

ART. X.—*The Pariah Caste in Travancore.* By S. MATEER,  
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THE Pariahs or *Parayans* (feminine in Tamil *Parachi*, in Malayalam *Parayi*) number 63,688, and are more numerous in the South of Travancore, though a few are found in almost every Talook (county). Of the whole, only 192 males, and no females, can read. Their general social condition is very similar to that of the other so-called "slave castes," though, perhaps, not quite so low.

There are said to be thirteen branches of this caste, somewhat varying in status and in the estimation in which they are held. Like various other castes, they delight to expatiate on some traditionary pretensions to a former free and elevated position, which the more intelligent endeavour to support by curious childish reasonings and fanciful deductions. A native friend, who is very familiar with their views, has favoured me with a sketch of their arguments on this point, of which the following slight abstract is presented. It will be observed that they assume the truth of the Brahmanical explanation of the origin of the present low castes, which is to the effect that they are the offspring of forbidden unions between persons of differing castes. All such instances reported by tradition, or mentioned in sacred poems or Puranas, are supposed to be instances of *Pariahs*, who thus can be proved to have been kings, prophets, saints, and even gods! The argument is founded on baseless myths and poems rather than on history, ethnology, and comparative philology. And the whole applies rather to the Tamil Pariahs than to the Malayalam ones.

ORIGIN OF PARIAS.

One born of a Brahman female by a Sudra was called Chandálan or Parayan. In South India the classification of "right-hand" and "left-hand" castes is ancient, and the

mutual disputes between these long continued. There is no open quarrelling at present, but their mutual enmity has not quite ceased. Besides Pariahs, who headed the quarrel, the right-hand castes are Vellálars, Shánars, Náyakkars, etc.; the left-hand castes are Carpenters, Maravars, Pallars, Chakki-liars, etc. The Brahmans joined neither party, but fomented the discord.

Sundry Pariahs have reigned in ancient times, as Nanthen, King of Bahar, son of a *Sudra* maid-servant; Kooken, the friend of Rama Rajah in the Ramayana; Athikamen, born of a Pariah woman, and brought up by Cheramán. Hari-chandra Rajah, the great-grandfather of Rama, was brought up by a Pariah, as stated in the drama. King Veerakumáran and his mother were supported by a Pariah, and his kingdom strengthened by a thousand of them.

Gurus also. Vadihtan, teacher of Rama, was born of a dancing-woman by Brahma; and is said to have married a Pariah woman, who, in consequence of her chastity, became, on her death, a star in the zodiac.

The Shánár race are descended from Adi, the daughter of a Pariah woman at Karuvur, who taught them to climb the palm-tree, and prepared a medicine by which they should be protected from falling from the high trees. The squirrels also ate some of this, by which they enjoy a similar immunity.

Uppai was the daughter of this Adi, and married a Parayan Vediya: after her death she became Mariamman, the goddess of small-pox, and is worshipped in every village. Her younger sister, Valli, became the wife of the second son of Siva, and is worshipped in every Saivite pagoda as equal to Supramanian. Isakki was a Pariah woman, whose pagodas in Tinnevely and South Travancore are numerous: the Hindus fear him more than they do their own Triad. Oaths are taken at her shrines.

Siva is said to have had two children by a Parachi, in honour of the elder of whom, Aneyérum perum parayan—"the great Parayan who rides on the elephant"—annual festivals are conducted at Tiruvárur.

In many Hindi temples there is also an altar called *Mádan munnadi*, dedicated to *Chambanaya Parayan*, on which sacrifice is offered before the worship of the chief gods is begun. Also, before securing the ropes to idol cars for drawing them, a lamb is sacrificed to *Téradi Mádan* according to the proverb "Before the god, the *chámbian* or pariah; before the *Shástávu*, the *munyadi*."

All this, however, we may remark, might naturally arise from the desire to propitiate the Pariah demons, as easily as from any original authority or influence exercised by this caste.

The origin of the Serpent Worship at Nagercoil is attributed to a Pariah woman, who was at work in a rice field on the spot, when she saw a divine serpent expanding its hood: a pagoda was erected, and on account of this, certain Pariahs in the vicinity enjoy grants from the Native Government.

*Tiruvallavar*, the author of the *Tamil Kural*, and *Avvei*, the authoress of various other poems, are reputed to have been Pariahs.

