

TANJORE.

(The City of the Mammoth Bull.)

BY

MAJOR H. A. NEWELL.

Indian Army.

An illustrated Guide with History.

[FIRST EDITION.]

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PRICE—8 ANNAS.

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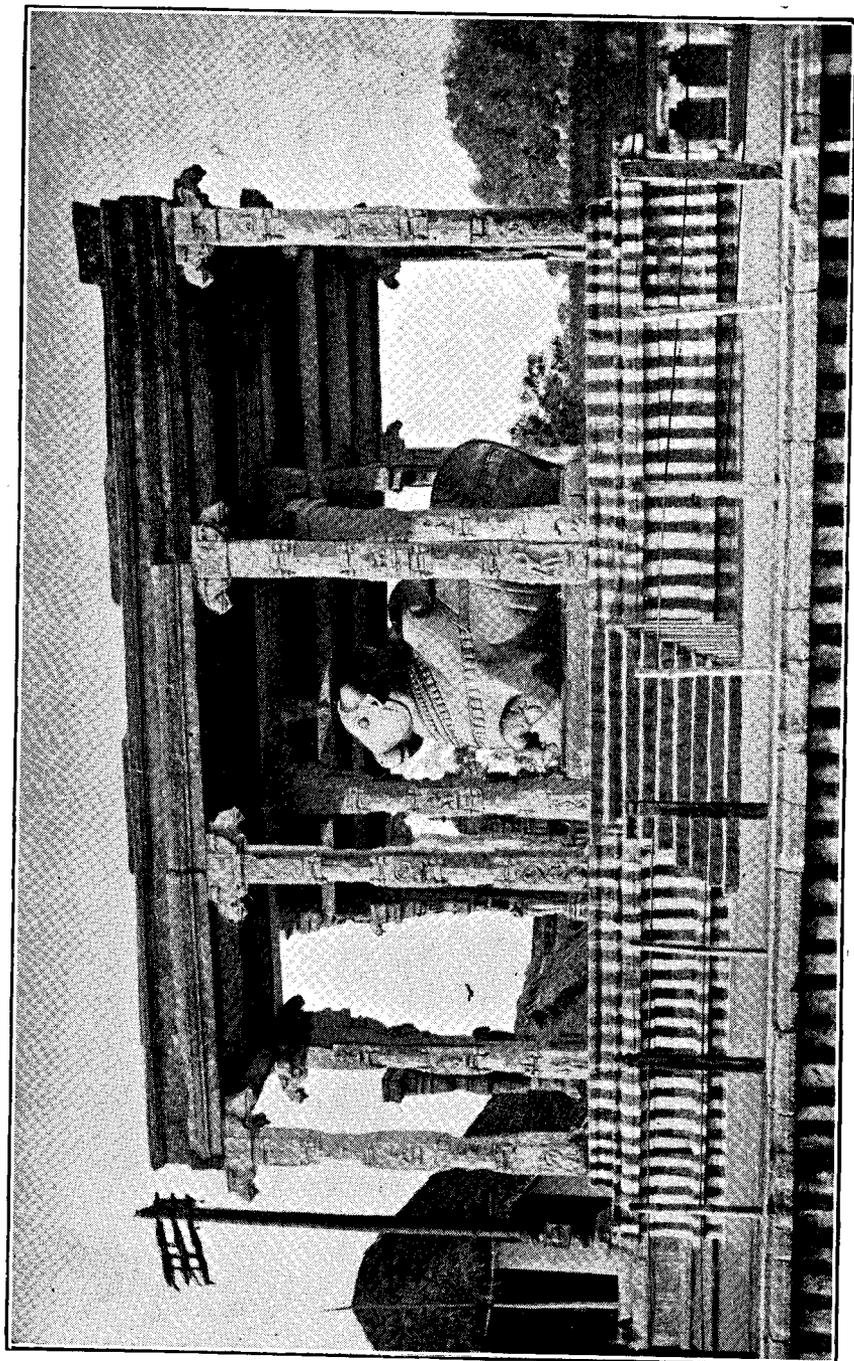


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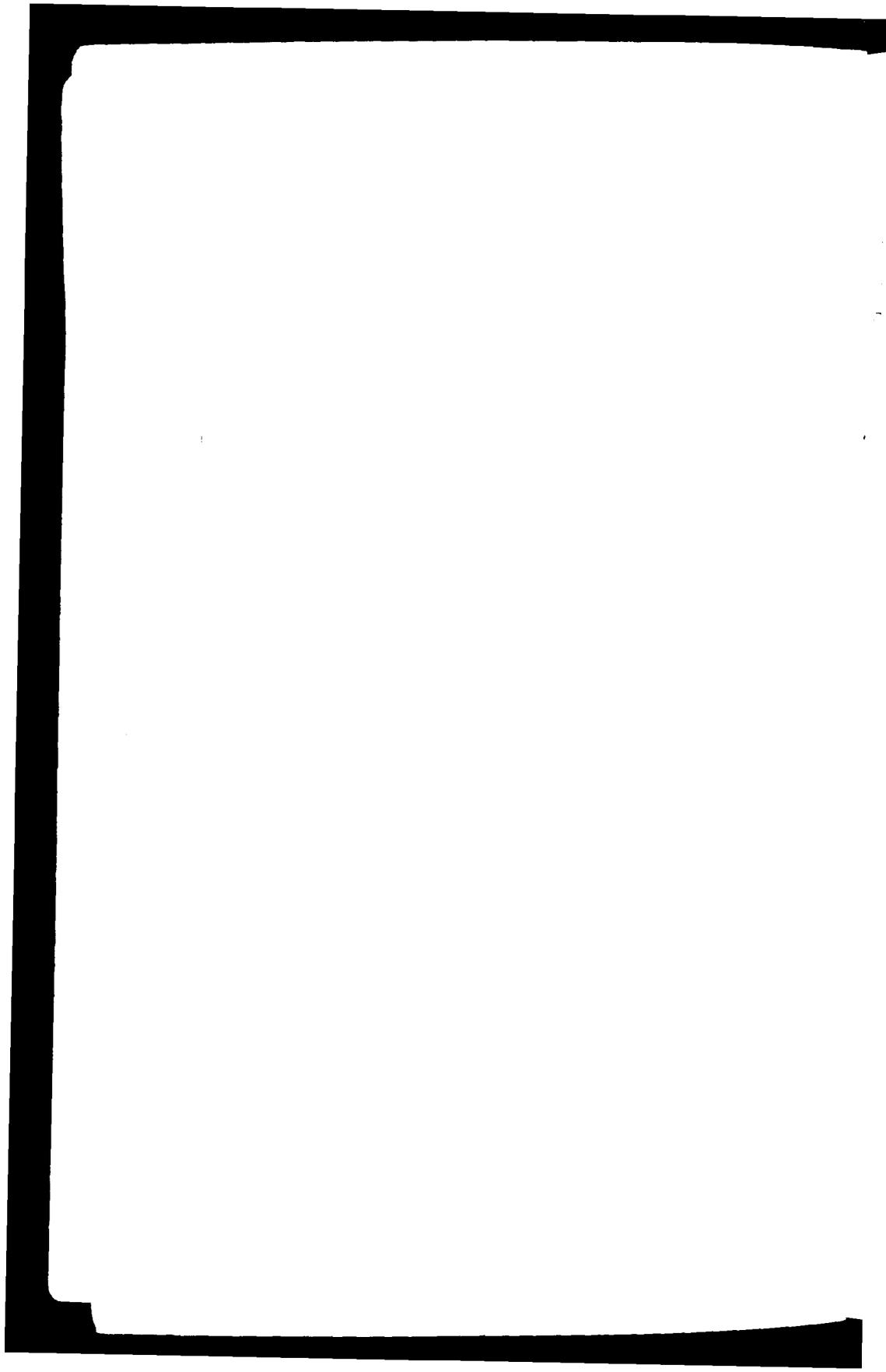


