

## RELIGION.

The essential features of the religion of the Coorgs are anti-Brahmanical and consist of Ancestral and Demon Worship. But 'it is not easy,' remarks the Revd. F. Kittel, 'to find out which of their superstitions the Coorgs brought with them at the time of their immigration, and which were imported afterwards. Their superstitions, however, shew Maleyála, Tulu, Kannaḍa, and Bráhmāna elements.

The Brahmans who are domiciled in Coorg have succeeded in introducing Mahadeva and Subrahmanya (under the name Iguṭṭappa), in entirely Brahmanizing the worship of the river Kávéri, in having temples erected and idols set up, in spreading puranic tales, and in usurping to some extent the puja at the places of Coorg worship. They have been greatly assisted by the Lingayats in these successful endeavours, especially in the introduction of the Linga. Tulus still manage to smuggle in their demons; Maleyalas have made themselves indispensable at demon and ancestor worship, and are also increasing the number of demons; and Mysoreans, at certain times of the year, bring a Māri-amma and carry it through the country to have the people's vows paid to it.\*

Though Coorg tradition has been supplanted by Brahmanism, and what information one is able to obtain is in most cases but a faint echo of the legends of the Kávéri Purána or some other brahmanical imposition, there is one story free from this imputation, and it throws light on the origin of some of the Coorg deities who are not the creations of brahmanical fancy, though their shrines are now presided over by Brahmans. The story is given by the Revd. G. Richter, as taken from oral tradition, and runs thus :—

In ancient times there lived in the Malabar country six brothers and a sister. Five of them, accompanied by their sister Ponnangálatamma, went to Coorg by the Páditōra ghát. While they were on the road, four of them said : 'How is it that our sister comes with us? the people will say that she is our wife.' The fifth replied : 'If she comes with us, we will spoil her caste.' When they came to the Chauripade hill near the

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\* *Ind. Ant.* II, 47.

Kakabé river, they felt hungry. Then Iguttappa said to his sister : ' Prepare us some food.' She replied : ' I have neither fire nor rice.' Iguttappa said : ' I will give you rice, but you must boil it without fire.' She replied : ' I will boil it without fire, but you must eat it without salt.' To this the brothers agreed. Then Ponnangálatamma, seeing a cow, one belonging to the Paradandra house, went and milked her, letting the milk fall into a pot full of rice, and while the brothers were sleeping in the shade of a tree, went to the bank of the river and buried the vessel in the sand, where it began to boil. Then she called her brothers to eat the rice which she had prepared.

When they had eaten enough, Iguttappa took some rice, threw it up into the air, and exclaimed : ' See how the hail is falling from the sky.' Ponnangálatamma, angry at this, took up a wooden ladle, and giving him a heavy blow on his back, said : ' See how the thunder breaks in the monsoon.' Then the other brothers all laughed at him. Afterwards, while they were sitting together and chewing betel, Pálúrappa said : ' Let us see whose betel is the reddest.' Then they all spat out the betel into their hands to look at it, after which the brothers, pretending that they were throwing it again into their mouths and chewing, threw the betel behind their heads. The sister, deluded by this, threw her betel into her mouth again, and went on chewing. They now said that by so doing she had lost her caste, and their brother in Malabar too, to whom they appealed, confirmed their decision.

Ponnangálatamma was excessively grieved, and wept bitterly. But Iguttappa threw an arrow from the Iguttappa-betta and ordered his sister to go with the arrow and stay where it fell. The arrow stuck into a mango tree at Ponnangála, in the village of Yawakkapádi, and Ponnangálatamma, assuming the shape of a crane, flew towards the spot. Near the Karatandra house some Holeyas were working in the paddy fields. Ponnangálatamma flew upon one of them, who thereupon became possessed, and ran towards the tree in which the arrow was sticking. The brothers then separated into different villages, where they settled, and the whole family were afterwards worshipped as gods. Baiturappa has a temple at Baitur in Malabar, the second in Taliparambu in Malabar, the third in the Maletambira forest in the Jóna-male in Coorg, the fourth on the Iguttappa hill near Kunjila, the fifth at Pálúr in Kuyangéri nád, the sixth, Tirnalli Timmaya, at Tirnalli in the Wynád. A temple was also built for Ponnangálatamma, round the tree where the

arrow had stuck. At her annual feast, in April, Ponnangálatamma weeps, and is worshipped by the Holeyas. The arrow is, up to the present day, seen sticking in the wild mango tree.

*Ancestor worship.*—According to Coorg superstition, the spirits of their ancestors continue to abide with or occasionally visit the living, and are jealous to be worshipped by them with due reverence, under pain of sore troubles and calamities to house, cattle and fields. It is believed that female spirits are the most implacable in their revenge. The spirit of a male ancestor is called Káraṇa, that of a female Karana-chi or Soḍalichi. Káraṇa is also a term commonly used to denote the living head of a family.\*

Ancestor worship occupies a very prominent place with the Coorgs. For the use of the ghosts or spirits of their ancestors, which continue to hover about the dwelling, a small building called Kaymaḍa or Kai-maḍṭa is erected near the house. It is square and consists of but one room or sometimes has only a niche, the basement being raised 5 or 6 feet above the ground. Within these Kaymadas, to represent the ancestors, are placed silver plates rudely embossed with figures, copper or bronze images male and female, or even a slab of stone with figures sculptured on it. Along with them are put sticks with silver heads, silver or common knives and other articles, by way of memorial. Those who cannot afford to build a Kaymada, make a sort of mud bank for the purpose, called Koṭa, under a tree in the fields where the family's first house stood.

