

THE
LAND
of the
CONCH SHELL



Augusta M. Blandford

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THE LAND OF THE CONCH SHELL.

The Conch Shell is the Emblem of Travancore
and appears on all Government Buildings
and Papers.

*A SHORT HISTORY OF TRAVANCORE
AND
C.E.Z. MISSION WORK THERE.*

BY
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PREFACE.



A FEW words only by way of preface to this little book.

Having been working for nearly forty years as a missionary in Travancore, I have, at the request of the Church of England Zenana Society, with which I have been connected for nearly half that time, endeavoured in the following pages to give an account of some of my impressions and experiences in that country. The chapter on its history has been written from notes copied from old records to which I have had access.

I have written for indulgent readers already interested in the work of making known throughout the world that Christ is the Saviour of all men.

May He grant His blessing on my humble attempt!

Augusta M. Blandford

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CHAPTER I. TRAVANCORE.



"The land is . . . a land of hills and valleys and drinketh waters of the rain of heaven."—Deut. xi. 11.



TRAVANCORE is a small country nearly as large as Wales, being 174 miles in length and 75 in its greatest breadth, having an area of 6,730 square miles. Its shape is triangular, its coast washed by the waves of the Indian Ocean on the west, and its eastern boundary a spur of the Western Ghâts, rising in some places to the height of nearly 9,000 feet.

One-third of this little kingdom is forest land, and was till recently impenetrable jungle; now, however, excellent roads have been made, and the beauties of its scenery are revealed to us. Tall, upright timber trees, such as ebony, teak, and blackwood; the jack, with giant fruit bigger than a man's head, suspended by strong stalks from the trunk; the banyan, with its fringe of brown roots growing downwards from the branches, ready, when long enough, to strike into the soil, and in time form another stem; palms of every variety; clumps of bamboos, with feathery branches uplifted in lovely tracery against the clear sky; the graceful acacia, and many flowering trees, with their masses of scarlet, pink, or purple bloom; besides tree ferns and creeping plants, with stems the size of a man's arm, clinging to the tree trunks, meet the eye at every turn. The eta, a huge specimen of the grass tribe,

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and the rattan, are both much used in building hill houses. Many of the larger forest trees were objects of worship in other ages, and are even now supposed, because of their great size, to be the habitation of demons, who must be propitiated with sacrifices.

During the last thirty years large tracts of forest have been destroyed by cultivators, who cut down all the trees, burn the brushwood, and sow paddy, i.e., unhusked rice. Grass fires, too, are very destructive, and they occur every year in the dry season. Sometimes they are kindled by native hunters wishing to obtain game, or by cattle drivers seeking fresh grass for their herds, for after the ten-feet high grass is burnt and heavy rain falls, green and tender shoots fit for grazing appear. Occasionally, however, the fire is the result of an accident due to the falling of a chance spark. Lighted in one valley, the flames spread over hill and dale, and, weeks after, may be found burning twenty miles off. One morning, while staying at a tea estate on the Poonmudi Hills, we went out to enjoy a walk in the jungle around, and found that nothing but a charred and blackened mass remained of what had been the day before graceful trees, beautiful trailing plants, and luxuriant ferns. The roaring of fires on an adjoining hill prevented our sleeping that night, although the sight of the magnificent flames was fascinating.

There are large tea plantations on the Travancore hills, and numbers of coolies are employed on them, often as many as 20,000. Schools are maintained for their children, and services are held on Sunday in their own language, Tamil, by native clergy or catechists.

Herds of wild elephants roam about these forests, and if unmolested are harmless, except when one of their number becomes mad and is turned out by

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the others: he is then called a rogue, and is dangerous, often killing people. I have sometimes stayed in houses so near the forest that they had to be surrounded by deep ditches to prevent a nocturnal visit from these animals, and instances are on record of their tearing off the thatch and knocking down the walls of temporary huts, besides uprooting plantain trees and doing further mischief to the plantations around them. Herds of bison also roam through these forests. The tiger, a far more dangerous enemy than either the elephant or bison, carries off many human victims annually. Quietly creeping with cat-like stealth amongst the brushwood, it stalks its prey until within a convenient distance, and then makes the fatal spring. Happily the promise made to Noah, "The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the field" is fulfilled, or the loss of human life would be far greater. I am thankful to say that in all my travels I have never been face to face with this cruel and bloodthirsty creature; but I remember that one evening I was riding with a party of ladies and men to a lovely brook, and suddenly an odour caused someone to exclaim, "Zoological Gardens," when the leader of our band, a man experienced in jungle life, replied, "Yes, there certainly is a smell of tiger, and we had better beat a retreat, or we shall have 'stripes' coming down as usual to the brook to drink." After this we were not slow in turning our horses' heads and riding back to the open ground, where no enemy could lurk behind bushes. The tiger and leopard usually take their supper near a watercourse, where all animals congregate in the early hours of the night: we used sometimes to hear the wild shriek of the victim when we were seated in the verandah just before bedtime.

We must turn now from the animals inhabiting

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the jungle to the different tribes exercising in a greater or less degree lordship over them. There is a population of from 8,000 to 10,000 wild hill men. They are quite distinct from the coolies living in "lines" on the different tea estates, for they only go up to the hills for a time, while the tribesmen consider themselves the lords of the soil, and look on the forest as their home. They naturally prefer those places where they can obtain the most game, and therefore retire before the approach of civilisation. They are divided into twelve or fourteen tribes, and never intermarry. They seem to have a perfect mutual understanding as to boundaries, for we never hear of disputes and feuds among them. They are dark in complexion, and many of them have short noses and thick lips. It is probable that they were the original inhabitants of Travancore, and that when the colony brought down from the north by Parasurâmen disputed the land with them, they retired to the hills and escaped the slavery which fell to the lot of the Pullâyans. Some of them speak a corrupt Malayâ-lum, others a language derived from the Tamil. The Arayans, many of whom became Christians under the teaching of Rev. H. Baker, C.M.S., are fairer and more intelligent, and probably descended from a superior race. I have a clear recollection of some of these hill tribes. In 1863, when travelling with Mr. Baker and his family, some Ulâdens, or hunters, came to meet us with lighted torches and guided us across the ford of the Mundakyun river, showing us how to take our horses over the stepping stones, as there was no bridge. I shall never forget the scene, the torches casting a lurid light on the dark but kindly faces of our guides, the waters of the rapid river, and the beautiful vegetation on the banks. We stayed three weeks in a small thatched bungalow with earthen floor,

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and on Sundays went to the primitive church on a hill-top, worshipping with the hill men who formed the congregation, and kneeling with a few of them at the Holy Table commemorating "the Lord's death till He come."

The Kanies, who come occasionally into Trevandrum to exchange hill products, such as honey, wax, dammer, cardamoms, and ivory, for salt, knives, cloth, etc., may sometimes be seen standing in a group by the side of the road, and I remember once coming into somewhat close contact with a party of them who had been decoyed into the house of the Durbar physician for the purpose of being photographed. There were women amongst them, whom we entertained by allowing them to go into all the rooms of the house and see the furniture used by civilised people. The looking glasses delighted them beyond measure, and on leaving they begged for needles, thread, and scissors from us. The men of these hill tribes are sturdy and muscular from constant use, their senses are keenly developed, and they can hear and see things which other men would not notice.

They are expert trackers, and from their knowledge of the country, their endurance, and the ease with which they clear paths through the jungle with their knives, are invaluable as guides to travellers.

Hill men are as a rule truthful, and much more trustworthy than men of the plains, and from living such a free life they are independent, and will not be driven. They are said to be moral, good tempered, and easily pleased, and may be heard shouting with laughter at each other's stories. When we are living in a hill bungalow, the Kanies sometimes come and see us, and ask for brandy, which, of course, we do not give them; tobacco we are also unable to supply, but such commodities as empty bottles, tins, etc., are always at their service.

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One man, on receiving a few of the latter, attracted by the bright label on one, detached it and went away rejoicing with "Concentrated Gravy" stuck on his forehead! The tribes on the lower slopes of the hills wear little more than a waist-cloth, but those whose homes are in a colder climate are glad of blankets and cast-off coats. They eat fish, which they catch in the rivers by nets or lines; the flesh of all animals except the bison is acceptable to them, and some of them have a great liking for that of the black monkey. They grow grain, plantains, yams, tapioca, pumpkins, and chillies (red pepper), also a little bhang and tobacco. Many of them are sadly addicted to the use of opium, taken in the first instance to relieve pain or fever, until it becomes a confirmed habit. They are decreasing in number, small-pox carries off a great many, vaccination being unknown among them. When this disease appears they generally leave the sick to take care of themselves, and the whole tribe decamps. As they have no medicines, cholera and fevers carry off large numbers.

Their religion consists chiefly in trying to appease the anger of malignant demons, who are thought to be always on the watch to do them harm, but they are not ignorant of a Good Spirit, who is supposed to dwell on one of the neighbouring hills, and whom they wish to please. One tribe on a certain day every year worships the tools of its ancestors. A Kani with his son, who recently paid us a visit on the hills, was very communicative on the subject of their beliefs; he told us that the priest had taught them a munthrum (prayer) which, if repeated, would without fail drive away any tiger that came near, and that other sacred words would prevent sickness. He had never heard, he said, of Jesus Christ, Who had given His life for men.

The most curious of all these tribes are the Hill

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Pandàrans, who do not cultivate the land, but subsist on the fruit of the cycas, the pith of the sago palm, fish, or on any roots they can dig up. They usually live in caves, and fly on the approach of strangers, being so timid that it is most difficult to persuade them to come out and show themselves. The Kanies are very skilful in making rattan houses. I remember seeing one of two stories made of basket work for the use of the late Maharajah of Travancore, on the occasion of his visit to the hills. I believe it was the first time a Royal progress had been made to this part of his dominions, and the fact so impressed the Kanies that they determined to build him a palace, and they were entirely successful in making the largest basket I ever saw. It had two rooms, one on the top of the other, with a verandah all round; it was quite weather-proof and beautifully finished; strong, too, for it lasted for months, till monsoon wind and rain destroyed it. We were living near, and after His Highness had returned to his capital, made daily use of his basket pavilion, frequently taking our afternoon tea there.

The soil of Travancore is not remarkable for very great fertility, but owing to a rainfall of from 35 to 200 inches annually (taken on an average of ten years), and a powerful tropical sun, vegetation is most abundant. A cultivator has but to scratch the soil with his primitive plough, and sow paddy, and a rich harvest will reward his labour. In some places three crops, two of paddy and one of garden produce, may be obtained in the year. Buffaloes are chiefly used in ploughing, their preference for marshy land adapting them for the wet rice fields.

The temperature of the low country varies little all the year round, for owing to the cool breezes which blow up from the sea every day in the hot season, the temperature seldom rises above 90 de-

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greens, while in the winter it rarely falls below 70 degrees. We have two rainy seasons, or monsoons, as we call them, the one commencing the end of May, and the other in October. The great relief experienced after the first showers reminds us of the verse, "Thou sentest a gracious rain on Thine inheritance and refreshedst it when it was weary." All nature rejoices, the neatly kept borders of grass on the sides of our roads are green, and from every



A View at Cochin.

crevice of old walls delicate lace-like ferns spring forth. The canna, or Indian shot, with blossoms of varied colours, as well as crotons and other foliage plants, delight the eye.

Even poor natives contrive to plant a little garden for themselves, and waste lands are being rapidly reclaimed. In unfrequented nooks of the towns, a man will put up a little mud hut for himself, thatch it with dried and plaited leaves of the

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cocoanut palm, and in a short time one may observe a little cultivation of plantains, sweet potatoes, brinjals, cucumbers, yams, pumpkins, etc., growing up round it ; next a few palms will be planted, then a slip or two of the betel, trained on a string to the upper branches of a tree, a profitable investment, as natives purchase and chew it with areca nut and a lump of chunam or whiting. In about ten years this little garden will enable the owner to enlarge his hut, to put window frames and shutters in it, surround it by a narrow verandah with floor of beaten earth, build a small porch, and lastly to plaster and whiten the outside. It is always a pleasure to me to see these little tenements and to feel that the inhabitants are adding to their very small income by their own industry.

We have no railway in Travancore, but a line from Tinnevely to Quilon is now in course of construction. Water communication by means of backwaters connected by canals extends northwards from the capital for over a hundred miles. The boats commonly used are cabin boats rowed by from twelve to fourteen men, in which the traveller may lie full length on a mattress, or enjoy the view from a seat on the top of the roof. The rowers keep time by a rhythmical chant, not unmelodious, but likely to disturb the slumbers of the passenger. Other boats are called wallums or "dug-outs," from the fact of their having been hollowed out from the trunk of a huge forest tree. The sides of these primitive boats are heightened by having pieces of timber sewn on by strong cord with great visible stitches. A movable cover of bamboo matting in several pieces, which slide over one another, protects the head from sun or rain. The position of the voyager when resting on his mattress at night under this cover, is like that of meat in the middle of a sausage roll. These boats have usually only

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two boatmen, who punt or row, and sleep alternately, so that progress is often slow. Two tunnels, made at great cost by the Travancore Government about thirty years ago, permit of the passage of boats along canals running through them. The Madras railway terminus in the south is at Tinnevely, so we in Travancore are ninety miles from our nearest railway station. To reach it we generally travel in transit coaches drawn by pairs of bullocks, changed every eight miles. Convenient travellers' bungalows are met with all along the route, at which both food and rest may be obtained. When the roads are good, and in bright moonlight, this way of travelling is not wholly unpleasant, especially as it is possible to alight and walk, either in front of or behind your cart should the jolting become too trying.



