the Aryan. They were rich in horses, cows, hundred-gated cities, jewels, castles, palaces, houses of stone, and arms. Their armour-plated chariots could resist spears and arrows. Like the Aryas, they lived in cities under kings. They raided the Arya cities, carried off their cattle, and confined them in stone prisons. Their gods like those of the Aryas lived in gold, silver, and iron castles. They knew how to form well-ordered villages, to allot lands, to make forts and buildings, and to prepare reservoirs or tanks. * Brahmanical legends refer to the strong and wealthy cities on the banks of the Indus, of which the Aryans took possession after a hard struggle ; for their adversaries were well armed. Several of the places afterwards celebrated in Indian history such as Takshasila, Mathura, and Ujjain were said to have been founded by a non-Aryan people who were probably of Dravidian race†. According to Mr. Oldham, at the time of the Aryan invasion of India, the Aryans were essentially nomadic pastoralists, though possibly acquainted with agriculture. Two important epithets were applied in one passage to the Dasas. The first is mridh-ravachah, which perhaps means only hos-

* *Vide* Baden Powell's 'Village communities in India' p. 49.

† P. 19 Havell's Short History of India.

tile speech. The other epithet is anāsah, which doubtless means 'noseless'. This is a clear indication that the aborigines, to whom these epithets were applied, were of the Dravidian type, as we know it at the present day*. Mr. E. B. Havell also holds that the adversaries of the Aryans in the Punjab were in all probability a Dravidian people†. Of course these Dravidians were called by the Aryans by different names such as Asuras, Daityas, Dasyus, or Nagas. We are told in the RigVeda that Indra shattered one hundred castles of Sambara, destroyed seven cities on behalf of Purukutsa, and that he boldly swept away the wealth of Sushna. Mr. Oldham maintains that Sanskrit writings ascribe to the Dravidian Asuras luxury, the use of magic, and ability to restore the dead to life. Since the Southern Dravidians were the same as those of the North, the picture of the condition of the Dravidians portrayed in the Vedic works may also be taken as true of the condition of the Dravidians of Southern India.

The earliest Dravidians were not primitive tribes, but tilled the ground and raised crops of various kinds, (*e.g.*) rice and sesamum. They were agriculturists by nature. But it is

* Cambridge History of India, Vol. I, p. 85.

† A short History of India, p. 19.

generally supposed that the Aryans were the first to introduce agriculture into South India, and asserted by some scholars that the Ramayana is nothing but an allegorical account of the event. Nevertheless, there are grounds for believing that the art existed in South India long before the Aryans entered it. The fabulous stories relating to the dispute between Ukrama Pandyan and Indra* the controller of the clouds, and the valiant defence of them on another occasion by the race of Karkatthar† show the great efforts made by the princes and peoples in the matter of irrigating their lands for purposes of cultivation. Of course these evidences, resting as they do on tradition, can only be accepted with caution. That the Tamilians had made very great strides in the direction of agricultural enterprise in ancient times, "the only Tamil poem of the age of the Mahabharata War preserved to us in a compilation of the Madura Sangam proves beyond the shadow of a doubt'. The reference is to the complimentary and eulogistic poem addressed to the great Chera King Uthian on his return from the field of Kurukshetra by a royal poet of the times named "the crowned Naga King"

* *Oriental Historical Manuscripts* by William Taylor, p. 94.

† Mr. T. Ponnambalam Pillay's Presidential Address, Saiva Conference, Palamcotta, 1912.

of the country of Murunchi, who is believed to have flourished in the times of the First Sangam. "The poem above referred to is included in the Sangam work entitled Pura Nanuru, and sings the praises of a Chera monarch who supplied rations of rice to both the contending armies in the Mahabharata War for all the eighteen days of the fight*."

The chronology of the first two Sangams has not been once for all settled, and even their existence has been regarded by some as purely a figment of the diseased imagination, and the reference to the existence of a Tamil poet of the days of the Mahabharata is regarded as unhistorical and too fanciful to be believed. It is now coming to be more and more recognised that the traditions of a people can never be rejected *in toto* by any scholar worth the name. The idea is happily gaining ground that it is no longer correct to declare that the person, who seeks information from ancient tradition, should first prove that it is worthy of attention; for now the duty rather lies on the person, who pronounces a tradition to be worthless, to give reasons for his assertion. we shall content ourselves with simply remark-

* *Tamilian Antiquities*—V. J. Tamby Pillai, *The Siddhanta Dipika*, Vol. 5, p. 170.

ing that, if we can rely on the authenticity and genuineness of this poem, no more evidence would seem to be necessary to establish the fact that, even so early as the age of the Mahabharata, the cultivation of paddy was carried on, on a gigantic scale, on this side of the Vindhya mountains.

The names of Marutham, மருதம், the land where paddy and other grains are cultivated wiih the aid of irrigation, and of paddy, நெல், are Dravidian terms*. The term paddy was not known to the Aryans at the time of their first appearance. Sir John Hewitt in his treatise on *The Pre-historic Ruling Races* says that the Dravidians were of all the great races of antiquity the first to systematise agriculture. Archaeology also confirms the evidence obtained from tradition, literature, and language as regards the acquaintance of the ancient Tamils with agriculture. The labours of Alexander Rea, M. J. Walhouse, Captain Newbold, Colonel Branfill, Burgess, Caldwell, R. B. Foote, R. Sewell, and other distinguished archaeologists have made us familiar with the existence of monuments such as rude stone circles, cromlechs, dolmens, menhirs, Kistvaens, urns, Tumuli, and Pandukulies at Adichanallur,

* Ponnamb alam Pillai's address *Ibid.*

Perumbair, Coimbatore, Pallavaram, Palmanir, Kollur near Tirukovilur, and many other places in South India. It is affirmed that the people, who used these burial urns, must have been an agricultural race, as brass and iron implements of agriculture were often found buried in their graves.*

The Dravidians had made much progress in the industrial arts. They worked in metals. The Dravidian name for a smith, karuma, from which the vedic Karmara is probably borrowed, meant a smelter. Their artificers made ornaments of gold, pearls, and of precious stones for their kings. The explorations of the Hyderabad Archaeological Society have brought to light pottery with incised marks resembling those of Minoan Crete. The Adichanallur remains, we have already indicated, consisted of bronze figures of a variety of domestic animals and of fillets of gold beaten very thin. These afford conclusive proof of the artistic development of the Dravidian races in pre-historic times. Such were the economic and industrial glories of the Dravidian races. Before closing, we may note the very profoundly interesting observations of Dr. Slater. In his opinion the Dravidians had a separate priestly caste.

* *The Siddhanta Dipika*, Vol. 5, p. 169.

The Dravidian magicians became the ancestors of the Brahmans. If the caste system, Dr. Slater argues, was evolved under Aryan influence, it is singular that it should have attained its fullest growth and greatest influence in Southern India, which was least exposed to Aryan contact, and especially in that western corner of Southern India cut off from all foreign influences save those coming from the sea. According to this distinguished Professor, the caste system was Dravidian in origin, though doubtless affected in its development by the Aryan invasion. Further investigations will have to be carried on before Dr. Gilbert Slater's remarks will receive unqualified and universal support. There is in the west a growing appreciation of the ideals of non-Aryan civilizations. We are sure that within a few years the culture of Dravidian India will be valued in the west, and her achievements in philosophy, literature, and art will take their right place in the scheme of human culture and civilization.

8. Dravidian Astronomy.

Dr. Maclean* observes, 'The fishermen of the South, dependent on the moon's phases for their operations early developed a primitive

* 'Manual of Administration of the Madras Presidency.'

lunar computation of time. The agriculturists of the plains observed the seasons and the movements of the sun. The Tamils had a highly developed practical astronomy, before they were touched by Brahmanical influences, and their system still holds its ground in many respects. The Jovian cycle of five revolutions of Jupiter or sixty years, which regulates the chronology of the Tamilians, is no part of the Aryan system. The familiar period of twelve years for domestic events amomg the Tamils is similarly independent." The Tamil calendars according to Dr. Slater are very suggestive. The civil calendar of the Tamils is solar, and does not even concern itself to make a month consist of so many days. The ecliptic is divided into twelve divisions, and at whatever moment in the morning, noon, or night, the sun enters a new division, at that moment the new month begins. Days begin at the calculated moment of sunrise at the spot on the equator 'which is also on the meridian of the site of the ancient Tamil observatory.' 'This unique calendar aims at a degree of astronomical accuracy and consistency beyond that of any other calendar in use.' These remarks prove the independent origin of Dravidian astronomical science in South India, and hence should be borne in mind by scholars,

when they contend that everything connected with astrology, astronomy, and time-measure in Tamil is from Sanskrit.

9. Dravidian Commerce.

In the field of commerce, the activity of the ancient Dravidians has been equally striking. South India, the home of the Ancient Dravidians, was the heart and centre of the old world for ages. It was one of the foremost maritime countries, and was the mistress of the eastern seas. It is here possible to give only a few rude outlines of South Indian commerce in general. The subject is too large, too intricate, and too difficult to be dealt with to allow here of a detailed and circumstantial description.

The Dravidians of South India were accustomed to the sea. They formed a large proportion of the sailors of the Indian Ocean. It is believed that regular maritime intercourse existed between South India and Western Asia even before the 8th century B. C. Various proofs have been adduced to establish the high antiquity of the maritime intercourse of South India with West Asia. The Dravidian speaking races of India traded with the Ancient Chaldeans, before the Vedic language found its way into India. Indian teak was

found in the ruins of Ur, and it must have reached there from India in the fourth millennium B. C., when it was the seaport of Babylon and the capital of the Sumerian kings. "This particular tree grows in Southern India where it advances close to the Malabar coast and nowhere else ; there is none to the north of the Vindhya."* This shows how advanced and enterprising were the Dravidians even as early as 4,000 years ago.

The Story of Joseph, who came to Egypt abut 1700 B.C., is a notable evidence of the early caravan trade which, crossing Arabia, carried the merchandise of India to Egypt, Syria, and Babylonia. In the tombs, dating from the time of the 18th Dynasty of the Egyptian rulers which ended in 1462 B. C., were found mummies wrapped in Indian muslins. The Egyptians of those times, says Prof. Lassen, dyed cloth with indigo, and this vegetable product could have been obtained only from India at a time when the major portion of it was still non-Aryan*. But Thompson, after examining with the aid of a microscope some fragments of mummy clothes preserved in the British Museum, came to the conclusion that they were all linen, and not cotton. As to the indigo, Sir George Wilkin-

* *Vide* Ragozin's *Vedic India*, p. 305.

son says that the broad-coloured borders of these clothes are similar to patterns which occur in paintings of the 16th and 18th Dynasties, and he does not explicitly state that indigo was used during the time of the 18th Dynasty.

The Egyptians employed in their naval expeditions the Phoenicians. Hiram, King of Tyre, and the Hebrew king, David, father of Solomon, combined in joint commercial expeditions to Ophir. The Ophir expedition started once in three years. The ships of Tarshish left Elath on the Bay of Elath or Ailah, proceeded to Berenike on the Egyptian coast, and thence to Okelis at the mouth of the Arabian Gulf. From this harbour, or from Kane on the Erythraean Sea, the ships sailed to the mouth of the Indus or to Barygaza, (Broach in the Gulf of Cambay), or to Muziris, or some other southern port. 'The navy of Tarshish brought gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks from India.' Solomon (962—930 B. C.) is said to have got sandalwood, apes, and peacocks from Ophir *via* ports on the Persian Gulf. The peacocks, which are mentioned to have been brought from India, are called in the Bible Tukkiyam, a plural form of Tukki, in which word scholars have recognised the Tamil word 'Togei', as can be seen

* G. Oppert—*On the Ancient Commerce of India.*

in old Hebrew dictionaries. The Dravidian name of peacock in the Bible intimates the presence of Dravidian traders. Ophir is identified with the Abeira of Ptolemy, the district bordering on the mouths of the Indus. These statements are not met with universal acceptance. Ophir, it is said, is not an Indian port, but a place in Arabia. It is said that it was not sandalwood, but something else taken for sandalwood, that was received by Solomon. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that the period of Solomon was one of great commercial activity. It is possible that the trade, which glorified his age, was carried on with some briskness by his neighbours with India for some centuries past.

As regards Indian trade with Assyria, it may be noted that gold, tin, silks, pearls, spices, and other valuable kinds of merchandise had been flowing from India into Assyria, since the foundation of the first Assyrian Empire in the 14th century B. C. The early Greek bards such as Homer were acquainted with tin and other articles of Indian merchandise. That gold was largely exported from India in very early days has been inferred from a number of corroborative facts. M. M. Perrot and Chipiez inferred, from objects found in the excavations, from inscriptions in which the

Assyrians boast of their wealth and prodigality, and from Egyptian texts in which the details of tribute paid by the Syrians and Mesopotamians are given, that Nineveh possessed a vast quantity of gold, which she obtained from her commerce with mineral-producing countries such as India. In an old Babylonian list of clothes occurs the word Sindhu, and all scholars are agreed that this meant Indian cloth. This cloth did not reach Babylonia through Persia by land ; for, in that case, the original 's' would have become 'h' in Persian mouths. The tribes, among whom the Vedic Mantras were composed, knew of the sea and sea-voyages by report, and not at first hand, and therefore this export trade was carried on by the Dravidian-speaking races alone*. That there existed sea-borne commerce between South India and West Asia prior to the 8th century B. C. cannot now be denied ; nevertheless, in the opinion of some scholars, some more evidence is required to establish it beyond the possibility of a doubt.

But for the period subsequent to the 8th century B. C., the available evidence becomes fuller, and so it is possible to make an authoritative statement. †The receipt of Indian ele-

Vide Ragozin's *Vedic India*, p. 307.

† *Vide* Kennedy's article, J. R. A. S. 1898.

phants as presents by Shalmaneser IV of Assyria (727—722 B. C.), the discovery of a beam of Indian cedar at Birs Nimrud in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar III (604-562 B. C.), the reference in the * Baveru-Jataka to the adventures of certain Indian merchants who took the first peacock by sea to Babylon, the importation into Babylon of the Indian rice and the Indian sandalwood, and the acquaintance in Babylon of the Hebrew compilers of I Kings and II Chronicles with the Tamil names of these exports, these bear eloquent testimony to the existence of sea-borne commerce between India and West Asia in the 8th, 7th, and 6th centuries prior to the Christian era. This trade was chiefly in the hands of the Dravidians who had a colony in Babylon.† Baudhayana's condemnation of the Northern Aryans who took part in this trade with West Asia proves that they were not the chief agents in it, although they had a not inconsiderable share.

Kautilya, the reputed author of the *Arthasastra* or 'Manual of Politics', was of opinion that the commerce with the South was of greater importance than that with the North,

* No. 339, Jataka iii, the Cambridge Edition.

† *Vide* Kennedy's Article on *The Early Commerce of Babylon with India*—J. R. A. S., 1898.

because the more precious commodities came from the peninsula, while the northern regions supplied only blankets, skins, and horses. Gold, diamonds, pearls, and conch shells are specified as the products of the South. Madura was famous for her textile fabrics. From the *Tolkappiyam** we learn that the Tamils used to cross oceans for the purpose of acquiring wealth. Taking advantage of the constant intercourse between South India and the countries in West Asia and East Europe, one of the Pandya rulers of Madura in 20 B.C. sent an embassy to the Emperor Augustus, and another sent for Grecian soldiers, and employed them as his bodyguard.

The fact that the Dravidians carried on the Indian trade with West Asia is strengthened by other evidences. The Dravidian name for ships, *oda*, is an original word, and not borrowed from Sanskrit. The Sanskrit name of pearl (mukta) is from the Tamil *muttu*, its name in the land where it was dived for. The Greek name for rice, *oryza*, was borrowed straight from the Tamil *arisi*, and not through its Sanskritised form vrihi, and the Greek peperi is the Dravidian *pippali*, long pepper. If the Greeks received rice and pepper from India, and if these names are

* Porulathikaram Vol. I, part 1, Sutra 34.

Dravidian words, we obtain an additional proof of the non-Aryan element represented in the Indian trade.*

From the *Mahavamsa*, *Rajavali*, and the *Rajarathnakari*, we learn that from very early times there were relations established between the Singhalese kings and the Chola and Pandya rulers. In the 6th cntury B. C., a Pandya princess married Vijaya, the 'Lion born,' and the founder of an illustrious dynasty of princes in Ceylon†. From some unnamed port in the southernmost section of the eastern coast, near Tuticorin, ships sailed to the opposite coast of Ceylon. By this route Vijaya's Pandyan bride and her retinue were conveyed to their new home; his ambassadors having already come by it from Ceylon to the Pandyan coast. The descriptions of the various voyages in the legends connected with the life and times of the Buddha imply that the vessels were ships of large size, and carried a large number of passengers. For instance the ship in which Vijaya's Pandyan bride was taken over to Ceylon, consisted of elephants, horses, and waggons worthy of a king, 18 officers of state, craftsmen and a thousand families of the 18 guilds‡, 75 menial

* Oppert.—*On the Ancient Commerce of India*, p. 37.

+ Radhakumud Mookerjee's *Indian Shipping*, p. 70.

