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# ETHNOGRAPHIC NOTES

ON THE

## MUDUVARS,

BY

AYLMER F. MARTIN,

*2nd Edition.*

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HIGGINBOTHAM & CO., MADRAS AND BANGALORE.

These notes were made in reply to a printed series of questions sent to me by Mr. Thurston, of the Madras Museum.

The Numbers correspond to the numbers on the questions.

TRICHINOPOLY, }  
17-11-05. }

A. F. M.

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*Note to 2nd Edition.*

When I first replied to Mr. Thurston's questions, I was acquainted only with the plateau Muduvars, slightly acquainted with those on the Cardamom Hills, and not at all with those on the Western slopes of the Kanan Devan Hills [in the "Aneikulam" country] I have recently become acquainted with the last named, and so have gathered some information which materially alters and corrects my former answers, and which I now set forth in the following pages.

MUNNAR, }  
1st June, 1907. }

A. F. M.



# ETHNOGRAPHIC NOTES

ON THE

## MUDUVARS.

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1. The name of the tribe in English is usually spelt Muduvar, and in tamil முதுவர், sometimes முதுவார், or முதுவானால் : outsiders sometimes call them தசுப்பன்மார்தன்.

2. They have a dialect of their own, closely allied to Tamil, and to Malayalam. On the East more Tamil than Malayalam, and *vice versa* on the West.

3. They are wholly illiterate.

4. Their names for males are mostly the names of Hindu gods and heroes ; but *Kanjan* = dry 'un or stingy 'un, *Karapu kunji* = black chick, *Kunjita* = chicken, *Kar-mēgam* = black cloud, are distinctive and common. I know also men with the following names :—*Sanguvan*, *Kuvalen*, *Chetty*, *Scerangam*, *Veerapandy*, *Komaly* (= clown) *Païar*, *Neelathan*, *Semma*, *Kochah*. Boy twins are invariably *Lutchman* and *Raman*. For females, the following names are usual : *Karapayee* = Black 'un, *Koopi* = Sweepings ; *Paychee* = She-devil ; also names of goddesses and heroines. Girl twins are invariably *Lutchmi* and *Ramayee* ; Boy and Girl, *Lutchman* and *Ramayee*, or *Lutchmi* and *Raman*. There is no superstition about the naming of children, such as one for every day use and one for ceremonial use ; nor is a son whose elder brother has died given an opprobrious name.

5, 6. The manners, customs, and habits of the Muduvars who reside on the slopes facing West, differ to some extent from those of the tribe living on the plateau, while the "Cardamom Hill" Muduvars are intermediate, according to

whether individual villages have affinities with the plateau, or with the Western slopes. These differences arise from the difference in their natural surroundings and not from any subdivision of caste, which does not exist.

7. The law of hypergamy is not followed.

8. A man or woman must marry within the caste, but must not marry the daughters of his brothers or sisters; he ought to marry his maternal uncle's daughter, and he may have two or three wives, who may or may not be sisters.

9. No one may marry outside the caste.

10. They do not believe themselves to be indigenous to the hills; the legend handed down from father to son is that they originally lived in Madura. Owing to troubles or a war in which the Pandyan Rajah of the time was engaged, they fled to the hills. When at Bodinayakanur, the pregnant women,—or, as some say, a pregnant woman,—was left behind, and eventually went with the offspring to the Nilgiris, while the bulk of the tribe came to the High Range of North Travancore. There is supposed to be enmity between these rather vague Nilgiri people and the Muduvars. The Nilgiri people are said occasionally to visit Bodinayakanur, but if by chance they are met by Muduvars, there is no speech between them, though each is supposed instinctively or intuitively to recognize the presence of the other.

Those that came to the High Range, carried their children up the ghauts on their backs, and it was thereupon decided to name the tribe "*Muduvars*" or *Back* people.

The approximate time of the exodus from Madura cannot even be guessed by any of the tribe, but it was possibly at the time when the Pandyan Rajahs entered the South, or more probably, when the Telugu Naickens took possession of Bodinayakanur in the 14th century.

