

THE
HISTORY
OF
RAILWAY THIEVES,
WITH
HINTS ON DETECTION.

BY
M. PAUPA RAO NAIDU,
of the Madras Police.

THIRD EDITION,

Madras :
HIGGINBOTHAM & CO.

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1904.

Price Re. 1.

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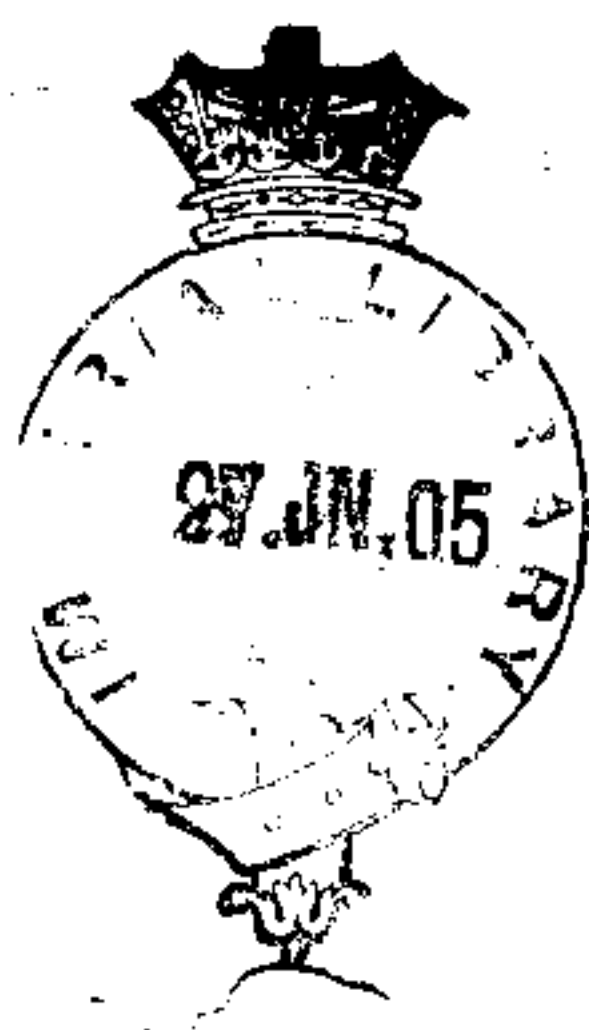
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M. PAUPA RAO NAIDU.

To

THE HON'BLE MR. MURRAY HAMMICK, C.I.E., I.C.S.,

LATE INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF POLICE, MADRAS,

THIS BROCHURE

IS

WITH KIND PERMISSION

MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR

AS A MARK OF HIS HIGH ESTEEM AND LASTING GRATITUDE

FOR THE KIND APPRECIATION OF THE

HUMBLE SERVICES RENDERED.

IN THE DEPARTMENT.

OPINIONS ON THE SECOND EDITION.

By Lord Ampthill, the Governor of Madras.

“I read your book. It is very interesting.”

By the Hon'ble Mr. Murray Hammick, C.I.E., I.C.S., Acting Chief Secretary to Madras Government and late Inspector-General of Police, Madras.

“You have done a great deal of good work in connection with tracing out Railway crime, and I hope your book will be widely read.”

By the I.-G. of Police, L. P., Bengal.

“The book is a good one and would be specially useful for the Orissa Districts and the Railway Police.” This opinion was accompanied with an indent for 47 copies to be supplied to all officers under him.

By the I.-G. of Police, Bombay.

“The book has been advertised in the Bombay Police Gazette as a useful one for Police Officers.”

By the I.-G. of Madras advertised in the Police Gazette of December 10th, 1900.

“This little book contains much useful information about certain sections of Criminal classes and the I.-G. commends it to the notice of all Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents and Inspectors of Police.”

By the Hon'ble Y. P. Madhava Row, Councillor and late I.-G. of Mysore.

“I have carefully read the book and have pleasure in stating that it is likely to be of great service both to the Police and to people travelling by Railway. You have treated the thieving habits of the Bhamptas of the Deccan and of the Ina Koravars of the South in an exhaustive manner. The chapter on the dishonest practices of certain Railway servants is equally instructive and the concluding ‘Hints on Detection’ from a Police Officer of your experience is sure to be of help to Policemen engaged in the investigation of crimes. I wish every success to your useful little book.”

By the I.-G. of Police, N.-W. Provinces and Cudh.

“I am to request you to supply 20 copies for the use of this department.”

By the I.-G. of Police, Hyderabad.

"Kindly send me 7 copies of your book. If you have had the book translated, please send me 10 copies of the book in Urdu."

By the I.-G. of Police, Mysore.

"Request that 12 copies of the latest edition may be supplied to this office."

By the Assistant I.-G. of Government Railway Police, Howrah.

"Please send 10 copies to all the Railway Police Inspectors. List enclosed."

By the District Superintendent of Police, Murshedabad.

"Request he will be so good as to send 22 copies for the use of the officers in this District."

By the Dewan of Pudukotta.

"I have the honour to request that you will be good enough to send me a dozen copies of the book. I shall be willing to purchase a few Tamil copies of the same if they be available."

By the Presidency Magistrate.

"The little brochure should prove of great value to Police Officers in general and to the Railway Police in particular."

By the Assistant I.-G. of Police, Madras.

"It is very interesting reading and will no doubt serve the purpose for which it is intended, viz. a guide to those who have to deal with the predatory classes."

By the Superintendent of Railway Police, Lucknow.

"Your Hints on Detection are interesting and to the point."

The Pioneer, Thursday, July 12th and 13th, 1900.

An amusing and instructive little pamphlet on the subject of Railway Thieves, their procedure and the modes of detection has been published by Mr. M. Paupa Row Naidu, a Railway Police Inspector in the Madras Presidency. Although it deals mostly with the criminals of Southern India, the treatise may be found useful by Police Officers further north, while it is full of interesting and suggestive information for the ethnologist. * * *

We should add that Mr. Naidu's pamphlet has also a chapter upon detection in which the Indian Policeman will find many useful hints.

The Bombay Gazette, Saturday, July 21st, 1900.

The History of Railway Thieves by M. Paupa Row Naidu (Addison & Co., Madras) is the title of a lively pamphlet, the second edition of

OPINIONS ON THE FIRST EDITION.

By Col. Porteous, Inspector-General of Police, Maadrs.

"There is much useful information in this pamphlet * *. It would be a good plan to divide the information more into sub-paras. or clauses and in margin to note subject of information of each para. ** The clearer it is given, the more likely is it to be viewed with favour."

By Mr. V. P. Madhavarao, Inspector-General of Police, Mysore.

"Mr. Paupa Rao Naidu, Inspector of Police, Gooty, is requested to supply this office with 20 copies of his Pamphlet on Railway Thieves with a bill of cost. The undersigned will be glad if Mr. Paupa Rao Naidu will kindly permit extracts from his book being translated into Canarese and published in the Mysore Police Fortnightly Circular."

By Mr. W. J. H. Sullivan, Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Madras.

"I have read the book through, and it seems to me to contain much useful matter. I will see what I can do to secure it a wide circulation in my range. I think the book should prove very useful to police subordinates, more especially Railway orderlies. I therefore hope that Tamil and Telugu editions of it may be published."

By Mr. H. G. Young, Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Madras.

"I am much obliged to you for your pamphlet on "Railway Thieves". Its compilation does you much credit. It is a most useful little book, and will, I am sure, prove of the greatest service to the Police employed in the prevention and detection of Railway thefts."

By Mr. J. Meredith, Assistant Inspector-General of Police, Madras.

"Accept my thanks for the copy of the pamphlet on Railway Thieves. I have read it with interest and profit. I think it should prove useful and I trust its publication in the *Police Gazette*, which the Inspector-General has sanctioned, may induce officers to purchase the booklet."

By Mr. T. Ponnambalam Pillai, Assistant Superintendent of Police, Trancores.

"I feel thankful to you for your kindness in sending me a copy of your pamphlet on Railway Thieves. I perused it twice with interest, and I may say without flattery that I have been sufficiently profited by its perusal. I was under the impression that your experience was confined only to the Telugu Districts, but I see that you have collected valuable information not only from the Tamil Districts, but

which now appears. It is a well compiled description of the different classes of thieves, which direct their attention to Railway thieving and useful hints for their detection are evolved from the author's twelve years active experience in trying to circumvent their machinations. * * * *

The Madras Mail, July 11th, 1900.

Encouraged by the success attending the publication of his "History of Railway Thieves," Mr. M. Paupa Row Naidu has brought out a second and enlarged edition. * * *

This little book is a very interesting one and cheap (8 as.) and is to be followed by another in which the Inspector intends to give the history of 17 other classes, who number many afflicted with criminal propensities. * * *

The Madras Standard, July 21st, 1900.

M. Paupa Row Naidu is an old hand at detection; and not only those who wish to be on their guard while travelling by rail, but all Police Officers who would excel in detection, will be glad to benefit by his long and varied experience. * * *

Mr. Paupa Row's hints on detection are useful and interesting, and in every way the book is well worth a perusal by all interested in Railways and Railway thieves.

The Hindu, July 11th, 1900.

Mr. Paupa Row Naidu is one of the ablest of our detective officers and his words on the professional thieves which it is his daily duty to hunt after, are therefore entitled to much weight. * *

The East Coast News, July 25th, 1900.

The book we are pleased to find contains a fund of information and should be translated into all the languages of South India and placed in the hands of every policeman, so that they may know who the professional thieves are; for the book gives directions and hints on detection. To a railway travelling public, it will be most useful as they will be in a position to beware of thieves. We would suggest that copies of the book should be exposed for sale at all Railway Book Stalls. We congratulate the author on his successful efforts to entertain and enlighten the reading and travelling public. * *

also from beyond the confines of the Presidency. It is only an experienced and talented detective that could separate the grain from the chaff. You are not new to us here. The Travancore Police have known you already in connection with the service you have done to detect the Cape Comorin Case, and this pamphlet has raised you in the estimation they had already formed of you. I have requested my chief, the Superintendent of Police, Travancore, to buy 50 copies for the use of the Department."

The Madras Mail.

We have received a copy of a pamphlet on "Railway Thieves" by Madireddi Paupa Rao Naidu, Inspector of Police, Gooty.

* * * *

Railway thieving has become a science in itself, so much so that steps have been taken by Government to organise a regular staff of Railway Police for its prevention. The pamphlet under notice attempts to give an account of the life, habits and modes of committing crime of the criminal classes engaged in railway thieving. Professional railway thieves have been divided by the author into the four classes, viz., (1) Bhamptas of the Deccan, (2) Ina Koravars *alias* Alagaries, (3) Bhatrajas of Piler and (4) Thetakars, or scissor thieves or pick-pockets, and to each class has been devoted a chapter. An interesting account is given in Chapter III. of the Bhatrajas who commit thefts while disguised as Brahmins. The author has brought to bear on the compilation of the pamphlet his departmental experience. The pamphlet has been well received by the Chief Officers of the Department, and cannot fail to be of use to all members of the Police Force, whose duty it is at all times and at all places to put a stop to the evil propensities of the thieving fraternity.

The Hindu.

Mr. M. Paupa Rao Naidu, Police Inspector of Gooty, has written and published a pamphlet on Railway Thieves. not less useful than interesting, not only to the Police detective, but also to the travelling public. The author gives interesting accounts of professional railway thieves, of their caste and origin, and their movements and methods of committing crime.

* * * *

The pamphlet abounds in interesting descriptions, and the author throws out valuable hints for the Police and the traveller. It may be read with advantage by every Police official and by every one, in short, who has to travel by railway.

The Madras Times.

An interesting pamphlet on "Railway Thieves" has been written by M. Paupa Rao Naidu, a Police Inspector of Gooty, and is an exemplary attempt on the part of an intelligent native to write upon the things that are his own concern. It is a small pamphlet, and its composition, though by no means bad, might have had a bad quarter of an hour in an Editor's hands; but the matter is decidedly of interest, and together with the lists of the whereabouts of thievish communities when "at home," the pamphlet should prove of much use in the Police Department, especially if translated, as Mr. Sullivan, Deputy Inspector-General, suggests, into Tamil and Telugu. The pamphlet appears opportunely at the present time, inasmuch as railway thieving has of late been coming into especial vogue. British civilisation in India has put its foot on the highway robberies of old times and a criminal gang have but small chance now of entering into pleasant and courteous converse with a band of merchants travelling into a far country, and of suddenly strangling their companions at supper. But to make up for this, the railway has offered still fairer chance of success; and it is easy to imagine that under the cover of darkness, and in the sleepy hours of the night, when property is lying at large on the floor of a railway compartment or on a railway platform, a smart man, with confederates to help him, is not likely to go penniless. Professional Railway Thieves, says the author of the pamphlet, may be divided into four classes: (1) the Bhamptas of the Deccan, (2) the Ina Koravars or Alagaries, (3) the Bhatrajas of Piler, and (4) irregular gangs of *Thetakars*, or pick-pockets.

* * * *

Greater protection of property against the railway thief's handiwork is an eminently desirable thing, and the author of the pamphlet throws out hints on the subject. Though a subordinate, he is evidently one who knows, and that as a practical observer; and he maintains that the Railway Police, as it now stands, is too small to cope with the work all over the Presidency. It is an encouragement, therefore, to learn that the subject of increasing the strength of the Railway Police is under the consideration of the Government.

The Madras Standard.

The Inspector of Police, Gooty, Mr. M. Paupa Rao Naidu, has published a very valuable little pamphlet on Railway Thieves. The Inspector has devoted much attention not only in compiling it, but also in obtaining the necessary details from different parts of India. It is a very useful and instructive little book, instructive not only to the Railway Police but to the travelling public also. The author has placed the travelling public under a deep obligation, and it is hoped the Government will soon recognise his services in some tangible form.

INTRODUCTION.



THE 'brief yet sweet' opinion of the Acting Governor-General Lord Ampthill, then Governor of Madras, that the book "is very interesting"; the kind remark that Col. Porteous, the late Inspector-General of Madras, then in office, put in officially regarding my first 'Pamphlet on Railway Thieves,' that "there is much useful information in it"; the strong suggestion of Mr. Hammick, the permanent incumbent then, embodied in his inspection report of the Vellore Police Training School, to the effect that it might with advantage form the subject of a lecture to the students there; the sincere request of Mr. V. P. Madhavarao, the then Inspector-General of Mysore, to be allowed to publish extracts from it in the *Mysore Police Gazette*, and his favorable review of the second edition since; the encouragement given to me by the late Mr. John Masters, Inspector-General of Police of Bengal, by an official order to supply all his subordinate officers with copies, giving an exhaustive list; these and other favourable opinions expressed or implied, alike by the public and the "Press", and the rapid sale of the second edition, have encouraged me in no small degree to bring out a revised edition of my booklet. And I gladly avail myself of the opportunity thus afforded to incorporate into the body of the work all my experiences as a Railway Police Detective, and as assistant to a special officer in the Central Criminal Intelligence Department, since issuing the second edition.

2. For much of the information appearing in the following pages, I am indebted to the kindness of Col. Porteous, who, often deputing me, when I was a Divisional Inspector of Gooty, to assist other officers in

the investigation of heavy cases, opened up opportunities for me to come in contact with several classes of thieves and to know much of them. Besides, Guntakul, an important junction in the Presidency, through which these worthies must pass and re-pass in the ordinary run of their nefarious career, formed a portion of my division, thus adding one more facility to know about them.

3. But the idea of reducing this information, which I jotted down in my note books from time to time, to the form of a pamphlet fit for public use, was, I must own, suggested by the invaluable report about the Bhamptas of the Deccan, published in 1887, by Col. A. B. Portman, Superintendent of Police, G. I. P. Railway. I hailed the idea as good, fully believing that a pamphlet of its kind, presenting the history of all classes of professional railway thieves, particularly with reference to the places where they live and the manner in which they commit crimes all over India, cannot fail to serve as a simple and easy, yet valuable guide to every Railway Police officer, employed on the different railway lines, in the detection and suppression of railway thefts, which are of every-day occurrence. I therefore immediately set to work with zeal, nothing daunted by the labour it involved, in collecting as much information as I possibly could, regarding the abodes and hamlets of the several classes of railway thieves all over, their peculiar ways and methods of thefts, and subsequent artifices by means of which they avoid detection.

4. At first I issued the pamphlet in Telugu, to make it useful to those for whom it was intended in the main; but Col. Porteous, who had the kindness to send for and peruse the book, expressed it as his opinion, that, the pamphlet "containing much useful information," a reproduction of the same in English might be of great service to the Police officers not only of the Telugu districts, but also of

the other districts. A suggestion like this, coming as it did from an officer of such unique and grave experience in the department, was in itself a sufficient inducement for me to undertake an English version of it and place the same in a rough shape before him. He not only expressed his approval of my attempt, but also offered certain valuable suggestions calculated to render the pamphlet acceptable to the public, to whom it will also serve as a safeguard, by keeping them sufficiently warned against the manifold tricks, by which these professional railway thieves often try to beguile and rob them of their property amounting at times to hundreds and thousands of rupees.

Though the information given in these pages comprises what I managed to collect during sixteen years' hard work put in as a Police officer, it cannot be pretended that it is exhaustive; there being surely much room still for supplementing and improving it.

5. In the first seven chapters, I deal only with men who have had a regular technical training, so to speak, in early life, and follow no other occupation than that of crime for a livelihood. An expert at the trade acquires such confidence in his own ability, that, not unfrequently from sheer love of adventure, he will undertake enterprises of the most difficult and dangerous nature; and on succeeding, as he often does, becomes the hero of his own gang and an object of admiration among his fraternity. This class hold very radical opinions regarding the rights of property; and their Law of Equity might be summed up thus:—

* Let him take who has the power,

" And let him keep who can."

It is no wonder then that the Police have so many difficulties to contend with in their dealings with such determined and lawless characters, who make "the flinty and steel couch of fight their thrice-driven bed of down." It is

an established fact that the more vigilant and efficient the Police, the more active and cunning the thief; the wit of the one sharpens as it were the wit of the other. In the eighth chapter I deal with the Railway Servants in their relation to the public as the custodians of their property.

6. At the request of some of my friends and colleagues in office to relate some of my own experiences in the detective sphere, I have ventured to give in a separate chapter at the end, a few hints on detection as occurred to my mind in my limited experience, over and above what occasionally appear in the body of the work; and I think I have in that way supplied a longfelt want. For, I have often found, to my utter discomfiture, Police Station-house officers betraying their ignorance in the very rudiments of investigating a crime. They do not, in the first place, know how to question a complainant in order to come at the various circumstances under which an offence was committed.

7. Before going into the subject, I must gratefully acknowledge the valuable assistance I received in my attempt from Col. A. B. Portman, who has rendered his name famous in the Central Provinces by his unflinching exertions in the detection and suppression of railway thefts in the Deccan, and the invaluable suggestions and help had, while bringing out the second edition, from Mr. H. A. Stuart, the then Acting Inspector-General of Police, now Director of Central Criminal Intelligence Department, and from Mr. F. Fawcett, the then Superintendent of Railway Police, now the Deputy Inspector-General of Police. I must not omit to thank Mr. Ramanuja Pillai, late Head Constable in the Chingleput District, who gathered and noted down information of a very valuable kind regarding the Alagari gangs of the South. My thanks are also due to my friend Mr. Coka Seethayya

Naidu, B.A., who has rendered invaluable assistance in bringing out this edition, while I was much engaged on official duty.

8. The seven classes shown in this pamphlet represent railway thieves pure and simple, inasmuch as they commit crimes in the trains, railway stations, and chattrums or hamlets attached thereto; but there exist also a large number of other classes who, though now and then resorting to railway thieving, extend their criminal propensities mostly in other directions. A description of some of these classes I have reserved for a separate book.

