

CASTES AND TRIBES
OF
SOUTHERN INDIA

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VOLUME V.

MARAKKĀYAR.—The Marakkāyars are described, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as "a Tamil-speaking Musalman tribe of mixed Hindu and Musalman origin, the people of which are usually traders. They seem to be distinct from the Labbais (*q.v.*) in several respects, but the statistics of the two have apparently been confused, as the numbers of the Marakkāyars are smaller than they should be." Concerning the Marakkayars of the South Arcot district, Mr. Francis writes as follows.* "The Marakkāyars are largely big traders with other countries such as Ceylon and the Straits Settlements, and own most of the native coasting craft. They are particularly numerous in Porto Novo. The word Marakkāyar is usually derived from the Arabic markab, a boat. The story goes that, when the first immigrants of this class (who, like the Labbais, were driven from their own country by persecutions) landed on the Indian shore, they were naturally asked who they were, and whence they came. In answer they pointed to their boats, and pronounced the word markab, and they became in consequence known to the Hindus as Marakkāyars, or

* Gazetteer of the South Arcot district.

the people of markab. The Musalmans of pure descent hold themselves to be socially superior to the Marakkāyars, and the Marakkāyars consider themselves better than the Labbais. There is, of course, no religious bar to intermarriages between these different sub-divisions, but such unions are rare, and are usually only brought about by the offer of strong financial inducements to the socially superior party. Generally speaking, the pure-bred Musalmans differ from those of mixed descent by dressing themselves and their women in the strict Musalman fashion, and by speaking Hindustāni at home among themselves. Some of the Marakkāyars are now following their example in both these matters but most of them affect the high hat of plaited coloured grass and the tartan (kambāyam) waist-cloth. The Labbais also very generally wear these, and so are not always readily distinguishable from the Marakkāyars, but some of them use the Hindu turban and waist-cloth, and let their womankind dress almost exactly like Hindu women. In the same way, some Labbais insist on the use of Hindustani in their houses, while others speak Tamil. There seems to be a growing dislike to the introduction of Hindu rites into domestic ceremonies, and the processions and music, which were once common at marriages, are slowly giving place to a simpler ritual more in resemblance with the nikka ceremony of the Musalman faith."

Of 13,712 inhabitants of Porto Novo returned at the census, 1901, as many as 3,805 were Muhammadans. "The ordinary vernacular name of the town is Farangi-pēttai or European town, but the Musalmans call it Muhammad Bandar (Port). The interest of the majority of the inhabitants centres in matters connected with the sea. A large proportion of them earn their living either as owners of, or sailors in, the boats which ply

between the place and Ceylon and other parts, and it is significant that the most popular of the unusually large number of Musalman saints who are buried in the town is one Malumiyar, who was apparently in his lifetime a notable sea-captain. His fame as a sailor has been magnified into the miraculous, and it is declared that he owned ten or a dozen ships, and used to appear in command of all of them simultaneously. He has now the reputation of being able to deliver from danger those who go down to the sea in ships, and sailors setting out on a voyage or returning from one in safety usually put an offering in the little box kept at his darga, and these sums are expended in keeping that building lighted and whitewashed. Another curious darga in the town is that of Araikāsu Nāchiyar, or the one pie lady. Offerings to her must on no account be worth more than one pie ($\frac{1}{100}$ of a rupee); tributes in excess of that value are of no effect. If sugar for so small an amount cannot be procured, the devotee spends the money on chunam (lime) for her tomb, and this is consequently covered with a superabundance of white-wash. Stories are told of the way in which the valuable offerings of rich men have altogether failed to obtain her favour, and have had to be replaced by others of the regulation diminutive dimensions. The chief mosque is well kept. Behind it are two tombs, which stand at an odd angle with one another, instead of being parallel as usual. The legend goes that once upon a time there was a great saint called Hāfiz Mir Sāhib, who had an even more devout disciple called Saiyad Shah. The latter died and was duly buried, and not long after the saint died also. The disciple had always asked to be buried at the feet of his master, and so the grave of this latter was so placed that his feet were opposite the head

of his late pupil. But his spirit recognised that the pupil was really greater than the master, and when men came later to see the two graves they found that the saint had turned his tomb round so that his feet no longer pointed with such lack of respect towards the head of his disciple." *

In the Madras Census Report, 1901, the Jōnagans are separated from the Marakkāyars, and are described as Musalman traders of partly Hindu parentage. And, in the Gazetteer of South Arcot, Mr. Francis says that "the term Jōnagan or Sōnagan, meaning a native of Sōnagan or Arabia, is applied by Hindus to both Labbais and Marakkāyars, but it is usually held to have a contemptuous flavour about it." There is some little confusion concerning the exact application of the name Jōnagan, but I gather that it is applied to sea-fishermen and boatmen, while the more prosperous traders are called Marakkāyars. A point, in which the Labbais are said to differ from the Marakkāyars, is that the former are Hanafis, and the latter Shāfis.

The Marakkāyars are said to admit converts from various Hindu classes, who are called Pulukkais, and may not intermarry with the Marakkāyars for several generations, or until they have become prosperous.

In one form of the marriage rites, the ceremonial extends over four days. The most important items on the first day are fixing the mehr (bride-price) in the presence of the vakils (representatives), and the performance of the nikka rite by the Kāzi. The nikka kudbha is read, and the hands of the contracting couple are united by male elders, the bride standing within a screen. During the reading of the kudbha, a sister of

* Gazetteer of the South Arcot district.

the bridegroom ties a string of black beads round the bride's neck. All the women present set up a roar, called *kulavi-idal*. On the following day, the couple sit among women, and the bridegroom ties a golden *tālī* on the bride's neck. On the third or fourth day a ceremony called *pāpārakkolam*, or Brāhman disguise, is performed. The bride is dressed like a Brāhman woman, and holds a brass vessel in one hand, and a stick in the other. Approaching the bridegroom, she strikes him gently, and says "Did not I give you buttermilk and curds? Pay me for them" The bridegroom then places a few tamarind seeds in the brass vessel, but the bride objects to this, and demands money, accompanying the demand with strokes of the stick. The man then places copper, silver, and gold coins in the vessel, and the bride retires in triumph to her chamber.

Like the Labbais, the Marakkāyars write Tamil in Arabic characters, and speak a language called Arab-Tamil, in which the Kurān and other books have been published. (*See Labbai.*)

Maralu (sand).—A *gōtra* of Kurni.

Mārān or Mārāyan.—The Mātāyans are summed up, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as being "temple servants and drummers in Malabar. Like many of the Malabar castes, they must have come from the east coast, as their name frequently occurs in the Tanjore inscriptions of 1013 A.D. They followed then the same occupation as that by which they live to-day, and appear to have held a tolerably high social position. In parts of North Malabar they are called Oc'chan."

"The development of this caste," Mr. H. A. Stuart writes,* "is interesting. In Chirakkal, the

* Madras Census Report, 1891.

northernmost tāluk of the Malabar district, and in the adjoining Kasargōd tāluk of South Canara, Mārāyans are barbers, serving Nāyars and higher castes ; in the Kottayam and Kurumbranād tāluks they are barbers and drummers, and also officiate as purōhīts (priests) at the funeral ceremonies of Nāyars. In the latter capacity they are known in those parts also as Attikurissi Mārāyan. Going still further south, we find the Nāyar purōhit called simply Attikurissi, omitting the Mārāyan, and he considers it beneath his dignity to shave. Nevertheless, he betrays his kinship with the Mārāyan of the north by the privilege which he claims of cutting the first hair when a Nayar is shaved after funeral obsequies. On the other hand, the drummer, who is called Mārāyan, or honorifically Mārār, poses as a temple servant, and would be insulted if it were said that he was akin to the shaving Mārāyan of the north. He is considered next in rank only to Brāhmans, and would be polluted by the touch of Nāyars. He loses caste by eating the food of Nāyars, but the Nāyars also lose caste by eating his food. A proverb says that a Mārāyan has four privileges :—

1. Panī, or drum, beaten with the hand.
2. Kōni, or bier, i.e., the making of the bier
3. Natumittam, or shaving
4. Tirumittam, or sweeping the temple courts.

“ In North Malabar a Mārāyan performs all the above duties even now. In the south there appears to have been a division of labour, and there a Mārāyan is in these days only a drummer and temple servant. Funeral rites are conducted by an Attikurissi Mārāyan, otherwise known as simply Attikurissi, and shaving is the duty of the Velakāttalavan. This appears to have been the case for many generations, but I have not attempted to distinguish between the two sections, and have classed all as

barbers. Moreover, it is only in parts of South Malabar that the caste has entirely given up the profession of barber; and, curiously enough, these are the localities where Nambūdiri influence is supreme. The Mārāyans there appear to have confined themselves to officiating as drummers in temples, and to have obtained the title of Ambalavāsi; and, in course of time, they were even honoured with sambandham of Nambūdiris. In some places an attempt is made to draw a distinction between Mārāyan and Mārāyar, the former denoting the barber, and the latter, which is merely the honorific plural, the temple servant. There can, however, be little doubt that this is merely an *ex post facto* argument in support of the alleged superiority of those Mārāyans who have abandoned the barber's brush. It may be here noted that it is common to find barbers acting as musicians throughout the Madras Presidency, and that there are several other castes in Malabar, such as the Tiyyans, Mukkuvans, etc., who employ barbers as purōhīts at their funeral ceremonies."

In the Cochin Census Report, 1901, Mr. M. Sankara Menon writes that the Mārārs are "Sūdras, and, properly speaking, they ought to be classed along with Nāyars. Owing, however, to their close connection with services in temples, and the absence of free interdining or intermarriage with Nāyars, they are classed along with Ambalavāsis. They are drummers, musicians, and storekeepers in temples. Like Tiyattu Nambiyars, some sections among them also draw figures of the goddess in Bhagavati temples, and chant songs. In some places they are also known as Kuruppus. Some sub-castes among them do not dine, or intermarry. As they have generally to serve in temples, they bathe if they touch Nāyars. In the matter of marriage (tāli-kettu and

sambandham), inheritance, period of pollution, etc., they follow customs exactly like those of Nāyars. In the southern tāluks Elayads officiate as purōhīts, but, in the northern tāluks, their own castemen take the part of the Elayads in their srādha ceremonies. The tāli-kettu is likewise performed by Tirumalpāds in the southern tāluks, but by their own castemen, called Enangan, in the northern tāluks. Their castemen or Brāhmans unite themselves with their women in sambandham. As among Nāyars, purificatory ceremonies after funerals, etc., are performed by Cheethīyans or Nāyar priests."

For the following detailed note on the Mārāns of Travancore I am indebted to Mr. N. Subramani Iyer. The name Mārān has nothing to do with maranam or death, as has been supposed, but is derived from the Tamil root mar, to beat. In the Tanjore inscriptions of the eleventh century, the caste on the Coromandel coast appears to have been known by this name. The Mārāns correspond to the Ōcchans of the Tamil country, and a class of Mārāns in North Malabar are sometimes called by this designation. In the old revenue records of the Travancore State, Mangalyam appears to be the term made use of. The two well-known titles of the caste are Kuruppu and Panikkar, both conveying the idea of a person who has some allotted work to perform. In modern days, English-educated men appear to have given these up for Pillai, the titular affix added to the name of the Sūdra population generally.