On occasions when the well-being of the Coorg house seems to be disturbed by troublesome spirits, they are appeased by offerings of milk, rice or arrack, which are placed in the niches in the wall of the house. If the visitant is supposed to be the spirit of Ajjappa (father or grandfather) a fowl or two are decapitated at the Kaymada. But should these not be deemed sufficiently effective, a member of the house may profess to become possessed by one of the spirits, as whose representative he now acts, and he is liberally treated with food and drink, and answers questions regarding the demands of the vexed spirit. The gifts offered him are called Káraṇa Barani.

A ceremony of still greater importance is the Káraṇa Kola or Spirit

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\* In the Pampa Ramayana, an ancient Jain poem in the Kannada language the expression *káraṇa puruṣa* is repeatedly used in the sense of a person born to fulfil a particular high destiny, or fated to accomplish some great work or purpose. Thus Rama was the predestined victor over Ravana, the champion of the rákshasas.

mask, performed in order to ascertain the particular wishes of the departed. It takes place annually or biennially, and is conducted by one of the fraternity of wizards,—Panika, Banna or Maleya. The ceremony begins after sunset, and is performed in the house, in the presence of the house-people and their neighbours. The personator of the spirit wears in succession a variety of masks, and buckles on a sword. Thus arrayed, he dances to the accompaniment of a drum, and as he sings of the deceased father, grandfather or other ancestor, the spirit seizes him and he speaks as its mouthpiece. To each spirit a sacrifice, also called Karana Barani, is offered in the courtyard, consisting of a cocoa nut, fried rice, a cock and a bottle of liquor, which latter the representative drinks to fortify himself for further exertions during the night. The ceremony terminates with the sacrifice of a pig fattened for the purpose. Either the wizard, or a Coorg whom he points out, decapitates the pig in front of the Kaimatta, where the head is placed for a few minutes, when it is removed and given to the wizard, but the body of the pig is cut up and eaten by the house people. Where there happens to be no Kaimatta, the sacrifice is made at the Ká-rana Kōta.

A peculiar kind of illumination is essential to both performances. Plantain trees split into thin strips are placed on the ground in three or four layers, crossing at right angles, and forming a kind of network, twenty-four, forty-eight or ninety-six such strips of split plantain-stems being used. Where they cross one another, spikes of a reed called *wotté* are driven through them into the ground. At the upper end of these spikes, which are two or three feet high, pieces of cloth are fastened, twisted into wicks and well moistened with oil. When the whole net is thus arranged, two layers of strips are raised, one to near the top of the spikes, the other a foot lower. Between the crossings, pieces of plantain leaf are placed, upon which quantities of rice, plain and fried, of areca nut, jaggery, &c., are put. When the ceremony begins, a few of the oiled wicks are lighted. At the sacrifice of the pig all are kindled, and the whole square blazes up like a table of fire, without however consuming the offerings placed on the leaves, which are the perquisite of the performers.

When females appear to be possessed, (*karanachi*) they do not give any responses but roll about on the ground speechless.

*Demon Worship.*—As if it were not sufficient to be in constant dread of some neglected and angry ancestral spirit, the life of the superstitious

Coorg is rendered still more gloomy and wretched by the supposed evil influence of certain malignant demons, both male and female, called Kúli, a word which occurs in Tamil and Tulu, and which means an evil spirit. Strange sounds or voices are some times heard by the knowing, sudden illness has overtaken the house or cattle, or a relative is supposed not to have died a natural death. In either case the services of the sly Kanya or astrologer are called into requisition. Should he declare the author of the mischief to have been a Kuli, then a Kuli-kola or Demon-mask must be performed. As such performances, however, take place only at fixed periods—once a year at a place called Kutta, and at other places once every second or third year—the master of the house vows to have the Kuli-kola duly performed at the appointed time, and as a pledge ties some money to a rafter of the house, or even his dinner plate and eats off plantain leaves until he has fulfilled his vow.

If the ceremony should be for the release of a departed spirit supposed to have been carried off by a demon or Kuli in the dying hour, the observances are the following :—The performer who represents the demon who has secured the departed spirit, is begged to let it go. After some resistance he throws a handful of rice on the members of the house near him, and with this action he gives the spirit over to them. The spirit then alights on the back of one of these members of the family, who at once falls into a swoon, and is carried by others into the house. With his return to consciousness, the spirit is supposed to have gained his right place amongst the ancestors.

These Demon-masks are performed by the above mentioned fraternity of wizards in the courtyard of the house, and they are held either in the name of five Kúlis :—Chámundi, Kalluruti, Panjuruli, Guliga and Goraga, termed the pancha bhúta\* ; or in the name of three—Kallugutti, Panjuruli and Kalluruti ; or in the name of only one—Chámundi. The food offered in these occasions, which is the same as that used in Karana Kola, is called Kuli Barani.

Representatives from other houses or villages that are under a vow to perform a demon mask, obtain the liberation of the imprisoned spirits in much the same manner, only when the performer throws the rice upon them they do not fall into a swoon, but as the spirit mounts their back, they have to hasten swiftly away with their burden, without looking back, till it is secure in the bosom of the ancestral family.

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\* See Vol. I, p. 366.

The final act of a Demon-mask is the decapitation of pigs in front of the so called Kuli-kota or demon abode, which may be anywhere near to or far away from the house or village : fowls are sacrificed upon it. One pig suffices for a house affair, but several pigs are required when a whole village is concerned. The heads are given to the performers, the carcasses supply the house or village dinner. There runs a vein of humor through all these dark and deplorable superstitions ; in the midst of all the demoniacal excitement, the parties concerned never lose sight of their own interest—the wizard minds his liquor bottle, and the Coorg his fowl or pig of which he is so fond !