Somewhat more to the point, whatever be their origin, are the curious and anomalous privileges of the servile castes in a few places, which Mr. Walhouse regards as surviving vestiges of ancient power exercised by them, and of a higher position as masters of the land before the arrival of the Brahmanical races. At *Melkotta*, for instance, and *Bailur*, the *Holiars* have the right of entrance to the temple on three days of the year specially set apart for them. At the *Dindigul* "bull games," the *Kallars* alone can officiate as priests and consult the deity. At *Tiruvalur*, the headman of the Pariahs is mounted on an elephant with the god and carries a *chauri*. At the annual festival of the goddess of Blacktown in *Madras*, when the *táli* (marriage-badge) is tied round the neck of the goddess in the name of the entire community, a Pariah represents the bridegroom.

The following points of similarity or connexion between the *Parayans* and the *Brahmans* have been traced by the former.

1. The Pariahs occasionally used the sacred thread; a few of their priests (Valluvars) wear it constantly. At funerals it is used; and on the occasion of marriages both bride and bridegroom wear the cord for sixteen days, then leave it off. But is not this mere imitation of a fashionable custom?

2. When there is a marriage in a Brahman house, the master is obliged to offer to the Pariah a new cloth, coconut, rice, plantains, and vegetables: these are taken to the back yard and the Brahman shouts thrice towards the Pariah village, "Brother, the wedding is about to be completed." The marriage cloth and badge are also taken there, but brought back again.

But are not these mere acts of condescension and charity to the poor on a festive occasion?

3. The white cloth umbrella, the handle of which is a bambu with twenty-one joints, and the white flag which Brahmans only are privileged to use, are claimed and used by Pariahs as their right on marriage and funeral occasions. The proverb is, "A white umbrella for the Brahman and the Sámbovan."

4. At certain sacrifices Brahmans used to be obliged to eat the flesh of the cow, which only Pariahs besides will touch. Of late years, mutton, or a figure of dough, has been substituted for this.

5. If an aged Pariah die, his wife is carried part of the way to the funeral, as if to be burned with her husband's corpse.

6. There is a legend to the effect that in ancient times, before the institution of caste, two sisters going weary and hungry along a road came upon a dead bullock: the elder sister very sensibly cut out a steak and ate it, which the younger refused to share. The descendants of the elder became Pariahs, those of the younger Brahmans, whence the proverb, "The Brahman's elder is the Parayan."

7. Brahmans and Pulayars have no special washermen. (No one will condescend to wash for degraded Pulayars.)

8. Brahmans and Pariahs call their dwellings *kottil*, and use the term *nangeinatti* for the husband's sister, which no

other castes do. Eastern Brahmans and Parachis at funerals wear the cloth in exactly the same way.

Whatever be the practical value of the preceding speculations, and they seem not to be worth much, it is certain that the actual condition of the Pariahs in Travancore was and still is lamentably low. They were formerly bought and sold like cattle, starved, flogged "like buffaloes," made to work all day for a little rice, and kept at a distance as polluted; and they still are in a position of subservience and deep degradation, not vitally differing from that of the Pulayars and Vedars. Rarely possessed of any property but a small clearing, to which their rights have never been legally secured, they are employed principally in field labour, with wretched dress, dwellings, and food, no manufactures of any value, suffering from ignorance and evil habits of drunkenness and vice, and devoted to demonism and sorcery.

One peculiar characteristic of this caste, and most offensive to others, is that they eat the flesh of bullocks and cows left dead by the roadside. They cut it up and bear it away; what they leave the vultures and dogs devour. This disgusting practice is discouraged, and is to a great extent disappearing among the Christian converts from that caste.

Beginning with those in the centre of Travancore, we shall afterwards speak of the Pariahs of Nánjinád in the south, and lastly of those of the Vembanád and North Travancore.

The Pariahs of Nevandrum district are rather stout, fair in complexion, and comparatively bold. They live in clusters of huts, and eat the putrid flesh of dead cattle, tigers, and other animals. Their girls are married when very young for mere form by their cousins, but when grown up, are selected by others, who give them a cloth and live with them in concubinage. Cases of polygamy occur, and sometimes also of polyandry.

The females are rather fair in complexion and licentious in habits. They wear numerous heavy ornaments, generally two iron bracelets and two heavy and several lighter brass

ones on the arms, copper rings for the fingers, and for the ears several leaden rings with a flat circular brass piece, the size of a rupee, pendent from the upper part. Their necks are burdened with a multiplicity of bead necklaces. They rub turmeric over their faces and bodies and cloths. They have no washermen, and are not accustomed to wear white cloths or to bathe regularly. From their filthy habits, therefore, the stench of a crowd is almost insufferable.

