



THE PLANTER'S BOOK
OF
CASTE AND CUSTOM.

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THE PLANTER'S BOOK
OF
CASTE AND CUSTOM

BY

LEWIS B. GREEN.

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Price Rs. 5/- Nett.  
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1926.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY THE TIMES OF CEYLON
COMPANY, LIMITED.
TIMES BUILDINGS, FORT, | BLACKFRIARS HOUSE, NEW,
COLOMBO, AND | BRIDGE ST. LONDON, E.C. 4.

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1st EDITION 1925.

2nd EDITION 1926.

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FOREWORD.

IN these democratic days, one hears and reads frequently of the need for breaking down caste, which is regarded by many as one of the great obstacles to progress in the development of India on modern lines. To my mind caste will always remain, and what is really wanted is the breaking down of the many barriers that exist between caste and caste from an arrogant idea of superiority of one caste over another. These barriers are created by tradition, by prejudice, by arrogance, and there is no need to abolish caste in order to break down these barriers, which are the real cause of many abuses that exist.

In Ceylon there are fewer signs of caste oppression than in India, and no one would wish to change this happy state of affairs, but if one wishes to have an understanding of the people with whom one is in daily contact, it seems obvious that one must enter as far as possible into their feelings and their points of view, and this becomes almost an impossibility without some knowledge of their attitude towards caste and customs which have been in-bred and in-born in their race for centuries past. Many of us desire to have a better knowledge of the people, and our thanks are due to Mr. Green for having compiled this small book as a guide to that knowledge, and possibly it may stimulate some to make a deeper study of the customs of our labourers.

Many of the customs prevailing are here explained, and it must have been the experience of many to wonder what they meant, and the reasons for them. These are ably set out, and will afford a new interest to the daily round of the planter,

for it is often difficult to find out from the people themselves the true significance of many of their ceremonies.

Mr. Green has some practical advice to give in his chapter of "Don'ts," many of which are no doubt practised daily by the majority of planters, but many of them will carry an added weight now that they have been seen in print.

Caste may be a hindrance to the union of the masses, though that remains to be proved. It has at any rate this advantage that in the development of social India, each caste had its individual job to do and was expected to do it and there is something to be learnt from that. Meanwhile Mr. Green's book is deserving of study, and should be kept as a book for ready reference in the estate office where opportunities may often arise of enlarging upon the small summary that is here placed in the reader's hands.

TOM VILLIERS.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

"The old order changeth, giving place to new" applies at least as truly to labour conditions on Ceylon estates as to most other things.

It is, I think, true of the men who are set to work the labour as well as of the labour itself—I refer in this book particularly to the Tamil cooly.

In the pre-war days, say anything from about 15 years back, things were easier for the Superintendent, especially the S.D., than they are now.

The patriarchal system was deeply ingrained in the Tamil cooly, and, from a purely practical point of view, the errors of judgment, want of sympathy, or other short-comings of the young planter due to inexperience, had no very great effect; the patriarch, *i.e.* the Head Kangany, was usually ready to stand by the "durai," if the latter was anything of a decent fellow, and smooth things over.

But in these days of Indian Government regulations the Tamil cooly is, if not actually, at least mentally, a very much freer man than he has ever been before. He is getting more education; he is acquiring by degrees a greater independence of thought and action; he is rapidly throwing off the patriarchal idea; in fact he is mentally growing up.

And, as is only to be expected, he is beginning to display the common symptoms of the young and growing—a greater independence of character, and frequently an exaggerated idea of his own importance.

This is an excellent thing as indicating the progress of the human race ; but one is bound to recognise that it must have an appreciable effect upon the relations between employee and employer—between the cooly and the “dorai,” for example :—that there will be less blind submission from the one, and that more knowledge, more consideration, and more tact will be called for from the other.

That the “dorai” too has changed there can be little doubt. Fifteen years ago the motor car or bicycle in Ceylon barely existed, and the week-end habit was much less in evidence, with the result that the “dorai” spent much of his off duty time on the estate. Now-a-days, if a Superintendent or Assistant has even a few hours to spare, he is off in his car or on his motor-bike to the Club, or to visit a neighbour.

The effect of this is that, generally speaking, the present-day “dorai” is not in such close touch with his coolies as he was in the days gone by. So that, what of the changes on both sides, labour in these days wants very careful handling, and it is with a view to helping the younger and less experienced planter to avoid some of the lesser pitfalls that may beset him that I have ventured to put together the following notes on Castes and Customs as commonly found among Tamil coolies on Ceylon estates.

L. B. G.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

In collecting these notes, it has been my object to compress in the smallest space possible all that it is essential or specially interesting for the yet inexperienced planter to know about the various castes and customs that are to be met with among the coolies on Ceylon estates, so that he may have a handy book of reference on such matters at a price within his means.

I should like it to be understood that what I have been able to set down as the result of my own personal knowledge from observation and experience is but a small matter compared with the amount of detail I have been able to gather from the works of other authors.

Of course such books are equally available to any young planter, as to myself, but they contain such masses of information and such wealth of detail beyond what it concerns a "dorai" to know, that I have thought it useful to do the reading for him, extract the essentials, and embody the result, together with some notes of my own, in the form of this book.

The works I particularly refer to are the well-known volumes of the Abbé Dubois, T. W. Rhys Davids, E. Thurston and a few others. It is to these authors my acknowledgments are due, and to whose works I am indebted for much of information contained herein.

L. B. G.

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CHAPTER I.

CASTE.

CLASSIFICATION.

Amongst the first things that strike the young planter taking up his first billet in Ceylon, will surely be the social distinctions of caste among his coolies. And as the Tamil cooly's whole mental attitude and outlook on life is based upon the caste system, it is important that the planter should get to know something about it, or he will never be able to understand his coolies and their little peculiarities.

The origin of the Indian caste system is obscure. There are a number of accounts of it to be found in ancient Sanskrit writings, but as these accounts differ, all we can say with certainty is that it is extremely ancient—perhaps the most ancient institution that exists.

There are four main divisions of caste :—

- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1st | The Brahmins | <i>i.e.</i> | the priests. |
| 2nd | The Kshatriyas | <i>i.e.</i> | the fighters or military. |
| 3rd | The Vaisyas or
Bannias | <i>i.e.</i> | the traders. |
| 4th | The Sudras | <i>i.e.</i> | the cultivators. |

With the first three of these we have nothing to do, we are concerned with the 4th section only—the Sudras.

This section includes all the castes that are likely to migrate to Ceylon, or that may be found on estates in the Island,


and comprises all the agricultural classes, as well as the Artizans (Smiths, Masons, Carpenters), Weavers, Fishers, Potters, Cattleherds-Dhobies, Barbers, and a few others. These again, particularly the cultivators, are divided into innumerable Sub-castes.

It is impossible to give a list showing all the castes and sub-divisions in order of precedence, as their distinction in the social scale is often so minute, and in many cases there is no agreement among themselves, each claiming precedence in districts where they are most numerous or influential.

However, by grouping several castes together it is possible to arrive at a roughly correct order of social rank, as summarised on the following list.

SUDRAS.

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 1. { Vellalan | 5. { Asari |
| { Chetti | { Kammalan or Kannan |
| 2. Retti or Kapu | { Odde |
| { Kallan | { Tachchan |
| 3. { Maravan | { Kollan. |
| { Ahambadiyan | |
| { Ambalakaran | 6. { Odayan |
| { Muthiriyar or | { Ideiyan |
| { Mutturasa | { Chakkan |
| { Vanniyar or | { Kaikolan |
| 4. { Padayachi | { Kurumba |
| { Pandaram | All above this line |
| { Andi | are Kudianas. |
| { Uppiliyan | |
| { Tottiyar | |
| | 7. Kosavan |

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 8. Malaiali | 12. Vannan or Dhoby |
| 9.  | 13. Valaiyan |
| 10. { Paravan | 14. Panchamas { Pallan. |
| 11. { Koravan. | 15. { Paraiyan |
| 11. { Ambattan or | 16. { Valluvan |
| 11. { Pariyari | 16. { Chakkiliyan |

Of the main divisions of the Sudras, it will be noticed that, generally speaking, the various castes of agriculturists rank highest, and those whose caste it is to perform menial offices, such as barbers, dhobies, come at the lower end of the scale.

Below these again come the Panchamas, who form a large proportion of our estate labourers—the Pallans, Paraiyans and Chakkiliyans. These last three castes usually take precedence in the order named, though sometimes the Paraiyans claim the advantage.

Besides the castes mentioned in the accompanying list, there are, of course, numberless others, many of them merely sub-divisions of those already noted, while many others are never, or at least so rarely, met with on Ceylon estates, that it would hardly be useful to include them here.

On enquiring the caste of a cooly, the answer will frequently be "I am a Kudiana." This word merely means "Cultivator" and is held to include all the castes marked from 1 to 6 on the foregoing list.

With regard to the Panchamas, from their work in Ceylon estates it might be supposed that they are "cultivators" too, but I do not think that would be, strictly speaking, correct—they work on the land, but it is not their own land; they are the hired labour of others and in addition to any cultivation works they may have to do, they have to perform all the hardest and most unpleasant tasks, not the least of which is scavenging.

There is another grouping of the castes, of which some mention may be made, viz :—the division into “ Right hand ” or “ Left hand ” factions. There are various legends concerning the origin of these factions, but the actual facts are not known ; we only know that it is an institution of much later date than that of the caste divisions.

To these factions are attached a sort of unwritten code of privileges, but the trouble is that as there is no clear written record of these privileges, members of one party will frequently claim a privilege belonging to the other, and the consequent disagreements often end in serious ill-feeling, if they do not end in actual fighting.

It may be said that this kind of quarrel is practically confined to the lowest castes, and it is usually the Pallans and Paraiyans, or the Paraiyans and Chakkiliyans that fall out. One rarely hears of faction quarrels among the higher castes.

The two factions include under each, the castes mentioned below. It will be noticed that in some cases the men of a caste belong to one faction while their wives stand by the other :—

Left Hand.

Ambalakaran
 Vanniyan (Wives)
 Valaiyan
 Maravan
 Chakkiliyan (Wives)
 Kammalan
 Muthriyan
 Pallan

Right Hand.

Vellalan
 Vanniyan (husbands)
 Pariyari
 Paraiyan
 Chakkiliyan (husbands)

Some of the privileges that may form the subject of disputes are :—

- (1) The right to wear Sandals on certain occasions.
- (2) The right to proceed on Horseback, or in a Palanquin at a wedding.
- (3) The right to blow a trumpet at the head of a procession.
- (4) The right to carry particular coloured flags.
- (5) The right to wear particular coloured flowers. etc., etc.

On estates, of course, the exercise of these privileges hardly applies, but there is one occasion where the existence of these factions is clearly seen :—

When a big "Swami" takes place, the coolies queue up on either side of the temple porch to receive the sacred ashes from the hands of the temple "Pandaram" or "Pujari." Members of the left hand faction should line up on the left, and those of the right, on the right; but this is where the trouble comes in—all want to be on the right, and the consequence is that there is no clear definition of sides and all crowd up together.

