



sambandham ceremony all over Kēralam are in the main the same. As there are different local names denoting marriage, so there may be found local variations in the performance of the ceremony. But the general features are more or less the same. For instance, the examination, prior to the betrothal, of the horoscopes of the bride and bridegroom to ascertain whether their stars agree astrologically; the appointment of an auspicious day for the celebration of the ceremony; the usual hour at which the ceremony takes place; the presentation of dānam (gifts) to Brāhmins; sumptuous banquet; the meeting of the bride and bridegroom, are features which are invariably found in all well-conducted sambandhams in all parts of Kēralam alike. But here I would state that I should not be understood as saying that each and every one of the formalities above referred to are gone through at all sambandhams among respectable Nāyars; and I would further state that they ought to be gone through at every sambandham, if the parties wish to marry according to the custom of the country. I would now briefly refer to the local variations to be found in the ceremony of the sambandham, and also the particular incidents attached to certain forms of sambandham in South Malabar. I shall describe the pudamuri or vastradānam as celebrated in North Malabar, and then show how the other forms of sambandham differ from it. Of all the forms of sambandham, I consider the pudamuri the most solemn and the most fashionable in North Malabar. The preliminary ceremony in every pudamuri is the examination of the horoscopes of the bride and bridegroom by an astrologer. This takes place in the house of the bride, in the presence of the relations of the bride and bridegroom. The astrologer, after examination, writes down



the results of his calculations on a piece of palmyra leaf, with his opinion as to the fitness or otherwise of the match, and hands it over to the bridegroom's relations. If the horoscopes agree, a day is then and there fixed for the celebration of the marriage. This date is also written down on two pieces of cadjan (palm leaf), one of which is handed over to the bride's Karanavan, and the other to the bridegroom's relations. The astrologer and the bridegroom's party are then feasted in the bride's house, and the former also receives presents in the shape of money, or cloth. This preliminary ceremony, which is invariably performed at all pudamuris in North Malabar, is called pudamuri kurikkal, but is unknown in South Malabar. Some three or four days prior to the date fixed for the celebration of the pudamuri, the bridegroom visits his Karanavans and elders in caste, to obtain formal leave to marry. The bridegroom on such occasion presents his elders with betel and nuts, and obtains their formal sanction to the wedding. On the day appointed, the bridegroom proceeds after sunset to the house of the bride, accompanied by a number of his friends. He goes in procession, and is received at the gate of the house by the bride's party, and conducted with his friends to seats provided in the tekkini or southern hall of the house. There the bridegroom distributes presents (dānam) or money gifts to the Brāhmins assembled. After this, the whole party is treated to a sumptuous banquet. It is now time for the astrologer to appear, and announce the auspicious hour fixed. He does it accordingly, and receives his dues. The bridegroom is then taken by one of his friends to the padinhatta or principal room of the house. The bridegroom's party has, of course, brought with them a quantity of new cloths, and betel leaves and nuts. The

cloths are placed in the western room of the house (padinhatta), in which all religious and other important household ceremonies are usually performed. This room will be decorated, and turned into a bed-room for the occasion. There will be placed in the room a number of lighted lamps, and ashtamangalyam, which consists of eight articles symbolical of mangalyam or marriage. These are rice, paddy (unhusked rice), the tender leaves of cocoanut trees, an arrow, a looking-glass, a well-washed cloth, burning fire, and a small round box called cheppu. These will be found placed on the floor of the room as the bridegroom enters it. The bridegroom with his groomsman enters the room through the eastern door. The bride, dressed in rich cloths and bedecked with jewels, enters the room through the western door, accompanied by her aunt or some other elderly lady of her family. The bride stands facing east, with the ashtamangalyam and lit-up lamps in front of her. The groomsman then hands over to the bridegroom a few pieces of new cloth, and the bridegroom puts them into the hands of the bride. This being done, the elderly lady who accompanied the bride sprinkles rice over the lamps and the head and shoulders of the bride and bridegroom, who immediately leaves the room, as he has to perform another duty. At the tekkinī or southern hall, he now presents his elders and friends with cakes, and betel leaf and nuts. Betel and nuts are also given to all the persons assembled at the place. After the departure of the guests, the bridegroom retires to the bed-room with the bride. Next morning, the vettilakettu or salkāram ceremony follows, and the bridegroom's female relations take the bride to the husband's house, where there is feasting in honour of the occasion. Uzhamporukkuka or vīdāram kayaral is a peculiar form



of marriage in North Malabar. It will be seen from the description given above that the pudamuri is necessarily a costly ceremony, and many people resort to the less costly ceremony of uzhamporukkuka or vidāram kayaral. The features of this ceremony are to a certain extent the same as pudamuri, but it is celebrated on a smaller scale. There is no cloth-giving ceremony. The feasting is confined to the relations of the couple. The particular incident of this form of marriage is that the husband should visit the wife in her house, and is not permitted to take her to his house, unless and until he celebrates the regular pudamuri ceremony. This rule is strictly adhered to in North Malabar, and instances in which the husband and wife joined by the uzhamporukkuka ceremony, and with grown-up children as the issue of such marriage, undergo the pudamuri ceremony some fifteen or twenty years after uzhamporukkuka, in order to enable the husband to take the wife to his house, are known to me personally. The sambandham of South Malabar, and the kidakkora kalyānam of Palghat have all or most of the incidents of pudamuri, except the presenting of cloths. Here money is substituted for cloths, and the other ceremonies are more or less the same. There is also salkāram ceremony wanting in South Malabar, as the wives are not at once taken to the husband's house after marriage."

In connection with the following note by Mr. C. P. Rāman Menon on sambandham among the Akattu Charna or Akathithaparisha (inside clan), Mr. Fawcett states that "my informant says in the first place that the man should not enter into sambandham with a woman until he is thirty. Now-a-days, when change is running wild, the man is often much less. In North Malabar, which is much more conservative than the south, it was,



however, my experience that sambandham was rare on the side of the man before twenty-seven." "The Karanavan," Mr. Rāman Menon writes, "and the women of his household choose the bride, and communicate their choice to the intending bridegroom through a third party; they may not, dare not speak personally to him in the matter. He approves. The bride's people are informally consulted, and, if they agree, the astrologer is sent for, and examines the horoscopes of both parties to the intended union. As a matter of course these are found to agree, and the astrologer fixes a day for the sambandham ceremony. A few days before this takes place, two or three women of the bridegroom's house visit the bride, intimating beforehand that they are coming. There they are well treated with food and sweetmeats, and, when on the point of leaving, they inform the senior female that the bridegroom (naming him) wishes to have sambandham with (naming her), and such and such a day is auspicious for the ceremony. The proposal is accepted with pleasure, and the party from the bridegroom's house returns home. Preparations for feasting are made in the house of the bride, as well as in that of the bridegroom on the appointed day. To the former all relations are invited for the evening, and to the latter a few friends who are much of the same age as the bridegroom are invited to partake of food at 7 or 8 P.M., and accompany him to the bride's house. After eating they escort him, servants carrying betel leaves (one or two hundred according to the means of the taravad), areca nuts and tobacco, to be given to the bride's household, and which are distributed to the guests. When the bride's house is far away, the bridegroom makes his procession thither from a neighbouring house. Arrived at the bride's house, they sit awhile, and are again



served with food, after which they are conducted to a room, where betel and other chewing stuff is placed on brass or silver plates called thālam. The chewing over, sweetmeats are served, and then all go to the bridal chamber, where the women of the house and others are assembled with the bride, who, overcome with shyness, hides herself behind the others. Here again the bridegroom and his party go through more chewing, while they chat with the women. After a while the men withdraw, wishing the couple all happiness, and then the women, departing one by one, leave the couple alone, one of them shutting the door from the outside. The Pattar Brāhmans always collect on these occasions, and receive small presents (dakshina) of two to four annas each, with betel leaves and areca nuts from the bridegroom, and sometimes from the bride. A few who are invited receive their dakshina in the bridal chamber, the others outside. Those of the bridegroom's party who live far away are given sleeping accommodation at the bride's house [in a Nāyar house the sleeping rooms of the men and women are at different ends of the house]. About daybreak next morning the bridegroom leaves the house with his party, leaving under his pillow 8, 16, 32, or 64 rupees, according to his means, which are intended to cover the expenses of the wife's household in connection with the ceremony. The sambandham is now complete. The girl remains in her own taravad house, and her husband visits her there, coming in the evening and leaving next morning. A few days after the completion of the ceremony, the senior woman of the bridegroom's house sends some cloths, including pavu mundu (superior cloths) and thorthu mundu (towels), and some oil to the bride for her use for six months. Every six months she does the same, and, at the Ōnam,



Vishu, and Thiruvathīra festivals, she sends besides a little money, areca nuts, betel and tobacco. The money sent should be 4, 8, 16, 32, or 64 rupees. Higher sums are very rarely sent. Before long, the women of the husband's house express a longing for the girl-wife to be brought to their house, for they have not seen her yet. Again the astrologer is requisitioned, and, on the day he fixes, two or three of the women go to the house of the girl, or, as they call her, Ammāyi (uncle's wife). They are well treated, and presently bring away the girl with them. As she is about to enter the gate-house of her husband's taravad, the stile of which she crosses right leg first, two or three of the women meet her, bearing a burning lamp and a brass plate (thālam), and precede her to the nalukattu of the house. There she is seated on a mat, and a burning lamp, a nazhi (measure) of rice, and some plantains are placed before her. One of the younger women takes up a plantain, and puts a piece of it in the Ammāyi's mouth; a little ceremony called madhuraṁ tītal, or giving the sweets for eating. She lives in her husband's house for a few days, and is then sent back to her own with presents, bracelets, rings or cloths, which are gifts of the senior woman of the house. After this she is at liberty to visit her husband's house on any day, auspicious or inauspicious. In a big taravad, where there are many women, the Ammāyi does not, as a rule, get much sympathy and good-will in the household, and, if she happens to live temporarily in her husband's house, as is sometimes, though very rarely the case in South Malabar, and to be the wife of the Karanavan, it is observed that she gets more than her share of whatever good things may be going. Hence the proverb, 'Place Ammāyi Amma on a stone, and grind her with another stone.' A sambandham ceremony at

Calicut is recorded by Mr. Fawcett, at which there were cake and wine for the guests, and a ring for the bride.

In connection with sambandham, Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes from Travancore that "it is known in different localities as gunadosham (union through good or evil), vastradānam or putavakota (giving of cloth), and uzhamporukkal (waiting one's turn). It may be performed without any formal ceremony whatever, and is actually a private transaction confidentially gone through in some families. The bridegroom and his friends assemble at the house of the bride on the appointed night, and, before the assembled guests, the bridegroom presents the bride with a few unbleached cloths. Custom enjoins that four pieces of cloth should be presented, and the occasion is availed of to present cloths to the relatives and servants of the bride also. The girl asks permission of her mother and maternal uncle, before she receives the cloths. After supper, and the distribution of pān-supāri, the party disperses. Another day is fixed for the consummation ceremony. On that day the bridegroom, accompanied by a few friends, goes to the bride's house with betel leaves and nuts. After a feast, the friends retire."

It is noted in the Cochin Census Report, 1901, that one name for the sambandham rite is kitakkora, meaning bed-chamber ceremony. In the same report, the following account of a puberty ceremony is given. "The tirandukuli ceremony is practically a public declaration that a girl has reached the age of maturity. When a girl attains puberty, she is seated in a separate room, where a lamp is lit, and a brass pot with a bunch of cocoanut flowers is kept. She has to keep with her a circular plate of brass called vālkannādi, literally a looking-glass with a handle. The event is proclaimed by korava



(shouts of joy by females). The females of the neighbouring houses, and of the families of friends and relatives, visit her. New cloths are presented to the girl by her near relatives. On the third day the villagers, friends and relatives are treated to a luncheon of rice and milk pudding. Early in the morning on the fourth day, the Mannans or Vēlans appear. The girl is anointed with oil, and tender leaves of the cocoanut palm are tied round the head and waist. In the company of maidens she is brought out of the room, and the Vēlans sing certain songs. Thence the party move on to the tank, where the girl wears a cloth washed by a Vēlan, and takes a bath. After the bath the Vēlans again sing songs. In the afternoon, the girl is taken out by the females invited for the occasion to an ornamental pandal, and the Vēlans, standing at a distance, once more sing. With the usual distribution of pān-supāri, sandal and jasmine flowers, the ceremony closes. In the midst of the song, the female guests of the village, the wives of friends and relatives, and most of the members of the family itself, present each a small cloth to the Vēlans. They are also given a small amount of money, rice, betel leaf, etc. The guests are then entertained at a feast. In some places, the girl is taken to a separate house for the bath on the fourth day, whence she returns to her house in procession, accompanied by tom-toms and shouting. In the northern tāluks, the Vēlan's song is in the night, and the performance of the ceremony on the fourth day is compulsory. In the southern tāluks, it is often put off to some convenient day. Before the completion of this song ceremony, the girl is prohibited from going out of the house or entering temples."

It is provided, by the Malabar Marriage Act, 1896, that, "when a sambandham has been registered in the manner



therein laid down, it shall have the incidence of a legal marriage ; that is to say, the wife and children shall be entitled to maintenance by the husband or father, respectively, and to succeed to half his self-acquired property, if he dies intestate ; while the parties to such a sambandham cannot register a second sambandham during its continuance, that is, until it is terminated by death or by a formal application for divorce in the Civil Courts. The total number of sambandhams registered under the Act has, however, been infinitesimal, and the reason for this is, admittedly, the reluctance of the men to fetter their liberty to terminate sambandham at will by such restrictions as the necessity for formal divorce, or to undertake the burdensome responsibility of a legal obligation to maintain their wife and offspring. If, as the evidence recorded by the Malabar Marriage Commission tended to show, 'a marriage law in North Malabar, and throughout the greater part of South Malabar, would merely legalise what is the prevailing custom,' it is hard to see why there has been such a disinclination to lend to that custom the dignity of legal sanction." * The following applications to register sambandhams under the Act were received from 1897 to 1904 :—

—				Nāyars.	Tiyans.	Others.	Total.
1897	...	...	...	28	6	2	36
1898	...	...	...	8	2	4	14
1899	...	...	...	8	2	4	14
1900	...	...	...	8	..	9	17
1901	...	...	...	3	...	1	4
1902	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1903	...	...	...	2	...	...	2
Total				57	10	20	87

* Gazetteer of Malabar.



In a recent account of a Nāyar wedding in high life in Travancore, the host is said to have distributed flowers, attar, etc., to all his Hindu guests, while the European, Eurasian, and other Christian guests, partook of cake and wine, and other refreshments, in a separate tent. The Chief Secretary to Government proposed the toast of the bride and bridegroom.

The following note on Nāyar pregnancy ceremonies was supplied to Mr. Fawcett by Mr. U. Balakrishnan Nāyar. "A woman has to observe certain ceremonies during pregnancy. First, during and after the seventh month, she (at least among the well-to-do classes) bathes, and worships in the temple every morning, and eats before her morning meal a small quantity of butter, over which mantrams (consecrated formulæ) have been said by the temple priest, or by Nambūtiris. This is generally done till delivery. Another, and even more important ceremony, is the puli-kuti (drinking tamarind juice). This is an indispensable ceremony, performed by rich and poor alike, on a particular day in the ninth month. The day and hour are fixed by the local astrologer. The ceremony begins with the planting of a twig of the ampasham tree on the morning of the day of the ceremony in the principal courtyard (natu-muttam) of the taravād. At the appointed hour or muhūrtam, the pregnant woman, after having bathed, and properly attired, is conducted to a particular portion of the house (vatakinī or northern wing), where she is seated, facing eastward. The ammayi, or uncle's wife, whose presence on the occasion is necessary, goes to the courtyard, and, plucking a few leaves of the planted twig, squeezes a few drops of its juice into a cup. This she hands over to the brother, if any, of the pregnant woman. It is necessary that the brother should wear a gold ring on his



right ring finger. Holding a country knife (pissan kathi) in his left hand, which he directs towards the mouth, he pours the tamarind juice over the knife with his right hand three times, and it dribbles down the knife into the woman's mouth, and she drinks it. In the absence of a brother, some other near relation officiates. After she has swallowed the tamarind juice, the woman is asked to pick out one of several packets of different grains placed before her. The grain in the packet she happens to select is supposed to declare the sex of the child in her womb. The ceremony winds up with a sumptuous feast to all the relatives and friends of the family." In connection with pregnancy ceremonies, Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes that "the puli-kuti ceremony is performed at the seventh, or sometimes the ninth month. The husband has to contribute the rice, cocoanut, and plantains, and present seven vessels containing sweetmeats. In the absence of a brother, a Mārān pours the juice into the mouth of the woman." It is noted in the Cochin Census Report, 1901, that "the puli-kudi ceremony consists in administering to the woman with child a few pills of tamarind and other acid substances. The pills are placed at the end of a knife-blade, and pushed into the mouth of the woman by means of a gold ring. The ceremony, which in a way corresponds to the pumsavana of the Brāhmans, is performed either by a brother or uncle of the woman, and, in the absence of both, by the husband himself. Unlike Brāhmans, the ceremony is performed only at the time of the first pregnancy." In the eighth month, a ceremony, called garbha veli uzhiyal, is performed by the Kaniyan (astrologer) to remove the effects of the evil eye.

The ceremonies observed in connection with pregnancy are described as follows in the Gazetteer of



Malabar. "The first regular ceremony performed during pregnancy is known as pulikudi or drinking tamarind, which corresponds to the Pumsavanam of the Brāhmans. But there are other observances of less importance, which commonly, if not invariably, precede this, and may be considered as corresponding to the Garbharakshana (embryo or womb protection) ceremony sometimes performed by Brāhmans, though not one of the obligatory sacraments. Sometimes the pregnant woman is made to consume daily a little ghee (clarified butter), which has been consecrated by a Nambūdiri with appropriate mantrams. Sometimes exorcists of the lower castes, such as Pānans, are called in, and perform a ceremony called Balikkala, in which they draw magic patterns on the ground, into which the girl throws lighted wicks, and sing rude songs to avert from the unborn babe the unwelcome attentions of evil spirits, accompanying them on a small drum called tudi, or with bell-metal cymbals. The ceremony concludes with the sacrifice of a cock, if the woman is badly affected by the singing. The pulikudi is variously performed in the fifth, seventh, or ninth month. An auspicious hour has to be selected by the village astrologer for this as for most ceremonies. A branch of a tamarind tree should be plucked by the pregnant woman's brother, who should go to the tree with a kindi (bell-metal vessel) of water, followed by an Enangatti * carrying a hanging lamp with five wicks (tukkuvilakku), and, before plucking it, perform three pradakshinams round it. In the room in which the ceremony is to be

* An Enangan or Inangan is a man of the same caste and sub-division or marriage group. It is usually translated "kinsman," but is at once wider and narrower in its connotation. My Enangans are all who can marry the same people that I can. An Enangatti is a female member of an Enangan's family.



performed, usually the vadakkini, there is arranged a mat, the usual lamp (nilavilakku) with five wicks, and a para measure of rice (niracchaveppu), also the materials necessary for the performance of Ganapathi pūja (worship of the god Gaṇēsa), consisting of plantains, brown sugar, leaves of the sacred basil or tulasi (*Ocimum sanctum*), sandal paste, and the eight spices called ashtagantham. The woman's brother performs Ganapathi pūja, and then gives some of the tamarind leaves to the Enangatti, who expresses their juice, and mixes it with that of four other plants.* The mixture is boiled with a little rice, and the brother takes a little of it in a jack (*Artocarpus integrifolia*) leaf folded like a spoon, and lets it run down the blade of a knife into his sister's mouth. He does this three times. Then the mixture is administered in the same manner by some woman of the husband's family, and then by an Ammayi (wife of one of the members of the girl's tarwad). The branch is then planted in the nadumittam, and feasting brings the ceremony to a close. The above description was obtained from an Urali Nāyar of Calicut taluk. In other localities and castes, the details vary considerably. Sometimes the mixture is simply poured into the woman's mouth, instead of being dripped off a knife. Some castes use a small spoon of gold or silver instead of the jack leaves. In South Malabar there is not as a rule any procession to the tamarind tree. Among Agathu Charna Nāyars of South Malabar, the ceremony takes place in the nadumittam, whither the tamarind branch is brought by a Tiyan. The girl carries a valkannadi or bell-metal mirror, a charakkōl or arrow, and a pisankatti (knife). An Enangatti pours some oil

* The aimpuli or "five tamarinds" are *Tamarindus indica*, *Garcinia Cambogia*, *Spondias mangifera*, *Bauhinia racemosa*, and *Hibiscus hirtus*.



on her head, and lets it trickle down two or three hairs to her navel, where it is caught in a plate. Then the girl and her brother, holding hands, dig a hole with the charakkōl and pisankatti, and plant the tamarind branch in the nadumittam, and water it. Then the juice is administered. Until she is confined, the girl waters the tamarind branch, and offers rice, flowers, and lighted wicks to it three times a day. When labour begins, she uproots the branch."

"At delivery," Mr. Balakrishnan Nāyar writes, "women of the barber caste officiate as midwives. In some localities, this is performed by Vēlan caste women. Pollution is observed for fifteen days, and every day the mother wears cloths washed and presented by a woman of the Vannān [or Tīyan] caste. On the fifteenth day is the purificatory ceremony. As in the case of death pollution, a man of the Attikurissi clan sprinkles on the woman a liquid mixture of oil and the five products of the cow (pānachagavya), with gingelly (*Sesamum*) seeds. Then the woman takes a plunge-bath, and sits on the ground near the tank or river. Some woman of the family, with a copper vessel in her hands, takes water from the tank or river, and pours it on the mother's head as many as twenty-one times. This done, she again plunges in the water, from which she emerges thoroughly purified. It may be noted that, before the mother proceeds to purify herself, the new-born babe has also to undergo a rite of purification. It is placed on the bare floor, and its father or uncle sprinkles a few drops of cold water on it, and takes it in his hands. The superstitious believe that the temperament of the child is determined by that of the person who thus sprinkles the water. All the members of the taravād observe pollution for fifteen days following the delivery, during



which they are prohibited from entering temples and holy places." It is noted by Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar that the first act done, when a male child is born, is to beat the earth with a cocoanut leaf, and, if the issue is a female, to grind some turmeric in a mortar, with the object, it is said, of removing the child's fear.

In connection with post-natal ceremonies, Mr. Balakrishnan Nāyar writes further that "the twenty-seventh day after the child's birth, or the first recurring day of the star under which it was born, marks the next important event. On this day, the Karanavan of the family gives to the child a spoonful or two of milk mixed with sugar and slices of plantain. Then he names the child, and calls it in the ear by the name three times. This is followed by a feast to all friends and relatives, the expenses of which are met by the father of the child. With the Nāyar, every event is introduced by a ceremonial. The first meal of rice (chorūn) partaken of by the child forms no exception to the rule. It must be remembered that the child is not fed on rice for some time after birth, the practice being to give it flour of dried plantain boiled with jaggery (crude sugar). There is a particular variety of plantain, called kunnan, used for this purpose. Rice is given to the child for the first time generally during the sixth month. The astrologer fixes the day, and, at the auspicious hour, the child, bathed and adorned with ornaments (which it is the duty of the father to provide) is brought, and laid on a plank. A plantain leaf is spread in front of it, and a lighted brass lamp placed near. On the leaf are served a small quantity of cooked rice—generally a portion of the rice offered to some temple divinity—some tamarind, salt, chillies, and sugar. [In some places all the curries, etc., prepared for the attendant feast, are also served.]



Then the Karanavan, or the father, ceremoniously approaches, and sits down facing the child. First he puts in the mouth of the child a mixture of the tamarind, chillies and salt, then some rice, and lastly a little sugar. Thenceforward the ordinary food of the child is rice. It is usual on this occasion for relatives (and especially the bandhus, such as the ammayi, or 'uncle's wife') to adorn the child with gold bangles, rings and other ornaments. The rice-giving ceremony is, in some cases, preferably performed at some famous temple, that at Guruvayūr being a favourite one for this purpose." It is noted by Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar that the rice-giving ceremony is usually performed by taking the child to a neighbouring temple, and feeding it with the meal offered to the deity as nivadiyam. In some places, the child is named on the chorūn day.

Of ceremonies which take place in infancy and childhood, the following account is given in the Gazetteer of Malabar. "On the fifth day after birth, a woman of the Attikurissi or Mārayan caste among Nāyars, or of the barber caste in the lower classes, is called in, and purifies the mother, the other women of the household, and the room in which the child was born, by lustration with milk and gingelly oil, using karuga (*Cynodon Dactylon*) as a sprinkler. Her perquisites are the usual niracchaveppu (1 edangazhi of paddy and 1 nazhi of uncooked rice) placed together with a lamp of five wicks in the room to be cleansed, and a small sum in cash. A similar purification ceremony on the 15th day concludes the pollution period. In some cases, milk and cow's urine are sprinkled over the woman, and, after she has bathed, the Mārayan or Attikurissi waves over her and the child two vessels, one containing water stained red with turmeric and lime, and one water blackened with

powdered charcoal. During this and other periods, a characteristic service called *māttu* (change) has to be rendered by people of the Mannān caste to Nāyars, and to other castes by their proper washermen, who may or may not be Mannāns. On the day of birth, the Mannātti brings a clean *tūni* (cloth) of her own, and a *mundu* (cloth), which she places in the yard, in which she finds the accustomed perquisites of grain set out, and a lamp. An Attikurissi Nāyar woman takes the clean clothes, and the Mannātti removes those previously worn by the mother. Every subsequent day during the pollution period, the Mannātti brings a change of raiment, but it is only on the 7th and 15th days that any ceremonial is observed, and that the Attikurissi woman is required. On those days, a Mannān man attends with the Mannātti. He makes three *pradakshinams* round the clean clothes, the lamp, and the *niracchaveppu*, and scatters a little of the grain forming the latter on the ground near it, with an obeisance, before the Attikurissi woman takes the clothes indoors. This rite of *māttu* has far reaching importance. It affords a weapon, by means of which the local tyrant can readily coerce his neighbours, whom he can subject to the disabilities of excommunication by forbidding the washerman to render them this service; while it contributes in no small degree to the reluctance of Malayāli women to leave Kērala, since it is essential that the *māttu* should be furnished by the appropriate caste and no other.

“On the twenty-eighth day (including the day of birth) comes the *Pālu-kudi* (milk-drinking) ceremony, at which some women of the father's family must attend. Amongst castes in which the wife lives with the husband, the ceremony takes place in the husband's house, to which the wife and child return for the first time on this day. The usual lamp, *niracchaveppu* and *kindi* of water,



are set forth with a plate, if possible of silver, containing milk, honey, and bits of a sort of plantain called kunnan, together with three jack leaves folded to serve as spoons. The mother brings the child newly bathed, and places it in his Karnavan's lap. The goldsmith is in attendance with a string of five beads (mani or kuzhal) made of the panchaloham or five metals, gold, silver, iron, copper and lead, which the father ties round the baby's waist. The Karnavan, or the mother, then administers a spoonful of the contents of the plate to the child with each of the jack leaves in turn. The father's sister, or other female relative, also administers some, and the Karnavan then whispers the child's name thrice in its right ear.

"The name is not publicly announced till the Chōrunnu or Annaprāsanam (rice giving), which takes place generally in the sixth month, and must be performed at an auspicious moment prescribed by an astrologer. The paraphernalia required are, besides the five-wicked lamp, some plantain leaves on which are served rice and four kinds of curry called kalan, olan, avil, and ericchakari, some pappadams (wafers of flour and other ingredients), plantains and sweetmeats called uppēri (plantains fried in cocoanut oil). The mother brings the child newly bathed, and wearing a cloth for the first time, and places it in the Karnavan's lap. The father then ties round the child's neck a gold ring, known as muhurta mothiram (auspicious moment ring), and the relatives present give the child other ornaments of gold or silver according to their means, usually a nūl or neck-thread adorned with one or more pendants, an arannal or girdle, a pair of bangles, and a pair of anklets. The Karnavan then, after an oblation to Ganapathi, gives the child some of the curry, and whispers its name in its right ear three times. He then carries the child to a cocoanut tree



near the house, round which he makes three pradakshinams, pouring water from a kindi round the foot of the tree as he does so. The procession then returns to the house, and on the way an old woman of the family proclaims the baby's name aloud for the first time in the form of a question, asking it 'Krishnan' (for instance), 'dost thou see the sky?' In some cases, the father simply calls out the name twice.

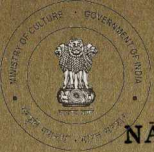
"The Vidyarambham ceremony to celebrate the beginning of the child's education takes place in the fifth or seventh year. In some places, the child is first taken to the temple, where some water sanctified by mantrams is poured over his head by the Shāntikāraṇ (officiating priest). The ceremony at the house is opened by Ganapathi pūja performed by an Ezhuttacchan, or by a Nambūdri, or another Nāyar. The Ezhuttacchan writes on the child's tongue with a gold fanam (coin) the invocation to Ganapathi (Hari Sri Ganapathayi nama), or sometimes the fifty-one letters of the Malayalam alphabet, and then grasps the middle finger of the child's right hand, and with it traces the same letters in parched rice. He also gives the child an ola (strip of palm leaf) inscribed with them, and receives in return a small fee in cash. Next the child thrice touches first the Ezhuttacchan's feet, and then his own forehead with his right hand, in token of that reverent submission to the teacher, which seems to have been the key-note of the old Hindu system of education.

"The Kāthukuttu or ear-boring is performed either at the same time as the Pāla-kudi or the Choulam, or at any time in the fifth or seventh year. The operator, who may be any one possessing the necessary skill, pierces first the right and then the left ear with two gold or silver wires brought by the goldsmith, or with karamullu



thorns. The wires or thorns are left in the ears. In the case of girls, the hole is subsequently gradually distended by the insertion of nine different kinds of thorns or plugs in succession, the last of which is a bamboo plug, till it is large enough to admit the characteristic Malayāli ear ornament, the boss-shaped toda."

Of the death ceremonies among the Nāyars of Malabar, the following detailed account is given by Mr. Fawcett. "When the dying person is about to embark for that bourne from which no traveller returns, and the breath is about to leave his body, the members of the household, and all friends who may be present, one by one, pour a little water, a few drops from a tiny cup made of a leaf or two of the tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*), into his mouth, holding in the hand a piece of gold or a gold ring, the idea being that the person should touch gold ere it enters the mouth of the person who is dying. If the taravād is rich enough to afford it, a small gold coin (a rāsi fanam, if one can be procured) is placed in the mouth, and the lips are closed. As soon as death has taken place, the corpse is removed from the cot or bed and carried to the vatakkini (a room in the northern end of the house), where it is placed on long plantain leaves spread out on the floor; and, while it is in the room, whether by day or night, a lamp is kept burning, and one member of the taravād holds the head in his lap, and another the feet in the same way; and here the neighbours come to take a farewell look at the dead. As the Malayālis believe that disposal of a corpse by cremation or burial as soon as possible after death is conducive to the happiness of the spirit of the departed, no time is lost in setting about the funeral. The bodies of senior members of the taravād, male or female, are burned, those of children under two are buried; so too are the bodies of all



persons who have died of cholera or small-pox. When preparations for the funeral have been made, the corpse is removed to the natumuttam or central yard of the house, if there is one (there always is in the larger houses) ; and, if there is not, is taken to the front yard, where it is again laid on plantain leaves. It is washed and anointed, the usual marks are made with sandal paste and ashes as in life, and it is neatly clothed. There is then done what is called the potavekkuka ceremony, or placing new cotton cloths (kōti mundu) over the corpse by the senior member of the deceased's taravād followed by all the other members, and also the sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, and all relatives. These cloths are used for tying up the corpse, when being taken to the place of burial or cremation. In some parts of Malabar, the corpse is carried on a bier made of fresh bamboos, tied up in these cloths, while in others it is carried, well covered in the cloths, by hand. In either case it is carried by the relatives. Before the corpse is removed, there is done another ceremony called pāra-virakkuka, or filling up pāras. (A pāra is a measure nearly as big as a gallon.) All adult male members of the taravād take part in it under the direction of a man of the Attikkurissi clan who occupies the position of director of the ceremonies during the next fifteen days, receiving as his perquisites all the rice and other offerings made to the deceased's spirit. It consists in filling up three pāra measures with paddy (unhusked rice), and one edangāli ($\frac{1}{16}$ of a pāra) with raw rice. These offerings of paddy and rice are placed very near the corpse, together with a burning lamp of the kind commonly used in Malabar, called nela vilaku. If the taravād is rich enough to afford one, a silk cloth is placed over the corpse before its removal for cremation.



