

MY VISIT
TO
TRAVANCORE AND COCHIN.

BY
THE MAHARAJA OF BOBBILI.

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Having been kindly invited by the Rulers of Travancore and Cochin, I left Bobbili on the morning of 29th September, 1913, and reached Madras on the next day. After staying there for a couple of days, I started from there for Rameswaram. As I was going to the southernmost part of India, I thought that it would be easier to run down to Rameswaram on my way to Travancore. The journey from Madras to Mandapam was quite comfortable, where the passengers had to leave the train and get into a steam launch. By the time it sailed, it was nearly dark and the water on the other side of the canal being shallow, a couple of boats without any sort of protection from the sun or rain were brought up to the launch, and by these the

luggage and passengers were taken to the Pamban side, where the train was waiting. As there was no platform nor any lights, we all had very great difficulty in walking across the sand and in getting into the train. Consequently we reached Rameswaram at 9 p.m. instead of 7.25.

On the next morning I went to the temple and in the evening visited Gandhamadan Hill, from which a fine view of the island was obtained. This is my second visit to Rameswaram, the first one done in 1886.

On the 4th October, I left Rameswaram and reached Madura at 8 p.m. and put up at the railway station. In crossing the canal from Rameswaram, we were crammed in the open boats and exposed to the scorching heat of the mid-day sun. I hope some sort of better arrangements will be made for the poor pilgrims until the Indo-Ceylon Railway is opened. The next morning I called on Messrs. Knapp and Burn, who were then both out, and visited Thirumal Naik's Palace. In the afternoon

I went to Teppakulam, and the temple which is noted for its stone carving work. On the 6th I left Madura by the 4-30 a.m. train for Quilon; and on the route, at Shengkota, a Tahsildar belonging to Travancore State met me and presented me with flowers and lime fruits. From there the train passes through a very high and dense forest of the State; in which there are five tunnels. Some of the curves of the line are very sharp. On alighting at Quilon, I was received by the Chief Secretary, the Commissioner of Police, and the Dewan Peshkar of Travancore State and garlanded and presented with a bouquet of flowers by the Chief Secretary, who drove with me to the Residency, where I put up for the day. It is situated on a high bank of the back-water facing towards the Maharaja's Quilon Palace. All its rooms are lofty and it has got a large park round it. It is a very quiet and comfortable place to live in for a change. After taking tea, I went in company with Mr. Vieyra, drove round the town and visited the Harrison and

Crossfield Tile Factory and Saw Mills. The process of tile making was interesting.

The next morning we went to Tungacherry, a small British settlement, almost all the population of which are Christians. There is only a single officer who is the Magistrate as well as the head of the Police and Registration. From there we visited the Maharaja's palace, which is beautifully situated on the other bank of the back-water and is very picturesque. I wonder why His Highness the Maharaja does not spend here some time in the year for a quiet change. I hear he only stays there for a day or two when passing Quilon on his way to Madras and other places.

We left Quilon in two motors and reached Trivandrum at 4-30, where I was received by the Dewan, Chief Justice, Dewan Peshkar, Superintendent of Police and others. The Dewan garlanded me and my brother-in-law and presented bouquets. The servants and light luggage were conveyed in a large motor buss supplied by the State. I was put

up at the newly finished State guest house. Though His Highness has many palaces to accommodate his guests, he has built this State guest house on up-to-date modern principles. This is the only house in Trivandrum that has got an electric installation. It is also beautifully furnished. It being situated on a small hill, a fine view is obtainable of the surrounding country. I hear another wing similar to the existing one will be built shortly. I was glad to be told that I was the first guest to occupy it after its completion. The scenery on the way from Quilon to Trivandrum is very striking and picturesque and quite different from what I have seen in other parts of India. After tea, accompanied by Mr. Vicyra, I went to Golf links, which were well laid out with artificial obstructions. There is a large pavilion well carved in wood. I hear not many people go there and play golf, as it is a little too far from the centre of the town. After an enjoyable stroll on the links, we drove round by the Lunatic and Leper Asylums and returned to the guest house. On the morning of the 8th I began

sight-seeing, "visiting first the library, where we were received and conducted by a retired Judge. Of course, all the libraries in prominent Native States are well equipped. But the noteworthy feature with this one is a lot of old books written or printed some centuries ago, exhibited in one of the rooms. From there we crossed over to the adjacent building, the School of Arts; Here we were met and taken round by Dr. Bishop. The ivory-carving and the metal-laying in iron articles were excellent. On another day I made a few purchases. Thence we went to the General Hospital, where Major Tucker and Dr. Poonen showed us everything that was to be seen. It is very cleanly kept up and I think this is the best hospital that I have seen in the Mofussil. Some more buildings are in progress. I saw there and in other institutions new buildings were being added and asked Mr. Vicyra (Chief Secretary) why he had been spending State money so lavishly. From the hospital we returned to the guest house. In the afternoon I paid my visit to His Highness, driving in a carriage escorted by four

