



by them. In 1806, owing to the success<sup>1</sup> of previous expeditions, it was determined that all the Thugs of northern India should work on this road; accordingly after the Dasahra festival six hundred of them, under forty Jemādārs or leaders of note, set out from their homes, and having worshipped in the temple of Devi at Bindhyāchal, met at Ratanpur in Bilāspur. The gangs split up, and after several murders sixty of them came to Lānji in Bālāghāt, and here in two days' time fell in with a party of thirty-one men, seven women and two girls on their way to the Ganges. The Jemādārs soon became intimate with the principal men of the party, pretended to be going to the same part of India and won their confidence; and next day they all set out and in four days reached Ratanpur, where they met 160 Thugs returning from the murder of a wealthy widow and her escort. Shortly afterwards another 200 men who had heard of the travellers near Nāgpur also came up, but all the different bodies pretended to be strangers to each other. They detached sixty men to return to Nāgpur, leaving 360 to deal with the forty travellers. From Ratanpur they all journeyed to Chura (Chhuri?), and here scouts were sent on to select a proper place for the murder. This was chosen in a long stretch of forest, and two men were despatched to the village of Sutranja, farther on the road, to see that no one was coming in the opposite direction, while another picket remained behind to prevent interruption from the rear. By the time they reached the appointed place, the Bhurtots (stranglers) and Shamsias (holders) had all on some pretext or other got close to the side of the persons whom they were appointed to kill; and on reaching the spot the signal was given in several places at the same time, and thirty-eight out of forty were immediately seized and strangled. One of the girls was a very handsome young woman, and Pancham, a Jemādār, wished to preserve her as a wife for his son. But when she saw her father and mother strangled she screamed and beat her head against the ground and tried to kill herself. Pancham tried in vain to quiet her, and promised to take great care of her and marry her to his own son, who would be a great chief; but

<sup>1</sup> Sleeman, p. 205.





all to no effect. She continued to scream, and at last Pancham put the *rūmāl* (handkerchief) round her neck and strangled her. One little girl of three years old was preserved by another Jemādār and married to his son, and when she grew up often heard the story of the affair narrated. The bodies were buried in a ravine and the booty amounted to Rs. 17,000. The Thugs then decided to return home, and arrived without mishap, except that the Jemādār, Pancham, died on the way.

They were not particular, however, to ascertain that their victims carried valuable property before disposing of them. Eight annas (8d.), one of them said,<sup>1</sup> was sufficient remuneration for murdering a man. On another occasion two river Thugs killed two old men and obtained only a rupee's worth of coppers, two brass vessels and their body-cloths. But as a rule the gains were much larger. It sometimes happened that the Thugs themselves were robbed at night by ordinary thieves, though they usually set a watch. On one occasion a band of more than a hundred Thugs fell in with a party of twenty-seven dacoits who had with them stolen property of Rs. 13,000 in cash, with gold ornaments, gems and shawls. The Thugs asked to be allowed to travel under their protection, and the dacoits carelessly assenting were shortly afterwards all murdered.<sup>2</sup> As already stated, the Thugs were accustomed to live in towns or villages and many of them ostensibly followed respectable callings. The following instance of this is given by Sir W. Sleeman:<sup>3</sup> "The first party of Thug approvers whom I sent into the Deccan to aid Captain Reynolds recognised in the person of one of the most respectable linen-draper of the cantonment of Hingoli, Hari Singh, the adopted son of Jawāhir Sukul, Sūbahdār of Thugs, who had been executed twenty years before. On hearing that the Hari Singh of the list sent to him of noted Thugs at large in the Deccan was the Hari Singh of the Sadar Bazār, Captain Reynolds was quite astounded; so correct had he been in his deportment and all his dealings that he had won the esteem of all the gentlemen of the station, who used to assist him in procuring passports for his goods on their way from Bombay; and

7. Dis-  
guises of  
the Thugs.

<sup>1</sup> Hutton, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 71.

<sup>3</sup> Pp. 34, 35.



yet he had, as he has since himself shown, been carrying on his trade of murder up to the very day of his arrest with gangs of Hindustān and the Deccan on all the roads around and close to the cantonments of Hingoli ; and leading out his band of assassins while he pretended to be on his way to Bombay for a supply of fresh linen and broad-cloth." Another case is quoted by Mr. Oman from Taylor's *Thirty-eight Years in India*.<sup>1</sup> "Dr. Cheek had a child's bearer who had charge of his children. The man was a special favourite, remarkable for his kind and tender ways with his little charges, gentle in manner and unexceptionable in all his conduct. Every year he obtained leave from his master and mistress, as he said, for the filial purpose of visiting his aged mother for one month ; and returning after the expiry of that time, with the utmost punctuality, resumed with the accustomed affection and tenderness the charge of his little darlings. This mild and exemplary being was the missing Thug ; kind, gentle, conscientious and regular at his post for eleven months in the year he devoted the twelfth to strangulation."

8. Secrecy  
of their  
operations.

Again, as regards the secrecy with which murders were perpetrated and all traces of them hidden, Sir W. Sleeman writes :<sup>2</sup> "While I was in civil charge of the District of Narsinghpur, in the valley of the Nerbudda, in the years 1822-1824, no ordinary robbery or theft could be committed without my becoming aware of it, nor was there a robber or thief of the ordinary kind in the District with whose character I had not become acquainted in the discharge of my duties as magistrate ; and if any man had then told me that a gang of assassins by profession resided in the village of Kandeli,<sup>3</sup> not four hundred yards from my court, and that the extensive groves of the village of Mundesur, only one stage from me on the road to Saugor and Bhopāl, were one of the greatest *beles* or places of murder in all India, and that large gangs from Hindustān and the Deccan used to *rendezvous* in these groves, remain in them for many days every year, and carry on their dreadful trade along all the lines of road that

<sup>1</sup> See *Cults, Customs and Superstitions of India*, p. 249.

<sup>2</sup> Pp. 32, 33.

<sup>3</sup> Kandeli adjoins the headquarters station of Narsinghpur, the two towns being divided only by a stream.





pass by and branch off from them, with the knowledge and connivance of the two landholders by whose ancestors these groves had been planted, I should have thought him a fool or a madman; and yet nothing could have been more true. The bodies of a hundred travellers lie buried in and around the groves of Mundesur; and a gang of assassins lived in and about the village of Kandeli while I was magistrate of the District, and extended their depredations to the cities of Poona and Hyderābād."

The system of Thuggee reached its zenith during the anarchic period of the decline of the Mughal Empire, when only the strongest and most influential could obtain any assistance from the State in recovering property or exacting reparation for the deaths of murdered friends and relatives. Nevertheless, the Thugs could hardly have escaped considerable loss even from private vengeance had they been compelled to rely on themselves for protection. But this was not the case, for, like the Badhaks and other robbers, they enjoyed the countenance and support of landholders and ruling chiefs in return for presenting them with the choicest of their booty and taking holdings of land at very high rents. Sir W. Sleeman wrote<sup>1</sup> that, "The zamīndārs and landholders of every description have everywhere been found ready to receive these people under their protection from the desire to share in the fruits of their expeditions, and without the slightest feeling of religious or moral responsibility for the murders which they know must be perpetrated to secure these fruits. All that they require from them is a promise that they will not commit murders within their estates and thereby involve them in trouble." Sometimes the police could also be conciliated by bribes, and on one occasion when a body of Thugs who had killed twenty-five persons were being pursued by the Thākur of Powai<sup>2</sup> they retired upon the village of Tigura, and even the villagers came out to their support and defended them against his attack. Another officer wrote:<sup>3</sup> "To conclude, there seems no doubt but that this horrid crime has been fostered by all classes in the community—the landholders, the native

9. Support of landholders and villagers.

<sup>1</sup> P. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Near Bilehri in Jubbulpore.

<sup>3</sup> Captain Lewis in Sleeman's *Report on the Thug Gangs* (1840).





officers of our courts, the police and village authorities—all, I think, have been more or less guilty ; my meaning is not, of course, that every member of these classes, but that individuals varying in number in each class were concerned. The subordinate police officials have in many cases been *practising Thugs*, and the *chankūdārs* or village watchmen frequently so."

10. Murder of  
sepoys.

A favourite class of victims were sepoys proceeding to their homes on furlough and carrying their small savings ; such men would not be quickly missed, as their relatives would think they had not started, and the regimental authorities would ascribe their failure to return to desertion. So many of these disappeared that a special Army Order was issued warning them not to travel alone, and arranging for the transmission of their money through the Government treasuries.<sup>1</sup> In this order it is stated that the Thugs were accustomed first to stupefy their victim by surreptitiously administering the common narcotic *dhatūra*, still a familiar method of highway robbery.

11. Callous  
nature of  
the Thugs.

Like the Badhaks and other Indian robbers and the Italian banditti the Thugs were of a very religious or superstitious turn of mind. There was not one among them, Colonel Sleeman wrote,<sup>2</sup> who doubted the divine origin of Thuggee : "Not one who doubts that he and all who have followed the trade of murder, with the prescribed rites and observance, were acting under the immediate orders and auspices of the goddess, Devī, Durga, Kālī or Bhawānī, as she is indifferently called, and consequently there is not one who feels the slightest remorse for the murders which he may have perpetrated or abetted in the course of his vocation. A Thug considers the persons murdered precisely in the light of victims offered up to the goddess ; and he remembers them as a priest of Jupiter remembered the oxen and a priest of Saturn the children sacrificed upon their altars. He meditates his murders without any misgivings, he perpetrates them without any emotions of pity, and he recalls them without any feeling of remorse. They trouble not his dreams, nor does their recollection ever cause him inquietude in darkness, in solitude or in the hour of death."

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 15, 16.

<sup>2</sup> P. 7.





