

7. Sekundärliteratur

Memoirs of the life and correspondence of the reverend Christian Frederick Swartz. To which is prefixed a sketch of the history of christianity in ...

Pearson, Hugh

London, 1835

CHAPTER X.

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CHAPTER X.

Tanjore, the future residence of Mr. Swartz—His Report of the Mission for the year 1778—Letters to friends—History of a young Hindoo convert—Major Stevens—Foundation of a Church at Tanjore—Mr. Swartz called by the governor to Madras—His mission to Hyder Ali—Account of his journey to Seringapatam—Reception by Hyder—His Palace and Government—Swartz' occupations during his stay—His last interview with Hyder—His return to Madras—His disinterestedness as to remuneration—He obtains a salary for Mr. Pohlé, and assistance towards building his Church at Tanjore—Reflections on his Embassy to Hyder.

CHAP. FROM this period, Tanjore formed the chief residence of Swartz, though he occasionally visited
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The territory of Tanjore was conquered from the reigning Hindoo prince, by Eckojee, a member of the Mahratta family, towards the close of the sixteenth century. Fertilized by the sacred waters of the Cavery, it is considered as holy land, and has always been a most favourite residence of the Hindoos. Its capital, bordering on

the delta of the Coleroon and the Cavery, is wealthy and splendid, adorned with a pagoda, which eclipses in magnificence all other structures in the south of India; and exceeding, in the number of its sacred buildings and charitable institutions, all the neighbouring provinces. Its soil is peculiarly rich and productive, and its inhabitants numerous and industrious. Having suffered but little from the Mahomedan invasion, the Hindoos of Tanjore preserved much of the original character of their religion, and cultivated the study of their sacred literature with ardour and success. Though inconsiderable, in point of extent, its comparative opulence and its local position rendered Tanjore, at that period, the seat both of a political resident and of a British garrison, a place of great interest and importance. Such was the spot in which the future exertions of Swartz, for the diffusion of our holy religion, were to be conducted.

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In communicating to the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge his general report for the year 1778, he observes, that among the Hindoos at Trichinopoly and Tanjore, there were many thousands, even among the Brahmins, who confessed that their idolatry was both vain and sinful. It was not unusual for them, when pressed by his arguments, to reply, "True—what can

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avail all our images and innumerable ceremonies ! There is but one supreme Being, the maker and preserver of all !" "Hardly a day passes," he says, "in which Brahmins do not visit my house at Tanjore, hear attentively what is addressed to them, frequently take up a book in which the doctrines of Christianity are explained, and praise it as a divine religion." But too generally their convictions ended with their applause. "A Brahmin," he continues, "being asked what he would resolve upon, whether he intended to stifle his conviction, or to receive that divine doctrine, and to profess it, replied that he could not deny the impression he had received, and that he had sounded some of his acquaintance ; but that they all insisted upon the task as too difficult and dangerous, on account of the great numbers of the professors of idolatry. Nothing, therefore, but fear keeps them, at present, from embracing the Christian religion ; but it is to be hoped that this conviction will embolden them, one day or other, to shake off that inglorious servitude of sin and Satan. For my part," he adds, "I entertain a cheerful hope of seeing better days, and therefore rejoice in the present opportunity of preaching the salutary doctrine of Christ, frequently calling to my mind, that there is a time of sowing preceding that of reaping.

"At Trichinopoly, we begin and end the day with public prayer. At Tanjore, I have introduced the same custom. Very often, Brahmins and others have been present, observing our reading the word of God, our singing and praying. I never discourage the heathen from being present at any of our acts of solemn worship."¹

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Early in this year, Swartz addressed the following affectionate and instructive letter to the children of his late friend, Colonel Wood.

"MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

"I hoped to read a line from you this year; nay, from the letter of your dear mamma, I understood that you were kindly inclined to make me so happy; but perhaps the ship sailed before you had finished it. Well, I am fully satisfied with the good account she sent me of your health and improvement in all useful knowledge; particularly I rejoiced at your filial obedience to her. Truly this account was joyful, and a subject of thanksgiving to God. As you have begun so hopefully, I trust you will continue in that path which will not only rejoice the heart of your dear mamma, but, which is infinitely more, will be a joy to angels and their Lord. Oh, my dear friends, read daily the word

¹ An instance of the beneficial effect of this practice occurs in the next letter to Mr. Chambers, p. 333.

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of God, and let the meditation of it be your delight. By so doing, your understanding will be enlightened; the doctrine of your blessed Redeemer will be like food to your hearts; your affections will be fixed upon Him who is the source of your blessing; your whole conduct will be conformable to the will of your best friend; and lastly, this daily meditation of Holy Scripture will guard and preserve you from the path of the wicked.

“Never read the word of God without prayer. Be sure, my dear friends, that the neglect of fervent prayer is the cause of so much iniquity in the world. Forget not how tenderly the blessed Redeemer has advised us to enter into our chambers, to shut the door, and to pray to our Father in secret. You know that he himself practised prayer, and so set us an example which it is our duty and happiness to follow.

“Wherever you are, watch lest evil conversation deprave your tender hearts. You know that we cannot trust our hearts; therefore be always upon your guard, and walk as in the presence of God.

“You see how plain I am to you, because I love you all, and wish to hear of your spiritual and temporal happiness. How happy should I be if I could be with you, and bend my knees with you before the Father of our Lord Jesus

Christ! But that being very improbable, I hope to spend with you a blessed eternity.

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"Pray for me, my dear friends, that I may preach the gospel of my Saviour faithfully; that I may not labour in vain, but win immortal souls unto Christ; and that I may finish my course with joy, and enter into the joy of my Lord.

