Chapter III. Population. Christians. *History.*

There were Christians in the Thána district as early as the sixth century. According to Kosmas (535) these Christians belonged to the Nestorian Church and were under the Metropolitan of Persia, who appointed a bishop to Kalyán.[1] A letter from the Patriarch Jesajabus to Simeon Metropolitan of Persia, seems to shew that by the middle of the seventh century the missionary spirit had grown cold and the Christians along the Indian Coast were without priests.[2] Still in the tenth century (942) there seem to have been Christians and Christian churches at Chaul,[3] and, early in the fourteenth century the Latin Friars Jordanus and Odéricus found several families of Nestorian Christians at Thána, and there seems to have been a Christian church at Supára.[4] They treated the Friars with much kindness, though, according to Jordanus, they were Christians only in name, without baptism, and believing that St. Thomas was Christ.[5] Jordanus, who was about two years in Supára, found the pagans, apparently Pársis and Hindus, willing to listen and be converted. He made thirty-five converts between Thána and Supára, and wrote that two Friars should be sent to Supára.[6]

No trace seems to be left either of the Nestorian or of the Latin converts.[7] The whole present Christian population seem to be the descendants of the converts made first by the Franciscans (1535-1548) and afterwards by the Jesuits under St. Francis Xavier (1506-1552) and his successors. The chief castes of which the present Christian population is composed are Bráhmans, Prabhus, Páchkalshis, Chárxalshis, Sonárs, Kharris, Bhandáris, Kházpátils, Kumbis, Kumbhárs, Nhávis, Dhobis, Kolis, Bhois, Mhárs, and Chámbhárs, and in Thána some converted Musalmán weavers.[8] The bulk of them are Bhandáris, Kolis, and Kumbis. Except with the Mhárs and Chámbhárs the different Christian sub-divisions eat with one another. As a rule, in matters of marriage the lower classes keep to their old caste distinctions. Kolis, Bhandáris,

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[1] Kosmas Indikopleustes in Migne's Patrologiæ Cursus, lxxxviii. 466. The reasons for holding that Kosmas' Kalliena was in Thána not on the Malabár coast are given in Places of Interest (Kalyán). Some grounds for supposing that the Kalyan Christians date from the second century are given in the History chapter.

[2] Hough's Christianity in India, I. 92. Caldwell's Dravidian Grammar (2nd Ed.), 27. These passages favour the view that the early Christians were Nestorians not Manichæans. The question is discussed in Ind. Ant. II. 273; III. 311; IV. 155, 163.

[3] Mis'ar bin Muhalhil in Elliot, I. 97. The reference is doubtful.

[4] Odericus in Yule's Cathay, I. 69 and Yule's Jordanus, VII.

[5] Yule's Jordanus, 23. Though it is improbable that the Apostle Thomas visited India (Hough, I. 49, 93; Burnell in Ind. Ant. IV. 182), the Persians had, as early as the seventh century, adopted the title of Thomas Christians both for themselves and for the Indian Christians (Hough, I. 92). The subject is complicated by the traditional visit of Thomas the Manichæan to India (Ditto 93).

[6] Jordanus in Yule's Cathay, I. 227.

[7] Herbert's (1627) Christians of Tanor (Travels, 357; Anderson's English in Western India, 34) belonged to Tanor near Cochin not to the Konkan. [See Places of Interest, Thánal. One recent report mentions a Christian village in Bassein that claims to be older than the Portuguese. No confirmation of this statement has been received.

[8] In the Thána Christians there are two strains of foreign blood, the European and the Negro. Though most of the European Portuguese left after the Maratha conquest (1739) there must have been a mixed population, the result of the marriage of the Portuguese garrisons and the women of the country. The Negro strain comes from the African slaves who, in almost all the larger estates, worked the home farm.

Bhois, Kumbhárs, Nhávis, and Dhobis form separate castes, and, when they fail to find wives among their Sálsette caste-fellows, seek them in such places as Chaul and Daman. Among the higher grades intermarriage among different castes occasionally takes place, and many among them cannot tell to what caste they originally belonged. Until lately the feeling of the impurity of the Mhárs remained so strong, that in some places they were not allowed to draw water from the village well or to enter the church.[1] Of late this feeling seems to have greatly worn off. Mhárs are now employed as house servants, even as cooks, and are allowed to attend church.

On the establishment of Portuguese power (1534-1538) large numbers of the people of Sálsette and Bassein were made Christians. This conversion was chiefly the work of the great Franciscan missionary Francis Antonio de Porto.[2] He threw down Hindu temples, rebuilt them as churches, persuaded numbers to change their religion, and by providing orphanages and in times of war and famine filling them with deserted children, prepared a class of native priests.[3] After 1548, by the help of St. Francis Xavier, the Jesuits were established in strength in Bassein and Bándra, and by their skill in preaching brought many men of high caste to change their religion. They made the day of baptism a season of rejoicing and ceremonial, and in one year (1588) as many as 9400 converts were baptised in Bassein Cathedral.[4] After the year 1560, when Goa was made an Archbishopric and the Inquisition was established, the work of repressing Hindu worship as well as of spreading Christianity was carried on with fresh energy. Till then some of the Viceroys had allowed their subjects the free exercise of their old religion. This was stopped when Philip II. reigned over Portugal (1580-1598), and apparently was never again allowed. The consequence was that the greater part of the people of Bassein and Sálsette were nominally Christian, and, by gradual grants, about one half of Sálsette became church property. The Jesuit College at Pándra was the head-quarters of the order, but most of the Sálsette churches and religious houses were held by the Franciscans. In Bassein, by the end of the sixteenth century or shortly after, there were houses of all the great religious orders, and at that time was established the College

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[1] Mhár converts live (1859) outside of the villages. They may touch other Christians but may not touch their wells, ponds, houses, or food. Or. Chris. Spec. 1859, 240.