In addition to the above objects of propitiation, which are chiefly of domestic or local importance, there are certain spirits possessing more of a national interest.

On the day of *Sivaratri*, a religious ceremony takes place in Mercara at the Raja's tombs, that of Dodd: Vira Rájendra being transformed into a temple, where the spirit of the hero is worshipped with the honours due to the saint or rather god, for Vira Rájendra has been defied by the Lingayats. On this occasion a large concourse of people, chiefly Sivá-cháris, collect round the tombs to pay their respects, or at any rate to participate in the liberal charity dispensed at the time from the Government Treasury.

*Ajjappa*—The people of Coorg have also great faith in a certain *Kaliatanda Ponnappa*, or simply *Kaliat Ajjappa*, the spirit of a Malayalam man, who came to Coorg many generations ago, was naturalized, married a Coorg woman, and established himself at Nálknád. He was a great magician, and long the dread of the Coorgs. At last he was shot near the Nálknád taluk cutcherry. Since his death, his spirit takes possession of men, who give themselves up to the strange arts that he practised. A similar worship is still maintained in honour of Acha Nayak in Chikka Munduru in Kiggatnad.

*Kuttad-amma*.—Higher even than Kaliat-Ajjappa, in the estimation of all Coorg, stands a certain female devil at Kutta, called Karingali (Kari Káli), or the Kuttad-amma. Kutta lies at the borders of the Wynád. Kuttadamma has no temple, but she is represented by some stones in an enclosure under a tree in the forest. The pujári is a young man, a Kannada-wokkaliga peasant, the only person left of the family which has engaged in this worship. For bloody sacrifices offered there only fowls are admissible. Large sums of money are annually sent thi-

ther by people from all parts of Coorg. Many vows are paid to Kuttadamma in behalf of sick people or of the dead. And whether a sick person recover or die, the sum vowed for his recovery must be paid, or woe to the living. Liberal presents are also given to her pujari to engage her services against enemies, who, they say, are distressed or altogether destroyed by the demon in answer to the prayers of her priest. There is, however, a decrease perceptible in the influence of Kuttadamma over the minds of young Coorg.

*Gulika*.—Another annual sacrifice every house has to offer to a peculiar divinity called *Gulika*. This is an invisible constellation or star, belonging both to the order of planets and to that of the zodiacal stars. It is, as the people say, a son of S'ani or Saturn. No mortal eye sees it. The astrologer only knows the *Gulika* and its power, especially over the sick. A stone is placed for the *Gulika* at the foot of some tree possessed of a milky juice. There the Coorg offers every year fowls, cocoa nuts and a little brandy, in a dish of plantain-leaves, to his tutelary numen. In cases of frequent deaths in a family, a second *Gulika*, called *Mrityu Gulika*, the *Gulika* of death, is worshipped.

*Serpent and Tree Worship*.—The universally discovered traces of serpent and tree worship are not wanting in Coorg. The *Nátas*, or spots on which cobras have finished their course of terrestrial life are the object of solemn ceremonies. According to Coorg lore, the cobra di capella lives a thousand years. When it was passed the meridian of its long life, its body begins to shrink, and to brighten till it shines like silver, and measures three feet or less, at the age of six or seven hundred years. Still later, the reptile shines like gold, and is only one foot in length. At last it shrinks to the size of a finger. Then it will some day fly up high into the air, die and sink down upon the ground, where it disappears altogether. No man sees it, but of course the Kanya knows the important secret, which he will communicate for a consideration to the proprietor of the land. Should any human being unawares set foot upon the hallowed spot, incurable disease of the skin will break out upon his person, and the poor wretch will rot away by degrees. To prevent such disasters, the *Náta* place is marked by a little stone enclosure. During the month of Scorpio (November—December) a lamp is lighted every evening to *Náta*, and cocoa nuts are offered as oblations.

Each *báne* (parcel of grass or forest-ground) has a presiding divinity, to which an annual sacrifice of pork and cakes is offered. If this sacri-

rice be not made, or not properly performed, the *Ká-dévaru*, the tending god, *i. e.*, the god watching over the cattle, will withdraw his favour, and sickness and death among the cattle will ensue.

Besides the many groves set apart in each nad for some object of worship, but chiefly for Ayappa-dévaru there are some extensive forests called *Devara-kádu*, which are untrodden by human foot and superstitiously reserved for the abodes or hunting grounds of deified heroic ancestors. These forests are : the Iggudappa devara kádu in Padinalknad, the Joma-male in Katiyetnad, and the Iruli-bánc in Kuyingeri-nad.

*Gramá Devatas.*—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 Grama Devatas :—*Máriamma*, *Durga* and *Bhadra Káli*, the tutelary goddesses of the Sakti line, who are supposed to protect the villages or náds from all evil influences.

In Kirindádu and Koninchéri-gráma in Katiyetnád, once in three years, in December and June, a human sacrifice used to be brought to Bhadra Káli, and during the offering by the Pánikas, the people exclaimed '*á! Amma!*' a man, oh mother! But once a devotee shouted : '*á! all Amma, ádu!*' not a man, oh mother, a goat,—and since that time a he-goat without blemish has been sacrificed.

Similarly in Bellúr in Távaligeri-múrnád of Kiggatnád taluk, 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 house, the devoted victim made his escape into the jungle. The villagers, after an unsuccessful search, returned to the temple and said to the pujári : '*kalak-ádu,*' which has a double meaning, viz., *kalake*, next year, *ádu*, we will give, or next year, *ádu*, a goat : and thenceforth only scape-goats 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 taluk in Ippanivolaváde and in Kádakéri in Hálerinad, 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 Méda, 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 Medas.



