लाल बहादुर शास्त्री प्रशासन अकादमी
Lal Bahadur Shastri Academy
of Administration
मसूरी
MUSSOORIE
पुस्तकालय
LIBRARY
अवाप्ति संख्या
Accession No. 8999 115228
वर्ग संख्या
Class No. 954.93
पुस्तक संख्या
Book No. Wil


PALK STRAIT
Point Pedro
Jaffna
NORTHERN PROVINCE
Mullaitivu
Paranji Aru
Mannar
Giants Tank
Vavuniya
GULF OF MANNAR
Arivi Aru
Yan oya
NORTH CENTRAL PROVINCE
Anuradhapura
Trincomalee
Habarane
Sigiri
Ganga
Kalpitiya
Pollonaruha
CENTRAL PROVINCE
Kalkudah
NORTH WESTERN PROVINCE
Dedara Oya
Matale
EASTERN PROVINCE
Vedda Country
Batticoloa
Chilaw
Kurunegala
KANDY
Mahaweli
Negombo
Maha oya
Kegalla
Badulla
Andella Oya
Gal Oya
Kelani Ganga
Nuwara Eliya
COLOMBO
WESTERN PROVINCE
PROVINCE OF UVA
Mt. Lavinia
Kalu Ganga
Adams Peak
SABARAGAMA PROVINCE
Little Basses
SOUTHERN PROVINCE
INDIAN OCEAN
Kirinda
Great passes
Galle
Hambantota
Weligama
Matara
Tangalle
DONDRA HEAD
JACK TRODD 1948
N
W
E
S

CEYLON

Pearl of the East

By the same Author

SOUTH LONDON
(County Books Series)

Fiction
IDIOT'S VISION



The Temple of the Tooth, Kandy. A sacred elephant in the Forecourt

CEYLON

PEARL OF THE EAST

by

HARRY WILLIAMS

He who has seen a white crow,
the nest of a paddy-bird, a
straight coconut tree, or a dead
monkey, will live for ever
VILLAGE SAYING

ROBERT HALE LIMITED
18 Bedford Square London W.C.1

First Published July 1950
Reprinted June 1951
Reprinted June 1953

To
HUGH SMYTH

quiet, unassuming, and unaltered
friend of my Ceylon years

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Ceylon Association in London, through the courtesy of its Secretary, A. G. Baynham, M.C., and the cheerful help of its Librarian, Mr. R. J. Barber, made this book possible. Constant use of the Association's Library—premises and contents—solved, most pleasantly, what appeared to me, in the early stages, an insoluble problem of research.

To what was then the Tea Propaganda Board—now the Tea Bureau in Lower Regent Street—I owe an equal debt. No less than seventeen of the illustrations in this book came from their photographic library, and were placed at my disposal without fee and without stipulation. I acknowledge, gratefully, their generous help and kindness.

And there is Mrs Lilian Lilley, who typed the manuscript and tidied up innumerable muddles in the process. To her I offer both thanks and admiration for her deftness and persistence. Finally, to my wife, responsible for the colossal index at the back of this book, I must express my most lively gratitude.

The illustrations numbered 4, 5, 23, 24, *are reproduced from photographs by Exclusive News Ltd.;* 27 *by "Illustrated";* 1 *by Topical Press;* 3, 14, 15, 17, 33 *by G. N. Skuce, Esq. The remaining illustrations are from photographs supplied by the Tea Bureau, Lower Regent Street.*

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
LOWE AND BRYDONE (PRINTERS) LIMITED, LONDON, N.W.10

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 9

Past Tense

THE SINHALESE KINGS

Wijayo 15

The Clergy of Reason 27

Mahawansa—The Great Dynasty 38

Sulawansa—The Lower Race 55

Indian Summer of a Civilization 63

THE KANDYAN KINGS

Portuguese Incident 79

Dutch Incident 95

British Incident 104

THE CITIES IN THE JUNGLE

Anuradhapura 120

Polonnaruha 142

Sigirya 153

Interlude

Veddhas 170

Present Tense

THE HILLS

Mahabadde—The Great Industry

1. Estates 191

2. Labourers 222

3. Planters 255

THE HILLS

1. Namunukulakande 273
2. The Garden of Ravanna 277
3. The Holy Mountain 281

THE PLAINS

1. Villages and Villagers 289
2. Towns and Townsfolk 309
3. Agriculture 347
4. Precious Stones 361
5. Flora and Fauna 370

EPILOGUE

Guide Book 411

BIBLIOGRAPHY 448

INDEX 449

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. The Temple of the Tooth, Kandy. A sacred elephant in the forecourt — *frontispiece*

facing page

2. Wearers of the saffron robe. Buddhist priests, the Clergy of Reason — 48
3. Statue of Parakrama the Great, holding a sacred "ola" leaf, carved in the living rock at Polonnaruha — 49
4. The Jaya Sri Maha Bodin-wahansa, or Holy Bo-tree, Anuradhapura: 2236 years old in 1948 — 64
5. The holy hill of Mihintale and the Maha Sena dagoba approached by one thousand eight hundred and forty steps — 65
6. The Ruanwelli, or Gold-dust dagoba, Anuradhapura, prior to the completion of the restoration work — 96
7. The rock temple of Isurumuniya, over 2000 years old — 97
8. The Kiri or Milk dagoba in the medieval jungle city of Polonnaruha — 112
9. The dead Buddha and mourning disciple, Ananda, Polonnaruha — 113
10. Jetawanarama temple, Polonnaruha, with the headless Buddha seen against the back wall — 144
11. The Gal-potta, or book of stone, Polonnaruha, with the Wata-dagé and Thuparama in the background — 145
12. The Audience Hall, Polonnaruha — 160
13. Medieval ruins at the base of Sigirya, famous rock fortress in the central jungle plain — 161
14. The Rest-house keeper, Sigirya, with his family — 192
15. A settlement of coast Veddhas in the jungle close to Batticoloa — 193

16. A modern up-country tea factory, 4000 feet above sea level in the Province of Uva *facing page* 208

17. The beautiful Deeyaluma falls, Koslanda, nearly 600 feet of sheer drop 209

18. A pilgrim reaches the summit of 7000-feet-high Adam's Peak, holiest mountain in the world 240

19. An aristocrat of the soil. A villager wearing the tortoise-shell comb of high caste 241

20. Raddawa caste Sinhalese women at work. Beating out a cloth on stones as in biblical times 256

21. A Sinhalese fisherman, considered of low caste because his profession involves the taking of life 257

22. Outrigger fishing craft on the shores of the Kalu-ganga, one of Ceylon's few navigable rivers 288

23. Clapham Junction of the East: Colombo's great artificial harbour 289

24. The main thoroughfare of the Pettah or Black Town, Colombo's native quarter 304

25. Catamarans drawn up on the beach of Ceylon's most popular tourist resort—Mount Lavinia 305

26. The potter's immemorial art. Tamil craftsmen working at a pottery near Cotta 336

27. Kandyan temple-dancers in traditional ceremonial dress 337

28. Flooded paddy (rice fields) in the Low-country plains 352

29. A primitive gem-mine near Pelmadulla. Washing gem-dirt brought up from the working strata 353

30. Polishing precious stones from Ratnapura, city of gems. A lapidary at work 384

31. A magnificent specimen of the Fan-palm tree in the botanical gardens, Peradeniya, near Kandy 385

32. The basket makers of Kalutara 400

33. Land's End. Dondra Head light-house, last outpost of *terra firma* before the South Pole is reached 401

INTRODUCTION

Cingalese history is authenticated by the concurrence of every evidence that can contribute to verify the annals of any country.

Introduction to Turnour's edition of the *Mahawansa*

IN the year 1826 an Englishman, the Hon. George Turnour, sat in his office in the Kachcheri buildings at Ratnapura, the city of gems, in the Saffragam Province of Ceylon. Those were the days of Empire, full-blooded and confident. The English spirit was young and ardent, and if the adventurers, with their keen materialism, were sowing the seeds of future reaction, the administrators were groping towards an ideal of service that has not been surpassed in the story of Man. The Colonial service, in particular, was attracting men of culture and high feeling, for whom the betterment of mankind in general, not personal prosperity, was the goal. Their story has yet to be told, for the speed of development of the world during the last century has obscured the patient labours of the men who consolidated the foundations of the second British Empire.

George Turnour was one of these men, and history has shown him scant respect, although its debt to him is immense. It is true that his scholarly mind would have rejected the acclamation generally accorded the soldier or sailor who performs some brilliant feat of arms, but it is a commentary on the falling standards of the times that his contribution to a fuller knowledge of the past is known only to a handful of specialists. Yet, once the dry rustle of old documents has been discounted, his work will be seen for what it was—a romance of discovery.

The documents lying on the desk before him that morning a century and a quarter ago were not connected in any way with his routine duties as Government Agent of the Province. They were, indeed, so rare in their nature, and afforded the key to such fabulous historic riches, that they must be considered unique. The mere sight of them filled Turnour with excitement, and a resolve to dedicate his life to a work of such distinction, accuracy and research that one is tempted to believe that

Providence had taken a hand in bringing together the missing documents, and this particular scholar, at one and the same moment in time.

At the opening of the nineteenth century, the existence of an historical record called the *Mahawansa*, or *Great Dynasty*, was known to a handful of Buddhist priests. It was a metrical chronicle, hiding in mystical verse the most astonishing dynastic history of any people, and it covered a period of twenty-three centuries from the year 543 B.C. to A.D. 1758. The language employed was classical Pali, which had long passed out of use, and to those who, with utmost difficulty, had translated a verse or two, the chronicle had seemed pure nonsense. The authors, it appeared, had sacrificed sense for rhyme, the whole work being mystical, verbose and incomprehensible. It had fallen into such disrepute that few, even among the Buddhist priesthood, knew of its existence, and none could translate it.

But one of the priests, the intelligent and learned Gallé, recognized in Turnour a man of genius. It is certain that without Gallé the history of Ceylon would not have emerged from the mists of fable and surmise, poetry and sheer exaggeration, in which that of the sub-continent of India is lost to the present day. The debt owed to the priest is little less than that which has yet to be paid to the Civil Servant.

The two men became acquainted, and Gallé told the Government Agent of his conviction that a "tika"—a prose explanation of the mystical verse employed in the *Mahawansa*—was still in existence. If it could be found, he thought that the historical chronicle might not be without value, for it was traditionally believed to contain an accurate record of events under the flowery outer-cover of metrical rhetoric.

Turnour's interest was aroused, and between them a search was made among the only possible repositories of such a set of documents, the Buddhist temples. The search was successful, the missing "tika" being discovered in the Wihara at Mulgirigalla, near Tangalle, a temple founded a hundred and fifty years before the birth of Christ. It was this, as it proved, priceless manuscript which lay on that Kachcheri desk in 1826.

That the prospect of using the "tika" to make a full translation of the *Mahawansa* appealed to Turnour is certain, but it must also have aroused doubt, for the difficulties were enormous. Although fluent in the Sinhalese vernacular, and possessing great

knowledge of Sinhalese script, he knew nothing of Pali, an extinct language, the root and original of both Sanskrit and Sinhalese, but quite distinct from either. There were no text-books nor vocabularies available, and no parallel documents to study. To obtain personal knowledge of the language, he would be compelled to spend long hours delving and probing into the minds of the handful of Buddhist priests who still were able to call to mind a few words of Pali. He would have to sacrifice all leisure time left over from his duties, themselves onerous, and he would have to be prepared to dedicate many years of his life to the task. The one hundred books of the *Mahawansa* covered, in fullest detail, two thousand years of Ceylon history, during which fifty-four kings of the Great Dynasty—the Mahawansa of the title—and one hundred and eleven sovereigns of the Sulawansa, or lower race, sat on the throne of Lanka.

It is almost inconceivable that a man should sit down calmly to attempt such an undertaking, as he must have realized that he himself might not live long enough to conclude it, for the translation of the hundred books, comprising hundreds of thousands of words, was but one half of the work. Having completed that, the "tika" would then have to be invoked, and the imagery and mysticism of the original verse reduced to the plain common sense of ordinary prose.

I like to think of him, faced with that colossal challenge, rising from his desk and turning to the vast mountain wall outside the Kachcheri windows for inspiration. To the north, and very close at hand, rearing its forest-clad summit 7000 feet into the burnished blue of the sky, stood Adam's Peak, incarnation of beauty and majesty. The sheer bulk of the cliffs, rising in precipitous grandeur from the foothills, induce feelings both of awe and exaltation, and it is from Ratnapura that the most devout of pilgrims make their ascent of this holy mountain. There can be few more wonderful sights than that headlong rush skywards of rock, cliff and clinging verdure, garlanded with forest, guardian of secrets, and object of the worship of mankind for thousands of years, perhaps from the very birth of Man. To George Turnour it must have afforded all the comfort, hope and encouragement he needed. It gave him his answer, and the decision was made, with the result that the confused intermingling of fact and legend which is the *Mahawansa* was translated, sorted, edited, and arranged by Turnour, who presented it to the world in the first

splendid edition of 1836. This edition contained only some thirty-odd of the hundred books, and Turnour did not live to complete the whole work, but recognition of the value of the record was instantaneous, and in due course the remaining books of the *Mahawansa* were translated. It was revealed as one of the most remarkable histories in existence, unrivalled—with, perhaps, the sole exception of the Shu King records of the Chinese Emperors —as a dynastic narrative of an ancient and cultured civilization.

But Turnour's research achieved more than this. It opened the path to the study and translation of the carved inscriptions found all over India, and among the countless monuments of two of the most remarkable lost cities in the world, Anuradhapura and Polonnaruha, abandoned and forgotten in the arid plains of central Ceylon. If his name is almost unknown, his work is of an importance that increases, rather than diminishes, with the passing of the years.

PAST TENSE

CHAPTER I

WIJAYO

HUMAN life goes back a very long way in the story of Ceylon. The Mohammedans believe that it began there with a reunion between Adam and Eve, cast out from Paradise above to meet, and propagate the human species, in Paradise Island below. Mr Wayland, rather more cautiously, gives it as his opinion that man lived in Ceylon certainly not less than one hundred thousand years ago. The presence of stone implements in caves verifies the existence of Stone Age men, although Seligmann insists that nothing so far discovered proves them to be of an older race than neolithic. Whichever they may be, palæolithic or neolithic, a man may find evidence of their passing by wandering at random among the up-country grasslands, known as *patanas*. Here, in abundance, he will find the chipped flakes which speak, with the same authority as the pyramids of Egypt, of a long-dead race.

The earliest known inhabitants, however, are the Veddhas, primitive aborigines still to be found, in the last stages of miscegenation for the most part, in the remoter forests and jungles of the interior of the island. There was a time when these sad people had an organization of their own, for the legend of their ancient capital city, Lankapura, does not fade although no monuments and not a single inscription have been found to support it. Yet so insistent is it that we know the very shape of that far-distant organization.

Then the Yakkas, or devils, were the dominant tribe, holding sway over the interior; with the Nagas, or snakes—whose king sat upon a throne of gems—exercising dominion over the northern parts of the island. These tribes undoubtedly existed, for the island was known as Naga Dwipa (snake island) to Buddhist writers centuries before the invasion of Wijayo. Unfortunately the natural confusion of those early days is further confused by the fact that the dead were also known as Yakkas, and legend has been unable to adhere to the flesh and blood tribesmen. Naga

Dwipa was an actual kingdom, and it is possible that the Nagas themselves were an immigrant tribe from southern India—part of a Tamil people called Nayars—but the traditional stories of past millenniums are now nothing but a mystical hotch-potch of devils, ghosts, and heroes so inextricably woven that it is very unlikely that the truth will ever emerge.

Tradition says that the Nagas and Yakkas shared their capital Lankapura with a third race, the Rakkshas, or demon worshippers, until such time as it was swallowed up by the ocean. Almost any villagers in the island will recount this story, most of them with no knowledge of where it comes from. Brahminical records support Sinhalese legends by stating that many thousands of islands were overwhelmed by the sea in the year 2387 B.C., the same year that Lankapura was lost. The curious thing is that geological research also supports this possibility, for it seems probable that Ceylon was once part of a vast land mass, divided from Northern India, but embracing land now sunk under the sea stretching as far west as Madagascar and as far east as Malaya.

It has always seemed, to me, unwise to smile at the deeply ingrained folk-lore of ancient peoples, for legend and scientific discovery have a habit of coinciding at many points, and lost Lankapura is one of them.

Under its Sanskrit name of Lanka, Ceylon figures prominently in the romantic Hindu epic the *Ramayana*, thought to have been written at least four thousand years ago. It is a tale the Ceylon part of which must be given in detail, for without knowledge of it there can be no comprehension, in Western minds, of the interweaving of legend, poetry, and religion which takes the place of history in the minds and hearts of hundreds of millions of Eastern people. Very often, too, it takes the place of what we call, in our arrogance, science. There are moments when one may glimpse those ultimate heights where folk-lore, history, science, and religion all meet upon a common basis.

John Still[1] relates one such moment in recounting the story of a conversation with Veddhas, during which they assured him that men once wore tails, and clambered about the forests of the Wanni—the northern plains of Ceylon—among the treetops. These aborigines would know nothing of the *Ramayana*, which describes the adventures of the hero Rama—none other than one quarter of the deity Vishnu visiting the earth in human guise—

[1] *The Jungle Tide.*

who, with his brother Saman, defeated Ravanna, King of Lanka, with the aid of an army of monkeys. Is it not possible, even probable, that somewhere in the fog of doubt and speculation which envelops the origin of Man the Veddhas, the *Ramayana*, and Charles Darwin have come together on common ground?

There is a third element to be added to the folk-lore of an ancient people and the religious historical poems of the Hindus, before a true appreciation of the story of the early days of Lanka can be gained, and that is the religious history of the Buddhists. To them the three visits of Gotama to Ceylon are factual, just as, to the Hindus, Vishnu visited the earth—and incidentally Ceylon —in human shape. In attempting any outline of Lanka's past, these things must not be forgotten for, as will be seen, they are of vital importance.

Gotama, twenty-fifth Buddha, and fourth in the present Kalpa—a division of time—landed in Ceylon upon three separate occasions. His first descent was at Bintenne, in the central plains, and the place is marked by a dagoba erected in honour of the event at Mahayangana. The second coming was at Nagadipo in the north of the island, where he settled a quarrel between Mahodara and Culodara over the throne of gems previously mentioned. Tradition places the scene of the last coming at Kelani, a few miles from Colombo, where the Naga King Mahodara provided Gotama with a sumptuous feast. When the banquet was over, the Buddha rose straight into the air to fly home to Magadha, his home in northern India, but in passing over the central mountains, his foot touched Sumana, or Adam's Peak, leaving its imprint there. This indentation in the rock on the very summit of the peak is an object of veneration for over one thousand million people to this day, although only the Buddhists believe it to have been made by Gotama.

To see Ceylon in all its matchless panoply of beauty and romance, it must be seen through the eyes of its own peoples, as well as by the light of Western knowledge. The Veddhas, apart from tales of the camp-fire and the legend of Lankapura, are voiceless. We shall hear the Buddhists throughout this book in the voice liberated by George Turnour—the *Mahawansa*—but that other great community, the Tamils, are a Hindu race with their own version of events; a version which must be heard, since it is believed implicitly by three hundred million souls, and not merely the million and a half Hindus living in Ceylon. These

three races, of the seventy which dwell in the island, are the only ones which have lived there from earliest times, and it must be remembered that before the Sinhalese were Buddhists they were Hindus.

The *Ramayana*, the finest of the three epic poems upon which Indian history is based, is attributed to the poet Valmiki. It tells the story of the invasion of Ceylon by Rama-Chandra—Rama signifies the moon—a Prince of Oudh, and is thought to be a dramatization of an early Aryan raid upon Lanka. The poem runs into 350,000 words in 530 cantos, and has been translated, by R. T. H. Griffiths, into English rhyming couplets.

Vishnu, second in the Hindu Trimurti—or Trinity of Gods, of which Brahma is the Giver of Life and Siva the Destroyer—is the hero of this epic, for he had to come down to earth to deal with a situation which was rapidly getting out of hand owing to an injudicious promise given by Brahma.

Ravanna, the ten-headed Giant King of Lanka, had worshipped Brahma with such devotion for ten thousand years that that god had given him a promise that he could not be destroyed, except by mortal hand. Having obtained this promise, which appeared to make his position unassailable; for there were no puny mortals capable of meeting him in fair fight; the giant's behaviour changed. He became utterly unbearable, and the gods conferred together, requesting Vishnu himself to descend to earth and deal with the upstart. This the great god did in fourfold form, turning himself into the four sons of Dasaradha, King of Oudh, and of his wife Kousalya. Of these four Rama is the hero of the poem, strongly supported by another quarter of Vishnu in Saman, his beloved brother.

In his mortal shape Rama performed the feat of breaking Siva's bow, previously beyond the strength of man, and as a reward for such strength and daring—for the god would have been angry if he had failed—he won, as his bride, the lovely Sita, daughter of King Mithila.

One odd characteristic of Hindu deities is that they appear susceptible to the effects of mortal cursing. The lowest caste labourer on any tea estate does not hesitate, if things go wrong with him, to berate and revile his own personal god with no respect for divinity or fear of blasphemy. This trait is shown in the story of Rama. The hero, still in possession of his godlike powers, was one day practising with his mighty bow when the

twang, as he released an arrow, so frightened a pregnant woman who happened to be close at hand, that she had an abortion. The woman's husband, in a rage at this dire misfortune, cursed Rama with the following words: "May Rama henceforth possess no more knowledge than the rest of men." I do not know who implemented the curse, and the *Ramayana* is silent on the point, but it took effect. From that moment Rama lost his divine prescience.

The *Ramayana*—older than the *Iliad*—is not a fairy story enjoyed by all and believed by nobody. Seven times the population of the British Isles accepts, not merely the story itself, but the powers attributed to all the actors in it.

Ravanna, in revenge for an insult paid to his sister, invaded India at that time, and chancing upon Sita, Rama's beautiful wife, carried her back to Ceylon with him. The giant used a flying machine in his travels, very fully described in the poem, an interesting fact which does something to explain the indifference shown by any coolie to the phenomenon of an aeroplane. Flying in machines has been a forgotten art for millenniums, but they show little surprise on finding that it has been rediscovered.

Rama, grief-stricken at his loss, immediately planned to rescue Sita, and knowing that, by himself, he stood no chance of success, he formed an alliance with Sugriva, King of the Monkeys. This monarch owed him a debt of gratitude for placing him upon his rightful throne, of which he had been dispossessed by his brother Vali whom none but the hero had been able to overthrow. To pay this debt of gratitude, Sugriva placed his army of monkeys, under the generalship of Hanuman, at Rama's disposal.

Even for reconnoitring purposes it was difficult to enter into Ravanna's kingdom, for between India and Lanka, in those distant days, was a treacherous sea, eight hundred miles in width. But Hanuman, son of the wind, was so agile and light on his feet that he walked, dry-shod, across this channel. After a long search in Ravanna's kingdom, he came finally upon Sita sitting under a tree, weeping, reviling Ravanna, and swearing fidelity to Rama. Sexual fidelity among wives in the East is largely a matter of circumstances. Women there put up with what happens to them, and to the Hindu, Sita's constancy was miraculous. Certainly its effect upon Rama was instantaneous.

The hero immediately conceived the idea of building a bridge across the Manaar Straits, entrusting this mighty feat of en-

gineering to Hanuman. The simian general carried out the task with prodigious speed by uprooting forests and levelling mountains, and to this day the proof of his work remains for all to see in Adam's Bridge.

Rama, knowing that the monkeys alone could not defeat Ravanna, raised and trained an army of bears also, and with these forces he invaded Ceylon. The fortunes of war swayed first this way and then that—Rama, at one point, was killed but was brought back to life by a display of incredible agility on the part of the faithful Hanuman—but at last the hero was triumphant. Ravanna, one cannot help feeling, was slightly unlucky to be defeated and slain, but no doubt he merited this fate. Sita was brought back from captivity to Oudh, but not at first in triumph. Rama, indeed, denounced the unfortunate woman as the cause of all the trouble, which gave her such sorrow that she cast herself upon a blazing pyre. The flames, however, could not consume her, and Rama accepted this as evidence of her innocence.

Lest it be thought that this epic, a matter of delightful fantasy and poetic licence to the Western mind, presents itself in the same light to Hindus, I would like to point out a few facts which suggest that this is not the case at all. Hanuman is worshipped all over the peninsula of India to this day, while in Ceylon, the central incidents of the story of the *Ramayana* each has its geography. Where Sita was found under her tree by Hanuman, the stages of her journey into captivity, the site of the last desperate battle between Ravanna and Rama, each is a known and hallowed spot. And of course the worship of Rama and Saman, as manifestations of the god Vishnu, goes on wherever Hindus are to be found. To hundreds of millions of living people, the events of Valmiki's poem are history, not fantasy.

The *Mahawansa*, however, authenticated, in its essentials, by every document and inscription that has ever been discovered, deals with the history of Ceylon only from the time of Wijayo onwards, and it is with Wijayo that we leave the realm of conjecture. Events may be embellished—indeed they usually are—with Eastern exaggeration and mystical trappings, but they happened. We shall discover how simple it is, relatively, to see the truth through the trappings as we proceed with this story.

Wijayo, founder of the Great Dynasty—also, of course, known as the Mahawansa to the Sinhalese—was the son of a Bengali named Singha, the lion. The *Rajavali* states that Wijayo was

not altogether an ordinary mortal, in that he was the result of a union between a very beautiful, if careless, princess and a lion. Thus, says this old and unreliable chronicle, the race came to be called the Lion Race, or Singhalese; a poetic explanation which overlooks the simple fact that the Bengali who, in fact, sired Wijayo was named Singha. This unknown Singha, who never saw Ceylon, and almost certainly had never heard of it, gave his name to a race that has endured for two thousand five hundred years, and has but lately come again into full stewardship of its ancient freedom and culture.

Wijayo was an adventurer, one of those men of restless blood and wide-ranging imagination without whom the world might never have passed from the tribal state. The Buddhist theory that he was ordained, the precursor of Gotama, ignores the man's very nature. He was an agriculturist from northern India, with an itch in his blood and a small band of faithful followers; a Brahmin whose piety was not proof against the temptations he encountered, and a thoroughly unscrupulous man. There can be no doubt that he was also a man with character and a power of leadership, but as the precursor of the gentle Gotama he merits no investigation whatever. In fact, despite the romantic imagery with which his landing has been invested—ardent Buddhists say that he arrived on the very day of Gotama's death—the rise of the Sinhalese civilization began in bloodshed and treachery.

It is interesting to find, in an account given by that careful chronicler, the Chinaman Fa Hien, that Ceylon was an accepted trading centre long before the advent of Wijayo. No doubt there were many previous incursions of adventurers from India, either in search of booty or trade. The accepted method of trading, in those early days, has the authentic smell of romance about it. The foreign merchants who ventured to that "ultimate isle" had no means of bargaining with their customers for they never saw them, but left their wares upon the beaches and withdrew. During the night the Yakkas, Rakkshas and Nagas crept from their lairs in the caves and woods and removed this merchandise, in payment for which they left precious stones and gems. The island was certainly well known, and communications with India were well established by the time Wijayo arrived, for he had no difficulty in bringing over bands of his kinsmen.

His landing was, from the very first, intended to be permanent, as he had been banished from Jambudipa by his father for

lawlessness. The *Mahawansa's* description of the landing of the pioneer and his meeting with the Veddha princess Kuweni is such an exact and vivid counterpart of the story of Ulysses and Circe that it is quite unthinkable that the two stories derive from different sources. They are the same, and it is possible that Homer gathered his material for that part of the *Odyssey* from Eastern mariners declaiming the legends of Taprobane.

Wijayo landed in the district of Tamena, and settled there, very quietly, for three years. During this time he ignored the fact that he was a Brahmin and married the Veddha princess Kuweni, who bore him three children, none of them sons. His small beginnings did not satisfy him, and he began to look around for some means to extend his kingdom. In this ambition he found a ready assistant in Kuweni, who betrayed her former people. Wijayo then massacred them at their capital Sri-Vastipura, and made himself master of the rude country of the Yakkas, but as soon as he felt himself strong enough to do so, he divorced the miserable Kuweni, who, abandoned and homeless, wandered with her children back to the remnants of the people that she had betrayed. They rose against her, perhaps not unnaturally, and she was murdered.

Wijayo died without male issue—and is, presumably, roasting in the hell reserved for Hindus who have no male progeny—but the kingdom passed peacefully to a nephew who married a relative of Gotama, the fourth Buddha of the present Kalpa. The bride's brothers swarmed into the now expanding colony, bringing with them their retinues, as was the custom, and parcelling out the whole island among themselves. This policy of division, although it undoubtedly facilitated speedy colonization, laid the foundations of the endless civil wars and internecine struggles which are so gloomily characteristic of subsequent Sinhalese history.

Three main divisions of the island, which Wijayo himself apportioned, retained their entity until comparatively modern times. In a sense they exist still. These were the Rajaratta, comprising all the territory north of Ceylon's largest river, the Mahawelliganga; Rohuna, with the sea as its boundary along the eastern and southern shores but including the central mountain mass of the island; and Maya-ratta, which covered the remaining territory to the west and south-west. The two southern kingdoms of India, from which, in future years, so

much trouble was to come, were the Chola and Pandyan provinces peopled by the warlike Malabaris.

In the account given of them in the *Mahawansa*, the Sinhalese were stated to be an Aryan race from Bengal, but with earlier antecedents still, pointing at Malayan origin. It is sufficient to class them as Aryans who spoke a Pali tongue akin to Sanskrit, and were culturally allied to the north Indian races rather than with those of the Dekkan who are largely of Dravidian stock. To this day, cultured Sinhalese say that they feel more at home in northern India than they do in the south.

Messrs F. and P. Sarasin[1] are convinced that Wijayo and his followers brought a knowledge of iron with them to Ceylon. Their superiority over the Veddhas, still in the neolithic, if not the palæolithic stage, would be so great, if that was so, that their easy assimilation of the country is readily understood. The fact explains also why it is that the Veddhas do not appear to have gone through a secondary Stone Age, leaping straight from early stone to iron in their development. That particular bound forward in evolution has done them no good. They are, to-day, the poor flotsam of a past age washed up on the shores of the present. Since they play no part at all in the history of the land, except as slaves and helots to whosoever happened to be in power at the time, I propose to give these unfortunates a chapter to themselves, out of the main stream of the island story.

Although culturally allied to northern India, Wijayo and his successors adopted, as the unit of their national organization, the patriarchal village system which is so strong even now in central and southern India. Underneath the centralized, pseudo-democratic order of Western government which has been imposed upon Ceylon in recent times, the village system persists stubbornly, the backbone of the island life. In its ideal form, as the people of Bali appear to have discovered, it presents a philosophy of life unexcelled in the story of mankind. It will be interesting to see if, with self-government, the Sinhalese will be able to discard the seductive economic bondage—with its superficial advantages of luxuries unobtainable under less centralized methods—which holds the Western world in thrall. A return to the village system, made efficient in the light of increased agricultural knowledge and technique, may provide an island life

[1] *Spolia Zeylanica.*

owing nothing to Western economics with its emphasis so often upon a wrong sense of values.

Agriculture, to Wijayo and his immediate successors, was the goal, and it must have presented a problem of staggering magnitude, for the whole of the northern and central plains of the island are low, flat and almost entirely without a dependable rainfall. To grow rice—then, as now, the staple diet of Eastern peoples—an unfailing supply of water is essential. The early colonists were thus faced with the necessity, if they wished to expand and multiply, of finding some means of irrigating the equivalent of a desert. They found it. They devised a method of irrigating a vast acreage unsurpassed, perhaps unequalled, in history.

Wijayo himself had enough to do during his lifetime to get his followers safely settled down into the first central community with its capital at Tamena Nuwara. During the first century or more, in fact, the early colonizers lived largely on the game that abounded in the woods, particularly elk and boar. As far back as 504 B.C. the royal huntsmen, according to the *Mahawansa*, had a lodge in the capital, and laws of the chase were clearly laid down. Deer, for example, could be shot—bows and arrows were skilfully used in those days, but by none so skilfully as the original inhabitants, the Veddhas or Yakkas—but only on the run. To kill standing deer was forbidden.

Wijayo's immediate successor, Panduwasa, was the first to put into practice the building of a reservoir to arrest and store the precious life blood of agriculture which fell in such abundance in the central, unknown mountains, and rushed without let or hindrance into the sea. In 504 B.C. he constructed the first of the "tanks," as they are known, the Abayawewa (*wewa* means lake) close to an expanding settlement—soon to be a vast city—called Anuradhapura. The building of reservoirs was understood by the Hindus, and had been practised in the northern plains of India. The building of the Abayawewa therefore was carried out under the instruction of a Brahmin, Jotiyo, for whom Panduwasa built a residence in the capital while the great work was in progress.

It was not until 437 B.C. that the example set by Panduwasa was followed by King Pandukabhaya, who built the Jayawewa, following it with a third tank, the Gamini, all in or near Anuradhapura.

I cannot do better at this stage than to quote Tennent's[1] description of the immense vitality, inventiveness and enterprise of these early settlers in the northern forests:

"Upwards of two hundred years were spent in initiating measures for the organization of the new state. Colonists from the continent of India were encouraged by facilities held out to settlers, and carriage roads were formed in the vicinity of towns. Village communities were duly organized, gardens were planted, flowers and fruit-bearing trees introduced, and the production of food secured by the construction of canals and other public works of irrigation."

It is a picture of industry and courage, and it developed into one of the world's greatest examples of the desert—in this case a drought-stricken forest—being made to blossom like the rose.

Travelling through those same plains to-day, in the silence of the jungle noon-tide, with the parched earth giving back the sun's glare, encountering stagnant swamps and broken "bunds" where once giant tanks reflected the ordered and lovely life on their banks, brings a sense both of sorrow and of wonder to the onlooker. The smallness of man's hold upon life is exemplified in this deserted, silent forest, once teeming with the well-established activities of a splendid civilization. The tangled growth and almost impenetrable jungle cover the petty symbols of lost cities. A few bricks here, some red earth, some cement as smooth and unbroken after two thousand years as the day that it was mixed, a dagoba or two, pillars of forgotten monasteries, a garden thousands of acres in extent, once dedicated to Buddha by a long-dead king; these things we shall explore, for the world does not know enough of them. Unsurpassed works of irrigation, during the heat of the day silent and still, become the magnetic centre of teeming wild life in the cool of the evening, the most beautiful things that I have seen in a lifetime of looking for beauty. Certainly the remains of these works—the cities and the network of roads, the mighty monuments of an almost inconceivable human energy—are bitter commentaries on the ephemeral nature of the might of kings. Only in forgotten nooks and crannies of the woods, where the Veddhas still pursue their immemorial quest for honey, flowers and wild fruit, is human life to be found, with the exception of Sinhalese villages which cling to the road arteries constructed by the British during their

[1] Sir Emerson Tennent, *Ceylon.*

term of occupation. These are very few and far between, passed in a moment, swallowed up by the forest. Over three-fifths of Ceylon—potentially one of the most fruitful countries in the world—supports no human life at all, while another fifth has so small a population as to be negligible. The vast jungles of the Pearl of the East constitute a silent but complete indictment of the foolishness of mankind.

CHAPTER II

THE CLERGY OF REASON

Abstain from all sin, acquire all virtue, repress thine own heart

THE early years of the first settlers were years of religious tolerance. Wijayo himself—a Brahmin—smashed every tenet of his faith by marrying the Veddha Princess Kuweni, and he followed this up by ordering religious indulgence for all creeds within his new kingdom. Even the crude temples of the demon-worshippers were respected, but of Buddhism there is no mention at all in those early times.

The coming of Buddhism to Lanka, now the world's centre of the Faith, is, however the holiest moment in Sinhalese history, and the accounts of it are moving and impressive. Since it brought with it not only religious teaching, but an alphabet and a language, it must be regarded as the crucial event in the story of the island people.

Buddhists believe that a Buddha comes into the world from time to time, at long intervals, to preach the true doctrine. The need for constant renewal of the teaching, acknowledged by Gotama himself, is interesting because of its psychological insight into human nature. With the passing of time any doctrine becomes more and more obscured, sometimes even corrupt, until the truth is all but lost in the accumulated arguments of centuries; and Buddhists admit this fact. But they believe that when such a point is reached in their faith, another Buddha then appears to renew the pure exposition of truth and to revive the faith. The last appearance of a Buddha was in the seventh century B.C., and the next is due to appear in the forty-fourth century A.D.

It follows that the Buddhist claim to be the first religion of all —because the true one—predating Brahminism by untold centuries, is not invalidated by the known date of the birth of Gotama. The doctrines of Buddhism had been preached by twenty-four Buddhas before him, each leaven of teaching having entirely disappeared before the advent of the next great teacher.

Thus, if the sacred books are correct, the first of all the Buddhas appeared upon this earth in periods so historically remote that the imagination cannot grasp them. Even to-day, Buddhism remains numerically the largest religious creed in the world after Christianity. Nearly four hundred million people acknowledge the religion of Pure Reason.

Siddhattha, son of Suddhodana, a chief—but not a Raja, and certainly not a Maharaja—of the Sakiyas tribe of northern India, is the present reigning Buddha. He is better known by his family name of Gautama, or Gotama, and half of his predestined period of five thousand years is over. The accuracy of the belief that as time goes on the purity of a doctrine becomes vitiated has proved all too true with Buddhism in Ceylon, and even more so in India, where it has been displaced, almost entirely, by Hinduism. Even in Ceylon, the stronghold of the faith, the yellow robe of the Buddhist priest and the red robe of the Brahmin have come symbolically very close to each other. Indeed very little of the early simplicity and purity of Buddhist thought remains, and Gotama's aversion to a priestcraft has been ignored.

Siddhatta was born an ordinary member of an Indian family, when caste was already well established on the sub-continent. He was a Kshatrya, probably at that time the dominant caste, for the Brahmins had not then triumphed in the struggle for supremacy. The caste system of that time, although virtually what it is to-day, had not quite the iron rigidity of the present tyranny. Free expression of thought, outside the Vedic law, was not only permitted but encouraged without incurring the dreadful punishment of being declared outcaste, the full horror of which I hope to explain in a later chapter. Caste had already imposed its fetters upon the masses, but there were still some free republics—of which the Sakiyas was one—where thought and philosophy had not finally fossilized within the caste system.

The prevailing belief then, as now, with Hinduism, was in the transmigration of souls. It is a convenient creed. The downtrodden in this existence accept their lot without complaint because they accept the fact that their behaviour in a former life made it inevitable. Their hope is not for this incarnation, but for the next, a state of mind which goes far to explain the widespread belief in witchcraft, astrology and animism shown by the great majority of Hindus who form the Sudra and Pariah castes.

As a Kshatrya, Gotama had no chance of entering the priest-

hood, already the exclusive province of the Brahmins, but he could claim the right to be a religious teacher. This he was anxious to do, but first he had to find conviction himself. There is no space here to give an outline of his pursuit of spiritual truth along the lines of ordinary Hindu thought of the day, his struggles and his failures. True Buddhists minimize none of these things, for it was a spiritual Gethsemane of vital importance to the future Buddha. Final emancipation from doubt, and the attainment of Nirvana, came to him at last under a Pipul tree, known from that moment onwards as the sacred Bo-tree (*ficus religiosa*). Under this tree he had spent a day and a night wrestling with the demons of doubt.

A priestcraft, as such, is entirely outside the orbit of Gotama's belief, although he foresaw the day when many men would wish to attain the highest state of mind and heart in this life, that of a hermit and recluse (and consequently a mendicant). He laid down, therefore, the limit of the material possessions that such a man would need, the whole emphasis on this enumeration being upon humility. Yet, since he held the life of a recluse to be the highest of all, the Buddhist priest has accepted this as a matter for pride, and therein lies the reason for the arrogance of the wearers of the yellow robe. They exhibit towards others much of the same outward pride and superiority of their Brahminical brethren of the red robe, for they believe, on the authority of Gotama himself, that none but a priest who forswears all earthly vanities can attain absolute wisdom. The twin paths of meditation and self-denial—seen all over the island to the present day in semi-ignorant monks dreaming out their lives in lonely caves and rock wiharas—can alone lead to Nirvana. Who, with secular cares to weigh him down, may hope to win through to that desirable bourne?

Yet there is a loophole in all this for the ordinary man with his earthly chains of family love, possessions, even wealth, who may, by living what is quite simply a Christian life, ensure rebirth under conditions which send him upwards along the path to complete emancipation, or Nirvana. This is not annihilation, as so many believe, but a state of mind finally emancipated from all the bonds of earthly worries.

The one fundamental difficulty to all this seems to me to reside in the fact that Buddhists do not admit the existence of a soul, as do the Brahmins. What passes from this incarnation to

the next is nowhere explained, or even faced, in the teachings of Gotama. He is insistent that there is no such thing as the soul, which the Hindus believe to be an essence which is imprisoned, during life, in the human frame and makes its way through a hole in the top of the head at death.

The immense hierarchy of gods which figures in the Hindu creed plays no part in the teachings of Gotama. On the contrary, there is no deity, no priestcraft, and no pomp or ceremony. The Brahma Viharas or Sublime Conditions apply to each individual, and make no provision for church, dogmas, priests, or sacred observances.

The conditions enumerated are, first and foremost, love. Second, sorrow at the sorrow of others, and the sorrow of the world. Thirdly, joy in the joy of others. Finally, complete spiritual equanimity at the joys, sorrows or earthly difficulties of oneself.

Majjhima 1, 129,[1] in describing the gradual practice and pursuit of these four great precepts, beginning on the simplest personal plane and ending with the whole cosmic world, says: "Our mind shall not waver. No evil speech shall we utter. Tender and compassionate shall we abide, loving in heart, void of malice within. And we shall be ever suffusing such an one with the rays of our loving thought. And with that feeling as a basis we will ever be suffusing the whole wide world with thought of love far-reaching, grown great beyond measure, void of anger or ill will."

These are high thoughts. The Christian creed itself has no purer expression of ideals of behaviour, and the acts and thoughts which are forbidden to Buddhists show an insight into the human heart only surpassed by the Bible. The Twelve Commandments of Buddhism are as close as they could be to Christianity, lacking only the revelation of divinity.

(1) Thou shalt not envy thy neighbour nor covet his property.
(2) Thou shalt not worship false gods.
(3) Thou shalt not commit adultery.
(4) Thou shalt not indulge in unprofitable conversation.
(5) Thou shalt not destroy any animate being.
(6) Thou shalt not trade in deadly weapons.
(7) Thou shalt not trade in poisons.
(8) Thou shalt not prepare or sell intoxicants.
(9) Thou shalt not traffic in human beings.

[1] *Encyclopædia Britannica.*

(10) Thou shalt not accept a bribe.

(11) Thou shalt not deprive anyone of his property by violence, fraud or deception.

(12) Thou shalt not tell a falsehood or use words to conceal the truth.

How the priestcraft of modern days reconcile their observances with some of these, particularly (2), I do not know. Throughout the island you will find, attached to the wiharas or Buddhist temples, dewales, or Hindu shrines, sometimes part of the main building, and certainly part of the worship.

Far from Nirvana meaning annihilation after death—a state of endless, eternal trance—it means a dying out of the three cardinal sins *in this life*. Annihilation is, of course, pessimism, and Gotama is anything but a pessimist. Indeed the whole Hindu race, in those far-off days, were buoyant with youthful, glowing optimism, long since decayed, and he shared this questing, adventurous searching of the mind to the full. He came to reject the pantheism of the early Hindu epic poetry—the sacrifices, devil-worship, ritualism, Brahminism, wood-god worship, sorcery and pure animism of his fellow-countrymen—but he could not altogether escape the fact that he was a man of his time; the supreme difference from Christ, a Man of all time. Rejecting the existence of the soul, he yet believed in the transmigration of souls, a belief which is itself animism, shared, in some degree, by every civilization that has ever appeared upon earth. Nevertheless, Buddhism marks a striking departure from previous religious thought, and the rules of the Society founded by Gotama (Samyutta V.421) are fully as instructive as they are interesting. It is interesting to note too that nowhere in them, and indeed nowhere in his teaching, does Gotama claim for himself any higher distinction than that of Arahatship—a state of mental and spiritual emancipation, but not the final perfection of Buddhaship.

"There are two aims," say these rules, "which he who has given up the world ought not to follow after—devotion, on the one hand, to those things whose attractions depend upon the passions, a low and pagan ideal fit only for the worldly-minded, ignoble, unprofitable; and the practice, on the other hand, of asceticism, which is painful, ignoble, unprofitable. There is a middle path discovered by the Tathagarta (those who have attained Arahatship), a path which opens the eyes and bestows

understanding, which leads to peace, to insight, to the higher wisdom, to Nirvana. Verily! it is this noble eightfold path, that is right views, right aspirations, right speech, right conduct, right mode of livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right rapture.

"Now this is the noble truth as to suffering. Birth is attended with pain, decay is painful, disease is painful, death is painful. Union with the unpleasant is painful, painful is separation from the pleasant, and craving unsatisfied, that too is painful. In brief, the five attributes of clinging (that is, the conditions of individuality) are painful.

"Now this is the noble truth as to the origin of suffering. Verily! it is the craving thirst that causes the renewal of becomings, that is accompanied by sensual delights, and seeks satisfaction now here, now there—that is to say the craving for the gratification of the senses, or the craving for a future life, or the craving for prosperity.

"Now this is the noble truth as to the passing away of pain. Verily! it is the passing away so that no passion remains, the giving up, the getting rid of, the being emancipated from, the harbouring no longer of this craving thirst.

"Now this is the noble truth as to the way that leads to the passing away of pain. Verily! it is the noble eightfold path, that is to say right views, right aspirations, right speech, right conduct, right mode of livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right rapture."

Nowhere in these rules is Buddha so much as mentioned, nor is the soul.

That is the benevolent atheism known as Buddhism, but the centuries that have succeeded the evolution of those rules have seen a watering down of the stern simplicity of the original. The literature of two thousand years shows a continual falling off from the severity of the early canonical writings. Indeed the chasm which divided Buddhism from Brahminism in the time of Gotama has now been comfortably bridged, and the popular gods have crept back into favour. The caste system and the pantheon of Hindu gods have risen triumphantly on the ruins of both the early Vedic law and the severe austerity of the Buddhism of Gotama.

However that may be to-day, the story of the coming of Buddhism to Lanka is both noble and colourful.

Mahindo, a Prince of Magadha, descendant of Chandragupta and son of the great Asoka, was divinely inspired to visit Ceylon and make of it the first great mission-field of the Buddhist creed. Prinsep, whose remarkable work led to the discovery and translation of Buddhist edicts engraved on rocks and buildings throughout northern India, discovered some issued by the great Asoka to his son on setting forth on this mission. First and foremost was the injunction against taking life. Secondly was the command that "everywhere wholesome vegetables, fruit, and root trees shall be cultivated, and that on the roads wells shall be dug and trees planted for the enjoyment of men and animals."

Buddha, like Jesus, insisted that his disciples should go forth into all the world and spread the message of his teaching. Mahindo was the first great missionary, and he could not have chosen a more propitious moment, for in Lanka the reigning monarch was King Tissa, a man of humane tolerance and breadth of mind rarely equalled again in the long line of the Sinhalese kings.

The *Mahawansa* records that Mahindo "flew" to Ceylon, descending upon the thousand-foot-high peak in the Mihintale hills called Ambatthalo overlooking the capital city of Anuradhapura. Tissa, at that moment, was out hunting, and what could be more natural than for Buddha to direct the stag to take a course which would bring it close to Mihintale? And so the great meeting took place, on the common ground of language, for both missionary and king spoke the ancient Pali. In passing it may be remarked how difficult it is for Western minds to think in the idiom of that far-off time. Asoka, "the most lovable and humane" king of Magadha, who so loved the tenets of the new faith that he sent his son into the dangers of the mission-field in unknown Lanka, is shown in the Hindu chronicles as having murdered one hundred rivals to come to his throne!

The account of the actual meeting of Tissa and Mahindo given in the *Mahawansa* is as follows:

"The King Dewananpiyatissa departed for an elk hunt taking with him a retinue, and in the course of the pursuit of the game on foot, he came to the Missa mountain. A certain devo, assuming the form of an elk, stationed himself there, grazing; the sovereign descried him, and saying, 'it is not fair to shoot him standing,' sounded his bowstring, on which the elk fled to the mountain. The King gave chase to the flying animal and, on reaching the

spot where the priests were, the hero Mahindo came within sight of the monarch, but the metamorphosed deer vanished."

Delicious account, tinged with the *naiveté* and freshness of the dawn of any religion, giving the imagination and the heart full play.

The rocky hill now known as Mihintale is itself a venerated monument to that great encounter. Upon it has been built a huge Wihara to commemorate the conversion of King Tissa, and the ashes of Mahindo himself were subsequently enshrined in the Ambustela dagoba which is said to mark the actual spot on which the meeting took place.

Almost every ancient race has its sacred tree, for the worship of trees is one of the earliest of all, as the Druids and their sacred groves testify in the story of our own country. It is safe to say that the arrival of the sacred Bo-tree in Ceylon, brought over from India by Sanghamuttu, Mahindo's sister, marks the striking of the roots of the new faith in symbolical fashion. This holy tree is still alive after 2,236 years (1948), the oldest historic tree in the world, subject and centre of legends immeasurably old, and the recipient of the veneration of millions of people who visit it from every part of the East to this day. To give it its full title, it is "the Victorious, Illustrious, Supreme Lord the Sacred Bo-tree (Jaya Sri Maha Bodin-Wahansa)" and it has been hedged about and guarded with reverent care from the moment that it was planted, for it is no less than a branch of the tree under which Gotama himself found Buddhaship. To-day it is dying—thought by many Sinhalese to be the result of the eruption into their island of three successive waves of European conquerors of whom the British were the last—the two remaining branches being very frail indeed. For all I know it may be dead by now, for it is more than twelve years since I saw it, but I find it hard to believe that the priests will let it die.

The foliage of the Pipul tree; a shimmering mass of heart-shaped leaves held by stems so delicately slender that it is a marvel that they do not snap in the slightest breeze; ripples like the surface of water in the play of the wind, and ardent Buddhists set this dainty tremulous restlessness down to the fact that the tree is itself conscious of having sheltered Gotama from the blazing heat of the day.

And so Buddhism came to Lanka, an influence profound and transforming, akin to that which swept England in the mighty

burst of religious feeling that followed upon the Norman conquest. The fair face of Britain, at that time, was covered with a crop of exquisite cathedrals and monasteries, a lovely and majestic expression of the awe and fresh faith of a young people. So it was, too, with Lanka, but on a simpler, sterner note, for to Gotama beauty lived in stark relevance, unembroidered with ornamentation; an unconscious reaction, no doubt, from the sickly overdecoration of Hindu religious thought and architecture.

Dagobas, wiharas and monasteries leapt up all around the sacred city of Anuradhapura, an astonishing expression of the human heart, young, buoyant and hopeful. Piety and love of life were the dominant themes, and a determination to give concrete form—mainly through sheer size—to the optimism of the era. Soon these visual monuments of faith spread over the face of the whole island, with the exception of the unexplored highlands. The dagobas in particular—colossal mountains of brickwork shaped in the form of a woman's breast—must be considered among the marvels of the world, fit to take their place by the side of the pyramids of Egypt for the herculean labours involved in their construction. They are the earliest monuments of the Buddhist religion in existence; indeed the Thuparama dagoba is the oldest surviving building, not merely in Ceylon but anywhere on the Indian peninsula. It has one rival in this claim, but that too is in Ceylon, the dagoba at Mahayangana in Bintenne built to commemorate the first visit of Buddha long before the arrival of Mahindo. Antiquarians believe the Thuparama to have been built first however, for much of the Mahayangana is known to have been built by King Dutthagamini in the second century B.C., whereas the Thuparama was built in the fourth century B.C.

The Ceylon dagobas are the prototype of all such monuments to be found in all Buddhist countries of Asia—the "topes" of Afghanistan and the Punjab, the pagodas (a corruption of the word dagoba) of Burma, and the boro bodeo of Java—and underneath the main mass of the building there is usually one small room, housing a relic, a hair or a bone, as the case may be, of Gotama himself.

Buddhism is atheism, a religion without a god, and its essence, before it became corrupted, was simplicity. Thus the dagobas are simple buildings, for meditation is the root of the creed, not worship. Over the years the simplicity has died away and idolatry has crept back again. One cannot go anywhere in the island with-

out encountering statues or figurines of Buddha, in one of three conventional positions, although the first recorded notice of a statue of Buddha does not occur until six hundred years after the first dagoba. The Buddhists say that the figures are not worshipped, but are there merely to keep in memory the great founder of the faith; an explanation which might be acceptable but for the mixed bag of statues of the Bull, the Malabar Eagle, Hanuman, Vishnu, and a host of other Hindu gods, many of them disguised with Sinhalese names, to be found in the dewale so often a part of the wihara itself.

Tissa the Pious first began the island preference for caves and rocks by building rock temples and monasteries in or adjacent to caves all over Ceylon, to house the army of priests which sprang into existence as a result of the religious fervour of the hour. Gotama had foreseen this and had laid down that caves, if available, were good enough for the dwelling-place of a recluse, but that if there were no caves, a simple room would be permissible. According to the *Rajaratnacari*, King Tissa was responsible for the erection of "eighty-four thousand temples" during his reign, but as Gotama had envisaged a "temple" it was nothing more than a shelter of cadjan or of leaves, a momentary resting-place for contemplation and teaching. The earliest dwellings and temples no doubt conformed to this ideal, but as king followed king, the monasteries, temples and dagobas that sprang up became more pretentious and impressive.

The rush to become a monk was so great—it is not, perhaps, too cynical to point out that a life of contemplation accords very well with the natural indolence of the Sinhalese, particularly when it is accompanied by a freedom from all secular worries such as the need to work for a living—that eventually the single cells of individual monks began to be grouped together in great monasteries. Each monastery had attached to it its own wihara and audience hall, some of which we shall see in our search of the buried cities. They rank among the wonders of the world; notably, for all its obvious vulgarity, the Brazen Palace of Anuradhapura. The *Mahawansa* sets the number of monks living in this one monastery at three thousand, but although, as communities, they appeared to amass great wealth, as individuals Buddhist monks seem to have maintained a supreme contempt for luxury. Their vow enjoining them to poverty and mendicancy seems to have been kept, whatever deterioration one may notice

in other aspects of the creed, and to this day the rule which lays down that a priest may possess only one set of robes is obeyed also.

With regard to these robes, a curious ritual survives from the time of Gotama himself, to whom an admirer presented a robe of superlative beauty and richness. Ananda, most beloved of disciples, cut it into thirty pieces in order to destroy the purely intrinsic value of the garment, and then sewed it together again so that it looked like so many yellow rice-fields. Since that moment all priestly vestments have been so treated, an odd message to come down over more than two thousand years.

The vanity of adornment, the desire for prosperity, the itch for power, these things at least the Buddhists have purged from their thoughts, and it is much. Until the advent of Western education, with its corollary of politicians trained in Western fallacies as well as Western knowledge, the great mass of the Sinhalese people—always excepting their kings—have shown a marked preference for the paths of peace and the enjoyment of simple things. For these things, the Clergy of Reason have always stood, and still stand to-day.

CHAPTER III

MAHAWANSA—THE GREAT DYNASTY

LIKE beads upon the frail thread of heredity the Sinhalese kings followed each other with few outstanding personalities. The first century after the reign of the pious Tissa was one of unimpeded social growth and religious fervour, a wonderful period in the story of the island. The extension and development of agriculture, as a result of the system of irrigation bequeathed by King Panduwasa, enabled the settlers to multiply, to bring over their relations from the continent, to swell into a large community dependent only upon the produce that they themselves were able to grow. It was a feat that no other administration has been able to effect since the final decline of the Sulawansa.

Why this should be so is hard to understand in a land so liberally endowed by nature. The reason is probably to be found in the *vulnerability* of an island state utterly dependent upon daily maintenance of a colossal and intricate network of reservoirs, canals and sluices. An insurrection, even an error, could cause devastating hardship, drought and death; and once the great works had been broken and abandoned, human life could survive only a matter of days.

Despite this ever-present danger, the agricultural progress of Ceylon for five hundred years after Wijayo was phenomenal. The whole surface of the northern plains was altered by tireless industry from wild and forbidding forest to an expanse of cultivated fields, roads, villages and towns almost comparable to the state of England under Queen Anne. At that point in history, indeed, the condition of the two realms was exactly reversed, for at the moment when Julius Cæsar was carrying out the first Roman reconnaissance of Britain—finding it a woody and almost impenetrable jungle—the kings of the Mahawansa in the full height of their religious devotion, were making of Ceylon a Paradise Island in truth.

The vigour and fame of the place were known far and wide. Ptolemy wrote of Anuradhapura, calling it Anurogrammum

Regium, and drew a map of the country—although he showed it as part of India—in A.D. 150. The Romans must have had considerable traffic with the island, for Roman coins minted in the reigns of twenty-five separate emperors have been found on its soil. Ovid mentions it as the last outpost of the world, which is true in the sense that there is no more land between Dondra Head, the southmost tip of Ceylon, and the South Pole.

In the reign of Claudius occurred an incident which resulted in the vigorous Sinhalese civilization being given ambassadorial status in Rome. A Roman sailor, Annius Plocamus, was blown out of his course and sought refuge in Lanka where he lived for six months. He was so impressed by the wonders of the island that he persuaded the Sinhalese king to send a representative back with him to Rome where he was given the rank of ambassador.

Pliny, writing of Ceylon and of its people, said, "they possess a greater degree of civil liberty, and a greater regard for popular rights, than perhaps ever existed in any region of the East."

But freedom in those days was relative, for there were many slaves in Lanka during the time of Pliny, as there were, of course, in the Empire of the Romans. The existence of a slave race—those same Yakkas and Nagas who crept nightly from their lairs in the woods to lay payment of gems on the beaches for the merchandise of Chinese and other adventurers—was the strongest single contributory factor in the phenomenal speed with which the high state of social progress of Lanka was attained. These Yakkas were numerous, pliable, and unresisting, and their needs were small. But for their unrewarded services, the mighty irrigation works, the roads, canals, monasteries, and huge monuments such as the Abhayagirya dagoba—higher than St Paul's Cathedral—could not have been built. Nor were there slaves only during the birth pangs of the new nation. The *Rajavali* records that, eight hundred years after the first landing, new tanks were being constructed with the aid of forced labour.

To irrigate over twelve thousand square miles of former jungle and desert would be considered a formidable task with the aid of every modern invention. Indeed, enormous tracts of Australia, potentially as fruitful as the northern districts of Ceylon, are left to drought and eternal loneliness for no other reason than that

man, at this stage of history, considers the task of opening it up uneconomic. Yet that is what happened in the days of the great dynasty, on a scale and with a furious energy that can scarcely be credited now. In the words of Tennent, "the number of these stupendous works [of irrigation] almost exceeds credibility." Great and small, as the barriers of the jungle went down before their steady advance, creative works were erected wherever more land was needed for agriculture.

The method of building the reservoirs or tanks which alone made agriculture possible was to seek out a valley or even a depression in the earth's surface, from which water could escape from one side only. Across this open side was thrown a dam or bund—the largest in Ceylon was over twelve miles in length—with a spill stone for the overflow when the tank was full. Some of the spill stones left by the ancients are absolutely colossal in size. To this day some of these tanks, repaired by British engineers, are more than twenty miles in circumference, but in earlier times many of them were forty miles or more. These wonderful inland seas are probably responsible for the Sanskrit name Tambropani—the great pond, or the pond covered with red lotus—which was given to Ceylon in the time of the Macedonians. In the zenith of their glory they must have presented a spectacle of beauty perhaps unrivalled anywhere, for they are lovely enough now in their desolation, clothed only in the sweet, untutored fascination of nature left to herself.

From these central reservoirs a web of *ellas*, or canals, went off in every direction, feeding smaller tanks which, in their turn, provided constant water for the rice-fields which need gently flowing water when the young paddy is first thrusting its spears of green above the mud. The capital city of Anuradhapura drew its water supply from the huge tank of Kaluwewa, acclaimed by Turnour as the greatest of the ancient works of the Sinhalese. It was at least forty miles round, with a bund of more than twelve miles, and the spill stone, in Turnour's own words, "is one of the most stupendous monuments of misapplied human labour in the world." The word misapplied is used, presumably, because no such strength was required merely for the overflow. In due course the colossal force of the waters burst the dam elsewhere, and it was never repaired.

The canal connecting this inland sea with the capital was over sixty miles in length, another remarkable piece of work.

Throughout the drought—in some places in the northern plains of twelve months' duration—this marvellous dispersal of water continued without let or hindrance. Every village, hamlet, or city nestled close to the bund of a tank, large or small, and had a constant and ample water supply although day followed day in the long brazen months with no signs of rain nearer than the line of the distant mountains on whose peaks may be seen, during the opening of the south-west monsoon, and from any part of the island, the astonishing lightning effects and high, massed clouds which herald the crashing rainfall of the tropics. This mountain core forms a tantalizing barrier between the eastern, central, and northern plains and the abundant rain of the south-west monsoon. On the hills themselves, and on the fertile plains to the west and south-west, the rain floods down at the rate of many inches a day for four months, with reasonable rain at intervals during the other eight; but on the other side the great plains see nothing but tattered strips of cloud throwing tiny shadows on the burning, drought-stricken forest during the time of the south-west monsoon.

The size and complexity of this agricultural enterprise, all on the wrong side of the mountain barrier, is almost impossible to grasp, but its weaknesses are clearly apparent. Although towns and villages could be, in fact were, defended by the great sheets of water and cobweb of connecting canals, yet in military operations of any magnitude it was a simple matter for the invaders to disrupt the water supplies. Adequate defence, except in certain, chosen spots, was impossible over the whole vast field. The stupendous structure had about it something of the instability of a house of cards, a delicate balance preserved, one would have thought, in almost daily fear and trembling. Yet it lasted for fifteen centuries.

So long as the population lived in peace, free from invasion and strife—particularly civil strife—a prosperous way of life was possible, but under invasion, or the duress of civil war, the whole social edifice was threatened. During the early centuries, strife —with the exception of the invasion by the Malabaris under their warrior king Ellala—was not on a large scale. As time went on, however, and not for the first time in history, the very virtues of a peace-loving, industrious people contributed to their own downfall. Partially disrupted a score of times by further invasions from India and internecine strife at home, the life

stream of the land fell into final ruin, the jungle swept over the fields, parks, and gardens in a ruthless tide, bringing in its train disease, poverty, starvation, and final decimation.

I have often attempted to picture that vast, scorching plain, pale, staring blue, savage, and sullen under the blazing sun, as it was in the high noon of that remarkable civilization. In these days thin, straight lines of metalled road plunge contemptuously through the wastelands, transient reminders of man, but twenty feet from either verge *Homo sapiens* has no place in the silent battle for survival going on in the teeming life of the forest. Such settlements as are to be seen are rude clusters of huts made of bamboo and cadjan, set in a few distinguishing trees. Each hut possesses its own coconut tree, a sure sign of human habitation, a pagoda fig tree perhaps for the temple, some jaks, margosas, and the inevitable plantains, with the emerald green of the communal rice-field nestling under the bund of a small pool. These are but lost oases in the thousands of square miles of the plain, blue, still and secretive, conceding to the silence only the occasional bark of a deer or the swishing of foliage as a tribe of monkeys bounce far overhead along their leafy trackways, or the scream of flashing parakeets.

Two thousand five hundred years ago this lost plain began to open up to man's most homely and lovely occupations—agriculture and horticulture. As the years passed five thousand tanks confined their liquid treasures, and beneath their bunds nestled innumerable towns and villages. Flowering trees and shrubs made a glory of the footpaths and the roads, while such a horticulture as the world has scarcely seen since must have flourished if the devout records of the era are to be believed.

Flowers are an essential part of Buddhism—they play a dominant role in almost every religious observance of the creed —and the faithful are always seeking to obtain merit by presenting them to the temples. Orchids and champac, jasmine and nagaha, temple flower and lotus, garland upon garland, every tiny wihara in the island groaned under its load of flowers. Lest this should seem an exaggeration, the *Mahawansa* records that whole dagobas were so garlanded that they disappeared from sight, and when we consider that the Ruanwelli—one of the dagobas expressly named—was 300 feet in height, the fervid ectasies of the pious may be appreciated. Nor was this ecstasy confined to the gift of flowers. In the case of the Ruanwelli the donor of the

flowers installed special machinery on the summit of the huge dagoba so that the flowers might be watered daily.

Innumerable gardens came to be dedicated to their particular wiharas, and Ceylon must have surpassed China as the land of flowers. The regulations relating to a single temple, according to the *Rajaratnacari*, acknowledge the receipt of 100,000 blooms daily, recording that each day the blooms were of a different kind.

It is probable that the world has never seen such a city of flowers as was Anuradhapura, the Sacred City, in the palmiest days of Buddhism. Roads were bordered with flame trees, the few pieces of land not under cultivation were covered with the flowering shrubs which are one of Ceylon's particular glories, and the gay horticultural gardens made a backcloth of sheer blazing colour behind the splendid buildings of the day. The capital, in fact, was silhouetted against a tapestry of flowers, green lawns, and silver lakes. Even now, walking among the ruins left to us after two millenniums, the magic has not died away. From the bund of the Basawak Kaluma in Anuradhapura, there is beauty in the very air, haunting the tiny breezes of evening.

But at the height of its fame, the worm was in the bud of the remarkable Sinhalese civilization. Buddhism, the great builder, came eventually to be the great destroyer also, for the teeming army of monks that arose to grasp a way of life so richly to their liking provided one of the main reasons for the decline and fall of the Sinhalese kings. A secondary but important reason for this decline was the inability of the gentle Buddhist race, brought up to regard killing as the sin of sins, to fight for their unity. These two reasons went hand in hand, and from the first invasion of the Malabaris, under Ellala, to the evacuation of the Sacred City and the retreat, by stages, to guerrilla fighting in the mountains, are never absent.

Almost from the first the Sinhalese employed bands of Tamil mercenaries from southern India to do their police work and their fighting for them. Busy with their vast agricultural ambitions and, after the advent of Buddhism, formally enjoined from killing, they left all military duties in the hands of these hardy adventurers, and it was not long before the Tamils realized their strength. As early as 237 B.C. two young men "powerful in their cavalry and their navy" murdered the reigning King Suratissa and usurped the royal power.

This incident was a political *coup d'état*, and in no sense either an invasion or a rebellion, for the mass of the people had nothing to do with it. The smooth day-to-day rhythm of the agricultural expansion did not falter and the usurpers, Sena and Gutthila, reigned for twenty years exactly as though they had been of Sinhalese royal blood.

