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THE ETHNOLOGY OF THE "MOORS"
OF CEYLON.

By the Hon. P. RÁMANÁTHAN.

(*Read April 26, 1888.*)



THAT section of our community which passes principally among our European settlers by the name of "Moors" number, according to the last Census, about 185,000 souls. They are all Muhammadans. In the Siphalese districts they occupy themselves with petty trade of all kinds, as pedlars and boutique (small shop) keepers. The poorer classes are mostly boatmen, fishermen, and coolies. In the Tamil provinces they pursue agriculture and fishing. In physique and features they closely resemble the Tamils, and as to the language they speak, it is Tamil, even in purely Siphalese districts. I propose in this Paper to consider the nationality of this community.

In ancient Roman history the name of Mauri frequently occurs as the inhabitants of Mauritania,¹ the westernmost country of North Africa, washed by the Atlantic on the west and the Mediterranean on the north. They were a nomadic, idolatrous, and illiterate race, and for many years vainly resisted the religion and power of the successors of Muhammad. When they became converts to the new faith (A.C. 698-709) their great ambition was to learn the language and affect the manners of the Arabs. In the words of Gibbon, they were "proud to adopt the language, name, and origin of

¹ Known to the Greeks as Maurusia, and in later days to the Portuguese as Máruecos, and to the French as Marocco. In English it is Márocco, and less correctly Morocco.

Arabs.”¹ The natives of Mauritania and of the regions extending eastwards to the Euphrates were known to the Greeks and Romans also by the name of Saracens. It is matter of history how this

“Countless multitude,
Syrian, Moor, Saracen, fresh renegade,
Persian and Copt and Tartar in one bond
Of erring faith conjoined—strong in the youth
And heat of zeal—a dreadful brotherhood,”

overran Spain and attempted to conquer Europe north of the Pyrennees, and how their fate was decided by the dreadful battle fought on the plains of Tours.² When the Portuguese navigated the eastern seas in the fifteenth century, and found Muhammadans along the western shores of India and Ceylon, they gave them the name of *Moros*, which in English is “Moors.”³ In India that name is no longer used to denote Muhammadans; but in Ceylon we continue to use it in a loose way, as if our information will not permit us to speak definitely, or to identify the nationality of this people. I believe that the honorific *Máarakar* or *Marikar*, which appears so often appended to a Muhammadan name both in South India and Ceylon, is a relic of Portuguese official language in a Tamil garb. It means “a man of Márocco,”

¹ *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, VI., p. 353 (Dr. Smith's ed.).

² Mr. Harris, who accompanied the British mission to Morocco last year (1887), gives a vivid account of the present condition of the Moors in the pages of the *Illustrated London News*, from which I quote as follows:—“The Moors, like all other dynasties, have risen and fallen, and though their fall was not as the fall of Egypt, Assyria, Greece, or Rome, yet it was to themselves as disastrous as any, for though they were not exterminated, they had to fly back to their wild African soil, where year by year they are sinking deeper into ignorance and bigotry. They have lost their activity, these Moors of to-day. Instead of leading his soldiers to battle, their Sultan sits in splendid halls, passing his life in indolence, save when, now and again on the march from one capital to another, he deigns to chastise some erring tribe with fire and sword. The Moors, whose ancestors once conquered in almost every war they undertook, sit and sigh and sing quaint ballads to Granada, their mountain home in the Sierra Nevada, and weep now and again over the keys of the houses which their ancestors possessed in Spain.” (Sept. 24, 1887.)

³ So Hindús were called by them *Gentios*, in English “Gentooes.” This word, too, has disappeared in India.

the final *ar* in *márakar* being the epicene particle in Tamil denoting respect.¹

In the Census Report of 1881 will be found a statement showing the distribution of the population of Ceylon according to religion and nationality. The total number of Muhammadans is given as 197,775, under the following "nationalities":—

Europeans	...	...	1
Eurasians	...	...	4
Siphalese	...	...	71
Tamils ...	...	...	715
Malays ...	...	...	8,857
Moormen...	...	...	184,536
Others ...	...	...	3,591

Those who are classed as "others" include Afghans, 130; Arabs, 450; Dekkanese, 3; Hindústání, 164; Javanese, 3; Patháni, 1,210; Tulukkar (Turks), 128, &c. We have fairly clear ideas of the nationality of these Muhammadans: but what is the nationality of the "Moormen"?

The Registrar-General and other Commissioners appointed for the taking of the Census are not primarily responsible for the term "Moor" representing a nationality in Ceylon. As I have said, our Portuguese conquerors applied the term to this community, not because that was the name it went by in its own circle or among its neighbours, but because, like the Moors of North Africa, its religion was Muhammadan. The political successors of the Portuguese—I mean the Dutch—took over the word and used it in a loose way to denote a class of people whose lingual and social characteristics they did not comprehend for several decades, either absolutely or relatively to the races which inhabit Ceylon and India. In the closing years of their rule, however, they were

¹ I do not see my way to deriving the word from the Arabic *markáb*, "a ship," because the Tamil personal noun formed from it would be *markáb-káran* or *markáb-ál*, not *marikar*. In Siphalese, a Moor is commonly known as *marakkaláha*, the *tandal* or head of a boat (cf. *gan-váhé*, "chief of a village"), and *marakkaláha* cannot be evolved from *markáb-áhé*, but is descended almost letter for letter from the Tamil word *marakkalam*, "a wooden vessel."

convinced that the "Moors" of Ceylon were, in the main, Tamil Muhammadans.¹ But before the discovery could stamp itself on official documents and pass current in official lips, the English had arrived and found a world of work to do in supplying the material and moral wants of the country, without the leisure for entering upon ethnological questions. Their first Census of which we have any returns, and which was ordered in 1824, was therefore necessarily erroneous in classification, if not enumeration. The old term "Moors" was retained, as also I may say the old term "Malabárs"² for Tamils, who knew not that word even in dreams, as they say. The second Census taken in 1871, and the third and the last taken in 1881, eliminated "Malabárs" but retained "Moors," evidently because the Commissioners and other European officials have lacked the time or the opportunity for studying that community. By a similar misapprehension the "Kandyans" were thought to be different from the Siphalese even as late as 1866.³

¹ See *Valentyn*, ch. XV., p. 214.

² Bishop Caldwell says:—"The Portuguese arrived first on the western coast of India, and naturally called the language they found spoken on that coast by the name by which the coast itself had long been called by their Arab predecessors, viz., *Malabár*. Sailing from Malabár on voyages of exploration, they made their acquaintance with various places on the eastern or Coromandel coast, and also on the coast of Ceylon, and finding the language spoken by the fishing and sea-faring classes on the eastern coast similar to that spoken on the western, they came to the conclusion that it was identical with it, and called it, in consequence, by the same name, viz., *Malabár*, a name which has survived to our own day amongst the poorer classes of Europeans and Eurasians. The better educated members of those classes have long learned to call the language of the Malabár coast by its proper name, Malayálam, and the language of the eastern coast Tamil."—*Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages*, Introd., p. 11 (2nd edition, 1875).

