

THE  
ANCIENT HEROES  
OF  
SOUTH INDIAN PENINSULA

BY THE  
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Southern India"

*"Nil desperandum"*

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TO  
HIS HIGHNESS  
M. BASHKARA SETUPATI

THE  
RAJAH OF RAMNAD

A  
DESCENDANT OF THE ANCIENT MARAVA DYNASTY  
AS AN HUMBLE TRIBUTE

AND  
AS TOKEN OF APPRECIATION  
OF  
HIS HIGHNESS' MANY BENEVOLENT ACTS  
THIS PAMPHLET IS DEDICATED  
WITH PERMISSION

BY THE

AUTHOR

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PREFATORY REMARKS.

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IT has been the invariable complaint of all who have attempted to write the history of India that, as Hindu literature which teems with mythological legends, is sadly deficient in historical records, it is difficult to say with any precision when India was first peopled by the Hindus, from whom they descended, and from what country they came. It is certain, however, that the people who settled themselves in Hindustan Proper which lies to the north of the Vindya Mountains, came from the north, and called themselves Aryans. They were at that time a pastoral people, keeping camels, horses, oxen and cows. The country to the south of the Vindya Mountains they called the Deccan, *i. e.*, *south*, and thought it was inhabited by bears, monkeys, goblins and monsters.

In ancient times the country was divided into ten kingdoms with as many different languages.



Of these, five were in the north, and five in the Deccan. The languages of the northern kingdoms, it is said, are of Sanscrit origin, and also the Mah-ratta and the Orissa, while the Tamil, the Telugu and the Canarese appear to be languages of the south. It is doubtful if the Deccan was as wild as Valmiki represents it in the Ramayanam, for it seems that Ravana's kingdom, both insular and continental, was more advanced in arts and literature than the country of the Aryans, and that those who are now stigmatized as "Pariahs," had among them distinguished literati, a fact which shows that the "Pariahs" were the aborigines of the country, and were reduced to their present state of degradation by the conquering Aryans. It is further recorded in history that of all the kingdoms of the Deccan, that of Pandya was the most ancient. It continued powerful down to the ninth century, and remained independent till 1736 when it was conquered by the Nabob of Arcot. The seat of the Government, after being twice changed, was ultimately fixed at Madura. We have the authority of another writer, Revd. J. Garrett, supporting the above. "In the extreme south," he says, "a degree of civilization prevailed several centuries before the Christian era."

The Tamil language seems to have been formed before the introduction of the Sanscrit; and the Tamil literature, unlike that of the rest of India, is not exclusively the production of the Brahmins.

Some of its most esteemed authors are of the lowest or "Pariah" caste. Mr. Garrett further

remarks that five languages were then spoken in the Deccan which showed an equal number of early national divisions, and that the most ancient kingdoms were in the extreme south, in all of which the Tamil language prevailed.

There are various records and traditions which say that the two kingdoms of Pandya and Chola were founded by Maravars, and that the former derived its name from its founder who flourished in the fifth century before Christ, and, that in the time of Ptolemy, an astronomer who lived in the second century, the seat of Government was fixed at Madura where it remained up to a century ago.

From all this it is evident that the kingdom of Pandya was the seat of learning and power from the most ancient times, and that Maravars are non-Aryans, because long before the coming of the Aryans, they had been inhabiting a district in the Deccan known up to this day as Marava Nâdu, "Marava province," or Ramnad.

That Maravars have a history of their own of great interest cannot be denied by any who have studied minutely the ancient history of India.

The object of the writer in publishing this work is not in the least to extol his own race or to speak derogatorily of any other. As a Christian, he attaches no importance to caste or race. His chief aim is to acquaint the reading public with the character, social and religious condition, needs and possibilities of these his people, and to show how

promising a field they offer for philanthropic and missionary enterprise. It is a sad fact that with the exception of a very few well to do people, some of whom are enlightened Zemindars and nobles, the mass of these people live in great ignorance and degradation; but with opportunities for intellectual and moral training, they are capable of great development. On this point, we call attention to the following opinion of Bishop Caldwell D. D., L L. D. He says:—

“There are elements of considerable excellence in the Maravar character. If christianized and well educated, their energy and courage would give them a high position.”

It will not be out of place to record here what Mr. William Digby C. I. E., the late Editor of “The Madras Times,” writes in his letter *anent* my manuscript. The extract is as follows:—

*“I have read it with interest....I recognise that you are animated with the noblest of intentions and wish you success in the many endeavours you are making to serve beneficially your fellow countrymen.”*

It is also greatly gratifying to note here that H. H. Bashkara Setupati, the Rajah of Ramnad, on perusing my manuscript has been highly pleased to issue a general letter to the Maravar community, regarding the formation of a Maravar Association, for the purpose of furthering the interests of this community.

We cannot conclude without acknowledging our heartfelt thanks to those who have rendered their valuable help in getting up this brochure.



## ORIGIN OF THE MARAVARS.

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IN the earliest times the Tamil land did not know caste distinctions. Its literature says nothing of the four classes into which Manû divided the Hindus. In fact the laws that regulated the rights, privileges and customs of the early Tamil community are all preserved in that part of Tamil Grammar which speaks of the "social status." It is known as the "*Porul adikaram*" i.e., chapter of general knowledge. But it is not general knowledge alone that finds a place in it. The daily life of early Tamil India is portrayed with a clearness that is nowhere found in eastern treatises.

The crafty Aryan based his classification of the Hindu community on "Birth and Parentage"; for, the word *Jati* (caste) shows neither more nor less. The simple Tamil speaking people seem to have had no relish for distancing man from man, on the adventitious rights of birth or parentage. We do not know with certainty how long it clung fast to the rules of society as set forth in its national grammar after Aryan influence commenced to make itself felt. We know that the Aryan was not the conqueror of Southern India. He came into it as a teacher of



religion and philosophy. The great perfection which these attained in the land of the Aryan at that early age is not unknown to us. Knowledge has had peculiar attractions for thinking mankind in all ages and climes. The Aryan thought pleased the Tamil people who opened a wide gate for its influx. The ancient hero-worship of the Tamilian gave way before the glittering nature worship of the Aryan. The subtle philosophy of the Aryan found a virgin soil in the Tamil country, and with the novel thoughts that invaded the Southern Peninsula, new words came in by scores mostly from the Sanscrit vocabulary. The Tamilian has a peculiar dislike for alien words. He chisels and fashions an imported word and when it has attained a form that charms his eye and a tone that pleases his ear he gives it admittance into his vocabulary and makes it current in daily speech. Slowly the northern usages crept into the south, and caste among the rest. What was once a mere convention became under the Aryan influence a settled and baneful system. Hence the innumerable castes that daily increase in number in Southern India.

