

IMPRESSIONS OF TRAVANCORE

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TRAVANCORE, the Kashmir of the South, thrilled us,—her beautiful backwaters, narrow lanes of canals lively with country crafts, green rice fields and ever green panorama of coconut groves with the deep azure background of distant hills, countless temples as old as Time itself, spotless metropolis Trivandrum, and above all the simple and hospitable Travancoreans.

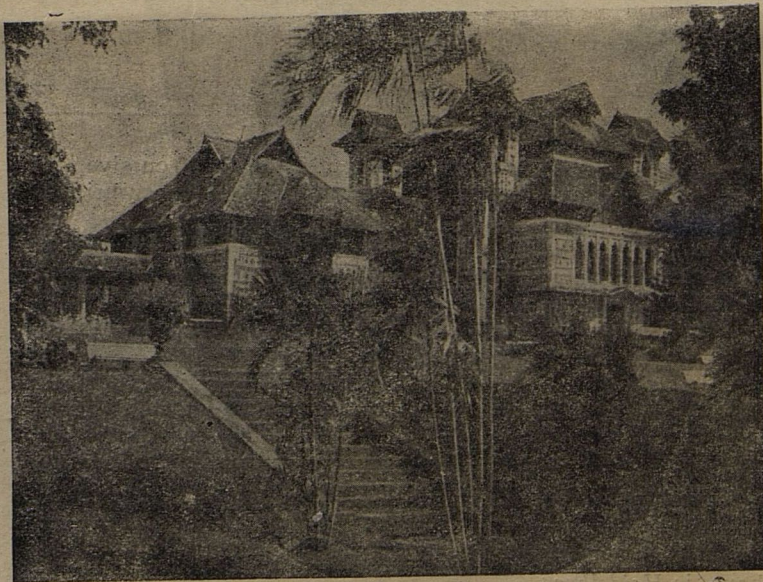
Sri Padmanabhaswami Temple

At the first glimpse I did not feel that I had come to a strange place, as it was so familiar like my own native land Bengal. I felt that I had just stepped into one room from another in my own home. When I

artistic wealth, the most celebrated amongst the temples of Travancore of which His Highness the Maharaja is the greatest daily worshipper, I felt that I was in a new world. The temples in Travancore are so clean, so well looked after, and above everything the sanctity of a Hindu place of worship is so well preserved, that one feels nearer to God when one enters their sacred precincts.

Art Gallery

The Museum with the lovely collection of art objects and particularly the remarkable Bronzes, the Zoo gardens, a paradise for the lovers of animals, the Sri Chitralayam Art Gallery, where the most beautiful collection of contemporary modern Indian paintings and those of the famous Russian master and his son, Prof. Nicholas and Svetoslav Roerich which are a feast of delightful colours, are so well arranged and properly kept, were all a surprise to me. As an artist I envy the Travancoreans possessing such an Art Gallery which I consider unique as no



TRIVANDRUM MUSEUM.

where else in other parts of our vast continent have we anything similar. Outside the capital within the State

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CLIFFS OF VIZINGA

of the two i's in Vilinam, the second alone is well articulated in ordinary parlance. Therefore, the name Vilinam mentioned to the Greek *'peripluser'* of the first century had all the chances of being noted down in Greek as BALINA, retaining only the accented i. And when he sat down at home to write an account of his *periplus*, in uncial Greek letters according to the Greek practice until the sixth century A. D., he must have written BALINA itself.

But the original MS. of the Periplus, or even an uncial copy of a later century, has not come down to us. The earliest Periplus MS. that we have is *Heidelberg Codex Pal Graec*, 398, a parchment copy of the tenth century in cursive script used to

this day. Even if the first cursive script copy of, say, the 6th—7th centuries had Balina correctly there was the later succession of copyists to misread it and convert the unknown place name into BALITA, cursive n being easily mistaken for t in Gk. MSS.

The alternative suggestion, much less probable, can also be made here that Balita is the truncated and corrupt form of Tiru-Vallattu, or the corrupt form of Vallattu, the locative form of Tiruvallam or Vallam, nominative. Philologically this change is not impossible. But there is no evidence yet that Tiruvallam (near Trivandrum) had anciently a fine harbour like Vilinjam.

