and frequently turgid ; lower jaw not heavy, its lateral expansion greater than in the Aryan and less than in the Turanian type, giving to the middle part of the face a marked development and breadth, and to the general contour an obtuse oval shape, somewhat bulging at the sides; forehead well-formed, but receding, inclining to flatfish, and seldom high ; occiput somewhat projecting ; beard considerable, and often strong ; colour of skin very dark, frequently approaching to black (*Manual* *of the Administration of the Madras Presidency,* Madras, 1885, vol. i., Introd., p. 36 ; see also Caldwell, *Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages,* 1875, pp. 558-79). The Tamils have many estimable qualities,—frugality, patience, endurance, politeness,—and they are credited with astounding memories ; their worst vices are said to be lying and lasciviousness. Of all the South-Indian tribes they are the least sedentary and the most enterprising. Wherever money is to be earned, there will Tamils be found, either as merchants or in the lower capacity of domestic servants and labourers. The tea and coffee districts of Ceylon are peopled by about 800,000 ; Tamils serve as coolies in the Mauritius and the West Indies. In Burmah, the Straits, and Siam the so-called Klings are all Tamils (Graul, *Reise nach Ostindien,* Leipsic, 1855, vol. iv. pp. 113-212).

*Language.—*The area over which Tamil is spoken extends from a few miles north of the city of Madras to the extreme south of the eastern side of the peninsula, throughout the country below the Gháts, from Pulicat to Cape Comorin, and from the Gháts to the Bay of Bengal, including also the southern portion of Travancore on the western side of the Gháts and the northern part of Ceylon. According to the census of 1881, the number of Tamil-speaking people throughout the province was 12,413,517, inclusive of 21,992 Yerkalas, 3843 Kurumbas, and 287 Irulas, three tribes speaking rude dialects of the language. To these should be added about 160,000 in the French possessions. But, as of all the Dravidian languages the Tamil shows the greatest tendency to spread, its area becomes ever larger, encroaching on that of the contiguous languages. Tamil is a sister of Malay­âlma, Telugu, Canarese, Tulu, Kudagu, Toda, Kôta, Gônd, Khond (Ku), Urâon, Râjmahâl, Keikâdi, and Brahuî, the nine last-named being uncultivated tongues ; and, as it is the oldest, richest, and most highly organized of the Dravidian languages, it may be looked upon as typical of the family to which it belongs. The one nearest akin to it is Malayâlma, which originally appears to have been simply a dialect of Tamil, but differs from it now both in pronunciation and in idiom, in the retention of Old-Tamil forms obsolete in the modern language, and in having discarded all personal terminations in the verb, the person being always indicated by the pronoun (F. W. Ellis, *Dissertation on the Malayâlma Language,* p. 2 ; Gundert, *Malayâlma Dictionary,* Introd. ; Caldwell, *Comparative Gr.,* Introd., p. 23 ; Burnell, *Specimens of South Indian Dialects,* No. 2, p. 13). Also, the proportion of Sanskrit words in Malayâlma is greater, while in Tamil it is less, than in any other Dravidian tongue. This divergence between the two languages cannot be traced farther back than about the 10th century; for, as it appears from the Cochin and Travancore inscriptions, previous to that period both languages were still substantially identical ; whereas in the *Râmacharitam,* the oldest poem in Malayâlma, composed probably in the 13th century, at any rate long before the arrival of the Portuguese and the introduction of the modern character, we see that language already formed. The modern Tamil *characters* originated “in a Brahmanical adaptation of the old Grantha letters corre­sponding to the so-called Vatteluttu,” or round-hand, an alphabet once in vogue throughout the whole of the Pândyan kingdom, as well as in the South Malabar and Coimbatore districts, and still sparsely used for drawing up conveyances and other legal instruments (F. W. Ellis, *Dissertation,* p. 3). It is also used by the Mâppilas in Tellicherry. The origin of the Vatteluttu itself is still a controverted question. The late Dr Burnell, the greatest authority on the subject, has stated his reasons for tracing that character through the Pehlevi to a Semitic source *{Elements of South Indian Palæography,* 2d ed., 1878, pp. 47-52, and plates xvii. and xxxii.). In the 8th century the Vatteluttu existed side by side and together with the Grantha, an ancient alphabet still used through­out the Tamil country in writing Sanskrit. During the four or five centuries after the conquest of Madura by the diolas in the 11th it was gradually superseded in the Tamil country by the modern Tamil, while in Malabar it continued in general use down to the end of the 17th century. But the earliest works of Tamil literature, such as the *Tolkâppiyam* and the *Rural,* were still written in it. The modern Tamil characters, which have but little changed for the last 500 years, differ from all the other modern Dravidian alphabets both in shape and in their phonetic value. Their angular form is said to be due to the widespread practice of writing with the style resting on the *end* of the left thumb-nail, while the other alpha­bets are written with the style resting on the left side of the thumb.