Was it so among the Dravida people of antiquity? Far otherwise. Although there were among them distinct classes of people, living in different sections of the country, and differing in habits and customs necessitated by local peculiarities, still in all material respects they were knit together by the bond of nationality. The nature of the land occupied by any section of the people gave that section a name. The Tamil people although scrupulously fond of

classification did not delight in multiplying the classes. Accordingly, all the Tamil country was reduced to five and only five classes, the topography of the country suggesting these divisions. If a portion of land was hilly, the occupants of it were styled *kundavars*, which in the hurry of speech became corrupted into *kuravars*, the name being taken from *kundu*, a hill. They raised all sorts of hill produce for which they found a market in the low country. The outcome of their labour proving in most cases too inadequate to maintain them, they fell into low pilfering habits in their visits to the plains. Departure from honesty steadily practised by a community becomes its revolting clan vice. They also imposed upon the credulity of the ignorant masses by offering to tell their fortunes for a pittance, and a progeny of similar practices was added as time rolled on. For all that, the low-country people did not lose sight of their cousinship with the *kuravars* till the latter became degraded to a degree below all respectability and turned out to be the wandering gipsies of the present day.

The occupants of fertile wood-lands naturally turned their attention to cattle-driving and were called *Edyars* (shepherds). Their name literally signifies "The occupants of the intermediate lands." Intermediate between what? Between the high tracts from which rivers and brooks took their source and the well-watered plains bearing a rich cultivation. Such an intermediate tract can be easily imagined as the best fitted for the luxuriant growth of woods and forest trees since they do not

require the copious supply of water for their nourishment which the serial crops of the plains demand. This class of people still exists with their distinctive class-name, though they have changed in character and custom with the changing time.

Next come the holders of nature's choicest plots, where fields groan under an abundance and where orchards invite the eye to their succulent plenty. The inhabitants of such favored spots were known by various names, such as *Vêlalars*, (agriculturists) and *Kilavars* (owners of estates). Agriculture was their congenial occupation and they formed the most peaceful part of the Tamil population. These people have come down to our own day under various names which will be mentioned and explained, as occasion arises in the progress of our discussion.

The dwellers on the sea-coast were called *Paravars*, whose chief occupation was fishing. These people are to this day what they were. Unlike the other classes of Tamil India, they have preserved their character and name intact.

Tracts of the country differing in kind from any of the preceding four were called *Palai* (lands that differ.) Such tracts were numerous and extensive in those old days when population was comparatively scanty. One can imagine such lands lying adjacent to any one of the foregoing tracts but differing in general character. They stood out in bold contrast and called forth the peculiar name that they bore. They were, in general, unsightly, barren wastes,



unfit for cultivation of any kind. In consequence of this the inhabitants were dependent for their meagre sustenance upon whatever chance threw in their way or their arms procured for them. These became the hardiest of the Tamil people, and "the mighty hunters" of the old dreary days. Reduced to sole dependence on weapons and bodily strength for the support of life, they became highly skilled in the use of arms, in the arts of war and in deeds of valour. They were known by various names in keeping with their character and occupation. They were *Maravars* (heroes: warriors) in war or *Kallars* (raiders) in peace. Their leaders established themselves as either petty princes all over the land or as mighty kings in one of the three then existing kingdoms of the Tamil land. Every bold warrior set up a clan and called it by the name he had given himself at the moment of his success and elation. When might was right, raiding and rapacity were not held in disrepute but on the contrary constituted some of the chief elements of heroism.

Bishop Caldwell was not far from the truth when he said that "the Kallars are the cousins of the Maravars": but the real truth is that the former and the latter are identically one people, although in course of time circumstances have separated them into two distinct sections.

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## THEIR TITLES.

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It would be an interesting inquiry if one could fully and carefully inquire into the numerous clan titles that obtain among the Maravars and the Kallars of Southern India. These contain history which can readily be gathered by a little close research. We have neither the time nor the wish to cover the whole of them in this work. We shall take up only a few which show that these ancient people held the principalities and kingdoms of the southern peninsula, at the time of its independence.

The title of "*Chola*" is still borne by a section of the *Kallars*. Thus, if the real name of a member of that clan were *Vira*, his full name would be *Vira chola*. Persons of that clan can be found by scores in the Tanjore territory.

The title of "*Pandian*" is the clan name of a section of the Maravars. Thus, if a person's name be *Guna*, along with the clan name it becomes "*Guna Pándian*."

Now it happens with one or two exceptions (as for instance, in the case of one of the Kallar chiefs, who bears the title of *Vándyar* which is probably the corruption of the term *Pandian*) that no part of the Kallar community bears the title of "*Pandian*" as also no section of the Maravar class bears the title "*Chola*." We know, again, that the Kallars are by far the more

numerous of the two in the ancient Chola territory of the present Tanjore, Trichinopoly, Arcot and Chingleput Districts, and that the Maravars are the predominating class in the old Pandian circle of the modern Madura and Tinnevely Districts. What does this signify? He that runs may read, that the present clans of these respective titles are the sorry debris of the old fallen dynasties that bore them with honor. The truth also seems established that the old Pandian dynasty was of the class of Maravars and the Chola dynasty of Kallars.

A section of the Kallars is called *Kalingarayar* (The king of Kalinga.) Whether this *Kālinga* is to be construed as one of the 56 petty states into which India was in olden times divided, or as a nut-shell principality, that had started forth into life and become extinct in the bosom of the Tamil country, one cannot decide with certainty. But the clan preserves the tradition that its founder was the king of a certain *Kalinga* territory.

Another portion of the Kallars is known as *Moovarasar* (Three princes.) This clan holds the tradition that its family descended from three princes who ruled three contiguous fortresses respectively which they had won by their prowess. Yet again a third section of the Kallars is known as *Mashavarayar* (princes of the *Mashavar* class.) We know from authentic sources, as for instance the *Madūra-Kanchi*, a Tamil poem of great celebrity, that the Mashawars formed the stoutest cavalry that in olden days rode forth against the hostile line of war elephants.

Such instances can be multiplied to any extent, but we do not think it necessary for us to go to that length, as the few that we have quoted are quite in point to prove that the Maravars and their cousins the Kallars constituted the heroes of ancient days and filled the royal seats of that age.

We can quote also a great many clan names that reveal the mischievous tendencies of the people. But, as our space is limited we leave the task to other workers in the field of archaic lore.

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## THEIR CHARACTER.