³ In his *Gazetteer*, p. 115, Casie Chetty (writing in 1834) said:—"The vast difference which the Kandyans exhibit in their customs as well as in their style of dress has led almost all European writers to treat them as a distinct race of people." And the Government Agent of the North-Western Province said, in 1866, that the population of his Province consisted of "Kandyans, Siphalese, Moors, Malabars, and Mukkuwas." (Sessional Papers of the Legislative Council, 1866, p. 217.) He ought to have said "Siphalese and Tamils," for the last three classes are Tamil.

It is noteworthy that in the Report of the Census of British India for 1881 there are no returns relating to nationality, but language is taken as equipollent to it. Surgeon-General E. Balfour, who is considered an authority on the sociology of Southern India, also uses language for nationality, as for instance in the following passage :—"The Haiderabad State has been formed from portions of four great nationalities the Canarese, the Mahratta, the Telegu, and the Gond. The number speaking the Gond language is not recorded, but out of a population of 9,845,594 the Telegu language is spoken by 4,279,108, the Mahratta by 3,147,746, and the Canarese by 1,238,519," &c.¹ Webster defines nationality to be "a race or people determined by common language and character and not by political bias or divisions." Professor Max Müller narrows this definition as follows :—"If there is one safe exponent of national character it is language. Take away," says he, "the language of a people and you destroy at once that powerful chain of tradition in thought and sentiment which holds all the generations of the same race together—if we may use an unpleasant simile—like the chain of a gang of galley slaves. These slaves, we are told, very soon fall into the same pace without being aware that their movements depend altogether on the movements of those who walk before them. It is nearly the same with us. We imagine we are altogether free in our thoughts, original and independent, and we are not aware that our thoughts are manacled and fettered by language, and that, without knowing and without perceiving it, we have to keep pace with those who walked before us thousands and thousands of years ago. Language alone binds people together and keeps them distinct from others who speak different tongues. In ancient times particularly 'language and nations' meant the same thing; and even with us our real ancestors are those whose language we speak, the fathers of our thoughts, the mothers of our hopes and fears. Blood, bones, hair, and colour are mere accidents,

¹ Cited in the Indian Census Report for 1881, vol. I., p. 201.

utterly unfit to serve as principles of scientific classification for that great family of living beings, the essential characteristics of which are thought and speech, not fibrine, serum, or colouring matter, or whatever else enters into the composition of blood.”¹ Of a similar opinion is Sir William Hunter, as may be seen from the following passage, which, by the way, is *à propos* to the subject discussed in this paper :—“ Many storms of conquest (besides the Brahmanical and Buddhist invasions) have since swept over the land (Madras Presidency), and a few colonies of Mughal and Mahratta origin are to be found here and there. But the indelible evidence of language proves that the ethnical character of the population has remained stable under all their influences, and that the Madras Hindú, Muhammadan, Jain, and Christian are of the same Dravidian stock.”²

If therefore we take language as the test of nationality, the Moors of Ceylon, who speak as their vernacular the Tamil, must be adjudged Tamils. But as some ethnologists, like Dr. Tylor, maintain that language of itself affords only partial evidence of race,³ I shall dive a little deeper and prove that the conclusion I have arrived at is supported as much by the history of the Moors (so far as it may be ascertained) as by their social customs and physical features.

Those returned in the Census of 1881 as “ Moors ” are to

¹ *Chips from a German Workshop*, III., p. 265 (“ Cornish Antiquities ”).

² *Gazetteer of India*, s. v. “ Madras Presidency.”

³ See article “ Anthropology ” in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9th edition, p. 119.

Speaking of the *political* significance attached in modern days to linguistic affinities, Sir Henry Maine says :—“ If you examine the bases proposed for common nationality before the new knowledge growing out of the study of Sanskrit had been popularised in Europe, you will find them extremely unlike those which are now advocated, and even passionately advocated, in parts of the Continent. For the most part the older bases theoretically suggested were common history—common, prolonged subjection to the same sovereign, common institutions, common religion, sometimes a common language, but then a common vernacular language. That people not necessarily understanding one another’s tongue should be grouped together *politically* on the ground of linguistic affinities

be found in every part of the Island. Their distribution according to number is as follows :—

In the District of Batticaloa	...	...	27,000
In the City of Colombo	...	...	23,600
In the District of Kandy	...	...	22,000
Do. Kalutara	...	...	12,800
Do. Puttalam	...	...	12,500
Do. Galle	...	...	11,000
Do. Kurunégala	...	...	9,400
Do. Nuwarakaláviya	...	...	7,300
Do. Mannár	...	...	6,600
Do. Badulla	...	...	6,000
Do. Mátalé	...	...	5,900
Do. Trincomalee...	...	...	5,700
Do. Kégalla	...	...	5,000
Do. Mátara	...	...	5,000
Do. Colombo	...	...	4,300
Do. Jaffna	...	...	2,600
Do. Negombo	...	...	2,500
Do. Ratnapura	...	...	1,500
Do. Nuwara Eliya	...	...	1,400
Do. Hambantota	...	...	1,200
Do. Vavuniya-Viláṅkulam	...	...	700
Do. Mullaittivu	...	...	400

This community, numbering (as I have said) nearly 185,000 souls, includes those who are commonly known in our Law Courts as “Ceylon Moormen” and “Coast Moormen.” The former class represents (as I shall show¹) the earliest settlers

assumed to prove community of descent, is quite a new idea. Nevertheless, we owe to it, at all events in part, the vast development of German nationality: and we certainly owe to it the pretensions of the Russian Empire to at least a presidency over all Slavonic communities.”—*Village Communities in the East and West*, p. 210 (3rd edition).

As regards the relation between Tamils and Moors, it is not a question of “linguistic affinities,” but a “common vernacular language.”

Dr. Tylor admits that, “as a rule, language at least proves some proportion of ancestry—affords at least partial evidence of race.” (Page 120, art. “Anthropology.”)

By tracing the history, that is, the descent of the Moors, I confirm the evidence afforded by the language used by them. And I still further strengthen my conclusion by showing that their social customs and physical features are in the main Tamil.

