

THE EARLY SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA.

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IN the last number of the BULLETIN (1926, pp. 80-111), Dr. Farquhar resuscitated from the grave of oblivion the question of St. Thomas' evangelisation of India. Almost all the critics of the latter half of the nineteenth century had pronounced a negative verdict on the question of the historicity of the mission of Thomas, and relegated it to the swollen catalogue of apocryphal fiction, classed in the domain of what we generally call a myth. In 1905, A. E. Medlycott, Roman Catholic bishop of Tricomia, wrote a whole book¹ on the general historicity of this mission of Thomas to India, and he wholeheartedly vindicated it without qualifications of any kind. This historicity was likewise strongly advocated seven years later by the Jesuit J. Dahlmann.² These two works, however, did not seem to have convinced many scholars, certainly not those of the Tübingen

¹ *India and the Apostle Thomas, an Inquiry*. This work represents the most detailed investigation of the mission of Thomas which I have so far seen. It is to be regretted, however, that the author did not show his work before sending it to the Press to a good Syriac scholar, who would have removed some bad errors that it contains. To give one example out of many: he insists, on p. 131, on the absurdity that the Syriac word *dukhrāna* (which he writes *doharana*), means "translation" of the relics of a saint, instead of merely "commemoration." The mission of Thomas is also discussed by the late J. F. Fleet, in *J.R.A.S.*, 1905, pp. 223-236, and by W. R. Philips in the *Indian Antiquary*, 1903, 1-15, 145-160. It is also favourably considered by the Roman Catholic Bishop Zaleski, *Les origines du Christianisme aux Indes*, Mangalore, 1915, and *The Apostle St. Thomas in India*; and by the Jesuit A. Wäth, *Der hl. Thomas der Apostel Indiens*, Aachen, 1925. See also some other authors mentioned below, pp. 505 and 508, and cf. Allgeier in *Katholik*, 1918, pp. 13 sqq.

² *Die Thomas-Legende*, 1912.

School, and in 1914 Richard Garbe,¹ the Indologist, disposed of all the 174 pages of Dahlmann's dissertation, and the 300 pages of Medlycott's work, in a few short passages. Garbe maintained that there was no ground whatever for reversing the verdict of the scholars of the nineteenth century, and endeavoured to prove that there are no traces of Christianity in India before the fourth century, or before the persecution of Sapor II., the Sasanian King of Persia. The beginnings of Christianity in India would thus be closely associated with the persecution of Sapor, which lasted with varying intensity from A.D. 339 to 379.² According to this theory the same thing would have happened in the fourth century as that which happened in the seventh. In the fourth century there was an exodus of Christian Persians to India in order to escape the Zoroastrian persecution of the Sasanian Sapor, and the seventh century marked the exodus of Sasanian Zoroastrians to India in order to escape the so-called sword of Islam. As the outcome of the second persecution marks the origin of the Parsee community of India, so the outcome of the first persecution would characterise the beginning of Christianity in India. In both cases, Persia would be the country of origin of the religious movement of India.

It is not our intention to refer in this short study to the Apostolate of Thomas, nor to the historicity of his mission to India. It may, or it may not be, true that Thomas evangelised the Indians, although we should find it difficult to reverse with a single stroke the constant tradition of the Church to this effect, from the second century down to our days. The *pros* and *cons* of the argument have been well analysed, with a conclusion favourable to Thomas' mission, by Dr. Farquhar, in his study mentioned above. What concerns us more here, is the history of early Christianity in India. Unfortunately such a history can only be written in our days in a very imperfect way ; the remoteness of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth living on or beyond the Ganges and the Indus from the centres of Christianity in Syria and Mesopotamia is one of the principal causes of the lack of historical data concerning them. The history of Christianity in Asia^{*} Minor, Syria, Mesopotamia, and even Persia, is known through

¹ *Indien und das Christentum*, p. 147 sq.

² This date is established by the historian Mshihā-Zkha in my *Sources Syriacques*, i., 129.

native Greek or Syrian authors of those countries, who have handed down to us commendable works in which the principal ecclesiastical events that affected their land are clearly registered, and the Apostolic succession of their bishops plainly defined. What should we have done, for instance, without Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Mshiha-Zkha, and Jacob of Edessa, to mention only five names out of scores? The same principle cannot unfortunately be applied to India. No early Indian has ever written the history of the Church of India, and all our information concerning even the mere existence of a Christian community side by side with Brahmanism and Buddhism in the immense country stretching south of modern Afghanistan and Baluchistan to the Indian Ocean is almost exclusively derived from Syriac and Greek authors. Now these authors, having no particular interest in India, refer to the Church questions that affect it in a very casual way. Their references are at best *obiter dicta*, which by the nature of the case constitute only imperfect, disconnected, and scattered pieces of evidence. There are solid grounds, however, for believing that a fairly large Christian community existed in India from very early times. Some of its members may have been aliens of a Graeco-Roman, Aramean, or Persian origin, who had settled there for commercial undertakings, but the majority were undoubtedly Indians, by blood and ancestry, who had embraced the new faith for its own sake from Christian missionaries who had gone to them from Persia and Mesopotamia.

Clearer light may perhaps be thrown on the dim question of the history of Indian Christianity if the problem were approached from a different angle. The quickest way to India from Persia and Mesopotamia lay through the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea. Now all along the line on the Persian and Arab side of the Gulf, there were considerable Christian communities from very early times. Pherat-Maishan, the modern Basrah, at the northern end of the Gulf, was a Bishopric since A.D. 225,¹ and further south, on the Arab side of the line, the country of the Ḳaṭars on the highway of the sailing ships from the Persian Gulf is spoken of in history as having also bishops as early as A.D. 225.² In the Persian tableland, situated on the eastern side of the Gulf, and best known in Persian history under the name of

¹ Mshiha-Zkha in *Sources Syriacques*, i., 106.

² *Ibid.*

Fars, a province which gave birth to the greatest Empires of Persia, the Achaemenian and the Sasanian, Christianity had also made great headway at the very beginning of the third Christian century, and the ecclesiastical metropolis of the province, the great city of Riwardashir, situated not far from the modern Bushire, played, as we shall presently see, an important rôle in the diffusion of Christianity in India. North of Fars was the province of Khuzistan, and its ecclesiastical metropolis Baith Lāpāt, afterwards called Gundi-Shapur, is also mentioned in history as having bishops since 225.¹ With this great array of a developed Christianity surrounding old India in its north-western, western, and south-western parts, we hold it to be somewhat improbable to suppose that there was no Christian community in the India of our days before the persecution of the Sasanian Sapor, that is to say, before the second half of the fourth century.

The way to India was not only strewn with bishoprics, but also with monasteries. We shall have occasion to speak below of the monastery of St. Thomas, situated on the shores of the "black island," and spoken of as harbouring two hundred monks (sic *Acta*) in the second half of the fourth century, say about 390. At about this time, the ascetic 'Abdisho' went from Mesene, at the head of the Persian Gulf, to Bahrain, and built a monastery in that island ;² the desert of Anbar, or Piruz Shapur, was indeed a granary of ascetics and solitaries from the very beginning of the fourth century. A monastery of St. Thomas, spoken of towards the end of the fourth century as containing two hundred monks, and situated somewhere south of Baith Ḳaṭrāye,³ precludes the hypothesis that there were no Christians in India till the second half of the same century.

We have shown in our *Spread of Christianity in Central Asia*, 1925, that in the direction of the India which is bordered in our days by Afghanistan and Baluchistan, there were also Christian bishoprics and Christian communities of a rather large size ; there is, therefore, every possibility that a stream of Christian missionaries and merchants had also in the long past penetrated through the passes that connect India by land with its northern and north-western neighbours. However that may be, the main Christian penetration of India seems

¹ Mshiha-Zkha in *Sources Syriaques*, i., 106.

² *Chronique de Seert* in *Pat. Orient*, v., 311.

³ See below, p. 450 sqq.

to have been by sea towards the west and north-west, and it is that side of Indian Christianity that withstood in later generations the many vicissitudes which, from the tenth century downwards, have completely destroyed its less fortunate sister Church of the north.

The first historical mention of the above bishoprics after Mshīḥa-Zkha, is in the Acts of Persian Martyrs, written towards the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth Christian centuries, say about A.D. 390-420. Amongst the bishops who in 341 suffered martyrdom with St. Simon, the Catholicos of the East, figure Gad-Yahb and Sabina, bishops¹ of Baith Lāpāt, John, bishop of Hormizd-Ardashir, and Bolida', bishop of Pherat-Maishan.² The bishops of the important district of the Ḳaṭars are next mentioned in the Synod of Isaac,³ in 410, under the name of the bishops of the *Isles*, and the bishoprics of the islands of Baḥrain are also mentioned by name in this Synod, under the name of Ardu and Todūru (see below, p. 489 sqq.). Such an importance was attached by the Nestorian Church to the country of the Ḳaṭars, that one of the great Synods of their Church, that of the Patriarch George, was, in A.D. 676, held in that south-eastern part of Arabia. The Synod is signed by the Patriarch and six bishops of Baith Ḳaṭrāye, one of whom was an Archbishop.⁴ As to the island of Socotra, the bishopric of which is attested by the Nestorian Byzantine writer Cosmas (see below, p. 461), it is possible that it was included by the General Synod of 410 in the above cryptic word "Isles," and that it had bishops of its own at a much earlier date. We should not be far from the truth were we to maintain that Socotra was a bishopric in about A.D. 300.

We do not deny that the persecution of Sapor gave a stimulus to the emigration of more Christians from Southern Persia to India ; indeed there is every possibility that such an emigration did actually take place ; but we do maintain that there is also every possibility that a Christian community of a comparatively important size existed before that time in India, and that it was more the existence of this

¹ The decrees of the Council of Nicæa were not in force in the Eastern Church till the Council of Isaac in 410.

² Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum*, ii., 131 ; *Pat. Syr.*, ii., 780-782.

³ *Synodicon Orient.*, p. 273 (edit. Chabot).

⁴ *Syn. ibid.*, p. 480. A commendable geographical and topographical sketch of Baith Kātrāye and the Bahrain islands in their relation to Christianity is found in Sachau's *Die Chronik von Arbela*, pp. 22-28.

community that attracted co-religionists from Persia in the time of the persecution than the bare sword of Sapor.

A second characteristic mark of Indian Christianity is that it has never had an independent existence of its own. From the earliest times to which our historical documents may be ascribed, to the time in which western missionaries first landed on its soil, we find the Church of India under the direct control of the more advanced Christianity of Mesopotamia and Persia. This Indian dependence is more clearly understood in the time which followed the Council of Nicæa, when the various Christian Churches of the world were grouped round important Apostolic sees, which claimed descent from an Apostle or a disciple of the Lord. Even the great East Syrian or Nestorian Church had in later years to attach itself to one of the new "Patriarchal" sees, and the "Patriarch" of Antioch wished on more than one occasion to extend his spiritual jurisdiction eastwards, far beyond his original boundaries, until the Nestorian schism of the fifth century and the self-assertion of the Catholicos of Seleucia nipped his efforts in the bud.

There are some local South Indian traditions passing under the names of *Thoma Parvam* and *Kēralolpatti*, in compilations very late in date, which deal with the mission of Thomas in native dialects and from sources which we are given to understand are foreign to the Syriac language and its *Acts*. In reality, however, they are of the same category as the three Malabar Syriac documents translated below, and like them, as we shall see, are devoid of good historical value for the establishment of early Christianity in India. Any attempt to speak of early Christianity in India as different from the East Syrian Church, is, in our judgment, bound to fail. Christianity in India constituted an integral part of the Church that began to develop vigorously towards the end of the first century in the Tigris valley, first in Adiabene, and then gradually in Mesene, and further south in Baith Ḳaṭrāye, and to speak of Indian Christians independently of the Syrian Church would be equivalent to speaking, for instance, of Adiabenian Christians independently of the Syrian Church. Thomas may have gone to India and made some converts there, but these converts have never had an independent existence of their own as a Church. History is absolutely deaf and dumb on their subject. They could not possibly have led,

for any considerable length of time, an isolated and precarious existence, cut off from all co-religionists, bereft of bishops, priests, and deacons, and deprived of Gospels or Christian sacred books of any kind. No Christian community has ever flourished under such conditions, and in our judgment, there is no doubt whatever that if there was any Christianity in India before the third century, it was linked up with its stronger and more Catholic sister of the Persian Empire and of South-East Arabia.

A third feature of the life of the Church of India is that it has never had a definite ecclesiastical language. In no time, till the arrival among them of western missionaries, had Christian Indians used any other language but Syriac. This fact proves, first of all, that not one of the scores of dialects spoken by India in the first century has been found fit to be raised to the dignity of a sacred language, in which the message of the Gospel could be expressed with dignity and aptitude ; it proves also that the Indian Christians were satisfied for the upkeep of their spiritual life with the use of a language which their esteemed missionaries had made familiar to them. Another language besides Syriac might have been used in some Indian Churches, such as Greek, the mother of almost all ecclesiastical languages, and that for the numerous Egyptian merchants who might have found themselves more or less stranded in Indian ports, but no trace of such a use has come down to posterity ; nor is there any impossibility in the suggestion that some lessons of the Old and New Testaments might have been submitted to writing for the use of the illiterate people, in one of the spoken native dialects, as it happened with the Palestinian Syriac for the inhabitants of Palestine ; but if any Indian dialect, such as Tamil,¹ was ever used for ecclesiastical purposes, later generations have preserved no trace of it. The Indian Church, even more so than the Persian Church, has always been Syriac in its language, and it is mainly to the East-Syrian or Nestorian branch of the Syrian Church that Christian India owes a debt of deep gratitude.

How different was the case with some other Churches. When a Christological point arose which snapped the bonds which united one Church with another in a common language, or when such a Church grew to the extent that it was able to develop a spiritual entity of its

¹ Cf. V. Smith's *The Oxford History of India*, 1919, p. 144 (et passim).

own, it modified its own language in a way in which it was possible for it to express the new points of the Christian doctrine. This happened with the Church of Armenia, which till a relatively late date was making use of Syriac ; it happened also with many Latin Churches, which in the first years of their existence were employing the language of Homer ; it happened finally with many Churches of the Balkan peoples, and with the great Russian Church itself.

A fourth point which strikes forcibly the historian of Christianity in India is the geographical immensity of its land, in comparison with a precise town or country in which Christians formed a tangible community. Everywhere, except perhaps in a few towns of the coast of Malabar, the Christians must have been in a hopeless minority. We have, it is true, the unchallengeable testimony of a Nestorian Patriarch of the seventh century (quoted below), who speaks of Christians and of Christian priesthood as found in one thousand and two hundred parasangs of Indian soil, but unfortunately no attempt is made to furnish any number, however approximate. From the seventh century India was also the seat of a Metropolitan, who might have had some ten bishops under his jurisdiction ; but what were ten bishoprics for the millions of India ? Only two Indian districts can be singled out as having harboured somewhat numerous and very distinct Christian communities : the coast of Malabar, and the north-western regions, which were in close proximity to Persia and the Arabian Sea. These two districts probably represent the route followed by the early Christian missionaries in their efforts to shake the numerous local cults, and render them more amenable to the doctrine of the Galilean Master. Malabar represented the peoples mostly evangelised from the sea, the Persian Gulf or the Indian Ocean, and the Christianity of the north-western regions would constitute the answer to the efforts of Persian Christians, under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Riwardashir, in the ancient province of Fars, which gave its name to all Persia. We shall have presently a word to say of the great struggle that a strong Nestorian Patriarch had to maintain in the seventh century in order to detach the bishops of India from the direct jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Riwardashir, and bring them under his own ecclesiastical rule. Riwardashir is the key to early Christianity of N.W. India, and Malabar the key to early Christianity of South and Maritime India.

A difficult point with which a student of Indian history should be acquainted in his researches in the writings of early authors is the elasticity of the term "India," and the confusion made through it between the real India of our day and the countries situated on both shores of the Red Sea, viz. those of the Ethiopians and the Himyarites. Many mistakes made by some ecclesiastical writers of the West can be traced to this confusion. It is hard to account for this confusion through a single cause or a single group of causes. The problem is probably complex, and we dare not here attempt to solve it in its various phases and developments.

One cause of the unfortunate confusion is possibly ethnological. Speaking exclusively of Syriac authors, we find that the majority of them classify the Indians among Hamites alongside the Ethiopians. This is done by Michael the Syrian, in his general history,¹ by the anonymous and early writer of the different races of mankind on the earth,² and by Barhebræus,³ to mention only three out of many. Some of them classify them, however, among the children of Shem.⁴ Probably the dark skin of the Indians lent colour to their classification with the Ethiopians. Another contributory cause would be the geographical situation of Ethiopia and Arabia-Felix, which extended on the main route by sea to the West Indian ports. Some writers of a more critical mind endeavoured to solve the problem by dividing their *India Magna* into many subsidiary Indias, such as *India Interior*,⁵—terms which are often applied to Ethiopia, *India Septentrionalis*,⁶ *India Meridionalis*,⁷ and *India Exterior*;⁸ but as the precise geographical boundaries of all these Indias are very difficult to determine, the principal points of the problem remain unsolved. Indeed, many other writers count as integral parts of India some localities situated in Persia, Afghanistan, and Baluchistan. So the

¹ i., 18 and 32.

² *Chron. Minora* (in *C.S.C.O.*), pp. 351; see also *ibid.*, p. 357.

³ *Chron. Syr.*, p. 7 (edit. Bedjan).

⁴ *Chron. Min.*, p. 356, and Theodore bar Kōni in *C.S.C.O.*, i., p. 116.

⁵ Assemani, *Bib. Orient.*, i., 359; Dionysius of Tellmahre's *Chronicle*, p. 55 (edit. Tullberg).

⁶ Barhebræus, *Chron. Syr.*, p. 8 (Bedjan), etc.

⁷ Michael the Syrian, i., 18, etc.

⁸ Barh., *Chron. Syr.*, 174, 180 (edit. Bruns); cf. p. 8, edit. Bedjan, etc.

great Michael the Syrian clearly mentions the city of Kabul, in present Afghanistan, as part of India.¹ Another writer, supposedly of the end of the fourth century, counts Ceylon as India.² We will not dwell more on a point which constitutes only in an indirect way a part of our enquiry.

The number of ecclesiastical writers who applied the term India to Ethiopians and Himyarites is very considerable. A few Greek and Latin authors will be incidentally referred to in the ensuing pages. So far as the Syriac writers are concerned, we find that the confusion is much more frequent among West Syrians than East Syrians, and this also among those authors who by their remoteness from the theatre of events, or by their restricted general knowledge of Eastern peoples, had no marked acquaintance with the real India.

We will refer to a few Syriac authors and give the subject a rest, as it has only a remote connection with Christianity in India. The first writer to make such a confusion is Aphrahāt: "It is the Archangel Michael who destroyed a thousand thousand of *Indians* before Asa;"³ further: "And Asa also prayed and his prayer showed a great force. When Zerah the *Indian* came out against him with an host of a thousand thousand, Asa prayed. . . ."⁴ It is obvious that "Indians" refer here to Ethiopians. The lexicographer quoted in the *Thesaurus*,⁵ says: "India, and it is also called Havilah, is an Eastern country. It takes its name from the river Inda (= Indus). This river Inda has its source on the other side of the Nile, which contains crocodiles." The confusion here is as complete as in Aphrahāt. The great Michael the Syrian is also emphatic on the subject. He writes in his history⁶ two chapters, the mere titles of which should be sufficient for our purpose: "On the things accomplished by the Emperor Justinian (Justin) among the Indian and Kushite kings, and on the Kingdoms of the Indians, Kushites, and Himyarites, which bore witness to the truth in the year 835 (of the Seleucids) in the time of Justinian. . . . In the time when Justinian persecuted the orthodox believers, the Jews got the upper hand, and had a king. This happened because the kings of Great India quarrelled among

¹ Michael the Syrian, ii., 522.

² Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum*, i., 466.

³ *Pat. Syr.*, i., 132, quoting 2 Chron. xiv. 9 sq.

⁵ Payne Smith's *Thesaurus Syriacus*, i., 1026.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 153.

⁶ ii., 183-185.

themselves ; the king of Exterior India, who was called Aksdon, rose against the king of Interior India, whose name was Anzug. When the Jewish king began to reign, he persecuted the Christians." The expression "Great India" seems to refer in Michael to both Ethiopia and Arabia Felix combined. This may have some bearing on a question dealing with a signatory to the Council of Nicæa (see below, p. 495). The same confusion is made in almost identical terms by Dionysius of Tellmahre,¹ and by another well known West Syrian writer, Barṣalibi, who writes as follows : "Lo, all the Armenians, Egyptians, Nubians, Ethiopians, and the majority of the Indians (i.e. Homeritæ), and the Libyans . . . accept the faith of St. Cyril, St. Dioscorus, and Severus the Great."² And he says further : "We Syrians, with the Armenians, Egyptians, Ethiopians, Nubians, and Indians, refer the *Trisagion* to the Son."³ A similar sentence is also found in his treatise "Against the Chalcedonians."⁴ Examples could be indefinitely multiplied among West Syrian writers. East Syrian or Nestorian writers who fall into this error are remarkably few. For them India is nearly always our modern India.

It is impossible to resist the temptation to believe that the knowledge of many early ecclesiastical writers of the West concerning India was very limited, and that the internal affairs and religious movements of the country were only judged by them very superficially, and almost exclusively through the vague words *Brahmans* and *Brahmanism*, which to their mind conveyed very little indeed. To some of them India seemed to represent a generic name for all the dark peoples of the East, or like Gog and Magog, to represent any Far Eastern country of which little was known. References in the Bible to India are few and obscure. We mention the Bible in this connection in order to examine whether our Western ecclesiastical writers have been misled by a difficult sentence found in it. The

¹ In Assemani, *Bibl. Orient.*, i., 359-385. Some western and more modern writers on the subject are quoted in Yule-Cordier's *Marco Polo*, ii., 431 sqq., and 424-427.

² From the unpublished treatise addressed to the deacon Rabban Isho'., Syr. MS., Mingana, No. 12, in Rendel Harris Library, Birmingham, fol. 128b.

³ *Ibid.*, fol. 138a.

⁴ Unpublished. See fol. 283b of Syr. MS., Mingana, No. 215, in Rendel Harris Library, Birmingham.

Hebrew word for India is *Hodu*; at least, this vocable has been generally understood to mean India in Esther i. 1, and viii. 9—which is quite possible, but not absolutely certain. In both places the expression used is “from Hodu as far as Kush.” Even if the problematic *Hodu* referred in Hebrew to modern India, our Syriac authors could not have been misled by it, since the Syriac versions of Esther have in both verses, *Hud*, a term which could not possibly have conveyed to them the idea of our India. In 1 Mac. vi. 37 there is an allusion to the Indian drivers of war elephants, but it is improbable that the verse could have led to the confusion of India with Ethiopia. In 1 Mac. viii. 8 the word is clearly corrupt, and many commentators read the words “Ionia and Mysia” for “India and Media.”

Perhaps the confusion may have originated first in the writings of classical historians, but here also we are in the dark. Herodotus¹ mentions India and Ethiopia as the most distant parts of the Empire; and towards the East he names India and Ethiopia as the extreme countries to which the dominions of Xerxes extended. It is this persistent mention of India with Ethiopia that is baffling. I cannot believe that the classical writers had any accurate knowledge of India before the time of Alexander, and even then India must have remained to many of them as a kind of a vague country, a half sealed book.² This indefinite quality of a sealed book is not removed by the identification (sanctioned by some ancient and modern commentators) of the river Pison, and the gold-producing Havilah of Gen. ii. 11, with the Indus and India.³ All this is half fictitious and unscientific, or at best it is nothing more than a surmise.

In the ensuing pages we shall endeavour to refer to all the Syriac and Christian Arabic passages and surviving traces and monuments which we have been able to collect on the subject of Christianity in India. We will confine ourselves to early Christianity, and delineate its main features from the earliest times down to the introduction of monophysitism into South India, and the time when Western nations made their influence felt in it by means of their missionaries or soldiers.

¹ vii., 9.

² See a recent study on this subject by E. R. Bevan in the *Cambridge History of India*, 1922, 39-425.

³ Gesenius, *Thesaurus* (s.v.).

We shall strictly avoid all controversial subjects, and not even mention the merits or demerits of the famous Synod of Diamper of 1599, which has rightly been characterised as one of the most interesting, and at the same time, one of the most melancholy episodes in the history of the Indian Church. It would be no betrayal, however, of our firm intention not to mix with the sectarian proclivities that prevailed in that Synod were we to state openly that several points discussed in it have been rightly condemned by all responsible Roman Catholic writers. In reading the *Jornada* of Antonio de Gouvea,¹ who recorded the proceedings of the Synod and the events that preceded and followed it, we cannot but deprecate the ignorance displayed by the western missionaries and prelates who took part in it, on many questions related to the East Syrian Church. A man like the learned author of the *Bibliotheca Orientalis* was not yet born to erase the many truly stupid things said in it concerning the greatest missionary Church the world has ever known.

It is hoped that this study will constitute a kind of a sequel to the monograph which we wrote in 1925 with the title : *The Early Spread of Christianity in Central Asia and the Far East*. Another study on Christianity in Arabia and the Western Islands of the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea will exhaust the subject that we have in view.

As in our study of Christianity in Central Asia and the Far East, we will divide our subject into three parts, (i) General Historians, (ii) Synods and Bishoprics, (iii) Surviving traces and monuments.

(i) *Historians.*

Under this head we will only mention the passages and references which are not under the direct influence of the *Acts of Thomas* and his mission to India. Had we not done so, we would have swollen the dimensions of this study with useless quotations. It is the constant tradition of the Eastern Church that the Apostle Thomas evangelised India, and there is no historian, no poet, no breviary, no liturgy, and no writer of any kind who, having the opportunity of speaking of

¹Published at Coimbra in A.D. 1606. Many English writers have spoken also of the Synod. See Hough's *History of Christianity in India* ; G. Milne Rae, *The Syrian Church in India* ; and M. Geddes, *History of the Church of Malabar*, etc.

Thomas, does not associate his name with India. Some writers mention also Parthia and Persia among the lands evangelised by him, but all of them are unanimous in the matter of India. The name of Thomas can never be dissociated from that of India. To refer to all the Syrian and Christian Arab authors who speak of India in connection with Thomas would therefore be equivalent to referring to all who have made mention of the name of Thomas. Thomas and India are in this respect synonymous.

(a)

We may state with some confidence that there was no Christian community in India known to the Syrian writers, in the first and second centuries of our era. The *Book of the Laws* of Bardaisan knows of the existence of no Christians in India in about A.D. 196. The argument taken from the silence of Bardaisan is very strong. After having discussed the habits of many pagan countries, he compares them with those of the Christians, and in this connection he contrasts the habits of Christian and pagan Parthians, Gilanians, Kushans, Persians, and Medes, but he does not mention the Indians as having Christians among them,¹ in spite of the fact that he had previously mentioned them in connection with their pagan habits.²

On the other hand, another Edessene writer, the author of the *Doctrine of the Apostles*, who flourished not much later than A.D. 250, was at least vaguely aware of the existence of a Christian community in India, endowed with priesthood. "India and all its own countries, and those bordering on it, even to the farthest sea, received the Apostles' hand of priesthood from Judas Thomas, who was guide and ruler in the Church which he built there, and ministered there."³ The author of the *Doctrine* is not under the influence of the *Acts of Thomas*, but he clearly believes in the mission of the Apostle to India, and gives it as an established tradition in Edessa in about (or possibly before) the middle of the third century. We may question the grounds of his assertion concerning an event that took place about 180 years previously, but we are not at liberty to deny that his sentence implies the existence in India, at the time when he wrote, of

¹ *Liber Legum*, in *Pat. Syr.*, ii., 606-608.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 582-585 and 600.

³ Cureton's *Ancient Syriac Documents*, p. 33 (from a MS. of about the fifth century).

a Christian Church, known to him at least from hearsay. If, at his time, the Church of India had ceased to exist, he owed it to his readers, who might have easily challenged his statement, to say a word to that effect. Since he did not write such a word, are we not allowed to affirm that they were perfectly satisfied that that Church was still extant in their time?

For curiosity's sake, we must here refer very briefly to the supposed mission of Pantaenus to India in 189-190. A reference to it was found necessary, since not very long ago it was accepted by two historians of the Church of India in this country,—Milne-Rae,¹ and G. Smith.² The arrival in India of the master of Clement of Alexandria is mentioned by Eusebius, the father of Church history, who writes³ that Pantaenus "became a herald of the Gospel of Christ to the nations of the East, and went even as far as India," The indefatigable Jerome⁴ refers also to Pantaenus' mission to India: "*ut in Indiam quoque rogatus ab illius gentis legatis, a Demetrio Alexandriae episcopo, mitteretur.*" From Eusebius, the tradition is picked up by Rufinus in his translation into Latin of Eusebius' history: "*quem (sc. Pantaenum) ferunt cum ad Indos pervenisset. . . .*"

We need not dwell here on the well-known fact that from the mention of the mission of the Apostle Bartholomew and of the Gospel of Matthew, in connection with Pantaenus' supposed arrival in India, as told by the above writers, the India they refer to is without doubt Arabia Felix. The fact has been recognised by all historians since Assemani⁵ and Tillemont,⁶ and has been considered as established even by such a conservative writer as Medlycott.⁷ It will be a matter of surprise if any responsible author will ever mention in the future Pantaenus in connection with India proper. We have already drawn attention to the fact that so little was known about India by many ecclesiastical writers of the West, that they often confused Indians with Yamanites and Abyssinians.

¹ *The Syrian Church in India*, pp. 64-70.

² *The Conversion of India*, p. 11.

³ *Ecc. Hist.*, lib. v., cap. x.

⁵ *Bibl. Orient.*, iv., 602.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 177-182.

⁴ *Pat. Lat.*, xxiii., 651.

⁶ *Mémoires Hist. Eccles.*, i., 387.

(b)

There is more precise information about Christianity in India in the third and the fourth centuries. The *Chronique de Seert*¹ informs us "that during the Patriarchate of Shaḥlūpha and Pāpa, say about A.D. 295-300, Dūdi (David), bishop of Baṣrah, on the Persian Gulf, an eminent doctor, left his see and went to India, where he evangelised many people." "Diese Notiz," Sachau has rightly pointed out, "ist zweifellos einem der ältesten Syrischen Geschichtswerke aus dem 7, oder 8, Jahrhundert entnommen."²

St. Ephrem, who died in 373, wrote many hymns on St. Thomas, which are under the direct influence of the *Acta*, but references in them might possibly imply the existence of Christians in India: "Lo, in India are thy miracles, O Thomas, and in our land is thy triumph, and everywhere thy festival. . . ."³ "The sunburnt India thou hast made fair. . . . A tainted land of dark people thou hast purified. . . . More than snow and white linen, the dark bride of India thou hast made fair . . . the cross of light has obliterated India's darkened shades."⁴

To the end of the fourth century is ascribed the interesting life of the hermit Yonan, which was written by Zadōi, "priest, monk, and archimandrite of the monastery of St. Thomas in India."⁵ The monastery was situated on the borders of an island termed "the black island," south of the country of Baith Ḳaṭrāye. The story which clearly presupposes a constant intercourse between South Persia and South Mesopotamia on the one hand, and South-East Arabia on the other, is based on the fact that towards the middle of the fourth century, Yonan, the anchorite, repaired from Anbar, or Piruz-Shapur, to the southern parts of Baith Ḳaṭrāye, close to the sea, and thence to the monastery of St. Thomas, erected on the shores of "the black island." Let us note in passing that the existence in about 390 on the shores of the Arabian Sea of a monastery under the name of Thomas is highly interesting, and constitutes the weightiest proof of all those which have so far been adduced to bolster up the historicity of

¹ In *Pat. Orient.*, iv., pp. 236 and 292.

² *Ausbreitung*, p. 71.

³ *St. Ephræmi Hymni* . . . (edit. Lamy), iv., p. 703.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 701, and in *Brev. Juxta. rit. Eccles. Syr.*, vi., p. 631.

⁵ Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum*, i., 466-525.

the mission of Thomas. Interesting also in the story is the narrative dealing with the inner life of the two hundred monks ¹ (sic !) of the monastery in that far off period. Some of the proper names found in the story evidently imply a country like Baith ẖaṭrāye, because they have an undoubted Arabian origin, such as Nu'aim,²—while some others have both an Arabic and a Persian savour, such as Zarkūn ;³ many also are decidedly Persian, such as Khusrau and Shahdost.⁴ The story also makes mention of the existence of a Jewish community in the vicinity of the monastery,⁵ and judging from the importance of Oman and Baith ẖaṭrāye as centres of commerce between the East and the West, we cannot but believe that this last information is really historical.

Another important point in the narrative is the information that the country had a bishop and a rather elaborate chorus of clerics,⁶ and that the monastery was constantly visited by solitaries from South Mesopotamia, then an integral part of Persia. A brother called Pāpa sailed, it is said, from Babylonia to pay a visit to it.⁷

We believe that in its broadest lines the story is historical. The great number of miracles found in it should not militate against its historicity ; a life of a saint was deemed by the ancients to be insipid without the salt of miracles, and the pious writers of all the stories of saints, especially of that class of saints which included monks and hermits, were really masters of their art in this respect, but the historicity of the personality of the hero of their narrative is in no way impaired by their fantastic narrative. It is all a question of taste ; in our days we want a sober narrative, not marred by any super-human deeds ; but our taste would have proved a stumbling-block to the writer, the hearer, and the reader of the lives of the old Fathers of the desert, including the lives of the great Anthony, the great Pacomius, and their immediate disciples. Another point to be considered in the story of Yonan is that its red titles are sometimes misleading, an obvious sign that they are not written by Zadoi himself, but that they emanate from the pens of the numerous copyists who have handed to us the original narrative.

¹ Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum*, i., p. 486.

² *Ibid.*, p. 491. The reader should note that in the story the town of Maron may possibly be read *Mazon*, i.e. Oman.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 494.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 497 and 510.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 501.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 507.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 509.

A critical study of the *Acta* is a desideratum, but we have neither time nor space to undertake it here. The words "black island" are generally understood to designate Ceylon¹ (Silan), or possibly the Coromandel Coast—situated, as the *Acta* say (*sic*!), "South of Baith ẖatrāye." The points which will have to be thoroughly investigated apart from those referred to above, are: (1) the island was in the vicinity of a town called Milon, the inhabitants of which fished pearls (p. 494); (2) it was situated at a distance of six days' journey from the town of Maron (p. 492); (3) it had no grapes, its fruits consisting mainly of dates, but had many palm trees (pp. 489, 496, 497, 501); (4) its wine used to come from Persia (*ibid.*); (5) it had in its shores crabs of an enormous size (pp. 505, 507); (6) it was a bishopric (p. 507). Putting all these facts together, I believe provisionally that it is possible to assume that the island was not Ceylon at all, but one of those small islands situated south of Baith ẖatrāye, on the way to Mazon and Oman, and that consequently the town of Maron found near it is to be identified with Mazon, on the southern shores of the Arabian side of the Persian Gulf. It is a well-known fact that in Syriac literature, Mazon (= Oman) is very often written *Maron*, and as often as not the word Mazōnāye (= Omanites) figures as *Marōnāye*; but was there really a town called Māzon? Is not this word commonly used in the sense of a country? ² Further, on p. 468, we will translate a Syriac document of great value, which shows that a monastery of St. Thomas did exist on the Coromandel coast of India. The opinion, however, that the monastery of St. Thomas was on the Arabian side of the Persian Gulf, and not in India, is confirmed by the fact that Yākūt³ makes mention of an old monastery of St. Thomas (*Dair Thūma*), and quotes about it a poetical piece by Marrār al-Fak'asi. It is not possible that an early Arabian poet should have praised the beauty of a monastery situated in Ceylon, or on the Coromandel Coast, or even on the Malabar Coast. In the absence of better data, I believe,

¹ So Labourt, *Le Christianisme dans l'empire Perse*, p. 306.

² The best sources for the criticism of Abbot Zadoi's narrative are: *Chronique de Seert*, in *Pat. Or.*, v., p. 246 sq. Isho'dnah's *Book of Chastity*, p. 441 (edit. Bedjan); 'Amr and 'Abdisho' quoted by Assemani, *Bibl. Orient.*, iii., 198; iv., 718. Cf. also, *ibid.*, 870-871.

³ *Buldān*, ii., 649-650 (edit. Wüstenfeld).

therefore, that the Syriac "black island" may have been the island called "Kāwān island," or "Lāfit island," which according to Yākūt¹ was situated between Oman and Bahṙrain. It was conquered by 'Uthmān b.a. 'Āṣ, to whom it served as a crossing in his attempt to subjugate South-West Persia. Yākūt informs us that for some unknown reasons the island was soon depopulated and completely forgotten, in spite of the fact that it had many villages and springs. The word *India*, therefore, used in the first heading of Abbot Zadoi's *Acta*, would correspond with South-East Arabia or Oman, and the otherwise obscure Abbot would then swell the number, already high, of the authors who counted that district of Arabia as part of India.

The first Western writer who makes mention of a monastery of St. Thomas seems to be Gregory of Tours, who died in 594. His text is as follows: "Thomas apostolus secundum historiam passionis ejus in India passus declaratur. Cujus beatum corpus post multum tempus adsumptum in civitatem quam Syri Aedissam vocant translatum est, ibique sepultum. Ergo in loco regionis Indiæ, quo prius quievit, *monasterium* habetur et templum miræ magnitudinis diligenterque exornatum atque compositum . . . Hoc Theodorus qui ad ipsum locum accessit, nobis exposuit."²

As Gregory does not specify the precise identity of the India of which he is speaking, it is not impossible to believe that the India intended by him was South Arabia; the very same old confusion is indeed clearly made by the author of King Alfred's embassy of A.D. 883: "The year 883. In this year the army went up the Scheldt to Condé, and they sat down one year. And Marinus, the Pope, then sent *lignum Domini* (a piece of the Holy Cross?) to King Alfred. And in the same year, Sighelm and Æthelstan conveyed to Rome the alms which the King had vowed to send thither, and also to India to St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew."³ The mention of Bartholomew renders almost certain the opinion that King Alfred's India was not India at all, but South Arabia or Abyssinia.

Could not the two above narratives of western writers, who

¹ *Buldān*, ii., 79-80; and iv., 342.

² *Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum*, by Arndt and Krusch, ii., 507-508.

³ B. Thorpe's *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ii., 66.

seemed to know very little about India, be reconciled with the account of Abbot Zadoi and his "black island" (South of Baith Ḳaṭrāye) on the one hand, and Yākūt's "Dair Thūma" on the other? And, relying on the favourite theme of confusion between S. Arabia and real India, could we not suppose that the "monastery of Thomas" of the western writers was situated in South-East Arabia, near the coast of Oman, and that it was the very same monastery concerning which such vivid details are given by Abbot Zadoi? Would it be possible to assume that there were in the fourth century two monasteries of St. Thomas, one on the coast of Oman, and the other on the Coromandel Coast? Or would it be possible to suppose that between A.D. 394 and 594, some monks from the older monastery of St. Thomas on the coast of Oman had gone to Mailapore and built a new monastery of Thomas, on the supposed spot where he had suffered martyrdom? There are many difficulties to be cleared up before this last point can stand on its feet in the ground of practical possibilities.