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THE national bent of the Marava mind was eminently adapted for acts of bravery. They were independent, adventurous, warlike, enterprising, and cunning. As in the absence of a regular government, valour and strength alone elevated one tribe above another, Maravars who were very fierce and warlike, were the dominant race among their neighbouring tribes. Further, the etymology of the name Maravar fully verifies this, for as the word Maram (மரம்) signifies strength, it is but natural to suppose that the oppressed tribes called their oppressors Maravars or the strong. The shrewd Maravars knew well how to create a plausible excuse to quarrel with their neighbouring tribes and often marched against them with some cruel ruffian as their leader and attacked them most mercilessly. When their attack was successful the victorious Maravars gave themselves to rapine. As occupants of nature's wastes they were trained by her to plunder and rapine. In their raiding excursions they discovered the weakness of the Edyars and the Velalars the inhabitants of the more fertile lands,



whom luxury had enervated and rendered effeminate. Having become under powerful leaders a body of warriors, they were constantly engaged in conquest and robbery. They regularly exacted tribute from the pusillanimous Edyars and Velalars; they built fortresses and strongholds from which they marched forth to devastation; they trained their boys to archery and swordsmanship. It was a disgrace to a scion of the race to possess soft womanly hands, to bear no scars of deep and ghastly sword-thrusts, to be ignorant of the use of the bow and arrow, or to eat food that his own hands had honestly procured and which plunder had not supplied. They struck terror and awe wherever their raiding spirit carried them and the result was that the weak inhabitants of the luxuriant plains humbled themselves and implored the valiant free-booters, to treat them as their children, worthy of their pity and kindness and not as their enemies, deserving extirpation.

In the period of the Tamil monarchies the Maravars and the Kallars were chosen by the sovereigns on account their valor and skill as the police-force in peace, and were rewarded with a portion of the revenue of the districts which they protected. This mode of protection laid the foundation of the hereditary *Kāval* or *Zemindary* system in the South. The hereditary *Kavalgars* were of four classes, the *Arasu-Kavalgars* and the *Nādukavalgars*, (that is, protectors of districts and protectors of taluqs) and *Desaikaval*, and *Stalam Kaval*. *Desai* and *Stalam* mean respectively, *direction* and *place*, and *Kaval*, *watch*.

When their masters grew impotent these Kaval-gars or police superintendents assumed independence and established petty principalities and Zemindaries. Hundreds of these were in existence at the time when the Mussalman and the Maharattas struggled for mastery, and England and France fought on opposite sides to establish their respective influence.

The eighteen polygars of the Tanjore and Trichinopoly Districts, all of whom are the Kallar class, and innumerable Polygars of the Maravar class of the Madura and Tinnevely Districts rose to power in this manner. The *kaval* duty conferred on the Kallars and Maravars a sense of responsibility and honesty to which as mere lawless soldiers they were entire strangers. Now they learned to protect life and property which formerly they took away without compunction. Humanity, and honesty took seat in their hearts along with valour, and contempt for danger; and yet, the masses of the Kallar and Maravar classes could not forget their original plundering propensity and they rushed forth to rapine when a valiant leader put himself at their head.

In the dissolution of the powers that successively ruled Southern India, these soldier races easily deprived the original land-owners of their estates and took to cultivation and other arts of peace. Thus arose the proverb in Tamil:—"The Kallan, the Maravan and the Aghampadyan slowly and slowly became Yélalan." Under the British flag they have settled down to peaceful cultivation, but

their race propensity has asserted itself in numberless raids that were put down by force or in deeds of revenge that were truly appalling.

When, however, they come under the influence of Christianity, they evince a character which is highly commendable and which is almost wholly absent in other classes. They possess, by nature, a bold, independent force of will, and a latent fondness and tenacity for truth. If once convinced of the amiableness of Christ, and the ennobling and saving character of His religion, they hold fast to their conviction unshaken by persecution in any form.

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## THE KĀVAL SYSTEM.

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THE peaceable cultivators of the Deccan whose isolated villages were far away from the seat of Government, finding the authorities weak and incapable of rendering them any sort of assistance or protection from the violence of the Maravars, appointed the leaders of the Maravars themselves their protectors on conditions favourable to both parties; and from this arose the systems of *Désa Kâval*, and that of *Stalam Kâval* &c., or the guarding of a tract of country comprising a number of villages against open marauders in armed bonds, and the guarding of separate villages with the houses and crops belonging to them, against secret theft. In short they "set a thief to catch a thief." The different chiefs who received fees from the villagers for the protection afforded against armed invasions and secret thefts, promised, on their part, if their employers should sustain any loss, to make it good by paying them its value.

The followers of the chiefs spreading themselves throughout the villages received their remuneration in the shape of fees, and lands for occupation without rental. The demanding of these *Kâval* fees is



still of common occurrence in certain parts of the Deccan.

Gradually the two systems blending into one, developed into a more authoritative system of Polighar. A district technically termed a *Pâlayam* was conferred by a sovereign on a chief who then became a *Pâlayukaran* or Polighar, and was bound not only to pay his lord annually a tribute termed *Peiscash*, but also render him military services when required. The Polighar who was the leader of a body of armed men, and who placed his services at the disposal of his sovereign, held the district or *Pâlayam* received in return for his services, by a military tenure. He was, to consider his territory, not as a *Nâdu*, a country, but a *Pâlayam*, an encampment. Hence, the sovereign exercised no criminal or civil jurisdiction within the limits of a *Pâlayam* which was entirely under the control of the feudal chief. If the sovereign's tribute were paid, and his feudatory sent him assistance in his wars, his demands were satisfied. A considerable portion of Southern India, south of Trichinopoly had thus passed into the hands of Polighars. In Madura and Dindigal hardly any land remained in the possession of the sovereign; and in Tinnevely the greater part of the country north of the *Tamrapèrni* River was in the possession of the Polighar. Mr. Lushington who has been the means of abolishing the Polighar system, gives in his report of 1797 a full description of the outrageous acts to which the Polighars resorted during the troubled times of the Nawab's Government, in order to recover their fees from the overawed villagers. It is

as follows:—"When the collection of the Kâval fees is not quietly submitted to, torture and the whip are applied, the whole village put into confinement, every occupation interdicted, the cattle pounded, the inhabitants taken captive to, and not unfrequently murdered in, the pollams (Palayam) and, in short every outrage of violence and cruelty is committed until their purposes are attained." Close upon this report follows the account of the disarming of the armed portion of the population, chiefly of the Marava caste who formed the bulk of the followers of Polighars. The Polighars then gradually settled down as Zemindars; and of their turbulent followers, some became watchers, some joined the criminal portion of the district of which they now form the greater part, and a few by degrees took to the more innocent employments of agriculture as under-tenants of the richer land-holders, and as farm labourers in which positions they continue to this day.