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TANJORE BULL.



INTRODUCTION.

IN the clearness of its general plan, and the straightforwardness of its architectural design the great Siva Temple at Tanjore differs considerably from the involved and bewildering styles so often found to characterise Dravidian buildings of the kind. The Brihatisvara Temple,—as the vast Siva shrine is called,—stands out prominently from all others in South India by reason of the purity of its lines, and the harmony of its conception. There is no danger of the stranger losing his way amid a maze of pillars, or labyrinth of corridors. He has but to enter the large gateway to the east, and walk straight on until he reaches the spacious open quadrangle wherein stands the temple of the God himself. By the time that he has made the circuit of this he will have seen all that there is to be seen. He will have gazed in wonder at the splendid central shrine, with its innumerable carved figures, its inscriptions, its signs and its symbols. He will have peered into the many smaller edifices, and made the tour of the long cloisters with their picture painted walls. There will be nothing he will not have seen. How much, however, will he have understood? In the hope of enabling many people to answer this vexed question in a satisfactory manner I have penned the following lines.

H. A. NEWELL,
Major, Indian Army.

SOME PRESS OPINIONS.

The "Times of India" says:—

Guide Books to India.

"The tourist in India must undoubtedly often find the ordinary guide book a source of embarrassment rather than assistance, and the absence of a properly planned itinerary often leads to vexatious delay and extra expense. A hearty welcome should, therefore, await the admirably planned and well written guides by Major H. A. Newell, Indian Army, now being published.

"Three days at Delhi" shows how all the chief objects of historical interest may be visited with a minimum of trouble and inconvenience, and the descriptive matter is informative and concise. Two maps are attached at the end of the book showing the new capital and the various routes of approach. "Three days at Agra" is on much the same lines, one day being devoted to Fatehpur-Sikri. Few tourists who visit Amritsar have any but a vague notion of what they are about to see, and "Amritsar the City of Golden Temple" should be, perhaps, even more useful than its companion booklets. The centre of Sikh worship is described in an interesting fashion, due attention being also paid to the Carpet Factory, Ram Bagh Gardens and Fort Govindgarh.

All these guides are of uniform size which enables one to slip them easily into the pocket, and the price of each is 8 annas. Several more of the series are in the press, and will be issued shortly, and those dealing with some of the sacred and historical places of Southern India should be particularly welcome."

The "Hindu" says:— ".....any traveller will be saved the vexatious waste of energy, time and money which inevitably follows his ignorance of the place and the uncertainty as to the sequence in which the various objects are to be visited..... the get-up is very neat."

* * * *

The "Pioneer" says:— "..... Major Newell's little hand books supply him (traveller) with a well-ordered itinerary..... They are excellently printed....."

* * * *

The "Madras Times" says:— "A welcome publication..... Admirable little book."

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The "Madras Mail" says:— "These volumes..... seem likely to be of use to travellers."

* * * *

The "Civil and Military Gazette" says: ".....very useful Guides."

TANJORE.



ACCORDING to legend Tanjore derives its name from a giant, or rakshasan, who once made his home there. He was killed by Vishnu, and with his last dying breath requested that a city might be built which should be called after him. Less picturesque but more probable is the suggestion that Tanjore really means City of Refuge, in which case it takes its title from the word tanjam, signifying refuge.

Of extreme antiquity the town occupies a peculiarly flat site 218 miles south-west of Madras. Its chief interest, in the eyes of visitors from over seas, lies in its temples, its palace and its beautiful brass work. Of the many shrines, for which the place is famous, only four or five are dedicated to the worship of Vishnu.

The majority of the inhabitants are Hindus, of whom fully two-thirds are Saivites. How far the followers of the Creator and Destroyer outnumber those of the Preserver may be ascertained by a glance at the sect marks, which adherents of the two popular deities wear in order to distinguish themselves, and proclaim to the world their particular culte.

Those who honour Vishnu as "Lord of All" draw a curiously shaped V, in the centre of their foreheads,

with white chalk, divided by a vertical red stripe. Devotees of Siva trace three horizontal bars across their brows with sacred ashes, and place a small round dot immediately above the nose.

Tanjore is said to possess some fifty minor shrines. These are of little interest, more especially as admittance is strictly prohibited to any but Hindus. At times of festival three of the larger temples are attended by crowds of pilgrims. None, however, can compare in size, beauty or importance with the great Siva sanctuary, the grandly carved gopurams of which attract the eye from afar. Hundreds of visitors, from all parts of the globe, annually visit this splendid shrine. As it possesses several enclosures into which the stranger may penetrate, there is no danger of an angry warder immediately stepping forward shouting, and waving a bunch of keys. The words may be unintelligible, but there is no mistaking the menacing tone and gesture. The intruder is made to feel that he is on forbidden ground. Nothing remains but to beat a hasty and somewhat ignominious retreat.

This unpleasant experience is familiar to all who have sought to penetrate the mysteries which lie beyond the outer wall of any but really large temples. In those the sanctum sanctorum is equally jealously guarded, but the surrounding enclosures are several in number, and these are open to European visitors.

THE GREAT SIVA TEMPLE.

“ I am the God of the sensuous fire
 That moulds all nature in forms divine :
 The symbols of death and of man’s desire,
 The springs of change in the world are mine ;
 The organs of birth and the circlet of bones ;
 And the light loves carved on the temple stones.”

SIR A. LYALL.