"Remember me respectfully to your kind governess. May divine grace guide her in instructing you! Farewell, my dear friends, and fulfil by your Christian behaviour the wished-for joy of your affectionate friend and servant,

"C. F. SWARTZ."

It is difficult to conceive any thing more truly wise, Christian, and paternal, than the preceding letter, more perfectly illustrating the character of the excellent writer, or better adapted to impress the hearts and to promote the improvement of the young persons to whom it was addressed.

To Mr. Chambers, who had now removed to Calcutta, Swartz wrote in this year, as follows.

"MY DEAR FRIEND;

"You have truly put me to shame by your repeated kind favours, when I reflect on my neglect in answering. Pardon this neglect. I promise to mend in this, as I ought in all points of my duty.

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“Hitherto a merciful God has preserved your unworthy friend, and bestowed on him innumerable benefits. Would to God I had made proper returns for all his unmerited kindness!

“The mournful story of your valuable servant¹ has much affected me and every one who has heard of it. Satan is ‘a murderer from the beginning,’ and his servants are too often, at least in their hearts, of the same hellish disposition. The conduct of that young man is a great comfort to you, and to us, in this melancholy affair. May God raise up many to be witnesses of his grace, and the divine effects which it produces in the hearts of all, who do not wilfully oppose it!

“The most agreeable account which I have heard a long time of the conversion of souls, is doubtless that which you so circumstantially described to me. I mean that happy couple, Mr. and Mrs. ——. ² Tell them that as all angels and servants of God rejoice over a sinner that repenteth, so the devil and his servants murmur and blaspheme. O may our blessed Redeemer fill their hearts with ‘joy and peace in believing,’

¹ The particulars of this story do not appear. It seems probable that the enmity of some of the natives had proved fatal to a converted servant of Mr. Chambers.

² The friends here alluded to, continued, during many years, both in India and in England, to adorn and promote the religion of the gospel.

that they may go on vigorously to the praise of their Saviour, to the encouragement of fellow Christians, and to the confusion of the devil!"

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The narrative which follows, illustrates the beneficial effect of the practice already mentioned of permitting the natives to be present at the devotional exercises of the missionaries, as well as the difficulty attending their conversion to Christianity.

"Here I had a few days ago an example which pleased me very much, though attended with trouble. A young man of twenty-four years, of the shraf caste, resolved to visit us at our evening prayer—heard the word of God explained, joined in prayer, meditated what to do—came to a settled resolution to join the despised people of God. Not poverty, not quarrel, but a desire of being happy, inclined him. He was engaged to marry a young woman, the daughter of a rich man at Seringham. The day of their wedding was appointed. He told his mother that he would fain marry that girl, but not with idolatrous rites. The mother said, 'I wish I had killed you as soon as you were born,' &c. All this happened before his being baptized. The relations got him cunningly, and kept him a close prisoner; but he found an opportunity of making his escape, and came hither to Tanjore. His mother and others made a great noise, and came

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and begged I would not admit him. I replied, in the presence of Brahmins and a number of people, that I never forced any body; but that I could not reject him, if he desired me to instruct him. Further, I said, 'Here he is; ask him whether he likes to go with you, or stay with us.' The young man said, 'Mother, and friends, if you can shew me a better way to heaven, I will follow you—but I will not live any longer in idolatry.' I remained in my house; the young man went to the chattiram; his relations followed him, and fairly carried him off to Vellum; but he again contrived to make his escape. After that, I instructed him daily, and baptized him. May Jesus triumph over all his enemies shortly!

"As to the rajah here, I thought to write to you as soon as I knew any thing with certainty. But I saw that this might detain me too long. I have not seen him since February. He has married more wives—lives a sensual life, and indulges much, as his people say, in drunkenness. He is surrounded with bad people. Nay, to say the plain truth, the behaviour of many Europeans to him has disgusted him much. You know, my dear friend, that the generality of our people do not mind that which is Christ's.

"In Colonel Wood's affair, he has declared that not he but the nabob is obliged to pay the debt.

“Remember me to your kind brother. O how
I esteem people who introduce justice into this
desert. May your brother prosper! But you men-
tion not a word of your mother. God bless you!

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“I am,

“Your affectionate friend and servant,

“C. F. SWARTZ.

“Your blessed employment, how it rejoiceth
me!—Blessed be God! Watch and pray, without
ceasing.”

His next letter to Mr. Chambers is strongly indicative of that simple, yet elevated and devoted piety which so peculiarly distinguished Swartz. The individual to whom he so painfully refers, had long been connected with the mission at Madras, but was now involved in pecuniary embarrassments arising from secular speculations and engagements, which obscured the lustre and impaired the efficacy of his previous exemplary labours. It is consoling to know that he was spared for several years after this period, and lived in some measure to redeem his character, and to prove the substantial excellence of his religious principles, and the validity of his Christian profession and hope. The allusion, however, to his case is preserved as a warning to those who may be engaged as missionaries, particularly in India, to avoid, with the utmost caution, all worldly occupations

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and pursuits ; while the kindness and forbearance exercised by Swartz upon this painful occasion, may teach a lesson of charity to all with respect to an offending and fallen brother.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ I arrived here at Madras yesterday ; and as I heard that a vessel is to be despatched to-morrow for Bengal, I thought it my duty to write you a line or two. The occasion of my taking this journey is melancholy. Mr. —, who has brought disgrace upon himself and us all, is dangerously ill. Some friends thought it necessary that I should try to get some information concerning certain points before he died. He is a little better, and as I have been dissuaded from entering upon that business, I shall say no more of it, except that his conduct has given me the most pungent pain. What shall I say ? Let us watch and pray, lest we enter, fall, and sink into temptation. What is man when left to his own foolish devices !