The first truly circumstantial and historical mention of a *Church* of St. Thomas in our modern India is made by western travellers of the lower Middle Ages: Marco Polo¹ (1293), John of Monte Corvino² (1293), Friar Odoric³ (1325), John de Marignolli⁴ (1349), and Nicolo Conti⁵ (about 1440), etc., but although all mention a Church or a Shrine of St. Thomas, none of them speaks of a monastery bearing his name. The first authentic Syriac document which speaks of a *monastery* in true India, bearing the name of Thomas, is, to our knowledge, the letter of the Nestorian bishops translated below, in which the word used is *'umra*, which commonly means monastery, but which is also used sometimes in the sense of a "church in which there is a shrine of a saint," "a church under the name of a saint in which the divine service is only given on the occasion of special festivities, generally the saint's own festivity." In the modern Syriac used in the villages of the present district of Zakho, *'umra* is often employed in our days to designate simply "Church." I have often

¹ ii. 353 sqq. (Yule-Cordier).

² In Yule-Cordier's *Cathay*, iii., 45.

³ *Cathay*, ii., 141-142.

⁴ *Ibid.*, iii., 230.

⁵ R. H. Major's *India in the Fifteenth Century* (Hakluyt Society, 1857), p. 7.

heard the word used in this sense. It was however known to the Nestorian authors of the fourteenth century that a monastery of St. Thomas existed in India. So the Christian Arab historian, 'Amr (A.D. 1340), speaks of the saint as follows: "his tomb is in the island of Mailapore in India, on the right-hand side of the altar, in his monastery."¹ The word *dair*, used by 'Amr, is almost exclusively used to express a monastery, and, to our knowledge, never a church or a shrine.

The district of Baith ẖaṭrāye, which in the vocabulary of the early canonists included also the district of Oman, gave birth to some of the best-known Nestorian theologians and mystics; it will suffice for our purpose here to refer to three of them, born before the Islamic invasion: Dādīsho' ẖaṭrāya,² Aḥōb ẖaṭrāya,³ and Isaac of Nineveh.⁴ Dādīsho' speaks of an ancient monastery as containing "many brethren serving God according to the monastic rule."⁵ A favourite topic of their illustrations is the seaman whose ship is wrecked, and he is thrown on a sea island, preferably on an island of the Persian Gulf.⁶ In the unpublished life of the monk Abraham of Kashkar⁷ (sixth century), the saint is made to say: "I was a merchant of the number of those who trade and travel on the sea. It happened to us that on our way back from the country of the Indians, our ship broke up, and while the seamen were repairing it, I went to the island where it was anchored. . . . The ship was full of people, to the number of 300." Another monk from Baith ẖaṭrāye who used to go frequently to India on business is Bar Sahde (seventh century) native of the island

¹ Assemani, *Bib. Orient.*, iv., 34. Mailapore, subsequently named San Thomé by the Portuguese, is in our days a suburb of the city of Madras, on the Coromandel Coast. Solomon of Baṣrah (about A.D. 1222), *Book of the Bee* (p. 105, edit. Budge), writes also: "Others say that Thomas was buried in *Mahluph* (= Mailapore), a city in the land of the Indians."

² I read his still unpublished commentary on the mystical work of Abbot Isaiah in Syr. MS. Mingana, No. 60, in Rendel Harris Library, Birmingham.

³ I read his still unpublished commentaries in Syr. MS. Mingana, No. 58, in Rendel Harris Library, Birmingham.

⁴ His mystical treatises have been published by Bedjan, and translated into English by Wensinck.

⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 87b.

⁶ Dādīsho', *ibid.*, fol. 114b.

⁷ Fol. 26b of Syr. MS. Mingana, No. 252, in Rendel Harris Library, Birmingham.

of Dirin : " he used to go on the sea in the company of merchants to the country of the Indians." ¹

We will make here a great digression and give a full translation of the anecdote of Meropius and Frumentius, as preserved to us in a Syriac garb. We know it in Graeco-Roman sources from Rufinus,² Socrates,³ Theodoret,⁴ and Sozomen.⁵ The Syriac authors derived it from the three last-named Byzantine historians, rather than Rufinus.

" On the Faith of the Indians.

" Because in the time of the King (Constantine), Christianity spread in all directions, the peoples also of the interior : the Indians, and the Iberians, were brought to it. I shall tell now how this happened to the peoples of the interior. When the holy Apostles went to evangelise the gentiles by casting lots as to their respective fields, Thomas received the mission of the Parthians, and Matthew was sent to Ethiopia, and Bartholomew had for his share that part of India which is close to Ethiopia ; but no inhabitant of *India Interior*, in which dwell people of different tongues, had till the time of Constantine received the word of faith.

" At this time a philosopher called Meropius, from Tyre, desired to see this *India Interior* ; he took with him two children, related to him, who were being instructed in liberal culture, and he departed with them to India. After having travelled there for some time according to his desire, he boarded a ship in order to return to his country. It happened then that the peace that was reigning between the empires came to an end, and the Indians took the Romans that were on the boat, and killed them all. None of them escaped except the two children ; the Indians took pity of their beauty, and offered them as a gift to the king of India. The king was pleased with their beauty, and he made one of them, whose name was Edesius, the cupbearer of his table, and he raised the other, whose name was Frumentius, to the office of the Chartularius of the state, i.e., the director of the treasury of the state. After a short time, when the king became ill and was nearing his death, he confided his youngest

¹ Isho'denah, *Book of Chastity*, p. 487 (edit. Bedjan).

² Migne's *Pat. Lat.*, xxi., 478-480.

³ *Ecl. Hist.*, bk. 1, cap. xix.

⁴ *Ecl. Hist.*, cap. xxiii.

⁵ *Ecl. Hist.*, bk. 2, cap. xxiv.

son to them so that they might take care of him, and administer his kingdom.

"When the king died, the administration of the kingdom of the Indians devolved on the two children. They displayed especial care to look out for merchants who came from the country of the Romans, and they greatly loved and honoured them. They ordered them to build for themselves places of worship, and openly to perform the obligations of their Christian faith. Many pagans used to come and see Christian devotions and practices, and embrace Christianity without fear. When the young king reached the age of manhood, the children delivered to him the reins of the government, and the royal youth, because he was well instructed by the two children in knowledge, wisdom, and Christian religion, showed toleration and kindness towards new converts to Christianity.

"Then the two children asked permission from the new king to return to their country, and see their people, but the king and his mother tried to persuade them to remain with them; their entreaties were, however, of no avail, and they let them depart. Edesius repaired to Tyre, his town, but Frumentius went to Alexandria, where he met the great Athanasius, the head of the bishops (= archbishop), who had recently been promoted to the office he held, and narrated to him the affair of the Indians. He told him that the latter were expecting a bishop to explain to them the mysteries of the Faith, and asked him to send to them a bishop and a priest. Athanasius urged upon Frumentius to accept this episcopate; and he was thus ordained and sent to India. When he reached it, the king was pleased with him, and helped him in the building of churches. The faith spread in India, and the bishop became worthy of the gift of miracles."¹

The story is told more succinctly by Michael the Syrian in his great history, in the following manner:

"At this time, a philosopher from Tyre, whose name was Meropius, went to the country of the Indians and of the Kushites with two young men, Edesius and Frumentius, in order to examine the nature and the character of the country. The peace that existed between the Romans and the Indians was then broken, and the

¹ *Chron. Anon.* in *C.S.C.O.*, xiv., i., pp. 145-147.

philosopher and those who were with him were captured in the open sea ; the Indians killed them all with the exception of the two young men, who were delivered up to the king. They grew up with him, and he gave them their freedom at his death-bed. They remained with his son who reigned after him, and they obtained power over all the country of India, as Joseph had done previously in Egypt. They built a church for the Christians who were there, and instructed (in the faith) the king, with other persons. Then Frumentius went to Alexandria, and apprised Athanasius of the fact that the Indians wished to be converted to Christianity, and desired to be baptized ; he implored him to send to them a bishop with him. Athanasius said to him : " There is no one more fitting than you to convert them from error." He persuaded him, ordained him bishop, and sent him. God performed through him miracles and prodigies. The question concerns here India Interior, because it was Thomas the Apostle who had preached in India Exterior and to the Parthians, and Matthew to the Kushites ; but Interior India was converted at the time of Constantine."¹

These two authors are endeavouring to correct by their remarks the impression conveyed by the Byzantine writers who understood the story as applying to India proper, instead of Ethiopia or Abyssinia. The very same mistake is made by Rufinus and others, who evidently failed to see the letter of the Emperor Constantius, as embodied in the *Apologia* of Athanasius.²

A much more important and trustworthy account is that concerning Theophilus the Indian, the head of a mission which the Emperor Constantius equipped and sent about 354 to the Sabeans, of South Arabia, to Abyssinia, to Ceylon, and to India. The sole historian of the mission is the Arian Philostorgius, as quoted in Photius's *Bibliotheca*.³ The words which refer to India are the following :—

"Thence (i.e. from the Maldives) he sailed to other parts of India, and reformed many things which were not rightly done among them ; for they heard the reading of the Gospel in a sitting posture, and did other things which were repugnant to the divine law ; and

¹i., 258.

²*S. Athanasii Apologia at Constantium*, in Migne's *Pat. Gr.*, xxv., 631-635 ; cf. Lequien's *Oriens Christianus*, ii., 643-644 ; and Medlycott, *ibid.*, 186-187.

³In Migne's *Pat. Gr.*, lxx., 481-489.

having reformed everything according to the holy usage, as was most acceptable to God, he also confirmed the dogma of the Church."

This statement implies, as Medlycott (*ibid.*, p. 198), rightly points out, (1) a resident congregation of the faithful, (2) Church services regularly held at which the Gospels were read, and (3) consequently a ministering clergy. This discloses a Christian community constituted in parochial form; and if there be any doubt as to whether the congregation be indigenous or foreign, such doubt (4) ought to be set aside by the peculiar custom found among them, which consisted in hearing the reading of the Gospel in a sitting posture, a custom condemned by the Apostolic Constitutions (lib. ii., cap. 57): "When the Gospel is being read, let all the presbyters, the deacons, and all people stand in perfect stillness."

There is hardly any reasonable doubt, therefore, that the Christian community of India in about A.D. 354, was an indigenous community, not much in touch with the practices prevalent in the Graeco-Roman churches, and was somewhat similar to the East Syrian Church before the time of the Catholicos Pāpa. Was it not also very akin to that found by Theophilus (*ibid.*) in Socotra, which he informs us, "made use of the Syriac language in their Church services?"

(c).

The fifth century opens with an Indian Christianity which was in such a state of development that she is able to send her priests to be educated in the best schools of the East Syrian Church, and to assist the doctors of that Church in their revision of the ancient Syriac translations of the Pauline Epistles. In a precious colophon to his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Isho'dad writes as follows: "This Epistle has been translated from Greek into Syriac, by Mar Komai, with the help of Daniel the priest, the Indian."¹ This important passage proves that the Church of India was about A.D. 425 in close relationship with the East Syrian Church, at the very beginning of the latter's scholastic life, which began at Edessa with the translation of the works of Aristotle.² Komai is one of the first translators of Greek works into Syriac, and it is gratifying to see

¹ *Horæ Semiticæ. The Commentaries of Isho'dad of Merv.*, v., 34 (edit. Mrs. Gibson).

² Cf. Duval's *Littérature Syriaque*, 1907, 246-247.

that his collaborators were Christian Indians well versed in the Greek sciences. The passage proves also that the ecclesiastical language of India was, at the beginning of the fifth century, Syriac and not any of the many Indian dialects.

This union of the Church of India with that of Mesopotamia and Persia, is rendered more evident by another scholar of the school of Edessa, Ma'na, bishop of Riwardashir, who, in about A.D. 470, wrote in Persian (i.e. Pahlawi) religious discourses, canticles, and hymns, and translated from Greek into Syriac the works of Diodore and Theodore of Mopsuestia, and sent them all to India: "And he despatched to the islands of the Sea (= Baḥrain), and to India, all the books he had translated."¹

To this century belong two passages in the letters of St. Jerome, which we feel tempted to quote here. The first passage deals with Pantaenus, of whom we have already spoken, and is: "Pantaenus Stoicæ sectæ philosophus, ob præcipuæ eruditionis gloriam, a Demetrio Alexandriæ episcopo missus est in Indiam, ut Christum apud Brachmanas et illius gentis philosophos prædicaret."² In spite of the mention of the Brahmins—of whom St. Jerome had apparently heard—the India of whom he is speaking is most probably South Arabia, as stated above; that is to say, that India of which Socrates writes "India quæ Aethiopiæ confinis est,"³ i.e. the India which is bordering on Ethiopia.

In the second passage Jerome informs us that he was visited in Palestine every day by monks from India, Persia, and Ethiopia, and is as follows: "De India, Perside, Aethiopia, monachorum quotidie turbas suscipimus."⁴ There is no great probability that Jerome entertained daily crowds of monks from India. As in the first passage quoted above, the India of which he is speaking seems also to be Southern Arabia, that India which Socrates informs us is in close proximity to Ethiopia.

(d).

In the sixth century we have the *Acta Maris*. These Acts speak of the evangelisation of the Eastern countries by the disciple Mari, a

¹ *Chronique de Seert*, in *Pat. Or.*, vii., 116-117.

² *Pat. Lat.*, xxii., 667.

³ *Eccl. Hist.* in *Pat. Gr.*, lxxvii., 126.

⁴ *Pat. Lat.*, xxii., 870.

pupil of the Edessene Addai. Much that is found in them concerning the Apostles, or the Apostolic times, is certainly legendary, but there is no reason for asserting that all an unknown author writes concerning contemporary events is false. The most uncharitable hypothesis that one can put forward against the *Acta* is that they are by an author of the sixth century, who was discoursing without apparently any written documents on events that had taken place in the first century; but no anonymous author would possibly write absurd things which could not be believed by his contemporaries. What he writes, therefore, must have been in harmony with the mentality of his readers, and may in this light be taken as representing a tradition current in his days. After having preached in the country of the Huzites, say the Acts, Mari "went down to the southern countries until the odour of Thomas, the Apostle, was wafted to him; and there also he brought a great number of people to the Lord, and detained in those countries a disciple named Job, to minister to them."¹ There is no doubt, therefore, that the author of the Acts of Mari knew, about A.D. 520, of the existence of Christians in the north-western parts of India, of which he seems to be speaking.

We will quote here the famous passage of Cosmas Indicopleustes, who travelled extensively in the countries beyond the Red Sea between 520 and 525. Although writing in Greek, Cosmas was a Nestorian, and technically, therefore, he is within the scope of our enquiry:

"Even in the island of Taprobane (= Ceylon) in Inner India where the Indian Sea is, there is a Church of Christians, with clergy and a congregation of believers, though I know not if there be any Christians further in that direction. And such also is the case in the land called Male (= Malabar), where the pepper grows. And in the place called Kalliana² there is a bishop appointed from Persia, as well as in the island of Dioscoris (= Socotra), in the same Indian Sea. The inhabitants of that island speak Greek, having been originally settled there by the Ptolemies, who ruled after Alexander of Macedon. There are clergy there also ordained and sent from Persia to minister among the people of the island, and a multitude of Christians. . . .

¹ Bedjan's *Acta Mart. et Sanct.*, i., 90.

² Probably identical with the still existing Kalyāni, on the mainland near Bombay. Yule-Cordier's *Cathay*, i., 220.

And so likewise among the Bactrians and Huns and Persians, and the *rest of the Indians*, and among the Persarmenians and Greeks and Elamites, and throughout the whole land of Persia, there is an infinite number of Churches with bishops, and a vast multitude of Christian people, and they have many martyrs and recluses leading a monastic life. So also in Ethiopia, and in Axum, and in all the country round about, among the Happy Arabians who are now-a-days called Homeritæ, and all through Arabia. . . ."¹

Cosmas' text is important not only as regards the existence of Christian communities in Bombay, Malabar, and Ceylon, but also and especially by the addition of the significant sentence : and among the *rest of the Indians*.

Of Ceylon proper, Cosmas has a special entry : "This is the great island in the ocean, lying in the Indian Sea. By the Indians it is called Sielediba, but by the Greeks, Taprobane. In it is found the hyacinth stone. It lies on the other side of the Pepper country. . . . The island hath also a Church of Persian Christians who have settled there, and a Presbyter who is appointed from Persia, and a deacon, and all the apparatus of public worship. But the natives and their kings are quite another kind of people (ἀλλόφυλοι)."² Ceylon had, therefore, no native Christian Church in the beginning of the sixth century, and it is only a century after this date that the Nestorian missionaries succeeded in establishing an indigenous Christian community in the island.

The above quotations from Cosmas prove not only the existence of numerous Christian communities among many Central Asian people, in India and in the surrounding districts, but also the subordination of all of them to the Nestorian Patriarchate of Seleucia and Ctesiphon.

About the island of Socotra we have also the following testimony of some Arab travellers of the ninth century,³ who write : "On the same sea is the island of Socotra . . . the majority of its inhabitants are Christians." We will also add the words of an Arab geographer,

¹ Edit. J. W. McCrindle, for the Hakluyt Society, 1907, pp. 118-121 ; cf. *Cathay*, i., 220-221, and Migne's *Pat. Gr.*, lxxxviii., 446.

² See some comments on this text in *Cathay*, i., 225-226.

³ Edit. of Reinaud, i., 130.

Abu'l Fidā':¹ "The island of Socotra is eighty parasangs in length, and its inhabitants are Nestorian Christians." The account of Marco Polo is well known:² "The people of Socotra are all baptised Christians, and they have an Archbishop. . . . Their Archbishop has nothing to do with the Pope of Rome, but is subject to the great Archbishop who lives at Baghdad. He rules over the bishop of that island, and over many other bishops in those regions of the world, just as our Pope does in these." Nicolo Conti writes about 1440:³ "The island of Socotra is six hundred miles in circumference, and is, for the most part, inhabited by Nestorian Christians."

This was the state of affairs till the arrival of the missionaries from the West, as Francis Xavier's letter written from Goa (18 Sept., 1542) testifies.⁴

Towards the first half of the sixth century, we find a Christian community of the so-called Indians active enough, and numerous enough, to take part in the Christological controversies that animated the Christian circles living under the rule of the Empire of the Sasanians and of Byzantium. Michael the Syrian states⁵ that in the time of Severus, the Monophysite Patriarch of Antioch, the error of Julian of Halicarnassus had penetrated into some Christian communities of India. It is, however, certain that the word *Indians*, used by Michael, refers here to *Ethiopians* and *Himyarites*. The same incident is narrated in unmistakable terms by the historians, John of Asia and Dionysius of Tellmahre, as follows: (The staunch followers of the heresy of Julian of Halicarnassus) "went to the East and to the West, to the Metropolis, to Alexandria, and to all Syria, and they reached even Hirta of Nu'mān and the Persian territory, and one of them, called Sergius, went as far as the country of the Himyarites . . . where he died four years later."⁶

(e)

In the seventh century we have the high authority of the Nestorian Patriarch Isho'-Yahb III. (650-660), whose text, translated below,

¹Reinaud's *Géographie d'Aboulfeda*, ii., 128.

²ii., 406-407 (edit. Yule-Cordier).

³Major's *India in the Fifteenth Century* (Hakluyt Society, 1857), p. 20.

⁴In Coleridge's *Life*, i., 117.

⁵Vol. ii., p. 251.

