

## CHAPTER XXIII

### SOCIAL ORGANISATION

IN this chapter I propose to bring together a number of matters connected with the social organisation; to consider the various sections into which the clan is divided for social or ceremonial purposes, the method of government, the laws concerning property and inheritance, and the position of women.

We have already seen that the primary fact in the social organisation of the Todas is the existence of two divisions, the Tartharol and the Teivaliol,<sup>1</sup> and the last chapter has shown that these divisions form endogamous groups, each of which is divided into a number of exogamous septs or clans. In some respects the clan is a definite unit in the social organisation with a certain amount of power in regulating its own affairs, owning property and having in many cases social or religious usages peculiar to itself.

#### THE CLAN

The clan system is territorial, and I could discover no trace of its ever having been totemic. The clan owns a number of villages and takes its name from the chief of these, the *etudmad*. The connexion of the clan with the village is so generally recognised that in some cases in which the *etudmad* of the clan has disappeared, or is rarely visited, there is a tendency to name the clan after the chief village

<sup>1</sup> A full account of the two divisions and of their relation to one another will be given in Chapter XXIX.

still in use. Thus the people of Pirspurs have now become the Pämol and the Kusharfol are often named after Umgas, a village in more frequent use than Kusharf. In general the villages belonging to a clan are situated in the same part of the hills, but a clan often possesses outlying villages at a considerable distance from the chief group. Sometimes these outlying villages are of comparatively recent origin, and in other cases they have been established on account of grazing necessities ; thus several clans which have their chief seats near Ootacamund have villages in the Kundahs or in the district near Makurti Peak, which are visited in the dry season.

The members of a clan have many common rights and privileges which bind them together, so that the clan-tie has a very real meaning. Property, however, as we shall see shortly, is largely centred in the family or the individual, and the Todas are in a state of social evolution in which the common bond constituted by membership of the clan has been largely replaced by the bond constituted by the family. They are in an intermediate condition between the state of society in which the clan is the social unit and that in which the family has taken this position.

Nearly all who have previously written about the Todas have described them as divided into five clans—viz., the Peiki, Pekkan, Kenna, Todi, or Tothi, and Kuttan. These are the five divisions recognised by the Badagas, and a Badaga knows each Toda as belonging to one of them. The Todas are also perfectly acquainted with these divisions, and they could always say, if asked, to which of them a given village or a given man belonged. If a Toda is asked by a European to which clan or division he belongs, he will probably give one of these names, but I do not believe that they are in use among themselves, being reserved for their intercourse with Badagas and other Indian castes and with Europeans.

The Peiki of the Badaga classification are the Teivaliol ; the Pekkan correspond to the Melgarsol, the people of Kidmad and Karsh being also usually included in this group. Kenna is the Badaga name of the Karsol ; the Todi or Tothi include two clans, the Nòdrsol and the Panol, while the Kuttan com-

prise the remainder of the Tarthar clans—viz., those of Taradr, Keradr, Kanòdrs, Kwòdrdoni, Päm and Nidrsi. I could obtain no direct information from the Todas which would explain why the Badaga classification should differ from their own. It is possible that it is an old classification of the Todas, but this is unlikely, since it is probable that the intercourse with the Badagas is not very ancient. It seems to me possible that it may have arisen out of the constitution of the *naim* or council. This has four Toda representatives belonging to Kuudr (representing the Teivaliol), Kars, Nòdrs and Taradr. This would correspond to four of the Badaga divisions, and the fifth, the Melgarsol or Pekkan, would certainly be well known to the Badagas through their privileges as *mòrol*. It is possible that the Nòdrs representative used also to represent Pan, and that the Taradr member represented the remaining clans, and, if so, it would point to there having been some old five-fold division of the kind believed in by the Badagas. It is quite clear that the five-fold division has no influence on the marriage regulations and Peiki, Todi and Kuttan all marry freely within their divisions. Except in connexion with the *naim*, I could learn of nothing which would show that the five-fold division has any social significance, and I know of no other way in which the Panol are associated with the Nòdrsol nor of any other way in which the six clans included in the Kuttan are associated together. It is possible that the five-fold division is connected with some customs regulating the payment of the Badaga tribute to the Todas, but I could learn nothing of such customs.

Each clan has divisions of two kinds called *kudr* and *pòlm*. The *kudr* is a division of ceremonial, the *pòlm* of practical, importance.

### THE KUDR

Normally each clan has two *kudr* and two only, and, as we have seen in Chapter XIII, these divisions become of the greatest importance in connexion with the *irnörtiti* ceremony, the whole regulation of which is dominated by the division into *kudr*. So far as I could ascertain, the *kudr* has now no

other significance, and I do not know whether the division is one which formerly possessed a social significance which it has now lost, so that the *kudr* only persists in ceremony, or whether it is a mode of division of the clan which has arisen purely in connexion with the *irnörtiti* and other allied ceremonies.

In one or two cases there was some doubt as to whether a certain division of the people was a clan or a *kudr*. This was especially the case with the Kwaradrol, now extinct, who were said by some of my informants to have been a clan, but it seemed clear that they only formed a *kudr* of the Keadrol, and were not properly a distinct clan. This is one case in which a *kudr* has a distinctive name, and another example occurs in the Panol where the *kudr* have separate names, one the Panol or Pandar, the other the Kuirsjol or Peshteidimokh. In general, each *kudr* is named after its leading man, thus the two *kudr* of the Nòdrsol are spoken of as the *kudr* of Mudrigeidi (1) and Kerkadr (2). The man who gives his name to the *kudr* is probably responsible for the general management of the ceremonies in which the *kudr* is concerned.

In a few cases a clan was said to have more than two *kudr*, but on cross-examination it turned out in each case that the statement was due to the fact that the clan contained a section which had no part, or only a subordinate part, in the *irnörtiti* ceremony and that this section might sometimes be spoken of as a *kudr*. Thus, in the Kuudr clan there are three sections, two which have reciprocal relations in the *irnörtiti* ceremony, and a third consisting of the family of Tövoniners (61) which lost certain privileges owing to a dispute many generations ago (see p. 675). This family could perform the *irnörtiti* ceremony, but in such a case the buffalo would go to the members of the two other divisions and Tövoniners would receive nothing if either of the other divisions performed the ceremony. Another example of a clan said to have three *kudr* is that of Piedr, where the family of Nongarsivan (62) stands in the same relation to the other divisions as is the case with the family of Tövoniners in the Kuudrol. In this case Nongarsivan's exceptional position is

probably due to the fact that his family lives at Kavidi in the Wainad.