The great Siva Temple at Tanjore is not considered particularly sacred. This is all the more surprising as not a booth is to be found within its walls, and it is one of the finest, best ordered and most beautiful shrines in South India. The idiosyncrasy is accounted for by a legend to the effect that in the early days of its history Appar, the famous Saivite saint, was refused admittance. No reason is assigned for the strange refusal. The result, however, was disastrous in the extreme. The holy man retaliated with that most deadly weapon—silence. Neither in his hymns nor in any of those of the other sacred poets of the Siva sect is allusion made to the temple, hence it is not invested with that odour of sanctity which mention by the inspired religious writers of olden time alone can impart.



THE Shrine was founded in the tenth century by Ràjaràja I. This monarch reigned from A. D. 985 to 1013. He was the greatest of all the long line of Chola kings, a dynasty which appears to

have existed several centuries prior to the Christian era, and to have remained in power considerably over a thousand years.

THE TEMPLE

KNOWN as the Brihatisvara Temple the vast edifice to Siva occupies a large portion of the southern half of the Small Fort. Remains of a once formidable moat still front the principal entrance. This consists of a wide, but not especially high gateway, in the east wall. Immediately inside is the enclosure which was converted into an arsenal by the French in 1772.

To left and right of the entrance stand two small shrines dedicated to Ganesh and Subramannia respectively, the elder and younger sons of Siva.

THE TEMPLE

GANESH is also known as Gannapatti or, in Sanskrit, as Vigneswara. He is represented as part elephant and part man. He is to be found at the entrance to every Hindu temple, for all religious ceremonies commence with an invocation to him.

The story of his birth is mythical in the extreme. The legend runs that as Siva and his wife, Parāshakati were looking at themselves in a mirror their reflections met. Simultaneously the powerful elephant god sprang into being. Ganesh is often made to appear riding on a mouse, that small animal being sacred to him.

THE TEMPLE GOD.



UBRAMANNIA is the second son of Siva. This deva is depicted as possessing six faces—five in front and one behind—each representing one of the six centres of the human body as understood in Hindu psychology. He invariably sits on a peacock, and is worshipped as God of War and of Wisdom. Those pray to him who are desirous of subjugating matter.

THE TEMPLE.



ABOVE the shrines of these two popular devas the gate rises to a height of some forty feet. In conformance with Hindu custom it is coated with whitewash. Surmounting it are gaily coloured plaster figures, and the inscription “Tanjore Sree Brahadeeswaraswamy Temple.” The centre of the carved and painted group is occupied by Siva, and his goddess Parvati. To left and right are their sons, and beyond again are Subramannia’s two wives, Vellianni and Thavianni. The outer figures represent hermits, Siva’s gluttonous servant, Gundotharam,—the hero of the favourite Hindu marriage legend,—a lion, and the sacred bull.

THE TEMPLE ENCLOSURE.



BEYOND the enclosure once used by the French as an arsenal rises the great gopuram of the second entrance. Among the elaborate carvings which cover the tower, Vishnu is represented in a

standing posture, and the remainder of the decorations set forth different episodes connected with his career. In the interior of the gateway there are two recesses. These contain the upper and lower portions of the car, known as Gorathani, employed in the minor processions that take place every month.

THE GATEWAY



THE carvings on the second Gopuram are all associated with Siva. Some of the figures are particularly fine, notably those of the Darwara Palakas, or gate-keepers. These two statues almost invariably stand sentinel at each side of all entrances to Hindu temples. They generally occupy a raised platform, or niche, to right and left.

In common with every sacred Hindu form, whether of man, beast, bird, fish or reptile, the Darwara Palakas possess a deep spiritual significance. They are not merely grotesque statues—sometimes large, sometimes small—placed outside the doors and gateways of sanctuaries for purposes of display. They are there to give a message and convey a warning.—Each is portrayed as having four hands, two for prayer and two for blessing. The upraised forefinger of the lower right hand signifies, “Sinners must not enter here!” The wide open palm of the upper right hand threatens: “I smite those who disobey my order!”

The inner walls of this gateway are inscribed with the ancient history of the temple in Tamil-Dravidian.

THE Siva gopuram gives admittance to a spacious central quadrangle containing the temple proper, and a number of other interesting and important buildings. This large courtyard measures 500 feet by 250 feet. It is surrounded by cloisters and is paved throughout with brick. The solid encircling walls are decorated, round the top, with no less than one thousand and eight stone bulls.

NEAR the south-east corner of the quadrangle stands a big square well. Beyond and north of this is a raised stone platform approached by four steps, and enclosed by a railing. This is the stage upon which the far-famed Nautch Girls dance during the great annual festival in April.

FACING the great Siva Temple is a white-washed pavilion gaily painted and supported by numerous pillars. It contains the mammoth bull, Nandi, about which such marvellous tales are told. The huge animal sacred to Siva is cut out of a particularly solid mass of hornblende gneiss, and is $19\frac{1}{2}$ feet long, $8\frac{1}{2}$ feet broad, and over 12 feet high. Numerous bells are carved round its neck, and altogether it is a very fine and imposing figure. It owes its colour to the fact that it is constantly polished with gingelly oil.

DEVOTEES of the temple regard the colossal bull as a Swayambu, *i.e.*, an idol not made by human art. The legend runs that it gradually came up out of the earth. At first it was quite small, and everybody was pleased with it, but it rapidly increased in size until the Raja, becoming alarmed, sent for the chief of the temple masons. The King said to the man, "What is the matter with the bull? You must prevent it from getting any larger, or it will quite eclipse my temple." The master mason replied. "There is a living toad inside the bull. As it grows the bull is forced to expand." At this intelligence the Raja commanded the toad to be killed. The royal order was executed, and a break in the back of the statue is pointed out as irrefutable evidence of the truth of the story. Blood is still said to trickle from the old wound in proof of the fact that, although severely injured, the toad is still alive after a lapse of some nine hundred odd years.

IMMEDIATELY in front of the wonderful bull, Nandi, stands a large granite pedestal supporting a tall flag-staff cast in bronze. The four sides depict characteristic Saivite figures. The western face portrays Siva and Parvati riding on the sacred bull. To the south Subramannia and his two wives are shown seated on a peacock. To the east Ganesh is seen mounted on a mouse, while to the north is

Chandikasaram, Siva's faithful messenger, armed with a hatchet.

THE temple proper does not occupy the exact centre of the courtyard. Instead it is set slightly back towards the west. In common with nearly all buildings of the kind it faces the rising sun, the principal entrance being to the east. It is distinguished by a tower, similar in design to the Gopurams over the gateways. This rises fourteen storeys and attains a height of 216 feet. The supporting structure is 96 feet square. Crowning all is a gold tipped dome carved out of a single block of granite, and said to weigh 80 tons! This gigantic stone was brought from Sarapallam, a village four miles away. It was conveyed from there by means of an inclined plane and it took twelve years of strenuous and patient labour to raise it to the summit. The space at the base of the dome is so wide that a four-wheeled wagon could be driven round it with ease. Each corner of the tower, immediately below the dome, is decorated with the granite figures of two bulls, the animal sacred to Siva.