The "Pandaram" gets over the difficulty in an ingenious manner. He calls up two at a time and offers the ashes to each, with hands crossed.

The effect of this is that, he of the pair, on the Pandaram's right receives his ashes on the right side, while he on the left receives his gift from the Pandaram's right hand. Both parties are satisfied and quarrels avoided.

CHAPTER II.

CASTES COMMONLY FOUND ON CEYLON ESTATES.

Here follow some notes on the various castes, containing a few salient points about each, such as it may be useful or interesting, for a planter to know.

Those castes most commonly to be found, and those less frequently met with, or at all events with which the S.D. will have less frequently to deal, though there may be quite a number about in towns and villages, are put into separate chapters for ease of reference.

AMBALAKARAN.—This caste comes principally from the Trichinopoly district and the adjoining territory of Puthukottai. They are very commonly found on Ceylon estates.

They are closely allied to the Valaiyans and the Muthiriyans (Telugu Muthurasa), indeed they are believed to have derived from the same stock, having later on split up into sections.

Of these sections the Ambalakarans appear to have improved their social status, while that of the others declined. At any rate the Ambalakarans now consider themselves superior to the Valaiyans and other sections, some of them styling themselves by the Vellala title of "Pillai"

The usual titles of the Ambalakarans are Servai, Muthuriyan, or Muppan, or Kavalgar (watcher).

Besides being cultivators, the Ambalakarans are professional watchmen.

AMBATTAN.—This is the barber caste, and a few members of it are to be found on almost all estates. The barbers are a most useful people. Besides hair-dressing and shaving, manicuring, cleaning the ears, and removing superfluous hair, which may be considered to be their own proper work, they are the recognized medicine-men and surgeons, while their women folk are the regular midwives of any Hindu community.

In addition to the above occupations, the barbers are in great request to officiate at marriages, coming of age ceremonies, feasts and funerals. At weddings it is frequently the barber's business to tie the "tali."

The barbers only, share with a section of the Paraiyas, and a section of the Idaiyans, the right to blow the conch, trumpet, or other wind instrument; no higher castes will touch a wind instrument, contact with the mouth piece, that is to say with saliva, causing deep pollution.

Though one of the base born castes, and considered but little superior to the Paraiyans, yet they are far better behaved than others of equal or better rank. They are strict in their customs and in the observance of them, and will not eat meat or drink liquor.

They do not bury, but cremate their dead.

In his capacity as doctor, the barber is called the "Pariyari"; in fact he is generally much better known by this name than by his caste name of Ambattan.

His only instruments are his razor and a kind of stiletto he uses for manicure work. Now-a-days, of course his work in this field, since the institution of dispensers and hospitals, is not what it used to be—and a very good thing too—for the patients.

CHAKKILIYAN.—This caste, with the exception perhaps of a few of the lesser known jungle tribes, is considered to be the lowest of all, though they are run fairly close by the Paraiyans.

The name is derived from the Sanskrit word "Shat-kuli" meaning "flesh-eater." The Chakkiliyans eat all kinds of flesh, including that of cattle, wherever they can get it; they are also much given to drunkenness, and are responsible for many a brawl in the lines.

They are cobblers and leather workers by trade, making shoes, straps, sandals, well-buckets, and all sorts of articles out of leather from the sacred cow, and this is perhaps the chief reason why they are held in such contempt by the superior castes.

Few of them do any tanning themselves, usually buying the tanned hides. For tanning, the bark of the Avaram plant (*Cassia auriculata*) is much used, and the Chakkiliyans hold this plant in great veneration.

Many of this caste will be found to understand Telugu or Canarese. They are undoubtedly allied to the Telugu Madiga Caste, and appear to have migrated southwards from the Telugu country.

The women of this caste have the distinction of being peculiarly good looking, and are sometimes very light in colour, quite beautiful specimens among them being

not uncommon. Their virtue, too, is reported to be of a high standard compared with many.

The Chakkiliyans are numerous on estates in Ceylon, where of course they do not ply their hereditary trade, but do agricultural labour, including all the unpleasant work. The "Sweepers" and "Latrine" coolies are practically all drawn from this caste.

DHOBY.—See Vannan.

KALLAN.—Derivation "Kalavu" theft.

This caste come chiefly from the Madura and Tanjore districts, those from Tanjore being the more advanced. Many of these have taken to agriculture and become wealthy, and now imitate the customs of the Vellalans and even of the Brahmins.

The Kallans are closely connected with the Maravans and Ahambadiyans, and come from the same country. Thieving is their hereditary occupation, but in these civilized days theft is accounted a crime, and they have been forced to take up other work.

Besides agriculture, in which Kallans are largely employed at the present day, they are often employed as watchmen. It is said that in Trichinopoly people are obliged to keep Kalla watchmen to protect their property from the caste; otherwise they would be frequently plundered. There is no doubt that even in the present day the Kallans and Maravans of Madura are responsible for a good deal of house-breaking and highway robbery, and the jails in this part of India contain a large proportion of these castes. The Kallans are specially clever at cattle stealing, keeping them in hiding while they blackmail the owners. If the

owners pay up they get the animals back, but if they try to recover them with the aid of Police, the cattle will disappear, and be sold far away, or even be shipped to Ceylon.

There are quite a lot of Kallans to be found on Ceylon estates, and it has been my experience that they are among the best workers.

They are very clean, compared with many other castes, and their line rooms well kept.

A peculiar habit of theirs is to enlarge the holes in their ear-lobes greatly. When the women quarrel these elongated ear-lobes form the object of attack. It is not uncommon to see a woman with a broken ear-lobe.

A girl before puberty, wears a horsehair necklet and the same applies to widows ; or if the Kallan is wealthy, the horsehair will be replaced by a necklet made up of many strands of fine silver wire.

The married women wear their " Tali " on a thread.

If a Kallan wants to divorce his wife, he hands her a piece of straw in the presence of his caste people. Hence the Tamil expression " to give a straw " or " take a straw " means to divorce, or accept divorce.

The Kalla women, however, are very virtuous, and I don't think " giving the straw " is a common occurrence among them.

The Kallans probably consider themselves Shivites—they may be seen wearing the bars of sacred ashes, on festive occasions—but they are properly devil-worshippers.

Their chief Swami is Allagaswami, the god of the great temple 12 miles north of Madura. Only Kallans may draw his car at the annual festival.

"Karupan" is another favourite Swami of the Kallans. This caste is particularly strong on the principle of sacrifice to propitiate their various Swamis, and will perform sacrifice on the smallest occasion, a sheep or a goat being the victim.

The Kallans in India, it is said, have an interesting custom on the Madu Pongal day, in connection with the marriage of their young maidens. Some coins in a cloth are tied to the horns of a number of young bulls. The bulls are then loosed, and with yelling and tom-toms are purposely excited by the crowd. The game is for the young men to tackle these bulls with nothing but their hands and unfasten and secure the cloth of coins. The maidens in question choose their husbands from the youths who secure the cloths from the horns of the fiercest bulls. The young men nominate their bulls and then go for them. It is considered a disgrace to them if they get wounded during the contest. The bulls are specially trained. The best bull games are seen at Thirumangalam, Thelur, Dindigul, or Madura.

I have not seen this practised in Ceylon, and don't know how this system of choosing husbands conforms with the more regular custom that the proper husband for a girl is her mother's brother's son, that is her first cousin on the mother's side.

PADAIYACHI.—See Vanniyan.

PALLAN.—This caste will be found to be numerous on most Ceylon estates. They come from the more southerly provinces of the Madras Presidency and are not found north of Salem.

Their proper occupation is that of agricultural labour.

According to ancient tradition the Pallans are ordained to be the slaves of the Vellalans, and at the present day they, and the other Pachamas, do all the hard work for the Vellalans and other land holders in the Indian Villages.

The Pallans appear to have known all about the "advance" system before they ever migrated to Ceylon, as it has been their time-honoured custom to obtain an advance of cash or kind from a prospective master, and in return, give their life-long labour. In Ceylon they practise only the first half of this custom !!

As previously mentioned, the Pallans form one of the large class of out-castes, and their huts are placed in a separate colony, called the Pallacheri, on the outskirts of the town or village.

There are numerous sub-divisions of this caste, each of which have certain differences among their customs.

In the Madura district, their headman is called the Kudumban. Muppan or Kudumban are often used as titles by the Pallans.

PALLI.—See Vannian.

PANCHAMA.—Literally "the 5th class, that is those who do not belong to the four great Caste divisions, but are outside them—out-castes in fact. The terms "out-caste" or "Paraiyah" are however considered to be derogatory, and the Indian Government now classes those lower castes as Panchamas.

PANDARAM.—This term refers to a Sect rather than to a caste. Pandarams are a sort of non-Brahmanical priests. They are mostly Shivites and serve the temples of the various Shivite gods. In India the Pandaram is often a very important person, having the charge of a temple which may be enormous, with its treasures and revenues. Coming down the scale, there is the village Pandaram in charge of quite a small temple, while here in Ceylon his charge has dwindled to the estate Swami-house.

Pandarams may be drawn from various castes, such as Vellalans or Ambalakarans, who choose to leave their proper calling and become priests.

All Pandarams, however, are not attached to temples. Many of them become Mendicants, wandering round the country doing casual jobs of priest-craft and begging their food.

There are two classes of Pandarams, the married and the celibate, the former being the more numerous.

The celibates are distinguished by wearing the orange or ochre-coloured robes. They smear their foreheads, chests and arms with sacred ashes, and wear their hair matted. In their hands they carry the vael or iron trident, emblem of Shiva.

On estates, the Pandaram's business is to look after the temple, sweep it clean, decorate it with flowers and prepare it for special occasions. He gets no pay for this work, but takes his perquisites from the offerings at times of festival, and frequently from the weekly rice issue.

PARAIYAN.—Perhaps the most numerous caste employed on Ceylon estates. This is a very ancient people, and there

appears to be little doubt that their present degraded position is very different from what it was long ago. The evidences of their once high estate, and their fall from it, remain in legends handed down through the Valluvans, the Paraiya priests, and in certain privileges that are enjoyed by the caste to this day, for instance :—

(1) at the big Siva festival at Trivalur in Tanjore, where the idol is carried round in procession on an elephant, it is a Paraiyan who is mounted on the elephant with the god.

(2) At certain village festivals the local "Pujari" invests a Paraiyan with the sacred cord.

(3) At marriages, etc., the Valluvans are allowed to wear the Sacred cord.

(4) A Brahmin will often officiate at a Paraiya wedding (not in Ceylon as Brahmins are not available here). But in spite of such privileges as they may possess, the position of the Paraiyans at the present day in India is a very degraded one.

In Ceylon they are infinitely better off.