When a *kudr* becomes extinct a new division of the remaining *kudr* may take place, but, as a rule, this is not done till an occasion for the *irnörtiti* ceremony arises. There are several cases in which one *kudr* of a clan has now been extinct for several years, but though the re-division is often a subject for discussion, it is not probable that a new *kudr* will be instituted till the necessity arises. Occasionally, however, it would seem that a new *kudr* may be decided on apart from an occasion for the *irnörtiti* ceremony, for about the time of my visit the people of Keadr, who had lost one *kudr* by the dying out of the Kwaradrol, decided that the family of Karem (69), of which the sole living representatives are three boys, should form a new *kudr*. I could not learn what had been the motives for the decision. Some unimportant clans which have arisen by fusion from other clans, such as those of Kidmad and Kulhem, have no *kudr*, and do not appear ever to have possessed these divisions.

### THE PÒLM

The word *pòlm* means 'portion,' and is the name of the section of the clan by means of which is regulated the sharing of any expenses which fall on the clan as a whole. Any expenses which the clan may incur as a whole are not equally divided among the individual members of the clan, but are equally divided among the *pòlm*. The chief occasion on which such expenses arise is in the repair or rebuilding of a dairy.

When a clan owns a *ti* and a dairy of the *ti* needs to be rebuilt or repaired, the expense also falls on the clan, and is equally divided among the *pòlm*, as in the case of the village dairy.

The outlay is equally divided among the *pòlm*, however much they may vary in size. Thus in the Kars clan one *pòlm* has sixteen adult male members, while another has only one, but this one man would contribute exactly the same amount as the other sixteen.

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Occasionally a *pòlm* is so poor that it cannot pay its share, and in one such case at the present time the *pòlm*, in this case consisting of two boys only, has been incorporated into another.

The number of *pòlm* in a clan varies greatly, from ten in the case of Kars to one only in the Pedrkars clan. There is no definite relation between the *kudr* and the *pòlm* as regards numbers; thus, one *kudr* of a clan may consist of one *pòlm* only, when the other *kudr* is divided into many *pòlm*. When there is a great degree of inequality in the sizes of different *pòlm*, a redistribution may take place, and this is probably the more likely to happen the more influential are the members of the smaller *pòlm*.

I believe that redistribution in the case of both *pòlm* and *kudr* is usually decided by the members of the clan itself, but in cases of doubt it is probable that the general council may have a voice in the matter.

Each *pòlm* has a headman and is spoken of as the *pòlm* of this man. He is responsible for collecting the amount due from it, but as the *pòlm* often consists of a number of brothers, who hold much of their property in common, the collection is not usually a matter of difficulty, and I never heard of any disputes arising from this source.

The Todas recognise the existence of the family (*kudupel* or *kudubel*) within the clan, meaning by this a group of people bound together by near blood kinship. As a general rule, the family corresponds with the *pòlm*, but sometimes there may be more than one *pòlm* in the same family. It seemed to me that the term *kudupel* had not the same clear meaning as the *pòlm*. The family has no important function in the social organisation except in so far as it corresponds with the *pòlm*, but it is taken into account when the *pòlm* and *kudr* are readjusted.

The term was chiefly used when the Todas were speaking of certain families as being noted in certain ways or as having certain privileges. Thus, some families are noted for their powers as sorcerers, and these are called *pilikudupel*; others are known as *manikudupel*, or chief families, whose members are important in government and can hold the office of

*monegar* and serve on the *naim*. Other families important in government whose members can serve on the *naim* or council are called *tinkaniputitth kudupel* or *tinkani kudupel* and *palutth kudupel*. The members of certain other families have certain duties of a lower order in connexion with the *naim*. They take messages and act generally as servants at the meetings, and the families with these functions are called *kavòdiputipol kudupel*, or servant families. They are also sometimes called *armanol* or palace people, because at one time the Rajah of Nelambur in the Wainad put his buffaloes into their charge.

### LAWS OF DESCENT

Descent among the Todas is always reckoned in the male line. A man is always of the same clan as his father, if by his "father" we understand the man who has given the bow and arrow to his mother at the *pursiitpimi* ceremony. In the case of the offspring of a *moklthoditi* union, there is at first sight an appearance of female descent. The child of a Teivali mother and a Tarthar father belongs to the Teivaliol and *vice versa*, but on further inquiry it is found that the child does not belong to his mother's clan, but to that of her legal husband. The child of a Teivali mother in such a case is not Teivali because his mother is of this division, but because a Teivali man only is allowed to perform the *pursiitpimi* ceremony with a Teivali woman and become the legal father of her child. If, in such a case, the *pursiitpimi* ceremony had not been performed, the child would belong to the division and clan of neither father nor mother, but would be a *padmokh*, of no division and of no clan.<sup>1</sup> I did not definitely inquire into the point, but from my general knowledge of the position of such an individual, I have little doubt that he would not be allowed to perform the *pursiitpimi* ceremony, and could therefore never become the legal father of a child.

In this as in all cases the clan to which a child belongs

<sup>1</sup> Another name for a man of no clan is *pasuli*, but I do not know whether this is merely a synonym of *padmokh* or whether a man can lose the right of belonging to a clan for any other reason than that described above.

is determined entirely by the *pursütpimi* ceremony. If in a polyandrous marriage the husbands belong to different clans, a child belongs to the clan of the husband who has last performed this ceremony, and, as we have already seen, in the case of the death of one of the husbands, the dead man may become the legal father of several children, if the surviving husband does not perform the ceremony of giving a bow and arrow to the wife.

Again, in the case of a woman becoming pregnant while still unmarried, the father of the child is the man who is called in to give the bow and arrow, although he may have had nothing to do with the woman before the ceremony. Further, if for any reason the husband of a woman should be prevented from performing the *pursütpimi* ceremony, some other man is called upon to give the bow and arrow and he becomes the father of the child. Lastly, in the numerous cases of transference of wives from one man to another by the *terersthi* custom, one man may be the real father of a child, but another will become the legal father if the transference should take place in time for him to perform the essential ceremony.

The Todas show few traces of mother-right. In some communities there is little reason to doubt that such acts as are performed by a Toda towards his sister's son are survivals of a condition of society in which the mother's brother was responsible, largely or altogether, for the welfare of the child. Among the Todas, however, the *mun* stands in two relations to a child. He is the mother's brother, and he is also the prospective or actual father-in-law, and we have no means of telling in which of these two rôles he performs his duties. If the duties of a man towards his sister's son among the Todas be a relic of mother-right, there can be little doubt that this condition must have been very remote.