In connection with this sacrifice there are peculiar dances performed by the Coorgs around the temple : the *komb-áta* or horn-dance, each man wearing the horns of a spotted deer or stag on his head ; the *pili-áta* or peacocks'-feather dance, the performers being ornamented with peacocks' feathers, and the *chauri-áta* or yák-tail dance, during which the dancers, keeping time, swing yák 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 Kanya to rest upon a house, stable or field, the ceremony performed seems to be another relic of human sacrifices. The Kanya sends for some of his fraternity, the Panikas or Bannas, 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, &c., are thrown. This sacrifice continues all night, the Panika sacrificer above, and his immature 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 *Mara-nada bali* or death-atonements. They cost from 10 to 15 rupees. Instead of a human being, a cock is sometimes shut up in the pit, and killed afterwards.

In cases of sore afflictions befalling a whole gráma or nád, such as small-pox, cholera or cattle-disease, the ryots combine to appease the wrath of *Mári-amma* by collecting contributions of pigs, fowls, rice, coconuts, bread, and plantains from the different houses, and depositing them at the Mandu : whence they are carried in a 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 nád boundary, the animals are killed, their blood is offered on a stone, the rice and basket are left, and the rest of the provisions consumed by the persons composing the procession. The people of adjoining grámas or náds 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 nád to nád, and at last expelled from the country.

*Pilgrimages.*—Besides the annual *Tale Káveri festival* in October, and the *Kuttad-amma játre* in April, there is a large concourse of people in February during *Sivarátri* at Herumálu in Kiggatnád, and the day following at Irpu five miles further on, where, at the foot of the Lakshmantírtha fall, thousands of pilgrims submit to the supposed sin-cleansing shower-bath. The way thither leads through a jungle, so that the landscape of Irpu, forming an open valley with a high wall of mountains at the back, bursts all at once upon the pilgrim's view. The Lakshmantírtha, which in its earlier course descends in beautiful cascades over the almost perpendicular mountain wall, lies before the eye calmly meandering through the rice valley. On the right bank of it is the *dévasthána*, an unsightly building, but adorned by a splendid specimen of the beautiful scarlet-flowered *asóge* tree. Near it and all along the banks of the stream pilgrims build their booths.

The bathing place is 200 feet above the temple. The way is romantic, with steep rocks to the right, the shallow winding stream to the left, tumbling and foaming over large boulders, but during the monsoon swelling into a thundering torrent. All around the scene are the hundreds of pilgrims, Coorgs and Malayálam people. Every few steps a beggar is encountered, exhibiting his deformities or sorcs. Here lies a fanatic, as if dead, with a wooden nail through his cheeks; there a boy with a lancet through his outstretched tongue and a smoking chatti on his stomach; here another man with a long knife across his throat, and a horrible corpse-like appearance.

At the holy bath, the stream high above breaks through a woody embrasure over a succession of rocky ledges till it spreads itself into a foaming shower bath, received in a stony caldron formed by slippery sharp-edged rocks. Here the crowd of pilgrims finds its goal. The bathing multitude now force their way under the falling spray, though only a few can avail of the sin-cleansing bath at the same time. See that old woman with bent head right under the spray, her body trembles from the shock, yet for several minutes she perseveres. There a father lifts his screaming child under the splashing water; here with firm grasp a husband drags his timid spouse along the rock and into the caldron; and even the tender babe at his mother's breast is brought within the influence of the bath. Dripping and shivering, the bathers force their way back through the new arrivals, and seek a sunny spot to change their garments. The pressure is great, the path slippery, and

the confusion alarming. According to Brahmanical superstition the color of the water in the caldron indicates the intensity of the guilt of the bathing pilgrim. The darker its hue the greater the guilt, and yet the phenomenon depends only on the accident whether the falling water is intercepted by the bodies of the bathers, or whether it reaches the basin directly and by the force of its fall is beaten into foam.

After bathing, the pilgrims assemble at about 4 o'clock in the temple, where a Brahman dances before the idol shrine with a brass image of Isvara upon his head; another Brahman with a plate receives the small money offerings, and a third distributes *prasáda* of flowers and sandal. The native officials first make their obeisance, the most devoted amongst them even the *sáshítáṅgam*, touching the ground with the eight members of the body, and then offer their gift. This temple possesses 2,000 battis of rice-land, and annually receives on this festive occasion 400 rupees from Government.

The origin of the Irpu and Hérumálu játre is based upon a common Brahmanical legend:—One day when Ráma with his followers was living in this place, his younger brother Lakshmana, in a fit of madness, insulted him by returning the bow and arrows which he had received from Ráma. But soon repenting of his rashness, Lakshmana asked forgiveness, offering at the same time to throw himself into a large fire as an expiation for his crime. He accordingly shot an arrow against the foot of the rocks at Irpu, when a large fire flared up, into which he threw himself. In order to save his brother, Ráma immediately created a river, which up to the present day is called Lakshmanatirtha, but it was too late. Ráma afterwards desired to consecrate the spot, and ordered Hanuman to bring a linga from Kási (Benáres) within one hour and a half. During his absence, Ráma, fearing that Hanuman would not be back in time, made a linga himself of river-sand, in which operation he was surprised by Hanuman, who flew into a rage for having troubled himself in vain. He twisted his enormous tail round one of the neighbouring hills, Hanuman betta, and attempted to upset it. Rama, to comfort the furious monkey-god, assured him that Hanuman's linga should become even more famous than his own. So the new linga was set up at Hérumálu, and the festive day of its worship precedes that of the linga at Irpu.