And again: "The most extraordinary trait in the characters of these people is not this that they can look back upon all the murders they have perpetrated without any feelings of remorse, but that they can look forward indifferently to their children, whom they love as tenderly as any man in the world, following the same trade of murder or being united in marriage to men who follow the trade. When I have asked them how they could cherish these children through infancy and childhood under the determination to make them murderers or marry them to murderers, the only observation they have ever made was that formerly there was no danger of their ever being hung or transported, but that now they would rather that their children should learn some less dangerous trade.

They considered that all their victims were killed by the agency of God and that they were merely irresponsible agents, appointed to live by killing travellers as tigers by feeding on deer. If a man committed a real murder they held that his family must become extinct, and adduced the fact that this fate had not befallen them as proof that their acts of killing were justifiable. Nay, they even held that those who oppressed them were punished by the goddess:<sup>1</sup> "Was not Nanha, the Rāja of Jālon," said one of them, "made leprous by Devi for putting to death Budhu and his brother Khumoli, two of the most noted Thugs of their day? He had them trampled under the feet of elephants, but the leprosy broke out on his body the very next day. When Mūdhaji Sindhia caused seventy Thugs to be executed at Mathura was he not warned in a dream by Devi that he should release them? And did he not the very day after their execution begin to spit blood? And did he not die within three months?" Their subsequent misfortunes and the success of the British officers against them they attributed to their disobedience of the ordinances of Devi in slaying women and other classes of prohibited persons and their disregard of her omens. They also held that the spirits of all their victims went straight to Paradise, and this was the reason why the Thugs were not troubled by them as other murderers were.

12. Belief  
in divine  
support.

<sup>1</sup> P. 150.



The fact that the Thugs considered themselves to be directed by the deity, reinforced by their numerous superstitious beliefs and observances, has led to the suggestion by one writer that they were originally a religious sect, whose principal tenet was the prohibition of the shedding of blood. There is, however, no evidence in support of this view in the accounts of Colonel Sleeman, incomparably the best authority. Their method of strangulation was, as has been seen, simply the safest and most convenient means of murder : it enabled them to dispense with arms, by the sight of which the apprehensions of their victims would have been aroused, and left no traces on the site of the crime to be observed by other travellers. On occasion also they did not scruple to employ weapons ; as in the murder of seven treasure-bearers near Hindoria in Damoh, who would not probably have allowed the Thugs to approach them, and in consequence were openly attacked and killed with swords.<sup>1</sup> Other instances are given in Colonel Sleeman's narrative, and they were also accustomed to cut and slash about the bodies of their victims after death. The belief that they were guided by the divine will may probably have arisen as a means of excusing their own misdeeds to themselves and allaying their fear of such retribution as being haunted by the ghosts of their victims. Similar instances of religious beliefs and practices are given in the accounts of other criminals, such as the Badhaks and Sānsias. And the more strict and serious observances of the Thugs may be accounted for by the more atrocious character of their crimes and the more urgent necessity of finding some palliative.

The veneration paid to the pickaxe, which will shortly be described, merely arises from the common animistic belief that tools and implements generally achieve the results obtained from them by their inherent virtue and of their own volition, and not from the human hand which guides them and the human brain which fashioned them to serve their ends. Members of practically all castes worship the implements of their profession and thus afford evidence of the same belief, the most familiar instance of which is perhaps, 'The pestilence that walketh in the darkness and

<sup>1</sup> Sleeman's *Report on the Thug Gangs*, Introduction, p. vi.





*Bemrose, Collo., Derby.*

THE GODDESS KĀLĪ.





the arrow that flieth by noonday'; where the writer intended no metaphor but actually thought that the pestilence walked and the arrow flew of their own volition.

Kāli or Bhawānī was the principal deity of the Thugs, as of most of the criminal and lower castes; and those who were Muhammadans got over the difficulty of her being a Hindu goddess by pretending that Fātima, the daughter of the Prophet, was an incarnation of her. In former times they held that the goddess was accustomed to relieve them of the trouble of destroying the dead bodies by devouring them herself; but in order that they might not see her doing this she had strictly enjoined on them never to look back on leaving the site of a murder. On one occasion a novice of the fraternity disobeyed this rule and, unguardedly looking behind him, saw the goddess in the act of feasting upon a body with the half of it hanging out of her mouth. Upon this she declared that she would no longer devour those whom the Thugs slaughtered; but she agreed to present them with one of her teeth for a pickaxe, a rib for a knife and the hem of her lower garment for a noose, and ordered them for the future to cut about and bury the bodies of those whom they destroyed. As there seems reason to suppose that the goddess Kāli represents the deified tiger, on which she rides, she was eminently appropriate as the patroness of the Thugs and in the capacity of the devourer of corpses.

When the sacred pickaxe used for burying corpses had to be made, the leader of the gang, having ascertained a lucky day from the priest, went to a blacksmith and after closing the door so that no other person might enter, got him to make the axe in his presence without touching any other work until it was completed. A day was then chosen for the consecration of the pickaxe, either Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Friday; and the ceremony was performed inside a house or tent, so that the shadow of no living thing might fall on and contaminate the sacred implement. A pit was dug in the ground and over it the pickaxe was washed successively with water, sugar and water, sour milk, and alcoholic liquor, all of which were poured over it into the pit. Finally it was marked seven times with vermilion.

14. Wor-  
ship of  
Kāli.

15. The  
sacred  
pickaxe.





A burnt offering was then made with all the usual ingredients for sacrifice and the pickaxe was passed seven times through the flames. A cocoanut was placed on the ground, and the priest, holding the pickaxe by the point in his right hand, said, 'Shall I strike?' The others replied yes, and striking the cocoanut with the butt end he broke it in pieces, upon which all exclaimed, 'All hail, Devi, and prosper the Thugs.' All then partook of the kernel of the cocoanut, and collecting the fragments put them into the pit so that they might not afterwards be contaminated by the touch of any man's foot. Here the cocoanut may probably be considered as a substituted sacrifice for a human being. Thereafter the pickaxe was called Kassi or Mahi instead of *kudāli*, the ordinary name, and was given to the shrewdest, cleanest and most sober and careful man of the party, who carried it in his waist-belt. While in camp he buried it in a secure place with its point in the direction they intended to go; and they believed that if another direction was better the point would be found changed towards it. They said that formerly the pickaxe was thrown into a well and would come up of itself when summoned with due ceremonies; but since they disregarded the ordinances of Kāli it had lost that virtue. Many Thugs told Colonel Sleeman<sup>1</sup> that they had seen the pickaxe rise out of the well in the morning of its own accord and come to the hands of the man who carried it; and even the several pickaxes of different gangs had been known to come up of themselves from the same well and go to their respective bearers. The pickaxe was also worshipped on every seventh day during an expedition, and it was believed that the sound made by it in digging a grave was never heard by any one but a Thug. The oath by the pickaxe was in their esteem far more sacred than that by the Ganges water or the Korān, and they believed that a man who perjured himself by this oath would die or suffer some great calamity within six days. In prison, when administering an oath to each other in cases of dispute, they sometimes made an image of the pickaxe out of a piece of cloth and consecrated it for the purpose. If the pickaxe at any time fell from the hands of the carrier it was a dreadful

<sup>1</sup> P. 142.





omen and portended either that he would be killed that year or that the gang would suffer some grievous misfortune. He was deprived of his office and the gang either returned home or chose a fresh route and consecrated the pickaxe anew.

After each murder they had a sacrificial feast of *gur* or unrefined sugar. This was purchased to the value of Rs. 1-4, and the leader of the gang and the other Bhurtotes (stranglers) sat on a blanket with the rest of the gang round them. A little sugar was dropped into a hole and the leader prayed to Devi to send them some rich victims. The remainder of the sugar was divided among all present. One of them gave the *jhiri* or signal for strangling and they consumed the sugar in solemn silence, no fragment of it being lost. They believed that it was this consecrated *gur* which gave the desire for the trade of a Thug and made them callous to the sufferings of their victims, and they thought that if any outsider tasted it he would at once become a Thug and continue so all his life. When Colonel Sleeman asked<sup>1</sup> a young man who had strangled a beautiful young woman in opposition to their rules, whether he felt no pity for her, the leader Feringia exclaimed: "We all feel pity sometimes, but the *gur* of the Tuponi (sacrifice) changes our nature. It would change the nature of a horse. Let any man once taste of that *gur* and he will be a Thug, though he knows all the trades and have all the wealth in the world. I never wanted food; my mother's family was opulent, her relations high in office. I have been high in office myself, and became so great a favourite wherever I went that I was sure of promotion; yet I was always miserable while absent from my gang and obliged to return to Thuggee. My father made me taste of that fatal *gur* when I was yet a mere boy; and if I were to live a thousand years I should never be able to follow any other trade."

16. The sacred *gur* (sugar).

The eating of this *gur* was clearly the sacrificial meal of the Thugs. On the analogy of other races they should have partaken of the body of an animal god at their sacrificial meal, and if the goddess Kālī is the deified tiger, they should have eaten tiger's flesh. This custom, if it ever existed, had

<sup>1</sup> P. 216.





been abandoned, and the *gur* would in that case be a substitute; and as has been seen the eating of the *gur* was held to confer on them the same cruelty, callousness and desire to kill which might be expected to follow from eating tiger's flesh and thus assimilating the qualities of the animal. Since they went unarmed as a rule, in order to avoid exciting the suspicions of their victims, it would be quite impossible for them to obtain tiger's flesh, except by the rarest accident; and the *gur* might be considered a suitable substitute, since its yellow colour would be held to make it resemble the tiger.