The Todas have a special name for the village of a man's mother—viz., *karuvnòdr*, or "honoured place," and when a *manmokh* gives a buffalo or other contribution on the occasion of a funeral, he speaks of it as a gift to his *karuvnòdr*. When a man visits his *karuvnòdr*, he goes to the door of the dairy

and then goes to the huts, where he is greeted with the appropriate greeting, but this differs in no way from the procedure of a visitor to any *etudmad*.

Marshall in his book<sup>1</sup> on the Todas has suggested that the existence of female succession among the buffaloes of the Todas may be a relic of female descent among the people themselves. He suggests that at one time the scheme of descent and kinship was the same for the Todas and for their buffaloes, and that with the introduction of polyandry there came in inheritance through males among themselves, while they continued to reckon the descent of the buffaloes in the female line.

We have seen (see p. 471) that the method of reckoning descent among the buffaloes is due superficially to the absence of names for male buffaloes and more deeply to the lack of interest in paternity. Nevertheless, Marshall's suggestion, wild as it may seem, should not be utterly scouted. The Todas regard their buffaloes so much as fellow creatures that many of their ideas concerning the relations of their buffaloes to one another should not be without interest to the student of social regulations.

If one may speak of social organisation among buffaloes—and in the case of the Toda herds we are justified in doing so—we have a state of society in some ways analogous to that which many sociologists suppose to have existed at one time in the early stages of human society. We have various groups of buffaloes, and each buffalo—certainly each female buffalo—belongs to the same group as its mother. There is complete promiscuity, and the buffalo belongs to its mother's group because paternity is unknown or disregarded.

It is true that this condition is artificial, but it is this very artificiality which gives it its interest, for it shows that people like the Todas, whose whole lives are devoted to the buffalo, to whom the breeding of the buffalo should have the deepest interest, have allowed this state of things to come about. If they had attached importance to paternity nothing would have been easier than to regulate breeding, to record paternity,

<sup>1</sup> P. 132.

and even to have developed a system of male descent among their buffaloes such as exists among themselves.

The nature of what may be called the social regulations of the buffaloes shows that the Todas take little interest in the part played by the male in the process of mating, and, as we have seen, this lack of interest is almost as great among themselves. Side by side with the strictest regulation of marriage as a social institution, such great laxity prevails in regard to sexual relations that the Todas may almost be said to live in a condition of promiscuity, though, as I have endeavoured to show, the degree of promiscuity is in practice perhaps hardly as great as their statements would lead one to expect.

### ADOPTION

It is clear that the custom of adoption of children is not practised by the Todas. They denied its existence emphatically, and I met with no instance which led me to suspect its presence in compiling the genealogies.

If a child is left an orphan, it is looked after by the people of its clan, but it is always clearly recognised that the child retains the father's property, and belongs to the *madol* and *pòlm* of the father.

There is, so far as I could ascertain, no religious custom which makes it necessary that a man should have children. The duties of a child at the funeral ceremonies can quite well be performed by some other member of the clan.

There is a social reason which makes it inconvenient in some cases that a man should die without male issue. If a man is the only representative of his *kudr*, and has no children, the *kudr* will become extinct, and the clan will be put to the trouble of rearranging the families of which it is constituted. If such a man is childless he may take another wife in the hope of having a son to carry on the *kudr*, but the adoption of a child for the purpose is never thought of. A good case is that of the two brothers Mudrigeidi and Odrkurs in Table I. They are the last two representatives of one *kudr* of the Nòdrsol. They have had two wives, one of whom has had a daughter and a boy who died, and in the

hope of having a son, one of the brothers had recently married a young girl, Obalidz, as his third wife, the others being still alive, though one had been taken by another man.

### GOVERNMENT

The most important feature of Toda government is the *naim*, or *noim*,<sup>1</sup> a council having a definite constitution. The *naim* proper has to do with the affairs of the Todas in general, and, in addition, more informal councils,<sup>2</sup> consisting of the chief members of a clan, may be held to settle matters arising within the clan. It seems, however, that the supreme *naim* may sometimes be called upon to settle the internal affairs of a clan.

The *naim* of the general body of Todas should have five members, or, if more than five members, they should be drawn from five sources. Four of these sources are the Tarthar clans of Kars, Nòdrs, and Taradr, and the Teivali clan of Kuudr. The fifth source is the Badaga village of Tuneri, from which a Badaga man may be sent to take part in the *naim*. He is only called upon to sit, however, on special occasions; and in the many councils which I saw during my visit a Badaga was rarely present. He probably only sits, as a rule, when questions arise which involve the relations between the Todas and Badagas.

The Toda representatives should be drawn from certain families of their respective clans. The Kuudr representative should belong to the family known as the *manikudupel*, and the representatives of Kars, Nòdrs, and Taradr to the families known as *tinkanikudupel*. A few years ago the Toda representatives were Kuriolv of Kuudr (52), Parkurs (8) and Piutolv (10) of Kars, Kudòdrsvan (3) of Nòdrs, and Ircheidi (20) of Taradr, though there was some question whether Ircheidi was on the *naim*, or whether his place had not been taken by Piutolv, the second Kars representative. All these men are at present living, but, with the exception of

<sup>1</sup> A meeting of the council is often spoken of as *kàtkàdriti*, "the assembly assembles," or *kàtpuniti*, "the assembly makes."

<sup>2</sup> It seemed clear that the term *naim* is also applied to these clan councils.

Kuriolv, they are too old or infirm to serve. Kuriolv is still on the *naim*, and his influence is entirely predominant, and it appears that he has been instrumental in altering the constitution of the council very largely. The number of representatives has been increased, and the following were the members in 1902:—Kuriolv and Ivievan (52) of Kuudr, Perner and Tebner (68), of Keadr, Parkeidi (21), Paners (23) and Siriar (20) of Taradr and Pidrvan (9) of Kars. Thus several members of the Kuudrol and Taradrol are serving, while there appears to be no representative of the Nòdrsol; and I was told by several Todas that Perner and Tebner are on the council because they are friends of Kuriolv, though, as members of the Keadr clan, they have no right whatever to the position.

On the slopes below the hill called Mirson, near Paikara, there are the remains of ruined walls marking a place where the *naim* used to meet. This place is called Idrgùdipem, and seems to have been at one time the chief meeting-place.

