

The Criminal Tribes

OF THE

MADRAS PRESIDENCY

22828

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THIS BOOK
IS
BY PERMISSION
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.
BY
HIS OBEDIENT SERVANT
THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.

In the compilation of these notes which are for the most part variorum, I lay no claim to any originality. I have derived considerable help from the standard works of Messrs. Papa Rao Naidu Garu, Mullaly, Kennedy, Gayer, Thurston and others, and I offer my thanks to these recognised authorities. The following notes are intended to present, in a compact and convenient form, the most distinguishing and prominent characteristics of the criminal classes that infest this presidency. A single standard book giving apt information, free from unnecessary and confusing details, is not available. Nor can the busy young police officer well afford to spare so much time as to consult all the voluminous standard books which treat of certain classes only. The notes, therefore, are calculated to supply a long-felt want. They originally formed a series of lectures delivered to the cadets under training in the Provincial Police Training School, Vellore; but, at the special request of Mr. T. K. Sundara Iyer, Editor of the *Illustrated Criminal Investigation*, Vellore, they were also published in the columns of his journal, for the benefit of young police officers outside the school. Acting on the advice of my patrons and well-wishers, I have undertaken to publish the notes in a book-form with a view to extending their sphere of utility.

I beg to acknowledge my deep debt of gratitude to the Government who, in G. O. No. 380 Mis., Educational, dated the 9th April 1915, placed the blocks of illustrations used in Mr. Thurston's "Caste and Tribes of Southern India" at my disposal, and thus greatly encouraged me in bringing out the book.

I take this opportunity of according my sincere thanks to Mr. E. J. Rowlandson for rendering me all possible help in the preparation of the book, and to Messrs. G. H. Bernays and L. Withinshaw for not only furnishing me with materials on certain tribes, but also encouraging me in my arduous work.

To my younger brother Muhammad Abdul Jabbar Saheb, who kindly looked over the proof-sheets, my thanks are also due.

P.T.S., VELLORE, }
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MHD. ABDUL GHANI.

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A KORAVA.

NOTES

ON

The Criminal Tribes of the Madras Presidency.

CHAPTER I.

Koravars, Korachas, Yerukalas, Kaikadees.

1. **Name, origin, habitat.** This criminal nomad tribe of Tamil origin permeates the length and breadth of this vast peninsula assuming different names in different localities. In the Madras Presidency the members of the fraternity are known as Koravas (fortune-tellers) from the extreme south up to the North Arcot, Nellore and Cuddapah districts, Korachas (corruption of Korava) in the North Arcot and the Ceded districts, and Yerukalas (sooth-sayers from *eruka* to prophesy) in the Northern Circars and the Nizam's Dominions. They are known as Kaikadees in the Central Provinces, Guzarat, Bombay, Rajputana, and Central India. In Calcutta where they are quack doctors they disguise themselves as Maharattas or Hindus of high social order. In Cuttack, Puri, Balasore and Midnapur they pose themselves as specialists in the treatment of fistulas and piles. Some of them are found in Ahmedabad, Patna, Bombay, Secunderabad and other places. The Koravars of the Madras Presidency pass themselves as Vellalabs and Agambadiars with the title of Pillai, and in Sermadevi, Tinnevely district, they go by the name of Sairvaikars. Sir Harold Stuart, Mr. Francis and all other recognized authorities on the subject are unanimous in admitting that the names Korava, Koracha and

Yerukala are synonymous and that these classes should therefore be treated as belonging to the same tribe. For criminal purposes we should treat them as members of the same fraternity. But the Census Superintendent of 1909 shows Yerukalas separately from Koravas. The Koracha is admitted on all hands to be the same as the Korava, and no doubt is entertained about their identity. The identity of the Koravas with the Yerukalas will be disposed of if the Koracha and the Yerukala are proved to be identically the same. It is true that there is an exact likeness as well as an apparent difference between the Koravas and the Yerukalas. "Both castes," says Mr. Francis, "are wandering gypsies, both live by basket-making and fortune-telling, both speak a corrupt Tamil, and both may have sprung from one original stock. It is noteworthy in this connection that the Yerukalas are said to call one another *Kurru* or *Kura*." But they do not intermarry or eat together. The Yerukalas use a tali made of black beads as a substitute for the Korava tali which is a piece of thread soaked in turmeric water. The Koravas worship Subramania while the Yerukalas worship Vishnu. The Koravas sell or mortgage their wives when necessity arises, but the Yerukalas are particular about the reputation of their womankind. But on the authorities of Wilson, Campbell, Brown and others the divergencies of practices referred to may be accounted for as being due to local customs, extraneous influences of environments and circumstances to which they are subjected on account of their living in widely separated areas. They are undoubtedly the same race.

The original home of the Koravas was in the south whence they migrated to the north. They carried on pack bullocks or donkeys, salt and grain from the sea-coast towns into the interior and returned with forest produce of the interior, such as tamarind, jaggery, leaves of curry leaf plant (*Murraya Konigii*). They followed their trade till the advent of the railways in India brought about the decadence and final destruction of their trade. They left their southern home for fresh fields. With the loss of their trade, they ceased to be honest folk, but betook themselves

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YERUKALAS.

to a criminal career characterized by commission of thefts, burglaries, robberies, dacoities and other grave offences against property throughout India.

2. Divisions according to sects, gotras. The Koravars fall within the following divisions :—

ACCORDING TO MULLALY.	ACCORDING TO MR. MAINWARING.
(a) Do not intermarry. { 1. <i>Kavadi</i> —Because they carry a (Superior) pole on the shoulders with two baskets hanging one on each side containing offerings to Tirupati temple. 2. <i>Wooyaloo</i> —Because they swing their offerings before the god Perumall.	1. Kavadi or Gujjala (bell).
(b) Do not intermarry. { 3. <i>Manebady</i> —Because they are the fit persons to sing before the god. 4. <i>Manrikutti</i> —stich. Because they stich shoes to the Mol. 5. <i>Sathupadi</i> —because they decorate the idol with (Superior) flowers, jewels and vestments. 6. <i>Bandy</i> — Because they drag the temple car.	{ 2. Devarakonda, Mendrakutt or Menapadi. 3. Sakai, Sampathi, Sathupadi.
N. B.—1 and 2 cannot intermarry, nor do the members of 3, 4, 5, 6. But 3, 4, 5, 6 can intermarry into 1 and 2.	N. B.—Members of 1 and 2 are pure Koravas, the legitimate descendants of Koravas who have never married outside the caste, whereas 3 represents and includes the mixed marriages and offspring thereof.

Mr. Fawcett points out that a knowledge of the house or sept names (*inteperu*) is very useful to the Police in order to establish a Koravar's identity. A Korava generally gives one name to the Police, another to the Committing Magistrate, and a third to the Sessions Judge. He will be known by one name in one place and by totally different names in different places infested by him. In fact his aliases are legions. It is impossible to trace his previous convictions by his names. "A Korava," says Mr. Fawcett, "who is generally untruthful as to his own name, is seldom if ever so as regards his house or sect name, and

his father's name. He considers it shameful to lie about his parentage, *to be born to one and yet give out the name of another.*" Mr. Thurston gives the following *intepurus* or sept names as given by Uppu Yerukalas :—

Dasari, mendicant.	Mogili,	(<i>Pandanus fascicularis</i>).
Sukka, star.	Uyyala,	swing.
Avula, bush of thorns.	Ragala,	ragi grain.
Thoka, tail.	Pula,	flowers.
Kanaga, (<i>Pongamia glabra</i>).	Katara,	dagger.
Bandi, cart.	Ambojala,	lotus.
Gajjala, small bell.	Venkatagiri,	a town.

Mr. Paupa Rao Naidu gives the following additional names :—

Mekala, Maramase, Mota, Devara, Bochu, Malle, Pecta, Salla, Gogula, Goddeti, Garika, Kothi, Ponna, Katta, Kampa. These house names are found in all the *gotrams* throughout Madras, Bombay, Central India, Rajputana, Central Provinces and other places where Koravars are met with.

In each of the gangs there are usually many distinct families or *gotrams*.

3. Division according to profession. They are sub-divided as follows :—

1. *Uppu, Bidar or Kavadi Koravars* (salt) were the nomad Koravars who originally carried merchandise in the form of salt, tamarind, jaggery, leaves of the curry leaf plant (*Murraya Konigii*) from place to place on packbullocks or donkeys like the Lumbadees. They were employed for transport purposes by Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan. After the introduction of the Railways, they were reduced to poverty. They are now one of the *very worst criminal classes* infesting all parts of the Madras Presidency, but chiefly to be found in the Ceded Districts, Chittoore, Salem, Coimbatore, South Arcot, North Arcot, and Tanjore districts. Their gangs have been traced in Bombay, Raichur, Lingsugur and Manvi taluks of the Nizam's Dominions, and Central Provinces.

2. *Karuwepalai (curry stuff leaf) Koravars* move about from place to place selling leaves of curry leaf plant (*Murraya Konigii*). This class is considered in some places as the worst lot of highway robbers and dacoits.

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A KORAVA WOMAN TELLING FORTUNE.

3. & 4. *Dhubbai* (split bamboo) and *Koodaikatti* (basket-making) Koravars make bamboo tatties, wicker baskets, mats, basket ropes, rope nets, slings, brooms, brushes and other articles of domestic use. They permanently settle themselves in towns, and sometimes possess lands. From their intimate knowledge of the locality, they are in a better position to commit thefts, to dispose of stolen property and to harbour in and furnish information to other Korava gangs. Their affluence is entirely due to the criminal part they play.

5. *Kavalkar Koravars* who are entirely confined to the south, are employed as village watchers like the Kallars of Madura, Trichinopoly and Tinnevely.

6. *Pachchaikuththi, Gadde Koravars*.—In this class the women go about from house to house proclaiming their ostensible profession of tattooing and fortune-telling. The males beg in villages dragging with them a monkey. In telling fortunes, they use a winnowing fan and grains of rice or cowries and prophesy good or evil according to the number of grains found on the fan. The women in their professional rounds carefully study all the ins and outs of houses and communicate the information to their criminal male members who commit burglaries. They move in gangs committing crimes. 2162

7. *Kunchu Koravars* are excellent shikaries (hunters), and snare antelope, partridge, duck, quail, and other game with great skill. They make brushes of fibre and straw, snares, and nets. Mr. Thurston considers this class and the Patchaikutti as the same; for the women in both the classes do tattooing.

8. *Kallu Koravars* (stone) mend grinding stones and work as coolies on roads. They are like Wodders, very dangerous criminals. They toil all day and commit burglaries and dacoities during nights.

9. *Koot Kaikarees* who are found both in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies obtain their living by dancing and prostitution of their women. They kidnap or sell children for the purpose. They are thieves and pickpockets. 1

10. *Pamula Koravars* follow the calling of snake charmers.

4. Appearance, dress.

(i) *Men*.—They can be readily identified if they are not in disguises which they employ very frequently. The men are dirty-looking objects, and their persons stink awfully as they rarely bathe. There is nothing distinct in their physiognomy, and they are of medium height, well-developed body, fleet of foot, quick of vision, active habits and possess great power of endurance. Their dress is very scanty, a piece of loin cloth or a langootee and a dirty head cloth completing their outfit. In the Deccan, the men dress in a dhoti or short trousers reaching to the knee, a shirt, a shoulder cloth, and a Maharatta turban or rumal. Well-to-do members and heads of gangs wear silver waistcords and bangles (kappus) for the wrists. A "Joochi" or cloth round the loins and a bag called the "Vadi sanchi" made of striped cloth complete the toilet. A characteristic of the Koravars, which is well-marked, is their hairlessness. They have plenty of straight hair of the head, but their bodies are particularly smooth. "Even the pubic hairs," says Thurston "are scanty, abdominal hairs are abundant only in a few instances." The hairs of the head are tied in a top knot. Both men and women are profusely tattooed. They alter, enlarge or modify their tattoos after each conviction to baffle identification. Many Koravars examined by Mr. Mainwaring were found injured in one way or another. They give plausible reasons to explain their bodily defect.

(ii) *Women*.—They wear a coarse black *sare* and a *ravikay* (bodice) which is fastened across the bosom, and not like the Lumbadies, at the back. They wear necklaces of shells and cowries mixed with beads and corals in several rows hanging low down on their bosom. Their favourite jewels are brass bangles of various shapes which they wear from the wrist to the elbow. They wear brass, lead and silver rings of very rough make on all their fingers except the middle one. Cowri pendants are attached to their betel bags and other bags in which they conceal stolen property. Their women, when using stolen cloths, remove the borders to destroy all marks of identification.

5. Headmen or Naicks. Korava society is purely patriarchal, and the leader of a gang, who is called 'Naick' "Pedda" or 'Periyā manusan,' is held in great estimation. He is selected principally because of his age, intelligence, and the influence he commands amongst the members of the gang. He presides at all consultations and panchayats, and is given the position of honor at all social functions. He is usually a jail-bird and an expert in crime and plans all campaigns though their executions are entrusted to other members. He gets a full share of the booty though he does not accompany his men or take an active part in a crime ; and when he does, he is given a double share. He is bound to obtain the release of any of his gang should he get into trouble, and in return for the Naick's services, even innocent members of a gang would undertake to go to jail by their own confession only to save him. The Naick takes care of the wives and children of the persons who are in jail during their absence.

6. Settlement of caste disputes. Concerning caste government, Mr. Fawcett says that "the *Kulm* or caste assembly adjudicates claim, inflicts fines and ejects individuals from caste, or re-admits them thereto. Free drinking of toddy at the expense of one of the parties accompanies every caste assembly. It is the aggrieved party who gives notice for assembly of the *Kulm*." The decision is sometimes arrived at by means of an ordeal. A new pot is filled with boiling oil or ghee and a coin or ring is thrown into it. The suspected person is then directed to take it out. His innocence or guilt is determined by his readiness or refusal to take up the coin. Another method is often resorted to. An equal quantity of rice is placed in two pots of equal weight having a quantity of water, and there is an equal quantity of firewood. The man whose rice boils first is declared to be the winner in the dispute. The *Kulm* has nothing to do with planning the execution of offences which are done by Naicks only ; but that body engages vakils for defending members of the gang and settles disputes arising out of the division of plunder. The causes of quarrels, writes Mullaly, afford to the Police an important

guide in the investigation of crime. Quarrels may take place on account of non-payment of bride's money by the bridegroom's party, particularly when the latter has obtained a big haul in a crime. Division of stolen property, quarrels about women, dissatisfaction with the Naick and the betrayal of a fellow Koraver, are fruitful sources of their quarrels. The Police can take advantage of these quarrels to obtain useful information.

7. Marriages. The moral code is very slack with the Koravars. Polygamy is practised, there being no limit to the number of wives. Widow marriages are freely indulged in. 'In the North Arcot District, the Koravars', says Mr. Thurston, 'are said to mortgage their unmarried daughters, who become the absolute property of the mortgagee till the debt is discharged. The same practice exists in Chingleput and Tanjore. In Madras, the Koravars sell their wives outright when they want money. In Nellore and other districts, they all purchase their wives.' During the absence of her husband in jail, a Korava woman selects another temporary husband, and on the return of the former she goes to him with the new children obtained by the second. The marriage tie is not sacred. A wife can discard her husband as easily as the latter can the former.

8. Superstition, omens, belief. The Koravars are extremely superstitious, and take careful notice of good and bad omens before they start on a criminal expedition. They hold a feast at which the assistance of the goddess Kolapuriamma or Perumal or Moothavi is sought. A goat with coloured thread attached to its horns and a garland of margosa leaves with a piece of turmeric round its neck is placed before the deity and cocoanuts are broken. If the body of the animal quivers when water is poured over it, it is a good omen and the criminal expedition will be successful; but if it does not, the expedition will be abandoned. If in addition to quivering the animal urinates, no better sign could be hoped for. Sometimes a fowl is sacrificed at the shrine and the direction from which the chirping of lizards is noted. Sometimes they place bricks or stones under a Nim (Margosa) tree smearing them with yellow.

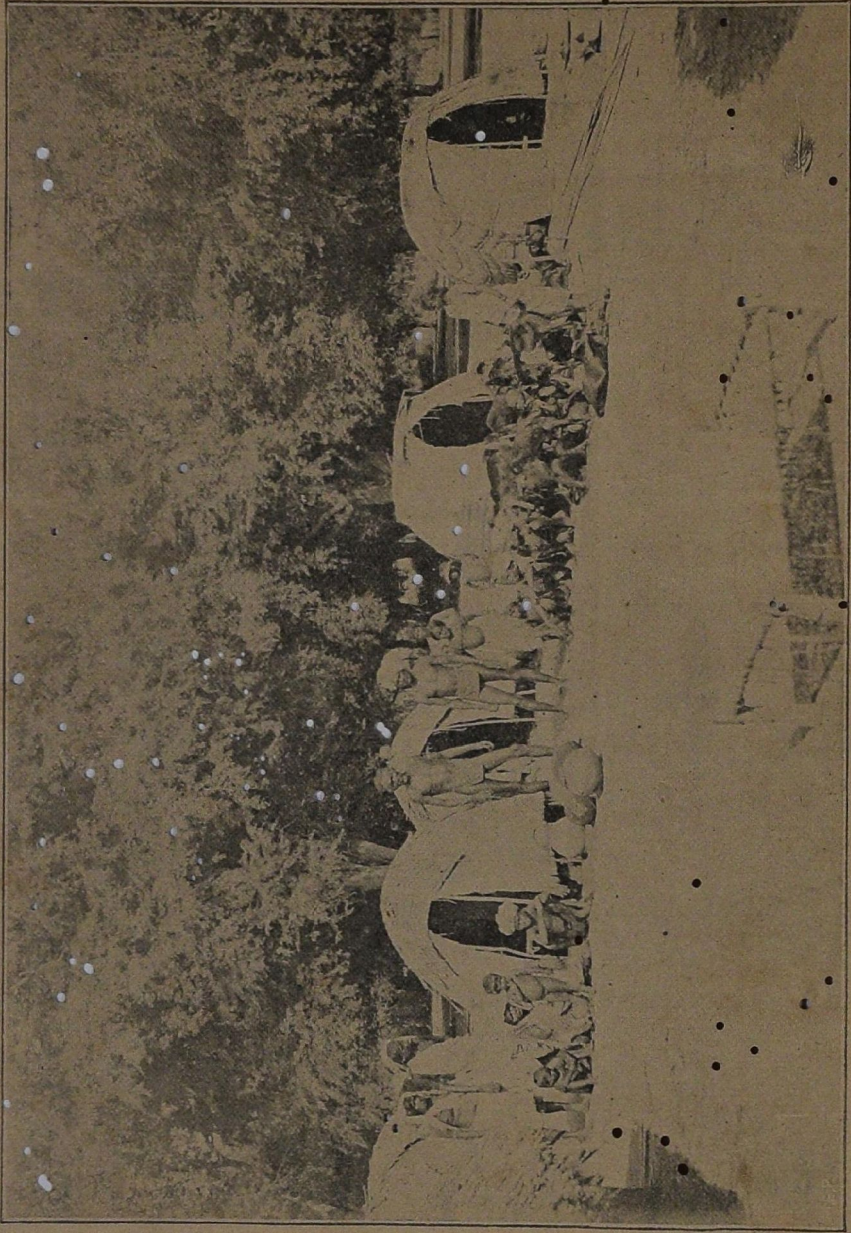
and red stuffs and offer cocoanuts, camphor and incense. The signs of recent performance of worship may prove an indication to the police that they have been concerned in a dacoity, and act as a clue to the detection thereof. It was an information of this ceremony having been performed which led to the detection of a torchlight dacoity, which took place in a komati's house in the Cuddapah District in 1896. It is unfortunate, when starting, to see widows, pots of milk, dogs urinating, a man leading a bull, or a bull bellowing, a snake or mangoose crossing the road, a red crow (Malabar pheasant) flying across the path, etc. To see a man goading a bull is a good omen when starting, and a bad one at the scene. Sprinkling urine over doors and walls of a house facilitates breaking into it. They sometimes solder the tip of their house-breaking implement with panchalokam (five metals) to counteract the effect of evil eye. If an expedition is abandoned and the party returns to encamp and there sees the above omens, it is considered lucky and the enterprize is promptly taken up. The Koravars, like other wandering tribes, avoid pitching a camp within the shade of the thandra tree (*Terminalia belikica*), in which the spirit of Saneswaradu is believed to reside. The number seven is considered ominous, and expedition never consists of seven men. A man who has returned from jail, or who has been newly married, is not as a rule taken on an expedition. A man who forgets to bring his stick, or to equip or arm himself properly, is always left behind. The eighteenth day of the Tamil month Avani is the luckiest day of all for committing crimes. A successful criminal exploit on this day ensures good luck throughout the year. Sundays are inauspicious days for crimes. Monday, Wednesday and Saturday are unlucky until noon for starting out from home. So, too, is the day after the new moon. Fridays are unsuitable for breaking into the houses of Brahmans. They avoid committing crimes on the new-moon or full-moon days. They should not enter a house by the front door, unless this is unavoidable, and, if they must so enter it, they must not leave by the same way. If they enter by the back door, they depart by the front door,

which they leave wide open. They should not commit robbery in a house, in which they have partaken of rice and curds. Curds always require salt, and eating salt is equivalent to taking the oath of fealty according to their code of honor. They ease themselves in the house in which they have committed a theft, in order, it is said, to render the pursuit of them unsuccessful.

9. Dietary. They eat any kind of food. Cats, fowls, fish, pigs, monkeys, jackals, field rats, deer, antelope, goats and sheep are their chief articles of dietary. They avoid eating cattle or buffaloes, and refrain from taking their food in the presence of barbers, washermen, carpenters, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, parayans, and chucklers. They drink heavily before proceeding on a depredation, and at their social gatherings liquor in profusion must be supplied by the disputants. Korava panchayets are always held at toddy shops. A clever detective can gather much useful information from such toddy shops.

10. Korava Gangs. Some Koravas have permanently settled themselves on the outskirts of villages. Their huts are circular with a middle pole supporting a sloping thatch roof which rests on a wall one yard in height all round. Some of them occupy pukka houses in a row in a village along with the houses of other villagers. Mullaly gives the description of a 'semi-permanent' hut which they build in their permanent settlements. This hut is a low round one roofed with palmyra leaves, with plaited nine strands, the entrance being half closed. These permanently settled Koravas do not commit any crime in the neighbourhood of their villages, and a close friendship and familiarity exists between them and other ryots of the village, so much so that even the village-heads always do not hesitate to speak to their honest means of livelihood. Police officers must not be deluded by the glowing testimony of these village officers as to the character of these dangerous criminals. In some places the village-heads encourage these Koravars to settle themselves in a place, only to receive stolen property from them. The wandering Koravars use small pals or tents called "*Bishakolu gudisays*" or moveable huts of an oblong or

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YERUKALA SETTLEMENT.

circular shape made of bamboo frames and date or palmyra mats thrown over them. They are portable and can be taken from place to place. It is a very important point to note that in Koravar gangs you will always find women and children, for they always travel with them. Women and children are taken even to places where they plan to commit depredations. These itinerant gangs always meet at a place both before and after committing a crime. They do not travel in cold and rainy seasons. In each gang there are many distinct families or Gotrams. Each has its family name. Men frequently change from gang to gang. The members of different clans or gotrams, who in other matters have nothing in common with each other, join in the commission of crimes. Koravars join with other criminal classes also for the commission of crime. They usually, encamping on the borders of one district, go long distances into the adjoining district and commit crime there and then recross the border to their encampment with great rapidity. They do not commit crimes near the places where they halt. The way in which members carry on communication with one another is very ingenious. Detached parties in the jungle or elsewhere are able to unite by making sounds like the howling of jackals or hooting of owls. The direction taken on a road or in the forest, is indicated by throwing the leaves of *tangedu* along the road or by rows of stones piled one over the other. At cross roads, the road taken is indicated by the thick end of a twig of *tangedu* placed under a stone. Each gang has its own jurisdiction for purposes of crime, and it invariably refrains from committing depredations within the jurisdiction of another. The breach of this obligation leads to constant quarrels among themselves.

11. Disguises. The Koravas disguise themselves as Kep-maries, Alagiris or Pujaris. They travel by trains in the disguise of Lingayets with lingams on their neck. The Korava is an adept in assuming various disguises. In fairs and festivals they disguise themselves as rich Zamindars with a large retinue.

They will act their part so well that pilgrims are taken in. A Korava was found in a Muhammadan costume.

12. Stock-in-trade. The instrument employed by the Koravars for committing house-breaking is the "Silloo Kolu" or "Gadi Kolu," which is an iron implement steel-tipped and pointed at both end, one end fitting into a handle. It varies in length, averaging about a foot long. Every member provides himself with his own "Silloo Kolu," which before starting on a depredation, is offered to god Perumal. Some Koravars employ augers to bore holes in the door near the bolt. The bolt is pushed aside by means of fingers passed through the hole. A bunch of false keys, a match-box, bits of candles, a small bag of sand and curved iron rods complete their kit. For dacoity they employ clubs, stones and slings. They even employ occasionally a sword or an old-fashioned gun. They take clubs from their own houses or cut branches of trees for the purpose from a jungle in the vicinity of the scene of crime. Even axes are taken for breaking open doors and trunks. According to Thurston, most Koravars possess knives and a kind of bill-hook, called Koduwal, which is a sort of compromise between a sword and a sickle. Sometimes both men and women conceal in their mouth small knives, which they employ for cutting the jewels off the neck of their victims in crowds.

13. Modus Operandi. The Koravars are the daring and relentless criminals of India who regard crime as their hereditary profession. They are taught from their very infancy to commit crime, and the early discipline of their boys and girls is so rigorous that, if they exhibit any clumsiness in committing theft and picking pockets, they are very severely thrashed. They are also schooled from their infancy to deny everything asked of them by the villagers or officers. They are taught the different methods of stealing, and the easiest way of getting into various kinds of houses. When a child is caught red-handed, he will never reveal his identity by giving his name. If a boy or girl refuses or shows any reluctance to carry away the bundles of any unwary traveller, he or she is whipped and refused any meal

for the day. So every woman and child of a Korava gang is an adept criminal. Koravars commit petty thefts, sheep and cattle thefts, theft of other kinds, house-breakings, robberies and dacoities of every kind. Boys and girls frequent weekly markets and fairs. A girl aged 12 years captured at the weekly market of Oregam had a small knife in her cheeks. They are further addicted to passing of brass jewels for gold ones and to cheating by the "confidence" trick. Koravars commit thefts at weekly markets, fairs, festivals, bathing ghats or other gatherings.

(i) *Thefts*:—Whenever a gang encamps in a place the members pilfer grain or some agricultural produce from standing crop, granaries and threshing floor on the pretext of being engaged in some innocent occupation close by or of going to these places for easing themselves. The fowl-stealing is a speciality with them. A Korava quietly sitting at a distance from a fowl pretending to make water will throw rice slowly in front of the bird without scaring it. Shortening the distance at each throw till the bird comes very close to the hand, he catches it by the neck. Sometimes they use a twine with a piece of flesh attached at one end and allow the fowl to swallow not only the piece of flesh but also a sufficient length of the twine. Mr. Thurston mentions the case of a Korava who stole the fowl from the house of a missionary gentleman and sold the same to his butler immediately without being caught. They very skilfully manage to commit cattle and sheep thefts. They usually drive away the stray cattle far away from the flock and take them to distant places and sell them. This will be done only by a few members of the gang, but the others will either remain at the same place or gradually change camp in the diametrically opposite direction to avert suspicion of the villagers. When a flock of sheep is grazing in shrubby jungle or in mountainous places, a Korava will, without the knowledge of the shepherd, crawl to the unfortunate animal grazing solitarily at a distance and tie the animal's legs to the shrub there, driving a date or a big babool thorn into the drawn tongue of the ani-

mal to prevent it from bleeting. When the flock passes off in the evening, the Korava will remove his booty from the place. In big towns the Koravars carry away clothes hung up in front of houses for being dried. They will perform this operation with so much pretences and so much grace and ease that passers-by would understand that the owner was himself removing them. There have been numerous cases in which small boys and girls, women and males have slyly entered into open houses during broad daylight and removed without the knowledge of the inmates, vessels and other small things lying in the front court-yards.

