

## Students' Tour, II:—A tour to Kollengode, Malabar.

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The students of class II were extremely fortunate in accepting the invitation extended by the Rajah of Kollengode, to make that place the object of a tour. The country is extremely attractive and the tour proved most instructive, while, the Rajah was kindness and hospitality itself. We assembled at Palghat—in itself a most interesting town with a very well preserved fort, where we were lodged in a part of the Hostel attached to the Victoria Institute. We noticed our Principal, with interest in such matters, inspecting this in the evening, and certainly the standard of these quarters is high. The rooms are arranged round a quadrangle which with the good rainfall that this town enjoys, was kept pleasantly green and fresh. Kitchens and dining rooms are located in the rear of this block while on the front side over the porch are rooms for the Warden, who sleeps there regularly a few nights a week. A newly constructed Reading Room excited no envy in view of our own approaching one, though the piece of glass stuck in the doorway of each hostel does not ensure the privacy we enjoy at Coimbatore. Next morning we all journeyed to Kollengode. Our Principal was taken by the Rajah in his car, but this necessitated a rather longer detour, than was necessary for the jutkas which were able to cross an unbridged river. On arrival at Kollengode we found ample and comfortable accommodation which we did not enjoy long, as we were at once taken out round the fields near. The details of such a walk are known to most, and I need not dwell on them here. The straggling party of students, divided into batches to permit of the interpretation which is always needed, and the continual urging of the Principal which is necessary to keep the party at all on the move. Next day we went towards the hills and after a long and hot walk we were delighted to come across a charming bathing pool where we were

kindly permitted to bathe, though curiously all did not avail themselves of this splendid opportunity. We returned next day to Palghat and left for Coimbatore by the afternoon train.

The interest of the tour to those who did not know the Malabar Coast lay in the discovery of unirrigated paddy, that is to say, which was grown solely with the rainfall. We were led to ask whether if this was the case, still more valuable crops could not be grown, and we learnt that though this was undoubtedly so the practice was not generally followed. Another interesting fact was the extraordinarily rapid change we were able to see in moving along east of Kollengode towards Pollachi. This was primarily of course due to the rainfall, but affected the cropping, the climate, the scenery, and the people. The few Tamil villages seen certainly did not compare with the Malayalam ones, but we learnt that for the dry cropping that becomes unimportant on the border line of the district, the Tamil-Goundan was the better man.

We saw much else of interest, and much that was novel, and it was a thoughtful and kindly idea that prompted the Rajah to prepare for us a little booklet describing the agriculture of the *Venganad* with which our thirst for knowledge could be partially slaked. The pertinent and searching questions at the end displayed the keen interest which the Rajah has in his tenants and their welfare. We offer our hearty thanks to the Rajah for this and for his other kindnesses, and to our Principal who took us there.

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### **Sugarcane crop, its past, present and future in relation to Noyyal valley.**

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Sugar is becoming of late a necessary article of food in India. It is being used either in a refined form or in the form of jaggery in

many a preparation; foods, drinks and sweetmeats in every household. The days when its use was more or less a luxury and a dainty belong to the past. The increased consumption of the article is evidenced by the steadily increasing imports of sugar from foreign countries, the local production being unable to meet the demand in full. It would seem a paradox that India which is one of the largest sugarcane producing countries in the world, is obliged to import such a large quantity of sugar as 600,000 tons-the causes are not far to seek. A large portion of the Indian population is becoming more and more accustomed to the use of sugar in a refined form. The jaggery produced in India, owing to its impure and crude state is going out of favour. The influx of cheap sugars from foreign countries partially controls the price of jaggery as well as its production. The area under sugarcane is consequently in the downward movement. Statisticians say that the prices of jaggery have not risen in the past 20 or 25 years in the same proportion as the prices of food crops and cotton. The question of the future of the sugarcane crop therefore becomes one of great economic importance. The past, present and future of sugarcane crop in relation to Singanallur and its neighbouring sugarcane villages as representative of the sugarcane crop in the Noyyal valley, will be dealt with in the succeeding pages; while doing so, reference to the Sugarcane crop of India as a whole, is found necessary, as the future of the crop of any particular tract is closely bound up with the future of the sugarcane crop of India.

*Origin of sugarcane.* Sugarcane is known in India from time immemorial. Many travellers also who had visited India in earlier times make mention of it as seen by them for the first time in India. The existence of sanskrit equivalents (Ikshu-sugarcane, Sharkara-sugar) for sugar and sugarcane, and mention said to be made of it in, 'Mahabharata' show that the plant is of great antiquity. In 86 A. D. an Indian king is said to have sent sugar as tribute to China. In the 7th century a Chinese Emperor is said to have sent his man to Bihar to learn sugar making. By long and repeated cultivation, sugarcane which must have been once a reed, has produced numerous