⁶Assemani, *Bibl. Orient.*, iv., 455-456; *ibid.*, ii., 87.

implies the existence before his time of a regular hierarchy in India, under the jurisdiction of the East Syrian (Nestorian) Patriarchate of Ctesiphon. In a letter to Simeon, Metropolitan of Riwardashir,¹ the illustrious Patriarch writes :

“Remember with these, O our God-loving brother, that as you closed the door of the episcopal ordination in the face of the many peoples of India, and you impeded the gift of God for the sake of perishable gains which kindle the passions of the body, so also did our predecessors close in the face of your spiritual necessities the door of the gift of God (i.e. episcopal ordination). . . . Because this gift has been, and is, imparted in the canonical way, lo, the world is full of bishops, priests, and faithful as numerous as the stars of heaven, and are still on the increase day by day. As far as your district is concerned, from the time you showed recalcitrance against ecclesiastical canons, the episcopal succession has been interrupted in India, and this country has since sat in darkness, far from the light of the divine teaching by means of rightful bishops : not only India that extends from the borders of the Persian Empire, to the country which is called Kālah, which is a distance of one thousand and two hundred parasangs, but even your own Fars.”²

From this important text we infer 1° that a kind of a schism had taken place in the Nestorian Church in the middle of the seventh century. The Metropolitan of Riwardashir evidently wanted to usurp the power of the Patriarch in the ordination of bishops for India, and Baith Kātrāye (see p. 496). Previous to about A.D. 650, the Metropolitans of Riwardashir had some control over the bishops of India ; this is in harmony with the quotation given above (p. 460) to the effect that Ma'na of Riwardashir sent to India his translation of the works of Diodore and Theodore. We infer 2° that there was a considerable number of bishops and priests in India, whose sees and parishes were apparently scattered in that vast country to the distance of one thousand and two hundred parasangs.

¹ The author of the ecclesiastical Canons which bear his name (Sachau's *Syr. Rechtsbücher*, iii., 209), and which were composed in Persian, and afterwards translated into Syriac by a monk from Baith Kātrāye. Note the frequent mention of Baith Kātrāye in connection with Riwardashir.

² *Liber. Epist.* in *C.S.C.O.*, lxiv., pp. 251-252 of the text, and in *Assem. B.O.*, iii., p. 113 sqq. The word *Pares* is here to be translated by *Fars*, and not *Persia* (see p. 468).

There is no doubt that the *Ḳalah* mentioned by Isho'-Yahb is the island of *Ḳalah* referred to by the Arab travellers whose accounts have been edited by Reinaud in 1845. In vol. i., pp. 93-94 of the text, it is written: "The King of Zabej counts also among his possessions the island of *Ḳalah*, situated half way between the lands of China, and the country of the Arabs. The circumference of the island is reported to be eighty parasangs." The island is also mentioned by another Arab traveller, Ibn Muhalhil,¹ who in A.D. 941 travelled overland to China and returned by sea: "Leaving Sindabil the traveller proceeded to the sea coast, and arrived at *Ḳalah*, the first city of India, and the extreme point made by ships sailing thence. If they go past it they are lost . . . *Ḳalah* is a great town, with high walls, and many gardens and springs." I believe with Reinaud² that the *Kalah* has a connection with Ceylon; indeed the whole of the south-east coast of Ceylon was formally known as *Galla*. Between *Galla* and *Kalah* the difference in the sound is very small. See a long discussion on the subject in Tennent's *Ceylon*.³ H. Yule,⁴ however, identifies it with the Coilum of Marco Polo, and adds that for ages Coilum, Kaulam, or as we now write it, Quilon, and properly Kollam, was one of the greatest ports of trade with Western Asia, while Cordier⁵ is sure that it is to be identified with the modern Malacca or Singapore: "It seems to me certain that it is a port of the Archipelago, representing in a general way the modern Singapore or Malacca, and very possibly identical with Kadah (Quedah)." This last identification I am unable to accept. Another long discussion on the subject by Yule-Cordier is found in *Cathay*, vol. ii., pp. 129-130 (*q.v.*).

For the quelling of the schism that has sprung up among the East Syrian bishops of Baith *Ḳaṭrāye*, India, and Fars, Isho'-Yahb wrote also five long letters to the "bishops, the monks, and the faithful of Baith *Ḳaṭrāye*,"⁶ ordering them to reject the bishops uncanonically

¹ Edit. of Scholoezer, *De Itinere Asiatico*, in *Cathay*, i., 252-253 (with some changes in the translation).

² *Ibid.*, ii., 48; and *Géographie d'Aboulfeda*, i., pp. cclxviii-cclxix.

³ 3rd Edit. i., 582-606.

⁴ *Marco Polo* (edit. Cordier), ii., 377.

⁵ *Cathay*, 1915, vol. i., p. 253 (Hakluyt Society).

⁶ *Liber Epistularum*, in *C.S.C.O.*, lxiv., 260-283.

ordained, and enjoining them to appeal ultimately in all questions affecting episcopal ordinations to the Patriarchal see, from which all spiritual power emanates. In the second of these letters¹ the illustrious Patriarch speaks of Christians found beyond Baith Kaṭrāye; but his sentence designates, in our judgment, the country of Mazon, and not Ceylon or India, as has been asserted by a critic, and refers to the Arab invasion and the defection of many Christians of that country to the Islamic cause:

"... At this time in which you are in need of the great power of the help of God, in order to strengthen your faith by a strong rampart, as times require, in order that the glory of your faith in the Lord may not suffer by the damage that befell *the far off peoples on the other side of you*. While suffering pains with a God-fearing mind, like a man on whom is laid the burden of spiritual fatherhood, which in the Church of God is understood to extend to all, I deemed it wise to warn you in time, in order to avert from you the disease of lack of faith, which through the bad cause of a little while ago, affected the peoples *who live beyond you*."

(f)

Towards the end of the eighth century we have the unchallengeable testimony of another Nestorian Patriarch, Timothy I. (A.D. 779-823), who in his letter to the monks of Mar Maron, concerning the addition of the formula *Crucifixus es pro nobis* to the trisagion, writes as follows: "And also in all the countries of Babylon, of Persia, and of Assyria, and in all the countries of the sunrise, that is to say,—among the Indians, the Chinese, the Tibetans, the Turks, and in all the provinces under the jurisdiction of this Patriarchal See, there is no addition of *Crucifixus es pro nobis*."²

Another authoritative statement is that of the Patriarch Theodose (A.D. 852-858), who mentions in his writings the Archbishops of Samarkand, India, and China.³

In case of the Patriarch Timothy, we may refer here to the difficulties that he experienced in bringing under the control of the

¹ *Liber Epistularum*, in *C.S.C.O.*, lxiv., pp. 262-263.

² This letter is not yet printed. I read the text in an unpublished MS. of my own collection in the Rendel Harris Library, Birmingham.

³ Assemani, *Bibl. Orient.*, iv., 439, and iii., 617.

Patriarchal see the recalcitrant Metropolitans of that part of ancient Persia that bordered on India proper,—that is to say, those Metropolitans of Riwardashir who had under their jurisdiction the bishoprics of North-West India and Baith Kaṭrāye. Timothy I. found the same difficulty in reducing them as that experienced by Isho'-Yahb III. of whom we spoke above. "It is said that down to the time of this Timothy, the bishops of the province of Fars¹ were wearing white garments like the secular priests, were eating meat, and marrying, and were not under the jurisdiction of the Catholicos of Seleucia. They used to say, 'We have been evangelised by the Apostle Thomas, and we have no share with the see of Mari.' Timothy, however, united them, and joined them to him. He ordained for them as Metropolitan a man named Simeon, and he ordered him not to eat meat, nor marry, and to wear white garments made only of wool. He further permitted him to confirm the bishops whom he would ordain, without coming for such a confirmation to the Catholicos."²

Assemani and Lamy have rendered the above sentence of Barhebræus, which means: "the province of Fars," by: "the country of Persia." How was it possible that all the bishops of Persia were married and were not under the jurisdiction of the Nestorian Patriarch till the ninth Christian century? This will sound absurd to all those who have even a superficial knowledge of the history of the East Syrian Church. It was the Metropolitans of the province of Fars who were again rising against the authority of Timothy, as they often rose previously against the Catholicoi, his predecessors, notably Isho'-Yahb III. The point of the greatest interest is the authority or the argument on which they based their claim, viz.: that as they had been evangelised by Thomas the Apostle, why should they submit to the authority of a Patriarchal see which was only founded by a disciple. The point raised is very important, and the event having taken place not much later than A.D. 795, the passage would thus contain the earliest reference to the Christians of Fars and North-West India, calling themselves *Christians of St. Thomas*. Mari³ refers the incident to A.D. 650-660, and writes in the life of Isho'-Yahb that "the previous (i.e. to the time of Isho'-Yahb III., 650-

¹ Translate here *Fars*, and not *Persia*. See below.

² Barhebræus, *Chron. Eccl.*, iii., 169-171.

³ *De Pat. Nest.*, p. 55; cf. Assemani, iv., 422.

660) Metropolitans of *Fars* (and not of *Persia*) were not subject to the authority of the Catholicos of the East."

We may here remark that the word *Pares* refers in Syriac literature to all Persia, and also to the province of Fars alone. Many examples may be quoted for such a use. The *Synodicon Orientale*¹ calls the Patriarch Yahb Alaha "The Catholicos of Baith Lāpāt, of Nisibin, of Pares," etc. The *Synodicon* is counting here the number of the Metropolitan provinces of which the Patriarch was the first and natural head, and *Pares* can obviously refer only to the province of Fars. Thomas of Marga² writes: "And after these things, the Catholicos went down to Baith ẖatrāye, in order to reconcile its inhabitants, for they had cut themselves off from submission to the episcopal throne of Riwardashir, which is Fars." The *Pares* used here can also designate only the province of Fars, and not all Persia. More quotations could be produced, but the above two will suffice for our purpose. A third example may be found in the letter of Isho'-Yahb III. quoted above.

(g)

Towards the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries, we have an important Syriac document, which is to be considered as the swan song of the Nestorian Church before the time in which western missionaries made themselves felt on Indian soil. The narrative contains also an interesting account of the first landing of the Portuguese, and their bitter struggles to maintain the positions they had won. An unbiassed and contemporary account of this kind constitutes the most reliable information that we possess on the subject from any eastern source known to us, and we invite our readers to peruse it with care and attention.³

"In the year one thousand eight hundred and one of Alexander (A.D. 1490), three believing Christian men came from the remote countries of India to the Catholicos Mar Simeon, Patriarch of the East, in order to bring bishops to their countries. By the will of God, one of them died on the way, and two of them reached the Catholicos alive. The Catholicos, who was then in the town of Gazarta of

¹ P. 276.

² *Book of Governors*, ii., 188 (where wrongly rendered by *Persia*).

³ *Assemani, Bibl. Orient.*, iii., 590.

Baith Zabdai,¹ was greatly pleased with them. One of them was called George, and the other Joseph. The Catholicos ordained both of them priests in the Holy Church of St. George at Gazarta, because they were well instructed, and sent them to the holy monastery of St. Eugenius. They took from there two monks, the name of both of whom was Joseph, and the Catholicos ordained both of them bishops in the Church of St. George. He named one Thomas and the other John, and he wrote to them admirable letters patent sealed with his own seal. After having prayed for them, and blessed them, he despatched them to India in the company of the Indians. By the assistance of Christ, our Lord, the four of them reached there alive.

“The faithful were greatly pleased with them, went to meet them joyfully with Gospel, Cross, thurible, and candles, and ushered them in with great pomp, with psalms and canticles. They consecrated altars and ordained many priests, because the Indians were for a long time without bishops. Bishop John remained in India, and Bishop Thomas, his companion, returned after a short time to the Catholicos. He brought to him gifts, presents, and a servant. It happened, however, that before Bishop Thomas had returned to India, the Catholicos Simon had died, and left this wordly and perishable life for an immortal and imperishable one, in the year one thousand eight hundred and thirteen of the Greeks (A.D. 1502), and was buried in the monastery of St. Eugenius. May our Lord grant rest to his soul in the heavenly mansions ! Amen.

“He was succeeded by Mar Elijah, the Catholicos and Patriarch, who also took from the monastery of St. Eugenius three pious monks, one of whom, brother David Arrikha (= the tall), he ordained Metropolitan and re-named Mar Yahb Alaha ; the next one, called brother George, he ordained bishop, and re-named Mar Jacob. He ordained all of them in the monastery of St. John the Egyptian, the carnal brother of St. Aḥḥa, which is situated in the vicinity of Gazarta of Baith Zabdai, in the year one thousand eight hundred and fourteen of the Greeks (A.D. 1503), and he sent them to the country of India, to the islands of the sea which are inside Java, and to China. The four of them reached there in peace and safety, by the assistance of Christ, their Lord, and they saw Mar John, bishop of India alive.

¹ The modern Jezireh, on the Upper Tigris.

The latter, and all the blessed believers who were there, were greatly pleased by the arrival of the Fathers. A year after they sent a letter to Mar Elijah, the Catholicos, but before its arrival the Catholicos Mar Elijah died, and was buried in the Church of St. Miskainta of Mosul. He was succeeded by Mar Simon, the Catholicos and Patriarch. The letter which the above-mentioned Fathers sent from India was in the following terms :

“To the second Simon, to the Papa of our days, to the Timothy of our generation, to the Joshua the son of Nun of our time, and to the Isho‘-Yahb of our day,¹ to whom power has been given in heaven and earth to tend the flocks of Christ with the rod of Peter, which he has inherited by succession—Blessed is the people to whom this prerogative is due, and who has such a head and director !—Mar Elijah, the Catholicos and Patriarch of the East, the mother of the other parts of the world. May the Lord who raised him and helped him, strengthen him, exalt him, and render him victorious to the glory of Christendom and the uplifting of Churches ! Amen !

“Thy humble servants and weak disciples, the contemptible and the lowly, Mar Yahb Alaha, Mar Thomas, and Mar Jacob, and Dinḥa, the stranger,—fall down before thy pure and holy feet, and crave thy answered and accepted prayers for the assistance of their wretchedness, and humbly cry aloud : Bless O Lord ! bless O Lord ! bless O Lord !² May also Mar John, the Metropolitan of Atail, that temple of God and the treasurer of His service, the saint and the head of the saints, and all the other holy Fathers, pious monks, pure priests, elect believers, and all Christians of your side, receive our greetings in the Lord !

“Now we would inform thy love that by the assistance of God, and through thy accepted prayers, we arrived in the blessed country of India in good health. Thanks be to God, the Lord of all, who does not confound those who trust in Him ! All the Christians of this side were greatly pleased with us, and our Father Mar John is still alive and hale and sends thee his greetings. There are here about thirty thousand families of Christians, our co-religionists, and they implore the Lord to grant thee a long life. They have begun to

¹ All the above are names of Patriarchs of the East Syrian Church.

² Syriac address to a Patriarch or a bishop.

build new churches, are prosperous in every respect, and living in peace and security : May God be praised ! As to the monastery of St. Thomas the Apostle, some Christian men have gone into it, have inhabited it, and are now busy restoring it ; it is distant about twenty-five days from the above-mentioned Christians ; it is on the shores of the sea in a town called Mailapore, in the country of Silan,¹ one of the Indian countries. The countries of India are very numerous and powerful, and their distance is about six months' journey. Each country has a special name by which it is known, and our country in which the Christians are found is called Malabar. It has about twenty towns, out of which three are renowned and powerful : Karangol, Pallur, and Kullam, with others that are near them. They contain Christians and churches, and are in the vicinity of the large and powerful city of Calicut, the inhabitants of which are idol-worshipping pagans.

"Let it be also known to you, O Fathers, that the king of the Christians of the West, who are the Franks our brethren, sent to this country powerful ships, and they were a whole year on the sea before they reached us. They came in a southerly direction on the other side of the country of Ethiopia, that is to say, Habash (= negroes), and they arrived at this country of India, where they bought pepper and other similar spices, and they returned to their country. Then they studied the way and learned it well. Thereupon the above-mentioned king, may God preserve his life, sent six large ships which reached the town of Calicut in six months, because they had studied and learned the sea route. Now in the town of Calicut there are many Mohammedans, whom envy has enraged and maddened against the Christians. They accused them before the pagan king, uttered lies concerning them, and said : 'These men have come from the West, and have seen thy country and thy beautiful towns ; they will return to their king and they will bring numerous armies on ships against thee ; they will besiege thee, and take thy country from thee.'

"The pagan king listened to the words of the Mohammedans, and yielded to their wish. Like a madman he rose and killed all the above-named Franks who were in his town to the number of seventy

¹ We preserve the Syriac form of the Indian names.

men, with five pious priests who were with them, because they do not travel anywhere without priests. The remainder of the men who were on the ships went by sea with great grief and bitter weeping to the neighbourhood of our Christians, to a town called Cochin, which had also a pagan king. When he noticed that they were in great trouble and sorrowful pain, he summoned them to him, comforted them, and swore to them that he would not betray them even in order to save his own life. But when the impious king who had massacred their companions heard this, he was incensed, and he mustered a great army, and went forth against them. The Franks, and the king with whom they were, escaped to a fort on the shores of the sea, where they remained a few days.

“Then Christ had pity on them, and many ships arrived from the country of the Franks, who waged a severe war against the king of Calicut. They threw at him hard stones with ballistas, and killed many people from the camp of that wicked king ; they made him run, and they drove him away and his armies from the shores of the sea. Then the Franks came to the town of Koshi, and they built in it a great fortress, in which were placed about three hundred warriors from them ; some of them were stone throwers with machines, and some others archers. They put also in it about fifty large ballistas, and about a hundred others of a smaller size, and iron bows from which arrows are thrown.

“Then that king, their enemy, whose memory deserves to perish, came back against them, and engaged them in battle, but they defeated him by the power of Christ, and killed about three thousand men from his army by stones from ballistas. He fled again, and went back to his town of Calicut ; but the Franks pursued him on the sea which is near his town, and overtook him ; they seized his ships and broke them, and killed in them about one hundred Mohammedans who were piloting them ; they also destroyed the town with stones thrown at it from their ballistas. The General of these Franks came then to another town called Cananore, situated in the country of Malabar, to another pagan king, and said to him : ‘Give us a place in thy town, in which we can buy and sell when we come here year by year to do business.’ He gave them a place and a large house, and was greatly pleased with them. The Christian General made him then gifts of cloth woven with gold, and garments of brocade, and

bought pepper to the extent of fourteen thousand *tagars*,¹ which he took with him to his country.

“There were about twenty men from them in the town of Cananore, when we arrived from the town of Ormuz to the Indian town of Cananore ; we went to them and told them that we were Christians, and narrated to them our story. They were pleased with us, and gave us beautiful garments, with twenty drachmas of gold ; for the sake of Christ they honoured in an extraordinary way our state of being strangers. We remained with them two and a half months, and they ordered us one day to say mass. They have prepared for themselves a beautiful place, like a chapel, and their priests say their mass in it every day, as is their custom. On the Sunday, therefore, of *Nusardail*,² after their priest had finished his mass, we also went and said mass, at which they were greatly pleased with us. After that we left them and went to our Christians, who were eight days distant from there.

“The number of all those Franks amounted to not more than about four hundred men, but their fear and dread is in the heart of all the pagans and Mohammedans found in these countries. The country of those Franks is called Portugal, which is one of the countries of the Franks, and their King is called Emmanuel. May Emmanuel protect him !

“Do not blame us, O brethren, for the length of this letter. We desired and wished to tell you all the above things. May our Lord be with us all and in us all ! Amen !”

The bishops mentioned in the above document figure also in Syr. MS. No. 25, of Paris, which in folio 7 bears the following colophon :³ “This book was written in the year 1815 of the Greeks (A.D. 1504), —and glory be to the Lord—, with the hands of the stranger Jacob. Let it be known to thee, my lord the reader, that in the above-mentioned year, we arrived in these Indian countries at the town called Cananore, in which we found our true brethren, the Franks, called Portuguese, who were greatly pleased with us. Let it be known also that in the year 1813 (A.D. 1502), at the beginning of

¹ An ancient weight measure equivalent to about two hundred kilograms.

