

THE CIVILIAN'S SOUTH INDIA

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SOME PLACES AND PEOPLE IN
MADRAS

BY "CIVILIAN"

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FOREWORD

WHEN the Civilian, being then of nearly four years' standing, suggested to his Superior that it was high time he should write something about India, his Superior was not encouraging.

“Do you mean to say,” he remarked, “that you contemplate the crime of publishing?”

The Civilian pointed out that he had previously on some one or two occasions been guilty of that same offence.

“Then,” said the Superior, “do not do so any more. Give it up. It is neither decent, nor *mamul*, nor anything else that is good. And, moreover, enough has been written about India already.”

“Not about South India,” said the Civilian, “and I really think it is high time people at home realized that there are other parts of India besides the Punjab.”

The Superior shrugged his shoulders and asked what the Civilian knew about India. The Civilian replied that in very truth he knew nothing, but that it was his firm belief that no one ever would know anything or ever had, and that therefore one might as well set down one's impressions. By

now his impressions might be said to have taken shape, their crudities to have worn off.

“I do not, for instance,” he said, “dislike you so heartily as I should have done three years ago, because I can now see your good points; certain mannerisms of the Indian no longer make me feel uncomfortable because I realize that by them he means no harm; I do not feel this country so abominably hot because I have become used to it. In a few years, on the other hand, I shall have become so used to it that I shall see or notice nothing at all. The hour therefore seems ripe.”

“You are talking like a fool,” said his Superior.

“Nevertheless,” said the Civilian, “I mean to do it.”