[2] According to the story of the Uraps and other classes their forefathers were forced to become Christians by having pieces of flesh thrown into their wells. So also the writer in the Oriental Christian Spectator (June 1859, 238) speaks of the Portuguese thrusting biscuit and pork into the mouths of unwilling multitudes. Force may have been used in some cases, but the Portuguese accounts seem to show that persuasion and interest were the chief means of conversion. Their treatment of their chief rivals, the Musalmáns, was specially severe. As. Res. V. 20, 21, and Hough, I. 266.

[3] Dr. Da Cunha's Bassein, 150. It was this class of native priests, who, when the European Portuguese retired before the Maráthás, were able to maintain their religion in little less power than before. The most distinguished of Salsette Christians is Gonçalo Garcia, who was martyred in Japan in 1597, was raised to the rank of Beatus in 1627, and to the glory of Saint in 1862. Dr. Da Cunha's Bassein, 241-242.

[4] Dr. Da Cunha's Bassein, 229-234.

Chapter III. Population. Christians. History.

of the Purification, a seminary for noble children, natives of these parts, who were brought up as missionaries. Some years before, at Mandapeshvar, called by the Portuguese Mont Pezier, the Royal College of Sálsette had been founded and endowed for the education of the children of converts. The ruins of this college, which was built over some Buddhist caves, are still very noticeable to the west of the Borivli station on the Baroda railway. A Jesuit Father, who, in 1598, came to visit the houses of the Society in India, rejoiced especially over the children of heathen parents received from them by the Church 'as roses from among thorns,' and he put four young Panjáb converts into the college at Bándra. Nearly a hundred years later Fryer (1675) and Ovington (1690), who visited Thána when the Portuguese power had greatly decayed, found the Church still supreme in Sálsette, and Della Valle (1623), Dellon (1673) himself a victim of the Inquisition, Gemelli Careri (1695), and other seventeenth century travellers describe how rigorously both Christians and Hindus were treated by the Inquisitors, the Christians if they strayed from the path of orthodoxy, the Hindus if they practised their religious rites.[1]

Though Christian names were given to all alike, the Portuguese treatment of converts of good birth was very different from their treatment of lower class converts. Men of rank were admitted into the best Portuguese society and were allowed to marry with Europeans. Like the Portuguese settlers and pensioners they received grants of land in Sálsette and elsewhere on small quit-rents. On the other hand, those of low birth were left in a state little removed from servitude. In 1675 the Portuguese gentry are described as living in pleasant country seats all over Sálsette, like petty monarchs holding the people in a perfect state of villainage.[2] Between 1665 and 1670, when he attacked and secured many outlying parts of the Portuguese territory, Shiváji is said to have taken much care that the people should be purified by Bráhmans and brought back to Hinduism. Many of these reverts probably regained their place, and are now lost among the mass of Hindus. After Shiváji's death the spread of Hinduism ceased. But when about fifty years later (1737-1743) Bassein and almost the whole of the Portuguese territories fell to the Maráthás, many churches were destroyed and numbers of the Christians were, according to the local story, purified by Bráhmans and admitted into Hinduism.[3] Among the classes who went back to the old religion at this time were probably the Bhandáris who are known as Kirpáls, perhaps Kriyápáls, that is allowed to perform the old rites.

In the ruin of the Portuguese power most European and half European families left the country, and the Portuguese monks and other white priests were forced to follow their example. In the treaty

[1] Some account of the cruelties practised by the Inquisitors is given in Hough's Christianity in India, I. 212-237. [2] Fryer's New Account, 71.

[3] Dr. Da Cunha's Bassein, 149. Vaupell (Trans. Bom. Geog. Soc. VII. 138) states that the Maráthás levied a tax to support Bráhmans whose duty it was to purify Christians before letting them back into caste.

for the cession of Bassein the Portuguese government were able to secure for the Christians only five churches, three in Bassein city, one in the Bassein district, and one in Sálsette. When the conquest was completed, the Native Christians showed more constancy and the Maráthás more toleration than could have been expected. Under a Vicar General who lived at Kurla, the native, or as they were called the Kanarin,[1] vicars managed the churches and kept the bulk of the people from forsaking Christianity. Twenty years later Anquetil du Perron (1757) travelled through Sálsetté, and though he wrote with some contempt both of the congregations and of the priests, it is plain that the Christians were an important part of the population. No fewer than fifteen priests assisted in a festival at Thána in which du Perron took a leading part in the choir. At nine in the morning the cathedral was filled with thousands of Christians, all of them black. The church was adorned with arches of palm leaves and with pillars and balustrades of gold, silver, and coloured paper. The people were well-behaved, everything was done in the greatest order, and the voices of the singers were accompanied by violins and bassoons.[2] The Maráthás allowed them the freest exercise of their religion, their processions and festivals were respected, and many of the Sálsette churches were built or rebuilt about this time (1760).

In 1774 Sálsette was taken by the British. But the Sálsette Christians did not receive any special encouragement from the British Government, and in some of the earlier accounts of the district they are noticed in terms of contempt. In the years of terrible cholera (1818-1820) that followed the introduction of British rule, and again in 1828, some of the Christian Kolis, finding that they suffered as much as their Hindu neighbours, took to propitiating the goddess of cholera, and either left or were driven from the Church.[3] Some of these people with the help of a Palshi Bráhman became Hindus, and are known as Uraps or Varaps, perhaps from *orapne* to sear with a hot iron in reference to the purifying rites they are supposed to have undergone. These Uraps, though they hold a somewhat degraded position, are now considered to belong to the Ágri caste.[4] Others of those who were expelled did not become Hindus, and though cut off from the Church communion still attend their parish churches at festivals.

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[1] Kanarin that is Kánarese, a name originally given to the native clergy in Goa. It is still in use, but is considered a term of reproach. Dr. P. F. Gomes.

[2] Zend Avesta, I. ccccxxv. Afterwards the Vicar gave a dinner to the priests, the *marguilliers*, and the singers. In so mixed a company there were few manners and the guests offended du Perron by sitting on benches along the sides of a long table with their legs folded under them, and eating with their fingers and elbow resting on the table.

[3] Nairne's Christians of Salsette, 6. Vaupell (Trans. Bom. Geog. Soc. VII. 138) says that the cause of the reversion was an attempt to extend the priestly prerogative.

