# MALABAR

## IN THE EYES OF TRAVELLERS.

Adapted and modernised for the use of Students.

EDITED BY

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Published by

THE EXCELSIOR PUBLISHING CO.

1940



Price Re. 1/8/-

*Printed at*
*The Sri Vilas Press, Trivandrum.*

## CONTENTS

# FOREWORD

The selections in this book have been taken from the accounts of Malabar and its people left by famous travellers who gathered the information on the spot by careful observation and study. Care has been taken to present these accounts in a language suitable to the standard of the High School students. The details are of particular interest from the literary, social and political standpoints. They show that Kerala as a whole was well governed by its own rulers and that the people led a contended and happy life. The institutions were well suited to the genius of the inhabitants of the land. It is true that in recording their impressions the writers often saw things through coloured spectacles. They have sometimes generalised without sufficient data. But the accounts on the whole bear the impress of truth.

It is hardly necessary to emphasise the value of these accounts to every student in Kerala. Written by some of the greatest travellers and authors of all time these accounts comprise almost every phase of Malabar life.

The extracts are arranged in chronological order. It is hoped that the introduction and notes will be found useful.

*Publishers*

# CONTENTS

# MALABAR

## IN THE EYES OF TRAVELLERS

## I

### MARCO POLO'S DESCRIPTION OF THE MALABAR COAST

*Marco Polo was a great Venetian traveller. He went to the court of the great Kublai Khan in 1275 A.D. and rose high in the Chinese service. He visited Quilon in 1293 on his way to Venice in the suit of Princess Kokachin. His account of Malabar extracted here is highly interesting and informative.*

When you quit Maabar[1] and go five hundred miles towards the south-west you come to the kingdom of Quilon[2]. The people are idolaters, but there are also some Christians and some Jews. The natives have a language of their own, and a king of their own, and are tributary to no one.

A great deal of brazil is got here which is called *brazil coilumin* from the country which

produces it; 'tis of very fine quality. Good ginger also grows here, and it is known by the same name of *coilumin* after the country. Pepper too grows in great abundance throughout this country, and I will tell you how. You must know that the pepper-trees are not wild but cultivated, being regularly planted and watered; and the pepper is gathered in the months of May, June and July. They have also abundance of very fine indigo. This is made of a certain herb which is gathered, and after the roots have been removed, is put into great vessels upon which they pour water and then leave it till the whole of the plant is decomposed. They then put this liquid in the sun, which is tremendously hot there, so that it boils and coagulates, and becomes such as we see it. They then divide it into pieces of four ounces each, and in that form it is exported to our parts. And I assure you that the heat of the sun is so great there that it is scarcely to be endured; in fact if you put an egg into one of the rivers it will be boiled, before you have had time to go any distance, by the mere heat of the sun.

The merchants from Manzi[3] and from

Arabia, and from the Levant come thither with their ships and their merchandise and make great profits both by what they import and by what they export.

There are in this country many and divers beasts quite different from those of other parts of the world. Thus there are lions black all over, with no mixture of any other colour; and there are parrots of many sorts, for some are white as snow with red beak and feet, and some are red, and some are blue, forming the most charming sight in the world; there are green ones too. There are also some parrots of exceeding small size, beautiful creatures. They have also very beautiful peacocks, larger than ours, and different; and they have cocks and hens quite different from ours; and what more shall I say? In short, everything they have is different from ours, and finer and better. Neither are their fruits like ours, nor their beasts, nor their birds; and this difference all comes of the excessive heat.

Corn they have none but rice. So also their wine they make from palm-sugar; capital drink it is, and very speedily it makes a man

drunk. All other necessaries of man's life they have in great plenty and cheapness. They have very good astrologers and physicians. Man and woman, they are all black, and go naked, all save a fine cloth worn about the middle.

There is no more to tell you there; so we will proceed, and I will tell you of another country called Kumari.

Kumari[4] is a country belonging to India, and there you can see something of the North Star, which we had not been able to see from the Lesser Java thus far. In order to see it you must go some thirty miles out to sea, and then you see it about a cubit above the water.

This is a very wild country, and there are beasts of all kinds there, especially monkeys of such peculiar fashion that you would take them for men! There are also *gatpauls*[5] in wonderful diversity, with bears, lions, and leopards, in abundance.

Eli[6] is a kingdom towards the west, about three hundred miles from Kumari. The people are idolaters and have a king, and are tributary

to nobody; and have a peculiar language. We will tell you particulars about their manners and their products, and you will better understand things now because we are drawing near to places that are not so outlandish.

There is no proper harbour in the country, but there are many great rivers with good estuaries, wide and deep. Pepper and ginger grow there, and other spices in quantities. The king is rich in treasure, but not very strong in forces. The approach to his kingdom, however, is so strong by nature that no one can attack him; so he is afraid of nobody.

And you must know that if any ship enters their estuary and anchors there, having been bound for some other port, they seize her and plunder the cargo. For they say, "You were bound for somewhere else, and 'tis God has sent you hither to us, so we have a right to all your goods." And they think it no sin to act thus. And this naughty custom prevails all over these provinces of India, to wit, that if a ship be driven by stress of weather into some other port than that to which it was bound, it is sure to be plundered. But if a ship come

bound originally to the place they receive it with all honour and give it due protection. The ships of Manzi and other countries that come hither in summer lay in their cargoes in six or eight days and depart as fast as possible because there is no harbour other than the river-mouth, a mere roadstead and sandbanks, so that it is perilous to tarry there. The ships of Manzi indeed are not so much afraid of these roadsteads as others are, because they have such huge wooden anchors which hold in all weather.

There are many lions and other wild beasts here and plenty of game, both beast and bird.

Malabar is a great kingdom lying towards the west. The people are idolaters; they have a language of their own, and a king of their own, and pay tribute to nobody. In this country you see more of the North Star, for it shows two cubits above the water. And you must know that from this kingdom of Malabar, and from another near it called Guzarat, there go forth every year more than a hundred corsair vessels on cruise. These

pirates take with them their wives and children, and stay out the whole summer. Their method is to join in fleets of twenty or thirty of these pirate vessels together; and then they form what they call a sea cordon, that is, they drop off till there is an interval of five or six miles between ship and ship, so that they cover something like a hundred miles of sea, and no merchant ship can escape them. For when any one corsair sights a vessel a signal is made by fire or smoke, and then the whole of them make for this, and seize the merchants and plunder them. After they have plundered them they let them go, saying: "Go along with you and get more gain, and that mayhap will fall to us also." But now the merchants are aware of this, and go so well manned and armed, and with such great ships, that they don't fear the corsairs. Still mishaps do befall them at times.

There is in this kingdom a great quantity of pepper and ginger and cinnamon and turbit and of nuts of India. They also manufacture very delicate and beautiful buckrams. The ships that come from the east bring copper in ballast. They also bring hither

cloths of silk and gold, and sendals; also gold and silver, cloves and spikenard, and other fine spices for which there is a demand here, and exchange them for the products of these countries.

Ships come hither from many quarters, but especially from the great province of Manzi. Coarse spices are exported hence both to Manzi and to the west, and that which is carried by the merchants to Aden goes on to Alexandria, but the ships that go in the latter direction are not one to ten of those that go to the eastward; a very notable fact that I have mentioned before.

NOTES

1. **Maabar**—This is the name given to the Coromandel coast by the early travellers.

2. **Quilon**—Called Coilum. For ages Quilon was an important emporium of trade. The earliest mention of Quilon is found in a letter written by, the Nestorian Patriarch Jesujabus of Adiabene who died in 660 A. D. Ibn Batuta says that the city was one of the finest in Malabar, with splendid markets and rich merchants and was the chief resort of the

chinese traders in India. Several distinguished travellers have visited this city and have recorded their appreciation of its beauty and opulence among whom may be mentioned Odoric, Friar Jordanus of Severac, John Marignoli, Varthema and Barbosa.

3. **Manzi**—Southern China. There was regular commercial relations between China and the Malabar Coast in those days. Quilon and Calicut were the chief emporiums. This relationship continued till the 15th century. The discontinuance of this trade may perhaps be attributed to the ill feeling between them and the Zamorin of Calicut. It is stated by Joseph of Cranganore in the *Novus Orbus* (Ed. of 1555 p. 208) that "the King of Calicut having treated them badly, they (Chinese) quitted that city, and returning shortly after inflicted no small slaughter on the people of Calicut, and after that returned no more."

4. **Kumari**—Cape Comorin. According to Portuguese version Kumari was a small kingdom stretching northwards from Cape Comorin. It is however doubtful whether it was an independent kingdom separate from Venad.

5. **Gat-paul**—This animal has not been identified. It may perhaps refer to a variety of monkeys.

6. **Eli**—Identical with Dely. Eli Mala in north Malabar. An isolated and conspicuous hill about 16 miles north of Cannanore. This was the first land seen by Vasco De Gama.

## II

### VASCO DE GAMA'S AUDIENCE WITH THE ZAMORIN

*Vasco De Gama was the first European sailor in the modern times to come to India. He sailed round the Cape of Good Hope and came to Calicut in 1498. Accounts of his visit to Calicut and Cannanore are given here.*

Immediately next day the Gozil sent one of the king's Nayars with a message to the captain-major, that the king said that since peace had been established as he desired, and he was loading his ships, he would be pleased if he came to deliver the embassage which he had brought for him. The Castilian, who took good care, as it pleased the Lord, on learning these things, came at night in the garb of a beggar, and going along begging alms, reached the door of the factory and

begged alms in Castilian, and the factor recognised him, because the Castilian told him by a sign, and he brought him inside, when he told the factor that the captain-major was not to come ashore without good hostages, and that he would give him a sign of what would be a good one: then he went out again, begging in the same way. This the factor wrote to the captain-major, who on hearing the message of the Nayar, told him that he was ready to go at once, and he asked him as a favour at once to send a hostage to the ship as was the custom for ambassadors, because he was ready to go immediately.

When the king heard this, with the longing that he had for the present, he told the Gozil to send a couple of Nayars, of the most honourable that he had, and with them his nephew. The Gozil did not like this, as he did not know what would turn out. The king told him to send them, because after the ambassador had come on shore he would send for them to come, and of this he gave him his promise. Then the three Nayars, with very good cloths, and gold bracelets on the shield-arms above their elbows, and gold ear-

rings in their ears and their swords and splendid shields, which it is their custom always to carry as long as they live, by day and night, were delivered over by the Gozil to the factor, for him to convey them to the ship; he excused himself from doing so saying he could not because he was weighing, but that the interpreter Joan Nuz would go to the king for him to deliver them up, because they had to be received from the king's hand, and then he would conduct them to the ship. This the Gozil did and went with the interpreter to the king, and delivered to him the hostages.

Meanwhile, the Castilian found time to tell the factor which of the three Nayars was the Gozil's nephew who was sufficient. They went immediately in an Indian boat to the ship, and the captain-major received them with much honour; and seeing three hostages, on account of the notice which he had already received from the factor he said through the interpreter that one hostage was sufficient for so great a king as was the king of Calicut, even though he were only one youth belonging to his household. They then got ready at once, and the captain-major ordered all the articles which I have before

mentioned to be wrapped up in handkerchiefs and napkins, and the Nayars were delighted to see them and he ordered the trumpeters to be dressed in white and red liveries which he had had made; and on the trumpets were set streamers of white and red taffety, with a gilt sphere upon them, and their slings, and the trumpets were cleaned and burnished so that they shone like gold. He took to accompany him twelve men well clothed, and some of his household, and there went Alvaro de Braga, Joan de Setubal, and Joan Palha, all smart men. The clothes of the captain-major and the articles of silver were put in a chest, and all embarked in the boat, and he took one of the Nayars, and left the other with the Gozil's nephew, well lodged in an apartment of his cabin, to whom Paulo de Gama gave a good welcome.

Next day Vasco de Gama went in the boats, which also carried goods for the factory, where the Gozil, with many people, was on the beach waiting for him; and he first sent the Nayar to go and tell the king that he was there, and with him he sent an interpreter. This the captain-major did on account of a warning from the Castilian, who sent him word that the king was about

to go five leagues outside the city, in order to bid him go thither, and that this was at the advice af the Moors. The Nayar and interpreter, on reaching land and mentioning the message with which they were going to the king, were sent back again by the Gozil to the captain-major to tell him to disembark and that they would go to the king's houses, and that he had had to go outside the city in a hurry and would return in the evening, and had given orders for them to wait there till he came.

Vasco de Gama sent the Nayar on shore to wait until he saw the king and tell him that he was coming at his summons, and that as he did not find him, on that account he was returning to the ship until the king came: and if he sent for him to come, he would come at once. At this the Gozil felt melancholy; and said to the factor that the captain-major did wrong not to come out and wait for the king as he had bidden. The factor told him that the captain-major was doing what he was ordered by his instructions, and that he was not to give his embassage by night but by day, when the king was in his palace with all his nobles. Then he sent word to the captain-major to

send the hostages on shore that they might go and eat. The captain-major answered that he had not got to send them, that he had no authority over them, and that they could very well go away if they pleased, as he was not going to keep them by force. Then Vasco de Gama spoke to the hostages, and told them that he had been going on shore to speak to the king, and that he had not found him, since the Gozil had sent to say that the king had gone outside to some other part, and that he had sent him word to send them on shore, which he could not order them to do, because the king had ordered them to remain there in the ship until he had spoken to him: therefore, if they wished to go, they might go and welcome, as he did not keep them by force. The Nayars said that they would not go except with the king's orders, and they sent to say this to the Gozil; on account of which they brought them their food and water, which, they drank. The Gozil sent a message to the king of what the captain-major had done.

The king was angry, because he was inclined to go out of the city, and he came back at once next day, and sent to tell the

captain-major that he was in his palace waiting for him. Upon this the captain-major went at once in the boat, and the Moorish broker took him on shore with all the packages in large Indian boats, and he went into the factory, where he dressed himself in a long cloak coming down to his feet, of tawny coloured satin, lined with smooth brocade, and underneath a short tunic of blue satin, and white buskins, and on his head a cap with lappets of blue velvet, with a white feather fastened under a splendid medal; and a valuable enamel collar on his shoulders, and rich sash with a handsome dagger. He had a page dressed in red satin, and in front of him went the men in file one before another. First after these went the basin carried wrapped in a napkin by a man who held it against his breast, and in front another with the ewer; then a tray with knives and caps, and then the open mirror which had doors, and was all splendidly gilt; next the pieces of silk, and in front of all the chair carried upon the head of the broker; and there was in front a piece of scarlet cloth opened so as to show it. Before these went the trumpets sounding, and the factor went with a cane in his hand, and

his cap off, as he conducted all the bearers of the present. The king was in a balcony and saw everything in the order in which it came, with great pleasure at seeing such rich things. The factor entered in front and presented each thing to the king, and he placed a cushion upon the chair, and another at its foot and said, that the ambassador asked him as a favour to sit on the chair for him to give him his embassage seated on that chair, and the king, with the great satisfaction which he experienced, sat upon it.

