killed. The lamb is killed by a washerman, and the blood allowed to flow on to the cholam in the basket. The bowels of the lamb are taken out, and tied round the wrist of the Māla." A procession is formed, and other lambs are sacrificed during the course of it. Part of the flesh of one of the buffaloes, which have been sacrificed, is given to five Māla children, called Siddhulu, *i.e.*, holy or sinless; the rest is eaten by the Mālas.

At the chāl (furrow) ceremony in Malabar, "the master of the house, the cultivation agent, and Cherumars (agrestic slaves), assemble in the barn. A portion of the yard in front of the building is painted with rice-water, and a lighted bell-lamp is placed near at hand with some paddy and rice, and several cups made of the leaves of the kanniram (*Strychnos Nux vomica*) as many cups as there are varieties of seed in the barn. Then, placing implicit faith in his gods and deceased ancestors, the master of the house opens the barn-door, followed by the Cheruman with a new painted basket containing the leaf-cups. The master then takes a handful of seed from a seed-basket, and fills one of the cups, and the cultivating agent, head Cheruman, and others who are interested in a good harvest, fill the cups till the seeds are exhausted. The basket, with the cups, is next taken to the decorated portion of the yard. A new ploughshare is fastened to a new plough, and a pair of cattle brought on to the scene. Plough, cattle, and basket are all painted with rice-water. A procession proceeds to the fields, on reaching which the head Cheruman lays down the basket, and makes a mound of earth with the spade. To this a little manure is added, and the master throws a handful of seed into it.

The cattle are then yoked, and one turn is ploughed by the head Cheruman. Inside this at least seven furrows are made, and the plough is dropped to the right. An offering is made to Ganapathi, and the master throws some seed into a furrow. Next the head Cheruman calls out "May the gods on high, and the deceased ancestors bless the seed which has been thrown broadcast, and the cattle which are let loose; the mother and children of the house, the master, and the slaves, may they also vouchsafe to us a good crop, good sunshine, and good harvest."* At the ceremony in Malabar, when the transplantation of rice is completed, during which a goat is sacrificed to Mūni, the protector of cattle and field labourers, the officiating priest is generally the cultivation agent of the family, who is a Nāyar, or sometimes a Cheruman.†

By the Penal Code it is enacted that—

Whoever imports, exports, removes, buys, sells, or disposes of any person as a slave, or accepts, receives, or detains against his will any person as a slave, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to a fine.

Whoever habitually imports, exports, removes, buys, sells, traffics or deals in slaves, shall be punished with transportation for life, or with imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years, and shall be liable to a fine.

Whoever unlawfully compels any person to labour against the will of that person, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with a fine, or with both.

* C. Karunakara Menon, Madras Mus. Bull., V, 2, 1905.
† *Ibid.*

MAKING FIRE BY FRICTION, FLINT AND STEEL.

THE making of fire by friction with two pieces of wood is still extensively practised by the hill and jungle tribes, who live remote from weekly markets where lucifer matches are sold.

At the Meriah sacrifice in Ganjam, the flesh of the sacrificed victim, cut off by the villagers, was buried, and the bowels, lungs, liver, and other internal organs were cremated in a fire kindled with fire made by friction. Among the Nambūtiri Brāhmans, the sacred fire for sacrifices should be produced by the friction of two pieces of wood. And, during their marriage rites, fire is made with pieces of the wood of the jāk tree and pīpal (*Ficus religiosa*).*

Fire is, in these advanced days, obtained by the Todas in their dwelling huts for domestic purposes from matches. The men who came to be operated on with my measuring instruments had no hesitation in asking for a match, and lighting the cheroots which were distributed among them, before they left the bungalow dining-room. Within the precincts of the dairy-temple the use of matches is strictly forbidden, and fire is kindled with the aid of two dry sticks of *Litsæa Wightiana*. Of these one, terminating in a blunt convex extremity is about 2′ 3″ long; the other, with a hemispherical cavity scooped

* F. Fawcett. Madras Mus. Bull., III, 1, 1900.

out close to one end, about 2½" in length. A little nick or slot is cut on the edge of the shorter stick, and connected with the hole in which the spindle stick is made to revolve. "In this slot the dust collects, and, remaining in an undisturbed heap, seemingly acts as a muffle to retain the friction-heat until it reaches a sufficiently high temperature, when the wood-powder becomes incandescent"* Into the cavity in the short stick the end of the longer sticks fits, so as to allow of easy play. The smaller stick is placed on the ground, and held tight by firm pressure of the great toe applied to the end furthest from the cavity, into which a little finely powdered charcoal is inserted. The larger stick is then twisted vigorously, "like a chocolate muller" (Tylor), between the palms of the hands by two men, turn and turn about, until the charcoal begins to glow. Fire, thus made, is said to be used at the tiriēri (sacred mand or dwelling place), the dairy-houses of ordinary mands, and at the cremation of males. In an account of a Toda green funeral, † Mr. Walhouse notes that, "when the pile was completed, fire was obtained by rubbing two dry sticks together. This was done mysteriously and apart, for such a mode of obtaining fire is looked upon as something secret and sacred." At a Toda funeral (of a female), I provided a box of tändstickers for lighting the pyre. A fire-stick, which was in current use in a dairy, was polluted, and rendered useless, by the touch of my Brāhman assistant! It is recorded by Harkness that a Brāhman was not only

* E. Bache. Royal Magazine, Aug. 1901. † Ind. Ant. III, 1874.

refused admission to a Toda dairy, but actually driven away by some boys, who rushed out of it when they heard him approach. Like the Todas, the Nāyādis of Malabar produce fire with two sticks of *Litsæa sebifera*, in the shorter of which a cavity is scooped out. They do not, like the Todas, put powdered charcoal into the cavity, but ignite a cotton rag by means of the red-hot wood dust produced by the friction. A very similar method is in vogue among the Yānādis of Nellore (plate XXVII). The cavity scooped out in the smaller stick is square instead of round. No charcoal powder is used, but a rag or dried leaves are set fire to. The sticks are obtained from the following trees:—*Protium caudatum*, *Bauhinia racemosa*, *Ficus*, *sp.*, *Stereospermum suberifolium*, and a tree belonging to the order Laurineæ. The Yānādis of Srihārikota make fire with dried twigs of the female *Cordia monoica*. The twigs of the male tree are said not to answer the purpose so well. I have seen a Kānikar of Travancore use as an impromptu twirling stick the blunt end of an arrow (plate XXVIII).

In making fire by friction, the Kotas of the Nīlgiris employ three forms of apparatus:—(1) a vertical and horizontal stick with sockets and grooves, both made of twigs of *Rhodomyrtus tomentosus*; (2) a small piece of the root of *Salix tetrasperma* is spliced into a stick, which is rotated in a socket in a piece of the root of the same tree. (3) a small piece of the root of this tree, made tapering at each end with a knife or fragment of bottle glass, is firmly fixed in the wooden handle of a drill. A shallow cavity and groove are made in a block of the same wood,

Plate XXVII.

Kānikars making Fire.

and a few crystalline particles from the ground are dropped into the cavity. The block is placed on several layers of cotton cloth, on which chips of wood, broken up small by crushing them in the palm of the hand, are piled up round the block in the vicinity of the groove. The handle is, by means of a half cocoanut shell, pressed firmly down, and twisted between the palms, or rotated by means of a cord. The incandescent particles, falling on to the chips, ignite them. The Kota pūjāri must for all purposes, domestic or ceremonial, use fire made by friction, and he keeps a broken pot, in which fire should be constantly kept up. The other priest, called tērkāran or dēvādi, when he requires fire, takes it from the pūjāri.

By the Badagas of the Nīlgiris fire is made by friction (niligolu or upright stick) at the annual fire-walking ceremony. The vertical stick is made of a twig of *Rhodomyrtus tomentosus*, which is rotated in a socket in a long thick piece of a branch of *Debregeasia velutina*, in which a row of sockets has been made. The rotation is produced by a cord passed several times round the vertical stick, of which each end is pulled alternately. The horizontal block is pressed firmly on the ground by the toes of a man, who presses a half cocoanut shell down on the top of the vertical stick, so as to force it down into the cavity (plate XXVIIIa). A Badaga, who failed in an attempt to demonstrate the making of fire by this method, gave as an excuse that he was under worldly pollution, from which he would be free at the time of the fire-walking rite. Though the Badagas make fire by friction, reference is made, in their folk legends, not to this method of obtaining fire, but to chakkamukki (flint

and steel,) which is repeatedly mentioned in connection with cremation.

Concerning the making of fire by the Kurumbas of the Mysore forests, Mr. Theobald writes as follows. "They follow the same method as the Todas, but never use powdered charcoal in the cavity of the horizontal stick, which is held down by their feet or by a companion. The fine brown powder formed during the rotation of the longer vertical stick gives sufficient tinder, which soon ignites, and is placed on a small piece of cotton rag rolled loosely, and blown gently until it catches fire. The vertical stick is held between the palms, and has a reciprocal motion by the palms being moved in opposite directions, at the same time using a strong downward pressure, which naturally brings the palms to the bottom. They are then at once raised to their original position, and the operation is continued till the naturally formed tinder ignites."

The following description, by a native correspondent, of fire-making by the Pulayans of Travancore may be quoted as an example of the difficulties with which a Superintendent of Ethnography in India has to struggle. "They know how to make fire, *i.e.*, by friction of wood as well as stone, etc. They take a triangular cut of stone & 1 flat oblong size flat. They hit one another with the maintenance of coir or cotton, then fire sets immediately, & also by rubbing the 2 barks frequently with each other they make fire."

The Paniyans, who dwell at the base of the western ghāts in Malabar, make fire by what is known as the Malay or sawing method (plate XXIX). A portion of a

Badagas making Fire.

Plate XXVIII-A.