troopers. The Maharaja himself received me at the entrance of the Durbar Hall. There was no one else in the Hall. After a few minutes' conversation, he took me upstairs and showed me very fine ivory workmanship. When I took leave of His Highness at the Durbar Hall, he himself took garlands and a bouquet from the table and presented them to me. His simplicity is well-known to all who are acquainted with him. Shortly afterwards His Highness returned his visit to me at the guest house. He was kind enough to send for my brother-in-law to make his acquaintance. I may say here that Mr. Vieyra, who was deputed to accompany me during my stay in Travancore, was not present at the above two functions. In company with Mr. Vieyra I went to the Museum and Zoo and spent more than an hour in going about the various sections. There is a good collection of animals and they are well looked after. The garden and paths are well laid out. From there we went to the beach, but it was rather too dark to see much of it.

On the next morning we went to Pangode lines, where Captain Skinner and other officers took us round. The living quarters are well provided with folding wooden beds. Thence we drove to the Residency to have a look at it. The Resident, Mr. Forbes, was away on some urgent business at Madras, and so I had no chance to meet him in Travancore and Cochin. The Residency is well situated in a large park with a well laid-out garden. On our return to the guest house, I had a visit from my old friend, the Dewan Mr. Rajagopalachari. We had a pretty long chat on matters of administration. The most important subject was the principle of saving so much a year from the revenues. He said that he could do it easily, but that there would be an outcry if a larger sum were saved. Now it seems there is some balance in hand and it would be utilized on the railway line from Quilon to Trivandrum. I believe some of the Native States in the North are insolvent, but I am glad to find that our Southern Native States are in a prosperous condition. I think that

on the whole there must be a sort of rule in all the States that so much a year should be saved according to the income for the public interest and utilized for the good of the public. There must be some money in hand always to meet providential calamities, such as a famine, etc. In the afternoon we visited the Public Offices, the High Court, the Maharaja's College for Girls, the late Maharaja's Palace apartments and the Royal Stables. The first two are combined in one huge building, in front of which there stands on the road the statue of the late Sir T. Madhava Rao, K.C.S.I., a well known statesman of Southern India. The Chief Justice showed me round the High Court in company with the Dewan, who afterwards took me round the public offices, and introduced several officials to me. All the public offices are very compact in one building. In the middle there is a Durbar Hall which separates the public offices from the High Court. Miss Watts was kind enough to take me round the Maharaja's Girls' School. I was very much pleased to see that grown-up girls

also were reading in it. All the girls looked very cheerful.

The next place of our visit was the Palace, where the Sarvadhikari (Khilledar) took us to the Durbar Hall, where the rulers of the State are installed. There are two thrones, one of which is an ivory one reserved for the installation only and the other intended for ordinary Durbars, but now used very rarely. The first one is prettily carved in ivory, but of old fashion. There are also several old interesting pictures. From there we were taken to another adjoining palace, where the late Maharaja used to live. Now there is the palace library in it, and the apartments are not cleanly kept. From the palace we went to the Royal Stables, which were fairly looked after. All the horses looked rather bulky, requiring more exercise. There are hardly any riding ones. The Maharaja has got only three or four motors for his own use and two for his guests. But he does wisely in not keeping an unnecessary number of cars as do some of our young Zamindars.

In the front yard of the stables, all the State elephants numbering some eighteen were drawn-up in a line. There were 14 tuskers among them. All of them were captured in the State forests. Some of them are huge ones, but they looked very much alike in appearance, as they belong to some particular forest. I much enjoyed my visit to the stables and elephants. Afterward's I returned my visit to the Dewan and the Chief Secretary. The former's quarters are situated in a healthy locality. There is another house for the Dewan near the palace, but the present man, I was told, has not occupied it.

Early on the 10th instant we started at 6-30 a.m. in two cars for Cape Comorin. After going a few miles one of the inner tubes of the second car burst. It took about half an hour to replace it. On our way we visited the Oodayagiri Fort, which is of a very ancient type. The road from Trivandrum to Nagercoil, is in a first rate order. From there to the Cape the road is narrow and not in

perfect condition for the cars. However, we reached the destination at 11-20 and took breakfast at the Residency and rested for about a couple of hours. The Residency is situated on the beach, from which a nice view is obtained. The unique feature of the place is that one can see the sun rise and set in the ocean, but we missed both. I wished we had provided a day's stay there in our programme. On our way back we took a short cut and reached the guest house by 6-15 p.m. quite tired. The distance between the guest house and Cape Comorin is 58 miles.

