MADRAS GOVERNMENT MUSEUM.

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# ANTHROPOLOGY.

# THE VILLAGE DEITIES OF SOUTHERN INDIA.

With Seven Plates.

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# Madras Government Museum Bulletins.

## *Vol. I.*

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## *Vol. III.*

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No. 2.—Sea Fisheries of Malabar and South Canara.—E. Thurston.

No. 3.—Nāyars of Malabar.—F. Fawcett.

## *Vol. IV.*

No. 1.—Todas of the Nilgiris; Eurasian Schoolboys; Meriah Sacrifice Post; Walking through Fire; Malaiālis of the Shevaroys; Scissors People; Sorcery in Coimbatore; Nayādis of Malabar.—E. Thurston.

No. 2.—The Dravidian Head.—E. Thurston; Yánádis of Nellore.—T. Ranga Rao; Miscellanea.

No. 3.—Marriage Customs in Southern India; Deformity and Mutilation; Urális, Sholagas, and Irulas; Fire-walking in Ganjám; Corporal Punishment in Vernacular Schools.—E Thurston.

## *Vol. V.*

No. 1.—Vision of the Urális and Sholagas; More Marriage Customs in Southern India; Hook-Swinging; Paliyans.

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1907.

# PREFACE.

The following pages are the fruit of leisure hours on my frequent tours through many districts in South India. I desire to acknowledge with grateful thanks the assistance given me in collecting information by the Tahsildars, police officers and other officials in every place that I have visited, to Mr. Thurston for kindly revising the proofs, and to Mr. K. Rangachari, of the Madras Museum, for supplying the illustrations. Where I have borrowed from the writings of others, my debt has been acknowledged in the bulletin itself. I will only add that this is only intended to be a small contribution to a very wide subject, and to suggest lines of investigation to others, who are interested in it. I have been led to put into print the materials gathered primarily for my own information, by the fact that I have been unable to find any regular treatise on this important part of what is vaguely called Hinduism. There are many descriptions of particular ceremonies, scattered about in Museum bulletins, District Manuals and Gazetteers: but I have not heard of or found anything like a systematic account of the village deities in any work on the religions of India. I hope, therefore, that this slight sketch will supply a real need, and stimulate further enquiry into a subject that is full of interest, and of no small importance to the student of comparative religion.

HENRY MADRAS.

Bishop's House, Teynampet,
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# THE VILLAGE DEITIES OF SOUTHERN INDIA.

## INTRODUCTION.

The worship of Village Deities, Grāma-Dēvata as they are called in the vernacular, forms an important part of the conglomerate of religious beliefs, customs and ceremonies, which are generally classed together under the term Hinduism. In almost every village and town of South India may be seen a shrine or symbol of the Grāma-Dēvata, and in every village the Grāma-Dēvata is periodically worshipped and propitiated.

As a rule the shrine of the village deity is far less imposing than the Brahmanical temples in the neighbourhood; very often it is nothing more than a small enclosure with a few rough stones in the centre, and often there is no shrine at all; but still, when calamity overtakes the village, when pestilence or famine or cattle-disease make their appearance, it is to the village deity that the whole body of the villagers turn for protection. Sivà and Vishnu may be more dignified beings, but the village deity is regarded as a more present help in trouble, and is more intimately concerned with the happiness and prosperity of the villagers. The origin of this form of Hinduism is lost in antiquity; but it is probable that it represents a pre-Aryan religion, more or less modified in various parts of South India by Brahmanical influence, and it is possible that some details of the ceremonies may point back to a totemistic stage of religion. At the same time, many of the deities themselves are of quite recent origin, and it is easy to observe a deity in the making even at the present day.

The District Superintendent of Police at Ellore, in the Telugu country, told me that in 1904, at a village some twelve miles from Ellore, two little boys, minding cattle in the fields, thought they heard the sound of trumpets proceeding from an ant-hill. They told the story in the village, and at once the people turned out and did *puja* to the deity in the ant-hill. The fame of the deity's presence

spread like wild fire far and wide, and the village became the centre of pilgrimages from all the country round about. Every Sunday as many as five thousand people, men and women, assembled before the ant-hill, and might be seen prostrate on their faces, rapt in adoration. The incident illustrates the ease and rapidity with which a local cult springs up in India, and suddenly becomes popular over a large district.

Another instance came to my notice a few years ago at Bezwāda. A small boy, the son of well-to-do parents, was murdered near the town for the sake of his ornaments, and thrown into the canal. The body was discovered and placed under a tree near the bank of the canal, at a place where three roads meet. A little after, a small shrine, about a foot and-a-half high, was built by the parents under the tree to the spirit of the murdered boy. Then some one declared that he had made a vow at the shrine, and obtained his desire. The fame of the shrine at once spread, the spirit of the boy rose quite to the rank of a minor deity, and a local worship speedily sprang up and became popular. When I last saw the shrine, it had been enlarged, and had become about twice its original size.

Mr. Harrison, the C.M.S. Missionary at Bezwāda, gave me an instance of the way in which local cults arise out of notorious crimes. About sixty years ago a Hindu widow, named Ramamma, lived between Bezwāda and Hyderabad, farming some land left her by her husband. After a time she contracted immoral relations with one of her servants named Buddha Sahib. Her brother was so angry that he murdered them both. Then the cattle plague broke out, so the villagers connected it with the wrath of the murdered Ramamma, and instituted special rites to pacify her spirit. And now, whenever there is cattle plague in the district, two rough wooden images about two feet high are made to represent Maddha Ramamma and Buddha Sahib, and, with two images of local goddesses as their attendants, are put on a small wooden cart and dragged in procession at night round all the principal streets of the village, accompanied by nautch girls, fireworks and music. Finally the cart is dragged to the boundary of the village lands and thrown into the territory of the adjacent village, in order to transfer to it the angry spirit of Ramamma. Compared to this proceeding, which is very common in the ceremonies connected with the propitiation of village deities, throwing

snails into your neighbour's garden is a charitable pastime. It is the general custom to pay special reverence to the spirits of any persons who come to an untimely end, *e.g.*, to the spirits of girls who die before marriage; but, when the circumstances of their death specially strike the imagination of the general public, the reverence, that is ordinarily confined to the family, expands into a regular local cult.

The special features which broadly distinguish the worship of the village deities from that of SIVA and VISHNU are—

(i) Firstly, the fact that the village deities, with very few exceptions, are female. In the Tamil country, it is true, almost all the village goddesses have male attendants, who are supposed to guard the shrine and carry out the commands of the goddesses; and one male deity, IYENAR, has a shrine to himself, and is regarded as the night watchman of the village. In the Telugu country, too, there is a being called POTU-RĀZU, who figures sometimes as the brother and sometimes as the husband of village goddesses, and sometimes as an attendant. But with the exception of IYENAR, and one or two other deities, all the male deities are so distinctly subordinate to the goddesses that they do not contravene the general principle that village deities are female and not male.

(ii) Then, in the second place, the village deities are almost universally worshipped with animal sacrifices. Buffaloes, sheep, goats, pigs and fowls are freely offered to them, sometimes in thousands. In the Tamil country, as I shall describe later, this custom is curiously modified by the influence of Brahmanism, which has imbued the villagers with the idea that the shedding of blood is low and irreligious, and it is to be remarked that no animal sacrifices are ever offered to IYENAR. MADURAI-VĪRAN accepts them eagerly, and takes toddy and cheeroots into the bargain; but IYENAR is regarded as far too good a being to be pleased by the sight of blood-shed.

(iii) Then, in the third place, the PUJĀRIS, *i.e.*, the men who perform the worship and officiate as priests, are not Brahmans, but are drawn from all the other castes.

It is hardly ever possible to make any general statement about any subject in India without at once being confronted with facts, which seem to prove that you are wrong. Accordingly, I may mention that I have found cases where Brahmans are officiating as Pujāris at the shrines of village

deities. I came across one such case at NEGAPATAM; while, at BANGALORE I actually found a case where a Brahman widow was the Pujāri. But, then, in these cases the Brahman Pujāri never has anything to do with the animal sacrifices. These are always conducted entirely by men of lower castes, and even so, it is a degradation for a Brahman to be connected, as Pujāri, with a shrine where such abominations take place; but according to the Indian proverb:—"for the sake of one's stomach one must play many parts." Setting aside these exceptional cases, it may be stated generally that no Brahmans are the priests of village deities, but that the Pujāris are drawn from all other castes indiscriminately, while an important part in the worship, especially that connected with the buffalo sacrifices, is even taken by the Pariahs, the outcaste section of Indian society.

As will be seen later on, the buffalo sacrifice has special features of its own, and seems to retain traces of a primitive form of worship, which may possibly have originated in totemism.

These three features, then, distinguish the worship of the village deities from the worship of SIVA and VISHNU, since in the latter the officiating priests are nearly always Brahmans, no animal sacrifices are ever offered, and the principal deities are male and not female.

The village deities are not, then, to be regarded as offshoots of the Aryan deities: they represent a form of religion that was widely prevalent in India long before the Aryan invasion.

## NAMES, CHARACTERS AND FUNCTIONS.

The names of village deities are legion. Some of them have an obvious meaning, many are quite unintelligible to the people themselves and I have often failed to get any clue to their origin, even from native pundits. They differ in almost every district, and often the deities worshipped in one village will be quite unknown in other villages five or six miles off. In MASULIPATAM, on the east coast in the Telugu country, the following were given me as the names of the village deities worshipped in the district, viz., MUTYALAMMA, the pearl goddess (AMMA is only a female termination); CHINNINTAMMA, the goddess who is head of the house; CHALLALAMMA, the goddess presiding over buttermilk; GHANTALAMMA, the goddess who goes with bells;

Yaparamma, the goddess who transacts business; Mamillamma, the goddess who sits under a mango tree; Gangamma, the water goddess, who in this district is the protectress against small-pox.

But, at a village about twenty miles from Masulipatam, I found that fifteen different goddesses were worshipped in the neighbourhood, of whom only four were identical with those of Masulipatam. Some were named after the villages from which they had been imported, *e.g.*, Addankamma, the goddess from Addanki, and Pandilamma, the goddess from Pandil; others had names derived from common objects of country life, *e.g.*, Wanamalamma, the goddess of the tope, and Bandlamma, the goddess of the cart; and Sitalamma, the water goddess.

In the Ellore District further west the deities worshipped are chiefly Gangamma, who is sometimes called Mahalakshmi and sometimes Chamalamma (the latter a name of Parvati, the wife of Siva, and the former the name of Vishnu's wife), and Poleramma, the boundary goddess, and Ankamma, who is regarded as the goddess of cholera, and disease generally.

Further west than Ellore, across the hills, in the Cuddapah and Kurnool Districts, the village goddess is often known simply as Peddamma (great goddess) or Chinnamma (little goddess). In many villages, however, of these districts these names are unknown and the village deities are called Gangamma, Polamma and Sunkalamma, etc. In some villages, the village deities consist of Potu-Rāzu and his seven sisters, who are known by various names. In one village they were given me as Peddamma, Isondamma, Maremma, Ankalamma, Nukalamma, Vasukota, Ellamma and Arikamma.

Potu-Rāzu is a mysterious person in the Telugu country; sometimes he is described as the brother, sometimes as the husband of the village goddess, and sometimes as only an attendant. Once I was told he was the Devil's younger brother, and occasionally the villagers seem to think that the less said about him the better. But I have never met with him as an independent deity, and have always been told that sacrifice is never offered to him alone, but always in conjunction with one or more of the goddesses.

The characters of the goddesses vary considerably. The villagers do not regard them as evil spirits, but neither do they regard them as unmixed benefactors. They are

rather looked upon as beings of uncertain temper, very human in their liability to take offence. At COCANADA the PUJĀRIS told me that the village goddess, who is significantly called NUKALAMMA from a colloquial Telugu word meaning broken rice, causes all sorts of trouble, and is dreaded as an evil spirit. But, when an epidemic of cholera breaks out, they, curiously enough, instal another goddess, called MARIDI-AMMA, in her place, and offer sacrifices to her instead of to NUKALAMMA, a proceeding calculated, one would have thought, to give dire offence.

The functions of the different goddesses are not at all clearly marked in the TELUGU country. The people often told me "They are only different names for the same goddess." In some places there is a special cholera goddess, *e.g.*, ANKAMMA, and in others a special small-pox goddess, *e.g.*, GANGAMMA; but as a rule the infliction and removal of epidemics and disasters is a general function of all goddesses alike. On the other hand in the COIMBATORE, TANJORE and TRICHINOPOLY Districts of the TAMIL country, where the people have been for many generations past far more influenced by civilization and BRAHMANISM than in the TELUGU country, I found that the functions of different deities were far more differentiated, and that often elaborate stories were current as to their origin and characters, *e.g.*, one of the deities worshipped in almost every village in the TAMIL country is MARIAMMAN or MARI, the goddess of small-pox, and one of the stories as to her origin runs as follows. One of the nine great RISHIS in the olden days, named PIRUHU, had a wife named NAGAVALLI, equally famed for her beauty and virtue. One day, when the RISHI was away from home, the TIRUMURTHI (The Hindu Triad, BRAHMA, VISHNU and SIVA) came to visit her, to see whether she was as beautiful and virtuous as reported. Not knowing who they were and resenting their intrusion, she had them changed into little children. They naturally took offence and cursed her, so that her beauty faded away, and her face became dotted with marks, like those of the small-pox. When PIRUHU returned and found her thus disfigured, he drove her away, and declared that she should be born a demon in the next world and cause the spread of a disease, which would make people like herself. In memory of the change, which PIRUHU found in her, she was called MARI ("changed") in the next birth. When she was put away, it is said that a washerman took care of her, and that in consequence she was also called UPPAI (a washerman's oven). I may remark that a totally

different derivation of the word MARI was given me in Mysore.

Again KĀLI AMMAN or KĀLI is said to be the only one of the village goddesses whose name is found in the VEDAS. She is an avatar, or incarnation of the eight powers of the universe. The story told about her is that a demon named MAHISHASURAN (the buffalo demon) gave great offence to SIVA, and was condemned to death. But, owing to a privilege bestowed on him by SIVA himself, he could not be slain by the TIRUMURTHI or by any male deity, so the task was given to KĀLI, who successfully accomplished it, and so won a place among village deities.

MAHA KĀLI is another form or avatar of the same goddess. She is supposed to be a deity of furious temper, and to be the cause of the prevalence of cholera. She is also known as VĪRAMAN-KĀLI or UGGRAMAN-KĀLI, to denote her rage and fury.

Another deity of similarly violent temper is ANGALAMMAN, who is worshipped largely in the COIMBATORE District. The idea seems to be that all who worship the ASHTA SAKTI or eight powers of the universe will attain to bliss, while the others will be destroyed by ANGALAMMAN. The people worship her to avoid falling victims to her unquenchable anger, since her main object is believed to be to devour and consume everything that comes in her way. She is said especially to have a great relish for bones!

Another deity of a very different disposition is KAMATCHI AMMAN, whose name implies that she is full of good and gracious qualities. She is reported to have been born a Brahman girl, and then to have become the avatar or incarnation of one of the ASHTA SAKTI.

Another benevolent deity is THUROPATHI AMMAN, who is reported to have been the wife of a RISHI and a very virtuous woman, so, in her next birth, she was allowed to be born a king's daughter. Accordingly, when THURUPATHAM, king of PANCHALA, offered a *puthrayagam* (*i.e.*, a sacrifice to obtain a child) she came forth from the fire. She afterwards became the wife of the PANDAVAS, the seven brothers famous in the great Hindu epic, the MAHABHARATA, and is regarded as one of the ASHTA SAKTI (or eight powers).

A deity of rather mixed character, who is worshipped largely in parts of the COIMBATORE District, is KANNAHAI AMMAN. She seems originally to have come from Madura.

The story goes that in MADURA during the palmy days of the PANDYA Kingdom, many centuries ago, PANDIAN was ruling very wickedly, and in the height of his power and presumption closed the temple of MINATCHI AMMAN, the renowned local deity. She was enraged at this and, with a view to taking vengeance, became reincarnate. At the same time PANDIAN, who greatly desired to have a child, found the deity, incarnate as a little infant, lying in the palace with a very curious bracelet on her wrist, which was the exact copy of one belonging to his wife. He wished to adopt the child, but the astrologers warned him that she would bring evil into his house, so he ordered her to be put into a basket and cast into the river. A Chetti (merchant) picked the basket out of the river and brought the child up, and called her KANNAHAI. Just before this, it happened that the god SIVA was incarnate as a Chetti and was living at KAVERIPUMPATINAM, a village at the mouth of the river KAUVERI in the TANJORE District. Having heard of the girl's story and mysterious origin, he came and married her. After some years they fell into extreme poverty, and the Chetti, in spite of his wife's remonstrances, took her strange bangle and went off to MADURA to sell it. There he was arrested on the charge of stealing the bracelet, which exactly resembled the one belonging to PANDIAN's wife, that had been lost. He was brought before PANDIAN and put to death. In a few days KANNAHAI went there, heard what had happened, took the form of a THURGAI, *i.e.*, an evil goddess, and slew PANDIAN. The slaughter of PANDIAN is regarded as having only whetted her appetite for bloodshed, and it is considered prudent to propitiate her.

An example of the way in which the deity of an aboriginal family might become the deity of a conquering race, and acquire a widespread popularity, is seen in the history of KONI AMMAN in the COIMBATORE District. The story goes that at a very remote date, when the tract now occupied by the town of COIMBATORE was forest land, inhabited by aboriginal hill-tribes known as MALAISAR (dwellers in the mountains), a certain man, named KOYAN, who was of some repute among the aborigines, dwelt there and worshipped a goddess who was called, after his name, KOYAN-AMMAN. The name was gradually changed, first into KOVAI-AMMAN, and then into KONI-AMMAN. After some years she became the village deity of the MALAISAR, and a temple was built in her honour, with a stone image of the goddess in front of it. In course of time a HINDU king, named MATHE-RAJAH,

happened to go there on a hunting expedition and, finding the spot very fertile, colonized the country with his own subjects. Gradually a flourishing town grew up, and KONI-AMMAN was adopted as one of the deities of the new colony. Centuries afterwards TIPPU SULTAN, the Tiger of Mysore, when he passed by the town during one of his marches, broke down the image and demolished the temple. The glory of persecution greatly increased the fame of the goddess. The head, which had been broken off the image, was brought back to the town, a new temple built, and in a few years the goddess became very popular over the whole district Her title to divine honours rests upon the legend that she killed a certain demon, who was devastating the land, and took the form of a buffalo when he attacked her. She is regarded as a benevolent being who does not inflict diseases, but is capable of doing much good to the people when duly honoured. She is only worshipped at COIMBATORE, the TAMIL name of which is KOYAMPUTHUR.

Some of the legends bear witness to the bitter conflict between the aboriginal inhabitants of the land, generally described as demons or RAKSHASHAS, and the superior races which conquered them, whether TURANIAN or ARYAN.

The legend of SAVADAMMA, the goddess of the weaver caste in the COIMBATORE District, is a case in point. It runs as follows:—Once upon a time, when there was fierce conflict between "the men" and the RAKSHASHAS, "the men," who were getting defeated, applied for help to the god SIVA, who sent his wife PARVATI, as an avatar or incarnation, into the world to help them. The avatar enabled them to defeat the RAKSHASHAS and, as the weaver caste were in the forefront of the battle, she became the goddess of the weavers and was known in consequence as SAVADAMMAN, a corruption of SEDAR AMMAN, SEDAR or CHEDAR being another title for the weavers. It is said that her original home was in the North of India near the HIMALAYAS.

Another deity, whose worship is confined to a particular caste in South India, and about whom a similar legend is told, is KANNIKA PARAMESWARI, the goddess of the KŌMATIS or traders. The story goes that in ancient days there was bitter hatred between the KŌMATIS, who claim to belong to the VAISYA caste, and the MLECHAS or barbarians. When the KŌMATIS were getting worsted in the struggle for supremacy they requested PARVATI, the wife of SIVA, to come and deliver them. It so happened that about that

time PARVATI was incarnate as a girl of the KŌMATI caste, who was exceedingly beautiful. The MLECHAS demanded that she should be given in marriage to one of their own people, and the refusal of the KŌMATIS led to severe fighting, in which the KŌMATIS, owing to the presence of the avatar of SIVA among them, were completely victorious and almost exterminated their enemies. After their victory the KŌMATIS entertained doubts as to the chastity of the girl, and compelled her to purify herself by passing through fire. This she did and disappeared in the fire, resuming her real shape as PARVATI, and taking her place beside SIVA in heaven. Her last words were a command to the KŌMATIS to worship her, if they wished their caste to prosper.

The following account of the village goddesses in the neighbourhood of TANJORE was given to me by one of the local pujāris, through the Rev. Isaac Daniel, Vice-Principal of St. Peter's College, TANJORE. "The presiding goddesses of the large class of tutelary deities are seven sisters; who are regarded as emanating from PARVATI, the wife of SIVA. Their names are—

(1) SENKALATCHI-AMMAN or PIDĀRI, (2) KODI-AMMAN, (3) UKKIRANI-AMMAN, (4) AKARI-AMMAN, (5) VANCHI-AMMAN, (6) SELLI-AMMAN, (7) KUNTHAN-AMMAN.

