

CHAPTER III.

THE PEOPLE.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS—Density of population—Its growth—Deficiency of females—Parent-tongue—Education—Occupations—Religions. THE JAINS. THE CHRISTIANS—Roman Catholic Mission—The London Mission. THE MUSALMANS—Dúdékulas. THE HINDUS—Villages and houses—Dress—Tattooing—Food—Amusements—Superstitions. RELIGIOUS LIFE—Bráhmans not plentiful—Nor powerful—Lingáyats numerous and influential—Large temples scarce—Lesser deities chiefly revered—Tree-worship—Snake-worship—Vows to temples. SOCIAL LIFE—Marriage rites—*Udike* marriage—Other marriage customs—Pancháyats—Adoption—Basavis. PRINCIPAL CASTES—Lingáyats—Bóyas or Bédars—Kurubas—Mádigas—Málas or Holeyas—Kabbéras—Lambádis—Korachas—Other large castes.

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GENERAL
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ISTICS.

—
Density of
population.

BELLARY contains fewer inhabitants than any district in the Presidency except its next neighbours, Kurnool and Anantapur, and the two exceptional cases of Madras City and the Nilgiris. When compared with the country in the south and west of the province, it is a very thinly populated tract, supporting less than half the number of persons to the square mile which those more fertile areas maintain; but nevertheless it is somewhat less sparsely peopled than the adjoining areas in the Deccan. Statistics of the matter appear in the separate Appendix to this volume, and it will be seen that the density of the population is highest in the Ádóni, Bellary and Hospet taluks and lowest in Rayadrug and Kúdligi, in the latter of which there is much forest and waste land. The figures are affected by the existence of large towns in the first three of the above taluks, but even if the inhabitants of these are left out of account Ádóni still heads the list.

Its growth.

As will appear in more detail in Chapter VIII below, the district was very severely hit by the great famine of 1876-78. At the census of 1881, taken three years after that visitation, its people were one-fifth fewer than they had been at the enumeration of 1871, five years before it occurred; and in Ádóni and Alúr taluks as much as one-third of the population had disappeared. Hospet and Rayadrug suffered least. The district took nearly three decades to recover the population it lost in those three years of distress. Latterly, however, though considerable emigration has taken place from it to Mysore and the Bombay Presidency and its gain by immigration is almost negligible, the rate of increase of its inhabitants is about equal to the average for the Presidency as a whole.

In Bellary, as in the other Ceded districts and Kistna and Nellore, there are, for some reason which has yet to be conclusively explained,¹ considerably fewer females than males. Munro noticed this peculiarity more than a hundred years ago and stated that it was then the popular belief that the gentler was always one-tenth less numerous than the sterner sex.

Canarese is the prevailing vernacular of the district, being spoken by slightly more than half the population. Telugu is the parent-tongue of nearly another third of it and Hindóstáni of about one-twelfth. Canarese is the language of the western taluks (in Hadagalli as many as nine-tenths of the people speak it) and of Bellary; but in Ádóni, Alúr and Rayadrug, though from a fourth to a third of the people speak Canarese, Telugu is the vernacular of the majority. The latter is the language of the courts in all taluks. An unusually large number of the people (13,000) speak Maráthi. Bellary adjoins the Marátha country and was much under Marátha influence in days gone by. The 10,000 Lambádis in the district speak among themselves the gipsy language called after them Lambádi or Labháni. Many diverse opinions are on record regarding its affinities. The Linguistic Survey of India has not yet examined it, but Dr. Grierson thinks² that the enquiries so far made show that it is based on Western Rájastháni. Some 5,000 of the Korachas speak the language of their caste, known variously as Koracha, Korava or Yerukala. It is a corrupt dialect of Tamil which has also yet to be reached by the Linguistic Survey.

The district is thus a polyglot place. Most of its people know at least two languages, but when a Canarese man converses with a Telugu each of them usually keeps to his own vernacular so that the questions will be in one tongue and the answers in another, both languages being understood by both parties.

The education of the people is referred to in Chapter X below, where it is shown that they are backward (though rather less so than their neighbours) in this matter, especially in Ádóni, Alúr and Rayadrug taluks.

Their occupations are dealt with in Chapter VI, which shows that an even more overwhelming majority than usual of them are dependent for their livelihood upon agriculture and the keeping of flocks and herds.

By religion, nearly nine-tenths of the people are Hindus. Statistics will be found in the separate Appendix. Practically all the remainder—a higher proportion than is usual in this Presidency

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ISTICS.Deficiency
of females.Parent-
tongue.

Education.

Occupations.

Religions.

¹ See Chapter IV of the report on the census of 1901 in Madras.

² Chapter VII of the report on the census of India in 1901.

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—are Musalmans. These latter are relatively most numerous in Bellary and Adóni taluks (especially in their head-quarter towns) and least so in Kúdligi. The Christians and the Jains do not together number even one in every hundred of the population. The former declined in numbers in the decade ending 1901, though they increased in every other district. Most of them are Roman Catholics, nearly four-fifths of them are found in Bellary town and over one-fourth of them are Europeans and Eurasians.

THE JAINS.

The Jains occur chiefly in Bellary, Hadagalli and Harpanahalli taluks, but even there their numbers are very small and, though the ruins of their temples are scattered throughout the country and show how widely their faith must formerly have prevailed, their influence upon the religious life of the district is now a negligible quantity. In dress, appearance and religious ceremonies the Jains (other than the foreign Márváris) now closely resemble the Bráhmans, wearing the thread, burning their dead, observing annual ceremonies, having exogamous gótras and prohibiting widow marriage or divorce. Their worship is however addressed to one or other of the tirthankaras, who are deified men and 24 in number. Like their fellows elsewhere, they are very scrupulous in avoiding the taking of life and the bird-catcher castes sometime trade upon this characteristic by bringing small birds and threatening to kill them unless they are paid something to let them go. Jains of the Bógara sub-division who work in brass cannot intermarry with the others but may dine with them.

THE CHRIS-
TIAN.

Excluding the S.P.G., which has only recently begun operations in the district, the Christian Missions in Bellary are those in charge of the Roman Catholic Church and the London Missionary Society respectively.

Roman
Catholic
Mission.

The former mission¹ is considerably the senior of the two. A record in an old register of baptisms, etc., at Mudkal in the Raichúr dcáb shows that in 1733 two missionaries, who were apparently Carmelites from Goa, were established in that place and visited the surrounding country. They were the Rev. Felice called by the natives Bággiánanda, and the Rev. Joannes Paradisi known as Rájéndra. They were followed by Fathers Ambrósio (Amritanáda) and Evangelist (Gnánabódha) and later by Father Clement (Kunupananda) who built the chapel at Mudkal. Father Paradisi died in 1793 and is buried near this building.² T

¹ For the account of it which follows I am indebted to the courtesy of Rev. J. Kleinschneider, Roman Catholic Chaplain at Bellary.

² His epitaph says:—Hic jacet P. Joannes Paradisi qui vixit ad 88 Missionem hanc rexit 41 an., ad fidem Xti. multos convertit et repositus virtuti requievit in Domino 13 Januarii 1793.

same record shows that at the time of his death there were three other missionaries, apparently natives, at Mudkal and that three Carmelites from Goa had also stayed there some months and then returned.