In the morning of 11th October I called on the Chief Justice and the Assistant Resident, Capt. Berkeley and visited the Teachers' College, which is a fine building. In the evening I called on Justice Hunt and went to the Agricultural Farm, where I was shown round by Mr. N. Kunjan Pillai. It is a model farm and worth visiting. But this sort of farm is not of much use to the ryot, who generally takes to the old methods of cultivation and manuring. I had myself a small one at Bobbili.

No doubt the produce raised by the new system of agriculture is more than double that raised according to the old methods, but it is not at all a paying concern to a ryot.

The same afternoon we also visited the Higher Grade Elementary School for Girls, which is situated within the walls of the palace. There Miss E. C. Carrapiett was kind enough to take us round. The music and the action songs were very good. I was also very much pleased to see that grown-up girls were also reading in it. I have suggested to Miss E. C. Carrapiett to teach some English together with the vernaculars. Here I was told that Nayar girls were going to give up the practice of tying up their hair on their heads. I told the Head Mistress that it would be more desirable to give up the practice of having large holes to the ears than to give up the tying up of the hair on their heads, which I consider very handsome. In the middle of the day almost all the high officials of the State called on me, being an Onam public holiday.

The 12th October.

In the morning I called on some of the people and visited Kanakakannu Palace. It is situated on a nice hill. I wished His Highness would stay there in preference to his palace in the City. At 1-30 p.m. the Dewan, the Chief Justice, and some others came to the guest house to bid me farewell before I left Trivandrum for Quilon, where I stayed for the night.

The 13th October.

We left Quilon at 8-20 a.m. in two boats. After we had gone four or five miles, the steam boat stuck on the ground in the back-water. There the Kalasis tried their best to float it, but in vain. Then a few of us got into the motor boat and proceeded on our journey. After a tedious journey of nine hours, we reached Alleppey in the evening and put up in the Commercial Bungalow for the night. As we thought the steam launch would follow us shortly, we left in it all our baggage, but it did not turn up till midnight. So we were put to great inconvenience. Before we left Quilon, we were told that the

journey to Alleppey would be done in 5 hours. But nine hours were taken up in the back-water.

The 14th October.

In the morning we visited the Pier and a High School. The port of Alleppey is a most important one to the Travancore State, but there is nothing more for sight-seeing. Again we left Alleppey at 10 a.m. thanking Mr. Vieyra for his pleasant company throughout our tour in Travancore, and reached Ernakulam at 4-30 p.m. The boat journey from Alleppey to Ernakulam was fairly comfortable. I would not, however, like to say that the journey from Quilon to Ernakulam was in any way comfortable.

On our arrival at Ernakulam I was received by the Dewan Peshkar and some others, who presented me flower garlands. After taking tea we motored straight to the Hill Palace at Tripunatara, which is the chief residence of His Highness the Raja of Cochin. It is situated on a nice hill and is beautifully furnished. On my return I visited the Eliya Raja

of Cochin. 'The next morning we went over in a motor boat to British Cochin. That island is divided into two portions, *vis*: the Native and British Cochin. The former belongs to the State and the latter to the British Government. In the latter though there are some places worth seeing, the officer who met me on landing did not know much about sight-seeing.' So we returned to Ernakulam pretty early. In the afternoon some of the officials called on me. After taking tea I started for sight-seeing. At the hospital Mr. Combes took me round and at the Second Grade College Mr. Glyn Barlow received me. After going through them, I went to the Public Offices, which are also built nearly on the same lines as those of Trivandrum, though on a smaller scale. Though there were some other public institutions to visit, I left Ernakulam by the early morning train for Trichur as there was a Garden Party arranged at the Residency by the command of His Highness in honour of my visit to Cochin State. There, at the railway station, I was met by the Dewan Mr. Bannerjee and all other high

officials of the State. Here I put up at a newly constructed bungalow belonging to the Consort of His Highness.