¹ See p. 255.

who have lived in this country for several generations. The latter class represents those who have arrived from either the coast or the inner districts of South India for purposes of trade, and who intend to return to their homes. Hence the distinction which the "Ceylon Moor" draws between himself and the "Coast Moor" when he calls himself *Chōṇahan* and his co-religionist from South India *Chammánkáraṇ*, a compound word made up perhaps of the Malay *sampan*, "boat," and Tamil *káraṇ*, "man."¹ The Sihalése being aware that not only the "Coast Moors" but also the "Ceylon Moors" came from abroad in sailing vessels, call them indiscriminately *Marakkaláha*, derived obviously from the Tamil word *maram* "wood," and *kalam* "vessel." As to the respective numbers of these two classes, it was estimated in 1886 (on the evidence of several Muhammadan gentlemen) by the Sub-Committee of the Legislative Council which was appointed to consider and report upon the Muhammadan Marriage Registration Ordinance, that fully one-third of the "Moors" along the maritime country from Kalpiṭiya to Mátara are "Coast Moors," and I have good reason for saying that much more than one-half of the "Moors" in the northern, eastern, and inland districts are also "Coast Moors." It may therefore be concluded that the 185,000 Moors in the Island are divisible almost equally between "Ceylon Moors" and "Coast Moors." The English in South India call the Muhammadans from whom our *Chammánkárar* are drawn *Lebbes* or *Lubbays*, most probably because *Lebbe* is a common ending to their names.² The "Lebbes" call themselves, and are called

¹ In Crawford's *Malay Dictionary*, *jung* is given for "a large native vessel," *prau* for "a boat," and *sampan* for "a small boat." For "a vessel of European build and form" he gives *kappal*, which is of course Tamil. If *Chamman-káraṇ* is not to be derived from *sampan*, is it too much to derive it from *chámán*, "things," "wares," in which case it would literally mean "a dealer in wares, a pedlar"? Cf. *Chammánkóḍu*, the name commonly given for Bankshall street in Colombo; *Hambantota*, in the Southern Province; *Chamman-turai*, in the Batticaloa District.

² I have not been able to ascertain whence the word *lebbe* or *lubbay* is derived. Freytag, in his *Arabic-Latin Dictionary*, gives *labib* (pl. *alibba*)

by the Tamils, *Chōpahar*, on which term I shall comment hereafter.¹

In order to appreciate the relations (social, lingual, and physical) which the "Coast Moors" bear to the "Ceylon Moors," and which both bear to the rest of the Muhammadans in India, we have to remember a few facts brought to light by the Census of 1881. Of the fifty millions of Muhammadans on that peninsula, Bengal claims 21,800,000 (or 31 per cent. of the Hindús); Punjáb 11,700,000 (or 51 per cent.); the North-Western Provinces and Oude 6,300,000 (or 14 per cent.); the Bombay Presidency 3,700,000 (or 18 per cent.); the Madras Presidency 1,900,000 (or 6 per cent.); Assam 1,300,000 (or 27 per cent.); the State of Haiderabad 930,000 (or 9 per cent.); Rajaputana 860,000 (or 9 per cent.); and Central India 510,000 (or 6 per cent.). It will thus be seen that Islám is as strong in North India, where Hindústání is the ruling language, as it is weak in the Madras Presidency, where Tamil is the ruling language. It is also certain that more than 50 per cent. of the Muhammadans of this Presidency are found in the districts of the extreme south, namely, Tinneveli, Madura, Malabar, and Tanjore,² and that while

as meaning "intelligent, prudent" (literally, "having a heart," *lub*), and *lubbaika* as meaning "here I am, I am your servant," &c. He further says that in the *Hamasa*, p. 789, *lubbay* is used as a noun, whether substantive or proper he does not mention. Perhaps *lubbay*, when affixed to a name, means "a *pandit*, a learned man."

The "Moors" say it means "priest," but the religion of Muhammad does not admit of priests, as we understand it. It recognises *imám*, the leader at prayers; and a *khatib*, the preacher. A *maulavi* is a teacher, and *muazzin* is a crier who summons the congregation to prayers.

¹ See p. 257.

² The Muhammadans in the Madras Presidency are distributed as follows in its twenty districts:—

Malabar ...	652,000	North Arcot ...	82,000
Madura ...	141,000	Karnual ...	82,000
Tanjore ...	112,000	Bellary ...	70,000
Cuddappah ...	98,000	Nellur ...	61,500
Tinneveli ...	90,000	Salem ...	51,000
Kistna ...	87,000	South Arcot ...	49,000
South Kanara ...	83,000	Godaveri ...	39,000

nearly all the Muhammadans of Malabar are *Mápiḷlas*, nearly all the Muhammadans in Tinneveli, Madura, and Tanjore are *Lubbays*. The figures, in round numbers, are these :—Of the 1,935,000 Muhammadans, 515,000 are Lubbays (speaking the Tamil language); 496,000 are *Mápiḷlas* (speaking the Malaiyálam language); and the rest are Shaiks, Sayyids, Patháns, and Mughals (speaking mostly the Hindústání language).¹

Hindústání, as is well known, is a language of modern creation, being the camp language of the motley crowd of Mughals, Patháns, Persians, and Turks, and Punjábis, Hindís, Urdús, and other native inhabitants of India, who formed the soldiers and camp followers of the Muhammadan conquerors. The Hindústání-speaking Muhammadans of the present day in India are partly the descendants of this heterogenous body through Indian mothers. The wave of Islám, it is well to bear in mind, entered through the Punjáb, gathered strength all along the North-Western Provinces, Oude, and Bengal, and only feebly touched the Madras Presidency. As to the date of the conversion and the manner in which it took place in the Punjáb, the following remarks of Mr. Ibbetson are valuable, as they throw some light into the course of conversion among the Tamil and Malaiyálam-speaking Muhammadans. Speaking of the Western Punjáb, Mr. Ibbetson² says:—“Farishta puts the conversion of the Afghan mountaineers of our frontier and of the Gakkhars of the Rawalpindi division at the beginning of the thirteenth century, and it is certain that the latter were still Hindús when they assassinated Mohammed Ghorí in A.D. 1206.” Of the Eastern Punjáb he remarks:—“The people of these districts very generally refer their change of faith to the reign of Aurangzeb (1658–1707), and it is probable

Coimbatour	...	38,000	Vizagapatam	...	21,000
Trichnopoly	...	34,000	Ganjam	...	6,000
Chengalput	...	25,000	Nilgiris	...	3,500
City of Madras, 50,000					

¹ See Hunter's *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, s. v. “Madras Presidency” and “Malabar.”

