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**THE MALAYALAM OF THE MISSIONARIES**

BY

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Cochin State and Travancore where Catholicism has flourished from a very early past, have ever since the advent of the Portugese in the 15th century attracted a stream of Catholic missionaries from the Latinist countries of Spain, Portugal and Italy. These missionaries knew well that a knowledge of the language of the people among whom they worked was always a key with which they could unlock the people's hearts. Many of them therefore acquired Malayalam with an assiduousness that could not be expected from laymen. Some of the earlier missionaries appear to have aimed at poetic composition, and literary excellence too. The story of the Malayalam scholarship of some of these pioneers is set out in Dr. P. J. Thomas' **കേരളത്തിലെ ക്രിസ്തീയ സാഹിത്യം**. A Hungarian missionary of the 17th century, who came to be known in Kerala as **പെന്തീനി** and who was a scholar both in Malayalam and in Sanskrit, composed Malayalam poems and compiled dictionaries. Paulinos of the 18th century had to his credit quite a large number of Malayalam prose essays, though he had not as much scholarship as **പെന്തീനി**. Clemens Peanius, another 18th century student of Malayalam, composed **സംക്ഷേപ ലേഖനം** and also a book on the Malayalam alphabet. The first Malayalam grammar in Malayalam appears to have been written by Angelo Francis in the first decade of the 18th century.

While some of these earlier missionaries aimed at scholarship, the majority of workers appear to have contented themselves with the acquisition of a linguistic medium which would help them to carry on their work in Kerala.

The journeyman-prose of these missionaries, particularly of the more recent periods, is "coloured" by what may be called the "Latinistic" outlook. Ideas, comparisons and turns of expression are cast in the Latinistic mould; constructions of Malayalam are imitated or adapted from those of the Latin speeches; new compounds and phrases are coined on the analogy of those existing in the speeches of the south of Europe; and sometimes even the words and forms of Malayalam are so chosen as to correspond to the south European outlook. It is these peculiarities that the Christians of Cochin State and Travancore good-humouredly refer to as *മുപ്പച്ചൻ മലയാളം*.

The study of a language by foreigners necessarily involves, in greater or lesser measure, this "colouring"; and so, the existence of constructional curiosities in the language of the European missionaries should not detract from the credit due to the enthusiasm and earnestness with which they pursued the study of Malayalam.

Though the Malayalam of the missionaries is, as is only to be expected, based upon the "dialect" of the Malayali Christians, it should not be considered to be identical with the "dialect" of the Christians, (which as I have pointed out elsewhere) owes its origin primarily to the cultural separation of the Christians from the Hindus, enjoined by the prohibitions of the Synod of Udayampērūr, whereas the unique peculiarities of *മുപ്പച്ചൻ* Malayalam arise from the Latinistic outlook of the missionaries. A few of the specialities of the Malayalam of the missionaries may have percolated to the religious word-stock of the masses; but, despite such infiltrations "*മുപ്പച്ചൻ* Malayalam" should not be equated to the dialect or dialects that Christians speak in south Cochin and North Travancore.

Except for some word-loans and for a few phrases in the religious vocabulary of the Christians, the outlook of the missionaries has left little permanent impress on Malayalam. While the influence of Sanskrit has been ancient (from the days of *Tolkappiyam*), continuous and long-standing, the contacts of the Latinistic outlook with Malayalam have been comparatively recent and

restricted to a small area and a small number of speakers. Again, the phenomenal influence of Sanskrit on Malayalam was due to the popularity of Sanskrit among *native* speakers for centuries, while the Latinistic outlook remained confined to the language of foreign missionaries. Further, the bonds between Sanskrit and Dravidian have been mutual from an ancient past.

For these reasons, "missionary" Malayalam has remained an "exotic," while Sanskrit has loaned out not only words but a few non-Dravidian sounds, gender-denoters, affixes and postpositions.