[4] See above, p. 117. There are Uraps also among Kolis and Káthkaris. Some of them seem to be Musalmán reverts. In support of the derivation of Urap from *orapne* to sear, it may be noticed that at Tánjor, in 1701, Christian reverts to Hinduism were branded on the shoulder with a red hot iron bearing the image of Vishnu (Hough's Christianity in India, II. 437).

Chapter III. Population. Christians. *History.*

In 1824 the whole number of Salsette Christians was estimated at about 10,000. At that time the lower orders were said to be indifferent Christians, who, while they were in the habit of attending a Christian sanctuary, kept in their houses symbols of the Hindu mythology, and continued addicted to many Hindu usages.[1] A few years later (1832) Mr. Warden described them as 'in the most lamentable state of superstitious degradation,'[2] and in 1838 Mr. Vaupell wrote of them as poor, ignorant and drunken, believing in all Hindu ideas of demon possession and enchantment.[3] If these accounts are correct the Sálsette Christians have, during the last fifty years, more than doubled in number, and have made a great advance not only in their condition, but in their knowledge of and their respect for their religion.

Appearance.

Among Thána Christians faces of a European or of a negro type are sometimes seen, but, as a rule, neither men nor women differ much in form or feature from local Hindus of the same class. Both men and women are neat and tidy in their dress, and there is much picturesqueness in the tall white-cloth cap worn by the men of some of the lower orders and in the women's full-dress upper robe.

Speech.

Their home tongue is Maráthi, very little different from the Maráthi spoken by the Kunbis and Kolis of the district. A few know and a considerable number understand an ungrammatical Portuguese, and among some of the higher families and in the Khatri ward of Thána town Portuguese is the home speech. Latin is the language of the Church, and most of the upper classes who go to Bombay know some English.

Houses.

They live in substantial tile-roofed houses with walls of wooden planks, mud, or brick and stone. The better class families generally have tables, chairs, couches, bedsteads, and stools, an argand lamp, cups, saucers, plates, metal cooking pots, a wardrobe, a box or two, and some pictures of the Virgin and Child and of Popes. A middle class family has generally one or two benches, one or two stools, with perhaps a single chair, cots, cups and saucers, and a few metal and earthen vessels. A poor family has perhaps a small wooden stool, some mats, and some earthen vessels.

Food.

Except some of the richer families who have three meals a day about nine, about one, and about eight in the evening, the bulk of the Thána Christians eat only twice about noon and about eight at night. Unlike Hindus the whole of the family, men, women, and children eat at the same time, and in some of the poorer households from the same dish. They live on rice, *nágli*, *vari*, pulse, vegetables, mutton, beef, pork, fowls, and fish, and drink liquor. On festive occasions they make rice cakes and eat them with mutton, potatoes, and plantains. They generally drink palm spirits called *ful*, with from three to five per cent of alcohol. Occasionally some drink and offer their guests *bavdo*, that is double distilled palm-juice. The well-to-do use brandy and European wines, some daily and others at

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[1] Hamilton's Hindostan, II. 172. At this time over 100 European pensioned soldiers had settled with their families at Thána (Ditto).

[2] Nairne's Sálsette Christians, 5

[3] Trans. Bom. Geog. Soc. VII. 138, 139.

weddings and other feasts. A limited number are in the habit of regularly drinking tea and coffee.

There is considerable variety in their dress. Among the well-to-do the men dress in European fashion, generally in black. The poorer classes wear tight trousers of coloured cotton cloth coming to the knee, and an inner jersey and cotton jacket. Among men the head-dress varies greatly; the upper classes wear the English hat, cart-drivers and husbandmen wear a long cylindrical white cotton hat or a woollen night-cap with or without a checked kerchief tied round the temples, fishermen wear red broadcloth caps, and palm-tappers wear either skull caps or night-caps.

Almost all the women dress in local Hindu fashion. Among the poorer classes the robe is worn tight and does not fall below the knee; the upper classes wear it full falling close to the ankle. Unmarried girls do not draw one end of the robe over the upper part of their bodies, and married women wear the upper end over the right shoulder not like most Hindus over the right temple. The robe is generally of cotton and in colour dark purple, green, or black. The bodice is loose full-backed and long-sleeved, and is tied in front under the bosom. For ordinary wear it is of cotton and for special occasions of silk or of brocade. When they go to church women cover themselves with a white sheet-like cotton robe that hangs from the head to the ankle, and is worn with considerable grace falling from the head in free outward curves, showing the face and rich necklace, and caught with the hand at the waist, and from there falling straight to the feet. Some years ago the women of some families took to wearing European petticoats and jackets, but the tendency of late has been to go back to the Hindu robe and bodice.

Ornaments.

Women generally wear gold earrings shaped like cockle shells, silver necklaces in double loops, and half a dozen China glass bangles round each wrist. On high days they wear gold-headed hair pins, looped gold necklaces, rings, earrings, bangles, and large silver anklets.[1]

Occupation.

Wealthy families, who are village headmen and owners of rich garden lands, often bring up one or more of their sons for the Church, and a considerable number who know English are employed in Bombay chiefly as clerks. The morning trains from Andheri and Bándra are crowded with men of this class on their way to their offices, and evening trains take them back to their homes.[2] The lower classes are husbandmen, some of them as the Vádvals among the most skilful cultivators in the district, palm-juice drawers, distillers, cart drivers, fishers, and labourers. A few have

[1] The details are: For the head the *mogri* worth from Rs. 8 to Rs. 20, the *mugdva* Rs. 4 to Rs. 15, the *karáb* Rs. 10 to Rs. 60, and the *kápoti* all of gold; for the neck, of gold ornaments, the *phugdaz*, *sákli*, *rujhár*, *peráva*, *dulodi*, *gáthe*, and *poth*, and of silver the *sari*: for the wrists gold, silver and glass bangles; for the fingers gold and silver rings; and for the feet silver anklets called *mále*. Widows do not wear bangles, the *mugdya* head ornament, the *poth* necklace, earrings or silver anklets, *mále*.