At the present time the *naim* meets anywhere. I have seen the council sitting in the compound of the bungalow at Paikara and on one occasion, when I was working in a bungalow at the Ooty Club, the *naim* sat in the grounds of the club. In general, they now meet at the places which happen to be most convenient for the chief members.

The members usually sit in a semicircular row. If they are considering a dispute between two parties, representatives of the parties take part in the sitting, and in these cases the members of the *naim* sit in the middle of the row while the representatives sit on either wing.

During my visit the council was chiefly occupied with the various complicated transactions which are always arising out of the custom of transferring wives from one man to another. This custom is the chief source of disputes among the Todas, and at times the *naim* may sit for several days before one case is settled.

I am doubtful whether the *naim* should have a definite head, but at the present time it certainly has such in the person of Kuriolv of Kuudr. He is the senior representative of the *manikudupel* of Kuudr, and is therefore the natural representative of this clan on the *naim*. He is highly intel-

ligent, and gave me the impression that he might have risen to a high place in any community. He has the reputation among the Todas of being very eloquent and of having great persuasive powers. When persuasion fails, there is very little doubt that he resorts to intimidation of some kind, though I could not discover what his means of intimidation are.

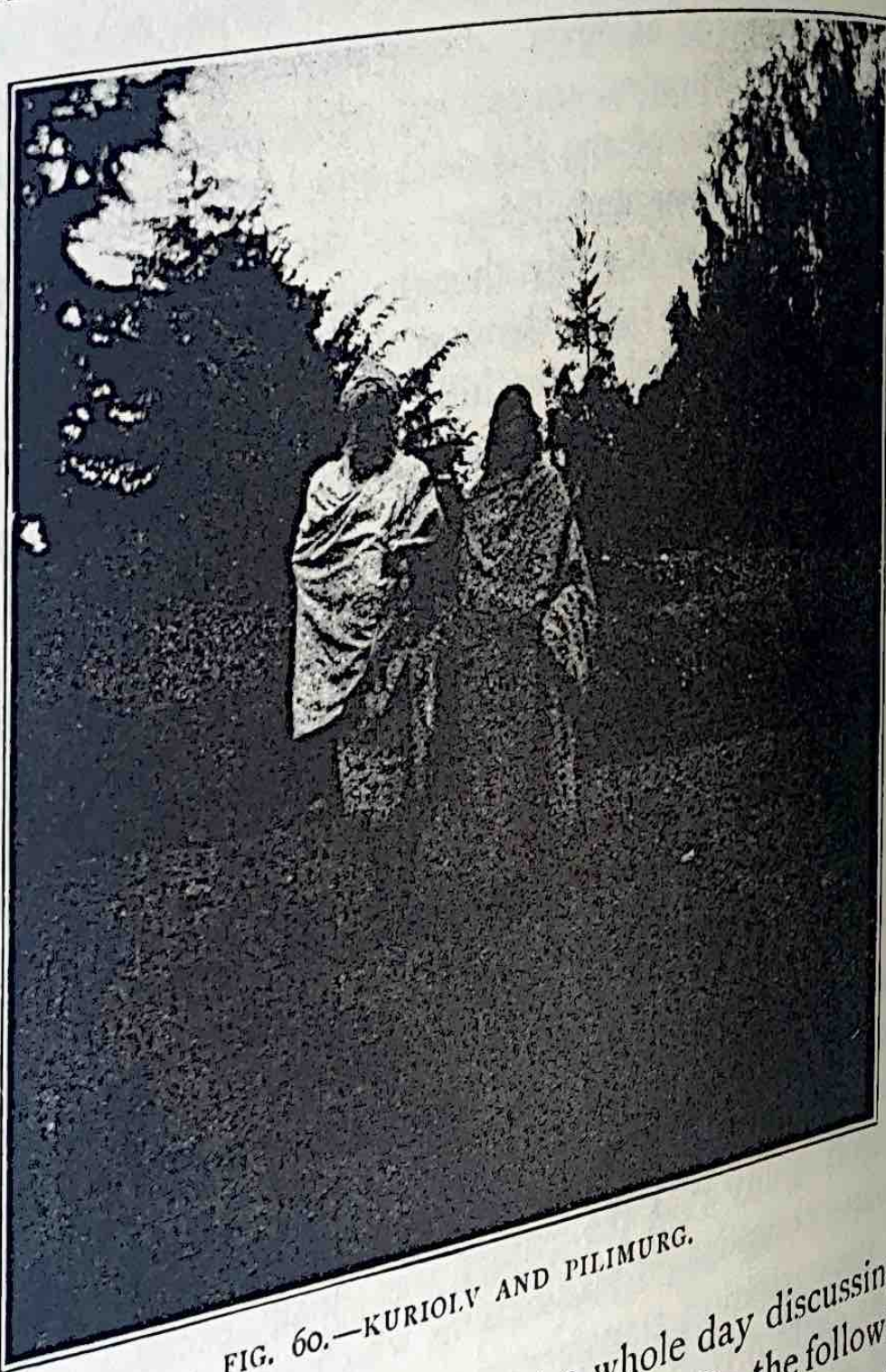


FIG. 60.—KURIOLV AND PILIMURG.

the *naim* spent a whole day discussing a Paikara. On the following to continue the arranged

he almost entirely dominated the Toda people at the time of my visit. We have already seen that he has succeeded in altering the constitution of the *naim*, and several examples are given in this book of his interference in the normal course of Toda affairs; interference usually in favour of his own family or friends. In at least one case (see Chap. XVI) during my visit he considered himself superior to ceremonial laws.

He seemed to me to afford an excellent example of the process by which one man may bring about considerable changes in the laws and regulations of a community; though I was told in several instances that the Todas would revert to their old customs as soon as Kuriolv died.

I did not obtain a full account of the duties of the *naim* and of the affairs which come under its jurisdiction. There is no doubt, however, that it is largely concerned with the settlement of civil disputes arising between individuals, families, and clans. As I have already mentioned, it seemed to me that it was almost exclusively engaged during my visit in the regulation of the disputes arising out of the *terersthi* custom. In one such case the question of funeral contributions was involved, and I have no doubt that the settlement of any dispute arising from this source would come within the province of the *naim*, and probably any doubtful point in the working of the social regulations would be submitted to it.

