

Wednesda~ 25th March 190)

Early this morning a niece of ours gave birth to a son and thus another member is added to our already large family. At about 8 the awful ; news was brought that my cousin the Kochu Koil Thampuram is no more. The whole family is plunged in the deepest sorrow for he was in every way a worthy head of our house. Although we had known that the disease he was suffering from was an incurable one and he had suffered terribly during his long illness, still we can not reconcile so easily to the thought of being separated from him for ever...

Thursda~ 26th March 190)

.. He had been the head of our family only for six short years and throughout his management he showed a spirit of conciliation, justice and strict impartiality. He was born in the month of Medom 1018 and therefore would have celebrated his 60th year next Medom had God spared him. He received his early education which was in Sanskrit from our uncles who were distinguished in one Art or the other...

. Frida~ 27th March and 5aturda~ 28th March 190)

. . . He was the eldest son of our aunt Kavamma and his brother Ithammar is the only issue now left. The latter who is now [+++] years old is a very intelligent and clever gentleman well versed in Sanskrit. He is only a little careless about his own affairs so that he looks as if he is in perpetual difficulties. Now to return to the subject of this sketch Raja Raja Varma or as he was generally called 'Kunjunni' who was the eldest of my cousins had acquired a fair knowledge of Sanskrit before he was invested with the holy thread. Some time after this ceremony he had the misfortune to be taken possession of by that most obstinate and troublesome devil commonly known as [demon of obsessive purity]... 208

5unda~ 29th March 190)

. . . blind superstition. He soon became a slave to this evil propensiry. He never was satisfied with the 'Mantrama' he repeated, he imagined that he pronounced every word incorrectly. He was never out of the water,209 he was constantly [+++].

[No entry between 29th March and 13th April]

Monda~ 1 )th April 190)

This is our 'Vishu' or New Year's day. The official new year begins with the month Chingom and nobody notices it much. I and my brother spent last Vishu in Hyderabad. Early this morning we were led like so



many blind men and women to our domestic sanctuarfl0 to open our eyes first on the bright, shining images, flowers and fruits. The day is kept as a holiday.

Sunda~ 14th April 1 90)

A new block of building with eleven apartments for ladies has been commenced. It extends north and south and when finished will present a decent appearance. The old building in front of it hitherto occupied by the ladies has been pulled down and its material will be used for the new one where practicable. The foundation was laid nearly two years ago.

W ednesda~ ! 5th April 1 90)

I left Kilimanur for town [Trivandrum] this evening at 5, with the object of paying a visit to H.H. The Maharaja and of being present at the meeting of the School of Arts Committee. I did not take leave of every one of the senior members of the family as usual since my absence will be but a short one. I took [a] boat at Puvampara, where-though there is scarcity of water-boats are available. My boat was put out at about 7.30 p.m.

Thursda~ 16th April! 90)

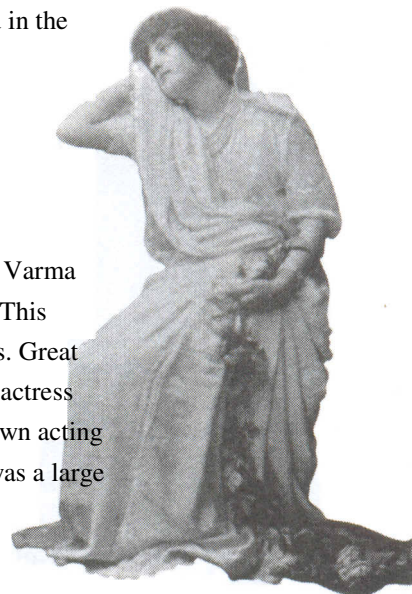
When I reached Trivandrum landing place it was broad day-light and so I walked to the beach having sent for a carriage. I enjoyed my walk by the seashore very much in the cool of the morning. The carriage came and drove to the Fort. After breakfast I paid a visit to the Maharaja, to the young Ranis and the Valiya Koil Thampuran. I slept at my wife's house. The night was very warm and my sleep was restless.