Before arriving at the palace there was a long street through which the captain-major went. But the crowd was so great that our men could not advance, even though there were many Nayars making the people keep off, and in that crowd there were a great number of Moors also with swords and shields, after the fashions of the Nayars. The captain-major went very leisurely and without fatiguing himself, and remained still until they had made the people stand off. Before reaching the palace, by the king's orders, the catual of the king's house came to receive the captain-major. He is the chief officer of the guard of the king's

palace, and if any one enters where the king dwells without his leave, immediately he will order his head to be cut off at the door of the palace without asking the king's pleasure about it. With this catual the Portuguese proceeded with less encumbrance, because he ordered the people to keep off, and they were much afraid of him. Each time the factor presented any piece of goods, the king looked at it for some time, and this caused much detention.

When the captain-major arrived, he was conducted through many courts and verandas to a dwelling opposite to that in which the king was, beyond, in another room arranged with silk stuffs of various colours, and a white canopy, which was of subtle workmanship and covered the whole room. The king was sitting in his chair, which the factor had got him to sit upon. He was a very dark man, half naked, and clothed with white cloths from the middle to the knees; one of these cloths ended in a long point on which were threaded several gold rings with large rubies, which made a great show. He had on his left arm a bracelet above the elbow, which seemed like three rings together, the middle one larger than the others,

all studded with rich jewels, particularly the middle one which bore large stones which could not fail to be of very great value. From this middle ring hung a pendent stone which glittered. It was a diamond of the thickness of a thumb; it seemed a priceless thing. Round his neck was a string of pearls about the size of hazel nuts; the string took two turns and reached to his middle. Above it he wore a thin round gold chain which bore a jewel of the form of a heart, surrounded with larger pearls, and all full of rubies. In the middle was a green stone of the size of a large bean, which from its showiness was of great price, which was called an emerald. According to the information which the Castilian afterwards gave the captain-major of this jewel, and of that which was in the bracelet on his arm, and of another pearl which the king wore suspended in his hair, they were all three belonging to the ancient treasury of the kings of Calicut.

The king had long dark hair, all gathered up and tied on the top of his head with a knot made in it; and round the knot he had a string of pearls like those round his neck, and at the end of the string a

MALABAR—IN THE EYES OF TRAVELLERS

pendent pearl pear-shaped and larger than the rest, which seemed a thing of great value. His ears were pierced with large holes, with many gold ear-rings of round beads.

Close to the king stood a boy, his page, with a silk cloth round him. He held a red shield with a border of gold and jewels, and a boss in the centre of a span's breadth of the same material; and the rings inside for the arm were of gold; also a short drawn sword of an ell's length, round at the point, with a hilt of gold and jewellery with pendent pearls.

On the other side stood another page, who held a gold cup with a wide rim, into which the king spat; and at the side of his chair was his chief Brahman, who gave him from time to time a green leaf closely folded with other things inside it, which the king ate and spat into the cup. That leaf is of the size of an orange leaf, and the king was always eating it; and after much mastication he spits it into the cup, and takes a fresh one, because he only tastes the juice of this leaf and the mixture that goes with it of quick-lime and other things, which they call areca, cut up small; it is of the size of a chestnut. Thus chewed all

together, it makes the mouth and teeth very red because they use it all day wherever they may be going, and it makes the breath very pleasant.

The factor having finished presenting all the things to the king, which he was looking at very leisurely, the ambassador arrived and made profound salutations to the king. The king bowing his head and his body a little, extended his right hand and arm, and with the points of his fingers he touched the right hand of the captain-major, and bade him sit upon the dais upon which he was; but he did not sit down. He spoke to him through the language in which Joan Nuz spoke to the broker, and the broker spoke to the Brahman, who was by the king. There were also there the overseer of the treasury and the Gozil.

Vasco de Gama said to the king: "Sire, you are powerful and very great above all the kings and rulers of India, and all of them are under your feet. The great king of Portugal, my sovereign, having heard of your grandeur, and it is spoken of throughout the world, had a great longing to become acquainted with you and to contract friendship with you as with a brother of his

MALABAR—IN THE EYES OF TRAVELLERS

own, and with full and sincere peace and amity to send his ships with much merchandise to trade and buy your merchandise, and above all pepper and drugs, of which there are none in Portugal. With this desire he sent fifty ships with his captain-major; and he sent me to go on shore with his present and message of love and friendship, which I have presented to you, because I have been separated from the rest of my company by storms. God has been pleased to bring me here where I now am. Therefore, I truly believe that you are the king and ruler whom we came in search of, since here we find the pepper and drugs, which our king commanded us to seek, and which you, Sire, have been pleased to give us. I have great hopes in God that before we depart hence another fleet will arrive here, or some others, for without doubt, Sire, we came to seek for you. I tell you, Sire, that so powerful is the king of Portugal, my sovereign, that after I shall have returned to him with your reply, and with this cargo which you are giving me, he will send hither so many fleets and merchandise, that they will carry away as many goods as are to be had in this city. To certify the

truth of what I say, here is the letter of the king, my sovereign, signed with his hand and seal, and in it you will see his good and true words which he says to you."

Vasco de Gama then kissed the letter and placed it upon his eyes, and upon his head, and gave it to the king with his knee on the ground. The king took it and placed it on his breast with both hands showing marks of friendship, and opened it and looked at it. He then gave it to the overseer of the treasury, telling him to get it translated.

The king then said to Vasco de Gama that he should go and rest, and that he would see the letter and answer it. He added that he should ask the overseer of the treasury for whatever merchandise he wished to put on board, and he would give it him; also whatever he required for the ships. He requested that he should send all his people to the city to amuse themselves, and to buy whatever they liked, for no one would do them any harm. He told the Gozil to announce this by the crier, and with that he dismissed Vasco de Gama, saying that another day he would speak more at leisure, as it was now late. So Vasco

de Gama went out with the overseer of the treasury and the Gozil and the catual of the king's door, who brought him to the factory, with his trumpets blowing before him, and there they took leave of him with salutations. The captain-major slept at the factory, after his great satisfaction, and the next day he sent the trumpeters to the ship with a letter in which he wrote all that had taken place with the king.

# III

## VASCO DE GAMA'S AUDIENCE WITH THE RAJA OF CANNANORE.

While the Portuguese were at Calicut, the king of Cannanore always knew all that happened to them, because he had sent people for that purpose to write to him everything. The Moors of Cannanore, who received information from those of Calicut, in order to indispose the inclination of the king, used to tell him many lies about the Portuguese, that they used violence and arrogance in Calicut, and many other false tales with respect to which the king knew the truth. For this reason, one day when the Moors were thus relating these things to him, he said that no one should tell him lies, because he would order his head to be cut off for it. The king said this for he had

these things which he had sent, and which they required for their voyage. He added that they made a great mistake in not completely filling their ships with a cargo of the goods they had come in search of, and that he would give them as much as they wanted. He assured them that they would not be losing any time for their voyage. He would be surprised, said he, if they rejected his friendship. So he entreated them much and promised to give them the merchandise at a much better price, and in better condition than what had been given in Calicut, because he desired to establish a sincere peace and friendship with them.

The good brothers having heard this message, both held a council and settled to have an interview with the king, and to establish peace and trade, since that was what they had come in quest of. They went on till they arrived at the port, and anchored, with the ships dressed out with flags and standards, and they fired salutes with chambers towards the outside, not to do any harm to the shipping. The king, who saw this from the beach, was much pleased. He

immediately sent one of his ministers to visit the Portuguese and convey to them many thanks for having come to the port, and to entreat them to complete the taking in of the ship's cargoes with what suited them best, as he would give them of everything. They were not to omit to take these goods, even though they might not have the wherewithal to pay for it. He would give it all if they would swear by the head of their king and sovereign that when they returned to India they would come to his city to take cargo, and establish peace and the friendship of a brother between him and their king. For that purpose he was ready to see them whenever they pleased, and urged that they ought to do since it so much suited them.

To this the Portuguese replied with many compliments and thanks, saying that they would do everything that he desired, only if he would excuse the interview between them. That was a thing that could not be, because their king, their sovereign, forbade them ever going on shore without first having established peace and friendship by means of signed letters with which he could be satisfied.

With this they gave a list of the things which were wanting to complete the cargo and also of what they wanted for the voyage. Immediately, on the following day, the king sent to them in *paraos* all that they had asked for, with superfluity, so that they sent some back ashore. The captain-major seeing such generosity and such demonstrations on the part of the king, desired to overcome him in liberality, and without weighing or reckoning he sent him in the same *paraos* so large a quantity of branch coral, vermilion, quicksilver, and brass and copper basins, that the whole was well worth the double of what the king had sent.

When the *paraos* went away from the ships, Nicolas Coelho was sent in a boat with a present to the king, *viz.*, a piece of green cloth, a piece of brown satin velvet, a piece of crimson damask, a large silver basin, thirty scarlet cloth caps, two knives with sheaths and five ells of darker scarlet cloth. On reaching the beach, the clerk called the men, who carried away the present, and the boat returned to the ship without any of the crew having landed, for the captain-major had thus ordered

it. The king was much delighted with the present, and said to Nicolas Coelho that the goods which had been sent in excess should be left for them to pay for whenever they pleased and that he was much pleased with the present, because his heart saw that which it had desired. But he added that he would not be altogether at rest unless he saw the captains with his own eyes, and that he would manage that they did not violate the commands of their king. With this he dismissed Nicolas Coelho, and sent him to the ships in a *parao*. Immediately afterwards, with great haste, the king ordered a wooden bridge to be made. It advanced into the sea as much as a cross-bow shot, and was very narrow, so that only one man could pass upon it in front of another ; and at its extremity a chamber was made of wrought wood.

Thither the king came to sit with six or seven persons, for the house would not hold more and there he could see the ships better, and send everything which they required. Then he sent word to say that he begged the captains very much to come and see him in their boats. They could do so without any infraction of their

king's commands, because he was waiting for them in the water where they could come in their boats without touching land. The captains seeing so great a desire on the part of the king, disposed matters for complying with his will, and for making a treaty of peace and friendship, and an agreement as to merchandise. They bore in mind that if Calicut did not make a good settlement, they could take advantage of Cannanore and its capabilities, and from thence they might gain the good will of Calicut. So that on all accounts it was very necessary to make an agreement with Cannanore. They sent to tell the king that they would go and see him whenever he commanded it. The king, with much satisfaction, sent his thanks, and a request that they would come the very next day, and that they would get ready for that purpose.

Next day the king came with many people and music, and in state, very richly dressed and sat down in the chamber, which was hung with rich silken stuffs. He sat on a dais covered with silk stuffs. The captains came in their boats. They were gaily dressed, and the sailors also wore very splendid clothes, which the captain-

major gave them, made of the silk stuffs which the king had given, and there were carpets in the boats and covered chairs, and rugs on the thwarts on which the crew sat. The boats carried forked streamers of white and red damask with the cross of Christ. The trumpets sounded, and the boats carried their swivel guns, and on leaving the ships they fired salutes with many chambers. As they were coming along, the minister, who governs all the kingdom, came to the king who sent him to accompany the captains to do them more honour. The captains showed him much respect, and Vasco de Gama took him into his boat and carried him with him.

When they reached the chamber where the king was, the two captains made him profound salutations, and remained standing with their caps in their hands. The king rose to them from his seat much pleased, and came to the edge of the planking. He ordered the boats to come close up, and entreated the captains to come in where he was. They did so because the king requested it so much, and since there were only his chief men with him, about seven or eight persons. When they entered the chamber, the

king took them both by the hand, and sat down with them upon his dais. He looked at them with much delight and inquired which of them had been a prisoner in Calicut.

Paulo de Gama said: "Sire, this brother of mine it was to whom the king did much harm without his deserving it." The king replied: "The king of Calicut had sent me a letter begging me to exculpate him. What had been done had happened without his knowledge. He had been deceived, and he is very angry, and will take great vengeance on those who had given him bad counsel." The captain-major replied: "Sire, when the king gives this punishment we shall see that he speaks the truth. We now no longer remember this, for the time will come that he will repent still more of it." Then Paulo de Gama said by means of the broker Davane and the Melinde pilot who interpreted: "Sire, you will have already known who we are, and how we have come to this country. It is not necessary for us to relate to you more at length. I only say that we have seen with our eyes that you are truly a good king, without any of the falseness of the king of Calicut. On that

account we have come here at your call. Since you show so much goodness in your conduct and actions, we shall be glad to establish with you peace and good friendship, which shall always endure with the king, our sovereign, who is so good a king, that when he establishes friendship with any good king, he then becomes like his brother, a friend of his friends, and enemy of his enimies. This sincere friendship being thus established, we will serve you like our own king."

The king answered him: "There is now in my heart the greatest joy that I ever thought to feel, and within me all is peace and friendship towards your king. Therefore, I will affirm it in the manner you may desire, according to my custom. It will give rest to my heart, which has desired this from the first day that I saw your ships, and since I learned what happened to you in Calicut. With the friendship of your king which you will give me, my heart will be very tranquil until I see in this my port other ships which will bring me an answer from your king. If you promise me this, my desire will be accomplished."

Then Paulo de Gama replied: "Sire, the

certainty of seeing our ships come to this your port with an answer from our king, God can give it according to his will, because we are going amidst the perils of the sea. But we, who are both sons of one father, we promise you by God who is in the heavens, and by the head of our king that if any other ships of our king should come to this port, they will bring with them letters ratifying the security of your peace and brotherhood, which will last for ever as long as you so wish it. All that we two promise in the name of our king from this day forward for ever. In remembrance of it and as a trustworthy sign we give you this sword. Such is the custom of our king, who, when he establishes a new friendship, gives a sword to certify its sincerity. By breaking it he would remain with the loss of his honour, since all honour is gained with the sword. For which reason from this day forward for ever peace and friendship with you remain secured on our part."