‡ P. 59, Geiger's *Mahavamsa*.

servants, slaves, and the princess and 700 virgins who accompanied her. The vessels employed were sailing ships. The crews were well-organised. The seamen had considerable nautical skill*. In the same epoch, we hear of the existence of matrimonial relations between the people of the Pandya kingdom and those of Ceylon. About 205 B. C., a chief known as Elala sailed with an army from the Chola country to Ceylon, and conquered it†. Usurper and stranger though he was, even the priestly Buddhist chronicles bear witness to the eminent qualities of this Tamilian who ruled the kingdom for well-nigh forty-four years administering justice with impartiality to friends and foes. People from the Chola and Pandya kingdoms sailed to Manthottam opposite Danushkodi, and plundered Ceylon. Some Tamils established settlements, and raised magnificent temples in the island. These relations, established with Ceylon, incontestably prove that the Tamils were a great sea-faring people in those ancient times.

From several centuries before the Christian era, a double stream of traders and adventurers began to flow into Indo-China from

* *The Deccan in the time of Gautama Buddha* by Thomas Foulkes, *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. 16, pp. 49-57 and pp. 1-8.

† P. 353, *Ceylon* by J. E. Tennent.

Southern India, through Burma and its southern coasts, by sea, and founded there settlements and commercial stations. Besides, there is no doubt of the antiquity of South Indian commerce with China. It is well-known that there existed communication by land and sea between the furthest east of China and the utmost south of India. From a study of *Manimekalai*, it may be inferred that the Tamils, even before the Christian era, traded with the islands of Sumatra, Java, and Malaya*.

The existence in the Tamil language of pure Tamil words like *kadal*, *paravai*, *punari*, *arkali*, and *munnir*, all of which refer to the sea, and of words like *kalam*, *marakalam*, *mithavai*, and *kappal*, which are also original Tamil words, and which all denote a ship, proves that the Tamils in the earliest times were a sea-faring people†.

During the early centuries of the Christian era, there was an extensive trade between South India and Rome. Roman subjects lived at Muziris and other towns. Muziris was one of the famous emporiums on the western coast of Tamilakam, much frequented by Yavana merchants. From the Peutingerian Tables (225

* *Sen Tamil*, Vol. 5, p. 419.

† *Sen Tamil*, Vol. 13, p. 156.

A. D.), we learn that the Romans had in this city a force of about 2000 men to protect their trade, and a temple erected in honour of Augustus. There was a Grecian colony of Byzantium on the Malabar coast. * It is now well known that in the early centuries of the Christian era there was a large influx of foreign merchants, and that a considerable quantity of Roman *aurei* and *dinarii* must have been imported into India for purposes of merchandise, and indeed we read of gifts in *dinarii* for the maintenance of lamps in temples. Small coins were also locally minted by a colony or colonies of foreigners. The importance of Roman commerce was so great that the local money should to a large extent have been replaced by the Roman. There have been discovered in the South of India numerous hoards of Roman coins at Kottayam near Tellicherry, Kaliyanputtur in the Madura District, Pollachi, Karuvur, and Vellalur in the Coimbatore district, Pudukottai, and at other places. These facts incontestably prove that the commerce of South India with Rome could not have been inconsiderable. Indian goods went to Rome through Alexandria. Later on, Byzantium also participated in the receipt of Indian goods.

* *Tamilian Antiquary*, No. 1 Vol. II, p. 41.

Pearl fishery was an important national industry in South India. * It was chiefly as the country from which pearls came that the Greeks knew Southern India. Pearls came from the coasts of the Pandya kingdom, and Megasthenes had heard of Pandaea, the daughter of Heracles (Krishna), who had become Queen of a great kingdom in the South. With her he also connected the pearl. Heracles wandered over the world for ridding land and sea of the monsters that infested them, and had found this thing of beauty in the sea made, it might seem, for a woman's adornment. Wherefore from all the sea pearls were brought together to the Indian coast for his daughter to wear. The pearl in India according to Arrian was worth thrice its weight in refined gold†. There was brisk trade between South India and Rome in pearls. Roman ladies were very fond of these pearls. They adorned nearly every part of their body with them, even down to the straps of their sandals, making their presence known by the clinking of pearl-strings. Lolla, the wife of the emperor Caius Claudius, appeared often publicly covered with pearls worth £ 300,000 sterling. The story about the wager between Queen Cleopa-

* *The Cambridge History of India*, p. 423, Vol. 1.

† *Ind. Ant.* 1876, p. 89—The INDICA of Arrian.

tra of Egypt and the Triumvir, Antonius, is well-known. She possessed two large pearls used as pendants of the ear which had previously been the property of other Eastern sovereigns, and were valued highly. She dissolved one pearl worth £ 80,000 in strong vinegar, drank it, and was only prevented by an attendant of Antonius from dissolving the other pearl. The exports of South India to the western Roman Empire were crystals, onyx, sardonyx, hyacinths, amethysts, corundum, smaragds, carbuncles, beryls, sapphires, chrysolites, and opals. The Roman Senator, Nonius, was proscribed by Antonius for the sake of an opal which was in his possession. Nonius escaped leaving all his treasures behind, but took away with him his opal ring valued at £ 8,000 sterling. Pliny is indignant that two millions sterling of Roman money were annually swallowed by India.

Foreign visitors obtained pepper, cassia, and sandalwood from the Malabar coast. The coins of Yagna-Sri, the ruler of the Andhras, bear unmistakable testimony to the existence of sea-borne trade on the Coromandel Coast in the second century of the Christian era.* Along the Coromandel Coast, from Nellore as far south as Cuddalore and Pondicherry, a

* Radhakumud Mookerji's *Indian Shipping* p. 50.

class of thin copper die-struck coins occurs. They are found in considerable numbers in or near dunes and sand-knolls in the vicinity of the *kupams* or fishing hamlets that stud the shore, together with Roman obloi, perforated Chinese coins, bits of lead and other metal, and beads. These are collected by the wives and children of the fishermen after gales of wind or heavy rains, and purchased from them by the itinerant pedlars, called Labis and Markayars, in exchange for useful necessaries, by whom they are sold to braziers and coppersmiths. The discovery of articles of this description in such localities indicates the existence of a considerable maritime trade in former times, probably during the first four or five centuries of the Christian era. The copper die-struck coins might have belonged to the period when the Kurumbars, a pastoral tribe, were ruling on the Coromandel Coast for some hundred years before the seventh century A.D. They are stated to have been engaged in trade, and to have owned ships, and carried on a considerable commerce by sea. On the reverse of these coins, there is a figure of a two-masted ship like the modern coasting vessel or *dhoni*, steered by means of oars from the stern.* It

* *Vide* Elliot's *Coins of Southern India* pp. 35–37, Radhakumud Mookerji's *Indian Shipping* pp. 50–52, and *Catalogue* of *Indian Coins* by Rapson p. LXXXII.

can safely be asserted therefore that these coins bear witness to a great maritime traffic in the early centuries of the Christian era.

The earliest Tamil works that we have refer to sea-trade in the beginning of the Christian era as an ordinary occupation of the Tamil people. From *Manimekalai* we learn that in Java a king by name Aputhran was ruling at Nagapuri, and that the heroine Manimekalai sailed across to the island, and paid a visit to him. The oldest Tamil proverbs have their own tale to tell regarding the ancient civilization and history of the Tamils. "Though Elalasingan's goods go across the seven seas, they will return safely." A proverb like this affords abundant tesimony to the maritime and commercial activity of the time of Elalasingan, a contemporary of the immortal author of the *Kural*. Another ancient proverb current among the Tamils is known as 'திரைகட லோடியும் திரவியம் தேடு'. This indicates the character of the people among whom it sprang up. World-history teaches us that traders frequently become rulers. The more we study the materials available on the subject, and the more we reflect on them, the more we realize that the Dravidians were a great people, whom trade pushed into the thrones of many a strange land. But some how they have forgot-

ten the glory that once was theirs. And verily the proverb, which once was theirs, is now nothing more than a proverb to them. It has lost its ancient meaning and significance for the modern descendants of the once glorious Dravidians. The debt, which the world owes to the Dravidians for its culture, will be fully known only when their true history is studied without bias and preconceived notions of any kind.

The two chief ports of Tamilakam were Muziris or Cranganore (Muyirikkodu), the great port of the Chera kingdom, and Bakarai or Vaikkarai, the haven of Kottayam, now in the Travancore State. Korkai, the Greek Kolkhoi, on the Tamraparni river was the principal seat of the pearl trade. Puhar, where a colony of Yavana merchants had settled* at the mouth of the Kaveri, was a rich and prosperous emporium of trade on the eastern coast. These merchants had a separate quarter of their own, and were in possession of rare and precious articles for sale. The grandeur of this great emporium of South India (*i.e.*) Puhar is very vividly brought home to our minds by Kadiyalur Rudirangannanar in his work *pattinappalai* composed in praise of Karikala Chola, who, according to the best

* *Tamilian Antiquary*, Vol. II, No. 1, p. 45.

authorities, was flourishing in the first century of the Christian era. The poet says in the course of his description of this ancient Chola city, "Adjoining the fishermen's quarters is the well-guarded broad street containing the store-houses of merchants. In the front-yards of these stores are heaped bales and parcels, which have been imported, and which have to be exported. These consignments are imprinted with marks of tiger by the customs-officers for the purpose of levying customs due to the State. These officers are as vigilant in their duty as the horses of the sun. Rams and dogs go skipping about on the heaps of bales and parcels." Other streets in the wealthy quarters are then taken up. There are the abodes of the Moors, the Chinese, and others who have come down from distant lands, and settled here amidst the natives.....The merchants always conduct their sales stating expressly their net profit.....Flags indicating gay taverns, flags posted in places, where paddy, betel and nut, and sweets are sold, flags lifted up on the ships anchored in the harbour, these and others are so many, that the city is beautifully shaded, and the sun can find no way to let in his scorching rays. In this emporium are found the produce of the Kaveri and the Ganges, victuals from Ceylon and Kadaram, corals from

the eastern ocean, pearls from the southern ocean, sandal and scents from the western mountains, gems and gold from the Himalayas, and horses and pepper brought in by ships*. Karaikal, Manmelkudi, Aludayarpattinam, Ammalpattinam, Kottaipattinam, Devipattinam, Tutukudi, Kayalpattinam, Kulasekarapattinam, Tondi, all these might have been the other great sea-port towns in the early centuries of the Christian era. The Tamil poets tell us of the vases and lamps of the Yavanas and of the European soldiers who wore fine armour, and defended the city of Madura with courage. *Puranānuru*, an ancient Tamil classical work of the early centuries of the Christian era, speaks with admiration of the great and beautiful ships of the Yavanas which frequented the port of Muziris†. The ancient Tamils used to have light-houses (கலங்கரை விளக்கம்) to warn ships, ‡ besides customs-houses, warehouses, godowns, docks and piers, $and one such light-house is described at the great port of Puhar (Kaveripumpattinam) at the mouth of the Kaveri, a big tower or a big palmyra

* *The Siddhanta Dipika*, Vol. IV, p. 19—article of Mr. T. Chelvakesavaraya Mudaliar, M.A.

† Prof. Dubreuil's Article, *India and the Romans*, Ind. Ant. Vol. LII, pp. 51-52.

‡ *Sen Tamil*, Vol. 13, p. 159.

$ Pandit Olaganatha Pillai's *Cholan Karikalan The First*, p. 44.

trunk carrying on the top of it a huge oil-lamp. Tradition, as recorded in Tamil literature, indicates that from very remote times wealthy cities existed in the south, and that many of the refinements and luxuries of life were in common use. The singular good fortune of Tamilakam in possessing such coveted commodities as gold, pearls, conch shells, pepper, beryls, and choice cotton goods attracted foreign traders from the earliest ages. Commerce supplied the wealth required for life on civilized lines. As regards the influence of foreign nations upon the history of the ancient Dravidians, it is said that the Dravidians, who visited Babylon during their commercial intercourse, perhaps brought with them a knowledge of coinage, of the solar-signs and week-days, * and some aspects of Babylonian architecture. The influence of Babylonian architecture is seen in the miniature huts erected along the exterior edge of each stage in the 'raths' at Mahabalipuram. The Dravidians like the Accadians of Babylon venerated mountains, and expressed their veneration in a unique and striking form. If the elementary conceptions of art and architecture were indigenous, there was scope for the borrowing of detail. One is

* *The Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, Vol. XIII No. 2, p. 617.

struck with the striking resemblance between the pyramids of Egypt and the famous pagodas of Tanjore and Madura. The kernel of the story of the Deluge, according to Ragozin, was imported by the Dravidians from Babylon in pre-Aryan times.* That the Dravidians in their turn should have exercised a considerable influence upon foreign nations goes without saying. But this subject, regarding the debt which South India owes to the nations of West Asia and the influences, cultural and religious, she in turn exercised upon those nations, deserves a more thorough research and investigation, before anything like a definite verdict can be said upon it.

To conclude, it has been indubitably shown that South India had considerable commercial intercourse with the different nations of antiquity. The enrichment of civilization consequent upon the constant and lively interchange of ideas and experiences with the myriad races of the ancient world, the high degree of material prosperity that followed in virtue of this extraordinary commercial enterprise, and the remarkable outburst of literary and intellectual activity, witnessed during the Augustan Age of Tamil literature, which, we venture to believe, is the outcome of that

* Ragozin's *Vedic India*, p. 344.

prosperity, these along with a distinct non-Aryan alphabet, a highly cultivated language exclusively Dravidian, a polished literature composed on Dravidian lines and independent of Sanskrit models, an indigenous system of religion, and an advanced civilization independent of Aryan influences are a few among the momentous factors that entitle the ancient Dravidians to a high place among the nations of antiquity.

Chapter III

ANCIENT SOUTH INDIAN POLITY.

The subject of Ancient South Indian Polity is one that has not hitherto been worked out in all its multifarious aspects. Only a rough outline of the evolution of political institutions may now be attempted reserving for a subsequent monograph a more detailed investigation. It is a theme that bristles with difficulties innumerable owing to insufficient data and uncertain chronology. Every assertion is liable to be contradicted, and every statement is open to serious objection at the hands of critics and scholars. The period taken up for investigation covers a very vast period consisting of many different stages, each one of which may require a volume by itself, and will require the labours of many different savants and antiquarians. It is therefore wiih considerable diffidence that the present attempt is made to sketch in brief the development of political institutions in Peninsular India from the tribal stage of society to the fully organised national kingdoms, checked and controlled by popular institutions, of the early centuries of the Christian era.

The subject of Ancient South Indian polity, here taken up for study, embraces three distinct periods known as the pre-historic period (from the earliest times up to 1000 B.C.), the semi-historic period (1000-100 B.C.), and the historic period (100 B.C.—400 A. D.). I call the first period as pre-historic, because the account for that period is largely traditional, and can hardly be shown to be conclusively and authoritatively true in the present state of our knowledge of this period. The second period we have labelled semi-historic, because a few genuine facts may be inferred from the material at our disposal, and this period may be brought within the pale of authentic history by patient and laborious research in the future. As for the third period, commonly known as the Augustan Period in Tamil literature, otherwise called the epoch of the Third Sangam, its historicity has gained the almost unanimous assent of scholars.

At the outset, the first point to be discussed in connection with the resuscitation of the lost South Indian polity is the sources of our knowledge for the period under review. For the first period, the sources, which throw light upon the institutions, social and political, of South India, are the hymns of the Rigveda, where we have numerous references to the

Dravidians in general. The sources for the second period are the observations made by writers like Hewitt on the probable primitive institutions of the Dravidian races from a study of survivals and the *Tolkappiyam*. The two great Indo-Aryan epics, the vestiges of Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, and Roman civilizations which illuminate the early intercourse of South India with Western Asia, the Buddhist chronicles of Ceylon, the observations of Megasthenes, Asoka's Rock Edicts, and the *Halasya Mahatmya*, these, which shed a very feeble light on the political history proper of South India during this period, are not at all, it is regrettable to note, helpful in the laborious task of reconstructing bit by bit the early polity of South India. For the third period, we have the reputed works of the Third Sangam like the *Kural*, *Ahananuru*, *Purananuru*, *Silappathikaram*, *Manimekalai*, *Kalithokai*, and the *Ten Idylls*, all of which are now acknowledged by the generality of scholars to have belonged to the early centuries of the Christian era.

The age, when the Tolkappiyam was composed, has not as yet been definitely determined by scholars. It is curious that wide differences of opinion should exist on this vital question. Nachchinarkiniyar, the celebrated commentator of the Tolkappiyam, holds that it

was composed, before even Vedavyasa, who lived probably between 1500 and 1000 B.C., arranged the Vedas into Rig, Yajur, Saman, and Atharvana*. This view is also shared by Pandit A. Mootootambi Pillai,† who however considers the 5th Millennium B. C., as the probable age of this ancient grammar. Pandit R. S. Vedachalam in his work entitled *Ancient Tamilian and Aryan* regards 1250 B. C. as the probable date of the Tolkappiyam, and he believes that it might be given even a higher antiquity, and placed about 2400 B. C. Such extravagant theories as these need not require refutation.