“ Your truly friendly letter has revived me in the midst of all my present anxieties. The contents of it are glad tidings out of Sion. Blessed be God !

“ I rejoice that you have awakened in some degree Mr. —.¹ O may you be a happy in-

¹ A young missionary at Calcutta.

strument of his thorough recovery ! Your advice to him not to compose his own sermons till he be more perfect in the English language is prudent. Any thing of his own composition in his present condition would rather hinder edification. May he have so much good sense as to follow the advice of sincere friends !

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“ It is cheering to reflect on the externally devout behaviour of the congregation. O may the Spirit of Jesus come on them like a rain, that the Bengal desert may become a fertile soil, and fruitful field of the Lord !

“ That this time is a time of apostasy and blasphemy none can deny ; but this must not discourage us from glorifying our God and Redeemer. No ; ‘ tu contra audentior ito.’ Who knows but God may bless us one way or other ? And if, (which God forbid !) we should seem to spend our strength in vain ; yet the work (and the fruit of it) is the Lord’s.

“ It is a most pleasing reflection to me, which has been much strengthened by the reading of your favour, that God is able to raise himself servants to do his will, and to promote the glory of his name, though those who are most obliged to do it should turn faithless to their charge.

“ May you be a burning and a shining light, like St. John—a light, full of divine knowledge—burning, and vigorous to live according to that

CHAP. knowledge ; and lastly, shining, and diffusing that
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“ My poor prayer shall attend you, and your dear friends. Whenever I bow my knees before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I shall often remember you, not only because you are my friend, but because you are a friend of my dear Master.

“ Remember me kindly to Mr. and Mrs. —, likewise the young lady that has dared to be unfashionable, so as to count all things but dross in comparison of the excellency of Jesus Christ our Lord. My prayer to God is, that they all may be fruitful branches ingrafted into the true vine, viz. Jesus Christ.

“ And now, my dear friend, abide in him, so shall you become daily more fruitful, and your fruit shall remain sure ; and, which above all is comfortable, your prayer will be acceptable before God, so that whatever you ask, the Father in heaven will grant, on account of Jesus, with whom you are united.

“ Farewell, my dearest of all friends. Be strong, watch and pray. And may God prosper you ! You shall hear from me soon again.

“ I am constantly,

“ Your affectionate friend and servant,

“ C. F. SWARTZ.

Major Stevens's quarters,
25th of June, 1778.”

“ My old friend Obeck salute in the Lord. You will pardon my writing so badly ; but I was obliged to do it in the night. Major Stevens desires to be remembered to you.”

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Major Stevens, from whose quarters at Madras the preceding letter is dated, had been stationed at Tanjore, and was an intimate friend of the pious Missionary. On the restoration of the rajah, the zeal of this brave and excellent officer for the interests of religion, induced him to erect at his own expense a temporary building in the large fort, in which Swartz officiated to the English garrison, and other Christians, native and European, in that place.

“ We had lost our church in Tanjore,” he observes in a letter to a friend, “ after that fort had fallen into the hands of the nabob. He amused us with empty promises ; but when we were quite at a loss where to assemble for divine service, my pious friend, Major Stevens, built us a fine mud-wall church, which cost him upwards of an hundred star pagodas. But the congregation increasing rapidly, and a fresh covering with straw being requisite from time to time, we began in Jan. 1779 to think of building a spacious and permanent church. A subscription was set on foot, but the amount was shamefully insignificant. At Madras, about ten thousand pagodas were

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cheerfully contributed towards erecting a *play-house*. But to build a *house of prayer*, people have no money. Major Stevens, who could have effectually promoted the subscription, and superintended the building, and who intended to return to Europe, and make a faithful representation of what might promote the true interest of the Honourable Company, and the welfare of this country, was killed on the 14th of October, 1778, before Pondicherry.

“General Munro, who knew, as well as every body, that Major Stevens and I lived together as brethren, condoled with me in the kindest manner, saying, ‘You will not soon get a Stevens again; however, I request you will consider me as your friend.’ Although we are bid not to place our reliance upon men, and although their promises are seldom any thing more than compliments; yet I praise the Lord, whenever he makes any one’s heart willing to further the work of God, even in the smallest degree. At a visit which General Munro and I paid the rajah, the general observed, that Christianity is far to be preferred to Paganism. ‘I am convinced,’ said the rajah, ‘that the Christian religion is an hundred thousand times better than idolatry.’—But the conduct of the Europeans makes a bad impression on his mind.

“In full reliance on the help of God, I set about the building of the church in the little Fort.

On the 10th of March, 1779, the general laid the foundation stone, nine feet deep ; and the garrison being assembled, I preached a short sermon from the sixty-seventh Psalm.

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“ As I had rendered the general some little service, by translating the letter which the Court of Directors had written to the king, by performing the duty of a chaplain in camp, for a short time, and otherwise, I was informed that he had requested government to make me a present for my trouble. Instantly, when I heard it, I wrote to Madras, declining any present for myself ; but if they would do me a favour, I requested that they would make a present of bricks and lime, of which the Company had here a quantity in store, towards building of this church, as we had not even money enough to pay the labourers, much less to purchase materials. The general, who went to Madras, promised to support and promote my request.”

It was some time before Mr. Swartz heard any thing further upon the subject ; but at length he received a letter from the general, desiring him to repair without delay to Madras, as the governor, Sir Thomas Rumbold, had something of importance to communicate to him. On his arrival at the presidency he was assured that his request respecting the church should be granted ; and was informed of the purpose for which he had been summoned. This was no other than to undertake

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a confidential mission to Hyder Ali at Seringapatam, to endeavour to ascertain his actual disposition with respect to the English, and to assure him of the pacific intentions of the Madras government.