Judging from the two distinct types of countenance, their language, and their curious mixture of customs, I hazard the conjecture that when they arrived on the hills they found a small tribe in possession, with whom they subsequently intermarried; this tribe having affinities with the West Coast, while the new arrivals were connected with the East.

11. The tribe seems to be settled on the Northern and Western portion of the Cardamom hills and on the High Range of Travancore, known as the Kanan Devan Hills; there is one village I believe on the British Anamallays. Within these limits they wander to some extent, the 'plateau' Muduvars of the High Range less so now than formerly, owing to the establishment of the Planting Community in their midst.

Their head-quarters at present may be said to be on the Western slopes of the High Range; the present "Māl-Vāken" or Head-Boss lives there in a village about 2,000 feet above sea-level, but villages occur up to 6,000 feet elevation, the majority of villages being about 3,000 feet above the sea. The wandering takes place between the reaping of the final crop on one piece of land, and the sowing of the next,—about November sees the breaking up of the old village and February the establishment of the new. On the plateau of the High Range their dwellings are small rectangular, rather flat roofed huts, made of jungle sticks or grass (both walls and roof) and are very neat in appearance. On the Western slopes, although the materials lend themselves to even neater building, their houses are usually of a rougher type. The materials used are the stems and leaves of the large leaved *Eetha* (*Beesha Travancorica*) owing to the absence of grass-land country. The back of the house often has no wall, the roof sloping on to the hill side behind and the other walls are generally made of a rough sort of matting made by plaiting split *Eetha* stems.

12. During the building of a habitation, or before it is inhabited, no sacrifices of animals or ceremonies are performed. There is no difference in the construction or material of the houses at different seasons of the year.

13. Outsiders are theoretically not received into the caste, but a weaver caste (*serdan*) boy and girl, who were starving (in the '77 famine, as far as I can make out) and deserted on the hills, were adopted, and were allowed, when they grew up, the full privileges of the caste. Since then, a *Thottiya Naicker* child was similarly adopted, and is now a full-blown Muduvar with a Muduvar wife. On similar occasions, adoptions from similar or higher castes might take place, but adults would never be received, while the adoption of pariahs or low caste

people would be quite impossible. A small gang of coolies, who were useless as workers were dismissed from Pallivasal Estate in October 1905 and went to the "Kalaarkudi" where the Muduvars kept them in food for quite a long time.

14. There seems to be no particular rule as to the administration of justice. If any dispute arises, it is referred to the men of the village, who form an informal punchayat, with the eldest or most influential man at its head.

References are sometimes—but only seldom made to the "*Moopen*," a sort of sub-headman of the tribe, except perhaps in the particular village in which he resides. If the *Moopen* does not satisfy both parties, the *Mēl-vāken* may be appealed to, and his decision is final.

The office of both *Moopen* and *Mēl-vāken* is hereditary and follows the *Marumakatayam* custom, *i.e.*, descent to the eldest son of the eldest sister. The orders of any punchayat or of the headman are not enforceable by any specified means; a sort of sending a delinquent to Coventry exists, but falls through when the matter has blown over. Adjudications only occur at the request of the parties concerned, or in the case of cohabitation between the prohibited degrees of consanguinity, when, on it becoming known, the guilty pair are banished to the jungle, but seem nevertheless to be able to visit the village at will. When disputes between parties are settled against any one, he may be fined, generally in kind,—a calf, or a cow, or a bull, or grain.

15. There is no trial by ordeal. Oaths by the accuser, the accused, and partisans of both, are freely taken. The form of oath is to call upon God that the person swearing, or his child, may die *within so many days* if the oath is untrue, at the same time stepping over the "*Rama kodu*," which consists of lines drawn on the ground, *one line for each day*. It may consist of any number of lines, but 3, 5 or 7 are usual; increasing the number of lines indefinitely would be considered to be rifling with the subject.