In April and December there are játres to the *Iggudappa kundu* in Pádinálknád, where Tulu Brahmans have a temple, and receive the oblations of the Coorgs. It often happens that a sick Coorg vows

his weight in rice to the temple, and heavy Coorgs are therefore no doubt acceptable worshippers.

On the Hattur hill or Kuntada-betta in Betiyatnád there is an annual játre in honor of Isvara or Siva, who has there a little stone-temple dedicated to him. In 1853 the dilapidated temple was rebuilt at the expense of the Takkas and headmen of Betiyetnád, and their names are written on a stone slab in the temple, which is only 15 feet square, but substantially built, with a linga in front. It stands near the brink of the precipice, which is about 500 feet deep, and whence a beautiful view is obtained over Kiggatnád. There is also a remarkable stone on the very edge of the precipice, about 2 feet broad and 5 feet long, where childless or unmarried people bring offerings of betel leaves, perform worship and turn three times round, believing that this ceremony will insure issue to the barren woman, or a suitable partner to the unmarried youth. On the north side, a little below the temple, there is a small tank with perennial water, which is considered holy, but 100 years ago it is said to have been defiled by a Chandála woman bathing in it, when the spring ceased to flow for some time. On the south-east ridge a cave is shewn, which, according to Brahmanical discovery, offered an asylum to the exiled Pándus. After their departure the cave was occupied by a tiger, which out of respect for the játre quits his abode seven days before the feast and afterwards returns. On the precipitous side of the rock there are nests of vultures and several hundreds of beehives.

For seven days before the Tulá sankramana the ryots assemble in the village of Mugutagéri at the foot of the hill, one from each house, and sing Coorg chants at the Mandu in praise of Isvara. On the night of the 7th, the inhabitants of the whole nád come together, disguising themselves in masks of 18 various descriptions. They then go to the Ambala and dance and sing to the sound of the tom tom. The day following, a light hollow frame, representing a horse, made of cane-work, is decked out so as to hide the lower part of the man's body who carries it, making it appear as if he rode the horse. The multitude then ascend the hill in procession, headed by the horse and a band of musicians, dance round the temple and bring their offerings of water, fruit and money.

The *Pávir játre* in Kuyingerinád in honor of Pálárappe, brother of Iggudappa, is a similar affair, which takes place in the month of

April. The temple was rebuilt only a few years ago at a considerable expense.

Amongst the jâtres beyond their own country, those visited by the Coorgs are four:—*Subrahmanya* on the northern frontier of Coorg, which is held in December and attracts a great number of people, as with the feast there is connected a cattle-fair and the sale of superior metal vessels and idols. *Baitur* in Malabar, held in January, to which chiefly the people of Beppunâd and Yedenâknâd proceed; they also send rice to the temple. *Payatur*, also in Malabar, held in February; it is especially supported and visited by the Kadiyetnâd Coorgs, who send from one to ten buttis of rice per house. *Nanjanagôdu* in Mysore, which comes off in December.

Hinduism.—It is unnecessary to add any description of the Hindu religious sects common to Mysore and Coorg, as they have been noticed in connection with the former. That the Jains were influential in the country from a very early period might not only be conjectured from its historical associations as previously described, but is evident from existing remains, especially in the south.

The Coorg Rajas were Lingayats, as well as the Rudrangalu, the rulers of the Periyapatna, Nanjarajpatna State and we find this sect the most numerous out of Coorg Proper, that is in the north, one-fourth of the population of Yelusavirasime and one-eighth of that of the Nanjarajpatna taluk being returned as Lingayats. According to the census, the Hindu inhabitants of Coorg consist of 124,791 votaries of Siva and 29,685 votaries of Vishnu, but the mode of classification is perhaps open to question, though the overwhelming preponderance of the Saiva faith is doubtless a fact.

The Coorg *dévastânas* or pagodas are mostly of an insignificant character; none is distinguished for great antiquity or structural beauty; most of them are but rude village shrines, of mud walls and thatched roofs, within a gloomy grove, and not calling for any particular description. But a passing notice may perhaps be bestowed on the *Omkarésvara devastâna* at Mercara, which stands in a hollow just below the Superintendent's Court, and is built in the same style as the Rajas' tombs, but with a small tank in the temple yard. From the centre of the tank a pretty little pavilion rises, which is connected with the margin by a balustraded passage. The priests or pújâris of these places are chiefly Tulu, Havige and Karnâtaka Brah-

mans. The former are divided into three branches : the Kótu, Kan-dávára, and Shivalli Brahmans, of whom the latter are the most numerous in Coorg. The Havige Brahmans are Smártas, residing near Honore in North Canara, whose native tongue is Canarese. They worship both Vishnu and Siva, and the marks on their foreheads are put horizontally. The Karnátaka Brahmans are immigrants from Mysore.

There are altogether 863 pagodas or temples in Coorg, and 57 mattas of Jangamas, of the total of which places 549 share a Government contribution of 13,800 rupees annually in cash, and 9,474 rupees worth of remitted assessment from endowed. landed property: 372 places only are maintained by private contributions. The lion's share of this large Government grant falls to the Mercara-Omkaré-svara temple, with rupees 4,850; to the Bhágamandala dévastána, with rupees 3,956; to the Tale Kávéri pagoda, with rupees 2,320; and to the Rajas' tombs, with rupees 2,000 per annum—a total of rupees 13,126.

The *mattas* or *jangams* are religious institutions originated and endowed by the Coorg Rajas, who were themselves Lingayets. They are now evidently of greater importance to the Siváchári priests who derive an easy living from the rich endowments, than of any practical use for the Coorg people, amongst whom this sect, in spite of its royal patronage, never struck any root. The 57 mattas hold as endowments 31,457 battis of land, representing an annual revenue of 3,360 rupees due to Government if the land were held by ryots. Government, therefore, contributes not only that amount of revenue, but also the actual produce of the fields less the working expenditure.