Of this singular embassy Swartz gave a brief account in his annual report to the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge; but as his conduct throughout this delicate and difficult undertaking was equally honourable to his ability and his character, it deserves the more detailed narrative which he transmitted to his friends in Germany,¹ and which contains many curious and important particulars both of his journey and of his intercourse with the very remarkable personage to whom he was sent. His description of Seringapatam and of the government of Hyder, at a period when he was at once the terror and the scourge of the British possessions in India, will still be read with interest; though his name, and that of his son, like those of greater conquerors, have ceased to excite either admiration or alarm.

It has been already observed, that upon more than one occasion Mr. Swartz had been solicited to act as the medium of communication between the English government and some of the native princes of Hindostan. This is by no means ex-

¹ Missionary Correspondence.

traordinary. His remarkable sagacity and penetration, his familiar acquaintance with the native languages, his extensive information and experience, his calm temper, and perfect self-possession, his open countenance, and simple, ingenuous manners, and above all, his known disinterestedness and incorruptible integrity, peculiarly qualified him for such services.

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But these, like all his other talents and acquirements, were directed and controlled by the purest Christian principles, and rendered subservient to the honour of his divine Lord and Master; nor does he, upon this or any other occasion, appear for a moment to have forgotten his one great character as a Christian missionary.

On being introduced to Sir Thomas Rumbold, for the purpose of receiving his instructions for the commission with which he was about to be entrusted, "the governor," he writes, "addressed me nearly as follows:—

" 'There is reason to believe that Hyder Ali Cawn meditates warlike designs; he has in some letters expressed his displeasure, and even speaks in a menacing tone. We wish to discover his sentiments in this weighty affair with certainty, and think you are the fittest person for this purpose. You will oblige us if you will make a journey thither, sound Hyder Ali, and assure him that we entertain peaceable thoughts.

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“ ‘The reason why we have fixed upon you, is, because you understand the Hindostanee, and consequently need no interpreter in your conferences. We are convinced that you will act disinterestedly, and will not allow any one to bribe you.

“ ‘You can travel privately through the country, without external pomp and parade, and thus the whole journey will remain a secret (which is of great importance to us) until you reach Hyder Naik himself.

“ ‘You will have nothing to do but to refer Hyder to his own letters, and to explain some dubious circumstances; and if you perceive him to be peaceably disposed, inform him that some principal members of council will come to him to settle the business finally. As the intention of the journey is good and Christian, namely, to prevent the effusion of human blood, and to preserve this country in peace, this commission militates not against, but highly becomes, your sacred office; and therefore we hope you will accept it.’ ”

This unexpected proposal, as may be readily imagined, surprised and perplexed the good missionary. “I requested time,” he says, “for reflection, intending to lay the case in retirement before God. It immediately occurred to me that it was in more than one respect an undertaking of danger.”—It was, indeed, truly such, both from

the nature of the country through which he was to pass, and from the fierce and perfidious character of the despotic chief whose territories he was about to enter.

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“Having implored wisdom from above, I thought it,” he continues, “my duty not to decline the proposal. The grounds which determined me, were,

“1st. Because the mission to Hyder was not attended with any political intrigues. To preserve the blessings of peace was the only aim I had in view, and at that time I really believed Sir Thomas’s intentions to be upright and peaceable. I considered, that if God, according to the riches of his mercy, would vouchsafe to employ me as an instrument to establish the happiness of British India, I durst not withdraw myself, nor shrink back on account of the danger of the undertaking, of which I was fully aware; but I ventured upon it in firm reliance upon God and his fatherly protection.

“2nd. Because this would enable me to announce the gospel of God my Saviour in many parts, where it had never been known before. And,

“3rd. As the Honourable Company and the government had shown me repeated kindness, I conceived that by this journey I might give them some marks of my gratitude.

“But at the same time I resolved to keep my

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hands undefiled from any presents, by which determination the Lord enabled me to abide; so that I have not accepted a single farthing, save my travelling expenses.

"These," he adds, "having been given me, I returned to Tanjore, where I left directions with the native teachers, how they were to act during my absence, and then to Trichinopoly, where I preached to the Europeans and natives in the absence of the Rev. Mr. Pohlé, who was on a tour to Palamcotta."

On the 1st of July, 1779, he set out from Trichinopoly on his important and honourable mission, accompanied by his able catechist, Sattianaden. He stopped the first night at Curuttaley, a beautiful place near the Cavery, the aqueduct from which irrigating the low south lands, enabled the nabob to reap the fields thrice every year as far as Trichinopoly. The catechist here read to the inhabitants, and many attending Brahmins, from the Tamul dialogues between a Christian and a heathen. On the 6th they halted at Cattaley, and conversed with many of the natives on the salvation of the gospel; in the evening they arrived at Caroor, the frontier fort of Hyder, about forty English miles from Trichinopoly.

Here he found the son of a Dutch gentleman at Colombo, with whom he had once resided for several months, and who had shown him much

kindness. This young man had been most liberally established in Ceylon by his father; but being offended by the refusal of some trifling request, he went in disgust to Negapatam, involved himself in hazardous speculations, was obliged to withdraw from Madras, where he next resided, and at length entered into the service of Hyder Ali, raised recruits for him, and incurred debts, in the hope that he would pay them. Hyder allowed him a salary; but deducted more than one-half monthly, for the purpose of liquidating his debts. Here he passed his life in sorrow, sighing over his folly, yet not thoroughly disposed to renounce it. Hence he engaged in new speculations, which only added to his perplexities. "How many," observes Swartz, "have I known, who, from determined self-will, have lost their prosperity, their lives, nay, too often, it is to be feared, their eternal salvation! O how should parents and teachers endeavour to inculcate on those entrusted to them, humility, and the subjugation of their own will!"