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CHAPTER II.

PAST HISTORY.

"Their feet run to evil and they make haste to shed innocent blood."—Isa. lix. 7.



RAVANCORE was not always the peaceful and prosperous little state it now is. It is difficult to realise as we drive along the well-kept roads of its towns, and see its happy homesteads, each with a neatly thatched roof of cocoanut palm leaves, peeping out of abundant foliage, that once oppression, rapine, and murder reigned supreme. I fancy the lives of its merry little children must have been sadly different then; now as we pass their homes they run out, double up their soft little bodies and make a smiling salaam, and I know of no sight prettier than the groups of boys and girls carrying books and slates or perhaps simply bundles of olas (leaves of the fan palm used in writing), that we see in the early morning on their way to school. Most of them are neatly and sufficiently clothed, the girls having even found time to weave garlands of white jessamine in their black knots of hair, and all go leisurely along, laughing and chatting gaily by the way. These children have evidently no history, very little to vary the pleasant monotony of their lives, and no trouble greater than a passing fear of their schoolmaster's cane. We older people, too, have our share of the quiet and freedom from anxious care; night after night we lie down and take our rest with wide-open windows, feeling as safe as the birds which perch in our trees around. We have no bars to our doors, and the bolts are

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only used to prevent jackals and wild dogs from walking in and carrying off our shoes. Thieves,⁴ of course, there are, but our only reminder of the fact are the long lines of convicts, heavily ironed, whom we meet in the roads; happily we have had no nearer experience of them.

Formerly, however, peace and safety were unknown words, and even the Rajahs of Travancore had very troubled reigns, for their great difficulty in controlling the Brahmans, who then tried to monopolise the revenues of the state, must have made their lives a prey to constant annoyance and even terror. The latter formed a society for the protection of pagoda property, consisting of eight and a half members, of whom eight were Brahmans, each having a vote, while the half member was the unfortunate Rajah, who had no vote at all, but was merely required to be present at the periodical ceremonies. This religious association possessed vast landed property, which was let out to tenants, over whom the Rajah had no authority whatever. The revenues were collected by eight families of the Nayar caste, who soon rose to power and importance, till they became lords of villages, and not being attached to the crown in any way, generally sided with its opponents, the Brahmans. The chief residence of the Rajahs of those days was at a place about thirty miles from Trevandrum, the present capital, but in A.D. 1335 a palace was built near the great pagoda there, and both buildings were enclosed by a high, strong wall, and formed what is now called the Fort. As soon as the Rajah moved to his new palace he began to watch the proceedings of the Brahmans, and to insist on supervising the expenditure of the pagoda funds. This measure was, naturally, displeasing to them, but they submitted during the reign of this Rajah, and those of several of his successors, who appear to have

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been determined men, and capable of rigorous government.

At length, however, in 1661, a weak prince, who had always led a retired life, and was more fit for a cloister than a throne, began to reign. The Brahmans then carried everything before them, and exposed the unhappy sovereign to every kind of annoyance. One night his palace caught fire, and as no one but the adherents of the Brahmans lived near, and they made no effort to extinguish the



A Coolie Tea-picker, Travancore.

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flames, the whole building was destroyed. The Rajah and Royal Family were obliged to retire to another palace at some little distance, and to it the temple Brahmans (the probable authors of the fire) came with expressions of condolence and sympathy. They were received by the king, who appears to have been most unsuspecting, with great kindness, and their visits were often repeated, and offerings of sweetmeats brought by them were accepted. The Rajah, being a devotee, dared not refuse to partake of food which had been first laid before the image of the great Padmanabha Swamy, but his compliance cost him his life; his enemies one day mixed poison with the gift, and the Rajah died suddenly after a reign of sixteen years.

The malice of the Brahmans did not end here, and they resolved if possible to take the lives of the six young princes, nephews of the late Rajah, who, according to the curious law prevalent in Travancore, were to be his heirs in succession to one another. One moonlight night a few boys belonging to Brahman families were playing in the palace courtyard with the five elder princes, when one of them, no doubt instigated by the enemies of the Royal House, proposed that they should go and bathe in a tank a little way off. The young princes agreed without consulting their mother, and while they were bathing, some men rushed into the water and drowned them all. One can well imagine the agony of the poor Rani when she learnt that her sons had perished. Taking with her the survivor, a boy of nine years old, and a few trusty followers, she fled to a place about twelve miles off, where she remained in retirement, not daring to interfere with the government of the kingdom, lest her only surviving son should fall a victim to some vile plot.

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The confederates then began to quarrel among themselves, and misrule and anarchy prevailed throughout the country. A Mohammedan Sirdar, taking advantage of these internal troubles, brought his troops through South Travancore as far as the capital, Trevandrum, and, as both Brahmans and Nayars had fled and left the pagoda unguarded, the invaders carried off much spoil, and the unhappy inhabitants were left a prey to fire and sword.

Happily for the Rani and her son, a brave defender related to her family arose at this juncture, who raised a force armed with bows and arrows, slings, swords, and lances, and attacked the Sirdar unexpectedly, at a time when his horsemen were scouring the country for plunder. Whilst defending himself from the Travancore army the Sirdar happened to disturb a hornets' nest, and the insects swarmed down and stung both him and his horse, thus enabling his enemies to surround and speedily despatch him. The rest of the Mohammedans were defeated, and those who survived fled to their own land, and Kerula Vurmah, the Rani's brave defender, returned to Trevandrum; but he was not allowed to enjoy the fruits of his valour, for he was shortly afterwards assassinated in his own house by agents of the temple Brahmans.

In 1684, after a troubled reign of seven years, the Rani was glad to abdicate in favour of her son, who had attained his sixteenth year. As he was the only member of the Royal Family, and his sons could not reign, it became necessary to adopt some of the children of a neighbouring Rajah, who sent two sons and two daughters to be the future princes and princesses of Travancore. Both of these boys reigned in succession on the death of the old Rani's son in 1718. One of the young ladies died, and the other became the mother of Marthànda Vurmah, who was a brave and resolute

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prince, and who has been called the Saviour of Travancore. When only fourteen he had begged his uncle, the reigning king, to allow him to assist in the government of the country, and having obtained his permission, soon showed a determination to check the arrogance and rebellious spirit of the temple Brahmans. This, however, exposed him to their enmity, and many and various were the plans formed for his destruction. His weak uncle was unable to afford him much protection, so the poor youth, finding the palace at Trevandrum an unsafe residence, wandered about disguised in the jungles or villages adjacent. Sometimes he took refuge under the roofs of poor people, or even in tree houses of the kind still to be seen in Travancore forests. The young prince had many narrow escapes, and on one occasion was obliged to conceal himself in a pagoda which was almost immediately surrounded by his enemies. Here he was saved by a faithful Hindu priest, who, pitying his condition, compelled him to exchange clothes with himself, and putting a brass pot of boiled rice on his head, told him to walk out, muttering prayers like a devotee, and to whisper to the crowd that the prince was inside. Marthànda Vurmah escaped, but the poor Brahman fell a victim to the rage of the prince's foes.

When Marthànda Vurmah ascended the musnud (throne) in 1729 he was twenty-three years old. He had no easy task before him, for his treasury was empty, his kingdom disorganised, and many of his subjects ready to break out into open revolt; but he was a man of great vigour of mind, and before long had collected and disciplined a body of Nayar troops, sufficient in number to enable him to dismiss the mercenaries from Trichinopoly who had been hired by the late king. The Brahmans again rebelled, and were joined by the two sons of the

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last Rajah, who, ignoring the usual law of succession in Travancore, aspired to the throne of their father. The conspirators met in an Ootapera, or house of public entertainment for Brahmans, and consulted together as to the best time and place for an attack on the Rajah. They agreed that the Arât festival would afford them a good opportunity of carrying out their designs. At this ceremony the Rajahs of Travancore walk in procession, accompanied by a vast crowd, in front of idols which are being carried along the public road to the seashore, a distance of two miles, to be bathed. At sunset it is the custom for them to retire to a shed on the beach to rest, and the rebels determined to choose this time for the perpetration of their cowardly deed. In order to ensure the attendance at the festival of all their adherents, intelligence of the plot was written on olas, the Malayâlam substitute for paper, and hidden in the soles of the sandals worn by the messengers who were sent off to various places with the news. In their excitement and pleasure at the thought of so easily accomplishing their base design, their voices grew louder and louder, and they were overheard by an old Pandârûm, who was one of the Rajah's spies, and who, crouched in a corner, had been attentively listening to all they had said. No sooner had the men departed than he hastened to repeat all he knew of their plans; their agents were arrested, and the evidence of their guilt was found in their slippers. The Rajah, though much alarmed, was too brave to fail in joining the procession, but he took the precaution of having an armed escort, and the traitors, finding that their scheme had been discovered, gave up their wicked intention. The disaffected sons of the late Rajah, however, made one more attempt on his life, but were taken and slain themselves. The two leaders of the rebellion hav-

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ing perished, the next step was to secure and punish the eight Nayar nobles and temple Brahmans who had plotted to destroy the Rajah at the Arât festival. Their guilt was proved, and the Nayars and their accomplices, forty-two in number, were hanged. The Brahmans were not included in this sentence, for by the laws of Manu none of that favoured caste, however great their crimes, may be put to death, but they were branded with the figure of a dog on their foreheads, degraded from caste, and banished from Travancore. The fate of the wives and children of the traitors was a sad one, for the Rajah, determined to extirpate the whole race, made them over to the low caste fishermen on the coast, and though they were probably well treated, life would no longer be worth having to those of them old enough to recollect that they were born high caste Hindus. All their property was confiscated and their dwellings razed to the ground. These severe measures took effect, and the Rajah, though engaged in wars with petty Rajahs as well as in conflicts with the Dutch, had no more to fear from treacherous subjects. Marthànda Vurmah reigned twenty-nine years.

Twenty-six years afterwards, in the time of his successor, Tippu Sahib, the great warrior of Maisur, collected a large army and determined to annex Travancore to his dominions. The Rajah, much alarmed, sent messengers to Lord Cornwallis, then Governor of Madras, with earnest entreaties for assistance. This was immediately sent, the tyrant defeated, and Travancore saved.

Sixteen years later, in 1800, a treaty was made between the little state and England, and the first British Resident sent to reside in the country. Since that time a cordial friendship has existed between the English and Travancoreans; and a succession of military and civilian representatives of

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Scripture Class in the Fort School, Trevandrum.

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the British crown, for the most part noble, unselfish men, deeply interested in the welfare of the country and people, have assisted the Rajahs in the government. Many have left amongst us names which are household words, and will never die, and the result of their self-denying labours is seen to this day in the excellent judicial, medical, and educational institutions which they helped to originate and foster. May Travancore long continue to earn the title bestowed upon her by one of the Governors of Madras, of "The Model State!"



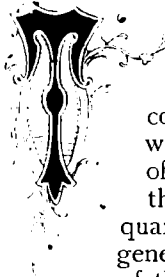
School-girls I

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CHAPTER III.

TREVANDRUM.

"O Lord, Thy blessings hang in clusters, they come trooping upon us! They break forth like mighty waters on every side."—
GEORGE HERBERT.



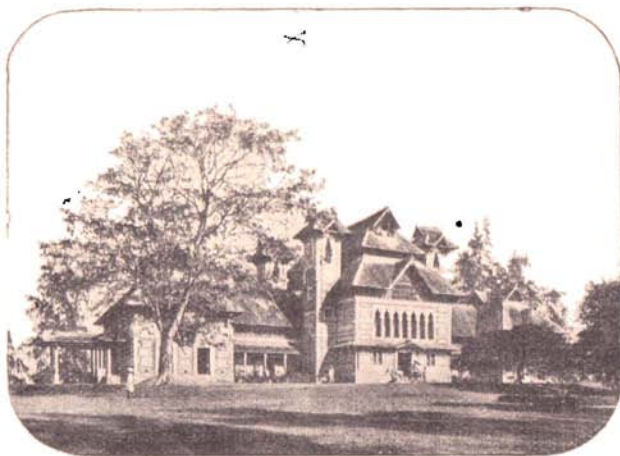
TREVANDRUM, or Th'i-ru-wi-nan-dha-púrum, as it was originally called, is the capital of Travancore. The streets are shut in by low walls, the better kind of which are made of red brick with a white stone coping; the next grade are of laterite, dug from quarries, plastered, whitewashed, and generally thatched with plaited dry leaves of the cocoanut palm, called olas; while the third sort are made simply of lumps of the reddish brown soil for which Travancore, like Devonshire, is famous, and are also covered in to protect them from rain. These latter, though not very durable in monsoon time, are much more picturesque than the others, contrasting as they do with the bright green grass and ferns by the roadside. Not only have we no pavements, but there is no visible line between the carriage road and that for foot passengers. This fact, however, appears to cause them no anxiety; they move along leisurely without fear of being run over. The houses behind these walls are built in very irregular fashion; some are pretentious looking buildings of two stories, with balconies, verandahs, sloping red-tiled roofs, and fronts of dazzling whitewash; while near them may be seen an old-fashioned mud hut with deep thatched roof, one small window and door, and surrounded by plantain trees. Next we

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come to a large compound with no house visible, though there may be one buried behind a thick plantation of coffee bushes, their branches laden with snow-white blossoms in the early months of the year. Further on, there are some shops; in one, sacks of grain of different kinds, rice, paddy, gram (a sort of pea on which horses are fed), and cotton seed, the food of bullocks. The sacks are arranged in a row at the edge of the narrow verandah, upright and open-mouthed to show their contents, while their owner generally reclines against them waiting for customers, with no great anxiety to secure them. The vegetable shops, with large bunches of red, green, or ripe golden plantains, mounds of bright scarlet or green chillies, huge pumpkins, gourds, cocoanuts, cucumbers, brinjals, etc., are worth more than a passing glance, and they are usually surrounded by a crowd of eager buyers, bargaining in loud voices, to effect as cheap a purchase as possible. Some vendors of European stores, drugs, wines, and other goods make no outside show, but are content to hang up a black board with the word "Shop" painted on it. Now, a break occurs in the street wall, and we come to a large open space laid out with grass and shrubs, shut in by handsome iron railings, and containing a fine block of buildings designed by an English engineer for government offices. Another grand pile is the college affiliated to the Madras University, where the youth of Travancore are trained to compete with men of other places in the Presidency for B.A. and B.L. degrees. Three British and a large staff of native professors are maintained there, and much excellent work has been done since the original High School was converted into a college. The Girls' College and High School is further along the street, and is presided over by a lady graduate from England and an efficient staff of teachers.

