

Travancore a Hundred Years Ago:

the Times of the Ranees and Colonel Munro.

(By I. Mathew of Mallappally)

1. An article on Colonel Munro appears in a former issue of this journal from the able pen of Rao Sahib S. Parameswara Aiyar, Avl. My attempt is only to supplement it with a few more facts about that period and to furnish some personal details about the Sovereigns of the time from the papers that passed through my hands in the course of my official duties. The records of the period are still incomplete, and what is given below comprises but the stray scraps of informa-

tion culled from the numerous cadjans (palm leaf manuscripts) and few paper records that have been traced. ¹

2. A summary of the principal events that disturbed the state of the country at the

¹ These palm-leaf M S S, and paper records are now in the central vernacular archives of the Travancore Government, to whom the Society is indebted for the present paper and the documents appended.

—EDITORS.

time of the arrival of Colonel Munro in Travancore in October 1810, has already been given in the article referred to. Those events may be briefly summarised in the words of Mr. C. M. Agur, at page 738 of his *Church History of Travancore*.

"The country was in such a disturbed and unsettled state that the plots of rival factions, the evil effects of the recent war, the heavy debts with which the Sirkar was burdened and the inability of the Native Government to cope with them, all these threatened the entire ruination of the country."

Two breaches of faith with the Honourable East India Company, as those committed in the attempts of De wans Velu Tampi and Ummini Tampi, within a single decade were more than enough to bring about the annexation of any State. And, the question was trembling in the balance. A line from Col. Munro should have been enough. Fortunately for Travancore, the scales were in the hands of a God-fearing man.

3. Not much of personal details is known about the history of the great Colonel. Neither the date of his birth nor the place of his domicile is known to any in Travancore. From the circumstance that in his retirement he settled at Teaninich in Ross-shire in Scotland, it may be presumed that he was a native of that place. He was accompanied by Mrs. Munro when he came to Travancore. Her frequent ill-health forced her to leave Travancore for good about Medam 992 (1817). The news that she was not improving reached the Colonel in Meenam 993 (1818), and he also decided to leave the scenes of his labours for good. He left the Trivandrum Residency on furlough to England about the end of January 1819. He returned to Madras in 1821 and retired in 1825. He rose to the rank of Major-General; and, after

thirty-three years of peaceful life in retirement, died on the 26th of January 1858. He is known to have had three children. The eldest Mr. Urban Veres Munro, was Bunder-Master at Alleppey when his father left Travancore. Another son, C. Stuart Munro, Esq., of Teaninich, supplied Mr. Agur with the original of the block that appears against Page 42 of his book. The third, a daughter, Lady Charlotte Spencer suggested the lights in the backwaters as the best form of memorial to her father.

4. It is not in the personal details of his life that Travancoreans are interested, as in the effects of his administration of the country—directly till the 12th of Mithunam 989 (1814), and indirectly till Makaram 994 (1819). How he dealt with the pretender Visakham Nal Raja and the turbulent Dewan, Ummini Tampi (or Tampi Martandan Iravi, as his name appears in the records), has already come in Mr. Parameeswara Aiyar's article. (See Vol. II, Series 7)

5. Ummini Tampi, though he was guilty of certain cowardly acts against the Rani and the British Officers, does not appear to have been a despicable character. His mistake seems to have been, like that of Dewan Velu Tampi, in kicking against the pricks; not realising that it was then too late in the day for any power in India to shake off the supremacy of the East India Company. Document XVI shows the charges which the Rani had to make against him. The extravagances attributed to him are, according to some reports, the way in which he spent the revenues on the improvement of the Vizhinjam Port. References about individual acts that are found in the papers show that they were actuated by the desire to cut down expenditure and meet the deficit in the revenues. In this, he seems to have been only following in the footsteps of his predecessors.

6. Raja Rama Varma had, in the affluent days of his reign, granted rather too liberal allowances to several dependants. These, and the grants in land made by him and his successor, were operating as a serious handicap on the revenues of the State. He cut down the allowances of some, assessed to revenue the tax-free grants made to others, and issued instructions to reduce the expenditure on religious ceremonies and *Ootoots* (feeding houses for Brahmins). These, by themselves, were not reprehensible acts. But, he does not seem to have taken care to fortify his acts with the approval of his master. In that also he was not unique. And, in the case of a monarch like Bala Rama Varma, surrounded by favourites and boon-companions, the Dalava's (Dewan or prime minister) ignoring of him cannot be a great fault.