From this distance in time it may seem astonishing that the royal power could have been overthrown so simply and with so little reaction from the people, but it is almost certainly due to that delicate balance of the national economy previously mentioned. Kings and nobles might dispute among themselves, but the people—intent upon their daily service of the great tyrant water—would be quite indifferent as to who ruled them. It was an apathy of character apparently as well-marked two thousand years ago as it is to-day, for certainly the villagers of Ceylon, at this moment, do not care who rules them. It is a fatalism probably endemic in all who follow that passionless creed, the worship of Pure Reason. The story of many of the trivial kings of the great dynasty supports this theory, for most of them were miserably inadequate, and murder and usurpation were never long absent in a constant fight for the throne. Subho, a gate porter, murdered King Yasa Silo at the instigation of a nymphomaniac queen, who encouraged a carpenter and a carrier of firewood to murder the gate porter and each other in due course. The head which wore the crown lay uneasily upon its pillow in Lanka in those days, for fifteen kings ruled less than a year, thirty less than four, twenty-two were murdered by their successors, six were murdered by other people, four killed themselves, and thirteen were slain in battle. Eleven more were dethroned and never heard of again—almost certainly murdered—a grim record besides which that of the early English kings seems almost peaceful.

All this is quite consistent with the Sinhalese character which, while utterly unwarlike, gentle, and apathetic towards almost all the incidents of life, yet rises to heights of ungovernable violence when roused, often by some trifling wrong. Murder, usually by the knife, is a commonplace in the island to-day, and I myself have seen a villager, within an hour of savagely murdering his wife, as tranquil and gentle as though such deeds existed only in the fertile imagination of Hollywood script writers. The same villager, too, went to his death by hanging with hardly an expres-

sion of interest on his face, apathetic and fatalistic to a degree, for the creed of the transmigration of souls at least does away with any fear of final dissolution, although not of the legions of devils and spirits that hedge the paths of the hereafter.

After the successful *coup d'état* of the two mercenaries Sena and Gutthila, it was twenty years before they, too, were murdered and the sovereignty restored to the rightful line. Ten years later, however, occurred the first invasion of the new civilization, when Ellala, a Chola prince, landed at several points on the coast at the same time and, converging on the capital, defeated and slew the unfortunate Asela.

Ellala's reputation among the Sinhalese is, to me, inexplicable. He has been almost canonized by them. "Although a Tamil," says the *Mahawansa*, "he administered justice impartially among friend and foe," as a result of which he is held in higher affection by the people he conquered than all but a few of their own national heroes. I can find no grounds at all for this heroic mantle, except the chivalrous story of his end. It is true that, although a Hindu, he defended the Buddhist faith against his followers, but, during a reign of forty years, that is about the sum total of his good deeds. His writ does not appear to have run south of the Mahawelli Ganga, although, to save themselves trouble, the Kings of Rohuna and Maya made token submission. But they also continued in their policy of opening up their provinces by the building of tanks, wiharas, and monasteries, unhampered in any way by the Tamil prince.

Meanwhile Ellala himself despoiled the rich central and northern provinces with a quite remarkable thoroughness, reducing them to ruin by a policy of complete neglect. His followers were permitted to rob temples and monasteries of their riches and return to India with their spoil, the mighty irrigation works were neglected and left to rot, drought and pestilence resulting, and except for the immediate environs of the royal palace, which he himself inhabited, the invader does not seem to have possessed any idea of administering a country. Why, in view of all this—and the records are complete—he should be venerated by his victims is more than I can tell. Tennent explains it by attributing to Ellala an element of chivalry foreign to the Sinhalese temperament and, after all, such admiration is not lacking in our own story. Surely Richard the Lionheart must rank as one of the worst kings who ever failed to live in the land

he was supposed to rule, yet his name has gone down to posterity as the essence of chivalry.

Although in some measure protected by Ellala, Buddhism was in great danger of being stifled by Brahminism during this interregnum. It was saved by the fighting spirit of Dutthagamini, who rallied the Sinhalese from his father's capital of Mahagama in Rohuna, and induced them to fight to the death for the faith which prohibits killing.

This was warfare on a large scale, a long and stirring struggle. Ellala, in anticipation of revolt, had built a line of forts from sea to sea, thirty-two in number, to protect the plains from attack from the mountains. The ruins of some of these forts are still to be seen, notably those of Vigittapura. This place had been Panduwasa's capital city when Anuradhapura was only a village, and it was probably the key fort of the line, for Dutthagamini, in 204 B.C., made it the focal point of his attack. The *Mahawansa* tells us that it was surrounded "by a triple battlement, and entered by a gate of iron," and it was bitterly defended by Ellala himself. At one stage in the siege, the attackers brought up elephants in great numbers, including Dutthagamini's famous war-elephant Kandula, but were routed by the defenders, who poured molten lead upon the unfortunate beasts. Kandula, sensible animal, rushed off with his warrior king still on his back, and rolled in the waters of the Kaluwewa.

The war dragged on for years, but the Sinhalese warrior king eventually gained the upper hand, and the final battle was joined. When it became clear that the Sinhalese must triumph, Dutthagamini gave orders that he alone was to challenge Ellala himself, a personal challenge that was immediately taken up. To quote Cave, "Having given orders that no other person should engage Ellala, he mounted his favourite war-elephant, Kandula, and advanced to meet his adversary. Ellala hurled the first spear, which Dutthagamini successfully evaded, and at once made his own elephant charge with his tusks the elephant of his opponent. After a desperate struggle, Ellala and his elephant fell together." This fight is commemorated in a fresco on the walls of the famous rock caves at Dambulla.

Dutthagamini appears to have shared the admiration felt by his countrymen for Ellala, for he treated his defeated foe with a magnanimity found nowhere else in Sinhalese history. He had him cremated, and built for him a tomb on the very spot where

he was killed, ordering his people and all Sinhalese posterity that none should ever pass the spot without giving honour to the slain. So sacred is this place that it is recorded that when Pilima, one of the most infamous prime ministers who ever tried to murder his own king, was flying for his life past this tomb, he yet found time to stop and worship there. Certainly, to this day, Sinhalese passers-by pray for the soul—or whatever it is Buddhists believe passes into the next incarnation—of Ellala.

Dutthagamini is the most famous of all Sinhalese kings, with sturdy old Walagum Bahu, as defenders of the faith. Having rid the kingdom of the invader, he began a campaign of piety and good works which seemed to have as its mainspring the desire to appease the monks who now began to swarm, once more, all over the island.

It was this turn in the Buddhist religion which brought ultimate ruin to the civilization founded by Wijayo, for the balance of the whole ship of state was lost in attempting to provide for so huge and economically useless a section of the population. Although we have no exact figures as to the number of priests, we have the evidence of Fa-Hein who stated that there were between forty and fifty thousand priests in Ceylon, with as many neophytes. It is certain that their numbers greatly increased later, and it is amazing that a form of atheism which quickly turned into idolatry—but idolatry without emotion or any element of grateful fanaticism—should have produced such a priestcraft. The noble Bo-tree of the faith itself was slowly smothered by the epiphytic growth of a section of the community of which the kings were very much in awe.

As showing something of the fear in which the priesthood was held, even by kings, the story is told that Dutthagamini, that stout warrior and champion of the faith, gradually realized the extent to which the rational life of the state had been endangered by the mystical. His dying words to the priest who attended him have more than a touch of irony, and a ring of deep bitterness. Leaning on his elbow, gazing upon his splendid works, the Loha-Pasada, or Brazen Palace, and the Ruanwelli or Gold Dust dagoba—the latter still incomplete—he said: "Four and twenty years have I been patron of the priesthood; may even my corpse be subservient to the protection of the ministers of the faith. Do ye therefore consume the corpse of him who has been as submissive as a slave to the priesthood in some con-

spicuous spot in the yard of the Upasatha Hall, within sight of the Mahathupa [the great dagoba, or the Ruanwelli]." Submissive as a slave is an odd phrase from sovereign to priest, particularly when it was the efforts of that king alone which saved the priesthood from extinction. The savour of the phrase was not altogether to the liking of the priests themselves, but the enslavement of Dutthagamini was only the beginning of the subjection of the entire kingdom. Later still, in the eighth century A.D., King Batiya Tissa went so far as to dedicate himself, his queen, his two sons, as well as his charger and his state elephant, as slaves to the priesthood. This was so bitter-sweet a pill that even the priests protested.

Dutthagamini's brother Saidatissa succeeded him, and followed in his footsteps as far as subservience to the priests is concerned. He is remembered chiefly as having built the famous Digganakhya dagoba at Batticoloa. But perhaps the most fatal step in the direction of the enslavement of the people to the priesthood was taken by the second great champion of Sinhalese racial and religious freedom, Walagum Bahu, fat old hero beloved of fable, one of the most romantic kings of the Mahawansa. He was turned out of his kingdom by a fresh incursion of Tamil marauders in the year 104 B.C., but went into the wilderness—we shall find his story recorded in the frescoes of the fascinating rock caves of Dambulla—determined to win back his throne and free his people. Like Dutthagamini, he was naturally a fighter, and although he had to flee to Rohuna—from which province Dutthagamini had organized his rebellion—he bided his time.

During this stay in the wilderness, he made the mistake of compensating the priests, whom he could no longer maintain with day-to-day charity, with awards of land. It was he, too, who was first responsible for gathering together the scattered, individual dwellings of the priests into monasteries close to the temples, thus "building wiharas in unbroken rows, conceiving that thus their repair might be the more easily effected." It is obvious that he did not foresee how vast the collective strength of the priests would become, for whereas comparatively few men took to the life of recluses dwelling alone in out-of-the-way caves, the sumptuous monasteries for which Walagum Bahu created a precedent, maintained by enormous gifts of land, attracted increasing numbers to the life. The personal vows of the monks



Wearers of the saffron robe: Buddhist priests, the Clergy of Reason



Statue of Parakrama the Great holding a sacred "ola" leaf, carved in the living rock at Polonnaruha

it is true bound them to a life of simplicity and austerity, but there was nothing to prevent them making the monasteries themselves wealthy institutions which became, in the course of time, insatiable leeches on the ordinary hard-working community. More and more choice agricultural land and flower gardens were appropriated to the monasteries. In the course of centuries, the temple lands of Ceylon included the larger portion of the finest agricultural holdings, and not only were these possessions exempt from taxation, but they carried with them the right to exact forced labour from the tenants of temple lands. To this day the temple lands in the inhabited parts of Ceylon present major problems of ownership, but if the new dominion ever sets to work to open up its lost legacy—the great plains—they would do well to start all over again in respect of ownership, for deeds and inscriptions still exist deeding vast tracts of land to various temples.

The munificence of kings and nobles towards the priesthood from the time of Dutthagamini onwards can only be described as crazy, and was clearly based upon fear. The *Rajaratnacari* instances one case in which no less than eight thousand rice-fields were bestowed upon the wiharas in a single gift. In all the Low Country in modern times, it would be hard to find eight thousand rice-fields of any size.

This religious tumour was of slow growth, but the end was certain. Kings became subservient to priests and vied with each other in the magnificence of their gifts. Perhaps the greatest single gift of all was made by the apostate Maha Sen, last of the Great Dynasty. He erected the massive Jetawanarama—or Eastern dagoba—in Anuradhapura, and bestowed upon its attendant wihara not only the new tank built by him—Minneriya, loveliest of all the inland seas of Ceylon—but the enormous tract of land which it watered.

Remarkable men among the kings of the Mahawansa may be numbered upon the fingers of one hand. The pious Tissa and Dutthagamini we have seen, but the story of Walagum Bahu cannot be omitted, for the ability to fight back from a losing position is not, normally, a Sinhalese characteristic.

He came to the throne in 104 B.C., but was quickly overthrown by another invasion of the Malabaris under seven chieftains who used Ellala's technique of landing at seven points simultaneously. They combined with a disaffected Brahmin of Rohuna,

and the king, whose army, mainly composed of Tamil mercenaries, had no stomach for a fight, was forced to flee to the mountains. Two of the invaders, laden with booty, returned home, but the other five princes remained in possession of the rich plains for fourteen years, a sufficient commentary on the inability of the Sinhalese to combine against an enemy. During this long period Walagum Bahu remained in hiding in the caves and forests of the mountains, then *terra incognita*, the resort of fugitives and outlaws, trackless, mysterious. The whole of the south of the island at that time was regarded as a wilderness, and invaders made no attempt to penetrate into its uncharted forests. Moreover the highlanders, although few in number, were of a hardier breed than the soft lowlanders—indeed they remain so to this day—and in the region of mountains and torrents of the peak and its surrounding wilderness known as Malaya, royal refugees could be certain of sanctuary. It was then, and remains to-day, one of the most wonderful mountain areas in the world.

When his chance came Walagum Bahu struck at last, with the aid of his sturdy highlanders, and the invaders were thrown out. This triumph was the signal for another crop of tanks, viharas, and dagobas, all dedicated to the priests as an act of thanksgiving. He seems, in fact, to have decided to outdo in munificence the efforts of all past—and future—monarchs, and the Northern Stupa, the Abhayagirya dagoba, at Anuradhapura, which he constructed, is perhaps the greatest dagoba in the world. Originally 450 feet in height, time has left us not much more than a ruined heap, but the engineering feat was so true and exact that, despite the fantastic weight of some millions of tons of bricks that the foundations were called upon to carry, there is no sign of subsidence, although the building covers an area of over eight acres.

But it is not only for his successful defence of the faith, or for his monuments, that the stout old king has remained one of the heroes of the *Mahawansa*. His strongest claim to fame, not only with his countrymen but with Buddhists all over the world, is that he caused to be set down in writing all the sayings, sermons, and teachings of Gotama, hitherto handed on from generation to generation by word of mouth alone. This great event happened as a result of a convocation called together by the king to consider what steps should be taken to suppress a schism that then threatened the faith. The Assembly met at what is now known

as the Alu-wihara Rock temple near Matale, and laid down stern measures to eradicate heresy. It succeeded in driving it underground for a time, but failed to suppress it, as we shall see. But it then turned its attention to higher matters, and the work of recording Gotama's sayings was put in hand immediately.

From that time onwards the Buddhist faith grew ever stronger, with small but turbulent interruptions—such as the reign of the robber Chora Naga, who despoiled temples, and the infamous Anula, first woman monarch, the nymphomaniac mentioned previously who numbered among her paramours a carpenter, a porter, and a Brahmin—until it encountered the rock of schism submerged but not broken up by the Convocation of Alu-wihara.

Queen Anula is an astonishing figure—a *femme fatale* of Sinhalese history. She began by poisoning her husband, King Kudatissa, successively marrying, raising to the throne, and then poisoning no less than five more lovers. Finally she reigned alone for four months, being unable to find anyone "to share her bed with her"—not, perhaps, altogether surprising—and ended her spectacular career, herself murdered by Kudatissa's son.

Buddhism was not destined to escape that bugbear of all religions—schism. It had appeared, in fact, during the lifetime of Gotama himself and in his own birthplace, Magadha, but it was not until the third century B.C. that it had shown in Ceylon. Even as early as that, however, the *Mahawansa* laments that there were no less than eighteen heresies in the island, some of them impugning the basic doctrines of the faith. The fate of Buddhism itself was in the balance, for the rising power of the Brahmins in India was beginning to make it clear that two such diametrically opposed religions as Brahminism and Buddhism could not hope to exist side by side. In Buddhism there was no place for the increasingly rigid caste system of the Hindus upon which the immense power of the Twice-born is based. Somewhere about the first century B.C. the silent battle for supremacy ended in the complete victory of the Brahmins in India. The followers of Gotama were vanquished and took refuge in Ceylon, which became the spiritual home of Buddhism and is reverenced as such to this day. Of that silent struggle the literature of neither religion has anything to say—one of the curiosities of history. Buddhism, born in Magadha, fled from India altogether except in the northernmost states of all; and in Tibet, where it remains in somewhat altered guise.

But although it found a home in Ceylon, here, too, trouble was in store. What is known as the Wettulyan sect arose, their beliefs based upon the heresies of a Brahmin said to be trying to undermine the purity of the Buddhist tenets. At first suppressed, it soon rose again to mar the unity of Buddhism in Ceylon for fourteen centuries, and to the impartial onlooker it would seem to have triumphed altogether in modern times. The *Mahawansa* gives no details as to the new doctrines which the Wettuliyans, or Abhayagiriyas, wished to include in the canon, but Turnour believes that from them arose the dewales and halls for devil-dancing, the former of which are now found in every part of the island. The Abhayagiriyas introduced into the rites of the Clergy of Reason some of the terror and mystery of Brahminism. The Brahmins of India would not tolerate the Buddhists by their side and threw them out, but Buddhism is the most tolerant of all world religions. This tolerance has proved fatal to its purity in Lanka, where the Hindu creed is for ever at its elbow, contaminating it with idol worship and opening the gate ever wider to the influence of demon worship.

The schism was so serious that King Maha Sen, last of the Mahawansa, was guilty of apostasy, influenced, it is said, by his tutor, an ardent Wettuliyan. So convinced was this king that the time had come for the new Buddhism that he pulled down the Brazen Palace in Anuradhapura in order to bestow its riches upon the new order. His destructive hand was heavy on all the land, a parallel with the dissolution of the English monasteries in 1540 by Henry VIII, although the sequel was different.

The old-established monks were not to be cajoled into service under the new religion. To their great credit they fled in horror to the forests and hills at this sacrilege. They could not countenance, as the new religion required of them, the inclusion of statues of Vishnu and Siva in the temple halls containing the statue of Buddha. Their successors do so to-day. The practice, indeed, is almost universal, although, as usual in such matters, there is a gloss of sophistry over the assimilation of the gods of Hinduism into the house of Gotama. Vishnu, the second figure in the Hindu Trimurti, is camouflaged as the tutelary deity of Ceylon, while the repulsive Siva, destroyer and ravisher, has not only acquired the name of Nata but is known as the next Buddha designate of the fifth Kalpa. Katragama, Hindu war deity, who was said to have aided Rama in his campaign against

Ravanna, is honoured by the Sinhalese, and so—more appropriately but even more surprisingly—is Pattini, Goddess of Chastity. The kappuralas of Hinduism officiate before their idols as the Buddhist priest, with his neophyte, praises his passionless god in the next room, or even an offshoot of the same room. Moreover Buddhists frankly admit belief in "Lokas," or various heavens, and a wide selection of hells peopled by spirits and devils, although they still maintain that there is no such thing as a soul. Yet the hells are, to them, places of preparation for people who have sinned in an earthly existence to make themselves fit before passing on to their next reincarnation.

The apostasy of Maha Sen, however, was too much for the mild Sinhalese people of his day, not yet confused by the imposition of Hindu gods upon their gentle religion. Faced with a growing spirit of rebellion, he thought it best to recant. The obvious proof of recantation was adopted, and monasteries were hastily rebuilt, new wiharas rose upon the ruins of the old, and new monuments rose to the purity of the true faith. In order to prevent any misunderstanding, he destroyed all Hindu dewales, for the building of which he had been responsible. To quote the *Mahawansa*: "He repaired numerous dilapidated temples throughout the island, made offerings of a thousand robes to a thousand priests, built sixteen tanks to extend cultivation (including Minneriya and Kantelai)—there is no defining the extent of his charity. And having performed, during his existence, acts of piety and impiety, his destiny after death was according to his merits." There is a grim hint, in that last sentence, that expiation of sin in the hereafter may not be so simple as it seems to the wealthy in this life. We shall see, in a later chapter, how this relentless refusal to condone sin—an admirable trait in the Buddhist faith—drove another powerful monarch to a savage renunciation of Buddhism in favour of a Brahminism which promised him complete absolution.

In A.D. 302 Maha Sen died, apostate and re-convert, last of the true Mahawansa.

KINGS OF THE MAHAWANSA

	Accession B.C.		*Accession* A.D.
Wijayo . . .	543	Dathika . . .	9
Upatissa I (Regent) .	505	Addagamini . .	21

	Accession B.C.
Panduwasa	504
Abhaya	474
Pandukabhaya	437
Mutasiwa	367
Devenipiatissa (The Pious)	307
Uttiya	267
Mahasiwa	257
Suratissa	247
Sena and Guttika (Tamil usurpers)	237
Asela	215
Ellala (Tamil usurper)	205
Dutthagamini	161
Saidatissa	137
Tuhl	119
Laiminitissa	119
Kalunna	109
Walagum Bahu	104
Mahdailitissa	76
Chora Naga	62
Kuda Tissa	50
Anula	47
Makalantissa	41
Batiyatissa	19

	Accession A.D.
Kirrihirridaila	30
Kuda Abha	33
Singhawali	34
Elluna	38
Sanda Muhuna	44
Yaso Silo	52
Subha (usurper)	60
Wahapp	66
Waknas	110
Gaja Bahu	113
Mahalumana	125
Batiya Tissa II	131
Chula Tissa	155
Kuhuna	173
Kudanama	183
Kuda Sirina (Siri Naga I)	184
Waiwahairatissa	209
Abha Sen	231
Siri Naga II	239
Wijayo II	241
Sangatissa	242
Dahama Sirisanga Bo	246
Golu Abha	248
Makalan Detu Tissa	261
Maha Sen	275

CHAPTER IV

SULAWANSA—THE LOWER RACE

THE story of the sixty-two kings who followed the Mahawansa is a sorry record of decline and fall, of civil strife, and a kind of perpetual, forced piety against a background of assassination, intrigue, and the infiltration of Malabari blood.

That part of the chronicle of the kings which is known as the *Sulawansa* was, as with the *Mahawansa*, written by monks, and from the fixed point of view of the priestcraft. To them the kings —with the solitary exception of the outstanding figure of Parakrama Bahu, the supreme hero of the Sinhalese—were noteworthy to the chroniclers only in so far as they built more dagobas, endowed more wiharas or extended irrigation by means of tanks and canals, to bestow upon the monasteries the fertile land which resulted. An ability to defend the country against the invasions of foreigners seems never to have ranked even as a merit in the day-to-day life of the kings as recorded by the priests. Yet the supreme heroes of either "wansa" are, undeniably, those who resisted invasion and struck red-blooded blows for the religion of Reason.

The monks' obsession with the building of tanks and canals, however monotonous it may seem in the *Mahawansa*, is readily understandable. Behind the prosperous life of the people, the culture and the beauty, the piety and yearning for immortality unconsciously expressed in the mighty dagobas, lies the constant fear of the tyranny of water. It was a civilization which existed for a millennium and a half in a desert, one of the unnoticed miracles of human cussedness. The fragility of the means by which life was sustained against the ever-threatening jungle—the thin trickle of water which was, almost literally, a bloodstream to the dwellers in the plains—can never have been far from the consciousness of the rulers of the people. It may account, in some part, for their instinct to intrigue, rather than to fight; to flee, rather than to oppose. The invaders had no such background to their thoughts, for they came to despoil.

In a community almost entirely dedicated to the triple pursuits of agriculture, horticulture and religion, originality in the personal life of the kings is rare. Detu Tissa, who followed Kitsi Maiwan, the first of the Sulawansa, was an artist and a patron of the arts. This is noteworthy, as there are few indications anywhere in the life of the Sinhalese of any deep feeling for art, and still less for music. Detu Tissa, however, was an exception. He won considerable renown as a painter, sculptor and an expert carver of ivory, and founded schools of art for his subjects, an innovation in the story of Lanka.

Perhaps originality begets originality, for Budha Dasa, who followed Detu Tissa, also possessed a strong individuality, this time in the realm of medicine. He wrote widely, both on the subject of medicine and surgery, and instituted a veterinary service for animals throughout the kingdom, surely one of the first instances of organized medicine for animals in the story of man? Apart from these two, another Wijayo, and Parakrama, signs of initiative among the monarchs of the Lower Race are almost entirely lacking.

An event of the highest importance in the annals of the island kingdom took place during the reign of one of the first two kings of the Sulawansa. We do not know which, because the *Mahawansa* itself makes no mention of it, another example of the restricted mental horizon of the monkish scribes. It was no less an event than the establishment of friendly relations with the vast kingdom of China, a contact which produced such far-reaching results, and became of so intimate a nature that it is astonishing that even the priests should remain silent about the early days of the friendship, although more expansive on the subject in later years.

Happily the Chinese were not so reticent, and Ma-touan-Lin in his encyclopædia says: "It was in the reign of the Emperor Nyan-ti [about A.D. 400] that ambassadors arrived from Ceylon bearing a statue of Fo in jade stone four feet two inches high, painted in five colours, and of such singular beauty that one would almost have doubted its being the work of human ingenuity."

The envoy of the Sinhalese king, Maha Nama, travelled to China across India and the Himalayas, taking ten years over the journey, rather than adventure the broad seas between. Later records show that both routes were used subsequently.

The Chinese, inveterate travellers and traders, share the

reverence of nearly all Eastern peoples for Adam's Peak, which was used by their mariners for navigational purposes from earliest times. To them, the footprint on the summit of the holy mountain is that of Pawn-koo, "the First Man," and they speak of the gems found in the wild valleys of the peak as the crystallized tears of Pawn-koo, "thus accounting for their singular lustre and marvellous tints." The friendship between the two countries, thus begun, lasted for centuries, although every trace of it has gone to-day. Between the years A.D. 442 and A.D. 529, the Sinhalese kings paid tribute and exchanged gifts with the Kingdom of Flowers.

The visit of Fa-Hien in the fifth century is of great value in its close and independent corroboration of the *Mahawansa*. It gives us complete faith in the facts of history recorded by the Sinhalese priests, for Fa-Hien, who was an ardent Buddhist himself, spent two years in Anuradhapura and recorded innumerable facts, all of which corroborate the work of the *Mahawansa*. All other chronicles of many nations relative to the events in the story of Lanka do the same.

Dhatu Sen, who ascended to the throne in A.D. 459, was a descendant of the original royal line, and a curious admixture of that piety and ferocious cruelty which seems so marked a characteristic of the Sinhalese. He was educated by his uncle, the learned Mahanamo, whom he commissioned to bring the records of the kingdom up to date. He, too, had to flee invasion, and after biding his time in the mountain fastnesses of Rohuna, he routed the Tamils who had occupied the whole of the Pihitiratta for no less than twenty-seven years. The purge carried out by the victorious king was thorough. He put to death all the chiefs who stood between him and the throne, a normal precaution of the day, and degraded all those Sinhalese chiefs who had, in modern terminology, collaborated with the enemy. The religion of his fathers, which had been contaminated by Hindu idols, he cleansed with the utmost vigour, restoring Buddhism in all its pristine purity, although having to break the most sacred of all Buddhist laws to do so. Once again we have the now familiar pattern of a Sinhalese monarch, driven into the mountains by the invaders, returning after years to purge his country of the enemy, and with a great burst of piety restoring temples and dagobas, and building or restoring tanks to bring back the balance of prosperity to the ravaged kingdom.

Such sweeping methods as he employed, although probably necessary in the state of corruption and decay that he found on his return, made enemies, the most determined and bitter of which was his own son Kasyapa, a detested figure in Sinhalese history. What King John is to the English, Kasyapa is to the Sinhalese, and to this day his name excites horror and disgust, as I have proved, in villagers who know little more of what took place than this detested name.

It is a tale of cruelty and hate, ending in the assassination of Dhatu Sen by his son under circumstances of such peculiar horror that even the citizens of a state in which assassination was a commonplace of existence could not stomach it. Murmurs of revolt came from them even before the parricide turned his attention to his brother Mogallana, with intent to murder him also. However, Mogallana succeeded in escaping, and lived to avenge his father.

The whole of this incident has about it the haunting savour of high tragedy, a theme for some Sinhalese *Macbeth*, for it has pathos, villainy, heroism and a lingering fascination that after all these centuries has not faded. I intend to recount the tale myself, as told to me by a villager living within the shadow of the grim rock fortress of Sigirya, to which Kasyapa fled, and from which he ruled a nation which felt for him nothing but contempt and loathing.

Mogallana defeated his parricidal brother in due course, at Ambatthakalo, and reigned for eighteen years in an odour of sanctity, distinguished by one innovation which does not seem to have occurred to any of his predecessors. Perhaps because he himself had had to flee to India from the wrath of his brother, and had been compelled to bring back with him Tamil mercenaries to defeat Kasyapa, he seems to have had a better appreciation of the weak points of invasion. He is certainly the first king to think of preventing the *landing* of invasion armies—invariably the Tamils at that time in history—realizing that it is better to stop them arriving in the country at all than to try and wage war among the tanks with the disastrous consequences to irrigation that invariably followed. This might well have been for the Sinhalese a moment as significant, to them, as Henry VIII's discovery of sea-power turned out to be for the English. Mogallana's sound strategical instinct would have made the Palk Strait "a moat defensive to an house" as Henry did of the

English Channel. He founded a Sinhalese "Navy" to prevent the Damilos, as the Tamils were called, from ever landing in Ceylon, but his wise policy did not survive his death.

Indeed very little survived his death except a legacy of perpetual strife with the Damilos, who had retained some sort of vested interest in Lanka from the days of Wijayo onwards. Actual blood relationships had, of course, been present from the first landing of all, for Wijayo, after divorcing the unhappy Kuweni, had married a daughter of the King of Pandya. He had also brought into the island a train of no less than seven hundred noble Pandyan ladies, all of whom speedily allied themselves to Sinhalese chiefs and nobles. This process of admixture never entirely ceased. The "infamous" Anula married a Tamil husband, and the people made no objection to his ascent to the throne, while Senghot—A.D. 432—married a Damilo queen. As Brahminism vitiated the original purity of Buddhism, the marvel is not that there should have been intermarrying, but that there should have been so little of it. In fact there was no fusion of the two races, and there is not to this day. There seems to be some chemical obstruction, as it were, to the mixing of the bloods, much as the Celtic peoples of the British Isles remain distinct from the Anglo-Saxon element. No matter how much intermarrying took place, the two races remained completely separate and distinct.

In the last stage of the "irrigation civilization," when King Parakrama the Great fanned the dying embers of national genius into a last, astonishing blaze, the fusion of the two races reached its highest peak, but fell short of homogeneity and afterwards reverted to complete racial individuality. Just as the Sinhalese had never been able to absorb the Veddhas, so the vigorous Dravidians of south India failed to absorb the Sinhalese and, in the end, were themselves rejected.

Throughout the whole story of the *Mahawansa*—which includes the kings of the Sulawansa—right up to the time of the evacuation of the great lowland capital city of Polonnaruha, there is a sort of shifting borderland noticeable between the Tamils—who established themselves in the northern tip of the island, the Jaffna Peninsula, from earliest times—and the Sinhalese, whose domination stretched ostensibly from Dondra Head to the beginning of the Jaffna Peninsula, at Elephant's Pass. Although never defined by boundaries—no king arose to build a Hadrian's

Wall across the neck of the island to be held against all comers—this borderland stood for a very real line of demarcation. It swayed considerably according to the fortunes of war or, rather, to the degree of invasion from which the Sinhalese happened to be suffering. Now known as the Wanni, an all but deserted desert-jungle land, those northern borderlands were once vibrant with life and strife, much as the border country between England and Scotland once rang with the sounds of incessant warfare. In Ceylon, however, the aggression was almost entirely one-sided, for the Sinhalese had to endure centuries of invasion from various south Indian tribes. It is possible that invasion from the same quarter, in more subtle guise, faces them in the future, for history is not very original and goes on repeating itself.

Following Mogallana came anarchy. The details are not pretty. Homicide and parricide, suicide and fratricide, constant intrigue and sudden death, it makes the England of Stephen's day seem tame. Kumara Dhatu Sen immolated himself, his son Kirti Sena was murdered, Siwaka, who murdered him, was himself murdered, and Dapulul committed suicide a few years later. Kirtisri Meghawma was put to death, so were Sanghatissa and Buga Mugalama—both beheaded. The dismal list of bloodshed seems never-ending. Between the years A.D. 523 and A.D. 648, says the *Rajavali*, no less than fourteen kings were murdered by their successors, and so constant and terrifying was the atmosphere of civil commotion in the declining civilization of the Sinhalese that peaceful countrymen emigrated in large numbers to Bihar and Orissa to escape the bloodshed and follow their peaceful avocations. This was noted, not merely by Sinhalese writers, but by the Chinese traveller Hiouen Thsang. Only the lack of foreign interest in "the ultimate isle" saved it from outright conquest at the hands of some vigorous foe.

It is curious that neither the Cholas nor the Pandyans seem to have wished to invest the island altogether. Time and again they raided the rich plains and monasteries of the relatively defenceless northern kingdom, taking the proceeds of the marvellous agriculture, stripping temples, loading themselves with jewels and provisions before returning to their own poorly organized countries; but of a creative and imaginative desire to rule Ceylon there is no sign. The raids, indeed, became a habit so ingrained that Mantotta, on the Ceylon side of Adam's Bridge, developed into what would now be known as a "bridgehead." Why the pusillanimous Sinhalese did not raise an army and wipe

out Mantotta is hard to understand. Only once or twice in their whole history did they retaliate at all on the authors of their recurring misfortunes. In A.D. 113, Gaja Bahu avenged an attack made upon Ceylon three years previously in which a Tamil chief had taken back several hundred Sinhalese nobles as slaves. With a refreshing reversal of this game of spoliation, Gaja Bahu invaded and ravaged Chola, returning home laden, not only with spoil and the lost Sinhalese nobles, but with hundreds of Chola captives also. The *Rajaratnacari* presents us with a curious account of this event, almost exactly duplicating one of the great primitive stories of the Old Testament. "Gaja Bahu," it says, "had no need to sail across the sea to land in India, for he smote the waters until they parted, so that he and his army marched through without wetting the soles of their feet."

From the seventh to the eleventh centuries the tale is one of constant infiltration by the Tamils, so that the kingdom of the plains came to be almost a dependency of Pandya. Tamils filled all the offices of state, even including that of prime ministers, and in the eighth century the position became so bad that they overran the ancient and sacred city of Anuradhapura to such an extent that the Sinhalese decided to move their capital. When abandoned, Anuradhapura had been the seat of Sinhalese kings for 993 years, with one short interregnum of six months when Kaluna Detutissa held his capital at Dondra Head.

A thousand years of sovereignty could not have been surrendered without many bitter misgivings, but the reaction of the Sinhalese is psychologically puzzling and interesting. Instead of rousing national opinion against the invaders and hurling them from the beloved city of sanctified memory, they abandoned it without a struggle and took themselves off to Polonnaruha, a place of royal residence for many years some sixty or so miles away across the plain. There they displayed a vigour and enterprise which, had it been devoted to the task of getting rid of the Malabaris, must have been successful.

If the story of Anuradhapura is comparable to that of Babylon, what can be said of the second flowering of Sinhalese genius at a time when their fortunes were at a low ebb—the incredible city of Polonnaruha? The nation was going down to final defeat in feebleness and corruption, yet it produced a renaissance within itself, a second kingdom which lasted close upon seven hundred years with Polonnaruha as its capital, a capital almost equal in the wonder and majesty of its buildings to Anuradhapura itself?

The Malabaris had no direct hand in this rejuvenation—the powerful Hindu influence perceptible in the architecture of the new city is due to the fact that the religion of Buddha, by this time, had been deeply corrupted by Hindu creed—and indeed their influence throughout the long history of the island state is one simply of ignoble parasitism or destruction. To the Sinhalese alone, gentle, in many ways feeble, goes the credit for the genius and industry which went into the building up of the wonderful civilizations in the desert, civilizations at least the equal, of their kind, to any others raised by man.

Before that second civilization flowered in its brief and magnificent high noon, there were centuries of indecision and weakness. Throughout the reigns of nineteen kings of Polonnaruha, says the *Rajaratnacari*, "the Malabaris kept up perpetual war with the Sinhalese." The strong, who could fight, battened upon the weak, who could only create, and again in every department of the Sinhalese kingdom the marauders took over the key positions one by one. It is a sickeningly familiar picture of strength feeding upon weakness, as true to-day as millenniums ago and as ignored. By A.D. 1023, when the King of Chola again invaded Ceylon, only Rohuna, with its mountain wilderness and its sturdy highlanders, was free. Once more, as in England, the weak inhabitants of an island had been forced back by waves of vigorous invaders into their last stronghold—the mountains.

It seemed that the twilight of Sinhalese greatness was darkening into the night of final extinction as a civilization, for even with the foe at the gate and the struggle all but determined, the few Sinhalese nobles still left in freedom could do little but quarrel among themselves. A united front proved impossible. Four contenders for the vanishing throne intrigued and plotted against each other while the invader took a firmer grip of the lost kingdom. The supremacy of one of the four, Lokaiswara, was finally acknowledged, and the feeble court taken to Katragama in the south-eastern plains of Rohuna. Here the Sulawansa hovered, for a moment, on the verge of final extinction. The flame of national genius had sunk to a barely perceptible glimmer when Lokaiswara died in 1071, but it was then that another Wijayo came to the throne in the very nick of time and blew the glimmer into a flame which; under the greatest of all the kings, Parakrama; threw its light not only upon a united island but over the whole of the Eastern world.

CHAPTER V

INDIAN SUMMER OF A CIVILIZATION

THE mercurial temperament of the Sinhalese race and their astonishing powers of recuperation show most clearly in the next period of their history. Almost all of the island was lost to them—a handful of patriots in the mountains and an area of forgotten jungle in the southern plains being all that remained between the Malabaris and absolute domination—and all power to organize seems entirely to have deserted them. They possessed no army, no wealth, no unity and no organized society from which rejuvenation might spring, and at no previous moment in their history could their fortunes be said to have been at a lower ebb.

Within little more than a century, the scene had been so completely transformed that Sinhalese sovereignty had been restored throughout the length and breadth of the land, the fame of Lanka's king went before him in all the Eastern lands, and an army of Sinhalese, bellicose at last, had landed first in Siam and then in India, sweeping all before it and reducing foreign countries to vassalage for the first—and last—time in the history of the island.

For some strange reason the mainspring of this astonishing Indian Summer seems to have made no real impression upon the historian. Even Sir Emerson Tennent, while recording the facts of the revival, dismisses Wijayo Bahu in a single page, to pass on to the spectacular and glorious exploits of the most exalted and famous of the kings, Parakrama the Great.

I do not understand that. Without the seed planted and sedulously cared for by Wijayo, the flower which bloomed with such magnificence under Parakrama would not have seen the light of the sun. It seems to me that the honour due to this Wijayo has been withheld, and the reason for this is probably that obsession with purely religious deeds which is so marked throughout the compilation of the *Mahawansa*. Written by monks, without breadth of vision—Ceylon as a mart of nations from earliest times has no place in its pages—and with no trace of

humour, the record has the defects of its qualities. It could see the life of the kings only in so far as they contributed to the advancement and glorification of the priesthood. By that yardstick Wijayo, whose main contribution to the history of Lanka was to save it from final disruption and bring it to unity again, cannot compare with the hero Parakrama. He did not have the chance. Almost his entire reign was devoted to the task of uniting his countrymen and evicting the invader.

Before Parakrama could raise his mighty monuments and wring, from the surrounding nations, respect and homage, the country had to be cleared of the invader, faith and energy revived and confidence in the future reborn. It was an immense task which Wijayo Bahu accomplished against difficulties so immense that his comparative lack of recognition in the Sinhalese roll of honour is almost unintelligible.

Since the days of Kasyapa, Anuradhapura had fallen into decay and Polonnaruha had superseded it as the centre of government. After a short time, the incompetence of the Tamils had shown itself conclusively in the sphere of administration, and the ancient city had become a scene of desolation and ruin. The new capital of Polonnaruha soon fell a victim to Tamil infiltration, once the decline of Anuradhapura was assured, and that the Sinhalese should have been able, despite constant intrigue, bloodshed and racial disturbances, to build it at all is an amazing tribute to their creative qualities. From the time of the evacuation of the Sacred City to the moment when Wijayo Bahu struck his first blow for freedom and ejected the Tamils from Polonnaruha, the island race cannot be said to have known a moment's real peace. Invasions from abroad and civil disturbances at home had followed each other without cessation.

Wijayo had grown up among such events and could have pictured none other, but he was ambitious. Coming to the throne after the negative rule of Lokaiswara, he found himself in precarious control of Rohuna. At once he began the task of rousing, among his small following of sturdy mountain men, a sense of patriotism almost absent from Sinhalese philosophy. Although in size his kingdom was large, the inhabitants were few. Nowhere in the *Mahawansa* is there more than an indication of the population of the island at any time, but Tennent, working on the evidence given by Parakrama himself on his death-bed, put it at a minimum of twenty millions. The great



The Jaya Sri Maha Bodin-wahansa, or Holy Bo tree, Anuradhapura: 2236 years old in 1948



The Holy Hill of Mihintale and the Maha Sena dagoba approached by the one thousand, eight hundred and forty steps

king, as he lay dying, reminded his sons that he had united the three kingdoms—the spadework of which had been effected, in fact, by Wijayo—and that Pihitti contained 450,000 villages, Rohuna 770,000 and Maya 250,000. Although the word "village" is applied even to a single farmstead, as well as to hamlets, on the smallest possible computation the population of Ceylon in the twelfth century must, obviously, have run into many millions of people. Anuradhapura, at the height of its fame, is said to have had a population of three millions, and Polonnaruha reached equal proportions at the time of Parakrama. "No one who has visited the silent and deserted regions can hesitate to believe," writes Tennent, "that when the island was at the zenith of its prosperity, the population of Ceylon must have been, of necessity, at least ten times as great as at the present day." At the time of writing that sentence, the population was over two millions of people.

The fact that Rohuna, in the time of Wijayo, had more villages than the northern plains is not so surprising as at first sight it appears. The Sinhalese, although they are not fighting men, do not like foreigners. They did not like the Tamils in the time of Wijayo any more than they do to-day. The Tamils had conquered and overrun most of the Raja-ratta, and the first great civilization was under their heel. The peasants, therefore, removed themselves to Rohuna and Maya, still considered a wilderness by the Tamils.

In this last remaining stronghold of pure Sinhalese, Wijayo, with a few thousand loyal mountaineers behind him, was successful in stirring up the faint patriotic spirit of the villagers. His enemies were in undisputed power, but they had become soft and careless. They had all the centres of wealth, they controlled the army and they had a long-ingrained contempt of the Sinhalese who were never prepared to fight to keep the riches that they built up.

That is the situation as I see it, and it would explain the comparative ease with which Wijayo, once he had planned his campaign, was able to defeat a powerful adversary with weak forces. The element of surprise and determination, coupled with the obvious rotting of the fibre of the opposition, was enough to win the day. Once the defeat of the Tamils appeared probable, no doubt all the Sinhalese in the Raja-ratta, who had given up hope of being freed from the millstone of the invaders, joined in.

All this, however, is surmise, for Wijayo's great effort is dismissed in the history in a few short sentences. I can only conclude that he was not as devout as he might have been, and that he was far more concerned with evicting the Tamils than with propitiating the priesthood. His achievements, in terms of dagobas, wiharas and other gifts to the priests, were meagre, and that is probably the reason why his paramount part in the liberation of his country is dismissed so lightly from the records. "He recovered the ancient capitals from the Malabars," admits the *Mahawansa*, "compelled the whole extent of the island to acknowledge his authority, reunited the several kingdoms of Ceylon under one national banner, and for the security of Lanka against foreign invasion placed trustworthy chiefs at the head of paid troops and stationed them round the coast. Thus, signally successful at home, the fame of his exploits extended over all Dambadiva [India] and Ambassadors arrived at his Court from the Sovereigns of India and Siam."

As far as it goes, that is tribute enough, but—that is all. Unless words have ceased to have any meaning these achievements, based upon a hide-out in the mountains and a decayed court at Katragama, must be considered the most notable effort at reconquest in the whole story of the island. Neither Dutthagamini nor Walagum Bahu, national heroes of story and legend, faced so huge a task as Wijayo Bahu, for in neither case had the corrupting influence of the Malabaris taken so firm a hold upon the affairs of the nation, nor had the morale of the Sinhalese people sunk so low. The detailed story of this success seems to have attracted little attention and Wijayo is chiefly noted, in the *Mahawansa*, as the man who paved the way for Parakrama. I do not subscribe to such an underestimation of the man, who must have been one of the most courageous and certainly one of the most determined men in the history of either dynasty.

Unfortunately he left a disputed succession, and for twenty-six years the unity he had striven so hard to create was again dissipated, although the major problem—the Malabaris—had been eliminated. It seemed as if civil war on a grand scale was about to break out on the death of Gajah Bahu, who occupied the uneasy throne for a short time, but the people took matters into their own hands at this threat and unanimously elected Parakrama, the young and brilliant son of the dead king, as the heir. This was too much for the young man's uncle and war did

actually break out, but it was speedily terminated, ending decisively in favour of Parakrama as far as the wealthy provinces of the Raja-ratta were concerned. He was crowned king in A.D. 1153, and although guerrilla fighting went on for another two years in the hills, the result was never in doubt. In A.D. 1155 the chiefs of Rohuna made their submission and saw Parakrama crowned King of Lanka.

It is said of this great man that, from his boyhood days, when his uncles first began to dispute the vacant throne of Wijayo, he had determined to complete the work of the liberator of his country and purge the island of the Malabari taint once and for all. To equip himself for this mighty task, he travelled widely and studied deeply. Theology, medicine, logic, grammar, poetry and music, the training of the elephant and the study of the horse, all these he is said to have mastered. Military science he made his special care, since it was obvious to him that he had a great deal of fighting to do before he could restore his country's greatness in the spheres in which she was naturally gifted: agriculture, horticulture and religious tolerance.

Despite his preoccupation with training for war—he insisted that all the officers of his new army should live in his palace in order "to grow familiar with the service of kings and become skilled in managing horses, and elephants and in fencing"—his very first speech in public reveals his true greatness. "In a country like this," he said, "not even the least quantity of rainwater should be allowed to flow into the ocean without profiting man. Remember that it is not meet that men like us should live and enjoy what has come into our hands and care not for the people. Let there not be left anywhere in my kingdom a piece of land, though it be of the smallest dimensions, that does not yield some benefit to man."

There to my mind speaks the natural genius of the Sinhalese people, and if there is a finer characteristic in any race than the fullest exploitation of the soil, mankind has yet to discover it.

The Sinhalese say that in Parakrama was born again the piety of Tissa, beloved of the gods, and the fighting chivalry of Dutthagamini. He is their beau-ideal, the embodiment of all the virtues, and it is not difficult to understand this fervent admiration, for Parakrama, not content with a well-ordered, united and pious kingdom at home, decided upon foreign conquest. In the long history of this gentle race, the people had been conquered

time and again. It was a new and cheerful experience to see themselves, for once, in the role of conquerors.

The account of the hero's coronation given in the *Mahawansa* is significant as a description of the highly organized state that then existed in the small island of Ceylon.

"On that day," says the *Mahawansa*, "the deafening sound of divers drums was terrible, even as the rolling of the ocean when it is shaken to and fro by the tempest at the end of the world. And the elephants, decked with coverings of gold, made the street before the palace to look as if clouds had descended thereon with flashes of lightning; and with the prancing of the steeds of war the whole city, on that day, seemed to wave even like the sea. And the sky was wholly shut out of sight with rows of umbrellas of divers colours and with lines of flags of gold. And there was the waving of garments and the clapping of hands, and the inhabitants of the city shouted 'Live! Live, Great King!'

"And there was feasting over the whole land, which was filled with arches of plantains intermingled with rows of flower-pots, and hundreds of minstrels chanted songs of praise, and the air was filled with the smoke of sweet incense. Many persons also arrayed themselves in cloths of divers colours and decked themselves in ornaments of divers kinds, and the great soldiers who were practised in war, mighty men armed with divers kinds of weapons, and with the mien of graceful heroes, moved about hither and thither like unto elephants that had broken asunder their bonds. By reason of the many archers also, who walked about with their bows in their hands, it seemed as if an army of Gods had visited the land: and the city with its multitude of Palaces, gorgeously decorated with gold and gems and pearls, seemed like unto the firmament that is studded with stars.

"And this mighty King, with eyes that were long like the lily, caused many wonderful and marvellous things to be displayed, and adorned himself with divers ornaments and ascended a golden stage supported on the backs of two elephants that were covered with cloth of gold. And he bore on his head a crown that shone with the rays of gems, like as the eastern mountain beareth the glorious and rising sun. And casting into the shade the beauty of Spring by his own beauty, he drew tears of joy from the eyes of the beautiful women of the city. And he marched round the city beaming with the signs of happiness, and, like unto the God

with the thousand eyes, entered the beauteous Palace of the King."

Agriculture and religion, the two dominant themes in the life of Lanka, were the first two preoccupations of the new king once he had pacified the island. Once more, and for the last time, began the building and the repairing, the refurbishing and the planning of dagobas, wiharas, audience halls, dewales and tanks, ravaged and neglected by long years of indifferent Tamil suzerainty. The old buildings came alive again, restored to their pristine beauty, and an astonishing crop of new ones leapt into existence on a scale of which no written testimony alone could ever have convinced me had I not seen the evidence for myself. The immensity of the ruins in the jungle speaks with a silent but unanswerable voice of an energy almost superhuman in its achievements.

Under the infiltration of the Tamils, the faith of Buddhism had rotted away and the Hindu gods had come into their own. Tennent says that when Wijayo finally cleared the kingdom of foreigners in A.D. 1071, "there was not to be found in the island five Tirunansis," these last being the highest ranking among the Buddhist hierarchy of priests. New tirunansis had to be imported from Siam.

All over the island, not merely in the central and northern provinces, the Indian Summer of Buddhism and of the irrigation civilization flamed into a benevolent glory. In almost any part of the central plains, to this day, the ruins of every kind of religious building known, perhaps, to the department of archæology but uncleared and unmarked, may be stumbled upon by any planter out on an evening's shoot in the jungle. The wild is full of them, the last relics of an almost frenzied activity hard to credit from another land and in a sceptical age. Let the *Mahawansa* speak again:

"Three temples at Polonnaruha were erected by Parakrama the Great, besides others at every two or three gows' distance [a gow is the distance a man may walk in an hour, and varies greatly with the difficulty or steepness of the terrain], 101 dagobas, 476 statues of Buddha, 300 image rooms built besides 6100 repaired. He built, for the reception of priests from a long distance, 230 lodging apartments, 50 halls for preaching, 9 for walking, 144 gates, 192 rooms for the purpose of offering flowers. He built also 12 apartments and 230 halls for the use of

strangers, and 31 rock temples with tanks, baths and gardens for the priesthood."

All this was only a beginning. We shall see for ourselves the silent testimony of that vast rejuvenation where bears now drink in wary solitude and bees swarm on the dreaming ruins of past splendour.

The edicts of the king were remarkable for their magnanimity. The strangers within his gates, including the Malabaris; for they could not be weeded out altogether any more than they could be to this day; had places of worship built for them and rest houses for those beset with bodily fatigue. For the Sinhalese there were almonries and hospitals, gardens and parks laden with flowers and fruits, schools, theatres, even dance-halls. The honour due to the crown was not forgotten in a palace of extraordinary magnificence. One hardly knows how to write of this palace, for the account given of it by the *Mahawansa* seems altogether too exuberant. Yet we shall find, when we visit the Loha Pasada at Anuradhapura, that when the chroniclers talk of a hall with a thousand pillars, they are understating the truth by a wide margin, for in fact there are no less than 1,600 pillars still standing for the eye to behold.

The Palace of Parakrama, the Vejayanta, contained a thousand rooms in seven stories, says the *Mahawansa*, and although only one corner of this colossal building survives, it is a cliff of masonry that could only have formed part of a giant. The massive and beautiful pillars supporting the floors are scattered about the surrounding jungle, but of the roof surmounted with hundreds of pinnacles wrought in precious metals there is now no sign. Of the furnishings of this marvellous place the record says that the carpets were of immense value and the tables inlaid with ivory and gold, but the invaders who finally swept through the ill-fated city like a plague left no trace of furnishings or anything that could be removed.

The schools, libraries, dance-halls, public baths, theatres and hospitals of the capital were set out with complete disregard for space amid beautiful gardens and parks, the whole dominated by a fortress overlooking the city. Parakrama was determined that, if there should be another invasion, the Sinhalese should not present an open city to the marauders, and he surrounded Polonnaruha with a wall twelve miles long on the two short sides and thirty miles in length on the others. Such a wall,

eighty-four miles in length, would comfortably surround modern London, although it was probably considerably shorter than that which Wahapp built round the ancient and sacred city of Anuradhapura. Within the massive outer ramparts were three lesser walls, only small sections of which have been uncovered to date, going off in an unswerving line into tangled forest or across the curious parklands still left in the most desolate wilds of the northern plains known as "talawas." Nothing but grass and an occasional isolated tree seems able to grow in these talawas.

Parakrama's giant programme of reclamation and development was not confined to the ancient capitals. It extended to the far provinces of Maya and Rohuna as well, and the corroding and destructive influence of the Malabaris is shown in the colossal repairing schemes to irrigation works alone undertaken in that programme. "The Seas of Parakrama"—tanks of truly gigantic size—were the first to be built, opening up tens of thousands of acres choked by encroaching jungle. There were three of them, with fifteen hundred others, smaller in size, in various parts of the plains.

Three hundred more were built especially for the priests, and if we add to this total another fourteen hundred tanks restored and yet another thousand enlarged, it will convey some idea of the tank system of Ceylon as it existed eight hundred years ago. Even so, it cannot have equalled the high noon of the island prosperity when the Sacred City was the heart of the island economy. Yet it is impressive enough. Five thousand tanks are mentioned, with 3,621 canals repaired and 34 new ones built.

That artists did not live, in those days, to record on canvas a view of the countryside as it was under that régime is a loss to humanity, for figures convey little of the immensity of the achievement. A land, nearly three hundred miles long and one hundred and sixty miles wide, only one-third of it fed by natural rains, and the other two-thirds under almost perpetual drought, was virtually without any wastelands at all. Wherever water could flow, it was made to, and the silver sheen of a myriad lakes must have shone back to the sky, when seen from some up-country vantage-point.

Even to-day, when the jungle gasps in the grip of drought and crocodiles trek long distances across the forest in an attempt to find water, the few great tanks restored by the British

Government shine, seen from some pinnacle of rock in the mountains, a brilliant silver in the all-pervading blue. There are not many of them left, possibly fifty in all, and those that remain are mostly shrunken and small, but still they stand out in bold relief from the brooding cover of the interminable forest. What that same view must have been like eight hundred, or even fifteen hundred years ago I have tried to picture. The thought of five thousand lakes, instead of fifty, with four thousand canals linking each to each in a delicate system of silver veins, is fascinating. The world has not seen such another system, for the splendid irrigation of northern India or of Burma never approached, in sustained and methodical thoroughness, the development of Lanka under Parakrama. It lies now broken and lost, its former marvels forgotten in the country of their origin, unknown in other lands.

For once, in its long line of monarchs, Lanka had found not only a fighter but an aggressive fighter. Parakrama, the full tide of his work of restoration moving to its high-water mark, turned his attention to military matters, for Siam had insulted his ministers and merchants alike, and badly needed a lesson in manners. To give her one, it was necessary to raise a fleet.

The Sinhalese have no stomach for the sea. It is curious that, with some nine hundred miles of coastline, they should not have acquired some skill as mariners or love of the sea, but they have not. Some of them are competent fisher-folk, although the best fishermen in the island are Malays, but the instincts of the people are all agricultural. The dhonies—those clumsy craft—of Jaffna, and the catamarans of the fishermen all round the coast, are adaptations of other people's craft, for the Sinhalese have not evolved a single type of ship for themselves in two and a half millenniums. Nor are Sinhalese sailors found aboard foreign vessels.

To raise an amphibious force, therefore, was a remarkable feat on the part of Parakrama, yet Turnour tells us that he raised "several hundreds of vessels, well equipped, within five months," with which to invade Siam. He effected a surprise landing, defeated the Siamese in the field, and returned in triumph with Siam as an acknowledged vassal.

His next exploit affords me, personally, great satisfaction. The Pandyans, who for so long had ravaged Lanka, smashing down with monotonous regularity the industry and enterprise of

others, were due to receive a little of their own medicine. So great was the fear of the Sinhalese hero that no attempt was made to oppose his landing, and his progress was more in the nature of a triumphal procession than an invasion. To mark his triumph, however, Parakrama founded a city and struck some coins in his own name in Chola, making both that state and its neighbour, Pandya, tributary to Lanka.

With his death, the unity of the race died also, and the last pretensions of Lanka to be a first-class civilization disappeared. The very prosperity and wealth that he had created, the fame of his name and exploits, these things had a boomerang effect, and within twenty years of his death, which occurred in 1197, the Tamils were back again in force under a merciless chief named Magha. With fire and sword and horrible cruelties he devastated the land, a decisive blow from which the low-country never recovered. The *Mahawansa* records, in melancholy and indignant words, the ravages of this miserable barbarian.

"This Magha, who was like a fierce drought, commanded his army of strong men to ransack the kingdom of Lanka, even as a wild fire doth a forest. Thereupon these wicked disturbers of the peace stalked about the land hither and thither crying out boastfully, 'Lo! We are the giants of Kerala!' And they robbed the inhabitants of their garlands and their jewels and everything that they had. They cut off also the hands and the feet of the people and despoiled their dwellings. Their oxen, buffaloes, and other beasts they bound up and carried away forcibly. The rich men they tied up with cord and tortured, and took possession of all their wealth and brought them poverty. They broke down the image-houses and destroyed many cetiyas [dagobas]. They took up their dwellings in the wiharas and beat the pious laymen therein. They flogged children and sorely distressed the five ranks of the religious orders. They compelled the people to carry burdens and made them labour heavily. Many books of great excellence did they loose from the cords that bound them and cast them away in divers places. Even the great and lofty cetiyas they spared not, but utterly destroyed them, and caused a great many bodily relics which were unto them as their lives to disappear thereby. Alas! Alas! Even so did those Tamil giants, like the giants of Mara, destroy the kingdom and religion of the land. And then they surrounded the city of Polonnaruha on every side, and took Parakrama Pandu captive, and plucked out his

eyes, and robbed all the treasures that were therein, with all the pearls and precious stones."

Magha landed in A.D. 1211 and had himself crowned the following year. The few short years between this horrifying terrorism and the death of the great Parakrama had been years of absolute chaos, for Wijayo Bahu II had none of the qualities of that other Wijayo Bahu to whom the flowering of the second kingdom is so largely due. He was a sensuous intriguer, and was murdered by his successor Mahindo, who was himself murdered. It was the mixture as before, and over the whole land spread a miasma of corruption.

The first four kings after Parakrama were murdered, and the fifth deposed by the great hero's widow, Lilawati. She herself was deposed, restored again in 1210, and deposed yet again the following year, the surest indication of the lack of unity in the kingdom. Internecine squabbles once more, and this time irretrievably, led to the ruin of the islanders, and the greatness of Lanka was at an end.

There were some slight efforts to restore the situation, made by yet another Wijayo, who raised the standard of independence in 1235. He found Polonnaruha untenable, in shards and ruins after the attentions of the Attila-like Magha, and made his capital across the plain at Dambedeniya. But his rebellion had purely a local success, capturing Maya—considered by the Malabaris of no importance—and grouping the last national resistance around the new capital. As a compliment to the possibility of the revolt spreading, the Tamils copied the tactics employed by the first invader, Ellala, and built a line of forts from Anuradhapura to Chilaw.

Almost all signs of resistance faded with the death of Wijayo III, and the capital had to be moved once more, this time to the rock fortress of Yapuhuwa, the very last seat of a united Sinhalese Government. It lasted eleven years, falling, after the death of King Bhuwanika Bahu in 1314, to the Pandyans, who sacked it, carrying away with them in triumph the Tooth relic so sacred to Buddhists. The Sinhalese subsequently ransomed this holy relic and removed it to their new capital—not, this time, a capital of all Lanka—at Kurunugalla, at the base of the Kandyan hills.

From then onwards Ceylon found herself assailed by other marauders, some of them from the east. The old enemy con-

tinued to raid what was left of her prosperity from the north, while Malays landed on the eastern shores and played their part in driving the Sinhalese from all but the most southerly part of Rohuna.

The Tamils, meanwhile, had spread themselves all over the fertile lowland plains, but their abilities were unequal to the task of maintaining a civilization so far above their natural level of culture. Over the rich agricultural fields the jungle crawled with its stealthy advance, and King Mosquito began his merciless reign as more and more tank bunds were broken and left unrepaired, more and more controlled lakes became moribund marshes, and innumerable Sinhalese labourers, attacked by malaria and bereft of hope, either fled to the mountains or perished altogether. The five thousand tanks and four thousand canals now spilled their waters into the parched earth. The proud "Seas of Parakrama" turned into abandoned swamps, the smaller tanks dried out altogether, the canals became depressions in the jungle undergrowth. Once that delicate balance had been upset, the process of disintegration was both swift and sure.

While this inexorable process was reducing the rich kingdom of the north to ruin, the Sinhalese were rapidly declining in numbers, health, enterprise and energy. The highlanders shrank into their mountain fastnesses, the lowlanders—what remained of them, for there is no doubt that they died like flies from the new disease, malaria—left the dry zones altogether and huddled round their new capital at Cotta, near Colombo, or in the wet forests of the southern kingdom. The north remained the unchallenged but dying territory of the Malabars, themselves destined to shrink back from the plains until only Jaffna was highly populated and small settlements remained along the coasts. The south broke up into small principalities, each one acknowledging no higher authority than its own chieftain.

And that remains a true population picture of the island to this day. The enormous stretch of the forests of eastern Rohuna and central provinces, and the Wanni stretching to the Jaffna peninsula are uninhabited, broadly speaking. Jaffna, where, to quote the *Rajavali*, "the King of the Ceylon Malabaris" held his court and collected tribute from the whole island, is highly organized, a centre of vigorous Tamil life. The rest is silence and the dominion of the animals, except for the huge mountain area, now tamed and opened to the new agriculture.

In 1405 the Chinese again come into the historical picture of Lanka, although the *Mahawansa* is once again reticent on the matter. Chinese historians, on the other hand, describe the events with the utmost clarity and detail, for the friendly relations which had hitherto existed between the two Kingdoms of Flowers took on an acid turn.

In this year a famous Chinese soldier, Ching Ho, paid a friendly visit to Lanka to offer tribute at the shrine of Buddha. The reigning king at that time was Wijayo VI, keeping his capital at Gampola in the Kandyan hills, and what incensed him towards the Chinaman we do not know. Perhaps it was only cupidity, and it may have been with some idea of holding the general to ransom that induced him to plot to kidnap Ching Ho. The wily general was not to be so caught, and with his escape it was certain that there would be some form of retaliation. It came five years later, when Ching Ho returned to Ceylon, this time in no friendly mood at all but with an army. The Sinhalese capital at Gampola was invested and captured—surely the low-water mark of their disastrous latter-day history?—and the king himself was taken back captive to China. Here the emperor took pity on the miserable prisoners, and nominating one of them as king—not the treacherous Wijayo—sent them back to Lanka which he pronounced a vassal of the Chinese Empire. The Sinhalese paid tribute from 1434 to 1448.

From the death of the king nominated by the Chinese Emperor—Sri Parakrama Bahu VI—to the arrival of the Portuguese in 1505 the nominal capital of Lanka was Cotta, but it was purely nominal, for the nation was divided into so many petty warring chieftains. In the north, the jungle was vanquishing man. In the hills, the mountaineers—henceforth known as the Kandyans—were quite independent of the lowlanders, or indeed of anyone else, and in the south even the titular Cotta kings were disregarded. Chaos was spreading and recovery, on a national scale, was no longer possible.

Into this cauldron of incompetence, faction wars, disease and decline came the first visitors from the Western world, Portuguese adventurers under D'Almeida. The Pearl of the East had been discovered by Europe.

KINGS OF THE SULAWANSA

	Accession A.D.
Kitsiri Maiwan	302
Detu Tissa	330
Badha Dasa	339
Upatissa II	368
Maha Nama	410
Senghot	432
Laimini Tissa	432
Mitta Sena	433
Interregnum of 5 Tamil usurpers	
Dhatu Sena	459
Kasyapa I	477
Mogallana I	495
Kumara Das	513
Kirti Sena	522
Maidi Siwa	531
Laimini Upatissa III	531
Ambaherra Salamaiwan	534
Dapulu I	547
Mogallana II	547
Kuda Kitsiri Maiwan I	567
Senewi	586
Aggrabodi I	589
Aggrabodi II	623
Sangatissa	633
Buna Muggalan (usurper)	633
Abhasiggahaka	639
Siri Sangabo II	648
Kaluna Detutissa	648
Dalupiatissa I	665
Kasyapa II	677
Dapulu II	686
Dalupiatissa II	693
Aggrabodhi	702
Walpitti Wasidata	718
Hunuraru Riandalu	720
Wijayo Bahu I (Wijayo II)	1071
Jayabahu I	1126
Wikramabahu I	1127
Gajabahu II	1127
Parakrama Bahu I (The Great)	1153
Wijayo Bahu II	1186
Kitsen Kisdas (Mihindu V, usurper)	1187
Kirti Nissanga (Tamil prince)	1187
Wikramabahu II	1196
Chondakanga	1196
Lilawati (Queen)	1197
Sahasamallawa	1200
Kalyanawati (Queen)	1202
Dharmasoka	1208
Nayaanga	1209
Lokaiswera I	1210
Pandi Parakrama Bahu II (usurper)	1211
Magha (Tamil usurper)	1214
Wijayo Bahu III	1235
Pandita Parakrama Bahu III	1266
Bosat Wijayo Bahu IV	1301
Bhuwenika Bahu I	1303
Parakrama Bahu III	1314
Bhuwenika Bahu II	1319
Here is a confusion of kings with dates of accession unstated. They are: Pandita Parakrama IV, Wanny Bhuwenika Bahu III, Wijayo Bahu V	
Bhuwenika Bahu IV	1347

	Accession A.D.
Mahalaipanu	720
Kasyapa III	726
Aggrabodhi III	729
Aggrabodhi IV	769
Mahindu I	775
Dappula II	795
Mahindu II	800
Aggrabodhi V	804
Dappula III	815
Aggrabodhi VI	831
Mitwella Sen	838
Kasyapa IV	858
Udaya I	891
Udaya II	926
Kasyapa V	937
Kasyapa VI	954
Dappula IV	964
Dappula V	964
Udaya III	974
Sena II	977
Udaya IV	986
Sena III	994
Mihindu III	997
Sena IV	1013
Mihindu IV	1023
Interregnum while Lanka was a dependency of Chola	
Parakrama Bahu V	1361
Wikram Bahu III	1371
Bhuwenika Bahu V	1378
Wijayo Bahu V	1398
Sri Parakrama Bahu VI	1410
Jaya Bahu II	1462
Bhuwenika Bahu VI	1464
Pandit Parakrama Bahu VII	1471
Wira Parakrama Bahu VIII	1485
Dharma Parakrama Bahu IX	1505
Wijayo Bahu VII	1527
Bhuwenika Bahu VII	1534
Don Juan Dharmapala	1542
Rajah Singha I	1581
Wimala Dharma	1592
Senarat	1604
Raja Singha II	1632
Wimala Dharma Suriya II	1687
Kundasala	1707
Sriwijayo Raja Singha	1739
Kirtisri Raja Singha	1747
Rajadhi Raja Singha	1781
Sri Wikrama Raja Singha	1798

Many of the kings had alternative names. The ones given here are the titles by which they were best known.