Mārāns may be divided into two main divisions, viz., Mārāns who called themselves Mārāns in North Travancore, and who now hesitate to assist other castes in the performance of their funeral rites; and Mārāns who do not convert their caste designation into an honorific plural, and act as priests for other castes. This distinction

is most clearly marked in North Travancore, while to the south of Alleppey the boundary line may be said to remain only dim. In this part of the country, therefore, a fourfold division of the caste is the one best known to the people, namely Orunul, Irunul, Cheppat, and Kulanji. The Orunuls look upon themselves as higher than the Irunuls, basing their superiority on the custom obtaining among them of marrying only once in their lifetime, and contracting no second alliance after the first husband's death. Living, however, with a Brāhman, or one of a distinctly higher caste, is tolerated among them in the event of that calamity. The word Orunul means one string, and signifies the absence of widow marriage. Among the Irunuls (two strings) the tāli-tier is not necessarily the husband, nor is a second husband forbidden after the death of the first. Cheppat and Kulanji were once mere local varieties, but have now become separate sub-divisions. The males of the four sections, but not the females, interdine. With what rapidity castes sub-divide and ramify in Travancore may be seen from the fact of the existence of a local variety of Mārāns called Muttal, meaning substitute or emergency employée, in the Kalkulam taluk, who are believed to represent an elevation from a lower to a higher class of Mārāns, rendered necessary by a temple exigency. The Mārāns are also known as Asupānis, as they alone are entitled to sound the two characteristic musical instruments, of Malabar temples, called asu and pāni. In the south they are called Chitikans, a corruption of the Sanskrit chaitika, meaning one whose occupation relates to the funeral pile, and in the north Asthikkurichis (asthi, a bone), as they help the relations of the dead in the collection of the bones after cremation. The Mārāns are, further, in some places known as Potuvans,

as their services are engaged at the funerals of many castes.

Before the days of Sankarāchārya, the sole occupation of the Mārāns is said to have been beating the drum in Brāhmanical temples. When Sankarāchārya was refused assistance in the cremation of his dead mother by the Nambūtiri Brāhmans, he is believed to have sought in despair the help of one of these temple servants, with whose aid the corpse was divided into eight parts, and deposited in the pit. For undertaking this duty, which the Nambūtiris repudiated from a sense of offended religious feeling, the particular Mārān was thrown out of his caste by the general community, and a compromise had to be effected by the sage with the rest of the caste, who returned in a body on the day of purification along with the excommunicated man, and helped Sankarāchārya to bring to a close his mother's death ceremonies. In recognition of this timely help, Sankara is believed to have declared the Mārān to be an indispensable functionary at the death ceremonies of Nambūtiris and Ambalavāsis. It has even been suggested that the original form of Mārān was Mūrān, derived from *mur* (to chop off), in reference to the manner in which the remains of Sankara's mother were disposed of.

The traditional occupation of the Mārāns is sounding or playing on the *panchavadya* or five musical instruments used in temples. These are the *sankh* or conch-shell, *timila*, *chendu*, *kaimani*, and *maddalam*. The conch, which is necessary in every Hindu temple, is loudly sounded in the early morning, primarily to wake the deity, and secondarily to rouse the villagers. Again, when the temple service commences, and when the *nivedya* or offering is carried, the music of the conch is heard from the northern side of the temple. On this

account, many Mārāns call themselves Vadakkupurattu, or belonging to the northern side. The asu and pāni are sounded by the highest dignitaries among them. The beating of the pāni is the accompaniment of expiatory offerings to the Saptamata, or seven mothers of Hindu religious writings, viz., Brāhmi, Mahēsvari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Indrāni, and Chāmunda. Offerings are made to these divine mothers during the daily sribali procession, and in important temples also during the sribhutabali hours, and on the occasion of the utsavabali at the annual utsava of the temple. There are certain well-established rules prescribing the hymns to be recited, and the music to be played. So religiously have these rules to be observed during the utsavabali, that the priest who makes the offering, the Variyar who carries the light before him and the Mārāns who perform the music all have to fast, and to dress themselves in orthodox Brāhmanical fashion, with the uttariya or upper garment worn in the manner of the sacred thread. It is sincerely believed that the smallest violation of the rules would be visited with dire consequences to the delinquents before the next utsava ceremony.

In connection with the musical instrument called the timila, the following legend is current. There was a timila in the Sri Padmanābha temple made of kuruntotti, and there was a Mārān attached to the temple, who was such an expert musician that the priest was unable to adjust his hymn recitation to the music of the Mārān's drum, and was in consequence the recipient of the divine wrath. It was contrived to get a Brāhman youth to officiate as priest, and, as he could not recite the hymns in consonance with the sounds produced by the drum, a hungry spirit lifted him up from the ground to a height of ten feet. The father of the youth, hearing what had

occurred, hastened to the temple, and cut one of his fingers, the blood of which he offered to the spirit. The boy was then set free, and the old man, who was more than a match for the Mārān, began to recite the hymns. The spirits, raising the Mārān on high, sucked away his blood, and vanished. The particular timila has since this event never been used by any Mārān.

The higher classes of Mārāns claim six privileges, called pāno, kōni, tirumuttam, natumuttam, velichchor, and puchchor. Kōni means literally a ladder, and refers to the stretcher, made of bamboo and kūsa grass or straw, on which the corpses of high caste Hindus are laid. Tirumuttam is sweeping the temple courtyard, and natumuttam the erection of a small pandal (booth) in the courtyard of a Nambūtiri's house, where oblations are offered to the departed spirit on the tenth day after death. Velichchor, or sacrificial rice, is the right to retain the remains of the food offered to the manes, and puchchor the offering made to the deity, on whom the priest throws a few flowers as part of the consecration ceremony.

A large portion of the time of a Mārān is spent within the temple, and all through the night some watch over it. Many functions are attended to by them in the houses of Nambūtiris. Not only at the tonsure ceremony, and samavartana or closing of the Brāhminacharya stage, but also on the occasion of sacrificial rites, the Mārān acts as the barber. At the funeral ceremony, the preparation of the last bed, and handing the til (*Sesamum*) seeds, have to be done by him. The Chitikkans perform only the functions of shaving and attendance at funerals, and, though they may beat drums in temples, they are not privileged to touch the asu and pāni. At Vechūr there is a class of potters called Kūsa Mārān, who should

be distinguished from the Mārāns propër, with whom they have absolutely nothing in common.

Many families of the higher division of the Mārāns regard themselves as Ambalavāsis, though of the lowest type, and abstain from flesh and liquor. Some Mārāns are engaged in the practice of sorcery, while others are agriculturists. Drinking is a common vice, sanctioned by popular opinion owing to the notion that it is good for persons with overworked lungs.

In their ceremonies the Mārāns resemble the Nāyars, as they do also in their caste government and religious worship. The annaprasana, or first food-giving ceremony, is the only important one before marriage, and the child is taken to the temple, where it partakes of the consecrated food. The Nāyars, on the contrary, generally perform the ceremony at home. Purification by a Brāhman is necessary to release the Mārān from death pollution, which is not the case with the Nāyars. In Travancore, at any rate, the Nāyars are considered to be higher in the social scale than the Mārāns.

In connection with *asu* and *pāni*, which have been referred to in this note, I gather that, in Malabar, the instruments called *maram* (wood), *timila*, *shanku*, *chenguḷam*, and *chenda*, if played together, constitute *pāni kottugu*, or playing *pāni*. *Asu* and *maram* are the names of an instrument, which is included in *pāni kottugu*. Among the occasions when this is indispensable, are the dedication of the idol at a newly built temple, the *udsavam pūram* and *Srīveli* festivals, and the carrying of the *tadambu*, or shield-like structure, on which a miniature idol (*vīgraham*) is borne outside the temple.

Marāsāri.—Marāsāri or Marapanikkan, meaning carpenter or worker in wood, is an occupational subdivision of Malayālam Kammālas.

Marātha.—Marāthas are found in every district of the Madras Presidency, but are, according to the latest census returns, most numerous in the following districts :—

| | | | | | |
|--------------|----|----|----|----|--------|
| South Canara | .. | .. | .. | .. | 31,351 |
| Salem | .. | . | .. | .. | 7,314 |
| Tanjore | .. | .. | .. | .. | 7,156 |
| Bellary | . | .. | .. | .. | 6,311 |

It is recorded, in the Madras Census Report, 1891, that "the term Marāthi denotes the various Marāthi non-Brāhman castes, who came to the south either as soldiers or camp followers in the armies of the Marāthi invaders; but in South Canara, in which district the caste is most numerous, it appears to be the same as Ārē, a class of Marāthi cultivators. Of the total number of 65,961, as many as 40,871 have returned Marāthi as both caste and sub-division. The number of sub-divisions returned by the rest is no less than 305, of which the majority are the names of other castes. Some of these castes are purely Dravidian, and the names have evidently been used in their occupational sense. For example, we have Bōgam, Gāndla, Mangala, etc." Mr. H. A. Stuart writes further, in the South Canara Manual, that "Marāthi, as a caste name, is somewhat open to confusion, and it is probable that many people of various castes, who speak Marāthi, are shown as being of that caste. The true Marāthi caste is said to have come from Goa, and that place is the head-quarters. The caste is divided into twelve wargs or balis, which are exogamous sub-divisions. Caste disputes are settled by headmen called Hontagaru, and allegiance is paid to the head of the Sringēri math. The favourite deity is the goddess Mahādēvi. Brāhmans, usually Karādis, officiate at their ceremonies. Marriage is both infant

and adult. The dhāre form of marriage is used (*see* Bant). Widows may remarry, but they cannot marry again into the family of the deceased husband—a rule which is just the reverse of the Levirate. In some parts, however, the remarriage of widows is prohibited. A husband or a wife can divorce each other at will, and both parties may marry again. Marāthis are either farmers, labourers, or hunters. They eat fish and flesh (except that of cattle and animals generally regarded as unclean) and they use alcoholic liquors. They speak either the ordinary Marāthi or the Konkani dialect of it." The Marāthis of South Canara call themselves Ārē and Ārē Kshatri.

In the North Arcot Manual, Mr. Stuart records that the term Marāthi is "usually applied to the various Marātha Sūdra castes, which have come south. Their caste affix is always Rao. It is impossible to discover to what particular Sūdra division each belongs, for they do not seem to know, and take advantage of being away from their own country to assert that they are Kshatriyas—a claim which is ridiculed by other castes. In marriage they are particular to take a bride only from within the circle of their own family, so that an admixture of the original castes is thus avoided. Their language is Marāthi, but they speak Telugu or Tamil as well, and engage in many professions. Many are tailors.* Others enlist in the army, in the police, or as peons (orderlies or messengers), and some take to agriculture or trading."

Of the history of Marāthas in those districts in which they are most prevalent, an account will be found in the Manuals and Gazetteers.

* The Rangāris are Marātha dyers and tailors.

The last Mārātha King of Tanjore, Mahārāja Sivāji, died in 1855. It is noted by Mr. M. J. Walhouse * that "an eye-witness has recorded the stately and solemn spectacle of his funeral, when, magnificently arranged, and loaded with the costliest jewels, his body, placed in an ivory palanquin, was borne by night through the torchlit streets of his royal city amid the wail of vast multitudes lamenting the last of their ruling race. The nearest descendant, a boy of twelve, was carried thrice round the pile, and at the last circuit a pot of water was dashed to pieces on the ground. The boy then lit the pile, and loud long-sustained lament of a nation filled the air as the flames rose." Upon the death of Sivāji, the Rāj became, under the decision of the Court of Directors, extinct. His private estate was placed under the charge of the Collector of the district. In addition to three wives whom he had already married, Sivāji, three years before his death, married in a body seventeen girls. In 1907, three of the Rānis were still living in the palace at Tanjore. It is recorded † by the Marchioness of Dufferin that, when the Viceroy visited the Tanjore palace in 1886 to speak with the Rānis, he was admitted behind the purdah. "The ladies had not expected him, and were not dressed out in their best, and no one could speak any intelligible language. However, a sort of chattering went on, and they made signs towards a chair, which, being covered with crimson cloth, Dufferin thought he was to sit down on. He turned and was just about to do so, when he thought he saw a slight movement, and he fancied there might be a little dog there, when two women pulled the cloth open, and there was the

* Ind. Ant., VII, 1878.