These people are often dishonest, brutish, and drunken, very offensive and abusive in their behaviour towards the higher castes, for which they are objects of reproach and dislike, these classes forgetting too often that this moral degradation has been caused by the long-continued oppression, ignorance and contempt to which they have been exposed.

They eat the seed of the *Melocanna Rheedii*, which abounds in an unusually dry season, as does also the bambu. Jungle roots, land crabs, and snails form part of their food. Some of them have enough of rice at harvest time, but seldom at any other period of the year. Their domestic relations are very loose and unsatisfactory, husband and wife too readily separating for slight causes, and forming new connexions even after several children have been born.

The Pariahs are zealous devil-worshippers, their chief demons being *Mádan* (the cow one), *Rathachámandy Mallan* (the giant) and *Múvaratta Mallan*, *Karunkáli* (black *Káli*), *Chávus* (departed spirits) *Bhútham*, *Mantramúrtti*, and other *Murttis* (ghosts), with many other evil beings, to whom groves and altars are dedicated.

The souls of their deceased ancestors are called *Maruttá* (ghosts), for whose worship young cocoa-leaves are tied at the bottom of a tree, and a small shed erected on poles and decorated with garlands of flowers; presents of cocoa-nuts, parched rice, and arrack are offered, and cocks killed in sacrifice. In the devil dancing they use clubs and rattans, bells, handkerchiefs, and cloths dedicated to these deities.

Other castes generally dread incurring the displeasure and malice of these deities. Sudras and Shanars frequently employ the Pariah devil dancers and sorcerers to exorcise

demons, search for and dig out magical charms buried in the earth by enemies, and counteract their enchantments; and, in case of sickness, send for them to beat the drum and so discover what demon has caused the affliction and what is to be done to remove it. Sometimes a present of a cow is given for these services.

These pretended sorcerers are slightly acquainted with a few medicines, profess to cure snake bite, and can repeat some tales of the Hindu gods. They also profess to discover thieves, who sometimes, indeed, through fear actually take ill, confess, and restore the property.

One priest whom I knew used to pretend that he had a "bird devil" in his possession, by which he could cast out other devils. On one occasion, however, when he made the attempt in the presence of a large concourse of Sudras and others, he utterly failed, and hurt himself severely by beating his chest with a cocoa-nut and leaping into the fire. He soon after resolved to abandon this vile course of life, and became a Christian.

Even after commencing attendance on Christian worship, they are easily alarmed by the occurrence of sickness, which is attributed by their relatives remaining in heathenism to the attacks of the demons whom they have deserted.

In one place the people of a whole village were hindered from Christianity, to which they are well disposed, and where some have at times joined us, by a peculiar endowment they enjoy, on the ground and condition of their influence and intercession with the demons. The story runs that some three centuries ago the Sudras of the locality joined together for some cause to beat a Parayan to death. Shortly after, many of the assailants died, and it was supposed by the astrologers that the demon Pára Mádan, worshipped by the murdered Parayan, was the cause of their suffering. To appease his anger, the diviners recommended the Sudras to make a collection of money, grain, fowls, and other offerings, which was handed over to the Pariah devil dancers. The sacred grove of this demon lay near the houses of certain Brahmans, who next began to suffer, and who then endowed

the grove with certain lands and rice fields for the service of the demon. The Pariahs still possess the lands, and make annual offerings in March. They are afraid that if they become Christians, the whole will be taken from them.

#### MARRIAGE.

The usual age is fourteen for boys, and seven for girls. Having selected a girl, the bridegroom sends to her a cloth, a fanam, and two finger-rings. This is called the "advance" or "earnest cloth." Henceforward the man ought to pay for her food and cloth at new moons and Onam feasts. Then the bride's father and uncle unite to give a feast. Early in February a person from the husband's party comes to the girl's house to settle that the marriage should be performed at this harvest. On the next day both parties boil some rice, which is called "muhúrta nel"—"rice for the propitious hour"—fixed for the marriage, which will be, say, a Wednesday or Thursday of the month of Meenam (middle of March to the middle of April).

