

## MADRAS PRESIDENCY

**O**FFICIALLY known as the Presidency of Fort St. George, this district occupies, with its native States, the whole of the southern part of the Peninsula of India and has an area of some 151,162 square miles, the Native States, the chief of which are Travancore and Cochin, claiming of this area some 10,087 square miles. It has on the east or Bay of Bengal, a coast line of about 1,200 miles and on the west or Arabian Sea one of about 450 miles. With, however, the exception of Madras itself, which has an artificial harbour, the whole coast is deficient in harbours of importance. The centre of the Presidency is occupied by a plateau varying in height from 1,000 to 3,000 feet and on either side, running roughly parallel with the coast are the eastern and western ghats, which meet in the Nilgiri Hills in the south.

The rivers, which flow from west to east, drain rather than irrigate the country, the chief being the Godavari, Kistna and Cauvery, each of which in its junction with the sea forms a fertile delta, which is, to a large extent independent of a rainfall that generally speaking is of an uncertain nature. The rivers in their descent from the central lofty table land to the lower elevations are marked by a series of magnificent waterfalls of surpassing beauty and scenic effect.

The population in 1911 was 41,402,900, or, including Native States, 46,215,000. Of this Hindus account for 89 per cent., Mahomedans for 6 and Christians for 3 per cent., but, as regards the last mentioned percentage, small though it be, it may be mentioned that Madras Presidency contains more Christians than the rest of India. The majority of the people are of Dravidian race and the principal Dravidian languages, Tamil and Telugu, are spoken by 15 and 14 million persons respectively. Of every 1,000 people 407 speak Tamil, 377 Telugu, 74 Malayalam, 37 Canarese and 23 Hindustani.

Over 70 per cent. of the population is connected with agriculture, 48 per cent. having a direct interest as landowners or tenants. About 80 per cent. of the cultivated area is under food crops. Rice and the millets each account for some 10 million acres, cotton and oil seeds each some 3½ million acres, while about 21,000 acres are under tea and 51,000 acres under coffee, of which fragrant berry Madras with the Native State of Coorg has, so far as India is concerned, practically a monopoly. Tobacco is also extensively grown. The picturesque cocoon is universally cultivated, especially in the coastal districts and supplies not only a thousand and one wants but provides employment for a large number of people. Condiments, spices and drugs also claim considerable attention.

In trade and industry Madras is rather at a disadvantage as compared with the sister Presidencies of Bengal and Bombay, the former with its port of Calcutta and a monopoly of the jute industry and its enormous coal fields and the latter with the port of Bombay and its cotton and textile industries and Karachi with its grain trade. Comparative poverty in readily exploitable mineral wealth and the difficulty of coal supply prohibit a very large industrial development, but excellent work both in reviving decadent industries and testing new ones, in which government lends a ready assistance, is now being done. Manganese, mica and graphite are among the chief minerals receiving attention, the output of the first named in 1912 being some 117,000 tons of a value of £133,000.

The literate population numbers 3,130,000 and of every

1,000, 135 men and 13 women can read and write, while of every 1,000 six are literate in English, but the total number of women literate in English is only 4,000. There were in 1910-11, 30 Arts Colleges, 5 Professional Colleges, 558 Secondary Schools and 23,426 Primary Schools for males and for females, 1 Arts College 248 Secondary Schools and 9,000 Primary Schools. In addition to these, all of which are Public Institutions, there were 366 advanced and 4,774 elementary private institutions for males and about 150 for females. The total number of scholars in educational institutions of all kinds was 1,215,725.

Madras is well supplied with railway communication and at the present time important steps are being taken to link up its railways, and through those the railways of India with Ceylon and the mail and steamship services using the Port of Colombo. The Island of Ceylon is separated from the Mainland of India by a comparatively narrow channel, known as the Gulf of Manaar, of some 57 miles width, but Nature has already provided the foundations for a bridge or causeway between them, and the existing breach is considerably lessened by the Islands of Rameswaram close to the Madras coast and Manaar on the Ceylon side, while between them lies Adam's Bridge, a series of shifting sandbanks with intervening narrow channels. The Island of Rameswaram already possesses a railway along its length of 25 miles, and the South Indian Railway has been extended to Mandapam, the extreme point on the mainland, and a steel viaduct with a rolling lift bridge over the Pamban Channel has been recently constructed, thus linking up the mainland with the Island of Rameswaram. On the Ceylon side the railway system has been extended to the Island of Manaar and there, therefore, now remains but the construction of a railway across the intervening space of Adam's Bridge to link up both systems, and the project for this is now being rapidly pushed forward.

Madras Presidency, with its natural beauties, its innumerable shrines and temples and its historic relics of the bygone past, presents everywhere objects of interest to the student, the traveller and the lover of the picturesque, and Mr. Sidney Low, who accompanied King George V, then Prince of Wales, on his visit to India in 1905, pays the following tribute to the attractions of Southern India:—

"It is a commonplace to observe that the South is the India of the picture books, but one cannot help repeating the saying, for its truth is self-evident. Here, at last, you can find that for which you have been searching, with expectant and baffled gaze, for many weeks. The brown desert of Rajputana, the stony hills of the Borderland, the bare rifted plains of the Upper Ganges Valley, the rice fields of Lower Bengal, the forts and tombs and palaces of the old royal cities, all these are interesting enough. But they are not the India of tradition, the India of our youth, and in the midst of them we are sometimes impelled to ask when India—the real India—is going to begin.

"It begins when the night mail from Calcutta has carried you clear of Orissa and you wake in the morning to find yourself among the palms and temples of the South, amid villages set deep in broad leaved tropical plants, cactus and alooe. Here are the Indians that we have all known, not the gaunt bearded peasants of the upper regions, not the bullet-headed stout Bengali, but the brown half naked folks with large gentle eyes and with vestments of red and blue, such as the Apostles wear in the old coloured nursery Bibles."

The history of Southern India or Madras Presidency con