F rida~ ! 7th April! 90)

I was busy this morning with my two brothers in examining and packing the things belonging to our late cousin the Kochu Koil Thampuran who had lived in the small upper story in the Sreepadam Palace facing the street leading to the Padmathirtham Tank. There are a lot of things, booksuseful and otherwise.

Saturda~ j 8th April and Sunda~ 19th April 1 90)

This evening my two brothers, my nephews K. Kerala Varma and Rama Varma went to the theatre to *see* the performance of a play by P. Balamony's troupe. This talented woman has acquired a wide reputation in Southern India as an actress. Great credit is due to her as she is the first to appear on the boards as a professional actress and have a company of her own. The I best part of the performance was her own acting and that of another woman who is said to be a Vaishnava211 by sect. There was a large audience.





Monday 20th April 1903

Balamony came to see my brother and requested him to paint her portrait for her. He made some remarks about her acting and pointed out to her in what respects there was room for improvement. She received the advice with cheerfulness. We told her that we could not paint her portrait without the sanction of the Maharaja. She has promised to get it, for the Maharaja is much pleased with her.

Tuesday 21st April 1903

There is no talk in Trivandrum now except that of Balamony and her troupe. She attracts full houses. For my own part I don't think much of her if I may judge from what I saw the other day. Her movements and expressions are a little too forced and unnatural. I liked the Vaishnava woman better.

Wednesday 22nd April 1903

My Brother Ravi Varma and myself left today for Kilimanur; my brother Goda Varma having left for Mavelikara. There is a great rush of people for boats at the landing place. All the boats have been pressed for service in connection with the approaching wedding of the nieces of Sankaran Tampi, the prime favourite of the Maharaja. Immense quantity [*sic*] of furniture and other things are being daily sent out to Chavara his native place. With great difficulty we got boats for our use.

Thursday 23rd April 1903

When I was in Baroda 10 years ago there were two dance-girls who were named Gori and Khandimati who were brought from Tanjore by the King. I saw them dancing to the tune of the Varna which begins with the line 'Mana Viraykana Radha' in Shankara Bharanam raga in Aditala.212

[No entry between 23rd April and 5th May 1903]

Tuesday 5th May 1903

I wrote a letter to Raja Bhagvan Das on behalf of Brother regarding the settlement of the account in connection of the Nizam's portrait.

Monday 11th May 1903

Brother, myself and Cousin K.R.R. went on an inspection trip to the forests which lie on the north-eastern boundary of Kilimanur. We had a large following. We breakfasted at the house of the Arur Potty and started for the jungles at about 2 p.m. We had a long and trying walk. We had our coffee and Vattapara in the midst of the jungle. At present most of the trees are young and not fit for house building. In about 20 or 30 years they will-if well



preserved-turn full grown timber. The dispute between Government and ourselves regarding our rights to the exclusive possession of all the forest produce (including royal trees such as teak etc.) having been settled by the present Dewan in our favour and the Government Forest Department having been prohibited from interfering with the trees in Kilimanur. It is now found necessary to make arrangements for the preservation of our forest. It is with this view that we visited portions of our forests which lie further from us. I think that some of the well wooded portions should be reserved for the greater safety of the trees. There is a large area of forest tract in the Adhikaram and it is well worth looking for.

Frida-':J 15th Ma-':J 190)

We sent two copies of the photographs of the picture of 'Aja's Lament' or the 'Fatal Garland' to Ms Chatterji of Allahabad for publication in his journal 'The Prabasi'.  
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[No entry till 24th May 1903]

Sunda-':J 24th Ma-':J 190)

We started early this morning for Kattakal our estate in 'Vempayam' on our way to Trivandrum. In the evening we walked through the fields and gardens inspecting the condition of the corn and the coconut trees.

Monda-':J 25th Ma-':J 190)

We took another walk this morning after coffee to those parts of our estate which we could not visit last evening. There is not a suitable building here for us to stay. At present we stay at the farm house which is a dismal place. We were looking for a site for a bungalow to be built but could not decide any. We left Kuttakal at 3 p.m. for town which is only 16 miles distant. We were three in number [:] my eldest brother, my cousin K.R.R. and myself besides servants.