All friends should be invited, and each render what help he can to the feast. The wedding takes place in a pandal at the bride's house, erected by their headman, for which he is rewarded with a double mat, a double basket of boiled rice, a náli measure of prepared areca nut, a bundle of tobacco, and one of betel-leaves, and three measures of aval (flattened rice) on the conclusion of the ceremony. On the appointed day, the bridegroom comes to the bride's house fully prepared, and sits in the pandal, where a pot filled with water, a náli measure of paddy, a lamp, and a flat brass plate, with a cloth and betel-leaves, are placed.

When the auspicious hour has arrived, the bride's uncle covers her face with the cloth which had lain on the plate, leads her three times around the shed, and then sets her near the bridegroom and towards the east. Then his sister and her sister take her, along with the measure of rice and the lamp, and go round the shed three times: the bride then covers her face with the nine betel-leaves, and sits looking



towards the east. The bridegroom then ties the *tali*. The headman now breaks a cocoa-nut (which is called the *Ganapathi polivu*) to augur the future of the pair. The bride's uncle delivers her to the husband's elder brother, who takes her from the shed and sets her in another room.

After the feast, the husband and wife go to their house together with their relatives. They have a feast there too. In the morning, the husband gives ten fanams to the bride's father, and fourteen fanams (two rupees) to her uncle. Should the couple live together till the death of the husband, the wife will receive one-half of her husband's property. Should they separate, the uncle returns to the husband the fourteen fanams which he had at first received, which he will pay to some other uncle to give him a niece as wife.

After the wife's confinement, the husband is starved for seven days, eating no cooked rice or other food, only roots and fruits; and drinking only arrack or toddy. The shed in which she was confined is burnt down. All this is dropped by the Christian converts.

#### DEATH AND BURIAL.

In case of sickness, the diviner is first consulted as to its cause, as is done amongst other similar castes: he names a demon, and offerings are demanded of rice, fruits, flowers, and fowls. Being duly supplied with these articles, the diviner spreads cow-dung thinly over a small space in the yard, where he places the offerings on three plantain-leaves, invokes the presence of the demons, dances, and repeats mantras, looking towards the east. He catches the demon that is supposed to come in an old piece of cloth filled with flowers and parched rice, and carries both demon and offerings into the jungle, where again preparing a spot as before, two torches are set, the food arranged, and after further mantras a fowl is sacrificed. He takes the whole afterwards for himself, gets a good meal, and is also paid twelve chuckrams (small silver coins) for the service.

Here it is interesting to note that among the Samoans a

sheet is spread out to obtain the soul of one deceased without burial, but some visible object is expected. The first living thing that happens to light upon the sheet is supposed to be the spirit, is carefully wrapped up, and the bundle buried with all due ceremony. (Turner's Polynesia, p. 233.)

Cases of death are at once reported to the relatives and caste men, who assemble and bathe the corpse, males for a man, females for a woman. Purchasing two new cloths, they tie one round the head, the other round the waist, remove the body to the open floor or verandah, and lay it north and south. The children and nephews then put the usual raw rice and scraped cocoa-nut into the mouth, wrap it in mats and carry it for burial. The diviner gives directions for the digging of the grave, which looks north and south. The body is carried round three times, mantras are repeated, and it is lowered in: the relatives first, then all present, throw in handfuls of earth and fill up the grave. On it are placed a tender cocoa-nut at the head, and a plant of turmeric and another of the esculent arum (márán) at the foot. All present are served with betel. The people of the house fast on that day, next day take raw rice, conjee, and young cocoa-nuts, and for sixteen days mourn and weep for the departed.

On the seventh day, all meet again at the house and purify it with cowdung. Each is presented with a little tobacco and two betel-nuts, and pays two chuckrams to the head of the house. A day is appointed for the pulakuli or purification from pollution, which is done within thirty days after the decease: then all attend and are fed with rice.

In case of small-pox, one who has had this disease is called in to attend; he takes the patient to a temporary hut in a lonely place, and is well paid and supplied with all that he requires. Through fear, none of the relatives will go near. Should the patient die, the attendant buries him on the spot, performing the ceremonies himself, then comes to the house, repeats mantras, and waves his hands round the head of each to remove further alarm. If a woman with child dies, she is buried at a great distance away. Occasionally the remains

of an aged man are burnt on a funeral pile, as being more honourable than burial, and providing some merit to the soul.

