

**TWO YEARS IN MALABAR.**

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# Two Years in Malabar

EAST INDIES

Being a Description of the Military Station and  
Cantonment of Malappuram, South Malabar

AN ACCOUNT OF

The Moplah Caste, and their superstitions

The History and Origin of the

GREAT MOPLAH FEAST

OF THE

“NURCHA”

*Moplah risings from 1840 to 1900 and other interesting  
information concerning this important Caste*

BY

LANCE-CORPORAL VINCENT JOS. RYDER

*2nd Bn., “The Cheshire Regiment”*

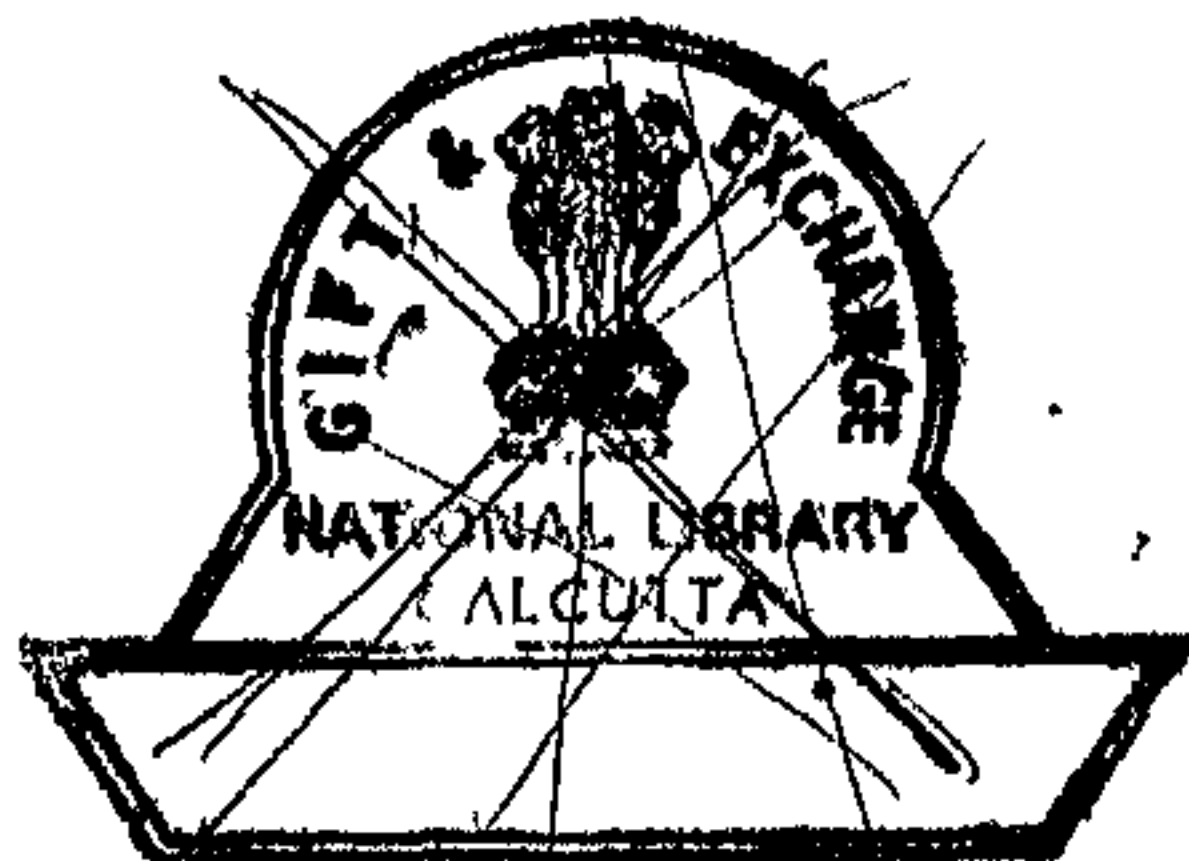
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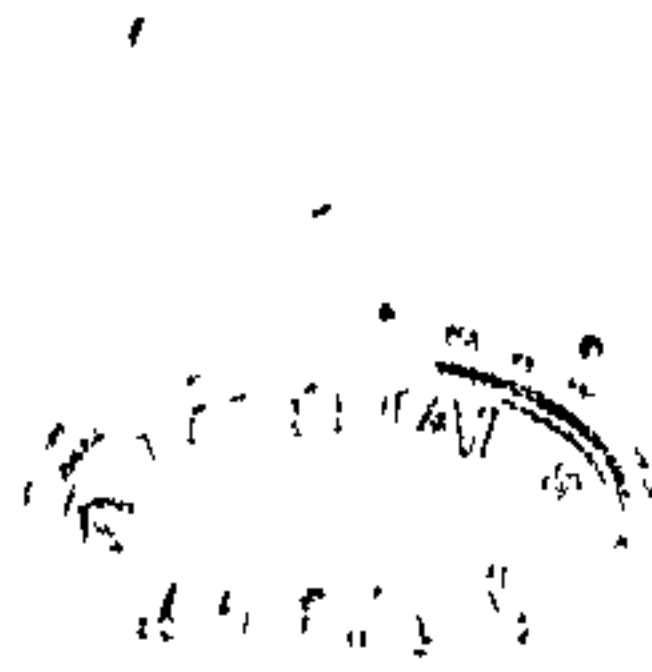
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## To the Reader, . . .

*THIS little work, the outcome of many months' labor, for the most part as Editor of the Detachment Journal, "The Echoes from the Jungle," I beg most respectfully to dedicate to the Officers, Non-commissioned Officers and men of my Corps, the 2nd Battalion, Cheshire Regiment, as a Souvenir of fully two years' Detachment Duty in the Moplah village of Malappuram, South Malabar, during the years 1904-05-06.*

*VINCENT JOS. RYDER.*

*Bellary, 1st March 1907.*



## INTRODUCTION.

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The object in publishing this little volume is to place before its readers in handier form what has, for the most part, appeared in the now defunct *Echoes from the Jungle*, a Detachment Journal published fortnightly at Malappuram, South Malabar, during the years 1905-6.

During the issue of the *Echoes* much was written by the author as Editor of that Journal concerning the various castes inhabiting the jungle village of Malappuram, more particularly concerning the Moplahs, a caste of which but little appears to be known. During a two years stay on Detachment in this part of South Malabar, I had many opportunities of studying and becoming acquainted with these very interesting people, for, as the duration of my stay went on, many of the early acquired prejudices disappeared.

I was enabled to write a number of articles concerning them which duly appeared in the columns of our fortnightly. The *Echoes from the Jungle*, which title was not given haphazard but advisedly so, for the little military station or cantonment is on the fringe of a jungle situated on the north bank of the Kadalundy river.

•• One will easily understand that natives of a jungle village must have characteristics of their own, much the same as villagers at home. There is then a very wide difference in the Moplah disposition, according as his surroundings may be; this is particularly noticeable when he comes in contact with Europeans and which has the effect of producing a change for the better in every respect.

Since the *Echoes* is no longer in existence, I can with safety undertake the task of re-editing my former articles, and the making of minor alterations in several of my articles. To those who followed the publication of that journal the alterations will be apparent. I may, however, point out that the alterations are not only necessary but justifiable.

Another and chief reason for the issue of this book is in order that other Detachments which may be stationed at Malappuram, might know something concerning the station and people amongst whom they are soldiering.

I have been asked, from time to time, to reprint my articles, for many, not only of my own corps but others, are desirous of having a souvenir of their stay in *Korila pazama*, or the land of Cocoanuts, as Malabar is termed, and at the same time an account of the Moplahs of Malappuram, who

## INTRODUCTION.

have in past years given the troops, not only of that station but likewise Calicut and Cannanore, a little trouble within recent years. There are N. C. O.'s and men serving in India at the present time who remember the Moplah outbreak so late as 1897 when the Moplahs made their final attack on the Hindoo temple at Trikalur near Manjeri.

Therefore, with this object in view, I decided to launch my book forth fully prepared to meet any criticisms directed against the volume, but at the same time buoyed up with the hopes that the interest centred in it by those who had served in the station and those who are now serving there as well as those who have yet to serve in that interesting station would more than compensate me for anything in that direction, nor do I think I shall be mistaken.

In this volume I have included the account of Moplah disturbances from 1840 to end of century from various sources chiefly "Logan's Malabar" to which, however, I have added an explanation of the *Hal' Illakan* or religious frenzy peculiar to the Moplah caste, and which appears to be little known.

I have purposely omitted from this book such article as have no direct bearing on the inhabitants or villages in the immediate neighbourhood of Malappuram, as the book is meant for the purpose of giving its military and civil readers all available information concerning a caste about which, singular as it may seem, so little appears to be known. Particularly does this apply to the "Feast of the Nurcha." This is, I believe, the first time a history of this event has appeared in print and will, therefore, be all the more interesting.

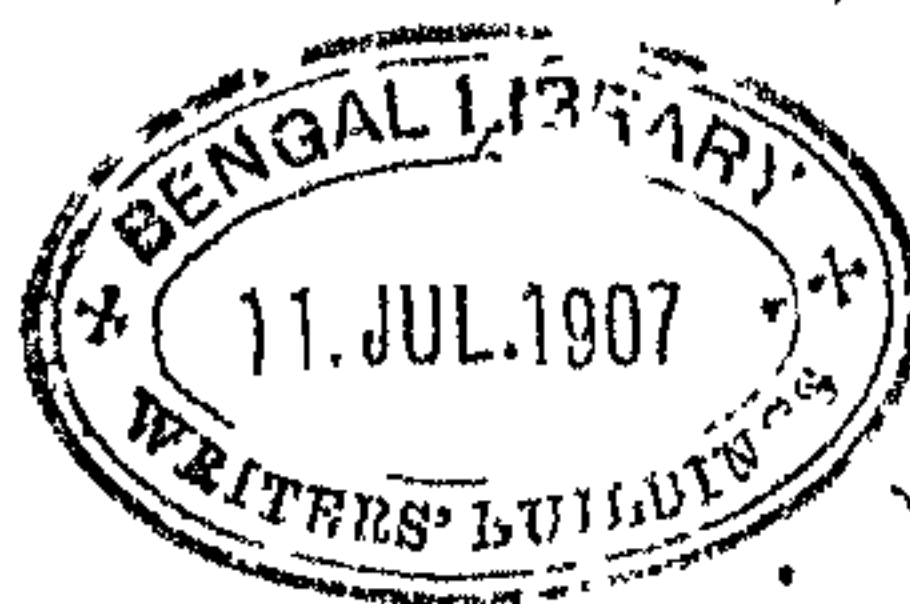
Again, the jungle village of Malappuram, in which I spent over two years on Detachment duty, is practically unknown to thousands of British troops serving in India at the present time. It is hoped my effort may assist in enlightening friends and relatives not only in India but at home as to its whereabouts as well as conveying something like an idea of the characteristics of this important caste.

In bringing my introduction to a conclusion, I can only hope my work may give the satisfaction I intend it should give. If, therefore, my efforts meet with such reward, then I am more than compensated for the trouble involved in re-editing my former articles.

I hope this volume may be regarded, as the title suggests, as a souvenir pleasant rather than otherwise of Malappuram at the most southern station for British troops in India and of Malabar generally.

THE AUTHOR.





# THE HISTORY OF MALAPPURAM.

## CHAPTER I.

### MALAPPURAM AND WHERE IT IS.

As indicated in the introduction to thousands who are serving in India the place is unknown. It is necessary to point out that Malappuram should not be confounded with Mallapuram, Salem, which is spelt with two *l*'s and one *p*, and for the purpose of preventing error in transmission of letters, correspondence should invariably be addressed, *Malappuram*, South Malabar or Malappuram *via* Tirur.

The detachment stationed at Malappuram consists of about 150 Officers, N.-C. O's and men (British troops). It is a Cantonment containing about sixty acres. It is situated in what is called "New Malappuram," the other part of the village to the west being called "Old Malappuram" which is on considerably lower ground. Whilst the one civil administration applies to both parts of the village, offences such as trespass or damage by cattle committed within the Cantonment area are dealt with by the Officer Commanding the Detachment, usually addressed as the "Officer Commanding Malappuram," he may, under the Cantonment Code of India, inflict a fine in the latter case, but hand over to civil custody in the former case.

The population of the Cantonment may be put down at one hundred and fifty Europeans and about one hundred natives.

The water supply for the use of troops is obtained from wells of various depths sunk within barracks, that for drinking purposes is drawn by means of pumps from closed in wells. Whilst the water supply during an exceptionally dry season run short, there is no record of its supply having at any time completely run out. The station then, so far as water supply, is very fortunately placed.

Malappuram which is approached from Tirur by the Turur road, a fairly well-metalled highway over which there is

a large local traffic, and from Calicut by a road bearing that name, is situated on the north bank of the Kadalundy river, which empties itself into the Arabian Sea, at Kadalundy port, some eight miles from Calicut.

This river which is a stream of considerable width at some parts, even near Malappuram, being fully one hundred yards wide, is navigable during parts of the year to this station, and is taken advantage of for shipping cocoanuts, in which the place abounds, to the coast. The stream presents great facility for bathing purposes owing to its sandy beach, but great care is necessary in the case of non-swimmers owing to the holes along the side. During the monsoons the privilege given the troops of bathing is altogether withdrawn, and a very wise course too.

The barracks are most pleasantly situated, being open to the west, and gets the benefit of the south-west breezes which blow for fully eight months in the year. It should be here explained that the barracks are situated on a cliff almost three hundred feet above the level of the river, and commanding an extensive view to the west, and from which perhaps some of the prettiest sunsets in Southern India are seen. In fact, I venture to think, that few barracks are more fortunately placed than that of Malappuram for healthy surroundings, and one cannot therefore wonder at its almost entire freedom from epidemic disease so far as effects the troops.

The name of the village is derived from the Malayalam words *Mala* (a hill) and *puram* (a town); the derivation conveys a good idea of its geographical aspect.

The village is in the Ernad Taluq (taluq meaning a division) of the Malabar district, Madras Presidency.

Its distance from Calicut is thirty-two miles by road. The nearest railway station is Tirur (about seventeen miles distant) on the S.-W. branch, Azzikhal and Madras railway.

One can easily understand the dreary walk for troops proceeding to or from Malappuram, and many a curse loud and deep has been registered against it.

The cost of transport is necessarily heavy owing to the distance, the time usually occupied by bullock bandy in performing the journey being not less than six hours. For reliefs the march from Malappuram to Tirur or *vice versa* is monotonous, being quite on a par with what one finds in this part of India, and during dry weather the roads are often ankle deep in pulverized laterite. In moves the leading section of four are the most fortunate, since they leave the dust created behind them for the rear sections, which in addition to creating thirst otherwise irritates the throat.

The highest hill in the immediate vicinity is the 'Urot-mala—N. Lat. 11° 3', E. Long. 76° 4', overlooking the Euro-

pean Military outpost of Malappuram. There is on the summit a small kind of temple with an inscription of no great antiquity. Height, 1,573 feet, and from the summit of which on any ordinary day Calicut and even more distantly situated places may be easily distinguished. A visit to Cholera, or Range hill, another prominence of less magnitude, at sunrise or sunset well repays the trouble involved. This hill which is practically within the Cantonment will probably be about one thousand feet, perhaps less, above sea-level, from which the Nilgiris may be seen. Reliable natives have averred that in the early morning the *Dodabetta*, the highest point in the Madras Presidency, may be seen. There is no earthly reason for doubting this, however much some may think to the contrary; in fact, I think it quite likely.

The population of the whole of Malappuram including natives living within the Cantonment area, according to the last census, is just under ten thousand. The inhabitants are divided into many sects or castes including Hindus, Brahmins, Mahommedans and a few scattered Jains. The Moplahs are the predominating caste; they are Mahommedans of the *Sunn* sect; the Moplah in his manners and religion is *sui generis*, observing strictly all the fasts prescribed in the Mahommedan ritual and may often be seen at sunrise and sunset reading his Koran and performing his ablutions in the river.

Polygamy is not practised by them to any appreciable extent save by the wealthier classes; it is therefore only on rare occasions one sees the females veiled.

Among some of the Hindoo castes polyandry is resorted to particularly in North Malabar, one woman being the common property of so many brothers.

Agriculture and Horticulture is followed in Malappuram, but the staple things are paddy growing, whilst toddy-drawing is carried on to a very great extent by the toddy-drawers exclusively of Hindoo caste. The Moplahs, like all followers of the Prophet, are strictly sober and are very industrious; a drunken or rowdy Moplah is extremely rare, for the penalty exacted by his religion for the offence is very heavy.

Little love appears to be lost between Moplah and Hindoo, and very little fuel is required to bring about a collision between these two important castes. The reason for this hatred, which is chiefly on the part of the Moplahs, will be found dealt with in the "Feast of the Naarcha."

The natives of Malabar, both male and female, are particularly good looking. Charles Lever speaks of "the flashing eyes of the Malabaree," and he was always considered a good judge of the fair sex.

The inhabitants are somewhat above the average height and exceedingly well developed; notwithstanding the insanitary conditions under which they live, there is but little sickness amongst them, the rate of mortality being exceedingly low.

Market day is held every Thursday on which occasion there is always a large influx of natives from surrounding districts, a fair turnover resulting. Taken on the whole the natives are well conducted and cleanly both in dress and habits.

During the time the writer was at Malappuram (just over 2 years), no friction of any kind occurred between the natives and troops.

True, the natives, like ourselves, sometimes get a little excited over religious questions, with other castes and even come to blows, but the dispensing of punishment to cover such offences whether within or without the Cantonment area is in the hands of the civil authorities who, if somewhat drastic in its application, know best what is required. From what I have seen I should judge that a strong hand is necessary in this village.

The Monsoon which usually commences about June (though it has been known to occur much earlier) lasts about four months, generally ending about the end of September or beginning of October. Still there are showers of varying severity as late as November and even December.

The mangoe or ripening showers usually make their appearance during April or May. The rainfall varies considerably, but often reaches 170 inches yearly.

The temperature of this part of Malabar is very even; there is in fact but little difference in temperature throughout the year, and it is probably this evenness of temperature which accounts for so little epidemic disease amongst the troops of this station.

Whilst no authentic records have been kept prior to its occupancy by the detachments of my regiment, I did however keep a record of the daily readings of the thermometer for about thirteen months, which shows an average temperature of a little over 80°.

During two years our regiment lost but one man in this station, and that from liver disease; this goes then to prove how healthy as a Military station Malappuram must be. Past records equally go to prove its immunity from any serious climatic disease. The only drawback to the station is the distance from the railway and its somewhat moist heat, which produces what is known as "prickly heat," a distressing thing while it lasts, but never fatal.

Living is fairly cheap whatever may be said to the contrary. There is always an abundance of fruit and what is



pleasing to say it is cheap and invariably fresh; one can even obtain fresh fish on certain days of the week brought by carriers, the sea being (crow line) but 12 miles away. Whilst the place is far removed from civilization there are some things which make up for inconveniences in this direction.

There are but few Europeans in Malappuram beyond the British troops, and these are employed on the police; there are however quite a number of Eurasian families in the locality and with whom kindly relations exist.

The language spoken here and in fact throughout South Malabar is Malayalam, which is a Dravidian branch of the great Aryan family of languages and a by no means easy language to acquire. As a result of contact and inter-marriage by the early Portuguese colonists, many words of that European tongue have become incorporated with the native language. Many Eurasian families still speak Portuguese very little removed (except by dialect) from what is spoken in Southern Europe.

At Malappuram there is a Government church for the use of British troops, built on a substantial scale.

Contrasted with the above is the Catholic church of St. Joseph doing duty for R. C. troops. This place of worship is so small that when packed as it invariably is with natives, it is almost suffocating. The writer has been compelled to go outside for a breath of fresh air. This place of worship with its laterite and adobe walls and thatched roof cannot be easily forgotten by those who may have worshipped there. Yet I doubt not that many a prayer, fervent and deep, has reached the ever-ready ear and proved as acceptable as that offered in the grandest cathedral ever raised to the Deity.

This station possesses its little Christian burial-ground with its portion set apart for troops, and where not a few have found a last resting-place so many thousands of miles from home. Nestling as it does at the foot of a somewhat shaded cliff, there is something which *volens volens* causes a sympathetic feeling to rise within one's breast, and in the case of a tender-hearted comrade a handkerchief is required to wipe away a suspicious moisture which gathers in one's eyes, and thoughts arise which for the time render one blind only to what is good within him. India is essentially a place for thinking, and has made many an indifferent home soldier a better man.

I have endeavoured in this chapter to give a pen picture of Malappuram, to convey something like an idea of this little village in which, I (as many others have lived and in which many others will also live) spent the first two fairly happy years of my Indian service among a caste who for devotion to their Creator and religious fervour would put to shame many of our co-religionists.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE MOPLAHS OF MALAPPURAM.

IN a place such as Malappuram, a typical East Indian village, where there is a mixed population as is usually the case, each people have their own particular place of worship, be it temple or mosque.

So many religions (each representing a caste) are practised even in this little hamlet that hardly a day passes without the observance of some festival connected with one or more of their strange beliefs, and which are a source of wonderment to many Englishmen fresh to the country and a source likewise of much discussion as to their relative merits as a religious people, but all are agreed as to their sincerity in the beliefs they hold.

In this chapter I purpose dealing exclusively with the Moplah caste—the predominating caste of this locality. I have had no books to aid me and have therefore been compelled to depend upon such information as I could glean from the more intelligent class of natives, nor do I think I have been misled in this respect. I had much difficulty in obtaining various items, and I must at this point explain that it is necessary to get the native to understand that so far as touches upon his religion, that whatever information one requires is not sought for in an irreverent sense, but with the best motives. One will at once see how necessary it is to treat his religion with the same respect we would have others treat our own. Avoid wounding the native religious susceptibility, and one will find that even a Moplah, usually a difficult medium for information, can, under favourable conditions, be quite open and willing to exchange ideas and at the same time satisfy one's craving for information which, under ordinary circumstances, it would be almost impossible to obtain. A knowledge of the native tongue at once entitles you to his respect and is the only real "open sesame" for information.

There is, however, one point on which even under the most favourable circumstances one must be prepared to find him exceedingly wary, and in this respect he is in no wise different than other followers of the Prophet; the point referred to is that connected with the interior economy of the home circle, so far as touches social usages as affecting the female

members of the Moplah household. On such a subject tact is necessary; still a kindly interest and a judiciously worded enquiry often performs wonders.

A mistaken impression appears to exist among many of the troops and Europeans generally no less than among those who preceded us on Detachment in this station, that all inhabitants of Malappuram are Moplahs, whether Hindoo, Brahman or Jain. This impression is totally wrong. The idea prevails that the word is collective rather than a distinctive one—that all natives of the locality are therefore Moplahs.

The Moplah, then, is of a caste having nothing in common with any of those enumerated, his faith or religious belief as well as habits varying altogether from those enumerated above.

The Moplah is a Mahomedan of the *Sunni* sect conforming strictly to the tenets of the Prophet and Koranical teachings generally, and, though differing from the Arab proper, has, like the rest of early converts who followed the paths of Islamism, gradually, through many centuries, imbibed those traits which are such a prominent feature in all who follow the religious teachings of Mahomet and which presents characteristics so much at variance with the religions of the West.

The modern name Moplah or, as some term themselves *Mappilas*, is derived from the Malayalam words *Maha* (great) and *pilla* (child), the last word, whilst meaning "child", carries with it the meaning of "respect". The founders of this caste came from Arabia to the Malabar coast some nine hundred years ago when they settled at Calicut, Cannanore and Mangalore. They were merchants dealing in pepper, coffee, cinnamon, and the other spices. After a time they established a factory on the sea front at Calicut, having first obtained after much opposition a grant of land from the Zamorin or Prince. Business evidently prospered with them, for we find they commenced the propagation of their religious ideas amongst the *aborigines* of Malabar, the ancient name of which was, as indicated in my introduction, *Kerula pozama* (land of cocoanuts).

Their great success as religious teachers, aided by their benevolence to the poor and oppressed of the then prevailing castes, secured many converts, which tempted them further afield.

Their missionary enterprise leading them amongst many other inland places to Malappuram where they obtained a piece of land from the Parambachan who might fitly be described as the "Lord of the Manor", but who was in reality but the steward (and often an unjust one) of the

then Zamorin at Calicut. This piece of land was near what is called the Nuradi bridge which spans the Kadalundy river in old Malappuram.

Here a mosque was erected. A school was also founded not only for religious but for secular teaching, and singular as it may seem even in those by-gone centuries, physical culture was by no means overlooked. Be it said to the credit of these pioneers of education in ancient Malabar, gymnastics were taught in that school and it has left its mark in the present-day Moplah.

A *Kariasthan* or gymnastic instructor was appointed whose duty it was to drill the scholars attending that little school just as at the present day, for physical training is by no means neglected by them. It is in fact this system of training carried on for hundreds of years that accounts for such fine specimens of manhood, for one sees great numbers over six feet and proportionately well built.

The growth of Islamism from such a small beginning in South Malabar has surpassed all that could have been desired by these Arabian merchant missionaries. Such is the fact and from this small beginning has sprung into existence not only the Moplahs of Malappuram but of Southern India.

Previous to the year 1732, this caste held but a subordinate position in the locality. Hinduism at that time being the prevailing religion in Malappuram, and though they permitted the small body of Moplahs to practise their religion in the little mosque on the Calicut road, they were treated with the greatest severity.

It was in the year 1732 that an event took place that was eventually the means of breaking up the despotic power of the local Hindoos, particularly the Parambachan and his sycophants, and by rapid strides the once badly treated Moplah assumed importance as he rose in power; so fell the power of the Hindoo in Malappuram as well as other parts of Malabar under the patronage of the Zamorin of Calicut. Fortunately with the growth of education and more equitable English laws a fairly tolerant spirit prevails. Still the presence of troops is required at Malappuram to keep matters quiet.

Under the chapters devoted to the "Feast of the Naarcha," the reader will find a full account of the several subjects referred to in this chapter, and several points which appear vague will be found explained.

In bringing this section of my book to a close, I would like to say that many of the peculiarities or what one might term such, so apparent in the Moplah, disappear on closer acquaintance, and one learns to admire him if only for his martial spirit.



Seeing him from day to day over a period of two years, it may safely be presumed the author should be able to judge him or at least form a fair estimate of his character, nor do I think I will be found wrong in my estimation of him.

To my thinking, then, he possesses many excellent qualities among which is his desire to please, nor is he by any means ungrateful as some have thought, probably there are many erroneous impressions concerning him, but much of this is arrived at through want of observation.

Treat him with respect, avoid hurting his feelings by the use of certain words, unfortunately, in too common use, and one will find him as I have found him, capable of much good and faithful as a dog. What one is compelled to like in the Moplah is almost an entire absence of cringing servility common to natives of more northern stations. Many events have occurred in the past which show him capable of great attachment in a moment of real danger. It should never be forgotten that a Moplah is a Mahomedan and, like the Jew, holds in abhorrence certain animals; by forgetting this fact many a thoughtless wrong is done him, but his intelligence teaches him that the wrong was unintentional, and it is passed over with a smile. Many of their customs may seem peculiar to us as Christians even as our own are equally incomprehensible to him. I have been told this much by intelligent natives and can quite understand what he feels; whatever private opinion may be as to the validity of his religion, one cannot help being favourably impressed by his fervour in practising it, and the ever-ready willingness with which he dispenses charity to the poor is praiseworthy.

In this as in the preceding chapter I have done my best to convey something like an idea of this particular caste, amongst whom I lived while the respective companies to which I belonged were at Malappuram during the years 1904-5-6 on Detachment duty, and which I gained from personal experience like many of my comrades who were in that station, and from the fact of never having heard one disrespectful word used towards me in my wanderings through the village and outlying villages in my search for information. I have come to the conclusion that the tales we heard when coming out to India as to their bitterness towards British troops are entirely without foundation; and I only hope during my Indian service, I may never meet a worse lot of natives than the Moplahs of Malappuram of whom I can say nothing only what is to their credit during my stay in that station.

## CHAPTER III.

### PART I.

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#### THE MOPLAH FEAST OF THE "NAARCHA."

##### THE HISTORY OF ITS ORIGIN.

At the time of writing, the feast referred to in the previous chapter and which lasts two days is in progress. Malappuram, ordinarily a quiet little jungle village with a population of between nine and ten thousand persons, presents a very different aspect. The place is literally teeming in scores of thousands of natives from outlying villages and townships having for an object, the honouring of 44 Moplah heroes or saints who met their death in 1732 in defence of families and religion, also to fulfil their vows by returning thanks for a run of prosperity or recovery from sickness.

I purpose dealing in this history with the origin of this feast and the circumstances which led to its inauguration as an annual festival.

The Indian Government makes an annual grant of thirty rupees towards sanitary measures including the watering of the roads in the immediate vicinity of the meeting place of this vast assembly.

A brief account of the events I am dealing with in this article, is given in the sacred book called "Sebecna," the public recital of which by the Moplahs on the occasion of this festival or at any other time has been prohibited by Government.

I am indebted to Adikhari Ali (Native Magistrate) of Malappuram, who has so kindly supplied me with an outline of the events and dates from records preserved in the mosque erected by the Moplahs three years after the events mentioned in my article, *viz.*, Malayalam Era 912 (A. D. 1737), and in which the Moplahs of this village worship.

The feast of the "Naarcha," a Malayalam word signifying "an offering," is now an annual gathering of the Moplah Mahomedan community. In its ecclesiastical sense, it is an offering to God prescribed in Islamitic teachings, much the same as Harvest thanksgivings at the present day in England.

Votive offerings are of very remote origin. Records unearthed from the buried cities of ancient Egypt have proved the high antiquity of the practice. The Mahommedan church has always permitted this, since they have a form of prayer covering the purpose and which is in use at the present day.

This form of thanksgiving or offering used in the Mosque is called "Naarcha." Thus it will be seen that a promise to perform a good deed or act, made by a person suffering from sickness, or in trouble of any kind, if permitted to be restored to good health, or even a run of good fortune in an enterprise, a gift to some charitable institute, or to the poor of the village in fulfilment of the promise: this also is "Naarcha" (an offering).

As the anniversary of the death of the forty-four Moplahs occurred in the month 'Makaram' (January) also called by the Arabic word 'Muharram' which is the first month of the Mahommedan New Year corresponding to our January, it became customary with the Moplahs to complete their vow on the commencement of the new year, much the same as we are in the habit of announcing our intention "to turn over a new leaf on the first day of the year." The fact of the fulfilment of a vow by devout Moplahs of Malabar on this anniversary, has been the means of its becoming a "fixed feast," now known by all Moplahs throughout this district, so that the word "Naarcha" from an ordinary votive offering, conveys to the minds of these people all the importance of this greatest of Moplah feasts.

As the meaning of the word is now understood, I will proceed to the more remote cause, which led up to the origin of this great Moplah feast, on the occasion of which scores of thousands wend their way to Malappuram from far and near to take part and at the same time make their pilgrimage, for this is really what the visit to Malappuram means, and add their offerings to the thousands being offered with the same common object; and there is no possible doubt as to the genuine piety which prompts these interesting people in worship of the same God to whom we as Christians offer our prayers, but by them called "Allah."

The "Naarcha," as shown, is therefore an offering now made on the anniversary of the death of these forty-four men, called according to the Moplahs and their sacred books "Saints," and who met their death in this very village (Malappuram) in the Malayalam Era or year 908 (A. D. 1732). The heroism, with which these Martyrs met their death for the sake of their parents, wives and children and people of this place, will be published later together with the tragic circumstances surrounding their death which entitles them to the

honours which are paid them on the occasion of the annual gathering of Moplahs; the manner of their death according to native ideas only too plainly entitles that their memories should be kept green, and that the Mahommedan church is justified in giving the title of "Saints."

The event is kept up yearly at the expense of the Moplah Mahommedan community, chiefly the wealthier classes, which also sanction the outlay of a certain sum from the coffers of the mosque or from levied moneys. Since sanction is given locally through the Thangal (the head of the Mahommedan community here), it is not surprising it has the support of the followers of the Prophet throughout the Malabar district.

The actual burial-place of these forty-four Moplahs was at Poolakamm, exactly half a mile north-east from Kottappadi (gate of the fort), which is still the name of the site on which the Detachment Football ground is now situated, but which was occupied by a fort at the time of the opening events in this history.

Poolakamm is the name of the paddy-field on which the pilgrims meet on the occasion of this festival. It will be therefore seen that this village, now so tranquil, was once the scene of strife and given up to pillage and plunder. It is nevertheless a fact and is vouched for by records taken at the time, and to which, by the kind permission of the Mosque authorities through the Adikhari (Native Magistrate) of Malappuram, I have been furnished with an outline. These records have left no doubt as to who were the aggressors,—undoubtedly the Hindoo caste—for the Moplahs suffered many indignities at the hands of these people who at the time of the opening of this history were in the ascendant in this locality. Though the events I am speaking of took place during the third decade of the 18th century, the ill-feeling on the part of the Moplahs to the Hindoos has not ceased, as the attack on the Hindoo temple at Manjery only a few years ago plainly indicated, on the occasion of which the troops of this station took part in quelling with loss of life.

The celebration of the "Naarcha" is the signal for a renewal of the Moplah hatred of the Hindoo, nor can there ever be any hopes of reconciliation between these two castes. To my own knowledge more than one Hindoo was roughly treated only last year, whilst in a lonely part of the village.

Personal contact with the Moplah brings to light many excellent qualities. These qualities I have mentioned in my previous articles on "Malappuram and where it is" and "The Moplahs of Malappuram," and I am expressing what I think to be a correct idea shared by the troops of this station. A history of India before and even after the advent of Europeans only too plainly indicates the despotism practised.



No man's life was worth the purchase. His wife and family and goods were all subject to the will of capricious Rajahs and their underlings or tributary princes. India then, as now, was a land of mystery and varied religions and divided into castes as at the present day, and just as diverse. In Malabar, in which Malappuram is situated, the same state of things existed.

Before European invasion, Malabar (its ancient name being *Kerala pozama*—land of cocoanuts) was governed by native despotic Rajahs and petty princes, and amongst the many despots of importance was the Zamorin of Calicut. Malappuram amongst other villages was under the immediate dominion or vassalage of the said Rajah, and therefore was tribute to Calicut, and taxes were levied with no light hand. These princes had a lien on everything that was of use, from household goods and savings to the daughter of his vassals, and it was the excesses of the latter right, which led to the gradual downfall of despotism in this locality. It is not difficult to believe that these Rajahs would have claimed even the souls of these poor crushed natives, could it have been done.

The Rajah or Zamorin of Calicut being unable to look after his many possessions of which Malappuram was one, appointed a chief or steward, one Para Nambi, as a vassal chief to govern Malappuram and adjacent places.

Moors and Arabs, according to the records, were the first coloured race to come to Malabar (see my "Moplahs of Malappuram"). They were merchants who came with the object of dealing in pepper and coffee, some of whom settled down in Malabar in the interests of their commercial pursuits, chiefly on the sea-coast, so as to be able to superintend the shipment of their goods, viz., at Mangalore, Cannanore and Calicut, and to whom rights and privileges to carry on trade were accorded.

These merchants being Mahommedans, with the characteristic zealousness of their faith, propagated their religious ideas throughout Malabar and, making great headway, had many adherents throughout the District and had already begun to make themselves a power. Such was the state of things immediately preceding the Malayalam year 908 (A. D. 1732).

Para Nambi, already mentioned, was the name of a Nambutiri Brahman to whose name was added, the word "Achan" (father), as a token of respect and in consideration of the important position he was holding under the immediate patronage of the Rajah of Calicut; hence we get the modern Malayalam word Parambachan, which in its wider sense signifies a lord of the manor.

Although a great favourite of the Zamorin of Calicut, it must not be forgotten that his sheer ability alone caused his rapid advancement. The fact remains, however, that he was appointed Vassal Rajah in Malayalam year 790 (A. D. 1615) of Malappuram as well as ten adjacent places, thus establishing the hereditary title for his successors.