BEZWADA,
5th November, 1904. }

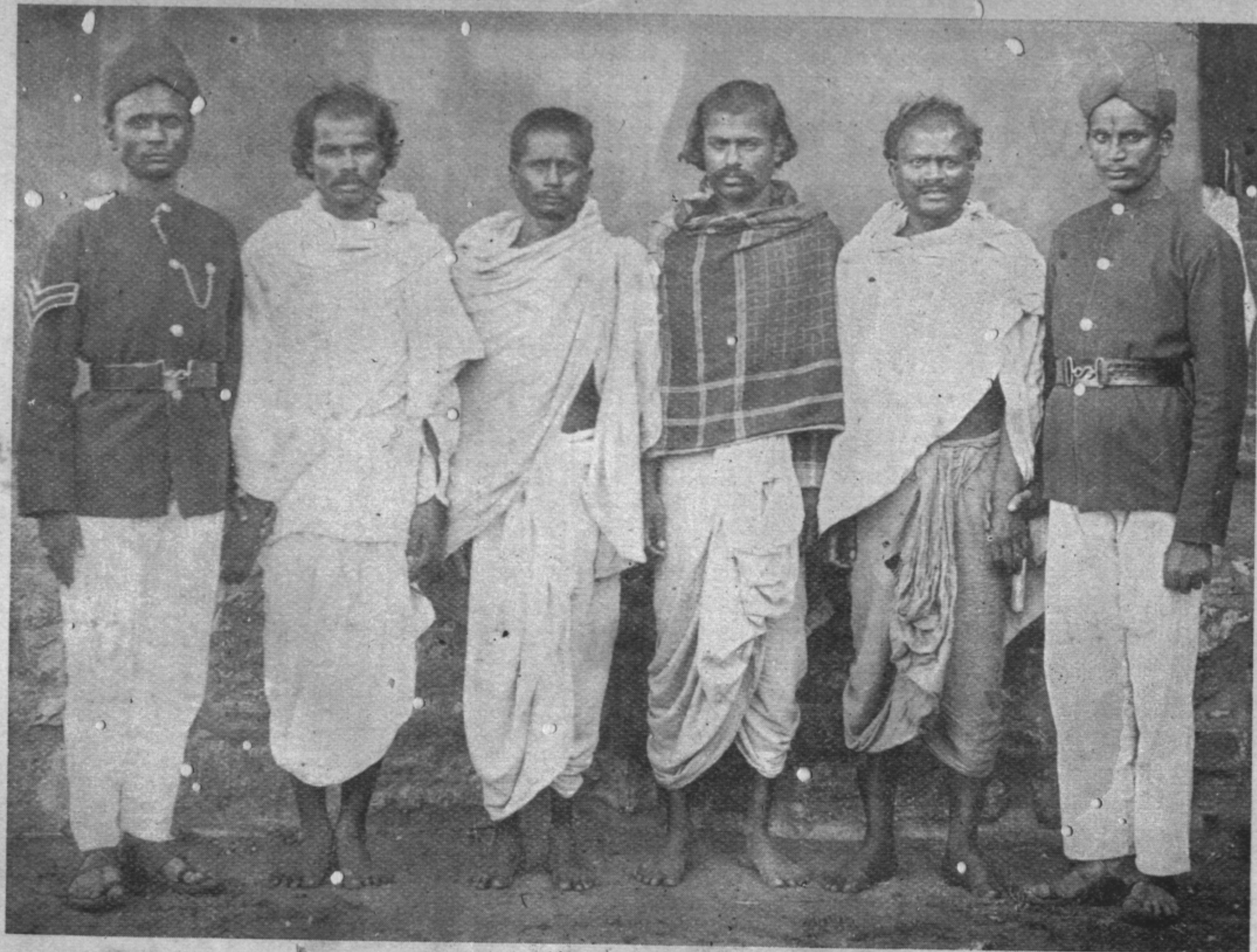
M. PAUPA RAO NAIDU.

RAILWAY THIEVES.

PROFESSIONAL Railway Thieves may be divided into seven classes, each class forming the subject of a separate section, thus :—

- I. The Bhamptas of the Deccan.
- II. The Ina Koravars *alias* Alagaries of Southern India.
- III. The Bharwars of Gonda and Lallatpur.
- IV. The Mullahs of Muttra.
- V. The Bhatrajas or Bhattu Turakas of India.
- VI. The Takku Woddars or Guntichores of Southern India.
- VII. The Railway Pick-Pockets of India.

The first six classes form distinct communities, each with its own peculiar manners and customs, while the seventh, and another that might be termed 'The Railway Servants Thieving', have no such distinct communal character, but are composed of men of all castes and creeds, and of all manners and customs, the only common bond uniting them being thieving. It may also be said that the first three classes are special experts at railway thefts.



BHAMPTAS.

CHAPTER I.

BHAMPTAS.

REGARDING the Bhamptas, it must be observed that the best description of them has already been given by Colonel Portman, and it would be almost vain to attempt to better it except, perhaps, in a few minor details. The Bhamptas are a class of people who reside in the Deccan, chiefly in the Poona, Satara and Ahmednagar Districts of the Bombay Presidency, and who earn their livelihood as professional thieves and pick-pockets.

● “And live they must, and live they will
“On curséd mammon gotten ill.”

They are known also by other special names in other places, viz., “Takari” in Nasik, “Oochlya” in Satara, “Guntichore” and “Vadari” in Ahmednagar, and “Senoria” in some other districts of the Bombay Presidency. They are known as Bhamptas all over India. They exist in every province in India under different names, and travel over all the Railway lines. Their criminal propensities have acquired such a notoriety that in Northern India the word Bhampta has become a by-word for a thief, no matter to which class of thieves the particular individual belonged. Even so, the word Chain in Bengal or Capemari in Madras signifies a thief of no class in particular.

2. As these Bhamptas talk broken Telugu, Colonel Portman thinks that they must have come originally from the Nizam's territories, or from some Telugu country; and this view of the eminent Colonel seems to be correct inasmuch as the house or family names of these men comprise words of Telugu origin, such for instance as Bhumimore (agriculturists), Guvvanore (bird catchers), Munigalore (followers of

Munisvara), Kaliputtinore (descendants of Kali), Pappanore (dealers in dhal), Panthipattinore (pig rearers), Yeddumoralore (merchants who carry their goods on bullocks), Goddalore (workers with axe), which are all derived from the Telugu words *Bhumi*, *Gurva*, *Munisvara*, *Kali*, *Pappu*, *Panthi*, *Yeddu* and *Goddali*. They also talk Hindustani.

Their language and dress. They talk and dress usually like the Mahrattas of the Poona and Satara districts.

They have certain words and phrases which are known only to themselves. When engaged in the Telugu districts, they talk Mahratti and Canarese; and when in Mahratti and Canarese countries, they talk Telugu. They show certain signs by their eye-lids and fingers which are totally unintelligible to others.

3. They are, for the most part, Hindus, and they worship the goddess "Kali," the principal temple dedicated to her honour, to which they resort, being in the village of Konali in the Akalkote State, under the Political Agent of Sholapur; and there they frequently assemble in gangs, before and after their raids, to worship the goddess that luck may attend them, or for the success achieved.

4. It is impossible to bring them under any particular caste or creed. Excepting the low caste Malas or Chumbars, Madigas or Dheds, Ramosi and Mangs, they admit all castes of men from Brahmins to Boyas, and even Mahomedans but very rarely, into their community. Recruits are thus enlisted, and after being duly initiated into the mysteries of thieving, they become Bhamptas, and intermarry with the members of the community.

5. The Bhamptas are sub-divided into two groups, viz., "Jadaw" and "Gaekwad." These divisions are exogamous, that is, "Jadaws" do not marry with "Jadaws," or "Gaekwads" with "Gaekwads"; but the members of the two

divisions intermarry one with another. During their wanderings, they occasionally come in contact with women of bad character, whom they take as concubines and eventually treat as wives. If opportunity offers, they even kidnap young boys of all castes, whom they adopt and bring up to their profession. It is said that Chinya, a Bhampta Naik, adopted as his sons, (1) Metya of the Wani or oil-monger class from Guzerat, (2) Munya of the Marwadi class, (3) Mahadya of the Sutar or blacksmith class, and several other boys.

6. Before the introduction of railways, these people, like the Bauris and other leading criminal tribes, confined themselves to wandering about the country in gangs, visiting all large towns and villages, especially those where fairs were being held or any festivals celebrated, for the purpose of thieving and picking pockets. They had one remarkable peculiarity; their trade was carried on only by day, never after dark. With the opening of railways, however, having soon found out that thefts could easily be committed in trains, they quickly took to this new way of enriching themselves, and gave up their old custom of thieving only between sunrise and sunset, because they discovered that darkness favoured their designs on the persons or property of travellers; and it may be said that all successful thefts in trains are committed by them only during the night. As the different lines of railways are extending, they are also increasing in number every day, and spreading in all parts of India, committing their depredations.

7. In August 1884, Lieutenant-Colonel Brown, the Acting Superintendent of Police on G. I. P., obtained from Government, on his own recommendation, a conditional pardon for two Bhamptas, named Methya Chinya and Ranya Satwa, who made a clean breast of their profession from *alpha* to *omega*. It was only through the

Two Bhamptas as approvers.

information obtained from these two men that his successor Colonel Portman, referred to in the introduction, was able to seize whole cartloads of stolen property consisting of various jewels, cloths, vessels, etc., of different places, from the houses of Bhamptas in the villages of Baburdi and Moragaon in the Soopha Taluq, Poona District. It was through these very men that Colonel Portman was able to collect their history.

8. Their mode of committing crime is that about ten Bhamptas with one or two women
 Method of committing crime. start from home and split into two or three batches, after arranging to meet again on a certain day in a fixed place. On a newly-opened railway, they engage a house in some large town of importance, calling themselves railway contractors, and travel by turns during the nights, always taking care that the house is never vacant. Each batch of men go to a station dressed in some sort of disguise or in good ordinary clothes, taking a canvas or carpet bag, or at least a bundle with them, and purchase tickets for some place far or near. In their bag or bundle they invariably have one or two coloured turbans, two or three coats, a knife, a pair of scissors, a mirror, a chisel about six inches long and half an inch broad, a long tin-case of chunam, "Vibhooti," "Namam" and "Sreechurnam," to put on different marks on their foreheads, a string of beads and a few old cloths. They also carry trinkets such as rings, bangles, buttons, nose rings, etc. of very trifling value, which their females expose for sale on road-sides to show ostensibly to the public that it is their means of livelihood. They will make the other passengers understand that they are on a pilgrimage to Ramesvaram, Tirupati, Hampi, Jagannadham, Kasi, Haridwar, or any other religious place on the railway line in which they fix their game. They look out for passengers also having bags which seem likely to contain anything valuable, and they follow such persons into the same carriage, and, sitting near, endeavour to

enter into conversation, and ask them where they are going and at what station they intend alighting. After a time,

A stratagem. when it begins to get dark, or, if it is already dark, the other passengers begin to drop off to sleep. Then one of the Bhamptas, on the pretext of making them more comfortable, lies down on the floor, and covers himself with a large cloth under the pretence of going to sleep, while his confederate, stretching his legs on to the opposite seat, spreads out his cloth, thus more or less screening the man lying beneath. This latter, when all appears quiet, begins manipulating the bag he has spotted under the seat, to feel with his hands if anything valuable is there, and if he cannot succeed in getting his hand into the bag, he takes from his mouth a small curved knife, which all Bhamptas carry concealed between their gum and upper lip, and with that he rips the seams of the bag and takes out what he finds. If the curved knife is not sharp enough to cut the strong canvas, he uses the other knife he has with him, and if the article spotted be a tin or wooden box, he makes use of the chisel in forcing it open, generally at the lock, and transfers the contents to his bag or bundle, or passes up what he had stolen to his confederate, and, at the next station, the two get out of the carriage, and either leave the train altogether, or get into another carriage. Should there be any complaint of loss, they throw away the things out of the window.

9. If the passenger discovers the loss while they are still in the same compartment, suspects them and complains to the Police Constable at a Railway station, the latter searches their bags or bundles, finds no stolen property to be sure, and lets them off. Then they go back along the line and recover the property. Or, instead of cutting open the bag, they quickly, when the owner is asleep, exchange bags and sneak away at the first opportunity, and the unfortunate victim discovers what has happened only a little too late, perhaps on arriving at his

destination, when of course he reports the loss to the Police, who naturally find great difficulty in tracing up the thief. If the passenger keeps his bag below his head, and is wary enough not to give them any scope in the train, they will also get down at the station with him, and as generally this passenger lies down in the station or choultry near it till morning, these Bhamptas go with him to the same spot, and misrepresenting to him that they are merchants from some place far or near, manage to sleep with him. During their conversation with him, they will inspire him with such confidence that he, taking them for honest travellers, relaxes his vigilance over his bag in proportion, nay more, feels positively happy in their company. They will then take the first opportunity to walk away with his bag in the dark, and will be several miles off before he goes and complains to the Police. Most of these budmashes have a notoriety for clearing at a stretch astoundingly long distances. These men will, as a rule, steal anything, however small in value, and it is needless to say that sometimes they make heavy hauls, much to the detriment of railway passengers. They also contrive to remove stealthily articles from the pockets of travellers purchasing tickets at the booking offices, as in the crowd the passengers do not notice what is going on, much less perceive who is the thief.

10. Bhamptas do not confine their operations merely to the railway which passes through their district. They also proceed in gangs on the Madras Railway, the Southern Mahratta and South Indian Railways, the Bezwaṇa-Madras and East Coast Railways, the Great Indian Peninsular Railway, the Mysore and the Nizam's State Railways, the Bombay-Baroda and Central Indian Railways, the Rajputana Railway, the Bengal-Nagpur Railway, the East Indian Railway, the Oudh and Rohilkund Railway and others. They generally choose some line and

Lines of Railways to which they extend and their operations.

start in a gang of about ten or twelve men with one or two women for some place on that line, and, fixing a central place as a rendezvous, proceed by twos and threes to prey upon the public, returning to their homes either after they succeed, or if they are afraid they are suspected, or when they are let off from jail. When returning with the booty, the stolen jewels will be secured round the waist of a woman, and she will travel in a female carriage. The stolen cloths will be concealed in bedding, which is generally carried by the men; but usually they send away the women in advance with all the valuables. When there is no female, the chief man will carry the jewels in his waist, under the disguise of a respectable contractor or a merchant.

11. In the year 1901 just about its close, the people of Rajahmundry were startled by a series of thefts committed both in the Bazaar street and on the bank of the Godavari, the cases numbering over half a dozen in the space of about a fortnight.

An instance of their recent tour around India.

Closely on the heels of these, came a clever pick-pocketing of about Rs. 10 committed on the station platform in broad daylight. Immediately that the complaint of this last case was received by me in my capacity of Railway Police Inspector, I went to work, and, suspecting that there was a professional gang located somewhere in the town or in its neighbourhood, I held a thorough scrutiny and with the help of the local officers, traced out a gang of nine Bhamptas and their women and children in three of the huts in the washerman quarters of Innespet about a mile and a half from the Railway station.

The three huts were immediately searched, when, besides a medley of trifling trinkets of all sorts, were found a few postal letters from their homes in Ahmednagar taluk received by them at Dharwar, Dond Junction, Allahabad, Calcutta and Khurda. These letters disclosed that they

sent home several money orders and parcels including two watches, and that they were then on a tour through India starting in February 1901 from Dharwar where one of them had a conviction for theft. They then travelled through the Bombay Presidency to Dond Junction whence they sent some money orders. Then they had been to Allahabad wherefrom they sent two watches and some money. In June the gang reached Howrah, where a few of its members seem to have been bound over for good behaviour by the Calcutta Magistrate. In August the whole gang squatted at a hamlet close to the Railway Station of Khurda Road under the patronage of the village *Saraparakar*, who, falling in love with a young widow of theirs, connived at the questionable life of the gang, who committing a few thefts near Midnapur and Puri, some of the members were caught and convicted. The Police too got scent finally of their unwelcome presence at Khurda Road.

Finding the place thus becoming too hot for them, they came down to Rajahmundry, leaving the young widow to the *Saraparakar*'s amours probably with the object of keeping up his connection with the gang.

The finger prints taken and sent to the different anthropometric centres elicited the above convictions in Dharwar and Calcutta that year.

Six of the men arrested at Rajahmundry were bound over for good behaviour by the Joint Magistrate of Godavari.

12. It may be interesting to the readers to know an instance of their doings on the Bezwada-Madras line traced up by me in January 1900. A party of nineteen men and three women, belonging to the gangs of Rooyee, Karati, Poojeechivadi, Hale, Wadagaon and Konali, started towards B. M. R. The party split up into two gangs of eleven each. On their way they had good hauls, and Manirafn and Byri with the two women named

Their raids on the
B. M. R.

Manku and Ranu, returned to their places from Hyderabad with a large quantity of the property stolen. Of the remaining eighteen Bhamptas, eight men confined their operations to the Bezwada-Madras Railway and made Nellore their headquarters, while the remaining nine men and the woman Sunderabai chose the Nizam's Guaranteed State Railway as their field of operations, and made a good haul before they were all arrested by the Secunderabad Railway Police.

13. The eight persons encamped at Nellore, hired a decent house belonging to one Inala Appayya Chetty at Santhapet, close to the Penner river, on the 11th December 1899, and called themselves railway contractors. From that day till the end of the month they kept travelling up and down, and ascertained for themselves at which of the railway stations there were no Constables, and which of the stations were considered to be important. Every night four of them went out, while the other four remained at home. On the 30th December they stole the tin-box of the Nazir of Amalapuram, Godavery District, which contained 28 rupees' worth of property. On the 2nd January 1900, some jewels were stolen from a passenger's bundle, but no complaint was lodged about the loss at the time. On the 5th January, a big theft involving a thousand rupees' worth of jewels, belonging to the wife of the Superintendent of Sangam Anicut, was committed between Nellore and Bezwada, and the complaint was made to me in person by the lady in sobs and cries. The wooden box from which the jewels had been removed was examined by me, and from the marks of a chisel or nail left on the lid at the lock, I was quite convinced that it must have been the work either of a Bhampta or of an Alagari. I took immediate steps to detect the case by tracing out this professional thief, and deputed Constables to the different stations to watch all the passengers closely, as this culprit must take train somewhere to reach his place of abode.

One Bhāmpṭa, named Nathu, was caught at Sulturpet with stolen property as he was alighting from the train, the complainant who missed his property having been sharp enough to discover the loss and to complain at once. While he was being searched by the Nellore Station-house Officer, his three associates, who held tickets from different places, bolted from the platform in the dark, but were eventually arrested in the village of Tada. Their names are Gangaram, Nama and Maru. No stolen property was found upon them.

14. Before the 20th January 1900, no less than ten thefts were committed by them. On the morning of the 21st, two more Bhāmpṭas, Rama and Bapu, with over 500 rupees' worth of property in their possession, were arrested by a beat Constable while they were dragging themselves along the road under the influence of liquor. The same evening another Bhāmpṭā, named Pakira *alias* Balaram, was arrested at Nayudupeta railway station by a Railway Police Constable. I presume that this man had evidently concealed all the property he had in his possession, and arrived at that station to go to Nellore to inform his other associates of the arrest of their comrades.

15. On the 25th January, when the train was about to start, the eighth man, Chendria *alias* Rama Chandar, got into the train at Nellore at 1 A.M., when a Platform Constable, suspecting him to be a Bhāmpṭa, and having no time to search his bundles, pointed him out to the two Constables of the travelling section in the train. These Constables, in their turn, conveyed the suspicion to the Station-house Officer of Bapatla, who was also in the same train, and he searched him at Bitragunta and found over a thousand rupees' worth of jewels and cloths with him. This man was perhaps leaving Nellore finally, as the place was getting too hot for the gang after so many arrests in quick succession.

16. As every one of them was going out of Nellore, and the thefts were being committed on both sides of

Nellore, I was convinced that these Bhamptas fixed Nellore as their headquarters. On making a searching enquiry I learnt that the house of Appayya Chetti, referred to above, had been engaged by them, and as it was found locked, I broke the lock open in the presence of some witnesses, and found in the house a portion of the stolen property connected with four of the cases mentioned above.

17. In four cases the boxes were broken open with chisels. In two cases the boxes were carried bodily away. In two cases the railway bags were cut open, and in the remaining two the property was removed from bundles. Property connected with eight cases was traced to them, and the Head Assistant Magistrate of Gudur sentenced them all to imprisonment varying from one to four years.

18. When thieving in towns and villages or on large platforms, the Bhampta is generally accompanied by a boy who watches and gives signals, draws off attention from the man and thus makes things easy for him. Not infrequently the boy is suspected and accused, and a hubbub is raised, during which the real thief makes off. The boy, when caught, is pitied by the other passengers or bystanders owing to his tender age, and upon their interference is let off with a slap or two. The boys are so trained from their very childhood that they will never betray their elders, nor will they give out their places of abode or the names of their parents.

19. Like other local thieves, the Bhamptas have their habitual receivers or purchasers of their stolen property. If they have made a good haul, they either send off one or two of the gang by road with it to their home if it is not far off, or dispose of it to a receiver. Sometimes valuable stolen ornaments are forwarded to their villages by parcel post, or the money by money order, the gang merely retaining money

just enough for ordinary expenses, to throw suspicion off themselves.

20. When a Bhampta is caught red-handed, or arrested on suspicion, he never gives his real name or place of abode, nor will he recognize or know aught of his confederates; and it is only by employing detectives and informers that anything can be ascertained regarding such men if made prisoners; but when confronted by those who know them, they generally confess their real names and places of abode. If they are called upon to give security for good behaviour or to go to prison in default, they usually telegraph to the head or Naik of the gang to which they belong, when two or three generally start off with money enough to save them from incarceration; but, of course, it often happens that sufficient money cannot be raised.

21. When a gang arranges a rendezvous on some line as already stated, it is generally at a point from two to five miles from the railway line, often in hilly, uninhabitable and thickly-wooded places. They often tarry in these places for considerable periods until they can gather sufficient booty, or until any of their gang, who may have been imprisoned, return from the jail. Till then they wait patiently, subsisting upon what the rest of the gang may manage to earn from day to day. To purchase provisions from shops in the neighbouring villages, one or two of them go daily in the morning, disguised as holy pilgrims to some great shrine like that of Tirupati or some other well-known place of Hindu pilgrimage. The disguise and imitation are so perfect that no casual observer would even dream of suspecting them, and unless every Police Constable or Village Magistrate makes it a point to question those travellers minutely and inquisitively, he will not be able to distinguish them from the other real and innocent pilgrims. That is how they hoodwink the Police and render

nugatory all their intelligent resources to prevent crime. In the afternoons, however, they manage to go to a different village and spend a good time in drinking toddy, their favourite beverage, and arrack. When they go to these shops, they go separately and never claim any relationship, nor do they appear to recognize each other. When by chance a Police officer smells them out and takes them to the station, every opportunity will be sought to abscond or escape from him, even by resorting to force or by throwing sand into his eyes.