† Our Viceregal Life in India, 1884-88.

principal Rāni—a little old woman who reached half way up the back of the chair, and whom the Viceroy had been within an act of squashing. He said it gave him such a turn!"

A classified index to the Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Tanjore palace was published by Mr. A. C. Burnell in 1880. In the introduction thereto, he states that "the library was first brought to the notice of European scholars by H.S.H. Count Noer, Prince Frederic of Schleswig-Holstein, who brought an account of it to the late Professor Goldstücker. But its full importance was not known till I was deputed, in 1871, to examine it by the then Governor of Madras, Lord Napier and Ettrick. The manuscripts are the result of perhaps 300 years' collections; firstly, by the Nāyaks of Tanjore; secondly, after about 1675, by the Mahratha princes. Some of the palm-leaf manuscripts belong to the earlier period, but the greater part were collected in the last and present centuries. All the Nāgari Manuscripts belong to the Mahratha times, and a large number of these were collected at Benares by the Rāja Serfojee (Carabhoji) about fifty years ago."

In the Marātha Darbar Hall of the Tanjore palace are large pictures, of little artistic merit, of all the Marātha kings, and the palace also contains a fine statue of Sarabhōji by Chantrey. The small but splendid series of Marātha arms from this palace constitutes one of the most valuable assets of the Madras Museum. "The armoury," Mr. Walhouse writes,* "consisted of great heaps of old weapons of all conceivable descriptions, lying piled upon the floor of the Sangita Mahāl (music-hall), which had long been occupied by many.

* *Lec. ult.*

tons of rusty arms and weapons, in confused heaps, coated and caked together with thick rust. Hundreds of swords, straight, curved and ripple-edged, many beautifully damascened and inlaid with hunting or battle scenes in gold ; many broad blades with long inscriptions in Marāthi or Kanarese characters, and some so finely tempered as to bend and quiver like whalebone. There were long gauntlet-hilts, brass or steel, in endless devices, hilts inlaid with gold, and hilts and guards of the most tasteful and elaborate steel-work. There were long-bladed swords and executioners' swords, two-handed, thick-backed, and immensely heavy. Daggers, knives, and poniards by scores, of all imaginable and almost unimaginable shapes, double and triplic-bladed ; some with pistols or spring-blades concealed in their handles, and the hilts of many of the kuttars of the most beautiful and elaborate pierced steel work, in endless devices, rivalling the best medieval European metal-work. There was a profusion of long narrow thin-bladed knives, mostly with bone or ivory handles very prettily carved, ending in parrot-heads and the like, or the whole handle forming a bird or monster, with legs and wings pressed close to the body, all exquisitely carved. The use of these seemed problematical ; some said they were used to cut fruit, others that they had been poisoned and struck about the roofs and walls of the women's quarters, to serve the purpose of spikes or broken glass ! A curious point was the extraordinary number of old European blades, often graven with letters and symbols of Christian meaning, attached to hilts and handles most distinctly Hindu, adorned with figures of gods and idolatrous emblems. There was an extraordinary number of long straight cut-and-thrust blades termed *Phirangis*, which Mr. Sinclair, in his interesting list of *Dakhani*

weapons,* says means the Portuguese; or else made in imitation of such imported swords. A kuttar, with a handsome steel hilt, disclosed the well-known name ANDREA FERARA (*sic.*). Sir Walter Elliot has informed me that, when a notorious freebooter was captured in the Southern Marāthā country many years ago, his sword was found to be an 'Andrea Ferrara.' Mr. Sinclair adds that both Grant Duff and Meadows Taylor have mentioned that Rāja Sivāji's favourite sword Bhavāni was a Genoa blade † Eventually the whole array (of arms) was removed to Trichinapalli and deposited in the Arsenal there, and, after a Committee of officers had sat upon the multifarious collection, and solemnly reported the ancient arms unfit for use in modern warfare, the Government, after selecting the best for the Museum, ordered the residue to be broken up and sold as old iron. This was in 1863."

It is recorded, in the Gazetteer of the Bellary district, that "in 1790 Lord Cornwallis, then Governor-General of India, entered into an alliance with the Marāthas and the Nizam to reduce Tipu to order, and it was agreed that whatever territories should be acquired by them from Tipu should be equally divided between them. Certain specified poligars, among whom were the chiefs of Bellary, Rayadrug and Harpanahalli, were, however, to be left in possession of their districts. Tipu was reduced to submission in 1792, and by the treaty of that year he ceded half his territories to the allies. ‡ Sandūr was allotted to the Marāthas, and a part of the Bellary

* Ind. Ant., II, 1874.

† The word Genoa occurs on several blades in the Madras Museum collection.

‡ The bas-relief of the statue of Lord Cornwallis in the Connemara Public Library, Madras, represents him receiving Tipu's two youthful sons as hostages.

district to the Nizam." The present Marātha chief of the little hill-locked Sandūr State is a minor, whose name and titles are Rāja Venkata Rao Rao Sahib Hindu Rao Ghōrpade Sēnāpati Māmalikat Madar. Of the eleven thousand inhabitants of the State, the various castes of Marāthas number over a thousand. " Three families of them are Brāhmans, who came to Sandūr as officials with Siddoji Rao when he took the State from the Jaramali poligar. Except for two short intervals, Siddoji's descendants have held the State ever since. The others are grouped into three local divisions, namely, Khāsgi, Kumbi, and Lēkāvali. The first of these consists of only some eight families, and constitutes the aristocracy of the State. Some of them came to Sandūr from the Marātha country with Siva Rao and other rulers of the State, and they take the chief seats at Darbars and on other public occasions, and are permitted to dine and intermarry with the Rāja's family. They wear the sacred thread of the Kshatriyas, belong to the orthodox Brāhmanical gōtras, have Brāhmans as their purōhits, observe many of the Brāhmanical ceremonies, burn their dead, forbid widow re-marriage, and keep their womankind gosha. On the other hand, they do not object to drinking alcohol or to smoking, and they eat meat, though not beef. Their family god is the same as that of the Rāja's family, namely, Martānda Manimallari, and they worship him in the temple in his honour which is in the Rāja's palace, and make pilgrimages to his shrine at Jejūri near Poona. [It is noted by Monier-Williams * that 'a deification, Khando-ba (also called Khande-Rao), was a personage who lived in the neighbourhood of the hill Jejūri, thirty miles from Poona.

* Brahmanism and Hinduism.

He is probably a deification of some powerful Rāja or aboriginal chieftain, who made himself useful to the Brāhmins. He is now regarded as an incarnation of Siva in his form Mallāri. The legend is that the god Siva descended in this form to destroy a powerful demon named Mallāsura, who lived on the hill, and was a terror to the neighbourhood. Pārvati descended at the same time to become Khando bā's wife. His worship is very popular among the people of low caste in the Marātha country. Sheep are sacrificed at the principal temple on the Jejūri hill, and a bad custom prevails of dedicating young girls to the god's service. Khando-bā is sometimes represented with his wife on horseback, attended by a dog. A sect existed in Sankara's time, who worshipped Mallāri as lord of dogs.] At the marriages of the Khāsgis, an unusual custom, called Vira Pūja, or the worship of warriors, is observed. Before the ceremony, the men form themselves into two parties, each under a leader, and march to the banks of the Narihalla river, engaging in mock combat as they go. At the river an offering is made to Siva in his form as the warrior Martānda, and his blessing is invoked. The goddess Gangā is also worshipped, and then both parties march back, indulging on the way in more pretended fighting. The second division of the Marāthas, the Kunbis, are generally agriculturists, though some are servants to the first division. They cannot intermarry with the Khāsgis, or dine with them except in separate rows, and their womanfolk are not gosha; but they have Brāhmanical gōtras and Brāhman purōhīts. Some of them use the Rāja's name of Ghōrpade, but this is only because they are servants in his household. The third division, the Lēkāvalis, are said to be the offspring of irregular unions among other Marāthas, and are many

of them servants in the Rāja's palace. Whence they are also called Manimakkalu. They all call themselves Ghōrpades, and members of the Rāja's (the Kansika) gōtra. They thus cannot intermarry among themselves, but occasionally their girls are married to Kunbis. Their women are in no way gōsha.*

The cranial type of the Marāthas is, as shown by the following table, like that of the Canarese, mesaticephalic or sub-brachycephalic —

| | | Cephalic Av | Index Max |
|----------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Canarese | 50 Holeyas | 79.1 | 87.4 |
| Marathi | 30 Rangaris | 79.8 | 92.2 |
| Canarese | 50 Vakkaligas | 81.7 | 93.8 |
| Marathi | 30 Suka Salés | 81.8 | 88.2 |
| Marathi | 30 Sukun Sales | 82.2 | 84.4 |

Maravan.—"The Maravans," Mr. H. A. Stuart writes,† "are found chiefly in Madura and Tinnevely, where they occupy the tracts bordering on the coast from Cape Comorin to the northern limits of the Rāmnād zemindari. The proprietors of that estate, and of the great Sivaganga zemindari, are both of this caste. The Maravars must have been one of the first of the Dravidian tribes that penetrated to the south of the peninsula, and, like the Kallans, they have been but little affected by Brāhmanical influence. There exists among them a picturesque tradition to the effect that, in consequence of their assisting Rāma in his war against the demon Rāvana, that deity gratefully exclaimed in

* Gazetteer of the Bellary district.

† Madras Census Report, 1891.

good Tamil Maravēn, or I will never forget, and that they have ever since been called Maravans. But, with more probability, the name may be connected with the word maram, which means killing, ferocity, bravery and the like, as pointing clearly to their unpleasant profession, that of robbing and slaying their neighbours. In former days they were a fierce and turbulent race, famous for their military prowess. At one time they temporarily held possession of the Pāndya kingdom, and, at a later date, their armies gave valuable assistance to Tirumala Nayakkan. They gave the British much trouble at the end of last (eighteenth) century and the beginning of this (nineteenth) century, but they are now much the same as other ryots (cultivators), though perhaps somewhat more bold and lawless. Agamudaiyan and Kallan are returned as sub-divisions by a comparatively large number of persons. Maravan is also found among the sub-divisions of Kallan, and there can be little doubt that there is a very close connection between Kallans, Maravans, and Agamudaiyans." This connection is dealt with in the article on the Kallans. But I may here quote the following legend relating thereto. "Once upon a time, Rishi Gautama left his house to go abroad on business. Dēvendra, taking advantage of his absence, debauched his wife, and three children were the result. When the Rishi returned, one of the three hid himself behind a door, and, as he thus acted like a thief, he was henceforward called Kallan. Another got up a tree, and was therefore called Maravan from maram, a tree, whilst the third brazened it out, and stood his ground, thus earning for himself the name of Ahamudeiyan, or the possessor of pride. This name was corrupted into Ahambadiyan."*

"Some say the word Maravan is derived from marani, sin; a Maravan being one who commits sin by killing living creatures without feeling pity, and without fear of god." *