There do not seem to be any good omens, but evil omens are numerous;—the barking of jungle sheep or sambhur, the hill robin crossing the path when shifting the village, are ex-

amples. Oracles, magic, sorcery, witchcraft, and especially the "evil eye," are believed in very firmly, but are not practised by Muduvars. I was myself supposed to have exercised the Evil Eye at one time. It became my duty once to apportion, to Muduvars, land for their next year's cultivation, and I went round with some of them for this purpose, visiting the jungle they wished to clear. A particular friend of mine, called "Kanján," asked for a bit of secondary growth very close to a Cinchona Estate; it was, in fact, situated between Lower Nettigudy and Upper Nettigudy, and the main road passed quite close. I told him that there was no objection, except that it was most unusual, and that probably the estate coolies would rob the place, and I warned him very distinctly that if evil come of his choice, he was not to put the blame on me. Shortly afterwards, I left India and was absent about 3 months; and when I returned, I found that small-pox had practically wiped out that village,—37 out of 40 inhabitants having died, including "Kanján." I was, of course, very sorry; but as I found a small bit of the land in question had been felled, and there being no claimants, I planted it up with cinchona. As the small-pox had visited all the Muduvar villages and had spread great havoc among them, I was not surprised at their being scarce, but I noticed on the few occasions when I did see them, they were always running away! When I got the opportunity, I cornered a chap by practically riding him down and asked for an explanation; he then told me that, of course, the tribe had been sorely troubled, because I told "Kanján" in so many words that evil would come; I had then disappeared (to work my magic, no doubt!) and returned just in time to take that very bit of land for myself!--

That was some years ago, and confidence has now been restored in me.

16. When boys attain puberty, the parents give a feast to the village; with a girl, the same feast is given, and she occupies, for the duration of the menstrual period, a hut set apart for all the women in the village to occupy during their uncleanness. When it is over, she washes her clothes, and takes a bath, washing her head. This is just what every

woman of the village always does. There is no mutilation or tattooing, but she changes her child's dress for a woman's dress.

17. There seem to be no purificatory ceremonies other than these on such occasions, or after child-birth. No special diet or customs are obligatory during pregnancy by husband and wife, but some advise certain diets, which, however, may or may not be adhered to, according to the disposition of the parties.

All the married women of the village assist at confinements. The only conversation I have had with Muduvars has been with the men, and these do not think all my questions quite proper, and as any persistence on my part would probably end in my being told a lie, I regret that I have not been able to ascertain the position adopted in accouchements. The child is washed as soon as possible after birth, but no ceremonies are performed. Twins bring good luck. Monsters are said to be sometimes born, taking the form of little tigers, cows, monkeys, etc. On these occasions the mother is said generally to die, but when she does not die she is said to eat the monster.

Monstrosities must anyway be killed. Childless couples are dieted to make them fruitful,—the principal diet for a man being lots of black-monkey, and for a woman a compound of various herbs and spices.

18. There is no particular child-naming ceremony.

19. Marriage takes place at puberty; sexual license before marriage is not recognized or tolerated, neither do they habitually prostitute their women.

20. Among the Plateau Muduvars, both polygamy and polyandry are permitted, the former being common and the latter occasional. In the case of the latter, brothers are prohibited from having a common wife as are also cousins on the father's side. In the case of polygamy, the first one married is the head wife, and the others take orders from her, but she has no other privileges. If the wives are amicably disposed they live together, but when inclined to disagree they are given separate houses for the sake of peace and harmony. With

quarrelsome women, one wife may be in one village and the others in another. A man may be polygamous in one village, and be one of a polyandrous lot of men a few miles off.

On the Cardamom Hills and on the Western slopes, where the majority of the tribe live, they are monogamous, and express abhorrence of both the polygamous and polyandrous condition, though they admit with an affectation of amused disgust that both are practised by their brethren on the high lands.