As much fuel as is necessary having been got ready at the place of cremation, a small pit about the size of the corpse is dug, and across this are placed three long stumps of plantain tree, one at each end, and one in the middle, on which as a foundation the pyre is laid. The whole, or at least a part of the wood used, should be that of the mango tree. As the corpse is being removed to the pyre, the senior Anandravan * who is next in age (junior) to the deceased tears from one of the new cloths laid on the corpse a piece sufficient to go round his waist, ties it round his waist and holds in his hand, or tucks into his cloth at the waist, a piece of iron, generally a long key. This individual is throughout chief among the offerers of pindam (balls of rice) to the deceased. The corpse is laid on the bier with the head to the south, with the fuel laid over it, and a little camphor, sandalwood and ghī (clarified butter), if these things are within the means of the taravād. Here must be stated the invariable rule that no member of the taravād, male or female, who is older than the deceased, shall take any part whatever in the ceremony, or in any subsequent ceremony following on the cremation or burial. All adult males junior to the deceased should be present when the pyre is lighted. The deceased's younger brother, or, if there is none surviving, his nephew (his sister's eldest son) sets fire to the pyre at the head of the corpse. If the deceased left a son, this son sets fire at the same time to the pyre at the feet of the corpse. In the case of the deceased being a woman, her son sets fire to the pyre ; failing a son, the next junior in age to her has the right to do it. It is a matter of greatest

* The eldest male member of the taravād is called the Karanavan. All male members, brothers, nephews, and so on, who are junior to him, are called Anandravans of the taravād.



importance that the whole pyre burns at once. The greatest care is taken that it burns as a whole, consuming every part of the corpse. While the corpse is being consumed, all the members of the deceased's taravād who carried it to the pyre go and bathe in a tank (there is always one in the compound or grounds round every Nāyar's house). The eldest, he who bears the piece of torn cloth and iron (the key), carries an earthen pot of water, and all return together to the place of cremation. It should be said that, on the news of a death, the neighbours assemble, assisting in digging the grave, preparing the pyre, and so on, and, while the members of the taravād go and bathe, they remain near the corpse. By the time the relatives return it is almost consumed by the fire, and the senior Anandravan carries the pot of water thrice round the pyre, letting the water leak out by making holes in the pot as he walks round. On completing the third round, he dashes the pot on the ground close by where the head of the dead body has been placed. A small image representing the deceased is then made out of raw rice, and to this image a few grains of rice and gingelly seeds are offered. When this has been done, the relatives go home and the neighbours depart, bathing before entering their houses. When the cremation has been done by night, the duty of sēshakriya (making offerings to the deceased's spirit) must be begun the next day between 10 and 11 A.M., and is done on seven consecutive days. In any case the time for this ceremony is after 10 and before 11, and it continues for seven days. It is performed as follows. All male members of the taravād younger than the deceased go together to a tank and bathe, *i.e.*, they souse themselves in the water, and return to the house. The eldest of them, the man who tore off the strip of cloth from

the corpse, has with him the same strip of cloth and the piece of iron, and all assemble in the central courtyard of the house, where there have been placed ready by an enangan some rice which has been half boiled, a few grains of gingelly, a few leaves of the cherūla (*Ærue lanata*), some curds, a smaller measure of paddy, and a smaller measure of raw rice. These are placed in the north-east corner with a lamp of the ordinary Malabar pattern. A piece of palmyra leaf, about a foot or so in length and the width of a finger, is taken, and one end of it is knotted. The knotted end is placed in the ground, and the long end is left sticking up. This represents the deceased. The rice and other things are offered to it. The belief concerning this piece of palmyra leaf is explained thus. There are in the human body ten humours:—Vāyūs, Prānan, Apānan, Samānan, Udānan, Vyānan, Nāgan, Kurman, Krikalan, Dēvadattan, Dhananjayan. These are called Dasavāyu, *i.e.*, ten airs. When cremation was done for the first time, all these, excepting the last, were destroyed by the fire. The last one flew up, and settled on a palmyra leaf. Its existence was discovered by some Brāhman sages, who, by means of mantrams, forced it down to a piece of palmyra leaf on the earth. So it is thought that, by making offerings to this Dhananjayan leaf for seven days, the spirit of the deceased will be mollified, should he have any anger to vent on the living members of the taravād. The place where the piece of leaf is to be fixed has been carefully cleaned, and the leaf is fixed in the centre of the prepared surface. The offerings made to it go direct to the spirit of the deceased, and the peace of the taravād is assured. The men who have bathed and returned have brought with them some grass (karuka pulla), plucked on their way back to the house.



They kneel in front of the piece of palmyra, with the right knee on the ground. Some of the grass is spread on the ground near the piece of leaf, and rings made with it are placed on the ring finger of the right hand by each one present. The first offerings consist of water, sandal paste, and leaves of the cherūla, the eldest of the Anandravans leading the way. Boys need not go through the actual performance of offerings; it suffices for them to touch the eldest as he is making the offerings. The half boiled rice is made into balls (pindam), and each one present takes one of these in his right hand, and places it on the grass near the piece of palmyra leaf. Some gingelly seeds are put into the curd, which is poured so as to make three rings round the pindams. It is poured out of a small cup made with the leaf on which the half-boiled rice had been placed. It should not be poured from any other kind of vessel. The whole is then covered with this same plantain leaf, a lighted wick is waved, and some milk is put under the leaf. It is undisturbed for some moments, and leaf is gently tapped with the back of the fingers of the right hand. The leaf is then removed, and torn in two at its midrib, one piece being placed on either side of the pindams. The ceremony is then over for the day. The performers rise, and remove the wet clothing they have been wearing. The eldest of the Anandravans should, it was omitted to mention, be kept somewhat separated from the other Anandravans while in the courtyard, and before the corpse is removed for cremation; a son-in-law or daughter-in-law, or some such kind of relation remaining, as it were, between him and them. He has had the piece of cloth torn from the covering of the corpse tied round his waist, and the piece of iron in the folds of his cloth, or stuck in his waist during the ceremony

which has just been described. Now, when it has been completed, he ties the piece of cloth to the pillar of the house nearest to the piece of palmyra leaf which has been stuck in the ground, and puts the piece of iron in a safe place. The piece of palmyra leaf is covered with a basket. It is uncovered every day for seven days at the same hour, while the same ceremony is repeated. The balls of rice are removed by women and girls of the taravād who are junior to the deceased. They place them in the bell-metal vessel in which the rice was boiled. The senior places the vessel on her head, and leads the way to a tank, on the bank of which the rice is thrown. It is hoped that crows will come and eat it; for, if they do, the impression is received that the deceased's spirit is pleased with the offering. But, if somehow it is thought that the crows will not come and eat it, the rice is thrown into the tank. Dogs are not to be allowed to eat it. The women bathe after the rice has been thrown away. When the ceremony which has been described has been performed for the seventh time, *i.e.*, on the seventh day after death, the piece of palmyra leaf is removed from the ground, and thrown on the ashes of the deceased at the place of cremation. During these seven days, no member of the taravād goes to any other house. The house of the dead, and all its inmates are under pollution. No outsider enters it but under ban of pollution, which is, however, removable by bathing. A visitor entering the house of the dead during these seven days must bathe before he can enter his own house. During these seven days, the Karanavan of the family receives visits of condolence from relatives and friends to whom he is "at home" on Monday, Wednesday or Saturday. They sit and chat, chew betel, and go home, bathing ere they enter their houses. It is said

that, in some parts of Malabar, the visitors bring with them small presents in money or kind to help the Karanavan through the expenditure to which the funeral rites necessarily put him. To hark back a little, it must not be omitted that, on the third day after the death, all those who are related by marriage to the taravād of the deceased combine, and give a good feast to the inmates of the house and to the neighbours who are invited, one man or woman from each house. The person so invited is expected to come. This feast is called patni karigi. On the seventh day, a return feast will be given by the taravād of the deceased to all relatives and neighbours. Between the seventh and fourteenth day after death no ceremony is observed, but the members of the taravād remain under death pollution. On the fourteenth day comes the sanchayanam. It is the disposal of the calcined remains; the ashes of the deceased. The male members of the taravād go to the place of cremation, and, picking up the pieces of unburnt bones which they find there, place these in an earthen pot which has been sun-dried (not burnt by fire in the usual way), cover up the mouth of this pot with a piece of new cloth, and, all following the eldest who carries it, proceed to the nearest river (it must be running water), which receives the remains of the dead. The men then bathe, and return home. In some parts of Malabar the bones are collected on the seventh day, but it is not orthodox to do so. Better by far than taking the remains to the nearest river is it to take them to some specially sacred place, Benares, Gaya, Ramēswaram, or even to some place of sanctity much nearer home, as to Tirunelli in Wynaad, and there dispose of them in the same manner. The bones or ashes of any one having been taken to Gaya and there deposited in the river, the survivors of the taravād have

no need to continue the annual ceremony for that person. This is called ashtagaya srādh. It puts an end to the need for all earthly ceremonial. It is believed that the collection and careful disposal of the ashes of the dead gives peace to his spirit, and, what is more important, the pacified spirit will not thereafter injure the living members of the taravād, cause miscarriage to the women, possess the men (as with an evil spirit), and so on. On the fifteenth day after death is the purificatory ceremony. Until this has been done, any one touched by any member of the taravād should bathe before he enters his house, or partakes of any food. A man of the Athikurisi clan officiates. He sprinkles milk oil, in which some gingelly seeds have been put, over the persons of those under pollution. This sprinkling, and the bath which follows it, remove the death pollution. The purifier receives a fixed remuneration for his offices on this occasion, as well as when there is a birth in the taravād. In the case of death of a senior member of a taravād, well-to-do and recognised as of some importance, there is the feast called pinda atiyantaram on the sixteenth day after death, given to the neighbours and friends. With the observance of this feast of pindams there is involved the dīksha, or leaving the entire body unshaved for forty-one days, or for a year. There is no variable limit between forty-one days or a year. The forty-one-day period is the rule in North Malabar. I have seen many who were under the dīksha for a year. He who lets his hair grow may be a son or nephew of the deceased. One member only of the taravād bears the mark of mourning by his growth of hair. He who is under the dīksha offers half-boiled rice and gingelly seeds to the spirits of the deceased every morning after his bath, and he is under restriction from women, from

alcoholic drinks, and from chewing betel, also from tobacco. When the diksha is observed, the ashes of the dead are not deposited as described already (in the sun-dried vessel) until its last day—the forty-first or a year after death. When it is carried on for a year, there is observed every month a ceremony called bali. It is noteworthy that, in this monthly ceremony and for the conclusion of the diksha, it is not the thirtieth or three hundred and sixty-fifth day which marks the date for the ceremonies, but it is the day (of the month) of the star which was presiding when the deceased met his death: the returning day on which the star presides.* For the bali, a man of the Elayatu caste officiates. The Elayatus are priests for the Nāyars. They wear the Brāhmin's thread, but they are not Brāhmins. They are not permitted to study the Vēdas, but to the Nāyars they stand in the place of the ordinary purōhit. The officiating Elayatu prepares the rice for the bali, when to the deceased, represented by karuka grass, are offered boiled rice, curds, gingelly seeds, and some other things. The Elayatu should be paid a rupee for his services, which are considered necessary even when the man under diksha is himself familiar with the required ceremonial. The last day of the diksha is one of festivity. After the bali, the man under diksha is shaved. All this over, the only thing to be done for the deceased is the annual srādh or yearly funeral commemorative rite. Rice-balls are made, and given to crows. Clapping of hands announces to these birds that the rice is being thrown for them, and, should they not come at once and eat, it is evident that the spirit is displeased, and the taravād had better look out. The spirits of those who

* All caste Hindus who perform the srādh ceremonies calculate the day of death, not by the day of the month, but by the thithis (day after full or new moon).



have committed suicide, or met death by any violent means, are always particularly vicious and troublesome to the taravād, their spirits possessing and rendering miserable some unfortunate member of it. Unless they are pacified, they will ruin the taravād, so Brāhman priests are called in, and appease them by means of tilahōmam, a rite in which sacrificial fire is raised, and ghī, gingelly, and other things are offered through it."

"There are," Mr. Fawcett writes, "many interesting features in the death ceremonies as performed by the Kiriattil class. Those who carry the corpse to the pyre are dressed as women, their cloths being wet, and each carries a knife on his person. Two junior male members of the taravād thrust pieces of mango wood into the southern end of the burning pyre, and, when they are lighted, throw them over their shoulders to the southwards without looking round. Close to the northern end of the pyre, two small sticks are fixed in the ground, and tied together with a cloth, over which water is poured thrice. All members of the taravād prostrate to the ground before the pyre. They follow the enangu carrying the pot of water round the pyre, and go home without looking round. They pass to the northern side of the house under an arch made by two men standing east and west, holding at arms length, and touching at the points, the spade that was used to dig the pit under the pyre, and the axe with which the wood for the pyre was cut or felled. After this is done the kodali ceremony, using the spade, axe, and big knife. These are placed on the leaves where the corpse had lain. Then follows circumambulation and prostration by all, and the leaves are committed to the burning pyre."

In connection with the death ceremonies, it is noted in the Cochin Census Report, 1901, that "the last



moments of a dying person are really very trying. All members (male and female), junior to the dying person, pour into his or her mouth drops of Ganges or other holy water or conjee (rice) water in token of their last tribute of regard. Before the person breathes his last, he or she is removed to the bare floor, as it is considered sacrilegious to allow the last breath to escape while lying on the bed, and in a room with a ceiling, which last is supposed to obstruct the free passage of the breath. The names of gods, or sacred texts are loudly dinned into his or her ears, so that the person may quit this world with the recollections of God serving as a passport to heaven. The forehead, breast, and the joints especially are besmeared with holy ashes, so as to prevent the messengers of death from tightly tying those parts when they carry away the person. Soon after the last breath, the dead body is removed to some open place in the house, covered from top to toe with a washed cloth, and deposited on the bare floor with the head towards the south, the region of the God of death. A lighted lamp is placed near the head, and other lights are placed all round the corpse. A mango tree is cut, or other firewood is collected, and a funeral pyre is constructed in the south-eastern corner of a compound or garden known as the corner of Agni, which is always reserved as a cemetery for the burning or burial of the dead. All male members, generally junior, bathe, and, without wiping their head or body, they remove the corpse to the yard in front of the house, and place it on a plantain leaf. It is nominally anointed with oil, and bathed in water. Ashes and sandal are again smeared on the forehead and joints. The old cloth is removed, and the body is covered with a new unwashed cloth or a piece of silk. A little gold or silver, or small coins are put into the



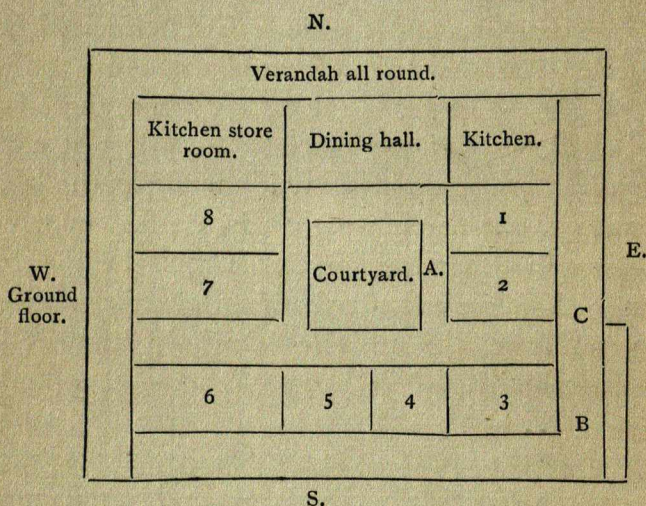
NĀYAR HOUSE.



mouth. With the breaking of a cocoanut, and the offering of some powdered rice, betel leaf, areca nut, etc., the body is taken to the pyre. The members junior to the deceased go round the pyre three, five, or seven times, throw paddy and rice over the dead body, put scantlings of sandal wood, prostrate at the feet of the corpse, and then set fire to the pyre. When the body is almost wholly consumed, one of the male members carries a pot of water, and, after making three rounds, the pot is broken and thrown into the pyre. The death of an elderly male member of a family is marked by udakakriya and sanchayanam, and the daily bali performed at the bali kutti (altar) planted in front of the house, or in the courtyard in the centre of the house, where there is one. The Ashtikurissi Nāyar officiates as priest at all such obsequies. On the morning of the fifteenth day, the members of the family wear cloths washed by a Vēlan, and assemble together for purification by the Nāyar priest, both before and after bathing, who throws on them paddy and rice, and sprinkles the holy mixture. The Elayad or family purōhit then performs another punnayaham or purification, and on the sixteenth day he takes the place of the priest. On the evening of the fifteenth day, and the morning of the sixteenth day, the purōhits and villagers are sumptuously feasted, and presents of cloths and money are made to the Elayads. In the Chittūr tāluk, the Tamil Brāhman sometimes performs priestly functions in place of the Elayad. Diksha is performed for forty-one days, or for a whole year, for the benefit of the departed soul. This last ceremony is invariably performed on the death of the mother, maternal uncle, and elder brother."

In connection with the habitations of the Nāyars, Mr. Fawcett writes as follows. "A house may face east or

west, never north or south ; as a rule, it faces the east. Every garden is enclosed by a bank, a hedge, or a fencing of some kind, and entrance is to be made at one point only, the east, where there is a gate-house, or, in the case of the poorest houses, a small portico or open doorway roofed over. One never walks straight through this ; there is always a kind of stile to surmount. It is the same everywhere in Malabar, and not only amongst the Nāyars. The following is a plan of a nālapura or four-sided house, which may be taken as representative of the houses of the rich :—



Numbers 6 and 7 are rooms, which are generally used for storing grain. At A is a staircase leading to the room of the upper storey occupied by the female members of the family. At B is another staircase leading to the rooms of the upper storey occupied by the male members. There is no connection between the portions allotted to the men and women. No. 8 is for the family gods. The Karanavans and old women of the family are perpetuated in images of gold or silver, or, more commonly, brass. Poor people, who cannot

always shade from the many trees and palms. Every house is in its own seclusion."

Concerning Nāyar dwellings, Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes that "the houses of the Nāyar, standing in a separate compound, have been by many writers supposed to have been designed with special reference to the requirements of offence and defence, and Major Welsh states that the saying that every man's house is his castle is well verified here. The higher ambition of the Nāyar is, as has frequently been said, to possess a garden, wherein he can grow, without trouble or expense, the few necessities of his existence. The garden surrounding the house is surrounded by a hedge or strong fence. At the entrance is an out-house, or patipura, which must have served as a kind of guard-room in mediæval times. In poorer houses its place is taken by a roofed door, generally provided with a stile to keep out cattle. The courtyard is washed with cow-dung, and diverse figures are drawn with white chalk on the fence. Usually there are three out-houses, a vadakkettu on the north side serving as a kitchen, a cattle-shed, and a tekketu on the southern side, where some family spirit is located. These are generally those of Maruta, *i.e.*, some member of the family who has died of small-pox. A sword or other weapon, and a seat or other emblem is located within this out-house, which is also known by the names of gurusala (the house of a saint), kalari (military training-ground), and daivappura (house of a deity). The tekketu is lighted up every evening, and periodical offerings are made to propitiate the deities enshrined within. In the south-west corner is the serpent kavu (grove), and by its side a tank for bathing purposes. Various useful trees are grown in the garden, such as the jack, areca palm, cocoanut, plantain,



tamarind, and mango. The whole house is known as vitu. The houses are built on various models, such as pattayappura, nālukettu, ettukettu, and kuttikettu."

Concerning the dress of the Nāyars, Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes that "the males dress themselves in a mundu (cloth), a loose lower garment, and a towel. A neriyatu, or light cloth of fine texture with coloured border, is sometimes worn round the mundu on festive occasions. Coats and caps are recent introductions, but are eschewed by the orthodox as unnational. It is noted by Mr. Logan that 'the women clothe themselves in a single white cloth of fine texture, reaching from the waist to the knees, and occasionally, when abroad, they throw over the shoulder and bosom another similar cloth. But by custom the Nāyar women go uncovered from the waist. Upper garments indicate lower caste, or sometimes, by a strange reversal of Western notions, immodesty.' Edward Ives, who came to Anjengo about 1740, observes that 'the groves on each bank of the river are chiefly planted with cocoanut trees, and have been inhabited by men and women in almost a pure state of nature, for they go with their breasts and bellies entirely naked. This custom prevails universally throughout every caste from the poorest planter of rice to the daughter or consort of the king upon the throne.'" [According to ancient custom, Nāyar women in Travancore used to remove their body-cloth in the presence of the Royal Family. But, since 1856, this custom has been abolished, by a proclamation during the reign of H.H. Vanchi Bala Rāma Varma Kulasakhara Perumal Bhagiodya Rāma Varma. In a critique on the Indian Census Report, 1901, Mr. J. D. Rees observes* that

* Nineteenth Century, 1904.

“if the Census Commissioner had enjoyed the privilege of living among the Nāyars, he would not have accused them of an ‘excess of females.’ The most beautiful women in India, if numerous, could never be excessive.” Concerning Nāyar females, Pierre Loti writes* that “les femmes ont presque toutes les traits d’une finesse particulière. Elles se font des bandeaux a la Vierge, et, avec le reste de leurs cheveux, très noirs et très lisses, composent une espèce de galette ronde qui se porte au sommet de la tête, en avant et de côté, retombant un peu vers le front comme une petite toque cavalièrement posée, en contraste sur l’ensemble de leur personne qui demeure toujours grave et hiératique.”] The Nāyars are particularly cleanly. Buchanan writes that “the higher ranks of the people of Malayala use very little clothing, but are remarkably clean in their persons. Cutaneous disorders are never observed except among slaves and the lowest orders, and the Nāyar women are remarkably careful, repeatedly washing with various saponaceous plants to keep their hair and skins from every impurity.” The washerman is constantly in requisition. No dirty cloths are ever worn. When going for temple worship, the Nāyar women dress themselves in the tatttu form by drawing the right corner of the hind fold of the cloth between the thighs, and fastening it at the back. The cloth is about ten cubits long and three broad, and worn in two folds. The oldest ornament of the Nāyar women is the necklace called nāgapatam, the pendants of which resemble a cobra’s hood. The Nāyar women wear no ornament on the head, but decorate the hair with flowers. The nāgapatam, and several other forms of neck ornament, such as kazhultila, nalupanti, puttali,

* L’Inde (sans les Anglais).

chelakkamotiram, amatāli, arumpumani, and kumilatāli are fast vanishing. The kuttu-minnu is worn on the neck for the first time by a girl when her tāli-kettu is celebrated. This ornament is also called gnali. Prior to the tāli-kettu ceremony, the girls wear a kāsū or sovereign. The inseparable neck ornament of a Nāyar woman in modern days is the addiyal, to which a patakkam is attached. The only ornament for the ears is the takka or toda. After the lobes have been dilated at the karnavedha ceremony, and dilated, a big leaden ring is inserted in them. The nose ornament of women is called mukkuṭhi, from which is suspended a gold wire called gnattu. No ornament is worn in the right nostril. The wearing of gold bangles on the wrists has been long the fashion among South Indian Hindu females of almost all high castes. Round the waist Nāyar women wear chains of gold and silver, and, by the wealthy, gold belts called kachchapuram are worn. Anklets were not worn in former times, but at the present day the kolusu and padasaram of the Tamilians have been adopted. So, too, the time-honoured toda is sometimes set aside in favour of the Tamil kammal, an ornament of much smaller size. Canter Visscher (who was Chaplain at Cochin in the eighteenth century) must have been much struck by the expenditure of the Nāyar women on their dress, for he wrote * 'there is not one of any fortune who does not own as many as twenty or thirty chests full of robes made of silver and other valuable materials, for it would be a disgrace in their case to wear the same dress two or three days in succession'."

It is noted by Mr. Fawcett that "the Venetian sequin, which probably first found its way to Malabar in the days

* Letters from Malabar.

of Vasco da Gama and Albuquerque, is one of those coins which, having found favour with a people, is used persistently in ornamentation long after it has passed out of currency. So fond are the Malayālis of the sequin that to this day there is quite a large trade in imitations of the coin for purposes of ornament. Such is the persistence of its use that the trade extends to brass and even copper imitation of the sequins. The former are often seen to bear the legend 'Made in Austria.' The Nāyars wear none but the gold sequins. The brass imitations are worn by the women of the inferior races. If one asks the ordinary Malayāli, say a Nāyar, what persons are represented on the sequin, one gets for answer that they are Rāma and Sīta ; between them a cocoanut tree."

In connection with the wearing of charms by Nāyars Mr. Fawcett writes as follows. "One individual (a Kiriattil Nāyar) wore two rings made of an amalgamation of gold and copper, called tambāk, on the ring finger of the right hand for good luck. Tambāk rings are lucky rings. It is a good thing to wash the face with the hand, on which is a tambāk ring. Another wore two rings of the pattern called trilōham (lit. metals) on the ring finger of each hand. Each of these was made during an eclipse. Yet another wore a silver ring as a vow, which was to be given up at the next festival at Kottiūr, a famous festival in North Malabar. The right nostril of a Sūdra Nāyar was slit vertically as if for the insertion of a jewel. His mother miscarried in her first pregnancy, so, according to custom, he, the child of her second pregnancy, had his nose slit. Another wore a silver bangle. He had a wound in his arm which was long in healing, so he made a vow to the god at Tirupati (in the North Arcot district), that, if his arm was healed, he would give up the bangle at the Tirupati temple. He intended to send the



bangle there by a messenger. An Akattu Charna Nāyar wore an amulet to keep off the spirit of a Brāhman who died by drowning. Another had a silver ring, on which a piece of a bristle from an elephant's tail was arranged."

Tattooing is said by Mr. Subramani Aiyar not to be favoured by North Travancore Nāyars, and to be only practiced by Nāyar women living to the south of Quilon. Certain accounts trace it to the invasion of Travancore by a Moghul Sirdar in 1680 A.D. In modern times it has become rare. The operation is performed by women of the Odda or Kurava caste before a girl reaches the twelfth year.

Concerning the religious worship of the Nāyars, Mr. Subramani Aiyar writes that "Buchanan notes that the proper deity of the Nāyars is Vishnu, though they wear the mark of Siva on their foreheads. By this is merely meant that they pay equal reverence to both Siva and Vishnu, being Smartas converted to the tenets of Sankaracharya. Besides worshipping the higher Hindu deities, the Nāyars also manifest their adoration for several minor ones, such as Mātan, Utayam, Yakshi, Chattan, Chantakarnan, Murti, Maruta, and Arukula. Most of these have granite representations, or at least such emblems as a sword or a cane, and are provided with a local habitation. Besides these, persons who have met with accidental death, and girls who have died before their tāli-tying ceremony, are specially worshipped under the designations of Kazhichchavu and Kannichchavu. Magicians are held in some fear, and talismanic amulets are attached to the waist by members of both sexes. Kuttichattan, the mischievous imp of Malabar, is supposed to cause much misery. Various spirits are worshipped on the Tiruvonam day in the month of Avani (August-September), on the Uchcharam or 28th

day of Makarom (January-February), and on some Tuesdays and Fridays. Kolam-tullal, Velan-pravarti, Ayiramaniam-tullel, Chavuttu, Tila-homam, and a host of other ceremonies are performed with a view to propitiate spirits, and the assistance of the Kaniyans and Vēlans is largely sought. Serpents, too, whose images are located on the north-western side of most gardens in Central and North Travancore, receive a large share of adoration. The sun is an object of universal worship. Though the Gayatri cannot be studied, or the Sandhyavandanam of the Brāhmans performed, an offering of water to the sun after a bath, to the accompaniment of some hymn, is made by almost every pious Nāyar. The Panchakshara is learnt from an Ilayatu, and repeated daily. A large portion of the time of an old Nāyar is spent in reading the Rāmayana, Bhagavata and Mahābharata, rendered into Malayālam by Tunchattu Ezhuttachhan, the greatest poet of the Malabar coast. Many places in Travancore are pointed out as the scene of memorable incidents in the Rāmayana and Mahābharata. There are many temples, tanks, and mountains connected with Rāma's march to the capital of Rāvana. Equally important are the singular feats said to have been performed by the five Pāndavas during the time of their wanderings in the jungles before the battle of Kurukshetra. Bhima especially has built temples, raised up huge mountains, and performed many other gigantic tasks in the country. There are some village temples owned exclusively by the Nāyars, where all the karakkars (villagers) assemble on special occasions. A very peculiar socio-religious ceremony performed here is the kūttam. This is a village council, held at the beginning of every month for the administration of the communal affairs of the caste, though, at



the present day, a sumptuous feast at the cost of each villager in rotation, and partaken of by all assembled, and a small offering to the temple, are all that remains to commemorate it. Astrology is believed in, and some of its votaries are spoken of as Trikalagnas, or those who know the past, present, and future. It is due to a curse of Siva on the science of his son, who made bold by its means to predict even the future of his father, that occasional mistakes are said to occur in astrological calculations. Sorcery and witchcraft are believed to be potent powers for evil. To make a person imbecile, to paralyse his limbs, to cause him to lavish all his wealth upon another, to make him deaf and dumb, and, if need be, even to make an end of him, are not supposed to be beyond the powers of the ordinary wizard. Next to wizardry and astrology, palmistry, omens, and the lizard science are generally believed in. In the category of good omens are placed the elephant, a pot full of water, sweetmeats, fruit, fish and flesh, images of gods, kings, a cow with its calf, married women, tied bullocks, gold lamps, ghee, milk, and so on. Under the head of bad omens come the donkey, a broom, buffalo, untied bullock, barber, widow, patient, cat, washerman, etc. The worst of all omens is beyond question to allow a cat to cross one's path. An odd number of Nāyars, and an even number of Brāhmans, are good omens, the reverse being particularly bad. On the Vinayaka-chaturthi day in the month of Avani, no man is permitted to look at the rising moon under penalty of incurring unmerited obloquy.