17. Wor-  
ship of  
ancestors.

The Thugs also worshipped the spirits of their ancestors. One of these was Dādu Dhira, an ancient Thug of the Barsote class, who was invoked at certain religious ceremonies, when liquor was drunk. Vows were made to offer libations of ardent spirits to him, and if the prayer was answered the worshipper drank the liquor, or if his caste precluded him from doing this, threw it on the ground with an expression of thanks. Another deity was the spirit of Jhora Nāik, who was a Muhammadan. He and his servant killed a man who had jewels and other articles laden on a mule to the value of more than a lakh and a half. They brought home the booty, assembled all the members of their fraternity within reach, and honestly divided the whole as if all had been present. The Thugs also said that Nizām-ud-dīn Aulia, a well-known Muhammadan saint, famed for his generosity, whose shrine is near Delhi, had been a Thug, at any rate in his younger days. He distributed so much money in charity that he was supposed to be endowed with a Dustul Ghīb or supernatural purse; and they supposed that he obtained it by the practice of Thuggee. Orthodox Muhammadans would, however, no doubt indignantly repudiate this.

18. Fast-  
ing.

Whenever they set out on a fresh expedition the first week was known as Satha (seven). During this period the families of those who were engaged in it would admit no visitors from the relatives of other Thugs, lest the travellers destined for their own gang should go over to these others; neither could they eat any food belonging to the families of other Thugs. During the Satha period the Thugs engaged in the





expedition ate no animal food except fish and nothing cooked with *ghī* (melted butter). They did not shave or bathe or have their clothes washed or indulge in sexual intercourse, or give away anything in charity or throw any part of their food to dogs or jackals. At one time they ate no salt or turmeric, but this rule was afterwards abandoned. But if the Sourka or first murder took place within the seven days they considered themselves relieved by it from all these restraints.

A Thug seldom attained to the office of Bhurtote or strangler until he had been on several expeditions and acquired the requisite courage or insensibility by slow degrees. At first they were almost always shocked or frightened; but after a time they said they lost all sympathy with the victims. They were first employed as scouts, then as buriers of the dead, next as Shamsias or holders of hands, and finally as stranglers. When a man felt that he had sufficient courage and insensibility he begged the oldest and most renowned Thug of the gang to make him his *chela* or disciple. If his proposal was accepted he awaited the arrival of a suitable victim of not too great bodily strength. While the traveller was asleep with the gang at their quarters the *guru* or preceptor took his disciple into a neighbouring field, followed by three or four old members of the gang. Here they all faced in the direction in which the gang intended to move, and the *guru* said, "Oh *Kālī*, *Kunkālī*, *Bhudkālī*,<sup>1</sup> Oh *Kālī*, *Mahā Kālī*, *Kalkatāwālī*! If it seemeth to thee fit that the traveller now at our lodging should die by the hands of this thy slave, vouchsafe, we pray thee, the omen on the right." If they got this within a certain interval the candidate was considered to be accepted, and if not some other Thug put the traveller to death and he had to wait for another chance. In the former case they returned to their quarters and the *guru* took a handkerchief and tied the slip-knot in one end of it with a rupee inside it. The disciple received it respectfully in his right

19. Initiation of a novice.

<sup>1</sup> 'Oh *Kālī*, Eater of Men, Oh great *Kālī* of Calcutta.' The name Calcutta signifies *Kālī-ghāt* or *Kālī-kota*, that is *Kālī's* ferry or house. The story is that Job Charnock was exploring on the banks of the Hoogly, when he

found a widow about to be burnt as a sacrifice to *Kālī*. He rescued her, married her, and founded a settlement on the site, which grew into the town of Calcutta.





hand and stood over the victim with the Shamsia or holder by his side. The traveller was roused on some pretence or other and the disciple passed the handkerchief over his neck and strangled him. He then bowed down to his *guru* and all his relations and friends in gratitude for the honour he had obtained. He gave the rupee from the knot with other money, if he had it, to the *guru*, and with this sugar or sweetmeats were bought and the *gur* sacrifice was celebrated, the new strangler taking one of the seats of honour on the blanket for the first time. The relation between a strangler and his *guru* was considered most sacred, and a Thug would often rather betray his father than the preceptor by whom he had been initiated. There were certain classes of persons whom they were forbidden to kill, and they considered that the rapid success of the English officers in finally breaking up the gangs was to be attributed to the divine wrath at breaches of these rules. The original rule<sup>1</sup> was that the Sourka or first victim must not be a Brāhman, nor a Saiyad, nor any very poor man, nor any man with gold on his person, nor any man who had a quadruped with him, nor a washerwoman, nor a sweeper, nor a Teli (oilman), nor a Bhāt (bard), nor a Kāyasth (writer), nor a leper, dancing-woman, pilgrim or devotee. The reason for some of these exemptions is obvious: Brāhmans, Muhammadan Saiyads, bards, religious mendicants and devotees were excluded owing to their sanctity; and sweepers, washermen and lepers owing to their impurity, which would have the same evil and unlucky effect on their murderers as the holiness of the first classes. A man wearing gold ornaments would be protected by the sacred character of the metal; and the killing of a poor man as the first victim would naturally presage a lack of valuable booty during the remainder of the expedition. Telis and Kāyasths are often considered as unlucky castes, and even in the capacity of victims might be held to bring an evil fortune on their murderers.

20. Prohibition of murder of women.

Another list is given of persons whom it was forbidden to kill at any time, and of these the principal category was women. It was a rule of all Thugs that women should not be murdered, but one which they constantly

<sup>1</sup> P. 133.





broke, for few large parties consisted solely of men, and to allow victims to escape from a party would have been a suicidal policy. In all the important exploits related to Colonel Sleeman the women who accompanied victims were regularly strangled, with the occasional exception of young girls who might be saved and married to the sons of Thug leaders. The breach of the rule as to the murder of women was, however, that which they believed to be specially offensive to their patroness Bhawāni; and no Thug, Colonel Sleeman states, was ever known to offer insult either in act or speech to the women whom they were about to murder. No gang would ever dare to murder a woman with whom one of its members should be suspected of having had criminal intercourse. The murder of women was especially reprobated by Hindus, and the Muhammadan Thugs were apparently responsible for the disregard of this rule which ultimately became prevalent, as shown by the dispute over the killing of a wealthy old lady,<sup>1</sup> narrated by one of the Thugs as follows: "I remember the murder of Kāli Bibi well; I was at the time on an expedition to Baroda and not present, but Punua must have been there. A dispute arose between the Musalmāns and Hindus before and after the murder. The Musalmāns insisted upon killing her as she had Rs. 4000 of property with her, but the Hindus would not agree. She was killed, and the Hindus refused to take any part of the booty; they came to blows, but at last the Hindus gave in and consented to share in all but the clothes and ornaments which the woman wore. Feringia's father, Parasrām Brāhman, was there, and when they came home Parasrām's brother, Rai Singh, refused to eat, drink or smoke with his brother till he had purged himself from this great sin; and he, with two other Thugs, a Rājput and a Brāhman, gave a feast which cost them a thousand rupees each. Four or five thousand Brāhmans were assembled at that feast. Had it rested here we should have thrived; but in the affair of the sixty victims women were again murdered; in the affair of the forty several women were murdered; and from that time we may trace our decline."

Another rule was that a man having a cow with him





21. Other  
classes of  
persons  
not killed.

should not be murdered, no doubt on account of the sanctity attaching to the animal. But in one case of a murder of fourteen persons including women and a man with a cow at Kotri in the Damoh District, the Thugs, having made acquaintance with the party, pretended that they had made a vow to offer a cow at a temple in Shāhpur lying on their road and persuaded the cow's owner to sell her to them for this sacred purpose, and having duly made the offering and deprived him of the protection afforded by the cow, they had no compunction in strangling him with all the travellers. Travellers who had lost a limb were also exempted from death, but this rule too was broken, as in the case of the native officer with his two daughters who was murdered by the Thugs he had befriended ; for it is recorded that this man had lost a leg. Pilgrims carrying Ganges water could not be killed if they actually had the Ganges water with them ; and others who should not be murdered were washermen, sweepers, oil-vendors, dancers and musicians, carpenters and blacksmiths, if found travelling together, and religious mendicants. The reason for the exemption of carpenters and blacksmiths only when travelling together may probably have been that the sacred pickaxe was their joint handiwork, having a wooden handle and an iron head ; and this seems a more likely explanation than any other in view of the deep veneration shown for the pickaxe. Maimed persons would probably not be acceptable victims to the goddess, according to the rule that the sacrifice must be without spot or blemish. The other classes have already been discussed under the exemption of first victims. Among the Deccan Thugs if a man strangled any victim of a class whom it was forbidden to kill, he was expelled from the community and never readmitted to it. This was considered a most dreadful crime.

22. Belief  
in omens.

The Thugs believed that the wishes of the deity were constantly indicated to them by the appearance or cries of a large number of wild animals and birds from which they drew their omens ; and indeed the number of these was so extensive that they could never be at a loss for an indication of the divine will, and difficulties could only arise when the omens were conflicting. As a general rule the omen varied





according as it was heard on the left hand, known as Pilhao, or the right, known as Thibao. On first opening an expedition an omen must be heard on the left and be followed by one on the right, or no start was made; it signified that the deity took them first by the left hand and then by the right to lead them on. When they were preparing to march or starting on a road, an omen heard on the left encouraged them to go on, but if it came from the right they halted. When arriving at their camping-place on the other hand the omen on the right was auspicious and they stayed, but if it came from the left the projected site was abandoned and the march continued. In the case of the calls of a very few animals these rules were reversed, left and right being transposed in each instance. The howl of the jackal was always bad if heard during the day, and the gang immediately quitted the locality, leaving untouched any victims whom they might have inveigled, however wealthy. The jackal's cry at night followed the rule of right and left. The jackal was probably revered by the Thugs as the devourer of corpses. The sound made by the lizard was at all times and places a very good omen; but if a lizard fell upon a Thug it was bad, and any garment touched by it must be given away in charity. The call of the *sāras* crane was a very important omen, and when heard first on the left and then on the right or vice versa according to the rules given above, they expected a great booty in jewels or money. The call of the partridge followed the same rules but was not of so much importance. That of the large crow was favourable if the bird was sitting on a tree, especially when a tank or river could be seen; but if the crow was perched on the back of a buffalo or pig or on the skeleton of any animal, it was a bad omen. Tanks or rivers were likely places for booty in the shape of resting travellers, whose death the appearance of the crow might portend; whereas in the other positions it might prognosticate a Thug's own death. The chirping of the small owlet was considered to be a bad omen, whether made while the bird was sitting or flying; it was known as *chiraiya*, and is a low and melancholy sound seldom repeated. They considered it a very bad omen to hear the hare squeaking; this, unless it was averted by sacrifices, signified, they said,





that they would perish in the jungles, and the hare or some other animal of the forest would drink water from their skulls. "We know that the hare was used in Brittany as an animal of augury for foretelling the future; and all animals of augury were once venerated."<sup>1</sup> The hare has still some remnant of sanctity among the Hindus. Women will not eat its flesh, and men eat the flesh of wild hares only, not of tame ones. It seems likely that the hare may have been considered capable of foretelling the future on account of its long ears. The omen of the donkey was considered the most important of all, whether it threatened evil or promised good. It was a maxim of augury that the ass was equal to a hundred birds, and it was also more important than all other quadrupeds. If they heard its bray on the left on the opening of an expedition and it was soon after repeated on the right, they believed that nothing on earth could prevent their success during that expedition though it should last for years. The ass is the sacred animal of Sitala, the goddess of smallpox, who is a form of Kālī. The ears and also the bray of the ass would give it importance.