In 1775 the Rev. Joachim D'Souza, a secular priest called by the natives *Ádikanáda*, visited Bellary and in 1784 he moved from Golconda to Mudkal and began regular visits among the Christians throughout the Ceded districts. He built chapels at *Ádóni* and *Muddanagera* (*Alúr taluk*) and at other places in *Cuddapah*, *Kurnool* and *Anantapur*. He died at *Bangalore* in 1829 and is buried there in the Church of *St. Mary, Blackpalli*. He is still remembered with great veneration by the old people in parts of *Cuddapah*.

In 1828 the Rev. *Fulgencius Pedroza* was appointed to the charge of the Bellary mission under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Goa and held the post until 1844. In 1837, however, the Goa jurisdiction was transferred to the Vicar Apostolic of Madras and the Rev. *W. Dinan* was appointed by Government as Chaplain to the Roman Catholics among the troops at Bellary. Dissensions naturally arose from this double jurisdiction and though in 1862, on the arrival of the Archbishop of Goa, a compromise, afterwards approved by the Pope, was effected, difficulties continued until 1887, when the Goa jurisdiction ceased with the establishment of the regular hierarchy under Apostolic letter *Humanæ salutis auctor* dated 1st September 1886. Meanwhile, however, each party had established its own chapels and there are now in consequence considerably more of these than are required.

In 1840 Father *Dinan* went to *Belgaum*. He was succeeded by the Rev. *P. Doyle*, who was in charge of the mission for the next 37 years and did much to extend it. The natives called him *Dayánanda*, or "father of mercy." During his time the Church of *St. Lazarus* was erected in the *Cowl Bazaar*, the asylums for destitute children of European descent, still in existence, were founded, and the convent of the Nuns of the Good Shepherd was established. He died in 1877 and lies buried in *St. Lazarus' Church*.

At present the mission is controlled by the Rev. *J. Kleinschneider*, Roman Catholic Chaplain, and four European missionaries, all of whom belong to the *Missionary Society of St. Joseph, Mill Hill, London*.

The chief out-stations are at *Ádóni*, and at *Muddanagera* and *Rámadurgam* in the *Alúr taluk*. The principal educational institutions in charge of the mission are referred to in Chapter X below.

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TIAN.

The London
Mission.

The work of the London Mission in Bellary¹ was begun in 1810 by the Rev. J. Hands, who with considerable difficulty obtained permission from Government to settle there. He set himself to master Canarese and by 1812 had completed a translation of three of the Gospels and a grammar and vocabulary. In the same year a charity school for European and Eurasian children was founded. It was transferred to the charge of the Chaplain in 1843 and is now known as the Protestant Orphanage. In 1824 the church in Brucepettah, now used by the Tamil and Canarese congregations, was built—mainly from public subscriptions. It continued to be used by the English congregation till 20 years ago, when the late Mr. D. V. Abraham built a stone church in the fort and presented it to the mission. In 1826 a Press was started and by 1852, when it was abolished, it had issued a complete edition of the Scriptures in Canarese, besides many other publications.

Mr. Hands' active connection with the mission ceased in 1828 and two years later the Rev. John Reid took his place and continued in charge until his death in 1841. Among the colleagues and successors of these two gentlemen were the Revs. R. W. Thompsor (1837-48) and J. S. Wardlaw (1842-52), the latter being the founder of the school which eventually developed into the Wardlaw College, and Mr. J. Macartney (1857-62) who was afterward agent to the Rája of Sandur. But the chief control during the last half century has lain in the hands of three men, namely, J. B. Cole (1849-86), Edwin Lewis (1865-95) and Thomas Haines (1870-90). Mr. Lewis was especially distinguished by his intimate knowledge of Canarese, Telugu and Hindóstáni.

The present European staff consists of four missionaries, of whom one is a lady. There are three churches in Bellary town—one in Brucepettah, another in Cowl Bazaar, and a third in the fort—and others at four of the ten out-stations which have been established elsewhere in the district. Besides its educational institutions, the chief of which are referred to in Chapter X below, the mission supports a Boys' Boarding Home in Bellary, which is a hostel established in 1896 for boys attending the Wardlaw College and a Girls' Boarding Home, begun as an orphanage in 1833 and used by the girls at the mission's lower secondary school. It further manages a co-operative bank which was opened in 1898, pays 5 per cent. interest on deposits by members of the mission and grants them loans at 6 per cent.

¹ For the following particulars I am indebted to the kindness of the Rev. E. Lewis of the London Mission, the son of the Edwin Lewis mentioned below.

The Musalmans of the district are conspicuous for the amicable terms on which they live with their Hindu neighbours. The unfortunate disputes between the two bodies which are common in other places seem to be almost unknown in Bellary. Bráhmans very frequently have Musalman domestic servants and some of the upper castes of Hindus send their Musalman friends presents of sugar and so on at the Mohurrum. A majority of the faith call themselves Sheiks or Saiyads (these terms are very loosely used now-a-days) and foreign sections, such as Moghals and Patháns, are rare.

The Dúdékulas, however, as elsewhere in the Ceded districts, are numerous and aggregate nearly 10,000 persons. Their name means "cotton-caste" (compare the Tamil synonym Panjári) and they live chiefly by cotton-cleaning and the weaving of coarse fabrics. In appearance they are Dravidian rather than Áryan and they are perhaps either converts from Hindu castes or the produce of mixed unions. Their ways are a curious mixture of Musalman and Hindu elements. They profess to be followers of Islám, attend the mosques, submit to the authority of the Kázis, practise circumcision, and dine with other Musalmans. Yet they speak Canarese and Telugu far more often than Hindóstáni, dress like Hindus rather than Muhammadans, add Hindu titles to their names (*e.g.* Hussainappa), consult Bráhmans regarding auspicious days, tie tális at their weddings, do occasional worship at Hindu shrines and follow the Hindu law of inheritance.

A similar confusion of customs occurs among the butcher (Khasáyi) sub-division of the Musalmans.

There remain to be considered the Hindus, the chief element in the population of the district. It will be convenient to first notice a few points in which their social customs as a whole and their general religious life differ from those prevalent in other areas and then to add some account of the salient characteristics of those of their castes which are especially numerous in the district.

A hundred years ago a Bellary village was almost always fortified. Traces of the enclosing stone walls and the circular watch-towers still usually survive and near the ruined gates often stands a shrine to Hanumán, who guards the inhabitants from harm. Without such defences the place would have been at the mercy of the robbers and irregular cavalry, while with them showers of stones¹ were sufficient weapons. The necessity of living within the fortifications caused the houses to be very closely crowded together and in many villages there are only one or two streets

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THE MUSAL-
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Dúdékulas.

THE HINDUS.

Villages and
houses.

¹ Buchanan's *Mysore, etc.*, i, 277.

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which are wide enough to admit an ordinary country cart and the other thoroughfares are tortuous lanes. This necessity also checked the formation of hamlets, desirable as these are from the sanitary and agricultural points of view. When the "fort" (*kóta*) was filled to overflowing a *pêta* was built just outside it so as to enable the inhabitants to take refuge in it if need were, and several villages (Kampli, for example) still consist of a separate *kóta* and *pêta*. There were no quarters reserved for special castes, like the *agra-hárams* of other parts. Except the *Mádigas*, all castes lived in close proximity. Though the necessity for defences has disappeared the customs to which it gave rise still subsist.