² See Report of the Census of British India, vol. III., p. xix.

that the tradition very nearly expresses the truth. Under the Afghan dynasties, while the great provincial governors were always Muhammadans, the local administration would appear to have been in a great measure left in the hands of Hindú chiefs who paid tribute and owed allegiance to the Sultán of Delhi. It is tolerably certain that little attempt was made at proselytising under the free-thinking Akbar. It would appear, however, that during his reign and those of his immediate successors the character of the administration changed considerably—a more direct and centralised control being substituted for an almost purely feudal system. The change gave the people Musalmán governors in the place of Hindús, and must have greatly facilitated the systematic persecution of the infidel which was instituted by Aurangzeb, by far the most fanatical and bigoted, and probably the first who was a bigot, among the emperors of Delhi. The local traditions tell us that in many cases the ancestor of the present Musalmán branch of a village community adopted Islám in order to save the land of the village from confiscation.” And he continues :—“In the eastern portion of the Punjáb the faith of Islám in anything like its original purity was till quite lately to be found only among the Saiyads, Patháns, Arabs, and other Musalmáns of foreign origin, who were for the most part settled in towns. The so-called Musalmáns of the villages were Musalmáns in little but name. They practised circumcision, repeated the *kalimah*, or Muhammadan profession of faith, and worshipped the village deities. But after the mutiny (1857) a great revival took place. Muhammadan priests travelled far and wide through the country, preaching the true faith and calling upon believers to abandon their idolatrous practices. And now almost every village in which Musalmáns own any considerable portion has its mosque, often a dome only, while all the grosser and more open idolatries have been discontinued. But the villager of the East is still a very bad Musalmán. A peasant saying his prayers in the field is a sight almost unknown, the fasts are almost universally

disregarded, and there is still a very large admixture of Hindú practice." This quotation, while showing that the Musalmán religion was introduced into the Western Punjáb in the thirteenth and into the Eastern Punjáb in the seventeenth century, serves also to show that even in the premier province of Islám, the highway of all Muhammadan conquerors, its votaries are mostly converts from the Hindú races, which occupy that part of the country, without an appreciable admixture of blood with that of the foreigners. It further shows that favouring times and a succession of a few but zealous missionaries may effect in less than five, indeed two, centuries the conversion of hundreds of thousands, nay millions, of people, for the Punjáb has nearly twelve millions of Muhammadans against nearly ten millions of Hindús.

The Islám of the Mápíllas in South India has an almost similar but earlier history. The tradition among them, as reported in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*,¹ is that in A.C. 844 an Arab ship, or *bagala*, was wrecked on the island of Cháliyam formed by the Beypúr and Kadelundi rivers, and that the local Hindú ruler, whose policy was to foster trade, received kindly the thirteen Arabs who were saved, and granted them lands, whereupon other Muhammadans arrived, together with a few enthusiastic missionaries. The Mápíllas, says the same authority, are Malaiyálam converts to Islám from various castes. "A sea-faring life, trade with Arabia, and Arab missionaries, led to extensive conversion among the Malabar fishing races. At one time, after the European nations appeared in Eastern seas, conversion was largely promoted by the Zamorin of Calicut, with a view to procure seamen to defend the towns on the coast."² The reason of the conversion is correctly given in the following passage:—"Hindús found an easy refuge from their own stringent caste laws, which debarred them from sea-faring pursuits, in the open arms of Islám."³ Quilon was the principal port of Malabar

¹ Vol. VI., p. 247, and vol. II., p. 330 (1st edition).

² Vol. IX., p. 23 (2nd edition).

³ Vol. VI., p. 247 (1st edition).

which attracted traders from Arabia from the earliest times, but the Mápillas, previous to the seventh century, saw nothing in their tenets or practices worthy of acceptance or imitation, for, like themselves, the foreigners were idolatrous and exclusive. Indeed, up to the ninth century the Mápillas do not appear to have come in contact with Muhammadans. As already stated, it was only since A.C. 844 that the Arab Muhammadans who were wrecked at Cháliyam, and the missionaries who followed them, were able to offer to intending proselytes freedom from the trammels of caste, assurances of esteem, and protection and the privilege of messing together at the same board. From that time forward Quilon, called *Kollám* by the natives, and Calicut (properly *Kóli Kóddai*, "cockfort")¹ opened up to their inhabitants adventurous careers on the sea, through which alone in those days a competency was possible to those who held no lands of their own. The people had also the example of their Rája, Chérumán Perumál,² who espoused the new religion, and, giving up kingdom and family, retired to Mekka. The converts, high and low, though devoted to Islám, adhere more or less to the present day to their own native customs and speak the Malaiyálam language.

Some centuries later we observe another town full of Muhammadans risen into importance on the south-eastern sea-board of the Tamil country, some five and twenty miles below the modern Tuticorin. Its name was *Káyal-paḍḍanam*, or "the town Káyál," which is of special interest to us, because not only has it been the principal city of the Lebbes, but the

¹ But see *Hobson Jobson*, "Quilon."

² He was a Tamil, and Viceroy of the Páñḍiyan king for the country along the western coast of India, from Cape Comorin to Gókarna in the South Canara District. In his day the people of Malaiyálam were Tamils, who so loved Chérumán that he had no difficulty in proclaiming his own independence. The work entitled *Keralátpatti* refers to his times. See also Mr. Logan's *Manual of Malabar*, published recently, and believed to be a work of high authority, the author having been Collector of the District for many years.

tradition there—and indeed in Ceylon—is, that a colony therefrom settled at Béruwala, near Kalutara, which is admittedly one of the earliest centres, if not the very earliest centre, of Islám in the Island. In 1290 the condition of this town is described as follows by Marco Polo :—“Cail is a great and noble city and belongs to Ashar, the eldest of the five brother kings. It is at this city that all the ships touch that come from the west, as from Hormos and from Kis (an island in the Persian Gulf), and from Aden and all Arabia, laden with horses and with other things for sale. And this brings a great concourse of people from the country round about, and so there is great business done in this city of Cail.”¹ Bishop Caldwell, commenting on this passage, says :—“Káyal stood originally on or near the sea-beach, but it is now about a mile and a half inland, the sand carried down by the river (Tamraparni, on which it stands) having silted up the ancient harbour and formed a waste sandy tract between the sea and the town. It has now shrunk into a petty village.” Consequent upon the desertion of the sea, another town had to be founded, which bears the same name, Káyal. Dr. Caldwell observes that it is admitted by its inhabitants that the name of *Káyal-paddanam* has been given to it as a reminiscence of the older city, and that its original name was *Chónakar-paddanam*, or “the town of the Chónakar,” which, I have said, is the name applied by the Tamils to the Mápillas, Lebbes, and Moors, and assumed by these communities to distinguish themselves from the other religionists of Tamil India.

It appears to me that Káyal contains the keystone of the history of the Tamil Muhammadans, just as Quilon and Calicut contain that of the Malaiyálam Muhammadans. The tradition in Káyal is, that a few missionaries or teachers from Cairo landed there and made it their headquarters in the early part of the ninth century. In fact, it is said that Káyal,

¹ Col. Yule's translation, vol. II., p. 357.

or Cail, is only another form of Cairo, properly Kahira.¹ The simplicity of the new creed, especially at a time when the masses knew not whether to follow the Saivite sages or their opponents, the Vishnuite Acháriyas, was so attractively preached that great numbers of Tamils of various castes were converted. Negapatam, Nágur, Atirámpet, and Kīlakkarai soon became other centres of proselytism. In the tenth century the Chóla dynasty overthrew the neighbouring sister kingdoms of the Chéra and Páñdiya,² and reigned paramount from the vicinity of Madras to Cape Comorin. It was doubtless subsequent to this period that the Tamil Muhammadans of South India became known as the "Chóliya Muhammadans," or more commonly *Chóliyar*, or people of the Tamil country called *Chóla-désam*. To this day the Hindústání Muhammadan speaks of his southern co-religionist as "Chóliya," for, save as to religion, the vast majority of the Chóliyar are Tamils in point of language, general appearance, and social customs, and for the following reason.