OUTSIDE the temple, and resting against its south wall, is a small shrine, approached by a steep and precipitous flight of twenty-one stone steps. This is the sanctuary of Thachanamorty, the God who always turns his face towards the south.



IN the south-west corner of the great quadrangle a narrow door leads through the cloisters to an outer enclosure. This contains the five large cars only used in the famous April procession. In the near neighbourhood of these brightly coloured and gilded chariots the sacred cows wander about at will. They are watched over by two ancient granite figures blackened by time, and frequent applications of gingelly oil—the figures of Ganesh and the Rain God. The former was mutilated by the Muhammadans, hence his banishment to that out-of-the-way corner, no broken statue being held sacred by Hindus. Behind the two devas the wall is closely inscribed with Sanskrit characters relating the history of the temple.



LEAVING the enclosure and returning to the quadrangle some curious paintings are observable on the west and south walls of the cloisters. The first is that of Lakshmi, wife of Vishnu and Goddess of Good Luck. The second depicts Brahma's wife, Sarasvati, the Goddess of Music and Learning, while the third portrays Kali, the dread goddess of blood sacrifice, slaying a bull.

The next group shows Ganesh riding a mouse, Siva and Parvati on a bull, and Subramannia on his peacock. Then follow a series of pictures illustrative of sixty-four miracles worked by Siva.



LARGE and remarkably beautiful temple to Subramannia occupies a north-westerly position in the quadrangle. Standing west of this, and looking up at the great wall of the Siva temple, four figures may be described rising one above another in a straight line. The lowest is much larger than the others, which gradually decrease in size, finally terminating in a man's head crowned by a bowler hat. The man wears a beard, and bears a fanciful resemblance to King Edward.

It is claimed that the masons responsible for the carvings were inspired by a vision of the four dynasties destined to rule over Tanjore. The first is the tallest, and represents a warrior standing with drawn sword. This is supposed to symbolise the Chola kings, whose reign lasted for so many hundreds of years. The second figure is that of the Nayak rajas, the third of the Maráthas, and the fourth of the British.

A less fanciful interpretation of the phenomenon of finding a European carved upon an ancient Hindu Temple is that it represents a Dane, who rendered valuable assistance to one of the Nayak Rajas either just before, or shortly after the acquisition of Tranquebar, by Denmark, in 1620. It is a fact beyond dispute that Roelant Crape, the pioneer of Danish enterprise in the country, had spent part of his youth at the Court of Tanjore.

THE base of the great temple is closely covered with inscriptions. These date from the 10th century, and were commenced by Rájárája I, the founder of the sanctuary. They have been copied by the Government Epigraphist, and translations are to be found in the voluminous work entitled, "South of India Inscriptions."

BUILT about a century later than the big Siva Temple the beautiful shrine to Subramannia well deserves special notice. Its walls are completely covered in the most delicate and exquisite carving. Fortunately they have alike escaped the ruthless brush of painter and white washer. So perfect is every detail of the carving that the petals of the smallest and closest flower stand out from the masonry, and a fine thread may be passed between.

Flights of steps lead up to either side of the shrine, but the principal entrance is to the east. This last gives access to a pillared hall, the upper end of which is cut off from the actual shrine by two doorways and a narrow passage. Needless to say none but Brahmans may brave these barriers.

The walls of the hall are adorned with portraits of the Mahráta Rajas of Tanjore. The furniture consists of curiously fashioned figures of birds, animals and

legendary horses, studded with imitation jewels,—chiefly diamonds and rubies. They are more quaint than beautiful, the most interesting things in the collection being the palanquin, or dandy of the last Raja, and an elaborate model of the fabulous flying car of Ravana, the ten-headed king of Ceylon.

IN the north-western portion of the big quadrangle stands a small shrine surmounted by the figure of a hermit. This marks the spot where an eminent Yogi lies buried.

ALITTLE beyond the beautiful shrine erected to Subramannia, and north-west of the celebrated bull, Nandi, rises the temple of the goddess, Parvati. None but high caste Hindus may pass its jealously guarded portals, inside which the tall figure of Siva's wife stands 15 feet high.

ACURIOUS feature about the great temple at Tanjore is that Sudras are admitted to the enclosure leading to that sanctum sanctorum the innermost shrine of the god himself. In no other temple of the district are they accorded so uncommon a privilege. Another strange example of unaccustomed tolerance is furnished by the fact that Valaiyans,—who

are usually not allowed entrance to the hallowed precincts at all,—may penetrate as far as the miraculous bull. This leniency is the more surprising in view of the legend that even so holy a man as the saint and poet, Appar was refused admittance.

Possibly those in authority hope that, by thus extending the hand of good fellowship to castes not in the habit of being so favoured, they may even, at this eleventh hour, be rewarded by “entertaining an angel unawares.”



KN order to reach the Sivaganga Tank it is necessary to go outside the east gate of the temple, and follow the high wall as it leads first north and then west. The large reservoir is solidly built of stone, and was once revetted throughout. Steps lead down to the water, which is of a peculiarly thick reddish colour, and does not look especially inviting.



FRONTING the Sivaganga Tank is an open square planted with some fine trees. To the east of this lies the old Mission Church. Stone walls enclose it on all four sides, while its western face is marked by a small marble tablet. This describes how the edifice was constructed in 1779 by the distinguished Missionary, Schwartz. The interior of the building is very plain, but there is something distinctly attractive about its simplicity. The west end is decorated with a

beautifully carved group, in white marble, by the sculptor Flaxmann. It depicts Schwartz lying on a bed surrounded by three men and four boys. The scene thus perpetuated represents a visit paid to the dying missionary by Raja Sarabhoji in November 1797. Below is the following inscription:—

To the memory of the
 Reverend Christian Frederic Schwartz
 Born at Sonnenburg of Neumark in the Kingdom of Prussia
 The 26th of October 1726
 and died at Tanjore the 13th of February 1798,
 In the 72nd year of his age.
 Devoted from his early manhood to the office
 of Missionary in the East
 the similarity of his situation to that of the
 first preachers of the Gospel
 produced in him a peculiar resemblance
 to the simple sanctity of the Apostolic character
 His natural vivacity won the affection
 as his unspotted probity and purity of life
 Alike commanded the
 Reverence of the
 Christian, Mahomedan and Hindu
 For sovereign princes, alike Hindu and Mahomedan,
 selected this humble pastor
 As the medium of political negotiation with
 the British Government
 And the very marble that here records
 his virtues was raised by
 The liberal affection and esteem of the
 Raja of Tanjore
 Maharaja Sirfojee.

THE palace is composed of a bewildering series of large and rambling buildings generally attributed to the Nayak Rajas. Those responsible for its construction do not seem to have followed any settled plan, or to have been guided by anything more definite than the particular whim, or need of the moment. The result is confusing in the extreme, the general impression left on the mind being of something curious rather than beautiful.