The older type of house is itself not unlike a fort on a small scale. It has high stone walls without outside windows and only one entrance, and if it stands on the outskirts of the village this entrance generally opens towards the village instead of away from it. More recent buildings adopt the *pial*, or outer verandah, so general further south. So cramped was the space available for building that few Bellary houses have the central courtyard usual in other parts and the *tulasi* altar, which ought to be so placed that it can be circumambulated, has been crowded out and is often built close against the street wall. The rice-flour patterns seen in front of the thresholds of houses in the Tamil country are either omitted or done inside the house instead of out. The cattle usually occupy the front room instead of the back. The walls of the house are generally of rough stone in mud and the roof is nearly always flat, earth which will make good tiles being rare. Faggots and a foot or so of mud are piled on the horizontal rafters and coated outside with clay. Light and ventilation are secured by leaving a round hole in this construction which is covered with a pot in wet weather. In heavy rain these roofs leak greatly. As elsewhere, there are endless superstitions and rules regarding the manner in which new houses should be built. The decoration of a dwelling is usually confined to an occasional smearing of the parts round the doorway with red earth and whitewash and the average Bellary village is a dismal, dust-coloured, unlovely affair.

Dress.

The climate of the winter months necessitates warm clothing and the average ryot dresses in the thick, coarse, cotton stuff woven by the lower castes of the district, wears a voluminous white turban and carries the ever-present *kambli* or blanket. The accepted breadth for a man's cloth is some nine inches less than in the south, and the garment consequently covers less of the wearer's legs. The cool classes, especially in the Canarese taluks often wear short cotton drawers reaching down to the knee. Except among the *Bráhmans*, who affect cloths from many othe

places, the women nearly all wear the fabrics woven within the district. The chief dye used in these is indigo, which, unless carefully applied, washes to an unpleasant sort of purplish-blue; and this is the prevailing colour in a crowd of the lower classes. The tight-fitting bodice is almost universal, the only women who habitually do without it being the Oddes, the Myása Bóyas, one sub-division of the Kammās and one of the Ídigas. It is very generally made of mixed silk and cotton. The patchwork quilt is a favourite possession. It is an agglomeration of bits of any old cloths which are otherwise useless. Jewels are conspicuous by their scarcity. The Bellary ryot is said to prefer to hoard bullion rather than invest in jewels.

Tattooing is almost universal among the married women of all classes. The operation is done by women of the Killekyáta and Kuntsu Koracha castes. Vegetable pigments are used, the principal one being prepared, it is said, from the *tangédu* shrub. The designs are pricked in with needles, and castor-oil and turmeric are applied to reduce the swelling which follows. The patient usually has fever for three or four days. The designs employed are legion, but perhaps the favourite pattern is that called *jógi chedi*, which is supposed to represent the pile of twisted hair which professed ascetics wear on the top of their heads, but which looks more like a conventional representation of a plant.

The staple food of all but the Bráhmans and the Kómatis, who eat rice, is cholam. This is sometimes soaked until it can be husked by a little rubbing and then cooked whole like rice, or, more usually, it is ground into flour and made into chupattis which are eaten with such condiments and additions as the means of the family permit. The poorest classes flavour them only with chutneys. Korra and cambu are similarly either eaten whole or ground into flour, but ragi is always ground. Very few vegetables are consumed. The dry climate and the scarcity of wells prevent such things from being largely grown. Tobacco is more employed for chewing than smoking. Even the stalks of the plant are used, being sliced, powdered and then mixed with betel and nut and chewed.

Games and amusements seem fewer than usual. The little girls play at *kóláttam*—which is evidently an ancient pastime, being represented in the carvings on the temples at Hampi and elsewhere—or at games of the fox-and-geese type, and every October they celebrate the Gauripújá with such pomp and circumstance as the subscriptions they can collect will permit. The boys play at varieties of tip-cat and rounders. Their elders occasionally divert themselves with the marionette shows which the Killekyátas

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Tattooing.

Food.

Amusements.

CHAP. III. and some of the Baliyas exhibit. Scenes from the Rámáyana and
 THE HINDUS. Mahábhárata sometimes form an item in the programme, but
 too often the point of the play is its impropriety. The Lambádi
 women have their own dances, which consist of much posturing
 in time with a rather monotonous chant.

The only caste which goes in for manly sports seems to be
 the Bóyas—or Bédars as they are called in Canaresc. They
 organise regular drives for pig, hunt bears in some parts in a
 fearless manner,¹ are regular attendants at the village gym-
 nasium—a building without any ventilation, often constructed
 partly underground, in which the ideal exercise consists in using
 dumb-bells and clubs until a profuse perspiration follows,—get
 up wrestling-matches, tie a band of straw round one leg and
 challenge all and sundry to remove it, or back themselves to
 perform feats of strength such as running up the steep Joladarási
 hill near Hospet with a bag of grain on their backs.

Super-
 stitions.

The folklore and superstitions of the district would fill a
 volume. The more backward western taluks, in particular, afford
 a mine which would well repay exploitation by enquirers with
 sufficient leisure. Considerations of space prevent reference here
 to any but one or two of the outward and visible signs—obvious
 to the traveller through the district—of the inward workings of
 the minds of its people. They must serve as samples of the
 others.

When the rains fail, and in any case on the first full moon
 in September, rude human figures drawn on the ground with
 powdered charcoal may be seen at cross-roads and along big
 thoroughfares. They represent Jókumára the rain-god, apparently
 a local deity, and are made by the Barikes—a class of village-
 servants who are usually of the Gaurimakkalu sub-division of the
 Kabbéras. The villagers give the artists some small remuneration
 and believe that luck comes to those who pass over the figures.

At cross-roads, again, may sometimes be noticed odd geomet-
 rical patterns. These are put there at night by people suffering
 from disease, and the belief is that the affliction will pass to
 the person who first treads upon the charm.

By the sides of the roads often stands a wooden frame-work,
 mounted on little wheels and bearing three rude wooden images.
 This is the car of Máriamma, the goddess of small-pox and
 cholera, and her son and daughter. When disease breaks out the
 car bearing her and her children is taken round the village with

¹ For a description of their methods see a letter entitled 'Bóyas and
 Bears' in the *Madras Mail* of August 29th, 1902.

music and other due ceremony and then dragged to the eastern boundary. By this means the malignant essence of the goddess is removed from the village. The adjoining villagers haste to prevent this from settling upon them by taking the car on with musical honours as before. The car is thus often wheeled through a whole series of villages. Theoretically, the process ought to go on *ad infinitum*, but in practice it eventually stops at some boundary or other until Máriamma begins again to give trouble.

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The flat roofs of many houses may be seen to be decked with rags fluttering from sticks, piles of broken pots and so forth. These are to scare away owls. Owls are birds of ill-omen and if they sit on a roof and hoot misfortune will overtake the inmates of the house. They sometimes, it is said, vomit up blood and sometimes milk. If they sit on a house and bring up blood it is bad for the inmates; if milk, good. But the risk of the vomit turning out to be blood is apparently more feared than the off chance of its proving to be milk is hoped for, and it is thought best to be on the safe side and keep the owl at a distance.