Paniyans making Fire.

bamboo stem, about one foot in length, in which two nodes are included, is split longitudinally into two equal parts. On one half a sharp edge is cut with a knife. In the other a longitudinal slit is made through about two-thirds of its length, which is stuffed with a piece of cotton cloth. The latter is held firmly on the ground with its convex surface upwards, and the cutting edge drawn, with a gradually quickening sawing motion, rapidly to and fro across it by two men, until the cloth is ignited by the incandescent particles of wood in the groove cut by the sharp edge. The cloth is then blown with the lips into a blaze, and the tobacco or cooking fire can be lighted.

The following account of the sawing method of making fire, as carried out by a hill-man in Vizagapatam, is given by a correspondent of the Indian Antiquary. * "He took a piece of dry bamboo, split it lengthways, and cut a notch on the convex side. He then tore a bit of rag from his cloth, and placed it on the ground under the notched bamboo, which he held tightly between his toes. He then got a bit of dry tamarind wood, and, cutting a knife-edge on it, shaped it to fit into the notch. He then rubbed this stick violently to and fro in the notch, until dust began to drop on the cloth. By and by the dust-laden cloth began to smoke, and, after perhaps two minutes, he took it up and blew the cloth into a flame."

By some tribes the fire-sticks are collected during the hot dry season, and stacked above the kitchen fire, so that, when the rainy season ensues, a stock of dry wood

* Vol. III, 1879.

for making fire is available. Everyone familiar with life in India during the rains knows the state of temper produced by efforts to light a cheroot from a box of matches made with red phosphorus. And the jungle man, with his more primitive but effective method, has the advantage over the cultured European.

Turning now to the use of the flint and steel. The Kādirs of the Ánaimalai hills make fire by means of an iron bar, a piece of quartz as a strike-a-light, and the floss of the silk-cotton tree (*Bombax malabaricum*), over which powdered charcoal has been rubbed. The Irulas of Chingleput employ for this purpose a piece of the pithy stem of *Æschynomene aspera*, in the upper surface of which a small cavity is scooped out. Against the pith an angular fragment of quartz is held firmly, and, by means of a smart and dexterous blow thereon from a flat iron instrument hollowed out on one side to support the thumb, a spark is made to fall on the pith, which is blown into a blaze. A rather more elaborate apparatus is used by one of the jungle tribes of Travancore. The man carries in his tobacco and betel bag a little box made from a bamboo stem with a node as its bottom, which is stuffed with silk floss (*Bombax ?*), and also holds a piece of quartz, and a flat piece of iron. Fire is obtained, as in the previous case, by igniting the floss with a spark from the quartz. I could not but admire the skill of the expert tribesmen, who were amused at my efforts to strike a light, which only produced a maimed thumb. By the Chenchus of the Nallamalai hills the floss of *Eriodendron anfractuosum* is used instead of that of *Bombax*.

FIRE-WALKING.

Moxque per ardentes stipulæ crepitantis acervos,
Trajicias celeri strenua membra pede.

OVID. FASTI.

THE ceremonial observance of walking through hot ashes (fête de feu) is very widespread throughout Southern India. As a typical example thereof, an account* may be given of the ceremony as it took place at St. Thomas' Mount, near the city of Madras, in 1901. The festival took place in connection with a small temple dedicated to the goddess Draupati, the polyandrous wife of the five Pāndavas, who, to prove her chastity during their absence in exile, submitted to the trial by ordeal of walking through fire. The celebration of the festival, it is believed, secures to the villagers their cattle and crops, and protection from dangers of all kinds. An individual who suffers from any chronic complaint makes a vow in the name of the goddess that, if he is cured, he will walk over fire. If he who takes the vow is poor, he must wait till a celebration takes place. But, if he is a man of means, he brings about the festival at his own cost. For ten days before the fire-walking special worship of the goddess was performed thrice daily. In the temple was recited the Māhābarata

* H. K. Beauchamp. Wide World Magazine; and Madras Mail, 1901.

in Tamil to hundreds of people gathered about the premises by a pūjāri (priest). And, every night, portions of the Māhābarata were acted in primitive village fashion to several hundred spectators. A day or two before the last day of the festival the vow-taker, after bathing, goes to the temple dressed in a saffron-dyed cloth, and gets the priest to tie a piece of saffron-dyed thread, with a bit of saffron attached to it, to his right hand (to the left in a woman). He sleeps in the temple at night, and is denied access to the interior of his house. The devotee observes a fast on the day of the fire-walking, and, early in the morning, goes to the temple, and worships the goddess along with others who have taken similar vows. They then bathe in a tank, to secure perfect cleanness of the body. Meanwhile, about midday, the temple servants heaped fuel on a permanent platform on an open space of ground. In this instance the fuel was a ton of jungle wood, and two cart-loads of charcoal. The vow-takers returned from their bathing, and set fire to the fuel heaped on the platform. At the end of the platform a shallow trench had been dug, in which the wood and charcoal were burnt, until the whole was a mass of glowing embers. These were then racked out of the trench, and spread evenly to a depth of three or four inches over a space, some five yards square, marked out in the centre of the platform. The trench, when cleared of the embers, was partially filled with water, and all round the area of red-hot cinders water was freely sprinkled. An hour before the fire-walking, the vow-takers assembled near the platform with the priest, who,

to satisfy himself that all was right with the devotees, performed three tests, the first of which consisted of balancing a sword on its tip on the rim of an earthen pot. In the second test the priest put a few pieces of burning charcoal in a towel dipped in saffron-water, without the cloth being affected. The third and last test was that a few flowers and limes, thrown into the lap of the idol a few days before, had kept fresh. [In some villages round Madras the pūjāri used to place a few red hot cinders in the lap of the idol, and it was regarded as a bad sign if the cloth on which they were deposited became burnt. The falling of a flower from the wreath of the idol to the right was regarded as a good sign]. The procession of the goddess Draupati, followed by images of Krishna and Arjuna, started from the temple a little after 6 P.M. and wended its way through the dense crowd to the scene of the fire-walking ceremony. The idols were placed in front of the platform, and, after worship had been offered, the priest, decked with garlands and clad in a yellow cloth, walked over the embers with measured steps and quite calmly. The other devotees then rushed on to the platform, and walked over the glowing cinders to the other side, where they cooled their feet in a puddle of water (the pāl-kuli or milk pit). The glowing embers were loose, not beaten down or flattened in any way, and the feet of the fire-walkers, as they passed through, actually sank into the loose bed of fire. This was particularly noticeable in the case of the pūjāri during his calm and deliberate passage. Neither he, nor the devotees, lifted their feet high. They seemed rather to

wade through the embers, as through shallow water. The relations of the performers were waiting on the other side to receive them. These covered them with new cloths, gave them something to drink, and conducted them home. An interesting feature of the ceremony was that a boy about eight years old walked over the embers, while a still smaller child was hurried over, hanging on to its father's hand. A few performers, too, carried children across on their shoulders. One young man, who went through the ordeal, carrying a decorated pot on his head, took part in a cricket match on the following day. A few of those who took part in the ceremony were questioned whether they felt any pain, or whether they protected their feet by rubbing them with the juice of some plant. The suggestion was received with resentment, and considered profane. The most common explanation of the immunity from burning is that a decoction of the *Aloe indica* is used. It is said that the fleshy part of the leaves is bruised, and squeezed through flannel. A glutinous juice is thus extracted, not unlike castor-oil in consistency. This is rubbed into the skin of the feet, and palms of the hands. The hair, beard, and eyebrows are also thoroughly saturated with it. After a careful and thorough anointing, the devotee is able to pass over glowing embers without hurt. He is, it is said, even able to drag a red-hot chain through his hands, and to comb his hair and beard with a red-hot metal comb. Many of those assembled at the ceremony took away with them some of the sacred ashes, to be used as a charm to drive away devils and demons.

As showing the simple faith in the ceremony, the sad evidence, given at the inquest by the mother of a young man who died as the result of tumbling into the fire-pit, may be cited.* "Pakkiri, who is lying here a corpse, is my son. He was attacked with jaundice, and I made a vow of treading fire for it. He got well. So he trod the fire last year and the year before. But this year his fate came upon him. I am blind of both eyes. I did not go with Pakkiri to the fire-treading. I went when I heard news that he had fallen into the fire and been burnt. I and my daughter carried him home. He died last night." In commenting on this case, Mr. Andrew Lang says† that "Mr. Stokes explains that 'the fire would hardly injure the tough skin of the sole of a labourer's feet.' Yet it killed a boy"! But it must be borne in mind that, both in this case and the one from Tinnevelly quoted hereafter (p. 485), the individuals died as the result of severe burns on a part of the body where the skin is less thick than on the sole of the foot.

At a fire-walking ceremony in Mysore a few years ago, the devotees were clad in wet garments. The god having been carried thrice round the pit, the female devotees were conducted thereto, and several shovelfuls of the glowing embers thrown over their heads. The men walked over the ashes, and a quantity of ghī and milk was then poured over them. The priest then proclaimed that nobody could walk over the ashes without receiving hurt. The Abbé Dubois notes‡ that those, whose weak

* H. J. Stokes. Ind. Ant. II, 1873. † Magic and Religion, 1901.
‡ Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies.

limbs do not permit of their running over the hot embers, cover the upper part of the body with a wet cloth, and, holding a chafing dish filled with burning coals, pour the contents over their heads. This feat is called the fire-bath.

