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Tagebuch von Johann Ernst Geister und Johann Zacharias Kiernander.

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18. - 19. April 1740

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April
18th

Finding it yet extremely difficult to enter into a nearer and more confident acquaintance & conversation with the natives, I have all this while considered very seriously if I could not find fair and proper means to attain to this design. It came at last in my mind to try if I could begin a Malabar Free School with Heathenish Children, that this under divine blessing might serve, to draw their Parents into a friendly Conversation with me. But I saw a great many difficulties and almost despaired in the very beginning of ever being capable to do such a thing. However in my discourses with the Malabars I now and then dropt some words about such a design in order to hear what they would say & I found that some of them thought it practicable & recommendable, but others raised difficulties. The hardest point was how to reconcile these two things, (Viz:) 1. to regulate & manage the School so, that in every indifferent particular it might look like one of their own Schools, because if they should find a remarkable difference they would not send their children, and yet 2. to accommodate it so that Idolatry and other things inconsistent with the main design of this School must be avoided. For a long while I could not come to a resolution yet at last trusting in God, I thought proper first of all to find a convenient place for such a school, and I pitched upon the Ground lately bought designing to Build there a Choultry which is a sort of a Shed which they use to build in publick places and commonly keep their Schools in, I chose this Ground to the South, because the Dwelling house Portuguese School &c. is to the North and it will be more agreeable to the Malabars if this School is Separate by itself and has its own passage to the Street. Therefore having provided every thing necessary, I begun in the name of God the Building of it. I considered likewise that though this Scheme should miscarry, this Choultry which cannot cost much may serve as a place for catechizing the children of the Catechist & others, and likewise in the beginning as a Malabar Chapel, before a little Church can be Built. Now I took the Opportunity to talk a little plainer to the Malabars and told them that this Building was designed for a School, which seemed to move some of them, and they recommended it expressing their Satisfaction & hopes that all the Children in the place would come to me.

19th

A Bramine of this place, who is a Scholar & Astronomer, visited me, and our discourse was about their learning, Chronology, Geography &c. On his saying that their Geographical Books were wrote four hundred thousand Years ago, I made several objections & exceptions. He did his best to refuse or to evade my arguments, not sparing his lungs to raise his Voice

(exceeding)

April

(13)

exceeding high, But finding it was in vain, he broke of at once, saying it was Dinner time and the strength of his appetite did not permit him to stay any longer.

About the middle of this month an unlucky quarrel was begun among the Inhabitants of this place about the respective privileges of their particular Tribes or Casts. Though the thing was decided by the Government yet one party not acquiescing and thinking to obtain by force, what they could not in a fair and lawful way, they made one bold fellow their head-man and in a Mutiny almost half the inhabitants amongst whom were all the working-men, left the Town gathering themselves without the limits, in hopes that the Government should be forced to call them in again & grant them all what they desired. But they were greatly disappointed, & after they had suffered very much for their folly, they were glad some weeks after to come in by stealth again, and took it as a Favour that they were not taken up and punished. I found this to be a great hinderance to go on in my conversation with the People because the place was not only most half empty, but those that remained were in such a hurry, & so exasperated against the others, that they had nothing in their minds and mouths, but revenge & destruction.

This month I continued to preach on the Doctrine of original and actual Sin.

May

Nothing extraordinary happened this month, but I went on in my Business according to the method mentioned before.

After the middle of this month, an inhabitant, with whom I entertained an acquaintance, brought a boy, who was related to him desiring that he might be taken in and instructed in the Portuguese language. I willingly granted this, in hopes that it might be an opportunity to a more friendly conversation. But the boy came only a few days, and afterwards absented himself.

22. To day the Choultry designed for a Malabar School was finished.

31. The eldest of the school-boys John Pearson was dismissed, and entered into the military service of the Hon^{ble} East-India Company. He has behaved himself very well being obedient diligent and willing. He was exhorted not to forget the benefit he had received in the School, and to fear and serve the Lord sincerely, for the better promoting of which he should not neglect to come on Sundays to hear the Sermon & that whenever he was free from Military duty, he should have leave to come again to repeat and improve what he had learned. His Captain gave leave and order, that on Sundays he should have liberty - for an hour to come to the Sermon.

M.