After I had dealt with the linguistic peculiarities of the 18th century *സംക്ഷേപവേദം* (written by Clemens Peanius), I chanced to come across two other works written by European missionaries. These two I propose to discuss below, in order to see if the directions along which the Latinistic outlook has influenced their Malayalam may be made clear.

## II

The first work is entitled "കേരളരാജ്യത്തിലെ സത്യവേദചരിത്രം— ഇത കർമ്മലിത്ത മിഷ്യൂൺസംഗീതത്തിൽ കേരളനാൽ ഉണ്ടാക്കപ്പെട്ടു." Printed in *കേരളം* in 1872, it treats about the history of Christianity in Kerala; it is based upon older authorities like Paulinus and Raulin, and handled from the standpoint of a warm and vigorous supporter of the Synod of Diamper. The story of the arrival of St. Thomas in India, the rise of Nestorianism and its influence on India, the Synod of Diamper and the subsequent history of Catholicism in Kerala, the literary achievements of some European missionaries in Kerala and finally a chapter on the effect of Tippu Sultan's invasion on missionary activities in Kerala,—these constitute the contents of the book.

This book abounds in passages and constructions of the "Latinistic" variety, a few specimens of which are given below :—

1) Passages embodying typically foreign ideas:

..... ചരിത്രപുസ്തകങ്ങൾ രണ്ടും വീശുന്ന അന്ധകാരങ്ങളുടെ ഇടയിൽ വഴിയെ തെറ്റിപ്പോകാതെയിരിപ്പാൻ “so as not to lose one’s way in the darkness produced by...”

കണ്ണനീരുകളെ പിന്തിരുന്നെഴു സത്യം ചെയ്തു..... “took an oath, shedding tears.....”

[കന്യാശ്ചരീതം] നശിപ്പിക്കുന്നതല്ല പസന്തയെ അടക്കുവാൻ വശമായില്ല “was not possible to put down the disease dire as hell”.

ഇവ ചുമക്കേണ്ട തോളുകളെ വഴക്കം അങ്ങനേ “would not have bent the shoulders to these burdens”.

ചട്ടിക യോഗ്യ മുദ്രിക “*dignum patella operculum.*”

തന്റെ ആടുമാടുകളുടെ ഗുണവും സമാധാനവും പൂർണ്ണമാക്കിവരുമ്പോൾ “while completing the process of ensuring the peace and the welfare of the flock”.

ചെമ്മരിയാടുകളുടെ വേരും ധരിച്ചുകൊണ്ടു നിങ്ങളുടെ പക്കൽ വരുന്നു, എന്നാൽ ഉള്ളേ പരിക്കുന്ന ചെന്നാക്കൾ ആകുന്നു എന്നുവരികുന്ന സൂക്ഷിപ്പിൻ “*caveat ab his qui veniunt ad vos in vestimentis ovium, intrinsecus autem sunt lupi rapaces*”.

ആകാശരാജ്യത്തിന്റെ താക്കോലുകളെ കൊടുക്കയും തന്റെ ആട്ടിൻകൂട്ടത്തിലേ ആടുകളെയും കുഞ്ഞാടുകളെയും മെയ്പ്പാൻ ചരമേളിക്കയും ചെയ്യുമ്പോൾ “when the keys of the kingdom of heaven were handed over, and the duty of feeding the sheep and the lambs of [his] flock was entrusted”.....

..... എന്ന കലഹക്കാരന്റെ വിത്തു എറിയവരുടെ ഹൃദയങ്ങളിൽ കിടന്നിരുന്നു ..... “the seeds sown by the sower of discord lay in the hearts of many.”

2) Passive constructions like the following :—

അവരുടെ ചതിവാൽ കല്ലെറിഞ്ഞപ്പോഴുകയും..... “was pelted with stones on account of their treachery.....”

ഇത പൽക്കാനം അറിയപ്പെട്ടപ്പോൾ “when this information was known”.

പൊതുവായിട്ടുള്ള കരച്ചിലും ശഠനവും കേൾക്കപ്പെട്ട “general lamentations and curses were heard”.