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CAPE COMORIN

The Land's End of India

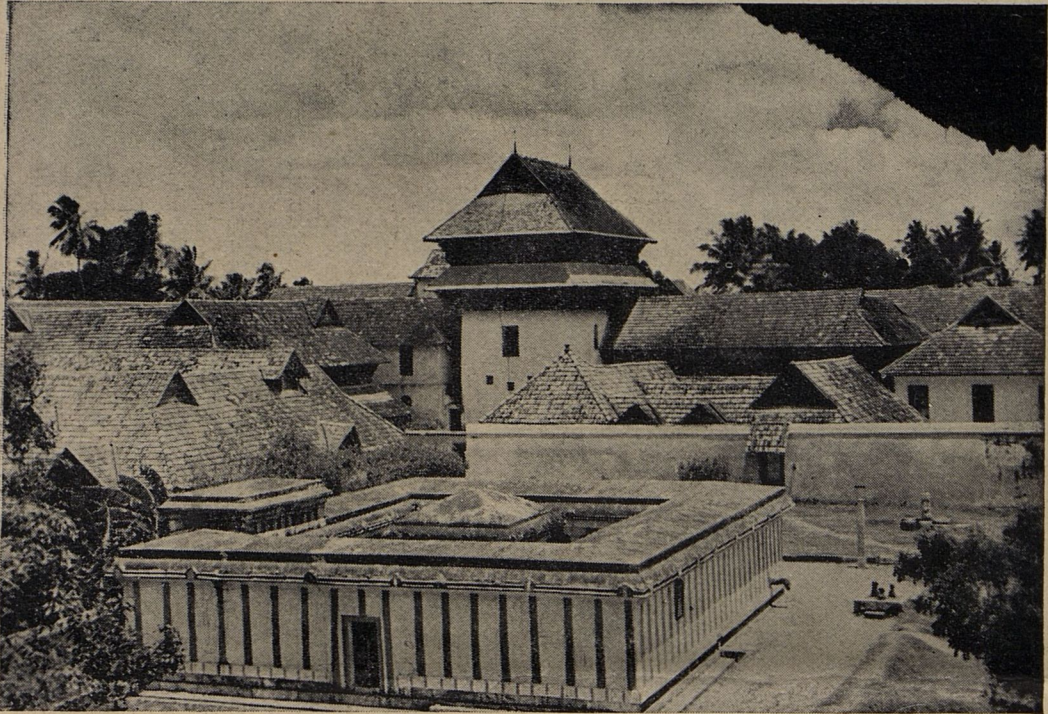
"*Kannya Kumari*", the Land's End of India, the sacred pilgrimage for pious Hindus, is an inspiring sight.

A Living Museum of Antiquities

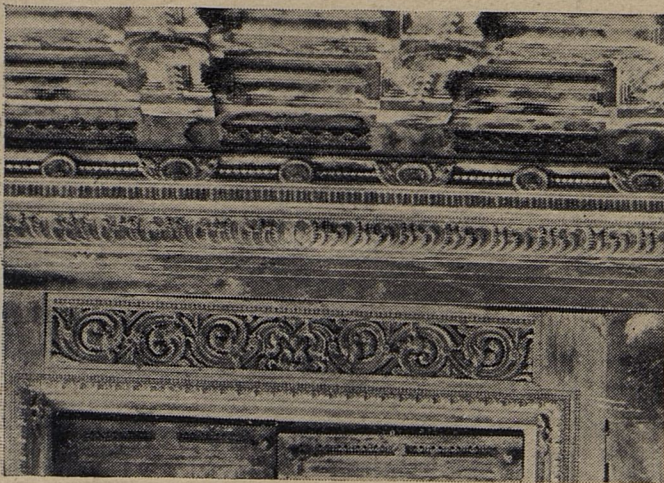
The Padmanabhapuram Palace with its typical Kerala style of architecture is a living museum of antiquities—sculptures, wood carvings and delightful fresco paintings, sombre in colour by age. By renovating and bringing out these art treasures to the notice of the people, the State holds out a new interest in her artistic achievements.