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This is a long low building of red brick, and near it on the opposite side of the road is a handsome Towa Hall, erected in commemoration of her late Majesty Queen Victoria's Jubilee. A much frequented Roman Catholic Church on one hand and the Protestant Church on the other, in which services are held every Sunday in English, Malayalam and Tamil, complete the group of buildings in this part of the road, while higher up is the parade ground of H.H. the Maharajah's Nayar Brigade, and not far off, the compound of the London Missionary Society, with the lately erected Students' Hostel, a pretty and ornamental erection. The spaces between the buildings are filled with groups of palms, the feathery cocoanut, slender-stemmed areca, with its graceful head, and the broad-leaved fan-palm. Tamarind trees, of delicate light green foliage, which are useful as well as ornamental, the scarlet flowering poinsettia, the bougain-villea and



Trevandrum Museum and Public Gardens.

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other gay shrubs adorn our streets, while some of them are hedged in, instead of being walled, by orange-coloured, mauve, or white lantana, and bordered by rows of casuarina and other trees, affording grateful shade to all travellers, but especially prized by the poor coolie toiling under his heavy load at noon, for whose convenience, too, rests are erected, consisting of a horizontal slab of granite, supported by two upright blocks of the same. On the top his burden is to be seen, while he sits placidly down in the shade close at hand. These rests, so familiar to every Hindu, are of use to the missionary as illustrating the wisdom of resting our burden of sin on One, strong and able to bear it.

Sacred trees, remnants of the most ancient worship known in this land, are to be met with here and there in the roads. They are generally of the ficus species, and each has a platform at its roots built of stone and whitewashed. Lights are placed at the four corners on festival nights, great daubs of red ochre are put on the tree, and the spirit supposed to be dwelling in it is further propitiated with fireworks. Crowds of poor people gather round and worship.

The most interesting to my mind of all our streets are those within the walls of the Fort, where Brahmans and other high caste families reside. You enter by a gate, wide open, although guarded by a Sepoy with fixed bayonet, and pass into a road, swept every morning as carefully as a drawing room. On each side of it are the quaint dwellings of the Brahmans, with a row of small windows just large enough for one head to peep out, but high up to prevent any passer-by from looking in; tiny verandahs, raised to some height above the road, are painted in stripes of red and white, while before each door, on the passengers' footway, is a square of black, rubbed with a mixture of cow dung and

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charcoal, and somewhat resembling a slate, on which a neat geometrical pattern has been traced in white. These drawings are very pretty, the lines being quite straight, and on festival days most elaborate, touched up with red to improve the effect, or ornamented by coloured petals of flowers laid on the various patterns. I often see women engaged on this work, and am surprised at the speed with which they trace their whitened fingers along the ground, for they use no pencil. There is a pleasant rivalry amongst them as to who shall execute the best and most studied designs, and one feels regret that although renewed every morning, they must be rubbed out at night.

The verandah is generally occupied by men in various attitudes, one muttering prayers from a book, but ready to look off every minute at what is going forward; another cleaning his teeth vigorously, or a schoolboy, with bright face, cheerfully learning his lesson aloud in English: we catch the stray words and they seem strangely incongruous, "The north wind doth blow and we shall have snow."

In and out among the people, looking as happy as any bird of the air, are boys and girls, dear little brown cupids without wings, unencumbered by any clothing except a string or silver chain round their fat little bodies. We go a little further and see the street well surrounded by a group of graceful women dressed in cloths of shaded browns, reds, or plain dark blue, and covered with jewels. They are merrily laughing, chatting, and drawing water, while perhaps into the midst of the happy group comes a widow, distinguished by having one end of her cloth drawn round her shaven head. Alas! for our poor sorrowing sisters, condemned to have but one meal a day, and despised for having caused the death of their husbands by some sin

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committed in a former state of being; their only solace is to have the care of the children of the house if there are any, and dearly they are often loved by the little creatures, who are all in all to them.

Next we meet a party of women of different ages, followed by an attendant carrying dry cloths and towels, evidently on their way to the large tank where they will enjoy their morning bath, in a corner by themselves, but in sight of men performing their ablutions. They are slightly clothed when in the water, and appear quite unconscious of any impropriety in choosing so public a place; it is sacred, near the great pagoda, and close to the holy stones, before which lights are burned every night—what place, then, could be better, they would argue, for the purification of holy women? At the tank during the bathing hour incessant noise is



A Native Lady, Travancore.



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heard, loud talking, sounds of merriment, muttering of munthrums or prayers, and the monotonous thud of beating their cloths against stones for the purpose of washing them ; for the Brahmans would be polluted by wearing garments cleansed by low caste washermen, and are obliged to perform this duty themselves every morning while bathing.

Passing on from the tank we come to a large walled-in garden, with heavy bunches of plantains hanging over the road ; a bread fruit tree, with large handsome leaves and solid looking green fruit ; and, by a heap of white stars on the roadway, are made aware of the presence of jessamine, universally cultivated for garlands.

The guard house for Sepoys, opposite to the residence of the Dewan (prime minister), is open, and about a dozen men of the Nayar Brigade, in red coats and black trousers, but no boots, are lounging about. They do not look very warlike, but would, doubtless, if occasion offered, fight bravely to defend their fields and homes. Now a mendicant Brahman passes by, and we note the copper vessel slung round his neck to contain the rice he is sure to get from house to house. He carries two little brass cymbals in his hand, which he strikes together to give notice of his approach, that housewives may get their offerings ready.

Street vendors are there, hawking their wares ; a woman with a large pot of buttermilk, which she ladles out to all who call her to their doors ; a young boy with Bryant and May's matches, shouting " Thi-pe-thi-i-i " with all his might, and a man with a round basket on his shoulders containing bread, which he announces by lusty cries of " Kau-thumb-roti." The streets of the Fort are pleasant in the early morning. The sky is blue, but not cloudless ; nimble grey squirrels, favoured by Rama, according to the legend, and bearing the impress of

K.P. Govindan Nair.

"KIZHAKKE MADAM"

Kizhakk Madathul-
Govindan Nair

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his fingers in three black stripes on their backs, chase one another over the tiled roofs of the houses, and play hide and seek in the curiously carved gables; the black and white robin stops in his search for food to trill forth a note of gladness and praise; and contented-looking cows and calves walk about where they please, with an air of proprietorship which only a cow in an oriental city knows how to assume. But hark! what means that tinkling bell, followed by a not unmusical chant which we hear as we pass an open door? It means that Man, the highest of all the great Creator's works, made after His Likeness, with the breath of His life breathed into his nostrils, is worshipping a lifeless image and calling it his god. "One shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer nor save him out of his trouble." Is. xlvi. 7.



School Children at Mavelikara.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE PEOPLE.

" Far and wide through all unknowing,
Pants for Thee each mortal breast ;
Human tears for Thee are flowing,
Human hearts in Thee would rest ;
Thirsting as for dews of even,
As the new-mown grass for rain,
Thee they seek, as God of Heaven,
Thee as man for sinners slain."

BISHOP COXE.



ACCORDING to a census taken in 1891 the population of Travancore was 2,557,736. Of these, 1,871,864 were Hindus, 58,823 Mohammedans, 482,683 Europeans and native Christians. We shall probably find a large increase when the enumeration of the census now in progress (1901) is completed, for through God's mercy we have had neither plague nor famine.

Trevandrum contained in 1891 27,887 inhabitants. These are of many nations, languages, and castes ; foreigners from many other parts of India being attracted to the state in the hope of meeting with appointments under a Hindu Maharajah.

The great lawgiver, Manu, who lived B.C. 500, divided the people into four castes, Brahmans, Kshettriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras, but in process of time sub-divisions have occurred, so that in Travancore there are now as many as 578. Caste is a religious and not a social distinction ; a man must belong to the caste in which he was born ; a Brahman, by neglect of his religious duties, may become an outcast, but no member of a lower caste can ever rise to a higher one. Many learned writers on

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Indian manners and customs think that there are advantages in the caste system, but a number of those who were born to it, and have lived under it, and well know its evil results, think otherwise. A man may be guilty of theft and murder, these crimes do not destroy his caste ; but let him take a glass of water from a European, in the presence of his own people, and it is at once destroyed. "Hindus are tied hand and foot, and are willing slaves of the most intolerant and exacting taskmaster that ever placed a yoke on the neck of man." Women are the chief upholders of caste, and were it not for their strenuous support I believe it would soon die a natural death.

In ordinary visiting and intercourse with Hindu ladies, no allusion is made to it as a rule ; you are greeted in European fashion, and take your place by their side as though considered to be equal in caste to themselves. You may even be acquainted with them for a long time before you know that, after your visit, they would rather die than partake of food without first bathing to cleanse themselves from the pollution caused by the touch of your hand. This does not usually distress one, but it is a real pain to be admitted to the sick room of a friend, dear to you, and to be motioned to a seat placed at the prescribed distance from her bed, because she is too ill to be able to bathe after you have left her. If suffering from bereavement you are allowed to visit her without any restriction, because she herself has been already polluted, and will remain so for a certain number of days after the death of her relative. A mother with a very young infant is in the same outcaste condition for a fixed period. You may, therefore, go to her bedside and perform little friendly acts, such as shaking up her pillows, while her Brahman mother and sisters, fearing pollution,

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dare not approach her. The tyranny of caste refuses to allow of emigration; a man may take a short voyage by sea, provided he can land every day and take his meal of rice on shore, but he is forbidden by the Brahmans to cross the "black water," as they call the ocean. A man from Cochin, a small state north of Travancore, lately transgressed this law by going to England, and on his return desired to be allowed to re-enter his caste. This was forbidden, and not only he, but all his relations were excommunicated also.

The Namburi Brahmans are supposed to have been brought to South India by Parasurāmen, who is credited with having thrown his axe into the sea, the immediate consequence of which was the rising from it of the fair land of Travancore. The probable foundation for this legend is that a colony of Arayans migrated at an early period from North India, and became the progenitors of this large caste, which now numbers about 10,000. Only a few Namburis are to be met with in Trevandrum; their homes are in secluded spots surrounded by their vast estates, let out to Nayar cultivators, the work of the fields being done by Pulleyars, or slaves. Their houses are called Illums, and are jealously guarded from the approach of the low castes. Once every six years an important festival is held in Trevandrum, and thousands of these Brahmans flock to it. They are lodged in large sheds erected for the purpose all over the Fort, each man provided with a separate cot made of bamboos. They receive liberal daily rations of rice, sugar, ghi, vegetables, spices, cocoanuts, plantains, etc., besides presents in cloths and money, and in return they pray daily for the welfare of the State. They are fair, with clear-cut features, and wear their black hair in one long lock tied on the top of their heads instead of at the back like the Tamil Brahmans. Their language is Malayalum,

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and they learn enough Sanscrit to enable them to repeat prayers in that tongue, which, I am assured, many of them could not translate. They despise English education and the arts of civilisation. Their dress consists of one long piece of white cotton cloth wound round their bodies, and is usually spotless; they often wear a solid gold bracelet on their right arms. They look imposing as they walk in procession round the temple, praying by turns, as the name of the festival Murajabom implies. They have many customs peculiar to their caste, and one, that of restricting marriage to the eldest son in each family, causes much misery to their own unmarried women, for many of whom no husbands can be found, as well as to the girls of the Nayar caste, who are often appropriated by their younger sons. Namburi women are very seldom to be seen in towns; they are much afraid of losing caste, and live in great privacy, only venturing outside their houses when covered by a large umbrella made of dried palm leaves, and accompanied by a Nayar woman, who warns them on the approach of strangers.