Then they gave him the sword which Paulo de Gama carried. It had a hilt enamelled with gold, and a velvet scabbard with the point sheathed with gold. The king then said

that all those words and promises and assurances which they had given to him on behalf of their king, he in the same manner said and affirmed them for ever upon his head and upon his eyes, and by the womb of the mother that bore him.

He at once ordered a gold leaf to be prepared, upon which all these things were written, and which the king and his ministers signed. Then the king gave them a splendid gold collar of jewels and pearls, broad to go upon the shoulders, worth ten thousand crusados, and ten pieces of silk with gold thread, a very handsome thing. He gave to each of the captains a thick round gold chain with a gold jewel set with precious stones, and six gold rings with valuable gems; and to each of them twenty very fine white stuffs; upon which they paid him great compliments and courtesies, and took leave of him. The king also made demonstrations of much affection and satisfaction. The good brothers returned to the ships with very great satisfaction.

Two days later the king sent to say that they should send for the letter which was now finished. Upon this they sent Nicolas Coelho in the boat very well fitted up. We went to the

chamber on the sea where the king was, and took with him the broker and the Melinde pilot, who knew the language of the country very well. The king delivered the letter to him with his own hand, again repeating the words of his oath. He swore besides by his pagodes, which are their idols, which they adore as gods, that he would fulfil everything till his death, and that when he died, he would enjoin it likewise upon his prince. This agreement, he assured, would continue so long as the ships came to his port and took in cargo of what was to be found in his country. He promised to give them of a good quality of all those goods for prices which they were worth in the country. He also promised that he would take the merchandise which they gave him. He requested them to establish a factory and assured that in the whole of his country they would be secure, as in the country of an own brother of the king of Portugal.

All that the king said was put down in the letter. Nicolas Coelho wished to write everything, at which the king was much pleased. He commanded the letter to be read, and Nicolas Coelho wrote. Then Coelho gave the paper to

the king, who signed it with his hand. The gold letter was wrapped up, and upon it was put the paper which Nicolas Coelho had written. The king gave Nicolas Coelho two rings and some fine white stuffs, and dismissed him, sending with him his minister to go and deliver the letter to the captains, to do them greater honour. The captains received him with great respect and ceremony. The minister kissed the letter, touched his eyes with it, placed it on his head, and then gave it into Paulo de Gama's hand. He took it with both hands with great courtesy, and placed it upon his breast. They gave the minister a piece of scarlet cloth, and another of green satin, and they again sent Nicolas Coelho on shore to carry a present to the king of a silver hand-basin, a chased and gilt ewer, and half a piece of brocade. To the four Nayars who came with the minister they gave red caps and knives with sheaths. The Nayars went away praising our people highly.

When they arrived before the king, who was still in the chamber, and Nicolas Coelho gave him the present, the king and his people were much surprised. They held this to be great liberality, and said that the Portuguese

would not do such things unless the king of Portugal possessed great riches. Then the king commanded the minister to send to the ships all that they wanted for their voyage freely. For this purpose he ordered the broker to remain on shore, and Nicolas Coelho went back to the ships. They were three days taking on board the things they wanted. When about to sail, they dismissed the broker and gave him a document signed by themselves, in which they declared to all the captains of the king of Portugal that Davane, the broker, a native of Cambay, was a very good and sincere friend, who had always gone with them until their departure, and they had always found in him much truth, and therefore wherever they might find him they were always to do him great honour, wherever they met with him, whether at sea or in the country in which they signed this. They gave him a hundred crusados and a hundred testoons, besides all that was due to him. They also gave him goods which were worth as much as five hundred crusados, pieces of silk and damask, and a letter in the language of the country, specifiying all this.

Further they gave him a gold portuguese and told him to have a hole bored in it, and always to wear it hung round his neck as a remembrace, because that coin was called a portuguese and was money of the king of Portugal. So the broker remained very well satisfied, and the captain-major said he would send to recommend him highly to the king for him to treat him with honour. The broker asseverated that when he knew of Portuguese coming to India he would go and seek for them to serve them; and with that he took leave. Whilst they were thus on the point of departure, two *paraos* came from the shore for each ship, laden with fowls and many fresh things, which they took in; and by a Nayar who brought these things they sent a recommendation of the broker to the king, and through him they took leave of the king with many complimentary speeches. They then loosed the sails and departed, which was on the twentieth of November of the year 1498.

# IV

## BARBOSA'S DESCRIPTION OF THE CUSTOMS OF MALABAR

*Barbosa was a Venetian traveller who visited Quilon in 1514 A.D. His account of Malabar is full of faithful details of a most interesting nature. The extract given here deals with the customs of the Kings of Malabar.*

In the first place, the kings of Malabar are Gentiles, and honour their idols. Many of them are brown; almost white; others are darker. They go naked from the waist upwards, and from the waist downwards are covered with white cotton wraps or with silk. Sometimes they clothe themselves with short jackets open in front, reaching halfway down the thigh, made of very fine cotton cloth, fine scarlet cloth, or of silk and brocade. They wear their

hair tied upon the top of their heads, and sometimes long hoods like Galician casques, and they are bare footed. They shave their beards and leave the moustaches very long, after the manner of the Turks. Their ears are bored, and they wear in them very precious jewels and pearls set in gold, and on their arms from their elbows upwards gold bracelets with similar jewels and strings of very large pearls. At their wrists over their clothes they wear jewelled girdles three fingers in width, very well wrought and of great value.

On their breasts, shoulders, and foreheads, they make marks by threes with ashes, which they wear in accordance with the custom of their sect, saying that they do it to remind themselves that they have to turn to ashes; for when they die they burn their bodies, and so this ceremony continues among them. And many use it mixed with sandal wood, saffron, aloes wood, and rose water, all this ground up.

When they are in their houses they always sit on high benches, and in houses without stories. These benches are very smooth, and are slightly smeared once every day with cow-

dung. They keep there a stand very white and four fingers high, and a cloth of brown wool undyed, after the manner of a carpet of the size of a horse-cloth folded in three folds. Upon this they sit, and they lean upon pillows, round and long, of cotton, silk, or fine cloth. They also sit on carpets of cloth of gold and silk; but they always keep under them, or near them that cloth of brown wool, on account of their sect, and for state. Frequently they happen to be lying on couches and cushions of silk and very fine white sheets. When anyone comes to see them, they bring him this brown woollen cloth and put it near him, and when he goes out, a page carries the cloth folded before him for state and ceremony. Likewise the king always keeps a sword near him, and when he changes from one spot to another, he carries it in his hand naked, as they always keep it.

The heirs of these kings are their brothers or nephews, sons of their sisters, because they hold those to be their true successors. In this wise the lineage of the kings of this country and the true stock, is in the women; that is to say, if a woman gives birth to three or four sons and two or three daughters, the first

is king, and so on, all the other brothers inherit from one another. When all these have died, the son of the eldest sister, who is niece of the king, inherits, and so also his other heirs after him; and when these have deceased, the children of the next sister. And the kingdom always goes in this way to brothers, and nephews, sons of sisters. If by good or evil fortune these women happen not to give birth to male children, they do not consider them as capable of inheriting the kingdom. These ladies, in such a case, all unite in council and institute some relation of theirs as king, if they have one, and if there is none, they name any other person for this office. On this account the kings of Malabar are old men when they succeed to reign, and the nieces or sisters from whom has to proceed the lineage of the kings are held in great honour, guarded and served, and they possess revenues for their maintenance.

The king of Calicut, and so also the other kings of Malabar, when they die, are burned in the country with much sandal and aloes wood. At the burning all the nephews and brothers and nearest relations collect together,

and all the grandees of the realm, and confidantes of the king, and they lament for him and burn him. Before burning him they keep him there when dead for three days, waiting for the assembling of the above mentioned persons, that they may see him if he died of a natural death, or avenge his death if any one killed him, as they are obliged to do in case of a violent death. They observe this ceremony very rigidly.

After having burned him, all shave themselves from head to foot, excepting the eyelashes, from the prince, the heir to the throne, to the smallest child of the kingdom, that is, those who are Gentiles. They also clean their teeth, and universally leave off eating betel for thirteen days from that time and, if in this period they find any one who eats it, his lips are cut off by the executioner.

During these thirteen days the prince does not rule, nor is he enthroned as king, in order to see if in this time any one will rise up to oppose him. When this term is accomplished, all the grandees and former governors make him swear to maintain all the laws of the late

king, to pay the debts which he owed, and to labour to recover that which other former kings had lost. He takes this oath, holding a drawn sword in his left hand, and his right hand placed upon a chain lit up with many oil wicks, in the midst of which is a gold ring, which he touches with his fingers, and there he swears to maintain everything with that sword.

When he has taken the oath, they sprinkle rice over his head, with many ceremonies of prayer and adoration to the sun. Immediately after certain counts, whom they call Kaymal, along with all the others of the royal lineage and the grandees, swear to him in the same manner to serve him, and to be loyal and true to him. During these thirteen days one of the Kaymals governs and rules the State like the king himself. He is like an Accountant-General of the king, and of all the affairs of the kingdom. This office and dignity is his by right and inheritance. This person is also the Chief Treasurer of the kingdom, without whom the king cannot open or see the treasury. Neither can the king take anything out of the treasury without a great necessity and by the counsel of this person and several others. All the laws and

ordinances of the kingdom are in the keeping of this man.

No one eats meat or fish in these thirteen days, nor may any one fish under pain of death. During that period large alms are given from the king's property of food to many poor people, and to Brahmans. When the thirteen days are ended, all eat what they please, except the new king, who observes the same abstinence for one year. Neither does he shave his beard, nor cut a hair of his head, nor of his body, nor his nails. He says prayers for certain hours of the day, and does not eat more than once a day. Before he eats he has to wash himself, and after washing he must not drink anything until he has eaten.

This king is always in the city of Calicut, in some very large palaces which he possesses outside the city. When the year of this mourning is accomplished, the prince who is to succeed him, and all those of the royal family and all the other grandees and nobles of the country, come to see him, and to perform a ceremony, which takes place at the end of the year, in honour of the death of his predecessor.

At the ceremony great alms are given, and much money is spent in giving food to many Brahmans and poor people, and to all those who come to visit him, and to their retinues, so that more than a hundred thousand people are assembled there.

On this occasion he confirms the prince as the heir, and likewise the others as his successors step by step. He confirms to all the lords their estates, and he confirms or changes as he sees fit the governors and officers who were under the former king. He then dismisses them, and sends each to his duties, and he sends the prince to the estates which are assigned to him. He must not re-enter Calicut until the king dies. All the other successors may go to the court, and reside with the king. When the before mentioned crown prince departs, after he has left Calicut, and on passing the bridge of a river, he takes a bow in his hand and shoots an arrow towards the residence of the king. He then says a prayer with uplifted hands in the manner of prayer, and then goes on.

This prince, when he comes to visit the king at the said feast and ceremony, brings all

his nobles with him, and his instruments of music, which are kettle-drums, drums of many shapes, trumpets, horns, flutes, small brass plates and lutes. They come making a great harmony, the nobles in front, all drawn up in order, as they regulate processions here. That is to say, the bowmen in the van, next the lancers, after them the bearers of sword and buckler. The king issues from the palaces and places himself at a great door, on foot, and there he stands looking at all these people who come up to him with great reverence, and do as though they worshipped him.

All retire after a while, and so he remains for the space of two hours, until all have done. Then the prince appears at a considerable distance with a drawn sword in his hand, which he brandishes as he advances, with his face raised up, and eyes fixed upon the king. On seeing him, he worships him and throws himself with his face upon the ground, and with out-stretched arms. He lies thus for a short time, then gets up again, and goes forward very slowly brandishing his drawn sword in his hand, and with his eyes still fixed upon the king; and at half way he does the same thing

again, and the king looks at him fixedly, without making any movement. The prince gets up again, and so arrives where the king stands. There he again throws himself on the ground in front of him. The king then goes forward two steps, takes him by the hand, raises him up, and so they enter both together into the palaces.

The king then sits on his dais, and the princes with all the other heirs, stand in front with their drawn swords in their right hands, and their left hands placed upon their mouths out of respect, withdrawn a little from the king's dais. They speak there to the king with much reverence, without speaking to one another; and if it is necessary for one to say anything to another, they speak so softly that no one hears them. So much so that there are two thousand men before the king in the palace, and no one hears them. They will not spit or cough before the king.

The king of Calicut keeps many clerks constantly in his palace. They are all in one room, seperate and far from the king, sitting on benches. There they write all the affairs of

the king's revenue, and his alms, and the pay which is given to all, and the complaints which are presented to the king, and the accounts of the collectors of taxes. All this is written on broad stiff leaves of the palm tree, without ink, with pens of iron. They make lines with their letters, engraven like ours. Each of these clerks has great bundles of these leaves written on, and blank, and wherever they go they carry them under their arms and the iron pen in their hand. In this way they are known to all people as scribes of the palace.

Among these there are seven or eight who are great confidantes of the king, and the most honoured, and who always stand before him with their pens in their hand, and writings under their arm, ready for the king's orders to do anything, as he is in the habit of doing. These clerks always have several of these leaves subscribed by the king in blank, and when he commands them to despatch any business, they write it on those leaves. These accountants are persons of great credit, and most of them are old and respectable. When they get up in the morning and want to write anything, the first time that they take the

pen and the leaf in their hand, they cut a small piece off it with the knife which is at the end of the pen, and they write the names of their gods upon it and worship them towards the sun with uplifted hands. Having finished their prayer, they tear the writing and throw it away, and after that begin writing whatever they require.

This king has a thousand waiting women, to whom he gives regular pay. They are always at the court, to sweep the palaces and houses of the king. This he does for state, because fifty would be enough to sweep. These women are of good family. They come into the palace to sweep and clean twice every day, and each one carries a broom and a brass dish with cow-dung dissolved in water. All that they sweep, after having swept it, they smear it with their right hand, giving a very thin coating, which dries immediately. These women do not all serve, but take turns in the service. When the king goes from one house to another, or to some temple, on foot, these women go before him with these dishes of the said cow-dung, spilling it on the road by which he has to pass.

These thousand women give a great feast to the king when he newly comes to the throne, after he has finished his year of mourning and abstinence. All the thousand assemble together, both the old and the young ones, in the king's house, adorned with jewellery, gold belts, pearls, and many bracelets of gold, and many rings with precious stones, and ankle-rings of gold on their legs. They will be dressed from the waist downwards with very rich silk stuffs, or very fine cotton, and from the waist upwards bare, and anointed with sandal and perfumes. They have their hair wreathed with flowers, and have rings of gold and precious stones in their ears, and the feet bare, as they always are accustomed to be.