It is maintained by pandits of a certain type, that every part of the *Tolkappiyam* is independent of Sanskrit, and devoid of any trace of Sanskrit influence. This view seems to be untenable for this reason that the *Tolkappiyam* throws light upon various subjects, such as caste and forms of marriage in vogue among the Aryas. Tolkappiyar in his chapter on *Kalaviyal* seeks a reconciliation between the Aryan forms of love and wedding and the Tamil forms of marriage. The *Tolkappiyam*‡ undoubtedly shows a medley of the Dravidian and Aryan

* *Vide* Pandit Savariroyan's Article, p. 42 S. Dipika Vol. III.

† *Vide* History of Tenmoli.

‡ Dravidic Studies No III, p, 11—Mr. S. Anavaratavinayakam Pillai, M. A.

institutions. It shows distinct traces of the influence of the Aryan immigrants. It should therefore have been composed at a time when the Aryan Brahmans had already come to South India, and had even introduced their ceremonies and institutions. It can definitely be shown that the colonisation of the South by the northern Aryans should have commenced about the 10th century B. C. Hence the more probable and correct view of the matter would be to regard the *Tolkappiyam* as a post-colonisation work.

In his monograph on *The Aindra School of Sanskrit Grammarians*, Dr. Burnell assigns the eigth century A. D. as the probable date of Tolkappiyar*. This strange view is quite in keeping with the spirit of European scholars, who are not prepared to concede any high antiquity to the Dravidian civilization or culture. The *Tolkappiyam*, according to tradition, is a work of the Second Madura Academy. Scholars are now almost agreed, that the Third Madura Academy flourished during the early centuries of the Christian era. Therefore, the *Tolkappiyam*, a Second Sangam work, should have been composed before the commencement of the Christian era. The late lamented Kanaka-

* Dr. Burnell—*On the Aindra Grammar*, p. 8.

sabhai Pillai lends his weighty support to the view that it is a work of the first or second century B. C. Mr. Anavaratavinayakam Pillai, the distinguished Tamil scholar, seems also to favour the view that it cannot be assigned to any period later than the first century B. C.

Panambaranar, a contemporary of Tolkappiyar, in his preface to the *Tolkappiyam* says that Tolkappiyar mastered the Sanskrit grammar of Indra, and that the *Tolkappiyam* was recited at the Court of Nilantharuthiruvirpandyan, and approved by Athankottasan. It is well-known that Panini's great Sanskrit grammar made an epoch in Indian literature ; his name occurs everywhere, his treatise soon superseded all others, and has exercised the ingenuity of a countless number of followers. Certainly, for two thousand years and more, Panini's word has been law in Aryan India on all questions of grammar. It is evident that, for it to have gained such a position of pre-eminence in so conservative a country as India, it must have been infinitely superior in the eyes of the Brahmans to all the numerous treatises which were undoubtedly in existence before Panini's time. And therefore it is a surprise to some scholars to find Tolkappiyar, a Brahman of Brahmans, the son of Jamadagni and the pupil of Agastya, studying and follow-

ing Indra's work in his grammar of the Tamil language. It is therefore argued that Panini was not known to the Southerners of Tolkappiyar's time. Besides, one of the sixty-four predecessors quoted by Panini in the field of grammatical science was Indra, and Indra should therefore have flourished before Panini. Thus Tolkappiyar must have lived anterior to Panini. We shall now examine these views categorically. Scholars are divided in their opinion of Panini's date. While Dr. R. G. Bhandarkar assigns to him the 7th century B.C., Prof. A. B. Keith considers that Panini should have flourished about 300 B.C. * It is maintained by some that Indra's date † might be placed about 350 B. C. As regards the date of Indra, we can only remark that, assuming Indra to have been a historical personage and not a dim and shadowy mythical figure, and assuming him to be other than the modern Indra or Jainendra who lived sometime perhaps in the 5th century A. D., the date, 350 B. C., assigned to him may not be acceptable for this reason that even in the Vedic works Aindra grammatical terms are found. It is therefore beyond the possibility of a doubt that these words are much older

* The Cambridge History of India, Vol. I, p. 113.

† *Studies in South Indian Jainism*, p. 39.

than Panini. And yet we are forced to regard Indra and Panini as almost contemporaries, if the dates assigned by certain scholars be regarded as absolutely correct and above controversy.

But a more important point deserves consideration. In the opinion of Dr. Burnell, by the Aindra Grammar one must understand a school of grammar and not a specific work by an individual.* If the passages, in which the Aindra Grammar is mentioned, be examined closely, it will be seen that they really bear this meaning, and do not attribute an actual grammatical treatise to the God Indra. Indra was fabled to have originated the science of grammar, but the Indra (or Aindra) Grammar was the primitive grammatical science as handed down by various teachers. Therefore we are justified in assuming that two schools of grammar, those of Indra and Panini, might have existed side by side, and that Tolkappiyar preferred the Indra system to that of Panini. Therefore to argue that Tolkappiyar was anterior to Panini, on the ground that he followed Indra's treatise and not Panini's, may not be entirely sound. Besides, the naturalness and simplicity of Aindram might have

* Dr. Burnell's *The Aindra School of Sanskrit Grammarians*, p. 31.

appealed to Tolkappiyar more than the artificial and involved arrangement of Panini, just as the syle of composition of Aindra's Grammar was the one adopted in the *Katantra* and Katyayana's *Varttikas*, and several others which are presumably of a later age. Dr. Burnell himself admits that the Aindra treatises belong to a system older than Panini's, though there is pehaps reason to believe that not one of them is, as a whole, older than the grammar of the last.

In the opinion of certain Tamil scholars, it is even open to question whether Aindram, on the principles of which the *Tolkappiyam* is said to have been modelled, was a foreign element or an indigenous treatise on grammar.* Lastly it may be noted that Tolkappiyar nowhere tells us on what model he composed his grammar, and Panambaranar's prefatory note to the *Tolkappiyam* may after all turn out to be a later interpolation ; but it may be stated with equal justification that there is nothing to throw doubt on Panambaranar's colophon which could have been made for no possible reason, if untrue. Thus the famous colophon of Panambaranar, of which much capital was and is being made by Tamil scholars, is shown to be altogether valueless for

* The *Tamilian Antiquary*, No. 5, p. 9.

the purpose of determining the age of the Tolkappiyam, and the outcome of our long and wearisome discussion seems to be to make the existing confusion worse confounded.

A new theory regarding the age of the Tolkappiyam has been put forward by one Mr. V. V. R.* in reviewing the *Studies in South Indian Jainism.*† Mr. V. V. R. would have us believe that, in the opinion of Panambaranar, the author of the Tolkappiyam was a Jain. He is also of opinion that the third century B. C., the date assigned to Tolkappiyar, is a great deal out of focus. Mr. V. V. R. says, 'It is incorrect to say that there is a reference to Indra's Sanskrit grammar in the colophon to the Tolkappiyam.....It must be clear to every impartial student, from a perusal of what appeared in the Sen Tamil (Vol. XVIII, p. 339), that in the opinion of Panambaranar....the Tolkappiyam drew largely on Indra's grammar. To identify the grammar to which Panambaranar refers, a ready help is available in the Silappathikaram (XI, ll, 98—99 and 154—155). Kaunti retorts on the Brahman, " Don't you know from the kalpa the

* Presumably Dr. V. V. Ramana Sastri, the distinguished Agamic Scholar. The review appears in The 'Hindu' April 4, 1925.

†M. S. Ramasamy Iyengar M.A., of the Vizianagram College.

true nature of the work revealed by Indra ?." She refers to the *kalpasutra* of Bhadrabahu, which was reduced to writing in Western India some time about 500 A.D. The tradition of the Digambara Jains, to whom the *kalpasutra* belongs, and one of whom, Vajranandi, started a 'Dravida Sanga' in Madura about 440 A.D., is that Indra put some questions to Jina, with the result that the whole science of grammar came as answers. This tradition is voiced for instance in Samayasundarisuri's commentary on the Kalpasutra. The grammar goes by both the names of 'Aindram' and 'Jainendram' by reason of the two channels through which it passed in the course of its genesis. The last redactor of the Aindram was Pujyapada, otherwise known as Devanandi, and when it is known that the founder of the 'Dravida Sanga' in Madura, Vajranandi, was none other than a pupil of Pujyapada, it can be readily inferred that Vajranandi should have been the means of giving currency to his master's redaction of the 'Aindram' in the Dravida Sanga of Madura. Prof. Pathak assigns the Aindram, that is to say, the date of Pujyapada to the latter half of the 5th century A. D. Now, if the 'Aindram' was woven into the Tolkappiyam so as to make of it such a magnificent textile as it is, it could only be the work of a Jain belonging to the

Dravida Sanga, and the date of it could not be earlier than a century after the founding of the Dravida Sanga. The date of the Tolkappiyam works therefore to the end of the sixth century A. D.' Mr V. V. R. then refers to the word 'orai' found in the Tolkappiyam. This word 'orai' is said to be derived from the sanskrit 'hora', which in turn was another form of the Greek 'hore'. 'The great astronomer, Varahamihira, fixed once and for all the Greek terms and teachings in an orthodox setting through his authoritative works in Sanskrit. The date of varahamihira is important as a landmark for fixing the time, when the Greek astrological 'termini technici' became current coin in Sanskrit astrology. Varahamihira died in 587 A. D.' In Mr V. V. R's opinion, it is idle to deny that the word 'orai' was taken into Tamil from Sanskrit. He goes on to say, 'Considering the difficulties of transmission in those days and the time that should be allowed for the reputation of an author of Upper India to be fully established in the Southern districts, we shall not be far wrong in taking the first half of the 7th century A. D. as about the earliest date for Varahamihira to be recognised as an astrological classic in the Tamil districts, at any rate among those who could read Sanskrit, and took an interest in astrology.'

Mr. V. V. R. concludes that the date of the Tolkappiyam may safely be put down round about 650 A. D. Incidentally he seems to support the view of a microscopic section among orientalists that the Augustan Age of Tamil Literature should cluster round the 8th and 9th centuries of the Christian era.

In the interests of truth, it must be stated here and now that Mr. V. V. R's theory is a bundle of fallacies and inaccuracies. We shall now examine the position of this scholar. He asserts that Tolkappiar is a Jain. Tolkappiyar, the student of Agastya and son of Jamadagni, has not informed us, when and why he became a Jain. We hold that there is no reference to Jain or Buddhist doctrines in the Tolkappiyam. Mr. K. S. Srinivasa Pillai, a distinguished Tamil scholar, believes that Tolkappiyar did not belong to the Jain persuasion. Besides, an overwhelming majority of Tamil scholars maintain that the theory of Tolkappiyar being a Jain rests on insufficient data. Panambaranar's reference to Tolkappiyar as *Padimaiyon* (படிமையோன்), on which the theory that Tolkappiyar was a votary of the Jain cult has been ingeniously built up, need not necessarily indicate that Tolkappiyar was a Jain. The term Padimaiyon might be applied to people of other persuasions as well. The next point

in the extracts that calls for attention is the learned reviewer's discovery of a reference to *Kalpasutra* of Bhadrabahu in the Silappathikaram (XI, II 98—99, 154—155).

The verses referred to are the following :—

(1) புண்ணியசரவணம் பொருந்துவி ராயின்
விண்ணவர் கோமான் விழுநூ லெய்துவிர்

(Silappathikaram XI, II, 98-99).

(2) கப்பத்திந்திரன் காட்டிய நூலின்
மெய்ப்பாட்டியற்கை விளங்கக்காண

(Silappathikaram, XI, II, 154-155).

Line 99 alludes to Indra's Grammar, while line 154 contains a reference to the grammar written by Indra, whose age is made up of many yugas. The first word கப்பம் (Kappam) in line 154 means simply a collection of yugas, and signifies a long time. The Tamil word Karpam (கற்பம்) corresponds to the Sankrit word Kalpam (கல்பம்), while its prakrit form is Kappam (கப்பம்). Thus the first word in the line simply refers to the age of Indra, and cannot under any circumstances refer to the *Kalpasutra* of Bhadrabahu. We do not know on what authority this view of Mr. V. V. R. is based. At any rate, so far as we are able to comprehend, there is no warrant for the assertion that there is in this passage an allusion to Bhadrabahu's work. If our view of the matter be correct, then the whole theory

of Mr. V. V. R., that the Tolkappiyam was composed centuries after the dawn of the Christian era, falls to the ground. If Mr. V. V. R's theory that the golden era of Tamil letters clusters round the 8th and 9th centuries is to be accepted, then it means that the theory built up so laboriously by a host of competent scholars like the Madras University Professor, Dr. S. Krishnaswami Iyengar, and the distinguished author of 'the Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago,' Mr. Kanakasabhai Pillai will become exploded, and the reconstruction of South Indian history will have to be made on different lines, and our ideas of the beginnings of South Indian history will have to be thoroughly revised and modified. On the whole, the elaborate reasoning exhibited by the learned reviewer in his treatment of this question seems clearly to rest upon a very uncertain and slender basis.

There can be no two opinions with regard to the antiquity of the *Tolkappiyam*. Tolkappiyar treats of Prosody as a minor section of the Porul division, whereas, by the Third Sangam age, prosody has become so important as to be co-ordinated with the threefold orthodox parts of grammar. A new classification had therefore to be adopted, and separate treatises were written on prosody alone such as the *Kakkai-*

padiniyam. The fact that fewer Sanskrit words are to be found in the *Tolkappiyam* than even in the so-called Third Sangam works is another circumstance which testifies to its great antiquity.

In Tennent's History of Ceylon the third erosion is stated to have occurred in 306 B. C. during the time of Devanampiya Tissa. Taking this last deluge as the one referred to in the *Iraiyanar Ahapporul*, some fix the third century B. C. as the lower limit of the *Tolkappiyam*. In their opinion, the testimony of the *Rajavali* and the *Mahavamsa* bears witness to the same view. Besides 'Tolkappiyar's mention in his work of Hora, for a knowledge of which it seems we are indebted to the Greek astronomers that accompanied Alexander the Great in the course of his Indian raid, would fix the age of Tolkappiyar as the third century B. C.'*

There are other evidences in the Tolkappiyam itself which may enable us to assign to it even an earlier age than the third century B. C. It will be seen from the Sutras 24, 27, and 28 of Vol. I, part I of the Tolkappiyam Porulathikaram that at the time of Tolkappiyar there were in use some Tamil words, in the middle of which letter combinations like lya (ய்ய), jnya (ஞ்ய), nya (ந்ய), mya (ம்ய), vya (வ்ய), and mva

* *Studies in South Indian Jainism*, p. 39.

(மவ) could occur. Not a single word of the kind referred to here is to be found in the whole range of the existing Tamil literature. In the Kural, a work of the first century A. D., it is not found. The period, when such words were current, might have been at least three centuries before the age of the Kural.

One comes across a host of words inbedded in the poems of the third Sangam which would be guilty of a serious violation of the rules laid down by Tolkappiyar. To cite a few illustrations :—

"சகரக்கிளவியும் அவற் றேறற்றே
ஆ, ஐ, ஔவெனும் மூன்றலங்கடையே"
(Sutra 29).

"ஆ, எ, ஒ, வெனும் மூவுயிர்ஞகாரத்துரிய"
(Sutra 31).

"ஆவோடல்லது யகரமுதலாது"
(Sutra 32).

If these rules of grammar had been made about the time of the early Third Sangam writings, they should have been strictly observed in them. But words like Chamaithu (சமைத்து), Chambu (சம்பு), *Chathukkam* (சதுக்கம்), *Chanthi* (சந்தி) *Chalam* (சலம்), *Upam* (யூபம்), *Ukam* (யூகம்), *Yavanar* (யவனர்), *changu* (சங்கு), and *chamam* (சமம்) found in common use in the writings of the Third Sangam constitute a gross breach of the above rules.

If Tolkappiyar had flourished during of the age of the Third Sangam works, he could not have made rules to outcast these words enshrined in them. ' As he should have deduced his principles from the standard literary works held in honour in his time, he should have made provision for the same in harmony with the tendencies of his time, and not traversed the sanction of the great masters of literature. He could not therefore have lived anywhere near the Third Sangam period, and much less after it.' The Tolkappiyam should have been composed at a time long anterior to the Third Sangam epoch. 'For, words are not smuggled into a language in the teeth of its grammar in a single season and in wagon loads. These proscribed words should have crept in by stealth, and must have lingered long in the shade, before they could freely and openly mingle with their innocent fellows; and it should have taken them longer still to muster into a colony sufficiently strong to extort for themselves a general amnesty, and to attract the notice of literary authorities to revise their systems of laws in order to make room for them'. The irresistible inference therefore is that some centuries might have elapsed between the age of Tolkappiyar and that of the poets of the Third Academy. The third century B. C. was

the epoch marked by the introduction of Buddhism and Jainism into South India. There is no reference to the doctrines of Buddhism or Jainism in the whole of the Tolkappiyam. The learned author of the *History of Tamil*, Mr. K. S. Srinivasa Pillai, concurs in this view. On all these grounds, we shall not be far from the truth, if we conclude that the age of the *Tolkappiyam* may not be assigned to a later period than the fourth century B. C.