In the middle of the threshold of nearly all the gateways of the ruined fortifications round the Bellary villages will be noticed a roughly cylindrical or conical stone, something like a lingam. This is the *Bodduráyi*, literally the "navel-stone" and so the "middle stone." It was planted there when the fort was built, and is affectionately regarded as being the boundary of the village site. Once a year, in May, just before the sowing season begins, a ceremony takes place in connection with it. Reverence is first made to the bullocks of the village and in the evening they are driven through the gateway past the *bodduráyi* with tom-toms, flutes and all kinds of music. The Barike next does *pújá* to the stone, and then a string of mango leaves is tied across the gateway above it. The villagers now form sides, one party trying to drive the bullocks through the gate and the other trying to keep them out. The greatest uproar and confusion naturally follow, and in the midst of the turmoil some bullock or other eventually breaks through the guardians of the gate and gains the village. If that first bullock is a red one, the red grains on the red soils will flourish in the coming season. If he is white, white crops like cotton and white cholam will prosper. If he is red-and-white, both kinds will do well.

The religious life and attitude of the Bellary people are markedly different from those of the Tamils of the south. Bráhmans are few in number and possess little sacerdotal authority; members of the Lingáyat sect are ubiquitous and powerful; the

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orthodox gods of the Hindu pantheon are less revered than the lesser village goddesses; such worship as is done to them is less punctilious and ritualistic; and round the cult of the minor deities has grown up a curious tangle of odd beliefs and customs which would be well worth unravelling. The space and time at present available only permit of the merest outline of the matter.

Bráhmans
not plentiful.

The Bráhmans of Bellary, two-thirds of whom speak Canarese and a majority of whom belong to the Mádhva sect, number less than 2 per cent. of the total population, or even of the Hindus, of the district. Bráhmans were never fond of settling in infertile tracts, and in Bellary the long period of Musalman domination, the disturbed years when the poligars were all-powerful, and the encroachments of the Lingáyats from across the Bombay border probably assisted to deter them from coming. Those who did come were, or have grown, less exclusive and punctilious and more secular than their fellows elsewhere. As has been seen, they do not live in separate *agrahárams* and they commonly employ Musalman domestic servants; they do not usually object to serving as puróhitas to Súdra castes; they will even accept *prasádam* (offerings made to the god) at the hands of the non-Bráhman priests who often officiate in the temples; they clip the ceremonies of their caste (such as the *tarpana* and *sráddha*) of much of their customary ritual; they conduct the worship in the temples in a manner which would be held casual and perfunctory in the south, and few of them remember more than a very little of the Védas.

Nor powerful.

The Bráhman has less sacerdotal authority in Bellary than in the south. The Lingáyats have their own spiritual gurus and other castes have followed suit by appointing members of their own community to such posts, so that the intervention of the Bráhman is no longer very necessary at weddings and funerals and his assistance is often dispensed with even in the search for lucky and unlucky days for undertaking enterprises. The Kómatis (and, in a less degree, the Kápus and the Baliyas) form a marked exception to this general rule. The Kómatis have a Bráhman guru, Bháskarácháriar at Náráyanadévarakeri in Hospet taluk, to whom they pay the greatest reverence. He holds sway over the four western taluks and parts of Bombay and the Nizam's Dominions and travels periodically round his charge in much state with drums, silver-sticks-in-waiting and belted peons to visit his adherents. He settles disputes, fines the unworthy, purifies the erring and collects subscriptions—which are usually assessed at the rate of one month's income per head—towards the finances of his *math*, which institution is in addition supported by landed inams.

The Lingáyats of the district, who are further referred to later on, are between seven and eight times as numerous as the Bráhmans and apparently (the statistics for several reasons seem uncertain guides) are increasing rapidly. Their temples, in striking contrast to most of the other Hindu shrines, are well-kept; they are, as a body, wealthy and enterprising and therefore influential; and though there is now no open antagonism between them and the Bráhmans they deny the sacerdotal authority of that caste and follow gurus of their own. The chief of these is the Totasvámi who lives in the Gadag taluk* of the Bombay Presidency. The four western taluks are included in his extensive charge and he travels round in the same kind of state and with much the same objects as the Bháskarácháriar of Náráyanadévarakeri.

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Lingáyats
numerous
and
influential.

Things being thus, it is not perhaps surprising that there should be few famous or well-attended temples in the district. The festival at the Hampi temple used to attract great crowds, but its glory has departed. The feasts at Mailár and Kuruvatti are rather cattle fairs than religious gatherings and pilgrims are said to return from them without having ever entered the temples. The shrine of Kumárasvámi in Sandur is more frequented by Maráthas and people from North India than by the inhabitants of the district and perhaps the fact that women are never allowed to see the god's image detracts from his popularity. Temples to the orthodox deities do, of course, exist in considerable numbers, but in the worship conducted at them there is an absence of the reverential attitude common in other districts. The bathing and feeding and dressing of the god are done at rarer intervals, the occasional worshipper contents himself with a reverence combined with a ring at the bell near the shrine to attract the god's attention, and the temples are used by travellers as cooking and halting places in a manner which would elsewhere be considered almost sacrilegious.

Large
temples
scarce.

The real worship of the people is paid to the shrines of Hanumán and of the village goddesses. The former abound, and there is a saying that there is no village without a cock and a Hanumán-temple. The village goddesses are many. Besides the usual Máriamma and Durgamma,¹ the water-goddess Gangamma² and the numerous nameless Ūr-ammás, or "village-mothers," there are several local *ammás* who are held in great repute, chief among whom are Hosúramma of Hosúru near Hospet, Huligiamma on the opposite side of the Tungabhadra, and Uchchangiamma on

Lesser
deities
chiefly
reverenced.

¹ See, for example, the Bellary Durgamma, p. 221 below.

² The festival to her in Hampáságaram (p. 241) is curious.

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Uchchangidurgam hill. The barbaric worship paid to these and the huge animal sacrifices which occur at their festivals are mentioned in the accounts of Harpanahalli and Kúdligi villages in Chapter XV below (pp. 254 and 292) and graphic descriptions of other somewhat similar ceremonies in the same neighbourhood will be found in a paper by Mr. F. Fawcett in the *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay*, vol. II, pp. 261—282.

Other unusual but popular deities are Kallésvara, the 'stone god' and Kattésvara, the 'wood god.' Brahma is also much worshipped. Sometimes four-faced images of him are set up, sometimes he is represented by a stone, like the stone cannon-balls referred to under Harpanahalli below (p. 253), and sometimes he is worshipped without the aid of any tangible image—a well in the Kámalápuram fort and one of the pillars in the Bágali temple being, for example, declared to be habitations of his.

Tree-
worship.

The pípal and margosa trees, as elsewhere, are revered and the worship of the *sami* or *vanni* tree (*prosopis spicigera*) is unusually popular. The story goes that it was on this tree that the five Pándava brothers concealed their arms when they set out in disguise and that the weapons turned to snakes and remained untouched until their return. At Uchchangiamma's festival it takes a prominent part and on the Dasara day people send their friends a few leaves of it by post as an auspicious greeting.

Snake-
worship.

Snake-worship seems to have been formerly far more common than it is now. Snake stones may be seen in almost every village, but few of them seem to get much attention. Vows are, however, made at snake shrines to procure children, and if a child is afterwards begotten it is given an appropriate name, such as Nágappa, Subbanna, Nágamma, etc. Fire-walking and hook-swinging are still popular.¹

Vows to
temples.

Vows to shrines are much in vogue. Women, and even men, will vow to devote themselves to a certain god if some wished-for boon, such as recovery from sickness, is granted them. Often the men are branded and thenceforward are known as *Dásaris* and live by begging. Those who have taken vows to the temple at Mailár are called *goravas*. *Ex voto* offerings are common.²

SOCIAL LIFE.
Marriage
rites.