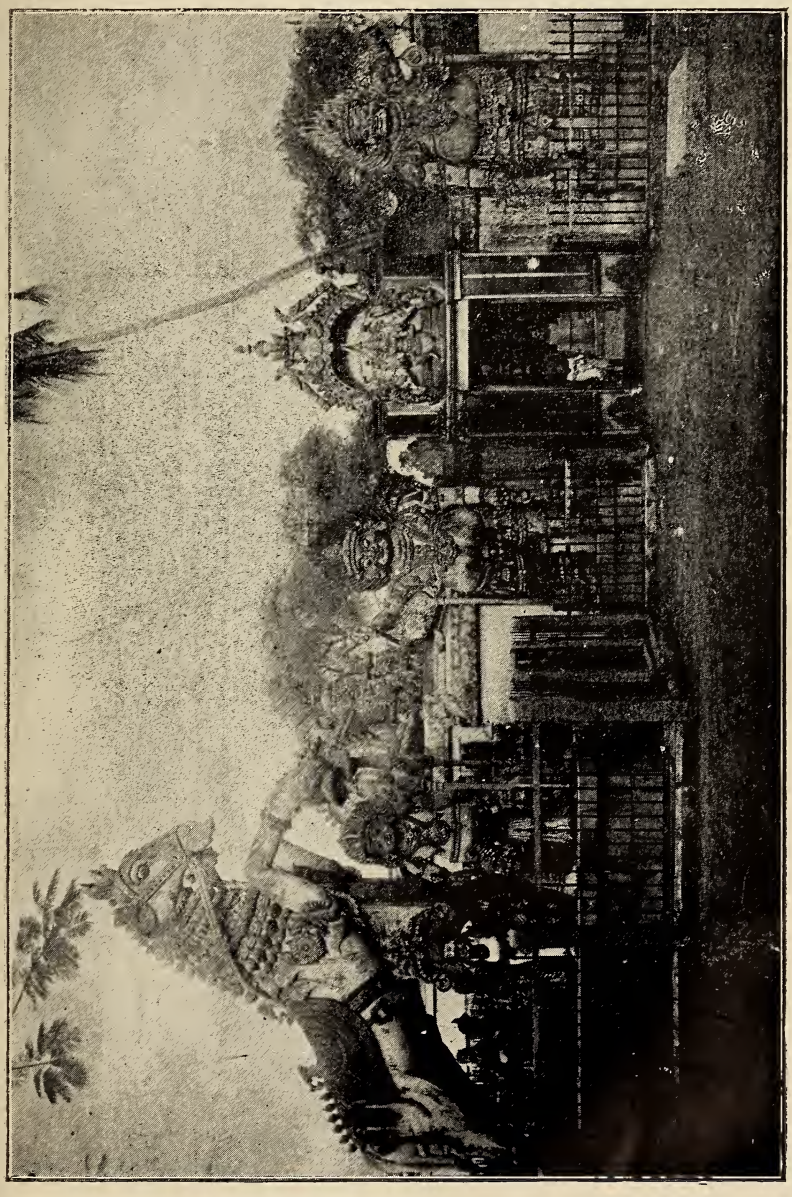
"As each one of these is regarded as the head of the village deities, their shrines are not found together in any temple, but each has a separate temple to herself. Associated with them are various male attendants; on one side various forms of the god KARUPPAN, and on the other MADURAI-VĪRAN, who is also called VĪRABATHRAN and VĪRAN, while in front stands MUNADIAN the guardian of the shrine.

"The god IYENAR has a separate shrine, generally about a hundred yards from that of SENKALATCHIAMMAN or PIDĀRI. He is regarded as the brother of the seven sisters, and as being far superior to the ordinary male attendants, MADURAI VĪRAN, KARUPPAN and MUNADIAN. He is represented as a Rishi with flowing locks of hair, and is supposed to exercise some authority over his sisters.

"In the shrines of the seven sisters, VIGNESWARA or GANESH, the son of SIVA and PARVATI, is always associated with the goddess herself and his image stands beside hers.

"This is another sign of the tendency to connect the worship of the village goddesses with that of SIVA. First, they are regarded as emanations from or incarnations of

Plate XIV.



IYENAR TEMPLE.

PARVATI, the wife of SIVA, and then GANESH, the elephant-headed son of SIVA, is associated with them. The process is the more natural that GANESH is especially the averter of evils, as his name VIGNESWARA signifies, and the bringer of blessings and good fortune, while it is the distinctive function of the seven sisters to ward off any evil or calamity from the village or their worshippers.

"It is noticeable that MARIAMMAN, the goddess of small-pox, is not found in any temples dedicated to one of the seven sisters, as she is considered superior to them in power and much worse in temper. The seven sisters are supposed to be kind and indulgent, while MARIAMMAN is vindictive and inexorable, and difficult to propitiate.

"The boundary goddess is worshipped in these parts under the name of KĀLI, and her special function is to prevent any evil coming from without into the village of which she is the guardian, while the seven sisters are supposed to guard against any evil arising within the village itself."

In the TAMIL districts of TANJORE, TRICHINOPOLY and CUDDALORE the names of village deities most commonly met with are PIDĀRI, which is often used as a generic name of village deities, MARIAMMAN, KĀLI, SELI AMMAN, DRAUPATI and ANGAL AMMAN.

MARIAMMAN is the commonest of them all, and her function is always, to inflict or ward off small-pox.

PIDĀRI is supposed to act as guardian against evil spirits and epidemics, especially cholera.

KĀLI is often regarded as especially the protectress against evil spirits that haunt forests and desolate places, and against wild beasts. In some parts she is the special goddess of the bird-catchers. But in some villages she is also the guardian against cholera. Except, however, in the villages near TANJORE, I have not met with KĀLI in the capacity of a boundary goddess. In other places there are curious ceremonies connected with the boundary-stone, ELLAI-KAL as it is called, and I was told in one village that in the boundary-stone reside evil spirits, which it is the object of the ceremonies to propitiate. In another village I found that there was a festival to a goddess called ELLAI-PIDĀRI.

Next to MARIAMMAN, the deity that is most universally worshipped among the Tamils is IYENAR, and he is the one village deity, largely worshipped in the TAMIL country, who

seems to be an exception to the general rule that the village deities are female. In almost every TAMIL village there is a shrine of IYENAR, who is regarded as the watchman of the village, and is supposed to patrol the village every night, mounted on a ghostly steed, a terrible sight to behold, scaring away the evil spirits. He has always a separate shrine, and is not, like MUNADIAN and MADURAI-VĪRAN, simply an attendant of a local goddess. His shrine may be known by the figures of clay or concrete horses ranged on either side of the image, or piled about in the compound (grounds) of the shrine in admired confusion. The horses are offered by devotees, and represent the steeds on which he rides in his nightly rounds. He is regarded by the villagers as a good and benevolent protector, of far higher character than the disreputable MADURAI-VĪRAN.

Another male deity, of much inferior character to IYENAR, who is sometimes worshipped separately, is KARUPPAN As a rule he is simply one of the subordinate male attendants of the village goddess : but in some places I have met with separate shrines to KARUPPAN, where he presides as the chief deity. At one of these shrines worship was offered exclusively by PARIAHS. At another place the evil spirit residing in the boundary-stone was called ELLAI-KARUPPU.

In another village in the TRICHINOPOLY District I came across a male deity known as RĀJA VAYAN (King Father) who was represented by four or five stakes, about five or six feet high with iron spear heads on the top. The spears were stuck on one side of a stone platform under a tamarind and aresa tree, and reminded me of the wooden stakes representing POTU-RĀZU in the TELUGU country. In one shrine belonging exclusively to the PARIAHS of a village, I found that the chief deities were all male and not female. Whether these independent and semi-independent male deities have in all cases developed out of the subordinate male attendants, or whether they are accretions on the system of village deities from some other phase of Hinduism, it is difficult to say.

At BELLARY, in the CANARESE country, the three village deities chiefly worshipped are DURGAMMA, UR-AMMA, SUNKALAMMA and MAREMMA. UR-AMMA seems to be, like PIDĀRI in Tamil Districts, a generic name for village goddesses (Ur = village). An ASĀDI (hereditary pujāri) of a village called KAPPAGALU in the BELLARY TALUQ, who was a MĀDIGA (the lowest section of the Pariahs), gave me the

IYENAR TEMPLE.

Plate XV.

following account of the origin of the deity UR-AMMA, which he said he had learnt from his "elders." The story is one which, with many variations, I came across in MYSORE, and in many parts of the TELUGU country as well.

In ancient days, the story runs, there lived a KURNAM (village magistrate) in a village to the East. He was blind, and had only one daughter. A Pariah, well versed in the VĒDAS, came to the village in the disguise of a BRAHMAN. The elders of the village were deceived, and induced the blind KURNAM to give his daughter to him in marriage, that he might succeed to the office of KURNAM in due time. The marriage was celebrated by Brahman rites, and the KURNAM's daughter bore sons and daughters to her Pariah husband, without any suspicion arising in her mind as to his origin. After a time a native of the Pariah's own village came to the place where they were living, and recognised the Pariah disguised as a BRAHMAN. Seeing, however, that he was a man of influence, he said nothing to the villagers, but went and told the Pariah's old mother. As he was her only son, the old woman set out in search of him and came to the village where he lived, and sat down by the well used by caste people. The Pariah happened to go there, and recognised his mother: so he took her to a barber, had her head shaved, passed her off as a Brahman widow, and brought her to his house, telling his wife that she was his mother and was dumb. He took the precaution to strictly enjoin her not to speak, lest her speech should betray them. One day the wife ordered a meal with a dish called SAVIGAHI (wheat flour baked with sugar and made into long strings) as a mark of respect to her mother-in-law. During the meal the mother, forgetting the injunction of silence, asked her son what the SAVIGAHI was, saying it looked like the entrails of an animal. The wife overheard the remark, and her suspicions were aroused by the fact that her mother-in-law could speak, when her husband had said she was dumb, and did not know a common Brahman dish like SAVIGAHI; so she watched their conduct, and felt convinced that they belonged to a low caste and were not BRAHMANS at all. Accordingly, she sent her children to school one day, when her husband was away from home, managed to get rid of the mother-in-law for a few hours, and then set fire to the house and burnt herself alive. By virtue of her great merit in thus expiating the sin she had involuntarily committed, she reappeared in the middle of the village in a divine form, declared that the villagers had done her a great wrong by

marrying her to a Pariah, and that she would ruin them all. The villagers implored mercy in abject terror. She was appeased by their entreaties, consented to remain in the village as their village goddess, and commanded the villagers to worship her. When she was about to be burnt in the fire, she vowed that her husband should be brought before her and beheaded, that one of his legs should be cut off and put in his mouth, the fat of his stomach put on his head, and a lighted lamp placed on the top of it. (These are details of the buffalo sacrifice, as will be described later on, and this part of the story was evidently composed to explain the ritual, of which the true meaning had long been forgotten.) The villagers therefore seized the husband, stripped him naked, took him in procession round the village, beheaded him in her presence, and treated his leg and the fat of his stomach as directed. Then her children came on the scene, violently abused the villagers and village officers, and told them that they were the cause of their mother's death. The deity looked at her children with favour, and declared that they should always be her children, and that without them no worship should be offered to her. The Asādis claim to be descendants of these children, and during the festivals exercise the hereditary privilege of abusing the villagers and village officers in their songs. After being beheaded, the husband was born again as a buffalo, and for this reason a buffalo is offered in sacrifice to Ur-Amma.

In the Mysore country I came across quite a different set of names for the village goddesses. At one village near Bangalore the name of the goddess was Mahesvaramma, also called Savaramma (she who rides on horseback). Her sister Dodamma and her brother Munesvara share in the worship paid to her. At another village a goddess, called Pujamma (she who is worshipped), was shown to me. She was said to be the local goddess of the Mādigas, the lowest section of the Pariahs, but at the same time the Sudras make vows to her, to induce her to ward off diseases from their homes, and then fulfil their vows by sacrificing buffaloes or thrusting silver pins through their cheeks. Annamma is the principal goddess at another shrine in Bangalore city, and in the same shrine are six other deities, Chandeshveramma, Mayesveramma, Maramma (the cholera goddess), Udalamma (she of the swollen neck), Kokkalamma (the goddess of coughs), Sukhajajamma (the goddess of measles and small-pox).

At some villages a little distance from BANGALORE the deity was called simply the GRĀMA-DĒVATA, *i.e.*, the village goddess. In MYSORE city the GRĀMA-DĒVATA is known as BISAL-MARIAMMA (BISAL in Canarese = sunlight, and I was told that MARI = SHAKTI or power). The deity seems to have been originally connected with sun worship. I was told that her shrines are never covered over with a roof, and one of the symbols representing the deity is a brass pot full of water with a small mirror leaning against it, called KANNA-KANNADI (KANNA = eye, KANNADI = mirror).

There are seven MARI deities, all sisters, who are worshipped in MYSORE, viz.—

BISAL-MARI—the sun.
GOORAL-MARI—asthma.
KEL-MARI—an earthen pot.
HIRI-DĒVATA, the eldest sister.
IRUNGERE-MARI, CHĀMUNDISWARI, and UTTANAHALLI.

All the seven sisters are regarded vaguely as wives or sisters of SIVA.

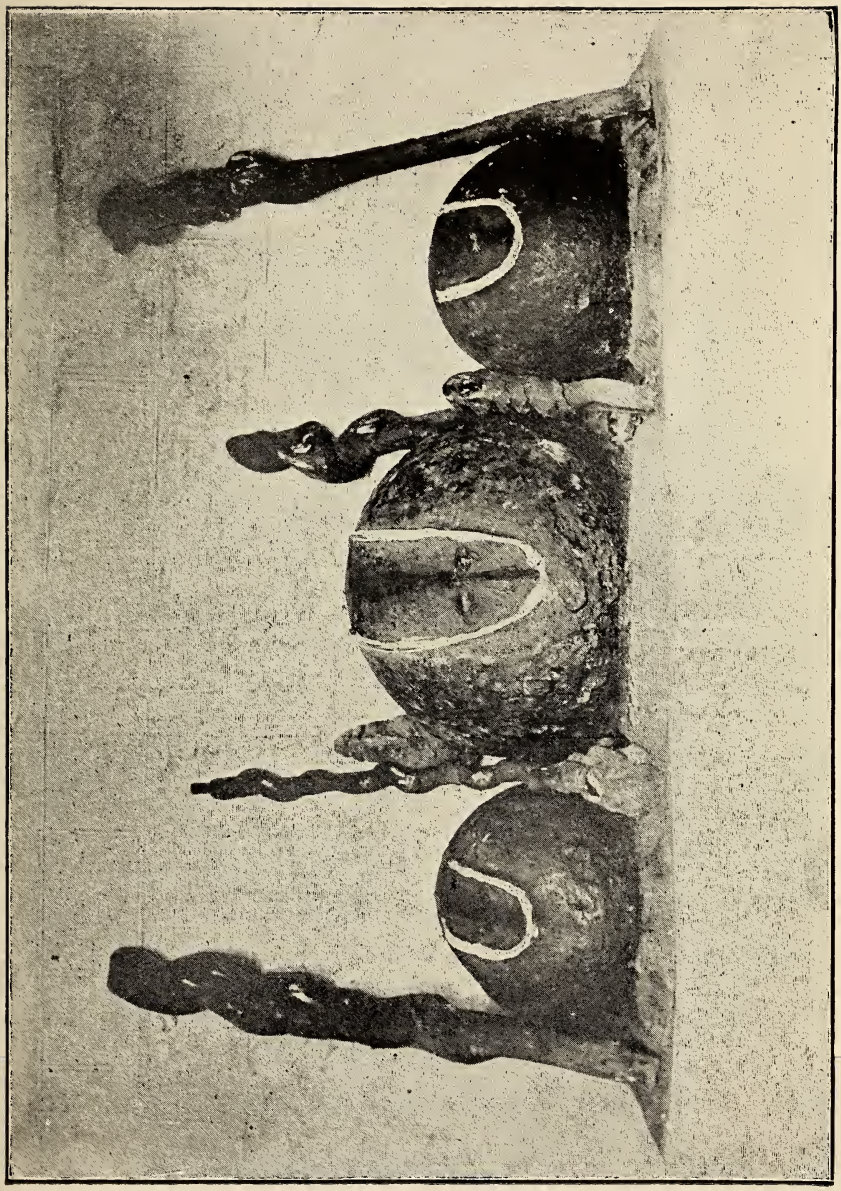
Another goddess worshipped in MYSORE is MĀHA DĒVA-AMMA, the great goddess, and doubtless there are countless other names in the MYSORE STATE, for the many deities who are worshipped as the guardians of the villages and the averters of epidemics and other misfortunes.

It is quite probable that originally in South India the village goddesses had all quite simple names, such as UR-AMMA or GRĀMA-DĒVATA or PEDDAMMA, *i.e.*, village goddess, or great mother, and that the imagination of the villagers gradually invented special titles for their own guardian deities. But at the present time the village deities consist of a most miscellaneous collection of spirits, good, bad and indifferent, who baffle all attempt at classification, enumeration or explanation. A few of them, like MARIAMMAN and IYENAR, have won their way to general respect or fear among the TAMIL people, and, where Brahman influence is strong, there has been an obvious attempt to connect the village goddesses with the popular worship of SIVA or VISHNU; but it is more than doubtful whether, originally, they had anything to do with either SAIVISM or VAISHNAVISM. The stories told about them in the folk lore of the people, which represent them as avatars of SIVA, were probably quite late inventions, to account for names and ceremonies whose meaning had long been lost.

## SYMBOLS AND IMAGES.

The images or symbols, by which the village deities are represented, are almost as diverse as their names. In some of the more primitive villages there is no permanent image or symbol of the deity at all; but a clay figure of the goddess is made by the potter for each festival and then cast away beyond the boundaries of the village, when the festival is ended. In other villages the deity is represented simply by a stone pillar standing in a field, or on a stone platform under a tree, or in a small enclosure surrounded by a stone wall. Often the stones, which represent the different deities, are simply small conical stones not more than five or six inches high, blackened with the anointing oil. It is difficult to see anything at all peculiar in them, which in any way fits them to be symbols of the goddesses or their male attendants. In more civilized parts a slab of stone has the figure of a woman roughly carved upon it, sometimes with four, six, or eight arms, holding various implements in her hands, sometimes with only two arms, and sometimes with none at all. Here is the description of a typical image which I saw in the TRICHINOPOLY District. It was a stone figure of a woman, about two and-a-half feet high with eight arms, and in her hands a knife, a shield, a bell, a devil's head, a drum, a three pronged fork, a goad, and a piece of rope :—truly a collection of articles worthy of a school-boy's pocket! Another image of the goddess made of the five metals (gold, silver, brass, copper and lead), was kept, strangely enough, in the temple of SIVA, about 200 yards off, for use in processions. It is very common in the TAMIL Districts to find a stone image fixed in the shrine, and a small portable metal image, which is used in processions during the festival: very often, too, the goddess is represented in processions by a brass pot filled with water and decorated with margosa leaves. I saw one of these brass pots in a shrine of KALIAMMAN at SHIYALI, in the TANJORE District. It was about a foot high and a foot in diameter at the base, and had four tubes sticking out just below the neck. In other TAMIL villages, where the image is fixed in the shrine and there is no metal image to carry in procession, an earthenware pot is used, filled with water and decorated with margosa leaves. At IRUNGALORE, in the TRICHINOPOLY District, I found a small enclosure, sacred to KARUMBAI-AMMAN, outside the village, without any image or sacred stones in it at all, and I was told that during the festival a small pandal (*i.e.*, booth) of leaves is erected in the enclosure, under which a small earthen pot, curiously decorated, is

Plate XVI.



KENCHARAYA OF KADUR REPRESENTED BY STONE.

placed to represent the goddess. The pot is filled with water, and has a silver two anna piece (2*d.*) put inside it. Some cocoanut and oleander flowers are stuck in the mouth of the pot, surrounded and concealed by a sheaf of mango leaves, tied together by tender shoots of the plantain tree. This bunch of mango leaves is then decorated with flowers, a small pointed stick of bamboo, with a lime stuck on the end, is inserted at the top of the bunch, and by the side of the lime a small silver umbrella with a silver handle. This decorated pot is placed on a small platform of sand, and about eight measures of rice are heaped round the base of it. It is called KARAGAM (*i.e.*, the pot) and is carefully prepared at the chief local shrine of KARUMBAI AMMAN, about a mile outside the village, and during the festival is treated exactly like the goddess. It is taken round in procession on the head of a PUJĀRI to the sound of tom-toms and pipes; offerings of fruit and flowers are made to it; a lamb is sacrificed before it, and it is worshipped with the orthodox prostrations.

At another village I found that KALIAMMAN was represented by seven brass pots, without any water in them, one above the other, with margosa leaves stuck into the mouth of the topmost pot, as well as by an earthenware pot filled with water and also adorned with margosa leaves. It is possible that the seven brass pots represent seven sisters or the seven virgins sometimes found in TAMIL shrines. The people themselves have no idea what they mean, but can only say that it is "*māmul*," *i.e.*, custom. At MYSORE city I found that the goddess was represented by a small metal pot full of water, with a small mirror leaning against it. In the mouth of the pot two, four, or six betel leaves are placed, always an even number, and the pot is decorated with a bunch of cocoanut flowers. The pot (kalasam) is called KANNA-KANNADI (eye-mirror), and is used, I was told, as a symbol of deity in the preliminary ceremonies of all the BRAHMANS. It is evidently, connected with sun-worship, which in MYSORE seems to have strongly influenced the cult of the village deities.

Another curious symbol used in MYSORE is what is called ĀRATI, which consists of a lump of rice-flower about six or eight inches high, with the image of a face roughly represented on one side of it by pieces of silver and blotches of red powder (KUNKUMA) stuck on to represent the eyes, nose, mouth, etc. Sticks of incense were stuck in the lamp all round, and on the top were about four betel leaves stuck upright and forming a sort of cup with a wreath of white

flowers below them. An ĀRATI was brought to me at MYSORE by the PUJĀRIS for my inspection. It was a quaint object, and seemed like the relic of some harvest festival of bygone days. I was told that a goat would have to be sacrificed to purify it from the pollution which the visit entailed.

A common symbol of the village deities is simply a stick or a spear. It is very common in the TAMIL country to see one or more iron spears stuck in the ground under a tree, to represent some village deity. The idea seems to be that the deity is represented by his weapons. In the TELUGU country POTU-RĀZU, the brother or husband of the village goddess, is often represented by a thin wooden stake, like an attenuated post, about four or five feet high and roughly carved at the top. It faintly resembles a spear, and is called "Sulam" which in TELUGU means "a spear." Sometimes this stake stands beside a slab of stone representing POTU-RĀZU. At one village the symbol of POTU-RĀZU is a painted image made of wood, about three feet high, representing a warrior, sitting down with a sword in his hand, and carrying a lime and nine glass bangles belonging to his sister ELLAMA. Besides each foot is the figure of a cock, and in the shrine is kept a large painted mask for the PUJĀRI to wear at festivals, as he dances round the image of POTU-RĀZU But elaborate images of POTU-RĀZU of this kind are not often found.

The shrines and images of KOGILLU, a village in the MYSORE country not far from BANGALORE, are typical of that part of the country. At the extreme entrance to the village, near a tank, stands a small shrine of stone and mud sacred to the goddess PUJAMMA (she who is worshipped). On the stone door posts are carved figures of serpents. Within the shrine there is no image of any kind, but to the left hand side of the door is a platform about three feet high, and on that another smaller platform, covered with garlands of white flowers, with a small earthenware lamp upon it, which is kept burning day and night as a symbol of the goddess. To the right of this shrine stands a smaller one dedicated to a goddess called DALAMMA. No one in the village could tell me who the goddess was or what her name meant. There was no image or lamp, or symbol of any kind in her shrine. An old picture frame, hung up on the wall to the left, without any picture in it, was the only attempt at decoration or symbolism. Just within the doorway was a shallow trough about one and-a-half feet long, one foot broad and two inches deep, where

MUNESWARA WORSHIP.