The most richly endowed mattas are the following:—

Basavahalli matta in Yedavanád		4,105, battis of land.	
Abbi	„ do	4,005	do
Madapur	„ Gadinád	2,643½	do
Siddapur	„ Horurnurokkalnád	2,372½	do
Tanadi	„ Amatnád	1,485	do
Chadadaralli	„ Horurnurokkalnád	1,430	do
Cheppada Katte	„ Yedenálnad	1,188½	do
Torenur	„ Gadinád	1,100	do

These endowments thus amount to 18,330 battis of land.

**Muhammadanism.**—As regards Muhammadanism, the history of the country during the reign of Tippu Sultan is sufficient to shew the character of the proselytism which was forced upon the unhappy people of Coorg by his fanatical propagandism.

There are but 5 small masjids in Coorg. The Musalmans residing there are mostly poor, and live chiefly in Mercara, Virajpet and Fraserpet.

**Christianity.**—The introduction of Christianity demands a longer notice, as presenting several unique features of interest.

*Roman Catholics.*—Whatever the moral and political vices of the Coorg Rajas may have been, in religious matters they shewed a tolerant and liberal spirit, which at the time put to shame the intolerance of many Christian Governments. Dodda Vira Rajendra extended his protection to the poor fugitive Roman Catholics who fled from the claws of Tippu Sultan when in 1792 Lord Cornwallis besieged Seringapatam. They were Konkans from the western coast, who had incurred Tippu's particular displeasure for their assistance in provisioning General Mathew's army, and had come into his power after the fall of Bednur and the siege of Mangalore in 1783, when he settled them in and about his capital. The Konkans are noted for their industry and skill of adapting themselves to circumstances. Dodda Vira Rajendra eagerly welcomed them into his depopulated country, granted them land at Virajpet, procured for them a priest in the person of Father John de Costa, a native of Goa, assisted them in building a chapel, and allotted to its maintenance a stipend of 84 buttis of paddy and a certain amount of oil and candles. This allowance his successors continued and the English Government in 1835 commuted it into a monthly grant of Rs. 20, "its continuance being dependent not only on the Priest's conduct, but that of his flock, in as far as he may justly be considered responsible for it." This stipend is now looked upon as the Priest's salary from Government, and attempts have been made to get it increased, but Sir Mark Cubbon declared: "that the amount the Priest enjoyed had no doubt been deemed proportioned to the ordinary duties of his office, but if called to the discharge of any extra duties by the requisition of the members of his congregation, the Commissioner conceived that the latter should contribute the means of enabling the priest to meet such extra official calls."

Pastoral jurisdiction over this community having been claimed by

the Archbishop of Goa, the Rev. F. Bernardino De Sta. Agnes, Bishop-Coadjutor, Vicar Apostolic at Mangalore, addressed the Superintendent of Coorg in 1846 in the following letter :—

“The Mission of Coorg, by a Firman passed by the Raja in 1805, was founded to remain always under the jurisdiction of the Bishop Vicar Apostolic of Bombay, who has ultimately transferred it to me. No jurisdiction over it was ever or is now possessed by the Archbishop of Goa. The jurisdiction of His Grace does not extend beyond that Portuguese territory, as shewn by various bulls which have emanated from Rome regarding the same, but the Archbishop, actuated by certain national presumption, pretends to possess something like an omnipotence in the spiritual throughout the whole of India, and therefore sends his emissaries to excite dissensions and disturbances among the Roman Catholics subject to the Vicars Apostolic, and he has accordingly sent one to Coorg, named Francesco Pacheco, who endeavours to take forcible possession of the church there.”

The Roman Catholic establishments in Coorg are now under the spiritual charge of the Bishop at Bangalore, the see at Mangalore having declined about ten years ago to send priests to so unhealthy a locality as Virajpet.

In 1835 a grant of Rs. 1,500 was sanctioned by Government for the restoration of the dilapidated church at Virajpet, and in 1866 a new grant of Rs. 2,500 for re-building the same edifice, which after completion is said to have cost Rs. 15,000. The Priest's dwelling and the school houses for boys and girls are on the same premises. The streets of the Christian quarter look clean and tidy, and the houses, like those of the better class of other natives in the place, are substantial and comfortable. The number of Roman Catholic Christians in Virajpet amounts to 313, and there may be as many more in the neighbourhood. The mortality amongst those in the town has of late years been very considerable.

As stated by Mr. Kerr, the late Superintendent of Coorg, and himself a Roman Catholic, “the Christian colony at Virajpet is not a mission establishment in the ordinary acceptation of the term,” and no Coorg and hardly any other caste people of Coorg have ever joined it. The Christians, away from their pastor's eye, seem to be more influenced by the surrounding heathenish superstition, than to exercise any renovating influence by their Christian life and testimony upon the heathen. But socially as well as morally they appear now to be in a better condition



than they were when Lieutenant Connor saw them in 1817, and drew a picture of the colony in the following sketch :—

“The Christians here are under the Church of Bombay, a small chapel has been built and its services are performed by an ecclesiastic from that place ; the condition of his flock, however, is far from flourishing, the greater portion of them are employed in the manufacture of arrack from rice, an avocation that bespeaks the estimation in which they are held. Christianity has impressed no very awful sense of religion on its rude followers, who are subject to all the degradation attaching to a profession of it in eastern countries ; but a small share of the morality it inculcates is observable, and its votaries seem still to retain most of their ancient superstitions ; indeed, if either the condition or character of these followers of it be taken as a criterion, the most sanguine could scarcely hope much good to result from a more general conversion to its divine doctrines.”

