

4. ANGANA AS NOW USED IN WESTERN INDIA.

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DEAR PROFESSOR RHYS DAVIDS,—I have heard the following places called ‘angan’ in Western India :—

- (a) The square courtyard surrounded by buildings, mentioned by Mr. Beames.
- (b) Court with buildings on two or three sides, and a screen wall or walls completing the enclosure, like Burlington House in the sixties.
- (c) Space in front of a house, fenced off more or less lightly; from the gravel before Buckingham Palace to a kitchen area. Buckingham Palace Gardens are *not* an ‘angan,’ for a reason stated apart.
- (d) Space in front of or around a house or hut, or even cattle-shed, with no screen or fence, but having boundaries recognizable in some way, generally by the ground being gravelled, paved, or rammed hard and plastered with cow-dung mud.
- (e) Similar space before a hut, of which the boundaries are known to its owner, but to a stranger only conjecturable from the use made of the ground for domestic purposes, and by its *not being tilled*.

These two last are like your ‘*midula*’ in Ceylon. In the garden villages of the Bombay Konkan, such ground is often deducted from the area assessable to land revenue. There have often been disputes as to whether they have been surreptitiously enlarged or originally overestimated by bribed measurers.

- (f) An assigned and limited space for the pitching of a tent or tents, as on the Esplanade of Bombay, where one can rent such a site from Government by the month, and live on it in private tents.¹ These sites are, or were, only marked off with whitewash lines on the ground, over which tent ropes should not be carried,

¹ There are often twenty or more families on ‘the Cooperage ground’ at a time; a little city of tents.

and there is 'no thoroughfare' but by courtesy and understanding between neighbours. I don't know what they may be called in the 'Bombay bat'— "a particoloured dress Of patched and piebald languages, English and Urdu on Marathi, like beetle wings on kus-kus tatty." But my establishment, marching in from the mofussil in the enjoyment of a pretty pure dialect, at once recognized my patch as an 'angan.'

All these places have one character in common, that is, that they are set apart from the surrounding ground for some special purpose. Whether that land be pasture, garden, field, or forest, its general use does not extend to the 'angan.' The ploughshare never touches it. One flower is always present, if the occupant be an Hindu, that is, the sacred Tulti (*Ocymum sanctum*); there may be a few others, generally such as are used in domestic worship or for personal decoration. They are apt to be in pots, or in some substitute for pots, or in little raised mud pies. Flower beds of any size are rare in 'angans,' and vegetables still more so. You will sometimes see a few stalks of Indian corn (*Zea mays*), and often enough one or two little Chili plants (*Capsicum*).

Trees are usually kept to the boundaries as far as possible. Exceptions to this are generally those whose leaves or flowers are used in worship. If a shade or fruit-tree is included, there will probably be a little platform round its foot, or some other sign of its being something different in use from similar trees outside.

In the trial of trespass cases the plaintiff makes a good deal of fuss about the sanctity of his 'angan,' and finds it difficult to understand that breach of the same is not 'house trespass' under the Penal Code, any more than the invasion of a 'pratie-patch' or of the now famous 'kailyard.'¹

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¹ It is for this reason that I can't use the law-word 'curtilage' as a satisfactory rendering. It sometimes includes too much.