The noise of two cats heard fighting was propitious only during the first watch of the night; if heard later in the night it was known as '*Kālī ki mauj*' or 'Kālī's temper,' and threatened evil, and if during the daytime as '*Dhāmoni*'<sup>2</sup> '*ki mauj*,' and was a prelude of great misfortune; while if the cats fell from a height while fighting it was worst of all. The above shows that the cat was also the animal of Kālī and is a point in favour of her derivation from the tiger; and on this hypothesis the importance of the omen of the cat is explained. If they obtained a good omen when in company with travellers they believed that it was a direct order from heaven to kill them, and that if they disobeyed the sign and let the travellers go they would never obtain any more victims.<sup>3</sup>

If a mare dropped a foal in their camp while they were travelling, they were all contaminated or came under the Itak;

<sup>1</sup> *Orphéus*, p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> Dhāmoni is an old ruined fort and town in the north of Saugor District, still a favourite haunt of tigers; and

the Thugs may often have lain there in concealment and heard the tigers quarrelling in the jungle.

<sup>3</sup> Sleeman, p. 196.





and the only remedy for this was to return home and start the journey afresh. Various other events<sup>1</sup> also produced the Itak, especially among the Deccan Thugs; these were the birth of a child in a Thug family; the first courses of a Thug's daughter; a marriage in a Thug's family; a death of any member of his family except an infant at the breast; circumcision of a boy; a buffalo or cow giving calf or dying; and a cat or dog giving a litter or dying. If a party fell under the Itak or contamination at a time when it was extremely inconvenient or impossible to return home, they sometimes marched back for a few miles and slept the night, making a fresh start in the morning, and this was considered equivalent to beginning a new journey after getting rid of the contamination. If any member of the party sneezed on setting out on an expedition or on the day's march, it was a bad omen and required expiatory sacrifices; and if they had travellers with them when this omen occurred, these must be allowed to escape and could not be put to death. Omens were also taken from the turban, without which no Thug, except perhaps in Bengal, would travel.<sup>2</sup> If a turban caught fire a great evil was portended, and the gang must, if near home, return and wait for seven days. But if they had travelled for some distance an offering of *gur* (sugar) was made, and the owner of the turban alone returned home. If a man's turban fell off it was also considered a very bad omen, requiring expiatory sacrifices. The turban is important as being the covering of the head, which many primitive people consider to contain the life or soul (*Golden Bough*). A shower of rain falling at any time except during the monsoon period from June to September was also a bad omen which must be averted by sacrifices. Prior to the commencement<sup>3</sup> of an expedition a Brāhman was employed to select a propitious day and hour for the start and for the direction in which the gang should proceed. After this the auspices were taken with great solemnity and, if favourable omens were obtained, the party set out and made a few steps in the direction indicated; after this they might turn to the right or left as impediments or incentives presented themselves. If they heard any one weeping for a death as they

<sup>1</sup> P. 91.<sup>2</sup> P. 67.<sup>3</sup> P. 100.





left the village, it threatened great evil; and so, too, if they met the corpse of any one belonging to their own village, but not that of a stranger. And it was also a bad omen to meet an oil-vendor, a carpenter, a potter, a dancing-master, a blind or lame man, a Fakir (beggar) with a brown waist-band or a Jogi (mendicant) with long matted hair. Most of these were included in the class of persons who might not be killed.

24. Nature  
of the  
belief in  
omens.

The custom of the Thugs, and in a less degree of ignorant and primitive races generally, of being guided in their every action by the chance indications afforded from the voices and movements of birds and animals appears to the civilised mind extremely foolish. But its explanation is not difficult when the character of early religious beliefs is realised. It was held by savages generally that animals, birds and all other living things, as well as trees and other inanimate objects, had souls and exercised conscious volition like themselves. And those animals, such as the tiger and cow, and other objects, such as the sun and moon and high mountains or trees, which appeared most imposing and terrible, or exercised the most influence on their lives, were their principal deities, the spirits of which at a later period developed into anthropomorphic gods. Even the lesser animals and birds were revered and considered to be capable of affecting the lives of men. Hence their appearance, their flight and their cries were naturally taken to be direct indications afforded by the god to his worshippers; and it was in the interpretation of these, the signs given by the divine beings by whom man was surrounded, and whom at one time he considered superior to himself, that the science of augury consisted. "The priestesses of the oracle of Zeus at Dodona called themselves doves, as those of Diana at Ephesus called themselves bees; this proves that the oracles of the temples were formerly founded on observations of the flight of doves and bees, and no doubt also that the original cult consisted in the worship of these animals."<sup>1</sup> Thus, as is seen here, when the deity was no longer an animal but had developed into a god in human shape, the animal remained associated with him and partook of his sanctity; and what could be

<sup>1</sup> *Orphéus* (M. Salomon Reinach), p. 316.





more natural than that he should convey the indications of his will through the appearance, movements and cries of the sacred animal to his human *protégés*. The pseudo-science of omens is thus seen to be a natural corollary of the veneration of animals and inanimate objects.

When the suppression of the Thugs was seriously taken in hand by the Thuggee and Dacoity Department under the direction of Sir William Sleeman, this abominable confraternity, which had for centuries infested the main roads of India and made away with tens of thousands of helpless travellers, never to be heard of again by their families and friends, was destroyed with comparatively little difficulty. The Thugs when arrested readily furnished the fullest information of their murders and the names of their confederates in return for the promise of their lives, and Colonel Sleeman started a separate file or *dossier* for every Thug whose name became known to him, in which all information obtained about him from different informers was collected. In this manner, as soon as a man was arrested and identified, a mass of evidence was usually at once forthcoming to secure his conviction. Between 1826 and 1835 about 2000 Thugs were arrested and hanged, transported or kept under restraint; subsequently to this a larger number of British officers were deputed to the work of hunting down the Thugs, and by 1848 it was considered that this form of crime had been practically stamped out. For the support of the approver Thugs and the families of these and others a labour colony was instituted at Jubbulpore, which subsequently developed into the school of industry and was the parent of the existing Reformatory School. Here these criminals were taught tent and carpet-making and other trades, and in time grew to be ashamed of the murderous calling in which they had once taken a pride.

25. Sup-  
pression of  
Thuggee.





## TURI

## LIST OF PARAGRAPHS

- |                                |                          |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. <i>Origin of the caste.</i> | 4. <i>Funeral rites.</i> |
| 2. <i>Subdivisions.</i>        | 5. <i>Occupation.</i>    |
| 3. <i>Marriage.</i>            | 6. <i>Social status.</i> |

t. Origin  
of the  
caste.

**Turi.**—A non-Aryan caste of cultivators, workers in bamboo, and basket-makers, belonging to the Chota Nāgpur plateau. They number about 4000 persons in Raigarh, Sārangarh and the States recently transferred from Bengal. The physical type of the Turis, Sir H. Risley states, their language, and their religion place it beyond doubt that they are a Hinduised offshoot of the Munda tribe. They still speak a dialect derived from Mundāri, and their principal deity is Singbonga or the sun, the great god of the Mundas: "In Lohardaga, where the caste is most numerous, it is divided into four subcastes—Turi or Kisān-Turi, Or, Dom, and Domra—distinguished by the particular modes of basket and bamboo-work which they practise. Thus the Turi or Kisān-Turi, who are also cultivators and hold *bhuinhāri* land, make the *sūp*, a winnowing sieve made of *sirki*, the upper joint of *Saccharum procerum*; the *tokri* or *tokiya*, a large open basket of split bamboo twigs woven up with the fibre of the leaves of the *tāl* palm; the *sair* and *nadua*, used for catching fish. The Ors are said to take their name from the *oriya* basket used by the sower, and made of split bamboo, sometimes helped out with *tāl* fibre. They also make umbrellas, and the *chhota dali* or *dāla*, a flat basket with vertical sides used for handling grain in small quantities. Doms make the *harka* and scale-pans (*tarāju*). Domras make the *peti* and fans. Turis frequently reckon in as a fifth subcaste the Birhors, who



cut bamboos and make the *sikas* used for carrying loads slung on a shoulder-yoke (*bhangi*), and a kind of basket called *phanda*. Doms and Domras speak Hindi; Turis, Ors and Birhors use among themselves a dialect of Mundāri.”<sup>1</sup>

