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Tagebuch von Johann Ernst Geister.

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9. I began to build again, though it went on a little slowly, there being a scarcity of materials.

10. Finding myself tolerably well advanced in the Malabar Language, I resolved to go now abroad, and converse with the Natives without doors. Therefore I visited to day all the schools in this place, enquiring after their books, way of learning and the like, telling the Schoolmasters at the same time, that if they had a mind to know the Ways, Customs and Religion of the Europeans, they might give me an opportunity of conversing with them. They gave a civil answer and shewed a Satisfaction about my knowing their Language, yet as they are poor people, and are obliged to attend the whole day at school, they seldom came to me, except I had a book to copy, or when they had a book to sell.

I chose the visiting of the Schools chiefly for that Reason, because I knew the Children would tell their Parents and Relations, what an unusual thing had happened at School and that consequently I would be sooner known amongst them.

On that same Account a few days after I went over the Fort Side, with an Intention to visit the Schools at Dewanapatnam, but found none in the usual places, because it was one of their holy days. However I went to the House of a Bramine, who amongst his Countrymen is accounted to be the greatest Scholar in the place. I discoursed with him for about a Quarter of an hour of Astronomy, Astrologie & the like, and he shewed me some of their Astronomical Draughts and figures, pretending at the same time to prognosticate the Number of my years, and other Accidents of my Life, in which however he made such blunders & downright Contradictions, that I could not help discovering them to him, upon which he put it off, to another day, when he could come to me & give me full satisfaction. I expressed my contentment about some things, he had shewn me, and told him, that I would be glad of his Company, whenever he would come to me, which he promised and visited me several times.

The finishing of all my Letters and Accounts to Europe, has required so much time, that I was in necessity to omit now and then an hour of my daily Catechisation.

30. Though I had taken all proper care of my health, yet I found myself about this time very heavy and some times almost unfit for business even in the Morning hours, for which I consulted the Doctor at Tranquebar, and he knowing my Constitution answered me, that bleeding was the only Remedy for my indisposition. Upon this I followed his Advice, and had a large evacuation today, which had the desired Effect, so that afterwards I found myself revived and capable to keep close to my business.

The building would not go on so fast as I wished, therefore I did all what I could to come only so far, that I might inhabit the house before the hot Weather, & that the Remaining part might be done as soon as the Circumstances would permit.

February.

The Portuguese Schoolmaster has behaved hitherto to my Satisfaction, only I found now and then, when I came unexpectedly to school, that he was too rigorous. Therefore I admonished and exhorted him, to try all other means, before he disciplined the boys, & to endeavour that they might rather love than fear him. Some boys, who absented themselves had made a great complaint to their Parents and Relations, as if they had been used most unmercifully by the Schoolmaster, but after a formal enquiry, I found these things to be false. Others had complained, that they run away for want of vituals being half starved. But every body that was in the house, knew that they had their Vituals three times a day and in such quantity and quality, as it was certain their Parents could not allow them. As these objections might have been prejudicial to my Business, I took proper care, to convince those, who any way might be concerned in it, of the contrary. Some of the boys run away with their Cloaths, which had been given them, and their Parents were so unthankfull, that they would not give them again, till upon my application, they were ordered by their Captain to do so.