The Pariahs spend much of their hire, received in grain, on these ceremonies and on the purchase of arrack and toddy and fowls, which they present as offerings, and afterwards eat and drink.

One of our Christian converts who had been a devil-dancer being asked concerning his former practices, replied, that they were mere tricks to obtain money. Others have said that something came over them which they could not explain.

Let us pay a visit to one of the rural hamlets of the *Kólám Parayans*, a considerable subdivision of this caste. It is situated, as required by Travancore caste law, at some distance from the road, so that one might pass by it for years without noticing its existence. In obscurity is their safety. Brahman agrárams or streets are also far retired, but from the opposite cause. The Pariah village is situated at the head of a valley, and on the border of the rice-fields where they labour. The site is unhealthy, low and damp, surrounded by cocoa-nut palms and plantain-trees, the ground covered with decaying vegetable matter, and the drippings of cattle actually trickling into their spring and well. Did they but settle on the hill above, in view of the beautiful scenery, and fanned by the fresh breezes, longer life would be enjoyed.

The houses are small and dirty, but not quite so bad as those of the Pulayars, the walls being of mud and the roof thatched with jungle-grass. They stand close to one another, and are supplied with cowsheds and a few cattle. Two or three sheds for drying and thrashing grain are larger and more airy.

The younger women generally flee from the presence of a stranger. Those whom we see are covered with numerous brass rings, red beads, and other ornaments. The complexion is rather fair, sometimes a nice light red colour. There are occasional marked exceptions in fairness of skin,

perhaps arising from some admixture of Mussalman or other blood, as Pariahs are not avoided to the same extent as Pulayars are. Some of the children are pretty, with pleasant brown eyes.

The men are in wretched filthy cloths. There is much suffering from sickness, the dirt of the houses produces vermin and itch, which deprives them of rest by day and sleep at night. A respectable native must cover his nostrils with his cloth when he enters amongst them, for the stench and filth. The aged, if there are any, suffer from debility, and may lie helpless day after day until they die; infants suffer from sores, diarrhœa, worms, and want of food; and adults from headache and indigestion, ague, dysentery, and intermittent fever. Much of the disease arises from starvation and lack of nutritive food; but instead of saving and careful habits and industry, they turn to drink, which is but a poor remedy for their sorrows.

The cattle manure is partly saved, but handed over to the Sudra farmers. The Pariahs plant a few trees around their settlement as "otti (mortgage) and kurikánam (a kind of tenant-right)," then pay a sum to the Sudra landowner to permit them to enjoy the produce, as it is so difficult for them to get waste lands registered in their own name. Some have cleared lands and possess a few cocoa-nut and betel-nut palms, mangoes, etc., part of the fruit of which they sell and use the remainder. They may have a few cattle also, and let out a milch cow to the shepherds at one rupee per month. They grow some vegetables, tapioca, etc., in waste valley lands temporarily cleared and cultivated. They work in the rice fields, sowing, planting, and reaping, for which they are paid in paddy at about the same rate as other castes—say seven edungallies of unhusked rice for reaping one para of land (about an eighth or tenth of an acre), and earn with diligence and care now-a-days as much at each harvest, twice in the year, as supplies them for a month or two without further purchase.

During the slack season they work at making mats of *Melocanna Rheedii*, for which the men bring loads of the

reeds from the hills, and the women do the more laborious work of plaiting. Baskets are made, worth one chuckram each, of which they manage to make sometimes three a day, "working day and night," and coarse mats, which are sold at four for a fanam at the nearest market, or three at Trevandrum or Kaliakavilei. This art they are said to have learnt from the Kanikar hill men within the last fifty years.

A man needs cloths twice a year, the suit costing one rupee each time. The wife sometimes sports a good red cloth of Madura make, which costs three rupees, and lasts for special occasions, with care, several years.

Their property, if they have any, goes half to sons, half to nephews.

In another village familiar to me, the Pariahs live along the side of a narrow and deep glen, in the bottom of which their forefathers, four generations ago, cleared a small rice field, on the produce of which, along with their labour for the Sudras, they live. They manure the fields pretty well with the droppings of the oxen and buffaloes, and reap about ten times the seed sown. The sirkar tax is one-tenth of the produce, but on one piece the rate is four times the quantity of seed sown. Along the banks are planted a little coffee, which they sell, areca palms, mangoes, and pepper vines. The huts are very small and poor, and the spring of water polluted with manure and mud, cocoa-nut husk and rubbish; so there are no old men amongst them, no tall well-grown men, and no good-looking persons, as in some parts. They die at a comparatively early age of fever, cholera, and other diseases. And their masters have for years fiercely persecuted, in this out-of-the-way corner, those of them who became Christians, and have tried to deprive them of the spots of earth on which they live, lest their own power to oppress and make gain of the unfortunate Pariahs should be gone.