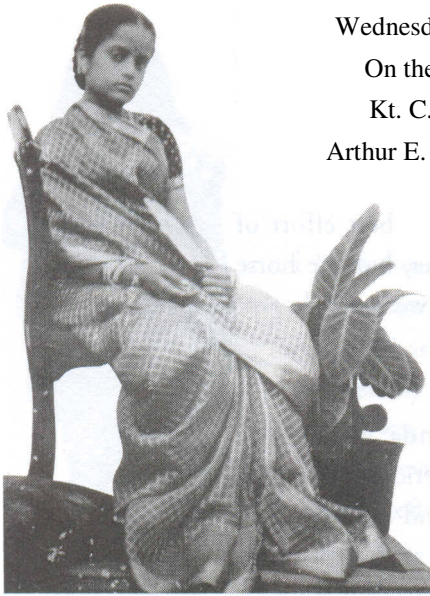
Tuesday-':J 26th Ma-':J 190)

It was past 9 last night when we reached Trivandrum, but our supper was kept in readiness. We paid our respects to H.H. the Maharaja at 2 p.m. Yesterday while travelling in our carriage Brother told me and my cousin that he has made a present of the Kattakal estate to me in consideration of the work I have done for him for the past fifteen years. In fact all his earnings are the result of our joint work.

Wednesda-':J 27th Ma-':J 190)

We paid visits to the Valiya Koil Thampuran and the young Ranis. My brother and the Ranis' mother were with them. The former of whom





Wednesda,y 17th June 1 90)

On the 15th instant a letter was received from Sir S. Ramaswami Mudaliar Kt. C.LE. giving the following extract from a letter addressed to him by Sir Arthur E. Havelock, at present Governor of Tasmania, expressing his pleasure at the news of the successful manner in which his portrait had been executed by us for the Banqueting Hall at Madras. He writes:

From His Excellency Lord Amphill and from others who have seen the portrait, I have received the assurance that the artist Ravi Varma Coiltampuran, has executed the difficult task entrusted to him with great skill and success. I saw some of the Artist's works when I visited Trivandrum in 1897 and again in one or more of the Art Exhibitions held in Madras. I was much impressed by the talent possessed by him. I should be greatly obliged to you, if you would express to him my grateful acknowledgements, should you have an opportunity of doing so.

[See alro Diary 22 July 1903]

Frida,y 19th June 190)

I This evening, Brother, myself and cousin K.R.R.V. paid a visit to Mr Sankarasubbah Iyer, the late Dewan who wants his portrait to be painted by us. We had a long conversation on various subjects. Regarding the appointment of Kerala Varma Valiya Koil Thampuran<sup>216</sup> as the guardian of the young princesses he does not take a favourable view. He seemed to think that a man of greater moral calibre was required for the place.

Saturda,y 20th June 190)

Attended the School of Arts meeting this morning. One case containing a half length portrait of King Edward and Queen, one of the Zamindar of Vollur and two others of the Zamindar's father and the Hon'ble N. Subba Rao were despatched today by transit cart for Tinnevelly to be sent to Cocanada by Rail. The transit charges were Rs 7. This morning when I visited the Library I paid Rs 2 subscriptions till the end of Karkudakam.

Sunda,y 21 stJune J 90)

I commenced Ms Sankarasubbar Iyer's portrait-a half length-and also one of Ms Nagamiah's old mother. Speaking of Nagamiah reminds me of the case related to Omanpallikara, which he has lately decided. The Namboodri who owns the tract called Omenpallikara in Kilimanur claimed that the Desam<sup>217</sup> was free from rent of all kinds, but we contended that we have the right to levy 1/8 Kadama on such of the lands as have been alienated. We have the case decided in our favour by High Court and Mr Nagamiah has now decided that a revenue settlement should be conducted and tax levied on lands that have been alienated.