★ "The chief religious festival of the Nāyars is Ōnam, which takes place in the last week of August, or first week of September. It is a time of rejoicing and merriment. Father Paulinus, writing in the latter half of the

eighteenth century, observes that about the tenth of September the rain ceases in Malabar. All nature seems then as if renovated; the flowers again shoot up, and the trees bloom. In a word, this season is the same as that which Europeans call spring. The Ōnam festival is said, therefore, to have been instituted for the purpose of soliciting from the gods a happy and fruitful year. It continues for eight days, and during that time the Indians are accustomed to adorn their houses with flowers, and to daub them over with cow-dung, because the cow is a sacred animal, dedicated to the Goddess Lakshmi, the Ceres of India. On this occasion they also put on new clothes, throw away all their old earthenware, and replace it by new. Ōnam is, according to some, the annual celebration of the Malabar new year, which first began with Cheraman Perumal's departure for Mecca. But, with the majority of orthodox Hindus, it is the day of the annual visit of Mahabali to his country, which he used to govern so wisely and well before his overthrow. There is also a belief that it is Maha-Vishnu who, on Ōnam day, pays a visit to this mundane universe, for the just and proper maintenance of which he is specially responsible. In some North Malabar title-deeds and horoscopes, Mr. Logan says, the year is taken as ending with the day previous to Ōnam. This fact, he notes, is quite reconcileable with the other explanation, which alleges that the commencement of the era coincides with Perumal's departure for Arabia, if it is assumed, as is not improbable, that the day on which he sailed was Thiruvōnam day, on which acknowledgment of fealty should have been made. Ōnam, it may be observed, is a contraction of Thiruvōnam which is the asterism of the second day of the festival. Throughout the festival, boys from five to fifteen years of age go out



early in the morning to gather flowers, of which the kadali is the most important. On their return, they sit in front of the tulasi (sacred basil) mandapam, make a carpet-like bed of the blossoms which they have collected, and place a clay image of Ganapati in the centre. A writer in the Calcutta Review * describes how having set out at dawn to gather blossoms, the children return with their beautiful spoils by 9 or 10 A.M., and then the daily decoration begins. The chief decoration consists of a carpet made out of the gathered blossoms, the smaller ones being used in their entirety, while the large flowers, and one or two varieties of foliage of different tints, are pinched up into little pieces to serve the decorator's purpose. This flower carpet is invariably made in the centre of the clean strip of yard in front of the neat house. Often it is a beautiful work of art, accomplished with a delicate touch and a highly artistic sense of tone and blending. The carpet completed, a miniature pandal (booth), hung with little festoons, is erected over it, and at all hours of the day neighbours look in, to admire and criticise the beautiful handiwork."

"Various field sports, of which foot-ball is the chief, are indulged in during the Ōnam festival. To quote Paulinus once more, the men, particularly those who are young, form themselves into parties, and shoot at each other with arrows. These arrows are blunted, but exceedingly strong, and are discharged with such force that a considerable number are generally wounded on both sides. These games have a great likeness to the Ceralia and Juvenalia of the ancient Greeks and Romans."

* January, 1899.

In connection with bows and arrows, Mr. Fawcett writes that "I once witnessed a very interesting game called ēitū (ēiththu), played by the Nāyars in the southern portion of Kurumbranād during the ten days preceding Ōnam. There is a semi-circular stop-butt, about two feet in the highest part, the centre, and sloping to the ground at each side. The players stand 25 to 30 yards before the concave side of it, one side of the players to the right, the other to the left. There is no restriction of numbers as to sides. Each player is armed with a little bow made of bamboo, about 18 inches in length, and arrows, or what answer for arrows, these being no more than pieces of the midrib of the cocoanut palm leaf, roughly broken off, leaving a little bit of the end to take the place of the feather. In the centre of the stop-butt, on the ground, is placed the target, a piece of the heart of the plantain tree, about 3 inches in diameter, pointed at the top, in which is stuck a small stick convenient for lifting the cheppu, as the mark which is the immediate objective of the players is called. They shoot indiscriminately at the mark, and he who hits it (the little arrows shoot straight, and stick in readily) carries off all the arrows lying on the ground. Each side strives to secure all the arrows, and to deprive the other side of theirs—a sort of 'beggar my neighbour.' He who hits the mark last takes all the arrows; that is, he who hits it, and runs and touches the mark before any one else hits it. As I stood watching, it happened several times that as many as four arrows hit the mark, while the youth who had hit first was running the 25 yards to touch the cheppu. Before he could touch it, as many as four other arrows had struck it, and, of course, he who hit it last and touched the mark secured all the arrows for his side. The game is accompanied by much

shouting, gesticulation and laughter. Those returning, after securing a large number of arrows, turned somersaults, and expressed their joy in saltatory motions." In a note on this game with bows and arrows in Kurumbranad, Mr. E. F. Thomas writes that "the players form themselves into two sides, which shoot alternately at the mark. Beside the mark stand representatives of the two sides. When the mark is hit by a member of either side, on his representative shouting 'Run, man,' he runs up the lists. His object is to seize the mark before it is hit by any one belonging to the other side. If he can do this, his side takes all the arrows which have been shot, and are sticking in the stop-butt. If, on the other hand, the mark is hit by the other side before he reaches it, he may not seize the mark. A member of the other side runs up in his turn to seize the mark if possible before it is hit again by the first side. If he can do this, he takes out, not all the arrows, but only the two which are sticking in the mark. If, while number two is running, the mark is hit a third time, a member of the first side runs up, to seize the mark if possible. The rule is that one or three hits take all the arrows in the stop-butt, two or four only the arrows sticking in the mark. Great excitement is shown by all who take part in the game, which attracts a number of spectators. The game is played every fortnight by Nāyars, Tiyaṅs, Māppillas, and others. I am told that it is a very old one, and is dying out. I saw it at Naduvanūr."

The Ōnam games in the south-east of Malabar, in the neighbourhood of Palghat, are said by Mr. Fawcett to be of a rough character, "the tenants of certain jenmis (landlords) turning out each under their own leader, and engaging in sham fights, in which there is much rough play. Here, too, is to be seen a kind of boxing, which

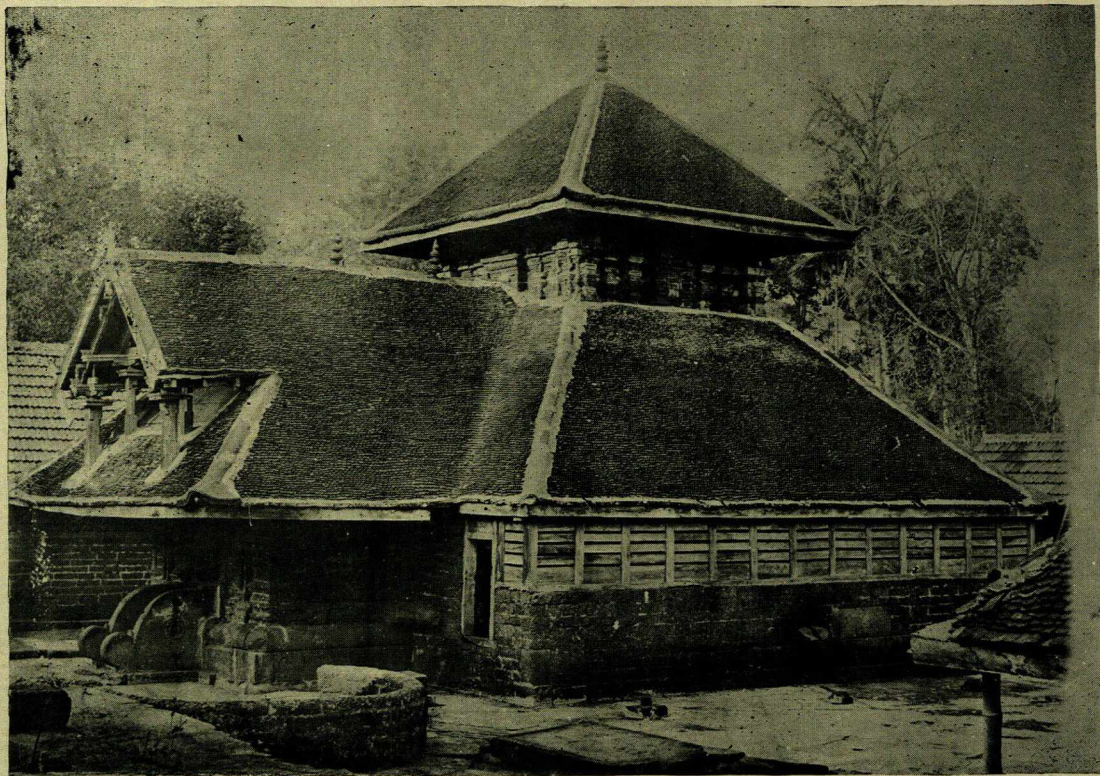


would seem to be a relic of the days of the Roman pugiles using the cestus in combat. The position taken up by the combatants is much the same as that of the pugiles. The Romans were familiar with Malabar from about 30 B.C. to the decline of their power.* We may safely assume that the 3,000 lbs. of pepper, which Alaric demanded as part of the ransom of Rome when he besieged the city in the fifth century, came from Malabar." Swinging on the uzhinjal, and dancing to the accompaniment of merry songs, are said to be characteristic amusements of the womankind during Ōnam festival, and, on the Patinaram Makam, or sixteenth day after Thiruvonam. This amusement is indulged in by both sexes. It is noted by Mr. Fawcett that "the cloths given as Ōnam presents are yellow, or some part of them is yellow. There must be at least a yellow stripe or a small patch of yellow in a corner, which suggests a relic of sun-worship in a form more pronounced than that which obtains at present. It is a harvest festival, about the time when the first crop of paddy (rice) is harvested."

Concerning another important festival in Malabar, the Thiruvathira, Mr. T. K. Gopal Panikkar writes as follows.† "Thiruvathira is one of the three great national occasions of Malabar. It generally comes off in the Malayālam month of Dhanu (December or January) on the day called the Thiruvathira day. It is essentially a festival in which females are almost exclusively concerned, and lasts for but a single day. The popular conception of it is that it is in commemoration of the death of Kāmadēvan, the Cupid of our national mythology. As recorded in the old Purānas, Kāmadēvan

* See Thurston. Catalogue of Roman, etc., Coins, Madras Government Museum, 2nd ed., 1894.

† Malabar and its Folk, 1900.



BHAGAVATI TEMPLE, PANDALŪR.



was destroyed in the burning fire of the third eye of Siva, one of the chief members of our divine Trinity. Hence he is now supposed to have only an ideal or rather spiritual existence, and thus he exerts a powerful influence upon the lower passions of human nature. The memory of this unhappy tragedy is still kept alive among us, particularly the female section, by means of the annual celebration of this important festival. About a week before the day, the festival practically opens. At about four in the morning, every young female of Nair families with pretensions to decency gets out of bed, and takes her bath in a tank. Usually a fairly large number of these young ladies collect at the tank for the purpose. Then all, or almost all of them, plunge in the water, and begin to take part in the singing that is presently to follow. One of them then leads off by means of a peculiar rhythmic song, chiefly pertaining to Cupid. This singing is simultaneously accompanied by a curious sound produced with her hand on the water. The palm of the left hand is closed, and kept immediately underneath the surface of the water. Then the palm of the other is forcibly brought down in a slanting direction, and struck against its surface, so that the water is completely ruffled, and is splashed in all directions, producing a loud deep noise. This process is continuously prolonged, together with the singing. One stanza is now over along with the sound, and then the leader stops awhile for the others to follow in her wake. This being likewise over, she caps her first stanza with another, at the same time beating on the water, and so on until the conclusion of the song. All of them make a long pause, and then begin another. The process goes on until the peep of dawn, when they rub themselves dry, and come home to dress

themselves in the neatest and grandest possible attire. They also darken the fringes of their eyelids with a sticky preparation of soot mixed up with a little oil or ghee, and sometimes with a superficial coating of antimony powder. They also wear white, black, or red marks down the middle of their foreheads. They also chew betel, and thus redden their mouths and lips. They then proceed to the enjoyment of another prominent item of pleasure, viz., swinging to and fro on what is usually known as an *uzhinjal*, or swing made of bamboo. On the festival day, after the morning bath is over, they take a light meal, and in the noon the family dinner is voraciously attacked, the essential and almost universal ingredients being ordinary ripe plantain fruits, and a delicious preparation of arrowroot powder purified and mixed with jaggery (crude sugar) or sugar, and also cocoanut. Then, till evening, dancing and merry-making are ceaselessly indulged in. The husband population are inexcusably required to be present in the wives' houses before evening, as they are bound to do on the *Ōnam* and *Vishu* occasions. Failure to do this is looked upon as a step, or rather the first step, on the part of the defaulting husband towards a final separation or divorce from the wife. Despite the rigour of the bleak December season during which the festival commonly falls, heightened inevitably by the constant blowing of the cold east wind upon their moistened frames, these lusty maidens derive considerable pleasure from their early baths, and their frolics in the water. The biting cold of the season, which makes their persons shiver and quiver, becomes to them in the midst of all their ecstatic frolics an additional source of pleasure. The two items described above, viz., the swinging and beating of the water, have each their own distinctive



significance. The former typifies the attempt which these maidens make in order to hang themselves on these instruments, and destroy their lives in consequence of the lamented demise of their sexual deity Kāmadēvan. The beating on the water symbolises their beating their chests in expression of their deep-felt sorrow caused by their Cupid's death."

Yet another important festival, Vishu, is thus described by Mr. Gopal Panikkar. "Vishu, like the Ōnam and Thiruvathira festivals, is a remarkable event among us. Its duration is limited to one day. The 1st of Mētam (some day in April) is the unchangeable day, on which it falls. It is practically the astronomical new year's day. This was one of the periods when, in olden days, the subjects of ruling princes or authorities in Malabar, under whom their lots were cast, were expected to bring their new year's offerings to such princes. Failure to comply with the customary and time-consecrated demands was visited with royal displeasure, resulting in manifold varieties of oppression. The British Government, finding this was a great burden, pressing rather heavily upon the people, obtained as far back as 1790 a binding promise from those Native Princes that such exactions of presents from the people should be discontinued thereafter. Consequently the festival is now shorn of much of its ancient sanctity and splendour. But suggestive survivals of the same are still to be found in the presents, which tenants and dependents bring to leading families on the day previous to the Vishu. Being the commencement of a new year, native superstition surrounds it with a peculiar solemn importance. It is believed that a man's whole prosperity in life depends upon the nature, auspicious or otherwise, of the first things that he happens to fix his eyes upon

on this particular morning. According to Nair, and even general Hindu mythology, there are certain objects which possess an inherent inauspicious character. For instance, ashes, firewood, oil, and a lot of similar objects are inauspicious ones, which will render him who chances to notice them first fare badly in life for the whole year, and their obnoxious effects will be removed only on his seeing holy things, such as reigning princes, oxen, cows, gold, and such like, on the morning of the next new year. The effects of the sight of these various materials are said to apply even to the attainment of objects by a man starting on a special errand, who happens for the first time to look at them after starting. However, with this view, almost every family religiously takes care to prepare the most sightworthy objects on the new year morning. Therefore, on the previous night they prepare what is known as a kani. A small circular bell-metal vessel is taken, and some holy objects are systematically arranged inside it. A grandha or old book made of palmyra leaves, a gold ornament, a new-washed cloth, some 'unprofitably gay' flowers of the konna tree (*Cassia Fistula*), a measure of rice, a so-called looking-glass made of bell-metal, and a few other things, are all tastefully arranged in the vessel, and placed in a prominent room inside the house. On either side of this vessel two brass or bell-metal lamps, filled with cocoanut oil clear as diamond sparks, are kept burning, and a small plank of wood, or some other seat, is placed in front of it. At about 5 o'clock in the morning of the day, some one who has got up first wakes up the inmates, both male and female, of the house, and takes them blindfolded, so that they may not gaze at anything else, to the seat near the kani. The members are seated, one after another, in the seat, and



are then, and not till then, asked to open their eyes, and carefully look at the kani. Then each is made to look at some venerable member of the house, or sometimes a stranger even. This over, the little playful urchins of the house begin to fire small crackers, which they have bought and stored for the occasion. The kani is then taken round the place from house to house for the benefit of the poor families, which cannot afford to prepare such a costly adornment. With the close of the noise of the crackers, the morning breaks, and preparations are begun for the morning meal. This meal is in some parts confined to rice kanji (gruel) with a grand appendage of other eatable substances, and in others to ordinary rice and its accompaniments, but in either case on a grand scale. Immediately the day dawns, the heads of the families give to almost all the junior members and servants of the household, and to wives and children, money presents to serve as their pocket-money. In the more numerically large families, similar presents are also made by the heads of particular branches of the same family to their juniors, children, wives and servants. One other item connected with the festival deserves mention. On the evening of the previous day, about four or five o'clock, most well-to-do families distribute paddy or rice, as the case may be, in varying quantities, and some other accessories to the family workmen, whether they live on the family estates or not. In return for this, these labourers bring with them for presentation the fruits of their own labours, such as vegetables of divers sorts, cocoanut oil, jaggery, plantains, pumpkins, cucumbers, brinjals (fruit of *Solanum Melongena*), etc., according as their respective circumstances permit. With the close of the midday meal the festival practically concludes. In some families, after

the meal is over, dancing and games of various kinds are carried on, which contribute to the enhancement of the pleasantries incidental to the festival. As on other prominent occasions, card-playing and other games are also resorted to." †

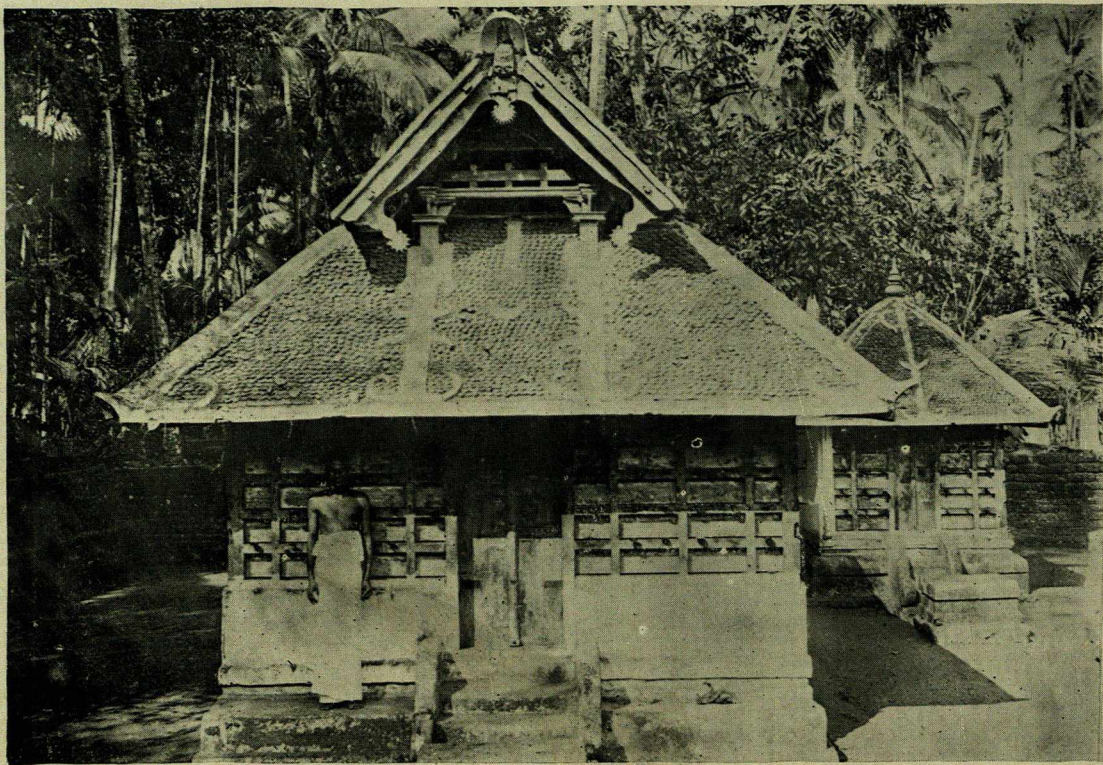
On the subject of religion, Mr. Fawcett writes as follows. "No Nāyar, unless one utterly degraded by the exigencies of a Government office, would eat his food without having bathed and changed his cloth. It is a rule seldom broken that every Nāyar goes to the temple to pray at least once a day after having bathed; generally twice a day. The mere approach anywhere near his vicinity of a Cheruman, a Pulayan, or any inferior being, even a Tiyan, as he walks to his house from the temple, cleansed in body and mind, his marks newly set on his forehead with sandal-wood paste, is pollution, and he must turn and bathe again ere he can enter his house and eat. Buchanan tells us that in his time, about a century ago, the man of inferior caste thus approaching a Nāyar would be cut down instantly with a sword; there would be no words. Now that the people of India are inconvenienced with an Arms Act which inhibits sword play of this kind, and with a law system under which high and low are rated alike, the Nāyar has to content himself with an imperious grunt-like shout for the way to be cleared for him as he stalks on imperturbed. His arrogance is not diminished, but he cannot now show it in quite the same way.

"I will attempt a description of the ceremonial observed at the Pishāri kāvu—the Pishāri temple near Quilandy on the coast 15 miles north of Calicut, where Bhagavati is supposed in vague legend to have slain an Āsura or gigantic ogre, in commemoration of which

event the festival is held yearly to Bhagavati and her followers. The festival lasts for seven days. When I visited it in 1895, the last day was on the 31st of March. Before daybreak of the first day, the ordinary temple priest, a Müssad, will leave the temple after having swept it and made it clean; and (also before daybreak) five Nambūtiris will enter it, bearing with them sudhi kalasam. The kalasam is on this occasion made of the five products of the cow (panchagavyam), together with some water, a few leaves of the banyan tree, and darbha grass, all in one vessel. Before being brought to the temple, mantrams or magic verses will have been said over it. The contents of the vessel are sprinkled all about the temple, and a little is put in the well, thus purifying the temple and the well. The Nambūtiris will then perform the usual morning worship, and, either immediately after it or very soon afterwards, they leave the temple, and the Müssad returns and resumes his office. The temple belongs to four taravāds, and no sooner has it been purified than the Kāranavans of these four taravāds, virtually the joint-owners of the temple (known as Urālas) present to the temple servant (Pishārodi) the silver flag of the temple, which has been in the custody of one of them since the last festival. The Pishārodi receives it, and hoists it in front of the temple (to the east), thus signifying that the festival has begun. While this is being done, emphasis and grandeur is given to the occasion by the firing off of miniature mortars such as are common at all South Indian festivals. After the flag is hoisted, there are hoisted all round the temple small flags of coloured cloth. For the next few days there is nothing particular to be done beyond the procession morning, noon, and night; the image of Bhagavati being carried on an elephant to an orchestra



of drums, and cannonade of the little mortars. All those who are present are supposed to be fed from the temple. There is a large crowd. On the morning of the fifth day, a man of the washerman (Vannān) caste will announce to the neighbours by beat of tom-tom that there will be a procession of Bhagavati issuing from the gates of the temple, and passing round about. Like all those who are in any way connected with the temple, this man's office is hereditary, and he lives to a small extent on the bounty of the temple, *i.e.*, he holds a little land on nominal terms from the temple property, in consideration for which he must fulfil certain requirements for the temple, as on occasions of festivals. His office also invests him with certain rights in the community. In the afternoon of the fifth day, the Vannān and a Manūtan, the one following the other, bring two umbrellas to the temple; the former bringing one of cloth, and the latter one of cadjan (palm leaves). I am not sure whether the cloth umbrella has been in the possession of the Vannān, but think it has. At all events, when he brings it to the temple, it is in thorough repair—a condition for which he is responsible. The cadjan umbrella is a new one. Following these two as they walk solemnly, each with his umbrella, is a large crowd. There are processions of Bhagavati on the elephant encircling the temple thrice in the morning, at noon, and at night. Early on the sixth day, the headman of the Mukkuvans (fishermen), who by virtue of his headship is called the Arayan, together with the blacksmith and the goldsmith, comes to the temple followed by a crowd, but accompanied by no orchestra of drums. To the Arayan is given half a sack of rice for himself and his followers. A silver umbrella belonging to the temple is handed over to him, to be used when



AIYAPPAN TEMPLE.



he comes to the temple again in the evening. To the blacksmith is given the temple sword. The goldsmith receives the silver umbrella from the Arayan, and executes any repairs that may be needful, and, in like manner, the blacksmith looks to the sword. In the afternoon, the headman of the Tiyans, called the Tandān, comes to the temple followed by two of his castemen carrying slung on a pole over their shoulders three bunches of young cocoanuts—an appropriate offering, the Tiyans being those whose ordinary profession is climbing the cocoanut palm, drawing the toddy, securing the cocoanuts, etc. This time there will be loud drumming, and a large crowd with the Tandān, and in front of him are men dancing, imitating sword play with sticks and shields, clanging the shields, pulling at bows as if firing off imaginary arrows, the while shouting and yelling madly. Then come the blacksmith and the goldsmith with the sword. Following comes the Arayan with the silver umbrella to the accompaniment of very noisy drumming, in great state under a canopy of red cloth held lengthways by two men, one before, the other behind. The procession of Bhagavati continues throughout the night, and ceases at daybreak. These six days of the festival are called Vilākku. A word about the drumming. The number of instrumentalists increases as the festival goes on, and on the last day I counted fifty, all Nāyars. The instruments were the ordinary tom-tom, a skin stretched tight over one side of a circular wooden band, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet in diameter and 2 or 3 inches in width, and the common long drum much narrower at the ends than in the middle; and there were (I think) a few of those narrow in the middle, something like an hour-glass cut short at both ends. They are beaten with curved drum-sticks, thicker at the end held in the hand.

The accuracy with which they were played on, never a wrong note although the rhythm was changed perpetually, was truly amazing. And the crescendo and diminuendo, from a perfect fury of wildness to the gentlest pianissimo, was equally astonishing, especially when we consider the fact that there was no visible leader of this strange orchestra. Early on the seventh and last day, when the morning procession is over, there comes to the temple a man of the Pānan caste (umbrella-makers and devil-dancers). He carries a small cadjan umbrella which he has made himself, adorned all round the edges with a fringe of the young leaves of the cocoanut palm. His approach is heralded and noised just as in the case of the others on the previous day. The umbrella should have a long handle, and, with it in his hand, he performs a dance before the temple. The temple is situated within a hollow square enclosure, which none in caste below the Nāyar is permitted to enter. To the north, south, east, and west, there is a level entrance into the hollow square, and beyond this entrance no man of inferior caste may go. The Pānan receives about 10 lbs. of raw rice for his performance. In the afternoon, a small crowd of Vettuvans come to the temple, carrying with them swords, and about ten small baskets made of cocoanut palm leaves, containing salt. These baskets are carried slung on a pole. The use of salt here is obscure.* I remember a case of a Nāyar's house having been plundered, the idol knocked down, and salt put in the place where it should have stood. The act was looked on as most insulting. The Vettuvans dance and shout in much excitement, cutting their heads with their own swords in their frenzy. Some

* The Vettuvans were once salt-makers.



of them represent devils or some kind of inferior evil spirits, and dance madly under the influence of the spirits which they represent. Then comes the Arayan as on the previous day with his little procession, and lastly comes the blacksmith with the sword. The procession in the evening is a great affair. Eight elephants, which kept line beautifully, took part in it when I witnessed it. One of them, very handsomely caparisoned, had on its back a priest (Müssad) carrying a sword smothered in garlands of red flowers representing the goddess. The elephant bearing the priest is bedizened on the forehead with two golden discs, one on each side of the forehead, and over the centre of the forehead hangs a long golden ornament. These discs on the elephant's forehead are common in Malabar in affairs of ceremony. The Māppilla poets are very fond of comparing a beautiful girl's breasts to these cup-like discs. The elephant bears other jewels, and over his back is a large canopy-like red cloth richly wrought. Before the elephant walked a Nāyar carrying in his right hand in front of him a sword of the kind called nāndakam smeared with white (probably sandal) paste. To its edge, at intervals of a few inches, are fastened tiny bells, so that, when it is shaken, there is a general jingle. Just before the procession begins, there is something for the Tiyaṇs to do. Four men of this caste having with them pūkalasams (flower kalasams), and five having jannakalasams, run along the west, north, and east sides of the temple outside the enclosure, shouting and making a noise more like the barking of dogs than anything else. The kalasams contain arrack (liquor), which is given to the temple to be used in the ceremonies. Members of certain families only are allowed to perform in this business, and for what they do each



man receives five edangālis of rice from the temple, and a small piece of the flesh of the goat which is sacrificed later. These nine men eat only once a day during the festival; they do no work, remaining quietly at home unless when at the temple; they cannot approach any one of caste lower than their own; they cannot cohabit with women; and they cannot see a woman in menstruation during these days. A crowd of Tiyan join more or less in this, rushing about and barking like dogs, making a hideous noise. They too have kalasams, and, when they are tired of rushing and barking, they drink the arrack in them. These men are always under a vow. In doing what they do, they fulfil their vow for the benefit they have already received from the goddess—cure from sickness as a rule. To the west of the temple is a circular pit—it was called the fire-pit, but there was no fire in it—and this pit all the Tiyan women of the neighbourhood circurnambulate, passing from west round by north, three times, holding on the head a pewter plate, on which are a little rice, bits of plantain leaves and cocoanut, and a burning wick. As each woman completes her third round, she stands for a moment at the western side, facing east, and throws the contents of the plate into the pit. She then goes to the western gate of the enclosure, and puts down her plate for an instant while she makes profound salaam to the goddess ere going away. Now the procession starts out from the temple, issuing from the northern gate, and for a moment confronts a being so strange that he demands description. Of the many familiar demons of the Malayālis, the two most intimate are Kuttichchāttan and Gulikan, who are supposed to have assisted Kālī (who is scarcely the Kālī of Brāhmanism) in overcoming the Āsura, and on the occasion of this festival these



demons dance before her. Gulikan is represented by the Vannān and Kuttichchāttan by the Manūtan who have been already mentioned, and who are under like restrictions with the nine Tiyaṅs. I saw poor Gulikan being made up, the operation occupying five or six hours or more before his appearance. I asked who he was, and was told he was a devil. He looked mild enough, but then his make-up had just begun. He was lying flat on the ground close by the north-east entrance of the enclosure, where presently he was to dance, a man painting his face to make it hideous and frightful. This done, the hair was dressed; large bangles were put on his arms, covering them almost completely from the shoulder to the wrist; and his head and neck were swathed and decorated. A wooden platform arrangement, from which hung a red ornamented skirt, was fastened to his hips. There was fastened to his back an elongated Prince of Wales' feathers arrangement, the top of which reached five feet above his head, and he was made to look like nothing human. Kuttichchāttan was treated in much the same manner. As the procession issues from the northern gate of the temple, where it is joined by the elephants, Gulikan stands in the northern entrance of the enclosure (which he cannot enter), facing it, and a halt is made for three minutes, while Gulikan dances. The poor old man who represented this fearful being, grotesquely terrible in his wonderful metamorphosis, must have been extremely glad when his dance was concluded, for the mere weight and uncomfortable arrangement of his paraphernalia must have been extremely exhausting. It was with difficulty that he could move at all, let alone dance. The procession passes round by east, where, at the entrance of the enclosure, Kuttichchāttan gives his



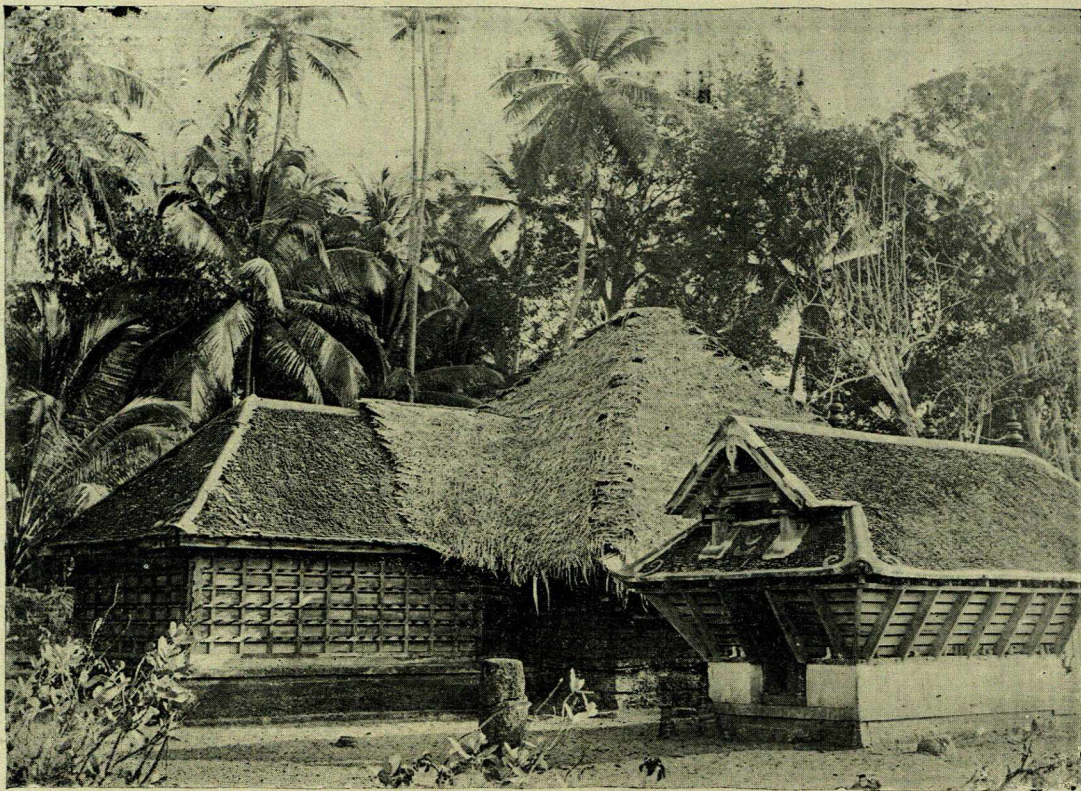
dance, round by south to the westward, and, leaving the enclosure, proceeds to a certain banyan tree, under which is a high raised platform built up with earth and stones. Preceding the procession at a distance of fifty yards are the nine men of the Tiyan caste mentioned already, carrying kalasams on their heads, and a crowd of women of the same caste, each one carrying a pewter plate, larger than the plates used when encircling the fire pit, on which are rice, etc., and the burning wick as before. The plate and its contents are on this occasion, as well as before, called talapōli. I could not make out that anything in particular is done at the banyan tree, and the procession soon returns to the temple, the nine men and the Tiyan women following, carrying their kalasams and talapōli. On the way, a number of cocks are given in sacrifice by people under a vow. In the procession are a number of devil-dancers, garlanded with white flowers of the pagoda tree mixed with red, jumping, gesticulating, and shouting, in an avenue of the crowd in front of the elephant bearing the sword. The person under a vow holds the cock towards one of these devil-dancers, who, never ceasing his gyrations and contortions, presently seizes its head, wrings it off, and flings it high in the air. The vows which are fulfilled by this rude decapitation of cocks have been made in order to bring about cure for some ailment. The procession passes through the temple yard from west to east, and proceeds half a mile to a banyan tree, under which, like the other, there is a high raised platform. When passing by the temple, the Tiyan women empty the contents of their plates in the fire pit as before, and the nine men hand over the arrack in their kalasams to the temple servants. Let me note here the curious distribution of the rice which is heaped in the fire pit.