Things went on smoothly for a time, but years after his appointment, *viz.*, M. E. 800 (A. D. 1625), a Vassal Rajah Gooruvayoor, for some reason not clearly defined, revolted against the Parambachan, and for two years a kind of desultory warfare was carried on between the two. Finally, in M. E. 812 (A. D. 1627), the Parambachan collected his Nayar forces, determined to put an end to the incursions of the Rajah of Gooruvayoor; the two opposing forces met and a fierce conflict took place, the victory remaining in the balance for some time. Eventually the Parambachan's forces were routed, he and the remnant of his forces were obliged to take to flight pursued by the enemy, who greatly harassed them. The Parambachan being separated from his troops was in imminent danger of being taken. A number of Malappuram Moplahs had witnessed the fight, and seeing the dangerous position of the Parambachan, were seized with pity on seeing him practically helpless and left alone in the hands of his enemies, managed to conceal and afterwards secretly conveyed him to his Fort at Malappuram which was situated on the site of the present Detachment Football Ground.

## PART II.

In the preceding chapter I left off at the point, where, after defeat of his forces by the enemy, the Parambachan had been conveyed as secretly as possible by a number of compassionate Moplahs to his Fort at Malappuram. This Fort was but a rudely constructed one, made from hewn blocks of laterite rock, such as is used in making buildings at the present day in this locality, and which forms the surface of the ground throughout the greater part of the Malabar District.

The risk attending the conveyance of the Parambachan, as may be imagined, was very great considering that the armed troops of the Rajah of Gooruvayoor were scattered all over the place, and many stationed at the various

approaches to this village. The friendly Moplahs did not however consider the danger they were running or that he was not of their caste, but all the same adopted the best method of securing his safety in which they were successful, and probably much relieved when they got the Parambachan through the gates of his Fort which, as already pointed out, occupied the site of the present Detachment Football Ground. This piece of land still goes by the name of "Kottappadi" which in Malayalam signifies "gate of the fort," and upon each annual gathering of pilgrims is visited by scores of thousands of devout Moplahs, who take no pains to hide their veneration for a spot which is so closely associated with the last stand of the heroes so dear to every Moplah heart. And there are few Moplah children who are not acquainted with the outlines of this important piece of religious and secular history, in celebration of which only a fortnight ago Malappuram was the scene of unusual activity not only by day but by night, when a fine pyrotechnic display was to be witnessed on several evenings with loud explosions from miniature cannon or by means of "chattie-bombs" (earthenware vessels containing powder packed tightly and exploded by means of a fuze).

Returning to the subject of the escape: the Parambachan greatly pleased at his safety and particularly pleased at the humanity of these Moplahs, though so widely at variance with their religious views as opposed to his own, he nevertheless made them substantial presents and further bestowed on the Moplah community many privileges which before this act they had not enjoyed.

Having proved the sterling quality of this section of his subjects, he arrived at the conclusion that although they were so widely different in caste, they might, if properly treated and accorded privileges placing them on a level with others of the subjects, from a civil point of view, prove most useful allies. He was already aware of their daring and felt they would be a most valuable acquisition as fighting-men, if he could only secure their services.

Accordingly, he increased the privileges they were enjoying still more, and was as a result of leniency enabled to recruit for his forces from amongst his Moplah subjects; nor was he at all disappointed, for in a very short time he was able to raise quite a big number of men and was anxiously awaiting a time to put their fighting abilities to the test. To these men he gave a thorough good training, employing the best material for the purpose, and thus prepared them for what was uppermost in his mind, *viz.*, retaliative measures against his old enemy, the Rajah of Goortuvayoores, whom he had not forgiven for his defeat some time previously.



The fact of the Parambachan's having been worsted, had created a deep feeling of resentment and he was most anxious to vindicate his honour by an appeal to arms, and at the same time test the fighting powers of his new friends, the Moplahs.

Contrary to precedent, the Rajah of Gooruvayoor did not follow up the advantages he had gained over the Parambachan, but seems to have been quite content in the knowledge that he had beaten off his rival to power, and quietly rested on his laurels.

The Parambachan feeling perfectly assured of the fighting powers of his Moplah recruits was now determined to make a further effort to punish the late victors. Accordingly in 803 M. E. (A. D. 1628) he sent notice of his intention to make war upon the Rajah of Gooruvayoor, who at once assumed the defensive, although very much against his will, having had no further thoughts of reprisals.

The Parambachan at the head of his Moplah troops set out to combat the Rajah of Gooruvayoor. The two forces meeting some miles from Malappuram, hostilities were commenced and a fierce conflict ensued. The superiority of the Moplahs was apparent from the very outset in the fray, which lasted some considerable time. Many lives were lost on the Rajah's side with but a few casualties on the side of the Parambachan's forces, by whom the victory was gained.

As a result of this conflict, the Rajah of Gooruvayoor became vassal to the Parambachan of Malappuram, and was compelled to pay tribute.

Unstinted praise was accorded the Moplah troops and as a result, the community of Malappuram received still further rights and privileges at the hands of the Parambachan. A great welcome was given on their return, after such a signal victory.

The Moplahs who, up to the time of enlisting into the Parambachan's service, had suffered many disabilities, considered this a fitting opportunity for airing their grievances, which was accordingly done. They pleaded successfully for their rights and privileges of citizens, and in proof of his great satisfaction the Parambachan granted their requests.

Previously, worship by the Moplahs, who then as at the present day are Mahomedans of the Sunni sect, was carried on almost in secrecy. Amongst the many advantages they gained by means of their request was the grant of land, upon which a mosque was built, and it is this very mosque round which centres so much of what subsequently became historical, and caused the foundation of the great "Moplah feast of the Naarcha." The concession, considering the fact that Hinduism was rampant, was a great one, and was greatly



appreciated by the Mahommedans of Malappuram and surrounding villages and was without doubt the means, at least for a time, of creating a better feeling between two castes so diametrically opposed, as Hindu and Mahomedan from a civil point of view.

The Moplahs were permitted by the Parambachan to extend their buildings and occupy quarters of their own instead of being scattered here and there, as had formerly been the case, before they had received these concessions.

These privileges were eagerly accepted by the Moplah population, who lost no time in obtaining the services of men skilled in architecture. Buildings, including a school, were therefore erected on a proper plan. Streets were formed and roads laid out superior to what had hitherto existed, as is plainly to be seen after a lapse of almost two centuries, adding not a little to a neater appearance even at that time, though not without a pang of jealousy on the part of the Parambachan's co-religionists. Still the improvements could not fail to be noticed by the Parambachan himself who, one may presume to hope, expressed his pleasure at the remarkably neat and business-like appearance and growth from what had formerly been the style of architecture.

So rapid were the changes being wrought in bringing barren land to a populous district that outsiders as well as those living in the villages were altogether surprised.

In many instances land that had been incapable of bringing forth the fruits of the earth was properly tilled and irrigated by these Moplahs and "brought forth abundantly."

During all this time another great work was in progress, viz., the spread of Moplah or Mahommedanism in the District. Unnoticed, this great work had been silently going on, and many converts had been made. In this, as in many other things, striking proof was being given from day to day as to the ability of these people, and no wonder people of other castes gave them the name of *Maha pillā* (greatly respected) in appreciation of the work they (the Moplahs) were doing both from a religious and a secular point of view. Day by day under proper treatment his thrift became proverbial, and "his religion as rapidly grew in its number of adherents," that all were compelled *nolens volens* to admit the fact. The name Moplah compounded of the two Malayalam words *Maha pillā* (greatly respected) was not given without just grounds. He began to make himself felt a power in the locality. Although friendly relations existed between Hindu and Moplah, yet misgivings now began to be felt by the former caste owing to the Moplahs' rapid progress all round; however, a generally friendly feeling was established and kept up.

till the M. E. 1904 (A. D. 1729), when an incident turning the whole course of events took place.

During this year (A. D. 1729) there came to Malappuram a certain Moplah bearing the name of Koyally Marakar, said to be a native of Wallavanad. This man, according to all accounts, appears to have travelled extensively throughout various parts of India. Records prove him to have been a man of superior education for this period. He was certainly a very clever man and possessed of many accomplishments, chief amongst which was his ability in the use of weapons of warfare, and his extraordinary skill in the use of the sword became known far and near. Where he acquired such wonderful power in the use of the sword does not appear to be known. There would appear to be no branch of military training of which he was not a perfect master. He likewise gained notoriety as an accomplished gymnast.

The wonderful ability of Koyally Marakar reached the ears of the Parambachan who lost no time in appointing an interview, at which an exhibition of Marakar's skill was given. So pleased was the Parambachan with the display of swordsmanship, that he at once enlisted his services and appointed him Kariasthan (Gymnasium Instructor), much to the delight of the Moplah community, who felt how great an advantage it would be for them to have a co-religionist in high favour with the Parambachan.

The feeling existing between Koyally Marakar and his master, the Parambachan, amounted on the latter's part almost to that of a father's love to a son, whilst the former took every opportunity of returning the confidence placed on him. Whether the Kariasthan's affection was real or pretended is hard to say, but at any rate he appeared to look to the interests of his master, the Parambachan bestowing favours upon him from time to time and taking every opportunity of shewing his liking for his new found favourite.

### PART III.

FOLLOWING the state of things existing at Calicut and other places in Malabar, it is not difficult to understand that the Parambachan followed the example of his illustrious master, the Zamorin, and carried out the traffic in human flesh. Prisoners of war became the property of the victors

and if unable to pay a suitable ransom, had to work for the benefit of their new master; and otherwise submit to his caprices and whims; nor were his wife and family exempted.

Records do, however, prove the Parambachan to have been for a short time a little more kindly in some instances than was usually to be found in men occupying so high a position as that he held in this locality, and had he not been too much guided by his relatives, or possessed of more will power, much that eventually took place in Malappuram a few years later would have been avoided.

Returning to Koyally Marakar, the Kariasthan or Gymnasium Instructor, this Moplah's position was virtually that of Commander of the Parambachan's troops, so the importance of his position will at once be seen. He was the arbiter of disputes which required settling by the sword, and subsequent events served to prove how ably he kept up his previously acquired fame.

In addition to his duties as Military Commander he made frequent excursions with his forces to outside districts not necessarily for settling disputes, but to do a little pillaging on his own and his master's account, for by a tacit understanding he was to share the proceeds of his "booty forages"—for this is what they really were—with his master at Malappuram. The pillaging of villages was a most lucrative business and as a result the "Coffers" at Malappuram were always in a most flourishing state. The same Koyally Marakar's success earned for him still greater privileges, but never once did he forget to urge the interests of his co-religionists, the Moplahs, who were willing enough to condone his offences whilst not sympathising with his methods, from the fact of his championing the cause of Moplahism, and by thus means proving himself to be "the friend at Court."

A time, however, came which proved the undoing of Marakar. One day he had gone out with a number of his forces with the usual object of brigandage, and had made a successful forage during which a large residence was attacked, and articles of value secured. During the operations Marakar obtained possession of a beautiful girl whom he submitted to indignity, a most unusual thing on his part, for Marakar had hitherto rather a good name concerning his treatment of female prisoners, so that the act was deprecated by even his own men.

The fault had been done and there is no doubt that he himself regretted deeply the fact of having allowed his passions to have overpowered him.

To make matters still worse, it was found that the girl was the daughter of blood-relatives of the Parambachan, so that the dilemma of Marakar will at once become apparent.



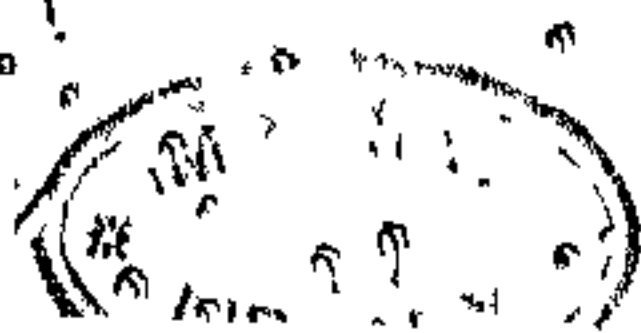
The return journey to Malappuram was made, and it need hardly be said that every effort was used to prevent the outrage reaching the ears of the Parambachan. The pillaging of the residence of the relatives was a minor offence compared with the still more serious charge hanging over the Kariasthan's head. For sometimes the offence was kept quiet, and it was thought that no more would be heard of the affair, but such was not to be the case. For some time after the event the circumstances of the case reached the ears of the Parambachan whose indignation can be better imagined than described, and he could not be brought to believe that his "beloved Marakar" could be guilty of such an offence. For regarding the actual pillaging he counted that as nothing, and probably the offence alleged against the Kariasthan, had it been committed against anyone but a relative of the Malappuram despot, nothing more would have been heard of the matter, but a relative—that was another thing.

Most reluctantly did the Parambachan give the order for Marakar's arrest which was at once carried out. No denial was made on the part of the accused favorite, who was allowed every privilege considering his position consistent with safety.

The Parambachan communicated with the relatives of the "deeply injured maiden" and invited the parents to visit Malappuram with the girl, and if necessary identify the man who had wronged her.

The parents and other relatives of the girl had in their communication to their powerful relative, the Parambachan, asked that compensation should be paid for the grievous wrong she had suffered, and further asked that the offending party should suffer the extreme penalty of the law.

There were many in the employ of the Parambachan who, jealous of the power placed in the hands of Marakar, were only too pleased to have the chance afforded them of encompassing his ruin; and no time or opportunity was lost in advocating his disgrace, which meant loss of power, whilst others openly advocated his execution and pointing out to their master that it was a great insult to the Parambachan in addition to a gross wrong to the girl, as well as a wrong to the parents and relatives, and which could only be atoned for, by the death of Marakar. Whilst the Kariasthan was a Moplah-Mahomedan and permitted to practise his faith, the Parambachan was a follower of Hindu faith. As there is such a wide difference between the two castes and their faith, and again as the followers of the Moplah faith were gradually increasing in numbers and strength much to the annoyance of Hinduism, it was urged that nothing short of



Marakar's death was necessary to prevent the downfall of that faith in this locality (a belief which was only too true for the whole of Malappuram is practically Mahomedan at the present day). This was not the true reason which prompted the desire for the death of Marakar; it was desire for power on the part of Hindoo satellites.

The Parambachan was placed on the horns of a dilemma and would make no promise to his co-religionists who had accordingly to "possess their souls in patience" and wait the result of the interview of the Parambachan with his relatives, and satisfy himself that his "beloved favorite" was guilty of the charge made against him, and whether it could be substantiated by the girl recognizing Marakar as the man who had violated her.

It becomes necessary at this point to give some indication as to the feeling of the Moplah community on the unfortunate affair, and the serious charge hanging over the head of *their* favorite. It is only fair to these people to say that whilst they strongly deprecated the offence alleged against their friend, the man who had done so much towards making their lot so much easier in this village, they were opposed to such drastic measures as advocated by his rivals to power. It is even recorded that they were prepared to assist in paying his fine if such were inflicted.

It will therefore be seen that whilst one side lusted for his blood, the other awaited the decision like stoics.

At last the relatives of the girl arrived at Malappuram with the girl herself, and Marakar's guilt was put beyond doubt—it was only too clearly established.

The Parambachan had hoped against hope that the charge had been wrongly made against his favorite whom records say "he loved as a father might love a son." His grief was painful to witness and many felt the weight of his temper.

The parents of the girl asked nothing less than the death of the "favorite." Whilst sympathizing with the girl and her people the Parambachan who loved his favorite above all, could not be brought to accede to what he thought to be a punishment out of proportion to the crime serious as it was, and "involving the honor of a girl."

The Parambachan urged that as Marakar had followed out his instructions, so far as pillaging was concerned, he had, however, exceeded his instructions in respect of the offence he had committed, and as one offence had led to the other his conscience smote him, and the execution of the favorite might lead to serious trouble with his Moplah troops. He was prepared to offer pecuniary compensation for his officer's offence.

This promise did not satisfy his relatives, who prompted by some of the jealous court officials still urged their desire for Marakar's execution.

Meanwhile everyone was in a state of anxious expectation as to the fate of Marakar. The Moplah troops who had served under him as well as a few faithful Hindoos were prepared to fight to the bitter end in resisting the order for their beloved leader's execution. In fact, a kind of understanding seems to have existed as to the course of events, should an attempt be made to execute Marakar. Subsequent events prove that all arrangements had previously been made for eventualities.

After further deliberations (not known) the Parambachan sent off an escort to bring Koyally into his presence. (Koyally Marakar had not been deprived of his arms and accoutrements). "The arrival of the men appeared a bad omen" to our Kariasthan who accordingly made preparations for the worst, but at the same time prepared to sell his life dearly having the impression, his end was near.

Having washed and put on suitable attire and fully accoutred, he placed himself in charge of the leader of the party and stated his willingness to be conducted to the presence of his master.

There were many sad hearts as Marakar passed the chamber of the Parambachan, for many a kindly gift had he made to the poor, and many a piece of oppression had been righted by him.

On his arrival at the fort, still going by the name "Kottappadi" (the Detachment Foot-ball Ground), in which were the rooms occupied by the Parambachan, he was conducted to his presence. "The Parambachan was greatly moved on beholding Marakar." His position made him feel for his favorite. "How to dispose of the case perplexed him greatly! His love was still strong," yet, there was a desire to give satisfaction to his relatives. Even then, he was undecided what to do, and how to punish so as to satisfy his conscience. Resolving to discuss the manner of dealing with the favorite, he ordered the escort to conduct Marakar to his place of confinement pending his resolution with strict injunctions to be closely watched, whilst the deliberations were in progress, and which lasted a considerable length of time. The excitement throughout the Fort, and in the village of Malappuram, and adjacent places being very great.

Again, Marakar is warned for the Parambachan's presence, this time to be confronted by the girl and her relatives, by whom satisfaction was demanded.

Marakar thinking that immediate punishment was to be meted out, and having strong reasons to fear treachery, re-



fused and resisted the efforts of his guard to force him into the presence of his master. He did not appear to think that his case was being dealt with fairly, and that the Parambachan was being influenced inordinately by his numerous relatives who was asking nothing short of Marakar's death, which request, if granted, would lead to grave results amongst his subjects.

Nothing having been decided upon, the Parambachan went off to his sleeping chamber in an upper story, and laying down on his bed lay thinking whilst resting his head upon his hands, watching what was going on outside, and arrived at the conclusion that his favorite must die.

Marakar asked to be conducted to the Parambachan's chamber, his request being immediately granted. Standing before his master, he asked that he would pardon him. Finding that there was no hope of forgiveness, and that his fate was sealed, performed one of his gymnastic feats, escaped from his escort and drawing his rolled sword which he had concealed under his dress, made a downward cut at his master's head. The Parambachan being near the window as Marakar's sword descended, it caught the stone lintel which broke the force of the blow, but it nevertheless inflicted a wound on the top of his head, and also caused a slight wound on the hand.

The order to seize Marakar was given and a rush was made to secure him, but Marakar succeeded in keeping off his guard whom he made no attempt to kill, being anxious only to secure his own retreat, which he did, and escaped through the window of his master's chamber.

Dropping to the ground his Moplals at once came to his aid. Every effort was made to recapture him, but in vain.

The news of the attempt on the life of the Parambachan and Marakar's escape spread rapidly through Malappuram and outside districts. Many Moplals came to assist Marakar, and a big fight took place in the village between Hindoos and Moplals, Marakar urging the latter to do their best, himself hewing down the enemy in scores. Numbers told on the Moplals, and Marakar himself being killed during the conflict, when all was over it was found that the Hindoo losses were 400 against but a small number of the former.

## (CONCLUSION.)

In the previous part I left off at the death of Koyally Marakar. The attempt on the life of the Parambachan greatly incensed him against the Moplahs, and he made no secret of his desire for revenge. The death of his favorite none the less grieved him and instead of ascribing the death to the proper cause he laid the blame at the door of his dead favorite's co-religionists. He even became embittered against his own relatives, but be that as it may, his feelings did not soften towards his Moplah subjects.

The Parambachan apart from any other feeling was not only ashamed to think, that a mere handful of Moplahs should be responsible for the loss of 400 of his troops, but that he had lost prestige in the eyes of other castes, and he felt he must avenge himself once and for all.

Accordingly, a secret communication was despatched to the Zamorin of Calicut, asking that Rajah to send down some fighting men to Malappuram, for the purpose of extirpating the Moplahs and at the same time to demolish their mosque together with their homes and cattle.

The Moplah villagers having acquired the secret of the Parambachan's intentions, and greatly fearing for their wives and families, petitioned the Parambachan to have pity on them, and asked why they who had taken no part in the conflict, or in any way countenanced it should be punished.

After repeated petitions had been presented, the Parambachan at last replied, stating that they who had taken no part in the plot need feel no alarm for their own safety or that of their wives and families, as it was no intention of his to punish the innocent for the guilty.

Not without some misgivings did the remaining Moplahs settle down to every-day life, and partly, though not completely reassured, few, if any, took precautions against any future dangers or fear of a broken pledge.

The faith of these peaceful Moplahs was doomed to an awful shattering. Little did they think that before morning they would behold the smoking ruins of their happy homes! Yet such was to be the case, for at dead of night on 12th Makaram M. E. 909 (January 1734), when most if not all were peacefully sleeping, a full force of 5,600 troops besieged the streets of the Moplah Quarter in, what is now known to



all as "Old Malappuram," setting fire to the homes, pillaging and plundering without mercy.

In a frantic and terror-stricken state as they were, the first thought of the Moplahs was for their wives and families, and like others have done thought, that their Mosque as a place of worship would afford sanctuary. "Thither they conveyed their dear kith and kin, leaving their belongings in the hands of the enemy, thinking of nothing, but parents, wives and children." No personal things did they carry, only such as they had in their possession at the time of the alarm, thinking they would be safe as the enemy would never attack a place associated with devotion to their Creator. However, the Mosque afforded them shelter where "with prayers deep and fervent, waiting for daylight, they hoped for the best." It is difficult to imagine the state of mind of these poor Moplahs patiently awaiting events, expecting at any moment to be massacred.

Gradually the news of what was going on at Malappuram filtered through to the Moplahs of adjacent places, viz., the following:—Wallavarad, Kondovatti, Angadipuram, Manjery, etc. Such as were capable of bearing arms made their way to Malappuram to ascertain the true state of affairs and assist in relieving their co-religionists, "encountering many difficulties and much opposition on the journey, eventually making their way to the Mosque" in old Malappuram on the Calicut road. They accordingly appointed a leader in the person of one "Naraspatti Polker." It was resolved for safety's sake to place the women and children in a securer place. "Forty-four men were chosen as a conducting party at the head of which was Polker." They were eventually got safely away during the first night. The party of 44 men resolved to protect the Mosque, as it was rumoured that the forces intended to raze it to the ground. The enemy, whose injunctions were to destroy this place of worship, were much surprised to find it in possession of 44 determined Moplahs with "Naraspatti" at the head.

The forces of the Parambachan coupled with those from Calicut were anxious to be doing something after travelling such a distance and commenced hostilities besieging the Mosque. Still these 44 Moplahs held out against the combined forces for 3 days. The poisoning of the water-supply and the giving out of the food turned their attention to evacuating the Mosque.

On the 3rd day these Moplahs asked for terms of peace of the Rajah, stating they were not the cause of the trouble and asking why they should be inhumanly treated for the misdeeds of a stranger Moplah (meaning Marakar, the Parambachan's favorite). If allowed to go free, without molestation

and no injury to the Mosque, they would even forfeit their estates and pay over to the Parambachan one lakh of gold mohurs.

The Rajah consulted with his councillors and then replied, saying that he was determined upon the destruction of the Mosque. Again the Rajah said he would not touch a single leaf (the Mosque being thatched), so long as one of the defenders were alive and of whom there were 44 including the leader "Naraspathi Polker."

On the 3rd day, at 11 in the night the forces surrounding the Mosque began by setting fire to the roof by means of the fire tipped arrows and rockets. The brave defenders knew now they had no mercy to expect from their enemies, and accordingly eleven men including Polker decided to fight their way out. In this attempt these eleven men were killed including Polker, nine outright and two lingering till noon. There was then a cessation of hostilities for a time.

On the 5th day at about 3-30 p. m., the remaining thirty-three Moplahs quitted the Mosque in the hopes of getting clear away, fiercely fighting their way through the ranks of their enemy. They succeeded in getting as far as the present Detachment Football Ground, the site then, as now, going by the name of Kottappadi, a distance of three-quarters of a mile from the Mosque.

At this point they were all killed fighting to the last, with the exception of one, who died 8 days later as a result of his wounds.

Thus died the forty-four Moplahs giving up their lives in defence of faith, wives, and families. It is not therefore surprising that their memories are revered by the Moplahs of Malappuram, as in fact, throughout Malabar.

Whilst these heroes had been fighting the forces of the Rajah, other Moplahs had been busy with the enemy at various points in and round Malappuram. Whilst, however, the losses sustained by the Moplahs, many being untrained men and direct from the plough in a manner of speaking, were remarkably few, those of the Parambachan's and the Zamorin's were no less than 680 killed and wounded.

Sympathizing with the sad end of the brave defenders and particularly anxious to honor the bones of the 44 heroes, a rich Moplah acted the part of a "Joseph of Arimathea" and caused their bodies to be separated from the many dead, and gave them burial according to Moplah rites, in the grounds of the very Mosque, in the defence of which they had lost their lives.

The burial-place of these "Saints" is the place referred to as Poolakamm, and adjoins the Mosque in old Malappuram where their graves are still to be seen.

A few days after the events detailed above, a certain wealthy Moplah of Malappuram, named Ainnee Kurikal returning to the village after a long absence met a crowd of Hindus, who elated with the victory and inflamed with toddy, insulted him. An encounter ensued in which Ainnee met his death together with many of his attendants, but not before accounting for the lives of 137 Hindus. The body of the Moplah (Kurikal) was thrown down a well, after being stripped and submitted to various indignities.

Some Moplahs of an adjacent village traced out the corpse as directed in a dream, and the body was honoured by burial in the same spot as the 44 heroes, since it was considered he also had met his death in the same cause.

The Mosque now in existence, and used for public worship for the Moplahs at Malappuram, and neighbourhood, is the one built in 1737 on the ruins of that destroyed by the Hindus, three years after the events narrated.

In bringing this history to a conclusion, it becomes necessary to point out that the events detailed above, far from exterminating the Moplahs had the contrary effect, for it taught other Moplahs what unity could do with the result that they became more closely united than before. Their example brought many converts, resulting in a vast increase throughout Malabar.

The Parambachan, it is said, afterwards underwent a great change towards these people. This change of attitude was probably brought about, more from policy than anything else, for the Moplahs had so increased in numbers that it was this knowledge of their strength, which brought about a change carrying with it good results.

Although the events occurred 172 years ago, the bitterness of the Moplah is none the less acute, and upon more than one occasion the troops stationed at Malappuram and Calicut, and even so far away as Cannanore, during various periods have been called out to assist in quelling disturbances, so far back as 1843 and so late as 1897, when a number of Moplahs took possession of the Hindu Temple at Trikalur near Manjeri, on which occasion the troops of this Detachment were requisitioned to put down the trouble which was only effected at loss of life to the troops, but with very heavy loss of life to the rebels.

In this history of the origin of the feast which has never before been treated by European pen (the writer himself having been in India less than two years), I have endeavoured in this account of a people, of whom little appears to be known, to place before the readers of this volume, a statement of the disabilities under which the Moplahs of Malabar existed

up to the year of the massacre (for it was nothing less) of these heroes or "Saints."

Why, one may ask, were these people oppressed over and above other castes? The answer is very simple. It was for the reason that being the followers of a new religion—in this particular District, at any rate—a religion opposed to Hinduism which had long been in the ascendant, and for no other reason.

The same kind of religious intolerance has existed in the West—does in fact exist to-day, but in a less severe form. One cannot therefore wonder that in a country such as India every effort was made to suppress this new religion, as were put forth in the attempt to eradicate Moplahism, but which nevertheless failed, for their numbers have grown immensely, so that they have become a power throughout Malabar.

The oppression, to which they were subjected from time to time, coupled with the attack on their village and the destruction of their Mosque and lastly the death of the "Saints," whose bones are annually honored on the occasion of the "Naarcha," has left a feeling of bitterness which is, notwithstanding the lapse of years, very intense throughout not only Malabar but other parts of India, and no opportunity is ever lost of showing their hatred of the Hindus, particularly in Malappuram where the events I have narrated actually took place. There is no likelihood of there ever being amicable relations between these two castes in South Malabar.

During that part of the year most remote from this feast, a fairly tolerant spirit does, however, exist between those having commercial relations with each other, but on the approach of the "feast" a coolness becomes apparent, strange as it may seem, even between persons doing business with each other. On the actual occasion of the festivities the Moplah is *malgre lui* Moplah, and at such times takes no pains to hide his dislike for anything Hindu, and brought to a stage of 'religious frenzy' called "*Hal Ilakkam*" has been known to run *amok*. Fortunately, such cases are very rare. Another thing, which is very noticeable at Malappuram, is that the Hindus who are not very numerous have, upon the two occasions I have seen this feast, exercised the very wise discretion of keeping indoors as much as possible, thereby giving little or no cause for feeding the Moplah prejudices. This is a course advised by the Civil Authorities, and upon which the Hindu inhabitants wisely act.

In drawing to a conclusion, I must ask my comrades and other readers to overlook the length of my history of the "Naarcha." I was asked by several friends to give an account of its origin. My promise has been redeemed,

though the work of carrying out that promise has been no light one.

Fortunately, the task I set myself to do enlisted the sympathy of several educated natives, one of whom as indicated at the beginning, placed at my service records taken at the time, *viz.*, in 1734, and kept amongst the documents preserved in the Mosque, and for which I must consider myself especially favoured.\* Beyond dates and a mere outline of events I had little data upon which to work, and have been obliged, here and there, to take a little liberty with the subject, but no more than was consistent with truth. If the "History of the Naarcha" has proved of interest to my comrades and others, then, I am more than compensated for the trouble involved in describing what actually occurred to a people amongst whom I lived, in the small but interesting village of Malappuram and where others are at present serving as soldiers on Detachment.

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[ \* My application for information to the Mosque authorities when explained to the *Tungat* (Moplah High Priest) met with that gentleman's approval, and he permitted me to be supplied with a copy of dates, etc., of the events mentioned at various parts of my history. This was, indeed, not only a great privilege, but an honor and compliment which I appreciate at its real worth. V. I. R. ]



## CHAPTER IV.

*An account of Moplah risings affecting Malappuram as a Military Station, from 1840 to the end of the Century, compiled from various sources.*

*Also an explanation of the Hal-Illakam or religious frenzy peculiar to the Moplah Caste.*

### PART I.

THIS caste seems to have directed its efforts on every available opportunity against the Hindus themselves, their property, or in a repeated attack on and in defiling of temples when the Hal-Illakam frenzy seized him.

It would appear that the Moplahs at times were very much in the position of the Irishman who occasionally became "blue mouldy for a fight." Apart from the peculiar side, it seems he must have some one on whom to vent his ill-humour. When a Hindu was not convenient, a visit was paid to the nearest temple, by the Moplahs in a body, defilement invariably ensuing.

Surely, one might ask, there must be some reason for this kind of thing going on from time to time; some reason to be assigned for this bitterness. The reason given was the death of the 44 Moplahs in 1732 coupled with both anterior and later oppression during the time that Hinduism was the ruling caste in that part of Malabar.

It is, however, most noticeable throughout the series of events, which took place during the period mentioned above, that there is nothing to show that the Hindu was at any time the aggressor, but was in each and every instance the first to suffer at the hands of his enemy, and it is the fact of the troops in this station protecting the Hindu and his property that has brought the Military, both Native and British, in contact with the Moplahs of this neighbourhood.

Among the last-named caste there existed (probably a few are even now to be found in the locality), a certain branch of Moplahs called the Hal-Illakam Sect, fanatics pure and simple, but who might be better described by the word 'agitators.' It is this particular brand of Moplahs that have been responsible for most of these breaches of the peace occurring from 1840 to 1896.

An account of this sect was written by a Native Subordinate so far back as 1843 as to the prevalence of the Hal-Illakam frenzy amongst the Moplahs in various villages adjoining Malappuram. The report says "Originally there was no Hal-Illakam." One can easily imagine a party of natives working themselves into a state of religious excitement with the aid of a few native instruments and notably the tom-tom !

They are few men in the Detachment at the present time who have not listened to its beat increasing to a rapidity which is simply astounding. Heard even at a long distance it produces a feeling the reverse to pleasant, and there is even something uncanny about the sound, that cannot reconcile itself to the senses of the average Englishman. Once heard, the sound is not easily forgotten. Even the lapse of years cannot totally eradicate the sound which is weird and one can imagine exciting to the native untutored mind.

Commencing slow, the tom-tom accompanied by the voices gradually gains speed, until it assumes what might be described as little less than a blur. One can likewise hear a voice chop in here and there when suddenly the noise ceases after proceeding with great rapidity for a time. Although not actually on the scene, one feels that one or more has dropped from sheer exhaustion.

One may be sceptical as to such a rude or primitive form of music producing such a state of feeling. This is not surprising on deeper consideration. The vibratory senses of the native are not so delicately strung as an Englishman's.

Fortunately, the numbers practising it must be very small, and education is doing much to remove this remnant of a barbaric practice, but habits which have been practised through many generations are difficult to remove. Still, even if the change is being effected slowly, it is something.

Sufficient has now been written to show the more immediate cause of this spasmodic outburst of fanaticism and the method employed to bring it about. The educated or more enlightened Moplah strongly deprecates the practice and will have none of it. One can safely predict that the practice will eventually, as the song says, "Fade away and gradually die."

From this point events recorded by various writers will be given in the succeeding issues of the Journal, so that our Readers may have a true account of various episodes in the history of the station, and which has on several occasions in past years required the assistance of European troops from such stations as Calicut and Cannanore in quelling what might have proved serious risings, but for the most drastic measures on the part of the Military authorities.

"The man who first had the Ilal-Ilakam" in the Punja fields is called by the Moplahs "Punja Tangal."

On the 4th December 1843, a Nayar labourer was found dead with 10 deep wounds on his body, and "his murderer was believed to be the work of the Ilal-Ilakam sect."

On the 11th December 1843, Anavattatt Suleman and nine others killed one Karakanna Govinda Mussat, the Athikari at Pandikkad in the Wallavanad Taluk, and a servant of his whilst bathing. They afterwards defiled two temples, broke the images therein, and took post in a house. A Detachment, Lieutenant Lynch, 1 Subadar, 1 Jemadar, 3 Havildars, 3 Naicks, 1 Drummer, and 30 Sepoys of the 19th Regiment, Native Infantry, was sent out, but the Officer Commanding deemed his force insufficient and consequently fell back a short distance. Two Companies consisting of 2 Lieutenants, 2 Subadars, 2 Jemadars, 11 Havildars, 8 Naicks, 3 Drummers, 148 Privates, 2 Puckallis and 4 Lascars of the same Regiment, under the command of Major Osborne, marched from Palghat on the 17th, and on the 19th the Moplahs without waiting to be attacked, rushed at the troops directly they appeared, and were shot, but not without loss of life, as one Naick of the force was killed.

In his report, dated 19th December 1843, Major Osborne says: "I moved the Detachment at 10-30, in the direction of the house occupied by the murderers accompanied by H. D. Cook, Esq., 2 Tahsildars and peons. Immediately after filing through the paddy field, the murderers rushed upon the column, and in a few minutes were shot, ten in number."

On this occasion the fanatics were in an open plain without shelter and charged deliberately 10 men into the midst of over 200.

On the 20th May, 1849, Chakalakkal Kammad wounded one Kannancheri Chiru and another and took post in a Mosque, when the Ernad Tahsildar, (a Pathan) proceeded toward the Mosque in the hope of inducing the murderer to surrender himself. He rushed forward with a knife, and a peon put an end to the fanatic, the same day.