Thursda,y 2)rdjune 190)

Wrote a letter to Sir Arthur Havelock to thank him for the kind terms in which he has referred to Brother in his letter to Sir S. Ramaswami Mudaliyar; also sent him a copy of Brother's biographical sketch published at the Indian Press, Allahabad, for his acceptance.218 Sir Arthur is now the Governor of Tasmania in Australia. As the Governor of Madras he was very popular.

Wednesda,y 2+th June 190)

I called on H.H. The Maharaja this noon to show him Sir Arthur Havelock's letter as desired by Sir S. Ramaswamy. Mr K.P. Sankara Menon the newly appointed Dewan Peshkar was waiting for an audience. But the Maharaja owing to a slight indisposition had fallen into a light slumber. When he awoke I was called in first and after fifteen minutes' conversation during which His Highness read the letter I left the palace. Mr Sankara Menon's father Sankarni Menon was Peshkar and was the author of a History of Travancore.219

[No entry between 24th June to 30th June 1903]

T uesda,y )oth June 190)

A contract was this day signed by Kuriajan[?] Jacob Kottanar of Tiruvella, promising to pay me and my cousin K. Raja Raja Varma Rs 10,000 out of the Rs 25,000 which the heirs of the late Kerala Varma Raja of Nedumpurathee Koikal have bound themselves to pay to him for the pecuniary help which he had agreed to give them in order to establish their claims to the property of the deceased in British Malabar in a court of Law. Their rival claimants are the Rajas of Mariyapalli. As the Kottanar is unable to further help them, my brother has agreed to undertake it for the above consideration.220

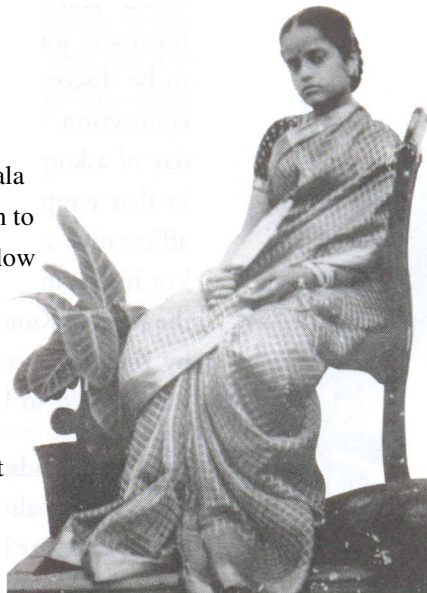
[No entry between 30th June and 4th July]

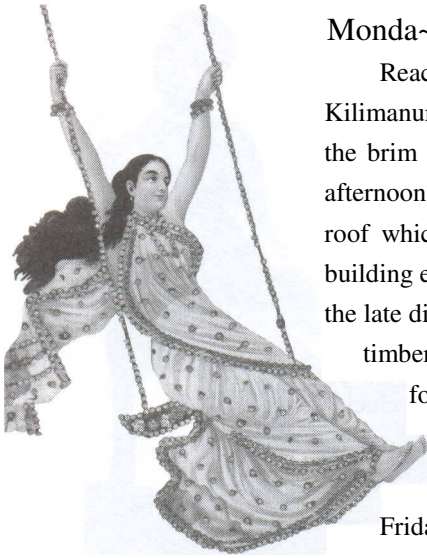
Saturda,y +th jul,y 190)

This morning I visited the School of Arts with my nephew Kerala Varma, Ravi Varma and Kunjuni whom I have arranged to be taken to the drawing class. In the evening we drove to Mr Nagamiah's bungalow and made a sketch of his old mother, who is 85 years of age. We returned home at about 6.30.

Sunda,y 5th jul,y 190)

This morning we paid a visit to Dr Poonen to consult him about the disease (Hernia) from which my brother has been suffering for a month and a half past. We leave to night for Kilimanur.





Monda~ 6th jul~ 1903

Reached Attingul [Attingal] early in the morning and after coffee left for Kilimanur where we arrived at about 11 o'clock. The heavy rains have filled our tank to the brim and as it had been drained two months ago, the water is very good. In the afternoon visited the new building to which the front veranda is now being built. The roof which had collapsed has been put right. There are 11 suits of rooms and the building extends north and south facing east. After the late disaster, H.H. The Maharaja has been pleased to order 50 Khandies of timber to be given [to] us. This is quite sufficient for our wants. Our own forest which supplied most of the timber does not contain trees large enough for planks for ceiling and doors.