A church and native congregation, chiefly of Tamil Christians—the servants of Europeans, and pensioned sepoy, especially Sappers and Miners—have been established at Mercara and Fraserpet, at which places either a European or a Native Priest periodically resides.

*Church of England.*—Mercara containing a greater number of Europeans than Mangalore, and offering a more salubrious residence, the chaplain of the latter station removed to the former in 1854, and Mercara has ever since been under the spiritual care of a clergyman of the Church of England. His congregation, comprising civilians, military officers and planters, numbers over a hundred souls. Through subordinate agency, Native Christians, especially Tamulians, have likewise been benefited by the successive chaplains.

*Basel Mission.*—When the account of the reduction of Coorg arrived in England, considerable interest was awakened in behalf of the inhabitants of the new Province whom British arms had delivered from cruel bondage, and whose brave and frank character seemed to establish a peculiar claim upon the sympathies of the friends of Indian Missions.

General Fraser on the 10th June 1834, in a letter to Mr. McNaughten the Secretary to the Government of India, remarks :—“There is not probably a spot of ground in all India of this limited extent capable of so much improvement as Coorg. The people appear to have little or no attachment to the debasing superstition of the country, and their minds seem to me to be more open than those of any other

Indians I have seen, to be prepared for receiving the light of the Christian religion, while their intellect may be expected rapidly to expand under the influence of that education they are themselves soliciting."

The noble-hearted general offered his share of the prize money as an endowment of a Protestant Mission, and the Wesleyan and London Missionary Societies were inclined to extend their operations to Coorg, but both Societies subsequently found that they could not spare men for a new mission at a distance from their older stations, and thus a good opportunity was lost. General Fraser subsequently established a school at Fraserpet, which he endowed with a sum of Rs. 300.

In the year 1834 the Basel Missionary Society commenced operations on the western coast, in the neighbourhood of Coorg, and extended their stations to the north and south. Mercara and Virajpet were now and then visited ; but no proposal was made to the Committee to occupy Coorg. Thus the country remained nearly twenty years under British rule without the establishment of a mission. At length in 1852 Dr. Moegling was in an unforeseen and singular manner led to commence the long delayed work.

Being on the point of returning to Germany to recruit his shattered health, he was visited by a Coorg man, disguised as a sanyási, who applied for instruction in the Christian doctrine. He was an intelligent and astute Coorg, and the story of his life highly interesting. After receiving baptism on the 6th January 1853 with the name of Stephanas, this man, Somaiya of Almanda in Beppu-nad, returned unexpected and unnoticed to his house, accompanied by Dr. Moegling. His wife received him with great joy and declared that she would live and die with him. On the following day Stephanas took formal possession of his house, and Dr. Moegling resolved on standing by the family and becoming security to the creditors who speedily assembled for the liquidation of the debts of the convert. Two days afterwards, his neighbours and relatives drove him and his family out of their house at night, and forced them to take refuge with the missionary at Virajpet. The Superintendent inquired into the case, and the Chief Commissioner, Sir Mark Cubbon, to whom the matter was referred, gave the following decision :—

To

THE SUPERINTENDENT OF COORG.

Sir,

The Commissioner, having had under consideration your various communications regarding the reception on his return to Coorg of one Somaiya, who

has left his caste, I have the honour by his advice to convey to you his instructions as to the manner in which this and similar cases should be dealt with.

In the first place, it seems to be admitted on all hands, that but for the fact of his having left his caste, Somaiya, as the rightful head by inheritance of his branch of his family, had nothing to do but to return to Coorg and take quiet possession of his house and lands. There would have been no aggrieved party in this case, and it requires to be shewn that there is an aggrieved party in the case as it really happened.

If it be true, as stated in the papers under notice, and the Commissioner sees no reason to doubt that it is so, that several instances exist of individuals having become outcastes from their own religion, and even converts to Muhammadanism, and yet been allowed to remain in quiet possession of their estates; it is clear that degradation from caste for misconduct, or on voluntary change of faith, is not of itself regarded in Coorg as involving the deprivation of hereditary or self-acquired property. It is therefore evident in the present instance, that neither on national nor on caste grounds could there have been an aggrieved party, unless perhaps in the event of his wife and children and the other inmates of the house which he came to occupy having felt themselves polluted by his neighbourhood. So far, however, is this from being the case, that it appears that one and all of them preferred being turned out in his company in the middle of the night to remaining under shelter of the roof without him, and it is moreover subsequently reported that the wife and children lost no time in following his example, and making a public renunciation of the faith in which they had been brought up.

Under these circumstances the Commissioner must regard the act of those people who violently ejected him from the house, of which he had been in quiet possession for nearly three days, as a gross and flagrant insult to the Government, only to be excused by their ignorance, and their having been led away to a certain extent by the evil example of their Subadar Appachoo. Of the conduct of Appachoo himself, there can be but one opinion, but the Commissioner is not unwilling to overlook for once the error of an old and able servant of the Government, and trusts that Appachoo will justify his good opinion of him by the cheerful alacrity with which he will replace Somaiya in possession of the house and lands of which he was so illegally and violently deprived.

You will be good enough carefully to explain the whole of the foregoing to all the parties concerned, and at the same time inform them that the Civil Courts are open to them should they still consider that there are any legal grounds for depriving this convert of his inheritance."

The Coorg family returned to their home in June, and Dr. Moegling remained in their neighbourhood during the monsoon. With the beginning of the cold season, he made preparations for building a little church and a dwelling-house, on a piece of ground given by Stephanas to the Mission, and the work of preaching at the principal market places was commenced.