[2] Many of them walk three or four miles from their homes to the station, and as early as seven may be met making their way barefoot across the fields carrying their shoes and stockings in their hands.

Chapter III. Population.

Christians. *Occupation.*

become mill workers. They rear large quantities of poultry and pigs. Unlike the Goanese Christians, they pride themselves on never taking household service with Europeans. The Christians hold a good position among the people of Thána. They are an independent respectable class. Neither in Bombay nor in the Thána district is a man thought less of because he belongs to the Christian community. In villages where Christians are few and poor the Hindus may prevent them from using the wells, but where the Christian element is strong and includes some of the richer families, no objection is raised to their use of the common wells, nor is there any caste difficulty of any kind. As a class they are mild and amiable, clean and tidy in their habits, hardworking and orderly. Almost all drink freely, and among the lower class drunkenness is common, though probably less common than among the corresponding class of Hindus.

Condition.

Though there are few rich families a considerable number are well-to-do, and some of the coast villages which are altogether Christian are among the best villages in the district. There is much indebtedness but almost no destitution.

Religion.

In religious matters Thána Christians belong to two bodies, those under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Goa and those under the jurisdiction of the Vicar Apostolic of Bombay. The latter are a small body not numbering more than 5000 souls. Their spiritual matters are managed chiefly by members of the Order of Jesus. Besides at Bándra where they have a church of St. Peter and two native orphanages, they have churches and vicars at the villages of Máu, Kánchavli, Gorái, and Juhu.[1]

The main body of the Thána Christians are within the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Goa. Under him are three Vicars General, of Bombay, of Sálsette, and of Bassein. The Vicars General of Sálsette and Bassein, who are also called Vicars Vara or Vicars of the Rod, are appointed the former by Government and the latter by the Archbishop of Goa, and have control over the priests in their charge. Under the Vicar General of Sálsette are twenty-two priests in charge of nineteen parish churches, seven smaller churches attached to parish churches, and four chapels.[2] And under the Vicar Vara of Bassein are nine priests and nine churches.[3]

[1] Details are given under Places of Interest.

[2] This and much other information has been kindly supplied by the present Vicar General the Very Rev. P. A. V. P. de Souza. Details are given under Places of Interest. The following are the names of the churches: Thána, the Church of St. John the Baptist; Kurla, the Church of the Holy Cross; Amboli, the Church of St. Blasius; Pawai, the Church of St. Thomas; Pali, the Church of St. Xavier; Vesáva, the Church of Our Lady of Health; Mora, the Church of Our Lady of the Seas; Malvani, the Church of St. Anthony; Poisar, the Church of Our Lady of Remedies; Manpaisar, the Church of Our Lady of Conception; Bhayndar, Our Lady of Nazareth; Kasáli, St. Jerome's; Máni, St. Anthony's; Manori, St. Sebastian's; Koli Kalyán, Our Lady of Egypt; Utan, Our Lady of the Sea; Dongri, Our Lady of Belan (Bethlehem); Gorái, Holy Magi; Manori, Our Lady of Help; Marol, St. John the Evangelist; Powai, Holy Trinity; Bándra, St. Andrew's with three chapels, Our Lady of the Mount, St. Anne's, and the Holy Cross; Uran, Our Lady of Purification; and Mátheran, the Holy Cross.

[3] The churches are: at Sándora, St. Thomas; at Pápdi, Our Lady of Grace; at Páli, the Mother of God; at Mánikpur, St. Michael's; at Davli, Our Lady of Help; at Nirmal, St. Cruz.; at Koprád, the Holy Spirit; at Agáshi, St. Iagos; and at Bassein, Our Lady of Mercy.

The Christians have a sufficient knowledge of the doctrines of their faith, and show their attachment to their religion by freely contributing to their churches and to the support of their priests. As a rule they go to church regularly, and on great festivals very few are absent. At Bándra it is common to see whole families, father, mother, and children walking together to church carrying their books with them. Though neither handsome nor imposing, the churches are generally large, substantial and lofty. Some of those now in ruins had lofty arches, tall gable ends, transepts, and high-pitched sometimes vaulted roofs. They have given place to a style of building which, while quite as roomy, is less pretentious and more suited to the capacities of native workmen, and at the same time is distinct from any non-Christian place of worship. The new churches are plain oblong tiled buildings, generally with the doorway at the west, and a small chancel at the east, but no aisles; the larger churches have in most cases a low square tower at the south-east or south-west corner, and the smaller ones a belfry. They are white-washed outside, and the west end is often painted in colours. Inside they are gay with gilding, chandeliers, and pictures of saints. The high altar is sometimes very elaborate, and a few have old wooden pulpits or well carved wooden screens. Altogether they are clean and cheerful and compare favourably with the local temples or mosques. They generally stand in large enclosures, and have always in front of the west door a large Calvary cross white-washed and adorned with the symbols of the Passion, and generally bearing the date of the church, and a short devotional motto. Votive crosses of the same sort, made either of stone or of wood, are common in the villages and along the roads. Within the last few years many of the churches have been rebuilt or restored at a surprising cost, the people contributing freely to weekly offertories. The prayers are in Latin, but Portuguese and Maráthi prayer-books are within the reach of all, so that all who can read can follow the prayers. The hymns, like the prayers, are in Latin, but of these also there are translations, and the sermons are either in Portuguese or in Maráthi.[1] Each church pays one or two music masters, who, as a rule, play on the violin and in some churches on the harmonium. There is no lack of musical talent, but they seem to have lost their old fondness for singing.[2]

Parish priests are chosen from all classes except Mhárs, Bhandáris, converts, and illegitimate children. Some of them are the sons of landowners, sufficiently well-to-do to give their children a good education. Others come from Bombay or from Goa. All know

[1] There is an interesting Life of Christ or Christe Purán, originally published in 1659, which is still well known and much read by the people. It is in the home dialect of the Thána Son or Sea Kolis, and differs little from the Maráthi now in use.