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**Religion:**—With the exception of a very few, all Maravars are Sivites. Many families have their tutelar gods. They also have their "Sattan Kovil" or temple to which they resort at stated periods of the year with sacrifices. Devil worship too prevails among them to a certain extent. *Chudalai Mâdan* is one of the many devils they worship. Educated Maravars have almost ceased to worship devils. At places where sacrifices are offered to devils some of

the ignorant Maravars themselves figure as capital dancers.

It is to be deeply regretted that more of the educated Maravars have not become better enlightened as to religion. When they do so, they certainly set a better example to their ignorant countrymen. It is surprising to notice that even those who have received their education in Christian Schools and Colleges in Madras and other districts do not seem to value the moral elevation of their countrymen so much as they do their intellectual and social elevation. If one's morals were good, he might seek a better religion and cease to worship devils, and shamelessly dance before them. May that blessed time soon arrive when Christianity will influence every Marava brother to worship the true God "in spirit and in truth" is the prayer and wish of the writer who feels for them, the more so for being a Marava himself.

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**Marriage:**—Our limited space will not permit us to do justice to the elaborate ceremonies, and costly preparations which characterize the marriage that takes place in the house of a Zemindar or of any other wealthy Marava Nobleman. It is on such occasions that his money continuously flows out from his treasury as the current in a river. Months before the advent of that joyful day, artisans of all trades to be found in the country, may be seen flocking into his compound, each praising his respective



mechanical skill which is sometimes tested; but generally at the recommendation of such as are acquainted with both parties, the best artisans are employed. In the mean time materials also may be seen, being brought into the compound by means of carts and otherwise. They consist of timber for erecting pandals; cadjans to thatch them; calico to line the roofs of the marriage *pandals* (temporary shed) and house, and for distribution among servants, and the poor; red cloth, white gauze, tinsel, coloured papers and paints of various colours &c., for decorations; gold embroidered flowered silk cloths or *chelais*, and shawls of the same kind to be worn, other superior coloured silks for making dresses; sandal wood, rose water, musk and various scents from English shops for the bridal parties, their friends and guests; huge mirrors and pictures in gilt frames, globe lamps, moon lights with cut glass drops, wall shades, table shades, valuable mats, &c., for decorating the house; sulphur, salt petre, coal, &c., for fire works; sheep, goats, hares, fowls, &c., to be fattened for the day of marriage; yams, ghee, sugar, dates, coconuts, &c., *areca*-nuts, spices, and other things that will keep long; and various other requisites for a native grandee's marriage festival. After all these things have found their way into his house and compound, and when the decorations are almost finished, then commences the making of cakes, and sweetmeats of various kinds too many for enumeration here. This is soon followed by the pouring in of various kinds of vegetables, fruits, betel-leaves and other such articles that will keep only a few days, straight from gardens and markets.



Weeks before the day of marriage the parents of the bride consult an astrologer to learn the nearest auspicious day in order to fix the first "*Pandal kal*," or pandal post, which is done at some expense, and then they fix a day for the marriage so that it may fall on the 3rd or 5th day from the day of the fixing of "*Panthal kal*." The period of the intervening days is sometimes prolonged but they take care to have the marriage day fall on an odd date such as 7, 9, 11, &c., when counted from the auspicious day selected for the fixing of "*Panthal kal*" which is attended with certain ceremonies. For instance, an expensive puja (prayer with offering) is performed involving the blessing of *Pillayar*, "belly god," and offerings are made to tutelar deities also, though not on that very day. It is in the *Panthal* erected at the bridegroom's house that the solemnization of the marriage takes place, hence these ceremonies are held there.

We will now suppose that the marriage day has arrived. At 3 A. M. musicians begin to fill the neighbourhood with the deafening sound of their several sets of musical instruments; flutes called "*Nagasuram*," and "*Otthu*," the former showing the airs distinctly and the latter giving only the bass; large drums called "*Thavil*," and "*Kaithalum*," cymbals, to keep time. To relieve them every now and then, a number of pariahs with their still more deafening tom-toms stand without the gate, and, with the noise of their tambourines, rend the air as if to keep it pure from the exhalations of the thousands that now fill the compound and move to and fro in making

preparations for the marriage. All is in a state of confusion; for amidst the deafening sound of so many instruments one can hardly hear the sound of his own voice. In vain does the poor host exhaust his lungs, for his ever submissive servants and minor members of the family are very disobedient to day. When he orders them to spread the carpets they go and hang the poor goats and sheep by their hind legs with their throats cut open before the sentence of death is passed on them. Noise and confusion only make them do every thing wrong, and the poor host has not time enough to go near them and stop what he does not want them to do. Besides being a bulky person his clumsiness proves a drawback to getting things done as the occasion requires. He goes and looks at the new clock brought only the other day from Messrs P. Orr and Sons in Madras in order to know the exact time, but what is the use? He announces the time at the top of his voice, which has, by this time, lost half its strength but nobody hears him distinctly, and the worst of it is that every time he announces the hour the servants who mistake it for some order given to them, leaving that which should be done then, go and do something else not required. The host now begins to cough after every word he utters, and with a sorry face slowly moves towards a lounge on which to stretch his wearied limbs. But this is not the day to take rest. So he jumps up and once more runs into the hall where the new correct time keeper is placed on a bracket,—and comes out in hot haste, and makes one or two more attempts to be heard by his servants but in vain, and

the servants continue on their work of putting the cart before the horse.

The work of more beautifully decorating a certain portion of the house set apart for accommodating the bride and her female relations, has just been finished. "Heaven on earth," the beholders remark, for in the midst of what charms the eyes of the beholders, beauty has fixed her lovely throne, supported by beautiful and symmetrical pillars in such a way as to please the Eastern, as well as the Western taste. It is difficult, however, to conceive how two extremes could be made to meet in the same point; but western education and civilization blending with those of the East, have wrought this miracle, which either of them alone could not do.

Suddenly a great noise coming from the neighbouring village, draws all the people in the premises, save the tired host who is now busy in attiring himself in his dressing apartment, to the wide attractive gate, and they now discover at a great distance elephants, horses, camels, carriages, palanquins, and carts, conveying according to their respective station gaudily dressed persons who belong to the brides party, followed by a large concourse of people. In the midst of this grand procession, something like a mass of gold dazzles their eyes, and they all know that it is the palanquin in which the bride and bridesmaids are nicely seated.