7. While Colonel Macaulay had the dead body of Velu Tampi Dalava quartered and hung up on gibbets, Colonel Munro's treatment of Ummini Tampi appears to have been mild and considerate, in spite of the bitterness of the Rani against him. The tenor of his letters to the Colonel, from his exile at Chinglepet, also shows that he had reliance on the sympathies of the Colonel. That he was not ordered to be separated from his wife, in spite of the decision of the Rani (vide Document VI), is itself evidence of the considerateness of the Colonel and the opinion in which he held Ummini Tampi. The same cannot, perhaps, be said of the Elaya Raja, or *Visakhani Annan* as the Rani called him.

8. But the greater danger to the peace of the country was the insecurity of the people from the oppressions of officers, the inroads of marauders and the jurisdiction of authorities like the Devaswoms and of the turbulent

local chieftains that jarred with those of the State. Even after Munro's assumption of the administration, the Arumana Amma Veedu at the capital was raided by three hundred *Maravars*. A *Konar* and three *Mudalies* were harassing the people of Nanjanad. Even some lands belonging to the Consort of the Rani, in Kadapra, were successfully trespassed upon by an influential person of the locality, and the swords wrested from the hands of the Dana Nayaks (soldiers on Police duty), sent to apprehend him.

9. The people were illiterate; and the lower Revenue Officers took undue advantage of it to make demands on the people for dues which they had already discharged. Road and water communications were not taken up as a matter of State policy. There were many oppressive taxes, forced labour, and imposts at frequent intervals along the trade routes. To add to these, the Treasury was practically empty; and, including the arrears of subsidy and the expenses of the British occupation in connection with the insurrection of Velu Tampi, the debts of the State to the Company amounted to over thirty lakhs of rupees.

10. It was to the improvement of such a heritage that Colonel Munro addressed himself. One of his earliest acts, after taking charge of the administration, was to improve the condition of the Devaswoms (Hindu religious establishments). The Devaswoms claimed to be *Sanketams* (enclaves exempt from jurisdiction) as against the Sirkar, so that the Sirkar Officers had practically no power to control anything that took place within the Devaswoms. His Highness Visakhani Tirunal, writing to a Calcutta Magazine, explains how such a state of affairs came into existence. It is stated that the ecclesiastics of the Malabar coast, among

whom the land had been divided by Parasurama, foresaw that the halo of sanctity which encircled them might not be proof against the gradual degeneracy of the religious feelings which time must produce. They therefore constitutionalised that sanctity by demising large tracts of land and their revenues to certain temples built and consecrated by them. Of these temples, they assumed the proprietary wardenship, knowing full well that men who would not hesitate to rob a priest may still hesitate to commit sacrilege on a place of religious worship. Old records are said to exist, which show that the temples and the synods which controlled their affairs under the proprietary wardens constituted a powerful factor in the country. They exercised judicial and executive functions which made the Sovereign's power in the land a mere shadow and a name.

11. The case of the Sri Padmanabhaswami Temple at Trivandrum, with the exploits of Raja Martanda Varma to break down the power of the Ettu Veettu Pillaimara, is a good example of the evils that the State had to fear when in opposition to the temple authorities. Much more would be the case with the poor country people. Munro took advantage of the opportunity furnished by the military occupation of the country and the disbanding of the State Militia to quietly assume the Devaswoms and their properties to the State. He appointed a committee to go into the *Pathivus* (fixed scales of expenditure) of each Devaswom and fix the rates that were considered proper. There is no Proclamation or statement of policy explaining the motives which prompted this Act of State. It does not differ very much in process from the conduct of Raja Martanda Varma in assuming the territories of

the intervening petty chieftains. Documents XVIII, XIX and XXXV illustrate the policy adopted by the State towards Devaswom property, and the immense benefits derived by the people after their assumption by the State.