Some Dombs in Vizagapatam are reputed to have been able to pour blazing oil over their bodies. And a Domb man is said to have had a miraculous power of hardening his skin, so that any one could have a free shot at him without hurting him. Some Dāsaris (religious mendicants) exhibit the Panda sērvai performance, which consists in affecting to be possessed by the spirit of a deity, and beating themselves all over the body with a flaming torch, after covering it probably with some protecting substance *

In Malabar a class of pseudo-Brāhmans derive their name of Tīyāttunni or Tīyādi (fire-play) from the ceremony of jumping through fire before temples. And, on the west coast, when celebrations are held in honour of Chāmundi, a much dreaded female divinity, the dancer who represents, and is supposed to be possessed by her, dances and rolls upon a pile of burning embers without any injury.†

At the annual fire-walking ceremony of the Badagas of the Nīlgiris, the local deity, in token of a vow to whom a long plait of hair is worn, is propitiated with a four-anna piece, a cocoanut, camphor, incense, and flowers. Prior to walking through the ashes, jasmine

* Manual of the N. Arcot district.

† M. J. Walhouse. Ind. Ant., VII, 1878.

or rhododendron flowers are thrown thereon, and, if the omens are favourable, is said not to be singed. So too, milk poured on the ashes is said not to produce a hissing noise. Fortified by their belief in the goodwill of the god, they go through the ceremonial. And, if any one suffers hurt therefrom, he takes it as a proof of the displeasure of the deity. The Harava (jumper) sept of the Badagas is said to be so called from the rite, in which they leap over fire. It was noted by an eye-witness that "no preparation, or application of any anti-fire lotion was in evidence. The only suspicious fluid about was the cocoanut milk flooding the floor, in which all fire-walkers, as well as non-fire-walkers, trampled alike. I examined the feet of one of the men, and one of the women, who went through the ceremony, but, beyond black impressions on the soles, there was no marked injury." Sometimes the Badagas drive their cattle, which have recovered from sickness, over the burning embers in performance of a vow.

In a picturesque account of a ceremony of walking through fire at Nuagada (or Nuvagōde) in Ganjam, Mr. S. P. Rice writes as follows.* "A holy man comes forth, a fire is kindled—no small fire of twigs, but a blaze of jungle faggots, the flames leaping up breast-high. Through this the inspired one walks unharmed, and proceeds to take his seat on a pile of sharp, strong thorns, raised about two feet from the ground, and woven in the form of a stool about two feet square.

* Occasional Notes on Native South Indian Life, 1901.

This is the crucial test. So lightly clad as to be almost naked, he takes his seat on the forbidding throne. If he is truly inspired, the thorns will break beneath him, or will be turned aside, powerless to pierce his divinely protected skin. But woe unto that man, into whom the true god has not entered! Not for him will the thorns fall away harmless: he shall taste to the full the bitterness of his presumption." To Mr. J. G. D. Partridge I am indebted for the following account of the Ganjam ceremony, at which he was present as an eye-witness. "In the village of Nuvagōde, situated in the Surangi zamindary, a fire-walking ceremony is performed once a year, during the Dassara festival, by the priest of the temple of a village goddess. I arrived at this village on the morning of the 6th October, 1902, and saw the preparations that had been made for the ceremony, which was to take place that night. A pit, six to nine inches deep, and about nine feet long and four feet broad, had been dug in a field close to the temple, and was filled with the ashes of a wood fire, which had been burning during the day. Alongside this pit, and separated by about six inches, was another of the same size filled with embers. At 9 P.M. the Zamindar of Surangi sent word that the priest was about to begin, and that, before walking over the fire, he would sit on a seat of thorns, during which time he was endowed with prophetic powers. A most fantastic spectacle, which no European had perhaps ever been fortunate enough to witness, presented itself before me. The villagers, with several hundred people from the neighbourhood, all Uriyas

filled the street, and in the middle, to the sound of twenty drums and many horns, danced the priest of the goddess, a young man, with a bare sword in his right hand. He was dressed as a woman, with rows of silver bells round his waist, and a large head-dress covered with feathers. I had seen him in the morning in the little temple of the goddess called Koraisani, and should not have recognised him in the peculiar dress he now wore. He seemed perfectly frenzied, and leapt about. But he was well aware of everything that went on, as, in addition to his dancing, he acted as master of the ceremonies, rushing about in the crowd, talking to the Zamindar, and telling me when all was ready for his performances. The thorn seat was hanging like a swing from a small upright stand. The sticks were closely interlaced, and the thorns projected two or three inches from them. He placed a small cloth on the thorns, and then jumped into the seat, holding on to ropes at the sides, but allowing his whole weight to rest on the seat. When he had done this for several minutes, I found that the thorns had pierced the small cloth, but, as far as I could see, had not hurt the priest. His clothes were thin, and afforded no protection from the thorns. He constantly stupified himself by inhaling incense from a small censer, and I presume that he felt no pain in consequence of this. There were no signs of blood, however, on his body. He claimed no special powers, though his sensations must have been in some way deadened when he sat on the thorns. He did not invite any of the spectators to follow his example; and he would certainly

not have found any one anxious to imitate him. About this time he thought he could inform me of the contents of my pocket, but unfortunately his prophetic powers failed. He said I had one rupee and some gold, but I had five rupees and no gold. No other attempt was made to test his powers in this line. He next went to the fire-pits, which were a mass of red-hot ashes; sprinkled not more than a handful of incense on to them; dipped his feet in a mixture of rice-water and milk; and walked across one pit, leading another man. He then dipped his feet again in the fluid mixture, and returned by the other pit. The time he took in walking across one pit was not more than four seconds, and he took about four steps on the ashes. At least fifty persons in the crowd walked over the pits afterwards, but they went a little faster than the priest, and some of them only took two steps on the ashes. Their feet were not hurt, and they did not wash them in any mixture before or after they went over the ashes. I infer from the way in which the performance was conducted that any one can easily walk rapidly over the ashes, but that, if he goes like the priest, he must dip his feet in the mixture both before and after walking across them. The priest tried to convince a gentleman near me, who was rather sceptical, that it would not hurt him, if he walked over the ashes, but this person was quite satisfied with seeing others perform. The priest only walked once across the two pits, and he afterwards danced for an hour, when I thought it time to depart. The performance takes place every year."

An observant friend, who witnessed a fire-walking ceremony some years ago in one of the southern districts, informs me that nine-tenths of the performers were youngsters, who evidently did it for a lark.

In a note on a fire-walking festival in Travancore Mr. G. F. D'Penha writes as follows.* "We could not see how hot the cinders were. But, judging from the look of them when we first arrived on the scene, and the length of time that elapsed before the ceremony took place, I should not think that the walking over the pathway was such a very hazardous operation after all. The previous market day we met a young man who was to go through the ceremony, and asked him why he did it. He told me he had been ill, and had promised the god that he would go through this performance if he recovered. He got better, and so was carrying out his part of the contract. This was, he said, the third year that he had done it."

To Mr. G. H. Bernays I am indebted for the following account of a fire-walking ceremony, which he witnessed at Sivakāsi in the Tinnevelly district. "During the evening I saw a great glow in the sky, and thought that a fire must have occurred in Sivakāsi. About 9 P.M., I had to go to the bazār, to preserve order, as the Mohurrum happened to be running concurrently with a Hindu procession. After the close of the latter I went round to the mosque about 11 P.M. In front of the mosque was a circular pit with a slightly raised wall about a foot high all round, and with an opening on the east and west.

* Ind. Ant., XXXI, 1902.

The pit, I should say, was roughly speaking about 1 foot or 1½ feet deep, and about 8 feet in diameter. In it a huge wood fire was blazing. It was the light of this, which I had seen from my bungalow some hours before. The flames were now allowed to die down until the pit was simply a mass of glowing red-hot ashes, the heat of which was so intense as to prevent one from going within three or four yards of the pit. Soon after a procession came out from the mosque, led by a venerable old man. They formed themselves round the pit, and the old priest, standing at the east end, recited various prayers, to which the others responded. Finally a man came out of the crowd, and, entering at the east end of the pit, walked through the glowing ashes. On arriving at the centre of the pit he halted, stooped down, and, gathering some of the ashes in his hands, threw them up in the air, and allowed them to fall in a red rain upon his naked body. He then walked slowly out at the other side. He was followed by several others, who all did the same with varying degrees of pace. Meantime the crowd kept up a continuous cry of "Dīn, Dīn." Finally a gōsha woman, with a child strapped up, was brought forward and seated near the east end of the pit, while someone (I think it was the old priest) picked up handfuls of the glowing ashes, and poured them over her, and a man near by brushed them off the woman at once, to prevent her cloth from catching fire. After this ceremony the usual Mohurrum 'tamāsha' took place. It is difficult to note what struck me most, but it was perhaps a sense of mystic

weirdness which was given by the dull glow of the fire, the serried ring of faces lit only by a few torches, and the figure of the old priest chanting his prayers. I felt a sense of powerlessness in the presence of a rite which I did not understand, and I think, as I looked at the faces, I began to understand a little of the meaning of 'fanaticism.' As far as I saw, no preparation was applied to the feet or body of the fire-walkers, though it may have been done inside the mosque. None of them showed any signs of hurt afterwards." I have often, in former days, wondered at the casual manner in which road coolies walk, with bare feet, over the sharp angular fragments of crystalline rock, when making a macadam road; and experience in measuring native feet has taught me how non-ticklish their soles are.

At Gūgūdu in the Anantapur district, Mr. Francis writes,* the Mohurrum is, strange to relate, entirely managed by the Hindus of the village, the Muhammadans taking but a small part in it. Hindus, to the number of several thousands, also come in for the ceremony from the adjoining villages. At the real Mohurrum, a pit is dug, and a bonfire made in it, round which lamentations over the death of Hussain and Hasan are made. In the Hindu's version of the ceremony, as at Gūgūdu, this item is developed into a regular fire-walking ceremony, which takes place twice, during the course of the Mohurrum, on the ninth and eleventh days. "First the musicians, who are Mangalas (barbers) by caste, walk through the fire, and then follow all sorts and

* Gazetteer of the Anantapur district.

conditions of others, both Hindus and Muhammadans. The same thing on a smaller scale is done at the Mohurrum at Mālyavantam. The Muhammadan Pīrs at Gūgūdu are held in great veneration, and all castes, even Brāhmans it is said, make their vows to them. and distribute sugar to the poor if they are successful in obtaining the object of their desires."