In an hour or so they all arrive, and the din which the mixed sounds of both the bride's, and the



bride-groom's parties produce, and the consequent clamour and confusion of the large crowd, make it impossible for any spectator to notice how the bride and her friends with other guests, are received by the host and his friends, and conducted into the marriage pandal in the midst of which stands an elevated place something like a most beautiful oriental throne, attracting the eyes of every one by its splendour and workmanship exquisitely finished with the greatest mechanical skill. It is called the "*Mana Arai*," a wedding room, constructed to perform the marriage ceremonies in. It can accommodate besides the bride and the bride-groom, their respective companions, the bride's-maids, and the best men with the Brahmin priest. There is a piece of plank placed in the centre for the bride and the bride-groom to sit upon, their companions having to stand by them till the ceremonies are over. Just before the plank-seat is placed a fagot of fine dry sticks, and ghee in a brass cup to make the sacred fire, around which the parties to be wedded will have to go thrice when making their solemn promises to each other.

The tying of the *Tàli*, badge of marriage, is the last rite, and that is done without the assistance of the priest. In this ceremony all elder members of the two families, and other elderly persons of rank, take a part by placing each his right-hand on the *Tàli* as it is being taken round on a silver tray, as a sign of their blessing it for its long continuance around the bride's neck.

We see also in the wide attractive pandal just



before the seats intended for the bridegroom and his best men to occupy after the marriage ceremonies are over, silver cups, containing sandal reduced to a thick fluid, placed on silver plates, and silver rose-water-holders filled with rose water and looking something like a round shaped carved decanter with long narrow necks having wide and perforated tops, also resting on silver plates. As a mark of respect and compliment paid to the guests the sandal paste is first offered them to daub their breasts and necks with, and also place in the centre of their foreheads just between the eye-brows a dot with it not larger than a two anna piece. When this is done, rose water is sprinkled on them. There are also placed here and there on the beautiful silk carpets which cover the whole area of the pandal, silver trays filled with betel-leaves, areca-nuts and spices.

We will now suppose that the priest has married the parties, and that the bride with her companions has retired to her apartment in the house, and that the bridegroom and his best men have taken their seat in the pandal amidst acclamations of the most hearty congratulations and the din of several sets of musical instruments played at the highest pitch and as quickly as possible.

For eight successive days celebration is kept up. Feasts, musical entertainments and various sorts of amusements, such as dancing by professional temple dancing girls, fencing and all other athletic sports, juggleries, monkey-dance, bear-dance, fire-works, &c., form the daily programme.

The above brief description shows the present mode of celebrating a marriage in a Zemindar's family which differs a little from the ancient mode of celebration as far as decorations are concerned which in those days were purely oriental in style; but the amount of money spent is almost the same in both.

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**Age of Marriage:**—There is no fixed age for giving a girl in marriage. Girls are generally married after they attain the age of puberty. In some well to do families they may at times be married when quite young, and the new couple is also then allowed to live as husband and wife. A girl who has attained her age may however, remain unmarried for 4 or 5 years or even for a longer period without incurring the displeasure of the caste, or losing anything in social status.

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**Birth Ceremonies:**—When a child is born in a family, if a male, or a first born female, the distribution of sugar with betel and areca-nuts among relatives and neighbours is the first thing done. On the 16th day after confinement, the woman, who is considered to be under defilement till then, and is kept in a detached portion of the house, is allowed to come out from her confinement to go through certain cleansing ceremonies performed by a Brahmin priest who, sitting before a thank offering made to the gods, chants Sanscrit verses. The offering

which is in fact offered to the priest to be taken home and enjoyed with his family, consists of uncooked rice, cocoanuts, plantain, betel, camphor &c., The floor of the whole house which had been daubed with cow-dung before the priest arrived, is now sprinkled with cow-urine by the priest. All the earthen vessels which have been used are thrown away. The woman, who had bathed before the priest came in, now becomes entirely cleansed and begins at once to move freely, resume her household duties touch the furniture and culinary utensils as any other woman, and thus show to all that she has passed her days of defilement. On such occasions there is usually feasting of relations and neighbours, giving a name to the child, and the giving of alms to the poor. Such ceremonies the poorer classes do not observe for want of means; they simply cleanse their houses by daubing the floor with cow-dung, and sprinkling the house and the premises with cow-urine.

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**Death and Cremation:**—When a person dies the son or some near relative draws the water to be used in the funeral rites of the deceased. No priest is required for the performance of funeral rites. But for the ablution ceremonies on the 16th day the services of a Brahmin are indispensable. If the deceased had received *Dheeksha*, superior religious instructions, a priest of the Vellala is required to receive back the *Dheeksha*. The body after being washed with the water brought by the son, or near



relative, is dressed in a new cloth and laid on a mat, when the females in the house sit round the corpse and weeping sing elegies in a mournful tone, and put into the mouth of the corpse *Pon Arisee*, gold rice. Very poor people who cannot afford to get grains of rice made of gold, use common uncooked rice. After this is done, the body is put on a bier adorned with garlands, and carried to the burning ground, accompanied with music, and laid on the funeral pyre. Then the son draws water again also in a new pot, and if water is not procurable there he carries a pot of water from the house, and takes it round the funeral pyre thrice, and then breaks the pot by dashing it with its contents on the ground. Then he sets fire to the pyre, and with the assistance of a barber burns the corpse. Before the body is placed on the funeral pile, near relations put *Pon-arisee* into the mouth of the deceased. After consigning the body to the flames, the son gets himself shaved and with all others that have attended the funeral, bathes in a river or a tank. After performing this ablution, each one goes to his own dwelling.

On the second day they all assemble again, and go to the burning ground to take the remains of the burnt body, bones and ashes, which are thrown into a river or sea. *Pujah* to a stone is kept up for 16 days, and on the last day a Brahman priest is called in to perform the cleansing ceremonies, and to take the stone away from the house to a river. It is also usual to have different kinds of dry grains in water and allow them to spring up, which the relatives on that day remove from the house, and throw into a



river or tank. The description here given differs in many respects according to different divisions of caste.

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**Divorce:**—A man may divorce his wife without assigning any reason, and so may also a wife give up her husband without stating her reasons for so doing. Both are at liberty to choose for themselves other consorts. This, however, does not obtain among the well to do people among whom divorce is not heard of. A divorce is effected by the man taking back the *Tali*, or marriage tie. Recourse is not had to *Panchayats*, or arbitration court. Among the people of middle class, *Panchayats* are held to settle differences between the husband and wife but seldom any good comes from the decision of such courts.

