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Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

The People of India, Volume Eight

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TODA MEN.--TODA WOMEN.

to find a better sale for their produce. This account of themselves is confirmed by the fact that, within my knowledge, the *dry* funeral of two of them has been celebrated at the funeral mound of the Peikis near Ootacamund.

"Little more information is to be derived from foreign sources. The Badagas are said to have come to the hills in consequence of the trouble which followed the fall of Vijayanugger, *circa* about three centuries ago; but their songs and stories depict the Todas much as we see them now. I think, however, that we may infer that the latter were more numerous, from the fact of their having been able to exact their 'guder' in the first instance; whereas now, with all the help afforded by long custom, they have at times difficulty in collecting it. Moreover, there are traces of old mounds long ago deserted, some of which, in the girth of trees which have since grown up in them, have evidently been abandoned for centuries."

The first discovery of the Todas is contained in the journal of the Archbishop of Goa, Alexo de Menegos (Coimbra, 1606). "A report had been made that Christians whose language differed from Malaba, still existed in the Toda Mala, originally converted by St. Thomas, and who had fled from local persecution. This was examined at the Synod of Cochin held in 1599, and in 1602 a priest was dispatched by Francisco Roy, the first bishop of the Syrian Catholic Church, to collect information. He returned with a good deal of information as to the mode of life of the Todas, but could discover no tidings of Christians. The Todas could give no account of their own origin: they simply said that they had heard their ancestors came from the east; that one party settled on the hills, and another descended into the plains."

F. Vincenzo, a Carmelite friar, in his voyage to the East Indies, mentions the Todas, but at second hand only, his information having been obtained on the coast, and it is necessarily very meagre.

From the Todas themselves, Mr. Brecks obtained three legends, which are too long to quote here, but which lead to no intelligible conclusion as to the origin or the religion of the tribe, and certainly have no traces of Christian legend in them. "If not Christian, however," observes Mr. Brecks, "the Toda religion is singular enough. The traces of element worship and strong pastoral colouring are almost Vedic, while the omission from their pantheon of the regular gods of the plains, in any of their innumerable forms, indicate long isolation. Some few of their customs resemble those of the various Kol tribes. The similarity of the funeral rites of the Ho and Mundah Kols of Nagpoor have already been noticed; the Larka Kols have the same singular law of inheritance, by which the house becomes the property of the younger son. They also offer a young buffalo once a year, like the Peikis, but it is to the goddess Bhowani.

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