[2] In former times one hamlet of Trinity (probably Vihar) was specially noted, whose people used to sing sacred songs while at work. Even in the woods men and boys were heard chanting the ten commandments from the tops of trees. The Thána choristers were famous singers. Annaes Maritimos e Coloniaes, Lisbon (1843) 382-383. Anquetil du Perron (1757) notices that in Thána the service was most orderly, and that the voices of the singers were accompanied by violins and bassoons. Zend Avesta, I. ccccxxv.

Maráthi and Latin, and all have some knowledge of Portuguese and a few of English. They are educated at Goa and ordained at the age of twenty-four by the Archbishop of Goa or his delegate. Here and there one is found who has been to Rome. They almost always live in houses adjoining or attached to their churches, and where the villages are small one priest often serves two or three churches. They dress in a long black cassock or cassock-like coat, and some of them wear the biretta or four-cornered cap. As a body they lead good lives and have an excellent influence over their people. A few priests have monthly salaries varying from £1 to £5 (Rs. 10 - Rs. 50) from the Goa Government, and all have an average allowance of £1 10*s.* (Rs. 15) from the British Government. In addition to this they receive from £2 to £10 (Rs. 20 - Rs. 100) a month in fees.[1] The priests neither know nor practise medicine. They have occasionally exorcised persons who have been supposed to be possessed with evil spirits. But instances are rare, and no case is believed to have occurred for several years.

A marked feature in the religion of the Native Christians is their passion plays. These were introduced by the Jesuits about the middle of the sixteenth century. In 1551, a Jesuit, named Gaspar Baerts, established a society of penitents, who, when the preacher aroused feelings of sorrow and shame, lashed themselves with thongs and cut themselves with iron blades till the blood flowed. So catching was this form of self-punishment that the whole congregation often followed the lead of the penitents, and the voice of the preacher was drowned in the whipping chorus.[2] To this passion plays were afterwards added, which, during Lent, week after week, showed the scenes that ended in Christ's crucifixion. In 1552 the practice was brought from Goa to Bassein by the Jesuit Father Melchoir Nunes Barretto, the second rector of Bassein.[3] At present the commonest form of these plays is that the priest tells the story with all possible liveliness of detail. Then a curtain is drawn and the scene is shown with the help of images and decorations. Some churches have one scene, others have a succession of scenes ending in the crucifixion. In some places as at Bándra, actors are occasionally employed, but as a rule the representation is made by wooden dummies. The dresses and other accessories are good. In the crucifixion the figure is taken from the cross by some of the ecclesiastics, and the whole performance is carried on with solemnity and regarded by the people quietly and with reverence.[4]

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[1] Da Cunha's Bassein, 199. Besides offertories the parishioners pay from 2*s.* to 10*s.* or 12*s.* (Re. 1 - Rs. 5 or Rs. 6) as christening, wedding, and burial fees. A mass for the dead costs from 1*s.* to 2*s.* (8 *annas* - Re. 1). The proceeds of these fees go to the priests. The Government grants are, besides Rs. 100 to the Vicar General, monthly allowances of Rs. 30 in one village, Rs. 25 in two, Rs. 26 in one, Rs. 15 in thirteen, Rs. 14-8 in eight, and Rs. 10 in four. Collector's Return, 12th Sept. 1881.

[2] At Tárápur, in 1673, M. Dellon saw in the cloister of the Church of Misericordia penitents with covered faces and bare shoulders wounding themselves most cruelly with whips containing bits of iron. Portugal e os Estrangeiros, I. 291-292.

[3] Da Cunha's Bassein, 250-253.

[4] Da Cunha's Bassein, 249. Dellon gives the following account of a passion play he saw at Tárápur on Good Friday, 1673. During the sermon the different mysteries of the passion were shown on a stage as a tragedy in five acts. In front of the stage was a curtain which was lifted whenever the preacher paused. After the sermon

Some of the Christian shrines have a great name among Hindus and Pársis, and to a less extent among Musalmáns.[1] The chapel of Our Lady of the Mount at Bándra, commonly called Mount Mary, enjoys special favour. On the 8th September, the titular feast of the shrine, a great festival, known as the Bándra feast, is attended by numbers of Pársis and Hindus, and throughout the year small companies of Hindus and Pársis, mostly women, whose prayer for a child or for a child's recovery from sickness has been answered, bring thank-offerings to the shrine. Musalmáns also, but less often than Hindus or Pársis, make vows at Christian shrines, and if their prayer is answered, offer money, candles, clothes, and oil, and when the recovery of some bodily organ has been the subject of the vow, silver hands, feet, eyes, or ears.

The Kolis are the only Christians who have any headman or council. There is no organisation for settling disputes or punishing offenders, except that the priest is sometimes appealed to, and that those who openly practise Hindu rites, lead scandalous lives, or neglect their Easter duties are put out of the church community. There are also brotherhoods who help at funerals, and they have church committees with the priest as chairman, which administer the temporal affairs of the different churches. These church committees and the priests in their spiritual capacities are, as already noticed, under the Vicars General of Sálsette and Bassein, who in turn are responsible to the Archbishop of Goa.

Many of the lower orders of Christians share the local beliefs in omens, lucky days, and magic. The authority of the priest is too great, and his disapproval of such practices is too strong to allow

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they represented the descent from the cross and laid Christ's image on a bier. On seeing this the congregation burst into groans and lamentations. Then a procession started, penitents leading the way cutting themselves with whips. Then came the chief men of the country, two and two, carrying candles, then monks, then the image of Christ on a bier covered with black crape and surrounded by twenty black men with masks and armed. In front of them was an officer, who struck now and again to look at the bier. The procession, preceded by drums and trumpets playing sad music, marched round the village and came back to the church. (Dellon quoted in Portugal e os Estrangeiros, I. 291-292).'

