

Franckesche Stiftungen zu Halle

Auszüge aus dem Tagebuch von Wilhelm Tobias Ringeltaube.

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Palayankottai, 19.06.1806

Mai 1806

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Copy of the Revd. M. Bingle's Diary
contains, however, a palace and three pagodas, which we were not suffered to enter. I conversed with several officers in the king's service, native Portuguese, who wished for a missionary to settle among them; one of them seemed particularly well-inclined & to him I gave an English Bible. He complained much of the exertions of the Roman missionaries at funerals, baptisms, &c.

May 1st Set off for Alenjo, the most ancient English possession in Travancore. I was struck with the number of handsome Romish churches along the beach; at every thousand yards there is a church, & there were formerly still more. They are mostly built by private persons in consequence of some vow or other; but no inference is to be drawn from the number of these churches with regard to the flourishing state of religion. In most of them, mass is performed only once in two years.

I will take this opportunity to give my opinion on the number of Roman Catholics in the peninsula of India. I know, from good authority, that there are beyond a thousand missionaries dispersed over the country. If we allow each of them a nominal influence on two or three thousand souls, as is not improbable, it brings the number of Roman Catholics to between two & three millions. Those that are well-informed, think my calculation falls short of the truth.

This is the work of three centuries. Could we suppose their religion will go on to spread in the same ratio, we might fix the period, humanly speaking, when India would be a Roman Catholic country! It is true, that at the outset, the missionaries were abundantly zealous & powerfully seconded by government; the archbishop of Goa was governor-general of the Portuguese possessions; money was sent from Europe in considerable sums. Circumstances are now altered, but the resources of the Romish priests in this country, are still considerable: fines, indulgences, fees, presents, masses for the dead, are inexhaustible sources.

At Alenjo I was introduced to the acquaintance of Father Raymond Piedmontese, & vicar-general of Veraples. He is a man of uncommon liberal principles, & what I learned from him amounts to this: at Veraples they have two numerous seminaries; one for the Latin the other for the Syriac students. So late as in April the bishop of — came down to Veraples (the vicar-general's confirmation to the bishopric having not yet arrived from Rome, the French having taken the ship in which it was coming, he cannot obtain,) in order to lay hands on a number of young priests, no less than 63; besides whom, 200 missionaries

184 missionaries of different degrees were ordained in the course of that month. Under Father Raymond's care are fifty thousand of the Syrian church and sixty thousand of the Latin church. There are, besides the archbishop of Goa, four Romish bishops on this coast. The united Syrians differ in nothing but the language made use of in public worship from the church of Rome. They were originally brought into that communion by compulsive measures. A few churches, of which more hereafter, resisted unto blood. The inquisition at Goa, of course, is now very mild. Father Raymond enjoys great regard from government, on account of his vast influence. The subsidies they draw from the congregation de propaganda fide, at Rome, amounts only to twelve hundred rupees per annum.

I met here two European soldiers, that seem to have something of daring life in their hearts, & whose walk is no disgrace to Christians. It is a pleasure to see God's children scattered every where.

3d After crawling & climbing for a day and a half along shore, reached Dulion, near which are the British head-quarters. At Dulion got acquainted with an old Dutch officer, from Brunswick, who is a good & religious man.

4th Had Tamil service with some straggling Christians and my coolies, to the number of twelve. The former were of M^r. Schwarze's converts. Among the soldiers there are said to be ten or twelve more, but I could not make them come. Baptized two children. Here are five Roman churches. The place uncommonly pleasant.

5th Embarked in a canoe made of a single tree, four feet in diameter. Here the great backwater begins, which favours an inland navigation for 120 miles, & is connected with many rivers descending from the hills. It opens in various places into the ocean, from which it is separated by a spit of land thrown up by the sea.

6th After having passed several canals, partly natural, partly artificial, intersecting a low marshy country, resembling Holland, arrived at Alleppe.

8th After another journey through canals, reached Cochin. This town extends along the south side of its spacious & excellent harbour. In this harbour are many pleasant islands, on one of which Colonel — resides, in a hermit like situation. This worthy gentleman's goodness & condescension towards me exceeded my warmest expectations, & can only be accounted for by the Lord having inspired his heart to favour the missionary cause with all his might. Indeed I was overcome with gratitude in considering the merciful providence of finding a man at the head of the British in Travancore, whose conviction of Christian truth

truth is so strong, & his real so determined. I know, it would be painful to his delicate feelings, if I had said more on the subject, and shall, on this occasion I account, refrain from making any further observations on his conduct in the course of a few days I had the happiness to spend under his roof.