22. An instance of this actually occurred once in the Gooty Division. On the 26th of March 1893, a Police Constable, on some information, found (1) Pakira, (2) Ambaji, (3) Maruda, (4) Rama, (5) Tukaram, (6) Gunda, (7) Kristna and (8) Hanimi, a woman, beneath a tamarind tree in the hills situated to the north of the village Kasapuram, about three miles from the Guntakul Junction. He arrested them all under suspicion, and brought them with the assistance of the village folk to the railway station. On searching them, the usual articles, as mentioned in para. 8 *supra*, and Rs. 135 were found. When each man was taken separately and questioned as to their whereabouts, they differed in their statements. And it was not till they were threatened that they would be placed before a Magistrate for being bound over for good behaviour, that they gave their correct names. It was then found out that one of them, Rama, was no other than the railway thief who had been seized with property at the Royalcheruva station about 35 miles from there on the 4th January 1893, and sentenced to two months' rigorous imprisonment by the Sub-Magistrate of Yadiki. Evidently they had been halting at the place till the return of that individual from the jail. It was with great difficulty that the woman could be made to admit her own connection with the gang. She persisted in saying that she had no

connection with them, except that, having met them on her way to Hanumukonda, and having been requested by them to prepare their meals, she had been doing so simply to oblige her fellow-travellers. This led the Station-house Officer to suspect them to be a criminal gang, and he appointed a Constable to escort them to Bellary on the night of 27th March 1893. On arriving at Bellary, the Constable wanted them to follow him to the town police station in order to provide a fresh escort from there, and the party accordingly followed him a short distance from the railway station, when suddenly two of the Bhamptas snatched a quantity of dust from the ground and flung it into the Constable's eyes, and after thus blinding him, the males made the best of their way and could never be traced again. They vanished into the thin air as it were, seeming more like 'spirits at choice inhabiting this sooty form and leaving it at will' to disappear so suddenly and altogether. It is such exploits that electrify the Police sometimes. Poor man! the Constable, after recovering his vision, saw the woman alone standing before him, and all his attempts to trace the fugitives were in vain. I may here add parenthetically that this was not the first attempt that the Bhamptas made at escaping from the Constable. At first they had recourse to the milder form of offering him a bribe and other agreeable inducements, but failing there, they resorted to the harsh means explained above, and carried it out so successfully. If they had failed in this too, they would undoubtedly have tried another and more violent means of escape, even to the extent of making away with the Constable altogether, should a favourable opportunity have presented itself.

23. ¶ On the return of a gang or party from a raid, all the property stolen is collected and divided, the Naik or headman getting his full share whether he has been out with the party or not. It is sometimes in these divisions that misunderstandings occur which enable the Police to obtain a clue,

Division of booty.

and, if there should fall out a chance of their being arrested, the Bhamptas would sacrifice one of their number, who, surrendering a portion of the stolen property, suffers imprisonment to save the rest, who are then left free to commit further depredations. Of course, the family of the man who goes to jail will be given another share by the rest of the gang, as is often done by other criminal classes.

24. When Bhamptas are strongly suspected or seized, their persons should, in the first in-

Mode of search.

stance, be completely searched without leaving any portion of the body to go unexamined, and then their bags or bundles. When a Police Officer spots a Bhampta in a train or on a platform, he must observe (himself unobserved though) with great caution, who exactly are his followers, and try to net them all together and seize them by surprise in a body, so as to assure himself that the property in their possession does not pass from hand to hand till it disappears altogether. It is the failure to take this precaution that is the cause of many an abortive search of the Bhamptas. When all the members of a gang are netted and closely watched, the property must, as a matter of course, be found concealed either in some part of their bodies, or in some corner of the cloths they wear, or in the bags or bundles which they carry. In one case a female Bhampta had a currency note of Rs. 100 fastened on to her thigh with a piece of cloth as if she had a boil there. The woman deputed to search her person did not open the bandage, till she was directed to do so by the Police Officer on learning that she had a boil.

25. It has to be remarked here that keen observation is necessary in identifying exactly who

Observation necessary.

constitute the members of the gang. They wear different disguises, and they are not generally seen together; and it is only by carefully observing their glances and general demeanour, that any connection can be traced between one member and another. This is the case not only on the railway

platforms, but also in the villages to which the Bhamptas resort for the disposal of the stolen property. Generally, two or more Bhamptas of a gang go for the purpose; not all in a body. One or two go first, followed at a short interval by another, and then by a third or fourth, as the case may be, and while the first batch bargain, the others will be found loitering about in the neighbourhood, but at a safe distance from them, as if attending to some other business.

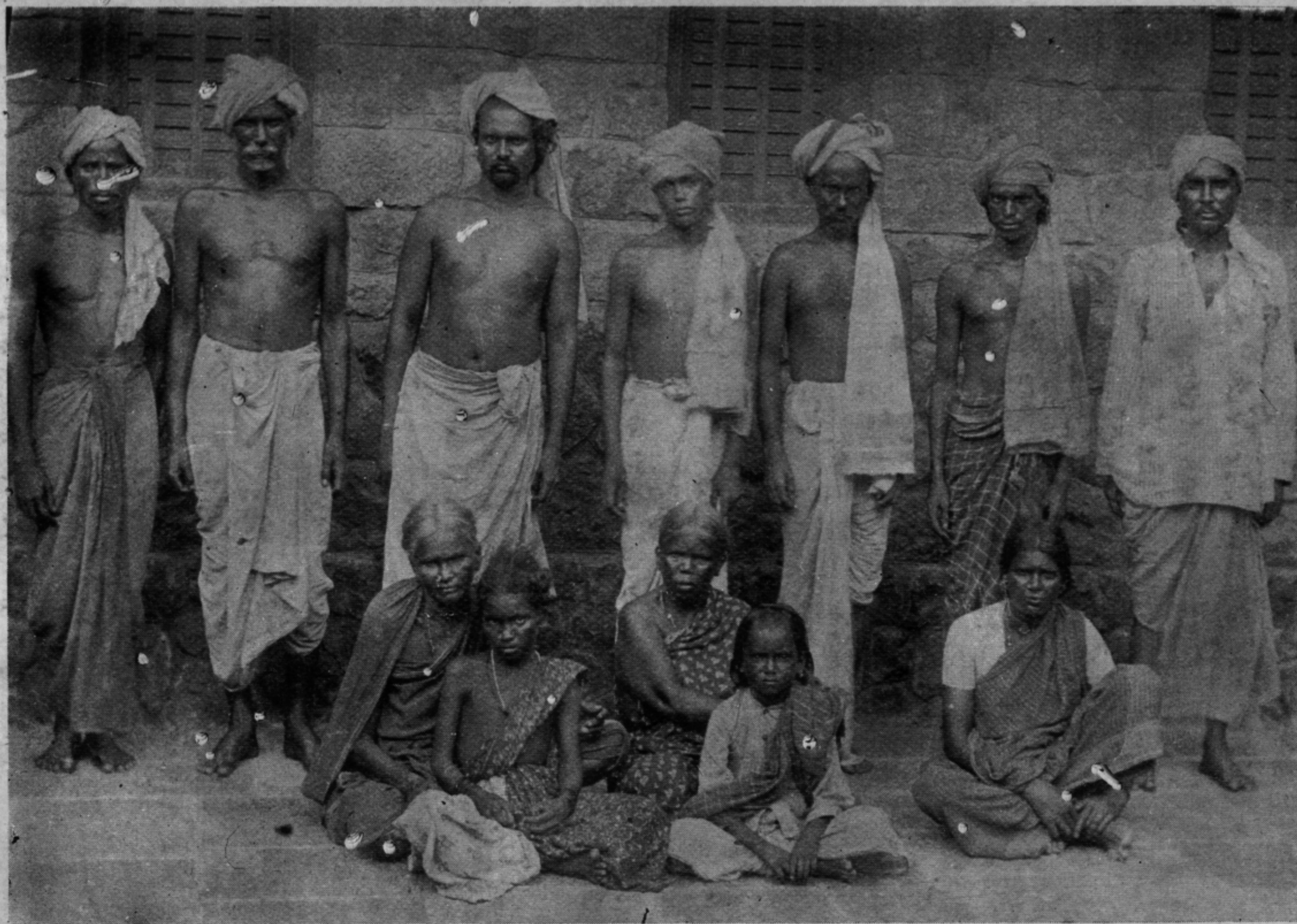
26. If a Constable happens to suspect the first batch, he generally begins with questioning them and ends with searching their persons, which show nothing. This is because the Constable is not patient enough to wait and observe the surroundings, or to find out who else have followed these suspected persons. If, on the other hand, the Constable can manage to keep his suspicions to himself for a time, observing carefully all what transpires, he is sure to mark one and all the Bhamptas coming to the place, and if search is made when all are there, the property will, as a rule, be found with the last comer. It is, therefore, only the last comer that can be of any use for the purposes of the Police, and unless the Constable waits till the last comer arrives, nothing can be found, as there is nothing on the persons of the others. In searching the houses for stolen property, every nook and corner should be examined thoroughly; sometimes property will be found buried a yard or more deep in the ground. Property is also concealed between double-built walls, and between beams and wall tops. Hearths and cooking places generally form the points of underground concealment, while the back-yards also are not unfrequently used for the same purpose. It is impossible to specify one and all the parts of the internal arrangement of a Bhampta house, to which search must be directed; but, above all, their persons should be examined as closely as their houses, as already hinted.

27. The next matter to which particular attention has to be paid relates to the time and manner of searching the houses of the Bhamptas. As already stated, they generally live in a secluded part outside the main village, as do some of the other criminal classes. When the house of any particular Bhampta has to be searched, it is useless to confine the search to his house alone, as the arrangement of their houses is such as to facilitate the passing of property from house to house, till it leaves the hamlet altogether. The first precaution, therefore, is to set Police guard all round the hamlet, so as to make sure that no property passes out of it before the search shall be completed. Very often females attempt to get away on the plea of answering the calls of nature, with the object of carrying away the property concealed in their clothes or in their private parts. After thus providing against all possible exit of the property, search must be carried out thoroughly from house to house throughout the hamlet.

28. Though the Law apparently allows Police searches to be made in any part of the day, it has been wisely directed by departmental orders, with a view to obviate all misapprehension or suspicion against the Police in the minds of Magistrates, Judges and the public, that, as far as possible, searches should be carried out between sunrise and sunset. In the case of Bhamptas, however, it is not generally possible to make a successful search in the daytime. The fellows are always wide awake, and are too shrewd not to notice the approach of the Police in the day, and a moment's previous notice is sufficient for them to transfer whole lots of property beyond the pale of their habitations. The best plan, therefore, is to surround the hamlet before daylight and take them by surprise early in the morning. This plan was successfully adopted by me in a case.

List of places where the Bhamptas are known to reside in different Districts in the Deccan.

District.	Taluk.	Village.
Ahmednagar	(1) Parner	(1) Baburdi.
	Do.	(2) Hingoli.
	Do.	(3) Kangoli.
	(2) Kurjut	Sinda.
Nasik	(1) Niphad	(1) Ravala.
	Do.	(2) Pipri.
	Do.	(3) Koondarwadi.
	Do.	(4) Jamb.
Kolapur	(1) Bage	Benduvada.
	(2) Niphad	(1) Gotkhandi.
	Do.	(2) Bahadurvadi.
	Do.	(3) Bhikhar.
Poona	(1) Indapur	Gondi.
	(2) Baramati	(1) Karati.
	Do.	(2) Bhutagaon.
	Do.	(3) Wudgaon.
	Do.	(4) Karanga.
	Do.	(5) Moorti Madwa.
	Do.	(6) Mooroom.
	Do.	(7) Waki.
	(3) Bhimtadi	(1) Bamburdi.
	Do.	(2) Moragaon.
	(4) Haveli	(1) Bypurdi.
	Do.	(2) Wadu.
	Do.	(3) Bhosree.
	Do.	(4) Bopukal.
	Do.	(5) Wadagaon.
	Do.	(6) Poojeechivadi.
	(5) Godnathi	(1) Kir dal Pabul.
	Do.	(2) Kunnersar.
Sholapur	(1) Akolkote State	(1) Bhageli.
	Do.	(2) Konali.
	Do.	(3) Soordi.
	Do.	(4) Malvandi.
Satara	(1) Kodabgaon	(1) Rooyee.
	Do.	(2) Kanerkhed.
	(2) Kared	Oomruj.
	(3) Jamkhandi	Watar.



INA KORAVARS OR ALAGARIES.

CHAPTER II.

INA KORAVARS.

THE INA KORAVARS are a class of people who live here and therein the Madras Presidency, chiefly in the Trichinopoly and Chingleput Districts and in the Malur Taluk of the Mysore Province. They are professional thieves and pick-pockets, practising their trade in trains and at festivals and fairs. They are also called "Aghambadiars," "Alagaries," "Capemaries," "Vanniars," "Vellalars" and "Korava Poojaries" in the Southern Districts; while in the Ceded Districts and in the Northern Circars, they are known as "Santha-dongalu," "Rail-dongalu," "Mudusumarlu," "Kathiravallu" and "Pachipolly." With the extension of railways, the settlements of these criminal gangs have increased apace, so that they are now to be found more or less all over the country under some designation or other. In Bombay, Bengal and the United Provinces they have settled as pile curers and korava poojaries.

2. The original abodes of this class were Pattukota in the Tanjore District, Thogamalai in the Trichinopoly District, and Sanjikota in the South Arcot District. The Thogamalai gang has lately removed to Edayapatti, a village two and half miles north of Thogamalai, where they call themselves "Uliakâra." Strictly speaking, they are Koravars by caste, known as Korichas or Erukulas in the Telugu Districts and Kykades in Bombay; but they gradually gave up all their connections with that class, and owing to their better associations and status in life, they pass themselves off for *bonâ fide* citizens, and forming themselves a distinct community, disclaim every connection with them. Before the days of the British Government and for several years afterwards, they were habitually com-

mitting dacoities, robberies and other offences of a heinous kind. But since the introduction of the Indian Penal Code, several of the leaders of the gangs were transported or sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, and at one time the Ina Koravars were seriously afraid of total extermination under the rigour of the law. Seeing that the crimes to which they had been accustomed were visited with such severe punishments, the gangs met together in what they call "Kootams," to discuss the new Criminal law as regards the degree of gravity with which it had dealt with serious offences against property and person, and resolved to give up their old crimes in favour of the milder forms of theft. But this new resolution was soon found not to pay them well if they confined themselves to their usual haunts; so they split into gangs, took to wandering over the country, visiting fairs, festivals and other places where people generally throng, for the purpose of thieving and picking pockets. After the opening of railways, they found, much to their delight, that thefts could easily be committed in the trains; so they took to this additional source of income, and have ever since been committing thefts on railways very successfully. But latterly owing to the efficient vigilance of the Railway Police and the particular care with which Mr. Fawcett, the then Superintendent, had been watching the movements of this troublesome class, they have not been so successful in railway thieving, and seem therefore to have taken again to their old habits of committing dacoities and burglaries.

On 2nd March 1900, a daring house dacoity was committed in the village of Agaram, Vellore Taluk, by a few Ina Koravars in collusion with some local Poligars, Talyaries and Vettians. As warrants were issued for their arrest, they migrated into Bengal and Hyderabad.

3. As already stated, they are really Koravars and, as such, used to eat any description of food, the squirrel, the crow being to
 Their assumed names.

them delicious. But by degrees, having become rich in the course of their criminal career, especially after the introduction of railways, they have assumed more dignified caste names and pass for a tribe of the Vellalars, calling themselves Aghambadiar Vellalars or Pillais, whose dress and manners also they have adopted to some extent. Ostensibly, to veil their criminal pursuits, a few of them cultivate lands, while a few others also take to doctoring, and these latter are generally considered to be experts in the cure of piles.

4. In religion the Koravars are Sivavites and wear on their foreheads the horizontal mark of ashes which is the distinguishing mark of that sect. The worship of "Kali" and "Bêthála," whom they call "Muneesvar," is also practised by them, but the deity worshipped as the presiding goddess of their profession is "Moothévi" the goddess of sleep, whom they dread and worship, male and female, more than any other god or goddess of the Hindu Pantheon. The object of this worship is twofold, one being to keep themselves vigilant and the other to throw their victims off their guard. "Moothévi" is invoked in their prayers to keep them sleepless while on their nefarious purpose bent, but withal to make their victims sufficiently sleepy over their property. This goddess is worshipped both by the males and females, but especially by the latter who perform strange orgies periodically to propitiate her. A secluded spot is preferred for performing these orgies at which animal sacrifices are made, and there is distribution of liquor in honour of the goddess. The Edayapatti gang worship in addition the deity known as Ratnasabhapathy at Ayyamala near there.

5. Both the men and women wear tattoo marks of circular or semi-circular forms on their foreheads and forearms. When they are once convicted, they enlarge

Marks on their persons.

or alter in some other way their tattoo marks on their forearms, so that they might differ from the previous descriptive marks of identification entered by the Police in their search books and other records. During festivals they put red stuff, "Kunkuma", over the tattoo marks on their foreheads.

6. They receive or purchase male or female children under five years of age from people of all castes except the inferior Mala, Madiga and the like, and bring them up in their ways. They then instruct such children in thieving and in the language of the community from their fifth year; and before the completion of their seventh or eighth year, these become sufficiently trained to practise thieving. The Koravars also admit women of other castes, excepting those above referred to, and keep them as concubines and wives, and the children begot on them are freely allowed the rights and privileges of the community without distinction. Adultery is very rife in this class, but a Korava woman will never under any circumstances give her person to a man of ordinarily good caste, a respectable member of society, lest the children so begotten might inherit any of their father's qualities, and thus prove unfit for the profession of thieving.

7. Marriages are performed under the auspices of a Brahmin Priest, with all the religious ceremonies observed by the low caste Hindus. When a Koravan dies, his widow marries his brother or some other relation, so that it often happens a man has at the same time two or three such women whom, however, he calls by different names of relationship, as it suits his convenience. Widow marriages are usually performed in the presence of their relations, when rice is cooked and distributed among them. There is no widowhood. A man may marry two sisters at a time. This is often done at Thogamalai.

8. In their thieving excursions, the Koravars form themselves into small detachments, with one or two women and a trained boy or girl about seven years old in each, and every detachment proceeds to a particular village. To avoid observation they generally go through the jungles as much as possible until they reach their destination. In the villages if they happen to see children with jewels on playing about, the woman, or the trained boy or girl, will be sent to strip them off their jewels. They often go to wells and rivers used for bathing purposes, and very dexterously remove the cloths and jewels left on the banks and pass them on from hand to hand. They also enter the open houses and carry away things as they find convenient. At railway stations and other crowded places, where the elders cannot conveniently do so themselves, they make the boy or girl who accompanies them go and mix with the passengers, who generally do not suspect juveniles, and steal whatever he or she can. For, the Koravars presume that if the boy or girl is caught in the act of stealing, the natural softness of the natives will generally prevail, making them reluctant to hand him or her over to the Police, and that they will let go the juvenile offender with a slap or two on the cheek. As soon as they succeed in a theft, they carry the stolen property to an out-of-the-way place, and burying it there, defecate over the spot to divert the suspicion of the Police. In fairs and festivals, they make a clever use of their scissors in cutting loose small knots of money and jewels from the persons of women and children. They carry away bundles and bags of the spectator if they can do so conveniently, and when the bundles are borne on the person, the Koravars nicely abstract the contents by untying the bundles or slitting the bags. When merchants are busily engaged in their bargains, they carry away money purses and bundles of valuable articles from their shops.

• Mode of committing crime.

9. On occasions of fairs and festivals, the Koravars go in a gang and encamp in a tope at a distance of a mile or two. They spend the day in eating and drinking, and when night falls they get mixed up in a crowd and come into the fair or temple where, while the visitors are engaged in paying their devotions, the Koravars busy themselves in cutting away as many of their ornaments as possible, and leave the spot before the owners miss their jewels. Outside the temples, on pavements or on pials or under the shade of trees in temple gardens, where visitors generally sleep after visiting the temple, the Koravars go and lie down as if to sleep with the children, if any, close to the persons whose property they intend to steal, passing themselves off as residents of one of the neighbouring villages, and inspiring them, by their talk and manner, with a degree of trust and confidence.