In Madura in South India, as in Thána, the Jesuits of the seventeenth century (1653) found passion plays a fruitful means of conversion. P. Alvarez, a man with much taste for ornament, falling so sick that all his work except prayer was stopped, made a charming theatre, chose young converts who showed a talent for acting, and trained them in the Indian style of declamation. Afterwards on Easter day he showed in the form of a tragedy the life of the holy king Josaphat. People came to see it from all parts of Trichinopoly and Tanjor. The numerous seats he had made could not hold a small part of the sight-seers. The rest camped under trees. The heathen were deeply impressed and from that time half of the people wished to be Christians. Idol festivals came to an end, for the people, after seeing the splendour of the Christians, said: 'How can we dare to try our childish ceremonies, every one will laugh at us.' La Mission Du Madura, III. 11.

[1] The readiness of the Hindus to worship Portuguese images is noticed with surprise by some of the old travellers. Tavernier (1660) says (Harris, II. 379), 'They worship the Virgin Mary as representing Sita, pulling off their shoes, making many reverences, putting oil into the lamp and money into the box. They would anoint the image and offer it fruit sacrifices if the Portuguese allowed them.' So Du Perron, about 100 years later (1757), saw many Indians at Thana, after the mass bring their children to have texts said over their heads, and saw others take oil from the lamp that burned before the Virgin. Zend Avesta, I. ccccxxv. In 1818, according to Hamilton (Hindustan, II. 169) a number of native women presented their children at the Máhim church to be baptised because they were paid a small premium

Chapter III. Population. Christians. *Religion.*

the worship of Hindu gods or Musalmán saints to be openly performed, and within the last fifty years these practices have grown much less usual or at least are much more carefully concealed. In Bándra and some of the villages near Bombay, which are under the management of Jesuit Fathers, irregular practices are said to be almost unknown. But in the more outlying villages of Sálsette and Bassein some of the men and women of the lower classes, though they do not openly worship them, are said occasionally to send secret offerings to Ganpati and his mother Gavri, and to pay vows to Shitládevi, the small-pox goddess. Their holidays are Christian holidays, Sunday, Easter, and Christmas. Before reaping the rice harvest they have a special thanksgiving when the first fruits are carried to the church and blessed.

Customs.

As the Thána Christians include many classes who have never associated and whose one bond of union is their religion, it is difficult to give an account of their customs which applies to all. The following details are believed correctly to represent the social and religious observances at present in use among the bulk of Thána Christians on occasions of births, marriages, and deaths.[1]

Birth.

For her first confinement a young wife goes to her parents' house, taking sweetmeats which she distributes among her relations and friends. On the third or the sixth night after a child is born, many of the lower orders watch the infant in case it may be attacked by the spirit *Sathi*, and strew gram on the doorway that if the spirit comes she may fall. Except that the midwife sometimes claims a fee for having watched all night, this custom is said not to be observed among the upper classes. Between the eighth and fifteenth day, if the child is healthy, an appointment is made with the parish priest, and at any hour between sunrise and sunset the child is taken to the church by its godfather, *padrinho*, and godmother, *madrinha*, followed by a company of friends and relations. The mother never goes to the christening.

Baptism.

The order of baptism is that laid down by the Catholic Church. When the company reach the church door the priest, in his surplice and violet stole, receives the name of the child and asks a few questions, which the clerk of the church answers for the child. In order to drive the devil away and make him give place to the Holy Spirit, the priest thrice breathes upon the face of the child, saying, *Exi ab eo*, 'Go out of him.' He then makes the sign of the cross upon the child's forehead and breast, and lays his hand upon its head repeating verses. Laying a little salt in the child's mouth he again makes the sign of the cross upon its forehead, and repeats verses. After this the priest lays the end of the stole upon the body of the child, and admits him into the church, saying, 'Enter into the temple of God that thou mayest have part with Christ unto life everlasting: Amen.' When they have entered the church the priest, jointly with the sponsors, recites the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer. The priest next exorcises the child, and taking spittle from his mouth, applies it

[1] With a few additions this section has been contributed by Mr. Gomes, G.G.M.C., of Bombay.

with his thumb to the ears and nostrils of the child, saying in Latin in a loud voice, 'Thou too fly away, O Satan?' He then questions the sponsors, and anoints the child on the breast and between the shoulders in the form of a cross, and changing his violet stole for a white stole, asks a few questions. Then the godfather or the godmother, or both, holding the child or touching the person to be baptised, the priest takes water in a small vessel and pours it thrice on the head of the child or person in the form of a cross, at the same time repeating distinctly the words, 'I baptise thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' After this the priest anoints the child on the top of the head in the form of the cross, and then places a white linen cloth upon it, saying, 'Receive this white garment and see that thou bringest it stainless before the judgment-seat.' He then gives a lighted candle to the child or to its godfather, repeating verses, and ending by saying, 'Go in peace and the Lord be with you: Amen.' The priest's baptism fee varies from 1*s.* 6*d.* to 2*s.* (12 *as.* - Re. 1). Among the upper classes friends are offered wine and sweetmeats, and near relations are feasted. The poorer classes burn incense at the door of the house before the child enters it, and the guests make presents to it of from 3*d.* to 2*s.* (2 *as.* - Re. 1) and have a feast of country liquor, dates, gram, and molasses. The priest is sometimes asked to attend the feast, but more often a present of wine and other articles is sent to his house. At the feast the guests sometimes subscribe and next day spend the money on drink. If an infant is sick it may at any time be baptised at its parents' house, either by the priest or by some intelligent member of the family, or by a neighbour who has learnt the formula. After recovery the child is taken to church to have the holy oil applied. On the fortieth day some parents take the child to church, and the mother also goes and is purified. On that day or after an interval of two, three or five months, the young mother goes back to her husband's house taking the child and some presents of sweet rice-flour balls, cocoanuts, boiled gram, and clothes.

The expenses connected with the birth of a first child vary among the rich from £15 to £30 (Rs. 150 - Rs. 300), among the middle class from £8 to £15 (Rs. 80 - Rs. 150), and among the poor from £2 10*s.* to £5 (Rs. 25 - Rs. 50). The expenses connected with the birth of a second child vary among the rich from £10 to £20 (Rs. 100 - Rs. 200), among the middle class from £5 to £10 (Rs. 50 - Rs. 100), and among the poor from £2 to £5 (Rs. 20 - Rs. 50). For other children the birth expenses are not more than from £5 to £10 (Rs. 50 - Rs. 100 among the rich, from £5 to £8 (Rs. 50 - Rs. 80) among the middle class, and from £2 10*s.* to £5 (Rs. 25 - Rs. 50) among the poor.