SRI CHITRALAYAM

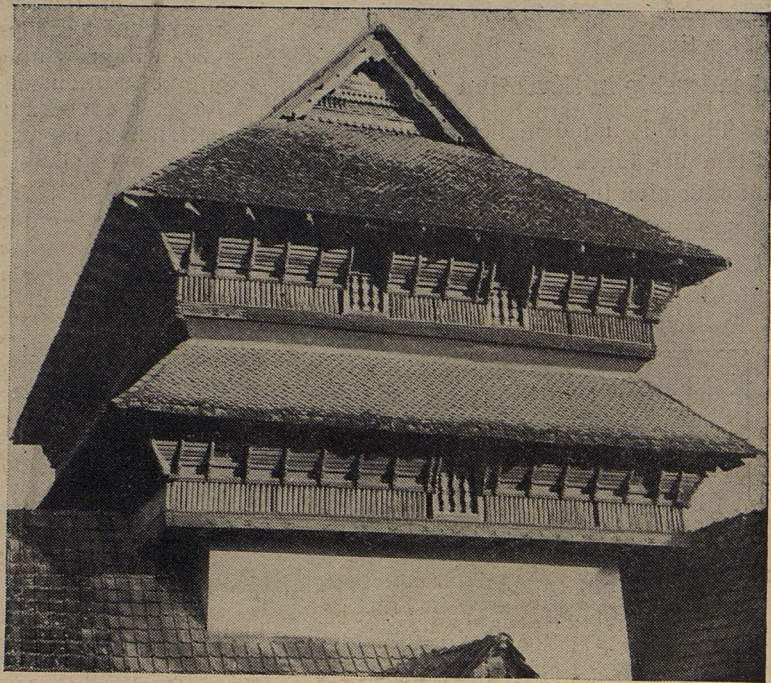


A VIEW OF THE PADMANABHAPURAM PALACE FROM
ONE OF ITS EASTERN TOWERS

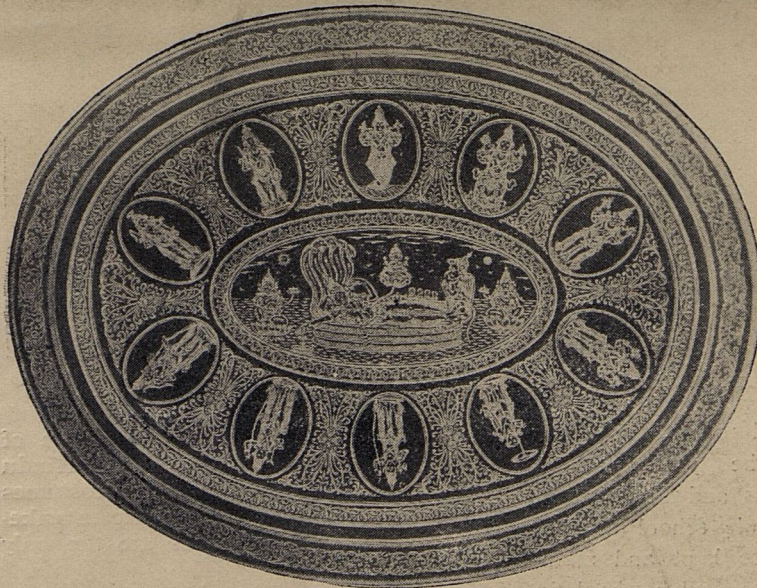


CARVED DOOR, CORNICES, AND
CEILING OF THE NIRAPPURA
AT PADMANABHAPURAM
PALACE

For the remarkable way in which the Navaratri Mantapam, the Spanish Clock Tower, the Mirror Hall, armoury corridors, Indra Vilasam, the Mantrasala, the great Dining Hall, and the Mural Pagoda are kept and maintained, one cannot but praise the State Authorities. I am ashamed, in our part of the country, we lack in such efficient management of our National heritage and culture.



WOODEN GABLE OF THE PADMANABHAPURAM PALACE



THE TEN AVATARS AND ANANTHASAYANAM
A FINE SPECIMEN OF KUFTGARI WORK

**Ranga Vilasam
Palace**

Travancore's superb Ivory carvings, Kufthari work, beautiful wood work, collection of exquisite bronzes, good Chinese and Tibetan paintings, white and blue porcelain done by the old Chinese master Potters and other works of art consisting of the beautiful life-size *Kathakali* characters carved in wood housed in the Ranga Vilasam Palace, bear ample testimony to

the imagination and the keen interest His Highness the Maharaja takes in Art and its activities.

