

TELINGA, OR TELOOGOO.

(For SPECIMEN of this Version, see Plate IV.)

GEOGRAPHICAL EXTENT AND STATISTICS.—The Telinga language is spoken within 23 miles of Madras, and prevails for about 500 miles along the coast, from the Dutch settlement of Pulicat to the borders of Orissa. In the interior it extends as far west as Bedar, through nearly the whole of Hyderabad, a part of Berar, and the eastern provinces of Mysore. The portion of the Telinga country subject to the Madras Presidency includes the five Circars—Vizagapatam, Rajahmundry, Masulipatam, Guntoor, and the Cuddapah and Nellore districts of the Carnatic. The superficial extent of the entire region in which this language is predominant has been estimated at 118,610 square miles. The natives are Hindoos, and number about 10,000,000. The Telinga language is also diffused to a greater or less extent through various countries of Southern India, in which the Tamul and Canarese are the proper vernacular languages. This diffusion in part arises from the early conquests, dating from the fourteenth century, achieved by the people of Telinga in the south. Like the Romans, they endeavoured to secure their conquests, and to keep the natives in subjection by the establishment of military colonies; and the Telinga language is still spoken by the descendants of the Telinga families, who were deputed by the kings of Vidianagara to found these colonies.¹ The roaming tendencies of the Telinga people also serve to account in part for the diffusion of the language. On this subject the missionaries have remarked that “in intelligence, migratory habits, secular prosperity, and unfrequency of return to their native land, this people are, in relation to other parts of India, what the Scotch are in relation to England and the world.”²

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LANGUAGE.—Telinga is the most soft and polished of the languages of Southern India, and contains the greatest proportion of Sanscrit words. Yet the Sanscrit terms with which it unquestionably abounds, form no part whatever of the basis of the language, but appear to have been engrafted on the elements of the original Telinga at some period far too remote for inquiry. The grammatical construction of Telinga is alone sufficient to prove that it has no claims to be regarded as a mere Sanscrit dialect. In the declension of its nouns, effected by means of subjoined particles, in the mode of conjugating the affirmative, and in the possession of a negative verb, in the use of a plural pronoun applicable to the first and second persons conjointly, and in the peculiarities of its syntax, it offers obvious points of deviation from the forms of Sanscrit grammar, while at the same time it exhibits decided affinity in these respects with its cognate languages of the Deccan. The Telinga language possesses no word exactly corresponding with our article; the indefinite article is sometimes expressed by means of the numeral *one*, but in general the article is considered as inherent in the noun. Like the Tamul and Canarese, the Telinga possesses that singular part of speech called the relative participle, which displays the combined force of the definite article, the relative pronoun, and the verb.³ It also resembles these languages in the possession of two dialects, the common or popular medium, used for all purposes of business and conversation, and the high or refined dialect, in which the literature of the nation, consisting chiefly of poetry, is written. The dissimilarity between these dialects is so great, that commentaries are requisite in the perusal of native works, even in the case of individuals who have acquired the most complete familiarity with the colloquial dialect. The Telinga possesses great facility in the naturalisation of foreign terms; yet, with the exception of a few words obtained from the neighbouring provinces of Orissa, Mahratta, and Gujerat, it does not appear to borrow many words from foreign sources. Several technical revenue and official terms derived from the Hindustani were at one time in common use, but they now begin to be superseded by the corresponding English words.⁴ The Telinga, like other Indian alphabets, is distinguished by the perplexing multiplicity of its symbols, of which there are no less than eighty-one: some of these, however, are merely abbreviated forms of the regular initial letters; others are only used as marks for certain consonants when doubled; and some are peculiar to words of Sanscrit origin. “Hence,” says Mr. Campbell, “all native grammarians concur in reducing the characters to thirty-seven, by excluding forty-four, which they acknowledge belong to the language, but which they will not admit into the

¹ Campbell's Telooogo Grammar, *Introduction*, p. 2.
² An Appeal in behalf of S. India, by Rev. J. Smith.

³ Campbell's Telooogo Grammar, p. 42.
⁴ Campbell's Telooogo Grammar, p. 75.