The Maravans claim descent from Guha or Kuha, Rāma's boatman, who rowed him across to Ceylon. According to the legend, Rāma promised Guha that he would come back at a fixed time. When he failed to return, Guha made a fire, whereon to burn himself to death. Hanumān, however, prevented him from committing suicide, and assured him that Rāma would shortly return. This came to pass, and Rāma, on learning what Guha had done, called him Maravan, a brave or reckless fellow. According to another legend, the god Indra, having become enamoured of Ahalya, set out one night to visit her in the form of a crow, and, seating himself outside the dwelling of the Rishi her husband, cawed loudly. The Rishi, believing that it was dawn, went off to bathe, while Indra, assuming the form of her husband, went in to the woman, and satisfied his desire. When her husband reached the river, there were no signs of dawn, and he was much perturbed, but not for long, as his supernatural knowledge revealed to him how he had been beguiled, and he proceeded to curse Indra and his innocent wife. Indra was condemned to have a thousand female organs of generation all over his body, and the woman was turned into a stone. Indra repented, and the Rishi modified his disfigurement by arranging that, to the onlooker, he would seem to be clothed or covered with eyes, and the woman was allowed to resume her feminine form when Rāma, in the course of his wanderings, should tread on her. The

* F. Fawcett. *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.*, XXXIII, 1903.

result of Indra's escapade was a son, who was stowed away in a secret place (*maravuidam*). Hence his descendants are known as Maravan.*

The head of the Maravans is the Setupati (lord of the bridge), or Rāja of Rāmnād. "The Sethupati line, or Marava dynasty of Rāmnād," the Rev. J. E. Tracy writes,† "claims great antiquity. According to popular legendary accounts, it had its rise in the time of the great Rāma himself, who is said to have appointed, on his victorious return from Lanka (Ceylon), seven guardians of the passage or bridge connecting Ceylon with the mainland Another supposition places the rise of the family in the second or third century B.C. It rests its case principally upon a statement in the Mahāwanso, according to which the last of the three Tamil invasions of Ceylon, which took place in the second or third century B.C., was under the leadership of seven chieftains, who are supposed, owing to the silence of the Pāndyan records on the subject of South Indian dealings with Ceylon, to have been neither Chēras, Chōlas, or Pāndyans, but mere local adventurers, whose territorial proximity and marauding ambition had tempted them to the undertaking Another supposition places the rise of the family in the eleventh or twelfth century A.D. There are two statements of this case, differing according to the source from which they come. According to the one, which has its source in South India, the rise of the family took place in or about 1059 A.D., when Rāja Rāja, the Chōla king, upon his invasion of Ceylon, appointed princes whom he knew to be loyal to himself, and who, according to some, had aided him in his conquest of all Pāndya, to act as guardians of the

† Fawcett, *loc. cit.*

† Madras Journ. Lit. Science, 1890.

passage by which his armies must cross to and fro, and supplies be received from the mainland. According to the other statement, which has its source in Sinhalese records, the family took its rise from the appointment of Parākrama Bahu's General Lankapura, who, according to a very trustworthy Sinhalese epitome of the Mahāwanso, after conquering Pāndya, remained some time at Ramespuram, building a temple there, and, while on the island, struck kahapanas (coins similar to those of the Sinhalese series). Whichever of these statements we may accept, the facts seem to point to the rise of the family in the eleventh or twelfth century A.D., and inscriptions quoted from Dr. Burgess by Mr. Robert Sewell* show that grants were made by Sethupati princes in 1414, again in 1489, still again in 1500, and finally as late as 1540. These bring the line down to within two generations of the time when Muttu Krishnappa Nayakka is said, in 1604, to have found affairs sadly disordered in the Marava country, and to have re-established the old family in the person of Sadaiyaka Tēvar Udaiyar Sethupati. The coins of the Sethupatis divide themselves into an earlier and later series. The earlier series present specimens which are usually larger and better executed, and correspond in weight and appearance very nearly to the well-known coins of the Sinhalese series, together with which they are often found. 'These coins,' Rhys Davids writes, † 'are probably the very ones referred to as having been struck by Parākrama's General Lankapura.' The coins of the later series are very rude in device and execution. The one face shows only the Tamil legend of the word Sethupati, while the other side is taken up with various devices."

* Sketch of the Dynasties of South India.

† Numismata Orient. Ancient Coins and Measures of Ceylon.

A poet, in days of old, refers to "the wrathful and furious Maravar, whose curled beards resemble the twisted horns of the stag, the loud twang of whose powerful bowstrings, and the stirring sound of whose double-headed drums, compel even kings at the head of large armies to turn their back and fly." * The Maravans are further described as follows. "Of strong limbs and hardy frames, and fierce looking as tigers, wearing long and curled locks of hair, the blood-thirsty Maravans, armed with the bow bound with leather, ever ready to injure others, shoot their arrows at poor and defenceless travellers, from whom they can steal nothing, only to feast their eyes on the quivering limbs of their victims." † In a note on the Maravans of the Tinnevely district, it is recorded ‡ that "to this class belonged most of the Poligars, or feudal chieftains, who disputed with the English the possession of Tinnevely during the last, and first years of the present (nineteenth) century. As feudal chiefs and heads of a numerous class of the population, and one whose characteristics were eminently adapted for the roll of followers of a turbulent chieftain, bold, active, enterprising, cunning and capricious, this class constituted themselves, or were constituted by the peaceful cultivators, their protectors in time of bloodshed and rapine, when no central authority, capable of keeping the peace, existed. Hence arose the systems of *Dēsha* and *Stalum Kāval*, or the guard of a tract of country comprising a number of villages against open marauders in armed bands, and the guard of separate villages, their houses and crops, against secret theft. The feudal chief received a contribution from the area around his fort in

* *Kalith-thokai*.

† *Kanakasabhai Pillai*. The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years ago. 1904.

‡ *Manual of the Tinnevely district*, 1879.

consideration of protection afforded against armed invasion. The Maravars are chiefly the agricultural servants or sub-tenants of the wealthier ryots, under whom they cultivate, receiving a share of the crop. An increasing proportion of this caste are becoming the ryotwari owners of land by purchase from the original holders."

Though the Maravans, Mr Francis writes,* "are usually cultivators, they are some of them the most expert cattle-lifters in the Presidency. In Madura they have a particularly ingenious method of removing cattle. The actual thief steals the bullocks at night, and drives them at a gallop for half a dozen miles, hands them over to a confederate, and then returns and establishes an *alibi*. The confederate takes them on another stage, and does the same. A third and a fourth man keep them moving all that night. The next day they are hidden and rested, and thereafter they are driven by easier stages to the hills north of Madura, where their horns are cut and their brands altered, to prevent them from being recognised. They are then often sold at the great Chittrai cattle fair in Madura town. In some papers read in G O, No. 535, Judicial, dated 29th March 1899, it was shown that, though, according to the 1891 census, the Maravans formed only 10 per cent of the population of the district of Tinnevely, yet they had committed 70 per cent of the dacoities which have occurred in that district in the previous five years. They have recently (1899) figured prominently in the anti-Shānār riots in the same district." (*See Shānār.*)

"The Maravans," Mr. F. S. Mullaly writes,† "furnish nearly the whole of the village police (*kāvilgars*, watchmen), robbers and thieves of the Tinnevely district.

* Madras Census Report, 1901.

† Notes on Criminal Classes of the Madras Presidency.

Very often the thief and the watchman are one and the same individual. The Maravans of the present time, of course, retain only a shadow of the power which their ancestors wielded under the poligars, who commenced the kavil system. Still the Marava of to-day, as a member of a caste which is numerous and influential, as a man of superior physique and bold independent spirit, thief and robber, village policeman and detective combined—is an immense power in the land."

It is noted, in the Madras Police Report, 1903, that "a large section of the population in Tinnevely—the Maravans—are criminal by predilection and training. Mr. Longden's efforts have been directed to the suppression of a bad old custom, by which the police were in the habit of engaging the help of the Maravans themselves in the detection of crime. The natural result was a mass of false evidence and false charges, and, worst of all, a police indebted to the Maravan, who was certain to have his *quid pro quo*. This method being discountenanced, and the station-house officer being deprived of the aid of his tuppans (men who provide a clue), the former has found himself very much at sea, and, until sounder methods can be inculcated, will fail to show successful results. Still, even a failure to detect is better than a police in the hands of the Maravans." Further information concerning tuppukuli, or clue hire, will be found in the note on Kallaks.

From a very interesting note on the Maravans of the Tinnevely district, the following extract is taken.* "On the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief, Maravars are paid blackmail to keep their hands from picking and stealing, and to make restitution for any thefts that may

* Tinnevely, being an account of the district, the people, and the missions, Mission Field, 1897

possibly take place, notwithstanding the vigilance of the watchmen. (A suit has been known to be instituted, in a Munsiff's Court, for failure to make restitution for theft after receipt of the kudikāval money.) As a matter of fact, no robberies on a large scale can possibly take place without the knowledge, connivance, or actual co-operation of the Kavalgars. People living in country places, remote from towns, are entirely at the mercy of the Maravars, and every householder or occupier of a mud hut, which is dignified by being called a house, must pay the Maravars half a fanam, which is equal to one anna eight pies, yearly. Those who own cattle, and there are few who do not, must pay one fanam a year. At the time of the harvest, it is the custom in Southern India for an enemy to go and reap his antagonist's crops as they are growing in the fields. He does this to bring matters to a climax, and to get the right side of his enemy, so that he may be forced to come to terms, reasonable or otherwise. Possession is nine points of the law. On occasions such as these, which are frequent, the advantage of the employment of Kavalgars can readily be understood. The Maravars are often true to their salt, though sometimes their services can be obtained by the highest bidder. The plan of keeping kaval, or going the rounds like a policeman on duty, is, for a village of, say, a hundred Maravars, to divide into ten sections. Each section takes a particular duty, and they are paid by the people living within their range. If a robbery takes place, and the value of the property does not exceed ten rupees, then this section of ten men will each subscribe one rupee, and pay up ten rupees. If, however, the property lost exceeds the sum of ten rupees, then all the ten sections of Maravars, the hundred men, will join together, and make restitution for the robbery. How

they are able to do this, and to recoup themselves, can be imagined. Various attempts for many years have been made to put a stop to this system of kudi-kaval. At one time the village (Nunguneri) of the chief Maravar was burnt down, and for many years the police have been on their track, and numerous convictions are constantly taking place. Out of 150,000 Maravars in the whole district, 10,000 are professional thieves, and of these 4,000 have been convicted, and are living at the present time. The question arises whether some plan could not be devised to make honest men of these rogues. It has been suggested that their occupation as watchmen should be recognised by Government, and that they should be enlisted as subordinate officials, just as some of them are now employed as Talayaris and Vettiyaṅs The villages of the Maravars exist side by side with the other castes, and, as boys and girls, all the different classes grow up together, so that there is a bond of sympathy and regard between them all. The Maravars, therefore, are not regarded as marauding thieves by the other classes. Their position in the community as Kavalgars is recognised, and no one actually fears them. From time immemorial it has been the mamool (custom) to pay them certain dues, and, although illegal, who in India is prepared to act contrary to custom? The small sum paid annually by the villagers is insignificant, and no one considers it a hardship to pay it, when he knows that his goods are in safety; and, if the Maravars did not steal, there are plenty of other roving castes (*e.g.*, the Kuluvars, Kuravars, and Kambalatars) who would, so that, on the whole, ordinary unsophisticated natives, who dwell in the country side, rather like the Maravar than otherwise. When, however, these watchmen undertake torchlight

dacoities, and attack travellers on the high-road, then they are no better than the professional thieves of other countries, and they deserve as little consideration. It must be borne in mind that, while robbery is the hereditary occupation of the Maravars, there are thousands of them who lead strictly honest, upright lives as husbandmen, and who receive no benefit whatever from the kudi-kaval system. Some of the most noted and earnest Native Christians have been, and still are, men and women of this caste and the reason seems to be that they never do things by halves. If they are murderers and robbers, nothing daunts them, and, on the other hand, if they are honest men, they are the salt of the earth." I am informed that, when a Maravan takes food in the house of a stranger, he will sometimes take a pinch of earth, and put it on the food before he commences his meal. This act frees him from the obligation not to injure the family which has entertained him.