Leadership in Education

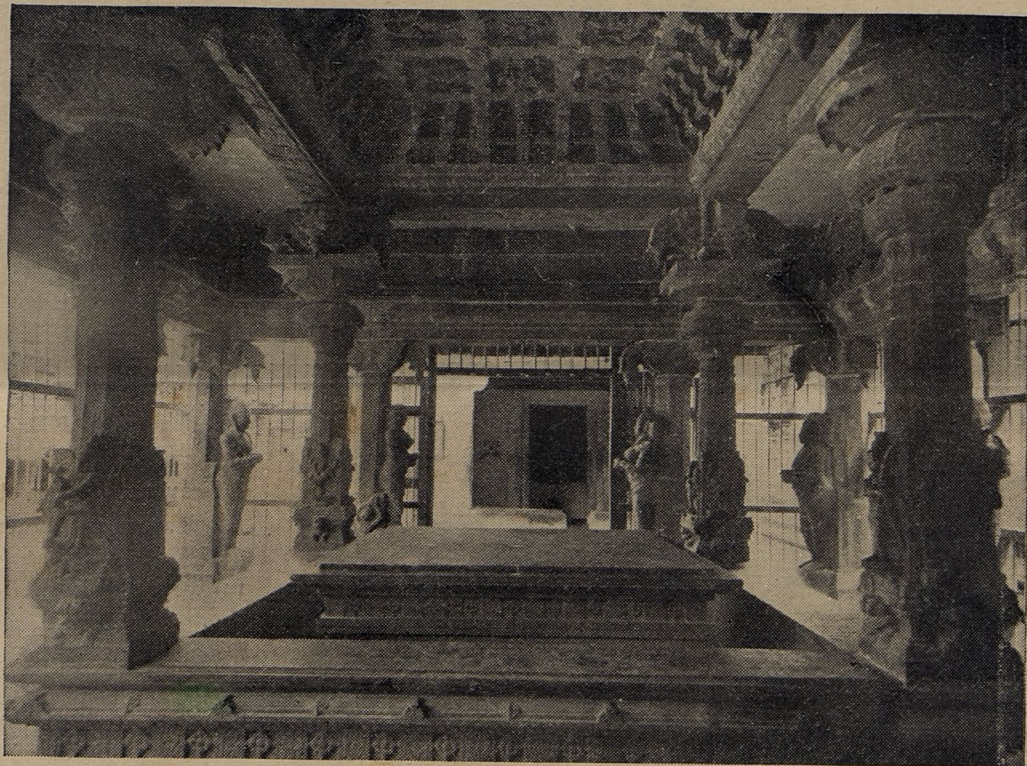
There is no denial of the fact that the State has taken the leadership in matters of education in our country.

I had the good fortune to visit a Girls English High School, where the Head Mistress so kindly showed me

These children of to-day are the future-citizens of tomorrow of the State. I can with confidence predict that these young-ones will grow up to maintain worthily the proud traditions of the State. I shall never forget the charming young children who entertained us with beautiful dancing in the school hall.

Music and Dancing

My expression of gratitude and delight will be incomplete without reference to music and dancing in which the State possesses distinctive excellence.



NAVARATRI MANTAPAM AT PADMANABHAPURAM PALACE

round. I was delighted to see the bright and happy faces of the young school children, their cleanliness and the beautiful way in which the whole school building and its surroundings are kept and maintained. I have never seen such schools in my own place.

Then came the *Kathakali*—the classic of dancing based upon the early Hindu mythology performed in bizarre costumes and masks and wonderful intricate make-up of which Travancoreans are the only real masters.

Concluding, I would like to appeal to the art students and artists of Travancore,



A KATHAKALI ACTOR (Photo by Mr. M. Bhavnani)

particularly those practising, painting to study the art treasures they have. They are their fortunes, their heritage. The younger generation of artists should apply the knowledge and the traditional craftsmanship for which Travancore was justly famous to their own works rather than attempt indifferent work in a technique and

medium which are alien to the genius of the land.

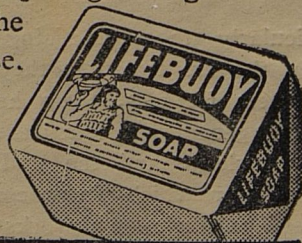
Travancoreans have the finest of every thing from ivory to wood—from stones to gold and innumerable other beautiful raw materials and above all, your greatest and sincerest friend and guide in your sympathetic Maharaja. I am gratified having seen beautiful Travancore.



.. of course
he's learned the
LIFEBUOY
habit!

Off to school and what will he pick up there? New knowledge, new ways—perhaps the germ of some epidemic! His Mother sends off her little man protected by all she has taught him, not least the daily use of Lifebuoy Soap to guard against “dirt-danger” which threatens even the healthiest boy with germs and possible disease.

*Lifebuoy is more than a good soap
— its a good habit*



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