Plate XVII.

the worshippers break their cocoanuts. In front of the larger shrine stood an enclosure about five or six yards square, enclosed by a stone wall, with four slabs of stone in the centre, on which a platform is erected, covered by a canopy of cloth and leaves, during the annual festival. The lighted lamp is then brought out from the shrine, placed under the canopy and worshipped as the symbol of the goddess. Apparently cattle are tethered in the enclosure at other times, and, when I saw it, there were no obvious marks of sanctity about it. About twenty yards off stands the "Cattle Stone," a slab of rough stone about five feet high and three feet broad, set up on a stone platform about one and-a-half feet high. When the cattle get sore feet, their owners pour curds over the Cattle Stone for their recovery. Near the Cattle Stone, in a field on the outskirts of the houses, stands a square stone pillar, about five feet high and half a foot in thickness, without any carving or ornament on it whatever. It represents MARAMMA, the goddess of small-pox and other epidemics, a most malignant spirit. Apparently she had been brought to this village by some people, who had migrated from another village called HETHANA; whence she is called MARAMMA-HETHANA. Buffaloes and sheep are offered to her whenever epidemics break out.

The GRĀMA-DĒVATA herself—she has no other name—has no permanent image. The goldsmith makes an image of clay in the form of a woman, about one or one and-a-half feet high, every year at the annual festival, which takes place after harvest, and she is then placed in the centre of the village under a canopy of green boughs. One striking feature of this festival is that on the first day of the festival a woman comes from every household to the place of worship with a lighted lamp made of rice flour (the ĀRATI), and then they all offer their lamps by waving them together in a circle from left to right above their heads, and from right to left below. When the festival is over, the washerman of the village, who acts as PUJĀRI, accompanied by all the villagers, takes the image to the tank, walks into the water about knee deep, and then solemnly deposits the image under the water and leaves it there. In some villages in the MYSORE State the ĀRATI (the lighted lamp made of rice flour) is presented by the men, the heads of the households, and not by the women. But in all the annual festivals in these parts the presentation of the ĀRATI, which seems often to be regarded as a symbol of the deity herself, forms an important part of the ceremonial.

## FESTIVALS AND PUJĀRIS.

### Festivals.

There is no act of uniformity and no ecclesiastical calendar regulating the festivals or forms of worship of village deities, and no universal custom as to the appointment of Pujāris (officiating priests). In some villages, where there is a permanent shrine, offerings of rice, fruit and flowers, with incense and camphor, are made every day by the villagers, who have made vows to the goddess, through the Pujāri. Often offerings are made once or twice a week, on fixed days, consisting chiefly of grain, fruit, and flowers, and occasionally of goats, sheep and fowls. In many places there is a fixed annual festival, which sometimes takes place after harvest, when the people are at leisure and well off for food. But there is no regular rule as to the time, and the custom varies widely in different districts. In most places, however, there is no regular annual festival, but a sacrifice is held whenever an epidemic or any other calamity occurs, which may make it expedient to propitiate the goddess. In some villages old men have complained to me that, whereas formerly festivals were held yearly, now, owing to the decay of religion, they are only held once in four or five years. So, again, there is no uniformity as to the duration of a festival. Generally it lasts about a week, but in the Tamil country it is sometimes a very elaborate affair, lasting for a fortnight, three weeks, or even a whole month; so too in Mysore City the Mari festival, which is held in February, lasts for about four weeks. But a long festival is an expensive luxury, which only a large town or a well-to-do village is able to afford. Speaking generally, the object of the festival is simply to propitiate the goddess and to avert epidemics and other calamities from the village, and to ward off the attacks of evil spirits. Every village in South India is believed by the people to be surrounded by evil spirits, who are always on the watch to inflict diseases and misfortunes of all kinds on the unhappy villagers. They lurk everywhere, on the tops of palmyra trees, in caves and rocks, in ravines and chasms. They fly about in the air, like birds of prey, ready to pounce down upon any unprotected victim, and the Indian villagers pass through life in constant dread of these invisible enemies. So they turn for protection to the guardian deities of their village, whose function it is to ward off these evil spirits and protect the village from epidemics

of cholera, small-pox or fever, from cattle disease, failure of crops, childlessness, fires and all the manifold ills that flesh is heir to in an Indian village.

The sole object, then, of the worship of these village deities is to propitiate them and to avert their wrath. There is no idea of praise and thanksgiving, no expression of gratitude or love, no desire for any spiritual or moral blessings. The one object is to get rid of cholera, small-pox, cattle disease or drought, or to avert some of the minor evils of life. The worship, therefore, in most of the villages, only takes place occasionally. Sometimes, as I have stated above, there are daily offerings made to the deity; but as a rule, the worship is confined to one big sacrifice. In some villages, this takes place every year, but for the most part, the sacrifice is only held when an epidemic or cattle disease breaks out. The general attitude of the villager towards his village deity is "let sleeping dogs lie." So long as everything goes on well and there is no disease afflicting man or beast, and no drought nor other great calamity, it seems safest to let her alone. But, when misfortune comes, it is a sign that she is out of temper, and it is time to take steps to appease her wrath.

## Pujāris.

One of the most striking features of the worship of the village deities is the absence of anything like a sacerdotal caste in connection with it. Every other department of village work belongs to a special caste, and in the ordinary worship of Vishnu and Siva the priestly caste of the Brahmans is supreme. But, in the worship of the village deities, the Pujāris are drawn from all the lower castes indiscriminately, though in any one village the Pujāris of a particular goddess nearly always belong to one particular caste.

I have occasionally found a Brahman in charge of a shrine to a Grāma-Dēvata in the Tamil country, and I found a Brahman widow in charge of a shrine at Bangalore. But, then, as I have noted above, the Brahman Pujāri never takes any part in the animal sacrifices, and, even so, is degraded by his connection with the shrine. In the Telugu country the potters and the washermen, who are Sudras of low caste, often officiate as priests, and an important part, especially in the buffalo sacrifices, is taken by the Mālas and Mādigas, the two sections of the outcaste Pariahs.

A MĀDIGA nearly always kills the buffalo, and performs the unpleasant ceremonies connected with the sprinkling of the blood, and there are certain families among the MĀLAS, called ASĀDIS, who are the nearest approach to a priestly caste in connection with the village deities. They have the hereditary right to assist at the sacrifices, to chant the praises of the goddess, while the sacrifices are being offered, and to perform certain ceremonies. But in the more primitive villages, where, it may be presumed, primitive customs prevail, it is remarkable how great a variety of people take an official part in the worship: the potter, the carpenter, the toddy-drawer, the washerman, Mālas and Mādigas and even the Brahman Kurnam or magistrate, have all their parts to play.

In the TAMIL country this is not so marked, and the details of the worship are left far more to the regular PUJĀRI. It is noticeable that the office of PUJĀRI is by no means an honourable one, and this is especially the case among the TAMILS, where Brahman influence is strong, and the shedding of blood is regarded with aversion. And even among the Brahmans themselves, though they owe their influence to the fact that they are the priestly caste, the men who serve the temples are regarded as having a lower position in the caste than those Brahmans engaged in secular pursuits.

Among the CANARESE in the BELLARY District the ASĀDIS take a similar part in the worship to the ASĀDIS in the TELUGU country. In the whole of the BELLARY District there are about sixty families of them living in three separate villages. They form practically a separate caste or section of the Pariahs. They eat food given them by the MĀDIGAS, and take their girls in marriage. The ASĀDI girls, however, never marry, but are made "BASAVIS," *i.e.*, consecrated to the goddess, and then become prostitutes. Certainly the degradation of religion in India is seen only too plainly in the degradation of the priesthood.

## OFFERINGS, SACRIFICES, AND MODES OF PROPITIATION.

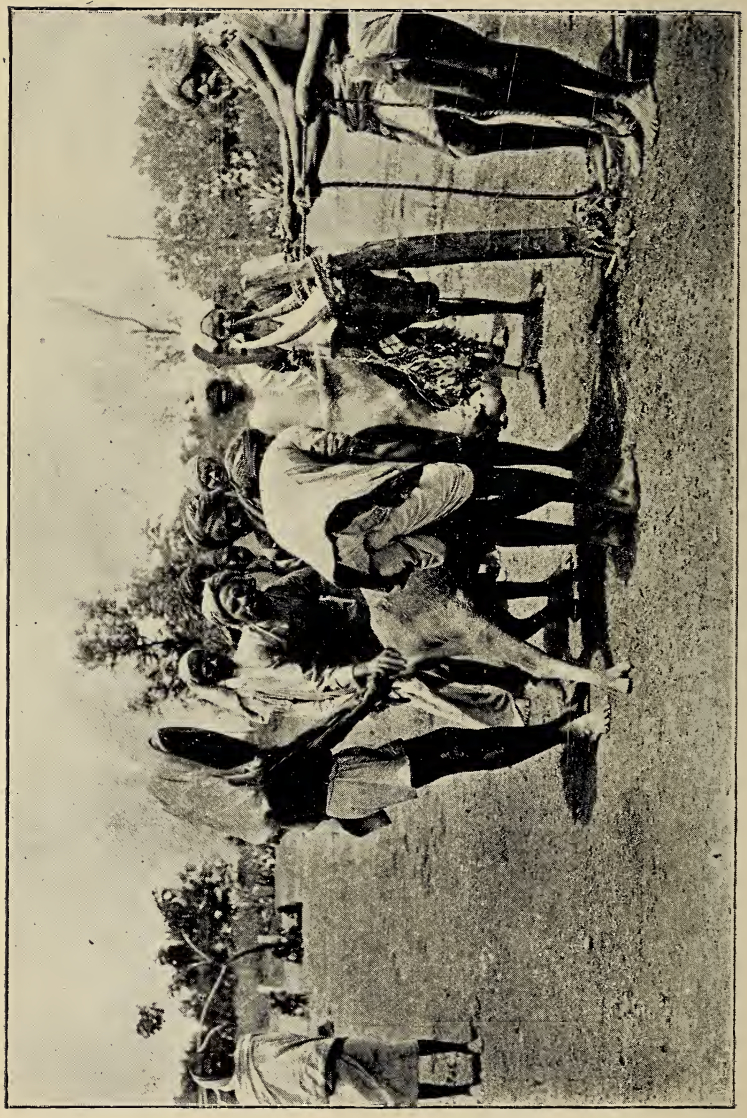
I have dignified the periodical sacrifices to the village goddesses by the name of festivals. But the term is a misnomer. There is really nothing of a festal character about them. They are only gloomy and weird rites for the propitiation of angry deities or the driving away of evil

spirits, and it is very difficult to detect any traces of a spirit of thankfulness or praise. Even the term worship is hardly correct. The object of all the various rites and ceremonies is not to worship the deity in any true sense of the word, but simply to propitiate it and avert its wrath. A brief description of the sacrifices and offerings themselves will make this clear. But I must premise that, as with the names and images and shrines, so with the offerings and sacrifices, there is no law of uniformity, but the variations of local custom and use are innumerable. Still the accounts here given will give a fair idea of the general type of rites and ceremonies prevalent throughout South India, in the propitiation of village deities.

### TELUGU.

Let us suppose that an attack of cholera or small-pox has broken out in a village of South India. We will take a village in the TELUGU country, in one of the more backward districts, where life is lived under more primitive conditions than in places where large towns and railways, and the influence of the BRAHMANS have tended to change old-fashioned ideas and customs. The village deity, in this particular village, is called PEDDAMMA, the great mother. The epidemic is a sign that she is angry and requires to be propitiated. So, a collection is made for the expenses of a festival, or a rich man offers to pay all expenses, and a propitious day is selected, which in this village may be any day except Sunday or Thursday. Then the potter of the village is instructed to make a clay image of the great mother, and the carpenter to make a small wooden cart, and a he-buffalo is chosen as the chief victim for the sacrifice. When the appointed day arrives, the buffalo is sprinkled all over with yellow turmeric, while garlands of margosa leaves are hung round its neck and tied to its horns. At about 2 P.M. it is conducted round the village in procession to the sound of music and the beating of tom-toms. The two sections of the PARIAHS or outcastes, the MĀLAS and MĀDIGAS, take the leading part in this sacrifice, and conduct the buffalo from house to house. One MĀDIGA goes on ahead, with a tom-tom, to announce that "the he-buffalo devoted to the goddess is coming." The people then come out from their houses, bow down to worship the buffalo, and pour water over his feet, and also give some food to the MĀLAS and MĀDIGAS, who form the procession. By

about 8 P.M. this ceremony is finished, and the buffalo is brought to an open spot in the village, and tied up near a small canopy of cloths supported on bamboo poles, which has been set up for the reception of the goddess. All the villagers then assemble at the same place, and at about 10 P.M. they go in procession, with music and tom-toms and torches, to the house of the potter, where the clay image is ready prepared. On arriving at his house, they pour about two and-a-half measures of rice on the ground and put the image on the top of it, adorned with a new cloth and jewels. All who are present then worship the image, and a ram is killed, by cutting off its head with a large chopper, and the blood sprinkled on the top of the image, as a kind of consecration. The potter then takes up the idol and carries it out of the house for a little distance, and gives it to a washerman, who carries it to the place where the canopy has been set up to receive it. During the procession the people flourish sticks and swords and spears to keep off the evil spirits, and, for the same purpose, cut limes in half and throw them up in the air. The idea is that the greedy demons will clutch at the golden limes and carry them off, and so be diverted from any attack on the man who carries the image. When the idol has been duly deposited under the canopy, another procession is made to the house of the toddy-drawer. He is the man who climbs the palm trees, and draws off the juice which is made into toddy. At his house some rice is cooked, and a pot of toddy and bottle of arrack are produced and duly smeared with yellow turmeric and a red paste, constantly used in religious worship among the Hindus and called KUNKUMA. The cooked rice is put in front of the pot of toddy and bottle of arrack, a ram is killed in sacrifice, and then the toddy-drawer worships the pot and the bottle. The village officials pay him his fee, $\frac{3}{8}$ of a measure of rice, $\frac{3}{8}$ of a measure of cholam, and four annas, and then he carries the pot and bottle in procession, and places them under the canopy near the image of PEDDAMMA. Then comes yet another procession The people go off to the house of the chief official, the REDDI, and bring from it some cooked rice in a large earthenware pot, some sweet cakes, and a lamb. A large quantity of margosa leaves are spread on the ground in front of the image, the rice from the REDDI's house is placed upon them in a heap, and a large heap of rice, from one hundred to three hundred measures, according to the amount of the subscriptions, is poured in a heap a little further away. All these elaborate proceedings



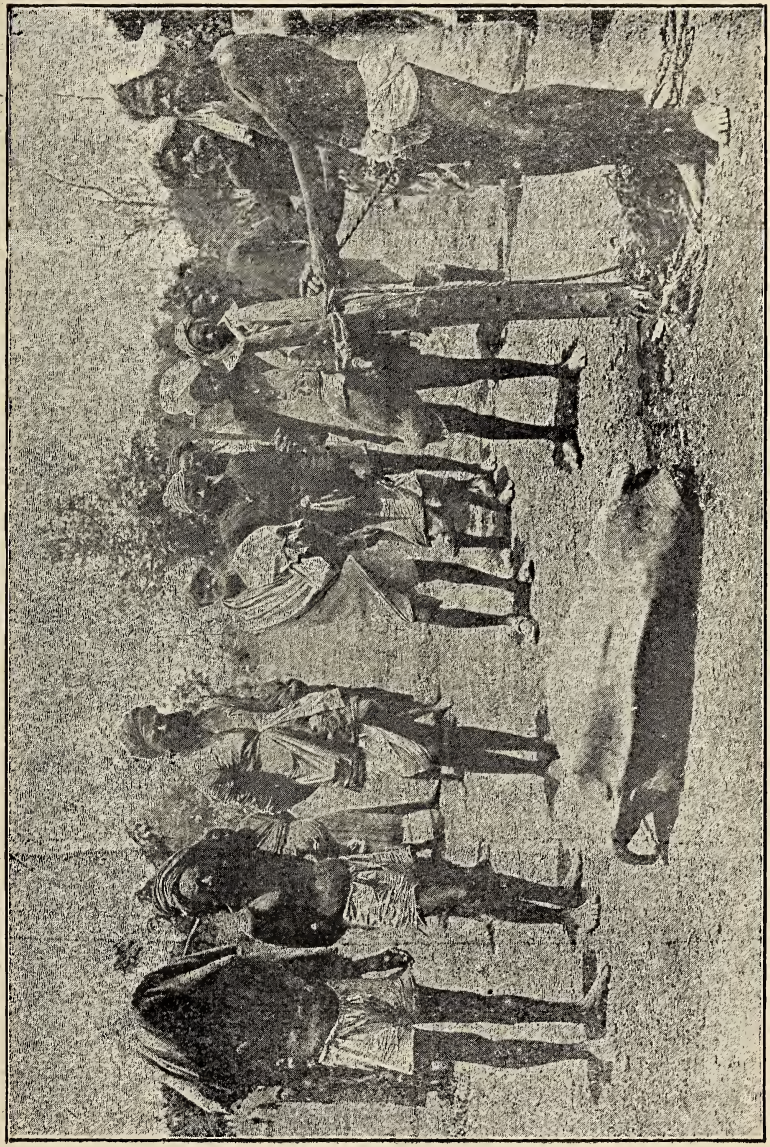
BUFFALO SACRIFICE.

form only the preparations for the great sacrifice, which is now about to begin. The lamb is first worshipped, and then sacrificed by having its throat cut and its head cut off. A ram is next brought and stood over the first large heap of rice, and is there cut in two, through the back, with a heavy chopper, by one of the village washermen. The blood pours out over the rice and soaks it through. One half of the ram is then taken up and carried to a spot a few yards off, where a body of Asādis are standing ready to begin their part in the ceremonies. The other half of the ram is left lying on the rice. The Asādis then begin to sing a long chant in honour of the deity. Meanwhile, the chief sacrifice is made. The he-buffalo is brought forward, and the Mādigas kill it by cutting its throat (in some villages its head is cut off). Some water is first poured over the blood, and then the pool of blood and water is covered up carefully with earth, lest any outsider from another village should come and steal it. The idea is that if any man from another village should take away and carry home even a small part of the blood, that village would get the benefit of the sacrifice. The head of the buffalo is then cut off and placed before the image, with a layer of fat from its entrails smeared over the forehead and face, so as to cover entirely the eyes and nose. The right foreleg is cut off and placed crosswise in the mouth, some boiled rice is placed upon the fat on the forehead, and on it an earthenware lamp, which is kept alight during the whole of the festival. Why the right foreleg should be cut off and placed in the mouth, and what the meaning of it is, I have never been able to discover, nor can I conjecture. When I have asked the villagers, they only reply "It is the custom." But, I have found the custom prevailing in all parts of South India, among Tamils, Telugus and Canarese alike, and it seems to be a very ancient part of the ritual of sacrifice prevailing in South India.

This completes the presentation of the sacrifice to the goddess, who is supposed to delight in the food offered and, especially, in the blood. A great deal of the food offered is, as a matter of fact, taken away by the people and eaten in their homes, but the idea is that the goddess takes the essence, and leaves the worshippers the material substance. This takes till about 3 A.M. next morning, and then begins another important part of the ceremonies. Some of the rice from the heap, over which the ram was sacrificed and its blood poured out, is taken and put in a flat basket, and

some of the entrails of the buffalo are mixed with it. The intestines of the lamb, which was first killed, are put over the neck of a MĀLA, and its liver is placed in his mouth, while another MĀLA takes the basket of rice soaked in blood and mixed with the entrails of the buffalo. A procession is then formed with these two weird figures in the middle. The man with the liver in his mouth is worked up into a state of frantic excitement, and is supposed to be inspired by the goddess. He has to be held by men on either side of him, or kept fast with ropes, to prevent his rushing away; and all round him are the ryots and MĀLAS, flourishing clubs and swords, and throwing limes into the air, to drive away the evil spirits. As the procession moves through the village, the people shout out "Bali, Bali!", and the man who carries the basket sprinkles the rice soaked in blood over the houses to protect them from evil spirits As he walks along he shouts out, at intervals, that he sees the evil spirits, and falls down in a faint. Then lambs have to be sacrificed on the spot and limes thrown into the air and cocoanuts broken, to drive away the demons and bring the man to his senses. And so the procession moves through the village, amid frantic excitement, till, as the day dawns, they return to the canopy, where the great mother is peacefully reposing. At about 10 A.M. a fresh round of ceremonies begins. Some meat is cut from the carcase of the buffalo and cooked with some cholam, and then given to five little MĀLA boys, "SIDDHALU" or "the innocents", as they are called. They are all covered over with a large cloth, and eat the food entirely concealed from view, probably to prevent the evil spirits from seeing them, or the evil eye from striking them. And then some more food is served to the ASĀDIS, who have been, for many hours, during the ceremonies of the night, chanting the praises of the goddess. After this the villagers bring their offerings. The Brahmans, who may not kill animals, bring rice and cocoanuts, and other castes bring lambs, goats, sheep, fowls and buffaloes, which are all killed by the washermen, by cutting their throats, except the buffaloes, which are always killed by the MĀDIGAS, the lowest class of the Pariahs. The heads are all cut off and presented to the goddess. This lasts till about 3 P.M. when the people go off to the house of the village carpenter, who has got ready a small wooden cart. On their arrival some cooked rice is offered to the cart, and a lamb sacrificed before it, and a new cloth and eight annas are given to the carpenter

Plate XIX.



BUFFALO SACRIFICE.

as his fee. The cart is then dragged by the washermen, to the sound of horns and tom-toms, to the place of sacrifice. The heads and carcases of the animals already sacrificed are first removed by the MĀLAS and MĀDIGAS, except the head of the buffalo first offered, which remains in its place till all the ceremonies are finished. The shrine is then removed, and at about 7 P.M. another series of ceremonies begin. First a lamb is sacrificed before the goddess, and its blood mixed with same cooked rice, and at the same time a pig is buried up to the neck in a pit at the entrance of the village, with its head projecting above the earth. The villagers go in procession to the spot, while one of the MĀDIGAS carries the rice, soaked in the blood of the lamb, in a basket. All the cattle of the village are then brought to the place and driven over the head of the unhappy pig, who is, of course, trampled to death; and, as they pass over the pig, the blood and rice are sprinkled upon them to preserve them from disease. Then, after this follows the final ceremony.

The image of the goddess is taken from the canopy by the washerman, and a MĀDIGA takes the head of the buffalo with its foreleg in the mouth, the forehead and nostrils all smeared over with fat, and the earthen lamp still lighted on the top; then they all go in procession to the boundary of the village, first the man carrying the buffalo's head, next the washerman with the image, and last the small wooden cart. When the procession arrives at the extreme limit of the village lands, they go on, for about a furlong, into the lands of the neighbouring village: there the ASĀDIS first chant the praises of the goddess, then some turmeric is distributed to all the people, and finally the image is divested of all its ornaments, and solemnly placed upon the ground and left there. The light on the head of the buffalo is extinguished, and the head itself carried off by the MĀDIGA, who takes it for a feast to his own house. The object of transporting the goddess to the lands of the next village is to transfer to that village the wrath of the deity, a precaution which does not show much faith in the temper of the goddess or much charity towards their neighbours!