The men of Cairo, who are said to have originally settled at Káyal, could not have been very many: including priests and laymen, the proportion which they bore to the annually increasing number of native converts must have naturally diminished in an inverse ratio. In the course of a century, after the arrival of the foreigners at that town, it is perhaps too much to suppose that they could have represented even five per cent. of the proselytes. There are at the present day 164,000 Christians among the Sīhalese and 82,000 among the Tamils, against 422 missionaries and ministers,

¹Perhaps there is some truth in this tradition, seeing that in the marriage contract or *kaduttam* (properly *kaditam*, Tamil for "a paper") the *mohr* is always stipulated to be paid in "Egyptian gold." The same currency is referred to in the Ceylon *kaditam*.

²These three Tamil kingdoms occupied the whole of South India. The Chóla kings originally reigned north of the Kaveri, having for their capital a city near the site of the modern Trichnopoly. The capital city of the Páñdiyans was Madura, and that of the Chéras, Karúr, in the district of Koimbatúr.

of whom only 110 are Europeans.¹ For the purpose of accounting for all this conversion, is it necessary to assume that the European ministers, or their predecessors in office, intermarried with the classes they had been converting? It might be said that the European clergy have either led a life of celibacy or come to the scene of their labours with their wives, and that the Egyptians and Arabs were situated differently. It is true that the latter had the sea-borne trade in their hands in the East previous to the advent of the Europeans, and were to be seen in almost every port of importance in India and Ceylon, but what evidence is there that, abandoning finally their own homes and their love of sea-faring life, they settled for good in South India or Ceylon in vast numbers? The mistake consists in assuming that a great proportion of the Africans, Arabians, and Persians who navigated the Indian Ocean made new homes for themselves on these shores, as if the pressure of population in their old homes was too severely felt, or the advantages of the self-imposed banishment outweighed the sorrows of parting from their country, family, and early associations. The truth, therefore, appears to be that only a small proportion of these traders domiciled themselves in South India and Ceylon, and that whatever changes have been wrought in the manners and customs of the native converts are due as much to contact with the passing traders as to the more permanent example and teaching of the smaller knot of resident foreigners. See, for instance, what vast changes have come over non-Christian Tamils and Sinhalese by mere association, in the course of business, with a handful of Europeans! But change of manners and customs does not indicate change of blood. Considering that not much more than 100 Europeans have laboured in the cause of Christianity at any given period in the Island, and have made as many as 250,000 converts during three centuries, it may be concluded that the Egyptians and Arabs who settled at Káyal could not have infused

¹ Ceylon Census for 1881.

their blood among the converts to so great an extent as to materially alter their character. Small as this fusion of blood must have been in the first instance, it would grow weaker and weaker as each generation of descendants got further and further removed from the original Arab or Egyptian ancestor. Hence it is that the Chóliyas continue to be in point of language, features, physique, and social customs still Tamils in all respects except religion.

In a paper read by Sir William Hunter¹ before the Society of Arts on the *Réligions of India*, he refuted the idea that "Islám in India is that of a conquering creed which set up powerful dynasties, who in their turn converted, more or less by force, the races under their sway," and pointed out that the part of Northern India which is most strongly Muhammadan is the part most remote from the great centres of Muhammadan rule. "The explanation is," he said, "that in Northern India Islám found itself hemmed in by strongly organised forms of Hindúism of a high type, on which it could make but slight impression. Indeed, Hindúism here re-acted so powerfully on Islám that the greatest of the Mughal sovereigns, Akbar, formally renounced the creed of the Prophet and promulgated a new religion for the empire constructed out of the rival faiths." He then described the process of conversion as follows: the Muhammadan missionaries and adventurers penetrated into outlying districts far removed from the influence of the higher forms of Hindúism, and preached there to the masses who were socially of low standing. And he continues:—"To these poor people, fishermen, hunters, pirates, and low-caste tillers of the soil, whom Hindúism had barely admitted within its pale, Islám came as a revelation from on high. It was the creed of the governing race; its missionaries were men of zeal, who brought the Gospel of the unity of God and the equality of man in its sight to a despised and neglected population.

¹ On February 24, 1888.

The initiatory rite rendered relapse impossible, and made the proselyte and his posterity true believers for ever."

In the early part of this Paper¹ I said that about one-half of the number of those whom the Ceylon Census returned as Moors were "Coast Moors," that is, "Chóliyas," or, as the English call them, "Lubbays." In the District of Batticaloa, which is the premier district of Islám in the Island, the Muhammadans call themselves "Sóni," or "Chóni," which appears to be only another form of Chóli. Indeed, Mr. Pybus, who was accredited in 1762 by the Government of Madras to the court of the King of Kandy, speaks of the inhabitants of the Eastern Province, where he landed, as "Choliyars and Malabars." He evidently believed that *all* those whom we call Moors were "Chóliya," for he says:—"Such trade as the Island affords (exclusive, I mean, of what the Dutch reserve to themselves) is carried on by Choliyars, of whom there are great numbers at all the principal settlements belonging to the Dutch and along the sea-coast; many at Candia and others interspersed in villages in different parts of the country."²

We are now in a position to deal with the question whether the "Ceylon Moors" have a history different from that of the "Chóliyas" ("Lebbes," "Coast Moors") which I have just outlined. In the *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society* Sir Alexander Johnston says:—"The first Muhammadans who settled in Ceylon were, according to the tradition which prevails among their descendants, a portion of those Arabs of the house of Hashim who were driven from Arabia in the early part of the eighth century by the tyranny of the Caliph Abd-al-melek Ben Merwan, and who, proceeding from the Euphrates southward, made settlements in the Concan, in the southern parts of the peninsula of India, on the Island of Ceylon, and at Malacca. The division of them which came to Ceylon formed eight considerable settlements

¹ See p. 241.

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² *Mission to the King of Kandy*, pp. 36 and 41.