(ii) *House-breakings* :—The Koravars are the experts in the art of committing house-breaking, and no criminal class of India has yet been known to excel this class of hereditary burglars. They entertain no high opinion as to the capability of other class in this branch of trade, and so they very rarely allow criminals of other classes to be their partners in the perpetration of this crime. The hole bored in the wall by a Korava can be readily recognized by its excellent finish and superior workmanship. It will be clean cut, circular, with clean edges and exactly big enough to admit a man to pass through. The hole is bored in the wall either on level with the floor or below the door sill. Sometimes they bore a very small hole in the wall near the door frame by the side of the bolt or latch. The door is opened by passing the hand through the hole and drawing aside the bolt or latch. In places where mud terraced roofs are found the entry is effected into the house by means of a hole bored in the roof. Having previously obtained information as to the topography of the place through women who go about hawking their wares or soothsaying or tattooing, and personally verified the information, the head man despatches the required number of persons armed with sticks, sickles and sikkookole, their favourite house-breaking implement, for the offence. Only one man first enters into the house through the hole and opens either the front or back door for effecting escape in case of danger. He with one more to assist him will

ransack the house and bring property outside and hand it over to those standing outside. They will remove it to some distant place. Some will be posted at a distance to give alarm on the approach of any danger. When any of their comrades is caught, all will rally to his aid and will even commit murder to save him. It is only on such occasions that burglary culminates into murder. Sometimes they insert a stick with a cum-bly wrapped up in the shape of a turban at the end with a view to finding out whether any inmates of the home are on the alert. In some cases you will find the hole to be very small. You must not conclude that no entrance was effected. In these cases small boys first enter through the hole and open doors for the elders. It was observed in some places that very old and infirm people of the age of 70 or 80 or young boys or girls of about 6 or 7 years concealed themselves quietly towards dusk in the corners of houses and some secluded parts of them and opened the door for the burglars at dead of night at a given signal. When caught lurking in the house by the inmates they pretended lunacy or gave some plausible excuse. It has already been noticed that Koravars sprinkle urine over the wall before boring the hole, and afterwards pass stools near the hole. Sometimes burnt matches and candle pieces are found near the hole. In order to find out exact places where wooden boxes and metallic vessels are kept, they throw a small quantity of sand in the house in different directions. The sound produced by sand coming in contact with various things will indicate their position. Another method of committing burglary is to bore holes in the door near the bolt by means of an auger and push aside the bolt by inserting fingers through the holes thus bored. When a hole is not sufficiently near the bolt, other holes are attempted till success is achieved. False keys and long iron-hooked rods are also employed for opening pad-locks.

(iii) *Robbery* :—Highway robberies are generally committed on roads leading from places where important weekly markets, fairs and festivals are held. Concealing themselves in bushes, under bridges and other hiding places by the side of the

road, Koravars would pounce upon unwary travellers who go single or in very small batches and remove any property on which they could lay their hands—not scrupling to remove paltry things even. Like vultures they are so impatient and hasty in the removal of things that they sometimes fail to remove valuable property about their victims or thrown away near the places to be picked up conveniently afterwards. House robberies are also committed by Koravars, and Mr. Thurston makes mention of two cases. A Yerukala in the Cuddapah District suddenly snatched up the sleeping woman by the massive gold earrings she wore, with so much violence as to lift up the woman, and in such a way as to wrench off the lobe of the ear. This trick he repeated in three different hamlets of the same village on one night, and in one house on two women. Sometimes Koravas lurk outside the house before dawn and snatch the jewels of women who come out of the house, as is the custom, to sweep the outside pial or sprinkle cowdung water. Koravas have been known to make a grab at the tali or other neck ornament of a woman as she brings a handful of rice to be put in the pot of the begging. Korava who goes from door to door, on dark nights, crying “Sandi bichcham, Amma, Sandi bichcham ” (night alms, mother, night alms).

(iv) *Dacoity* :—Koravars commit house dacoities, road dacoities, field dacoities, sheep and cattle dacoities. Their dacoities are always characterized by severe violence offered to their victims who sometimes die from the effects of injuries received by them. The injuries received by the victims are always proportionate to the resistance made by them or attempts made by them to escape or conceal property, or unwillingness to deliver property. Sometimes they tie their victims blindfolded to trees and other objects to prevent pursuit or delay the lodging of a complaint with the police. They always commit dacoities on houses which are situated at the outskirts of villages or where help to the victims could not be easily procured. Before commencing the operation they would either fasten the doors of other houses in the locality or throw prickly pear at the entrances

to prevent people leaving their houses to proceed to the scene of offence for help. A heap of stones collected usually in the back-yard, says Mr. Mullaly, "invariably points to Koravars." Road dacoities are perpetrated on roads where there is heavy traffic of carts and travellers. They wait at a convenient garden or a ravine in a hill close to the road and begin the skirmish on bandies by pelting stones on them. When no response is made by the travellers by the discharge of guns for ascertaining which this test was employed, they drag the bulls into fields and jungles. Sometimes they unyoke the bulls before beating the inmates of the bandies with clubs which they would always take with them. All the victims will be made to sit on the ground in a circle or in a line. First their persons will be searched and keys taken charge of. The *samans* of the bandies will then be carefully ransacked. After everything is recovered, they carry away the property to a jungle at some distance from the place and there take a list of the valuable stolen property throwing away articles of petty value on the paths *opposite to those leading to their encampment to mislead investigating police officers.* An instance of daring sheep dacoity is mentioned by Thurston. Koravars made arrangements with a meat supplier at Bangalore to deliver on his behalf a large number of sheep at a wayside station near Dharmavaram to receive which trucks had to be ready and the transaction was purely cash. One morning the Koravars captured and tied to trees the small boys who grazed the flock of sheep in the reserved forest of Singanamalla and drove the flock to the railway station, put them into trucks and despatched them to Bangalore receiving payment of money on the spot. The boys were not discovered till late at night, and the Police did not get to work till the following day, by which time the sheep were safely entrained for Bangalore.

(v) *Cheating.*—Some Koravars buy gilded beads at Madura, and cheat unsuspecting villagers by selling them as gold. The "confidence trick" is perpetrated in this way. They entice a greedy Komati receiver to a lonely spot on the promise of giving

him a large quantity of stolen jewels. They gain his confidence by showing him some good and genuine specimens before. When the transaction is being carried and the stolen goods exchanged after receipt of money, some confederates in the dress of a police constable put in their appearance. Confusion arises. The dupe is persuaded to run away. Sometimes in the confusion real jewels are exchanged for spurious ones or the Koravars take to heels with cash.

14. How information is obtained. The duty of obtaining information devolves upon the leader of the gang who does this business personally; but he sometimes employs shrewd and observant members, both males and females, who go about from village to village selling wares such as mats, rope nets, karivapilu, ropes, beads, etc., and glean the required information. Women who tattoo and tell fortune have very easy access to every Hindu house, and the males who grind mill stones have also equal chances of the same. They study the topography of place and communicate it to their leader who verifies it before planning the campaign. In places where Thubbai Koravars have settled themselves permanently they furnish the required information. The toddy and arack shop-keepers and goldsmiths of the locality who are their receivers and patrons help them with information also. Sometimes an inhabitant of the place with whom they are intimate is taken into confidence only seemingly, for, they place no entire confidence upon any outsider. When any undertaking is arranged upon the information supplied to them by these people they will be kept in ignorance as to the exact time of the commission of the same, for fear they would turn hostile and betray them. The Koravars also commit offences at the instigation of persons who employ them from motives of revenge or spite. In the South the Kaval-kara Koravars who are employed as village watchers are a useful source of information to their kinsmen. Some frequent the cart stands and collect information as to the movements of rich men travelling by road.

15. Concealment of property. The women are equally skilful with men in the matter of concealment of property on

their person. The women conceal small articles of value by passing them into the vagina. The best way of ascertaining whether a woman has concealed anything there, is to make her jump. Sometimes this device fails. In 1901, a woman in the Kolar Gold Fields had a small packet of stolen gold amalgam passed to her during the search of the house by her husband. She left the house to urinate and concealed the property in her vagina. On suspicion her person was searched by a female searcher who found the parcel jammed transversely in the vagina and required manipulation to dislodge it. Small jewels, which Koravas manage to steal, are at once concealed in the mouth, and even swallowed. To recover these, purgatives have to be administered. Sovereigns have been recovered in this way. Male Koravars conceal stolen articles in the rectum. Two thin gold chains 14 inches long were extracted by the medical officer from a Korava in the Tanjore District. When the gang is encamped in a place, the stolen property is always hidden somewhere near the camp. The ground round the pegs to which their asses are tied, the heaps of ashes and rubbish, easing places and cow-dung heaps are their favourite places of concealment. When the gang is on the move the stolen property is secreted in the folds of their pack saddles, border folds of mats, and in the interspace of their double lid baskets. The settled Koravas of towns conceal property underneath fire places, in walls and in court yards. When the police have to search a gang the first thing to be done is to separate men, women and children and make them sit separately in different places without allowing them to intermingle and without any ingress or egress. The females generally take an important part in resisting an attempt to arrest the males who run away while the females, stripping themselves, dance in a state of nudity hoping thereby to divert the attention of the arresting constables. If this trick fails, they fall down senseless having lacerated their private parts from which blood flows profusely and thus frighten the police. Sometimes they will not hesitate to stone them, or break chatties and pots on their heads. When a Korava gang is searched, women should not be allowed to go out for answering

the calls of nature, for they very cleverly remove stolen property. Sometimes they wish to go out for fetching water in pots lying in the house. You may be sure that in such cases the property is removed in those pots. The women are very quick in burying property under the spot where they may be squatting. Some Korava women have tied small jewelry and currency notes on their thighs with bandages and pretended they were suffering from boils. The object of keeping all the members separately is not to give them any chance of conjoint attack on the police.

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A JOGHI.

CHAPTER II.

Joghies.

16. Origin, Habitat. The Joghies, who are the most daring criminals of the Madras Presidency, had their original abode in the Telugu speaking country. They are, like the Dasaries, itinerant jugglers and beggars earning their livelihood apparently by breeding pigs, selling beads, charming snakes, performing juggling tricks and acrobatic feats. Some Joghies are quack doctors who pretend to possess a sound knowledge of medicine and medicinal herbs. Some of them are believed to be magicians and conjurers, who pretend to possess supernatural powers and consequently held in great dread by the ignorant people. "They are" according to Sir Harold Stuart, "divided into those who sell beads and those who keep pigs." Those who sell beads go also by the name of Pitchuguntas. The Joghies first came from Mysore, and were, like Pichuguntas, heralds. They subsequently became criminal in their habits by association with other criminal communities. Joghies came to notice so early as 1872, long before the famine of 1877. At that time they were found in great numbers at Sreeperambathur, Conjeevaram and Uthramallur, where many of the males and females were convicted of robberies and dacoities. They afterwards migrated to different places and formed the nucleus of a great many gangs of criminal propensities living in various parts of the Madras Presidency. The Pichaguntas are now found in large numbers in Nellore, Chittoor, Cuddapah, Kurnool, Anantapur and Bellary Districts, and in some portions of Wallajah and Gudiyattam Taluqs of North Arcot District. The pig-breeding Joghies live in the districts of North Arcot, Chingleput, Nellore, South Arcot and Salem. By far the largest number of them are found in Wandiwash, Arni, Gudiyattam, Tiruvannamalai, Vellore, Wallajah, Conjeevaram, Madurantakam and Tirukoviloor Taluqs. The Joghies are also found in Pondicherry, and some have emigrated

to Penang, Singapore and Rangoon where they earn a precarious livelihood. In the Tamil country, the Joghies, according to Thurston, are called Dhoddiyan or Tottiyan, and those who are employed as scavengers are known as Koravas or Oddans.

17. Appearance, Dress.

(i) *Men*. They can be very easily picked out from a group of ordinary ryots on account of superior physique and a finer cast of features which they possess. They are strong and wiry, capable of enduring much fatigue and exertion. The males are scantily dressed and have special liking for red waist cloths by means of which they can be very easily identified. 'The Joghi mendicants go about,' says Thurston, 'clad in a dirty loin-cloth (often red in colour) and a strip of cloth over the shoulders, with cobras, pythons, or rat-snakes in baskets and carrying a bag slung over the shoulder.' Sometimes these Joghi mendicants who pose themselves as quack-doctors and herbalists are more fully clothed. They profusely paint their chest and arms with namams (holy marks), and wear rudraksham malai round their neck. The heavy turban on the head will be guarded by numerous small tubular rows of charms woven in strings. A capacious hollow gourd, which serves as a convenient receptacle for various things including stolen articles, is slung over the shoulder. A bag made of rough striped country cloth is hung from the other shoulder, and it usually contains medicinal herbs, fruits, flower-spikes, roots of various kinds, porcupine quills, pieces of cuttle-fish shells, narrikombu (spurious Jackals' horns) possession of which brings luck, and pieces of wood supposed to be an antidote for snake poisoning. A snake-charming reed instrument made of dry gourd will be carried in hand or concealed in the bag referred to. Brass or silver bangles and ear-rings are occasionally worn.

(ii) *Women* :—The women have the ordinary physiognomy about them. They are always seen in the streets and at fairs and festivals, decked in gaudy attire and laden with brass bangles and bead necklaces. According to Thurston, the women go about the streets, decorated with bangles and necklaces of beads,

sharks' vertebrae, and cowry shells, bawling out "Subbamma," "Latchamamma," etc., and will not move on till alms are given to them. Some of these are ill-looking and filthily dressed only with a small bit of loin cloth which is barely enough to conceal their nudity. Like the male mendicants some filthy looking females carry snakes about their neck and person and in baskets, and beg for alms, from house to house playing on the snake-charming reed. They, like males, also carry a dry gourd. Some women wear, in addition to the marriage *bottu*, a special *bottu* in honor of one of their gods. This is placed before the god and worn by the eldest female of a family, passing on at her death to the next oldest. The Dasirapuvadu class women are, as a rule, comely, and dress well. The Joghi women often sell toy rattles made of palmyra leaves like the women of Dubbe Koravars.

18. Habits and Customs. The Joghies are very filthy in their habits, and eat without restriction any kind of dirty and unclean food—putrid flesh, snakes, frogs, field-rats, jackals, crocodiles, bandicoots and cats. They have particular liking for cats which they catch in bag-loads and carry to their homes to hold a feast. As people object to the catching of cats for food by Joghies, they say that they require them for marriage ceremony. Mr. Thurston says that "there is a tradition that Joghi bridegroom, before tying the *bottu* (marriage badge) on his bride's neck, has to tie it by means of a string dyed with turmeric round the neck of a female cat." Their ostensible means of livelihood is pig-breeding and they take droves of pigs to Madras and other large towns for sale. Some Joghies are employed in the cultivation of land, and we find some of them serving in Municipal towns as scavengers, totties, and killers of pariah dogs. According to Thurston, the Joghies have ten exogamous septs or interperus (family names) divided into two main divisions. One division is supposed to be superior to the other and the members of the superior division do not mix with lower caste Pariahs and the like, but strangely enough intermarriage between the two divisions is allowable. The Joghies as a whole consider

themselves superior to Malas and Madigas, but a Woddan will not eat in the house of a Joghi who may eat in the house of any Sudra Hindu. The Joghi women are highly depraved and immoral, and prostitution is very common. The widows are allowed to live in concubinage, and the penalty imposed is the payment of a trifling sum of money and prohibition from washing her body with turmeric water. As a proof of chastity, ordeal of drinking a potful of cow-dung water or chilly water has to be undergone. If a man, proved guilty of adultery, pleads inability to pay the fine, he has to walk a furlong with a mill-stone on his head. Before a marriage, a Joghi couple have to beg for seven days till they could get enough to make up Rs. 7. The begging is done by the bride and bridegroom in company of their elders generally a male and a female—the male playing the snake-charming reed and the female bawling out "Gouri Kalyanam." The bride will carry a plate for receiving alms. The bride and bridegroom either go together or separately. The amount collected is spent in providing toddy to all Joghies attending the marriage. As stated *supra*, the tali, which is a string dyed with turmeric is first tied to the neck of a female cat which is afterwards killed and eaten. The bridegroom gives to the bride's party, a sum of Rs. 21-8-0 and a pig which is killed to provide a feast to the guests. It is proverbial that a Joghi widow may mount the marriage dais (*i.e.*, remarry) seven times. The Joghies consume much liquor. The women of the Dasirapuwadu class of Joghies do not marry at all, but live as prostitutes. They live under the patronage and protection of Vaniahs (oilmongers) and others. It is through these women that Joghies get local information. They are of great use to the community in the disposal of stolen property and in securing legal aid. The Joghies as a class are fond of music, and are experts in playing snake-charmer's reed, Nagasoram, Pilankushal. Headman is called *Jangam*. He presides at all caste meetings, settles disputes and exercises a general control over the community. He plans depredatory excursions, keeps the stolen property with him and distributes it after everything is quiet. He gets two shares. It is he who performs all religious and marriage ceremonies. The Joghies are very superstitious and consult

omens before they proceed on a criminal errand. They worship Peddavadu, Malalamman, Gangamma, Ayyavaru, etc. The Joghies as a class do not wander far from their encampments. They often encamp in the outskirts of villages usually on a plain or dry bed of a tank surrounded by prickly pear bushes or at the foot of a hill. Their huts are made of palmyra leaves with five strands forming an arch, completely open at one side and closed on the other. They use asses to carry their samans, tents or pals. They always possess a fine breed of dogs, and they brand their animals with different kinds of marks—a scorpion, a crab, a tree, and a lizard.

19. Disguises employed and how information is obtained. The Joghies seldom employ any disguise for the purpose of committing dacoity or robbery; but they muffle up their faces. They uniformly tie one waist cloth high up not to embarrass them in their locomotion. Even females were seen clad in undervests taking an active part with males in several dacoities. The Joghies, however, employ disguises to fish out information only, and the disguise usually employed is that of a mendicant or a fortune-teller who goes about from place to place making personal observations and enquiries from others regarding the affluence of their intended victims. In some places the village officials furnish information to them and even employ them for the commission of offences. The Joghi women, who are prostitutes by profession, communicate very useful information to Joghi gangs, and it has been observed in some cases that these prostitutes through their paramours help the gangs in case of trouble. The Pallars of the locality furnish information also, and it is a notorious fact that the Pallars of Nedungal and Anuputhur of North Arcot District assist the Joghies with information. The information is also secured through toddy shop-keepers; and the toddy shop-keepers of certain villages in Wandiwash circle have been known to help the Joghies of that place not only with information but also with money. The District Magistrate of North Arcot in his Proceedings No. 414, dated 18th March 1907, has debarred a

toddy shop-keeper of the place from bidding at arrack sales. Another very effective device adopted by the Joghies to gather information is to secure domestic employment under the respectable men of the locality who sometimes become their patrons. The name of the Brahmin dacoit leader, the notorious Kanikilippai Vijiaraghava Iyer of the Arni Circle, is too well known in the North Arcot District in this connection. In Puduppadi and other places, Joghi domestic servants under Brahmins, committed robberies and dacoities till they were traced and convicted. The Joghies are terribly afraid of fire arms and guard against them they take particular care to see if any one has fire-arm in the village to be dacoited. With this purpose in view, during day, two women will go abegging in a village to be dacoited during night. Before leaving the village they will enquire of the dhobies and bazaarmen if there are Shikaris living there. If questioned as to why they want the information, they give a plausible reason that they want a bird called "Kalei-kakai" for curing coughs. This enquiry is made to find out if any one has a gun in the village.

20. Modus Operandi. Highway robbery and dacoity are their favourite crimes and burglary is taken to only occasionally. These they commit in the neighbourhood of their encampment and they do not at all wander far from their encampment for committing crimes. It is during their caste panchayets and marriage ceremonies that excursions are planned and members selected by the headman. Occasionally members of the fraternity encamped in the vicinity are taken into confidence and consulted. They select an isolated Nim tree in a secluded spot as a meeting place where the preliminaries for the depredation are settled and the blessing of their god Perumal is invoked.

(i) *Dacoities*.—They start on the excursion observing auspicious signs; and if any evil omen is observed, the excursion is totally abandoned or not attempted till after a considerable time has passed. Under auspicious omens they set out from their rendezvous in bands of from 12 to 15, armed with clubs, sticks and even with old fashioned guns, and await in a hiding place

the arrival of carts. With faces muffled up they attack the carts in twos or threes. The carts are usually driven off the road and not unfrequently upset, and the inmates of the carts are first assaulted and terrified to give all they possess. If property is given quietly no further violence is resorted to.

(ii) *House-breakings*.—They are not adepts in committing burglaries, but they are gradually making improvements in the commission of the offence where detection is not very easy. They bore holes in all the ways in vogue in the country and their boring instrument is the ordinary crowbar. In order to throw suspicion on Koravars, Joghies are known to desecrate the place next to the hole by passing stools.

21. **Their dangerous criminal propensity.** Though the Joghies were, in the beginning, a class of harmless mendicant wanderers, yet their constant contact with "peculent traders," receivers and other criminals contaminated them and developed their criminal propensities to such an extent that they are now the most daring, desperate, dangerous and troublesome criminals of Southern India. In 1900 a number of Joghies concerned in the Kalavai dacoity case were imprisoned in the police lock-up at Arcot. One night they all broke open the iron bars of the cell and escaped from custody after assaulting and wounding the police. There are numerous instances on record where they have mercilessly attacked the police officers who attempted to arrest them or search their houses. The daring deeds of the notorious Joghi Kuppan alias "Sergeant" of North Arcot District who used to put on police uniform for the purpose of impersonating a police head constable are too well known. In 1906 the Joghies concerted plans for murdering two Inspectors who had been placed on special duty against them; but actually attacked a head constable who travelled with the records of the said Inspectors and burnt his uniform and the records. In 1907 the saman of Mr. B. Swire, then A. S. P., Vellore, was looted between Pennagar and Dusi, and the police orderly of that officer accompanying the bandy was robbed of his carbine and cartridges. These desperate criminals take pride in attacking the police and in depriving the

police officers who fall a prey to them of their uniforms and arms. In this attempt many a Joghi has fallen a victim to the bullet of a wary patrol constable. Mullaly mentions a case in which a V. M. incited an attack on a party of police engaged in searching a Joghi house for stolen property.

22. Receivers, Patrons. As has been observed already oilmongers, toddy-shop-keepers and even village officers and respectable villagers are their receivers and patrons. They reap a rich harvest in their dealings with the Joghies. The property is always disposed of locally, but in some cases it is taken to towns and there disposed of by the receivers. It may not be out of place here if a mention is made of the notorious dacoit leader, receiver and patron Kannikalappa Vijiaraghava Iyer of the North Arcot District referred to *supra*. This Brahmin badmash whose perverted intellect was employed for ignoble objects, organised various Joghi gangs and personally led them to commit countless dacoities in Arni, Wandiwash and Tiruvattiyur Taluks. He conducted the cases in which he was implicated boldly and ably in courts, and shattered witnesses by his very clever and ingenious cross-examination. Though he got off in many cases yet he was convicted and sentenced to 10 years' R. I. in a dacoity case of Pernamallur Station, North Arcot District. After his release in 1913 he has now settled himself as a manager of Coffee hotel at Sattanapallee in Guntur District.

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ALAGHĪRĪ KEPMARIES.

CHAPTER III.

Alaghiri Kepmaris.

(*Professional pick-pockets and Railway thieves.*)

23. **Origin, habitat.** The Kepmaris (from a word meaning a thief or a cheat) are the enlightened Alaghiris of the southern districts of the Madras Presidency, and they form the worst and the most criminal community which professionally commits thefts and pick-pocketing at fairs and festivals and in railway trains. Their notoriety as the manufacturers and utterers of counterfeit coins and cheats is steadily on the increase. They are known under different names in different places. In the Telugu districts, they are known as 'Santha-dongalu,' 'Rail-dongalu,' 'Mudusumarlu,' 'Kathiravallu' and 'Pachipollu,' and in the Tamil districts they are called 'Alaghiris, Kepmaris, Ena Koravars, and Korava Pujaries.' Though they are generally known by these names, they do not call themselves by these names. They pass themselves as 'Aghambadiars,' 'Mudalis,' 'Vellalars,' 'Naidus,' etc. The Kepmaris of Mariankuppam, South Arcot District, call themselves as 'Padayachis,' whilst the Kepmaris of Thogamalai, Trichinopoly District, style themselves as 'Uliakarans,' 'Palayakarans,' 'Sairvaegarans' under which last title they hold pattas of their lands. The Kepmaris of Tenari, Malabar, call one another as Tahsildars and Kanakapillays. The original home of the Kepmaris is not distinctly known, but they had their first known settlements at Pattukota in the Tanjore District, Thogamalai in the Trichinopoly District, and Sanjakota in the South Arcot District. With the advent of the railway system in India, these settlements increased to such an extent that at present these dangerous criminals to society are found to reside in all parts of India from the Himalyas to Cape Comorin under some designation or other. The Kepmaris are undoubtedly of Korava origin, and are related by all ties of blood and religion to the Koravas of the Tamil districts, the Yerukalas or Korichas

of the Telugu districts and the Kaikadees of the Bombay Presidency. They, however, do not admit their connection with the Koravas, the Korichas and the Erukalas, and even resent the idea of being classed with them ; for their general refinement in habits and dress, their high social status, their affluence and imitation of high life, have isolated them from their more barbarous, clumsily attired and socially degraded brethren, the Koravars. In fact the Kepmaris now assume the names of high-caste Hindus, whose ways of living, manner of speech, style of dress, and habits and customs they have adopted ostensibly to ply their nefarious trade. In the beginning, the Kepmaris were a class of dacoits, robbers and burglars, who always resorted to heinous crimes attended with extreme violence ; but the deterrent punishment of transportation compelled them to take to less serious crimes of theft, picking pockets in fairs and festivals and in trains, though occasionally reverting to their old habits of committing grave crimes when opportunities afforded themselves. Finding out by experience that this settled mode of life in permanent settlements exposed them to frequent dangers, they splitted themselves into different gangs, some of which wandered all over the country and some settled themselves in places with favourable environments. It has now become the characteristic feature of a Kepmari that he remains in one place till he is either convicted or marked by the local police, when he runs away to a distant place and joins a different gang assuming a different name. The previous convictions of Kepmaris, therefore, can be traced only by the finger print system, to which every police officer must resort to, whenever a Kepmari is arrested under suspicious circumstances.

The Kepmaris are found in the following places :—

<i>District.</i>		<i>Taluk.</i>		<i>Village.</i>
Madras	...	Madras	...	Madras.
Chingleput	...	Trivellore	...	Vembakkam.
S. Arcot	...	Chidambaram	..	Mariyankuppam.
Salem	...	Salem	...	Ettukudi.

<i>District.</i>		<i>Taluk.</i>		<i>Village.</i>
Trichinopoly	...	Kulitalai	...	Edayapatti near Thogamalai.
Cuddapah	...	Cuddapah	...	Boggalettipally.
Pondicherry	...	Pondichery	...	Kunisampet.
Malabar	...	Palghat	...	Ellapally.
Do.	...	Do.	...	Thanery.
Do.	...	Do.	...	Mela Kuthiam- pakam.
Do.	...	Do.	...	Pedanathy.
Mysore	...	Tumkur	...	Kunigal.
Do.	...	Malur	...	Chikkampalli.
Do.	...	Do.	...	Gudnahally.
Do.	...	Do.	...	Boppanahally.

The gangs of Kepmaris living in the places mentioned in the above list are all closely connected with each other by inter-marriages. The members of the gangs who had lived in Arunachellam Mudali Chatram and other places in Trivellore and Saidapet Taluks, and some of the members of the Edayapatti, Baggalettipalli, and Malur gangs emigrated to Bhimasanki in Vizagapatam when the E. C. Railway was under construction and passed there for railway contractors and workmen, committing crimes in Ganjam, Vizagapatam and other districts. As those places became hot for them to live in, they decamped to Bengal. There are some found at Ellore, Narasapuram, Cuttack, Puri, Berhampur and Calcutta where they say they earn their livelihood as curers of piles and fistulas. The former headquarters of the Kepmaris was Trivellore, Chingleput District; but at present their chief head-quarters is Edayapatti, a village $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Thogamalai where a very prosperous gang lives in security and ease. This gang has recently been settled under the Criminal Tribes Act. This gang is related to the Malur, Palghat, and other gangs by marriage. Another Kepmari gang of importance is found settled at Mariyankuppam and Vallampadugu in the South Arcot District. The Kepmaris of Pondicherry are related to this gang. The sphere of operations of the

Kepmaris is, therefore, the whole of Madras Presidency, excluding Malabar and S. Canara districts, where they have not been known to commit crimes although one of their settlements, Tanari is on the confines of the former district, and they commit Railway thefts all over India. The Kepmaris are also found in Hyderabad.