CHAPTER VI

PORTUGUESE INCIDENT

THE Portuguese as conquerors were the most unpleasant race, probably, who have ever discovered the secret of power—for one brief moment in history—until the twentieth century taught human beings new depths of infamy. The story of their exploitation of Ceylon in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is a shameful recital of sadism and bestial cruelty. It goes far to explain the congenital dislike of white people shown by the Sinhalese, for folk-memory is tenacious.

The arrival in the island of D'Almeida had, from a modern and materialistic viewpoint, several excellent consequences. Information with regard to geographical facts leaves the sphere of legend and becomes accurate. Maps, first Portuguese and later Dutch, begin to show Lanka in detail, a great advance, for even as late as 1480 there was no map in existence which recognized it as an island. The Portuguese established the fact that it was surrounded by sea and named it Taprobane Isola. Lafreri's atlas of 1572 shows the Pearl of the East with many of its essential features correctly sited, but even this map was still based on Ptolemy's.

If the material and scientific advance of the white people is, in fact, progress—and that has yet to be proved—it was perhaps inevitable that the East should be "discovered" and exploited by them in due course, but from the point of view of the Sinhalese, it was singularly unfortunate that their first experience of the white races should be the Portuguese, whose methods of colonization were appalling. The soldiers and sailors sent out on expeditions of discovery were the sweepings of the slums of Lisbon, men who sailed knowing that their chance of reaching a destination was small, and of survival, once that destination had been reached, even smaller. It is not surprising that these men displayed no mental balance. They alternated between excessive piety and ferocious cruelty at a moment's notice, and the story of their stay in the island is one of shocking strife, treachery

and cruelty. And yet it cannot be denied that they possessed some curious streak of affinity with the Sinhalese. Certainly they left strong and seemingly indelible impressions upon the island, whereas the Dutch with their calm, at times grovelling patience, and their concentration purely upon commercialism, left very few signs of their passing. It may be that the British, with their maddening fair-mindedness and unaffected superiority, will leave even less, for the people of the East need many centuries of such an outlook to develop any sympathy with it.

The gusty violence of the Portuguese nature, not unlike that of the Sinhalese themselves, and the streak of Oriental extremism in their behaviour resulted in two major legacies that time has not yet been able to expunge. The first is the pageantry of Roman Catholicism, still to be found in almost every small town along the western seaboard where alone the Portuguese had any security of tenure; and the other is a patois to which the population took so kindly that, to this day, large sections of the people of these towns can speak it. These two things are quite remarkable, in view of the desperate century and a half during which the invaders from the Iberian peninsula may be said to have held sway—never undisputed—in Lanka.

Lorenzo D'Almeida, son of the Viceroy of India, Don Francisco D'Almeida, put into the port of Galle in 1505 by chance. Some four years before his arrival another Portuguese sailor, Dom Lourenco, had arranged a trade agreement with the Sinhalese King of Cotta. An inscription to this effect, carved upon a rock and dated 1501, is still to be seen in Colombo Museum, but nothing came of this first trade agreement.

D'Almeida was not in Ceylon waters in search of trade. The Portuguese, who were in the heyday of their fame as explorers and navigators, maintained a large fleet in Indian waters, and he had been dispatched to intercept Moorish spice ships plying between Malacca and the Persian Gulf. He had lost himself in unfamiliar seas, and a chance breeze gave him what is, perhaps, the loveliest landfall on the earth's surface, Adam's Peak. He put into Galle, and a small ember had fallen upon historical tinder, to smoulder there for twelve years before bursting into the flame of conquest.

In Galle harbour D'Almeida found some Moorish ships, loading cargoes of cinnamon and elephants, the lure of which was to cause the unhappy Sinhalese people so much agony. All the sea-

ports of the island were in the hands of the vigorous Moors, a Mohammedan race of seamen who must be numbered among the few ethnological conundrums still to be unravelled. Their origin remains unknown, although the word "Moor," which derives, it is thought, from the Portuguese word "Mouro," was used at one time to designate all Mohammedans. These energetic traders, who maintain a firm hold upon their share of the commerce of Ceylon to this day, are Arabs, as prevalent in all the ports of the East as they were in the time of D'Almeida.

Although ready to fight to protect their trade, for they are courageous men, the Moors are not primarily a fighting race. They are a peaceful race of traders first and foremost, and D'Almeida caught them all unprepared in that sunny port four and a half centuries ago. They did not realize that he too was unprepared, and the bluff pursued by the Portuguese captain was successful, with all its unhappy consequences. The Moors, in order to save their valuable cargoes, pretended that Galle was the capital of the reigning Sinhalese king, Dharma Parakrama Bahu IX, even going so far as to persuade a local prince to impersonate the king, whose real capital was at Cotta. The impersonator gave D'Almeida the right to build a fort at Colombo, and although it is improbable that he was deceived by this elaborate pretence, the charade suited him admirably. He withdrew, thankful to escape, with rich gifts and bogus permission to build a fort in Ceylon, which was to stand the Portuguese in good stead.

The island saw no more of the white men until 1517, but the slow ember had smouldered to good effect. D'Almeida had not failed to report on his visit to Galle, and when de Albegaria first saw Adam's Peak rise up from the horizon, he came with a fleet of seventeen sail, an army of cut-throats and sufficient cannon to fortify the trading post he proceeded to build where the city of Colombo now stands. The fortifications were there nominally to protect the peaceful Portuguese against their trade rivals the Moors, with whom, by then, they were in open competition for the spice trade of the East. The cinnamon of Lanka was the lure and the Moors, alarmed, enlisted the aid of the Sinhalese and laid siege to the new bridgehead.

For the unhappy Sinhalese king the newcomers were but one more distraction in a chaotic situation. The times were extremely favourable to the Portuguese, for the Sinhalese "King" was king only in name. He exercised no control whatever over the

princes of Badulla, Gampola, Mahagama or the ever-rebel Kandy, and in this atmosphere of disunity even a strong character might have been nonplussed. Dharma Parakrama Bahu IX was only a pale shade of his illustrious namesake, and once the siege of Colombo, incited by the Moors, proved abortive, he saw no course open to him but to become a vassal of the victorious Europeans. The agreement—which the Portuguese had inscribed on a tablet of gold—proved the prelude to a century and a half of desperate guerrilla warfare, ambushes, punitive expeditions, murders and utter chaos.

The main object of the agreement was the growing, harvesting and marketing of cinnamon, called by the Portuguese the Mahabadde, or great industry. Under this pact, a whole tribe of low-caste Sinhalese villagers known as the Chalias were bound, as forced labour—slaves, in fact—to go into the forests where the tree grew wild, cut the sticks, peel them, bundle them in marketable bundles and deliver them ready for export to their Portuguese masters.

The resistance which sprang up from the Sinhalese people, despite the defection of their king, had its roots deep in the soil. It was primitive and unreasoning—their weapons, in the early days of the struggle, consisted of lances or spears, swords and bows and arrows—but it was implacable. It outlived not only the Portuguese, but the Dutch, and only flickered out finally, as a militant force, with the last of the Kandyan kings during the time of the British. Even then it survived as a spiritual force and has lived to see the moral eviction of the British.

At its strongest in opposition to the Portuguese, it became, as de Couto, the Portuguese historian, clearly saw, a wasting disease "gradually consuming her Indian revenues, wasting her forces and her artillery, and causing a greater outlay for the government of that single island than for all her other conquests of the East." While the Cotta kings, whose geographical position was hopeless from the first, became catspaws of the invaders, the Kandyan kings, as fierce, proud and arrogant as the Portuguese themselves, never bowed the knee except, from time to time, as a matter of treacherous policy. The resistance movement centred on Kandy began slowly to bleed the invaders to death.

Artillery, a terrible surprise for the Sinhalese when first used, became a boomerang, for the Sinhalese in due course mastered the art of making guns, and made better ones than their opponents.

The *Rajavali* describes the first discharge of cannon upon the island soil with graphic words, as "making a noise like thunder when it breaks upon Jungara Parvata, and a ball from one of them, after flying some leagues, will break a castle of marble." There can be no doubt that the initial surprise of these engines of war had much to do with the consolidation of their first bridgehead by the Portuguese but, once the surprise had worn off, their effect was far more apparent than real in such terrain.

As the power of the miserable king waned, the people became more and more restless and rose, eventually, in strong support of Maaya Dunnai, youngest son of the weak Wijayo Bahu VII, when he flew the standard of revolt. The struggle that followed was sordid to a degree, for Maaya was as treacherous as he was cunning, and the Portuguese were ready to play off any chief against any other, to bribe, cheat or murder as opportunity presented itself. It is best dismissed as an early form of all-in fighting. The Moors, early opponents of the Europeans, paid dearly for their support of the Sinhalese. They put their trust in Maaya Dunnai, but that chief, as soon as he suffered a reverse, had no hesitation in beheading Paichi Marcar, the Arab leader, with all his nobles, offering up the severed heads in token of submission to the victorious Europeans. The surrender was as short-lived as the alliance with the Moors had been, just one more move in a disgusting game of treachery.

Meanwhile Bhuwenika VII, poor isolated catspaw, appealed to the Portuguese to safeguard his grandchild's accession to the throne, the sole survivor of the royal house. This they did with pomp and ceremony, carrying out a strange coronation in effigy in Lisbon and naming the boy Don Juan as a reward for his unprotesting Christianity.

Religion moves under astonishing disguises. The Portuguese brand of Christianity came to Ceylon by methods that the Nazarene would have condemned, on a wave of murder and coercion. The Franciscans who came out to the island as a result of the "conversion" of Bhuwenika were given orders as follows: "Begin by preaching, but that failing, proceed to the decision of the sword." This policy, with its ironical motto "amity, commerce and religion," was pursued throughout the whole blood-stained occupation, but the end was ignominy and failure. Their fanaticism was a source of constant trouble with a people whose own religion is the antithesis of force, and although they num-

bered their converts by thousands, they were the product of the bludgeon, with as little idea of true Christianity as the men who were attempting to propagate it. Indeed, the numerous Catholics still to be found in the island observe the ritual with strict punctiliousness to this day and are present whenever a feast or a procession—both of which recur with great frequency—is organized. But away from the colour and the ritual, they return, as I have had a hundred opportunities of observing, at once to the comfortable demonology of their forefathers. This return to their Yakka ancestry is so irrefutable to the observer who sees them about the unguarded affairs of everyday life that one is led to the conclusion that they are profoundly ignorant of the real tenets of the Christian faith. Indeed, many of my best friends among the villagers have admitted this, whether they are supposed to be Roman Catholics or Protestants. I do not believe that the Portuguese missionaries had any substantial success in their campaign of ruthless evangelism, but one lasting memorial to their efforts remains in the crop of Portuguese names and titles bestowed, in the first place, upon those families among the local inhabitants who professed Christianity. They are retained to this day by the descendants, most of whom have long since returned to the religion of Buddha or the demonology of the original race.

There is no doubt that the flame of racial hatred was fed by the religious persecution of the Franciscans, and Maaya Dunnai, feeling that the time was ripe, again took the field. This time Bhuwenika prepared personally to meet him, but was accidentally killed by a Portuguese soldier. The king, recovering from a fever, went to Kelani, close to Colombo, with a "water party" of Sinhalese noblemen and Portuguese gentry. The *Rajavali* says: "He opened the doors of the uppermost story of the royal pavilion built over the water, and as he walked about, looking up and down the river, the Portuguese fired a shot which struck the king on the head and instantly killed him. Some say that this hurt was done of set purpose, others that it was done unwittingly, God alone knoweth which is true." The marksman, Antonio de Barcelos, is said to have confessed, when dying, that he shot at a pigeon and hit the king in error.

The memory of Bhuwenika, poor, weak puppet, is abhorred and detested among the Sinhalese as the greatest traitor in the history of his country, and it is not surprising that his grandson, Don Juan, found that he had inherited a mockery of a throne.

Supported only by the hated invader, despised by his few remaining subjects, he was powerless. The rest of the island outside his few square miles of protected territory would have no dealings with him.

In the long war which now broke out, Maaya Dunnai was defeated and his romantic capital of Sitawacca was plundered and burned. Sitawacca derives its name from the belief that it was here, in the Kelani valley foothills of the Adam's Peak range of mountains, that Sita was found by Hanuman in the long ago. Now known as Avisawella, its proximity to Colombo shows not merely how small a kingdom the puppet Sinhalese kings reigned over, but how slight a hold the Portuguese themselves had upon the island.

The defeat of Maaya Dunnai did not end the war, it intensified it. The Portuguese sent expeditions to ravage the seaboard towns and continued their strategy of setting one savage chief against another with success. Maaya Dunnai retaliated in kind, and wherever the enemy had started small Christian communities, usually along the coast, the patriots would fall upon them, burning and slaying as heartily in the name of Buddhism as did the white men in the name of Christ.

At this type of warfare, even the Robin Hood quality of the old Kandyan chief suffered eclipse in the rise of his youngest son, a remarkable figure in Sinhalese history. Born in more settled times this young man, who had earned the title of Raja Singha—the Lion King—by his prowess against a southern chief, might have made a real contribution to his country's fame. As it was there were too many warring elements, Sinhalese against Portuguese, chief against chief, and Malabaris against anyone, to give him one settled cause. He could not combine the rebellious chiefs, or the Portuguese might have been exterminated.

He was a formidable opponent and his first step, on the death of Maayi Dunnai, was to besiege Colombo with fanatical patriotism, forcing the Europeans to evacuate Cotta. He won a great battle over the Portuguese at Mulleriyawa, a few miles from Colombo, where "blood flowed like water on the field of Mulleriyawa. There fell of the Portuguese army 1600," a very considerable number. Close by, at Kaduwela, Raja Singha built a fort in 1559 which served him also as a palace. It was intended to defend the road to his capital, Sitawacca, and the Kottugodella,

or Fort Hill, is certainly a commanding eminence. The whole of this stretch of country, so close to Colombo, is littered with evidence of the Lion King's furious siege, but in this he just failed. One wonders what would have happened had he succeeded, for it is clear that he aimed at reviving the Sinhalese under one king—himself—and in conformity with the jungle tactics of the day murdered all who stood in the way of that desirable objective. With irresistible energy and considerable tactical skill, he made himself master of his own immediate kingdom and surrounding chiefs, and the Portuguese did not hesitate to accuse him of the crime of parricide in so doing. Whether he did this deed or not we do not know for certain, but he was fully capable of it. The first Englishman who ever visited Ceylon, one Ralph Fitch, met this extraordinary character and was obviously deeply impressed with him. He left a vivid pen portrait of Raja Singha as he was when in the midst of his campaign against the Portuguese in 1589, in which he stresses the fierce personality and indomitable will of the Sinhalese king.

The Sinhalese priesthood know him as the apostate. During a severe illness later in his life, the impersonal views of the priests as to his prospects in the next incarnation so enraged him that with characteristic fury he put several of them to death, burned their sacred books and bestowed the Sri-Pada—the Footstep of Buddha on the summit of Adam's Peak—upon some Indian fakirs. Impious, apostate, murderer, tyrant, he yet left his mark upon history and I believe nearly all Sinhalese people have a sneaking pride in the strength and savagery of this extraordinary man who lived to be a centenarian.

His siege of Colombo was an astonishing achievement. After disarming the Kandyans, he raised a force of 50,000 men, invested the main fortress of the invaders, organized a navy and generally tied down a maritime power with an unassailable base in India. So close to success did he come that at one time the Portuguese defenders had to resort to cannibalism—pickling the flesh of the fallen—to stave off starvation. Those were brutal days, but the obscenities of Belsen remind us that although brutality may sleep, it does not die in the human make-up.

The whole conflict makes a disgusting page in history, redeemed only in the heroism shown by both sides. The frightful barbarities displayed by the Europeans are calmly recorded by their own historians and not the *Rajavali*, whose accounts

might have been suspect. The dry accounts of the Portuguese themselves can hardly be doubted.

Pinned down in their Colombo bridgehead, the invaders concentrated their efforts on amphibious raids on the coastal villages and thus, inadvertently, they struck a mortal blow at the pretensions of the Lion King. This lucky blow was the destruction of the mighty temple of Taneveram at Dondra Head, some small ruins of which are all that remain to indicate the splendour of the original. This beloved Mecca of Hindu worship was built upon vaulted arches along a promontory of land stretching out into the ocean, and the raiders claim to have overthrown a thousand statues of stone and bronze, to have defiled the sacred shrines and slaughtered the deified cows before returning to their base laden with the spoils of their audacity.

The destruction of Taneveram was only one of such marauding expeditions during which Galle, Kosgodda and Madampe were utterly destroyed, but it proved fatal to Raja Singha's cause. Appalled, he gave up the siege and retired to his fortress capital, Sitawacca.

Although I have spoken of all the highlanders, including Raja Singha, as Kandyans, the king's capital was in fact a long way from Kandy, which is on the other side of the mountain range. Kandy itself did not become a royal capital until 1592, when Wimala Dharma recanted his Christian creed, as we shall see, and installed himself there as a Sinhalese king and not a Portuguese puppet.

Raja Singha's failure to take Colombo evoked the usual consequences of failure and the brilliant exploits of the early days were soon forgotten. The Kandyans now rose in revolt under Kunappa Bandar, the Wimala Dharma of the preceding paragraph, who was a scion of the royal house, and an opportunist of no mean attainments. He had taken the easy road to eminence by currying favour with the white men, turning Christian and assuming the title of Don Juan as a compliment to the hero of Lepanto, Don John of Austria. He is a very considerable figure in Sinhalese history, and if we accept the fact that he was a child of his time, dealing in the common coinage of the day; which was treachery, deceit and murder; he played a sturdy part in resisting the invader.

He began by besieging the fallen Raja Singha's capital of Sitawacca and the old king, alleged to have been more than one

hundred years of age, was wounded in the fight. Depressed by the ruin of his ambitions, the old man refused to have his wound dressed and bled to death.

This success opened up further fields of conquest to Don Juan, who saw no reason to pander further to his former masters and threw off the mask, renouncing Christianity. He then swept the Portuguese from the mountain kingdom and announced that he had always remained, secretly, a Buddhist. To secure the support of the priests he then had himself crowned king as Wimala Dharma in 1592.

It is necessary here to go back, in the confused turmoil of events, to the year 1560 when the Portuguese, in one of their amphibious forays, had captured Jaffnapatnam from the Malabars. With the fortress and town, they captured also the Sacred Tooth, which had been sent there for safe keeping by the Sinhalese who little dreamt that the Portuguese could strike so far afield. I shall give a full account of this event later, for it is of great importance in the story of the island, but I mention it here to point an audacious deception practised by Wimala Dharma. In his determination to win the priests over to his side, he produced a new "Sacred Tooth" which, he claimed, had not been destroyed by the Portuguese but had risen straight into the air and had flown back to Ceylon, its spiritual home, from Goa. This timely display of the miraculous was as eagerly seized upon by the priests as by the king, and the relic was proclaimed the genuine palladium. It was enshrined in the Dalada Maligawa in Kandy where it remains to this day. By Western standards it is an obvious fake—it is not even, in the opinion of Tennent, a human molar—but the Eastern mind thinks otherwise, and if we consider, for one moment, the mysteries of our own Communion service, we must be prepared to accept the Tooth as a factual fake but a spiritual truth, and leave it at that.

The effect of this demonstration upon the people was marked, as is shown by events. The Portuguese, enraged by the treachery of their protégé, sent an expedition against Kandy, captured it and placed Donna Catharina—the Sinhalese queen who had been forced to flee when Raja Singha first subdued the Kandyans —on the throne. Had Wimala Dharma not had the inspiration to discover the Tooth, Queen Catharina might have reigned undisturbed as a puppet, but by judicious bribery and with the aid of his prestige as the finder of the palladium, Wimala Dharma

turned the tables once more. He returned in triumph to his capital, ejected the Portuguese and kept Donna Catharina as his own queen. For the remaining twelve years of his life, he reigned as undisputed king of the mountains.

That the Kandyans could do such things—strike and hide, raid and disappear—needs some explanation, and it is to be found in the nature of the mountains. Words are inadequate to describe their forested beauty, the intricacies of their valleys, jungles, crags and waterfalls. When first the eye beholds them it is entranced and the mind wonders if, in all the world, there is such confused and tangled beauty, such a wonderland of cliffs, peaks and brooding forests. Without communications they are untameable, a labyrinthine maze in which whole armies may lose themselves and be no more seen, and until man, the destroyer, learned to cut roads and railroads and sweep away with axes the immemorial growth of nature, to force a passage anywhere must have been a herculean task.

The Kandyans were well aware of the source of their relative immunity and, beyond a few tracks, they did not permit roads to be built or maps to be made. Such knowledge as there was of this wilderness existed in the individual minds of villagers and in the bones of a highland race. Even to-day the hold of civilization upon these brooding crags is precarious. Uproot a few roads, destroy the railway and allow the jungle to have its way with the neat rows of tea-bushes and shade trees of the estates, and within half a century one would need to search to find any trace of the blight of commercialism.

Each raid made by the Portuguese on this thorny centre of resistance was a major operation, not lightly to be repeated. It does not seem to have occurred to them, or to their successors the Dutch, that the key to the whole situation was a military road. Even one central highway into the hills, suitably protected by block-houses and troops, would have enabled them to keep Kandy, at least, in subjection, but probably they did not command the resources to put such a work in hand.

To Wimala Dharma's *coup d'état* they reacted in characteristic fashion, blazoning their name heavily upon the escutcheon of infamy through the instrumentality of a monster named Don Jeronimo de Azavedo. This depraved creature did not care for Colombo and established his headquarters at Malwana, on the Kelani river, a few miles out of the capital. Malwana was once a

Sinhalese fort, but it was captured by the Portuguese in 1593 and rebuilt. Traces of it may still be seen. Here Azavedo held his judicial court, and established huge elephant stables, and from the Raxapana rock he fed his crocodiles on living prisoners, throwing them into the river at the same place daily, so that the reptiles came to be fed with the regularity of cattle. He dismembered women and children alive, and before cutting off the heads of mothers, he forced them to hold their own babies while millstones closed upon them and ground them. The particular atrocity by which he is best remembered by the Sinhalese was recorded by a Portuguese historian in these words: "Punning on the name of the tribe of Gallas, or Chalias, and its resemblance to the Portuguese word for cocks—gallos—he [Azavedo] caused his soldiers to take up children on the point of their spears, and bade them hark how the young cocks crow!"

For years this sort of disgusting warfare continued. Nothing daunted the Portuguese, and although never masters of the island in any real sense, they did not hesitate to send expeditions to any part of it, however wild. We shall find memories of them in almost every corner of Ceylon, and there is no doubt that this gallantry touched a responsive chord in the island people, greatly though they hated their oppressors. The Dutch, who appeared upon the Eastern scene for the first time during the reign of Wimala Dharma, had another approach altogether to the native population, one almost of subservience; but the Portuguese remained arrogant and cruel, but courageous, right to the bitter end.

In 1602 the first Dutch ship known to the island dropped anchor in Batticoloa. She was the *La Brebis*, and her captain, Spilberg, was in search of trade, for the Dutch were not *conquistadores*. It was the lure of cinnamon that had attracted them, and Wimala Dharma, styling himself Emperor of Ceylon, was alarmed at this incursion of still more white men prepared to go to any lengths for the spice. Since they appeared to want nothing else, the king gave orders that the tree was not to be grown in future, a wise precaution but taken too late. But when the emperor discovered that Spilberg was an active rival of the Portuguese, and was prepared to co-operate with the Sinhalese against them, Wimala showed great cordiality and an alliance was made. It was the thin edge of the Dutch wedge.

The last legitimate monarch of the island, ruling from Cotta,

was Don Juan Dharmapala, who died in 1597. What despair must have seized him as he surveyed the unparalleled ruin of his country we cannot know, but it is probable that fear of the future, rather than any love for the Portuguese, caused him to sign away the birthright of his people in his famous will. By this document he left the island, *in toto*, to Philip II of Spain, then overlord of Portugal, although he had lost the allegiance of the Central Provinces, so shortly to take from the Portuguese their control of Eastern waters. The death of Dharmapala gave the Portuguese control over the island except for Jaffna, once more in the hands of the Tamils, and Kandy, completely intransigent under the queen, Donna Catharina, whom they themselves had placed on the throne.

It was an uneasy bequest. The Kandyans intensified their guerrilla tactics and the strain upon the Portuguese power was immense. Colombo remained their one real centre and they built it as a permanent Portuguese city, for their idea of colonization differed from that of the British in one very important respect. They regarded Ceylon as home, and not as a place in which to earn retirement to Portugal.

The colourless Donna Catharina had succeeded Wimala Dharma on the latter's death in 1604, but it was clear that she did not command a following among her people. A brother of Wimala, Seneratna, disputed the throne with a prince of Uva, murdered him, made Catharina his queen and took the throne within twelve months of his brother's death. Donna Catharina must have been a little confused by the number of kings who made her their queen.

Seneratna signalized his appearance as king by entering into an alliance with the Dutch whereby, in return for an offer of help in an emergency, they were permitted to build a fort at Trincomalee. This fort was completed in 1612, but the Portuguese, by a truly epic secret march across the whole width of the island, surprised it before it was garrisoned and destroyed it, a tactical masterpiece. They then took the offensive in real earnest against the dour Seneratna and defeated him completely in the battle of the Seven Corles.

Desultory fighting, alliances and cross-alliances went on in this way for years. Eventually the Portuguese, who were tired of beating Seneratna without conquering him, patched up an uneasy truce with the Kandyan, who was equally tired of making

alliances with the Dutch which came to nothing. During this period even the Danes contemplated taking a hand in the destiny of the island, a small force appearing off Ceylon in 1620.

Seneratna used the truce characteristically in an effort to rouse the whole Sinhalese people against the perfidious white men. The Portuguese, meanwhile, gathered an army together again and launched a sudden attack against distant Badulla, the capital of the Prince of Uva, capturing it and burning it to the ground, but the march home, which should have been a triumphal procession, ended in disaster. The Sinhalese troops in the pay of the Portuguese governor, Constantine de Saa, had treacherously agreed to desert to the Kandyans when they reached a certain spot on the homeward march. This they did, and left the Portuguese remnant no match for the Kandyan army. They were slaughtered to a man and the head of de Saa was presented to the Emperor's son as a sign of victory.

In 1638, with the appearance in Eastern waters of the Dutch Admiral Westerwold, the coastal towns of Batticoloa, Trincomalee, Negombo and Matara fell, while Colombo itself had to undergo siege from the Sinhalese. This was the beginning of the end, the twilight of Portuguese power, although they did not go down without striking hard blows. But once Rajah Singha II, who succeeded his father to the throne, had decided to throw all his influence on the side of the Netherlanders, the Portuguese were doomed.

They made one last spirited effort, however, in retaliation for the Kandyan king's move, and attacked Kandy, which they captured and burned. But the brooding mountains exacted their toll, and the returning army, caught in their defiles, was ambushed and exterminated, the *Rajavali* commenting that the Kandyans built the skulls of the fallen into a huge pyramid. This was the end of actual conflict between Kandyans and Portuguese, but there were to be twenty more years of truce and war between Portuguese and Dutch before the latter triumphed.

During these years Raja Singha, despairing of ever freeing his country of the loathed white man, played off the one race against the other with consummate skill. Although, in 1646, hostilities between Portugal and Holland ceased, and an armistice came into effect to last for ten years with both powers retaining the *status quo* in Lanka, the Kandyans succeeded in keeping hostilities simmering in the island. They raided both interlopers from

time to time, descending from their mountain fastnesses and often crossing the territory of the Dutch to reach that of the Portuguese, and vice versa. But for the national phlegm and refusal to take offence displayed by the Dutch, they might have stirred up more trouble than they did with these clever spoiling tactics.

The feeling of helplessness of Raja Singha as, from his eyrie, he watched the decline of the Portuguese compensated by the rising power of the Dutch must have been extreme. It does something to account for the savage excesses of his subsequent behaviour. He saw the years come and go without any fundamental change in the position, for when one group of white men were finally expelled, the other became just as strong and even more tenacious.

In 1652, two years after the conclusion of the truce between the two European powers, the Dutch broke it and took the field against the Portuguese. Raja Singha, judging their star to be in the ascendant, threw in his lot with them. Kaltura and Colombo were invested and captured in 1656 and the end was in sight. Two years later the Dutch took Mannar, which served them as a base from which to direct operations against Jaffna, the last stronghold of the enemy. This they besieged and captured in the same year and, with the exception of the territory of their allies the Kandyans, they found themselves masters of the whole island.

Confined within his own small territory, Raja Singha had the bitter knowledge that, although the Portuguese had gone at last, that hated enemy, he had but exchanged one master for another. The last state of affairs, from the point of view of the passionately patriotic hillsmen, was no better than the first.

The Portuguese incident was over. The small kettle, simmering now so quietly in the Iberian peninsula, must have had a mighty spiritual fire under it to have boiled over as it did during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For a brief period the men of Portugal held the glorious East in fee, but of Ceylon they made nothing. Brutality and outrage, greed and corruption, arrogance and fanaticism, provoked exactly the same qualities from their adversaries. The men of the plains might capitulate but the men of the mountains had stiffer necks. And so the stage had to be set for a century and a half of inglorious warfare which benefited no one, and when at last the Europeans returned from

whence they had come, they left as their epitaph the words of one of their own chroniclers, Faria y Sousa:

"We had not grown odious to the Chingalas had we not provoked them by our infamous proceedings. Not only the poor soldiers went out to rob, but those Portuguese who were lords of villages added rape and adulteries which obliged the people to seek the company of beasts in the mountains rather than be subject to the more beastly villainies of men."

The verdict is just.

CHAPTER VII

DUTCH INCIDENT

THE Portuguese were missionaries first—fanatical, zealous, cruel—and traders afterwards, but the Dutch, in their occupation of Lanka, were merchants first, last and all the time. They were scrupulously fair and restrained in their dealings with the Sinhalese—indeed their patience, under the extreme provocation meted out to them by the increasingly arrogant Kandyan kings, was astonishing—but they were relentless in their determination to exploit the resources of the country, particularly cinnamon.

It is difficult for us, in modern times; when refrigeration and the opening up of means of communication throughout the world have made all kinds of produce available anywhere; to realize the immense attraction once held for the Western world by this single spice. It had been known and coveted from earliest times and ranked high as a desirable prize, a present fit for the mightiest of monarchs. Even Moses, it will be remembered, was bidden to use sweet cassia and cinnamon.

The tree from which this essence is produced is grown in many countries, but in none is it of such high quality as in Lanka of which it is native. It was the main attraction for the Dutch adventurers, their purpose being to open up as much land as possible under the spice, and to make Ceylon the centre of a lucrative trade in it.

The Portuguese, we may remember, had introduced a slave system into the Mahabadde—or great industry—placing the responsibility for the collection and delivery of the spice upon the kings of Cotta. The Dutch set out to extend this system, still using the unfortunate Chalias as unpaid labour, until it produced the wealth which they were convinced was to be found in the island. It must have been galling to the Kandyans, confined within the prison of the hills, to watch the operations of these placid, humourless but determined white men with their open worship of the great god wealth. It drove successive kings to

wilder and wilder excesses, until even the hillsmen themselves could endure the tyranny of their monarchs no longer and appealed to yet a third invader—the British—to save them from their own kings.

Although devoid of the sadism and fanaticism of the Portuguese occupation, that of the Dutch was, in its way, even more sordid and contemptible. The wild savages with whom they had to deal soon felt for them nothing but scorn. They were in search of material wealth, and if it became necessary to fight the local inhabitants, they would fight them. If, on the other hand, they could attain their object by flattery and cheap presents with a good deal of obsequiousness thrown in, so much the better.

Raja Singha II, who shows glimpses of greatness in the cunning persistence with which he resisted both Portuguese and Dutch, soon deteriorated under the disappointment of discovering that he had left the frying pan for the fire. The humble flattery with which the Dutch kept him quiet went to his head. Flattery was his Achilles' heel, as the Dutch had early discovered in their joint operations against the Portuguese holding out in Colombo. In 1656 they sent their General Hulft to report progress to the savage king in his palace at Ganegalla. The general pocketed his pride and knelt before the king in meek humility, telling him that his name was known throughout the world, among other gross flatteries. This treatment the Dutch found to be extremely efficacious, and did not allow pride to stand in their way when they wanted to repeat it.

One cannot withold a certain measure of pity from the miserable king, who showed his scorn and hatred of the obnoxious white men in every possible way he could. He ignored treaties, promises or truces; he insulted and even imprisoned ambassadors, and sent out armed forays repeatedly to disrupt the peaceful agriculture—particularly the growth of cinnamon—inaugurated by the Dutch. In return, the Dutch also ignored treaties and agreements, but whereas Raja Singha, in his impotent disappointment, went from excess to excess; not only with the Dutch but with all white men landing for any reason whatever on his shores and, eventually, with his own people; the Hollanders adhered firmly to the policy of turning the other cheek so long as it paid them to do so. They repaid insults with grandiose titles, and as Robert Knox, in his remarkable book *An Historic Relation of Ceylon*, so shrewdly notices, "They prevail to have



The Ruanwelli or Gold-dust dagoba, Anuradhapura, prior to the completion of the restoration work



The rock temple of Isurumuniya, over two thousand years old

the country and he [Raja Singha] to have the honour." From our vantage point in the twentieth century, when petty cheating has been replaced by bad faith on a colossal scale, such behaviour seems revolting, but it must be remembered that the British in India were going through much the same phase at that time in their relations with native potentates.

There is something of the quality of a caged animal in the unfortunate Raja Singha, and it seems charitable to suppose that the balance of his mind, never very secure, gave way under the maddening circumstances of the time. His personal foibles became more and more extreme, his egoism more inflamed by the corroding flattery of his enemies, until actual madness supervened; at least, so it seems to me.

One form this madness took was, as mentioned previously, to imprison mariners who landed for water, merchants from white countries, even ambassadors, anyone whom he considered to be trespassing, however innocently, upon his territory. It is to this strange penchant that we owe one of the most remarkable books ever written.[1]

Robert Knox's father was the captain of the English trading ship *Anne*, which anchored in the mouth of the Mahawelliganga in the Bay of Cottiar to the south of Trincomalee to take in water in the year 1659. All the crew, including Robert and his father, were captured and taken to Kandy, where the elder Knox soon died. The son, who discovered that there were already sixteen other British subjects in captivity when he arrived at Kandy, remained there for twenty years. Most of his companions went "native" in that they took wives from the Sinhalese girls, accustomed themselves to village life and never left the island, but Knox never gave up hope of escape. Eventually he did so, and then wrote his astonishingly accurate book.

Although he himself appears to have been well treated, there were fifty Dutch officers and an unspecified number of other white nationalities in captivity with him, all of them exposed to horrible treatment. "His cruelty," Knox wrote of Raja Singha, "appears both in the torture and painful deaths that he inflicts and in the extent of his punishments, viz. upon whole families for the miscarriage of one of them. And this is done by the cutting and the pulling away of their flesh by pincers, burning them with hot irons, sometimes he commands them to hang their two

[1] *An Historic Relation of Ceylon*, Robert Knox.

hands above their necks and to make them eat their own flesh and mothers eat their own children, and so to lead them through the city in public view to terrify all, unto the place of execution, the dogs following to eat them."

The last Biblical phrase sets the seal of an awful veracity upon this account of the capital city of that gloomy, demented tyrant.

It is not surprising that the Kandyans themselves rose in revolt against this reign and, the king having fled, proclaimed his twelve-year-old son the new ruler. But the child, terrified by the proceedings, ran back to his father for comfort, who greeted him with a dose of poison. There being no other claimant to the throne, Raja Singha returned to his capital unopposed. It is a sad little story and an illuminating glimpse of the casual disregard for life shown at that time.

If Raja Singha's crimes in his previous term of office had been so shocking as scarcely to be borne, this further outrage should have turned his people finally against him, but in fact his rule was never again disputed. The incident seems to have frightened him, however, and his subsequent conduct was less violent.

Meanwhile the Dutch, despairing of finding a *modus vivendi* with such savages, fortified their possessions in the low country, particularly those which overlooked the precious forests of cinnamon. Matara, Galle, Colombo, Negombo, Chilaw and Jaffna, all on the west coast, were protected by forts victualled to withstand a year's siege. Trincomalee and Batticoloa, the two considerable settlements on the east coast, were given up, since the precious spice did not thrive on that waterless side of the island, although there is evidence to show that it was grown there in the early days of Dutch rule.

In some respects the occupation by the Netherlanders provides a curious blank in the story of the island. The Dutch chronicler, Valentyn, gives us one of the most complete portraits of Ceylon and its people yet given—as far as the Dutch interest in it went. But that did not go very far, for progress in the social well-being and institutions of the Sinhalese was never attempted. Apart from the growth of cinnamon and other commercial aspects of the island life, the Dutch displayed no interest whatever in Ceylon, and the colourful interior, in particular, was unknown to them. Nor were the nationals of other countries permitted access to the interior, and but for Knox's remarkable account of the Kandyan kingdom there is no literature on seventeenth- and

eighteenth-century Ceylon except in respect of the trade of the western seaboard and the rise of Galle and Colombo as entrepôt ports of importance to the whole world. It was not a peaceful trade, for Raja Singha kept up a desultory guerrilla warfare wherever the unfortunate Chalias were encountered working the cinnamon in the woods. The forts of the white men were useless against such tactics, and once again the economic bleeding of the invader took its inexorable course.

Cinnamon was not the only trade developed by the Dutch. They set high store by the elephants of the country, while areca nuts—the chewing-gum of the East when eaten with betel—were grown in large quantities for export. They developed a trade in salt from the shallow lagoons to be found on either coast, grew pepper, cardamoms and timber, and produced a coffee which compared favourably even with the Arabian coffee which then led the world in quality. They even attempted to grow sugar, with some agricultural success but at an economic loss, for over all such enterprises hung the shadow of Raja Singha's highlanders. Because of the cost of military preparedness and a growing executive dishonesty among the Dutchmen who had to try to make this obvious failure seem successful, any profits that there might have been were drained away. The high hopes of the early days disappeared and as events in Europe grew darker for the Netherlands, the Dutch efforts in Ceylon lacked conviction.

They had never shown, and they failed to exhibit to the end, any concern for the welfare of the Sinhalese. It is true that they built churches for their own religion in an effort to offset the vigorous hold of the Roman Catholic Church upon a section of the people, and they built schools to undermine the loyalty of the Sinhalese to their kings, but they were a layer of oil on the turbulent waters of another race. They did not mix and had no intention of mixing. They ruled by a judicious mixture of flattery and by giving encouragement to native headmen—through the bestowal of high-sounding titles and privileges—to keep a firm hold on the ordinary citizens. In a word, they displayed no interest in the government of the Sinhalese, except on the business side, the imposition and collection of as much money in the way of taxation as the people could stand. They were fair, and they were certainly not cruel, but their occupation is a sorry tale of meanness and lack of imagination.

Raja Singha roused himself for a brief moment before his death, which occurred in 1687, when a French squadron under de la Haye captured Trincomalee in 1672. He gave the Frenchmen a warm welcome, seeing in their presence a chance of ridding himself of the bucolic overlords of the island, although what better fate he anticipated at the hands of the French we cannot guess. He was very tired of the Netherlanders and probably looked no farther than their overthrow, but the French, beyond throwing their rivals into a panic, did nothing else and soon left the island. The welcome prospect of yet another revolt flickered out, and the old king resigned himself to his worrying tactics and an unquenchable defiance.

Wimala Dharma II, who followed the pugnacious old fighter, confined all his thoughts and efforts to the revival of the glories of the Buddhist religion. His successor, Koondasala, pursued the same aim, an effort in the right direction, for the degeneration of the Sinhalese called for a revival of the faith. In this the relieved Dutch were only too happy to co-operate, even going to the length of placing a ship at the disposal of the Kandyans to bring from Arracan the priests of high rank needed to resuscitate the priesthood in Lanka.

Koondasala died in 1739, the last of the Sulawansa. It is the end of the road as far as the blood royal is concerned, but it is not the end of the Kandyan kings and certainly not of Kandyan resistance. Yet it is the end of a recognizable chapter and a pathetic one, in view of the splendour of the first civilization founded by the early kings of the Mahawansa. It is a far cry from that regal splendour in the northern and central plains, to the petty and flamboyant kingdom of the hill kings caught in their mountain trap, but the kings had had a long innings. Few in world history have had longer. For over two thousand two hundred years, with inconsiderable interruptions, the seed of Wijayo had ruled the destinies of Lanka.

The Sinhalese, even of the royal line, had, of course, long intermarried with the women of south Indian races, and the successor to the throne of Koondasala was of Telugu descent, from Madura. Although a Malabari, his race was not of the destroying Malabaris who had for so many centuries harried the Sinhalese of the plains. Wijayo Rajah, as he called himself, was as much a Kandyan as his predecessor, and he and his two successors, Kirtisri Raja Singha and Rajadhi Raja Singha, both

Telegus, made great efforts to rouse the patriotism of the low-country Sinhalese in a last rebellion to evict the white race from their land. But the deterioration of long inferiority had done its work. The poor peasants of the plains had neither the equipment nor the moral stamina to rise to the occasion.

Fighting did break out, however, and in 1763 the Dutch, roused to a pitch of annoyance seldom seen in them, sent a punitive expedition to the hills which surprised and captured Kandy, where it remained in occupation for several months. The treaty which followed gave the conquerors more territory and better trading concessions, for which the wise and humane Dutch Governor Falck must be given the credit.

Sri Wikrama Raja Singha, last of the Kandyan kings, came to his perplexed throne in 1798, when the European world was going through one of its frequent upheavals. Britain, now the rising maritime power in the East, was beginning to make her strength felt in India, and the new king immediately sent his Adigar—one of two chief ministers of the Kandyan court—as his envoy to Madras to try and make a treaty with them. The whole rotting fabric of the Dutch occupation, as much a disappointment to them as it was an incubus to the islanders, was tottering to its fall, and like an over-ripe plum the colony was ready to fall into the basket of the British.

With this state of affairs Dutch domestic history had not a little to do, for the Netherlands were in a state of revolution, after their occupation by a French rabble whose own revolution had swept away the social order of the times. Holland, indeed, was fighting a desperate fight for survival in Europe, and Ceylon was of little moment to them. The trade of the island had vanished and the very ships which might have embarked their nationals and taken them home were being sunk upon the high seas. It is not to be expected that the garrisons of their Eastern possessions, themselves often in a state of mutiny, would be ready to fight hard for the right to retain a colony of which they themselves were heartily sick.

Colonel Stuart, who had commanded an expedition sent to Ceylon in 1795 by Lord Hobart, Governor of Madras—a foray which had taken Trincomalee and Jaffna—landed at Negombo in 1798 and took it without a shot fired. From Negombo he called upon Van Angelbeck, the last of the Dutch governors, to surrender Colombo. The Dutchman, who had already yielded

up Galle, Kaltura and Matara without an effort to defend them, capitulated at once.

The whole of this incident is very curious. One has to bear in mind the background—the disappearing empire of the Dutch—and remember the threat to their homeland, not dissimilar from the situation which faced the British Empire a century and a half later when Singapore fell, also without a fight. In the imminent collapse of the motherland, the fate of a small and uneconomic island must have seemed to Van Angelbeck of no importance whatever, but one would have thought that the very training of a military man would have evoked some spirit of resistance from him. The conditions, unlike those at Singapore, were favourable to the defenders, but British troops were permitted to march from Negombo to Colombo, through country entirely suitable for ambush and delaying tactics, without a shot being fired at them. They crossed the Kelani river at Mutwal on bamboo rafts, a proceeding which might have been made suicidal by a resolute defence, and their final appearance off the fortress of Colombo itself was the signal for a few shots from a stout-hearted troop of Malays in Dutch pay, but no more. The ripe plum had fallen. The rotting fabric had torn apart, for mutiny and discontent were rife in the Dutch ranks and the governor himself went in hourly fear of assassination.

That, at least, is his own account of the fall of the citadel, but Dutch historians have another explanation of that shameful surrender. They accuse Van Angelbeck of selling his country to the English and produce formidable evidence in support of that contention. We are not concerned with it here, but it is borne out, to some extent, by one significant fact. After the surrender, the British sent the Dutch troops home but Van Angelbeck did not accompany them. He stayed in Ceylon under the protection of the British, but, as he died the following year—the Dutch say by his own hand—that fact is not conclusive, only suggestive.

Whatever the details of the final collapse, it is certain that the Netherlanders had had enough of Ceylon and were not, in the last analysis, prepared to die for it. They had put their faith in a common-sense trading policy and it had failed. Their end was far more inglorious than that of their predecessors, who died fighting to the very last. The truth is that they had not seen, in their search for wealth, that man does not live by bread alone.

Almost nothing remains as a lasting memorial to the passing of

the Dutch with the exception of a small, hard-working community known as the Burghers, who are direct descendants of high-ranking Dutch families mixed, in the majority of cases, with Sinhalese blood. These people are as dependable and hard-working a race as is to be found anywhere, and they have made for themselves something of a monopoly of certain grades of government appointments. This racial legacy, some almost perfect specimens of fortresses, and a code of Roman-Dutch law which provides the basis of the system of jurisprudence used by the island, are the only footprints in the historical sands of the Pearl of the East left by the people of the Netherlands.

CHAPTER VIII

BRITISH INCIDENT

LANKA was taken from the Dutch, not by the British Government—for conquest, in those days, was in the hands of private enterprise—but by the East India Company, and the first twenty years of this change of masters was, if anything, rather worse than what had gone before to the unfortunate Sinhalese. The plight of the islanders was sore. In Kandy the last of the kings, himself a foreigner and a despot of the most ferocious kind, lived in constant dread of losing his ancient liberty to the new breed of European who had taken the place of the Dutch. The prime minister of this tyrannical state, the favourite and favoured adviser to his half-mad sovereign, wielded power comparable to that exercised in English history by Cardinal Wolsey. With this man, the infamous Pilimar, at the helm of state, extortion, cruelty, corruption and fear were rife, for there was only one court of appeal from his decisions and that was the king himself. No Kandyan citizen would willingly come face to face with that terrible figure, and Pilimar, as Adigar, was master of the kingdom. Summary trial and barbarous punishment were the daily, hourly lot of those who offended the king's Adigar; and once again the dogs followed to eat them.

That Kandy, claimed by many people to be the loveliest town in the world, should have been the centre of this wholely terrible reign is one of life's ironies. Beauty and the beast, loveliness and terror walked hand in hand, for if ever a Paradise existed on earth it is to be found in this glorious spot, and if ever the adjective "bloody" could be bestowed upon earthly kings, it may be applied with justice to the last of the Kandyan monarchs.

There were extenuating circumstances, for the British began their occupation with a shortsightedness never exhibited either by the Portuguese or the Dutch. With their invincible faith in their own methods of doing things, they imported, in one drastic process, the fiscal arrangements of the Carnatic into the alien atmosphere of Ceylon, despite the difference in race, religion and

customs of the islanders from those of the people of Madras. The Civil Servant in charge, obeying the only training that he had had, brought with him to the island the Indian subordinates with whom he had worked in India. No doubt it seemed to him an eminently sane solution of the problem. He placed his henchmen in charge of local affairs, sweeping aside the Mudaliyars and headmen who had for millenniums formed the mainstay of local government. These Indian assistants practised extortion and petty tyranny from the very start, to an extent previously unknown even in an island of corruption. It became apparent to the Sinhalese, even to the timid lowlanders, that the new brand of white man was the worst that had yet been imposed upon them, and with the eager help of both Dutch and French they embarked once more upon the familiar seas of rebellion.

It was a formidable affair. In 1797 a great battle took place between the Sepoys brought over from India by the East India Company, and a Sinhalese army of both lowlanders and highlanders, entrenched in the foothills of the Kandyan mountains. The result was indecisive, but losses were heavy on both sides.

The effect of this violent reaction against the rule of the East India Company was to make the British Government realize the importance of the island and to take over its administration. In 1798, the Hon. Frederick North arrived in Colombo, the first governor; but although it was a Crown appointment, he and his advisers were placed under the command of the governor-general of India from the fixed British belief that, since Lanka is so close to India, it must be part and parcel of the peninsula. That belief remains to this day, but it was particularly unfortunate that the Government, which should have known better, should have shared it then. The administration of India had nothing in common with that of Ceylon. Nevertheless, that unsatisfactory state of affairs continued until the Treaty of Amiens was signed in 1802, after which Ceylon became, officially, a Crown Colony.

Lord North's first transactions were moderate and sensible, but upon being informed of the situation with regard to the Kandyans, he set in motion one of those intrigues, apparently undertaken with stainless motives, for which the English are infamous to the rest of the world. He sought to gain control of the Kandyan kingdom without bloodshed, and with this laudable aim in view he entered into a plot with the Adigar Pilimar. Although an honest and straightforward man, the governor was

very self-opinionated and refused to listen to his advisers. He lent himself to a scheme devised by Pilimar, by which the old king was to be deposed and his place taken by a purely nominal sovereign, Sri Wikrama. As far as the British governor was concerned, that was the full extent of the plot, but the crafty Pilimar Talawa, to give him his full name, who had royal blood in his veins, had another and personal object in view. He wanted the throne for himself. He saw himself King of Ceylon, for who had the better right to the throne—himself, of ancient Sinhalese blood, or an interloper from Madura?

The path he had chosen for this desirable end was to be one of bloodshed. Having placed Wikrama upon the throne, he intended to incite the young and weak king to such deeds of tyranny and bloodshed that even the old king Raja Singha should be outdone. The British would then call upon him, Pilimar, to take over the reins of sovereignty.

Knowledge of this amiable scheme came to the ears of the governor, who approved the end but not the means. Incredible as it sounds, he nevertheless offered to send in support of this infamous plan a force of British troops to the hill capital to overawe the young king, and in March 1800 these troops, under the command of General Macdowell, actually arrived in Kandy.

But he who would sup with the Devil must use a long spoon. The murder and violence and the heavy blow to British prestige which resulted from all this double-dealing—for that is what it was—reached a pinnacle unknown even in the worst days of the Portuguese régime. The effort to gain a bloodless footing by what was doubtless considered justifiable diplomacy failed, and the army, looking extremely foolish, returned to Colombo having postponed by fifteen years any possibility of affording relief to the Kandyan people groaning under the scourge of a new tyrant.

It would be well if that decade and a half could be forgotten and buried in merciful oblivion, but however easy it may be for the British people to forget them—and, of course, the majority have never heard of them—the Sinhalese do not forget. The thoughtful among them pin the responsibility for the horrors which followed squarely upon the shoulders of the British, and their first taste of British diplomacy is in their mouths still.

Pilimar, having failed to usurp the throne with European connivance, now sought to provoke war, never a very difficult task. His success was immediate and the British marched a force into

Kandy at once, the wretched king having fled at their approach. Instead of imprisoning Pilimar forthwith, for it must be remembered that Governor North knew what type of man he was dealing with, his services were called upon as though his treacherous outlook was not perfectly clear to the invaders. He was invited to give the benefits of his ministerial advice to the British nominee for the Kandyan throne, a Malabari named Muttusamy, possessor of a shady and contemptible record well known to the Sinhalese.

The Adigar, whose estimation of Lord North's intelligence can hardly be regarded as flattering, now proposed that the young King Wikrama should be delivered up to the governor, that Muttusamy should be sent to rule over Jaffna, where he could do little harm, and that he, Pilimar, should reign in Kandy. That such an outrageous proposal should be accepted is one of those mysteries that time cannot solve. We have to accept it as a fact and note the consequences, which seem inevitable after the event.

Having accepted this offer, Lord North ordered General Macdowell to leave a small garrison in Kandy and return to Colombo, which was done. Such blind trust was too much for the Adigar, who saw the door to power obligingly unbolted and thrown open to him. It is not surprising that he could not resist the temptation to walk through it, for between him and complete domination stood a handful of Malay soldiers and a few British officers. Colombo was a long way away and nothing that he had seen of the governor had imbued him with fear of that officer or respect for the Crown. He roused his Kandyans, therefore, and descended upon the luckless officer commanding the British force like the Assyrian upon the fold. After a short engagement, in which the hopelessness of the position was rubbed in with heavy losses to the defenders, Davie, the commanding officer, came to terms. He agreed to march his men out of Kandy, taking with him the governor's protégé, the Malabari Muttusamy.

Arriving at a village called Paranagantota, a few miles from Kandy on the banks of the river Mahawelli Ganga, the unwarlike Davie found that great river in spate, as of course the Adigar had known it would be. Pilimar offered to escort the British troops across the torrent provided that they first surrendered up their arms and with them—surely one of the most shameful betrayals in our annals?—the miserable Muttusamy.

This offer was accepted, an almost incredible event, and

Muttusamy having been handed over, the troops were led away two by two to be taken over the flood.

It is so easy to picture this tragedy if one has seen the place, known to this day as Davie's tree. The blistering heat, the very smell of the running water, the glaring all-pervading sunlight and the exhausted Malays, going off two by two to be escorted across the river. Two by two, and nobody suspected treachery! Two by two, their arms and ammunition having been taken from them! In their haste to be rid of them, the Kandyans slaughtered them within a few yards of the main body, barely taking them out of sight of the others waiting, in blind trust, to be murdered in their turn. The men were clubbed to death, but Muttusamy received a more dignified death as befitted his rank. He was first dismembered alive, and then shot.

Davie was not killed, but died in captivity without having a chance to give his version of what occurred; but one man escaped, struggling through dense jungle for days with his head so nearly severed from his body that he had to hold it with his hands all the time. This man's name was Barnsley, and but for him no account of the massacre of Davie's troops would have come down to posterity. To this day for many miles round Paranagantota, the villagers will take a visitor without hesitation to Davie's tree.

Retribution was long delayed. Indeed Wikrama, who was not dethroned by Pilimar, stoutly maintained that he had no part in the Adigar's treachery—which was likely enough—and he all but brought about the complete expulsion of the British. He roused the island, no doubt on account of the cowardly conduct of the British troops at Paranagantota, and the Sinhalese fell upon Matara, Chilaw, Puttalam, Jaffna and Batticoloa simultaneously. Even the low-country villagers, seeing a chance to be rid of the pestilential white man once and for all, joined in and threatened the disease-ridden and exhausted British troops.

Once again a Kandyan king, this time Wikrama, nearly took Colombo, which would have ended the occupation of the British. On the 21st August 1803, Cordiner tells us that the Kandyan army under the command of the king himself had approached within fifteen miles of the capital, taking the important little fort of Hanwella. Both the Portuguese and the Dutch had made stands at this place and both had been defeated, but the British had not appreciated its strategical value—doubtless they did not

foresee that the Kandyans would ever attack them in force—and had not kept it in order. They were thrown out on the 21st, but retook it the next day and held out against three successive attacks by the main force of the Kandyans.

On the 6th September the king made a massed attack, bringing up artillery which, had it been efficiently used, must have smashed down the defences. Captain Pollock, in command of the small force of British troops, withheld his fire right up to the last moment. Outnumbered by at least one hundred to one, he had the courage to split his tiny force, and sent one half of it off to the flank of the enemy, who were merely an undisciplined, if brave, rabble. The silence of the garrison seems to have unnerved them, for they halted in their tracks close to the fort as if afraid to advance. At that moment Pollock fell upon them with both his small forces, and the slaughter began and continued for two hours. A shot from an English gun falling close to the Sinhalese king decided the issue, for the king fled in haste and his men went with him.

The English in fact were at their very last gasp when this heroic engagement took place. Not one of Captain Pollock's men was on the active list, for all were recovering from malaria. In Colombo the situation was worse, for the main body of troops had been without reinforcements for so long that they were decimated by disease, short of stores, ammunition and food. The Sinhalese, who had anticipated an easy victory, did not press their attack or they must have triumphed.

It was a near thing. The war in France had made the sending of troops to such an unimportant place as Ceylon impossible, and in the island itself the white troops were rotting with disease. The one plan drawn up to teach the Kandyans a painful lesson, as a punishment for Paranagantota, was not organized for over a year after that massacre, and then it had to be cancelled at the very last moment when the six parties, stationed at six different towns along both coasts, were all ready to march.

Although this plan was cancelled, it provides the one bright spot in the drab and shameful story of the occupation during these years of waiting, for Captain Johnson's party, stationed at Batticoloa, did not receive the order countermanding the plan. Accordingly, a mere three hundred men, they marched, and accomplished one of the most astonishing feats of endurance ever recorded in the long history of British arms.

With little experience of the jungle, stifled in the heat, short of water, plagued by mosquitoes and dysentery, this little band not only succeeded in reaching Kandy but—realizing that they could not remain there alone—retreated in perfect order, destroying the king's palace at Kundasalla on the way. It is an epic.

For a month they fought continuously, every day of their lives without respite, and their retreat was conducted with the same skill and stamina as was their advance. I have been along some part of this line of march myself, with a car when required to drive along metalled roads with well-appointed rest-houses for my refreshment, but even so there were long stretches of country which seemed to me barely passable for a single man. The distance both ways is over two hundred miles, a tough nut to crack regarded purely as a route march under tropical conditions. Johnson's feat, in my opinion, equals anything accomplished by that remarkable force, the Chindits, during the last war, for it was carried out when knowledge of such warfare was slight. Science had not then invented the paraphernalia with which jungle troops are equipped to-day.

The party reached its base, at the conclusion of this memorable march, with a loss of forty-eight men killed and a prestige which, for the first time, gave the Kandyans a respect for this new breed of white men, and filled them with a fear of what would happen if ever they were able to take the field in strength.

Forbes relates the vivid impression that this great feat had upon the mind of one of the Kandyan chiefs sent to harass Johnson's tiny force. "He must have been in alliance with supernatural powers," said this chief, "as his judgment and energy, superior as they were, were insufficient to account for his escape from one continued ambush."

But meanwhile, and for eleven more years, the tyrant Wikrama went on his merciless way unmolested. With his vile Adigar at his shoulder, he inflicted upon his own people a reign of terror perhaps the most horrible of all endured by them during their turbulent history. Raja Singha himself was eclipsed and the land groaned in agony and fear.

At long last the schemer Pilimar made an error. The king discovered him in a plot to seize the throne after murdering Wikrama and had him executed without delay.

The speed with which the new Adigar plotted to usurp the

throne has a refreshing note almost of *naïveté* about it. This man, Ehelapola, was not sufficiently adroit and had to flee for his life. The king, feeling no doubt that he was surrounded on all sides by treachery, struck blindly in his darkness of terror and rage. He subjected the wife and children of the escaped man to such hideous torture, before killing them, that even the hardened executioner is said to have fainted with horror and disgust and the people retired into their homes for two days as a sign of mourning.

The demented king, driven no doubt by the teeming demons of megalomania, now threw off any semblance of restraint. Having captured some British subjects, he cut off their ears, noses and hands, and returned them to Colombo. It was a provocation that could not be ignored and at last the British took the field in earnest.

Within a few weeks Kandy had fallen, the king had fled and was captured at Medamahanuwara with the aid of a friend of Ehelapola who was thirsting to avenge his wife and children. Wikrama was not brought to justice as a murderer for fear, no doubt, of political repercussions, but he was deported to India and the last of the Kandyan kings had entered the limbo of lost history. From Wijayo in 543 B.C. to Wikrama, who fell in A.D. 1815, Ceylon had never been without a king. One hundred and sixty-five known monarchs in all, they played their little parts in the fascinating enigma of power, but now they are gone and the stage is set for a new civilization, that of the West.

With the disappearance of Wikrama, the governor may have hoped that there would be no more trouble, for he had not taken the field against the last of the kings without the approval, even the supplications, of the Kandyan people themselves. In that sense the Kandyans claim that they were never conquered, for resistance to the British forces had been so slight as hardly to count. Lord North was confident, therefore, as he called together a convocation of Kandyan chiefs, that bloodshed was at an end and an era of civil prosperity about to dawn. He was wrong.

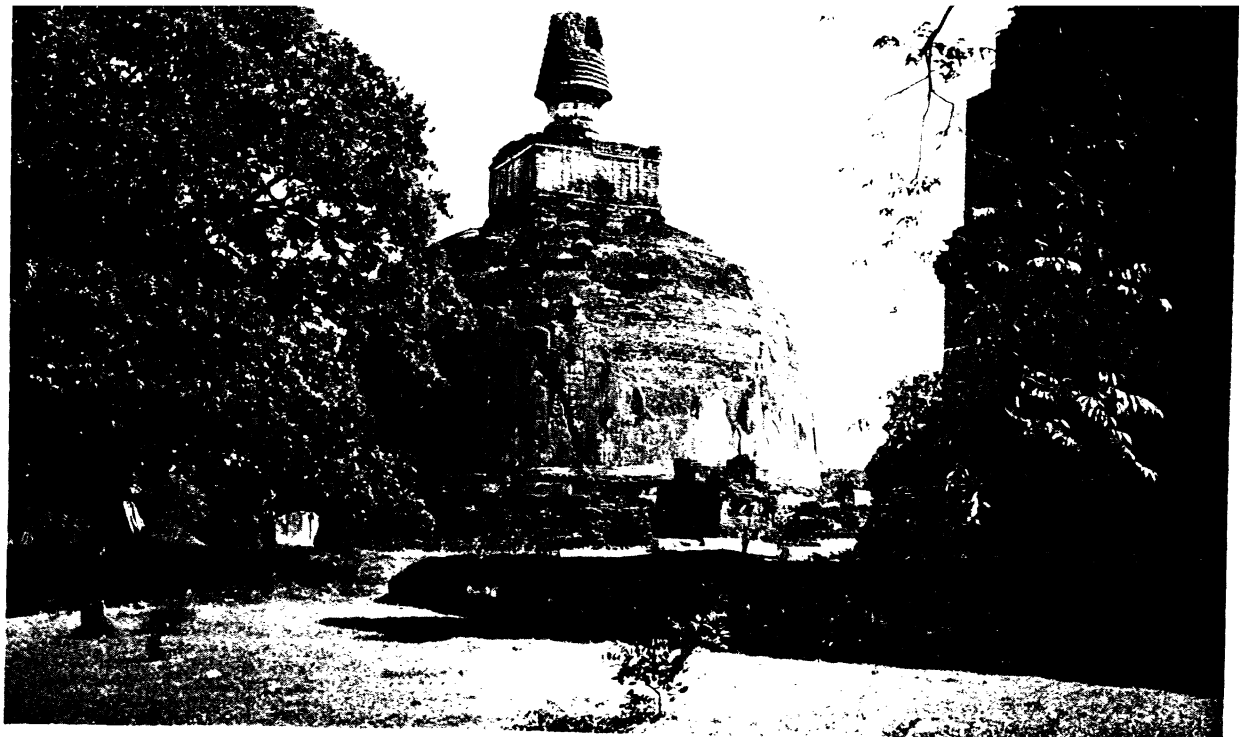
The meeting of the chiefs was held in the Audience Hall in Kandy, that old hall of tragedies, now the Court of Justice, which had seen so much blood and agony and such wild pageantry. At the convocation the governor confirmed the proud chiefs in their authority and recognized Buddhism as the religion of the land. He did not, however, accept Ehelapola as king, as that

worthy no doubt expected, but the Adigar showed no resentment, although he refused to accept office of any kind.

The trouble that arose was simple in its origin. The Kandyan chiefs had indeed called upon the British to curb the excesses of the last of the kings, but these, to them, had been purely a matter of degree. With the principle of royal power all were in hearty agreement, and the common people, if Lord North had known it, groaned as much under their petty tyranny as under that of the late king. The governor had misread the situation. He expected, possibly, that the chiefs would go away and start ruling their territories for the good of the people. On the contrary, they attempted to emulate the deceased king, and the people found that they had exchanged the tyranny of one man for that of several. The familiar urge to rebel smouldered in them once again, an urge which came to a head in an astonishing way, since it had no real leader and no head. The only point upon which all were united—for the chiefs soon joined in—was that the stupidity of the British was worse than the commercialism of the Dutch or the cruelty of the Portuguese. The rising was nation-wide, and this time the British could do little. Within ten months, indeed, their position became so desperate that they all but resolved to abandon the guerrilla warfare, in which the Sinhalese were usually successful, and withdraw to the coast.

Almost simultaneously with this decision, however, the Sinhalese themselves began to show obvious signs of distress, disunity and submission. Another month and the British might have withdrawn, but the devastation of the country, the loss of life, crops and cattle, had been too much for the low-country peasants, and they broke down. The rebellious chiefs were captured or surrendered, the "Pretender" to the Kandyan throne fled, and the Sacred Tooth, which had been carried round the island as a torch to set light to religious fanaticism, was taken back to the Dalada Maligawa in Kandy. The rebellion was at an end, the last rebellion, on a national scale, to take place during the reign of the British in Lanka.

After this an obvious military measure was taken against the hillsmen. The new road to Kandy, a triumph of engineering skill and incidentally one of the loveliest highways in the world, was thrust through the mass of mountains, the tortuous defiles, the giant boulders, the forests and swirling rivers that had for so



The Kiri or Milk dagoba in the medieval jungle city of Polannaruha



The dead Buddha and his mourning disciple, Ananda, Polonnaruha

many centuries served the highlanders as a bastion against the world.

Sir Edward Barnes, the new governor, decided upon a policy of roads, more roads and still more roads, until the mountains were riddled with them and the security of the wilderness was gone. With it went also the almost superstitious fear of the Kandyans felt by the British troops. The new civilization had arrived.

With the new civilization came emancipation of the inhabitants of the island. Domestic slavery came to an end, forced labour was abolished, the tyranny of native chiefs was replaced by law and justice. The birth-rate rose sharply and the children born remained alive so that the population grew apace. Starvation and the extremes of disease disappeared, while agriculture was extended and new sources of wealth were introduced. The remarkable system of roads built by Sir Edward Barnes was soon followed by the railway, for during the reign of Victoria, when England had a belief in herself and a sense of cause which has now left her, she was the most virile, inventive and progressive country in the world. This immense virility, undimmed by self-doubt, was shown as much by the opening-up of her colonies and great dominions as in the feverish domestic development which made her the workshop of the world. Roads, railways, civil organization, law courts, hospitals, coffee plantations, the discovery of the potentialities of the rubber industry; all the impedimenta of Western civilization descended upon the island with cataclysmic energy. The mighty forests of the hills were felled to make room for coffee, their wild poetry schooled and subdued to the uniformity of agricultural design. The silence and the beauty of the solitudes were broken and lost, education began to replace instinct and freedom and prosperity appeared to be within the grasp of all.

The British people used to have an enviable propensity for doing good to others at great personal profit to themselves. Very early in their stay in the island, in the year 1824, they introduced coffee-planting on a considerable scale. The bush grew wild in the island—it does still—and its produce had been exported with some success by the Portuguese and considerably more by the Dutch. It was the first demonstration, on a large scale, of the economic curse emanating from England and now resting upon mankind for some future generation to exorcize.

By 1877 there were over one quarter of a million acres of coffee

under cultivation, and Ceylon seemed marked out as one of the world's producers of quality coffee, when a disaster of the first magnitude occurred. From one million pounds of coffee a year, production dropped almost to vanishing point because of the attacks of *Hemilia vastatrix*, a microscopic fungus that destroyed the leaves of the plant and within ten years ruined the industry. The planters were left with a big problem to solve, for either they had to abandon the island and renew their coffee-planting activities elsewhere, or they had to find a new product. Tea had proved that it could be grown in Ceylon and the decision was taken to switch over to that.