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along the north-east, north, and western coasts of that Island, viz., one at Trincomalee, one at Jaffna, one at Mantota and Mannár, one at Coodramalé, one at Puttalam, one at Colombo, one at Barbaryn, and one at Point-de-Galle.”¹

It is difficult to conceive an array of *bagalas* sailing together in those early ages for over two thousand miles on the fitful Indian Ocean, and making for the different ports above-mentioned in different parts of the Island, as if there were agents in those places appointed to receive the unfortunate men. But a grander difficulty exists. The Arab exiles were, or were not, accompanied by their wives and daughters. If they were so accompanied and settled with them in purely Sighalese districts like Kalutara and Galle, why did they abandon both the Arabic and Sighalese and take to the Tamil? Or, if they came to Ceylon without their women and took Sighalese wives, why has the same survival of the Tamil language occurred? It is impossible to accept this version of wholesale Arab colonisation. It is too elaborate and inexplicable. But the crowning absurdity of the tradition remains yet to be mentioned. Hashim, the son of Abdul Manif, was the father of Abdul Muttalib, who was the father of Abdullah, and grandfather of Muhammad the Prophet. In so great veneration is the memory of Hashim held by the Arabs, that among them the family of Muhammad are called Hashimites, as Mr. Keene says in his *Oriental Biographical Dictionary*: consequently, the Ceylon Moors would all be Sayyids!—which they are not, and do not profess to be, being only Sunnis of the Sháfá’í sect. Sir Emerson Tennent discredits the story for other reasons. He observes:—“The Moors, who were the informants of Sir Alexander Johnston, probably spoke on the equivocal authority of the *Tohfut-ul mujahideen*, which is generally, but erroneously, described as a narrative of the settlement of the Muhammadans in Malabar. Its second chapter gives an account of the manner in which the Muhammadan religion was first propagated

¹ Vol. I., p. 538.

there, and states that its earliest apostles were a Sheik and his companions who touched at Cranganore about A.C. 822, when on their journey as pilgrims to the sacred footprint on Adam's Peak."¹ The tradition reported by Sir Alexander Johnston may be a wild exaggeration of that mentioned in the *Tohfut-ul Mujahidin*, or of that which prevails among the Mápillas, to the effect that their conversion was due to the Arab mariners who were wrecked off Beypur in A.C. 844. At any rate, there is a tradition in Ceylon, which is referred to by Casie Chetty² (and, so far as the circumstances, but not the years, are concerned, is not at all improbable), that the ancestors of the "Ceylon Moors" formed their first settlement in Káyal-paḍḍanam in the ninth century, and that many years afterwards, in the 402nd year of the Hijra, corresponding to A.C. 1024, a colony from that town migrated and settled at Barberyn (Béruwala), I have already called attention to the belief current in South India that Béruwala is a colony of Káyal.

The discrepancy between the dates of colonisation given in the tradition reported by Casie Chetty and that reported by Sir Alexander Johnston is irreconcilable, as the one refers to the early part of the ninth century and the other to the early part of the eleventh century. In this state of conflict we naturally turn to the history and literature of the Sinhalese for some light. The *Mahávaṅsa* makes no mention whatever of the Moors (*Yonnu*, *Marakkalayó*); but the *Rájávaliya*³ records that a great number of them arrived in 1505 from Káyal-paḍḍanam, and attempted to settle by force at Chilaw, and were beaten back by Dharmma Parákrama Báhu. An earlier reference is contained in the *Paravi Sandésa* ("Pigeon Message"), a poem written by Totagamuwé Ráhula Sthavira, and addressed to the god Vishṇu at Devundra (Dondra) Déválé. The pigeon is made to start from Jayawardhana Kótté (the modern Cotta near Colombo), where

¹ Tennent's *Ceylon*, vol. I., p. 630, note (1). ² *Ceylon Gazetteer*, p. 254.

³ Upham's translation, p. 274.

Srī Parákrama Báhu (1410–61) was then ruling, and to fly along several villages to Dondra, carrying the prayer that that monarch might be preserved and blessed. One of the villages on the route is Béruwala, which is described to be in the occupation of “cruel and lawless Bamburas” (scil. *mléchchas*, “barbarians”). Another poem, the *Kókila Sandésa*, written by Irugal Kulatilaka Sámi, in the same reign, alludes to Béruwala in similar language. I have not had time to get at earlier references in Sīhalese literature, but I suspect none such exist. We have, however, some information from foreign sources. In 1350 John de Marignolli was wrecked on the coast of Ceylon at “Perivilis,” which is supposed to be Béruwala. “Here,” he says, “a certain tyrant, by name Coya Jaan, an eunuch, had the mastery in opposition to the lawful king. He was an accursed Saracen,” *i.e.*, Muhammadan. We are also told that by means of his great treasures he had gained possession of this part of the country. He robbed De Marignolli of the valuable gifts he was carrying home to the Pope.¹ Ibn Bātúta visited the Island six years earlier (in 1344), but makes no mention whatever of Béruwala, though it lay directly on his route from Galle to Colombo. He refers to Galle as a small town, to Colombo as the seat of a pirate in command of five hundred Alysinnians, and to Battalah (Puttalam) as the capital of a Tamil king, Arya Chakkaravartti, “one of the perverse and unjust,” as the devout traveller says, but of whose hospitality he is loud in praise.²

By the light of these passages, and the circumstance that the Sīhalese did not know in the early part of the fifteenth century any more of the colonists who were found settled at Béruwala than that they were barbarians, we may safely conclude that Béruwala had not been seized upon by the Muhammadans in 1344; that that hamlet, Galle, and Puttalam, which are commonly believed to have received the

¹ Yule's *Cathay*, p. 357.

² *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Ceylon Branch*, vol. VII., p. 56, of the extra number.

earliest Muhammadan settlements, did not contain any such colonies at that period ; and that, though Arabs, Egyptians, Abyssinians, and other Africans may have constantly come to and gone from Ceylon, as merchants, soldiers, and tourists, long before the fourteenth century, comparatively few of them domiciled themselves in the Island ; and that the settlement at Béruwala, which the Ceylon Muhammadans generally admit to be the first of all their settlements, took place not earlier than the fourteenth century, say A.C. 1350. We may also safely conclude that this colony was an offshoot of Káyal-paḍḍanam, and that the emigrants consisted largely of a rough and ready set of bold Tamil converts, determined to make themselves comfortable by the methods usual among unscrupulous adventurers. Having clean shaven heads and straggling beards ; wearing a costume which was not wholly Tamil, nor yet Arabic or African even in part ; speaking a low Tamil interlarded with Arabic expressions ; slaughtering cattle with their own hands and eating them ; given to predatory habits, and practising after their own fashion the rights of the Muhammadan faith ;—they must indeed have struck the Sinhalese at first as a strange people deserving of the epithet “barbarians.” It is only natural that other colonies should have gone forth from Káyal-paḍḍanam, and not only added to the population of Béruwala, but settled at other places, such as Batticaloa, Puttaḷam, &c. With the advent of the Europeans, communication with “the fatherland of the Chónahar” (as Káyal is known) and Ceylon grew feeble, and during the time of the Dutch must have practically ceased, because the Muhammadan settlers, from their obstinate refusal to become Christians, became objects of persecution to the Hollanders, who imposed all manner of taxes and disqualifications on them. The distinction which the “Ceylon Moor” draws between himself and the “Coast Moor” (*Chammánkáran*) is evidently the result of the cessation of intercourse thus produced and continued for several decades between the mother-country and her colonies.

