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# CALENDAR



OF A

## VOLUME CONTAINING NOTIFICATIONS

(1779 TO 1824)

ISSUED BY THE

DANISH ADMINISTRATION AT TRANQUEBAR

(DANISH RECORDS, SERIAL No. I.)



MADRAS:

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## PREFACE.

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THE Danes came to India in 1620 and settled down on the Coromandel Coast between Negapatam and Tranquebar (the town of the billows.) The Danish Admiral Ove Gjedde bought the then insignificant village and a small territory from the Raja of Tanjore to whom they belonged. The village soon became a small town with many inhabitants and the trade flourished. Although Tranquebar had no harbour it was at that time a much-frequented shipping place as the roadsteads were safer and the surf less violent than at Madras. Admiral Gjedde built the fort "Dansborg" and surrounded the town with walls to protect the inhabitants.

At the time of the wars at the beginning of the 19th century Denmark was acknowledged as a neutral state by the powers at war and many of the Danish inhabitants at Tranquebar acquired considerable fortunes by lending their names to protect the property of Englishmen. But unfortunately Denmark did not keep neutral and as a result of this Tranquebar as well as the other Danish Colony Serampore in Bengal were taken possession of by England in 1803.

The colony remained in the hands of the English up to 1815 when it was handed over to Denmark again.

Denmark treated her Indian subjects with much consideration. The colony was ruled by a paternal Government who regulated by laws almost everything concerning the inhabitants' life and conduct. It intervened in caste disputes, and regulated and settled a sale-price of articles of food and clothing. The sale of tobacco, liquor and salt were a Royal monopoly. The slaves were treated fairly well and were not allowed to be put into irons. While the Government tried to be impartial to all religions, the Christians had some privileges, and in 1823 we even see the Government taking under its special protection the Evangelical Velagamutters who were told to regard the Government as their father who would protect them and to whom they should behave as a child to its father.

The colony however never recovered after the war and the formerly flourishing trade went down to almost nothing. From English territory rice and hides were now and then brought to Tranquebar to be exported to Isle de France, but much rice had to be imported to the colony as its own rice produce was far from being sufficient to its many inhabitants. The revenue had diminished considerably and were not even sufficient to pay half of the expenses. The yearly income did not exceed 30,000 rupees, including the compensation paid by the English Government for the salt monopoly which they had held since the war. Moreover the Danish Government had to pay a yearly tribute of 2,000 pagodas to the Raja of Tanjore.

It is therefore not to be wondered at, if Denmark began to consider the question of disposing of the colony—a thought that however was not regarded with favour by the Danish people who thought it beneath the dignity of Denmark that she should