Frida~ 10th jul~ 1903

We [Brother, myself and cousin K.R.R.] paid a visit this afternoon to the Oadattumalla about three miles to the north-east where pepper plantation has been lately commenced under my brother's orders. A very extensive area of the forest has been cleared of the undergrowth of grass and bushes and vines planted at the foot of almost every tree. At about 6 it began to rain and we returned home.

Saturda~ 11th jul~ 1903

Not far from the pepper plantation and about a mile to the east of the public road from the place called Attur Chettram is our ancestral estate of Kuravankuzhydoddy which we think of visiting before long. Near this estate is a ruined temple of Vishnu called Wyattunkara. Its circular base constructed of sculptured granite stone would show that it was a temple of great importance at one time. It is said that the Raja of Ambalapuzha when he was an independent chief had owned this temple and the land adjacent to it. There is still a place called 'Chempakachery' near the temple where the Namboodri chieftain had his house some remains of which the people in the neighbourhood say are still to be discovered. An other evidence of the Ampalapuzha Raja's ownership and connection with this temple is to be found in the custom extant to this very day of asking by the Tandri of the Ampalapuzha temple before the Kadiyettu in that temple-if the Kadiyettu of Attur is over and on being replied in the affirmative the Kadiyettu is performed. At what time the Ampalapuzha Raja lost his claims to the estate and temple here is unknown. One account says that the Rajas of Kunnumel who were the Lords of Kilimanur before they were subjugated by the Kings of Travancore gave the Ambalapuzha chief such trouble that he was obliged to leave his possessions here for ever and betake to his own state.

[Here ends the transcription of the first diary of C. Raja Raja Varma. The copy of the second part of the diary was-like the first part-transcribed into a calendar diary by the same hand, it begins with an entry for Wednesday, 15th July, 1903, and ends with the entry of Friday, 1st January, 1904.]



Wednesda~ J 5th jul~ 190)

Received information this morning that [some] burglars entered the farmhouse at 'Kattakal' and attempted to steal corn from the granary. One of the thieves has been caught and our farmer has written to ask what should be done with him. Word has been sent to hand him over to the police and charge him. The thief is well known to us and is a frequent visitor to our estate.

Saturda~ J 8th jul~ 190)

A money order for Rs 7-8 was sent this day to the manager of the Madras Standard being the subscription to the paper from January to the end of June. We began to take this paper at the desire of its late editor Mr G. Parameswar Pillaf<sup>22</sup> whose sad death took place lately at Quilon.

Monda~ 20th jul~ 190)

Received a letter from our agent at Mysore that the proposal to adorn the Maharaja's new palace with a set of our paintings has been favourably received by the engineer in charge of the work. He wants to know what it would cost for us to pay a visit to Mysore to see the building before deciding upon the subject of the pictures and our terms in executing them.

**T**uesda~ 21 stjul~ 190)

I commenced my usual oil treatment this morning. I find it very tedious to pass my time doing nothing. I have long been accustomed to devote every hour of mine in doing something useful. I have now to lie down quiet. It is a pity that I have here no one to read to me some book I am interested in.

Wednesda~ 22ndjul~ 190)

Sir Arthur Havelock's letter to brother is transcribed here though it was received on the 11 th August. As no entries had been made under this and the six following dates I have thought of filling the blank spaces with this letter which is a valuable testimonial to be preserved.<sup>223</sup>

'Government House Hobart'  
Tasmania  
17th July 1903

Dear Mr Ravi Varma,

It has given me great pleasure to receive your letter of the 22nd June. You have given me an opportunity of repeating the admiration I feel for the artistic skill and talent shown by yourself and your brother in the execution of the memorial portrait of myself, which has been honoured by a place in the Banqueting Hall at Madras. His Excellency the Governor and others who have seen the portrait all join in testifYing to the merits of the portrait as a work of art and to the excellence