Having thus shown that the history of the Moors of

Ceylon, no less than the language they speak, proves them to be Tamils, it remains to consider their social customs and physical features. But I do not propose to dwell at length on these points, not only because they are apparent to most of us who reside in the Island, and this Paper has far exceeded the limits I set upon it, but also because, in January last, when Mr. Bawa's Paper on the Marriage Customs of the Moors of Ceylon was read, I pointed out what the requirements of a marriage were according to the law of the Prophet, but how different were the rites and customs practised by the Moors, and how many of those customs, such as the *stridhanam* (independent of the *mohr*), the *álatti* ceremony, the bridegroom wearing jewels though prohibited by the law, the tying of the *táli*, the bride wearing the *kúrai* offered by the bridegroom, and the eating of the *paçhóru*, were all borrowed from the Tamils. I also commented on other customs, such as the absence of the *purdah* system (or rigid seclusion of women), and of prayer in the streets and other public places, both of which customs are foreign to Tamils, but germane to Egyptians and many clans of Arabs.

I shall therefore pass on to their physical features. Of these, the best marked race-characters, according to Dr. Tylor,¹ are the colour of the skin, structure and arrangement of the hair, contour of the face, stature, and conformation of the skull. On all these points there is, in my opinion, no appreciable difference between the average Tamil and the average Moor. If he were dressed up like a Tamil he would pass easily for a Tamil, and *vice versa*. As regards cranial measurements, I would add that in a famous trial for murder (known as "the Chetty street murder case"), in which I appeared in 1884 as counsel, I had to be in consultation with three of our leading doctors of medicine and surgery (having large experience of the country and its people)² on the question whether the skull produced

¹ Art. "Anthropology" in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9th edition, p. 111.

² Dr. J. L. Vanderstraaten, M.D.; Surgeon-Major L. A. White, M.R.C.S.; and Dr. W. G. Vandort, M.D., C.M.

in the case was the skull of a Tamil or not, and they were unanimously of opinion that it might be as much the skull of a Moorman or a Sinhalese as of a Tamil: so difficult would it be to distinguish between the skulls of the three sections of our community! The results of Prof. R. Virchow's inquiry into the physical anthropology of the races of Ceylon, as contained in his Paper on the Veddás of Ceylon and their relation to the neighbouring Tribes,¹ are unfortunately of little value from his want of local knowledge, which prevents him from discriminating between the right and the wrong information given by the writers on Ceylon whom he quotes, and from his candid admission that the skulls submitted to him were too few, if not of doubtful identity. Commenting upon the Moorish skull, for instance, he says:—"So far as I can learn, there is only one skull of a Moor in Europe It is accordingly orthodolichocephalic and chamæprosopic. A further comparison is scarcely desirable, because from a single skull no judgment can be formed as to whether it is really typical of the race."² And he mentions that, until of late only a single Tamil skull was known in Europe, and that his conclusions are based upon an examination of this skull and of three others forwarded to him as Tamil skulls from Colombo. Besides the question of the identity of these skulls, it appears to me that four cannot be taken to be typical of the Tamil race. As the upper classes of Tamils cremate their bodies, a legitimate comparison with the other races, class for class, would be always a matter of difficulty.

I do not feel myself free to conclude this Paper without making a few remarks on the name by which the "Ceylon Moors" and the "Coast Moors" (Lebbes, Chóliyar, Chammá-kárar) are known among the native races of India and Ceylon in the midst of whom they live. The Sinhalese call them *Yonnú* and the Tamils *Chónahar*. It is supposed by those few of the Moors who would (like the Mauri of old,

¹ *R. A. S. Journal, Ceylon Branch*, vol. ix., pp. 350-495.

² *R. A. S. Journal, Ceylon Branch*, vol. ix., p. 451.

described by Gibbon) “adopt the language, name, and origin of Arabs, that this very name of *Yonnú* or *Chónahar* is evidence of the origin of the Moors from Arabia,” because Arabia in Sanskrit is *Yavana*, in Páli *Yonna*, and in Tamil *Chónaham* or *Sónaham*.

The descent of *Yonna* from *Yavana* must be conceded on the analogy of *lona*, Páli for salt, being derived from the Sanskrit *lavana*; but it may be contended that *Chónahar* with a long *o* cannot be traced as clearly from the Sanskrit. A more direct derivation, it has been pointed out to me by the Rev. Father Corbet, is from the Arabic *shúna*, “a ship of war,” and *shuna* could easily have become *shona* through the Hindústání, which often tends to change the long *u* into *o*. If this be so, *Chónahar* (in which *har* would represent the Tamil plural form) would mean warlike people. Father Beschi, in his Tamil Dictionary, says that the name is a corruption of “Chóla-nahara people.” Mr. C. Brito¹ thinks it is derived from *sunni*, as the bulk of the Moors are Sunnis of the Sháfá’i sect.

But even if we accept the position that *Chónahar* is derived from *Yavana*, it does not at all follow that the Moors are Arabs, for the long and shifting history of the *Yavanas* in India, which is now well known, points to a different conclusion. They are mentioned in the *Mahá Bhárata* with the Sakas (Scythians), Pahlavas (Persians), Kambojas, &c., to denote warlike races outside the limits of India, and differing from the Indians in religious faith and customs. The term *Yavana*² having been identified with Ionia, Dr. Hunter has shown in his delightful work on *Orissa*³ how the Ionians “at once the most Asiatic and the most mobile of the Greek colonists in Asia Minor,” came to be confounded by the Persians as early as B.C. 650, and through them by the Indians, with the

¹ *Yalpána Vaipava Málai*, Appendix, p. 82.

² Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra identifies *yavana* with Sans. *yuvan*, Lat. *iuvenis*, as indicating the “youthful” or new race of Asiatic Greeks. See *Indo-Aryans*, vol. II., p. 177.