Foreign Brahmans of the Mahratta, Tamil, Telugu, Canarese, and other nations have settled in great numbers, and for many years past, in Travancore. The Diwàn, or Prime Minister of the country is generally a highly educated man of one of these nations, and, with wisdom enough to value female education, has sent his girls to our Mission School. Others in public offices have often followed his example, with the result that year by year numbers of these Brahman girls have passed through our hands, and we have formed many pleasant friendships amongst them. They are very bright and intelligent, fond of learning for the most part, but much interrupted by religious festivals and marriages in their own and other families, which,

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together with the early age at which they leave school, prevents their studying for public examinations. They are married very young, and, even if children, at the time of the husband's death are condemned to perpetual widowhood. The women of a past generation were not as a rule taught to read, but some of them, the Mahratta ladies, embroidered their own cloths and jackets with silk and small pieces of looking-glass before I knew them. They are also skilful cooks, and spend much time in performing religious ceremonies. When living in Trevandrum they are not secluded, but are permitted to visit their friends, making their calls usually in bullock carriages with unveiled faces; but in their own lands, whither they occasionally return, they are obliged to adopt the veil. The children of both sexes are lively and engaging, generally dressed in gay colours, and flitting about, regardless of the presence of strangers, like a flock of small parroquets.

The Kshettriyas, Hindustani-speaking people, are to be found in considerable numbers in a certain quarter of the town of Trevandrum. The men are employed chiefly as peons, i.e., messengers in public offices and in our houses, where they decline to do menial work, but are faithful and very useful. They are backward in education, few of them having learned to read or write, and consequently unwilling that their women or girls should learn. Four only have been taught in our Caste School. They are very poor, being constantly involved in debt, owing to their heavy marriage expenses. These debts are carried on from father to son, a portion of their monthly wage being regularly set aside to pay the interest, and no thought given to the clearing off of the principal, which, of course, has actually been paid over and over again in the lapse of years.

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Mudhaliars, Vellalas, and Tamil Sudras are also foreigners, who, having acquired more or less English education, have obtained appointments under government. Some of them are men of influence and respectability, and are successful as pleaders, clerks, etc. The wives of even rich members of these castes are often ignorant of book learning, and have no knowledge of any sort of needlework, but many of them value the visits of mission ladies who can speak Tamil. Marriage contracts are strictly observed among them, and children inherit the property of their parents; when sons are born there is great rejoicing. They are often very charitable, hoping for much merit by large gifts to Brahmans and to the poor. One family has adopted the practice of dispensing buttermilk to thirsty passers-by. Two servants are stationed inside the garden wall, and the fluid trickles out through a hollow bamboo into the mouth of anyone who applies for it. It may be imagined that their office is no sinecure in this hot country.

Nâyars or Malayalum Sudras form the majority of the population of Trevandrum and its surrounding districts. They are chiefly agriculturists, and are, as mentioned above, tenants of Namburi landlords. The soldiers of the State are taken from this caste, as their name, Nayar Brigade, implies. Strong attachment to their native land is one of their characteristics. Many have received of late years a university education, and are serving the State in high capacities, but only a few have risen to the rank of Diwan. The women, even those who have not attended Government or Mission Schools, have for the most part been taught to read their own language, with the addition perhaps of a little Sanscrit. Very young girls are frequently sent to little boys' schools, and learn to read first of all by tracing the form of the letters of their difficult alphabet with

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their fingers, in sand spread on the mud floors. Their next step is to study the characters written by their schoolmasters on books made from the dried leaves of the fan palm, and they are finally promoted to books made of paper. The women and girls of this class are very pleasing in appearance; they dress in white cloths wrapped round the waist; in short-sleeved jackets of bright print or silk, with a thin upper cloth, often gold-bordered, covering all from the shoulders downwards. They tie their glossy, abundant black hair in a large knot over the left eye, and frequently adorn it with roses or a garland of jessamine. Many of them play well on a stringed instrument called a vīna, and some have sweet voices and sing melodiously.



A Nayar Lady.

The customs of their caste with regard to marriage are very revolting. The first wedding, or Kālianum, takes place at a very early age, and involves extensive preparations and often great expense. A shed is erected in front of the girl's house and decorated more or less in proportion to the means of the family; a large party of relations and caste friends are invited, and much feasting and merriment follows. The chief ceremony consists in the tying of a small gold ornament called a

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thali, threaded on a thick cotton cord, round the neck of the girl by a boy who is often a Namburi Brahman, but does not become her husband or live with her afterwards. To Europeans the rite has no more significance than the acting of a charade, and to Nayars it only means that the young lady is at liberty to choose her own husband as soon as she is grown up. No further ceremony is necessary. As soon as the youth is told of her choice, he gives her a handsome cloth in the presence of friends and neighbours, and the pair live together until they are tired of one another and desire a change, which is, alas! too often soon. Education has greatly modified this bad practice, and I know of many Nayar husbands and wives who have lived with each other for years, but the custom is, unhappily, far too prevalent at the present time.

Much discussion has been raised lately on a Bill brought forward in the Madras Council for the legalisation of Malayalam marriages in Travancore and British districts of the Malabar coast, but though earnestly desired by leading men of the caste, opposition has been too strong to allow of its being carried. The children of these marriages do not belong to their father, but to their maternal uncle, whose property they inherit, and even in those cases where the whole family live together in the lifetime of the father, it is considered right to send the mother and her sons and daughters away immediately after or even before the cremation of her husband. His house and lands belong to his nephews, who quickly come in and take possession.

Inheritance being through the female line, girls are more desired than boys, and it is looked on as a great misfortune to have no daughters. Nayar families of the richer classes often consist of as many as thirty people living under the same roof and governed by their senior male relative. All the

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women yield implicit obedience to the eldest lady, whose duties are not light, for besides buying, storing up and giving out food for so many mouths, she regulates the lives of the children, decides what schools they shall attend, how they shall dress, and what medicines they shall take when they are ill, their own mothers having no voice in anything that concerns them. Another, and by no means an easy task, is that of settling the numerous quarrels that arise. So highly is this lady honoured that even her own sons may not, without permission, sit down in her presence. On my visits I have never seen them seated; they stand behind her chair as a matter of course.

Hindu women, especially amongst the Brahmans, are much to be commended for their devotion to their husbands; they cook for them, wait on them at meals, taking their own food only when their lords are satisfied, and minister to them in sickness and sorrow. A Nayar woman, even if her attachment to her husband be lifelong, quickly consoles herself after his death by taking another; but Brahman and Kshettriya women live in perpetual widowhood, afflicting themselves by frequent fasts "for the good of their husbands' souls." The tortures of some widows are not only self-inflicted, but gloried in. The case of child widows is, however, very different, and I have grieved much and long over bright, intelligent Brahman girls, happy at lessons and play on one day, and the next struck down with the terrible news of the death of the young boy, a husband only in name, to whom they were betrothed. No more lessons; no more merry fun; feeling herself to have caused by her own fault, deep sorrow to her mother and other relatives who now cannot bear her embraces; despised by her neighbours; forbidden to attend marriage feasts lest she should bring bad luck with her; consid-

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ered by some to be a vile, polluted thing : our poor little afflicted one drags on her miserable life without change till she becomes of marriageable age. Then, on an appointed day, the barber comes, and amid deeply-felt grief and loud wailing, shaves her head ; her jewels are torn off, an old garment wraps her round, and she is consigned to life-long misery, with no hope of alleviation. I remember a case where the screams of the poor girl so touched the tender heart of the enlightened English-taught uncle that he sent the barber away and would not allow the doleful ceremony to proceed. He told me himself that by doing so he had so incurred the anger of his fellow Brahmans, that though he occupied a prominent position under Government, none of them would have any fellowship with him 'until he had sent away the women of his house to a distance. O ! that those who thus suffer from the bondage of caste would trust in the Blessed Son of God who would make them "free indeed." How can they, having heard of Him, hug their chains and refuse to be set at liberty?

So much has been written about the religion of the Hindus, that I need only refer to it briefly. The religion of the Brahmans appears to me to be one dreary round of ceremonies, performed with more or less conscientiousness. Ancient songs are chanted in Sanscrit, but no attempt is made to exhort the people to love and fear God, to speak the truth, and to lead good lives. How can they be moral when the gods they worship are represented in some of their sacred books as looking down from the heights of bliss, laughing at the calamities of men, and enjoying the bodily and mental agonies of sufferers? One of the incarnations of Vishnu, Krishnen, a favourite with Malayalum women, whose picture I have often seen decorated with wreaths of white jessamine, was so wicked during his life on

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earth that I should find it impossible to read the story of his acts with my Munshi. Any man committing the same crimes would be prosecuted in British India, if not in Travancore.

Brahmans, who are supposed to have emanated from the brain of Brahm the Creator, are worshipped as gods by other castes ; feeding Brahmans, observing fasts, scrupulous obedience to the rules of caste, giving alms to beggars, are means whereby merit may be gained and stored up for the benefit of the soul.

Sudras are not allowed to pray or repeat the Vedas (sacred writings) when need of prayer is felt by them, such as at the birth of an infant, the marriage of a son or daughter, or the death of a relative. Brahmans are called in and loaded with gifts of cloth and money, as well as liberally fed if the family be rich, in return for which they perform the prescribed ceremonies. The only semblance of prayer permitted to the Sudra is the repetition of one of the names of God. As we pass by their houses in the evening we hear the constant sound of "Rama Rama," or it may be "Narayan Narayan," generally from the lips of children, who, it is hoped, will in this way bring down a blessing on their homes. This repetition of the name, thousands of times, is thought to accumulate great merit.

The very word for holiness in their language signifies cleanliness, the purification of the body by ceremonial bathing, and so utterly on one occasion did I fail to convince my hearer of sin that she looked up and said with great confidence, "I have God in my heart, and the evil as well as the good that I do are alike done by Him." Another woman, when asked by me, "What is sin?" replied, "Killing flies," and when I suggested that telling lies was a sin she assented, but added, "Everyone does that."

I remember, many years ago, when a Maharajah of Travancore was dying, he gave large sums of

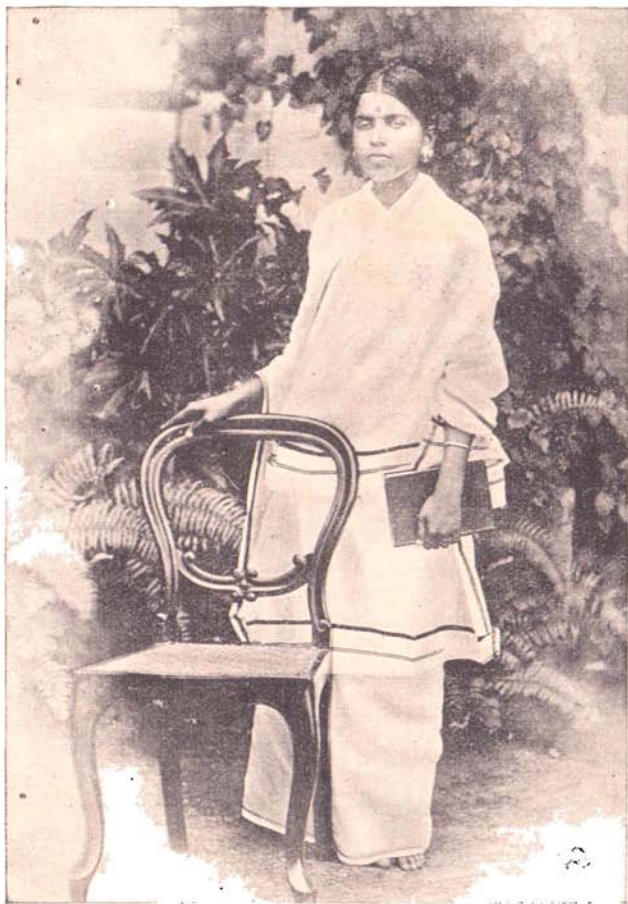
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money as well as cows to Brahmans; all the poor in Trevandrum were fed in different quarters of the town, and donations to beggars and lepers in the Charity Hospital were liberally dispensed; he sent a message to me through his wife asking me to give my opinion as to the best means of ensuring his recovery from sickness or obtaining merit in case of death. Was it, I was asked, better to feed the hungry, or to give large sums to public institutions? I thus had an opportunity of pointing him to Jesus, our great Sin-bearer, "ever ready to save to the uttermost all who come to God through Him." He did not, alas! accept this way of salvation, for before he died, search was made for a man willing to take upon himself the penalty of the Maharajah's sins. He was called to the bedside, embraced by the dying man, and with a large bag of rupees in payment, sent away to a distance, like the scapegoat of the Israelites into the wilderness.

The doctrine of Metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls, is firmly believed in. The soul, when departing, is thought to come back again and again and inhabit other bodies, even, it may be, those of animals, until, by the sufferings of a hundred thousand lives, the sins of the individual are atoned for, and the soul absorbed in that of the Deity. My heart often aches for the mothers of India who, on losing their children by death, refuse, like Rachel, to be comforted, having no hope of ever meeting them in another world.

The bondage in which the Hindus are kept by belief in astrology and omens is second only to that of caste. Nothing of any importance is ever undertaken without consulting them. When a child is born, the astrologer is sent for, its horoscope is drawn up, the events of its life foretold and its duration predicted; when a marriage is desired in a

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"Our First Matriculate," Trevandrum, 1900.

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family, the astrologer is the guide and counsellor ; should the horoscopes of the proposed bride and bridegroom not agree, the alliance is abandoned. He is also consulted with regard to propitious days for starting on a journey, celebrating feasts, shaving the head of young children, the best time for putting on the sacred thread, and many other events in life. One instance of the real evil of consulting astrologers has come under my own observation.