Remarriage of widows is both permitted and practised. There is no limitation in the matter. Widows are quite free either to marry again, or remain as widows till death. The latter is the case with those connected with Zemindars' families.

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**Dress:**—The dress of males consists of an upper and lower cloth, a turban, and a kerchief. Some instead of the turban, convert their kerchiefs into a sort of head dress. Those whose circumstances allow them put on ear-rings, and finger-rings and wear belts made of gold or silver. In the case of females a single coloured cloth of not less than 8 yards called *chélai* is generally worn. Petti-coats, tuckers, saries, or skirts, are not used by the common people.

Zemindars put on coats, trousers, shoes, and embroidered velvet caps. Their ear-rings are valued from 5 to 10,000 rupees. The state dress of His Highness the Rajah of Ramnad and His Highness the Rajah of Pudukottah is worth many lacs of rupees. Their females load themselves with gold jewels set with rubies and other precious stones. We will give a rough calculation of the value of the jewels worn by them when they attend marriages or pay visits to their friends which they rarely do. Their head gears value from 5 to 10,000 rupees; ear ornaments from 3 to 5,000 Rupees, ornaments for the neck, wrists, and fingers about 25,000 rupees, and leg ornaments invariably made of silver, about 300 rupees. The value of their silk cloth or chelais, according to the nature of the occasions, varies from 25 to 550 rupees and even more. They as a rule go in palanquins, more perhaps on account of the great inconvenience they are put to by their unwieldy jewels with which they are cruelly burdened.

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**Divisions:**—Among the Maravars there are four chief divisions, and many minor ones. The former are Chamba Nattu Maravars, Kondaiyan-kotai Maravars, Vanniya Maravars, and Kottali Maravars. Of the latter we may mention Annilkottai Maravars, Kothikar Maravars, Vanniyar Maravars and Parivara Maravars as the principal ones. Of Kallars the Rajah of Pudukottah is the head. To the first of the four chief divisions belong the Rajah of Ramnad and the Zemindar of

Sivagangai. Of the former we shall speak at length under the head "Setupati."

Those that belong to the second division, Kondaiyankotai, are chiefly to be found in the Tinnevely district. At present there are 8 Zemindars who belong to this division; they are, Zemindars of Chokkampatty, Ahavidaiyapuram, Wottumalai, Maniachy, to whom the writer has the honor of being a near relation, Kadampoor, Thalaivankotai, Churandai, and Naduvukurichi. During the Polighar war, the polighar of Maniachy was one among those who proved themselves loyal to the British Government. Touching this, Mr. Lushington says, that "whilst the disloyal polighars suffered the punishment due to them for rebellion, Government did not forget to reward those polighars that remained loyal, especially those who were near neighbours to *Panchalangkurichi*, and who might have been expected to take the rebel chief's side. The polighar of Maniachy whose refusal to join in the rebellion brought down upon him great deal of local odium, fled for refuge at the beginning of the war to Palamecottah where he remained with the permission of the Collector till its close."

This Polighar however, was an enemy to Christianity as appears from what the Rev. *Dr. Bower* says of him:—

"Although the Zemindar of Maniachy was also an enemy to the progress of Christianity and gave a great deal of trouble by preventing the building of a house of prayer at Pudducottai as it was in his Zemindary ;

yet a church was built for the Lord in a night." He induced his sons-in-law, the writer's fore-fathers, to persecute the Christians at Pudducottai, Tinnevely, in various ways. It was in the very church of which Dr. Bower speaks the writer embraced Christianity from heathenism openly. Those that belong to the 3rd division are scattered throughout Madura and Tinnevely. The Zemindar of Shevagiri belongs to this division. His high mental attainments, integrity, and impartial administration of justice have won for him the love and esteem of his people.

To the fourth division belongs the Zemindar of Urkad.

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## SETUPATI.

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THE word "Setupati" is compounded of *setu*, (சேது) and *pati* (பதி.) The former means a dam, or *embankment*, the latter, king. It is admitted by all historians that the title *Setupati* was first conferred by Râma the hero, the famous and powerful king of Oudh, on one of the Marava Chiefs for both rendering him military services, and constructing the bridge known among the Hindus, as Râma's bridge and among Europeans, Adam's bridge, when he made an expedition against Râvana the king of Ceylon, to recover his wife Sîta.



Bishop Caldwell observes that "Dêver" the caste title of Maravars, is the same as that of the old kings of Chola and Pandya dynasties. The chieftains of this race still possess the principalities of Shevagangai and Ramnad, which are called "the two Maravars." The prince of Ramnad has possessed from an ancient period the title of "Setupati" or "hereditary guardian of Râma's bridge." No doubt is entertained as to Ramnad being one of the ancient kingdoms, and as to the title of "Setupati" being conferred upon one of the ancestors of the present prince by Râma, the conqueror, in recognition of the military services rendered him.

Mr. Nelson further avers that among the members of the Marava tribe, Sri Râma appointed "Setupati" as the custodian of the ishmus of Ramasuram. It is further recorded by him that "Maravars were subject to the Madura King, but in course of time they became sufficiently powerful to shake off their yoke; and at last made their masters their servants, and remained lords of the Madura kingdom for no less than eleven generations; and during three reigns, rulers over the whole of the South India."

"In former times," observes Dr. Sherring, "the Maravars as a great fighting or warrior tribe held the same position in the south that the Rajput tribe held in the north." We will now make a few more quotations from Mr. Nelson. He says that "in the time of *Varatunga Rajamathanda Setupati*" some Telugu invaders drove the *Chola* out of his

kingdom. The Chola came for help to the Pandya, and that the Setupati was sent to repel the invaders. Their expulsion was successfully effected, and the Setupati was rewarded with the title of "the establisher of the Chola country."—"After many generations," the same writer says, in the time of *Kulothunga Setupati*, the *Chola* invaded the Pandya country. He was driven back to *Pattikotai*, and *Arundanghi*, and this portion of his kingdom was annexed by the "victorious Setupati" who thereupon assumed the title of, "He who conquers seen, and never lets go countries conquered."

On another occasion "Samara Kolâhala Raja Mahattanda" Setupati, the same writer observes, was sent by the Pandya to settle a boundary dispute between him and the Chola. He executed his commission with fidelity, and was rewarded by the Chola with the monopoly of the pearl fisheries in the gulf of Mannar, whilst the Pandya conferred the following titles on him, namely, "Rajaya Raja Raja Paramishwara Raja Mahattanda Raja Gambeera." The Setupati was always a vassal of the Pandya, and there is no ground to suppose that the Maravars were at no time the dominant race in the south of India.