Entrance is by way of a large quadrangular courtyard. The encircling walls are pierced by big gateways to the north and east, and by a small postern in the north-west corner. The enclosure is planted with some old trees, under one of which stands an ancient elephant. This venerable animal belonged to the last Maharaja of Tanjore, and is nearly a hundred. The courtyard leads to a many-pillared hall. To right and left of the main door are shrines to Lakshmi, Goddess of Good Fortune, and to Subramannia, also dignified by the title of Doctor of Wisdom. Paintings adorn the high ceiling, while the outer corridor, on the west side, served as a guard room for sepoys and bandsmen. Over the central door is a large portrait of the last Raja, immediately below which appears a gaily painted figure of that all-popular deva Ganesh.

A small inner courtyard gives access to a larger one. The archway between is adorned with a hunting picture

of the last Raja. Further on yet another archway has its inner walls enlivened by brilliantly coloured representations of Hanuman, the Monkey God, Lakshmi and Krishna.

THE DARBAR HALLS.

THE chief sights of the palace are generally considered to be the two great Darbar Halls, called respectively after the second and third dynasties which ruled over Tanjore, namely, the Nayaks and their supplanters, the Maráthas.

THE MARATHA HALL.

THIS handsome throne room faces a square courtyard, above which it is raised a couple of feet. A fine effect is lent by the many large pillars that support the lofty roof. Circular in shape and smooth these tall columns are coloured a rich tone of red, and are entirely decorated with twining garlands of grapes, and vine leaves in white paint.

From the body of the hall six brilliantly hued steps lead up to a stone platform. Here the huge octagonal columns appear in vivid tones of yellow and red, and are surmounted by extremely ornate tops and a variety of plaster figures.

SEATS OF THE MIGHTY.

THE centre of the platform is occupied by a slightly raised dais approached by a couple of steps. This supports a glittering crystal

canopy beneath which the Rajá's gilt throne and sumptuous footstool stand between two less splendid seats, those of his two principal advisers.

The walls, in the immediate vicinity of the throne, are hung with immense oil paintings portraying all the kings of the Mahráta Dynasty.

THE SKELETON IN THE CUPBOARD.



IN the platform to the left of the dais is a wooden cupboard provided with two doors. This contains a pair of skeletons, those of the Raja's nurse and her husband. Just why the sovereign desired to preserve such grim relics of his childhood's friends is not recorded. It may have been mere morbid fancy on his part, or the result of a promise made in jest and kept in earnest.

THE PYTHON'S VICTIM.



YET another grim trophy is treasured in a glass case on a small table near the cupboard containing the skeletons. It consists of a python wound about the body of a goat. This tragedy attracted the Raja's notice, during one of his hunting expeditions, and he commanded the bodies of both slayer and slain to be brought to the palace and there preserved.

A CHARITABLE RAJA.

TO the right of the throne hangs a large oil painting which depicts a Darbar presided over by a Raja reputed so charitable that, at his funeral, showers of sandal scented rain are said to have fallen.

THE OUTER COURT.

THE open court in front of the throne room was used as an arena for buffalo fights. Rams, too, were pitted against one another, wrestlers met at close grips, and acrobats performed many wondrous feats.

To north and south of the enclosure are screened off upper places whence the ladies of the zenana witnessed the proceedings.

THE NAYAK HALL.

THE Darbar Hall of the Nayaks is much simpler in its general scheme of decoration than that of the Maráthas. In front three massive columns rise up to support a facade elaborately decorated with plaster figures. The floor is paved with alternate squares of black and white marble. Five steps lead up to a very remarkable slab of gneiss formerly occupied by the throne, but now used as a platform to support a fine white marble statue of Maharaja Sarabhoji, by the sculptor, Chantrey. Deeply

carved round the edge the gneiss slab is cut out of a solid block. It measures 18 feet by 16 feet, and is $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet thick. The recess in the wall behind is filled with painted figures representing Rama and his beloved queen Sita, his three admirable brothers, and some of the leading monkeys who rendered him such signal service in his war against Ravana, the demon king of Ceylon.

The roof of the Nayak Hall is made conspicuous by a curious raised platform, the place from which the Rajas were in the habit of flying kites, a favourite amusement of theirs, and one at which, from constant practice, they were adepts.

THE LIBRARY.



ACING the Nayak Hall is the Palace Library. This is of quite unusual interest. The shelves contain over twenty-two thousand volumes. The majority are in Sanskrit, but there are also rare editions in various Indian and European languages. These last include an Encyclopædia Britannica of the 18th century. The books have been catalogued by Doctor Burnell, and are pronounced of great value.

In addition to the many shelves of bound volumes there are innumerable large cupboards completely filled with old time books in tablet form. These are composed of narrow strips of sandal wood of equal size, and are exquisitely inscribed with the finest and most beautifully characters cut with a sharp steel point. Each tablet

is pierced by a hole through which a cord is passed, the pages being strung together after the fashion of beads on a string. Finally the precious strips are bound firmly round and deposited, for still greater security, in the folds of a gaily coloured silk or cotton handkerchief.—Besides these sandal wood tablets there are a vast quantity composed of palm leaves. These are treated in a similar manner so far as the binding is concerned.

According to Doctor Burnell the library represents the result of three hundred years collecting by the Nayak and Marátha Rájas. He ascribes many of the palm leaves MSS. to the earlier period, but sets down the majority as belonging to the eighteenth and commencement of the nineteenth centuries. He considers that all the Nágari MSS. should be attributed to Mahráta times. A considerable number were collected at Benares by Raja Sirfoji, or Sarabhoji.

The Library also contains several large portfolios filled with interesting and valuable old colour prints.

THE GUDAGOPURAM.



THE Gudagopuram or Armoury is the tall central tower which rises so conspicuously above the flat roof of the palace. Similar in design to the gopurams chiefly found above temple gateways it can be approached from several directions. One of the most direct is by way of a steep flight of narrow stairs

situated in the north-west corner of the courtyard in front of the Mahráta Hall.

The tower is seven storeys high. By climbing to the summit a good idea is gained of the interior construction of buildings of the kind. Unfortunately the steps are badly worn in many places rendering ascent difficult, and descent dangerous to any but the very sure footed.

Each of the seven storeys is characterised by a domed central chamber encircled by arched and pillared corridors. These last lessen in number as the height increases. A large wheel-shaped contrivance of gaily painted wood is attached to every ceiling. From this arms were suspended, while muskets were stacked between the surrounding colonnades, the upper parts of which are decorated with artistically arranged plaster figures, beautifully modelled and painted. Each storey is treated to a different style of ornamentation. On the second are Cupid-like figures blowing bugles, horses appear on the third, kites—the bird sacred to Vishnu—on the fourth, and so on.