10. If, however, a wary spectator is found closely watching his property, so that it cannot be easily purloined, the Koravars post themselves on different sides close to him, and one of them, seizing a boy of theirs, gives him such a loud thumping that makes the boy cry so loudly as to divert the attention of the watchful spectator. Seizing the opportunity of this momentary inattention, one of the Koravars makes away with the bundle or other article of property nearest to him. If on re-directing his attention to his things, the spectator espies the thief, he naturally runs in pursuit of him, leaving his other things inadvertently behind, which in their turn are carried away by the remaining men of the gang present at the spot. When any of the bystanders happens to observe the Koravan, runs and attempts to seize him, the latter flings the bundle in his face, takes to his heels and thus eludes pursuit. Such deeds are generally perpetrated during the night, so that detection and identification of the thief becomes a matter of extreme difficulty, and conviction is

rendered almost impossible. On occasions like this, when the thief is caught on the spot, and a Police Constable is not near to take charge of the criminal, the people take the law into their own hands, administer a sound thrashing and let him go. The Koravan expects such treatment as very likely, and goes fully prepared to take it as best he could. Before starting on their thieving excursions, the Koravars intoxicate themselves with country liquor, but not to such an extent as to lose their control over hand or head. May be they do this as much to rouse the devil lying dormant in them, as to deaden what little conscience there might still be left. It has been very aptly remarked that drink and crime have twinned at a birth.

11. All small jewels which the Koravars manage to steal are at once concealed in the mouth and even swallowed, if necessary. When swallowed, the jewel is next day produced with the help of a purgative. In this way a half sovereign, stolen by a Koravan, was recovered a few years ago, and the thief convicted by the Conjeeveram Sub-Magistrate. The women of this class also, like their Bhampta sisters, are clever in concealing small jewels in their private parts. The best way to find this out is to make the woman jump, so that the jewel may drop in the act of jumping. In this way, in 1882, at the feast of Kooram, a gold jewel ("Addigai") was recovered from a woman, and she was convicted. There are many women in this class with more than half-a-dozen convictions for thefts against each.

12. The Korava women wear no gold or silver jewels, not even the gold tali, which is used by all classes of married women, as such jewels might serve for purposes of identification. They, therefore, prefer wearing jewels of brass or other inferior metal, ordinarily sold in the bazaars, and, instead of the tali, they wear a string of

cotton, coloured with saffron. The Koravars can speak all languages of Southern India, and, in their intercourse with the people, they generally use the language of a particular locality, so as to pass for some peaceful residents of the neighbourhood. As a rule, they make friends with the Reddies or Munsiffs of the villages they visit, and with the grog-shop keepers in the neighbourhood. When arrested and asked as to their caste, they give themselves out as belonging to the "Palli", "Agamudiar", "Kavarai", "Idaiyan", "Palliyāchee", "Reddi" or some such caste.

13. If searched soon after the commission of a crime, there will be found on the person of a Koravan a small knife or a sharp piece of broken glass which he often carries concealed in his mouth, a pair of scissors, an iron nail, two or three rupees in coin, a match box, and a few sets of clothes of different colours. The knife or glass is used for slitting open bags or bundles, the scissors in cutting off the jewels on the persons of women and children, the nail to break open the boxes, and the rupees for bribing the Constable who arrests him if he is open to such a temptation. As soon as a Koravan safely gets out with the stolen property, he hands it over to another of his class outside the crowd and changes his clothes so as to baffle suspicion. If the property be in the shape of gold or silver jewels, the man to whom it is handed over takes it with the match box to a pre-ascertained secluded spot in the neighbouring jungle, where there is already another man of the gang ready to melt it. Sometimes their receivers follow the Koravars in their thieving excursions.

14. Like the Bhamptas, the Koravars are experts in thieving on railways. They steal carpet or canvas bags, bundles or small boxes, not only on platforms and in ticket rooms, but also from railway carriages. They always carry with them a decent canvas bag filled with

useless rags under lock and key, or a decent looking bundle of such rags. One of them taking this bag or bundle quietly near that of another passenger, places it close by for some time, as if he also were an ordinary traveller, but, at the earliest opportunity, quietly walks away with the other bag, leaving his own behind, which the traveller believes to be his own until the next day perhaps, when he attempts to open it. We all know what such delay means for a thief, and for the Police as to the chances of their being able to trace the property. If a favourable opportunity does not present itself at the platform, he manages to learn the destination of the traveller, and, purchasing a ticket for the same or some intermediate station, gets into the same compartment. Then again in the carriage, he enacts the same part contriving to place his bag as close as possible to that of his victim whom he watches until he becomes sleepy or otherwise unwary, and gets down quietly at the very next station with his bag. If the ticket happens to be purchased for a station farther off, he runs into the latrine and remains there till the train passes. If he is observed and questioned by the Railway officials or by the Police, he complains that he has missed the train, and feigning intense sorrow at the mishap, perhaps

“Drops tears as fast as the Arabian trees

“Their medicinale gum.”

These Koravars cut open bags, break open boxes, throw away property from the carriages on the line, and change compartments or carriages after the commission of thefts, just like their Bhampta brethren; but for the most part their operations are confined to the platforms rather than the trains.

15. Till very recently these Koravars have been travelling with only bags or bundles as mentioned above, but they now travel at times with steel trunks and put on
- Further improvement in appearance.

a more gentlemanly apparel as a safer mask to their villainy.
 For they seem to have learnt that

"The apparel oft proclaims the man."

They use silk-bordered Conjeeveram or Coimbatore cloths, and their women wear Kornadu cloths and bodices. In a very recent search of their houses at Vembakampet near Trivellore, steel trunks were found in every one of them. In another search of their houses at Booggaletipalli near Cuddapah, in connection with a heavy theft at Guntakal, large quantities of silk and kornadu cloths were seized by me on suspicion along with the stolen property which was found in the hut of one Ponneri Narayana.

16. The household language of the Koravars is a dialect of Tamil, but as already stated they know all the vernaculars,—Telugu, Canarese and Hindustani. They are generally illiterate, though of late they have commenced sending their children to vernacular schools, so that some of the younger generation know how to read and write Tamil. In the presence of strangers they make use of certain expressions, words and signals, whose meaning is known only to themselves, on matters which they consider unsafe to be understood by others. Similar means of communication are adopted in the commission of a crime. The following are some of the terms used by them :—

Valan or Mooli or Nayi meaning Constable.

Pothalu	„	Carpet or Canvas bag
		or bundle.

Polambi . „ Gold jewel.

Vadayan ,, Soon.

Vasare „ Bring.

Voru kuppu „ Give arrack.

Kufambu „ Toddy.

'Shadayan " Cloth.

Boothi „ Children.

Chafamuti „ Necklace.

Varipudu	meaning	Leave him.
Vangittuvanthan	„	Previously convicted.
Keppathe	„	Do not tell.
Peratu keppathe	„	Do not give out your residence.
Shadayan irchiti ippico	„	There is a cloth, take.
Valan varachiran malai rechutti varachuthu	} „ {	The Constable is coming, conceal the jewel by burying.
Mooli varachiran gendilé inchithi kanayam kup- pettu engu	} „ {	The Constable is coming, escape by paying him the rupees you have.

17. It is perhaps instructive to conclude this account of the Koravars with stating that the only effective punishment in their case is “durance vile”, which works the more effectively the longer it runs. It has already been stated that the long terms of imprisonment held out by the Penal Code for dacoity and robbery have restrained the Koravars from those grave crimes and made them prefer the simpler forms of theft, and it might be hoped that if, even for these latter offences, such condign punishment as the law inflicts be rigorously meted out, the Koravars may, in time, be compelled to give up their criminal habits altogether, and settle themselves as peaceful people. A Koravan dreads imprisonment more than any amount of corporal punishment. With him,

“A felon’s cell

“’S the fittest earthly type of hell.”

When prosecuted for a crime, the Koravan invokes his favourite deity to let him off with whipping, in the following words:—“Adidhandanai vidhithal Ammanuku poojasai-garén,” (*i.e.*) “If the punishment of whipping be inflicted, I shall adore the goddess.”

18. In conducting the search of the houses and persons of the Koravars, the precautions prescribed in the case of the Bhamptas

Searches.

should be observed, as these men also reside outside the main villages. Their women should never be allowed to leave the place till the search is completed. The woman deputed to search Korava woman should be sufficiently warned against all precautions that may be taken by them to baulk her attempt at a successful examination.

19. These Koravars, when they find their business slack at fairs, festivals and railways, go abroad with gilt jewels of good make and offer them to receivers secretly, by night, as real gold and so cheat them. These receivers do not generally complain of the deception practised to any of the authorities, for fear of being marked as receivers of stolen property.

Settlement in Northern Circars.

20. As I was editing the first issue, in 1895, a gang of about 20 Koravars, settled at Bheemasanki, a village within the station limits of Jami, Singavarapukota Taluk, Vizagapatam District. This gang consisted of members of the gangs of Vengudi and Vellirithangal in the Trivellore Taluk of the Chingleput District, of Chikavaram in the Malur Taluk of the Mysore Province, and of Edayapatti in the Kullitalai Taluk of the Trichinopoly District, all of which are shown in the Appendix. They were living there disguised as bricklayers and contractors. They gave out their places, names and house-names quite different from their own, but common to the neighbouring districts. For example, one Venkatasawmy of Edayapatti who was arrested with two others in the Vizagapatam town, gave out his name as Gopiseti Veerasawmy, the house-name 'Gopiseti' being one of the house-names of the Kapu or Telaga people of the Kistna and Godavery Districts. Most of the members of this gang have migrated into the Bengal Presidency. Some other Koravars of Cuddapah, Vembakampet and Malur have settled in Ellore and Narasipatam in the Godavery District. In January 1900, three money orders were sent by a Koravan to Vembakampet

from Ellore, and a letter was received by him from his parents at Malur to the care of a poojari woman in Béstha-varpet. At Narasapuram, a family has settled as quack doctors for piles and boils, affording an asylum from time to time to the itinerant section of the community.

21. While editing the second issue of this booklet, a large gang of these Koravars were to be seen in Cuttack and Poori Districts. At Cuttack some of them have since settled, advertising themselves as specialists in the cure of piles and fistulas. They move about in gangs in different directions, and, after making pretty good hauls, return to Cuttack and dispose of their booty. There they frequent the Pension lines, Jopra and Kothapeta. On 30th May 1899, during the Chandan Jatra at Poori, near the Narendran tank which is one of the holy Thirthams, a Korava woman was arrested with two silver bangles which she had removed from the person of a child, but she was sharp enough to fling the property into the tank, which is unfortunately too deep for making any attempts to recover the same. A good many railway thefts were committed on the Poori line in 1898 by these Koravars, some of which have not escaped the vigilance of the Police, who, be it said to their credit, succeeded in bringing several of the offenders to book.

22. Some of them have since settled at Calcutta and Bombay and also further North as far as Delhi and Patna, as curers of piles and fistulas harbouring others of their class. It is only from Punjab and Sindh that we do not hear of these gangs, but from their recent adventurous conduct of spreading through Northern India, I have no doubt they will shortly be found in Lahore and other towns of Punjab as curers of piles and fistulas, affording as usual an asylum to their fraternity. Ten members, including the leader Kolavi Narayana of

Vembakampet in Trivellore taluk, were arrested by the Police at Puri in February 1903 and were prosecuted under Sec. 110, C. C. P. They had all absconded from their village after the dacoity case at Ambur in 1900 referred to above, and settled themselves at Baliana about 5 miles from Bubeneshvar railway station. They were identified to be of the gang by my Constable deputed to see them.

An extract from the report of the Inspector-General of Police, Bengal, may here be given as an authority on the subject of their extension :—

“Cognate with the Kapemaries is a class of Korava Pujaries (as they call themselves in their own village) who, emanating from one little hamlet (Pattukotah) in the Tanjore District, are spread more or less over India. There are or were until the other day, and probably are still, some of them in Cuttack, Balasore, Midnapur, Ahmedabad, Patna, Bombay and Secunderabad and in other places. One of them Parasuram by name attained a high position in Bombay. Their ostensible profession is curers of piles and fistulas; but it is noticeable that sooner or later after taking up abode at any place, the Kapemaries are to be found somewhere near; and the impression, which is not quite a certainty, but very nearly so, is that they play the convenient rôle of receivers of property stolen by Kapemaries. One of these Korava Pujaries, Thyagaraja Pujari by name, has for some time resided in Bow Bazaar, Calcutta, where he is known as Kasiram. Their residence at any particular place as well as their members fluctuate. Curers of piles and fistulas hailing from the Madras Presidency should be watched and look-out maintained for their brethren and allies, the Kapemaries, who are arrant and most persistent thieves, men, women and even young children.”

23. About thirty years ago, a colony of these Koravars related to those of Vembakampet, settled themselves in Sreerangapuram in Warangal taluk of the Nizam's dominions, and are nominal landlords there owning a few acres. They usually leave the old women and the young girls at home, and themselves keep moving all over India. There are about a dozen families with about 20 acres of dry and barren land in their names and a few oxen. A gang of them generally consists of about 10 male members who always move about with a few adult women. Besides being professional railway thieves, they make counterfeit coins in baked moulds of mud. The metal they use being stronger than that used by the Chupperbund Fakirs, they are able to utter these base coins much more successfully.

List of places where the Ina Koravars or Alagaries are known to reside in the different districts of the Madras Presidency.

District.	Taluk.	Village.
Chingleput	Trivellore	(1) Vembakam. (2) Arunachala Chattram. (3) Sirigadal. (4) Kandankolle. (5) Vengudi. (6) Vellirithangal. (7) Sevapet. (8) Pappanambakam.
South Arcot	Chidambaram	(1) Maryankuppam hamlet of Tachakadu. (2) Porto Novo.
Trichinopoly	Kullitalai	(1) Edayapatti.
Cuddapah	Cuddapah	(1) Booggaletipally.
Pondicherry	Pondicherry	(1) Kummersempet.

List of places where the Ina Koravars or Alagaries are known to reside in the different districts of the Madras Presidency—(continued).

District.	Taluk.	Village.
Mysore Province...	Tumkur	.. (1) Gunigal.
	Malur	.. (1) Chikavaram. (2) Gudnahally. (3) Boppanahally. (4) Mathanahatti. (5) Abbehalli.
	Bangalore	.. (1) Bangalore. (2) Alusur.
	Palghat	.. (1) Ellepally Amsham. (2) Thanary. (3) Kothiamyakam. (4) Pedanathy.
Vizagapatam	.. Singavarapukota	.. Bheemasanki.
Godavery.	.. Ellore	.. Ellore.
	Narasapuram	.. Narasapuram.



BARWARS.

CHAPTER III.

BARWARS.

THE Barwars are a class of criminal fraternity reputed much for pick-pocketing in bathing ghauts, fairs, festivals, choultries and railway stations, moving all over India under some disguise or other as their Bhampta brethren of the Deccan.

2. ° They are said to have sprung from the Kurmis of Patna and its neighbouring districts, but have subsequently split into two major divisions, one going towards the North into Gonda, Berially, Sitapur and other places, and the other towards Lalitpur and Bilaspur of the Central Provinces in the South. Those that went towards the North are called Barwars and those that went towards the South, Sanorias. In them again sub-divisions have been formed, members of the original tribe being distinguished by the name Sowang and those who have been recruited from Bengal and elsewhere being styled Gulams and their servants, Tilarsi. Those that went towards Gonda intermarried with their Gulams, whereas those of Berially and Hardue have not. Hence there has been a split among them. As for those of the South, there seems to have been no such sub-division except their migration to different places. Of those in the North, the Gonda gangs have been brought under the provisions of the Criminal Tribes Act; and of those in the Central Provinces, they that settled at Lalitpur have been subjected to that Act.

3. According to the version of the Bengal Police Officers, who seem to pay more attention to this tribe than the officers of the other Presidencies, the Barwars worship Debi and Mahabir and call themselves Hindus, but reverence also the Mahomedan Pir Syad Salar Musa-ud-Ghaji and

visit his tomb at Baraitch. They obey omens, and will turn back from an expedition on merely meeting a Government official.

4. Men of all castes, except a few of the very lowest, are admitted by initiation into their confederacy. Boys used to be kidnapped from Bengal and elsewhere; but they have now abandoned this practice, as the punishment proclaimed for such offence is very severe. They use a peculiar slang or Farsi. By its means and by the use of certain signals, they secretly communicate with each other and facilitate thefts. They never commit crimes involving violence, such as, dacoities, and were known to be committing even the simple thefts only between sunrise and sunset; but latterly some of them have found out that darkness favoured them more in their designs. The men, women and boys all commit theft by strategy. Lately there was an instance in which two young men in the disguise of *Sadhus* were convicted of a heavy burglary at Vijayanagaram in the Madras Presidency.

A young boy is so trained to the trade as that he is easily guided in his actions by signs made to him by a proficient in the art. Immediately he lays his hands on any property, he passes it to a strong fleet man who is near and who conveys it to a third person on the road leading to the secure retreat of the gang, about two or three miles from the railway station or other scene of the offence. Soon after the commission of a crime they move with all possible haste to a distance.

5. The women all resort to the nearest fairs and festivals. They wear rich dress and deck themselves gaudily with jewels, and join parties of other women going into a temple; and, while the latter are engaged in offerings and prayers and are intense in their devotion, the former with great dexterity remove from their person the jewel or jewels they could

conveniently lay hold on. Their sleight-of-hand is so perfect, that the thing escapes the observation of the women robbed, who, for the time being remain utterly unconscious of the robbery on their person. Even earrings, noserings and necklaces, which are rather difficult to remove from one's person in such circumstances, are not safe from these robber women.

6. They keep their faces veiled and often disguise themselves as Brahmin women to avert suspicion. The men often disguise themselves as *Sadhus*, and their *modus operandi* of thieving is much the same as that of a Bhampta in trains and at railway stations. They throw away stolen property more frequently than the Bhamptas, through the windows of the railway carriages; and get down at the next station to go and pick up, or send accomplices to pick them up. In the constitution of gangs, in the selection of halting places, and in all what they do to facilitate their criminal designs, the Barwars are very like the Poona Bhamptas already described.

7. They claim Brahmin origin and wear sacred thread and make no secret of their trade. They even defend it on *quasi* religious grounds, quoting the Hindu proverb, that surely it is a gain and no loss to be robbed by a Brahmin.

In the Bengal Police Code their history is given with a list of the villages where they reside, with strict orders to watch them at all the Railway Junctions, during the special seasons of festivals at Gya, Poori and other important religious places. When Barwars are arrested they frequently name some places of Nepaul as their homes and give wrong addresses.

CHAPTER IV.

MULLAHAS OF MUTTRA

OR

CHAIN MULLAHAS OF BALLIA.

THIS is also a criminal gang of pick-pockets and Railway thieves, living at present mostly in the Muttra district. They are called Chain Mullahas of Ballia, because they are reported to have been formerly residents of the Ballia district; and the word Chain denotes a thief or a pick-pocket. About this gang special enquiries were instituted under orders of the Inspector-General of Police, by the Superintendent of Railway Police, Mr. H. de L. Ross of the United Provinces. His memo. is exhaustive and interesting enough to be published in original, and it runs thus:—

2. Mr. L. C. Porter, Magistrate and Collector of Muttra, whilst inspecting the Shergarh police station of that district, had his attention drawn to the Mullahas of Muttra, and wrote the following remarks in his inspection note of the 18th January 1900: "There is a curious colony of Mullahas at Singara and Chamagarhi. They make a living entirely by looting in Bengal. A Thakur who finances them has a shop, ostensibly for cloth selling at Calcutta, and the Mullahas visit him there and loot right and left. He remitted home Rs. 1,500 lately. One was arrested lately at the Magh Mela and identified here. The Calcutta police should be communicated with, and full particulars given them about Daulatta (the Thakur in question)."

Subsequently the Inspector-General of Police, in his administration report for the year ending 31st December 1899, remarked on the Chain Mullahas of the Ballia district and their connection with Bengal and Muttra. Enquiries

were accordingly instituted in the Muttra district, which resulted in the following particulars of these people being obtained :—

3. The Mullahas of the Muttra district are to be found in the police circles of Muttra, Mahaban, Rayah, Bindraban, Mat, Surir, Nohjhil, Majhoi, and Shergarh. They call themselves Thakurs, and state they have no relationship or connection with Dhimars and Kahars, and believe they were formerly residents of the Ballia district, but that nothing is now known by them as to when this was or when their ancestors first came to Muttra. Certain of the Muttra Mullahas say their forefathers came to Muttra more than a century ago from Delhi and Gurgaon, and that there are still several of their caste fellows in those districts, some of whom are zemindars; but the Muttra Mullahas, whether originally from Ballia or elsewhere, deny any connection with the present Mullahas of Ballia, whom they look down upon as their inferiors owing to the Ballia Mullahas taking service as, and doing the work of, Kahars.

The Mullahas of Muttra cannot be said to be a professional criminal tribe; in places they are engaged in cultivation, as found in several small *naglas* of the Nohjhil and Majhoi police circles; but those of the Shergarh, Surir, Mat, and Rayah police circles have adopted the profession of pick-pockets (*uthaigiri*) and engage in this occupation at all large *melas* as well as in cities and towns.

As far as it could be ascertained, certain Mullahas have followed this calling for years and do nothing else, but beyond petty thieving they are said to commit no serious crime or burglaries, and for the purpose of *uthaigiri* visit all the large fairs in these provinces, such as those at Allahabad, Hardwar, Garhmuktesar, and exploit the Punjab as well. Their greatest success, however, is met with in Bengal, where, they say, they have greater opportunities and less difficulties to meet.