21. Marriages are arranged by the friends, and more often by the cousins on the mother's side of the bridegroom, who request the hand of a girl or woman from her parents. If they agree, the consent of the most remote relatives has also to be obtained, and if everyone is amicable, a day is fixed and the happy couple leave the village to live a few days in a cave by themselves. On their return they announce whether they would like to go on with it or not. In the former case, the man publicly gives ear-rings, a metal (generally brass) bangle, a cloth and a comb to the woman, and takes her into his hut. The comb is a poor affair made of split "Eetha" or perhaps of bamboo, but it is the essential part of the ceremony. If the probationary period in the cave has not proved quite satisfactory to both parties, the marriage is off, and the man and the woman are both at liberty to try again with some one else. In the original selection, the woman has no choice, but the man has. No presents are interchanged between the contracting parties and their respective families. Betrothal does not exist as a ceremony, though families often agree beforehand to marry their children together, but this is not binding in any way. The tying of the "*Tali*" is said to have been tried in former days as part of the marriage ceremony, but as the bride always died, the practice was discontinued.

Intermarriage between all sorts of Muduvars are quite permissible, all of them admitting that in spite of certain customs being different at different places, the *caste* is unimpeachably good. As a rule, however, the ladies of the open uplands dislike the idea of living in the depths of extensive forests where the leeches and elephants are so numerous, and

the rainfall excessive, while their sisters of the lower elevation prefer to be the only spouse of their lord, disliking the ideas on matrimony to which the uplanders are accustomed.

22. Remarriage of widows is permitted, and the widow by right belongs to, or should be taken over by her deceased husband's maternal aunt's son, and not, under any circumstances, by any of his brothers. In practice, she marries almost any one but one of the brothers. No man should visit the house of his younger brother's wife, or even look at that lady. This prohibition does not extend to the wives of his elder brothers, but sexual intercourse even here would be incest. The same ceremonies are gone through at the remarriage of a widow as in an ordinary marriage—the ear-rings and bangles, which she discarded on the death of the previous husband being replaced. Widows do not wear a special dress, but are known by the absence of jewelry.

Elopements occur: when a man and woman do not obtain the consent of the proper parties, they run away into the jungles or a cave, visiting the village frequently and getting grain, etc., from sympathizers. The anger aroused by their disgraceful conduct having subsided, they quietly return to the village and live as man and wife.

23. In theory, a man may divorce his wife at will, but it is scarcely etiquette to do so, except for infidelity or in the case of incompatibility of temper. If he wants to get rid of her for less horrible crimes, he can palm her off on a friend.

A woman cannot divorce her husband at all in theory, but she can make his life so unbearable that he gladly allows her to palm herself off on somebody else. Wives who have been divorced, marry again freely.

24. The tribe follow the West Coast or *Marumakkatayam* law of inheritance with a slight difference, the property descending to an elder or younger sister's son.

25. Property—which seldom consists of more than a bill-hook, a blanket, and a few cattle—always goes to a nephew, and is not divided in any way.

26. The tribe professes to be Hindu; "Kadavallu" which means simply God and "Panaliandavar"—a corruption and honorific of Palaniandi—are their chief gods. They are supposed to live in the Madura temple with "Meenatchiamal" and her husband "Sokuru."

They recognize almost any Hindu deity, and can give no reason for preferring those I have mentioned, except that they have been brought up that way. As regards the attributes of their deities, they do not differ much from the "gaseous vertebrate" type common to other parts of the world.

27. "Suryan" (the Sun) is a beneficent deity. Those considered maleficent I cannot get them to name, but they are numerous, and all require propitiation and avoidance. The propitiation is not very taxing, as a respectful attitude when passing their reputed haunts seems to suffice. They are alluded to as "*Karapu*" = Black ones. One in particular is "Nyamaru" who lives on Nyamamallay, the jungles round which were said to be badly haunted. At present they are flourishing Tea Estates, so Nyamaru has retired to the scrubby stuff at the top of the mountain. Nyamamallay is also the principal haunt of a very terrible creature of the Muduvar imagination, called the "*Narisimbam*" which means I think Jackal-lion. No one who has seen this beast has survived to describe it because its glance is fatal, causing instant death. It is possible to meet this creature in any forest.