Now a few notes on the Pariahs of Nánjinád, in the extreme south, near Cape Comorin. Four of the subdivisions of the caste are found there, and extend thence as far as Kulitoty. From their geographical position and the comparative readiness with which they could escape to either

side from oppression, the high castes have been less able to degrade them than in the more northern regions. They go somewhat freely to Sudra houses, and into various streets where other people go, but not into Brahman streets. They enjoy pretty free intercourse with Sudras and other medium castes, unlike the western Pariahs, who are called *Teendár Parayans* 'not to be touched,' and cannot associate with their masters.

Some Pariahs in Nanjinad have enjoyed ancestral property for six generations, and a few still have good properties. An instance has been known of a Sudra writer employed by a Pariah landowner.

Titles were purchased for money of the Rajahs of Travancore, *e.g.* *Sámbavan*, an old name for Pandi Pariahs. The Rajah gave to such a headman a cane and authority to claim a double allowance of betel, etc. He, however, had in his turn to give double at funerals and festivals to his visitors. This head Parayan would be met with drums and marks of honour by his people, and the arrangement would enable the government to rule the Pariahs more easily. It is said that some Rajah fleeing in war hid himself in Pariah huts at Changankadei, and was thereby saved, for which he gave them a small grant of land producing a few fanams annually, which they still enjoy. They have a tradition that in M.E. 102 (A.D. 927) some Vanji Mannan Rajah granted privileges to Pariahs.

Their priests, called Valluvars, always wear the sacred thread as gurus. There are two or three such in Nánjinád, and their houses are called, like those of Brahmans, madam.

During the war with Tippu, proclamation was made that every Parayan in this district must have a Náyar or master, and belong to some one or other; all who were not private property would be made slaves of the sirkar (which was greatly dreaded on account of the merciless oppression), and obliged to cut grass for the troops and do other services.

Many, therefore, became nominally slaves to some respectable man, asking it as a kindness to free them from government slavery. This reminds us of the Roman clients and

patrons. Several respectable families begged the Nambúri high priest, visiting Suchindram and other temples, to call them his slaves, for which they paid him one fanam a head per annum; this payment is still kept up. This priest conferred upon them additional benefits, for in their troubles and oppressions he wrote to the government requiring for them justice and proper treatment. The slaves of a Nambúri would also be treated with consideration on account of his sacred position and rank. These families, "Póty slaves," still intermarry only among themselves, as in this case the wife could not be claimed by a different owner from the husband's.

These Pariahs generally live near tanks and by the riversides, in order to be near the fields of their masters which they cultivate. Sometimes both their houses and the sites on which they stand are the property of their masters: so that whenever they show any disobedience, they are driven away. Their huts are poor and crowded together; cleanliness is little cared for.

Lastly, as to the Pariahs of North Travancore. Their condition seems lowest of all, as they enter farther into the Malayálam country, and enjoy fewer opportunities of escape from caste degradation and from bitter servitude.

"Their own tradition has it that they were a division of the Brahmans who were entrapped into a breach of caste by their enemies through making them eat beef. They eat carrion and other loathsome things. The carcasses of all domestic animals are claimed by them as belonging to them by right. They frequently poison cows and otherwise kill them for the sake of their flesh. They are also charged with kidnapping women of the higher castes, whom they are said to treat in the most brutal manner. It is their custom to turn robbers in the month of February, in which month, they pretend, the wrong was done them, to break in through the houses of the Brahmans and Nairs, and to carry away their women, children, and property, to which they are actuated more by motives of revenge than of interest, and to justify which they plead the injury their caste had received

from these parties. In former times, they appear to have been able to perpetrate these cruelties almost with impunity, from the fear of which the people still betray great uneasiness, though the custom is now grown into disuse." (Rev. G. Matthan, in *C. M. Record*, 1850.)

These Pariahs are regarded as polluting by contact, are miserably provided with the necessaries of life, while their persons and property are entirely at the disposal of their masters. The state of these poor creatures is in every point of view most wretched.

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