12. But, the State and the people are not the only parties that were benefited by the process. The State had always been looking at the Devaswoms with an unfriendly eye and taking advantage of every opportunity to assimilate to the general revenues the Devaswoms and their properties. There were several cases of assumption through the consent or incapacity of the trustees, and through escheat. Munro annexed only 348 principal Devaswoms in 1867. Including those annexed before his time, such Devaswoms numbered 378 in the time of Dewan Seshiah Sastry. Devaswoms like Turavur and Kaviyur are instances of later assumptions. Other processes by which the Devaswoms were likely to decay and disappear are those described by Mr. Nagamiah, the author of the Hindu Religious Endowments Regulation. In regard to private temples managed by private bodies (*Ooralars*), he says that, in the majority of cases, most of the properties had been alienated. "Sometimes, the *nichavaram* rents (residual rents from mortgagees) have been sold and even the right of trustee-ship itself is mortgaged or heavily encumbered". To these may be added the losses through adverse possession from the incapacity and rivalries of the so-called trustees or *Ooralars*. How far these processes affected the existence of the temple properties may be seen from the accounts of Devaswom properties in the Agastisvaram taluk between the year 1060 and the year of the last Settlement in that taluk. What in 1060 comprised 38,000 *parahs* (a *parah* comprises 14 cents) of paddy

land dwindled into about 14,500 *parahs* at the Settlement. If this is the case in these days of law and order, what might have been the disruptive forces to which the Devaswom properties were subject in the olden days? Munro's procedure safeguarded the existence of these institutions from the ravages of friends and foes alike. Hence both the Devaswoms and the people alike have to be thankful to Colonel Munro for his farsighted act.

13. The next great administrative measure of the period was the Revenue Settlement of the country. Munro had the holdings measured, their taxes ascertained and recorded in *pattas* (title deeds) issued to the ryots, so that each land-holder may know the amount for which he is liable. To increase the literacy of the people, he had schools established throughout the country to teach Malayalam and the scripts (Malayalam and Tamil) in which the accounts were being written. It is also seen that some persons were entrusted with the preparation of suitable text-books for the schools. Care was taken to relieve the people of taxes disproportionate to the yield from the land. A *topu purayidam* (an extensive garden) in Chirayinkil which bore a tax of 2,000 odd *fanams* had the tax written off and the yielding portions alone assessed to revenue as it was found that the trees planted by the owner had been destroyed through water-logging. In Kallada, it was found that the Revenue Officers had distributed a tax of 60 *fanams* on his title, once levied from a *tarakam* (title given to merchant princes) among 36 members of his community as the *tarakam* had become a pauper, and the Government demand could not be realised.

14. He not only took away from the Revenue Officers their military and judicial

functions, but provided for revenue complaints being heard by a special court. To hear disputes about the amounts entered in the *pattas*, he appointed separate courts for each taluk. At his advice the Rani gave up the assessment in coconuts which was being levied from certain Sri Padam lands, resolving to meet the demands of the institutions by local purchase. (Vide document XXXVI). It was also Munro who successfully contested the claims of the Company's Collectors for portions of the Cardamom Hills and of Shencottah taluk.

15. While separating the Courts from among the functions of the Revenue Officers, he prescribed Regulations for their conduct, and was very particular in seeing that the recruitment to the posts of judges was made from persons of status and known probity. He even induced two European Missionaries to accept appointment as judges. Documents I & VII give an idea of the intentions of Colonel Munro and the mind of the Rani in the matter. The Records also show that till the discharge of the debts due to the Company he did not enlist a militia. He had those functions discharged by the Sepoys under him, lending at one time nearly 200 Sepoys to grace the *Looyayoluppu* (Dasserah) procession of the Rani. In 1987, he allowed about thirty horsemen to be recruited as troopers. He allowed the number to be raised to sixty, only six years later. The present Nayar Brigade also appears to have been recruited only about 993. Even after relinquishing the direct charge of the administration, he used to accompany the Dewans on tours of inspection, giving directions as to the bunds, irrigation channels and tanks that had to be improved in the interests of the ryots. In the Mavelikara taluk, in 1989, he had channels cut to benefit about 26,500

parahs of paddy lands. He visited Kallada in Vrischigom 994 to inspect the damages of a recent flood, and ordered the cutting of the canal that separates the Munro Island from the main land.