They have there all sorts of musical instruments, and many guns and other fire-works of various kinds. Many nobles who accompany them come there very smart and gay, and are their admirers. Seven or eight elephants covered with silk housings and small bells in great quantity hanging to them are brought there with large chains of iron suspended from their backs. The ladies take an idol for their protector, and put it on the top of

the biggest elephant. The priest who carries it in his arms sits on the back of the elephant. So they set out in procession with music and rejoicing, and much firing of guns, going along a very broad street to a house of prayer. There they lower the idol which is to be seen with another that is in that temple. They perform to them great ceremonies, and many people assemble to see and adore those idols, and pay honour to their images.

These thousand women have each got a brass dish full of rice, and on the top of the rice lamps full of oil, with many lighted wicks, and between the chandeliers are many flowers. At nightfall they set out from the temple with their idol for the king's palace, where they have to place it; and all come in procession before the idol which is set upon the elephant, in bands of eight, with the before mentioned salvers. Many men accompany them with oil with which they replenish the lamps. The nobles, their admirers, go along with them, talking to them with much courtesy.

All the instruments are sounding, and there is a great firing of rockets, and they carry some burning shrubs, so that it is a very pretty sight.

At night some gentlemen go in front of the idol inflicting wounds with their swords upon their own heads and shoulders and shouting like mad men, and foaming from the mouth like persons possessed. They say that the gods enter into them and make them do this. Many tumblers and buffoons also go along performing feats of agility, and the governors and chief men of the city go there to direct and arrange that procession, which is conducted with much order until it arrives at the king's palace, where it disperses.

The king is for the most part sitting on his dais, and sometimes his confidential advisers are there, and a page with a napkin round his neck full of betel, which he gives him to chew.

His manner of eating is that no one sees him eat. Only four or five servants wait upon him. First of all, when he wishes to eat, he bathes in a pool of water which he has in his palaces, very clean and prettily kept. When undressed he performs his ceremonies and worships three times to the east, and walks three times round, and plunges three more times under the water, and after that dresses in clean clothes, each time fresh washed. Then he goes and sits in

the place which he has appointed for eating, the ground having been swept, or on a very low round stand. There they bring him a large silver tray, and upon it are many small silver saucers, all empty. They are set before him on the ground upon another low stand. The cook comes, who is a Brahman, and brings a copper pot with cooked rice, which is very dry and entire. With a spoon they take it out, and make a pile of it in the middle of the said large tray. Afterwards they bring many other pans with divers viands, and put portions of them into the small saucers.

He then begins to eat with the right hand, taking handfuls of the rice without a spoon. With the same hand he takes some of all the dishes and mixes it with the rice. With his left hand he must not touch anything of what he eats. They set near him a silver pitcher of water. When he wants to drink, he takes it with the left hand, and raises it in the air, and pours the water into his mouth in a small jet. Thus he drinks without the pitcher touching his mouth. The viands which they give him, both of flesh and fish, or vegetables and herbs, are done with so much pepper, so

that no one from our parts could endure them in his mouth. He never cleans his right hand, nor uses a napkin or cloth for that, until he has done eating when he washes his hand.

If, during his meals, there should be present with him any honourable Brahmans, in in his confidence, he bids them eat there apart from himself on the ground. They set before them leaves of the Indian fig-tree, which are very large and stiff, a leaf for each man; and upon these they set food before them, the same as for the king. He who is not going to eat there goes away, because no one else may be where the king eats. When he has ended his meal, the king returns to his dais, and is almost always chewing betel.

Whenever the king goes out of the palace to amuse himself,or to pray to some idol, all his gentlemen are summoned who are in waiting, and also the minstrels. They carry the king in a litter, which is borne by men, and is covered with silk stuffs and jewels. Many jugglers and tumblers go before the king, with whom he amuses himself. He stops frequently to look at them, and praises the one

about a league along the sea-side, till we came



who performs best. One Brahman carries a sword and shield, and another a long gold sword, and another a sword in his right hand, which the king of all Malabar, who went to die at Mekkah, left behind him, and in his left hand a weapon which is like a fleur-de-lis. On each side go two men with two fans, very long and round, and two others with two fans made of white tails of animals, which are like horses, and which are much valued amongst them, set on gold spears. These men fan the king, and close to them is a page with a gold pitcher full of water, and on the left side another with a silver one, and a page with a napkin; for, when the king wishes to clean his nose, or if he touch his eyes or mouth, they pour water and wash his fingers, and the other gives him the napkin to dry them.

They also carry vases, in which the king spits the betel. His nephews, governors and other lords go along with him, and all accompany him with their swords drawn and shields. And a great number of buffoons, tumblers, and musqueteers firing guns accompany the king; and if he goes by night, they carry four large chandeliers of iron full of oil with many lighted wicks.

# V

## NIEUHOFF'S AUDIENCE WITH THE KING OF TRAVANCORE.

*Nieuhoff was the Dutch representative deputed to carry on trade negotiations with the kings and chiefs of Malabar (1662—1664 A.D.). The three extracts that follow are taken from his accounts of Malabar. They are rich in details of a very interesting nature.*

On the twelfth of February, I embarked at nine o'clock in the evening for Attingal, where the king of Travancore kept his residence then, having come thither some days before. With break of day we found ourselves near the village of Mappul[1], about five leagues to the east of Quilon, but not daring to approach the shore with our vessel, we were forced to hire an Indian boat, which carried us safely ashore, notwithstanding the violence of the waves that rowled against the shore. We travelled for

about a league along the sea-side, till we came to a large river, which carried us in three hours rowing to the court. Here we understood that the king was just then ready to go to Kalkulam. So I gave immediate notice of my arrival to his majesty, who sent for me by one of his Residoors[a]. He met us on the stair's head, with many of his courtiers. I presented him with the usual respect, the letter, with some presents, which he received and caused the letter to be read aloud before all there present. He told me, that he would forthwith let me know his intention, and that in the meanwhile, I might take a walk into the garden of the castle, with some of his Residoors, and discourse with them farther in a certain grove, which he pointed at with his fingers.

Accordingly I began to talk more at large concerning my propositions with the four Residoors, who were for treating with me immediately upon the subject in hand. But I told them I had no orders to do so, my business being to treat with the king in person. They having given the king an account of what I said, brought me word that his majesty, in a matter of such consequence could not take a resolution

till next day, desiring me to have patience till then, and presented us with Pysang[3] and some other refreshments.

On the western-side of the palace is a pleasant house at the foot of a hill, in the midst of a very pleasant grove, from whence there is a prospect into a very fruitful valley full of rice-fields, hedged in with palm-trees. This place was assigned to us for our lodgings. Our host appeared to be a very honest man, but so mistrustful withal, that when we were going to supper, he refused to let us have dishes or any other utensils. Their soldiers being exasperated at this usage, the whole house began to be in an alarm. I inquired the reason, but could get no other answer from him than that the devil and his ill fortune owed him a shame when they brought such lodgers into his house. He desired us at the same time to look out for another lodging. With much ado I persuaded him that we were no such fellows as he imagined us to be, and so at last with the help of a little money, he let us have what we had occasion for.

The next day, being the fourteenth of February about 8 o'clock in the morning the

king sent for me to court again by a Nayar. We met the before mentioned four Residoors at the gate, ready to receive us. We went together into the garden, where I caused a carpet to be spread under the shadow of some trees, as they did their Indian mats. Being seated, the chiefest of the Residoors told me, that his majesty was not a little dissatisfied at our burning the royal palace of Quilon[4], and that he had given him orders to treat of that as well as the other subject with me. The letter sent to admiral Hustart[5] had been written with no other intention than to treat concerning the pretensions of the prince Goda Varma[6]. Therefore they said they would be glad to hear what instructions I had about that matter.

As I thought it not for our purpose to tergiversate in the matter, I told them bluntly, that Goda Varma might thank himself for his misfortunes; for that when our fleet and forces, about two years ago appeared near Cochin, to attack the Portuguese, our enemies, the Dutch admiral had set up a white flag, to show his willingness to treat with the Queen of Cochin[7] which Goda Varma had not only prevented, but also attacked our forces, and opposed and still do

oppose all our designs tending to the re-establishment of the Government of Cochin upon its true foundation. I further told them, that when about two years ago, I had the honour to see his majesty at Kalikoli[8], I assured his majesty that we had conquered Cochin, and were engaged in an everlasting alliance with Mutha Tavazhi, their legal sovereign; and that therefore, Goda Varma need not flatter himself with the least hopes of his re-establishment.

Of this they gave an account to the king, who soon sent them back with another proposition, whether Goda Varma might not be admitted as a second or third person in the kingdom. To make an end at once of this dispute, I asked them whether they did acknowledge Mutha Tavazhi lawful king. They answered they did. I demonstrated to them how unreasonable it was to demand that one who had set up against his legal sovereign should be received in such a station in the same kingdom, Considering the ill consequences which must needs ensue from thence. I told them it was in vain to say a word more of it. This made them insist no more upon the business of

of Goda Varma. They only told us that we had best be upon our guard, Goda Varma and his three brothers being resolved to live and to be buried in the kingdom of Cochin. I answered him carelessly, that I had travelled through the greatest part of that kingdom; and that I was sure there was room enough for a lakh of them. I assured them farther that his majesty of Travancore had been always in great esteem with our company, that they never doubted of his friendship, notwithstanding he seemed to bear so great a share in Goda Varma's business. Further I told them that I was sent thither on purpose to enter into a more strict league with him, in the same manner as had been done with several other kings, his neighbours.

Whilst they were debating this matter, an envoy arrived from the queen of Quilon with a letter, in which she complained that she had not received any share of the customs, nor were the connon restored to her. The Residoor asked me what the meaning of it was, and whether we would do less than the Portuguese had done. I answered him, if we should follow the footsteps of the Portuguese,



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we must be guilty likewise of the same enormities, in murdering, plundering etc., things not customary among us, the intention of our company being to maintain every one in his right, and to establish a free commerce without interruption. These, said I, are the main contents of my commission, according to which I am to treat with all the kings and princes of the coast of Malabar.

After several other debates, finding them full of tergiversations, I roundly told them, that I found them very backward in what had been proposed; that for my port, I had done all that I could to procure a peace, but that they seemed to be rather inclinable to war. Finding them somewhat puzzled by their silence, I said that if they could find out any expedient to compose matters upon reasonable terms, I should be willing to hearken to them, and that if it was for a yearly present or a sum of money, once for all, they should have it.

The king being informed of this resolution, sent me word back that in a thing of this nature, in which several others besides himself were concerned, he must take some leisure to

advise himself. He promised that he would send one of his Residoors to Quilon to treat farther of the matter. I insisted upon having all things despatched here; but the Residoors telling me that they durst not urge it any more to the king, for that time, I was fain to acquiesce and to defer it till our next meeting at Quilon. I very well foresaw that this negotiation would meet with no small difficulties, unless something more were granted than had been offered hitherto. About the same time, the before mentioned queen sent me underhand word that she was very inclinable to a farther treaty; but that it could not be done till the king of Travancore was gone. As it was no unwelcome news to me, I desired the Residoor whom she sent to me to use his utmost interest with her majesty to bring it to pass, being sensible that it was the intention of my masters to live with her in a good correspondence.

The country about Attingal has hitherto not been described by any that I know. It abounds in pepper, of which a great quantity is brought thither out of the circumjacent parts. The ancient race of the kings of Travancore

owed its origin to Attingal; but for want of male heirs, one of the princes of Cochin was placed in that throne, the king who then reigned being descended from the Cochin race of Ramerankoil, and elected king of Travancore. The ground, where the pepper grows, is hereabouts strong and red, which makes the pepper not full so large here as in the valleys about Quilon and Cochin. On the descents of the hills you see very pleasant rice-fields, cut out like steps and watered from the top by small rivulets. The king and queen's palaces are directly opposite to one another with some rice-fields betwixt them.

The next day about ten o'clock in the morning, I was called to court again, where the king told me in person that it would be better to re-assume the treaty at Quilon. I being fain to be satisfied with this, I took my leave of his majesty and the Residoors. They offered me a present from the king according to the custom of the country. I accepted it and went directly to the river-side. There we found our boat, and sailing down the river, came just before sunset to Mapul, where I was met by the resident of Tengapattanam, whom I had

given notice of my coming that way. The following day, *viz*, the sixteenth of February we re-embarked our vessels, and steered our course by sea to Quilon.

## NOTES

1. **Mapul**—A place not identified; Perhaps Mampalli.
2. **Residoors**—Officers of the king. This is a corruption of the word Rajadhura, generally appearing in Malayalam correspondence as Turakkar—those who bear the burden of the king's administration.
3. **Pysang**—A foreign word meaning banana.
4. **Burning the royal palace of Quilon**—The Dutch first came to Malabar in 1660. On their way they landed at Quilon and a fight ensued with the Nayars of the place. The Dutch thereupon burnt the palace and captured some pieces of connon. After that they went away to Cochin. It is to that incident that reference is made here.
5. **Hustart**—The Dutch governor in the East.
6. **Prince Goda Varma**—He was a member of the junior branch of the Cochin royal family. At that time there was a much disputed succession in the Cochin family. The Dutch espoused the cause of the *Mutta Tavazhi*, the elder branch, and the Portuguese supported the claims of the *Elaya Tavazhi*, the junior branch. The king of Travancore

at the time was an adoptee from the Cochin family, and therefore, Goda Varma who was expelled from Cochin by the senior branch with the help of the Dutch, sought the help of Travancore. The succession war is described in detail in the Malayalam poem Patappattu published by the Travancore Government.

7. **The Queen of Cochin.**—Rani Gangadhara Lakshmi. She was then ruling Cochin. In the fight that ensued, the Dutch made her a prisoner.

8. **Kalikoli**—Perhaps Kayamkulam.

9. **Elected king of Travancore**—Aditya Varma who was then reigning in Travancore was an adoptee from the Vellarappalli palace, Cochin.

# VI

## NIEUHOFF'S AUDIENCE WITH THE RANI OF QUILON.

The next day the Residoor of the king of Travancore came to Quilon. He was received by us with all imaginable respect. He began among other things to renew his former discourse about the prince, Goda Varma, upon which it was agreed to delay the last conclusion of the treaty till the coming of Mr. Hustart who was expected every day at Quilon.