The result of this decision was an epic of commercial enterprise, skill and courage little appreciated in the country of its origin but the root cause of the prosperity of Ceylon. Within five years of the collapse of the coffee industry, 150,000 acres of tea had been planted, an act of faith indeed, since tea does not begin to be a really remunerative proposition for three, or even four, years from planting. These original tea-fields were upon coffee land, but as success began to appear probable, more and more virgin land was opened up until, by the end of the nineteenth century, there were 384,000 acres under tea. By 1947, when the island attained Dominion status, there were approximately 550,000 acres of tea in Ceylon, a total unlikely now to be increased to any extent.

Conan Doyle wrote of this remarkable feat of determination: "Not often is it that men have the heart, when their one great industry is withered, to rear up in a few years another as rich to take its place, and the tea-fields of Ceylon are as true a monument to courage as is the lion at Waterloo."

The climatic conditions required by this great industry—the new Mahabadde—are found only in the mountains or the foothills, and thus there grew up a reversal of the division of the island as it had been in the great days of the irrigation civilization. Under the British occupation, the ancient hill forests disappeared, and a network of roads and thousands upon thousands of acres of cultivated hillside and rubber forests took its place. On the other hand, where once the plains had flourished with a marvellous agriculture, the jungle had returned in strength—though not, of course, in the time of the British—and except for the wet zone around Colombo and the south-west, the low country is now deserted but for a few isolated settlements.

This oddly one-sided development, concentrated upon what the white man needed, was a leaf out of the Dutch book of policy. It must have seemed to the Sinhalese that their own increasing health, wealth and prosperity were purely incidental to the vast commercial wealth built up by the British merchants. It was a bad mistake for the British Government not to make clear every step taken for the betterment of the people, for the national trait of self-effacement and a modesty which no one else understands has done incalculable harm throughout the world, and the results may be seen in this small island in the lack of gratitude shown by the ordinary educated Sinhalese. For what, they ask, have the British done for the soul of the people? Education is increasing—nearly eighty per cent of the people of Ceylon can read and write after a fashion, an astonishing proportion—there are roads, hospitals, schools, cinemas and all the rest of Western fetishes, but there is also a whole race of peasants living a largely parasitical existence in the country which is theirs by over two thousand years of right. The answer to that, quite unacceptable to the Sinhalese, is that six out of every seven Sinhalese now living would not have been born but for the British. Yet it cannot be denied that agriculture on a national scale is sadly inadequate—Lanka has to import most of the rice needed to feed her own people—and agriculture could and should have been the real Mahabadde of the Pearl of the East. The genius of the Sinhalese race, now atrophied, lies in that direction, and the British, preoccupied with their own affairs, have not sufficiently recognized this vital fact. All the good work, the genuine solicitude for the state of the villages and villagers, the social improvements, the personal kindness and the genuine desire to educate the people until they could take over their own affairs, goes for nothing in the minds of the Sinhalese, for, to them, it was all incidental to the amassing of wealth by the interlopers. It is possible that some small proportion of the Western-educated statesmen know otherwise, but in their political fight for power they have fed the rest of the nation on misrepresentation for so long that the shortcomings and the shortsightedness of the British rule are the only aspects known to the masses. Political propaganda of this nature, perfectly legitimate tactics in the jungle of the world's diplomacy at the present time, always acts as a boomerang. The essential goodness of heart of the British, their insistence upon justice and freedom, have never received credit

and it is too late to start now. The villagers believe that the bear, the elephant and the leopard enjoy their birthright because the Europeans were too busy making their fortunes to attend to the people. They have seen 10,000 white people—there are now fewer in Ceylon—set up the machinery whereby the nation works, expanding with remorseless energy sustained by the power and vigilance of a mother-country 7,000 miles away, whirling their country along the path of mechanized "progress" while they had to stand and watch. That is the only picture which remains in their minds after years of ceaseless political propaganda. Their own existence, comparative wealth and increasing good health; their freedom from the beasts of the mountains, tyranny and death; these things are unknown to them. The British never talk about such concrete benefits, and the Sinhalese politicians deliberately suppressed them as politicians, all the world over, denigrate the good works of their opponents.

Yet the debit side of the occupation is real, for the whole trend of development was out of sympathy with the genius of the island race. The illusion of material progress has, of course, deceived Britain herself, who now has to suffer for it so severely in her homeland that survival itself is in the balance; but grafted upon an Eastern race, once cultured, it has led to some unhappy results, chief among them being the debasement of the peasantry.

The countrymen of the lonely villages, far removed from the crowded wet zone with its material, Westernized outlook, retain a courteous and cultured mien, a philosophy and a dignity wholely impressive. To talk to them is to realize that education has very little to do with knowledge. That there is something lacking in lives from which labour has almost disappeared nobody will deny, but the converse is even more undeniable. The villagers of the lonely places are unspoiled, while those of the villages clinging to the main roads, fringing cities, or clustering round the great estates, show strong signs of social retrogression. Throughout the beautiful, bountiful island, these sophisticated villagers live in a sort of satirical and cynical parasitism on the white men's enterprises, or on the Tamil labourers—of whom there are 800,000 on the estates alone—who make the wheels of the white men's enterprises revolve. Compared with this huge total of over three-quarters of a million labourers from southern India working on the estates, there are only 50,000 Sinhalese so employed, the rest being a landed peasantry, but

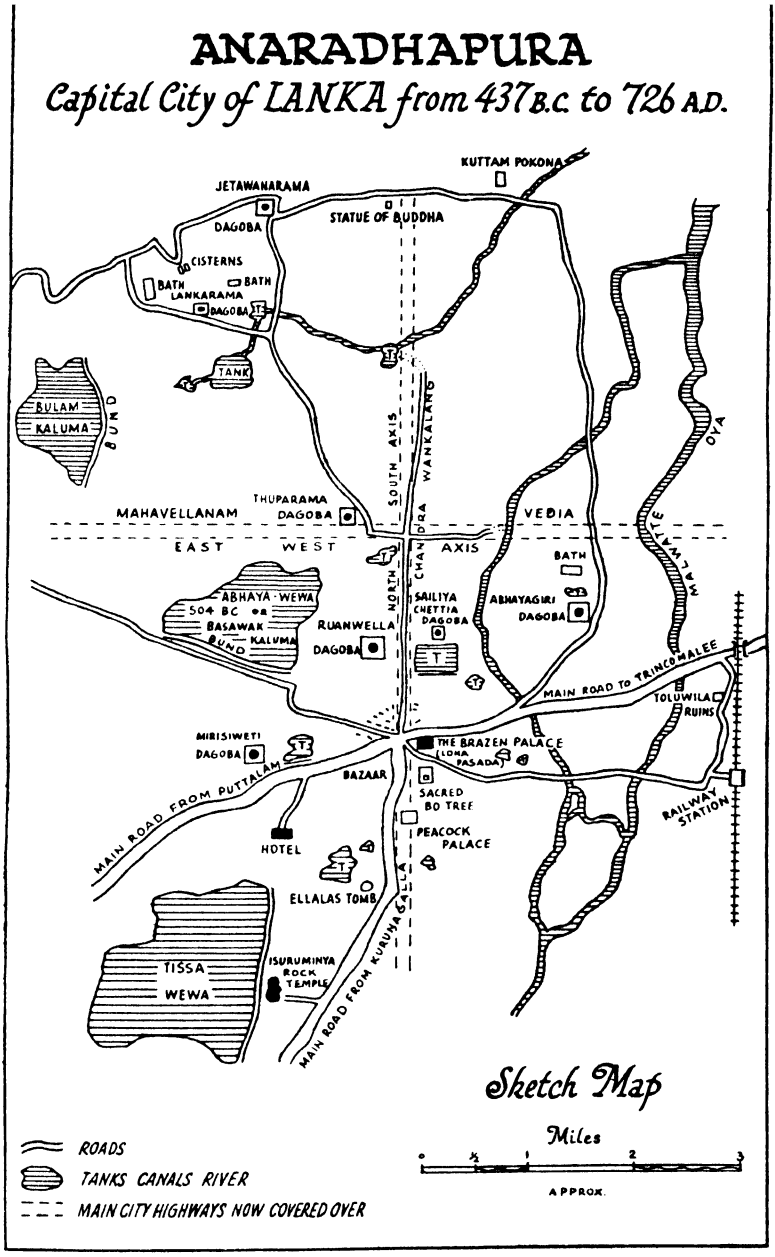
one which exists from hand to mouth. It is one which battens as much as possible on the work of others and regards the efforts of the European to effect social improvements with thinly disguised scepticism.

Certainly the Sinhalese villagers show an aptitude for lucrative indolence. They like working upon coconut estates best of all because of the pleasant easiness of the work. Rubber, too, they find reasonably simple, although even there the Tamils predominate. Best of all the peasantry prefer to work their own tiny plots of land in the village of their birth, putting in a few weeks' really hard manual labour on the communal rice-fields once or twice a year and making what pickings they can from the frailty of human nature. The sale of illicit toddy and arrack has attained massive proportions; gambling, as in England, is a major industry; corruption, laziness, trickery and deceit are rife. Their superior intelligence allows them to impose upon the Tamil labourers of the estates to an almost unlimited degree, as bad for them as for their victims, and the political freedom that has been bestowed upon them is as meaningless as their liberation from the last of the Sinhalese kings, for they are ignorant of both events. The new race of politicians; reared upon Western educational practice and placed in positions of power by that fantastic and wholly delightful whim of the British, universal suffrage; have taken the place of the Kandyan chiefs in the minds of the masses. There is no difference to them, for although things have changed, they have remained the same. The Kandyan chiefs have disappeared, except as picturesque anachronisms, but their place has been taken by the "trouser-karens," that brave race of politicians who have beaten the white race at their own game.

It is only during the twentieth century that this latter-day cynicism has emerged, for during the nineteenth, although the thrust and drive of the English was aimed, obviously, at their own advancement, the Eastern mind understood and accepted such common-sense aims, and relations between master and man, if rough, were perfectly cordial. There was no introspection, none of the morbid self-questioning and sentimentality which attacks nations in the twilight of their power. The slow and sound development, based upon motives obvious to all, has been replaced by a swift rush towards "self-expression," whatever that may mean, based upon sentiment.

The English have followed in the wake of the previous adven-

turers and have left the island for good, as rulers and administrators. As in the case of the Dutch, they have left some of their nationals behind them, guardians of immense commercial interests. The outlook is uncertain, both for the nationals and for the commercial interests, for the moving finger has writ and, moving on, has left in its wake an uneasy Dominion, unsure of itself and afraid of the hostile forces watching it with speculative eyes from the outside world. The Sinhalese have a great opportunity, and they are a gentle, humorous, good-natured people with many gifts, but they are weak and they are alone. They have received their full heritage too soon and too precipitately, and history may well record of the British that they are the first great power in world history to have pointed a way to a lasting social structure for mankind, based upon peace and justice, throwing away the torch with the race half run, not from defeat or exhaustion but from a craven fear of being great.



ANURADHAPURA, CAPITAL CITY OF LANKA FROM 437 B.C. TO A.D. 726

CHAPTER IX

ANURADHAPURA

WHEN one is young, the senses are keyed to heights of poetry and sensitivity which, like the years, are eaten by the locust. The first time I visited Anuradhapura, twenty years ago, I rode there on my motor-cycle at night, through the tunnel of the jungle. Overhead the brilliance of the tropical sky was dimmed and forgotten by the greater brilliance of the cone of light thrown by my headlamp. The trees, velvet black and threatening, crowded to the edge of the hard white road. There was the song of the wind caused by my rushing progress, the roar of the machine itself, and the whine of its tyres, but that was all. If I cut my engine and stood still, there was a silence very intimidating to inexperience. And if I went on again, there were the eyes. The silence and the eyes! There is nostalgia in the thought of both.

I know now about the eyes, those bright yellow orbs of jungle creatures when turned towards the dazzling headlamps of cars or motor-cycles. Not all of them show yellow in the glare which paralyses them, a glare for which their experience has not prepared them. The eyes of elephants show red, and those of civet cats brilliant green, but most are yellow and the creatures behind them stand frozen into immobility. I saw many that first night, the deer first, waiting against all the instinct of the foresters until I drew abreast of them. Only then was the spell broken and they leapt for the safety of the undergrowth. The deer were followed by pigs, monkeys, a kabrogoya and finally a leopard, huge and black, as confused and taken aback as any of his humbler rivals.

Beginner's luck. I saw other animals under similar circumstances during my years in the island and I regret to confess that, in my early days, accepting the conventions of others and failing to think for myself, I shot beasts standing paralysed in the glare of headlamps; but never again did I see so many varieties in so short a time as on that first night of all.

It is a vile thing to do, putting a bullet into a wild animal defenceless in dazzling light, and should be made a criminal offence. I grieve for it now. Indeed, after my first year of jungle work, I lost all desire to kill God's creatures except from necessity.

It is good to arrive in Anuradhapura, the dreaming ghost of an incredible lost city, at night time. One sees the small, central hamlet, a line of *boutiques* bright and gay, colourful and noisy, smelling of pepper and burning oil, and it is a glimpse of the living heart of the East, as true now as two and a half millenniums ago. Robes and saris, cloths and sarongs, merchandise and flowers and noise—always noise—it might well be any town of the East from Colombo to Hong Kong, but beyond the East of the present one rides out of the bazaar into a dark, spacious and infinitely beautiful past. Few there are that can comprehend it at the time, and I was not one of them. It laved me, and I felt it but could not understand. I wish, now, that I had taken more heed of what I saw. Archæology was for me a closed book. I realized that I was in the midst of the ruins of a civilization immeasurably old but I was on my way to stay with a man renowned throughout the island as a hunter, and that was the reason for my visit. As far as archæology was concerned I came to scoff but remained to pray.

For that first night an exciting thing happened which exposed, for one second, the heart of Ceylon—the life of the villagers. Cities of the Orient, however beautiful they may be, have shallow roots; the railways, cars, aeroplanes and other inventions of the white man are amusing playthings; but the land is final reality. All things exist for man because of the land, an eternal truth which I saw made manifest that night. And with it I had a satisfying insight into the millenniums which had seen life wax and wane in this wonderful old capital. The exploration of the monuments of past ages might have seemed pointless to me but for the incident in the night.

About one o'clock in the morning, an excited deputation of villagers roused my host from his bed with the request that he should come at once to deal with a rogue elephant which had all but destroyed their village. Elephants are noble beasts, but they have their social misfits, and when one of them sins against the code of behaviour laid down for elephants, he is visited with condign punishment. He is made outcast, exactly as the Hindu

who breaks his religious laws is made outcast, and with the same result. Banished from his own family, the offender finds that no other tribe will accept him and he is doomed to wander, for ever alone, a jungle pariah. Elephants are gregarious beasts and loneliness soon drives them mad, turning them into "rogues," the most dangerous of all foresters.

We drove out then and there to Medawatchy, for my host had that deep understanding of youth so rarely encountered, and he realized that, nuisance as I was bound to be, the whole of my life might be influenced by the magic of the moment, as indeed it was. Leaving the car in the hamlet, we took to the forest on foot in single file, and trekked to the scene of the incident.

Who could forget such a sight as met our gaze? We broke from the imprisoning forest into a moonlit clearing of young "paddy" under its thin covering of water. The fields may have been as much as a hundred acres in extent, with a village on some high ground behind them, huts of cadjan set among a confused mass of jak and cotton trees, palms and plantains, with a chena in which grew brinjals and maize with wild, uncultivated jungle growth contesting every inch of land. Beyond it, at a slightly higher level, we could see the bund of a small tank, but the other three sides of the rice-fields were bounded by forest.

In the moonlight, the trees of the jungle and the star-flooded sky were reflected with fidelity upon the face of the water, from the surface of which broke a million tiny spears of the young shoots of paddy. One doubted the security of the solid earth upon which one stood. It was as if we were suspended in the centre of a glass bowl, infinite in size, with skies above and beneath and a roaring orchestra of cicadas and bullfrogs sending out wave upon wave of sound in never-ceasing cadences. In the village, the angry flare of torches moved about aimlessly, grown brothers of the countless fireflies that drifted in wavering hordes at all levels of the trees and vegetation.

It would have been a scene of sheer enchantment—and indeed the witchery of that nocturnal scene has not left me—but for the confusion, anger and terror divulged by the restless flares and the shouting of voices. The discordant element was soon clear, even to my inexperience—wanton destruction. The village huts were smashed and scattered, acres of paddy were trampled into a muddy pulp, coconut trees had been torn up by the roots, a senseless, cataclysmic force had been at work to smash, trample

and ravage. Life in its first essentials had been disrupted and scattered, and the reaction was elemental. The village was a buzzing ant-heap of distressed but vengeful humanity, roused to restore at once the mainspring of their existence, a destroyed agriculture. I saw, in that moment, the eternal peasant, the foundation of organized human society.

Since that day I have seen large cities smashed and pounded into heaps of rubble, but the reality of that scene in the jungle, where a single rogue elephant had struck at a primeval human community, was far greater to me that night so long ago. In the light of that interlude of beauty and terror I came, after twenty years, to understand in full the message of the cities of the jungle, of which the first and greatest was Anuradhapura.

The lost cities of Ceylon rank among the wonders of the world, although few recognize them as such. Interest in them is probably smaller than that shown in the ruins of any other comparable civilization. Why this should be so is hard to understand for, thanks to the industry and scholarship of George Turnour, we know almost all that can be known of every building, statue and the majority of the great monoliths with which the surrounding jungle abounds. Their history is clear, detailed and certain, for the sacred "Olas"—leaves of the talypot tree turned into a form of parchment—which have been carefully, almost miraculously, preserved from the very advent of Buddhism, record facts which subsequent events and discoveries have never been able to falsify. Surely this felicity of record is unparalleled in archæological research?

Some eight miles east of that central bazaar through which I rode on my first visit to the capital is the thousand-foot-high hill called Mihintale, where Mahinda, the first Buddhist missionary, first met King Tissa. Although the hill is eight miles out of the centre of the town, it was well within the limits of the ancient city, and its history is quite lost in the mist of antiquity. Long before Gotama was known in Lanka, Mihintale was sacred and legend associates many former Buddhas with it. There are dim echoes, too, of a former civilization; long before Wijayo and even before Lankapura; which still come to us from folk-lore and legend concerning this sacred hill.

The summit looks out over the sea of jungle from a sheer precipice known as the cliffs of Ambatthalo where, says tradi-

tion, Mahinda alighted from his aerial flight. To reach this holy spot, the pilgrim ascends a grand staircase of 1,840 steps made of granite slabs fifteen feet in width. It climbs the least precipitous side, that on the east, and leads to the Etwahara dagoba on the top, from the ruins of which a stupendous view may be obtained, stretching from sea to sea, and particularly fine where the dagobas of Anuradhapura lie dreaming in the sun. The tanks, mighty buildings, road and temples of the city as it was fifteen hundred years ago, must have provided a glorious spectacle, and even to-day the lakes gleaming in their circles of forests, the park-like clearings of the Mahagema Garden and the huge stupas rising above the highest trees instil feelings of wonder. Imagination runs riot over that gigantic panorama of silent jungle, teeming with animal life but almost devoid of human society now, where a millennium and a half ago five thousand tanks and a connecting cobweb of canals had opened up several millions of acres of land to agriculture. Look at the map of the city even as it is to-day, when a few hundred people inhabit the ruins of a metropolis, and you will see that there is still, comparatively speaking, a network of tanks and waterways.

Near the summit of Mihintale, the Maha Seya dagoba stands in majesty, over one hundred feet in height, enshrining a single hair from the head of the Buddha and still in fair repair after two thousand years. The trees which covered the summit when I was there all grew in the crumbled brickwork, germinated from seeds dropped by birds.

Where King Tissa met Mahinda a great monastery, or wihara, was built, and the giant rocks which abound in this area are honeycombed with the rock dwellings of monks. It was not until this wihara was completed that the staircase was begun, the work being carried out by generations of pious pilgrims who have never ceased to find their way to the sacred hill.

The prevalence of granite, and man's penchant for perpetuating himself by means of inscriptions, have provided a rich archæological haul round the slopes of this holy hill. The monastic cells built by King Tissa have instructions inscribed on their walls giving, in smallest detail, the duties of monks, priests, neophytes and others. No man who had destroyed life might live within the shadow of the mountain, special offices were laid down for all, and even day-to-day administration was not forgotten. Accounts were to be kept, say the inscriptions,

time-tables followed, ceremonial ablutions maintained and orders of the day followed by doctors, laymen, priests, clerks, watchmen and humbler labourers, all of whom had a part to play in the working of that temple city. The instructions reveal organizing and administrative ability of a high order.

Wherever we go in the immensity of Anuradhapura we shall encounter *pokunas*, stone baths built by the ancients for a variety of purposes but principally for religious ablutions. One of the most romantic of these pokunas is to be found at Mihintale. It is called the Naga, or Snake pokuna, because of the carving in bas-relief of a huge five-headed cobra in the living rock in the shelter of which the pool has been built. The bath is 135 feet in length, precursor of many others that will be encountered in our wanderings about the ancient city.

Not far from the top of the hill is a flat space on which has been built the Ambustella dagoba, in which is enshrined the holiest of all relics not actually part of Gotama himself, the ashes of Mahinda the missionary, who returned here to die. The dagoba is built upon the very spot where tradition claims that the missionary for Buddhism met the great Sinhalese King Tissa.

The building itself is comparatively small but beautiful. It is constructed of stone, the only dagoba, as far as I am aware, not built of brick. It has a wide veranda round it on which are standing many octagonal pillars carved with the sacred geese of Buddhism.

From the Ambustella a path leads to a ledge in the precipice known as Mahinda's Couch, and indeed the whole hill mass is known from afar by that name. It is a rock eyrie from which contemplation of the beauties of the world might be carried on indefinitely, for no words can give an adequate impression of the blue and silent immensity spread beneath this most holy couch. Seen from above, the matted carpet of the jungle, broken only here and there by the silver sheen of tank water, seems to have stood there in unbroken solitude from the dawn of time, but it is not so. Down beneath that very rock and for hundreds of square miles around, hidden in undergrowth, covered over perhaps by detritus or lost beneath forest trees, unseen for centuries by human eyes, lie countless ruins waiting to be unearthed by the archæologist when funds permit.

Eight miles distant from Mihintale is the centre of the city, the heart of the metropolis, and the road connecting the two

must have been one of the most colourful highways in history. On great festival days the whole of the distance of eight miles was covered by a carpet, upon which the feet of the pilgrims, purified in the bath at Mihintale, might travel to the centre of the city without being soiled. The whole significance of this highway was religious, a path for those ceremonies and processions in which the Oriental mind delights. Every few yards of its course show some evidence of past occupation; monoliths, statues or mounds which were once buildings. Walters says of it that it was the *Via Sacra* of the Buddhist hierarchy, and it would be a dull imagination that could not picture, where now is silence, glare and solitude, the gay multitudes, the chariots, the prancing horses and caparisoned elephants of a past glory.

Before crossing the Malwatte Oya—the flower-garden stream —on our way to the heart of the town, let us turn left from the Via Sacra into what are known as the Toluwila ruins, close to the present railway station. Incidentally it was along the course of this river—the Malwatte Oya—probably all but dried up and therefore the easiest route through thick jungle, that Robert Knox, author of *The Historical Relation of Ceylon*, made his way to freedom after twenty years of captivity in Kandy. He did not realize that this was once the ancient capital of which he had heard, but he wrote: "Here and there, by the side of the river, is a world of hewn stone pillars, and other heaps of hewn stones which, I suppose, formerly were buildings, and in three or four places are the ruins of bridges built of stone, some remains of them yet standing upon stone pillars."

To me, the ruins of Toluwila have especial interest in that they are the only evidence of the form of highway used by the ancients that I saw. The metropolis was once bisected by two vast highways, the Mahavellanam Vedia or east–west axis, and the Chandra Wankalang, the north–south axis, from which innumerable small roads ran off to right and to left. But all these remain to be uncovered. The Toluwila ruins, for half a mile or so, stand upon either side of one of these smaller roads, for pedestrians only, which has been exposed. It is paved and kerbed, but it was clearly not for wheeled traffic since there are two flights of steps to be negotiated along its length. On either side of the road are the ruins of dwellings, some of them large in size, probably wiharas. No doubt this was part of the sacred heart of Anuradhapura, but, overgrown as it is, it speaks more suggestively

of ordinary human activities than any other part of the immense ruins elsewhere encountered.

Turning back to the *Via Sacra*, we travel another mile or so into the very heart of the old capital, which is now the centre of the modern, shoddy town. It is more than a pity that the two coincide, for it is easy to lose the sense of majesty of the past in the cheerful vulgarity of the present.

The word "Anuradhapura" does not mean, as has been so often stated, "the city of ninety kings," although it is quite true that no less than ninety kings followed each other in this royal and sacred city. The name is probably derived from Anuradha, a constellation of stars under which the city was founded, although there is a persistent legend that there was an Indian prince by the name of Anuradha who crossed over into Lanka with five companions in the year 500 B.C. and founded the settlement.

Whether it is the city of the constellation or the city of the Indian prince, it has remained the centre of Buddhism from the date of the conversion of King Tissa to the present time, and, of course, the Buddhists add to this fact by the sanctified legend that all previous Buddhas gave it holiness by their presence in the lost past.

Among the legends, some facts are clear. One of these is that King Pandukhabaya chose this as his site—or, if legend is correct, confirmed the choice of site made by Prince Anuradha—in the fifth century B.C. It did not become a city of importance, however, for over a century more, but by the first century A.D. it ranked with Babylon and Nineveh as one of the great cities of the world.

Nowhere else in Ceylon, and probably in all the East for Buddhists, is there to be found so sacred a place, almost inconceivably hallowed to millions of human beings, as the few square yards of ground whereon grows the Jaya Sri Maha Bodinwahanse, the holy Bo-tree. "Endowed," says the *Mahawansa*, "with many miraculous powers, it has stood for ages in the delightful Maha-megha garden in Lanka, promoting the spiritual welfare of the inhabitants, and the propagation of the true religion."

Historically it is the oldest tree in the world, a centre of veneration and hoary legend for 2236 years at this moment of writing. Throughout this colossal lifetime it has been guarded,

reverenced and tended, and the Sinhalese have never considered the possibility of its death. But it is certainly dying now, for only two branches of it had life when I last saw it many years ago. The leaves of this tree are always carefully preserved by pilgrims, though it is rather more than doubtful—for there are many Bo-trees in Ceylon—that the ones they treasure so reverently are always from the Maha Bodin-wahanse itself.

The tree stands on a high plinth at no great distance from the Brazen Palace to the north and the Peacock Palace to the south. At the bottom of the steps leading to the plinth is a fine specimen of a "moonstone"—that delicately carved bottom stone of a flight of stone steps which appears to be both a Sinhalese invention and one of their architectural specialities—and there are two carved "guard-stones" on either side of the steps at the bottom. One very strange decoration of the small temple is an undoubted unicorn, known locally as "kangawanna." The Sinhalese maintain that it is not a mythical beast at all, but one that was once as common as a horse.

There can be no doubt that the marauding Malabaris, who shattered so much of the creative work of the Sinhalese, respected the holy Bo-tree only because *Ficus religiosa* happens to be holy to Brahmins as well as Buddhists. Otherwise it would have been torn out by the roots, thus destroying, if Forbes is to be believed, what Buddhists believe to be the site of the religious trees of three former Buddhas in the present Kalpa—the Mahari tree of Kakusanda, the Ataika of Konagamma and the Nigrodi of Karsyapa Buddha. Happily the coincidence that the tree is equally holy to both religions saved it from such profanation.

Not far to the south, on the other side of the road leading from the centre of the city, is the so-called Peacock Palace. The word "maligawa," which means a palace, has rather a different connotation from its English equivalent. Any large building is called a "maligawa," including large monasteries such as the Loha Pasada.

The Peacock Palace was built in the first century A.D., and from the accounts of it given by the old chroniclers it must have been of extraordinary magnificence, for it is praised in lavish phrases. But nothing now remains except some thirty or so carved monoliths, some standing, some half-fallen and some broken and lying on their sides. It is supposed to have gained its

name through the brilliance of its outside decoration, but it is now a replica on a small scale of the astonishing Brazen Palace —the Loha Pasada previously mentioned—in the very centre of the modern bazaar.

This presents so strange a spectacle that it is almost impossible to imagine it as it must have been when it was actually a building, swarming with monks, the centre of a religious activity rarely equalled. There is nothing new that can be said of it, for after all, the facts are so simple as to permit of no variation, but its fame—and it is probably the most famous ruin in Ceylon—has not spread far from the island of its birth. Built by Dutthagamini as an act of penitence for the necessity of taking life while ridding Lanka of the Tamil usurper Ellala—for Buddhists are forbidden to kill—it was composed of nine stories, each of twelve to fourteen feet in height. The sixteen hundred granite columns, which still stand and which supported the first floor, are twelve feet in height, and, allowing some two feet for the thickness of each floor, the building with its roof must have been somewhere in the vicinity of 150 feet high, the first skyscraper. Forbes gives the original height of this building as 270 feet, but I do not believe that such a figure is possible in view of the shortness of the standing columns. None the less, something in the middle of my view and that of Forbes is probable, and a nine-story building which possessed one thousand rooms, housed three thousand monks and stood certainly not less than 150 feet in height is remarkable enough.

The most venerated of the monks lived on the highest floor of all, for the rule was "the greater the sanctity, the higher the eminence," but simplicity of adornment was not in this case practised. The rooms were finished in silver and the cornices embellished with gems, according to the *Mahawansa*. On the ground floor the huge central audience hall was supported by pillars of gold, in the midst of which there was a spectacular ivory throne, presumably for the high priest or chief of the tirunansis. All the furnishings were of exquisite finish and beauty, in gold, silver and other precious metals, while the roof was covered with brazen tiles. It must have shone with a golden glare for many miles around, in the heat of the day.

To-day one can wander among acres of the lonely monoliths which supported that colossal edifice, within hearing of the noisy bazaar encroaching almost into the precincts of the old monas-

tery. The Sinhalese have no sense of division between the past and the present, and no feeling for bathos. They build their own clumsy shanties all over the loveliest monuments of the past, and one is inclined to wonder what will happen now that the careful and reverent hands of the Archæological Department under its British trustees have been removed. It may be that life may return to the deserted cities, blatant, cheerful and vulgar, in all its Oriental fecundity, for I do not believe that the central hills are the proper habitat for most of the Sinhalese population. The highlanders will return to their mountains and the lowlanders may try, once again, to open up their fertile plains. It may be so.

All around the Brazen Palace, probably the hub of the old city, there are ruins of fascinating interest. Here is the tomb of King Batiya Tissa, there the site of the royal crematorium with its attendant "place of lamentation" for the royal dead. A collection of stones and monoliths marks the site of the assembly hall of the priests, and a mile away to the west, close to the hotel, is the Miriswetti dagoba, one of the oldest of all, built by Dutthagamini in 161 B.C.

The Miriswetti is fourth in size of the great stupas of Anuradhapura, and it is in a very fair state of preservation. The chief features of this dagoba are the massive altars, about twenty feet in height and ribbed with bars, on the platform surrounding the base. It is supposed to have derived its name from a Sinhalese word, "miri," meaning a chilli. Legend has it that King Dutthagamini, in a fit of absent-mindedness, once ate some food without sharing it with the priests. He realized his fault while actually in the act of swallowing a chilli and, as an act of penance, he built this dagoba and dedicated it to the priests under the name of Miriswetti.

A short distance away from this dagoba is a clump of huge monoliths known as "the elephants' stable," thought to have been a monastery of an heretical sect of monks known as the Dharmarucci.

All these ruins and scores of others are in the middle of what is known as the Mahagema Garden.

In Magadha, the home of Gotama, legend has it that a king named Bimbisara presented a spacious pleasure garden to the Buddha. It was natural that Tissa, on his conversion, should wish to show that the Sinhalese were at least the equal of the Magadhians in piety, and to this end he presented the Mahagema

Garden, twenty miles square in extent, to the Muni, together with countless wiharas, temples and dagobas, the ruins of which testify to his lavish generosity. This was in the third century B.C. "The eminent saint," says the *Mahawansa*, "fixed the points defining the boundary as marked by furrows made by the king's plough. Having fixed the position for the erection of thirty-two dagobas, this sanctified person completed the definition of all the boundary lines." The *Mahawansa* tells us that the king himself did the ploughing of the boundaries, a creditable piece of work, for however willing the buffaloes, to guide them for some sixteen miles is a tiring task.

Seen from the summit of one of the giant stupas, the King's Garden, with those lovely lakes the Basawak Kaluma and the Bulam Kaluma in the middle, is a glorious sight to this day. What it must have been like at the zenith of its beauty one can only guess, but I do not believe that any other city could have been more beautiful than Anuradhapura when at the height of its prosperity.

Before exploring more of this vast park, I should like to turn aside for a moment and walk around the bund of the largest of the lakes of Anuradhapura, Tissa Wewa, some two miles to the south. Here is the Isurumuniya rock temple, to my mind the most interesting and certainly the most beautiful of the Ceylon rock temples, although not to be compared in importance with the Kalu-gal wihara at Polonnaruha or the rock temple of Dambulla. With my imperfectly developed sense of archæology, perhaps even of architecture, I found Isurumuniya the most exciting and romantic spot in the island with the exception of Sigiriya, although I cannot say why. The place seems to reek of romance and of the past, with that particular atmosphere which clings to rocks and caves and calls to something atavistic in the most prosaic of men.

The temple, built by Tissa the Pious in the third century B.C., is half-carven from and half-built into a huge clump of those granite rocks to be found everywhere in the island. It has ponds in front of it and at the back, and the huge tank of Tissa Wewa behind gives it a perfect setting for which an artist might seek in vain. Why artists have done so little for Ceylon I do not understand. If gifted that way, I do not think that I could ever take my leave of the island, so rich is it in colour and atmosphere, so infinitely resourceful in the play of its light and shade.

Isurumuniya, from directly in front or from across the lotus pond at the back, is transcendently beautiful, but I have never seen a painting of it.

The pool or pokuna in front of it was built originally for ceremonial ablutions, but it has now been given over entirely to crocodiles. These creatures, fed by the priests, spend their serene days in these waters with only the lotus flowers and an army of marine insects for company. They are clearly regarded as pets and the monks appear to feel genuine affection for them.

Sculptured tablets and frescoes abound in the temple but few of them are of high quality. The sculptured doorway is, however, magnificent. The place was only discovered towards the end of the nineteenth century, and if it is any indication of the buried world still to be unearthed, there must be riches indeed under the jungle tide-wrack covering the central and northern plains.

On the main road back to the city there is a single pillar standing which is said to mark the spot where Dutthagamini met Ellala in that chivalrous personal encounter so highly honoured in Sinhalese history.

And now back again to the heart of the Mahagema Garden where Tissa left so vast a legacy to the honour of Gotama, although it all seems to have been ascribed by the Sinhalese to his own honour.

A short distance northwards along the Chandra Wankalang, once the street of eleven thousand houses, on the left-hand side of the road, is the most famous of all the dagobas, the Ruanwelli or Gold Dust dagoba. It is neither the largest, the oldest, nor the most beautiful, but it seems to have fired the imagination of the old chroniclers as none other, and the *Mahawansa* devotes many pages to a description of its glories.

When last I saw this giant, its restoration had been but half completed. It has now been finished and I have seen a photograph of it, but no measurements. This restoration work has been clumsily done by the devotion of countless pilgrims who, upon arrival in the sacred city from all over the East—but mostly, of course, from Ceylon—purchased a brick each from the priests and, ascending the scaffolding up the side of the enormous stupa, laid it reverently in place. A disgruntled villager with whom I conversed assured me that the priests did not care for the work to proceed too quickly and from time to time ascended the

scaffolding themselves, in the dark of the night, to remove a few layers of bricks. This almost libellous statement was, no doubt, due to the refusal of the citizen's Guru to fall in with his desires, but certainly the work has taken a long time. The photograph of the final product of all this devotion either fails to do justice to the art of the photographer, or the completed work compares most unfavourably with the standard of workmanship of the originals of these colossal monuments.

I did not climb the Ruanwelli myself, but above the top of the reconstructed brickwork, when I was there, the top half of the original structure resembled a jungle hill, covered in thick undergrowth, shrubs and trees. Underneath that natural covering the mound was composed of several million tons of brickwork.

Without entering into the detailed comparisons drawn by Tennent, some idea of these dagobas may be gained if one thinks of the bricks employed in the construction of a single one of them. A wall a foot thick and ten feet high could be built from London to Edinburgh from the bricks used to erect the Ruanweli, while a town the size of Northampton could be made of the bricks used in the Abhayagirya or the Jetawanarama dagobas. In the construction of each one of them, millions of tons of bricks were employed and the foundations were cut out to a depth of 100 feet before the work began.

The entrance to the Ruanwelli, the eastern portico, has been fully exposed and shows that the approaches to these holy monuments were splendid indeed. There is no roof remaining to the columns which flank the top of the entrance steps, but it is quite clear that they were roofed in former times, allowing sufficient room for elephants to pass under them.

The lowest platform encircling the stupa is 100 feet in width and is most impressive in its huge simplicity. The processions which used this paved highway were of considerable size, as the *Mahawansa* tells us, and looking at it now where it has been entirely cleared for inspection, one sees no reason to doubt the figures given by the old monks.

Above the lowest platform is another measuring 500 feet each way and apparently supported upon the heads of four hundred brick elephants most cunningly contrived. These beasts are nine feet in height, somewhat battered but most impressive to look upon. Originally they were coated with smooth *chunam*, one or two of them still retaining this veneer, and each elephant had

been given real tusks of ivory. No two of them were alike in their accoutrements, a masterpiece of detail.

All around this brick colossus are carvings, altars, carved monoliths, scrolls, Buddhas, kings—a stone world in wild profusion, fantastic testimony to a spacious past. One slab in particular is of great interest for the story it tells. It recounts the good deeds of King Kirti Nissanka, famous for his love of restoring pious buildings and for setting aside the wherewithal to maintain them. According to this testimony in stone, he decorated the capital like a city of gods.

Above the two great platforms mentioned, there are three terraces running around the base of the dagoba, above which the vast breast-shaped edifice sweeps skywards. It must have been pleasant indeed, in the cool evening of the day, to promenade round these terraces in pious contemplation—with, perhaps, an occasional interlude of earthly gossip—gazing out over the lovely city, mellowing in the glory of the sunset hour. A city of gods! Standing there now, in unimaginable peace, the thought of the race of men that could rear up such staggering buildings, and the conditions of the civilization that made them possible, is very salutary. It would need, for example, five hundred bricklayers, working English union time for fourteen years, to build a Gold Dust dagoba.

Incidentally the *Mahawansa* mentions a restoration of this noble building in A.D. 246, when a glass spire was included "to serve as a protection against lightning." Glass as a non-conductor of electricity was evidently understood many centuries before the nature of electricity itself was appreciated.

Around these silent and proud witnesses to past greatness, the convenient grasslands of the present, grazed by cattle into neat lawns almost as smooth as those of Hyde Park, cover hundreds of acres. On these lawns, in every direction, the relics of the lost city litter the grass. One may wander by the hour among the pokunas, monoliths, monuments, image houses, courts, wiharas, moonstones, steps and guardstones of an incredible ecclesiastical past, but of the houses, shops and markets of the ordinary people there is almost no sign. Except for the palaces of the kings—and even these were large groups of small houses rather than one vast building as in the case of the Vejayanta at Polonnaruha—it would seem that even the nobles of King Tissa's day lived in dwellings built of easily perishable materials similar, perhaps, to

those humble huts which form the town of Anuradhapura in modern days, so vulgarized by the late war as to suggest a shanty town of an American gold-rush film. No doubt they were larger than the cadjan huts of the present citizens of the sacred city, but it is at least suggestive that every solid ruin of the Mahagema Garden has some religious significance. Wood and mud and cadjan, in such a warm climate, were probably considered good enough for ordinary houses, and for citizens whose personal span of existence was confined to a mere threescore years and ten.

Pokunas are to be found at short intervals all over the area of the old city which, at its high noon, with its three great lakes and countless feeder tanks connected by a spider's web of canals, must have presented a glorious sight. These pokunas, to my mind, have never received the attention that they deserve, for their carvings and ornaments give them the right to rank with the baths of the old Roman cities, as we shall see during the course of our wanderings.

We will take leave of the Ruanwelli dagoba with an odd memory from the annals of the monks to bewilder us—the thought of this tremendous building covered with flowers, so that no bricks could be seen, to the glory of Buddha!

Immediately in front of the dagoba is an astonishing well for drinking purposes. Tennent gives its dimensions as 188 feet in diameter and 110 feet deep, and it uses the same architectural device seen in almost all the pokunas, concentric and descending steps.

Across the road is a granite slab supposed to commemorate the hallowed spot where Dutthagamini, on his death-bed, contemplated the great dagoba of his own creation and philosophized on death with the attendant priest. I say "supposed," for the actual slab of granite marking this site has been proved part of a building not put up for another thousand years after Dutthagamini's death.

A short walk due east brings us to all that is left of the Sailiyar Chettiar, a tiny dagoba built over two thousand years ago in the reign of the foreign usurper Dathiya. Although there is little to see, the place is nevertheless one of the holiest monuments of the past. I do not know why.

Further still to the east, on the outer circular road, is the enormous Northern Stupa, the Abhayagiri dagoba, mightiest of them all when originally built. Its name is very confusing—

that of the Northern Stupa—since it is, geographically speaking, the eastern stupa—but the reason for this was a genuine doubt as to which dagoba was which. For long the Jetawanarama was known as the Northern Stupa under the impression that it was the Abhayagirya. Now that the real identity of the two is known, they retain their first names of Eastern and Northern although they are now found to be in a reverse position.

When sturdy old Walagum Bahu descended from his mountain retreat to vanquish Dathiya and restore Lanka to the Sinhalese, he made penance and gave thanks in the ordinary way. In the Abhayagirya dagoba he built the largest dagoba-type building in the world and one which, after centuries of neglect, still stands foursquare to the heavens. Despite the millions of tons of bricks of which it is composed, no part of it has sunk.

The original height of this monster was 450 feet, considerably higher than our own St Paul's Cathedral, and the diameter of the dome is 360 feet. The dagoba stands upon eight acres of ground—sufficient testimony to its fantastic proportions—but it has never been properly excavated, no doubt through lack of funds, and its terraces are heaped over in places with the fallen brickwork. The top has either fallen, or has been smashed down by succeeding waves of invaders, and walking up the rough path to the summit is just like walking up a very steep and stony hill in the jungle. The view from the top is breath-taking.

The box-like structure at the very top has been partially restored, as has the spire, or *hti*, but the only other restoration that has taken place here—or had when I was there—was at the four cardinal points on the lower veranda. Here four massive altars, larger and finer than those of the Ruanwelli, have been opened up, and it is only reasonable to think that all the other work of this dagoba might be comparably larger and finer than that of the more famous Gold Dust dagoba. Certainly the few carvings revealed are of a high standard of workmanship. Cobras, elephants, horses, geese and bulls are much in evidence, together with symbolic animals of an imaginative character. The human figures on the altars are Nagas and their female companions, Nagani, indicative of the schismatical differences between the Abhayagiryans and the Maha Wihara or orthodox Hinayanist Buddhists. These ornamentations of snakes and Nagas suggest the basis of devil-worship behind the new Buddhism of the Abhayagiryanists.

Returning to the Chandra Wankalang, a walk of a quarter of a mile brings us to the intersection of the two great thoroughfares of the ancient capital. There is no suggestion left of the two central avenues of a mighty city, for the small roadway which goes off to the right ends abruptly at a lung of the Malwatte Oya. A very few yards to the left, however, is the most interesting and, to me, the most beautiful dagoba in Ceylon—the Thuparama.

Apart from its chief claim to fame, that it is the oldest monument either in Ceylon or India, the Thuparama is notable for its architectural beauty. It is bell-shaped, slenderly symmetrical and despite its simplicity—or perhaps because of it—altogether satisfying. It stands on a slight eminence in a clearing surrounded by fine trees and, as ever with these old Sinhalese monuments, it is not far from water. I have forgotten the name of the small tank so close at hand, but it is a symbol of that bloodstream of nature which made the dagobas possible.

Tissa, according to tradition, obtained the right jawbone of Gotama from Asoka, and a cupful of other relics from Sackraya to enshrine in this dagoba. In order to impress its holiness on the populace, the jawbone of Gotama, on arrival in Anuradhapura, rose from the back of the elephant that conveyed it, hurled itself into the air to a height of two thousand feet and hung there, flames and spouts of water bursting from it.

The Thuparama is in a state of almost perfect preservation, no doubt because of its handy size. It stands a mere sixty feet, instead of the four hundred of the original Abhayagirya, and it has clearly been practicable to keep so small a dagoba in repair, even when partly destroyed by raiders from time to time. Under the same circumstances, constant repairs to the giants were out of the question. Although work of renovation has gone on over the centuries on the upper half of the structure, the lower half of the Thuparama, with its platform and its carvings, is considered to be the original building erected in 307 B.C. Two thousand two hundred and fifty years is a long time for a building to stand, but there is no trace of deterioration in this exquisitely beautiful dagoba.

There is a wide terrace running round the base of the brickwork which is itself in two flat and receding tiers. On this platform there is a forest of ornamental pillars, many still standing, of beautiful proportions. The carving of the capitals is quite

magnificent, and altogether this first flowering of the spirit of Buddhism reached a perfection never again attained anywhere in the two giant capitals of the rising civilization.'

The pillars are arranged in four concentric circles, the tallest in the middle, the others tapering off to the lowest at the outside edge. The height of the inner ring of octagonal pillars is twenty-six feet and it is probable that they supported a roof above a court, or they may have been prayer-poles carrying streamers at the time of greatest ceremony.

Mr Hocart believes that the Thuparama is not constructed entirely of brickwork, as are the three giants, but partly of brick and partly of earth.

Within the grounds of this first of all the world's stupas are the ruins of the first Dalada Maligawa, or Palace of the Tooth. The famous relic, Gotama's Tooth, is said by legend to have arrived in Lanka concealed in the hair of a Tamil princess fleeing during a war in southern India during the reign of Kitsiri Maiwan, first monarch of the Sulawansa. In support of this legend, the funeral of Gotama took place at Kusinara in the year 543 B.C., after which his left canine tooth was taken to Dantepura, the capital of Kalinga, where it was treasured "for eight hundred years." When, however, the country was forced into a war with little hope of a successful issue, the king ordered his daughter to flee to Ceylon, whither Buddhism had fled before her, taking with her the sacred tooth to sanctuary. It was taken at once to Anuradhapura in A.D. 311, when the last touches were being given to the Jetawanarama, and the Dalada Maligawa was built for its reception close to the most honoured of the dagobas.

The outlines of this maligawa are still clearly defined, consisting of an entrance hall, ante-room and relic temple. The flight of steps up to the entrance are beautifully carved and the moonstone at their feet is outstanding. In one part of the building, the moulded jambs and lintel of a door still stand, making one sigh for the treasure-trove lost to us by the destructiveness of the Malabaris which has left so few examples of this kind of architecture complete. This temple was more than once razed to the ground by the invaders, and on each occasion the Tooth itself had to be smuggled away for safety. Once it was surprised, captured and taken to India, but it was ransomed by Parakrama III who brought it back in triumph to its spiritual home. Wherever

the hard-pressed Sinhalese, hounded from one place to another, made a halt, there they built a maligawa for the palladium until, at last, the uneasy relic came to its final home in Kandy. From the moment of its arrival in the island, however, the great Perehera was inaugurated. The Tooth was borne through the streets of Anuradhapura fifteen hundred years ago as it is borne to-day through the streets of Kandy, upon the back of a white elephant especially kept for the honour in the elephant stables of the priests.

To the west of the Thuparama, the embankment of the Basawak Kaluma—"kaluma" is the Tamil word for a lake, the Sinhalese word for which is "wewa"—deserves attention for it is thought to be the original bund built in 505 B.C., the remote age of Wijayo. Close by is the brick-built building called Gedigé, the Fruit House, which is thought to stand upon the site of the original royal palace.

To the north, close to the Bulam Kaluma—the second of the three great lakes of the capital which, with their connecting canals, made of Anuradhapura an inland Venice—is the last group of ruins that we have space to consider. Here there are two more dagobas, the Lankarama, of the third century A.D., and the Jetawanarama, built by the apostate Maha Sen in A.D. 330. Here, too, is the Ratna Pasada or Jewel Palace.

The Lankarama is just another dagoba, and the Jetawanarama is remarkable only for its gigantic size, the third of that vast trinity of which the Abhayagiriya and the Ruanwelli are the others. Even to-day it still stands 250 feet in height, and Tennent computes that its cubic content, in its original state, was no less than 20,000,000 cubic feet. To-day it looms up across the Basawak Kaluma like a conical forest hill, tree- and shrub-covered.

The Ratna Pasada was excavated as recently as 1912 and presents the usual spectacle of massive pillars. At the bottom of the approach steps there is only one guard stone, the other not yet having come to light. The one that has been excavated was discovered at a depth of seven feet under the surface, which gives some idea of the difficulty of reconstructing these wonderful ruins. This Jewel Palace was the headquarters of the Mahayanaist priests who had forgotten their vows of simplicity and were clearly living a life of great luxury and indolence.

In the triangle of road between the Lankarama and the Jeta-

wanarama there are several pokunas of high quality, and a pair of quite remarkable "cisterns" close to the Ratna Pasada. These tremendous canoe-shaped troughs are sixty-three feet in length, and are thought to have been used as receptacles for gifts of rice and other foodstuffs to the priests.

The Kuttam pokuna, on the north circular road, consists of two tanks or baths, built end to end. They are over one hundred feet long each by fifty feet wide and resemble, when full, an English swimming bath although built with an architectural pride unusual in English swimming baths. When empty, during the drought, they show descending terraces to a depth of twenty feet, connected by bold flights of steps. Cave points out that the famous baths of the Roman emperors, built contemporaneously with these pokunas, have long since crumbled beyond repair, whereas those of Lanka, although scattered by the malice of the invaders, are as sound as the day on which they were built when assembled by archæologists. Certainly the famous Roman swimming pool at Bath, in England, compares very unfavourably with many pokunas. With their lovely and imposing proportions, their fine terraces and impressive steps, the baths of Dutthagamini deserve far more notice than they have received. So too do the great dagobas, gigantic examples of man's toil, energy and reverence, at least the equal of the pyramids. Beyond the Great Pyramid of Cheops, I saw none other in Egypt comparable to the three huge stupas of the Sacred City.

It cannot be denied, of course, that the colossal industry displayed in the creation of these fabulous stupas far outweighs the originality of the architects, but it has to be remembered that the Sinhalese mind sees no virtue in originality. Indeed, it is considered improper to give any but an accepted version of a fundamental verity such as a portrait of the Buddha. There are three versions of this subject, and three only—standing, sitting and recumbent, all treated conventionally. In the same way, once the design for the dagoba was accepted, variations upon the theme were neither expected nor acceptable. The gay inventiveness of the Burmese in the development of pagodas, originally based upon the Sinhalese dagobas, does not accept this austerity of outlook, but it has prevailed with the Sinhalese throughout their history.

Unfortunately time and the Malabaris have dealt savagely with ruins which might have given us more insight into the

possibilities of the old Sinhalese race as architects. The audience halls, wiharas, palaces and image houses which abound are tantalizing in what they do not tell us, for although we are often confronted with pavilions whose general plan was obviously splendid, no superstructure of any kind has ever been left. Duplicated pediments, flights of steps, noble carvings, fine statues, vast granite blocks hollowed out to form a bath for elephants, gloriously carved cisterns, coffin-shaped blocks carved out in the shape of the human form—thought to be embalming blocks—stones carved with square holes as repositories of relics, pokunas, guardstones, moonstones; many hundreds of acres of cleared forest are covered with these mute testimonials to the skill of a highly gifted people, but in a sense they are only the minutiæ of the splendours of the lost metropolis. The skeleton of the city is there, but only the imagination can clothe it with the flesh of the past, for the glory has departed.

Despite the wealth of the ruins already disclosed, cleaned and restored by the devoted labours of the archæological department, the surrounding jungle for miles in all directions teems with the undisclosed secrets of that enormous city which, in its heyday, is thought to have housed a population of three million people. Even the famous wall built by King Wahapp, which was "sixteen gows in circumference," still remains to be exhumed, and it is possible to wander many miles in any direction and stumble upon fallen monoliths, broken masonry, soil still red from brickdust and granite slabs half-buried in soil which may indicate the lost palace of a noble for all that one can tell. The heart of the sacred city has been revealed, but remarkable though this work of restoration is, it is only a foretaste of what might have been accomplished if the things of the spirit, in modern times, commanded the same human respect as those of the flesh.

CHAPTER X

POLONNARUHA

ALTHOUGH Anuradhapura was the capital city of Lanka for a thousand years, Polonnaruha had long been a favourite place of residence for the Sinhalese royal house. But the origin of this city remains obscure, for its very name has no meaning. Indeed, in the *Mahawansa* it is called "Pulastipura," but it rose to eminence, with its present name, following upon the disastrous reign of Kasyapa. The civil wars and the constant invasions of the Malabaris led to the final decay and ruin of Anuradhapura in the eighth century A.D., and in order to retain some measure of independence the unfortunate Sinhalese were forced to evacuate the scenes of their former glory. Abandoned to the Damilos, the doom of the sacred city was finally sealed.

Wijayo Bahu I put a stop to the Tamil incursions, but it was to the brilliant if short-lived renaissance brought about by the national hero Parakrama that the rise of the new capital was due. The uneasy existence of the Sinhalese between the fall of their first great capital and the rise of Parakrama left behind, in Polonnaruha, almost nothing of significance. It appears to have been a dark age akin to that suffered by England in the centuries following the withdrawal of the Roman legions, and it culminated in the sacking of Polonnaruha by the irrepressible Tamils in A.D. 1023. It is a tribute to the Sinhalese people that they were able to keep their culture alive at all, ready to flower in splendour again under the leadership of Parakrama, for scarcely one brick remains standing upon another of the town of Polonnaruha as it was before that hero's reign.

But when, finally, it rose to its peak of fame under the great king it must have been a city of splendour indeed, if the *Mahawansa* is to be believed, and that it can be accepted fully, where facts are concerned, I am confident. Again and again its accuracy has been established by new discoveries of which the *Mahawansa* gives completely accurate descriptions. Archæological discoveries, in fact, have invariably borne out the accounts

given of various hitherto unknown buildings by the old monks.

Many people well able to judge, including Sir Emerson Tennent, rate Polonnaruha more highly than Anuradhapura, but I confess that I cannot understand this estimate of the medieval city. The ruins that remain, fascinating as they are, do not, to my mind, challenge comparison with the purity of design and sheer magnificence of those of the sister capital sixty miles away across the plain. None the less, they must be numbered among the wonders of the world.

It must be remembered that the area restored so far is but a sample of that which remains to be revealed, for this medieval capital was enormous. It was a metropolis of parks and gardens, lakes and waterways, flowers, shrubs and flowering trees in tropical abundance; with hospitals, almshouses, schools, theatres and libraries as well as all the vast temples and other religious buildings that one expects of that old civilization, all enclosed by a wall surrounding an area of land equivalent to that upon which modern London is built. Whereas, of course, London is crowded and lumped together with a density of population only exceeded by parts of New York, the old capital of Lanka was built with a roomy dignity which conformed with the more leisurely philosophy of the age. Polonnaruha was as large as modern London in area, but there is no question of a comparable population. The city was built with no niggard hand and designed with an opulence uncomplicated by the theories upon which Western economic life is based. The resultant beauty was accepted as an indispensable background to life as lived during the high noon of the irrigation civilization.

Little of all this remains to be seen to-day, but the atmosphere of beauty and spaciousness clings like an aura to the central highway, running along the bund of the King's Lake—now considerably smaller in size than it was then—along which highway all that has been uncovered of the buried city is grouped. It remains almost as beautiful in decay and ruin as it must have been at the height of the Indian summer of Parakrama. The new life already beginning to form around the ancient central city has had, as yet, curiously little effect upon the silence and the majesty of the past, although the modern development of the cheerful, bustling Oriental life which characterizes the modern section of that other ancient capital, Anuradhapura, will have broken the silence of centuries.

The heart of the old city was the Topa Wewa, a considerable lake built by Upatissa II and restored by Sena in A.D. 838. Parakrama enlarged it, and the bund built by him remains to this day, although the tank has been breached and its active life long since ended as a distributor of water for irrigation purposes. Even in its shrunken old age it is beautiful beyond description, its waters, seen from the high bank where the rest-house now stands, stained, at the going down of the sun, with all the colours of the peacock's wing.

A member of the Archæological Department with whom I conversed told me that, even if the necessary funds were available, half a century's work would be needed to open up all the wonders of this old medieval city discovered, in 1820, by an English officer, Mr Fagan. The large central buildings, whose magnificence even the jealous jungle could not hide, although splendid in themselves, do no more than hint at the stupendous proportions and dignity of the original city.

Starting our journey of discovery from the far north, some three miles from the rest-house, we come first upon the northern temple—the Demala Maha Saya dagoba—so like the Jetawanarama (of Polonnaruha, not to be confused with the dagoba of the same name in Anuradhapura), on a small scale, that I will leave a full description of it for fear of duplication. In this building, as in all the city, there is a strong flavour of Hindu architecture. Along the main walls grotesque goblins, beautifully carved, stand around in a frieze like the elephants on the plinth of the Ruanwelli at Anuradhapura, apparently supporting a crushing burden. Inside the main temple there is a colossal statue of Buddha and some Jataka frescoes of real merit. Close by the temple is the mound of brick rubble, covered with jungle vegetation, which was once the dagoba of the same name.

In Polonnaruha, as in Anuradhapura, there are many pokunas, and close to the Demala Maha Saya is one named the Lotus Bath. The floor is scalloped to represent the eight petals of this mystic flower, a perpetual motif in both Sinhalese and Hindu decorations. Each platform of steps repeats the lotus motif, giving the pokuna the appearance of being a huge flower in stone, a lovely piece of work.

A walk of nearly two miles through the jungle brings us to the most famous rock cave, after Dambulla, in Ceylon—the Kalu Gal, black rock, wihara. Here, from one huge stone of



Jetawanarama temple, Polonnaruha, with the headless Buddha seen against the back wall



The Gal-potta, or book of stone, Polonnaruha, with the Wata-dagé and the Thuparama in the background

granite, there have been carved three colossal figures, in the three conventional positions, of Buddha and Ananda. Although these figures appear to be quite independent, in reality they were hewn from the solid boulder to which they remain attached by ties of original rock.

The most formidable of these three figures is the reclining Buddha, with the sorrowing disciple Ananda standing by his side, both figures carved with a simplicity and an austerity eclipsed nowhere else in the island. The Buddha has about his whole attitude a marvellous verisimilitude to a resting figure. There is repose in every inch of the stone and the head *rests* upon the right hand, while the left arm fits naturally and easily along the curve of the thigh. This statue is forty-six feet in length, a lovely piece of artistry, although many judges think that the figure of Ananda is even finer. Certainly the expression of grief-stricken sorrow on the face of this carved figure is uncanny. This most beloved disciple of Gotama stands there, twenty-six feet in height, an emblem of eternal grief. It looks as though there was once a building of some sort covering these two figures and the wall carvings a little further along the rock face—no doubt a monastery—but no trace remains of it now.

The temple itself is small, carved out of the rock, with another figure of Buddha, this time sitting, at the end of the cave. Again the figure is carved from the living rock with a background of dagobas and attendant Buddhisats on either side, flanked with lions. There are many other figures and symbols, and altogether the whole group is one of great beauty.

The entrance to the cave repeats the architectural trick of the goblins seen in the Demala Maha Saya. They stand there apparently holding up the vast mass of the rock by their own unaided efforts, a most effective piece of work, probably derived from the Græco-Buddhist style—a legacy of Alexander the Great —of Magaha. The lion theme in the carvings strikes quite an Assyrian note.

Beyond the entrance to the wihara is the third of the mighty sculptured figures, this time a seated Buddha of workmanship decidedly inferior to those of the reclining Buddha and of Ananda.

A little to the south of the Kalu-gal wihara, on the main thoroughfare of the ancient city running along the bund of the lake in a straight line miles to the south, is a group of ruins of

great interest. It consists of the Kiri, or milk dagoba, and the Jetawanarama temple previously mentioned, both of them standing on one immense platform built in two tiers.

The Jetawanarama is not, as is the building of the same name in Anuradhapura, a dagoba, but a temple of pronounced Hindu architecture. It is perhaps better known as the Lankatilleke (not to be confused with the Lankatilleke temple near Kandy) and is one of the really important architectural contributions made by Parakrama. Vijayo Bahu III restored this temple in the thirteenth century, as an inscription on one of the guardstones records, and the work of the Archæological Department has now revealed it in its entirety. To my mind it is a Hindu temple and nothing more, despite its objective as the great central shrine of Buddhism in the new capital. The architecture is purely Hindu, and the prevalence of the Lingam and Sacred Bulls in the ornamentation duplicates such temples as the famous Hindu centres of Madura and Rameswerам.

It is, of course, perfectly clear what had happened to make the Hindu influence so strong in the new capital of the Sinhalese. Driven from their own sacred city, existing for centuries in a state of constant strife, the Sinhalese, although they remained builders and masons, lost their own native art. Parakrama found it necessary to import architects from southern India, probably from the provinces he had conquered, and the bastard architecture of Polonnaruha is the result. The Jetawanarama and the Thuparama (Polonnaruha) are indistinguishable from similar buildings in India, and it is for this reason, above all, that I do not understand the claim of archæologists that the splendours of Polonnaruha eclipse those of Anuradhapura. Neither in size, magnificence of design, layout or purity does the former, in my opinion, compare favourably with the latter. In this, it must be admitted, I am voicing a personal and untrained opinion only, and it is not shared by many more competent to judge.

The Jetawanarama is 170 feet long by 80 feet wide, with a height which must have been—when it reached full arch and had a roof surmounting it—at least one hundred feet. The walls, built of red brick and coated with chunam, are twelve feet thick, and the two huge columns flanking the entrance are almost awe-inspiring. Against the back wall stands a mighty figure of the Buddha, now headless, some sixty feet in height.

This temple was the holiest of all in the king's city, but it

provides irrefutable evidence of the corruption of the pure faith of Buddhism by Hindu influences. That the idolatry of the Tamils had seeped into the bloodstream of the Sinhalese is discernible everywhere one goes in Toparé—a modern name for Polonnaruha based upon the name of the lake, Topa Wewa—and nowhere more so than in this, the central monument. It is said to be an exact replica of the temple built by Gotama himself at his birthplace, Kapili Vashi, but while it is true that Gotama, himself a Hindu, would have known no other style of architecture than that prevalent in his own country, any such claim seems to me quite untenable. The Muni loathed magnificence and thought in terms of utmost simplicity. Vast temples with impressive entrances flanked by soaring columns are so alien to thoughts of simplicity that the claim has no more basis in fact than if it were to be said that Christ had erected a cathedral on the scale of St Peter's at Rome. Simplicity is a quality which never survives in the story of the great religions.

There are many lesser ruins around this huge temple; no doubt the remains of "the eight stately houses" of three stories each built for the priests, or the image-houses, halls and libraries mentioned in the *Mahawansa;* but they are hard to reconstruct even in imagination, from the forlorn monoliths and slabs of masonry that cumber the ground to-day.

The "milk" dagoba, so-called from its white coat of protective chunam, is a thing of beauty still, even in partial ruin. It is not as large as the Rankot, which we shall see presently, but it is more than twice the size of the Thuparama at Anuradhapura, with which dagoba I could not but couple it in my mind. To me it was the most beautiful, perhaps because it was the most simple of all the legacies of the past at Polonnaruha, and it is easy, looking at it, to reconstruct the perfection of the original, snow-white, surmounted by the *hti* and the spire of gold which we know it possessed. The *Rajavali* says that it was erected in 1187, in the reign of the usurper Kitsen Kisdas, who built also a circular temple and a house for the Dalada, or Sacred Tooth.

Tennent says that the group of pillars at the base of the two terraces, each six feet in height, which surround the Jetawanarama and the Kiri dagoba, are the ruins of the city Gansabhawa, the equivalent of our Court House for petty sessions. Gansabhawas exist still in modern Lanka, and are the courts in which all minor offences are tried and disputes settled.

Not far away from this group is the Rankot dagoba, chiefly remarkable for its size. Built by Nissanka in the thirteenth century, it is the only dagoba at Polonnaruha which rivals the magnificence of sheer size of the great trio at Anuradhapura, and its true name is the same as the most famous of the three, the Ruanwelli. But it is known also as the Rankot, and to differentiate—the duplication of famous names in the two cities is natural but confusing—I use that name throughout.

The protective coat of chunam has been cracked in many places and seeds dropped by birds, or blown by the wind, have established themselves in fissures with the inevitable results of time and the processes of nature. I gained the impression, in Polonnaruha, that the jungle was of a fiercer and more bustling nature than that which surrounds Anuradhapura, for buildings erected many centuries later than those of the older capital are in a worse state of decay in many instances. It may be, of course, that the workmanship of the earlier and more solid civilization had a perfection lacking in that of the brilliant but doomed civilization of Parakrama. Whatever the reason, the Rankot has suffered severely from trees and shrubs which, growing in cracks of the mason work, have burst asunder great sections of it. Even so, it is a noble pile, 186 feet in diameter and, in its original state, perhaps 200 feet high. All around its base are grouped the ruins of small buildings, probably chapels, all elaborately carved, the work of King Kirti Nissanka.

There are many other similar dagobas in Polonnaruha, all built to the same plan and in very much the same condition. None equals the Rankot in size, and since one dagoba is very like another, I do not propose to mention any more of this type of monument. But they are there, silent witnesses to the prolific energy of an earlier day.

A mile away, on the road to the rest-house running through beautiful woods, is the next great group of ruins, but on our way we must turn aside, for a moment, to look at a statue believed to be that of the greatest of all Sinhalese kings, Parakrama himself.

He stands, a bearded, corpulent giant, looking out across the plains over which, for centuries, the raiders from India swarmed like locusts, destroying, ravaging, looting. Cut in the living rock, he is a remarkable piece of statuary, forty feet high, holding in his hands an Ola or sacred book of palmyra leaves, no doubt as a mark of his deep piety. Around his waist is a girdle, richly embroidered,

and the robe which covers the king's body is beautifully carved by the unknown artist.

We come next to a clearing, carved out of the strangling grip of the jungle, in which is the next group of ruins. They stand, curiously aloof in their lonely splendour, even more solitary in their isolation than they were when enfolded by jungle vegetation.