Here they go about, shop in the caddies, and talk to all and sundry much as they please. In Indian towns and villages their position is vastly different. They may not draw water from wells used by people of caste, their own wells indeed are often surrounded by a ring of bones, that all may recognise the wells of pollution, and avoid them.

A Paraiyan must not speak to a higher caste man, unless spoken to, and then only with his hand over his mouth

so that his breath may not pollute the other, and if a high caste man were so much as to brush against a Paraiyan accidentally, he would have to purify himself by bathing afterwards.

To revert again to the wells :—I was once at a village in time of drought and famine. There was only one well, and the water in it so low that water rations for all were very scanty. But the wretched Paraiyans were not allowed to draw any, they squatted around at a respectful distance entirely dependent on the charity of the higher caste people, who would every now and then spill a cupful of water from their own pots into the Paraiyans' chatties.

Then again, on Ceylon estates, the Paraiyans live in a colony with all sorts of other castes, although they may perhaps have a separate set of lines, and they draw their water often from a spout common to all.

In Indian towns and villages the Paraiyans do not live in the "gramam" or village proper, they have their own colony of huts outside called the "cheri" in the case of this caste it would be called the "Paracheri"—in the case of the Pallans, "Pallacheri." The caste have a prescriptive right to the land on which their Paracheri is built.

With regard to marriages :—It is common for a boy or girl to be bethrothed; when the girl comes of age they may live together without a marriage ceremony which is often postponed to a more convenient season, from lack of funds or other cause. It is usual however for the "tali" to be tied before a man takes to himself a second wife, or before the marriage of one of his own children.

If the first wife produce no children, or only girls, a Paraiyan will sometimes take another wife. Though the "tali" is not usually tied on the second wife, any children by her would be considered legitimate. More than two wives is uncommon, but I have known a man with four.

On the death of his first wife, a Paraiyan will often marry his deceased wife's sister.

The Paraiyans are nominally Shivites and Vishnavites, but are actually devil-worshippers, their favourite Swamis being Mariamma, Muniandy and Madasamy.

Paraiyans will eat all kinds of meat, and even carrion. I recollect the case of an estate cow that died of disease and was buried in a pit. On the second morning after, the pit was open and the carcase gone. It was suggested to me that this must have been the work of jackals, but I had good reason to believe that the estate Paraiyans had made away with it.

Many Paraiyans have become Christians, in fact the large majority of Christian converts are drawn from the caste. In 9 cases out of 10, however, it will be found that the veneer of Christianity is distinctly thin, and the convert finds it impossible to forego the habits and customs that have been his from time immemorial.

There are many sub-divisions of the Paraiyans, chief of which are the *Valluvans* who may almost be considered a separate caste. (See Valluvan).

KOLIYAN.—A section of the caste who are weavers, though many do field labour. This section have split off from the parent stock to such an extent as to be considered almost a separate caste now—but

as these people are rarely found on Ceylon estates I make no separate mention of them.

They have two forms of marriage, "Little Marriage" and "Big Marriage." In the former, the sister of the bridegroom goes to the house of the bride on an auspicious day, and having tied the "tali" round the bride's neck, leads her to the bridegroom. Women so married are debarred from taking part in their own children's weddings later on.

The "Big Marriage," like that of most other castes, is a long and elaborate ceremony and an expensive business.

SANKU.—These are the blowers of the conch shell, (See Ambattan) a right which this section share with the barber caste. They are in great demand at marriages, funerals, and other processions.

URUMIKARAN.—The drum beaters—in similar demand for festive occasions as the conch blowers.

PARIYARI.—(See Ambattan).

PUJARI.—Or as it is commonly pronounced on Ceylon estates "Poosari" is not a caste, but a title meaning "priest," or one who performs puja (worship). They are a sort of lesser priest, and may be of various castes. Unlike the Pandarams proper, who serve the big temples of Vishnu and Shiva, the "Pujari" only officiates at the shrines of the lesser gods and goddesses, such as are to be found on every estate. In addition to performing such duties, Pujaris tell fortunes, consult the oracles, are experts on omens, exorcise devils, and generally speaking are the most utter charlatans and humbugs. Every estate will be

found to have one individual acting as Pujari—more often a man, but occasionally a woman.

RETTI OR KAPU.—Retti is really the title of the Kapu caste, but they are always known as Rettis in this country. They are stated to be the largest caste in the Madras Presidency, and are mostly found in the Telugu districts, and in Tinnevely, Salem and South Arcot.

Those on Ceylon estates usually come from the latter districts.

They are of good physique, thrifty and hard-working. Many of them are land-owners and cultivators in their own country.

The caste is split into a large number of sub-divisions, having their own particular differences of custom. Some Rettis practise the same marriage custom as the Malaialis, (See Malaiali) marrying a grown woman to a husband about 5 years old.

The “tali” is not used, but only the “tali” string, which is of twisted threads dyed yellow with turmeric.

VALLUVAN.—Though it is rare, on Ceylon estates, to find a man calling himself a Valluvan, still I must include Valluvans in this list, as they are undoubtedly allied to that very numerous, caste the Paraiyans.

They are the priests of that caste, and are considered to be a sub-division of the Paraiyans, but they will not eat with them nor do they live in the Paracheri.

Not all Valluvans are priests however. Many are Astrologers, whose proper business it is to forecast the future, draw Horoscopes, and find the auspicious days

for all sorts of events, such as marriages. They also profess to cure sickness by charms.

VANNAN OR DHOBI.—The Washerman. This is rather an occupational title than a caste name, though it is certainly used by the Vannans themselves as the name of their caste.

There are various divisions of washerman: for instance the Pandya Vannans wash for the higher castes, the Pothara Vannans wash for the Pallans and Paraiyans and the like. The Tulukka Vannans wash for Mohammedans, and the Vaduga Vannans for Telugus, and so on.

It is a custom of the Dhoby occasionally to hire out the clothes he washes, articles like sheets or any sort of white cloth being in great demand at funerals.

There are other ways too, by which the Dhobies add to their income, the men often being expert devil-dancers, and the women folk, like those of the Ambattan, are frequently midwives.

Their marriage customs are somewhat unusual. Their girls are usually married before coming of age, but if this cannot be arranged and the girl matures first, she has to go through a marriage ceremony with a sword or a tree, before she may take a man.

The binding part of their ceremony is not, as usual, the tying of the "tali," but the bridegroom puts a bangle on the bride's arm.

VELLALAN.—The great farming or cultivating caste. They are found all over the Madras Presidency, and number well over two millions. The generally accepted position of the caste is at the head of the Sudra division. But many of them claim to belong to the Vaisyas, the 3rd of

the four great caste divisions, and not to come under the head of Sudras at all. Certainly many of the legends and traditions of their origin tend to support this claim.

Many Vellalans are clerks, merchants, and Government servants, but the bulk of the caste are cultivators, which is their traditional calling. There is a proverb to the effect that "Agriculture is no agriculture unless performed by the Vellalans." They are a very industrious people, thrifty, even miserly, and in consequence they are among the wealthiest of all the Sudra castes.

As there are many of this caste on Ceylon estates, it may be useful to say a few words about the various subdivisions.

There are four main divisions :—

<i>Division.</i>	<i>Country of Origin.</i>	<i>Titles.</i>
1. Tondamandalam	Chingleput and North Arcot.	Mudali, Retti or Nayanar.
2. Soliya	Trichy. and Tanjore	Pillai.
3. Pandya	Madura and Tinnevely	Pillai.
4. Konga	Salem and Coimbatore	Kavandan.

Members of these four main divisions may not intermarry with each other, but exceptions are not uncommon

Vellalans—on Ceylon estates anyhow—are not known by the above divisional names, except in the case of No. 4, the Konga Vellalans. Each division has a number of subdivisions, and it is by the names of the latter that the Vellalans distinguish themselves. I will mention here only a few of these, such as are likely to be met with on Ceylon estates :—

No. 1 division includes among others the

KONDAIKATTI VELLALANS, that is those who tie the hair in a knot. (See note at end of this paragraph.)

No. 2 division includes the

MOTTAI VELLALANS, so called because they entirely shave off the moustache, (*mottai* = bald) or so as only to leave a fringe about 1 hair thick. Also they partially shave their heads, and wear a very small "*Kudumi*" or head knot. (See note). The women of this section of the caste wear their "talis" on a golden thread.

THE KODIKAL VELLALANS, also belonging to No. 2 division are the betel vine growers, and are quite commonly found on Ceylon estates. They are excellent workers.

The 4th Division the *KONGA VELLALANS*, are decidedly of lower social rank than the other divisions of the caste, and have little in common with them. They have elaborate rules and ceremonies of their own.

There are not many of this section on Ceylon estates, though they are to be found in small communities in certain localities. They may often be distinguished by their speech which is difficult to understand, and sounds more like Telugu.

The men often wear large numbers of gold rings in their ear lobes. The women wear a peculiar "tali" of large size on an untwisted cotton thread.

NOTE.—The "*konde*" is the whole hair of the head gathered into a knot, usually worn at the back. Some castes, (not often met with on estates) wear it at the side.

The "*kudumi*" is a small knot of part of the hair only the rest of the head being shaved.

CHAPTER III.

RELIGIOUS AND OTHER FESTIVALS

SHIVA RATRI.—This is a festival of Shiva, and many coolies observe it. It occurs on the night of the new moon in February. The incident which this day commemorates is given in a legend which runs, briefly, as follows :—

“A certain huntsman, overweighted with the spoils of his chase, was delayed in returning home, and night overtook him while yet in the forest. So, to save himself and his spoils from the wild beasts, he climbed in to a Margosa tree. Here he had to stay all night, starving with hunger, and very cold and uncomfortable. Now it happened that there was a “lingam” (see page 40) set up at the base of the tree, and while frequently shifting his position, the hunter caused dew, and the leaves, flowers and fruits of the Margosa tree to fall upon the “lingam.”

This pleased Siva so much that he promised to reward the huntsman. Shortly afterwards the huntsman died, and Yama, king of hell, sent to claim his soul, but Shiva, mindful of his promised reward fought Yama for it, beat him and took the huntsman's soul to heaven.”

Those who observe Shiva Ratri fast all the day before, and that night, worshipping the “lingam” and making offerings of Margosa leaves to it, afterwards eating the

leaves. The Pandarams on this occasion clean their temples, and repair, or clean up and decorate the "lingams."

DEEPAVALI.—This festival (usually pronounced Teevali by Coolies) is universally observed on estates. It occurs at the time of the New Moon, about the end of October or early November. Legend has it that Deepavali was a Rajah of ancient times, chiefly notorious for the gross oppression of his people. His subjects were reduced to a state of slavery, they were insufficiently fed on the coarsest food, nor might they clothe themselves in anything better than rags.

The day of that Rajah's death was the signal for general rejoicing, and the poorer classes especially made it an occasion for feasting and dressing up in the best clothes they could find—enjoyments which had been denied to them for so long.

That is why "Teevali" is the season when everyone buys new clothes.

