

ART. VII.—*On Malabar, Coromandel, Quilon, etc.*

By C. P. BROWN.

The Arabs and Africans who first visited the west coast of India, came "Mu-abbar": "from beyond" the sea. In the voyages of Ibn Batuta, translated by Dr. Lee, the country is called Muabbar, without any surmise that this is Malabar. The Syrian Christians who live in Travancore wrote the word ^{معبّر} in Syriac characters: **معبّر**, and it has occurred to me that in careless writing this may have been altered into **ملابار** Malabar: a name unknown to the inhabitants; who fancy it is the European name for their country and language. The Eastern shore of India also was visited by men "from over the sea:" and the name Malabar has also been wrongly applied to the Eastern coast.

But the name underwent another change. The Tamils in those lands could not pronounce the ع *ain*, or the letter B, and Muabbar was softened into 'Mâpîla' the name borne by these descendants of Africans: who are now called Moplas.

The children borne to these foreigners by Hindu women were in Hindî called "Do-bhashi," or "two-linguaged;" hence *Dobhash*, or *Dubhash*, an interpreter: bilingues is the phrase used by Virgil. This word also was hard to the Tamils, who could pronounce neither D nor Bh. They changed the word (such is my opinion) into To Pâsi and hence the name Topass; which was applied afterwards to such persons of the mixed blood.

The name Maabar is correctly explained in Wright's edition of the English version of Marco Polo's Voyages, (in Bohn's Library, 12mo. p. 395): but in a learned essay translated from Arabic, in Prinsep's Journal of the Asiatic Society (Aug. 1836, p. 458) the coast is called ^{مونيبار} Mōnibâr: which is

there misprinted Monembar. The Arabs also called this country ^{بلد الفلفل} Bilid ul Falfal, 'the land of pepper' (see Sir Wm. Jones's Description of India, chap. iii. which is in his Works xii. 387). The Hindus call the western rêvu, or coast 'Korchi Rêvu,' which we call Cochin: while 'Calicut' is properly Kallee Kôṭa; Aulay-polay has been corrupted into Alleppie; and Kollam is modernized into Quilon.

A mile or two north of Madras-town there is a fishing village called Kuru manil ^{कुरुमनिल} or 'Black sand;' the earliest Portuguese sailors pronounced this Coromandel, and called the whole coast by this name: which is unknown to the Hindus. At a later day 'Shozha Mandal' has been assigned, denoting 'the land of the grain called maize:' but that grain is peculiar to no district. Some have proposed the etymon 'Kuru-Mandal,' but the Kuru race were in the north not the south of India.