The Thuparama is not, as is its namesake at Anuradhapura, a dagoba. It is an oblong building in the same architectural style as the Jetawanarama (Polonnaruha) with massive walls and low, square tower. When Mr Burroughs opened up this temple in 1886, he described it as still having its roof in place, almost the only ancient building of either city to do so, but it has fallen in since. Ruins of no less than twelve statues of Buddha stand around the walls, but the most instructive find of all was an immense slab of granite on which was inscribed the story of King Parakrama's mighty victories in Dambadiva—India—ending up by saying that the slab itself was the king's favourite seat when he wished to allay bodily weariness.

The next building is the Sat-mahal-prasada, a fascinating seven-storied building standing up like a child's edifice of bricks, each story a receding replica of the one beneath it. The seventh is so small and box-like that it does not appear to have had any function at all, and indeed, although there is a suggestion of a stairway inside, it does not go beyond the first floor. There are also steps climbing the outside, but these too only go as far as the first floor. It is impossible to say, therefore, if the remaining five stories were ever used or if they were purely decorative. Cave says that the origin of this curious place is wrapped in mystery, but since it is close to the monoliths which experts think may be the ruins of the colossal palace of Parakrama, the Vejayanta, it may have been the residence of the chief priest.

In front of the Sat-mahal-prasada is the Gal-pota, or stone book, so called from its resemblance to the thick boards which hold the Olas together, thus forming a book, in an Oriental library. This stone is a monolith twenty-six feet long by four broad, with the sacred geese of Buddhism carved all round its edges and an inscription upon its face which tells the story of how the strong men of Nissanka carried it there from Mihintale, sixty or more miles away. Nissanka Mala, the king in question,

had a fine taste in anticipating the future. Wherever he went, he inscribed rocks to tell posterity of his own beneficent deeds.

The Round House, the Waté Dagé, is a new departure in Sinhalese architecture. It is, as its name implies, circular in construction, and conforms to the description given in the *Mahawansa* of the halls built by King Parakrama, close to his palace, "made of stone in an oval form." The walls are now some twenty feet high, and there is a surrounding promenade of stone, with stone balustrade and pillars. Stairs climb to this promenade at the four cardinal points of the compass, embellished with the usual moonstones at the foot of each flight.

The Nissanka-lata-manda-laya, the flower altar of Nissanka, is one of the most famous treasures of either city. Eight enormous twisted columns, carved to resemble the trunks of trees, stand upon a plinth. There is no roof, but around the platform the Archæological Department have restored a three-ringed fence, built of solid granite bars, a fine specimen of a "Buddhist rail."

In this same group of ruins is the Ata-dagé, the House of the Eight Relics, built of brick, faced with stone.

Of the Vejayanta, the fabulous palace of Parakrama, built in seven stories with its hundreds of pinnacles gleaming in the sun and its thousand rooms teeming with soldiers, nobles, priests and politicians of the day, nothing certain remains. The lonely monoliths previously mentioned seem to be in the position indicated by the *Mahawansa* as the site close to the Round Houses—but so much exploratory work still remains to be done that it would be idle to pretend that there is any certainty in the matter. I am by no means convinced, myself, that the huge slab of brickwork known as the King's Palace close to the rest-house is in reality the Vejayanta, but it may be so. Certainly, whatever this colossal corner of a building may have been, it was a giant in size.

A certain doubt, too, exists in connection with the ruins of the Dalada maligawa. It is known that there were, in fact, three palaces to house the Sacred Tooth, the most famous of which was built by Parakrama. The description of this palace given in the *Mahawansa* is so lyrical that it is impossible to reconcile it with the Round House that we have already seen, a fine enough ruin but obviously never of the mighty proportions described by the *Mahawansa*. "It was like unto the Palace of the Goddess of Beauty," said that record—an odd metaphor, surely, for a temple put up to hold the sacred relic of the advocate of simplicity?—

"and shone with lustre so great that all that was delightful on earth seemed to have been gathered together and brought into one place." Though it shone with roofs and windows and doors of gold, with countless works of art within and without, it is a vision that has gone.

There are two others, somewhat ominously known as Siva Dewale 1 and 2. What a dewale labelled with the name of the Destroyer has to do with the relic house of the gentle Gotama I cannot imagine, and none of my Buddhist friends have been able to make clear to me, but both these buildings are blatantly Hindu.

Nevertheless the first, and smaller, is a little gem of a place, its walls built of granite blocks, impressively huge, and fitted together with a nice precision that shows the mason's art at its very highest. The simple decorations for once belie the usual gaudy colourings of Hindu temples.

The second was built by King Nissanka Mala, a single-storied building of no great height, but of quite exceptional beauty. Of its kind I thought it without rival in Polonnaruha, and as an example of stonework it would be hard to beat anywhere in the world.

The last recognizable group of ruins is close to the rest-house and is scattered around the remains of that great palace of unknown origin which may have been the Vejayanta. It is thought, in fact, to have been built by Wijayo III in the thirteenth century, and its massive walls are nine feet thick. The high pile of stone which is all that now remains bears no resemblance whatever to the freehand drawing of this palace made by Tennent in 1860.

Alongside are the remnants of a pavilion, the splendid stone plinth of which is covered with the carved figures of lions and elephants, while dragons writhe their way, serving as balustrades to the flights of stairs ascending the plinth. This is thought to have been an audience hall in one of the pleasure gardens in which the lovely city abounded, and a portion of the wall still stands.

A short walk away, but within the palace grounds, is the ruin known as the Kumara Pokuna, the Bath of the Prince. The very word Kumara betrays the strong Hindu grip of Sinhalese life evident even during the Indian Summer of Parakrama. The bath has a paved floor and gaps where steps once ran down to the

water and it must have been handsome indeed before it was wrecked. All over this great clearing lie monoliths and pillars, blocks of granite, carved stones, thrown as a child throws its toys when it has tired of them, probably by the giant hand of the destroyer Magha. But they remain, and no doubt my friend of the Archæological Department, if given the funds and the labour, could rebuild from the existing materials the broad outline of that wonderful city.

Close to the rest-house there are some casual ruins thought to have been the council halls of Nissanka Mala. The plinths remain, but the vast pillars have fallen and lie where they fell. It was here that the enormous Lion of Polonnaruha was found, now in Colombo Museum, once part of Nissanka's fabulous lion throne. On what is now a promontory, but was once an island, is all that is left of the Pleasure House of Parakrama.

It is fitting to end with Parakrama, the presiding genius of the place. What we have seen represents only the shadow of the heart of the lost city, for it is known that the jungle for miles in all directions is full of ruins yet to be excavated. It is an archæological paradise, the work—for all the massive restoration and the clever sylvan clearings and the lively new scheme of colonization—but barely begun. Lovely and lonely, with that forlorn air which clings to all such witnesses of man's greatness fallen into dust, Polonnaruha has a charm and fascination all its own. Possibly that is why it has been given an eminence, in my view quite unjustified, over the colossal monuments of Anuradhapura. Flowering for a brief spell in the middle of centuries of strife and civil wars, it has left behind it a charm and a colourful atmosphere of romance incomparable in its appeal. Most of it remains buried to this day, for the King's Wall stretched ninety miles in its circuit of the city, but that part of it which stands revealed, defiant of time and the threatening forest alike, sears itself into the memory of all who behold it as the emblem of the dignity and culture of a vanished race.

CHAPTER XI

SIGIRYA

THE right and proper way to approach the lonely rock fortress of Sigirya—that enigmatic outcrop of gneiss standing almost foursquare and formidable in the northern plains—is from Kandy, the ancient capital of the hills. The road from Kandy to Trincomalee passes through country of such varied and prolific beauty that it has few rivals, even in this country of loveliness.

At the eighth mile from Kandy is a Moorish village supposed to have been founded by some Arabs in the service of Raja Singha II, living close to the rock temple of Galagane, thought to have been founded in the first century B.C. At the seventeenth mile, surrounded by the Hunysgeria mountains crowned by the fine peak of that name, is the little town of Matale—the Maha Talawa of the *Mahawansa*—immaculate, beautiful, guarded by an imposing ring of mountains accessible, before the advent of the English, only by a few secret hill tracks the secret of which was known only to the Kandyans. Matale is best seen from the top of the Ballkadawa Pass, some few miles before it is reached, nestling in its valley. I did not see the Loka-bambara-gaha—the tree of bambara bees—noticed by Forbes on the top of this pass, but it is by no means an unusual phenomenon in Ceylon. Forbes tells us that this tree housed over a hundred swarms and, although I have never seen as many as that, there was one on my own tea estate, where between thirty and forty of these swarms hung in a semicircular comb, a menace to any passing horseman, for they seem to resent the smell of horse more than anything else. Each year they returned to this same tree, and I have no doubt at all that Forbes's hundred swarms still go back to the Loka-bambara-gaha on the top of the Ballakadawa Pass.

From a small conical hill in Matale, the ramparts of Fort Macdowell—that same General Macdowell who left the miserable Davie and his handful of Malays to perish at the hands of the treacherous Pilimar—once commanded the town. Only

remnants of these earthworks remain, but the fort was well sited and indicates the importance with which the town was regarded. The English church now stands on the spot where this fortress frowned over the little town.

Matale was, at one time, a place of residence of chiefs and princes, and King Walagum Bahu lived here for a time while in exile from his kingdom of Anuradhapura. The site is still known to the Sinhalese as Walabanuwara, but Walagum Bahu was not the only king to live there. In the twelfth century Gajah Bahu and Siriwallaba held their court there. Ehelapola, too; the scheming Adigar whose wife and children were murdered with such ferocious cruelty by the last of the Kandyan kings; had his estates in this district.

For a town with such a lively past, it is curious how few monuments remain.

Two miles out of Matale, down a turning off the main road to Trincomalee, is the sacred place known as the Alu Wihare. It was here that, a century before Christ, King Walagum Bahu convened the great meeting to consider the threatening shadow of schism upon Buddhism. The most important result of this convocation was that the sayings and teachings of Gotama, handed on by word of mouth alone for five centuries, were at last committed to writing. Alu Wihare is now, of course, the most holy place in the island to all Buddhists, with the exception of the hill of Mihintale.

Walagum Bahu must have possessed an instinct for atmosphere. If he had searched the island, rich as it is in romantic caves and rocks, he could not have found another out-of-the-way corner so mystic in its setting as the Alu Wihare. Great twisted masses and pinnacles of rock lie here, hemmed in by the surrounding jungle. With their penchant for caves, the monks built, under the two beetling cliffs of granite, the cells in which they and their descendants have lived ever since. To-day there are few of them, for the British soldiers wrecked most of the cells they found here in 1803. The cliffs rise to a considerable height above them, where they cower in the cleft. Along the left-hand side of this cleft runs a veranda, covering the entrance to the remaining cells, and inside the veranda, on the face of the rock, are some frescoes; crudely executed but interesting, portraying, as they do, the Buddhist conception of the punishment awaiting sinners in this life when they reach future reincarnations.

On one of the pinnacles of rock is a print of Buddha's footstep, in imitation of that on Samanala, or Adam's Peak; and on high ground at the end of this extraordinary fissure are three graceful areca palms—an effective touch of artistry in the rugged grandeur of the scene—beyond which is perched a small but lovely white dagoba.

This was the setting for that convocation which produced the Buddhist equivalent of the Bible, the *Tri Pittaka*, literally the Three Baskets of the Law. The Buddhist Bible, the *Bana Pota*, runs to 592,000 stanzas, and the *Athakatha*—commentaries compiled by Buddha Ghosa in the fifth century A.D.—comprise another 362,000 stanzas. The teachings of Gotama himself are divided into three sections. The first, Winaya, is for the priests, the second, Sutra, for the laity, and the third, Abhidharunna, is for Devas and Brahmas of the celestial world—the word Brahma here meaning the same, but having no connection at all with Brahma, the Giver of Life, of the Hindu Trimurti.

One of the caves is dedicated to Buddha Ghosa—who re-translated the Sinhalese text of the *Tri Pittaka* into Pali and made it available to Burmese Buddhists, to whom, in consequence, Alu Wihare is particularly holy.

In addition to the teachings of Gotama, there are also the Jattakas—or 550 births—akin to the parables of our Lord. They are legendary tales supposed to have been told by Gotama; fascinating, and of never-failing interest to the Sinhalese. Many of these Jattakas are undoubtedly the originals of what came to be known afterwards as Æsop's Fables.

Thirteen miles beyond this awesome shrine is the village of Nalanda; where there is a temple called Gedige dating from the seventh century; which marks the end of the foothills and the beginning of the central and northern plains. The thirty miles traversed from Kandy to Nalanda, through that wild country which, for so many centuries, defied successive waves of invaders, constitutes a thrilling experience to the traveller who traverses them with some knowledge of past history to help him along. The cliffs and crags and brooding forests, the queer sharp peaks that rise to heights of over five thousand feet, the rushing streams and precipitous gorges, and the tangled labyrinth of rocks and forest in which armies floundered and were lost, are there still, tamed but by no means subdued. The forests of the highlands have been reduced in size by the opening up of tea

and rubber estates, areca nut, cinchona, vanilla, pepper, cardamoms all now are grown in gardens, and from time to time, in the watered valleys, the immemorial rice-fields of the villages shine, a brilliant emerald colour, in the darkness of the surrounding forest; but the spirit of the place is unbroken.

Beyond Nalanda the plains begin, and civilization is at an end but for the ribbon of the road and the few villages clinging to it as it makes its way through the jungle towards the north.

Dambulla, a few miles beyond Nalanda, is perhaps rather more than a village at the moment, with the increase of importance which accrued to it by reason of the aerodrome built there during the war; but in former times it was just a village close to the most famous rock temple in the island. It will probably revert to its peaceful serenity—if it has not already done so—now that the toys of the white man have been removed and the jungle has crept back over its accustomed acres. The villagers made what profit they could from the troops and fliers who had to live there, but I had a long discussion with one of our men, and found him defeated by the detachment and the impersonal curiosity displayed by the Sinhalese towards the interlopers. The furious tempo of the life led by the actual flying men, the buzzing of the infernal machines dropping down out of the sky to disgorge mere men, the noise and the antlike activity of all concerned, evoked almost no response from the local inhabitants. It was as if they knew that such things would pass and leave them to the ways of nature and their sacred caves on the hill.

This indifference to the curiously vulgarizing effect of the war is noticeable throughout the island. Jeeps and lorries, troops and aeroplanes, all these things settled themselves like a new breed of locust. Photographs of centuries-old villages taken during the war give them an appearance of small mid-western townships of the United States, which sprang into energetic life within a matter of weeks. Everything appears improvised, blatant and cheap. Advertisements and lorries, the tangled mess of telephone wires and their hideous posts running down the middle of the main street in Anuradhapura, the petrol cans and the film posters, all are shown in their bizarre ugliness wherever the blight of war sent troops in any numbers into camps. Beauty is everywhere defeated by the ugliness of Western contraptions and the villagers appear to have witnessed it, partaken of it, profited from it as much as possible and yet rejected it spiritually as completely

as they reject Christianity. As ever in their history, they showed, during the war, that they have no use for foreigners.

Dambulla—known as Rangiri, the Golden Rock, from having had the whole of its temple gilded by King Kirti Nissanka—is a place dreaming of the past. The rock temples which have made it famous have stood on their high hill for two thousand years and will be there, no doubt, two thousand years from now.

Before we make the ascent of that steep crag, I must mention the canal of Ellahara which passed close to Dambulla on its journey from Matale to the sea, eight centuries ago. It was of such a size and so perfectly constructed from an engineering point of view that it is said to have been navigable over its whole course of some seventy-odd miles, and I have no reason to doubt this legend. In fact I see no reason, other than the compelling power of economics over human destinies, why the whole of the northern plains should not be made to bloom again as they did fifteen centuries ago and, if necessary, by the identical methods then employed, for they were methods that it would be hard to improve upon except in detail.

The waters of the Ambanganga, a tributary of the Mahawelliganga at Matale, were conveyed by Parakrama's canal into a series of huge reservoirs—Kalu-wewa, Minneriya, Kowdellai and Kantalai being the four largest—from which they were redistributed into a swarm of smaller tanks, each feeding its own small district. Certainly it could be done again, for the world's food production is dangerously low. The pity is that the British, who are much more level-headed than the Sinhalese, did not do it on a sufficiently large scale while they retained the sceptre.

The approach to the rock of Dambulla has something in common with that of Sigirya, already discernible across the blue plains twenty miles away. Both are enormous, isolated rock masses hurled upon the flat plains as if in the sport of gods, but whereas Dambulla lies naturally at the foot of the mountain range, still part of it, if an outpost, Sigirya stands by itself as if it had tumbled down at such speed that it had rolled twenty miles before it could stop. The only other places at all similar are Yappahuwa, fifty miles to the west of Matale; Dahiakande, close to the fort of Viggitapura; and the mountain of Rittigalla where the Yakkas are said to have made a great stand against the forces of Dutthagamini. This last is the haunt of ghosts, spirits and devils to this day, and greatly feared by the jungle people.

Dambulla is one boulder, almost without vegetation, five hundred feet in height and a mile round the base. Close to the top is a natural cave that has been turned into a series of five by crude workmanship. This retreat was chosen by Walagum Bahu as one of his hiding-places while in exile during the first century B.C On regaining his throne, one of his first acts was to turn the caves which had sheltered him into rock temples, and as such they have remained for two millenniums.

To reach the top of this giant slab of rock, one climbs a steep stairway cut into the living rock, and the view from the summit beggars description. As far as the eye can see, the mountains of Ceylon stretch away to that indeterminate horizon where sky and land blend, while to the north the carpet of the forest unrolls itself into the mists of distance.

To turn from this smiling vista to the interior of the caves is to turn from light to darkness in more senses than one. There is something evil, to my mind, about these rock temples, the very smell of corruption; a purely personal feeling born, I think, of my intense sympathy with the religion of Gotama as I understand it. That gentle, simple creed seems to me to hold in it the essence of Christianity, falling short of Christ's teaching because Gotama was a man, with nothing but a man's fallible reason to guide him. What I found at Dambulla had little in common with the Buddhism as preached by Gotama. Frankly, to me, the temple was purely idolatrous; Buddhism making its surrender to Brahminism.

The outside of the cave is sheer bathos, some miserable verandas, tile-covered in the slipshod modern manner, hiding the richly carved and highly ornate entrance to the temple. In front of this entrance there is a courtyard extending to the top of the precipice looking out over the plain, blue at all times of the day with heat and distance. There is a Bo-tree in the centre of the courtyard, of no great antiquity, although—as with every other sacred Bo-tree in the island—it claims to be of the seed of the Jaya Sri Maha Bodin-wahanse at Anuradhapura.

Inside the cave, in the sombre light, it seemed to me as if I had entered some chamber of the nether world, uncanny and noisome, a nightmare in which queer creatures slithered and writhed. This is not as fanciful as it sounds, for some of the carvings have just that nightmare quality, notably the Makara, that fabulous beast beloved of Hindu sculptors which possesses

the trunk of an elephant, the feet of a lion, the teeth of a crocodile, the eyes of a monkey and the ears of a pig. The Makara is much in evidence at Dambulla, and altogether the atmosphere of the place is more Hindu than Buddhist.

The first figure that one sees, when one's eyes have become accustomed to the gloom, is that of Vishnu in his incarnation as Rama Chandra, the hero of the *Ramayana*. Vishnu, the most reasonable of the Hindu Trimurti but no fit companion for the gentle Gotama, is made of wood, but although the first, he is not the master-image of the cave which is, of course, the Buddha, a stone monster forty-seven feet long, recumbent, hewn from the living rock. Some of the frescoes in this first cave are two thousand years old, dating from the day the stout old king turned his refuge into a temple.

The next compartment is the maha wihara, dominated by Walagum Bahu in person, with no less than fifty other statues, life-size, mostly of the Buddha but containing a selection of Hindu gods also, among which Saman, Vishnu, Nata and Pattini are prominent. The wall frescoes, too, give mute testimony to the mingling of the two religions and are very interesting historically, for they portray most of the great events in the life of the nation including the landing of Wijayo, the mission of Mahinda and the famous incident when Dutthagamini the chivalrous met and slew Ellala in personal combat outside Anuradhapura.

There are three other caves of similar character, all with rock inscriptions of great interest, but I confess that it was with a feeling of relief that I, personally, emerged into the light and made my way with alacrity to the topmost part of the rock. If proof were needed that the religion of Gotama has been adulterated over the centuries, it will be found in the caves of Dambulla.

The tragedy of Sigirya begins with the boyhood of Dhatu Sen of the blood royal. During his early years, the Tamils had once again taken control of Anuradhapura, and he and his family were compelled to live in exile. The boy was being prepared for the priesthood at this time by his uncle Mahanamo—the priest subsequently chosen to write up the *Mahawansa* to date—and showed great qualities of mind and heart. But he had, too, that curious streak of sadism in his character that one encounters

again and again in the behaviour of the Sinhalese kings. Two curious prophecies were made of him, the first foretelling his greatness in familiar Hindu fashion, for a cobra fell on him from a tree, covering the book he was reading with its hood. A king cobra is said to have performed a like office for Gotama, shielding the Muni, who was lost in contemplation, from the heat of the midday sun, thus earning for itself and its breed for ever the worship of Buddhists.

The second omen in connection with Dhatu Sen was an incident almost incomprehensible to the European mind. It presages the retribution which, for all his gifts, lay in wait for him on account of that sadistic streak of his. While walking along the bund of the wonderful Kalu-wewa tank, his greatest memorial, to superintend personally some improvements that were being carried out by his engineers, he came upon a Buddhist priest, so deep in meditation that the engineers had been unable to move the good man who was holding up their work. Dhatu Sen could not bring the thoughts of the holy man back to mundane affairs, and it is recorded in the *Mahawansa* that he thereupon—presumably in a fit of rage—ordered the engineers to proceed with the work. Earth was heaped upon the priest, burying him alive in the bund of the Kalu-wewa.

Such a story might have been harder to believe before the rise of the Nazis in Germany and the subsequent blood bath to which the world has been subjected. It seems to be fully authenticated, for the part of the *Mahawansa* which deals with the incident was written in great sorrow by Mahanamo, who ended his melancholy account with the words: "His own living entombment was the retribution manifested in this life for that impious act."

Nevertheless, Dhatu Sen was one of the few fighting kings of the two dynasties and, abjuring the priesthood for which he had been trained, he roused the nation to repel the Tamil invaders, defeating them in two great battles and putting to death, as the custom was, all possible rivals to the throne.

Those who had remained faithful to Lanka during the occupation of Anuradhapura he recalled and restored to their previous rank. Those who had truckled to the Malabaris or who had intermarried with their women, he treated with the utmost severity. Then he settled down to the great task of restoring the ravaged land, giving particular attention to the great irrigation schemes, restoring damaged dagobas and wiharas, building new ones and



The Audience Hall, Polonnaruha



Medieval ruins at the base of Sigirya, famous rock fortress in the central jungle plain

founding hospitals. "Who," asks the *Mahawansa*, "can describe in detail all the good deeds that he has done?"

The cruelty of his nature, however, could not be suppressed, showing itself in the hasty violence so essentially a part of the national character. His daughter, married to his nephew, was ill-used by her husband and turned to Dhatu Sen for protection. His reaction to this insult was to order the death by burning, not of the nephew but of the nephew's mother, an illogical and vile deed which alienated all sympathy. The nephew, in search of revenge, found a willing ally in the king's eldest son, Kasyapa. Together they accomplished the fall of Dhatu Sen, another palace revolution accomplished without the participation of the people. Kasyapa assumed the throne with the approval, on the whole, of the citizens, for the old king's cruelty had shocked them deeply. One man alone, Kasyapa's younger brother, endeavoured to save his father but failed; and the old man was taken prisoner and flung into chains, only the absence of the palace treasure, of whose whereabouts he alone had the knowledge, saving him from instant death.

Pressure was brought to bear on the royal prisoner to persuade him to reveal the hiding-place of the treasure but, although well aware that his time had come, he dissembled and informed his interrogators that if they would allow him to go to the shores of the Kalu-wewa, he would reveal to them where the riches of the royal house were to be found. Accordingly he was conveyed there, under guard "in a carriage with broken wheels." It is in such details as this description of the prisoner's conveyance that the hallmark of truth shows so clearly throughout the *Mahawansa*, for who could have fabricated so tiny a point as those broken wheels?

On the way to the lake the driver of this poor equipage took pity on the king and shared his rice with him, an act of kindness that caught the imagination of Mahanamo, inspiring him to the use of a lovely phrase in illustration of the ephemeral nature of temporal power. "Worldly prosperity," he wrote, "is like the glimmering of lightning, and what reflecting man would devote himself to its pursuit?" In the East the lightning, at certain times, glimmers and darts rather than flashes. The phrase is exact.

Dhatu Sen, resigned to his coming death, derived solace from meeting his friend and priest at the Kalu-wewa, Mahanamo.

After that last interview he informed Kasyapa, with a wide sweep of his arm, that the beauty of the waters of the lake and the beneficial work done by irrigation, with the constancy and love of a friend, were all the treasure that he possessed.

This somewhat naturally incensed his son, who took the strange step of parading before his father in his prison cell arrayed in all the robes and insignia of royalty, accusing his father of wishing to preserve the treasure for the younger son Mogallana. Dhatu Sen replied that he was as fond of one son as of the other and Kasyapa, in a rage at this reply, ordered his father's death.

In Oriental lands, where death is regarded with an indifference that the Western world has not yet acquired, the manner of a man's passing is not a matter of any great importance. It is this outlook which accounts, probably, for the ingenuity in fiendish cruelty so often displayed in these old tragedies. But the manner of this particular murder horrified the Sinhalese, freezing the soul of the race with its inhuman bestiality. One of my own villagers, fifteen hundred years after the event, knew of this incident, now an island legend. He had never been to Sigirya, eighty miles or more away, nor had he heard the name of Dhatu Sen, but he knew Kasyapa the parricide, much as any English villager has heard of bad King John.

With insults and foul epithets hurled at him, Dhatu Sen was stripped naked and bound in chains so that he could not move. Then masons were put to work, and slowly, very methodically, they built a wall all round the king, entombing him alive. The wall, with its royal victim inside it, was finally sealed up with chunam, and not until the very last moment would the king begin to die.

Kasyapa then turned his attention to his young brother, but carelessly left this assassination in the hands of his groom and cook, who failed in their attempt. Mogallana escaped to southern India.

Time and time again in Sinhalese history we see violent deeds of horror followed by a remorse rooted deep in the religious beliefs with which even the worst of the kings seems to have been endowed. The irrevocability of murder only makes itself apparent to the murderer after the event, when the heat of action is replaced by the slow canker of remorse. The Erinues were in full cry after Kasyapa and he seems early to have

realized the fact. His hideous crime weighed heavily upon him and his efforts to make amends came to nothing. The people shrank from him and, in time, he began to shrink from them, for the mark of Cain was on him. The social life of the court, the ceaseless religious activity going on daily in the sacred city, in neither of these worlds was there a place for him, for he sensed mental and spiritual ostracism everywhere. After a time he could stand this atmosphere no longer and fled from the capital, making his home at Sigirya, thus beginning the final decline of the sacred city leading up to its abandonment in A.D. 769.

Fear was now the king's master, its driving force daily more impelling, and it was for this reason that he chose the lonely rock fortress which appears to have had no history before his appearance. It was a formidable place, tremendously strong in its natural state, with the trackless, unknown mountains at its back and the open plain—every part of which could be kept under constant observation for the approach of a hostile army—in front of it. Yet, strong as it was, the haunted king lost no time in making it stronger. Around the base of the giant cliffs, precipitous for three-quarters of their height of four hundred feet and overhanging for the rest, he cleared some fifty acres, surrounding this enclosure with a mighty wall. The town which then existed was protected by this rampart. The modern rest-house stands on the site of the old town, and the lake, lotus-covered and lovely, was then part of the moat which surrounded this outer bastion. Fifty feet above the moat he built a great gallery, defended by a wall nine feet in height which is still there, and from this gallery the flat, square top of the rock could be gained by means of a spiral stairway ornamented with the lions from which the rock gets its name, for the words Siha-giri mean Lion Rock. The galleries and stairs leading to this high plateau were defended by picked household troops, and no one else had access to it except the royal party. His army and adherents lived in the town within its huge bastion. The king's personal retreat was absolutely impregnable, the lair of a mountain brigand rather than the capital of a monarch of a race which formerly led the Eastern world.

The ruins which still cover the top of the rock show that Kasyapa lived in great luxury and spaciousness, for the palace, the baths, the houses of his personal retainers, all were solidly built if without the elegance and artistry of an earlier day.

Once secure in his fortress, he made strong efforts to obtain grace by building temples to Buddha and monasteries for the priests, but even the monks—rarely averse to the acceptance of rich gifts—refused to accept them in his name. They used a sophistry which does them little credit, insisting that the gifts should be made not to them but to Buddha himself, after which, of course, they were holy. Given thus, however, they did not count to the king's credit, a material viewpoint incomprehensible to us but only too clear to the Buddhist trained in such sophistries.

Spurred on by his remorse, the miserable king undertook an immense programme of good works. Parks, hospitals, almshouses and endowments to the priesthood followed each other thick and fast. He himself took the vow "aposaka"—the obligation to asceticism practised by laymen who wish to live the life of a priest without taking the robe—and imposed upon himself rigorous self-mortification, abstinence and piety. For all the effect it had upon public opinion, he might as well have lived a life of voluptuous debauchery. He was shunned and his life centred upon Sigirya.

It is not hard to picture him, half-mad with remorse and a prey to gnawing dread of his brother's revenge, wandering about the confines of his self-imposed prison. It rose above the forest, impregnable, aloof from ordinary life. Day by day he performed the prayers and penances, the ceremonial ablutions and the self-flagellation demanded by his conscience, while gazing out with ever-growing frequency over the immensity of the plains beneath him, his kingdom and his jailer. The great domes of the dagobas of the sacred city glistened in the sunlight sixty miles away, clearly visible in the light of early morning. They must have beckoned and repelled him, a prey to his own morbid imaginings, whispering of the life of the spirit enjoyed there by the meanest of his subjects but irrevocably denied to him.

This life of waiting ended at last. Mogallana returned, after an absence of eighteen years, at the head of a powerful army of Malabaris. The Sinhalese—true Buddhists—stood aside, although Kasyapa's men did not desert him. Little is said of these men in the history of the time, but there must have been a large number of them, and as they were loyal to their king in the days of plenty, so they fought for him when the lean times came. It must have been so, for in the final clash the two armies met "like two seas that have burst their bonds."

The rest-house keeper at Sigirya, an interesting man well informed of the historic events which had played themselves out in this haunted spot, brought a villager to see me with an interesting story to tell. It was a version of the final meeting of the two brothers which does not altogether correspond with the well-authenticated details given by the *Mahawansa*. No reliance can be placed upon it, therefore, but it is inherently probable and the greybeard who recounted it spoke as if it was a tale told and retold, by word of mouth, over the centuries.

According to this version Mogallana arrived at the first obstacle, the wall surrounding the town, and made a confident and furious assault on it with his fine army. But he was beaten back, and all subsequent attacks met the same fate, falling back as sea-spume from a cliff. A siege was hopeless, for the fortress was stocked with supplies for a year's siege, and the fifty acres of land enclosed by the wall was fine agricultural land producing good crops. Kasyapa's men, under cover of night, had no difficulty in descending from their fortress and securing supplies from the surrounding countryside how and when they liked. My villager was insistent that the parricide had only to stay within his walls to win the day, for in the war of attrition that then began it was Mogallana and not Kasyapa that was in the precarious position. Moreover—and this is an odd point—the attacking forces were mostly Tamils, and the dislike of the Sinhalese for the parricide was not very much worse than that which they felt for Tamils. Mogallana had brought in foreigners to defeat a king of the royal Sinhalese blood, and the Sinhalese did not like it, for mankind is seldom logical for long. The stalemate confronting the two armies would have turned, as public opinion itself was beginning to turn, in favour of Kasyapa.

Had matters been equal, that is what would have happened according to my villager, but in the personal duel of character between the brothers, one was guilty and the other was not. The younger brother therefore brought a rude understanding of psychology to his aid and hit upon the schoolboy device of taunting his enemy, standing out in the open, morning, noon and evening, and shouting out a single taunt of cowardice to the surrounding cliffs.

It was a pretty device. Of course Kasyapa heard. His men would see to that. Possibly, for a time, he turned a deaf ear to the taunts, but their insistence finally prevailed. There came a day

when the half-demented king, forgetting all prudence, gathered his forces round him and rushed out upon his brother. But his brother was not there, only a small rearguard force. Mogallana had withdrawn his army to a better strategical position, several days' march across the plain, and Kasyapa, routing the rearguard in a fierce battle, smelt blood. The rout became a chase, but it was a chase with a trap at the end of it. In vain the king's counsellors advised him to turn back, for he had determined to make an end, one way or the other, and the two armies met in final conflict at the battle of Ambatthakalo.

The *Mahawansa* states of this battle only that Mogallana prevailed, for the king's elephant, fearing boggy ground, refused to advance, true to its instinct. Kasyapa turned it, intending to find a way round, but his men, seeing him going the wrong way, decided that he was fleeing and themselves fled. Mahanamo, who was present, describes this incident, but my villager—with no knowledge of anything but legend—gave me another version again. To the poetically-minded it is a truer version. The Erinues—the Furiæ of Greek mythology—were not to be denied.

In this version Kasyapa came within an ace of winning the day. His troops, everywhere triumphant, swept through the surprised Malabars, carrying their king with them until he found himself face to face with his brother. With hate spurring him on, Kasyapa rushed straight at Mogallana, but his elephant, knowing that swamp was between the two brothers, wished to refuse. The king, however, savagely forced it forward and it sank, suddenly, belly-deep and helpless in the sticky mud. Seeing the king thus out of the fight, the men feared to continue their victorious advance and hesitated. Mogallana's swift counter-attack, swirling all round the helpless man in the marsh, carried the day. The parricide had the choice of waiting for the inevitable end, or of committing suicide, and chose the latter course. He hurled himself into the mud, and the terrified elephant, as these beasts will, finding something solid upon which to tread in its efforts to escape from the bog, trod him underfoot.

This is quite at variance with the account given in the *Mahawansa*, written by a man who was there, but it is a strange coincidence that Turnour, in his *Epitome*, says that Kasyapa committed suicide. The villager knew nothing of Turnour, nor of Mahanamo, and, at the time, I knew no Sinhalese history. It is

not strange, therefore, that I should remember that local account almost word for word. It was told to me in careful Tamil—for I knew little Sinhalese—with the interested rest-house keeper helping us out with an English translation from time to time.

Sigirya, as it stands to-day, although there is now a road right up to the rest-house, is still a lonely, brooding, ill-starred rock, avoided by the Sinhalese who says that the Rakshyos; spirits of the dead, very fierce and malignant; frequent the groves which surround the rock, ready to leap out upon passers-by. None the less, it is very interesting, this enormous mass of gneiss, only approachable by the stone galleries now restored. The remains of the lower ramparts which defied Mogallana's men are still to be seen, and the wewa is part of the moat which surrounded the whole mass. As with all these dainty lakes, the pool is quite beautiful, especially when the colours of evening flush the wide sky. It is a little gem of a place, in which the buffaloes wallow in solemn content during the heat of the day, only their noses, eyes, and ears showing above the surface of the water, and the king-fishers flash their vivid blue plumage against the olive-coloured forest. Herons there are, too, and at times troops of chattering wanderoos.

The Archæological Department have done a great deal of work on the place. Along the gallery fifty feet up the sheer side of the rock, the wall previously mentioned, some nine feet in height and still cased in chunam—as hard and fissureless as the day it was applied—stands unchanged. The original stairs leading to it have gone, but here and elsewhere over the mass of the cliff they have been replaced by iron staircases which make safe the ascent, although it remains a matter for certain breathless misgivings in places.

Fifty feet above the gallery is a shallow niche which was once a cave of some depth, which can be gained by an iron ladder, I believe, in these days. When I made the ascent twenty years ago there was only a bamboo ladder here, of utmost flimsiness, which swayed violently in the slightest breeze. The climb, although so short, was severe, for the top ten feet or so slope outwards at an intimidating angle, and when I swung myself thankfully into the cave—I had not dared to look down at the menacing tree-tops some hundred feet beneath me—my guide remarked that, although relatively easy to ascend, it was a very different matter to descend. I must be a brave man, he said, to climb up to the

cave of the frescoes so lightheartedly, as few men could face that climb. As I had given the matter no thought at all, I regret to say that the attention I gave to the frescoes, for which the niche is famous, was rather less than perfunctory. All I wanted to do was to place my feet once more upon *terra firma*.

None the less, the frescoes are remarkable. They are of groups of females, thought to be queens of the royal house, with their ladies. They are brilliantly coloured and executed, if with rather fewer clothes than is generally considered *de rigueur* in England to-day.

One most curious discovery, turned up while excavating the lower defences of the rock, was a number of coins, some sixteen hundred in all, of which all but twelve were Roman, dating back to the fifth century B.C.

There may be more romantic places in the world than Sigirya, but I doubt it. From the summit of that rock; which for centuries before Kasyapa had hidden its secrets from man, and for a millennium afterwards did so again; the world lies stretched out in blue serenity, hundreds of square miles of forests, lakes, rivers and crags as far as the eye can see. To the north-west, even now, the summit of the Abhayagirya dagoba in distant Anuradhapura rears itself above the jungle, while to the south the jagged outline of the Kandyan hills stands etched against the pale beauty of the sky. Swifts whirl and plunge about the enchanted rocks, and the hot smell of parched jungle, the sour, nostalgic scents of the wewa, enthrall the senses. The ruined galleries, walls, moat, baths, palace and throne-room of a remorseful parricide seem of less importance, in the huge serenity of that incomparable view, than the swarms of bees clinging to the rocks in the high places, menacing the passer-by.

Of these bees John Still has a wonderful tale to tell, a grim tragedy no less remarkable than the fratricidal struggle already recounted. He tells of a pitched battle fought between the bambara bees on the heights and an invading army of hornets from the jungle trees four hundred feet beneath, a battle which continued until the last bee went down uncompromisingly to defeat against the heavier battalions.

But when I was there, the bees were there also and I had no net. In the magic of the moment, the fullness of living that such a scene—no less than the panorama of a lost civilization—brings to any man with an ounce of poetry in his soul, one small section

of my mind sounded an alarm. Beauty is everlasting but—bees are bees. A hundred thousand of them were murmuring and grumbling in the bubbling swarms so dear to the Veddha, and on my way down I must needs pass within a few feet of them.

In the finest amber there is, usually, a fly!

INTERLUDE

CHAPTER XII

VEDDHAS

CEYLON harbours in its remote forests the remnant of one of the first races of man. It is a pitiable survival, palæolithic man lingering on in a world to which he has been unable to adapt himself, and it is dying as surely as the sacred tree that for two millenniums has drawn the faithful in annual pilgrimage to Anuradhapura.

I doubt if, in the whole island, one hundred specimens of true Veddha lineage could now be rounded up. Personally I should like to make the attempt, for these people have much to teach the new, sophisticated breed of man. They have maintained standards of truth, courtesy, marital fidelity and simple kindness that the modern world has all but discarded, and if, in their blind pursuit of freedom, they have ended in ruin and dissolution from hardship and disease, they have managed to preserve intact a torch of childhood in the darkness of the general middle-age of the human species.

Early in this present century it was felt that, since the Veddhas have retained characteristics which make them perhaps the most primitive of surviving peoples, some scientific investigation of their beliefs, life, religion and customs should be set on foot before they disappeared for ever. Progress was closing in on them. The comparatively small area available to them during the florescence of the irrigation civilization had been available to them in its entirety. Communications hardly existed, and in the fastnesses of the wilderness of the Peak, the high patanas of Bandarawela and the talawa country of the foothills, they lived out their lives unmolested. As the Sinhalese civilization waned and more land reverted to jungle, so did their dominion grow.

The civilization of the West, however, brought with it the secret of communications. Distance has been annihilated during the last century, and although the size of the terrain over which the Veddhas are free to wander has, if anything increased, it has lost its privacy. There is hardly a hill or a lake, a cave or a cliff

in the island to-day which is more than a day's march from a road, and although close upon twenty thousand square miles are abandoned to unorganized life, mostly animal, yet it is true to say that privacy has virtually disappeared. The wandering Moormen, the gipsies, the jungle men of the Wanni and the half-wild Sinhalese and Tamil peasants living in villages clinging to the main roads, have penetrated to every corner of the island. It is a strange paradox. Twenty thousand square miles of an island less than twenty-six thousand square miles large are uninhabited, yet the Veddhas, who in their unsophisticated state require no contacts with strangers other than those of barter once or twice a year, are being crowded out. It needs some explanation.

The Government of Ceylon made a grant to assist an expedition fitted up to probe the wastelands and reveal as much as possible of the lives of these poor survivors of a simpler age. They could not have chosen a better man than the one appointed for the task, Professor C. G. Seligmann, who, with his wife, ranged the low-country jungles in a patient and remorseless search for the last strongholds of palæolithic man.

It is true that Seligmann's work—subsequently published as an absorbing book[1]—has its detractors. It was said that, since he himself spoke no Sinhalese, he was often bamboozled by these children of the wild, and that, I think, is likely enough. Indeed Seligmann himself points out how simple a matter it was for him to make mistakes, but the care and attention to detail, the broad and gentle humanity brought to bear upon this fascinating subject, leave nothing to be desired. There are no claims to omniscience to be found in this able and exhaustive account of the Veddhas, but to anyone who has followed, however sketchily, the trail blazed by Seligmann, the report is stamped with truth.

The communities that he found were few and since his day they have become fewer. Starvation and drought, the severity of marital limitations and sheer incapacity to cope with the troublesome idea of progress, have hunted the Veddha down. To him progress is annihilation. His life, as he knows it, contains not merely all that he needs, but perfection.

This last is an odd thought, and in ferreting out the light which has led them, we shall see some of the darkness which has fallen upon ourselves. Meeting Veddhas for the first time, small

[1] *The Veddhas*, Prof. C. G. S. Seligmann.

—a man five feet in height is tall—wizened before their time, half-starved, usually verminous, one feels for them nothing but pity. But one discovers that, if only they could be assured of abundant food, they are in no need of our pity.

In this chapter I am concerned largely with that last small section of the old Veddha race which remains wild. Many of them have intermarried, near villages and along the coast, and are only faintly distinguishable from the ordinary Sinhalese and Tamil village communities into which they have been received. These have abandoned part of their jungle ways, and although keeping their Veddha ancestry proudly to the forefront, live the life of ordinary villagers. Then, too, there is a belief, disputed by Seligmann, that a large section of the original race—Yakkas, Rakshas, Nagas—were men of culture and wealth who were absorbed into the Sinhalese nobility. One theory goes so far as to claim that the Kandyans, the men of the mountains, are all descendants of Veddha aristocracy. Certainly all Sinhalese, whatever their rank, are proud of Veddha blood. With such arguments as these I am not concerned here. The community of which I am writing is the wild Veddhas of Ceylon, the last remaining remnant of aborigines who have never risen above their aboriginal status, nor ever desired to do so. Vagrants, wanderers, shunning the evils of a civilization which threatens to deprive them of their priceless heritage, the life of the wilds, they hide in the remote corners of the interior, shy as deer, a doomed race.

Their history is of a negative but persistent kind which provokes speculation, for they have inhabited Ceylon for millenniums, and although there is some reason to believe that they are related to the Gonds of southern India, there is no certain evidence of this, nor of their arrival in Ceylon. Spittel suggests that they lived in Lanka before it was split off from India at all. Certainly no records or even legends exist which speak of the island without them. They may be the descendants of the very first of all men, a theory which we shall be the more inclined to accept when we see them. To them all material progress is dust, and a people which can continue to exist for many thousands of years without development of their religious, artistic or mental lives must possess certain static qualities possessed by the animal kingdom which make progress impossible. But this applies only to the remnant of Veddhas still left, for in earlier times some of them at least were politically organized. Lankapura was a reality,

and the more advanced Veddhas clearly threw in their lot with Wijayo on his arrival in the island.

According to the *Mahawansa*, Citta, King of the Yakkas, ruled on an equality with Wijayo himself in the early years at Anuradhapura, and the slaves, upon whom the Sinhalese adventurer was largely dependent for getting the rough work of the new colony done, received generous treatment in that city. Unfortunately we are faced with the propensity of the *Mahawansa*, when not dealing with matters of fact, to wander off into the sphere of metaphysics while discussing early events. Thus, while giving us the facts of that joint kingship, it goes on to describe in detail the ability of the Yakka king to make himself invisible when he so desired. It is this inability to decide when the aborigines of the island are flesh and blood and when they are spirits that obscures so much of the history of Ceylon prior to 500 B.C. The Yakkas were the earliest inhabitants of the island, while the Yakkas are also the spirits of dead Veddhas. Confusion between them has been, and still remains, profound.

Wijayo did not make the mistake of trying to suppress the religious beliefs of the conquered race. He permitted their temples to remain—indeed, he built them new ones in his rising city of Anuradhapura—and throughout the succeeding centuries the Veddhas are acknowledged members of the Sinhalese race. They are mentioned as inhabiting the northern forests in the reign of Bhuwenika Bahu Raja, and in the seventeenth century they were the principal inhabitants of the Matale area. All this points to the certainty that the cultured ones among them did merge with the Sinhalese, but the wilder ones among them—slaves throughout the history of the island until the arrival of the British—remained stubbornly unassimilable, and to this day their racial characteristics remain distinct. There is no possibility of mistaking them either for Tamils or Sinhalese, and even where miscegenation is widespread—as in jungle villages and in the Veddha settlements of the eastern coast—Veddha characteristics are obvious to the most untrained eye. For over two thousand years the "wild Veddhas" have remained exactly as they were when they were the Yakkas, sturdily adhering to a way of life of an aboriginal people.

It is interesting to compare the account of these people given by Knox with the facts as they exist to-day. "Of these natives," he wrote, "there are two sorts, wild and tame, for as in these

woods there are wild beasts, so there are wild men also. The land of Bintan [Bintenne] is all covered with mighty woods filled with an abundance of deer. In this land there are many of these wild men, they call them Veddhas, dwelling near no other inhabitants. They never till any land for corn, their food being only flesh. They are very expert with their bows. They have a little ax which they stick by their side to cut honey out of hollow trees. Some few have commerce with other people. They have no towns nor houses, only live by the waters under a tree . . . they never cut their hair, but tie it up on their crowns in a bunch. The cloth they use is not broad nor large, scarcely enough to cover their buttocks. The wilder and tamer sort do both observe a religion. They have a god peculiar to themselves. They have their bounds in the woods among themselves, and one company of them is not to shoot or gather honey or fruit beyond those bounds . . . they have a peculiar way of preserving flesh. They cut a hollow tree and put honey in it and then fill it up with flesh and fill it with clay which lies in reserve to eat in time of need. For portions with their daughters in marriage they give hunting dogs. . . ."

At this moment, while the Veddhas still remain in existence as a recognizable race, Knox's two divisions, the wild and the tame, are certainly valid. The tame have taken to working the soil, building permanent villages, paying taxes and tasting the delights of lawsuits and other Western pastimes dear to the Sinhalese villager. The wild do not appear to have deviated except in tiny details from the ways of their palæolithic forebears.

They divide themselves up into clans or *waruges*, a system still in force among some jungle tribes in the Dekkan, but unknown to Sinhalese history. They will not marry within their own tribe, and since the tribes are now so few in number the opportunity for marriage given to young men is limited. The strictness of these marriage laws has not a little to do with the dying out of the race.

Nevertheless Veddhas are probably the best husbands in the world, for they reverence their women in the most practical way known to man, by living on an absolute and complete equality with them. The female sex is considered in every way the equal of the male, and even the belief in the uncleanness of women—very strong among the Sinhalese and the Tamils—does not enter into their comradeship. Among those waruges which

have not come under the influence of the Sinhalese villages, women are admitted to all ceremonies, receive the same—indeed the best—food, and are an essential part of the tribal discussions. The men are fiercely jealous of their women and absolutely faithful to them, with the result that illicit love affairs are almost unknown. Monogamy is the firm rule and Seligmann, in his exhaustive inquiry, heard of only one case where the woman had left her husband in the whole story of the Veddhas.

Marriage is invariably on settled lines, the child of a brother marrying that of his sister. Children of two brothers must not marry, nor of two sisters, while the popular belief that a brother may marry a sister is quite wrong. The belief arises from the use of a word, exactly the same in Sinhalese as in the Veddha jargon, which possesses quite different meaning to the two peoples. A brother marrying a sister is incest and would never occur, for incest is horrible to these simple people.

A Veddha community consists of a few families of the same waruge who share hunting and fishing rights over a well-defined tract of land exactly as explained by Knox. Each family consists of parents, unmarried children and married daughters with their husbands, for the man almost invariably goes to the family of his bride. In his new family, the bridegroom has the closest possible relations with his father-in-law, with whom he is invariably on terms of great friendship. He has barely any contact with his mother-in-law, to whom he is forbidden even to speak except in the presence of other people. This fact is due entirely to the defensive wall erected round their women by the Veddhas, for a man avoids his son's wife in exactly the same way. It is felt, in fact, that no man should be with a woman at all except in company, and if two members of opposite sexes meet with no one else present, they must not converse and may not, under any circumstances at all, touch each other. To such an extreme is this convention carried that if a woman were to fall down and break her leg in the forest, a man must not touch her until he has brought others to the place of the accident.

First cousins marry each other inevitably, and since the wedding ceremony is no more than a public declaration that the two are married, pre-nuptial connection may be condoned. Sometimes a boy and a girl who know that they are to be married come together before the girl has attained puberty and this is not now considered a very serious offence, although the wedding

is then declared to be a *fait accompli*. But it is regarded as a very serious lapse of morality for a boy to take a girl before her breasts have shown pronounced development. With this one exception —some slight anticipation of the ceremony by children who have been regarded as husband and wife from earliest days—there is no concupiscence among these simple people and harlotry is unknown. Even this exception to the general high standard of chastity is of recent growth. Half a century ago the feeling against pre-nuptial intercourse was very strong and the man and woman who committed adultery might even be punished with death by stoning.

The life of women, when hunting and honey-collecting is good, compares more than favourably with that led by women in English slums. Family life still centres around rock caves, although the colony moves about at different seasons of the year. These movements, however, have a definite rhythm, and cannot be called nomadic. In the dry season on the plains, the animals collect round the waterholes, lakes and rivers which do not dry up, and the Veddhas will be found in their agreed hunting grounds. They hunt the deer, the grey ape and the monitor lizard in particular—for some reason they do not eat pig or fowl —and fish if they can get it, but their chief delight is the honey of the black bambara bee in season, or of the small stingless bee in his season. Wild yams, truffles, kurrakhan, maize, fruits and certain jungle edible flowers complete their diet. One meal a day is their normal fare, although they will certainly have more if the larder runs to it. They endure hunger with the philosophy of many centuries of hard living, and their defence against its gnawing presence is a sort of chewing-gum made from tree bark, which is to them what the delicious betel, areca nut and lime chew is to the Sinhalese. If they can get this latter chew, they prefer it infinitely to their own bark, but it is a mark of good times rather than of bad to possess the ingredients for this dainty.

During the rains the game scatters, since water then becomes available anywhere, and the deer in particular take to the hills. So do the Veddhas, thus escaping the worst of the malaria which descends upon the low country when the rains have caused pools to form in every nook and hollow of the jungle lands, pools which quickly become stagnant when the short-lived rains have gone.

Usually a colony has two settled habitations therefore, homes for the wet and dry seasons. There is a third, or camping, season

when the flower bursts on the jungle trees in wild and lovely profusion, bringing honey-time in its wake. The bees swarm, the honeycombs appear on wild and inaccessible crags and the Veddhas go into temporary quarters, if necessary, while the hunt for honey is on.

While the men are out hunting, the women concern themselves with the tasks of women everywhere, looking after the children and preparing the food. This latter process they do by two methods only, roasting in the ashes and embers of a fire, or boiling in crude pots made by the men. It is the womenfolk, too, who search for yams and truffles.

While they have great communal qualities, these people of the wood have a sturdy belief in private property. Their wants are very few, for they despise wealth, but their own cave, or section of a cave, their own betel pouch, axe, bow and arrows, with the time-honoured boundaries of their hunting lands, are things for which they would be prepared to fight. Otherwise a more unwarlike, peaceful, courteous and kindly race does not exist, until spoilt by too frequent contact with Sinhalese or Europeans.

My first encounter with them was of this kind, an arranged meeting with professional—there is no other word for it—wild men.

While staying at Bibile rest-house, in the middle of the Uva Veddha country although some distance from the unsophisticated, pure-blooded Veddhas, the rest-house keeper asked me if I would like to talk to some Nilgalla Veddhas. Naturally I was delighted, and the following morning they arrived, complete with the minimum of clothing, bows, arrows, a fierce and incomprehensible jargon and an insistence upon money, and a good deal of it. I was completely taken in, as better men have been before me, and it was not for some years that I discovered, when making a trip into the Alutnuwara district with a man who knew the country and its scattered peoples with an intimate knowledge, that I had been made the victim of a show. A certain number of these village Veddhas—undoubtedly with true Veddha blood in their veins—make a traffic out of their picturesque appearance and history. In their own villages, as I saw subsequently for myself, they are indistinguishable from their Sinhalese neighbours, but when on show—probably by arrangement with the rest-house keeper—they assume the fierceness, unkemptness and

general farouche appearance expected of them. It is only the true wild men, whom I met only once under circumstances that I shall relate, who have had too little contact with other people to have acquired any of the vices of civilization.

They are a very affectionate race, particularly with their children whom, in our eyes, they spoil completely, giving them everything they demand until they are considered adult enough to take their place in the community. They then expect them to be obedient, "and," says Seligmann in some astonishment, "for some reason or other, they are!"

Veddha children are given toys to play with, tiny bows and arrows for the boys, miniature pots with which they pretend to cook for the girls. Small boys go through the motions of descending cliffs in search of honey in exact pantomime. They make small replicas of the bamboo ladders used by the men during this supremely dangerous pursuit and pretend to smoke out their prey exactly as their fathers do. On gaining the top of the supposed cliff, they brush off countless but happily imaginary beestings before rushing off into the jungle, amid the yells of the other children, as if to dodge the attack of enraged bees.

Although I never saw an adult raid upon rock-bees, it must be thrilling and intensely dangerous work. Only the most fearless and athletic men can make the actual descent, sometimes swaying on their frail bamboo ladders—as I once swung above the jungle from Sigirya rock—hundreds of feet above the forest. The whole community go to the place where the raid on the honey is to be made, for success or failure is of prime importance to the tribe, and all take a hand in the preparations. It is no uncommon thing for a young Veddha to lose his hold, under a concerted attack by the bees, and fall to his death from his frail ladder.

At night-time the few remaining wild Veddhas sleep in caves which are carefully divided, the line of demarcation between families being adhered to with great strictness, although there is no actual partition. A small fire is kept burning, and the families sleep upon rock in order to avoid the damp rising from the earth. They appear impervious to heat or cold or wet, for their caves are by no means weatherproof, but they cannot do without a fire however small.

Childbirth is not regarded lightly by these people, who are fully aware of its perils. To them it has no phase of uncleanliness

as it has with both Tamil and Sinhalese, nor has menstruation, during which the women do not live apart from the rest. Death in childbirth is rare, for the whole community know what is about to happen and the women, all the women, are there to give any help that they can. Before the event all; men, women, and children; pray for the mother-to-be.

Veddha women are not prolific. Seligmann did not discover a single case in which twins were born, and families, generally, are very small. While a child is on the way, intercourse is not avoided, nor is it discontinued for long after the birth.

Death, to the Veddhas, while it presents certain difficulties, has none of the atmosphere of uncleanness which is such a marked characteristic of the Hindu faith, or among Sinhalese villagers. The dead man may be buried with a stone on his chest —until a few years ago he was merely covered with leaves— and the colony then leave the caves in which death occurred. It is not fear of death that drives them away, but fear of the bad temper of the departed spirit, for, to the Veddha, the spirit goes through rather a tiresome time after death. It does not immediately become a Yakka, but has to serve some form of initiation before being accepted into the spirits of the dead, the Nae Yaku. Until it is accepted as a fully fledged Yakka, the "thing" is apt to be a trifle sensitive and the best thing to do is to leave the vicinity for the time being. There does not seem to be any element of doubt about all this, in its truest form, but with village and coastal Veddhas the worship of the Nae Yaku has now been contaminated with Hindu beliefs and demon-worship. With the handful of true wild men left, the worship of Nae Yaku remains in its simplest form.

The Nae Yaku are friendly and helpful unless, which is unthinkable, the living should forget them. If that were to happen, the Veddhas believe that they would become actively hostile.

Each community has its holy man or Shaman, much the same as the Sinhalese Kapurala, although that worthy invokes devils while the Shaman merely has the ability to get into touch with the Nae Yaku. The dances and invocations are simple, and devoid of any mysticism except that, over the years, the words of some of the invocations have lost all meaning even to the practising Shaman. The spirit invoked speaks through the mouth of the Shaman, and in this the Veddhas are at one with all jungle

people. Possession by spirits or devils is universally believed by all Hindus and the majority of, if not all, present-day Buddhists.

Each Shaman, who seems to claim no rights or powers whatever beyond his inherited ability to act as medium for the spirits of the dead, is secure in his office while he lives. He cannot be displaced, however inefficient he may appear to be. The reigning Shaman chooses his successor and trains him in his duties and the mysteries of possession. The religion of the Veddhas is not deism, and yet it is not devoid of a belief in God. The nearest that these simple people come to confessing a god is that one of their number, whose success as a hunter must have become a legend to all forest folk while he lived, seems to have attained a position of unquestioned leadership of the Nae Yaku.

This simple, childish and unassuming religion certainly possesses the elements of Christian belief, for it is based upon love and good-fellowship, with fear only in the background. While the Veddhas have no curiosity whatever over the Giver of Life, or of the meaning of creation, they have no use at all for evil. In their uncontaminated state they appear to be singularly free from the sins of sophistication, and far from being the surly, morose race described by Deschamps. I can testify that they can be both merry and happy provided that they have enough food.

They have little conception of art, as may be imagined, but their women, while waiting for the huntsmen, do draw pictures upon the walls of the cave, the crude line-drawings of a child of six. Leopards, household pots, men, women and dogs about exhaust the limits of their ingenuity, executed in the form of pin-men. Ashes mixed with water make their "paint" and they apply it with their fingers. These drawings have no religious significance, being done merely for fun.

Their music is perhaps the most elemental still left in the world, confined entirely to the voice and limited to songs which range from two notes, at their simplest, to five at their most complex. They have no instruments, not even drums—always excepting the village and coastal Veddhas who come into contact with the Sinhalese—and their one method of keeping communal time is to beat their thighs with their hands in unison with the singer.

Yet even this simple music has its merits. The singers hit the notes with clean accuracy, not sliding to and from it after the manner of much modern crooning, and such small melodies as

emerge are clear and fundamental. I heard one forest Veddha demonstrate what he called his honey-collecting song, a cheerful yell on three notes which rang through the jungle and would certainly give the most pugnacious of bees furiously to think.

One cannot forget, in any estimate of the Veddhas, their hunting dogs. These they use principally for hunting iguanas, or monitor lizards, their favourite food, and they grow very fond of them. Knox was right again when he said that these dogs are given as marriage portions with brides, and very highly they are esteemed.

The most wonderful of all the attributes of these lovable people is their jungle-craft. So fine is it and so true, that one is convinced that they are possessed of incredible sight, hearing and smell beyond anything known to the European; but Seligmann, who conducted exhaustive and most ingenious tests in these matters, proved that this is not the case. Their sight is no better than that of white people, their sense of smell worse and their hearing goes off very soon after adolescence. Nevertheless, they have a quickness, a fidelity to their instincts and an incomparable sense of direction that is quite thrilling to experience. For example, they are able, through noticing one honey-laden bee returning to the hive, to track down the hive. The direction taken by the bee is so accurately appreciated that they can take the same line, and since it is a fact that laden bees take a "bee-line" home, they give themselves away to the observant Veddhas.

It is, of course, the old comparison between the amateur and the professional, for whereas the planter, when hunting in the jungle, is there purely for sport and pleasure, to the Veddha his hunting is his life. Even those who have taken to the semi-village life of the chena have retained their wonderful faculties, and among all the jungle folk—the Sinhalese and those remarkable foresters of the Wanni whose origin is debatable—the true Veddha is acknowledged king of trackers.

John Still, one of the most expert foresters among Europeans that Ceylon has known, compares his own superb skill as a tracker with that of a Veddha in his book *The Jungle Tide*.

"It was when it came to stalking," he wrote, "that Undiya's superiority over me rose highest. He could not see better than I could, but could interpret far better what he saw, and looking into a thicket would tell from a few square inches of hide of a motionless animal what kind it was, and generally the sex as well,

where all I saw was skin . . . but it was in a sense of touch all over the body that makes or mars a tracker that he was supremely excellent. The test of good stalking is speed. Almost anyone can move silently at two yards a minute, but when I tried to keep up with Undiya, leaves would rustle and twigs would crack until everything for a furlong around us was standing on tiptoe with ears cocked and nose twitching ready to fly like a loosed spring at any moment."

That was Mr John Still, and in my own small experience I have found his words only too true. Once I went crocodile-shooting with a villager who claimed to be pure Veddha, which he certainly was not. That he was part Veddha is probable. Crocodile-shooting is a pleasurable pastime but poor sport, for the reptile has no chance of fighting for his life, and the best that can be said of it is that he does not know what hits him if the shooting is accurate. I left some villagers skinning two fine crocodiles and made my way back to the rest-house, two miles away, with the tracker, Vanukku. At one point he made a signal that he had heard something and disappeared into undergrowth more sinuously than any snake, for a snake rustles in its passing and Vanukku did not. In a few moments he was back and signalled me to follow, which I did with that laborious care—two yards a minute—mentioned by John Still. I was a newcomer to the wild, as keen as I was clumsy, and Vanukku had motioned me to extra care. Like two wraiths we slid some six yards or so into dense growth. Parting this thick vegetation with his hands with an almost exquisite care, the villager motioned me to peep through the aperture. Within a few feet of us, almost literally within touch, was a fine elephant, quietly feeding. I have no idea what would have happened had the beast scented us. Most probably it would have been off with that astonishing turn of speed which is such a surprising feature of these splendid animals, crashing regardless of noise for a few yards, and then vanishing with the silence which seems so inexplicable until knowledge of the jungle teaches one that animals, like human beings, prefer roads. Wherever elephants are to be found, the jungle is a maze of trackways, and when game is startled there is usually a flurry of sound for a few seconds and then—silence.

My only contact with real Veddhas came about by chance. It was many years ago and the jungle to me was as exciting to explore as the moon's surface would be, perhaps more so. The

heat and the smells, the acrid scent of burning, the sudden delicious wafting of some perfume from tree or flower, the curious lightening of the nostrils which denotes the presence of water in an arid plain, these things live on in memory, while the discomfort, the ticks, the mosquitoes, the intolerable heat which makes marching a misery are forgotten as soon as one has had a bath. I think it was Mr Spittel who said that the lure of the wild is one thing, and the payment that it exacts is another, but no man can expect the one without the other. You pay, in fact, as you go.

We left Bibile rest-house, a large party, and made our way along the old pack-bull, or tavalam, road to Alutnuwara. I do not know whether it ever went all the way, or whether our guide simply preferred forest tracks, but by the afternoon of the first day we had lost all trace of a road. It is a story of heat and flies and flaring sunsets and the still peace of the dawn which hurts to remember, savaging the deepest recesses of memory, an old story of no interest to any but the participants because of its peculiar intimacy. So many men have tried to imprison in print the glory of such moments, but personally I feel that there are times when one is alone with God and that such moments are incommunicable. Bird-song and sunlight, the green aisles of the forest, the occasional spoor or more exciting droppings of an animal not long departed, the fresh earth from tree roots that speaks of bear, pig or anteater, a sudden cry—these are the things of which men have spoken and written since civilization made them almost unobtainable, but it is an atmosphere that cannot be pickled in print for others to read. It has a bloom that is non-transferable, an essence which, as far as I have been able to puzzle it out, is purity. The world is new on jungle mornings, and renews itself with every sunrise. Clear and strong, the morning air, and heady like wine, and the sunlight on the dew sparkles and flashes from a million leaves and spiders' webs, a world of countless coloured jewels. The spiders' webs—I have never read any account of them in other books—are the perfect setting for dew in the early morning, particularly up-country where they stand revealed in frail gossamer, straddling the leaves and twigs of every tea-bush.

On the second day of our march, soon after the midday halt, we broke from thick and rather fine forest, through which we had travelled since leaving Bibile, into talawa country. The real reason for these stretches of grassy parklands, of which there are

few in that part of the Bintenne, is not known for certain. It is thought that they were once highly cultivated areas of the lost kingdom, which they well may be.

Beyond this talawa country was a steep outcrop of rock almost amounting to foothills some hundreds of feet high, and it was while climbing this eminence in single file, in intense heat, that we came upon a party of some half a dozen Veddhas on their way to trade in Bibile.

These, I was told, were the genuine wild Veddha breed, untouched by the lives of others except for their biannual contact with Moormen traders. Surly and frightened at first, they became like friendly children when we gave them rice, curry stuffs—the greatest luxuries of their lives—and a supply of betel, areca nut and lime.

They were very short—none of them as much as five feet I should say—with large heads, unruly hair and tousled beards, but I admired the wiriness of their physique. In no way could these tribesmen be mistaken for Sinhalese, even by the eye of complete inexperience, although they spoke Sinhalese with some variations of their own. They were in no hurry and neither were we, but as with all such vital experiences I did not fully realize its significance or its opportunity at the time. No doubt I foresaw a future when such expeditions would be frequent and certainly had no presentiment that meeting and talking to these true Veddhas was an almost unique experience. Unfortunately, in my own case, it proved unique. In all the years I spent in the island, I did not again meet a group of pure Veddhas.

On the following day we visited some more Veddhas, this time obviously strongly influenced by Sinhalese ways of life. They were living in a village and, looking back with the knowledge that I now possess, I feel sure that it was the village of Dambani described at length in Seligmann's book, although, of course, he wrote of it as it was some fifteen years before my visit. I cannot, now, remember any of my party, of which I was the junior and very shyest member, speak of them as the Dambani Veddhas, but that they were Veddhas, although village ones, was obvious. Again they were shorter, darker and altogether different from the jungle Sinhalese who accompanied our expedition.

I believe that we must have stumbled upon this community without any intention of so doing. The Vidane, or Veddha headman, had heard of our coming—he did not tell us how—only the

previous day, and it is to this circumstance that I think we owed our relative freedom from exhibitionism. Seligmann records that this village, if it was Dambani—comparatively readily accessible to curious and gullible Englishmen—did a good trade in professional wild men, and describes the villagers as being so spoilt that they would not do anything of their own volition, but required presents before they would perform. Something of the sort was noticeable in their attitude to us, but times were hard and possibly the curiosity of earlier days had somewhat worn off. Certainly they were more amenable and a few rupees made them eager to please. This fact alone showed how far they had travelled from the outlook of the pure Veddha, who has no use for money at all. It is quite valueless to him, but to these Dambani folk it was useful, for Alutnuwara with its *boutiques* was not many miles distant.