On the second of March, with break of day, the viceroy of the king of Travancore, called by them Kurup, the chief commander of the Nayars, called Mattanda Pillai and myself, set out for the court of the queen of Quilon[1], which was then kept at Kallada. We arrived

there about two o' clock in the afternoon. As soon as notice was given of our arrival, we were sent for to court, where, after I had delivered the presents, and laid the money down for pepper, I was introduced into her majesty's presence.

She had a guard of above seven hundred soldiers about her, all clad after the Malabar fashion. The queen's attirement was no more than a piece of calico wrapt round her middle, the upper part of her body appearing for the most part naked, with a piece of calico hanging carelessly round her shoulders. Her ears, which were very long, her neck and arms were adorned with precious stones, gold rings and bracelets, and her head covered with a piece of white calico. She was past her middle age, of a brown complexion with black hair tied in a knot behind, and of a majestic mein. She was a princess who showed a great deal of good conduct in the management of her affairs.

After I had paid the usual compliments, I showed her the proposition I was to make to her in writing. She ordered it to be read twice,

the better to understand the meaning of it. This being done, she asked me whether this treaty comprehended all the rest and whether they were annulled by it. Unto this I having given her a sufficient answer, she agreed to all our propositions which were accordingly signed immediately. This done, I recommended Mr. James Cher de Venne who was to succeed me at Quilon, to her majesty, desiring her to acknowledge him as such and to continue in a good correspondency with our company.

I then desired leave to depart, because I expected Mr. Hustart every hour at Quilon. This she readily granted, and at the same time took a golden bracelet from her arms and presented me as a token of her good inclinations to the company. She ordered one of the Residoors to fasten it to my arm, but it being too straight she caused it to be fitted for me. She had once before, *viz.* when I first gave her notice of Mr. Hustart's coming, presented me with another golden bracelet. For this and all other honours I had received from her majesty since my residence at Quilon, I returned my hearty thanks, desiring

title of kingdoms, and gave several other countries to others of his friends. Upon his sword-bearer, who had Calicut for his share, he bestowed the title of Zamorin, or emperor. For, Zamorin signifies in the Indian tongue as much as an emperor, being otherwise expressed by the word Tampuran, i. e., God[2]. This is the reason why all the other Malabar countries follow the religious ceremonies of those of Calicut as being the chiefest kingdom of Malabar. From hence it is that the Zamorin claims the pre-eminence before all the other Malabar kings, he alone having the prerogative of coining[3].

The two next in rank are the kings of Quilon and Cannanore. Besides these many other petty princes on the coast of Malabar claim the title of kings, though they are not really so; nor do they enjoy the prerogative of coining. The Zamorin, or king of Calicut, lost a considerable share of his lustre after the coming of the Portuguese into those parts. With their assistance the king of Cochin freed himself from all subjection formerly due to the kings of Calicut, and soon after arrived to that pitch of greatness, that they thought themselves

not in any wise inferior to the Zamorins, and waged continual war against them. Nevertheless most of the petty Malabar kings, except the king of Cochin, and the Nayars are vassals of the Zamorin, and never speak of him but with a great deal of reverence. The kingdom of Quilon being the most remote of all, pays the Zamorin less respect than any of the rest. However, all the kings of Malabar are sovereigns in their own dominions.

The first in rank next to the king are those called by them Kaimals, then the Brahmans, who are in great esteem in those courts, the king of Calicut himself being of that sect, and wearing the twisted cord. After the Brahmans come the Nayars, or military order, the true off-spring of their ancient nobility. Then come the vulgar or common people called Mukkuvas, Pulayas or Paravas.

The king is the only judge here, before whom are brought all such as have committed any crime, or refuse to pay their debts. In his absence certain great men of the court determine all affairs of any moment. But if a difference arises betwixt two or more Mukkuvas or any strangers, he that thinks himself

aggrieved, makes his complaint to the next Nayar he meets who is obliged to do him justice immediately without receiving any reward, unless the plaintiff will voluntarily give him a present. This holds in matters of small consequence, for all matters of moment are decided before the king in person.

Their ordinary punishments are imprisonments, or the loss of a joint of a limb. If the crime be capital the malefactor is thrown to the elephant. They have no other prisons but what are in the royal palaces. In case of any difference betwixt two Pagans, when the truth is to be verified by a solemn oath, they put one hand into boiling oil, or else lay hold of a piece of red hot iron. Sometimes they swim across a river swarming with venomous creatures. It is their belief that if they have spoken the whole truth, they shall not receive any hurt. But the trial with the hot iron is most generally received. When the Malabar kings or their governors intend to inflict a punishment upon the inhabitants of a certain place, they surround it with wooden stakes like an enclosure out of which they must not stir. Neither may they

buy or sell, nor have the least communication with others, till the same be removed again under pain of death. This is sometimes done also before the doors of private persons.

All pagans here, as well Brahmans as the Nayars and Mukkuvas, burn the carcasses of their deceased friends. This was more universally practised before the Portuguese and Dutch introduced and settled the Christian religion here. They take peculiar care to provide in their life time as much fine scented wood and other precious drugs as they think requisite for the burning of their bodies to ashes, which is afterwards divided among their relations and friends, who preserve them, and at their festivals mix them with water, and paint their faces with them. When a Brahman happens to die his widow is obliged, as a demonstration of her affection towards her deceased husband to burn herself. This is commonly done under the noise of several musical instruments to suppress the doleful outcries of the dying person, and in the presence of their next kindred. However they may excuse themselves as to this point if they please, but then they are branded with infamy, their hair is cut off close

which they must not let grow to any length again. They are excluded from the society of other women, and are not allowed to marry again. Notwithstanding this, many choose rather to dispense with these disadvantages than to burn themselves. The wives of the Nayars are not obliged to this custom, though there are not wanting instances that they have thrown themselves into the flames which consumed their husband's carcass. The men are not engaged to mourn for their wives, except that they are forbidden to marry again.

The marriages of the richer and better sort are celebrated here with a great deal of solemnity. The first thing they do after matters are agreed betwixt them, is to repair to the Pagoda or temple, where the priests perform certain ceremonies. After this the friends and relations of the newly married couple, both men and women, lead the bride for fifteen days consecutively to the bridegroom's house where they are entertained at his charge. Most of the women sing and play upon flutes, small drums, and other musical instruments. The bride and bridegroom are placed together very richly attired, especially with jewels, to such an excess,

that they have been computed to amount sometimes to two lakhs of crowns. The room is hung with fine silk hangings interwoven with gold. Among other things, a plate with betel is offered to everyone there present, nay even to those that are strangers. Towards the evening the women reconduct the bride to her house.

At the expiration of the fifteen days, the bride and bridegroom are mounted on an elephant richly accoutred, so as to face one another. The elephant is led by a Nayar and sorrounded by the friends and relations on foot. Thus they are conducted through the whole city and are sure always to stop at the doors of any of their nearest kinsfolks, relations or particular friends, who present them with betel, fruits and sweetmeats, and anoint the head of the elephant with sweet-scented waters. They are very careful not to miss any of their friends' houses, for if any such thing should happen, they would look upon it as a signal affront. When they come to the pagoda they dismount, and after they have tarried there for some time, return to the bride's house, where the marriage is consummated, each of the guests being

obliged to present the Nayar that led the elephant with a coconut.

## NOTES

1. **Cheraman Perumal**—The account of Cheraman Perumal's conversion to Islam and his pilgrimage to Mekka is not believed now. The theory of his partition of the kingdom among the several Malabar rulers is unfounded. For details on this question vide K. P. Padmanabha Menon's History of Kerala.
2. **Zamorin**—The explanation of the term Zamorin as signifying emperor does not appear to be correct. Others say that Zamorin, ie., Samutiri, is a term adopted by the kings of Calicut to signify their power over samudra—sea.
3. **The prerogative of coining**—This does not seem to be correct; for, the kings of Travancore had their own coins from very ancient times. Travancore never appears to have recognised the pre-eminence of the Zamorin though he was the most powerful ruler in the north of Malabar.

# VIII

## VISSCHER'S DESCRIPTION OF THE MALABAR TEMPLES

*Canter Visscher was a Dutch chaplain (1723 A. D) who wrote a series of illuminating letters about Kerala. His letters have formed the basis for further researches for many students of history. The present letter deals with the temples of Malabar, their revenues, mode of consecration etc.*

I shall now give you a description of the temples in Malabar and their form of structure.

They are termed pagodas[1], or houses of the gods, who are supposed to inhabit them and to receive in them the devotions of the pious. They are mostly built of stone; the grandest glitter with copper roofs. All the architectural talents of the heathen have been

devoted to the erection of these edifices. Their dwellings on the other hand are wretched; generally mere low mean huts; but the temples far surpass in grandeur any of the royal palaces. I have seen a highly ornamented pagoda in Cranganur, in which the gateway of the exterior gallery is surmounted with an arch of such skilful workmanship that even in Europe it would be admired as a work of art.

We sometimes find arches and facings of marble, a material not found in Malabar. A wall furnished with a good front gateway encloses a quadrangle. Within this enclosure is an empty uncovered space, free to every one, even the Christians and the unclean castes. This reminds me of the court of the gentiles[8] in Solomon's temple. The pagoda itself stands in the centre of this enclosure. The exterior of the building consists of a covered gallery open on the inside, though from without it appears to be all one. This gallery, which traverses all four sides of the edifice, may be likened to the second court of the temple, frequented by the priests and Israelites.

Within this again stands the house itself,

surmounted by a pointed roof, and in the centre of this sanctuary there is a square stone elevation like an altar, its four corners furnished with four columns, on which stands the idol. This image is made of various materials. I have seen silver specimens. They are sometimes gilt, but copper is the most common material. I have a few of these in my possession, which were taken at the pillage of the rich pagoda of Pouretour Namboori. The temples are all dedicated to special deities, as was the case with those of the Greeks and Romans, and the patron idol in each pagoda presides over the others; his form surpassing theirs both in size and splendour. I have seen a copper cow at the pagoda at Cranganur almost as large as life. As the gods are supposed to delight in illuminations, several lamps both iron and copper, fastened into the walls of the second court on both sides, are lighted up on feast days.

There are cavities along the walls of the inside gallery, something like baking ovens, in which Rajas, princes, or private individuals may deposit their treasures for security. The keys of these treasure chambers are always kept by

the proprietors, who may obtain access to them when they please with the assistance of the Brahmans who have the care of the temple.

No Christian, Jew or Moor, may penetrate into this sanctuary, though the gates are suffered to stand open. We may approach as far as the threshold, but not near enough to obtain a sight of the interior. This I have found by experience; for if we attempted to intrude too far, we should be pushed back, as the temple would be polluted, and must then undergo fresh consecration and various ceremonies in order to render it fit again for the offices of religion. This would be the case even if we were merely to enter the tanks or wells in which the Brahmans, bound by their law, bathe daily. They would be contaminated and require fresh consecration to purify them.

Not alone men of other religions are prohibited from entering their temples, but the same rule is extended even to the low and despised castes among themselves, a practice which runs counter to the notions of all other nations; for as the mere touch of these miserable creatures would defile Brahman or a member of the

higher castes, so would their presence the temple of the gods, of whose favour and notice they are unworthy.

The daily services of the temple consist of prayers and devotions offered three times a day, morning noon and night. The devotees perambulate the outer court thrice, making their Sombaic or reverence, a gesture performed by bending forward and striking the forehead with clasped hands each time they come opposite the door of the pagoda. The Brahmans observe a similar routine in the innermost gallery of the sanctuary, muttering prayers all the time. Then the first priest steps up to the alter and sprinkles holy water and flowers on the image, which act forms the daily sacrifice, for no blood must be shed in or near the temple.

Estates are invariably attached to the pagodas from which they derive considerable revenues, and their wealth is increased by the offerings and alms of the faithful. I saw at Purakkad two stone images, man and woman, which have stood for ages by the side of the river, so near that in the rainy season they are flooded. Bags hang from their necks to

receive the offerings of passengers on the river, who throw into them a portion of their fruits, rice, nely[3], etc., as an almsgiving to the adjacent pagoda.

To rich pagodas are attached a number of Brahmans, perhaps two or three hundred, who must be fed. Besides this, at many of the Raja's courts are places called Marroe[4], where food is dispensed to any Brahman who demands it. There is one good thing about these pagodas, that they furnish provision for many wayfarers of their own religion, who resort to them: rice is never refused. They serve in this respect like hospitals or charitable establishments, where a man, however poor and destitute he may be, can always find shelter.

I had almost forgotten to state that when in the daily service the priests come to the performance of the Sombaie, or reverence, the first priest holds up the image while the others bend their knees to it.

On certain national feasts a solemn procession takes place. The idol, finely ornamented and placed in a palanquin or set upon an

elephant and covered with a canopy, is paraded about accompanied with music, and every body must perform the Sombaie before it. Thus still exists the procession of the tabernacle of Moloch, which, among the Egyptians, Syrians and other gentiles, used to cause the children of Israel to sin. The low castes, who may not enter the temple, are permitted to attend at a distance on some of these occasions, and to deposit their donations of fanams before the temple; for though not admitted, they are compelled to contribute to its support, as if it were a privilege so to do. They possess temples of their own constructed of dried palm leaves, and if they could afford to build them of stone they must yet cover them with palm leaves. They have no Brahmans for their priests, but members of their own caste minister the offices of religion.

Near some pagodas, as those of Valdurti and Mowton[5], outside the enclousure stands a stone, at which the Nayars, who are permitted to partake of the flesh of all animals except cows, offer sacrifices of blood. Here also they offer up vows to their deities to obtain the boon of fertility for their estates, promising in turn

to sacrifice so many cocks. When the day for the sacrifice arrives thousands assemble, and the Nayars officiate at the solemnity in place of the Brahmans, who may not touch the bodies of dead animals. The chief called Velichappadu[6] first advances, cuts off the head of a cock which he throws on the ground letting the blood run on the stone. The others in succession follow his example, each sacrificing and eating his own cock.

In the consecration of a new pagoda the building is first sprinkled with water and the leaves of the Ixora, and then smeared with cow-dung. This done ten or twelve cows, as sacred beasts, are tied up inside the building and fed with grass, then with waters taken from four sources, the Ganges, the sea, the river near which the pagoda stands, and the opposite side of the same river, they sanctify the idol, the presiding genius of the temple. They next take a number of dishes (they must not be fewer than forty-nine but generally there are as many as hundred and one of them) made of gold, silver, copper or stone, filled with raw rice and covered with partly coloured cloths, over which are strewed flowers and figures

representing the twenty-seven stars under the influence of which the days of the month are placed. These figures are made of gold or silver, on each of which the name of the star is inscribed. These dishes remain in the pagoda for a period of twenty-one or forty-one days according to pleasure, during which time the Brahmans assemble to the same number that there are dishes, offer up prayers to the triune godhead, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. When this is over, a fire lighted in the quadrangle must be brought before the altar, on which the image is then set up, and fastened with mortar mixed up of various adhesive substances, pearl-dust, sugar, honey, cake, etc. and the Brahmans must be regaled for eleven or twelve days.