It was noted some years ago, as a happy reform, by the Collector of Tanjore that, since Government set its face against the ancient practice, the people use flowers instead of fire, and tread on them devoutly in honour of the goddess.

As bearing on the subject of walking through fire, I may quote extracts from the selections from the records of the Madras Government, * which show, *inter alia*, that the ceremony is not confined to the Hindu community. In summing up the reports received from the officials of the various districts, the Government expressed its opinion that "the ceremony of walking through fire is only of partial occurrence, and can scarcely be called a religious observance, being performed for the most part in fulfilment of vows voluntarily made The practice does not appear to be acceptable to the higher classes."

Madras.—The observance is confined to the lowest orders of the people, and the same individuals exhibit annually, like any other class of jugglers; though there are some few, who go through the supposed ordeal in fulfilment of vows.

* Reports on the swinging festival and the ceremony of walking through fire, 1854.

Ganjam.—It has been customary at Chicacole to perform this ceremony immediately after the hook-swinging festival, the same parties performing in both. The Muhammadans also, during the Mohurrum, are in the habit of passing through the fire.

North Arcot.—On the last day of the festival, a shallow pit, half a foot deep, and several yards broad and long, is filled with firewood fully ignited. The only classes who take any part in the proceedings are some of the Sūdra classes, and, for the most part, those of the least consideration and of the least range of intelligence. The Brāhmans have no concern with them.

Salem.—The Hindus observe the ceremony on the last day of some of their festivals, and it is not unusual during the Mohurrum for Muhammadans, in fulfilment of a vow, to leap in and out of the pits, in which they kindle bonfires opposite their ashoorkhānas (ten-day houses), while the embers are still burning.

Tinnevelly.—During the celebration of the Mohurrum in 1850, a Muhammadan fell accidentally into a fire-pit prepared for the ceremony of walking through, and died three days afterwards. It was reported that the accident occurred from the individual being under the influence of liquor. Since the occurrence of the accident the practice of lighting fires in pits during the Mohurrum festival has been discontinued in that village.

Godāvari.—There is one class, viz., the Lingadharloo, by whom the fire treading is regarded as an efficacious observance for recovering their sanctity if by any chance they lose their lingam (the symbol of Śīva, which they

wear); but, even amongst them, it is not considered an essential ceremony.

Nellore.—In the month Madur (Jamad-ul-aval) the fakirs (Muhammadan) walk on, and roll in fires at two places at Nellore. This custom does not appear to be enjoined by their religion, but has been observed a long time in memory of their priest named Bundashaw Madar.

Kistna.—The devotee or devotees proceed to the temple or spot fixed upon with all the pomp and parade they can muster. They are excited by noisy music, and the recitation of stanzas descriptive of the attributes and miracles of the deity. Religious enthusiasm is roused to the highest pitch by the time the spot is reached, and the devotees run or hop over the coals as quickly as possible. It is said by some that the feet and legs are anointed with a preparation, which prevents the embers from affecting them. Sometimes the performers, or some of their followers, by way of making the ceremony more attractive and imposing, pierce their eyelids, tongues, the fleshy parts of their arms, etc., with narrow nails, to one or both ends of which cotton wicks are attached and ignited. Among the Muhammadans, the ceremony is sometimes observed, at the Mohurrum, before the astanam or hall where the Pīrs are installed and exhibited.

HOOK-SWINGING.

In summing up a series of reports on the swinging festival, the Government of Madras, in 1854, expressed the opinion that it "is on the whole less frequently observed now than formerly. In some few districts the practice is as prevalent as ever; in the majority, however, it is on the decline, while in none can it be called general. Further it does not seem to be in any way connected with the religion of the observers, but to be performed in fulfilment of vows. In some cases it would appear that the observance has led to loss of life. This would, of course, justify the interference of the magistracy, and, in future, any occurrence of this nature should lead to the prohibition of the ceremony of the village where it happened. The best method of discouraging this objectionable practice must be left to the discretion of the different magistrates, but the Governor in Council feels confident that, if it be properly explained that the object of Government is not to interfere with any religious observance of its subjects, but to abolish a cruel and revolting practice, the efforts of the magistracy will be willingly seconded by the influence of the great mass of the community, and more particularly of the wealthy and intelligent classes who do not seem to countenance or support the swinging ceremony."

From the Government records (1854) the following details are culled.*

* Reports on the swinging festival, and ceremony of walking through fire, 1854.

In 1852 two men were killed during the celebration of the festival in the Salem district, in consequence of the pole from which they were suspended having accidentally snapped. In the Tanjore district the festival was known to have been practised in former years in a hundred and twenty-five towns and villages, and still took place occasionally in seventy-eight places. In the Nellore district swinging festival of the following nature were observed either annually or at intervals of two to thirty years :—

(1) Gaulaupooseedy, *i.e.*, a man hung to the end of a cross beam fixed on a post by the skin, etc., of his back with iron hooks.

(2) Gumpaseedy, *i.e.*, a man sitting in a basket, or on a plank hung to the end of the iron beam thereof.

(3) Pucaseedy, *i.e.*, iron hooks fixed in the sides of a man, who has to walk round a pagoda.

(4) Tallaseedy, *i.e.*, a man hung to a post by a rope tied to his waist.

In the Kistna district there had been no swinging for several years, but the custom was reintroduced by an old pensioned Hindu Subadar. It appeared that his father's sister performed sutti 70 or 80 years since, and a temple was erected to her memory on the site of her immolation, and in commemoration of the event a swinging festival was held annually. This had ceased for many years until the return of the old subadar, when, out of respect to the memory of his relative, he restored the temple, and re-established the swinging festival at his own expense. The Paraiyans were, it is stated, the principal performers

at the village swinging ceremonials, and they received from one to four rupees from a general fund subscribed by the villagers, or granted for the purpose by some public-spirited individual. In one report it is mentioned that, on the party who had been accustomed to pay the swingers having left, the villagers, afraid lest a discontinuance of the practice should be productive of calamity, took to swinging sheep and pumpkins, a much more reasonable exhibition of devotion. In cases of famine, cholera, or other calamity, a swinging festival was held for the purpose of propitiating the deity, and, at the same time, a slaughter of goats, sheep, pigs, fowls, and even male buffaloes took place. In the Canara district, on the occasion of a very extensive celebration, the swinging was combined with an extensive slaughter of animals. The pole was erected in the close vicinity of a high heap of reeking heads. All the men, women and children were in holiday attire, and hundreds of the latter were brought close to the heap of heads, and showed intense excitement and enjoyment in witnessing the struggles of the dying animals, or in hearing their shrieks.

In front of the Māriamma temple at Mūdabidūri in South Canara stands a quadrangular stone, which is hollowed out at the top. It was formerly used as a receptacle for a wooden beam, on which another beam was made to revolve at the hook-swinging festival. The necessary wooden implements are still preserved near the temple.* The apparatus for hook-swinging still lies outside the Pe[illegible]layam temple near Madras.*

* E. Hultzsch, Government Epigraphist, Annual Report, 1900-01.

Of this barbarous ceremony, as carried out at the latter end of the eighteenth century, an interesting account is given by Sonnerat, * who thus describes it. "Those who imagine they have received great benefits from Mariatale, or wish to obtain them, make a vow to suspend themselves in the air. This ceremony consists in passing two iron tenter-hooks, tied to the end of a very long lever, through the skin of the votary's back. This lever is placed at the top of a mast twenty feet high. As soon as the votary is hung on the hooks, they press the other end of the lever, and lift him up in the air. In this state they turn him round as often as he chooses. He commonly has a sword and shield in his hands, and makes the motions of a man who is fighting. He must appear cheerful, whatever pain he may feel: for, if tears escape him, he is driven from his caste, but this seldom happens The votary who is to be hung up drinks some intoxicating liquor, which makes him almost insensible, and looks upon this dangerous preparation as a pastime. After turning him several times round, they take him off, and he is soon cured of his wounds. The quickness of the cure passes for a miracle in the eyes of the zealots of this goddess. The Brāhmans do not assist at this ceremony, which they despise. The worshippers of Mariatale are of the lowest castes."

In the early part of the last century Mr. Elijah Hoole was present as an eye-witness of a hook-swinging ceremony at Royapettah in the city of Madras, of which he

* Voyage to the East Indies and China, 1774 and 1781.

gave the following graphic description.* "A pole, thirty or forty feet high, was planted in the ground perpendicularly, having an iron pivot on the top, on which rested the middle of an horizontal yard or cross pole, which might also be about forty feet in length. This latter was managed by a rope attached to one end, reaching down to the ground, by means of which it could be made to turn upon the centre as fast as the people could run. Near the other end of the cross-pole, attached to a short rope, were two bright iron hooks, and at the extreme end was a short rope, about the length of that to which the hooks were attached. By slackening the rope for the management of the cross pole, the other end, to which the hooks were attached, was lowered to a platform higher than the heads of the assembled multitude, from whence, when it was raised, was borne into the mid-air a man, with no other dress than a waist cloth, and supported only by the muscles and flesh of the middle of the back, into which were thrust the iron hooks. When the cross pole, thus laden, had regained its horizontal position, it was turned quickly on the pivot, by the persons holding the rope at the other end moving round with it at a good pace. It was impossible to look at the deluded votary of superstition thus painfully suspended without a sickening horror, not merely from an idea of the agonies endured by him, but also from a fear lest the flesh should tear by his weight, and that, falling from a height which would ensure his destruction, he should, by death, complete the sacrifice thus offered to the infernal gods.