In addition to its functions in disputes between individuals, the *naim* has wide functions in connexion with Toda ceremonial. It decides when many ceremonies take place, and has the chief word in regulating the affairs of the *ti* dairies. Thus it appeared that the various arrangements and alterations of arrangements in connexion with the migration of the buffaloes of the *Nòdrs ti* which were made during my visit were the work of the *naim*, or, at any rate, of its chief members.

#### CRIME

I have no knowledge about the power of the *naim* in criminal as opposed to civil matters. I never heard of inquiry into any criminal offence committed by one man against the community. It is, however,

doubtful whether crime can be said to exist among the Todas.

Acts such as infanticide are committed which would be regarded as crimes by others, but since these are the outcome of custom they are not crimes from the Toda point of view. Again, we have seen that the Todas have a code of offences against the dairy, but these must be regarded as sins rather than as crimes, for they are neither investigated nor punished by the civil authority, the *naim*, but are punished directly by the gods, and the various ceremonies described in Chapter XIII are expiatory and not punitive.

The list of offences given on p. 295 includes quarrelling between people of the same clan at a festival and quarrelling in the dairy. In both cases the quarrelling is an offence against the dairy, and I have no information to show whether quarrels ever lead to acts of violence which might in other places become the subject of criminal investigation. So far as I could learn, any investigation by the *naim* would only deal with the causes which had led to the quarrel; it would deal only with the civil and not with the criminal aspect of the case.

Again, the custom of *terersthi*, or transference of wives, which is the chief subject of the deliberations of the *naim*, sometimes leads to acts of violence. A woman who has been transferred by the *naim* from one man to another may be carried off by force from the home of the former, but, however such an act may be regarded from our standpoint, it is not a crime from the Toda point of view, but merely the carrying out of the decision of the judicial authority. So many Todas are, however, discovering that such an act is regarded as a crime by Europeans that there will probably soon come about a state of public opinion which will regard such abduction as a crime, and possibly the same idea may become attached to the whole custom of transference of a woman from one man to another unwillingly. It seemed not unlikely at the time of my visit that this conversion of a custom into a crime might be assisted by the action of the Government.

In the legend of Kwoten, this hero kills Parden, but so far

as I know this is the only example of murder, either legendary or historical, among the Todas. The Todas may take part in the murder of a Kurumba who has been working magic, but this is of course no crime from the Toda point of view, but an obvious method of self-defence, for it is believed that the only way of stopping Kurumba sorcery is to kill the sorcerer.

With the exception of the occurrences accompanying the transference of wives, which I have already considered, I heard of no case of assault by one Toda on another.

Similarly, I heard of no offence against property except in connexion with the dairy. So far as I know, ornaments or clothing are never stolen. In the list of offences against the dairy, stealing ghi is included, but it was clear that this is regarded as sacrilege, as an offence against the dairy and not as an offence committed against the individual.

### SUICIDE

In the legend of Kwoten there is a record of suicide by strangling, and since the suicide of Erten and his confederates this is said to have been a recognised custom among the Todas. Several instances have occurred in recent times; thus, about four generations ago, at a village called Podzkwar, near Taradrkirsi, a woman and her husband had a dispute and the woman strangled herself. About three generations ago a man strangled himself in the dairy at Melgars, and when a Toda is very angry he will threaten to commit suicide, saying "*on mêdr kati kédraividikin*"—"my neck tying, I will die."

Another way of committing suicide, said to have been borrowed from the Badagas, is that of taking opium. There has been a recent case of suicide, by this means, and when angry, a Toda sometimes says, "*mud tid kédraividikin*"—"Opium eating, I will die."

### THE MONEGAR

The Todas have a *monegar*, or headman, who is responsible for the assessment which the Todas pay to Government for their grazing rights, &c. (see below).

The earliest *monegar* whom the Todas remember is Teitchi or Teiti (52). He was succeeded by his fourth son, Mutevan, who is still alive. The two eldest sons had died before their father, and Persevan, the third son, was said to be weak-minded, and Mutevan was therefore chosen to succeed.

Mutevan is now a very old man, probably about eighty years of age, and his office was taken over some years ago by his eldest son, Ivievan. Though Ivievan is the *monegar* he is not the chief representative of his family on the *naim*, this position belonging to Kuriolv, the son of Pareivan and Persevan. Ivievan is helped in collecting the assessment by an assistant *monegar*, and till lately this place belonged to Parkurs of Kars.

It does not appear that the *monegar*ship is a real Toda office, but that the earliest *monegar* was appointed by Mr. Sullivan, the first British official of the Nilgiris. The family, however, to which the *monegar* belongs is called the *manikudupel*, which may mean the *monegar* family, but I could not discover definitely whether this title is older than the institution of the *monegar*ship. It is possible that Teitchi was one of the chief men of the *naim* when the Europeans first came to the hills and that he was therefore appointed as *monegar*.

It is quite clear that at the present time the *monegar*, Ivievan, is not the most important man among the Todas, but that the predominant position belongs to his cousin, Kuriolv, the representative of the family on the *naim*.

## HEADMEN

Though it is very doubtful whether the institution of *monegar* is not an innovation, and whether the Todas as a whole have properly any true chief, it is fairly clear that the clan and its divisions have definite leaders.

Each clan has a headman or *etudol*; usually, it seemed to me, one who had come to the top by virtue of his character and ability. I did not learn how far his position was generally recognised nor by what means he was chosen. It was quite clear, however, that the leading man of a clan

might lose his position in old age or as the result of illness, and at the time of my visit there were several men who had been the heads of their clans but no longer occupied those positions.

Similarly, as we have seen, both *kudr* and *pòlm* have their leading men, who give their names to the divisions and are probably responsible for the conduct of their business.

### PROPERTY

Among the Todas, property may be held by the clan, the family or the individual. I am not clear whether there is any case in which property is held to belong to the Todas as a whole, or to either of the two divisions. There were two villages, Padegar and Ki Perththo, said to be common property, so that any one might live at them. At the time of my visit both were occupied by Melgars people, and I could not satisfy myself as to what was meant by saying that they were common property.

In general, land, the dairies of the chief villages, and some buffaloes may be said to be the property of the clan. The house, and probably also some villages, are the property of a family, and most buffaloes, household goods and ornaments are the property of the individual.