In Raigarh and Sārangarh of the Central Provinces the above subcastes are not found, and there are no distinct endogamous groups; but the more Hinduised members of the caste have begun to marry among themselves and call themselves Turia, while they look down on the others to whom they restrict the designation Turi. The names of subcastes given by Sir H. Risley appear to indicate that the Turis are an offshoot from the Mundas, with an admixture of Doms and other low Uriya castes. Among themselves the caste is also known as Husil, a term which signifies a worker in bamboo. The caste say that their original ancestor was created by Singbonga, the sun, and had five sons, one of whom found a wooden image of their deity in the Baranda forest, near the Barpahāri hill in Chota Nāgpur. This image was adopted as their family deity, and is revered to the present day as Barpahāri Deo. The deity is thus called after the hill, of which it is clear that he is the personified representative. From the five sons are descended the five main septs of the Turis. The eldest was called Mailuār, and his descendants are the leaders or headmen of the caste. The group sprung from the second son are known as Chardhagia, and it is their business to purify and readmit offenders to caste intercourse. The descendants of the third son conduct the ceremonial shaving of such offenders, and are known as Surennār, while those of the fourth son bring water for the ceremony and are called Tīrkuār. The fifth group is known as Hasdagia, and it is said that they are the offspring of the youngest brother, who committed some offence, and the four other brothers took the parts which are still played by their descendants in his ceremony of purification. Traces of similar divisions appear to be found in Bengal, as Sir H. Risley states that before a marriage can be celebrated the consent of the heads of the Mādalwār and Surinwār sections, who are known respectively as Rāja and Thākur, is obtained, while

2. Sub-divisions.

<sup>1</sup> *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, art. Turi.



the head of the Charchāgiya section officiates as priest. The above names are clearly only variants of those found in the Central Provinces. But besides the above groups the Turis have a large number of exogamous septs of a totemistic nature, some of which are identical with those of the Mundas.

3. Marriage.

Marriage is adult, and the bride and bridegroom are usually about the same age; but girls are scarce in the caste, and betrothals are usually effected at an early age, so that the fathers of boys may obtain brides for their sons. A contract of betrothal, once made, cannot be broken without incurring social disgrace, and compensation in money is also exacted. A small bride-price of three or four rupees and a piece of cloth is payable to the girl's father. As in the case of some other Uriya castes the proposal for a marriage is couched in poetic phraseology, the Turi bridegroom's ambassador announcing his business with the phrase: 'I hear that a sweet-scented flower has blossomed in your house and I have come to gather it'; to which the bride's father, if the match be acceptable, replies: 'You may take away my flower if you will not throw it away when its sweet scent has gone.' The girl then appears, and the boy's father gives her a piece of cloth and throws a little liquor over her feet. He then takes her on his lap and gives her an anna to buy a ring for herself, and sometimes kisses her and says, 'You will preserve my lineage.' He washes the feet of her relatives, and the contract of betrothal is thus completed, and its violation by either party is a serious matter. The wedding is performed according to the ritual commonly practised by the Uriya castes. The binding portion of it consists in the perambulation of the sacred pole five or seven times. After each circle the bridegroom takes hold of the bride's toe and makes her kick away a small heap of rice on which a nut and a pice coin are placed. After this a cloth is held over the couple and each rubs vermilion on the other's forehead. At this moment the bride's brother appears, and gives the bridegroom a blow on the back. This is probably in token of his wrath at being deprived of his sister. A meal of rice and fowls is set before the bride-





groom, but he feigns displeasure, and refuses to eat them. The bride's parents then present him with a pickaxe and a crooked knife, saying that these are the implements of their trade, and will suffice him for a livelihood. The bridegroom, however, continues obdurate until they promise him a cow or a bullock, when he consents to eat. The bride's family usually spend some twenty or more rupees on her wedding, and the bridegroom's family about fifty rupees. A widow is expected to marry her Dewar or deceased husband's younger brother, and if she takes somebody else he must repay to the Dewar the expenditure incurred by the latter's family on her first marriage. Divorce is permitted for misconduct on the part of the wife or for incompatibility of temper.

The caste bury the dead, placing the head to the north. They make libations to the spirits of their ancestors on the last day of Phāgun (February), and not during the fortnight of Pitripaksh in Kunwār (September) like other Hindu castes. They believe that the spirits of ancestors are reborn in children, and when a baby is born they put a grain of rice into a pot of water and then five other grains in the names of ancestors recently deceased. When one of these meets the grain representing the child they hold that the ancestor in question has been born again. The principal deity of the caste is Singbonga, the sun, and according to one of their stories the sun is female. They say that the sun and moon were two sisters, both of whom had children, but when the sun gave out great heat the moon was afraid that her children would be burnt up, so she hid them in a *handi* or earthen pot. When the sun missed her sister's children she asked her where they were, and the moon replied that she had eaten them up; on which the sun also ate up her own children. But when night came the moon took her children out of the earthen pot and they spread out in the sky and became the stars. And when the sun saw this she was greatly angered and vowed that she would never look on the moon's face again. And it is on this account that the moon is not seen in the daytime, and as the sun ate up all her children there are no stars during the day.

4. Funeral rites.



5. Occupa-  
tion.

The caste make and sell all kinds of articles manufactured from the wood of the bamboo, and the following list of their wares will give an idea of the variety of purposes for which this product is utilised: "*Tukna*, an ordinary basket; *dauri*, a basket for washing rice in a stream; *lodhar*, a large basket for carrying grain on carts; *chuki*, a small basket for measuring grain; *garni* and *sikosi*, a small basket for holding betel-leaf and a box for carrying it in the pocket; *dhitori*, a fish-basket; *dholi*, a large bamboo shed for storing grain; *ghurki* and *paili*, grain measures; *chhanni*, a sieve; *taji*, a balance; *pankha* and *bijna*, fans; *pelna*, a triangular frame for a fishing-net; *choniya*, a cage for catching fish; *chatai*, matting; *chhāta*, an umbrella; *chhitori*, a leaf hat for protecting the body from rain; *pinjra*, a cage; *khunkhuna*, a rattle; and *guna*, a muzzle for bullocks.

Most of them are very poor, and they say that when Singbonga made their ancestors he told them to fetch something in which to carry away the grain which he would give them for their support; but the Turis brought a bamboo sieve, and when Singbonga poured the grain into the sieve nearly the whole of it ran out. So he reproved them for their foolishness, and said, '*Khasar, khasar, tin pasar*,' which meant that, however hard they should work, they would never earn more than three handfuls of grain a day.

6. Social  
status.

The social status of the Turis is very low, and their touch is regarded as impure. They must live outside the village and may not draw water from the common well; the village barber will not shave them nor the washerman wash their clothes. They will eat all kinds of food, including the flesh of rats and other vermin, but not beef. The rules regarding social impurity are more strictly observed in the Uriya country than elsewhere, owing to the predominant influence of the Brāhmans, and this is probably the reason why the Turis are so severely ostracised. Their code of social morality is not strict, and a girl who is seduced by a man of the caste is simply made over to him as his wife, the ordinary bride-price being exacted from him. He must also feed the caste-fellows, and any money which is received by the girl's father is expended in the same manner. Members of Hindu castes and Gonds may be admitted into the com-





munity, but not the Munda tribes, such as the Mundas themselves and the Kharias and Korwas; and this, though the Turis, as has been seen, are themselves an offshoot of the Munda tribe. The fact indicates that in Chota Nāgpur the tribes of the Munda family occupy a lower social position than the Gonds and others belonging to the Dravidian family. When an offender of either sex is to be readmitted into caste after having been temporarily expelled for some offence he or she is given water to drink and has a lock of hair cut off. Their women are tattooed on the arms, breast and feet, and say that this is the only ornament which they can carry to the grave.

**Velama, Elama, Yelama.**—A Telugu cultivating caste found in large numbers in Vizagapatam and Ganjām, while in 1911 about 700 persons were returned from Chānda and other districts in the Central Provinces. The caste frequently also call themselves by the honorific titles of Naidu or Dora (lord). The Velamas are said formerly to have been one with the Kamma caste, but to have separated on the question of retaining the custom of *parda* or *gosha* which they had borrowed from the Muhammadans. The Kammas abandoned *parda*, and, signing a bond written on palm-leaf to this effect, obtained their name from *kamma*, a leaf. The Velamas retained the custom, but a further division has taken place on the subject, and one subcaste, called the Adi or original Velamas, do not seclude their women. The caste has at present a fairly high position, and several important Madras chiefs are Velamas, as well as the zamīndār of Sironcha in the Central Provinces. They appear, however, to have improved their status, and thus to have incurred the jealousy of their countrymen, as is evidenced by some derogatory sayings current about the caste. Thus the Baliyas call them Gūni Sakalvāndlu or hunchbacked washermen, because some of them print chintz and carry their goods in a bundle on their backs.<sup>1</sup> According to another derivation *gūna* is the large pot in which they dye their cloth. Another story is that the name of the caste is Velimāla, meaning those who are above or better than the

r. Origin and social status.

<sup>1</sup> *North Arcot Manual*, i. p. 216.





Dhers, and was a title conferred on them by the Rāja of Bastar in recognition of the bravery displayed by the Velamas in his army. These stories are probably the outcome of the feeling of jealousy which attaches to castes which have raised themselves in the social scale. The customs of the Velamas do not indicate a very high standard of ceremonial observance, as they eat fowls and pork and drink liquor. They are said to take food from Bestas and Dhīmars, while Kunbis will take it from them. The men of the caste are tall and strong, of a comparatively fair complexion and of a bold and arrogant demeanour. It is said that a Velama will never do anything himself which a servant can do for him, and a story is told of one of them who was smoking when a spark fell on his moustache. He called his servant to remove it, but by the time the man came, his master's moustache had been burnt away. These stories and the customs of the Velamas appear to indicate that they are a caste of comparatively low position, who have gone up in the world, and are therefore tenacious in asserting a social position which is not universally admitted. Their subcastes show that a considerable difference in standing exists in the different branches of the caste. Of these the Rācha or royal Velamas, to whom the chiefs and zamīndārs belong, are the highest. While others are the Gūna Velamas or those who use a dyer's pot, the Eku or 'Cotton-skein' who are weavers and carders, and the Tellāku or white leaf Velamas, the significance of this last name not being known. It is probable that the Velamas were originally a branch of the great Kāpu or Reddi caste of cultivators, corresponding in the Telugu country to the Kurmis and Kunbis, as many of their section names are the same as those of the Kāpus. The Velamas apparently took up the trades of weaving and dyeing, and some of them engaged in military service and acquired property. These are now landowners and cultivators and breed cattle, while others dye and weave cloth. They will not engage themselves as hired labourers, and they do not allow their women to work in the fields.