A somewhat different form of ceremonial prevails in some of the villages of the TELUGU country nearer the coast. The village of GUDIVADA, about twenty miles from the important town of MASULIPATAM, may be taken as a good specimen of a well-to-do village in a prosperous district, and the

ceremonies prevailing there are a fair sample of the cult of the village deities in these parts.

The name of the village deity at Gudivada is Pallalamma. Her image is the figure of a woman, with four arms and a leopard's head under her right foot, carved in *bas relief* on a flat stone about three feet high, standing in an open compound surrounded by a low stone wall. The Pujāri, who is a Sudra, gave me a full account of the rites and ceremonies. Weekly offerings are made every Sunday, when the Pujāri washes the image with water and soap-nut seeds early in the morning, and smears it with turmeric and kunkuma (a red paste made of turmeric mixed with lime), offers incense, breaks a cocoanut, cooks and presents to the image about a seer of rice, which he afterwards eats himself. The rice is provided daily by the villagers. Occasionally fowls and sheep are offered on the Sunday by villagers, who have made vows in time of sickness or other misfortunes. When a sheep is sacrificed, it is first purified by washing. The animal is simply killed in front of the image by a Mādiga, who cuts off its head with a large chopper. The blood is allowed to flow on the ground, and nothing special is done with it. The head becomes the perquisite of the Pujāri, and the offerer takes away the carcase for a feast in his house. In many villages, both in the Telugu and Tamil Districts, water is poured over the sheep's back to see whether it shivers. If it shivers, it is a sign that the goddess has accepted it. Where the people are economical, they keep on pouring on water till it does shiver, to avoid the expense of providing a second victim, but, where they are more scrupulous, if it does not shiver, it is taken as a sign that the goddess will not accept it and it is taken away.

A public festival is held whenever an epidemic breaks out. The headman of the village then gets a new earthenware pot, besmears it with turmeric and kunkuma, and puts inside some clay bracelets, necklaces, and earrings, three pieces of charcoal, three pieces of turmeric, three pieces of incense, a piece of dried cocoanut, a woman's cloth, and two anna's worth of coppers—a strange collection of miscellaneous charms and offerings. The pot is then hung up in a tree near the image, as a pledge that, if the epidemic disappears, the people will celebrate a festival. When it does disappear, a thatched shed of palmyra leaves is built near the image, and a special image of clay, adorned with turmeric and kunkuma, is put inside with an earthen pot beneath it, filled

Plate XX.

BUFFALO SACRIFICE.

with buttermilk and boiled rice. This pot is also smeared with turmeric and kunkuma, adorned with margosa leaves, covered with an earthenware saucer, and carried in procession through the village during the day, to the exhilarating sound of pipes, horns, and tom-toms, by the village potter, who takes the rice and buttermilk for his perquisite, and renews it every morning of the festival at the public expense. The duration of the festival depends on the amount of the subscriptions, but it always lasts for an odd number of days, excluding all numbers with a seven in them, *e.g.*, 7, 17, 27, etc. During the night the barbers of the village chant the praises of the goddess, and the MĀDIGAS beat tom-toms near the image. On the night before the day appointed for the offering of animal sacrifices by the villagers, a he-buffalo, called Dēvara Potu (*i.e.*, he who is devoted to the deity), is sacrificed on behalf of the whole village. First, the buffalo is washed with water, smeared with yellow turmeric and red kunkuma, and then garlanded with flowers and the leaves of the sacred margosa tree. It is brought before the image and a MĀDIGA cuts off its head, if possible at one blow, over a heap of boiled rice, which becomes soaked with the blood. The right foreleg is then cut off and placed crosswise in its mouth, according to the widespread custom prevailing in South India, the fat of the entrails is smeared over the eyes and forehead, and the head is placed in front of the image. A lighted lamp is placed, not as in the other villages on the head itself, but on the heap of rice soaked with blood. This rice is then put into a basket and carried by a MĀDIGA, the village Vetti or sweeper, round the site of the village, sprinkling it on the ground as he goes. The whole village goes with him, but there is no music nor tom-toms. The people shout out as they go "Bali, Bali!" *i.e.*, "Offering! Offering!" and clap their hands and wave their sticks above their heads to keep off the evil spirits. The rice offered to the goddess, but not soaked with blood, is then distributed to the people. What spirits the rice soaked in blood is supposed to feed is not clear, but the object of sprinkling the blood is evidently to ward off evil spirits and prevent them from coming near the village, and apparently the present idea is that they will be satiated with rice and blood, and not want to do any mischief. The original idea was possibly quite different; but this seems to be the intention of the ceremony in modern times.

On the next day, early in the morning, the clay image and the pot are washed and smeared afresh with turmeric

and kunkuma, incense and boiled rice are then offered as on other days, and the pot is taken in procession round the village. When this has been done, about mid-day, each householder brings his offering of boiled rice, cakes, fruits, and flowers, and, in addition, the village as a whole contributes about two hundred or more seers of rice, which is boiled near the pandal. All these offerings are placed in a heap before the image. Then first a sheep or buffalo is offered on behalf of the whole village. Having been duly washed, and smeared with turmeric and kunkuma, and decorated with margosa leaves, its head is cut off by a MĀDIGA. The blood is allowed to flow on the ground, and some loose earth is thrown upon it to cover it up. The head is offered to the image by the headman of the village. After this various householders bring animals for sacrifice, even BRAHMANS and BUNNIAHS. All are killed by a MĀDIGA, and then the heads are all presented and placed in a heap before the goddess. Sometimes an extraordinary number of animals is sacrificed on occasions of this kind, as many as ten thousand sheep on a single day. In a village like GUDIVADA the number of victims is, of course, far less. The question of precedence in the offering of victims constantly gives rise to quarrels among the leading villagers. When I was last at GUDIVADA, there was a case pending before the Tahsildar, between a zamindar (landowner) and a village Munsiff about this knotty point. The heads are taken away by the PUJĀRIS, potters, washermen, barbers, MĀLAS and MĀDIGAS and others, who take any official part in the sacrifice. The carcases of the private sacrifices are taken away by the offerers, and that of the public victim belongs to the headman of the village. The rice, fruit, etc., are distributed among the various officials. This function lasts from about 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. In the evening a cart is brought to the image with eight pointed stakes standing upright at the four corners and one in the centre: on each stake is impaled alive a young pig, or a lamb, or a fowl. A MĀLA, called a PAMBALA, then sits in the cart dressed in female attire, holding in his hand the clay image of the goddess which was made for the festival. The cart is dragged with ropes to the extreme boundary of the village lands, and both cart and ropes are left beyond the boundary. The PAMBALAS take away the animals, which all die during the procession, as their share of the offerings.

This cruel ceremony of impaling live animals is quite common in the eastern part of the TELUGU country, and I

have come across it in many villages that I have visited. The Rev. F. N. Alexander, the C.M.S. Missionary who has lived just fifty years at Ellore, told me that he witnessed it in the town of Ellore the first year that he went there, and wrote a letter to the *Madras Mail* describing it. As a result of his letter the practice was forbidden by the Government, so now at Ellore the animals are tied on to the stakes without being impaled; but in many villages near Ellore the custom still survives of impaling the unfortunate animals alive. Sometimes there are only four stakes on the cart, sometimes five and sometimes more. It is not often that there are as many as nine.

Sometimes, when there is a cattle disease, much the same ceremonies are performed, only on a smaller scale, or a pig is buried up to its neck at the boundary of the village, a heap of boiled rice is deposited near the spot, and then all the cattle of the village are driven over the head of the unhappy pig. It is not the custom at Gudivada to sprinkle anything on the cattle as they pass over the poor animal as is done elsewhere.

There is a remarkable parallel to this form of sacrifice in a description quoted by Mr. E. Thurston, in his Ethnographical Notes in Southern India, p. 507, of an ancient custom among the Lambādis, a wandering tribe of South India.

"In former times, the Lambādis, before setting out on a journey, used to procure a little child, and bury it in the ground up to its shoulders, and then drive their loaded bullocks over the unfortunate victim. In proportion to the bullocks thoroughly trampling the child to death, so their belief in a successful journey increased."

It is possible that the custom of driving the cattle over the head of a buried pig may be connected with the worship of an agricultural goddess, since in ancient Greece the pig was sacred to agricultural deities, *e.g.*, Aphrodite, Adonis and Demeter; but it may also be a survival of some former custom of infanticide or human sacrifice, such as prevailed among the Lambādis.

I have been told that among the Todas of the Nilgiri hills it was formerly the custom to place female children, whom it was desired to rear, on the ground at the entrance of the mand, and drive buffaloes over them. If they survived this ordeal, they were allowed to live.

It is only fair to add that the Todas themselves deny that this custom ever existed. To quote Mr. Thurston again (*op. cit.* p. 507) :—

"The practice of infanticide, as it prevailed among the Todas of the Nilgiris, is best summed up in the words of an aged Toda, during an interview with Colonel Marshall (A Phrenologist amongst the Todas, 1873). 'I was a little boy when Mr. Sullivan (the first English pioneer of the Nilgiris) visited these mountains. In those days it was the custom to kill children, but the practice has long died out, and now one never hears of it. I don't know whether it was wrong or not to kill them, but we were very poor, and could not support our children. Now every one has a mantle (putkūli), but formerly there was only one for the whole family. We did not kill them to please any god, but because it was our custom. The mother never nursed the child, and the parents did not kill it. Do you think we could kill it ourselves? Those tell lies who say we laid it before the open buffalo-pen, so that it might be run over and killed by the animals. We never did such things, and it is all nonsense that we drowned it in buffalo's milk. Boys were never killed—only girls; not those who were sickly and deformed—that would be a sin; but, when we had one girl, or in some families two girls, those that followed were killed. An old woman (kelachi) used to take the child immediately it was born, and close its nostrils, ears and mouth with a cloth thus (here pantomimic action). It would shortly droop its head, and go to sleep. We then buried it in the ground. The kelachi got a present of four annas (4*d.*) for the deed.' The old man's remark about the cattle pen refers to the Malagasy custom of placing a new-born child at the entrance of a cattle pen, and then driving the cattle over it, to see whether they would trample on it or not."

At Masulipatam, where very similar ceremonies are performed as at Gudivada during an epidemic, a washerman carries the earthenware pot, half full of buttermilk and adorned with margosa leaves, round the village to the sound of tom-toms. As it goes round, the washerman stops at each house, and the wife comes out and pours water beside the pot on the ground and does reverence to the pot, imploring the goddess not to left any evil spirit come to the house; and then she puts more rice and buttermilk into it. When it is full, it is taken back to the shrine, and another brought in its place. As this procession continues for fifteen days, the accumulation of rice and buttermilk must be considerable. It is ultimately consumed by the washermen, potters, Mālas and Mādigas, who take part in the festival. The real sacrifice begins on the sixteenth day and lasts for a month. Cotton-thread and all the rice and buttermilk collected from

the villagers are offered to the image. The images themselves are smeared with turmeric, and dots of kunkuma are put on them, and finally on the last day a male buffalo, called Dēvara-Potu (he who is devoted to the goddess), is brought before the image, and its head cut off by the head Mādiga of the town. The blood is caught in a vessel and sprinkled over some boiled rice, and then the head, with the right foreleg in the mouth, is placed before the shrine on a flat wicker basket, with the rice and blood on another basket just below it. A lighted lamp is placed on the head, and then another Mādiga carries it on his own head round the village, with a new cloth dipped in the blood of the victim tied round his neck. This is regarded here and elsewhere as a very inauspicious and dangerous office, and the headman of the village has to offer considerable inducements to persuade a Mādiga to undertake it. Ropes are tied round his body and arms and held fast by men walking behind him, as he goes round, to prevent his being carried off by evil spirits, and limes are cut in half and thrown into the air, so that the demons may catch at them instead of at the man. It is believed that gigantic demons sit on the tops of tall trees ready to swoop down and carry him away, in order to get the rice and the buffalo's head. The idea of carrying the head and rice round a village, so the people said, is to draw a kind of cordon on every side of it, and prevent the entrance of the evil spirits. Should any one in the town refuse to subscribe for the festival, his house is omitted from the procession, and left to the tender mercies of the devils. This procession is called Bali-Haranam, and in this district inams (lands rent free) are held from Government by certain families of Mādigas for performing it. Besides the buffalo, large numbers of sheep and goats and fowls are sacrificed, each householder giving at least one animal. The head Mādiga who kills the animals, takes the carcase and distributes the flesh among the members of his family. Often cases come into the Courts to decide who has the right to kill them. As the sacrifice cannot wait for the tedious processes of the law, the elders of the village settle the question at once, pending an appeal to the Courts. But in the town of Masulipatam, a Mādiga is specially licensed by the Municipality for the purpose and all disputes are avoided.

At Cocanada there is only one Grāma-Dēvata, Nukalamma (from Nuku, a Telugu word, meaning "broken rice"); but she is very ill-tempered, they told me, and gives much trouble. Curiously enough the present Pujāri

is a woman of the fisherman caste. The office was hereditary in her family, and she is the only surviving member of it. A male relative acts as Deputy PUJĀRI. Offerings are made to NUKALAMMA every day, doubtless on account of her temper. One custom I found observed here, which is not uncommon in these parts. When the victim's head has been cut off, it is put before the shrine and water poured on it. The offerer then waits to see whether the mouth opens. If it does, it is a sign that the sacrifice is accepted. Another ceremony observed here is significant and, doubtless, a relic of the primitive idea of sacrifice. As soon as the victim is killed, the offerer dips his finger in the blood, and puts it on his own forehead.

The annual festival of this goddess lasts for a whole month, ending on the New-Years-Day of the TELUGU calendar. During this festival the procession of pots is observed with special ceremony. Six brass pots, each about two feet high, with the figure of a cobra springing from below the neck and rising over the mouth of the pot, are draped with women's cloths and carried round the town on men's heads. Nothing is put inside them, but, as they go round, the women of each house come out, pour water on the feet of the bearers, and make offerings of rice and fruit. These are solemnly presented to the pots by the bearers, and some powder is applied to the two small feet that project at the base of each pot, and form a sort of frame fitting on the bearer's head. The bearer then takes a little of the turmeric powder, that is already on the foot of the pot, and puts it into the dish in which the offering was brought, with a few margosa leaves from a bundle that he carries with him. The dish is returned to the woman who offered the gifts, which become the property of the PUJĀRI. The women and children of the family mark their foreheads with the turmeric, and put the margosa leaves in their hair. This is called AMMAVARI-PRASADAM. As they go round, the PUJĀRIS dance to the sound of tom-toms. On the last day of the festival, when the buffalo is sacrificed, a curious ceremony takes place which is said to be very common in the villages of this district. After the head is cut off by the Vetti, who is a MĀDIGA, the blood is collected in a basin and nine kinds of grain and gram are put into it. The basin is then put before the idol inside the shrine, and the doors of the shrine are kept shut for three days. On the fourth day the doors are opened, the coagulated mass of blood, grain and gram is carefully washed, and the grain and gram

are separated on the ground behind the shrine, in order to see which of the various kinds of grain have sprouted. All the ryots eagerly assemble to watch the result, and whichever is found to have sprouted, is regarded as marked out by the goddess as the right kind of grain to sow that year. This method of determining which crop to sow is common in both the Godāvari and Masulipatam districts. In these sacrifices to Nukalamma, too, the application of the blood is specially noticeable. Immediately the victim is killed, a small quantity of the blood is smeared on the sides of the doorposts of the shrine, and the Deputy Pujāri dips his finger in the blood and applies it to his forehead, and then all the other people present do the same, and afterwards some boiled rice is mixed with the blood and some tumeric powder, and a little of it is sprinkled on the head of the Mādiga who holds the basin to catch the blood.

When an epidemic of cholera breaks out, another goddess called Maridi-Amman is installed in the place of Nukalamma. A log of margosa wood, about three feet high and six inches in diameter, is cut and roughly carved at the top into the shape of a head, and then fixed in the ground with a pandal of leaves and cloths over it. Then the procession of the earthen pot half filled with buttermilk and rice is conducted, very much in the same way as at Masulipatam, every day till the epidemic subsides. After that some ten or twelve small carts are made, about six feet square, with three pointed stakes standing up on each side, on which live animals are impaled, as in other parts of the Telugu country. The carts are partly filled with boiled rice and curry stuff prepared at the shrine, the blood of the victims sacrificed being poured over the rice. I was told that live animals were only impaled if a cart would not move properly, as they dragged it to the boundary, which is regarded as a sign that the goddess is angry and needs to be appeased.

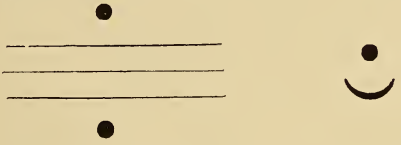
The number of victims slaughtered at some of these festivals is enormous. At Ellore, which is a town of considerable size and importance, I was told that at the annual festival of Mahālakshmi about ten thousand animals are killed in one day, rich people sending as many as twenty or thirty. The blood then flows down into the fields behind the place of sacrifice in a regular flood, and carts full of sand are brought to cover up what remains on the spot. The heads are piled up in a heap about fifteen feet high in front of the shrine, and a large earthen basin about $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet in diameter is then filled with gingelly oil and put on the top of the heap,

a thick cotton wick being placed in the basin and lighted. The animals are all worshipped with the usual "NAMASKARAM" (folded hands raised to the forehead) before they are killed. This slaughter of victims goes on all day, and at midnight about twenty or twenty-five buffaloes are sacrificed, their heads being cut off by a MĀDIGA Pujāri and, together with the carcases, thrown upon the large heaps of rice, which have been presented to the goddess, till the rice is soaked with blood.

The subsequent ceremonies illustrate again the varieties of local custom. The rice is collected in about ten or fifteen large baskets, and, instead of being carried by a MĀDIGA, is carried on a large cart drawn by buffaloes or bullocks, with the MĀDIGA PUJĀRI seated on it. MĀDIGAS sprinkle the rice along the streets and on the walls of the houses, as the cart goes along, shouting "Bali, Bali!" (offering). A large body of men of different castes, Pariahs, Sudras and Kommas, go with the procession: but only the MĀDIGAS and MĀLAS (the two sections of the Pariahs) shout "Bali!", the rest following in silence. They have only two or three torches to show them the way, and no tom-toms nor music. Apparently the idea is that, if they make a noise or display a blaze of lights, they will attract the evil spirits, who will swoop down on them and do them some injury; though in other villages it is supposed that a great deal of noise and flourishing of sticks will keep the evil spirits at bay. Before this procession starts the heads of the buffaloes are put in front of the shrine, with the right forelegs in their mouths and the fat from the entrails smeared about half inch thick over the whole face, and a large earthen lamp on the top of each head. The PAMBALAS (priestly families of the MĀLAS) play tom-toms and chant a long story about GANGAMMA till daybreak, and about 8 A.M. they put the buffalo heads into separate baskets with the lighted lamps upon them, and these are carried in procession through the town to the sound of tom-toms. All castes follow shouting and singing. In former times, I was told, there was a good deal of fighting and disturbance during this procession, but now the police maintain order. When the procession arrives at the Municipal limits, the heads are thrown over the boundary, and left there. The people then all bathe in the canal, and return home. On the last day of the festival, which, I may remark, lasts for about three months, a small cart is made of margosa wood and a stake fixed at each of the four corners, and a pig and a fowl are tied to each stake, while a fruit, called

Dubakaya, is impaled on it instead of the animal. A yellow cloth, sprinkled with the blood of the buffaloes, is tied round the sides of the cart, and some margosa leaves are tied round the cloth. A Pambala sits on the cart, to which are fastened two large ropes, each about 200 yards long. Then men of all castes, without distinction, lay hold of the ropes and drag the cart round the town to the sound of tom-toms and music. Finally it is brought outside the Municipal limits and left there, the Pariahs taking away the animals and fruits.

Sometimes, I was told, animals are sacrificed to Gangamma by the people in Ellore in the courtyards of their own houses. They then clean the wall of the house outside with cow-dung, and make three horizontal lines with kunkuma (a red paste of turmeric and lime), with a dot above and below, and a semi-circle on the right side with a dot in the middle, thus :—



The symbol on the right represents the sun and moon; that on the left is the Saivite Sectarian mark. They then sacrifice to this symbol, sheep, goats or fowls. It is curious that, in these private sacrifices at home, they pour water on the sheep and goats to see whether they shiver, as a sign of acceptance, though this is not done in the public sacrifices at Ellore. At a village called Dharmaja-Gudem, about sixteen miles from Ellore, while the main features of the festivals are the same as those found elsewhere, there are two or three peculiarities, which deserve notice. The ordinary Grāma-Dēvatas of the village are Ellar-amma, Gangamma, Mutyalamma, and Ravel-Amma, who are represented by four stone pillars about six feet high, with the figures of women carved on them, standing in an open field on the outskirts of the village: but, when an epidemic breaks out, Mutyalamma, Gangamma, Ankamma and Mahalakshmi-amma are the deities propitiated, and special images are made of them. Those of the first three are made of clay, but that of Mahalakshmiamma is made of turmeric kneaded into a paste. Then, again, it is noticeable that a Brahman acts as Pujāri of Mahalakshmi, a washerman as Pujāri of Gangamma, and a potter as Pujāri of Ankamma. The Brahman

Pujāri presides over the worship for the greater part of the festival, which lasts for about three months, and during that time the people come almost every day and offer flowers, fruits, cocoanuts, camphor and incense, but no animal sacrifices. All this time too, some Nautch girls come and dance in a booth erected in front of the image and work themselves up into a state of frenzy, during which they are supposed to be inspired by the deities, and utter oracles to the worshippers. When the epidemic begins to abate, the Brahman Pujāri closes his part of the proceedings and departs. Then, on that afternoon and evening, animal sacrifices are offered under the booth. On the first animal killed, which is generally a goat, water is poured from a brass vessel, to see if it shivers. If it does, it is taken as a good omen that the goddess is propitiated, and the disease will disappear. Then other animals are brought and, in accordance with a very common division of functions in the Telugu country, a washerman kills the sheep, goats and fowls, and a Mādiga the buffaloes. The heads of the sheep and goats, as well as of the buffaloes, have the right forelegs put crosswise in the mouths, the face smeared with fat from the entrails, and a lighted lamp placed above them. The blood is caught in a basket full of boiled rice, and the rice and blood are sprinkled round the village, while a Mādiga carries on his own head the head of a buffalo, exactly as is done elsewhere. Here, too, great care is taken to prevent any person from another village taking away any of the rice and blood, lest the other village should get all the benefit of the sacrifice, and evils of all kinds descend on the unhappy villagers who have offered it. The ceremony of impaling live animals on stakes fixed round a wooden car, and dragging them off to the boundary of the village, is also practised here.