Two-thirds of it go to the four Tiyaṇs who carried the pūkalasams, and one-third to the five who carried the jannakalasams. Returning to the procession, we find it at the raised platform to the east of the temple. On this platform have been placed already an ordinary bamboo quart-like measure of paddy (unhusked rice), and one of rice, each covered with a plantain leaf. The principal devil-dancer takes a handful of rice and paddy, and flings it all around. The procession then visits in turn the gates of the gardens of the four owners of the temple. At each is a measure of rice and a measure of paddy covered with plantain leaves, with a small lamp or burning wick beside them, and the devil-dancer throws a handful towards the house. The procession then finds its way to a tree to the west, under which, on the platform, is now a measure of paddy and a lamp. Some Brāhmins repeat mantrams, and the elephant, the priest on his back and the sword in his hand, all three are supposed to tremble violently. Up to this time the procession has moved leisurely at a very slow march. Now, starting suddenly, it proceeds at a run to the temple, where the priest descends quickly from the elephant, and is taken inside the temple by the Mūssad priests. He, who has been carrying the sword all this time, places it on the sill of the door of the room in which it is kept for worship, and prostrates before it. The sword then shakes itself for fifteen minutes, until the chief priest stays its agitation by sprinkling on it some tirtam fluid made sacred by having been used for anointing the image of the goddess. This done, the chief amongst the devil-dancers will, with much internal tumult as well as outward convolutions, say in the way of oracle whether the dēvi has been pleased with the festival in her honour, or not. As he pronounces this oracular utterance, he falls



in a sort of swoon, and everyone, excepting only the priests and temple servants, leaves the place as quickly as possible. The sheds which have been erected for temporary habitation around the temple will be quickly demolished, and search will be made round about to make sure that no one remains near while the mystic rite of sacrifice is about to be done. When the whole place has been cleared, the four owners of the temple, who have stayed, hand over each a goat with a rope tied round its neck to the chief priest, and, as soon as they have done so, they depart. There will remain now in the temple three Müssads, one drummer (Marayar), and two temple servants. The reason for all this secrecy seems to lie in objection to let it be known generally that any sacrifice is done. I was told again and again that there was no such thing. It is a mystic secret. The Müssad priests repeat mantrams over the goats for an hour as a preliminary to the sacrifice. Then the chief priest dons a red silk cloth, and takes in his hand a chopper-like sword in shape something like a small bill-hook, while the goats are taken to a certain room within the temple. This room is rather a passage than a room, as there are to it but two walls running north and south. The goats are made to stand in turn in the middle of this room, facing to the south. The chief priest stands to the east of the goat, facing west, as he cuts off its head with the chopper. He never ceases his mantrams, and the goats never flinch—the effect of the mantrams. Several cocks are then sacrificed in the same place, and over the carcasses of goats and cocks there is sprinkled charcoal powder mixed in water (karutta gursi) and saffron (turmeric) powder and lime-water (chukanna gursi), the flow of mantrams never ceasing the while. The three Müssads only see the sacrifice—a part of the rite which



AIYAPPAN TEMPLE, NEAR CALICUT.



is supremely secret. Equally so is that which follows. The carcass of one goat will be taken out of the temple by the northern door to the north side of the temple, and from this place one of the temple servants, who is blindfolded, drags it three times round the temple, the Mūssads following closely, repeating their mantrams, the drummer in front beating his drum softly with his fingers. The drummer dare not look behind him, and does not know what is being done. After the third round, the drummer and the temple servant go away, and the three Mūssads cook some of the flesh of the goats and one or two of the cocks (or a part of one) with rice. This rice, when cooked, is taken to the kāvu (grove) to the north of the temple, and there the Mūssads again ply their mantrams. As each mantram is ended, a handful of saffron (turmeric) powder is flung on the rice, and all the time the drummer, who by this time has returned, keeps up an obligato pianissimo with his drum, using his fingers. He faces the north, and the priests face the south. Presently the priests run (not walk) once round the temple, carrying the cooked rice, and scattering it wide as they go, repeating mantrams. They enter the temple, and remain within until daybreak. No one can leave the temple until morning comes. Before daybreak, the temple is thoroughly swept and cleaned, and then the Mūssads go out, and the five Nambūtiris again enter before sunrise, and perform the ordinary worship thrice in the day, for this day only. The next morning, the Mūssad priests return and resume their duties. Beyond noting that the weirdness of the human tumult, busy in its religious effusion, is on the last night enhanced by fireworks, mere description of the scene of the festival will not be attempted, and such charming adjuncts of it as the gallery of pretty Nāyar women looking on from the

garden fence at the seething procession in the lane below must be left to the imagination. It will have been noticed that the Nambūtiris hold aloof from the festival; they purify the temple before and after, but no more. The importance attached to the various offices of those who are attached to the temple by however slender a thread, was illustrated by a rather amusing squabble between two of the Mukkuvans, an uncle and nephew, as to which of them should receive the silver umbrella from the temple, and bear it to the house of the goldsmith to be repaired. During the festival, one of them made a rapid journey to the Zamorin (about fifty miles distant), paid some fees, and established himself as the senior who had the right to carry the umbrella.

“An important local festival is that held near Palghat, in November, in the little suburb Kalpāti inhabited entirely by Pattar Brāhmans from the east. But it is not a true Malayāli festival, and it suffices to mention its existence, for it in no way represents the religion of the Nāyar. The dragging of cars, on which are placed the images of deities, common everywhere from the temple of Jagganath at Pūri in Orissa to Cape Comorin, is quite unknown in Malabar, excepting only at Kalpāti, which is close to the eastern frontier of Malabar.

“Near Chowghāt (Chavagāt), about 30 miles to the southward of Calicut, on the backwater, at a place called Guruvayūr, is a very important temple, the property of the Zamorin, yielding a very handsome revenue. I visited the festival on one occasion, and purchase was made of a few offerings such as are made to the temple in satisfaction of vows—a very rude representation of an infant in silver, a hand, a leg, an ulcer, a pair of eyes, and, most curious of all, a silver string which represents a man, the giver. Symbolization of the offering of self is made by

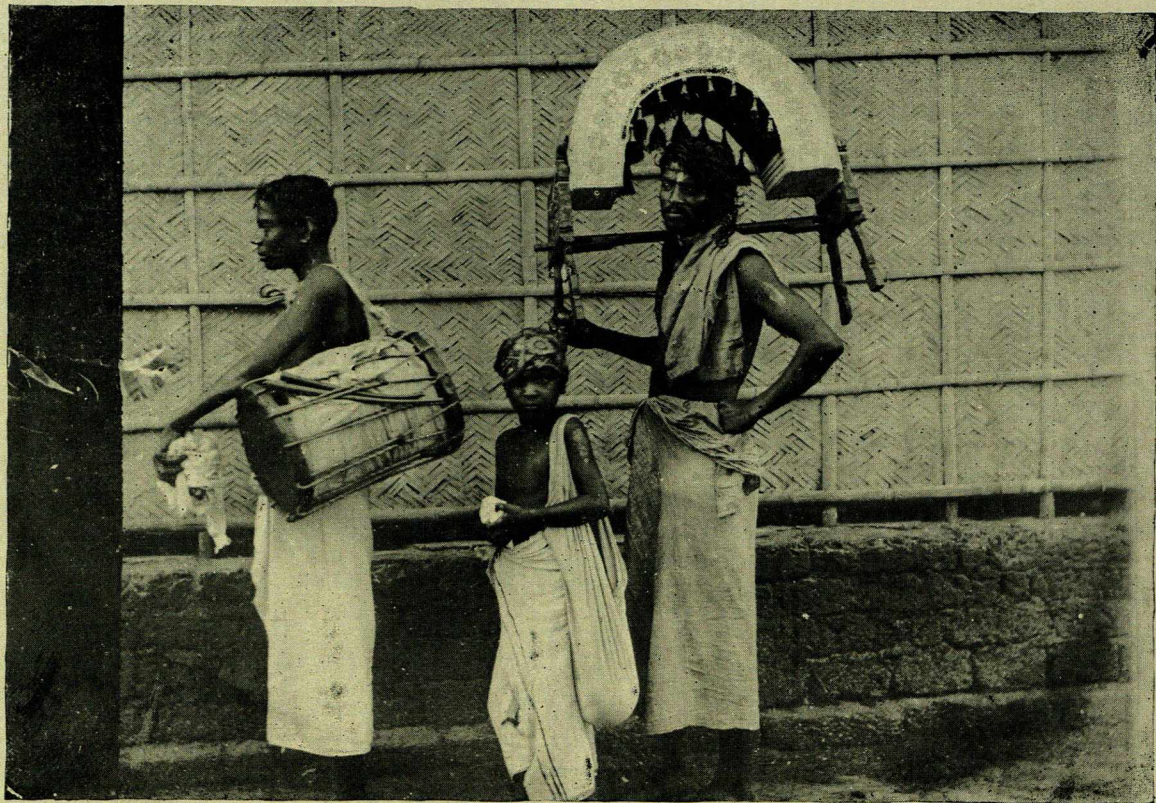
a silver string as long as the giver is tall. Goldsmiths working in silver and gold are to be seen just outside the gate of the temple, ready to provide at a moment's notice the object any person intends to offer, in case he is not already in possession of his votive offering. The subject of vows can be touched on but incidentally here. A vow is made by one desiring offspring, to have his hand or leg cured, to have an ulcer cured, to fulfil any desire whatsoever, and he decides in solemn affirmation to himself to give a silver image of a child, a silver leg, and so on, in the event of his having fulfilment of his desire.

“A true Malayāli festival is that held at Kottiyūr in North Malabar, in the forest at the foot of the Wynād hills rising 3,000 to 5,000 feet from the sides of the little glade where it is situated. It is held in July during the height of the monsoon rain. Though it is a festival for high and low, these do not mix at Kottiyūr. The Nāyars go first, and after a few days, the Nāyars having done, the Tiyans, and so on. A curious feature of it is that the people going to attend it are distinctly rowdy, feeling that they have a right to abuse in the vilest and filthiest terms everyone they see on the way—perhaps a few days' march. And not only do they abuse to their hearts' content in their exuberant excitement, but they use personal violence to person and property all along the road. They return like lambs. At Kottiyūr one sees a temple of Īsvara, there called Perumāl (or Perumāl Īsvara) by the people, a low thatched building forming a hollow square, in the centre of which is the shrine, which I was not permitted to see. There were some Nambūtiri priests, who came out, and entered into conversation. The festival is not held at the temple, but in the forest about a quarter of a mile distant. This spot is deemed extremely sacred and dreadful. There was,



however, no objection to myself and my companions visiting it; we were simply begged not to go. There were with us a Nāyar and a Kurichchan, and the faces of these men, when we proceeded to wade through the little river, knee-deep and about thirty yards wide, in order to reach the sacred spot, expressed anxious wonder. They dared not accompany us across. No one (excepting, of course, a Muhammadan) would go near the place, unless during the few days of the festival, when it was safe; at all other times any man going to the place is destroyed instantly. Nothing on earth would have persuaded the Nāyar or the Kurichchiyan to cross that river. Orpheus proceeding to find his Eurydice, Danté about to enter the Inferno, had not embarked on so fearful a journey. About a hundred yards beyond the stream, we came upon the sacred spot, a little glade in the forest. In the centre of the glade is a circle of piled up stones, 12 feet in diameter. In the middle of the pile of stones is a rude lingam. Running east from the circle of the lingam is a long shed, in the middle of which is a long raised platform of brick, used apparently as a place for cooking. Around the lingam there were also thatched sheds, in which the people had lodged during the festival. Pilgrims going to this festival carry with them offerings of some kind. Tiyans take young cocoanuts. Every one who returns brings with him a swish made of split young leaves of the cocoanut palm."

Of the Kottiyūr festival, the following account is given in the Gazetteer of Malabar. "The Nambūdiri priests live in a little wayside temple at Kottiyūr, but the true shrine is a quarter of a mile away in the forest across one of the feeder streams of the Valarpattanam river. For eleven months in the year, the scene is



PALNI PILGRIM AND KAVADI.



inconceivably desolate and dreary ; but during the month Edavam (May-June) upwards of 50,000 Nāyars and Tiyans from all parts of Malabar throng the shrine for the twenty-eight days of the annual festival. During the rest of the year, the temple is given up to the revels of Siva and Parvati, and the impious Hindu who dares to intrude is consumed instantly to ashes. The two great ceremonies are the Neyyāttam and the Elanīrāttam, the pouring of ghee (clarified butter) and the pouring of the milk of the green cocoanut. The former is performed by the Nāyars, who attend the festival first, and the latter by Tiyans. In May, all roads lead to Kottiyūr, and towards the middle of the month the ghee pourers, as the Nāyar pilgrims are called, who have spent the previous four weeks in fasting and purificatory rites, assemble in small shrines subordinate to the Kottiyūr temple. Thence, clad in white, and bearing each upon his head a pot of ghee, they set forth in large bodies headed by a leader. At Manattana the pilgrims from all parts of Malabar meet, and thence to Kottiyūr the procession is unbroken. However long their journey, the pilgrims must eat only once, and the more filthy their language, the more orthodox is their conduct. As many as five thousand pots of ghee are poured over the lingam every year. After the Neyyāttam ceremony, the Nāyars depart, and it is the turn of the Tiyans. Their preparations are similar to those of the Nāyars, and their language *en route* is even more startling. Eruvatti near Kadirūr is the place where most of them assemble for their pilgrimage, and their green cocoanuts are presented gratis by the country people as an offering to the temple. The Elanīrāttam ceremony begins at midnight, and the pilgrims heap up their cocoanuts in front of the shrine continuously till the evening of the



same day. Each Tiyan then marches thrice round the heap, and falls prostrate before the lingam ; and a certain Nāyar sub-caste removes the husks preparatory to the spilling of the milk. The festival finally closes with a mysterious ceremony, in which ghee and mantrams play a great part, performed for two days consecutively by the presiding Nambūdiri, and Kottiyūr is then deserted for another year."

"A shrine," Mr. Fawcett continues, "to which the Malayālis, Nāyars included, resort is that of Subramania at Palni in the north-west corner of the Madura district about a week's march from the confines of Malabar near Palghat. Not only are vows paid to this shrine, but men, letting their hair grow for a year after their father's death, proceed to have it cut there. The plate shows an ordinary Palni pilgrim. The arrangement which he is carrying is called a kāvadi. There are two kinds of kāvadi, a milk kāvadi containing milk, and a fish kāvadi containing fish, in a pot. The vow may be made in respect of either, each being appropriate to certain circumstances. When the time comes near for the pilgrim to start for Palni, he dresses in reddish orange cloths, shoulders his kāvadi, and starts out. Together with a man ringing a bell, and perhaps one with a tom-tom, with ashes on his face, he assumes the rôle of a beggar. The well-to-do are inclined to reduce the beggar period to the minimum ; but a beggar every votary must be, and as a beggar he goes to Palni in all humbleness and humiliation, and there he fulfils his vow, leaves his kāvadi and his hair, and a small sum of money. Though the individuals about to be noticed were not Nāyars, their cases illustrate very well the religious idea of the Nāyar as expressed under certain circumstances, for between the Nāyars and these there



is in this respect little if any difference. It was at Guruvayūr in November, 1895. On a high raised platform under a peepul tree were a number of people under vows, bound for Palni. A boy of 14 had suffered as a child from epilepsy, and seven years ago his father vowed on his behalf that, if he were cured, he would make the pilgrimage to Palni. He wore a string of beads round his neck, and a like string on his right arm. These were in some way connected with the vow. His head was bent, and he sat motionless under his kāvadi, leaning on the bar, which, when he carried it, rested on his shoulder. He could not go to Palni until it was revealed to him in a dream when he was to start. He had waited for this dream seven years, subsisting on roots (yams, etc.), and milk—no rice. Now he had had the long-looked-for dream, and was about to start. Another pilgrim was a man wearing an oval band of silver over the lower portion of the forehead, almost covering his eyes; his tongue protruding beyond the teeth, and kept in position by a silver skewer through it. The skewer was put in the day before, and was to be left in for forty days. He had been fasting for two years. He was much under the influence of his god, and whacking incessantly at a drum in delirious excitement. Several of the pilgrims had a handkerchief tied over the mouth, they being under a vow of silence. One poor man wore the regular instrument of silence, the mouth-lock—a wide silver band over the mouth, and a skewer piercing both cheeks. He sat patiently in a nice tent-like affair, about three feet high. People fed him with milk, etc., and he made no effort to procure food, relying merely on what was given him. The use of the mouth-lock is common with the Nāyars when they assume the pilgrim's robes and set out for Palni ;



and I have often seen many of them garbed and mouth-locked, going off on a pilgrimage to that place. Pilgrims generally go in crowds under charge of a priestly guide, one who, having made a certain number of journeys to the shrine, wears a peculiar sash and other gear. They call themselves pūjāris, and are quite *au fait* with all the ceremonial prior to the journey, as well as with the exigencies of the road. As I stood there, one of these pūjāris stood up amidst the recumbent crowd. He raised his hands towards the temple a little to the west, and then spread out his hands as if invoking a blessing on the people around him. Full of religious fervour, he was (apparently at any rate) unconscious of all but the spiritual need of his flock.

“Brief mention must be made of the festival held at Kodungallūr near Cranganore in the northernmost corner of the Cochin State, as it possesses some strange features peculiar to Malabar, and is much frequented by the Nāyars. I have been disappointed in obtaining particulars of the festival, so make the following excerpt from Logan’s Manual of Malabar. ‘It takes the people in great crowds from their homes. The whole country near the lines of march rings with the shouts “Nada-a Nada-a” of the pilgrims to the favourite shrine. Of what takes place when the pilgrims reach this spot perhaps the less said the better. In their passage up to the shrine, the cry of “Nada-a Nada-a” (march, march away) is varied by terms of unmeasured abuse levelled at the goddess (a Bhagavati) of the shrine. This abusive language is supposed to be acceptable to her. On arrival at the shrine, they desecrate it in every conceivable way, believing that this too is acceptable; they throw stones and filth, howling volleys of



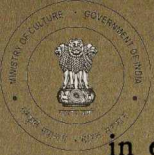
opprobrium at her house. The chief of the fisherman caste, styled Kūli Muttatta Arayan, has the privilege of being the first to begin the work of polluting the Bhoot or shrine. Into other particulars it is unnecessary to enter. Cocks are slaughtered and sacrificed. The worshipper gets flowers only, and no holy water after paying his vows. Instead of water, he proceeds outside and drinks arrack or toddy, which an attendant Nāyar serves out. All castes are free to go, including Tiyaars and low caste people. The temple was originally only a Bhoot or holy tree with a platform. The image in the temple is said to have been introduced only of recent years.' It is a pity Mr. Logan is so reticent. My information is that the headman of the Mukkuvans opens the festival by solemnly making a faecal deposit on the image. Here again there is the same strange union of everything that is filthy, abusive, foul and irreverent, with every mode of expressing the deepest religious feeling."

Of the cock festival at Cranganore, the following account is given by Mr. T. K. Gopal Panikkar* in his interesting little book on Malabar and its folk. "In the midst of its native charms is situated a temple dedicated to Kali, the goddess who presides over the infectious diseases, cholera and small-pox. She is a virgin goddess, whom no quantity of blood will satisfy. The temple is an old-fashioned one, presenting no striking architectural peculiarities. The priestly classes attached to it are not, as usual, Brāhmins, but a peculiar sect called Adigals, of whom there are but three families in the whole of Malabar. The Brāhmins are purposely excluded from participation in the poojah ceremonies,

* Malabar and its Folk, Madras, 1900.



lest their extreme sanctity might increase the powers of the goddess to a dangerous extent. Poojahs are daily offered to her. An annual festival known as the Bharani, connected with this goddess, plays a most important part in the religious history of Malabar. It comes off in the Malayalam month of Meenam (about March or April). Pilgrimages undertaken to the temple on this occasion are potent enough to safeguard the pilgrims, and their friends and relations, from the perilous attacks of cholera and small-pox. Hence people resort thither annually by thousands from almost all parts of Malabar; and, the more north you go, the stronger will you find the hold which the goddess has upon the popular imagination. The chief propitiatory offering on the occasion is the sacrifice of cocks. In fact, every family makes a point of undertaking this sacred mission. People arrange to start on it at an auspicious moment, on a fixed day in small isolated bodies. Preparations are made for the journey. Rice, salt, chillies, curry-stuffs, betel leaves and nuts, a little turmeric powder and pepper, and, above all, a number of cocks form an almost complete paraphernalia of the pilgrimage. These are all gathered and preserved in separate bundles inside a large bag. When the appointed hour comes, they throw this bag on their shoulders, conceal their money in their girdles, and, with a native-fashioned umbrella in the one hand and a walking-stick in the other, they start, each from his own house, to meet the brother pilgrims at the rendezvous. Here a foreman is selected practically by common consent. Then commences the vociferous recitation of that series of obscene songs and ballads, which characterises the pilgrimage all along. The foreman it is that opens the ball. He is caught up by others



in equally loud and profuse strains. This is continued right up till the beginning of their homeward journey. Nobody whom they come across on the way can successfully escape the coarse Billingsgate of these religious zealots. Even women are not spared. Perhaps it is in their case that the pilgrims wax all the more eloquently vulgar. A number of cock's feathers are stuck or tied upon the tip of a stick, and with this as a wand they begin to dance and pipe in a set style, which is extremely revolting to every sense of decency. Some of the pilgrims walk all the distance to the temple, while others go by boat or other conveyance ; but in neither case do they spare any passer-by. Hundreds of gallons of arrack and toddy are consumed during the festival. The pilgrims reach the temple in their dirty attire. The temple premises are crowded to overflowing. The worship of the goddess is then commenced. The offerings consist of the sacrifice of cocks at the temple altar, turmeric powder, but principally of pepper, as also some other objects of lesser importance. A particular spot inside the temple is set apart for the distribution of what is called manjal prasadam (turmeric powder on which divine blessings have been invoked). The work of doling it out is done by young maidens, who are during the process subjected to ceaseless volleys of vile and vulgar abuse. Now, leaving out of account the minor ceremonies, we come to the principal one, viz., the sacrifice of cocks. The popular idea is that the greater the number of cocks sacrificed, the greater is the efficacy of the pilgrimage. Hence men vie with one another in the number of cocks that they carry on the journey. The sacrifice is begun, and then there takes place a regular scramble for the sanctified spot reserved for this butchering ceremony. One man holds a cock by the

trunk, and another pulls out its neck by the head, and, in the twinkling of an eye, by the intervention of a sharpened knife, the head is severed from the trunk. The blood then gushes forth in forceful and continuous jets, and is poured on a piece of granite specially reserved. Then another is similarly slaughtered, and then as many as each of the pilgrims can bring. In no length of time, the whole of the temple yard is converted into one horrible expanse of blood, rendering it too slippery to be safely walked over. The piteous cries and death throes of the poor devoted creatures greatly intensify the horror of the scene. The stench emanating from the blood mixing with the nauseating smell of arrack renders the occasion all the more revolting. One other higher and more acceptable kind of offering requires more than a passing mention. When a man is taken ill of any infectious disease, his relations generally pray to this goddess for his recovery, solemnly covenanting to perform what goes by the name of a thulabharum ceremony. This consists in placing the patient in one of the scale-pans of a huge balance, and weighing him against gold, or more generally pepper (and sometimes other substances as well), deposited in the other scale-pan. Then this weight of the substance is offered to the goddess. This is to be performed right in front of the goddess in the temple yard. The usual offerings being over, the homeward journey of the pilgrims is begun. Though the festival is called Bharani, yet all the pilgrims must vacate the temple on the day previous to the Bharani day. For, from that day onwards, the temple doors are all shut up, and, for the next seven days, the whole place is given over to the worst depredations of the countless demons over whom this blood-thirsty goddess holds sway. No human beings can safely remain there, lest

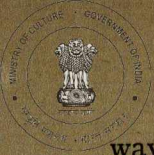


they might become a prey to these ravenous demons. In short, the Bharani day inaugurates a reign of terror in the locality, lasting for these seven days. Afterwards, all the dirt is removed. The temple is cleansed and sanctified, and again left open to public worship. The pilgrims return, but not in the same manner in which they repaired thither. During the backward journey, no obscene songs or expressions are indulged in. They are to come back quietly and calmly, without any kind of demonstrations. They get back to their respective homes, and distribute the sandals and other pujah substances to their relations and friends who have elected to remain at home; and the year's pilgrimage is brought to a close."

"The month Karkkatakam," Mr. Fawcett writes, "when the Malayālis say the body is cool, is the time when, according to custom, the Nāyar youths practice physical exercises. At Payōli in North Malabar, when I was there in 1895, the local instructor of athletics was a Paravan, a mason by caste. As he had the adjunct Kurup to his name, it took some time to discover the fact. Teachers of his ilk are invariably of the Paravan caste, and, when they are believed to be properly accomplished, they are given the honorific Kurup. So carefully are things regulated that no other person was permitted to teach athletics within the amsham (a local area, a small county), and his womenfolk had privileges, they only being the midwives who could attend on the Nāyar women of the amsham. His fee for a course of exercises for the month was ten rupees. He, and some of his pupils, gave an exhibition of their quality. Besides bodily contortions and somersaults, practiced in a long low-roofed shed having a sandy floor, there is play with the following instruments :—watta ; cheruvadi,

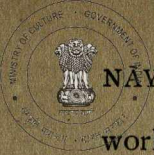


a short stick; and a stick like a quarter-staff called a sariravadi, or stick the length of one's body. The watta is held in the right hand as a dagger; it is used to stab or strike and, in some ingenious way, turn over an opponent. The total length of the watta is two feet, and of the cheruvadi about three feet. The latter is squared at the ends, and is but a short staff. It is held in the right hand a few inches from the end, and is used for striking and guarding only. The sariravadi is held at or near one end by one or by both hands. The distance between the hands is altered constantly, and so is the end of the stick, which is grasped now by one, now by another end by either hand, as occasion may require; sometimes it is grasped in the middle. The performance with these simple things was astonishing. I should say the watta and the cheruvadi represented swords, or rather that they were used for initiation or practice in swordmanship, when the Nāyars were the military element in Malabar. The opponents, who faced each other with the sariravadi or quarter-staff, stood thirty feet apart, and, as if under the same stimulus, each kicked one leg high in the air, gave several lively bounds in the air, held their staff horizontally in front with out-stretched arms, came down slowly on the haunches, placed the staff on the ground, bent over, and touched it with the forehead. With a sudden bound they were again on their feet, and, after some preliminary pirouetting, went for each other tooth and nail. The sword play, which one sees during festive ceremonies, such as a marriage or the like, is done by the hereditary retainers, who fight imaginary foes, and destroy and vanquish opponents with much contortion of body, and always indulge in much of this preliminary overture to their performance. There is always, by



way of preliminary, a high kick in the air, followed by squatting on the haunches, bounding high, turning, twisting, pirouetting, and all the time swinging the sword unceasingly above, below, behind the back, under the arm or legs, in ever so many impossible ways. Nāyar shields are made of wood, covered with leather, usually coloured bright red. Within the boss are some hard seeds, or metal balls loose in a small space, so that there is a jingling sound like that of the small bells on the ankles of the dancer, when the shield is oscillated or shaken in the hand. The swords are those which were used ordinarily for fighting. There are also swords of many patterns for processional and other purposes, more or less ornamented about the handle, and half way up the blade."