Certain caves are regarded as shrines, where spear heads, a trident or two, and copper coins are placed, partly to mark them as holy places, and partly as offerings to bring good luck, good health, or good hunting. They occur in the most remote spots.

28. The only one important festival is "Tie pongal"—a New Year's day, when all who visit the village, be they who they may, must be fed. It occurs about the middle of January, and is a time of feasting and rejoicing.

29. The tribe do not employ priests of other castes to perform religious or any other ceremonies. Muduvars who are half-witted, or it may be only eccentric, are recognized as "*Swamyars*" or priests. If one desires to get rid of a headache

or an illness, the "*Swamyar*" is told he will get four annas or o if the complaint is soon removed, but he is not expected to perform miracles or to make any active demonstration over the matter.

"*Swamyars*" who spend their time in talking to the Sun or Moon as their brethren, and in supplications to mysterious and unknown beings, are the usual sort, and if they live a celibate life, they are greatly esteemed; for those that live principally on milk in addition to practising the other virtue, the greatest reverence is felt. Such an one occurs only once or twice in a century.

30. The dead are buried lying down face upwards and placed North and South. There are no death, funeral, purificatory or memorial ceremonies, except, perhaps, that all immediately concerned in the corpse take a bath.

The grave has a little thatched roof about 6' x 2' put over it without any thing in the way of a wall. A small stone weighing 20 or 30 lbs. is put at the head, and a similar one at the feet; these serve to mark the spot when the little roof perishes or is burnt during the next grassfire. The depth of the grave is, for a man, judged sufficient if the grave-digger, standing in the bottom, finds the level of the ground up to his waist, but for a woman, it must be up to his armpits. The reason is, that the surviving women do not like to think they will be very near the surface, but the men are brave, and know that if they lie North and South nothing can harm them and no evil approach.

The Muduvars share with many other jungle-folk the curious idea that if any animal killed by a tiger or leopard falls so as to lie North and South, it will not be eaten by the beast of prey, neither will it be re-visited, so that sitting over a "*Kill*" which has fallen North and South, in the hopes of getting a shot at the returning tiger or leopard, is an useless proceeding!

The ghosts of people killed by accident, or dying a violent death, haunt the spot till the memory of the occurrence fades from the mind of the survivors and of succeeding generations. These ghosts are not propitiated, but the haunted spots are avoided as much as possible.

31. Propitiation of ancestors is not recognised.

32. Nor does Totemism exist, but in common with other jungle tribes, the tiger is often alluded to as "jackal."

33. Fire is still often made by means of the flint and steel, though match boxes are common enough. Some dry cotton (generally in a dirty condition) is placed along the flint, the edge of which is struck with the steel; the spark generated ignites the cotton, and is carefully nursed into flame in dead and dry grass. They understand how to make fire by friction too, but now-a-days this is very seldom resorted to. A rotten log of a particular kind of tree has first to be found, the inside of which is in an extremely dry and powdery condition, while the outside is still fairly hard. Some of the top of the topmost side of the recumbent log having been cut away at a suitable place, and most of the inside removed, a very hard and pointed bit of wood is rapidly rotated against the inner shell of the log where the powdery stuff is likely to ignite, and this soon begins to smoke, the fire being then nursed, much in the same way as with the fire generated by the flint or steel.

34. Tattooing is not practised.

35. By the men, the *languti* and leg cloth of the Tamils are worn, the latter generally hitched up short to permit freedom of movement. A turban is worn, and a *cumbly* or blanket invariably is carried, and put on when it rains. I have seen—it struck me as horrible—a Muduvar with an umbrella. Now-a-days the discarded coats of Planters, and even trousers and tattered riding breeches, are common. A Muduvar has been seen with a blazer on in addition to carrying an umbrella. The men wear ear-rings, supposed to be, and sometimes are in reality, of gold, with bits of glass of different colours set in them, also silver or brass finger and toe rings, and sometimes a bangle on each arm or on one leg.