16. The State had no regular Medical Department to serve the people or the Rani. The Consort of Rani Lakshmi Bai, when ill in 986, is stated to have been treated by a Brahmin woman (*ayi amma*). The Princess Parvati Bai when suffering from cold, fever and worm troubles is seen to have improved under the *kashayam* (decoction) of an *Anaval* (temple subordinate). It was only by 993 that one Dr. Brown is seen treating the Rani and the members of the Palace.² In 994, Colonel Munro took advantage of the presence of the European doctors at Trivandrum, Quilon and Cochlin to get certain medicines distributed in advance among the local *vaidyans* (Ayurvedic physicians), and instructions imparted to them about the treatment of an approaching epidemic that first broke out in Bengal and reached this State in about Dhanu of that year. The beginnings of the Trivandrum-Quilon Canal were also made in his time. It is seen from a *Net* (a communication with the Royal sign manual) of 991 that this canal had already been begun. The great statesman's anxiety to conserve the capital in the country by encouraging local production to replace imported articles is indicated by Document XXXIX. He is seen to have offered first a prize or bounty of Rs. 10 for every candy of raw cotton wool produced in the country. Seeing that the inducement was not enough, he offered a minimum price of Rs. 200 per candy and the

supply of seeds through the Huzur. Several arrangements for the opening of markets and the encouragement of trade and ship-building are found to have been made during the closing years of Colonel Munro's life in this country. Among the *paularavanka* (belonging to the State treasury) ships, one named "Aidross Chamman" is found mentioned as laid up for repairs at Poovar.

17. The above may not give an adequate idea of the labour involved in the achievement of the reforms effected and the savings gathered to pay off the Company's debts. Perhaps with a view to secure freedom from the distractions of a capital city, during the whole time that Colonel Munro was in charge of the administration here, he took up his residence at a village called Nilakkamukku, between Anjengo and Alencode, about five miles by the present road route from Attingal. The only thing of importance known about the place at that time is that there was an old market there. In a compound by the side of it, about five acres in extent, the Colonel took up his residence with his wife and children. Lieutenants Ward and Conner, writing about 1820, noted a roofless bungalow in a garden with a variety of fruit trees. There was also a long building, on a height commanding an extensive view of water and country, which was Colonel Munro's Huzur Cutcherry. No remnants of either of the two buildings are to be seen now.

18. To this place of voluntary seclusion the Staff of the Huzur Cutcherry, the Treasury and the Jail seem to have been temporarily transferred. From Document X it may be seen that the Rani refers to all the accounts being at Nilakkamukku. He summoned the officers to Nilakkamukku while he went through the accounts and cross-examined them on points of doubt. The Colonel appears to have been very severe on those

2. A regular department with the "black doctor" (corresponding to our Senior Surgeon) and staff of clerks came into existence only later.

who resorted to dishonesty and crooked methods. The experience of blacksheep and suspicious characters among the officers does not seem to have been very peaceful or pleasant. Document XVII shows that when the Sarvadhikariakar (Head Tahsildar) in charge of a ceremony in the *mathilakam* (the temple precincts at the capital) was summoned to Nilakkamukku, the *Kariakars* (Tahsildars) who were assisting him disappeared without anybody's knowledge.

19. Document IX shows the efficacy of the course pursued by the Colonel. The *Tirumanam* ceremony of deceased Sovereigns, which cost Rs. 44,000 odd in 934 and Rs. 89,000 odd in 974, cost in 987 only about Rs. 38,000. Document X shows that the Rani was set up to protest against the insufficiency of the amount estimated, and that she had to give in on seeing that the Colonel would not be satisfied until he had subjected all her officers to the processes at Nilakkamukku. Document XII shows that the amount estimated by the Colonel proved to be quite sufficient.

20. Though the Colonel held in his hands the independent existence of the country, his relations with the Ranees were most gentle and cordial. Some of the commissions that were being entrusted to him would have tried the patience of an ordinary man. It is well known that individuals who have free access to the person of the sovereign often succeed in attracting undue importance to their claims and grievances. There were others who, on the ground of their kinship with the Rani, constrained her to write on their behalf to the Colonel. Besides these, he had to make arrangements, as part of his duties as Dewan, for the reception of Swamiyars (celebrate Hindu religious heads) and even for the journeys of her kinsmen.