4. The Mullahas of the Agra and Aligarh districts are also said to follow the same calling. Their *modus operandi*. No particular "slang" expressions or language is made use of by them or disguise adopted when out on their predatory expeditions. They generally go about in small parties of four or five with two or three boys, each party having its recognised leader, who is responsible for the daily expenses of the party as well as for the maintenance of the family members of the gang left behind.

They travel by road as well as by rail, and whilst in cities and towns, steal whatever they can lay their hands on, and dispose of such things in villages on their way, pretending at the time to be starving and in want of money.

When the Mullahas travel by rail they commit petty thefts, mostly pick-pocketing at railway stations, particularly when passengers are collected in a crowd round booking offices and exit gates, and on occasions as opportunities offer they make themselves useful to passengers, promising to look after their things whilst the passenger is occupied in purchasing his ticket, the result being that the too confiding traveller never sees his things again.

It is said that one of the Mullahas sometimes assumes the garb of a *Sadhu* and sits at night in a *musafirkhana* (passenger hall) at train time, with smoking materials near him. The other members of the gang appear before him as strangers, and are given a free smoke. This does not escape the attention of the bystanders awaiting trains, and they soon join in the circle round the friendly *Sadhu* enjoying a free smoke, which probably saves them one pice, but the other Mullahas do not waste their opportunities, and generally manage to relieve their unsuspecting victims of some of their possessions.

5. In this manner they proceed on their journey to Calcutta, calling themselves Thakurs or Banias, and never giving their correct residences or castes. If one of their number should have the misfortune to be arrested, they will make every endeavour through monetary means to obtain his release, and, whether successful or not, they still proceed on their journey.

On reaching Calcutta, which they are familiar with, they rent a small place, posing as strangers in search of employment, and to avoid suspicion being raised as to their real calling, their residences are changed very often.

Whilst in Calcutta they do nothing else but *uthaigiri* and dispose of their stolen goods through certain shopkeepers or *kabaris* who are known to them as habitual receivers of stolen property.

6. For many years past one Daulta, Thakur, of *nagla* Mahria, police circle Surir, has been in the habit of visiting Calcutta every cold weather, which is the time of the year the Mullahas of Muttra are generally to be found there. This Daulta takes with him coarse cloths, such as *dohars* and *mirzais*, which he sells to the labouring classes, and on this pretence starts a shop, thereby assisting the other Mullahas in disposing of stolen property. The Mullahas of Muttra, it is said, do not remit money direct to their homes by money orders, but to different persons through different post offices.

It is learnt that at one time Daulta purchased a phonograph, which he hired out to other Mullahas, who, by means of this instrument, managed to collect a crowd round them, when the boy Mullahas busied themselves picking the pockets of the gaping and wondering villagers.

Natha and Barsi, Mullahas of *nagla* Mahria, police circle Surir, brought this phonograph back to their homes, and

gave out that they made their livelihood at Calcutta by charging a small price for each tune.

The Mullahas of Aligarh and Agra are also said to visit the Bombay Presidency.

7. The Muttra Mullahas when arrested, whether on the railway or in Calcutta or elsewhere, always give their wrong names, castes, and residences, and generally get off with a light punishment, as few magistrates or police officers consider it necessary to verify their antecedents. Once the finger impressions of the Muttra Mullahas, who had been suspected of visiting distant places for the purpose of crime, were taken and sent to Calcutta and Allahabad, with the result that few, if any, convictions were reported from Allahabad, but in some instances Calcutta reported five or six.

It is found that the greater number of sentences passed in Bengal on Mullahas of Muttra were unknown at Allahabad or Muttra, and consequently the police of these provinces were ignorant of the criminal history of these people, which prevented heavy sentences being passed on them, as the *mouza-war* registers generally gave them a clean record.



BHATRAJA OR BHATTU TURAKA.

CHAPTER V.

BHATRAJAS

OR

BHATTU TURAKAS OF INDIA.

THE Bhats are the genealogists and family bards of India, and are, rather were, tolerably well-to-do and respected class of men therefore. Many classes of these Bhat Brahmins there are in different parts of India, who earn their livelihood by honest means doing their legitimate duties, and have nothing of criminality about them.

Others there are, who have irretrievably fallen from the high pedestal of their time-honored functions, and who are described by Mr. Nesfield as 'rapacious and conceited mendicants, too proud to work but not too proud to beg.'

Some of the other criminal classes assume that name to pass for beggars while they go on committing crimes all over.

It is with the doings of these criminal Bhats that this brochure is concerned.

Mr. West says that in Eastern Bengal 'during the Durga Puja they force their way into respectable houses and make such a horrid uproar by shouting and singing that the inmates gladly pay something to get rid of them.'

2. The subcastes known in Bengal are 'Baram-Bhat,' 'Raj-Bhat' and 'Turk-Bhat.'

The Turk-Bhats abound at Sailkot in the Punjab and are probably of Mahomedan origin. Thus it is a fact that there are Turk-Bhats or Bhat-Turakas in Punjab, Bengal and Madras. All these three classes may have had some common origin.

In the Central Provinces too, the Bhats have been clearly identified with the Khanjars or Sansias of Northern India. They are the most desperate dacoits, and wander about the Deccan as though belonging to the Gujarati Domharies or Showman.

In the Madras Presidency, there is an honest class of Bhatrajas among whom there existed in times of yore many good poets. Even to this day we come across educated Bhats who are able to compose Telugu or Sanskrit verses just on the spur of the moment, whenever they have to praise a donor who treats them liberally and with respect. But alas! Even this tiny spark of India's greatness is fast dying out through want of encouragement in these days of keen competition for Government employ—and the few educated Bhatrajas there are, are but paupers.

3. The criminal class of Bhatrajas called also Bhattu Turakas live in gangs in the villages of (1) Yenumulavandlapalle, (2) Kambamittapalle, (3) Yellalavandlapalle and (4) Erraguntlapalle, which comprise the revenue payakat village of Agraharam in the Piler Division of the Cuddapah District, and in the villages of Aravavandlapalle and Mekalavandlapalle of the Chendragiri Division of the North Arcot District. They are treated as criminal gangs by the Police of the above districts, and the long and protracted absence of their male members is a significant feature always noted down by the Police as affording a valuable clue to the detection of their crimes. In the other parts of the Presidency very few Police officers know about them, though their existence and the mode of their operation are published in P. W. C. of 1881, and elsewhere.

4. About ten or twelve men start from their homes, and, splitting into gangs of four persons each proceed to carry on their operations. They are often absent for months together from their

Modus operandi.

villages, sometimes going very far to commit thefts. Each batch arranges with the others to meet at a certain place on a certain day. The men composing each batch dress themselves like a particular sect of Brahmins and carry a

Manner of disguising. bundle or bag containing "Rudratcha-
malas," "Thulasimalas," "Saligra-
mams;" copper vessels called "Chemboos," "Panchapat-
rams;" "Udharinas" and plates; and cloths known as
"Naramadiës" and "Pithambarams" used by Brahmins at
the time of making pooja. They know a few principal
mantrams generally recited by all sects of Brahmins. It

Imitation of Brahmin-
ism. is difficult to say exactly to what
particular caste they belong, but they
appear to be like so many Madhvas,

Smartas and Vaishnavas. They know a bit of Sanscrit,
and cleverly imitate all the outward rites of Brahminism,
such as "Sandhyavandanam," "Lingarchana," etc. They
wear sacred threads on their shoulders as Brahmins do,
but at times they secrete them in their waists as occasion
requires. Thus equipped, they confine their depredations
to the Tamil districts, where they pass for rude Telugu
country Brahmins. In the Telugu districts, however, their
imposture is easily discerned, and hence the fear of appear-
ing there.

It is during festivals and feasts that they very often
commit thefts of the jewels and cloths of persons bathing
in the tanks. They are thus known as "Kolamchuthi
Papar," meaning thereby that they are Brahmins that live
by stealing around the tanks. Before the introduction of
railways, their depredations were mostly confined in this
way to the choultries and tanks.

5. The parties that so split to meet at a certain place
on a certain day, have very peculiar
Peculiar means of
communication. modes of communicating with each
other. The most important of them
all is by means of their leaf platters which they stitch in a

particular manner, and throw after use in a certain place, previously arranged, and pin them to the ground with stones. These leaf platters can easily be recognized as belonging to them if properly examined, for, there will be a difference in stitching from the common bazaar leaves. An expert happening to come across such platters at any place is sure to find Bhattu Turakas in its neighbourhood.

6. To illustrate their mode of thieving, the following six instances, which were given in P. W. C. of 1881, are reproduced here :—

- (1) A native gentleman on arrival by rail at Vellore, found himself waited upon by four exceedingly respectable Brahmins (Bhatrajas disguised) who helped him with his luggage and helped themselves to his carpet bag.
- (2) Four Brahmins (Bhatrajas) took up their abode in a native hotel in Vellore, and after a stay of two or three days disappeared with the whole of the landlady's jewels.
- (3) A Brahmin mendicant sought and obtained accommodation in the house of one Ayyavier of Katpadi, but he showed his hand too soon, and was accordingly turned out by his host before he had an opportunity of doing business.
- (4) Four Madhva Brahmins (Bhatrajas) with "Mūdras" well marked on chest, and with fans, entered the house of a native official at Chittoor during the celebration of a marriage. After partaking of their host's hospitality, they partook of his property to the value of Rupees 400. They were pursued, arrested with the property and convicted.

(5) Three Siva Brahmins lodged in a choultry at Trichanoor with some rich pilgrims from Madras. During the absence of the pilgrims at the temple, they decamped with a box containing Rs. 1,000 worth of property.

(6) Two Vaishnava Brahmins were noticed by a Komati of Cuddapah District, who was staying in the Mahant's choultry at Tripaty, to be paying too much attention to his property. He raised an alarm and the so-called Brahmins (Bhatrajas) took to their heels.

7. Another mode of thieving is, that one of them gets engaged as servant to some rich man, and the others remain in the village hanging about him, even for months, before the servant gains the confidence of his master to such an extent as to find access to some valuable property; and then they all walk away with the property.

8. In choultries and on platforms they put on a very respectable appearance, and, like the Bhamptas and the Koravars, they substitute their bags filled with rubbish for those of the passengers which they carry off, or, often carry them off with no such substitution even. These Bhatrajas in their disguise as Brahmins have greater facilities of access to the passengers than their brother thieves, and are therefore more successful than they in committing thefts with less chances of detection. That is why we find very few of this class convicted for thefts on the railways. Their women were never accused of thieving.

9. When arrested by the Police, they give false names of themselves and of their villages.
- Division of spoil. If, however, they are fortunate enough to return safe to their village after a raid, the spoil or sale proceeds thereof will be equally divided among the members of the whole gang, a double share being taken by the actual thief in each case, as is usually the custom with most other criminal gangs.

CHAPTER VI.

TAKKU WODDARS

OR

GUNTICHORES.

THE word Takku (tricky) is an epithet sufficiently intelligible in itself to show that the Woddars to whom it is applied here are false, cunning and deceitful.

There are several classes of these Takku Woddars, known by different names in different places, and forming distinct communities :—

In the Ceded Districts, they are called 'Takku Woddars' generally; in Mysore and the Nizam's Dominions, 'Donga Dasaries'; in Nellore, 'Kathiras'; and further North, 'Pachapas.' In the Southern Districts of the Madras Presidency, they are known as 'Goodoo Dasaries' and 'Thetakars.' All over the Bombay Presidency they are called 'Guntichores.'

They call themselves 'Thota Baliyas,' 'Poosala Dasaries,' 'Jathipallis' and so forth according to the *professions* that they ostensibly follow to serve as a cloak to their villainy, and claim to be treated as people belonging to a Vajshnava sect of mendicants.

But according to the *names* given to them by the public, they may be divided as follows :—

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Takku Woddars. | 8 Naṅkalavallu. |
| 2 Donga Dasaries. | 9 Erragollalu. |
| 3 Kathiravallu. | 10 Dumpa Chenchus. |
| 4 Telaga Pamulavallu. | 11 Goodoo Dasaries. |
| 5 Peddeti Gollalu. | 12 Thetakars. |
| 6 Pachapavallu. | 13 Jathipallis. |
| 7 Parikimuggulavallu. | 14 Guntichores, etc. |

Though to start with, there may be no blood relationship between any two of the above divisions, I have no doubt

that a few days' association with one another in their common nefarious attempts brings about the matrimonial connections also. It all depends more on the success achieved by the gang than on any caste scruples.

2. All the above divisions are of Telugu origin and speak Telugu, though those that settled in the Tamil and the Mahratta countries are conversant with Tamil and Mahratta languages also.

And there can be no doubt that the parent stock for all these criminal gangs is the hard-working class of Woddars who toil for their bread all the live-long day,

'From morn till noon, from noon to dewy eye';

for, their house names, such as Avula, Peetla, Mekala, Narra, etc., correspond with those of the working Woddars.

Some of these hard-working Woddars too do commit burglaries and dacoities when opportunities present themselves. Some of them in Nellore, Kistna and the Ceded Districts have a bad reputation and a few of them have turned reckless leaders of dacoits in Southern India.

One Venkatigadu, for whose arrest a reward of a thousand rupees was offered by the Madras Government in 1903, committed numberless dacoities, sometimes attended with murder, all over the Northern Circars, the Ceded Districts and the Nizam's Dominions. He was so familiar with all the criminal gangs all over, and was so well known to them all, that he could readily organize a fresh gang of dacoits wherever he would go. His associates need not always be of his own class. Even Koravars and other classes he would collect at an hour's notice. So much for the parent stock of Woddars.

3. To return to our criminal Woddars proper, the first two names in the foregoing list are applied mainly to the Woddars resident in Cumbum taluk of the Karnool District with their headquarters at Motupalle and Teniskota to the gangs of Venkatanuram in Narasimam.

Woddars and Donga Dasaries.

taluk of the Vizagapatam District; to the gangs living at Arecalu, Nagalapuram and other villages in Adoni taluk of the Bellary District; and to the gangs settled for a long time near Raichur. All these gangs are matrimonially connected with each other, and again are all related to No. 14, the Guntichore gangs of Dharwar, Belgaum and Bijapur Districts of the Bombay Presidency.

4. In Dharwar, these Guntichore gangs seem to have been settled in some villages of the taluks of Dharwar, Nowlgond, Herekeru, Hangal and Bankapur.

Guntichores of Bombay.

In Belgaum, they are found in the taluks of Gokak, Chikodi, and Kekeru, and in Bijapur they are found in Badami taluk. They all talk Telugu like their brethren in the Madras Presidency. These gangs often arrange to meet and periodically visit the Mysore Provinces, especially Tumkur District, passing through Anantapur and Bellary; and the Nizam's territory, passing through Kistna and Kurnool Districts. The men and women disguise themselves as Dasaries with perpendicular Vaishnava marks on their foreheads, and, carrying a lamp post (garudacumbum), a gong of bellmetal, a small drum called Jagata and a tuft of peacock feathers, go a begging in the villages, and are at times treated with sumptuous meals including cakes offered to them as the disciples of Venkatesvarlu.

5. No. 3, Kathiras or Kathiravallu, a special class of them, are mostly found in the Nellore District wherein, according to Police registers, they abound to the extent of over 200 men besides women and children. They are like their brethren of the Ceded Districts the worst type of criminals. They move in gangs with cattle, donkeys and pigs, all which being intended only to serve as a blind, and are the worst burglars and dacoits moving all over the Madras Presidency under some false name and pretext. They contracted friendly relations with some of the Kapu Reddies of

Kathiras of Nellore.

Nellore and their females by selling away the stolen property to them cheap, and usually find shelter in their houses. In a few villages, these Kathiras have even commenced a carnal intimacy with the Kapu women by lavishing their ill-gotten wealth on them. It has lately been found out by Mr. Narayanasawmy Naidu, a lecturer in the Vellore Police School, that these Kathiras in Nellore are related to some of their class in Trichinopoly, and that they often travel thither in their disguise as Kapus.

6. Nos. 4 to 8 are found mostly in the Nizam's Dominions and in the neighbouring districts of Kistna and Godaveri. Some of them are snake-charmers ostensibly; some, the exorcisers of devils by means of rice flour of different colors spread on the ground in the form of what is called "Muggu"; and some others spin mats and baskets for sale. They all commit crime wherever convenient, and have no fixed place of residence, travelling all over the Northern Circars besides the Nizam's Dominions. Nakkalavallu, No. 8, claim relationship with the Yanadies of Nellore and the Erragollas of Chicacole, but having been accustomed to eat jackals in jungles as the term denotes (*Nakka* meaning jackal) they are not now admitted into their fraternity by the Yanadies of the Southern Districts. Their ostensible means of livelihood is by sale of hares, deer and other eatable animals which they hunt in the woods.

7. Erragollas, No. 9 in the list, are like their brethren at Kistna and Godavari snake-charmers ostensibly, but are dangerous criminals. They live permanently in villages adjoining Calingapatam Police Station. Their women tattoo for grain and for money like Koravars or Erukulas, and wear cloths like Kapus. Their men wear sacred thread like

They go in gangs with their women and put up two or three months in certain villages, and create trust by offering liberal interest for a few rupees taken on loan pledging jewels of trifling value. They also liberally present the rich Kapu women of the village with the meat of their stolen sheep and with vegetables, and in this way gaining the villagers' implicit confidence, they increase the money loans taken from the rich ryots, cheating them with pledging brass jewels palmed off for the moment as gold ones, and disappear all of a sudden from the village. These men also call themselves Aravapallelu, who are chiefly found in Chicacole taluk though they move all over the Northern Circars.

8. Dumpa Chenchus of Ganjam and Vizagapatam, No. 10 in the list, live mostly in Dumpa Chenchus. Palakonda, and in the limits of Chicacole, Parlakimidi and Tekkali divisions. They live in the villages adjoining hills; when they see any officer, they at once take to the hills. They wear langoties. They are said to have descended from the Yanadies* of Nellore,

* Mr. F. S. Mullaly of the Madras Police has given a special study to this class of Yanadies (*vide* pages 21 to 27 of his notes on Criminal classes). Mr. T. Ranga Rao, a Tahsildar in Nellore, has also published a detailed and valuable history of "the Yanadies of Southern India" in a small pamphlet. They seem to think that these Yanadies are connected with Nakkalavalli and Chenchus of the Northern Circars. According to them, "there are the Reddi, the Challa or Chatla, the Adivi, the Nakkala, the Kappala or the frog-eaters, and the non-frog-eaters. The Reddi Yanadies are a settled race employed chiefly as cooks by the Panta (cultivating) Reddies. They do not mingle with the Challa and the Adivi Yanadies whom they look upon as outcastes. These Reddi and Challa Yanadies are employed as kavalgars or village watchmen in the Kistna and the Godavery Districts. The Adivi Yanadies as the name indicates, are jungle wallahs, the true nomads, the houseless wanderers, who are professional burglars out of the Nellore District. The Nakkala Yanadies in the South of the Ganjam District, and in the upland taluks of the Godavary and Vizagapatam Districts are scattered gangs deriving their name from their habit of snaring and eating jackals. They call themselves "Toorpu" or East Yanadies, but are not acknowledged by their Southern brethren. The "manchi" or good Yanadies are a small and superior class, who came down from the mountains and amalgamated themselves with the common Yanadies. Between these and the Chenchu Yanadies, there is some connection. The Yanadies of the North Arcot District, who worship the deity of Chenchu, are known as the Chenchu Yanadies."

but they have no connection whatever with them. Their manners and customs do not differ much from those of the Chenchus of Kurnool who live mostly on forest produce and reside in hills. As I do not find this tribe in the Ganjam Manual of Mr. T. J. Maltby edited by Mr. G. D. Leman, I am lead to believe that they must have migrated into this district from the Southern Districts only quite recently. They ostensibly live by weaving date mats and catching wild animals. They commit thefts and highway robberies but never approach a railway station. This tribe is very timid. When once they are caught, they deliver the stolen property and make a free confession to avoid being tortured.

9. Nos. 11 and 12, Goodoo Dasaries and Thetakars,
 are found in North and South Arcot,
 Goodoo Dasaries.
 Thetakars. Nellore and Cuddapah Districts.

These men carry *Kasi Kavadies* when they go to beg, passing for religious travellers carrying Ganges holy water in their *Kavadies*, where they keep an empty rose-water bottle covered with saffron cloth and beads of Tulsi and Ruthrachi for sale, and give out that they brought them from Benares or Gya. Their women steal fowls by stupefying them with a kind of poisoned rice scattered before and eaten by them. The women sell needles and beads of all kinds hung in strings from short sticks which they carry in their hands.

10. No. 13, Jathipallis, abound in the Tanjore, Trichinopoly and South Arcot Districts.
 Jathipallis.

They are found also in Tinnevely and Travancore. They say they are superior to the ordinary Koravars, but in fact do not appear so both in their conduct and crime. They roll themselves down the streets begging in the name of Venkataramana, with women following. The women also tattoo for money, grain and cloths. They are dexterous burglars and daring dacoits moving all over Southern India in gangs.