I became acquainted with and much interested in a Nayar family, two girls from which attended my Caste School ; both father and mother received my visits with evident pleasure, and always expressed gratitude for my kindness to their children. At length the poor mother died and left an infant girl of a few days old.

I went to see the family in their trouble, and remarked to the father that he and his two little girls would find it difficult to rear so tiny a creature. I even offered to take it and have it cared for by a motherly woman whom I knew, promising that he and his children should see it as often as they pleased. He replied, "Oh! no, what would my neighbours say? They would mock me, and declare I had committed a great sin by causing my child to lose her caste." All that I could say was in vain. I could do nothing to help them but beg a daily supply of milk from one of the neighbouring palaces.

From time to time I saw the baby, and was pleased to find it thriving, but on my return from a six weeks' visit to the hills I found it emaciated, dirty, and neglected. The father, on being questioned, replied that he had, on consulting the astrologer, heard that the child would not live longer than five years, and that he thought it useless to try and bring it up after that verdict! This is probably not the only example of child-murder resulting from conferences with astrologers.

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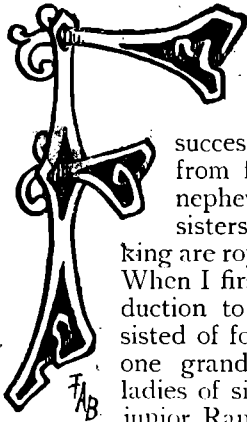
CHAPTER V.

THE ROYAL FAMILY.

A life of honour and of worth
Has no eternity on earth—
'Tis but a name;
And yet its glory far exceeds
That base and sensual life, which leads
To want and shame.

The eternal life, beyond the sky,
Wealth cannot purchase, nor the high
And proud estate;
The soul in dalliance laid—the spirit
Corrupt with sin—shall not inherit
A joy so great.

LONGFELLOW.



FROM very ancient times, as far back as old records reach, Travancore has been governed by kings. The succession to the throne has not been from father to son, but nephews to nephews on the female side. The sisters, nieces and grand-nieces of a king are royal, not so his wife and children. When I first had the pleasure of an introduction to the Royal Family they consisted of four brothers, two nephews, and one grand-nephew, besides two young ladies of sixteen and fourteen, senior and junior Ranis who had been adopted into the family.

His Highness Rama Vurma, G.C.S.I., the Third Prince, a younger brother of the Second Prince, who ascended the throne in 1885, is the present Maharajah.

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The Senior Rani has unhappily had no family. The little Fourth Prince, son of her sister, the Junior Rani, was a smiling infant in the arms of his grandmother when I first saw him, and he soon became an engaging and promising child. In course of time three other sons were born, of whom His Highness Rama Vurma is now Elaya Rajah.*



H.H. Rama Vurma, Maharajah of Travancore, who recently entertained Lord Curzon.

A daughter who only survived her birth a few days, died many years ago, and as there was no Rani to carry on the succession and be the mother

* Since going to press, we have heard with deep regret of the death of H.H. the Senior Rani and of that of H.H. the Elaya Rajah, thus leaving the Maharajah without an heir.—M. B.

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of future sovereigns, two little great-nieces of H.H. the Senior Rani were adopted last year—

Her Highness Seta Lakshmi Baye, Junior Rani, aged six, and

Her Highness Seta Parwathi Baye, First Princess, aged five.

They are cousins, and very winning, lovable little girls, with charming manners. May they by God's grace grow up to be good, as well as well-educated, accomplished women, and become a blessing to their family and country!

On looking back over the period of my long residence in Travancore—thirty-eight years—it is pleasant to think of the great improvement which has taken place in the public institutions of Trevandrum, the capital.

I remember the laying of the foundation stone of the General Hospital, as well as the opening ceremony performed by H.H. Rama Vurmah, who reigned from 1861—1880. Very much has been done medically since then; a separate Hospital for His Highness's Nayar Brigade; another for the Sepoys of the Residency Escort; a Hospital for Incurables, commonly called the Charity Hospital; an Asylum for lunatics; a large commodious building in a beautiful situation outside the town for lepers; and lastly, though not less important, the new and well-managed Hospital for Women, presided over by a lady doctor from England. In addition to these there are many dispensaries in various parts of the town, as well as a regular network of medical establishments all over Travancore. But in spite of all these efforts to provide medical attendance and skilled surgery as practised by European doctors, many of the natives prefer to be treated by their own ignorant practitioners, and women, especially in Mohammedan families, are allowed to languish and die in pain because

their relatives will not take the trouble to procure medicine for them. Hysterical affections are usually ascribed to a direct possession of the devil, and if the priest do not succeed in casting him out by the use of tom-toms and incantations, cruel methods are often resorted to. I have heard of one case where the nostrils and ears of the patient were stuffed with cotton and then lighted, causing intense agony. Another girl suffering from the same complaint, whose screams at night disturbed our rest, though our house was at some little distance, was compelled to drink the blood of a living fowl put into her hands by the devil-priest. The dried and powdered liver of a black cat is a specific for one disease, and musk rats and other vermin are often used in the preparation of native quack medicines. A great deal may be done by medically-educated natives themselves, by making an effort to teach their own people the necessity of vaccinating their children, of boiling water or milk in clean vessels before drinking it in time of cholera, or during an epidemic of typhoid, and of procuring skilled nurses for their women and young infants.

I have already referred to the fine buildings erected for the Boys' and Girls' Colleges, both of which have been built since 1864. In education generally much progress has been made lately; all fees have been remitted in Girls' Schools with a view to increase the attendance. Grants in aid have been made to schools under the management of the Church and London Missionary Societies, as well as to our own Fort School, the convent and others under Roman Catholic superintendence; besides aid given to schools under Syrian Christian, and private direction. I believe the percentage of girls educated is now higher than that of Madras, but though secular knowledge is liberally imparted

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in Government Schools, religious teaching is relegated to the background, or else wholly neglected. As a large number of Christians attend these schools it would be as well to have special classes for them where the Bible might be taught by competent teachers.

A Sanscrit College, a Female Normal School, and large Girls' School, in which only vernacular languages are taught, besides a great number of small village schools, are also maintained or simply aided by the Government.

The Industrial School of Arts, in which drawing in various styles, painting, carving in ivory and wood, pottery, moulding and modelling, carpet weaving, wood engraving and silversmith's work are taught, is also a useful institution, and provides employment and a living for many youths.

Excellent work has been done year by year by a succession of English Engineers assisted by trained native subordinates. Public offices, colleges, hospitals, a handsome museum, jails, the Jubilee Town Hall, bungalows for travellers all over the country, as well as schools have been built; while bridges, roads and canals have been multiplied. Public gardens have also been laid out at great expense and with much taste, in which the Band of the Nayar Brigade plays once a week. Thirty years ago a very large project was taken in hand to facilitate water communication from Trevandrum to the north. It was no less than to bore through four miles of hilly ground and enable boats to pass through two tunnels connected with each other by a canal. Miners from England had to be requisitioned for the work, which was executed at great cost. Travellers may now go without leaving their boat a distance of 130 miles from the Capital to the northern boundary of Travancore.

Another costly undertaking for so small a State

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was the diverting of the waters of the Peryar river into the Madura country, and turning an arid waste into a fertile district.

Nor have European officers and friends been forgotten in the beneficent expenditure of State funds, for two commodious bungalows have been erected on Travancore hills at Poonmudi, thirty-five miles



Ladies of ~~the Royal Family~~ Travancore (Mahratta Brahmins).

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from Trevandrum, to which they can retire when needing rest and change.

Large sums are annually spent on all these institutions, and Travancore is worthy still of the name she has borne for centuries of "The Land of Charity."

Yet it is a source of deep regret that amid much that is praiseworthy, a very low code of morals exists, and that licentiousness stalks abroad in the land.

Toleration has for years been practised towards men of all religions, but an old law which had become effete has recently been revived—that a convert to Christianity loses all civil rights, and is considered to be dead, the family property being divided amongst the other relatives, and again—that it is a penal act to erect a place of worship for Christians without the express sanction of Government, the penalty for doing so being imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or a fine. Enforced, these restrictions will be a cause of distress and hardship to Christians, and it is to be hoped that His Highness the Maharajah and his Diwan, both highly educated and enlightened men, though strict Hindus, will issue a proclamation for the removal of disabilities, and thus allay the uneasiness of a large body of law-abiding, peace-loving people.

They are deeply grateful for the toleration granted them in the past, and earnestly desire that it may be afforded them in future.

"Righteousness exalteth a nation but sin is a reproach to any people." Prov. xiv. 34.



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CHAPTER VI.

MISSIONS.

Thy mercy will not fail us,
Nor leave Thy work undone ;
With Thy right hand to help us,
The victory shall be won ;
And then by men and angels,
Thy name shall be adored,
And this shall be their anthem,
One Church, one Faith, one Lord.

VERY REV. EDWD. HAYES PLUMPTRE.



MUCH regret that the limits of this little book will not allow me to give even a short sketch of the Missions of those two useful Societies* which have been already so much blessed in Travancore. I can only hope that an abler pen than mine may put on record some account of the self-denying labours of the worthy men and women who have devoted their whole lives to the civilisation and evangelisation of the people.

I was sent out in 1862 by the "Indian Female Normal School and Instruction Society" to Kottayam, where I first studied the Malayalam language, and after passing an examination in it (there was only one in those days)

* The London Missionary Society commenced work in 1805, and now occupies the ground from Quilon forty miles north of Travancore to the extreme south, while the Church Missionary Society, whose labours began at Alleppic in 1816, and at Kottayam in 1817, amongst the Syrian Christians (an ancient Church existing ever since the days of the Apostles), has a number of stations from the northern boundary to the centre of Travancore.

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was transferred to Trevandrum in July, 1864. I was introduced to and received with great politeness by H.H. Rama Vurmah, the first Sovereign to receive the title of Maha or Great Rajah and Investiture of the Order of the Star of India. His Prime Minister of Diwan, Sir Mahadewa Rao, entered warmly into my scheme for establishing a school for High Caste Girls, and appropriated to my use a large old palace within the Fort, the most sacred enclosure in Trevandrum. It had been built for a former Diwan, he explained, as we walked up the stairs, as a residence for himself, but never inhabited, being thought to be haunted. "You as a Christian will not be afraid of ghosts," he added, smiling, "and I think this will be a good place for your school." The first room we entered was a lofty and spacious one, forty-five feet long and broad in proportion, with rows of windows on each side and a door opening on to a balcony at either end. It led into a smaller room which, the Diwan observed, would serve as a private sitting-room, and should be furnished with a sofa and easy chair, which he proposed that I should purchase and send in the bill to him. The large room floor had been already covered with matting, and a few chairs and a table were in the middle of it. This upper story was built entirely of wood, quaintly carved in places; the windows were not glazed, but shuttered, and the view from them into a spacious garden of palms and other tropical plants was refreshing to the eye. The rooms on the lower story exactly corresponded with the upper ones, but those on the ground floor, being extremely hot and dark, were unfit for our use, and I gave them back to the Sircar, as the Government is called.

My school was opened on November 3rd, 1864, with a daughter and niece of the good Diwan and two little Malayali girls of the Nayar caste, who

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were my only scholars up to the following May, although the Diwan advertised the school in the Government Gazette, and strongly advised Hindu parents to avail themselves of the advantages offered. The Diwan's was a Mahratta Brahman family, so my four pupils had two languages between them, only one of which I had studied. The elder, Cavary Bai, was living with her husband; the younger, Ambu Bai, a sweet girl of ten, was married, but still in her father's house. I taught them both English, drawing, and needlework five days in the week, to which music was added as soon as a piano had been purchased. Elder daughters of the Diwan then came in to share the music lessons and to chat and laugh. We soon began to understand each other and became great friends; but a very real affection sprang up between Ambu Bai and myself, and I was very sorry when she was suddenly withdrawn to go and live in her husband's house two years afterwards. She sent me her eldest daughter Suckoo Bai, who attended the Fort School for some time and was a great favourite. Now, alas! dear Ambu Bai has become a widow, and suffers greatly from rheumatism. I have not been allowed to see her for some years. Her companion in study, Cavary Bai, lost her husband, Annàji Rao, soon after the birth of her second son, and deep was my grief when I first saw her afterwards with shaven head and sad face worn with fasting and tears. Her husband, a good English scholar, well-read and of courteous manners, had now and then called on me and expressed great interest in her studies, but now her books and work must be laid aside, and nothing but privation and misery were before her. Her two baby sons would, I thought, be a solace and induce her to try and live for their sakes, but her health had always been delicate, and she could not bear up against the overwhelming grief and

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self-inflicted austerities. She drooped and died two years afterwards.

The first palace to open its doors to me was that of H.H. the First Prince, who afterwards reigned for five years. His Lady, Lakshmi Anmachi, as she was called, was then (1865) a young girl of eighteen who had been married at eleven years of age.