24. Appearance, dress, disguises. As Kepmaries are adepts in the art of disguising, the description of their home dress which is like that of an ordinary Tamilian is of little use. The numerous disguises they adopt and the agility with which they change a series of disguises at a moment's notice to baffle identification, display their criminal superiority over other criminal fraternity. The men and women are, as a rule, fair and good looking, and bestow particular attention to their personal appearance. The men adopt the disguises of respectable traders or well-to-do pilgrims on their way to sacred shrines. During *Adi Ammavasai* bathing festival at Danushkodi, in the island of Rameswaram, they were arrested in 1904 in the disguise of Komaties and Chetties. Well dressed, wearing caste marks and other outward signs of respectability, they readily gain admission to temples, chatrams, and other places resorted to by respectable travellers and pilgrims. In 1908 a batch of Kepmaris visited the Rameswaram temple during Thai Ammavasi festival. A decently clad and respectably-looking member with jewels on his person was set up as a big Zemindar and he was followed by a lot of attendants. The whole party went into the inner prakaram of the temple at about 8 P.M., began to cut with impunity jewels, and disappeared with them in a twinkling of an eye. The Kepmaris generally wear turbans, (sometimes laced ones), coats, and country slippers. They use silk bordered Conjeevaram or Coimbatore cloths as waisttees. They always carry along with them spare coats and turbans which they change as circumstances demand. Their coats are sometimes parti-coloured with one colour inside and a different one outside. To change disguise they have only to change the side of the coat. When they proceed in trains to commit crimes, they invariably carry carpet bags, beddings,

and steel trunks of a superior make to pass off as very respectable passengers. Previously convicted Kepmaris or those known in any locality grow their beards to evade identification. Some of them even wear the sacred thread. In 1905 a Kepmari was arrested at Kumbakonam while posing himself as a vakils gumastah with a pen, pencil and a bundle of records with him, and in 1901 a Thogamalai Kepmari disguising himself as a Bill Collector collected rents, issuing printed receipts for payments made, from bazaar keepers in a weekly market at Tirupatur, Ramnad district. Various instances, where the Kepmaris have put on the Police or the Salt officer's uniform and extorted money from the credulous villagers are on record. At a toddy sale conducted by Sub-Collector, a Kepmari appeared as a bidder and walked away with a purse containing a large sum of money belonging to another bidder. Mr. Mullaly says "that the identification of Kepmaris as a class is difficult: their disguises are complete, and they possess the faculty of carrying them out. No hard and fast rule for the identification of these social pests can be laid down." The women are comely and are not without claim for beauty. They, like southern females of respectable families, wear Kornadu cloth, laced saris and silk bodices. They usually visit temples dressed very respectably like Brahmin widows paying vows or making pujah before the idol. They do not wear gold and silver jewels, but content themselves with jewels made of brass or other baser metal. One important point is that instead of *tali*, they only wear a cotton string coloured yellow. Tattoo marks of circular or semi-circular forms are worn both by males and females on their foreheads and forearms. These, on conviction, are either enlarged or altered to defy identification by the police. They also wear caste marks and Namams on their foreheads and no inference should be drawn as to their caste by such marks. Sometimes they apply kunkuma (red-stuff) on their foreheads to conceal their tattoo marks.

24. Habits, Customs.

(1) *Recruitment* :—The Kepmari community forms a fraternity rather than a separate caste or tribe, in that it is possible

for a person who was not born as a Kepmari to belong to it. There are several known instances of children of the lower classes having been kidnapped in infancy and brought up as Kepmaris. They are generally females, but it sometimes, though rarely, happens that male children are kidnapped for the purpose. Sometimes female children are purchased and adopted. They also admit women of other castes as concubines and wives, and the children born to them freely enjoy the rights and privileges of the community. Members of the Pariah, Mala and Madiga and other inferior castes are never adopted by the Kepmaris.

(2) *Morality of women. Marriages*:—The women are morally very loose, and adultery is tolerated; but they never surrender to the seduction of any man outside the community, for fear that they might give birth to children not possessing natural propensities for thieving. A man may have two or more wives; and it sometimes happens that a man marries two sisters together at the same time. This is generally done by the Kepmaris of Thogamalai. The great rule of marriage is for the sister's son to marry a brother's daughter. Girls are married at about the age of five. A man takes over the widow of his deceased brother. There is no widowhood among the Kepmaris; and inter-marriages amongst the members of different gangs always take place, so much so that all Kepmari gangs are inter-related by marriage ties. Wives are sometimes pledged as securities for debts contracted by their husbands, and become the property of the creditors should the debt fail to be liquidated. If the debt is paid they return to the houses of their husbands with all the children born to them through their creditor husbands.

(3) *Religion and superstition*:—The Kepmaris are Sivavite Hindus who smear sacred ashes on their foreheads. They profess to worship some of the deities of Hinduism, chiefly Subramania; but the gods and goddesses of the lower cult, chiefly, Maduraveeran, Kattari, Kali, Bethala Moothevi, receive most of their attention. Moothevi is worshipped to keep them sleepless and their victims sleepy during nights when they commit crimes. Thogamalai Koravars worship Rathnasabapathy. The worship

of these deities are always attended with animal sacrifices when drinking is much indulged in by the devotees. The Kepmaris are, like other criminal classes, highly superstitious, and they are strict observers of good and bad omens. The bad omens which they much dread and which put them to the painful necessity at all costs to abandon their plundering projects are the flight of a crow across their path from left to right, the passing of a cat from right to left, the appearance of a widow with an empty pot on her head and the sight of a snake.

(4) *Dietary* :—The Kepmaris, like the Koravars, eat any kind of food except beef. The crow and the squirrel are their favourite delicacies. They now show more partiality to the squirrel. When you see some foreigners engaged in catching squirrels, you may be sure that they are Kepmaris. They catch squirrels very ingeniously. The squirrels of the locality will be hunted till they all run to take refuge on a solitary tree standing at a distance, when a man will climb the tree and make the squirrel run down. Two or three Kepmaris who will stand at the foot of the tree will kill the squirrels as they come down. Drinking is much indulged in by the Kepmaris before they proceed on their predatory excursions. During their caste punchayets both males and females freely take liquor. The proceeds of their crimes are generally spent in drinking, feasting, gambling and other sorts of merry making and free living.

(5) *Language* :—The mother tongue of the Kepmaris is Telugu; but they can speak all the languages of Southern India—Tamil, Hindustani and Canarese. They use the particular language of the place where they happen to camp at the time, so as to pass for some peaceful inhabitants of the locality close by. They have a peculiar slang of their own, intelligible to themselves, and they can never remain long together without conversing in that language. The majority of the adult members know to read and write Tamil, and a few of the women are also literate. In the presence of strangers they sometimes make use of signs and gestures to communicate their ideas.

(6) *Leaders*.—Every gang has its own leader who decides all disputes, divides stolen property, provides for the maintenance of the family of any Kepmari who is undergoing imprisonment in jail, and procures legal aid for defending any member under trial in courts. These leaders who form a panchayet have the power of punishing and rewarding any member.

(7) *Their beats*.—The Kepmaries do not commit crimes in places where they happen to be known by the local police, or where they have, on any former occasion, been arrested. Each gang has its particular beat, and they seldom encroach on the hunting ground of others of their fraternity. The Thogamalai gang visits, during fairs and festivals, such places as Rameswaram, Palni, Kumbakonam, Madura, Srirangam, and Tanjore. The Mariankuppam gang goes to Velangani, Chidambaram, Nagore, Mayavaram and other places in the Tanjore, South Arcot and North Arcot districts. The Trivellore gang monopolizes Madras and Chingleput districts, and the depredations of the Tenari gang are confined to Malabar, Mysore and the Kolar Gold Fields. With an express sanction of a gang, another gang can reap harvest in the jurisdiction of the former. It is during festivals that the different gangs meet together at a place and settle affairs relating to the well-being of the whole fraternity and negotiate marriages amongst members of different gangs.

(8) *Honor among thieves*.—A Kepmari never implicates another of his fraternity, and the family of a man who has gone to jail is provided for by the rest of the community. Every member of the gang works singly on a predatory excursion and feigns ignorance of others of their community.

25. *Stock-in-trade*. The Kepmaris invariably carry with them a small lancet shaped knife, sharp pieces of broken glass, a pair of scissors, a sharp edged chisel, one or two iron nails, and a bunch of false keys. The knife, the glass-pieces and the scissors are employed for cutting threads of necklaces and fastenings of neck ornaments, and for tearing open canvass bags and bundles. The nail and the chisel are used for breaking open boxes, and the bunch of keys serves to open locks. A

needle sometimes will be found with them, and it is used to prick the foot of a sleeping passenger who cautiously guards his valuables under his head. A carpet bag containing different sorts of coats and turbans for ready disguises forms a necessary accompaniment of the Kepmaris, who frequent the fairs and the railway. They even carry Railway bags, with them containing rubbish for substitution, and also fine steel trunks to pass for respectable travelers.] A Railway Map was found with some Kepmaris.

23. Modus operandi. The Kepmaris undoubtedly form a fraternity of genuine criminals, frequenting fairs and festivals and all large crowds and assemblies, for the sole purpose of snatching jewels and pilfering any thing they can lay their hands on. Though they commit house-breaking and dacoity, their *metier* is expert stealing in crowds. They also manufacture and utter counterfeit coins. Every member of the 'fraternity, whether male or female, boy or girl, is an expert criminal. The juveniles (boys and girls) are the most dangerous of the lot, for they, under the mask of youthful innocence and apparent helplessness, exhibit, under the supervision and guidance of their elders, such criminal dexterity that they are veritable pests to the society. Instruction in every kind of thieving and lying is inculcated from a very early age. Every boy or girl above the age of seven, after completing a course of criminal education, becomes a new-fledged criminal, so much hardened that it becomes quite indifferent to a thrashing, which would be serious in the case of any other ordinary individual. The juveniles generally commit depredations during the day only, and they do not use knife, &c., to cut jewels. The females are as dangerous as the juveniles, if not more; but generally their share in crime is not, however, of a very dangerous character. Seldom do they travel by trains for committing crimes. The men are often dangerous criminals. They entirely live by crime. No Kepmari does any honest work for his living. The Kepmaris leave their homes on their thieving excursions in small batches with one or two women and a boy or girl about 7 years' old. The batch proceeds to a particular place of destination passing through

jungles and unfrequented places to avoid observation and there begins to ply the trade with impunity. We describe the method adopted by the Kepmaris for committing crimes in various places.

(1) *Thefts in villages and towns*:—The males, females and juveniles separate themselves from each other and proceed in different directions taking care not to recognise and own any relationship with each other. The juveniles mingle themselves with the village children wearing jewels on their person, and by various stratagems, decoy them to secret places where their jewels are stripped off either by the juveniles or by their elders who always remain near at hand to act at the emergency. They freely enter into open houses, and audaciously carry away any small vessel, cloth and jewel that may be lying in the house or in the court-yard. During a marriage in a richman's house at Pondicherry, the jewels kept on a plate for the purpose of adorning the bride with, were very cleverly removed by a Kepmari girl who quietly stepped into the house without raising any suspicion at all. During another marriage in Chintadripet a woman of this class went into the house as one of the members of the marriage party and removed the valuable cloths suspended on a line in the front hall, under the very nose of the assembled guests who could not suspect her on account of the part she so well played. In a temple in Madura District, a Kepmari, dressing himself as a religious devotee, went into the Moolagraham late at night for making pōojah and returned with the virahmudy of the idol. When bazaar-men are very busily engaged in their bargains, the juveniles secretly carry away money purses and bundles of valuable articles from their shops. The Kepmaris frequently visit river beds, tanks and wells, where people bathe and dexterously remove the clothes kept on steps, parapet walls, etc.. A male of this class once bathed with others in a tank and came out of the water and folded his own cloth with those of others in such a way that the owners found out their loss only after the criminal had gone. In Tiruvottiur a female of this class slept with another woman in a choultry and disappeared with one ear-ring and

a necklace of the latter. Both adults and juveniles, with much alacrity, change possession of stolen articles, and in a twinkling of an eye the thing is carried off a long way. Even if the thief is caught red-handed, you seldom find stolen property in his possession.

(2) * *Thefts in fairs, festivals and crowded assemblies* :—The Kepmaris usually frequent fairs, festivals and other places of public resort in batches. A batch consisting of males, females and juveniles invariably encamps in a tope or near a tank, close to the place of assembly. The members spend the day in eating and drinking, but issue out during nights to commit crimes. The males generally supervise and instruct the juveniles and females in all matters, and will be ready to receive and transmit or secure the property handed to them. They will also carry away bags and cut jewels in crowds. The chief duty of the males consists in employing various stratagems and devices to divert the attention of the watchful men, whilst the females and juveniles are actually engaged in removing the property. The children, when caught, plead that they are orphans starving for food. They are at the worst beaten and sent away. The Kepmaris generally go and lie down on pials, outside temples, under trees and other places resorted to for rest by the up-country people who come for festival from villages. Females with children select suitable spots and lie down along with other females with hands stretched towards the neck or ears of the victim. When they are fast asleep, their jewels are cut off and removed. A woman with a sucking child has better chances of getting a good haul, for no one generally refuses to allow her to sleep by another female's side. Sometimes these Kepmaris pretend to be the friends and old relations of their victims, and by their talk and manners, inspire so much trust and confidence in them that they throw themselves out of guard only to be deprived of their belongings by their hypocritical and accommodating friends. A rich traveller slept in a chatram having placed his cash box under his head. Suddenly he got up to examine his feet which had just received a severe pricking. Immediately glancing on his precious burden, he found it has disappeared

from his sight. In fairs and festivals these criminals make such a clever use of their scissors and knives that throughout the place there would be a continuous wailing and lamentation of the women and children, who have fallen victims to the rapacity of these human vultures. In cattle-fairs, these Kepmaris may also be found roaming about the place cleverly watching the intending purchasers of cattle, only to walk away with their bundles when the least possible chance offers itself. The bandy stands are also their frequent haunts.

(3) *Thefts on platform and in waiting-rooms* :—The boys and girls move about busily on the platform and in waiting-rooms and make away with carpet bags, bundles, small boxes or anything that they can lay their hands on. They immediately change possession of the stolen articles, and the adult member who remain close at hand always carry the article far away. The adults too commit thefts of bundles and other things on the platform and in waiting-rooms when circumstances permit. If it is not possible to commit theft in these places, they purchase tickets and follow the passenger in train to reap a good harvest during the journey. If a passenger on a platform is found closely watching his property without his attention being drawn aside by various devices, the adults, posting themselves at convenient places, begin to thrash severely an urchin who, with loud shrieks and cries, runs towards the passenger for help. In the confusion that arises the passenger is deprived of his burden. If on seeing the thief, he gives a hot chase after him leaving his other bundles behind, any other member of the gang runs away with the remaining bundle in the opposite direction. If the Kepmari is vigorously pursued and overtaken, he flings the bundle against the face of his pursuers and runs away. Sometimes they carry a decent canvass bag or bundle filled with rubbish, and cleverly substitute it for that containing valuables of a fellow passenger near whom they take seat engaged in a familiar conversation like an ordinary traveller. If this trick does not succeed on the platform, it is successfully attempted in train. Both the juveniles and adults very cleverly commit pick-pocketing at the

windows of booking offices where there is generally a scramble for purchasing tickets.

(4) *Thefts in trains* :—Only male adults commit thefts in trains. A few years ago a very big official was travelling in a first class and slept during the journey. He got up at Erode and to his surprise, he found his box containing valuables was missing and in its place another box containing trifles was kept. The crime was traced to the Trivellore Kepmari gang and one ring worth Rs. 500 was recovered. These Kepmaris cut open bags, break open boxes, throw any property through the carriage windows on the line, and change compartments or carriages after the commission of thefts. Sometimes they get down from the train when it is in full motion. The articles thrown on the line will be picked up afterwards. Sometimes learning the destination of the passenger, they purchase ticket for the place of destination or for some intermediate station on the line and get into the same compartment. When the victim goes to sleep, they quietly get down at the next station with the bundle of the victim. If the ticket had been purchased for a station farther off on the line, they run to the latrine and remain there concealed till the train moves off. After the train had left, they feign intense sorrow at the missing of the train, if any person observes them.

(5) *Counterfeiting coins* :—The Kepmaris have shown their skill in the art of manufacturing counterfeit coins and uttering them with great facility. They used mud moulds for their counterfeits. Moulds are made of Plaster of Paris too. Another peculiar process of manufacture is that bits of China or porcelain are very finely powdered and sifted. The fine dust so obtained is kneaded with honey for three or four days and the mould is prepared.

(6) *Cheating* :—They practise what is known as 'confidence trick.' They entice some greedy 'receiver' with false or genuine ornaments to some lonely spot and there, while the transaction is being carried out, confederates acting the part of policemen appear on the scene. In the confusion that arises

everybody bolts away. The boys coat pice with quick-silver and pass the coated coins as four anna piece.

28. Concealment and disposal of stolen property. When small articles of value are stolen, the males invariably conceal them in their mouth, and are known to have swallowed rings, half-sovereigns and even sovereigns. The things swallowed can be recovered by a purgative. The females conceal stolen property in their private parts like their Bhampta sisters. The stolen property is disposed of at once by being handed over to their receivers who accompany the gang from place to place. The Kepmaris melt their own jewels before disposal. When halting at a place, they bury their stolen property in out-of-the-way places taking care to desecrate them. When nearing their home, they carry stolen property to their houses in small food pots or in fire-wood bundles.

29. Receivers. Their receivers are goldsmiths and liquor venders of towns and Chetties of villages. The Chetties accompany the gangs in their depredatory excursions to receive stolen property. Village headmen assist the Kepmaris who have settled in their villages in the disposal of stolen property.

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DONGA DASARIS.

CHAPTER IV.

Donga Dasaris.

30. Name, origin, habitat. The Donga Dasaris (thief mendicants) belong to a most daring and criminally distinct family or tribe, which should not be confounded with other Dasaris who are religious mendicants of the Vaishnavite sect. The Dasaris proper are those who have been admitted into the mendicant brotherhood from different classes of people and are to be found all over the Presidency. They are not, as a rule, criminal. But the Donga Dasaris are the most dreaded of the criminal classes of the Telugu speaking districts of the Presidency. It is a mistake to suppose that the Donga Dasaris are entirely of a mixed race, and although a few outsiders are regularly initiated as Donga Dasaris for various purposes, the criminal portion of the tribe as a whole belongs to one caste of Koravas known under the general appellation of Alagiries. Mr. Mullaly calls them as the Alagiries of the more northern districts of the Presidency. They are known under different local names in different parts of the Presidency as :—

- (1) *Kathiras* or "Scissor-thieves" in Nellore.
- (2) *Donga Dasaris* in Kurnool and Guntur.
- (3) *Pachapas* or "Tattooers" in Godavari and Kistna.
- (4) *Pusalavaru* or "bead-sellers" in Hyderabad.
- (5) *Goodoo Dasaris* in the southern districts of the Presidency.

Mr. Papa Row classes Nackkalas, Dumpa Chenchus and Pamulavally under Donga Dasaris ; but they are treated in this book as belonging to the Yanadi tribe.

The Donga Dasaris call themselves usually "Peddetti Golla" or "Golla Dasaris" in Nellore, "Dasraris" in Kurnool, Pachapas in Godavari and Kistna, and Pusalavaru in Hyderabad. They go by such names as Mucheri Kallas, Takku (tricky) Waddars, Santhai dongaloo (fair thieves.)

They are chiefly found in the following places and in villages near them :—

<i>Chittoor District</i>	...	Puthoor, Tirutani, Kalahasti, Madanapalli, Mustoor, and Bagiletipali.
<i>Bellary</i>	„ ...	Adoni, Nagalapuram, Areculu.
<i>Guntur</i>	„ ...	Darsi, Venkatapuram.
<i>Kurnool</i>	„ ...	Cumbam, Moottupally, Lanjakota.
<i>Kistna</i>	„ ...	Nandigama.
<i>Godavary</i>	„ ...	Rajahmandri.
<i>Vizagapatam</i>	„ ...	Vizagapatam, Narasapatam (Venkatapuram.)
<i>Hyderabad</i>	„ ...	Kottala, Srirangapuram.

They are known to the police under different heads as: (1) Venkatapuram gang, (2) Motupally gang, (3) Nagalapuram gang, (4) Kalahasti gang and Donga Dasari gang. Their most central headquarters are in Mottupalle in Kurnool.

There is no doubt that all the divisions referred to supra are of Telugu origin, and Mr. Papa Row Naidu traces them to the parent stock of the hard-working class of Wodders. They are all drawn from the Boya, Golla, Wodder and Salia castes. There may be, according to Mr. Papa Row Naidu, no blood relationship existed between any two of the above divisions, but their association with one another for purposes of crime brought about matrimonial connections. The Donga Dasaris were originally honest agriculturists who possessed land and cattle. The famine of 1877 compelled them to eke out their livelihood as regular mendicant Dasaris by begging. From begging they went on to petty thefts and pocket-picking and finally to house-breaking, robbery and dacoity, for the last 20 or 25 years. Now their notoriety as expert and dangerous criminals is established beyond doubt by the finger-print system which furnishes ample proofs of their steadily increasing criminal propensity.

31. Divisions. The tribe has shown tendency to split up into three main divisions.

(1) *Kathiras* or *Kathirvallu*, i. e., Scissors-thieves who wander about Nellore and Guntur districts. They settled for a long time in Alur, Rapur and Kavali Divisions of the Nellore district. They are, like their prototype of the Bellary, Kurnool and Cuddapah districts, the most hardened criminals who move about from place to place in gangs with cattle, donkeys and pigs, committing daring burglaries and dacoities along the route. The Motupalli gang to which the Kathiras are closely related does not travel with animals. This division has been settled at the Kalichedu mica mines and numbered 92 adult males, 80 women and 105 children. Under the Criminal Tribes' Act the movements of this tribe have been restricted to the Kalichedu Settlement where, under the fostering care of Mr. Ludwig, the manager of some mica mine, the members of the gang earn their livelihood by honest means. These Kathiras lived hand and glove with the Kapu Reddies of Nellore who are their patrons and receivers. There have been cases in which Kathiras have kept Kapu women as their concubines. It has been recently shown that the Kathiras of Nellore are related to some of their class in Trichinopoly whither they travel as Kapus. They join Koravas or Yanadis in committing dacoities on high ways and in villages.

(2) *Donga Dasaris* are the criminals, residing in Cumbum Taluq of the Kurnool District with their headquarters at Motupalle and Lanjakota. They are matrimonially connected with the Venkatapuram gang in Narasipatam Taluq, Vizagapatam District, and with the Nagalapuram gangs in the Adoni Taluq, Bellary District. The gang at Ammayagaripalli in the Cuddapah District, the gang at Harpanhalli in the Bellary District, and the gang at Yadagiri near Raichur, are also inter-related. The name Donga Dasari is applied to all these gangs. Their headquarter at Motupalle has recently been abandoned, and the gang consisting of about 80 or 90 members has splitted itself. About 22 of the males with 6 females are at present with the Kathiras of Kalichedu, the rest being either out of view (28) or in jail (27). Some have joined with the Pachachpas of Godavary and Kistna.

Districts. The Motupalli gang moves all over the Madras Presidency excepting the Tamil Districts. Its favourite haunts for shelter and concealment are found in the fastnesses of jungles and hills where it remains concealed for months together. Even the forest guards and jungle people will not, for fear of injury, give any information to the Police.

(3) *Pachchapas* or *Tattooers* have no settled headquarters of their own, and are usually split up into small gangs which wander about, principally in the Godavary and Kistna Districts. The Pachchapas, on the pretext of begging, visit Guntur, Kurnool, and Vizagapatam Districts also. It is believed that they formerly belonged to the Pittapur estate. Their females wear marks of saffron and red 'kunkuma' on their foreheads and carry a pot representing a goddess. They are at present divided into about a dozen parties, committing crime wherever convenient. Telaga Pamulavallu, Peddetti Gollalu are believed by some authorities to belong to Pachchapas. According to Mr. Pappa Row Naidu some of them are snake-charmers ostensibly and some spin mats and baskets for sale.

Goodoo Dasaries, *Pusalavandlu* and *Thetakars* are, according to Mr. Pappa Row Naidu, found in the North and South Arcot, Nellore, Cuddapah, Chittoor, Bellary and Chingleput Districts. Their house names such as Pasupuleti, Pasupati, Koreti, clearly indicate that they are of Telugu origin. They beg from house to house carrying on their shoulder a kavadi containing inside a bottle or vessel said to contain the holy Ganges water. They offer for sale beads made of tulsi shrub-wood and ruthracha malai similar to those worn by the Byragees and Pandarams. They give out that these holy articles were brought from the sacred shrines of Kasi, Ayodhia, Gya or other sacred places. The men wear no tuft of hair on the head. Both men and women usually sell gilt vessels and toys and other articles of trifling value, red palmyra leaf-rolls worn by females for insertion into big holes in the lobes of ears, betel bags and toys. The women who are like the ordinary Sudra women sell needles and beads of all kinds. They steal fowls by stupefying them with rice soaked in Dhatura juice.

They are closely connected with Kathiras, Donga Dāsarīs and Pachchapas.

32. Homogeneity of the tribe. There is no doubt as to the homogeneity of the Kathiras, Donga Dasarīs and the Pachchapas; but the period at which the tribe splitted up into these divisions is uncertain. Further the divisions are not rigidly separate. Members leave one division and join with another division. There have been instances where the members of all the three divisions were found together. The joint convictions of the members of the different divisions and the matrimonial relationships that exist between them and their criminal operations over practically the same tracts of country, offer undoubted proofs of homogeneity. Though some of them were, perhaps, distinct originally, but their contact with each other for purposes of crime cemented them into a criminal fraternity, the members of which subsequently began to develop matrimonial connections which formed a nucleus for the growth of the tribe.

33. Appearance, dress, disguises. The tribe has no distinct physiognomy of its own, and it can rarely be distinguished from others inhabiting the locality. As it always employs disguises, a mention must be made of them. The disguises usually adopted by them are those of the Byraghees and Gōsains. The men and women put on a huge perpendicular Vaishnavite Namam or caste-mark on their foreheads. They usually wander about singing hymns to a monotonous accompaniment upon a leather instrument called *tappai* (tabret). They also carry the *conch-shell*, which they blow to announce their arrival; the *gong* which they blow as they go along their rounds; the *tall iron lamp* with a cocoanut shell to hold the oil for replenishing it (Garuda Kambum); a *tuft of peacock feathers*; and the small metal image of Hanuman hung round their necks. Of these, the iron lamp is at once the most conspicuous and the most indispensable. It must be kept burning always. They also wear tulasi and rudraksha malai round their necks in profusion. They recite the prayers and incantations of Byraghees

so well that it is very difficult to detect the artifice. They wear a turban (sometimes a laced-one,) a shirt, a coat, and a dhotee. Occasionally a mantle or shawl is thrown over the shoulders. They sometimes pass Brahmins, carrying a kavadi, a deer skin, and copper vessels. In fact they carry out the disguises admirably and command the respect of the credulous.

34. Habits, Customs. "Donga Dasaris," according to Thurston, "were said to have practised kidnapping boys and girls of other castes to strengthen their number, and even now, as the practice stands, any person can become a Donga Dasari though very few would like to become one." They worship Hanuman and Venkatesa, an incarnation of Vishnu. In their villages they have temples dedicated to Huligavva or Ellamma before whom vows are taken before starting on a depredatory expedition. They sacrifice sheep and fowl before the goddess also. They place a turban on the head of the sheep or fowl that was sacrificed as soon as the head falls on the ground. If the turban turns to the right, it is a good omen and they proceed on their nefarious business. Another way of consulting good omen is to watch the falling of the flowers from the garlands hung on both sides of the neck of Hanuman. If flowers on the right-side drop down first, it is considered as a permission granted by the god to start on their criminal excursions. The Donga Dasaris generally start on their raids with their whole family, wife and children following them. Before proceeding to commit crime they drink arrack and toddy. They always encamp in the outskirts of villages or towns; but men do not reside with women in camp during day time. The men and women meet during nights in jungles. The gang avoids halting in places where it intends to commit depredations. When women are seen together with men, the former neither seem to recognise the latter nor to own them at all. The Donga Dasari woman is very loose in her morals, and marriage ties are not considered sacred. Their immorality is confined to the members of the tribe and they do not have any dealings with outsiders for fear that children born to them of a father who is not a criminal

will fail to develop the hereditary criminal cleverness. The women are as criminal as the men, and they are adepts in the art of spying and of concealing and disposing of stolen property. The children are taught thieving by their mothers when they are 5 or 6 years' old. The mother takes her boy or girl to the nearest market and shows the child some cloth or vessel and asks it to bring it away. When it fails, it is thrashed, and, when stroke upon stroke falls upon its back, the only reply it is taught to give is that it knows nothing. Thus the children are as dangerous as the men, for they commit petty thefts and steal fowls, sheep, etc. They are also employed to drag away dogs from houses on the evening of the day fixed for attack. The drug used is the dhatura mixed with food. Confessions among the Donga Dasaris are very rare, nor will they point out their confederates. They will give false names and false caste when caught. They have a cipher language among themselves. The Donga Dasaris eat all kinds of food except pork and beef. As a class Donga Dasaris are daring criminals. There have been cases where these dangerous criminal gangs have assaulted Police officers. The lamentable death of the late Mr. Jugga Row, Inspector of Bezwada, was perpetrated by this gang of hardened habitual criminals. In order to escape, they will even murder their assailants.