21. The Chirattaman Moosu, now of Olassa near Kottayam, had certain tax-free lands in Shertallai to meet the expenses of a festival. With the transfer of his residence to Olassa, these lands were assumed in 985. He pleaded that he was continuing the festival at Olassa: and the lands had to be assigned to him again after the enquiries involved. A dancing girl living with a Sarvadhikari had her things also included in the not infrequent confiscation of the Sarvadhikari's belongings. Another dancing girl had to get back the jewels loaned to another Sarvadhikari. All these were fit matters for the Colonel's personal attention. In his endeavours to keep down expenditure, he had to check the Rani's household also. Document VIII shows that the Rani agreed to limit her pocket money to Rs. 500 per mensem. But there were other expenses which were liable to go on increasing unless there was the fear of the Colonel's scrutiny. In Medom 987, the Rani made a call for an additional sum of 5,000 fanams (a coin 1.7 rupee in value) to meet her tour charges to Attungal. The Colonel saw that the amount was cut down to 2000. Document XX shows that the Rani wished very much to mint gold varahans (Rs. 4 in value) in her name in 988. But the Colonel allowed it only in 992 during the reign of her sister.

22. The Colonel's objection to extravagant expenditure extended also to the claims made by his own assistants and dependants. Captain Macleod, Commandant at Trivandrum, was in the good opinion of the Rani. She wanted to raise his pay by Rs. 500. The Colonel sanctioned only Rs. 200. The Colonel had an Indian Assistant, one Mahasingu, with the designation of Khilladar. He seems to have been a highly paid man and was in charge of the Colonel's sepoy's at

Trivandrum. He was often the means of communication between the Rani and the Colonel. He originated the mischief which led to the autograph letter in Document V, but which the Colonel afterwards denied as having never been in his mind. Whether for fear or favour of the man, the Rani proposed to meet the expenses of the Upanayanam (sacred thread ceremony) of Mahasingu's son. The Rani proposed an expenditure of Rs 2000 for the purpose. I find that an amount on this account was sanctioned only after the sixth letter on the subject from the Rani.

23. But it should not be supposed that the Colonel was either harsh or wanting in deference to the Rani. Document XIV shows that he understood that the Rani had her own misgivings about the appearance of an unusual star. He arranged with the Rajah of Edapalli to examine certain old astrological books on the subject and advise her as to the propitiatory ceremonies to be performed. Ultimately 15200 fanams are found to have been sanctioned for the purpose. Document XXI illustrates another instance of deference to the feelings of the Rani. Document XI shows that the Rani's milch goats in the Sreepadom Estates were being carried away by the meat contractors to the Company's sepoy's stationed at Quilon or with the Colonel at Nilakkamukku. The price of these was obtained and paid. Documents XV, XXII and XXXVII show the Colonel's desire to satisfy the Rani's curiosity. Documents III, IV and XIII would show how they correspond when under any apparent misunderstandings.

24. As I went through the records of this period, scrappy though the collection is, I could conceive of no finer instance of the studied forbearance and unobtrusive nature of the great Colonel, when the issues at stake were not great, and of the anxiety with

which he watched and nurtured the growing individuality of the young and inexperienced Queen Parvathi Rani, than the case of Nanjappaiah. The Colonel knew Nanjappaiah and his work in Cochin. She had already made two mistakes in the selection of her Dewans. Munro then suggested Nanjappaiah. But the Rani showed a mind to try one Narayanan Raman. He interfered no further though the sequel proved her mistake. The attitude maintained by the Colonel will be better appreciated when it is contrasted with the conduct of General Cullen in worrying and teasing the older and far abler Swathi Tirunal and his nominees till the Resident's man was accepted.

25. General Munro was the deacon of his church in Scotland till the date of his death, and was thus a Congregationalist by persuasion. Even the practices of the Syrian Church were in his eyes idolatrous: and he tried to get them weeded out and the Church itself assimilated with the Church of England. Yet his first concern after clearing the debts of the State was the repair of the Hindu Temples, Easwaraseva, Kottarams (mofussil palaces for ceremonies and devotional purposes) and Oottus. The records also show that he readily made all arrangements for the Varunajapam (prayers to the God of rains and floods) and Adachudhara (libations flooding the image of the God) ceremonies of Nanjanad for lack of rains, and the Pushpanjali (offering of flowers) and Sarkarapayasom (pottages using crude cane sugar) ceremonies of Kuttanad in times of excessive rains.