My first visit to H.H. Lakshmi Baye, I.C.I., Senior Rani of Travancore, was paid in 1864, but I was not invited to attend regularly for the purpose of instruction till July 25th of the following year. She was then a girl of sixteen, and had been prepared by lessons in English from her husband to profit rapidly by my teaching. She soon acquired a fair knowledge of English, to which she added skill in drawing, painting, and needlework, and many have been the happy hours spent in Her Highness's little study. This dear lady, the highest in the land, has set an example not only to the women of her family, but to those of her caste and nation by reading the Bible, and in great measure shaping her life according to its precepts. Twenty-six years ago, her husband, although an enlightened, clever, scholarly man, fell under the displeasure of the reigning Maharajah and was banished from Travandrum with no hope of a return to his former station. The young Rani, deeply distressed, and urged by all her relatives to forget him and take another consort, made a firm resolve to live in widowed seclusion, and although a wooer was actually sent to her by the Maharajah, she had firmness and strength of mind enough to bid him depart. At length her trial ended by the death of this Sovereign and the restoration of her husband, after five years' absence, by his successor.

Her late Majesty, our beloved Queen-Empress, on learning this incident from the Duke of Buckingham, then Governor of Madras, sent Her High-

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ness the Order of the Crown of India, a distinction never before granted to any Rani of Travancore. The Investiture took place in open durbar on June 17, 1881, and was an occasion of public rejoicing. I hope it has not been without influence for good amongst the women of Travancore.

Her late Highness the Junior Rani, a sister of the above-mentioned lady, became my pupil a month after her in August, 1865, and for twenty-eight years, until her death in 1893, my visits to her were more or less constant. She was very amiable and affectionate, and I mourned her sincerely. I can never forget the sad sight of her last sufferings just before she died. I had driven down to the palace, and was by the kindness of her devoted son, who was watching, permitted to look at Her Highness through the venetian shutter of a window. I had promised to be quite silent, so could only take a speechless farewell and commend her soul in prayer to our All Merciful God. Oh! how my heart yearned over her; taught for so many years from God's word; plainly pointed to the Saviour, Who gave His precious life for her; entreated to serve Him, keep His commandments, and walk in the narrow way that leadeth to Everlasting Life, and yet clinging to all that is evil in Hinduism, following the immoral customs which it permits, and bringing a blight on the lives of her four sons. Only one of them survives her, may God be gracious to him! I can hardly, after the lapse of eight years, write this story without weeping. How truly "the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word and it becometh unfruitful"!

Kalliani Ámmachi, wife of the Maharajah, was my next pupil. She was a lady of great beauty and intelligence. She read and understood the New Testament with me at my frequent visits. Another

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interesting palace pupil was wife of His Highness Revi Vurma, Rajah, an imbecile Prince who was incapable of succeeding to the throne. This young girl had a retentive memory, and as she could read her own language, Malayalum, and studied the New Testament by herself, she made great progress in Divine knowledge. She was anxious to be taught, drinking in like a thirsty soul the waters of life. Four years passed away, and she not only confessed to me that she was a believer, but in my presence used to talk to her mother and brother about the Christian faith. I often spoke to my pupil at this time about the duty of professing Christ openly if she really believed in Him, and she promised me that when the child she was expecting was born she would declare herself boldly to be on the Lord's side. One day to my great grief I learned that all was over—that she had died in her confinement.

I went at once to the house, and her poor mother with streaming eyes gave me an account of all that had happened just before her death. When she knew that she could not recover, she begged her friends to send for her "Madama," the name by which she always called me. It was a long way to my house and the night was dark, so they did not take the trouble to go and tell me, but promised her that I should be fetched in the morning. Then the poor lady prayed to the Lord Jesus, confessed to all around her that she was His disciple, and before morning passed, as I earnestly hope, into His presence.

But to return to our Fort School. It made but slow progress for many years, even ten after the first opening I find only between thirty and forty on the Roll. It took a long time to accustom the grandmothers and mothers to the idea of girls learning more than they could pick up in pial schools kept by native masters; and besides, four years after

our school was begun a rival one where Malayalam and Tamil only were taught was opened under Hindu management and preferred by some of the parents, though all the teachers at that time were men!

Our good friend Sir Mahadeva Roa resigned his appointment in 1872, and was succeeded by a Tamil Brahman, and the latter by a Diwan of the Nayar caste, both of whom were friendly and sent nieces or daughters to us to be educated. But in 1881 a crisis occurred in the history of the school. A bigoted Hindu, an Iyengar, came from Madras to be our Diwan. I have no doubt that he was astonished to find a Christian Mission School close to his official residence, and I can imagine that he took no rest till he had matured a plot to remove it. However that may be, I was just closing my class-work in the Fort one afternoon, when a peon handed me a note from the Diwan, and on opening it after the girls were dismissed, I found that he "requested I would make arrangements to vacate the palace in which my school was held, as it was required as a residence for H.H. the First Prince."

I had been in possession of this house for seventeen years, and had heard no rumour of any feeling inimical to our work there, so I naturally felt both surprised and grieved; but even in that first moment of perplexity I was sustained by the "good hand of my God upon me." A party of scowling Iyengars were standing at the gate, no doubt expecting to see signs of distress upon my countenance; but He who upheld me was King of all the earth, and He enabled me to salaam to them smilingly and to pass on. I simply wrote to the Diwan to know when the building would be required, and he replied by the end of the week.

I had some difficulty in hiring a house large enough for our party, and then all the benches, desks, and other furniture had to be handed out

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through the windows, as the winding stairs were too narrow for them. I gave my girls only one extra holiday on the Friday, and before they left sent them in procession with their teachers to the new house, telling them to appear there on Monday, bringing books and slates to school. We worked hard in our preparation on Friday and Saturday, and were quite ready for them at the time appointed, but before we left the Fort we all knelt in prayer together to seek future mercies of Him Who had so helped us in years past. I had no hope that we should ever meet in the old Fort Palace again, and thought with many a pang about the happy hours spent there during the past seventeen years.

We worked on for three months in the new school house, but our Brahman girls dropped off one by one; they were willing and anxious to go on learning with us, but it was difficult for them to walk so far, and their mothers feared loss of caste for them by their coming in contact with people in the high road. Rumours reached me that the Maharajah intended giving us the old palace again, but no official intimation had reached me to that effect, and I knew that His Highness was planning a tour in North India which would occupy six weeks, and that in his absence no restoration would take place. At length the guns announcing his departure were fired, and my heart sank within me at the sound. Could it be that God, Who had heard so many prayers, was now hiding His face from me, and was my school destined to fail? I well remember the night of trouble which followed, but "joy" came "in the morning." About noon a messenger, who had been sent back fifteen miles from the Maharajah's camp, arrived with a letter for me from the Dewan, giving permission for the old palace to be re-occupied by my school, and sending me the key.

We were not long in taking possession, and bringing back the furniture and stores; but when we were removing our goods, several parents in the neighbourhood of the new building, who had sent their girls to us, begged us so earnestly to continue to hold a school there, that we consented, and for the next nineteen years a Tamil-English School was carried on there, and educated a large number of girls. A year and a half ago I was with great regret obliged to close this school owing to reductions in mission allowances from England. But to return to our Fort School, re-opened in the old building early in 1882. About ten days after we returned to it a fire broke out in the compound and entirely destroyed a shed close to the palace; the woodwork of the upper story was blackened, but by God's mercy did not ignite. Had it done so nothing could have saved the place, for the walls, all of old, dry wood, would have burst into a flame impossible to extinguish. The fire was very mysterious, and, I feared, the work of incendiaries; but if so, their plans were frustrated by a Higher than they, "Who knoweth them that trust in Him." My peon repeated the remark of a passer-by that it was the Mission stores which had saved the building, the man adding, "Their God is stronger than ours."

It was not difficult to trace the Hand of God in all that happened to us at that time—the enemy tried to injure our one school, and their efforts to destroy it issued in the opening of another. The Fort School is still held in the old palace, and last year one out of three scholars sent up for matriculation passed. May it still continue to flourish!

In July, 1879, the Trevandrum Mission was transferred from the "Indian Female Normal School and Instruction Society" to that of the "Church of England Zenana Missionary Society," under the direction of which it is still conducted.

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A third school was opened by us in Trevandrum in 1888, in which English and Mahratta were taught for the benefit of a number of Mahratta Sudras, who had been settled in the town for about a hundred years. We admitted little boys as well as their sisters, and all the scholars learned to read their own beautiful language as well as Tamil and a little English. But the school was very expensive, and after eleven years it was closed for a time. We re-opened it in 1897, but we were obliged to close it again in 1899. The scholars are now taught, as with us, from God's Word, and instructed in Tamil, but not in their own tongue, which their parents undervalue. We hope, however, as opportunity occurs, to visit in their homes and read with them in Mahratti, which the elder scholars who are now married, with little ones of their own, are much pleased to read with me.

Our Mission is much indebted to the self-denying labours of devoted and earnest Bible-women, who, as in England, are a link between the people and the ladies who superintend them. Many of them have been in past years, and still are, warmly welcomed in upwards of 2,000 houses, where in most instances, without any secular teaching, the Bible reading is not only permitted, but gladly accepted. In this way mothers who were once taught in our schools, have their memories refreshed by hearing again the holy words which so much interested them long ago, and their children, now being trained by us, also carry home messages of God's love and "tidings of great joy" to all who desire that their sins should be forgiven and that Everlasting Life should be granted them. We have now six of these women on our staff, who pay on an average one hundred and twenty-five visits a week, besides daily attendance in the Fort School and Dispensary.

We began this branch of our Mission twenty-



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seven years ago with but one agent. Three who have laboured with us "rest from their labours, and their works follow them." Only the Great Day will disclose the results of these labours; there has been much patient sowing; the work has been toilsome, carried on in the heat of the day or in heavy monsoon rain; often with unflinching courage during epidemics of cholera or small-pox; in evil report and good report; but the love of the Master has constrained them to work on unweariedly, and they will doubtless receive an abundant reward in the day when the Angel Reapers come forth and gather the sheaves into His garner.

"The golden evening brightens in the west; soon, soon to faithful warriors comes their rest."



A Group of Bible-women, Trevandrum.

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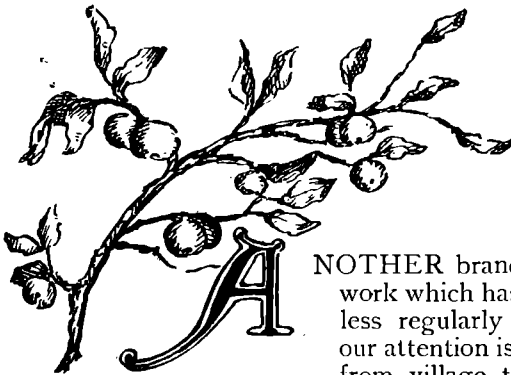
CHAPTER VII.

MISSIONS (*continued*).

Oh ! happiest work below,
Earnest of joy above,
To sweeten many a cup of woe,
By deeds of holy love.

Lord, may it be our choice,
This blessed rule to keep,
" Rejoice with them that do rejoice,
And weep with them that weep."

REV. SIR HENRY W. BAKER, BART.



ANOTHER branch of our work which has more or less regularly engaged our attention is to travel from village to village with medicines, Bibles, Gospels, and other holy books. We have no need of tents, for there are numerous travellers' bungalows, clean, comfortable resting places, at intervals in every road or canal bank. Here we may stay and find accommodation for ourselves, servants, horses, and bullocks, and spend three or four days at a time ministering to the sick and teaching the ignorant about God. I have taken several journeys of this kind,

sometimes riding from place to place on my pony, and leaving my companions to follow in carts, or else travelling in boats or bullock carts myself. Our usual plan after taking up our abode at a bungalow is to send a Bible-woman round to the native houses in the neighbourhood, and invite the sick to come to us the next morning. We soon have a company of lame, halt, and semi-blind, also those suffering from skin diseases and ulcers, very prevalent in the hot, damp climate of Travancore. Many opportunities are thus afforded, while giving to each individual attention, of enquiring into the faith and knowledge of God possessed by the patient.

In some villages medical dressers and catechists may have already bestowed care on the people, and then the great pall of black ignorance may have been partially lifted, but too often we find in the regions beyond utter inability to answer the simplest questions on the nature of sin or the mercy of God, and are met with a stare of incredulity when we try to explain that the Son of God willingly gave up His life that they might be saved.

In Brahman streets, which are always in some isolated corner of a village, it is easy to collect a congregation and secure patient attention to a chapter read aloud from the New Testament. Not only men and boys, but women also crowd the verandahs, look from the small windows, and stand round the reader. At first the novelty of hearing one of the vernacular languages of the country from the mouth of a white woman, commands for her a quiet audience, but soon the elder women begin to object, and though often silenced by the men, not infrequently make so much noise in talking to each other that the open-air meeting has to be closed. Tracts are then distributed, for which eager hands are held out; cards with texts



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printed on them are given to the boys, who are told to learn to repeat them and to go to the bungalow next day, and Gospel portions are promised as soon as twelve texts have been committed to memory. We also make calls on the Tahsildar and other rich men in the village, but on asking to see the ladies of the house are often told they are too busy to come out, the real truth being that they fear caste defilement by approaching us, and are disinclined to bathe afterwards. In one Mohammedan village our efforts to see the women were entirely hindered by a crowd of men, who followed us right through the main road, and told us that they did not wish to hear what we had come so far to tell them. In another, more distant still from Trevandrum, and inhabited by about a hundred people, chiefly Mohammedans, our bungalow was crowded with sick and suffering clamouring for medicine, and quite willing to hear our Gospel message. They repeatedly told us to go again and bring more quinine, for many were "down with fever," but, alas! other duties kept us tied to Trevandrum, and we could not do so.

