

were widowed; and less than one per cent were found to be unmarried at ages over 60. There were more widows at each successive age growth, the result of early marriage of girls to husbands much older and the general discouragement to widow remarriage. 17·9 per cent of women of all ages were widows in this district in 1931 as against 17·8 per cent for the whole Presidency. At ages above 40, 67 per cent of the women were widows as against a Presidency average of 61·8—that is to say, when middle age is reached more than three-fifths of the district women are found to be widowed. There is a great rush of marriages among girls in the age period 15—30 (it is really between 15 and 20) and for the males the marriage age is between 20 and 40 as is shown by the figures in column 2 of age periods 15—30 and 30—40. Of marriages of girls in the age period 0—5, this district returned 0·34 per cent as against 0·01 per cent in Malabar which adjoins it; the latter is in fact the first district to show almost complete abstention from infant marriage. The better educated regions were generally less prone to adopt child marriages though caste custom plays a large part in this affair.

CHAPTER IV.

RAINFALL, SEASONS AND PRICES.

*Pages 58 to 78.—Substitute:—*There were in 1935 eleven stations in the district where rainfall was registered and Table XII of this volume gives the average rainfall recorded in these stations during the years 1870 to 1930. The mean annual rainfall for the whole district during this long period of 61 years was 146·92 which is the heaviest for any district in the Presidency. The minimum fall was 98·99 inches in 1881, the next lowest fall being 114·57 inches in 1875. The highest fall recorded was in 1878 (178·61 inches). It would appear from Table XII that very little rain falls during the first four months of the year, but in May the average rises to 5·58 inches. From June to September the period of the south-west monsoon, the average fall is 127·05 inches of which about two-thirds are received in June and July. In October the north-east monsoon sets in, which gives an average of 12·31 inches of which nearly two-thirds fall in October. The rainfall is smallest in Kásara-gód taluk which borders on the Malabar district, but the heaviest fall is in Kárkál and Beltangadi where the annual averages are 185·53 and 175·06 inches, respectively.

South Kanara is an exceptionally favoured district in respect of its rainfall, and famine is almost unknown, though, scarcity in the neighbouring districts tends to increase the prices of

food-grains here. The rains during the south-west monsoon are so plentiful that there is hardly any necessity for storing water in tanks for cultivation as in other districts of the Presidency. Rice, for instance, is raised by means of rains alone and without the aid of artificial irrigation.

The reports to the Board of Revenue by the Collectors from fasli 1221 (A.D. 1811-12) of which short notes appear in the Manual show that only in a few years the rains were unseasonal or abnormal and flooded the country and affected the crops; and in no year was it said that the rivers overflowed their banks and destroyed villages or caused other serious damage to animals, crops and plantations. Perhaps there were during the century and more that followed fasli 1221 a few years in which the rains were followed by disastrous floods in the rivers but we have no record of them, the reports of the Collectors abstracted in the Manual only relating to the influence of the rains or absence of rains on the agricultural operations in the district and on the prices of food-grains.

Some recent
floods.

In July and August 1923 and in July of the following year there were disastrous floods in the district owing to heavy and continuous monsoon rains in those months. The rivers had to carry more water than they could within their banks and so overflowed to such an extent that the villages and towns on them or at their confluence with other rivers or the sea were greatly damaged and in some instances the bridges across them were broken up or destroyed. In the floods of July 1923 all taluks except Kásaragód were affected. With great difficulty life and property had to be saved in some of the villages and towns. The Gangóly bar at Coondapoor was widened and the iron bridge over the Deli-Holé river was destroyed. The widening of the bar was a blessing in disguise for it helped the quick passage of flood waters into the sea. The floods that these rivers brought down a month later, that is in August, were more destructive and seriously affected the villages of Bantvál, Panemangalore, Vénoor and Uppinangadi. On the sixth and seventh of that month large portions of the streets of Bantvál were laid low and more than a thousand people rendered homeless. The bulk of them left for Mangalore and so eased the situation in this small place. Rice and grain worth Rs. 20,000 stored in the godowns along the river bank were damaged. Most of the houses and the girder bridge at Panemangalore were destroyed. Kásaragód taluk was also affected this time as the Paiswáni was heavily flooded. The worst sufferer was, however, Uppinangadi of which the greater part was razed to the ground, for its two main streets between the Kumara-dhári and Nétrávathi rivers were completely destroyed except for a dozen buildings including the temple, hospital, police station and tile factory. The forest range office and the post

office were washed away with all their records and furniture. The big bridges at Puchamógar and Vénóor and several minor culverts and bridges were destroyed. At Mangalore, besides the damage to the railway line, several houses in Kudróli, Sultan's Battery, Bólár and Jeppu collapsed and the bar opposite Sultan's Battery got widened. The floods of July 1924 chiefly affected the coast, though the roads all over the district were badly cut up and breached in several places. The floods, though not as great as in the previous year, lasted for ten days and damaged the crops. The widening of the bar at Kásaragód prevented damage to houses along the river banks but breaches on the roads including some of the ghat roads involved the district board in heavy expenditure. Government officers and non-officials showed great energy in coming to the rescue of victims of the floods. Remissions of land revenue of about Rs. 25,000, grant of two lakhs in agricultural loans and free supply of building material to the poorer classes of people were allowed by Government and local relief committees as in Tonse West and Kalianpur had to feed and give shelter to hundreds of people for several days and to clothe many of them. The owner of the tile factory at Uppinangadi clothed and fed about a thousand people at his factory.

There being few failures of yearly rains in the district, it is no wonder that South Kanara never found itself in the grip of any serious famine. The reports of the early Collectors referred to above depicted a gloomy view of the seasons in some years, but they were apparently influenced by scarcities in a few isolated parts of the district. Besides landowners and farmers all the world over would seldom admit that any season is entirely satisfactory, for they set up a standard of perfection which could not be reached even in the most prosperous years. Famine has been practically unknown in the district which has been specially favoured by nature with rainfall in seasons so plentiful and so evenly distributed that the people raise their first and best crop of paddy without any more effort than ploughing the land, preparing the plots and sowing the seeds. Nature comes to their help and an abundant rainfall helps in the growth and maturing of the crops. It was only in one year 1872 that any relief work had to be opened, but this was not due to any actual famine in the district but to distress caused by an abnormal export of grains which tended to raise the prices. There have been subsequently many famines in other districts but none of them actually extended to South Kanara; they merely tended to raise the prices of food grains.

A table of prices of important staple food grains during the faslis 1326 to 1342 at the various taluk centres is given in Table XVIII of this volume. It will be seen from it that the prices were generally above the warning rate mentioned in the