* Personal narrative of a mission to the South of India, 1820 to 1828.

The rising of the flesh taken up by the hooks seemed to threaten such a catastrophe, and the short rope at the extremity of the pole, being within reach of the person suspended, was perhaps intended to afford, in such a case, some chance of safety. Some of the persons thus suspended appeared fearful of falling, and held constantly by the rope, as, by this means, they perhaps hoped to relieve themselves of some degree of the pain which must be endured. Others, more bold and hardy, made no use of the rope, and, as though happy as well as fearless, thrust their hands into their cloth, and, taking out a profusion of flowers, provided for the occasion, showered them abroad amongst the people, who struggled to catch and preserve them as though they had been blessings from heaven. One fellow, by way of additional bravado, fired a pistol, which he had stuck in his waist for the purpose.* I never pressed through the assembled crowds near enough to see the hooks put into the flesh, but was told that the only means used to deaden the pain was a smart blow, given with the open hand, on that side of the back into which the hook was to be inserted. From the indifference with which they mingled with the crowd after the ceremony, and the smallness of the streams of blood I have seen trickling from the wounds, I should suppose that a less quantity of blood than would be imagined is lost by the devotees. I think I have seen five or six persons swing in one day. Swinging is neither practised nor sanctioned by the Brāhmans; at least they have disavowed it to me; and

* Sometimes the suspended man would blow a trumpet, or sing a song.

Plate XXX.

Hook-swinging.

I never observed any besides the lower classes of the Hindus conducting or participating in the ceremony. It is said to be observed in consequence of vows made in time of sickness or danger, in expiation of an offence, or for the obtaining of children or some other desired object."

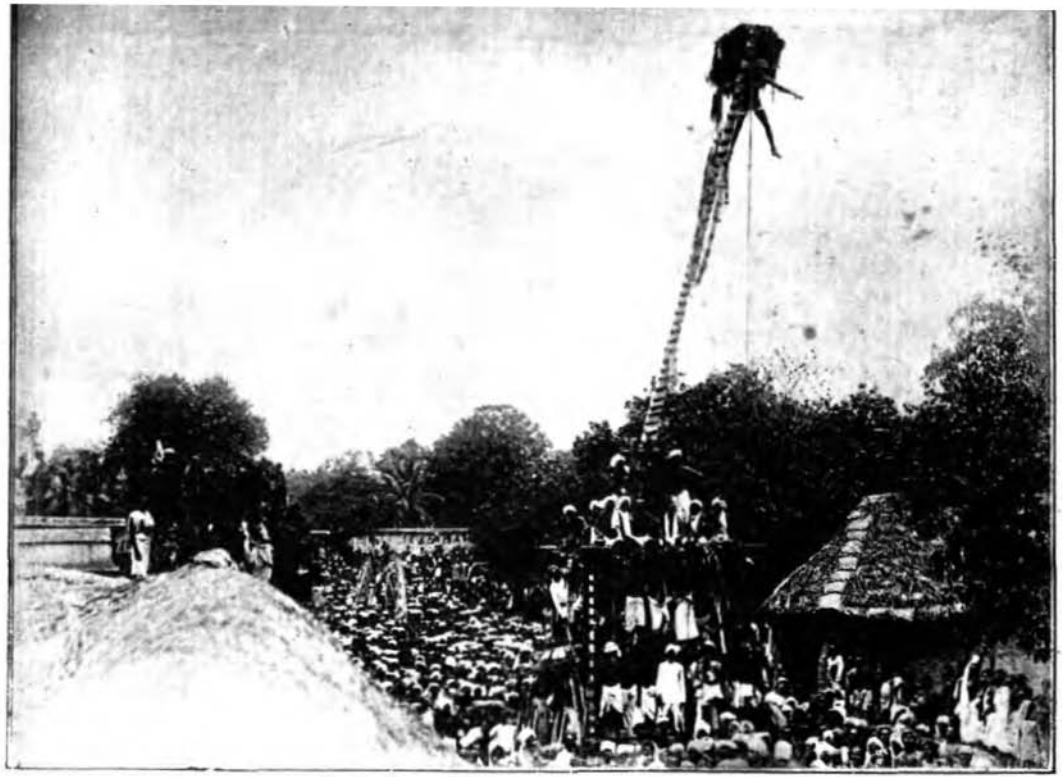
"Hook-swinging," the Rev. Mr. Phillips writes,* "is performed after the consent of the goddess is obtained. If a lizard is heard chirping at the right side, it is regarded as a sign of her consent." It is believed that the man who is swung suffers no pain if the cause is a good one, but excruciating agony if it is a bad one.

It was, Moor tells us,† customary for a man to swing in performance of a vow, if he married a certain girl within a certain time. And a person might swing by proxy. He was told of a venerable dame, who came on behalf of her daughter, who had vowed to swing if the child, with which she was pregnant, was a boy. The damsel had been delivered only a short time before the arrival of swinging day, and the old lady went through the ceremony for the young woman in the straw with great resolution, and to the satisfaction of the assembled throng.

In a recent note‡ on the Izhuvas of the Cochin State, Mr. L. K. Anantha Krishna Iyer states that "there are two kinds of hook-swinging, namely Garuda (Brāhminy kite swinging) and thoni tukkam (boat swinging). [The Brāhminy kite, *Haliastur indus*, is the vehicle of Vishnu,

* Evolution of Hinduism, 1903.
† Narrative of Little's Detachment, 1794.
‡ Monograph Eth. Survey of Cochin

who is represented in temples as a winged human being]. The ceremony is performed in fulfilment of a vow, to obtain some favour from the deity Kāli. In the fight between Kāli and the demon Darika, the latter was completely defeated, and the former, biting him on the back, drank his blood to gratify her feelings of animosity. Hook-swinging symbolises this incident, and the blood shed by the insertion of the hook through the flesh is intended as an offering to the goddess. The performer of the ceremony should bathe early in the morning, and be in a state of preparation for a year or forty-one days by worshipping Bhagavāti. He should strictly abstain from meat, intoxicating liquors, and association with women. During the morning hours he dresses himself in a garment tucked into the waist band, rubs his body with oil, and is shampooed particularly on the back, into which the hooks will be inserted. He is also taught by his instructor to perform various feats and gesticulations called payitta. This he continues till the festival. In kite-swinging, a kind of car resting on two axles with four wheels is used. On it there is a horizontal beam resting on two vertical supports. A strong rope tied to a ring attached to the beam is connected with the hook, which passes through the flesh of the back. Over the beam there is a kutaram (tent) tastefully decorated, inside which two or three persons can swing at a time. In some places there is a different arrangement, and, instead of the beam and supports, there is a small pole, on which rests a horizontal beam provided with a metal ring at one end. The beam acts as a lever, so that one end of it can be lowered to give some rest to the swinger.



Hook-swinging.

The rope tied to the ring is connected with the hook and the waist-band. For boat-swinging the same kind of vehicle, but without wheels, is in use. For kite-swinging the performer has his face painted green, and he puts on an artificial beak and wings like those of the kite. He wears long locks of hair like those of an actor in a katha-kali (Malabar drama). Various feats are performed to the accompaniment of musical instruments, and, as he swings, the car is dragged three, five, seven, nine, or eleven times round the temple. In boat-swinging the performer puts on the same kind of dress, without the beak and wings. Sometimes pillayeduthu thukkam, or swinging with a child in performance of a vow, is performed. The child is handed over to the swinger, who carries it as he swings. The swinging ceremony is performed by Nāyars, Kammālars, Kuruppans, and Izhuvas.

Of the ceremony as performed in recent years at the Kollangodu temple in Travancore, an excellent account is given by the Rev. T. Knowles,* from which the following précis has been compiled. In front of the temple was a booth containing the image of the goddess Bhadra Kāli, a cruel deity, who is supposed to delight in blood. At a little distance was the car. The bottom part of this was very much like a lorry used when transporting large logs of timber by means of elephants. There were four solid wheels of thick timber, with a framework, like a railway waggon on a small scale. To this were attached two thick cable ropes. Joined to the sides of the car

* Wide World Magazine, September, 1899.

were two upright posts, about 15 feet high, strengthened with stays and cross-pieces. On the top was a piece of thick timber with a hole in it, and the bottom rounded, which fitted into a cross-piece, and allowed the long beam on which the men were swung to move up or down. This beam was some 35 or 40 feet long, and about 9 inches in diameter. It was placed through the hole in the piece of timber on the top of the upright frame, and balanced in the middle like a huge see-saw. At one end of the pole was a covered canopy, and at the other long ropes were fastened, which trailed on the ground. The whole arrangement of the car was such that, by lowering one end of the long beam to the ground, and fastening a man to it, and then pulling down the other end by the ropes, the man could be raised into the air a height of some 40 feet or more. The whole car could then be dragged by the thick cable ropes round the temple. While the subject was being prepared for swinging, a mat was stretched above his head, partly to do him honour, partly to protect him from the sun. His head and neck were richly ornamented, and below he was bedecked with peacock's feathers, and clad in a loin-cloth, which would bear some, if not all the weight of his body. Amid the firing of mortars, beating of tom-toms, the screeching of flutes, and the shouts of the crowd, the canopied end of the long beam was lowered, and the devotee, lying prone on the ground, was fastened to the beam by means of ropes passing under his arms and around his chest. To some of the ropes hooks were fastened. The priests took hold of the fleshy part of the man's back, squeezed up the flesh, and put some four hooks at least through it. A rudely

fashioned sword and shield were then given to the man, and he was swung up into the air, waving the sword and shield, and making convulsive movements. Slowly the people dragged the car round the temple, a distance not quite as far as round St. Paul's cathedral. Some of the men were suspended while the car was dragged round three or four times. The next devotee was fastened in the same way to the beam, but, instead of a sword and shield, the priests gave him an infant in his arms, and devotee and infant were swung up in the air, and the car dragged round the temple as before. Some children were brought forward, whose parents had made vows about them. The little ones were made to prostrate themselves before the image of Kāli. Then the fleshy parts of their sides were pinched up, and some wires put through. This done, the wires were placed in the hands of the relatives, and the children were led round and round the temple, as though in leading strings. It is on record that, when the devotee has been specially zealous, the whole machine has been moved to a considerable distance while he was suspended from it, to the admiration of the gaping multitudes."