At Caroor he remained a month, having to write to Hyder for permission to advance, and to await his answer. During this interval, which to many would have proved tedious and uninteresting, he found full and most useful occupation. With his young friend from Ceylon, and his family, he performed divine service. Some

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CHAP. of his servants he instructed, and baptized. In
X. the place itself, he and Sattianaden proclaimed
1779. the majesty of God, the deep corruption of man,
the mighty Saviour, and the nature and necessity
of repentance and faith in him. Upon these oc-
casions, the street was often quite filled. Many
listened attentively. A Brahmin said, "This is
deep wisdom." A young man replied to his ex-
hortation, "Look at the water in the river: will
it assume another colour? As little shall we
change." Some objected, that it was repugnant
to them to receive the Christian doctrine, though
they acknowledged it to be good, from Europeans.
Were it preached by Brahmins, it would be more
acceptable.

On the 6th of August Swartz and his catechist
left Caroor, teaching and conversing with heathens
and Roman Christians by the way. On the 8th,
being Sunday, they staid at Curremudi, where he
was joined by his friend and his family from Ca-
roor. He preached to them from the 19th of
St. Luke. "We were on the banks," he says,
"of the river Cavery, where beautiful trees render
the scene very delightful. We had a long dis-
course with a pandaram, on the principal subjects
of religion. When he heard of the resurrection,
he said, 'What is this? Can the body rise
again?'"

The next day they came to Errode, where they

observed the vestiges of the English army, which had some years since encamped there, and captured the fort. In the afternoon, they arrived at Bovany. "This," says Swartz, "is an island formed by the Cavery, and highly venerated by the Hindoos. As we were to halt here for some time, I visited the inhabitants, inspected the pagoda, and the lovely spots near the river, where the Brahmins are accustomed to assemble. The streams flowing on each side, and the lofty and branching trees, refresh the eye and the spirits much more than in Europe. Several Brahmins pressed me to visit them, when I set before them the doctrine of Christ, and earnestly admonished and exhorted them. Apparently, they approved all; but there it rested. 'We have already heard of you,' said one; 'how you have declared the true law at Caroor.'"

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On the 14th, they reached Sattimungulum, after travelling for more than a day at the foot of the mountains. The fort stands on a high rock, opposite to which is a pagoda, from which Colonel Wood bombarded and captured it without much trouble. The marks of the shot were distinctly visible. Being Sunday, divine service was performed with his friends from Caroor, and Swartz preached from Luke xviii.

Three days afterwards, the party arrived at Guzzulhatty, close to the pass. The heat was

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intense, and formidable mountains were before them. "Early on the 18th," he writes, "we set forth, not without fear, and prayer to God for his fatherly protection. A multitude of people accompanied us. Many carried a piece of wood, which they lighted, not only to render the path more discernible, but to deter the tigers. The mountain is ascended gradually. In many places, it is steep. If one looks down into the abyss, the head becomes quite giddy. The path is frequently narrow ; so that if you slip, it is all over with you. But the trees which grow on all sides, conceal the danger. When we had mounted about half way up the hill the sun rose, and we beheld the numerous heights and depths with astonishment, and admiration of God. The eye cannot satiate itself with gazing ; so that the dread of tigers is forgotten. Often we had a summit on our left, and a fearful abyss on our right. We directed the people around us to the majesty, the might, and the inconceivable greatness of God. The heights and declivities which weary the traveller, are his work ; and He has created them that they may proclaim his glory. But wretched man looks off from these wonders, and makes to himself worthless images, and says, Ye are our gods !

"About nine o'clock, we had surmounted the pass, and its seven lofty ridges. We expected

that we should now have to descend ; but it was a plain before us, and we perceived, with surprise, that the Mysore country is a full English mile higher than the Carnatic. During the whole way, the people saw but one small tiger, though there are thousands of them in these mountains. Having reached a village, we began to rest ourselves, when a thunder-storm came on, one clap of which was so loud, that the whole mountain seemed to be shaken in pieces.

“ On the 19th, we proceeded, and had another hill to climb ; fearful, on account of the tigers, but not to be compared, in elevation, with the first. There was a tolerably spacious choultry ; and, on entering into conversation with the people, a Brahmin said, ‘ No man lives so holy. Only let money be offered to any one, and all his good resolutions vanish ! ’ ” — an observation which, though but too true of the generality of mankind, and particularly of the Hindoos, was most remarkably refuted by the pure and perfect disinterestedness of the admirable person to whom it was addressed.

The following day, the party came to Arryacottah, where Swartz conversed in Hindostanee with the Brahmins on religious topics. The chief Brahmin, however, sent and called him away, fearing that Hyder might hear of it, and think that they were conferring on political sub-

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jects. "Hyder," he added, "is quite unconcerned as to religion. He has none himself, and leaves every one else to his choice." The observation was perfectly true, and affords a striking contrast to the despotic government of this successful adventurer in every other respect, and to the relentless bigotry of his son.

"On the 22nd of August," he continues, "being Sunday, we halted at Madenemuley, a pleasant little town. I first held divine service by the river, under the green trees. We meditated on the gospel for the day, respecting the deaf and dumb, and besought God to compassionate us, and this benighted land.

"The country was very delightful, verdant, and well planted with trees. The air was fresh, and the nights rather cold; so that a covering was quite needful. A scarcity of rain having for some time prevailed, the poor heathen imagined, that if the Brahmins would only submit to certain painful ceremonies, God would soon send them rain; since they supposed that he was pleased with such austerities. One of those who was present, exclaimed, 'Our religion is a complete system of fraud!'