At another village called Bhimadole, about twenty miles from Ellore, I came across one of the few instances I have met with of any direct connection between the harvest and the worship of a village goddess. There is an annual festival held there about harvest time, in November or December, lasting one day, which is always Tuesday. About half a ton of rice is boiled in the middle of the village, taken to the shrine and presented in a heap before the image, with a lighted lamp on the top of it, made of rice flour kneaded into a paste, holding about one pint of oil. Some toddy is poured on the ground to the east of the rice by the washerman, incense and camphor are burnt, while the people make Namaskaram (salutation with folded hands raised to the

forehead) to the image. As many as 200 sheep and goats are then killed, and fowls are brought by the poorer people. In this festival the rice soaked in the blood of the victims is not sprinkled on the streets of the village or over the houses, but each ryot gives a handful of it to one of his field servants (a Pariah), who takes and sprinkles it over his master's fields. Three handfuls of the crop are cut on the same day to inaugurate the harvest. No buffaloes are sacrificed during this festival On the other hand, when an epidemic breaks out there is a special festival, when five or six buffaloes are sacrificed as well as about three hundred sheep and goats. The buffaloes are killed last of all. One special buffalo, called PEDDA-VETA (great sacrifice), is reserved to the end, and killed about 10 P.M. Nothing special is done with the blood of the other buffaloes or with that of the sheep and goats, but the blood of the PEDDA-VETA is allowed to flow on to some of the rice, as soon as the head is severed, and both head and carcase are placed upon the rice heap. The head, as usual, has the right foreleg put in the mouth, with fat smeared over the face and a lighted lamp above it. At about 11 P.M. the head is carried by a MĀLA, not by a MĀDIGA in this village, on his own head three times round the boundaries of the village site, and the rice soaked in blood is sprinkled by the MĀLAS on the ground, as they go, and on any cattle they happen to meet, accompanied by the same weird and excited procession as elsewhere.

## CANARESE.

THE CANARESE are, Mr. Thurston tells me, closely allied ethnologically to the TELUGUS, and we should naturally expect, therefore, to find a close connection between the ceremonies used by the two peoples in the worship of their village goddesses. A brief account of the ceremonies used in different parts of the CANARESE country will show how far this is actually the case.

In the BELLARY District DURGAMMA, SUKALAMMA and UR-AMMA are very commonly worshipped. UR-AMMA means simply the village goddess, and is equivalent to the general term GRĀMA-DĒVATA. Her festival is not celebrated annually, but when there is a specially good crop, or when cholera or plague break out. The following account of it was given me by an ASĀDI of a village near BELLARY, and may be taken as describing fairly the general type of such festivals and sacrifices throughout the district. We will

suppose that cholera has broken out in a village. The villagers then make vows to offer the sacrifice if the epidemic ceases. The day appointed for the festival is invariably a Tuesday, and on the previous Tuesday an earthen lamp (in the form of a basin), filled with oil and furnished with a stout cotton wick, is placed in the house of the Reddi (village magistrate) and kept lighted till the festival and all the ceremonies are ended. The carpenter, also, prepares beforehand a wooden image of the goddess and a small cart, while a pandal (booth) of leaves and cloths, with a raised platform inside and festoons of flowers hung in front, is made ready in an open space in the village. On the appointed Tuesday a sheep or goat is first sacrificed at the carpenter's house and the carcase given to the Taliaris (village servants, generally Boyas by caste). The image is then put on the cart about sunset, and taken by the villagers in procession to the booth. In some villages the washerman lays clean cloths on the ground, so that the men who carry the image from the cart to the booth may not tread on the earth. Then the people proceed to the house of the flower-seller, who is by caste a Gira and generally a Lingayat, and bring thence a kind of cradle, made of pith and flowers, together with a pot of toddy, a looking-glass, some limes and other articles used in worship. The cradle and looking-glass are hung up in front of the booth, and other things are placed in front of the image. A looking-glass, I was told, is considered very auspicious, and is used by all castes in various religious ceremonies. Next the lighted lamp is brought in procession from the Reddi's house and placed before the image by some man belonging to the Reddi's family. Four measures of boiled rice are then poured in a heap before the image, while flowers, betel leaves, nuts, plantains and cocoanuts are offered, and camphor and incense burnt. When the preliminaries have been duly performed, the buffalo, which has been reserved for sacrifice and dedicated to the goddess since the last festival, is brought from the Pariah quarters to the pandal in solemn procession, the Asādis, some ten or twelve in number, dancing before it and singing songs in honour of the goddess. It has been kept the whole day without food or water, and is garlanded with flowers and smeared with turmeric and red kunkuma. This buffalo is called Ganda-Kona, or husband-buffalo, and, according to the traditional story, represents the Pariah husband who pretended to be a Brahman and married the Brahman girl, now worshipped as Ur-Amma. A fresh

buffalo is always dedicated immediately after the festival, lest the goddess should be left a widow. When it arrives at the pandal, it is laid on its side upon the ground, and its head is cut off by one of the MĀDIGAS with the sacrificial chopper. Its neck is placed over a small pit, which has been dug to receive the blood, and the entrails are taken out and placed in the pit with the blood. The right leg is then cut off below the knee and put crosswise in the mouth, some fat from the entrails is placed on the forehead, and a small earthenware lamp, about as large as a man's two hands, with a wick as thick as his thumb, is placed on the fat and kept there lighted, till the festival is over. Some of the blood and entrails are then mixed with some boiled rice and placed in a new basket, which a MĀDIGA, stripped naked, places on his head and takes round the boundary of the village fields, accompanied by a washerman carrying a torch, and followed by a few of the villagers. He sprinkles the rice, blood, and entrails all round the boundary. The greatest care is taken to see that none of the blood from the pit in front of the pandal, where the buffalo was killed, is taken away by any one from another village, as they believe that in that case all the benefits of the sacrifice would be transferred to the other village. In former days men who stealthily took away the blood were chased and murdered. As this cannot be done under British rule, a strict patrol is kept all round the place where the blood lies, and no one from any other village is allowed to loiter near the spot. Next day, Wednesday, about 4 P.M., villagers, who have made vows, bring sheep for sacrifice and offerings of boiled rice, fruits, cocoanuts, etc., with incense and camphor. I was told that fowls were not offered to UR-AMMA. After the sheep has been killed, the head is cut off and water is poured on the nose: if the mouth opens, it is regarded as a good omen. The carcases are taken away by the offerers to their own homes as a feast for the family. The heads are all put together and distributed to those of the village artizans and officials who are meat-eaters.

On Thursday about 4 P.M. the flesh of the buffalo, which was sacrificed on Tuesday evening and must be by this time rather high, is cooked in front of the pandal, and part of it is first offered to the goddess, with some boiled rice, on five separate leaves. The ASĀDIS make the offering with songs and dances, the breaking of cocoanuts and burning of incense and camphor, and prostrations flat on the ground (SHASHTANGAM). For this part of their service they receive

twenty pies (about 1¾*d.*), 4 pies for each leaf, not an extravagant sum. Then they take the five leaves away and eat the flesh and rice at some distance from the pandal, where it was cooked. These offerings to the goddess must be eaten on the spot, and are not allowed to be taken home. The rest of the flesh is given to the Pariahs and taliaris, who cook and eat some of it on the spot and take away the remainder. After sunset the goddess is put on the wooden cart and dragged in procession to the boundary of the village, an Asādi walking in front and carrying on his head the head of the buffalo. When they come to the limit of the village lands, they leave the image on their own side of the boundary and there it stays. This ceremony ends the festival.

Somewhat similar festivals are held periodically to propitiate Sunkalamma, the goddess of small-pox and measles, and Maremma, the goddess of cholera. In the town of Bellary there is a shrine of Durgamma, which consists only of an ant-hill, with a small stone shrine about thirty feet long, six deep, and eight or ten high built over it. The story goes that an old woman many years ago was worshipping an image of Durgamma on this spot, when the goddess appeared to her and said that she was Durgamma of Bellary, that she lived in the ant-hill and ought to be worshipped there. The ant-hill grew in size in the course of years, and a shrine was built. The present Pujāri, who is a Golla or milkman by caste, says that in the time of his father, about forty years ago, a large snake lived in the ruined wall behind the shrine, and used to come out and eat eggs and milk placed for it before the shrine. Apparently it very rarely makes its appearance now. There is an annual festival to this goddess in Bellary, when he-buffaloes, sheep, goats, and fowls are offered in sacrifice. When a buffalo is sacrificed, the right leg is, as usual, cut off and placed in its mouth, and fat is smeared over its forehead, with a lighted lamp on the top. Then the offerer stands with folded hands in front of the goddess asking for a boon and, if at that time the mouth of the buffalo opens, he thinks that his prayer has been granted; otherwise he goes away disappointed. The Tahsildar of Bellary conjectured that the practice of putting the right foreleg in the mouth was originally connected with this last ceremony, its object being to prevent *rigor mortis* setting in at once, and to keep the mouth open and the jaws twitching, so as to deceive the superstitious. But this does not seem to be a likely explanation of so widespread a custom. The skins of the buffaloes offered in sacrifice are used for the

drums employed in worship, and the carcases are given to the Pariahs and taliaris in the vicinity of the shrine. People who do not approve of the slaughter of animals cut off the right ear of a goat or sheep and, after carrying it round the temple, offer it to the pujāri. The blood of animals offered in sacrifice in Bellary is not sprinkled round either the shrine or the town. People who offer animal sacrifices also offer boiled rice with them. The rice is heaped on leaves in front of the shrine, turmeric and kunkuma are sprinkled over it, and then it is distributed to the people present. Tuesdays and Fridays are regarded as specially suitable days for the worship of this deity, and are observed as days of fasting by the Pujāris of the shrine. About February every year the hook swinging festival is celebrated in connection with the worship of Durgamma; originally devotees swung from the top of a high pole by hooks fastened through the muscles of their backs; but in these days only an effigy is swung from the pole. It is quite common, however, for devotees to come to the shrine with silver pins fastened through their cheeks. These pins are about six inches long, and rectangular in shape. They are thrust through both cheeks, and then fastened, just like a safety pin. The devotee comes to the temple with his cheeks pierced in this fashion, and with a lighted lamp in a brass dish on his head. On his arrival before the shrine, the lamp is placed on the ground, and the pin removed and offered to the goddess. I was told that the object of this ceremony is to enable the devotee to come to the shrine with a concentrated mind!

It was also formerly the custom for women to come to the shrine clad only in twigs of the margosa tree, prostrate themselves before the goddess, and then resume their normal clothing. But this is now only done by children, the grown-up women putting the margosa branches over a cloth wrapped round their loins.

The ceremonies performed in the Mysore State, further south, do not materially differ from those already described, though they seem in some places to have been greatly influenced by sun-worship.

In Bangalore there is a shrine of Mahesvaramma, at a village near the Maharajah's palace, where a Brahman widow is the Pujāri. The popularity of the shrine seems to have declined in recent years, but daily offerings of fruit and flowers, camphor and incense are still made, and on Tuesdays

and Fridays people sometimes bring fowls and sheep to offer them to the goddess. When there has been illness in a house, or when, for some other reason, special vows have been made, women often come to the shrine with a silver safety pin pierced through their cheeks, as is the custom for men at Bellary. They offer fruit and flowers, prostrate themselves on the ground before the image, then take out the pin and present it to the goddess. In front of the shrine, in an open space across the road, about fifteen yards off, stands a block of granite like a thick milestone, rounded at the top, with a small hollow above it, and a female figure without arms, representing Doddamma, the sister and companion of Mahesvaramma, roughly carved on the side fronting the shrine. The stone is about two and-a-half feet high and stands on a low stone platform. When the people make offerings to Mahesvaramma, the Pujāri pours the curds they bring into the hollow on the top of the stone, and smears the image with turmeric and kunkuma, puts a garland round the stone and breaks a cocoanut before it. Dodamma seems to be treated as a younger sister of the goddess, whom it is politic to propitiate, though with inferior honours.

An annual festival is held in this village after harvest. A special clay image is made by the goldsmith from the mud of the village tank, and a canopy is erected in a spot, where four lanes meet, and decorated with tinsel and flowers. The goldsmith takes the image from his house, and deposits it beneath the canopy. The festival lasts three days. On the first day the proceedings begin at about 2 p.m., the washerman acting as Pujāri. He is given about two seers of rice, which he boils, and at about 5 p.m. brings and spreads before the image. Then he pours curds and turmeric over the image, probably to avert the evil eye, and prostrates himself. The villagers next bring rice, fruits, flowers, incense and camphor, and small lamps made of paste of rice flour, with oil and lighted wick inside, called Ārati and very commonly used in the Canarese country. One ārati is waved by the head of each household before the clay image, another before the shrine of Mahesvaramma, and another before a shrine of Munesvara about two furlongs off, and a fourth at home to his own household deity. During these ceremonies music is played, and tom-toms sounded without ceasing. After this ceremony any Sudras, who have made vows, kill sheep and fowls in their own homes and then feast on them, while the women pierce their cheeks with silver pins, and go to worship at the shrine

of MAHESVARAMMA. At about 9 P.M. the MĀDIGAS, who are esteemed the left hand section of the PARIAHS, come and sacrifice a he-buffalo (Dēvara-Kona), which has been bought by subscription and left to roam free about the village under the charge of the TOTI, or village watchman. On the day of the sacrifice it is brought before the image, and the TOTI cuts off its head with the sacrificial chopper. The right foreleg is also cut off and put crosswise in the mouth, and the head is then put before the image with an earthen lamp alight on the top of it. The blood is cleaned up by the sweepers at once, to allow the other villagers to approach the spot; but the head remains there facing the image till the festival is over. The MĀDIGAS take away the carcase, and hold a feast in their quarter of the village.

On the second day there are no public offerings, but each household makes a feast and feeds as many people as it can. On the third day there is, first, a procession of the image of MAHESVARAMMA, seated on her wooden horse, and that of MUNESVARA from the neighbouring shrine, round the village. They stop at each house, and the people offer fruits and flowers, but no animals.

At about 5 P.M. the washerman takes up the clay image of the GRĀMA-DĒVATA, goes with it in procession to the tank, accompanied by all the people, to the sound of pipes and tom-toms, walks into the tank about knee-deep, and there deposits the image and leaves it.

This is the common type of festival held in honour of the GRĀMA-DĒVATA in all the villages round about BANGALORE, whatever special deity may be worshipped, allowing, of course, for the variations of detail which are found everywhere. In one small village with a big name, viz., KEMPAPURA AGRAHARA, where PUJAMMA is worshipped, the PUJĀRI of the shrine has nothing to do with the buffalo sacrifice during the annual festival. That ceremony is performed by the MĀDIGAS alone. The blood of this victim is mixed with some boiled rice in a large earthen pot, and taken at night round the village by the TOTI, and sprinkled on the ground. The MĀDIGAS go with him, carrying torches and beating tom-toms. The object of this ceremony is, as usual, to keep off evil spirits.

PUJAMMA is especially the goddess of the MĀDIGAS in these parts, and the buffalo sacrifice forms an important part of the annual festival whenever she is worshipped. At a

group of villages some ten miles from Bangalore, near YELAHANKA, I found that she was represented by no image, but by a small earthen lamp, which is always kept lighted. At one shrine on the outskirts of BANGALORE, where there are seven goddesses, viz., ANNAMMA, the presiding goddess, CHANDESHVERAMMA, MAYESVERAMMA, MARAMMA (the goddess of cholera), UDALAMMA (goddess of swollen necks), KOKKALAMMA (goddess of coughs) and SUKHAJAJAMMA (goddess of small-pox and measles), the fire-walking ceremony forms an important part of the annual festival which lasts for ten days. A trench is dug in front of the shrine about thirty feet long, five feet wide and one and-a-half feet deep, and washed with a solution of cow-dung, to purify it. About thirty seers of boiled rice are then brought on the fifth day of the festival, and offered to the goddess before the trench. It is all put into the trench, and some ten seers of curds are poured over it and then distributed to the people, who eat some on the spot and some at home. A cart-load of firewood is then spread over the trench, set alight and left to burn for about three hours, till the wood becomes a mass of red-hot embers. When all is ready, the people assemble, and the PUJĀRI, whose turn it is to conduct the worship, first bathes to purify himself and then, amid the deafening din of trumpets, tom-toms, and cymbals and the clapping of hands, walks with bare feet slowly and deliberately over the glowing embers, the whole length of the trench towards the shrine of the seven goddesses. After him about thirty or forty women walk over the red-hot embers with lighted ĀRATIS on their heads. Such is the power of the goddess, the people told me, that no one is injured. The PUJĀRI of the shrine declared positively that the people put no oil nor anything else on their feet when they walk over.

At MYSORE CITY, where the fire-walking ceremony is also performed, I asked three men who had walked over the trench, why they were not hurt. Their reply was, that people who were without sin were never hurt! I can only say that in this case their faces sadly belied their characters.

The following account of the worship of village deities in the CITY of MYSORE, and the note on the worship of village deities in the CANARESE country generally, was kindly given to me by Mr. Ram Krishna Row, the Palace Officer at Mysore:—

"The MARIS of MYSORE are said to be seven in number, and all the seven are sisters—

(1) Bisal Mari.
(2) Goonal Mari.
(3) Kel Mari.
(4) Yeeranagere Mari.
(5) Hiridevathy.
(6) Chammandamma.
(7) Uttahnahaliyamma.

"Of the seven Maris, Hikidevathy is said to be the eldest. Every year the Mari Jatra is held, generally in the month of February. It lasts for about four weeks, and consists of the following :—

(1) Mari Saru,
(2) Mari Made,
(3) Mari Sidi,
(4) Kelammana Habba,

each taking nearly a week's time.

"(1) *Mari Saru.*—On Sunday of the first week of the Mari Jatra at about 6 p.m. the people and pujāris, called Toreyars, collect at a consecrated place in the fort (the place now used is a little to the east of the southern entrance to the palace), cook rice there, and colour the cooked rice red with the blood of a sheep or goat, killed on the spot. After offering the rice to the Bisal Mari they take it, with the carcase of the goat, to the south fort gate and westwards, going round the fort in the inner circle, dragging the carcase of the goat on the ground, and all the way sprinkling the red rice over the streets (this is said to purify the place lying inside the circle traced in their course), till they arrive at the point whence they started. They then convey the carcase and the remaining rice to a spot near the shrine of Madesvara, situated in the quarters where they live. Then the entrails of the goat are roasted and, with the rice, divided into three equal parts, and made into three balls, which are given away to the Chaklas (right-hand class) for their services in tom-toming during the rice-sprinkling ceremony.

"(2) *Mari Made.*—On Monday of the second week the Toreyars throw away all their old earthen pots, used for cooking, and get their houses whitewashed. They get new pots, prepare Kitchadi in them, cover them with earthen lids and put āratis (lights) on them. At about 6 p.m. the āratis are carried by females to a consecrated pial, known as the Galdige, and placed in front of a Kanna

KANNADI ( a looking glass used as a symbol of the goddess). Two sheep or goats are killed in sacrifice on the spot, and all the flesh is distributed amongst the families of TOREYARS. This done, the KITCHADI pots are carried by females in procession to the BISAL MARI shrine, cloths about four feet wide being spread all along the way on which the procession walks, that they may not tread on the earth. The KITCHADI in all the pots is offered to the BISAL MARI, and heaped up on a cloth in front of the BISAL MARI image. The females return home with the empty pots, which will henceforth be used for cooking in their families. The heap of KITCHADI then becomes the property of the washerman pujāri, who distributes it amongst his friends and relatives. At the end of this week the MANE MANCHI shrine, which remains closed all the year, is opened. It contains a hole resembling an ant-hill, which is said to be the abode of an unknown serpent, to which the name of MANE MANCHAMMA is given. Prayers are offered here, chiefly by the men that are to swing on the SIDI, but also by the man that performs the "HUMAN SACRIFICE CEREMONY", which is now a semblance, not a reality. The TOREYAR caste men generally bring from their houses bunches of plantains, and store them in this shrine. They are left to remain there till the SIDI is over, after which they become the property of the families by whom they were brought to the shrine.

"(3) *Mari Sidi.*—This occupies the third week of the JATRA. On the Sunday, before the Monday on which the SIDI takes place, the Human Sacrifice Ceremony called BALI is performed. It begins at midnight, and lasts till dawn. The man appointed for the BALI is made to lie down, a piece of cloth fully covering his body. This takes place on the same spot where the rice for the MARI SARU (already explained) was prepared. A VAJARANAM (carpenter) begins the ceremony by touching the man lying down with a cluster of flowers of the cocoanut tree. The CHAKLAS keep tom-toming, while the carpenter dances round the victim, singing songs. Fires are lit all round. The carpenter closes his dance by touching the victim again with his cluster of flowers about daybreak. The people present carry the victim (Bali Man) to the MANE MANCHI Shrine, where he takes rest and walks straight home. On Monday the carpenter who performed the Bali ceremony the previous day, gets the SIDI CAR fitted up. It is ready about 5 P.M. for the swing. The men to swing on the SIDI are kept without food. They take a cold bath, dress themselves on the pial or gaddige

(mentioned in connection with MADE) and then go to the palace, where they get a present of some betel leaves and nuts, and thence they proceed to the shrine of MANE MANCHI, offer prayers there and join the party in BISAL MARAMMANAGUDI, where the SIDI is ready with the victims, viz.,—two buffaloes, one on behalf of each man that swings on the SIDI, and a sheep or a goat. The buffaloes are smeared with turmeric (yellow powder) and kunkuma (red powder), and are also garlanded with flowers and margosa leaves. They remain with the SIDI, but, before the men are allowed by the carpenter to swing on the SIDI, the carpenter tests his fittings, and offers the goat in sacrifice. Its blood is taken and sprinkled over all the joints of the car and the wheels of the SIDI. The goat sacrificed is given away to the coolies that work at the car. Then the SIDI procession begins. The two men who are to swing go with the buffaloes to the HIRIDEVATHI shrine, where another SIDI party from YEERANGERE, the northern part of the city, meet them with another SIDI, one buffalo and one man to swing. One at a time mounts on each SIDI. After mounting, each lightly strikes the other as the SIDIS cross. Then each swings suspended by a band round his waist on his SIDI. It is at this time that the buffaloes are all killed one after another. It is attempted to cut off the head of each victim with one blow, but actually more blows are used before the buffaloes' heads are severed. When this is over, the men on the SIDIS get down and return to the HIRIDEVATHI shrine. There they offer pūja, after which the parties return home. The party from the BISAL MARI shrine go to the MANE MANCHI shrine, take rest, dine and spend the night there, offering prayers, etc. The following morning they walk home.