Among Sálsette Christians the marriageable age for boys is above fourteen and for girls above twelve. But boys do not generally marry till after twenty, and girls till between fourteen and sixteen. Parents take great pains to secure a good match for their daughters. They propose to the boy's parents,[1] and the boy and girl know

[1] This is the case in Sálsette. In Bassein the proposal comes from the boy's side.

their parents' wishes, but except when they are grown up, which is seldom the case, they have no choice. The chief point for agreement is the amount of money the bridegroom is expected to settle on his wife. The sum generally varies from £5 to £50 (Rs. 50 - Rs. 500) and sometimes rises as high as £500 (Rs. 5000). It is usually paid in the form of ornaments, seldom in cash.[1] When a match has been privately arranged, the boy's relations or friends go by appointment to the girl's house, and in the presence of the priest and a witness or two are formally asked if they accept the girl on certain conditions as to the amount of dowry. Among the well-to-do a written contract is drawn up and two copies are made, one for each party. Rings or other articles of jewelry are also exchanged between the boy and girl, wine and sweetmeats are served, and if the boy's party have come from a distance, this is sometimes followed by a dinner or supper. After the betrothal, marriage may take place in a few weeks or it may be put off for months or years, as suits the convenience of the parties. From two to five days before the wedding, booths are built at the bride's and at the bridegroom's houses, and friends are asked to the wedding both by message and by writing. For two or three months before the wedding the boy and girl, if they have not been taught them before, are instructed by the priest or the sacristan in the doctrines of the Christian faith, their fathers paying the sacristan from 1*s.* to 2*s.* (8 *as.* - Re. 1) each. A day or two before the wedding the boy and girl attend the church to confess and receive the communion.

Except among the Kolis, who are married in the afternoon with native music, weddings take place between eight and ten in the morning. The bridegroom generally walks to church with a company of friends and shaded by a large long-handled silk umbrella. If he belongs to an upper class family, he dresses in a European black hat, an evening or frock coat, and light waistcoat and trousers. If he belongs to the lower classes, he wears the full European dress of bygone days, a scarlet or black military coat with cocked hat, epaulets, knee-breeches, stockings, and shoes.[2] The bride comes with the men of her family and sometimes with one

[1] In the case of the death of a wife who has had children the ornaments remain for her husband's and children's use. If a woman dies without leaving a child, the dowry returns to her parents unless a contract has been made securing the property to the husband, or unless she has specially bequeathed it to him. If the property returns to the parents of the deceased woman, the burial expenses are deducted. If the husband dies without issue, the wife does not inherit any of his property unless it is specially left her.

[2] A writer in the Times of India (9th Mar. 1881) gives the following description of the bridegroom's costume. A pair of short coloured silk breeches, *a la* knickerbocker, fastened just below the knees with a pair of gilt garters. Scarlet silk stockings, patent leather shoes with large buckles, watered silk waistcoat, shirt with stand-up collar, a white cravat, an English regimental scarlet tail-coat with gilt buttons and epaulets, a cocked hat, and a old sword, generally preserved in the family with great veneration as an heirloom. The pattern of the breeches and waistcoat is of the time of the Portuguese Viceroy Dom Joao de Castro (1543), the English scarlet coat of the era 1667. Thus gorgeously attired the bridegroom starts to church, stopping at every few paces to wipe the dust off his polished shoes, and escorted by a servant carrying a tremendous coloured damask umbrella of the days of Bahadur Shah, king of Gujarat (1530).

or two girls as bride's maids, and, if it is a holiday, with the whole company of wedding guests. She rides in a palanquin, or *duli*, and has a longhandled silk umbrella held over her. If she is a rich girl she is probably dressed in modern English fashion, a white silk or muslin gown, or a brocaded petticoat and bodice, and a black mantle and veil in the old Portuguese style.[1] Some wear the ordinary full dress, the Hindu robe and outer sheet of white cloth. Brides of the lower classes wear a Hindu robe falling to the feet instead of their short every-day robe and the white overall.

When the two parties have met in the church, the priest, dressed in a surplice and white stole and accompanied by at least one clerk to carry the book and a vessel of holy water, and by two or three witnesses, asks the bridegroom who stands at the right hand of the woman, 'Wilt thou take *A. B.* here present for thy lawful wife, according to the rite of our holy Mother the Church?' The bridegroom answers 'I will.' Then the priest puts the same question to the bride, and she answers in the same words as the bridegroom. Then the woman is given away by her father or friend. The man receives her to keep in God's faith and his own, and holds her right hand in his own right hand, the priest saying, I join you together in marriage in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Amen. Then he sprinkles them with holy water. When this is done the bridegroom places upon the book gold and silver, which are presently to be delivered into the hands of the bride, and also a ring, which the priest blesses. Then the priest sprinkles the ring with holy water in the form of a cross, and the bridegroom having received the ring from the hands of the priest, gives gold to the bride, and says, 'With this ring I thee wed, this gold I thee give, with my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow.' Having said this the bridegroom places the ring on the third finger of the bride's left hand. The priest repeats verses, and, if the nuptial benediction is to be given, a mass is said. Then the priest, standing at the epistle side of the altar and turning towards the bride and bridegroom who are kneeling before the altar, repeats prayers over them. Next he returns to the middle of the altar, repeats a verse, gives them the communion, and proceeds with the mass ending with a blessing.