35. How information is obtained. Adepts in the art of reciting holy hymns and verses from the Vedas in the guise of religious mendicants, the males gain free admission to the houses of respectable villagers and personally study at a glance the topography of the house and the position of the bolts and other things. The males and females, while selling beads and kunkuma respectively, gather information also. What cattle are to the Sugalis, what curry leaves (Karupillay) are to the Erukals, what feathers are to the Tottier Naicks or Kumbalathans, that poosalu-beads are to the Donga Dasaris. By fortune-telling with the aid of a palmyra book, these Byragees fish out information from people of all ranks who easily fall a prey to their machinations. Sometimes 12 or 15 decently dressed males putting on the

appearance of high class Naidus pretend to wait upon a grand-looking, richly attired man whom they set up as a rich Zamindar on a pilgrimage to the temple of Tirupati, in pursuance of a vow taken to present to the temple, on recovering from a bodily infirmity, an idol of his likeness and stature made in gold, silver, brass, copper and bell-metal, all mixed up, a portion of the required amount having been obtained by going abegging personally from door to door in different villages. They go inside the houses on the pretence of collecting useless utensils of brass, copper and bell-metal, and remain there sufficiently long to gather all available information required for committing offences. To add credibility to their pretensions, they produce registers maintained by them containing the names of their previous donors and sympathisers. After marking the houses of intended victims they go away only to return secretly after sometime, when you will hear series of house-breakings and dacoities in one night. When several crimes are reported in one and the same village in quick succession, the Donga Dasaris should always be suspected. Seldom do they require to visit a village a second time for the purpose of dacoities. If their attempt to gather information during their first visit fails, they make a second visit in a different disguise as Byraghees or Gosayees, or bead-sellers, or fortune-tellers. The second visit is a sure test of approaching burglary. At nights they do not stay in villages but stop in topes, near tanks, in temples at a distance from the village. Much valuable information is gathered by women, and they are adepts in the art of spying. The females go about abegging during nights singing Narapatto (a peculiar song). The males disguise themselves sometimes as Byraghees with Kavadi on their shoulder and pretend to be pilgrims to Tirupati, Rameswaram, Kasi and Jaganath. Sometimes women and children, accompanied by a few old men or youths, travel about the country in gangs ostensibly begging and selling beads. They communicate the information gathered in their travels to able-bodied men who commit crimes afterwards.

36. Stock-in-trade. The five ensignia of a religious mendicant—Garadāstambam, Tappai, Samacalam, conch, bell, peacock-feathers—have been referred to above. The house-breaking instrument they employ is called by them “Kuchi” or “Gadi-kol.” It is most ingeniously made, and is carried about by them on their begging tours. To the casual observer, it is a musical instrument like a Veena in shape. They call it Chula. On examining it closely you will find that it is composed of two parts, in one of which is concealed a sharp iron tool about 12 to 15 inches in length, octagon small-shaped, and tipped with steel. The “Kuchi-kol” makes no noise when it is employed for boring holes which all possess sharp and clearly defined edges. The Donga Dasaris also carry pieces of glass or the lancet-shaped knife to cut the threads of beads and jewels worn by sleeping women and children. Burnt matches and hard grains are found in the houses they have visited. The latter are thrown into the house before entrance to learn the position of any brass or copper-pots or boxes.

37. Modus Operandi. The Donga Dasaris commit all sorts of crime.

(1) *Theft* :—The women and children are addicted to petty thefts, while the male adults commit more heinous crimes. The presence of this class of criminals near the locality will be manifested by the series of petty thefts, thefts of fowls and thefts of cloths left outside the houses in streets for drying. They visit fairs, festivals, and places of public resort and commit thefts. The males and females are adepts in cutting jewels from necks of women in crowds. During fairs and festivals, the Donga Dasari and Alagiri females freely mix with all other people, mark such of the ladies as are laden with jewels and follow them and sleep side by side with them in mantapams and on pials, and when they fall asleep, cut away the jewels most dexterously and pass them off to their comrades who will be waiting. They are also known to suddenly divert the attention of the people, if it is necessary to steal a bag or a bundle they may have with them by side or used as pillows.

(2) *Railway Theft* :—The women and boys and girls are experts in stealing articles at the waiting rooms and booking offices of Railway stations. The quickness with which they pass on articles to adult members is marvellous. They are seldom caught red-handed. The males are adepts in getting into and alighting from running trains. They throw down the articles stolen from running trains, get down at the next station, get into the latrine and effect an escape to go back and pick up the articles thrown. If they are found out, they weep and lament as if they have missed the train and escape some time after. They are known to travel all over India for committing Railway thefts.

(3) *House-breaking* :—In their disguises, they go about from house to house making careful observations of the geography of the place. They also carry broken pieces of glass, and coloured chalk with which they generally mark out the exact spot by scratches, only intelligible to them on the walls of houses, near door frames and at other places where holes should be bored. Their means of effecting entrance into the house are of two kinds. They either effect entrance by climbing over the walls, or by boring a hole in the wall close to the bolt sufficiently large to admit of man's arm being inserted to draw aside the bolt. If houses could not be broken into by any other means than by climbing over them, they enter into houses only when they are sure that no resistance would be offered by inmates. On entering the house the first thing they will do is to have ready the back-yard door for effecting escape. When leaving the house they fasten the front doors. Jewels worn by sleeping women and children are dexterously cut off with pieces of glass or small lancet-shaped knives. On entering into a house they first examine boxes and if no valuable property is discovered, they leave no stone unturned to spot out the exact place of concealment of property. For this purpose they will upset all grain pots, rubbish, husk, etc. They will always arm themselves with clubs, and every man will keep in his waist about 5 or 6 stones to be hurled against the assailants for effecting escape. These stones must be picked up and carefully examined.

They will certainly tell the route they have taken. The house-breakings committed by these people can be very easily found out by the following:—

(1) The hole bored in the wall will be very *regular* at the edges all round, and it usually slopes downward towards the bolt. It will be sharp and clearly defined round the edges, and marks of the instrument may be detected, if a careful inspection of the breach in the wall is made.

(2) Scratches made by glass, pieces or chalk, will be found on the door frames near the bolt or on the walls. Sometimes you will find scratches on the lid of boxes or near the hinges to show that some sharp instrument was employed to force open the box.

(3) At the spot hard grains and not unfrequently burnt matches will be found. They are also known to throw small stones into the middle space (court-yard) of the house or on the roof to ascertain if the inmates are asleep or any body is awake.

(4) The burglary will not be single. The occurrence will be followed by more burglaries than one committed in the same night, unless a huge haul is had in a single crime, they seldom stop with committing one crime. House-breaking is their favourite crime as it is generally difficult for detection. Sometimes house-breakings culminate into dacoities if the inmates of the house are few in number, and if the chance of reaping a huge harvest is clear. Donga Dasaris carry away all sorts of valuables, jewels, clothing, vessels, etc. They are not known to steal grains.

(5) *Robbery and Dacoity*:—Donga Dasaris commit robbery and dacoity both on highways and in houses at small villages, often attended with hurt and murder. They leave their encampments in small parties of 4 or 5 and all join together at a convenient place from which they proceed in a body to commit dacoity in the place already settled. They don't wait for any absent members, but proceed on their errand, leaving behind marks and signs for the guidance of stragglers. The mark generally made is that of an arrow drawn on the earth by the foot. All the members take part in the crime. They first take care to

have the way for escape well-guarded so that they may not be intercepted. Some of their comrades remain here and there on the way and pelt stones to prevent external help or resistance. If possible, they commit series of dacoities on the roads and villages far away from their place of encampments. Generally their crimes are never single. During fairs and festivals and in places of public resort, in addition to their usual petty thefts, they lie in wait for people wearing jewels and attack them when they pass on the road.

(6) *Cheating*:—They pretend to make gold out of brass and deceive people. They are also known to inform probable receivers that they have stolen property for sale and take the intended purchaser with money to distant and lonely places and generally deceive by giving him brass and gilt jewels. If they find the purchaser too clever to be deceived by them, they give him real gold and silver jewels on the spot; but follow him unobserved and rob him of the property sold on his way back to his house.

38. Disposal of stolen property. The women are employed for the purpose of taking property from the scene of offence to the hiding places. So it is the women that have to be searched first, and they must be searched thoroughly; for they carry stolen property secreted even in their private parts. During house searches the women and children set up a howl along with the males, if the property is concealed within the house. As a rule the property will not be concealed within the house. It will be immediately disposed of to the local receivers who are arrack and toddy vendors of the place. It is impossible to recover stolen property from the males. The habitual receivers and women should be systematically watched to trace out property. They also send stolen property to their trusted receivers by concealing the same in some sundry things which are thrust into a gunny-bag which is despatched by rail as a railway parcel. Stolen property is also sent through registered parcels by post.

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YANADIS.

CHAPTER V.

Yanadis.

39. 'Origin, habitat, division. The Yanadis are a very interesting aboriginal class whose primitive home existed, according to Mullaly, in the wilds surrounding the Pulicat lake, where they, living in a state of barbarism, subsisted chiefly on the forest produce such as fruits, roots and game which they hunted at pleasure, until they were enslaved by the Reddis. As they remained in the primitive hunting and fishing state without possessing any culture or civilisation, endeavours were made by Government in various directions to ameliorate their condition, but to no avail. The opening of schools, the establishment of industries, and the assignment of land for cultivation, produced no good results, so much so, that in 1877 they were left to themselves. The head-quarters of the Yanadis is the Island of Sriharikota in the Nellore District, where the head of the tribe still lives. The Yanadis have recently been settled under the Criminal Tribes' Act near Bapatla. According to Thurston the division of the Yanadis into classes based on the kind of food they eat, the nature of occupation they follow, and the place they reside in, is as follows :—

A.—Non-Frog Eating.

(1) Reddi Yanadis or Munchi Yanadis. (2) Chenchus (classed by some as Yanadis.)

B.—Frog Eating or Kappala Yanadis.

(1) Challa (refuse eating) or Garapappa (dry land) or Chatla (tree) Yanadis. (2) Adavi Yanadis.

(a) *The Reddi Yanadis* (non-frog eaters) are a settled class employed as cooks by Panta Reddis. Very few of them possess lands. They do not associate themselves with other Kappala Yanadis whom they consider as social outcastes. They are decidedly less criminal than the other classes ; but the Reddi

Yanadis employed as Kavalgars or village-watchmen in the Kistna and Godavari districts have the notoriety of being dangerous and skilful burglars. Some say that the Reddi (Munchi) Yanadis were originally Chenchus who fled from the west and amalgamated themselves with the common Yanadis. Now they both live close together, but not intermingling, on the Nallamalais. They differ however in their social customs, and there is not much love lost between them. The Yanadis of North Arcot District are Chenchus, and they are non-frog eaters and do not allow frog-eaters (Kappala Yanadis) to touch their pots.

(b) *The Challa or Garapappa or Chatla Yanadis* hold an important place among the criminals of the Northern Districts. They are named Challas after their filthy habit of eating refuse. They are found in the Nellore District. Some of them live on dry lands and are therefore known as Garapappa. Others living in small sheds, bowers and other similar protections made of shrubs tied together and are called Chatla Yanadis. These Yanadis do not live in towns and villages; but prefer to live in huts far away from the outskirts of villages, eking out a miserable livelihood by collecting forest produce, hunting and snaring game, and doing other mean service to the villagers. They are sometimes employed as Kavalgars in the Kistna and Godavari Districts where they also commit burglaries.

(c) *The Adavi Yanadis, (Jungle men)* who are the most dangerous class of criminals, live in the Nellore District as the professional and hereditary burglars, like the Erukulas with whom they often associate for purposes of crime. There is also similarity between the two in person, dress and, to certain extent, in habits. They live a nomadic life, wandering from place to place without any temporary shed whatsoever. The Adavi Yanadi has been found to be irreclaimable. Mullaly mentions a peculiar class of Adavi Yanadis who live in the Godavari, Vizagapatam and Ganjam Districts, and are known as *Nakkala Vandlu*, Jackal snares, from their habit of catching and eating jackals. They call themselves Surpu Yanadis, and their head-quarters are in Palkonda, Vizagapatam District. They are less daring than their southern

confre. According to Thurston, the Somari or idle Yanadis live in the Kavali Taluk of the Nellore District by doing scavenging work and eating the refuse food thrown away by people from the leaf plate after a meal.

40. Appearance, dress. In appearance and dress, the Yanadis are like the Erukalas and the Irulas. They are generally of a medium stature and of a black colour. They allow hair to grow profusely on their heads, and sometimes the front part is shaved. The Reddi and Challa Yanadis possess "Mongolian features broad about the cheek bones, which are more or less prominent with a pointed chin, a slight moustache, no whiskers, and scant straggling beard over the forepart of the chin." Like other depressed classes they wear very scanty clothing. The male's dress consists of a dhoti (loin cloth) only. Some wear Goachi a narrow strip of cloth just broad enough to conceal nudity. They all wear a waist-string. The women wear coarse saris, but no bodice. Like the Korachas they wear brass-bangles and beads. They are well featured, but have a wild, timid, shrinking look.

41. Habits, Customs. Until quite recently, the Yanadi tribe remained under the guidance of a hereditary leader of Sriharkota who wielded immense power. But now the headman (Pedda Yanadi or Kulampedda) exercises general social control over a group of huts known as "gudem." Some Yanadis of the Kistna District are engaged as ploughmen, but this is their ostensible means of livelihood; for, they are better off than others following the same occupation. Yanadis have no tribal marks or party badges. The huts of the settled Yanadis are made of a frame work of bamboo bent into an arch with an entrance of about two feet square. Mr. Thurston says that the Yanadis live in low conical huts, rudely built of bamboo and palmyra leaves, grass, or millet stalks with a small entrance, through which grown up people have to creep. The hut affords protection from the sun and rain, but the Yanadis generally cook, eat and sleep outside. Their huts are not so well made as those of the Koravars, Joghies and Dommaras. The Yanadis know the forest flora

well, and the uses of the various trees and shrubs, which yield good firewood. They know the properties and uses of herbs and roots, with which they treat fevers, rheumatism, etc. They have their own remedies for cobra-bite and scorpion sting. They are quack doctors. The staple food of the Yanadis, apart from bazaar purchases, consists of the flesh of sambur deer, bear, porcupine, boar, bandicoot, rat, mungoose, etc., and vegetables and fruits. They do not eat keef. They are, like the Irulas of Chingleput, very partial to sour and fermented rice-water which is kept by the higher classes for cattle. Yanadis will not eat with Madigas or Paraias. They are addicted to much drinking, and are expert shikaries and anglers catching fish with a triangular net or wicker basket. They gather honey from beehives on hill tops and cliffs. They pose as prophets of human destinies, and like the Nilgiri Kurambas, pretend to hold intercourse with gods. The marriage ceremony is no indispensable necessity. The Adavi Yanadis avoid it, the Reddy Yanadis always observe it. Seduction and elopement are common occurrences, and divorce is easily obtained. Adultery is no serious offence; widows may live in concubinage; and pregnancy before marriage is no crime. A widow may take about ten husbands one after the other. Polygamy is common. They very cleverly make fire by friction with sticks.

42. °Crimes they commit. They are professional criminals who commit all sorts of crime. They are experts in committing highway-dacoity and robbery in an organized manner, using great violence. It is a settled fact that the Yanadis sometimes join with Erukakas in the commission of crimes attended with violence. The Pedda Yanadi or headman plans the campaign previously, and gangs of varying strength will leave their encampments and go long distances for the purpose. The party will break into two or more groups which are disposed at short intervals in ambush along the road. On the approach of a cart or passenger, the Pedda Yanadi gives the signal, when all the members rush out of the hiding place and commence operations. Bullocks are unyoked and bandies are upset and passengers are beaten mercilessly. If a

passenger has a weapon of offence, the headman attacks him first and snatches the weapon away. Women do not accompany them for committing dacoity and robbery. The commission of house dacoity is rare ; but sometimes burglaries culminate in house dacoities, if resistance is offered by the inmates of the house. They also commit house-breaking, and if they are unsuccessful in the first attempt they will try other houses without giving up the venture until a good haul is obtained. They occasionally commit cattle-lifting. Sheep or goat lifting by stealth or with violence is a favourite crime of the "settled" Yanadis.

Yanadis confess their own crimes readily, but will never implicate an accomplice.

43. How information is obtained. Among the settled Yanadis, the men gather information personally by going from house to house without attracting attention ; but among the wild Adavi Yanadis, women do this business while begging in villages. Generally liquor-shopkeepers are relied upon for the supply of information.

44. Disguises. Disguises are occasionally employed, and not unfrequently do they disguise themselves as Erukalas in order to throw suspicion on that class. The organized crimes with violence which were mainly attributed to the Erukalas have been shown by recent investigations to be the work of Yanadis.

45. Stock-in-trade. Their "Sikkaloo kol" is the favourite implement for committing house-breakings. It is an ordinary iron tool pointed at both ends, one end being fitted in a wooden handle. It is kept by them ostensibly for digging roots ; but is really their jemmy.

46. Disposal of property. The liquor-dealers are their favourite receivers of stolen property. The women are employed in the disposal of this property also. They, while selling mats or on their begging tours, cleverly tempt avaricious women into buying their stolen articles. They sometimes carry stolen goods in their marketing baskets to the village Komate (Bania.)

CHAPTER VI.

Banjaras, Sugalies, Lumbadies.

(*A class of traders, herdsmen, cattle-breeders, cattle-lifters and dacoits.*)

47. Origin, habitat. This criminal class is known by different names in different parts of India as Banjaras, Brinjaris, Lumbadies, Lamans, Lambanis, Sugalies, Charans, Mathurias, etc. By some, Sugali is said to be a corruption of *suparee* (betel-nut) because they formerly traded largely therein. But accounts of them in the various different provinces vary in a rather confusing manner. We do not proceed to describe the various tribes or sub-divisions of the class; but give the characteristic features of the criminal and troublesome division that infests the Deccan and the Carnatic. In the Madras Presidency, the Lumbadies are also known by the two appellations Sugalies and Banjaris. The Rev. J. Cain points out a distinction between these two. He says that the "Sugalils do not travel in such large companies as the Banjarils, nor are their women dressed as gaudily as the Banjari women." It is, however, noted in the Census Report 1891, that enquiries show that Lumbadies and Sugalis are practically the same. Sir Harold Stuart states that the names Sugali, Lumbadi and Brinjari "seem to be applied to one and the same class of people, though a distinction is made. The Sugalis are those who have permanently settled in the district, the Lumbadies are those who commonly pass through from the coast to Mysore, and Brinjaris appear to be those who come down from Hyderabad or the Central Provinces." Mr. W. Francis notes that in the Bellary District, the Lumbadies do not recognise the name Sugali. For all Police purposes it is expedient to regard them as one class. The class which is found in Southern India and the Deccan is descended from the Rajputs and the Brahmins. It is essentially a Hindu class, though a Muhammadan tribe, according to Mr. Gayer, is found in the United Provinces. One of their principal sub-castes, according to Mr. Thurston, is known under the name of Labhani, and this name is often applied to

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LAMBADY WOMEN.

the whole tribe. Mullaly states that the Bhutyas form the principal class among the Lumbadies and that they move about with large drives of pack-bullocks through the Ceded Districts occasionally visiting the Southern Districts. Before the advent of the railways in India, these Lumbadies were the carriers of the country and they monopolised the trade in grain, salt, etc. The Banjaries are said to have accompanied the Moghal armies to the South, early in the 17th century, as grain carriers, and from them started the Deccan branch. Orm mentions the Lumbadies as having supplied the Comte de Bussy's army with store, cattle and grain, when besieged by the Nizam's army at Hyderabad. They were employed by the English in their last war with Tippu Sultan of Mysore. It is noted by Wilks that this travelling grain merchants furnished the English army under Cornwallis with grain during the Mysore war. When their trade was ruined, many have betaken themselves to agricultural pursuits. In Cuddappah, Kurnool, Chittoor, and Anantapur Districts members have settled down and hold land and live in respectable houses. The Lumbadies found in H. H. The Nizam's Dominions are the most daring and dangerous criminals. They commit all heinously grave crimes of dacoity and robbery even attended with murder. They generally cross the Tungabadra river and commit a series of dacoities in the Kistna and Kurnool Districts. In 1878 a notorious gang of Lambadi dacoits settled itself in Mysore near the village of Shikarpur and committed series of dacoities, robberies, cattle-liftings and house-breakings throughout the province, but fortunately this gang was broken up in 1884. Still, however, there may be seen notorious gangs living in that province. In the Chittoor District they are found in jungly tracts living chiefly by collecting firewood and jungle produce. In the Bellary and Kurnool Districts they are wood-cutters, carriers and coolies, but some of them settled down and became cultivators. In the Vizagapatam District they possess a fine breed of bullocks. A large number of Lumbadies have been settled at Guntur.

46. Appearance, dress.

(a) *Males*:—The men are fine muscular fellows, capable of enduring long and fatiguing marches. They are tall, sturdy,

well-built and fair in colour. Their ordinary dress is a *dhoti* or *cholna* (loose-knicker-bockers), coat or *pairahan*, head-cloth, coloured or white and frequently gaudy turbans on festive occasions. Among the more well-to-do, the *pugri* worn is often large and of red material, an *uparni* or *roomal* or shoulder-cloth being carelessly folded over it when the wearer leaves home. Their costume and the type of physiognomy conform to those of Marwadi Rajputs or Maharattas of good family. They also wear a considerable amount of jewellery.

(b) *Women* :—The women are comely and mostly of superior physique. They are fair and above the average height. They are very interesting figures and can be easily identified by the peculiar kind of their dress and the profusion of jewels they wear. In some places they are bold and talkative, elsewhere shy and retiring, after the fashion of Marwadi women. Their dress consists of "*Lainga*" or "*ghagra*" which is a sort of skirt or gown. It is generally made of bright coloured cloth or of coarse Karwar cloth dyed red, blue or green, with a quantity of quaint embroidery. Their *Odni* which is a head and body scarf of the same material is profusely embroidered and ornamented with beads, shells, and looking glass. It is fastened in at the waist and hangs at the side with a quantity of tassels and strings of cowries. The "*cholee*" of bodice, loose in front, open in the back, covers the bosom and is tied by variegated cords at the back, the ends of the cords being ornamented with cowries and beads. Their jewels made of brass, horn, bone and silver are very numerous and include strings of beads 10 or 20 rows with a cowree as a pendant called the "*cheed*" threaded on horse hair, a silver "*hasali*" (necklace), a sign of marriage equivalent to the *tali*. Brass or horn bracelets, 10 or 12 in number, extending to the elbow on either arm with a "*guzera*" or piece of embroidered silk, one inch wide, tied to the right wrist. Anklets of ivory or horn are only worn by married women; they are removed on the death of the husband. "*Pachala*" or silk embroidery adorned with tassels and cowries is also worn as an anklet by all women. The nose ornament is called "*Mukaram*" and the ear ornament "*Kania*" which is a silver pendant from

the upper part of the ear attached to a silver chain which hangs to the shoulder. They wear a large number of silver, brass and lead rings in their fingers. They pay little attention to cleanliness; their hair, once plaited, is not combed or opened perhaps for months. Sir Harold Stuart writes "that married women are distinguished from the unmarried in that they wear their bangles between the elbow and shoulder, while the unmarried have them between the elbow and wrist. Unmarried girls may wear black bead necklets, which are taken off at marriage, at which time they first assume the ravikkai or jacket. Matrons also use an ear-ring called *guriki* to distinguish them from widows or unmarried girls." According to Mullaly "the hair is, in the case of unmarried women, unadorned, brought up and tied in a knot at the top of the head. With married women it is fastened, in like manner, with a cowry or a brass button, and heavy pendants or *gujuris* are fastened at the temples. This latter is an essential sign of marriage, and its absence is a sign of widowhood."/

49. Habits, customs. (a) *Thandas*. As Lumbadies are not admitted into village communities and societies, they live separately at some distance from established villages. They live in detached clusters of rude huts called 'thandas'. A Lumbadi hut which is made of grass and palmleaf, generally consists of only one small room which serves as kitchen, dining and bed room and where men, women and children are huddled together. The cattle are generally tied up outside in any available spot near their huts, so that the whole village is a sort of cattle-pen interspersed with huts. When on the move they live in palls or tents made of stout coarse cloth fastened with ropes, and they carry them from place to place with their goods and chattles on their pack bullocks. They seldom make long marches except when on predatory excursions.

(b) *Naick*.—Each *thanda* has a headman called the "Naick," whose word is law, and whose office is hereditary. The *thanda* is named after the *naick* and he is regarded with great reverence and credited with supernatural powers. He

takes an active part in the commission of crime and receives two shares of the spoil in the division. He looks after the families of the convicted persons during their absence in jail. He settles all caste disputes and levies fine. He selects men from his *thanda* to proceed on criminal excursions.

Disguises. In order to obtain information, Banjaras occasionally disguise themselves as Lingayets and Brahmins; but, for the actual commission of crime, disguises are not assumed. To baffle identification they muffle up their faces and even smear them with ashes or charcoal powder.

They are clever herdsmen and are frequently employed by villagers to tend their cattle. These give information to the gang. They are superstitious people, and their favourable and unfavourable signs are the same as those believed in by most criminal classes. Lumbadies use considerable violence. If resistance is offered, the victim is either stoned, or beaten with clubs, or stabbed to death. In the face of resistance they get excited and resort to very great violence and cause death. After the commission of dacoity or highway robbery, they call a short halt a mile or so from the scene of the offence and then take an easy, overhaul the spoil and compare notes before final departure for their *thanda*.

Lambadies are allowed to marry women of other castes which are not socially inferior to them. Infant marriage though allowed is not practised. Oaths made are held to be most binding. As a class, they are particularly fond of music and dancing, and the men and women join together in revels. They are fond of tobacco smoking from hookas at home and away from home from *chilams* or cleverly rolled leaf pipes (*chuttas*). *Chilams* are rude earthen smoking pipes without the tube. They are also fond of eating betel-nut (*pan-supari*) which they always keep in bags well-ornamented with cowrie shells or looking-glass and profusely embroidered. The discovery of such articles at the scene of crime point to Lumbadies as the culprits, unless there is reason to suppose that Kaikadies or some other criminals may have deliberately deposited such articles in order to divert

suspicion. The women have been known to take a leading part in dacoities and to beat off an attack by villagers on a gang of Lumbadies engaged in a serious village dacoity.

50. Crimes Committed.

(a) *The more serious forms are:—*

(1) High way robbery and dacoity both on roads and in dwelling houses, but chiefly on roads.

(2) Cattle-lifting in which they are experts and also sheep dacoity.

(3) House-breaking in which they do not excel at all. Therefore they very seldom attempt to commit this offence.

(b) *Other offences committed by them are :—*

(1) Grain thefts which are committed in the early hours of morning.

(2) Sheep thefts.

(3) Kidnapping of children and women.

(4) Pilfering at nights from off carts both moving and standing at halting places like the Koravars.

(5) Illicit distillation of liquor. This is done largely in the Bellary and Kurnool Districts.

(6) Smuggling of opium in loads and pack saddles. On arrival at home the opium is concealed under ground and retailed to opium eaters.

(7) Levy of black-mail for the restoration of stolen cattle like the Kallars and Marawars of Madura, Tinnevely and Trichinopoly Districts.

51. Modus Operandi.

(a) *Highway robbery and dacoity :—*If a solitary cart passes along a road, three or four will waylay it, and, by overpowering the cartmen, they compel them to deliver cash and valuables in their possessions. To attack a string of carts a large number is engaged. One peculiarity is that during day time they attack bandies on roads leading through solitary tracts or hilly country. First they deliver a

volley of stones on the bandies from a distance and then the main body comes to close quarters using freely sticks and other weapons. Even swords and guns are used for intimidation. A small body of men is stationed at the approaches of the road, and they guard them by using slings and stones and thus prevent people from going to help the victims. During the commission of crime they will never talk, but give signals only. When going away after the offence, they would first go in a direction opposite to their real destination dropping valueless articles as they go and then split up and travel by unfrequented roads to a place on the opposite direction. They throw worthless articles on the road to mislead the police and place them on a wrong scent. They also commit dacoities and robberies while a *thanda* is on the move. The women take charge of the "thanda" and the men hastily proceed to a distant place previously fixed, rapidly perpetrate a dacoity there and come back to their *thanda* without raising any suspicion. The house-dacoity will be confined to isolated houses which are situated at the outskirts of the village. When delivering an attack, Banjaras arm themselves with sticks often cut from trees enroute, slings, stones, sickles, and if obtainable, swords, and guns. Sometimes potash-bombs are exploded to frighten villagers and create an impression that the gang carries fire arms.

(b) *Cattle thefts*.—Sheep and cattle are either removed from sheds and pens or driven away from flocks and herds in the open, the latter sometimes mixed up with the Banjaras' own animals. Sometimes a dozen or more cattle disappear from village and are driven off singly by different routes to an appointed meeting place. Relays of men are posted at suitable intervals between the *thanda* and the scene of the proposed crime. Banjaras, like the Kallars, are very skilful in changing the entire appearance of animals stolen and ward off identification. Horns are trimmed, the shape of the ears altered and brands put on.

(c) *House-breakings* :—These are seldom attempted and their handi-work was very clumsy until late. They employ the ordinary crowbar for boring holes and they seem to progress

marvellously in this direction. Their house-breakings, if resistance is offered, ripen into house dacoities.

52. Concealment and disposal of stolen property. Property is not concealed in a *thanda*; it is buried in the neighbourhood in some convenient spot such as old wells, canals, river-beds. Small articles of value are concealed in the folds of the women's dress or sewn into the bullock packs, or hidden in pots containing cooked food. Gunthrope says that the Brinjari women, when taken unawares, deposit small articles of jewellery in cooking utensils and say that cooking is in progress. These utensils should be carefully examined by the Police. Cattle are disposed of by ones or twos at a distance from the scene of offence. Stolen ornaments are usually not distributed among the members of the gang; they are turned into cash, the Naick getting two shares. Their "receivers" are chiefly liquor vendors, Lingayets, Marwadis, goldsmiths, and in certain places village officers.

CHAPTER VII.

Veypur Pariahs.