Though the *Tolkappiyam* is now shown to have been a work possibly of the 4th century B. C., it is believed by some Tamil scholars like Mr. Senathi Raja that it gives us a glimpse into the political and social condition of Southern India in pre-Aryan times, (ie) in those early times anterior to the advent of the Aryas into the South. It has already been stated that the date of the commencement of the Aryan colonisation of the South is probably the tenth century B. C. Since, in the opinion of these writers, certain portions of the *Tolkappiyam* refer to a period, when Aryan influence was conspicuous by its absence in the south, the *Tolkappiyam* is conceived to picture for us the condition of South India, as it was before 1000 B. C.*

* The Tamilian Antiquary No. 5, p. 20.

What are the reasons for this bold and confident assertion? The *Tolkappiyam* contains three books, each comprising nine chapters. The first book deals with Orthography. The second book deals with Etymology. The third book called *Porulathikaram* is the grammar of matter. This is a special feature of Tamil unknown in any other language. *Porul* falls into two divisions *Ahapporul* and *Purapporul*. *Ahapporul* or conjugal love relates to domestic affairs, and Purapporul relates to State affairs. Thus the third book deals with love and war, which in a primitive society were the only themes capable of arousing the enthusiasm of the poet or the strains of a bard. But why should Tolkappiyar include in a purely grammatical treatise the subject of *Porul* which does not fall within the scope of grammar in general? It is because in their opinion *Porul* is of Dravidian origin. Before the *Agatthiam* and the *Tolkappiyam*, there existed a Tamil literature on *Porul*. Tolkappiyar, who found the customs of the Tamils different from those of the Aryans, wanted to leave accounts of them to posterity. So these writers conclude that the *Tolkappiyam* contains vestiges of the Dravidian society in pre-Aryan times, and that it therefore constitutes an important source for our knowledge of the social and

political organisation of the Dravidians prior to the 10th century B. C. But this view seems to be far-fetched, and betrays an utter want of the historic sense. Tolkappiyar nowhere states that he is portraying the condition of the Dravidian society, as it was six hundred years before his own time, if our determination of his age be accepted at least as approximating to the truth.

Regarding the pre-historic period, it has already been shown how from the Vedic literature we could learn something about the political organisation of the Dravidian society. It has already been pointed out how the Southern Dravidians should have had chiefs who lived in fortresses, and who could fight with bows and arrows, and how they had attained a respectable level of civilization of their own. Beyond these few references, our knowledge, as regards the political organisation of the Dravidian society in the prehistoric period, is sadly defective.

Then passing on to the semi-historic period, we shall first of all study the probable village organisation of the Dravidian society. The whole mass of villages, as far as they are ancient in South India, are of non-Aryan origin*, since no considerable bodies of Aryans ever set-

* Baden-Powell's, *Village Communities in India*, p. 54.

tled at all in these regions. The non-Aryan races had established villages for agricultural life before the Aryans. But the Dravidians of Southern India have been slowly changed in the course of ages by climatic conditions and by their absorption of some of the Aryan religious beliefs, practices, and customs. Consequently we do not expect to find their village and other customs actually primitive, but only showing some marks of their origin. There are places in Chutia Nagpur, Orissa, and elsewhere, where some Dravidian tribes have retained their original customs. The remarks of J. F. Hewitt and Baden-Powell who had exceptional opportunities of studying all about the remnants of the Dravidian races at those places enable us to infer as to what might have been the probable condition of the Dravidian society in the semi-historic period.

The Dravidians of South India were organised in tribes. The country traversed by the forest races of South India was, as the number of occupants increased, divided among a number of communities, to each of which a fixed area of territory was assigned by local custom. The boundaries of these were carefully defined, and each tribe pursued its avocations within its own limits. The different settlements were separated by large} expanses of forest and

waste, within which they chose new camping grounds, when the soil round their original residences was exhausted. The men employed their time chiefly in hunting animals for food, while the women searched for vegetable food such as fruits, roots, and edible grass seeds. Among these women agriculture first originated in India. They secured yearly crops by sowing the seeds of the wild rice and coarse local millets. It was, when this custom of sowing seeds had been established, that the first attempt to change the encampment into a permanent village was undertaken. Huts were made of a few tree boughs stuck in the ground, and each settlement was only occupied, as long as the fertility of the soil lasted. They were usually placed on the higher slopes of hills. It was the forest races of South India that first founded the village communities and provincial governments. The villages were originally the rude settlements of the nomad agriculturists of the forest races. The villages were in the first instance established by distributing or allotting the territory among the smaller groups, each led by its petty chief or chiefs who in turn allotted the land within the village for the holdings of the various families or persons entitled to be provided for. As time went on, new villages were constantly established one by one by small

groups starting out on their own account into the abundant waste and clearing a new settlement independently of the movement of a whole clan or sept.

The unit of the Dravidian society was thus the village. In the ancient Dravidian village there was developed a compact tribal organization under a more or less centralised government. There was a hierarchy of village officers who looked after the equable distribution of land. 'There is an elaborate establishment of lots or holdings for the headman, the priest, the deputy or accountant, and a staff of artisans or menials. The village sacred tree or grove, the village deity, and the village dance or festival symbolise the unity of the village settlement; while a group of villages or tribal territorial divisions unites to form a larger territorial unit comprising from 10 to 100 villages—a confederacy meeting in assemblies to confer on any important matter that concerns several of the villages in common.' There are evidences of the regular institutions of Dravidian autonomous villages, unions of villages, and territorial divisions*.

Vide Radha Kamal Mookerjee's article on *Indian Village Assemblies* in the Lucknow University Journal, Vol. 1, No. 3, and J. F. Hewitt's *History and Chronology of the Mythmaking Age*.

In taking up for study the *Tolkappiyam*, our next important source, we leave behind us the region of hypothesis and conjecture for comparative certainty, and shall proceed to sketch in outline the structure of the Dravidian or Tamil society, as gleaned from this great Tamil classic. There were five different communities scattered in different parts of the country and living apart by clans, each having its own tutelary deities and chiefs following its own customs and manner of living, such as *Marutamakkal* or agricultural tribes, *Kurunchimakkal* or semi-agricultural tribes, *Mullaimakkal* or pastoral tribes, *Neithalmakkal* or fishing tribes, and *Palaimakkal* or hunting tribes. Among the agricultural tribes the towns were called Ur, Perur (big village), and Mudur (old village). The chief of an agricultural tribe in ancient times was called Uran (lord of the village) or Kilavan (elder, owner). The semi-agricultural tribes living in hilly districts were known as Kuravar. Their chief was known as Verpan or Chilampan. Their towns were modest clusters of huts called sirukudi (little huts). The pastoral tribes inhabited jungle tracts of land. They lived in villages called cheri (சேரி) and padi (பாடி). The men were called Ayar and Idaiyar. Their tribal drum was called pambai. The

fishing tribes lived in villages called pattanam or pakkam. Their chiefs were known as Cherpan or Pulamban, Turaivan, and Konkan, and the ordinary men were called Parathar and Nulaiyar. The tribes inhabiting desert tracts were known as Vedar. These were the nomads. They lived on hunting and plundering the adjoining countries. Their chiefs were Kalai and Vidalai. Their habitations were called Kurumbu, and their war drum was Tudi. The people were also called Maravar and Eyinar. * The pastoral tribes worshipped Vishnu; the hill tribes worshipped the god Muruga; the fishing tribes worshipped the god Varuna; the agricultural tribes worshipped the god Indra, while the nomads worshipped the goddess Kali.

It is surprising to note that these five different tribes enumerated above have continued to exist side by side for centuries, some of them even to the present day, with their characteristic habits and manners. We would not be far wrong, if we imagine that these tribes might have existed unchanged even long before the *Tolkappiyam*. At any rate it is quite possible to infer that these existed long before Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, and Canarese separated from the parent stock, and

* *Tolkappiyam*, Porulathikaram, Sutra 5, Part 1, Vol. 1.

became differentiated into different dialects; because among the Canarese and Telugus, the same tribes, with almost the same names and occupations as those among the Tamils, may be found to exist even now.*

Thus, there were five territorial divisions, such as hill (*Kurunchi*), plain (*Marutham*), the region between hill and plain (*Mullai*), sea-shore (*Neithal*), and waterless waste (*Palai*). Besides, the *Tolkappiyam* refers to four professional castes such as *Arasar* (Kshatriyas or Rulers), *Anthanar* or Parpar (Brahmans), Vanikar (Merchants), and Vellalar (Agriculturists). The duties of the four classes are thus described:† Learning, teaching, sacrificing, officiating at sacrifices, giving alms, and receiving alms, these belong to the Brahmans. Learning, sacrificing, giving alms, protecting the people, crushing the wicked, these are the functions of the king. Learning, sacrificing, giving alms, cultivation, trade, and tending cattle, these belong to the class of merchants. The Vellalas are divided into two classes, the higher and the lower. The duties of the higher type of Vellalas are learning, sacrificing, giving alms, cultivating lands, trade, and

* *Ethnographical Survey of Mysore*—Mr. Nanjundayya M.A., M.L.,

† *Tolkappiyam*, Porulathikaram, Sutra 75.

tending cattle, while those of the lower type of Vellalas are learning (excepting the vedas), giving alms, cultivating lands, tending cattle, trade, and services to others. Only certain duties were special to each class. Thus the special duties of a Brahman were to officiate at sacrifices and receive gifts; those of the king to protect the people and punish the wicked; those of the merchants and the higher Vellalas cultivation, trade, and the breeding of cattle; and those of the lower Vellalas services to others, trade, agriculture, and the breeding of cattle. The higher Vellalas and the merchant class had at first the same duties to perform, even though in actual practice each class specialised in one walk of life. The merchant class attended to commercial matters. The attention of the higher Vellalas was absorbed by high matters of state. They could enter into vocations allotted to the upper three classes. Nachchinarkiniar states that Vellalas could give their girls in marriage to those of the kingly class, serve in the army as commanders, and could become kings of the second class, and be called '*Arasu*' and '*Vel*' (*Kurunilamannar*).* The Vellalas occupied a high position during the days of Tolkappiyar. In the words of

* *Sen Tamil*, Vol. 11, No. II, p. 366.

Tiruvalluvar, the author of the *Kural*, they constituted the noble heritage of a nation.

The Aryan theory, that mankind is divided into four varnas or groups of caste, such as Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Sudra, was wholly foreign to the Southern Dravidians. Caste was non-existent. There is no reference to the term 'sudra' in the whole of the *Tolkappiyam*. In the words of Mr. Manicka Naicker a transmutable, plastic, and barrierless professional distinction is all that is found in the work. The *Tolkappiyam's* fourth class can never be identified with the degraded North Indian fourth class Sudra of any age. A caste system nearest to this can only be found in Dutt's Rig Vedic castes. Manu's compound castes cannot be gleaned the least in the *Tolkappiyam*.

True love among the ancient Tamils had two phases known as *Kalavu* or furtive love and *Karpu* or wedded love. Furtive love answers to what is known as courting among Europeans, the only difference being that courting may perhaps end in rejection which may be mutual or one-sided, whereas furtive love is real love between the champion and the dame unknown to the world at large. The discovery may bring about the wedding,

or, if frustrated, bring about the voluntary death of both the parties, as their love was chaste and dignified. The form of marriage that was in vogue among the Tamils corresponded to the Aryan Gandharva form of marriage. * 'It is the oldest and the best appreciated form of marriage among the ancient Tamils, as also the most natural way of effecting a life-long union, in which romance, free choice, karmic activities, and religion, all mingle together in one harmonius whole. Mutual choice in a god-sent and casual meeting leads to private consortship, which sooner or later ends in the happy union of the parties with the consent of their parents.' The marriageable age of a boy was sixteen, and that of a girl was twelve. Polygamy and prostitution were prevalent among the ancient Tamils. Slavery † was not unknown. Women did not accompany their husbands to the battle-field,‡ nor would they accompany their husbands, if the latter went abroad for the acquisition of knowledge or riches. Women would not be allowed to accompany their husbands, whenever the latter undertook sea-voyages. § Men,

* *Christian College Magazine*, Quarterly Series, Vol. III, No. 2 p. 95.—Mr. R. Rangachariar's article.

† *Tolkappiyam*, Porulathikaram, Sutra 23.

‡ *Tolkapiyam*, Porulathikaram, Sutra 175.

§ *Tolkapiyam*, Porulathikaram, Sutra 34.

who had to go abroad for the acquisition of knowledge, would not be away from their homes for more than three years. The people knew how to sculpture * in stone. The references to the *virakkal* put up in honour of the departed heroes illustrate this point. If the people knew how to sculpture in stone, it may be presumed that they could have built palaces and temples and fortresses in stone. Unfortunately, these have all perished leaving not a trace behind.

So far, our sources of knowledge, if imperfect, have given us some material to sketch the main outlines, however indistinct and shadowy, of the Dravidian society. Unhappily, when we turn to consider more closely the details of the political organisation proper, the evidence becomes painfully inadequate and disappointingly meagre. From the section on Purapporul in the *Tolkappiyam* we learn that the different tribes or clans were under the patriarchal rule of their chiefs who had fortified places and armies. The arms of the soldiers consisted of bows, arrows, swords, and javelins. The chiefs marched to battle to the sound of the tribal drums and flutes, and the standard-bearers carried the flags or banners of the respective tribes, each of whom had a

*Tolkappiyam, Porulathikaram, Sutra 60.

distinct banner. The soldiers had long hair, which they tied into a knot on their heads, and the warriors wore different kinds of flowers on their *Kondai*, when going to or returning victorious from the field of battle, and they wore anklets on their ankles which made a jingling sound when they marched to battle.

Cattle-lifting was the beginning of warfare between two Tamil chiefs. The section dealing with cattle-lifting contains a graphic account of this practice. In a series of animated stanzas, the plan, progress, and results of the raid are vividly described under the title of *vetchiturai* from the badge of *vetchi*, a plant worn by the leader and his men. The large numbers of *virakkal* that lie scattered profusely in different parts of the country testify to the prevalence of a practice like that of the cattle fighting so common on the borders between Scotland and England in the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries. * Elliot says: "As the exclusive constitution of an Indian village tends to isolate it from the cultivation of friendly relations with its neighbours, it seems probable that the bolder spirits of one township might occasionally take advantage of a favourable opportunity to pounce upon the cattle of another

* *Ind. Ant.* May 1897—W. Elliot's article.

especially among the communities which constitute the predatory classes." The examples of such cattle raids are not confined to adjoining villages, but are quite common to frontier villages of opposing States. Then open war breaks out leading to the systematic invasions of the raiders' territories. Then follows the siege. The war ends in victory for one of the parties. Sober counsel is given to the victor about the transitoriness of mundane enjoyments, when he becomes intoxicated with his own triumph in the war. It is also given to the defeated chieftain to suppress his grievance, to make him remain calm and resigned without being overpowered by grief, and direct his thoughts about the life to come.

It should be borne in mind that the methods of warfare above sketched should have been in vogue not only among petty chiefs, but also among the rulers of the Pandya, Chera, and Chola kingdoms. Tolkappiyar nowhere explicitly refers to the existence of these three well-known Tamil kingdoms. From this it is argued by certain scholars that the description in the *Tolkappiyam* carries us back to remote times, to the beginnings of the Dravidian society, to a semi-agricultural and nomadic state, when the chief wealth of a tribe consisted of cattle, and when organised king-

doms had not been formed. To us this view seems to be untenable. For want of a better source of information, grammatical works like the *Tolkappiyam* have to be laid under contribution by those intent upon the elucidation of the forgotten history of ancient South India. Tolkappiyar need not have made explicit references to the Tamil kingdoms notwithstanding their existence as well-organised kingdoms in his own age, since he was bringing out a purely grammatical treatise of the Tamil language and not a monograph on the political history of the Tamil country.

The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, Asoka's Rock Edicts, Sinhalese traditions, the *Periplus*, Ptolemy's *Geography*, Kalidasa's *Raghuvamsa*, all these eloquently testify to the prevalence of flourishing, vigorous, and independent monarchies in the Tamil country. If the traditions and the different lists of the Pandyan dynasty and the *Halasya Mahatmya* of the *Skandapurana* which gives an account of the sports or miracles of Sundaresvara were investigated without prejudice, the truth will certainly dawn upon any eager inquirer that the Pandyan dynasty should have originated at an epoch even anterior to the fifth century B. C. In making this state-

ment we are not indulging in any vague generalisation, and we are confident that one day this statement will meet with universal assent. *The ancient history of the Chola kingdom commences at the same time as that of the Pandyan. It can be safely asserted that the Chera kingdom, which is always enumerated along with the Pandya and the Chola States by original authorities, had as high an antiquity as the Pandya and the Chola.

We shall now proceed to describe the genesis of the monarchy in South India. We have before referred to the existence of five different tribes with their elders or chiefs. These chiefs by the conquest of neighbouring territory and the absorption of adjacent tribes would have developed in course of time into great rulers of organised kingdoms. We may note that, when nomad communities settle down to agriculture, the old men of these communities would become the acknowledged heads, and begin to exercise at first a patriarchal authority over them. With the increase of the family, this power augments, and they become chieftains. The first of the Pandyans seems to have been one of those patriarchs of an agricultural community who, by conquering some of the adjoining tribes, had become a sovereign.

* Wilson's *Catalogue of the Mackenize Mss.* p. 49.

This was probably also the process, by which the other kingdoms such as the Chola and the Chera might have come into being.