*Land.*—The relation of the Todas to the land has been a much discussed theme, and for many years after the first settlement of the hills by Europeans it was a subject of controversy. The fact that the Badagas paid what seemed to be a tribute of grain to the Todas was held to show that the latter were regarded as the "lords of the soil," and the view was strongly upheld that they should be so regarded by the Indian Government. The other view taken of the matter was that permanent rights in the soil throughout India belong to the State. The controversy<sup>1</sup> was not settled till 1843, when it was decided that the Todas should have the privilege of pasturing their herds on the State lands on payment of a small tax. At the present time the Todas receive an annual

<sup>1</sup> For a full account of this controversy see the *Manual of the Nilagiri District*, by H. B. Grigg, Madras, 1880. See also Thurston, Bull. i. 182.

sum from the Government as compensation for land taken from them in Ootacamund and elsewhere.

Although the Todas have thus had much difficulty with the Government in relation to the ownership of land, it does not seem that they have trouble in this matter among themselves, and I heard of no disputes between members of different clans or different villages about grazing rights.

In the account of the marriage dispute between Punog and Nertiners (see p. 536) the former had evidently put many of his buffaloes in the charge of his brother-in-law for grazing purposes, but it was quite clear that no question of grazing rights came into this dispute. The buffaloes only came into the quarrel because Nertiners happened to have them in his charge when the marriage dispute arose.

I did not ascertain definitely how grazing rights between two clans or families are regulated, but I think it is quite clear that there is no individual ownership in land.

Certain dairies, and probably all the chief villages (*etudmad*), are regarded more or less as the property of the whole clan. There probably never arises any real question of ownership, but as regards the dairies, it was clear that any expenses incurred in the repair or rebuilding of a dairy fall on the whole clan, each *pòlm* of the clan contributing an equal share.<sup>1</sup>

The buffalo herds of the *ti* are also regarded as the property of the whole clan, but the rights of ownership are in these cases very shadowy. It does not appear that the owning clan derives any pecuniary benefit from its possession of the herd, while, on the other hand, the possession involves considerable expense, chiefly owing to certain feasts which have to be provided, and these expenses are given as the reason why certain of the sacred dairies are unoccupied. The people of the owning clan have, it is true, the right of choosing the *palol*, but as the choice is limited, and there is, in most cases, little competition for the office, this is a very empty honour.

*Houses.* Each house belongs to a certain family. The normal Toda family consists of a number of brothers with

<sup>1</sup> I am not clear on whom the expense of rebuilding and repairing a dairy would fall when the dairy is situated at a village occupied by one family only, and used exclusively for buffaloes which are the private property of that family.

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one wife, and each house belongs to a family of this kind, and is handed on to the children of the brothers.

If the brothers quarrel, the affair is settled by the *naim*, and it is usually decided that one brother or more than one of the brothers shall occupy the house for a certain period, usually a year, and that at the end of this period he (or they) shall move to another village, when another brother or brothers will occupy the house.

Such disputes do not seem to be frequent, but one was in existence during my visit. The two younger of three brothers had taken a wife without the knowledge of the eldest. The latter did not approve of the choice, and wished his brothers to send the wife away, which they refused to do. As the dispute had not yet been settled, the eldest brother at the time of my visit was living in the house, while the other brothers were living at the village of their newly chosen wife.

If a family dies out, it seems that the house is not, as a rule, taken on by another family. It falls into disuse, and in time disappears. As a village may sometimes consist of one house only, villages may disappear in this way, and the ruins of some villages were pointed out to me which had fallen into disuse owing to the dying out of the families which formerly occupied them. A really important village, *i.e.*, one with an important dairy, would of course never disappear in this way, but it is possible that the reason why some villages, such as Nasmiòdr and Kanòdrs, now consist of a dairy only, is that the families which possessed the houses at these villages became extinct. I do not, however, know positively that a house at such an important village may not, in some cases, be taken over by another family.

Brecks has stated that the Toda custom is that the house shall pass to the youngest son. It seems quite clear that this is wrong, and that this custom is absolutely unknown among the Todas. It is, however, a Badaga custom, and among them I was told that it is due to the fact that as the sons of a family grow up and marry, they leave the house of the parents and build houses elsewhere. It is the duty of the youngest son to dwell with his parents and support them as long as they

live, and when they die he continues to live in the parental home, of which he becomes the owner.

*Buffaloes.* These are to a very large extent individual property. In practice, owing to the fact that brothers usually live together, a herd of buffaloes is treated as the property of a family of brothers, but whenever the occasion arises there are definite rules for the division of the buffaloes among them.

I have already referred to the fact that certain herds of buffaloes, such as the *ti* herds and the *kugvalir* of Taradr, are the common property of a clan, but the great majority of both sacred and ordinary buffaloes belong to families or individuals.<sup>1</sup> When a man who owns a certain number of buffaloes dies, the buffaloes are not necessarily divided among his sons. If the sons are all living together, the buffaloes may be treated as if they were common property. The milk of the ordinary buffaloes is churned in the dwelling-hut, and that of the sacred buffaloes in the dairy, and the produce in each case is regarded as the property of the whole family. It is only when dissensions arise, or when some reason makes it desirable that the brothers should separate and live in different villages, that the laws regulating the partition of buffaloes come into force.

When such an occasion arises the buffaloes are equally divided among the brothers, with the exception that the eldest son and the youngest son each receive one buffalo in excess of the rest. This custom is known as *irvâkhtnûdr meilkûdr*, or "if divide buffaloes, superior portion."

If there are only two sons, each will get *meilkudr*, and the buffaloes are equally divided; but if there should be an unequal number of buffaloes, the odd buffalo is taken by the elder son.

If there are more than two sons, the buffaloes are equally divided with *meilkudr* to the eldest and youngest, and any odd buffaloes are in this case sold and the proceeds equally divided, or, more commonly, one of the brothers takes the odd buffaloes and gives the right proportion of their value to the other brothers.

<sup>1</sup> On p. 70 I have given an example of the ownership of sacred buffaloes in the Kars clan.

Thus, if sixteen buffaloes are to be divided among four brothers, the eldest and youngest would each take four, the second and third brothers would each take three, and the remaining two buffaloes would either be sold and the purchase money equally divided, or taken by one of the brothers, who would divide three-quarters of the value of the buffaloes between the other three men. If there should be only fourteen buffaloes, the eldest and youngest sons would each take four buffaloes and the others three.

The *meilkudr* is also operative if a man divides his buffaloes among his sons in his lifetime. In this case a man usually keeps some buffaloes for himself; thus I was told that a man who had sixteen buffaloes and three sons might give four buffaloes to the eldest, three to the next, and four to the youngest son, keeping five for himself.