In their general caste customs the non-Bráhmans of Bellary differ considerably from those of the southern districts. Among the upper classes of them the usual form of marriage, for example, is

¹ References to them will be found in the accounts of Bellary (p. 222), Hampáságaram (p. 241) and Rayadrag (p. 299) in Chapter XV.

² See, for example, the references to them in the accounts of Bellary (p. 222) and Harpanahalli (p. 254) in Chapter XV.

widely different from the Súdra rite in fashion in the South.¹ On or about the day of the marriage a branch of the "Indian coral tree"—*erythrina indica*, called in Canarese *háluvána*—is planted at the place where the marriage is to take place. It is called the *hálu-kamba*, or milk-pole, is decorated with saffron, chunam and green leaves and forms the centre of the subsequent ceremonies. On the wedding-day four pots are arranged in a square near this and a thread is passed round them. Within the enclosure so made the happy pair are bathed together (aged female relations whose husbands are still living assisting in the operation) and dressed in new cloths. This bathing is called *surge* in Canarese. Next, part of the thread which made the enclosure—which is called *konkana*—is taken, dipped in saffron, wrapped round a bit of saffron, one or two betel-leaves or other objects (the practice differs widely in different castes) and fastened to the wrists of the couple. Then the *táli* is tied to the bride's neck. The badge on this again differs greatly in different communities and it is sometimes tied by the bridegroom, sometimes by the officiating priest and sometimes by a dancing-girl or a Basavi, both of whom bring luck because they can never be widows. But it cannot be dispensed with since, as in other districts, the tying of it is the binding part of the ceremony. This over, the wedded pair eat out of the same leaf-platter, a ceremony which is called *bhúma*, and then the relations present are also feasted. These five rites, or variants of them, form part of the generality of the wedding ceremonies among the upper classes of non-Bráhmans. They are accompanied by feasts which vary in frequency according to the means of the party but which are seldom less than two, namely, the *dévar-úta*, or feast to the gods, and the *úr-úta*, or feast to the people of the caste in the village.

The maimed rites at the re-marriage of a widow or of a woman who has left her first husband (which marriages are, of course, only recognised by a limited number of castes) are very much simpler. The ceremony is called *udike*, which means "putting on" (clothes). No women but widows take any part in it. Sometimes the bride is merely taken by the other widows into a darkened room in the house, invested with a new cloth and bodice, brought out again, marked with *kunkumam* powder and given a *táli* and then handed over to her new husband. Sometimes the betrothed couple go in the evening to a Hanumán temple where the *pújári* and a bangle-seller wait by appointment. The man gives the woman a new cloth and bodice which she puts on, the bangle-seller invests her

Udike
marriage.

¹ This is a very general statement, but space will not permit of any exact differentiation of the various castes which do and do not adopt the form referred to or of the countless variations in its details which are prevalent.

CHAP. III. with new bracelets, the *pújári* pours holy water over their hands
SOCIAL LIFE. and they are one thenceforth. Sometimes a *táli* is tied round the
 woman's neck and sometimes not; sometimes a feast is given to
 the friends and at others it is omitted.

Other marriage customs. In most castes of the class referred to there is a definitely fixed
 bride-price, called the *teravu*, which the bridegroom has to pay
 to the bride's parents, and the price of a widow is very generally
 one-half of that of a maid.

Marriages are also only permissible outside the limits of the
 sub-division of the caste, called *bedagu*, to which the bridegroom
 belongs. A man cannot marry a girl whose *bedagu* is the same
 as his own, and a *bedagu* is thus what is known as an exogamous
 sub-division. It may be added here in parenthesis that there
 seem to be no traces of hypergamy in the marriage customs in
 Bellary and that no cases of totemism were met with.

Pancháyats. Pancháyats for the trial of caste questions and offences, usually
 held under the presidency of the hereditary *ejamán* or caste
 head, are as universal as elsewhere, but an unusual point about
 them seems to be the custom of dividing the fine inflicted into three
 parts, one for the priest, one for the members of the pancháyat and
 the third for the Sirkar. In Sandur State this last third is still paid
 into the State coffers, whence it is handed over to deserving charities

Adoption. The custom of *illatom* adoption, by which, in consideration of
 assistance in the management of the family property, a son-in-law
 is affiliated to the family and inherits like a son at the death of the
 adopter, prevails among the Kápús in at least some of the taluks
 of the district. So far as the matter has as yet been judicially
 investigated¹ the practice seems to be confined to this caste and to
 the Ceded districts and Nellore.

Basavis. Connected with adoption is the curious custom which prevails
 among all the lower castes in the western taluks (and to some
 extent in the eastern half of the district as well) of dedicating one
 of the daughters of a family at some temple as a "Basavi," a word
 which is apparently the feminine form of Basava, or Nandi, the
 bull of Siva. The practice is also common in the adjoining parts
 of Dharwar and Mysore. Parents without male issue often,
 instead of adopting a son in the usual manner,² dedicate a daughter

¹ See Mayne's *Hindu Law*, sec. 207, and I.L.R., 4 Mad., 272.

² There seems to be reason to believe that among certain of these castes the
 old rule that none but a brother's son may be adopted is still strictly observed.
 This naturally greatly limits adoptions and so forces parents to make their
 daughters Basavis. This and several other points about this interesting custom
 require clearing up by some one who has leisure for more than the few hasty
 enquiries to which the time at my disposal restricted me.

by a simple ceremony to the god of some temple and thenceforth by immemorial custom she may inherit her parents' property and perform their funeral rites as if she were a son. She does not marry, but lives in her parents' house with any man of equal or higher caste whom she may select and her children inherit her father's name and *bedagu* and not those of their own father. If she has a son he inherits her property; if she has only a daughter that daughter again becomes a Basavi. Parents desiring male issue of their own, cure from sickness in themselves or their children, or relief from some calamity, will similarly dedicate their daughter.

Apparently the right of a daughter to thus inherit in violation of the ordinary canons of Hindu law is a point which has never yet been actually settled by the civil courts, but the revenue authorities have frequently registered the patta of a deceased ryot in the name of his Basavi daughter, the more distant kindred who would in ordinary circumstances have succeeded having freely admitted her claims to be equal to those of a son.

The ceremony of dedication differs greatly in its details in different temples. Mr. Fawcett's paper in vol. II of the *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay* sets out at length several variants of it. If dedicated in a Vaishnava temple the girl is usually branded with the 'chank' and 'chakram' on the points of both shoulders and over the right breast. If initiated in a goddess' temple the ceremony is different and her position afterwards differs in several essentials. A second ceremony is necessary when she attains puberty.

The children of a Basavi are legitimate and neither they nor their mother are treated as being in any way inferior to their fellows. A Basavi, indeed, from the fact that she can never be a widow, is a most welcome guest at weddings. Basavis differ from the ordinary dancing-girls dedicated at temples in that their duties in the temples (which are confined to the shrine of their dedication) are almost nominal and that they do not prostitute themselves promiscuously for hire. A Basavi very usually lives faithfully with one man, who allows her a fixed sum weekly for her maintenance and a fixed quantity of new raiment annually, and she works for her family as hard as any other woman. Basavis are outwardly indistinguishable from other women and are for the most part poor coolies. In places there is a custom by which they are considered free to change their protectors once a year at the village car-festival or some similar anniversary and they usually seize this opportunity of putting their partners' affection to the test by suggesting that a new cloth and bodice would be a welcome present. So poor, as a rule, are the husbands that

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the police aver that these anniversaries are preceded by an unusual crop of petty thefts and burglaries committed by them in their efforts to provide their customary gifts. The High Court has held¹ that the dedication of a minor girl as a Basavi is an offence under section 372, Indian Penal Code, but the accused was not represented when the case was argued and several points which distinguish the results of the ceremony from that of the initiation of the ordinary dancing-girl were not placed before the learned judges.

