It was Thomas Carlyle who expressed the view that history is nothing but the biography of great men. “History”, he said, “is the essence of innumerable biographies.” The learned English writer thus approached the study of history from the limited angle of the role of historical characters. With full consciousness of the obvious shortcomings of this approach to history, an attempt has been made by me in this volume to provide some glimpses of the history of Kerala with focus on the accomplishments of select historical personages and groups of men who had a hand in shaping the course of Kerala history through the ages. Though the approach so adopted in the treatment of the subject matter is different from that of my earlier volumes, viz, A Survey of Kerala History (1967), Cultural Heritage of Kerala (1978) and Social and Cultural History of Kerala (1979), I expect this book to serve the purpose of a companion volume that should benefit the student and the general reader along with my earlier ones.

I would like to explain the circumstances under which I happened to write this book. The Madhavan Nayar Foundation, a Registered Public Charitable Trust, with headquarters at Cochin, has set up a unique institution, viz, the Museum of Kerala History and its Makers at Kalamasseri in the suburbs of Cochin, wherein about thirty-seven sets of appropriately attired life-size figures, made in concrete, representing prominent personages or groups, adorn the gallery. Mr. R. Madhavan Nayar, the Managing Trustee of the Foundation, who is the moving spirit behind the Museum Project, was kind enough to invite me to visit the place early in August 1986 to have a look at the Museum under construction and some of the figures which had been got ready. He was also kind enough to give me a complete list of the figures proposed to be kept in the Museum. Mr. Nayar wrote to me that it would be worthwhile if I could “prepare a continuous account of the history of Kerala based on the achievements and contributions of the thirty-seven historical personages and groups.” He was also kind enough to extend to me all help and encouragement to take up the work. The title of the book Kerala History and its Makers was also suggested by him. I would like to
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