MADAMALLAGAI.



UCH is the name given to the curiously constructed tower which rises from the palace roof at a little distance beyond the Gudagopuram. It is six storeys high and possesses more than a hundred very narrow steps. Tradition accounts for its presence thereby saying that it was built in order to allow a Raja to

gaze across at Trichinopoly, in fervent worship of Sri Rangan, the deity in whose honour the splendid temple, near that city, was built.

HISTORY.



From point of view of antiquity Greece is the only European country that can compare with Tanjore. Nothing, however, would be known of its early history were it not for the Tamil poets. Fortunately those old time chroniclers have handed down clear and comprehensive records. These relate how the ancient kingdom, in South India, had attained to a high degree of civilisation and commercial prosperity long before the dawn of the Christian Era.

Researches among the Tamil poets have further revealed that far back as the dominion of the Cholas extends they were not the first masters of the country. Prior to their advent upon the scenes the land was occupied by the wild Naga race, the savages from whom the present Kallanes and Maravans trace descent.

Apparently the Cholas were a body of non-Aryan invaders from Lower Bengal, who descended upon Tanjore by way of the sea. They sprang from the same stock as the Cheras and Pandyas, the two rival powers with whom they disputed the supremacy of the south for so many hundreds of years.

THE CHOLA DYNASTY.

THE existence of the Chola Kingdom as far back as 250 B. C. is attested by the edicts of King Asoka, the mighty Buddhist ruler of the widespread Mauryan Empire. It is probable that the dynasty flourished several centuries prior to that date. The ancient annals of Ceylon speak of the Cholas as having first invaded that island 247 B. C., and again one hundred years later. The country was likewise known to the old Greeks. Mention is made of it by Plotemy A. D. 130, who gives the capital as Uraiyur, now a suburb of Trichinopoly. It is also referred to in the Periplus Maris Erythraei about A. D. 246.

EARLY DOMAIN.

ACCORDING to the Tamil poets the early domain was not extensive. It seems to have comprised the greater part of Tanjore and Trichinopoly, but did not reach much beyond Conjeeveram in the north. Panal Nadir, or Land of Floods, was the name by which it was known.

ANCIENT RULE.

THE Chola kings seem to have ruled their little kingdom wisely and well. Practically enjoying immunity from the north the only interference they had to fear was from their rivals in the south, the Pandyas and Cheras. As is inevitable between

near neighbours of the kind disputes were of frequent occurrence. Indeed there seem to have been few periods in their lengthy career when they were not at war with one or other, if not both these powers. During such short intervals of peace as their country enjoyed they developed their arts and industries, built temples and palaces, and carried on a trade over seas. In glowing terms the Tamil poets sing of gold ladenships from far away ports, of vessels loaded with jewels from Ceylon, and of many other rare and costly luxuries in which, according to them, the Chola monarchs freely indulged.

The chief energies, however, of those in authority seem to have been concentrated upon the construction of extensive and cleverly planned irrigation works, which they inaugurated throughout their dominions.

KARIKAL CHOLA.



THE first of the immensely long line of Chola monarchs to stand out with any degree of historical prominence is Karikal, or Blackfoot. A. D. 50-95. This king owed his name to an attempt to murder him by fire, from which he escaped with no more serious damage than scorched and blackened feet. He seems to have been a chivalrous and daring leader. Of his victory over the combined forces of the Cheras and Pandyas the Tamil poets relate how, when the Chera King was wounded in the back, that sovereign determinedly set himself to die by starvation rather than survive

such disgrace. The incident illustrates the high standard of heroism prevalent at that early period.

NALANKILLI (THE GOOD).



ARIKAL was succeeded by his son, Nalankilli, who reigned until A. D. 105. Like his father this king was successful in wars with his neighbours.

KILLIVALLAVAN.



LESS than nine princes united against Killivallan in a determined effort to prevent his ascending the throne rendered vacant by his father's death. Their object was to divide the kingdom among themselves. Killivallan quelled the rebellion, married a princess from Ceylon, and dying without leaving a direct heir, was succeeded by his brother, Perunarkilli.

Two more early Chola kings are spoken of by the Tamil poets. Their names are also recorded in ancient inscriptions. One is lauded as a saivite saint and a devotee of Vishnu, a distinction which he owes to having erected temples to both deities.

THE PALLAVAS.



WITH the advent of the Pallavas, invaders from the north-west who temporarily forced their influence upon Southern India, the Cholas became a subject people. Beyond paying a tribute,

however, they do not seem to have been much troubled by their conquerors.

VIJAYALA.

TOWARDS the close of the 9th century the Cholas regained their independence under Vijayala. Despite this momentous fact little is known of the further achievements of this monarch, and a like ignorance prevails with regard to his immediate successor, Aditya I.

PARANTAKA.

PARÁNTAKA reigned from 906 until 946. He extended the Chola dominions, and pursued his victories as far as Ceylon. Having defeated the Singhalese king he styled himself "a veritable Rama in battle."

RAJARAJA I.

AFTER Parantaka's death the country drifted into an unsettled condition. Harassed by external and internal perils it was in danger of losing all the advantages gained under the three preceding kings. From this it was rescued by the advent of Rájarája I. 985—1013. No sooner had this able prince assumed control than matters began to mend, and it was not long before the kingdom of the Cholas had entered upon the greatest and most prosperous period of all its long career.

The era of prosperity inaugurated by Rájarája continued, with but one brief interruption, for over a century. This best and most famous of Chola kings seems to have spent the greater part of his time in the field against his neighbours. By A. D. 1002 he had pushed his victories as far as Ceylon. The last inscription of his many triumphs is dated A. D. 1113. This describes him as having vanquished "the twelve thousand ancient islands of the sea."

Apart from the war-like side of his character Rájarája seems to have been possessed of many of the milder virtues. He was a lover of art and a devoted follower of Siva. He it was who built the great and beautiful Siva Temple at Tanjore. About this time he adopted the custom of prefixing his inscriptions with a short account of his exploits, an innovation for which history is much indebted to him.

RAJANDRA CHOLA.

URING the last years of his reign Rájarája shared his throne with his son, Rajendra Chola, A. D. 1011—1044. This prince followed in his father's footsteps, and his many long inscriptions give full details of his victories. He sent a naval expedition to Lower Burma, conquering the Nicobar Islands on the way. He appears to have carried his successes as far as the Ganges, for he assumed the title of Gangai-Konda-Chola, or "The Chola Conqueror of the Ganges." He also named a town in

honour of this victory, calling it Gangai-Konda-Cholapuram, and in 1022 made it his capital in preference to Tanjore.

RAJADHIRAJA DEVA I.