26. Such breadth of view, at a time when zealous ecclesiastics of each Christian denomination were wont to look up on their brethren in the sister churches as already swarming along the high road to Hell, was almost unheard of. Such uncharitable views persisted as a fashion even to the close of the last



RANI LAKSHMI BAI (1810—14)



RANI PARVATI BAI (1814—29)

(Sign Manuals at bottom)



A large, handwritten signature of Colonel John Munro in cursive script.

COLONEL JOHN MUNRO (1810—19)

(Signature at bottom)

(I. Mathew)

century. The Colonel, in the midst of his arduous preoccupations in a strange land, must, nevertheless, have often felt the beauty of the great truth in the discovery of Saint Peter that "God is no respecter of persons: but that in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

27. Till the debts to the Company were cleared, the Colonel was keeping in his own hands the collections of the State, sending, at the same time, monthly accounts to the Rani for the receipts and disbursements even to a fanam (Document XII a). Document XXIX shows the extent of the debts cleared by the Colonel, though it does not give the amount of the arrears of subsidy. In document XXX of Medom 989 the Colonel says that thereafter he intends remitting to the Kaivazhi Chellam (Palace Treasury) all except the Seemachilavu (remittances to Europe) and Kappapanam (subsidy). From Document XXXII it will be found that the Colonel, on calculating backwards, found that an amount of Rs. 21,200 had been remitted to the Company in excess of the amount due from the State and that he returned it.

28. In addition to the worrying duties of the Political Agent and the Dewan of Travancore, the Colonel had also to exercise a similar supervision over the affairs of Cochin. Strong though he was, he is seen to have fallen ill at least four times in the course of so many months. Along with the last he was experiencing sleeplessness on nights, & he is seen to have gone to Courtallam and Palamcottah for a change. Even on this well-earned rest, he was attending to the affairs of the State. For the 21th of Karkatagom 987 he had posted at Quilon the auction of the monopolies. His wife, who most probably had not any work so strenuous as her husband's, was also falling ill and left for

Europe early in 938. Besides the effects of the climate, he had also to fear the attacks of persons bent on taking his life. In Meenam 988, it is seen that he was shot at by some one from under cover while he was travelling by vallon (canoe) on his official tour. Document XXIII shows how anxious the Rani used to feel when she heard that the Colonel was ill.

29. Towards the close of 938 Captain Blacker, a brother of Mrs. Munro, was deputed by the Madras Government to assist the Colonel in his work. This is the gentleman referred to in Documents XXV and XXVI. Mrs. Munro appears to have been an extremely good natured lady, like her husband. During their tours, they used to accompany the early missionaries on visits to their infant churches and schools. Mr. Agur, in his history, says that Mrs. Munro used to supply the churches, wherever she went, with the bread and wine for the communion table. The Rani must have known her intimately. Document XXVIII shows the Rani, from the solitude of her eminence, yearning for the company of one to whom she could open her heart.

30. Document XXXI shows between the lines, in spite of the different persons through whom the original ideas³ had to pass, the

3. English was not a well-known language at the time. The rendering of now well-known terms in those days will be interesting. The month of August is written as "Agastambur" (അഗസ്ത്യമാർ), assistant as "ajishtani" (അജിഷ്ടാനം), Government as "Govarnmandar," doctor as മെമ്മർ English as 'Inkiresu.' ഇംക്രിസൽ The military rank of Captain is often written as 'Kalpan' (കല്പനം = a man of ability). There is a tradition that a former Dewan mistook the word "Pothema:" (പൊത്തമൾ) for "Pattanmar" പട്ടന്മാർ (Tamil Brahmins) and issued panicky orders. It was to such people that Munro had to communicate his ideas and get them rendered into Malayalam, probably employing the services of a Dubash who understood only Mahrathi or Persian well. With the two Dewans also a similar but less complicated process had to be gone through. It was after so many intervening processes that the Colonel and the Rani made themselves understood to each other.