On the 25th August, 1849, Torrangal Uniyar killed one Padditoddi Teyyuni, and with 4 others joined one Attan Gurrikal, descendant of the Gurrikal who gave so much trouble in the early days of the British Administration. He was a worthless fellow who preferred a life of idleness and *shikar*, varied by occasional dacoities, to any other kind of pursuit. He had gathered round him a considerable body of men of the same way of thinking as himself, but among them were two at least of a respectable family who had been reduced to poverty "by suit and otherwise in their early life." They with others on the following day killed the servant of one



Marat Nambutri and two others, and took post in the Hindu Temple overlooking Manjeri, the head-quarters of the Elnad Taluk in which is Malappuram. They defiled the temple and the part round it. Captain Watt, with a Detachment of the 43rd Regiment, Native Infantry, proceeded from Malappuram to Manjeri, and on the 28th, formed a plan for attacking the temple. Ensign Wapse and his Company were sent across the paddy-field separating the Taluk Cutcherry hill from the temple hill to attack the rebels, then only 32 in number, and who were drawn from their position in the temple by parties of police and villagers who had been sent forward to fire at them.

The rest of the Malappuram Detachment was held in reserve on the Cutcherry hill, Mr. Collett, the Assistant Magistrate, being with them. Ensign Wapse's party with the exception of four men, who were killed, refused to advance to receive the charge of only a few of the fanatics, who came down hill at them, and notwithstanding the gallant example set by the Ensign himself in killing the first man who charged, the party of Native soldiers broke and fled, after some ineffectual firing.

Mr. Collett's report, dated 28th August 1849, says:—  
 "Others now came down upon Ensign Wapse, and I am informed that one of them seized him by the jacket and he received a wound, when he appeared to have fallen and was of course quickly put to death, but by this time three of the insurgents had fallen, and now those men of the Detachment, who alone had emulated their officer, fell, one of them having first bayoneted the man who gave Lieutenant Wapse his death wound."

The party held in reserve on Cutcherry hill, on witnessing this disaster, fled, although the fanatics were at a considerable distance, on the far side of the paddy flat lying at the bottom of the hill on which the reserve was posted. Only one of the insurgents crossed this paddy flat, and he was killed by a police Kolkar.

A Detachment of His Majesty's 94th Regiment from Cannanore, composed of 3 Officers, 6 Sergeants, 5 Corporals, 2 Drummers and 194 Privates under Major Dennis, reached Manjeri on the 3rd September and also a Detachment of the 29th Regiment, Native Infantry, from Palghat, comprising 2 European Officers, 2 Native Officers, 3 Naicks, 2 buglers and 132 Privates. The insurgents whose ranks had been largely recruited in the interval, evacuated the temple during the night, after the arrival of the reinforcements, and proceeded a distance of about 2 miles to the Bhagavati Kavu temple near Angadipuram, the head-quarters of the Wallavanad Taluk. Thither next day they were followed by the troops, who,

in spite of their forced march in Monsoon weather from Cannanore to Calicut, of being cooped up wet and without regular food, in cramped positions in the boats, in which in still more boisterous weather they were conveyed from Calicut to Arikod, and of the heavy march of the two preceding days, showed utmost eagerness to close with the enemy. At 5 p.m. on the 4th September the encounter took place at the 41st milestone from Calicut, on the great western road (No. 6), and in the open ground (now enclosed), to the south of the road at that point. On receiving intelligence that the insurgents, now 64 in number, were coming to the attack Major Dennis drew his men up in column of section (*vide* his report of 5th September 1849) "right in front, so as to occupy the whole road, when the enemy came on with most desperate courage, throwing themselves on the bayonets. After firing their matchlocks they took to their war-knives, swords and spears, and when struck down to the ground, renewed the fight even on their knees, by hurling their weapons at the faces of our men, and which they continued, till, literally, cut to pieces; others planted on the trees, kept up a most destructive fire with their matchlocks loaded with iron slugs. This attack was made by the enemy in three divisions, about 300 yards apart, the second led on in person by Atton Gurikkal (Coyah or Priest) who fought with the most desperate courage, but I am happy to say that through the steadiness, correct and low firing of the men, our loss has not been so considerable as might have been expected from the desperate onset of these mad fanatics; and in the space of half-an-hour, the enemy was completely annihilated, leaving 64 dead, their bodies lying near to each other, exhibiting most dreadful wounds, some having received four or five musket balls, besides bayonets stabs, before they could be stayed from carrying on their determined work of destruction into our ranks."

The District Magistrate's Report of 12th October 1849 says: "The power of their fanaticism was astounding. One of the men had had his thigh broken in the engagement in which Lieutenant Wapse was killed. He had remained in all the agony attendant on an unhealed and unattended wound of this nature for seven days; he had been further tortured by being carried in a rough litter from the Manjeri to Angadipuram pagoda. Yet, there he was at the time of the fight hopping on his sound leg to the encounter and only anxious to get a fair blow at the infidels before he died."

"The casualties in the Detachments were trifling when the numbers and the determination is considered. Two Privates of the 94th Regiment were killed and 3 others and a Sergeant wounded; one officer received a deep flesh wound.

Major Dennis had a wonderful escape from a bullet which grazed his wrist.

A sepoy of the 39th Regiment was likewise severely wounded. On searching afterwards, one of the insurgents, a lad of 17 or 18 years, was found to be alive. He lived for some time and told what he knew about the outages.

The bodies of the slain insurgents were thrown into a dry well in the garden lying to the south of the Wallavanad Taluk Cutcherry at Perintalmanna.

On the 2nd October, 1850, information was received that the sons of one Periambeth Attan, the Mappila Adikhari at Puliakod Amson, in the Ernad Taluk (in which is Malappuram) had with others concerted to kill one Mungamdamballatt Narayana Mussat and to devote themselves in death to arms. Security was required of nine individuals on this account.

On the 5th January, 1851, Choondyamoochikal Attan attacked and wounded severely a Government Native Clerk, named Raman Menon, who had been employed in inspecting gingelly-oilseed (*ellu*) cultivation in Payanad, Ernad Taluk, in conjunction with the Village Accountant in view to settling the Government share, and he then shut himself up in the Inspector's house, setting the police at defiance. No persuasion could induce him to surrender himself. He declared he was determined to die a martyr. The Tahsildar (a Moplah) tried to induce him to give himself up, but he utterly refused to do so. Finally rushing out, and firing at the opposing party, he was shot dead. The reason assigned by the criminal for attacking the Inspector was that his wife's gingelly oil crop has been over-assessed.

On the 17th January 1851, three Moplahs were reported as contemplating an assault, and security was taken from them.

On the 20th August 1851, six Moplahs killed one Katuparambat Komu Menon and his servant on the high road between Manjeri and Malappuram, as they were returning home from the Mankada Kovilakam of the Wallavanad Raja. They were joined by three others. With these they proceeded towards Komu Menon's house, but finding a brother of Komu Menon's ready to meet them with a gun and a war-knife, they left the place and went to the house of Ittuni Rama Menon, a brother of Komu Menon, another brother who was then bathing in a tank close by. They killed Kadakathil Nambudri, who was seated in the porch of the house, the family of Rama Menon escaping in the tumult. The murderers then overtook Rama Menon, who had endeavoured to escape and cut him down. Setting fire to the house, they marched towards the house of one Mundayangara Rarichan Nair, whom they wounded severely, who subsequently died of his wounds.



They then set fire to the house of one Chengara Variyer. On the morning of the 23rd they were seen in the Korava Amson, about 8 miles distant from Ittuni Rama's house. Thence they proceeded to the house of Kollatur Variyer, an influential *janni* who had opposed the erection of a mosque. They were in the meantime joined by five others. On their arrival the attendants and family escaped; and the women and children were told by the fanatics to go away. They next killed two servants of the Variyers, two of the junior Variyers escaped, but the old Variyer, a man of 79, probably shut himself up in a room where the fanatics eventually discovered him. The Hindus sent for the Moplahs' chief men of the place and others. About 50 persons appeared, two of whom joined the insurgents, calling out, "the chief pig is inside." "The old Variyer was then brought out into the paddy-field adjoining his house, to a distance of sixty yards from the gate house, and one Pupatta Kuttiaten and another, in the sight of all the people assembled, hacked him to pieces, severing his head from his body. As soon as Mr. Collett, the Divisional Magistrate, heard of their having taken up a position at Kollatur, he sent a requisition to Major Wilkinson, the Officer Commanding the 39th Regiment at Malappuram, who, in complying with the request, wrote to Mr. Conolly on the 24th as follows:—

"I despatched a party, under the command of Ensign Turner, of 65 rank and file with the proper complement of native commissioned and non-commissioned officers.

"My reason for sending the party under the command of Ensign Turner was, that Mr. Collett had informed me, when at my house very early yesterday morning, that he had written expressly for the European troops stationed at Calicut."

In his two letters to the Government of the 25th August 1851, Mr. Conolly thus describes the operations of the Malappuram Detachments:—

"The troops advanced by a muddy road towards the house" in which the insurgents were "and attacked them abreast along a causeway leading to the house through paddy-fields. After some firing, nine of the Moplahs came out from the house, and advanced to meet the sepoys on the causeway. The leading sepoys were seized with a panic, which communicated itself to those in the rear, and a general retreat ensued. The Moplahs pursued the fugitives and cut down (killed) three—a Naick, a Sepoy, and a Drummer. They then picked up some of the muskets which had been thrown away by some of the sepoys in their haste to escape, and returned to their house. One or two of the party are supposed to have been badly wounded by the first firing.



The scattered sepoy rallied after some time and have been posted in a house about a mile from where the Moplahs are."

This was (to use Mr. Collett's words) "a complete disaster." The European Detachment arrived from Calicut on the 27th under the command of Captain Rhodes [1 Captain, 1 Lieutenant, 2 Sergeants, 2 Corporals, 2 Drummers, 47 Privates and 2 Puckallies of H. M.'s 94th Regiment].

They "were so lagged out with their marches and so exhausted and footsore" that they were not able to act with sufficient steadiness against the fanatics, whose ranks had been, in spite of a close watch by villagers and Police, joined by three others, and who now numbered seventeen.

## PART II.

THE previous number tells of the troops being very much fatigued after their march, which is not surprising for a report says: "They had marched a good forty miles in two days, over a very hilly, stony and wild district", the route being by Beypore, Tirurangadi, Venkatakotta, and Chappanangadi to Kollatur.

"The fanatics showed a disposition to attack directly they arrived near their stronghold, and Captain Rhodes had not time to rest and recruit his men. The attack was thus sketched by Mr. Conolly:—

"The Europeans were in advance and the Sepoys in rear. The Europeans fired at the fanatics, who had the partial cover of a bank, till they were too tired to load, the fanatics then advanced and charged them, and the soldiers retreated in order (the charges were made under cover of the smoke of firing, which had lasted a quarter of an hour or more, the Detachment being drawn up in quarter column, and some of the fanatics, passing round the flanks under cover of the smoke, attacked the rear, whilst others attacked the front of the column). The Sepoys in the rear seeing this, of course retreated also, and the confusion was very great, until the Officers by dint of exhortation, managed to rally their men. It was now that the Sepoys, whose guns were loaded, did the good service I spoke of."

"Eleven of the fanatics were shot by a party of the 39th Regiment, who ran down to meet them from the house held

by the Sepoys about a mile from the Variyer's house.' The report proceeds. They brought down some of the leading pursuers, and thus enabled the Europeans to halt and reload. Their confidence was at once restored, and they moved forward again with the sepoys in expectation of meeting their enemies. They were all in good order when I joined them in the house from which the fanatics had come out. That the check was a very unhappy one cannot be denied, but it was satisfactory that it was so soon rectified. In the previous attack by the detachment of the 39th Regiment, the route was complete, and there was no rallying until the Mappillas had retired into their stronghold."

In this second engagement on August 27th, 4 European Privates and 1 Native Subadar were killed.

The result of the action, so far as the Moplahs were concerned, may be thus summarised. Of the 19 fanatics who were concerned in these outrages, it seems that 9 were engaged in the first four murders on the 22nd, one joined them immediately afterwards, and 4 more during the night and next morning, 14 thus attacked the Variyer's house, where 9 more immediately joined them. Of these 16 men, one was killed in the affair of the 24th August, and another, mortally wounded, died on that night, 3 more subsequently joined the band, making 17 who fell on the 27th August.

On the 3rd October 1851 information was received that Tothangad Mummud and three other Moplahs of Nenmini Amsom (village), Wallavanad (district), were found in possession of certain arms and were designing to commit an outrage. The District Magistrate's report of the 18th October 1851 says: "They had intended to join the fanatics who perished at Kollatur, but were too late. Their purpose, it was said, had been known to some of their co-religionists and they were subject to the contemptuous soubriquet of *Minjina Sahids* (all but saints). There was but too much reason to fear therefore from previous experience that they would take an opportunity of wiping off the reproach by organizing an outbreak on their own account." Security to keep the peace was required of three of them.

On the 27th October 1851 information reached the Head Police Officer in Ernad that some Moplahs of Trimboli Amsom, Ernad Taluk, had likewise intended to join the late fanatical outbreak at Kollatur. Two of them were likewise required to give security to keep the peace.

On the 9th November 1851 information was received that Choriyo Mayan and eight others were designing to break out and kill one Kolottal Kesavan Tangal, a wealthy and influential Hindu jenmi of Mottanur in Kottayam Taluk. Evidence was lacking and the Tahsildar omitted to report

the matter. The individual in question did, however, with the others, subsequently commit the outrages next to be described.

On the night of the 4th January 1852, the party named above, and six others, making in all fifteen, supported by a large mob estimated at 200, proceeded to the house of the aforesaid Kolottil Tangal in Mottanur, Kottayam Taluk. They butchered all the unhappy inmates (eighteen in all) and thus extirpated the family, wounded two other persons and burnt the house on the following morning. They then, unattended by the said mob, burnt four houses and a Hindu temple, killed four more individuals, defiled and damaged another Hindu temple, entered the palace of a Raja, took post there temporarily, defiled and then destroyed two more Hindu temples, and finally fell on the 8th idem in a desperate and long-sustained attack on the house of the Kalliad Nambiar, another wealthy and influential *jenmi* in Kalliad Amsom of Chirakkal Taluk. A Detachment under Major Hodgson of the 16th Regiment, consisting of two companies of that Corps, were sent out from Cannanore, but before they arrived on the scene, the Moplah fanatics had been all killed by the country people, retainers of the Nambiar.

On the night of the 28th February 1852, one Triyakalathil Chakku and fifteen other Moplahs of Melmuri and Kil-muri Amsoms, in the Ernad Taluk, "set out to die and to create a fanatical outbreak." Information of this was given to the principal Moplahs of the former Amsom at about 10 o'clock that night. They and their adherents remained on guard during the whole of the night at the house of Pilatodi Panchu Menon and Permikod Pisharadi, the principal Hindu *jenmis* in the Amsom, and respecting the former of whom there was on several occasions rumours that Moplah fanatics were seeking to kill him. On the morning of Sunday, the 29th, Panchu Menon hastened into Malappuram, having been alarmed by seeing some Moplahs moving on the hill at the back of the house. He applied for protection to the Officer Commanding Malappuram, who, deeming the danger of an attack on Panchu Menon's house imminent, proceeded with a portion of his troops to the house, where they remained for a few hours. He then left a guard of twenty-five sepoy, who were withdrawn at night, a guard of villagers being substituted.

On the afternoon of the 1st March, the suspected persons were secured in a mosque through the exertions of a wealthy, and influential Moplah, named Kunny Ali. The case was inquired into by Mr. Collett, the Assistant Magistrate, Malappuram, and the offenders were required to furnish security to keep the peace.

Ominous rumours of an intended Moplah outbreak in the Kottayam Taluk in April 1852 drove many of the Hindu inhabitants into the jungles.

A report to Government about this time speaking of the Moplah outrages says: "The Hindus, in the parts where outbreaks have been most frequent, stand in much fear of the Moplahs as mostly not to dare to press for their rights against them, and therefore many a Moplah tenant who does not pay rent (so imminent are the risks) cannot be evicted. Other injuries are also put up with uncomplained of."

Continuing, the report goes on to say: "To what further lengths the evil might not go if unchecked, it is impossible to say. Even the desire for plunder on the part of the Moplahs may prove a sufficient motive for the organization of these outbreaks, some having already profited largely in this way."

In the Kollatur case in August 1851, the leading Moplahs had even asserted "that it was a religious merit to kill landlords who might eject tenants."

The condition of the Hindus had "become most lamentable," and even the prestige of the rule of Government had been "much shaken in the district."

Special legislation was necessary towards the following objects, *viz.*—

Escheating the property of those guilty of fanatic outrage.

Fining the district where such outrages occur. Reporting the suspected, and placing restrictions on the possession of arms, and more especially of the war-knife and the building of mosques.

### PART III.

*An account of Moplah disturbances affecting Malappuram from 1840 to 1900, compiled from various sources.*

In December 1854 Mr. Conolly, the District Magistrate and Provisional Member of Council, proceeded on a tour through the heart of the Mappila country, brought in 2,725 war-knives, and by 31st of the following month of January 1855 (the latest date on which the possession of a war-knife



was legal) the number of war-knives surrendered to the authorities amounted to the large number of 7,561.

The next report in connection with these Moplah outrages conveyed to the Government the distressing intelligence that Mr. Conolly, District Magistrate and Provisional Member of Council for the Presidency (Mr. Conolly was shortly to have proceeded to the Presidency Town as Member of the Council of Government), had been barbarously murdered by a gang of Moplahs at his residence at West Hill, Calicut.

What followed is thus described by Mr. Collett, the Sub-Collector, in one of his official reports, dated 21st September 1855:—"Nothing could have exceeded the treachery with which the murder was begun, or the brutal butchery with which it was completed. Mr. Conolly was seated in a small verandah on a low sofa. Mrs. Conolly was on one opposite, a low table with lights on it being between them. He was approached from behind, for even Mrs. Conolly did not catch sight of the first blow, which would alone have proved fatal; the next moment the lights were all swept off the table and the ruffians bounded upon their victim, slashing him in all directions; the left hand was nearly severed, the right knee deeply cut, and repeated stabs inflicted in the back. The wounds (27 in number) could have been inflicted only by fiends actuated by the most dreadful malice. To the cries of poor Mrs. Conolly no one came; the peons and servants are usually present in a passage beyond the inner room; they were either panic-stricken, or, unarmed (as they invariably were) were unable to come up in time to afford any real assistance. One poor massalji, who came forward and met one of the murderers in the inner room, received a blow which cut clean off four fingers of his left hand. A peon also had a slight wound, but it does not appear how he came by it. Doubtless this atrocity was rapidly completed, and perhaps the first thoughts of those servants who came up was to carry off their mistress to another part of the house. Mr. Conolly was soon after carried in, and Mr. Todd was the first to arrive to witness the terrible scene of domestic agony that ensued. Supported by Mr. Todd, Mr. Conolly lingered another half hour, and then expired, having addressed a few words only to Mrs. Conolly, and apparently endured intense agony. Mr. Conolly had received an anonymous letter warning him, but unfortunately thought it needless to take precautions, and had not even mentioned it to Mrs. Conolly.

Immediately after the murder the criminals proceeded along the high road to Tamarasseri to a village near Keravil, about 12 miles from Mr. Conolly's house, where (it appears) they went to the mosque. About 4 P.M., on the 12th, they

went to the Makat Nambutiri's illam, and remained there till about 9 P.M. They took away money and property to the amount of Rs. 300. Then they struck back to the main road to Tamarasseri, and came to the house of one Pullkutti Moyi. At night they went to the Bhaval Mosque, where they remained till the following night (13th).

On the 14th they purchased provisions at the bazaar. On the 15th they moved to the Tiruvambadi Amson (village) of the Calicut Taluk (District). On the 16th they met a village peon, and wrested his musket from him. They compelled one Chapali Poker to act as their guide. He led them to Eddamannapara, which they reached at 4 P.M. on the 17th. They had not gone far from this place when they were seen, and, being followed up by the people of Kōndotti (another sect of Moplahs), were driven at length to take refuge in the house where they were shot the same evening by a Detachment of Major Haly's Police Corps, and a part of No. 5 Company of H. M.'s 74th Highlanders under Captain Davies.

A report by Mr. Collett, dated 17th September 1855, from Marar, eight miles north-west of Manjeri, says : " The position of the Moplahs was a most difficult one consisting of gardens surrounded by ditches. After some practice with the mortar and howitzer, the troops charged into the gardens, and after turning the Moplahs out of the house, the offenders retreated to a stronger one, which they barricaded, the outer door of this garden was on the edge of a deep nullah ; this door was first forced, and the troops were in the act of firing the house when the Moplahs threw open the door and rushed out upon the troops, and were of course quickly disposed of. It was quite impossible, I consider, to have secured them alive, though injunctions had been given to do so if possible. The men of the new police corps emulated the Europeans in their steadiness, and were equally to the front at the last charge. I have though with great regret to report that one European was killed by a shot from the house, and another very dangerously wounded by a cut on the throat whilst one of the Moplahs was on his bayonet." Two Hindus were also killed, one accidentally shot and the other murdered by the Moplahs when they took possession of the house."

Various causes were suggested at the time as to the motive for the murder of Mr. Conolly, but the most probable of them seems to be that the ruffians who were men of bad character, were exasperated at the orders of Mr. Conolly subjecting them to restraint in the jail, and they had revolved, probably at the suggestion of some outsiders, on avenging the banishment of Saiyid Tazi to Arabia. [This Saiyid Tazi, who was Tangal or Moplah high priest at Tirurangalli, was

known to have fostered discontent among his flock, so that his expatriation became necessary. He was of Arab extraction and was otherwise known as Pukoya. Pu (Malayalam = flower), and Koya (? corrupt form of Khwaja = influential person, gentleman). The Moplahs regarded him as imbued with a portion of divinity. They swore by his foot as their most solemn oath. Earth on which he spat and walked was treasured up. His blessing was supremely prized, and even among the higher class of Moplahs his wish was regarded as a command, and no consideration of economy was allowed to stand in the way of its being gratified. On the very day (17th February) that the Government appointed Mr. Strange as Special Commissioner, Mr. Conolly reported that 10,000 to 12,000 Moplahs '*greater number of whom were armed*' met at Tirurangadi and held close conclave with the Tangal on rumours being spread that he was at once to be made a prisoner and disgraced.]

The following Ansoms (villages) implicated in the outrage, were fined in the sums noted against each :—

		Rs.	A.	P.
Nenmini, Wallavanad Taluk	...	1,857	8	0
Kariavattam do.	...	1,951	0	0
Kalpakancheri, Ponami do.	...	16,989	0	0
Kammanam, do.	...	1,869	0	0
Vadakkumpuram, do.	...	1,991	0	0
Talakad, do.	...	8,842	0	0
Kodavayur, Palghat do.	...	3,003	0	0
Kacheri, Calicut do.	...	1,371	0	0
Kedavur, do. do.	...	512	0	0
TOTAL		38,331	8	0

The widow of Mr. Conolly was granted the net proceeds of the Moplah fines aggregating Rupees 30,936-13-10.

In November 1855 Mr. Collett, Joint Magistrate, suspecting two Moplahs who had deserted from the Malabar Police Corps, confined them on failure to find security for three years. They afterwards left the country.

A Mahomedan, named Vanji Cudorat Kunji Mayan, was arrested on 3rd September 1857, on a charge of using seditious language in the public streets and of invoking the people in the name of God to rid the country of the *Kafirs* (Europeans). The country then was in a very disaffected state, owing to the scarcity of rice and the outbreak of the Mutiny.

The excitement caused by Mayan's preaching was so great as to induce the Brigadier Commanding the Provinces to



adopt precautionary measures also at Cannanore and Tellicherry, and to place the former station in a state of defence?

It was decided that the case of Mayan should be dealt with without the intervention of the Mahomedan Sadr Amin (native criminal judge). He was eventually sent to Calicut for disposal, and subsequently died in jail at Trichinopoly.

A state of unrest existed throughout the whole of Malabar for a number of years. The troops of Malappuram, both British and Native, were always prepared at a moment's notice to turn out.

Shortly after midnight of 7th September 1873, Kunhippa Musaliyar, the priest of the Tutakkal Mosque in Paral Amson of Wallavanad Taluk (this Taluk or District adjoins the Ernad Taluk in which Malappuram is), with eight others, visited the house of one Chattara Nayar, the *Vellichchapad* or oracle of the Hindu temple at Tutakkal, which lies directly opposite to the mosque on the other or southern bank of the river. The *Vellichchapad* in one of his fits of inspiration had given offence to the Moplahs of the mosque opposite. The party on arrival at his house, roused him up on the pretence that one of their number had been bitten on the foot by a snake. As the *Vellichchapad* (oracle) stooped down to examine the limb, the leader of the gang struck him several severe blows across the back of the neck, and the party then went away leaving him for dead.

From the *Vellichchapad's* house they proceeded to, and reached in the early morning, Kollatur, the scene of the memorable outrage (already detailed) of 22nd and 27th August 1851, a distance of twelve miles, expecting to find the Varier (the head of the family and member of the District Board) at home. But he chanced (luckily) to be absent. Two other male members of the family, however, were at the house, and one of these was delayed downstairs by the leader of the gang, and was immediately attacked and mortally wounded. The other man managed to escape.

Hearing from Paral in the early morning that the gang had started for Kollatur, the Taluk Tahsildar, a Moplah, sent to Malappuram a requisition for troops, and Mr. Winterbotham, the Head-Assistant Magistrate, who chanced to be in the Taluk (District) at the time, also heard of the outbreak whilst riding from Manarghat to Angadipuram and pushed on to Kollatur, which he reached at 4 P.M.

Mr. Winterbotham had time to reconnoitre the buildings held by the fanatics before the troops (1 Lieutenant, 1 Surgeon, 2 Sergeants, 1 Corporal, 1 Bugler, and 31 Privates of the 43rd or Oxfordshire Light Infantry under Captain Vesey) from Malappuram arrived at about one hour before dark. This enabled Captain Vesey to make his dispositions for attacking the fanatics at once.



## PART IV.

The right half company under Lieutenant Williamson passed through the temple attached to the Variyer's house and took up a position in the level courtyard of the house flanking the left half company, which, under Captain Vesey, occupied the interior verandah of a raised gate-house.

As soon as these dispositions had been completed and just as the day was closing in, the fanatics attacked the gate-house party. They were armed with swords, spears, a knife, and axe, and a chopper, and notwithstanding the cross-fire from both parties of military, charged home on the bayonets. The leader of the gang, a man of great determination, "received two bullets in the chest, if not more, wounded first a front rank man, and then a rear rank man, receiving first the bayonet thrust of each and was then killed by a third bayonet thrust." "Another man was also wounded at the same spot." Of the nine fanatics eight were killed, and one, "a mere child," was wounded and afterwards recovered.

The Amsons (parishes) concerned in this outrage were fined Rs. 42,000, and the proceeds were utilized in giving compensation to those aggrieved and in constructing two cart roads to open up the tract of country where the outrage occurred, and a police station at Kollatur.

We now pass on to the year 1884, to an event which more closely affects Malappuram as a military station than anything in the previous narratives.

A Hindu of the toddy-drawer caste, named Kannacheri Raman, who had several years previously embraced and subsequently renounced Islam, was proceeding by a river footpath from his house to work (as a section boy) at the *Malappuram Barracks* at about 6-30 in the morning on the 18th June 1884. He was there waylaid and attacked in a most savage manner by two Moplahs armed with hatchets, and was very severely wounded. He managed, however, to get free and fell into the river Kadalundi close by, whence he contrived to make his escape to the house of his brother, by whom he was taken to the Malappuram Station Hospital. He at once denounced Avarankutti and Koyamutti, two Moplahs, as the men who had wounded him, and stated that a third person, one Kunhi Mammad Mulla, was present and held him whilst the others attacked him. These men had intended to run the usual course (Hal Illakam), but their courage failed them at the last moment and they were in due course arrested, brought to trial, and, being convicted of attempt to commit murder, were sentenced to transportation for life.

Three other persons were afterwards reported in connection with this case and five others released with a warning. The Acting District Magistrate (Mr. Galton) proposed to fine the Kilmuri Amson (township) in the sum of Rs. 15,000, of which he proposed to assign the sum of Rs. 1,000 to K. Raman, the wounded man, as compensation for his wounds, and these proposals were in due time sanctioned by the Government.

It was, however, found necessary to reduce the fine to about Rs. 5,000 by reason of the poverty of the Moplah inhabitants.

The proposal to assign Rs. 1,000 of this sum to apostate K. Raman appears to have rankled in the minds of the Moplahs generally. These hold the perverted view that an apostate should suffer death, and viewed the idea of granting a reward to an apostate for his wounds as a covert attack on this cherished dogma of their religion. This and the fact that the pseudo *sahids* (martyrs) in this case had set out fully resolved to die as such, and had not had courage enough to adhere to their resolution, were viewed as slurs upon the faith of Islam and could only be washed out in blood.

Champions of the faith were required and these were found, not among the recreant inhabitants of Malappuram, but away in the north of the Taluk (district) among the wild timber-floating population, and who earn a precarious living amid hardships and dangers of no common sort.

And the following narrative sets forth how they fared in the self-imposed mission in defence of their "pearl-like faith."

At 4 A.M., on the 27th December 1884, Kallokkudan Kutti, Assan and eleven other Moplahs proceeded to the house of Kannancheri Choyikutti, the brother of the apostate K. Raman, mentioned in the preceding narrative, in search of the latter, who, fortunately for himself was absent. *The house is on the river bank within sight of the barracks of the European Infantry (occupied at present by the Detachment, "F" Company, 2nd Battalion, Clasheshire Regt.), Malappuram, and is situated less than half a mile away.* When Choyikutti, hearing a noise at his cowshed, opened the door to ascertain what it was, he was greeted by a volley from the firearms carried by the party. Two of the shots took effect on him and he fell badly wounded. His son, a small boy, was also wounded. The gang set fire to the thatched roof of the house and drove the women and children out of it. On leaving the house in flames they raised the Mussalman cry to prayers. The noise was distinctly heard in barracks, but no one paid any attention to it as firing guns was quite common in the vicinity.

After this exploit the gang formed up and marched right through the Malappuram bazaar passing within 20 yards of the police station, and continued on their course along the great western road (No. 6) for a distance of over eight miles, warning people whom they met to get off the road. A Brahmin who failed to comply with their request was mortally wounded by the leader of the gang with a bullet from a number 6 gauge single-barrel muzzle-loading elephant gun which he carried and received, besides a cut from a heavy knife behind the ear. Long before they left the road it was broad daylight and they sent sundry messages to Officer Commanding Malappuram and to the District Magistrate of what they had done.

On reaching the 21st mile 4th furlong, they diverged to the north into the wild hilly and jungly country stretching thence to the Beypore river; at the river they halted for a time to take food. After doing this, a party of seven of them proceeded straight across the river, which was at that part of the year fordable to the Hindu temple at Trikkalur, lying in the Urungattiri Anson at Iznad Taluk. They halted, for a short time only, at the Churot mosque, which lies about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from the temple on a large paddy flat.

The seven men broke into the temple and took possession of it raising the Mussalman's cry to prayer, and firing their guns out of the four windows of the upper-storeyed gate-house.

The above occurrences happened during the Christmas holidays, and both the Special Assistant Magistrate and the Assistant Superintendent of Police quartered at Malappuram were absent from the station. The Head Constable of Police, however, put himself, as soon as the particulars were ascertained, in communication with the Officer Commanding (Captain Curtis of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry) and the latter with a party of his men started in pursuit of the gang, which, however, having had a long start, was never overtaken, and the detachment returned the same afternoon to Malappuram.

The District Magistrate (Mr. W. Logan) and the Police Superintendent (Major Hole) were at Calicut when the news of the outrage arrived late in the afternoon of the same day. Hastily gathering as many as possible together of the Police Reserve under Inspector Sweeney, they marched in the afternoon and evening to Kondotti, and before midnight received authentic intelligence that the gang of fanatics had taken possession of the Hindu temple at Trikkalur.

Hearing that the gang had firearms, the District Magistrate sent from Arikod, which was reached in the early morning of the 28th, urgent requisitions to Malappuram and

Calcut for dynamite, as it was not at all improbable that the gang of fanatics meant to depart from the tactics of their predecessors and to fight from behind walls with firearms, instead of charging the troops in the open as had been the practice heretofore. After-events justified this anticipation.

The paddy-flat beneath the temple on the east was reached at 10-30 A.M., and the Moplah inhabitants of the locality were assembled and despatched to bring in the fanatics if possible. But in this they failed and only brought back a message to this effect from the fanatics: "K. Raman committed an offence worthy of death by becoming an apostate. You not only did not punish him for this offence, but you actually proposed to reward him with Rs. 1,000 for doing it. How could we let him live under the circumstances?" One of the members of the deputation had the hardihood to remain behind when the rest of the party retired from the temple, and joined the gang of fanatics. They now numbered twelve, the heart of one of the original party having failed him when the neighbourhood of the temple was reached the preceding afternoon.

The fanatics had burnt two houses in the neighbourhood in the morning as a warning to the people that they must be supplied with provisions. They had also caught and killed a cow for food which they found near the temple.

The first shot was fired by the fanatics shortly after the deputation of Moplahs retired from their interview with the gang.

About 2-30 P.M., a party of 28 men of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry, commanded by Lieut. Day and accompanied by Surgeon-Major Joseph Heath (the latter shortly afterwards killed by dacoits in Burma) reached the spot from Malappuram.

It was determined to attack the temple from the west, on which side the ground was open, whereas the direct route on the east side was not only steep, but, owing to the slippery nature of the ground, no musketry fire could be directed on the building until close range was reached, and even then there was no room for more than ten men in the first line of attack.

## PART V.

*Moplah outbreaks affecting Malappuram as a Military Station from 1840 to 1900.*

ON the west, the building, and in particular the upper-storeyed gate-house, in which it was believed the fanatics



meant to make their stand, could be seen for a distance of over half a mile. It was known that the fanatics had but one rifle in their possession, the one already described, the rest of their armament consisted of a double barrel muzzle loading percussion gun, about 14 bore, by Westley Richards, a smooth bore percussion musket, and two country guns, besides several heavy chopping knives, etc. The temple and in particular the upper-storeyed gate-house, occupied a most commanding position except on the east, where the view was obscured by trees.

As Lieutenant Day's party came in sight at a distance of about 500 yards, the fanatics opened fire from the gate-house with their rifle, throwing conical bullets of over three ounces; which, from their ragged shape and high velocity, due to excessive charges of English sporting gunpowder, flew over the heads of the Detachment with a scream like that of a small cannon ball.

The Light Infantry assumed the attack formation, advancing by rushes of a few yards, and having the police in reserve behind them. No casualties occurred until the military and police had both entered the spacious outer temple square through the ruined western gate. Here they found themselves, with massive wooden bolted doors, stone walls, and thick-tiled roofs separating them from their enemies, who held the spacious inner square and the upper-storeyed eastern gate-house.

But the walls which sheltered the Moplahs also afforded shelter to the military and police, for the fanatics not expecting the attack from the western side, had only partially loop-holed it.

As Lieutenant Day was reconnoitring the building he received what at the time appeared to be a fatal wound from a bullet at the southern door of the inner square and had to retire. And the fanatics began to come down from the upper floor to the inner square and to make loopholes in the roof for shots at close range. Axes were procured, but it was found to be an impossible task to break open the massive doors.

A retreat from the outer square became necessary, and just as the critical operation had been accomplished under a brisk fire, but without casualty, Lieutenant Cardew of the Oxfordshires came up shortly before sundown with 28 more men from Malappuram.

The fanatics had all this time kept up a brisk fire from the upper-storey and the western door of the inner square, and numerous very narrow escapes from their bullets had occurred.