FN order no doubt to avoid subsequent disputes and bloodshed Rajendra caused his nephew to mount the throne during his lifetime. This King—Rájadhirája Deva I.—engaged in successful wars against the Cheras, Pandyas and Singhalese who appeared to have joined forces against him. An inscription records how he “cut off the beautiful head of Mánábháranan,” how he seized “Virakeralan of the broad ankle rings, and was pleased to have him trampled by his furious elephant,” and, finally how he drove “Sundára-Pandya, of great and endless fame,” to take flight bare-headed, and how, in the fierce conflict, this monarch lost “his royal white parasol, his whisks of the hair of the white yak, and his throne.”

That Rájadhirája entertained a fairly high opinion of his own achievements is proved by his performing the Asvamedha, or Horse Sacrifice, a ceremony only ventured upon by the mightiest and most successful monarchs. His career ended in 1053 when he was slain in battle.

RAJADHIRAJA II.



THE decline of Chola power began during the 12th century. In the Pandyan war of succession the Chola King and the King of

Ceylon took opposite sides, with the result that the former was defeated. The victorious Singhalese made use of the opportunity to pay off old scores. An inscription found near Conjeeveram gives a graphic account of the Chola's consternation. It describes the ravages of the invaders, "very wicked men, all sinners against Siva," and goes on to tell how they had "removed the sacred door of the temple at holy Rámeswaram, obstructed the worship, and carried off the treasures."

KULOTHUNGA III.

THE next king, Kulothunga III. resumed the war against Ceylon. He defeated the Singhalese, "cut off their noses and drove them into the sea." He also captured Madura, and set his own candidate on the Pandyan throne. After these victories he assumed the title of "Conqueror of Madura and Ceylon."

RAJARAJA III.

UNDER Rájarája III. (1216—1244) the Chola forces suffered a fatal reverse. The country was invaded by the King of Pandya who burnt down Tanjore and Uraiyur. Before retiring the conqueror added insult to injury by returning the kingdom to the Cholar monarch as a gift.

THE HOYSALA BALLALAS.

ABOUT this time a new power began to loom large on the southern horizon, that of the Hoysala Ballalas. They assisted the Cholas

against the Pandyas, and established themselves near Sri Rangan, Trichinopoly. From being protectors and friends they rapidly became dictators and finally enemies.

THE MUHAMMADANS.

EARLY in the 14th century the sudden invasion of the Muhammadans threw South India into direst confusion and terror. The enemy penetrated as far as Rameswaram. The Hoysalas were destroyed, and the path laid for the great empire of Vijayanagar.

NAYAK DYNASTY.

ASANSKRIT poem states that Sévappa Nayak (1544-1572) obtained the Kingdom of Tanjore by his own valour. The author of this assertion was the eldest son of the prime minister of the second and third Nayak rajas. In flat contradiction of this an old Telugu poem tells how Sévappa received Tanjore, as dowry with his wife, who was sister-in-law to Achyuta Emperor of Vijayanagar.

ACHYUTAPPA NAYAK.

ACHYUTAPPA (1572-1614) ascended the throne during his father's lifetime. An inscription of his, dated 1577, is found in the big temple at Tanjore. He was an enthusiastic patron of religion and letters, but his reign was troubled by the opposition of a descendant of the ancient Chola kings, the last of the line of whom there is any record.

RAGUNATHA.

IN 1614 Achyutappa abdicated in favour of his son. He then retired to Sri Rangam, where he led a life of prayer and seclusion. The new king inherited his father's taste for literature, and like him was a patron of religion. He built temples to Vishnu and Chatterams. His war with Pandya ended by his marrying a Pandyan princess.

THE MUHAMMADAN YOKE.

ALL this time Tanjore had been subservient to Vijayanagar, and although that great empire was on the wane, the Nayaks were paying tribute as late as A. D. 1611. In their efforts to throw off the yoke they unwittingly assumed another—that of the Muhammadans.

FALL OF THE NAYAKS.

A FEUD brought the Nayak dynasty to an end in 1673. The King of Tanjore refused to give a member of his family as wife to the Madura monarch. The latter at once invaded the country and, advancing on the capital, killed the king.

MARATHA DYNASTY.

THE Maratha dynasty was founded by Venkaji, the son of a Bijapur Maratha General. He had been ordered to assist a youthful son of the last Nayak King of Tanjore to establish himself on

the throne. This he did, but in the intrigues that followed he was persuaded to take the reigns of government into his own hands. By this time European influence was already at work in the country. In 1612 the Portuguese had settled at Negapatam while that Danish had acquired Tranquebar in 1620.

VENKAJIS' SUCCESSORS.



VENKAJI'S reign was troubled by constant wars. He left three sons, each of whom reigned in turn.

Shahji, 1687—1711.

Sarabhoji, 1711—1727.

Tukkoji, 1728—1735.

The last was succeeded by his eldest son. This prince died within a year, and his widow, Sujana Bai, assumed control. She was not left long in power. The influence of the Muhammadan Commander of the Fort set a pretended nephew of Tukkoji upon the throne. Meanwhile Saiyajji, the second son of King Tukkoji, was at Pondicherry imploring help of the French. In August of the same year he succeeded without their aid, but his stay at Pondicherry had been fruitful in so far as it led to the French acquiring Karikkal.

PRATOP SINGH.



SAIJAJI was not a popular ruler, and was deposed in favour of Pratop Singh, an illegitimate son of Tukkoji. Nine years after his

deposition Saiyaji applied to the Madras Government to restore him. He made his story so good that, regarding him as a much wronged prince, they agreed to do so on condition that he should bear the cost of the war and cede the Fort and territory of Devicotta.

The first expedition consisted of 430 Europeans and 1,000 sepoys. It failed, but the second, under Stringer Lawrence, and accompanied by young Clive, captured Devicotta, which was afterwards ceded by Pratop Singh, and a peace concluded, that prince being left in possession of the throne.

SARABHOJI.

PRATOP Singh was followed by Tulsaji, who died in 1787. This Raja only left one child, an illegitimate son named Sarabhoji. The young man's claim to succeed being considered invalid he was passed over in favour of his father's brother, Amar Singh. At the same time he was placed under the guardianship of the new Raja. Finding that his uncle was treating him cruelly the British removed Sarabhoji to Madras for safety.