"Over the river which flows by this place, is a bridge, of twenty-three arches; and, after rain, the superintendent is required to send people to repair it, wherever any earth is washed away from

its sides. "It is Hyder's economical regulation," observes Swartz, "to repair every thing immediately; by which means, all is maintained in good condition, and much expense is saved. Among the Europeans in the Carnatic, all is suffered to go to ruin."¹

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"On the 24th of August," he continues, "we arrived at the fort of Mysore, from which the country takes its name, and observed, with delight, the beauty of the surrounding scenery. A high hill, on which a pagoda is built, was formerly dangerous to travellers. The Pagan mountaineers imagining that their deities took peculiar pleasure in the offering of a human nose, frequently rushed out upon travellers, cut off their noses, and offered them to their idols. Hyder has, however, strictly forbidden this inhuman practice; so that travellers may now proceed on their way in safety. From this eminence, we had a distinct, but distant, view of Seringapatam, which we reached the next day. We crossed the river over a bridge, which, together with the strong columns on which it is constructed, is built entirely of stone. On the other side of the fortress, there is another arm of the river; so that Seringapatam is an island. From the point at which the river divides into these two branches, the fortifications commence.

¹ This, it must be remembered, was written more than fifty years since. Such mismanagement does not now exist.

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“I had a tent pitched on the glacis, as I found it too close and sultry in the fort itself; and an epidemic fever raged within; but I had, at all times, full liberty to enter. The fortifications have a grand appearance; but Europeans think that the works are not strong. I am not able, and do not wish, to pronounce an opinion on them. The rampart round the walls is not broad. Many of the houses are of two stories; and some of the ancient buildings are of hewn stone, with lofty and massive columns.

“The palace of Hyder Ali, built by himself, is very beautiful, according to the style of Eastern architecture. It is entirely of hewn stone, with numerous pillars. At the extremity of the pagoda stands the ancient palace of the kings of Mysore. The former possessor of the throne, to whom Hyder allows an annual income, still inhabits it. He has his servants, but is treated as a prisoner of state. Hyder himself sometimes visits him, and stands in his presence as a servant. Thus men of the world can dissemble. The king's sons are all dead; and the general opinion is, that they were secretly despatched.

“Opposite to the palace, is a large square, on two sides of which are open buildings, in which the military and civil servants of Hyder have their appointed stations for conducting public business. He can overlook them from his bal-

cony; and, as they are required at appointed hours to be in the places assigned them, to receive the reports of the country and army, whoever has business to transact knows where to find them. Here reigns no pomp; but the utmost regularity and despatch.

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“Though Hyder sometimes rewards his servants, the main spring of action here is terror. Every one performs his part from a motive of fear, well knowing the consequences of any neglect of duty. Persons of the highest, as well as of the meanest, condition, are punished with the same instrument. The tyrant keeps two hundred men, with whips in constant readiness; and no day passes, without many being chastised. The governor of a whole district is whipped in the same manner as the meanest groom. Hyder treats them all alike. Even his two sons, and his son-in-law, are liable to the same cruel usage. When any one of his highest officers has been thus publicly flogged, he does not allow him to resign his employment, but compels him to retain it, that the marks of the whip on his person may serve to deter him from repeating the offence; for he seems to think that almost all persons who seek to enrich themselves, are devoid of all principles of honour.

“Entering the palace one evening, I observed in the audience chamber a number of people sitting in a circle. By their dress, I perceived that

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they were collectors of districts; and in their countenances, the marks of anxious fear were visible. I was informed, by Hyder's Persian secretary, that they were come to submit their accounts. They appeared to me like criminals expecting death. Very few were able to render these to Hyder's satisfaction: and, in consequence, dreadful punishments were daily inflicted. I hardly know whether to mention how one of these unhappy men was treated. The poor criminal was tied to a post; two men approached with whips, and flogged him in the most cruel manner, the pointed nails lacerating his flesh. The cries of the wretched victim were most heart piercing.

“But, notwithstanding this severity of punishment, there are numbers who eagerly seek these lucrative employments, and even outbid each other. The Brahmins are the worst in this traffic. When one of them has obtained a district, he fleeces the inhabitants without remorse. At length, when called upon by Hyder for his arrears, he pleads poverty; and, having undergone a flagellation, returns to renew his exactions. Can we be surprised if the people, under such a government, lose all sense of shame?”

May it not be added, that it is a matter of congratulation, both to India and to ourselves, that a

system, so corrupt and cruel, should, within a few years afterwards, have been overthrown ; and the government transferred to a nation acting upon the pure principles of British and of Christian justice ?

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“Hyder’s army is under the management of four chief officers, (called baschi.) They may be considered as pay-masters ; but their office is not confined to paying the troops, as they have to provide for the recruiting service, and to regulate other military matters, being likewise judges for the decision of private quarrels. With these people I often conversed. Some of them speak Persian ; others, only Hindostanee, and are all Mahomedans. They once asked me what is the most acceptable prayer, and to whom ought it to be addressed ? I explained to them, that as sinful creatures, and therefore deserving eternal death, we could only approach the Almighty in the name of the Mediator, Jesus Christ ; and then expounded the Lord’s Prayer. They next inquired, whether the Lord Jesus, in his gospel, had fixed the period of his coming, and of the day of judgment. In reply to this I explained to them the doctrines of the gospel ; to some, in Tamul ; to others, in Hindostanee. As the household of Hyder consisted chiefly of Brahmins, I had very frequent conversations with them.

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Some of them gave me very modest answers ; whilst others avoided the discussion, and gave me to understand that they did not consider their temples to have been built in vain. The ‘buildings,’ I replied, ‘may be useful ; but the idols you worship, are worthless.’