The reinforcements enabled Lieutenant Cardew to guard during the night two of the four gates leading through the

walls of the outer square of the temple, and the charge of the third, the eastern gate, was taken by the police reserve. The southern gate was left unguarded during the night. This fact was probably not known to the Mappillas in the temple nor to those in the neighbourhood, several of whom armed with guns, had been seen hanging suspiciously in the flank of Lieutenant Day's detachment as it marched up to the temple, and from others of whom there came defiantly at intervals across the intervening paddy flat a wild Mahomedan cry to prayers during all the time the musketry was playing in the temple front, in sympathetic response to similar cries raised by the fanatics in the temple. Two men unarmed attempted to pass into the temple during the night, but were stopped by the sentries. It is certain, judging from previous experience, that recruits would have joined the gang in large numbers during the night had these precautions not been taken.

Captain Curtis arrived during the night with some dynamite, and Mr. Twigg, the Special Assistant Magistrate, who had travelled all the way from Madras, after receiving news of the outbreak, also arrived in the early morning.

The Moplahs had been busy loopholing the western side of the temple during the night, and at the first dawn, as the party of six officers stood closely together in a group talking, the first shot from the new loopholes in the temple was fired, and the bullet from an overloaded gun fortunately whistled harmlessly over their heads.

The means of getting access to the temple had now arrived, but a difficulty which had not been foreseen occurred, for no one present knew how to handle the explosive, and those who eventually prepared the cartridges had never seen the explosive before. A series of experiments were made separately first with fuse, then with fuse and detonator, and finally with fuse, detonator and cartridge. The experiments being successful, about 25 cartridges were tied together and enveloped in a thick coating of wet clay.

Just as these preparations were being made, Captain Heron Maxwell arrived from Calicut with Surgeon Cusack and 50 men of the Royal Fusiliers.

The troops and police were then divided into three parties, the larger number, including nearly all the police, were posted at every available spot round the ruined outer wall of the temple to fire upon the gate-house and all the loopholes in the doors and roof of the N.W. and S. sides of the inner square. Another but very small party of picked men were told off to life the few practicable places in the ruined wall of the east side. A third party was held ready to receive the fanatics with the bayonet if they charged out.

These arrangements having been completed, a brisk fire was opened on the N.-W. and S. sides against the loopholed doors and roof of the inner square, and when the firing ceased, Private Barrett of the Oxfordshire ran up to the western door of the inner square and placed a dynamite cartridge on the sill. The fuse went out, a second cartridge was brought and placed in like manner beside the first one.

After an interval, which seemed an age to those waiting for the result, a loud report shook the ground, a dense cloud of smoke and dust rose from the doorway, and when this cleared away it was seen that the dynamite\* cartridges had successfully done their work by blowing in the door and displacing the beams with which the fanatics had strengthened it inside. Another five-pound cartridge had subsequently to be used to clear away the wreck.

After this the taking of the stronghold was only a matter of time. But it was not accomplished without further bloodshed. Private Mills, one of the steadiest shots in the Oxfordshire Detachment, had been told off as one of the marksmen at the eastern gate to protect Private Rolfe of the Royal Fusiliers, who laid the dynamite charge at the eastern door. Rolfe had laid one charge, but the fuse had gone out. Mills was peeping through some bushes on the ruined outer wall with his head only exposed, when a fanatic shot him dead from one of the loopholes. Rolfe nothing daunted, laid the charge in spite of a brisk fire from the fanatics and smashed in the eastern door.

The north door was next destroyed, and a cross-fire poured through the north and west doors drove the fanatics in the inner square up into the upper-storeyed building.

Their determination to resist desperately to the end was remarkable. They had a bullet proof parapet extending to the height of nearly thirty inches from the floor of the upper-storeyed room in which they were now all gathered. By lying or even kneeling behind this they were absolutely safe from injury from bullets which crashed through the broad wooden planks which closed in the room on all sides above this thirty-inch parapet. In the interstices between these planks loopholes had been cut. Each fanatic took his place to fire at the police and military. As the muzzle of his gun was seen protruding from the loophole and in the act to fire, some twenty or thirty of the marksmen lining the ruined outer wall, fired a volley at the spot, and some of their bullets crashing through the wooden planks, hit the fanatic

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\*It is believed that this was the first occasion on which dynamite was used in actual warlike operations in the face of an enemy in India.

in several parts of his body, simultaneously, but usually in the head or chest. It was thus they all died one by one.

As the fire slackened, the interior of the temple was gradually occupied by the military and police, and the last dynamite cartridge was used to blow open the massive trap-door, giving access to the upper gate-house room where the final stand was made.

Of the twelve fanatics, three were still alive, but two of them were speechless and died immediately. The third man lived about 24 hours.

## PART VI.

THE casualties among the military were one private killed, and one officer (Lieutenant Day) and one private wounded. It is marvellous that the casualties were so low in number, considering that the fanatics were afterwards estimated to have fired not less than 250 shots at the party of order.

This serious outbreak was followed by several other small affairs, all pointing to the existence of widespread and fanatical zeal, the particulars of which it is unnecessary to state here.

The risks run by the party employed in suppressing the Trikkalur gang from the firearms used by the fanatics made the Government decide to disarm three taluks, *viz.*, Calicut, Pinad and Walluvanad, and this ticklish operation was, notwithstanding the excited state of the Moplah community at the time, successfully carried out in the month of February 1885 by the District Officers. It had a most beneficial effect on the population of the tracts in which the order was enforced.

Five disarming parties were organized, each in charge of a Magistrate. To each party were attached a havildar's guard of sepoys. Troops furnished by the 12th Regiment were imported by rail, and stationed at all the important centres, and a considerable body of European troops furnished by the Oxfordshire Light Infantry were located at Malappuram and Calicut in the heart of the country to be disarmed ready to act in any direction in which their services might be required.

The number of arms of all kinds eventually collected was very large, namely, 17,205, of which no less than 7503 were firearms of different kinds.



During the night of 1st May 1885, a gang of Moplahs broke open the house of a Cheraman (slave caste) and murdered him with his wife and four children on account of his having reverted from Islamism to Hinduism. This gang of Moplahs had but one gun with them, and proceeded to a Police Station (Kalpikancheri) with the object of helping themselves to the arms, but they found they were guarded. They then struck a course northwards towards the Urotmala Hill near Malappuram, taking post in the small Hindu temple; want of water, however, compelled them to quit it. They afterwards took up their quarters in the house of a wealthy Nambutiri Brahmin, landlord of Pommundum Amsom in the Ponnani Taluk.

In the afternoon they were attacked by a party of the S. W. Borderers from Malappuram under Captain Logan. The party opened fire on the Borderers and wounded four men. The volley was returned when it was found that the return fire had killed in all twelve persons.

The disarming of the Ponnani Taluk was next ordered by the Government and carried out successfully on the same plan as in the previous February. One Company of the 2nd Battalion, S. W. Borderers, was brought by rail from Madras and stationed at Vettathpudiangadi, where it remained during the disarming operations.

Fanaticism of this violent type flourishes only on sterile soil. When the people are poor and discontented it flourishes like other crimes of violence. The grievous insecurity to which the working ryots are exposed by the existing system of landed tenures was to blame for the impoverished state of the peasantry, and measures to protect the working ryot of whatever class is the means which seems to commend itself the most for the amelioration of their condition, with settled homesteads and an assured income to all who are thrifty and industrious—and in these respects the Moplah surpasses all other classes—it is certain that fanaticism would die a natural death.

## CHAPTER V.

### MALAPPURAM SUPERNATURAL.

• •SINCE the publication of this book has been decided upon, I have been asked by several N.C. O.'s and men to again write something about Malappuram, so that our friends may know the kind of place and people amongst whom we are living.

• It may be known to a few who have been here sometime, but not to the majority of the Detachment, that the Malabaree, like the inhabitants of other parts of India, is extremely superstitious. This becomes more pronounced as darkness creeps on. In moving about after sunset, his courage is commensurate with the amount of his companions, especially in the vicinity of "Range Hill."

It will be remembered that in an article which appeared in *The Echoes from the Jungle* sometime back on "Rambles round Malappuram," reference was made to the ruins of an ancient Hindu temple on "Range," or by its better known title of "Cholera Hill," close to which is the well, the original purpose of which has puzzled so many persons who have visited the spot.

Since the publication of that article, I have learned that its evil associations have long been known to the inhabitants of this village, amongst whom there is a very strong belief that a malevolent spirit takes up its abode in the well, its period of activity being exercised between sunset and sunrise, and that there is a forbidden zone or radius over which it presides. There are some natives who doubt its power, but even the doubting ones have not so far lost their native prejudices, sufficiently to venture near the well after sunset.

The well and ruins at decline of day look uninviting. I was speaking to a native a short time ago and asked him to bring me a certain plant which grows near the well. He seemed amazed and raising his hands deprecatingly said, "No Sahib, if I went near that well after 6 o'clock at night the devil would drag me down it and I'd never be seen again."

• My spirit of curiosity was aroused, and I asked him if he ever knew of such a case as a man disappearing. He could not state one, but added his grandfather knew of such a case. He could give me, he said, particulars of what occurred, to

his own knowledge only a few years ago. His tale was something like the following :—

"A few years ago a native (a Toti) commenced to build a house for himself on the Manjery road and had reared it some feet above ground, leaving everything all right, left off work for the day. On going next morning, not so much as a stick or stone was to be seen. The ground was level and clear as before he commenced building operations. What had become of it? All doubts were cleared, a few days later when a boy reported that on passing the well he ventured to look down and saw a lot of new building material at the bottom."

The building had been conveyed through the air like Dean Swift's Island of Laputa and dropped down the well.

My informant assured me in all truth that this actually occurred, and that he could find lots to prove that such did take place.

The evil repute of the well and its surroundings are not confined to any particular caste, and all are agreed that one cannot with safety venture within the zone or radius, for fear lest the malign influence should be visited upon him and culminate in his rapid transit to a place much warmer than even Malappuram!

Should one feel desirous of taking a ramble as indicated above, there are lots of pleasant scenery. Unfortunately, however, owing to the heat during the day, one's hours of indulging in this direction are somewhat restricted; one cannot, therefore, venture out with any degree of comfort till about 5 o'clock in the evening, and since the sun sets throughout the year about 6 o'clock with but a few minutes difference in time, little opportunity is afforded of proceeding far from the Cantonment. The exceedingly short twilight in Southern India is a great drawback to evening walks. Moonlight nights are, however, a luxury. To those who are able to stand the heat of an earlier hour, then a better opportunity is afforded of seeing things, especially by adopting a leisurable pace along either the Manjeri, Tirur or Calicut roads, or again one can go as far as the ferry at Kotalangadi.

If one desires a good view of the surrounding country with a minimum of exertion, then by all means pay a visit to Cholera, or Range Hill, which is within the Cantonment, and from the summit of which one obtains an extensive view of the surrounding country for miles, while the barracks and village lie before one like a map—a genuine picture worth seeing at any time.

Towards evening, in fact, throughout the day there is always a pleasant breeze. This is the best position from which to view the many very beautiful sunsets, such a feature of this part of Southern India, one beholds in this station.

and my advice to those who have not, is, don't deprive yourself at a sight not easily forgotten.

The top of this hill forms a table or plateau of probably three acres, in the centre of which may be seen the ruins of an ancient Hindu temple; close by are two wells said at one time to have been connected; both are of considerable depth, but at the time of writing this article the bottom was full of rubbish, etc. Out of these wells may be seen growing palmyra trees, which form quite a landmark for many miles around, and thus serve to indicate this particular hill and wells, concerning which the natives hold many superstitious views.

One cannot believe that either of these wells could have been sunk for the purpose of obtaining water, for their position on the summit of this hill forbids the belief that water was the objective, for the wells must be fully 700 feet, perhaps more above the river Kadalundy, scarcely half a mile away.

The natives of all castes hold to the belief that the wells are connected with an underground passage leading to and terminating at the river. Several N. C. O.'s and men of our Detachment, including the writer, descended the well nearest the Cantonment at the bottom, at which were found the bones of many animals; no estimation of the depth of rubbish could be given, nor did there appear to be any indication that the wells were connected, though it is extremely probable.

The fact of these two wells being so close together and near the ruins of the temple are strong indications of the extreme probability of their connection, but whatever may have been their use, one cannot approach the edge without feeling an almost superstitious awe, and associating with them all kinds of sinister thoughts, probably justified by what one has read in the past of the practices connected with some of the religious rites, one might with safety say mystic rites, connected with many eastern beliefs; speaking conscientiously, however, the writer, even as others have expressed always felt quite a relief on quitting the vicinity of these wells.

There are many other wells in or about Malappuram, connected with which is some supernatural attribute, more particularly is this said to be the case along the Manjeri road, and one finds great difficulty in getting a native to discuss the question after dusk; even in broad daylight he shows some hesitation in indicating the locality.

A somewhat weird tale is told concerning a well on the south bank of the Kadalundy river opposite the Cantonment.

I was fortunate to get something like the following statement from a Moplah: "Close by is a well covered by a couple of large stones. A wicked Rajah many years ago made an oath that whatever happened his money should be buried with him."



"It happened a few years after he had registered this oath on the Koran, the monsoons failed and the surrounding villages was beset by famine, and old and young were dying daily by scores. Appeal was made to him in vain. Even holy men told him he was released from his oath, but still he refused to give aid to those who were starving. An old man was seen talking to the Rajah, urging assistance, but in vain. The old man was heard to mention 'giving by sunset' still no help came.

"A wonderful thing happened at sunset. A terrible crash, as of many thunders, was heard, and people looking towards the Rajah's palace saw a cloud of dust arising, making their way towards the palace, found nothing but a few heaps of dust, and what appeared to be a well, where none existed before, covered by two ponderous stones as a covering. Search was made for the hidden wealth, but none was ever found from that day to this. It is said that, 'Allah had buried him alive for his wickedness, with all his wealth.'"

Local tale-tellers say that many efforts have been made to lift the stone, but in vain. It would be a pity to spoil the tale by giving an explanation of the well. So I will let the matter rest as it is.

#### MALABAR ENCHANTMENTS.

Probably many of "The Echo" readers have either read or heard of Harrison Ainsworth's "Lancashire Witches" and the methods employed by "Old Mother Demdike," to bring torments on her victims.

Malabar has *par excellence* been described as the land of sorcery and magic, the most powerful bhootas and demons residing there.

The following recipe (*sic*) is used in compassing the discomfiture of enemies. Make an image with wax in the form of your enemy, take it in your right hand at night and hold your chain of beads in your left hand; then burn your image with due rites, and it shall slay your enemy in a fortnight. Another spell for evil is to take a human bone from a burial-ground, and recite over it a thousand times the powerful Malyali *mantra*, viz. :—*Om ! Hram ! Hram !* Swine-faced goddess ! Seize him ! Seize him as a victim ! drink, drink his blood ! Eat ! eat his flesh ! O image of imminent death ! *Bhagavati* of Malayala ! *Glaum ! Glaum ! Om !* The bone thrown into an enemy's house will cause his ruin. Let a sorcerer obtain the corpse of a maiden and place it at the foot of a *bhuta* haunted tree on an altar on a Sunday night, and repeat a hundred times "*Om, Hrim Hrom !*" "O

goddess of *Malayala*, who possesseth us in a moment come." The corpse will then be inspired by a demon and rise up, and if the demon be appeased with arrack (a fiery and spirituous liquor) will answer all questions put."

The demons "can be bought, carried about and transferred from one sorcerer to another." It may be added that the best educated native gentlemen have even yet hardly got over their objection to photographs, and may by piercing with needles the eyes and other organs, and by powerful incantations work them serious mischief. (From Logan's *Malabar*.)

## CHAPTER VI.

### MALAPPURAM SPORTING REMINISCENCES.

Writing of sporting, with a knowledge of Malappuram and various officers who have been in this station since October 1904, reminds me that many successful expeditions have taken place. What may be described without doubt as the biggest capture was the killing of a rogue elephant by Lieutenant-Colonel, at that time Major E. T. Taylor, 2nd Cheshire Regiment, and who was in command of Malappuram. This full grown animal was responsible for many human lives. Many attempts, extending over a number of years, had been made to destroy it, but without success. It had in consequence of its habits grown to be a terror to natives, not only at Nilambur but for many miles round.

Major Taylor undertook the work of destruction and was fortunate, singular as it may seem, in bringing it down with a first and well-directed shot in a vulnerable part, afterwards completing the work of its destruction much to the delight of thousands of natives who were able once more to breathe as it were again in peace.

Two magnificent tusks were obtained from the animal and which were seen by the writer and many other N. C. O.'s and men of "B" and "H" Companies at the Officers' quarters, being on view for the benefit of the Detachment. One unfortunately was so damaged, and we might say deformed, as to detract from its commercial value to some extent, but in other respects it was, what might be described, as a real curiosity by reason of a bullet hole through the base, and which was reported to have been done fully ten years before. Major Taylor explained at the time that this injury must have caused intense pain and suffering for a long time to the beast, and which fact, judging from the tusk and position of the shot hole, we quite believed to be correct. With the lapse of time, however, the hole had closed up, but future growth gave the tusk quite a distinctive look, which was very noticeable during the life of the mammoth. The manner in which the closing had been effected had produced a peculiar appearance on the interior or core, which of itself was a curiosity.

It is a singular and noteworthy fact that Lieutenant Colonel Taylor's sporting expeditions were invariably profitable ones. Elephants and other large game appeared to be his speciality. In the immediate vicinity of Malappuram

there was quite an abundance of various species of big game, Lieutenant (now Captain) Busfield and Lieutenant E. C. Maxwell (2nd Cheshire Regiment) securing some big game. The latter officer, so recent as May 1906, killing a cheetah of almost eight feet from tip to tip. On several occasions he had hair-breadth escapes.

### THE KING COBRA.

Quite a long correspondence has been going through the columns of the *Madras Mail* on the above subject, dealing for the most part on the length of this most dangerous of all reptiles (*Ophiophagus elaps*).

The following description of the king cobra in "Nicholson's Elementary Treatise on Ophiology" may be of interest to our readers :

"This snake grows to 12 feet. When at bay its head stands about 2 feet off the ground. It will eat other snakes ; and there appears to be enmity between it and the cobra, the latter (I am credibly informed) attacking it with fatal effect. When watching its eggs it is very savage, and will drive away by hostile demonstration or even pursuit, any passers-by ; at other times it is peaceable enough."

What must have been one of this species was seen by a party of Non-Coms from this Detachment, whilst on a shooting expedition, several months back, only a few miles from Manjeri. That it was a cobra was placed beyond all doubt, as one of the party was fortunate enough to kill it by a shot from his gun ; so that all had the means of obtaining a close inspection, of what they described at the time as a monster cobra, for it was not less than eight feet in length, and what now further strengthens the belief of these Non-Coms, after following the correspondence in the *Mail*, is the fact that the cobra made as though to attack, without apparent cause, one of the party.

### THE MUHARRAM OR MAHOMMEDAN NEW YEAR.

By the time this edition is in the hands of its subscribers, Malappuram\* will once again be the scene of the great Moplah feast. This great event is ordinarily held after the sight of the new moon in February. The new moon was not visible until the evening of the 24th ultimo, which ushered in the Mahommedan year 1325 A.H.—Anno Hegira or year of the flight.



In former years it has been customary to hold the feast during the new year rejoicings, but this year it has been found impracticable by the Mahomedan Church dignitaries at the Mosque, owing to the wet state of the paddy-field, which was until a short time ago under cultivation, and, as this particular field is the only one suitable, it was deemed advisable to postpone the event until the ground became thoroughly dry, hence the delay this year.

The Muharram, like the Christian New Year, is a time of great rejoicing. Holiday clothing is donned, and work is suspended, for the advent of another year is just as eagerly looked forward to as in England or any other Christian country, and every possible opportunity is taken by the natives of Malappuram, i.e., the Moplahs, to thoroughly enjoy themselves. It is very easy to imagine that the event, whilst exclusively Moplah, is utilized as an excuse by other castes for obtaining a few days' rest from labour. Some such excuses are made by our own countrymen at home, so that one cannot blame the various other castes for seizing upon an excuse for a few days' rest from toil, when one considers that in India workmen usually labour seven days to the week.

Whilst, as already indicated, the Muharram is usually a time of great rejoicing amongst all Mahomedans; the Moplahs of Malabar particularly avail themselves to the fullest extent, but when doing so they never fail to set apart a portion of the time during the holiday for the celebration of the great Moplah feast, called the "Nurcha," a Malayalam word signifying "an offering"—properly speaking, an offering of prayer for the departed spirits of 44 Moplah "martyrs," who lost their lives in Malappuram some 179 years ago during a religious persecution.

Vast crowds of natives (Moplahs) from far and near make their way to Malappuram, the scene of the massacre, for the two-fold purpose of, firstly, rejoicing on the advent of another year, and secondly, that of keeping alive the memories of the martyrs who died for religion's sake, and of offering a prayer for the repose of the souls of these forty-four departed Moplahs, many of whose descendants still live in Malappuram, to one of whom I am indebted for most of the information contained in this article.

The scene of the festival is in the large paddy-field off the Calicut road in Old Malappuram. Already the erection of huts is in progress for the accommodation of the vast multitudes which pour into Malappuram from all quarters. The immense number of people making the pilgrimage to Malappuram (for this is actually what it is) cannot be housed, with the result that thousands upon thousands sleep in the open air or take what accommodation they may be able to find.

One must not be surprised to hear of a number of deaths from snake-bites, the inevitable result of lying in out-of-the-way places. One cannot, therefore, anticipate any exception to former years. Last year it was estimated that during the festival, not less than 50 or 60,000 persons took part in this great religious ceremony, on the occasion of which the graves of these minor saints are visited and prayers prescribed for the Moplah dead are then recited.

Times like this are responsible for a great levelling process. Side by side with the much bejewelled Rajah may be seen the poor agricultural labourer, having the same common object, *viz.*, that of honouring the dead, and whatever our feelings may be touching their beliefs, one cannot but admire the spirit of devoutness, which one sees practised by the followers of the Prophet.

#### SOME OF THE PESTS OF MALAPPURAM,

The saying "Wait till the monsoon comes" carries with it a weight of meaning which can only be realized when the change of season does actually take place.

The pests during the prevalence are many, and at the same time just as varied. After long months of what can justly be described as simply scorching hot weather, one longs for the "monsoon," and although he knows that for fully three months he will have it "heaven's hard" (a phrase used to express a shower in its superlative sense), he is prepared to accept it as a matter of course. He becomes as it were a fatalist for the time being at all events.

Only those who by force of circumstances are in India (the British soldier comes under this category) know how to appreciate the few changes of climate which take place out here. Really, they are but two, *viz.*, winter and summer. Both are to my thinking *misnomers*. Anyhow, such as they are, they do take place, and they are accepted as such, for there is really but little in the name.

When it rains in Malabar, it's the proper article, and plenty of it, and fairly roots out the cobras, scorpions and centipedes, besides the hosts of other small fry too numerous to mention. So far as insects go, the mosquito as of old takes precedence.

Malappuram seems fairly alive with cobras and other species of snakes, but it is the natives who suffer and who augment the death-roll from snake-bites. One of the men of this Detachment (Private Norrie) killed only recently a cobra almost 6 feet long, which was playing havoc with the poultry, having killed no less than six hens.

One has, now the monsoon has made its appearance, to be very careful to examine his boots for fear lest a scorpion (mostly black or rock here) should have taken up quarters in a boot or sock. No one should go about unless armed with a suitable stick, and should invariably wear "ammunition boots."

Singular as it may seem, one becomes used to things and troubles very little about them. A certain writer said: "On a soldier landing in India for the first time, for three months he is in a state of dread of snakes and other reptiles, and for the next seven years forgets all about them," and there is some degree of truth in it; still, in Malappuram, whilst not exactly "dreading," he is at least constantly reminded of their existence by frequent sights of these pests, and must be prepared for emergencies.

The ant, whose name conjures up all the delights of that female relative, is divided into quite a number of species, or classes.

There is the small black ant, such as we see at home, but is harmless; then comes the red one, which has a peculiar habit of making its way up your trousers' legs, and gets into places and corners not only inconvenient, but most difficult to get at for the purpose of easing oneself, and which fairly takes pieces out of one! The effects produced on different persons vary; if a man be thick-skinned (and it is surprising what a lot of thick-skinned people there are in India), then it raises a blister as big as a small marble, accompanied by an itching and burning sensation with the desire to tear oneself to pieces; lastly comes the white-ant, the most destructive of all.

To my own knowledge they have practically eaten a great coat in the space of 10 to 12 hours. I have also had brought to my notice the destruction of a new pair of shoes in a single night; both these cases occurred when "B" Co. was here.

Another pest, fortunately transient, is that of the flying ant. On the falling of the first monsoon rains, if succeeded by brilliant sunshine, the eggs are rapidly hatched, with the result that the air is thick with them, and the birds have a fine time of it. So far they are harmless, but as soon as the lamps are lit, reading is altogether out of the question. These insects, whilst intensely annoying, have double wings, much resembling those of a dragon fly. Like all other night flies and moths, they make for the light round which they gyrate, and on alighting they shake the body and flap their wings, if I may be allowed to use the expression. So that one is justified in coming to the conclusion that it is anxious to rid itself of its wings, which it appears is quite correct. Singular

as it may seem after the loss of wings, they all crawl to one given place and die, their bodies forming small pyramids.

Thus, these insects pass out of existence, having, according to naturalists, laid so many eggs and fulfilled all the obligations demanded of them in the natural order of things.

The lizards have a veritable harvest (I am speaking of under cover). One can see them gliding hither and thither on the walls, seizing an ant and shaking it just as a dog shakes a rat; this is in order to get rid of the wings. For the lizard is something of an epicure, having destructive tastes, for he goes in for small insects and moths if not too large. He does seem rather to draw the line at flying bugs which seem to appeal to his sense of smell. In this respect he very much resembles the soldier. There is nothing poetic in the smell of a flying bug especially a crushed one. I've seen the lizard glide up to a flying bug sniff it, then "get." "It isn't in my line" as our comrade in "B" Co. sings.

By great numbers of the natives the flying ant is accounted as a great luxury. They are collected, stripped of the wing, are cooked and eaten in various ways, the common and least expensive being in the form of a curry, the better class natives cooking them in ghee, eaten in any form. The flying ant is said to be very nutritious and strength-giving. (There may be some reason for this belief, since the body of the ant contains formic acid, though it is doubtful if the native is aware of this fact.)

I have enumerated a few of the pests found in this station so far as reptiles and insects are concerned. There are other kinds of pests which I may be tempted to write about later if the opportunity occurs. I will now draw to a conclusion, but even as I am waiting, I am reminded of one as I can hear the hyenas and jackals in the vicinity of 'number three' being alive, which seems to come in for more than a fair share of insect life, being next to the river, which up to lately was little more than 'a stagnant pool' and alive with mosquitoes. 'Number three' has always seemed to bear an unenviable reputation with the various detachments garrisoning Malappuram. To the pests already enumerated, I must not omit to add the monsoon frog who has likewise put in his appearance, and whose dismal croak heard during midnight hours is the reverse of pleasant. With such a lot to contend with, one cannot wonder at some comrades saying "Roll on Oct."—(Trooping Season.)



## CHAPTER VII.

### MALABAR AND ITS BOUNDARIES.

MALABAR proper extends from north to south along the Coast, a distance of about one hundred and fifty miles, and lying between N. Lat.  $10^{\circ} 15'$  and  $12^{\circ} 18'$  and E. Long.  $75^{\circ} 14'$  and  $76^{\circ} 56'$ .

The boundaries of Malabar proper are North—South Canara District; East—Coorg, Maisur, Nilgiris, Coimbatore, South—the Native State of Cochin; West—the Arabian Sea.

### THE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE OF MALABAR.

THE Malayalam language is rich in proverbs, in "wise saws and modern instances," and there is nothing the Malayali loves better than to give a turn to conversation by an apt saying. The proverbs depend as much upon rhythm and alliteration and other affinities as on terseness of expression, and on sarcasm, wit, and humour as much as on common sense.

The following is very expressive "*Akattu kattiyum—purattu pattiyum*," literally "Knife inside, plaster outside."

The following is likewise very terse in its expression, and though it is wholly Sanskrit it is in common use here:—"*Arthum anartham*," literally "riches (are) ruin."

In one of the many proverbs or axioms in which this language abounds, expression of the Malayali's scorn is given of the sordidness of foreign Brahmans: "*attu vella Pattar—attu vella panni*," meaning "the Pattar runs as fast to a rice distribution as the wild pig runs from its pursuers." The Pattar is often the butt for a Malayali's wit and sarcasm, and in one proverb he classes him with black beetles and bandicoots (a species of large rat) as among the plagues of Keralam (Malabar). A "Book of Proverbs" was printed at Mangalore in 1868 containing 990 such phrases.

Malayalam is written in more than one alphabet, and that employed in the most ancient written documents extant—the Jews' and Syrians' copperplate grants—is known as *Vatteluttu*. Besides it there is its derived alphabet called *Kaiveluttu*, chiefly used in keeping the records in Rajas' houses, and lastly, there is the modern Malayalam alphabet introduced by *Punjattā Eluttachēan*.

Dr. Burnell styles the *Vatteluttu*, "the original Tamil alphabet which was once used in all that part of the peninsula south of Tanjore, and also in South Malabar and Travancore." Its origin has hitherto not been traced. Dr. Burnell said of it: "The only possible conclusion, therefore, is that the *S. Acoka* and *Vatteluttu* alphabets are independent adaptations of some foreign character, the first to a Sanscritic, the last to a Dravidian language," and he thought, that both had "a common Semitic (Jewish) origin." The *Vatteluttu* alphabet "remained in use" in Malabar. Dr. Burnell wrote: "Up to the end of the 17th century among the Hindus, and since then in the form of the *Katteluttu* (=sceptre-writing), it is the character in which the Hindu sovereigns have their grants drawn up."

#### THE EXCESSIVE RAINS OF MALABAR.

Excessive falls of rain are quite common and floods frequent. On the 19th and 20th May 1882 there was registered a very heavy fall of rain. Several rain gauges in different parts of the town of Calicut (the nearest observation station) registered from 18 to 25 inches in the 24 hours, and as an instance of a heavy fall spread over a longer period in the monsoon of 1871. The rain gauge at the Collector's Office in Calicut registered over six inches per diem for six consecutive days, but floods do little damage. The rivers have in the course of ages worn down for themselves deep riverbeds, which, as a rule, contain all ordinary floods, and the common laterite soil of the country is so porous that within half an hour of the heaviest shower of rain the roads are dried up, and but for the dropping trees and bushes, there would be very little to tell of the rain that had just ceased.

#### MALABAR (ORIGIN OF THE NAME).

The name by which the district is known to Europeans is not in general use in the district itself, except among the foreigners and English-speaking natives. The ordinary name is *Malayalam* or in the short form *Maalayan* (the hill country). The word Malabar is therefore probably, in part at least, of foreign origin; the first two syllables are almost certainly the ordinary Dravidian word *mala* (hill, mountain), and *bar*\* is probably the Arabic word *barr* (continent), or

\* *bar* signifies a coast in the language of the country," page 10 of Renandot's translation of the "ancient accounts of India and China by two Mohammedan travellers in the ninth century A. D."—London, 1733.

(the Persian word *bar* (country). From the time (A.D. 522-547) of Cosmas Indicopleustes down to the 11th or 12th century A. D. the word "Male" was applied to the coast by Arab navigators, and the sea-faring population, who flocked thither subsequently for pepper and other spices, called it *Malibar*, *Manibar*, *Mulibar*, *Minibar*, and *Malbar*. The early European travellers followed suit and hence come the other forms in which the name has been written, *Melibar* (Marco Polo), *Minibar*, *Milibar*, *Minubar*, *Melibaria*, *Malabria*, &c. Malabar may therefore be taken to mean the hilly or mountainous country, a name well suited to its physical characteristics.

*Malayalam* is not, however, the only indigenous name for the district. The natives love to call it *Keralam*. (From Logan's *Malabar*).

#### MOUNTAINS OVERLOOKING MALAPPURAM, WITH A BRIEF ACCOUNT.

The following will be of interest to our readers since the mountains are so well known:—

'*URUTMALA*':—N. Lat.  $11^{\circ} 3'$ , E. Long.  $76^{\circ} 4'$ , overlooking the European Military outpost of Malappuram. There is on the summit a small kind of temple with an inscription of no great antiquity. Height 1,573 feet.

Many of our comrades have probably heard of the attack by the Moplahs on the *Trikalur* temple, near Manjeri, when the troops of Detachment turned out. This was in the year 1885. On the afternoon of the 10th February communication between Calicut and Malappuram was suddenly interrupted; it was known that some people in Calicut had been discussing the effect which an interruption to the wires would have had on the Moplah outbreak of December 1884. It was thought at the time that the interruption might have been caused by design (it was long afterwards discovered that this was not the case), and in any case the necessity for a substitute made itself generally felt. Signalling parties were accordingly organized. The *Urot hill* (noticed above) near Malappuram, was occupied by a signalling party of the Oxfordshires, who communicated by helio by day and by lamp at night, with the General Officer Commanding at Calicut, 22 miles; at Malappuram where the bulk of the European force were stationed, 6 miles; and with the District Magistrate's disarming camp, as it moved to its various disarming stations, *iz.*, Manjeri, 8 miles; Pranikad, 16 miles; Wondur, 17 miles; and Arikkod, 10 miles.

.. *PANDALUR*:—N. Lat.  $11^{\circ} 8'$ , E. Long.  $76^{\circ} 11'$ , also overlooking the Malappuram outpost. It is covered for the



most part with dense scrub jungle, but one or two coffee gardens have been opened on the northern slopes. At some distance from the summit and on the east face of the hill is a perennial spring of excellent water flowing from an immense boulder of rock. The spring is supposed to be haunted, and as a matter of fact, a solitary Mussalman Fakir used to inhabit a tiger's cave close to the spring. A magnificent panoramic view of mountain scenery is obtained from various parts of this hill, but particularly from the highest point of it—a piled up cone of rocks reaching to a giddy level with the tops of the forest trees. Height about 2,000 feet.

PRANAKAD:—N. Lat.  $10^{\circ} 59'$ , E. Long.  $76^{\circ} 21'$ . The summit of a small densely wooded range of hills (also overlooking Malappuram in the distance) which, with the range last mentioned, seems to form at this point the advanced guard of the Nilgiri mountains. Height 1,792 feet.

#### THE KADALUNDI RIVER.

N. Lat.  $11^{\circ} 8'$ , E. Long.  $75^{\circ} 53'$ —is united to the Beypore river by a creek, and thus is formed the island of Chaliyam. The Kadalundi River comes from the western slopes of the Nilgiri Mountains and the "Silent Valley" range, and its main branch is 75 miles in length. The country through which it passes is on a higher level than the valley of the Beypore River, and hence the boat traffic on the stream is very limited except during the annual flood season (monsoon), when boats can get upstream as far as Malappuram, and even further, but in the dry season, boat traffic is confined to a few miles near the mouth of the river. An unsuccessful attempt, continued down to 1857, was made by several Collectors to connect by a canal the Kadalundi River with the back water and creeks of the Ponnani River. A cutting was made, and for a day or two in the height of the monsoon, when the country is flooded, boats can pass with some difficulty from the one river to the other, but at other seasons, this is impracticable. A very great natural obstacle to the successful construction was that at a short depth below the surface a bed of unctious clay or mud was found which, oozing into the canal, filled it up sufficiently to prevent the passage of boats. This liquid mud seems to be of the same character with that which, forced up from the bottom of the sea by submarine volcanic action or by subterraneous pressure of water from the large inland backwaters, forms the mud banks or mud bays in which at one or two places on the coast (notably at Narikal and Alleppey) ships can ride in safety to load and discharge cargo.