11. These fourteen classes are thus observed to be connected with one another. Though some of them were perhaps distinct originally, in the course of their common predatory excursions carried far and wide, they began to appreciate the artful manœuvres of their fraternity, and, as time wore on, commenced intermarrying with them. Thus there came about a matrimonial connection between the several gangs of the various provinces, cementing the link that already existed in the oneness of their criminal pursuits, rowing as they were in the same boat on the ocean of life.

12. All these classes take their women along in their excursions but see that they do not own them. Sometimes the elderly women take the lead and supply funds to the gang. So it is the women that have to be searched first, and they must be searched thoroughly; for, they carry stolen property secreted about their person just near their privates. In a certain case a gold waist cord was found secured about the thigh of a woman, evidently with the intention of shunning a successful search. These women are so troublesome that no ordinary timid woman will dare search their persons properly; some bold, forward and intrepid woman of another caste must therefore be specially selected for the purpose.

When Police officers go to search their houses, the females and children set up a howl along with the males, especially when the stolen property is still in their possession, which is, however, seldom the case. And sometimes they will not even shrink from assaulting the officers to escape from their clutches.

13. They often take their receivers with them to melt the stolen property at the spot and to purchase the gold. They keep the receivers in jungles along with the women, without receiving them as being of the same caste. In

Receivers.

familiar to them, they have local receivers especially in the persons of the arrack and toddy vendors, with whose women they have often carnal intimacy.

14. These classes admit women and boys of all castes except Mussalmen and Pariahs, into their community. Their marriages are not considered sacred. In some of these classes there are no marriage ceremonies at all, though in regular Woddars a Brahmin's presence is necessary to place the pair in bonds of holy wedlock. The mere congregation of men and women around the bride and bridegroom, and a formal worship by the pair of a deity set up for the occasion, before they all treat themselves to a hearty meal and drink, constitute the marriage ceremony. The widows and divorced women can remarry in the same or neighbouring gang without any compunction.

15. Generally men do not reside with women in camps during daytime. The men and women meet during nights in the jungles. The men cannot all be got at by the Police or village heads. When the women are asked as to the whereabouts of their husbands, they will unhesitatingly say that they had deserted them some years back, even though they are pregnant or carry at the time children suckling at their breasts. Very often the village officials connive at their crime more through fear than through any monetary consideration. It is well-nigh an impossibility to recover stolen property from the men. It is only by watching carefully their habitual receivers that we can recover any property. The receivers and the women travel by trains soon after a crime, but alight at two or three stations in advance of theirs and travel by foot to their camp with the property.

Their women, and boys and girls of over 7 or 8 years, are experts in stealing articles at the waiting rooms and

booking offices, and in handing them over to their men to be carried away. When by chance they are caught redhanded, they will never confess nor will they point out their older confederates.

They visit fairs and festivals periodically, and will not find it difficult to dislodge the jewels from the necks of children and females. These classes have all been committing burglaries and robberies both on highways and in houses at small villages, often attended with hurts and murders. Some of these gangs join the Koravars in such heinous crimes. The burglaries committed by the expert Woddars can be distinguished from others, inasmuch as the holes made by them will always be neat and four-sided.

CHAPTER VII.

RAILWAY PICK-POCKETS OF INDIA.

As has already been stated in the preamble, this class consists of all castes and creeds, from Their abodes. Brahmins down to Chucklers. They can be found now in almost all the towns of India. These men wear a decent sort of dress, and put on all kinds of marks on their foreheads as occasion requires. They commit thefts mostly at nights, during festivals and in the trains, and at times conjointly with the Ina Koravars. They carry on their operations in much the same way as the Bhamptas and the Koravars do. One peculiarity with some of them is, that, when they are caught red-handed with the property about their person, they fling it away over the crowd or amidst persons standing close by.

Some of these pick-pockets, like their Bhampta and Korava brethren, have got peculiar terms and words to converse with, intelligible only to themselves; such, for instance, as 'Palupu' meaning gold, 'Velupu' meaning silver, and so on.

2. Their women are not trained in thieving. Very rarely you find a woman figuring as a pick-pocket. The men are very clever in extracting the contents of the pockets of persons in bazaars and during festivals, and it is from this circumstance that they derive their name.

At ticket-offices and on platforms they manage more dexterously with their victims than the other classes of thieves, while they are engaged in purchasing tickets or in getting into compartments. Most of these wear shoes called 'Chadávs', and if the articles stolen

are very small, they put them at once into their shoes, which form very convenient receptacles from their peculiar shape. And therefore, when a pick-pocket with such a shoe on is suspected of having stolen a jewel, the shoes must be searched first, then the mouth and the other parts of the body, before searching their bundles or their houses.

3. In large towns and on platforms they offer knives and scissors of very ordinary make for sale, and when they find it opportune, these very instruments are made use of to cut open the knots, packets and bundles. They also carry sometimes a bundle of new towels, handkerchiefs and other cloths, which they offer to the passengers for sale. They never give out their true names when caught by the Police, who often remain ignorant of their previous convictions; and hence it is that we find many in this class with more than half-a-dozen convictions, and yet sentenced to only a few months' imprisonment for their last theft. If, however, the previous convictions had been known and taken to the notice of the Courts in due time, these light-fingered gentry would not have existed in India, but should have been transported for life. Surely there would then have been a good clearance of bad rubbish. The introduction of Anthropometry is proving effectual in this respect.

4. It is therefore necessary that arrests should be promptly communicated to all the Anthropometrical bureaus in the several provinces.

Prompt communication to the Anthropometrical bureaus desirable.

In one case in May 1894, a noted railway thief, Deen Mahomed *alias* Sheik Abdullah by name of Ajmere, living in the D. Division of the Madras City, was arrested at Guntakul Junction with all the stolen property, soon after the commission of a theft of Rs. 323, which he abstracted from the bag of a passenger while he was getting into the train. I charged him and placed him before a First Class

Magistrate for trial, being of opinion that a sentence of six months' imprisonment which could be inflicted by a Sub-Magistrate was inadequate for a railway thief. From the respectable appearance he wore, little did I suspect that he was an old offender; but what was my surprise when, about a month after the Deputy Magistrate of Gooty sentenced him to eighteen months' rigorous imprisonment, the Commissioner of Police, Madras, informed me that the very man had three previous convictions in Chingleput, Trichinopoly and Vellore.

5. Most of these are old convicts and are of different professions ostensibly. They are therefore more adventurous than the other professionals. They travel often in second and intermediate classes of trains, and walk away with the boxes and bundles of co-passengers at stations where the owners are found fast asleep. Some of them

Thefts in 2nd and 1st class carriages.

are so reckless that though they travel in third class compartments, they walk along the foot board, to the second and first classes while the train is in full motion, and remove through the windows small hand bags hung from the hat-pegs, or enter the carriages and carry away the boxes.

6. In a recent case in the Madras Presidency, a Missionary's bag was stealthily removed from the second class carriage in which the Missionary was travelling, to an empty first class carriage next to it; and after the contents were rummaged and the valuables stolen, the bag was left there with the useless papers in it. The Missionary discovered the loss rather too late. Nevertheless the Railway Police recovered the whole property and got the accused convicted.

A Missionary robbed.

7. In another case lately, a lady passenger in a second class was robbed when the train was running; and when she attempted to catch the thief, she was thrown out

Thefts in running trains.

of the carriage through the window. The villain was afterwards traced and convicted.

8. Last year, on North-Western Railway in Sind, a lady travelling in the first class was similarly molested while the train was in full speed, and was thrown out of the window. A reward of a thousand rupees was offered for the apprehension of the culprit but in vain. In both these cases the ladies were fortunately picked up alive in the mornings with slight injuries to their person.

9. In a third case, on Oudh and Rohilkund Railway, the property belonging to a Police Officer to the extent of over ten thousands, was stolen from a reserved first class carriage, where the officer and his lady had been sleeping. But in this case I hear that the carriage was standing in the yard of a station at the time.

10. Very lately a regular organization among some of these notorious railway thieves of different provinces was brought to light. It has thus been found that there is combination among those in Madras, Bombay, Bengal, Central Provinces, United Provinces and Punjab; the select places of rendezvous being at Indore, Secunderabad and other important towns, where they are not watched and where they seem to enjoy themselves in gaming houses after their successful excursions.

11. Last year two valuable confessions were recorded, one by a Police Officer at Calcutta and another by the Superintendent of Government Railway Police, Allahabad. As both of them reveal the organized bands of these railway pick-pockets of different castes and creeds, the one common tie of thieving linking them all, I have thought it useful to the Police all over the continent of India to publish extracts from them. The lists of the railway

thieves and of their receivers given in both these confessions seem to be nearly correct—though the places mentioned against them as their residences, have been changed by the members. For instance, No. 14 Din Mahomed *alias* Deena of Ajmere referred to in para. 4 had been living at Madras for a number of years and is now reported to have gone to England, probably to try the Scotland Yard detectives.

The following is the confession of Sheonath *alias* Shiba
alias Shibnath of Cawnpore, a noto-
 Confession One. rious railway thief who was arrested
 at Calcutta on the 26th of June, 1903:—

“My father is dead. He was a Johori at Cawnpore, Mohulla Chitai Mahal. I am 25 years of age. About eight or ten years ago a celebrated railway thief of Lucknow named Ramchendar Benia, since dead, took me in hand and taught me to be a railway thief. I used to travel all over the Indian Railways with Ramchendar for three or four years till his death—to Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, etc. Our chief receiver was Bhoiro Lal, Marwari of Bombay. Then I took up with two or three railway thieves, going journeys, first with one, then with another, namely Jivan Ram Khetri of Amritsar, many times convicted. Jivan Ram is still alive at Amritsar. Then with Hira Lal, Banya of Amritsar, a convicted railway thief. Then with Debi Dyal, Khetri, convicted railway thief, Lahore. Besides the above mentioned thieves, I know the following professional railway thieves in India”:

1. Mula, Khetri of Amritsar.
2. Nuri, Khetri of Amritsar.
3. Har Kissen, Bania of Aligarh.
4. Harnath, Bania of Agra.
5. Ganga Dyal, Mahratta of Guzerat.
6. Ramchendar, Khetri of Multan.

7. Asaram, Bania of Multan, at present at Hyderabad (Deccan).
8. Sankar Singh, Chatri of Indore.
9. Gopal Singh, Khetri of Amritsar, at present at Indore.
10. Dyaram, Khetri of Amritsar, mostly lives at Indore.
11. Chand, Mussalman of Indore.
12. Munu Lall, Kalwar of Unao, Oudh.
13. Rahim Baksh of Indore.
14. Din Mahomed *alias* Deena of Ajmere.
15. Johori, Bania of Ajmere.
16. Elahi, Mussalman of Ajmere.
17. Ramachandar, Khetri of Amritsar.
18. Gocul, Khetri, brother of 17.
19. Lalu, Bania of Ajmere.
20. Pala *alias* Bishen Dyal of Amritsar; lives at Surat where he was married about 5 years ago.
21. Das, Punjabi of Amritsar.
22. Jhumon, Mussalman of Ajmere.
23. Shiba, correct name Sheo Dyal, Khetri of Amritsar; has a brother-in-law named Saru, a shop-keeper in Calcutta.
24. Gourdhanji, Bania of Ajmere.
25. Shaik Nur of Delhi, at present in Calcutta.
26. Ibrahim *alias* Booji of Delhi, at present in Calcutta.
27. Chuni, Khetri, became a Mussalman under the name of Khoda Baksh in Ajmere jail, but again reverted to Hinduism. He is a native of Delhi but is at present in Calcutta.
28. Naurathandas, Bania of Jullundar.
29. Bulakidas is a receiver from railway thieves at Lahore.
30. Latchman Sett, Bhattia of Ahmedabad, is also a notorious receiver from railway thieves.

“The above thieves generally travel with packages of cloth, and even in towns either purchase or get the loan of a bundle of cloth to show that they are cloth-dealers. They open boxes by means of keys, and they must be particularly careful that the box is again locked. They seldom lift boxes. They are all known to one another, but cannot be called a gang. They travel singly or two at a time—seldom more. The above-mentioned thieves are well-known to other railway thieves, and all are said to have been convicted for thefts on the different railways in India. Their exact address can easily be ascertained by questioning other known railway thieves residing in the same towns.”

The second confession was recorded by the Superintendent of Government Railway Police, Northern Section, from a railway thief named Mathra Prasad *alias* Jamna Prasad, son of Sadaram, Brahmin of Shekupur, Police Circle Basant, Delhi district.

“My real name is Mathra, son of Nandram. I am by caste a Brahmin and a resident of Delhi City. My parents died when I was young and since then I have lived by picking pockets and committing thefts on the railway. I have no permanent residence and am travelling about by rail. The gang I belong to, commit thefts on the railway between Meerut, Delhi, Umballa, Lahore, Ajmere and Indore.”

“I was once sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment from the Delhi City. Again I was sent up under section 109 C. C. P. from Ghaziabad, district Meerut, and was sentenced to 6 months' rigorous imprisonment. While in Meerut jail I once received 20 stripes.”

“From Ghaziabad, Arjun Khetri *alias* Gulam Rasul, a time-expired convict, resident of Amritsar, caste Bhisti of Patiala, and Sujan Chand, Saragogi, of Ajmere were *chalaned* with me.”

He then gives details of his crime on railways and says that the following railway thieves belong to his gang :

1. Ahmad, Mahomedan of Berially, lives at Shahadana, district Meerut, in the house of Behari, licensed liquor vendor and receiver of stolen property.
2. Alafkhan of Muzaffarnagar.
3. Alladia of Jansath, district Muzaffarnagar.
4. Niza Ahmad of Berially.
5. Yakub of Ballangarh, district Delhi.
6. Niaz Ahmad of Meerut.
7. Mahomed Umar of Delhi City, convicted several times, now living at Umballa Cantonment.
8. Latchman Lodha of Pebwaria.
9. Sarjum of Batewara, who has nominally opened a shop to sell *Puris* at Delhi.
10. Ram Prasad of Delhi.
11. Piare, Bania of Delhi, who was convicted in Agra.

Then he goes on narrating several instances of thefts committed by the members of the gang at Howrah, Muradabad and other places, and also informing about the receivers and harbourers at Secunderabad and Indore, where they all seem to have a gaming house and assemble.

To these two lists, I may add the following notorious railway thieves moving all over India and even Ceylon :

1. Madar Bhaksh of Trichinopoly living at Colombo for some time.
2. Nathar Bhaksh, father-in-law of the above, now living in Hyderabad.
3. Fathejung of Delhi with one false eye, convicted several times in Madras and Bombay Presidencies.
4. Anthony of Madras now in Secunderabad jail.

CHAPTER VIII.

RAILWAY SERVANTS THIEVING.

“There are more things in Heaven and Earth Horatio,
“Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”

Why harp so unrelentingly upon those outside thieves,
as if they are the only beings of the
kind? Are there not many such
‘worthies’ among the Railway Ser-
vants, innocent and ingenuous as they seem? Why, my
reader, you will, perhaps, be surprised to learn that over
50 per cent. of the thefts committed on the railways are
by Railway Servants themselves.

It ought to be at once interesting and instructive to the
public, to know how each class of servants find innumerable
opportunities, which, in the very nature of things, must
necessarily be favourable to commit clandestine abstrac-
tions from the articles that come into their possession and
custody, almost every day and every hour during their
transit.

2. There are more consummate rogues among them
than the professionals I have been
treating of in the preceding pages.
I could not help using such strong
language in their case, in view of the fact that with little
or no scruples of conscience they prove treacherous to the
trust reposed in them by their officers and the public, not-
withstanding the decent salaries paid to them expressly for
looking to the safety of the public and their property,
which thus becomes a duty morally and legally imposed on
them. But with the professionals it is different; with no
fixed incomes to subsist upon and being more or less
actuated by ‘chill penury,’ they don’t feel any such duty

imposed on them, unless it be a moral obligation that they owe to the generality of mankind, as between stranger and a stranger.

3. I will now narrate a few of the ways in which each class of servants render themselves odious in this manner, by laying violent hands on public property entrusted to their care. Of course I am not to be understood to mean that every one of them is a thief. There are a good many honourable exceptions among them.

The public are aware how a passenger's luggage is booked at a railway station. In some cases boxes or bags which are not properly secured are placed in the luggage vans, with no better safeguard than the confidence reposed in the guard alike by the public and the establishment. The booking-clerk, before the departure of the train, makes them over to the guard and obtains his signature, and the guard as he takes charge of the articles examines them with a practised eye, if he is one open to temptation. He will thus be in a position to know which of them could be easily meddled with without exciting suspicion and which not, also the places to which they are destined. Though in the broad daylight, when the sun is riding high in the heavens appointed there as it were by the Almighty God to watch the interests of mankind down below, such worthies have not got nerve enough to carry out their criminal projects; yet as soon as

“The sun's rim dips, the stars rush out,

“At one stride comes the dark,”

throwing a sable mantle over all humanity, the guard, ha! ha! guard forsooth! what a misnomer! and yet a guard for all that, gets suddenly transformed into a sneaking thief, and, entering the van, rummages all the articles he had already fixed his eyes on, examining minutely the contents of the box or bundle as the case may be, and then selecting the best and most valuable of them, quietly

transfers them to his own box in the van. On reaching the last station of his range, he makes over charge of the luggage to the next guard who relieves him. Naturally, the guards trusting each other, never examine the articles closely, but simply count them as they lie piled one upon the other in the van, and sign in the 'summary' of the relieved. In this way the article tampered with changes the possession of several guards before it reaches its destination.

4. Ultimately when the owner takes delivery of the article, he finds to his dismay several valuable contents missing and complains of the loss to the Station Master, who, in his turn, refers the matter to the Police. In the meanwhile, the first guard returns home with the booty by the next train, perhaps long before the complaint is made. It is not always that the first guard commits the extraction; any relieving guard in the course of the journey might do it. The Police of course take up the case, examine all the guards concerned, whose signatures, except perhaps that of the last on the line, are clearly shown in the 'summaries.' It is not generally possible to fix upon the culprit, when there are so many guards and their assistants involved at every stage; and to be able to trace out the property in such cases is often very difficult, if not altogether impossible; and the great many failures to bring such offenders to book was long a stigma on the reputation of the Police.

If, however, the passenger takes a little care, which perhaps is not always possible, to examine his articles at every junction or other large station, wherever the articles are exposed either in transshipping or in loading and unloading other articles, the extraction can be found out and a complaint lodged on the spot. Such a complaint, fixing as it does the limited range wherein the act was committed, will point to the culprit guard more definitely, rendering it comparatively easy for the Police to trace out the property

Successful complaints.

Sometime ago the then Assistant Collector of Kistna was travelling from Madras to Masulipatam *via* Guntakul, booking the leather portmanteau containing his apparel as luggage for the brake-van. At Guntakul the gentleman casually observed his articles, while being transhipped from Madras Railway to Southern Mahratta Railway, and found the portmanteau bearing evident signs of having been tampered with. He then and there examined the contents and found several valuable clothes missing. A complaint was immediately made to the Police and the Station Master, who, in their turn, making a prompt search of the boxes of the guard and the underguard, who had been relieved at Gooty, found all the missing clothes in that of the latter. The man was then charged and placed before the District Magistrate, who gave him six months' imprisonment.

5. In 1896 and 1897 two guards and three underguards, all Mahomedans, formed themselves into a 'Golden Gang' at Bangalore, and were freely abstracting valuable things of all kinds from boxes or bundles destined to distant places on foreign lines, escaping detection all the time. One of these extractions was of property consisting mostly of silk and lace cloths to the aggregate value of over Rs. 3,000 belonging to the Nabob of Amroa near Muradabad. In October 1896, nineteen boxes of luggage were booked by the Nabob and about ten of them meddled with. So dexterously was the business managed, that no railway servants all along the several lines ever suspected the boxes to have been tampered with; and throughout the journey the guards had clear signatures in their journals, notwithstanding they had to be transhipped into several railways. A special Railway Police Inspector of Lucknow, who was deputed to investigate the case, rightly suspected the railway servants of Guntakul, Bangalore line, and his report was sent to me for my action. Just about that time a box containing silk cloths and a few silver articles

was sent from Bangalore to Sompet *via* Guntakul. The 'ploy' was enacted once more, but to make up the deficiency in weight, two stones and an iron spike used evidently to force the box open were thrown into it. The consignee, who was a clever wakil, preserved the stones, the spike, and the new string used by the culprits to re-stitch the gunny over it. The spike was found to belong to the South Indian Railway and the stones to Dharmavaram Taluk. The guards, who had the charge of the box at Dharmavaram, were immediately pounced upon at Bangalore, their headquarters, and to the surprise of the public and the Railway officers, a whole cartload of stolen property, including a portion of the property in the above two cases, was found in three houses. The guards used to get into the luggage vans at night, and, as the train rolled along, open the boxes at leisure, with the aid of a lamp, and repack them after helping themselves to a portion of the contents. The travelling kalasies or porters are sometimes used by such culprits as their instruments, and are given a portion of the booty. They often arrange with any of their relations or friends to stand at a certain gate or place, and, as the train approaches it at night, the bundle of the property stolen is thrown down, when the man waiting on the spot takes it away to some village and there disposes of it or takes it to the guard by road.