It is possible to notice but a few stray references to the polity of these kingdoms. Kapatapuram,* the capital of the Pandyas, was golden, beautiful, adorned with pearls, and worthy of the Pandyas. The Pandyas were crowned by Agastya, the priest of the Pandyas. † It may be inferred from the *Indica* of Megasthenes that the Pandya Queen had 500 elephants, a force of cavalry 4000 strong, and another of infantry consisting of about 130,000 men. ‡ Owing to the moral influence of Asoka, the monarchs of the Chola, Pandya, Satyaputra, and Keralaputra kingdoms made arrangements in their respective kingdoms for the caring of the sick, both of men and cattle. Besides, they caused wells to be dug, and trees and useful healing herbs to be planted on the roads for the benefit of men and cattle. Though the credit for this beneficent measure is attributed to Asoka in his Girnar Edict, it is only reasonable to suppose that the above mentioned arrangements could not have been introduced by Asoka's will into

* *Tamilian Antiquary*, No. 7—M. Rahaviengar's article on *Valmiki and South India*.

† *Ind. Ant.* Vol. 1876, p. 89.

‡ *Ind. Ant.* Vol. 1876, p. 272—Girnar Inscription of Asoka.

those independent kingdoms of the South, but only by the rulers of those States themselves. Pliny mentions a tribe called Pandaea (Pandyas), who alone of the Indians were in the habit of having female sovereigns. Megasthenes says, 'Heracles begot a daughter in India whom he called Pandaea. To her he assigned that portion of India which lies to the southward, and extends to the sea; while he distributed the territory subject to her rule into 365 villages giving orders that one village should each day bring to the treasury the royal tribute, so that the queen might always have the assistance of those men, whose turn it was to pay the tribute, in coercing those who for the time being were defaulters in their payments'. The division of the territory into 365 villages or revenue units is an indication of the civil division of the Pandya Kingdom during the centuries anterior to the Christian era. It has already been stated how Pandaea possessed a great treasure in the fishery for pearls which were highly valued by the Greeks and the Romans. The Pandya rulers were great patrons of literature. The first two Madura Academies, if their very existence is not to be questioned at all, should be assigned to the centuries preceding the Christian era, and so the Pandya rulers during the centuries

preceding the Christian era should have presided over these Academies, and done not a little to promote the cause of sound learning and culture. The scanty materials that are available do not throw even this feeble light upon the condition of the other Tamil kingdoms of the south.

Having sketched, though in feeble and indistinct outlines, the system of polity as it obtained currency in the semi-historic period, we shall now pass on to a description of the ancient South Indian polity as it was in the historic period, a most remarkable, but none the less forgotten, period of its development. The early centuries of the Christian era form an important land-mark in the development of political institutions of the peoples of Peninsular India. Happily the numerous Tamil classical works of the epoch of the Third Sangam furnish the means of describing in outline some features at least of the polity, existing at the time, of the Tamil kingdoms, such as the social system, the fiscal system, the administrative system, the legal system, with some view of commerce and religion. It is also possible to deal with the political thought of ancient South India during the early centuries of the Christian era as exhibited in ancient Sangam works, and to present a picture, however dim

and shadowy, of the State and its duties during the period under review. It may also be unhesitatingly affirmed that the political organisation portrayed in these Sangam works was not simply an ideal sought after by the thinkers and writers of the day, but also an actual achievement. That there was phenomenal progress achieved in the field of polity, that the government in that distant age was not an undiluted, unmitigated despotism, but was subject to checks and counter-checks, that the ancient monarch carried on the government in consonance with high ideals and lofty principles, that he invariably sought the advice of a council of elders and certain popular assemblies, and that he had a great regard for public opinion which reigned as supreme as the law guarded by himself, these indisputable facts will, it is hoped, be apparent from a perusal of the following pages.

In the *Perumpanarruppadai*, a fine description of the Brahmans' quarters at a village in Tondainadu is thus given :—'The healthy calf tied to one of the posts in the pandal indicates that its mother the cow went out to the meadow. The milk-yielding cow was an indispensable animal in the house of a Brahman ; for the five-fold products from the cow were essential for vedic rites, as they are even

at present. Why the hen and the dog are mentioned is inexplicable.' The reference to the teaching of Vedic slokas to the parrots with aquiline bills by Brahmans is evidently an exaggeration. The Brahman wife was a paragon of chastity like the tiny star (near one of the seven stars known as the constellation of the Great Bear) in the northern horizon. She was an accomplished cook being well-versed in the preparation of highly relishing vegetarian diet. A particular kind of rice interpreted as *irasannam* (இராசான்னம்) by the commentator was the staple food in the house. In the Brahman villages only the vegetarian diet was available, but it was prepared in a highly relishing manner. The Brahman was noted for his cleanliness and religious austerities. He would readily feed with pleasure even low-caste minstrels. The *Tirumurugarruppadai* gives a true picture of the Brahman of the classic age. The Brahman should be born of a father and a mother sprung of totally different gotras of unsullied reputation such as Kasyapa. He should rear the three kinds of sacred fires; he is twice born, the first birth being his natural birth, and the second being the one he assumes during the holy thread ceremony; he should wear a holy thread of nine strings; when worshipping God Muruga, he should be in wet attire

dripping water; his raised hands should rest on his head, and his mouth should devoutly mutter gently the six mystic syllables of Muruga's name.

The Sages conducted *yagas* or holy sacrifices. 'They were the most honoured among the pure Tamils. They professed to know the three stages of time, that is, the past, present, and future. They led a retired and religious life, dwelling outside the great towns.' The Vaisyas constituted the trading class. Their virtues strike the reader with admiration. These traders were virtuous, and helped in the the propagation of virtue among other classes. By their advice, flesh-eaters became vegetarian, and robbers and thieves gave up their ignoble calling. In strict conformity with the injunctions laid down in the Vedas, they worshipped the celestial beings (Devas), and conducted holy sacrifices. They manifested boundless grace towards cows and bulls. They maintained the dignity of the Brahmans, and performed charities in the name of those who could not afford to do them, so that they might reap the consequent blessings. They sumptuously fed the hungry. Traders though they were, they spoke only the naked and unadorned truth. In making bargains, they carefully avoided all sorts of illegitimate gain. They made a clean

breast of the net profit they made by their dealings. Agriculture was practised by the Vellalas. From the higher kind of Vellalas, the major and the minor dynasties of kings were chosen. Next in rank to the Vellalas were the shepherds and huntsmen. Below these were the artisans such as goldsmiths, carpenters, potters, etc. After these came the military class (*i.e.*,) the Padaiachchier or the armed men. Last of all were the Valayar and Pulayar or the fishermen and scavengers respectively. The distinction of the four castes Brahma, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Sudra observed by the Aryas did not exist among the Tamils. The expression 'twice-born', applied by the Aryans to those who were sanctified by the investiture of the sacred thread, was always used in ancient Tamil literature to denote only the Brahmans, and it is evident therefore that the Kshatriya and the Vaisya, who wore the sacred thread, were not known in *Tamilakam.*

Strong-bodied mlechchas and Maravas beautify their bodies with garlands, get drunk with fermenting toddy, and wander with mirth riotously everywhere in the streets of large cities like Madura. Innocent damsels at sunset light oily wicks in the lamps, and adore the household deities with flowers and paddy grains. In the guarded

houses of the rich, servant boys are busy in preparing pastes of musk upon the black mortars. There were halls with flags for discussions between disputing philosophers. There were the residences of sages and penancing devotees. Hypnotic dances of *velan*, the dances of females, religious festivities, and musical entertainments could be witnessed everywhere. The business of entertainment should have provided a livelihood for different classes of persons such as dancers. There is a reference to dancing maids who press their lutes tight to their warm bosoms to heat the strings at sunset in winter, and tune their chords to suit admirably to their dance. There were charity-houses, wherein the poor and the needy were fed. The *conji* flew out in streams, which were rendered miry by bulls fighting with one another. The ceaselessly plying cars rendered the mire into dust, which rose up, and spoiled the paintings in the adjoining temples. There were charity-houses for feeding stray cattle.

The classic age was characterised by a sad feature. People other than Brahmans were addicted to drink, gluttony, and flesh-eating. There seemed to have been no sumptuous dinner without these vices. The minstrel, who was directed to the king for receiving a fit reward, was encouraged by the

hope of a sumptuous flesh diet throughout his long way from the different peoples. Vegetarianism was in fact a later growth. No doubt there should have been honourable exceptions among the Saivas and the Jains in those days. Rice was pounded with long pestles bordered with strong iron rings. These rings by constant employment underwent much wear and tear, and became blunt and smooth. This custom is still in vogue. *Maduraikkanchi* tells us that clothes were washed in sour rice-water, and ironed, as is the custom even at the present day in remote villages.

In certain houses monkeys were brought up like children. Young monkeys and children played together. Elephants were trained in a northern language by lads of the Tamil race. In the *Chintamani* one of the Five Ancient Tamil Epics, this practice is referred to. Elephants were fed with rice smeared well in ghee by keepers. The Dravidians used to catch wild elephants in pitfalls dug in the woods; but the Aryans introduced the ingenious method of decoying wild elephants by tame female elephants. From *Mullaippatu* we learn that there were oracles at the shrine of *Korravai*, which used to be consulted by the people on emergencies. When the king was about to go on a

warlike expedition, the queen was disconsolate. Old matrons in attendance upon the queen consulted the oracle, and informed her that the king would return triumphant. Then the queen consented to the king's departure.

In the classical age, Puhar or Kaverippumpattinam, situated at the mouth of the Kaveri, was a thriving emporium, and the capital of the Chola kingdom. To the seaport of Puhar, ships from all parts of the then known world brought cargoes of merchandise, which were speedily conveyed to the inland towns. It was famous enough to count among its inhabitants men of different nationalities that had resorted to it probably on trade business or for amassing fortune. Greeks from Alexandria and Arabs from Mecca jostled in its streets with Romans and with men from all the Eastern regions. The bazaar thoroughfare at Puhar was the scene of unceasing festivals. There were arrays of flags on either side of the bazaar road. In the bazaar in Madura, flags of beauty used to be raised in honour of divine festivals. Besides, there were flags to commemorate the capture of foreign cities by the generals of the king. Flags in honour of triumphs in war waved majestically like cataracts flowing down the hills. Elephants, cars drawn by brilliant horses, and magnificent chargers mounted by trained

riders passed and repassed through the bazaar thoroughfare. In the bazaar were to be seen pedlars and sellers of petty articles of merchandise, such as fragrant unknit flowers, garlands of variegated colours, perfumed powders manufactured by the joint work of several persons, who had divided the labour between themselves, betel leaves, spiced areca nuts and lime slaked from burnt shells. There were the manufacturers of bangles from conches, goldsmiths, cloth merchants, painters, weavers offering their clothes for sale, and sellers of vegetables. Customs were levied at all the sea-ports. Tolls were collected on the trunk-roads used by caravans and at the frontier of each kingdom. Wine and other intoxicating liquors were imported into India by the Bactrian Greeks or Yavanas. We have already referred in detail to the commercial activity of this epoch. The state of society corresponding to this activity of trade, to the traffic on high roads, the bustle at frontiers, customs-houses, tolls, and to the minute regulation of these must have been one of considerable complexity. Naturally there should have been a considerable growth of luxury consequent upon the rise of the Tamil kingdoms like the Chola and the Pandya to pre-eminence in the South.

We learn from *Porunararruppadai* that clothes of very fine texture with beautiful embroidery were manufactured in Tamilakam. Foreign influences also began to assert themselves. There should have taken place a considerable advance in art during this period. Marvellous machines were constructed by the Tamils*, and great architectural works were carried out under the supervision of the Yavanas. From *Nedunalvadai* we learn that these Yavanas were excellent artists versed in the construction of metal statues, and apparently the Tamils should have learnt this art from them. The science and practice of the fine arts were highly developed among the ancient Tamils. The study of music was an essential part of a liberal education. Dancing was cultivated as a fine art, and there were text-books already composed, in which rules were given in detail for the performance of the several kinds of dancing then in vogue. In the arts of painting and sculpture, the Tamils had acquired a considerable degree of proficiency. Figures of gods, men, and animals were painted with a variety of colours on the walls of private houses and public buildings, such as temples and palaces.

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* Silappathikaram, Adaikalakkathai.

'The dress worn by the Tamil people varied according to their rank in society and the race to which they belonged. The Brahmans cropped their hair leaving a small tuft on the top of the head. The soldiers employed to guard the public thoroughfares and the servants in the king's palace wore coats. A full dress was the outward sign of a servant rather than of a master. Women mixed freely in the business and amusements of social life. From the queen downwards, every woman visited the temples. Every town and village had its street of harlots, and in the great cities there were educated courtezans. The courtezans honoured by the special regard of the king were allowed to travel in carriages or palanquins, to visit the royal parks, and to use betel boxes made of gold. Boys were considered marriageable at sixteen, and girls at twelve years of age. All the villages and towns were fortified against the attacks of robbers and enemies.''* Owing to the freedom enjoyed by women it was possible for young people to court each other before marriage. One most curious custom referred to in the Sangam works is that of a disappointed lover proclaiming his love in the public

*Extracts from V. Kanakasabhai Pillai's *The Tamils 1800 Years Ago*, pp. 116-130.

streets and committing suicide. In the narrow world of an ancient South Indian village, a courtship could be carried on only with much difficulty. The lovers had to meet under cover of night at some appointed place in the outskirts of the village. At such meetings, the young woman was always accompanied by her confidante. Nallanthuvanar's *Kalithokai* throws much interesting light on the modes of life, manners, and sentiments of the ancient Tamil people. The lovers had met a few times before at night; and the young lady's confidante, solicitous about her companion's reputation and with a view to hasten the man's making a public proposal of marriage to her, would like to terminate such private interviews. She therefore weaves a delicate tissue of fiction; and within hearing of the man narrates it to her companion pointing out the peril of such meetings as a moral of the story, and conveying to the man a gentle hint to immediately make a public proposal for the lady's hand to her parents.

One national virtue of the Tamils was the hospitality they invariably showed to the poor and the needy. The ideal of the people was that virtue should be ever on the increase, and that vice should go on diminishing. To love mankind, to seek their welfare,

to relieve the distressed and the needy, not to compass evil and become hateful, not to stab people in the dark, and not to despise and glory over the fallen are some of the many lessons conveyed in the *Kalitokai** The model housewife must be gentle, loving, industrious, and, above all, obedience itself. Valluvar, the author of the Kural, was once asked, whether the married state or celibacy was chiefly to be desired. He gave no answer, but invited the inquirer to wait and see. Valluvar's wife was drawing water from the well. He called to her, and, leaving the bucket hanging midway, she instantly came. At dinner he complained that the cold rice burnt his mouth, and his wife immediately fanned it. "Next day, while the sun shone clear and bright, he cried out that he could not see to read. She brought at once a light." 'This', said Valluvar to his visitor, 'is domestic felicity. If you can have such a wife, marry; otherwise, prefer celibacy'. It is further related of this model wife, that, having during her life performed unhesitatingly her husband's every behest, at her death she asked him first, and last, and only question. 'Tell me,' she said, 'Why, at our marriage, did you require of me a needle and a pot of water?'

* J. M. Nallaswami Pillai p. 18-S. Dipika Vol. 8.

'It was', he replied, "that I might with the needle pick up a grain of rice, should one ever be spilt, and dip it in the water'. No grain of rice had ever been suffered by this model house-wife to fall in serving her husband's meal. The needle and the pot of water had never been used. She died content. We would like to have more scenes of real life such as this among the ancient Tamils.

In the *Manimekalai*, there is a reference to the celebration of the feast of Indra. The herald seated on an elephant proclaimed to all the inhabitants of Puhar, "Decorate your temples and your houses. Let garlands hang through every street from every window. Let the sound of every species of music be heard throughout all your borders. Let merchants and dealers fill every avenue in all that is beautiful and precious. Let the temples of every religion and sect be crowded with devout worshippers. Let the teachers of every school deliver their lectures, hold disputations, discuss their tenets, and promulgate their faith. Thus let the city be filled with peace and gladness." It is refreshing to come upon passages like this in this great classical work which gives us an accurate and graphic picture of the life led by the Tamilians eghteen centuries ago. During these festivals, there were fairs

on a magnificent scale. It was the custom for all the actresses, dancing girls, and songstresses to give magnificent entertainments on these occasions.