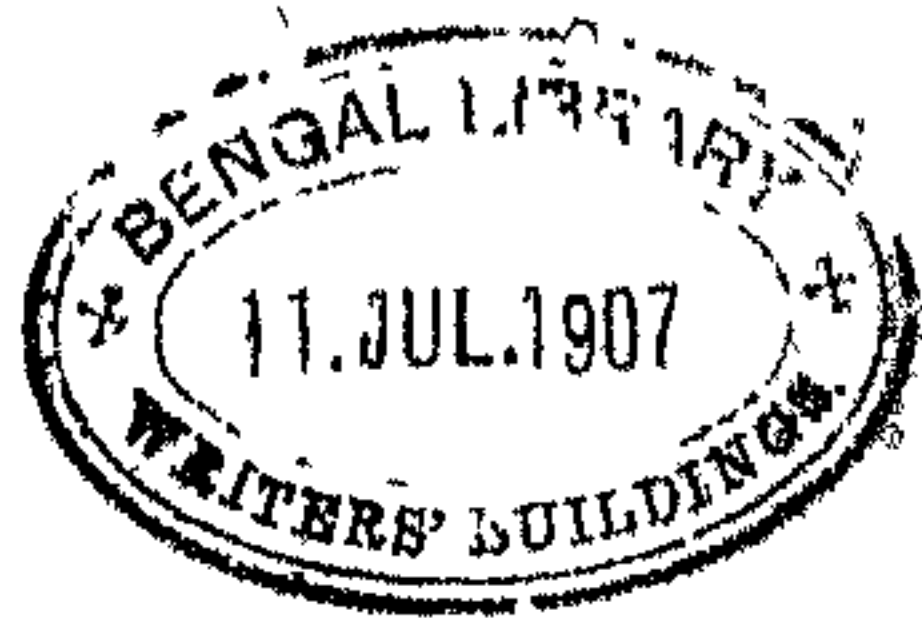


throughout the monsoon season. The same difficulty was experienced at Calicut in making a short canal from the Kallai River to the main bazar.

[At the time of writing (30-4-'06) this river is no longer a flowing stream, but is completely dry for several hundred yards, a vast difference to monsoon time when it becomes a raging torrent at some points quite 100 yards wide and fully 30 feet deep.—*Editor.*]







**TWO YEARS IN MALABAR.**

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# Two Years in Malabar

EAST INDIES

Being a Description of the Military Station and  
Cantonment of Malappuram, South Malabar

AN ACCOUNT OF

The Moplah Caste, and their superstitions

The History and Origin of the

GREAT MOPLAH FEAST

OF THE

“NURCHA”

*Moplah risings from 1840 to 1900 and other interesting  
information concerning this important Caste*

BY

LANCE-CORPORAL VINCENT JOS. RYDER

*2nd Bn., “The Cheshire Regiment”*

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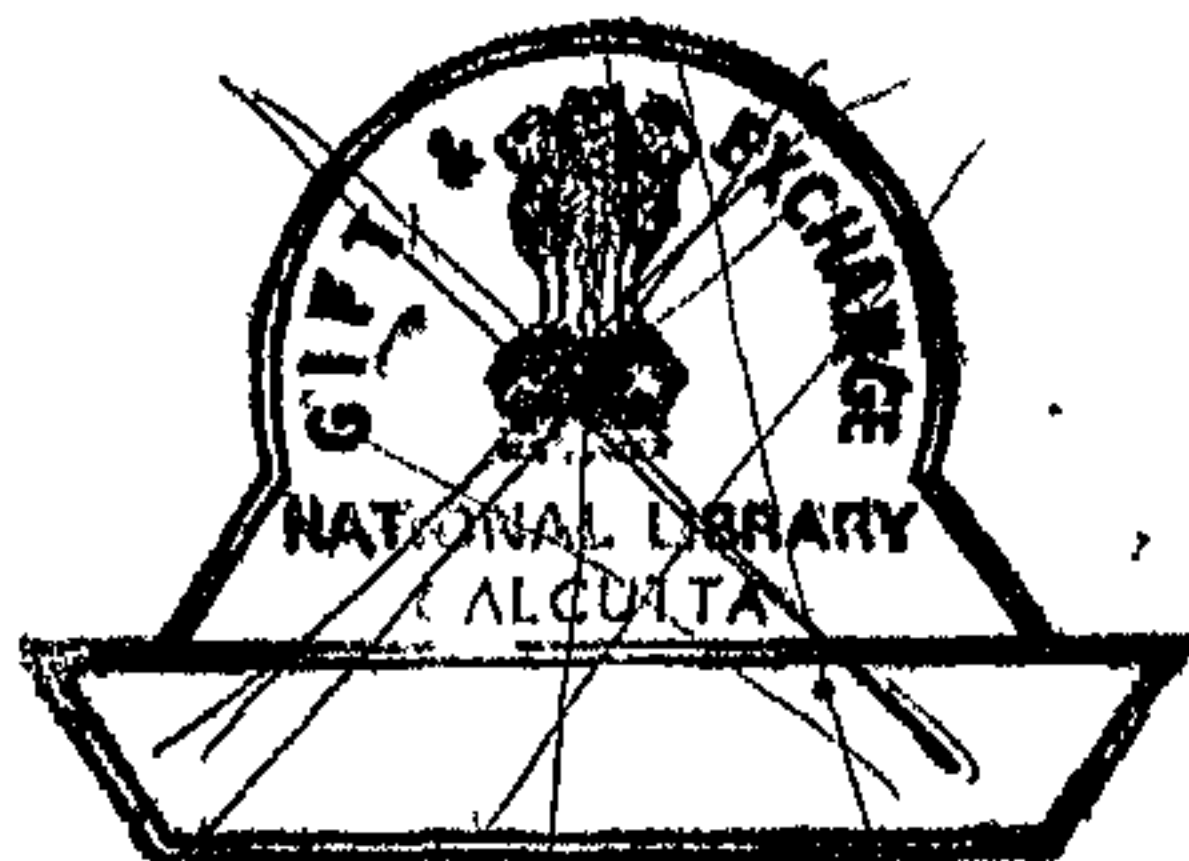
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CALCUTTA

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## To the Reader, . . .

*THIS little work, the outcome of many months' labor, for the most part as Editor of the Detachment Journal, "The Echoes from the Jungle," I beg most respectfully to dedicate to the Officers, Non-commissioned Officers and men of my Corps, the 2nd Battalion, Cheshire Regiment, as a Souvenir of fully two years' Detachment Duty in the Moplah village of Malappuram, South Malabar, during the years 1904-05-06.*

*VINCENT JOS. RYDER.*

*Bellary, 1st March 1907.*





## INTRODUCTION.

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The object in publishing this little volume is to place before its readers in handier form what has, for the most part, appeared in the now defunct *Echoes from the Jungle*, a Detachment Journal published fortnightly at Malappuram, South Malabar, during the years 1905-6.

During the issue of the *Echoes* much was written by the author as Editor of that Journal concerning the various castes inhabiting the jungle village of Malappuram, more particularly concerning the Moplahs, a caste of which but little appears to be known. During a two years stay on Detachment in this part of South Malabar, I had many opportunities of studying and becoming acquainted with these very interesting people, for, as the duration of my stay went on, many of the early acquired prejudices disappeared.

I was enabled to write a number of articles concerning them which duly appeared in the columns of our fortnightly. The *Echoes from the Jungle*, which title was not given haphazard but advisedly so, for the little military station or cantonment is on the fringe of a jungle situated on the north bank of the Kadalundy river.

•• One will easily understand that natives of a jungle village must have characteristics of their own, much the same as villagers at home. There is then a very wide difference in the Moplah disposition, according as his surroundings may be; this is particularly noticeable when he comes in contact with Europeans and which has the effect of producing a change for the better in every respect.

Since the *Echoes* is no longer in existence, I can with safety undertake the task of re-editing my former articles, and the making of minor alterations in several of my articles. To those who followed the publication of that journal the alterations will be apparent. I may, however, point out that the alterations are not only necessary but justifiable.

Another and chief reason for the issue of this book is in order that other Detachments which may be stationed at Malappuram, might know something concerning the station and people amongst whom they are soldiering.

I have been asked, from time to time, to reprint my articles, for many, not only of my own corps but others, are desirous of having a souvenir of their stay in *Korila pazama*, or the land of Cocoanuts, as Malabar is termed, and at the same time an account of the Moplahs of Malappuram, who

## INTRODUCTION.

have in past years given the troops, not only of that station but likewise Calicut and Cannanore, a little trouble within recent years. There are N. C. O.'s and men serving in India at the present time who remember the Moplah outbreak so late as 1897 when the Moplahs made their final attack on the Hindoo temple at Trikalur near Manjeri.

Therefore, with this object in view, I decided to launch my book forth fully prepared to meet any criticisms directed against the volume, but at the same time buoyed up with the hopes that the interest centred in it by those who had served in the station and those who are now serving there as well as those who have yet to serve in that interesting station would more than compensate me for anything in that direction, nor do I think I shall be mistaken.

In this volume I have included the account of Moplah disturbances from 1840 to end of century from various sources chiefly "Logan's Malabar" to which, however, I have added an explanation of the *Hal' Illakan* or religious frenzy peculiar to the Moplah caste, and which appears to be little known.

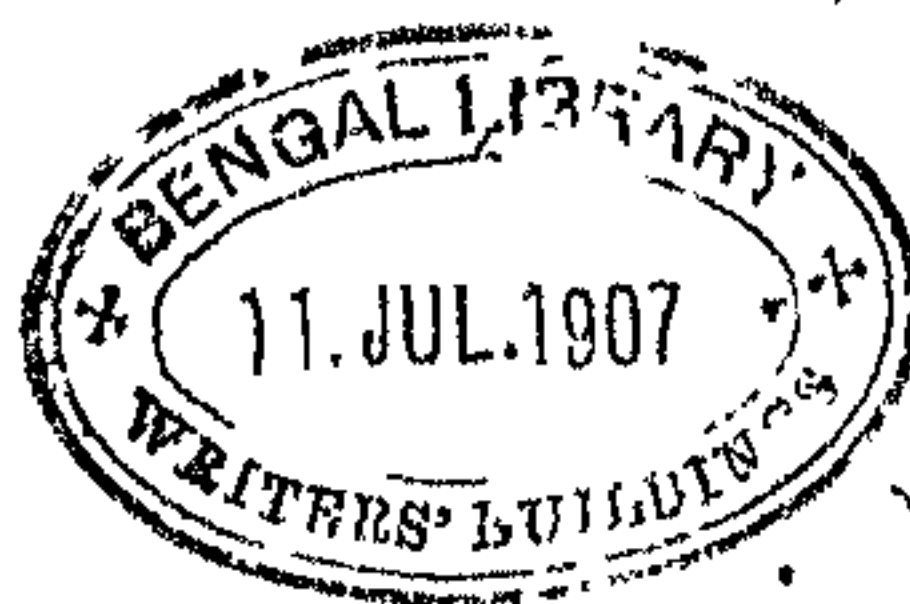
I have purposely omitted from this book such article as have no direct bearing on the inhabitants or villages in the immediate neighbourhood of Malappuram, as the book is meant for the purpose of giving its military and civil readers all available information concerning a caste about which, singular as it may seem, so little appears to be known. Particularly does this apply to the "Feast of the Nurcha." This is, I believe, the first time a history of this event has appeared in print and will, therefore, be all the more interesting.

Again, the jungle village of Malappuram, in which I spent over two years on Detachment duty, is practically unknown to thousands of British troops serving in India at the present time. It is hoped my effort may assist in enlightening friends and relatives not only in India but at home as to its whereabouts as well as conveying something like an idea of the characteristics of this important caste.

In bringing my introduction to a conclusion, I can only hope my work may give the satisfaction I intend it should give. If, therefore, my efforts meet with such reward, then I am more than compensated for the trouble involved in re-editing my former articles.

I hope this volume may be regarded, as the title suggests, as a souvenir pleasant rather than otherwise of Malappuram at the most southern station for British troops in India and of Malabar generally.

THE AUTHOR.



# THE HISTORY OF MALAPPURAM.

## CHAPTER I.

### MALAPPURAM AND WHERE IT IS.

As indicated in the introduction to thousands who are serving in India the place is unknown. It is necessary to point out that Malappuram should not be confounded with Mallapuram, Salem, which is spelt with two *l*'s and one *p*, and for the purpose of preventing error in transmission of letters, correspondence should invariably be addressed, *Malappuram*, South Malabar or Malappuram *via* Tirur.

The detachment stationed at Malappuram consists of about 150 Officers, N.-C. O's and men (British troops). It is a Cantonment containing about sixty acres. It is situated in what is called "New Malappuram," the other part of the village to the west being called "Old Malappuram" which is on considerably lower ground. Whilst the one civil administration applies to both parts of the village, offences such as trespass or damage by cattle committed within the Cantonment area are dealt with by the Officer Commanding the Detachment, usually addressed as the "Officer Commanding Malappuram," he may, under the Cantonment Code of India, inflict a fine in the latter case, but hand over to civil custody in the former case.

The population of the Cantonment may be put down at one hundred and fifty Europeans and about one hundred natives.

The water supply for the use of troops is obtained from wells of various depths sunk within barracks, that for drinking purposes is drawn by means of pumps from closed in wells. Whilst the water supply during an exceptionally dry season run short, there is no record of its supply having at any time completely run out. The station then, so far as water supply, is very fortunately placed.

Malappuram which is approached from Tirur by the Turur road, a fairly well-metalled highway over which there is



a large local traffic, and from Calicut by a road bearing that name, is situated on the north bank of the Kadalundy river, which empties itself into the Arabian Sea, at Kadalundy port, some eight miles from Calicut.

This river which is a stream of considerable width at some parts, even near Malappuram, being fully one hundred yards wide, is navigable during parts of the year to this station, and is taken advantage of for shipping cocoanuts, in which the place abounds, to the coast. The stream presents great facility for bathing purposes owing to its sandy beach, but great care is necessary in the case of non-swimmers owing to the holes along the side. During the monsoons the privilege given the troops of bathing is altogether withdrawn, and a very wise course too.

The barracks are most pleasantly situated, being open to the west, and gets the benefit of the south-west breezes which blow for fully eight months in the year. It should be here explained that the barracks are situated on a cliff almost three hundred feet above the level of the river, and commanding an extensive view to the west, and from which perhaps some of the prettiest sunsets in Southern India are seen. In fact, I venture to think, that few barracks are more fortunately placed than that of Malappuram for healthy surroundings, and one cannot therefore wonder at its almost entire freedom from epidemic disease so far as effects the troops.

The name of the village is derived from the Malayalam words *Mala* (a hill) and *puram* (a town); the derivation conveys a good idea of its geographical aspect.

The village is in the Ernad Taluq (taluq meaning a division) of the Malabar district, Madras Presidency.

Its distance from Calicut is thirty-two miles by road. The nearest railway station is Tirur (about seventeen miles distant) on the S.-W. branch, Azzikhal and Madras railway.

One can easily understand the dreary walk for troops proceeding to or from Malappuram, and many a curse loud and deep has been registered against it.

The cost of transport is necessarily heavy owing to the distance, the time usually occupied by bullock bandy in performing the journey being not less than six hours. For reliefs the march from Malappuram to Tirur or *vice versa* is monotonous, being quite on a par with what one finds in this part of India, and during dry weather the roads are often ankle deep in pulverized laterite. In moves the leading section of four are the most fortunate, since they leave the dust created behind them for the rear sections, which in addition to creating thirst otherwise irritates the throat.

The highest hill in the immediate vicinity is the 'Urot-mala—N. Lat. 11° 3', E. Long. 76° 4', overlooking the Euro-



pean Military outpost of Malappuram. There is on the summit a small kind of temple with an inscription of no great antiquity. Height, 1,573 feet, and from the summit of which on any ordinary day Calicut and even more distantly situated places may be easily distinguished. A visit to Cholera, or Range hill, another prominence of less magnitude, at sunrise or sunset well repays the trouble involved. This hill which is practically within the Cantonment will probably be about one thousand feet, perhaps less, above sea-level, from which the Nilgiris may be seen. Reliable natives have averred that in the early morning the *Dodabetta*, the highest point in the Madras Presidency, may be seen. There is no earthly reason for doubting this, however much some may think to the contrary; in fact, I think it quite likely.

The population of the whole of Malappuram including natives living within the Cantonment area, according to the last census, is just under ten thousand. The inhabitants are divided into many sects or castes including Hindus, Brahmins, Mahommedans and a few scattered Jains. The Moplahs are the predominating caste; they are Mahommedans of the *Sunn* sect; the Moplah in his manners and religion is *sui generis*, observing strictly all the fasts prescribed in the Mahommedan ritual and may often be seen at sunrise and sunset reading his Koran and performing his ablutions in the river.

Polygamy is not practised by them to any appreciable extent save by the wealthier classes; it is therefore only on rare occasions one sees the females veiled.

Among some of the Hindoo castes polyandry is resorted to particularly in North Malabar, one woman being the common property of so many brothers.

Agriculture and Horticulture is followed in Malappuram, but the staple things are paddy growing, whilst toddy-drawing is carried on to a very great extent by the toddy-drawers exclusively of Hindoo caste. The Moplahs, like all followers of the Prophet, are strictly sober and are very industrious; a drunken or rowdy Moplah is extremely rare, for the penalty exacted by his religion for the offence is very heavy.

Little love appears to be lost between Moplah and Hindoo, and very little fuel is required to bring about a collision between these two important castes. The reason for this hatred, which is chiefly on the part of the Moplahs, will be found dealt with in the "Feast of the Naarcha."

The natives of Malabar, both male and female, are particularly good looking. Charles Lever speaks of "the flashing eyes of the Malabaree," and he was always considered a good judge of the fair sex.

The inhabitants are somewhat above the average height and exceedingly well developed; notwithstanding the insanitary conditions under which they live, there is but little sickness amongst them, the rate of mortality being exceedingly low.

Market day is held every Thursday on which occasion there is always a large influx of natives from surrounding districts, a fair turnover resulting. Taken on the whole the natives are well conducted and cleanly both in dress and habits.

During the time the writer was at Malappuram (just over 2 years), no friction of any kind occurred between the natives and troops.

True, the natives, like ourselves, sometimes get a little excited over religious questions, with other castes and even come to blows, but the dispensing of punishment to cover such offences whether within or without the Cantonment area is in the hands of the civil authorities who, if somewhat drastic in its application, know best what is required. From what I have seen I should judge that a strong hand is necessary in this village.

The Monsoon which usually commences about June (though it has been known to occur much earlier) lasts about four months, generally ending about the end of September or beginning of October. Still there are showers of varying severity as late as November and even December.

The mango or ripening showers usually make their appearance during April or May. The rainfall varies considerably, but often reaches 170 inches yearly.

The temperature of this part of Malabar is very even; there is in fact but little difference in temperature throughout the year, and it is probably this evenness of temperature which accounts for so little epidemic disease amongst the troops of this station.

Whilst no authentic records have been kept prior to its occupancy by the detachments of my regiment, I did however keep a record of the daily readings of the thermometer for about thirteen months, which shows an average temperature of a little over 80°.

During two years our regiment lost but one man in this station, and that from liver disease; this goes then to prove how healthy as a Military station Malappuram must be. Past records equally go to prove its immunity from any serious climatic disease. The only drawback to the station is the distance from the railway and its somewhat moist heat, which produces what is known as "prickly heat," a distressing thing while it lasts, but never fatal.

Living is fairly cheap whatever may be said to the contrary. There is always an abundance of fruit and what is

pleasing to say it is cheap and invariably fresh; one can even obtain fresh fish on certain days of the week brought by carriers, the sea being (crow line) but 12 miles away. Whilst the place is far removed from civilization there are some things which make up for inconveniences in this direction.

There are but few Europeans in Malappuram beyond the British troops, and these are employed on the police; there are however quite a number of Eurasian families in the locality and with whom kindly relations exist.

The language spoken here and in fact throughout South Malabar is Malayalam, which is a Dravidian branch of the great Aryan family of languages and a by no means easy language to acquire. As a result of contact and inter-marriage by the early Portuguese colonists, many words of that European tongue have become incorporated with the native language. Many Eurasian families still speak Portuguese very little removed (except by dialect) from what is spoken in Southern Europe.

At Malappuram there is a Government church for the use of British troops, built on a substantial scale.

Contrasted with the above is the Catholic church of St. Joseph doing duty for R. C. troops. This place of worship is so small that when packed as it invariably is with natives, it is almost suffocating. The writer has been compelled to go outside for a breath of fresh air. This place of worship with its laterite and adobe walls and thatched roof cannot be easily forgotten by those who may have worshipped there. Yet I doubt not that many a prayer, fervent and deep, has reached the ever-ready ear and proved as acceptable as that offered in the grandest cathedral ever raised to the Deity.

This station possesses its little Christian burial-ground with its portion set apart for troops, and where not a few have found a last resting-place so many thousands of miles from home. Nestling as it does at the foot of a somewhat shaded cliff, there is something which *volens volens* causes a sympathetic feeling to rise within one's breast, and in the case of a tender-hearted comrade a handkerchief is required to wipe away a suspicious moisture which gathers in one's eyes, and thoughts arise which for the time render one blind only to what is good within him. India is essentially a place for thinking, and has made many an indifferent home soldier a better man.

I have endeavoured in this chapter to give a pen picture of Malappuram, to convey something like an idea of this little village in which, I (as many others have lived and in which many others will also live) spent the first two fairly happy years of my Indian service among a caste who for devotion to their Creator and religious fervour would put to shame many of our co-religionists.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE MOPLAHS OF MALAPPURAM.

IN a place such as Malappuram, a typical East Indian village, where there is a mixed population as is usually the case, each people have their own particular place of worship, be it temple or mosque.

So many religions (each representing a caste) are practised even in this little hamlet that hardly a day passes without the observance of some festival connected with one or more of their strange beliefs, and which are a source of wonderment to many Englishmen fresh to the country and a source likewise of much discussion as to their relative merits as a religious people, but all are agreed as to their sincerity in the beliefs they hold.

In this chapter I purpose dealing exclusively with the Moplah caste—the predominating caste of this locality. I have had no books to aid me and have therefore been compelled to depend upon such information as I could glean from the more intelligent class of natives, nor do I think I have been misled in this respect. I had much difficulty in obtaining various items, and I must at this point explain that it is necessary to get the native to understand that so far as touches upon his religion, that whatever information one requires is not sought for in an irreverent sense, but with the best motives. One will at once see how necessary it is to treat his religion with the same respect we would have others treat our own. Avoid wounding the native religious susceptibility, and one will find that even a Moplah, usually a difficult medium for information, can, under favourable conditions, be quite open and willing to exchange ideas and at the same time satisfy one's craving for information which, under ordinary circumstances, it would be almost impossible to obtain. A knowledge of the native tongue at once entitles you to his respect and is the only real "open sesame" for information.

There is, however, one point on which even under the most favourable circumstances one must be prepared to find him exceedingly wary, and in this respect he is no wise different than other followers of the Prophet; the point referred to is that connected with the interior economy of the home circle, so far as touches social usages as affecting the female



members of the Moplah household. On such a subject tact is necessary; still a kindly interest and a judiciously worded enquiry often performs wonders.

A mistaken impression appears to exist among many of the troops and Europeans generally no less than among those who preceded us on Detachment in this station, that all inhabitants of Malappuram are Moplahs, whether Hindoo, Brahman or Jain. This impression is totally wrong. The idea prevails that the word is collective rather than a distinctive one—that all natives of the locality are therefore Moplahs.

The Moplah, then, is of a caste having nothing in common with any of those enumerated, his faith or religious belief as well as habits varying altogether from those enumerated above.

The Moplah is a Mahommedan of the *Sunni* sect conforming strictly to the tenets of the Prophet and Koranical teachings generally, and, though differing from the Arab proper, has, like the rest of early converts who followed the paths of Islamism, gradually, through many centuries, imbibed those traits which are such a prominent feature in all who follow the religious teachings of Mahomet and which presents characteristics so much at variance with the religions of the West.

The modern name Moplah or, as some term themselves *Mappilas*, is derived from the Malayalam words *Maha* (great) and *pilla* (child), the last word, whilst meaning "child", carries with it the meaning of "respect". The founders of this caste came from Arabia to the Malabar coast some nine hundred years ago when they settled at Calicut, Cannanore and Mangalore. They were merchants dealing in pepper, coffee, cinnamon, and the other spices. After a time they established a factory on the sea front at Calicut, having first obtained after much opposition a grant of land from the Zamorin or Prince. Business evidently prospered with them, for we find they commenced the propagation of their religious ideas amongst the *aborigines* of Malabar, the ancient name of which was, as indicated in my introduction, *Kerula pozama* (land of cocoanuts).

Their great success as religious teachers, aided by their benevolence to the poor and oppressed of the then prevailing castes, secured many converts, which tempted them further afield.

Their missionary enterprise leading them amongst many other inland places to Malappuram where they obtained a piece of land from the Parambachan who might fitly be described as the "Lord of the Manor", but who was in reality but the steward (and often an unjust one) of the

then Zamorin at Calicut. This piece of land was near what is called the Nuradi bridge which spans the Kadalundy river in old Malappuram.

Here a mosque was erected. A school was also founded not only for religious but for secular teaching, and singular as it may seem even in those by-gone centuries, physical culture was by no means overlooked. Be it said to the credit of these pioneers of education in ancient Malabar, gymnastics were taught in that school and it has left its mark in the present-day Moplah.

A *Kariasthan* or gymnastic instructor was appointed whose duty it was to drill the scholars attending that little school just as at the present day, for physical training is by no means neglected by them. It is in fact this system of training carried on for hundreds of years that accounts for such fine specimens of manhood, for one sees great numbers over six feet and proportionately well built.

The growth of Islamism from such a small beginning in South Malabar has surpassed all that could have been desired by these Arabian merchant missionaries. Such is the fact and from this small beginning has sprung into existence not only the Moplahs of Malappuram but of Southern India.

Previous to the year 1732, this caste held but a subordinate position in the locality. Hinduism at that time being the prevailing religion in Malappuram, and though they permitted the small body of Moplahs to practise their religion in the little mosque on the Calicut road, they were treated with the greatest severity.

It was in the year 1732 that an event took place that was eventually the means of breaking up the despotic power of the local Hindoos, particularly the Parambachan and his sycophants, and by rapid strides the once badly treated Moplah assumed importance as he rose in power; so fell the power of the Hindoo in Malappuram as well as other parts of Malabar under the patronage of the Zamorin of Calicut. Fortunately with the growth of education and more equitable English laws a fairly tolerant spirit prevails. Still the presence of troops is required at Malappuram to keep matters quiet.

Under the chapters devoted to the "Feast of the Naarcha," the reader will find a full account of the several subjects referred to in this chapter, and several points which appear vague will be found explained.

In bringing this section of my book to a close, I would like to say that many of the peculiarities or what one might term such, so apparent in the Moplah, disappear on closer acquaintance, and one learns to admire him if only for his martial spirit.

Seeing him from day to day over a period of two years, it may safely be presumed the author should be able to judge him or at least form a fair estimate of his character, nor do I think I will be found wrong in my estimation of him.

To my thinking, then, he possesses many excellent qualities among which is his desire to please, nor is he by any means ungrateful as some have thought, probably there are many erroneous impressions concerning him, but much of this is arrived at through want of observation.

Treat him with respect, avoid hurting his feelings by the use of certain words, unfortunately, in too common use, and one will find him as I have found him, capable of much good and faithful as a dog. What one is compelled to like in the Moplah is almost an entire absence of cringing servility common to natives of more northern stations. Many events have occurred in the past which show him capable of great attachment in a moment of real danger. It should never be forgotten that a Moplah is a Mahomedan and, like the Jew, holds in abhorrence certain animals; by forgetting this fact many a thoughtless wrong is done him, but his intelligence teaches him that the wrong was unintentional, and it is passed over with a smile. Many of their customs may seem peculiar to us as Christians even as our own are equally incomprehensible to him. I have been told this much by intelligent natives and can quite understand what he feels; whatever private opinion may be as to the validity of his religion, one cannot help being favourably impressed by his fervour in practising it, and the ever-ready willingness with which he dispenses charity to the poor is praiseworthy.

In this as in the preceding chapter I have done my best to convey something like an idea of this particular caste, amongst whom I lived while the respective companies to which I belonged were at Malappuram during the years 1904-5-6 on Detachment duty, and which I gained from personal experience like many of my comrades who were in that station, and from the fact of never having heard one disrespectful word used towards me in my wanderings through the village and outlying villages in my search for information. I have come to the conclusion that the tales we heard when coming out to India as to their bitterness towards British troops are entirely without foundation; and I only hope during my Indian service, I may never meet a worse lot of natives than the Moplahs of Malappuram of whom I can say nothing only what is to their credit during my stay in that station.

## CHAPTER III.

### PART I.

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#### THE MOPLAH FEAST OF THE "NAARCHA."

##### THE HISTORY OF ITS ORIGIN.

At the time of writing, the feast referred to in the previous chapter and which lasts two days is in progress. Malappuram, ordinarily a quiet little jungle village with a population of between nine and ten thousand persons, presents a very different aspect. The place is literally teeming in scores of thousands of natives from outlying villages and townships having for an object, the honouring of 44 Moplah heroes or saints who met their death in 1732 in defence of families and religion, also to fulfil their vows by returning thanks for a run of prosperity or recovery from sickness.

I purpose dealing in this history with the origin of this feast and the circumstances which led to its inauguration as an annual festival.

The Indian Government makes an annual grant of thirty rupees towards sanitary measures including the watering of the roads in the immediate vicinity of the meeting place of this vast assembly.

A brief account of the events I am dealing with in this article, is given in the sacred book called "Sebecna," the public recital of which by the Moplahs on the occasion of this festival or at any other time has been prohibited by Government.

I am indebted to Adikhari Ali (Native Magistrate) of Malappuram, who has so kindly supplied me with an outline of the events and dates from records preserved in the mosque erected by the Moplahs three years after the events mentioned in my article, *viz.*, Malayalam Era 912 (A. D. 1737), and in which the Moplahs of this village worship.

The feast of the "Naarcha," a Malayalam word signifying "an offering," is now an annual gathering of the Moplah Mahommedan community. In its ecclesiastical sense, it is an offering to God prescribed in Islamitic teachings, much the same as Harvest thanksgivings at the present day in England.



Votive offerings are of very remote origin. Records unearthed from the buried cities of ancient Egypt have proved the high antiquity of the practice. The Mahomedan church has always permitted this, since they have a form of prayer covering the purpose and which is in use at the present day.

This form of thanksgiving or offering used in the Mosque is called "Naarcha." Thus it will be seen that a promise to perform a good deed or act, made by a person suffering from sickness, or in trouble of any kind, if permitted to be restored to good health, or even a run of good fortune in an enterprise, a gift to some charitable institute, or to the poor of the village in fulfilment of the promise: this also is "Naarcha" (an offering).

As the anniversary of the death of the forty-four Moplahs occurred in the month 'Makaram' (January) also called by the Arabic word 'Muharram' which is the first month of the Mahomedan New Year corresponding to our January, it became customary with the Moplahs to complete their vow on the commencement of the new year, much the same as we are in the habit of announcing our intention "to turn over a new leaf on the first day of the year." The fact of the fulfilment of a vow by devout Moplahs of Malabar on this anniversary, has been the means of its becoming a "fixed feast," now known by all Moplahs throughout this district, so that the word "Naarcha" from an ordinary votive offering, conveys to the minds of these people all the importance of this greatest of Moplah feasts.

As the meaning of the word is now understood, I will proceed to the more remote cause, which led up to the origin of this great Moplah feast, on the occasion of which scores of thousands wend their way to Malappuram from far and near to take part and at the same time make their pilgrimage, for this is really what the visit to Malappuram means, and add their offerings to the thousands being offered with the same common object; and there is no possible doubt as to the genuine piety which prompts these interesting people in worship of the same God to whom we as Christians offer our prayers, but by them called "Allah."

The "Naarcha," as shown, is therefore an offering now made on the anniversary of the death of these forty-four men, called according to the Moplahs and their sacred books "Saints," and who met their death in this very village (Malappuram) in the Malayalam Era or year 908 (A. D. 1732). The heroism, with which these Martyrs met their death for the sake of their parents, wives and children and people of this place, will be published later together with the tragic circumstances surrounding their death which entitles them to the

honours which are paid them on the occasion of the annual gathering of Moplahs; the manner of their death according to native ideas only too plainly entitles that their memories should be kept green, and that the Mahommedan church is justified in giving the title of "Saints."

The event is kept up yearly at the expense of the Moplah Mahommedan community, chiefly the wealthier classes, which also sanction the outlay of a certain sum from the coffers of the mosque or from levied moneys. Since sanction is given locally through the Thangal (the head of the Mahommedan community here), it is not surprising it has the support of the followers of the Prophet throughout the Malabar district.

The actual burial-place of these forty-four Moplahs was at Poolakamm, exactly half a mile north-east from Kottappadi (gate of the fort), which is still the name of the site on which the Detachment Football ground is now situated, but which was occupied by a fort at the time of the opening events in this history.

Poolakamm is the name of the paddy-field on which the pilgrims meet on the occasion of this festival. It will be therefore seen that this village, now so tranquil, was once the scene of strife and given up to pillage and plunder. It is nevertheless a fact and is vouched for by records taken at the time, and to which, by the kind permission of the Mosque authorities through the Adikhari (Native Magistrate) of Malappuram, I have been furnished with an outline. These records have left no doubt as to who were the aggressors,—undoubtedly the Hindoo caste—for the Moplahs suffered many indignities at the hands of these people who at the time of the opening of this history were in the ascendant in this locality. Though the events I am speaking of took place during the third decade of the 18th century, the ill-feeling on the part of the Moplahs to the Hindoos has not ceased, as the attack on the Hindoo temple at Manjery only a few years ago plainly indicated, on the occasion of which the troops of this station took part in quelling with loss of life.

The celebration of the "Naarcha" is the signal for a renewal of the Moplah hatred of the Hindoo, nor can there ever be any hopes of reconciliation between these two castes. To my own knowledge more than one Hindoo was roughly treated only last year, whilst in a lonely part of the village.

Personal contact with the Moplah brings to light many excellent qualities. These qualities I have mentioned in my previous articles on "Malappuram and where it is" and "The Moplahs of Malappuram," and I am expressing what I think to be a correct idea shared by the troops of this station. A history of India before and even after the advent of Europeans only too plainly indicates the despotism practised.

No man's life was worth the purchase. His wife and family and goods were all subject to the will of capricious Rajahs and their underlings or tributary princes. India then, as now, was a land of mystery and varied religions and divided into castes as at the present day, and just as diverse. In Malabar, in which Malappuram is situated, the same state of things existed.

Before European invasion, Malabar (its ancient name being *Kerala pozama*—land of cocoanuts) was governed by native despotic Rajahs and petty princes, and amongst the many despots of importance was the Zamorin of Calicut. Malappuram amongst other villages was under the immediate dominion or vassalage of the said Rajah, and therefore was tribute to Calicut, and taxes were levied with no light hand. These princes had a lien on everything that was of use, from household goods and savings to the daughter of his vassals, and it was the excesses of the latter right, which led to the gradual downfall of despotism in this locality. It is not difficult to believe that these Rajahs would have claimed even the souls of these poor crushed natives, could it have been done.

The Rajah or Zamorin of Calicut being unable to look after his many possessions of which Malappuram was one, appointed a chief or steward, one Para Nambi, as a vassal chief to govern Malappuram and adjacent places.

Moors and Arabs, according to the records, were the first coloured race to come to Malabar (see my "Moplahs of Malappuram"). They were merchants who came with the object of dealing in pepper and coffee, some of whom settled down in Malabar in the interests of their commercial pursuits, chiefly on the sea-coast, so as to be able to superintend the shipment of their goods, viz., at Mangalore, Cannanore and Calicut, and to whom rights and privileges to carry on trade were accorded.

These merchants being Mahommedans, with the characteristic zealousness of their faith, propagated their religious ideas throughout Malabar and, making great headway, had many adherents throughout the District and had already begun to make themselves a power. Such was the state of things immediately preceding the Malayalam year 908 (A. D. 1732).