The women go in very largely for beads, strings of them adorning their necks; white and blue being favourite colours. Rings for the ears, fingers and toes the same as those of the men, and sometimes many glass bangles on the arms, also an anklet on each leg, are the usual things, the pattern of the metal jewelry being often the same as seen on the women of the plains.

The cloth, after being brought round the waist and tucked in there, is carried over the body, and two corners are knotted on the right shoulder. Unmarried girls wear less jewelry than the married woman, and widows wear no jewelry till re-married, when they can, in no way, be distinguished from their sisters.

Sometimes a stout thread is worn on the arm with a metal cylinder containing some charm against illness or the "evil eye," but only the "wise men" or elders of the caste lay much store on, or have knowledge of these things.

36. Branding is not resorted to.

37. The tribe believe that they were originally cultivators of the soil, and their surroundings and tastes have made them become hunters and trappers since coming to the hills. At present, they cut down a bit of secondary jungle, or "cheppukad," and after burning it off, they sow ragi, or where the rainfall is sufficient, hill-paddy, which is weeded and tended by the women, the men contenting themselves by trying to keep out the enemies to their crops. After harvest there is not much to be done, except building a new village perhaps, making traps, and shooting.

38, 39. I would describe the tribe as nomadic cultivators and hunters combined. All they catch is "game" to them, though we would describe some of the animals as vermin.

They catch rats, squirrels, quail, jungle fowl, porcupine, mousedeer and fish. They kill, with a blowpipe and dart, many small birds. The traps in use are varied, but there are three principal ones, one of which looks like a big bow; it is fixed upright in the ground as a spring to close with a snap a small upright triangle of sharp-edged bamboo, to which it is connected, and into which any luckless small game may have intruded its head, induced to do so by finding all other roads closed with a cunningly made fence. Another is a bent sapling from which a loop of twine or fibre hangs on what appears to be the ground, but is really a little platform on which the jungle fowl treads and immediately finds itself caught by both legs and hanging in mid-air! The third is very much the same, but of stouter build, the loop is upright and set in a hedge

constructed for the purpose of keeping the fretful porcupine in the path, passing along which the beast unconsciously releases a pin, back flies the sapling, and the porcupine is hung! If fouled in any way, he generally uses his teeth to advantage and escapes.

They are also adepts at catching ibex, which are driven towards a fence with nooses set in it at proper points, and cause the beasts to break their necks. Fish are caught in very beautifully constructed cruives, and also on the hook, while, on the larger rivers below the plateau, the use of the night line is understood.

With the gun, sambhur, ibex, jungle sheep, mongoose, monkeys, squirrels, martens, are killed. Besides being a good shot, the Muduvar when using his own powder, takes no risks; the stalk is continued until game is approached sometimes to within a few yards, when a charge of slugs from the antiquated match-lock has the same effect as the most up-to-date bullet from the most modern weapon.

Crocodiles are not inhabitants of the Muduvar country, but tortoises are picked up casually.

40. In their agricultural operations, the Muduvars are very happy-go-lucky. They have no scare-crows to avert injury to crops or to frighten away demons, but they employ many devices for keeping off pigs, sambhur and jungle sheep from their crops, none of which appear to be efficacious for long.

41. The implement "*par excellence*" of the Muduvar is the bill-hook, from which he never parts company, and with which he can do almost anything,—from building a house to skinning a rat, or from hammering sheet-lead into bullets, to planting maize.

42. The bulk of the caste live on "ragi" (millet), or hill-rice and whatever vegetables they can grow, and whatever meat they trap or shoot. They esteem the flesh of the black monkey (*semnopithecus johni*) above everything, and lust after it. I have seen a Muduvar much pulled down by illness, seize an expiring monkey and suck its blood from its jugular vein. This was, of course, taken purely medicinally.