The life they were leading was not in any essential different from that of ordinary Sinhalese villagers. They had permanent gardens as well as chenas, with plantains, coconut trees, jak trees and their own buffaloes. The chenas were well fenced against encroachments from the surrounding wilds and there were watch-huts in one or two of the tallest trees from which the crop-watchers shouted monotonously and incessantly to scare both birds and beasts, all through the night.

When first we attempted conversation, they replied in short, staccato phrases in a language that none of us could understand, but I am not convinced that it was the ancient Veddha tongue, if there is such a thing. I believe they were speaking a made-up rubbish reserved for lucrative visitors, but it may have been *kaelebasa*, that strange esperanto of the wastelands used by all jungle men, whether they be Wanniyas, jungle Sinhalese or Veddhas.

Their huts, bowered in trees, were primitive affairs, but quite well laid out, and their dogs, buffaloes and poultry—which they said they were raising to sell in the market and not to eat—were exactly similar to their Sinhalese counterparts. They had bows and arrows, but when we requested them to give a display they refused to do so, and I have an idea that none of them had used a bow for years, if at all, and kept them merely as part of their wild-men stock in trade.

The following day we spent in Alutnuwara, birthplace of Raja Singha II, and although I was informed that there were no

pure Veddhas left there, I cannot omit a description of this disease-ridden village counted holy by millions of men who have never seen it and tens of thousands who have.

The old name for this historic spot is Mahayangana, a meeting-place for Veddhas before the dawn of history. Its original architect, says legend, was the demon Dediminda Yakka. Perhaps because of this demon-authorship, Gotama chose Alutnuwara for his first appearance in person to prepare the way for Buddhism in Lanka, for it seems that the Yakkas of that day were unworthy to accept the true religion. They were known, we may remember, as devils from the confusion existing in early times as to whether or not the unfortunate Veddhas were really human. Gotama himself seems to have regarded them as less than human, for he struck such terror into their hearts that they all agreed to flee the island. Buddha is said to have caused another island, Giridipo, to float close to Lanka in order that the Yakkas might swarm on it in their terror, whereupon it floated away. But many people believe that the Basses rocks, off the south-east coast close to Kirindi, are all that is left above water of this floating island, which presumably sank as soon as it was filled with the fleeing devils, thus drowning them all. Only the devout "devas" were left behind, to whom the tenets of Buddhism might be expounded.

The claim that the Mahayangana dagoba, which is still in a fair state of repair and is supposed to cover relics of the Buddha, is an earlier dagoba than the Thuparama at Anuradhapura we have examined elsewhere. In Turnour's *Epitome* it is quite clearly stated that the original was built by Mahanaaga, own brother to Tissa the Pious, who founded Maagam, the ancient capital of Rohuna now known as Tissa-Maharama. The original height of the dagoba was thirty cubits, raised to eighty by King Dutthagamini. Mahanaaga dwelt for many years in amity with his holy brother in Anuradhapura, and almost certainly saw the Thuparama built or begun before he was forced to flee from fear of Tissa's wife. This good woman feared the popularity of Mahanaaga, for it might stand between her son and the crown, and after the custom of the time she tried to poison him. She failed, but Mahanaaga preferred the task of building up a new civilization in Rohuna to that of dodging recurring doses of poison, and fled for his life.

Alutnuwara fascinated me, I do not know why. It was once a

centre of glory, for not only did King Dutthagamini live there as far back as the second century B.C., but it must have been a fine city in the time of the Dutch. Valentyn writes of it: "One of the handsomest cities in the whole island, with many wide streets and handsome buildings." Such a description is incredible in this collection of poor huts as it is to-day, one of the loneliest, lost outposts in the island. But it has that most curious of all qualities —romance. Although its inhabitants now hardly number more than three hundred souls, it speaks of other days with nothing material to show for it. One or two of the huts have, for gateposts, old muzzle-loading guns of unknown vintage, and to find them in such a spot, with only theories as to how they got there, is thrilling. The story I heard to explain them was that a negro regiment under a single British officer was sent there presumably in search of Raja Singha during the last great rebellion. The officer is said to have died of fever—how anyone avoids that fate in that part of the world is hard to understand—and the negroes decided not to return. They made themselves into a separate village community—not without some initial troubles with the local inhabitants who objected to losing their prettiest girls—and it is said that their descendants may be seen for sons of Africa to this day. Personally I did not notice anyone with particularly negroid characteristics, but all was so wonderful and new to me in those days that observation was more general than particular.

From Alutnuwara the Pilgrim's Way leads across the ferry of Wiragantota and up the steep, almost precipitous hill of the two thousand steps—the Gallepadahulla—on its way to Kandy. There is in fact a road here, a fine feat of engineering which negotiates eighteen V-bends in four miles, but the devout pilgrims who flock to the bird- and fever-haunted village annually do not use it.

The pilgrims come to his holy place from three directions. Firstly, and mainly, from Kandy, through Teldeniya and the pass of the two thousand steps. Secondly from Badulla, down the wild Taldua gorge—from which supremely beautiful glimpses may be obtained of the great northern plains and the silver oval of Horaborawewa—once the main pass to the hills from the eastern port of Batticoloa. Through this gorge the bullock or tavalam caravans brought up coconuts, salt and fish from the coastal areas, returning with coffee and other produce for sale there. The third route by which pilgrims reach Alutnuwara, now little

used, is the one by which our expedition reached it from Bibile on the main Badulla–Batticoloa road.

Only a short walk from Alutnuwara lies the lake so closely identified with the Veddhas, Horaborawewa, so hauntingly beautiful that hardly a stick or stone of its banks, or a leaf of the trees that crowd its shores, has left my memory. In the evening of the day, when all the pullulating life of the wild seems to relax its traditional distrust for a space, these glorious lakes become such a centre of social activity for birds, beasts and insects that the world of man is quite eclipsed. Although I saw all the main inland seas of Lanka, this particular tank retains a special place in my mind. For many years I had seen it daily, from the highest fields of my estate, a tiny silver mirror in the static immensity of the scene. It had come to have for me an almost mystic significance, I do not know why, and it was with a sense almost of shock that I found myself walking along its verge.

I did not then appreciate its fame as the very heart of the Veddha country, but that I am not the only one to come under the magic of its spell is shown by this Sinhalese song, translated by Spittel in his book *Wild Ceylon*:

"Wild are the wastes that surround Horaborawewa. Through a channel of cut stones her waters feed the fields. To the Temple of Bintenne are her lotus blossoms borne. Eyes that have not beheld her, can they worship truly?"

It is a fitting note upon which to leave the subject of Lanka's palæolithic man—the Veddha. I hope I have not romanticized these poor relics unduly. They are near the end of their tether and it is possible, even probable, that they are at a lower ebb now than when I saw them many years ago. That is why I have called this section "Interlude," for these poor people, whose virtues far surpass any little vices that they may have, are neither entirely of the past nor of the present. They come somewhere between the two, a link that is strained to its uttermost limits of strength as I write, and soon must break for ever.

PRESENT TENSE

CHAPTER XIII

MAHABADDE—THE GREAT INDUSTRY

1. ESTATES

THE cultivation and manufacture of tea bears no relation to the popular conception of these processes to be found among ordinary English people. The indolent planter, wallowing in luxury, with a mildly romantic suggestion of vice about his personal life, is a figment of mass imagination. Such man a would have little chance of obtaining an appointment as an assistant on an estate in modern times, for tea estates are highly organized pieces of machinery which cannot function without efficient management and a permanent labour force. The first remains still largely in European hands, and there is neither justice nor common sense in the suggestion that the time has now come when it should pass to those of the Sinhalese.

Imprisoned in their small island and enmeshed in the spider's web of their political theories, the people of Britain live from year to year blind to the romance of their own achievements. Tea is a case in point. Had the building up and development of this wonderful industry been the achievement of a young and enthusiastic nation it would have been hailed as a matter for pride, and its defence against the encroachments of sentiment would have been a first call upon the loyalty of the home government. But since we are an old nation, the attitude of our citizens and successive English governments towards the Ceylon tea industry has been one of indifference, coupled with widespread public ignorance, and the estates—the mainstay of the island economy—are in the twilight of their days at the present time, from sheer lack of home loyalty and support. It seems that John Still's sober prophecy, which seemed to me so incomprehensible when I was a young man, may yet be fulfilled. "In time the jungle tide," he wrote, "will swing once more, and then those who care for other things than wealth will wander back to the wet side of the monsoon line, and while elephants

browse where tea is now plucked, antiquaries will unearth the ancient bungalows of the British period. Having both planted tea and arranged the antiquities of a Museum, I venture to prophesy that this picture will be realized in very much less than fifteen centuries, perhaps in one-fifth of that, perhaps one-tenth."

I have pondered this prophecy often, particularly of late, now that our great race is losing its sense of purpose. The fifteen centuries alluded to were, of course, the centuries during which the irrigation civilization of the ancient Sinhalese flourished in the dry zone. One-tenth of that span is one hundred and fifty years, and for myself I think the signs of decay are now so strong that it would not surprise me if history proves Mr Still to be as much as three-quarters of a century too generous in his guess. The life of the modern Mahabadde will certainly be numbered by decades, rather than centuries, unless a halt is called to the forces of disintegration now gathering momentum.

It may be right that the tea industry should fail. Wrong motives drive men forward, very often, in pioneer work, and many mistakes were made by the British in opening up the tea industry, many wrongs committed, much damage done. All such errors have been pointed out with a wealth of detail, not only by Sinhalese striving, somewhat naturally, to take over for themselves the fruit of other men's genius, but by our own intelligentsia. It may well be true, but at least the facts of the case should be made known, for there is another side to the matter.

Ceylon is the second-largest producer of tea—that is, tea which may be bought in the market—in the world, India being the first and greatest. The tea production of China is legendary, it is true—so much a part of the national life that it is woven into the very folklore of the land—but it is virtually unprocurable, for the amount exported is negligible. There are no companies and no European ownership. The leaf is grown in innumerable tiny gardens in which the bushes are numbered, not the acres. The owners of these clumps of bushes are peasants, tens of thousands of them, and the whole colossal activity is not an industry in any Western sense of the word. It provides and has provided for millenniums a food without which Chinese village life would be deprived of a background as much spiritual as physical.

Japan, although its industry was organized—before the war—with meticulous care, and carried out with modern methods in



The Rest-house keeper, Sigirya, with his family



A settlement of coast Veddhas in the jungle close to Batticoloa

imitation of the West, has the same background as China. It is a widespread peasant activity, and the gardens are gardens in a literal sense, where again the bushes, and not the acres, are numbered. China will continue to supply Soviet Russia with tea "bricks"—a word accurately describing the finished product—and Japan will continue to send a few million pounds annually to the New World, but neither is likely, within any foreseeable future, to affect the world tea trade as at present constituted.

Here are the acreages of the world's tea-producing countries:

India	840,000
Ceylon	560,000
Java and Sumatra	510,000
Japan and Formosa	210,000
U.S.S.R.	125,000
Nyasaland and Kenya	25,000

French Indo-China, Malaya, Burma, Siam, Turkey, Persia, Africa and South America all grow tea, but between them they do not at the present moment amount to more than 50,000 acres. Yet even these figures, if we are realistic, do not convey a true impression, for Japan and the U.S.S.R. are out of the picture. What they grow they need.

Let us glance at the figures provided by the International Tea Committee in their Memorandum of 1945. They give, in broad outline, easily obtainable production figures on the one hand and pre-war consumption figures on the other, the intention clearly being to prove that production must be regulated if the markets of the world are not to be flooded. With that argument, as set out at the time, no one with knowledge of the subject can quarrel. Regulation, in the world as we knew it, was necessary and healthy.

PRODUCTION, THE UNIT BEING 1 MILLION POUNDS

Regulated Countries	
India	400 (millions)
Ceylon	270
Dutch East Indies	220
British East Africa	30
Non-regulated Countries	
China	100
Japan and Formosa	75
All others	10

Broadly speaking, the tea of the non-regulated countries is not available to the countries of the British Commonwealth, which, of course, has not needed them in the past. It all goes to the New World and to Russia. If, therefore, the production of tea in India and Ceylon were to disappear, through the removal of the expert knowledge and sane administration of British managers, the Cup of Tea, that supposedly vital part of the English way of life, would disappear also, completely and quickly.

Here is pre-war consumption at a glance, and in the same unit of 1 million pounds of made tea:

United Kingdom	435 (millions)
The Empire	135
Europe and Asia	170
New World	130

As a generalization, it will not be denied that tea-drinking is an English custom, based upon British pioneer enterprise, work, science and determination. All the world put together—always excepting China and Japan, who drink unknown quantities of tea based upon their own internal production—does not drink as much tea as the people of these islands.

I have said enough to show that this pleasant national habit, of incalculable comfort and benefit to the British Commonwealth, is absolutely dependent upon the tea industries of Ceylon and India. While I shall not attempt to speak fully for the Indian aspect of this question, I think it is high time that a realist view of the situation was taken. Sentiment has had its innings, and the horror that has broken out in the sub-continent of India is, in my view, directly attributable to its dire influence. No man can foretell the end of that vast tragedy, but in a strictly realist sense one of two things will happen. Chaos may supervene, or India will find her strength, and a nationalist government take over full control. If the one, the hold of the tiny European community will disappear from the tea gardens; if the other, no responsible people's government can ignore one of the few highly organized, wealthy and lucrative industries within its territories. It will pass from British hands, perhaps by compulsory purchase, and be lost to us.

If this should seem too pessimistic a forecast the fate of the British companies in Burma may perhaps be cited. The British Press made scant comment on the passing of the huge Irrawaddi

rice fleet, a British-owned company compulsorily acquired by the Burmese with no price mentioned. Nor was any comment made on the nationalization of the teak industry—a monument to British courage and enterprise. That India will do the same to the tea industry must rank as rather more than probable, but I have no confidence in their ability to maintain it at anything like its present level of efficiency when they do so.

That is as far as I am prepared to venture along the treacherous path of prophecy as far as India is concerned. It is a problem similar in broad outlines to that of Ceylon, but its variations in detail are probably infinite. Of those details I have no knowledge and there is enough clamour of half-informed voices in modern Babel without my wishing to add to it.

In Ceylon there are some twelve hundred tea estates ranging in size from one hundred acres to four thousand acres of tea. They are almost entirely European-owned at the moment.[1] In addition to these industrial undertakings, there are an unspecified number of native-owned holdings, ranging from half an acre up to one hundred acres, covering another seventy-five thousand acres. Of the European-owned estates, there are still a handful of proprietary holdings, but in recent years these have all but disappeared, eaten up by the companies.

Slightly over ninety per cent of the resident labour force for tea—and for that matter rubber—estates comes from southern India. The withdrawal of these labourers back to their own country is the first, and possibly imminent, threat to the stability of the industry, for without them it could not continue. The remaining ten per cent of the personnel of the estates is made up by Sinhalese villagers doing skilled, individual work as mechanics, carpenters, masons and builders; Burghers and Jaffna Tamils in responsible jobs as tea-makers, clerks and other administrative posts; and Europeans, the managers and assistant managers of the estates. There are exceptions to all three categories, but they are few in number and do not affect the general argument.

In 1869, *Hemilea vastatrix* descended upon the old coffee plantations and began its swift work of destruction. A little tea already existed at that time, but it was not until 1875 that the first thousand acres of the new industry were planted in the

[1] Since these words were written several estates have passed to Sinhalese ownership.

ruined fields of coffee. Twenty years later there were three hundred thousand acres in being, an astonishing feat of pioneer enterprise. Now there is an area of roughly twice that size under tea, and the limit of expansion—in the opinion of the Ceylon administration—has been reached.

One of the worst aspects of the fierce burst of energy and courage with which the coffee planters faced the ruin of their old industry was the speed with which they opened up the new tea lands. With an almost savage disregard for the greatest principle in agriculture—that more must be put into land than is taken from it—they felled huge areas of virgin forests covering the hills, without protective measures of soil conservation, so that the accumulated treasure of millenniums, agriculturally speaking—the wonderful rich top and subsoil of thousands of years of forest growth and protection—were swept away in the first rains. The heritage of a millennium could, and did, rush down the naked hillsides in a single monsoon season, a reckless dissipation of natural resources for which the industry has paid heavily ever since. It was some time before the ruinous folly of these proceedings was realized and steps taken to see that it did not happen again, but a good deal of damage was done and tea estates in Ceylon cannot, at the present time, maintain crop without lavish use of chemical manures.

There are certain central functions in the growth and manufacture of tea which are constant to all varieties of the plant, all climates and all elevations, but the variations in detail—height above sea-level, soil, manuring, "jat" or type of bush, shade, manufacture—are innumerable. No European who joins the profession is expected to grasp the intricacies of tea production under five years, and few may expect to rise to senior posts under ten. It is a very long and arduous apprenticeship of hard work under trying conditions, study and observation. The initial period of training for the new recruit to tea planting covers some six months, after which a man may be appointed to a junior post as an assistant on a large estate, but it is many years before he is expected to take any degree of responsibility for fundamental decisions. The reasons for this long initiation are numerous. Knowledge of the complex language, religion and social customs of the Tamil labour force is essential, and the "feel" of such indefinable things as weather, soils, manures and crop needs years to acquire. There is no short cut. The land

demands complete surrender from its servants if they would wish ever to be its master, and only by *living* with things of the soil day in and day out for years can a man, however brilliant he may be, acquire that mastery.

There are three main types of finished teas—Black Tea, in which the leaves are fully fermented; Green Tea, in which they are dried but not fermented at all; and Oolong, in which half the process is carried out. For all practical purposes, Ceylon concentrates on the first type of manufacture, the black, crisp and brittle contents of the grocer's packet.

In the early days of tea in Lanka, the seed necessary for starting off the estates was imported, mainly from India, but for many years now the island has produced its own seed. The early history of the plant in China, the accepted home of tea-drinking, is obscured in a mass of legend, but Cha Pu is the first Chinese author to write expressly on the subject. Confucius, writing in 500 B.C., mentions tea, but Cha Pu says that it was first used on a wide scale as a medicine in the third century A.D., and that it was not until the sixth century that it was considered as a beverage.

Lo Yu, another famous Chinese writer, says that it was first taxed in A.D. 793, which means presumably that it was then drunk on a nation-wide scale; and in the year 960 tea was first sent as a tribute to the emperor.

The first mention of it ever made by an Englishman was in A.D. 1635, when a man named Wickham, writing from Japan to a representative of the East India Company, asked for "a pot of the best sort of chaw." To this day, in what is considered the worst sort of slang, tea is sometimes called "a cup of char," again demonstrating the curious tenacity of folk-lore in the affairs of man. The name comes in fact from the Japanese word for tea, which is "Tcha."

The plant—*Thea sinensis*, or *Camellia thea*—is an evergreen of the familiar *Camellia* family, a hardy species which, provided that it receives plenty of rain and sun, will grow almost anywhere. The two varieties are *Bohea*, the Chinese breed which really is a bush, and *Viridis*, from northern India, which is properly a tree. China tea is not necessarily a tea produced in China, but one manufactured from the leaf of the Chinese type of bush which grows to a height of from eighteen inches to two feet. In actual fact, I know of no "China tea" manufactured in Ceylon, although there are plenty of China "jat," or type,

bushes. The crop from these bushes is included with the crop from *Viridis* and manufactured into an ordinary "black" tea.

Viridis, in its natural state, grows to a height of from twenty to thirty feet, but on the estates it is artificially turned into a bush, and kept under control, by means of pruning in the first place, and plucking in the second. As an historical curiosity, the first scientifically planted tea—the word "scientifically" being used comparatively, for the methods employed were in reality very rough and ready—was that of Labookellie estate on the Ramboda pass, which was opened in 1867, and still thrives.

An estate usually reserves a few acres of good land, remote from the fields to prevent casual pollination and the consequent production of hybrids, for its seed-bearers. The struggle to win the race of production in the early days was such that there was no time to devote to a study of this science, for science it is, and even now there is much leeway to be made up. The island has, however, in its Tea Research Station at Talawakellie, a fine observation estate, not limited by the necessity of showing profit, where every aspect of the growth, control, production and manufacture of tea is being closely studied.

The seed-bearers on the estate where I spent so many years were planted at a distance of twelve feet by twelve, on the box system, showing roughly three hundred trees to the acre. Even wider spacing is now held to give better results. Light and air are both essential. Although, if left to itself, the tree will thrust straight upwards, lateral growth is needed even in natural seed-bearers, for each new shoot is capable of producing only one lot of flower. New shoots must be produced if flower, followed by the seed, is required, so that the nursery work of an estate is of the highest importance. Thinning out and topping back, cleaning, keeping the trees free from pests and a score of other routine jobs continue all the year round apart from the harvesting and preparation for planting of the seed crop itself.

Although the trees flower all the year round, the seed ripens and falls only between June and September and is gathered at once. As with English bulbs, the good seed is the "solid" seed. The "light" seed is, therefore, floated off and the sound seed put out in specially prepared beds—sandy, good soil, heavily manured with good cattle manure—and shielded from the sun. These beds must be kept well watered. There, carefully tended, they grow until they are between eighteen months and two years

of age before being taken from the nursery to the new clearings, or for replacements in mature fields, for planting out. No one with any knowledge of agriculture or of gardening will need to be told that such a bald outline of the growth and cropping of seed covers a hundred nuances of treatment to which a whole book could be devoted.

I never tired of visiting the nursery, far away from the estate though it was. It was at the bottom of a valley, many miles in length and breadth, with the highest hills some hundreds of feet above the level of the stream running through the seed-bearers. The sense of stillness and peace of that place was indescribable, but in all memories of the East it seems to me that the nose plays first part. The smell of the dried grass, the little, refreshing tang of the scent of water, the acrid smells from a village lost in its distinctive trees, the sour-mud odour of the rice-fields and what can only be described as the golden scent of the sunrays, grow rather than diminish with the years. I needed small excuse to make a visit to this place, although the old kangany—field overseer—who had charge of it knew his job with a knowledge which had come from a lifetime of instinct and observation. To find fault with his work was so difficult that it became a sort of game rather than supervision, and that old man and his coolies might have been left to themselves for months without the high quality of the work falling off. It was a happy place.

New clearing work on an estate—now almost a thing of the past, for European companies are no longer permitted to purchase land for tea—was the most challenging and satisfying task that any planter had to do. Relatively few have had the experience, for most of the large estates have been developed to their fullest capacity for many years, but such is the pride and interest taken in this work by all who have had to do it that each man's new clearings are superior to those of anyone else. It is a deep but friendly rivalry of the best type, and there is no doubt that to open up land is a richly satisfying experience. The coolies share this excitement and interest and there is intense rivalry among them to be chosen for new clearing work.

Tea is grown on the slopes of the vast horseshoe of mountains in the centre of Ceylon. There are three broad divisions: Low-country teas, ranging in altitude from one foot above sea-level to 1500 feet; Mid-country teas, altitudes from 1500 to 3500; and High-grown, ranging from 3500 feet to close upon 7000.

High-grown teas, generally speaking, produce the smallest crops but the best quality, Low-grown, huge crops but little quality, and Mid-grown somewhere in between the two. The High-grown teas come from the districts of Dimbula, Dickoya, Nuwara Eliya and parts of Uva, the Mid-country around Kandy, and the Low from Ratnapura and parts of the plains. All the High-grown teas are in the wet zone with the exception of Uva which is on the dry side of the mountains. The tea from this district, therefore, has qualities of its own, owing to the prolonged drought which, at its height, almost extinguishes yield but atones for it by bestowing a rich quality—for all too short a period—comparable to the finest Indian teas.

What forest remains in the hills is now, and rightly, conserved by the Government, and as the remaining patanas—or grasslands—are in theory earmarked for grazing lands for villagers, no more opening up of land is anticipated. But, in fact, there are many thousands of acres of good patana land above four thousand feet lying idle and likely to remain so.

The land which is to be cleared is first of all very carefully resurveyed in order to make quite certain that there will be no litigation with regard to ownership at some future date. No villager will dispute ownership until the clearing is finished, for without the new tea the land is probably worthless to him, while, if the estate is in being, the company will be prepared to pay very heavy compensation to the "owner" to retain its new field. To find that the original Government survey confirms the estate survey is comforting, but if it does not, it is by no means certain that the estate is wrong. The Survey Department must be called in to mark the property out again, and the bounds agreed before a single sod is cut.

The land is then cleared, usually by Sinhalese villagers who are adepts at such work. If it is jungle land, such trees as may be useful for timber are marked, felled and sawn. Fuel trees are felled and cut up. The roots of all trees and undergrowth are grubbed out, the grass cut, left to dry in the sun and burned off.

The general plan of the work has been considered at length before the clearing begins, but modifications may be necessary and the planter who is handling the job usually has a large measure of freedom to exercise his own judgment. Young and inexperienced assistants are seldom given this work, though, for their own education, they will be sent out to help with all processes.

First of all, sites are reserved for the major building works that may be required. Line-rooms for the labourers are almost certain to be needed, but such buildings as factories, bungalows, hospitals or stores are less common, unless it is a new estate which is being opened. If they are required, very careful thought must be given to their construction, for there are a variety of factors to be considered.

In the early pioneer days factories were invariably built on the site of the old coffee stores. These were in valleys, sheltered by the hills, and on the river's bank wherever possible, for water was absolutely indispensable in the manufacture of coffee to wash the berries and to provide the power. It has been discovered that the ideal site for tea manufacture is not in a shielded hollow at all, and indeed in later years all new factories have been sited upon a hilltop, provided that other vital factors—such as accessibility, convenience and power—make it possible. The withering of the leaf, as we shall see, is one of the most vital of all the processes through which the green leaf passes, and although it is possible to wither it by artificial methods, if it can be done by natural air great advantages are to be gained.

Coolie lines must be planned to ensure that the labour force is rationally distributed; stores for tools and manure sheds must be built at the best vantage-points; and if a "cart-road"—metalled and macadamized roads for lorry transport—is required, it must be worked in with an eye twenty-five years on the future—now extremely unlikely to come to pass—to link up further fields and provide a central highway for hundreds of acres yet to be cleared. The minor roads—or paths—of which there are scores of miles on a large estate, need to be planned with the greatest care, to ensure that all parts of the various fields will be fully served but that no unnecessary soil will be wasted on them. Gradients for the cart-road and paths, too, need skilful handling. Lorries, fully loaded, do not like climbing a gradient of one in five, but, on the other hand, the cost of blasting a road through a granite cliff may be prohibitive. Coolies object to walking miles along easy gradients when, by climbing straight up the hillside, they can save a considerable distance, but if paths are put in too steeply, the loss of top-soil when water is in spate is ruinous. All such factors have to be balanced against each other and decisions taken before the work is started. There will, of course, be modifications as progress is made.

From the general layout, the work then turns to the particular jobs to be done. Where roads cross ravines, bridges must be built; where the land slopes, drains must be cut and provided with devices, such as silt pits, to hold up the precious top-soil; where ravines do not exist, leading drains must be cut into which the side drains will flow.

I know of no greater delight than wandering round a new clearing of one's own planning, with the various works under way. Here masons are building a culvert, there putting in an "Irish drain"—or paved crossing across a road where the amount of water to be taken off does not justify the expense of a culvert —somewhere else putting up coolie lines, or rows of dwelling-rooms. Such lines are built to Government minimum requirements, somewhat ironical in view of the conditions under which they permit their own nationals to exist. Only absolutely first-class work is allowed by the managers of good estates, and every phase of it must be constantly supervised. In this type of work the Sinhalese are outstanding, and I am quite certain that, many centuries hence, when antiquarians carry out excavation work in the thick hill jungles that will then exist, they will come across specimens of stonework, such as culverts, as good then as the day they were built. It is a joy to watch a Sinhalese mason at work, his handling and cutting of great blocks of granite being the unconscious expression of real artistry. Sometimes he brings elephants to help him move the granite, prevalent everywhere in the up-country mountains, and the intelligent beasts lift, lower, dribble huge blocks of stone down the hillside with their feet or trunk, or climb steep hills with the agility of goats.

Blasting work with black powder or dynamite is carried out by the villagers, who are responsible, too, for nearly all the carpentry and other building work. To see them on a contract of this nature is to marvel at the curious paradox of their character. Strong, keen, humorous and highly intelligent, they are delightful people to work with and their standards are in all respects higher than those of their Tamil counterparts. But they are quite unreliable. No trust whatever can be placed in them, for they must be one of the most mercurial races alive.

There is much detail, as well as major work, going on, such as the erection of boundary fences to keep out stray cattle or village buffaloes, the putting up of telephone wires or power cables, and the variety of the scene is its great charm.

The navvy work of cutting the earth for main roads, estate paths, leading and side drains, and sites is all done by the Tamils, after they have been surveyed and the levels pegged in with absolute accuracy by the superintendent or his European assistant, usually working with specially trained and intelligent Tamil boys. It is stimulating to work with these youngsters—*podians*—who are gay and happy, filled with the joy of life, and full of fun. Their energy, despite the gruelling heat on these clearings where no trees shade the glaring sunrays, is limitless. They will race up and down the hillside, and take a delight in "dressing" the pegs themselves so that they stand in perfect white lines up and down the brown earth.

There are many systems of drains and usually the individual planter has his prejudices, but whatever system he chooses nothing is done in a haphazard fashion. The whole clearing is executed with a mathematical accuracy and gleaming efficiency.

When ready, the cleared and drained land is then "lined," to peg out the exact places where the young plants, ready at the nursery, are to be put in. Roughly there are two systems possible for lining. Some prefer "contour"—that is, the rows running round the natural contours of the piece of land cleared—and others slope, or straight up-and-down-the-hill planting. What is straight up-and-down-the-hill in one corner of a fifty-acre plot may be running diagonally by the time the other side is reached, so that putting in the master, or key row, is of great importance. Usually it is somewhere in the centre of the land, and all the others are put in, by compass and line, with mathematical accuracy.

Close planting is now fairly general. Compact bushes, with enough breathing space to grow to their full stature but not enough to live out of contact with their fellows, provide a complete umbrella for the soil. In a mature, well-planted field of tea it is not possible to see the ground at all. Coolies work their way along the rows, looking, from afar, like gay butterflies hovering on green grass, and this cover serves several purposes. Besides giving the maximum bush surface from which the crop is taken, it also keeps the sunlight from the weeds, breaks the force of tropical rainfall and conserves the moisture in the soil against the fierce heat.

To provide this perfect cover, with a high jat tea, most new clearings of late years were planted at three feet between plants, and three feet six inches between rows. It is a beautiful sight to

see a new clearing, the rich brown soil all ready for the plants, the gleaming rows of pegs standing up like soldiers in perfect formation as far as the eye can reach.

Good deep holes, about two feet deep, are then cut to receive the plants. Most planters like the raw earth to have some seasoning, or weathering, before the plants go in, and add a pinch of manure to the earth to give them a start. Light, drizzly rain for several days is the ideal weather, and I have noticed that coolies cast anxious looks at the sky before planting time, as if the welfare of each plant is their own personal concern. Certainly the planter himself feels that it is.

The new plants are carefully pruned before they leave the nursery, and great care is exercised by the coolies in handling and planting, in filling, tamping and shading, in looking over, after a short period, to replant where original plants have not survived the shock of transfer—a five per cent death roll is considered a bad clearing—and in hovering around their charges as though the responsibility is theirs. This loyalty is a marked attribute of Tamils, especially in new clearing work, and although close supervision is essential every man gives of his best. On my particular estate, owing to the genius of the manager, the morale in the labour force was high. There was a comradeship which survived even the artificially created labour troubles of the day, and when it came to my turn to take over the estate, when the manager went on leave, I received nothing but the most loyal co-operation from coolies of all castes.

Once the tea is planted, other planting begins. There are various kinds of shade trees grown between the rows of tea to shield the bushes from the worst heat of the day—*Acacia decurrens*, dadap, albizzia—and along high ridges, or down steep hillsides, windbelts are planted to break the force of the gales. In these belts quick-growing eucalypti of various kinds find a place, and some other timber trees, such as grevillias. When all is done, constant supervision of drains, weeds, resupplying and vigilance against the possibility of pests, is needed until the new fields are worked gradually into the full routine of mature tea. This is a long process. Although the bushes of these clearings are "brought in" as yielding areas in their third year, they are not an economic asset until the fourth or even fifth year. Without capital, confidence, expert supervision and patience, opening up tea fields is a waste of time and money. Nevertheless over half a

million acres of tea are now in full production in the island of Ceylon, and the pioneer courage, energy and enterprise necessary to have achieved such a result were possible only in a race which believed in its own destiny.

The estate upon which I worked covered several thousand acres of land. One end of it was more than six miles from the other, and its fourteen hundred acres of fine tea and the three hundred acres of rubber forest were organized in six separate divisions, four of tea and two of rubber, dotted about in the valleys and on the crests of two mountain ranges. Only two of the divisions were actually in contact. Between others considerable distances had to be covered over patanas, ravines, areas of jungle or valleys in which Sinhalese villages practised their immemorial agriculture. Some of the pockets of jungle were quite fascinating, a mere fifty to a hundred acres in extent, but living links with palæolithic man, for it is quite certain that they have never been anything else but jungle. To stand in these green cathedrals, knowing that open grassland was less than a hundred yards to right or to left, was an odd experience. It was a forest world, complete and immutable, a microcosm of the wild.

The highest tea on that "group," as large estates comprising several divisions are known, grew between 4000 and 5000 feet, the lowest at 2000 feet, but if one were to attempt to make a "bee-line" from the one to the other, one would have a very strenuous time of it, traversing cliffs, gorges, stretches of virgin jungle, secret pools and sudden summits giving views over the huge mountain heart of the island one moment, with glimpses of one hundred miles of low-country plains the next, blue with heat and distance. Wherever one went in the course of the day's work, the loveliness of earth, in all its aspects, was all-pervading.

I liked best the new clearings, away out on their own along a high ridge forming one side of an immense gorge, the Valley of Death, the other side of which was the Madulsima range rising to something over 5,000 feet in places. Far down, from my own secret corner, which I called Contemplation Rock, a hidden stream worked its way north to join the Mahawelli Ganga, the serpentine curves of which could be glimpsed, 4000 feet beneath, in folds of the forest. It joined the mother stream close to Alutnuwara, forever steaming in its azure-tinted jungle cover. Beyond it the mystic silver oval of Horaborawewa waited for me, after long years, to stand upon its shores.

But up on our hills we had variety enough. There were no more tea estates between ourselves and India, and before sinking into the jungle plains, there were many thousands of acres of untouched patanas, a vast bowl, in the bottom of which, tiny and almost indistinguishable, were our own nurseries. It was a sweet stretch of country, cut off from the main run of the tea estates, which were grouped around the historic little town of Badulla. There was good rough shooting there, until I sickened of killing anything, and half a dozen small villages whose people I got to know, and peace and beauty never-ending.

Fourteen hundred acres of tea with an average of 3200 bushes to the acre is a total of something over four million bushes, every one of which received personal attention, care and cultivation. As an example, each bush received a dose of manure every year. To bestow this constant care and attention it was necessary to keep an army of fifteen hundred working coolies permanently employed—men, women and children. Counting in the "pensioners"—old estate coolies unable to work and granted pensions of rice and foodstuffs—and children not yet old enough to go out into the fields—their great ambition and joy—the Tamil population on this one group numbered over two thousand souls. Their "lines" were all built upon the tea divisions, two or three communities spread over each division, for distances were great and variations in altitude considerable. These "lines" were usually named after the first kangany to occupy them, retaining this name, sometimes, long after the original occupant had died or retired to the "coast," as India was known.

Each morning at an early hour—loveliest time of the day in Paradise Island—muster is held at central points known as muster-grounds, on each division. At this parade, the labourers are detailed for the various tasks of the day.

Let us follow the pluckers—the women and younger children of both sexes—to whom is entrusted the daily task of bringing in the crop, for the estates are so organized that crop is taken six days out of every seven all through the year, with the exception of two or three of the great Hindu festival days.

The pluckers have large round bamboo or cane baskets slung on to their backs by means of a rope which passes around their foreheads. The women wear gaily coloured cloths wound, rather after the classical Greek fashion, across their breasts, caught in at the waist, and falling from the hips exactly like a European skirt.

Round their heads, and padded where their foreheads take the strain of the basket rope, they wind a headcloth, turban fashion. Greens, reds, golds and white predominate, and the effect of a hundred or more pluckers, moving leisurely along the rows of bushes, up to their waists in greenery, is most picturesque.

Of the bushes, trained to a height of between three feet and three feet six inches by systematic pruning, each yields a crop of "flush" every ten days to a fortnight. This is a tender closed leaf-bud and the next two leaves, young and succulent. The next leaf on the stem is larger and harder, and the connecting stalk coarser, and should be not included in the leaf for the factory, although, since the pluckers are paid by weight, they will include it if supervision is poor. The "flush," if not plucked, would, of course, continue to grow upwards, throwing new leaves as it progressed, but it is plucked and put into the basket. Any coarse leaves that have grown beyond the "table" of the bush are broken and thrown away, as are the barren shoots—known as *Banjis*—which, because they have no leaf-buds, would merely become large and coarse and close those particular branches as far as "flush" is concerned. The cleaning of the bush of these unproductive stems is vital, but since it does not add to the pluckers' tally of pounds, is not popular with them.

The women are superlatively skilful at this work and to watch them is fascinating. The hands of a first-class plucker—almost always a woman, though some of the young boys are good and during the rush season men show a surprising aptitude for the work—dart over the surface of the bush with the agility of a highly trained typist. The movements are too swift and dainty to follow in detail, gathering the flushes in small heaps in the hand and throwing them, with a lithe, quick jerk, over the shoulder into the waiting basket. The whole gang moves slowly but purposefully over the field, like so many gay animals feeding.

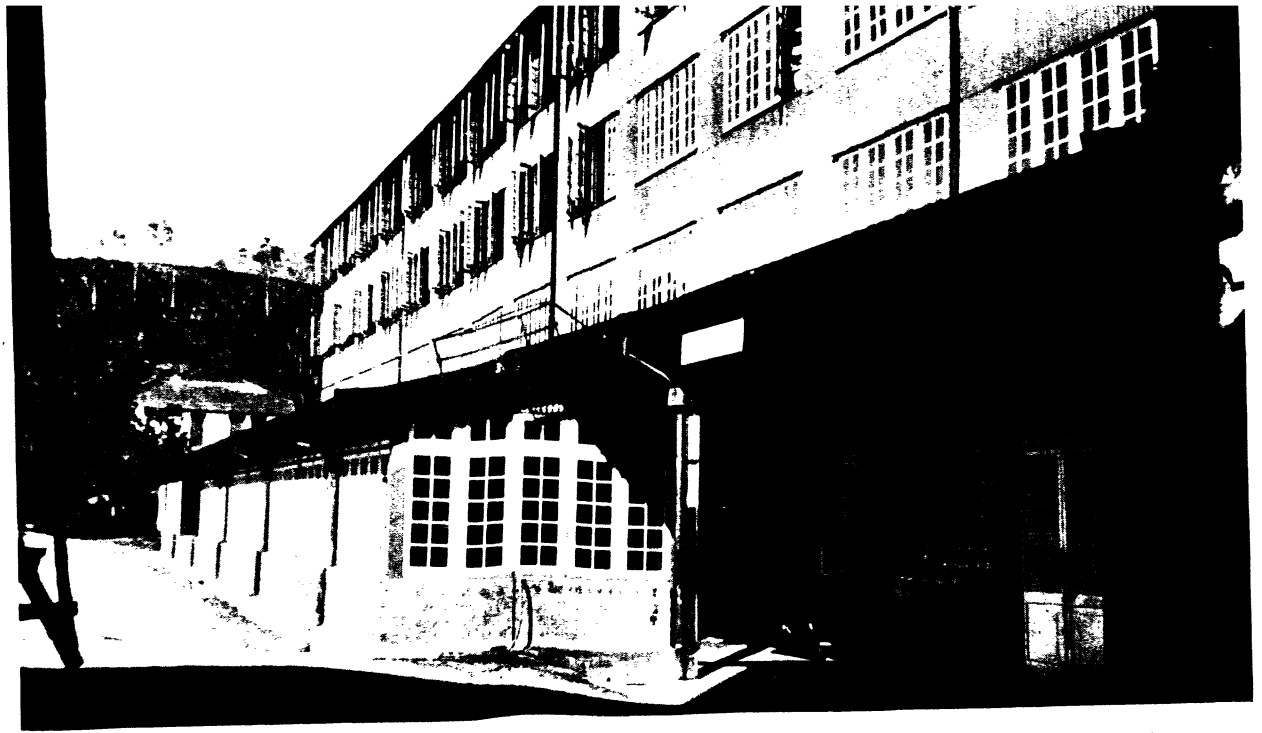
The supervision of this work is in the hands of men—kanganies or overseers—whose duty it is to see that coarse leaf is not included and that the fragile leaf is not crushed in the pluckers' hands or bruised by pushing it down too hard into the baskets. These men have the insignia of their rank—usually an ancient European-type jacket on top of the full cloth covering the legs, a turban round their heads and an umbrella—the high-sign of superiority over the common herd—caught in the collar of the coat and hanging down their backs.

Four times a day, and during rush seasons even more, the leaf is carefully weighed, each plucker's tally being entered in a small account book kept by the kannackapillei—the "child of accounts" mentioned later in this book. He is responsible to the European assistant running the division for complete records of all the various works done during the day. He cannot make mistakes with regard to the amount of leaf plucked by the women, for although they note nothing down, they know to a pound how much they have plucked and have the right, not merely to challenge the kannackapillei but, at the monthly pay day, the Durai too. In this matter cheating never seems to occur to any of them, and if accounts are challenged, the coolies' statement may be accepted usually as completely accurate or a genuine mistake.

The leaf, once weighed up, is packed carefully into coir sacks with an open mesh—bruising the leaf at all stages of its career from bush to packet is the worst of all faults—and then put into lorries, ranged on shelves so that they barely touch each other. Sometimes the fields are on high mountain ridges—tea grows anywhere—and the cart-road may be a mile or more away. In such cases wire shoots—the longest on our group was one and a quarter miles in length—are stretched from the highest pinnacle to the white ribbon of the road sometimes a thousand feet beneath. Where possible, these shoots go straight down to the factory, if it is an old one built in a hollow. The sacks of leaf are then hitched on to small steel wheels, or runners, and career madly over the valley to the landing stage where automatic run-offs see to it that they do not crash into the ground. Where the fields are in deep valleys and the factory on top of a mountain, some estates have endless wire tramways, to which the sacks are hitched and hauled up to the factory.

That is the productive, crop-taking work of the estate. On each division there are usually two gangs of pluckers, the experts working the young fields with their rich crops, the older and slower women working in the maturer tea where the crop is much smaller. The organization of this work—rotation, provision of baskets, runners, sacks and lorries, the keeping of the accounts and countless other small details—may be imagined. It is by no means simple.

The tea bush, however, does not come to a productive level and stay there. After a time—which varies from eighteen



A modern Up-country tea factory 4,000 ft. above sea level in the Province of Uva, Ceylon



The beautiful Diuluma Falls, Koslanda, nearly 600 feet of sheer drop

months in the forcing, hot-house climate of the plains, to as long as four years in the highest fields of all, bordering almost upon the snow-line—the bush grows tired of yielding flush. Its arteries harden. The sap moves sluggishly. Then, to bring it back again into production, it must be pruned, by which is meant cutting off all the top hamper of green, matured leaves, cutting the main branches back and across to a level with precision and care, removing twisted and useless stems, cleaning out die-back and washing off lichen and other growths from the collar, or bole.

The pruning programme is carefully organized in rotation, and varies according to the height of the estate and the jat of tea it carries. It varies, too, with individual theories, for some prune lightly and some severely, some prune clean and others leave side branches with their leaves still on, and there are many other idiosyncrasies. In such a short, general account as this, all that can be said is that all these theories have their devotees, and no doubt everybody is right, but putting the problem on its simplest basis, in three-year tea a third of the estate is pruned every year.

Seen from afar, a field, after pruning, seems to be bare brown earth, with the accurately planted but widely spaced shade trees showing as green blobs against the background of soil. Then is the time for special manuring—the pruning mixture has a different composition from the general mixture with which each field is treated every year—every part of the field being deep-forked by hand, followed by lopping the green manure as the shade trees are called, and spreading their leaves along the rows as a protective mulch. Here again practice varies with individual theory. Many planters regard deep forking as heresy, a certain waste of good top-soil, and others again fork in the green manure deep with the inorganic manure to give back humus to the soil. No two programmes altogether agree, but once the forking and green manuring is done, the drains are cleaned out and the sub-soil spread carefully back into the field, and the road drains and culverts cleaned out too, a general spring cleaning. A well-pruned field, with all its attendant work competently done, is a joy to behold, and there is no planter in Ceylon who does not take the closest personal pride and interest in this work. In planters' clubs all over the hill country, most of the conversation concerns pruning, manuring, new clearings and manufacture.

It is heavy labour. To prune a fine tea bush carefully in

blazing heat reduces a European to a soggy mess of perspiration, but in planting the junior assistant is expected to be able to execute all hand tasks himself, pruning, lopping, cleaning, forking as skilfully as any of his coolies. It is a wise rule, by no means universally followed out, of course.

Pruning was my own particular hobby, and in my first five years when—as a junior—I hardly counted as a human being in the scheme of things, I trained myself to take a row with my number one pruners and work up the mountainside with them. Pruners always work uphill, for obvious reasons, and although I could not keep pace with my skilled men, my work compared with the best of them. At my peak, I fell short by some thirty bushes of the required total—or Kannack—which was 160 bushes of our big tea per man per day.

Those are the pruners, the very cream of the field labourers. The pruning season comes twice a year, and lasts from three weeks to a month each time. For the rest of the year, pruners do all other field tasks as required of them, but they receive a higher rate of pay all the year round. Keen men, therefore, want to become pruners, and there is a certain amount of competition in this respect. Every season, too, there comes a stir of excitement among the men as pruning draws closer. It is hard work, but it is distinctive and they like it.

Every acre of the estate receives a dose of manure every year —in some estates every eighteen months—with a special dose for the pruned fields. All drains, silt-pits, roads and culverts are cleaned out also. In the timber reserves, where, in the case of my group, we maintained a cycle of quick-growing fuel trees on a four-year basis, there is a good deal of work felling, splitting and dispatching wood to the factory. Then there are special works such as spraying—for the bush is a prey to endless pests internal and from outside—carrying cattle manure to weak places in the tea cover, replanting individual bushes that have died, and other emergency tasks for which provision cannot be made on a programme of work, but which must be done as they arise. In times of extreme drought, for example, special irrigation measures are taken to water dying tea, and in times of flood and havoc, all hands are turned on to clear fallen banks and rocks. Certainly work never ceases.

Then there are the specialists. Lorry drivers are almost always Sinhalese, as are the engineers in the factory power-house, the

blacksmith and the electricians. The sack and basket men are invariably Tamils, as are the cattle-keepers, the line sweepers, the gardeners, the horse-keepers and a swarm of other individual jobs that makes of any large estate an absolute hive of varied industry.

The specialists know what their job will be, but the main labour force does not—except at special times such as the pruning season when pruners go straight to the field they are pruning—and turns out to muster each day. From there they are detailed off and, in my time, went with a will, for they are a cheerful crowd. Ramasamy—the generic name for all Tamil coolies—was a wonderful worker as I knew him, happy, dogged, short in imagination except where his gods were concerned, but absolutely indomitable in the face of bad weather. Without him tea is doomed, for I am quite convinced that there is no substitute for him, and without European management Ramasamy will not continue to function for long. Within the boundaries of the estate he is at home for it is, admittedly, a small feudal world. He has his sumptuous line-rooms, his garden, his cattle, goats and poultry, a school for his children, a dispensary, midwife and doctor within call, a bank to save his money for him, a Durai to do his business for him, his own "kaddai" or general store, a dhoby, barber and priest, and his own centre of worship, the kovil or temple. It is a land of plenty, unguessed at by his kinsfolk who stay behind in south India.

But outside the protective borders of the estate he is in an alien world. Villagers and townspeople fleece him mercilessly, sell him rubbish, get him drunk, send him back home without a cent left in his pouch. He has no future without British management, except in a world of colourful Oriental confusion and swift decay. Within a decade or two of the eviction of the British and the nationalization of the industry—a real threat—tea, as a serious world industry, will have vanished from Ceylon.

One last field work must be mentioned—weeding. It is a highly contentious subject, for weeds, if allowed their freedom, grow with a fierce pertinacity and a prolific exuberance which might be expected of tropical soils. Yet if they are removed, the earth loses its vital top-soil the more easily for the vigorous scraping to which it is subjected. Hand weeding is a pipe dream, although, in theory, many estates practise it. In fact the weeders, the majority of whom are small boys and girls, when bent down

to their task are invisible in a field of big tea. I have had to search a small ten-acre field, in which I knew a gang of "podians" or small boys were working, to find them. As soon as the Durai appears, all signs of scrapers disappear, but the ravaged earth tells its own tale.

We did what we could to counteract this by paying well for coolies to weed "contracts" in their spare time, or by means of the pensioners who spent their days in the lines. These old people were infinitely more conscientious than the rising generation.

Into this intricate pattern of field work is woven the private lives of the labourers. Of their beliefs and customs I shall write in a separate chapter. They are a mosaic of fascinating variety, religious and social, but they cannot be dissociated from the daily routine. Into the steady stream of work which never ceases must be fitted the festivals, the marriages, births, deaths, disputes and even murders of a vast human community.

Twice a week I opened my office for interviews, and one by one a stream of coolies appeared at my window asking for money from their bank accounts, for advances of pay, for loans, for help in the purchase of a piece of land in their home village in India, for the redress of wrongs, for contracts, for the settlement of line, caste or faction rows, for leave off the estate, for permission to beat drums, blow horns, let off fireworks, for permission to increase their herd of goats, to complain of leaky roofs, evil eyes, bad rice—day in and day out for years, sometimes during the night as well, drunks, epileptics, fanatics, sorcerers, priests, villagers, Aratchis; and never two days the same. There is no escape for the Durai. His bungalow is usually planted in the very centre of the estate, often miles from the next European, sometimes—as in the case of my first bungalow—miles from a road and a thousand feet above it. There is no escape from that job, for the obligation of authority, nurtured by a century of special tradition and a millennium of national growth, was not one that could be evaded.

The only reward that I discovered was the human interest of the work itself. The fascination of my days among Tamil coolies is a memory I would not change for wealth, and in the end I knew that it had been work well done. When, finally, I was removed in an ambulance, as all thought to my death—for the priest had told them that I should not recover—all the workers

in the fields downed tools and made their way to the cart-road along which my ambulance had to travel. There they stood, in absolute silence, as it passed.

I believe that, until artificial strife between Durai and coolie was fomented by the spirit of evil that is ranging the world so freely to-day, the Tamil labourers of the tea estates of Ceylon felt towards the Europeans who served them a respect that bordered upon veneration.

The first step in the long journey of tea to the markets of the world has been taken in the field in the production of crop. The next is to manufacture the "flush" into tea.

From the millions of green, tender leaf-buds and young leaves that pour daily into the factory of a group is made that crisp, black tea whose characteristic odour delights the nostrils of Englishwomen as they collect their groceries in towns and villages throughout the kingdom. The metamorphosis is neither simple nor direct. It is, in fact, an astonishing chain of scientific processes, mathematically conceived and executed, but dependent, for the highest and most delicate functions of all, upon fallible human judgment and instinct.

Tea-making is something between a science and an art, and it is generally agreed, among planters, that tea-makers are born and not made. Even though such men are born with the "feel" —a delicacy of touch, smell and instinct for the psychological moments which occur in the change of the leaf which no instruments can measure—yet twenty years of intensive work and experience are needed before a man may claim to be a first-class tea-maker.

The mechanics of producing the finished article vary in a hundred particulars according to such factors as geography, altitude, weather conditions, jat of tea and others, but broadly speaking the main principles are the same.

When the green leaf arrives at the factory it goes through five processes—withering, rolling, fermenting, firing and grading—the last of which is purely a mechanical arrangement of leaves which have gone through all the elements of change attendant upon manufacture. It is during the first four processes that the leaf undergoes metamorphosis, a prey to involved and delicate as well as violent and marked chemical and physical changes, some of which, to this day, elude analysis. Theories and

research continue, but the most experienced planters of all the tea-producing countries are still unable to agree with one another as to what actually happens to the leaf during manufacture.

The principal ingredients of the leaf are water, essential oil, caffein and tannin. Research chemists admit that little or nothing is known about the essential oil, which is so volatile that, so far, it has escaped analysis. Since, however, it provides the flavour, it is the element of which, above all, knowledge is needed. It is being pursued diligently and patiently, and if the industry survives it will be run to earth one day. Meanwhile essential oil remains the most mysterious element in tea.

The astringency of the fluid tea comes from the tannin and the stimulus from the caffein. The water, which forms seventy-six per cent of the leaf before manufacture begins, is largely eliminated during the four phases of change, only some six per cent being left in a well-made tea.

Throughout the work nothing is added, no outside agent, colouring matter, flavour stimulant or addition to bulk, in any factory in the island.

In a large factory of four floors, the top three are called withering lofts, where all the floor space is devoted to the process of getting rid of most of the water in the leaf and starting chemical change in its structure. It is almost unbelievable how complicated a process this "drying" can be, for although, theoretically, the leaf is spread thinly and evenly over "tats," or banks of shelves, made of jute hessian stretched on wire or wooden frames, and just left to dry, what actually happens is complex and involved.

It is known that two changes occur—physical and chemical—and to synchronize these two plain changes to the best advantage is the art of withering. In the event they refuse to synchronize, and endless controversy, experiments and plain fads go on from day to day in all the factories of the island in pursuit of the ideal wither.

All this controversy and experimentation makes the whole art of tea-making of gripping interest to the planting fraternity. The subject is one which is never exhausted and never fails to rouse controversy among planters no matter under what circumstances it is raised. I have heard two planters, sitting over a water-hole in low-country jungle awaiting the arrival of leopard,

arguing in heated tones—when absolute and unbroken silence was vital—about the respective merits of artificial and natural withers. This very controversy, however, makes a simple outline of what goes on a difficult task. Almost any generalization may be challenged, and the impression that the production of tea is merely a matter of routine, a simple, boring process that keeps Europeans occupied for the short time during the day in which they are not to be found at their clubs, is fantasy. The reverse is true.

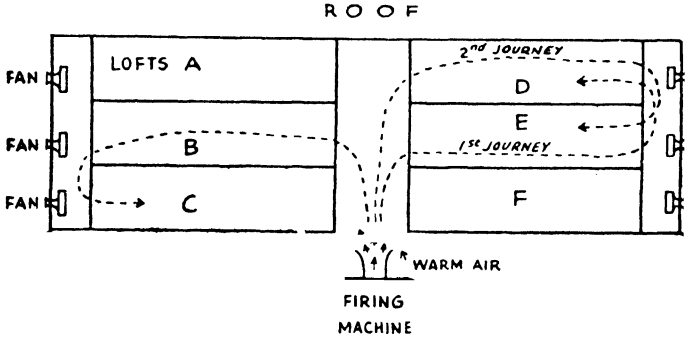
During my own training, I spent days and nights in the factory, watching, measuring, feeling, recording, inventing charts and graphs, smelling, touching, pondering and, like the proverbial Chiel, for ever taking notes. I have those notes still, and regard them affectionately, nor is it certain that some of their boyish guesses and conclusions are wide of the mark.

During this first process; which, at its best, is achieved by the natural drying qualities of the atmosphere through the open windows of the lofts, but which too often has to be stimulated artificially by boosting hot air; some sixty per cent of the water is lost. The study and control of atmospheric humidity is the root of the operation, and flavour, infusion, brightness, liquors and strength—all of special interest to the tea trade—rest upon the results obtained in the lofts. I should point out here that the tea trade is concerned with the marketing, blending and distribution of made teas, while the tea industry is responsible for growing, manufacturing, packing and shipping the finished product.

By a system of trap doors, boosting fans which pull or push warm air, and the air itself, heated by the driers and mixed with natural air to any required degree of humidity, withering may be controlled. The air ascends a central shaft, and is drawn through any loft that the tea-maker may require, and pulled out at the far end by expeller fans. It then returns to the central shaft. After a time, the process is repeated, but the other way round, so that the humidity of the air, which progressively lost dryness on its first journey by taking up moisture from the leaf, does so in reverse the second time, thus exactly balancing the two lofts. It is a subtle art, dependent upon an anxious and constant study of hygrometers showing the constantly changing humidity of the air, frequent inspections to ascertain the state of the leaf on the tats, the smell—a glorious ripe-apple smell as the wither

proceeds—and many other factors including the touch which is of a putty-like consistency if well-withered leaf is crushed in the hand. Natural withers, when the humidity of the outside air is correct, last anything from ten to twenty hours, and the organization of a factory, with leaf constantly pouring in from the fields, may be imagined. It is a positive hive of industry, and to walk round it at a busy time is analogous to wandering about a battleship at sea.

The leaf when withered is sent down to the rolling room, usually by means of chutes through the floors running straight



ARTIFICIAL WITHERING OF LEAF

down to the machines. Throughout all processes, the minimum of handling is insisted upon, even by the highly skilled coolies who do factory work, for friction of any kind produces heat, and heat is the enemy of quality.

Rolling breaks down the leaf cells and liberates the juices which, for the first time—unless it has happened prematurely by bruising—come into contact with the air. Oxidization then takes place, and some of the tannin ferments. During this process the leaf juices spread themselves over the surface of the leaf, where they dry and remain in a soluble state. When boiling water is poured on them they dissolve and provide the colour, the strength, the odour and the taste of the liquid we pour into our cups.

If you have seen a man rolling a quid of tobacco between his palms, you will know exactly what goes on in the ingenious, if ponderous, machines known as rollers. A round box rotates one way and a ribbed table rotates the other, the two being so close together that none of the leaf in the box can escape between it and the table. It cannot escape from the top either, as there is a lid to the box, a lid which can be screwed down exerting whatever pressure is required by the tea-maker to break up the leaf. The leaf, of course, gets very roughly handled indeed at this stage, and exact knowledge and experience are required to know how much pressure should be exercised, how long to roll without ruining quality, and how so to exert and release pressure that heat, the enemy of quality, does not become excessive. There is no short cut to any of this knowledge.

Power in modern tea factories is derived as a rule from oil-driven engines of the Tangye or Ruston Hornby type, sometimes operated by turbines harnessed to the adjacent mountain river. They provide up to two hundred horse-power by which the factory shafting is propelled, driving various machines in all parts of the factory. Dynamos create the electric power not only for the factory, but usually for the various bungalows all over the group.

In both Japan and China rolling is done by hand which, to people with hygienic scruples, is not a very attractive idea, particularly when feet come into the picture as well and thighs are used as a handy table. In Ceylon handling at all times is reduced to an absolute minimum, and the leaf is not touched by hand once it has been through the firing machine.

The final product of the rolling is a sticky, golden-green or copper conglomerate which is put upon a fine-meshed machine called a "roll-breaker." Its function is to break up the roll. Quite simply it is a sloping table which shakes backwards and forwards at high speed. The fineness of the mesh allows only the small tea through, which falls in a thin rain to the floor underneath, while the rest is shaken down to the end of the table, and is taken back to the rollers, where the process is repeated. The whole cycle is gone through—in most factories—four times.

The small leaf which comes through the roll-breaker at each shaking is not again rolled, but is taken to the fermenting room. Usually the floor is used for spreading the "dhool," since the

floor is the coolest part of the room. Light is largely excluded, and in some factories the temperature is kept low by running water down the walls. This cool, dark room allows the process of fermentation, started by the breaking open of the leaf-cells, to take place under most favourable conditions.

Of the four—or more—rollings, each produces a crop of fine leaves which have managed to make their way through the meshes of the roll-breaker. The naturally small leaf—the buds often dry white, and are known as "tip"—goes through the meshes without breaking, as a rule, and this first "dhool" is the most valuable part of the day's "make." At each successive roll more and more leaf has been broken, so that there is always a crop for fermentation. The last shake-off is large, comparatively coarse leaf which has not been able to get through the meshes and this, when dried, is cut to give it the appearance of smaller leaf.

Rolling periods, pressures, temperatures, roll-breaking, handling, all are processes requiring years of practical experience if good results are to be obtained. No amount of theoretical study can take the place of practical knowledge, a humiliating fact against which the intelligentsia of the world is in constant revolt. Factory work is certainly an intensive study, but it is much more. The coolies who do this work are intelligent men by coolie standards, but they are also experienced because, once they take to the work, they do not wish to leave it. They are a very contented lot, with high standards of integrity and great interest in their work.

The last process during which "change" occurs is that of fermentation when, in the coolness and the darkness, an oxidizing enzyme produces brown products from the remaining water in the tannin. The freed qualities of the leaf are there all ready for the water to be boiled in a kettle seven thousand miles away, but the exact moment when the oxidizing process shall be halted is one of such nicety that nothing but a nose which has sniffed fermented leaf for a minimum of ten years can speak with authority on the matter. Once the word has been given to remove the fermented leaf to the firing machine, or "tea-drier," the Rubicon has been passed, for the oven extracts the moisture from the fermenting leaf and the oxidization stops. Under- and over-fermentation both produce unpleasant teas. The exact moment is the only correct one, but as with so much

experience in life, words are quite useless to explain. That is the reason, I think, why experienced men are nearly always quiet to the point of being silent.

The dangers of firing—passing fermented leaf, spread on an endless tray, through a large oven heated at precisely the correct temperature—cannot be enumerated in full, any more than were the innumerable pitfalls in the other processes previously outlined. Too high temperatures or too thick spreading cause loss of pungency or, worse still, loss of flavour. Thin spreading and low temperatures waste fuel and turn out a "stewed" tea—a phrase which exactly describes the finished product. Quick drying or slow, high or low temperatures, thin spread or thick, here are more controversial matters of policy upon which opinion is always at variance. Individual experience in different factories often flatly contradicts, too, the carefully worked out experiments of the scientist. But in Ceylon, there is no tendency among planters to belittle or question the work of the Tea Research Institute, nor have the scientists employed by the Institute ever showed any inclination to lay down the law on tropical agriculture to the planters in the field. The relationship between the two, in my time, seemed to be ideal. If fact belied theory, the scientists re-examined the theory, for they recognized full well that tea-making is as much art as science, and that its study is still in swaddling clothes.

But now the lovely fragrant heaps of black, crisp tea, flecked with specks of white "tip," are lying on the floor, a finished product as far as change is concerned. It is too late to do anything more about the countless imponderables, the might-have-beens which have gone into its manufacture, and if any changes in policy are required, they must be set in motion with the next crop of leaf. What we have here is tea, ready for those processes of sorting, cutting, sifting, grading and packing which make it ready for the world's markets. Once there, it has passed from the sphere of positive worth to one where speculation plays a considerable part.

The sifting-room of a tea factory is possibly the centre of the highest art of all—the separation and compilation of those grades required by the world market, for which the tea concerned is best suited. Each estate and each factory (some estates have more than one factory) produces its own particular types of tea, so that an expert "tea spitter" standing along his rows of cups

in an office in what is left of Mincing Lane will know, as he rolls a liquor round his palate, from which estate it comes within a second of touching it with his lips—perhaps even before, as smell is often enough.

Unless the policy with regard to the grading of tea is correct, all the other virtues of an absolutely first-rate estate may be lost in the market. Fine plucking, wonderful agriculture, splendid manufacture, all count for nothing if a manager loses twopence a pound on half a million pounds of made tea because he is turning out the wrong grades. The market may have no use for a tea which, if fired at a temperature of 5 degrees more might excite keen competition in the buyers. By making rather less of one grade with a slightly higher quality, all grades might well bring in higher prices. It is a pretty problem, to which the answer once again is to be found only in that one irritating word—experience.

My particular estate made five grades, probably the most widely made grades of all. They were Broken Orange Pekoe, Orange Pekoe, Pekoe, Fannings and Dust. Other estates produced, before the war, grades such as Souchongs, Pekoe Souchongs, Flowery Orange Pekoes, Flowery Pekoes and—a pure advertisement enterprise—Golden Tip. Of these the tea trade knows the B.O.P.'s, the B.P.'s, Fannings and Dust as Broken Grades, while the others are classed as Leaf Teas.

When, from the resounding noise and clatter of the sifting room, the various grades emerge, they are stored in bins until the time comes to send home a "break" of tea. The market could not accept a constant stream of boxes of made tea without rhyme or reason, and "breaks" of eighteen full, or twenty-four half-chests had to be collected before they could be dispatched, although there were exceptions to this rule, as, for example, in grades which deteriorate in keeping, when smaller "breaks" were accepted by arrangement. Things happen to teas which wait in bins, or those which spend some weeks in the hot holds of cargo ships, and the manager has to bear all such factors in mind in his manufacture. A tea which tastes perfect in the factory may be over-fired when it reaches London sales rooms, because of a hot passage through the Red Sea, and the tea which has waited some time in factory bins might be quite unacceptable if nothing more were done to it. The reason for this is that tea is highly hygroscopic—that is, ready to take up moisture from the air. The

air in sifting-rooms is often "conditioned," but even so, the utmost care cannot prevent bin teas taking up much more than their proper share of water. The bin teas are therefore "bulked" —put out in large heaps in their respective grades—and passed through the drier to extract any unwanted water before they are packed in hermetically sealed boxes for the homeward journey. In dry weather, in Uva, a final firing is not always necessary, for the air is itself so dry that the bin teas cannot take up any moisture, but most teas have to receive a final firing before they go.

And so into the chests, carefully packed and shaken in by machine, the boxes lined with tin foil which is sealed over the tea. Then they are weighed, stencilled, packed in lorries, driven to the railhead and dispatched to the port of Colombo where they await a ship home. Arrived home, the planter's responsibility is ended. His product, for good or bad, is out of his hands, at the mercy of a tea market where any haphazard conditions and requirements of the moment may set at naught the devoted labours of thousands of people, through a hundred intricate processes, over many months of time.

This outline of a vast industry suffers from the faults of any such attempt to set down the art and craft of a life study—it is too simple. The background is not there, even of one estate, where over two thousand people live their daily lives of labour, leisure, worship and sickness as the living force which drives the machine. A stretch of country in which are to be found forests and cliffs, jungles and large areas of well-ordered, disciplined growth, settlements of Tamils and picturesque native villages with their lovely, unconscious settings. Roads with motor traffic and steam rollers, factories with power houses, telephone systems linking up all corners of the territory, hospitals and dispensaries, a general store, a blacksmith's shop, offices and bungalows—a world of its own—that is a tea estate. Over all the vagaries of a tropical climate with alternating drought and heavy rains exercise its sometimes baneful influence. It is a comprehensive world and its government, within the law of the land, is in the hands of one man—the superintendent. His writ runs to every corner of his dominions, and only now, when outside influence and wrong theories are destroying the comradeship and leadership shown for half a century in the tea estates of Lanka, is the worth of the British superintendent being derided and his work

ruined by the clamour of half-educated tongues. As in India, where terrible forces have been let loose to expose the wicked pretensions of theory over experience—so will it be in Ceylon. Unless the planter is given the backing so consistently denied him by his own people, and unless the Sinhalese people themselves realize, in time, the urgent necessity of securing for him the status he has earned by over half a century of work far more valuable in its sociological than in its economic aspects, the tea estates of the island are doomed to rot and decay; and it should not be forgotten that bound up with the estates are ancillary undertakings of great scope and magnitude. Rail transport and shipping, banking and insurance, merchandise of all kinds from machinery to artificial manures, food and drink, clothes, cars, lorries, motor-cycles and all those other toys of Western civilization which depend upon economic well-being, all are largely bound up with the Mahabadde.