“Without the fort, several hundred Europeans were encamped ; some of whom were French ; others, Germans. I also met with a few Malabar Christians, whom I had instructed at Trichinopoly. To find them,” he adds, with true pastoral feeling, “in that country, far from all Christian ordinances, was painful, but to renew the instruction which they had formerly received, was very comfortable. Captain Buden, the commander of the German troops, lent me his tent, in which I performed divine service every Sunday, without asking permission ; acting in this as one bound in conscience, to do his duty. We sang, preached, and prayed, no one presuming to hinder us. The whole I considered as a kind providence of God.

“In Hyder’s palace, high and low came, inquiring of me the nature of the Christian doctrine ; so that I could speak as long as my strength allowed. Hyder’s younger son (not Tippoo) seeing me in the durbar, or hall of audience, saluted me in a friendly manner, and invited me to pay him a visit in his own apartments. I told him I

would come most cheerfully, provided his father would give permission; since to do so, without his consent, might prove injurious both to himself and to me. Of this he was perfectly aware. Even the most intimate friends do not venture to speak their mind freely. Hyder has every where his spies; but I knew very well, that, on the subject of religion, I might discourse day and night, without fear of giving him the least offence.

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“When I was admitted to an audience, Hyder bade me sit next to him on the floor, which was covered with the richest carpets; and I was not required to take off my shoes. He listened to all I had to say;¹ expressed himself in a very frank and open manner, and told me, that notwithstanding the Europeans had violated their public engagements, he was willing to live in peace with them. A letter was then read to me, which had been prepared by his order. ‘In this letter, said he, ‘I have stated the substance of our conversation; but you will be able to give further explanations personally.’ Hyder seemed, by this expression, to consider my visit as the preliminary

¹ In his account of this interview to the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, Swartz says, “Hyder Ali gave a plain answer to all the questions I was ordered to put to him; so that the honourable Board at Madras received the information they desired.”

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to a treaty of peace; but the nabob at Madras defeated all these intentions.

“Whilst sitting near Hyder, I was struck with the expeditious manner in which the public business was despatched. When he had ceased conversing with me, some letters were read to him, and he dictated an immediate answer. The secretaries hastened away, wrote the letter, read it before him, and he affixed his seal to it. In this way, many letters were written in the course of the evening. Hyder himself can neither read nor write; but he has an excellent memory. Few have the courage to impose upon him. He orders one to write a letter, and then has it read to him; after which, he calls another, and hears it read a second time; and if the secretary has not strictly conveyed his meaning, or has in the least deviated from his orders, his head pays for it.

“I frequently sat with him in a room, adorned with marble pillars, opening into the garden, which, though not large, as it could not be in the fort, was neatly laid out with trees, which were grafted, and bore two kinds of fruit; rows of cypresses, fountains, &c. Observing a number of youths carrying earth into the garden, I inquired respecting them, and was told that Hyder had established a battalion of boys, all of whom were orphans, and whom he had taken under his protection; boarding, and clothing them, and fur-

nishing them with wooden guns, for the purpose of teaching them their exercise. This care of poor orphans really pleased me; and I wish our government would, in this particular, imitate his example, and improve upon it, particularly as to religious instruction, so as it becomes Britons, and as God will certainly require it at our hands, who hath armed us with power, that we should use it chiefly for his service and glory, and not merely for our own.¹

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“On the last evening, when I took my leave of Hyder, he requested me to speak Persian before him, as I had done with some of his attendants. Of this language he understood a little, but he does not speak it. I did so; and explained the motives of my journey to him. ‘You may perhaps wonder,’ said I, ‘what could have induced me, a priest, who has nothing to do with political concerns, to come to you, and that on an errand which does not properly belong to my sacerdotal functions. But as I was plainly told, that the sole object of my journey was the preservation and confirmation of peace; and having

¹ The benevolent missionary was here misinformed, or he would not thus have eulogised Hyder’s supposed humanity. The battalion alluded to was formed of boys, called *chêlahs*, or captives, selected, at the proper age, from the numbers carried away after one of the sieges of Chittledroog, to people the island of Seringapatam, and trained, like the Turkish Janissaries, for the military service of this tyrant.

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witnessed, more than once, the misery and horrors attending on war ; I thought within my own mind, how happy I should deem myself, if I could be of service in cementing a durable friendship between the two governments ; and thus securing the blessings of peace to this devoted country, and its inhabitants. This I considered as a commission in no wise inconsistent with my office as a minister of a religion of peace.' He said, with great cordiality, 'Very well ! very well ! I am of the same opinion with you ; and my only wish is, that the English would live in peace with me. If they offer me the hand of peace and concord, I shall not withdraw mine, provided—' "But of these mysterious provisions, nothing," observes Colonel Wilks, "can now be ascertained."

"I then," adds Swartz, "took my leave ; and, on entering my palanquin, I found three hundred rupees, which he had sent me, to defray the expenses of my journey."

The conscientious missionary wished to decline this present, but was told by Hyder's officers that it would endanger their lives, if they presumed to take it back. He then expressed his desire to return it in person ; but he was informed that it was contrary to etiquette to re-admit him into their master's presence, after having had his audience of leave, or to receive any written representation on the subject ; and that Hyder, knowing that a great

present would offend him, had purposely limited it to the lowest amount of travelling expenses.

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Such is Mr. Swartz's interesting narrative of this singular embassy. Too much praise can scarcely be given to his conduct throughout this difficult undertaking. While his piety engaged the protection and favour of Heaven, his frank and manly bearing evidently disarmed the hostility, and won the confidence, of the Mysorean chief. The natives of India are said to be expert in appreciating character, and Hyder Ali possessed this talent in an eminent degree. He failed not to discern, under the simple and pious demeanour of Swartz, a mind of no common order; a degree of talent and of fearless integrity which he could neither deceive nor alarm, and which at once commanded his respect and conciliated his regard. Had the Madras governor been as penetrating with respect to the character and designs of Hyder, and as sincere in his professions of peace, as his admirable envoy, the storm which soon afterwards burst over the Carnatic, might have been retarded, if not altogether averted.