² In the East Syrian (Nestorian) Calendar, the sixth Sunday after Trinity.

³ *R. O. C.*, 1912, pp. 82-83.

the month of September, our common Father, Mar Simon, the Catholicos of the East, left this world of miseries.¹ The bishops assembled near our Father Mar John, the illustrious Metropolitan, and ordained Mar Elijah Catholicos and Patriarch to the throne of the East. And this Father Mar Elijah ordained the following bishops for India: Mar Yahb Alaha, and Mar Thomas as archbishops, and Mar Dinḥa and me, the humble Jacob, as bishops, in the holy monastery of Mar John the Egyptian, which is situated near Gazarta of Zabdai, in the district of Kaulaz, on the second day of Easter, in the year 1815 of the Greeks (A.D. 1504)."

(*h*).

We will here translate another document of a totally different type. Several differences distinguish it from its predecessors, of which we will here give only the following: while the accuracy of the preceding documents is above reproach, that of the present one is to be accepted only with great caution. Its first part is clearly legendary, and the author was probably a Jacobite Indian from Malabar, writing more precisely long after the Synod of Diamper, in the beginning of the eighteenth century. The second part of his account, however, is not to be entirely disregarded, as it preserves to us the local tradition of an indigenous Indian Church staggering under the blow of western impact, struck by a well-organised, powerful, and wealthy Roman Catholicism. We know of the existence of some other more modern lucubrations by native Indians, written in Syriac language, but the few chosen here are more original and more typical. Another point to which we wish to draw attention is the fact that the author is extremely hostile to the Franks (in the author's phraseology, the Roman Catholic missionaries), on whom the Nestorian authors of the two preceding documents bestow so much praise. The Nestorian writers saw only a few Franks for a short time, and because of the hospitality and gifts which they had received from them, they harboured no bitterness against them. The case is different with the Jacobite writer; his forefathers and himself had been in close contact with Roman Catholic missionaries for a great number of years, and their theological views, social life, and

¹ Simon V., therefore died in 1502, and not in 1503, as Abbeloos and Lamy in Brahebræus's *Chron. Eccl.*, ii., 568.

personal conduct, had evidently inspired him with disgust. The Nestorian writers were still under the spell of the glamour of the Christian West, but this glamour had vanished in the case of the Jacobite author, who is thus writing under the weight of great grievance and bitter disappointment :¹

“In the fifty-second year of our Lord Jesus Christ, St. Thomas came to India and reached Mailapo.² He preached the good news there to many, and he evangelised and baptised them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Then he left that place and came to Malabar, and reached Malykara, where he preached the Gospel to the inhabitants of the country, built an altar to the Lord, and ordained two priests. He then left the country and went to Kutkayel and built a church in it ; he did the same thing in Irapeli, Gukamaglam, Niranam, and Tirubokut. After that he went back to Mailapo, where he was speared to death by pagans, and his soul rested in peace.

“After the death of the Apostle Thomas, India and also Malabar were without a preacher and a leader, apart from the priests ordained by St. Thomas. After ninety-two years, India and Malabar became without priests, having only believing men and women. In that time a pagan magician appeared, whose name was Manikbashr ; he went to Mailapo and wrought many wonders by his magic, and proved a stumbling-block to the heads of the faithful, and turned them away from the true faith. There was no one left to contradict him and thwart his orders, so the remainder of the faithful came and took refuge in Malabar. When the believing brethren of Malabar saw them, they were greatly pleased with them, and lived together the life of Christians. After that, when the one hundred and sixty Christian families of Malabar were on several occasions without priests and leaders, divisions sprang up among them on several occasions for various reasons. Some of them left the orthodox faith, and some did not. Those who left it were ninety-six families, and those who did not numbered sixty-four families.

“At that time the Metropolitan of Edessa saw a vision in the night, and rose the next morning and went to the Catholicos of the East to whom he narrated it. When the Catholicos heard it, he sent

¹ Land's *Anecdota Syriaca*, i., 24-30.

² We preserve the Syriac form of the Indian proper names.

messengers to all churches, monasteries, and towns under his jurisdiction, and summoned them to himself. When great multitudes assembled near him with their bishops and their merchants, he narrated to them the vision and the words of the bishop. One of the faithful, the merchant Thomas of Jerusalem,¹ rose up and said : 'We have heard the story of Malabar and India from strangers, men of different countries.' When the Patriarch heard his words, he rose from his seat, drew near to him, embraced him, and said to him : 'I implore thee, my beloved son, to repair to Malabar, visit its inhabitants, and report to me concerning what happened to them.' Thomas of Jerusalem left then and went to Malabar, and reached Maliomkara, where he saw the Christians of St. Thomas. They comforted one another, and they related to him what had happened to them.

"When Thomas heard their story, he fortified them, and comforted them with sweet words. Then he immediately went on board a ship and returned to his country, where he saw the Catholicos and said to him : 'I saw with my own eyes the Christians of St. Thomas ; we spoke together, and we comforted one another ; I left them full of hope, and returned.' When the Catholicos heard his words he said : 'I wish to sacrifice even my life for them, and I ask thee to show me what could be done for these my children.' He then narrated to the

¹ If this Thomas is an historical personage, he is different from Thomas Cana, another problematical bishop of Malabar, in about A.D. 823 (see below, p. 497). The scene of this merchant Thomas is placed, according to the Malabar tradition, in 345. In this year the Catholicos of the East was Barba'-Shemin, the nephew of the great Simon bar Sabbā'e (Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum*, ii., 296-303 ; Assemani, *Acta Mart.*, i., 111-117 ; Sozomen, *Hist. Eccl.*, ii., 14, etc), and was in prison from February, 345, to 9 January, 346, in which he suffered martyrdom. After him, the see was vacant for twenty years. Before him, the Catholicos was Shahdost, who was himself martyred in 342, and after him the see had become vacant for more than two years ('Amr, *De Pat.*, p. 12 ; Mari, *De Pat.*, pp. 16-18 ; Bedjan, *ibid.*, ii., 276-280, etc.). In their short term of office, during the persecution of Sapor, not one of the above Catholicoi whose time was mostly spent in prison could have possibly attended to the business of a merchant Thomas from Jerusalem. The whole story is absolutely unhistorical. I believe that this very late Malabar Syrian tradition might have made a stupid chronological mistake of about four centuries and a half ; but then this unhistorical Thomas was a simple merchant, and not a bishop, while the possibly historical Thomas Cana was a bishop. No one can fathom the depth of stupidity to which a late and worthless tradition may lead a critic.

Catholicos the needs of the brethren of Malabar. It happened by the power of our adorable God, and by order of the Catholicos, that after a very short time the merchant Thomas of Jerusalem left his country accompanied by that very bishop who saw the vision, and by priests and deacons, by men, women, and children, from Jerusalem, Bagdad, and Nineveh (Mosul). They went on board a ship and came to Malabar, and reached Maliomkara in the year three hundred and forty-fifth of our Lord.

“When the inhabitants of Malabar recognised them, they assembled near them, and took advice from one another. They then went to Sharkun, the king of all Malabar, and brought him gifts and presents. The king was pleased with them and said to them: ‘I will gratify all your wishes,’ and he gave them land as long and as broad as they desired. And he invested them also with royal honours inscribed on pieces of copper, which are preserved with us down to the present day.¹ When they received all these from the king, they returned to Maliomkara. Then they busied themselves with the building of the church and the town. They erected a church in the land of Kuramaklur, which was given to them by the king, and they built also a town there composed of four hundred and seventy-two families, stretching from east to west, and dwelt in it as by right.

“In those days and in the days that followed, Syrian Fathers used to come to that town by order of the Catholicos of the East, and govern the diocese of India and Malabar, because it was from it that the Syrians used to go to other parts until they were dispersed. Then in the year 823, the Syrian Fathers, Mar Sapor and Mar Parūt (Piruz), with the illustrious Sabrisho² came to India and reached Kullam. They went to the king Shakirbirti,³ and asked from him a piece of land in which they could build a church for themselves and erect a town. He gave them the amount of land they desired, and they built a church and erected a town in the district of Kullam, to which Syrian bishops and Metropolitans used to come by order of the Catholicos who sent them.

“A long time after, or about the year 1500, the deceitful Franks came to this country of Malabar, and they also dwelt in Malabar and

¹ See below, p. 507.

² About these three bishops, see below, pp. 498 and 508.

³ About this king Chakravarti, see below, p. 507.

India. At that time also the Syrian Fathers, Mar Dinḥa, Mar Thomas, Mar Jacob, and Mar Yahb-Alaha,¹ came and visited the diocese of Malabar and India according to the old custom. Then after those days, in the year 1580, came the Syrian bishop Mar Abraham,² and when he reached Malabar the murderous Franks envied him and laid snares for him in order to murder him ; but he escaped them then, by the help of Christ our Lord, but in discharging the duties of his office he was in constant dread and fear of them. In those days the Franks, the enemies of the Most High, began to lay snares in the roads in which the Syrians were travelling, in order to capture them and murder them. After the death of the Syrian bishop, Mar Abraham, no Syrian bishop came to Malabar for fifty-two years.

“In those days a Frankish bishop³ came by order of the Pope of Rome, and desired to reduce the Syrians and bring them under his authority, but they refused. Then this tyrant bishop went to the king of Kōkshin, and he gave him thirty thousand pieces of gold as a bribe. The king then began to molest the Syrians with all kinds of persecution, and the Syrians suffered from this persecuting king for three years, and having been much weakened by him, they submitted by force to the Frankish bishop. The Franks then changed the good habits of the Syrians, and prohibited the marriage of priests and deacons, and taught a novel and abominable doctrine.

“When the Syrians were for fifty-two years in this state God wished to bring to light the deceitfulness of the insincere Franks, by means of the Patriarch Ignatius, who desired to come to Mailapo and thence proceed to Malabar. When this prelate came to Mailapo, the Franks captured him, incarcerated him, brought him to Kōkshin, and drowned him in the sea. This became known in all Malabar and to the Syrian deacons who were in it at that time. All the

¹ On these bishops see below and cf. Assemani, *Bibl. Orient.*, iv., 162-163; Lequien, *Oriens Christ.*, ii., 1277-1278; Raulin, *Histo. Eccl. Malab.*, pp. 436-437.

² This is the famous Abraham, Archbishop of Angamale; see Giamil's *Genuinæ Relationes*, pp. 1-8, 69-73, etc.

³ This hated bishop appears to have been Alexius Meneses, surnamed Goanus, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Goa, who in 1599 assembled the Synod of Diamper. Milne Rae's *Syrian Church*, p. 20, et passim, etc.

Syrians, therefore, congregated in the Church of Mutumsheri, which was near Kōkshin, and swore in the name of the Creator before the holy altar that they would never join with the Franks till the end of time, nor let their seed join with theirs ; and they wrote their oath on paper. Amen ! The Syrians were thus separated from the Franks, and for a short while they were successful.

“Then the bishop of the Franks began to send precious gifts to the Syrian priests, and to correspond with them in secret. Some of these priests secretly accepted these gifts, and visited the bishop of the Franks by night, but some others did not accept the gifts nor did they go to him by night. After a short time, some priests fell and followed the bishop, and some did not, and this produced divisions among the Syrians who separated into two hostile camps. After half of the Syrians had followed the Franks, and after the latter had bribed the kings and the rulers in order to molest the Syrians, the Franks prevailed upon the Syrians. At that time, however, came to India the believing Amiral, the just judge, and the ruler of all India and Malabar, and destroyed all the Franks in Kōkshin and in all the towns of the land of India,¹ as Joshua, son of Nūn, had previously destroyed the Canaanites and other peoples.

“From that day down to our time joy is felt in the camp of the Syrians, and sorrow in that of the Franks. The Syrians are in union with the Syrian Fathers who come from Jerusalem, Nineveh (Mosul), Bagdad, and other places, by order of the Catholicos of the East, and the Franks are under the jurisdiction of the Frankish bishops who come from Rome and from other countries, by order of the Pope of Rome.

“Then in the year 1705, the Syrian Archbishop, Mar Gabriel,² came to India by order of the Catholicos of the East. He noticed the

¹ The author probably alludes here to the successes of the Dutch over the Portuguese. In 1660 the Dutch took Negapatam; and they succeeded in taking Quilon towards the end of 1661. In 1662 they captured by assault the town of Cranganore, after which they began to lay siege to Cochin, which submitted to them in January, 1663. Milne Rae's *The Syrian Church in India*, p. 258, and other writers.

² This is evidently the Nestorian bishop Gabriel described by Paoli as an *Implacabilis hostis Jacobitarum*. In spite of hostile machinations he maintained his position for twenty-six years, or till his death in 1731. Milne Rae, *ibid.*, p. 271 ; Assemani, *ibid.*, iv., 447 ; Lequien, *Oriens Christ.*, ii., 1283-1284.

two hostile camps among the Syrians, and was struck by the great number of them who had followed the Franks, and contracted their abominable habits, without reflecting on their origin, and by the fact that the Syrian priests who had thus followed the Franks did not marry like their fathers, but blamed the married life of their Syrian brethren. Because of these things, this Syrian Metropolitan Gabriel did not follow the Syrians his kinsmen, nor did he follow those Syrians who had followed the Franks, but he followed a middle course in order to attract those Syrians who had followed the Franks. Many people from both camps followed him; indeed forty-two churches from the camp that had followed the Franks attached themselves to him; but now, through the zeal and deceitfulness of the Carmelites and Sampalos (= Jesuits? Franciscans?) twenty churches from them detached themselves from him.

"Let it be known also to you, O blessed and illustrious gentlemen, that if the appointed Governor and the blessed king of all India and Malabar were in these days to help this poor Syrian Archbishop, and if there were not two camps in the Syrian Church, the deceitful Franks would never dominate in India, till the end of the world.

"In the handwriting of the Syrian priest Matthew, the wretched, the poor, and the miserable. Amen."

(2).

We are in a position to supplement the above account by an unpublished Syriac document of a more circumstantial character. We have at hand a letter sent in 1721 by Thomas, the Jacobite bishop of Malabar, to the Dutch scholar, Carolus Schaaf, of Leiden (the author of the *Lexicon Syriacum* of 1717 [second edition]), who had asked him to write a short sketch containing the Indian tradition about the Apostle Thomas in particular, and the history of Christianity in India in general. The document that we possess is in the handwriting of Land, the well-known editor of the *Anecdota Syriaca*, and dated Amsterdam, 8 July, 1871; it was copied by him from "*MS. Bibl. Publ. Amstelod., I.F.*," and is as follows:

"O great and learned teacher Carolus, you asked me concerning the one who preached to us the holy Gospel, and I answer thus: There was a king called Pirmal Shōyin who ruled over India. He had but one desire, and that was to build a very beautiful palace.

After many enquiries he learned that if he could call in the builders who built to Solomon, his desire would be fulfilled. He summoned, therefore, his majordomo who was called Ḥabban, and ordered him to proceed to Jerusalem and bring to him the builders who worked for Solomon. After Shoyinpirmal despatched the majordomo, our Lord appeared to the latter while he was walking in the road, in the form of an artisan, and said to him : 'Where art thou going to, and from where art thou coming ?' And he answered him : 'The king of India ordered me to go and bring the artisans who built for Solomon.' Our Lord then said to him : 'I am the head of all the builders.' While He was still speaking, an angel lifted Thomas from Edessa, and made him stand behind our Lord, who made a sign to him and said to Ḥabban : 'This will erect all your buildings,' and He sold him and delivered him to Ḥabban.

"This is the occasion of the arrival of Thomas in India, to our countries. The king and many inhabitants of India believed in Christ at the hand of the Apostle Thomas, and received baptism and priesthood. After having established seven churches, he went to Mailapo, where he was speared to death, and his body was carried by an angel to Edessa. The names of the seven churches built by St. Thomas are first Mailapore, and then Corignalore, Parākar, Irapelli, Koḡam-maglam, Niranam, and Tirobancore. This happened in A.D. 52. From this date the faithful diminished little by little in our country. At that time, St. Thomas appeared in a vision to the Metropolitan of the town of Edessa, and said to him : 'Wilt thou not help India ?' and he also appeared to Abgar, King of Edessa, who was the king of the Syrians ; and then by order of the king and the bishop three hundred and thirty-six families composed of children and grown-up people, clerics, men, and women, came to India under the leadership of Thomas the Canaanite, from Canaan, which is Jerusalem. All these sailed in the sea and entered Coringalore, our country. They inhabited it by special permission from the king Shiramon-Pirumal, who was ruling India at that time. All this took place in A.D. 345.

"From that time the Church of our country spread in all directions, to the number of seventy-two churches ; and in our days there are over one hundred churches : all the churches from Sherokhai Shorkon to Shora Kullam, the church of Mailapo and Tirobancore. This is the origin of us Syrians. The Franks have by their craftiness and

temporal power captured half of all the churches. About half of the diocese of Cochi belongs to the Franks, but our Church in Malabar is not counted in that diocese. Amen. What I have said above, I have said it in very short terms, and it is not found in the Syriac language but only in our native Indian language. . . . O Mar Carolus . . . may the Lord God bless thee ! . . . Amen."

The historical value of the first part of the document, which includes the history of early Christianity in India, exclusively from the local Indian tradition, is of course very small. See also below, p. 509.

(j).

For the history of the more modern Church of India we have the account of another Jacobite, the priest Abraham of Travancore, who in A.D. 1821 wrote the following lines at the request of W. H. Mill. We will translate them below as usual without any comment, but we will warn the reader that, as in the two previous documents, the account that they contain concerning early Christianity in India is to be accepted with great caution :¹

"In the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one true God. Amen.

"In the year 52 of our Lord, the Apostle Thomas came to India and baptised many people. He built five churches, over which he set two men, and he went to Mailapore, where he evangelised, died, and was buried.

"In the year 345, a Christian merchant named Thomas came to India by order of our Father the Patriarch Mar Ignatius.² With him came also bishops, priests, deacons, and Christian laymen, who inhabited this land, and preached to us the way of truth. They selected men from those who had previously received ordination from the Apostle Thomas, placed them at the head of the dioceses of India, and ordained them archdeacons.

"In the year 825 of our Lord, a merchant called Job came and dwelt in this land, with two Syrian bishops. We were orthodox

¹From Oxford Syr. MS. 72; in Payne Smith's catalogue, col. 264, there is a very good summary of the narrative. See also *R.O.C.*, 1912, 74-82.

²The introduction into the scene of a West Syrian instead of an East Syrian Patriarch is in keeping with the mentality of the Jacobite writer.

Jacobites in our habits from the beginning of the preaching of the Apostle Thomas down to the year 1545. After that came a bishop named Abraham, by order of Mar Elijah, and brought many books with him. We received ordination from him, because we were deprived of bishops.

“In that time the king of the Portuguese had under his command the fortress of Cochin, where he conducted Mar Abraham by force ; after that he brought him to Rome and made him submit to the Pope, who gave him power over all the dioceses of India. He came back here and he preached to us the habits of the Franks. After the death of Mar Abraham, Purgis, the Governor of Cochin, gave much money to the king of Cochin, who then greatly molested the archdeacon and the faithful of the Syrian community. In the year of our Lord 1598, we forsook the habits of the Syrians, and followed those of the Franks, and in that time the priests refrained from lawful marriage.