We shall now proceed to sketch briefly the religion of the Tamils in the early centuries of the Christian era. Valluvar's religion is the religion of the Dravidians. Valluvar systematised the ethics of the Dravidian community, and as well built up a system for them. His system is a high-water mark of excellence. He is a utilitarian of the noblest type and a thinker of the loftiest order. His conception of the good of the community and the law of service enjoined upon the member of that community to contribute to that good is well conceived. In the chapter on *Oppuravarithal* (ஒப்புரவறிதல்) in his sacred *Kural*, Valluvar, the ablest exponent of the Dravidian religion and philosophy, formulates the most comprehensive and far-reaching ideal of service to the good of the community or nation. In the thought-region, Valluvar is a prodigy and a type of Dravidian intellect, nothing short of meteoric. In the opening chapter of the *Kural*, a perfect ethical and religious code, the Godhead is described as the first and indivisible, the supremely wise, the heart-dweller, the sense-destroyer, the passionless, the incompar-

able, the good, and the possessor of noble attributes. Valluvar's creed is not a godless creed. His God is the first cause and lord. He is intelligent. He is immaculate, and untainted by likes and dislikes. He is the Lord of lords and King of kings. He is the source of all dharma and beneficence. He has eight attributes. Valluvar describes God by the terms *Chemporul* (செம்பொருள்=Good being), *Ullathu* (உள்ளது=The Existent), and *Meyp-poral* (மெய்ப்பொருள்=True being). According to Valluvar, "no amount of learning is of any good, unless a man believes in the existence of God, and worships His Feet in all love and truth. The references to the deities Indra, Vishnu, Siva, Lakshmi, and Brahma would seem to argue Valluvar's faith in symbology, despite his alleged aloofness from particular creeds.*

The deities of the Sangam period, as seen from the other works of this age, were Siva of the dark throat, Baladeva of white colour, Krishna of the deep blue colour, and Subramanya, the Red One. In Puhar and Madura, there were temples dedicated in honor of these deities as well as of Indra. One of the oldest of South Indian shrines is devoted to the worship of Krishna. The Sangam literature affords abundant evidence to show the supre-

Vide Kural—Stanzas 898, 610, 580, 616, and 1062.

macy of Siva. The latter is given the front place among the gods in *Maduraikkanchi*. In all the introductory invocations of the Sangam works, Siva's form and grace are dealt with. There are many references to the worship of Siva throughout the *Purananuru*. God Subramanya was a great favourite deity with the Tamils. He resided with splendour in six favourite places such as Tirupparamkunram, Tiruchendur, Palani, Tiruverakam, Alagar-Koil, and Kunrutoradal. There should have been shrines dedicated to Subramanya in these places. The Tamil God Muruga was the common object of worship to the Aryans and the Tamils. The poem *Tirumurugarrup-padai* clearly shows the readiness with which the Aryans incorporated the traditions and religious beliefs of the Tamils. God Subramanya condescends to accept the obeisance of mortals to him in whatever form it may be given. Bloody sacrifices were offered by the people in villages to this deity. Sacrifices of sheep were offered to the God. Hypnotic dances were in vogue in honour of this God. The rudiments of Vaishnavism are also traceable in the Sangam works. In this body of literature there are references to Rama and Krishna. Besides the cult of Siva, the cult of Vishnu also was coming into prominence. Much importance was at-

tached to sacrifices. The *Vedic* learning was much esteemed.

An interesting account of Buddhism is given in the classical work, *Manimekalai*. The chief problem that confronted the Buddhists was, 'How to get freed from birth which is unmixed pain.' The solution they arrived at may be expressed in the words of the *Manimekalai* thus; 'The born are doomed to ever-increasing pain; those who will not be born are blessed with eternal beatitude. Of attachment the former is an outcome and by renunciation the latter is doomed.' The *Manimekalai* contains references only to the Mahayana form of Buddhism. The fabric of Buddha's teachings rests on the foundation of the four Satyas. "The ever-increasing misery by attachment is caused, the happiness of emancipation by non-attachment secured. These conjointly form the 'Four Principles of Truth." The lines of the *Manimekalai* that deal with the origin of misery are almost taken verbatim from the Buddhistic Text, the *Tripitaka*: "Of ignorance are actions the result, and from actions knowledge proceeds. Knowledge gives rise to name and form, and they in turn to the five organs of sense and the mind. These organs six, of contact with things, are the cause. On contact depending, ex-

perience comes. Of experience desire is the outcome. And desire to attachment gives rise. Attachment, of an aggregate of actions, is the root. On this aggregate based all birth proceeds; with birth, old age, disease and death, pain and weeping, suffering and care, and despair, all the fruits of actions. Thus is said the origin of misery." The means of obtaining freedom from misery is then described: "With ignorance departs actions all; with actions, the knowledge that differentiates. When knowledge departs, names and forms along. Names and forms departing, the organs six are no more. With the organs six, the contact with things does leave, and contact with it the faculty of experience does steal. With experience vanish all kinds of desire. And desire fails not attachment to take. Attachment to Karma deals a death blow. Karma falling, the wheel of birth no longer turns. When freedom from birth is secured, secured also is freedom from old age, disease and death, pain and weeping, suffering and care, despair and all the rest." In another place it is stated that whosoever born among men cares to know the characteristics of these twelve, ignorance (Avidya), actions (Samskaras), differentiating knowledge (Vijnana), name and form (Nama Rupa), six organs (Shadayatanas),

contact with things (Sparsa), experience (Vedana), desire (Trshna), attachment (Upadana), aggregate of actions (Bhava), birth (Janma), and the fruits of actions (Karmapala), knows also the great Nirvana".* The ten sinful actions that should be avoided in all religious practices by all kinds of practitioners irrespective of their stage of life (Grahasta or Samyasi) are 'killing, stealing, and lusting, these three appertaining to the body; lying, tale bearing, using hot words, indulging in vain talk, these four to utterance belonging; desire, anger, and delusion, these three in the mind springing.' An examination into the old Buddhistic customs reveals to us that women also were permitted to become Sannyasins, and that in that stage of life they were known as Bhikshunis. From the *Manimekalai* we learn that Matavi hearing of the sad death of Kovalan at Madura spends the remainder of her life in a Buddhist monastery. The heroine Manimekalai herself finally settles at Kanchi to perform penance with a view to attain Nirvana. We learn from the *Manimekalai* that the Jain saints were generally heartless and unsympathetic. Jainism partly failed from a lack of human sympathy. The Jains were more anxious

* *Vide Manimekalai*, Stanza 30, lines 51-103, and *the Siddhanta Dipika*, Vol. IV, p. 112.

to show mercy and pity to the animal creation than to suffering humanity. Buddhism on the other hand showed an astonishing sympathy with all human infirmity. Buddha is represented as a tender, most loving friend of men*

Besides the Buddhist system of philosophy, there were in the Tamil land according to the *Manimekalai* five other systems of philosophy such as Lokayatam, Sankhyam, Naiyayikam, Vaiseshikam, and Mimamsakam, and the authors of these systems were Brihaspati, Kapila, Akshapatha, Kanada, and Jaimini respectively. In describing the dectrines of each of the above systems, the *Manimekalai* does not give any account of the Nyaya; but in its place it mentions the Ajivaka and Nigranta philosophies which were evidently the representatives of the older Nyaya systems. The existence of these numerous schools show the religious activity of the people in the Tamil land. Thus Saivism, Vishnavism, Buddhism, and Jainism were all prevalent, and were allowed to prosper peacefully without persecution. There were the monasteries of the Jains and the Buddhists. Men with their wives and children used to go with flowers to the Buddhist churches during nights. Religious toleration

* G. U. Pope—S. Dipika, Vol. XI No. 8 p. 344.

was a marked feature of the academic times in the Tamil country.

The religious liberty which the Tamils enjoyed had a great and salutary influence upon their intellectual and moral development. By softening feelings and manners, Buddhism powerfully contributed to the amelioration of the social state. The Nigrantas and Buddhists, holding up a high ideal of morality, exercised a profound influence upon moral and intellectual order and upon public ideas and sentiments. The pure conceptions of morality of the ancient Tamils, so well-embodied in their classical literature, constituted the real enduring basis of their civilization.

From the *Pattinappalai* we learn that a temple for worship was known as *Ambalam*. The most supreme deity worshipped by the Dravidians, it has already been stated, was known as *Kanthali*. *Kanthu* was the place where the God was supposed to remain. It was also regarded as a symbol to represent God who is with shape and without shape. Nakkirar also testifies to the prevalence of this idea of God. The invisible, unthinkable Deity cannot be given forms as we like, and so a symbol called *Kanthu* was erected. The numerous references to the four Vedas, Vedic Brahmans and Sages, and Vedic sacrifices,

the allusions to the worship of gods, the nature of the deities and objects of this life and of the life to come, described in these classical works, all go to prove that the Tamilians had greatly assimilated the Aryan system of religion in the third Sangam epoch.

Another point deserves to be noted. Some of the classical Tamil poems contain not merely references to theistic Gods such as Siva and Vishnu, but also to the four *Vyuhas*. The orthodox Hinduism, which had found a home in the South, underwent a certain degree of modification 'towards subordinating the purely ritualistic part of the Brahmanic religion by a very strong infusion of the devotional element in it.' Since the Brahman was duly discharging his duties as a sacrificer to the community as a whole, people other than Brahmans were already looking forward 'to the attainment of earthly prosperity here in this world and salvation in the next by the comparatively easier method of devotion, each to the god of his heart.' The notion of a God and that of a ministering priest to stand between God and individual man already came into relief. This peculiar feature of devotion to God under the right guidance of a preceptor is a feature peculiar to *Bhakti*.

Thus the indigenous Dravidian religion, subjected to the mellowing influences of Buddhism, Jainism, and the vedic religion, gave rise in due time to the sweet, practical, and heart-enthralling culture of the Tamils, of which the Tamil classics, together with the soul-stirring Saiva and Vaishnava hymnology, not to mention the mighty and majestic God-aspiring temples of *Tamilakam*, constitute even to-day the imperishable monuments of beauty and glorious divine enthusiasm. 'In the study of the history of religion', according to Albrecht Weber, 'we are enabled to follow the different phases undergone by an idea from its first inception to its culminating point. That which is at the beginning is not only simple ; it is also the better, the right, and the true. But in the course of its development foreign elements continue to make their influence felt till, when we reach our goal, we are frequently confronted with something altogether opposed to the propositions from which we started. Superstition has made itself master of the situation, and like the fabled mermaid, we see a lovely maiden ending in an ugly fish.' But happily for South India, the religion of the Dravidians, at the period we have now reached (*i.e.*) the early centuries of the Christian era, was all the better for the absorption of the

alien elements from the north, and already showing promise of a brilliant future, and the diverse seeds of many religions, sown on South Indian soil, were already germinating, and well on the way towards bearing rich and abundant fruit in the shape of the *Saiva Siddhanta* system ef the next epoch.

References may here be made to a few sources which, besides the Tamil classics, throw a few welcome rays of light upon the political organisation of the Tamils in the historical period. The Kurumbars, it has already been stated elsewhere, were a pastoral tribe living in the region from the base of the table-land to the Palar and Pennar rivers known as Tondamandalam. They were attacked by an army under Adondai or Tondaiman, the illegitimate son of Karikal Chola, and subjugated. This Tondaiman, under instructions from Karikal Chola, introduced civilization and political and social institutions suited to a civilized people in this once barbarous land. Fragmentary notices of their political and social organisation may be gathered from the essay of F. W. Ellis on land tenures and from traditionary statements preserved in the *Mackenzie Collection of Mss.* They appear to have formed a sort of confederate state, under chiefs of their own, each of whom

resided in a fortified stronghold, having a district of greater or less extent under its jurisdiction denominated a *Kottam* (from *Kottai*, a fort or castle), the largest of which was recognised as the head of the union. Of the *kottams* there were twenty-four each consisting of one or more *nadus* and each *nadu* sub-divided into several *nattams* or townships. It is quite probable that this kind of organisation was the one introduced by Tondaiman. If this be so, this must have been the system in vogue in the Chola country. Tondaiman could not have newly evolved from his own brain the institutions he is stated to have set up in the land of the Palar, but only transplanted them from the Chola country to which he belonged. It does not do much violence to truth and historical accuracy, if we maintain that the institutions whose remains were noticed by Ellis and other scholars, are the primitive polity of the Cholas in the early centuries of the Christian era.

The Tamil classics also confirm this testimony about the administrative divisions of the Tamil land. The unit of administration was the village or a group of villages. The villages in the Tamil country were known as Pattinam or Pakkam, Ur, Sirur, Padi, Palli, Cheri, and Kuruchi. A certain geographical

area containing a number of these units constituted a small division which in the Tondamandalam was dominated by a fort, while in the Chola country an important town or city dominated it. A number of these bigger units taken together constituted a district ; a number of these districts in turn united to form a division giving us the regular gradation indicated in the Pallava and Chola copper-plates and inscriptions of a later period. Nadu was the biggest division, and pakkam, ur, cheri, or kurichi the smallest according to the divisions of the country into *neythal* ,*marutham*, *mullai* or *kurunji* respectively. The big *nadus* called in later days *mandalam* were ruled by crowned monarchs (முடிவேந்தர்கள்). Under them were subordinate kings (குறுநில மன்னர்கள்), who ruled over a *kurram*, comprising a number of townships and villages. There were also commanders of the army who were given a similar charge.

It is said that in the provinces and townships there were *Panchayats* consisting of old and respectable men of the various localities who helped the heads of provinces and townships in the administration of justice. 'The constitution of these popular assemblies was quite democratic. From what we know of the *Panchayat* during the days of the Pallava and

the Chola ascendancy, between the eighth and the eleventh centuries A.D., we can infer that the members were elected by the people, and the assembly took cognizance of all matters of local importance, and settled every difference between one individual and another. *Puram* 266 gives us an idea of its great popularity and the confidence of the public in the integrity and the wisdom of its members. Public opinion was very strong in these local bodies, and none dared to offend them by disobeying their orders.* † We have references to the meeting of assemblies in the classical works. The poet Perungadungo says that the Kosars true to their plighted word appeared at the place of assembly suddenly with war drums beating and conch resounding. This place of assembly was underneath the shade of an old and ancient banyan tree with magnificent branches. In *Tamilakam*, the chief and ryots would frequently meet for purposes of common deliberation underneath the tall and shady banyan tree with its branches spread far and wide. In the *Tirumurugarruppadai*, there is a reference to the spreading tree under which village elders used to meet for transacting public

* *The Christian College Magazine, Quarterly Series*, Vol IV, p. 168.

† *Vide Kurunthokai*, 15, Aham 251.

business.* On the existing tribal and communal organisations, a central administration was superimposed. The Tamil classics like the *Kural* teach us the character of the central organisation † ' which welded the local organisations for local purposes into one unity which might be the state of those times. The local organisations were certainly of a democratic character, and rested for certain purposes on the communal basis. The devolution of power was complete. The central organisation has merely the control of local administration, the maintenance of peace and order in the country and providing for defence against external enemies'.

According to Valluvar, the constituent elements of a State are the minister, people, resources, allies, army, and fortresses. That is a great country which never fails in its yield of harvests, which is the abode of sages, which attracts men to itself by the greatness of its wealth, and which yields abundantly being free from pests, which is free from famines and plagues, and which is safe from the invasions of enemies. The country, which has known no devastation at the hands of its foes and

* Tamilian Antiquary No. 5—Prof. Sundaram Pillai's article on the Ten Tamil Idylls.

† *Vide Some contributions of South India to Indian Culture* —Dr S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar.

which, even should it suffer any, would not bate one whit in its yield, will be called a jewel among the countries of the world. The waters of the surface, the waters that flow underground, rain water, well-situated mountains, strong fortifications, these are indispensable to every country. The nation, which is not divided into warring sects, which is free from murderous anarchists, and which has no traitors within its bosom to ruin it, is truly great.

Fortresses are helpful not only to the weak, who think only of their defence, but also to the strong and powerful. Watercourses, deserts, mountains, thick jungles—all these constitute various kinds of defensive barriers. Height, thickness and impregnability, these are requisites that science demands of fortresses. That is the best fortress which is vulnerable in very few places, which is spacious and capable of breaking the assaults of those that attempt to take it, which affords facility of defence for the garrison, which is filled with stores of every kind, which is garrisoned by men that will make a brave defence, which cannot be reduced by a regular siege, by storm, or even by mining, which has been rendered impregnable by works of various kinds, and which enables the defenders to fell

down their adversaries. The poet Mulamkilar of Aiyur, in referring to the different parts of a fortification, says, 'There was first of all a moat so deep that it reached down to the abodes of demons; this was crowned with turrets, from which the archers shot forth their arrows; there was an impervious wood that surrounded small forts at every angle.'