"The Nāyars," Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes, "have a distinct feudal organisation, and the division of their territories had an unmistakeable reference to it. The territorial unit was the dēsam, presided over by a Dāsavazhi. A number of dēsams adjoining one another constituted a nādu, which was under the jurisdiction of a chieftain called the Nāduvazhi. Above the Nāduvazhis was the Rājah, the highest suzerain in the country. In course of time, each nādu split itself up into a certain number of taras, over the affairs of which a Karanavan, or elder, presided. An assembly of these Karanavans constituted the six hundred—an old socio-military organisation of the Nāyars in mediæval times. These six hundred are referred to in two places in the second Syrian Christian document, which bears the date 925 A.D. In a South Travancore inscription, dated 371 M.E., the same organisation is referred to as Venatarunuru, or the six hundred of Venad, and one of their duties evidently related to the supervision of the



working of temples and charitable institutions connected therewith. As Venad was divided into eighteen districts in ancient days, there might have been altogether eighteen six hundred in the country. The Nāduvazhis possessed considerable authority in all social matters, and possessed enough lands to be cultivated by their Kudiyans. A feudal basis was laid for the whole organisation. Large numbers served as soldiers in times of war, and cultivated their lands when the country was quiet. In modern times, none of them take to military service in Travancore, except those employed as sepoys in the Nāyar Brigade."

Concerning the organisation of the Nāyars, Mr. Logan writes that they were, "until the British occupied the country, the militia of the district (Malabar). This name implies that they were the 'leaders' of the people. Originally they seem to have been organised into six hundreds, and each six hundred seems to have had assigned to it the protection of all the people in a nād or country. The nād was in turn split up into taras, a Dravidian word signifying originally a foundation, the foundation of a house, hence applied collectively to a street, as in Tamil *teru*, in Telugu *teruvu*, and in Canarese and Tulu *teravu*. The tara was the Nāyar territorial unit of organisation for civil purposes, and was governed by representatives of the caste, who were styled Kāranavar or elders. The six hundred was probably composed exclusively of those Karanavar or elders, who were in some parts called Mukhyastans (chief men) or Madhyastans (mediators), or Pramānis (chief men), and there seem to have been four families of them to each tara, so that the nād must have originally consisted of one hundred and fifty taras. This tara organisation of the protector caste played a most important



part in the political history of the country, for it was the great bulwark against the tyranny and oppression of the Rājas. The evidence of the Honourable East India Company's linguist (interpreter, agent) at Calicut, which appears in the diary of the Tellicherry Factory under date 28th May, 1746, deserves to be here reproduced. He wrote as follows: 'These Nāyars, being heads of the Calicut people, resemble the parliament, and do not obey the king's dictates in all things, but chastise his ministers when they do unwarrantable acts.' The parliament referred to must have been the kūtṭam (assembly) of the nād. The kūtṭam answered many purposes when combined action on the part of the community was necessary. The Nāyars assembled in their kūtṭams whenever hunting, or war, or arbitration, or what not was in hand, and this organisation does not seem to have been confined to Malabar, for the koot organisation of the people of South Canara gave the British officers much trouble in 1832-33. In so far as Malabar was concerned, the system seems to have remained in an efficient state down to the time of the British occupation, and the power of the Rājas was strictly limited. Mr. Murdoch Brown, of Anjarakandi, who knew the country well, thus wrote to Mr. Francis Buchanan in the earliest years of the present (nineteenth) century regarding the despotic action of the Rājas when constituted, after the Mysorean conquest, the revenue agents of the Government of Haidar Ali. 'By this new order of things, these latter (the Rājas) were vested with despotic authority over the other inhabitants, instead of the very limited prerogatives that they had enjoyed by the feudal system, under which they could neither exact revenue from the lands of their vassals, nor exercise any, direct authority in their districts.' And



again, 'The Rāja was no longer what he had been, the head of a feudal aristocracy with limited authority, but the all-powerful deputy of a despotic prince, whose military force was always at his command to curb or chastise any of the chieftains who were inclined to dispute or disobey his mandates.'* From the earliest times, therefore, down to the end of the eighteenth century, the Nāyar tara and nād organization kept the country from oppression and tyranny on the part of the rulers, and to this fact more than to any other is due the comparative prosperity, which the Malayāli country so long enjoyed, and which made Calicut at one time the great emporium of trade between the East and the West. But, besides protection, the Nāyars had originally another most important function in the body politic. Besides being protectors, they were also supervisors or overseers, a duty which, as a very ancient deed testifies, was styled kānam—a Dravidian word derived from the verb kānuka (to see, etc.). Parasu Rāman (so the tradition preserved in the Kēralolpatti runs) separated the Nāyars into taras, and ordered that to them belonged the duty of supervision (*lit.* kan = the eye), the executive power (*lit.* kei = the hand, as the emblem of power), and the giving of orders (*lit.* kalpana, order, command), so as to prevent the rights from being curtailed, or suffered to fall into disuse. The Nāyars were originally the overseers or supervisors of the nād, and they seem to have been employed in this capacity as the collectors of the share of produce of the land originally reserved for Government purposes. As remuneration for this service, and for their other function as protectors, another share of the produce of the soil

* Buchanan, Mysore, Canara and Malabar.



seems to have been reserved specially for them. It would be well worth the study of persons acquainted with other districts of the Presidency to ascertain whether somewhat similar functions to these (protection and supervision) did not originally appertain to the Kāvalgars of Tamil districts and the Kāpus in the Telugu country, for both of these words seem to have come from the same root as the Malayālam kānam. And it is significant that the Tamil word now used for proprietorship in the soil is kāni-yāchi, to which word the late Mr. F. W. Ellis in his paper on Mirasi Rights assigned a similar derivation."

The occupation of the Nāyars is described by Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar as "comprising all kinds of worldly pursuits. So late as the end of the eighteenth century, there were with the then Mahārāja of Travancore a hundred thousand soldiers, consisting of Nāyars and Chovas, armed with arrows, spears, swords and battle-axes. The chief occupation of the Nāyars is agriculture. Cultivation of a slipshod, time-honoured type is the forte of the Nāyar, for which he has always found time from times of old, though engaged in other occupations as well. In the Velakali, a kind of mock fight, which is one of the items of the utasom programme in every important temple in Malabar, the dress worn by the Nāyars is supposed to be their ancient military costume. Even now, among the Nāyars who form the Mahārāja's own Brigade, agriculture, to which they are enabled to attend during all their off-duty days, goes largely to supplement their monthly pay. Various other occupations, all equally necessary for society, have been, according to the Kēralavakasakrama, assigned to the Nāyars, and would seem to have determined their original sub-divisions. They are domestic servants in Brāhman



and Kshatriya houses and temples, and deal in dairy produce, as well as being engaged in copper-sheet roofing, tile-making, pottery, palanquin-bearing, and so on. But these traditional occupations are fast ceasing under the ferment of a new civilisation. In the matter of education, the Nāyars occupy a prominent position. Almost every Nāyar girl is sent to the village school to learn the three R's, quite as much as a matter of course as the schooling of boys. This constitutes a feature of Malabar life that makes it the most literate country in all India, especially in respect of the female sex. After Rāmanujam Ezhuttachchan developed and enriched the Malayālam language, numerous Asans or village teachers came into existence in different parts of Malabar. After a preliminary study of Malayālam, such as desired higher, *i.e.*, Sanskrit education, got disciplined to an Ambalavāsi or a Sastri. Even to-day the estimable desire to study Sanskrit is seen in some Nāyar youths, who have readily availed themselves of the benefit of the local Sanskrit college. In respect of English education, the Nāyars occupy a prominent position. The facility afforded by the Government of Travancore for the study of English is being largely availed of by Nāyars, and it is a matter deserving to be prominently recorded that, in recent years, several Nāyar girls have passed the Matriculation examination of the University of Madras."

It is noted, in the Gazetteer of Malabar, that "the Nāyars as a class are the best educated and the most advanced of the communities in Malabar (excepting perhaps the Pattar Brāhmans, who are not strictly a Malayālam class), and are intellectually the equals of the Brāhmans of the East Coast. Many of them have risen to the highest posts in Government, and the caste



has supplied many of the leading members of the learned professions."

Nāyi (dog).—An exogamous sept of Kuruba.

Nāyinar.—Nāyinar, Nāyanar, or Nainar, has been recorded as a section of Vellālas, who are thought to be descended from Jains who were converted to Hinduism, and as a title of Jains, Kaikōlans, Pallis, and Uдайyāns. Nāyanikulam occurs as a synonym of Bōya. The word Nāyinar is the same as Nāyaka, meaning lord or master, and the Saivite saints, being religious teachers, are so called, *e.g.*, Sundara Mūrti Nāyanar.

Nāyinda.—Recorded, in the Mysore Census Report, 1901, as the name of a caste, which follows the hereditary occupation of barber, and also of agriculture. "They are," it is there said, "members of the village hierarchy. They are paid, like the Agasa (washerman), in kind for their services. They are also fiddlers, and have the exclusive right of wind instruments. They are known as Kēlasiga or Hajām. They are both Saivites and Vaishnavites. A section of them wear the lingam, and follow Lingayetism. They are known as Silavanta. These people are largely in requisition at feasts, marriages, etc., when they form the music band." Kelasi is the name of a Canarese barber caste, and Hajām is a Hindustani word for barber.

Nedungādi.—This name, denoting a settlement in Nedunganād in the Walluvanād taluk of Malabar, has been returned as a sub-caste of Nāyars and Sāmantas.

Nekkāra.—A small class of washermen in South Canara. The women only are said to do the washing, while the men are employed as devil-dancers.

Nellika (*Phyllanthus Emblica*).—An illam of Tiyan.

Nellu (paddy, unhusked rice).—A gōtra of Kurni.



Nemilli (peacock).—An exogamous sept of Bōya and Baliya.

Nērali (*Eugenia Jambolana*).—An exogamous sept of Gangadikāra Holeyā.

Nerati.—Nerati or Neravati is a sub-division of Kāpu.

Nēse.—An occupational term, meaning weaver applied to several of the weaving castes, but more especially to the Kurnis. It is noted, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, that “in the inscriptions of Rāja Rāja the Chōla king, about the beginning of the eleventh century, the Paraiyan caste is called by its present name. It had then two sub-divisions, Nesavu (the weavers) and Ulavu (the ploughman).”

Nētpanivāndlu (neyyuta, to weave).—Recorded by the Rev. J. Cain * as a name for Māla weavers.

Nettikōtala.—In a note on the Nettikōtalas or Neththikōtalasi, Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao writes that they correspond to the Kalladi Siddhans of the Tamil country. The name means those who cut their foreheads. They are mendicants who beg from Gavara Kōmatis, whom they are said to have assisted in days of old by delaying the progress of Rāja Vishnu Vardhana. (See Kōmati.) When their dues are not promptly paid, they make cuts in their foreheads and other parts of the body, and make blood flow.

Nēyigē.—The silk and cotton hand-loom weavers of the Mysore Province are, in the Census Report, 1891, dealt with collectively under the occupational name Nēyigē (weaving), which includes Bilimagga, Dēvānga, Khatri, Patvēgar, Sāle, Saurāshtra (Patnūlkāran), Sēniga and Togata.

* Ind. Ant., VIII, 1879.



Neytikkar.—Weavers of coir (cocoanut fibre) mats in Malabar.

Nēyyala.—The Nēyyala are a Telugu fishing caste found chiefly in Vizagapatam and Ganjam, for the following note on whom I am indebted to Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao. The name is derived from the Telugu nēyyalu, meaning fried rice or cholam (*Sorghum vulgare*), which is made by female members of the caste, especially during the harvest season, into balls with jaggery (crude sugar). These are carried about the country by the men for sale to those engaged in reaping the crop and others. As payment, they receive from the reapers a portion of the grain which they are cutting. A further occupation of the caste is fishing with konti vala, or koyyala vala *i.e.*, nets supported on a row of bamboo sticks, which are placed in shallow water, and dragged by two men.

The Nāga (cobra) is revered by the caste. A Brāhman officiates at marriages, during which the sacred thread is worn. The remarriage of widows is permitted, provided that the woman has no children by her first husband. Divorce is not allowed. The dead are burnt, and the chinna (little) and pedda rōzu (big day) death ceremonies are observed.

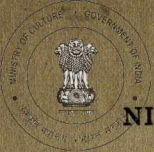
As a caste, the Nēyyalas do not drink intoxicating liquor, and eat only in Brāhman houses. Their usual title is Ayya.

Nēyye (clarified butter).—An occupational subdivision of Kōmati.

Nila (blue).—An exogamous sept of Mēdara.

Nilagāra (indigo people).—The name of a class of dyers, who are, in the Mysore Census Report, 1901, included in the Kumbāra or potter caste.

Nili (indigo).—An exogamous sept of Padma Salē and Togata.



Nirganti.—Recorded, in the Mysore and Coorg Gazetteer, as a regulator and distributor of water to irrigated lands. He is usually a Holeya by caste.

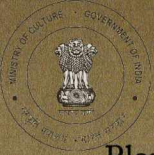
Nirpūsi (wearers of sacred ashes).—Recorded, at times of census, as a sub-division of Pāndya Vellālas. Nirpūsi Vellala is described, in the Gazetteer of the South Arcot district, as a name current in the South Arcot district meaning Vellālas who put on holy ash, in reference to certain Jains, who formerly became Saivites, taking off their sacred threads, and putting holy ashes on their foreheads.

Nityadāsu.—Nityadāsu, or Nityulu, meaning immortal slaves, is a name by which some Māla Dāsaris style themselves.

Nodha.—Recorded, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as a very small caste of hill cultivators and earth-workers in the Oriya country.

Nōkkan.—The Nōkkans, who often go by the name of Jādipillais (children of the caste), are a class of mendicants, who beg from members of the Palli caste. The word Nōkkan is said to mean 'he who looks'. The Nōkkans make periodical visits to villages where Pallis live, and receive from them a small fee in money. They attend at Palli marriages, and, during processions, carry flags (palempores) bearing devices of Hanumān, tigers, Agni, etc., which are made at Kālahasti.

The Nōkkans claim fees from the Pallis, because one of their ancestors helped them. The legend runs as follows. During the reign of a Palli king at Conjeeveram, a car, bearing the idol of the god, stood still, and could not be moved. A human sacrifice was considered necessary, but no one would offer himself as a victim. A Nōkkan came forward, and allowed his only daughter, who was pregnant, to be sacrificed



Pleased at his behaviour, the king ordered that the Pallis should in future treat the Nōkkans as their Jāḍipillais. Some Nōkkans say that they were presented with copper-grants, one of which is reputed to be in the possession of one Nōkka Ramaswāmi of Mulavāyal village in the Ponnēri tāluk of the Chingleput district.

In the course of their rounds, the Nōkkans repeat the story of the origin of the Pallis, one version of which runs as follows. Two Asuras, Vāthāpi and Enādhapi, who were ruling at Ratnagiripatnam, obtained at the hands of Siva, by means of severe tapas (penance), the following boon. No child should die within their dominions, and the Asuras should be invincible, and not meet their death at the hands of uterine-born beings. The Dēvatas and others, unable to bear the tyranny of the Asuras, prayed to Brahma for rescue. He directed them to the Rishi Jambuvamuni, who was doing penance on the banks of the river Jumna. This Rishi is said to have married a woman named Āsendi, who was born from the cheeks of Parvati. Hearing the request of the Dēvatas, the Rishi lighted the sacred fire, and therefrom arose a being called Rūdra Vanniyan, and forty other warriors, including Nīlakanta, Gangabala, and Vajrabāhu. The Pallis are descended from these fire-born heroes. (*See Palli.*)

Nōkkans wear the sacred thread, and carry with them a big drum and a gourd pipe like that used by snake-charmers.

Noliya.—A synonym used by Oriya castes for the Telugu Jalāris.

Nonaba.—A territorial sub-division of Vakkaliga. The name is derived from Nonambavādi, one of the former great divisions of the Tanjore country.

Nōttakāran.—The office of village Nōttakāran, or tester, has been abolished in modern times. It was



generally held by a goldsmith, whose duty was to test the rupees when the land revenue was being gathered in, and see that they were not counterfeit.

Nuchchu (broken rice).—A gōtra of Kurni.

Nūkala (coarse grain powder).—An exogamous sept of Padma Sālē.

Nulayan.—In the Madras Census Report, 1901, ninety-six individuals are recorded as belonging to a small caste of Malayālam fishermen and boatmen. The Nulayans are found in Travancore, and were returned in the census of Malabar, as the two small British settlements of Anjengo and Tangacheri in Travancore are under the jurisdiction of the Collector of Malabar.

Nūnē (oil).—An occupational sub-division of Kōmati.

Nunia (nuno, salt).—A sub-division of Odiya.

Nūrankurup.—An occupational name for Paravans settled in Malabar, whose employment is that of lime-burners (nūru, lime).

Nūrbāsh.—Recorded, at the census, 1901, as a synonym of Dūdēkula. A corruption of nūrbaf (weaving).

Nūvvala (gingelly : *Sesamum indicum*).—An exogamous sept of Kamma and Mēdara. Gingelly seeds, from which an oil is extracted, “form an essential article of certain religious ceremonies of the Hindus, and have therefore received the names of hōma-dhānya or the sacrificial grain, and pitri-tarpana or the grain that is offered as an oblation to deceased ancestors.” (*U. C. Dutt.*) During the death ceremonies of some Brāhmans, libations of water mixed with gingelly seeds, called tilothakam, and a ball of rice, are offered daily to two stones representing the spirit of the deceased.

Nyāyam (justice).—An exogamous sept of Padma Sālē.



Ōcchan.—The Ōcchans are a class of temple priests, who usually officiate as pūjāris at Pidāri and other Amman (Grāma Dēvata) temples. They are for the most part Saivites, but some belong to the Vadagalai or Tengalai Vaishnava sects. Some of the pūjāris wear the sacred thread when within the temple. Their insignia are the udukkai, or hour-glass shaped drum, and the silambu, or hollow brass ring filled with bits of brass, which rattle when it is shaken. In the Chingleput district, some Ōcchans act as dancing-masters to Dēvadāsis, and are sometimes called Nattuvan.

The name Ōcchan is derived from the Tamil ōchai, meaning sound, in reference to the usual mode of invoking the Grāma Dēvatas (village deities) by beating on a drum and singing their praises. It has been suggested that Ōcchan is a contracted form of Uvacchan, which occurs in certain old inscriptions.* Of these, the oldest is dated Sakha 1180 (A.D. 1258), and refers to the tax on Uvacchas. Another inscription, in which the same tax is referred to, is dated Sakha 1328 (A.D. 1406). In both these inscriptions, Uvacchan has been interpreted as referring to Jonakas, who are a class of Muhammadans. This is one of the meanings given by Winslow,† who also gives “a caste of drummers at temples, Ōcchan.”

In the northern districts, the Ōcchans are divided into five sections, called Mārayan, Pāndi, Kandappan, Periya or Pallavarāyan, and Pulavan. Mārayan is also the name of temple priests in Travancore, on whom the title Ōcchan is bestowed as a mark of royal favour by the Travancore sovereigns.‡ The Ōcchans have

* E. Hultzsch. South Indian Inscriptions, I. 82, 108, 1890.

† Comprehensive Tamil and English Dictionary.

‡ Travancore Census Report, 1901.

many titles, *e.g.*, Archaka or Umai Archaka, Dēvar, Parasaivan, Mudaliar, Vallabarāyan, Pūsāli, Pulavar, and Kamban. Of these, the last two are said to be derived from the Tamil epic poet Kamban, who is traditionally believed to have belonged to the Ōcchan caste. There is a legend that Kamban was on his way to the residence of a king, when he heard an oil-monger, who was driving his bulls, remonstrate with them, saying "Should you kick against each other because the poet Kamban, like the Ōcchan he is, hums his verse?" On hearing this, Kamban approached the oil-monger, and went with him to the king, to whom he reported that he had been insulted. By order of the king, the oil-monger burst forth into verse, and explained how his bulls had taken fright on hearing Kamban's impromptu singing. Kamban was greatly pleased with the poet oil-monger, and begged the king to let him go with honours heaped on him.

In the southern districts, more especially in Madura and Tinnevely, it is usual for an Ōcchan to claim his paternal aunt's daughter in marriage. In the northern districts, a man may also marry his maternal uncle's or sister's daughter. Brāhman Gurukkals officiate at marriages. In their puberty, marriage, and death ceremonies, the Ōcchans closely follow the Pallis or Vanniyans. The dead are burnt, and Brāhman officiate at the funeral ceremonies.

The caste is an organised one, and there is usually a headman, called Periyathanakāran, at places where Ōcchans occur.

Ōda vāndlu (boatmen).—A synonym of Mila, a fishing caste in Ganjam and Vizagapatam. Some prosperous Milas have adopted Ōda Balija as their caste name. (*See* Vāda.)

Ōdan.—An occupational name of a class of Nāyars, who are tile-makers.

Odāri.—The Odāris or Vodāris are Tulu-speaking potters in the South Canara district. Those who have abandoned the profession of potter call themselves Mūlia, as also do some potters, and those who are employed as pūjāris (priests) at bhūthasthanas (devil shrines). In many cases, the headman combines the duties of that office with those of pūjāri, and is called Mūlia. Otherwise his title is Gurikāra.

The Canarese potters in South Canara, in making pots, use the ordinary wheel, which is rotated by means of a long stick. The wheel of the Odāris is more primitive, consisting of a small disc, concave above, made of unburnt clay, fitting by means of a pebble pivot into a pebble socket, which is rotated by hand.

Like other Tulu castes, the Odāris worship bhūthas, but also reverence Venkatarāmana.

In their marriage ceremonial, the Odāris follow the Bant type. At the betrothal, the headmen or fathers of the contracting couple exchange betel, and the party of the future bridegroom give a ring to the people of the bride-elect. The marriage rites are completed in a single day. A bench is placed within the marriage pandal (booth), and covered with clothes brought by the Madivāli (washerman caste). The bridegroom is conducted thither by the bride's brother, and, after going round three times, takes his seat. He is generally preceded by women carrying lights, rice and fruits before him. The lamp is hung up, and the other articles are deposited on the ground. One by one, the women throw a grain of rice, first over the lamp, and then a few grains over the head of the bridegroom. Then the barber comes, and, after throwing rice, shaves

the face of the bridegroom, using milk instead of water. The bride is also shaved by a barber woman. The pair are decorated, and brought to the pandal, where those assembled throw rice over their heads, and make presents of money. Their hands are then united by the headman, and the dhāre water poured over them by the maternal uncle of the bride.

An interesting rite in connection with pregnancy is the presentation of a fowl or two to the pregnant woman by her maternal uncle. The fowls are tended with great care, and, if they lay eggs abundantly, it is a sign that the pregnant woman will be prolific.

The dead are either buried or cremated. If cremation is resorted to, the final death ceremonies (bojja) must be celebrated on the eleventh or thirteenth day. If the corpse has been buried, these ceremonies must not take place before the lapse of at least a month.

Oddē.—The Oddēs or Voddas, who are commonly called Wudders, are summed up by Mr. H. A. Stuart * as being “the navvies of the country, quarrying stone, sinking wells, constructing tank bunds, and executing other kinds of earthwork more rapidly than any other class, so that they have got almost a monopoly of the trade. They are Telugu people, who came originally from Orissa, whence their name. Were they more temperate, they might be in very good circumstances, but, as soon as they have earned a small sum, they strike work and have a merry-making, in which all get much intoxicated, and the carouse continues as long as funds last. They are very ignorant, not being able even to calculate how much work they have done, and trusting altogether to their employer’s honesty. They are an open-hearted,

* Manual of the North Arcot district.

good-natured lot, with loose morals, and no restrictions regarding food, but they are proud, and will only eat in the houses of the higher castes, though most Sūdras look down upon them. Polygamy and divorce are freely allowed to men, and women are only restricted from changing partners after having had eighteen. Even this limit is not set to the men."

Women who have had seven husbands are said to be much respected, and their blessing on a bridal pair is greatly praised. There is a common saying that a widow may mount the marriage dais seven times.

In the Census Report, 1871, the Oddēs are described as being "the tank-diggers, well-sinkers, and road-makers of the country who live in detached settlements, building their huts in conical or bee-hive form, with only a low door of entrance. They work in gangs on contract, and every one, except very old and very young, takes a share in the work. The women carry the earth in baskets, while the men use the pick and spade. The babies are usually tied up in cloths, which are suspended, hammock fashion, from the boughs of trees. They are employed largely in the Public Works Department, and in the construction and maintenance of railways. They are rather a fine-looking race, and all that I have come across are Vaishnavites in theory, wearing the trident prominently on their foreheads, arms, and breasts. The women are tall and straight. They eat every description of animal food, and especially pork and field-rats, and all drink spirituous liquors."

Of the Oddēs, the following brief accounts are given in the Nellore, Coimbatore, and Madura Manuals :—

Nellore.—"These people are the tank-diggers. They sometimes engage in the carrying trade, but beyond this, they only move about from place to place



as they have work. The word Voddē or Oddē is said to be a corruption of the Sanskrit Odhra, the name for the country now called Orissa, and the people are ordinarily supposed to have emigrated from the Uriya country. Besides Telugu, they are said to speak a peculiar dialect among themselves; and, if this should turn out to be Uriya, the question might be regarded as settled. The laborious occupation of the men tends to develop their muscles. I have seen some very fine men among the tribe."

Coimbatore.—"Numerous, owing to the hard nature of the subsoil and the immense and increasing number of irrigation wells, which demand the labour of strong men accustomed to the use of the crowbar, pick-axe, and powder. They are black, strong, and of good physique, highly paid, and live on strong meat and drink."

Madura.—"An itinerant caste of tank-diggers and earth-workers. They are Telugus, and are supposed to have come southward in the time of the Nāyyakkans. Possibly Tirumala sent for them to dig out his great teppakulam, and assist in raising gopuras. They are a strong, hard-working class, but also drunken, gluttonous, and vicious. And but little faith can be placed in their most solemn promises. They will take advances from half a dozen employers within a week, and work for none of them, if they can possibly help it."

In Mysore numbers of Oddēs are now permanently settled in the outskirts of large towns, where both sexes find employment as sweepers, etc., in connection with sanitation and conservancy. Some Oddēs are, at the present time (1908), employed at the Mysore manganese mines. The tribe is often found concerting with the Korachas, Koramas, and other predatory classes in



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committing dacoities and robberies, and it has passed into a proverb that they would rather bear any amount of bodily torture than confess or disclose the truth regarding the crimes attributed to them. Some Oddēs have settled down as agriculturists and contractors, and some are very prosperous. For example, there are a few Oddēs near Kuppam in the North Arcot district, whose credit is so good that any rich merchant would advance them large sums of money. A wealthy Oddē, worth nearly a lakh of rupees, worried my assistant for half an anna, wherewith to purchase some betel leaf. It is recorded by Bishop Whitehead,* in the diary of a tour in the Nizam's Dominions, that, at Khammamett, "the Waddas who have become Christians have for some time past possessed land and cattle of their own, and are well-to-do people. One of the headmen, who was presented to me after service, said that he had 80 acres of land of his own."

Some of the timber work in the Nallamalalai hills, in the Kurnool district, is done by Oddēs, who fell trees, and keep bulls for dragging the timber out of the forests. Under the heading "Uppara and Vadde Vandlu," the Rev. J. Cain gives† the following account of the distribution of wages. "The tank-diggers had been paid for their work, and, in apportioning the share of each labourer, a bitter dispute arose because one of the women had not received what she deemed her fair amount. On enquiry it turned out that she was in an interesting condition, and therefore could claim not only her own, but also a share for the expected child."

A legend is current to the effect that, long ago, the Oddēs were ordered to dig a tank, to enable the Dēvatas

* Madras Dioc. Magazine, April, 1908.

† Ind. Ant., VIII, 1879.

and men to obtain water. This was done, and they demanded payment, which was made in the form of a pinch of the sacred ashes of Siva to each workman, in lieu of money. When they reached home, the ashes turned into money, but they were not satisfied with the amount, and clamoured for more. The god, growing angry, cursed them thus : " What you obtain in the forests by digging shall be lost as soon as you reach high ground." Parvati, taking pity on them, asked Siva to give them large sums of money. Whereon Siva, hollowing out a measuring-rod, filled it with varāhans (gold coins), and gave it to the maistry. He also filled a large pumpkin with money, and buried it in a field, where the Oddēs were working. The measuring-rod was pawned by the maistry for toddy. The Oddēs, noticing the raised mound caused by the burying of the pumpkin, left it untouched to show the depth that they had dug. A buffalo, which was grazing in a field close by, exposed the pumpkin, which the Oddēs, not suspecting its contents, sold to a Kōmati.

According to another legend, the Oddēs were employed by God, who had assumed a human form, and was living amongst them. On one occasion, God had to perform a certain ceremony, so he gave the Oddēs an advance of three days' pay, and ordered them not to worry him. This they failed to do, and were accordingly laid under a curse to remain poor for ever.

A further legend is current among the Oddēs to the effect that, when Siva and Parvati were walking one sultry day upon the earth, they got very hot and thirsty. The drops of perspiration which fell from Siva were changed by him into a man with a pick and crowbar, while those falling from Parvati turned into a woman carrying a basket. The man and woman quickly sunk

a well, with the cooling waters of which the god and goddess refreshed themselves, and in gratitude promised the labourers certain gifts, the nature of which is not now known, but neither was satisfied, and both grumbled, which so incensed Siva that he cursed them, and vowed that they and their descendants should live by the sweat of their brows.

Among the Oddēs, the following sayings are current:—

The Oddēs live with their huts on their heads (*i.e.*, low huts), with light made from gathered sticks, on thin conji (gruel), blessing those who give, and cursing those who do not.

Cobras have poison in their fangs, and Oddēs in their tongues.

Though wealth accumulates like a mountain, it soon disappears like mist.

At recent times of census, the following occupational sub-divisions were returned:—Kallu or Rāti (stone-workers) and Mannu (earth-workers), Manti or Bailu (open space), between which there is said to be no intermarriage. The endogamous sub-divisions Nāta-pūram and Ūrū (village men), Bidāru (wanderers), and Konga (territorial) were also returned. Bēri was given as a sub-caste, and Oddērāzu as a synonym for the caste name. In Ganjam, Bolāsi is said to be a sub-division of the Oddēs. The caste titles are Nāyakan and Boyan. The similarity of the latter word to Boer was fatal, for, at the time of my visit to the Oddēs, the South African war was just over, and they were afraid that I was going to get them transported, to replace the Boers who had been exterminated. Being afraid, too, of my evil eye, they refused to fire a new kiln of bricks for the new club chambers at Coimbatore until I had taken my departure.

It is noted, in the Mysore Census Report, 1891, that "the caste divides itself into two main branches, the Kallu and Mannu Vaddas, between whom there is no social intercourse of any kind, or intermarriage. The former are stone-workers and builders, and more robust than the latter, and are very dexterous in moving large masses of stone by rude and elementary mechanical appliances. They are hardy, and capable of great exertion and endurance. The Kallu Vaddas consider themselves superior to the Mannu Vaddas (earth diggers). Unlike the Kallu Vaddas, the Mannu Vaddas or Bailu Vaddas are a nomadic tribe, squatting wherever they can find any large earthwork, such as deepening and repairing tanks, throwing up embankments, and the like. They are expert navvies, turning out within a given time more hard work than any other labouring class." The Mannu Oddēs eat rats, porcupines, and scaly ant-eaters or pangolins (*Manis pentadactyla*).