It is possible that the new Dominion has taken the decision to let these things go, to discard the dross of the West and seek the old gold of ancient Eastern philosophy. It is possible, but I doubt if the tiny minority of men who to-day have been given the power to run a country of over seven million inhabitants have ever given any thought to such an eventuality. They have been reared on the political thought of the West, a superficial veneer, of which the masses of the people have no knowledge. They are in a difficult position, and one with which I have every sympathy, but I predict that Mr John Still's prophecy is about to be fulfilled. The Mahabadde—the Great Industry—is in mortal danger, and solid buttressing action is needed before it is too late, for certainly it is later than we think.

2. Labourers

India knelt at her feet, and felt her sway,
More fruitful of life than Spring.

SWINBURNE

There are enough Sinhalese peasants in Ceylon to man the tea estates many times over, but, unfortunately for the industry, the Sinhalese peasant is a gentleman, with a philosophy of life that

he is not prepared to barter for material prosperity. If hunger makes it imperative for him to work, he will do so, and none better for he is both skilled and intelligent. The whole history of Lanka is to be read in the light of that skill and intelligence, but it reveals just as certainly that there are no prizes glittering enough to tempt him to work when he does not wish to do so. The urgent necessity of others is nothing to him.

One other point which makes him unsuitable as a permanent worker on an estate is that he detests rain, the lowlander very much more so than the highlander. But the latter, although more reconciled to rain than the former, has never become reconciled to the subjugation of his beautiful mountains to the needs of an alien agriculture. He stands aloof, except when hunger calls, and few Kandians work upon tea estates in a regular capacity.

Broadly speaking, therefore, the estates have to run without regular Sinhalese labour, for when bushes need plucking they must be plucked, and when contracts require weeding they must be weeded. Nature passes upon her occasions oblivious of the little antics of men.

The industry found the answer to the problem of finding a permanent dependable and resident labour force, prepared to work six days a week under any weather conditions, by the importation of Tamil labour, mainly from the Coromandel coast of southern India. This piece of capitalistic impertinence may seem, possibly, a little less arbitrary if we glance for a moment at the lives of typical villagers from whom these men, women and children are recruited. The description quoted was written fifty years ago, but it is as true to-day of the villages I myself saw as the day that it was written.

"In order to obtain a true idea of their abject misery," wrote Dubois, "one must live among them, as I have been obliged to do. They live in hopeless poverty, and the greater number lack sufficient means to procure even the coarsest clothing. They go about almost naked, or at best clothed in rags. They live from hand to mouth the whole year round, and rarely know one day how they will procure food for the next. When they happen to have any money, they invariably spend it at once, and make a point of doing no work as long as they have anything left to live on."

Dubois was a French missionary who lived to grasp what is,

perhaps, the first essential of dealing with these likeable peoples —that one must live among them. Men who have not done so, whether they be politicians of high rank or pillars of the Church, have no right to speak, for the subject is altogether too serious a matter to be left to politicians or bishops. Democratic axioms from text-books are not merely dangerous when applied wholesale to such people as the Hindus who work the tea estates of Ceylon; they are wicked. Let us lift a corner of the veil of their ordinary lives and see what they believe, and then reconsider our own theories before attempting to reconcile the two. If this is done, the problem will be seen for what it is, one of immense and vital importance and of a complexity entirely unrealized by ordinary people in this country.

The Tamils of Ceylon, who now number close upon two million people half of whom work upon the tea estates, are Hindus, and it must be remembered that science and art flourished among the Hindu nations of India thousands of years before the first ancient Britons built fishing villages upon piles in the shallows, or upon the eyots of Bermondsey. The political and social institutions of the peninsula, the knowledge of metaphysics, ethics and philosophy, which rank highly in the world's culture even to-day, were in operation certainly four thousand and probably ten thousand years ago. It is true that Indian history, based upon the three great epics the *Ramayana*, the *Bhagavata* and the *Mahabharata*, is wrapped in a cocoon of chimera, fable and superstition, but in all of them the condition of the social fabric remains remarkably constant. These works contain, no doubt, a little truth and a great deal of fantasy—a labyrinth of poetic imagery designed rather to please national feelings than to reflect historical truth—but they reveal with absolute fidelity the character, principles and ineradicable conservatism of the peoples of India, who owe little to the manners or customs of other branches of the human race. No social order in the world compares in antiquity with the Hindu caste system, the most remarkable social structure yet known to history.

The *Purush Sukta* states that the four great castes—the Brahmins, or Brahmana, the Kshatryas or Rajahs, the Vaisyars or landholders and merchants, and the Sudras or cultivators, peasants and menials—were born of the mouth, arms, thighs and feet of Purusha or Brahma, the creator. In other words caste was coeval with creation, and although early poets dispute that state-

ment, saying that in the beginning there were no caste distinctions, caste has remained the unyielding skeleton upon which the flesh of this vast association of peoples has grown. At the time of Gotama, six hundred years before Christ, all the conditions of the present caste system were extant, although they had not finally settled into the ever-hardening rigidity of the present time. Superficial modifications of the last half-century—Brahmini no longer burn themselves upon their husband's funeral pyres, and mothers no longer kill their girl children at birth because of the absence of males of a higher sect for them to marry—have made no impression upon the immense strength of the edifice itself. The caste system is stronger to-day than ever before in its life of many millenniums.

Broadly speaking, the south Indian Tamils who work upon the tea estates—not to be confused with the high-caste Tamils of Jaffna—come within the fourth and lowliest of the castes. It is the most numerous and subdivided of the four, numbering ninety-four per cent of the total Hindu population of the subcontinent. There are many other races, as well as Tamils, included in this great caste, but in this chapter I deal only with that race, which I had the chance to study, under the conditions mentioned by Dubois, for many years. Within the framework of the society of this one race, however, will be found a microcosm of the whole Hindu religion.

Even the humblest of the Pariahs, the lowest section of the lowest caste, a section whose very presence defiles a Brahmin, is not the dregs in the lees of the system, a degradation reserved for the Outcastes. These men once belonged to one of the four castes, but were expelled, for one of the reasons we shall examine shortly, and have been condemned to the fate of the rogue elephant.

It is as well for me to admit, at the outset, that I believe the caste system to have some remarkable advantages. In India there would have been, probably, nothing but anarchy and barbarism for centuries but for the *lucidus ordo* which has divided up conflicting tribes and nations into innumerable castes, sects and factions, each with its own functions and each indispensable. Every one of these cells has its own framework of rules, customs and religious observances, and all are governed by absolute precedence. To complete a framework unguessed at by the average humanist and almost ignored by politicians

throughout the history of our occupation of both India and Ceylon, no member of any of the four castes may perform two functions. The cobbler is indeed tied to his last.

To a people indolent and careless by nature this was an indispensable safeguard, for while to Western thought caste imposes terrible and humiliating restrictions upon human dignity, it cannot be divorced from the conditions which brought it into being. The system was based upon the performance of definite duties within the Hindu commonwealth by each individual, and the anchor which held the ship of state in the stormiest sea was religion, for India understands religion. It understands it in every pore of its being, lives it, breathes it and sleeps it; for there is almost no single action which can be performed by a Hindu which is not rooted in religion. Even his excesses, such as the revolting nocturnal celebrations of *sakti-puja*, during the course of which human fertility is worshipped by a mixture of castes amid copious libations, have their part in a conception of religion so all-embracing that it can scarcely be apprehended. That is why true conversion from the Hindu faith is so rare as to be negligible, for although Christian converts among Tamils in Ceylon run into some thousands, the degree of conversion is questionable. Experienced missionaries, clear-sighted after years of intimate knowledge of their flocks, are aware of this fact. They know that when a Hindu becomes a genuine convert he is completely cut off, once and for all, from his own kind. He becomes an Outcaste and cannot even live with his own kind again, for in every small act of his day some religious observance is required to the many deities who preside over his destinies. He may not marry or attend the feasts, ceremonials or ceremonies with which the lives of Tamils are woven.

I had many professing Christians on my estate, but regret to say, and I say it categorically, that not one of them ever gave his pandaram, or priest, cause to haul him before the panjayam of his sect to show cause why he should not be made Outcaste. On the contrary, all were good practising Hindus, attending high days and holidays, marriages and feasts with commendable regularity, and remaining in the forefront of those acts of religious ritual which are as natural to Tamils as the act of breathing.

One old man to whom I spoke on this subject assured me that Jesus was a great Swahmi (God) ranking only fourth to Brahma, Vishnu and Siva in the scheme of things, a little higher than

Buddha. This old veteran liked to be careful, for there was no point in antagonizing the gods of other people, and he kept a special stone for him—presumably in imitation of the Brahminical Salagrama stone of dubious origin—and had set up a special kovil, or temple, to him in an open space on the patana above the estate where no one else was likely to find it. To be completely on the safe side, he had erected one also to Buddha. He had not, he said, told his white "pandaram" about this, for it would have hurt him. The white pandaram had said that he must worship Jesus alone.

I asked him, at this stage, if I had heard truly that his daughter Velliamma was about to be married to a most eligible young man of a higher sect than herself, and he assented proudly. I hope to make the point of that question crystal clear before I have done.

The Tamil as I have met him holds his beliefs and customs, his taboos and his ceremonies inviolate, for the caste system is too strong and has had too long a start over the ever-changing ideas which emanate from the West.

Among the Hindus on the estates, although they are all, broadly speaking, of the Sudra caste, there is a multiplicity of sub-castes which have sprung up over the years. The Totiyars, Pariahs, Saiklis and Pallens are the most numerous, with relatively few of the higher sects, Chettiahs, Agambuddyans, Kallan, Moravan and Vellalahs.

Generally speaking, intoxicating liquor is anathema to the Hindu with the exception of the Pariah caste, the lowest septs of the Sudras. This is all the more peculiar in that one of the great Triad of Gods, Siva the Destroyer, is depicted as spending his time in Kailasa, his Abode of Bliss, giving himself up to drunken orgies and everlasting carnal pleasure. None the less, although, as we shall see, Siva is an immensely popular god, drink is regarded as disgusting except among the Pariahs. Since large numbers of estate coolies are Pariahs, drinking is pretty freely indulged in among them. Indeed the sale of toddy and arrack is one of the staple industries of the Sinhalese villagers who live close to the estates. Men, women and even children drink these heady intoxicants, and revolting scenes occur from time to time, especially among the followers of Vishnu, the second of the great Triad of Gods of which the first is Brahma, the Giver of Life.

It is curious that the followers of Siva, a god to whom drunken-

ness is bliss, should abhor alcohol, while those of Vishnu, who denounces it, should give way to it freely, but Hinduism is full of such paradoxes. Certainly it is the followers of Vishnu who are rowdy and turbulent, while the Sivaites, whose god is the God of Destruction, are far less quarrelsome and much better behaved. I do not know why.

Estate Tamils are about equally divided in their support of the two rival deities, Vishnu and Siva. Brahma, the Giver of Life, is, as we shall see, a figurehead although the highest of the gods, but though all Hindus worship all three gods, there is a strong division between personal adherence to Vishnu and Siva which has its origin, it is thought, in the existence of these two gods long before the Brahmins invented the present religious structure to provide a reason for their own pre-eminence. For the moment I will leave Brahma and the Brahmins, since neither figures to any extent in the daily life of coolies.

The followers of Vishnu wear on their foreheads the mark of their order, one perpendicular red line and two oblique lines of white, meeting the red line at its base, forming the sign of the trident. This is, of course, emblematical of the Trimurti, the Hindu Trinity. Incidentally all Hindus wear some mark indicative of caste, sect or tribe on their foreheads unless they have not broken their fast or are in mourning, but the origin of many of these marks has been forgotten. They are not to be confused with the trident adornment of the Vishnuvites, which is called the Namam.

The distinguishing mark of the Sivaites is a small black stone carried in a silver box or in a tube hung round the neck called the Lingam. This is purely a phallic symbol, and from a Western viewpoint a revolting form of testimony, but to Tamils the sexual organs are as purely factual as the nose and ears. They shrink, it is is true, from the vulgarity of a completely naked body, but in conversation and symbolism, procreation and its instruments have no connection with personal modesty. Nor is there any reticence at all over the act of copulation, for the Biblical insistence upon natural increase is the corner-stone of their faith. In all their symbolism, therefore, great stress is laid upon human fertility, and one of the most paradoxical features of the Trimurti is the emphasis laid upon sexual manifestations in the worship of Siva, whose central function is not creation but destruction. How the two conflicting facts arose I do not know, but it is quite

certain that Siva, the Destroyer—who is certainly worshipped as such—is also the God of Sex.

The Vishnuvites, the noisier and more quarrelsome sect, seem to me to be incited more by their priests than the quieter Sivaites. Particularly is this noticeable during times of pilgrimage, when itinerant priests make their appearance on the scene. I suspect that these priests are a sect of Vishnuvite Brahmins, a somewhat lowly sect in the highest caste of all, the Twiceborn, who, as with the other great castes, are themselves subdivided into lesser and greater. These Vishnuvite Brahmins have a cult of their own in which Brahma seems to play an even smaller part than he does with the others, but they are not regarded highly. There is another type of Brahmin who sometimes leads these pilgrimages known as Sanyarssis, whose lives are dedicated to the pursuit of holiness alone. They are highly esteemed in the Brahminical hierarchy, living by begging of a very masterful type and exempt from every rule of behaviour that binds all others. They are free to mix with the lowliest without loss of caste, and may do as they please, except that they do not under any circumstances touch women.

Whoever it is that leads the great annual pilgrimages, Sanyarssi, Vishnuvite Brahmin or ordinary estate pandaram, he appears to work the pilgrims up to a state of furious excitement as the procession passes along the estate road on its way to Kataragam, Dondra Head, Trincomalee or to the dewales of Kandy. The chief objects of veneration to the relatively lowly crowds who leave the estates are Basava the Bull, Hanumento the Monkey, Garuda the Malabar Eagle and the "Nulla Parmbu," the Good Snake, or Cobra. The banging of gongs as they go, the shouting, screaming and monotonous wailing "aroooooooha! aroooooo-ha!" the blowing of single-note horns, these have to be heard to be believed as the penitents in search of absolution start off in the dusk by the flickering light of torches.

A Tamil is not born into either of the two great sects. He can choose, and enters one or other of them after a long ceremony of initiation. Persons of all castes may be either Vishnuvites or Sivaites, but the latter sect calls for the renunciation of so many of the good things of life—such as meat and liquor—that it finds its main sources of recruits among the higher castes. There are many exceptions to this, but as a rough guide the high-caste coolies are Sivaites and the lower-caste Vishnuvites.

The division of the two great sects is not absolute, as in the case of caste which is fore-ordained. A change from one to the other is fairly common and brings with it no disgrace, although it may well bring plenty of trouble. A husband may be a follower of Vishnu while his wife worships Siva without disturbing domestic relations, yet such is the paradoxical nature of the whole proceedings that to the Sivaite the sign of the Namam is abominable, while to the Vishnuvite the very presence of the Lingam in its casket of silver or of gold is revolting. Each is perfectly prepared to revile the other, and rows—apparently thoroughly enjoyed by all—are frequent. Tamils do not appear to have any sense of blasphemy in speech, for they will describe each other's gods with brilliantly imaginative obscenity, but they have an overdeveloped sense of blasphemy in actions. It is a case of being careful what one does without worrying at all about being careful what one says. On the whole these rows are full of sound and fury without signifying very much, but these sectarian disturbances are all the more curious since all concerned believe in the Trimurti, and it is difficult for Europeans to understand how they can revile one of the Trinity whom all worship. An analogy would be for Protestants to blaspheme violently against the Virgin Mary and Catholics to vilify the Christ, while each continued to worship both in their private religious observances.

Lest this outline should appear over-simple, it must be remembered that both Vishnuvites and Sivaites are subdivided again and again into numerous sub-sects, each with its own mysteries and ceremonies and each in some respects at variance with all the others. These are thought to be the survival of wood-god worship, devil and spirit worship, all of which existed long before the Brahmins arose to weave all such beliefs into the fabric of Hinduism which, although it is not Brahminism, cannot at any stage be separated from it.

We have some sort of parallel with this subdivision in England, where the Christian Church displays anything but unity to the puzzled heathen. The brands of Christian faith labelled Methodist, Unitarian, Protestant and Catholic, to name only a few, are incomprehensible to the cultured Hindu. But strange and diversified as is the Church of Christ in England, its divisions are only the palest shade of the Indian scene. Even the social fabric of two million Tamils, so minute a part of the Hindu problem, is a fearful and a complex structure. Many castes and innumerable

sects, the whole broken up again by the two great factions, all set against an unyielding history of over four thousand years, present a formidable organization.

The credulity of the Tamil, his devil-ridden imagination and predilection for sorcery and the ways of the stars, make him an easy prey for the priestcraft. The Gurus in positions of highest authority are invariably Brahmins, and the shaved head and red robe is never far away from the lives of the people. Incidentally, once the red robe of the Brahmin has faded a little, it is indistinguishable from the yellow robe of the Buddhist bhikku, a symbol, to me, of the dominating influences in the life of the island.

To both sects there are priestesses of the temples, and it is not hard to guess one of their chief roles. These girls are given to the gods as wives and are decorated with the sacred bird, the Malabar Eagle, or the Lingam as the case may be. The priests of Siva are celibate, but celibacy under such circumstances loses some of its terrors. The girls are universally recognized as the priests' mistresses, but they do not lack respect from the worshippers on that account. Theirs is an accepted role, sanctified by long practice, and everybody is quite happy about it, particularly the celibate priests.

Hindus marry in strict family circles and the male strain is the only one which counts with them. For that reason, the father of females must always mate his daughter with a male of a higher sept if that is at all possible. Where it was clearly impossible, the female child used to be killed at birth to prevent perpetuation of inferior stock, but the British put an end to that as they did to death by suttee. Nevertheless, the female must marry a male of at least an equivalent sept within the caste, and the closer the relationship the better. A widower will marry his deceased wife's sister for choice, an uncle will marry his niece and cousins will marry cousins. If such unions are impossible, the marriage must be within the caste, for the penalty for breaking this sacred rule is the almost unthinkable one of being made outcaste. Widows are not permitted to remarry—it is within living memory that "suttee," the immolation of a Brahmin's widow on her husband's funeral pyre, has been made illegal—the only known cases of such remarriage being among the very lowest of the Pariah caste septs. Since some Tamil girls, usually of higher caste, are still married at five years of age to widowers of fifty or sixty, it

is not surprising to find that there are many widows who have never known their husbands. The fact that the husbands died long before some of these children reached the age of puberty makes no difference. They remain virgin widows, and although efforts were being made to change these and other incomprehensible survivals from the days of Vedic law, another century or two of patient work under British guidance would have been necessary to lay firm foundations for fundamental changes. The dispassionate advice and guidance of the British Indian Civil Service might have brought about, very slowly, the change so desirable, but their removal and the introduction of a completely Hindu state in India is ominous. The Mahommedans, who do not share the gloomy pantheon of gods which govern the daily lives of Hindus, have removed now to a state of their own. An all-Hindu state, as may be seen within the next few years, is likely to produce a curious type of "freedom" among one-fifth of the peoples of the world.

Caste precedence differs in different places, even in Ceylon, but a rough guide to relative caste importance is that the higher the grade, the more the members of it wash themselves for purposes of purification. The Brahmin, highest caste of all, is constantly having to purify himself against the world's pollution, and abstains, with other high-caste Hindus, from eating flesh, or indeed any food such as eggs, that has once held the germ of life.

The views of these high-caste Hindus, however much they may be disguised by the necessities of diplomacy, are absolutely rigid in respect of Europeans, whose detestable habits, from the Viceroy downwards, put them on a level with the Pariahs. Eating beef, a loathsome sin, blowing noses, wearing shoes and a score of everyday habits of which the European has long since ceased to think consciously, stamp him, to the Brahmin, with the outward and visible sign of the Pariah. It is quite true that the Twiceborn, when not in the priestcraft, will do all these things themselves when with Europeans, but they have a saying which should be closely studied, for it explains not only this apparent anomaly but many more. "When the stomach is empty," runs this Brahminical saying, "it must be filled." Almost any sins may be committed, in fact, provided that absolution is sought by *puja*, the ceremony of cleansing. In the company of Europeans they are permitted to behave in all respects

as Europeans, but purely as a means to an end. They will make haste to cleanse themselves as soon as the day is done and contact with the disgusting white Pariahs ended.

The higher the caste, the more scrupulous is the observance of ritual, the marriage festival, for example. This great event in the lives of Hindus takes, among the highest castes, seven days to complete the highly complicated ceremony. There are many others, some of which we shall see later. The higher the caste, too, the more rigid the system of slavery imposed upon their womenfolk, although all Hindu women live under a tyranny that only a man who has lived for years among Hindus can begin to understand. To the politician in England, earnestly advocating the right of all peoples to "self-determination," the following rules for Hindu wives, taken from the *Padma-purana* of the Penitent Vasishta, may or may not commend themselves as an expression of the self-determination they permit two hundred million women of Hindustan:

"I will expound to thee how a wife attached to her husband and devoted to her duties ought to behave.

"There is no other god on earth for a woman than her husband.

"The most excellent of all the good works that she can do is to seek to please him by manifesting perfect obedience to him. Therein should lie her sole rule of life.

"Be her husband deformed, aged, infirm, offensive in his manners; let him be also choleric, debauched, immoral, a drunkard, a gambler, let him frequent places of ill-repute, live in open sin with other women, have no affection whatever for his home, let him rave like a lunatic, let him live without honour, let him be blind, deaf, dumb or crippled, in a word let his defects be what they may, let his wickedness be what it may, a wife should always look upon him as her God, should lavish upon him all her attention and care, paying no heed to his character, and giving no cause whatsoever for his displeasure.

"A woman is made to obey at every stage of her existence. As daughter, it is to her father and mother that she owes submission, as wife to her husband, her mother-in-law and her father-in-law, as widow, to her sons. At no period of her life can she consider herself her own mistress.

"If her husband should laugh, she must laugh, if he be sad, she must be sad also, if he ask questions, she must answer.

"A wife must eat only after her husband has eaten his fill. If he fast, she must fast. Should she perceive that he is squandering all the family substance in extravagance she would be wrong to complain, and still more wrong to oppose him.

"A woman during her menstrual period shall retire for three days to a place apart.

"In the presence of her husband a wife must not look at anything else, but must remain with her eyes fixed upon him waiting for his orders. . . ."

There are pages more of this poisonous rubbish which is, nevertheless, rigorously believed and carried out as far as human nature permits to this day. It would be interesting to know how many politicians who so gracefully prepared the path for the new "Dominion" of India have ever heard of that document. Of itself, of course, the *Padma-purana* is of no importance. What is important is that three hundred million souls believe every word of it. I have had to adjudicate on many family rows in my time, some of them on a grand scale, for the Tamil coolie dearly loves a shindy, and I am glad to say that I have witnessed many occasions when the female partner to a union has forgotten the existence of the *Padma-purana* for a time; but the fact remains that such forgetfulness is only momentary. All believe in this slavery of women, not least the women, and any apparent emancipation observable among the handful of Westernized Hindus is one drop in the ocean of custom which engulfs them all. Let there be no shadow of doubt on this point. The author of *Mother India*, who failed in her object of rousing the scorn and indignation of the Western world simply because she massed her facts too savagely, wrote no untruths and very few mistakes in her book. It is all perfectly true, although a century and a half of careful and conscientious British rule had done something—a very little—to prepare the path of reform. This is what a Frenchman had to say on the rule of the British in India:

"The justice and prudence which the present rulers display in endeavouring to make the people less unhappy than they have been hitherto, the anxiety they manifest in increasing their material comforts, above all the inviolable respect which they constantly show for the customs and religious beliefs of the country, and lastly, the protection they afford to the weak as well as the strong, to the Brahmin as to the Pariah, to the Christian, to the Mahommedan, to the Pagan, all these have contributed

more to the consolidation of their power than all their victories and conquests."

It is a very curious and sad reflection that the work of discrediting all this careful groundwork was carried out by our own reformers, and above all by politicians, both with the best of intentions. I have received an impassioned lecture on this subject from an ambitious politician who had never been East and had not learned a word of Pali, Hindustani, Urdu, Telugu or Tamil.

He had never heard of the Trimurti, the *Padma-purana*, or of a Brahmin, and in this was no different from the majority of his country-folk. He took his part, nevertheless, in destroying seeds laboriously planted to produce good fruit a long time hence, for my own belief is that Brahminical rule will descend upon India within a decade. It is rather more than possible, also, that it will find its way across the Palk Straits. The Sinhalese, it seems to me, are not blind to this possibility themselves.

Caste is merely one aspect of the divisions of Tamil life upon tea estates. There are two others of equal complexity, Sect and Faction, of which the simple outlines of sect have already been explained. More confusing than either caste or sect, which have rational organization, is the existence of the two great factions, again endlessly subdivided, to which Hindus of any caste or sect may belong—the Right-hand and the Left-hand factions.

The man from the West, caught up in this incredible mosaic, has to be constantly on his guard if he lives among Hindus, for he cannot hope to find his feet for many years. It is almost a safeguard for him that he himself is regarded as being low-caste, an odd being invested with great authority in material affairs, but ranking with Pariahs as a creature of Brahma. It is an excellent thing for recruits to the planting profession—there will be none, henceforth, for the Civil Services of either India or Ceylon—to remind themselves of that fact. It might have been a still more excellent thing if members of the various Government Commissions, who from time to time spent a few pleasurable weeks in Ceylon listening to curiously one-sided evidence, had remembered it too, if, indeed, they were ever aware of a fact so injurious to their dignity. These great men, earnestly endeavouring to give "subject races" freedom and a wider life, were themselves, in the eyes of the subject peoples concerned, less than so many village cows.

The low-caste Sudras are mostly of the Left-hand faction—

possibly the terminology Left and Right in modern politics derives from the Hindu factions—the higher castes of the Right, with one curious and confusing exception. The Pariahs, lowly though they are, are also of the Right.

Disputes and conflicts between these two are of common occurrence, occasioned by causes so deep-seated that it is rarely possible for the impartial planter to arrive at the truth. His safeguard in these, as in other differences of opinion within the ranks of his labour force, is their absolute belief in his integrity. It is, in fact, a humbling experience to find that one has gained the confidence of some two thousand coolies, for once it is bestowed it appears to be an absolute gift. It is obvious that there comes a time in the minds of his labour force when the Durai is promoted to the rank of one of the lesser gods with whom they are in daily contact. Indeed, one's coolies actually go to the length of addressing one as "swahmi," or God, once this Rubicon is passed. It is no light honour. From thenceforth one's impartiality is never called in question, although one's ruling well may be. In this the coolie displays no difference from his dealings with others of his gods, whom he curses with the utmost heartiness when they do not please him. This childlike faith is a saving grace in a planter's life, but, as with most things in a world losing all belief, it is being rapidly and deliberately undermined.

Line rows are quite fascinating. Ordinarily so gentle and timid, even cowardly, the Tamil is utterly unpredictable in caste, sect or faction rows. High words, usually obscene with a touch of artistry in the choice of foul epithets, and a certain amount of hair-pulling are customary. Blood-letting is uncommon and murder extremely rare, much rarer than with the Sinhalese whose religion prohibits killing. I was called out to a line murder only once, when drink turned an ordinary, quiet working man into an incarnation of Siva the Destroyer. He slew three people and terrorized the whole of a block of rooms in which his gang lived, before the effects of the alcohol wore off. When I arrived on the scene, he fell upon his knees in the act of prostration, a sign of penitence, and I can only hope that my relief did not show too clearly on my face.

That was the one case of murder with which I personally was concerned, but the ordinary line row is a commonplace of life in Ceylon. When the fur is flying, the rumpus can be heard for miles around, and to the inexperienced it can be an intimidating

experience though one to which one soon becomes accustomed. Riot and civil commotion are the least that the newcomer expects when first he hears the sound of a family dispute among Tamils.

The old pitched battles of caste, sect or faction have gone, but echoes of former strife persist and may be fanned to new life when the wise control of the European is removed finally from Ceylon as from India.

The insistence upon keeping marriages in the family if possible, in the belief that the paternal strain is the more valuable of the two, has led to a clear line of descent in most Hindu families. The males can trace their descent back for centuries without difficulty, and a high-caste Vellala will quote twenty or more of his ancestors without pause.

There are, of course, exceptions to this lineal purity, but until very recent times it was enforced with all the power of the caste system, and the penalties for the offence were very rigorous. Until the end of the nineteenth century, for example, the penalty for adultery was death and it was the same for man or woman.

Family life among the estate coolies is a mixed existence, for parental control is very small in some respects while absolute in others—marriage, for example. Noisy, quarrelsome, coarse, a Tamil family lacks the courtesy and wisdom of the Sinhalese villager, but it is a structure which has survived untold centuries. Invaders have come and gone, but Hindu family customs remain.

To be expelled from caste is the most terrible punishment that can be meted out among Tamils. It is one of the reasons which make me so certain, after years of study of the question, that Christianity has made very little real progress among Hindus, for consider what happens to the man brave enough to abandon completely the worship of Brahma and become a Christian.

Immediately such a man becomes dead to the only world that he has known, and the Tamil, at any rate, is a very gregarious creature. If he can cut adrift, live in another country, possibly there may be a chance for him, but if he continues to live in Ceylon he is doomed to a terrible fate. His wife and family are not permitted to have any more to do with him, he is debarred from all festivals, ceremonies and conversation, and there is only one section of his own kind who will ever willingly speak to him again—the outcastes, a company of desperate, degenerate

rogues who have paid the all but supreme price for defiance of the law of caste. The stigma of outlawry attaches even to the family of an outcaste, for his marriageable daughters are not sought in marriage and his sons will look for wives in vain. Such a penalty would fall at once upon a man who was brave or thoughtless enough to forsake the gods of his fathers, and I am not convinced that it happens with any frequency.

This excommunication falls also upon Hindus who commit two other main crimes, the horrible one of eating cow's flesh, and the unmentionable one of marrying outside one's own caste. To the first decree the Pariah caste are exempt. They may eat the flesh of the cow provided that the animal has died and has not been killed, and this indulgence from the strict rule of Hinduism is one of the main reasons why the Pariahs are known as Untouchables. They are permitted to do what is horrible to all other Hindus, but although they do not lose caste for so doing, it is only because there is no lower caste.

These two awful crimes are unforgivable; with the exception of the special dispensation to Pariahs in the case of eating beef; and there are others which may receive the dire penalty, although it is just possible, provided that the crime committed is a family matter, that there may be a loophole for atonement. The panjayat, or domestic court, may lay down an endless series of ceremonies of repentance which the culprit must undergo. While he is doing so, he must accept contumely and condign punishment of all kinds with humility, ending up by feasting the whole family to the extreme limit of his purse. He may then be reinstated.

If it is a matter of caste outside the jurisdiction of the family, reinstatement is all but hopeless, but not quite, provided that the ultimate sin of eating beef is not the crime. But readmittance to caste at this level is often accompanied, even to-day, by terrible ordeal. The Europeans, known as the Duraimah, live in another mental and spiritual existence from their coolies, however closely they try to identify themselves with them, but they are not entirely blind to the fact that odd things happen from time to time, of which they receive no hint at all from any of the principals concerned. The fact remains that secret ceremonies, such as the branding of the penitent with a red-hot iron, burning one side of his tongue or making him walk the red-hot embers, go on to this day on any estate. When these or similar

punishments have been bravely borne by the penitent seeking to regain caste, he drinks the urine of a cow as a final purification and feasting for all is the order of the day.

Many of the rules of caste find their parallel in the old Law of Moses, who gave to the Hebrews much the same social structure as that which still persists among the Hindus. There are many parallels, such as the importance placed by the Hebrews upon female fertility and the story of the Flood, almost exactly paralleled in Hindu history. According to these ancient records Mahanava escaped drowning by building an Ark and retired to it during the great rains, taking with him the Seven Penitents. With their help, after the rain had subsided, he divided up the human race (since the Flood covered the earth for a long period it is not clear how any of the human race survived) into the four great castes. Dubois tells us that the name Mahanava, divided into two parts, stands for Maha, or great, and Nuva, clearly the Hindu version of the word Noah, an interesting theory.

Among the estate Tamils caste plays exactly the same role as it does on the peninsula. It is an ingrained system of life as mechanical, as involuntary as the acts of sleeping and breathing. Most of them are Pariahs, or Parayens to give them their proper name, and while they lived in their own country they were slaves in all but name, compelled to put up with any treatment, for they were the Untouchables, knew it, agreed it and did not resent it. To touch one of them, for a member of a higher caste, was to suffer defilement. A ceremony of purification, *puja*, had to follow any such contact. To eat food touched by Pariahs, to drink water from a *chatty* that might have been touched by one of them, these things would mean excommunication to the Brahmin or even the Vellala who did not purify himself at once. Yet, paradoxically—and the whole crazy edifice is paradoxical—the Vellalas admit the Pariahs as their "children" and agree their common origin. That is about all that they do admit and their actions bear no relation to their words, for the Pariahs remain as untouchable as ever.

Another numerous caste of untouchables, the Pallens, come from the Madura district of south India. Except in their own eyes they are indistinguishable from Pariahs, but they hold themselves a higher caste because they do not eat beef. On the other hand, the Pariahs belong to the Right-hand faction, a curious

anomaly previously pointed out, and therefore consider themselves superior to the Pallens. It is entertaining and instructive to hear these castes describing each other, but both are considered by other castes to be the dregs of the Sudra people.

The Valluvas, derisively spoken of by the Brahmins as "the Brahmins of the Pariahs," are the holy men from whom the estate pandarams or kovil priests are drawn. The kovil is a minor temple and the pandarams are minor priests, but the fact is that the great masses of the ordinary village people of India; although they are in awe and dread of the three great gods created for them by the Brahmins and regard the Brahmins, or Twiceborn, as of a high race apart, are happiest with the small gods that they really know, survivals of wood-god worship and the demons and spirits with which their darkened souls are beset. In this they differ not at all from the Sinhalese villagers.

The Valluvas, then, are close to the people, and they preside at the marriage ceremonies and other intimate rites of the Pariahs who have a high regard for them, although they have no standing among the real priestcraft, the Brahmins.

Pariyaris, or barbers, and Dhobies, or laundrymen, are two more castes which are to be found in every Tamil community. They are held in great respect by the coolies and although they cannot do other work outside their caste trade, they have complete security, for rivals are not permitted to enter into competition with them. They may bring in others of the Pariyari or Dhoby castes to help them with their work if trade becomes too brisk, but it must be at their own request.

These Pariyaris are an interesting caste. They are rude surgeons, performing minor operations such as excising boils with the solitary razor that their caste laws permit; and ardent musicians. Until recent times the Pariahs were the one caste permitted to play wind instruments because of the defilement arising from touching the mouthpiece of such instruments with the lips, but I am not sure now that a way round this objection has not been found. It is certainly a curious thing that the arts, music, painting and sculpture, are entirely in the hands of the lower castes on estates. Painting, for them, is largely a question of brilliant colouring, rarely extending to detailed observation or clever draughtsmanship. The figures drawn or carved are, for the most part, purely conventional and roughly equivalent to the performance of a ten-year-old child in Western communities,



A pilgrim reaches the summit of 7,000 ft. high Adam's Peak, holiest mountain in the world



An aristocrat of the soil. A villager wearing the tortoiseshell comb of high caste

although of a far higher standard than the level of Veddha art. Tamils do not waste time or thought on drawing, but they are masters of fierce and startling colours, for colour, to them, is art. Even in the great Hindu temples the same is true. The carvings and draughtsmanship are of a higher standard than those of estate kovils, it is true, but they are largely conventional, being always secondary to colour.

As for their music, it is an affair of savage but always disciplined drum rhythm combined with cacophonous whistlings and wailings to which I could never accustom myself. At one time, determined to conquer the musical idiom involved, I purchased some gramophone records of Tamil music and played them repeatedly, but failed to find in them any inner content to the superficial texture of the sounds. It is the music of a primeval people and seems to carry only one message, apart from natural excitement engendered by the rapid rhythm, a message of fear. It is, in my view, based entirely upon fear, the terror of the unknown. Much noise, much shrill sound, all of it discordant with the exception of the wild, logical accompaniment of the drums, hand-played, speaks always of the unknown, and has no place in its monotony for joy or wonder.

The drums of death, ceaseless, slow and rhythmical, accompanied by bursts of crazy vocal wailing by the pandaram in which he describes the virtues of the deceased, assail a musical ear with cadences of horror. They are one of my strongest recollections of the island and of its people, and many an evening, sitting outside in the blazing wonder of the moon with an endless panorama of forested hill before me and the immensity of the Badulla Bowl at my feet, I have listened to these drums of death from some distant kovil. As the years pass, so does the fascination of this custom increase, for it embodies in some strange fashion all the nuances of mourning in its measured, throbbing beat.

The vocal music of the Tamils, although based upon a scale of seven notes, was incomprehensible to me as a musical structure. Its theme seemed always the same, a monotonous reiteration and a wobbling around two or three notes only, which continued indefinitely unless the Durai, goaded beyond endurance, put an end to it.

I attempted once to get an old kangany—an overseer or headman—to explain Tamil music to me, its purpose and its

method. A record of Tamil music played upon my gramophone puzzled him for a moment, and then he said, with a wealth of contempt, that the performers were merely "vellyardu poruthu," an almost untranslatable phrase in this connection. It means literally that they were playing, in the sense that we say "Don't play about." In other words it was mere foolery and he insisted that what they were doing had no meaning at all. From this I gathered that singing in Tamil ceremonies *has* some real meaning, but if so it has always eluded me.

That small episode is an illustration of the difficulty of arriving at the real meaning of anything in a system so vast and complicated as that of caste. Although that old kangany gave no sign, it is possible that he did recognize in the song an expression of feeling from another caste. Indeed, I asked him that very question but he did not, or would not, catch what the singers on the record were saying. Although I am myself fluent in the frightful "argot" which passes for a language among Pariahs, I am as lost when listening to pure, grammatical high Tamil as are the coolies themselves.

This gulf between the language of high- and low-caste Tamils is much greater than that between a Scots highlander and a Cornishman. The two languages have very little in common, a fact that was brought home to me when acting in the capacity of foreman of the jury in a murder trial in the fine old audience hall close to the Temple of the Tooth, Kandy. The miserable creature on trial for his life was a Pariah Tamil who had been made outcaste for marrying a Sinhalese girl, a very rare incident indeed. The resultant misery all round had culminated in a series of appalling murders, and the trial was an expression of British justice rather than the resolving of a doubt. But during the hearing the wretched prisoner made several statements which had to be translated to the court by the Mudaliyar interpreter, and with astonishment I realized that he was not being interpreted correctly. As the trial proceeded, it became clear that the Mudaliyar could hardly understand the prisoner at the bar, and the prisoner could not understand one single word that the interpreter said to him. The beautiful, flowing, high Tamil of the Mudaliyar was as incomprehensible to me as it was to the accused.

Kuruvars, the wild gipsies of Ceylon, are a Tamil or possibly a Telugu caste. Like their Rodiyan cousins they are wanderers

upon the face of the earth and prize freedom of movement beyond rubies. The Sinhalese call them Snake Charmers, or Ahikuntakayo, and Monkey Gipsies, or Madhillio, two very distinct tribes that seldom mingle. They move in gangs each with its own chief, for all the world like the Romany Chals of western Europe, and indeed there is no essential difference between gipsies anywhere. They are now a permanent part of the island landscape, although they still speak of south India as "home." Nomads, basket-makers, monkey dancers, beggars, foresters and fortune tellers, they bring entertainment into the lives of the coolies on the estates, who dearly love gambling, horoscopes, conjuring and magic of all kinds. When these allegedly dangerous fellows were known to be in the district, I received reports on their activities from my kanakapillei—a word which explains itself, for it means literally a "child of accounts" and is the name given to one's right-hand man in the field work of an estate, a sort of clerk of the works—but I never had any occasion to think ill of them.

They are unkempt, ill-clothed scarecrows, and it is not difficult to believe that they are capable of anything. Their women have the reputation of being uncompromising in the sexual field, and in the poorer districts of India they are said to go out in gangs, when the need calls, and round up men whom they persuade, by main force if necessary, to satisfy them. I never heard of any such event in the island and indeed I can hardly imagine the wizened products of semi-starvation that came my way capable of any such exertions. My own coolies assured me that it was so and I have no hesitation in accepting their word.

In common with gipsies all the world over they have their own tribal laws and keep their affairs inviolate from other people, living a life of freedom that non-gipsies cannot understand. I exchanged views with them without suffering the illusion of thinking that I entered into their true thoughts in any degree. They are an engaging set of rascals, and I can believe the stories of their loose morals, their light fingers and their nomadic restlessness, but that they are necessarily evil I do not believe, although the estate coolies fear them.

Kuruvars carry their wealth with them, a few performing animals, some snakes, snakestones—stones called *nagatharana*, which are reputed to possess the power of sucking venom from a wound—a few pots and pans and, of course, their womenkind.

Their most precious possession, which clings to them all like an aura, is the consciousness of a freedom before God and man that words are useless to portray.

Dombers, who are jugglers, mountebanks, conjurers and acrobats known to the coolies as "tantra-karens," are very popular visitors. As with the Kuruvars, snake-charming is part of their stock-in-trade, although the only display that I saw in my stay in the island was performed by Kuruvars and was not very impressive. It was carried out in the courtyard of our club in Badulla, and I felt sorry for the spiritless snakes whose fangs had had their venom removed, I am sure. But one trick, the only trick I saw performed in the East for which I cannot find an explanation, confounded us all upon that occasion. The "tantra-karen" placed a small vessel, rather like a flower-pot and filled with soil, on the patio in front of our club steps and covered it with a cloth. He then removed himself to some little distance, perhaps ten paces, and uttered his mumbo-jumbo without moving. But the cloth moved upwards as he spoke, under the compulsion of an object beneath it, and when it was removed the pot contained a sturdy growth of the cactus family at least twelve inches in height. We could not prevail upon the Kuruvar to do his trick again, but apparently the cactus plant was of no further use to him for he offered it to anyone for a rupee.

I never saw "tantra-karens" performing for the coolies, although their visits were not infrequent and amused my people hugely. A love of magic is deeply ingrained in Hindus, coupled with a most obliging credulity.

Among all these castes, sub-castes and caste septs the pandarams lead a busy existence, for the life of the Tamil is one long pilgrimage through legions of devils, evil spirits, curses and spells. In some respects the similarity of Hindu beliefs with those of the ancient Greeks is something more than a startling coincidence. I am convinced that there is, quite definitely, a connection somewhere. Jupiter, for example, is carried by an eagle, and so is Vishnu by Garuda. Juno was the Goddess of Wealth, while Vishnu's wife, Lakshimi, is named with a word which means "riches." Pluto reigned in Tartarus exactly as Yama reigns over the Hindu Hell, Naraka, and just as Pluto found it almost impossible to find himself a wife and had to carry off Proserpine, so Siva had the utmost difficulty in persuading Parvata to let him marry Parvati, whom the god now carries always on his left

hip for fear that she will escape him. These are but a few of the striking similarities of the two sets of gods, and it would be a brave man who claimed that those of the Greeks came into existence first. The better known of the Hindu hierarchy have persisted for at least four thousand years, and there is reason to suppose that the central figures date back some millenniums before that.

The Tamils in this crowded nightmare find that to prosper at all in life calls for incredible wariness in choosing propitious dates and hours for their actions. They do so by means of horoscopes cast, for a consideration, by the priests or pandarams. Devils, too, must be exorcized constantly by means of mantarams or special prayers, the secret of which is known only to the priests. Evil spells and evil eyes, rarely absent for long in the lives of the coolies, can be averted or set aside by precisely the right ceremonies carried out at exactly the right moment. The most important events in the lives of these humble people, birth, marriage and death, are hedged about by massive ritual impossible even to follow and so steeped in the accumulated ceremonial of centuries that sometimes not even the pandaram has any idea of how they originated or what they mean. All this mumbo-jumbo is the jealously guarded preserve of the priestcraft, handed down with the utmost care from generation to generation. We shall find that the Sinhalese villager, after paying outward tribute to the Religion of Reason, spends most of his private and deeply personal life in exactly the same way as the estate coolies. There are many differences in detail but the similarities are startling. Underneath both Buddhism and Brahmanism, the old gods, devils and spirits command the real fear of the ordinary people.

The Tamil has no chance of surviving a single day without knowledge of the almanac and the constant casting of horoscopes. Doctors cannot carry out their work without a choice repertoire of mantarams, while midwives have to be skilled in the evasion of the Evil Eye—especially virulent during confinement—unlucky planets, unpropitious days and the seething terrors of the dark borderlands of the Hindu mind. The good midwife steers her way confidently through all these mysteries; scrofulous, disease-ridden old hag though she so often is. The politician, calling for the self-determination of subject people, shouts with equal gusto for cool, hygienic hospitals, maternity wards, highly

trained midwives and unremitting medical attention. It seems to me that, with Tamils, he may have one or the other but not both, and not the second without first a half-century of painful training. My own estate built a maternity ward long before the humanists in England had discovered that capitalists were grinding the faces of the poor Hindus, and we worked with all our strength and conscience to make it a success. In a quarter of a century, virtually no progress had been made. It was used occasionally, and we lifted up our hearts until the reason for its usage was discovered. As a rule the women who used it did so because, being unclean during childbirth, the family concerned had been unable to make any other arrangement. It was the last extremity, one shade better than sending the wretched mother out into the fields or forest to have her infant. I knew more than one poor woman who, in the same circumstances, chose the latter alternative all the same, for the hospital, despite everything that we could do to popularize it, was regarded as a place wherein people invariably died. Too often they did so, for seldom was it possible to persuade coolies to enter until they were so far gone in their trouble that nothing could be done for them. None the less, slowly, imperceptibly, headway was being made. After all, in the shadow of four thousand years of idolatrous conservatism, a quarter of a century is as naught.

Sorcerers are a much-feared race, for they have the ability to summon "p'ssarssis" or devils at will, and experience considerable difficulty in sending them away again unless suitably rewarded. The Tamils live in constant fear of spells and Evil Eyes directed at them by their enemies through the services of first-class sorcerers. I have known favourite coolies—good, healthy pruners, the shock-troops of the estate labourers—die inexplicably, for no known medical reason, because they had been subjected to the Evil Eye. The relatives had explained to me, more in sorrow than in anger, that the deceased had come into conflict with a rival who had employed a sorcerer to put a spell upon him. They knew this for certain for, from time to time, as a reminder of the inexorable progress of the curse, they had come across little marks in the ground, small stones, flowers, all the weapons of the sorcerer's art, and they had been unable to discover the counteracting spell. The Evil Eye was feared indeed, and rightly so when credulity is ingrained from birth.

Before any ceremony the place where the meeting is to be

held, whether it be the estate kovil or the family room, must be cleansed and purified with cow dung and sacred grass. This is not only a matter of religious significance—it is also ordinary courtesy to be shown to friends or visitors when they come to an estate. For one thing, fleas dislike cow dung.

Canopies of woven leaves and branches known as pandals are inseparable from any festival of importance. They are erected in front of the door through which the people will pass, but there are conventions even in so simple a matter as the building of a pandal. The Right-handed faction, for example, are entitled to twelve posts for theirs, but the Left-handers must content themselves with eleven.

To the Tamil Death is the great Uncleanness and his presence abominable. If one hears of the death of a relative many miles away, purification is necessary and even close friends of the deceased consider themselves involved. Once a death has occurred all the relatives of the dead person are in a ferment until the obsequies. They may neither eat nor drink until the burial has taken place and the room in which death occurred has been purified by the pandaram. Sacrifices, holy water, mantarams and a terrific mourning performance by hired mourners, and if there is one, from the widow, take away the smell of death and the family may revert to their normal life.

All, that is, except the widow, if the deceased should happen to have been a husband. Her fate is little short of terrible, for however young and attractive she may be she may not marry again. In free Western lands, where marriage is becoming an incident of life rather than a corner-stone, this may not appear to be so great a hardship, but to Tamils it is the ultimate misfortune. The widow lives an existence cut off from the main stream of those ceremonies and feasts which are life to the Hindu. Her very presence brings bad luck and a bad omen, and she is debarred from wearing bright clothes. It is little wonder that these calamities give to her performance as a mourner a reality that might not be present if she were mourning the husband alone. She is not. She is bewailing her own fate, shut off from life, denied light, colour and laughter, an object of grudging pity and dislike. Her shrieks and wails—which include downright denunciation of her husband for his supreme selfishness in dying and round abuse of Vishnu or Siva for letting him die—lack nothing in sincerity. Though her life with her husband was, in

all probability, one of perpetual bickering and fighting, without him she is faced with a dreary vista of years in which she will be but half alive. But women have a desperately hard time of it in any case. High-caste Brahmins do not admit that they go to any of the four heavens when they die, and they receive treatment in accordance with that belief while they are on the earth. The mother of a new-born child, instead of being a goddess, is a thing unclean and lives apart, shut up with her own thoughts. So, too, with any woman during her menstrual periods, during which she is usually sent outside to live on the veranda which runs along all line rooms, for three days. During these three days it is her duty not even to look at anybody else, or they will have to undergo a ceremony of purification. Under British rule ceaseless efforts were being made, by constitutional methods and therefore with infinite patience and slowness, to change this state of mind. The late Mahatmaya Gandhi himself derived his ideas of reforming the caste system, and the position of women under it, from his contacts with the British. It is a British legacy and the growth of enlightened treatment for two hundred million women depended upon its implementation. It is not easy now to believe that it will be implemented, for not only the British but the great champion of the Untouchables have left the Indian scene.

The deification of cows probably has its origin in simple common sense, for milk and butter are vital goods and cows are delicate to rear in India, or, for that matter, in Ceylon. The flesh might well have been prized above the other products, and within a comparatively short period the beast would have been extinct without some interdict upon its extinction. They were protected, therefore, by the shrewd and simple step of making them sacred. But if milk or butter was ever derived from the cows of India, it is not now. Estate cows, jealously guarded though they are, appear to possess no practical value at all. Nevertheless to kill a cow is deicide, to eat its flesh a sin beyond redemption—except for the Pariahs. No doubt, for there is cold logic somewhere in all caste customs, this exception in favour of Pariahs was necessary in a hot country for scavenging purposes.

To Tamils marriage is the most exciting event of their lives, for it is a time of consummation in more senses than the purely sexual one. Indeed, that particular consummation often does not occur for some time after the actual marriage ceremony, for the bride continues to live with her people until she attains puberty.

Until a man has married he has little status in the community, and until his wife has presented him with a son he is often in a state of morbid apprehension, for, incredible though it may seem to Western ears, a Tamil knows that hell's gates are yawning wide for him until he pays the great debt to his ancestors—the production of a male heir. There is, in the Hindu creed, a special hell for men who have no sons.

The Tamils lose any sense of financial values that they may have—and it is never a strong sense with them—when a wedding arrives in their lives. They will expend the savings of a lifetime—and if they have no savings they will incur enormous and crushing debt—to do themselves and their families credit in the great hour. In my part of the island we did not often see the gigantic Afghans, those superlative moneylenders, loathed by all, who have reduced the breeding of money by money to an exact science; but money-lending by Sinhalese, by other Tamils, by any one of the seventy different races which inhabit the island, was the very breath of life to all concerned. It covers the whole structure of the population, indigenous and immigrant, with an endless web, fine as gossamer, as remorseless as fate. The giver of the loan is himself in debt, and it is probably true to say that there is hardly such a thing as a solvent Tamil coolie. Indeed, there is a saying among them: "Kudden ill'arth'arl, moolay ill'arth'arl," or "He that has no debts, has no brains," which speaks for itself.

In the marriage game, the choice of man and woman is left entirely in the hands of the parents, caste and property being the only criteria. The girl's parents must estimate the prospective bridegroom's worldly wealth and the character of his father and, above all, his mother, for the poor little bride will find herself a slave to her mother-in-law. The bridegroom's family think only in terms of lineal suitability, for it is recognized that the female's one moment of worth in her life is when she becomes the vessel which produces their son's first son, thereby removing from him the fear of hell. Beauty, talent, personal feelings of any sort mean nothing at all in the match, and the revolting barbarism of men and women kissing in public and all the other obscenities of the Western film screen—to which coolies everywhere now have access—provide them with a never-failing source of illicit, shuddering fascination. I do not think that it ever occurs to Tamils who swarm to see cinema shows that the girls thereon

displayed are anything but harlots, for personal feelings mean nothing at all in Tamil matrimony. The custom is for the bridegroom's family to purchase the bride outright, so much down in a lump sum and all the expenses of the festivities.

As soon as the bride attains puberty—until she does, she lives with her parents—the bridegroom is informed and there are more ceremonies and celebrations. From then on, until a boy is born, the husband knows as little rest as the wife, for a girl as first-born is useless and a reproach, as it appears to have been in the Old Testament also. In the East, a woman is barren until she has borne a son, no matter how many daughters may make their appearance.

The non-appearance of a male heir is the only permissible reason, among Tamils, for the taking of a second wife while the first still lives, and it is only possible then if the first—who retains all her rights as chief wife—gives her consent. Usually she does give it, though with great reluctance, for she is well aware what is likely to happen when a young attractive woman produces the missing son for the husband.

Divorce is permissible for one reason only—the adultery of the wife. Concubinage is, however, quite normal and carries no stigma beyond that of a mild contempt that the concubine did not manage to get a husband. As soon as a woman attains puberty she must marry without delay, for otherwise she becomes the prey of any male of the same caste. It has been established and accepted for many thousands of years that woman is man's creature, and to both men and women the knowledge is as natural as that night follows day.

It is hardly surprising therefore that the morals of the coolies are not very far removed from the farmyard. There are so many more women than men, and although a man's wife is guarded with some jealousy, among the concubines almost anything seems permissible. Promiscuity is widespread, with its attendant evil, venereal disease. The Sinhalese and Tamils both call this the White Man's disease and declare that it was unknown to the island before the advent of the European. How true this may be I have no idea, but venereal disease is now a shocking problem among estate coolies—and, incidentally, Sinhalese villagers—and is dangerously on the increase. Some of the saddest and most terrible objects that I saw in my years in Ceylon were victims, some of them newly-born babes, of congenital syphilis. I have

seen a month-old child, still alive, with its sexual parts all but eaten away, a horrifying memory. But the sexual urge among these people would appear to be so strong and the religious emphasis on fertility so constant and engrossing that warnings are useless. What can be done about it I do not know, but the measures at present in operation are quite inadequate.

It has occurred to me that the absolute acceptance of man's leading part in the act of procreation—for the phallic symbol has complete symbolic dominance in Hindu life—is due to a genuine mistake. It seems probable that the Hindus have had knowledge of the male sperm passing to the female for centuries, but have never suspected that it was merely the instrument of fertilization for the female ovum. If that is so, their view of matters was, on the evidence at their disposal, correct as far as it went, and the divinity of the proceedings belonged entirely to the male. If they could be brought to understand that the male role in procreation is secondary throughout, the position of women in the Hindu world might be changed overnight. At the moment it is as it has always been, and a woman who attains the marrying age and cannot find an eligible husband—and owing to the strict rules of family and caste there are many who cannot—must enter at once into an acknowledged state of concubinage, for the Hindu may have only one lawful wife. The Trinity—Brahma, Vishnu and Siva—each have to be satisfied with one wife, Sarasvati, Lakshmi and Parvati, but they do not frown upon concubinage. The children of such unions are, of course, illegitimate and have no rights, although the father may, if he likes, leave them some of his property.

The Tamils have one outlet from the sombre pressure of the unseen world, a childlike delight in feasting and merrymaking. It is this natural ability to fill in their leisure hours with, to them, profitable activities which puts them so far ahead of the stagnation into which the masses of the people reared on Western ideas have fallen. The coolie has immense resources within himself to fall back upon, in contrast to the sterile inability of the average Englishman to amuse himself in the empty hour. Synthetic amusements play, as yet, little part in the lives of the labourers on the estates. Feasting, singing and dancing take their place, for there are no less than eighteen obligatory feasts in the year in the Hindu religion, some of them of several days' duration.

Deepvali, the Feast of the Lights, seems to have as its origin the worship of fire, no doubt Siva the Destroyer, but it is also the feast of the crops, a kind of Tamil Harvest Home, the very opposite of destruction. It is a joyous affair and flowers, gifts of boiled rice, fruits, singing, dancing and innumerable pandals are the order of the day.

Pongal is an even more popular celebration, the gayest feast of the year, for it concludes a season which corresponds roughly with the Christian Lent. The month preceding this feast is composed entirely of unlucky days, and the relief of finding that a day may be propitious must be enormous. I imagine that Ganesa, God of Obstacles, is in great demand during the weary month before Pongal. Ganesa is the curious god of providence, sagacity and forethought, worshipped by all. He is called also Vigneshwara and Pillayar, and possesses an elephant's head, a huge pot belly, small limbs, and is always depicted with a rat at his feet. He is certainly unusual in Hindu thought in that he never married and gives himself up to meditation. He is the son of Siva and Durga, the wife with whom the god was discovered in the act of copulation when visited by Vishnu and the Penitents.

Certainly the pandarams are busy in the weeks before Pongal. So evil are those days that—until Durai put a stop to it—the pandaram was in the habit of going round the lines at two in the morning beating a gong to warn all that the hour was unpropitious and that Siva—who presides over the month—needed propitiation.

After this long preparation and fear of disaster, the feast, when it comes, is an occasion for thanksgiving. The gods of the temple —Hanumento, Garuda, Ganesa, Basava the Bull and other presiding deities—are given an outing, dragged round the estate on a triumphal car, the air strident with acclamation from the worshippers. The temple is filled with the incense of flowers, and flowers are strewn everywhere in homage and, I suspect, in delighted relief that the suspense is over. Curious games, singing, dancing, little shrines in unexpected places gay with temple flowers, sacred stones in open fields, bright clothes—Pongal is the beloved feast of the year.

The main estate kovil is, of course, the centre of the fun. As a rule these buildings are poor little places and their ornaments and idols have few pretensions to beauty or culture. The central image is invariably repulsively ugly—Siva is a thing of horror—

and it lives in a close, confined space, heavy with the stink of camphor and the sweet, sickly scent of flowers. Such imagery as there may be is mostly childish but the colours are always brilliant. To pass one of these temples during a feast is an experience worth having and the memory of it one that is not likely to fade. Tinkling of many bells, the winding of horns, an occasional rush of sound from an instrument incredibly like the bagpipes, and over all the knowledge of depths of belief like a mystic aura, there is a power for good in such religion that, properly canalized, might bring a whole people to God.

The lack of common ground between East and West—and the truth of Kipling's jingle is as evident to-day as when it was written despite the scorn of the intellectuals—is not seen at a glance. It is not noticeable after a year or even two years. It becomes clear, at last, when, after living for many years with Tamils, the knowledge is born that all of them, virtually every Hindu on the pensinsula of India, some three hundred million souls, believe implicitly in the Trimurti. They believe too in the four paradises. Let us summarize the main gods and their abodes of bliss and see then if, after all, Kipling's judgment is so very far wrong.

Indra is the god of the second-rankers and his abode of bliss is called Swarga, to which all virtuous people, no matter what their caste, may go. It is a happy abode, filled with many rivers and sacred trees and gay with music and dancing-girls. These girls—for this is Paradise—are always ready to satisfy carnal passions and indeed go around exciting them.

In Kailasa, Siva and Parvati spend their time in carnal intercourse in the intervals of which Siva drinks himself into a series of drunken stupors. The courtiers in this delightful region are all evil spirits, horrible to behold, spreading terror everywhere, naked, drunken, fighting mad, nearly as repulsive as the great god Siva himself, who is depicted as being covered with serpents and clad in the skin of a tiger. He is, perhaps, the most popular deity of all.

Vishnu lives in Vaikantha and he, curiously enough, is a god of meditation and gentleness living in a Paradise roughly akin to the conventional European Heaven. But, tiring of both meditation and gentleness, this god decided, as Krishna, to come down to earth, and did so through the womb of Devaki, sister of the tyrant Kamsa. Krishna, in agreement with Brahma and Siva,

had sworn to rid the earth of Kamsa, and kept his vow after behaving in infinitely viler fashion than that tyrant at his worst. The *Bhagavata* naïvely describes the way in which Krishna, on reaching manhood, gave himself up to debauchery and unbridled lechery, not even respecting the virtue of his sisters or even his mother. The number of his wives was 16,000, and the number of children produced by this imposing seraglio too numerous to be recorded. By any Western standards his deeds are foul beyond description, but he is considered a mighty incarnation of Vishnu.

Finally there is Sattya-Loka where lives Brahma the Giver of Life, a Paradise to which only the Twiceborn may aspire. The ultimate god of all, the unhonoured First Cause, who issued from a Tamarasa flower, had five heads when he was born, but began his career by outraging Parvati, the wife of Siva, and that drunken deity struck off one of them in revenge, making him—as he is now known—the Four-faced God. Brahma followed up this beginning by mating with his own daughter, for whom he conceived a violent incestuous passion. To have outraged his own daughter as a god seems to have been too much even for this greatest of all deities, so he changed himself into a stag and his daughter into a hind and possessed her in that way. It is an odd thing that even his creatures appear to have found this too much for them to stomach, for although Brahma is the fount-head of creation, he is entirely without temples or acts of worship. He is a god without honour. Nevertheless, the Brahmins sprang from his head, the Kshatryas from his shoulders, the Vaisyas from his stomach and the Sudras from his feet. He is the lord of all, and all men are born with their fates written by him upon their foreheads.

Three hundred million people believe all these things with a passion of belief that he who has not lived close to them for years cannot begin to appreciate. In the face of such facts is Kipling, after all, such an object of derision, or are the intelligentsia, whose easy laughter and superficial brilliance has destroyed belief without in the slightest degree affecting fact, mockers and scoffers at the Truth? Personally, I believe that the latter is the case. I am convinced that my Tamil coolies; with whom I lived for years, of whom I grew fond with an attachment far above anything that any government may lay down for me, and in whom I found much to admire and study; dwell in a world to

which Western man has as yet no means of access. There was a bridge being built across the gulf of centuries, a thing of infinite patience, labour and care, a bridge of slow understanding, but it has been swept away by the facile impatience of the age. There was no contact between East and West, as Kipling knew, but there was a basis for contact. It has gone and the world is the poorer for it.

These are the people which make up the labour force on the tea estates of Ceylon. Without them the industry could not have been built up and if they depart—for the Government of Hindustan may one day recall them—Mahabadde, the Great Industry, will follow the cities of the Mahawansa, the Great Dynasty, and revert to the jungle which gave it birth.

3. PLANTERS

Owing to the hot climate and the lack of other amusements, the Englishman turns to the most national and least dignified of vices —drink.

P. R. SMYTHE, *A Ceylon Commentary*

The Sinhalese are a gentle people, and of the seventy races who live in their island they have shown no real animosity to any but the British. Even against them, the rancour shown has been more apparent than real, concentrated in speech as opposed to action and bent upon the natural goal of getting rid of the interlopers. Their sense of history is no stronger than that of any other nation, for people's memories do not extend beyond the boundaries of their own lives. What they remember is real to them, all else fantasy. Sinhalese politicians have no means of comparing the lot of the population to-day with that of the peasants in the time of their fathers' fathers.

A little more than a century ago a human tiger lived in the mountains, exercising a bloodthirsty sway over a people so long used to bloodshed and tyranny that it had become a commonplace with them. Defy the tyrant or his Adigar and you died, by torture sometimes, with commendable speed always. Conditions of living were low and the population was small. There were no roads, poor crops, ever-present disease and sudden death for the unwary. The peasants of the plains were worse off; disease, low living, cruelty and ignorance having reduced them

to a shadow of the once proud lion race. In the whole of Lanka there were less than one million and a half people, of which something more than a million were Sinhalese.

That was the state of the island, not in forgotten millenniums, not in the mists of a legendary past, but a mere century and a half ago. Only a few generations removed from a living man.

What has happened during that short time? The one and a half million people, living always in the shadow of fear, have become over seven million people living robust lives in fear of nothing but the teeming devils of their own imaginations. In the inhabited fifth of the island there are roads everywhere, hospitals, schools, hydro-electric power, new industries of rice and cotton cultivation, huge estates of tea, rubber and a million acres of coconuts. The "trouser-karens," products of the system against which they railed with such brilliant venom, are in command of the destinies of the seven million. They have chosen Dominion status and in all the leading articles of the newspapers of both countries friendliness in the written word is the order of the day. The sun is rising on the first new Dominion of coloured people in the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Only one section of the British race has made this possible, and it is not government, wise and enlightened though that has sometimes been; it is commerce. The men who went out to Ceylon when fear and ignorance were the presiding deities, and opened up plantations of coffee, are the *fons et origo* of the prosperity which now seems to beckon the new Dominion. The planters, attacked during my time in the island with ever-increasing bitterness by the Sinhalese, unhonoured and unsung among their own people, are nevertheless the architects of progress.

I have written enough to indicate my own belief that there will be no progress, only retrogression, in Ceylon unless a halt is called now to the process of disintegration that pays no heed to optimistic diplomacy. One of the first actions to stay the injustice of present events is for this country to secure, at once, both the future of its tea industry and the livelihood of the planters. The present drift is towards the elimination of both and the stated policy of the Communist Party in Ceylon—a live force and, but for inner dissension, a possible government in the near future—is confiscation of all British-owned estates without compensation.



Raddawa caste Sinhalese women at work Beating out a cloth on stones as in biblical times



A Sinhalese fisherman, considered of low caste because his profession involves the taking of life

At the time of the fall of Singapore there were harsh things said about the planters. Even at this distance in time, the mud flung still sticks. But the tea and rubber planters of Ceylon are so complete a microcosm of the people of the British Isles that he who indicts them indicts all sections of his own social order. Honours graduates of universities, high-ranking officers of the forces, solicitors, commercial men, public-school boys, grammar-school boys, elementary-school boys, Conservatives, Liberals, Socialists and Communists, rich and poor, cultured and uncouth, English, Scots, Welsh, Irish and Channel Islanders; a complete cross-section of the British people is to be found there. The profession has its failures, as the medical profession at home has its failures; it has its rogues exactly as rogues are to be found among British politicians; its drunkards, just as I have seen high officers of the forces of the Crown drunk; and from time to time its members exhibit opportunism as opportunism is displayed in a score of walks in both private and public life in England to-day. I say again: indict planters and you accuse the British way of life.