"(4) *Kelammana Habba.*—The same night the buffaloes' carcases are removed by CHAKLAS and carried to the open place outside the fort, adjoining the southern wall, forming the Barr Parade Maidan, which place is presumed to be that of KELMARAMMA. There they put up for the occasion a green shed, and place the two buffaloes' heads under them. On these heads are placed lights, and the faces are smeared with fat, turmeric and kunkuma. The right foreleg of each animal is cut off, and stuck into the mouth. The flesh, etc., of the buffaloes is cooked and eaten by the CHAKLAS as well as by their friends and relatives. For one week the heads are kept in the above sheds and worshipped every day. On the next Monday the CHAKLAS and HOLEYARS, called also the BALAGAI caste, carry the heads of the two buffaloes in grand

procession to their quarters and eat them up, *if they are not very putrid.*

"A legend is prevalent regarding this KELMARAMMA. HIRIDEVATHI, the eldest of the MARI sisters, is said to have ordered one of her younger sisters KELMARI to bring fire. The latter went, and in her search for fire, she found a lot of low caste men cooking the flesh of a buffalo and eating the same. It was a curious sight for her to see them do so. She sat there observing what was going on, and lost time. As she was late, the eldest sister was very wrath and excommunicated her with a curse, saying that she should only be worshipped by the lowest class of people. Hence the heads of the buffaloes are worshipped in the name of KILMARI. The following legend is believed in as regards MARI in general. Once upon a time there lived a RISHI who had a fair looking daughter. A CHANDALA, *i.e.*, a person of the lowest caste, desired to marry her. He went to KĀSI (BENARES) in the disguise of a BRAHMAN, where, under the tuition of a learned Brahman, he became well versed in the SHASTRAS, and learnt the Brahman modes of life. On his return he passed off for a Brahman, and gradually made offers to the RISHI lady, and somehow succeeded in prevailing upon her to marry him. She did so, her father also consenting to the match. They lived a married life for some time, and had children. One day it so happened that one of the children noticed the father stitch an old shoe previous to going out for a bath. This seemed curious, and the child drew the mother's attention to it. Then the mother, by virtue of her *Topas*, came to know the base trick that had been played upon her by her husband, and cursed him and herself. The curse on herself was that she should be born a MARI, to be worshipped only by low caste men. The curse on him was that he should be born a buffalo, fit to be sacrificed to her, and that her children should be born as sheep and chickens. So that, during periodical MARI festivals the buffaloes, the sheep and chickens are used as victims, and the right leg of the he-buffalo is cut off and stuck in his mouth, in memory of his having stitched the shoes in his disguise as a BRAHMAN.

### SACRIFICES PERFORMED BY THE CANARESE OF THE MYSORE COUNTRY.

"Animal sacrifices are generally offered by VAISYAS and SUDRAS, the victims being usually buffaloes, sheep or goats and fowls. These sacrifices are usually propitiatory and

sometimes thank-offerings, but there is no sin-offering. When, owing to sickness, anyone's life is despaired of, a vow to sacrifice the life of an animal on the recovery of the sick person is made and carried out by the convalescent as soon as possible after restoration to health. Should any misfortune happen to a personal enemy, an animal is at once sacrificed as a "thank" offering!

"In all these cases, the victim is taken before the altar, and there decapitated by a stroke of a sword, the blood being sprinkled on the object before which the sacrifice is offered, or on the ground in the vicinity. In no case is the blood ever sprinkled on the persons offering, the sacrifice. Before a building is finished or occupied, the same kind of sacrifice is made, to propitiate the spirit supposed to have already entered there, and the blood of the victim is sprinkled over the materials of which the building is constructed.

"Similarly, when a well is sunk, or a tank built, or a new tool or agricultural implement used, all of which from their nature might be the means of causing death, a sacrifice is offered to the evil spirit to prevent accidents, and, in the case of sharp edged tools, blood is poured on that part which would cause the hurt. A 'partial' sacrifice is made in the case of tools and implements, which from their nature would not be likely to cause death, and in these cases only a slight cut is made, usually in the nose or ear of the animal, sufficient to draw a few drops of blood, which are smeared on the tool, as already mentioned. In cases of epidemics, blood is poured over the image of the deity, supposed to be responsible for the disease."

The relic of human sacrifice described above, in Mr. Ramkrishna Row's memorandum, would serve to show that in Mysore such sacrifices at one time formed a regular part of the worship of the village deities, and this is confirmed by the account given in the "Mysore and Coorg Manual" by Mr. Lewis Rice (Vol. iii, pp. 264–265) of the worship of Grāma-Dēvata in Coorg, a hill country to the west of the Mysore State, inhabited by a mixed population, containing a few aboriginal tribes, about a hundred and twenty thousand cultivators and artizans, who were formerly serfs but are now freemen, and a ruling class of Kodagas or Coorgs, who probably migrated into the country about the third century A.D.

"The essential features of the religion of the Coorgs" says Mr. Rice, "are anti-Brahmanical, and consist of ancestral and

demon worship." With reference to the worship of GRĀMA-DĒVATAS among them he says, "as among other DRAVIDIAN mountain tribes, so also in COORG, tradition relates that human sacrifices were offered in former times to secure the favour of their GRĀMA-DĒVATAS, MARIAMMA, DURGA, and BHADRA KALI, the tutelary goddesses of the SAKTI line, who are supposed to protect the villages or NĀDS from all evil influences. In KIRINDADU and KONIUCHERI-GRĀMA in KATIYET NĀD, once every three years, in December and June, a human sacrifice used to be brought to BHADRA KALI, and during the offering by the PANIKAS (a class of religious mendicants) the people exclaimed "AL AMMA!" A man, Oh Mother!, but once a devotee shouted "AL ALL AMMA, *Adu*!"—not a man, oh mother, a goat—and since that time a he-goat without blemish has been sacrificed. Similarly in BELLUR in TAVALIGERI-MURNAD of KIGGAINAD TALUQ, once a year, by turns from each house, a man was sacrificed by cutting off his head at the temple; but when the turn came to a certain home, the devoted victim made his escape into the jungle. The villagers, after an unsuccessful search, returned to the temple, and said to the pujāri "KALAK ADU" which has a double meaning, viz., KALAKE next year, ADU we will give, or ADU a goat, and thenceforth only scapegoats were offered. The devotees fast during the day. The he-goat is killed in the afternoon, the blood sprinkled upon a stone, and the flesh eaten. At night the PANIKAS, dressed in red and white striped cotton cloths, and their faces covered with metal or bark masks, perform their demoniacal dances. In MERCARA TALUQ in IPPANIVOLAVADE and in KADIKERI in HALERINAD, the villagers sacrifice a KONA or male buffalo instead of a man. Tied to a tree in a gloomy grove near the temple, the beast is killed by a MĒDA (a wandering tribe, who are basket and mat makers), who cuts off its head with a large knife, but no COORGS are present at the time. The blood is spilled on a stone under a tree, and the flesh eaten by the MĒDAS. In connection with this sacrifice there are peculiar dances performed by the COORGS around the temple, the KOMB ATA or horn dance, each man wearing the horns of a spotted deer or stag on his head; the PILI-ATA or peacock's feather dance, the performers being ornamented with peacock's feathers, and the CHAURI-ATA or yak-tail dance, during which the dancers, keeping time, swing yak-tails. These ornaments belong to the temple, where they are kept.

"In some cases where a particular curse, which can only be removed by an extraordinary sacrifice, is said by the

KANIYA (The KANIYAS are religious mendicants, said to be descendants of a MALAYALAM BRAHMAN and a low caste woman) to rest upon a house, stable or field, the ceremony performed seems to be another relic of human sacrifices. The KANIYA sends for some of his fraternity, the PANIKAS or BANNUS, and they set to work. A pit is dug in the middle room of the house, or in the yard, or the stable, or the field, as the occasion may require. Into this one of the magicians descends. He sits down in Hindu fashion, muttering mantras Pieces of wood are laid across the pit, and covered with the earth a foot or two deep. Upon this platform a fire of jack wood is kindled, into which butter, sugar, different kinds of grain, etc., are thrown. This sacrifice continues all night, the PANIKA sacrificer above, and his immured colleague below, repeating their incantations all the while. In the morning the pit is opened, and the man returns to the light of day. These sacrifices are called MARANADA BALI or death atonements. They cost from ten to fifteen rupees. Instead of a human being, a cock is sometimes shut up in the pit, and killed afterwards.

"In cases of sore affliction befalling a whole GRĀMA or NĀD, such as small-pox, cholera, or cattle disease, the ryots combine to appease the wrath of MARI-AMMA by collecting contributions of pigs, fowls, rice, cocoanuts, bread, and plantains from the different houses, and depositing them at the MANDU: whence they are carried in procession with tom-toms. In one basket there is some rice, and the members of each house on coming out bring a little rice in the hand, and waving it round the head, throw it into the basket, with the belief that the dreaded evil will depart with the rice. At last the offerings are put down on the Nād boundary, the animals are killed, their blood is offered on a stone, the rice and basket are left, and the rest of the provisions are consumed by the persons composing the procession. The people of adjoining GRĀMAS or NĀDS repeat the same ceremony, and thus the epidemic is supposed to be banished from the country. In still greater calamities, a flock of sheep is driven from Nād to Nād, and at last expelled from the country."

### TAMIL.

The ceremonies observed in the worship of village deities in the TAMIL DISTRICTS of TANJORE, TRICHINOPOLY, and CUDDALORE closely resemble those prevailing in the TELUGU and CANARESE countries; but there are striking differences,

which seem largely due to the influence of BRAHMANICAL forms of worship. In the first place the ceremonial washing of the images and the processions during the festivals are much more elaborate in these districts than among the TELUGUS and CANARESE. Then, again, the male deities connected with the goddesses are much more prominent, and tend much more to assume an independent position. IYENAR is entirely independent and has a separate shrine, and often a separate festival, while in many cases special sacrifices are made to the male attendants, MADURAI-VĪRAN and MŪNADIAN. And, then, in the third place, there is a widespread idea that animal sacrifices are distasteful to good and respectable deities, both male and female, so that no animal sacrifices are ever offered to IYENAR or to the good and kind goddesses. The ancient sacrifices of fowls, sheep, goats, and buffaloes are, indeed, still offered, but only to the male attendants, MADURAI-VĪRAN and MŪNADIAN, and not to the goddesses themselves, and while the animals are being killed, a curtain is often drawn in front of the image of the goddess, or else the door of her shrine is shut, lest she should be shocked at the sight of the shedding of blood.

An account of the modes of worship and festivals in some typical villages will clearly show both the resemblances to the TELUGU and CANARESE uses, and also the striking differences.

In the district of CUDDALORE, at a village called VANDIPALIAM, three deities are worshipped, MARIAMMAN, DRAUPATI, and IYENAR, each of whom has a separate shrine. MARIAMMAL's is the largest, about 12 feet high, 25 feet long, and 12 or 15 feet broad. DRAUPATI's is less imposing, being only about 6 feet high, 10 feet long and 8 feet broad, while IYENAR stands in the open, under a tree, with clay images of horses, elephants, dogs, and warriors (or Vīrans) on either side. The VĪRANS are supposed to keep watch over their master, while the animals serve as his VAHANAMS (*i.e.*, vehicles), on which he rides in his nightly chase after evil spirits. Individual villagers, both men and women, constantly offer private sacrifices consisting of boiled rice, fruit, sugar, incense, and camphor, or fowls and sheep to the VĪRAN of IYENAR, but not to IYENAR himself. Whenever an animal sacrifice is offered, a curtain is first drawn before the image of IYENAR, and then the victim is brought before the image of the VĪRAN. Water is sprinkled over it, a wreath of flowers is put round its neck by the pujari, and turmeric and kunkuma are smeared on its forehead. Then a bottle of arrack, a pot of

toddy, two or three cheroots, some ganja (Indian hemp) and opium, and dried fish are presented to the VĪRAN, afterwards to be consumed by the pujāri. Camphor is burnt between the animal and the VIRAN, and finally the head of the victim is cut off by a pujāri, specially appointed for the purpose, with a large chopper. Nothing special is done with the blood. The carcase is taken away by the offerer, and the head belongs to the pujāri, who cuts it off.

Once a year a public sacrifice is offered to IYENAR by the whole village, some time in April or May. On this occasion the image of IYENAR, which is made of granite and stands about $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, is first washed with gingelly oil, lime juice, milk and curds, with cocoanut, plantains, sugar and some aromatic spices all mixed together. Then cocoanut milk, sandalwood paste and clean water are poured over it. After these ablutions the image is wiped with a cloth and ornamented with flowers, some sandalwood paste is put on the forehead, and a cloth tied round its waist. The villagers then bring boiled rice, cocoanuts, plantains, betel leaves and betel nut, sweet cakes of rice flour, sugar and cocoanut in large quantities, and spread them all on leaves upon the ground before the image. The pujāri burns incense and camphor, and finally the offerings are all distributed among the people present. After these offerings have been duly made, a curtain is drawn in front of the image of IYENAR, and sheep and fowls are sacrificed to the VĪRAN, in the same way as at private sacrifices.

MARIAMMAN and DRAUPATI have each one annual festival, which lasts for ten days, but no animal sacrifices are ever offered on these festivals, or on any other occasions at the shrines of these goddesses. The festival begins with the hoisting of a flag, and then for eight days there are processions morning and evening, when a metal image of the goddess is carried in a palanquin through all the streets of the village. On the ninth day there is a car procession, when the image is put on a large car, about 20 feet high, and dragged round the village, while on the night of the tenth day the image is put on a raft, and dragged round the tank with torches, pipes and tom-toms. Offerings of boiled rice, fruits and flowers, incense and camphor, are made every day and especially on the ninth day, when a large crowd usually assembles.

At a large village in the TANJORE District, named SHIYALI, where Brahmanism is very strong, IYENAR, PIDĀRI,

Mariamman, Angalamman, and Kaliamman, are all worshipped with typical rites; but in this village, though no animal sacrifices are offered to Kaliamman, Mariamman, Pidāri and Angalamman, yet they are offered to the subordinate male deities, Madurai-Vīran and Mūnadian, who act as guardians of their shrines. Apparently, however, Pidāri is regarded as slightly less squeamish in the matter of blood-shed than the others, as curtains are drawn before the other three when animals are sacrificed to Madurai-Vīran and Mūnadian, but not before Pidāri. No festival is held for Kaliamman, who seems to be a rather inert deity, of no great account in practical affairs. During the festivals of Mariamman, Pidāri and Angalamman the ablutions are particularly elaborate. The image is washed twice every day, morning and evening, with water, oil, milk, cocoanut milk, a solution of turmeric, rosewater, a solution of sandal-wood, honey, sugar, limes, and a solution of the bark of certain trees, separately in a regular order. This ceremonial washing is called in the Tamil country Abishegam, and certainly deserves an imposing name. The Pujāri next repeats certain mantrams (sacred texts) before the image, after the example of Brahman priests, and the offerings of the people, boiled rice, fruit, flowers, cakes, sugar, etc., are presented, incense and camphor are burnt, and prostrations made to the deity. Every evening, after sunset, an image of the goddess made of metal, on a small wooden platform decorated with tinsel and flowers, is carried in procession on the shoulders of the people, round the main streets of the village, accompanied with fireworks and torches, and the inspiriting sounds of the tom-tom. After the procession, camphor is burnt, a cocoanut broken and the image replaced in the shrine.

On the tenth day of the festival, in the evening, animal sacrifices are offered, consisting of fowls and sheep, to Madurai-Vīran and Mūnadian. People who have made vows, in times of sickness or distress, or in order to secure some boon, bring their victims to the shrine. Water and turmeric are poured on the whole body of the animal, and some mantrams are recited by the pujāri. If the animal is a sheep or goat, it is then seized by the offerer and his friends, some of whom catch hold of its hind legs, while others hold fast to a rope fastened round its neck, and its head is cut off with one stroke of the chopper by one of the pujāris. The head is placed in front of the image of Madurai-Vīran with its right foreleg in its mouth. During the killing of the

victim a curtain is drawn in front of MARIAMMAN and ANGALAMMAN, but not before PIDĀRI. At the festival of MARIAMMAN two special ceremonies are performed, which are not performed at the other festivals in this village, but are quite common elsewhere. When sheep are sacrificed, the blood is collected in earthen vessels, mixed with boiled rice, and then sprinkled in the enclosure of the shrine and in the four corners of the main streets, through which the procession passes. What remains over is taken and thrown away in some field at a little distance from the village. Then, after the animals have been sacrificed, the fire-walking ceremony takes place. A trench is dug inside the enclosure of the shrine and filled with logs of wood, which are set alight and reduced to glowing embers. In the evening the metal image of MARIAMMAN is brought out and held in front of the fire, while a short puja is performed by burning camphor. Then the Pujāri walks barefooted over the red hot embers, followed by other people, who have made vows to perform this act of devotion. During the festival of PIDĀRI, there is a car procession on the ninth day, which is always the day of the new moon, and in the evening one or more buffaloes are sacrificed to MADURAI-VĪRAN or MŪNADIAN. The victim is always a he-buffalo, and is generally brought by some private person. Water and turmeric are first poured over it, and it is garlanded with flowers, and then its head is cut off with a single stroke of the chopper by a man of the PADAYACHI caste, who, by the way, is not a PARIAH. The head is placed in front of the image, but the foreleg is not cut off or put in the mouth, as is constantly done in the case of buffalo sacrifices in the TELUGU country. The blood is collected in an earthen vessel, and placed near the image of PIDĀRI and left there the whole night. Next morning, the people assured me, only a small quantity of blood is found in the vessel, PIDĀRI having drunk the greater part of it. The remains are poured away outside the compound of the shrine. The head and carcase of the buffaloes sacrificed are all handed over to the Pariahs of the village, who take them away for a feast.

At the festival of ANGALAMMAN pigs are sacrificed as well as sheep, goats and fowls, not only by the PARIAHS, but also by any caste of SUDRAS. The IYENAR festival takes place at the same time as the PIDĀRI festival, and the same ceremonies are performed, except that no animals are sacrificed at his shrine.

The idea, so naively expressed in the PIDĀRI festival at SHIYALI, that the goddess actually drinks the blood of the victims, is not uncommon. In many villages some of the blood is collected in an earthen vessel, and placed inside the shrine after the sacrifice At one village, where pigs are sacrificed to MADURAI-VĪRAN, though the blood is not collected in any vessel, but simply allowed to flow on the ground, the people assured me that MADURAI-VĪRAN drinks it. In the same way the rice and blood sprinkled through the streets of a village or round the boundaries, which is called BALI, (offering), in TELUGU, is regarded as food for the evil spirits. In many TAMIL villages the rice and blood are made up into little balls and thrown up in the air, where, as the people firmly believe, they are seized upon by the deity to whom the sacrifice is offered, or by the evil spirits that hover round the procession.

Another characteristic festival, which is specially conducted and paid for by the PARIAHS, is held in the TRICHINOPOLY district, near the village of Essene, during the month of July or August. About a mile south of the village, on the road to MADRAS, there is a shrine, consisting of a large open enclosure about thirty feet square, surrounded by a low stone wall. On the west side of the enclosure are three large images of men seated on tigers, each about eight feet high, representing PANDUR-KARUPPANNA (PANDUR being the name of an ancient village), PUDU-KARUPPANNA (*i.e.*, the NEW KARUPPANNA) and URSUTHIYAN (he who goes round the village); and in front of them a number of small stones, black with oil, six carved roughly into the figures of men and women, and about six quite plain, some of them only about six inches high. At right angles to this row of stones, on the south side, runs a small shrine, with seven small female figures representing seven virgins (KANIMARS), while at the north-east corner is a small separate enclosure with a figure of MADURAI-VĪRAN on horseback with his two wives seated in front of him. The presiding deities of the shrine are the goddesses, represented by the small stones, and not the imposing but ugly male creatures seated on tigers. When the time for the festival has been fixed, each family of Pariahs gives about one rupee for the expenses. Then, on the first day, they perform pūja (worship) in the Pariah street of the village of Melakari close by the shrine. Three sets of seven brass pots, standing one above the other, are placed in one of the huts, and on the top of each set a small image made of the five metals, one image representing PUDU-KARUPPANNA,

another PANDUR-KARUPPANNA and the third a female deity, MALAIYAYI, who is the wife of KARUPPANNA. Boiled rice is first offered, cocoanuts are broken and incense burnt to the pots, and then at night there is a sword and spear dance in the compound of the hut. On the second day the Pariahs come to the shrine, and wash the small black stones and images representing the goddesses, with oil, milk, cocoanut-milk, lime-juice and water, put on them some new pieces of cloth, garland them with flowers, and mark them with sandal-wood paste. Then they boil rice on the spot, and offer it to the goddesses, and afterwards bring to the shrine sheep, pigs, and fowls. Water is first poured over each sheep, and, if it shivers, it is accepted by the goddess, if not, it is rejected. Then one of the PARIAH Pujāris cuts off the head of the acceptable victims with a sword. If the head is cut off at one blow, another Pujāri, who is supposed to be under the influence of the deity, sucks out the blood from the neck of the carcase. During the night he thus sucks the blood of about a hundred sheep. After the sheep have been killed, four or five pigs are offered by a few of the PARIAHS, who have made vows. The head of each pig is cut off with a chopper, and then a small quantity of blood is collected in some earthen vessels, newly brought from the potter's house, and placed inside the shrine. When all the people have left the place, the Pujāris mix this blood with some boiled rice, and throw it about a hundred yards outside the shrine to the north-west, north-east, south-east, and south-west, and that ends the festival. The sucking of the blood is a horrid business, but not so horrid as an annual ceremony which takes place every February or March at TRICHINOPOLY, one of the great centres of trade and education in the TAMIL country, during the festival of KULUMAI-AMMAN, who is regarded as the guardian against cholera and cattle plague, and epidemics generally. A very fat Pujāri of the VELLĀLA caste, who holds this unenviable office by hereditary right, is lifted up above the vast crowd on the arms of two men; some two thousand kids are then sacrificed one after the other, the blood of the first eight or ten is collected in a large silver vessel holding about a quart, and handed up to the Pujāri, who drinks it all. Then, as the throat of each kid is cut, the animal is handed up to him, and he sucks or pretends to suck the blood out of the carcase. The belief of the people is that the blood is consumed by the spirit of KULUMAI-AMMAN in the Pujāri; and her image stands on a platform during the ceremony about fifteen yards away. A similar idea is probably expressed by a particularly

revolting method of killing sheep, which is not uncommon in TAMIL villages during these festivals. One of the Pujāris, who is sometimes painted to represent a leopard, flies at the sheep like a wild beast, seizes it by the throat with his teeth, and kills it by biting through the jugular vein.