The festival lasts several days, as occasion offers. It will be found, generally speaking, that it is not made so much of by the higher castes, but is chiefly celebrated by the low caste coolies.

PONGAL.—The origin of this feast appears to be a survival of the ancient sun-worship. It occurs on the date of the winter solstice—that is mid-winter on the Northern hemisphere, when the sun is vertical over the tropic of Capricorn. The idea of the festival is to welcome the return of the sun to the North of the Equator, *i.e.*, to India, at the time when the sun is wanted to ripen their crops.

The feast properly lasts three days. On the first day the people visit each other and entertain each other throughout the day. On the 2nd day visits are again exchanged. On meeting each other the first words they say are "has the rice boiled?" The answer is "it has boiled." (Tamil "pongarethe"—it boils. "Pongal"—lit: "A boiling," and in this sense always means a boiling of rice.) On this day certain ceremonies with boiling rice are carried out by the married women only.

The 3rd day is the Madu-Pongal. On this day coolies specially feed and make much of their cattle, with many ceremonies, and, as far as feeding goes, the same applies to all their animals—goats, dogs, cattle, pigs or fowls.

In the evening there is much dancing and singing in which character parts are taken. The performances are chiefly notable for their obscenity as any one who has witnessed them will know.

VAEL.—This is the great festival of Subramaniam, the 2nd son of Shiva. It is held at the date of the July full moon. At the large centres like Colombo it is held with great pomp and ceremony, and Subramaniam's Car is taken round the town in procession.

The festival takes its name from the "Vael" or three pronged fork, which is the emblem of Subramaniam, and which is much in evidence on this occasion.

Subramaniam is often worshipped in the form of a snake, and in India there are many temples devoted to this god where snakes swarm, being protected and fed by the priests, and considered sacred.

In this country there is a famous shrine of Subramaniam at Kattaragam, in the South. Coolies from all parts of the Island make pilgrimages to this shrine during July, particularly childless women who wish to reverse their fortune in this respect.

An interesting paper on the subject of the Kattaragam temple, by the late Sir. P. Arunachalam was read at a meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society on March 27th 1924. The spot, it appears, was already celebrated as early as the 3rd century B.C., and is recorded as one of the places visited by Gautama Buddha. With the arrival of the sacred Bo-tree at Anuradhapura, Kattaragama also received a sapling which is alleged to be the very tree growing there to this day.

Subramaniam is worshipped in various forms as "Murukan" = the tender child, or "Kumaraswami" = the youthful god, or Kandaswami (from Skanda another name for Murukan).

Sir P. Arunachalam's paper gives a great deal about the origin of Kattaragam and the legends in connection with it, for which there is no space here, but which is well worth reading and may be found in the *Times of Ceylon* of March 28th 1924.

There are, of course, many Subramaniam temples on estates all over the country, but it appears to be thought, from long association no doubt, that Subramaniam is much more specially present at Kattaragam, or perhaps that, by virtue of having to make a long journey there, the god will be better pleased and so be more likely to grant the pilgrim's prayer. If possible, however, it is well to dis-

suade coolies from making this pilgrimage, as they frequently bring back with them a bad type of malarial fever, which they get in the low unhealthy regions around Kattaragam.

"ADI POUSSAI."—It is the universal custom on estates in Ceylon for coolies to have one chief annual holiday of two or three days. This holiday is always made the occasion for a big "Swami" worship. It usually happens that estates in the same districts take this festive occasion at about the same time. In the Uva districts, this holiday is taken in July as the name implies (Adi poussai=July worship); it coincides with the period of the Vael festival, and Subramaniam is the object of all the "Swami Coombudus" that take place.

Estates in the S.W. Monsoon Zone observe no festivals at this their wettest season, but usually take their opportunity in the fine weather about February or March, when Mariamma is the usual Swami to whom worship is addressed.

THE FAST OF PERUMAL.—This is a fast, commonly observed by those who are Vishnavites, (Perumal is one of the many incarnations of Vishnu) for instance:—the Idaiyans, Malaialis, and some Pallans.

It is observed on every Saturday in September. On these days no food is eaten before 3 p.m., after which hour rice is prepared and the usual evening meal taken early. Friends are invited to this meal, and the remainder of the rice given away to beggars, cripples, or any unfortunates that may be about.

ST. ANNA'S DAY.—This is, of course, a Christian festival, but some mention of it may be made as it is observed as a

feast day by many estate coolies, Hindus and Christians alike.

There is a notable shrine dedicated to St. Anna at Talawila near Puttalam, to which enormous crowds go every year, but this is too far away for most estate coolies, and the festival is also held at Hatton, which is attended by large numbers of coolies from Up-country. St. Anna's day falls on the 29th of July, but for convenience, the festivals at the big shrines are held on the last Sunday in July.

Christian coolies attend this festival (presumably) to venerate the Saint ; Hindu coolies, for the benefits they hope to receive in return for a small offering—such as the cure or relief from chronic ailments, or, as in the case of their pilgrimages to Subramaniam, the procuring of children.

ADAM'S PEAK.—This mountain, or more particularly the depression in the rock of its summit, has been the object of veneration from very ancient times. The name is thought by some to have been given to the mountain by the Portuguese, but there is evidence that from much earlier times the Mohametans connected it with Adam. The story goes that when Adam was cast out of Paradise he fell to earth, landing on the mountain, and that the depression to be seen on the rock summit is Adam's footmark.

But long before Mahomet's day, Buddhist tradition ascribes the footmark to Buddha, and before that again, the Peak—as well as the great cave at Dambulla,—appears to have been sacred to the worship of the Sun god, "Sumanā."

However all this may be, it is certain that the spot is today venerated not only by Buddhists, but by Mohametans and Hindus too, though, as is natural in a Buddhist country, the shrine on the top is now a Buddhist one.

The chief pilgrimages take place about April, the time of the Sinhalese New Year, when thousands of people may be seen coming from all parts of the country forming endless processions, by day and night, as they converge upon the mountain.

Many estate coolies, both Hindus and Christians, make the pilgrimage and will take several days off for the purpose, probably just at the moment when the rush of "flush" is beginning. Coolies who cannot get back to India for their own or their children's hair cutting ceremony, frequently take the opportunity of doing it at the Peak. (See note on page 33).

CHAPTER IV.

"SWAMIS."

It does not come within the scope of this book to give any account of the Hindu religion; volumes have been written on the subject which the student can discover for himself. The average cooly knows no more about it than the average planter. All he knows is that there are certain "Swamis," i.e., gods and goddesses, mostly malevolent in nature, whom it is necessary on many and particular occasions to worship and propitiate. Many of these godlings have their own particular temples, or sometimes merely a favourite spot in the open, a rock or a tree, or just a stone to represent a "lingam" protected with a few boughs.

MARIAIE OR MARIAMMA.—One of the deities to whom their "Swami" houses are most universally dedicated is Mariaie or Mariamma. She is one of Shiva's wives, and is the goddess who sends cholera, smallpox, measles, chickenpox, and diseases of the ears, eyes and throat.

Her temples are perhaps resorted to more frequently than any others. All sorts of other troubles besides the foregoing, are laid at her door, but she is easily propitiated with a prayer and a small offering, and the cooly goes off confident of relief.

In connection with small-pox, abovementioned, coolies usually make an offering to Mariaie to help their arms to recover from vaccination

MUNIANDY.—is the son of Mariaie, it is he who is appealed to when a cooly is frightened by the dark. Generally speaking, coolies of the Kallan, Maravan, or Ahambadiyan castes, whose traditional business of theft and robbery must be largely carried out in the dark, move about during the night without fear, though no doubt there are many exceptions. But to the average cooly the darkness of the night all round him is thick with all sorts of frightful goblins, and his imagination causes him to see and hear many alarming sights and sounds. So if he has been frightened, or wants to go on a night journey, Muniandy is the "Swami" to drive away the devils.

SUBRAMANIAM.—*Murukan, Kumaraswami, Kandaswami* (See Vael festival).

MADASAMY.—This is an evil spirit, and a mischievous one, and corresponds rather to the Western child's "bogie-man." His activities are chiefly to be feared at dawn or dusk, for instance :—A man coming along a lonely path at dusk on passing some rock or tree trunk, might receive a slap from behind, or hear a demoniacal scream or laugh. Again a woman going to draw water at dawn, will perhaps have her legs pinched or her water pot knocked out of her hand and broken.

Coolies firmly believe in this kind of delusion of their imaginations, and will describe with great detail how these pranks have been played upon them. They are all put down to "Madasamy" and it is he that must be propitiated with an offering, as occasion demands.

CHAPTER V.

CUSTOMS.

It is surprising what a number of customs, forms, ceremonies, obligations, and observances, the Tamil cooly burdens himself with, all of which are in one way or another connected with his caste, his gods and devils, or his superstitions.

I don't think it is necessary or even desirable for the European planter to have any knowledge of a great many of these things—still there are a number of such matters that are interesting and useful for the budding Superintendent to know, some notes upon which here follow :—

EXORCIZING THE DEVIL.—It will not be long before the young planter's observing eye will notice certain tufts of black hair nailed to a tree, and will wonder how they came to be there.

It is no rare thing for a woman to become, as they say, possessed of a devil. Her behaviour is abnormal, she talks at random, or becomes morose, and may fall down in a kind of fit. Clearly she is "possessed."

The local "Pujari" is sent for. He comes to the house, squats down in front of the possessed woman, and begins to beat his drum and chant certain "*mantrams*," (See note on Mantram p. 41.) calling upon his favourite god to come and drive out this devil.

The possessed woman presently becomes frenzied, and at this stage the "Pujari" asks her the name of the

particular devil—or devils, if there be more than one—that have entered into her. On being informed, the “Pujari” then asks if she will give her hair to bind the devil. The woman replies “yes.”

The “pujari” then ties a knot in the woman’s hair,—for each devil a knot. Then he brings a big stone and lays it in front of the woman. She picks it up, puts it on her head, and rushes out with it and lays it down at the foot of some tree, the devils being supposed to direct the woman to the tree of their choice. The woman remains standing quietly up against the tree.

The “pujari” then comes up and nails each knot of her hair to the tree. Then, to the accompaniment of more “*mantrams*” (see note) he frees the woman by cutting off the hair. The devil or devils remain bound to the tree.

All women will avoid this tree afterwards, and, especially at dark, will on no account go near it.

HAIR CUTTING CEREMONY.—Before undertaking a long journey, on the birth of a child, or for recovery from a serious illness, and on such like occasions, the aid of Palaniandy “Swami” is often invoked. In return for this help a man will vow his hair, or that of his son, according to circumstances, as an offering to Palaniandy, after a period of years, perhaps 3, 7, or 15 years, during which time it shall remain uncut and unkempt. The state of the matted mass of hair after some years under this vow may be better imagined than described, but it appears to be acceptable to the “Swami.”