Para Nambi, already mentioned, was the name of a Nambutiri Brahman to whose name was added, the word "Achan" (father), as a token of respect and in consideration of the important position he was holding under the immediate patronage of the Rajah of Calicut; hence we get the modern Malayalam word Parambachan, which in its wider sense signifies a lord of the manor.

Although a great favourite of the Zamorin of Calicut, it must not be forgotten that his sheer ability alone caused his rapid advancement. The fact remains, however, that he was appointed Vassal Rajah in Malayalam year 790 (A. D. 1615) of Malappuram as well as ten adjacent places, thus establishing the hereditary title for his successors.

Things went on smoothly for a time, but years after his appointment, *viz.*, M. E. 800 (A. D. 1625), a Vassal Rajah Gooruvayoor, for some reason not clearly defined, revolted against the Parambachan, and for two years a kind of desultory warfare was carried on between the two. Finally, in M. E. 812 (A. D. 1627), the Parambachan collected his Nayar forces, determined to put an end to the incursions of the Rajah of Gooruvayoor; the two opposing forces met and a fierce conflict took place, the victory remaining in the balance for some time. Eventually the Parambachan's forces were routed, he and the remnant of his forces were obliged to take to flight pursued by the enemy, who greatly harassed them. The Parambachan being separated from his troops was in imminent danger of being taken. A number of Malappuram Moplahs had witnessed the fight, and seeing the dangerous position of the Parambachan, were seized with pity on seeing him practically helpless and left alone in the hands of his enemies, managed to conceal and afterwards secretly conveyed him to his Fort at Malappuram which was situated on the site of the present Detachment Football Ground.

## PART II.

In the preceding chapter I left off at the point, where, after defeat of his forces by the enemy, the Parambachan had been conveyed as secretly as possible by a number of compassionate Moplahs to his Fort at Malappuram. This Fort was but a rudely constructed one, made from hewn blocks of laterite rock, such as is used in making buildings at the present day in this locality, and which forms the surface of the ground throughout the greater part of the Malabar District.

The risk attending the conveyance of the Parambachan, as may be imagined, was very great considering that the armed troops of the Rajah of Gooruvayoor were scattered all over the place, and many stationed at the various



approaches to this village. The friendly Moplahs did not however consider the danger they were running or that he was not of their caste, but all the same adopted the best method of securing his safety in which they were successful, and probably much relieved when they got the Parambachan through the gates of his Fort which, as already pointed out, occupied the site of the present Detachment Football Ground. This piece of land still goes by the name of "Kottappadi" which in Malayalam signifies "gate of the fort," and upon each annual gathering of pilgrims is visited by scores of thousands of devout Moplahs, who take no pains to hide their veneration for a spot which is so closely associated with the last stand of the heroes so dear to every Moplah heart. And there are few Moplah children who are not acquainted with the outlines of this important piece of religious and secular history, in celebration of which only a fortnight ago Malappuram was the scene of unusual activity not only by day but by night, when a fine pyrotechnic display was to be witnessed on several evenings with loud explosions from miniature cannon or by means of "chattie-bombs" (earthenware vessels containing powder packed tightly and exploded by means of a fuze).

Returning to the subject of the escape: the Parambachan greatly pleased at his safety and particularly pleased at the humanity of these Moplahs, though so widely at variance with their religious views as opposed to his own, he nevertheless made them substantial presents and further bestowed on the Moplah community many privileges which before this act they had not enjoyed.

Having proved the sterling quality of this section of his subjects, he arrived at the conclusion that although they were so widely different in caste, they might, if properly treated and accorded privileges placing them on a level with others of the subjects, from a civil point of view, prove most useful allies. He was already aware of their daring and felt they would be a most valuable acquisition as fighting-men, if he could only secure their services.

Accordingly, he increased the privileges they were enjoying still more, and was as a result of leniency enabled to recruit for his forces from amongst his Moplah subjects; nor was he at all disappointed, for in a very short time he was able to raise quite a big number of men and was anxiously awaiting a time to put their fighting abilities to the test. To these men he gave a thorough good training, employing the best material for the purpose, and thus prepared them for what was uppermost in his mind, *viz.*, retaliative measures against his old enemy, the Rajah of Goortuvayoores, whom he had not forgiven for his defeat some time previously.

The fact of the Parambachan's having been worsted, had created a deep feeling of resentment and he was most anxious to vindicate his honour by an appeal to arms, and at the same time test the fighting powers of his new friends, the Moplahs.

Contrary to precedent, the Rajah of Gooruvayoor did not follow up the advantages he had gained over the Parambachan, but seems to have been quite content in the knowledge that he had beaten off his rival to power, and quietly rested on his laurels.

The Parambachan feeling perfectly assured of the fighting powers of his Moplah recruits was now determined to make a further effort to punish the late victors. Accordingly in 803 M. E. (A. D. 1628) he sent notice of his intention to make war upon the Rajah of Gooruvayoor, who at once assumed the defensive, although very much against his will, having had no further thoughts of reprisals.

The Parambachan at the head of his Moplah troops set out to combat the Rajah of Gooruvayoor. The two forces meeting some miles from Malappuram, hostilities were commenced and a fierce conflict ensued. The superiority of the Moplahs was apparent from the very outset in the fray, which lasted some considerable time. Many lives were lost on the Rajah's side with but a few casualties on the side of the Parambachan's forces, by whom the victory was gained.

As a result of this conflict, the Rajah of Gooruvayoor became vassal to the Parambachan of Malappuram, and was compelled to pay tribute.

Unstinted praise was accorded the Moplah troops and as a result, the community of Malappuram received still further rights and privileges at the hands of the Parambachan. A great welcome was given on their return, after such a signal victory.

The Moplahs who, up to the time of enlisting into the Parambachan's service, had suffered many disabilities, considered this a fitting opportunity for airing their grievances, which was accordingly done. They pleaded successfully for the rights and privileges of citizens, and in proof of his great satisfaction the Parambachan granted their requests.

Previously, worship by the Moplahs, who then as at the present day are Mahomedans of the Sunni sect, was carried on almost in secrecy. Amongst the many advantages they gained by means of their request was the grant of land, upon which a mosque was built, and it is this very mosque round which centres so much of what subsequently became historical, and caused the foundation of the great "Moplah feast of the Naarcha." The concession, considering the fact that Hinduism was rampant, was a great one, and was greatly

appreciated by the Mahommedans of Malappuram and surrounding villages and was without doubt the means, at least for a time, of creating a better feeling between two castes so diametrically opposed, as Hindu and Mahomedan from a civil point of view.

The Moplahs were permitted by the Parambachan to extend their buildings and occupy quarters of their own instead of being scattered here and there, as had formerly been the case, before they had received these concessions.

These privileges were eagerly accepted by the Moplah population, who lost no time in obtaining the services of men skilled in architecture. Buildings, including a school, were therefore erected on a proper plan. Streets were formed and roads laid out superior to what had hitherto existed, as is plainly to be seen after a lapse of almost two centuries, adding not a little to a neater appearance even at that time, though not without a pang of jealousy on the part of the Parambachan's co-religionists. Still the improvements could not fail to be noticed by the Parambachan himself who, one may presume to hope, expressed his pleasure at the remarkably neat and business-like appearance and growth from what had formerly been the style of architecture.

So rapid were the changes being wrought in bringing barren land to a populous district that outsiders as well as those living in the villages were altogether surprised.

In many instances land that had been incapable of bringing forth the fruits of the earth was properly tilled and irrigated by these Moplahs and "brought forth abundantly."

During all this time another great work was in progress, viz., the spread of Moplah or Mahommedanism in the District. Unnoticed, this great work had been silently going on, and many converts had been made. In this, as in many other things, striking proof was being given from day to day as to the ability of these people, and no wonder people of other castes gave them the name of *Maha pillā* (greatly respected) in appreciation of the work they (the Moplahs) were doing both from a religious and a secular point of view. Day by day under proper treatment his thrift became proverbial, and "his religion as rapidly grew in its number of adherents," that all were compelled *nolens volens* to admit the fact. The name Moplah compounded of the two Malayalam words *Maha pillā* (greatly respected) was not given without just grounds. He began to make himself felt a power in the locality. Although friendly relations existed between Hindu and Moplah, yet misgivings now began to be felt by the former caste owing to the Moplahs' rapid progress all round; however, a generally friendly feeling was established and kept up.



till the M. E. 1904 (A. D. 1729), when an incident turning the whole course of events took place.

During this year (A. D. 1729) there came to Malappuram a certain Moplah bearing the name of Koyally Marakar, said to be a native of Wallavanad. This man, according to all accounts, appears to have travelled extensively throughout various parts of India. Records prove him to have been a man of superior education for this period. He was certainly a very clever man and possessed of many accomplishments, chief amongst which was his ability in the use of weapons of warfare, and his extraordinary skill in the use of the sword became known far and near. Where he acquired such wonderful power in the use of the sword does not appear to be known. There would appear to be no branch of military training of which he was not a perfect master. He likewise gained notoriety as an accomplished gymnast.

The wonderful ability of Koyally Marakar reached the ears of the Parambachan who lost no time in appointing an interview, at which an exhibition of Marakar's skill was given. So pleased was the Parambachan with the display of swordsmanship, that he at once enlisted his services and appointed him Kariasthan (Gymnasium Instructor), much to the delight of the Moplah community, who felt how great an advantage it would be for them to have a co-religionist in high favour with the Parambachan.

The feeling existing between Koyally Marakar and his master, the Parambachan, amounted on the latter's part almost to that of a father's love to a son, whilst the former took every opportunity of returning the confidence placed on him. Whether the Kariasthan's affection was real or pretended is hard to say, but at any rate he appeared to look to the interests of his master, the Parambachan bestowing favours upon him from time to time and taking every opportunity of shewing his liking for his new found favourite.

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### PART III.

FOLLOWING the state of things existing at Calicut and other places in Malabar, it is not difficult to understand that the Parambachan followed the example of his illustrious master, the Zamorin, and carried out the traffic in human flesh. Prisoners of war became the property of the victors



and if unable to pay a suitable ransom, had to work for the benefit of their new master; and otherwise submit to his caprices and whims; nor were his wife and family exempted.

Records do, however, prove the Parambachan to have been for a short time a little more kindly in some instances than was usually to be found in men occupying so high a position as that he held in this locality, and had he not been too much guided by his relatives, or possessed of more will power, much that eventually took place in Malappuram a few years later would have been avoided.

Returning to Koyally Marakar, the Kariasthan or Gymnasium Instructor, this Moplah's position was virtually that of Commander of the Parambachan's troops, so the importance of his position will at once be seen. He was the arbiter of disputes which required settling by the sword, and subsequent events served to prove how ably he kept up his previously acquired fame.

In addition to his duties as Military Commander he made frequent excursions with his forces to outside districts not necessarily for settling disputes, but to do a little pillaging on his own and his master's account, for by a tacit understanding he was to share the proceeds of his "booty forages"—for this is what they really were—with his master at Malappuram. The pillaging of villages was a most lucrative business and as a result the "Coffers" at Malappuram were always in a most flourishing state. The same Koyally Marakar's success earned for him still greater privileges, but never once did he forget to urge the interests of his co-religionists, the Moplahs, who were willing enough to condone his offences whilst not sympathising with his methods, from the fact of his championing the cause of Moplahism, and by thus means proving himself to be "the friend at Court."

A time, however, came which proved the undoing of Marakar. One day he had gone out with a number of his forces with the usual object of brigandage, and had made a successful forage during which a large residence was attacked, and articles of value secured. During the operations Marakar obtained possession of a beautiful girl whom he submitted to indignity, a most unusual thing on his part, for Marakar had hitherto rather a good name concerning his treatment of female prisoners, so that the act was deprecated by even his own men.

The fault had been done and there is no doubt that he himself regretted deeply the fact of having allowed his passions to have overpowered him.

To make matters still worse, it was found that the girl was the daughter of blood-relatives of the Parambachan, so that the dilemma of Marakar will at once become apparent.

The return journey to Malappuram was made, and it need hardly be said that every effort was used to prevent the outrage reaching the ears of the Parambachan. The pillaging of the residence of the relatives was a minor offence compared with the still more serious charge hanging over the Kariasthan's head. For sometimes the offence was kept quiet, and it was thought that no more would be heard of the affair, but such was not to be the case. For some time after the event the circumstances of the case reached the ears of the Parambachan whose indignation can be better imagined than described, and he could not be brought to believe that his "beloved Marakar" could be guilty of such an offence. For regarding the actual pillaging he counted that as nothing, and probably the offence alleged against the Kariasthan, had it been committed against anyone but a relative of the Malappuram despot, nothing more would have been heard of the matter, but a relative—that was another thing.

Most reluctantly did the Parambachan give the order for Marakar's arrest which was at once carried out. No denial was made on the part of the accused favorite, who was allowed every privilege considering his position consistent with safety.

The Parambachan communicated with the relatives of the "deeply injured maiden" and invited the parents to visit Malappuram with the girl, and if necessary identify the man who had wronged her.

The parents and other relatives of the girl had in their communication to their powerful relative, the Parambachan, asked that compensation should be paid for the grievous wrong she had suffered, and further asked that the offending party should suffer the extreme penalty of the law.

There were many in the employ of the Parambachan who, jealous of the power placed in the hands of Marakar, were only too pleased to have the chance afforded them of encompassing his ruin; and no time or opportunity was lost in advocating his disgrace, which meant loss of power, whilst others openly advocated his execution and pointing out to their master that it was a great insult to the Parambachan in addition to a gross wrong to the girl, as well as a wrong to the parents and relatives, and which could only be atoned for, by the death of Marakar. Whilst the Kariasthan was a Moplah-Mahomedan and permitted to practise his faith, the Parambachan was a follower of Hindu faith. As there is such a wide difference between the two castes and their faith, and again as the followers of the Moplah faith were gradually increasing in numbers and strength much to the annoyance of Hinduism, it was urged that nothing short of



Marakar's death was necessary to prevent the downfall of that faith in this locality (a belief which was only too true for the whole of Malappuram is practically Mahomedan at the present day). This was not the true reason which prompted the desire for the death of Marakar; it was desire for power on the part of Hindoo satellites.

The Parambachan was placed on the horns of a dilemma and would make no promise to his co-religionists who had accordingly to "possess their souls in patience" and wait the result of the interview of the Parambachan with his relatives, and satisfy himself that his "beloved favorite" was guilty of the charge made against him, and whether it could be substantiated by the girl recognizing Marakar as the man who had violated her.

It becomes necessary at this point to give some indication as to the feeling of the Moplah community on the unfortunate affair, and the serious charge hanging over the head of *their* favorite. It is only fair to these people to say that whilst they strongly deprecated the offence alleged against their friend, the man who had done so much towards making their lot so much easier in this village, they were opposed to such drastic measures as advocated by his rivals to power. It is even recorded that they were prepared to assist in paying his fine if such were inflicted.

It will therefore be seen that whilst one side lusted for his blood, the other awaited the decision like stoics.

At last the relatives of the girl arrived at Malappuram with the girl herself, and Marakar's guilt was put beyond doubt—it was only too clearly established.

The Parambachan had hoped against hope that the charge had been wrongly made against his favorite whom records say "he loved as a father might love a son." His grief was painful to witness and many felt the weight of his temper.

The parents of the girl asked nothing less than the death of the "favorite." Whilst sympathizing with the girl and her people the Parambachan who loved his favorite above all, could not be brought to accede to what he thought to be a punishment out of proportion to the crime serious as it was, and "involving the honor of a girl."

The Parambachan urged that as Marakar had followed out his instructions, so far as pillaging was concerned, he had, however, exceeded his instructions in respect of the offence he had committed, and as one offence had led to the other his conscience smote him, and the execution of the favorite might lead to serious trouble with his Moplah troops. He was prepared to offer pecuniary compensation for his officer's offence.



This promise did not satisfy his relatives, who prompted by some of the jealous court officials still urged their desire for Marakar's execution.

Meanwhile everyone was in a state of anxious expectation as to the fate of Marakar. The Moplah troops who had served under him as well as a few faithful Hindoos were prepared to fight to the bitter end in resisting the order for their beloved leader's execution. In fact, a kind of understanding seems to have existed as to the course of events, should an attempt be made to execute Marakar. Subsequent events prove that all arrangements had previously been made for eventualities.

After further deliberations (not known) the Parambachan sent off an escort to bring Koyally into his presence. (Koyally Marakar had not been deprived of his arms and accoutrements). "The arrival of the men appeared a bad omen" to our Kariasthan who accordingly made preparations for the worst, but at the same time prepared to sell his life dearly having the impression, his end was near.

Having washed and put on suitable attire and fully accoutred, he placed himself in charge of the leader of the party and stated his willingness to be conducted to the presence of his master.

There were many sad hearts as Marakar passed the chamber of the Parambachan, for many a kindly gift had he made to the poor, and many a piece of oppression had been righted by him.

On his arrival at the fort, still going by the name "Kottappadi" (the Detachment Foot-ball Ground), in which were the rooms occupied by the Parambachan, he was conducted to his presence. "The Parambachan was greatly moved on beholding Marakar." His position made him feel for his favorite. "How to dispose of the case perplexed him greatly! His love was still strong," yet, there was a desire to give satisfaction to his relatives. Even then, he was undecided what to do, and how to punish so as to satisfy his conscience. Resolving to discuss the manner of dealing with the favorite, he ordered the escort to conduct Marakar to his place of confinement pending his resolution with strict injunctions to be closely watched, whilst the deliberations were in progress, and which lasted a considerable length of time. The excitement throughout the Fort, and in the village of Malappuram, and adjacent places being very great.

Again, Marakar is warned for the Parambachan's presence, this time to be confronted by the girl and her relatives, by whom satisfaction was demanded.

Marakar thinking that immediate punishment was to be meted out, and having strong reasons to fear treachery, re-



fused and resisted the efforts of his guard to force him into the presence of his master. He did not appear to think that his case was being dealt with fairly, and that the Parambachan was being influenced inordinately by his numerous relatives who was asking nothing short of Marakar's death, which request, if granted, would lead to grave results amongst his subjects.

Nothing having been decided upon, the Parambachan went off to his sleeping chamber in an upper story, and laying down on his bed lay thinking whilst resting his head upon his hands, watching what was going on outside, and arrived at the conclusion that his favorite must die.

Marakar asked to be conducted to the Parambachan's chamber, his request being immediately granted. Standing before his master, he asked that he would pardon him. Finding that there was no hope of forgiveness, and that his fate was sealed, performed one of his gymnastic feats, escaped from his escort and drawing his rolled sword which he had concealed under his dress, made a downward cut at his master's head. The Parambachan being near the window as Marakar's sword descended, it caught the stone lintel which broke the force of the blow, but it nevertheless inflicted a wound on the top of his head, and also caused a slight wound on the hand.

The order to seize Marakar was given and a rush was made to secure him, but Marakar succeeded in keeping off his guard whom he made no attempt to kill, being anxious only to secure his own retreat, which he did, and escaped through the window of his master's chamber.

Dropping to the ground his Moplals at once came to his aid. Every effort was made to recapture him, but in vain.

The news of the attempt on the life of the Parambachan and Marakar's escape spread rapidly through Malappuram and outside districts. Many Moplals came to assist Marakar, and a big fight took place in the village between Hindoos and Moplals, Marakar urging the latter to do their best, himself hewing down the enemy in scores. Numbers told on the Moplals, and Marakar himself being killed during the conflict, when all was over it was found that the Hindoo losses were 400 against but a small number of the former.

## (CONCLUSION.)

In the previous part I left off at the death of Koyally Marakar. The attempt on the life of the Parambachan greatly incensed him against the Moplahs, and he made no secret of his desire for revenge. The death of his favorite none the less grieved him and instead of ascribing the death to the proper cause he laid the blame at the door of his dead favorite's co-religionists. He even became embittered against his own relatives, but be that as it may, his feelings did not soften towards his Moplah subjects.

The Parambachan apart from any other feeling was not only ashamed to think, that a mere handful of Moplahs should be responsible for the loss of 400 of his troops, but that he had lost prestige in the eyes of other castes, and he felt he must avenge himself once and for all.

Accordingly, a secret communication was despatched to the Zamorin of Calicut, asking that Rajah to send down some fighting men to Malappuram, for the purpose of extirpating the Moplahs and at the same time to demolish their mosque together with their homes and cattle.

The Moplah villagers having acquired the secret of the Parambachan's intentions, and greatly fearing for their wives and families, petitioned the Parambachan to have pity on them, and asked why they who had taken no part in the conflict, or in any way countenanced it should be punished.

After repeated petitions had been presented, the Parambachan at last replied, stating that they who had taken no part in the plot need feel no alarm for their own safety or that of their wives and families, as it was no intention of his to punish the innocent for the guilty.

Not without some misgivings did the remaining Moplahs settle down to every-day life, and partly, though not completely reassured, few, if any, took precautions against any future dangers or fear of a broken pledge.

The faith of these peaceful Moplahs was doomed to an awful shattering. Little did they think that before morning they would behold the smoking ruins of their happy homes! Yet, such was to be the case, for at dead of night on 12th Makaram M. E. 909 (January 1734), when most if not all were peacefully sleeping, a full force of 5,600 troops besieged the streets of the Moplah Quarter in, what is now known to

all as "Old Malappuram," setting fire to the homes, pillaging and plundering without mercy.

In a frantic and terror-stricken state as they were, the first thought of the Moplahs was for their wives and families, and like others have done thought, that their Mosque as a place of worship would afford sanctuary. "Thither they conveyed their dear kith and kin, leaving their belongings in the hands of the enemy, thinking of nothing, but parents, wives and children." No personal things did they carry, only such as they had in their possession at the time of the alarm, thinking they would be safe as the enemy would never attack a place associated with devotion to their Creator. However, the Mosque afforded them shelter where "with prayers deep and fervent, waiting for daylight, they hoped for the best." It is difficult to imagine the state of mind of these poor Moplahs patiently awaiting events, expecting at any moment to be massacred.

Gradually the news of what was going on at Malappuram filtered through to the Moplahs of adjacent places, viz., the following:—Wallavarad, Kondovatti, Angadipuram, Manjery, etc. Such as were capable of bearing arms made their way to Malappuram to ascertain the true state of affairs and assist in relieving their co-religionists, "encountering many difficulties and much opposition on the journey, eventually making their way to the Mosque" in old Malappuram on the Calicut road. They accordingly appointed a leader in the person of one "Naraspatti Polker." It was resolved for safety's sake to place the women and children in a securer place. "Forty-four men were chosen as a conducting party at the head of which was Polker." They were eventually got safely away during the first night. The party of 44 men resolved to protect the Mosque, as it was rumoured that the forces intended to raze it to the ground. The enemy, whose injunctions were to destroy this place of worship, were much surprised to find it in possession of 44 determined Moplahs with "Naraspatti" at the head.

The forces of the Parambachan coupled with those from Calicut were anxious to be doing something after travelling such a distance and commenced hostilities besieging the Mosque. Still these 44 Moplahs held out against the combined forces for 3 days. The poisoning of the water-supply and the giving out of the food turned their attention to evacuating the Mosque.

On the 3rd day these Moplahs asked for terms of peace of the Rajah, stating they were not the cause of the trouble and asking why they should be inhumanly treated for the misdeeds of a stranger Moplah (meaning Marakar, the Parambachan's favorite). If allowed to go free, without molestation

and no injury to the Mosque, they would even forfeit their estates and pay over to the Parambachan one lakh of gold mohurs.

The Rajah consulted with his councillors and then replied, saying that he was determined upon the destruction of the Mosque. Again the Rajah said he would not touch a single leaf (the Mosque being thatched), so long as one of the defenders were alive and of whom there were 44 including the leader "Naraspatti Polker."

On the 3rd day, at 11 in the night the forces surrounding the Mosque began by setting fire to the roof by means of the fire tipped arrows and rockets. The brave defenders knew now they had no mercy to expect from their enemies, and accordingly eleven men including Polker decided to fight their way out. In this attempt these eleven men were killed including Polker, nine outright and two lingering till noon. There was then a cessation of hostilities for a time.

On the 5th day at about 3-30 p. m., the remaining thirty-three Moplahs quitted the Mosque in the hopes of getting clear away, fiercely fighting their way through the ranks of their enemy. They succeeded in getting as far as the present Detachment Football Ground, the site then, as now, going by the name of Kottappadi, a distance of three-quarters of a mile from the Mosque.

At this point they were all killed fighting to the last, with the exception of one, who died 8 days later as a result of his wounds.

Thus died the forty-four Moplahs giving up their lives in defence of faith, wives, and families. It is not therefore surprising that their memories are revered by the Moplahs of Malappuram, as in fact, throughout Malabar.

Whilst these heroes had been fighting the forces of the Rajah, other Moplahs had been busy with the enemy at various points in and round Malappuram. Whilst, however, the losses sustained by the Moplahs, many being untrained men and direct from the plough in a manner of speaking, were remarkably few, those of the Parambachan's and the Zamorin's were no less than 680 killed and wounded.

Sympathizing with the sad end of the brave defenders and particularly anxious to honor the bones of the 44 heroes, a rich Moplah acted the part of a "Joseph of Arimathea" and caused their bodies to be separated from the many dead, and gave them burial according to Moplah rites, in the grounds of the very Mosque, in the defence of which they had lost their lives.

The burial-place of these "Saints" is the place referred to as Poolakamm, and adjoins the Mosque in old Malappuram where their graves are still to be seen.



A few days after the events detailed above, a certain wealthy Moplah of Malappuram, named Ainnee Kurikal returning to the village after a long absence met a crowd of Hindus, who elated with the victory and inflamed with toddy, insulted him. An encounter ensued in which Ainnee met his death together with many of his attendants, but not before accounting for the lives of 137 Hindus. The body of the Moplah (Kurikal) was thrown down a well, after being stripped and submitted to various indignities.

Some Moplahs of an adjacent village traced out the corpse as directed in a dream, and the body was honoured by burial in the same spot as the 44 heroes, since it was considered he also had met his death in the same cause.

The Mosque now in existence, and used for public worship for the Moplahs at Malappuram, and neighbourhood, is the one built in 1737 on the ruins of that destroyed by the Hindus, three years after the events narrated.

In bringing this history to a conclusion, it becomes necessary to point out that the events detailed above, far from exterminating the Moplahs had the contrary effect, for it taught other Moplahs what unity could do with the result that they became more closely united than before. Their example brought many converts, resulting in a vast increase throughout Malabar.

The Parambachan, it is said, afterwards underwent a great change towards these people. This change of attitude was probably brought about, more from policy than anything else, for the Moplahs had so increased in numbers that it was this knowledge of their strength, which brought about a change carrying with it good results.

Although the events occurred 172 years ago, the bitterness of the Moplah is none the less acute, and upon more than one occasion the troops stationed at Malappuram and Calicut, and even so far away as Cannanore, during various periods have been called out to assist in quelling disturbances, so far back as 1843 and so late as 1897, when a number of Moplahs took possession of the Hindu Temple at Trikalur near Manjeri, on which occasion the troops of this Detachment were requisitioned to put down the trouble which was only effected at loss of life to the troops, but with very heavy loss of life to the rebels.

In this history of the origin of the feast which has never before been treated by European pen (the writer himself having been in India less than two years), I have endeavoured in this account of a people, of whom little appears to be known, to place before the readers of this volume, a statement of the disabilities under which the Moplahs of Malabar existed

up to the year of the massacre (for it was nothing less) of these heroes or "Saints."

Why, one may ask, were these people oppressed over and above other castes? The answer is very simple. It was for the reason that being the followers of a new religion—in this particular District, at any rate—a religion opposed to Hinduism which had long been in the ascendant, and for no other reason.

The same kind of religious intolerance has existed in the West—does in fact exist to-day, but in a less severe form. One cannot therefore wonder that in a country such as India every effort was made to suppress this new religion, as were put forth in the attempt to eradicate Moplahism, but which nevertheless failed, for their numbers have grown immensely, so that they have become a power throughout Malabar.

The oppression, to which they were subjected from time to time, coupled with the attack on their village and the destruction of their Mosque and lastly the death of the "Saints," whose bones are annually honored on the occasion of the "Naarcha," has left a feeling of bitterness which is, notwithstanding the lapse of years, very intense throughout not only Malabar but other parts of India, and no opportunity is ever lost of showing their hatred of the Hindus, particularly in Malappuram where the events I have narrated actually took place. There is no likelihood of there ever being amicable relations between these two castes in South Malabar.

During that part of the year most remote from this feast, a fairly tolerant spirit does, however, exist between those having commercial relations with each other, but on the approach of the "feast" a coolness becomes apparent, strange as it may seem, even between persons doing business with each other. On the actual occasion of the festivities the Moplah is *malgre lui* Moplah, and at such times takes no pains to hide his dislike for anything Hindu, and brought to a stage of 'religious frenzy' called "*Hal Ilakkam*" has been known to run *amok*. Fortunately, such cases are very rare. Another thing, which is very noticeable at Malappuram, is that the Hindus who are not very numerous have, upon the two occasions I have seen this feast, exercised the very wise discretion of keeping indoors as much as possible, thereby giving little or no cause for feeding the Moplah prejudices. This is a course advised by the Civil Authorities, and upon which the Hindu inhabitants wisely act.

In drawing to a conclusion, I must ask my comrades and other readers to overlook the length of my history of the "Naarcha." I was asked by several friends to give an account of its origin. My promise has been redeemed.

though the work of carrying out that promise has been no light one.

Fortunately, the task I set myself to do enlisted the sympathy of several educated natives, one of whom as indicated at the beginning, placed at my service records taken at the time, *viz.*, in 1734, and kept amongst the documents preserved in the Mosque, and for which I must consider myself especially favoured.\* Beyond dates and a mere outline of events I had little data upon which to work, and have been obliged, here and there, to take a little liberty with the subject, but no more than was consistent with truth. If the "History of the Naarcha" has proved of interest to my comrades and others, then, I am more than compensated for the trouble involved in describing what actually occurred to a people amongst whom I lived, in the small but interesting village of Malappuram and where others are at present serving as soldiers on Detachment.

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[ \* My application for information to the Mosque authorities when explained to the *Tungat* (Moplah High Priest) met with that gentleman's approval, and he permitted me to be supplied with a copy of dates, etc., of the events mentioned at various parts of my history. This was, indeed, not only a great privilege, but an honor and compliment which I appreciate at its real worth. V. I. R. ]

## CHAPTER IV.

*An account of Moplah risings affecting Malappuram as a Military Station, from 1840 to the end of the Century, compiled from various sources.*

*Also an explanation of the Hal-Illakam or religious frenzy peculiar to the Moplah Caste.*

### PART I.

THIS caste seems to have directed its efforts on every available opportunity against the Hindus themselves, their property, or in a repeated attack on and in defiling of temples when the Hal-Illakam frenzy seized him.

It would appear that the Moplahs at times were very much in the position of the Irishman who occasionally became "blue mouldy for a fight." Apart from the peculiar side, it seems he must have some one on whom to vent his ill-humour. When a Hindu was not convenient, a visit was paid to the nearest temple, by the Moplahs in a body, defilement invariably ensuing.

Surely, one might ask, there must be some reason for this kind of thing going on from time to time; some reason to be assigned for this bitterness. The reason given was the death of the 44 Moplahs in 1732 coupled with both anterior and later oppression during the time that Hinduism was the ruling caste in that part of Malabar.

It is, however, most noticeable throughout the series of events, which took place during the period mentioned above, that there is nothing to show that the Hindu was at any time the aggressor, but was in each and every instance the first to suffer at the hands of his enemy, and it is the fact of the troops in this station protecting the Hindu and his property that has brought the Military, both Native and British, in contact with the Moplahs of this neighbourhood.

Among the last-named caste there existed (probably a few are even now to be found in the locality), a certain branch of Moplahs called the Hal-Illakam Sect, fanatics pure and simple, but who might be better described by the word 'agitators.' It is this particular brand of Moplahs that have been responsible for most of these breaches of the peace occurring from 1840 to 1896.



An account of this sect was written by a Native Subordinate so far back as 1843 as to the prevalence of the Hal-illakam frenzy amongst the Moplahs in various villages adjoining Malappuram. The report says "Originally there was no Hal-illakam." One can easily imagine a party of natives working themselves into a state of religious excitement with the aid of a few native instruments and notably the tom-tom!

They are few men in the Detachment at the present time who have not listened to its beat increasing to a rapidity which is simply astounding. Heard even at a long distance it produces a feeling the reverse to pleasant, and there is even something uncanny about the sound, that cannot reconcile itself to the senses of the average Englishman. Once heard, the sound is not easily forgotten. Even the lapse of years cannot totally eradicate the sound which is weird and one can imagine exciting to the native untutored mind.

Commencing slow, the tom-tom accompanied by the voices gradually gains speed, until it assumes what might be described as little less than a blur. One can likewise hear a voice chop in here and there when suddenly the noise ceases after proceeding with great rapidity for a time. Although not actually on the scene, one feels that one or more has dropped from sheer exhaustion.

One may be sceptical as to such a rude or primitive form of music producing such a state of feeling. This is not surprising on deeper consideration. The vibratory senses of the native are not so delicately strung as an Englishman's.

Fortunately, the numbers practising it must be very small, and education is doing much to remove this remnant of a barbaric practice, but habits which have been practised through many generations are difficult to remove. Still, even if the change is being effected slowly, it is something.

Sufficient has now been written to show the more immediate cause of this spasmodic outburst of fanaticism and the method employed to bring it about. The educated or more enlightened Moplah strongly deprecates the practice and will have none of it. One can safely predict that the practice will eventually, as the song says, "Fade away and gradually die."

From this point events recorded by various writers will be given in the succeeding issues of the Journal, so that our Readers may have a true account of various episodes in the history of the station, and which has on several occasions in past years required the assistance of European troops from such stations as Calicut and Cannanore in quelling what might have proved serious risings, but for the most drastic measures on the part of the Military authorities.

"The man who first had the Ilal-Ilakam" in the Punja fields is called by the Moplahs "Punja Tangal."

On the 4th December 1843, a Nayar labourer was found dead with 10 deep wounds on his body, and "his murderer was believed to be the work of the Ilal-Ilakam sect."

On the 11th December 1843, Anavattatt Suleman and nine others killed one Karakanna Govinda Mussat, the Athikari at Pandikkad in the Wallavanad Taluk, and a servant of his whilst bathing. They afterwards defiled two temples, broke the images therein, and took post in a house. A Detachment, Lieutenant Lynch, 1 Subadar, 1 Jemadar, 3 Havildars, 3 Naicks, 1 Drummer, and 30 Sepoys of the 19th Regiment, Native Infantry, was sent out, but the Officer Commanding deemed his force insufficient and consequently fell back a short distance. Two Companies consisting of 2 Lieutenants, 2 Subadars, 2 Jemadars, 11 Havildars, 8 Naicks, 3 Drummers, 148 Privates, 2 Puckallis and 4 Lascars of the same Regiment, under the command of Major Osborne, marched from Palghat on the 17th, and on the 19th the Moplahs without waiting to be attacked, rushed at the troops directly they appeared, and were shot, but not without loss of life, as one Naick of the force was killed.

In his report, dated 19th December 1843, Major Osborne says: "I moved the Detachment at 10-30, in the direction of the house occupied by the murderers accompanied by H. D. Cook, Esq., 2 Tahsildars and peons. Immediately after filing through the paddy field, the murderers rushed upon the column, and in a few minutes were shot, ten in number."

On this occasion the fanatics were in an open plain without shelter and charged deliberately 10 men into the midst of over 200.

On the 20th May, 1849, Chakalakkal Kammad wounded one Kannancheri Chiru and another and took post in a Mosque, when the Ernad Tahsildar, (a Pathan) proceeded toward the Mosque in the hope of inducing the murderer to surrender himself. He rushed forward with a knife, and a peon put an end to the fanatic, the same day.