The famous father of the present prince of Ramnad, Raja Bhaskara Setupati, was commonly known by the name of Dhurai Raja. Although he was not acquainted with the English language, like his son the present Setupati of Ramnad, he was, however, a master of many of the vernaculars of the

different nationalities that occupy Hindustan. He also knew prosody in both theory and practice, and his poetical compositions won him the title of 'a good Tamil poet.' As a player on musical instruments he stood unrivalled, being able to play on all the native instruments most admirably. In addition to these acquirements, his physical strength was extraordinary and he was therefore active in both mind and body.

His brother Ponnusawmy Dever Avergal was indeed his brother in more than one sense. He imitated his worthy brother in everything in which he was an expert. He has published many books in Tamil, and his work on medicine, called Vayithia Sara Sangragam, (வைத்திய சாரசங்கிரகம்) is still used by many a native medical practitioner as one of the best works on that subject. The vigour of manliness is to be seen in the person of Mr. P. Kottasawmy Dever Avergal, the elder son of Mr. P. Ponnosawmy Dever.

His Highness the present Setupati, who is an under-graduate of the Madras University, received his education in the Christian College in Madras under the able tuition of the REV. W. MILLER, M. A., LL. D., C. I. E., Principal of the College. His Highness aims at all social and religious reforms, and aids all schemes calculated for such purposes, without distinction of race or creed. His Highness has given a large donation for the support of a Hindu Theological institution in Madras. In making gifts His Highness has shown his wonted liberality in the furthering of all good causes. Setupati's ad-



ministration is good ; his loyalty to the imperial Government is remarkable. Besides, a sound collegiate education has made His Highness more noble, more enlightened and more liberal in views than his worthy predecessors.

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## THE RAJAH OF PUDUKOTTAH.

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Mr. Lewis Moore M. C. S. says as follows :—

“ Our first connection with the ancestors of the present Rajah, then known as Tondaman, was formed during the wars in the Karnatic in the eighteenth century. An account of the several transactions in which Tondaman rendered us assistance during the wars has been already given in the Political History of the District and it is, therefore, not necessary to refer to them again. It will be sufficient to mention that, during the seige of Trichinopoly by the French in 1752 and 1753, our troops in the city were more than once solely dependent on the provisions received from the Puducottah territory, and that, if it had not been for the ready and efficient manner in which Tondaman came to our aid and furnished us with supplies, it can scarcely be doubted that we should have been obliged to capitulate. Subsequently he was very serviceable in the wars with Hyder-Ali. The Rajahs of Puducottah are of the Kallar caste.”



We quote a few lines from the letter sent by Lord Clive to one of the Rajahs of Puducottah, "With respect to the honorary marks of distinction which Captain Black Burne has informed me that you are desirous of possessing, I have determined that you (Rajah of Puducottah) and your descendants shall be permitted to assume the distinguishing marks of two gold *Chobadar-sticks* conformably to the wish which you have expressed on that subject; and so as a token of my approbation I have desired that two gold-sticks of that description shall be prepared and presented to you in my name."

That a warlike spirit in any people whose minds have not been cultured morally and intellectually, will often lead them to commit the most daring outrages, no man of sense would deny. It is, however, our humble opinion, that there can exist no true sound moral training which is not given through the true religion of Christ. It is not too much to say that when morality is seasoned with such a religion, it will work wonders even in the most barbarous nations. To evince the truth of our assertion we have simply to refer all those whose minds are always open to conviction, to that vast change between the state of the Britons B. C. 55 and to their present most enviable condition.

What Christianity has done to one nation, surely it will do to other nations also, provided they embrace it in the same spirit in which the Britons and other western nations have embraced it.

Let us not be understood as condemning *in toto*

that morality practised without the knowledge of Christianity. No, we on the contrary admit that a mere form of morality is better than no form, and that twilight is better than total darkness. In making these remarks we may perhaps, appear to have digressed from our subject. If we have done so, it is to show our readers that Maravars, to whose race we have the honor to belong, though on the score of their possessing true martial spirit all deserve to be dubbed *Setupati*, yet for want of that true moral and intellectual training which characterize the noble *Sêtopati* and Zemindars, prove a scandal to their race. Let us hope that all philanthropists will ungrudgingly put forth their efforts to see the race soon refined so as to occupy an equal position with their enlightened brethren in the social scale.

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### THEIR FEATS OF VALOR.

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During the reign of Akbar, there lived in South India one of the distinguished heroes of the Marava race, a Zemindar of Avadyapuram or Nercuttoomseval, Pooli Dever by name, on whom the title of Pacha was conferred by the emperor for services rendered him in subduing petty kings and various rebels who gave much trouble to the Empire. Hence the hero was called *Pooli Pacha*.

During the time of the Telugu sovereignty in Madura, there lived another Marava publicly recognized by Government as a hero whom we can

call *Indian Tell*, He was a hero of many deeds of valor. But the one that won him the title publicly is as follows :—

In the town of Madura there is a tank called *Vandyor Teppacoolam* about 2 furlongs in length and about a furlong in breadth with a mangoe tree in the centre of it. Some of the members of the royal family, each with a retinue of hundreds of valiant men, made a bet with this hero, that if he could throw his cudgel so as to cut a particular mango peculiarly hung between two branches and reach the road on the opposite side of the tank, they would publicly recognize him as a great hero and do him honor as such. Much pleased with the opportunity offered, he accepted the challenge. Off went the cudgel in a moment to the other side of the tank and down-fell the fruit at the foot of the tree, while a loud “hurrah” rent the air with deafening sound. This cudgel, a foot long, was curved and used in war to throw upon enemies at a distance and called *valai-thady* in Tamil.

Súttu Pottyah was another of the heroes who lived some four or five generations ago when a quarrel occurred between the Maha Rajah of Travancore and the Rajah of Cochin. Owing to this cause, as often as the people of Travancore tried to find their way into Cochin, they were invariably compelled to return to Travancore, for dread of a monster crocodile who would upset the boats and cause tremendous harm to the crew. Hearing of the valorous Súttu Pottyah, the Maha Rajah sent for him and took a promise for the hero to bring him



the head of the Cochin Rajah. The hero started in a boat and reached the place which the monster frequented. The crew observed the crocodile making towards them furiously with his eyes shooting fire. The hero put his hands on his lance and tied a long chain to his waist asking his friends to let go the chain to its full length. Plunging his lance into the body of the monster he stood erect on its back and in a moment both disappeared. As the hero had acquired the habit of with-holding his breath for hours together, when he was dragged up he was found in the same attitude on the dead carcass of the crocodile, while his hands held fast the lance. But to all appearance though he was a corpse, under his previously enjoined treatment by his comrades, he revived and returned to the Maha Rajah with the head of the Cochin Rajah. The descendants of the hero still enjoy the privilege of grants ceded to their heroic ancestor in Travancore. This is a standing proof of the recognition of a Marava hero.