PRINCIPAL
CASTES.

This chapter may conclude with some account of the salient characteristics of a few of the castes which are especially numerous in the district. My enquiries were practically confined to the western taluks and even there were prematurely cut short. One of the most striking points about the customs of the people in those parts is the manner in which they vary from village to village. Probably in the old unsettled days there was little communication between adjoining forts. The circumstance renders it difficult to claim more than a local application for many of the following statements.

Lingáyats.

The Lingáyats (or Virasaivas) may be first referred to. They are not a caste, but a sect of the Hindus. Their chief home is in the adjoining parts of Mysore and the Southern Marátha country, but even in Bellary they number as many as 12 per cent. of the total population, which is a larger proportion than occurs in any other district in this Presidency. Their head-quarters is the *math* at Ujjini in the Kúdligi taluk, the guru at which decides appeals from their pancháyats.

Regarding their origin and their tenets there is a considerable vernacular literature, much of which is conflicting and irreconcilable.² Apparently the sect originated at Kalyáni in the present Nizam's Dominions in the latter half of the twelfth century. In 1156, Bijjala, formerly a Kalachurya feudatory of the Western Chálukyás, ³ usurped his suzerain's throne. He was a Jain. His prime minister was a Saivite Bráhmaṇ named Báladéva. This man's nephew Basava, when a boy of eight, refused to be invested with the sacred thread, declaring himself appointed to destroy distinctions of caste. This attitude and his abilities

¹ I.L.R., 15 Mad., 75-7.

² For their origin, see Dr. Fleet in *Epig. Ind.* v., 239: for some of their customs see C. P. Brown in *Madr. Journ. Lit. and Sci.*, vol. xi (1840), and the Gazetteers of the Bijápúr and Dhárwár districts of Bombay. Mr. R. C. C. Carr, I.C.S., has written a monograph on their ways in the Bellary district to which the present account is greatly indebted.

³ See p. 30 above.

attracted attention and he eventually succeeded his uncle as Bijjala's minister and married the king's daughter. From his high position he spread the new doctrines and he was greatly assisted in the work by his nephew Channa Basava ('the beautiful Basava') who had been miraculously born to his unmarried sister. Shortly after 1167 he and his nephew caused Bijjala to be assassinated because he had wantonly blinded two pious Lingáyats and they had both to flee into hiding.

The two chief of the Lingáyat sacred books are the Basava purána (apparently finished during the 14th century) and the Channa Basava purána (written in the 16th century) which describe the lives and doings of these two pioneers. The Jains were the special objects of their persecution. Their creed also aimed at breaking down all the restrictions which Bráhmanism had set up. Caste distinctions were to be swept away; Siva was the one true god; the wearing of his emblem the lingam (whence the name Lingáyat) rendered all men equal; men were holy, not by birth alone, but in proportion as they were worthy followers of the faith; sacrifices, penances, pilgrimages and fasts were unnecessary; women were equal to men and were to be treated accordingly; and child-marriage and the prohibition of widow re-marriage were wrong. The faith purported to be the primitive Hindu faith cleared of later excrescences and the Lingáyats claimed to be the Puritans of the Hindus.

Every Lingáyat, man, woman or child, still wears on all occasions—usually knotted in a red silk handkerchief tied round the neck or the left arm, or sometimes slung round the neck in a silver case—the lingam with which he is solemnly invested at birth; but several others of the original cardinal principles of the faith have been departed from. Social distinctions gradually arose—some Lingáyats, indeed, now group the various divisions of the sect under the four traditional classes of Bráhman, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Súdra; by degrees a priesthood (the Jangams) established itself; elaborate forms of worship and ceremony were introduced and a religious system devised in which Bráhman influence is traceable; marriage is now allowed between infants; widow-marriage is regarded with disfavour; and the lowest castes, such as Málas and Mádigas, are not freely admitted to the fold.

The sect is a body of peaceable, hard-working and business-like (though markedly illiterate) people who engage in all sorts of occupations, except that they will not sell meat or toddy or do scavenging or leather-work. They do not wear the Hindu top-knot and they have no ceremonial pollution, allowing women in their monthly periods to cook the household meals and at deaths having a kind of feast in the same room with the corpse. They bury

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their dead in a sitting position, carrying them to the grave propped up in a chair, but unmarried persons are buried lying down. In both cases the deceased's lingam is placed in his left hand and buried with him. They have no sráddha. They do not eat meat or drink alcohol, and they will not dine with other castes. They regard their Jangam priests as incarnations of the deity and the reverence they pay them is scarcely to be distinguished from worship. They are apparently extending their hold over the Kurubas and the Kápus more rapidly than over any other castes and it is said that a Kápu girl remains a Hindu or is invested with the lingam according as she is betrothed to a Hindu Kápu or a Lingáyat Kápu. Usually, however, there is a regular rite of initiation of new converts.

Bóyas or
Bédars.

Of the various Hindu castes in Bellary, the Bóyas (called in Canarese Bédars, Byédas or Byádas) are far the strongest numerically. They aggregate some 177,000 persons, or over 18 per cent. of the total population. Many of the poligars whom Munro found in virtual possession of the country when it was ceded to the Company belonged to this caste, and their irregular levies and also a large proportion of Haidar's formidable forces were of the same breed. It has already been seen that they are perhaps the only people in the district who still retain any aptitude for manly sports. They are now for the most part cultivators and herdsmen or are engaged under Government as constables, peons, village watchmen and so forth.

Their community provides an instructive example of the growth of caste sub-divisions. Both the Telugu-speaking Bóyas and the Canarese-speaking Bédars are split into the two main divisions of 'Úru,' or village men, and 'Myása,' or grass-land men, and each of these divisions is again sub-divided into a number of the exogamous *bedagus* already referred to. Four of the best known of these sub-divisions are Yemmalavaru or 'buffalo-men'; Mandalavaru or 'men of the herd'; Pulavaru or 'flower-men'; and Minalavaru or 'fish-men.' They are in no way totemistic divisions. Curiously enough, each *bedagu* has its own particular god to which its members do especial reverence. But these *bedagus* bear the same names among both the Bóyas and the Bédars and also among both the Úru and Myása divisions of both Bóyas and Bédars. It thus seems clear that at some distant period all the Bóyas and all the Bédars must have belonged to one homogeneous caste.