The great temple of Palani is situated some 20 miles from Trichinopoly. If it should happen that circumstances

prevent the cooly going to India when the time comes to fulfil his vow, he will sometimes go to Adam's Peak and make his offering there instead.

COMING OF AGE OF A GIRL.—One of the things the new S.D. will be sure to notice before long is that a little house 4 or 5 feet square, thickly woven of green branches, has been erected outside some line room.

This is the hut used in connection with the coming of age ceremony described below :—

The ceremony, substantially as given here, though there may be occasional variations, is common to all castes usually found on Ceylon estates.

At the moment when a cooly girl's first menstruation occurs, a regularly married woman, *i.e.* a woman with a "*tali*" takes her by the hand, and after making the girl gather a branch, or bunch of fresh green leaves, leads her back to her room in the lines.

Here she is left outside the threshold, and a small hut of green boughs is constructed just outside, or sometimes in the verandah, (the latter arrangement is not usual, and is probably only necessitated by bad weather).

The proper person to build this hut is the girl's uncle—her mother's brother.

In the evening when the lights are lit, five "*tali*" married women bring 5 water pots and pour the contents over the girl, clothes and all, after this the girl disrobes and puts on a fresh cloth. Then a light is brought into the hut of boughs, and the girl does reverence to it.

The next thing is food :—The girl has to drink some gingelly oil—then a raw egg—after which she eats a meal of rice and green gram with pepper water. For 16 days she has to remain shut up, eating meals similar to the above, morning and evening. In some cases the girl remains in the hut of branches only 7 days, the 8th to 16th days being passed in the verandah, screened off with sacks, hessian, or the like.

At the end of the 16th day, friends and relatives are invited, who will bring presents, mostly eatables, and there is eating and drinking and tom-tom beating. Later on the Dhoby is called. The girl's relations present him with a new cloth, and the guests each give him a small dole of money.

The Dhoby, the girl's sister-in-law, and one married woman, then call the girl out of her hut. Then follows a short ritual, after which the girl goes into the house and puts on a new cloth. On returning outside she is garlanded by her uncle.

Then follow some more ceremonies, with betel, and the uncle picks up and carries the girl into the house.

Shortly after this the guests depart with due ceremony.

Seven days afterwards the hut of branches is set fire to and burnt down.

BETROTHAL, MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, FUNERAL RITES.

The ceremonies in connection with the above are so long, complicated, and so diverse, each caste having its variations, that it is doubtful whether detailed accounts of them will be of any value to the young planter. A few words on these matters are all that will be material.

BETROTHAL.—The principal parties to a match have little or nothing to do with it. The whole thing is arranged by the parents. The essential part of the betrothal is the amicable settlement of the dowry on behalf of the bride, and the acceptance of the bridegroom's gifts.

MARRIAGE.—A common rule is that the proper wife for a man is his father's sister's daughter. Similarly, a girl marries her mother's brother's son, or not infrequently her mother's brother himself.

The essential part of the ceremony is the tying of the "*Tali*" round the neck of the bride, and is symbolical of marriage in exactly the same way as is the ring among Christians. The custom of giving Mooi-kasi may be mentioned, as it is a point of honour with every guest. At a certain stage of the ceremonial, every guest must give the Mooi-kasi, or as we might say "ante up" a rupee or so. This money is taken by the married couple, and is meant to recompense them in some degree for the hospitality dispensed to the many guests for several days.

Equally, it is expected by all of the guests (whose names with the amount of money they have given are carefully recorded) that when it comes to their turn to be married the present bride and groom will turn up at their weddings and return the courtesy of the Mooi-kasi.

THE TALİ.—Every S.D. will soon notice the married cooly women wearing a Tali, and if he is observant will wonder why perhaps some women don't wear one, though married.

The commonest form of tali is usually shaped as sketched, and may be made of gold silver, or other metal. It is supposed to represent the husband's two feet, or rather footmarks. Above the fork of the Tali is the emblem of Shiva or Vishnu, as the case may be. The sketch shows the front or converse of the Tali. The obverse is modelled to represent the truncated male body.



Some castes use different forms of Tali, e.g.:—

THE KONGA VELLALANS wear a peculiar Tali of large size on an untwisted cotton thread.

THE RETTIS wear no Tali but only the Tali string.

THE IDAIYANS wear one shaped like a conch shell.

THE CHAKKILIYANS wear one of plain gold (or other metal) beaten into a round hollow shape like a tiny gong.

THE DHOBIES do not use a Tali at all, but a bangle is placed on the bride's arm instead.

Others may wear the usual type of "*Tali*" but make differences in the string with which it is tied.

A married woman never takes off her Tali except after a separation from her husband, or if she has become a widow. A widow takes off her Tali when her husband's body has been prepared for burial and put on the bier, just before the procession starts, and never wears it again. She keeps it, however, and regards it as an object of veneration and on high days and festivals does "*Puja*" to it.

DIVORCE.—may be obtained by either party, according to the decision of the elders present at the betrothal.

The guilty party usually has to pay the other a sum equivalent to the cost of the wedding. Different castes have different standards of costs, for instance :—the cost of a Palla wedding is set at Rs. 48'75, though of course the actual amount spent on the occasion may be more, or less.

In some cases divorce may be obtained for twice the value of the gifts and money paid for the bride.

FUNERAL RITES.—When a death occurs, the news is taken in the case of a Kudiana caste person, by a Paraiyan, to the relations and caste people on the estate and further afield; in the case of a Pallan by a Chakkiliyan. In the case of a Paraiyan or a Chakkiliyan, by a man of their own caste.

Perhaps the most significant of the innumerable details of the ceremony are the breaking of a chatty of water and the flaming torch, symbolic of the dissolution of the body and the continued life of the soul.

The household of the deceased are considered to be in a state of pollution while the body is above ground and must not touch any one, but as soon as the body is buried they purify themselves by the usual bathing and changing of clothes.

POLLUTION.—All castes observe the period of pollution attached to women undergoing their monthly courses.

A woman in this condition must not enter her line, but must stay outside in the verandah, or right outside the line building, for three days. During this time she must take care not to touch any one.

After the 3rd day she must purify herself by bathing, afterwards putting on a clean cloth and giving her soiled one to the dhoby.

For 2 more days she must remain outside the house. Then she bathes again, giving the cloth she is then wearing to the Dhoby and putting on another clean one. Her purification is now complete.

The S. D. will frequently notice at weighing time or at the pay table that a woman will not bring her basket or take her pay herself for the reason, as the Tamils express it, that she is "outside the house."

MARKS.—The young planter will very soon notice coolies, and others, wearing certain marks, at times, as for instance :—

THE SACRED ASHES.—Those coolies who are Shivites (the majority are, nominally) may wear bars of ashes smeared across their foreheads, and sometimes across chest and arms as well. The occasion would always be that of a religious feast, or fast day. The ashes are made of the dung of cattle. (The Bull is one of the emblems of Shiva). Thin pats of cattle dung are made and stuck on a wall or paving to dry in the sun. When thoroughly dry they are burnt and the ashes used as above.

SHIVA'S TRIDENT.—Some wear this mark on the forehead, though the usual mark of a Shivite is the sacred ashes.



The mark is made with white lines, as sketched.

VISHNU'S MARK called the "namam" is worn by those who are Vishnavites. The curved line is white and the centre line red. Often the centre red line only is worn.



POTTU.—The spot of sandal worn on the forehead between the eyes. It might be white, or a bright majenta colour. These marks are often put on after a purification, and have no more significance than just "Swank." Some say the spot is to ward off the evil eye; the mark being conspicuous, it would catch the eye of an evilly disposed observer, and draw their attention to it rather than to the wearer. In this connection, it will often be observed that in the coolies' gardens there will be a tall stick with an inverted chatty on top. The chatty will be covered with white spots. This is done so that any one's evil eye may be attracted by the chatty and so diverted from the cabages.

TRIPLE CORD.—This is scarcely likely ever to be seen worn by an estate cooly, but may be noticed occasionally in towns or villages.

The cord consists of 3 strands, each strand made up of 9 threads. It is worn over the left shoulder down to the right hip.

The right to wear the cord is a much prized privilege, and is only accorded to the highest caste divisions, *i.e.*, Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas. But with a very few exceptions, no Sudras may wear it, such exceptions being the Kammalan and Asari classes of the Panchalas, the Kusavans, and some Valluvans, and in any case such Sudras could not wear the triple cord except on special occasions, such as at a funeral.

The significance of the cord is that it confers the right to study, and in the case of a Brahmin it gives him the right to read the sacred Hindu Books.

RUDRAKSHA :—This is a necklace of beads made of the seeds of the tree "*Elaeocarpus ganitrus*." They are about the size of large tea seeds, a rich brown in colour, and curiously convoluted, something like a peach stone.

These necklaces are worn by all kinds of priests and religious mendicants. They may be seen worn by the wandering Andis who pass through the estates from time to time. The Rudraksha is used for the same purpose and in the same way as the R.C. Rosary

THE LINGAM.—This is the emblem of Shiva, and it exists in two forms. The most commonly recognized form is that of a pointed stone set on end, often with two smaller stones, one on either side, at its base.

It is actually a representation of the male reproductive organ, and is emblematical of Shiva as the origin of all life. A lingam will be present in every temple of Shiva or of the lesser Shivite gods, and may often be noticed in wayside places at the foot of a tree or a rock. (For a fuller account see Dubois' *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, p. 628).

Another form of the lingam is that worn by devout Shivites. It consists of one Rudraksha bead mounted in gold or silver. It is worn round the neck on a silver wire or string.

SOONIAM.—This is an ornament very commonly worn by coolies. It consists of a little cylinder of silver containing a charm. Often worn round the upper arm on a string. Frequently a necklace of beads will have half a dozen of such cylinders attached.

The Sooniam is merely an amulet or lucky charm and has no other significance.

MANTRAM.—The word means "charm" or "spell," and is used of the spoken word as well as of the written character. A "Mantram" may be used to bring luck, such as those worn inside the "Sooniam" above described; or it may be used as a love philtre; or again it may be used to bring misfortune on a particular person. Used in this way the mantram is usually placed in front of the threshold of the person to be injured, so that in his coming and going he has to step on or over it. I have seen one of this kind:—it consisted of two tiny bits of Peacock's feathers bound round with silver foil, the whole slipped into the hollow centre of a small stem of bamboo. No doubt some particularly poisonous words had been chanted over it.

The art of making mantrams is not necessarily confined to any particular caste. Any one, with the knowledge, can cast spells and make charms. All the same the practice may be considered the speciality of the Tottiyans, though here and there a "Pandaram" or a "Pujari" may profess to be able to make charms.

PANCHAYAM.—This is the tribunal, or Court of the Elders. When a cooly has suffered theft or assault, or there is a dispute about money, property, or land, the elders of the disputant's caste call a Panchayam, and enquire into the matter. On estates the Panchayam would consist of the more important Kanganies and coolies, irrespective of caste. Witnesses are examined, the guilty party convicted, and suitably fined or otherwise punished.