There is another strange ceremony, which is quite common in the TAMIL country, connected with the propitiation of the boundary goddess, where the blood of the victim seems to be regarded as the food of malignant spirits. At Irungalur, a village about fourteen miles from TRICHINOPOLY, it forms the conclusion of the festival to the local goddess KURUMBAI. During the first seven days the image is duly washed, offerings of rice and fruit are made, and processions are held through the streets of the village. Then, on the eighth day, a small earthen pot, called the KARAGAM, is prepared at the shrine of the goddess

The elaborate decorations of the KARAGAM have been already described on page 123, and I need not describe them again. When it is ready, some boiled rice, fruits, cocoanuts and incense are first offered to it, and then the Pujāri ties on his wrist a cord (KAPU) dyed with yellow turmeric, to protect him from evil spirits. A lamb is next brought and sacrificed in front of him, to give him supernatural power, and he then takes the KARAGAM on his head, marches with it in procession through the village to the sound of tom-toms and pipes, and finally deposits it under a booth erected in the middle of the village. On the eighth, ninth and tenth days the KARAGAM is taken in procession morning and evening, and rice and fruits, camphor and incense are also offered to it.

On the tenth day, at about 7 A.M. before the procession starts, a lamb is killed in front of the KARAGAM. The throat is first cut, and then the head cut off, and the blood collected in a new earthen pot filled with boiled rice. The pot is put in a frame of ropes and taken by a PUJĀRI to a stone planted in the ground, about four feet high, called ELLAIKAL (*i.e.*, boundary stone), some three hundred yards off. A crowd of villagers run after him with wild yells, but no tom-toms or pipes are played. When he comes to the boundary stone, he runs round it thrice, and the third time throws the pot over his shoulder behind him on to another smaller stone, about two feet high and some five or six feet in circumference, which stands at the foot of the ELLAIKAL. The earthen pot is dashed to pieces and the rice and blood scatter over the two stones and all around them. The pujāri

then runs quickly back to the booth, where the KARAGAM stands, without looking behind him, followed by the crowd in dead silence. The man who carries the pot is supposed to be possessed by KARUMBAI, and is in a frantic state as he runs to the boundary stone, and has to be held up by some of the crowd, to prevent his falling to the ground. The pouring out of the rice and blood is regarded as a propitiation of an evil spirit residing in the boundary stone, called ELLAI-KARUPPAI, and of all the evil and malignant spirits of the neighbourhood, who are his attendants. When the Pujāri gets back to the booth, he prostrates himself before the KARAGAM, and all the people do the same. Then they go to bathe in the neighbouring tank, and afterwards return to the booth, when another lamb is sacrificed, and the procession starts off through the village. In the evening of the same day a pig, a sheep and a cock are bought from the funds of the shrine, and taken to the shrine itself, which stands outside the village. There they are killed in front of a stone image of MADURAI-VĪRAN, which stands in a separate little shrine in front of that of KARUMBAI. A large quantity of rice is boiled inside the walls of the compound, and then the flesh of the three animals is cooked and made into curry. The rice and curry are put on a cloth, spread over straw, in front of the image, while the Pujāri does puja to MADURAI-VĪRAN inside his shrine, offering arrack, fruit, flowers, incense and camphor, and saying mantrams; afterwards he sprinkles some water on the curry and rice, which are then distributed to the people present. During this sacrifice to MADURAI-VĪRAN KARUMBAI's shrine is closed.

The ceremony of propitiating the spirit of the boundary stone is very common in the TRICHINOPOLY DISTRICT, though there are the usual variations of local custom in performing it. At a village, called PULLAMBADĪ, it takes place in connection with the festival of KULANTHALAMMAN, which lasts for fifteen days. On the first day the image is washed, and a sheep killed outside the enclosure as a sacrifice to KARUPPU, the door of the shrine being closed. Rice, fruit, flowers, etc., are also offered to the goddess. On the next six days only rice, fruits, etc., are offered; but on the eighth day two more sheep are sacrificed to KARUPPU. From the ninth to the fifteenth day the metal image of the goddess is taken in procession round the village, each day on a different VAHANAM (vehicle); on the fifteenth day it is carried on a car, and on this day three sheep are killed in front of the

shrine, before the procession starts, the blood being collected in an earthen pot and mixed with boiled rice. Then a sheep is sacrificed at each of the nine corners of the streets that surround the temple, and the blood of all the sheep is put into earthen vessels by a pujāri of the SHERVĀGARU caste, called the KAPPUKARAN, the animals being all killed by one of the pariahs. The KAPPUKARAN then mixes all the blood and rice together in one large earthen pot and carries it to the village, which is about half a mile away. Nine more sheep are sacrificed at nine other corners of the village itself, and their blood is again collected and mixed with the rest. When the car has come back to its resting place and the procession is finished, the KAPPUKARAN takes the large vessel full of blood and rice, and, followed by all the men of the village, some holding him by the arms, goes to the western boundary of the village lands, where is the boundary stone, ELLAIKAL, about two feet square and one and-a-half high. A lamb is then killed over the stone, so that its blood flows over it; and the head, which has been cut off, is then placed on the top of the stone. The KAPPUKARAN runs thrice round the stone, carrying the pot full of rice and blood in a framework of ropes, and, facing the stone, dashes the pot against it. This done, he at once runs away, without stopping to look back. The other villagers go away before the pot is broken. This concludes the ceremonies of the festival.

At another village, SEMBIA, in the PUDUKŌTTAI TALUQ, the ceremonies connected with the propitiation of boundary spirits are rather more elaborate. There is a boundary stone at each of the four corners of the village site, five more stones inside the village, and another stone on the boundary of the village land. During the PIDĀRI festival boiled rice, fruits, etc., are offered at all the nine boundary stones in the village, and on the sixteenth day the image of PIDĀRI is taken to the house of the pujāri, who is to perform the dread ceremony of propitiating the spirits that inhabit the boundary stone of the village lands.

The pujāri puts the KAPU (the cord dyed with turmeric) on his wrist, and a goat, entirely black, is sacrificed before the image, and its blood is collected in an earthen pot, but not mixed with rice. The metal image of PIDĀRI is then carried in procession, and at each of the nine stones in the village itself a lamb is sacrificed. When this procession is ended, the pujari with the KAPU on his wrist

takes the earthen pot, with the blood of the black goat inside it, fastens it inside a frame of ropes, and runs to the boundary stone on the extreme limit of the village land. About twenty or thirty villagers run with him, holding him by the arms, as he is out of his senses, being possessed with PIDĀRI. When he arrives at the stone, he runs once round, and then stands facing it, and dashes the pot against it. Without a moment's delay and without looking behind him, he runs back to the place where PIDĀRI is seated on the wooden horse, on which she was carried round the village. The image is taken back to the shrine, and the ceremony is at an end.

An untoward event happened a few years ago, in connection with one of these PIDĀRI festivals, at one village in the TRICHINOPOLY District. The festival had commenced and the pujari had tied the KAPU on his wrist, when a dispute arose between the trustees of the shrine, which caused the festival to be stopped. The dispute could not be settled, and the festival was suspended for three years, and during all that time there could be no marriages among the UDAYA caste, while the poor pujāri, with the KAPU on his wrist, had to remain the whole of the three years in the temple, not daring to go out, lest PIDĀRI in her wrath should slay him. At a village in the TANJORE District, called TUKANAPALIAM, the boundary spirits are propitiated during the KALIAMMAN festival by the sacrifice of a buffalo. On the last day of the festival the image of KALIAMMAN, who in many parts of the TANJORE District is specially the goddess of the boundary, is taken to the boundary stone, and then one he-buffalo is killed beside the stone and buried in a pit close by; but nothing is done either with the head or the blood.

The worship of the village deity at a village, called MAHAKALIKUDI, about eight miles from TRICHINOPOLY, presents several rather curious features. The chief deity is a goddess called UJINIHONKALI or MAHAKALI. In her shrine are four subordinate female deities ELLIAMMAN, PULLATHALAMMAN, VISHALAKSHMIAMMAN, and ANGALAMMAN, and three subordinate male deities MADURAI-VĪRAN, BATHALAMA and IYENAR. (This is the only place where I have come across IYENAR as a subordinate deity.) In this temple UJINIHONKALI is worshipped by all classes, including the BRAHMANS, and while some of the pujāris are SUDRAS, the others are BRAHMANS. An old Munsif of the district told me that he could remember the time when all the pujāris were SUDRAS. The BRAHMANS

appear to have secured a footing in the shrine about fifty years ago. The yearly festival is held in February or March and lasts sixteen days.

On the first day, called KANKANADHARANAM, a gold bangle, or bracelet (KANKANAM) is prepared for the occasion by the temple authorities and put on the wrist of the image, which is made of the five metals in the form of a woman, and stands about three feet high. This must be done at an auspicious hour either of the day or night. One of the SUDRA pujāris at the same time puts a KAPU (a cotton bracelet dyed yellow with turmeric), on his own right wrist. Boiled rice, cocoanuts, plantains and limes are afterwards offered to the goddess, lights are placed all over the shrine, and incense and camphor are burnt. For eight days the same ceremonies are repeated, the same bangle put on the wrist of the image and the same KAPU on the wrist of the pujāri.

On the ninth day this bangle is removed, and put in the treasury of the shrine, and a new one put on. The same offerings are made as on the other days, but on this day, for the first time, the image is taken out and carried in procession on a small wooden platform, adorned with tinsel, through the village with music and tom-toms, torches and fireworks

These ceremonies are then repeated till the end of the festival, but each day, till the fourteenth, the image is carried on a different vehicle or VAHANAM; on the tenth day on a wooden horse, on the eleventh on a car, on the twelfth on a wooden lion, on the thirteenth in a palanquin, on the fourteenth on a swan or bull. No animal sacrifices are performed during the festival at the shrine itself; but on the eleventh day many sheep and goats are sacrificed in connection with the car procession. Just after the image is put on the car, a kid is brought in front of it and decapitated by a village watchman, or KAVALGAR, of the UMBELLAYAR caste. The KAVALGAR takes up the head and carcase and carries them round the car, letting the blood drip upon the ground, and then gives both to a Pariah servant of the shrine. When the car returns, a sheep is sacrificed in front of it. Its head is cut off by the KAVALGAR, and its head and body are allowed to lie upon the ground, while fruits, cocoanuts and camphor are offered. The man, who provides the sheep, ultimately takes the body, and the pujāri the head. While the car is being dragged through the streets, people who have made vows bring sheep to the

doors of their houses, and the KAVALGAR comes with his heavy chopper and cuts off their heads.

At the neighbouring village of KANNANUR, there is a curious local variation in the ordinary rite of sacrifice. During the festival of MARIAMMAN many people, who have made vows, bring sheep, goats, fowls, pigeons, parrots, cows and calves to the temple, and leave them in the compound alive. At the end of the festival these animals are all sold to a contractor! Two years ago they fetched Rs. 400, a good haul for the temple, which is a particularly large one, covering two acres of ground, enclosed by a high wall.

Buffalo sacrifices are not as common in the TAMIL as in the TELUGU country, but they are offered in many villages, especially in connection with the worship of MADURA-KALI-AMMAN. At a village called TURAYUR near TRICHINOPOLY, a buffalo sacrifice is offered once in five or six years. Before the day of the festival is fixed, the chief men of the village go to the shrine, offer rice and fruits, etc., and ask the goddess whether they may perform the festival. If a lizard utters a chirp in a part of the temple fixed on beforehand, it is taken as a sign that permission is given and the festival is arranged. The buffaloes devoted for sacrifice are generally chosen, some time beforehand, by people who make vows in sickness or trouble, and then allowed to roam about the village at will. When they become troublesome, the people go and ask permission of the deity to hold a sacrifice. The buffaloes are brought to the shrine on the appointed day, and killed by a man of the KALLAR caste, who cuts off the heads with a chopper. Nothing is done with the blood, but both head and carcase are thrown into a pit close by the shrine as soon as the animal is dead. The same pit is used at each festival, but it is cleared out for each occasion. When all the carcases have been put in, incense and camphor are burnt, cocoanut and fruits are offered on the edge of the pit, and then earth is thrown in, and the carcases are covered up. This takes place outside the temple walls, and during the sacrifice a curtain is drawn before the shrine, where the immovable stone image of the goddess is located; but, on the other hand, the metal image, used in processions, is taken out before the sacrifice begins, carried on a wooden lion, and placed on four stone pillars specially erected for the purpose outside the temple, about four or five yards from the place where the buffaloes are killed. No curtain is drawn before this image, but the sacrifice is performed in full view of the goddess. It is a curious little compromise between ancient

custom and BRAHMAN prejudice. At another village I found that BRAHMAN ideas had taken one step further in the worship of MADURA-KALIAMMAN, as no animal sacrifices of any kind are offered there to the goddess herself, but only to PERIYANNA-SWĀMI, a male deity residing on the top of a hill some three miles away from her shrine, and even there the pujāris lamented that, owing to the degeneracy of the age, offerers now take away both head and carcase for their own use, instead of leaving the head, as was done in better days, to be the perquisite of the pujāris. At one village I was told that there used to be buffalo sacrifices some twenty years ago; but the people did not know to what deity they were offered and none are ever offered now.

At PULLAMBADI, a village of some size in the TRICHINOPOLY DISTRICT, I was told that MADURA-KĀLI only accepts "VĒDIC," *i.e.*, holy sacrifices. All animal sacrifices, therefore, are made to MADURAI-VĪRAN or KARUPPU, and a curtain is drawn before MADURA-KĀLI while they are being offered. The pujāri in this village collects the blood of the animals in an earthen pot, mixes it with rice, and makes it up into little balls. Then, possessed by KARUPPU or MADURAI-VĪRAN, he takes the pot and runs round the temple enclosure, and at each corner throws up a ball of rice and blood, which is carried off by KARUPPU or MADURAI-VĪRAN, so the people firmly believe, and never falls down. The Munsif, who was quite a well educated man, assured me that this was a fact, and that he had seen it with his own eyes—only, as he admitted, the ceremony takes place in the dark!

Buffaloes are offered in some villages of the TANJORE DISTRICT both to KALIAMMAN and PIDĀRI. Where the sacrifice is strictly performed, as at VALLAM, the pujāri, who is a SUDRA, lives only on milk and fruit, and eats only once a day for a whole month beforehand, and on the day of the sacrifice puts the KAPU (cotton bracelet dyed with turmeric) on his right wrist before he takes hold of the sacrificial sword. It is supposed that he is first inspired by the deity before he can kill the victim. He cuts off the head sometimes in one blow, and sometimes in two or three. Nothing is done with the blood, and both head and carcase are buried in a pit near the shrine. The dung of the victim is mixed with water, and poured over the image of the deity. In some villages in the TAMIL country it is customary to take the entrails of the victim and hang them round the pujāri's neck, and put

the liver in his mouth during the procession, when the rice and blood is sprinkled through the village, and sometimes part of the entrails are cooked with rice and presented before the image. At one village I found that, after this procession had gone round the houses, it passed on to the burning ghāt, where the entrails are taken from the pujāri's neck and the liver from his mouth, and both are deposited with some curry and rice, which is afterwards eaten by a few of the low-caste people. These extremely repulsive processions, however, are not, as in the TELUGU country, especially connected with buffalo sacrifices.

An unfeeling custom prevails in one village, that I came across, which is considerably worse than seething a kid in its mother's milk. When a pig is sacrificed to ANGALAMMAN, its neck is first cut slightly at the top and the blood allowed to flow on to some boiled rice placed on a plantain leaf, and then the rice soaked in its own blood is given to the pig to eat. If the pig eats it, the omen is good, if not, the omen is bad; but in any case the pig has its head cut off by a SUDRA pujāri. In some villages the blood of the pig, offered to ANGALAMMAN, is mixed with boiled rice, taken to the burning ghāt, where the dead bodies are burned, and thrown into the air at night, as an offering to the evil spirits that hover round the place.

Among other curious applications of the blood of animals, not the least interesting and significant is the one that prevails in nearly all the villages of the PUDUKKŌTTAI TALUQ of the TRICHINOPOLY District, where it is the custom for all the villagers to dip cloths in the blood of animals slain simply for food, and hang them up on the eaves of their houses to protect the cattle against disease. This is probably a relic of an age when animal food was only eaten at the time of sacrifice.

It is refreshing to turn to a custom, connected with the worship of village deities, which can make some pretence to practical utility. In the village of PULLAMBADI, at the shrine of KULANTHAL AMMAN, whose festival has already been described on page 167, an interesting custom prevails, which seems to be not uncommon in those parts. When a creditor cannot recover a debt, he writes out a statement of his claim against his debtor on dried palmyra leaves, presents it to the goddess, and hangs it up on a spear before her image. If the claim is just, and the debtor does not pay, it is believed that he will be afflicted with sickness and terrifying dreams,

and that in his dreams the goddess will warn him to pay the debt at once. If, however, he disputes the claim, then he in turn writes out his statement of the case, and hangs it up on the same spear. The deity then decides which statement is true, and afflicts the perjurer with dreams and misfortunes, till the false statement is withdrawn. When the claim is acknowledged, the debtor brings the money to the pujāri, who places it before the goddess, and then sends for the creditor and informs him that the debt is paid. All the money thus paid into the temple coffers is handed over to the various creditors during the festival in April or May, after deducting the amount due to the temple treasury. This is certainly a simple method of doing justice in the matter of debts, and probably just as effective as the more elaborate and more expensive processes of our Courts of Law. I was told that about ten creditors come to the temple every year, and that the temple had made about Rs. 3,000, as its commission on the debts collected, during the last thirty years. Before that time the people came and stated their claims to the goddess orally, promising to give her a share, if the debts were recovered; but some thirty years ago the system of written statements was introduced, which, evidently, has proved far more effectual in the settlement of just claims, and much more profitable to the temple. To the practical British mind this seems the one really sensible ceremony connected with the worship of the village deities in South India.

## PROBABLE ORIGIN OF THE WORSHIP OF VILLAGE DEITIES.

The account given above of the rites and ceremonies connected with the worship of the village deities in South India does not pretend to be an exhaustive one. It would require many bulky volumes to enumerate the innumerable varieties of local use and custom prevailing in the different villages, and the result would be wearisome in the extreme; but enough has been said, I think, to give a fair idea of the general nature and character of this phase of HINDUISM, and to form a basis of comparison, on the one hand between the cult of the village deities and the BRAHMANICAL cults of VISHNU and SIVA, and on the other hand between the cults of village deities existing among the TELUGUS, CANARESE, and TAMILS; and, at any rate, this brief sketch of the religion of about 80 per cent. of the HINDU population of South

India may serve to dispel the idea, sometimes derived from a study of the classical literature of India, that the people of India are, as a body, a race of philosophers, or that, what is vaguely termed HINDUISM, is a system of refined philosophy, almost rivalling CHRISTIANITY or European philosophy in the purity of its morality and subtlety of its doctrines. Religious philosophy, undoubtedly, has played a great part in the development of the higher thought of the Indian people; but in South India, at any rate, the outlook of about 80 per cent. of the population on the visible world in which they live, and the invisible world which borders closely upon it, and their ideas about GOD and religion are represented, not by HINDU philosophy, but by the worship of their GRĀMA-DĒVATAS.

Considerable caution must be used in drawing conclusions from the striking resemblances between the ceremonies observed in the worship of village deities among the TELUGUS, CANARESE, and TAMILS, as the value of all evidence of this kind is largely discounted by the unifying influence of the great VIJIANAGAR EMPIRE. For about 250 years, from 1326 A.D. to 1565 A.D., the whole of South India was united under this great Empire, which had its capital on the TUNGABHADRA River, and formed the great bulwark of HINDUISM against the advance of the MUHAMMADANS. The capital itself was of vast extent, and gathered together men and women of all races from every part of South India. It must have formed, therefore, a great centre for the fusion of different ideas and customs; and, when the City of VIJIANAGAR was captured and rased to the ground by the MUHAMMADANS in 1565 A.D., TAMILS, TELUGUS, and CANARESE, may well have carried home with them many new ideas and customs borrowed from one another. We cannot assume, therefore, that, because a custom is widespread in the TAMIL, TELUGU, or CANARESE country now, it necessarily formed part of the worship of the village deities before the foundation of the VIJIANAGAR EMPIRE. Allowing, however, for this possible borrowing of religious rites and ceremonies, the resemblances between the rites in all three countries are very striking. Such a curious ceremony as that of cutting off the right fore-leg and putting it into the mouth of the victim, which is found to exist all over the three countries in various villages and towns, might possibly have been borrowed; but the general resemblance in type, which underlies all local differences of custom, can hardly have been due to this cause, and the general impression left by

a study of the various festivals and sacrifices in the three countries would be, I think, that they all belong to a common system, and had a common origin.

In the same way caution is needed in drawing conclusions from the resemblances between the worship of the village deities and the BRAHMANICAL cults of VISHNU and SIVA. The two systems of religion have existed side by side in the towns and villages for many centuries, and the same people have largely taken part in both. Naturally, therefore, they have borrowed freely from one another. In the TAMIL country the influence of BRAHMANISM on the cult of the village deities is very noticeable, and it is more than probable that many ceremonies, which originally belonged to the village deities, have been adopted by the BRAHMAN priests. No conclusions, therefore, can safely be drawn from the folk-lore, which represents various village goddesses as, in some way, connected with SIVA. It is quite possible that stories of this kind are simply due to a desire to connect the less dignified village deities with what was regarded as the higher form of worship controlled by the BRAHMANS. On the other hand, the points of difference between the worship of the village deities and that of SIVA and VISHNU, which have been noted in the introduction, are very strongly marked, and clearly indicate that the two systems of religion are quite distinct. The village goddesses are purely local deities, inflicting or warding off diseases and other calamities. They seem never to be regarded as having any relation to the world as a whole, and their worship is the religion of ignorant and uncivilized people, whose thoughts do not travel beyond their own surroundings and personal needs. On the other hand, SIVA and VISHNU represent a philosophic conception of great forces at work in the universe, forces of destruction and preservation, and their worship is a religion that could only have originated among men accustomed to philosophic speculation. They may have borrowed many ideas, customs and ceremonies from the more primitive religion of the villages; but the foundation and motive of the whole system are to be sought in the brain of the philosopher rather than in the fears and superstitions of uneducated villagers. At the same time, it is also true that morally the BRAHMANICAL system has sunk to lower depths than have been reached by the cruder religion of the village people. The worship of the village deities contains much that is physically repulsive. The details of a buffalo sacrifice are horrid to read about, and still worse to witness, and the sight of a PUJĀRI parading the streets with the entrails of a

lamb round his neck and its liver in his mouth would be to us disgusting; and, doubtless, there is much drunkenness and immorality connected with the village festivals; while the whole system of religion is prompted by fear and superstition, and seems almost entirely lacking in anything like a sense of sin or feelings of gratitude towards a higher spiritual Power. But still it is also true that, setting aside a few local customs in the worship of the village deities, there is nothing in the system itself which is quite so morally degrading and repulsive as the LINGAM worship of the SIVAITES, or the marriage of girls to the god, and their consequent dedication to a life of prostitution among the VAISHNAVITES. If the worship of SIVA and VISHNU has risen to greater heights, it has also sunk to lower moral depths than the less intellectual and less æsthetic worship of the GRĀMA-DĒVATAS.