Soon after my arrival, he procured me an opportunity of visiting the synagogue of the Jews, in one of the suburbs of Cochin, which being the only one in India, has been the subject of much curious inquiry in Europe. The congregation consists at present of about a thousand souls, five hundred of which are descendants of white Jews; the rest are black. Mr. Alex. Jacob Levy, a Jew born in London, officiates as presiding rabbin. He told me they had a tradition, that these Jews were of the tribe of Benjamin, who, after the conquest of Jerusalem by Titus, escaped with the silver trumpets and other implements, from the temple and settled in Arabia, from whence they came gradually down the coast to Crangamore & other places, till a persecution by the Portuguese took place, in which their antiquities, documents, &c. were all destroyed, when they took refuge in the dominions of the king of Cochin. They were formerly, more rich & numerous, but since the last war, reduced to poverty they now subsist by the produce of their coconut gardens. This tradition, as to their emigration from Jerusalem, is obviously involved in uncertainty. The truth seems to be, that trade allowed their ancestors into India at an early period, as well as into Persia, Arabia &c.; & then being persecuted by the Roman Catholics they finally retired to Cochin, from the different quarters, where they had at first settled.

They have several deeds, the most antique said to be nine hundred years old, engraved on a plate of brass. These, however, contain nothing but grants from several kings to settle under their protection. Colonel — is in possession of authentic copies of them all, & they will no doubt, be given to the public in due time. It is curious, that the Portuguese accounts concerning their occupation of India make no mention whatever of Jewish colonies. The synagogue at Cochin is a snug little building, in the style of a Dutch synagogue, illuminated by sixteen massive lustres of silver. As far as manuscripts, they have none. Their thora or law, is written in the usual modern characters, & has been sent out from Europe.

These are all the remarkable circumstances I could learn; but as the Rev. & learned Dr. Buchanan from Calcutta is on his way to Cochin, his researches will be more gratifying to the public. I shall

dismiss

16. dismiss this subject, with noticing a curious custom, that prevails among them: if two young people of different sexes, in the presence of two witnesses, divide & eat a piece of bread, fruit or any other morsel, with each other, they are considered as lawfully married. Something similar to this prevails all over the East. To eat or drink any thing, in this way, produces the closest union of interests; & to drink tamarind water with a boy out of the same cup, constitutes the ceremony of adopting him. See 1 Cor. X, 16. 17.

During my stay at Malgant, the island where Colonel — resides, I had an opportunity of seeing a dignitary of the Syriac Church. His dress consisted of a plain long frock, of black silk, a small blue bonnet & a long bishop's staff in his hand. His physiognomy differed much from that which characterizes the Indian; austerity, firmness, acumen & integrity, seemed to form its character. He looked like a man. The Syriacs came into India, he said, more than a thousand years ago. Their tenets were those held by the Nestorians, who during their severe persecutions, (the storms that scatter the seeds of opinion,) spread all over the East. The Syriacs, numerous at present, go by name of Nasirins, or Nazarenes. They are an industrious, moral & wealthy branch of the community, & are greatly respected in all commercial intercourse for their integrity. The greater part of them have been induced, by compulsion, to join the pale of the church of Rome. They are quite Roman Catholics, with this exception, that mass is performed among them in Syriac instead of Latin. They have the New Testament in Syriac, & a seminary of their own at Veraples, near Cochin. Under the bishop of Veraples, are said to be no less than fifty thousand souls, who hold community with the church of Rome. Two branches of the Syriac Church, however create schism: First, Those in the hills to the north, forming about thirty-two churches, who braved the persecutions of the Portuguese, adhere to their old heterodox tenets concerning the two natures in Christ & receive the sacrament in both kinds. Secondly, About fifty-two churches in the south fell off again from the Romish church, when the persecution ceased, retaining, however, most of the peculiarities of the catholic worship. On what principle they split, I cannot learn. All these churches worship saints, & especially the Virgin Mary.

Cochin, once a fine compact town, presents now a ruinous

ruinous aspect. The fortifications have been blown up, as ~~well~~ have all the public buildings. The inhabitants languish, as there are no schools, no public worship, & no trade.

On the 12th, I left Col. — a hospitable roof, with his kind promise, that he would, at any rate, procure me an order from the king of Travancore, allowing me to build a church, annexing the offer of the money required for this purpose. With a most grateful sense for all his kindness, I stepped into my boat, praising the Lord for all his goodness. Colonel — strongly persuaded me, to fix myself near him at Cochin, or at least at no great distance, in order to give me his helping hand on every occasion. But enticed as this offer was, I declined it, in consideration of my engagements, & the calls of duty in the Finevelly mission.

13th In the morning reached Alapully, or Alappze, formerly fortified, & still a place of trade. Some of the king's troops are quartered here, & a few European gentlemen reside at this place for the purposes of trade. The land gains so fast upon the sea hereabouts, that a ship which had been begun about five years ago to be built close to the water's edge, is now at the distance of 500 paces from the sea.