53. Origin, habitat The Veypur Pariahs are a class of professional criminals who live in the villages of the western portion of Virudhachellum Taluq and in the villages of Kallakurichi Taluq bordering on Virudhachellum Taluq. The thirty-two villages in which the Pariahs are found are designated by a common appellation of "Koliputtu." The original home of the Pariahs was in Gingee, which their adventurous and enterprising spirit impelled them to abandon in search of "fresh fields and pastures new." At the special invitation of Kasi Vasi Bala Sannari Veera Soora Pandarathan, Zamindar of Endal, Virudhachellum Taluq, they settled themselves in their present abode as servants and subordinate revenue officers of the Zamindar. As they possessed a superior physique, a bold spirit and an undaunted courage, they were employed by the Zamindar for the collection of rents from the ryots who, on various pretences, fell into arrears. The Zamindar found the Pariahs more than a match for his turbulent and refractory tenants who soon discovered that any resistance to the power of these foreign mercenaries resulted in the forcible distraint and attachment of their moveable property in satisfaction of the arrears of rent. They became in fact the chief power in the Zamindary. For sometimes these Pariahs were zealous and faithful in the discharge of their duties to the Zamindar; but afterwards they began to oppress the ryots and extort money from them. Their oppression, tyranny and highhandedness day by day increased to such an extent that they were held in great dread by the people who began to hate them also. With the decline of the Zamindar dynasty the Pariahs were left to themselves without any profession or other honest means of livelihood. Their natural aversion to agriculture, prompted them to lead a life of crime, which was characterized by the commission of theft, housebreaking, cattle-theft, robbery and dacoity. From their criminal

habits they earned the appellation of "Thiruttu" or thieving Pariahs. For the purpose of the restitution of stolen property to owners, they borrowed a system of black-mail known as Tuppu Cooly (clue hire) which was in vogue among the neighbouring Maravars and Kallars of the Madura and Tinnevely districts. Now their sphere of operations extend to the whole of the South Arcot, North Arcot, Chingleput Districts and to the town of Madras.

54. Appearance, dress, disguise. The Veypur Pariahs are a dark-skinned, muscular and medium-sized race differing little from the surrounding people in physiognomy. At home they are very poorly dressed with a single dirty cloth which serves as a dhoti. They generally have another cloth tied round their waist. Disguises are only assumed when they start from their villages on depredatory excursions abroad. On those occasions their dress will be neat, clean and even gaudy like that of the high caste Hindus. Valuable laced and silk bordered upper and lower cloths, fine coats, decent turbans, velvet caps, country slippers and other articles of dress of high life are invariably put on by them to pass off as respectable Mudaliars and Vellalaks. Some of the Pariahs who wear the sacred thread pose themselves as Chetties and Brahmins. They smear sacred ashes on their foreheads and also put on sandal or other caste marks, and bear rudraksha malai and other insignia of sanctity. With the help of these disguises they freely gain admission to caste chuttrams, eating houses, coffee clubs and the like and there reap a bumper harvest by a series of thefts and burglaries without giving rise to a slight suspicion. The Tamil which they talk on these occasions will be pure, fluent and free from slang expressions much in use amongst the lower orders.

55. Habits, Customs. The Pariahs are, for the most part, a settled people who confine themselves to their own particular localities, but occasionally leave their villages for depredatory excursions abroad. In their own villages they have thatched houses which are like those of the ordinary villagers and are situa-

ted in quarters set apart for themselves on the outskirts of villages. Unlike the ordinary Pariahs of villages who are hard-working coolies and thriving and peaceful agriculturists, the Veypur Pariahs are a lazy lot who take to cultivation only to serve as an ostensible means of livelihood. Though they usually own a few acres of dry lands (swajina lands), they neglect them so much or lease them to others that they are not capable of providing them with an adequate means of living for the maintenance of their ever-increasing families. When they go to do any cooly work, you can be rest assured that the work was undertaken as a means of getting information likely to be of use to them in a criminal undertaking. The Veypur Pariahs are Valluvars by caste ; and the Valluvans are by far the most respectable of the Pariahs, inasmuch as they act as "gurus" or spiritual pastors to the others. Taking advantage of this fact, the Veypur Pariahs wear "rudraksham," "sacred-thread" and "holy ashes" only to dupe people. They worship Thasudiyan of K. Mailon, Manjappa Swami of Iyanarpolium, and Muniappan of Kothanur. Each family has its own special family deity. They are very highly superstitious and strictly observe omens before they start on a depredatory excursion. They also consult their tutelary deities to whom animal sacrifices and pujas are offered. When they return to their homes after a successful mission with a good booty, a portion of the proceeds of the stolen property is set apart for offering pujahs to their gods who granted them success. This occasion is taken advantage of for all sorts of merry-making and excessive drinking. They pay particular attention to the omens indicated by lizards, crows, owls, snakes, jackals. The chirping of a lizard in front, the flight of a crow across the path from left to right, the crawling of a snake in front, etc., are good signs, and the hooting of a solitary owl to the left is an unpropitious one. The Pariahs observe omens not only at the time of starting, but also during the course of the journey. They will take particular care to return back to their homes during auspicious hours of the day. The marriages are confined to amongst the members of their own class. The widow marriages are allowed, and polygamy is

permissible though bigamy is very common. All matrimonial disputes are settled by the Poliyagar of the locality, and this worthy exercises a full control over the community in all social matters. He presides at their caste punchayets and punishes the delinquents. When a woman behaves unfaithfully towards her husband, the poligar of the place takes cognisance of the case referred to him for disposal, summons the parties, hears evidence adduced on each side, and punishes the seducer by the infliction of a very heavy fine. A portion of the fine goes to the pockets of the poliyagar, a small portion is awarded as a compensation to the aggrieved husband and the balance is handed over to the Pariah community for feasting and drink. Morality of the women is on the whole good; but sometimes the Udayars of the place enjoy the special privilege of maintaining Pariah concubines, and the Udayar women bestow their favours on a Pariah. The Pariah marriages are performed with much eclat and the bride is presented with a lot of brass vessels and jewels as dowry. Their attachment to the family of the poligar is so much that whenever any death takes place, the Pariah dependants get their heads shaved and observe the mourning in the same way as if a personal bereavement has befallen them. Their dietary is not like that of ordinary Pariah; for they scrupulously avoid eating beef. They eat any other kind of flesh including pork. They are addicted to much drinking.

56. Stock-in-trade. The house-breaking implement employed by them is generally called "Arasu Kuchi," which is an iron instrument somewhat similar to a plough-share about 18 inches long. They always carry a bamboo stick and a gunny bag with them, and the latter forms a convenient receptacle for their stolen property.

57. Modus Operandi. The Veypur Pariahs have earned a notoriety as expert thieves, cattle-lifters and house-breakers. They very rarely commit any robbery or dacoity. They use violence to their victims only in cases of self-defence; but when any member of theirs is caught, even extreme violence sometimes

resulting in murder will be used to rescue him. All will join to make an united attack upon the captors. Burglary is usually committed in the following ways:—

(1) By boring a hole in the wall.

(2) By entering into the house through the inter-spaces between the wall and eaves of the roof.

(3) By making a hole near the bolt of the door sufficiently large to admit of a man's arm being inserted to draw aside the bolt to open the door. As soon as the entrance is effected, their first care is to see that the means of exit and escape in case of alarm is ready. About two or three comrades remain outside to receive the spoil and to offer help to the inside men when necessary. These Pariahs are dexterous cattle-lifters, and the animal lifted is invariably taken to a reserve forest and tied there in a secluded place. The animal is restored back to the owner on payment of "tuppoo-cooly" or clue hire. The property of persons who lodge complaints with the Police, are not restored back under any circumstances. In other cases the entire property is not returned although the owner has paid the full amount of tuppoo cooly. The Pariahs are in the habit of stealing bags from rarts going along the roads, and the removal is effected so noiselessly and cleverly from the offside of the cart that the driver seldom suspects any foul play. They have never been known to waylay the carts of Government officials although they proceed along the solitary roads singly and under tempting circumstances.

58. Patrons, Receivers. Their patrons and receivers of stolen property are generally the Udayans, the descendants of the Zamindars, and their females, who also take a prominent part in transactions regarding stolen property. As soon as the Pariahs return to their homes after committing depredations abroad, they deliver up all the stolen goods including vessels, jewels and valuable clothes to the Udayans or their women. They change the identity of the brass vessels by inscribing their own names on them. In return they pay the Pariahs a very low value just sufficient for their daily maintenance and toddy. When male

members are absent from their homes on their criminal excursions, it is the duty of the Udayans to advance money to the females for their daily necessities of life. Should these Pariahs get into trouble, the Udayans engage counsel for their defence and pay the necessary fees. In some cases they also appear as defence witnesses.

59. How information is obtained. The Veypur Pariahs rely upon their own efforts to procure any information they are in need of; but occasionally they take into confidence the other Pariahs of the locality and gather information through them. Of course the information obtained through this source is first subjected to careful scrutiny and, if necessary, personal verification before any action is taken on it. The informers are generally rewarded for their information.

N.B.—For additional information see Appendix I.

CHAPTER VIII.

Kallars.

80. Origin, habitat. The Kallars (from a word meaning 'a thief, a robber') are such daring, violent and lawless thieves; cattle-lifters, robbers and dacoits of the Madura, Ramnad, Tinnevely, Trichinopoly and Tanjore districts and Pudukota State that the name is very justly applied to them. The original home of the Kallars appears to have been Tondamandalam, and the head of this class, the Rajah of Pudukotai, is to this day called the Tondaiman. "The Chola country or Tanjore," Mr. Francis writes, "seems to have been the original abode of the Kallars before their migration to the Pudukotai kingdom, after its conquest by the Cholas about the eleventh century." It is believed that the Kallans, the Maravans and the Aghambadiyans have a common ancestry, though they are now regarded as distinct castes. According to Mr. Mullaly the tribe is divided into two main divisions—the Mel Nadu or western country and the Keel Nadu or eastern country. The extensive possessions gained by the Kallars near Dindigal is known as Mel Nadu. The Keel Nadu comprises of the villages around Melur near Madura. In the Census Report of 1901, it is recorded that in "Madura (including Ramnad) the Kallars are divided into ten endogamous divisions which are territorial in origin." These are 1. Mel Nadu, 2. Sirukudi Nadu, 3. Vellor-Nadu, 4. Mallakottai Nadu, 5. Pakaheri, 6. Kandramanickam, 7. Kandaveri, 8. Puramalai Nadu, 9. Tennilai Nadu, and 10. Palaya Nadu. The Kallars call themselves as Ambalakarans; but the Kallars of Pudukota style themselves as "Seruvasal" and those in the Trichinopoly district go by the name of 'Visanganathu Kallars.' The Ambalakarans are the descendants of the Kallars of Valanadu, the capital of which was Conjeevaram. The Valanadu Kallars first settled themselves in Malur as servants of the Vellalabs of that place; but subsequently they gained superiority over their masters who were not

only reduced to poverty, but were, on account of the violent and aggressive conduct of their servants, induced to abandon their villages and hereditary possessions and to emigrate to foreign countries. The Kallars denominated their newly acquired territory as "Than-arasu Nadu," *i. e.*, independent country. During the Nayakan dynasty of Madura, the Kallars paid no tribute to the then government which exercised no control or authority over them.

In the early period of the British rule in India they became so turbulent that Capt. Rumley was sent with troops to check them. It is on record that, during the Trichinopoly war, the horses of Clive and Stringer Lawrance were stolen by two Kallan brothers. The visitors to the Tirumal Naick's palace at Madura are still shown the massive roof of the sleeping apartment through which a Kallan, according to a tradition, bore a hole, got down the chains of the cot hung from the roof and stole the royal jewels. Although after the annexation of the province of Madura to the Company's territories in 1801, the Kallars changed their habits and submitted to order, yet they took to marauding and to making themselves obnoxious by their grave crimes against property. What exasperated the people was their system of black-mail, called Kudikaval, under which system the Kavalgars (Kallars) of the villages received fees and free lands for undertaking to protect the property of the villagers against theft or to restore an equivalent in value for any thing lost. When people did not pay their fees or fell in arrears with their payments, the Kavalgars began to lift cattle and to set fire to houses. The people who suffered most at the hands of the Kallars were the shepherds (Konans and Idaiyans) whose sheep and goat formed a convenient subject for the Kallars' raids. The shepherds started the Anti-Kallar agitation which rapidly spread throughout the Madura and Tinnevely districts. The other communities joined with the Konans and took oath on their ploughs to dispense with the services of the Kallars. They arranged for watchmen among themselves to patrol the villages at night; but the Kallars, in one or two places,

gathered in large bodies to overawe the villagers, and serious riots followed from 1893 to 1896. The Kallar villages in Dindigul and other places were attacked and burnt. The result of the anti-Kallar movement was that the Kudikaval system came to an end. The Kallars now commit all crimes against property, and they are like their neighbours the Maravars, expert cattle-lifters. The Kallars of Keelacudi, Usilampatti, Tirumangalam and other places in the Madura District are responsible for a great number of crimes. They have now been settled under the Criminal Tribes' Act.

61. Appearance, dress, disguises. By Sir Harold Stuart "the Kallars are said to be a middle sized, dark-skinned tribe." They are bold and high spirited and of good physique. They are not very particular as to their outward appearance, dress, etc. The men wear a coarse white cloth round their loins and an upper cloth or angavastiram also of coarse material, and a red handkerchief; they seldom wear jackets. The women are also scantily clad: a coarse white sari completes their attire; they never wear the bodice. Both males and females have their ears bored and stretched by having heavy rings made of lead so as to expand their ear-lobes down their shoulders. Altercations between women constantly lead to one or both parties having the ears violently pulled asunder. Their jewels and ornaments are similar to those worn by other Hindus of inferior social standing. They generally wear a special kind of ear-rings (Kadukans). It is a curious fact that the Puramalai nadu Kallans practise the rite of circumcision. The Sirukudi Kalla married women use a tali on which a crescent and star is engraved, but other married women tie horse hair round the neck in the place of tali. The richer Kallans substitute for the horse hair, a necklace of many strands of fine silver wire. In Tirumangalam, the women often hang round their necks a most curious brass and silver pendant, six or eight inches long, and elaborately worked. The Kallars grow their hair on head very long. This privilege is not granted to boys below 15 years. *Disguises are not employed by Kallars, but while committing crime, they sometimes muffle up their faces.*

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KALLAR CHILDREN.

62. Habits, customs. The Kallars are, in the social scale, considered to be of a low caste, ranking above the Pariahs. They are, however, allowed to approach Brahmins. They profess to be worshippers of Siva, but in reality they are merely demon worshippers. Their chief deity is Alagarswami, (Kalla Alagar) whose temple is 12 miles from Madura. The Kallan dacoits and thieves invoke the aid of this god before they set out on marauding expeditions, and if successful, they set apart a portion of their ill-gotten gains for the Alagar temple. They also worship Minatchi of Madura. They have, besides, their Kolathivam (family gods) who are also consulted before starting on depredations. During Chitrai festival at Madura, the Kallars have the right of dragging with a rope the car of Alagarswami. The Kallars do not hesitate to steal a god and to dig up the coins or jewels that are generally buried under an idol. They observe omens before starting on their depredatory excursions, and their household gods are consulted in this way. "Two flowers—one red and the other white—are placed before the idol (Kalla Alagar). The white flower is the emblem of success : a child of tender years is then told to pluck a petal of one of the two flowers and the undertaking rests upon the choice made by the child" (Mullaly). "The Kallar women have all the ill-qualities and evil dispositions of men ; in most of their actions they are inflexibly vindictive and furious on the least injury, even on suspicion, which prompts to the most violent revenge without any regard to the consequences." Formerly when a quarrel takes place between two women, the insulted woman would bring her child to the house of the aggressor and kill it at her door to avenge herself; but this cruelly barbarous custom has died out now. The most proper marriage alliance in the opinion of a Kallan is between a man and the daughter of his father's sister, and, if an individual has such a cousin, he must marry her, whatever disparity there may be between their respective ages. A boy of fifteen must marry such a cousin, even if she be thirty or forty years old. Failing a cousin of this sort he must marry his aunt, or his niece, or any near relative. A divorce is easily obtained

on either side. Kallar women are generally chaste. They seldom join in crimes; but assist the men in the disposal of stolen property. The Kallans, as a class, are very fond of bull-baiting for which sport they train their animals very well. A large number of fierce bulls are let loose with their horns containing valuables, amidst the din of tom-tom and harsh music and the shouts of thousands of spectators which terrifies and bewilders them. They run madly about, very much excited. Young Kallars will run after the particular bull and recover the valuables tied to its horn. This is called the *Jellikuttu*. The best Jellikuttus are to be seen in Tirumangalam, Melur and Madura taluks. The head man who is called 'Ambalakar' presides at all caste panchayets. His office is hereditary. He receives small fees at domestic ceremonies, is entitled to the first betel and nut, and settles caste disputes. The Kallans are usually farmers or field-labourers, but many of them are employed as village or other watchmen, and not a few depend for their subsistence upon the proceeds of thefts and robberies. They regard a robber's occupation as discreditable neither to themselves, nor to their fellow castemen, for the simple reason that they consider robbery a duty, and a right sanctioned by descent. The Kallars are a settled race. They do not generally wander far away from their homes for purposes of crime; but occasionally take advantage of the railway system to extend their depredations in Salem, Coimbatore, Tanjore, and South Arcot districts.

63. Stock-in-trade. The Kallars usually arm themselves with "Vellari Thadis" or clubs, and occasionally with knives of the Malabar pattern. They also provide themselves with "aruvāls" and slings, and they are very proficient in the use of the latter. Their house-breaking implement is called "Kunno kol." They occasionally use "augers" for boring holes in doors.

64. Modus operandi. The Kallars are addicted to dacoity, robbery, house-breaking, theft and cattle-stealing.

(1) *Dacoity*.—All kinds of dacoities—house dacoity, road dacoity and field dacoity—are perpetrated with success, and

they are the favourite pastime of the Kallars. Dacoities on high roads leading from Madura, Sivaganga, Tirupatur, Usilampatti, Ammanayakanoor, Periyakolam, Dindigul and other places are of very frequent occurrence. It is the duty of the leader of the gang to gather information about the movements of the intended victims which is very easily ascertained at the bandy pettahs or stands. A party of 15 or 20 Kallars under its leader proceeds to the dangerous part of the road and begins the attack on the bandy selected by first hurling stones by means of slings against it. When no response is made, the dacoits approach near the bandy and threaten the bandy driver who is also beaten with clubs. The bandy is dragged to the side of the road or into a ditch and then upset. The unfortunate travellers are forced to sit at the side of the road with their backs to the cart and their faces to the ground, while their baggage is searched for valuables by the remainder. Generally the dacoits don't employ any disguise; but when they commit depredations near their native place, they generally muffle up their faces. They exchange signals by whistling or by scribbling on the ground. Another important peculiarity of the Kallars is that while engaged in the commission of crime names are never mentioned: they address each other as the "big man," the "little man," using ambiguous terms to baffle all attempts towards identification. They take clubs from home to the scene of dacoity and do not cut sticks for the purpose from trees on the way. If any attempt to capture them is made, they very freely use slings or pelt stones. They don't hesitate to attack bandies of Government officers, no matter whether they be Europeans or Indians.

(2) *House-breakings*.—They are committed in various ways. Generally the hole in the wall is bored under the door frame and its dimension will be about $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft. $\times$ $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft. You will sometimes find a hole of small dimension, in which case a lad of diminutive size creeps in and opens the door for the elders who afterwards enter the house through the opened door. The hole in the wall is level with the surface of the ground-floor is

also bored, and the bugglee operation, *i.e.*, boring a small hole by the door frame near the bolt, which is pushed aside by means of hands passed through the hole, is also common. They remove all kinds of property. Jewels worn by sleepers are seldom touched.

(3) *Cattle-thefts*.—Cattle-theft is the most popular calling among the Kallars. They are clever at handling animals, and the stolen animals are driven great distances (as much as 20 or 30 miles) on the right of theft, and are then hidden for the day either in a friend's house, or among hills and jungles. The next night they are taken still further, and again hidden. Pursuit is by this time hopeless, as the owner has no idea even in which direction to search. Sometimes relays of men are posted at suitable intervals between the place where the animal is to be concealed or carried away and the scene of crime. Another peculiar but audacious type of cattle-lifting is perpetrated in the Madura and Ramnad districts. During nights when bandy-drivers generally go to sleep allowing their bulls automatically drag bandies along the road in a string one after another, some two Kallars will quietly place themselves one on each side of the yoke taking the place of bulls which will be unyoked and removed far away. The Kallars will drag the bandy for some distance and then throw down the yoke and run away. Like the Sugalis, the Kallars very skilfully change the appearance of the animal to baffle identification. The horns are twisted, new brands are put, ears are cut, and tails are cut off or altered in some way or other. The animals after undergoing these changes, appear quite different, and they are either taken to different cattle-fairs and sold or sent to Tuticorin to be shipped for Ceylon.

65. Tuppu-Cooly. It is a system much in vogue amongst the Kallars and Marawars of Madura, Ramnad, Tinnevely and Trichinopoly by which the owners who lose their cattle could recover them on payment of tuppu-cooly or clue-hire to certain known agents engaged in the trade. Whenever any cattle is stolen the owner proceeds at once to the nearest agent or go-between and offers him a reward if he will bring back the cattle. The tuppu-cooly

agents have their own spies or informants everywhere to help him. The reward or tuppu-cooly ranges from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ the price of the animal. When tuppu-cooly is paid, the owner is told to go to the spot, which is usually a lonesome one in the neighbourhood, where he is sure to find the animal tied to a babool tree. If the owner reports the theft to the Police, no Kallan will help him to recover his animals, which are eventually sold in other districts or in Travancore, or even sent across from Tuticorin to Ceylon. It is on account of this that cattle thefts are rarely reported to the police, for the people know that if a complaint is made to the authorities, recovery of lost animal through tuppu-cooly system is impossible, unless some mutual friends intervene and work mightily for the recovery, in which case the restoration is through the cattle pound as if the cattle had strayed into the pound and not stolen. The cattle branding system recently introduced into the Madura District considerably reduced the number of cattle thefts and tuppu-cooly cases.

66. Receivers, patrons. Their receivers of stolen property and patrons are the local toddy and arrack shop-owners and the Nattukottai Chetties.

CHAPTER IX. Bhamptas.

(*Professional railway thieves, pick-pockets and swindlers.*)

67. Origin, habitat. It is a mistake to regard the Bhamptas as a criminal tribe in the true racial sense ; for they originated only from a fraternity which banded itself for the chief object of committing thefts and picking pockets in fairs and festivals before the advent of railways in India. It recruited its members practically from any caste or creed, so much so, that at present Brahmins, Muhammadans, Parsis, Jews and even Eurasians of low social standing are found among its members. The fraternity established its own caste system which divided it into two groups—Jadaw and Gaekward—which are exogamous, *i.e.*, do not intermarry. The Bhamptas, whose original domicile was the Telugu speaking country of the Nizam's Dominions, are now found permanently settled themselves in the districts of Poona, Satara, Ahmednagar, Nasik and Sholapur, under the different appellations of Ghantichors (bundle-thieves), Uchlias (lifters), Kisa or Jeb Katru (Pocket-cutters), Takarias, Vadaris and Senorias. As Bhamptas travel far and wide all over the railway lines throughout India including Assam, Burma and Ceylon, in pursuit of crime, they frequently secure a temporary abode for a time in places where congenial environment could be had for plying their lucrative trade. They are therefore to be seen everywhere in India. The Rajput Bhamptas who are a class of pick-pockets and pilferers only owe their origin to the tribe of Sanorias, the great diurnal thieves of Bhopal and Bundelkand. They are found in Ahmednagar, Sholapur, and Usmanabad District of the Nizam's Dominions. In their *modus operandi* the Bhamptas resemble the Kopmari Alaghiries of the Madras Presidency.

68. Appearance, Dress. The Bhampta face conforms to no particular type, as this class includes people of different castes and creeds. Majority of Bhamptas, however, are below the average height, some are fair, others very dark. All are wiry and active rather than powerful and robust. Their women are comely

but mostly of loose morals. As a rule, Bhamptas dress well and live in a superior style of the Maharattas. Women dress like Maharatta women and sometimes like Brahmin women and wear nose-rings. They tattoo their hands and faces, the left hand being tattooed more profusely than the right. The Rajput Bhamptas wear the sacred thread, also kundalas (ear-rings.) Their women never bore their nostrils, nor wear nose ornaments, nor tattoo the corners of their eyes. The married women wear a row of red beads with a *thali* round the neck. A double string of black beads are also worn.

69. Disguises. The Bhampta is an adept in assuming a variety of disguises very difficult to be recognised even by experts. He generally poses himself as a well-to-do Mahratta merchant, or a respectable Brahmin, or a rich railway contractor, either on pilgrimage or sight-seeing. Sometimes he takes the guise of a Marwadi, a Lingayat, a Minstrel, a Sadhu, a Bairagee or a Deccan Bhat. Assuming as he does the disguise of a high caste Hindu, he easily obtains admission without rousing any suspicion into superior class railway accommodation, to temples and places resorted to by the better class of travellers and pilgrims. The Rajput Bhamptas when visiting fairs assume the garb of Bairagis or Sadhus and add the suffix 'Das' or 'Singh' to their names. Women do not dress themselves up in any disguise, but pose as members of some superior caste. In their canvas or carpet bags, Bhamptas will invariably have one or two coloured turbans, two or three coats, a cap, a silk handkerchief, one or two lace or silk dhoties, a string of beads, a few old clothes, a tin dubbee containing Vibhoothi, another dubbee containing white, red and yellow colours to put different caste marks on their foreheads and a small mirror. This paraphernalia is kept always ready for assuming disguises. It has been further observed that Bhamptas also possess coats with one colour inside and a different colour outside, and they, to escape detection, or avoid suspicion, reverse the coat at a moment's notice.

70. Habits, customs. Bhamptas during their wanderings generally take women of bad repute as their concubines, and

finally treat them as their own wives. On the admission of any accomplished thief into the tribe on payment of a fee and performance of a ceremony or feast, he gains the privilege of marrying a Bhampta woman. Sometimes Bhamptas kidnap young boys of all castes whom they adopt and bring up to their own profession. The Uchlias give shelter to women of respectable families who become pregnant from criminal intimacy and when children are born they are retained, and the mothers are sent away with a present of *Sari* and a rupee or two. It is a rule among Bhamptas not to give a girl in marriage till the intended husband has proved himself a dexterous thief. Bhamptas will eat with or from the hands of other castes who are admissible into their own. They are gross feeders, and are also fond of *liquor*. Bhamptas speak Telugu, Maratti, Hindustani and Canarese. While travelling through the Telugu districts they talk Maratti and Canarese; and then in Maratta and Canarese countries they talk Telugu. Bhamptas, who are for the most part Hindus, worship Kali, whose temple is in Konali in the Akalkote State. Here they assemble in gangs, before and after their raids, to worship that goddess that luck may attend them, or for the success achieved. Bhampta is not a nomad like the gipsy. He does not travel about with his goods and chattels constantly changing his residence. He settles himself in a headquarter from which depredations are made. A rendezvous is arranged in a hilly, uninhabitable and thickly wooded place about 2 to 5 miles from a railway station. The Bhamptas remain in this place for a considerable time until they can gather sufficient booty, or until any of their gang, who may have been imprisoned, return from jail. Till then, they remain in the place disguised as pilgrims to a holy place, without being suspected by the people of the locality and by the local police. In the afternoon they manage to go to toddy shops of the neighbouring villages separately, without claiming any relationship with each other, and even without recognizing each other. When a Bhampta is arrested, he never reveals his identity. He will not give his real name or place of abode, nor will he recognize or know aught of his confederates. When confronted by detec-

tives and informers who know *him*, he readily confesses his real name and place of abode.

Every gang has its own head or Naick whose chief business is to distribute the proceeds of the stolen property among the members of the gang, to support wives and children of the Bhamptas in jail by giving to them their share in the booty brought by the members of the gang, to arrange for the defence of the members criminally prosecuted, to effect the release of persons on bail by furnishing security for the same through respectable men of the locality who would be purchased for the purpose.

• **71. Stock-in-trade, weapons, etc., used in committing crime.** One peculiar characteristic of the weapons and instruments used by Bhamptas is that they possess homely and domestic appearance which removes all suspicion. Their house-breaking instruments are :—

(1) *Ulthani* (the household instrument for turning *chapātis*).

(2) *Palli* (iron ladle). The rod-like portion of these instruments is generally made of steel and it is very pointed. The hole is bored by means of this portion, whilst the spoon-shaped portion is used for removing mud.

(3) *Knife*. A large pointing knife is sometimes used for boring holes.

(4) *A metal hook* is used for picking and breaking locks and opening boxes.

(5) *Korne* (chunam scrape), *betel-nut cracker*, a pair of scissors, and a *chisel* are also used.

For cutting open bags, pockets, and seams, and severing the fastening of neck ornaments, the Bhampta carries :—

(1) *Ulmukh* or *waghnak* which is a small sickle-shaped sharp knife. It is concealed in the mouth between the gum and the upper lip or in a cavity in the throat, and by women in a small pocket in the bodice or in their hair knobs. The Capemari-

Alghiries of the Madras Presidency carry in their mouth a similar knife which is more or less lancet-shaped for the same purpose. Sometimes a piece of glass is also concealed.