At Madura, Mr. Knowles states, on the occasion of a hook-swinging festival a few years ago, the devotee was swung by hooks alone, and not by ropes and hooks. The pole was longer than that used at Kollangōdu, and decorated with coloured cloth something like a barber's pole, and garlanded with flowers. Instead of it being fixed on a car, a large platform was used. The fleshy part of the man's back was first beaten to cause it to swell, and two large hooks were fastened into the flesh.

The Abbé Dubois,* in describing the hook-swinging ceremony, says that "a priest beats the fleshy part of the back until it is quite benumbed. While suspended, the devotee is careful not to show any sign of pain; indeed he continues to laugh, jest, and gesticulate, like a buffoon in order to amuse the spectators, who applaud and shout with laughter. After swinging in the air for the prescribed time, the victim is let down, and, as soon as his wounds are dressed, he returns home in triumph."

Some years ago, a man in a village, north of the Godāvari river, who had four holes in his loins from previous swingings, complained to the Deputy Commissioner that his occupation was gone, as he was no longer allowed to be swung. Quite recently the Governor of Madras was approached by a ryot (agriculturist), on behalf of the community, with a request for permission to revive the practice of hook-swinging in a certain village of the Madura district. He represented, with all earnestness, that, since this ceremony had been stopped, the rainfall had been deficient and the crops scanty; cholera had been prevalent; and in families where there were five or six children ten years ago, there were now only two or three.

A variant of the form of hook-swinging dealt with above is described by Tavernier, who, writing in the seventeenth century, narrates how devotees "go out of the city and fasten iron hooks to the boughs of several trees. Then come a great number of poor people, and hang themselves, some by the sides, some by the brawn

* Hindu Manners, Customs, and Ceremonies.

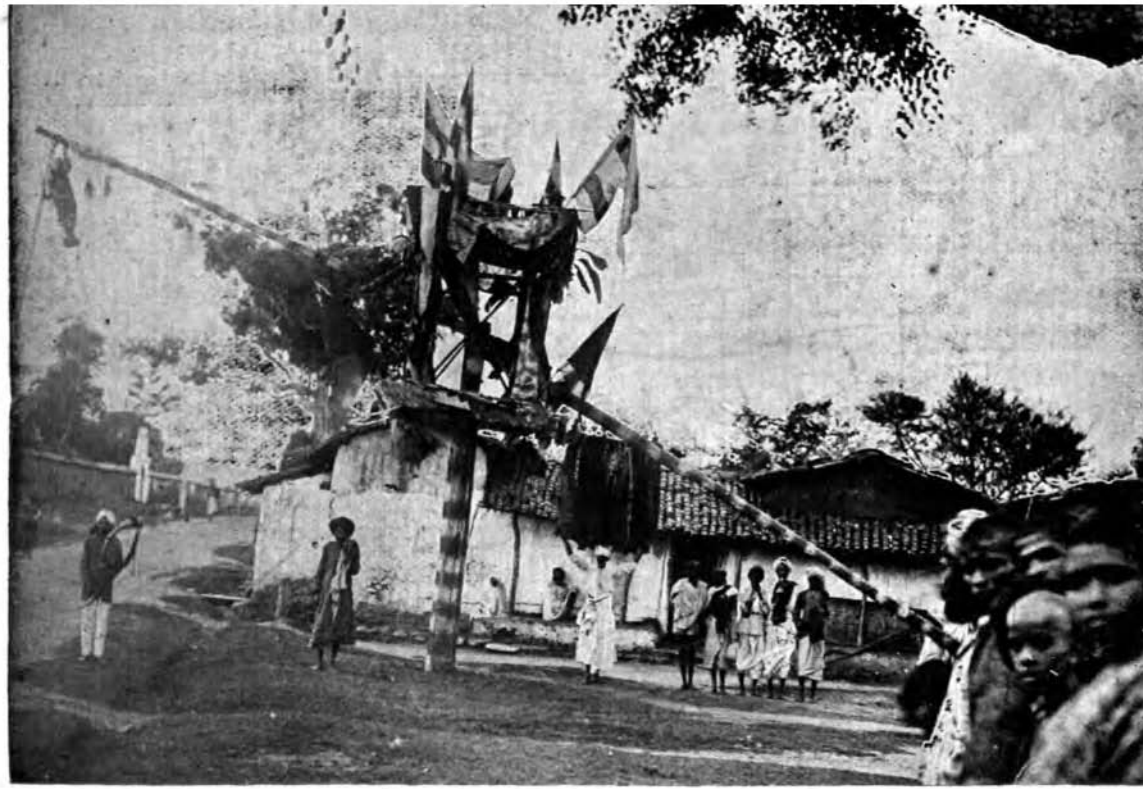
Plate XXXII.

Sidi Viranna.

of their backs, upon these hooks, until, the weight of their body tearing away the flesh, they fall of themselves. T'is a wonderful thing to see that not so much as one drop of blood should issue from the wounded flesh, nor that any of the flesh should be left upon the hooks; besides that in two days they are perfectly cured by such plasters as their Brāhmans give them."

A ceremony which is closely allied to hook-swinging is the tūkkam (lifting), which takes place during the kumbhum kodum or pot festival in Travancore, for the following account of which I am indebted to the Madras Mail, 1902. On a wooden platform is an upright frame, on which is a transverse bar, both ends of which can be raised or lowered at will. Facing the temple there were three such platforms, and each of them was occupied by a man who performed the tūkkam ceremony. He was fitted with a head gear resembling an old poke-bonnet. From the rim were suspended slender threads of coloured beads and tinsel. On his shoulders rested a pair of wooden epaulettes, which looked gilded. His costume was turkey red and black, and from the waist downwards he was covered with a skirt of peacock's feathers. Under his arms ran a leather band, by which, when the transverse bar was raised, he hung in mid-air. Behind the band were two steel hooks, which pierced the skin very slightly. In his hands each man held a bow and what seemed to be an arrow, and from time to time he shouted and gesticulated in an alarming manner. There was a distinct military air about the dress and demeanour of the men.

As human hook-swinging is forbidden, a pseudo-ceremony has been subsituted for it, and was recently performed for my special edification at Chennapatna in the Mysore province. The nature of the apparatus which is erected for the occasion, and decorated with coloured cloths, flags, and leafy twigs of the mango tree, is rendered clear by reference to plate XXXIII, which shows Sidi Vīranna suspended on high, and Māriamma in her shrine carried above its bearer's head. To the top of the framework a brass umbrella and kalasam (brass pot) are affixed. The end of the beam to which the figure of Sidi Vīranna (plate XXXII) is suspended, is adorned with a canopy with mango leaves tied to it. The goddess Māriamma in her shrine, borne by a pūjari, and Sidi Vīranna carried by a boy, are conducted to a tank where they are worshipped, and brought in procession to the scene of the swinging ceremony. To a long beam, which is lowered to the ground, Sidi Vīranna, carrying in his hands a sword and shield, and dressed up in a gaudy turban and silk-bordered cloth, is secured by means of a rope made of human hair, which is tied to a hook in the middle of his back. The beam is then hoisted on high, and Sidi Vīranna rotated round and round, accompanied by the goddess Māriamma, and Holeya musicians playing weird music with fife and drum. Sometimes a cradle is tied to the beam beneath the canopy, and children are placed in it. And occasionally men, tied to the beam by ropes passed round the waist, are hoisted. The festival usually commences on a Tuesday, and lasts for three days. On the first day the



Pseudo-Hook-swinging.

Plate XXXIII.

goddess Māriamma is worshipped by Brāhmans only, and on the following day by other castes, who make offerings of fowls and sheep. The swinging of the god is carried on for several hours. At its conclusion, the goddess is taken in procession through the streets, and, when the temple is reached, a fire-walking ceremony, called konda, takes place. Over the hot embers strewn in front of the temple, the pūjāri, with the goddess, walks three times, and enters the temple. It is said that he receives no injury to his feet, if he fasts and keeps himself pure on the day of the ordeal.

At a roadside hamlet near Kumulam in the South Arcot district, my assistant saw a pseudo-hook-swinging ceremony being performed. The beam had a sheep tied to it, as a substitute for a human being. One family had taken a vow to tie their child to the beam for one revolution thereof, but the police intervened, and the child's clothes and a sheep were swung instead. At a pseudo-hook-swinging ceremony in the Bellary district, as carried out at the present day, a Bēdar is suspended by a cloth passing under his arms. The Mādigas always swing him, and have to provide the hide ropes which are used.*

I am indebted to Messrs. Wiele & Klein for the photographs illustrating the human hook-swinging ceremony.

* Manual of the Bellary district.

INFANTICIDE.

THE sacrifice of infant life may, so far as Southern India is concerned, be classified under two heads: (*a*) criminal offence as a means of getting rid of inconvenient offspring, or as an act of revenge; (*b*) tribal custom. The Abbé Dubois * notes that parents used to abandon on a high road innocent babies, who happened to be born on a certain day, which the prognostications of the professional astrologer had signified to be unlucky. And there were even unnatural parents who went the length of strangling or drowning these tiny victims of stupid and atrocious superstition. A few years ago a newly-born baby was found dead in a ditch, and one of a gang of Basavis (dedicated prostitutes), working at a neighbouring factory, was suspected of being the mother. The police officer announced his intention of examining all the Basavis, and she who was in a state of lactation, with no baby to account for her condition, would be charged with knowledge of the infant's death. Of infanticide as an unauthorised act of mercy by the Irulas of the Nīlgiris, the following account is given by Harkness.† During the winter, or while they are wandering about the forests in search of food, driven by hunger, the families or parties separate one from another. On these occasions

* Hindu Manners, Customs, and Ceremonies.