എന്റെ മനസ്സല്ല പിന്നേതോ മനസ്സാന്റെ മനസ്സു ചെയ്യപ്പെട്ടേ “*non mea voluntas fiat, sed Dei*”.

ഹോരാഷോവാന്റെ തിരുമുദ്രകൾ എത്രയും ആശ്രയിക്കപ്പെട്ടതും[*sic*]യിരുന്നു “*Exploatiassimae nobis erant litterae Majestatis*”.

3) Constructions which are exotic in Malayalam :

ഓര വഴയിൽകൂടെ കരതേറുന്നു എന്നുള്ളവൻ കള്ളൻ “*Qui ascendit aliunde, ille fur est*”.

വലിയതായി എന്ന് ഞാൻ അനുസരിച്ചില്ലെന്നുവെന്ന അബദ്ധത്തിന്റെ പൊരുതി “*erroris, quem ingentem fateor, veniam imploro*”.

നീങ്ങളെ ദോഷിക്കുന്നു എന്നവർക്കു നന്മ ചെയ്തുകൊടുവിൻ “Do good unto those who do evil to you”.

ചിശ്ചംപു കാരോരോ ദിക്കിൽ ആസ്ഥാനമാക്കിയിരുന്ന ഭക്തന്മാര വഴിയായിട്ടു അറിവിൽ കുറവുള്ളവരെന്നു ലോകരെ തട്ടിച്ചു മയക്കിയ ശീശ്ചയിൽ ഉൾപ്പെട്ട ഇവർക്കു ചെയ്തു “Through the agents made ready by the devil in different parts of the country, men lacking in true knowledge were deceived into becoming involved in a frightful schism”.

ഇടിവെട്ടപ്പെട്ട “*fulmine tactus*”.

4) Imitation of Latin “cases”.

ആകാശത്തിന്റേയും നിന്റേയും മുനൽ ഞാൻ പിഴച്ചു “*peccavi in coelum et coram te*”.

ആത്മാവുകളുടെ രക്ഷയ്ക്കു താല്പര്യം “interest felt about the souls”.

അവയൊക്കെയിന്മേലും മിണ്ടാത്തതിനാലും “remaining silent about all that”.

സത്യങ്ങളോടു മറുതലിപ്പാൻ “to contradict the truths”.

ഇത കാസം എന്നിൽനിന്നു കടക്കട്ടെ “*transeat a me calix iste*”.

5) Word-compounds like the following which denote religious ideas and which therefore may have been specially coined :

ഹൃദയമേഖലി “tenderness of heart”.

ചാവുദോഷം “mortal sin.”

മെലത്യാഹങ്കാരം “mad self-love” “*superbia*”.

ഗുണവധികാരം “*probitas*”.

ദോഷപൊരുതി “forgiveness of sins”.

മൈവേ ഉഴഴിയം “work for the lord”.

പെളുസകഥകൾ “open stories”.<sup>1</sup>

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1. It may be noted here that the word-stock of this book is, as only to be expected, that of the Christians of south Cochin and north Travancore. Many words which I have listed in my paper on the “language of 18th century Malayalam prose written by Christians” appear in this book also. Old forms like വേണുപതില്ല, പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്നേൻ, തോന്നാത്താൻ, ചെല്ലാരോ, രക്ഷിക്കയും ആം also occur. All these must have been survivals in the Christian dialect.

## III.

The other work which I want to advert to here is a grammar of Malayalam written in Latin and published probably about 1903. There is no title-page in the copy that I possess; and the name of the author is also unknown. Apparently, the book was intended for missionaries who wished to study Malayalam; and I may state at once that the book abundantly fulfills this purpose despite mistakes and wrong etymologies.

The sounds and the grammatical features of Malayalam are viewed here through the Latinistic standpoint. Malayalam sounds are compared to those of Spanish, Italian and Latin (as spoken by the missionaries). The grammatical categories are cast into Latin moulds. The explanations are all made with reference to Latin (or Spanish), and some of the passages composed by the author for illustrating his propositions are examples of typical "missionary" Malayalam.