The town of Madura is bedecked with sky-reaching mansions, which everywhere appear like the beds of large rivers. The royal mansion is enclosed by high fortified walls. The ditches round the fort are deep with blue water. The ramparts of stone rise into the region of the celestials. The ornamented gate with its massive doors appears like a huge tunnel cut through a mountain; the gate with doors ever smeared with ghee is broad and high enough to allow the passage of fully-caparisoned elephants along with triumphal banners. 'The gates of the fort are busy like the ceaselessly flowing river with throngs of men who pass incessantly under it.' To drive the darkness throughout night, metallic statues constructed by Yavanas bear lamps in their hands, and there are servants who carefully watch the lamps, and pour oil into them as it is exhausted. Flags of various hues waving over the high mansions present the

appearance of rainbows seen on mountain summits. The royal couch made of ivory is grand beyond description. It has a silk curtain whose borders are ornamented with hanging pearls; mattresses and cushions stuffed with the soft down of eider duck are laid upon the couch. The queen's ornamental mansion contains seven storeys. Madura resembles the celestial city; it is the fit city for salvation. Puhar, the capital of the Chola kingdom, was as usual in those days surrounded by a fort. The fort opened by a gate, and upon the massive doors of which the tiger-mark was worked, as it was the ensign of the Chola, just as the fish-mark was that of the Pandya. Around the city and the royal residence were a series of gardens planted with trees, shrubs, and plants interspersed with memorials to the dead and with various consecrated buildings. Each of these was surrounded by a high wall, and there were gates strictly guarded, leading from one to the other. In the vicinity of these gates, statues were placed in which various divine or semi-divine personages were supposed to dwell, frequently exchanging a word with the passers-by. In the account of the inauguration of the feast of Indra we get some glimpses of the arrangements of the city. It was divided into two parts, of which one lay along the harbour,

and presented the characteristics of a modern seaport town. The other, which was some distance inland, was the abode of the wealthy. There was the palace, and its streets were full of the abodes of luxury and splendour. Between these two was a square of considerable extent, where the markets were held, and bazaars of every kind of merchandise were found. There were two special demons called 'the demon of the market' and the 'demon of the square' who had shrines and images at either end of this square. Their special function was to punish and even devour those that were guilty of gross sins. The citizens were heard to say that, if they neglected to keep the feast, the Bhutas would cease to guard them by punishing wicked persons. The palace of Nannan, the chieftain of Konkan, lies close to the river, Seyar. A class of warriors maintain the military dignity of Nannan, and lances which brought about the destruction of his foes rest on the walls, and strike terror into the hearts of foreign visitors. There is a menagerie in front of his mansion, where the cubs of tigers and bears are confined in cages; several other animals such as the deer, the wild sheep, the guana, the mongoose, the peacock, the jungle-fowl, and the elephant find their respective places therein. There is also

a botanical garden. The far-famed city of Puhar also had in its vicinity orchards, flower gardens, banks, and tanks. The royal menagerie at Madura contained several wild beasts such as tigers and bears. The town of Kanchi was encircled by brick walls. The broad streets of Kanchi were full of deep grooves made by the wheels of the huge cars which plied often in them. There were also the quarters for soldiers whose military glory never grew dim. The bazaars were intensely busy. Festivals adored by all religionists were almost continuously held in the streets of the victorious city.

The queen's bosom was ornamented by necklaces of gems. Her soft wrists were adorned by bracelets of gold. She was dressed in silk clothes with flower embroidery. Her feet used to be shampooed by attendant maids. 'Dwarfs, hunchbacks, and eunuchs, besides a number of noble maidens, waited upon the queen. On all public occasions the queen took her seat on the throne along with the king. She did not wear a crown, unless she had inherited the monarchy in her own right.'

The education of royal youths was so adjusted as to fit them for their high and exalted station. They were given a Spartan training, so for as their physical development was concerned.

From boyhood they were placed under expert tutors, and were trained in the use of arms, in riding on elephants and horses, and in driving chariots.

The king should possess a strong and striking personality. A tall stature, long arms touching the knee, legs that have become stout and firm by driving elephants, ankles bearing the marks of anklets worn on them, the right hand turned inwards being accustomed to hold the arrows, and the left hand holding the bow, a broad chest—these constitute a few of the characteristics of a king of the Tamil land. Besides, the king wore on his body a warrior dress (வீரவுடை), a special wreath (வீர மாலை), and a golden anklet (வீரக்கழல்). The king wore a long crown of a conical shape made of gold and set with precious stones. The kings sat on a royal chair of costly workmanship—a kind of mancha or cot (அரசகட்டில்) made of ivory, gold, and gems and surmounted with costly cushions—the whole raised on lions' heads carved on the four corners of it.

The king was served by the eight groups of attendants such as perfumers, garland-makers, betel-bearers, areca-nut servers, armourers, dressing valets, torch-bearers, and body guards. That the body-guards of the Indian princes and maid servants of the royal

household were mainly composed of Yavana youths and girls is all clearly indicated in the old Tamil classics. These Yavanas are described as strong-bodied soldiers guarding the king's room.

The king must have courage, liberality, wisdom, energy, alertness, learning, and decision. He should not fail in virtue, should not sin against the laws of valour, and should know how to develop and safeguard the agricultural and mineral resources of his kingdom, how to enrich his treasury, preserve his wealth, and spend it worthily. The king shall devote himself assiduously to works that are commended by the wise. If he neglects them, he will suffer in all his future births. Though the glory of the king is a strong army, yet virtue is his chief strength. He must have strength like that of the sun, grace like that of the moon, and charity like that of the rain. He should guide his people and the affairs of state, as one guides a car on a proper road. Such are a few of the qualifications of a king. Parsimony, overconfidence, and excessive amour, these are the faults which a prince should avoid.

'The king's time was divided among his three main duties, (*viz.*) the pursuit of wealth of virtue, and of pleasure. The day was wholly

spent in transacting the business of state, and the night was reserved for secret council meetings, and for the reception of spies, and secret embassies. Of the twelve hours of the day, the first four the king utilised in the pursuit of virtue. The king was awakened in the early hours of the morning by the blowing of conches.' For example, we are told Nedun-cheliyan got up early, and bathed and adorned his beautiful person with rich ornaments. Every morning a grand durbar was held in the audience hall, and the people of all classes found ready admission to it. He sent for soldiers, warriors, and generals who had done meritorious service on his behalf, and enlivened them with encouragement. 'The next four hours he spent with his wife, relations, and children in the inner apartments of the palace. The four closing hours of the day were spent in looking after the revenue affairs, the collection of taxes and tribute, and the scrutiny of State charges in their various forms.'

. The ideals that a king should place before himself are also described. He should give with grace, and rule with love. He must administer impartial justice, and consult the men of law. A king (or a judge) should mete out due justice without swerving ever so little in favour (or disfavour) of the rich or the poor;

any divergence in the course of justice resembles a river of milk with a water current in its course.* The king shall measure the guilt of the offender, and punish him so that he offendeth not again ; but the punishment shall not be excessive. Those that desire that their power shall last, let them brandish their rod smartly, but lay it on soft. Men look up to the sceptre of the king for protection. His sceptre is the mainstay of the Brahmans and of righteousness. In the land of the king who wields the sceptre in accordance with the law, seasonal rains and rich harvests have their home. It is not the lance but the sceptre that brings victory to the king. His umbrella should protect the oppressed. The king, that guards his subjects from enemies both within and without, may punish his subjects when they go wrong. It is not a blemish but his duty. Punishing the wicked with death is like the removing of weeds from the cornfield. The tutelary goddess, *ManimekalaDeyvam*, having left *Manimekalai* in the Island of Mani-Pallavam returned, and finding out the disappointed udayakumaran addressed him as follows :—

"——Oh son of the king !
If the king swerve from right, the prosperity of the land will fail,

* Palamoli, Stanza 5.

If equity fail, rain will cease to fall.
If rain cease to fall, human life will fail.
Human life is to the king as his own life.
So all things fail when the king fails in virtue.
So cease thou the vain pursuit of her who is
Dedicated to an ascetic life ".

From the stories related to the king by the sages of the Chakravalakkottam described in *Manimekalai*, we learn that the Tamil kings used to punish in seven days those who committed crimes. When the king came to know that Prince Udayakumaran had been caught and slain in an amorous intrigue, he exclaimed, 'The ascetic duties of renouncing sages and woman's chastity cannot exist, if kings guard not as them befits', and ordered that his son's body should be thrown into the earth with the wheel of chariot upon it, so that all might know that one unworthy had been born in his royal line.

The triumph of the king is the result of the produce of the soil raised from the sweat of the cultivator. When there is drought and dearth, and people become wicked, the world will blame the king. Without listening to lying counsel, when cultivators are protected, and through them other people also, then will

the king merit the praise of even his enemies. When the king grants his great love and peace to his people, his people feel for his safety as for themselves. He should be accessible to all his subjects, and be never harsh of word. He should have the virtue to bear with words that are bitter to the ear. The king, who is not easy of access, and who judges not causes with care, will fall from his place, and perish even when he has no enemy. In poem 35, *Purananuru*, the poet says addressing the king, 'Be easy of access at fitting time, as though the lord of justice sat to hear and decree right. Such kings have rain on their dominions at their will: kings get the blame, whether rains fail or flow copiously, and lack the praise; such is the usage of the world.' The king is the life of the people, as will be seen from the following stanza:

Foodstuff is not the life nor water;
The king is the life of the world,
Therefore to know he is the life,
Is the duty of the king with a large army.
Purananuru, 186.

Can any statesman of the present day give a better advice to a king than what is stated in the following stanza of Purananuru :—

Oh mighty king, Lord of the spacious
forest lands,

Where elephants spread over the land
like grazing herds,
Commingled with dark rocks like buffalos!
Since thou art supreme in power, one
thing I say to thee
Be not one with those who, void of grace
and love,
Become the prey to endless woes in hell!
Let thy dominion be as care of tender
babes!
That is true tenderness, in this world rare
to find!

Purananuru, 5

The duties of the rulers enjoined in these poems and the code of political morality that breathes through most of them are very high.

It is pleasing to note that these high ideals were completely realised. 'The Council of Uraiyur, impregnable city of the valiant Cholas, was famous as being the abode of equity.' * When Pandyan Nedunchcliyan was told by pilgrims that some North Indian rulers insulted him and other Tamil princes, he is reported to have exclaimed, 'I shall defeat those rulers and make them carry stones; otherwise let me be known as the king who tyrannised over his subjects.' Thus oppression of the people by a monarch was considered most abominable in

* Purananuru, verse 39.

those days, and unworthy of the ancient Tamil rulers. The Tamil classics inculcated obedience and fervent loyalty to the king. From the Marutham of Orampogiar (Aingurunuru), we learn that the loyalty of the Tamilian to his king was very deep-rooted. Treachery to the king (*i. e.*) *rajadroham* was regarded as one of the worst sins a man could be guilty of. The prowess of the king in war, his immutable justice and accessibility, his protecting hand over the poor, and his liberality and piety are all set forth in the *Purananuru* and *Purapporulvenbamalai*. The usual way of calling the attention of the people to what was going on in the king's Court was by the beating of drums. Great importance was attached to the drum, which was kept in the precincts of every king's palace, and was treated almost as a minor deity. It was made to rest upon a luxurious, richly ornamented, and cushioned couch being constantly cleansed, rubbed with perfumed earth, and covered with wreaths of flowers. On special occasions it was carried on the back of the stateliest of elephants. The kings had three kinds of drums known as the war-drum (* Virâmurasam, வீரமுரசம்), the justice-drum (Neethimurasam, நீதிமுரசம்), and the gift-drum (Kodaimurasam, கொடைமுரசம்). They

* *Vide Puranamuru*, Verses 279 and 89.

were symbolical of the three great virtues of heroism, justice, and charity that distinguished every Tamil sovereign. When these drums were beaten, they would sound differently. Then the people knew for what they were sounded. The royal umbrella was regarded as symbolical of the protection given to the subjects by the king.

The king's position in the early centuries of the Christian era was hereditary. Sometimes it was elective. A prince who distinguished himself in war by feats of valour might be elected by the warriors as king. The king was the head of society. He was the supreme priest, the first to offer sacrifices, when seasons failed. He was the supreme commander. He exercised vast powers in matters of war and peace. He was also the supreme judge in civil and criminal cases. We have interesting details as regards the administration of justice in that remote age. There is a reference to the peculiar course Karikal Chola adopted on one occasion. Two persons had a disagreement, and when Karikal Chola who was in his youth attempted to settle their dispute for them, they replied that he was too young to thoroughly investigate the cause of their dispute, whereupon he seemed to have disguised himself, and in the shape of an old man came and heard the whole matter, and

decided it to their satisfaction. A thief arrested with stolen property was beheaded. A man caught in the act of adultery was killed. One who had trespassed into another's dwelling with the intention of committing adultery had his legs cut off. "Spying was visited with capital punishment. Sometimes the unfortunate victims to the king's wrath were trodden down by elephants. When innocent people were brought as suspects and given punishments, the poets interceded on their behalf, and saved them from the clutches of the law." * Justice was administered free of charge to suitors. There were special officers who performed the duties of judges. The presiding judge in each court wore a peculiar headgear, by which he was distinguished from other officers of the court.

Crimes were rare not merely because of the severe punishments, but also because of the precautions of the government. From *Maduraikkanchi*, we learn that, on the principle, 'set a thief to catch a thief,' the king appointed watchmen well-versed in all the arts of theft. Dexterity and fearlessness were their great virtues. They roamed quite fearlessly in the streets in spite of heavy rains and floods like tigers in search of prey. They peeped slyly into the rendezvous of crafty

* Purananuru, Stanzas 46 and 47.

thieves and robbers. A very graphic description of an accomplished robber is given in the epic *Silappathikaram*. Theft should have risen to a fine art in those days. But for the appointment of guards who knew all the ins and outs of the art of theft, the people's property should have been in great danger of being stolen. The complexion of the arch-thief was jet-black, which merged with darkness and made him quite invisible in the dark ; he had a spade with which he could split rocks and planks ; he had also got a sword to serve him in self-defence, if caught ; his feet were protected by shoes probably to escape detection from foot-steps ; he was clad in a soft cloth of jet-black hue ; a rope made of cotton fibres with a clip at one end served him as a ladder to climb up any wall, and this was wound round his waist. His eyes rolled slyly in search of jewels and treasure ; he was so dexterous that, when detected, he could hide himself within the twinkling of an eye. The guardsmen, who were a terror to the burglars, were noted for their undaunted courage and detective skill that had won for them the approbation of the wise.

Though the king was the repository of the executive and judicial powers, these powers were harmoniously combined in him.

He carried out the law which had been formulated by the great men who had gone before him. His function was to administer, but not to make the law. The king was not an autocrat, but a constitutional ruler. The principal officers of State, who assisted the king in his work of government, were the high priest, the chief astrologer, the ministers, and the commanders of the army.

As the eyes of a king are his own ministers, he should use his discretion, and choose them wisely. The minister should be a man of affairs, clever, pure-minded, devoted to the king, and skilful in reading the hearts of men. The man, who is able to develop the resources of the kingdom, and cure the ills that may befall it, should be entrusted with the management of the affairs of State. The man, who is endowed with kindness, intelligence, decision, and who is free from greed, should be selected for service. Work should be entrusted to men in consideration of their expert knowledge and capacity for patient exertion, and not because of their love towards the person of the king. The prosperity of the king who will not take counsel with his councillors will wane.

A kind heart, high birth, and manners that captivate kings—these are the qualifications of the ambassador. A loving nature, a

wise understanding, and skill in speech, these three are indispensable to the envoy. Intelligence, learning, a commanding presence, conciseness of speech, sweetness of tongue, a careful eschewing of all disagreeable language, firmness of mind, purity of heart, engaging manners, these are the other requisites of an envoy. He is the fittest ambassador who has a just eye for time and place, who knows his duty, and who weighs his words before uttering them. Even when threatened with death, the perfect ambassador will not fail in his duty, but will endeavour to secure his master's profit. The poetess Auvaiyar, the Tamilian Sapho, possessed these qualifications in a pre-eminent degree. She was gifted with high political wisdom, and in an important embassy to Tondaiman of Kanchi was sent by her patron, AthiyamanNedumanAnchi.

The author of the *Kural* is aware of the dangers of incompetence on the part of the monarch. The sovereignty of the king, who does not oversee the administration every day, and remove the irregularities, will wear day by day. The evils of tyranny have not escaped the penetrating eye of the immortal author of the *Kural*. The king, who oppresses his subjects and does iniquity, is worse than an assassin. The thoughtless king, whose rule

swerves from the ways of justice, will lose his kingdom and his substance. We know for instance from the *Silappathikaram* the tragic end of Pandyan Neduncheliyan, when he realised that he had unjustly put to death Kovalan. When the king committed suicide he let fall these heart-rending and memorable words :—'No king am I who believed the words of my goldsmith. I am the thief. I have done an act which sullies the fair fame of the long line of kings who ruled the southern land. Better to die, than to bear this disgrace.' The tears of those groaning under oppression wear away the prosperity of the king. Unjust rule darkens the glory of the king. Repression of the rich, forgetfulness by the Brahman of his science, failure of the heavens to send showers in their seasons, premature and abrupt close of the reign, these are the characteristics of tyranny. The government, as described above, seems at first sight to be an unmitigated and uncompromising autocracy. But in reality it is not the case ; for a deeper and more detailed study will show that it is hedged in by diverse restrictions, all of them enforced by the community, which had an organisation to express its will. This organisation was embodied in the king's Council formed of the Five Great Assemblies called *Aimberun-*

gulu (ஐம்பெருங்குழு). The five assemblies, according to an unknown commentator of the *Silappathikaram* (*Arumbathavuraiasiriyar*, அரும்பத உரையாசிரியர்), consisted of the representatives of the people (மாசனம், Majanam), priests (பார்ப்பார், pārpār), physicians (மருத்தர், maruththar), astrologers or augurs (நிமித்தர், Nimithar), and ministers (அமைச்சர், Amaichchar). The assembly of representatives safeguarded the rights and privileges of the people; that of the priests directed religious ceremonies, that of physicians attended to all matters affecting the health of the king and his subjects; that of astrologers fixed auspicious times for public ceremonies, and predicted important events. The assembly of the ministers attended to the collection and expenditure of the revenue and administration of justice. Separate places were assigned in the capital town for each of these assemblies for their meeting and transaction of business. But, according to *Adiyarkunallar*, the celebrated commentator of the epic under reference, the assemblies consisted of ministers, priests, commanders (சேனாபதியர், Senapatis), ambassadors (தூதுவர், Thoothuvar), and spies (சாரணர், Charanar). In addition to the Five Great Assemblies, there was another assembly called Enberayam (எண்பே

ராயம்). According to Adiyarkunallar, this body consisted of executive officers (Karanathiyalavar, கரணத்தியலவர்), priests (Karumavithikal, கருமவிதிகள்), treasury officials (கனகச்சுற்றம், Kanakachchurram), palace guard (கடைகாப்பாளர், *Kadaikappalar*), great men of the city (நகரமாந்தர், *Nakaramanthar*), captain of troops (நனிபடைத்தலைவர், *Nanipadaithalaivar*), elephant-warriors (யானை வீரர், *Yanaivirar*), and cavalry officers (இவுளி மறவர், *Evulimaravar*).