regret and sorrow that filled the hearts of both the Rani and the Colonel at the prospect of the latter's departure for good from the State. From the attempts made by the Rani in later years, to induce the Madras Government to prevail on Colonel Munro to accept at least some material token of her gratitude, it is more than likely that she had begun such requests as soon as or, even before, she heard of his intention to go on furlough. But, like the Prophet of old spurning the gifts of a grateful Naaman, Colonel Munro persisted in his refusal all along. It is in this period that we find the benefactions of the Rani to the Christian Missions at Kottayam, Myladi and Nagercoil. The Rani also knew that the Colonel was interested in the Syrian community. The Rs. 21,000 odd returned by Munro was donated to the Kottayam Seminary (Document XXXII). The portion of West Kallada converted into an island through the canal suggested by the Colonel was also donated to the same Seminary. It is also seen that sanction for a Syrian church to the north of the Taikad Residency was given to the Rev. Fenn. All these were done, not because of any pressure from the Colonel, but only to give some sort of relief at least to the heart of the Rani from the debt of gratitude that was oppressing it.

31. The last date of the Colonel's presence in Trivandrum, I have seen in the Neettus is the 7th Makaram 994. Before his departure he seems to have recommended to the Dewan, orally, a few persons to the consideration of Government. One Hoogewerf thereby got his monthly pension increased by Rs. 100. One Sundaramier, a 'Mjosanthi' of the Appeal Court, was recommended for a gift of Rs. 2,000 or Rs. 2,500 to buy properties in his name. The Rani readily sanctioned the higher amount in the Colonel's suggestion. The

liberality of the grants will be best realised when it is understood that a day labourer hardly earned Rs. 2/- a month in those days. Munro's son, who was Bundermaster at Alleppey, on Rs. 300 per mensem, was apparently young and inexperienced at the time. Nevertheless, Captain Guardian, the Commercial Agent, recommended him for an immediate increase of Rs. 50 for the sake of his father. The Rani of her own accord raised the amount to Rs. 150. Munro's furniture, silver-set, tents and crockery were going to be auctioned. The Rani offered to take them at a valuation and keep them for the use of the Residency and the Commandant's quarters.

32. The news of Munro's death came to the ears of a generation that knew him not. Nevertheless, there was an attempt to commemorate his name. The Government consulted the wishes of his daughter Lady Charlotte Spencer who suggested the putting up of lights in the backwaters, to guide the boatmen in the dark to the mouths of the canals and rivers they had to take in pursuing their journey. The suggestion came through the Resident about 1860 A. D. and yet by 1875 only the glasses and prisms for the lights had been bought. Two of them at a cost of Rs. 7000 odd were put up at the mouth of the Pallam river and at the entrance to the Alleppey canal from the north. They are still called Munro lights and are the only official memorials to the great statesman and deliverer.

33. Paltry though the memorial is, in comparison with all that Travancore has gained through Munro's unselfish labours during the best period of his life, it is not without significance, conceived as it was in the affectionate regard of a loving daughter. The boatman in his frail vallom, benighted on the bosom of a wind-tossed lake, is guided

to shelter and safety by these lights. Statesmen confronted with conflicting interests, and surrounded by oppositions on all sides, can still find inspiration from the ideals that actuated the Colonel in the disinterested work he rendered to the State in the most vigorous period of his manhood. The replies of the Colonel endorsed on the Neettus in Documents XXXII and XXXIII contain his own way of stating the ideals.

33. Among the Dewans that have administered this country from the time of the Ranis to recent times, the figures of three stand out in bold relief through the mists of the past — General Munro, Sir. T. Madhava

Rao, and Mr. V. P. Madhava Rao. But undoubtedly the greatest of these, in the magnitude of his achievements and the extent of the difficulties he had to grapple with, is Munro. Such an unselfish nature, sincere and godly — such a prince among men — is not to be had for love or money. Of all the Britishers that influenced the destinies of this State Munro reflected most the justice, humanity and 'providing care' that characterised the Lord whom he cherished in his heart of hearts. As expressed by Lekahmi Rani herself, in a moment of prayerful gratitude, 'such a man was sent by the Bhagavan (the great God) himself.'

— I. M.