At 3 o'clock I paid my visit to His Highness in his Trichur Palace, where I was received officially. A wing of infantry with band saluted me on alighting from my car. The Sarvadhikari or Khilledar received me and conducted me upstairs. His Highness wearing his Grand Stars of the two Orders met me at the steps and took me to the drawing-room. His Highness was much pleased to see me in his State. When taking leave of His Highness, he presented me with garlands and other usual things. At 4-30 he drove in a carriage escorted by his body-guard and paid me a return visit. The infantry with band saluted His Highness. I met him at the carriage and conducted him upstairs, where we had a most friendly talk. The customary formalities were observed when His Highness left my place. Under the command of His Highness the Dewan gave a Garden Party at 5 p.m. at the Residency in honour of my visit. His Highness,

almost all the State officials, as well as the gentry of the place, were present. Under His Highness's instructions, the Dewan took me round and introduced me to several of them. There was a badminton and His Highness's band was playing a select programme. Certainly it was a successful party. On the morning of the 17th the Dewan came to me and arranged the programme of sight-seeing in and about Trichur. In the afternoon I visited the Girls' School, where Miss Reilly showed me round. Here also as in the Girls' Schools at Trivandrum grown-up girls were reading. From there I went to Mrs. Bannerjee for tea, after which Mr. Bannerjee took me for a motor drive. We first went to the Grant Duff Mandapam, which was erected in memory of Sir Mounstuart Grant Duff's visit to Trichur. From there we had a very good view of the country round. Near to the Mandapam, a new jail is now being constructed. Thence Mr. Bannerjee took me for a long drive to a hill, from which a fine view of the back-water and the country was obtained.

On the 18th I went to the Trichur saw-mills and rubber plantation. I hear the teakwood of Cochin State is harder than that of Rangoon. I had an idea that teak in India would not grow into logs, but contrary to my expectations the teak of Southern India grows as large logs as in Rangoon. This is the first time that I have seen any rubber plantation and it was very interesting to see the process of making rubber from the milk of the rubber trees. It is also very simple and profitable. Mr. Norman, the Manager, gave me some seeds with directions as to planting them. I am going to try those seeds on my lands and if I should be successful, I would introduce the plantation. On returning from there, I went to the Residency, where I was surprised to find His Highness playing badminton keenly. He is now over sixty years of age and very energetic for his age. On the next day I motored to Chalakudi, took breakfast and started by the Cochin Steam Tram Car for the forests in company with Mr. Govinda Menon, Conservator of Forests, and Mr. Wright, Mechanical

Engineer. At the foot of the hills our tram saloon was attached to the Kavalai Incline Railway. It is worked by pulleys in three places, the ascent and descent being done by corresponding weights. The last incline is rather steep, the gradient being great. At this height there is a bungalow built entirely of wood, where I stayed for an hour or so. The two gentlemen who accompanied me proceeded on from there to the interior of the forests in the usual steam tram. I returned to Trichur by 6-30 p.m. after a wearisome journey,

On the 20th, on my return from my morning walk, the Dewan bade me farewell. I left Trichur for Palghat. His Highness was kind enough to lend me his special saloon from Ernakulam to Trichur and from there to Shoranur. The Dewan's Secretary, Mr. Sankara Menon, was deputed to accompany me throughout my stay in Cochin State.

The arrangements made for the supply of meals in both the States were rather on a lavish scale. The Brahmin cooks used to prepare more than twenty vegetable dishes and about the same number

of pickles besides a variety of sweets. One cannot enjoy his meals, when provided with so many dishes. Before he touches each of them for the sake of merely knowing their taste, his meals would be over. A few decent dishes would be more enjoyable. For these arrangements several cooks and other men were employed and they were all fed at the expense of the State. When I had visited Mysore as a guest of that State, the supplies for meals were made only according to the list presented by my touring agent and for our luncheon, only some sort of sweets and fruits were provided.

At Olavakkot station, the Raja of Kollengode and the Municipal Chairman met me and the Raja took me to his house, which is situated between Olavakkot and Palghat. When I saw the Raja at Madras some months ago, I distinctly told him that I would pay a visit to him after my sojourn in Travancore and Cochin in case he would treat my visit as simple as possible. But yet I regret to say that he made a good deal of fuss. Without my consent he organised a Garden Party on a grand scale. He invited not

only the gentry of the place, but almost all the Zamindars of the district, many of whom came to the party. He also got the band of the West Coast Volunteers from Calicut. The Party was given on the grounds of the Municipal buildings on the evening I arrived there. However, I must say it was well arranged and well attended.

On the next morning I took my breakfast early and motored down to Kollengode in company with the Raja, where we reached in a couple of hours. There the Raja had arranged delicious things for the lunch. Soon afterwards his mother and two sisters came out to meet me and enquired about my welfare. Afterwards the Raja showed us the inner apartments, which are in my opinion rather badly ventilated.

We returned to Palghat in the middle of the day. On our way to the railway station we visited the small fort built by Tippu Sultan. After halting for three days at Madras, I reached Bobbili on the 24th after a very pleasant and comfortable sojourn in Travancore and Cochin States.