“In the year 1653 our Father Ignatius, Patriarch of Antioch, came to Mailapore. Two deacons went from Malabar to the church of Mailapore, in order to worship before the grave of St. Thomas the Apostle. When our Father Mar Ignatius saw the deacons, and recognised them, he wept, and they also wept with him. This scene having been noticed by the Franks, they set up watchmen over them, in order to impede the deacons from seeing and speaking to our Father Mar Ignatius ; there was no bishop from our own race, and they were the masters of the dioceses of India. Once, however, our Father Mar Ignatius made a secret sign to the deacons, and granted them a letter of recommendation to elect bishop the Archdeacon Thomas, and gave them leave to depart. When the deacons reached Malabar, they delivered the Patriarchal letter to the Archdeacon Thomas, who despatched letters to this effect to the churches. When all the priests, deacons, and Christian laymen of Malabar came to him, and heard that our Father, Mar Ignatius, had arrived at the fortress of Cochin, they repaired there without delay and implored the pagan king of Cochin to summon their Father Mar Ignatius, and deliver him to them. The king answered them : ‘To-morrow I will summon him and deliver him to you.’ This, however, became known to the Franks who gave much money to the king of Cochin, and he permitted them to do as they wished.

“In that very night the Franks tied a large stone round the neck

of the blessed Patriarch, and threw him into the depth of the sea. The moment the blessed Patriarch died, the pagan king also died. After these events all the Syrian parties assembled in the church of Maṭansheri, and each one of them swore in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, that they will have no more love for, nor union and communion with, the Franks, and they established Archdeacon Thomas the head of all the churches of the Syrians, in accordance with the order of our Father the Patriarch Ignatius. After this, in the year 1660, Bishop Joseph came to Malabar, but we did not follow him. A short time after this bishop Joseph called a priest named Alexander, from the family of bishop Thomas, and by fraud and deceit he persuaded him to receive episcopal ordination ; this divided the Syrians of Malabar into two camps.

“In the year one thousand¹ . . . our Father Mar Gregory came to us, and in the year 1685 we were visited also by our Fathers Mar Basil the Maphryān and bishop Mar John, who turned us away from the habits of the Franks, and made us contract the habits of our fathers, which we have faithfully kept down to our own days without addition or diminution. In the year 1708 of our Lord bishop Mar Gabriel came to us by order of Mar Elijah the Catholicos, and preached to us the doctrine of two natures and two persons in Christ, and because of this a great schism occurred in our midst. A few people from our camp and the camp of the Franks followed him. He offered the sacrifice of the Mass with leavened and unleavened bread, and instituted fasting according to the habit of the Syrians. After his death, however, and the death of those who had followed him, everybody reverted to the ancient habits.

“On Tuesday, 23rd April, 1751, the Maphryān Basil, the Metropolitan Gregory, and the Chorepiscopus George came to us ; and Mar Basil ordained John the great (or the elder) bishop. May their prayer be a rampart to us ! In the year 1595 a Synod was held in the church of Autin Firur ;² its heads were : bishop Alesos (Alexis), priest Franciscus, called the expert, priest Androscon, priest Jacob of the church of Pallurṭi in Malabar, and Archdeacon George, the Governor of the holy churches of Malabar.

¹ The rest of the date is represented in the MS. by a blank.

² The author evidently alludes here to the Synod of Diamper of 1599.

"The names of the Frankish bishops who presided over the church of Barpūsha are: the first Mar Ansholus, the second Mar John, the third Mar Arispolis, the fourth Mar Ausol, and the fifth Mar Lubius.

"The names of the Frankish bishops who presided over the church of Putashra are: the first Mar John, the second Mar Anthony, the third Mar John, the fourth Mar Salvador, the fifth a Metropolitan from Malabar called Caryāti, the sixth the priest Thomas Gubernator, and the seventh Paul, a bishop from Malabar."

(k)

We have excluded from the scope of our enquiry the account of Eastern and Western authors and travellers of the lower Middle Ages, but we cannot refrain from referring to those of them who may help us to get a rough estimate of the number of Christians who inhabited India at that period.

A fifteenth century writer, Conti, speaks as follows (about 1440) of the Nestorians in India: "In Mailapore the body of St. Thomas lies honourably buried in a very large and beautiful church; it is worshiped by heretics, who are called Nestorians, and inhabit the city to the number of a thousand. These Nestorians are scattered over all India, in like manner as are the Jews among us."¹

Conti further writes: "The inhabitants of Central India are only allowed to marry one wife; in the other parts of India polygamy prevails very generally, excepting among those Christians who have adopted the Nestorian heresy, who are spread over the whole of India."²

In A.D. 1325 there were only about fifteen Christian houses near the shrine of Thomas, and all of them belonging to the Nestorians, "those vile and pestilent heretics."³

Marco Polo⁴ speaks of Christian communities in the Kingdom of Coilum and in the province of Malabar, but gives no numbers.

¹ R. H. Major, *India in the Fifteenth Century* (Hakluyt Society), 1857, ii., 7.

² *Ibid.*, ii., 23.

³ Friar Odoric in *Cathay*, i., 141-142 (Yule-Cordier). The same Odoric makes mention of Christians in the towns of Flandrina and Cingilin, i.e. the Syriac Shingala, or Chrongalore = Cranganore (*ibid.*, p. 133).

⁴ Pp. 353 sqq. and 375 sqq. (edit. Yule-Cordier).

The author of the "Navigation of the Indian Joseph" came to Rome in the time of the Pope Alexander VI., and testified to him in the end of the fifteenth century that there were Nestorian Metropolitans in Cathay and India who had many suffragan bishops: *quibus subsunt multi episcopi*¹ (cf. Al. Assem., *Codex Liturgicus*, xiii., 229).

'Abdīsho' IV., the Patriarch of Babylon, when nominated Patriarch in Rome in 1562, enumerated to Pope Pius IV., *inter alia* the following bishoprics and archbishoprics of India:² "Cuscin (Cochin), archbishopric; Cananore, archbishopric; Goa, archbishopric; Calicut, bishopric, which has under its jurisdiction the town of Caronngol,—*cui subest Caronngol civitas*."

Other authors besides Conti speak of Nestorians as found scattered all over India. For the Eastern parts we have Thomas a Jesu, who writes as follows: "In India etiam Orientali crebræ sunt Nestorianorum familiæ huic Patriarchæ (i.e. the Nestorian Patriarch) subditæ, qui eis episcopos præficere solit."³

Osorius and Jarricus, quoted by Al. Assemani,⁴ speak of numerous Nestorian communities on the River Ganges, and in Central and East India. Another ancient author, Morinus,⁵ speaks of the Nestorian Patriarch as sending bishops and Archbishops to all parts of India, as the Pope of Rome does for the Catholic districts: "Episcopos et archiepiscopos . . . in universam Indiam mittit, non secus ac Pontifex Rom. in regiones Catholicas."

The Jesuit Ludovicus Gusmanus, quoted by Le Quien,⁶ speaks of hundreds of thousands of Indian Christians: "multi in India Christiani sunt, quorum numerus ultra centum quinquaginta millia excurrit, per varia regna divisi . . . Habent ii suum archiepiscopum, episcopos et sacerdotes."

The Patriarch Bar Mama⁷ makes also mention in 1552 of

¹ Giamil, *Genuinæ*, p. 615; *Novus Orbis*, 1555, p. 133; cf. Vincenzo Maria, *Il viaggio all'Indie Orientali*, 1672, p. 140.

² Giamil, *Genuinæ Relationes*, p. 65.

³ *De Conversione omnium gentium*, Antwerp, 1613, p. 258.

⁴ *Codex Liturgicus*, Rome, 1766, vol. xiii., pp. 228-229.

⁵ *Commentarius de Sacris Ordinationibus*, Antwerp, 1695, pp. 364-365.

⁶ *Oriens Christianus*, Paris, 1740, ii., col. 1273.

⁷ S. Giamil, *Genuinæ Relationes*, pp. 17, 24.

Christians all over India. Another Patriarch, Elijah, informs us in A.D. 1610¹ that there were forty thousand Christian families in the South-West Coast of India alone.

At the beginning of the fourteenth century John of Monte Corvino, speaking of the Christians in the maritime districts of India, says: "There are a very few Christians and Jews, and they are of little weight."² For the middle of the same century we have the more important testimony of Marignolli, who in his "Recollections of Eastern Travel"³ speaks of Indian Christians as the masters of the steelyards and the proprietors of the spices of South India. Father Vincenzo Maria⁴ speaks also of the Christians of India as having almost the monopoly of the pepper trade, and adds: "qui habent stateram ponderis totius mundi." Marignolli further asserts⁵ that the king of India "gave St. Thomas a perpetual grant of the public steelyard for pepper and all aromatic spices, and no one dares take this privilege from the Christians but at the peril of death." One of the old grants claimed by the Indian Christians as the charter of their ancient privileges has the following passage: ⁶ "We have given as eternal possession to Iravi Corttan, the lord of the town, the brokerage and due customs of all that may be measured by the *para*, weighed by the balance, stretched by the line, of all that may be counted or carried . . . salt, sugar, musk, and lamp-oil, or whatever it be, namely within the river mouth of Codangulor (Cranganore)."

About A.D. 1443 the vizier of the king of Bidjanagar was a Christian, called Nimah Pazir.⁷

Towards the end of the sixteenth century Christianity had dwindled away to such an extent in many parts of North and Central India that it was the *Padris* (Roman Catholic missionaries) and not the Nestorians who in A.H. 986 brought to the notice of the great Emperor Akbar (A.D. 1556-1605) the Gospel, the Trinity, and the religion of Jesus.⁸ The emperor became so interested that he ordered

¹ S. Giamil, *Genuinæ Relationes*, p. 108.

² *Cathay*, iii., 63.

³ *Ibid*, iii., 217.

⁴ *Op. cit.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, iii., 252-254.

⁶ *The Madras Journal*, 1844, p. 119. See below p. 507.

⁷ *Journey of 'Abdar-Razzāk*, in Major's *India in the Fifteenth Century*, 1857, i., p. 41 (Hakluyt Society).

⁸ *Tārīkh-i Badā'uni*, ii., 260; Elliot, *History of India*, v., 528-529.

his son, Prince Murād, to learn some lessons from the Gospel, and directed Shaikh abu l'Fazl to translate it.¹

Ulughkhāni² and others speak of *Kanisah* and *Kanā'is* of gold, in Rāchūrah and Sirah, plundered in A.D. 1308 and 1310 by 'Alā'ad-Dīn, the tyrant Khilji Sultan of India (A.D. 1296-1316), and by his powerful lieutenant Kāfūr, but in non-Arab countries of the post-classical period of Arabic and Persian the word *Kanisah*, except otherwise stated, commonly refers to a pagan temple and not to a Christian church or Jewish synagogue.

In 1439 the Pope Eugenius IV. wrote as follows to the head of a local dynasty of Malabar :³ "There has often reached us a persistent rumour that Your Serenity and also all who are the subjects of your Kingdom are true Christians." At the close of the fifteenth century a Genoese merchant, Hieronimo di Santo Stefano paid a visit to Calicut about which he said :⁴ "In this town there are several thousand houses inhabited by Christians, and the district is called Upper India" (*sic*).

We will close our quotations with the words of Petrus Strozza who might have got his information from the delegates whom the Nestorian Patriarch had sent to Pope Paul V., whose secretary he was :⁵ "Patriarchæ Nestorianorum amplissima est autoritas, eaque in Indiam sese extendit. Nam Chaldæi, qui Goæ, Cochini, Angamalæ, atque in insula S. Thomæ ante adventum Patrum Societatis Jesu reperiabantur, omnes pariter professione Nestoriani, obediebant Patriarchæ Babylonis."

II. Synods and Bishoprics.

In our work *The Early Spread of Christianity in Central Asia* (p. 27) we quoted the Synodical Canons of 'Abdisho (cap. xix.)

¹ The Roman Catholic missionary who took an important part in the discussion was a Jesuit called Rodolpho Aquaviva from Goa. See Blochmann's *Ā'ini Akbari*, i., 167; Murray's *Discoveries and Travels in Asia*, vol. ii.; Smith's *The Oxford History of India*, 1919, pp. 361-362, 377-378.

² *Zafar al Wālih*, i., 155-156, etc. (edit. Ross).

³ Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, p. 60; *Travancore Manual*, 1906, ii., 147; *Indian Antiquary*, 1923, 158.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Al. Assemani, *Codex Liturgicus*, xiii., 229, quoting also Bzovius for the year 1330.

according to which the Metropolitans of India, China, and Samarkand, and other remote lands were, owing to long distances, exempted from attending the General Synods of the East Syrian Church. There is nothing unusual, therefore, in the fact that the name of no Indian bishop figures among the signatories of the Synods of the Nestorian Church. The only sources of information left to us are, therefore, the canonists of the Church, and the scanty references found in the correspondence of the Patriarchs and the general historians. It will be useful to repeat here the statement ventured at the beginning of this study that all references to Indian bishops in history are always made in connection with the East Syrian or Nestorian Church : another link in the chain of the argument that India has never had an independent Church of its own, or an indigenous hierarchy under its own ecclesiastical chief, independently of the vigorous Christianity that had previously developed in the valley of the Tigris and in the Sasanian Persia.

We will divide this section into two distinct parts. In the first we will give the names of the Christian bishoprics that surrounded India in the North, West, and North-West. As we have already ventured to remark, we believe it to be somewhat improbable that an India hemmed in by land and sea by Christian bishoprics established since about A.D. 225, in Baith Kaṭrāye, Fars, Mesene, Bahrain islands, Baluchistan, and Oman, could have resisted for long the impact of East Syrian and Persian missionaries. For reasons given above, we are in dire need of historical data concerning Christianity in India, but the antiquity and the high number of many ecclesiastical sees which surrounded the country, are a welcome, though a meagre, addition to our store of knowledge.

A.

BISHOPRICS¹ IN THE PROXIMITY OF INDIA.

Ardai. One of the group of islands in the Persian Gulf, which have not yet been identified with safety. See Sachau's *Chronik von Arbela*, p. 26. One of its bishops, Paul, attends the Synod of Isaac in 410² (pp. 273 and 618).

¹ In alphabetical order.

² The references, unless otherwise stated, are to the *Synodicon Orientale*, 1902 (edit. Chabot).

Ardashir-Kurra, the more modern town of Firūzābād, south-east of Kāzīrūn, in the province of Fars. For more details, see Le Strange's *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, pp. 256-257. Mentioned in the Synods of the years 424 and 540.

Ardashir Pharihd, in Baluchistan of our days. Mentioned in the Synod of Yahb Alaha of 420 (p. 276).

Baith Hūzāye, in Persian and Arabic : Khuzistan, north of the Persian Gulf. The metropolis of this very ancient East Syrian ecclesiastical province was Baith Lāpāt. It was already the seat of a bishop in A.D. 225.¹

Baith Kaṭrāye, the country of the Kaṭars, the Arabian region on the west coast of the Persian Gulf, facing the islands of Baḥrain. It was a bishopric in A.D. 225.² Its bishops are mentioned in the Synods of Isaac in 410 (p. 273). One of its bishops, Thomas, attends also the Synod of the Patriarch George in 676 (p. 482). The diocese represented a good belt of all north-east Arabia. The Patriarch Isho'-Yahb III. (650-660) has five long letters addressed to the bishops and the monks of Baith Kaṭrāye on the occasion of a schism.³ The bishops of the country were under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Riwardashir.⁴

Baith Lāpāt. One of the most important sees of the Nestorian Church, after that of the Patriarch. It was the metropolis of Baith Hūzāye, called afterwards Gundi-Shapur. It was a bishopric in A.D. 225.⁵ Eleven of its Metropolitans are mentioned in *Syn. Orient.* for the general Synods which assembled in the years 410, 420, 424, 486, 497, 544, 554, 576, 585, 754, 790. Its first bishops mentioned by name in history go back to 341, i.e. to the persecution of Sapor ; they were called Gadyahb and Sabina.⁶

Bih-Shapur, an episcopal town in the province of Fars. One of its bishops, Abraham, attends the Synod of Aba I. in 544 (p. 332). From it sprang the monk Bar Sahde, who built a monastery near

¹ Mshiha Zkha, in my *Sources Syriacques*, i., 106.

² Mshiha Zkha, *Ibid.*, p. 106.

³ *Liber Epistularum*, in *C.S.C.O.*, pp. 260-283 (of the text).

⁴ Thomas of Marga, *Governors*, ii., 188, etc.

⁵ Mshiha-Zkha, *ibid.*, p. 106.

⁶ Evod. Assemani, *Acta Sanctorum Mart.*, i., 80 ; Bedjan's *Acta Martyrum*, ii., 131.

Harbe, on the Lower Tigris. Isho'denah's *Book of Chastity*, p. 443 (edit. Bedjan).

Darabgird, the well-known town and district of Fars. One of its bishops, Yazd-bozid attends the Synod of Dadisho' in 424, and another one, called Malka, that of Joseph in 554 (pp. 287 and 352).

Darai, possibly the same as the following island of Dairin in the Persian Gulf. One of its bishops, Jacob, attends the Synod of Isho'-Yahb in 585 (pp. 424, 455). See the above *Ardai*, and Sachau's *Chronik von Arbela*, p. 24.

Dairin. One of the islands of Bahrain, the Dārūn of Yākūt (*Buldān*, ii., 537). One of its bishops, Isho'-Yahb, attends the Synod of George in 676 (p. 482). Mentioned by Isho'-Yahb III. in his Epistles (*C.S.C.O.*, p. 267), and mentioned also by Thomas of Marga (*Governors*, ii., 188), as under the jurisdiction of Riwardashir. Cf. Nöldeke's *Geschichte der Perser*, p. 57.

Fars. The province east of the Persian Gulf. Its metropolis was Riwardashir (q.v.). The word *Pares* is used in Syriac, both in the sense of Persia in general, and in that of the province of Fars in particular.

Hagar, in the interior of Bahrain; cf. Yākūt (*Buldān*, iv., 953-954). It was the residence of the Governor of the island. Mentioned by Isho'-Yahb III., in his Epistles (*C.S.C.O.*, p. 267). One of its bishops, Isaac, attends the Synod of Ezechiel in 576, and another, Pusai, is present in the Synod of George in 676 (pp. 387 and 482).

Haṭṭa (Arab. Al-Khaṭṭ), on the coast of the Persian Gulf, in the region known to-day as Aḥsa, not far from Kaṭīf. Mentioned by the Patriarch Isho'-Yahb III., in his Epistles (*C.S.C.O.*, p. 267). One of its bishops, Isaac, attends the Synod of Ezechiel in 576, and another, Shāhīn, is present in the Synod of George in 676 (p. 482).

Hormizd-Ardashir, called afterwards by abbreviation *Hormshir*, the town of Ahwāz, or Sūk al-Ahwāz, on the Kārūn. It was a bishopric in 225.¹ Its first bishop mentioned by name in history is John, martyred in 341.² Nine of its bishops are mentioned in the nine Nestorian Synods held between 410 and 605. It is mentioned eighteen times in the Nestorian Synods.

¹ Mshiha-Zkha, in my *Sources Syriques*, i., p. 106.

² E. Assemani, *Act. San. Mart. (ibid.)*; Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum*, ii., 131.

Islands (in Syriac *Gazrātha*). The word designates in the Synods of the East Syrian Church all the islands situated in the Persian Gulf ; they contained the following bishoprics : Ardai, Darai, Dairin, Mashmahij, Rūḥa, Tālwān, Todūru (q.v.) (pp. 273 and 276) ; the word includes also the island of Socotra.

Islands of the Sea, or Maritime Islands. The words designate all the Islands in the Arabian Sea (pp. 619, 620).

Istahr, in the province of Fars, not far from the ancient Persepolis. One of its bishops, Zādoi, is mentioned in the Synod of Dadisho' in 424 (pp. 276, 285). Mentioned also by the Canonist Elijah (Assemani, *Bibl. Orient.*, ii., 459). Near it was the monastery of the monk George (Isho' denāḥ, *Book of Chastity*, p. 496 edit. Bedjan).