If the temple were to be polluted by the presence of a Christian or a member of the low castes, twenty-one dishes of water with flowers must be introduced to purify it, the idol must be washed again with the four waters, a feast lasting for three days must be given to the Namboories, and the temple swept thrice a day and smeared with cow-dung.

## NOTES

1. **Pagoda**—This is a term coined by the Portuguese to signify temples. The origin of the word is from Bhagavati, to whom many temples are dedicated in Malabar.
2. **Gentiles**—A term applied to the heathens, originally non-Jewishnations.
3. **Nely (Paddy)**—Nellu in Malayalam.
4. **Morroe**—Madham
5. **Valdurty**—Pallurutti near Cochin.

   **Mowton**—in shertalai.
6. **Velichapad**—A Nayar Priest who officiates in Bhagavati temples on the occasion of taking the idol in procession. He behaves as if possessed by the deity.

# IX

## FRA BARTOLOMEO'S DESCRIPTION OF THE EDUCATION IN MALABAR

*Bartolomeo was a missionary who spent many years in Travancore during the time of the great Dharma Raja. He had several audiences with that illustrious Maharaja. He has left a most interesting account of Malabar in his book entitled Voyage to the East Indies. He was a careful student of the language, manners and customs of Malabar, and his account is most valuable for its rich details and scrupulous faithfulness.*

The education of youth in India is much simpler, and not near so expensive as in Europe. The children assemble half naked under the shade of a coconut tree; place themselves in rows on the ground, and trace out on the sand, with the forefinger of the right hand, the elements of their alphabet, and then

smooth it with the left when they wish to trace out other characters. The writing master called Asan, Ezhuthachan, who stations himself opposite to his pupils, examines what they have done; points out their faults, and shows them how to correct them. At first, he attends them standing; but when the young pupils have acquired some readiness in writing, he places himself cross-legged on a tiger's or deer's skin, or even on a mat made of the leaves of the coconut tree, or wild ananas, which is called Kaita, plainted together. This method of teaching writing was introduced into India two hundred years before the birth of Christ, according to the testimony of Megasthenes, and still continues to be practised. No people, perhaps on earth have adhered so much to their ancient usages and customs as the Indians.

A schoolmaster in Malabar receives every two months, from each of his pupils, for the instruction given them, two Fanams or Panams. Some do not pay in money, but give him a certain quantity of rice, so that this expence becomes very easy to the parents. There are some teachers who instruct children without any fee, and are paid by the overseers of the

temple, or by the chief of the caste. When the pupils have made tolerable progress in writing, they are admitted into certain schools, called Ezhuthupalli, where they begin to write on palm leaves or *Panayola* which, when several of them are stitched together and fastened between two boards, form a *Grantha*, that is an Indian book. If such a book be written upon with an iron style it is called *Granthavari* or *Lekhya*, that is writing, to distinguish it from *Alekhya*, which is something not written.

When the Guru or teacher enters the school, he is always received with the utmost reverence and respect. His pupils must throw themselves down at full length before him; place their right hand on their mouth, and not venture to speak a single word until he gives them express permission. Those who talk and prate contrary to the prohibition of their master are expelled from the school as boys who cannot restrain their tongue and who are consequently unfit for the study of philosophy. By these means the preceptor always receives that respect which is due to him. The pupils are obedient, and seldom offend against rules

which are so carefully inculcated.

The chief branches taught by the Guru are the principles of writing and accompts, the Sanskrit grammar, which contains the declensions and conjugations—in Malabar it is called Siddharupa, but in Bengal Sarasvada or the art of speaking with elegance—the second part of this grammar, which contains the syntax or the book Vyakarana; and the Amara or Brahminic dictionary. This work, which is highly esteemed by the Brahmans, does not consist, as Anquetil du Perron says, of three, but of four parts; and contains every thing that related to the gods, the sciences, colours and sounds, the earth, seas and rivers, men and animals, as well as to the arts and all kinds of employment in India.

To render the construction of the Sanskrit language and its emphatic mode of expression more familiar to their pupils, the Guru employs various short sentences clothed in Sanskrit verse which are called Sloka. These verses serve not only as examples of the manner in which the words must be combined with each other, but contain, at the same time, most excellent moral maxims which are thus imprinted in the minds of the young people as

if in play ; so that, while learning the language, they are taught rules proper for forming their character and directing their future conduct in life. That the reader may be better enabled to conceive some idea of the morality of the Brahmans, I shall here subjoin a specimen of these sentences.

What is the use of study, if the object of it be not to learn knowledge and fear, which is true wisdom ?

Why have we ceased living in the forests, and associated ourselves in cities and towns, if the object of our doing so be not to enjoy friendship ; to do good mutually to each other, and to receive in our habitations the stranger and wanderer ?

The wounds occasioned by a slanderous tongue occasion far more pain and are much more difficult to be healed than those which proceed from fire and the sword.

Of what use is it to thee to shut the door of thy house ? It is necessary in order that thy wife may learn to be upon her guard.

He who revenges an injury enjoys a pleasure which endures only a day ; but he who forgives receives a satisfaction which will accompany him through life.

Modesty becomes every one, but is a particular ornament to the learned and rich.

The state of a married pair, who never deviate from the path of honour, virtue and mutual duty, is as difficult as that of those who impose on themselves the severest penances.

In the garden, or sacred enclosures, in which children are taught, the Siva idol or Priapus, is generally found. It is however not worshipped by all the Indians, but only by the Sivites. These are a particular sect who pay divine honour to Fire, under the form of the god Siva, as the principle or creative power by which everything was produced. Besides the above idol, there are two other statues, which, for the most part, are placed before the entrance of the school. One of them represents Ganesa, the protector of the sciences and of learned men, and the other the goddess Sarasvatī, the goddess of eloquence and history. Every student, as he enters the school, always

directs his eyes to these two idols; raises his hands to his head, and shows his respect for them by repeating certain forms of prayer. That with which he salutes Ganesa is commonly in the following words: Sat Gurave namah: Adoration to thee, thou true master. Or, Ganapataye namah: Adoration to thee, O Ganapati. This is real idolatry; but these practices at any rate prove that the Indians accustom their children early to honour the gods, and to consider them as their protectors and benefactors. "Those who are desirous of knowing the power of religion and the influence of religious opinions," said the Marquis of Kergariou, who commanded the Calypso frigate, "need only go to India." This observation is indeed just; for among two thousand Indians you will scarcely find one who is not convinced of the necessity of supplicating the gods. Education and the nature of the climate are the strongest incitements to the natives to worship the deity, and to submit themselves to his will.

The other sciences and branches of learning taught to the Indian youth are Poetry *Kavya*, Fencing *Payattu*, Botany and medicine

*Vaidyasastra*, Navigation *Nausastra*, the use of the spear on foot *Hastiludium*, the art of playing at ball, *Panthukali*, Chess *Chathurangam*, Tennis *Kolati*, Logic *Tarkasastra*, Astrology *Jyotisha*, Law *Svadhyaya*, and Silence *Mauna*. The reader will have already remarked that surgery, anatomy and geography are excluded from this catalogue. The Indians are of opinion that their country is the most beautiful and happiest in the whole world: and for that reason they have very little desire to be acquainted with foreign kingdoms. Their total abstinence from all flesh, and the express prohibition of their religion which forbids them to kill animals prevent them from dissecting them and examining their internal construction.

Of the Indian poetry I have already spoken in my Sanskrit grammar; and I shall give some farther account of it hereafter. Their navigation is confined merely to their navigable rivers; for, in general, the pagan Indians have the greatest aversion to the sea. The management of the lance, fencing, playing at ball and tennis have been introduced into their education on good grounds, to render

their youth active and robust, and that they may not want dexterity to distinguish themselves in battles and engagements where cannon are not used. There are particular masters for all these exercises, arts and sciences; and each of them, as already mentioned, is treated with particular respect by the pupils. Twice a year each master receives a piece of silk which he employs for clothing; and this present is called *Sammanam*.

All the Indian girls, those alone excepted who belong to the caste of the Nayars, are confined at home till their twelfth year. When they go out, they are always accompanied by their mother or aunt. They inhabit a particular division of the house, called *Antargrha*, which none of the male sex dare approach. The boys, in the ninth year of their age, are initiated with great ceremony into the calling or occupation of the cast to which their farther belongs, and which they can never abandon. This law, mention of which occurs in Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Arrian, and other Greek writers, is indeed exceedingly hard; but, at the same time, it is of great benefit to civil order, the arts and sciences, and even to religion.

According to a like regulation, no one is allowed to marry from one cast into another. Hence it happens that the Indians do not follow that general and superficial method of education by which children are treated as they were all intended for the same condition, and for discharging the same duties. But those of each caste are from their infancy formed for what they are to be during their whole lives. A future Brahman, for example, is obliged, from his earliset years, to employ himself in reading and writing, and to be present at the presentation of offerings; to calculate eclipses of the sun and moon; to study the laws and religious practices; to cast nativities; in short, to learn everything, which, according to the injunction of the Veda, or sacred books of the Indians, it is necessary he should know. The Vaisya, on the other hand, instruct youth in agriculture; the Kshatriya in the science of government and the military arts; the Sudra in mechanics; the Mukkavar in fishing; the Channar in gardening; and the Banyen in commerce.

By this establishment the knowledge of a great many things necessary for the public good

is not only widely diffused, but transmitted to posterity; who are thereby enabled still farther to improve them, and bring them nearer to perfection. In the time of Alexander the great, the Indians had acquired such skill in the mechanical arts that Nearchus, the commander of his fleet, was much amazed at the dexterity with which they imitated the accoutrements of the Grecian soldiers. I once found myself in a similar situation. Having interested to an Indian artist a lamp made in Portugal, the workmanship of which was exceedingly pretty some days after he brought me another so like my own that I could scarcely distinguish any difference.

It, however, cannot be denied that the arts and sciences in India have greatly declined since foreign conquerors expelled the native kings; by which several provinces have been laid entirely waste, and the castes confounded with each other. Before that period, the different kingdoms were in a flourshing condition; the laws were respected, and justice and civil order prevailed. But unfortunately, at present every thing in many of the provinces must give way to absolute authority and despotic sway.

# X

## ANJENGO

*This extract is taken from the Military Reminiscences Col. Welsh. He came here during the rebellion headed by Velu Tampi Dalava, and subsequently during the wedding of Princess Rukmini Bayi. His description of Anjengo is rich in historical allusion and imaginative colour.*

This place, once so famous in eastern history, is now going fast to decay. The Fort on the sea-shore resembled that of Tuticorin, being a commodious square with the interior completely occupied by a capital Government house and other public buildings; all of which, tottering to their foundations, have been lately sold by Government for the materials, and are now dilapidated. The Kotwal, a very civil intelligent fellow, told me it was one hundred

years old, which, in the East, is an indefinite way of expressing great age. I put up in a small Portuguese house on the back-water, immediately under the eastern face of the Fort, and said to be the very house in which Eliza Draper[1] was born; but which, like all the rest of the place, bears evident marks of better days. The guards who lately paraded the Fort having been withdrawn, the hundreds of decayed buildings and squalid half-starved wretches in almost every street proclaim its miserable and rapid downfall.

The surf at present is really tremendous, being if possible, more terrific than that of Madras, and the south-western monsoon having set in, the whole coast looks dreary and desolate. The remembrance of the Abbe Reynold's Apostrophe to Sterne's Eliza from his History of India made me somewhat desirous of beholding this place. But time has now left no traces of a woman whose name has been most capriciously handed down to futurity by two eccentric Priests, who might have employed their talents on a much better subject, as far as we can learn at this distant period. Still, in spite of my disapprobation of

Lawrence Sterne's heroine, I found myself mechanically led to seek some relique, and actually robbed a broken window of two or three pieces of oyster-shell, or mother of pearl, in memento of my visit to the birth-place of Eliza Draper. Another century, and even the site of the house will be washed away, or mingled with promiscuous ruins; while Sterne's writings will last to the end of this sublunary sphere; a proof to after-ages of his transcendent wit, his energetic feelings, and, I am sorry to add, his unfortunate depravity.

There are no European inhabitant at Anjenge, though there are many *soi-distant* Britons, the offspring of Portuguese, who have a very fine Roman Catholic Church still standing entire. The native name of this place is Anjytangle.[2] I found great difficulty in making my way by the sea-coast here, from a dozen of rapid rivers running, where no previous stream existed; and was more than once nearly drowned in crossing them. I arrived safely at Quilon, however, on the evening of the 4th of June, though I suffered considerably from my exposure to so much wet.

## NOTES

1. **Eliza Draper**—Famous in English Literature through the writings of Lawrence Sterne. Draper was a native of Anjengo.

2. **Anjytangle**—Whether this is the correct form or not cannot be asserted with any degree of surety The form popularly current is Anchu Tengu.

# XI

## NATIONAL CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE OF MALABAR

*This is adapted from The Land of the Perumals (1863 A. D.) by Francis Day who was for some time Medical Officer in Cochin. Day is a clear and forcible writer, and his account is never vitiated by national prejudice. The following extracts show his insight into the national character of the people of Malabar.*

The people of Malabar as a whole appear to enjoy a most passive state of existence and are delighted to make any excuse for obtaining a holiday. No matter of what caste or creed they may be, indolence seems to constitute the acme of their happiness, and a quiet swing in the verandas of their houses or a lounge under a tree chewing betel is much preferred by them

to any active pleasure which entails exertion. Their meditations do not disturb their tranquillity; they reflect not on the past, and whilst they have sufficient for today, they are indifferent as to the wants of to-morrow. The pay of workmen and coolies during late years has risen greatly, and now having no fear of the heavy exactions of the rapacious governments of former days, many are able to subsist in idleness for a week on the work of one day.

In promises they are equally profuse, with their forgetfulness in performing them. Their expressions are florid, and often interspersed with high-flown similes. They are very good-natured, especially the Romo-Syrians: but very inquisitive, although suspicious of being questioned themselves, and averse to giving a correct reply. They are also extremely vindictive in their animosities. The Nayars, more especially, are rather lavish in their expenditure, and have not so much of that sordid disposition frequently found in Hindus of other parts of India. The inhabitants of Travancore and Cochin are celebrated amongst neighbouring tribes, as being great proficients in the black art, and

even possessing the power of destroying their enemies.