If it is not possible to decide which of the two parties is in the wrong, they all repair to the estate "Swami" House (probably Mariamma's), where, with more or less ceremony according to the importance of the case, the parties are made to swear their innocence. Usually the guilty one will refuse to swear, the belief being that he who swears falsely will die within a given time limit.

In this way the real culprit is frequently discovered, but sometimes both parties will swear hardily, and so a negative result, or even a miscarriage of justice, may follow upon this method of trial.

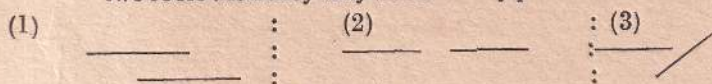
BUNDLES IN TREES.—The occasional appearance of a small bundle of something, done up in a bit of cloth or old sack, and fixed up in the fork of a tree will soon strike the eye of the new planter, and if he is particularly observant he will notice that the trees are only those which exude milk, for example the Sappu, the Jak, or the Rubber.

This is the outcome of a curious superstition: when a cow calves, the after-birth from the cow is tied up in a bundle and fastened in a milk bearing tree, as above. To do this is to assist the milk production of the cow, whereas if the after-birth were merely thrown away or buried the cow's milk would dry up.

ROOF RIDGES.—Tamils have another curious superstition which has to be taken into account when building lines. A line must not be so placed that the ridge of one, if produced, cuts the ridge of another at right

angles. This refers to lines in close proximity to each other. If the two buildings are some distance apart, say 100 yards, the observance of this rule would not appear to matter.

Suppose these lines to represent the ridges of two roofs then they may be relatively placed as follows:



but they must not be placed so :—



The reason is that to do so is to anger the gods of fire, of wind, and of the 8 points of the compass; and coolies will often refuse to live in a line so built. They think it will be sure to have its roof blown off, or to be burnt down, or otherwise come to grief. I have not been able to find why the gods of fire or wind should mind in which direction the roofs run. In the case of the god of the compass one can understand the idea better:—He is supposed to sit at the pole, *i.e.*, at the centre of his cross lines, like a spider in the centre of her web; and if he sees another pair of cross lines (in the shape of crossed roof ridges) in competition with him, he naturally gets annoyed.

“SEETU-KASI”.—This is a custom in vogue on most estates. The words mean “Money by lot.” A certain number of coolies, say 10, agree to pool all their pay every month, and each month they draw lots for the one of their number who shall take the

pool. Each one gets the pool in due course. But the system is open to a lot of abuse, and on one occasion I remember the fellow who drew the first pool bolted immediately afterwards.

“SEETU-ARISI.”—The same system is practised, more frequently, with the weekly rice issue.

“SHUND-ARISI.”—A “Shundu” is a measure about the size of a large cigarette tin and contains $\frac{1}{84}$ th part of a bushel according to coolies’ measure.

The system known by the above name is a most pernicious one. It consists in various parties deducting from the coolies’ rice issue 1 shundu in every bushel for various purposes.

The Clerk, or Conductor, or K.P., who issues rice takes “shundu arisi” to make up for losses in his rice store due to rats.

The Pujari, or some one deputed to do so takes a shundu for the Swami house. This does not occur every week, but only sometimes, and is the perquisite of the Pujari. The Kangany, head or sub, takes toll of a shundu, for no reason at all that I could ever discover except to prove his power of doing his own coolies down.

Thus, out of every bushel, the cooly is usually mulcted in 2 and sometimes 3 shundus.

With the exception of the occasional contribution to the Swami, it is usually possible to put a stop to these impositions, though no doubt on some places it may be difficult to do so.

CHAPTER VI.

A FEW "DON'TS."

1. Don't put Pallans and Paraiyans, or Paraiyans and Chakki-lyans on the same side of the same set of lines, unless unavoidable. These castes belong to opposite factions and as there is traditional jealousy and rivalry between them, it is well to keep them apart, as far as may be practicable.
2. Don't make coolies of different castes use the same threshold, or entrance. Verandahs are frequently built with only 3 or 4 entrances to 8 or 10 rooms, and in such a case the occupants should be of the same caste.
3. Don't take any notice of a cooly when he is eating his rice, or expect him to get up and salaam. Mealtime is sacred, and it is no rudeness on the part of the cooly not to get up as you pass.

When passing a cooly engaged in eating his meal, don't let your shadow fall on his food. If he is a high caste cooly it may cause him annoyance.

4. Don't call a high caste man by an outcaste name. To do so is to commit an offence beyond the limit.
5. Don't forget that the right hand is clean, and the left unclean; and that to take or give anything—coolies' pay for instance,—with the left hand is an offence against good manners. Use the right hand :

6. Don't ever kick a man—not for the, to us, obvious reasons—but because in doing so you pollute him. In the first place your shoe, coming in contact with pollution on the ground, communicates that pollution to the man, and secondly, his religious feelings are hurt, for the bull or cow is sacred to him, and your shoes are made from the hide of these animals. For a cooly to beat another with a sandal is the worst kind of disgrace. To hit a cooly with a broom, or even to threaten to do so comes under the same category of offences. To be touched with a broom is pollution no less than to be touched with a shoe.
7. Don't lick your receipt stamps, and ask a Vellalan or a high caste man to sign over them. Spittle is pollution—use a damper.
8. Don't suppose that it is rudeness on the part of a cooly if he, or she, talks to you with the hand over the mouth. Neither is this merely a nervous trick, but a habit ingrained in those of low caste in their own villages in India. No outcaste cooly may there talk to one of high caste without screening the mouth so that his breath may not pollute the latter.
9. Don't ask a woman what her husband's name is. It is not polite to mention the word “husband” to a man's wife, nor for a wife to mention her husband's name. If you want to know, ask somebody else.
10. Don't send any but a Paraiyan or Chakkiliyan with the beef box, or to fetch meat. Here is an instance of what may happen if you do :—

A friend of mine once, upon the unexpected arrival of some visitors, finding his larder not sufficiently well equipped, sent off a cooly to the nearest store to get some tinned meat. It happened to be a good caste cooly, but as he didn't know what was in the tin, all would have been well but for the kitchen cooly, who, being an idiot, after the manner of his kind, gave the show away. The cooly who fetched the tinned meat of course accused the kitchen cooly of having purposely put this indignity upon him and a feud at once arose between their respective gangs. The immediate result was a free fight in the lines, and quite a number of broken heads.

11. Mohammedan coolies will be found numerous on estates in certain localities. On such estates let the S.D. remember that the pig is to a Mohammedan unclean, whether alive or in the form of pork or bacon.
12. Don't put a low caste Kangany in charge of a field where a lot of high caste coolies are working. It probably won't matter for awhile, but there is likely to be insubordination trouble in the end. If the S.D. knows his coolies and their castes, he will make up his working gangs suitably at muster, and this sort of trouble will never arise.
Similarly a low caste K.P. is never a success for long
13. Don't take immediate action on a complaint. Remember that the first to complain is almost invariably the liar.

Hear both sides first ! Unless the complaint is a matter directly in connection with the work of the estate it is often best to let the Kanganies call a Panchayam (see note on Panchayam p. 41) and deal with it themselves that way.

14. Don't shout ! by doing so you (1) work yourself up into a temper (2) work the Kangany or cooly up ditto. The Tamil cooly is an easily excited individual, and on occasions, may be looking for a chance to make a scene. If you start shouting you are simply playing his game. A quiet manner avoids excitement. This caution would seem to be superfluous—indeed it ought to be—but I have seen in others, and myself experienced the ill effects of shouting so frequently, that I include the warning here.
15. Don't praise a child, or a new baby, to its parents—rather say “ what an ugly little monkey ” or words to that effect. To notice good qualities of any kind will only arouse the jealous anger of the gods, who may put a blemish on the child, or otherwise bring bad luck upon it.
16. Don't imagine that if you do any or all of these things, and nothing happens, that it will be forgotten ! There is a black mark recorded against you for each such offence, the cumulative effect of which, as may be imagined, will not make for popularity with the labour force.

CHAPTER VII

CASTES LESS COMMONLY FOUND ON ESTATES, BUT WHICH ARE OCCASIONALLY MET WITH.

AGAMUDAIYAN OR AHAMBADIYAN.—This caste comes chiefly from Madura, Tinnevely and Tanjore districts, though they occur in small numbers all over the Madras Presidency.

They are found on Ceylon estates in small numbers. My experience of them has been that they are not at all good coolies, being lazy and insubordinate.

The Madura Ahambadiyans have more or less merged into and are now regarded as a section of the Maravans. Those in the North Arcot district on the other hand, have allied themselves to the Vellalans, and closely follow their customs; they even frequently call themselves Vellalans.

The Ahambadiyans are Shivites and wear the lingam.

The derivation of the word seems uncertain; there are several different ones claimed by legend. The most likely derivation seems to be from "Aham" (a house) and "Udaiyar" (denoting possession) meaning a householder.

The ordinary title of the Ahambadiyans is "Servaikaran" or Thevan. Some of them adopt the Vellala title of "Pillai"

ANDI.—This is really a generic term for all Tamil beggars. They may be found among all classes of Sudras. Beggars of the Vellala caste would however be called Pandaram, which is another term meaning the same thing.

But it must be understood that Andis are not beggars in the ordinary sense of the word, but religious mendicants. To be a common beggar, a "*pitcheḱaran*" is disgraceful, but to beg, posing as a kind of unofficial priest is honourable. I cannot discover that these Andis ever do any job at all in spite of their religious profession. They chant no prayers, read no scriptures, perform no ceremonies at the various temples they visit on estates. The only thing they appear to do is to tell fortunes, and in this way humbug the coolies out of a few coins.

They may be easily recognized by the various insignia of religion which they wear or carry about with them. Their forehead will be smeared with ashes; they wear the necklace called "*Rudraksha*"; some of them wear the yellow robe; some carry with them the "*Kavadie*", a sort of canopy on a pole with Peacock's feathers at each end of it, some carry a gong or a bell, and all of them have a begging bowl.

When arriving on an estate they go straight to the lines; beg from all and sundry, sleep in the Swami house, and move on next day.

A very large proportion of the coolies will give them rice, even if only a very little, for fear of the spells which might be put upon them if they gave nothing.

But all Andis are not religious mendicants, some are cultivators, and some are permanently occupied about the temples, where they officiate at the various ceremonies.

Andis will eat meat and indulge freely in liquor, and are especially in evidence about the temples at times of sacrifice, when there is plenty of meat to be had.

ASARI.—This is one of the five classes of artizans called the Panchalas. The word "Asari" in Ceylon, usually denotes the goldsmith, but is sometimes used as a generic term for all five classes.

The name "Kammalan" is also sometimes used to denote any of the 5 divisions of the Panchalas.

The Asari enters a good deal into the life of the cooly. Every piece of jewellery worn by them has been made by the Asari. Many estates have one permanently living in the lines, while in every village or set of caddies at least one Asari may usually be found.