The Todas told me of one apparent exception to the law of *meilkudr*. If, in a family of four brothers, the two elder brothers marry one wife and the two younger marry another and the two groups separate, the buffaloes would be equally divided, but this is because each would receive a *meilkudr*. If, on the other hand, the eldest and youngest son married one wife, and the other two sons married another woman, the first group would receive two buffaloes in excess of the second. The former example is, of course, an obvious consequence of the law of *meilkudr*. I only mention it because the Todas told me of it especially, and seemed to regard it as a case which might be thought to be a departure from custom.

I gave the Todas a number of hypothetical problems of buffalo division, and all were solved in accordance with the law of *meilkudr*. I have not been able to learn of any exact parallel in other parts of the world, and it seems possible that it is an independent invention of the Todas. The division is called *kudr*, or horn, and it seems to me quite possible that at some time it occurred to an ingenious Toda that the two extremities of the family should be regarded as the two horns of the family, and that this fact should be recognised in the division of property, or, it may be, that the custom of endowing the eldest of the family above his fellows

existed among the Todas as among so many other races, till it was pointed out that this was like a buffalo with one horn, and the youngest son was therefore similarly endowed to restore the symmetry of the family. The buffalo influences the Toda mind so much that I do not think this is a far-fetched explanation of a custom which appears to be the unique possession of this people.

The word *kudr* is also the name of one of the divisions of the clan, and it seemed clear in this case that the proper number of *kudr* in each clan is two.

There is much transference of buffaloes from one man to another, or from one family to another. Many ceremonies involve gifts of buffaloes, and these are usually presented by a member of one clan to a member of another. Marriage is one of the chief occasions of such gifts. Refusal to fulfil the marriage contract and divorce involve the payment of buffaloes, and the *terersthi* custom is a great source of the passing of buffaloes from one clan to another. Similarly, buffaloes are given at the ceremonies of naming, ear-piercing, &c., and as I have already pointed out, these transferences have led to great confusion in the classification of the different kinds of sacred buffaloes, as a man may have in his possession animals belonging to several named groups.

In the case of ordinary buffaloes, or *putiir*, it seemed that a distinction is made between buffaloes which have been acquired by a man and those descended from animals which had been in the possession of his father and grandfather. My attention was drawn to this point by the occurrence at the funeral of Sinerani. The recalcitrant buffalo on this occasion was one of the latter kind, and I was told that it should not have been killed at the funeral of a girl because, being descended from a buffalo which belonged to Kuriolv's grandfather, Kuriolv's heirs had a right to it of which they were deprived by its slaughter for a girl. If the dead child had been a boy the slaughter of this buffalo would have been proper, for the dead child in this case would have been one of the heirs.

Transferences of buffaloes also take place between Todas and Badagas, as we have seen in connexion with the ear-

piercing ceremony described in Chapter XIV. In this case the gift appeared to be nothing more than a friendly compliment, but it is possible that transferences of buffaloes may in some cases be connected with the other complicated relations between the two tribes.

*Household Goods.* These are equally divided among the sons, though, as in the case of the buffaloes, they are used in common so long as the sons live together. If household goods have to be divided among the members of a family they are shared as equally as possible, and this is also the case with any ornaments. If the man had only one ring, it was said that this ring would either be broken up and shared equally, or its value would be divided. Money is shared equally among the sons.

If one of several brothers who has his own wife should die and leave children, the sons would take their father's share at any division of property. Thus, at the time of my visit, Piutolvan and Püljeidi (10), two very old men, were thinking of dividing their buffaloes among their descendants. In this case Menkars would receive the number which his father Tagners would have received if he had been alive. If Tagners had left two sons, the portion which their father would have received would be divided between the two boys or devoted to their common use.

Daughters inherit nothing. They only receive from their parents what they are given as dowry (*adrparn*).

Any property given to a woman as dowry goes with her if she changes husbands, but any ornaments or other property given to a wife by her husband are kept by the husband if the wife is transferred to another man or group of men.

Harkness records a case in which a dispute about property arose. In this case a woman bore two children to three husbands. One of the husbands died and the other two husbands married other wives. The two children claimed one-third of the property of the mother and her first husband, and Harkness was told that this was generally recognised to be a just claim. I did not inquire into this special case but according to the laws of inheritance of property which I have given, it would seem that the children were entitled to

one-third of the whole of the property of the three brothers. If the property had been divided among the three brothers, the man who died would have received one-third, and the children should have received his share.

In all cases of distribution of property, inheritance depends on descent as determined by the *pursiitpimi* ceremony, and not on the real descent, even if this should be well known. Thus the boy Meilitars (44), who is really the son of Kuriolv, but is legally the son of Pepners, should not inherit any of Kuriolv's buffaloes, but will receive those of his legal father, Pepners, of whom at present he is the only son.

If the whole of a family, such as is given in one of the genealogical tables, should die out, the inheritance of the buffaloes and other property is determined by the nearest links of descent, of which a tradition may be preserved, even if the actual relationship cannot be definitely traced.

Several interesting features of Toda law are illustrated by a case out of which a lawsuit may one day arise. If the family of Kiugi (57) should become extinct, there would arise a dispute about the succession to the property, which would turn largely on a case in which the *pursiitpimi* ceremony was performed several generations ago. When the eldest child of Tudrvan (52) was about to be born, Tudrvan was away from home, and had not performed the *pursiitpimi* ceremony. There was a danger that the delivery might take place before the ceremony could be performed, and Kòrs (57) was therefore called in to give the bow and arrow, and Teitchi, who was born soon afterwards, was, according to Toda custom, the child of Kòrs. When Teitchi grew up, however, he decided to regard himself as the son of his real father, Tudrvan, and being a powerful and influential person like his grandson Kuriolv, he appears to have had his way, and his descendants have been regarded as the descendants of Tudrvan. Tudrvan himself gave the bow and arrow in the succeeding pregnancy, and there is therefore no doubt about the legitimacy of Pusheiri and his younger brothers and sisters.

Owing, however, to the part played by Kòrs before the birth of his grandfather, Kuriolv has lately directed that Kiugi, the son of Kòrs, should belong to the same *pòlm* as

himself in order that he or his family may succeed to the buffaloes of Kiugi's *pòlm* if this should die out. It is known, however, that Kiugi's *pòlm* is closely related to that of Tüliners (56), so that should the *pòlm* of Kiugi become extinct, there would arise a lawsuit between Kuriolv and Tüliners or their representatives for the possession of Kiugi's buffaloes.