In the evening I saw an instance of Roman catholic church discipline. Taking a walk with a gentleman, we heard a woman cry very much, as if under a severe flogging. Having followed these sounds, we perceived, in front of a church, a young woman, tied to a cocoa-nut tree, and a stout fellow, (the church-clerk,) inflicting this severe discipline, whilst the native priest stood by to see that justice was done. By our appearance the priest was moved to put a stop to the execution. In that system, which the Roman missionaries have adopted, where all manner of offences are tried by them, such punishments may sometimes be necessary for grosser crimes. We dare say, if the woman had possessed the means of pacifying the priest, confession and absolution would have been all that was needful on this occasion. The following day I proceeded on my journey, and dined

(18) at a hut belonging to a family of Canarines. They wear the Bramin thread over their shoulder, & their language is the Grandam or modern Sanscrit. Their features also are of the Braminic cast. From this coincidence, it seems to be plain, that the Bramin came originally from the Canara country, in the heart of the peninsula, from whence they brought their superstitions and their language. It can not be thought, that they would suffer the Canarines to wear their distinguishing badge, had they not sprung from a Canarine stock. The family I visited, were Roman Catholics, & I observed in their hut tables & benches, & a piece of furniture of which other Indians know not the use: I also saw two very simple bucket-wheels, to throw water from the rice lands into a canal. Here too and only here, I saw the people cut boards and planks by means of a saw, as we do in Europe.

15th I arrived again at Quilon, where I waited on Col. — and some of the officers. In the evening of this day was introduced by Dr. —, nephew to the colonel, to his excellency the Dewan. At this interview, I requested him to give me leave, to build a church at Magilandy for the Christians. He asked me. "Of what religion are you?" Of that ~~the~~ Colonel is — is. "I never knew, that there was such a religion." I endeavoured to explain to him what it was, but with little success. He told me frankly, the thing was not to be done, as it was an innovation. But as I had Colonel —'s promise, that he would get me leave to build a church, I was not much alarmed, but took my leave. Soon after this, Colonel — repeated his promise by letter, and requested his excellency the minister to come and see him, which was done accordingly. I mention this fact to show how impossible it would be to introduce the mission into Travancore in opposition to the Bramins and Roman priests, if the present favourable moment had been slipped. The Dewan is a man of great sense, and resolution. At the late rebellion he stood at the head of the rebel

rebel party, as it is called: (Cf. my vol in van 19
hundred against the rebel party in the island.)
This day I was requested by a Roman catholic lady of great
influence, to baptize her youngest daughter, & to admit her
eldest daughter a member of the protestant church. Her
general argument, after much discussion, amount-
ed to this, that though for her own part she knew
and discriminated the essentials of religion, yet she con-
ceived, that her daughters were in great danger, if
brought up in the Roman catholic persuasion, which in
this country was frequently the object of just ridicule,
as certainly it appeared very often as a piece of pious
buffoonery. Her daughters might probably be married
to protestants, & they might be reared out of all religion
if they embraced that of the church of Rome. I thought
very seriously & deeply on this subject, & laid the matter
before the Lord in prayer, & after giving it due re-
flection, was resolved to stay a fortnight at Quilon,
in order to give these amiable children, as they really
were, some instruction, which might enable them to
make their own choice. Accordingly, I began my in-
structions with the three children, one of them a most en-
gaging, but almost blind youth, the son of a Dutch
governor at Cochin. I was rejoiced to find my
scholars prove susceptible of gracious impressions, which
I hope will never be obliterated. Of three successive
Sundays we had divine service in English, and having
confirmed the two eldest children on the day previous,
we all partook of the Lord's supper. The Lord was near
to our hearts, & those my dear friends, who overwhelmed
me with kindness, promised, at parting, that they would
regularly keep divine service on the Lord's day; a pro-
mise which, I am happy to learn, has since been con-
scientiously fulfilled. I am truly thankful to the Lord
for

20 For this happy fortnight, and have some hopes, that the good boy above mentioned will one day make an useful, though perhaps blind missionary, in the Travancore country, and Malegaalam language.

Although the rainy season had now set in, the Lord, in his mercy, gave me a whole week of fine weather for my return towards home, and the contrary would have been distressing in the extreme. I travelled with all speed, and arrived, July 4th at Myengo.

On the 5th, in the morning partook of the Lord's supper with three communicants, one of them an amiable English servant, who was abundantly thankful, & in the evening arrived at Sonterri, where an old Portuguese Gentleman, in the service of the king, gave me a great deal of information on the religious and political state of Travancore.

On the 7th, at Cyacotta, I was mercifully preserved from being killed by a falling palm branch, an hair-breadth escape! Here I was informed, that the catechist, I had taken with me, after a deal of bad conduct, unknown to me, had absconded with some of my money and clothes. This was very unpleasant, as I wanted him much in the capacity of an interpreter, being desirous of obtaining a piece of land in the south part of Travancore: but as this poor creature, on my first coming into these parts, had done me essential service, never to be forgotten; I felt more inclined to pity than resentment. His abilities are great, & may still, some time hence, be useful, if the Lord in mercy should grant him repentance.

10th Reached my present home full of gratitude to God our Saviour for prospering my way.

I shall conclude my diary, with stating the present circumstances of the mission, and the views, which I beg leave to suggest to our directors for advancing & promoting the cause of genuine and spiritual religion in these extensive regions.

When I got home, a collection, amounting to 40 star pagodas, £30 enabled me to make some necessary repairs and improvements