6. In 1897 the personal luggage of rich passengers that used to be booked from Bombay to Punjab was not safe on the way. There were many valuable extractions from the luggage boxes discovered at the places of destination. Frequent complaints of these extractions attracted the attention of the Railway and Police officers, and all of them were making enquiries between Bombay and Lahore suspecting many guards in vain; but the guard who had the charge of these articles from Agra to Tundla was not in the least suspected, because he had them only for a short distance of 14 miles, and probably also because of

A guard between Agra and Tundla.

the gentlemanly appearance of this Eurasian guard and his charming wife, and of their polite and respectable deportment whenever they appeared on the platforms. On a certain occasion, however, a consignment of valuable cigars that passed through Agra Fort station was reported to have been extracted from. A few days after, when the Station Master Mr. A. E. Bower, now District Traffic Superintendent on S. I. R., and his Assistant Mr. A. G. Tydd, now a Traffic Inspector on B. B. & C. I. Railway, were airing themselves in the Agra Fort station, the guard in question offered valuable cigars to both of them. They casually questioned him as to where he had got such good ones from, when, with a little hesitation, he replied that he had got them from a friend at Calcutta and gave also the name of some friend there. This excited their suspicion, and enquiries were at once instituted against the guard and his wife. The Police also suspected the same parties and searched their house, when lace and silk cloths were found secreted in beds and pillows. Many silver and other valuable articles there were, secured in boxes, and property to the extent of several thousands had been found and the guard convicted, though the wife escaped the clutches of the Law.

7. Coming now to the Station Masters, and here again there are many honourable exceptions, it has to be remarked that they have greater opportunities and greater facilities than any other class of servants to commit thefts. For, these men have access to the public property at their own stations, nay, in their very rooms, with no such fear that a guard might have, of nearing a station while engaged in his criminal doings, or of being pertinently questioned by his reliever regarding the articles meddled with. A dishonest Station Master, on the pretext of a better and safer custody of the articles, will direct his menials to stow them in his own room, where he can make extractions with no fear of intrusion. He might conveniently cut open a bundle,

remove some of the contents and re-stitch it, after stuffing the empty space with rubbish, often with stones also, to make up the weight.

In a recent case at Cocanada, stolen property all consisting of cloths extracted from time to time from various bundles, was found in the box of the Station Master, who, however, had his deserts having been convicted in three cases of theft.

It is often said that some of this class never purchase grain and other things required for their domestic consumption. Either from the waggons that pass into their stations, or from the goods booked by them, a bag of rice or other grain is misappropriated at a time, and extractions of chillies, tamarind, jaggery and other necessities are freely made whenever convenient. In some important stations the goods sheds are looked upon by them as their own stores! The lady of the house has only to order the porter, and immediately the thing wanted is brought from the shed. It is often comically remarked that the Station Masters have a right to pilfer so—why go to the far-off bazaar when the merchant brings their necessities to their very door? That seems to be their convenient logic.

The Assistant Station Master will never expose his brother official, being birds of the same feather, unless there is a hitch between them in the division of their mamools or pilferings.

The menial servants also follow suit, extracting cholam or other kinds of staple grain,

‘As the old cock crows, so crows the young,’

and, being given their usual share of the mamools, they do not expose their superiors.

8. . As soon as a bag is misappropriated, they are careful enough not to omit to send a wire at once to the despatching station that

Their *modus operandi*.

waggon, No. so and so, with seals intact was unloaded, but one bag was short. A copy of this wire is sent to the District Traffic Superintendent and the Police, who, seeing no occasion to doubt its veracity, naturally conclude that the bag might have been mislaid in some other waggon or might have been left behind. Thus they make fools of their officers, and laugh in their beards. At times the officers hasten to the conclusion that the bags were not counted properly when loaded, and that the merchants had not brought the bag at all, which, of course, gives a finishing stroke to the whole affair. In some of the cases, however, officers do order the recovery of the value of the bag, but, from whom? From the innocent Station Master who despatches, for, he is simple enough to plead his absence at the time of loading.

A Station Master at Calicut on the Madras Railway was so much addicted to such misappropriations, with impunity as it seemed, that he once had the foolhardiness to misappropriate a whole waggon-load valued at upwards of Rs. 500, and to go the length of stating that no such waggon was ever received by him. Enquiries were then started, and eventually the whole value had to be made good by him. It may very naturally be asked what the Police have been doing all the time. But what could the Police or anybody do? If a well-to-do merchant colludes with a Station Master, not a mere bag or waggon-load, but a whole train-load can be made away with before any complaint shall be lodged. It is too much for an officer, however vigilant and strict he may be, to keep suspecting every merchant removing goods from the shed or a waggon.

As a useful hint for the detective staff, I might lay down, that, if a Station Master or guard is strongly suspected of a theft, the property connected with it, will, in most cases, be found in his house on careful search.

9. About the middle of last year, a parcel of 3,000 rupees arrived at Tenali station in the Kistna district from Secunderabad, to the address of one Kolla Guravayya, a large dealer in rice. When the merchant appeared with the owner's portion of the receipt for the delivery of the parcel, the Station Master took the receipt from him, and slyly changing it for the guard's portion of the receipt already received by him, gave the latter to the merchant, asking him to come with it the next day for the delivery of the parcel, and telling the man the bare-faced lie that the guard's portion of the receipt had not yet come in, as the reason for the delay. The merchant who was un-english-knowing, could not smell any mischief. It so happened that this merchant received six other bundles of empty gunnies that very day. The Station Master delivered all these to him but obtained his signatures in two books, one of the signatures being against the entry of the valuable parcel in question, the merchant believing that the signatures were all for the six gunny bundles and suspecting nothing all the time. The Station Master who thus obtained the merchant's original receipt as also his signature for the undelivered parcel, believed he could easily misappropriate it. The next day, when the merchant came with his brother and some others for the delivery of the parcel, the Station Master, without any compunction whatever, told to his very face, that he had delivered the parcel to him the previous day, and also obtained the receipt from him and his signature. As for the guard's portion of the receipt in the merchant's possession, he alleged that it must have been stolen from his office by the merchant with an evil design. To say that the poor merchant was simply dumfounded at this bold assertion of the audacious Station Master, is to say the least.

Complaints however came to be lodged up in due course by both the parties, and they were taken up by the

Railway Police and investigated. The Station Master paid his dues in Jail by one year's hard labour.

10. Next comes another important class, Goods, Parcel and Luggage clerks, men who are in constant touch with the property by virtue of their respective appointments on the Station staff. It may be said of them that they are the actual keepers of the stores at stations, and, as such, will always be handling the property both 'in season and out of season.'

Being thus 'the monarchs of all they survey,' and with 'none to dispute their right' for the time being, the easily susceptible of them, in implicit obedience to the tempting call, extract valuables from the bundles, always taking care to re-stuff, re-pack and re-stitch properly to elude suspicion till delivery is taken. If these clerks or Station Masters happen to be addicted to drinking, the liquor cases that pass through their stations are sure to be meddled with. These men are sometimes very clever in deceiving even large European firms, by sending orders for liquor under fictitious names, for some station beyond their own; and when, as a matter of course, the boxes pass their stations, they substitute other cases, which they carefully pack with stones and grass of the approximate weight and label them with the firms' names. These false boxes go to their destination, but the Station Masters not finding the consignees, advise the firms that no such persons are in existence, when the firms order the return of the boxes. When the boxes are received, what is their chagrin to find manuscript labels in the place of their printed ones, and what is their dismay on opening the boxes to find stones and grass instead of their whiskies and clarets! They then address the Traffic Officers, who, in their turn, address the Police, at any rate not before a month, which time is taken up in correspondence. By this time perhaps the whole liquor is consumed and digest-

ed, and the empty bottles broken, and the boxes used for fuel at leisure, so that detection in such cases is something next to impossibility. As mentioned in the Administration Report of 1899, I successfully detected one such crime committed at Guntakul by the luggage clerks in December 1898, and gave a deathblow to similar occurrences in future.

11. It may be interesting I hope to know the steps I took to detect the case. In the year 1898 no less than half-a-dozen cases of this kind were complained of by the Bombay and the Madras firms with reference to the boxes despatched to the stations on the different lines of railway. Also the Superintendent of G. I. P. Railway sent me his Chief Constable with two such substituted boxes. But, in one and all of them, the complaint was too late, being over two months old. Nevertheless, I began from that date to observe the Station staff of Guntakul a little more closely and found the luggage clerks and some others of the station drinking freely at nights, which opened up a clue to the unravelling of what seemed hitherto mysterious to a degree. But as there was no fresh complaint, I patiently waited for a suitable opportunity. As if to subserve my attempts, Christmas came with all its flurry, when, with a strong conviction that they had shown their hand at some trick once more, I surprised them in a body and had their houses thoroughly searched. To my great pleasure, a box with six full bottles of Huntley Blend Whisky with the label of Cutler, Palmer & Company was found in the house of the Assistant Luggage Clerk, as also a few new shirts of Wrenn, Bennett & Co.

I immediately ran with them to Madras, and on showing the box to Cutler, Palmer & Co., I was told that a box of the kind was sent to the address of a Ferry Overseer of Godavery that week on an order from him, and that neither the money nor any advice was forthcoming. It was subsequently ascertained that the letter said to

have been written by the Overseer was a forged one. In fact, there was no such officer.

As for the shirts of Wrenn, Bennett & Co., the Manager produced before me some correspondence to show that some shirts have been extracted from a parcel addressed to the P. W. Inspector, Dharwar, and an old broom substituted. Thus you see I was fortunate in having pounced upon the gang without waiting for any formal complaint from the owners concerned; for, had I waited for the usual complaints and all the paraphernalia of criminal proceedings, I should probably have lost the game, or, at all events, should not have detected so very easily and with such astounding proofs of their criminality. The six bottles would have been consumed and the shirts worn and washed long before the complaint is preferred, and the chances are one to ten that the case will ever be detected.

12. Here is another amusing case bringing out the

The 'Croton case.' dare-devil character of this class of servants into singular prominence.

It is called the 'Croton case.' You know that on the East Coast Railway special prizes were offered to the Station Masters, to induce them to make their platforms lovely with fine creepers and charming flowers and croton plants. The Station Master of Nidadavola, a booking-clerk likewise, had the effrontery to send an order to the Horticultural Gardens of Bangalore, under a fictitious name, for various kinds of flower and croton plants. On the consignment arriving, he took care to inform the gardeners at Bangalore that the consignee could not be found and commenced planting the crotons on the platform. The Bangalore men, who were thus cleverly duped, saw perhaps no other alternative than to request the Station Master to oblige by putting them to auction, when of course he did it pell-mell, purchasing them for a nominal bid himself in others names. The fellow has subsequently been convicted for theft in another case, and one more riddance it was.

Many and various are the cases of a similar nature, to cite all of which will take volumes: For, have not many of my readers missed the whole or portions of fruits and vegetables ordered from time to time from distant places?

13. This class includes the carriage examiners, the numbertakers, the yard foremen, the pointsmen, the porters, and others who do business in the station yards. As they move about the waggons in the course of their business, they remove articles of all descriptions from the waggons without betraying any fear or compunction. The carriage examiners and the numbertaker once removed at Guntakul, with a degree of celerity that was simply astonishing, a parcel of gold and silver of over Rs. 5,000 value from the brake-van through the offside door, while the train was standing in the yard ready to go to Bangalore. The heavy parcel was at once buried, and after some days divided among the party concerned. But the culprits, one and all of them, had to pay the penalty of the law sooner or later.

It is usual with these men, to shunt on some pretext or other the waggon they set their eye upon, to some distant point of the station where they can both extract and carry away the property with greater facility. The seals affixed are no bar to them; the string bearing the seal is snapped, and knotted again to avoid immediate detection. In the case of open waggons the work is much more easy; they have simply to shove out a bag or two at some convenient place in the darkness, as the waggons are shunted in the ordinary course. Very often the extractions are committed on the platforms as the goods are loaded or unloaded.

14. On B. B. & C. I. Railway, in through goods trains, the line clears are made to miss purposely to bring the trains to a stop; and when the trains naturally stop at some distance from

the station, the line clear is taken by a porter. In the meanwhile, the other menials or their accomplices get over the waggons and shove down a few bundles from the waggons, which they take home after the train's departure. At the destination of the waggon when the bags or bundles are missed, there is usually correspondence between the forwarding and receiving stations; but generally, the spot at which they are actually stolen is not taken into account even by the enquiring officers. A few instances of this nature have been discovered and the culprits brought to book.

15. In a recent case at Godra on B. B. & C. I. Railway, it was found that leather bundles
 Re-booking stolen articles. brought to the goods shed, booked and loaded in waggons, were removed by night by the station menial staff, and, of course, in collusion with the merchants, taken by a different route in carts to the goods shed the next morning to be re-booked as a different consignment.

CHAPTER IX.

HINTS ON DETECTION.

DETECTION, from a Latin word signifying *to uncover*, means the uncovering or bringing to light something attempted to be kept concealed; the exposure of an act, thing or person that does exist but is unknown. It is not, therefore, impossible for a man to detect a crime committed by another in 'flesh and blood' like himself. It is only a question of time and perseverance, as you will find presently. It ill-behoves a Police Officer, therefore, to

give up a case as impossible to detect,
Detection, never an impossibility. after the few immature and futile attempts that he makes to come at

the truth. The difficulty, which he is only too ready to call impossibility, lies more with him than with the case. There it is, as accessible as ever, if only he works with zeal and caution, throwing his very heart and soul into the matter, with a firm resolve worthy of a detective never to desist until he succeeds in tracing out the crime, or dies in the attempt. May it be with our detectives as with the soldier in Tennyson's immortal song!

"Theirs not to make reply,

"Theirs not to reason why,

"Theirs but to do and die;"

always with a distinct aim in view in all that they set about to do in this life of theirs, which is "no empty dream," but is "real" and "earnest." No case of any importance involving life and property should ever go out of the mind of a Police Officer. It must live there ever hot with the hints and clues that he needs must learn from time to time, if only he does not, like some indolent men, conclude too soon that it is impossible for man to detect it. As an old proverb says, and very aptly too—

"Hasty conclusions are the mark of a fool."

All that is necessary is a certain amount of perseverance, courage and determination. Know we not the grand old motto of Napoleon, 'Nothing is impossible for man.'

2. Very often a Police Officer, when he goes to the scene of an offence, questions the complainant the first thing as to whom he suspects, without even

The first step in investigating.

acquainting himself with the details of the case. Think you that this type of an officer will ever achieve success, especially in cases against property? Never! An officer of tolerable tact and judgment generally begins with taking a statement from the complainant, questioning closely about the several circumstances of the case and the movement of any persons at or near the scene of action at the time. Even if the complainant should volunteer his suspicions against a man from ill-feeling or other trivial cause, he simply considers it as one of the circumstances and works up without allowing it to colour the glasses he sees through. Particular care is taken in noting down every bit of information that may have any bearing on the facts of the case, as sometimes circumstances which do not appear to be important when taken by themselves, form very important links when the clue is got and the case detected. What at first appear to be mere 'trifles light as air' become in the long run 'confirmations strong as proofs of holy writ.' And the officer, too, is dubbed perhaps with the remark, 'He that is wise in small matters cannot be foolish in large ones.'

REQUISITE QUALIFICATIONS.

3. The following are some of the principal qualifications requisite to make a successful detective :—

i. **Observation.**—This is the most essential of them all.

Observation. A detective must have his eyes and ears always open about him. Nothing, however trivial, should escape his notice. He should take note of the minutest detail that he sees or hears.

Mere enquiry will not do unless supplemented by his own ocular demonstration whenever that is possible. Very often carelessness in omitting to note down a blood-stain or a foot-print, spoils the whole case. The seriousness of such omissions will be apparent when you are told that sometimes heavy crimes, such as murders and dacoities, are traced solely by the aid of such marks and prints. Don't we hear it often said that a Police Officer should talk less, but see and hear more? In murder cases, the Police and the village authorities are the first to conduct the preliminary examination, and, as such, should observe the minutest details found on the corpse and at the scene of offence, and record the same in the inquest paper or mahazarnamah prepared at the time. It almost always happens that evidence will be forthcoming at the trial regarding the circumstances, the state and position of the body, and the persons who saw or heard several facts connected with the murder, though they have found no place in the inquest paper. This evidence, however, is always open to suspicion. It is, therefore, imperative that all the evidence available at the time in the village, and all the symptoms observed, be noted carefully in the paper before the body is despatched for the *post mortem* examination, no matter even if there be a little delay. A judge or a clever lawyer will concern himself more with the inquest report and the report of the village officials than with the evidence adduced.

ii. **Promptitude.**—The quick appearance at the scene of offence to take immediate action, is another qualification equally important. A Police Officer must, in the very nature of things, expect every moment some report or other of a serious nature; and immediately that he receives one, he must gallop off to the spot. A minute's delay, especially in murder cases, means losing so much valuable evidence. He must 'strike the iron while it is hot,' or, sure, he will

miss many important links in the evidence if he goes to the spot leisurely after the removal of the corpse, or after the close of the inquest. The intense ardour of the villagers, burning to hook the culprit on to the gallows, might perhaps cool down as time advances, making them less communicative; or, if the culprit happens to be an influential man, much evidence might be lost for ever. 'Never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day.'

iii. **Patience** ranks next in importance. As soon as an informant—and there are many classes of informants as described in the sequel—gives out any particulars regarding a case, the Police Officer must make it a point to *listen carefully*, taking in all the details, even to minutiae, *consider deeply*, weighing every bit of information and taking it for what it is worth, and *judge calmly* without being carried away by any one particular more than the other. And then he must allow himself to be guided by it, if it has successfully stood the test and is reliable. But he ought not to be hasty in forming conclusions, taking this or that as reliable, or throwing it away as unreliable, without bestowing due consideration upon it. Patience seems bitter at first, yet the fruit is sweet. Again, a Police Officer ought to dive deep into all the details of the facts before him. He ought not to be content and stop with the evidence before him, when there is a likelihood of getting more; and it is the duty of the Police to adduce evidence even regarding the facts which, they are sure, will be admitted by the accused, just to make the prosecution strong enough.

"Make assurance double sure."

In all these and in what follows, a degree of patience is requisite that is seldom exercised by the Police to their great disadvantage. Thus it is how their failures and miscarriages are sometimes signal and most humiliating. In heavy crimes, an officer will have to move about for days together, before he gets at a piece of information

which serves him as a clue, or as a hint from which some clue is derived. There is no use in depending upon the constables for information, for their interest towards public property and safety is clearly at a discount.

iv. **Affability.**—Affable and courteous treatment of the public is another secret of success. A Police Officer must be accessible to all persons, of whatever circumstances they may be in life. He must condescend a little to go to every nook and corner of the village he visits on business, and to converse freely with the villagers as if he is one of them, if at all he cares to collect reliable information. The people look upon a Police Officer generally with dread, but that feeling must be converted into one of love for him by his affability, and then success to be sure will attend his mission. He must not only be firm and determined in his purpose, but also affable, gentle and courteous in his treatment of all persons alike.

Affability and condescension.

“*Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re.*”

INFORMANTS.

4. There are several classes of these, as I have already said. Some of them chiefly are :—

i. **The honourable informants.** These are respectable persons in society, who have such a deep sense of law and justice that they never rest till they expose the culprit and see him punished. They are actuated by no spiteful motive, but simply work for the good of humanity in the ennobling cause of the amelioration of the masses. A Police Officer can easily find them out from the way in which they lodge their information, and from a few searching questions put to them. This class relate the actual facts ; they

“Nothing extenuate,
“Nor set down aught in malice.”

It is even so with the next class of informants,

ii. **The innocent or artless informants,** who are simple enough to be dragged into narrating a truthful tale of facts seen or heard

Innocent informants.

by them, alike ignorant of the consequences of the information they give out and of the cravings of law and justice; nor are they influenced by any spite or other motive. A Police Officer, passing through the fields and petty villages on the look out for any important information, if only he cares to accost some shepherd boy or peasant whom he comes across, with kind words about his sheep, or concerning his welfare, can be sure of leading him on to the point uppermost in his mind. Such informants abound mostly in the rude, uncivilized country parts, but not in towns, where roguery keeps steady pace with civilization.

But these villagers cannot as a rule stand the test of long cross-examination by the wily Vakils, who generally put equivocal questions to exact the answer yes or no, and thus gain the purpose of breaking down their evidence. Very often such answers of yes or no are given readily, without their understanding the gist of the question, just to be done with the business and get away as soon as they can, from the precincts of these solemn and awe inspiring courts which they perhaps see for the first time in their lives.

iii. **The timid informants.** These men give information generally on being questioned by an officer, but request always not to

Timid informants.

be exposed for fear of the culprit. They are also afraid of being 'dragged' into court. These informants are equally useful for purposes of law; but the information has to be worked up, and fresh materials discovered on its strength. It is not always safe to cite them as witnesses, for, when in courts, they may deny everything. The merchant community and the shepherds in the mofussil mostly belong to this class.