The Asari also frequently acts as a pawnbroker, advancing money on jewellery.

CHAKKAN.—The planter is hardly likely to come across any men of this caste. Still there are a few in Ceylon. They are the oil-pressers of Malabar, some of whom ply their trade in Ceylon villages.

CHETTI.—This word is often loosely used in Ceylon to denote a man's occupation or trade—the word meaning "trader." Nevertheless "Chetti" is the name of a true caste. There are many sub-divisions of the caste the best known of which are the Beri Chetties and the Nattukottai Chettis: Madura and Tanjore are Chetti strongholds.

Some divisions of the caste wear their heads clean shaved, while others wear the "Kudumi" (hair knot.—See note on page 21).

Of the latter divisions some have taken to agriculture, but very few of this caste will be found on Estates.

Their proper occupation is that of petty trader or money lender, and in that capacity they will be found all over the East. As money lenders, or financiers, they often run very large business, but the planter, if he comes across this caste at all, will do so with the Chetti in the capacity of Pawn-broker, with whom the coolies have frequent dealings. Many of these Chettis will use a secret code language among themselves, which no doubt comes in handy when bargaining with customers. The code is written as well as spoken.

The Nattukottai Chettis are credited with being very hard usurers, and much of the large sums of money they make by this means they bestow on temples, shrines and charities. For the rest, they do not seem to enjoy their wealth, but live like misers.

Some divisions of the Chettis have a curious custom of only celebrating marriages once in 10 years or so. When the marriage season come on, they congregate at the headquarters village of their own particular caste-division, when perhaps 50 to 100 weddings will take place, the marriage season lasting several months. The various families participating pool the expenses.

The customs of each division vary considerably one from the other.

GANGEDDU.—See Idaiyan.

IDAIYAN OR EDAYAN.—These are the cattle herds and shepherds, a numerous caste. The derivation of the name, It is thought, may be from the word "idei" meaning

"middle," the grazing lands being midway between the hills and the low-country.

The caste is broadly divided into 2 sections : one, the more civilized, being Vishnavites and calling themselves Yadavas ; the other being less advanced. The latter probably consider themselves to be Shivites, but may be described as devil worshippers. It is members of this section that are found on Ceylon estates. They do not make good agriculturists, and naturally do best at their own trade, as cattle keepers, carters, wheelwrights and shoeing bulls. Their usual title is "Konan."

The Idaiyans take a higher rank than their state seems to warrant partly on account of a tradition that Krishna was brought up by their caste (their most important festival is Krishna's birthday)—and partly because, being the cowherds, all castes, even Brahmins, are obliged to deal with them for milk and ghee.

There are many sub-divisions of the two main sections of the caste, of which I will make mention of one or two here :—

THE PU-IDAIYANS.—The occupation of this section was (and is to this day) to string flowers in the temples of Perumal.—(Perumal was an incarnation of Vishnu).

Now it is considered very unlucky to have a deformed calf, and it used to be the custom for all people owning such an animal to present it to the temple of Perumal. The legend runs that Perumal set the Pu-Idaiyans to graze these deformed cattle. To look after these freak animals the Idaiyans considered to be a degradation, even a sin, and they prayed for

compensation. Perumal then gave them a bull which he called after himself, saying that if they took care of it as they would of their own children, and led it from house to house begging its food, they would be absolved from any sin attaching to the care of deformed cattle.

The above is the legendary origin of the Perumal Madukarans or

ERUDUKARANS (Perumal Eduru = Vishnu's bull) now accepted as a separate sub-division of the Pu-Idaiyans. In the more northerly Telugu country the caste is known as GANGEDDU, and is I believe looked upon as a separate caste, but as it undoubtedly originated from the Idaiyans, I include it here.

These Perumal Madukarans, or Gangeddu, now do nothing else than tour the country with their bulls. These performing bulls are cleverly trained to do a variety of tricks, and are frequently deformed. People having the misfortune to own a deformed animal will call in a man of this caste, and not only give it to him, but pay him to take it away with a present of money and a new cloth.

In the course of a good many years I have only seen a few of these bulls in Ceylon, but they are not really uncommon. When approaching a village or colony of cooly lines where they are about to perform, the Perumal Madukarans announce their coming by beating a drum and blowing a conch shell. The bulls are decorated with flowers and cowrie shells with a conch shell over the forehead tied to the horns.

This caste are found about the Chingleput and Arcot districts, most of them speak Telugu, but many of them know Tamil as well.

PUVANDANS.—A few coolies giving this as their caste name may occasionally be found on Ceylon estates. The section were anciently, the palanquin bearers. The Puvandan women wear a conch-shaped tali instead of the usual one.

All Idaiyans will eat meat—but not, of course, beef, and drink liquor, when they can obtain them.

IRULA.—This caste is uncommon in Ceylon, but it is occasionally to be found. They are really a jungle tribe from the Nilghiris, but many of them now work on the Indian estates.

The name from “irul”=dark, probably refers to their colour, they certainly are a peculiarly black shade.

The only Irulas I have known were little use as estate workers. They are said to be good cattle men.

KAIKOLAN.—These are the Tamil weavers. They are numerous in the southern districts and in the Telugu country. They are occasionally found on estates, doing ordinary cooly labour, and very good men too. If you have got a man of this caste on the estate, you will probably find he is your best factory cooly, or filling some other rather special duty.

The name is derived from “Kai”=hand, and “Kol”=shuttle.

It is the custom for every Kaikolan family to dedicate one daughter to the service of the temple, where

she becomes a dancing-girl, or Dasi. There is an elaborate ceremony at her dedication. The rule is that as long as she or her descendants live, another girl is not dedicated, but as soon as her line dies out, another girl of the family must be dedicated.

The Kaikolans style themselves Mudali or Nayanar.

KAMMALAN.—These are the brass and copper smiths, one of the five classes of artizans, collectively known as Panchalas.

Tradition says that the Kammalans were at one time driven to take refuge in Ceylon, as the result of an incident in which it was attempted to force a Kammalan to marry a Dhoby caste woman, which would have been a degradation. There certainly are a number of the caste here, whose families have been here for generations. The caste is not infrequently found on estates, and the few I have known have been very good coolies.

Derivation :—anciently "Kannalan" "one who gives the eye." A temple image is always made with blank eyes. On consecration, the Kammalan comes forward and carves out the pupils. Knox says :—"before the eyes are made it is accounted but a lump of metal, but the eyes being formed it is thenceforward a god."

This name does not appear to be in common use on estates. The coolies always call it "Kannan."

There are various unusual customs attached to this caste, e.g., these are among the few Sudras who may wear the sacred triple cord, which they do on special festivals or ceremonious occasions.

Their marriage customs are peculiar :—A girl marries a suitable husband chosen for her by her parents, but if the man has any brothers, the girl has to marry the lot ; she is equally the wife of all.

But if one or more of the brothers wishes to marry another wife, he can do so, but that wife in turn becomes the common property of all the brothers.

The children are the joint responsibility of all the husbands.

Kammalan women wear the "Mookatie" = nose ornament (worn through the right nostril) and the "Pila-ku" = a hanging ornament worn through the cartilage.

The dead are cremated, but if young, buried. When buried, they are buried in a sitting position.

KAVANDAN.—This name is often given as a caste name, but it is not a separate caste. It is a title used by various castes such as the Konga Vellalans, Vanniyans, or Ambalakarans.

KOLLAN.—These are the blacksmiths and ironworkers, one of the five classes of Panchalas. There are several subdivisions of the caste some of them even working in leather, but the Panchalas will not recognize the latter as members of their fraternity.

Quite a number of estates employ one or more of this caste.

KORAVAN.—These people are not agricultural labourers, but are usually to be found in Ceylon in their proper character as gypsies. There are a few estates in the Low-country however which employ a large number of Koravans as coolies.

This vagrant tribe is found all over the Tamil country of Southern India. They get their living by snaring birds and small animals, fortune telling and basket making, tattooing, begging and thieving. Some of them are acrobats. "To cheat like a Koravan" is a common Tamil saying.

These people often migrate to Ceylon about the time of the New Year, and have been responsible for many robberies in the Island. They will even rob a woman of her jewels in broad daylight if they can catch her out alone.

They are clever burglars and will make entrance to a house by burrowing through the wall if it is of mud and wattle.

The Koravans are exceedingly superstitious, for instance :—They will never begin an undertaking at New or Full moon. The number 7 is particularly unlucky to them. The 18th August is the luckiest day for a criminal expedition, and so on. They attach great faith to omens and never fail to consult them before any undertaking.

In pursuance of their thieving business, Koravans will sometimes disguise themselves as Pujaris, or mendicant priests. From this habit of disguising themselves comes the Tamil expression "Talapa mati" = (literally, one who changes his head dress) a term of contempt often used as meaning a double faced rogue.

A marked feature of the Koravans is their hairlessness, that is to say, they have the usual quantity on their heads but their bodies and limbs are peculiarly smooth.

They will eat all kinds of animals' flesh except that of cattle, and are very fond of liquor.

KURUMBA.—This caste is rarely met with in Ceylon. The Kurumbas are extremely ancient and are believed to be one of the aboriginal tribes of India.

A section of this people still resemble their forefathers and are wild jungle dwellers of the Nilgiris.

Their more civilized cousins are spread about all over the Southern Provinces, and have become shepherds, weavers, cultivators, and even traders. A lot of the cumblies worn by the Ceylon estate coolies are made by Kurumbas.

KUSAVAN.—The potters. These people do not work on estates, but are to be found in villages all over the country. Their social rank is little better than that of the Paraiyans, yet the very special privilege of wearing the triple cord is theirs. Besides household pots, which they trade to everyone, they make all the vessels for the temples, and many of the painted hollow clay images. Many of the Kusavans are temple pujaris. Ayanar is their favourite god, and his symbol, the horse, will be frequently seen in village or wayside shrines, or set up in the fields.

These horses, which are of clay, painted, and are hollow, are made by the Kusavans. Ayanar is supposed to be a great huntsman, and the idea is that he comes at night, mounts one of these horses, and hunts the devils out of the neighbourhood.

The Kusavans custom is to marry their girls before they come of age.

Besides their proper trade, the Kusavans are said to be skillful bone-setters, and are called upon for this parti-

cular branch of surgery, in the same way as the Pariyari is in request for surgery with the knife.

Thurston records how Lord Elphinstone, when Governor of Madras, had his arm set by a potter when the European doctors had given up the job.

MALAIALI.—literally "hillman." There are quite a number of this caste on Ceylon estates, here and there, though one could hardly describe them as being commonly found. These people come from the hilly districts of Salem, Trichinopoly, and North and South Arcot. The name should not be confused with "Malayali," which is merely a name for the inhabitants of the Malayalam country and who are but rarely found on Ceylon estates.