According to *Purapporulvenbamalai*, * the member of the king's Council should possess eight qualities, and should always look to success after duly weighing the chances of victory and defeat, and after debating justly the questions raised and the objections urged. The eight qualities of the councillors are stated to be good birth, learning, good character, truthfulness, purity, and the ornament of even-mindedness without being envious and being covetous. These are ideal characteristics, which, if possessed, would bring glory to the land.

According to Mr. R. C. Majumdar, the so-called five assemblies were really the five committees of a great assembly. It is interesting to note also that the ministers formed one of the assemblies. The assemblies taken

* Vahaipadalam Chapter VIII, 19.

together may justly be compared with the Privy Council, the assembly of the ministers corresponding with the Cabinet composed of a selected few.* The representative character of the assemblies and the effective control, which they exercised over the administration, are clearly established. On important occasions, the five assemblies attended the king's levee in the throne hall, or joined the royal procession. The power of government was vested in the king and in the Five Great Assemblies. That these assemblies played not an inconsiderable part in the life of the Tamil States is proved by the references to them in the *Silappathikaram*. In connection with the celebration of the annual festival in honour of God Indra, the members of these assemblies were assigned the duty of bringing water in a golden vessel from the sacred Kaveri. Again, in *Arangerrukathai*,† the members of the Five Great Assemblies are said to have accompanied the royal procession. Again, when Senguttuvan Chera sent his sword in advance before his own departure for the purpose of bringing a stone from the Himalayas, the assemblies are said to have blessed him‡. These few references show that the assemblies were associated with him

* *Vide Corporate Life in Ancient India.*

† *Silappathikaram*, Lines 126-28.

‡ *Kalkotkathai* Chap 26, line 38.

constantly, and that they helped him in the government of the State. The royal administration was carried on not merely with the help of the assemblies, but also with the great officers of state. In a sense, the governmental organisation of the Tamil kingdoms may be said to resemble the system of government that prevailed in England in the Norman period.* Under the Tamil kings, the chief officers of the household, the Priest (ஆசான், *Asan*), the Great Accountant (பெருங்கணி, *Perungani*), the Brahman Judges (அறக்களத் தந்தணர், *Arakkalaththanthanar*), the tax collectors (காவிதி, *Kavithi*), and the Secretary of State (மந்திரக்கணக்கர், *Manthirakkanakkar*) acted in the administration along with the ministers. The commanders of the army formed also part of the organisation of the government. In another place these officers are referred to as † Purohits (கரும வினைஞர்), Accountants (கணக்கியல் வினைஞர்), Judges (தரும வினைஞர்), and Commanders (தந்திர வினைஞர்). Perhaps it was one of the duties of these officers and the assemblies mentioned above to consider on the death of a king what had next to be done, the choice of a successor, even

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* *Silappathikaram* Chap- 22, lines 6-11

† *Silappathikaram*, Chap. 26, *Kalkotkathai*, line 40 Chap. 28 *Nadukalkathai*, lines 222–224.

though the hereditary principle of succession to the throne was in operation among the Tamils, and to make the necessary arrangements for carrying on the administration during the interregnum. On another occasion, the Brahman judges, the priest, the great accountant along with the sculptors and architects were ordered to help in the consecration of a temple to Kannagi. Thus from the *Silappathikaram* as well as from other works of this period, it may be inferred that the assemblies had a recognised standing, and that they were amenable to public opinion.

Besides the constitutional checks explained above, there was an additional safeguard to the wayward actions of the king in the class of poets who were the sages and wise men of those days. They were a privileged class, and they tendered their good counsel without fear or favour, and the king dared not injure them, as their person was considered sacred. For example, Mangudi Maruthanar composed an exquisite idyll known as *Madurai-kkanchi* with a view to impress upon the mind of the Pandyan Nedunchеliyan the evanescence of all earthly splendour and the consequent necessity for obtaining a knowledge of the eternal bliss by the performance of holy sacrifices under the auspices and guidance of

Brahman sages of antique celebrity. When an ancient Chola king by name Kopperuncholan was reigning at Uraiyur, his sons unfurled the banner of revolt against him. The irate father prepared to wage war against his own sons. Then a poet of his court appeased his wrath, and dissuaded him from an unnatural war with his sons by reasonable pleading. When the Chola king, Perunarkkilli, performed a *rajasuya* sacrifice, the Tamil kings, warrior chieftains, poets, bards, and minstrels flocked to his metropolis in honour of the occasion. The celebrated Auvaiyar who was present on the occasion availed herself of this golden opportunity to exhort the Tamil kings to be benevolent towards the poor. A poet by name Nariverunthalaiyar exhorted the Chera king to protect his subjects, just as persons would tend babies in their charge. The Purananuru contains stories of poets such as Kabila who acted as arbiters of contending kings.

The ancient Tamil kings realised that the great remedy against famine was irrigation. Very extensive irrigation works were carried out by these rulers, who had at their disposal large treasures and an immense amount of forced labour. The embankment thrown on the Cauvery by Karikal Chola is an instance in

point. A nation or society takes very long before it takes to the culture of the land which is an index of its settled state and a measure of its advanced civilization. In the agricultural stage, as J. S. Mill observes, 'the quantity of human food, which the earth is capable of returning even to the most wretched system of agriculture, so much exceeds what could be obtained in the purely pastoral stage that a great increase of population is invariably the result.' We most authentically learn of the ancient Tamils through their monumental work (*i.e.*) the *Kural*, which according to historical computation is at least 1,800 years old, that they were organised into a nation with its ideas materialised in the advantages of economic self-sufficiency in clothing and food. According to this work, the ancient Tamils had actually solved the puzzle of food problem. Its talented author lays considerable stress on the supreme importance of agriculture to society. The literature, traditions, and customs of the Tamils support the pre-eminent respectability of the calling of husbandry. To the ancient Tamilian, there was indeed nothing nobler than the yoke and the plough, which were to him the true emblems of freedom, honour, and virtue. According to Valluvar, in spite of every hard-

ship, husbandry was the chief industry. 'Husbandmen support all those that take to other work, not having the strength to plough. They alone live who live by tilling the ground.' All others eat only the bread of dependence. The Tamil kings thoroughly understood the importance of agriculture to this land. The writers of the age were also keenly alive to the need for fostering agriculture. In 35, *Purananuru*, the poet exhorts the king to lighten the load of the tillers of the soil. An old lyric (No. 18, *Purananuru*) says :

" . . . . Then Mighty ruler, listen to my song,
Who give to frames of men the food
They need, these give them life ;—
For food sustains man's mortal frame ;
But food is earth with water blent :
So those who join the water to the earth
Build up the body, and supply its life.
Men in less happy lands sow seed, and watch to skies for rain,
But this can never supply the wants of kingdom and of king.
Therefore, O Cheliyan, great in war, despise this not ;
Increase the reservoirs for water made.
Who bind the water, and supply to fields
Their measured flow, these bind

The earth to them. The fame of others passes swift away."

The ancient Tamil kings, besides fostering agriculture, devoted their attention to public works. For example, Karikal, the Chola king, turned jungles into populous areas, dug many tanks, and improved in various ways the material resources of his kingdom. He converted Uraiyur, which was before his time in a desolate condition, into a thriving city with an impregnable fortress. There were charity houses, wherein the poor and the needy were fed. Besides, there were charity houses for feeding stray cattle.

The king collected as state revenue one sixth of the produce from the people. The Tamil princes were enjoined not to levy arbitrary taxation. There was a young prince called the learned Pandyan Nambi. He was disposed to be tyrannical. He was advised by the poet Pisiranthayar not to follow evil methods of rule in the following words :

"If an elephant take mouthfuls of ripe grain on it, the twentieth part of an acre will yield it food for many days,
But if it enter a hundred fertile fields with no keeper,
Its foot will trample down much more than its mouth receives.

So if a wise king who knows the path of right take just his due,
His land will prosper yielding myriad fold.
But if a king not softened by his knowledge take just what he desires
Nor heed prescriptions rule, feasting with song and dance
Amid his court and kindred, and show no love to his subjects
Like the field that elephant entered
His kingdom will perish and he himself will lose his all."

The Tamil kings were munificent patrons of learning. But for this unprecedented munificence, the epoch of the Third Sangam would never have witnessed the remarkable outburst of literary and intellectual vitality which we have learnt to associate with 'the Augustan Age of Tamil Literature.' The favourite gifts of Ori, the chieftain of Kolli, a hill in Malabar, to the minstrels who sought his help were caparisoned elephants. The chief gifts of Kari, the feudatory king of Maladu, were decked horses and lands. Kaudamanar, a poet, requested his patron, Palyanaichchelpuhalkuttuvan to enable him to attain *Svargam* (the abode of the celestials). Thereupon, the astounded king conducted holy sacrifices in accordance with vedic rules, and

the Brahman poet is stated to have realised his wish. As an example of the liberality of the Tamil kings, Nannan's treatment of the minstrels who resorted to his court may be cited. The dirty dress, in which the poverty-stricken bard was clad, was removed, and a rich apparel was given to him instead; the bard could remain for any number of days in the court, and meet with the very same courteous treatment given him on the first day of his visit. He could return with the bounties, which Nannan bestowed profusely like the clouds hovering over his hill. The *Pattinappalai* of Kadiyalur Rudirangannanar had a marvellous effect upon the mind of Karikal Chola, who rewarded the poet with one million six hundred thousand *pons* (small gold coins) as recompense.* Tondaman Ilanthiraiyan of Kanchi was very affable to the bards, personally attended upon them during their dinner, and rewarded them with suitable gifts on the very day of their visit. In those days it was usual for a lord, who rewarded the poet who had sung on him, to follow him to a distance of seven steps, when the poet returned home recompensed by him. To the star of the first magnitude in the firmament of Tamil literature of the epoch under review, (*i.e.*) the poetess

* *Vide Kalingattupparani*, Stanza 185.

Auvaiyar, was presented by Athiyaman Neduman Anchi, a rare black Nelli fruit (the black gooseberry) which had the virtue of conferring immortality upon the eater thereof. A poet by name Mosikiranar repaired to the Court of the Chera King, Perumcheralirumporai, and feeling tired unconsciously fell asleep on the drum-couch in the palace. The king, who was a great sympathiser, was fanning the sleeping poet, till he got up trembling. The panic-stricken bard was soothed and rewarded beyond his wildest dreams of avarice by the tender-hearted king. The foregoing account will conclusively show that learning was encouraged by the monarchs of those days, and it is no wonder that the Tamilian civilization had attained an unheard of splendour during the early centuries of the Christian era.

Public defence was highly organised. Elephants, spears and swords, bows and arrows, cavalry, infantry, and chariots, all were utilised in war. The arms of a king should be well-organised and puissant. It should contain veterans who could hold out in desperate situations with grim determination regardless of decimating attacks. It should know no defeat, should be incapable of being corrupted, should have a long tradition of valour behind it, and

should face valiantly even the God of Death, if He were to advance against it in all His fury. It should not be inferior in numbers to that of the enemy, should have no implacable jealousies, should not be left to starve without pay, and should be led by capable chiefs. Our ancients knew the different ways of fighting an enemy by siege and in the open battlefield. They employed spies. According to the teachings of the *Kural*, the power of the king, who has tact to convert enemies into allies, will last without end. If he has to contend alone and without allies against two enemies, he must try to gain over one of them to his side. Valluvar says: "Form a wise plan, consolidate thy resources, and provide for thy defences. If you do this, the pride of your enemies will soon be humbled to the dust. They shall not last long who humble not the pride of men who defy them. The king should take into consideration the output, the wastage, the profit that the undertaking will yield, and then put his hand to it. He must weigh justly the difficulty of the enterprise, his own strength, the strength of his enemy, and the strength of his allies, and then he should enter upon it. To make war without planning every detail of it beforehand is only to transplant your enemy on carefully prepared soil. Bend down before

your adversaries till the day of their decline; when that day arrives, you may easily throw them down." Though the ancient Tamils were implacable in their rage, still no one ventured into a war unless forced by sheer necessity and without deeply considering all the horrors of war.

The *Purapporulvenbamalai* presents to us a picture of the political organisation of the ancient Dravidians similar in the main to that delineated by the *Tolkappiyam*. According to it, all their science of public or state affairs was summarised chiefly under the head of war which consisted of various branches. Cattle lifting was the beginning of warfare. The raid was followed by the rescue, and this by the organised invasion of the enemy's country, for which a particular wreath was assumed. This led to the systematic defence, and the defenders assumed a different wreath. The siege and protection of forts, each demanded its appropriate garland. Then came war in general, and for that another wreath was borne. Finally the victors who had gained supremacy had another wreath which they wore as the proud token of victory. This work relates to the expedition in which these eight different chaplets were worn by the combatants according to the character of those undertakings and the feel-

ings of those engaged in them. These garlands were intended to strike awe into the minds of the opposing hosts, and to some extent supplied the place of military uniforms.

The rules of warfare may then be briefly touched upon. The capture of the enemy's cattle was carried out with a view to remove the useful and the sacred animals from the scene of war. The invader was equally humane to the aged, the infirm, the childless, the women, and the Brahmans. The Tamils usually gave instructions to their soldiers thus: 'Touch not the temples where sacrifices are offered; spare the dwellings of the holy ascetics; enter not the houses of the sacred vedic Brahmans.' From stanza 9 of the *Purananuru* we learn something of the humane rules of warfare observed among the ancient Tamils. The Pandyan king, Palyagasalaimudukudumipperuvaluthi, was about to commence a battle. He advanced with his forces to surprise the owners of the cattle. Before these had time to muster, he uttered the words of warning. The fight would begin, as soon as the warriors assembled for defence; meanwhile he was anxious that there should be no unnecessary bloodshed either of cattle or of non-combatants. The words of warning which he uttered were as follows:—'Ye cows;

ye Brahmans of like sanctity; ye women; ye who are suffering from disease; ye who have not obtained sons of priceless value, whose sacred duty it is to care for those who dwell in the Southern Regions performing on their behalf the sacred rites, we are going to shoot out our swift arrows; therefore, hasten ye to your sheltering fortresses.' In another place, the same king is said to have subdued his various enemies by his true heroism in battles without any foul play or strategem. It is touching to note that the king's sympathy towards his wounded soldiers was unbounded. Thanks to the *Nedunalvadai*, we get a picture of Pandyan Neduncheliyan in encampment at midnight. The king is not confining himself within his tent. He is busy in paying encouraging visits to his wounded soldiers, who fought gloriously for him by cutting down to the ground the ornamented trunks of his enemies' tuskers. The blaze of the torch held near him burns horizontally. The royal umbrella protects him from the arrowy spray of the northern wind. The night garment loosening from his shoulders is held by his left arm, while his right hand rests on the shoulders of his aid-de-camp bearing the royal sword. In this manner, led by the field-marshal, he goes from tent to tent encouraging the wound-

ed by his beaming countenance and sweet words.

But the ancients were merciless to the vanquished. For example, when Karikal Chola invaded foreign territories, he reduced them to desolate regions. Fertile fields and gardens of his foes were turned into wastes overgrown with weeds. The magnificent halls of his enemies became the resort of the ill-omened owls and ghosts of either sex. The massive pillars in these halls became the posts for tying his rut elephants. The spacious kitchens of his foes became the rendezvous of robbers who distributed their booty among themselves, while the wild owls shrieked over their heads. The war usually ended with the death of the king and the overthrow of his kingdom. The inhabitants of the invaded country would flee on every side. The country would be ravaged with fire. 'The beautiful homes with pictured halls are levelled with the dust. Asses are yoked to plough up the soil with spears; while worthless plants are sown on the foundations.' * Thus rages the conquering king. The conqueror is solemnly wedded to the newly acquired country; neighbouring kings bring tribute; and universal submission follows. Dr. G. U. Pope in his introduction to the *Purana-*

* *Vide* Purapporulvenbamalai, verse 120.

nuru asserts that in it there is a note of savage ferocity. The Doctor, when he wrote this, really had in mind the state of the battle-field, where intrepid warriors had clashed at close quarters and the pitiable sight of fortresses that had been razed to the ground or burnt down by the victor which is so beautifully narrated in many of the stanzas of the *Purananuru*. These evils are the inevitable accompaniments of war. Real heroism, chivalry, and valour may be easily mistaken for savagery, and yet it is these that permeate many of the poems of these works.

Such was the system of Government followed in the three great Pandya, Chera, and Chola kingdoms during the early centuries of the Christian era. May we not hope that the Dravidian genius will, as in the past, so in the future, rise equal to the occasion, and solve the many complicated social and political problems which may hereafter press for solution, in a manner not wholly unworthy of its splendid and ennobling record ?