Having taken all these steps without the Society's sanction, the founder of the Mission had to bear all the burden of its support and arrangement, as well as the evangelistic labour, for six long years. It was in order to bring the case before the public, and obtain subscriptions for the Coorg Mission, that Dr. Moegling compiled his work called *Coorg Memoirs*, which is a most graphic and interesting account of Coorg and its people, and contains a summary of the history of the country. This publication, and the periodical reports of his work in the "Madras Christian Herald," greatly helped to interest the South Indian public in his Mission. But though thus standing alone in his work, he still continued in connexion with the Basel Committee in everything except financial support and obedience to the rules of their conference as applied to the older stations.

Meanwhile two more Coorg families joined him, and Dr. Moegling, notwithstanding repeated attacks of jungle fever, remained at his post and continued to labour assiduously, preaching on market days at Virarajendrapet and Mercara, visiting the scenes of the Coorg annual festivals, and engaging in literary labours for the Government and the Bible Society. He was treated with great kindness and encouragement by the English officials and by the other residents in Mercara.

In the same year a number of families, comprising 130 souls, of the Holeyas or agricultural slave-caste, who had assisted in building the Al-manda church, applied for instruction. They were received, and located in Ammat-nad on a waste farm, which was taken from Government for the purpose, where they might maintain themselves by its cultivation, under the direction of Stephanas. The farm was held by Dr. Moegling's spiritual son, the Rev. A. Kaundinya, one of the first Brahman converts of Mangalore, who cheerfully undertook the risk and responsibility. The new settlement was named Anandapur (city of joy) and a simple residence and chapel were erected.

In 1858, the departure one by one of the tried friends who had known the work from its beginning, and the altered circumstances of

India after the mutiny, induced Dr. Moegling to seek connection with the Church Missionary Society, and he went to England and offered himself and the Coorg Mission to their acceptance. He was very kindly received by the Committee, but, after full deliberation, they considered it better that he should make another effort to continue attached to Basel, and meantime they gave a liberal grant of £ 500 to his work. Encouraged with this help, he returned to Coorg in January 1859, after having effected a new connexion of the station with the Basel Society, and so it still continues. Dr. Moegling in 1860 had to part with his excellent wife, who was ordered to Europe in broken health, and at the end of the same year he had himself to follow in thoroughly shattered health, and reached Wurtemberg just in time to nurse her in her last illness. His own state of health did not allow him to return to India.

The work has been carried on by his successors—the Revs. Kittle, Stokes, Kaufmann, Kaundinya and Schnepf—with varying success and under great trials and disappointments. The Christians built for themselves new houses: the proprietor of the farm erected through his manager Mr. Hahn, a substantial dwelling and a new church, towards which the Government contributed Rs. 1,000; he also opened out a small coffee plantation to give additional and permanent employment to the colony, but though very hopeful at first, the devastation by the borer was here so complete that the whole plantation was destroyed.

Unfortunately, the locality of Anandapur, being in a bamboo district and only partially and newly cleared, has not proved a healthy one; the native as well as the European residents were frequently prostrated by fever, the missionaries Kittel, Stokes and Schnepf, and Mr. and Mrs. Hahn had to leave the station on account of ill-health from severe attacks of fever, and both the late pastor Mr. Kaufmann and his wife fell victims in 1869 to the Coorg fever contracted at Anandapur.

According to the census of the Coorg Mission, there were in 1870, 50 communicants and 7 non-communicants, 42 children and 12 catechumens, while the parochial school was attended by 23 children. Considering the abject and degraded position of most of these Christians before their conversion, the social, intellectual and religious standing of this colony cannot be expected to be very high; but, in spite of much weakness and grievous shortcomings, evidences are not wanting of visible and genuine Christian and spiritual life.

Of the nine Christians from amongst the Coorgs, and of Step,

hanas in particular, not much good can be said ; in fact several of them disgraced by their conduct the Christian name among their own people and proved to them a stumbling block. Stephanas, being insincere and of a divided heart, as it seems, from the very beginning, was at last found out in his secret course of wickedness and had to be excommunicated. He is suspected to have afterwards in a fit of revenge set fire to the Almada chapel and dwelling house in 1867, both of which were utterly demolished, and then disappeared from the country without any trace of his whereabouts. His son is in the Mangalore Theological Seminary, and his two married daughters at Mangalore lead a becoming Christian life. Their mother died, her last years being beclouded by insanity.

Thus far General Fraser's hopeful view of the Coorgs' preparedness for embracing the Christian religion when the opportunity should be offered to them, has not been realised. To what causes this failure may be ascribed it is difficult to say. The unpalatable defeat of some of the Coorg headmen in Stephanas' affair, the loss of the 130 Holeyas of Beppu-nad who joined the Missionary, the Coorgs' jealousy of the moral and social improvement of their former slaves, their fancied apprehension of their own degradation to an equal footing with them on becoming Christians, the inconsistent life of some of the Coorg converts, the natural propensity of the Coorgs to, and success in, material prosperity of late years and the concomitant self indulgence, their more frequent intercourse with Europeans, the increasing influence of Brahmans upon the superstitious Coorgs—these and other circumstances may have led to such a result. Perhaps General Fraser formed his opinion before he had sufficiently made himself acquainted with the Coorg character, though he was a very shrewd observer ; or perhaps the providential time has not yet come for such a decisive step by the whole Coorg-clan, and his opinion may still be an unfulfilled prophecy ; but however this may be, Dr. Moegling's labours in Coorg cannot have been in vain.

In connection with the Mercantile Association of the Basel Mission, there is at Mercara a mercantile establishment under a European married agent, which, while serving the secular interests of the Mission, gives useful employment to a number of native converts,

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