The Malaialis are an offshoot of the Vellala caste. Living in the hill country near the forests, they are good Shikaris, practised in the use of snares, and accustomed to the use of the gun, mostly of obsolete, gaspipe pattern, with which they bring down deer, bear, or leopards.

Their houses are thatched—the use of tile roofing is unlucky to them, as being an innovation which would not find favour among their gods. When the Malaiali leaves his hills and come to Ceylon, however, he must be so overwhelmed with innovations of all sorts, that objections attached to them in his own country are probably set aside here, at any rate I have never noticed a Malaiali objecting to live under a corrugated iron roof, though I have not had the opportunity of testing him with a tiled one.

The Malaialis have a curious marriage custom:—They marry a young boy to a mature woman. During the boy's minority his father assumes the duties of a husband,

so as to ensure, if possible, for himself and his son, a male descendant who will deliver them from "Put." "Put" is a special hell for those who have not produced a son.

MARAVAN.—This caste come principally from the Madura and Tinnevely districts. They are closely connected with the Agamudayans and Kallans. Originally marauders, they are now generally settled as agricultural labourers, and many of them own their own land.

Thieving and cattle stealing are still common among them, and like the Kallans, on the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief, many of them are employed as watchmen, and even as Police, in India.

The caste is not very common on Ceylon estates, and both these and their cousins the Agamudayans, are unsatisfactory workers. They are good enough men physically, but seem to be less amenable to discipline than most other castes, and in these respects are much inferior to the Kallans, whom I have always found to be very good coolies. The worst gang of rogues I ever had as coolies were Maravans.

The Maravan women, like the Kallans, are accustomed to extend the lobes of their ears enormously.

Their usual title, often attached to the end of their name, is "Thevan."

The Maravan's great sport, in their own country at least, is a form of bull baiting, very like that indulged in by the Kallans in connection with their marriages, only in the case of the Maravans the prize is not the maiden, but only the cloth containing sundry small pieces of jewelry.

MUDALI.—Sometimes given as caste, but is really a title used by various castes, such as the Vellalans of the Northern districts, the Kaikolans, Vanniyans, and one or two others.

MUPPAN.—Not a caste, but a title used by Ambalakarans, Valaiyans, Pallans and Paraiyans.

MUTHIRIYAN.—(Telugu : Mutturasa). This may be considered a separate caste, though these people have been occasionally returned as a sub-division of Ambalakaran. This is really a Telugu caste, but many of them, have migrated southwards and being now settled in Tamil country, call themselves Muthiriyar.

Originally they were not cultivators, and made their living by hunting and fishing, they are also employed as watchmen.

They are not altogether uncommon on Ceylon estates, and the few that I have had to do with I have found good workers.

Their titles are Naicken or Nayakkan (Telugu : Naidu).

Unlike most other castes who make a great business of weddings, these people frequently do not perform the marriage ceremony. A man just arranges to live with a particular woman, and the pair are considered as married, and their children legitimate.

ODDE.—(Usually pronounced "Wudder"). These are the workers in stone, one of the five classes of artisans included under the Panchalas. They are a Telugu people, but they have spread southwards and are to be found in Coimbatore, Madura, Arcot, and in other districts, wherever in fact, they can get contracts. All their work is done on contract

and a great deal of it for Government. In Ceylon they are not very frequently found on estates. Those I have had to deal with were not good workers and I was glad to pay them off.

Their traditional occupations are digging tanks, building bunds, sinking wells, brick making, and working in stone. In the Cuddappah district a particularly good straight splitting stone is abundant, lying not in boulders, but in great slabs more or less horizontally placed at ground level. The Oddes are very clever at splitting them. On these slab rocks, fires are lighted till the rock is well heated. The fires are then swept aside and cold water poured over the heated spots, the rapid contraction that ensues causing the stone to split.

In many parts of South India pillars of rest house verandahs, "Ambalams," and other buildings, perhaps 8 or 10 ft. high, may be seen made of slim, perfectly straight split single stones.

The Oddes are a people of fine physique, due, no doubt, to the heavy nature of their labour, and partly perhaps to their eating meat habitually.

Many of them are itinerant, when one contract is finished, moving on to where more work may be obtained. Many of those wandering Oddes, as a side-line to their proper occupations, make a little extra money by tatooing, and also, it is said, by thieving and robbery.

Their marriage ceremony is very much simpler than that of most castes, the usual endless and complicated details of ritual being dispensed with. They have, however, a peculiar custom :— a man may marry, divorce, and

marry again as many women as he likes. In the case of a woman, a good deal of latitude in this respect is allowed too, but a limit is set at the 18th husband.

PADAIYACHI.—See Vanniyan.

PANCHALA.—(Canarese : Panch = five). The collective name for the 5 classes of artizans :—goldsmiths (Asari), brass and copper smiths (Kammalan), carpenters (Tachchan), masons (Odde), blacksmiths (Kollan).

Though not agricultural labourers, Ceylon estates are familiar with all these, except perhaps the carpenters and masons : Sinhalese being mostly employed in these two crafts.

A further account is given of each class under its own heading.

PARAVAN.—A numerous caste of Tamil fishermen found on the coast of Tinnevely and on the coasts of Ceylon.

The history of the Paravans is somewhat interesting :— In ancient days, the pearl fisheries of Mannar were in the hands of the Paravans, who paid annual tribute of their produce to the local Rajahs.

The Paravans prospered, and step by step, as time went on, they purchased their independence from the Rajahs, and, having acquired the free hold of much of the shore lands of S. India, they built their settlements upon them and lived along the coast as a separate and independent race, with their headquarters at Tuticorin.

About the middle of the sixteenth century the Paravans began to feel the competition of the Moors, who were spreading all over India and the East. These particular

Mohammedans who settled along the southern Indian shores, came from the Persian Gulf and knew all about pearl fishing !

Now it was Paravans *versus* Moors, but soon the Moors combined with the Rajahs, and the Paravans suffered much oppression.

The Paravans then sought the help of the Portuguese, who presently arrived at Tuticorin with a naval force from Goa. The condition of their assistance was that the Paravans should accept Christianity. This condition was agreed to, and after the Moors had been suppressed, some 20,000 of the Paravans were baptized and became Christians.

The fishers on the west coast of Ceylon and the southern Indian coasts are almost all devout Roman Catholics to this day, many of them still retaining the Portuguese names adopted by their ancestors at the time of their conversion.

As to how the Paravans came to Ceylon,—well, the Gulf of Mannar is only about 100 miles across, and they must frequently have been driven across by stress of weather ; at any rate there is evidence from old Tamil writings to show that the Paravans were in occupation of the North West coasts of Ceylon at least 1,000 to 1,500 years ago, and probably earlier still.

The occupations of the Paravans at the present day are :—fishing, collecting shells and coral, lime-burning, palm climbing—(that is to say coconut picking), cadjan making, and umbrella making.

TALAYARI.—Not a caste, but an office. The Talayari is the village head watchman, and may be of various castes, such as a Maravan, a Muthurasa, or a Paraiyan. He is paid by the various land owners to guard the fields, and threshing floors, and to trace stolen cattle. At the present day, however, the Talaiyaris form an organized branch of the Government Police service in India.

“Talayari” is not uncommon as a cooly’s name. His caste will probably be one of those above referred to, the name giving an indication of his family’s occupation.

TOTTIYAN.—This is a Telugu caste, but they inhabit largely the Tamil countries, Salem, Madura, Tanjore, and Tinnevely, and occasionally are found on Ceylon estates. They are cultivators at the present day, though their traditions indicate that their original occupation was that of cattle herds. A sub-division of the caste (Kollar) are shepherds.

This caste is divided into two main sections, those engaged in cultivation being superior, the other section are wandering mendicants who get their living by begging and sometimes by rearing pigs.

The Tottiyans have a curious custom of worshipping their ancestors :—When a man dies, his body is cremated. On the last day of the funeral a tall stone is up-ended among the ashes of the deceased and worshipped.

Close to the burning ground there is a roughly disposed circle of similar stones. The bones of the deceased are now buried close to those of the last one who died, so as to continue the circle, and the stone planted on top.

The Tottiyans have the reputation of being great sorcerers, and it is these people who make most of the "Mantrams" or charms so frequently used by the Hindu.

Tottiyans frequently use the title Nayakkan.

UPPILIYAN.—These are the Tamil salt workers, as the name implies. They are allied to the Telugu Upparas. They are found all over the Madras Presidency. Besides their traditional occupation of making earth-salt, their speciality is doing earth-work of all kinds, such as: making mud-walls, building the bunds of tanks, digging wells, brick making, and house building. The women will work as hard as the men at earth work. I have come across very few of this caste, and do not think they are common on Ceylon estates.

VADUGA.—This is not a true caste name but may be described as meaning "a Northerner" that is of the Telugu country. Kammas, Balijas, Oddes, Kapus, might all term themselves "Vadugas."

VALAIYAN.—It is difficult to know where to place this caste. They appear to be a split off, if not a sub-division of the Ambalakarans. Like the latter, the Valaiyans' usual title is Muppan, and some even call themselves Ambalakaran. At the same time they are looked upon as a debased people, and in some places they live in colonies of their own outside the town or village. Neither are they allowed inside the Hindu temples.

They have a legend that Shiva degraded them for the sin of eating rats and frogs. At the present day they will eat almost anything.

Their traditional occupation was the use of the net (valai=net), snaring birds, small animals, and fresh water fish. Many of them now do agricultural and ordinary cooly labour.

The Valaiyans come mostly from Madura and Tanjore, and a few from Trichinopoly. Not very common on Ceylon estates.

VANNIYAN OR PALLI OR PADAIYACHI.—The name derived from the Sanskrit "Vahni"—fire, reflects the claim of these people to be descended from the Vahnikula, a race of fire worshippers. Legend and historical inscriptions both indicate that the caste was anciently a military one, and furnished the Pallis or Pallavas with soldiers, chiefs, and even kings.

"Vanniyar" in old Tamil writings is used to mean "King." It is on record that a princess of the Pandyan Kingdom (the Madura area) came over to Ceylon to marry its king, and brought with her a force of Vanniyar soldiers. The name Padaiyachi is used alternatively as the caste name, and means "Soldier."

At the present day we have a relic of the past history of these people in Ceylon in the "Wanni," a district in the Eastern Province, which at one time used to have Vanniyar kings of its own.

Whatever the ancient history of the Vanniyaes may have been, however, it is certain that in later times they have become an agricultural caste, and rank below the Vellalans. It seems probable too that there are some connecting links of ancient origin between the Vanniyaes, Ambalakarans, Ahamabadiyaes, and other divisions.

It will be found quite a common thing on Ceylon estates for a cooly to give his caste as Padaiyachi, but making no claim to be a Vanniyan, and on going into the matter, it will probably be found that he is not really a Padaiyachi—*i.e.* a Vanniyan—at all, but turns out to be an Ambalakaran

FINIS.



Printed and Published by Alfred Holmes for the
Times of Ceylon Co., Ltd., Fort, Colombo.