At the same time, there is no doubt that the author has studied Malayalam with some care, since he mentions or interprets unique Malayalam features like the following :

the "palatalised" ഞ ;

the "neutral" vowel occurring as finals of nouns and of conjunctive participles, and also as the unaccented varieties of *a* in medial positions of words ;

the change of *a* to *e* in the radical syllables of Sanskrit loans with initial ഴ, ഺ, ഻, ി, റ, റ, and ;

the opening out of *i* to *e* (as in ഹരി) and of *u* to *o* (as in കരം);

the colloquial assimilation of alveolar റ to a റ്റ nasal before ഴ, ഺ, ഻, ി in external സന്ധി ;

the "nasal" assimilation in Malayalam ഞ and ഞ.

the value of *l* for Sanskrit *l* in റ ;

the qualificatory ഞ, (which, however, is wrongly marked off as "ഞ");

the old Malayalam negatives like ഞ and ഞ, which "*viz in praxi utuntur*";

- the old use of  $\text{ഈ}$ , as in  $\text{ചെയ്തിലുമാം ചെയ്യായിലുമാം}$  ;
- the reference to the exotic character of the passive voice in Malayalam ;
- the "habitual" meaning of the future tense with  $\text{ഉം}$  ;
- the clear description of the relative pronouns ;
- the use in Malayalam of the tense with  $\text{ഉം}$ , preceded by forms having final restrictive  $\text{എ}$ .

In view of these features, there is little doubt that the grammar would surely have served the practical purpose of introducing Malayalam to European missionaries.

There was a period in the history of the languages of Europe, when the scholars (who were in those days Latinists) had the tendency to saddle European 'vernaculars' indiscriminately "with the elaborate Latin system of tenses and moods". Jespersen observes that "by means of such Procrustean methods the actual facts of many languages were distorted and misrepresented; discriminations which had no foundation in reality were insisted on, while discriminations which were non-existent in Latin were apt to be overlooked".

The Sanskritists of Kerala have similarly tried to measure Malayalam grammar by the pattern of Sanskrit; for instance, the  $\text{സാഹസ്രബന്ധം}$  invents equivalents in Malayalam for the  $\text{ഭാവപ്രയോഗ}$  construction, and gives the illustration  $\text{പുരകംശികളാലിഹ കൂടെയന്നുള്ളതാണ്}$ . Again it regards  $\text{സൂര്യൻ കർക്കരകനിലുംവിത്തയത്തിൽ}$  as a locative absolute in Malayalam !

The adoption of a foreign grammatical terminology or scheme of classification need not by itself vitiate the usefulness of a book, if the fundamental features of the language concerned are analysed faithfully and minutely. It is when the important features of a language are ignored or misrepresented or neglected as unimportant, on account of the foreign outlook, that the treatment lays itself open to criticism. It may be said that for Malayalam, and for Dravidian in general, neither the terminologies nor the methods of grammatical





The values of Malayalam sounds are given in terms of those of the sounds of Latin, Spanish or Italian. ച' for instance, is "cia italicum, cha hispanum, suave;" ഞ "profertur attracta retrorsum lingua, ita tamen ut g vix audiatur;" ഞ is "gn italicum;" ഞ "pronuntiatur inversa retrorsum lingua, fere adeo ut interiorem palati summitatem attingat, siccum sonitum producendo;" ഞ "ut ha anglicum et ja hispanicum;" and so on.

The parts of speech are (following the orthodox classifications of Europe) marked off as Nouns, Adjectives, Pronouns, Verbs, Adverbs, Postpositions (in the stead of Prepositions), Conjunctions and Interjections.

Among the "cases" of nouns, four "ablatives" are distinguished, viz., the types of ചതുവിനം, ചതുവനം, ചതുവിക and ചതുവികനം. The instrumental and the locative are included in ablatives (according to the method of Latin grammars.)