(2) A small pocket penknife which is sometimes concealed in brass snuff boxes or chunam receptacles.

(3) A bunch of keys.

(4) A needle and thread to stitch up bags which have been cut open.

(5) A carpet bag containing a few necessities for ready disguises (*vide Disguises*).

(6) An umbrella.

(7) Another carpet bag filled with rubbish to substitute for some similar bag containing valuables belonging to a fellow passenger.

(8) A railway map of India.

(9) Women carry trinkets, rings, bangles, buttons, nose rings of very trifling value and expose them for sale on road sides to show, ostensibly to the public that it is their means of livelihood.

72. Crimes to which addicted. (1) *Thefts*—Bhamptas have notoriety throughout India as expert professional pick-pockets and railway thieves like the Kepmaries of Madras. A Bhamptā is exceedingly dexterous at removing ornaments off the persons of women and children in a crowd, at landing places, fairs, in bazaars and in temples. Bhamptas were pick-pockets, pure and simple, originally, but after the advent of the railway it supplied a most lucrative field for their activities. *It was a rule among them not to commit, on pain of expulsion from the caste, crime between sunset and sunrise.* All this is, however, now changed. But the Rajput Bhamptas still retain their old habit of committing crime generally by day only, and stealing by night is punished by excommunication. Among the Bhamptas both sexes are adepts at thieving; but the women who do not generally travel far, commit crimes in female compartments in railway carriages. Children are first taught to pilfer shoes, cocoanuts, etc., and are freely punished by parents for want of proficiency in their criminal training. Boys are

experts at removing ornaments off the persons of children who are very cleverly enticed away to a secret place by a bait of sweetmeat, copper coins and trinkets.

(2) *House-breaking, robbery, dacoity.*—Of recent years Bhamptas have taken to burglary and even robbery. The Ghan-tichors of the Carnatic are addicted to gang robbery and dacoity. The Rajput Bhamptas have never been known to commit these violent forms of crime. As a rule, Bhamptas do not break through walls; but when holes are bored, they are made near the door or window frame.

(3) *Cheating.*—It consists of two forms:—(1) Cheating Receivers; (2) Cheating known as *Ramthadi* (vide *Modus Operandi*.)

73. Modus Operandi. (1) *Thieving and pick-pocketing.*—Bhamptas leave home in batches of 8 or 10 with one or two women, splitting up into smaller parties later on and arranging to meet in a selected place on a certain fixed day. They engage a house in a suitable town, on a newly opened railway at the outskirts, and pose themselves as railway contractors. They travel by turns during the nights taking care not to allow the house to remain vacant. Assuming disguises or decently clothed in ordinary dress they purchase railway tickets to some place far or near. They will always carry a carpet bag with them as described above. Spotting out their victims, they enter with them in the same railway compartment and begin a very intimate conversation making them understand that they are pilgrims to Rameswaram, Tirupati, Hampi, Jaganatham, Kasi, Haridwar, or any sacred place on the line. By their very polite conduct and affable manner, they will obtain the confidence of their fellow-passengers. After dark when passengers are overcome by sleep, they will be so solicitous as to offer them room for sleeping by making one of the Bhampta lie down on the floor below the seats covering his body with a large cloth. The other Bhampta will sit above stretching his legs to the opposite seat spreading his cloth to conceal his confederate lying below.

When everything is quiet, the Bhampta lying below will slowly feel the bags of the travellers and remove property therefrom by cutting the canvas with the aid of the small curved knife concealed in his mouth. If this small knife is not sharp enough to cut the strong canvas, the pen-knife of the snuff-box is used. To break open tin or wooden boxes the chisel is employed. Sometimes the contents are transferred to their own bags or passed off to his confederate, and both get out of the train at the next station. Instead of cutting open the bag, they quickly exchange bags and skulk away at the first opportunity. Should there be any complaint of loss, they throw away their booty out of the window and pick it up next morning. The stolen jewels are also passed on to their women who travel in a female carriage and they conceal the booty round their waist.

If their victim is very careful and keeps his bag below his head so that the Bhampta has no chance of access to the bag, the criminal will get down with him and accompany him to the waiting room in the station or to the choultry or chatram close by and manage to sleep with him, thereafter, entering into a conversation with him and gaining his confidence by spinning yarns as to his affluence, high status in life and respectability. When the victim relaxes his vigilance over his bag thinking that he is in the happy company of respectable fellow passengers, he will find to his great dismay that his bag has disappeared and with it his companion too.

If the booty to be secured is a bundle under the head of a man dosing or asleep, the Bhampta will prick the sleeper's feet while his confederates remove the bundle, the moment the man starts up to see what has bitten him. Sometimes the confederate substitutes another bag in the place of one removed so cleverly. If a woman keeps a bundle with her on a railway platform a Bhampta will sit down to ease himself in her presence. When the woman modestly turns her face, a confederate will run away with the bundle.

Another stratagem employed by Bhamptas is that a Bhampta will beat his child who, with wild cries, shrieks and screams,

rushes to a well-to-do person, with a bag containing valuables, for help. The boy will cling himself to the person of the respectable man whilst the father will kick him and drag him away. While the attention of the owner is diverted by what takes place, a confederate will substitute a bag identical in shape, colour and size but containing rubbish for the bag of valuables. Sometimes if a sowcar or a shroff, carrying a bag of money, is waiting in the waiting room or on the platform, some playfully boisterous youths scrimmaging about in some rough game will tumble down on the sowcar or shroff who, to avoid being knocked over by the urchins, will be forced to move a little away from the bag. In a twinkling of the eye the bag will be carried away by a confederate.

Their work in crowds, at fairs, landing places, temples, railway booking office, windows and waiting rooms, is marvellously ingenious. In these places they work in gangs of 3 or 4 with a boy to help them. When an ornament is secretly removed, a pocket containing money is dexterously picked, a necklace is stealthily cut, other confederates will arrange and place themselves in such a position that the booty is passed off from hand to hand in such a clever way that in an incredibly short time it has gone far, far away. If access to the coveted place could not be had easily by ordinary methods the Bhampta will forcibly and hurriedly jostle or hustle up against his victim in the crowd and dexterously and smartly remove the valuable he is after and pass it on. The boy is employed to give signals and to divert the attention of victims by various devices.

Bhamptas visit railway stations at nights and boldly lift bags and articles from second, but rarely, from first class carriages. In 1898, a Bhampta has successfully lifted H. E. The Governor's valuable travelling bag from his brilliantly lighted saloon and escaped detection. These Bhamptas leave carriages from off side of trains which should be carefully watched by the Police. They are also very quick and active at getting into and leaving carriages while trains are in motion, and at walking along the foot-boards. They often board first and second class carriages in this way. A Bhampta was once found in a second class carriage in the dress

of a very respectable Punjabi Muhammadan. These instances suffice to demonstrate the ingenuity and resourcefulness a Bhampta brings to bear on his works.

(2) *House-breaking, Robbery and Dacoity.*—Bhamptas have taken to these crimes only very recently and they are not very experts in them. They prefer always the “buglee operation,” i.e., boring a hole near the door or window frame close to the bolt. They also go in a batch of 3 or 4 with a leader “Rangateea.” It is the duty of the leader to enter the house and secure property. Others remain outside provided with stones which they use to cover retreat in case of pursuit or to assist the leader in getting out of the house. They generally select houses situated on the outskirts of villages. Boys and women are utilized for obtaining information of likely houses. They also fish out information by getting hold of some communicative lads of the village. For committing robbery and dacoity Bhamptas, who will disguise themselves as Bhats, will become friendly with well-to-do people who attend big fairs and bazaars and ascertaining all about them and their intended departure, will lie in wait for them and loot them on the road at some convenient spot.

(3) *Cheating* :—They first show a genuine gold jewel as stolen property to a rich receiver and promise to offer some more jewels at a cheap rate. They then settle the price of gold and ask him to come with money to a certain out of the way lonely place. They arrange with two local Police Constables on some remuneration, and the jewels, most of which are false, are placed in front of them to be examined and weighed. Then the Constables come towards them on some signal from them and the Bhamptas forcibly snatch away the bundle of Rupees from the receiver and run away for ever. When Constables could not be hired, two among themselves will play the role of Constables. This is known as “Cheating Receivers.” Another crime known as ‘Ramthadi’ to which Ghantechor is addicted consists in cheating the victim by the substitution of brass mohurs or beads, similar to those worn by women in necklaces for gold ones.

74. Signs made by Bhamptas. There is a sort of free-masonry among Bhamptas by which they can recognize one another though not personally acquainted. They possess secret signs with the eyes, fingers and the elbow. One Bhampta warns another by first coughing and then clearing his throat. He will never point with his finger or hand and will not even look at the direction from which danger is expected, but only point with his elbow while scratching his head. To intimate to his friend that he is being watched he will, when scratching his head, work his elbow backwards. If a Bhampta twists the one end of his shoulder cloth round one arm it means that he is tied up by being watched and that his friends should not come near. If he sees his friends travelling in train want to get down there, he will scratch his head and work his elbow in the direction of the train. This will mean that his fellows should not get down but continue on their journey. Bhamptas, before leaving a halting-place will bring the tops of their cooking stones together to indicate to those following that they have moved on. The direction taken will be indicated by scraping a mark with the side of the foot and with the imprint of a naked foot pointing in the direction taken across the heap of earth so scraped.

75. How to search Bhamptas. Bhamptas, though they always travel in groups of three or four, they will never be seen mingled together. It is only by carefully observing their glances, gestures, and general demeanour that their connections could be traced. An arrested Bhampta will never reveal his identity, nor will he betray his associates. When in custody he will not even care to acknowledge his own brother if confronted with. When a Police Constable finds a Bhampta in a train or at a fair, he must patiently watch for others and spot them out before he makes any attempt towards arrest. It is very desirable to arrest all simultaneously. Similarly with regard to Bhampta gang. If a first batch is suspected, the police should patiently wait till all the batches arrive one after another and then they must be arrested all at one time; for property might be found with the last batch. The person of Bhamptas should be very scrupulously searched

without leaving any portion of the body to go unexamined. They conceal property in their mouths or in their throats where, by constant use, a cavity is formed. Some conceal property in their rectum or even in their foreskin. The swellings sometimes found at the top of the neck near the throat are due to the habit of concealing property there. Some Bhamptas pretend to be suffering from some boils, if you open the bandage you will find property instead of the boil, specially women are in the habit of concealing property in this way. Very often females try to leave the searching party on the plea of answering the calls of nature, with the property concealed in their clothes or in their private parts. They must be carefully observed by the police. Col. Wilson, a former Commissioner of Bombay, was asked by a clever Bhampta to search and recover from his mouth Rs. 25 in cash which he had concealed there, but that officer could not recover any thing from the mouth although a very strict search was made. Then the Bhampta, to the surprise of all, took out Rs. 25 from his mouth and counted them. Bhamptas are apt to be very violent and troublesome when arrested. They have assaulted the Police, even women joining with males in the fray. They have thrown dust in the eyes of Police Constables to effect an escape.

76. Disposal of property. Bhamptas dispose of property obtained in one province in another after a brief lapse of time. They have their own receivers who are for the most part Marwadi merchants, goldsmiths and teddy-shop keepers. Sometimes they send property to their distant homes by parcel post, but generally they sell the property locally and remit money to their homes. Money orders and parcels are also addressed to village patils or sowcars who receive money for their services.

CHAPTER X.

Chapparbands.

(Fakir Coiners.)

77. **Origin, habitat.** The Chapparbands are *Shaik* Muhammadans whose original home was in the Punjab. They afterwards settled themselves at Delhi, and accompanied the Mughal army, in the 17th century, towards the south, in the capacity of 'Chapparbands,' i.e., roof-builders or hut-makers. Hence their name. Abandoning the Mughal service they employed themselves in the same capacity under the Peishwas, and finally settled themselves in the Bijapur District, Bombay Presidency. They are now found in 64 villages of Bagiwadi and Maddibihal Taluqs of the said District. It appears that about 100 years ago, when they could not follow their military career, they became restless in their present home, and systematically and regularly left it to eke out their livelihood in different capacities as peddlers, then as mendicants and finally as the most confirmed manufacturers and utterers of false coins. They learned the art of making false coins, according to a legendary tale, from two fakirs named Pir Bhai and Pir Makhan, who are now venerated as their patron saints and whose effigies are kept in a *Makan* in the village of Bagevadi.

78. **Appearance, dress, habits.** The Chapparband, in his home, wears a 'Kurthani', a shirt, a loosely folded turban round the head and a 'lung' a dhoti like the one ordinarily used by the Hindus. We are not concerned with his dress; for he discards it and assumes disguises when he issues out on his predatory excursions. In his appearance the Chapparband is slim and wiry. He seldom shaves his beard which is scraggy and lank. He has a puny voice and whining patter. He is a very good walker. Even the oldest member of a gang walks about 40 miles a day to throw persons off his track. He is very active. At home he lives a very honest and law-abiding life, his nefarious trade being entirely confined to the outside world. He travels all over India

and even goes to Ceylon. At times he will beg for alms ; but he will decline the hospitable offer of a roof. He will drink freely and openly in his native place ; but while on tour he is strictly sober to keep up the appearance of a holy man. When away from home, he is very strictly prohibited from having sexual intercourse with women of other castes. Their women remain at home and never accompany males in their wanderings—a fact to be carefully noted. At home the women make mats and quilts and have nothing to do with coining. They are very superstitious and consult omens before all their actions. They worship their 'Pir' on every Sunday, when their false rupees, moulds and other implements are placed before him. A fowl is sacrificed and its eyes and tail are fixed on three thorns of different thorny trees and thrown in the direction in which they propose to proceed. It is a noteworthy feature that Chapparbands always work and travel in gangs.

79. Disguises. A Chapparband rarely, if ever at all, adopts the disguise, speech or actions of a Hindu beggar. It is, therefore, very easy to distinguish him. He disguises as a Muhammadan fakir of the order of *Madaria* and adds 'sha' after his name. Chapparbands will always carry a *Kishtah*, a black coqanut shell which serves as a begging bowl of the Pandarams of Southern India, a *Chimta* tongs, and a *Jholi* (bag for alms) made of cloth or leather. Sometimes this *Jholi* is made of kid skin with hair on. This *Jholi* is provided with double folds and is carried on the shoulders. These bags have shelves in them for concealing materials for making moulds and coins. Chapparbands wear beads made of glass and other substances. Their turban is yellow, green or salmon coloured with ends left loosely hanging on their backs. They wear langoties or loin cloths in which there is a flap to conceal coins in. They mutter the sawals or songs or sing-song begging tone of their class. They are studiously polite and cringing in their manners. When arrested, a Chapparband will exhibit no fear but protests that he is a poor 'fakir' who chants for alms or catches and trains young bears. He will always give a false name and address and, profess

to be a pilgrim to the shrines of Muhammadan saints of Gulbargah, Ajmer, Nagore, Penukonda and other sacred places. Each member of a gang leaves his village in his ordinary every-day dress, but he changes his garb and assumes his disguise only in the house of his friend who lives in a different village. In this rendezvous he transforms himself completely and becomes a 'Madaria Fakir,' and is ready for his nefarious trade. He then joins a gang in this capacity.

80. Modus Operandi. The Chapparband is first and foremost a manufacturer and utterer of *Cast Counterfeit Coins*, both rupees and smaller silver coins. He is sometimes addicted to pony lifting and kidnapping children. Chapparbands also entice destitute women to follow them and accompany them to their homes. They are also given to swindling. They leave their homes to ply their trade generally in the months of September and October after the rains and return back before Mohurram. The harvest season is preferred, as during that time women, who would be very easily made their victims, remain at home when the males are at work in the fields. They usually proceed in groups of from three to ten. A gang composed of even thirty members has been known. They are unaccompanied by their women—a very important point for a Police officer to note. The gang is under the leadership of a "*Khagda*" whose orders are implicitly obeyed. He receives a larger share of the earnings than any of the others, and when the gang is on the march, he carries the earnings of the gang, also the moulds, clay, and the metal. He does *not* carry the false rupees—a noteworthy point. He generally rides a pony accompanied by a boy '*Handiwal*' whose duty it is to do menial work such as bringing water, serving food and assisting '*Khagda*' in cooking meals for the gang. He also keeps watch while the others are engaged in the manufacture of false coins. The rank and file are known as *Bhandars* who are the utterers or passers of the counterfeit coin. The *Khagda* and his boy do not pass counterfeit coin. When the gang moves on, the *Bhandars* separate themselves from the *Khagda* and the boy and perform the journey singly or by twos or threes by different

routes, generally on foot, but, at times by rails, buying short-distance tickets in order to avoid suspicion and finally gather at the new halting place agreed upon beforehand. When Bhandars pass through the country in this way, it is then that they do their business. The Khagda and the boy first reach the new camp and the former, generally buries the moulds and cash close by at some little distance in grass under a bush, in the hollow of trees, sometimes even under his bedding. The Bhandars too, when they join the camp, conceal their false coins in the same way. They take care that moulds as well as false coins are not seized together. Hence it is very rare that Chapparbands are convicted of manufacturing coins with moulds. The gang generally encamps on high ground commanding a good view all around and close to water so that they can see any one who approaches, and when raided by Police they could throw away their false rupees and moulds into water. It is only in these camps that each Bhandar will manufacture his own false coins in the day time. While manufacturing their false coins they are very wary and are very suspicious of persons who approach the place, but sometimes they will not mind a Hindu who is obviously coming to bathe or worship provided he does not show any disposition to come too close. Police officers who want to catch the gang red-handed in the act of manufacturing coins should go there in the disguise of religious Hindus going to bathe in the tank.

81. Stock-in-trade, instruments and weapons. A Chapparband will have always with him some of the following articles :—A pair of scissors, a broad-bladed knife, tongs, pincers, a spoon or ladle, earthen bowl or pot, a file, some needles, concealed perhaps in a small bamboo tube, some linseed oil, gum, antimony, some of the metal and earth or powder used for counterfeiting, a small tin containing black powder, a small grinding stone, a wooden blow pipe, right angle tube, touch-stone, some mercury, lead, pewter, sulphur, powdered charcoal, a piece of soft skin, some fine dust or salt for polishing, a few Hyderabad or Rajshahi coins for duping people, and, if taken by surprise or

unawares, the characteristic mould below described. Chapparbands have been known to carry the clay required for making moulds in the shape of miniature sacred shrine and sometimes in the form of beads worn round the neck. On the move, coining implements and the materials for manufacturing coins are usually carried in a leather bag.

82. Their coining moulds. Moulds are made of finely powdered and sifted clay especially *multani matti*, the Tungabadra mud called Sideepait matte, gopichandan and balaph or balpham. This clay is mixed with a little water and oil and well kneaded. Two flat round halves of the mould are made and a genuine rupee is pressed between them and the outside is tapped with a flat piece of wood to give even impression. A cut is then made all round the edge so as to separate the two halves properly. A small channel to receive molten metal is cut at the edge. In order to keep the two discs in position, pegs of thorns one on each side are run in. The mould covered with rags is then baked. Its upper disc is then separated and the genuine rupee is tilted out. The two discs are then stuck together by gum and tied with cotton and thread all round. The mould is now complete. The melted substance is then poured in. After a little use of the knife and file for polishing and milling, the rupee is ready. An ordinary mould is capable of turning out 10 to 20 rupees; a good one of turning out 50 or even more.

83. Nature of coin. The Chapparband false coin is generally of very crude manufacture, and it is seldom difficult to tell it from a genuine rupee when looked at carefully. Its finish is very poor and the milling crude. The coin can be bent very easily and it is smooth to the touch, light in weight and dull in sound.

84. How to search Chapparbands. When you see a solitary Chapparband in your station limits you must be sure that the gang is hiding itself somewhere. Trace the gang first. You should not approach the gang when it is separated, but wait till the gang collects itself in a halting place in the afternoon. You should not attack the gang when it is in the act of manu-

facturing coins, for it is then very wary and suspicious. You must wait till the process of manufacture is over. With a strong force of police you must suddenly make a raid on the gang, arrest all the members both adults and boys, hand-cuff them all *at once* and keep them all separately apart from each other without allowing them to mingle together. If kept together they generally begin to assault the police. Proceed to search carefully first the "langotees" as counterfeit coins are kept in inner pocket in front of the private part. Chapparbands also conceal their coins in the rectum where, from constant manipulation, a cavity is formed. Then other saman including their furnaces should be searched as also any place near the camp showing signs of new burial.

85. How to distinguish a Chapparband from a genuine fakir.

(1) Genuine fakirs travel with women, but not with children. Chapparbands will travel accompanied by male children or juveniles only ; but never by women.

(2) Fakirs coming from outside the Presidency are generally *alone*, rarely consist of less than four.

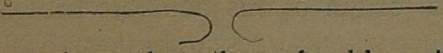
(3) Genuine fakirs are seldom, if ever, abstainers from ganja, but Chapparbands use ganja but rarely.

(4) Chapparbands avoid ordinary *choultry*, but prefer out-of-the-way places. They do not like to face genuine fakirs.

(5) Fakirs seldom purchase provisions and when they do, they pay in copper ; but Chapparbands buy provisions with their own counterfeit rupees or other smaller silver coins.

(6) Chapparbands avoid enquiries about their Pir, his genealogy and the traditions of their assumed order "Madaria." A genuine fakir can very easily find out the imposter.

86. Signs made by Chapparbands. To give information to their caste-fellows, they generally make heaps of mud or earth a foot long, 6 inches broad and 6 inches high at places where roads cross. They also draw an arrow line in front of the heap with the head of the arrow pointing towards the direction taken by the gang. Three such heaps are made at intervals of a hundred yards to avoid mistakes. Sometimes marks are made on

sand by dragging the foot sideways along the ground to make a head. A broad mark on the heap shows the direction taken. A line with a curve at one end is drawn in the dust on the side of the road followed, alternative routes being crossed by a cross. The straight end of the line indicates the route taken. Sometimes a few twigs may be placed under a stone on the side of road, the broken stalks pointing the direction followed. The sign  will indicate to the detached members that they should cast about to find their comrades.

87. How false coins are passed.

(1) Women or men who look foolish are selected as victims. The Chapparband will offer to give 17 annas in copper for one rupee. When the genuine rupee is given, it will be, by the sleight of hand, dexterously changed for a false one which will be handed over to the victim as being useless. The copper is taken back by the criminal who proceeds to the next victim richer with a genuine rupee.

(2) Chapparband will make purchases in a shop by showing a genuine rupee, but at the time of payment a false rupee will be passed. Sometimes after a bargain is struck and money has passed, he will cancel the bargain, return the money, substituting some of his spurious coins by sleight of hand.

(3) Chapparband will pose himself as a dealer in gold, selling it a little below the market value. He will have two bags, one containing counterfeit coins and the other empty. He will also have 20 tolas of genuine gold. The intended purchaser who will always be a receiver of stolen goods will be induced to go with the criminal to a secret out-of-the-way place for purchasing gold. He will give genuine rupees which will be put in the empty bag. The gold lump will be handed over to him. While he is examining it, some member of the gang who is keeping himself in the back ground will suddenly appear in the uniform of a constable. In the excitement which follows, Chapparband changes the bags and hands over the bag containing spurious coins to the purchaser, gets back the gold and makes himself scarce.

CHAPTER XI.

Iranees or Beluchees.

(A tribe of wandering criminal Gypsies.)

88. Origin, habitat. The origin of this nomadic tribe is very doubtful; but recent anthropological researches establish certain resemblance which is known to exist between this race and the gypsies of Egypt, England and other places in Europe. Mr. Hunt, who made a special study of the tribe, found it impossible to say with any authority where the forefathers of the Indian Iranees came from. The tribe is known in India by the appellation 'Iranees' which suggests that it had something to do with 'Iran', the ancient name for Persia. Whether the Iranees originated from Iran where they possessed a fixed abode, or whether they had only a prolonged stay in that country in the course of their perpetual wanderings, it is very uncertain; but it must be admitted that, from the striking contrast which they present to the refined and cultured people of Iran who possessed the highest degree of civilisation from antiquity, they had a very low origin. They were in fact "*social outcasts*" who led fierce, isolated and semi-barbarous life which was morally abominable and socially contemptible. Their criminal propensity and the consequent persecutions it evolved made the country very hot for them and they crossed the borders into British India whose mysterious wealth and plenty attracted them. The exact year of their immigration into India cannot be fixed with any amount of certainty; but it is certain that the present generations have been born in India and have never been out of it. It is a mistake to suppose that they came from Afghanistan or Beluchistan though they are popularly known in India by such names as Beluchees, Heratees, Makraanees (Mekhran being a province in Beluchistan,) Kabulees and Pathans—names which they have invented for themselves out of a desire to pass off as the warlike and respectable tribesmen of the frontier. The

official enquiries instituted to find out the claimed relationship which existed between the Iranees and the frontier tribes resulted in the latter indignantly disavowing their connection with the former. The Iranees have now, after long vicissitudes of fortune, settled themselves permanently in India and are the sons of the Indian soil in every respect ; but they are not confined to any part of India. They wander from the Himmalayas to Cape Comorin committing crimes openly all over India and terrorising the people with impunity. They appeared in the Nilgiris in 1842, in the Kistna District in 1846, in the Mysore Province in 1853, in Southern India in 1875 and in Bengal in 1884.

89. Appearance, dress. Their appearance and dress are characteristically distinct from those of any other class indigenous to South India. In some respects they resemble the Pathans and Kabulees who hail from the independent States beyond the North-West Frontier Provinces and Afghanistan, but they are quite distinct from them in many respects. The Iranees have excellent physique, and are physically strong, robust, muscular, and hardy. They are fair in colour with Caucasian features. The women who are also strong, fair and energetic, are not without claims to beauty. They are more intelligent than the males. Some of the Iranees are very good athletes and champion wrestlers (Pahilwan.) The whole race is now said to be deteriorating in physique and spirit, and according to Mr. Hunt, "the Iranees were a much finer race years ago, and apparently more troublesome." The cause of their degeneracy is attributed to the admixture of baser blood, as they pick up wives promiscuously from other castes and to the enervating influences of the tropical climate to which they are constantly exposed in their incessant nomadic travels. The men put on the dress generally worn by Muhammadans, but instead of trousers (Pyjama) you will find a 'lungi', i.e., dhotee. They have a particular liking for coloured clothes. Their shirt will be very loose with broad seams on the shoulders, and they will sometimes wear short embroidered vests. They seldom wear baggy trousers which are worn by the Kabulees, and their turban will be without 'Kullah' or

skull cap, an indispensable head-dress of a Kabulee. They have recently shown their partiality to silk coats and laced angostrams. They bore holes in their ear-lobes ; but some of them actually wear ear-rings. Both males and females tattoo their persons. The women have their own peculiar dress. Their skirt which has an extensive girth all thrown into folds is always made of coloured chintz or Indian-made blue cloth. It possesses pockets at the back and in this they ingeniously conceal small articles or other stolen property. This shirt is employed for committing crimes. The women sit on the ground spreading out their skirt, slip the purloined article under them, and pass it on to another behind who takes it away. The shirt or jacket which is also made of coloured cloth is loose and reaches only to the waist. They wear a head cloth called "kasava," which is a square piece of cloth folded triangularly and tied round the head above the forehead with the two folds hanging loosely at the back. They do not wear bodice and the long "saree" like the native women of India. You can very easily distinguish an Iranee woman from her long plaited locks of hair one at each side of the face. These women are not without their crude jewellery. They wear ear and nose rings, bangles and anklets. They also wear necklaces of silver coins or of silver amulet with Arabic characters engraved on it. The men also wear gold or silver charms or necklaces made of gold or silver coins about their neck. The wrestlers wear the "Kuntha" the badge of a Pahilwan. Sometimes men wear silver bangles on their wrists. Their youngsters also wear silver bracelets and necklaces. Their dress is often very dirty and as these people don't bathe frequently, their persons stink awfully.

90. **Habits, Customs.** The Iranees are nomads unlike the Kabulees who come down from their country and settle for a while in some important town or village visiting other places for criminal purposes. The Iranees always keep on a move in gangs. When Mr. Hunt took their census in 1895, they numbered only 300 males divided into a dozen gangs under the leadership of their Jemadars who are selected by common vote and are the "business" men amongst them. A Jemadar, when he gets old, is often deposed and some one is elected in his place. As these

functionaries are sometimes changed, confusion arises as to the identity of a party. The gang always carries its camp equipment with it. Small tents with their ropes and pegs are conveyed on small ponies. Their culinary utensils, bags containing their articles of merchandise, their dirty clothes, cages of birds and fighting cocks are similarly carried. Sometimes they hire carts to convey their *samans*; but they do not generally pay the cart-hire. As their presence in a village is considered a pest, the villagers voluntarily supply them carts for carrying their *samans* to the next camp gratis, only to get rid of them. They always make rapid marches and their halts are very brief. During these brief halts they contract the friendship of poor Muhammadan families and either marry the Indian girls by offering large presents to the parents or entice away grown-up girls by lavish supply of eatables to them. Cases are on record where they actually purchased young beautiful girls and eventually married them to members of their gang. Poor helpless widows have also been taken into their gang in various capacities. Free admission of local men and women into their society has resulted in the natural deterioration of the race which, excellent as it was in physique, colour and spirit, has now become very much degenerated in physical strength, body and prowess. The short, black and stunted individuals which we now see in the Iranee camps would have been an impossibility in the earlier periods of their settlement. A very noteworthy feature of an Iranee camp is the presence of rude, obstinate and quarrelsome women and mischievous and troublesome youngsters. The women, who are prolific, give birth to a number of children and are very chaste. Adultery is considered the vilest crime, punishable by an exorbitant fine and expulsion from the gang. Sometimes corporeal punishment is inflicted. Mr. Hunt in his report published in Police Gazette, dated 21st December 1895, states as follows:—"The men are thorough bullies by nature, have no mercy for the weak and bring to any one who stands up to them."