Karka de Laidan, in Khuzistan, north of Susa, near the ruins of Iwān-i-Kark of our days. Eight of its bishops sign the decrees of eight Eastern Synods from 420 to 605.

Karka de Maishan, town between the Tigris and the Kārūn, towards the present town of Baṣrah. Seven of its bishops attend the seven Synods of the East Syrian Church held between 410 and 605. It was the ancient capital of the province of Mesene.

Kirman, the capital of the well-known province of South-West Persia. Its bishopric is attested by the Canonist Elijah (Assemani, *Bibl. Orient.*, ii., 459).

K'zsh, the island of Kīs, in the Persian Gulf, towards Kaṭar. Its bishop, David, was a contemporary of the Patriarch Aba I. in 552.

Mashkna de Kurdo, a bishopric in Fars. Ardaḳ, its bishop, attends in 424 the Synod of Dadisho' (p. 285).

Mashmahīg, in Arabic Samāhij, a town in the island of Muḥarrak. Two of its bishops, Baṭṭai and Elijah, are mentioned in the Synod of Isaac in 410 (pp. 274-275). Mentioned by Isho'-Yahb III., in his Epistles (in *C.S.C.O.*, p. 267).

Mazon, the Persian name of the district of 'Umān (Oman), on the southern parts of the Arabian side of the Persian Gulf. One of its bishops, Yoḥannan, attends the Synod of Dadisho' in 424 ; another bishop, David, is present at the Synod of Aba I. in 544, while another bishop, Samuel, signs the decrees of the Synod of Ezechiel in 576 ; a fourth bishop, Stephen, is found in the Synod of George in 676.

Nahrgur, between Maishan and Ahwāz. Its Persian official name was Abz-Ḳubād. Seven of its bishops attend the seven Synods of the East Syrian Church held between 410 and 605.

Pherat, or *Pherat de Maishan*. Very near, and almost identical with, the modern town of Baṣrah, which it often represents. It was a bishopric in 225.¹ Thirteen of its bishops attend the thirteen Synods of the East Syrian Church held between 410 and 790. Its first bishop mentioned by name in history goes back to the persecution of Sapor; he was called Bolida.²

Ram-Hormizd, a town in Khuzistan, called in our days Rumiz. Two of its bishops, Mihr-Shapur and 'Enanisho, attend the Synods of Ezechiel in 576, and of Isho'-Yahb in 585, respectively.

Rima, or (*Baith Rima*), an ancient town of the province of Maishan (Mesene). Sachau³ has discussed the precise geographical position of the town, and inclines to a place between Karkha and Ḳārūn, near Suḵ al-Ahwāz, which is possible. Eight of its bishops are mentioned with eight Synods held in the years 410, 424, 486, 497, 544, 554, 585, 605. The town, however, is mentioned in history before 410 under the name of Rimiyun. The *Chronique de Seert*⁴ asserts that the ascetic 'Abdisho converted many pagans in it about A.D. 360, and what is more important for our purpose, that from it he went south to Baḥrain, where he built a monastery.

Riwardashir (called afterwards Ri-Shahr). The metropolis of the province of Fars. It was situated north-west of the present town of Bushire on the river Tāb. We have seen that the Metropolitans of this city had much to do with the bishops of India proper, and probably all the bishops of India before about A.D. 330 were under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Riwardashir. In the time of the Patriarch George (661-680), Riwardashir ruled also over all Baith Ḳatrāye. See Thomas of Marga's *Book of Governors*, ii., 188. This was also the case during the Patriarchate of Isho'-Yahb III. (650-660); see his *Liber Epistularum*, in *C.S.C.O.*, pp. 247-283. Its Metropolitans are mentioned by the annalists 'Amr and Māri, down to the twelfth century; see for 'Amr, *De Pat. Nest.*, pp.

¹ Mshiḥa-Zkha, *ibid.*, p. 106.

² E. Assemani, *Acta San. Mart.*, i., 41; Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum*, ii., 311.

³ *Ausbreitung*, p. 50.

⁴ *Pat. Orient.*, v., 311.

43, 55, 61, and for Mari, *De Pat. Nest.*, pp. 87, 89, 93, 97, 101, 102, 133. The inhabitants of the town dealt much in pearls that came to them from the Persian Gulf. Isho'denah's *Book of Chastity*, p. 468 (edit. Bedjan).

Rūha, in the Persian Gulf; mentioned once in the Synods in A.D. 424.

Shūshtar, *Shūshtre*, or *Shushtrīn*, the well-known town of Khuzistan, on the Gargar or Dujayl. Thirteen of its bishops are mentioned in connection with the East Syrian Synods. Near it was found the famous monastery of the monk Shabor (Isho'denah's *Book of Chastity*, p. 476).

Socotra. The island is not mentioned by name in the *Synodicon*, but is included in the group called the "Islands," which had a bishop in 410 (p. 273). Its episcopal see is attested by Cosmas Indicopleustes. See pp. 439 and 461. In the life of Yabī Alaha III., the head of the famous Mongol Embassy to the West, 'Amr¹ mentions a bishop of the island called Cyriacus. Māri² speaks of a bishop sent to it by the Patriarch Sabrisho'-Zanbūr (1063-1072). The Canonist Elijah of Damascus³ gives Socotra as a Metropolitan see. See Assem., iv., 602-603, and W. Germann, *Zeitsch. f. hist. Theol.*, 1874, p. 227.

Sūs, or *Shūsh*. The well known Susa. The first of its known bishops is Miles, who suffered martyrdom on the 3rd November, 341.⁴

Talwān, an island in the Persian Gulf, mentioned in the *Syn.* in 424.

Todūrū (vowels uncertain). Possibly to be read also *Torūdū*, or *Tārūt*, the island of the group of Bahrain. Its bishop is referred to in the Synod of Isaac in 410.

Ubullā, a city on the Persian Gulf between the modern Baṣrah and Mohammerah. Sachau⁵ has referred to all the passages of the Arab geographers who speak of it. Le Strange⁶ locates it in the

¹ *De Pat. Nest. Commentaria*, p. 72. Cf. Assem., *B.O.*, ii., 456

² *De Pat. Nest.*, p. 110.

³ Assem., *B.O.*, ii., 459.

⁴ Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*, ii., 260-281.

⁵ *Ausbreitung*, p. 51.

⁶ *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, p. 44.

S.E. angle of the "great island" formed by the two great canals of Nahr Ma'kil and Nahr al-Ubullah, on the way from Baṣrah to the Gulf. 'Amr¹ mentions Timon, one of its Metropolitans at the time of the Patriarch Narsai (524-535).

B.

BISHOPRICS IN INDIA PROPER.

The first bishop of India mentioned by name in history is Dūdi or David, who sailed from Baṣrah in about A.D. 295 (see above, p. 450). This bishop must presumably have had his seat somewhere near the Malabar Coast.

The second bishop of which history makes mention is John, who in the Council of Nicæa of 325 signs himself "bishop of the Great India and Persia."² If historical this John must have presumably been the bishop of a town in North India, close to the frontiers of Persia proper.

In the signatures to the decrees of the Council of Nicæa, as reproduced by Cyzicenus,³ the same entry is found: "Joannes Persa, Ecclesiis in tota Persia et Magna India." In 1908⁴ I treated as a fable the presence in the Council of Nicæa of this John the Persian, and for *Persia* I substituted *Perrhe*, on the Upper Euphrates. Against this view may be urged the fact that Eusebius of Cæsarea was present at the Council, and that in his *De Vita Constantini*,⁵ he actually makes mention of a bishop of Persia as present in the Council: "Quidam etiam ex Perside episcopus Synodo interfuit." The presence, therefore, in the Council of Nicæa of a bishop John, from one of the numerous sees of Persia of the beginning of the fourth century, preferably Riwardashir, is not altogether impossible. Michael the Syrian expressly states in his history⁶ that this John the Persian attended the Council of Nicæa. We must admit, however, that in a passage of Michael the Syrian quoted above, the expression "Great India" is used of Ethiopia and Arabia Felix

¹ *De Pat. Nest.*, p. 38.

² Labbe's *Sacrosancta Concilia*, ii., 235. See also *Patrum Nicænorum Nomina* (Bibl. Teubner).

³ *Pat. Gr.*, lxxxv., 1342 sq. The author, however, is not very reliable.

⁴ In my *Sources Syr.*, i., 125-126.

⁵ *Pat. Gr.*, viii., 51.

⁶ i., 250.

combined. Speaking of the Council of Nicæa, Barsalibi, another well-known West Syrian writer says: "Among the Fathers of the Council Jacob of Nisibin and Ephrem his pupil, Ithalaha of Edessa, Māra of Macedonopolis, and John of Persia, were Syrians."¹

The third bishop of which we have any traces is Joseph of Edessa, who in A.D. 345 was sent by the Catholicos of the East to the coast of Malabar.² The general information given by the document which we have translated above may not be accurate in every detail, but we have no serious reason as yet to deny absolutely the historicity of Joseph himself.

We have already endeavoured to show that the Christians of North-West India were in very early times under the jurisdiction of the Persian Metropolitans of Fars. This last Nestorian see is indeed very ancient. According to the Nestorian canonist Ibn at-Ṭayib,³ the see of Fars was raised to an Archbishopric by the Patriarch Isaac (A.D. 399-410), but a hint is given by another Nestorian canonist, 'Abdisho,⁴ that this Archbishopric "was created and organised" by the Patriarch Yahb-Alaha (A.D. 415-420). Soon, however, the Christians of India proper increased in number to such an extent that a special Metropolitan see with some six to twelve suffragan bishops had to be created for them. This was done, according to Ibn at-Ṭayib,⁵ by the Patriarch Isho'-Yahb II., (A.D. 628-643); 'Abdisho⁶ also appears in this respect to be in harmony with Ibn at-Ṭayib. The former canonist further states that in rank the Metropolitan of India took precedence of that of China, and the Metropolitan of China of that of Samarkand.

The authority of the Patriarchs over the Metropolitan of India seems to have been challenged more than once by the more ancient see of Fars, as we have seen in the case of the Patriarchs Isho'-Yahb III., and Timothy I.;⁷ the reason for this seems to be sought, in our opinion, in the natural and explicable reversion that the Archbishops

¹ The unpublished treatise to the deacon Rabban Isho'; in Syr. MS., Mingana, No. 12, in Rendel Harris Library, Birmingham, fol. 137b.

² S. Giamil, *Genuinæ Relationes*, pp. 578-579.

³ We have given the whole of his text in our *Early Spread of Christianity in Central Asia*, pp. 74-75.

⁴ We gave also the whole of his text in our above study, pp. 75-76.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁷ See above, pp. 464, 467, and 493, and cf. Noldeke's *Geschichte der Perser*, p. 19.

of Fars had towards the new idea of detaching India from their jurisdiction, and handing it over to the direct jurisdiction of the Patriarch. As long as there was no special Metropolitan for India, all its bishops owed them obedience, but once it had a Metropolitan of its own, it had to be administered directly by him under the supervision of the Patriarch. As it was impossible for a Metropolitan to have jurisdiction over another Metropolitan, the Archbishops of Fars refused for a time to adhere to the Patriarchal decree, and it is entirely due to the zeal, prudence, and ability of two strong Patriarchs : Isho'-Yahb III., and Timothy I. that a greater schism did not occur in the Nestorian Church over the question of India and its Metropolitan.

In our study mentioned above, we have also referred to the statement of 'Amr¹ to the effect that in the fourteenth Christian century, the Metropolitan of India was the fifteenth in rank among all the Metropolitans of the Nestorian Church. It is deplorable, however, that neither Ibn at-Ṭayib, nor 'Abdisho, nor 'Amr, mention the district or the town of India in which the Metropolitan had his seat in early times ; neither have our early Syriac sources any indication of the precise seats of his suffragan bishops. They have in this respect rendered us a disservice, which we feel reluctant to forgive and forget. It is only from late Syriac and European sources that we even hear of Malabar as a flourishing centre of Christianity in South India. These late Syriac documents, which are beyond the scope of our enquiry, give Angamale and Shingala (Chrongalore) as the seats of the Nestorian Archbishop, but he is sometimes mentioned also in connection with other towns.

In a historical order the next bishop of India of whom we have any record is a certain Thomas Cana, who seems to have lived towards the end of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth centuries, say between A.D. 795-824. His seat seems to have been a town in the coast of Malabar. Assemani² has already refuted the fantastic sayings of some authors quoted by Raulin.³ There is hardly any reasonable doubt that if this bishop Thomas has any historical personality at all, he is to be counted among the monks whom the Patriarch

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

² *Bibl. Orient.*, iv., 442.

³ *Historia Ecc. Malabaricæ*, p. 8.

Timothy I. selected, as the historian Thomas of Marga¹ informs us, ordained bishops and sent to all the countries of the East. Even Lequien² is forced to write, "Iste Mar Thomas juxta magnum Chronicum Belgicum de Babylonia in Indiam venerat, et ipsi ab Indiarum rege dono datam fuisse civitatem quæ Ulna vel Ultima dicitur." He is also mentioned in the Syriac document translated above, p. 481. See further note of p. 476.

Some twelve years after the time of this Thomas, history has preserved to us the names of two other bishops of Malabar: Mar Sabrisho' (hitherto erroneously read as Mar Sapor (see below, p. 508), and Mar Piruz. Gouvea, quoted by Raulin,³ calls them *Xabro* and *Prodh* respectively. Assemani⁴ believes that they were sent to India by the Nestorian Patriarchs in about A.D. 992. Lequien⁵ tentatively fixes the year as 880: "Anno circiter 880 duo Episcopi Xabro vel Sabra seu Jesu-Sabran (read, however, Sabrisho'; see below, p. 508) et Proud (read, however, Piruz), Chaldaei paulo post fundatam urbem Coulan venerunt ex Babylonia, viri sanctitate insignes, quorum memoria solemnitas fuit in Ecclesiastico Malabarensium officio. Hi multas Ecclesias extruxerunt, auctaque est eorum tempore Christiana religio in regno Diamper." We adhere (and we believe rightly) to the date fixed in the Indian tradition by the Malabar Syriac document that we translated above (p. 477), which mentions for the arrival in India of the two bishops the year 823. This date is also somewhat fixed by the charter spoken of below on p. 507.

The Syriac MS. of the Vatican (No. iv) was written in 1556 in India in a church built in honour of the two above bishops. See the colophon of this MS. below, p. 502.

For the years A.D. 1122-1129 Raulin⁶ and Lequien⁷ give the name of another bishop of Malabar, John; but we have no mention of him in any Syriac document. We have, however, much more trustworthy information about another bishop of India called also John, who in 1490 was ordained and sent to Malabar by the Nestorian Patriarch Simon III. See his history in the Syriac document which we have translated above (p. 468). Another Nestorian bishop

¹ *Liber Superiorum*, pp. 261-262 (edit. Bedjan).

² *Oriens Christianus*, ii., 1273 (note).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 8. ⁴ *Ibid.*, iv., 442.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ii., 1274.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 435 (note a).

⁷ *Ibid.*, ii., 1275-1277.

mentioned in this document is Yahb Alaha, who in 1503 was ordained by the Patriarch Elijah IV., the successor of the preceding Simon.

After this bishop begins modern history, with conditions more or less similar to those prevalent in contemporary times. Of the bishops living under these conditions, it is not our intention to speak.

III. REMAINING TRACES AND MONUMENTS.

A.

Liturgical Manuscripts.

Before the Synod of Diamper of 1599, there were many Syriac MSS. in India, which contained an extensive biblical, liturgical, and patristic literature. The Synod, however, declared that all books which were opposed in any way whatsoever to the doctrine of the Church of Rome were to be burnt without pity. The order was actually carried out at Angamale, Chinganore, and elsewhere. The Biblical MSS. and the office-books of the Hudhra and Gazza were affected only to the extent that they had to be purged of all Nestorian names and Nestorian Saints, and generally amended in accordance with the teaching of the Church of Rome.¹ Cambridge Oo. 1. 22, and other MSS. show signs of such erasures. Rome did at the end of the sixteenth century with the Syrian Church of India what she did in the second half of the nineteenth century with the Syrian Church of Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia. To the breviaries of the Nestorians and the Jacobites who, yielding to the promptings of the missionaries of the Church of Rome, accepted in the last few decades the infallibility and the absolute supremacy of the Pope, the decrees of the Synod of Diamper have been rigorously applied at the instance of the Congregation *De Propaganda Fide*. There is nothing East Syrian or Nestorian left for the historian and the impartial scholar in the *Breviarium Chaldaicum* printed at Leipzig in 1886-1887 (vols. i.-iii.), nor is there anything West Syrian or Jacobite in the *Breviarium*

¹ For illustrations of the alterations, see Geddes, *History of the Church in Malabar*, pp. 151, 189, 231 sqq., and 362; and S. A. Cook, *South Indian Syriac MSS.*, pp. xviii.-xxv. of the Cambridge catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts.

juzta ritum eccles. Antioch. Syrorum, printed at Mosul in 1886-1898 (vols. i.-vii.).

It would be useful here to give the titles of some East Syrian MSS. burnt by order of the Synod :¹ (1) The book of the infancy of our Saviour, or the History of our Lady (doubtless the Protevangelium); (2) The book of John barialdon (doubtless the life of the monk Busnāya by John bar Khaldun of the tenth century); (3) The book of the Fathers² (doubtless the one of which a fragment has survived in Cambridge Oo. 1. 29)³; (4) The book of the Pearl (of 'Abdisho'); (5) The book of Maclamatās (doubtless 'Abdisho's "book of Paradise" called *Mākāmāt*); (6) The life of Abbot Isaiah (doubtless Dadisho' Kaṭraya's commentary on Abba Esha'ya, see above, p. 455); (7) The book of the Synods (doubtless the *Synodicon Orientale*); (8) The book of Timothy the Patriarch (doubtless the book of his letters); (9) The letter which came down from heaven; (10) The Uguard or "Rose" (doubtless the book of the hymnologist Warda); (11) The Camiz (doubtless the book of the hymnologist Khamis); (12) The book of the Commentary on the Gospels wherein it is stated that 1 John and James are not the work of the Apostles (possibly the book of the Commentaries of Theodore of Mopsuestia); (13) The book of Rabban Hormizd; (14) The book of Narsai; (15) The book of Saints containing the lives of over a hundred Nestorians—many of them current separately; (16) The book called Parsiman; ⁴ (17) The book of Lots.⁴

According to Dr. S. Cook,⁵ other allusions to the literature of the Indian Christians are made by Ramusis in 1554; he further quotes the following statement of Paulinus à S. Bartholomæo :⁶ "Circumfertur pariter in ecclesiis Malabarensibus Chaldaicus liber inscriptus *Nuhara* seu explicatio in iv., Evangelia auctore Jesu Dada (doubtless Isho'dad of Merv) episcopo Asoriensi Maronita (sic!) cod. MS. . . . ; Sacra Scriptura manuscripta; et dictionarium Syro-Chaldaicum."

¹ Uhlius, *Thesauri Epistolici Lacroziani*, Leipzig, 1742, vols. i.-iii. (passim), and Cook (*ibid.*).

² Cf. W. Germann, *Die Kirche der Thomas Christen*, 1877, p. 353 (note).

³ Ita Cook, see *Cambridge Catalogue of Syriac MSS.*, by Wright and Cook, p. 1099 sqq.

⁴ These books are unknown to me.

⁵ Ita Cook, see *Cambridge Catalogue of Syriac MSS.*, by Wright and Cook, p. xxii.

⁶ *India Orientalis Christiana*, Rome, 1794, p. 255.

It is not surprising, therefore, that only few Syrian-Indian MSS. written before 1599 have come down to posterity. A relentless war waged on them in India since that date has made them very scarce, and by a curious irony of fate the Vatican library contains nearly all of them.¹ They are :

(a).