By the most unhappy coincidence,¹ Swartz arrived at Seringapatam a few days after Hyder had received intelligence of an attempt on the part of a body of British troops to pass without permission, through his territory. This

¹ Wilks' South of India, vol. ii. p. 242.

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event was not calculated to allay the resentment which he had long cherished against the English on other accounts; and in fact, though gracious and condescending to the venerable missionary, in the letter to the governor, of which he was the bearer, Hyder evidently betrayed his irritation and his hostile disposition. He reviewed the conduct of the English as connected with Mahomed Ali, from his refusal to resign the province of Trichinopoly, as he had promised in 1752, to their breach of the treaty of mutual support and defence in 1769, in consequence of which his affairs had been nearly ruined, in his contest with the Mahrattas, and enumerated the capture of Mahé from the French, the conduct of the nabob's officers on the frontiers, and of the Company's servants at Tellicherry, in affording protection to his rebellious subjects, as so many proofs of their determination to break with him; adding with fearful emphasis, "*I have not yet taken my revenge, and it is no matter.* When such conduct is pursued, what engagements will remain inviolate! I leave you to judge on whose part treaties and promises have been broken. You are acquainted with all things; it is right to act with prudence and foresight." From the haughty usurper of Mysore, what could be more intelligible, or more menacing, than such language as this!

On the return of Mr. Swartz, the governor communicated for the first time to his council the result of a mission, which it seems had been undertaken without their knowledge. The only documents recorded on that occasion, are Sir Thomas Rumbold's letter to Hyder, and his reply, which has been already adverted to, and which intimated that the faithful missionary would inform the governor of several matters with which he had charged him. No entry, however, appears on the records, of any such information ; nor a single line of report or communication in any form upon this important subject.

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The able historian of the South of India justly expresses his surprise at this omission, as well as that no such report had ever been officially called for. He adds, what the writer of these memoirs can confirm, that upon various inquiries, both in India and in England, no document of this nature has been discovered, and that in the preceding extracts from the correspondence of Mr. Swartz, a mysterious blank is interposed at the very point on which the desired information is wanting. "The nabob *and others*, frustrated all hopes of peace."—

The truth appears to have been, that full information of all that passed between himself and Hyder Ali was afforded by the pious missionary on his return, to the governor of Madras, and that, with his characteristic candour and fidelity, he communicated his own impressions as to the state

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of affairs. Swartz himself was not deceived as to the probability of an approaching rupture. He clearly foresaw, and in subsequent letters to his friends plainly adverted to the intrigues of the nabob, and the misconduct of other persons, as the causes of this calamitous event. May it not, therefore, be conjectured, that the report of the result of his mission to Hyder was not recorded, because it little coincided with the prevalent views of the Madras government?

“These extracts,” says Colonel Wilks, “are added, for the purpose of exhibiting the amount of the lights which they afford regarding the nature of the mission, and of furnishing a curious and interesting picture of the mind of this venerable Christian, who seems to have deemed the political mission no farther worthy of notice, than as it tended to promote a particular object of spiritual pursuit.”

In his last observation, this candid and eloquent writer by no means does justice to the character and views of Swartz. It was, indeed, one of the motives which induced him to undertake the embassy to Hyder Ali, that it would afford him an opportunity of pursuing the higher objects of his sacred mission; but he was, at the same time, deeply interested in the preservation of the peace of India, and, as the most effectual means of securing it, was anxious to promote the British power and

¹ From the missionary's correspondence.

ascendancy in that country. Simple and spiritual as he was, he entertained the most just and enlarged conceptions of the real welfare of nations, and upon more than one occasion evinced the extent of his information and the soundness of his judgment on points of civil and political importance. In one respect only did he invariably reject every approach to secularity—in steadily refusing to derive from political services any personal or pecuniary advantage.

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On his return to Madras, "having been furnished," says this disinterested man, "with all necessities by the honourable board, I delivered the bag containing the three hundred rupees sent to me by Hyder to *them*, who desired me to keep it. Thus urged, I requested their permission to appropriate this sum as the first fund for an English orphan school at Tanjore, hoping that some charitable people would increase it. General Munro promised to recommend the plan to the gentlemen of the settlement." This design was immediately commenced, and it will be gratifying to know, was afterwards carried into extensive and most beneficial execution.

"Being told," continues Swartz, "that Sir Thomas Rumbold intended to procure me a present from the board, I begged leave to decline accepting any, declaring that if my journey had been in any way beneficial to the public, I rejoiced

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at the opportunity. I signified, however, that it would make me very happy if the board would allow my colleague at Trichinopoly the same yearly sum they had given to me, being convinced that he would use it for the benefit of the school, and the maintenance of some catechists. This request was granted. Mr. Pohlé receives at Trichinopoly yearly a hundred pounds sterling, as I do here at Tanjore; by which means we are enabled to maintain in both places schoolmasters and catechists." The government further immediately ordered that he should be supplied with bricks and lime towards the building of his church at Tanjore.

Thus ended this memorable visit of Swartz to the capital of Mysore. "Of my journey back," he observes, "and the conversations I held with heathens, Roman catholics, and Mahommedans, I cannot, on account of the shortness of time, say more. God preserved me on the dangerous journey, gave me abundant opportunities to announce his word, and directed all circumstances so as was most expedient for me. Praised be his gracious name! May the Almighty grant that every where, and even in the Mysore country, his gospel may be preached, received, and glorified; so that many thousands may be converted, and eternally saved, to the praise and glory of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ!"