Sarabhoji employed his exile in petitioning for his father's throne. His relations supported his demands until, finally, the Governor-General consented to depose Amar Singh. In 1798 Sarabhoji was declared Raja of Tanjore. Much as he had desired the position he soon wearied of it. Before long he suggested that the country

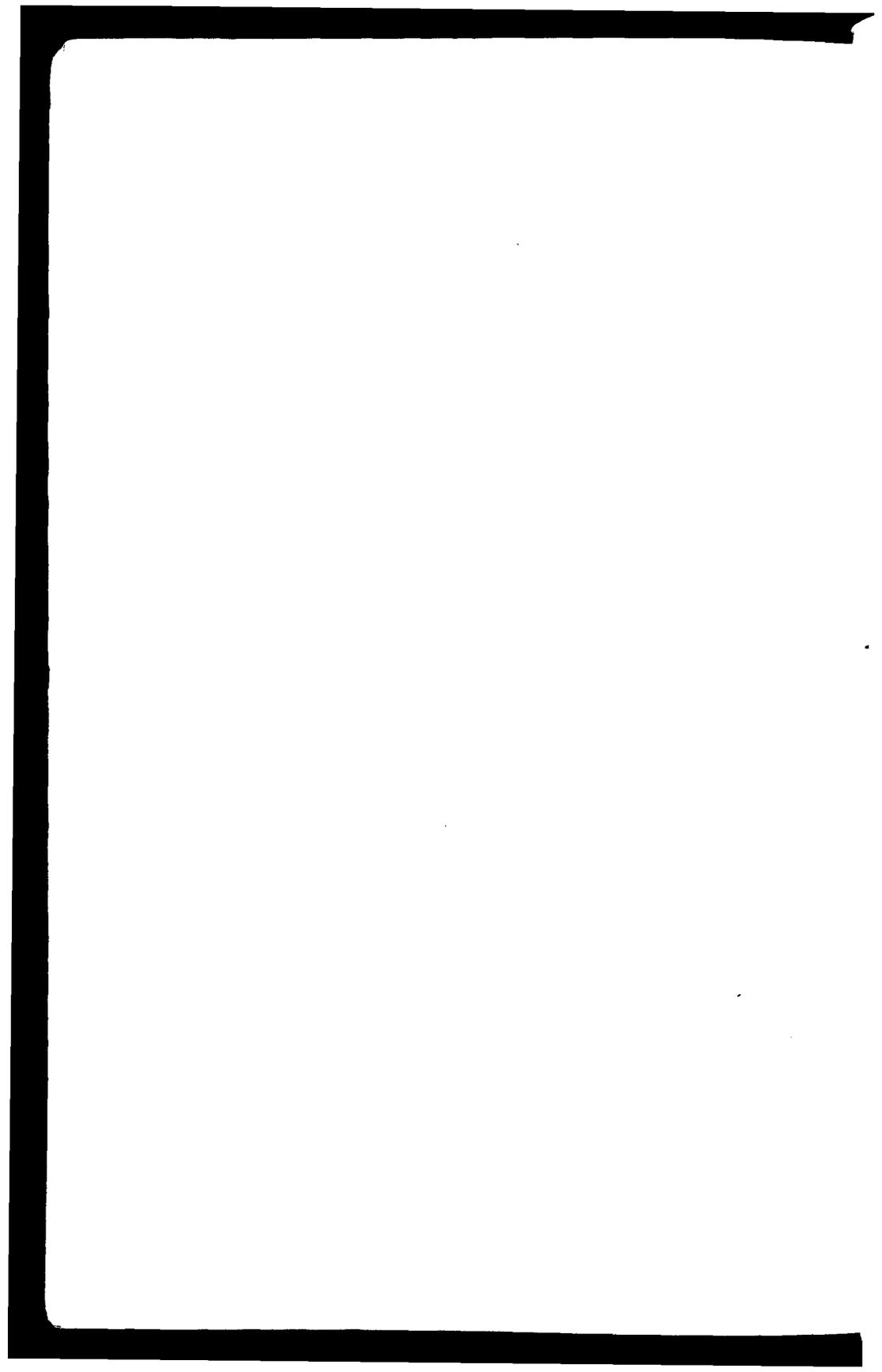
should be taken over and administered by the British. This was done. A suitable pension was assigned the Raja whose authority was thenceforward limited to a small area around the Fort.

LAST RAJA.

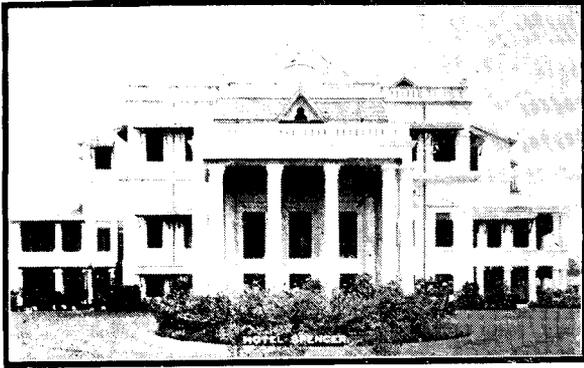
IN 1824 Sarabhoji was succeeded by his son Sivaji. This Raja seems to have been an absolute non-entity. Writing of him the eminent missionary Schwartz, who spent so much of his life in the country, says, "The King of Tanjore is, in the estimation of the ignorant, a prince who governs according to his despotic will, but he is in fact more a slave than a king. He seldom goes out, and often when he proposes to do so the Brahmans tell him it is not an auspicious day. This is sufficient to confine him to the house."

Sivaji died in 1855 leaving three widows but no heirs to the throne. In this way the last of the Tanjore dynasties came peacefully to an end. After flickering up for a brief space it snuffed out like a candle burnt down to its socket.





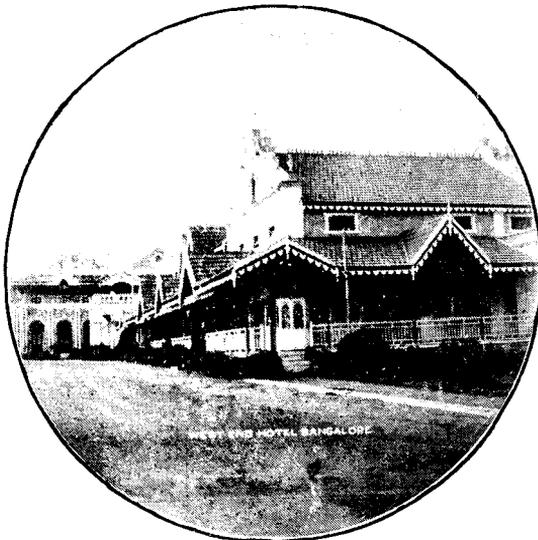
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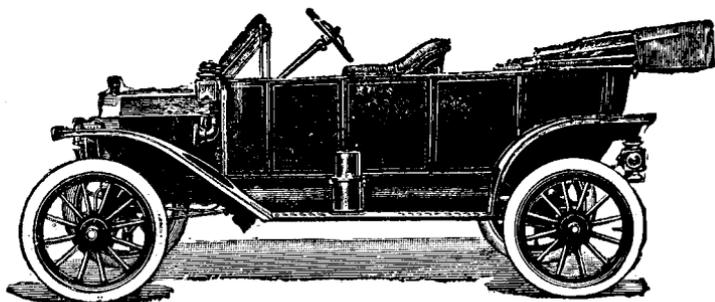
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