"Adjectiva explicita" are forms like സന്തോഷമുള്ള, പിന്നെ, ഇന്നലെ, ചൊൽ (in ചൊൽപാത്രം), ആറ് (in ആറുവെള്ളം), etc.— "Adjectiva abbreviata" are ഇ in ഇളനീർ and in കറച്ചി, etc.— And then there are also "Adjectiva attributiva" and "Adjectiva praedicativa."

Categories galore appear in the section on verbs : primitive verbs and derivative verbs, transitives, intransitives, auxiliaries, actives, passives, causals, intensives, composites, defectives, irregulars, the strong ("firma") and the weak ("infirma") are some of these.

The "moods" are the indicative, the imperative, the infinitive and the subjunctive (1) Malayalam constructions corresponding to the Latin supine, gerundials and participles are marked off, and conversely Malayalam participles are translated into Latin.

Simple, progressive and concreative (as in ചൊക്കയാകുന്നു) varieties are distinguished for the Malayalam present tense. The past tense has three varieties: the imperfect (ചൊല്ലേണ്ടിരുന്നു or ചൊക്കയാകുന്നു), the perfect (with its three sub-divisions: remote, proximate and progressive) and the pluperfect.

"Potentiales, impotentiales, necessariae, innecessariae, praeceptivales, prohibitivales, precativae, intentionales, habituales, dubitativae, praesentiales, temporales, honorificae",— these are "modal" forms of verbs!

And then there are "completives" and "explicatives" among "intensives".

While it may be granted that the author has succeeded in explaining some of the important features of Malayalam grammar, his Latinistic outlook has had a "cramping" effect on the treatment of a number of other features.<sup>1</sup>

1. Forms like ഇനിക്കു, കൈയുടെ, കൈക്കൽ, കതിരേ (vocative), തങ്ങ (vocative) കരച്ചിൽ, പറച്ചിൽ, താങ്ങാങ്ങു and imperatives like വിളി, എഴു, കൊടു show that the language on which this grammar is based is the "dialect" current among Christians of south Cochin and north Travancore.

Illustrations like the following reflect the "Latinistic outlook: അവൻ എന്തെല്ലാമിട്ടു ചെയ്തു "Ille doluit de me".

നിന്റെ രാജ്യം വരേണം "Adveniat regnum tuum".

നാം പോകട്ടെ "Eamus" (for normal ഞങ്ങൾ പോകട്ടെ or നമുക്കു പോകാം.)

ഞങ്ങളുടെ ഇന്നത്തെ അപ്പം ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് തരണമേ "Panem nostram quotidianum da nobis hodie"

ഞാൻ ദൈവത്തിൽ വിശ്വസിക്കുന്നു "Confido in deo".

There are gaps and mistakes like the following: Among the sounds, the difference between dental റ് and alveolar റ has not been noted; the sound of റ is not exactly 'fere ട'; Sanskrit compounds are mentioned in the section on Malayalam സംസ്കൃതം: പോകുമ്പോൾ is wrongly split up into പോകും and അല്ലാതെ; the 'radix' of പറയുക is not പറ; പറഞ്ഞു is not the "emphatic" form of പറ; etc.

Some of the "etymologies" are unhappy: റ of രാജാവു is not an 'affix'; ഇള of ഇളൻ cannot be "derived" from ഇളയ which is not the "forma integra"; ആളൻ of പുണ്യവാളൻ is wrongly isolated as വാളൻ; the ഊ in അപൂർവ്വ is not the modification of അ of അയ്; എന്നി should be split up into എന്ന് and ഇ; to derive കൊൽ from കൊയ് is to put the cart before the horse; ആണ as in "എന്റെ അച്ഛനാണ്" should not be confused with ആണ്, though sometimes ആണ (ultimately from ആണ്) is pronounced as ആണ് in Malayalam; it is wrong to say that there are no impersonal verbs in Malayalam, as instances like മിന്നി, ഇടിച്ചു fall under this category; and so on.