³ Vol. I.

whole Greek race. After Alexander the Great's expedition to India at the close of the fourth century B.C., the term *Yavana* was applied in Indian literature to the Greeks. In the rock inscriptions of Aśóka, for instance, Antiochus, the Greek king, whose eastern dominions covered great portions of western Asia, is referred to as "Antiacho, the Yona king" (B.C. 250); and Patanjali (B.C. 130) records "that the Yavanas eat lying down." Since the invasions of Alexander and Seleucus, the Ionians had established themselves beyond the Indus, and even gone as far as Oude, for the Sanskrit grammarian just mentioned records that the Yavanas laid seige to that city. They then pushed their way to the Buddhist kingdom of Magadha, and advanced into Orissa as Buddhists, where they founded a Yavana dynasty. Being expelled therefrom in A.C. 473, they moved southwards, overthrew the Andhra kingdom, the capital of which was Warangul (half-way between the Godaveri and Haiderabad), and ruled in that part of the country till A.C. 963, when their downfall occurred amidst a great religious revival which ended in the overthrow of Buddhism and the re-establishment of the Saiva faith. From this period the Ionians disappear from Indian history, being most probably absorbed by the war and persecution which characterised the times. But the name Yavana survived as meaning *a people who came from the north and brought in new religious rites*. "These," says Sir William Hunter, "were the two crucial characteristics of Yavanas in the Hindú mind, and in the end they led to the transfer of the name to a people more widely separated by race and religion from the Ionians than the Ionians from the Hindú. For the north was again about to send forth a race of invaders bringing with them a new faith, and destined to establish themselves upon the wrecks of native dynasties and native beliefs. The Musalmán invasions of India practically date from the eighth century, when the Arabs temporarily conquered Sindh. The first years of the eleventh century brought the terrible Máhmud Sultan, whose twelve expeditions introduced a new era into

Hindústan. From this time it becomes difficult to pronounce as to the race to which the term Yavana applies. At first, indeed, the Musalman invaders, especially in Southern India, were distinguished from the dynasties of Ionian Yavanas by the more opprobrious epithet of *Mlechchas*. But as Islam obtained firmer hold upon the country, this distinction disappeared; and popular speech, preserving the old association of northern invasion and a new creed with the word Yavana, applied it indiscriminately to the ancient Ionians and to the new Musalmans. Before the Muhammadan power, the heretic and the orthodox dynasties of India alike collapsed, and in a few centuries the ancient Yavanas had ceased to preserve any trace of their nationality. All former differences of race or creed were pulverised in the mortar of Islam, and the word Yavana grew into an exclusive epithet of the Musalmans." Prof. Weber has emphasised these views in his *History of the Indian Literature*,¹ and proves conclusively that the Arabs and other Muslims were the last to receive the name of Yavanas. From the ninth to the fourteenth centuries the Muhammadans in South India were known as *Mlechchás*, or "barbarians," just as the Sinhalese knew them in Ceylon in those ages as *Bamburó*. In later days they knew them as *Yonno*, while the Tamils learnt to use the word *Chónahar*.

To sum up. It has been shown that the 185,000 Moors in the Island fall under two classes, "Coast Moors" and "Ceylon Moors," in almost equal numbers; that the "Coast Moors" are those Muhammadans who, having arrived from the Coromandel coast or inner districts of South India as traders or labourers, continue steadily to maintain relations of amity and intermarriage with their friends in South India; and that such "Coast Moors" are Tamils.

As regards the nationality of the "Ceylon Moors," numbering about 92,500 out of the 185,000, we have ample reasons for concluding that they too are Tamils,—I mean the masses of them; for, of course, we meet with a few families here and

¹ Page 220, note.

there—say, five per cent. of the community, or about 5,000 out of the 92,500—who bear the impress of an Arab or other foreign descent. Even the small *coterie* of the Ceylon Moors, who claim for themselves and their co-religionists an Arab descent, candidly admit that on the mother's side the Ceylon Moors are exclusively Tamil. All that remains to be proved, therefore, is, that their early male ancestors were mainly Tamils. For this purpose I have sketched the history of the Ceylon Moors. I have shown the utter worthlessness of a tradition among them that a great colony of Arabs of the house of Hashim made settlements at Béruwala and other parts of the Island, and have adduced reasons for accepting as far more probable the tradition reported by Mr. Casie Chetty, that the original ancestors of the Ceylon Moors formed their first settlement at Káyal-paḍḍanam, and that many years afterwards a colony from that town—"the fatherland of the Chonagar"—migrated and settled at Béruwala. I have further shown how similar the history of the Ceylon Moors is to that of the Coast Moors; how intimately connected they were with each other till the Dutch began to persecute them in Ceylon; how the intercourse between the mother-country in South India and Ceylon was arrested about 150 years ago; and how the distinction arose thereafter between the Ceylon Moors and the Coast Moors. By tracing in this manner their history, that is, their descent, I arrive at the conclusion that the early ancestors of the "Moors," Ceylon and Coast, were mainly Tamils on the father's side, as admittedly they are exclusively on the mother's side.

Then, considering their social customs, I have pointed out how closely they are a copy of Tamil institutions. I have also touched upon their physical features and called attention to the opinion of some of our leading doctors of medicine and surgery, that the skull of a Moorman cannot be distinguished from that of a Tamil. In complete confirmation of the inference drawn from these arguments is the evidence afforded by language. The vernacular language of the Moors is, as I have said, Tamil, even in purely Sinhalese districts.

What diversities of creed, custom, and facial features prevail among the low-country Sinhalese and the Kandyan Sinhalese, between Tamils of the Brahmin or Vellala castes and of the Paraya caste! And yet do they not pass respectively as Sinhalese and Tamils, for the simple reason that they speak as their mother-tongue those languages? Language in Oriental countries is considered the most important part of nationality, outweighing differences of religion, institutions, and physical characteristics. Otherwise each caste would pass for a race. Dr. Freeman's contention, that "community of language is not only presumptive evidence of the community of blood, but is also proof of something which for *practical purposes is the same as* community of blood,"¹ ought to apply to the case of the Ceylon Moors. But, of course, in their case it is not language only that stamps them as Tamils. Taking (1) the language they speak at home in connection with (2) their history, (3) their customs and (4) physical features, the proof cumulatively leads to no other conclusion than that the Moors of Ceylon are ethnologically Tamils.²

¹ Art. on Race and Language, *Contemp. Review*, p. 739, March, 1877.

² Besides our Dutch rulers, who believed that the Moors were only Tamil Muhammadans, other authorities, who have mixed and moved with the people of Ceylon and taken pains to study them, may be cited: such as the Rev. James Cordiner, whose duties as Director of all Schools in Ceylon during the administration of Governor North, 1798-1805, afforded him great opportunities of collecting information and judging on all matters connected with the sociology of the Island. At p. 139 of his work on Ceylon he declares that the Moors are Tamils by race.

I would mention also the name of Mr. Simon Casie Chetty, who was a Member of the Legislative Council of Ceylon for some years since 1838, and whose opinions are recorded in his *Gazetteer*.

The editors of the *Ceylon Observer*, in their issue of December 10, 1885, said, "We believe that fully 80 per cent. of the Muhammadans of Ceylon are Tamils."

And Mr. A. M. Ferguson, C.M.G., who has lived and laboured in Ceylon for over fifty years, speaking at a meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society, Ceylon Branch, held on January 26, 1888, observed, in reference to the Paper read on that day, as follows:—"The obvious reason why the marriage customs of the Muhammadans were mainly Tamil was due to the fact, that most of the proselytes made by Muhammadans in South India and Ceylon were from the Tamil race."