The caste are said to have 77 exogamous groups descended from the 77 followers or spearsmen who attended Rāja Rudra Pratāp of Bastar when he was ousted from





Wārangal. These section names are eponymous, territorial and totemistic, instances of the last kind being Cherukunūla from *cheruku*, sugarcane, and Pasapunūla from *pasapu*, turmeric, and *nūla*, thread. Marriage within the section or *gotra* is prohibited, but first cousins may intermarry. Marriage is usually adult, and the binding portion of the ceremony consists in the tying of the *mangal-sūtram* or happy thread by the bridegroom round the bride's neck. At the end of the marriage the *kankans* or bracelets of the bridegroom and bride are taken off in signification that all obstacles to complete freedom of intercourse and mutual confidence between the married pair have been removed. In past years, when the Gūna Velamas had a marriage, they were bound to pay the marriage expenses of a couple of the Palli or fisherman caste, in memory of the fact that on one occasion when the Gūna Velamas were in danger of being exterminated by their enemies, the Pallis rescued them in their boats and carried them to a place of safety. But now it is considered sufficient to hang up a fishing-net in the house when a marriage ceremony of the Gūna Velamas is being celebrated.<sup>1</sup> The caste do not permit the marriage of widows, and divorce is confined to cases in which a wife is guilty of adultery. The Velamas usually employ Vaishnava Brāhmins as their priests. They burn the bodies of those who die after marriage, and bury those dying before it. Children are named on the twenty-first day after birth, the child being placed in a swing, and the name selected by the parents being called out three times by the oldest woman present. On this day the mother is taken to a well and made to draw a bucket of water by way of declaration that she is fit to do household work.

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Antiquary* (1879), p. 216.





## VIDUR

## LIST OF PARAGRAPHS

- |  |  |
|--|--|
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| 2. <i>The Purāṇs, Golaks and Borals.</i>         | 5. <i>Marriage.</i>                    |
| 3. <i>Illegitimacy among Hindu-stāni castes.</i> | 6. <i>Social rules and occupation.</i> |

x. Origin  
and  
traditions.

**Vidur,<sup>1</sup> Bidur.**—A Marāṭha caste numbering 21,000 persons in the Central Provinces in 1911, and found in the Nāgpur Division and Berār. They are also returned from Hyderābād and Bombay. Vidur means a wise or intelligent man, and was the name of the younger brother of Pāṇdu, the father of the Pāṇdava brothers. The Vidurs are a caste of mixed descent, principally formed from the offspring of Brāhman fathers with women of other castes. But the descendants of Panchāls, Kunbis, Mālis and others from women of lower caste are also known as Vidurs and are considered as different subcastes. Each of these groups follow the customs and usually adopt the occupation of the castes to which their fathers belonged. They are known as Kharchi or Khāltātya, meaning 'Below the plate' or 'Below the salt,' as they are not admitted to dine with the proper Vidurs. But the rule varies in different places, and sometimes after the death of their mother such persons become full members of the caste, and with each succeeding generation the status of their descendants improves. In Poona the name Vidur is restricted to the descendants of Brāhman fathers, and they are also known as Brāhmanja or 'Born from Brāhmins.' Elsewhere the Brāhman Vidurs are designated especially as Krishnapakshi, which means

<sup>1</sup> This article is compiled from Assistant Commissioner, Bhandāra, and papers by Mr. W. A. Tucker, Extra Mr. B. M. Deshmukh, Pleader, Chānda.





'One born during the dark fortnight.' The term Krishnapakshi is or was also used in Bengal, and Buchanan defined it as follows: "Men of the Rājput, Khatri and Kāyasth tribes, but no others, openly keep women slaves of any pure tribe, and the children are of the same caste with their father, but are called Krishnapakshis and can only marry with each other."<sup>1</sup> In Bastar a considerable class of persons of similar illegitimate descent also exist, being the offspring of the unions of immigrant Hindus with women of the Gond, Halba and other tribes. The name applied to them, however, is Dhākar, and as their status and customs are quite different from those of the Marātha Vidurs they are treated in a short separate article.

Another small group related to the Vidurs are the Purāds of Nāgpur; they say that their ancestor was a Brāhman who was carried away in a flooded river and lost his sacred thread. He could not put on a new thread afterwards because the sacred thread must be changed without swallowing the spittle in the interval. Hence he was put out of caste and his descendants are the Purāds, the name being derived from *pūr*, a flood. These people are mainly shopkeepers. In Berār two other groups are found, the Golaks and Borals. The Golaks are the illegitimate offspring of a Brāhman widow; if after her husband's decease she did not shave her head, her illegitimate children are known as Rand<sup>2</sup> Golaks; if her head was shaved, they are called Mund (shaven) Golaks; and if their father be unknown, they are named Kund Golaks. The Golaks are found in Malkāpur and Bālāpur and number about 400 persons. A large proportion of them are beggars. A Boral is said to be the child of a father of any caste and a mother of one of those in which widows shave their heads. As a matter of fact widows, except among Brāhmans, rarely shave their heads in the Central Provinces, and it would therefore appear, if Mr. Kitts' definition is correct, that the Borals are the offspring of women by fathers of lower caste than themselves; a most revolting union to Hindu ideas. As, however, the Borals are mostly grocers and shopkeepers, it is possible that they may be the same class

2. The  
Purāds,  
Golaks and  
Borals.

<sup>1</sup> Buchanan, *Eastern India*, i. p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> Rand = widow or prostitute.





as the Purāds. In 1881 they numbered only 163 persons and were found in Dārhwā, Mehkar and Chikhli tāluks.

3. Illegitimacy  
among  
Hindustāni  
castes.

There is no caste corresponding to the Vidurs in the Hindi Districts and the offspring of unions which transgress the caste marriage rules are variously treated. Many castes both in the north and south say that they have  $12\frac{1}{2}$  subdivisions and that the half subcaste comprises the descendants of illicit unions. Of course the twelve subdivisions are as a rule mythical, the number of subcastes being always liable to fluctuate as fresh endogamous groups are formed by migration or slight changes in the caste calling. Other castes have a Lohri Sen or degraded group which corresponds to the half caste. In other cases the illegitimate branch has a special name; thus the Niche Pāt Bundelas of Saugor and Chhoti Tar Rājput̃s of Nimār are the offspring of fathers of the Bundela and other Rājput̃ tribes with women of lower castes; both these terms have the same meaning as Lohri Sen, that is a low-caste or bastard group. Similarly the Dauwa (wet-nurse) Ahīrs are the offspring of Bundela fathers and the Ahīr women who act as nurses in their households. In Saugor is found a class of persons called Kunwar<sup>1</sup> who are descended from the offspring of the Marāṭha Brāhman rulers of Saugor and their kept women. They now form a separate caste and Hindustāni Brāhmins will take water from them. They refuse to accept *katcha* food (cooked with water) from Marāṭha Brāhmins, which all other castes will do. Another class of bastard children of Brāhmins are called Dogle, and such people commonly act as servants of Marāṭha Brāhmins; as these Brāhmins do not take water to drink from the hands of any caste except their own, they have much difficulty in procuring household servants and readily accept a Dogle in this capacity without too close a scrutiny of his antecedents. There is also a class of Dogle Kāyasths of similar origin, who are admitted as members of the caste on an inferior status and marry among themselves. After several generations such groups tend to become legitimised; thus the origin of the distinction between the Khare and Dūsre Srivāstab Kāyasths and

<sup>1</sup> The term Kunwar is a title applied to the eldest son of a chief.





the Dasa and Bīsa Agarwāla Baniās was probably of this character, but now both groups are reckoned as full members of the caste, one only ranking somewhat below the other so that they do not take food together. The Pārwar Baniās have four divisions of different social status known as the Bare, Manjhile, Sanjhile and Lohri Seg or Sen, or first, second, third and fourth class. A man and woman detected in a serious social offence descend into the class next below their own, unless they can pay the severe penalties prescribed for it. If either marries or forms a connection with a man or woman of a lower class they descend into that class. Similarly, one who marries a widow goes into the Lohri Seg or lowest class. Other castes have a similar system of divisions. Among the great body of Hindus cases of men living with women of different caste are now very common, and the children of such unions sometimes inherit their father's property. Though in such cases the man is out of caste this does not mean that he is quite cut off from social intercourse. He will be invited to the caste dinners, but must sit in a different row from the orthodox members so as not to touch them. As an instance of these mixed marriages the case of a private servant, a Māli or gardener, may be quoted. He always called himself a Brāhman, and though thinking it somewhat curious that a Brāhman should be a gardener, I took no notice of it until he asked leave to attend the funeral of his niece, whose father was a Government menial, an Agarwāla Bania. It was then discovered that he was the son of a Brāhman landowner by a mistress of the Kāchhi caste of sugarcane and vegetable growers, so that the profession of a private or ornamental gardener, for which a special degree of intelligence is requisite, was very suitable to him. His sister by the same parents was married to this Agarwāla Bania, who said his own family was legitimate and he had been deceived about the girl. The marriage of one of this latter couple's daughters was being arranged with the son of a Brāhman father and Bania mother in Jubbulpore; while the gardener himself had never been married, but was living with a girl of the Gadaria (shepherd) caste who had been married in her caste but had never lived with her husband.