Of exogamous septs, the following may be cited :—

Bandollu, rock.	Sampangi (<i>Michelia Cham-</i> <i>paca</i>).
Bochchollu, hairs.	Thâtichettu, palmyra palm.
Cheruku, sugarcane.	Bandāri (<i>Dodonaea viscosa</i>).
Enumala, buffalo.	Dēvala, belonging to god.
Goddali, axe.	Donga, thief.
Gampa, basket.	Malle, jasmine.
Idakottu, break-down.	Panthipattu, pig-catcher.
Jambu (<i>Eugenia Jambo-</i> <i>lana</i>).	Panthikottu, pig-killer.
Kōmāli, buffoon.	Upputhōluvaru, salt-carrier.
Santha, a fair.	Pitakāla, dais on which a priest sits.
Sivarātri, a festival.	Thappata, drum.
Manchāla, cot.	

At the Mysore census, 1901, a few returned gōtras, such as arashina (turmeric), huvvina (flowers), honna (gold), and akshantala (rice grain).

“The women of the Vaddevandlu section of the tank-digger caste,” the Rev. J. Cain writes,* “only wear the glass bracelets on the left arm, as, in years gone by (according to their own account), a seller of these bracelets was one day persuading them to buy, and, leaving the bracelets on their left arms, went away, promising to return with a fresh supply for their right arms. As yet he has not re-appeared.” But an old woman explained that they have to use their right arm when at work, and if they wore bangles on it, they would frequently get broken.

In some places, tattooing on the forehead with a central vertical line, dots, etc., is universally practiced, because, according to the Oddē, they should bear tattoo marks as a proof of their life on earth (bhulōkam) when they die. Oddēs, calling themselves Pachcha Botlu, are itinerant tattooers in the Ganjam, Vizagapatam and Godāvari districts. While engaged in performing the operation, they sing Telugu songs, to divert the attention of those who are being operated on.

The office of headman, who is known as Yejamānadu, Samayagādu, or Pedda (big) Bōyadu, is hereditary, and disputes, which cannot be settled at a council meeting, are referred to a Baliḥa Dēsai Chetti, whose decision is final. In some cases, the headman is assisted by officers called Chinna (little) Bōyadu, Sankūthi, and Banthari. An Oddē, coming to a place where people are assembled with shoes on, is fined, and described as gurram ekki vachchinavu (having come on a horse). The Oddēs are very particular about touching leather, and beating with shoes brings pollution. Both the beater and the person beaten have to undergo a purificatory ceremony, and

* Ind. Ant., V, 1876.

pay a fine. When in camp at Dimbhum, in the Coimbatore district, I caught hold of a ladle, to show my friend Dr. Rivers what were the fragrant contents of a pot, in which an Oddē woman was cooking the evening meal. On returning from a walk, we heard a great noise proceeding from the Oddē men who had meanwhile returned from work, and found the woman seated apart on a rock, and sobbing. She had been excommunicated, not because I touched the ladle, but because she had afterwards touched the pot. After much arbitration, I paid up the necessary fine, and she was received back into her caste.

When a girl reaches puberty, she is confined in a special hut, in which a piece of iron, margosa leaves (*Melia Azadirachta*), sticks of *Strychnos Nux-vomica*, and the arka plant (*Calotropis gigantea*) are placed, to ward off evil spirits. For fear of these spirits she is not allowed to eat meat, though eggs are permitted. On the seventh day, a fowl is killed, waved in front of the girl, and thrown away. At the end of the period of pollution, the hut is burnt down. Sometimes, when the girl bathes on the first day, a sieve is held over her head, and water poured through it. In some places, on the eleventh day, chicken broth, mixed with arrack (liquor), is administered, in order to make the girl's back and waist strong. The hen, from which the broth is made, must be a black one, and she must have laid eggs for the first time. The flesh is placed in a mortar, pounded to a pulp, and boiled, with the addition of condiments, and finally the arrack.

Both infant and adult marriages are practiced. The marriage ceremony, in its simplest form, is, according to Mr. F. S. Mullaly,* not a tedious one, the bride and

* Notes on Criminal Classes of the Madras Presidency.



bridegroom walking three times round a stake placed in the ground. In the more elaborate ritual, on the betrothal day, the bride-price, etc., are fixed, and an adjournment is made to the toddy shop. The marriage rites are, as a rule, very simple, but, in some places, the Oddēs have begun to imitate the marriage ceremonies of the Baliyas. On the third day, the contracting couple go in procession to a tank, where the bridegroom digs up some mud, and the bride carries three basketfuls thereof to a distance. The following story is narrated in connection with their marriage ceremonies. A certain king wanted an Oddē to dig a tank, which was subsequently called Nidimamidi Koththacheruvu, and promised to pay him in varahālu (gold coins). When the work was completed, the Oddē went to the king for his money, but the king had no measure for measuring out the coins. A person was sent to fetch one, and on his way met a shepherd, who had on his shoulders a small bamboo stick, which could easily be converted into a measure. Taking this stick, he returned to the king, who measured out the coins, which fell short of the amount expected by the Oddēs, who could not pay the debts, which they had contracted. So they threw the money into the tank, saying "Let the tank leak, and the land lie fallow for ever." All were crying on account of their misery and indebtedness. A Baliya, coming across them, took pity on them, and gave them half the amount required to discharge their debts. After a time they wanted to marry, and men were sent to bring the bottu (marriage badge), milk-post, musicians, etc. But they did not return, and the Baliya suggested the employment of a pestle for the milk-post, a string of black beads for the bottu, and betel leaves and areca nuts instead of gold coins for the oli (bride-price).



The Oddēs are in some places Vaishnavites, in others Saivites, but they also worship minor deities, such as Ellamma, Ankamma, etc., to whom goats and sheep are sacrificed, not with a sword or knife, but by piercing them with a spear or crowbar. Writing at the commencement of the nineteenth century, Buchanan states * that “although the Woddaru pray to Vishnu, and offer sacrifices to Marima, Gungama, Durgama, Putalima, and Mutialima, yet the proper object of worship belonging to the caste is a goddess called Yellama, one of the destroying spirits. The image is carried constantly with their baggage; and in her honour there is an annual feast, which lasts three days. On this occasion they build a shed, under which they place the image, and one of the tribe officiates as priest or pujāri. For these three days offerings of brandy, palm wine, rice, and flowers are made to the idol, and bloody sacrifices are performed before the shed. The Woddas abstain from eating the bodies of the animals sacrificed to their own deity, but eat those which they sacrifice to the other Saktis.”

The dead are generally buried. By some Oddēs the corpse is carried to the burial-ground wrapped up in a new cloth, and carried in a dhubati (thick coarse cloth) by four men. On the way to the grave, the corpse is laid on the ground, and rice thrown over its eyes. It is then washed, and the nāmam (Vaishnavite sect mark) painted, or vibūthi (sacred ashes) smeared on the forehead of a man, and kunkumam (coloured powder) on that of a female. Earth is thrown by those assembled into the grave before it is filled in. On the karmāndhiram day, or last day of the death ceremonies, the

* Journey through Mysore, Canara, and Malabar.



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relations repair to a tank or well outside the village. An effigy is made with mud, to which cooked rice, etc., is offered. Some rice is cooked, and placed on an arka (*Calotropis*) leaf as an offering to the crows. If a married woman has died, the widower cuts through his waist thread, whereas a widow is taken to the water's edge, and sits on a winnow. Her bangles are broken, and the bottu is snapped by her brother. Water is then poured over her head three times through the winnow. After bathing, she goes home, and sits in a room with a lamp, and may see no one till the following morning. She is then taken to one or more temples, and made to pull the tail of a cow three times. The Oddēs of Coimbatore, in the Tamil country, have elaborated both the marriage and funeral ceremonies, and copy those of the Baliyas and Vellālas. But they do not call in the assistance of a Brāhman purōhit.

A woman, found guilty of immorality, is said to have to carry a basketful of earth from house to house, before she is re-admitted to the caste.

The following note on a reputed cure for snake poisoning used by Oddēs was communicated to me by Mr. Gustav Haller. "A young boy, who belonged to a gang of Oddēs, was catching rats, and put his hand into a bamboo bush, when a cobra bit him, and clung to his finger when he was drawing his hand out of the bush. I saw the dead snake, which was undoubtedly a cobra. I was told that the boy was in a dying condition, when a man of the same gang said that he would cure him. He applied a brown pill to the wound, to which it stuck without being tied. The man dipped a root into water, and rubbed it on the lad's arm from the shoulder downwards. The arm, which was benumbed, gradually became sensitive, and at last the fingers could move, and the pill

dropped off. The moist root was rubbed on to the boy's tongue and into the corner of the eye before commencing operations. The man said that a used pill is quite efficacious, but should be well washed to get rid of the poison. In the manufacture of the pill, five leaves of a creeper are dried, and ground to powder. The pill must be inserted for nine days between the bark and cambium of a margosa tree (*Melia Azadirachta*) during the new moon, when the sap ascends." The creeper is *Tinospora cordifolia* (gul bēl) and the roots are apparently those of the same climbing shrub. There is a widespread belief that gul bēl growing on a margosa tree is more efficacious as a medicine than that which is found on other kinds of trees.

The insigne of the caste at Conjeeveram is a spade. *

"In the Ceded Districts," Mr. F. S. Mullaly writes, † "some of the Wudders are known as Donga Wuddi-wars, or thieving Wudders, from the fact of their having taken to crime as a profession. Those of the tribe who have adopted criminal habits are skilful burglars and inveterate robbers. They are chiefly to be found among the stone Wudder class, who, besides their occupation of building walls, are also skilful stone-cutters. By going about under the pretence of mending grindstones, they obtain much useful information as to the houses to be looted, or parties of travellers to be attacked. In committing a highway robbery or dacoity, they are always armed with stout sticks. Burglary by Wudders may usually be traced to them, if careful observations are made of the breach in the wall. The implement is ordinarily the crowbar used by them in their profession as stone-workers, and the blunt marks of the crowbar

* J. S. F. Mackenzie. Ind. Ant., IV, 1875.

† *Op. cit.*



are, as a rule, noticeable. They will never confess, or implicate another of their fraternity, and, should one of them be accused of a crime, the women are most clamorous, and inflict personal injuries on themselves and their children, to deter the police from doing their duty, and then accuse them of torture. Women and children belonging to criminal gangs are experts in committing grain thefts from kalamas or threshing-floors, where they are engaged in harvest time, and also in purloining their neighbours' poultry. Stolen property is seldom found with Wudders. Their receivers are legion, but they especially favour liquor shopkeepers in the vicinity of their encampment. Instances have been known of valuable jewellery being exchanged for a few drams of arrack. In each Wudder community, there is a headman called the Ganga Rāja, and, in the case of criminal gangs of these people, he receives two shares of spoil. Identifiable property is altered at once, many of the Wudders being themselves able to melt gold and silver jewellery, which they dispose of for about one-tenth of the value."

It has been said of the navvies in England that "many persons are quite unaware that the migratory tribe of navvies numbers about 100,000, and moves about from point to point, wherever construction works are going forward, such as railways, harbour, canals, reservoirs and drainage works. Generally the existence of these works is unknown to the public until their completion. They then come into use, but the men who risked their lives to make them are gone nobody knows where. They are public servants, upon whose labours the facilities of modern civilised life largely depend, and surely, therefore, their claim on our sympathies is universal." And these remarks apply

with equal force to the Oddēs, who numbered 498,388 in the Madras Presidency at the census, 1901.

In the Census Report, 1901, Odderāzulu is given as a synonym of Oddē. One of the sections of the Yerukalas is also called Oddē. Vadde (Oddē) Cakali (Tsākala) is recorded, in the Vizagapatam Manual, as the name for those who wash clothes, and carry torches and palanquins.

Oddilu.—The Oddilu are described * by the Rev. J. Cain as principally raftsmen on the Godāvāri river, who have raised themselves in life, and call themselves Sishti Karanamalu. He states further that they are Koīs (or Koyīs) who are regarded as more honourable than any of the others, and have charge of the principal vēlpu (tribal gods).

Ōdhuvar (reader or reciter).—A name for Pandārams, who recite hymns in temples.

Odisi.—A sub-division of Bhondāri.

Odiya.—It is noted, in the Madras Census Report, 1891, that “this is the principal Uriya caste of farmers in Ganjam. Odia and Uriya are different forms of one and the same word, and this caste name simply means a native of the Odia or Uriya country, as Telaga means a man of the Telugu country. In both cases, therefore, we find a number of persons included, who are in reality members of some other caste. The total number of sub-divisions of Odia, according to the census schedules, is 146, but a number of these are names of various Uriya castes, and not true sub-divisions. The largest sub-division is Benāito, which is returned by 62,391 persons. The Nunia sub-division, the next largest, was returned by 9,356 individuals.” It is further recorded, in the

* Ind. Ant., VIII, 1879.



Census Report, 1901, that Odiya, Oriya, or Uriya⁵ "is one of the vaguest terms in the whole of Table XIII (Caste and Tribe). The Odiyas are a race by themselves, split up into many castes. 'Odiya' also often means merely a man who speaks Oriya. The term is, however, so constantly returned by itself without qualification, that Odiya has perforce figured in the tables of all the censuses as a caste. The Odiyas of the hills differ, however, from the Odiyas of the plains, the Odiyas of Ganjam from those of Vizagapatam, and the customs of one muttāh (settlement) from those of the next." Mr. Narasing Doss writes to me that "Odiya literally means an inhabitant of Odissa or Orissa. There is a separate caste called Odiya, with several sub-divisions. They are cultivators by profession. Marriage is infant or adult. They employ Brāhmans at ceremonials. Widows and divorcées are remarried. They eat fish and meat, but not fowls or beef, and do not drink liquor. They burn the dead. Members of the Nāgabonso sept claim to be descendants of Nāgamuni, the serpent rishi."

I gather that there are three main sections among the Odiyas, viz., Benāito, Nuniya, and Baraghorias, of which the first-named rank above the others in the social scale. From them Oriya Brāhmans and Korōnos will accept water. The Benāitos and Nuniyas are found all over Ganjam, whereas the Baraghorias are apparently confined to villages round about Aska and Purushothapūr. There are numerous exogamous gōtras within the caste, among which are Nāgasira (cobra), Gonda (rhinoceros), Kochipo (tortoise), and Baraha (boar). The gods of the gōtra should be worshipped at the commencement of any auspicious ceremony. The Odiyas also worship Jagan-nātha, and Tākurānis (village deities). A number of titles occur in the caste, *e.g.*, Bissoyi, Podhāno, Jenna,



Bariko, Sāhu, Swāyi, Gaudo, Pulleyi, Chando, Dolei, and Torei.

When an unmarried girl is ill, a vow is taken that, if she recovers, she shall be married to the dharma dēvata (sun), which is represented by a brass vessel.

People of mixed origin sometimes call themselves Odiyas, and pass as members of this caste. Some Bhayipuos, for example, who correspond to the Telugu Ādapāpas, call themselves Odiyas or Beniya Odiyas.

Odiya Tōti.—A Tamil synonym for Oriya Haddis employed as scavengers in municipalities in the Tamil country.

Ōjali.—The Ōjali, Vōjali, or Ōzolu are summed up, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as being “Telugu blacksmiths in the Vizagapatam Agency. They eat beef, but are somewhat superior to the Paidis and Mālas in social position. They are also called Mettu Kamsali.” It is stated in the Vizagapatam Manual that, during the reign of Chōla Chakravati, the Kamsalas (artisans) claimed to be equal to Brāhmins. This offended the sovereign, and he ordered their destruction. Some only escaped death by taking shelter with people of the ‘Ōzu’ caste. As an acknowledgment of their gratitude many of the Kamsalas have ōzu affixed to their house-name, *e.g.*, Kattōzu, Lakkōzu.

Okkiliyan.—Okkiliyan is the Tamil synonym for Vakkaliga, the large caste of Canarese cultivators, and the name is derived from okkalu, meaning cultivation or agriculture. In the Madras Census Report, 1901, the Vakkaligas or Okkiliyans are described as “Canarese cultivators, who originally belonged to Mysore, and are found mainly in Madura and Coimbatore. The caste is split up into several sub-divisions, the names of two of which, Nonaba and Gangadikāra, are derived from



former divisions of the Mysore country. Each of these is again split up into totemistic exogamous sections or kūlas, some of which are Chinnada (gold), Belli (silver), Khajjāya (cake), Yemme (buffalo), Alagi (pot), Jōla (chōlum : a millet)." The Vakkaligas say they are descendants of the Ballāl Rājah of Ānēgundi, and that they left their homes in pursuit of more suitable occupation, and settled themselves in Konganād (Coimbatore). The Okkiliyans, whom I have investigated, were settled in the Tamil country in the Coimbatore district, where they were engaged as cultivators, bakers, milk-vendors, bricklayers, merchants, cart-drivers, tailors, cigar manufacturers, and coolies. They returned the following eight endogamous sub-divisions :—

(1) Gangadikāra, or those who lived on the banks of the Ganges.

(2) Gudi, temple.

(3) Kirē (*Amarantus*), which is largely cultivated by them.

(4) Kunchu, a tassel or bunch.

(5) Kāmāti, foolish. Said to have abandoned their original occupation of cultivating the land, and adopted the profession of bricklayer.

(6) Gauri, Siva's consort.

(7) Bai.

(8) Sānu.

Like other Canarese castes, the Okkiliyans have exogamous septs (kūttam or kūtta), such as Belli (silver), Kastūri (musk), Pattēgāra (headman), Aruva, Hattianna, etc. By religion they are both Saivites and Vaishnavites. Those of the Aruva sept are all Saivites, and the Hatti sept are Vaishnavites. Intermarriage between Saivites and Vaishnavites is permitted, even though the former be Lingāyats. The Okkiliyans also worship village



deities, and sacrifice goats and fowls to Māgāliamma and Koniamma.

The Kiraikkārans of Coimbatore, whose main occupation is cultivating kirai (*Amarantus*) and other vegetables, are said to be Kempati Okkiliyans, *i.e.*, Okkiliyans who emigrated from Kempampatti in Mysore.

The hereditary headman of the caste, at Coimbatore, is called Pattakāran, who has under him a Chinna (little) Pattakāran. The headman presides over the caste council meetings, settles disputes, and inflicts fines and other forms of punishment. If a person is accused of using coarse language, he is slapped on the cheek by the Chinna Pattakāran. If, during a quarrel, one person beats the other with shoes, he has to purify himself and his house, and feed some of his fellow castemen. The man who has been slippered also has to undergo purificatory ceremony, but has not to stand a feast. In cases of adultery, the guilty persons have to carry a basket of sand on the head round the quarters of the community, accompanied by the Chinna Pattakāran, who beats them with a tamarind switch. In some places, I am informed, there is a headman for the village, called Ūru Goundan, who is subject to the authority of the Nāttu Goundan. Several nādus, each composed of a number of villages, are subject to a Pattakar, who is assisted by a Bandāri. All these offices are hereditary.

When a Gangadikāra girl reaches puberty, her maternal uncle, or his son, constructs a hut of stems of cocoanut leaves, reeds and branches of *Pongamia glabra*. Every day her relations bring her a cloth, fruits, and flowers. On alternate days she is bathed, and dressed in a cloth supplied by the washerwoman. The hut is broken up, and a new one constructed on the third, fifth, and seventh days. During the marriage ceremony, the



VAKKALIGA BRIDE.



bridegroom carries a dagger (katar) with a lime stuck on its tip, and partly covered with a cloth, when he proceeds to the bride's house with a bamboo, new clothes, the tāli (marriage badge), jewels, wrist-thread (kankanam), fruits, cocoanuts, rice, and a new mat, camphor, etc. He must have the dagger with him till the wrist-threads are untied. The barber cuts the nails of the bridegroom. The Pattakāran, or a Brāhman priest, takes round the tāli to be blessed by those assembled, and gives it to the bridegroom, who ties it on the bride's neck. The ends of the cloths of the contracting couple, with betel leaves and areca nuts in them, are tied together, and they link together the little finger of their right hands. They then look at the sky, to see the pole-star, Arundati, who was the wife of the ascetic Vasishta, and the emblem of chastity. The marriage booth has four posts, and the milk-post is made of the milk hedge (*Euphorbia Tirucalli*), to which are tied mango leaves and a wrist-thread. At some Okkiliyan marriages, the caste priest, called Kanigāra (soothsayer), officiates at the tāli-tying ceremony. Very great importance is attached to the linking of the fingers of the bridal couple by the Kanigāra or maternal uncle. The dowry is not given at the time of marriage, but only after the birth of a child. For her first confinement, the woman is taken to her parents' home, and, after delivery, is sent back to her husband with the dowry. This is not given before the birth of a child, as, in the event of failure of issue or death of his wife, the husband might claim the property, which might pass to a new family.

Among some Okkiliyans the custom is maintained by which the father of a young boy married to a grown-up girl cohabits with his daughter-in-law until her husband has reached maturity.

A dead person, I was informed at Coimbatore, is buried in a sitting posture, or, if young and unmarried, in a recumbent position. As the funeral procession proceeds on its way to the burial-ground, the relations and friends throw coins, fruits, cakes, cooked rice, etc., on the road, to be picked up by poor people. If the funeral is in high life, they may even throw flowers made of gold or silver, but not images, as some of the higher classes do. At the south end of the grave, a hollow is scooped out for the head and back to rest in. A small quantity of salt is placed on the abdomen, and the grave is filled in. Leaves of the arka plant (*Calotropis gigantea*), or tangēdu (*Cassia auriculata*), are placed in three corners, and a stone is set up over the head. The son, having gone round the grave with a pot of water and a fire-brand, breaks the pot on the stone before he retires. The widow of the deceased breaks her bangles, and throws them on the grave. The son and other mourners bathe, and return home, where they worship a lighted lamp. On the third day, dried twigs of several species of *Ficus* and jāk tree (*Artocarpus integrifolia*), milk, a new cloth, plantains, tender cocoanuts, cheroots, raw rice, betel, etc., required for worship, are taken to the grave. The twigs are burnt, and reduced to ashes, with which, mixed with water, the figure of a human being is made. It is covered with a new cloth, and flowers are thrown on it. Pūja is done to plantains, cocoanut, etc., placed on a plantain leaf, and milk is poured over the figure by relations and friends. The widow breaks her tāli string, and throws it on the figure. The son, and the four bearers who carried the corpse to the grave, are shaved. Each of the bearers is made to stand up, holding a pestle. The barber touches their shoulders with holy grass



dipped in gingelly (*Sesamum*) oil. Raw rice, and other eatables, are sent to the houses of the bearers by the son of the deceased. At night the cloths, turban, and other personal effects of the dead man are worshipped. Pollution is removed on the eleventh day by a Brāhman sprinkling holy water, and the caste people are fed. They perform *srādh*. By some Okkiliyans, the corpse is, like that of a Lingāyat Badaga, etc., carried to the burial-ground in a structure called *tēru kattu*, made of a bamboo framework surmounted by a canopy, whereon are placed five brass vessels (*kalasam*). The structure is decorated with cloths, flags, and plantain trees.

The Morasu Vakkaligas, who sacrifice their fingers, are dealt with separately (*see* Morasu).

Ōlai.—A sub-division of Palli, the members of which wear a ear ornament called *ōlai*.

Olāro.—A sub-division of Gadaba.

Olēkara.—*See* Vilyakāra.

Olikala (pyre and ashes).—An exogamous sept of *Dēvānga*.

Omanaito.—The Omanaitos or Omaidos are an Oriya cultivating caste, for the following account of which I am indebted to Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao. According to a tradition, the ancestor of the caste was one Amātya, a minister of *Srī Rāma* at *Ayōdhya*. After *Rāma* had gone to heaven, there was no one to take care of them, and they took to agriculture. The caste is divided into two endogamous sections, called *Bodo* (big) and *Sanno* (little). The latter are regarded as illegitimate children of the former by a *Bottada*, *Gaudo*, or other woman. The *Bodo* section is divided into septs, called *Sva* (parrot), *Bhāg* (tiger), *Kochchimo* (tortoise), *Nāga* (cobra), *Sila* (stone), *Dhūdho* (milk), *Kumda* (*Cucurbita maxima*), and *Kukru* (dog).

The caste headman is called Bhatha Nāyak, whose office is hereditary. He arranges council meetings for settling social questions, and takes a leading part in excommunicating members of the caste. Like the Gōnds, the Omanaitos cannot tolerate a man suffering from sores, and he is formally excommunicated. To be received back into the caste, he has to give a caste feast, of which the Bhatha Nāyak is the first to partake.

Girls are married before or after puberty. A man claims his paternal aunt's daughter in marriage. As soon as a young man's parents think it is time that he should get married, they set out, with some sweets and jaggery (crude sugar), for the house of the paternal aunt, where the hand of her daughter is asked for. A second visit of a similar nature is made later on, when the marriage is decided on. An auspicious day is fixed by the Dēsāri. A messenger is sent to the house of the bride-elect with some rice, three rupees, a sheep, and a new cloth, which are presented to her parents, who invite the bridegroom and his party to come on the appointed day. On that day, the bridegroom is conducted in procession, sometimes on horseback, to the bride's village. There, in front of her hut, a pandal (booth) has been constructed of eight posts of the sāl tree (*Shorea robusta*), and a central post of the ippa (*Bassia*) tree, to which seven pieces of turmeric and seven mango leaves are tied. At the auspicious moment, the bridegroom is conducted in procession to the booth, and the messenger says aloud to the paternal aunt "The bridegroom has come. Bring the bride quickly." She stands by the side of the bridegroom, and the Dēsāri links together their little fingers, while the women throw rice coloured with turmeric over them. Water, which has been brought from the village stream at early morn, and coloured with turmeric, is



poured over the couple from five pots. They then dress themselves in new cloths presented by their fathers-in-law. A feast is given by the bride's party. On the following day, the bride is conducted to the home of the bridegroom, at the entrance to which they are met by the bridegroom's mother, who sprinkles rice coloured with turmeric over them, and washes their feet with turmeric-water. Liquor is then distributed, and a meal partaken of. The Dēsāri takes seven grains of rice and seven areca nuts and ties them up in the ends of the cloths of the contracting couple. On the following day, a feast is held, and, next day, the parties of the bride and bridegroom throw turmeric-water over each other. All then repair to the stream, and bathe. A feast follows, for which a sheep is killed.

It is noted, in the Gazetteer of the Vizagapatam District, that in the course of an Omanaito wedding there is a free fight, with mud for missiles.

The remarriage of widows is permitted, and a younger brother may marry the widow of his elder brother. Divorce is allowed, and divorcées may marry again.

The Omanaitos worship Tākurāni and Chāmariya Dēvata, as priest of whom a member of the caste officiates. An annual festival is held in the month of Chaitro.

The dead are burnt. Pollution on account of a death in a family lasts for ten days, during which the caste occupation is not carried out, and the mourners are fed by people of another sept. On the eleventh day a feast is held, at which liquor is forbidden.

The caste title is usually Nāyako, but the more prosperous take the title Pātro.

Ondipuli.—Recorded, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as Telugu-speaking cultivators and cattle-breeders

in the Salem district. The name is sometimes applied to the beggars attached to the Palli caste.

Onnām Parisha (first party).—A section of Elayad.

Onne (*Pterocarpus Marsupium*).—An exogamous sept of Toreyas, who are not allowed to mark their foreheads with the juice which exudes from the trunk of this tree.

Onteddu.—Onteddu or Onti-eddu is the name of a sub-division of Gānigas or Gāndlas, who only use one bullock for their oil-mills.

Opoto.—Opoto or Apoto is the name of the palanquin-bearing section of Gaudos.

Oppamtara.—A title conferred by the Rāja of Cochin on some Nāyars.

Oppanakkāran (trader).—Telugu traders and agriculturists. Recorded as a sub-division of Baliya.

Oppomarango (*Achyranthes aspera*).—An exogamous sept of Bhondāri, the members of which may not use the root as a tooth-brush.

Ore.—An honorific title of Nāyars.

Origabhakthudu (saluting devotee).—A class of mendicants, who are said to beg only from Perikes.

Oriya.—Oriya, or Uriya, is a general term for those who speak the Oriya language. At times of census, it has been recorded as a sub-division of various castes, *e.g.*, Sōndi and Dhōbi.

Oruganti.—A sub-division of Kāpu and Mutrācha.

Orunūl (one string).—A sub-division of Mārāns, whose widows do not remarry.

Oshtama.—A corrupt form of the word Vaishnava, applied to Sātānis, who are called by illiterate folk Oishnamāru or Oshtamāru.

Osta.—Recorded, in the Travancore Census Report, 1901, as the name of a caste of barbers for Muhammadans.



Otattu (tile-makers).—An occupational name for Nāyars, who tile or thatch temples and Brāhman houses.

Ottaisekkan.—The name, indicating those who work their oil-mill with a single bullock, of a sub-division of Vāniyan.

Ottikunda (empty pot).—An exogamous sept of Kamma.

Paccha (green).—An exogamous sept of Kamma. The equivalent Pacchai is a sub-division of Tamil Paraiyans, and of Malaiyālis who have settled on the Pacchaimalais (green hills). Pacchi powāku (green tobacco) occurs as an exogamous sept of Dēvānga. Pacchai Kutti is the name given to Koravas who travel about the country as professional tattooers, the operation of tattooing being known as pricking with green. In like manner, Pacchai Botlu is the name for Oddēs, who are itinerant tattooers in the Ganjam, Vizagapatam, and Godāvāri districts.

↓ **Pachilia**.—A sub-division of Oriya Gaudos.

Pada (fighting).—A sub-division of Nāyar.

Padahāru Mādala (sixteen mādalas).—The name, indicating the amount of the bride-price, of a section of Upparas. A mādala is equal to two rupees. Some say that the name has reference to the modas, or heaps of earth, in which salt was formerly made.

Padaiyāchi.—A synonym or title of Palli or Vannian, and Savalakkāran.

Padāl.—A title of headmen of the Bagatas.

Pādam.—Recorded, in the Travancore Census Report, 1901, as a sub-division of Nāyar. Pādamangalam

or Pādamangalakkār is also recorded as a sub-division of Nāyars, who escort processions in temples. Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes that "Pādamangalam and the Tamil Pādam are recorded as a division of Nāyars, but they are said to be immigrants to Travancore from the Tamil country." Pādam also occurs as an exogamous sept of Moosu Kamma.

Padarti.—A title of pūjāris (priests) in South Canara, and a name by which Stānikas are called.

Padavala (boat).—An exogamous sept of Dē-vānga.

Padiga Rāju.—Recorded, in the Madras Census Report, as the same as Bhatrāzu. The Padiga Rājulu are, however, beggars attached to the Padma Sālēs, and apparently distinct from Bhatrāzus. The name is probably derived from padiga, a kind of vessel, and may bear reference to the vessel which they carry with them on their begging expeditions.

Padma (lotus).—A sub-division of Velama.

Padma Sālē.—The Padma (lotus) Sālēs are a Telugu-speaking caste of weavers, who are scattered all over the Madras Presidency. The majority are engaged in their hereditary occupation, but only the minority possess looms of their own, and they work, for the most part, for the more prosperous owners of hand-looms. As a class they are poor, being addicted to strong drinks, and in the hands of the money-lenders, who take care that their customers always remain in debt to them. Like the Kaikōlans, the Padma Sālēs weave the coarser kinds of cotton cloths, and cannot compete with the Patnūlkārans and Khātrēs in the manufacture of the finer kinds.