In my capacity of assistant to an officer on special duty in the Central Criminal Intelligence Department, I got

reliable information from a Banya broker at Ahmedabad, that a shroff there had long been uttering counterfeit coins. He even gave an instance of his having done so quite recently. On this information, I arranged a search with the help of the Local Police under Mr. R. M. Phillips the District Superintendent of Police, and found some false coins in the shroff's possession. But this informant did not speak to the fact in the court when cited as a witness, the merchants by whose help he had been living having threatened to cease their connection with him.

iv. **The spiteful informants**, who freely give information in a vindictive spirit through spite. The information is nevertheless true, but the motive is low. It is none the less important for that, so far as the investigation of a case is concerned. Men of this class are often inclined to add or suppress facts as they like, but a detective of ordinary common sense can separate the chaff from the grain.

v. **The accomplice informants**, who play the informant when they fall out with their comrades for some reason or other. These will try to exonerate themselves, and, in the effort, twist and distort the real facts so as to throw suspicion off themselves. Nevertheless, the information is useful; only, it has all to be taken *cum grano salis*.

Not infrequently these informants arrange the commission of a crime with the accused, and apprise the Police of it, of course, with a promise from the latter that they will not be charged. Whenever some Police officers fail to bring the offenders to book in other decent ways, they have recourse to these unscrupulous men, paying them to boot for the nasty part they play. This looks more like an abetment of the offence than "provoking the agents of crime" as it is termed. This sort of detection betrays the want of detective talent in the Police.

vi. **The associate informants,** who have no hand in the commission of the crime, but still are given a share in the booty in consideration of their associating with them in milder vices. If at any time they are overlooked, they "squeak," and, as in the preceding case, they never 'a round unvarnished tale deliver' lest they should get mixed up in the affair. Even this piece of information cannot fail to be useful, if the officer proceeds with caution.

vii. **The false informants.** These are the worst and most detestable type of men we ever come across. They are so dead to all scruples of conscience, and to the calls of humanity, that they do not shrink from making deliberately false statements with scarcely a modicum of truth, knowing them to be false. They do it so boldly and so unflinchingly, and yet with such apparent sincerity, that Police Officers are often beguiled into ruining many an innocent person implicated by them, while the real culprits trot off scotfree; thus they defeat the ends of justice. Officers cannot, therefore, be too guarded against this kind of informants, who in sooth are greater delinquents than the offenders themselves.

viii. **The paid informants.** Others there are who fish out information for the sake of 'fees,' as I may say, paid to them by the complainants sometimes or by the detectives.

Old pensioned Police Officers and *others* who find time hanging heavy on their hands, and also law touts perhaps, are thus engaged; sometimes as special informants by the Police to collect materials in disguise. But all these require to be borne out by some stern facts.

A few others are taken regularly in service, permanently or temporarily, to act the informant. In many provinces, even members of criminal tribes are enlisted as Police

constables; but these are found to be of very little use not doing their duty properly, and sometimes even suspected of shirking it in the interest of the offenders.

5. A Police Officer must next concern himself with finding out the associates of the accused in a crime, for it is through them that they manage to dispose of the stolen property. There is a greater risk, and therefore a greater chance for detection, in the disposing of the property, than in the commission of the crime itself. The associate is in the position of a 'tout' to the thieving fraternity. It is he that finds customers for the stolen goods. Sometimes a man well connected and well educated performs this part, disposing of any amount of property, while all the time he baffles suspicion by his respectable appearance. Once in a case of dacoity in the Ceded Districts, a Pleader happened to sell the stolen property, though guilty knowledge could not be brought home to him by the Police.

6. BURGLARIES AND DACOITIES.—These are the most difficult offences for a Police Officer to detect. They are generally committed not by amateur thieves, but by professionals of some standing. Bad and depraved characters, of all classes and creeds, of different villages far away from each other, conspire together beforehand, their usual haunts for such conspiracies being gaming houses, cock-fightings and toddy-shops.

As a rule, the burglars and dacoits do not confine their operations to any fixed locality. They often go beyond their own districts, having their own spies to ascertain for them where any rich house can be successfully broken into. After fixing their game, they frequent the spot and make a close and careful study of its topography, so that they may not experience any difficulty afterwards in effecting their escape with the booty. Usually, in burglaries an inhabitant

of that or of the neighbouring village, who is well acquainted with the house or houses reported to be rich, gives the clue to the burglars in the first instance, of course on promise of a share in the booty. He even sends for them and harbours them under his roof for a day or two or more at times. In heavy burglaries committed by these vile characters, the spoil is divided before the next morning on some hill, or in some tope on their way. Though proverbially faithful to each other in the cause of the fraternity, they do not display the same confidence in the case of property. Not infrequently, the cleverest of them conceals a portion of the booty, showing only the rest to his comrades.

A skilled detective can easily distinguish the openings cut out by pucca burglars from those made by a clumsy thief, from their neat and symmetrical figure, while that made by a beginner is sure to be uneven and crooked. It is for this reason that the latter receives scratches on his back and chest, which at times afford a valuable clue for the detection of the case.

Similarly, the holes made by Cabulee burglars and some of the Northern India gangs by means of drills in the doors and windows, can readily be distinguished from those made by ordinary blacksmiths and other burglars who break open hasps, bolts and chains in a clumsy, rude sort of way.

7. After obtaining the clues or hints in the manner pointed out in the foregoing pages, Enquiring the accused, and after getting at the accused through their aid, by his independent enquiry as recommended in para. (2) *supra*, the Police Officer comes to the very acme of a criminal enquiry, the duty of examining the accused himself. He must weave round him a close net-work of all the facts and circumstances worked up, so very formidably arrayed against him that he needs must admit his crime, if he be guilty; but,

as a rule, we find the rogues never admit, always answering the queries of an officer with a series of negatives. But these denials, too, can be turned to account, if the officer is intelligent enough to elicit in the same manner denials of certain circumstances often favourable to the prosecution, and collect evidence also on such denials.

In a scientific work called 'The Criminal' (The Contemporary Science series) the author says, the structure of the several organs in a human being indicates his qualities. But this physiognomy requires a special study. Another author, a Bengal detective, assures us that by closely observing the movements of the ends of lips, of nose lids, and the changes in the cheeks and in the corners of the eyes, we can find out the real culprit. But this is not to be our sole guidance in the absence of other materials.

8. When the Police Officer in this way works up the case, collecting all kinds of evidence, no matter whether it is primary, secondary, circumstantial or mere hearsay, he must make it a point to *record* every circumstance, however trivial, connected with it; though, when the case is placed before a Magistrate, the hearsay and other irrelevant evidence *must* be excluded from the charge sheet. By the bye, much depends upon how a case is laid before a Magistrate and how it is conducted *in Court*. Very often good and genuine cases miscarry in courts for want of sufficient precaution in those matters. It is not unusual for the officers to supply false links in such cases, or even suppress portions of facts, as a necessary step to secure conviction—a step which is slyly encouraged by a few of the Sub-Magistrates. But that is in no way advisable. Able Judges, when they but find any portion false, are apt to suspect the genuineness of the whole case. When once an able District Magistrate questioned me as to why the Station-house Officers trouble themselves with adding false

Recording indispensable.

False links inadvisable.

links even in true cases, I had to reply that it was owing to the encouragement they receive from the Sub-Magistrates. The following illustration explains my meaning. A burglary is committed in a house in a certain village at midnight, and some gold jewels are lost. The next morning the residents discover the loss and complain to the Police, who, in their investigation, successfully recover the property after a few days, in a village about five miles off, from the possession of a pretty respectable man. There is the evidence of the commission of the crime and of the recovery of the stolen property; more is not known, as everybody was asleep at the time. If these materials are placed before a Sub-Magistrate, he convicts the man in whose possession the jewels were found, as the possessor of stolen property; but not for burglary. The case of burglary still stands against the Police 'in proud array' in all the records as undetected, although it has been dealt with completely and truly detected. If, however, a link is supplied in the shape of a false witness, to prove that the accused was seen at or about the house or village in question, the Magistrate has easy work of it, and the Police are off with another feather perhaps to their cap. But with an intelligent and conscientious Judge it is different. It does not cost him any trouble to ascertain the nature of the evidence by a little flourish of a well-directed cross-examination; and if once he begins to suspect the sincerity of the witness, he will perhaps end with throwing out the case altogether. It is, therefore, unwise, if not exactly dangerous, to take that false step which tends merely to the improvement of evidence.

9. It is well known that the Police are already scoffed at in secret by the public at large.

Public prejudice against the Police.

His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal observed, in the course of a debate on the Age of Consent Bill, that 'there exists in the public mind a strong bias against the Police, and

however unjustifiable and unreasonable it might be, Government should take note of it and adopt means to 'allay public fear.' There is thus the danger of individual Police Officers, however zealous and true their conduct might be, being sacrificed to this Moloch of popular prejudice. A Police Officer cannot, therefore, be too cautious in discharging his duties legitimately, honestly and conscientiously, always keeping in view the sin of criminating innocent persons. 'He who sins against man may *fear* discovery, but he that sins against God *is sure* of it.'

10. Though, by reason of the multifarious nature of crimes, each of which is differently circumstanced from the rest both in inception and development, it is not possible to lay down any hard-and-fast rule to guide a Police Officer through all the labyrinthine stages of unravelling the tangled web of a crime, I have endeavoured to give a general outline of the hints which every Police Officer ought, or at least I never failed, to find serviceable in investigating any criminal case of any description whatsoever. And I will now wind up this brochure with a brief *résumé*, not omitting of course the most salient points, of an important case which nearly cost me my life; a case the like of which very few Police Officers have met with in their career. Being replete, as it is, with peculiar circumstances and technicalities, my brethren in office cannot fail to draw important lessons from this unique case, as to how they should regulate the time and manner of searching houses, what promptitude and *élan* they should display in appearing at the scene, and in conducting their investigation; and, above all, how imperative it is for them to thoroughly equip themselves with a sufficient *posse* of constables and with a full-charged revolver. For, it will be seen that it was through not taking such precautions as these, I got desperately involved in hair-

breadth escapes and dangers imminent' at the hands of a host of marauders, more ruffianlike perhaps as they seemed to me than the 'Anthropophagi' immortalised by Shakespeare.

11. In the year 1890, when there was no railway communication between Guntakal and Bangalore as now, it was a well-known fact in those parts, that the road between Gooty and Anantapur was the hotbed of dacoities, and people lived in constant dread of travelling along it. The Police of Gooty and Anantapur had a very uneasy time of it. I was then the Police Inspector of Gooty.

On the 27th of July 1890, a dacoity of some importance was committed on the high road, seven miles from Gooty. I took horse to different villages to the east and north, and on the 1st August following, while I was going to Nagasamudrum, I happened to pass a Talyari on his way to Gooty, who, on being questioned, hinted that the Korichas of the gang of Kattakindapalle, a hamlet of Hanumpalle, were now and then seen returning to their village, across the tank of Nagasamudrum early in the mornings. Hanumpalle was within my limits, but the hamlet belonged to the sub-division of Uravakondah.

12. Early in the morning of 2nd August 1890, I went to Kattakindapalle, taking with me the village Munsiff of Nagasamudrum and a Talyari, as the village officers of that hamlet do not live there. I was also accompanied by the Head Constable of Gooty, three Constables and a beat Constable of Uravakondah who joined us. I could not send for the Station-house Officer of that division, as I was told that he was engaged in another case. We all hurried on to the row of huts, of which there were about seven to the south of the village, and surrounded them. The Korichas inside were still asleep. I called them all out, in order to

ascertain whether any of the members were absent; and, without allowing any of them to re-enter their huts, I commenced the search of the huts in the presence of a few leading ryots of the village. In the first hut which belonged to the head of the gang, two small pots were found buried at about a yard's depth with several gold and silver jewels in them. The people present exclaimed that the property belonged to the Mondi Thurakas who were robbed near Karoor in the Uravakondah division, about seven months before, and for which case this gang was tried but acquitted for want of evidence. Thereon the Koricha (Nagadu), in whose hut the property was discovered, made an admission to me of his guilt, adding that the Village Munsiff, Kurnam and some of the ryots present had also been given a portion of the spoil in question. Leaving then a guard on the remaining Koricha huts, I went into the village and searched the houses of the persons mentioned by the Koricha. In the house of a leading ryot, a silver bangle corresponding to the one taken from the Koricha hut was found. Search lists were then and there prepared at the hut and the houses in the village, and the search of the remaining huts resumed in the afternoon. The Forest Officer of that section happening to come there, saw the jewels which I had with me on a cot in front of the huts. In the third hut some property relating to the dacoity of my division was found.

13. Just then the Village Munsiff and the Kurnam with a Talyari came from Hanumpalle and entered the village, evidently on information that they had also been implicated by the Koricha, and fifteen minutes later appeared with 15 or 20 others, all in a crowd, facing me. When I accosted the Kurnam very courteously in these words, "Kurnamgaru come and sit," he replied in an insolent and defiant manner, "Are you the Collector that I should come when you call? You come and search the

A Kurnam and a Munsiff on the scene.

houses of ryots and cause confusion in our absence!" I at once apprehended an assault, and called the Head Constable who was engaged in the search. The Head Constable

Assault.

approached the Kurnam and stretching forth his hand, said "Come, Sir, sit near the Inspector. Have you come to create a disturbance?" As soon as he stretched out his hand, the fellow drew back a little, took off his slipper and struck him with it, and both he and the Munsiff cried aloud, 'beat,' 'beat.' There was a great confusion. Stones were pelted at the Head Constable. I had to get up and had taken hardly a step towards the Head Constable who was attacked, when the Koricha (Nagadu) suddenly seized the bundle of property on the cot and was running away with it. I followed him, and held him down, struggling hard to recover the property but being beaten on the back with sticks I had to let go. About 20 men with clubs and stones surrounded me, and I sought in vain for the revolver left with my saman in the temple close by. I then emerged into an open place by the side of a cattle shed, when I was knocked down by a heavy blow. I, however, managed to get up, and running a few paces, secured the revolver.

14. I then turned round, and, facing the crowd which was pursuing me, threatened to fire if they continued their pursuit. They did not like my revolver, but pursued me all the same. I therefore aimed at the Kurnam's legs and

Use of revolver.

fired. I missed the Kurnam, but a Koricha behind him received the bullet in his foot. Immediately after this, a strong man backed by some others aimed a blow at me. I fired at him, and he turned and fell, bleeding profusely from the armpit. I then aimed at the poojari of the temple who raised a stone to throw at me, and pulled the trigger. The revolver did not go off. Thinking there were no more cartridges in it, I threw it down and began to run towards a cholum field as fast as I could. But I fell down, and four or five persons who followed me beat me again and again, until at

last I pretended to appear like one dead. Thereupon a man threw a heavy stone at me, which smashed my left thumb, and another aimed a pointed stone at my stomach, which hit me, causing a deep cut about three inches in length. Just then there was a brisk shower of rain, and they all left me for good. It appeared to me as if the Almighty had specially sent the shower for my sake, to cool the excitement of the mob, and to allay my thirst a little.

15. Meanwhile, the Munsiff of Nagasamudrum, who accompanied me, the Head Constable, the Constables, the Talyari, my bandyman, my horsekeeper and my cook were all given chase and beaten. The Munsiff was brought back to the chavadi; the Forest Officer, who had unfortunately returned to the village to see what the tumult was about, was also beaten and placed in the chavadi. Myself and my Head Constable were carried and laid together under the pial of the chavadi. The beaten Munsiff was forced to write a false report, on pain of being beaten again, that I illegally entered the house of the deceased and assaulted him and shot him, though the deceased had no connection whatever either with dacoities or with the receiving of stolen property.

16. Mr. Lucas, a military pensioner and Railway employé, was informed of the occurrence by a fugitive Constable, named Madere, and requested to go to the spot and rescue me. He arrived at the village in the evening, riding over three miles' distance, with a lot of people on foot. On nearing the village, he saw a number of men running from the village to the jungle and rocks. He saw me along with the Head Constable placed in a covered cart, to which we had been removed at the wise suggestion of the beaten Munsiff. My "cloths were covered with blood and hair dishevelled, and the Head Constable was in a state of nudity and covered with mud." Mr. Lucas, after giving

me some water to drink, arrested the Munsiff, the Kurnam, the Korichas, and some others mentioned by me, and took all of us to Gooty. He snatched the revolver from the Munsiff, and found in it two discharged cartridges and one loaded chamber with empty chambers on both the sides.

17. The next morning, the Sub-Magistrate of Uravakonda, the Taluk Magistrate of Gooty, and the Divisional Magistrate all arrived, and took my sworn statement, as they all apprehended that I would die of my wounds. The Sub-Magistrate, the Superintendent of Police, and the local Police Inspector all repaired to Kattakindapalle and examined many people, including the deceased's wife and brother; and all of them supported my statement, though the Munsiff and the Kurnam tried to set up an *alibi*, and stated that they had come there after the tumult was over. The accused had a High Court Vakil, an Attorney and two First Grade Pleaders to defend them.

Mr. Holmes, the then acting Sessions Judge of Bellary, after a patient trial of five days, convicted eleven of the accused, including the Munsiff and the Kurnam, and sentenced them all to three years' imprisonment, and to execute bonds to keep the peace for two years more.

18. Then the two cases of dacoity were launched against the Korichas. The first one was with regard to the property found in the first Koricha hut in the search of the 2nd August 1890. As the property was carried away by the Koricha, secondary evidence was offered along with the original search list, which was fortunately for me, and unfortunately for them, not destroyed by the assailants. Mr. Holmes, with the aid of a jury, whose foreman was an honest man, sentenced five of the gang to long terms of imprisonment. In the second case, dacoity likewise, five of them were charged for the offence committed on Gooty-

Anantapur road on 27th July 1890, and they were tried by the same Judge with the help of a jury having a pensioned District Munsiff as its foreman. They were all sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

12. Appeals were preferred in all the three cases.
 Appeals to High Court. Mr. Justice Wilkinson dismissed the appeals in the two dacoity cases.

In the assault case, however, Mr. Justice Muthusawmy Iyer and the Honorable Mr. Justice Parker heard the appeal. Mr. Wedderburn appeared for the appellants. Their Lordships delivered judgment on the 23rd February 1891, reducing the sentence from three years to eighteen months' imprisonment.

With all the deference due to such exalted and venerable Judges of the High Court, I endeavour to point out how the prejudice against the Police could not be kept out of their minds, even in a case of life or no life like this, where the accused happen to be two scheming village officials, a Kurnam and a Village Munsiff, who had not only made themselves liable for encouraging highway dacoities and sharing the spoil, but also rendered themselves execrable in the eye of the law as well as of the public, by trying to defeat the ends of justice even to the extent of mortally wounding the officers concerned with justice. The Medical Officer's statement reads:—"On examining the Inspector, I found upwards of forty contusions and abrasions on his person, caused probably by sticks and stones." "For some days his life was in danger." "His left thumb has been both fractured and dislocated and is permanently injured."

20. Their Lordships, though they admit "there is no counter-evidence as to what really occurred," state further on, "it seems to us there is reason to believe that the story told by the Police witnesses cannot be entirely true,"

in spite of the fact being sufficiently borne out by the accused themselves, the Forest Officer new to the taluq, the Village Munsiff of Nagasamudram, and the enquiries of a whole body of Magistrates and a Sessions Judge. Again, their Lordships say that "the shots must have been fired upon retreating persons," giving their reasons as: "The medical evidence shows that the man who was shot dead was shot in the back, the bullet entering eight inches below the neck on the left of the spinal column, and penetrating the lung, came out about four inches below the left armpit." The Medical Officer stated as his opinion, that the man in turning aside a little to avoid the shot aimed at him, must have got it in the back; otherwise the shot would not have penetrated sidewise under the armpit. If the man was running away with his back towards me, the shot must have passed through the chest or below the chest. In a similar strain, their Lordships commented on the evidence given in a case, by persons who were surrounded and beaten by a mob of hillmen about sixty in number, headed by their leaders, the village officers, who always exercise an undue influence over them.

21. It was upon these unfavorable comments of their Lordships, that the recommendation of the District Magistrate and the Inspector-General of Police to present me with a suitable reward, was not favourably considered by the Madras Government. The Inspector-General of Police, who made local inquiries in this case, and who studied the case from its very inception, disagreed with the remarks of the High Court, and sanctioned the reward which he had in his power to present, noting down in the Police Administration Report of that year as follows:—

Inadequate reward.

"Detection in Anantapur has risen from 20 in 1889 to 28.6 in 1890 (in dacoities). In one case Inspector Pâupa Rao Naidu, of Anantapur, while engaged in searching the huts of a gang of Korichas, who were suspected of having committed certain dacoities, was most brutally attacked by

them and by some of the adjoining villagers, and the property discovered by the Inspector was forcibly taken from his hands. The Inspector then attempted to recover the same, but the crowd overpowered him. Imagining that his life was in jeopardy, he made use of his revolver, shooting one dead and wounding another, but he was afterwards severely mauled, beaten and left for dead; finally he was rescued by Mr. Lucas, a Railway Inspector. His left thumb has been permanently injured. This Inspector has also been instrumental in breaking up a bad criminal gang, and of procuring the conviction of its principal members, for which good work he was granted a reward of Rs. 50 by the Inspector-General of Police."