"The women, on the other hand, impress me (Mr. Hunt) as being more stubborn; it is they who are generally the culprits in all cases of assaults or violence of any description; with

double the strength and pluck of the ordinary native of the south, they are 'cute' enough to take full advantage of belonging to the gentler (?) sex, but few natives care to complain of having been thrashed and perhaps robbed of by a woman. The Beluchis know this and that is why the woman and for the same reason the children take the most active part in earning their nefarious livelihood."

The Iranees are voracious eaters and live in luxury. Their chief food is mutton, beef, fowls and chapaties in the preparation of which they use ghee like water. The males, females and children all sit together for meals which will be served in a common vessel. They very seldom indulge in alcoholic stimulants. Both the males and females smoke "hobka." Their wedding feasts are characterized by lavishness of hospitality and local men are also invited and sumptuously fed. They employ the local priest to solemnize the "nicka" and the "mahar," i.e., bride's money is paid down to the bride by the bridegroom on the spot. After "nicka" is over, everybody, both males and females, indulge in a wildly vigorous dance to the accompaniment of music of a low character. The members of different gangs intermarry. Husbands train their wives to steal, and this training is specially imparted to women received from outside the gang. The members of each gang are closely related to each other and give and receive their women in marriage without much regard for relationship.

91. Ostensible profession, their merchandise, horse-dealing. Everybody knows the Iranees to be petty merchants who deal in knives, scissors, padlocks, false stones, false pearls, trinkets of several kinds, toys, beads, quicksilver and false coins of different kinds. Both the men and women sell these goods sometimes exhibiting them in open bazaars and sometimes hawking from house to house whichever is convenient. They carry their wares in a leather courier bag often decorated with brass eye-léts hung across their shoulders. Their articles of merchandise are cheap, worthless, German-made things which they purchase at Bombay. They are also reputed horse-dealers

and their animals are well-trained and hardy ones purchased in the fairs of Kathiawar, Ajmeer, Bundelkund and Mairwara and other places in North India. Their horse trade is not carried on largely now.

92. Coins. Mr. Hunt, who was placed on special duty to trace out the traffic in false coins passed by the Beluchi gangs in the Madras Presidency, reported that he, along with Sirdar Abdul Ali Khan of the Bombay C. I. D, inspected the "mint" of Lala Vijian of Bombay and found that the said mint manufactured all kinds of coins except the "*Current Coins*," and that the Beluchi gangs do not obtain their supply from this mint. It was traced that the Beluchi gangs obtain their "*false uncurrent coins*" from the Marwari Bazaar of Bombay where goldsmiths, about 30 in number, employ manual labour for the manufacture of these spurious coins. Their chiefly patronized goldsmith was one Lukka Vishram Soni, who charged Rs. 2 for making 100 coins. The Jemadars stay with him when they visit Bombay and he apparently acts as agent to the various Beluchi gangs. The coins are made of an alloy of silver and other baser metals and are worth Re. 0-8-0 each. The coins are sold to the public at prices varying from 12 annas to Re. 1-4-0 each, making a very handsome profit. Mr. Papa Row Naidu says that according to a very recent information, these coins are made at Calcutta and at Nagpore. The four kinds of coins which these Iranees sell require some description.

(1) The Ramachander coin contains the effigy of Rama and his favourite wife Sita.

(2) The Charyaree coin (*i.e.*, the coin of the four caliphs) contains the names in Arabic of Abu Bakr, Omar, Osman and Ali, the first four caliphs of Islam. The obverse has the Kalima—La ilaha illullah Muhammadur Rasullullah.

(3) Panjathani coin (*i.e.*,—the coin of the Five Sacred Ones) consists of the names of Allah the God, Muhammad the Prophet, Ali the son-in-law of the Prophet, Fatima the daughter of the Prophet and wife of Ali, Hussan and Hussain the grandchildren of the Prophet and sons of Ali.

(4) The Akbari coin has the name of Akbar and the date of his accession to the throne on one side and Kalima on the obverse. Mr. Papa Rao Naidu's description of the coins requires a little correction. Sometimes Arcot Rupees, Bejapur Rupees and old Hyderabad coins (not current) are also found. The Muhammadans and the Hindus purchase these coins not so much for their intrinsic value, but for their supposed magical power to avert evil eye and to bring fortune and luck to the possessor. They are invariably worn as charms round the necks of children. For this reason they are purchased at prices far higher than that of pure silver.

93. Modus Operandi.

(i) *Women.* The women are the most troublesome creatures, pilfering, assaulting, intimidating the villagers wherever they go. They are the cause of disturbance everywhere, and being very strong and robust, they even assault and beat two or three males. Two or three females with their youngsters enter into a house on the plea of asking for water. When they find the inmates of the house to be mild people, one of the party will exhibit a number of coins and begin to deliver a good lecture on their magical power and thus distract attention of the owners of the house. The remaining members of the party will cleverly enter into the house unobserved and steal valuables in the house and conceal them in their skirts which possess shelves. Sometimes the youngsters go into the house and empty all pots containing rice, dhal, salt and other necessities and run away. When asked, the females would say that they were hungry. The boisterous nature of the women and youngsters are too well known. They find the Corridor train of the South Indian Railway a convenient medium for committing thefts. Occupying seats in the said train, they send young boys and girls and their females all along the train on the pretext of exhibiting their wares for sale. If a passenger is careless about his baggage, these lift it and pass it off to the males who occupy a corner of the train. When caught hold of in the act of stealing by the owners of property, the women will create so much disturbance

and fuss that nobody would venture to go near them. When attempts are made to search their person for stolen property they would become boisterous and would raise such a hideous cry as to alarm everybody. They would attempt to throw away their young children through the carriage windows on to the platform. There are cases on record where women have looted bazaars and vegetable and fruit-stalls in towns and have threatened to dash the brains of their children by striking them on the ground when opposed by people. The youngsters are very dexterous in pilfering fowls and even sheep.

°(ii) *Men*:—They commit theft, robbery, dacoity, extortion, and cheating. They steal at every place they visit. The members of the gang generally keep bunches of false keys with which they enter houses and steal everything they could lay their hands on. They extort money from villagers as a matter of right and the timid village-head-men not only give them money but also supply them with provisions during their halt in the village. The instances where they looted the bags of postmen and mail bags of runners are on record. The gangs travel in trains without tickets if they find the railway staff to be mild. Generally they purchase a few tickets and stuff the compartment with their dirty baggage, tents, cages of fowls, wooden posts, rice-pounders and all their belongings. If the station masters raise any objection, then everybody including women and children will join to abuse and to assault that officer. During the fracas, the Jemadar would appear on the scene, as if unaware of the episode, and begin to cringe and beg of the officers to excuse them. The way in which they swindle in the purchase of rice and ghee requires a mention here. They go to a bazaar with two pots, one above the other and the above pot having a soft mud bottom. They ask the bazaarman to put ghee into the upper pot and when the ghee is so put, they begin to raise a fuss for the smallness of the quantity given. In their quarrel they pick a hole in the mud bottom, and the ghee runs into the lower pot. When the bazaar man notices the trick they frighten him into filling up the top measure as agreed upon. They use a double bag into which they get a bazaar man to pour rice; let-

ting some through into the bottom part, they pour out the remainder and accuse the bazaarman of giving them short measure.

94. Distribution, concealment and disposal of property. Each member of a gang provides for himself and his family. There is no common division of profits. If any one becomes a bankrupt, the others lend him a few hundred rupees, without interest, to be paid back when able. Expenses for the general benefit of the gang, such as trips to Bombay to replenish stock-in-trade are contributed by each member in equal share. Each member conceals his stolen property under a tree or near some land mark pre-arranged, so that nothing is found if searched by the police. They take the stolen jewels to Madras or Bombay, one or two merely go, not the whole gang. There they either sell the gold or silver, or have these jewels altered for their own use.

CHAPTER XII.

Bowris or Bauriahs.

(*Burglars and False Coiners.*)

95. Origin, Habitat. The Bowris are the most notoriously skilful and dangerous criminals whose predatory excursions extend throughout India. Their origin is enveloped in obscurity; but it is believed that their original home was in the jungles of Mewar or Odaipur in Marwar, where they led a peaceful and honest life chiefly subsisting on the forest produce. After the siege of Chittoor in Odaipur by the Moghul Emperor, famine and scarcity impelled the Bowris to seek for fresh fields and pastures new. They were put to the necessity of committing highway robberies and dacoities and other violent forms of organized crimes, and were so much dreaded by the travelling public that they were employed as *paid guides* during the journey only to get their good-will. Sometimes they organized themselves into regular bands of brigands and harrassed the country far and wide. About the year 1838 these Bowris were dealt with under the Criminal Tribes Act, and were settled by free grants of lands in Bedowli in the Muzaffarnagar District, United Provinces. They are, therefore, known as Muzaffarnagar Bowris. But, as the police surveillance over them was gradually relaxed, they began to leave their homes and wander about in disguises to distant provinces. The advent of the railways afforded them facilities for travelling, besides giving them a very wide field for their harvest. They abandoned their violent forms of crime and became experts in milder crimes of theft, burglary, cheating, and false-coining, but never shrinking from resorting to extreme violence in self-defence or when placed in a critical position.

Bowris are now known by different names in different parts of India. The Dehlivala Bowris hail from Muzaffarnagar, Malpuras from Central India and Bhopal, Khairwadas from Gwallior,

Budhuks from Bhopal and United Provinces, Marwadas from Marwar, Panjabis from the Punjab, and Moghias from Malwa. In Southern India they are commonly known as Takurgars.

96. Personal appearance, dress. The Bowri is in appearance and dress very similar to the ordinary cultivator of the United Provinces and Central India. They are as a class strong, well-built, and of medium stature, with coarse features. Their complexion varies between sallow and dark. They are active, keen of sense and inured to hardships and fatigues. The females are generally sallow or wheat coloured and often not without claims to good looks. Khairwada women are cleaner, better-dressed and more refined-looking than the females of the other division. As the Bowris met with in this country are generally in disguise, a description of their customary home attire is not of much practical use. Their disguises must be known.

97. Disguises. They very cleverly adopt the disguises of Bairagees, Gosains, Sadhus, Brahmacharins and other holy orders of the Hindus. Their prayers, religious habits, ceremonials and incantations are so well performed that even the practised eye of a genuine Bairagee or a Sadhu is deceived. The general get-up of the disguise is very life-like. They smear their foreheads with holy ashes (Veeboodi), or sometimes mark it with *Gopichandan* (sandal marks). Some are known to wear namams like the Vaishnavites. They also wear *thulasi* or *rudraksha mala* (string of beads) round the neck, and sometimes wear the sacred thread of the Brahmin. They carry about the usual paraphernalia of the real sadhu including *chimta* (huge iron tong), a *kamandal* (a begging bowl) made of either brass or dried pumpkin, a tiger, cheeta or a deer skin, on which they generally sit (*asan*) and a sadhu staff. Some shave their heads and others allow their hair to grow. They always add '*das*' or '*gir*' to their names. Some have Dwarka or Ajodhia *chaps* or the brands of the religious visitor to these shrines, on their upper arm. Some will have big religious books like *Tulsi Krit Ramayana* with them, and they will usually sit under a big banyan tree near a village and

drone out long pieces from these books to the great admiration of the passers-by. They wear a *dhوتي* ten cubits in length or an *angocha* (a short *dhوتي*) measuring six cubits. They also wear *kurta* or shirt and a large *feeta* or head-scarf tied up in a peculiar fashion. Marwar Bowris wear a silver *kada* or anklet on the right angle.

98. How to distinguish a Bowri from a Bairagee, Gosain or Sadhu. Bowris are such adepts at the Sadhus' disguise that ordinary people are rarely able to penetrate them and even Sadhus are taken in. They can be distinguished from the *bona Sadhus*' *fide* Sadhus as follows :—

1. Bowris differ from genuine Sadhus in their style of living, manners and customs, and articles of food and drink. Bowris cook and eat *together* and indulge in intoxicating drinks, and consume flesh openly ; but real Bairagees do not touch flesh or liquor at all. Some of the real Sadhus and Bairagees who are secretly given to eating flesh, will not do so in company, nor openly, nor will they drink liquor. Every true Sadhu will cook and eat his own meals separately.

2. Parties of true Sadhus are always made up of individuals from different parts of the country with different dialects and more or less showing some difference in cast of countenance ; but the Bowri gang, disguised as Sadhus, have general uniform appearance, dialect, manners and customs which to the practised eye should excite suspicion and betray them.

3. The Bowri will never wear *dhوتي* and *langoti* (a suspensory inner cloth) together. As a rule, his *dhوتي* is 10 cubits in length and the *angocha* (short *dhوتي*) measures 6 cubits. Both are tied in a peculiar fashion, the former displaying more of the right thigh, the latter of the left. The cloth is gathered at one end and it is placed at the small of the waist. The remaining portion is passed between the legs and taken to the navel and then wound round the waist twice. When the second round comes to the navel, a portion of the cloth is tied to the first round and the remaining portion allowed to dangle free. The portion of the cloth at the back is also tucked up. This

leaves the left leg and the back of the right leg below the knee completely exposed while a triangular piece of cloth having one end of the cloth for its opening loosely hanging in front. The Bairagees do not tie their cloth like this. The Bowris, when in disguise tuck up that portion of the cloth which is hanging in front. The Bawris put on waist-coats and when in disguise cover it with another cloth which is so tied that it covers the trunk and leaves arms exposed. The Bairagees do not wear waist-coats. In head dress too there is dissimilarity. When in disguise they use a white towel for their head dress. The two diagonally opposite ends are taken and left hanging behind the head while the remaining portions are tied round the head, one portion having been placed above the other. The Bawris wear garlands of Tulsi or other beads, mixed with coral beads ; but Bairagees will never wear coral beads.

4. The Bowris always carry a family goddess *devi*. It consists of some wheat grains and some black seeds of a creeper enclosed in a brass or copper *daabi* (receptacle or box), a peacock feather, a bell, all wrapped up in a pair of sheets of white cloth each measuring $2\frac{1}{4}$ by 2 cubits, the outer of which bears the imprint of hand dipped in goat's blood. The whole is again rolled up in two pieces of red cloth, (Kharwa or kavi) of the same dimensions as the white and tied in a bundle. It is very easy to identify Bowris by the presence of this goddess which is held very sacred by them and represents, "*Kalika Devi*."

99. **Stock-in-trade, instruments and weapons used in committing crime.** *Gyan* or *Daulatia* is their chief and characteristic implement of house-breaking. Gyans are of three kinds. That carried by Dehlivals is like an ordinary ladle (*palli*) but it is heavier and stronger than the ordinary culinary spoon and it is made of an alloy of iron and steel, the end of the handle being sharpened and tempered. This *gyan* is used both for cooking and for criminal purposes. The Malpura's and Khairwada's *gyan* is an ordinary pointed steel *jemmy* with a knob at the end. A miniature crow-bar is always carried hidden in the bamboo staves which they generally carry. The staff has iron rings around it,

If rings are removed, the hidden bar will be seen. The *Badaks'* *gyan* is a steel and iron jemmy 6 to 10 inches, bound at the top and also where the metal fits into the wood, with iron bands. A pair of big *tongs* is sometimes used for boring holes. The Bawriah leader will always carry a *ball of wax* for coating the taper, a rough pair of small scales for weighing the valuable, and a small stone to test gold and silver. A piece of cloth is well waxed with the ball and then twisted—this takes the place of a candle when a gang breaks into a house. Sometimes a razor, sticks, and a match box complete the outfit carried by a Bowri burglar. Gyans like the stolen property are carried separately by one of the men who remain far away from the gang either a mile in front or a mile behind the gang. When they camp at any place they bury this underground in the neighbourhood.

100. Modus Operandi. The Bawris leave their country for committing crimes abroad only after the cessation of rain and return to their homes before the monsoon breaks. During the monsoon they remain inactive wherever they happen to be camping if they had not already gone to their homes. For their criminal expeditions they form themselves into gangs (*Mandlas* or *girohs*) of varying strength but usually do not exceed ten. Their ostensible places of pilgrimage are Jaggannath, Dwarka, Rameswaram, Haridwar, Kasi and other religious places. While ostensibly on their way to these places they carry on their nefarious trade. Every gang is headed by a leader styled by Dehliwals and Marwadads 'Kamaov', by Malpuras 'Kadoo', by Badacks 'Upkare', and 'Jamadar', by Moghias. There will be in the gang 'pitwaris' (the rank and file of the gang which commits thefts), "Bhandari" (cock) and *Kothari* (one who does menial work such as washing pots, clothes, etc.). The Kairwadi and Marwada Bawriahs boldly put up inside towns and villages in temples, but other Bauriahs prefer to lurk in the outskirts of towns and villages, in a remote garden, or an abandoned temple, or an out-of-the-way mutt, or other convenient resting places. They gather their information for themselves. During moonlight nights 'kamaov' and one or two of the more accomplished 'pitwades' start off singly in different

directions to survey towns and neighbouring villages. Begging from door to door they will make mental notes of premises. Sometimes they go to houses under the pretext of selling medicines and obtain the necessary information. After prospecting is over, they will go away from the place only to return for crime during dark nights. To commit a burglary, Bawris will walk as long as 40 miles in 24 hours. Their favourite H. B. implement is the gyan. They effect entrance into houses by three methods. First, a hole is bored in the wall by the side of the door frame near the bolt which is pushed aside by the hand put through the hole. They call this 'bugle' method, viz., side way method. Another method is the "Rumali" method which consists of making a hole in the wall large enough to crawl in. This hole is always covered by a confederate with a cloth to keep out light and cold draught which might disturb the sleep of the inmates. The third method is to get into a house through a barred window, bars being forcibly bent and drawn away. It is only the leader 'Kamaov' who enters into the house, whilst all the rest remain outside ready for assistance if need be. He generally throws a handful of seeds or pebbles at the door and on the roof of the house to satisfy himself whether the inmates are fast asleep or not. As soon as he enters into the house he lights a wax taper or match to find out the valuables and it is afterwards put out. If no light is used, he throws inside the room seeds or grains to locate the position of boxes and copper or brass pots. The jewels and ornaments on the person of sleeping females or children are very carefully removed without disturbing them. They remove quietly boxes and break them open not far from the house and only take gold and silver ornaments, rejecting the rest. As a rule, the Bawriahs will not injure persons inside the house except to effect escape.

101. False-Coining by Bawriahs. Marwar Bawriahs are the hereditary coiners. Though their appliances are very crude and their handicraft is confined to casting counterfeits of an alloy of copper, bell metal and tin, their work is superior to those of the Chapparbands of Bijapur. They make two exactly fitting

blocks measuring $3 \times 3 \times \frac{3}{4}$ inches of clay with cotton or wool. Two pegs are inserted at each end to keep the blocks in position. When dried in shade, a hollow larger than a rupee in circumference and about $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch deep is scraped in the inner side of the lower block. A channel is cut in the side of the block leading into the hollow. A circular *hole*, larger than a rupee in circumference, is cut in the upper block and a side channel is also cut to correspond with the side channel on the lower block. It is through this hole molten metal is poured. Limestone (Maradka-pathar) is made into a very fine powder and mixed with *ghi* to form a white clay or plaster-of-paris. This plaster of paris is filled into the cavity of the lower block and a genuine rupee is half embedded into it. Fitting the upper block on to the lower, the round hole of the upper one is filled with plaster-of-paris. Pressure is applied on the plaster-of-paris to get an impression of the obverse. The rupee is then cleverly removed, and a channel is delicately scraped in white-clay or plaster-of-paris. The mould is now complete. After removing the counterfeit out of the mould, the edges of the former are milled by pressing the edges of a genuine coin round the soft edges of the spurious one. False coins are concealed in small pockets sewn in front folds of the *dhotis*. When there are women, these moulds are kept by them.

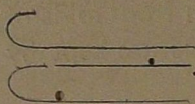
102. Passing off of Coins. Of the various methods adopted to pass off coins, the following are generally practised :—

(i) A Farukabad Rupee or other uncurrent rupee is tendered in payment of some small purchase made. When refused to be accepted, the Bawriah hands over a counterfeit coin in its place. Sometimes the Bawriah will ask to be shown a genuine coin which by the sleight of hand is exchanged for a counterfeit one from the next hand where he will conceal it under a stick which he will always carry.

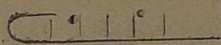
103. Bawriah women. The female Bawrhin is wheat-coloured and possesses good looks. Her morals are loose ; but she will not be guilty of misconduct with strangers. The women do

not actually participate in crime, but are always well informed and assist in the disposal of property. Tattooing among females is largely indulged in, most of them having a dot or two or some lines at the corners of the eyes, at the side of the nose, below the lower lip, as well as on the knuckles, wrist and arms. Dehlivala and Malpura Bawriahs do not take their females with them; but Marwar Vaghris always take them. The Bawriahs take women of inferior caste into their gang.

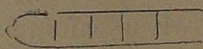
104. Marks or Signs used by Bawriahs. When Bawriahs leave one place and go to another, they always leave marks or signs with charcoal on the walls of chatrams, temples and other places for the guidance of other Bawriahs. Sometimes if no convenient buildings are found, marks are made on the ground by the road side with a stick. Among Marwar Bawriahs, a member of a gang, usually a woman, trails a stick in the dust as she walks along leaving a special track on the ground. Sometimes to indicate the route taken, Bawriahs place leaves under stones at intervals along the route. The following are the few signs known :—



The straight end indicates the direction in which the gang has gone. The other sign below indicates the same thing according to Gayer.



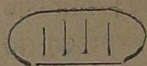
The strokes represent the number of males in the gang which has gone in that direction.



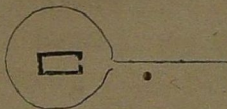
Marks a place at which they have halted and also shows the number of males in the party.



The strokes represent the strength of the gang.



It also means that the gang is encamped in the vicinity, intends to return and all is well.



The square is intended to represent a box. The sign means that the property has been secured by friends who have left in the direction pointed by the line.



Means either, they are in the district on tour or that they have secured a good haul.

105. Division, concealment and disposal of stolen property. The articles of jewellery, except precious stones and pearls which are kept with the leader for subsequent disposal, are always broken into pieces and divided at once among the members. The property is divided into five shares. The leader gets one, and the remaining four shares are divided among the members including the leader, even absent member gets a share. Each member melts his own share and makes his own arrangement to dispose it of in the best way he thinks fit. The sale proceeds are remitted by post to their native places. While encamped in a place, a Bawriah will conceal property in the near vicinity of the halting place, but when moving he carries his cash and stolen property on his person. Before division the property is in charge of the leader who, while encamped at a place, buries it near the camp without the knowledge of other members, but on the move, it is carried by one of the able bodied members who is fleet of foot. The hole dug by Bowris when concealing property under ground, is generally wider at the base than at the surface and the property is deposited in a small side burrow scraped out at the base.

CHAPTER XIII.

Maravars.

106. Origin, habitat "The Maravars," Sir Harold Stuart writes, "are found in Madura, Ramnad and Tinnevely, where they occupy the tracts bordering on the coast from Cape Comorin to the northern limits of the Ramnad Zamindary." They are also found in Trichinopoly and Coimbatore Districts as servants. Tradition says that the Maravars assisted Rama in his war against Ravana and that deity expressed his gratitude with the Tamil word "*Maraven*," which means 'I will never forget.' Others derive the name from "*Maram*," which means 'killing, ferocity, bravery and the like, as pointing clearly to their unpleasant profession, that of robbing and slaying their neighbours.' The Maravars undoubtedly belong to a great fighting or warfior tribe, and in former times they were a fierce, lawless, turbulent and unmanageable race held in perpetual terror and dread by the quiet and peaceful inhabitants of the country all around. They were once very numerous and powerful in the Madura District, and thus perpetually harrassed the territories of the Nayakan Kingdoms of Madura and Tanjore. They were the source of trouble to the Nawabs of the Carnatic, and, about a century ago, gave much trouble to the British authorities of the district ; but they have now settled down to peaceful habits, exhibiting, however, a bolder and more determined spirit than their neighbours. The head of the Maravars is the Rajah Sethupathi of Ramnad, who is their hereditary ruler. We have also many other Maravar Zamindars who wield immense power and possess considerable property, notably the Zamindars of Uthumalai, Singampatti, Setur, Sivagiri, Sivagunga, Surandai, etc., who now retain only a shadow of the power which their ancestors wielded in the good old days of the Poligars. Though the Maravars have now taken to peaceful vocations, chiefly agriculture, they have earned a wide notoriety as being the professional dacoits, robbers and burglars and expert cattle-lifters of the Madras Presidency. No other criminal fraternity, except the

Sugalees, is known to have excelled them in cattle-lifting. Their criminal propensity can be gauged by the fact that although they form only 10 per cent. of the population of the Tinnevely District, yet they are responsible for 70 per cent. of the dacoities committed every year. They are criminals by predilection and training. They figured very prominently during the Anti-Shanar riots in the Madura and the Tinnevely Districts in 1899, when they boycotted the Shanars and forcibly prevented them from entering into temples frequented by other caste Hindus.

The Maravars, according to Mullaly, are divided into seven principal clans as follows :—

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Sembu-Nattu. | 5. Orur (Orayur) Nattu. |
| 2. Kondayan-Kottai. | 6. Uppu Kottei. |
| 3. Apanur-Nattu. | 7. Kurichi-Kattu. |
| 4. Agata. | |

The highest of all is the Sembu-Nattu, but which is the best or which the worst as regards character, it would be difficult to say : all are much alike (*Mullaly*).

107. Appearance, dress, disguise. The physiognomy of the Maravar is so distinct that he stands quite aloof from the neighbouring races. The Maravars are generally tall, robust, well-made and of strikingly superior physique. Their bold and independent spirit and commanding personality contribute much to inspire awe and fear in the minds of the surrounding peaceful communities. They are black in colour, and generally wear profuse whiskers. There is much resemblance between the Maravars and their cousins, the Kallars ; but the former will wear their hair on the head exceedingly long. Another striking resemblance is in the enormous lengthening of ear-lobes brought about by constant wearing of heavy ornaments. The ear-lobes of women are so elongated by artificial appliances that jewels worn in them rest on the shoulders. The robbery committed by snatching jewels worn in the ears is of constant occurrence in the Marava countries, and further any slight quarrel amongst women terminates in the tearing of the attenuated ear-lobes. The Maravars'

favourite head dress is the ordinary coloured and striped 'Erumal,' a square cloth which is folded triangularly and tied round the head. They do not wear turbans. A lohn cloth is also worn. The women wear a single sari, without bodice. The tali is held sacred. The Maravars do not practise tattooing like the Kallars.

Disguises are not adopted by the Maravars when committing crime; but they muffle up their faces or paint them with chunam or charcoal, if they commit dacoity in a place where they are likely to be identified.

108. Habits, customs. The Maravars are essentially a "settled" race, possessing lands and houses in their villages. Their chief occupation is agriculture; but they consider it not unworthy of their dignity to gain their livelihood by preying on their neighbours' property. They sometimes indulge in crime as a mere pastime, like the Kallars. Another favourite profession is that of a "cattle-broker." Their principal deity is "Alaghar Swami," to whose temple a portion of their spoil is dedicated after every successful raid. Before proceeding on depredations, the Maravars consult omens like the Kallars. They bear Saivite sectarian marks. They also worship minor deities such as Kali, Karuppan, Muthu Karuppan, Aiyandar, etc. Men and women indulge largely in liquor and tobacco. Gambling is a favourite pastime. The "Kudi-Kavil" system is prevailing very largely in the Madura and Tinnevely Districts. Kudi-Kavalgars are the private watchmen in each village, and in return for their pay received in kind, they undertake to return the property stolen or an equivalent in value. The Kudi-Kavalgars are directly or indirectly the criminals of the place. A Kavalgar is, therefore, a thief, robber, village-policeman and detective combined. In order to meet claims against them for property stolen within the jurisdiction of Kavalgars, they have to resort to depredations elsewhere. The women are, as a class, very moral. It is the bridegroom's sister who officiates at a marriage ceremony. She removes the string of black beads from the neck of the bride and ties a tali which is usually "the head of Indra fastened to a

bunch of human hair, or silken strings representing his hair." Marriage by means of a proxy for the bridegroom in the shape of a stick sent by the bridegroom is allowed. Widow remarriage is tolerated and frequently practised, and the divorce is easy and frequent. They practise Jellikuttu, Manjaivurttoo, Erathukattoo, various forms of bull-baiting, which is considered as a national game worthy of a bold and free people. On a certain day large crowds of people assemble together in some extensive open space, the dry bed of a river perhaps, or of a tank, or a field by the slopes of hills, where a number of specially reared ferocious bulls with money attached to their horns, are loosened one after another, in quick succession, from a large pen, with furious tom-toming and loud shouts of the assembled spectators. The game consists in overpowering the animal and removing the prize tied up to its horns. The winner is held in great admiration. The tuppoo cooly system is in vogue amongst the Maravars (*vide* Kallars). The headman is called the Thalavan or the Ambalagaram, and he presides at all the panchayets, settles disputes and punishes the delinquents. He is generally a man of means and influence. Though not a thief himself, he, however, harbours thieves, receives stolen property and aids in the disposal of the same. It is the duty of the leader of the gang to organize depredatory excursions and to bring them to successful issues. The women do not accompany the males in the commission of crimes; but they, however, help them in the disposal of stolen property.