The Padma Sālēs have only one gōtra, Markandēya. But, like other Telugu castes, they have a number of

exogamous septs or intipērus, of which the following are examples :—

Bandāri, treasurer.	Paththi, cotton.
Bomma, an idol.	Putta, ant-hill.
Canji, gruel.	Thêlu, scorpion.
Chinthaginjala, tamarind seeds.	Tangedla, <i>Cassia auriculata</i> .
Gōrantla, <i>Lawsonia alba</i> .	Tumma, <i>Acacia arabica</i> .
Jinka, gazelle.	Avari, indigo plant.
Kālava, ditch.	Chinnam, gold ?
Kāsulu, copper coins.	Gurram, horse.
Kongara, crane.	Geddām, beard.
Kadavala, pots.	Kōta, fort.
Manchi, good.	Mēda, raised mound.
Nili, indigo.	Middala, storeyed house.
Nūkalu, flour of grain or pulse.	Māmidla, mango.
Nyāyam, justice.	Narāla, nerves.
Ūtla, rope for hanging pots.	Pūla, flowers.
Pōthu, male.	Sādhu, quiet or meek.

The Padma Sālēs profess to be Vaishnavites, but some are Saivites. All the families of the exogamous sept Sādhu are said to be lingam-wearing Saivites. In addition to their house-god Venkatēswara, they worship Pulikōndla Rangaswāmi, Maremma, Durgamma, Narasappa, Sunkālamma, Urukundhi Viranna, Gangamma, Kinkiniamma, Mutyālamma, Kālelamma, Ankamma, and Padvetiamma. Their caste deity is Bhāvana Rishi, to whom, in some places, a special temple is dedicated. A festival in honour of this deity is celebrated annually, during which the god and goddess are represented by two decorated pots placed on a model of a tiger (vyagra vāhanam), to which, on the last day of the ceremonial, large quantities of rice and vegetables are offered, which are distributed among the loom-owners, pūjari, headman, fasting celebrants, etc.

The Padma Sālēs belong to the right-hand, and the Dēvāngas to the left-hand faction, and the latter aver

that the Padma Sālēs took away the body of the goddess Chaudēsvari, leaving them the head.

Three kinds of beggars are attached to the Padma Sālēs, viz., Sādhana Sūrulu, Padiga Rājulu or Koonapilli vāndlu, and Inaka-mukku Bhatrāzus. Concerning the Sādhana Sūrulu, Buchanan writes as follows.* “The Vaishnavite section of the Samay Sale is called Padma Sālē. The whole Shalay formerly wore the linga, but, a house having been possessed by a devil, and this sect having been called on to cast him out, all their prayers were of no avail. At length ten persons, having thrown aside their linga, and offered up their supplications to Vishnu, they succeeded in expelling the enemy, and ever afterwards they followed the worship of this god, in which they have been initiated by their brethren. The descendants of these men, who are called Sadana Asholu (Sādana Sūrulu), or the celebrated heroes, never work, and, having dedicated themselves to god, live upon the charity of the industrious part of the caste, with whom they disdain to marry.”

The Padiga Rājulu are supposed to be the descendants of three persons, Adigadu, Padigadu and Baludu, who sprang from the sweat of Bhāvana Rishi, and the following legend is current concerning the origin of the Padma Sālēs and Padiga Rājulu. At the creation of the world, men were naked, and one Markandēya, who was sixteen years old, was asked to weave cloths. To enable him to do so, he did thapas (penance), and from the sacred fire arose Bhāvana Rishi, bearing a bundle of thread obtained from the lotus which sprang from Vishnu’s navel. Bhāvana Rishi made cloths, and presented them to the Dēvatas, and offered a cloth to Bhairava also.

* Journey through Mysore, Canara and Malabar, 1807.



This he refused to accept, as it was the last, and not the first, which is usually rolled up, and kept on the loom. Finding it unsuitable for wearing, Bhairava uttered a curse that the cloths made should wear out in six months. Accordingly, Siva asked Bhāvana to procure him a tiger's skin for wearing. Narada came to the assistance of Bhāvana, and told him to go to Udayagiri, where Bhadrāvati, the daughter of Sūrya, was doing penance to secure Bhāvana as her husband. She promised to secure a skin, if he would marry her. To this he consented, and, in due course, received the tiger's skin. Making the tiger his vāhanam (vehicle), he proceeded to the abode of Siva (Kailāsām), and on his way thither met a Rākshasa, whom he killed in a fight, in the course of which he sweated profusely. From the sweat proceeded Adigadu, Padigadu, and Baludu. When he eventually reached Siva, the tiger, on the sacred ashes being thrown over it, cast its skin, which Siva appropriated. In consequence of this legend, tigers are held in reverence by the Padma Sālēs, who believe that they will not molest them.

The legendary origin of the Padma Sālēs is given as follows in the Baramahal Records.* “In former days, the other sects of weavers used annually to present a piece of cloth to a rishi or saint, named Markandēyulu. One year they omitted to make their offering at the customary period, which neglect enraged the rishi, who performed a yāga or sacrifice of fire, and, by the power of mantras or prayers, he caused a man to spring up out of the fire of the sacrifice, and called him Padma Saliwarlu, and directed him to weave a piece of cloth for his use. This he did, and presented

* Section III. Inhabitants. Madras Government Press, 1907.

it to the rishi, saying 'Oh ! Swāmi, who is thy servant to worship, and how is he to obtain moksham or admittance to the presence of the Supreme?' The rishi answered 'Pay adoration to me, and thou wilt obtain moksham.' "

The office of headman (Setti or Gaudu) is hereditary. The headman has under him an assistant, called Ummidi Setti or Ganumukhi, who is the caste messenger, and is exempt from the various subscriptions for temple festivals, etc.

When a girl reaches puberty, she is forbidden to eat meat or *Amarantus* during the period of ceremonial pollution. In settling the preliminaries of a marriage, a Brāhman purōhit takes part. With some Padma Sālēs it is etiquette not to give direct answers when a marriage is being fixed up. For example, those who have come to seek the hand of a girl say "We have come for a sumptuous meal," to which the girl's parents, if consenting to the match, will reply "We are ready to feed you. You are our near relations." The marriage rites are a blend of the Canarese and Telugu types. In the Ceded districts, the bride is conveyed to the house of the bridegroom, seated on a bull, after worship has been done to Hanumān. As she enters the house, a cocoanut is waved, and thrown on the ground. She then bathes in an enclosure with four posts, round which cotton thread has been wound nine times. Wrist-threads of cotton and wool are tied on the bride and bridegroom. The bottu (marriage badge) is tied round the bride's neck, and she stands on a pile of cholum (*Sorghum vulgare* : millet) on the floor or in a basket. The bridegroom stands on a mill-stone. While the bottu is being tied, a screen is interposed between the contracting couple. The bride's nose-screw ornament is dropped into a plate of milk,



from which she has to pick it out five times. Towards evening, the bridal couple go in procession through the streets, and to the temple, if there is one. On their return to the house, the bridegroom picks up the bride, and dances for a short time before entering. This ceremony is called *dēga-āta*, and is performed by several Telugu castes.

Some Padma Sālēs bury their dead in the usual manner, others, like the Lingāyats, in a sitting posture. It is customary, in some places, to offer up a fowl to the corpse before it is removed from the house, and, if a death occurs on a Saturday or Sunday, a fowl is tied to the bier, and burnt with the corpse. This is done in the belief that otherwise another death would very soon take place. The Tamilians, in like manner, have a proverb "A Saturday corpse will not go alone." On the way to the burial-ground, the corpse is laid down, and water poured into the mouth. The son takes a pot of water round the grave, and holes are made in it by the Ummidi Setti, through which the water trickles out. On the fifth day, a sheep is killed, and eaten. During the evening the Sātāni comes, and, after doing *pūja* (worship), gives the relatives of the deceased sacred arrack (liquor) in lieu of holy water (*thirtham*) and meat, for which he receives payment. On the last day of the death ceremonies (*karmāndiram*), the Sātāni again comes with arrack, and, according to a note before me, all get drunk. (*See Sālē.*)

Pagadāla (trader in coral).—A sub-division or exogamous sept of Baliya and Kavarai. The Pagadāla Baliyas of the Vizagapatam district are described as dealing in coral and pearls. Pagada Mūkara (coral nose-ring) has been returned as a sub-division of Kamma.

Pagati Vēsham.—A class of Telugu beggars, who put on disguises (vēsham) while begging.* At the annual festival at Tirupati in honour of the goddess Gangamma, custom requires the people to appear in a different disguise every morning and evening. These disguises include those of a Bairāgi, serpent, etc.†

Paguththan.—A title of Sembadavan.

Paida (gold or money).—An exogamous sept of Māla. The equivalent Paidam occurs as an exogamous sept of Dēvānga.

Paidi.—The Paidis are summed up, in the Madras Census Report, 1891, as “a class of agricultural labourers and weavers, found in the Vizagapatam district. Some of them are employed as servants and village watchmen. They are closely akin to the Pānos and Dōmbos of the hills, and Mālas of the plains. They speak a corrupt dialect of Uriya.” In the Census Report, 1901, Kangara (servant) is recorded as a synonym for Paidi.

For the following note on the Paidis of the Vizagapatam district, I am mainly indebted to Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao. There is a great deal of confusion concerning this caste, and the general impression seems to be that it is the same as Dōmb and Pāno. I am informed that the same man would be called Paidi by Telugus, Dōmb by the Savaras, and Pāno by the Konds. In the interior of the Jeypore Agency tracts the Dōmb and Paidis both repudiate the suggestion that they are connected with each other. The Paidis, in some places, claim to belong to the Vālmiki kulam, and to be descended from Vālmiki, the author of the Rāmāyana. A similar descent, it may be noted, is claimed by the Bōyas. In the Vizagapatam Manual, the Paidimālalu or Paidi Mālas (hill Mālas) are

* Madras Census Report, 1901.

† See Manual of the North Arcot district, I, 187.



described as cultivating land, serving as servants and village watchmen, and spinning cotton. It is said that they will not eat food, which has been seen by Kōmatis. The Paidis stoutly deny their connection with the Mālas.

When a Paidi girl reaches puberty, she is kept under pollution for a varying number of days, and, on the last day, a Mādiga is summoned, who cuts her finger and toe nails, after which she bathes. Girls are married either before or after puberty. The mēnarikam custom is in force, according to which a man should marry his maternal uncle's daughter. If he does so, the bride-price (vōli) is fixed at five rupees; otherwise it is ten rupees. The marriage ceremonies last over four days, and are of the low-country Telugu type. The remarriage of widows and divorce are permitted.

The Paidis are Vaishnavites, and sing songs in praise of Rāma during the month Karthika (November-December). Each family feeds a few of the castemen at least once during that month. They also observe the Sankramanam festival, at which they usually wear new clothes. The dead are either burnt or buried, and the chinna (small) and pedda rōzu (big day) death ceremonies are observed.

Some Paidis are cultivators, but a large number are prosperous traders, buying up the hill produce, and bringing it to the low-country, where it is sold at markets. Their children study English in the hill schools. The caste titles are Anna and Ayya.

Some time ago some prisoners, who called themselves Billaikāvu (cat-eaters), were confined in the Vizagapatam jail. I am informed that these people are Māla Paidis, who eat cat flesh.

The following note refers to the Paidis who live in the southern part of Ganjam. Some have settled as

watchmen, or in other capacities, among the Savaras, whose language they speak in addition to their own. In their marriage ceremonies, they conform to the Telugu type, with certain variations adopted from the Oriya ceremonial. On the first day, a pandal (booth) is set up, and supported on twelve posts. A feast is given to males during the day, and to females at night. Like the Oriya Dandāsis, they bring water from seven houses of members of castes superior to their own. The auspicious time for tying the pushte (gold marriage badge) on the following day is fixed so as to fall during the night. At the appointed time, the bridegroom rushes into the house of the bride, and the contracting couple throw rice over each other. Taking the bride by the hand, the bridegroom conducts her to the pandal, wherein they take their seats on the dais. The bride should be seated before the bridegroom, and there is a mock struggle to prevent this, and to secure first place for the bridegroom. He then ties a mukkuto (chaplet) on the bride's forehead, a thread on her wrist, and the pushte on her neck. After this has been done, the couple bathe with the water already referred to, and once more come to the dais, where a small quantity of rice, sufficient to fill a measure called adda, is placed before them. Some amusement is derived from the bride abstracting a portion of the rice, so that, when the bridegroom measures it, there is less than there should be. The marriage ceremonies conclude on the third day with offerings to ancestors, and distribution of presents to the newly married couple.

The death ceremonies are based on the Oriya type. On the day after death, the funeral pyre is extinguished, and the ashes are thrown on to a tree or an ant-hill. As they are being borne thither, the priest asks the man



who carries them what has become of the dead person, and he is expected to reply that he has gone to Kāsi (Benares) or Jagannātham. A cloth is spread on the spot where the corpse was burnt, and offerings of food are placed on it. On the fourth day, a pig is killed and cooked. Before being cooked, one of the legs is hung up near the spot where the deceased breathed his last. Death pollution is got rid of by touching oil and turmeric, and the ceremonies conclude with a feast. An annual offering of food is made, in the month of November, to ancestors, unless a death takes place in the family during this month.

The Ganjam Paidis worship the Tākūrānis (village deities), and sacrifice goats and sheep at local temples. As they are a polluting caste, they stand at a distance opposite the entrance to the temple, and, before they retire, take a pinch or two of earth. This, on their return home, they place on a cloth spread on a spot which has been cleansed, and set before it the various articles which have been prepared as offerings to the Tākūrāni. When a Paidi is seriously ill, a male or female sorcerer (Bejjo or Bejjano) is consulted. A square, divided into sixteen compartments, is drawn on the floor with rice-flour. In each compartment are placed a leaf, cup of *Butea frondosa*, a quarter-anna piece, and some food. Seven small bows and arrows are set up in front thereof in two lines. On one side of the square a big cup, filled with food, is placed. A fowl is sacrificed, and its blood poured thrice round this cup. Then, placing water in a vessel near the cup, the sorcerer or sorceress throws into it a grain of rice, giving out at the same time the name of some god or goddess. If the rice sinks, it is believed that the illness is caused by the anger of the deity, whose name has been mentioned.

If the rice floats, the names of various deities are called out, until a grain sinks.

It is recorded * that, in the Parvatipūr country of the Vizagapatam district, "the Paidis (Paidī Mālas) do most of the crime, and often commit dacoities on the roads. Like the Konda Doras, they have induced some of the people to employ watchmen of their caste as the price of immunity from theft. They are connected with the Dombus of the Rāyagada and Gunupur tāluks, who are even worse."

Paik.—It is noted by Yule and Burnell,† under the heading Pyke or Paik, that "Wilson gives only one original of the term so expressed in Anglo-Indian speech. He writes 'Pāik or Pāyik, corruptly Pyke, Hind., etc. (from S. padātika), Pāik or Pāyak, Mar., a footman, an armed attendant, an inferior police and revenue officer, a messenger, a courier, a village watchman. In Cuttack the Pāiks formerly constituted a local militia, holding land of the Zamindars or Rājas by the tenure of military service.' But it seems clear to us that there are here two terms rolled together: (a) Pers. Paik, a foot-runner or courier; (b) Hind. pāik and pāyik (also Mahr.) from Skt. padātika, and padika, a foot-soldier."

In the Madras Census Report, 1891, Paiko is defined as "rather an occupational than a caste name. It means a foot-soldier, and is used to denote the retainers of the Uriya Chiefs of Ganjam and Vizagapatam. These men were granted lands on feudal tenure, and belonged to various castes. They are now ordinary agriculturists. Some are employed in the police, and as peons in the various public departments." In the records relating to human sacrifice and infanticide, 1854, the Paiks are

* Gazetteer of the Vizagapatam district.

† Hobson-Jobson.



referred to as matchlock men, by whom the Konds and Gonds are kept in abject servitude. In the Vizagapatam Manual, 1869, various castes are referred to as being "all paiks or fighting men. Formerly they were a very numerous body, but their numbers are much diminished now, that is as fighting men, for the old army used to be paid, some in money, and some in grants of land. Now there are very few paiks kept up as fighting men; those discharged from service have taken to trading with the coast, and to cultivating their pieces of land. The fort at Kōtapād on the Bustar frontier always had a standing garrison of several hundred paiks. They are gradually being disbanded since we have put police there. The men are a fine race, brave, and capital shots with the matchlock." Paiko has been recorded, at times of census, as a synonym or sub-division of Rona. And Paikarāyi occurs as a title of Badhōyis.

Paiki.—A division of Toda.

✓ **Pailmān.**—Pailmān or Pailwān has been described * as "an occupational term meaning a wrestler, used by all classes following the occupation, whether they are Hindus or Musalmans. The Hindus among them are usually Gollas or Jettis." In the Telugu country, the Pailmāns wrestle, and perform various mountebank, conjuring, and juggling feats. A wandering troupe of Marātha Pailwāns performed before me various stick-exercises, acrobatic and contortionist feats, and balancing feats on a bamboo pole supported in the kamerband (belly-band) of a veteran member of the troupe. The performance wound up with gymnastics on a lofty pole kept erect by means of ropes tied to casual trees and tent-pegs, and surmounted by a pliant bamboo, on which the

* Madras Census Report, 1901.

performer swung and balanced himself while playing a drum, or supporting a pile of earthen pots surmounted by a brass vessel on his head. The entertainment took place amid the music of drum and clarionet, and the patter of one of the troupe, the performers playing the drum in the waits between their turns.

Painda.—A synonym of Paidi.

Pākanāti (eastern territory).—A sub-division of various Telugu classes, *e.g.*, Baliĵa, Golla, Kamsala, Kāpu, Māla, and Tsākala.

Paki.—Recorded by the Rev. J. Cain * as a sweeper caste in the Godāvari district, members of which have come from the neighbourhood of Vizagapatam, and are great sticklers for their caste rules.

Pakinādu.—A territorial sub-division of Kamsalas and other Telugu castes, corresponding to Pākanāti.

Pakirithi.—Pakirithi or Parigiri, meaning Vaishnavite, is a sub-division of Besthas, who, on ceremonial occasions, wear the Vaishnava sect mark.

Pāl (milk).—Pāl or Pāla has been recorded as a sub-division of Idaiyan and Kurumba, and an exogamous sept of Māla. (*See* Hālu.)

Palakala (planks).—An exogamous sept of Kamma.

Pālamala.—Pālama is recorded as a sub-division of the Kānikars of Travancore and Palamalathillom, said to denote the mountain with trees with milky juice, as an exogamous sept of the same tribe.

Pālāvili.—A gōtra of Gollas, who are not allowed to erect pālāvili, or small booths inside the house for the purpose of worship.

Pālayakkāran.—*See* Mutrācha.

Paligiri.—A sub-division of Mutrācha.

Palissa (shield) **Kollan**.—A class of Kollans in Malabar, who make leather shields. It is recorded, in the Gazetteer of Malabar, that, at the tāli-kettu ceremony, “the girl and manavālan (bridegroom) go to the tank on the last day of the ceremony. The girl, standing in the tank, ducks her whole body under water thrice. As she does so for the third time, a pāndibali or triangular platter made of cocoanut fronds and pieces of plantain stem and leaf plaited together and adorned with five lighted wicks, is thrown over her into the water, and cut in half as it floats by an enangan, who sings a song called Kālikkakam. Lastly, the girl chops in two a cocoanut placed on the bank. She aims two blows at it, and failure to sever it with a third is considered inauspicious. Among Palissa Kollans and some other castes, the lucky dip ceremony is performed on the last day (called nālām kalyānam or fourth marriage). An enangan, drawing out the packets at random, distributes them to the manavālan, the girl, and himself in turn. It is lucky for the manavālan to get the gold, and the girl the silver. A significant finish to the ceremony in the form of a symbolical divorce is not infrequent in South Malabar at all events. Thus, among the Palissa Kollans the manavālan takes a piece of thread from his mundu (cloth), and gives it, saying ‘Here is your sister’s acchāram’ to the girl’s brother, who breaks it in two and puffs it towards him. In other cases, the manavālan gives the girl a cloth on the first day, and cuts it in two, giving her one half on the last ; or the manavālan and an enangan of the girl hold opposite ends of a cloth, which the manavālan cuts and tears in two, and then gives both pieces to the girl.”

Paliyans of Madura and Tinnevely. In a note on the Malai (hill) Paliyans of the Madura district, the



Rev. J. E. Tracy writes as follows. "I went to their village at the foot of the Periyar hills, and can testify to their being the most abject, hopeless, and unpromising specimens of humanity that I have ever seen. There were about forty of them in the little settlement, which was situated in a lovely spot. A stream of pure water was flowing within a few feet of their huts, and yet they were as foul and filthy in their personal appearance as if they were mere animals, and very unclean ones. Rich land that produced a luxuriant crop of rank reeds was all around them, and, with a little exertion on their part, might have been abundantly irrigated, and produced continuous crops of grain. Yet they lived entirely on nuts and roots, and various kinds of gum that they gathered in the forest on the slopes of the hills above their settlement. Only two of the community had ever been more than seven miles away from their village into the open country below them. Their huts were built entirely of grass, and consisted of only one room each, and that open at the ends. The chief man of the community was an old man with white hair. His distinctive privilege was that he was allowed to sleep between two fires at night, while no one else was allowed to have but one—a distinction that they were very complaisant about, perhaps because with the distinction was the accompanying obligation to see that the community's fire never went out. As he was also the only man in the community who was allowed to have two wives, I inferred that he delegated to them the privilege of looking after the fires, while he did the sleeping, whereas, in other families, the man and wife had to take turn and turn about to see that the fire had not to be re-lighted in the morning. They were as ignorant as they were filthy. They had no place of worship, but seemed to



agree that the demons of the forest around them were the only beings that they had to fear besides the Forest Department. They were barely clothed, their rags being held about them, in one or two cases, with girdles of twisted grass. They had much the same appearance that many a famine subject presented in the famine of 1877, but they seemed to have had no better times to look back upon, and hence took their condition as a matter of course. The forest had been their home from time immemorial. Yet the forest seemed to have taught them nothing more than it might have been supposed to have taught the prowling jackal or the laughing hyæna. There were no domesticated animals about their place: strange to say, not even a pariah dog. They appeared to have no idea of hunting, any more than they had of agriculture. And, as for any ideas of the beauty or solemnity of the place that they had selected as their village site, they were as innocent of such things as they were of the beauties of Robert Browning's verse."

In a note written in 1817, Mr. T. Turnbull states that the Madura Pulliers "are never seen unless when they come down to travellers to crave a piece of tobacco or a rag of cloth, for which they have a great predilection. The women are said to lay their infants on warm ashes after delivery, as a substitute for warm clothing and beds."

The Palayans, or Pulleer, are described by General Burton * as "good trackers, and many of them carried bows and arrows, and a few even possessed matchlocks. I met one of these villagers going out on a sporting excursion. He had on his head a great chatty (earthen pot) full of water, and an old brass-bound matchlock.

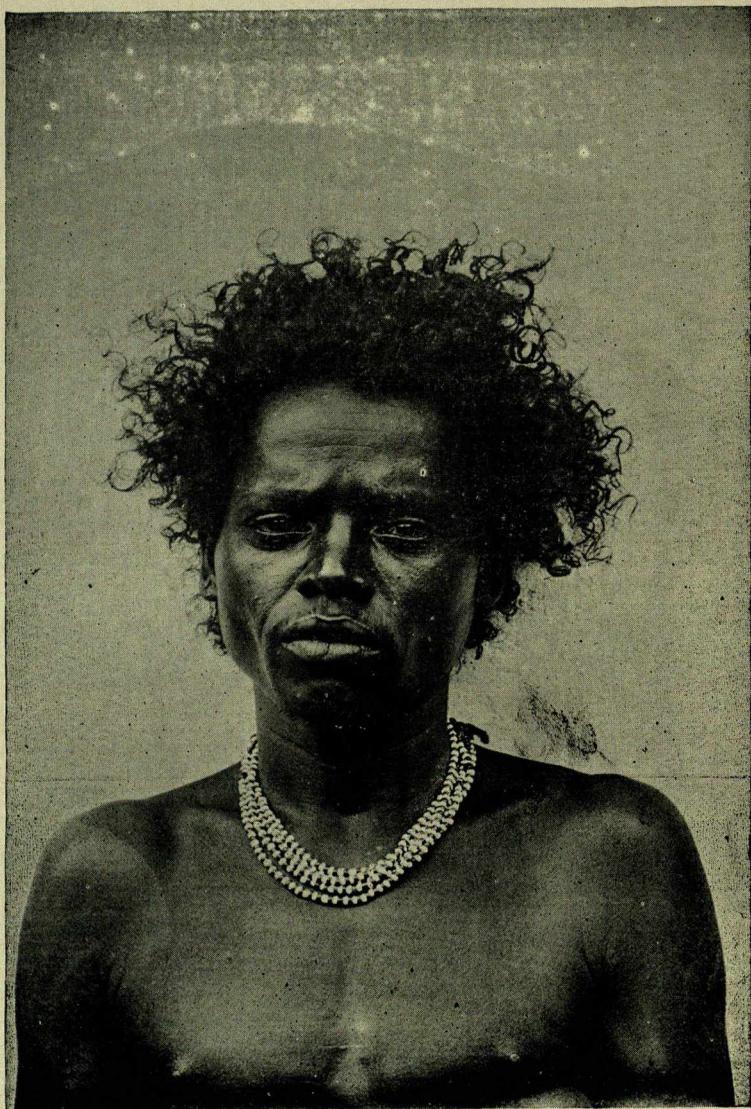
* An Indian Olio.



It was the height of the dry season. He was taking water to a hollow in a rock, which he kept carefully replenished, and then ensconced himself in a clump of bushes hard by, and waited all day, if necessary, with true native patience, for hog, deer, or pea-fowl to approach his ambush."

In the Madura Manual, it is noted that "the Poleiyans have always been the prædial slaves of the Kunuvans. According to the survey account, they are the aborigines of the Palni hills. The marriage ceremony consists merely of a declaration of consent made by both parties at a feast, to which all their relatives are invited. As soon as a case of small-pox occurs in one of their villages, a cordon is drawn round it, and access to other villages is denied to all the inhabitants of the infected locality, who at once desert their homes, and camp out for a sufficiently long period. The individual attacked is left to his fate, and no medicine is exhibited to him, as it is supposed that the malady is brought on solely by the just displeasure of the gods. They bury their dead."

The Paliyans are described, in the Gazetteer of the Madura district, as a "very backward caste, who reside in small scattered parties amid the jungles of the Upper Palnis and the Varushanād valley. They speak Tamil with a peculiar intonation, which renders it scarcely intelligible. They are much less civilised than the Pulaiyans, but do not eat beef, and consequently carry no pollution. They sometimes build themselves grass huts, but often they live on platforms up trees, in caves, or under rocks. Their clothes are of the scantiest and dirtiest, and are sometimes eked out with grass or leaves. They live upon roots (yams), leaves, and honey. They cook the roots by putting them into a pit in the ground,



PALIYAN.



heaping wood upon them, and lighting it. The fire is usually kept burning all night as a protection against wild beasts, and it is often the only sign of the presence of the Paliyans in a jungle, for they are shy folk, who avoid other people. They make fire with quartz and steel, using the floss of the silk-cotton tree as tinder. Weddings are conducted without ceremonies, the understanding being that the man shall collect food, and the woman cook it. When one of them dies, the rest leave the body as it is, and avoid the spot for some months."

A detailed account of the Paliyans of the Palni hills by the Rev. F. Dahmen has recently been published,* to which I am indebted for the following information. "The Paliyans are a nomadic tribe, who for the most part rove in small parties through the jungle-clad gorges that fringe the Upper Palnis plateau. There they maintain themselves mostly on the products of the chase and on roots (yams, etc.), leaves and wild fruits (*e.g.*, of the wild date tree), at times also by hiring their labour to the Kunnuvan or Mannadi villagers. The find of a beehive in the hollow of some tree is a veritable feast for them. No sooner have they smoked the bees out than they greedily snatch at the combs, and ravenously devour them on the spot, with wax, grubs, and all. Against ailments the Paliyans have their own remedies: in fact, some Paliyans have made a name for themselves by their knowledge of the medicinal properties of herbs and roots. Thus, for instance, they make from certain roots (*periya uri katti vēr*) a white powder known as a very effective purgative. Against snake-bite they always carry with them certain leaves (*naru valli vēr*), which they hold to be a very efficient antidote. As soon as

* Anthropos, III, 1908.



one of them is bitten, he chews these, and also applies them to the wound. Patience and cunning above all are required in their hunting-methods. One of their devices, used for big game, *e.g.*, against the sambar (deer), or against the boar, consists in digging pitfalls, carefully covered up with twigs and leaves. On the animal being entrapped, it is dispatched with clubs or the aruvāl (sickle). Another means consists in arranging a heap of big stones on a kind of platform, one end of which is made to rest on higher ground, the other skilfully equipoised by a stick resting on a fork, where it remains fixed by means of strong twine so disposed that the least movement makes the lever-like stick on the fork fly off, while the platform and the stones come rapidly down with a crash. The string which secures the lever is so arranged as to unloose itself at the least touch, and the intended victim can hardly taste the food that serves for bait without bringing the platform with all its weight down upon itself. Similar traps, but on a smaller scale, are used to catch smaller animals: hares, wild fowl, etc. Flying squirrels are smoked out of the hollows of trees, and porcupines out of their burrows, and then captured or clubbed to death on their coming out. The first drops of blood of any animal the Paliyans kill are offered to their god. A good catch is a great boon for the famished Paliyan. The meat obtained therefrom must be divided between all the families of the settlement. The skins, if valuable, are preserved to barter for the little commodities they may stand in need of, or to give as a tribute to their chief. One of their methods for procuring fish consists in throwing the leaves of a creeper called in Tamil karungakodi, after rubbing them, into the water. Soon the fish is seen floating on the surface. Rough fashioned hooks are also used. When not engaged on some



expedition, or not working for hire, the Paliyans at times occupy themselves in the fabrication of small bird-cages, or in weaving a rough kind of mat, or in basket-making. The small nicknacks they turn out are made according to rather ingenious patterns, and partly coloured with red and green vegetable dyes. These, with the skins of animals, and the odoriferous resin collected from the dammer tree, are about the only articles which they barter or sell to the inhabitants of the plains, or to the Mannadis."