Muduvans will not eat beef, dog, jackal, nor snake, but will eat several sorts of lizards and all rats. Ibex, sambhur, and all the deer tribe, fish, fowl, and other birds, except kites and vultures, are all put into the pot.

The fact that they abstain from beef in their opinion raises there caste above others.

The plateau Muduvans and those on the Eastern slopes will not eat pig in any shape or form; those on the Western slopes are very keen on wild-pig and this fact causes them to be somewhat looked down upon by the others. I think this pork-eating habit is due to the absence of sambhur or other deer in the heart of the extensive forests. Muduvans are fond of alcohol in any shape or form. They take a liquor from a wild palm which grows on the Western slopes, and after allowing it to become fermented drink it freely, some members of the tribe living in the vicinity of these palms are more or less in a state of intoxication during the whole time it is in season. Their name for the drink is "*Tippily-kal*" and the palm resembles the "*Kitool*." The Western slope Muduvans are acquainted with opium from the West Coast, and some of them are slaves to the habit,—and will do anything to get it when the craving is on them.

43, 44. The Muduvans do not admit that any other caste is good enough to eat, drink, or smoke with them. They say that once upon a time they permitted these privileges to Vellalans, but this fact induced so many visitors to arrive that they really could not afford it any more, so they eat, drink and smoke with no one now, but will give uncooked food to passing strangers.

45. I have never heard any proverb, song, or folk tale of the Muduvans; I believe the story of their arrival on the hills from the plains to be their stock tale. They have a yarn which is more a statement of a belief than anything else, and that is, that when a certain bamboo below *\*Pallivasal* flowers, a son of the Maharajah of Travancore turns into a tiger or "*Pulimisan*" and devours people. Men often turn into "*Pulimisan*" owing chiefly to witchcraft on the part of others, and stories of such happenings are often told.

The nearest approach to a proverb I have heard is "*Tingakilamei nalla tingalam*," which sounds rather meaningless and tame in English. "On Monday you may eat well," — the play on the words being quite lost, of course. I have had personal experience of the truth of this saying, for Sunday being an off-day on plantations, I often went after ibex or other game on that day, and have had shocking bad luck, to make up for which I have sometimes allowed myself to be persuaded to go out again the next day, when the luck has completely changed, and not only has game turned out to be plentiful, but I have held my rifle straight, which may have been the result of the experience gained on the previous day, but to the Muduvar it was because "*Tingakilamei nalla tingalam*!"

46. I do not think there are any tribal games, but some of the men have taken readily to the form of "draughts" known to most low country coolies, and I have also seen what looked suspiciously like "Oughts and Crosses," but my appearance always put a stop to the game and caused a hasty obliteration of all traces of it. They make a miniature tom-tom by stretching monkey skin over a firm frame of split bamboo or "*Eetha*," on which the maker thereof will strum by the hour, much to his own apparent enjoyment and to the seeming indifference of the rest of the village. The surprising thing to me is that no perpetrator of this sort of music has ever been knocked on the head.

47. I have never heard of anything in the way of theatrical performances, but the younger ones imitate the dances of men of the low country, and the usual "*komali*" business, but are very shy about it, and nothing of the sort is ever done before strangers as it would lower the dignity of the tribe in the eyes of the world.

*General.*—I have used the word "tribe" and "caste" indiscriminately, for we count them a tribe, while they count themselves a caste knowing no distinctive name for tribe. They have lucky times and "lucky days" for starting on a journey:—

On Monday, start before sunrise.

„ Tuesday, it must be in the forenoon.

„ Wednesday, before 7 A.M.

On Thursday, after eating the morning meal.

„ Friday, never make a start, it is a bad day.

„ Saturday and Sunday, start as soon as the sun has risen.

I think this also applies to the commencement of any undertaking.