Some of the heroes were able to run along a slightly slanting palmyra to its top and after cutting a few of its fruits with one stroke of a knife, come down the tree running. Some there were who could run treading closely on the heels of the swiftest horse, if not in advance. I need not mention the names of *Pallikondan* (பள்ளிகொண்டான்) *Eravarappatchi*, (இரவாரப்பக்கி), *Sokka Thalivan*, (சொக்கத்தலைவன்), *Thickurijayan* (திக்குவிஜயன்) &c., who are known to some of us even personally. True it is that their heroism was misdirected. Our limited space will not allow us any long description of

those heroic deeds which would surprise the enlightenment of even the nineteenth century.

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**In the Church and State:**—It is an undeniable fact that the Gospel of Christ has its peculiar power to reform and regenerate even the worst of nations as for example the cannibals of the Fiji Islands, when they can be brought under its influence. In the case of the ancient heroes of the Dravidian Provinces it could not be otherwise. A few among the Maravars and Kullars have been brought under its influence and have become thoroughly reformed and regenerated. They stand as "living monuments" for the fulfilment of the prophesy of of Isaiah saying that "the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them, and the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together. And the lion shall eat straw like the ox." In the several denominational churches planted in Southern India there are a few prominent persons belonging to this class of people usefully employed in Mission work.

We now come to the labors of the First Protestant Missionaries in the land of the Tamilians, such men as the venerable and saintly Zienbulg, Schwartz and others; men sent by a mighty hand from Denmark and other parts of Europe to raise up thousands who were buried in the depths of superstition and idolatry. They being men of the purest

minds and gentlest spirits, many of the idolaters soon flocked around them and sitting at their feet drank deep from those precious saints of Him who said "I will draw all men unto me." The fruit of their consecrated labor remain a testimony to the power and glory of Him in whose name they preached. They labored zealously and faithfully; and soon old things passed away yielding place to new. An unseen Power was working through them raising lost men from their perilous position.

The Rev. Isaac Abraham of Pannaveli, Tinnevely, a devoted servant of God, is a convert of that well-known man of piety the late Rev. John Thomas Tucker of the Church Missionary Society. Mr. Abraham is an apostle of Christ very well-known for his personal piety and Christian zeal. He occupies a large field as a sphere of his work. He is "a living epistle known and read by all." The Rev. Daniel and his son Simon Daniel, the late Rev. Nallatambee and two of his sons, the late Rev. Sawmidason, the well-trained disciple of the venerable Dr. G. U. Pope and a few others have consecrated their services to the cause of Christ in connection with the C. M. S. In the S. P. G. Society, the Revds. Aseervatham, Satthianadhan, and Abishekanadhan are ministers of Christ. The latter an under-graduate of the Madras University is now working independently of the Mission. He is by no means an ordinary man in his intellectual powers. We cannot here forget to bring in one Revd. Cornelius, the co-worker of the late Bishop Caldwell. We should make allusion to other persons of intellectual prominence. Mr.



John Issac Dever, B. A., the son of the Rev. Issac Abraham, has won honor for himself. He is the only graduate of the Marava race. He holds a responsible office in the Government of Madras. His younger brother Mr. Edward Issac Dever is a medical officer in the Mysore Province. He is very popular in the district where he is now stationed. The brilliant attainments of Mr. Stephen Assirvaddha Dever ought not to be forgotten as a distinguished English journalist and successful pleader. We may also mention the names of one Mr. Joseph Dever and one Mr. Edward Dever, the former is a pleader and an under-graduate of the Madras University and the latter is a noted gymnast.

\* The American Madura Mission has its share of converts in this race of people. One Mr. Navakody Dever of Poolangulam is a man of influence and affluence. His name was once a terror in that part of Madura District where he now dwells. Since he became a disciple of Christ he is altogether "a new creature" in Him. He has built a substantial chapel and a school house at his own expense. He had taught his pet-parrot to repeat the Lords Prayer, and the apostles creed. He is an ornament to the Christian Church in the Madura District.

It is not out of place to mention in this connection the name of Mr. Sandiappa Dever, a graduate of the Pasumalai Theological Seminary, whose abilities in the missionary field have always been appreciated and it is a fact well-known that he has always proved popular among the people committed to his ministerial charge. The Wesleyan Mission-

ary Society of the Trichinopoly and Negapatam Districts has its converts among the Kallars of whom Mr. Gurusawmy is one. He is a very useful mission agent. His work in the Evangelistic and Educational Departments add more to his efficiency and thus he is loved by those among whom he so faithfully labors.

The Rev. G. Devasahayam, B. A., stands prominent in the race of Kullars in connection with the Evangelistic Lutheran Mission. He belongs to the stamp of men who make the sphere of their duty their pleasure ground. He is an erudite scholar not only in his own mother tongue but also in some of the ancient classics, which should in a measure yield to him an independent position. Few there are on the University ladder of his keen intellect and child like spirit. He has from time to time won the esteem of his country-men by his honesty and perseverance and it may well be said that he is a worthy servant of a worthy missionary agency, which should strive to reward his labors by assigning him a position of responsibility in their work in Southern India, for he is the only graduate in the ministerial order that the Mission possesses. We must not omit, to mention those converts who have gained some reputation in the Romish Church.

First the name of Revd. Gnanapragasam, a man of great abilities, and one who has won a name for himself by his intellect and perseverance. His younger brother Mr. Susappillai, a Master of Arts of the Madras University, is also a man of brilliant parts. He is at present an educational officer in charge of

St. Mary's College, Cuddalore. It now remains for me to make a special plea on behalf of my countrymen to the various Missionary bodies at present working in Southern India. I cannot do better than to reiterate the weighty words of Bishop Caldwell who says:—

“There are elements of considerable excellence in the Marava character. If christianized and educated their energy and courage would give them a high position.”

These words speak for themselves, and need no further comment. We have given elsewhere the numerical strength of Maravars and Kullars of whom about 1,500 are Christians therefore, what we need is unprejudiced and earnest work for the Gospel's sake. Let us cast away the dreams of caste superstition for they must sooner or later be dispelled by the dawn of Truth; that Truth which has been handed to us by the “Prince of Peace” who has well said “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.” The sooner we are able to see the falsity of caste prejudice the better will it be for ourselves and for our country. May the Lord hasten the day when all shall know Him from the least to the greatest, is the earnest prayer and desire of the writer.

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