When the ceremony is over the company form in procession, sometimes led by musicians, the bride and bridegroom coming next either in a carriage or palanquin, or walking holding hands or arm in arm and the wedding guests following. When they reach the bride's house, the newly married pair stand at the entrance of the booth and receive their friends' congratulations. Each friend in turn throws a few flower leaves or sprinkles some drops of rose water on their heads, shaking hands, or if they are near relations kissing or embracing, and, if they have them to give, making presents. Wine and sweetmeats are handed round, first to the bridegroom and bride, and then to the guests. The bride and bridegroom are then led

[1] These dresses are to be had on hire at from 10*s.* to £1 (Rs. 5-Rs. 10).

Chapter III. Population. Christians. *Marriage.*

into the house, and the bride's party pass the time till dinner in singing, joking, and making merry. Meanwhile the bridegroom's party leave for some neighbouring house, and before dinner bring the bridegroom's presents, a rich robe and bodice, and a gold necklace which the bride wears so long as her husband is alive. Among the well-to-do the wedding-dinner is laid and served in European fashion with many dishes and European wines. The poorer classes have less variety, but almost always have two excellent dishes of cold pork, vinegar, and spices that remain fresh during the whole festivities which last for several days. A piece of shop-made bread is set beside each guest, but they seldom eat any but home-made leavened and unleavened bread and sweetmeats. The poorest families sit on mats and eat off leaf-plates. Besides liquor they have generally only one chief dish of pork or a dish of dried prawns. When dinner is over they sing, dance, and make merry. Late in the evening, or next morning, the bridegroom and bride with the bridegroom's party go to his house, where they have a dinner to which the bride's near relations are asked. After the dinner comes more singing, dancing, and merry-making. Next day the bridegroom and bride are asked to the bride's parents' house, and for about fifteen days the young couple pay visits to their neighbours, friends, and relations. Each father has to pay the priest a marriage fee of 6*d.* (4 *annas*) and a church fee of from 4*s.* to 8*s.* (Rs. 2 - Rs. 4). The marriage of a son costs an upper class family from £100 to £150 (Rs. 1000 - Rs. 1500), a middle class family from £50 to £80 (Rs. 500 - Rs. 800), and a poor family from £15 to £30 (Rs. 150 - Rs. 300). Exclusive of the amount of dowry which varies from £5 to £500 (Rs. 50 - Rs. 5000), and of which £100 (Rs. 1000) are spent on ornaments, the cost of a daughter's marriage is about the same as the cost of a son's.

Death.

When sickness takes a fatal turn, the priest is sent for, and, if he is able, the dying man confesses, the priest anoints him with holy oil, and sits besides him praying and repeating verses. When the sick man is dead the church bell is tolled that the parish may know and offer prayers for his soul, and messages or letters are sent to friends at a distance to tell them of the death and of the time of the funeral, which generally takes place within twenty-four hours. Arrangements are made with the priest as to the style of the funeral and the position of the grave.[1] On hearing of the death neighbours come in, the body is washed and dressed, among the rich in its best garments and among the poor in a calico habit supplied by the church, like a monk's robe, in shape like a Franciscan's and in colour like a Carmelite's. After the robing is over, the body is laid on a bed with a crucifix at the head and a candle on either side. A table is set in the largest room in the house covered with a black cloth, or if the dead is a child, with a white sheet. On this the coffin is set and the

[1] Graves are of two classes, temporary graves which are liable to be used again and vary in price from 4*s.* to £1 10*s.* (Rs. 2 - Rs. 15) and permanent graves, where the dead can never be disturbed, and which vary in cost from £2 10*s.* to £20 (Rs. 25 - Rs. 200). The prices vary in different parishes according to the wealth of the people.

body laid in it, or if there is no coffin the body is laid on the table. The coffins of the unmarried are lined with white, and the bodies of children under seven are decked with flowers. Six or more candles are set round the coffin or round the body if there is no coffin, and lighted when the priest begins to read or chant the prayers. When the last prayer is finished, if the dead has left a widow she takes off some of her ornaments, and, unless she is very young, never wears them again. Among the mourners the men wear black, and the women, if the family is well-to-do, black robes, and in all cases a shawl which near relations draw over the head and friends wear round the shoulders. If the dead belonged to one of the guilds or brotherhoods, of which there are several in most parishes, the members, if there is no coffin, lend a bier, and themselves attend in their robes holding lighted candles or helping to carry the coffin. When all is ready the procession starts to the church if the priest goes no further, and to the grave, if the priest has been asked to perform the service there. As the funeral party moves along, the church bell tolls and the priests and choristers chant hymns. At the church or at the grave the service is read with fewer or more prayers, according to the arrangement made with the priest. Unbaptised children, or people who have been put out of the church, are buried by themselves in unconsecrated ground. When the service is over all return to the house of mourning, and the guests condole with the members of the family, holding their hands or embracing them if they are near relations. Some special friends, those who have come from a distance or have been most helpful, are asked to stay and share the next meal which is generally plain, one or two dishes of meat or fish and one or two glasses of wine. In some cases friends come on the seventh day after a death, and go with the mourning family to the church to pray for the dead and then return to their house to dine. Formerly friends supplied all that was wanted for the funeral dinner, including the expense of the dinner or supper after the ceremony is over, but this custom has died out. The cost of a funeral varies from £10 to £50 (Rs. 100 - Rs. 500) in the case of a rich family; among the middle classes from £2 10*s.* to £10 (Rs. 25 - Rs. 100); and among the humbler classes from £1 to £3 (Rs. 10 - Rs. 30). In some cases religious services are held on the third and more often on the seventh day after a death, at the end of a month, at the end of a year, and in some cases every year. The expense on each occasion varies from 2*s.* to £2 10*s.* (Re. 1 - Rs. 25).

Education.

Christians, as a rule, are anxious to give their sons some schooling. The well-to-do send them to St. Mary's School or to St. Xavier's College in Bombay. The sons of the poorer classes, besides getting religious instruction from the priest, go to the ordinary Government schools, or to the parish schools where reading, writing, catechism, and music are taught.[1] Besides the parish

[1] There are eleven parish schools in Sálsette: Uran with 150 pupils, Bandra with 125, Thána with 83, Kole Kalyán with 52, Utan with 44, Marol with 40, Kurla with 33, Amboli with 45, Parla with 15, and two scholars at Gorai.