† Description of a singular Aboriginal Race inhabiting the summit of the Neilgherry hills, 1832.

the women and young children are often left alone, and the mother, having no longer any nourishment for her infant, anticipates its final misery by burying it alive. The account was given and corroborated in such a manner as to leave no doubt of its correctness.

It is stated by Orme, on the authority of the Jesuit Father Martin, that the fury of revenge operates so strongly among the 'Colleries' (Kallans) that a man, for a slight affront, has been known to murder his wife and all his children, merely to have the atrocious satisfaction of compelling his adversary to commit like murders in his own family. The former practice of infanticide by the Kallans is dealt with at greater length in the Manual of the Madura district, where it is stated, on the authority of the survey account, that "a horrible custom exists among the females of the Colleries. When a quarrel or dissension arises between them, the insulted woman brings her child to the house of the aggressor, and kills it at her door to avenge herself, although her vengeance is attended with the most cruel barbarity. She immediately thereafter proceeds to a neighbouring village with all her goods. In this attempt she is opposed by her neighbours, which gives rise to clamour and outrage. The complaint is then carried to the head Ambalacaur, who lays it before the elders of the village, and solicits their interference to terminate the quarrel. In the course of this investigation, if the husband finds that sufficient evidence has been brought against his wife that she had given cause for provocation and aggression, he proceeds unobserved by the assembly to his house, and brings one

of his children, and, in the presence of witnesses, kills his child at the door of the woman, who had first killed her child at his. By this mode of proceeding he considers that he has saved himself much trouble and expense, which would otherwise have devolved on him. This circumstance is soon brought to the notice of the tribunal, who proclaim that the offence committed is sufficiently avenged. But, should this voluntary retribution of revenge not be executed by the convicted person, the tribunal is prolonged to a limited period, generally fifteen days. Before the expiration of that period one of the children of the convicted person must be killed. At the same time he is to bear all expenses for providing food, etc., for the assembly during three days." Such atrocities are not permitted under British rule.

In the Manual of the Vizagapatam district it is stated that female infanticide used to be very common all over the Jeypore country, and the Rājah is said to have made money out of it in one large talūk (division). The custom was to consult the Dāsari (priest) when a female child was born as to its fate. If it was to be killed, the parents had to pay the Amīn of the talūk a fee for the privilege of killing it; and the Amīn used to pay the Rājah three hundred rupees a year for renting the privilege of giving the license and pocketing the fees.

The practice of female infanticide was formerly very prevalent among the Khonds of Ganjam, and, in 1841, Lieutenant Macpherson was deputed to carry into effect the measures which had been proposed by Lord Elphinstone for the suppression of the Meriah (human) sacrifice

and infanticide. The crime was ascribed to various beliefs, viz.: (1) that it was an injunction by god, as one woman made the whole world suffer; (2) that it conduces to male offspring; (3) that woman, being a mischief-maker, is better out of the world than in it; (4) that the difficulty, owing to poverty, in providing marriage portions was an objection to rearing females From Macpherson's well-known report * the following extracts are taken. "The portion of the Khond country in which the practice of female infanticide is known to prevail is roughly estimated at 2,400 square miles, its population at 60,000, and the number of infants destroyed annually at 1,200 to 1,500 The tribes (who practice infanticide) belong to the division of the Khond people which does not offer human sacrifices. The usage of infanticide has existed amongst them from time immemorial. It owes its origin and its maintenance partly to religious opinions, partly to ideas from which certain very important features of Khond manners arise. The Khonds believe that the supreme deity, the sun god, created all things good; that the earth goddess introduced evil into the world; and that these two powers have since conflicted. The non-sacrificing tribes makes the supreme deity the great object of their adoration, neglecting the earth goddess. The sacrificing tribes, on the other hand, believe the propitiation of the latter power to be the most necessary worship Now the tribes which practice female infanticide hold that the sun god, in contemplating the

* Selections from the Records of the Government of India (Home Department), No. V. 1854.

deplorable effects produced by the creation of feminine nature, charged men to bring up only as many females as they could restrain from producing evil to society. This is the first idea upon which the usage is founded. Again, the Khonds believe that souls almost invariably return to animate human forms in the families in which they have been first born and received. But the reception of the soul of an infant into a family is completed only on the performance of the ceremony of naming upon the seventh day after its birth. The death of a female infant, therefore, before that ceremonial of reception, is believed to exclude its soul from the circle of family spirits, diminishing by one the chance of future female births in the family. And, as the first aspiration of every Khond is to have male children, this belief is a powerful incentive to infanticide." Macpherson, during his campaign, came across many villages of about a hundred houses, in which there was not a single female child. In his arguments with the people, he asserted that inquiry would prove that the opinion that male births are increased by the destruction of female infants is unfounded. And, with respect to the justification which is laid on the ground that the destruction of infants is a less evil than that which must arise from the contests attendant on the capricious dissolution of their marriages, he held it to be obvious that the practice of infanticide, and the cause of those contests re-act upon each other, alternately as cause and effect. Infanticide produces a scarcity of women, which raises marriage payments so high that tribes are easily induced to contest their

adjustments when dissolutions of the tie occur, while these dissolutions are plainly prompted by that scarcity which prevents every man from having a wife. On the cessation of infanticide women would become abundant, and the marriage payment would become small. Every man would have a wife as elsewhere. Women would have less power to change, and, when they did, there would be no difficulty in making the requisite adjustment of property.

In 1855, Captain Frye found many Baro Bori Khond villages without a single female child in them.

In former times, the Lambādis, before setting out on a journey, used to procure a little child, and bury it in the ground up to its shoulders, and then drive their loaded bullocks over the unfortunate victim. In proportion to the bullocks thoroughly trampling the child to death, so their belief in a successful journey increased.*

The practice of infanticide, as it prevailed among the Todas of the Nīlgiris, is best summed up in the words of an aged Toda, during an interview with Colonel Marshall.† "I was a little boy when Mr. Sullivan (the first English pioneer of the Nīlgiris) visited these mountains. In those days it was the custom to kill children, but the practice has long died out, and now one never hears of it. I don't know whether it was wrong or not to kill them, but we were very poor, and could not support our children. Now everyone has a mantle (putkūli), but formerly there was only one for the whole family. We did not kill them

* Rev. J. Cain, Ind. Ant., VIII, 1879.
† A Phrenologist amongst the Todas, 1873.

to please any god, but because it was our custom. The mother never nursed the child, and the parents did not kill it. Do you think we could kill it ourselves? Those tell lies who say we laid it down before the opening of the buffalo-pen, so that it might be run over and killed by the animals. We never did such things, and it is all nonsense that we drowned it in buffalo's milk. Boys were never killed—only girls; not those who were sickly and deformed—that would be a sin; but, when we had one girl, or in some families two girls, those that followed were killed. An old woman (kelachi) used to take the child immediately it was born, and close its nostrils, ears, and mouth with a cloth thus—here pantomimic action. It would shortly droop its head, and go to sleep. We then buried it in the ground. The kelachi got a present of four annas for the deed." The old man's remark about the cattle-pen refers to the Malagasy custom of placing a new-born child at the entrance to a cattle-pen, and then driving the cattle over it, to see whether they would trample on it or not.* The Missionary Metz † bears out the statement that the Toda babies were killed by suffocation.

In a recent note on the proportion of the sexes among the Todas, ‡ which brings out very clearly the great excess of male over females, Mr. R. C. Punnett states that "all who have studied the Todas are agreed upon the frequency of the practice in earlier times. Marshall,

* Ellis, History of Madagascar.

† Tribes inhabiting the Neilgherry hills. By a German Missionary, 1856.

‡ Proc. Cambridge Philosoph. Soc., XII, 1904.

writing in 1872, refers to the large amount of female infanticide in former years, but expresses his conviction that the practice had by that time died out. Marshall's evidence is that of native assurance only. Dr. Rivers, who received the same assurance, is disinclined to place much confidence in native veracity with reference to this point, and, in view of the lack of encouragement which the practice receives from the Indian Government, this is not altogether surprising. The supposition of female infanticide, by accounting for the great disproportion in the numbers of the sexes, brings the Todas into harmony with what is known of the rest of mankind." In summarising his conclusions, Mr. Punnett, notes that—

(1) Among the Todas, males preponderate greatly over females.

(2) This preponderance is doubtless due to the practice of female infanticide, which is probably still to some extent prevalent.

(3) The numerical preponderance of the males has been steadily sinking during recent years, owing probably to the check which foreign intercourse has imposed upon female infanticide.

MERIAH SACRIFICE.

THE ethnological section of the Madras Museum received a few years ago a very interesting relic in the shape of a human (Meriah) sacrifice post from Baligudu in Ganjam (plate XXXIV). This post, which was fast being reduced to a mere shell by 'white-ants,' is, I believe, the only one now in existence. It was brought by Colonel Pickance, who was Assistant Superintendent of Police, to Baligudu from some place in the south-west of the Chinna Kimedi Maliahs, and set up in the ground near the gate of the reserve Police barracks.

"The best known case," Mr. Frazer writes,* of human sacrifices systematically offered to ensure good crops is supplied by the Khonds or Kandhs, a Dravidian race in Bengal and Madras. Our knowledge of them is derived from the accounts written by British officers, who, forty or fifty years ago, were engaged in putting them down. The sacrifices were offered to the earth goddess, Tari Pennu or Bera Pennu, and were believed to ensure good crops, and immunity from all diseases and accidents. In particular, they were considered necessary in the cultivation of turmeric, the Khonds arguing that the turmeric could not have a deep red colour without the shedding of blood. The victim, a Meriah, was acceptable to the goddess only if he had been purchased, or had been born

* The Golden Bough.