At present, however, though Úru Bóyas will marry with Úru Bédars and Myása Bóyas with Myása Bédars, there is no intermarriage between Úrus and Myásas, whether they be Bóyas

or Bédars. Even if Úrus and Myásas dine together they sit in different rows—each division by themselves. Again, the Úrus (whether Bóyas or Bédars) will eat chicken and drink alcohol, but the Myásas will not touch a fowl nor any form of strong drink, and are so strict in this last matter that they will not even sit on mats made of the leaf of the date-palm, the tree which in Bellary provides all the toddy. The Úrus moreover celebrate their marriages with the ordinary ceremonial of the *hálu-kamba*, or, milk-pole, and the *surge*, or bathing of the happy pair; the bride sits on a flour-grinding stone and the bridegroom stands on a basket full of cholam and they call in Bráhmans to officiate. But the Myásas have a simpler ritual which omits most of these points and dispenses with the Bráhman. Other differences are that the Úru women wear *ravikkais*, or tight-fitting bodices, while the Myása women do not, and that the Úru men fasten their cotton drawers with a tape run through the top of them, while the Myásas tuck them under their waist-string. Both divisions eat beef and both have a hereditary headman, called the *ejamán*, and hereditary *dásaris* who act as their priests on occasion.

Round about Rayadrug and Gudékóta, but apparently nowhere else in the district, the Myása Bóyas, but not the Úru division, practise circumcision. With the single exception of some of the Kallans of Madura,¹ no other Hindu caste seems to do so. These Myásas seem quite proud of the custom and scout with scorn the idea of marrying into any family in which it is not the rule. The rite is performed when a boy is seven or eight. A very small piece of the skin is cut off by a man of the caste and the boy is then kept for eleven days in a separate hut and touched by no one. His food is given him on a piece of stone. On the twelfth day he is bathed, given a new cloth and brought back to the house, and his old cloth and the stone on which his food was served are thrown away. His relations in a body then take him to a *tangédu* (cassia auriculata) bush which is offered cocoanuts, flowers, and so forth and duly worshipped by them and him.

Girls on first attaining puberty are similarly kept for eleven days in a separate hut and afterwards made to do worship to a *tangédu* bush. This plant also receives reverence at funerals.

After the Bóyas and Bédars the most numerous caste in Bellary are the Kurubas, who are 97,000 strong. There are more of them in this district than in any other. They are the shepherds of the community and the blankets they weave from the wool of their sheep are referred to in Chapter VI (p. 107) below. They are split into two divisions called *Unnikankana* ("woollen thread") and *Hattikankana* ("cotton thread"), the former of whom use a

¹ Nelson's *Madura Manual*, part ii, 55.

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woollen thread to tie together (in the manner already described) the wrists of the happy couple at marriages and the latter employ one made of cotton. These two do not intermarry but they dine together in separate rows. Each of them has a number of *bedagus* and as these are the same in both divisions the caste, like the Bóyas, was apparently once a homogeneous unit. None of the *bedagus* are now totemistic in character—though some of their names (*e.g.*, *kóri*, a blanket; *belle*, silver; *hatti*, a hut; *honne*, gold; etc.) have a totemistic sound—and they thus differ from those mentioned in the North Arcot *Manual*.

The ritual at their marriages is of the usual kind already described, but in addition they have a betrothal ceremony called the *sakshi ville*, or “witness betel-leaf,” which consists in the formal partaking of betel and nut at the time when the marriage is originally agreed upon. An unusual rite is also in some cases observed after deaths, a pot of water being worshipped in the house on the eleventh day after the funeral and taken the next morning and emptied in some lonely place. The ceremony is named “the calling back of the dead,” but its real significance is not clear. Kurubas will not ride horses or ponies as they are the vehicle of their god Bírappa, who seems to be a form of Vira-bhadra. They have the usual hereditary *ejamáns* and *dásaris* (priests) and they furnish most of the *goravas* who are dedicated to the Mailár temple.

The most striking point about the caste is its strong leaning towards the Lingáyat faith. Almost everywhere Jangams are called in as priests and allegiance to the Lingáyat *maths* is acknowledged, and in places (Kámalápuram, for example) the ceremonies at weddings and funerals have been greatly modified in the direction of the Lingáyat pattern.

Mádigas.

Next in numerical importance to the Kurubas come the Mádigas, the leather-workers of the community. Their profession, and the facts that they eat beef and even carrion and drink heavily, place them very low in the social scale and they are obliged to live in a quarter by themselves, called the Mádiga-kéri, outside the village; they cannot enter the temples and so often have shrines of their own with priests of their own caste; and they have to act as their own barbers and washermen. There are, however, depths below these deeps and the Mádiga speaks scornfully of the Másálas, Asádas, Dakkalas and Chelavádiyás as people below him on the social ladder. Mádigas talk either Canarese or Telugu and difference of language is in itself no bar to intermarriage, the bride adopting her husband's vernacular. They have the usual exogamous *bedagus* and there is a fixed price for the bride, but in its essentials their marriage differs from the standard ceremony described above. It is a long affair, lasting sometimes eight

days, and the principal events in it are the feasts given to the relations of the contracting parties, to the members of their two bedagus and to the whole of their acquaintance in the caste. The *táli* is usually tied by the Mádiga priest known as the *thavatiga*, or drummer. This office is hereditary, but each successor to it has to be regularly ordained by a Kuruba guru at the local Mádiga shrine, the chief item in the ceremony being the tying round the neck of the candidate a thread bearing a representation of a goddess and, on either side of this, five white beads. Thenceforth the *thavatiga* is on no account allowed to engage in the caste profession of leather-work but lives on fees collected at weddings (these however only consist of a little rice, some betel-leaves and five "doddus," or one anna eight pies) and by begging. He goes round to the houses of the caste with a little drum slung over his shoulder and collects contributions.

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A marriage is never consummated until three months after it is celebrated, even though the bride be of age at the time. *Udike* marriages are allowed and the woman and her children are received in Mádiga society, but more than usual care is taken that no one but the parties and widows shall witness the ceremony and no one but a widower is allowed to avail himself of the form. Basavis are dedicated, but no one but the Mádigas themselves ever consorts with them.

The dead are usually buried but are burnt sometimes. The body is buried naked, except for a few leaves. Children are interred face downwards. Pregnant women are burnt. The bier is usually made of the milk-hedge plant.

Accounts of this caste in other localities speak of their having invented stories of their descent from sages and other great people and of their possessing customs which show that they were not always so low down the social ladder as they now are, but I could hear of neither in Bellary.

Almost equally inferior in position to the Mádigas are the Málás, or, as they are called in Canarese, the Holeyas. They eat beef and drink heavily, and so are debarred entrance to the temples and the use of the ordinary village wells and have to serve as their own barbers and washermen. They are the musicians of the community and many of them also weave the coarse white cotton fabrics usually worn by the men of the district. Their marriage ceremonies resemble the standard form already described, but, like the Mádigas, they include in them several feasts and insist on a three months' interval before consummation. In places the Málás worship a *tangédu* bush once a year, but the origin and meaning of the custom is obscure. The caste shows a considerable tendency towards the adoption of the Lingáyat faith and customs.

Málás or
Holeyas.

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Kabbéras.

The Kabbéras are grouped into two divisions, the Gaurimakkalu, or sons of Gauri (Párvati), and the Gangimakkalu, or sons of Ganga, the goddess of water, and these do not intermarry but will dine together. Each has its *bedagus* and these seem to be different in the two sub-divisions. The Gaurimakkalu are scarce in Bellary and belong chiefly to Mysore. They seem to be higher in the social scale (as such things are measured among Hindus) than the Gangimakkalu, as they employ Bráhmans as priests instead of men of their own caste, burn their dead instead of burying them, hold annual ceremonies in memory of them, and prohibit the re-marriage of widows.