In another village of about 800 houses and 15,000 or 16,000 inhabitants we were greatly helped in explaining St. John i. 1-18 and St. Matt. xxv. 1-14 to a large crowd which gathered one by one, by a Christian policeman and his friend, also a disciple of Christ. After we had finished speaking we heard several boys read, and gave Gospels to all who could do so; went into the house of a poor woman, and were glad to find she had a New Testament of her own; then on to a large upper-storied house belonging to a wealthy contractor for timber, the master of which civilly invited us in. We were a large party by this time, all the people to whom we first spoke having followed us into the compound. The owner, who was a Christian, gave me his large

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Bible and New Testament ; his wife, with an infant in her arms, appeared and stood near while I read St. John xvi. 1-11, urging them to look to Christ only, telling them that unless we abide in Him we cannot bring forth fruit, and begging them to seek the help of the Holy Spirit to enable them to become more like Christ.

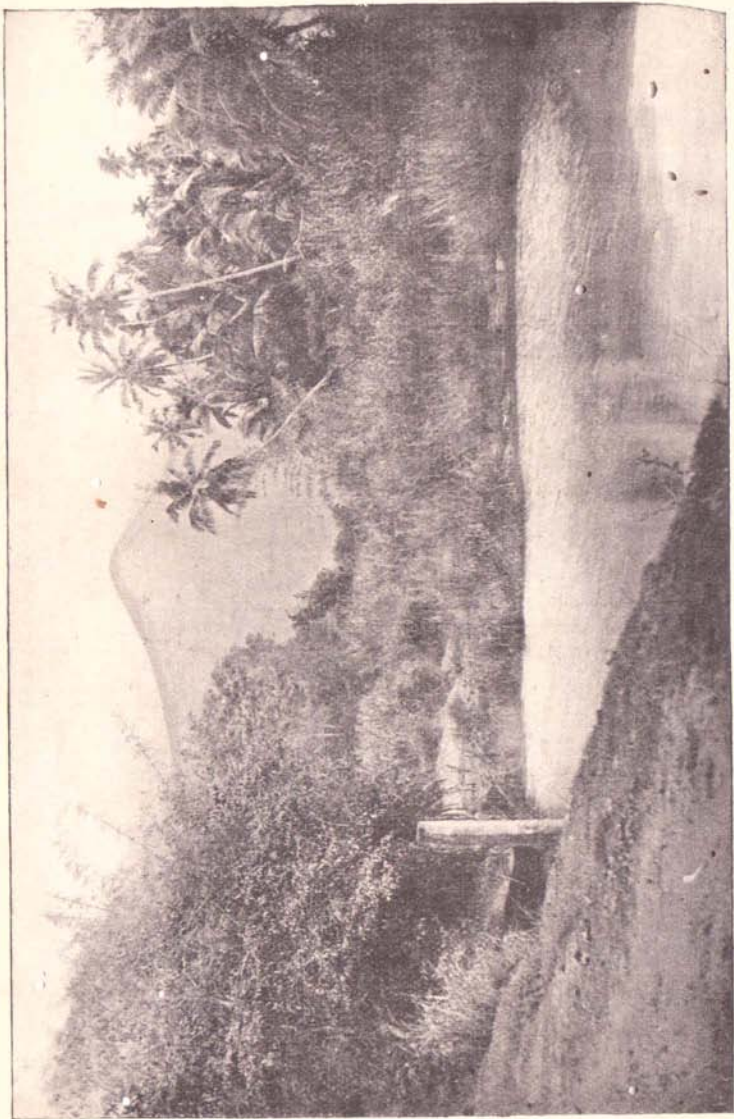
The third house was approached by a ladder of six steps leaning against the outer mud wall: it was also inhabited by a Christian. The policeman and whole crowd walked with us, and we were also joined by a Mohammedan, two or three Sudras, and more boys, our numbers having increased like a rolling snowball. I read St. John iii. 1-17, and told them that our own merit was powerless to save—that only Christ the Sinless One could atone for our sins by His precious blood. In this house also there was a good Bible of clear print. Even Christians are apt to leave God's Word behind when they go away to distant homes, and it pleased me much to find a Bible or Testament in each of these houses. They told me also that every week they had a prayer meeting by turns in each other's dwellings from 2 to 5 in the afternoon. There was no place of worship nearer than two miles, and that was a Syrian Church, with service in Syriac, but sermon in Malayalum. Like the Roman Catholic Churches, the Syrians conduct their public worship in a dead language not understood by the people. Visits are also paid to any boys' school near and leaflets distributed amongst the boys, and Gospel portions to the teachers, who are invariably pleased to see us. A vast field for work is in this way opened to us, but the labourers at our station are always few or unprepared by non-acquaintance with any Indian language.

Our converts, those actually baptised, have not been many. We need a baptism of the Holy Spirit

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on ourselves and those whom we teach. May the good Lord hasten it in His time! Some droppings of the coming shower have, however, already been granted us.

About twenty years ago a Brahman of good family found a tract and began eagerly reading it. From this he was led to the study of the Bible, and after many conflicts he resolved to give up the religion of his fathers and become a Christian. He was married to a young wife of more than average intelligence, and he imparted to her the truths he had learned, with the result that she professed herself willing to follow him in his renunciation of Hinduism. He went to see the Missionary of the C.M.S. in Trevandrum, the late Rev. S. Mateer, who was much pleased with him, and on being convinced of his sincerity, advised him to go to Kottayam for further instruction and baptism, fearing that if he remained in Trevandrum the opposition of his friends would be too strong for him. He and his wife started off together, and were kindly received by Rev. Henry and Mrs. Baker, of the C.M.S. They both broke caste by partaking of food prepared by Christians, and after having been carefully taught for a few days, a time for their baptism was appointed. Before this could be done, however, the girl's father, one of the priests attached to H.H. the Maharajah's palace, deeply grieved at his daughter's flight with her husband, went to Kottayam and tried by every argument and threat he could think of to induce them to return. The convert remained firm, but the girl yielded and went away with her father. Her husband was baptised soon afterwards by the name of Sâtyadâsen, true servant. The poor young wife, or widow as she was now called, had a great deal to bear. Priests were called in, her tongue was cruelly burnt to restore her caste, muntrums were



1
A View at Ponmanay, Travancore.

Rudau Naur.

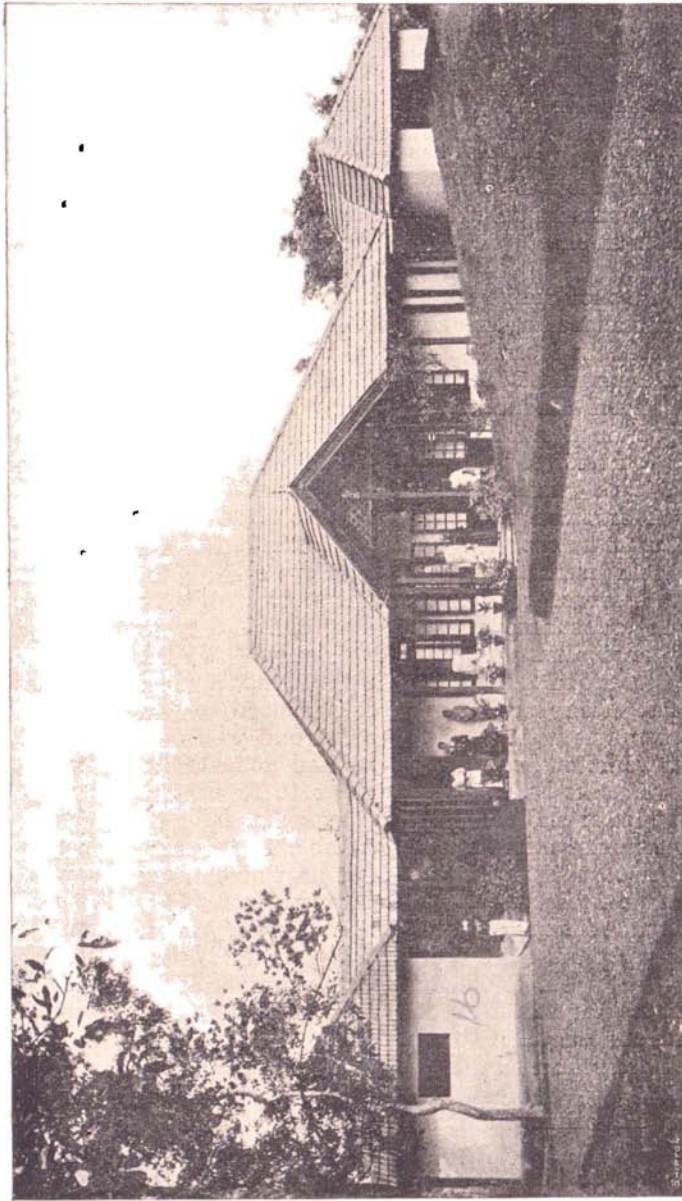
"IZHAKRE NAJAM"

Madatul-
Rudau Naur

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repeated, reproaches were heaped upon her by her husband's mother and sister, her husband's defection being due, they supposed, to sins committed by her in a former state of existence ; but she was a Christian in heart, and no one could take away from her the remembrance of the texts of Scripture she had learned, or prevent her from praying after the other women were asleep to the Lord Jesus, her newly-found Saviour. I cannot recollect the exact time she remained at home, but believe it was only a few months before she wrote to her husband to come and fetch her. He contrived to let her know that he would on a certain evening at dusk have a carriage waiting outside the village in which she might be conveyed to the landing place, where a boat would be ready for her. With trembling steps she reached the spot, where, to her great joy, she found her husband, and they both reached Kottayam in safety. She was baptised soon after, and received the name of Fanny, after her god-mother, Mrs. Baker. She had been very fairly educated, could read and write both Tamil, her own tongue, and Malayalum, having learned in a girls' school opened by the Government at Karamony, her native village. This double baptism caused a great deal of excitement at the time, and one day when I was sitting with her, H.H. the Junior Rani remarked that the wicked man had been well punished for giving up his caste, for that now he was a coolie, carrying heavy burdens in the Châley Bazaar, Trevandrum.

Happily I could contradict that rumour, for I happened to have in my pocket a letter I had received from Mrs. Baker, in which she had mentioned that Sâtyadâsen and Fanny were very happy ; that he was being trained as a catechist by the C.M.S., and that she was useful in many other ways.



The New Hospital, Trevandrum, opened by H.H. the Maharajah, July 24th, 1900.

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For some years afterwards I heard but little of the family in Trevandrum, but one day a Brahman woman accompanied by a boy came to the bungalow to see me, and I was glad to find that she was Sâtyadâsen's mother. She was very shy and did not talk much, but her heart yearned over her only son, and she had come for news of him.

I told her all I knew, as well as some simple facts about our loving Saviour, and not long afterwards she came again, bringing her daughter with her. Great secrecy was necessary lest their neighbours should find out where they were going, so they dressed in their bathing cloths, taking their towels and other cloths with them, that it might be supposed they were going out for their usual bath. On arriving at the Bible-women's house in our compound they changed their garments and came into the house to see me.

We had a long and earnest conversation. I was much pleased with the daughter, and glad to find she could read well in two languages. I lent her tracts and small copies of the Gospels which might be easily hidden, and she promised to read them. I found that she was the second wife of Fanny's father, the old priest who had gone to Kottayam and persuaded his daughter to return. He had been very angry at her change of faith, so Pichu Ammal, his wife, was not able to tell him of her having seen me. Year after year passed, and I saw the mother and daughter but seldom. Sâtyadâsen came to Trevandrum occasionally and gave me news of them, for his mother and he met in the bazaar, where they could converse together undisturbed.

At length one day Pichu Ammal came again, and I saw that she was anxiously seeking for more knowledge. I gave her a Testament, and before long she rejoiced my heart by saying that she wished to be a Christian. The mother, who had

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heard what she said, added that she herself, though old and ignorant and unable to read, would join us too if there was room in our caste for her. Then came the question, What would Pichu's husband say? Could they tell him? and the reply was a sorrowful negative. He was too firmly rooted in his religion, and might kill them if he knew.

I could only counsel them to pray and wait. I saw very little of the women for the next eight or ten years. Sâtyadâsen became a valued catechist of the C.M.S. and his wife came now and then to see us, staying in our Bible-women's house, and edifying them by the fervency of her addresses and prayers. Pichu and her mother were much with us at this time, and grew "in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" under dear Fanny's careful teaching. They were very happy and much pleased with Sâtyadâsen's two children, a boy and girl, whom Fanny had brought with her.

Three years more passed away, during which the old priest died and was burned with heathen rites and ceremonies, the Maharajah defraying all expenses and promising to pension the widow and her mother. My heart sank within me lest the prospect of regular allowances from the palace, so much prized by the women connected with it, should steal their affections away from their newly-learned faith, but happily the pension was never paid.

The relations of the deceased priest instituted a lawsuit, and the two helpless widows had to wait on some years yet in painful uncertainty and delay. Archdeacon Caley, of the C.M.S., kindly came two or three times to Trevandrum and helped them in every way with money and advice. During this time they both visited us nearly every Saturday, and were very regular in their attendance at my Bible Class on Sunday. All fear of their neighbours

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had left them then, and they invited my niece, Miss Collins, C.E.Z.M.S., and me to go and see them at Karamony.