109. Stock-in-trade. The house-breaking implement is the "Kunnookol," but the ordinary crowbar is also employed. For dacoity, clubs, sticks, stones and slings are used. The Maravars of Tinnevely convert the axle of a wheel for battering doors of houses to be dacoited. The axle is hung from a tripod and the mechanism serves as a battering ram. Sometimes the dacoits take guns with them. Augers are used for boring holes in doors.

110. Modus operandi. They are especially addicted to dacoity, robbery, burglary and cattle-lifting.

i. *House-breaking*:—Like the Kallars, the Maravars commit house-breaking in all the ways; but, the most common method adopted by them is to bore a hole in the wall in level with the inside floor. The next method in order of frequency is to bore a hole by the side of the door frame sufficiently big to admit of a man's arm being inserted to push aside the bolt for opening the door. The Maravars bore holes in walls very dexterously, and the stone and the brick walls are bored with much greater ease than the mud walls. Sometimes they effect entrance into houses by removing or bending the bars of windows.

ii. *Cattle-lifting*:—Like the Kallars, the Maravars are very skilful cattle-lifters. The stolen animals are returned back to owners on payment of "Tuppu-cooly" to certain agents who derive a lucrative trade by taking advantage of the Tuppu-cooly system. If the animals are not claimed by owners, their appearance are changed and they are sold in the cattle fairs at a distance from the scene of crime, or sent to Colombo through Tuticorin. (For fuller information read Sec. 65).

iii. *Robbery*:—The most frequent form of robbery is the snatching of jewels worn in the attenuated ear-lobes of the women which are generally torn. The robbery committed on the lonely wayfarers returning from a neighbouring weekly market is also common. On important roads leading to certain prosperous villages, the Mail robberies are generally perpetrated, and in some of these cases the postal servants will be at the bottom of the mischief.

iv. *Dacoity*:—All kinds of dacoity—house dacoity, road dacoity, torch light dacoity and road dacoity—are committed by the Maravars with great ease. The planning of the entire campaign and its successful execution devolves on the leader. On the appointed day he despatches small batches of his men separately through different routes with instruction to meet at a central place near the scene of crime. Some will accompany a bandy which will pick up stones or the road metal from any road-side heap along the route and a good quantity of prickly pear if that is not available near the scene of crime. As soon as the gang reaches the house to be dacoited,

the members of the gang will be posted for duty at different places according to the instructions given by the leader. Torches will be lighted, stones will be pelted by means of slings in different directions in the village, front doors of other houses will be fastened from outside, prickly pear will be strewn across the streets leading to the scene of crime and guns will be discharged. All this will be done to frighten the inhabitants of the locality and to prevent them from going to the help of the unfortunate sufferers of the dacoited house. If doors of the house offer any resistance for entry, the axle of the bandy will be used as a battering ram by suspending it in the middle of a tripod. A dacoit will get up on the top of the house and give loudly a description of an imaginary bloodshed and carnage that is being perpetrated in the house. This hoax is employed only to dissuade people from going to the succour of the terrorized victims. A dacoity of this description took place at Chochanathapuram, Tirupatur Circle, Ramnad District, in 1902.

. 111. **Receivers, Patrons.** Toddy and arrack shop-keepers, Nattakotai Chetties, some village officers, certain Naicks and Sairvaigarans are their receivers and patrons.

CHAPTER XIV.

Donga Woddars.

112. Origin, habitat. The name Woddar is said to be a corruption of the Sanskrit "Odhra," the name of the country now called Orissa whence the Woddars are supposed originally to have emigrated. They are the navvies of the Telugu country and are experts at quarrying stone, sinking wells, building houses and tank-bunds and doing various other kinds of earth-work. They are divided into two classes, (1) Kāllu (Stone) Woddars, and (2) Mannu (Earth) Woddars. All Woddars are not, as a rule, criminals; but the Donga Woddars of the Ceded Districts who are quite separate from the ordinary Woddars, are criminals. They gain the appellation of *Donga Woddars* or thieving Woddars on account of their having taken to crime as a profession. The ordinary Woddars now wander about the country, remaining temporarily in those places where they obtain work. Sometimes they live in detached settlements, building for themselves conical huts with a low entrance; but the Donga Woddars who adopted criminal habits live in the Cuddapah, Kurnool, Bellary, Guntur and Anantapur Districts. The gang of Donga Woddars, which is known as such to the people of Kurnool and neighbouring districts of this Presidency, was organized many years ago by a notorious criminal of the Cumbum Taluq, Kurnool District, by name Machi Reddi who was a great friend of the notorious Narasimma Reddy of Uyyalawada, Koilkuntla Taluq, Kurnool District, who in his time looted the Koilkuntla Treasury and killed the Tahsildar. The Donga Woddars, on the death of their leader Machi Reddy, split up into small batches, each under its own headman, which occasionally united at marriage celebrations and other ceremonies. They took to a wandering life committing crimes, with impunity, throughout the Ceded Districts. A dangerous gang has now been settled at Siddapur, Kurnool District.

113. Appearance, dress. Woddars are a fine-looking race. The males are well-built, and wear Vaishnavite trident marks on

their foreheads, arms, and breast. They have the external appearance of caste people, but this totally belies their character. The looks of many of the younger women would compare favourably with women of the better classes. They seldom use disguises.

114. Women. The women are very immoral. They are as criminal as the men, though they do not actually take part in the commission of heinous crimes. They are inveterate petty thieves and are adepts in the art of collecting information useful to the males in the commission of more serious offences and in concealing and disposing of stolen property. They are staunch supporters of their malekind when the latter are detected in crime, and there are instances in which they have actually rescued the males from lawful custody. They become most clamorous and inflict personal injuries on themselves and their children to deter the police from doing their duty, and then accuse them of torture. They are adepts at grain thefts and are clever in purloining the neighbour's poultry.

115. Habits, customs. The ostensible means of livelihood of the gang is begging, but this, when it resorts to it, amounts to nothing less than extortion. In each criminal gang there is a headman called the 'Gunga Raja' who exercises jurisdiction in caste disputes, arranges all criminal campaigns, distributes stolen property, and, in fact, does everything for the general welfare of the gang. In non-criminal gangs, the "Gunga Raja" engages in the contracts to be performed by his followers who dislike the daily wages system, but will work in gangs on contract only. The members of the gang frequently inter-marry with the ordinary village Woddars and in the case of a female Donga Woddar marrying a villager, the latter invariably joins the gang. As a rule, however, the members prefer to make an exchange with other members of the gang, i.e., a member having a son and a daughter prefers to marry them to the daughter and son of another member. When this is not possible Rs. 16 is paid for the bride who remains in her husband's house from the time of

marriage even though she may not then have attained puberty. The marriage ceremony lasts only a night and the marriage may be dissolved at any time, but in that case Rs. 16 has to be returned to the bride's parents. In cases of divorce the children by the marriage are divided between father and mother as decided by the headman ; but divorces are of very infrequent occurrences. The deity they chiefly worship is Sathidevara. The worship is performed on no fixed occasions. It is as a rule held when the gang is in funds and plenty of arrack, toddy and sheep are available. The celebrations are generally held in out-of-the-way places, so that the warrantees and supernumeraries may be present without fear of molestation. The gang also worships Malyamma, Sunkamma and other village deities in a lesser degree. When the gang is about to go out for crime the members pray to Sathidevara and drink large quantities of toddy or arrack which is invariably served to them by the females who also tie the waist bands of the males. The gang is most superstitious and puts great faith in omens. The *bad omens* are : any member sneezing when they are about to start ; the meeting of two Sudras on their way ; a cat crossing their path ; and the howling of a dog. If any of the above happens they will put off their expedition. The *good omens* are : the meeting of one Sudra ; the neighing of a horse ; the braying of an ass ; and the flight of a swallow across their path. When they reach the scene of their intended operations they attempt to answer calls of nature in the village gate-way and if they are able to do so they feel confident of success in their undertaking. The presence of the gang at any place may always be known by the theft of considerable amount of toddy from date topes in the vicinity of their halting place. They never halt in any one place long and they never travel by road or by trains, but always through jungle or cart tracks.

116. How information is obtained. Most of the preliminary information necessary for the commission of offence is obtained by the women, who endeavour for that purpose to make friends with the low caste people in the village, such as Madigas,

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WODDERS.

Malas and Boyas either by paying them or more often by allowing the latter to have sexual intercourse with them. Having thus made friends with these people, they easily succeed in finding out who are the wealthy personages in the village, where they keep their property and so on.

117. Stock-in-trade. While committing depredations, the members will be armed with daggers and battle-axes and some will carry crow-bars for committing burglary, although as a rule they rarely enter houses by making holes in the walls. Some of them will carry baskets to contain the stolen property, and others carry pieces of meat to be thrown to any troublesome dog. Some will be always armed with sticks. The discovery of a peculiar stick usually carried by the notorious dacoit Sathigadu but left behind at the scene of crime, led to the detection of a dacoity committed by that criminal at Pusulur in Nandyal Taluq.

118. Modus operandi. The Donda Woddars are desperate criminals and at times cruel when any opposition is offered, and have been known to inflict severe personal injuries on their victims. When committing crime *at night* the Donga Woddars do not resort to violence unless opposed, which is seldom, as their methods are too well known, but when any opposition is offered, they beat their victim mercilessly. Offences committed by them *by day* are always accompanied by extreme violence. They make a point of raping all the young women who come into their power. Indeed their favourite diversion when holding up a village was to make all the available young women remove their clothing and dance before them. Their favourite crimes, therefore, are robbery and dacoity, but they are not skilful burglars. The blunt marks of the crow-bar are noticeable on the breach in the wall which will be generally unsuccessful. So they generally refrain from committing house-breaking by boring holes in the wall. They employ other methods for the purpose. Entry may be effected by removing iron-bars of the windows. Their dangerous and desperate character may be proved by various

cases in which they have mutilated the person by cutting the nose, ear, etc., of owners of property who gave chase to arrest the Donga Woddars. In some cases the Donga Woddars have assaulted the Police officers, carried off their carbines and ammunition and even killed them. Escapes from police lock-ups are very frequent, and in one case, in order to escape from custody, some Donga Woddars jumped from the window of a running train and ran away.

119. Division and disposal of stolen property. The cash is always retained and grain is handed over to the toddy-shop-keeper for safe custody. Jewels are disposed of to receivers. This is done immediately if they are in their neighbourhood, but if not, the property will be buried near the place where the gang is halting. It is not unearthed and taken away with the gang when it moves off, but some days afterwards two or more of the females will return secretly and hide it in some more distant place. This procedure is followed until the property is finally disposed of. As regards the division of the stolen property it is invariably shared equally amongst all, females and children receiving an equal share with the males.

120. Receivers, Patrons. They are the Komatis, Kapus, Gollas, Kammas and Edigas of the place. Some Village Magistrates and Village Taliaries have acted as receivers.

CHAPTER XV. Minor Classes.

1. Tottiyar Naicks.

A very dangerous gang of criminals whose members are legion, has been committing depredations throughout the Tamil Districts of the Presidency for the last three decades. Recently, its criminal activity has increased with alarming rapidity. It is very difficult to trace the origin of this gang; but the members call themselves by different names, such as *Thotti Naickars*, *Kambalathans*, *Fathipillays*, *Kaduga Naickars*, *Pandarams*, *Dasaris* and *Rajputs*. How for the gang has any claim to use these appellations, it cannot be determined with any degree of accuracy. According to Sir Harold Stuart "the Tottiyans or Kambalathans are a caste of Telugu cultivators settled in the districts of Madura (including Ramnad), Tinnevely, Coimbatore and Salem. They are probably the descendants of poligars and soldiers of the Nayakan Kings of Vijayanagar, who conquered the Madura country about the beginning of the sixteenth century." Mr. Francis also holds this view. Mr. Nelson in his Gazetteer of the Madura country states that after the fall of the Naick dynasty of Madura, the Tottiyans scattered themselves over-all the Tamil Districts of the Presidency. There is no doubt that these people hailed from the Telugu country, for the Telugu which they still speak is the Telugu pure and simple of the Northern Districts, making allowances for defects in accent and intonation the result perhaps of long residence in the Tamil country. The Tottiyans are most numerous in the Madura and Tinnevely Districts, and include according to Mr. Thurston, "two grades in the social scale. Of these, one consists of those who are engaged in cultivation, and petty Zamindars. The other is made up of those who wander about begging and doing menial work. Between the two classes there is neither interdin-
ing nor intermarriage." The criminal Tottiyans, therefore,

belong to the second division, and they are now, like all other criminal fraternity, homeless vagabonds living a nomadic life, making temporary halts in jungles and fastnesses or in the outskirts of the village through which they move. To connect the name Thottiyar with their other assumed name of Jathipillays is rather difficult. It is possible that the gang has adopted the agnomen of several castes to one or other of which it claims to belong. This causes confusion and creates difficulty in fixing its identity. 'Jathipillay' means 'a son of the caste.' How the members of the gang came to be known as 'Jathipillays' is explained by an old legend which says that the King of Kanchi ordered his Kshatriya minister to be publicly put to disgrace in the open streets of the town for embezzling public money; but a Kammalan (blacksmith) of the town went to his rescue by paying the amount embezzled to the King and thus saved him from disgrace and humiliation. The minister became thenceforward the dependant of the blacksmith who adopted him into his community as "Jathipillay." He acquired a claim on the bounty of the blacksmith class which descended to his supposed progeny, the members of this gang. The claim is evidenced by a copper title-deed which is often produced by the members of the gang. On the "pattayam" or copper plate is engraved a copy of an inscription, said to exist on a stone buried under the feet of the god in the Conjeevaram temple. This inscription authorises a mythical hero named Singapuli Ramaswami Naicken and his descendants for ever to collect subscriptions in the shape of rice and money from all sects of Kammalas, Pallars, etc. Whenever this gang appears in a village, its members are fed by the Kammalans of the locality who also raise subscriptions to make presents to them. According to Nelson, the Thotia Naickars and Kambalathans came from Vizagapatam and enlisted in the army of the Naick Kings of Madura after whose downfall they scattered themselves all over the Tamil countries. Whatever may be their origin they are now quite a distinct criminal class. They are at any rate a mongrel crew and quite a distinct gang not connected with the respectable Thottiyans. They are most likely descended from some portion of the

Korava tribe or have inter-bred with them. Mr. Papa Row Naidu classes Jathipillays along with Donga Dasaris. It is possible that the two classes might have sprung from a common origin. In their habits and customs, general physique, appearance, dress, and above all, in their behaviour towards each other in the presence of strangers, resemblance between these two classes is very marked. Though there appears to be a diversity of names, under which these people are known, there is a striking similarity and uniformity in their habits and customs, means of livelihood, and methods employed by them for the commission of crime. They are purely nomadic in their habits and though stray members have settled down in places (Salem and Coimbatore), these settlements are not regularly resorted to by the rest of the tribe. They travel about carrying their own baggage and using no transport animals; neither do they use portable huts. They live in choultries or under any other shelter they can find. The tribe is split up into 50 or 60 small parties or gangs. Their practice is for the main party or nucleus of a gang to travel without concealment through a district. Two or three smaller parties will accompany the main gang separately and unobserved, but remain in touch with it. The minor gangs will *never* visit the main gang openly. They will keep within a radius of some miles and profess the occupation of jugglery, bird-snaring, tattooing. The women do tattooing and the men catch birds and gather the feathers by the sale of which they pretend to earn a living. They always keep a stock in hand of the different kinds of feathers. They also maintain a book in which pictures, designs and rough outlines of tanks, trees, flowers, animals, insects, reptiles and other objects are drawn. They show the book to persons who are requested to select the pattern to be tattooed on their person. This is their ostensible means of livelihood and they do not get enough money for their maintenance. They live by committing burglaries and dacoities. There is nothing very special in the way in which they commit crimes. The last house in the street is generally selected for attack. Entry into the house is effected through a hole bored below the sill of the back-door. They only remove the neck and ear ornaments of sleeping inmates, and they rarely remove other articles

in the house. In removing ornaments sometimes a little more force is applied and it results in the raising of an alarm and subsequent pursuit. As the criminals are very sure-footed, the capture is a hard affair. They defend themselves well and do not refrain from inflicting mortal wounds to effect escape. They will be armed with spears, daggers and newly cut jungle sticks. The women who commit petty thefts also collect information for the gang, and in their professional tattooing visits to houses, they study the topography of the place. The gang does not rely on the local spies for the supply of information. The stolen property is always carried with the gang and it will be concealed in the folds of mats used as pack-saddles. It is disposed of by the main party through Kammalans and other receivers whom they visit on the pretence of collecting subscriptions under the "pattayam". This gang first attracted the attention of the Police in 1875, when it committed series of grave crimes in the Tanjore District. Its sphere of operation was extended to Puddukottai and Mysore, and in 1901, the gang disguised as Rajputs, committed crimes in Salem and Coimbatore. In 1910 the gang took shelter in Cochin. Ever since that year small detachments of the gang have been roaming about in almost all the Tamil Districts of the Southern Presidency. Now they are found in Cochin and Mysore.

2. Konda Doras.

The Konda Doras are a caste of hill-cultivators found in the Vizianagaram, Cheepurupalli and Gajapatinagaram Taluqs of the Vizagapatam District. They are also known as Konda Kapus and Ojas. Mr. Francis believes that they are a section of the Konds, which has largely taken to speaking Telugu, and has adopted some of the Telugu customs. Their original home was Orissa from which place they emigrated into the Telugu speaking country along the slopes of the Eastern Ghats. There are, according to Mr. Hayavadana Row, two well defined divisions among the Konda Doras—Pedda (big) and Chinna Kondalu. It is the second division with which we are concerned that has come

under Telugu domination. Both sections allow the re-marriage of widows, and divorce is permitted. A riot took place in 1900, at the village of Koravanivalasa in the Vizagapatam District, when one Korra Mallayya, pretended that he was a re-incarnation of one of the five Pandava brothers sent on a special mission to drive out the English and to rule the country. He made people believe that he would arm his followers with bamboos which should be turned by magic into guns, and would change the weapons of the authorities into water. He soon collected about four or five thousand people and began to drill them. He gave notice that he would loot the village of Pachipenta and murdered two Constables sent to that place. When the authorities went to the place to arrest Korra Mallaya, a serious riot took place and the police fired on the rioters killing 11 and arresting 60 whilst the rest ran away. The Swami and his son were arrested and charged with murder and rioting. They both died in jail. A specimen of his bamboo gun is exhibited in the Police Training School's Museum.

The Konda Doras are burglars and dacoits. They have obtained notoriety as expert house-breakers. The hole is bored in the wall either by the side of the bolt or under the door frame. There is one peculiarity about their operation. One man digs the hole, whilst his companion holds his cloth to receive the falling bricks and stones to suppress the noise. Their house-breaking implement is about 12 or 15 inches long, triangular or rectangular, with one end sharp. Like the Koravars, they collect a heap of stones near the scene of crime for hurling against their pursuers. They covet the ear-rings worn by the inmates of the house, and often tear the ears by forcibly snatching the rings. They indulge profusely in liquor before they proceed on their depredations. Some male members proceed to other districts and employ themselves as servants under rich persons. By their devotion to duty, integrity and honesty, they gain the confidence of their employers and obtain information about their property as well as that of the other rich men of the locality. Then they send for members of their tribe and make them commit burglaries in the house of their masters or any other house in the village. They remain

with their masters for a long time after the commission of offence, till the excitement has subsided, to ward off suspicion. Konda Doras travel by rail to adjacent districts for the commission of offence; but in their own place they generally avoid rail. The stolen property is sent through their women who accompany them to the scene of crime by rail.

3. Bhatt Rajas, Bhatt Turkas.

The Bhats proper were the bards and minstrels who flourished under the patronizing atmosphere of the oriental courts of India in ancient days. They were divided into (1) Barām Bhats (Brahmin Bhats), (2) Raj Bhats (Rajput Bhats) and (3) Turk Bhats (Muhammadan Bhats). After the advent of the British in India the Bhats became so much degenerated that some of them turned their versatile genius in the direction of crime. These criminal Bhats are now found only in Bengal, Punjab and Madras. The Madras Bhats who are entirely confined to five villages in Vayalpad and Chandrigiri Taluqs of the Chittoor District are the descendants of the Bhats who flourished in the Court of the Nawabs of the Carnatic. They are a peculiar people who, putting on the respectable appearance of Telugu Brahmins, confine their criminal depredations to the Tamil Districts of the Presidency. They do not commit any crime in the Telugu Districts for fear that their imposture will soon be discovered. They disguise themselves as Madhva, Smartha and Vaishnava Brahmins of a very high religious order wearing Rudrakshamalas, Tulasimalas and silk cloths used by Brahmins at the time of poojah, carrying Vaishnava copper chemboos, reciting mantrams and performing Brahmin religious rites. They are instructed in Sanskrit and in all the outward requisites of Brahmanism. They frequently absent themselves from homes for months together and commit depredations far from their native place and return back having converted their spoil into ready cash. Their long absence from home is a sure sign that they are busy elsewhere. Ten or twelve leave home together, but soon split up into 3 or 4 batches working separately. They have methods of com-

communicating intelligence to their associates when separated from them. One of the methods by which they give sign to let their comrades know of their movements is by their leaf-platters which they stitch left hand and in a particular manner different from the usual way of stitching. They leave these used platters pinned to the ground near tanks and choultries. It is very noteworthy that their females do not leave their homes for committing crimes abroad. The males go to distant towns and engage themselves as caste servants. They serve generally for 1 or 2 years with singular fidelity and then abscond with as much property as they could lay their hands on. Sometimes they remain as faithful servants much trusted by their masters, but send for their castemen who commit series of undetectable thefts all round. They frequent all fairs and festivals and bathing places and commit thefts of jewels and clothes of the people. As they habitually commit thefts of jewels and clothes of people bathing in tanks they are known as "Kolamchutti Papar," i.e., the Brahmins that go round and round the tanks (for committing thefts). They also commit thefts in chatrams, choultries and eating-houses, for they have greater facilities of access to these places. Four Bhatrajas disguised as Brahmins stayed for 3 days in a hotel at Vellore and disappeared with the landlady's jewels. Four Madhava Brahmins (Bhatrajas) attended a marriage feast in an official's house at Chittoor and walked away with his property worth Rs. 400. Three Saiva Brahmins (Bhatrajas) put up with some rich pilgrims in a choultry at Trichanoor and decamped with a box containing Rs. 1,000 worth of property. A Bhatraja boy who was sleeping with many pilgrims in a Mandapam suddenly raised alarm 'I am dead, a serpent has bitten me and it is running away.' All was in confusion for a moment, everybody running here and there to avoid the snake. In the meantime the boy disappeared with two bundles. They also commit thefts in trains, on platform and in waiting room. By volunteering to help the passengers they often get mingled with them and disappear with anything that they can lay their hands on with or without substituting empty bundles instead. Their raids on Railways extend all over Southern India. Four exceedingly respectable Brahmins (Bhatrajas) waited upon an

Indian gentleman on arrival by rail at Vellore and disappeared with his baggage. An Assistant Inspector of Salt, a very orthodox Brahmin, was travelling with his family in train to Palghat. Two Brahmins (Bhats) finding that the Inspector would not go into the compartments occupied by other caste men, invited him into their compartment ; and during the journey they all became friends and exchanged confidences. When the Inspector reached his destination he found his jewel-box containing Rs. 3,000 worth of jewels was missing. Thus you will find that the most dangerous of the modern class of thieves are the Bhatrajas who move among the people and tax them heavily for the pleasure of their company. In their *modus operandi* they resemble the Kepmaris or the Koravars.

APPENDIX I.

Additional Notes on the Veypur Pariahs.

1. Habits, Customs. The bride is selected with the permission of the god Nanjappah to obtain which, parents and representatives of the contracting parties proceed to his temple and there wait in sombre silence to hear the chirping of a lizard from a desired direction. The chirping of the reptile from any other direction is considered as an unfavourable sign. When the bride has to be selected from another family altogether, the bridegroom determines the suitability or otherwise of the bride's alliance with him by a peculiar ordeal. He starts on a series of depredatory excursions. The first attempt must be a failure without any danger to the husband. The second and the third attempts should crown him with success. With the money obtained from these offences, the marriage is celebrated with much eclat and general festivities. The death of a Pariah, while in the act of committing theft, is regarded as a glorious deed. The victim is not only deified, but he is given a grand public funeral at the expense of his companions and his rich Malaiman patrons. The companions take oaths in the name of their god Nanjappah to maintain the widow and the children of the deceased by paying a share in all their booty. The Pariahs live on rich meals, consuming mutton and fowls in plenty. They do not cook these delicacies in their houses. It is the women of the Malaiman caste who cook meals for them and serve them in their hiding places on the pretext of carrying meals to their own husbands working in the fields. If you suddenly examine the house of a Pariah for provisions, you will rarely find food supply that will suffice them for a day even. The Pariahs dress like high class Hindus and always appear neat and tidy; but when they appear before any Government officer, they are in dirty rags and tatters. They ascribe the change of their raiment to the fear of the police who,

they allege, seize their fine clothes and trump up theft cases with regard to them. They don't generally wear stolen clothes. If fine laced and silk clothes are stolen (which is seldom done) they are presented to their Malaiman friends. The Pariahs are conversant with Telugu, Hindustani and even English. They will be careful enough not to allow others to know this. They have ever-changing cypher language to communicate their ideas to the members of their fraternity. The Pariahs are highly superstitious and have much faith in omens. They proceed on their depredations with express permission of their god Nanjappah, indicated by the chirping of a lizard from the direction of their proposed journey. Among the good omens are :—a jackal running ahead ; a jackal crying in advance. The bad omens are :—the hooting of an owl at the back. They look for omens for everything they do. When a warrant is pending against a Pariah, he will never go to sleep unless he sees good omens. As oaths taken in the name of Nanjappah are inviolable, a Pariah will take that oath only when he is driven to a corner after much prevarication and lying. When he once takes it, he will keep it at all cost. The oath is taken by making a person pass over seven lines drawn on the ground without treading on them and at the same time repeating, in the name of Nanjappah, what he pledges to perform. Treading over the lines does not solemnize the compact.

2. Modus Operandi. The house-breaking is also committed by boring a hole under the back-yard door frame. In all cases, the back-yard door must be kept open first to facilitate escape in case of danger, and if the opening of the door offers any difficulty, the members who have succeeded in effecting entrance into the house, abandon the project altogether even without touching the property lying close at hand. While committing a house-breaking, two or three members post themselves at the back-yard door for rendering help in case of danger to the members engaged inside the house and also for removing property one after another from the house to a secluded spot at a distance where another member awaits with the sandals and clothes of his comrades. After everything is over, all the members assemble at

the above spot, there chew *pansupari* (betel-nut) and spit all over the place. It sometimes happens (but rarely) that as Pariahs leave the house, they lay their hands on jewels worn by the sleeping females and run away snatching them. The dacoity, which is seldom attempted, is perpetrated at the instigation of their agents and informers who invariably advance earnest money to them to meet their travelling expenses. This amount is afterwards repaid. The booty obtained in these expeditions is handed over to the agents on receipt of money, *i.e.*, their share. They also extract a promise from them to return the stolen property back if its restoration to the owners is arranged for by their Malaiman patrons on receipt of "Mulladay Cooly." The Pariahs seldom commit crimes within their own jurisdiction. When any village fails to give them Kaval (Enam), thefts are committed in that village and the property is restored to the owners through "Mulladay Cooly" system. The crime outside the district is committed at the special request of their agents and associates. For this purpose they go to the selected places disguised as merchants, settle there for a time to gather information, commit burglary and then return back to their homes. Sometimes boys are sent to large towns, such as Madras, Madura, Trichinopoly, etc., where they employ themselves as domestic servants under rich caste Hindus and communicate information to their elders, who commit depredations. Within their own district they always walk to the scene of crime through jungles, etc.; but they use railways freely for their journey outside the district with this precaution that they do not get into the train at any station within the district.

3. Relations and Associates. The Veypur Pariahs have relatives and friends in many places outside their native villages, *viz.*, Suthukolam near Cuddalore O. T., Avaraipakam near Roodichavadi in S. Arcot District, Nellithoppu in the French limits, Pondicherry proper, Meenamur and Veeramur near Gingee, Seyur and Thenmambattu of the Chingleput District. In Salem, Madras (Vepery), and Kumbakonam some of the Pariahs are domestic servants under European gentlemen.

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