If the usually adopted rule that the languages of people give a clue to the national character be remembered, that of Cochin would hardly tend to raise a very high idea of the inhabitants. On asking a favour the phrase is "You must give," "You had better give," or "It will be best to give". If the petition is granted, thanks are considered quite superfluous; indeed there is no word in which to express such. Thanks, patriotism, and some others have no synomyms. The same may be observed in their religious ceremonies. Their prayers are long and frequently repeated, but even when they believe their petitions to have been heard and favourably received, thanks are exceedingly rarely offered up. Still if patriotism does not exist, a strong affection for their native land is found firmly rooted amongst the natives of these parts. They can rarely be induced to leave it for any length of time, and should they do so, they rapidly pine away and generally before long die in a foreign land.

Many of the laws and maxims of the natives are good were they followed out. In

former times a person convicted of telling an untruth was tortured, or very severely punished. Were this not obsolete, the courts of justice would have sufficient employment. Veracity is a virtue unfortunately not too prevalent amongst the natives of the low country; but in the wilder parts they are more truthful. It appears that the farther they are removed from cities, and communication with the external world, the more their word may be relied on. This can scarcely be wondered at, subject as they have been for centuries to tyrannical rule, where the law of the most powerful has, by force of circumstances, been that of the country; and each official has had, (and truth must admit many still have,) their price. Dissimulation has thus become necessary, and fraud been so thoroughly engrafted into the native character, that many a long year must elapse ere it can be eradicated.

It is a curious anomaly that this race, who think it no crime to cheat a white man, but on the contrary rather a meritorious action, and would pilfer as labourers, are as a rule to be trusted as coolies with valuable property to carry long distances. Very rarely does the cooly

ever abscond with his load, although he may leave it in some safe place, if from sickness or other cause he is unable to proceed with it. And the same applies to bills of exchange given by natives, scarcely one of which was ever known to be dishonoured. There is a strong underlying vein of honesty in the natives of India, which is much to be admired and esteemed.

The Native Christians and Hindus have many charms against the evil eye, amongst them jewels, and tiger's claws set in silver with which they load their children. The Muhammadans also suspend charms from the ceiling for the same purpose. Whilst, the Jews put figures on their houses. Women were not allowed to undergo the trial by water or poison, but were not exempted from the other forms of ordeal.

Amongst a people given to trials by ordeal, sacrifices to evil spirits in every form, and who firmly believe that ghost and hobgoblins are everywhere around them; amongst a race many of whom even worship the first animal they meet in the morning, a tree, or a block of wood, auguries are of course regarded as most

important ; and many a great undertaking is postponed solely because some anticipated good omen is not forthcoming. No one would think of continuing a walk, should a black cat happen to run across the road soon after he started. If a Namboori setting out on a journey meet another Namboori, he invariably returns home, and if possible postpones his journey ; but if this is impracticable he remains at his house half an hour and then makes a fresh start. Meeting a jackal or two Namboories are good omens.

If a lizard chirp upon the wall the conversation is at once changed. In some parts of India no answer is returned by the father to a proposal of marriage for his daughter until the lizard has made itself heard ; and the position of the sound, its loudness and other equally important differences, determine the tenor of the reply. Thursday is an inauspicious day. Hawkers consider it very unlucky should they not sell any article at the first house they visit in a day, and would rather dispose of something at a loss than part with nothing.

The Syrians are as superstitious in their way as the Hindus. One of their most extra-

ordinary ceremonies consists in poking out the eye of Judas Iscariot. On good Friday, a cake on which is a representation of an eye is placed in the midst of the family circle. Each person is armed with a knife, and in succession makes a dig at the eye. After this is satisfactorily destroyed, the cake is cut up and distributed.

One sect were said, not long since, once a year, to have had their sins written out on a piece of paper by a Catanar, and then placed inside a loaded bamboo gun and discharged in the midst of a great feast, the uproar thus effectually dissipating and destroying their year's accumulation of misdemeanours. It is not unusual to perceive the skull of an animal raised on a stick in a Christian's paddy field to avert the evil eye, in the same way as in those of the surrounding Hindus; and very many of their superstitious rites are identical.

Of course atmospheric disturbances are viewed with great awe. An eclipse is believed by the vulgar to be one of their two bad spirits swallowing the sun or moon. A comet is supposed to foretell disasters, a dear season or a frightful sickness. Lightning with its

attendant thunder is believed to be the gods waging war in Heaven or elsewhere, whilst the Muhammadans assert the shooting stars to be missiles discharged by angels at evil spirits who are listening to what is going on in Heaven.

Etiquette is a subject deserving of a few remarks. Those in power have at various times attempted to break through its regulations, but unsuccessfully. He who disregards its observances is liable to be disrespectfully treated in public, and laughed at in private. Although to many Europeans, it may appear absurd to insist upon natives, from a prince to a cooly, removing their shoes when entering a European house, still all who understand the native character must admit its necessity. They themselves originated the custom in the same manner as Europeans have the removal of the hat as a sign of respect.

# XII

## THE JEWS OF MALABAR

[*Adapted from The Land of the Perumals.*]

Scattered about in various parts of India are small families of Jews, some interesting communities of whom reside in Malabar especially in the Cochin State. Around the town of Cochin they have several settlements, the largest Jews' town situated a little more than one mile to the south-east, contains four hundred and nineteen of this peculiar race. At Ernakulam to the east, on the mainland, three hundred and fifty-three reside: and at Chennamangalam, twenty-five miles inland, sixty-five more. In the town of Cochin there are also a few half-caste and black Jews who have removed there for the purpose of more

easily obtaining employment, as well as in consequence of certain privileges being denied them elsewhere.

Their houses are of the same description as those in Cochin, being constructed of laterite, mostly two storied high, having tiled pent roofs and running in the form of one long narrow street. Various representations may be seen on the walls of the houses, either graven on the stone or formed out of the chunam with which they are covered. They consist of peacocks, sometimes two or three, being on one house, double headed eagles. In one instance, two cocks fighting: in another a man on one knee presenting a sword with his right hand against a tiger, which is rushing upon him. A deer with huge antlers is on one house, a non-descript animal, something resembling a crocodile, on another. The interior of these houses are of exactly the same description as the usual style of those of Portuguese construction within the fort of Cochin, from which they were no doubt copied. The windows have the same kind of seats and shutters, and are glazed in the same manner, whilst the walls are as thick and as croocked, and the doors as strong

as those in Cochin. In the door posts of every room the Jews according to the Mosaic command insert small tubes of tin or bamboo, in which are portions of Deuteronomy and the name of Jehovah written upon very thin leather or vellum. On leaving their houses, or even on simply going from room to room, they kiss this tube, bow to it or touch it with their fingers, which they then kiss.

There are two chief Synagogues, one at the northern end of the town, close to the wall of the Raja's palace, and only used by the white Jews, another at its southern extremity, which is used by the black, also termed slave Jews. There is also a third smaller one.

The chief or northern Synagogue is about forty feet long and thirty wide, and by no means a fine building. Tawdry brass chandeliers hold numerous tumblers of oil for lights. The reading desk is in the centre facing the Books of the Law to the west where they are kept in a cupboard behind a curtain, and consist of five copies of the Pentateuch, most beautifully written in Hebrew characters on vellum. Having no altar, they have no sacrifices, and the yearly oblation of a cock,

said to take place in Europe, does not do so in Cochin where no bloody sacrifices are made. The flooring of the Synagogue is of blue and white China tiles. The women's gallery is screened from the body of the Church, around which are benches for the men.

On passing inside the gateway through the first court-yard where four ostrich eggs are suspended the porch of the Synagogue is arrived at. Here the Jew leaves his shoes before he enters within the house of prayer. There is an iron safe for the reception of alms for the poor fixed against the outer wall of the building.

A person visiting the Synagogue during the service cannot draw the conclusion that he is surrounded by a devotional people, as children are running about all the time, talking, laughing and playing tricks upon one another. The service commences by a Rabbi who with his head covered by a tallith, or veil, thrown over his turban, chants a prayer from the reading desk. This faces the west, is raised two steps above the floor, and surrounded by a railing outside which are seats. The Rabbi generally covers his face whilst reading, but this is not done in the feast of the Tabernacles. He

turns towards the west whilst the congregation continue swaying their bodies incessantly backwards and forwards, and bowing towards the Tabernacle. This is interrupted by their suddenly bursting forth with an electrifying response to the Rabbi. Although before entering the Synagogue, the Jews remove their shoes, which they leave in the outer court, some of the better classes retain the stockings which they wear. When inside the building they advance a few steps towards the Books of the Law, place the two first fingers of their right hands on their lips, incline their bodies and then proceed to their seats.

The Jews are strictly divisible into two classes, but there is also an intermediate one. The two former are the white, or Jerusalem, Jews whose blood has never been mixed with that of the surrounding people, and the black Jews who are pure natives. Five hundred of them are said to have been purchased by the first Jewish settlers, and the present race are believed to be the discendants of these slaves, and of other natives of Malabar who were converted to the Jewish faith. These last are

said to call themselves Beni Israel. The white Jews inhabit the sea-coast, but the black Jews generally live more in the interior of the country. Besides these, there is the intermediate race known as half-caste Jews whose denomination sufficiently denotes their origin.

The white Jew retains the peculiar characteristics of his race. His religion, manners and customs are unaltered either by time or distance: and if his contempt of the Nazarenes is as great here as in Europe, he does not show it in his manner, which is very courteous. He shakes hands with those who enter his house, and is by no means shy or ill at ease. The Jews are naturally very much annoyed if persons present during their religious services ridicule or laugh at them, and in consequence, it is said, of the uncivil behaviour of certain sailors, they have latterly become averse to strangers visiting their Synagogue, and endeavour to mislead respecting the days of their feasts.

The complexion of the white Jew is fairer than that of most Europeans, and his features in many instances, but not in all, bear the true Jewish stamp. He is usually good looking,

intelligent and agreeable. Many of them have flaxen hair and light blue eyes, which singularly agrees with the following remark made by Miss Martineau. "Here" (Hebron) "at Jerusalem and elsewhere we saw many Jews with fair complexion and light hair." Time appears to improve the personal appearance of the Jew who even in old age retains his handsome features, whilst his long white beard gives him an imposing and patriarchal appearance. It is curious to visit one of these communities of an evening, and to watch them in a Hindu State, in their long flowing robes, wending their way to the Synagogue. Their waist-coats are buttoned up in front, and the robe is on Sundays composed of materials of whatever hue they prefer, and full white trowers complete the costume. Their heads are shaved at an early age, leaving only one lock in front and above both ears. They wear a scull cap on ordinary occasions, but occasionally a turban.

The Jewesses do not like being seen by strangers, or walking in the streets. They are seldom visible, excepting at weddings and great festivals, and their language is said not to be such as is generlly approved by ears polite.

They have fine figures, but there are but few pretty faces amongst them. The attire of the middle-aged women is by no means so graceful as that of the men, as they have copied the jackets and scanty skirts, or cloths, worn by the surrounding natives. The cloth is fastened round the waist by a gold or silver belt, from whence a bunch of gold or silver keys is suspended.

They are usually very plainly dressed, but for grand occasions they have some magnificent costumes composed of cloth of gold and silver, but these they seldom wear after the first few years of their marriage. One of them has a white muslin Malabar dress, bordered all round with sovereigns, and a stomacher made of little gold fish, intermingled with jewels. Sometimes the skirt is made of silk, but more commonly of printed calico. They wear a square head-dress whith a white veil which falls over their shoulders as low as the waist. The necks are perfectly loaded with chains of coins mostly Venetian sequins, and other curiously fashioned golden ornaments. When the black Jews, commonly called by the white Jews the slaves, became more opulent, they began to wear dresses

and ornaments of coins and necklaces like the white division. This gave great offence, so about 1860 the Bagdad dress was adopted by the young white jewesses. Another reason assigned for this change of costume is that young Jews from other places who were unaccustomed to the ugly Malabar style of dress disliked it exremely, and in consequence rarely took brides from amongst their country women in Cochin. The more elderly married women, not caring so much for personal appearance, have retained the costume to which they are accustomed.

The Badgdad dress consists of a scanty skrit of rich cloth, satin figured barege, or muslin made in one piece, from the neck to the ankles, gathered in behind, fastened up in front and open from the throat, nearly as far down as the waist showing a white handkerchief or stomacher. Their hair is usually very untidy, and the older women appear to take very little trouble in personal adornment. Married women after the birth of their scond child generally leave off their jewels and dress plainly. In mourning they wear either white clothing edged with black, and white or

black ornaments, or dresses of a deep blue colour.

After marriage, they always cover their heads either with a handkerchief or, on grand occasions, with a little gold coloured cap with a long golden tassel. In the Synagogue all the females have their heads covered, some of them by long muslin or net viels. As age creeps on, the jewess rapidly loses her good looks, and at thirty may be considered quite passee.

The Synagogues belonging to the black Jews have nothing remarkable about them. These people distinctly show their native origin. The Jewish cast of features is apparent in those of rather a light complexion demonstrating the race from which they are sprung. Some of the darkest coloured of these Jews are so like the natives of Malabar as at once to convince the most sceptical observer that they must have originated from amongst the surrounding population. Some of them are converts, and others the descendants of slaves purchased by the Jews in the time of the Portuguese and Dutch and converted to the Jewish faith. They act as inferiors to the

white Jews at some feasts, but have never paid any tribute to them; still being an inferior race, they are not allowed to sit down in their presence. The white Jews are traders and merchants, whilst the black Jews gain their livelihood by practising various handicrafts, and are sawyers, blacksmiths, carpenters, brick-layers, book-binders, tailors, fishermen, servants to the white Jews, &c. They travel about the country for these purposes nearly as far as Bombay. Three quarters of them are vendors of household necessaries. During the last few years a manifest improvement has taken place in their circumstances.

Many years ago, the black Jews claimed equal rank with the white Jews, and demanded the same privileges especially the right of intermarrying with them; but as they would not listen to any propsals of this nature, the black Jews refused to recognise their authority setting the dictates of the head man at defiance. A war ensued in which the white Jews are said to have been nearly extirpated, but a Native Prince coming to their assistance, the rebels were reduced to obedience, and since then the two races have totally separated.