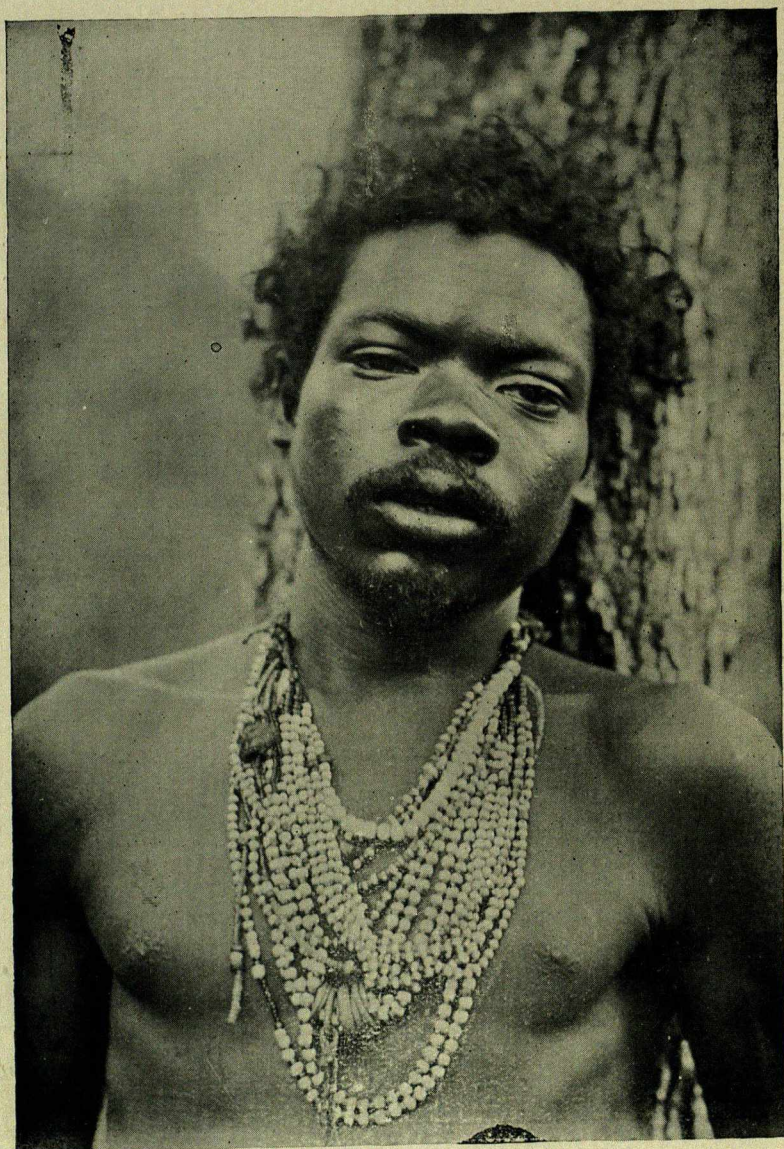
Concerning the religion and superstitions of the Paliyans, the Rev. F. Dahmen writes as follows. "The principal religious ceremony takes place about the beginning of March. Mayāndi (the god) is usually represented by a stone, preferably one to which nature has given some curious shape, the serpent form being especially valued. I said 'represented,' for, according to our Paliyans, the stone itself is not the god, who is supposed to live somewhere, they do not exactly know where. The stone that represents him has its shrine at the foot of a tree, or is simply sheltered by a small thatched covering. There, on the appointed day, the Paliyans gather before sunrise. Fire is made in a hole in front of the sacred stone, a fine cock brought in, decapitated amidst the music of horn and drum and the blood made to drip on the fire. The head of the fowl ought to be severed at one blow, as this is a sign of the satisfaction of the god for the past, and of further protection for the future. Should the head still hang, this would be held a bad omen, foreboding calamities for the year ensuing. The instrument used in this sacred operation is the aruvāl, but the sacrificial aruvāl cannot be used but for this holy purpose. Powers of witchcraft and magic are attributed to the Paliyans by other castes, and probably



believed in by themselves. The following device adopted by them to protect themselves from the attacks of wild animals, the panther in particular, may be given as an illustration. Four jackals' tails are planted in four different spots, chosen so as to include the area within which they wish to be safe from the claws of the brute. This is deemed protection enough: though panthers should enter the magic square, they could do the Paliyans no harm; their mouths are locked." It is noted by the Rev. F. Dahmen that Paliyans sometimes go on a pilgrimage to the Hindu shrine of Subrahmaniyam at Palni.

Writing concerning the Paliyans who live on the Travancore frontier near Shenkotta, Mr. G. F. D'Penha states* that they account for their origin by saying that, at some very remote period, an Eluvan took refuge during a famine in the hills, and there took to wife a Palliyar woman, and that the Palliyars are descended from these two. "The Palliyar," he continues, "is just a shade lower than the Eluvan. He is permitted to enter the houses of Eluvans, Elavanians (betel-growers), and even of Maravars, and in the hills, where the rigour of the social code is relaxed to suit circumstances, the higher castes mentioned will even drink water given by Palliyars, and eat roots cooked by them. The Palliyars regard sylvan deities with great veneration. Kurupuswāmi is the tribe's tutelary god, and, when a great haul of wild honey is made, offerings are given at some shrine. They pretend to be followers of Siva, and always attend the Adi Amavasai ceremonies at Courtallum. The Palliyar cultivates nothing, not even a sweet potato. He keeps no animal, except a stray dog or two. An axe, a knife, and a pot are all the impedimenta he carries. An

* Ind. Ant., XXX, 1902.



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expert honey-hunter, he will risk his neck climbing lofty precipices or precipitous cliffs. A species of sago-palm furnishes him with a glairy glutinous fluid on which he thrives, and such small animals as the iguana (*Varanus*), the tortoise, and the larvæ of hives are never-failing luxuries."

The Paliyans, whom I investigated in North Tinnevely, were living in the jungles near the base of the mountains, in small isolated communities separated from each other by a distance of several miles. They speak Tamil with a peculiar intonation, which recalls to mind the Irulas. They are wholly illiterate, and only a few can count up to ten. A woman has been known to forget her own name. At a marriage, the father, taking the hand of the bride, and putting it into that of the bridegroom, says "I give this girl to you. Give her roots and leaves, and protect her." The value of a bride or bridegroom depends very much on the quantity of roots, etc., which he or she can collect. When a widow does not remarry, the males of the community supply her with roots and other products of the jungle. Marriages are, as a rule, contracted within the settlement, and complications occasionally occur owing to the absence of a girl of suitable age for a young man. Indeed, in one settlement I came across two brothers, who had for this reason resorted to the adelphous form of polyandry. It would be interesting to note hereafter if this custom, thus casually introduced, becomes established in the tribe. As an exception to the rule of marriage within the settlement, it was noted that a party of Paliyans had wandered from the Gandamanaikanūr forests to the jungle of Ayanarkoil, and there intermarried with the members of the local tribe, with which they became incorporated. The Paliyans admit members



of other castes into their ranks. A case was narrated to me, in which a Maravan cohabited for some time with a Paliya woman, who bore children by him. In this way is the purity of type among the jungle tribes lost as the result of civilisation, and their nasal index reduced from platyrhine to mesorhine dimensions.

The Tinnevely Paliyans say that Valli, the wife of the god Subramaniya, was a Paliyan woman. As they carry no pollution, they are sometimes employed, in return for food, as night watchmen at the Vaishnavite temple known as Azhagar Koil at the base of the hills. They collect for the Forest Department minor produce in the form of root-bark of *Ventilago madraspatana* and *Anisochilus carnosus*, the fruit of *Terminalia Chebula* (myrabolams), honey, bees-wax, etc., which are handed over to a contractor in exchange for rice, tobacco, betel leaves and nuts, chillies, tamarinds and salt. The food thus earned as wages is supplemented by yams (tubers of *Dioscorea*) and roots, which are dug up with a digging-stick, and forest fruits. They implicitly obey the contractor, and it was mainly through his influence that I was enabled to interview them, and measure their bodies, in return for a banquet, whereof they partook seated on the grass in two semicircles, the men in front and women in the rear, and eating off teak leaf plates piled high with rice and vegetables. Though the prodigious mass of food provided was greedily devoured till considerable abdominal distension was visible, dissatisfaction was expressed because it included no meat (mutton), and I had not brought new loin-cloths for them. They laughed, however, when I expressed a hope that they would abandon their dirty cloths, turkey-red turbans and European bead necklaces, and revert to the primitive leafy garment of their forbears. A struggle ensued for



the limited supply of sandal paste, with which a group of men smeared their bodies, in imitation of the higher classes, before they were photographed. A feast given to the Paliyans by some missionaries was marred at the outset by the unfortunate circumstance that betel and tobacco were placed by the side of the food, these articles being of evil omen as they are placed in the grave with the dead. A question whether they eat beef produced marked displeasure, and even roused an apathetic old woman to grunt "Your other questions are fair. You have no right to ask that." If a Paliyan happens to come across the carcase of a cow or buffalo near a stream, it is abandoned, and not approached for a long time. Leather they absolutely refuse to touch, and one of them declined to carry my camera box, because he detected that it had a leather strap.

They make fire with a quartz strike-a-light and steel and the floss of the silk-cotton tree (*Bombax malabaricum*). They have no means of catching or killing animals, birds, or fish with nets, traps, or weapons, but, if they come across the carcase of a goat or deer in the forest, they will roast and eat it. They catch "vermin" (presumably field rats) by smoking them out of their holes, or digging them out with their digging-sticks. Crabs are caught for eating by children, by letting a string with a piece of cloth tied to the end down the hole, and lifting it out thereof when the crab seizes hold of the cloth with its claws. Of wild beasts they are not afraid, and scare them away by screaming, clapping the hands, and rolling down stones into the valleys. I saw one man, who had been badly mauled by a tiger on the buttock and thigh when he was asleep with his wife and child in a cave. During the dry season they live in natural caves and crevices in rocks, but, if these leak



during the rains, they erect a rough shed with the floor raised on poles off the ground, and sloping grass roof, beneath which a fire is kept burning at night, not only for warmth, but also to keep off wild beasts. They are expert at making rapidly improvised shelters at the base of hollow trees by cutting away the wood on one side with a bill-hook. Thus protected, they were quite snug and happy during a heavy shower, while we were miserable amid the drippings from an umbrella and a mango tree.

Savari is a common name among the Tinnevely Paliyans as among other Tamils. It is said to be a corruption of Xavier, but Savari or Sabari are recognised names of Siva and Parvati. There is a temple called Savarimalayan on the Travancore boundary, whereat the festival takes place at the same time as the festival in honour of St. Xavier among Roman Catholics. The women are very timid in the presence of Europeans, and suffer further from hippophobia; the sight of a horse, which they say is as tall as a mountain, like an elephant, producing a regular stampede into the depths of the jungle. They carry their babies slung in a cloth on the back, and not astride the hips according to the common practice of the plains. The position, in confinement, is to sit on a rock with legs dependent. Many of these Paliyans suffer from jungle fever, as a protection against which they wear a piece of turmeric tied round the neck. The dead are buried, and a stone is placed on the grave, which is never re-visited.

Like other primitive tribes, the Paliyans are short of stature and dolichocephalic, and the archaic type of nose persists in some individuals.

Average height 150.9 cm. Nasal index 83 (max. 100).

Pallan.—The Pallans are "a class of agricultural labourers found chiefly in Tanjore, Trichinopoly, Madura



PALLAN.



and Tinnevely. They are also fairly numerous in parts of Salem and Coimbatore, but in the remaining Tamil districts they are found only in very small numbers."*

The name is said to be derived from pallam, a pit, as they were standing on low ground when the castes were originally formed. It is further suggested that the name may be connected with the wet cultivation, at which they are experts, and which is always carried out on low ground. In the Manual of the Madura district (1868), the Pallans are described as "a very numerous, but a most abject and despised race, little, if indeed at all, superior to the Paraiyas. Their principal occupation is ploughing the lands of more fortunate Tamils, and, though nominally free, they are usually slaves in almost every sense of the word, earning by the ceaseless sweat of their brow a bare handful of grain to stay the pangs of hunger, and a rag with which to partly cover their nakedness. They are to be found in almost every village, toiling and moiling for the benefit of Vellālans and others, and with the Paraiyas doing patiently nearly all the hard and dirty work that has to be done. Personal contact with them is avoided by all respectable men, and they are never permitted to dwell within the limits of a village nattam. Their huts form a small detached hamlet, the Pallachēri, removed from a considerable distance from the houses of the respectable inhabitants, and barely separated from that of the Paraiyas, the Parei-chēri. The Pallans are said by some to have sprung from the intercourse of a Sudra and a Brāhman woman. Others say Dēvendra created them for the purpose of labouring in behalf of Vellālans. Whatever may have been their origin, it seems to be tolerably certain that in ancient

* Madras Census Report, 1891.

times they were the slaves of the Vellālans, and regarded by them merely as chattels, and that they were brought by the Vellālans into the Pāndya-mandala." Some Pallans say that they are, like the Kallans, of the lineage of Indra, and that their brides wear a wreath of flowers in token thereof. They consider themselves superior to Paraiyans and Chakkiliyans, as they do not eat beef.

It is stated in the Manual of Tanjore (1883) that the "Pallan and Paraiya are rival castes, each claiming superiority over the other; and a deadly and never-ending conflict in the matter of caste privileges exists between them. They are prædial labourers, and are employed exclusively in the cultivation of paddy (rice) lands. Their women are considered to be particularly skilled in planting and weeding, and, in most parts of the delta, they alone are employed in those operations. The Palla women expose their body above the waist—a distinctive mark of their primitive condition of slavery, of which, however, no trace now exists." It is noted by Mr. G. T. Mackenzie * that "in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the female converts to Christianity in the extreme south ventured, contrary to the old rules for the lower castes, to clothe themselves above the waist. This innovation was made the occasion for threats, violence, and a series of disturbances. Similar disturbances arose from the same cause nearly thirty years later, and, in 1859, Sir Charles Trevelyan, Governor of Madras, interfered, and granted permission to the women of lower caste to wear a cloth over the breasts and shoulders."

In connection with disputes between the right-hand and left-hand factions, it is stated † that "whatever the

* Christianity in Travancore, 1901.

† Gazetteer of the Trichinopoly district.



origin of the factions, feeling still runs very high, especially between the Pallans and the Paraiyans. The violent scenes which occurred in days gone by * no longer occur, but quarrels occur when questions of precedence arise (as when holy food is distributed at festivals to the village goddesses), or if a man of one faction takes a procession down a street inhabited chiefly by members of the other. In former times, members of the opposite faction would not live in the same street, and traces of this feeling are still observable. Formerly also the members of one faction would not salute those of the other, however much their superiors in station; and the menials employed at funerals (Paraiyans, etc.) would not salute the funeral party if it belonged to the rival faction."

In the Coimbatore Manual it is noted that "the Pallan has in all times been a serf, labouring in the low wet lands (pallam) for his masters, the Brāhmans and Goundans. The Pallan is a stout, shortish black man, sturdy, a meat-eater, and not over clean in person or habit; very industrious in his favourite wet lands. He is no longer a serf." The occupations of the Pallans, whom I examined at Coimbatore, were cultivator, gardener, cooly, blacksmith, railway porter, tandal (tax-collector, etc.), and masālchi (office peon, who looks after lamps, ink-bottles, etc.). Some Pallans are mani-yagārans (village munsifs or magistrates).

In some places a Pallan family is attached to a land-holder, for whom they work, and, under ordinary conditions, they do not change masters. The attachment of the Pallan to a particular individual is maintained by the master paying a sum of money as an advance, which the Pallan is unable to repay.

* See Nelson, the Madura Country, II, 4-7, and Coimbatore District Manual, 477.



The Pallans are the Jāti Pillais of the Pāndya Kammālans, or Kammālans of the Madura country. The story goes that a long while ago the headman of the Pallans came begging to the Kollan section of the Pāndya Kammālans, which was employed in the manufacture of ploughs and other agricultural implements, and said "Worshipful sirs, we are destitute to the last degree. If you would but take pity on us, we would become your slaves. Give us ploughs and other implements, and we shall ever afterwards obey you." The Kollans, taking pity on them, gave them the implements and they commenced an agricultural life. When the harvest was over, they brought the best portion of the crop, and gave it to the Kollans. From that time, the Pallans became the "sons" of the Pāndya Kammālans, to whom even now they make offerings in gratitude for a bumper crop.

At times of census the Pallans return a number of sub-divisions, and there is a proverb that one can count the number of varieties of rice, but it is impossible to count the divisions of the Pallans. As examples of the sub-divisions, the following may be quoted:—

Aiya, father.

Ammā, mother.

Anja, father.

Atta, mother.

Dēvendra.—The sweat of Dēvendra, the king of gods, is said to have fallen on a plant growing in water from which arose a child, who is said to have been the original ancestor of the Pallans.

Kadaiyan, lowest or last.

Konga.—The Kongas of Coimbatore wear a big marriage tāli, said to be the emblem of Sakti, while the other sections wear a small tāli.



Manganādu, territorial.

Sōzhia, territorial.

Tondamān, territorial.

These sub-divisions are endogamous, and Aiya and Ammā Pallans of the Sivaganga zemindāri and adjacent parts of the Madura district possess exogamous septs or kīlais, which, like those of the Maravans, Kallans, and some other castes, run in the female line. Children belong to the same kilai as that of their mother and maternal uncle, and not of their father.

The headman of the Pallans is, in the Madura country, called Kudumban, and he is assisted by a Kālādi, and, in large settlements, by a caste messenger entitled Vāriyan, who summons people to attend council-meetings, festivals, marriages and funerals. The offices of Kudumban and Kālādi are hereditary. When a family is under a ban of excommunication, pending enquiry, the caste people refuse to give them fire, and otherwise help them, and even the barber and washerman are not permitted to work for them. As a sign of excommunication, a bunch of leafy twigs of margosa (*Melia Azadirachta*) is stuck in the roof over the entrance to the house. Restoration to caste necessitates a purificatory ceremony, in which cow's urine is sprinkled by the Vāriyan. When a woman is charged with adultery, the offending man is brought into the midst of the assembly, and tied to a harrow or hoeing plank. The woman has to carry a basket of earth or rubbish, with her cloth tied so as to reach above her knees. She is sometimes, in addition, beaten on the back with tamarind switches. If she confesses her guilt, and promises not to misconduct herself again, the Vāriyan cuts the waist-thread of her paramour, who ties it round her neck as if it was a tāli (marriage badge). On the following day, the man and



woman are taken early in the morning to a tank (pond) or well, near which seven small pits are made, and filled with water. The Vāriyan sprinkles some of the water over their heads, and has subsequently to be fed at their expense. If the pair are in prosperous circumstances, a general feast is insisted on.

At Coimbatore, the headman is called Pattakāran, and he is assisted by various subordinate officers and a caste messenger called Ōdumpillai. In cases of theft, the guilty person has to carry a man on his back round the assembly, while two persons hang on to his back-hair. He is beaten on the cheeks, and the Ōdumpillai may be ordered to spit in his face. A somewhat similar form of punishment is inflicted on a man proved guilty of having intercourse with a married woman.

In connection with the caste organisation of the Pallans in the Trichinopoly district, Mr. F. R. Hemingway writes as follows. "They generally have three or more headmen for each village, over whom is the Nāttu Mūppan. Each village also has a peon called Ōdumpillai (the runner). The main body of the caste, when attending council-meetings, is called ilam katchi (the inexperienced). The village councils are attended by the Mūppans and the Nāttu Mūppan. Between the Nāttu Mūppan and the ordinary Mūppans, there is, in the Karūr tāluk, a Pulli Mūppan. All these offices are hereditary. In this tāluk a rather different organisation is in force, to regulate the supply of labour to the landholders. Each of the village Mūppans has a number of karais or sections of the wet-land of the village under him, and he is bound to supply labourers for all the land in his karai, and is remunerated by the landowner with $1\frac{1}{4}$ marakkāls of grain for every 20 kalams harvested. The Mūppans do not work themselves, but maintain discipline among their



men by flogging or expulsion from the caste. In the Karūr tāluk, the ordinary Pallans are called Manvettai-kārans (mamoty or digging-tool men)."

The Pallans have their own washermen and barbers, who are said to be mainly recruited from the Sōzhia section, which, in consequence, holds an inferior position; and a Pallan belonging to another section would feel insulted if he was called a Sōzhian.

When a Pallan girl, at Coimbatore, attains puberty, she is bathed, dressed in a cloth brought by a washerwoman, and presented with flowers and fruits by her relations. She occupies a hut constructed of cocoanut leaves, branches of *Pongamia glabra*, and wild sugarcane (*Saccharum arundinaceum*). Her dietary includes jaggery (crude sugar) and milk and plantains. On the seventh day she is again bathed, and presented with another cloth. The hut is burnt down, and for three days she occupies a corner of the pial of her home. On the eleventh day she is once more bathed, presented with new cloths by her relations, and permitted to enter the house.

It is stated by Dr. G. Oppert* that "at a Pallar wedding, before the wedding is actually performed, the bridegroom suddenly leaves his house and starts for some distant place, as if he had suddenly abandoned his intention of marrying, in spite of the preparations that had been made for the wedding. His intended father-in-law intercepts the young man on his way, and persuades him to return, promising to give his daughter as a wife. To this the bridegroom consents." I have not met with this custom in the localities in which the Pallans have been examined.

* Original Inhabitants of Bharatavarsha or India.

In one form of marriage among the Pallans of the Madura district, the bridegroom's sister goes to the house of the bride on an auspicious day, taking with her the tāli string, a new cloth, betel, fruits and flowers. She ties the tāli round the neck of the bride, who, if a milk-post has been set up, goes round it. The bride is then conducted to the house of the bridegroom, where the couple sit together on the marriage dais, and coloured water, or coloured rice balls with lighted wicks, are waved round them. They then go, with linked fingers, thrice round the dais. In a more complicated form of marriage ceremonial, the parents and maternal uncle of the bridegroom, proceed, on the occasion of the betrothal, to the bride's house with rice, fruit, plantains, a cocoanut, sandal paste, and turmeric. These articles are handed over, with the bride's money, to the Kudumban or Kālādi of her village. Early in the morning of the wedding day, a pandal (booth) is erected, and the milk-post, made of *Thespesia populnea* or *Mimusops hexandra*, is set up by the maternal uncles of the contracting couple. The bride and bridegroom bring some earth, with which the marriage dais is made. These preliminaries concluded, they are anointed by their maternal uncles, and, after bathing, the wrist-threads (kankanam) are tied to the bridegroom's wrist by his brother-in-law, and to that of the bride by her sister-in-law. Four betel leaves and areca nuts are placed at each corner of the dais, and the pair go round it three times, saluting the betel as they pass. They then take their place on the dais, and two men stretch a cloth over their heads. They hold out their hands, into the palms of which the Kudumban or Kālādi pours a little water from a vessel, some of which is sprinkled over their heads. The vessel is then waved before them, and they



are garlanded by the maternal uncles, headmen, and others. The bride is taken into the house, and her maternal uncle sits at the entrance, and measures a new cloth, which he gives to her. She clads herself in it, and her uncle, lifting her in his arms, carries her to the dais, where she is placed by the side of the bridegroom. The fingers of the contracting couple are linked together beneath a cloth held by the maternal uncles. The tāli is taken up by the bridegroom, and placed by him round the bride's neck, to be tightly tied thereon by his sister. Just before the tāli is tied, the headman bawls out "May I look into the bride's money and presents"? and, on receiving permission to do so, says thrice "Seven bags of nuts, seven bags of rice, etc., have been brought."

At a marriage among the Konga Pallans of Coimbatore, the bridegroom's wrist-thread is tied on at his home, after a lamp has been worshipped. He and his party proceed to the house of the bride, taking with them a new cloth, a garland of flowers, and the tāli. The milk-post of the pandal is made of milk-hedge (*Euphorbia Tirucalli*). The bride and bridegroom sit side by side and close together on planks within the pandal. The bridegroom ties the wrist-thread on the bride's wrist, and the caste barber receives betel from their mouths in a metal vessel. In front of them are placed a Pillayar (figure of Ganēsa) made of cow-dung, two plantains, seven cocoanuts, a measure of paddy, a stalk of *Andropogon Sorghum* with a betel leaf stuck on it, and seven sets of betel leaves and areca nuts. Camphor is burnt, and two cocoanuts are broken, and placed before the Pillayar. The tāli is taken round to be blessed in a piece of one of the cocoanuts. The Mannādi (assistant headman) hands over the tāli to the bridegroom, who ties it round the



bride's neck. Another cocoanut is then broken. Three vessels containing, respectively, raw rice, turmeric water and milk, each with pieces of betel leaf, are brought. The hands of the contracting couple are then linked together beneath a cloth, and the fourth cocoanut is broken. The Mannādi, taking up a little of the rice, turmeric water, milk, and betel leaves, waves them before the bride and bridegroom, and throws them over their heads. This is likewise done by five other individuals, and the fifth cocoanut is broken. The bride and bridegroom go round the plank, and again seat themselves. Their hands are unlinked, the wrist-threads are untied, and thrown into a vessel of milk. The sixth cocoanut is then broken. Cooked rice with plantains and ghi (clarified butter) is offered to Alli Arasani, the wife of Arjuna, who was famed for her virtue. The rice is offered three times to the contracting couple, who do not eat it. The caste barber brings water, with which they cleanse their mouths. They exchange garlands, and the seventh cocoanut is broken. They are then taken within the house, and sit on a new mat. The bridegroom is again conducted to the pandal, where cooked rice and other articles are served to him on a tripod stool. They are handed over to the Ōdumpillai as a perquisite, and all the guests are fed. In the evening a single cloth is tied to the newly married couple, who bathe, and pour water over each other's heads. The Pillayar, lamp, paddy, *Andropogon* stalk, and two trays with betel, are placed before the guests. The Mannādi receives four annas from the bridegroom's father, and, after mentioning the names of the bridegroom, his father and grandfather, places it in one of the trays, which belongs to the bride's party. He then receives four annas from the bride's father, and mentions the names of the bride, her father



and grandfather, before placing the money in the tray which belongs to the bridegroom's party. The relations then make presents of money to the bride and bridegroom. When a widow remarries, her new husband gives her a white cloth, and ties a yellow string round her neck in the presence of some of the castemen.

At a marriage among the Kadaiya Pallans of Coimbatore, the wrist-thread of the bride is tied on by the Mannādi. She goes to a Pillayar shrine, and brings back three trays full of sand from the courtyard thereof, which is heaped up in the marriage pandal. Three painted earthen pots, and seven small earthen trays, are brought in procession from the Mannādi's house by the bridegroom, and placed in the pandal. To each of the two larger pots a piece of turmeric and betel leaf are tied, and nine kinds of grain are placed in them. The bridegroom has brought with him the tāli tied to a cocoanut, seven rolls of betel, seven plantains, seven pieces of turmeric, a garland, a new cloth for the bride, etc. The linked fingers of the contracting couple are placed on a tray containing salt and a ring. They go thrice round a lamp and the plank within the pandal, and retire within the house where the bridegroom is served with food on a leaf. What remains after he has partaken thereof is given to the bride on the same leaf. The wrist-threads are untied on the third day, and a Pillayar made of cow-dung is carried to a river, whence the bride brings back a pot of water.

In some places, the bridegroom is required to steal something from the bride's house when they return home after the marriage, and the other party has to repay the compliment on some future occasion.

When a death occurs among the Konga Pallans of Coimbatore, the big toes and thumbs of the corpse are



tied together. A lighted lamp, a metal vessel with raw rice, jaggery, and a broken cocoanut are placed near its head. Three pieces of firewood, arranged in the form of a triangle, are lighted, and a small pot is placed on them, wherein some rice is cooked in turmeric water. The corpse is bathed, and placed in a pandal made of four plantain trees, and four green leafy branches. The nearest relations place a new cloth over it. If the deceased has left a widow, she is presented with a new cloth by her brother. The corpse is laid on a bier, the widow washes its feet, and drinks some of the water. She then throws her tāli-string on the corpse. Her face is covered with a cloth, and she is taken into the house. The corpse is then removed to the burial-ground, where the son is shaved, and the relations place rice and water in the mouth of the corpse. It is then laid in the grave, which is filled in, and a stone and some thorny twigs are placed over it. An earthen pot full of water is placed on the right shoulder of the son, who carries it three times round the grave. Each time that he reaches the head end thereof, a hole is made in the pot with a knife by one of the elders. The pot is then thrown down, and broken near the spot beneath which the head lies. Near this spot the son places a lighted firebrand, and goes away without looking back. He bathes and returns to the house, where he touches a little cow-dung placed at the entrance with his right foot, and worships a lamp. On the third day, three handfuls of rice, a brinjal (*Solanum Melongena*) fruit cut into three pieces, and leaves of *Sesbania grandiflora* are cooked in a pot, and carried to the grave together with a tender cocoanut, cigar, betel, and other things. The son places three leaves on the grave, and spreads the various articles thereon. Crows are attracted by clapping the hands,



and it is considered a good omen if they come and eat. On the fourth day the son bathes, and sits on a mat. He then bites, and spits out some roasted salt fish three times into a pot of water. This is supposed to show that mourning has been cast away, or at the end. He is then presented with new cloths by his uncle and other relations. On the ninth or eleventh day, cooked rice, betel, etc., are placed near a bābūl (*Acacia arabica*) or other thorny tree, which is made to represent the deceased. Seven small stones, representing the seven Hindu sages, are set up. A cocoanut is broken, and pūja performed. The rice is served on a leaf, and eaten by the son and other near relations.

The Pallans are nominally Saivites, but in reality devil worshippers, and do pūja to the Grāma Dēvāta (village deities), especially those whose worship requires the consumption of flesh and liquor.

It is recorded,* in connection with a biennial festival in honour of the local goddess at Āttūr in the Madura district, that “some time before the feast begins, the Pallans of the place go round to the adjoining villages, and collect the many buffaloes, which have been dedicated to the goddess during the last two years, and have been allowed to graze unmolested, and where they willed, in the fields. These are brought in to Āttur, and one of them is selected, garlanded, and placed in the temple. On the day of the festival, this animal is brought out, led round the village in state, and then, in front of the temple, is given three cuts with a knife by a Chakkiliyan, who has fasted that day, to purify himself for the rite. The privilege of actually killing the animal belongs by immemorial usage to the head of the family

* Gazetteer of the Madura district.

of the former poligar of Nilakkōttai, but he deputed certain Pallans to take his place, and they fall upon the animal and slay it."

It is noted by Mr. Hemingway * that the Valaiyans and the class of Pallans known as Kālādīs who live in the south-western portion of the Pudukkōttai State are professional cattle-lifters. They occasionally take to burglary for a change.

The common titles of the Pallans are said † to be "Mūppan and Kudumban, and some style themselves Mannādi. Kudumban is probably a form of Kurumban, and Mannādi is a corruption of Manrādi, a title borne by the Pallava (Kurumban) people. It thus seems not improbable that the Pallas are representatives of the old Pallavas or Kurumbas."

Pallavarāyan.—The title, meaning chief of the Pallavas, of the leader of the Krishnavakakkar in Travancore. Also a sub-division of Ōcchans.

Palle.—In the Telugu country, there are two classes of Palles, which are employed respectively in sea-fishing and agriculture. The former, who are the Mīn (fish) Palles of previous writers, are also known as Palle Kariyalu, and do not mingle or intermarry with the latter. They claim for themselves a higher position than that which is accorded to them by other castes, and call themselves Agnikula Kshatriyas. Their title is, in some places, Reddi. All belong to one gōtra called Ravikula.

The caste headman is entitled Pedda Kāpu, and he is assisted by an Oomadi.

In puberty, marriage, and death ceremonies, the Palles follow the Telugu form of ceremonial. There is, however, one rite in the marriage ceremonies, which

* *Op cit.*

† Madras Census Report, 1891.



is said to be peculiar to the fishing section. On the fifth day after marriage, a Golla pērantālu (married woman) is brought to the house in procession, walking on cloths spread on the ground (nadapāvada). She anoints the bridal couple with ghī (clarified butter), and after receiving a cloth as a present, goes away.

The fishing class worship the Akka Dēvatalu (sister gods) periodically by floating on the surface of the water a flat framework made of sticks tied together, on which the various articles used in the worship are placed.

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