In a note entitled *Marava jāti vernanam*,* from the Mackenzie Manuscripts, it is recorded that "there are seven sub-divisions in the tribe of the Maravas, respectively denominated Sembunāttu, Agattha, Oru-nāttu, Upukatti, and Kurichikattu. Among these sub-divisions, that of the Sembunāttu Maravas is the principal one." In the Madras Census Report, 1891, the following are returned as the most important sub-divisions:—Agamudaiyan, Kallan, Kārana, Kondaikatti, Kottāni, Sembanāttu, and Vannikutti. Among the Sembanāttus, (or Sembanādas), the following septs or khilais have been recorded:—

Marikka.
Piccha.
Tondamān.
Sitrāma.

Thanicha.
Karuputhra.
Katrā.

* Madras Journ. Lit. Science, IV, 1836.

"The Kondayamkottai Maravars," Mr. F. Fawcett writes,* "are divided into six sub-tribes, or, as they call them, trees. Each tree, or kothu, is divided into three khilais or branches. These I call septs. Those of the khilais belonging to the same tree or kothu are never allowed to intermarry. A man or woman must marry with one of a khilai belonging to another tree than his own, his or her own being that of his or her mother, and not of the father. But marriage is not permissible between those of any two trees or kothus: there are some restrictions. For instance, a branch of betel vine or leaves may marry with a branch of cocoanut, but not with areca nuts or dates. I am not positive what all the restrictions are, but restrictions of some kind, by which marriage between persons of all trees may not be made indiscriminately, certainly exist. The names of the trees or kothus and of the khilais or branches, as given to me from the Maraver Pādel, a book considered to be authoritative, are these—

| Tree. | | kothu | | Khilai. |
|--------------|-----|-----------------|---|---|
| Milaku ... | | Pepper vine ... | { | Viramudithanginan. Sedhar. Semanda. Agastyar. Maruvīdu. Alakhiya Pandiyan. Vaniyan. |
| Vettile ... | ... | Betel vine ... | { | Vettuvan. Nataivendar. Kelnambhī. Anbutran. Gautaman. Sadachi. Sangaran. Pichupillai. Akhili. |
| Thennang ... | ... | Cocoanut ... | { | Lokhamurti. Jambhuvar. |
| Komukham ... | ... | Areca nut ... | { | |
| Ichang ... | ... | Dates ... | { | |
| Panang ... | ... | Palmyra ... | { | |

* Journ. Anthropol. Inst., XXXIII, 1903.

“Unfortunately I am unable to trace out the meanings of all these khilais. Agastya and Gautamar are, of course, sages of old. Viramudithanginan seems to mean a king's crown-bearer. Alakhiya Pandiyan seems to be one of the old Pandiyan kings of Madura (alakhiya means beautiful). Akhili is perhaps intended to mean the wife of Gautama, Lokamurti, the one being of the world, and Jambhuvar, a monkey king with a bear's face, who lived long, long ago. The common rule regulating marriages among Brāhmans, and indeed people of almost every caste in Southern India, is that the proper husband for the girl is her mother's brother or his son. But this is not so among the Kcndayam-kottai Maravars. A girl can never marry her mother's brother, because they are of the same khilai. On the other hand, the children of a brother and sister may marry, and should do so, if this can be arranged, as, though the brother and sister are of the same khilai, their children are not, because the children of the brother belong perforce to that of their mother, who is of a different khilai. It very often happens that a man marries into his father's khilai; indeed there seems to be some idea that he should do so if possible. The children of brothers may not marry with each other, although they are of different khilais, for two brothers may not marry into the same khilai. One of the first things to be done in connection with a marriage is that the female relations of the bridegroom must go and examine the intended bride, to test her physical suitability. She should not, as it was explained to me, have a flat foot; the calf of her leg should be slender, not so thick as the thigh; the skin on the throat should not form more than two wrinkles; the hair over the temple should grow

crossways. The last is very important." A curl on the forehead resembling the head of a snake is of evil omen.

In one form of the marriage rites as carried out by the Maravans, the bridegroom's party proceed, on an auspicious day which has been fixed beforehand, to the home of the bride, taking with them five cocoanuts, five bunches of plantains, five pieces of turmeric, betel, and flowers, and the tāli strung on a thread dyed with turmeric. At the auspicious hour, the bride is seated within the house on a plank, facing east. The bridegroom's sister removes the string of black beads from her neck, and ties the tāli thereon. While this is being done, the conch-shell is blown, and women indulge in what Mr. Fawcett describes as a shrill kind of keening (*kulavi idal*). The bride is taken to the house of the bridegroom, where they sit side by side on a plank, and the ceremony of warding off the evil eye is performed. Further, milk is poured by people with crossed hands over the heads of the couple. A feast is held, in which meat takes a prominent part. A Maravan, who was asked to describe the marriage ceremony, replied that it consists in killing a sheep or fowl, and the bringing of the bride by the bridegroom's sister to her brother's house after the tāli has been tied. The Kondaikatti Maravans, in some places, substitute for the usual golden tāli a token representing "the head of Indra fastened to a bunch of human hair, or silken strings representing his hair."*

In another form of the marriage ceremony, the father of the bridegroom goes to the bride's house,

* F. Fawcett, *loc. cit.*

accompanied by his relations, with the following articles in a box made of plaited palmyra leaves :—

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 5 bundles of betel | 7 lumps of jaggery (crude |
| 21 measures of rice | sugar). |
| 7 cocoanuts. | 21 pieces of turmeric. |
| 70 plantains | Flowers, sandal paste, etc. |

At the bride's house, these presents are touched by those assembled there, and the box is handed over to the bride's father. On the wedding day (which is four days afterwards), pongal (cooked rice) is offered to the house god early in the morning. Later in the day, the bridegroom is taken in a palanquin to the house of the bride. Betel is presented to him by her father or brother. The bride generally remains within the house till the time for tying the tāli has arrived. The maternal uncle then blindfolds her with his hand, lifts her up, and carries her to the bridegroom. Four women stand round the contracting couple, and pass round a dish containing a broken cocoanut and a cake three times. The bride and bridegroom then spit into the dish, and the females set up their shrill keening. The maternal uncles join their hands together, and, on receiving the assent of those present, the bridegroom's sister ties the tāli on the bride's neck. The tāli consists of a ring attached to a black silk thread. After marriage, the "silk tāli" is, for every day purposes, replaced by golden beads strung on a string, and the tāli used at the wedding is often borrowed for the occasion. The tāli having been tied, the pair are blessed, and, in some places, their knees, shoulders, heads, and backs are touched with a betel leaf dipped in milk, and blessed with the words "May the pair be prosperous, giving rise to leaves like a banyan tree, roots like the *thurvi* (*Cynodon Dactylon*) grass, and like the bambon." Of

the thurvi grass it is said in the Atharwana Vēda "May this grass, which rose from the water of life, which has a hundred roots and a hundred stems, efface a hundred of my sins, and prolong my existence on earth for a hundred years."

Still further variants of the marriage ceremonial are described by Mr. Fawcett, in one of which "the Brāhman priest (purōhit) hands the tāli to the bridegroom's sister, who in turn hands it to the bridegroom, who ties a knot in it. The sister then ties two more knots in it, and puts it round the bride's neck. After this has been done, and while the pair are still seated, the Brāhman ties together the little fingers of the right hands of the pair, which are interlocked, with a silken thread. The pair then rise, walk thrice round the marriage seat (manavanai), and enter the house, where they sit, and the bridegroom receives present from the bride's father. The fingers are then untied. While undergoing the ceremony, the bridegroom wears a thread smeared with turmeric tied round the right wrist. It is called kappu."

In the manuscript already quoted,* it is noted that "should it so happen, either in the case of wealthy rulers of districts or of poorer common people, that any impediment arises to prevent the complete celebration of the marriage with all attendant ceremonies according to the sacred book and customs of the tribe, then the tāli only is sent, and the female is brought to the house of her husband. At a subsequent period, even after two or three children have been born, the husband sends the usual summons to a marriage of areca nut and betel leaf; and, when the relatives are assembled, the bride

* Madras Journ. Lit. Science, IV, 1836.

and bridegroom are publicly seated in state under the marriage pandal, the want of completeness in the former contract is made up; and, all needful ceremonies being gone through, they perform the public procession through the streets of the town, when they break the cocoanut in the presence of Vignēsvara (Ganēsa), and, according to the means possessed by the parties, the celebration of the marriage is concluded in one day, or prolonged to two, three or four days. The tāli, being tied on, has the name of katu tāli, and the name of the last ceremony is called the removal of the former deficiency. If it so happen that, after the first ceremony, the second be not performed, then the children of such an alliance are lightly regarded among the Maravas. Should the husband die during the continuance of the first relation, and before the second ceremony be performed, then the body of the man, and also the woman are placed upon the same seat, and the ceremonies of the second marriage, according to the customs of the tribe, being gone through, the tāli is taken off; the woman is considered to be a widow, and can marry with some other man." It is further recorded* of the Orunāttu Maravans that "the elder or younger sister of the bridegroom goes to the house of the bride, and, to the sound of the conch-shell, ties on the tāli, and, early on the following morning, brings her to the house of the bridegroom. After some time, occasionally three or four years, when there are indications of offspring, in the fourth or fifth month, the relatives of the pair assemble, and perform the ceremony of removing the deficiency; placing the man and his wife on a seat in public, and having the sacrifice by fire and other matters conducted by the Prōhitan (or Brāhman);

* Madras Journ. Lit. Science, IV, 1836.

after which the relatives sprinkle seshai rice (or rice beaten out without any application of water) over the heads of the pair. The relatives are feasted and otherwise hospitably entertained; and these in return bestow donations on the pair, from one fanam to one pagoda. The marriage is then finished. Sometimes, when money for expenses is wanting, this wedding ceremony is postponed till after the birth of two or three children. If the first husband dies, another marriage is customary. Should it so happen that the husband, after the tying on of the tāli in the first instance, dislikes the object of his former choice, then the people of their tribe are assembled; she is conducted back to her mother's house; sheep, oxen, eating-plate, with brass cup, jewels, ornaments, and whatever else she may have brought with her from her mother's house, are returned; and the tāli, which was put on, is broken off and taken away. If the wife dislikes the husband, then the money he paid, the expenses which he incurred in the wedding, the tāli which he caused to be bound on her, are restored to him, and the woman, taking whatsoever she brought with her, returns to her mother's house, and marries again at her pleasure."

It is recorded, in the Madras Census Report, 1891, that "a special custom obtaining among the Marava zemindars of Tinnevely is mentioned by the Registrar of that district. It is the celebration of marriage by means of a proxy for the bridegroom in the shape of a stick, which is sent by the bridegroom, and is set up in the marriage booth in his place. The tāli is tied by some one representative of the bridegroom, and the marriage ceremony then becomes complete Widow re-marriage is freely allowed and practiced, except in the Sembunattu sub-division." "A widow,"

Mr. Fawcett writes, "may marry her deceased husband's elder brother, but not a younger brother. If she does not like him, she may marry some one else."

When a girl reaches puberty, news of the event is conveyed by a washerman. On the sixteenth day she comes out of seclusion, bathes, and returns home. At the threshold, her future husband's sister is standing, and averts the evil eye by waving betel leaves, plantains, cocoanuts, cooked flour paste (*puttu*), a vessel filled with water, and an iron measure containing rice with a style (*ambu*) stuck in it. The style is removed by the girl's prospective sister-in-law, who beats her with it as she enters the house. A feast is held at the expense of the girl's maternal uncle, who brings a goat, and ties it to a pole at her house.