The Tamil alphabet is sufficiently well adapted for the expression of the twelve vowels of the language (*a*, *â, i, î, u, û, e, ê, o, ô, ei, au),* —the occasional sounds of *ö* and ü*,* both short and long, being covered by the signs for *e, ê, ί, î* ; but it is utterly inadequate for the proper expression of the consonants, inasmuch as the one character *k* has to do duty also for *kh, g, gh,* and similarly each of the other surd consonants *ch, t, t, p* represents also the re­maining three letters of its respective class. The letter *k* has, besides, occasionally the sound of *h,* and *ch* that of *s.* Each of the five consonants *k, ch, t, t, p* has its own nasal. In addition to the four semivowels, the Tamil possesses a cerebral *r* and *l,* and has, in common with the Malayâlma, retained a liquid *l,* once peculiar to all the Dravidian languages, the sound of which is so difficult to fix graphically, and varies so much in different districts, that it has been rendered in a dozen different ways (*Manual of the Administration of the Madras Presidency,* vol. ii. p. 20 *sq.*)*.* Fr. Miiller is probably correct in approximating it to that of the Bohemian *r.* There is, lastly, a peculiar *n,* differing in function but not in pronunciation from the dental *n.* The three sibilants and *h* of Sanskrit have no place in the Tamil alphabet ; but *ch* often does duty as a sibilant in writing foreign words, and the four corresponding letters as well as *j* and *ksh* of the Grantha alphabet are now frequently called to aid. It is obvious that many of the Sanskrit words imported into Tamil at various periods (Caldwell, *loc. cit.,* Introd., pp. 86 *sq. )* have, in consequence of the incongruity of the Sanskrit and Tamil notation of their respective phonetic systems, assumed disguises under which the original is scarcely recognizable : examples are *ulagu* (loka), *uruvam* (rûpa), *arukken* (arka), *arputam* (adbhutam), *natchattiram* (nakshatram), *irudi* (rishi), *tîrkam* (dîrgha), *arasen* (râjan). Besides the Sanskrit ingredients, which appear but sparsely in the old poetry, Tamil has borrowed from Hindustani, Arabic, and Persian a large number of revenue, political, and judicial terms, and more recently a good many English words have crept in, such as *tiratti,* treaty, *patlar,* butler, *Akt,* act, *kulôb,* club, *kavarnar,* governor, *pinnalk6du,* penal code, *sîkku,* sick, *mejastirattu,* magistrate. But, as compared with its literary sister languages, it has preserved its Dravidian character singularly free from foreign influence. Of Tamil words which have found a permanent home in English may be mentioned curry (*kari),* mulligatawny (*milagu,* pepper, and *tannîr,* cool water), cheroot (*suruttu),* pariah (*pareiyan).*

The laws of euphony (avoiding of hiatus, softening of initial consonants, contact of final with initial consonants) are far more complicated in Tamil than in Sanskrit. But, while they were rigidly adhered to in the old poetical language (Sen-Tamil), there is a growing tendency to neglect them in the language of the present day (Kodun-Tamil). It is true the Tamil rules totally differ from the prevailing Sanskrit ; still the probability is in favour of a Sanskrit influence, inasmuch as they appear to follow Sanskrit models. Thus, *irul nîkkinân becomes irunîkkinân ; pon pâttiram, porpâttiram ; vüttil kandên, vüttir kandên ; vâlsirumei, vâtsirumei ; palan tandân, palanrandân.* Nouns are divided into high-caste