This peculiar people, this nation within a nation, have been occasionally persecuted and oppressed, but still they throve. In the time of the Dutch they reached the highest point of their prosperity, but when the British took Cochin they gradually but surely declined and decreased in numbers, power and opulence.

During the last few years, they have again been more prosperous, their trade has increased, they have become more wealthy, and altogether a decided change for the better is perceptible amongst them. In their formerly great and remunerative trade, which, in the time of the Dutch they almost monopolized, they are now supplanted by Europeans, Parsees, Moplahs and others. The women now principally employ themselves in making coarse lace, and embroidering caps, which meet with a ready sale in Bombay amongst the Parsees.

# XIII

## THE SYRIAN CHRISTIANS OF MALABAR

*This is adapted from The Land of Charity (1871 A. D.) by Rev. Samuel Mateer. He was a missionary in the service of the London Mission Society and in that capacity had intimate acquaintance with Travancore.*

Amongst the green hills and fertile valleys of north Travancore and Cochin, the venerable churches and quiet dwellings of a remarkable Christian people are found in large numbers. They have been there from a very early period of the Christian era, and have for some centuries, with more or less clearness, borne their testimony in a dark land for God and Christian truth. Like the Waldenses, they have been subjected to bitter persecution from the Church of Rome, and while many have

succumbed to her power, others have retained their independence. They are a most interesting remnant of ancient Christianity long surviving in a heathen land, shut out from the aid and sympathy of the Christian world. Though fallen from the purity of scriptural doctrine and practice, reforms, both from within and from without, are beginning to appear; and there is reason to hope that the Syrian Christian Church in Malabar shall yet again arise and shine forth with primitive splendour and power. What a mighty influence for good might these Christians exert, as their forefathers once did in Persia, India and China, were the Syrian Church but revived, purified from error, and zealously engaged in labour for the glory of the Lord amongst the heathen in India and throughout the nations of the East.

These people are called by the Hindu natives Suriyani, Syrians or Nazrani, Nazarenes and by Europeans, "the Christians of St. Thomas," or more appropriately, "the Syrian Christians of Malabar." Their own traditions attribute their origin to the apostle Thomas who visited India, they say, about A. D. 52, and preached the Gospel

there, making numerous converts, who were joined some centuries afterwards by other Christians from Syria. The accuracy of the tradition of this apostle's visit to India and of his martyrdom there is exceedingly questionable, though there is reason to believe that the Gospel was preached in India at a very early period. It is probable that the Syrian Christians were, in the first instance, a small colony from Antioch; perhaps driven thence by violent persecutions about the middle of the fourth century.

A favourable reception was given to these early Christian colonists by the Hindu kings of the Malabar coast, on which they landed. Extensive privileges were granted them, according to the inscriptions on copper plates which are still in the possession of the Syrians, preserved in their college at Kottayam; facsimiles of which, taken by Dr. Buchanan, I have seen in the Public Library of the Cambridge University, along with copies of similar grants to the chief of the ancient Jewish colony at Cochin.

These grants confer upon the Syrian chieftain possession of a village, with permission

to use certain ornaments and musical instruments and emblems of authority; to collect particular taxes and duties allotted to him; and to exercise jurisdiction over his own tribe. The dates of these important documents are expressed in such ambiguous language that it is difficult to determine the exact period. Different writers have assigned to them various dates, from the second to the fifth century A.D.

The Syrian Churches are solid, ancient-looking structures, long and narrow, with gable ends surmounted by the cross, forming large, conspicous objects in comparison with the native-dwelling-houses near which they stand. The high walls are often supported by plain, sloping buttresses; the windows are small and few, and the roofs tiled. One peculiarity is that the external roof of the chancel is higher than the nave, instead of being lower, as with us. The inner ceiling of the chancel, however, is decidedly lower. Porch, pillars, pilasters and other architectural ornaments in brick and plaster adorn the fronts. Attached to or surrounding the central edifice are open sheds, cook houses and other buildings for the accommodation of the people on festive occasions, or

sometimes a small chapel consecrated as a place of burial. In front of the church stands a pedestal on which a handsome stone cross is elevated; the whole being sometimes as much as twenty feet in height. The dark, ill-lighted interior is in general far from cleanly in appearance; possibly this is permitted that it may present a gratifying air of antiquity. At the western end a wooden gallery, or loft, contains a few simple articles of furniture for the accommodation of the bishop on his visits to the church, and is also used as a store-room. The church bell hangs inside to do honour to the host. Crosses or crucifixes, and sometimes curious paintings of their patron St. George, adorn the walls and chancel. In every church three altars of stone or wood are found—one in the centre of the chancel and the others on either side. The honoured dead are buried in the floor of the church, near the entrance. A lamp is kept burning in front of the altar day and night.

The Syrian hierarchical order and ritual system bear resemblance to that of the Copts, or native Egyptian Christians. They are governed by a "Matran" or Metropolitan bishop,

who is appointed by the patriarch of Antioch. The "Kattanars", or priests, perform the services of the church, celebrate marriages, and bury the dead. They do not receive stated pay, but derive their support from the contributions of the people on festival days, and from marriage and burial fees, &c. The deacons are often mere boys appointed by the bishop for the sake of the ordination fee which he receives. The ordinary dress of the priesthood is a long white coat of cotton cloth, tied or buttoned in front, and loose white trousers. The hair is shaven in the form of a tonsure, the beard is usually worn long.

Previous to the Jesuit crusade against the Syrian church, they rejected many Papal errors and corruptions, such as the dogmas of Papal supremacy and the authority of traditions, the doctrines of transubstantiation and purgatory. They had no images in their churches, nor were extreme unction or auricular confession practised by them. The sacraments they regarded as three, *viz* Baptism, Orders, and the Lord's Supper. The clergy were allowed to marry; the bread was dipped in the wine, and the communion thus administered in both kinds.

But after that disastrous attack upon their faith and liberty the Syrians were led to receive many errors which are still retained, though the authority of the Church of Rome is repudiated. Transubstantiation, the worship of the Virgin Mary, the invocation of saints, and even prayers for the dead, are now allowed. The Lord's Supper is regarded as a mass, and the prayers are offered in what is, to the generality of the laity, an unknown tongue. Still there is this important difference from the church of Rome, that the authority of the Inspired Word is recognised, and its perusal is not opposed; so that there is now a reforming party within the church itself, anxious for Gospel light and privileges, and earnestly opposing the superstition and formality into which the church has fallen.

Baptism is performed by placing infants in the stone font, and pouring water over them with the hand. Adults are placed in the front and a vessel of water poured over them. The sign of the cross is marked upon them in oil, and thrice the words are uttered, "Forsake the Devil–Receive Christ". A lay man or deacon who has once married, and whose wife is alive,

may become a priest; but when an unmarried deacon is once ordained a priest he may not get married, nor is a priest whose wife has died allowed to remarry.

The Syrian Christians are sometimes, though erroneously called Nestorians; that is the sect who maintain that Christ was two distinct persons as well as natures. It appears that this was their doctine in the sixth and seventh centuries; but in the eighth century a Jacobite or Monophysite bishop came from Alexandria, and the Syrian Christians thus became dependent on the Jacobite see of Antioch. The Jacobites (so called after Jacobus Baradaeus, an able opponent of Nestorianism in the sixth century) contend that in the Redeemer of the world there is but one nature, the human nature being absorbed in the divine, not, say they, like oil and water, but like water and wine which become mingled and united; an error in the opposite extreme to that of the Nestorians. This, however, was readily adopted by the Syrians of Malabar who thus veered round from one extreme to the other. In the Nicene creed, which they acknowledge and receive, they reject the addition respecting

the procession of the Holy Ghost "And from the Son" which was inserted in that creed by the Latin Church, and which thus became partly the occasion of the schism between the Eastern and western Churches.

The patriarch of Antioch, to whom the Syrians profess to render obedience, is one of the four great Catholic patriarchs, *viz* of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem; of whom the first is supreme. There are no less than three prelates in Syria that claim the title and rank of patriarchs of Antioch; but the head of the Asiatic Jacobites is he who resides generally in a monastery not far from the city of Mardin in Turkey. His spiritual dominion is extensive. He has an associate in the government to whose care, under the general direction of the patriarch, are entrusted the more distant eastern churches, and who resides in a monastery at Mosul in Mesopotamia, near to the ruins of Nineveh. All the patriarchs of this sect assume the name of Ignatius, and their associates that of Basil.

The ancient liturgy in general use throughout the Syrian churches, called St. James's Order, has been translated more than once into

English, and may be found entire in Hough's History of Christianity in India. Some of the prayers are beautiful and sublime, but many include invocations of the Virgin and saints, and prayers for the dead.

The small Malayalam prayer-books used by the Syrians contain prayers for several occasions, and short prayers to be offered in the course of the public service; but no translation of the prayers offered by the Kattanar in the celebration of the mass.

Though the Syrian Christians speak and write Malayalam as their mother tongue, the style of their religious works in this language is very peculiar, being interlarded with Syriac words in a pure or modified form. Their technical and theological terms are all Syriac, and the compound of Syriac and Malayalam seems rather strange to the unaccustomed ears of a Hindu Malayali.

There is reason to believe that in many instances very serious corruptions, and even heathenish practices, have been allowed to prevail in some of the Syrian congregations. Several of the festivals and fasts are in some

places conducted in a manner little better than those of the heathens. Certain ceremonies performed for the dead are even called by the Hindu title of similar observances, and there have been instances of heathen songs having been sung in churches for the amusement of the people, besides other degrading and unchristian acts of compliance with heathen sentiment and practices.

The Syrian Christians are generally respectable in appearance and dress, and are comparatively fair in complexion. Many are engaged in trading and agricultural pursuits, and some are possessed of much wealth. Their houses are often spacious and good, with neat wood carvings and other decorations in the Malabar style. On the whole they are intelligent, and display considerable intellectual activity as well as commercial industry and capacity. Several of their number occupy good positions as English teachers, astronomers, lawyers and clerks.

# XIV

## TRAVANCORE
## ITS BEAUTIES AND ITS GREATNESS

*This is the famous Banquet Speech made by Lord Curson, Viceroy of India, in reply to the toast proposed by H. H. The Maharaja, Sri Mulam Tirunal (21st. Nov. 1900). Curson was the first Viceroy of India who visited Travancore, and every preparation was made to accord a warm reception to the Viceroy and Vicerene. Curson's glorious description of the beauties of Travancore is almost unrivalled for its gradeur and majesty.*

Your Highness, Ladies and Gentleman,

Since I have been in India I have had a great desire to visit the State of Travancore. I have for many years heard so much of its exuberant beauties, its old-world simplicity, and its Arcadian charm. Who would not be fascinated by such a spectacle? Here Nature has spent

upon the land her richest bounties; the sun fails not by day, the rain falls in due season, drought is practically unknown, and an eternal summer gilds the scene. Where the land is capable of culture, there is no denser population: where it is occupied by jungle or backwater or lagoon there is no more fairy landscape. Planted amid these idyllic scenes is a community that has retaind longer than any other equally civilised part of the Indian continent its archaic mould; that embraces a larger Christian population than any other Native State; and that is ruled by a line of indigenous princes who are one in origin and sentiment with the people whom they govern. Well may a Viceroy of India find pleasure in touring hither his wandering footsteps; good reason has he for complimenting such a ruler and such a State.

His Highness the Maharaja has proposed my health in a speech that contained so much of personal eulogy that it is difficult, if not impossible, for me to reply. Perhaps, however, as he is so familiar with my good points, such as they are, he will allow me to say that I am not less aware of his. I know His Highness by repute as a kindly and sympathetic and

diligent ruler whose merits have been tested, and for whom the affection of his people has been continuously enhanced by fifteen years of prosperous administration. I know him to combine the most conservative instincts with the most enlightened views. Has not the Government of India itself signified in the most conspicuous manner its recognition of his statesmanship and his services by the addition to his salute to which His Highness just now alluded ?

There are two matters of domestic concern which I should not like to pass by without mention on the present occasion. If one of them bring a note of sadness into my speech, the effect may, I trust, be compensated by the satisfaction which the other may reasonably evoke. The sorrowful incident is the recent death of the First Prince of Travancore[1], an amiable and accomplished prince, a man of culture, of travel, and of learning, the first graduate, I believe, among all the Indian princes, who seemed destined to cast a fresh lustre upon the name of the famous ancestor which he bore. I deeply sympathise with His Highness, and with his people upon the premature

death of this gifted member of the Royal House. On the other hand, I must be allowed to congratulate him upon the steps that have recently been taken, by renewed adoption, for the perpetuation of the ruling line.[2] In due time I trust that the expectations which have been aroused by this interesting event may meet with fulfilment, and that there may never be wanting in the Travancore State a succession of princes, royally born, well nurtured, and qualified by instinct and training to carry on its ancient and honourable traditions.

His Highness has alluded in his speech to the contemplated extension of the South Indian Railway to Quilon. I am glad to think that he has encouraged this most important step, which, I believe, will be fraught with great advantage to his dominions by an advance of seventeen lakhs from the State funds; and also to congratulate him upon the possession of a large and carefully accumulated balance in the treasury, which his enlightened zeal will doubtless suggest to him fresh opportunities of utilising for the material development of the country. I am believer not in the talent that

is laid up in a napkin, but in the talent that is turned to productive employment, and that brings other and more and more talents after it.

In one respect His Highness enjoys a position of peculiar responsibility; for he is the ruler of a community that is stamped by wide racial differences, and represents a curious motley of religions. In such a case a prince can have no higher ambition than to show consideration to the low, and equity and tolerance to all. In the history of States no rulers are more esteemed by posterity than those who have risen superior to the trammels of bigotry or exclusiveness, and have dealt equal mercy and equal justice to all classes, including the humblest of their people.

In this category of princes His Highness, who has given so many proofs of liberality of sentiment, may attain a conspicuous place, and may leave a name that will long be cherished by later generations.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have only, in conclusion, to thank His Highness for the very graceful allusion that he has made to Lady Curzon, who is just as enchanted with all that

she has seen in Travancore as I am; and to ask you all to signify our gratitude for the lavish hospitality extended to us, our interest in this fascinating spot, and our regard and admiration for its illustrious ruler, by pledging a full toast to the health and happiness of His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore.

## NOTES

1. The death here lamented is that of Prince Martanda Varma, a gifted member of the royal family. His premature death (on 25th. Kanni 1076 M.E.) cast a gloom over the whole country.
2. The adoption took place on 15th Chingam 1076 M.E.