The Gangimakkalu were apparently originally engaged in all the pursuits connected with water, such as propelling boats, catching fish and so forth, and they are especially numerous in villages along the banks of the Tungabhadra. But they are at present engaged in a number of other callings and, perhaps in consequence, several occupational sub-divisions have arisen, the members of which are more often known by their occupational title than as either Gangimakkalu or Kabbéras. The Barikes, for example, are a class of village servants who keep the village *chávadi* clean, look after the wants of officials halting in the village and do other similar duties; the Jálakáras are washers of gold-dust; the Madderu are dyers who use the root of the *maddi* (*morinda citrifolia*) tree; and apparently (the point is one which I have not had time to clear up) the Besthas, who have often been treated as a separate caste, are really a sub-division of the Gangimakkalu who were originally palanquin-bearers, but now that these vehicles have gone out of fashion are employed in divers other ways.

The marriage ceremony among the Gangimakkalu is according to the standard rite already described, and the betrothal is formally evidenced by the partaking of betel-leaf in the girl's house in the manner followed by the Kurubas and mentioned above. As among the Mádigas, the marriage is not consummated for three months after its celebration. The caste also follows the Kuruba ceremony of 'calling back the dead.'

Lambádis.

The Lambádis are more numerous in Bellary than in any other Madras district. They are so widely distributed throughout India and are so striking in their appearance that they have frequently been described and it is not necessary to attempt any complete account of them. Their Áryan features and high nasal index and the curious dress and ornaments of their womenkind are well-known. Their language has already been referred to above. In Bellary they do not recognise the name Sugáli which is applied to them in some places. They have certain exogamous divisions. They live in the usual *tandas* or collections of huts built here and there outside villages and each *tanda* is ruled by a hereditary *náyak*

or headman. Their *pújáris* are also hereditary. Both officers require, however, to be formally confirmed in their appointments. The *Lambádís* used to live by pack-bullock trade with the west coast and by supplying grain to the various armies, and they still remember the names of some of the generals who employed their forebears. When peace and the railways came and did away with these callings they fell back for a time upon crime as a livelihood, but they have now mostly taken to agriculture and grazing and are not much more criminal than other castes.

Their most curious rite is the marriage ceremony, and of this there seems to be no description on record. It doubtless differs in detail in different localities, but as acted before me by a number of both sexes of the caste it runs as follows: The bridegroom arrives at night at the bride's house with a cloth covering his head and an elaborately embroidered bag containing betel and nut slung from his shoulder. Outside the house, at the four corners of a square, are arranged four piles of earthen pots—five pots in each. Within this square two grain-pounding pestles are stuck upright in the ground. The bride is decked with the cloth peculiar to married women and taken outside the house to meet the bridegroom. Both stand within the square of pots and round their shoulders is tied a cloth in which the officiating *Bráhma*n knots a rupee. This *Bráhma*n, it may at once be noted, has little more to do with the ceremony beyond ejaculating at intervals "*Shóbhána! Shóbhána!*" or "may it prosper!" Then the right hands of the couple are joined and they walk seven times round each of the upright pestles while the women chant the following song, one line being sung for each journey round the pestle:—

Téró mэрó hóyé ládi,

(To yourself and myself marriage has taken place,)

Ekkat pэрó pharlé ládi,

(Together we will walk round the marriage pole,)

Tina pэрá hóyé ládi,

(Walk the third time; marriage has taken place,)

Tuyí hamári ládi,

(You are mine by marriage,)

Páncha pэрá hóyé ládi,

(Walk the fifth time; marriage has taken place,)

Chhó pэрá hóyé ládi,

(Walk the sixth time; marriage has taken place,)

Sát pэрá hóyé ládi,

(Walk the seventh time; marriage has taken place,)

Sát pэрámi hóyé tumári,

(We have walked seven times; I am yours,)

Sát pэрá par liyá.

(Walk the seventh time; you are mine.)

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The couple then sit on a blanket on the ground near one of the pestles and are completely covered with a cloth. The bride gives the groom seven little balls compounded of rice, ghee and sugar, which he eats. He then gives her seven others which she in turn eats. The process is repeated near the other pestle. The women keep on chanting all the while. Then the pair go into the house and the cloth into which the rupee was knotted is untied and the ceremonies for that night are over. Next day the couple are bathed (separately) and feasting takes place. That evening the girl's mother or near female relations tie to the locks on each side of her temples the curious badges, called *ghugri*, which distinguish a married from an unmarried woman, fasten a bunch of tassels to her back hair, and girdle her with a tasselled waist-band from which is suspended a little tasselled bag into which the bridegroom puts Rs. 5. These last two are donned thereafter on great occasions, but are not worn every day. The next day the girl is taken home by her new husband.

Korachas.

The Korachas are not particularly numerous, but some of their sections are very notorious for their inveterate criminality.¹ Their wandering habits and moveable huts have often been described. They seem to have originally been all members of one homogeneous caste, for, whatever may be their occupation, they appear to all have the same four *bedagus*, namely, *Sátapádi*, *Kávádi*, *Manepadi* and *Manaragutti*. But the caste is now split up into a number of functional sub-divisions which do not freely intermarry (the exact rules regarding this intermarriage, I have not had time thoroughly to clear up) and which differ in characteristics as well as occupation. These divisions are the *Úru*, the *Eddulu* or *Vyábári*, the *Dabba* or *Tádu*, and the *Kuntsu* or *Kóti* Korachas. The names are derived from the callings of the different groups, the *Úrus* being those who live a fairly-settled village life; the *Eddulus* or *Vyábáris* those who sell cattle and trade; the *Dabbas* or *Tádus* those who make mats and ropes; and the *Kuntsus* or *Kótis* those who make the weavers' brushes or travel about with performing monkeys.

The *Úru* and the *Kuntsu* or *Kóti* sub-divisions are reputed the least criminal and the *Eddulus* or *Vyábáris* the most so. The latter are especially addicted to dacoity and cattle-lifting. With the *Dabba* or *Tádu* Korachas burglary is more popular. The *Kuntsus* are very handy at snaring birds. The smaller kinds they catch by liming either twigs or an arrangement of bits of bamboo with a worm hung inside it, or by setting horse-hair nooses round the nests. Quails they capture by freely snaring a piece of ground and

¹ See Chapter XIII (p. 185) below.

then putting a quail in a cage in the middle of it to lure the birds towards the snares. They also catch them (and partridges too) by driving the bevy towards a collapsible net. To do this they cover themselves with a dark blanket, conceal their heads in a kind of big hat made of hair, feathers and grass, and stalk the birds from behind a bullock trained to the work, very gradually driving them into the net. They also occasionally capture black-buck by sending a tame buck with nooses on his horns to fight with a wild one. The latter speedily gets his horns entangled in the nooses and is then easily secured.

Besides the above communities there are a number of castes which are neither peculiar to Bellary, nor found there in any exceptional strength. Such are the landowning Kápus; the shepherd Gollas and Gaulis; the Oddes, who work stone and dig tanks and wells; the merchant and shop-keeping castes of the Kómatís, Baliyas and Banajigas; the Upparas, who formerly manufactured earth-salt and are now engaged in a variety of callings; the Sáles, Kurnis, Dévángas, and Tógatas, who are the weavers of the district; the Tsákalas and Mangalas, its washermen and barbers; the Ídigas, who draw the toddy; and the Kamsalas and Pánehálas who are the smiths and masons of the community. These may be left to be described in the Gazetteers of the districts in which each is especially conspicuous.

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Other large
castes.