Inquiries made in a small town as to the status of seventy families showed that ten were out of caste on account of irregular matrimonial or sexual relations; and it may therefore be concluded that a substantial proportion of Hindus have no real caste at present.

4. Legend  
of origin.

The Vidurs say that they are the descendants of a son who was born to a slave girl by the sage Vyās, the celebrated compiler of the Mahābhārata, to whom the girl was sent to provide an heir to the kingdom of Hastināpur. This son was named Vidur and was remarkable for his great wisdom, being one of the leading characters in the Mahābhārata and giving advice both to the Pāndavas and the Kauravas.

5. Mar-  
riage.

As already stated, the Vidurs who are sprung from fathers of different castes form subcastes marrying among themselves. Among the Brāhman Vidurs also, a social difference exists between the older members of the caste who are descended from Vidurs for several generations, and the new ones who are admitted into it as being the offspring of Brāhman fathers from recent illicit unions, the former considering themselves to be superior and avoiding inter-marriage with the latter as far as possible. The Brāhman Vidurs, to whom this article chiefly relates, have exogamous sections of different kinds, the names being eponymous, territorial, titular and totemistic. Among the names of their sections are Indurkar from Indore; Chaurikār, a whisk-maker; Achārya and Pānde, a priest; Menjokhe, a measurer of wax; Mine, a fish; Dūdhmānde, one who makes wheaten cakes with milk; Goihe, a lizard; Wadābhāt, a ball of pulse and cooked rice; Diwāle, bankrupt; and Joshī, an astrologer. The Brāhman Vidurs have the same sect groups as the Marātha Brāhmans, according to the Veda which they especially revere. Marriage is forbidden within the section and in that of the paternal and maternal uncles and aunts. In Chānda, when a boy of one section marries a girl of another, all subsequent alliances between members of the two sections must follow the same course, and a girl of the first section must not marry a boy of the second. This rule is probably in imitation of that by which their caste is formed, that is from the union of a man of higher with a woman of lower caste. As already stated,





the reverse form of connection is considered most disgraceful by the Hindus, and children born of it could not be Vidurs. On the same analogy they probably object to taking both husbands and wives from the same section. Marriage is usually infant, and a second wife is taken only if the first be barren or if she is sickly or quarrelsome. As a rule, no price is paid either for the bride or bridegroom. Vidurs have the same marriage ceremony as Marātha Brāhmans, except that Purānic instead of Vedic *mantras* or texts are repeated at the service. As among the lower castes the father of a boy seeks for a bride for his son, while with Brāhmans it is the girl's father who makes the proposal. When the bridegroom arrives he is conducted to the inner room of the bride's house; Mr. Tucker states that this is known as the *Gaurighar* because it contains the shrine of Gauri or Pārvati, wife of Mahādeo; and here he is received by the bride who has been occupied in worshipping the goddess. A curtain is held between them and coloured rice is thrown over them and distributed, and they then proceed to the marriage-shed, where an earthen mound or platform, known as Bohala, has been erected. They first sit on this on two stools and then fire is kindled on the platform and they walk five times round it. The Bohala is thus a fire altar. The expenses of marriage amount for the bridegroom's family to Rs. 300 on an average, and for the bride's to a little more. Widows are allowed to remarry, but the second union must not take place with any member of the family of the late husband, whose property remains with his children or, failing them, with his family. In the marriage of a widow the common *pāt* ceremony of the Marātha Districts is used. A price is commonly paid to the parents of a widow by her second husband. Divorce is allowed on the instance of the husband by a written agreement, and divorced women may marry again by the *pāt* ceremony. In Chānda it is stated that when a widower marries again a silver or golden image is made of the first wife and being placed with the household gods is daily worshipped by the second wife.

The Vidurs employ Marātha Brāhmans for religious and ceremonial purposes, while their *gurus* are either Brāhmans

6. Social rules and occupation.



or Bairāgis. They have two names, one for ceremonial and the other for ordinary use. When a child is to be named it is placed in a cradle and parties of women sit on opposite sides of it. One of the women takes the child in her arms and passes it across the cradle to another saying, 'Take the child named Rāmchandra' or whatever it may be. The other woman passes the child back using the same phrase, and it is then placed in the cradle and rocked, and boiled wheat and gram are distributed to the party. The Vidurs burn the dead, and during the period of mourning the well-to-do employ a Brāhman to read the Garud Purān to them, which tells how a sinner is punished in the next world and a virtuous man is rewarded. This, it is said, occupies their minds and prevents them from feeling their bereavement. They will take food only from Marātha Brāhmans and water from Rājputis and Kunbis. Brāhmans will, as a rule, not take anything from a Vidur's hand, but some of them have begun to accept water and sweetmeats, especially in the case of educated Vidurs. The Vidurs will not eat flesh of any kind nor drink liquor. The Brāhman Vidurs did not eat in kitchens in the famine. Their dress resembles that of Marātha Brāhmans. The men do not usually wear the sacred thread, but some have adopted it. In Bombay, however, boys are regularly invested with the sacred thread before the age of ten.<sup>1</sup> In Nāgpur it is stated that the Vidurs like to be regarded as Brāhmans.<sup>2</sup> They are now quite respectable and hold land. Many of them are in Government service, some being officers of the subordinate grades and others clerks, and they are also agents to landowners, patwāris and shopkeepers. The Vidurs are the best educated caste with the exception of Brāhmans, Kāyasths and Banias, and this fact has enabled them to obtain a considerable rise in social status. Their aptitude for learning may be attributed to their Brāhman parentage, while in some cases Vidurs have probably been given an education by their Brāhman relatives. Their correct position should be a low one, distinctly beneath that of the good cultivating castes. A saying has it, 'As the *amarbel* creeper has no roots, so the Vidur has no ancestry.' But owing to

<sup>1</sup> *Bombay Gazetteer*, vol. xviii. p. 185.    <sup>2</sup> *Nāgpur Settlement Report*, p. 27.





their education and official position the higher classes of Vidurs have obtained a social status not much below that of Kāyasths. This rise in position is assisted by their adherence in matters of dress, food and social practice to the customs of Marātha Brāhmans, so that many of them are scarcely distinguishable from a Brāhman. A story is told of a Vidur Tahsildār or Naib-Tahsildār who was transferred to a District at some distance from his home, and on his arrival there pretended to be a Marātha Brāhman. He was duly accepted by the other Brāhmans, who took food with him in his house and invited him to their own. After an interval of some months the imposture was discovered, and it is stated that this official was at a short subsequent period dismissed from Government service on a charge of bribery. The Vidurs are also considered to be clever at personation, and one or two stories are told of frauds being carried out through a Vidur returning to some family in the character of a long-lost relative.

**Wāghya,<sup>1</sup> Vāghe, Murli.**—An order of mendicant devotees of the god Khandoba, an incarnation of Siva; they belong to the Marātha Districts and Bombay where Khandoba is worshipped. The term Wāghya is derived from *vāgh*, a tiger, and has been given to the order on account of the small bag of tiger-skin, containing *bhandār*, or powdered turmeric, which they carry round their necks. This has been consecrated to Khandoba and they apply a pinch of it to the foreheads of those who give them alms. Murli, signifying 'a flute' is the name given to female devotees. Wāghya is a somewhat indefinite term and in the Central Provinces does not strictly denote a caste. The order originated in the practice followed by childless mothers of vowing to Khandoba that if they should bear a child, their first-born should be devoted to his service. Such a child became a Wāghya or Murli according as it was a boy or a girl. But they were not necessarily severed from their own caste and might remain members of it and marry in it. Thus there are Wāghya Telis in Wardha, who marry with other Telis. The child might also

<sup>1</sup> This article is partly based on a paper by Pandit Pyāre Lāl Misra, ethnographic clerk.

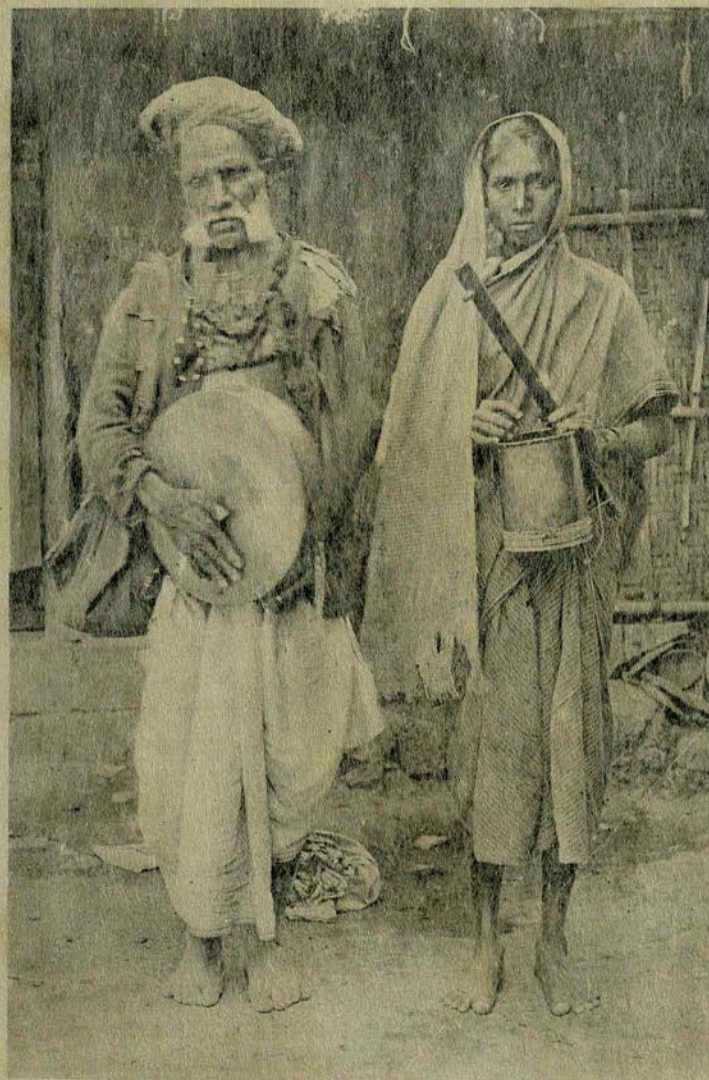


be kept in the temple for a period and then withdrawn, and nowadays this is always done. The children of rich parents sometimes simply remain at home and worship Khandoba there. But they must beg on every Sunday from at least five persons all their lives. Another practice, formerly existing, was for the father and mother to vow that if a child was born they would be swung. They were then suspended from a wooden post on a rope by an iron hook inserted in the back and swung round four or five times. The sacred turmeric was applied to the wound and it quickly healed up. Others would take a Wāghya child to Mahādeo's cave in Pachmarhi and let it fall from the top of a high tree. If it lived it was considered to be a Rāja of Mahādeo, and if it died happiness might confidently be anticipated for it in the next birth. Besides the children who are dedicated to Khandoba, a man may become a Wāghya either for life or for a certain period in fulfilment of a vow, and in the latter case will be an ordinary member of his own caste again on its termination. The Wāghyas and Murlis who are permanent members of the order sometimes also live together and have children who are brought up in it. The constitution of the order is therefore in several respects indefinite, and it has not become a self-contained caste, though there are Wāghyas who have no other caste.