On the 25th August, 1849, Torrangal Uniyar killed one Padditoddi Teyyuni, and with 4 others joined one Attan Gurrikal, descendant of the Gurrikal who gave so much trouble in the early days of the British Administration. He was a worthless fellow who preferred a life of idleness and *shikar*, varied by occasional dacoities, to any other kind of pursuit. He had gathered round him a considerable body of men of the same way of thinking as himself, but among them were two at least of a respectable family who had been reduced to poverty "by suit and otherwise in their early life." They with others on the following day killed the servant of one

Marat Nambutri and two others, and took post in the Hindu Temple overlooking Manjeri, the head-quarters of the Elnad Taluk in which is Malappuram. They defiled the temple and the part round it. Captain Watt, with a Detachment of the 43rd Regiment, Native Infantry, proceeded from Malappuram to Manjeri, and on the 28th, formed a plan for attacking the temple. Ensign Wapse and his Company were sent across the paddy-field separating the Taluk Cutcherry hill from the temple hill to attack the rebels, then only 32 in number, and who were drawn from their position in the temple by parties of police and villagers who had been sent forward to fire at them.

The rest of the Malappuram Detachment was held in reserve on the Cutcherry hill, Mr. Collett, the Assistant Magistrate, being with them. Ensign Wapse's party with the exception of four men, who were killed, refused to advance to receive the charge of only a few of the fanatics, who came down hill at them, and notwithstanding the gallant example set by the Ensign himself in killing the first man who charged, the party of Native soldiers broke and fled, after some ineffectual firing.

Mr. Collett's report, dated 28th August 1849, says:—  
 "Others now came down upon Ensign Wapse, and I am informed that one of them seized him by the jacket and he received a wound, when he appeared to have fallen and was of course quickly put to death, but by this time three of the insurgents had fallen, and now those men of the Detachment, who alone had emulated their officer, fell, one of them having first bayoneted the man who gave Lieutenant Wapse his death wound."

The party held in reserve on Cutcherry hill, on witnessing this disaster, fled, although the fanatics were at a considerable distance, on the far side of the paddy flat lying at the bottom of the hill on which the reserve was posted. Only one of the insurgents crossed this paddy flat, and he was killed by a police Kolkar.

A Detachment of His Majesty's 94th Regiment from Cannanore, composed of 3 Officers, 6 Sergeants, 5 Corporals, 2 Drummers and 194 Privates under Major Dennis, reached Manjeri on the 3rd September and also a Detachment of the 29th Regiment, Native Infantry, from Palghat, comprising 2 European Officers, 2 Native Officers, 3 Naicks, 2 buglers and 132 Privates. The insurgents whose ranks had been largely recruited in the interval, evacuated the temple during the night, after the arrival of the reinforcements, and proceeded a distance of about 2 miles to the Bhagavati Kavu temple near Angadipuram, the head-quarters of the Wallavanad Taluk. Thither next day they were followed by the troops, who,



in spite of their forced march in Monsoon weather from Cannanore to Calicut, of being cooped up wet and without regular food, in cramped positions in the boats, in which in still more boisterous weather they were conveyed from Calicut to Arikod, and of the heavy march of the two preceding days, showed utmost eagerness to close with the enemy. At 5 p.m. on the 4th September the encounter took place at the 41st milestone from Calicut, on the great western road (No. 6), and in the open ground (now enclosed), to the south of the road at that point. On receiving intelligence that the insurgents, now 64 in number, were coming to the attack Major Dennis drew his men up in column of section (*vide* his report of 5th September 1849) "right in front, so as to occupy the whole road, when the enemy came on with most desperate courage, throwing themselves on the bayonets. After firing their matchlocks they took to their war-knives, swords and spears, and when struck down to the ground, renewed the fight even on their knees, by hurling their weapons at the faces of our men, and which they continued, till, literally, cut to pieces; others planted on the trees, kept up a most destructive fire with their matchlocks loaded with iron slugs. This attack was made by the enemy in three divisions, about 300 yards apart, the second led on in person by Atton Gurikkal (Coyah or Priest) who fought with the most desperate courage, but I am happy to say that through the steadiness, correct and low firing of the men, our loss has not been so considerable as might have been expected from the desperate onset of these mad fanatics; and in the space of half-an-hour, the enemy was completely annihilated, leaving 64 dead, their bodies lying near to each other, exhibiting most dreadful wounds, some having received four or five musket balls, besides bayonets stabs, before they could be stayed from carrying on their determined work of destruction into our ranks."

The District Magistrate's Report of 12th October 1849 says: "The power of their fanaticism was astounding. One of the men had had his thigh broken in the engagement in which Lieutenant Wapse was killed. He had remained in all the agony attendant on an unhealed and unattended wound of this nature for seven days; he had been further tortured by being carried in a rough litter from the Manjeri to Angadipuram pagoda. Yet, there he was at the time of the fight hopping on his sound leg to the encounter and only anxious to get a fair blow at the infidels before he died."

The casualties in the Detachments were trifling when the numbers and the determination is considered. Two Privates of the 94th Regiment were killed and 3 others and a Sergeant wounded; one officer received a deep flesh wound.



Major Dennis had a wonderful escape from a bullet which grazed his wrist.

A sepoy of the 39th Regiment was likewise severely wounded. On searching afterwards, one of the insurgents, a lad of 17 or 18 years, was found to be alive. He lived for some time and told what he knew about the outrages.

The bodies of the slain insurgents were thrown into a dry well in the garden lying to the south of the Wallavanad Taluk Cutcherry at Perintalmanna.

On the 2nd October, 1850, information was received that the sons of one Periambeth Attan, the Mappila Adikhari at Puliakod Amson, in the Ernad Taluk (in which is Malappuram) had with others concerted to kill one Mungamdamballatt Narayana Mussat and to devote themselves in death to arms. Security was required of nine individuals on this account.

On the 5th January, 1851, Choondyamoochikal Attan attacked and wounded severely a Government Native Clerk, named Raman Menon, who had been employed in inspecting gingelly-oilseed (*ellu*) cultivation in Payanad, Ernad Taluk, in conjunction with the Village Accountant in view to settling the Government share, and he then shut himself up in the Inspector's house, setting the police at defiance. No persuasion could induce him to surrender himself. He declared he was determined to die a martyr. The Tahsildar (a Moplah) tried to induce him to give himself up, but he utterly refused to do so. Finally rushing out, and firing at the opposing party, he was shot dead. The reason assigned by the criminal for attacking the Inspector was that his wife's gingelly oil crop has been over-assessed.

On the 17th January 1851, three Moplahs were reported as contemplating an assault, and security was taken from them.

On the 20th August 1851, six Moplahs killed one Katuparambat Komu Menon and his servant on the high road between Manjeri and Malappuram, as they were returning home from the Mankada Kovilakam of the Wallavanad Raja. They were joined by three others. With these they proceeded towards Komu Menon's house, but finding a brother of Komu Menon's ready to meet them with a gun and a war-knife, they left the place and went to the house of Ittuni Rama Menon, a brother of Komu Menon, another brother who was then bathing in a tank close by. They killed Kadakathil Nambudri, who was seated in the porch of the house, the family of Rama Menon escaping in the tumult. The murderers then overtook Rama Menon, who had endeavoured to escape and cut him down. Setting fire to the house, they marched towards the house of one Mundayangara Rarichan Nair, whom they wounded severely, who subsequently died of his wounds.

They then set fire to the house of one Chengara Variyer. On the morning of the 23rd they were seen in the Korava Amson, about 8 miles distant from Ittuni Rama's house. Thence they proceeded to the house of Kollatur Variyer, an influential *janni* who had opposed the erection of a mosque. They were in the meantime joined by five others. On their arrival the attendants and family escaped; and the women and children were told by the fanatics to go away. They next killed two servants of the Variyers, two of the junior Variyers escaped, but the old Variyer, a man of 79, probably shut himself up in a room where the fanatics eventually discovered him. The Hindus sent for the Moplahs' chief men of the place and others. About 50 persons appeared, two of whom joined the insurgents, calling out, "the chief pig is inside." "The old Variyer was then brought out into the paddy-field adjoining his house, to a distance of sixty yards from the gate house, and one Pupatta Kuttiaten and another, in the sight of all the people assembled, hacked him to pieces, severing his head from his body. As soon as Mr. Collett, the Divisional Magistrate, heard of their having taken up a position at Kollatur, he sent a requisition to Major Wilkinson, the Officer Commanding the 39th Regiment at Malappuram, who, in complying with the request, wrote to Mr. Conolly on the 24th as follows:—

"I despatched a party, under the command of Ensign Turner, of 65 rank and file with the proper complement of native commissioned and non-commissioned officers.

"My reason for sending the party under the command of Ensign Turner was, that Mr. Collett had informed me, when at my house very early yesterday morning, that he had written expressly for the European troops stationed at Calicut."

In his two letters to the Government of the 25th August 1851, Mr. Conolly thus describes the operations of the Malappuram Detachments:—

"The troops advanced by a muddy road towards the house" in which the insurgents were "and attacked them abreast along a causeway leading to the house through paddy-fields. After some firing, nine of the Moplahs came out from the house, and advanced to meet the sepoys on the causeway. The leading sepoys were seized with a panic, which communicated itself to those in the rear, and a general retreat ensued. The Moplahs pursued the fugitives and cut down (killed) three—a Naick, a Sepoy, and a Drummer. They then picked up some of the muskets which had been thrown away by some of the sepoys in their haste to escape, and returned to their house. One or two of the party are supposed to have been badly wounded by the first firing.

The scattered sepoy rallied after some time and have been posted in a house about a mile from where the Moplahs are."

This was (to use Mr. Collett's words) "a complete disaster." The European Detachment arrived from Calicut on the 27th under the command of Captain Rhodes [1 Captain, 1 Lieutenant, 2 Sergeants, 2 Corporals, 2 Drummers, 47 Privates and 2 Puckallies of H. M.'s 94th Regiment].

They "were so fagged out with their marches and so exhausted and footsore" that they were not able to act with sufficient steadiness against the fanatics, whose ranks had been, in spite of a close watch by villagers and Police, joined by three others, and who now numbered seventeen.

## PART II.

THE previous number tells of the troops being very much fatigued after their march, which is not surprising for a report says: "They had marched a good forty miles in two days, over a very hilly, stony and wild district", the route being by Beypore, Tirurangadi, Venkatakotta, and Chappanangadi to Kollatur.

"The fanatics showed a disposition to attack directly they arrived near their stronghold, and Captain Rhodes had not time to rest and recruit his men. The attack was thus sketched by Mr. Conolly:—

"The Europeans were in advance and the Sepoys in rear. The Europeans fired at the fanatics, who had the partial cover of a bank, till they were too tired to load, the fanatics then advanced and charged them, and the soldiers retreated in order (the charges were made under cover of the smoke of firing, which had lasted a quarter of an hour or more, the Detachment being drawn up in quarter column, and some of the fanatics, passing round the flanks under cover of the smoke, attacked the rear, whilst others attacked the front of the column). The Sepoys in the rear seeing this, of course retreated also, and the confusion was very great, until the Officers by dint of exhortation, managed to rally their men. It was now that the Sepoys, whose guns were loaded, did the good service I spoke of."

"Eleven of the fanatics were shot by a party of the 39th Regiment, who ran down to meet them from the house held



by the Sepoys about a mile from the Variyer's house.' The report proceeds. They brought down some of the leading pursuers, and thus enabled the Europeans to halt and reload. Their confidence was at once restored, and they moved forward again with the sepoys in expectation of meeting their enemies. They were all in good order when I joined them in the house from which the fanatics had come out. That the check was a very unhappy one cannot be denied, but it was satisfactory that it was so soon rectified. In the previous attack by the detachment of the 39th Regiment, the route was complete, and there was no rallying until the Mappillas had retired into their stronghold."

In this second engagement on August 27th, 4 European Privates and 1 Native Subadar were killed.

The result of the action, so far as the Moplahs were concerned, may be thus summarised. Of the 19 fanatics who were concerned in these outrages, it seems that 9 were engaged in the first four murders on the 22nd, one joined them immediately afterwards, and 4 more during the night and next morning, 14 thus attacked the Variyer's house, where 9 more immediately joined them. Of these 16 men, one was killed in the affair of the 24th August, and another, mortally wounded, died on that night, 3 more subsequently joined the band, making 17 who fell on the 27th August.

On the 3rd October 1851 information was received that Tothangad Mummud and three other Moplahs of Nenmini Amsom (village), Wallavanad (district), were found in possession of certain arms and were designing to commit an outrage. The District Magistrate's report of the 18th October 1851 says: "They had intended to join the fanatics who perished at Kollatur, but were too late. Their purpose, it was said, had been known to some of their co-religionists and they were subject to the contemptuous soubriquet of *Minjina Sahids* (all but saints). There was but too much reason to fear therefore from previous experience that they would take an opportunity of wiping off the reproach by organizing an outbreak on their own account." Security to keep the peace was required of three of them.

On the 27th October 1851 information reached the Head Police Officer in Ernad that some Moplahs of Trimboli Amsom, Ernad Taluk, had likewise intended to join the late fanatical outbreak at Kollatur. Two of them were likewise required to give security to keep the peace.

On the 9th November 1851 information was received that Choriyo Mayan and eight others were designing to break out and kill one Kolottal Kesavan Tangal, a wealthy and influential Hindu jenmi of Mottanur in Kottayam Taluk. Evidence was lacking and the Tahsildar omitted to report



the matter. The individual in question did, however, with the others, subsequently commit the outrages next to be described.

On the night of the 4th January 1852, the party named above, and six others, making in all fifteen, supported by a large mob estimated at 200, proceeded to the house of the aforesaid Kolottil Tangal in Mottanur, Kottayam Taluk. They butchered all the unhappy inmates (eighteen in all) and thus extirpated the family, wounded two other persons and burnt the house on the following morning. They then, unattended by the said mob, burnt four houses and a Hindu temple, killed four more individuals, defiled and damaged another Hindu temple, entered the palace of a Raja, took post there temporarily, defiled and then destroyed two more Hindu temples, and finally fell on the 8th idem in a desperate and long-sustained attack on the house of the Kalliad Nambiar, another wealthy and influential *jenmi* in Kalliad Amsom of Chirakkal Taluk. A Detachment under Major Hodgson of the 16th Regiment, consisting of two companies of that Corps, were sent out from Cannanore, but before they arrived on the scene, the Moplah fanatics had been all killed by the country people, retainers of the Nambiar.

On the night of the 28th February 1852, one Triyakalathil Chakku and fifteen other Moplahs of Melmuri and Kil-muri Amsoms, in the Ernad Taluk, "set out to die and to create a fanatical outbreak." Information of this was given to the principal Moplahs of the former Amsom at about 10 o'clock that night. They and their adherents remained on guard during the whole of the night at the house of Pilatodi Panchu Menon and Permikod Pisharadi, the principal Hindu *jenmis* in the Amsom, and respecting the former of whom there was on several occasions rumours that Moplah fanatics were seeking to kill him. On the morning of Sunday, the 29th, Panchu Menon hastened into Malappuram, having been alarmed by seeing some Moplahs moving on the hill at the back of the house. He applied for protection to the Officer Commanding Malappuram, who, deeming the danger of an attack on Panchu Menon's house imminent, proceeded with a portion of his troops to the house, where they remained for a few hours. He then left a guard of twenty-five sepoy, who were withdrawn at night, a guard of villagers being substituted.

On the afternoon of the 1st March, the suspected persons were secured in a mosque through the exertions of a wealthy, and influential Moplah, named Kunny Ali. The case was inquired into by Mr. Collett, the Assistant Magistrate, Malappuram, and the offenders were required to furnish security to keep the peace.

Ominous rumours of an intended Moplah outbreak in the Kottayam Taluk in April 1852 drove many of the Hindu inhabitants into the jungles.

A report to Government about this time speaking of the Moplah outrages says: "The Hindus, in the parts where outbreaks have been most frequent, stand in much fear of the Moplahs as mostly not to dare to press for their rights against them, and therefore many a Moplah tenant who does not pay rent (so imminent are the risks) cannot be evicted. Other injuries are also put up with uncomplained of."

Continuing, the report goes on to say: "To what further lengths the evil might not go if unchecked, it is impossible to say. Even the desire for plunder on the part of the Moplahs may prove a sufficient motive for the organization of these outbreaks, some having already profited largely in this way."

In the Kollatur case in August 1851, the leading Moplahs had even asserted "that it was a religious merit to kill landlords who might eject tenants."

The condition of the Hindus had "become most lamentable," and even the prestige of the rule of Government had been "much shaken in the district."

Special legislation was necessary towards the following objects, *viz.*—

Escheating the property of those guilty of fanatic outrage.

Fining the district where such outrages occur. Reporting the suspected, and placing restrictions on the possession of arms, and more especially of the war-knife and the building of mosques.

### PART III.

*An account of Moplah disturbances affecting Malappuram from 1840 to 1900, compiled from various sources.*

In December 1854 Mr. Conolly, the District Magistrate and Provisional Member of Council, proceeded on a tour through the heart of the Mappila country, brought in 2,725 war-knives, and by 31st of the following month of January 1855 (the latest date on which the possession of a war-knife

was legal) the number of war-knives surrendered to the authorities amounted to the large number of 7,561.

The next report in connection with these Moplah outrages conveyed to the Government the distressing intelligence that Mr. Conolly, District Magistrate and Provisional Member of Council for the Presidency (Mr. Conolly was shortly to have proceeded to the Presidency Town as Member of the Council of Government), had been barbarously murdered by a gang of Moplahs at his residence at West Hill, Calicut.

What followed is thus described by Mr. Collett, the Sub-Collector, in one of his official reports, dated 21st September 1855:—"Nothing could have exceeded the treachery with which the murder was begun, or the brutal butchery with which it was completed. Mr. Conolly was seated in a small verandah on a low sofa. Mrs. Conolly was on one opposite, a low table with lights on it being between them. He was approached from behind, for even Mrs. Conolly did not catch sight of the first blow, which would alone have proved fatal; the next moment the lights were all swept off the table and the ruffians bounded upon their victim, slashing him in all directions; the left hand was nearly severed, the right knee deeply cut, and repeated stabs inflicted in the back. The wounds (27 in number) could have been inflicted only by fiends actuated by the most dreadful malice. To the cries of poor Mrs. Conolly no one came; the peons and servants are usually present in a passage beyond the inner room; they were either panic-stricken, or, unarmed (as they invariably were) were unable to come up in time to afford any real assistance. One poor massalji, who came forward and met one of the murderers in the inner room, received a blow which cut clean off four fingers of his left hand. A peon also had a slight wound, but it does not appear how he came by it. Doubtless this atrocity was rapidly completed, and perhaps the first thoughts of those servants who came up was to carry off their mistress to another part of the house. Mr. Conolly was soon after carried in, and Mr. Todd was the first to arrive to witness the terrible scene of domestic agony that ensued. Supported by Mr. Todd, Mr. Conolly lingered another half hour, and then expired, having addressed a few words only to Mrs. Conolly, and apparently endured intense agony. Mr. Conolly had received an anonymous letter warning him, but unfortunately thought it needless to take precautions, and had not even mentioned it to Mrs. Conolly.

Immediately after the murder the criminals proceeded along the high road to Tamarasseri to a village near Keravil, about 12 miles from Mr. Conolly's house, where (it appears) they went to the mosque. About 4 P.M., on the 12th, they

went to the Makat Nambutiri's illam, and remained there till about 9 P.M. They took away money and property to the amount of Rs. 300. Then they struck back to the main road to Tamarasseri, and came to the house of one Pullkutti Moyi. At night they went to the Bhaval Mosque, where they remained till the following night (13th).

On the 14th they purchased provisions at the bazaar. On the 15th they moved to the Tiruvambadi Amson (village) of the Calicut Taluk (District). On the 16th they met a village peon, and wrested his musket from him. They compelled one Chapali Poker to act as their guide. He led them to Eddamannapara, which they reached at 4 P.M. on the 17th. They had not gone far from this place when they were seen, and, being followed up by the people of Kōndotti (another sect of Moplahs), were driven at length to take refuge in the house where they were shot the same evening by a Detachment of Major Haly's Police Corps, and a part of No. 5 Company of H. M.'s 74th Highlanders under Captain Davies.

A report by Mr. Collett, dated 17th September 1855, from Marar, eight miles north-west of Manjeri, says : " The position of the Moplahs was a most difficult one consisting of gardens surrounded by ditches. After some practice with the mortar and howitzer, the troops charged into the gardens, and after turning the Moplahs out of the house, the offenders retreated to a stronger one, which they barricaded, the outer door of this garden was on the edge of a deep nullah ; this door was first forced, and the troops were in the act of firing the house when the Moplahs threw open the door and rushed out upon the troops, and were of course quickly disposed of. It was quite impossible, I consider, to have secured them alive, though injunctions had been given to do so if possible. The men of the new police corps emulated the Europeans in their steadiness, and were equally to the front at the last charge. I have though with great regret to report that one European was killed by a shot from the house, and another very dangerously wounded by a cut on the throat whilst one of the Moplahs was on his bayonet." Two Hindus were also killed, one accidentally shot and the other murdered by the Moplahs when they took possession of the house."

Various causes were suggested at the time as to the motive for the murder of Mr. Conolly, but the most probable of them seems to be that the ruffians who were men of bad character, were exasperated at the orders of Mr. Conolly subjecting them to restraint in the jail, and they had revolved, probably at the suggestion of some outsiders, on avenging the banishment of Saiyid Tazl to Arabia. [This Saiyid Tazl, who was Tangal or Moplah high priest at Tirurangalli, was



known to have fostered discontent among his flock, so that his expatriation became necessary. He was of Arab extraction and was otherwise known as Pukoya. Pu (Malayalam = flower), and Koya (? corrupt form of Khwaja = influential person, gentleman). The Moplahs regarded him as imbued with a portion of divinity. They swore by his foot as their most solemn oath. Earth on which he spat and walked was treasured up. His blessing was supremely prized, and even among the higher class of Moplahs his wish was regarded as a command, and no consideration of economy was allowed to stand in the way of its being gratified. On the very day (17th February) that the Government appointed Mr. Strange as Special Commissioner, Mr. Conolly reported that 10,000 to 12,000 Moplahs '*greater number of whom were armed*' met at Tirurangadi and held close conclave with the Tangal on rumours being spread that he was at once to be made a prisoner and disgraced.]

The following Ansoms (villages) implicated in the outrage, were fined in the sums noted against each :—

		Rs.	A.	P.
Nenmini, Wallavanad Taluk	...	1,857	8	0
Kariavattam do.	...	1,951	0	0
Kalpakancheri, Ponami do.	...	16,989	0	0
Kammanam, do.	...	1,869	0	0
Vadakkumpuram, do.	...	1,991	0	0
Talakad, do.	...	8,842	0	0
Kodavayur, Palghat do.	...	3,003	0	0
Kacheri, Calicut do.	...	1,371	0	0
Kedavur, do. do.	...	512	0	0
TOTAL		38,331	8	0

The widow of Mr. Conolly was granted the net proceeds of the Moplah fines aggregating Rupees 30,936-13-10.

In November 1855 Mr. Collett, Joint Magistrate, suspecting two Moplahs who had deserted from the Malabar Police Corps, confined them on failure to find security for three years. They afterwards left the country.

A Mahomedan, named Vanji Cudorat Kunji Mayan, was arrested on 3rd September 1857, on a charge of using seditious language in the public streets and of invoking the people in the name of God to rid the country of the *Kafirs* (Europeans). The country then was in a very disaffected state, owing to the scarcity of rice and the outbreak of the Mutiny.

The excitement caused by Mayan's preaching was so great as to induce the Brigadier Commanding the Provinces to

adopt precautionary measures also at Cannanore and Tellicherry, and to place the former station in a state of defence?

It was decided that the case of Mayan should be dealt with without the intervention of the Mahomedan Sadr Amin (native criminal judge). He was eventually sent to Calicut for disposal, and subsequently died in jail at Trichinopoly.

A state of unrest existed throughout the whole of Malabar for a number of years. The troops of Malappuram, both British and Native, were always prepared at a moment's notice to turn out.

Shortly after midnight of 7th September 1873, Kunhippa Musaliyar, the priest of the Tutakkal Mosque in Paral Anson of Wallavanad Taluk (this Taluk or District adjoins the Ernad Taluk in which Malappuram is), with eight others, visited the house of one Chattara Nayar, the *Vellichchapad* or oracle of the Hindu temple at Tutakkal, which lies directly opposite to the mosque on the other or southern bank of the river. The *Vellichchapad* in one of his fits of inspiration had given offence to the Moplahs of the mosque opposite. The party on arrival at his house, roused him up on the pretence that one of their number had been bitten on the foot by a snake. As the *Vellichchapad* (oracle) stooped down to examine the limb, the leader of the gang struck him several severe blows across the back of the neck, and the party then went away leaving him for dead.

From the *Vellichchapad's* house they proceeded to, and reached in the early morning, Kollatur, the scene of the memorable outrage (already detailed) of 22nd and 27th August 1851, a distance of twelve miles, expecting to find the Varier (the head of the family and member of the District Board) at home. But he chanced (luckily) to be absent. Two other male members of the family, however, were at the house, and one of these was delayed downstairs by the leader of the gang, and was immediately attacked and mortally wounded. The other man managed to escape.

Hearing from Paral in the early morning that the gang had started for Kollatur, the Taluk Tahsildar, a Moplah, sent to Malappuram a requisition for troops, and Mr. Winterbotham, the Head-Assistant Magistrate, who chanced to be in the Taluk (District) at the time, also heard of the outbreak whilst riding from Manarghat to Angadipuram and pushed on to Kottatur, which he reached at 4 P.M.

Mr. Winterbotham had time to reconnoitre the buildings held by the fanatics before the troops (1 Lieutenant, 1 Surgeon, 2 Sergeants, 1 Corporal, 1 Bugler, and 31 Privates of the 43rd or Oxfordshire Light Infantry under Captain Vesey) from Malappuram arrived at about one hour before dark. This enabled Captain Vesey to make his dispositions for attacking the fanatics at once.

## PART IV.

The right half company under Lieutenant Williamson passed through the temple attached to the Variyer's house and took up a position in the level courtyard of the house flanking the left half company, which, under Captain Vesey, occupied the interior verandah of a raised gate-house.

As soon as these dispositions had been completed and just as the day was closing in, the fanatics attacked the gate-house party. They were armed with swords, spears, a knife, and axe, and a chopper, and notwithstanding the cross-fire from both parties of military, charged home on the bayonets. The leader of the gang, a man of great determination, "received two bullets in the chest, if not more, wounded first a front rank man, and then a rear rank man, receiving first the bayonet thrust of each and was then killed by a third bayonet thrust." "Another man was also wounded at the same spot." Of the nine fanatics eight were killed, and one, "a mere child," was wounded and afterwards recovered.

The Amsons (parishes) concerned in this outrage were fined Rs. 42,000, and the proceeds were utilized in giving compensation to those aggrieved and in constructing two cart roads to open up the tract of country where the outrage occurred, and a police station at Kollatur.

We now pass on to the year 1884, to an event which more closely affects Malappuram as a military station than anything in the previous narratives.

A Hindu of the toddy-drawer caste, named Kannacheri Raman, who had several years previously embraced and subsequently renounced Islam, was proceeding by a river footpath from his house to work (as a section boy) at the *Malappuram Barracks* at about 6-30 in the morning on the 18th June 1884. He was there waylaid and attacked in a most savage manner by two Moplahs armed with hatchets, and was very severely wounded. He managed, however, to get free and fell into the river Kadalundi close by, whence he contrived to make his escape to the house of his brother, by whom he was taken to the Malappuram Station Hospital. He at once denounced Avarankutti and Koyamutti, two Moplahs, as the men who had wounded him, and stated that a third person, one Kunhi Mammad Mulla, was present and held him whilst the others attacked him. These men had intended to run the usual course (Hal Illakam), but their courage failed them at the last moment and they were in due course arrested, brought to trial, and, being convicted of attempt to commit murder, were sentenced to transportation for life.

Three other persons were afterwards reported in connection with this case and five others released with a warning. The Acting District Magistrate (Mr. Galton) proposed to fine the Kilnuri Amson (township) in the sum of Rs. 15,000, of which he proposed to assign the sum of Rs. 1,000 to K. Raman, the wounded man, as compensation for his wounds, and these proposals were in due time sanctioned by the Government.

It was, however, found necessary to reduce the fine to about Rs. 5,000 by reason of the poverty of the Moplah inhabitants.

The proposal to assign Rs. 1,000 of this sum to apostate K. Raman appears to have rankled in the minds of the Moplahs generally. These hold the perverted view that an apostate should suffer death, and viewed the idea of granting a reward to an apostate for his wounds as a covert attack on this cherished dogma of their religion. This and the fact that the pseudo *sahids* (martyrs) in this case had set out fully resolved to die as such, and had not had courage enough to adhere to their resolution, were viewed as slurs upon the faith of Islam and could only be washed out in blood.

Champions of the faith were required and these were found, not among the recreant inhabitants of Malappuram, but away in the north of the Taluk (district) among the wild timber-floating population, and who earn a precarious living amid hardships and dangers of no common sort.

And the following narrative sets forth how they fared in the self-imposed mission in defence of their "pearl-like faith."

At 4 A.M., on the 27th December 1884, Kallokkudan Kutti, Assan and eleven other Moplahs proceeded to the house of Kannancheri Choyikutti, the brother of the apostate K. Raman, mentioned in the preceding narrative, in search of the latter, who, fortunately for himself was absent. *The house is on the river bank within sight of the barracks of the European Infantry (occupied at present by the Detachment, "F" Company, 2nd Battalion, Clasheshire Regt.), Malappuram, and is situated less than half a mile away.* When Choyikutti, hearing a noise at his cowshed, opened the door to ascertain what it was, he was greeted by a volley from the firearms carried by the party. Two of the shots took effect on him and he fell badly wounded. His son, a small boy, was also wounded. The gang set fire to the thatched roof of the house and drove the women and children out of it. On leaving the house in flames they raised the Mussalman cry to prayers. The noise was distinctly heard in barracks, but no one paid any attention to it as firing guns was quite common in the vicinity.



After this exploit the gang formed up and marched right through the Malappuram bazaar passing within 20 yards of the police station, and continued on their course along the great western road (No. 6) for a distance of over eight miles, warning people whom they met to get off the road. A Brahmin who failed to comply with their request was mortally wounded by the leader of the gang with a bullet from a number 6 gauge single-barrel muzzle-loading elephant gun which he carried and received, besides a cut from a heavy knife behind the ear. Long before they left the road it was broad daylight and they sent sundry messages to Officer Commanding Malappuram and to the District Magistrate of what they had done.

On reaching the 21st mile 4th furlong, they diverged to the north into the wild hilly and jungly country stretching thence to the Beypore river; at the river they halted for a time to take food. After doing this, a party of seven of them proceeded straight across the river, which was at that part of the year fordable to the Hindu temple at Trikkalur, lying in the Urungattiri Anson at Iznad Taluk. They halted, for a short time only, at the Churot mosque, which lies about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from the temple on a large paddy flat.

The seven men broke into the temple and took possession of it raising the Mussalman's cry to prayer, and firing their guns out of the four windows of the upper-storeyed gate-house.

The above occurrences happened during the Christmas holidays, and both the Special Assistant Magistrate and the Assistant Superintendent of Police quartered at Malappuram were absent from the station. The Head Constable of Police, however, put himself, as soon as the particulars were ascertained, in communication with the Officer Commanding (Captain Curtis of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry) and the latter with a party of his men started in pursuit of the gang, which, however, having had a long start, was never overtaken, and the detachment returned the same afternoon to Malappuram.

The District Magistrate (Mr. W. Logan) and the Police Superintendent (Major Hole) were at Calicut when the news of the outrage arrived late in the afternoon of the same day. Hastily gathering as many as possible together of the Police Reserve under Inspector Sweeney, they marched in the afternoon and evening to Kondotti, and before midnight received authentic intelligence that the gang of fanatics had taken possession of the Hindu temple at Trikkalur.

Hearing that the gang had firearms, the District Magistrate sent from Arikod, which was reached in the early morning of the 28th, urgent requisitions to Malappuram and

Calcut for dynamite, as it was not at all improbable that the gang of fanatics meant to depart from the tactics of their predecessors and to fight from behind walls with firearms, instead of charging the troops in the open as had been the practice heretofore. After-events justified this anticipation.

The paddy-flat beneath the temple on the east was reached at 10-30 A.M., and the Moplah inhabitants of the locality were assembled and despatched to bring in the fanatics if possible. But in this they failed and only brought back a message to this effect from the fanatics: "K. Raman committed an offence worthy of death by becoming an apostate. You not only did not punish him for this offence, but you actually proposed to reward him with Rs. 1,000 for doing it. How could we let him live under the circumstances?" One of the members of the deputation had the hardihood to remain behind when the rest of the party retired from the temple, and joined the gang of fanatics. They now numbered twelve, the heart of one of the original party having failed him when the neighbourhood of the temple was reached the preceding afternoon.

The fanatics had burnt two houses in the neighbourhood in the morning as a warning to the people that they must be supplied with provisions. They had also caught and killed a cow for food which they found near the temple.

The first shot was fired by the fanatics shortly after the deputation of Moplahs retired from their interview with the gang.

About 2-30 P.M., a party of 28 men of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry, commanded by Lieut. Day and accompanied by Surgeon-Major Joseph Heath (the latter shortly afterwards killed by dacoits in Burma) reached the spot from Malappuram.

It was determined to attack the temple from the west, on which side the ground was open, whereas the direct route on the east side was not only steep, but, owing to the slippery nature of the ground, no musketry fire could be directed on the building until close range was reached, and even then there was no room for more than ten men in the first line of attack.

## PART V.

*Moplah outbreaks affecting Malappuram as a Military Station from 1840 to 1900.*

ON the west, the building, and in particular the upper-storeyed gate-house, in which it was believed the fanatics

meant to make their stand, could be seen for a distance of over half a mile. It was known that the fanatics had but one rifle in their possession, the one already described, the rest of their armament consisted of a double barrel muzzle loading percussion gun, about 14 bore, by Westley Richards, a smooth bore percussion musket, and two country guns, besides several heavy chopping knives, etc. The temple and in particular the upper-storeyed gate-house, occupied a most commanding position except on the east, where the view was obscured by trees.

As Lieutenant Day's party came in sight at a distance of about 500 yards, the fanatics opened fire from the gate-house with their rifle, throwing conical bullets of over three ounces, which, from their ragged shape and high velocity, due to excessive charges of English sporting gunpowder, flew over the heads of the Detachment with a scream like that of a small cannon ball.

The Light Infantry assumed the attack formation, advancing by rushes of a few yards, and having the police in reserve behind them. No casualties occurred until the military and police had both entered the spacious outer temple square through the ruined western gate. Here they found themselves, with massive wooden bolted doors, stone walls, and thick-tiled roofs separating them from their enemies, who held the spacious inner square and the upper-storeyed eastern gate-house.

But the walls which sheltered the Moplahs also afforded shelter to the military and police, for the fanatics not expecting the attack from the western side, had only partially loop-holed it.

As Lieutenant Day was reconnoitring the building he received what at the time appeared to be a fatal wound from a bullet at the southern door of the inner square and had to retire. And the fanatics began to come down from the upper floor to the inner square and to make loopholes in the roof for shots at close range. Axes were procured, but it was found to be an impossible task to break open the massive doors.

A retreat from the outer square became necessary, and just as the critical operation had been accomplished under a brisk fire, but without casualty, Lieutenant Cardew of the Oxfordshires came up shortly before sundown with 28 more men from Malappuram.

The fanatics had all this time kept up a brisk fire from the upper-storey and the western door of the inner square, and numerous very narrow escapes from their bullets had occurred.