Both burial and cremation are practiced by the Maravans. The Sembunāttu Maravans of Rāmnād regard the Agamudaiyans as their servants, and the water, with which the corpse is washed, is brought by them. Further, it is an Agamudaiyan, and not the son of the deceased, who carries the fire-pot to the burial-ground. The corpse is carried thither on a bier or palanquin. The grave is dug by an Āndi, never by a Pallan or Paraiyan. Salt, powdered brick, and sacred ashes are placed on the floor thereof, and the corpse is placed in it in a sitting posture. The Kondaiyamkottai Maravans of Rāmnād, who are stone and brick masons, burn their dead, and, on their way to the burning-ground, the bearers of the corpse walk over cloths spread on the ground. On the second or third day, lingams are made out of the ashes, or of mud from the grave if the corpse has been buried. To these, as well as to the soul of the deceased, and to the crows, offerings are made. // On the sixteenth day,

nine kinds of seed-grain are placed over the grave, or the spot where the corpse was burnt. A Pandāram sets up five kalasams (brass vessels), and does pūja (worship). The son of the deceased, who officiated as chief mourner, goes to a Pillayar (Ganēsa) shrine, carrying on his head a pot containing a lighted lamp made of flour. As he draws near the god, a screen is stretched in front thereof. He then takes a few steps backwards, the screen is removed, and he worships the god. He then retires, walking backwards. The flour is distributed among those present. Presents of new cloths are made to the sons and daughters of the deceased. In his account of the Kondaiyamkottai Maravans, Mr. Fawcett gives the following account of the funeral rites. "Sandals having been fastened on the feet, the corpse is carried in a recumbent position, legs first, to the place of cremation. A little rice is placed in the mouth, and the relatives put a little money into a small vessel which is kept beside the chest. The karma karta (chief mourner) walks thrice round the corpse, carrying an earthen vessel filled with water, in which two or three holes are pierced. He allows some water to fall on the corpse, and breaks the pot near the head, which lies to the south. No Brāhman attends this part of the ceremony. When he has broken the pot, the karma karta must not see the corpse again; he goes away at once, and is completely shaved. The barber takes the cash which has been collected, and lights the pyre. When he returns to the house, the karma karta prostrates himself before a lighted lamp; he partakes of no food, except a little grain and boiled pulse and water, boiled with coarse palm sugar and ginger. Next day he goes to the place of cremation, picks up such calcined bones as he finds, and places them in a basket, so that he may some day throw them in

water which is considered to be sacred. On the eleventh or twelfth day, some grain is sown in two new earthen vessels which have been broken, and there is continued weeping around these. On the sixteenth day, the young plants, which have sprouted, are removed, and put into water, weeping going on all the while; and, after this has been done, the relatives bathe and enjoy a festive meal, after which the karma karta is seated on a white cloth, and is presented with a new cloth and some money by his father-in-law and other relatives who are present. On the seventeenth day takes place the punyaga-vachanam or purification, at which the Brāhman priest presides, and the karma karta takes an oil bath. The wood of the pipal tree (*Ficus religiosa*) is never used for purposes of cremation."

Concerning the death ceremonies in the Trichinopoly district, Mr. F. R. Hemingway writes as follows. "Before the corpse is removed, the chief mourner and his wife take two balls of cow-dung, in which the barber has mixed various kinds of grain, and stick them on to the wall of the house. These are thrown into water on the eighth day. The ceremonial is called pattam kat-tugiradu, or investing with the title, and indicates the succession to the dead man's estate. A rocket is fired when the corpse is taken out of the house. On the sixth day, a pandal (booth) of nāval (*Eugenia Jambolana*) leaves is prepared, and offerings are made in it to the manes of the ancestors of the family. It is removed on the eighth day, and the chief mourner puts a turban on, and merry-making and dances are indulged in. There are ordinarily no karumāntaram ceremonies, but they are sometimes performed on the sixteenth day, a Brāhman being called in. On the return home from these ceremonies, each member of the party has to dip his toe



JALLIKATTI BULL

into a mortar full of cow-dung water, and the last man has to knock it down."

Among some Kondaiyamkottai Maravans, a ceremony called *palaya karmāndhiram*, or old death ceremony, is performed. Some months after the death of one who has died an unnatural death, the skull is exhumed, and placed beneath a *pandal* (booth) in an open space near the village. Libations of toddy are indulged in, and the villagers dance wildly round the head. The ceremony lasts over three days, and the final death ceremonies are then performed.

For the following account of the *jellikattu* or bull-baiting, which is practiced by the Maravans, I am indebted to a note by Mr. J. H. Nelson.* "This," he writes, "is a game worthy of a bold and free people, and it is to be regretted that certain Collectors (District Magistrates) should have discouraged it under the idea that it was somewhat dangerous. The *jellikattu* is conducted in the following manner. On a certain day in the year, large crowds of people, chiefly males, assemble together in the morning in some extensive open space, the dry bed of a river perhaps, or of a tank (pond), and many of them may be seen leading ploughing bullocks, of which the sleek bodies and rather wicked eyes afford clear evidence of the extra diet they have received for some days in anticipation of the great event. The owners of these animals soon begin to brag of their strength and speed, and to challenge all and any to catch and hold them; and in a short time one of the best beasts is selected to open the day's proceedings. A new cloth is made fast round his horns, to be the prize of his captor, and he is then led

* Manual of the Madura district.

out into the midst of the arena by his owner, and there left to himself surrounded by a throng of shouting and excited strangers. Unaccustomed to this sort of treatment, and excited by the gestures of those who have undertaken to catch him, the bullock usually lowers his head at once, and charges wildly into the midst of the crowd, who nimbly run off on either side to make way for him. His speed being much greater than that of the men, he soon overtakes one of his enemies and makes at him to toss him savagely. Upon this the man drops on the sand like a stone, and the bullock, instead of goring him, leaps over his body, and rushes after another. The second man drops in his turn, and is passed like the first; and, after repeating this operation several times, the beast either succeeds in breaking the ring, and galloping off to his village, charging every person he meets on the way, or is at last caught and held by the most vigorous of his pursuers. Strange as it may seem, the bullocks never by any chance toss or gore any one who throws himself down on their approach; and the only danger arises from their accidentally reaching unseen and unheard some one who remains standing. After the first two or three animals have been let loose one after the other, two or three, or even half a dozen are let loose at a time, and the scene quickly becomes most exciting. The crowd sways violently to and fro in various directions in frantic efforts to escape being knocked over; the air is filled with shouts, screams, and laughter; and the bullocks thunder over the plain as fiercely as if blood and slaughter were their sole occupation. In this way perhaps two or three hundred animals are run in the course of a day, and, when all go home towards evening, a few cuts and bruises, borne with the utmost cheerfulness,

are the only results of an amusement which requires great courage and agility on the part of the competitors for the prizes—that is for the cloths and other things tied to the bullocks' horns—and not a little on the part of the mere bystanders. The only time I saw this sport (from a place of safety) I was highly delighted with the entertainment, and no accident occurred to mar my pleasure. One man indeed was slightly wounded in the buttock, but he was quite able to walk, and seemed to be as happy as his friends."

A further account of the jallikat or jellicut is given in the Gazetteer of the Madura district. "The word jallikattu literally means tying of ornaments. On a day fixed and advertised by beat of drums at the adjacent weekly markets, a number of cattle, to the horns of which cloths and handkerchiefs have been tied, are loosed one after the other, in quick succession, from a large pen or other enclosure, amid a furious tom-tomming and loud shouts from the crowd of assembled spectators. The animals have first to run the gauntlet down a long lane formed of country carts, and then gallop off wildly in every direction. The game consists in endeavouring to capture the cloths tied to their horns. To do this requires fleetness of foot and considerable pluck, and those who are successful are the heroes of the hour. Cuts and bruises are the reward of those who are less skilful, and now and again some of the excited cattle charge into the on-lookers, and send a few of them flying. The sport has been prohibited on more than one occasion. But, seeing that no one need run any risks unless he chooses, existing official opinion inclines to the view that it is a pity to discourage a manly amusement which is not really more dangerous than football, steeple-chasing, or fox-hunting. The keenness

of the more virile sections of the community, especially the Kallans (*q.v.*), in this game is extraordinary, and, in many villages, cattle are bred and reared specially for it. The best jallikats are to be seen in the Kallan country in Tirumangalam, and next come those in Mēlur and Madura taluks."

"Boomerangs," Dr. G. Oppert writes,* "are used by the Maravans and Kallans when hunting deer. The Madras Museum collection contains three (two ivory, one wooden) from the Tanjore armoury. In the arsenal of the Pudukōttai Rāja a stock of wooden boomerangs is always kept. Their name in Tamil is *valai tade* (bent stick)." To Mr. R. Bruce Foote, I am indebted for the following note on the use of the boomerang in the Madura district. "A very favourite weapon of the Madura country is a kind of curved throwing-stick, having a general likeness to the boomerang of the Australian aborigines. I have in my collection two of these Maravar weapons obtained from near Sívaganga. The larger measures $24\frac{1}{8}$ " along the outer curve, and the chord of the arc $17\frac{5}{8}$ ". At the handle end is a rather ovate knob $2\frac{1}{4}$ " long and $1\frac{1}{4}$ " in its maximum thickness. The thinnest and smallest part of the weapon is just beyond the knob, and measures $\frac{1}{4}\frac{1}{8}$ " in diameter by $1\frac{1}{8}$ " in width. From that point onwards its width increases very gradually to the distal end, where it measures $2\frac{3}{8}$ " across and is squarely truncated. The lateral diameter is greatest three or four inches before the truncated end, where it measures 1". My second specimen is a little smaller than the above, and is also rather less curved. Both are made of hard heavy wood, dark reddish brown in colour as seen through the

* Madras Journ. Lit. Science, XXV.

varnish covering the surface. The wood is said to be tamarind root. The workmanship is rather rude. I had an opportunity of seeing these boomerangs in use near Sivaganga in March, 1883. In the morning I came across many parties, small and large, of men and big boys who were out hare-hunting with a few dogs. The parties straggled over the ground, which was sparsely covered with low scrub jungle. And, whenever an unlucky hare started out near to the hunters, it was greeted with a volley of the boomerangs, so strongly and dexterously thrown that poor puss had little chance of escape. I saw several knocked out of time. On making enquiries as to these hunting parties, I was told that they were in observance of a semi-religious duty, in which every Maravar male, not unfitted by age or ill-health, is bound to participate on a particular day in the year. Whether a dexterous Maravar thrower could make his weapon return to him I could not find out. Certainly in none of the throws observed by me was any tendency to a return perceptible. But for simple straight shots these boomerangs answer admirably."

The Maravans bear Saivite sectarian marks, but also worship various minor deities, among whom are included Kāli, Karuppan, Muthu Karuppan, Periya Karuppan, Mathurai Viran, Aiyanar, and Mūnuswāmi.

The lobes of the ears of Marava females are very elongated as the result of boring and gradual dilatation during childhood. Mr. (now Sir) F. A. Nicholson, who was some years ago stationed at Ramnād, tells me that the young Maravan princesses used to come and play in his garden, and, as they ran races, hung on to their ears, lest the heavy ornaments should rend asunder the filamentous ear lobes.

. It was recorded, in 1902, that a young Maravan, who was a member of the family of the Zemindar of Chokampatti, was the first non-Christian Maravan to pass the B.A. degree examination at the Madras University.