What the origin of the village deities and their worship may have been, it is difficult to say. The system, as it now exists, combines many different ideas and customs, and has probably resulted from the fusion of various forms of religion. In the TAMIL country there are many features in the worship of the village deities, which, obviously, have been adopted from BRAHMANISM, *e.g.*, the elaborate washing of the images, and the growing aversion to animal sacrifices. So in MYSORE, there are traces of sun-worship in the cult of BISAL-MARI; and there are many features in the system everywhere, which seem obviously to be borrowed from the worship, or rather propitiation of the spirits of the departed. But the system as a whole is redolent of the soil, and evidently belongs to a pastoral and agricultural community. The village is the centre round which the system revolves, and the protection of the villagers the object for which it exists. At the same time, it is quite possible that the ultimate origin of the religion may be traced further back to a nomadic stage of society. Very many of the rites and ceremonies have now entirely lost their meaning, and, when the people are asked what a particular ceremony means or what its object is, their usual reply is simply "it is MĀMUL," *i.e.*, custom; and there are many details of the sacrifices, which seem strangely inconsistent with the general idea and theory of the worship, which now prevails. The one object of all the worship and sacrifices now is to propitiate various spirits, good and evil. And this is done by means of gifts, which, it is supposed, the spirits like, or by ceremonies which will please them. Some of the spirits are supposed to delight in bloodshed, so animals are killed in their

presence, and sometimes even the blood is given them to drink; or blood and rice are sprinkled over the fields and streets, or thrown up in the air for them to eat. To the less refined goddesses or to the coarser male attendants, like MADURAI-VĪRAN, arrack, toddy and cheroots are freely offered, because it is assumed that these gifts will rejoice their hearts, and propitiate them. But a great deal of the ritual, and many of the most striking ceremonies are quite inconsistent with this gift-theory of sacrifice and the idea of propitiation, which is now assumed to be the one motive and purpose of the festivals. For instance, one of the main features of the animal sacrifices is the varied applications of the blood of the victims. Sometimes, the blood is applied to the bodies of the worshippers themselves, to their foreheads and breasts, sometimes it is sprinkled on the lintel and doorposts of the shrine, sometimes on the houses or cattle, sometimes on the boundary stones, sometimes it is mixed with rice and scattered over the streets, or sprinkled all round the boundaries of the village lands. But what possible meaning could these various uses of the blood have according to the gift-theory of sacrifice? On this theory it would be intelligible why it should be presented, as is sometimes done, at the shrine of the deity, or even drunk, as at TRICHINOPOLY, by the Pujāri, who represents the goddess; but of these other uses of the blood, the gift-theory seems to furnish no adequate explanation. Or again, what possible meaning could the gift-theory suggest for the widespread custom of putting the entrails round the neck of the pujāri, and the liver in his mouth? It is not probable that such a custom as this originated without there being some reason or idea at the back of it; but on the gift-theory it seems absolutely meaningless.

Or again, another leading feature of the worship is the sacrificial feast in various forms. Sometimes the feast takes place on the spot in the compound of the shrine, more often the carcase is taken home by the offerer for a feast in his own house. Sometimes it is a formal and ceremonious act, as in certain villages of the TELUGU country, where five little MĀLA boys, called SIDDHULU, or "innocents," are fed with the flesh of the victim under cover of a large cloth, to keep off evil spirits or the evil eye. Here, again, the gift-theory seems quite inconsistent with the whole idea of the sacrificial feast. The explanations often given, that the goddess consumes the essence or spirit (*Saram* or *Avi*) of the gifts, while the worshippers take the material substance, is probably quite modern, and is certainly far too subtle to have occurred to the

mind of the primitive villager. I shrewdly suspect that it has really been borrowed from the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, as I have chiefly met with it in districts, where the Roman Catholic Church has been, for some two centuries, strong and influential; but, in any case, it can hardly be regarded as the original idea, which explains the sacrificial feast. On the other hand, all these ceremonies, which form some of the leading features of the whole system, find a natural and ready explanation, if we assume that the system originated in the desire for communion with the deity worshipped, and not in the idea of propitiation.

In the nomadic stage the natural form of society is that of tribes or clans, the members of which are akin to one another, or, at any rate, are assumed to be united by ties of blood relationship. All the members of the clan, then, are blood relations, and are bound together, as members of one family, for mutual help and protection. The normal attitude of every clan towards other clans is one of suspicion, hostility and war, and this constant pressure of hostile clans compels each individual clan, not only to maintain its unity and brotherhood, but, if possible, to enlarge its limits and add to its numbers. It becomes possible to do this by a convenient extension of the idea of blood relationship. If a man is not one of the clan by birth, he can be made one by, in some way, being made a partaker of its blood. In his "Introduction to the History of Religion" Mr. Jevons quotes several instances of this from different parts of the world, in both ancient and modern times.

The following examples from Africa will suffice to illustrate the custom:—"The exchange of blood is often practised amongst the blacks of Africa, as a token of alliance and friendship. The Mambettu people, after having inflicted small wounds upon each others' arms, reciprocally suck the blood, which flows from the incision. In the Unyora country the parties dip two coffee berries into the blood, and eat them. Amongst the Sandeh the proceedings are not so repulsive; the operator, armed with two sharp knives, inoculates the blood of one person into the wound of another. The exact manner in which this last operation is performed is described by Mr. Ward, who himself submitted to it. After noting that blood brotherhood is a form of cementing friendship and a guarantee of good faith, popular with all the Upper Congo tribes, he proceeds: "An incision was made in both our right arms, in the outer muscular swelling just below the elbow, and as the blood flowed in a tiny

stream, the charm doctor sprinkled powdered chalk and potash on the wounds, delivering the while, in rapid tones, an appeal to us to maintain unbroken the sanctity of the contract, and then, our arms being rubbed together, so that the flowing blood intermingled, we were declared to be brothers of one blood, whose interests henceforth should be united as our blood now was'."

These examples will suffice to illustrate the widespread idea that the actual drinking or application of the blood of a clan will create a blood-relationship and alliance among men, who are not actually members of the same family. It can easily be seen, then, how readily this idea would extend to the sphere of religion in what is generally known as the totemistic stage. The human clan in its struggle for existence found itself surrounded, not only by other human clans, but also by various tribes of animals, whom it looked upon as analogous to the clans of men; and it desired to strengthen its position by an alliance with one or another of these animal clans, which, for some reason, impressed itself upon its imagination as animated by some supernatural power. The animal clan then became what is now called the totem of the human clan; and the spirit that was supposed to animate the totem clan became, in a certain sense, an object of worship. One great purpose of the worship, then, was to cement and strengthen the alliance between the human clan and the animal clan; and the way in which this was done was through some application of the blood of the totem, or by, in some way, coming into contact with that which was specially connected with its life, or by partaking of its flesh. The object, then, of killing a member of the totem tribe becomes clear. Under ordinary circumstances it would be absolutely forbidden, and regarded as the murder of a kinsman; but on special occasions it was solemnly done in order to shed the blood and partake of the flesh, and so strengthen the alliance. The blood is regarded as the life, and when the blood of a member of the totem tribe of animals was shed, the life of the totem was brought to the spot where it was needed, and the blood could be applied to the worshippers as a bond of union, and then the union could be still further cemented by the feast upon the flesh, by which the spirit of the totem was absorbed and assimilated by its human kinsmen. The object of the animal sacrifice, therefore, was not in any sense to offer a gift, but to obtain communion with the totem-spirit.

Now, if we apply this theory of sacrifice to the sacrifices offered to the village deities in South India, we see that the

main ceremonies connected with them at once become intelligible; the various modes of sprinkling and applying the blood, and the different forms of the sacrificial feast were all originally intended to promote communion with the spirit that was worshipped. In the same way, even such a ceremony as the wearing of the entrails round the neck, and putting the liver in the mouth, acquires an intelligible meaning and purpose. The liver and entrails are naturally connected with the life of the animal, and the motive of this repulsive ceremony would seem to be an intense desire to obtain as close communion as possible with the object of worship by wearing those parts of its body that are specially connected with its life. So, too, this theory explains why the animal sacrificed is so often treated as an object of worship. In the case of the buffalo sacrifices in the TELUGU country, as we have seen, the buffalo is paraded through the village, decked with garlands and smeared with turmeric and kunkuma, and then, as it passes by the houses, people come out and pour water on its feet, and worship it. But why should this be done if the animal sacrificed is regarded as only a gift to the goddess? When, however, we realize that the animal sacrificed was not originally regarded as a gift, but as a member of the totem tribe and the representative of the spirit to be worshipped, the whole ceremony becomes full of meaning.

Then again, this theory of the origin of sacrifice supplies a very plausible and intelligible explanation of the origin of the use of stones and images to represent the village deities in India. At first sight it seems a complete mystery why a common, ordinary stone should be regarded as representing a god or goddess. Most of the stones used for this purpose in South Indian villages have absolutely nothing that is peculiar or distinctive about them. Often they are simply stone pillars of varying heights, and a large number are only small, conical stones, not more than six or seven inches high. Some, again, are flat slabs with figures carved on them in *bas relief*, and others are regular images. The images and carved *bas reliefs* we can understand; but how could these ordinary stones and stone pillars have ever come to be regarded as the representatives of spiritual beings? The theory of sacrifice connected with totemism supplies, at any rate, a possible and intelligible explanation. The Totem animal was killed in order to shed the blood and so secure the presence of the Totem deity at a particular spot, which then became sacred or taboo. To violate it would be a

grievous offence. Accordingly the spot was marked by a simple heap of stones or by an upright stone pillar, which would perhaps be sprinkled with the blood. Then, as totemism gradually died out and gave place to higher religious ideas and anthropomorphic conceptions of deity, the old totemistic conception of sacrifice became obscured, and the animal that was killed was regarded no longer as the representative of the object of worship, but as a gift to the deity. At the same time the sanctity of the spot became associated with the stones, originally set up to mark the place of sacrifice, and so in time the stone pillar itself became sacred, and came to be treated as the symbol of the deity to whom the sacrifice was offered, while the heap of stones developed into the sacred altar. We can probably trace one stage of his process of evolution in the ideas now connected with the boundary stone, ELLAI-KAL. No doubt, it was once simply a stone placed to mark the spot, on the boundary of the village lands, where the sacrifice was offered Then the stone became sacred, and the idea grew up that it was inhabited by the spirit who was worshipped. There, however, the process of evolution stopped, and the stone is not now regarded, like the other stones, as representing the deity, but simply as her abode.

Probably the other stones were once regarded in exactly the same light, and then advanced a step further and became representatives of the deities worshiped. The next step, to the carved human figures, whether *bas reliefs* or complete images, would be easy and natural, when once the deity had been conceived no longer as the spirit of a whole species of animals, but as akin to human beings.

When this change in religious ideas took place must, of course, be a matter of conjecture, but it probably coincided with the change from the nomadic to the settled pastoral and agricultural life, when the wandering clan developed into the village community, and the superiority of man to the lower animals had been definitely established.

And it is possible that the connection between the growth of agriculture and the origin of village communities, and so also of village deities, may account for the fact that the village deities of South India are almost always females. Agriculture naturally begins as the occupation of women rather than of men. The business of man in the tribe was to hunt and fight; but the cultivation of the fields, when it first began on a small scale, would almost certainly be regarded as part of the household duties of the women, and

beneath the dignity of their lords and masters. Indeed, it is a well known fact that, at the present day, among savage races, agriculture is left to the women. Hence it would be only natural that the agricultural deities, connected with the cultivation of the soil and probably at first exclusively worshipped by women, should be females rather than males. One trace of this is still found in the custom of the MĀLA PUJĀRI, who is a man, dressing up as a woman when he sits in the cart with the animals impaled alive all around him, and is dragged in procession through the village (*see* p. 136), as well as in the prominent part taken by women in some places in the waving of the ĀRATI (*see* p. 125).

These theories as to the origin of the village deities, of idolatry and of animal sacrifice in South India, can, of course, only be regarded as hypotheses. But, when we consider that the totemistic theory is able to furnish a plausible explanation of the crude form of idolatry which exists in many villages, and of many features in the sacrificial rites, which seem quite inconsistent with the existing ideas of sacrifice, we see that there is sufficient evidence to justify its adoption as a working hypothesis. And there can be no doubt that the ceremonial observed in these sacrifices gives very substantial support to the theory, that the original idea of sacrifice was not that of a gift to the deity, but communion with a supernatural power. And, if that is true, then we may see, even in these primitive rites, a foreshadowing of far higher forms of religious belief and practice. The mysterious efficacy attributed to the sprinkling of the blood might almost be regarded as an unconscious prophecy of the Christian doctrine of the Atonement, while the whole ritual of the sacrifices, even in its crudest and most revolting forms, bears witness to that instinctive craving after communion with GOD, which finds its highest expression and satisfaction in the sacramental system of the Christian church.

HENRY WHITEHEAD,
*Bishop of Madras.*

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# APPENDIX A.

## WORSHIP OF KĀLI BY COOLIES FROM THE UNITED PROVINCES AND CENTRAL PROVINCES AT THE YELLANDU COAL FIELD IN THE DECCAN.

Kāli is the cholera goddess. There is a temple to her near the pits, with a small conical stone in the shrine, about a foot high to represent the goddess. On Monday, July 23rd, being an auspicious day, puja was performed. At about 9 A.M. they made a small round pit about 2 feet in diameter and 2 feet deep, in front of the temple, and filled it with wood, which they set fire to. At about 10 A.M. some North-country Brahmins came and did puja by throwing rice and ghee, cocoanuts, gram, corn, jawāri, incense and camphor into the pit. At about 12 o'clock cocoanuts, sweets and jaggery are distributed to all the people present, and then the Brahmins depart. After that the tom-toms and music begin, and the lower caste people, Mochis (leather-workers), Parsis (outcastes), Ahirs (cultivators), Loadths (cultivators), Koris (weavers), etc., bring about eleven goats. Two are first sacrificed about 10 yards from the pit near the temple. The heads are cut off by a man chosen for the occasion. Nothing is done with the blood or the heads. The carcases are taken away by the Parsis and Mochis. The procession then starts round the cooly lines and villages, headed by the tom-toms and music. There is no sprinkling of rice or blood. The other goats are sacrificed at intervals of about two or three furlongs, after the procession has started. Two pigs are also taken along with the procession, and buried alive about a mile from the temple on the outskirts of the village. A pit is dug about three feet deep, and one pig is buried alive there. It is entirely covered over with earth, and smothered. There it remains, and is never taken out. Another pit is dug about a mile away in the opposite direction, and the second pig is buried in the same way. No puja is performed while the pigs are buried; but the tom-toms and music play vigorously, and the people all shout *Kāli-mai-ke-jay* (victory to Kāli mother). Afterwards they all go to the nullah and bathe, and then return home.

The Telugu people on the coal field offer buffalo sacrifices, as well as sheep and goats, during the cholera epidemic to Mahan Kāli, at the temple. They do not go in procession round the villages or cooly lines; but go round the temple three times, and do puja by breaking cocoanuts and offering fruits, plantains and betel-nuts, camphor and incense. The blood of the victims is sprinkled over heaps of rice offered to Kāli, and then the rice and blood are buried near the temple: but none of it is ever sprinkled round the villages, or in the streets, or on the houses.

The Mālas and Mādigas do not join in this sacrifice, except that a Mādiga is brought to kill the buffaloes. The sheep and goats are killed by other people. The Mālas and Mādigas do puja separately under a banian tree about a mile from the village to Mahan-Kāli. She is represented by a flat stone, round at the top, with nothing carved on it. They offer goats, sheep and buffaloes, and cook the carcases and eat them on the spot. Some of the rice is mixed with blood, and kept before the image with cocoanuts, fruits, etc., but not sprinkled anywhere. The heads are all buried near the tree. After the feast, all the meat and food is buried, and nothing is taken away. A good deal of arrack and toddy are consumed during the feast, and a little is offered to the goddess.

# APPENDIX B.

## THE BURYING OF PIGS.

On page 137 I have described the ceremony of burying a pig up to its neck, and driving the cattle of the village over its head which is a common feature of village festivals in the Telugu country, and have referred to two possible explanations of the custom, viz., (*a*) that it is a relic of human sacrifice, (*b*) that it is connected with the worship of the village goddess as an agricultural deity, the pig being sacred to agricultural deities in other parts of the world. Since writing this account of the ceremony, I have come across another instance of pig-burying in the Kurnool district. While I was on tour there in March last, an old man described to me the account he had received from his "forefathers" of the ceremonies observed when founding a new village. An auspicious site is selected and an auspicious day, and then in the centre of the site is dug a large hole, in which are placed different kinds of grain, small pieces of the five metals, silver, copper, iron and lead, and a large stone, called Boddu-rayée (*i.e.*, navel-stone), standing about three and-a-half feet above the ground, very like the ordinary boundary stones seen in the fields. And then, at the entrance of the village, in the centre of the main street, where most of the cattle pass in and out on their way to and from the fields, they dig another hole and bury a pig alive. This ceremony would be quite consistent with either of the explanations suggested as the origin of pig-burying. The pig may be buried at the entrance to the village as the emblem of fertility and strength to secure the prosperity of the agricultural community, the fertility of the fields and the health and fecundity of the cattle. Or, it may equally be a substitute for an original human sacrifice. The idea that a new building or institution must be inaugurated by the sacrifice of a human life is very common all over India. To this day there is often a panic among the villagers who live near the banks of a river, where a bridge is about to be built, because they think that one or more of their babies are sure to be required to bury under the foundations of the first pier. And when I was at Kalásapad, in the

Cuddapah district, in March, the Rev. A. Groves, the Missionary there, told me that, when a new ward was opened for their local mission dispensary last year, no one would go into it because the people imagined that the first to go in would be the needful sacrifice. Their fears were allayed by a religious service at the opening of the ward, but, had it been a Hindu hospital, probably a goat or sheep would have been killed as a substitute for the human victim.

The idea of substitution too is quite common in India. In the hook-swinging ceremony described on page 155, it is common both in the Telugu and Tamil districts to substitute a sheep for a man, and fasten the iron hooks in the muscles of its back. I asked the villagers at one village whether they did not think this very cruel. They answered, "Not at all. It does not hurt the sheep. It only bleats because it is lifted high up and swung round. The same sheep is used for three or four years running!"

# APPENDIX C.

## MISCELLANEOUS ADDITIONS.

Since the bulletin has been printed a few miscellaneous facts have come to my knowledge which are worth recording—

(*a*) It is curious how impossible it is ever to make any general statement on any subject in India with any degree of certainty. I thought that it was the invariable rule in the buffalo sacrifices that the right foreleg, not the left, should be cut off and placed in the mouth of the victim. But last March when I was talking to the villagers at Uyyálaváda in the Kurnool district, some 14 miles south of Giddalur, an old man who was describing the ceremonies of the festival of Ankalamma stated that the left leg was cut off. I asked whether he was sure it was the left not the right. He looked with a puzzled air from his right leg to his left, unable to make up his mind, apparently, which was which. Then a Mādiga got up, and said it was the left. On my asking him whether he was quite sure, he answered, "I have cut it off myself, with my own hands, every time for the last twenty years, and so I knought to ow." This seemed conclusive, and I abandoned my attitude of scepticism. It has been suggested to me that the reason for cutting off the right leg is that the right leg or hand is propitious in the case of males, and the left in the case of females. But the buffalo sacrificed in all the cases that I have come across is a male, and yet apparently sometimes the left leg not the right is used.

(*b*) At the same village of Uyyálaváda in the Kurnool district, the people described the ceremonies used at the festivals of Ankalamma and Peddamma. The latter are very much the same as those already described on pp. 129–33, except that the feeding of the five Māla boys is omitted, and the left instead of the right leg of the buffalo is placed in its mouth, and the clay image of the goddess is finally deposited inside the boundary of the village not outside, for the very excellent reason that their neighbours would attack them if they attempted to convey the wrathful deity over

their frontiers. Elsewhere as a compromise, I was told, they put the image exactly on the boundary.

But the ceremonies at the Ankalamma festival are worth recording. The festival lasts five days. On the first they offer some rice. On the second they fill a brass pot, put kunkuma and turmeric on it, hang garlands of flowers and even jewels round its neck, and then carry it in procession with tom-toms and fireworks through the village, finally bringing it back again to the shrine. On the third day at noon they sacrifice a sheep, carry the carcase round the temple, boil some cholam, mix it with the blood, and then sprinkle the blood and cholam round the shrine. On the fourth day, they tie together a large armful of bamboos about seven feet high, make artificial flowers of cotton and turmeric, tie them round the bamboos from top to bottom and then place the bundle under a sacred "Jumbi" tree, and leave it there. On the fifth day a large car is made with an arrangement of poles for the hook swinging ceremony (*see* page 155). A sheep is then suspended from the pole by iron hooks fastened through the muscles of its back and a band round its middle and swung round and round. Formerly, about forty years ago, a man was swung instead of a sheep. Two or three of the elder men in the village said that they had often seen men swing like this with iron hooks fastened into their backs, and that it did not hurt. As soon as the sheep is swung up, buffaloes, sheep and goats are sacrificed, and the car is then dragged in procession through the village. This concludes the ceremonies of the festival.

(*c*) In the same taluk of the Kurnool district I was told that the Mālas of those parts worship Peddamma and Mathamma (mother) as their special deity, quite apart from the village festival of Peddamma in which all the villagers join, but with precisely the same rites. This strengthens the conclusion which I should be inclined to draw from the very prominent part which the Mālas and Mādigas (the two sections of the Pariahs or outcastes in the Telugu country) play in the buffalo sacrifice and the festival of Peddamma, viz., that Peddamma was the deity of the aborigines who were conquered and enslaved by the Turanian immigrants into South India, and then became one of the village deities of the conquerors. Apparently no other caste specially worships Peddamma as its own caste deity.

(*d*) A quaint little piece of information was given me by one of the revenue inspectors near Giddalur. As we were on the way to Giddalur in the early morning talking on religious subjects, he pointed to a conical hill, and remarked that it would turn into a volcano. I asked why? He said, because there was no shrine or temple or sacred pillar upon it, and that every conical hill which has not some religious stone or building upon it turns into a volcano. When I enquired how he knew that, he said that he was certain of it from his own observation, as he had noticed that no conical hill which had a religious building on it ever did turn into a volcano! and added that this accounted for the fact that there were so many volcanoes in Europe and none in India. In the face of the last fact it seemed useless to argue the question. I may add that the revenue inspectors are educated and intelligent government officers.

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