The essential point of the situation is that Kuriolv is trying to make use of his double position as the descendant of Tudrvan by real paternity and of Kòrs by virtue of the *pursütpini* ceremony. According to the latter he is of the same *pòlm* as Kiugi, but if equity prevails in the decision of the *naim* which may have to settle the dispute, Kuriolv or his representative will have to decide whether he is descended from Tudrvan or Kòrs, and will not be allowed to take advantage of both lines of descent.

As a matter of fact, I was assured by several Todas that though they have apparently fallen in with Kuriolv's wishes, they still regard Kiugi's *pòlm* as most closely allied to that of Tüliners, and if Kuriolv should die before the extinction of Kiugi's family, I have little doubt that the *naim* would decide that the buffaloes of Kiugi should go to the family of Tüliners.

This potential lawsuit is important as showing the rôle played by the genealogies in the social regulations of the Toda community. We see that an eventuality which may never arise and probably will not arise for many years to come is already the subject of consideration and discussion, that the crucial point upon which the lawsuit will turn is an event which occurred probably about 120 years ago, and that the ties of kinship which will be involved in the dispute are carefully preserved in the memories of the people.

The history is also very interesting in showing that a century ago a man of force was able to set aside a fundamental regulation of Toda society, and that his grandson, who has apparently inherited the powerful character of his ancestor, is following in his footsteps, and, as we have seen frequently during this volume, is able to put on one side Toda customs or laws when they conflict with his interests or desires.

It seems to be not uncommon for a Toda to die in debt, and it is the duty of the sons to pay off the debts of their father. If there are no children, the payment of the debt is regarded as the duty of the brothers of the dead man.

When children have to pay the debts of their father, they may give their services to others, receiving in return money and other recompense. The usual pay is six rupees a year, two cloaks and food. To this is often added the loan of a milking buffalo.

This custom of working for another is called *kālvatkerthi* or *kālvatkerthiti*. Several of the eight sons of Pushteidi and Keitan (6) are now working to pay their father's debts. Two of the sons are married to one woman and live at one of their own villages, where they look after the buffaloes of the family. Another brother is unmarried, but lives with a Teivali woman. The other five sons are unmarried and work for various people. One is employed on a tea estate, and the others are working for different Todas, who reward them in the manner already described. The milking buffaloes lent to them are handed over to the charge of the brothers who are married.

It is very exceptional to find a family in which so many of the men are unmarried, and this was said to be due to the necessity of paying off their father's debt. In this case the two eldest brothers have remained unmarried, but this was said to have been due to their own choice. It seems that it is left to the family to decide which of them shall marry and which shall undertake the duty of paying the debt. As soon as the debt is paid off, all the sons are allowed to marry.

### THE POSITION OF WOMEN

There is no doubt that women have a subordinate position in the Toda community. The ceremonial of the dairy has a predominant place in the lives and thoughts of the people, and the exclusion of women from any share in this ceremonial must have influenced the attitude of the

community towards the sex. The laws regulating the relations of the dairymen with women also can hardly have contributed to raise the esteem in which they are held. The special ceremonies in which women are concerned involve various disabilities due to the ideas of impurity connected with these ceremonies. The seclusion-hut of a woman has attached to it the same ideas of impurity which attach to a corpse or its relics.

Not only are women excluded from any share in the work of the dairies connected with the sacred buffaloes, but they are also prohibited from any part in the milking of the ordinary buffaloes or in the churning of their milk, which is performed solely by males in a part of the hut with which women have nothing to do. It seems that at one time women had the one function of tending the buffaloes at the time of calving, but even this is no longer allowed them.

In other household matters, the duties of women are very limited in scope. Their chief work is the pounding and sifting of grain, the cleaning of the hut, and the decoration of clothing. I am doubtful whether they are allowed to cook, at any rate to cook food in which milk forms one of the ingredients. With such occupations as divining and sorcery they have nothing to do, but one woman has the reputation of possessing the powers of healing which belong to the *utkòren*.

I could not learn of any matters of social importance in which women are consulted. When collecting genealogies in Torres Straits, I found that women were often repositories of this important branch of knowledge, but I received no indication that this was the case with the Toda women, though I cannot say definitely that they may not have possessed some knowledge of this and cognate subjects.

Though thus unimportant in ceremonial and of little influence in the regulation of social affairs, women have nevertheless much freedom. In general social intercourse the two sexes always seemed to be on the best of terms, and I never saw or heard anything to indicate that women are treated harshly or contemptuously.

In my psychological tests it certainly seemed to me the general intelligence of the women was very much lower than that of the men. Some of the younger women were as acute and intelligent as the men, but the older women were as acute to me hopelessly stupid. They did not try to give their minds to the tasks I set them with anything approaching the keenness and interest shown by the men, and again and again I failed to obtain results of any value in tests which men understood readily.

It seems probable that the intelligence of the two sexes is not appreciably different in youth, but that the social life of the women does nothing to develop this intelligence and everything to force its exercise into the narrowest channels.

It might, I think, be expected that polyandry would be associated with a subordinate position of woman, and there can be no doubt that the Todas show the association of the two conditions.

When a woman marries she becomes of the same clan as her husband, and this is a matter of some importance in connexion with religious and social ceremonial. Thus, in the funeral ceremonies of a woman, the choice of appropriate day and place, of the people who are to take part in the funeral rites and other features of the ceremonial are determined, not by the clan of the woman's father, but by that of her husband, and this even when the marriage itself forms part of the funeral ceremonies.

While I was on the hills, the widow, Kiuneimi (3), who had been living with her father at Nòdrs, died. Her husband had belonged to Kanòdrs, and as a member of this clan she should have been taken to its burning-ground. This was, however, so far from Nòdrs that it was decided not to go there, but to hold the funeral ceremonies near the place where she had died. The proper funeral place for Nòdrs women could not, however, be used, for she belonged to another clan, and the body was therefore taken to a village which was not a true funeral place, and so no laws were infringed.

The funeral of Sinerani (p. 391) is an excellent example which shows how all the details of a funeral ceremony are

dependent on the transference of a young girl to the clan of a boy who acts as husband to the corpse. By her marriage to Keimba, the dead girl became a member of the Keadrol, and her funeral should have been held at the burning-ground of this clan. Many of the features of the ceremonies were in accordance with this change of clan, and since all were not so, the various mishaps which occurred at the funeral were ascribed by the Todas to the departure from prescribed custom.