The following description of the dedication of children to Khandoba is taken from the *Bombay Gazetteer*.<sup>1</sup> When parents have to dedicate a boy to Khandoba they go to his temple at Jejuri in Poona on any day in the month of Chaitra (March-April). They stay at a Gurao's house and tell him the object of their visit. The boy's father brings offerings and they go in procession to Khandoba's temple. There the Gurao marks the boy's brow with turmeric, throws turmeric over his head, fastens round his neck a deer- or tiger-skin wallet hung from a black woollen string and throws turmeric over the god, asking him to take the boy. The Murlis or girls dedicated to the god are married to him between one and twelve years of age. The girl is taken to the temple by her parents accompanied by the Gurao priest and other Murlis. At the temple she is bathed and her body rubbed with turmeric,

<sup>1</sup> Vol. xx. pp. 189-190.





*Bemrose, Collo., Derby.*

WĀGHYA MENDICANTS.





with which the feet of the idol are also anointed. She is dressed in a new robe and bodice, and green glass bangles are put on her wrists. A turban and sash are presented to the god, and the *guru* taking a necklace of nine cowries (shells) fastens it round the girl's neck. She then stands before the god, a cloth being held between them as at a proper wedding, and the priest repeats the marriage verses. Powdered turmeric is thrown on the heads of the girl and of the idol, and from that day she is considered to be the wife of Khandoba and cannot marry any other man. When a Murli comes of age she sits by herself for four days. Then she looks about for a patron, and when she succeeds in getting one she calls a meeting of her brethren, the Wāghyas, and in their presence the patron says, 'I will fill the Murli's lap.' The Wāghyas ask him what he will pay and after some haggling a sum is agreed on, which thirty years ago varied between twenty-five and a hundred rupees. If it is more than Rs. 50 a half of the money goes to the community, who spend it on a feast. With the balance the girl buys clothes for herself. She lives with her patron for as long as he wishes to keep her, and is then either attached to the temple or travels about as a female mendicant. Sometimes a married woman will leave her home and become a Murli, with the object as a rule of leading a vicious life.

A man who takes a vow to become a Wāghya must be initiated by a *guru*, who is some elder member of the order. The initiation takes place early on a Sunday morning, and after the disciple is shaved, bathed and newly clad, the *guru* places a string of cowries round his neck and gives him the tiger-skin bag in which the turmeric is kept. He always retains much reverence for his *guru*, and invokes him with the exclamation, 'Jai Guru,' before starting out to beg in the morning. The following articles are carried by the Wāghyas when begging. The *dapdi* is a circular single drum of wood, covered with goat-skin, and suspended to the shoulder. The *chouka* consists of a single wire suspended from a bar and passing inside a hollow wooden conical frame. The wire is struck with a stick to produce the sound. The *ghāti* is an ordinary temple bell; and the *kutumba* is a metal saucer which serves for a begging-bowl. This is considered sacred,





and sandalwood is applied to it before starting out in the morning. The Wāghyas usually beg in parties of four, each man carrying one of these articles. Two of them walk in front and two behind, and they sing songs in praise of Khandoba and play on the instruments. Every Wāghya has also the bag made of tiger-skin, or, if this cannot be had, of deer-skin, and the cowrie necklace, and a *seli* or string of goat-hair round the neck. Alms, after being received in the *kutumba* or saucer, are carried in a bag, and before setting out in the morning they put a little grain in this bag, as they think that it would be unlucky to start with it empty. At the end of the day they set out their takings on the ground and make a little offering of fire to them, throwing a pinch of turmeric in the air in the name of Khandoba. The four men then divide the takings and go home. Marāthas, Murlis and Telis are the castes who revere Khandoba, and they invite the Wāghyas to sing on the Dasahra and also at their marriages. In Bombay the Wāghyas force iron bars through their calves and pierce the palms of their hands with needles. To the needle a strip of wood is attached, and on this five lighted torches are set out, and the Wāghya waves them about on his hand before the god.<sup>1</sup> Once in three years each Wāghya makes a pilgrimage to Khandoba's chief temple at Jejuri near Poona, and there are also local temples to this deity at Hinganghāt and Nāgpur. The Wāghyas eat flesh and drink liquor, and their social and religious customs resemble those of the Marāthas and Kunbis.

**Yerūkala.**—A vagrant gipsy tribe of Madras of whom a small number are returned from the Chānda District. They live by thieving, begging, fortune-telling and making baskets, and are usually treated as identical with the Koravas or Kuravas, who have the same occupations. Both speak a corrupt Tamil, and the Yerūkalas are said to call one another Kurru or Kura. It has been supposed that Korava was the Tamil name which in the Telugu country became Yerukalavāndlu or fortune-teller. Mr. (Sir H.) Stewart thought there could be no doubt of the identity of the two castes,<sup>2</sup> though Mr. Francis points out differences

<sup>1</sup> *Bombay Gazetteer*, vol. xxii. p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> *Madras Census Report* (1891).





between them.<sup>1</sup> The Yerūkalas are expert thieves. They frequent villages on the pretence of begging, and rob by day in regular groups under a female leader, who is known as Jemādārin. Each gang is provided with a bunch of keys and picklocks. They locate a locked house in an unfrequented lane, and one of them stands in front as if begging; the remainder are posted as watchers in the vicinity, and the Jemādārin picks the lock and enters the house. When the leader comes out with the booty she locks the door and they all walk away. If any one comes up while the leader is in the house the woman at the door engages him in conversation by some device, such as producing a silver coin and asking if it is good. She then begins to dispute, and laying hold of him calls out to her comrades that the man has abused her or been taking liberties with her. The others run up and jostle him away from the door, and while they are all occupied with the quarrel the thief escapes. Or an old woman goes from house to house pretending to be a fortune-teller. When she finds a woman at home alone, she flatters and astonishes her by relating the chief events in her life, how many children she has, how many more are coming, and so on. When the woman of the house is satisfied that the fortune-teller has supernatural powers, she allows the witch to cover her face with her robe, and shuts her eyes while the fortune-teller breathes on them, and blows into her ears and sits muttering charms. Meanwhile one or two of the latter's friends who have been lurking close by walk into the house and carry away whatever they can lay their hands on. When they have left the house the woman's face is uncovered and the fortune-teller takes her fee and departs, leaving her dupe to find out that her house has been robbed.<sup>2</sup> The conjugal morals of these people are equally low. They sell or pledge their wives and unmarried daughters, and will take them back on the redemption of the pledge with any children born in the interval, as though nothing out of the ordinary had happened. When a man is sentenced to imprisonment his wife selects another partner for the period

<sup>1</sup> *Madras Census Report* (1901).

<sup>2</sup> *Bombay Gazetteer*, vol. xxi. pp. 170, 171.





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of her husband's absence, going back to him on his release with all her children, who are considered as his. Mr. Thurston gives the following story of a gang of Koravas or Yerūkals in Tinnevely: "One morning, in Tinnevely, while the butler in a missionary's house was attending to his duties, an individual turned up with a fine fowl for sale. The butler, finding that he could purchase it for about half the real price, bought it, and showed it to his wife with no small pride in his ability in making a bargain. But he was distinctly crestfallen when his wife pointed out that it was his own bird, which had been lost on the previous night. The seller was a Korava."<sup>1</sup> In Madras they have also now developed into expert railway thieves. They have few restrictions as to food, eating cats and mice, though not dogs.<sup>2</sup> The Yerūkals practised the custom of the Couvade as described by the Rev. John Cain, of Dumagudem:<sup>3</sup> "Directly the woman feels the birth-pangs she informs her husband, who immediately takes some of her clothes, puts them on, places on his forehead the mark which the women usually place on theirs, retires into a dark room where there is only a very dim lamp, and lies down on the bed, covering himself up with a long cloth. When the child is born it is washed and placed on the cot beside the father. Asafoetida, jaggery and other articles are then given, not to the mother but to the father. During the days of ceremonial impurity the man is treated as other Hindus treat their women on such occasions. He is not allowed to leave his bed, but has everything needful brought to him.

"The Yerūkals marry when quite young. At the birth of a daughter the father of an unmarried little boy often brings a rupee and ties it in the cloth of the father of a newly-born girl. When the girl is grown up he can then claim her for his son."

<sup>1</sup> *Tribes and Castes of Southern India*, art. Korava.

<sup>2</sup> *North Arcot Manual*, p. 247.

<sup>3</sup> *Ind. Ant.* vol. iii., 1874, p. 157.

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