The reinforcements enabled Lieutenant Cardew to guard during the night two of the four gates leading through the

walls of the outer square of the temple, and the charge of the third, the eastern gate, was taken by the police reserve. The southern gate was left unguarded during the night. This fact was probably not known to the Mappillas in the temple nor to those in the neighbourhood, several of whom armed with guns, had been seen hanging suspiciously in the flank of Lieutenant Day's detachment as it marched up to the temple, and from others of whom there came defiantly at intervals across the intervening paddy flat a wild Mahomedan cry to prayers during all the time the musketry was playing in the temple front, in sympathetic response to similar cries raised by the fanatics in the temple. Two men unarmed attempted to pass into the temple during the night, but were stopped by the sentries. It is certain, judging from previous experience, that recruits would have joined the gang in large numbers during the night had these precautions not been taken.

Captain Curtis arrived during the night with some dynamite, and Mr. Twigg, the Special Assistant Magistrate, who had travelled all the way from Madras, after receiving news of the outbreak, also arrived in the early morning.

The Moplahs had been busy loopholing the western side of the temple during the night, and at the first dawn, as the party of six officers stood closely together in a group talking, the first shot from the new loopholes in the temple was fired, and the bullet from an overloaded gun fortunately whistled harmlessly over their heads.

The means of getting access to the temple had now arrived, but a difficulty which had not been foreseen occurred, for no one present knew how to handle the explosive, and those who eventually prepared the cartridges had never seen the explosive before. A series of experiments were made separately first with fuse, then with fuse and detonator, and finally with fuse, detonator and cartridge. The experiments being successful, about 25 cartridges were tied together and enveloped in a thick coating of wet clay.

Just as these preparations were being made, Captain Heron Maxwell arrived from Calicut with Surgeon Cusack and 50 men of the Royal Fusiliers.

The troops and police were then divided into three parties, the larger number, including nearly all the police, were posted at every available spot round the ruined outer wall of the temple to fire upon the gate-house and all the loopholes in the doors and roof of the N.W. and S. sides of the inner square. Another but very small party of picked men were told off to lie in the few practicable places in the ruined wall of the east side. A third party was held ready to receive the fanatics with the bayonet if they charged out.



These arrangements having been completed, a brisk fire was opened on the N.-W. and S. sides against the loopholed doors and roof of the inner square, and when the firing ceased, Private Barrett of the Oxfordshire ran up to the western door of the inner square and placed a dynamite cartridge on the sill. The fuse went out, a second cartridge was brought and placed in like manner beside the first one.

After an interval, which seemed an age to those waiting for the result, a loud report shook the ground, a dense cloud of smoke and dust rose from the doorway, and when this cleared away it was seen that the dynamite\* cartridges had successfully done their work by blowing in the door and displacing the beams with which the fanatics had strengthened it inside. Another five-pound cartridge had subsequently to be used to clear away the wreck.

After this the taking of the stronghold was only a matter of time. But it was not accomplished without further bloodshed. Private Mills, one of the steadiest shots in the Oxfordshire Detachment, had been told off as one of the marksmen at the eastern gate to protect Private Rolfe of the Royal Fusiliers, who laid the dynamite charge at the eastern door. Rolfe had laid one charge, but the fuse had gone out. Mills was peeping through some bushes on the ruined outer wall with his head only exposed, when a fanatic shot him dead from one of the loopholes. Rolfe nothing daunted, laid the charge in spite of a brisk fire from the fanatics and smashed in the eastern door.

The north door was next destroyed, and a cross-fire poured through the north and west doors drove the fanatics in the inner square up into the upper-storeyed building.

Their determination to resist desperately to the end was remarkable. They had a bullet proof parapet extending to the height of nearly thirty inches from the floor of the upper-storeyed room in which they were now all gathered. By lying or even kneeling behind this they were absolutely safe from injury from bullets which crashed through the broad wooden planks which closed in the room on all sides above this thirty-inch parapet. In the interstices between these planks loopholes had been cut. Each fanatic took his place to fire at the police and military. As the muzzle of his gun was seen protruding from the loophole and in the act to fire, some twenty or thirty of the marksmen lining the ruined outer wall, fired a volley at the spot, and some of their bullets crashing through the wooden planks, hit the fanatic

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\*It is believed that this was the first occasion on which dynamite was used in actual warlike operations in the face of an enemy in India.

in several parts of his body, simultaneously, but usually in the head or chest. It was thus they all died one by one.

As the fire slackened, the interior of the temple was gradually occupied by the military and police, and the last dynamite cartridge was used to blow open the massive trap-door, giving access to the upper gate-house room where the final stand was made.

Of the twelve fanatics, three were still alive, but two of them were speechless and died immediately. The third man lived about 24 hours.

## PART VI.

THE casualties among the military were one private killed, and one officer (Lieutenant Day) and one private wounded. It is marvellous that the casualties were so low in number, considering that the fanatics were afterwards estimated to have fired not less than 250 shots at the party of order.

This serious outbreak was followed by several other small affairs, all pointing to the existence of widespread and fanatical zeal, the particulars of which it is unnecessary to state here.

The risks run by the party employed in suppressing the Trikkalur gang from the firearms used by the fanatics made the Government decide to disarm three taluks, *viz.*, Calicut, Pinad and Walluvanad, and this ticklish operation was, notwithstanding the excited state of the Moplah community at the time, successfully carried out in the month of February 1885 by the District Officers. It had a most beneficial effect on the population of the tracts in which the order was enforced.

Five disarming parties were organized, each in charge of a Magistrate. To each party were attached a havildar's guard of sepoys. Troops furnished by the 12th Regiment were imported by rail, and stationed at all the important centres, and a considerable body of European troops furnished by the Oxfordshire Light Infantry were located at Malappuram and Calicut in the heart of the country to be disarmed ready to act in any direction in which their services might be required.

The number of arms of all kinds eventually collected was very large, namely, 17,205, of which no less than 7503 were firearms of different kinds.

During the night of 1st May 1885, a gang of Moplahs broke open the house of a Cheraman (slave caste) and murdered him with his wife and four children on account of his having reverted from Islamism to Hinduism. This gang of Moplahs had but one gun with them, and proceeded to a Police Station (Kalpikancheri) with the object of helping themselves to the arms, but they found they were guarded. They then struck a course northwards towards the Urotmala Hill near Malappuram, taking post in the small Hindu temple; want of water, however, compelled them to quit it. They afterwards took up their quarters in the house of a wealthy Nambuthiri Brahmin, landlord of Pommundum Amsom in the Ponnani Taluk.

In the afternoon they were attacked by a party of the S. W. Borderers from Malappuram under Captain Logan. The party opened fire on the Borderers and wounded four men. The volley was returned when it was found that the return fire had killed in all twelve persons.

The disarming of the Ponnani Taluk was next ordered by the Government and carried out successfully on the same plan as in the previous February. One Company of the 2nd Battalion, S. W. Borderers, was brought by rail from Madras and stationed at Vettathpudiangadi, where it remained during the disarming operations.

Fanaticism of this violent type flourishes only on sterile soil. When the people are poor and discontented it flourishes like other crimes of violence. The grievous insecurity to which the working ryots are exposed by the existing system of landed tenures was to blame for the impoverished state of the peasantry, and measures to protect the working ryot of whatever class is the means which seems to commend itself the most for the amelioration of their condition, with settled homesteads and an assured income to all who are thrifty and industrious—and in these respects the Moplah surpasses all other classes—it is certain that fanaticism would die a natural death.

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## CHAPTER V.

### MALAPPURAM SUPERNATURAL.

• •SINCE the publication of this book has been decided upon, I have been asked by several N.C. O.'s and men to again write something about Malappuram, so that our friends may know the kind of place and people amongst whom we are living.

• It may be known to a few who have been here sometime, but not to the majority of the Detachment, that the Malabaree, like the inhabitants of other parts of India, is extremely superstitious. This becomes more pronounced as darkness creeps on. In moving about after sunset, his courage is commensurate with the amount of his companions, especially in the vicinity of "Range Hill."

It will be remembered that in an article which appeared in *The Echoes from the Jungle* sometime back on "Rambles round Malappuram," reference was made to the ruins of an ancient Hindu temple on "Range," or by its better known title of "Cholera Hill," close to which is the well, the original purpose of which has puzzled so many persons who have visited the spot.

Since the publication of that article, I have learned that its evil associations have long been known to the inhabitants of this village, amongst whom there is a very strong belief that a malevolent spirit takes up its abode in the well, its period of activity being exercised between sunset and sunrise, and that there is a forbidden zone or radius over which it presides. There are some natives who doubt its power, but even the doubting ones have not so far lost their native prejudices, sufficiently to venture near the well after sunset.

The well and ruins at decline of day look uninviting. I was speaking to a native a short time ago and asked him to bring me a certain plant which grows near the well. He seemed amazed and raising his hands deprecatingly said, "No Sahib, if I went near that well after 6 o'clock at night the devil would drag me down it and I'd never be seen again."

• My spirit of curiosity was aroused, and I asked him if he ever knew of such a case as a man disappearing. He could not state one, but added his grandfather knew of such a case. He could give me, he said, particulars of what occurred, to



his own knowledge only a few years ago. His tale was something like the following :—

"A few years ago a native (a Toti) commenced to build a house for himself on the Manjery road and had reared it some feet above ground, leaving everything all right, left off work for the day. On going next morning, not so much as a stick or stone was to be seen. The ground was level and clear as before he commenced building operations. What had become of it? All doubts were cleared, a few days later when a boy reported that on passing the well he ventured to look down and saw a lot of new building material at the bottom."

The building had been conveyed through the air like Dean Swift's Island of Laputa and dropped down the well.

My informant assured me in all truth that this actually occurred, and that he could find lots to prove that such did take place.

The evil repute of the well and its surroundings are not confined to any particular caste, and all are agreed that one cannot with safety venture within the zone or radius, for fear lest the malign influence should be visited upon him and culminate in his rapid transit to a place much warmer than even Malappuram!

Should one feel desirous of taking a ramble as indicated above, there are lots of pleasant scenery. Unfortunately, however, owing to the heat during the day, one's hours of indulging in this direction are somewhat restricted; one cannot, therefore, venture out with any degree of comfort till about 5 o'clock in the evening, and since the sun sets throughout the year about 6 o'clock with but a few minutes difference in time, little opportunity is afforded of proceeding far from the Cantonment. The exceedingly short twilight in Southern India is a great drawback to evening walks. Moonlight nights are, however, a luxury. To those who are able to stand the heat of an earlier hour, then a better opportunity is afforded of seeing things, especially by adopting a leisurable pace along either the Manjeri, Tirur or Calicut roads, or again one can go as far as the ferry at Kotalangadi.

If one desires a good view of the surrounding country with a minimum of exertion, then by all means pay a visit to Cholera, or Range Hill, which is within the Cantonment, and from the summit of which one obtains an extensive view of the surrounding country for miles, while the barracks and village lie before one like a map—a genuine picture worth seeing at any time.

Towards evening, in fact, throughout the day there is always a pleasant breeze. This is the best position from which to view the many very beautiful sunsets, such a feature of this part of Southern India, one beholds in this station.

and my advice to those who have not, is, don't deprive yourself at a sight not easily forgotten.

The top of this hill forms a table or plateau of probably three acres, in the centre of which may be seen the ruins of an ancient Hindu temple; close by are two wells said at one time to have been connected; both are of considerable depth, but at the time of writing this article the bottom was full of rubbish, etc. Out of these wells may be seen growing palmyra trees, which form quite a landmark for many miles around, and thus serve to indicate this particular hill and wells, concerning which the natives hold many superstitious views.

One cannot believe that either of these wells could have been sunk for the purpose of obtaining water, for their position on the summit of this hill forbids the belief that water was the objective, for the wells must be fully 700 feet, perhaps more above the river Kadalundy, scarcely half a mile away.

The natives of all castes hold to the belief that the wells are connected with an underground passage leading to and terminating at the river. Several N. C. O.'s and men of our Detachment, including the writer, descended the well nearest the Cantonment at the bottom, at which were found the bones of many animals; no estimation of the depth of rubbish could be given, nor did there appear to be any indication that the wells were connected, though it is extremely probable.

The fact of these two wells being so close together and near the ruins of the temple are strong indications of the extreme probability of their connection, but whatever may have been their use, one cannot approach the edge without feeling an almost superstitious awe, and associating with them all kinds of sinister thoughts, probably justified by what one has read in the past of the practices connected with some of the religious rites, one might with safety say mystic rites, connected with many eastern beliefs; speaking conscientiously, however, the writer, even as others have expressed always felt quite a relief on quitting the vicinity of these wells.

There are many other wells in or about Malappuram, connected with which is some supernatural attribute, more particularly is this said to be the case along the Manjeri road, and one finds great difficulty in getting a native to discuss the question after dusk; even in broad daylight he shows some hesitation in indicating the locality.

A somewhat weird tale is told concerning a well on the south bank of the Kadalundy river opposite the Cantonment.

I was fortunate to get something like the following statement from a Moplah: "Close by is a well covered by a couple of large stones. A wicked Rajah many years ago made an oath that whatever happened his money should be buried with him."

"It happened a few years after he had registered this oath on the Koran, the monsoons failed and the surrounding villages was beset by famine, and old and young were dying daily by scores. Appeal was made to him in vain. Even holy men told him he was released from his oath, but still he refused to give aid to those who were starving. An old man was seen talking to the Rajah, urging assistance, but in vain. The old man was heard to mention 'giving by sunset' still no help came.

"A wonderful thing happened at sunset. A terrible crash, as of many thunders, was heard, and people looking towards the Rajah's palace saw a cloud of dust arising, making their way towards the palace, found nothing but a few heaps of dust, and what appeared to be a well, where none existed before, covered by two ponderous stones as a covering. Search was made for the hidden wealth, but none was ever found from that day to this. It is said that, 'Allah had buried him alive for his wickedness, with all his wealth.'"

Local tale-tellers say that many efforts have been made to lift the stone, but in vain. It would be a pity to spoil the tale by giving an explanation of the well. So I will let the matter rest as it is.

#### MALABAR ENCHANTMENTS.

Probably many of "The Echo" readers have either read or heard of Harrison Ainsworth's "Lancashire Witches" and the methods employed by "Old Mother Demdike," to bring torments on her victims.

Malabar has *par excellence* been described as the land of sorcery and magic, the most powerful bhootas and demons residing there.

The following recipe (*sic*) is used in compassing the discomfiture of enemies. Make an image with wax in the form of your enemy, take it in your right hand at night and hold your chain of beads in your left hand; then burn your image with due rites, and it shall slay your enemy in a fortnight. Another spell for evil is to take a human bone from a burial-ground, and recite over it a thousand times the powerful Malyali *mantra*, viz. :—*Om ! Hram ! Hram !* Swine-faced goddess ! Seize him ! Seize him as a victim ! drink, drink his blood ! Eat ! eat his flesh ! O image of imminent death ! *Bhagavati* of Malayala ! *Glaum ! Glaum ! Om !* The bone thrown into an enemy's house will cause his ruin. Let a sorcerer obtain the corpse of a maiden and place it at the foot of a *bhuta* haunted tree on an altar on a Sunday night, and repeat a hundred times "*Om, Hrim Hrom !*" "O

goddess of *Malayala*, who possesseth us in a moment come." The corpse will then be inspired by a demon and rise up, and if the demon be appeased with arrack (a fiery and spirituous liquor) will answer all questions put."

The demons "can be bought, carried about and transferred from one sorcerer to another." It may be added that the best educated native gentlemen have even yet hardly got over their objection to photographs, and may by piercing with needles the eyes and other organs, and by powerful incantations work them serious mischief. (From Logan's *Malabar*.)



## CHAPTER VI.

### MALAPPURAM SPORTING REMINISCENCES.

Writing of sporting, with a knowledge of Malappuram and various officers who have been in this station since October 1904, reminds me that many successful expeditions have taken place. What may be described without doubt as the biggest capture was the killing of a rogue elephant by Lieutenant-Colonel, at that time Major E. T. Taylor, 2nd Cheshire Regiment, and who was in command of Malappuram. This full grown animal was responsible for many human lives. Many attempts, extending over a number of years, had been made to destroy it, but without success. It had in consequence of its habits grown to be a terror to natives, not only at Nilambur but for many miles round.

Major Taylor undertook the work of destruction and was fortunate, singular as it may seem, in bringing it down with a first and well-directed shot in a vulnerable part, afterwards completing the work of its destruction much to the delight of thousands of natives who were able once more to breathe as it were again in peace.

Two magnificent tusks were obtained from the animal and which were seen by the writer and many other N. C. O.'s and men of "B" and "H" Companies at the Officers' quarters, being on view for the benefit of the Detachment. One unfortunately was so damaged, and we might say deformed, as to detract from its commercial value to some extent, but in other respects it was, what might be described, as a real curiosity by reason of a bullet hole through the base, and which was reported to have been done fully ten years before. Major Taylor explained at the time that this injury must have caused intense pain and suffering for a long time to the beast, and which fact, judging from the tusk and position of the shot hole, we quite believed to be correct. With the lapse of time, however, the hole had closed up, but future growth gave the tusk quite a distinctive look, which was very noticeable during the life of the mammoth. The manner in which the closing had been effected had produced a peculiar appearance on the interior or core, which of itself was a curiosity.

It is a singular and noteworthy fact that Lieutenant Colonel Taylor's sporting expeditions were invariably profitable ones. Elephants and other large game appeared to be his speciality. In the immediate vicinity of Malappuram

there was quite an abundance of various species of big game, Lieutenant (now Captain) Busfield and Lieutenant E. C. Maxwell (2nd Cheshire Regiment) securing some big game. The latter officer, so recent as May 1906, killing a cheetah of almost eight feet from tip to tip. On several occasions he had hair-breadth escapes.

### THE KING COBRA.

Quite a long correspondence has been going through the columns of the *Madras Mail* on the above subject, dealing for the most part on the length of this most dangerous of all reptiles (*Ophiophagus elaps*).

The following description of the king cobra in "Nicholson's Elementary Treatise on Ophiology" may be of interest to our readers :

"This snake grows to 12 feet. When at bay its head stands about 2 feet off the ground. It will eat other snakes ; and there appears to be enmity between it and the cobra, the latter (I am credibly informed) attacking it with fatal effect. When watching its eggs it is very savage, and will drive away by hostile demonstration or even pursuit, any passers-by ; at other times it is peaceable enough."

What must have been one of this species was seen by a party of Non-Coms from this Detachment, whilst on a shooting expedition, several months back, only a few miles from Manjeri. That it was a cobra was placed beyond all doubt, as one of the party was fortunate enough to kill it by a shot from his gun ; so that all had the means of obtaining a close inspection, of what they described at the time as a monster cobra, for it was not less than eight feet in length, and what now further strengthens the belief of these Non-Coms, after following the correspondence in the *Mail*, is the fact that the cobra made as though to attack, without apparent cause, one of the party.

### THE MUHARRAM OR MAHOMMEDAN NEW YEAR.

By the time this edition is in the hands of its subscribers, Malappuram\* will once again be the scene of the great Moplah feast. This great event is ordinarily held after the sight of the new moon in February. The new moon was not visible until the evening of the 24th ultimo, which ushered in the Mahommedan year 1325 A.H.—Anno Hegira or year of the flight.

In former years it has been customary to hold the feast during the new year rejoicings, but this year it has been found impracticable by the Mahomedan Church dignitaries at the Mosque, owing to the wet state of the paddy-field, which was until a short time ago under cultivation, and, as this particular field is the only one suitable, it was deemed advisable to postpone the event until the ground became thoroughly dry, hence the delay this year.

The Muharram, like the Christian New Year, is a time of great rejoicing. Holiday clothing is donned, and work is suspended, for the advent of another year is just as eagerly looked forward to as in England or any other Christian country, and every possible opportunity is taken by the natives of Malappuram, i.e., the Moplahs, to thoroughly enjoy themselves. It is very easy to imagine that the event, whilst exclusively Moplah, is utilized as an excuse by other castes for obtaining a few days' rest from labour. Some such excuses are made by our own countrymen at home, so that one cannot blame the various other castes for seizing upon an excuse for a few days' rest from toil, when one considers that in India workmen usually labour seven days to the week.

Whilst, as already indicated, the Muharram is usually a time of great rejoicing amongst all Mahomedans; the Moplahs of Malabar particularly avail themselves to the fullest extent, but when doing so they never fail to set apart a portion of the time during the holiday for the celebration of the great Moplah feast, called the "Nurcha," a Malayalam word signifying "an offering"—properly speaking, an offering of prayer for the departed spirits of 44 Moplah "martyrs," who lost their lives in Malappuram some 179 years ago during a religious persecution.

Vast crowds of natives (Moplahs) from far and near make their way to Malappuram, the scene of the massacre, for the two-fold purpose of, firstly, rejoicing on the advent of another year, and secondly, that of keeping alive the memories of the martyrs who died for religion's sake, and of offering a prayer for the repose of the souls of these forty-four departed Moplahs, many of whose descendants still live in Malappuram, to one of whom I am indebted for most of the information contained in this article.

The scene of the festival is in the large paddy-field off the Calicut road in Old Malappuram. Already the erection of huts is in progress for the accommodation of the vast multitudes which pour into Malappuram from all quarters. The immense number of people making the pilgrimage to Malappuram (for this is actually what it is) cannot be housed, with the result that thousands upon thousands sleep in the open air or take what accommodation they may be able to find.

One must not be surprised to hear of a number of deaths from snake-bites, the inevitable result of lying in out-of-the-way places. One cannot, therefore, anticipate any exception to former years. Last year it was estimated that during the festival, not less than 50 or 60,000 persons took part in this great religious ceremony, on the occasion of which the graves of these minor saints are visited and prayers prescribed for the Moplah dead are then recited.

Times like this are responsible for a great levelling process. Side by side with the much bejewelled Rajah may be seen the poor agricultural labourer, having the same common object, *viz.*, that of honouring the dead, and whatever our feelings may be touching their beliefs, one cannot but admire the spirit of devoutness, which one sees practised by the followers of the Prophet.

#### SOME OF THE PESTS OF MALAPPURAM,

The saying "Wait till the monsoon comes" carries with it a weight of meaning which can only be realized when the change of season does actually take place.

The pests during the prevalence are many, and at the same time just as varied. After long months of what can justly be described as simply scorching hot weather, one longs for the "monsoon," and although he knows that for fully three months he will have it "heaven's hard" (a phrase used to express a shower in its superlative sense), he is prepared to accept it as a matter of course. He becomes as it were a fatalist for the time being at all events.

Only those who by force of circumstances are in India (the British soldier comes under this category) know how to appreciate the few changes of climate which take place out here. Really, they are but two, *viz.*, winter and summer. Both are to my thinking *misnomers*. Anyhow, such as they are, they do take place, and they are accepted as such, for there is really but little in the name.

When it rains in Malabar, it's the proper article, and plenty of it, and fairly roots out the cobras, scorpions and centipedes, besides the hosts of other small fry too numerous to mention. So far as insects go, the mosquito as of old takes precedence.

Malappuram seems fairly alive with cobras and other species of snakes, but it is the natives who suffer and who augment the death-roll from snake-bites. One of the men of this Detachment (Private Norrie) killed only recently a cobra almost 6 feet long, which was playing havoc with the poultry, having killed no less than six hens.



One has, now the monsoon has made its appearance, to be very careful to examine his boots for fear lest a scorpion (mostly black or rock here) should have taken up quarters in a boot or sock. No one should go about unless armed with a suitable stick, and should invariably wear "ammunition boots."

Singular as it may seem, one becomes used to things and troubles very little about them. A certain writer said: "On a soldier landing in India for the first time, for three months he is in a state of dread of snakes and other reptiles, and for the next seven years forgets all about them," and there is some degree of truth in it; still, in Malappuram, whilst not exactly "dreading," he is at least constantly reminded of their existence by frequent sights of these pests, and must be prepared for emergencies.

The ant, whose name conjures up all the delights of that female relative, is divided into quite a number of species, or classes.

There is the small black ant, such as we see at home, but is harmless; then comes the red one, which has a peculiar habit of making its way up your trousers' legs, and gets into places and corners not only inconvenient, but most difficult to get at for the purpose of easing oneself, and which fairly takes pieces out of one! The effects produced on different persons vary; if a man be thick-skinned (and it is surprising what a lot of thick-skinned people there are in India), then it raises a blister as big as a small marble, accompanied by an itching and burning sensation with the desire to tear oneself to pieces; lastly comes the white-ant, the most destructive of all.

To my own knowledge they have practically eaten a great coat in the space of 10 to 12 hours. I have also had brought to my notice the destruction of a new pair of shoes in a single night; both these cases occurred when "B" Co. was here.

Another pest, fortunately transient, is that of the flying ant. On the falling of the first monsoon rains, if succeeded by brilliant sunshine, the eggs are rapidly hatched, with the result that the air is thick with them, and the birds have a fine time of it. So far they are harmless, but as soon as the lamps are lit, reading is altogether out of the question. These insects, whilst intensely annoying, have double wings, much resembling those of a dragon fly. Like all other night flies and moths, they make for the light round which they gyrate, and on alighting they shake the body and flap their wings, if I may be allowed to use the expression. So that one is justified in coming to the conclusion that it is anxious to rid itself of its wings, which it appears is quite correct. Singular

as it may seem after the loss of wings, they all crawl to one given place and die, their bodies forming small pyramids.

Thus, these insects pass out of existence, having, according to naturalists, laid so many eggs and fulfilled all the obligations demanded of them in the natural order of things.

The lizards have a veritable harvest (I am speaking of under cover). One can see them gliding hither and thither on the walls, seizing an ant and shaking it just as a dog shakes a rat; this is in order to get rid of the wings. For the lizard is something of an epicure, having destructive tastes, for he goes in for small insects and moths if not too large. He does seem rather to draw the line at flying bugs which seem to appeal to his sense of smell. In this respect he very much resembles the soldier. There is nothing poetic in the smell of a flying bug especially a crushed one. I've seen the lizard glide up to a flying bug sniff it, then "get." "It isn't in my line" as our comrade in "B" Co. sings.

By great numbers of the natives the flying ant is accounted as a great luxury. They are collected, stripped of the wing, are cooked and eaten in various ways, the common and least expensive being in the form of a curry, the better class natives cooking them in ghee, eaten in any form. The flying ant is said to be very nutritious and strength-giving. (There may be some reason for this belief, since the body of the ant contains formic acid, though it is doubtful if the native is aware of this fact.)

I have enumerated a few of the pests found in this station so far as reptiles and insects are concerned. There are other kinds of pests which I may be tempted to write about later if the opportunity occurs. I will now draw to a conclusion, but even as I am waiting, I am reminded of one as I can hear the hyenas and jackals in the vicinity of 'number three' being alive, which seems to come in for more than a fair share of insect life, being next to the river, which up to lately was little more than 'a stagnant pool' and alive with mosquitoes. 'Number three' has always seemed to bear an unenviable reputation with the various detachments garrisoning Malappuram. To the pests already enumerated, I must not omit to add the monsoon frog who has likewise put in his appearance, and whose dismal croak heard during midnight hours is the reverse of pleasant. With such a lot to contend with, one cannot wonder at some comrades saying "Roll on Oct."—(Trooping Season.)

## CHAPTER VII.

### MALABAR AND ITS BOUNDARIES.

MALABAR proper extends from north to south along the Coast, a distance of about one hundred and fifty miles, and lying between N. Lat.  $10^{\circ} 15'$  and  $12^{\circ} 18'$  and E. Long.  $75^{\circ} 14'$  and  $76^{\circ} 56'$ .

The boundaries of Malabar proper are North—South Canara District; East—Coorg, Maisur, Nilgiris, Coimbatore, South—the Native State of Cochin; West—the Arabian Sea.

### THE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE OF MALABAR.

THE Malayalam language is rich in proverbs, in "wise saws and modern instances," and there is nothing the Malayali loves better than to give a turn to conversation by an apt saying. The proverbs depend as much upon rhythm and alliteration and other affinities as on terseness of expression, and on sarcasm, wit, and humour as much as on common sense.

The following is very expressive "*Akattu kattiyum—purattu pattiyum*," literally "Knife inside, plaster outside."

The following is likewise very terse in its expression, and though it is wholly Sanskrit it is in common use here:—"*Arthum anartham*," literally "riches (are) ruin."

In one of the many proverbs or axioms in which this language abounds, expression of the Malayali's scorn is given of the sordidness of foreign Brahmans: "*attu vella Pattar—attu vella panni*," meaning "the Pattar runs as fast to a rice distribution as the wild pig runs from its pursuers." The Pattar is often the butt for a Malayali's wit and sarcasm, and in one proverb he classes him with black beetles and bandicoots (a species of large rat) as among the plagues of Keralam (Malabar). A "Book of Proverbs" was printed at Mangalore in 1868 containing 990 such phrases.

Malayalam is written in more than one alphabet, and that employed in the most ancient written documents extant—the Jews' and Syrians' copperplate grants—is known as *Vatteluttu*. Besides it there is its derived alphabet called *Kaiveluttu*, chiefly used in keeping the records in Rajas' houses, and lastly, there is the modern Malayalam alphabet introduced by *Punjattā Eluttachēan*.

Dr. Burnell styles the *Vatteluttu*, "the original Tamil alphabet which was once used in all that part of the peninsula south of Tanjore, and also in South Malabar and Travancore." Its origin has hitherto not been traced. Dr. Burnell said of it: "The only possible conclusion, therefore, is that the *S. Acoka* and *Vatteluttu* alphabets are independent adaptations of some foreign character, the first to a Sanscritic, the last to a Dravidian language," and he thought, that both had "a common Semitic (Jewish) origin." The *Vatteluttu* alphabet "remained in use" in Malabar. Dr. Burnell wrote: "Up to the end of the 17th century among the Hindus, and since then in the form of the *Katteluttu* (=sceptre-writing), it is the character in which the Hindu sovereigns have their grants drawn up."

#### THE EXCESSIVE RAINS OF MALABAR.

Excessive falls of rain are quite common and floods frequent. On the 19th and 20th May 1882 there was registered a very heavy fall of rain. Several rain gauges in different parts of the town of Calicut (the nearest observation station) registered from 18 to 25 inches in the 24 hours, and as an instance of a heavy fall spread over a longer period in the monsoon of 1871. The rain gauge at the Collector's Office in Calicut registered over six inches per diem for six consecutive days, but floods do little damage. The rivers have in the course of ages worn down for themselves deep river-beds, which, as a rule, contain all ordinary floods, and the common laterite soil of the country is so porous that within half an hour of the heaviest shower of rain the roads are dried up, and but for the dropping trees and bushes, there would be very little to tell of the rain that had just ceased.

#### MALABAR (ORIGIN OF THE NAME).

The name by which the district is known to Europeans is not in general use in the district itself, except among the foreigners and English-speaking natives. The ordinary name is *Malayalam* or in the short form *Maalayan* (the hill country). The word Malabar is therefore probably, in part at least, of foreign origin; the first two syllables are almost certainly the ordinary Dravidian word *mala* (hill, mountain), and *bar*\* is probably the Arabic word *barr* (continent), or

\* *bar* signifies a coast in the language of the country," page 10 of Renandot's translation of the "ancient accounts of India and China by two Mohammedan travellers in the ninth century A. D."—London, 1733.



(the Persian word *bar* (country). From the time (A.D. 522-547) of Cosmas Indicopleustes down to the 11th or 12th century A. D. the word "Male" was applied to the coast by Arab navigators, and the sea-faring population, who flocked thither subsequently for pepper and other spices, called it *Malibar*, *Manibar*, *Mulibar*, *Minibar*, and *Malbar*. The early European travellers followed suit and hence come the other forms in which the name has been written, *Melibar* (Marco Polo), *Minibar*, *Milibar*, *Minubar*, *Melibaria*, *Malabria*, &c. *Malabar* may therefore be taken to mean the hilly or mountainous country, a name well suited to its physical characteristics.

*Malayalam* is not, however, the only indigenous name for the district. The natives love to call it *Keralam*. (From Logan's *Malabar*).

#### MOUNTAINS OVERLOOKING MALAPPURAM, WITH A BRIEF ACCOUNT.

The following will be of interest to our readers since the mountains are so well known:—

'*URUTMALA*':—N. Lat.  $11^{\circ} 3'$ , E. Long.  $76^{\circ} 4'$ , overlooking the European Military outpost of Malappuram. There is on the summit a small kind of temple with an inscription of no great antiquity. Height 1,573 feet.

Many of our comrades have probably heard of the attack by the Moplahs on the *Trikalur* temple, near Manjeri, when the troops of Detachment turned out. This was in the year 1885. On the afternoon of the 10th February communication between Calicut and Malappuram was suddenly interrupted; it was known that some people in Calicut had been discussing the effect which an interruption to the wires would have had on the Moplah outbreak of December 1884. It was thought at the time that the interruption might have been caused by design (it was long afterwards discovered that this was not the case), and in any case the necessity for a substitute made itself generally felt. Signalling parties were accordingly organized. The *Urot hill* (noticed above) near Malappuram, was occupied by a signalling party of the Oxfordshires, who communicated by helio by day and by lamp at night, with the General Officer Commanding at Calicut, 22 miles; at Malappuram where the bulk of the European force were stationed, 6 miles; and with the District Magistrate's disarming camp, as it moved to its various disarming stations, *iz.*, Manjeri, 8 miles; Pranikad, 16 miles; Wondur, 17 miles; and Arikkod, 10 miles.

.. *PANDALUR*:—N. Lat.  $11^{\circ} 8'$ , E. Long.  $76^{\circ} 11'$ , also overlooking the Malappuram outpost. It is covered for the

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most part with dense scrub jungle, but one or two coffee gardens have been opened on the northern slopes. At some distance from the summit and on the east face of the hill is a perennial spring of excellent water flowing from an immense boulder of rock. The spring is supposed to be haunted, and as a matter of fact, a solitary Mussalman Fakir used to inhabit a tiger's cave close to the spring. A magnificent panoramic view of mountain scenery is obtained from various parts of this hill, but particularly from the highest point of it—a piled up cone of rocks reaching to a giddy level with the tops of the forest trees. Height about 2,000 feet.

PRANAKAD:—N. Lat.  $10^{\circ} 59'$ , E. Long.  $76^{\circ} 21'$ . The summit of a small densely wooded range of hills (also overlooking Malappuram in the distance) which, with the range last mentioned, seems to form at this point the advanced guard of the Nilgiri mountains. Height 1,792 feet.

## THE KADALUNDI RIVER.

N. Lat.  $11^{\circ} 8'$ , E. Long.  $75^{\circ} 53'$ —is united to the Beypore river by a creek, and thus is formed the island of Chaliyam. The Kadalundi River comes from the western slopes of the Nilgiri Mountains and the "Silent Valley" range, and its main branch is 75 miles in length. The country through which it passes is on a higher level than the valley of the Beypore River, and hence the boat traffic on the stream is very limited except during the annual flood season (monsoon), when boats can get upstream as far as Malappuram, and even further, but in the dry season, boat traffic is confined to a few miles near the mouth of the river. An unsuccessful attempt, continued down to 1857, was made by several Collectors to connect by a canal the Kadalundi River with the back water and creeks of the Ponnani River. A cutting was made, and for a day or two in the height of the monsoon, when the country is flooded, boats can pass with some difficulty from the one river to the other, but at other seasons, this is impracticable. A very great natural obstacle to the successful construction was that at a short depth below the surface a bed of unctious clay or mud was found which, oozing into the canal, filled it up sufficiently to prevent the passage of boats. This liquid mud seems to be of the same character with that which, forced up from the bottom of the sea by submarine volcanic action or by subterraneous pressure of water from the large inland blackwaters, forms the mud banks or mud bays in which at one or two places on the coast (notably at Narikal and Alleppey) ships can ride in safety to load and discharge cargo.

throughout the monsoon season. The same difficulty was experienced at Calicut in making a short canal from the Kallai River to the main bazar.

• [At the time of writing (30-4-'06) this river is no longer a flowing stream, but is completely dry for several hundred yards, a vast difference to monsoon time when it becomes a raging torrent at some points quite 100 yards wide and fully 30 feet deep.—*Editor.*]