The general title of the Maravans is Tēvan (god), but some style themselves Talaivan (chief), Sērvaiṅkāran (captain), Karaīyalan (ruler of the coast), or Rāyarvamsam (Rāja's clan).

Mārayan.—A synonym of Mārān.

Māri.—Māri or Mārīmanisaru is a sub-division of Holeya.

Māriyan.—Said to be a sub-division of Kōlayān.

Markandēya.—A gōtra of Padma Sālē and Sēniyan (Dēvānga), named after the rishi or sage Markandēya, who was remarkable for his austerities and great age, and is also known as Dīrghāyus (the long-lived). Some Dēvāngas and the Sālapus claim him as their ancestor.

Marri (*Ficus bengalensis*).—An exogamous sept of Māla and Mutrācha. Marri-gunta (pond near a fig tree) occurs as an exogamous sept of Yānādi.

Marumakkathāyam.—The Malayālam name for the law of inheritance through the female line.

Marvāri.—A territorial name, meaning a native of Marwar. At times of census, Marvāri has been returned as a caste of Jains, *i.e.*, Marvāris, who are Jains by religion. The Marvāris are enterprising traders, who have settled in various parts of Southern India, and are, in the city of Madras, money-lenders.

Māsādika.—A synonym for Nādava Bant.

Māsila (māsi, dirt).—An exogamous sept of Dēvānga.

Masthān.—A Muhammadan title, meaning a saint, returned at times of census.

Māstiga.—The Māstigas are described by the Rev. J. Cain * as mendicants and bards, who beg from Gollas, Mālas, and Mādigas. I am informed that they are also known as Māla Māstigas, as they are supposed to be illegitimate descendants of the Mālas, and usually beg from them. When engaged in begging, they perform various contortionist and acrobatic feats.

Matam (monastery, or religious institution).—An exogamous sept of Dēvānga.

Mātanga.—Mātanga or Mātangi is a synonym of Mādiga. The Mādigas sometimes call themselves Mātangi Makkalu, or children of Mātangi, who is their favourite goddess. Mātangi is further the name of certain dedicated prostitutes, who are respected by the Mādiga community.

Matavan.—Recorded, in the Travancore Census Report, 1901, as a name for the Pulikkapanikkan sub-division of Nayar.

Matsya (fish).—A sept of Dōmb

Mattiya.—The Mattiyas are summed up as follows in the Madras Census Report, 1901. "In Vizagapatam these are hill cultivators from the Central Provinces, who are stated in one account to be a sub-division of the Gonds. Some of them wear the sacred thread, because the privilege was conferred upon their families by former Rājas of Malkanagiri, where they reside. They are said to eat with Rōnas, drink with Porojas, but smoke only with their own people. The name is said to denote workers in mud (matti), and in Ganjam they are apparently earth-workers and labourers. In the Census Report, 1871, it is noted that the **Mativās** are 'altogether superior to the Kois and to the

Parjās (Porojas). They say they sprang from the soil, and go so far as to point out a hole, out of which their ancestor came. They talk Uriyā, and farm their lands well.'"

For the following note, I am indebted to Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao. The caste is divided into at least four septs, named Bhāg (tiger), Nāg (cobra), Chēli (goat), and Kochchimo (tortoise). A man may claim his paternal aunt's daughter in marriage. Girls are, as a rule, married after puberty. When a match is contemplated, the would-be husband presents a pot of liquor to the girl's parents. If this is accepted, a further present of liquor, rice, and a pair of cloths, is made later on. The liquor is distributed among the villagers, who, by accepting it, indicate their consent to the transfer of the girl to the man. A procession, with Dōmbś acting as musicians, is formed, and the girl is taken to the bridegroom's village. A pandal (booth) has been erected in front of the bridegroom's house, which the contracting couple enter on the following morning. Their hands are joined together by the presiding Dēsāri, they bathe in turmeric water, and new cloths are given to them. Wearing these, they enter the house, the bridegroom leading the bride. Their relations then exhort them to be constant to each other, and behave well towards them. A feast follows, and the night is spent in dancing and drinking. Next day, the bride's parents are sent away with a present of a pair of cows or bulls as jholla tonka. The remarriage of widows is allowed, and a younger brother usually marries the widow of his elder brother. Divorce is permitted, and, when a husband separates from his wife, he gives her a new cloth and a bullock as compensation. A divorced woman may remarry.

By the Mattiyas, and other Oriya castes, the *ghor-javai* (house son-in-law) custom is practiced. According to this custom, the poorer folk, in search of a wife, work, according to a contract, for their future father-in-law for a specified time, at the expiration of which they set up a separate establishment with his daughter. To begin married life with, presents are made to the couple by the father-in-law.

The dead are burnt, and the spot where cremation takes place is marked by setting up in the ground a bamboo pole, to which one of the dead man's rags is attached. The domestic pots, which were used during his last illness, are broken there. Death pollution is observed for eight days. On the ninth day, the ashes, mixed with water, are cleared up, and milk is poured over the spot. The ashes are sometimes buried in a square hole, which is dug to a depth of about three feet, and filled in. Over it a small hut-like structure is raised. A few of these sepulchral monuments may be seen on the south side of the Pangām stream on the Jeypore-Malkangiri road. The personal names of the Mattiyas are often taken from the day of the week on which they are born.

Māvilān.—Described, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as a small tribe of *shikāris* (hunters) and herbalists, who follow *makkathayam* (inheritance from father to son), and speak corrupt Tulu. *Tulumār* (native of the Tulu country), and *Cūṅgattān* (lion-hearted people) were returned as sub-divisions. "The name," Mr. H. A. Stuart writes,* "is said to be derived from *māvilāvu*, a medicinal herb. I think, however, the real derivation must be sought in Tulu or Canarese, as it seems to be a Canarese caste. These people are found only in the

* Madras Census Report, 1891.

Chirakkal taluk of Malabar. Their present occupation is basket-making. Succession is from father to son, but among some it is also said to be in the female line."

It is recorded, in the Gazetteer of Malabar, that the Māvilōns are "divided into Tulu Mavilōns and Eda Mavilōns, and sub-divided into thirty illams. They are employed as mahouts (drivers of elephants), and collect honey and other forest produce. Their headmen are called Chingam (simham, lion), and their huts Māpura."

Mayalōtilu (rascal).—Mayalōtilu or Manjulōtilu is said by the Rev. J. Cain to be a name given by the hill Kōyis to the Kōyis who live near the Godāvāri river.

Mayan.—Recorded, in the Madras Census Report, as a synonym of Kammālan. The Kamsali goldsmiths claim descent from Maya.

Mēda, Mēdara, Mēdarlu, or Mēdarakāran.—The Mēdaras are workers in bamboo in the Telugu, Canarese, Oriya and Tamil countries, making sieves, baskets, cradles, mats, fans, boxes, umbrellas, and tatties (screens). Occasionally they receive orders for waste-paper baskets, coffins for Native Christian children, or cages for pigeons and parrots. In former days they made basket-caps for sepoys. They are said to cut the bamboos in the forest on dark nights, in the belief that they would be damaged if cut at any other time. They do not, like the Korachas, make articles from the leaf of the date-palm (*Phoenix*).

They believe that they came from Mahēndrāchāla mountain, the mountain of Indra, and the following legend is current among them. Dakshudu, the father-in-law of Siva, went to invite his son-in-law to a devotional sacrifice, which he was about to perform. Siva was in a state of meditation, and did not visibly return the obeisance which Dakshudu made by raising his hands to his forehead. Dakshudu became angry,

and told his people not to receive Siva or his wife, or show them any mark of respect. Parvati, Siva's wife, went with her son Ganapati, against her husband's order, to the sacrifice, and received no sign of recognition. Thereat she shed tears, and the earth opened, and she disappeared. She was again born of Himavant (Himālayas), and Siva, telling her who she was, remarried her. Siva, in reply to her enquiries, told her that she could avoid a further separation from him if she performed a religious vow, and gave cakes to Brāhmans in a chata, or winnowing basket. She accordingly made a basket of gold, which was not efficacious, because, as Siva explained to her, it was not plaited, as bamboo baskets are. Taking his serpent, Siva turned it into a bamboo. He ordered Ganapati, and others, to become men, and gave them his trisula and ghada to work with on bamboo, from which they plaited a basket for the completion of Parvati's vow. Ganapati and the Gānas remained on the Mahēndrāchāla mountain, and married Gandarva women, who bore children to them. Eventually they were ordered by Siva to return, and, as they could not take their wives and families with them, they told them to earn their livelihood by plaiting bamboo articles. Hence they were called Mahēndrulu or Mēdarlu. According to another legend,* Parvati once wanted to perform the ceremony called gaurinōmu, and, wanting a winnow, was at a loss to know how to secure one. She asked Siva to produce a man who could make one, and he ordered his riding-ox Vrishaban to produce such a person by chewing. Vrishaban complied, and the ancestor of the Mēdaras, being informed of the wish of the goddess, took the snake which formed Siva's necklace,

* Manual of the North Arcot district.

and, going to a hill, planted its head in the ground. A bamboo at once sprang up on the spot, which, after returning the snake to its owner, the man used for making a winnow. The snake-like root of the bamboo is regarded as a proof of the truth of the story.

As among many other castes, opprobrious names are given to children. For example, a boy, whose elder brother has died, may be called Pentayya (dung-heap). As a symbol of his being a dung-heap child, the infant, as soon as it is born, is placed on a leaf-platter. Other names are Thavvayya, or boy bought for bran, and Pakiru, mendicant. In a case where a male child had been ill for some months, a woman, under the influence of the deity, announced that he was possessed by the goddess Ankamma. The boy accordingly had the name of the goddess conferred on him.

The following are some of the gōtras and exogamous septs of the Medaras —

(a) *Gōtras.*

| | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Hanumanta (monkey-god). | Bombadai (a fish). |
| Puli (tiger). | Vinayaka (Ganesa). |
| Thagenīlu (drinking water). | Kaśi (Benares). |
| Avisa (<i>Sesbania grandiflora</i>). | Moduga (<i>Butea frondosa</i>). |
| Rēla (<i>Ficus</i>). | Kovila (koel or cuckoo). |
| Seshai (snake?). | |

(b) *Exogamous septs.*

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Pilli (cat). | Nuvvulu (gingelly). |
| Parvatham (mountain). | Senagapapu (Bengal gram). |
| Putta (ant hill). | Tsanda (subscription). |
| Konda (mountain). | Nila (blue). |
| Javādi (civet-cat). | Sirigiri (a hill). |
| Nandikattu (bull's mouth). | Kanigiri (a hill). |
| Kandikattu (dhāl soup). | Pōthu (male). |
| Kottakunda (new pot). | Nāginīdu (snake). |
| Pooreti (a bird). | Kola (ear of corn). |
| Kallūri (stone village). | |

A man most frequently marries his maternal uncle's daughter, less frequently the daughter of his paternal aunt. Marriage with a deceased wife's sister is regarded with special favour. Marriage with two living sisters, if one of them is suffering from disease, is common.

In a note on the Mēdaras of the Vizagapatam district, Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao writes that girls are married before or after puberty. A Brāhman officiates at the marriage ceremonies. Widows are allowed to remarry once, and the sathamānam (marriage badge) is tied by the new husband on the neck of the bride, who has, as in the Gūdala caste, to sit near a mortar.

Formerly all the Mēdaras were Saivites, but many are at the present day Vaishnavites, and even the Vaishnavites worship Siva. Every family has some special person or persons whom they worship, for example, Virullu, or boys who have died unmarried. A silver image is made, and kept in a basket. It is taken out on festive occasions, as before a marriage in a family, and offerings of milk and rice gruel are made to it. Bāla Pērantālu, or girls who have died before marriage, and Pērantālu, or women who have died before their husbands, are worshipped with fruits, turmeric, rice, cocoanuts, etc.