Plate XXXIV.

Meriah Sacrifice Post.

a victim, that is the son of a victim father, or had been devoted as a child by his father or guardian."

In 1837, Mr. Russell, in a report on the districts entrusted to his control, wrote as follows.* "The ceremonies attending the barbarous rite, and still more the mode of destroying life, vary in different parts of the country. In the Māliahs of Goomsur, the sacrifice is offered annually to Thadha Pennoo (the earth) under the effigy of a bird intended to represent a peacock, with the view of propitiating the deity to grant favourable seasons and crops. The ceremony is performed at the expense of, and in rotation by certain mootahs (districts) composing a community, and connected together from local circumstances. Besides these periodical sacrifices, others are made by single mootahs, and even by individuals, to avert any threatening calamity from sickness, murrain, or other cause. Grown men are the most esteemed (as victims) because the most costly. Children are purchased, and reared for years with the family of the person who ultimately devotes them to a cruel death, when circumstances are supposed to demand a sacrifice at his hands. They seem to be treated with kindness, and, if young, are kept under no constraint; but, when old enough to be sensible of the fate that awaits them, they are placed in fetters and guarded. Most of those who were rescued had been sold by their parents or nearest relations, a practice which, from all we could learn, is very common. Persons of riper age are kidnapped by

* Selections from the Records, Government of India, No. V, Human Sacrifice and Infanticide, 1154.

wretches who trade in human flesh. The victim must always be purchased. Criminals, or prisoners captured in war, are not considered fitting subjects. The price is paid indifferently in brass utensils, cattle, or corn. The zanee (or priest), who may be of any caste, officiates at the sacrifice, but he performs the poojah (offering of flowers, incense, etc.) to the idol through the medium of the Toomba, who must be a Khond child under seven years of age. This child is fed and clothed at the public expense, eats with no other person, and is subjected to no act deemed impure. For a month prior to the sacrifice there is much feasting and intoxication, and dancing round the Meriah who is adorned with garlands, etc., and, on the day before the performance of the barbarous rite, is stupefied with toddy, and made to sit, or, if necessary, is bound at the bottom of a post, bearing the effigy above described. The assembled multitude then dance around to music, and, addressing the earth, say: 'O God, we offer the sacrifice to you. Give us good crops, seasons, and health.' After which they address the victim 'We bought you with a price, and did not seize you. Now we sacrifice you according to custom, and no sin rests with us.' On the following day, the victim, being again intoxicated and anointed with oil, each individual present touches the anointed part, and wipes the oil on his own head. All then proceed in procession around the village and its boundaries, preceded by music, bearing the victim and a pole, to the top of which is attached a tuft of peacock's feathers. On returning to the post, which is always placed near the village deity called Zakaree

Pennoo, and represented by three stones, near which the brass effigy in the shape of the peacock is buried, they kill a hog in sacrifice, and, having allowed the blood to flow into a pit prepared for the purpose, the victim who, if it has been found possible, has been previously made senseless from intoxication, is seized and thrown in, and his face pressed down until he is suffocated in the bloody mire amid the noise of instruments. The Zanee then cuts a piece of flesh from the body, and buries it with ceremony near the effigy and village idol, as an offering to the earth. All the rest afterwards go through the same form, and carry the bloody prize to their villages, where the same rites are performed, part being interred near the village idol, and little bits on the boundaries. The head and face remain untouched, and the bones, when bare, are buried with them in the pit. After this horrid ceremony has been completed, a buffalo calf is brought in front of the post, and, his fore feet having been cut off, is left there till the following day. Women, dressed in male attire and armed as men, then drink, dance and sing round the spot, the calf is killed and eaten, and the Zanee (priest) is dismissed with a present of rice and a hog or calf."

In the same year, Mr. Arbuthnot, Collector of Vizagapatam, reported as follows. "Of the hill tribe, Codooloo, there are said to be two distinct classes, the Cotia Codooloo and Jathapoo Codooloo. The former class is that which is in the habit of offering human sacrifices to the god called Jenkery, with a view to secure good crops. This ceremony is generally performed on the Sunday preceding or following the Pongal feast. The victim is

seldom carried by force, but procured by purchase, and there is a fixed price for each person, which consists of forty articles such as a bullock, a male buffalo, a cow, a goat, a piece of cloth, a silk cloth, a brass pot, a large plate, a bunch of plantains, etc. The man who is destined for the sacrifice is immediately carried before the god, and a small quantity of rice coloured with saffron is put upon his head. The influence of this is said to prevent his attempting to escape, even though set at liberty. It would appear, however, that, from the moment of his seizure till he is sacrificed, he is kept in a continued state of stupefaction or intoxication He is allowed to wander about the village, to eat and drink anything he may take a fancy to, and even to have connection with any of the women whom he may meet. On the morning set apart for the sacrifice, he is carried before the idol in a state of intoxication. One of the villagers officiates as priest, who cuts a small hole in the stomach of the victim, and with the blood that flows from the wound the idol is besmeared. Then the crowds from the neighbouring villages rush forward, and he is literally cut into pieces. Each person who is so fortunate as to procure it carries away a morsel of the flesh, and presents it to the idol of his own village."

Concerning a method of sacrifice, which is illustrated by the post preserved in the museum, Colonel Campbell records * that "one of the most common ways of offering the sacrifice in Chinna Kimedi is to the effigy of an elephant (hatti mundo or elephant's head) rudely carved

* Personal Narrative of Service among the Wild Tribes of Khondistan.

in wood, fixed on the top of a stout post, on which it is made to revolve. After the performance of the usual ceremonies, the intended victim is fastened to the proboscis of the elephant, and, amidst the shouts and yells of the excited multitude of Khonds, is rapidly whirled round, when, at a given signal by the officiating Zanee or priest, the crowd rush in, seize the Meriah, and with their knives cut the flesh off the shrieking wretch as long as life remains. He is then cut down, the skeleton burnt, and the horrid orgies are over. In several villages I counted as many as fourteen effigies of elephants, which had been used in former sacrifices. These I caused to be overthrown by the baggage elephants attached to my camp in the presence of the assembled Khonds, to show them that these venerated objects had no power against the living animal, and to remove all vestiges of their bloody superstition." In another report Colonel Campbell describes how the miserable victim is dragged along the fields, surrounded by a crowd of half intoxicated Khonds who, shouting and screaming, rush upon him, and with their knives cut the flesh piecemeal from the bones, avoiding the head and bowels, till the living skeleton, dying from loss of blood, is relieved from torture, when its remains are burnt, and the ashes mixed with the new grain to preserve it from insects. Yet again he describes a sacrifice which was peculiar to the Khonds of Jeypore. "It is", he says, "always succeeded by the sacrifice of three human beings, two to the sun to the east and west of the village, and one in the centre, with the usual barbarities of the Meriah. A stout wooden

post about six feet long is firmly fixed in the ground, at the foot of it a narrow grave is dug, and to the top of the post the victim is firmly fastened by the long hair of his head Four assistants hold his outstretched arms and legs, the body being suspended horizontally over the grave, with the face towards the earth. The officiating Junna or priest, standing on the right side, repeats the following invocation, at intervals hacking with his sacrificing knife the back part of the shrieking victim's neck. 'O Mighty Manicksoro, this is your festal day. To the Khonds the offering is Meriah, to kings Junna. On account of this sacrifice you have given to kings kingdoms, guns, and swords. The sacrifice we now offer you must eat, and we pray that our battle axes may be converted into swords, our bows and arrows into gun powder and balls; and, if we have any quarrels with other tribes, give us the victory. Preserve us from the tyranny of kings and their officers.' Then, addressing the victim, 'That we may enjoy prosperity, we offer you a sacrifice to our god Manicksoro, who will immediately eat you, so be not grieved at our slaying you. Your parents were aware, when we purchased you from them for sixty rupees, that we did so with intent to sacrifice you. There is, therefore, no sin on our heads, but on your parents. After you are dead, we shall perform your obsequies.' The victim is then decapitated, the body thrown into the grave, and the head left suspended from the post till devoured by wild beasts. The knife remains fastened to the post till the three sacrifices have been performed, when it is removed with much ceremony." In an account

by Captain Mac Viccar of the sacrifice as carried out at Maji Deso, it is stated that "on the day of sacrifice the Meriah is surrounded by the Khonds, who beat him violently on the head with the heavy metal bangles, which they purchase at the fairs, and wear on these occasions. If this inhuman smashing does not immediately destroy the victim's life, an end is put to his sufferings by strangulation, a slit bamboo being used for the purpose. Strips of flesh are then cut off the back, and each recipient of the precious treasure carries his portion to the stream which waters his fields, and there suspends it on a pole. The remains of the mangled carcase are then buried, and funeral obsequies are performed seven days subsequently, and repeated one year afterwards."

The Khonds of Bara Mootah promised to relinquish the rite on condition, *inter alia*, that they should be at liberty to sacrifice buffaloes, monkeys, goats, etc., to their deities with all the solemnities observed on occasions of human sacrifice; and that they should be at liberty, upon all occasions, to denounce to their gods, the Government, and some of its servants in particular, as the cause of their having relinquished the great rite.

The last recorded Meriah sacrifice in the Ganjam Māliahs occurred in 1852 and there are still Khonds alive, who were present at it. Twenty-five descendants of persons who were reserved for sacrifice, but were rescued by Government officers, returned themselves as Meriah at the Census, 1901. The Khonds have now substituted a buffalo for a human being. The animal is hewn to pieces while alive, and the villagers rush home to their villages, to bury the flesh in the soil, and so secure