Cod. Syr. Vat., N. xxii. It contains a church Lectionary of the Pauline Epistles. The colophon, which informs us that it was written in A.D. 1301, is as follows :² (fol. 93b) : "This holy book was written in the royal, renowned, and famous city of Shingala in Malabar, in the country of India, in the Church of the illustrious martyr Mar Cyriacus—May all the faithful be helped by his prayers ! —Amen !—in the time of the great pilot and director of the holy Catholic Church of the East, and its shining light which illuminates it in all directions, the first of all spiritual shepherds, the chief of chiefs, the head of heads, and the Father of Fathers, our blessed and holy Father Mar Yahb Alaha V., the Turk, Catholicos Patriarch of the East—May God prolong his life and lengthen his days for the good government of His Church and the pride of its children ! Amen !—

"And in the time of bishop Mar Jacob, Metropolitan and director of the holy see of the Apostle St. Thomas, that is to say, our director and the director of all the holy Church of Christian India. May God grant him strength and help that he may govern us with zeal and direct us according to the will of his Lord, and that he may teach us His commandments and make us walk in His ways, till the end of time, through the intercession of the holy Apostle St. Thomas and all his colleagues ! Amen !

"This holy book with all its rights and requirements was finished on a Wednesday, in June, of the year 1612 of the Greeks (A.D. 1301), and Glory be to God. May His pity and grace be with us. Amen ! Amen ! It was written by the weak scholar and the sinner, Zechariah, son of Joseph, son of Zechariah, one of the pupils

¹ Assemani's *Bibliot. Apost. Vaticanæ cod. manuscr. Catalogus* (1758-1759), where counted as Nos. ii.-iv., xvii., xlv., lxxxv., lxxxviii., cxxviii.

² We translate the colophons according to the text printed by S. Giamil in his *Genuine Relations*, pp. 571-575, 584 and 586.

and relatives of our above Father and director, and by name a deacon, from the above-mentioned town Shingala.”

(*b*).

From A.D. 1301 to A.D. 1510, an interval of 209 years, there is no Syrian Indian MS. in existence. Cod. Syr. Vat., xvii., contains a Syriac New Testament written (fol. 477) by Jacob, Metropolitan of India, in the town of Shingala (Chrongalore), in the Church of the Apostle Thomas, on a Thursday, the 6th of March, in the year 1821 of the Greeks (A.D. 1510).

(*c*).

Cod. Syr. Vat., N. iv., is dated A.D. 1556, and bears the following colophon (fol. 278) : “ By the help of our Lord we have finished this book of the Prophets ; it was written on a Monday, the 18th of February, in the year 1556 of the birth of our Lord. I, priest Jacob, the disciple of Mar Jacob, and from the village of Phuraor, have written this book in the holy Church of Mar Shapur and Mar Yapot (Piruz ?). May the holy name of God be praised for ever. Amen ! ”

(*d*).

S. Giamil (*ibid.*, pp. 601-602) makes mention of two Syriac MSS. written in India in A.D. 1557 by the Metropolitan Joseph, whose chequered life he well discusses on pp. 31, note, 85-86, 94-95, 600-602. The two MSS. contain the *Synodical Canons* of ‘Abdisho’, and the prayers of the novices in their cells.

(*e*).

The next MS. in point of date is Cod. Syr. Vat., N. ii., which is dated A.D. 1558 ; its colophon is : “ This holy book of the New Testament was finished in the Church of our Lady Mary, the mother of light and life, in the blessed town of Angamale, on a Monday, the 9th of the blessed month of May, in the year 1558 of the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and in the year 1869 of the blessed Greeks, and in the year of Kollam : 733.¹

(*f*).

Next comes Cod. Sy. Vat., N. iii., dated also A.D. 1558, the colophon of which runs thus (fol. 234b) : “ This book was finished

¹ The Indian era.

on a Wednesday, the 26th of the blessed month of January, in the year 1558 of the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and in the year of Kollam : 733, in the blessed and renowned town of Angamale, in Malabar, in the country of India ; in the holy Church built under the name of our blessed Lady Mary, the mother of light and life. May all the faithful be helped by her prayers ! And may this happen also to me ! Amen ! Amen ! May God be blessed for ever, and may His name be glorified till the end of the world ! The book was written by a weak man and a sinner : George."

(g).

The MS. Cod. Syr. Vat., lxxxv., is dated A.D. 1562, and its colophon (fol. 104b) is as follows : "By the help of our Lord and God we have finished this breviary which is used for all the ferial days of the year, according to the right of the holy monastery of St. Gabriel and St. Abraham, near Mosul, a rite that has been sanctioned by our blessed Fathers, sons of spiritual theology. May perpetual praise be to God, and may His grace be upon us for ever and ever ! Amen !

"This book of Kashkūl was finished on a Tuesday, the 15th of the blessed month of December, in the year 1562 of the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It was written in the blessed and royal town of Angamale, in the holy Church of our Lady, the blessed Mary, mother of light and life—may her prayer be a rampart to us ! —with the hands of the wretched sinner, and weak . . . Simon, son of Simon, who is by name a priest . . . and a native of Angamale."

(h).

We have given above, p. 473, the translation of another Christian Indian MS. preserved in Paris, and dated A.D. 1504.

This exhausts the list of all the Indian MSS. written before the Synod of Diamper. We subjoin below a complete enumeration of all the other MSS. preserved in the public libraries of Europe, and written after the Synod of Diamper :

Bodleian.—The oldest MSS. are MS. Syr. e 5 and 6. The latter is dated A.D. 1734, and the former appears to be somewhat later. These were acquired after Dean Payne Smith wrote his

catalogue. Or. 628 and parts of Or. 623¹ belong to the eighteenth century, and the rest, i.e. Or. 624-626, 631, 655, 666 and 667 are later. In all, eleven MSS.

Paris.—For the Syr. MS. No. 25, see above, p. 473. In the catalogue of Zotenberg there are six MSS. : Nos. 24, 25, 92, 186, 187 and 280, the oldest of which is No. 187, dated A.D. 1689. In all seven MSS.

Leiden.—In the catalogue of De Goeje we find the following MSS. : 1204, 1212-1215, and 18 (cod. Heb. Scal. 18), from which Ludwig de Dieu printed the Syriac Apocalypse in 1627. In all six MSS.

British Museum.—Curiously enough the British Museum does not seem to possess any Indian Christian MS. At least there is none in the Catalogues of Rosen and Forshall, Wright, and Margoliouth. There is, however, some Indian connection in Add. 21, 454 (p. 1167 in Wright's Catalogue).

Cambridge.—A large number of Indian MSS. are preserved at Cambridge,² distinguished by the class mark Oo. 1. The earliest dated are Oo. 1. 7, and Oo. 1. 15, of A.D. 1682 and 1691 respectively. There are in all twenty-four MSS. (vol. ii., pp. 1037-1118 of the Catalogue).

There are in existence some contemporary tracts of a controversial character written by Jacobite Indians, but of them we have no intention to speak. Another Christian Indian literature which is outside the scope of our enquiry, is that which includes books in Malayalam language written in Syriac characters, a kind of a Malayalam Garshūni. Some such MSS. exist in Cambridge (the best specimen being Add. 285), in Paris (Nos. 186 sqq. in Zotenberg's Catalogue), in Leiden (cod. 1215, of which Land has a facsimile reproduction in his *Anecdota Syriaca*, i., tab. B. ii.), but as Burnell has pointed out³ "a few tombstones and similar relics in Travancore show that the Syriac Malayalam alphabet is of recent construction, and that the Syrians originally used only the Vatteluttu character."

¹ In Payne Smith's Catalogue, Nos. 200 and 36.

² For the origin of the collection, see Dr. S. A. Cook's introduction to the catalogue of the MSS., pp. xiii.-xv.

³ *Elements of S. Indian Palæography*, p. 58.

B.

Monuments and Inscriptions.

(a)

In our *The Early Spread of Christianity in Central Asia*, pp. 39-42 of the separate reprint, we spoke of the gravestones found in the province of Semirychensk, in Russian Turkestan. Among the stones discovered there with Syriac inscriptions are some belonging to Christians from India. It is natural to suppose that those Christians were from the north of India rather than the south.

(b)¹

There are in South India four crosses which testify to the existence of a Christian community within its borders.

The first cross was discovered in 1547 on St. Thomas's Mount, near Madras. It has a Pahlawi inscription divided into two unequal parts by another small cross resembling the plus sign in algebra. It is generally ascribed to the seventh or the eighth centuries.

The same Pahlawi inscription with almost identical form of letters appears on the second cross, which is preserved at Kottayam, in North Travancore. Palæographically, therefore, this second cross is not much later than the first.

An interesting controversy arose as to the right reading and translation of the Pahlawi inscription. Pahlawi, especially that form of it which is mixed with Arameo-Syriac words, is difficult to read and translate. Burnell's transcription and translation have generally been believed in this country to contain a more natural meaning of the inscription, which is as follows :

(The first part) : *Yin riyā mn vn drd-i dnmn.*

¹ My authorities for (b) and (c) of this section are: H. Gundert in *The Madras Journal*, vol. xiii., i., 115-164, and ii., 11-14; A. C. Burnell in *The Indian Antiquary*, 1874, 308-316; W. Logan's *The Manual of the Malabar district*, 1887, i., 208, and ii., Appendix xii.; Milne Rae's *The Syrian Church in India*, pp. 114-130, 154-168; the *Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India*, especially *Southern Circle*, 1907-1921; T. K. Joseph in *Indian Antiquary*, 1923, pp. 355-357; K. N. Daniel, *ibid.*, 1924, 185-196, 219-229, 244-251, 257-261; T. K. Joseph in *Young Men of India*, May, 1926.

(The second part) : *Mūn amn mshīḥa af alhā-i mdm af rshd-i* (or *rkhi*) *ai asar bokht.*

(1) "In punishment by the cross (was) the suffering of this (one)."

(2) "(He) who (is) the true Christ, and God above, and guide ever pure."

Haug's translation¹ suggests a slightly different reading for three words, and runs thus : "Who believes in the Messiah and God above and in the Holy Ghost is redeemed through the grace of Him who bore the cross."

The following translation (*ibid.*) given by West seems to us to be far-fetched : "What freed the true Messiah, the forgiving, the upraising, from hardship ? The Crucifixion from the tree and the anguish of this."

A replica of the first cross was in 1921 discovered in North Travancore, at a place called Katamarram, by T. K. Joseph.

We have not seen the original crosses, and the reproductions we saw of them do not enable us to form an independent opinion of the above transcription and translation, but whatever translation is ultimately admitted as final—and we do not believe any of them is final—could not the expression "God above" be considered as a rendering of the Syriac *Alaha Mraima*, "God the Most High" ? And could not Burnell's sentence, "guide ever pure," which has no good Syriac equivalent in the Nestorian breviary and liturgy, be changed into "wise guide," answering to the Syriac *Mdhabbrāna ḥakkima* found in the daily prayer of the Nestorian clergy ?²

The first part of the inscription of the fourth cross, which is also preserved in the Church of Kottayam, is in Estrangeli characters, said to belong to the tenth century,³ and consists of the Syriac quotation of Galat. vi. 14 : "Let me not glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." This quotation takes the place of the first Pahlawi line of the first two crosses.

According to the *Young Men of India* (May, 1926), a fifth cross was discovered two years ago at Muttuchira.

¹ *Beilage Zur Allgemeinen Zeitung*, 1874 (No. 29).

² *Breviarium Chaldaicum*, i.-ii., and iii., p. 272 ; and *Missale juxta ritum Ecclesiae Syrorum Orientalium*, p. 14.

³ I was unfortunately unable to procure a good facsimile of the Syriac characters.

(c)

In the Syriac document which we translated above (see p. 477) it is suggested that the Christians of Malabar secured privileges, including the right of self-government, and of possessing plots of land on which they could build churches and even towns of their own.

There are in existence two copper-plate charters which bear out the information furnished by the document which we have already translated. We will describe them very shortly in the words of Burnell and Rae ; as they are not in Syriac, they are, strictly speaking, outside the limits of this study.

The first charter is a copper instrument—14 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches by 4—written on both sides in old Tamil characters mixed with a good many Grantha letters.¹ Its date is, according to Burnell's calculations, A.D. 774. It is a grant made by King Vira Raghava Chakravarti² to Iravi Korttan of Cranganore, making over to him, as representative head of the Christian community there, the little principality of Manigramam,³ and elevating him to the position of sovereign merchant

The second charter consists of five copper plates bound together, according to the usual custom, by a ring passing through holes pierced in the ends of the several plates. The plates or leaves, as they are sometimes called, contain seven pages of Tamil-Malayalam, apparently written by different hands, and two pages of Pahlawi and Arabic in the Kufi characters, with four signatures in characters that look like Hebrew. The deed was granted about the year 824 with the sanction of the palace-major or commissioner of King Stanu Ravi Gupta, who is said to be identical with Charaman Perumal,⁴ whose name, in the words of Rae, is in the mouth of every child on the coast. It is a legal document by which one Marvan-Sapir-Iso⁵ who had obtained a grant of a piece of land in the neighbourhood of Quilon, transfers the same with due legal formality to the Tarasa Church and community.

¹ Burnell says: "It is now in the possession of one of the rival Syrian Metropolitans of Kottayam."

² On this king, see the Syriac document translated above on p. 477.

³ The name is said to mean "city of gems."
of Kerala.

⁴ See about this name the Syriac documents translated above on p. 480.

⁵ This is undoubtedly the bishop Sapor who is mentioned by our Syriac document (translated above on p. 477) and of whom we spoke on pp. 498, 508.

A particularly interesting point in the charter is that all those who signed the grant as witnesses seem to have come from Persia and Arabia, and were probably emigrants.¹

Two personal, and in our judgment, important, remarks on the charter will close the section : (1) There is no doubt in my mind that the problematic name *Marvan-Sapir-Iso* mentioned in it is the Syriac *Maran Sabr-Isho*, "our Lord Sabrisho." *Mar* is the Syriac title of all bishops, and *Sabrisho* is a very common Syriac name meaning "Jesus is my hope." The name, therefore, of the bishop of India of whom it is spoken above on pp. 477, 498, was not Sapor at all, as hitherto believed, but Sabrisho. This important point in which we cannot read a doubtful conclusion of any kind, disposes of all the hypotheses and unsound remarks written on the subject by Burnell (*ibid.*, p. 314), Rae (*ibid.*, p. 156, 163), and others. (2) Burnell informs us (*ibid.*, p. 310), that in the charter the Church is said to have been built by one *Ishodatavirai*. This proper name also designates without doubt the well-known Syriac name *Isho dad*, formed of a Syriac and Persian compound meaning, "Jesus gave," or "Jesu-datus."

Mr. K. N. Daniel has a long discussion² on the plate kept in the Old Seminary at Kottayam by the Metropolitan Mar Dionysius. With the conclusions drawn by him (*ibid.*, p. 251) as to the date of the grant, mostly from astronomical calculations, I am unable to agree. The date A.D. 230 seems to me to be too early, but even here I am not inclined to close the door to further researches on the subject.

C.

Non-Syriac Indian Tradition.

For the sake of completeness (and for nothing else), we will allude here very shortly to the non-Syriac Indian tradition.³

¹ So believes Haug, *An Old Pahlawi-Pazand Glossary*, p. 82. We believe, however, that they were Indian Christians with Syrian Christian names.

² *Indian Antiquary*, 1924, 185 sqq.

³ Logan, *ibid.*, i., 276 sqq.; Medlycott, *ibid.*, p. 132 sqq.; Milne Rae, *ibid.*, pp. 162, 373-374, and especially P. J. Thoma's *The South Indian Tradition of the Apostle Thomas*, in "Centenary Supplement" to *J.R.A.S.*, 1924, pp. 213-223, and T. K. Joseph in the *Young Men of India*,

(a).

There are non-Syriac Malabar accounts of the Apostle Thomas in scattered songs and ballads, the most authoritative collection of which is a poetical work of 450 lines entitled *Thoma Parvam*, composed in Malayalam, probably in A.D. 1601, by Maliekel Thoma Rambān, forty-eighth in descent from the ancestor "Thoma," who received baptism from the Apostle Thomas' own hand. The subject matter of the song is a detailed itinerary of St. Thomas in South India, with vivid accounts of his doings in various centres. It begins with the journey of Thomas, accompanied as usual by the merchant Aban (= Habban), and ends with his martyrdom in A.D. 72, when he was stabbed to death near Mailapore by a company of Hindu priests. The narrative even makes Thomas sail from Mailapore for Malacca and China.

It would be useless to emphasise the fact that these traditions are a dim echo of the Syriac *Acta*, and that apart from this fact there is as much history in them as in some good stories of the Arabian Nights entertainments. To say more than this would be an insult to the intelligence of the historian.

(b).

It seems that the tradition of Thomas's mission in South India is not confined to Malabar Christians, but that it is shared by their Hindu neighbours. There is apparently a collection of Hindu legends concerning the Apostle in a Brahmin work called *Kēralolpatti*. They tell us that a certain foreigner, Thoman, who is spoken of as an opponent of all vedas, came to Malabar and converted to his "Bouddha" faith many prominent people of the land, including the king, whose name is given as Bana Perumal.

As we have no means for ascertaining whether the above Thoman was the Apostle Thomas, or the legendary merchant Thomas of

May, 1926, etc. See also Nagan Aiya, *Travancore State Manual*, ii., 122; Richards, *The Indian Christians of St. Thomas* (1908); and D'Cruz, *St. Thomas the Apostle in India*. Cf. also some authors mentioned above, p. 435. The earlier sources are: Maffei, *Historiarum Indicarum Libri* xvi., Bergomi, 1747, i., 49; Barbosa, *Delle Navigazioni et Viaggi*, Venetia, 1550, 339; G. Correa, *Lendas da India*, Lisboa, 1855-1864, i., 365, 660, 683 (Correa went to India in 1514).

Jerusalem (see above, p. 476), or the problematic bishop Thoma Cana (see above, p. 481), we will simply note the tradition, and till fuller light dawns relegate it to the depth of oblivion.

What India gives us about Christianity in its midst is indeed nothing but pure fable. See the Syriac documents on pp. 475, 480, and 482, with which the two above non-Syriac collections seem to coincide.

APPENDIX.

In the course of our study we have referred to or quoted some unpublished Syriac texts. All the references but one are to MSS. of my own collection in Rendel Harris Library, Birmingham; the one MS. which does not belong to this collection is in Holland. For the benefit of Syriac scholars we give below the text of all these quotations and references, but without repeating the numbers of the folios of the MSS., which have already been given in the body of the work.

From p. 455 (concerning Dadīsho' Katrāya):

[illegible]

From p. 455 (concerning the life of Abraham Kashkrāya) :

[illegible]

۱۰. منہ سے اُنکے اپنے اپنے دلوں میں جتنی باتیں چھپی ہوئی تھیں، وہ سب اُن کے سامنے آگئیں۔
 ۱۱. وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر... وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر...
 ۱۲. وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر... وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر...
 ۱۳. وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر... وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر...
 ۱۴. وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر... وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر...
 ۱۵. وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر... وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر...
 ۱۶. وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر... وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر...
 ۱۷. وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر... وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر...
 ۱۸. وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر... وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر...
 ۱۹. وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر... وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر...
 ۲۰. وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر... وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر، وہ سب باتیں سن کر...

[illegible][illegible]

¹The Syriac style is full of grammatical and lexicographical mistakes, and is altogether unclassical.

[illegible]

1. אֲנִי מֵיִן לְהַפְרִיחַ מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ
 2. מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ
 3. מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ
 4. מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ
 5. מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ
 6. מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ
 7. מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ
 8. מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ
 9. מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ
 10. מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ וְנִינָה מִלֵּךְ

[illegible][illegible]