Some of the Saivites bury their dead in a sitting posture, while others resort to cremation. All the Vaishnavites burn the dead, and, like the Saivites, throw the ashes into a river. The place of burning or burial is not as a rule marked by any stone or mound. But, if the family can afford it, a tulsi fort is built, and the tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*) planted therein. In the Vizagapatam district, death pollution is said to last for three days, during which the caste occupation is not carried out. On the third day, a fowl is killed, and food cooked. It

is taken to the spot where the corpse was burnt, on which a portion is thrown, and the remainder eaten.

The potency of charms in warding off evil spirits is believed in. For example, a figure of Hanumān the monkey-god, on a thin plate of gold, with cabalistic letters inscribed on it, is worn on the neck. And, on eclipse days, the root of the madar or arka plant (*Calotropis gigantea*), enclosed in a gold casket, is worn on the neck of females, and on the waist or arms of males. Some members of this, as of other castes, may be seen with cicatrices on the forehead, chest, back, or neck. These are the scars resulting from branding during infancy with lighted turmeric or cheroot, to cure infantile convulsions, resulting, it is believed, from inhaling tobacco smoke in small, ill-ventilated rooms.

Various legends are current in connection with tribal heroes. One Mēdara Chennayya is said to have fed some thousands of people with a potful of rice. His grandson, Medara Thodayya, used to do basket-making, and bathed three times daily. A Brāhman, afflicted with leprosy, lost a calf. In searching for it, he fell into a ditch filled with water, in which the Mēdara had bathed, and was cured. One Medara Kēthayya and his wife were very poor, but charitable. In order to test him, the god Iswara made grains of gold appear in large quantities in the hollow of a bamboo, which he cut. He avoided the bamboos as being full of vermin, and useless. At some distance, he found an ant-hill with a bamboo growing in it, and, knowing that bamboos growing on such a hill will not be attacked by vermin, cut it. In so doing, he cut off the head of a Rishi, who was doing penance. Detecting the crime of which he had been guilty, he cried "Siva, Siva." His wife, who was miles away, heard him, and, knowing that he must be in some

trouble, went to the spot. He asked her how he was to expiate his sin, and she replied. "You have taken a life, and must give one in return." He thereon prepared to commit suicide, but his wife, taking the knife from him, was about to sacrifice herself when Iswara appeared, restored the Rishi to life, and took Mēdara Kēthayya and his wife to heaven.

As among many other castes, the *sthambamuhurtham* (putting up the post) ceremony is performed when the building of a new house is commenced, and the *deep-arathana* (lamp-worship) before it is occupied. In every settlement there is a *Kulapedda*, or hereditary caste headman, who has, among other things, the power of inflicting fines, sentencing to excommunication, and inflicting punishments for adultery, eating with members of lower castes, etc. Excommunication is a real punishment, as the culprit is not allowed to take bamboo, or mess with his former castemen. In the Kistna and Godāvāri districts, serious disputes, which the local *pañchāyat* (council) cannot decide, are referred to the headman at Masulipatam, who at present is a native doctor. There are no trials by ordeal. The usual form of oath is "Where ten are, there God is. In his presence I say."

When a girl reaches puberty, she has to sit in a room on five fresh palmyra palm leaves, bathes in turmeric water, and may not eat salt. If there is "leg's presentation" at childbirth, the infant's maternal uncle should not hear the infant cry until the *shanti* ceremony has been performed. A Brāhman recites some mantrams, and the reflection of the infant's face is first seen by the uncle from the surface of oil in a plate. Widow remarriage is permitted. A widow can be recognised by her not wearing the *tālī*, *gāzulu* (glass bangles), and *mettu* (silver ring on the second toe).

The lowest castes with which the Mēdaras will eat are, they say, Kōmatis and Velamas. Some say that they will eat with Sātānis.

In the Coorg country, the Medaras are said to subsist by umbrella-making. They are the drummers at Coorg festivals, and it is their privilege to receive annually at harvest-time from each Coorg house of their district as much reaped paddy as they can bind up with a rope twelve cubits in length. They dress like the Coorgs, but in poorer style.*

It is recorded by Bishop Whitehead† that, "in Mercāra tāluk, in Ippanivolavade, and in Kadikeri in Halerinad, the villagers sacrifice a kōna or male buffalo. Tied to a tree in a gloomy grove near the temple, the beast is killed by a Mēda, who cuts off its head with a large knife, but no Coorgs are present at the time. The blood is spilled on a stone under a tree, and the flesh eaten by Mēdas."

At the Census, 1901, Gauriga was returned as a sub-caste by some Medaras. The better classes are taking to call themselves Baliyas, and affix the title Chetti to their names. The Godagula workers in split bamboo sometimes call themselves Odde (Oriya) Mēdara.‡

Mēda (raised mound).—An exogamous sept of Padma Sālē.

Medam (fight).—An exogamous sept of Dēvānga.

Mehtar.—A few Mehtars are returned, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as a Central Provinces caste of scavengers. "This name," Yule and Burnell write,§ "is usual in Bengal, especially for the domestic

* G. Richter Manual of Coorg.

† Madras Museum Bull., V, 3, 1907.

‡ For portions of this article I am indebted to a note by Mr. J. D. Samuel.

§ Hobson-Jobson.

servant of this class. The word is Pers., comp. *mīhtar* (Lat. major), a great personage, a prince, and has been applied to the class in question in irony, or rather in consolation. But the name has so completely adhered in this application, that all sense of either irony or consolation has perished. *Mehtar* is a sweeper, and nought else. His wife is the *Matranee*. It is not unusual to hear two *Mehtars* hailing each other as *Mahārāj!*"

Meikāval (body-guard of the god).—A name for *Pardārams*.

Mēkala (goats).—Recorded as an exogamous sept of *Bōya*, *Chenchu*, *Golla*, *Kamma*, *Kāpu*, *Togata*, and *Yānādi*. *Nerigi Mēkala* (a kind of goat) is a further sept of *Yānādi*.

Mēkhri.—A sub-division of *Navāyat Muhamma-*
dans.

Mēlāchchēri.—A class of *Muhammadans* in the *Laccadive islands* (*see Māppilla*).

Mēladava.—Dancing-girls in South Canara.

Mēlakkāran.—Concerning the *Mēlakkārans*, Mr. F. R. Hemingway writes as follows.* "The name means musicians, and, as far as Tanjore is concerned, is applied to two absolutely distinct castes, the *Tamil* and *Telugu Mēlakkārans* (of whom the latter are barber musicians). These two will not eat in each other's houses, and their views about dining with other castes are similar. They say they would mess (in a separate room) in a *Vellālan's* house, and would dine with a *Kallan*, but it is doubtful whether any but the lower non-*Brāhman* communities would eat with them. In other respects the two castes are quite different. The former speak *Tamil*, and, in most of their customs,

* *Gazetteer of the Tanjore district.*

resemble generally the Vellālans and other higher Tamil castes, while the latter speak Telugu, and follow domestic practices similar to those of the Telugu Brāhmanas. Both are musicians. The Telugus practice only the musician's art or periyamelam (band composed of clarionet or nāgasaram, pipe, drum, and cymbals), having nothing to do with dancing or dancing-girls, to whom the chinnamēlam or nautch music is appropriate. The Tamil caste provides, or has adopted all the dancing-girls in the district. The daughters of these women are generally brought up to their mother's profession, but the daughters of the men of the community rarely nowadays become dancing-girls, but are ordinarily married to members of the caste. The Tamil Mēlakkārans perform both the periyamēlam and the nautch music. The latter consists of vocal music performed by a chorus of both sexes to the accompaniment of the pipe and cymbals. The class who perform it are called Nattuvans, and they are the instructors of the dancing-women. The periyamēlam always finds a place at weddings, but the nautch is a luxury. Nowadays the better musicians hold themselves aloof from the dancing-women. Both castes have a high opinion of their own social standing. Indeed the Tamil section say they are really Kallans, Vellālans, Agamudaiyans, and so on, and that their profession is merely an accident." The Vairāvi, or temple servant of Nāttukōttai Chettis, must be a Mēlakkāran.

Mellikallu.—Under the name Mellikallu or Mal-lekalu, seventy-six individuals are returned, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as "hill cultivators in Pedakōta village of Viravalli tāluk of the Vizagapatam Agency, who are reported to constitute a caste by themselves. They pollute by touch, have their own priests, and eat pork but not beef."

Mēlnādu.—Mēlnādu, or Mēlnātar, meaning western country, is the name of a territorial sub-division of Kallan and Shānān.

Mēlu Sakkare.—A name, meaning western Sak-kare, by which Upparas in Mysore style themselves. They claim descent from a mythical individual, named Sagara, who dug the Bay of Bengal. Some Upparas explain that they work in salt, which is more essential than sugar, and that Mēl Sakkara means superior sugar.

Mēman.—More than three hundred members of this Muhammadan class of Bombay traders were returned at the Madras Census, 1901. It is recorded, in the Bombay Gazetteer, that many Cutch Mēmans are prospering as traders in Kurrachee, Bombay, the Malabar coast, Hyderabad, Madras, Calcutta, and Zanzibar.

Menasu (pepper or chillies).—An exogamous sept of Kuruba, and gōtra of Kurni.

Mēnōkki (overseer) —Mēnōkki and Menōki have been returned, in the Travancore and Cochin Census Reports, as a sub-division of Nayars, who are employed as accountants in temples. The name is derived from mēl, above, nōkki, from nōkkunnu to look after.

Mēnōn.—By Wigram,* Mēnōn is defined as “a title originally conferred by the Zamorin on his agents and writers. It is now used by all classes of Nāyars. In Malabar, the village karnam (accountant) is called Mēnōn.” In the Travancore Census Report, 1901, Mēnōn is said to be “a contraction of Mēnavan (a superior person). The title was conferred upon several families by the Rājā of Cochin, and corresponds to

* Malabar Law and Custom.

Pillai down south. As soon as a person was made a Mēnōn, he was presented with an ōla (palmyra leaf for writing on) and an iron style, as symbolical of the office he was expected to fill, *i.e.*, of an accountant. Even now, in British Malabar, each amsham or revenue village has a writer or accountant, who is called Mēnōn." Mr. F. Fawcett writes * that "to those of the sub-clan attached to the Zamorin who were sufficiently capable to earn it, he gave the titular honour Mēnōn, to be used as an affix to the name. The title Mēnōn is in general hereditary, but, be it remarked, many who now use it are not entitled to do so. Properly speaking, only those whose investiture by the Zamorin or some other recognized chief is undisputed, and their descendants (in the female line) may use it. A man known to me was invested with the title Mēnōn in 1895 by the Karimpuzha chief, who, in the presence of a large assembly, said thrice 'From this day forward I confer on Krishnan Nāyar the title of Krishna Mēnōn.' Nowadays be it said, the title Menōn is used by Nāyars of clans other than the Akattu Charna." Indian undergraduates at the English Universities, with names such as Krishna Menōn, Rāman Mēnōn, Rāmunni Mēnōn, are known as Mr. Mēnōn. In the same way, Marātha students are called by their titular name Mr. Rao.

Mēra.—A sub-division of Holeyā.

Meria.—At the Madras Census, 1901, twenty-five individuals returned themselves as Meria or Merakāya. They were descendants of persons who were reserved for human (Meriah) sacrifice, but rescued by Government officials in the middle of the last century.

* Madras Museum Bull. III, 3, 1901.