In former days, the whole tribe were very shy of strangers, and it is only within the last 30 years that they have become used to having dealings with outsiders. Old men still tell of the days when robbers from the Coimbatore side used to come up, burn the Muduvar villages and carry off what cattle or fowls they could find. Even now there are some of the men in whom this fear of strangers seems to be innate, and who have never spoken to Europeans. In the women this feeling is accentuated, for, when suddenly met with, they make themselves scarce in the most surprising way, and find cover as instinctively as a quailchick. I have never got any other explanation from the men than that it is fright, and they cannot help being frightened because it is born in them owing to former generations having been persecuted; most of the men had overcome the feeling, but the women had not, etc. This is hardly satisfactory, especially as the women have been delighted to see the few European ladies who have visited their villages. I expect that the men tutor the women in the matter, though I cannot get myself to believe that they tell them anything very dreadful. Still they may encourage without difficulty their natural timidity.

Quite 20 years ago, a Muduvar, called "Mangalam,"—he is now a "Swamyar"—expressed a desire to me to learn to read, and as I was at the time struggling with Tamil, I gave him some paper, a pencil, and a little book I had, which taught how to spell simple words, illustrating some of them, such as the word *man* written under a picture of an ox of sorts. A few weeks afterwards, I asked Mangalam how he was getting on, and as he replied in what seemed to me a fairly hopeful strain, I asked him how to spell "*madu*," and he thereupon drew for me a rather queer representation of the ox in the book! Shortly afterwards, he abandoned his attempt to climb

this branch of the tree of knowledge. There are still now and again men in the tribe who aspire to read, but I do not know how far any of them succeed.

The Muduvars are becoming accustomed to quite wonderful things—the harnessing of water which generates electricity to work machinery, the mono-rail tram which now runs through their country, and most wonderful of all, the telephone. I was fortunate in being able to watch an old Mūdūvar's first impressions of this instrument: I got into communication with a neighbour some three or four miles off by wire, and after explaining matters to him, induced the Muduvar, old "Sanguvan," to enter upon a conversation, his features all the time being a perfect picture of pleased surprise. He afterwards excitedly went over the whole conversation to me, (forgetting that as I was standing beside him I had already heard it), and described how he would raise envy and wonder in the hearts of his tribe by relating his experience. "I am the first of my caste to speak and hear over five miles," said he, with evident delight.

I have alluded to the two different types of countenance; perhaps there is a third, resulting from a mixture of the other two. The first is distinctly aquiline-nosed and thin-lipped and to this type the men generally belong. The second is flat-nosed, wide-nostrilled, and thick-lipped, and this fairly represents the women, who compare most unfavourably with the men in face. I have never seen men of the second type, but of an intermediate type they are not uncommon.

The plateau Muduvars are a more manly and more sturdy lot than those on the Western slopes, whether it is the effect of opium or drink I do not know, but the last mentioned men are a shiftless, unreliable lot who cannot be depended on, while the former are more agreeable people to deal with.

On the Cardamom Hills there may still exist a tribe of dwarfs of which very little is known. The late Mr. J. D. Munro had collected a little information about them. Mr. A. W. Turner had the luck to come across one, who was caught eating part of a jungle sheep raw,—I think it was the entrails he was devouring, but I am not sure on this point. Mr. Turner managed to do a little conversation with the man by signs, and

afterwards he related the incident to "Seerangam," a good old Muduvar shikari, who listened thoughtfully and then asked "*Did you not shoot him?*"—but beyond this, proved most uncommunicative on the subject of the dwarfs. The question, however, put a new complexion on to the character of the usually peacefully inclined and timid Muduvar.

When the death of any of the village occurs, all the women in that village make loud lamentation. How much of this collective weeping is due to the Eastern custom of mourning similar to the Irish "keening," I don't know; but I feel sure that some cry from feelings of genuine grief, and some, perhaps, from sympathy with the others. The men, with the exception of close relatives, do not shed tears.

I know them to be capable of real affection: "Kanjani" was very proud of his little son and used to make plans for wounding an ibex so that his boy might finish it off, and thus become accustomed to shooting. I knew another man too, who was very grieved at the death of his wife,—I think he had only one,—and it was quite touching to witness his emotion which was most subdued and shown more by his manner than by any action or speech.