They had a curiously built little house, with no windows on the ground floor, which Pichu told us had been very convenient, because when the outer door was shut the women who lived near could not see her studying her Bible, though it was so dark that she had to light a lamp to see to read. The upper room was reached by a ladder placed inside the house, and was chiefly used for storage.

God was very gracious in answering our prayers. The lawsuit ended in their favour, a purchaser was found for the little dark house, and some land adjoining, as well as for some distant paddy fields, and one day they came to tell me that they were quite ready to start by boat for Alwaye, where Sâtyadâsen and his wife were then living.

An old schoolmaster accompanied them, and they arrived safely, to the great joy of the son and brother. Pichu Ammal was shortly after sent to Mrs. Bower, of the C.M.S., Trichur, and wrote not long after to me to be her godmother, and choose her name.

I was sorry I could not leave my work in Trevandrum to go to Trichur and be present at her baptism, but I was with them in spirit when she exchanged her heathen name of Pichu for that of Anna Poornum. She is now a Bible-woman of the C.M.S., and has had much loving care and teaching from the ladies of that Society.

Fanny had great gifts, she spoke with much fluency, and on one occasion addressed my servants at their usual Sunday morning meeting with such effect that my cook, who had for some time been wavering, decided then and there to become a Christian. After a short time for further instruction, he and five of his youngest children were baptised,

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and the next year his wife, eldest son and two daughters followed. Dear Fanny has since then passed away in "sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection." Her life and powers were wholly consecrated to the Saviour she so much loved, and though "absent from the body" she is doubtless "present with the Lord."

Early in January, 1900, my dear colleague, Miss Cox, and I had the joy of being present at the baptism of a husband and wife who had been under instruction for some time. The woman had first heard of Jesus at our Tamil School, where she was a caretaker—sitting outside on the doorstep of the schoolroom while the daily Bible lesson went on. She had learned much of the teaching and miracles of Christ, and diligently carried home to her husband the knowledge she had obtained. They were middle-aged and had never learnt to read, so it took them some time to be able to repeat the words of the Creed, the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. Both made satisfactory progress in head knowledge, and they were baptised by the names Johannan and Ludhya, John and Lydia. We were very happy that both husband and wife were prepared to come out together, and that there was no cruel separation as is too often the case. The pair were very comfortably off, the husband being a gardener at the police station and Lydia still in our service, though the Tamil School had been closed.

Not long ago, I was much distressed on hearing from Trevandrum that poor Johannan had been accidentally shot while the police were being drilled, another man also sharing the same fate. It was consoling to hear, as a proof of the respect felt for the poor man's Christian character, that the English officer in charge of the Force had attended his funeral.

Another of our people, a girl named Gewiri, has

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lately passed away. She had been at the Fort School for twenty years, first as scholar and next as teacher of a junior class. All that time she had daily Bible lessons and took great delight in them. My colleagues and I all felt that she was a true Christian, although still a Hindu in name. Her unvaried attention to our teaching, and her beautiful life, so different from that of many of her companions, was so Christ-like that we could not doubt that she indeed belonged to Him. She developed phthisis and had to give up her work at the school early last July. Before I left Trevandrum I went to bid her farewell, and again urged her to be baptised. She told me that she had loved the Lord Jesus for a long time and desired to receive the holy rite, but that her friends objected. She had a brother and sister who waited on her most affectionately, and she would have been quite cut off from them had she consented to give up her caste. Miss Cox wrote on August 12th as follows :

“I went to see Gewiri last evening, but it looked so like rain I would not stay long, so went again this morning after church.

“I sat with her for nearly an hour. . . . She seems to care to speak of nothing but Heaven and the way there, and she says, ‘I do pray through the Lord Jesus always.’

“I did thank God for giving me the opportunity of a little time with her. I wrote a short prayer, first said the words myself and then asked her if she would repeat them after me. She then did so, word for word, and asked me to leave the paper. I told her that after praying so she need not fear, that without doubt the Lord would hear and answer.”

Miss Cox wrote again on September 9th:—
“Dear Gewiri has passed away. She died on Saturday afternoon on the 8th about 4 o'clock very

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painlessly. She so dreaded pain at the last and was spared it. . . . 'The working of the soul is beyond us; shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'"

Surely Satan never invented a more cruel system to bind souls to himself than caste! Men and women in Travancore are every day acting against their consciences, disobeying the voice of God which bids them cast away their idols and worship Him alone; and caste, like a strong fetter, holds them fast to the outward observance at least of idolatrous ceremonies. They, those who are educated and civilised, are leading a dual life, with more or less of hypocrisy in it, outwardly approving of the morality and beauty of the Sermon on the Mount and all other of Christ's teaching, but in their homes giving their countenance and support to much that is immoral and evil. How long will such a state of things last? When will the True God be worshipped in spirit and in Truth? It must be in truth that His aid is sought with the earnest and sincere resolve to follow His guidance.

CHAPTER VIII.

MEDICAL WORK.

More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of;
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

TENNYSON.—"Morte d'Arthur."



VISITS to Hindu houses and village work amongst the poor very soon convinced me of the duty of doing something for the sick and suffering. It was very painful to see my bright, clever little scholars, when struck down with fever, lying in dark, unven-

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tilated rooms, attended only by untaught native doctors, who forbade food and drink, hoping by starving to overcome the disease. Many of them died off—the wonder is that any recovered after such a régime.

I remember well going to see a sick mother, and finding her in a dirty outhouse, literally “lying among the pots.” She was in great pain, but nothing had been done for her relief; her husband, who was exhorted to send her to the Government Hospital, and told that she would die if left where she was, brutally replying, “Let her die, I can soon get another.” She did die, poor creature, and was succeeded by another wife, but it was terribly sad for her poor little daughter, who wept bitter tears for her loss.

About eleven years ago I laid my plan for a temporary hospital before His Highness the present Maharajah, who, with his usual kindness, promised help. He ordered a large house made of bamboo matting, framed in wood, to be erected. It was divided into two rooms, with a verandah on three sides supported by wooden pillars. The roof was strong, with beams of wood and bamboo rafters thatched with dried leaves of the cocoanut palm, and altogether suitable for suffering women and children. At first we took in women who required nursing, and as there was then no doctor in our Mission, we had to seek the aid of a native apothecary. Soon after our place was ready a poor Sudra woman, a Malayàli, seated herself on the doorstep of the Fort School palace to waylay me as I came out. She said, “I want to go home with you and be treated in your hospital. If you cannot take me with you in your bullock coach I will sit here till I die.” She looked very ill, and it was with some difficulty that she was assisted in and out of the carriage. Her poor little boy of about nine had followed us,

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weeping, very anxious because he thought his mother was going to lose her caste. She was very ill for a long time; it was a case of pernicious anæmia, and a doctor of much experience in such cases said he feared I should lose her. However, by God's blessing on medicine and nursing, she recovered, and left us after some months quite restored. We had some difficulty at first in inducing the patients to stay long enough to effect a cure; some slight annoyance would be sufficient to make them start off and run home without any notice; but by degrees prejudices vanished, and they became more willing to trust us. Eight years ago a qualified lady doctor, educated in Madras, joined us, and I cannot speak too highly of her skill and devoted attention to her patients.

We soon found that numbers of low caste people came to us begging for medicine and surgical help, so, feeling it to be impossible to refuse them, we turned our matting house into a Dispensary, and resolved to build a small hospital for in-patients in another part of the compound.

Our committee, while sympathising with the effort and wishing us success, were unable to spare a grant towards the building, but the contributions of friends, given privately, and the liberal response of the Maharajah and native gentry, have enabled us to build a neat and convenient hospital at a cost of Rs.4,000 (£266). The centre ward contains six beds with iron spring mattresses sent out from England; two others in isolated rooms; and at one end is an operation room divided by an arch from a smaller one in which anæsthetics may be administered. At the other end of the main ward are bath and other rooms. All cooking will be done in a separate building to which a store room is attached. The front has a good verandah supported by wooden pillars painted dark red, and the roofs of

both buildings are tiled. The Hospital is in a healthy situation and has been especially designed by the architect and a friendly doctor (both of whom gave their services gratis) according to modern theories of sanitation. The building has been erected on an unusually solid foundation and great pains have been taken to render it strong, lasting and attractive.

H.H. the Maharajah kindly opened the Institution on July 24th, 1900, and it was my pleasant duty to declare it free of debt. The opportune gift from England of £50 from an old friend of my girlhood came at the last moment, when help was greatly needed, as a precious boon from the Hearer and Answerer of prayer. We are encouraged still further by help from friends who have since enabled me to send out additional instruments to enable the doctor to perform operations.

A poor Brahman woman suffering from internal abscess, and in great agony, has lately been admitted and, thank God, cured. She said it was like being in heaven to rest in one of our nice beds. Our good Tamil Bible-woman took great pains in teaching her, and I trust she has learned something of our faith. She is very poor, living with her little boy in her father's house, her husband having, after pawning her jewels for drink, no means of supporting her.

The latest news from Miss L. Beaumont, our doctor, speaks of an operation on a little boy with contracted cheek muscles. "His teeth were clenched so that he could not open his mouth to eat. He was such a pitiful specimen of humanity, poor dear. We pulled out some of his teeth and cut the contracting bands, so now he is able to open his mouth quite wide." Another case, that of a Tamil Sudra girl, has been operated on for tumour on her ear, and has also made a good recovery. On the 'day

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Miss Beaumont wrote she had had 140 patients at the dispensary, and had to send about 20 away, as she was quite exhausted, and could not "think very clearly after seeing that number." She is quite single-handed, and has only the help of a native nurse and two compounders, all trained by herself.

Trevandrum is not an unhealthy place as compared with other Indian stations, and if as time goes on we can teach our people to live better lives, to refrain from offerings to devils when sick, and to follow our health rules, we may hope to see great improvement in them and their children. Occasionally we have epidemics of small-pox and cholera, the latter generally imported from Tinnevely, by some Tamil official returning after a visit to his native place. When once this terrible disease breaks out it spreads rapidly, in spite of all that medical aid can do. The Fort, usually so full of busy men and women, and merry playing children, becomes quite silent; no one is in the streets; even the customary wailing for the dead is stopped lest the gods should be offended; large fires of wood saturated with medicaments are burning at every street corner, and heavy grief and woe seems to be in the very air. Every expedient is then tried to appease the gods, bloody sacrifices are offered and lengthy prayers repeated. At one place where I was during this awful scourge the Mohammedans had a service every night in their mosque, which was right and proper for them to do, but they supplemented it by a parade all through the roads, holding lighted torches in their hands and chanting; one man set the tune and the rest joined in chorus; it was more like a melancholy howl than a melodious hymn, and was, I thought, calculated to make the already alarmed people more than ever nervous.

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This reminds me of an experience of Dr. Hankin, of Agra, who one day, during an outbreak of cholera, came upon a body of Hindu Sânyâsis who were praying to the goddess of cholera and beseeching her to withdraw the "armies" which were devastating the place. He told them he would show them the "armies" and could tell them how they might be dispersed: then putting some polluted water under a microscope, he pointed out the cholera bacilli which were the cause of the mischief.

Then to show how the "armies" might be got rid of, he poured a few drops of permanganate of potash into the water. Ocular demonstration of this description cannot fail to do good and is no doubt practised by the doctors in Trevandrum, who are training up a great number of native youths in the Medical College there.

We have no endowment for our little Hospital, and are very anxious to secure friends in England to adopt the eight cots at £10 each. It is not a large sum to ask and yet it would make us quite happy and above want. I hope to return to Trevandrum in a few months and from there to send regular reports of what we are doing in the Mission. I trust the kind friends who have already done so much for us will continue to remember us and strengthen our hands by further help in prayerful sympathy.

May I not hope, too, that some possessing the requisite gifts will devote their lives to mission work either with us or in other stations of our Society? I hope my slight sketch may convince ladies who may read it that in our Schools, Dispensary, Hospital, superintendence of Bible-women, and village work, we have occupations of intense interest. Will not some of them join us? I would entreat each one of my lady readers to ask herself, "Am I fulfill-

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ing my Lord's command and, if not, why not?"

The difficulties of travel have been greatly minimised of late, and missionary life in India is not always one of isolation and loneliness. To very young ladies leaving father, mother, brothers and sisters, the sacrifice is great, and parting often agonising, but there are many whose chief earthly treasures have been removed from them, and to whom life in England has lost its charm. They may have fully consecrated their powers to God and be already engaged in work for Him, but could not that be as easily done by others, who are really tied to their native land? Should this be the case, I would beg of them to pray over the matter and consider whether God is not calling them to mission work.

Our God and Saviour Who has given Himself for us wills that we should bestir ourselves and leave no effort untried to advance His kingdom. We need more faith, more united prayer, more entire devotion to Him and more determination to listen to the "still small voice speaking to our consciences and urging us to go forward."

No time for self-indulgence,
For resting by the way ;
Repose will come at even,
But toil is for to-day ;
Work like the blessed Jesus,
Who from His earliest youth
Would do His Father's business
And witness for the truth.

Oh ! Jesus, Who art waiting
Thy faithful ones to crown,
Vouchsafe to bless our conflict,
Our loving service own ;
Come in each heart for ever,
As king adored to reign,
Till we with saints triumphant
Uplift the victor strain.