Probably the root cause of the malice shown towards planters, understandable in the Sinhalese, less comprehensible in Englishmen, is envy; for it is a happy and pleasant existence. It is a good career, largely, I think, because it has found a cure for the Western disease of city life, that slow divorcement of man from all the wonders and consolations of nature that has led us to our present predicament.

Planters work hard, surprisingly hard, and they play hard, but one of the reasons why they have achieved their aura of naughtiness—which all who condemn seem so oddly to envy—is that the life robs them of pretence. The outer façade of civilized life goes by the board. The white collar of the city man and his blameless tie bestow upon him a label, a valuable defence of respectability against the probing curiosity of the herd, even his own herd. The unfriendliness of the Londoner, his exclusiveness, his miserable loneliness and self-sufficiency are like the pathetic thorn fences that the Sinhalese villager erects to protect his little chena from marauding animals. The jostling crowds threaten to stamp out the life of the dweller in cities and his reaction is to identify himself as quickly as possible with a herd. Thus he will find it relatively simple to follow the well-worn animal tracks through the jungle of civilization. Hence of course the Masons, the Rotarians, the Old Boys' Clubs, each of which reserves the

right of confining its mysteries to members of its own particular herd.

The planter, who has to do without so many of the things that townsfolk consider vital, yet retains his individuality to a marked degree. He, too, is a gregarious animal like his brother in London and exhibits his own herd tendencies, but he spends so small a proportion of his time with his fellows that it barely counts in the sum total of his days. Nevertheless it is the herd aspect of the life that has drawn down upon him the withering disapproval of his own people, who do all the things that he does every day of their lives. He does them once a week at most, probably not more than twice a month.

The young man fresh out from England who enters the profession begins his career by becoming a "creeper." It is a descriptive word but I do not know how it originated. Perhaps it signifies that a man must creep before he can walk in this infinitely complex profession, and certainly a cautious start is essential. The young man, perhaps twenty years of age, enters the establishment of an experienced estate manager where, for some months, he learns his A.B.C. of planting.

The first step of all is to learn something of the language of the coolies, which is Tamil. Sinhalese may be valuable at a later stage—for seventy per cent of the people in Ceylon speak the language—and indeed, I think it should be taught from the beginning; but Tamil is the key language of the estates and it is so hard to pick up that most planters consider that it is enough for the newcomer, overpowered as he must be by the majesty, the beauty and the bursting fullness of his first glimpse of tropical life.

My own creeping days, I think, were the peak of my life, teeming with ecstasies and wonder, and since all who come fresh to the life must tread roughly the path I trod, I shall attempt to describe it.

Before daylight each morning the boy brought me a cup of tea, a nectar never brewed in England. Then I lighted my candle, for the factory's dynamos were not working at that hour for estate use, and rose in a sort of trembling eagerness to begin the day. In the velvet darkness cocks were crowing, flinging their challenge to the surrounding mountains, and the stars winked with a fire unknown in other lands. Four thousand feet down, as I left the bungalow, the tremendous, brooding plain

stretched away to its perfect marriage with the horizon. Paradise Island indeed.

To a young man not insensible to beauty the walk of two miles to the muster ground was pure delight. I knew nothing of the trees, the bushes, the clumps of forest, the rocks, the cliffs that encompassed me. All were dark mysteries between which I walked in the wine-like air before the dawn, with that elemental crowing of cocks in the thousands of square miles spread around me, and the sound of distant horns blowing I knew not where or why. They were there and the world was exquisite and, young as I was, I sensed, I think, the living beauty in mystery which evaporates with too much knowledge. Before long I knew the very cocks which made most of the row and the coolie lines in which they made it, and the exact muster grounds and lines from which came the blowing of the horns calling the labourers to work; and with the knowledge the small, tingling thrill of the unknown disappeared.

I could not speak one word of the language, but Tamils have a courtesy and a friendliness towards the beginner which is most heartening to meet. Indeed they carry it too far, for rather than hurt the feelings of the Durai they will note his mistakes of speech and use them back to him again so that he may feel that he was right. This is friendly, no doubt, but does not help in the long run. The coolies among whom I spent my first few months were, however, used to beginners. Truth to tell, the famous planter with whom I trained made something of a speciality of taking "creepers" and as all of them began by attending daily muster on the same small division, the kannackapillei and coolies there knew what was expected of them. Whatever I touched with an inquiring glance, the Tamil name was enunciated by one or other of them and I noted it down in my vocabulary.

Planters seldom learn to write Tamil. One of the reasons for this is that so large a proportion of the labour force are themselves illiterate that they never use their own script. The kannackapilleis and other trained field-kanganies use figures but rarely need writing, though most of them can write. In communicating with his Durai, the kannackapillei uses word of mouth alone.

Tamil script is extremely difficult. The language is closely akin to Malayalam, Cannarese and Telugu, but as the coolies

speak an argot which has little or no grammar, to relate writing to their speech is almost impossible. The immense labour of learning to write, when it will have almost no application to everyday life, is therefore hardly ever attempted. It is, frankly, a waste of time in one's early days, although I think some of its advantages might well be pointed out at a later stage.

The language itself is difficult to learn because it is, as it were, the "Cockney" of high Tamil, which has both grammar and syntax, both singularly absent from coolie speech. Since they do not understand high Tamil one whit better than English, it is a useless accomplishment, and slowly, laboriously, their argot has to be picked up as used. Rules of speech are few and far between and the most valuable book[1] yet produced for the "creeper" is largely in the form of a vocabulary with copious examples of sentences used in the field.

During the mornings I used to go round "the field"—by which is meant all outdoor works wherever they may be—with the Sina Durai, or Small Master, as the assistant to the superintendent is known by the coolies. I ought here to say that the word "coolie" is forbidden to planters by law, as it is supposed to be derogatory to the dignity of the Tamil race. Since, however, it is the European pronunciation of the word *quli*, the Hindustani for labourers, I would go cheerfully to jail rather than pay lip-service to such rabid nonsense. To tens of millions of Hindus in the sub-continent of India, "coolie" is the only word they have for a labourer, and if planters are forbidden by law to use a Hindu word for a Hindu, then indeed all sense has gone from the world.

I was fortunate in my Sina Durai, a Bachelor of Science, winner of the King's Dirk at Dartmouth, the very finest type of young Englishman with an immense and comprehensive grasp of planting and the humility of mind that is as anxious to learn as to teach. The two proceedings, as far as he was concerned, went hand in hand. Since, too, he was a lover and a student of the jungle and the ways of the wild, it is not difficult to see from whence came my own predilections in later years.

Our walks and rides—for planters who have to work large areas spend many hours on horseback—were, to me, of fascinating interest. Vociferously, endlessly, I asked questions and still more questions for five months, but in the afternoons my mentor

[1] E. Marsh-Smith, *Ingē Var*.

had a rest from me and went off by himself. This was part of the training and my afternoon rounds were spent by myself burrowing into all aspects of the work going on in the division to which all new Durais were assigned. I managed to find my way to the Big Bungalow for tea, but thereafter had to wend my way back again to the final muster of the day.

That did not end my training. In the evening I was sent off to my room for an hour's study of my vocabulary, since the manager insisted that I should be able to say twenty new words each day for six days of the week—not difficult at first, but increasingly so after a time.

Later I spent a month in the factory, day and night. My visits were left to my own discretion, but the weekly interrogation I received from the manager was exhaustive and exhausting. Evasion, had I thought of such a thing, would have been useless. Either I had witnessed and studied the operation or I had not. If not, it had to be included in the next week's syllabus.

It was hard work but, at that, I did not work as hard as my mentors. From six in the morning to six or seven at night, with every kind of reasonable relaxation but no letting up from one year's end to another, the work on that group belied completely any reputation that planting may have achieved for being an "easy" occupation.

The manager believed, and indeed took for granted, that his European staff were prepared to give at all times every ounce that was in them. But he believed also that life, when his men were not working, should be as full and happy as it was possible to make it. There was never any question of set "leave," or of any leave at all when there was work to be done, but if his assistants said that the teal were "in" down in some tank of the jungle plain, and that they had fixed up to take a couple of days after them, there was no more to be said. It was certain that every arrangement had been made for work on the estate and that nothing requiring close supervision was in train. As the "Pootha Durai"—the "new" master—such outings were considered part of my education. I did not miss one of them, for which I can never be sufficiently thankful. Teal or snipe, crocodile or pig, I was included in any party that was got together, for the manager knew that knowledge of the island was a fundamental part of training. The car was sent round by road—a matter of fifty miles—while we rose at three in the morning,

the wine-dark, perfumed, intoxicating morning, and made our way down an almost sheer cliff, four thousand feet of stiff clambering to the witchery of the jungle beneath. The coolness, the clearness, the sheer exhilaration of it will not fade in my memory.

Usually, after a day in the jungle, we threw our guns into the back of the car and set its nose for the coast, sixty miles away. There we bathed, hired catamarans in which to charge the beach on the crest of the great breakers, shot over another tank as the birds winged home in the twilight, bathed again in the darkness and ate the wonderful "fish dinner" of the rest-house before smoking our pipes on the veranda, looking out over the sea or towards the line of the mountains sixty miles distant.

There were other relaxations. The estate had its own swimming pool, tennis court, squash court and cricket nets, and within a ten-mile radius there were a dozen athletically inclined young men and girls. Visitors were frequent, for the estate was one of the show places of the island and the social life of the place was of a variety and depth unknown in English life. To be honest, it was almost unknown anywhere else in Ceylon. Not many newcomers to the island will have the luck to "creep" under such perfect conditions. Wherever they go, however, they will receive roughly the same basic training as I did.

The end of such an idyll had to come. It came after five months, and I was torn between delight at being my own master and earning a salary, and the feeling that never again was I likely to experience such comradeship and happiness as on the group where I did my "creeping."

My new home, over which I exercised absolute sovereignty, was a four-roomed box made of sun-dried brick and corrugated iron roof. It was perched on the mountainside high above the Badulla "bowl" in the province of Uva. The town, lost every night of the south-west monsoon under a fleecy white sea of clouds known as the Badulla "blanket," looked companionably but deceptively near. To reach it I had a two-mile walk, descending one thousand feet through tea, jungle and rubber to the factory where I kept my motor-cycle. From the factory to the club was seven miles, but leave was hard to obtain. For my first year I rarely went into the town at all and was not permitted to join the club. I found my recreation in constant work and in exploring the patana and jungle wild lands which abutted on to

the tea for which I was responsible. I possessed a double-bore gun and an insatiable desire to explore every nook and cranny of the hills, but I could wish now that I had done it scientifically.

Certainly I shall not forget that first home, tiny and isolated, lonely and forgotten. Even my boy, my one companion during the few hours of daylight which I spent indoors, lived in the lines —over a mile away—at night. There are many such bungalows in Ceylon still, but I doubt now if such a rigid discipline is imposed on young beginners. It was wrong and stupid, and it was in bitter contrast with the wide social life offered by the group on which I did my "creeping." Some measure of the loneliness I suffered may be seen in the fact that I trained a gekko, the tiny house lizard so esteemed by both Tamils and Sinhalese, to share my evening meal with me. It took some time, but in the end the little fellow came every evening for his crumbs.

The second year was better, and after my first spell of four and a half years—making five since I had left England—I was given home leave. It is usual now to give six months on full pay, and there are no words to describe one's feelings at the first sight of the red cliffs of Devon.

My second spell, as a senior assistant, was a very different affair, for by now I was fully fledged—though not yet a planter —and had the privileges of seniority. And so, I think, it is with all newcomers to the profession who show promise. Their first five years are hard, their second spell affords increased privileges and responsibilities including, perhaps, six months as "acting" manager while their senior is on leave; and during their third period of five years they may hope to receive a permanent appointment as a manager themselves.

The centre of social life away from the estate bungalows is the club. In Badulla there were two, one for the Europeans only, and the other, a sports club, for all who cared to join regardless of nationality.

There was a good deal of criticism of the Englishman's exclusiveness in having a club to himself, but to this day I am quite impenitent. I mixed freely with both Tamils and Sinhalese in my time on the island, and considered them men in precisely and exactly the same mould as myself. But I wanted and needed a club in which I could meet my own kind and only my own kind, precisely as Masons congregate with Masons, Rotarians with

Rotarians, and Old Boys with Old Boys. The Sinhalese had their own clubs to which they repaired without expecting Europeans to make application for membership. So did the Tamils, the Burghers, and indeed all the other nationalities in the island, and no cry was ever raised against their exclusiveness. I maintain, in the teeth of all the well-meaning souls in Britain who shuddered at the thought of the exclusiveness shown by planters, that we had the right to get together by ourselves once or twice a week. Only sentimental hysteria could see in a homely desire to talk one's own language an insult hurled at a "subject race." Incidentally, in all my years in Ceylon I never once heard a planter use that phrase, nor do I think that anyone ever thought it. It was left to the hasty young students and opportunist politicians to exploit the possibilities of trouble that such labels offer.

The fuss and bother about European clubs being confined to Europeans—argued most bitterly—was astonishing. It ended in the capitulation of the Europeans, whose clubs now are open to all. Those of the Sinhalese, Burghers and Tamils remain closed.

The planter has a great many relaxations, a fact which, no doubt, explains the general envy of his life and the desire, by people who do not live it, to curb it. It is a gentleman's existence. He shoots, fishes, spends his Saturday afternoons playing rugger, hockey, cricket, polo and indeed any game involving a ball; rides, even hunts, and spends as much leave as he can get in the jungle or at the seaside. He even spends his Sundays doing these things very often, for his Christianity is on a par with that of the male population of English cities. It is lax and it is inconsistent, exactly as at home.

On Saturday evenings there is usually a dance at the large central clubs of provinces. Uva Province, for example, as large as Yorkshire, has a few tiny "out station" clubs for tennis, bridge and social chit-chat, for many of the planters cannot travel fifty or sixty miles to a central club very often. In the whole area, 3154 square miles, there are under two hundred planters, although there are an increasing number of wives and daughters now that civilization has come to the up-country hills. Many of the men are married, and those that are not want to be, and any pretty girl who comes out to stay with her parents or comes to visits friends is certain of a good deal of attention. One lovely and extremely level-headed girl whom I knew in the days of

her initiation into planting circles told me many years afterwards that nothing so intoxicating had ever happened to her. Nights in the Mediterranean on a luxury liner were as nothing, she said, to the club evenings, the gymkhanas, the polo tournaments of up-country Ceylon. I can well believe it. The candle and the moths. . . .

It is the same of all planting districts, not only of the far-flung acres of Uva. There are under one thousand planters to work the twelve hundred estates of the hills, and they meet together whenever they can. They like each other's company and they keep open house, the equal of any people in the world for hospitality.

When they do meet, the barriers are down in a way quite alien to the town civilization of the home country, for planters have a zest and a capacity for enjoyment very captivating to encounter, and such events as the local gymkhana meets, polo tournaments, cricket weeks, race meets, and inter-district rivalry in all kinds of sport are memorable occasions. The bleak and arid existence of people in Britain to-day bears no comparison with the generous and full social life of the tea estates before the war.

There were, of course, evils. The loneliness of the life and the trying nature of the climate imposed strains upon human nature of a more direct and open type than those suffered by the helots of city life. The morals of the planting fraternity have come in for such severe criticism that I have been at some pains to attempt to discover the root cause of the general condemnation —happily less virulent of late—and have provoked discussion on this point whenever possible. As usual, I found the most definite critics of the behaviour of planters were people who had not visited Ceylon.

As a matter of fact morals were submitted to a severe and unfair test. The sex difficulty was real and actual, and the remedy of the theorists—sublimation—was seldom sufficient.

Nature has equipped healthy young males with a biological urge that cannot be glossed over, ignored or even sublimated. It has, so to speak, a cheerful disregard for hypocrisy and insists upon being faced in each individual life no matter how virulent public opinion may be. In his secret heart and thoughts, everyone has to face up to the fact that, from time to time, he wants and needs a mate on a purely physical basis. So scandalous and unwholesome is this physical desire of man for woman—and of

woman for man—in the eyes of the arbiters of morals, that it has come to be regarded, in any communal sense, as a thing of shame. To this day in England, although the machinery of sex is discussed with a frankness and obvious enjoyment that does something towards substituting conversational for physical satisfaction, the whole subject of the biological urge itself is taboo. The inference is that sublimation is enough, that right thinking will do away with the cry of the blood.

I believe that this is partly true of societies where daily social contacts and the incidence of useful conventions give young men full opportunities for sublimation. It is even true of a great many planters who, by a furious concentration upon games and hunting during their leisure time and undeviating application to their work during the long hours of the day, manage to conform to the rules for conventional conduct in England. But it does not always work, for consider the special difficulties of the life.

Day in and day out, year after year, a young man lives by himself, sometimes many miles from a European neighbour, in a hot climate. A peculiarity of planting-life is that for most days during the year an assistant has his own company twenty-four hours of the day. The visits of his manager are few and far between, he is not expected to leave the estate very often during the week, and the interruptions of life in England, so incredibly frequent that they are not realized by people who have never led any other sort of life, simply do not happen. The telephone call, the tradesmen, the shopping visits, the unheeded word to the tobacconist, the 8.43 up to town, the porter on the gate, the wireless, the cinema, the pub, the train home, correspondence, the postman—a constant spider's web of unrealized contacts with other human beings who speak the same language and share the same heritage is the lot of almost every Englishman in England. On many estates in Ceylon, especially with the younger men, *none* of these things happen. Day after day may pass without the interchange of a single word in English, without newspapers, wireless—although that, of course, is now available in most bungalows—postmen, tradesmen or any of those tiny contacts which are so taken for granted in English life that a strong effort of will would be required for an ordinary man to imagine an existence without them.

When, therefore, the young planter gets leave off the estate he hurls himself into whatever is happening. He is whole-

hearted, usually as hard and fit as a man can be—the dragging down effects of malaria and dysentery take their heaviest toll in early middle life—and life bubbles warmly within him. Too warmly. Sex complications are apt to catch the unwary when least expected.

English inhibitions and evasions are unwholesome and even disgusting to Sinhalese and Tamils alike. They look upon the celibacy of white men as so unnatural as to be quite untrustworthy, for fertility is a first obligation upon males in their religions. It is true that Buddhism says nothing on that subject at all, but pure Buddhism is almost unknown in Ceylon to-day. What remains is a Buddhist framework within which the demon-worship of the original inhabitants combines with the deism of Hindus to give an average outlook indistinguishable, in many ways, from that of Tamil coolies. A man living without a woman is wrong, as they see it. The one was created for the other.

The caste complications of the Hindu labour force are so many and fraught with such dangers that for a planter to interfere with any of his women labourers is exceptional. The women, it is true, are not above attempting to seduce the Durai occasionally, and sometimes they succeed, for when they are young they can be most attractive. Such unions, however, are considered disastrous on both sides, for even among the Pariahs, as I have shown, adultery of this sort may lead to the family of the woman concerned being made outcaste. As a rule, if and when such a thing happened, the Durai who was so foolish as to be involved would be sacked at once by his company, perhaps even sent out of the island. Caste trouble is practically inevitable when a liaison occurs between the Durai and a member of his own labour force. Between a Durai and a Tamil woman of someone else's labour force, however, it might give no trouble at all. Tamil men regard intercourse as so absolutely natural—like eating rice—that they really do not bear any grudge against their womenfolk so long as they are not found out. The great sin, as in English society, is being found out. As a rule, however, planters leave the Tamil women alone, but with the Sinhalese it is different. Their caste distinctions, severe among themselves, do not apply to the white men, and as soon as a newcomer to an estate has been sized up, it is almost certain that a father of daughters will visit his bungalow with a view to making an arrangement. Sometimes he arrives with a selec-

tion of possible concubines, and if the biological urge triumphs over common sense—the certain knowledge that dead-sea fruit is all that can come of such intercourse—the young man falls and makes his choice.

There are, obviously, some planters who have neither morals nor moderation. With such men, to be found everywhere in the world, I am not concerned, except to say that there are not many of them left in Ceylon. I am concerned with the ordinary, conscientious and thoroughly decent boy who, faced with years of hard work before marriage becomes even a possibility, falls to persistent and insistent sexual temptation. He tries to face life squarely while unable to live on his nerves by constant and unnatural sublimation, and chooses a young village girl to live with him. Such girls are highly attractive, intelligent and loving, and the two often have real happiness together before payment is exacted. The normal trouble is, of course, a child; for the girl, egged on by her parents, does everything in her power to have one. One has to bear constantly in mind that to have a child, to an Eastern woman, is as much a matter of course as for a jak tree to have fruit. The planter, not unnaturally, does not want one, but whether one arrives or not, the ultimate reckoning is always high. Sometimes it is crippling. The wary villager has the settlement drawn up by a properly qualified proctor—or solicitor—in the bazaar, and the miserable planter often finds that he is saddled with a form of alimony for the rest of his life on the island, as well as having to provide his concubine with a house and land in the village of her choice.

One happy aspect of this sordid commerce is that children of such connections are not looked down upon by the Sinhalese. As far as I could make out they are treated in every respect as the equals of the other children, although I confess to a great curiosity as to the mental lives of these half-castes. Do they find, in their tranquil village existences, that they get flashes of restlessness for things of which they can have no knowledge at all?

Latterly, with the advent of European women, this problem has decreased. The very presence of white women at the club, especially young girls, has helped European boys to hold out against the insidious appeal of pretty Sinhalese girls. So far from such liaisons being general in modern times, I should say that they were now the exception, for it is my experience that virginity among males is greater than is usually conceded. If

something could be done to root out and destroy the slimy taproom tradition in males that unless a man has had intercourse with a variety of women he is not a *man*, there would be less fornication than there is. I am quite convinced that most young men out from England have a wholesome repugnance at the thought of cohabiting with women simply for the sake of doing so, and a dread of the filthy diseases that go with promiscuousness. But the bar-bragging of conquests, even of the acquisition of syphilis, has done much to convey the impression that to be a man one must first revel in filth. Even without this weak-minded boasting, which has led many boys to take a step bitterly regretted all their lives, the temptations are great, far greater than any comparable appointment in England, and let him who has experienced them and triumphed over them throw the first stone if stones are to be thrown. The temptation, the loneliness, the climate, the propinquity, the sheer heady intoxication of all that is beautiful in the tropical scene, these things are formidable, and to the young, hot-headed and hot-blooded, a constant lure.

The planter's addiction to strong drink is known all over England. It is almost a truism, in the same way that *vox populi vox Dei* is a truism to many millions of people who have never given the matter a thought. Of course, the voice of the people is not the voice of God by any means—it is rarely the voice, even, of common sense—but it is accepted as a fact and therefore never questioned. That is precisely what has happened to the reputation of the tea planters of Ceylon for indulging in too much drink. I have known men—indeed one of them was mayor of his own small town—tell me that it is a shame that Englishmen are allowed to go abroad and let down the name of the country by getting consistently drunk in front of natives. All planters, it seemed, drank like fish. It is by now a national convention, but it bears the same degree of truth as the statement that all Englishmen beat their wives.

All planters are not heavy drinkers and some of them do not drink at all. On the group next to mine, one of the three Europeans drank very heavily indeed, the second very moderately, the third was a teetotaller. Of the three on my own group, two of us drank very rarely and one not at all, while of the six men who worked the three estates nearest to our borders, one drank nobly but was never to my knowledge drunk, four of the other five were light drinkers and the fifth was a teetotaller. Out of

twelve seasoned planters, therefore, there were three teetotallers, seven light drinkers, one old warrior of the bottle and one who bordered upon a soak. Most of us, as I have subsequently proved, would not have been able to keep our end up in any of a hundred West End bars.

But perhaps that illustration is not a fair one? Was there, in fact, any heavy drinking at planters' clubs in the island? There was indeed. There were, for example, a dozen men in our district who would be relied upon to drink more than was good for them every week-end of the year. No doubt they drank in their own bungalows as well, for I knew more than one case of *delirium tremens* and quite a number bordering upon that unpleasant malady. There is no doubt at all that some very heavy drinking went on in the Province and occasionally there were one or two disgusting public scenes as a result of it.

Let us, however, keep our sense of proportion. A planters' club is far more of a focal point of his activities than any comparable organization in England. He has one or two small local clubs, or one large central club, as his centre of social activity in an area of some three thousand square miles in the Province of Uva. There are no public-houses, no theatres, no night clubs, no restaurants, only one cinema and not a single dog-track anywhere in the province. It is not odd, therefore, that when he leaves the estate, he goes to one or other of the four clubs, three small and one large, that exist. At each of these clubs there is a bar, and wherever there is a bar, whether it is in London, New York, Buenos Aires or Paris, there you will find drinkers congregated. In London you will find them all day and every day, but in Uva you will discover that the club is empty all through the week. The young gentleman who wrote the passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter complained, elsewhere in his book, that for five days in the week the club was not used. The planters, presumably, were so busy drinking that they could not find time to go and play tennis with him! Only at week-ends can it be said to be busy, and on those occasions "incidents" do occur.

There are some rather special conditions which incline planters towards the quenching of their thirst, the first of which is temperature. Although in the hills the heat cannot be called excessive for the tropics—seldom rising above ninety degrees—it is constant. Not one day in the year, for example, does the thermometer fail to reach seventy-five degrees. After the first

year or two of this "ideal" climate, the persistent heat becomes rather trying. The last three years of the second spell in the island become decidedly heavy and the fifth takes a little living through. In the third spell, the climate seems to become increasingly a factor to be reckoned with and by the end of it most people are on the verge of collapse.

All this sapping of energy, a process hastened in the majority of cases by malaria, leads to the taking of a stimulant. Whisky is a stimulant and its temperate use is of great value in sustaining energy, but the weak-willed drink too much of it. As time goes on and energy decreases, increased stimulants are taken by many men who would otherwise have led blameless lives. It is so and it cannot be denied, but he who has not experienced the provocation is in no position to judge the degree of fault. You will find more stark vice in a walk round Soho and Piccadilly on any one night than you will encounter among the whole of the planting community in twelve months.

Taken all in all, the planting life produces a broadness of outlook, a tolerance, a kindliness and a warm hospitality among the men who live it that, in my experience, is not to be found anywhere in England to-day; and I believe the reason to be that all live constantly with nature, and all live lives in which economic considerations play no obvious part. The wealthiest Visiting Agent and the youngest Sina Durai are in no whit divided—except by the awe-inspiring gap of experience—and money, that ever-present curse of urban life, has no social existence in the planters' clubs of Ceylon. It is a factor easier to notice than to describe, but it is very real. There are, in fact, no class distinctions whatever.

There are few rewards now for a lifetime devoted to planting. A man becomes the manager of an estate owned by a company which has, in all probability, several others as well. If he is good, he will in time be promoted to the best group on the company's books. If he is outstanding he will rise to be a Visiting Agent, but there are not many Visiting Agents in the island. It is the highest position open to planters in the field, and from all points of view it is a wise and excellent institution. A Visiting Agent, as his name suggests, visits the estates of the company to which he belongs, inspects them thoroughly and reports on them at length. His own group is not free from inspection—although a leading planter from another company may be asked to report

on it—for even the most experienced and knowledgeable of men is apt to get into a rut where his own work is concerned, and an outsider's inspection is valuable. Experienced planters certainly do not resent such visits but welcome them.

When the time comes for the planter to retire from active life on the estates, he may, if he is very lucky, receive the reward of a directorship of his company. More often he receives a small pension, made possible not so much by the generosity of the companies, of which I saw scant evidence in my time, but by the work of an organization known as the Planters' Association of Ceylon which, from small beginnings, has come to represent planting opinion throughout the island. It is not confined to Europeans. A large acreage of rubber and an increasing acreage of tea is owned by Sinhalese, who pay the European the compliment of copying his methods. The best Sinhalese estates in the island are little, if at all, inferior to those of the European-owned companies, but they depend completely on European methods and organization. If the British planter leaves the island, the standard of these estates will fall rapidly, and the planters concerned are well aware of the fact. For that reason they give strong support to the Planters' Association, a non-political and non-sectarian body that has fought very strongly and almost alone for justice for planters and estates. The lot of the planter, shadowed now by the uncertainties of his future, would have long since become unendurable but for this excellent organization.

That is the Ceylon planter, an ordinary, hard-working honest type of British man than whom the world has never yet produced a better. He has been spoken of with scorn by the people he has done so much to raise from their position of decay and squalor, and he has been traduced by his own flesh and blood. There is no suggestion of high ideals about him and his blunt matter-of-fact knowledge and experience is repellent, no doubt, to the racial theorists who confuse politics with life. But in the sour and waning standards of life, liberty and happiness in Britain to-day, there is hardly a glimpse to be seen of the open-hearted frankness, the hospitality, the quiet wisdom and the sheer joy of living that may be found among the planters of the little island of Ceylon.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MOUNTAINS

1. NAMUNUKULAKANDE

GEOLOGISTS tell us that Lanka spent millenniums, century upon century, slowly and majestically rising from the bed of the ocean, a lump of crystalline rock. Walt says that this crystalline core belongs to the most ancient of geological periods and that during æons, while the rest of the world's surface was writhing and heaving into its present shape, it remained at rest, virtually as it is to-day.

This lump of rock, which may have stood, therefore, from the time that the earth first settled itself, is the mountain core of the island, for the plains are newcomers to the scene by geological standards and their creation was of a different nature.

Ten miles inland from Madampe on the west coast, the shells of pearl oysters have been unearthed, and even further inland other marine shells have been discovered in terraces a little higher than the surrounding plain. Most of the north of the island, in fact, is the product of the accumulation of centuries of detritus washed down from the mountains, and alluvial deposits carried by the strong currents that sweep down from the Coromandel coast of India. Even the non-geologist can see at a glance that the Jaffna pensinsula is entirely the product of these processes.

The mountains, that lovely central core of almost solid gneiss, cover over one-sixth of the surface of Lanka, an area of 4212 square miles so rich in contrasting beauties that the chroniclers of all the ages have vied with themselves in their efforts to capture at least some flavour of its magic in words. They are the result of an uplifting force, exerted from south-west to north-east, with Adam's Peak as its nodal point, producing a series of remarkably parallel ranges of hills. At first sight the wild confusion of spurs and ridges which run in all directions obscures the regularity of the general design, for the rugged grandeur of the mass gives no impression of symmetry. Nevertheless the symmetry is there,

for the horseshoe of mountains, if broken up and subjected to close study, reveals the main ranges running in parallel lines with many basic similarities of structure.

The plains with which this central massif is surrounded are by no means flat and monotonous. There are many minor ranges of mountains, some of them—such as the Monaragalla and the Nuwaragalla hills—rising to a considerable height, and curious isolated rock masses such as Mihintale, Dambulla, Sigirya, Kuranagalla, Yappahura and Friar's Hood, loneliest mountain outpost of them all. In the Dekkan, these lonely rocks are so familiar a sight that, by contrast, those of Ceylon are said to be rare, but I do not agree with this. Stand upon some height on the Uva hills and look out towards the north, and you will see that the great plain is anything but flat or unbroken.

The strongest feature of the geological picture is the prevalence of gneiss and the entire absence of tertiary rocks. The gneiss, covered with thick beds of dolomite having veins of quartz running through them, is always found on granite laterite. This is called "kabook" in the island, and is a product of disintegrated gneiss. It is quarried on a large scale for building purposes. The only suggestion of volcanic activity is to be found in the basalt seen at Trincomalee and Galle.

The soil of the whole island comes from the disintegration of gneiss, supported by the alluvial deposits of the northern plains and the activities of the coral polyp. Why certain masses, which must have formed part of the central upheaval, have resisted disintegration, remaining as mighty boulders, some of them many hundreds of feet in height, upon the jungle plains is a mystery of nature for which I have seen no explanation.

Southern India does not, geologically speaking, belong to the northern parts of the sub-continent, but to a separate land mass of which Lanka was once a part. There are signs that this mass once stretched from Malaya to Madagascar, and the naturalist still finds links which speak of that distant time. The loris, the only lemur in Ceylon, the chameleon and the drongo, all point to an age when Madagascar was linked by land with the island, while the whistling thrush is said to suggest a similar early connection with Java.

Such things, I confess, are too deep for me, but whatever their origin and the geological cataclysms through which they have passed, there the mountains of Ceylon still stand, yoked to

the commercialism of man but untamed, mysterious and unattainable.

The six highest peaks in Lanka are:

Pidarattallagalla (Pedro)	8820 feet
Kirilgalpota	7810 ,,
Totapella	7720 ,,
Adam's Peak	7420 ,,
Great Western	7264 ,,
Namunukula	6740 ,,

of which the least known is probably Namunukula.

Although I lived upon the lower slopes of this wonderful peak for thirteen years, at one time a constant visitor to a bungalow built within fifteen hundred feet of its forest-crowned summit, I failed to climb it; in retrospect an unforgivable omission. Why this should be I do not know, but it is a common phenomenon. I knew a man who for twenty-eight years tasted teas in Eastcheap, and in all that time never visited the Tower of London or climbed the Monument, both outside his very door. But that is no excuse; Namunukula is a most interesting mountain, itself holy like its more famous brother Adam's Peak, and a landfall for mariners on the Bay of Bengal from earliest times.

Yet, although I never stood upon its highest point, the magnificent jungle with which the tops were crowned always fascinated me and I visited it many times. There were several hundred acres of it, cut off from communication with the wild by encircling tea-fields, which thrust their ordered boundaries as close to the heights as the Government permitted, and in its tangled labyrinth game still lived that had never known the curbing influence of man. I have seen pig there and the tiny mouse-deer, while birds innumerable, from the Ceylon eagle to the squalling parrokeets, throve in its branches, but I do not believe that leopard were still to be found in its coverts although my coolies assured me that it was so.

These stranded jungles at high levels have a pathetic majesty all their own, for they are the direct heirs of the primeval forests which covered the whole of the up-country hills—with the exception of the patanas of disputed origin—before man set foot on Lanka's shores. Too steep for tea, they are game sanctuaries which live on almost untouched by man. Deer, boar, the small rilawa monkey and the solemn wanderoo, anteaters, mongooses

and porcupines, all congregate there still, sharing, with the birds and insects, the limited freedom of their shrunken dominions. But if they have sanctuary from man, there is no peace in the high forests any more than in the great jungles of the plains. Nature's war never ceases, tree with tree and flower with flower, bird with bird and beast with beast. Yet these enclosures, where decay and death go hand in hand with vigorous life, and flowers and orchids open their unnoticed beauty to any sunshine which pierces the leafy cover of the trees, must surely provide an ideal laboratory for the naturalist, the botanist or the ornithologist. Bees, moths, ants and hornets, bats and birds—a man could spend his lifetime in earnest study of the imprisoned jungle of Namunukula and hardly touch the fringe of its unrevealed mysteries. But even more than these, the high forest awaits the interpretation of the artist. As far as I know, artists leave Ceylon alone; I cannot think why.

Patanas—the rolling grasslands of the hills which have much in common with the English downs—may be seen at their best from the top of Namunukula. There is a mystery about them, for you may see two pockets of prolific jungle, the soil of which gives sustenance to every kind of tree and shrub, completely surrounded by grasslands on which only an occasional tree has found the strength to grow. The only explanation that I have seen—that they were formerly coffee plantations—is nonsense. There are many thousands of acres of these rolling grass-covered hills in Uva alone which have never seen a coffee bush. In some unexplained way the grass growth of this strange feature of the Ceylon mountains establishes a supremacy over all other growth—there is a reflection of this supremacy in the Talawa country of the low-country jungles—which is not challenged except in the hollows and ravines or near flowing water.

It is not known whether these downs are an ancient feature of the island, but it is thought that it may well be so as the flints of neolithic man are found on them in great profusion. Stone Age man naturally preferred the open for domestic purposes, for there he could not be surprised by his enemies.

At lower levels the cover is tall lemon grass and at higher altitudes a hardy and wiry grass in which only an occasional tree can flourish. Cattle do not like either of these grasses except in their earliest stage of growth, when they find the delicate new buds very succulent. At certain seasons of the year, therefore,

the patana grasses are burned off, one after the other, filling the air with the thin smoke which produces that all-pervading blue so characteristic of the island.

The occupant of the highest bungalow on the slopes of Namunukula, brother of a very famous English playwright, was an intimate friend of mine. From his dinner-table we could see, as from an aeroplane, the carpet of the eastern plains many thousands of feet beneath, and at night the lights of the Basses—protectors of some menacing rocks in the Bay of Bengal—winking at us from a distance of sixty miles. The teeming nights; when the fireflies wove their endless traceries in a thousand trees and untold millions of cicadas scraped their shrill violins in solid volumes of sound, had a quality of unreality about them which defies the pen; and the dawns were of such splendour that only music, I think, could hint at their beauty. The light of a new day was so clear, sometimes, that ships passing on their lawful occasions as much as one hundred miles away were, by some magnifying process of the air, visible in detail.

2. The Garden of Ravanna

The highest point in Lanka is the summit of Pedro, that slightly unimpressive mountain in whose shadow nestles the hill station and valley of Nuwara Eliya, "the town in the plain." The whole of the central uplands of the island, from Adam's Peak to the Horton Plains, is sacred to Hindus as the Asoka-aramaya, the pleasure-grounds of Ravanna. It was he, it will be remembered, who kidnapped Sita, wife of the god Vishnu, come to earth as Rama, and brought her in captivity to this very area, although others ascribe her captivity to Sitawacca in the Kelani Valley. The whole of what is now the hill resort, the plain from the foot of Pedro almost to Hakgalla, was the Sita Talawa, where Sita was eventually discovered by Hanumento. The General of the Apes fired all the surrounding forests to clear them of evil spirits and left the plain bare and open. Vishnu decreed that they should remain like that for ever, and as the moon-plains they may be seen to this day. But the planters, heedless of the angry god's decree, planted their tea bushes, row upon row, over thousands of acres of the barren land, and once more vegetation flourishes on what was once held to be sterile land.

Nuwara Eliya, now accessible by railroad, is built round a lake at a height of 6200 feet above sea-level. It is to Ceylon what Simla is to India, and as a consequence it has many hotels, boarding-houses and conventional English amusements, including an enchanting golf course and a race-course. Looking at it now, akin to a Scottish highland resort with its roads and hotels; its casuarina and fir trees, pines, gums and cedars; its brilliant beds of flowers, hydrangeas, phlox, roses and michaelmas daisies; its scarlet rhododendrons and golden broom; it is difficult to realize that it was only discovered to Europeans one hundred and twenty years ago. Yet it was not until 1826 that an English officer wandered into that heavenly valley and realized its possibilities. Kandyan kings had lived there, but it was a sheltered valley in the great labyrinth of the central mountains, relatively untouched by man, before the British opened it as a health resort. It has its drawbacks. From the middle of June until the end of November Nuwara Eliya lives in mists and heavy, though rarely torrential, rain, with occasional bursts of redeeming sunshine. At night the atmosphere is so cold that roaring fires are necessary, but to the European sweltering on the plains this last attribute is an attraction rather than the reverse.

It is connected to the outside world by four main roads. The first climbs over the hills to descend by the Kadduganawa Pass to Gampola and Kandy. The second runs south-east through the two great tea provinces of Dimbula and Dickoya, and the third east to the Udupussalawa range which runs as if to join the Badulla hills and stops short to fall precipitously to the jungle. The last road climbs out of the valley to Hakgalla, where there are some splendid botanical gardens close to the giant Rock of Hakgalla which gives its name to the pass that runs down into Uva Province and the east. The scene from this rock, embracing the whole rolling downlands of Uva, the mountains of Haputale and the Horton Plains and mile upon mile of lowland jungle beyond the last outpost of the tea lands, has an enchanting intimacy. I did not climb to the top, the sheer tip of which is exactly 7000 feet above sea-level, but if ever I am lucky enough to return to the island I shall do so, for its position in the mountain chain would give, I believe, a panorama even more remarkable in some respects than that of Pedro and almost the equal, in the wild confusion of cliffs, gorges and cascades, to that of Adam's Peak.

I climbed Pedro before dawn and by myself, for I felt an aversion to sharing an experience which I knew was to be almost a sacrament. The ascent of barely two thousand feet from the hotel is so gradual that it hardly constitutes a scramble, but living at that height even for a short spell inclines one to breathlessness.

The way leads through thick forest, in which live elk and leopard, the latter of which have been known to walk at night down the main street in Nuwara Eliya even in recent years. I had forgotten such things in my anticipation and eagerness to set foot on the highest point in Lanka, although at one place I was rudely reminded of the possibility of an awkward encounter by the sound of a quick crash in the undergrowth bordering the path, followed by a silence more terrifying than the noise.

These forests in and around Nuwara Eliya and covering the whole of the top of Pedro have, in certain seasons, the most wonderful of all nature's carpets—the nelu flower. Tree ferns unnumbered, and flowering trees in their splendid regalia of gold and crimson and russet and claret and orange, stand knee-deep in an underbrush of red or blue, for so close are the blooms of this curious flower that they cover the earth so that nothing else can be seen. There are several species of nelu, and when they are in flower they are the paradise to which all bees go. There were large patches of this wonderful colouring out, although I did not see them, of course, until the return journey, but I was lucky to see them at all, for they were of the kind that bloom only once in seven years and, having bloomed, die.

There is a sense in which I was unlucky when I stood upon the summit of Pedro, for it was not a clear day. As the dawn came, oyster-grey through the canopy of clouds, the revelation of the whole island which I had been promised did not materialize. It is a fact that, given the right conditions, it is possible to follow the entire coastline of the new Dominion nearly nine hundred miles in length, the only mountain on earth, I have been told, from which an island of such magnitude may be seen in its entirety. But I did not see it. I saw, instead, the most awe-inspiring cloud display that I have ever experienced, although I have spent twenty years of my life living among mountains. From all corners of the compass immense funnels of cloud soared in wondrous formations and I followed them spellbound, watching the rising stream of light from the sun playing with the legions of cloudland.

In time, and with astonishing swiftness, the clouds rose and the island was revealed, dark and still—for full daylight was not yet upon the plains—but very far from clear. In all the valleys darkness hovered still, and on all the tops the golden light of morning, turning in places to a strange lavender tint more appropriate to sundown, grew stronger and stronger and a new day was born. From the shadows appeared Uva, with her crags and mountains, her streams and downs; Kandy, its contorted peaks standing on shadow; and Adam's Peak, sharp and clear, although nowhere did the sea shine from the indefinite horizon. This was strange, for usually the sun turns the sea into a thin bright band of gold.

Finally the sun itself appeared and instantly every tree and creeper in the forest world all round took on the vivid clarity which is a characteristic of the East. The mists vanished from the valleys and the last of the bats and nightbirds took flight until darkness fell again, but from that height I did not hear the homely challenge of the roosters. I did not hear anything. In all my life I cannot recollect so marvellous a silence.

So many times, in so many words, has the old miracle of a new day, seen from a high place in the hills, been described, that more than humility afflicts the writer who essays to do it again. A sense of hopelessness supervenes and yet, if any man has lived one second of such perfection he has no right to pass on, surely, without making the attempt to record it.

Pedro has its Lovers' Leap. Although a hill of gentle slopes on the Nuwara Eliya side, to the north-east are some fearsome crags, one or two of them possibly unclimbable. I do not know if crags-men have ever set out to climb them, but they seemed to me far worse than climbs considered impossible in the Lake District. Lovers' Leap is one of them, a sheer cliff over which, says legend, a Kandan prince who loved too well, but not wisely, had leapt to his death. The girl he loved was of a low caste and his father, the king, on hearing that he was with her, sent his soldiers after the lovers, who fled. But they were pursued and, faced with inevitable capture, they chose death in each other's arms and flung themselves into space over Lovers' Leap.

The mountains of Lanka, although the most cultivated part of the island, still have their solitudes. I know a rock face more than two thousand feet in height and almost sheer, on which the monkeys congregate in the evenings with such an immense

chattering and hullabaloo that my coolies nicknamed it Monkey Rock. Long after the last of the monkeys had gone we continued to use that name, and it may be that my successor does so to this day for nicknames persist long after their origin has been lost.

On the gentle slopes on the reverse side of this rock the European has imposed his disciplined agriculture, but the cliff—so characteristic of the island's hill formation—had almost certainly never been trodden by the foot of man. From my own personal Contemplation Rock I had studied it carefully, for there is no doubt that the ascent could be made. Indeed there were one or two funnels which, cleaving the steepest portion, made the climb of no particular difficulty, but I regret to say that I did not attempt it.

The lower slopes under the cliff sheltered wild pig, deer and even, at times, leopard, but very few villages, although I did find two small settlements when exploring. Some of the women and children of these settlements, with white men living within five miles of them, had never seen one, but the men regularly visited both Badulla, on the western side of the Valley of Death, and Passara on the eastern. They told me that, once, the valley had been thickly populated, but that malaria had decimated the villages and now they were the only two left for many miles. From the river in the bottom of the valley to the windbelt planted by man on the crest of Monkey Rock was all of four thousand feet.

There are many such places in the mountains of Ceylon, quiet, still secret, for in over four thousand square miles of rugged precipitous mountains and gorges even half a million acres of tea is well lost.

3. The Holy Mountain

A landmark in the sea of time

Adam's Peak is the most sacred mountain in the world, holy to one thousand million people, and I do not wonder at it, for it is a natural cathedral so stupendous and exquisite that none can stand upon it without worship in his soul. Yet it is a strange thing that this mighty pinnacle, standing in the middle of an island which was not even correctly mapped two centuries ago, should bless Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists and Christians alike. Under its

spell anger is unknown and even the harlots who have never known what it is to refuse themselves, do so once the holy fane has been sighted.

The Moslems named it after the first man, who was also the first of all prophets, Adam, and it is from this, no doubt, that the Portuguese named it "Pico de Adam," the name by which it is known to the Western world. The last prophet is, of course, Mohammed. Adam, taller than the slender areca palm, was hurled from the seventh heaven of paradise for his sin, and alighted on one foot on the peak, leaving the indentation still to be seen on the summit. For a thousand years he stood there expiating his sin. The unhappy Eve, thrown no less violently from Paradise, fell near the port of Jidda, where Mohammedan pilgrims disembark on their pilgrimage to Mecca. There she dwelt, awaiting the day of reunion. After the period of atonement, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to Adam and led him by the hand to Mount Ararat where he found Eve awaiting him. They returned together to Lanka and lived there many centuries, propagating the species.

Some faint echo may be found in this story of the geological statement that Lanka is one of the most ancient of the settled land masses of the world, for it is on that part of the earth's crust which first became land that one might fairly expect to find the first man.

For the Hindus it is Siva's mountain. When Rama, part incarnation of the great god Vishnu, conquered Lanka in 2386 B.C. he did so with the help of his brother Saman. The name Samanakande by which the mountain is known to Hindus means the Hill of Saman, who is presumably Siva himself. Siva, the God of Destruction and Wrath, also known as Ishwara (or Aeswara) Rudra, Sadaswira, Mahadeva, Parameswara and many other names, he it is who rules for ever over Samanakande. That is why the butterflies—those incredible flimsy legions that drift over the plains once a year in an ever-broadening river, a fantastic but gentle stream made of countless millions of diaphanous wings—are known as Samanaliya. They are wending their way, as every Hindu knows and most Sinhalese believe, to Adam's Peak, there to die. I have an uncomfortable conviction that that is what *does* happen. The direction of the flying hordes never wavers and never alters from year to year, and from that countless host no single butterfly ever deviates for more than a

second's gentle intercourse with a flower. If I were an entomologist I could not rest until that dainty mystery had been settled once and for all, but I never met a man who could say definitely whether the coolies were right in their belief or not.

Thirdly and most important of all, for Lanka is the great citadel of the Buddhist faith, the peak is the Holy of Holies to Buddhists. Their claim goes back beyond the last Buddha, Gotama, to the first of the present kalpa, Kakusanda. There is a place, if one climbs the peak from the side of the easy slope, Maskeliya—the Pilgrim's Path begins at Laxapana Pass—which is called Bagawa Linna, where all four Buddhas, Kakusanda, Konagama, Karsyapa and Gotama, are said to have rested while on visits to the peak. Many Buddhists, including a priest to whom I spoke, did not know this. All that they knew was the story of Gotama visiting the Naga king at Kelaniya and, on his way back to Magadha, touching the summit with his foot in passing.

Indeed, the High Priest of the Temple of the Sri-Pada itself ascribes the discovery of the holiness of the mountain to King Walagum Bahu who for fourteen years wandered the wilderness of the peak in exile from his capital at Anuradhapura. In pursuing a deer which he failed to catch, he was led to the summit of the peak and was the first of all men to behold the holy imprint.

Fourthly, the Chinese hold the mountain sacred to Pawn-koo, the first man of all, yet another suggestion that Ceylon was the first land mass in the world to support human life.

Fifthly, the Gnostics believe the footstep to be that of Ieu, and finally there are the Roman Catholics, who have given two versions of the indentation. The early Catholics attributed it to St Thomas, but later it was said to have been made by the eunuch of Candace, Queen of Ethiopia. Candace was defeated by the Roman general Petronius in the year 22 B.C., but any possible connection between her eunuch and Lanka escapes me.

The peak itself is a last gesture of defiance from a land mass between the Himalayas and the South Pole, a kind of Ultima Thule. The fact that it can be seen from far out to sea in all directions has made it a conspicuous object to mariners from the earliest mists of time and this, coupled with its slender finger pointing to Heaven, has had not a little to do with its fame. And when one is standing on its last pinnacle, with the wilderness of

the peak, a tumbled, primeval forest at one's feet, the belief that all the spirits of the men who have worshipped there throughout all the ages hover in the clouds, the rising mists, among the trees, caves and dark crevices with which its towering slopes are honeycombed, is not difficult to believe. In the dark, before the first trembling of the light, it is difficult not to believe.

High Priest of the Peak is one of the highest titles of the Buddhist priesthood but, although the Sri-pada, the Sacred Footstep, is under Buddhist care, the utmost toleration is shown to pilgrims of all races and creeds who toil annually to worship it.

The surroundings are grand and stirring to a degree, a wild, magnificent forest, never levelled by man but in which, nevertheless, man has taken refuge from earliest times. For the Veddhas, fleeing from Vijayo's treachery, fled there for sanctuary, and successive kings of the Mahawansa and Sulawansa hid in its inaccessible caverns. But before either of these, if John Still is to be believed, the earliest men of all chipped flints there as their lasting memorial. They must have been hard men, very much in love with life, for in the wilderness conditions could scarcely be more severe. Constant rains of an intensity rarely seen in northern climes, swollen rivers and cascades, lightning and rolling thunder echoing from cliff to cliff and from chasm to chasm, and ever-present danger from the beasts—for neolithic man, used to the everlasting sun and constant drought of the northern plains, survival must have been a penance.

On one side of the mountain, the steep and in places dangerous ascent from Ratnapura, there are cliffs so precipitous and perilous that chains have been fixed, the top end into the solid rock. These swing loose at the other extremity and the pilgrim, catching the loose end, hauls himself up step by step, putting his feet into a kind of stirrup every yard or so. These chains seem to me the most curious of all the wonders of the ancient kingdom, for no one can state with certainty how they got there. A Persian poet says that they were fastened there by no less a person than Alexander the Great himself in the fourth century B.C., who, he said, visited the island and climbed the marvellous mountain after his conquest of northern India. But he gives no shred of proof for this theory. Marco Polo commented on them, as did Ibn Batuta, but neither knew of their origin. As far back as man's memory or the ancient records of the land go, they have

been there to aid the pilgrims from every corner of Asia as they struggle upwards in faith and hope. Since the steep ascent is the one which confers added grace, even the aged and infirm sometimes make the attempt, and many die by the wayside. Others cannot possibly struggle up the cliffs which mark the end of the climb and have to be carried on the heads of their relations. It is not surprising to find that there are many cases of pilgrims being torn from their holds by fierce winds and hurled to their death in the abyss below.

The climb from Ratnapura is so severe, in fact, with so many hazards to life and limb, that one can only marvel at the tenacity of purpose shown by the people, old and young, who make the ascent. It seems to me that only a very real religious fervour could give the majority of them the strength to face that terrible climb.

From the City of Gems, where Turnour made his decision to devote his life to solving the riddle of the *Mahawansa*, the first part of the pilgrims' way is through thick jungle. The third full moon of the year—poya season—is the time of the pilgrimage. Family parties led by the Gurunanse, book in hand, chanting texts, travel at night by brilliant moon. It is tropical jungle of a density and size seldom encountered in the low country, and the heat by day is stifling. The mere sight of this wonderful forest at close quarters, with its teeming, incessant life which yet keeps its presence hidden from the wayfarer, brings to mind how much beauty has been destroyed by the great plantations and the ceaseless search for material wealth. The path is very beautiful, rough and full of obstacles though it is. In the forest there is a dense undergrowth of ferns and bamboos, the tendrils of climbing plants and creepers, rhododendrons and nelu flower. There are many flowers, if a man has time to search for them, begonias and orchids, festoons of delicate climbing plants and hibiscus, a vegetation rich and luxuriant that yet gives way in many places to animal tracks.

In the wilderness of the peak elephants teem for, contrary to popular belief, the elephant does not like the heat and sunlight of the low-country plains. He prefers coolness and shade and, if he can find it, he will always make for the high ground. He is a wonderful engineer of animal roads and has few rivals as a climber. John Still says: "I am tempted to think that, wherever a man may climb, so may an elephant," and certainly they found

their way to the top of Adam's Peak before ever man did. Their paths wend a way right up to the highest edge of the forest to this day, and so numerous and useful are their tracks that large areas of the wilderness which would otherwise be impenetrable can be explored with their aid.

As the pilgrim climbs higher up the slopes, he finds that the air grows appreciably cooler and the nature of the terrain changes to scenes of wild grandeur. Enormous boulders are flung around as if in some giant sport, deep gorges appear almost at one's feet, huge creepers and cunning rootgrowths cumber the path. One such gorge is called Nilihela, in memory of a young girl who came upon it too suddenly, fell into the abyss and was killed. Her spirit is said to haunt the place and if a man should shout, the echo will come back from the granite face of the cliff, not in his voice but hers.

At Diyabetma, which means the "division of the waters" and is the source of the Kalu-ganga, the cone of the peak, hitherto hidden, comes suddenly into full view, and the pilgrim begins his chant of praise which never ceases, except from shortage of breath, until the summit is gained. The view from this last contact with the lower world is awe-inspiring, in its different way about as inspiring as any offered by this wonderful climb.

At Sitaganga there are many pools with steep rock escarpments, a forlorn, lost place of enchantment reminiscent of Kubla Khan.

> *Where Alph the sacred river ran*
> *Through caverns measureless to man*
> *Down to a sunless sea.*

This is the legendary abode of Sita, wife of Rama, and it was in this stream that she used to bathe. Here the pilgrims perform various ablutionary acts of devotion, and of all the penances undergone, I do not think that any deserves more merit in a future state than this one.

Leaving Sitaganga the climb begins in earnest, a stiff scramble at first through primeval forest again, from which the crash of an elephant, the bell call of an elk or the scream of an animal in pain comes, from time to time, with the utter detachment of the wild that cares nothing for the presence of man. Yet although evidence of game is everywhere, sight of it—as in the low-

country jungle—is rare. In all the wilderness of the peak I did not once see a monkey, although they abound.

The most desperate part of the climb is the last grand assault on the summit. Without the final chain—the chain of the creed —I do not know how it could be done except by expert mountaineers. It is here that the fatalities usually occur. The story is told of a whole family, strung along the length of a chain, each in his own stirrup hold, swept out beyond the edge of the escarpment to hang over the void while fellow pilgrims could only watch and pray as one by one they fell to their death.

From the summit, where the faint indentation—the Sri-pada —calls the attention of the faithful, the eyes of the European will swing in fascination to the illimitable splendour of the view. From here the grandeur of the entire mountain massif is revealed, a panorama of unsurpassed beauty. "The panorama," writes Tennent, "is perhaps the grandest in the world, as no other mountain, altho' surpassing it in altitude, presents the same unobstructed view over land or sea." One can discover the jagged outline of the Knuckles behind Kandy, the Matale hills, the peak of Hunisgirya, glimpses of Uva with Namunukula dreaming in isolation over the eastern plain, the Bandarawella hills, the Horton plains, the little edge of all things known as World's End, Hakgalla Rock and the rounded dome of Pedro, and closer at hand Great Western, Kirilgalpota and Totapella. Between these proud giants valleys and intersecting ridges lie in tortured profusion, the stretches of dull, ordered agriculture of man looking mere patches in the lavish waste of tropical vegetation. It is a magic scene which, while not so comprehensive as that from Pedro, has a sharpness and a focus unequalled anywhere else in the world. If seen at sunrise, the miraculous vision known as the Shadow of the Peak may occur. A giant cone of darkness lies over the world, an apparition of almost supernatural wonder and awe. As the sun rises, the cone shortens swiftly and one has an impression of the endless spaces of the empyrean to which the surface of our globe is of little account.

I think the reason for the superb grandeur of the view from the peak is that everything falls away with such quick precipitation that there is literally nothing else to absorb the eye. It is as if one stood upon a skyscraper over seven thousand feet in height and the scene revealed, because of the tenuous hold that one has upon earth oneself, is entirely different in character from

that gained from an aeroplane. On the peak one has a sense of positive insecurity, so small is the area of the summit.

Every fold and tuck in the immense, undulating carpet of the earth at the foot of the great spire is shrouded in forest from which, in the still hours, the cries and the belling, the shrieks and deep roars of wild life rise in clearest cadences. If, as has been said, this most wonderful place; superb in its majestic beauty, haunted, feared and worshipped; was in fact the Garden of Eden, the snake has triumphed for Adam and Eve have been cast out and death has entered in. But still man's spirit is healed there, for among all the pilgrims that flock to worship the Holy Mountain there is a tolerance, an earnestness, and an outpouring of purely spiritual yearning that is more holy than the mountain of its veneration.



Outrigger fishing craft on the shores of the Kalu-ganga, one of Ceylon's few navigable rivers



Clapham junction of the East Colombo's great artificial harbour

CHAPTER XV

THE PEOPLE

1. VILLAGES AND VILLAGERS

A yielding fluid, filling any vessel but unchanging in its character

THE strength of Lanka is in the love of the soil, the deep abiding attachment to the land that is found among her people. They are essentially villagers, countrymen, although the sickly and corrupt history of past centuries has done much to obscure the countryman's strength.

The British occupation of the island has had a marked effect upon the health of the Sinhalese national body, which had become so fever-ridden and so enervated that its energy and enterprise had virtually disappeared. Strength has returned, health has improved and the latent qualities of the race are again in evidence. But there can be no doubt that the seductions of the Western form of civilization, with its constant preoccupation with material progress, have turned the energies of the Sinhalese into channels for which their genius is ill-attuned. Democracy, a theory with ten thousand interpretations even in the Western world, is an uncomfortable inhabitant in the Eastern, politically speaking, although it is probably true to say that it exists in a very real sense in village life.

The introduction of a new deity—the Vote—to the pantheon of gods which already exist to bewilder a people over whom the caste system exercises a strong control is untimely. They are not ready for it. In our own country, with a legacy of a thousand years of democracy, progress has been slow, and what has been gained on the swings of material progress has been offset by the roundabouts of aimless pleasure, æsthetic hideousness, drab cities and the emptiness of lives lived at hectic speed divorced from any true knowledge of nature. The noticeable decline of the people of Britain under the material system they have adopted should act as a warning to a race, convalescent after

centuries of illness, whose natural strength is in the soil. The pursuit of an ideal based upon mass production of material things will bring ruin and unhappiness to the new Lanka. It has no proletariat now and needs none.

The people are fitted for a rural life and their religion, in its purest form, demands one. The climate and the bountiful soil make Mahatmaya Gandhi's vision of a rural land of agriculture, balanced by widespread cottage industries, not merely practicable but ideal for Ceylon. At the present moment the island produces a very small proportion of its own staple food, rice, for tea, rubber and coconuts are more paying, and foreign rice—although qualitatively less valuable than the pink rice of the island—is considered more tasty. But these profitable enterprises may one day prove a serious national weakness. To supply her own population as far as possible should be a cardinal point of policy with the new Dominion.

There are, admittedly, serious difficulties in the way of such a policy, for the British for many years have done what they could to revive the irrigation civilization of the past without any great success. The indolence of the male population, the caste system and the structure of the village life of the island, are all factors which militate against the revival of agriculture on a vigorous and progressive scale. Some knowledge of all three is essential to an appreciation of the problem.

A Sinhalese village, at the present time, is not an institution which can be sentimentalized. The photographs of picturesque huts bowered in trees, happy children frolicking in the sun and luxuriant Nature showering her gifts upon the people of the soil are both basically true and essentially false. The true picture is sombre in many respects, for the villagers live in a world of dark superstition and dread, although by nature gentle, generous and of a happy disposition.

Only one area of the country, apart from the hills, is thickly populated. That is the Colombo district and the south-west wedge between Adam's Peak and the coast, where rainfall is moderately consistent throughout the year—the wet zone. Within this zone, and excluding the city of Colombo itself, over four million people live the life of the soil in countless small villages.

Along the coastal areas the cultivation of coconuts is the dominating interest but, moving inland, these are soon displaced by gloomy rubber forests which cover a rather larger area of

land than the Mahabadde itself. Here there are fewer villages, and even fewer are to be found in the mountains. Although the main roads are fairly populous, away from them there is silence, for the Kandan hillsmen are themselves losing their countryman's lore. Provided, however, that the traveller keeps to the main road or the railway, he will still see, where streams run down the valleys of the mountainsides, the cunningly contrived terraces of the small family rice-fields.

Modern conditions have not left the villagers of the wet zone masters of their own affairs. In the dry zone, despite semi-starvation and disease, they retain their independence, but in the heavily populated area King Coconut has fallen a victim to the lure of a capitalized, mass-producing system. One million one hundred thousand acres of coconuts—twice the area of the tea estates—are grown in scientifically laid out estates developed to compete in the modern world of mass production for international markets. They are owned by wealthy Sinhalese whose lives are governed by Western standards—some of them cannot speak their own tongue with any fluency—or by companies. The rubber estates are still largely European-owned, and the Mahabadde we have seen in some detail.

The villagers cannot compete with this bustling world of commerce, and most of them have long since sold most of their own birthright for a mess of pottage. Only a minority of village families in the wet zone are landowners in their own right. They are certainly not a race of peasant proprietors. In 1938 a survey of the Kuranagalla area—on the verge of the dry zone—was carried out to provide some evidence as to how far the process of selling family lands for cash had gone with former peasant owners. It revealed that of two thousand families interviewed, approximately four hundred still owned land, a mere twenty per cent. Every family concerned had, at one time, possessed some portion of the good earth, that fundamental of life to the peasant, and such a state of affairs—a good deal worse at the Kalutara end of the wet zone—is nothing less than tragic. The people, dispossessed of their land by an unfair attack on their cupidity—for they have no foresight, and will mortgage the future of unborn generations for the cash in hand—now work as labourers largely on the coconut estates.

Some streak of caution has seen to it that the villager has not entirely burned all his boats. Most of them, if they themselves

no longer own a family rice-field, have a share in someone else's, and the versatility of their interests is remarkable. They are masters of many small industries, controlled, almost as rigidly as under the Hindu system, by caste, and nearly all of them still own the hut in which they live and the garden without which a Kandyan home is unthinkable. Apart from his share in a rice-field and his garden in which are grown the trees which give him so much of the essentials of life, the villager has, or shares, a chena where land is available. A government which reorientates its policy from producing a race of civil servants to that of teaching an intensive agriculture would bring about a revolution in the productiveness and fertility of village life within a decade, for the seed-bed of progress is there, despite the corrosive effect of sophistication.

Of that sophistication much could be written, for it is an evil thing. A gentle, courteous people are becoming rude, vulgar and obstreperous, particularly where Western education prevails. The wireless and the gramophone sets in the roadside *boutiques*, the cinemas, the flocking to football matches or racemeets, the tearing motor-buses, these things are an alien poison. At the moment it does not go very deep in the countryside, its worst aspects being largely confined to the towns. The generosity and simple courtesy of the villagers, in fact, become more and more in evidence the greater the distance one puts between oneself and Colombo. One is tempted to believe that the store of philosophy and wisdom of this ancient race varies in inverse proportion to the amount of Westernized education that it has received.

A village of the plain, far distant from Colombo or even from Kandy, is a fascinating place, not less for its deficiencies than for its merits. Almost always it is built below the bund, or retaining wall, of a tank, for without the insurance of a reservoir agriculture is too much of a gamble in a country only twenty per cent of which has a dependable rainfall. Each home—mud-walled thatched huts with a single door of sawn or adzed timber, and no windows—stands in its own paddock, which has a slight fence around it purely to mark its bounds. The huts are invariably whitewashed, and when well built and well cared for, look most attractive. The thatch is of straw or plaited coconut leaves, and the homesteads vary in size, though seldom larger than nine feet by twelve. They stand upon a solid foundation of hard earth two feet in height, and usually a veranda runs along the length

of the front of the hut, a most useful adjunct used for the preparation of food—not the cooking of it—and for entertaining guests or neighbours.

Some of the houses have a small kitchen adjoining, in which is the *lipa*, the hearth or cooking fireplace, but most Sinhalese housewives do their cooking inside the single room which is their home. They keep the open ground in front of the house clear of weeds and sweep it every morning, and they have little stick platforms—not unlike those built by Boy Scouts when out camping—in which to keep their cooking utensils.

Their gardens are very poorly cultivated and receive very little attention, for the Sinhalese peasant is one of the laziest men alive. He prefers gossip to anything else and does the absolute minimum of work necessary to support life for himself and for his family. Something should be done to widen his otherwise broad and in many ways cultured philosophy, for not only does he himself fail to derive the full benefit of Nature's fruits of which he is the heir, but his indolence has a depressing effect even upon Nature herself. The land becomes more and more discouraged and at last gives the barest of subsistences where, with knowledge energetically applied, a plentiful harvest could be obtained.

In each garden there are a coconut tree, a halmilla, a mango if possible, or a jak-fruit tree, limes, oranges and some clumps of plantains, the delicious small banana of Lanka. Under one of these trees is kept the family store of firewood, usually collected by the women from the burnt-off chena. Climbing up the various trees will be pepper and other climbers, with very special care given to the betel vine. This last is almost certain to be given protection—a skull of a buffalo, perhaps—against malevolent spirits and, most of all, the Evil Eye, for the villager would almost rather go without his rice than his chew of betel and lime.

Where the ground is damp, there the lovely areca palm will thrust its beautiful stem towards the sky, its cluster of thin fruit nestling below the dainty crown of its foliage. Further away, close to the waters of the tank, there will be tamarinds growing, their rough barks very convenient as scratching posts, against which the buffaloes, tethered there, constantly relieve the irritation of tick bites. During the day, only the calves will be under the tamarinds, dealing lethargically with the endless flies. Their mothers will be pulling ploughs, treading corn, or doing other

village tasks, though, if they are not required for work, they are allowed to cover themselves in the delicious waters of the tank, only their eyes, nostrils and horns showing above the surface. Although these animals are completely tame with the villagers, they are in no sense different from their wild brethren. Sometimes a wild bull will come and make love to the tame females of the village, siring an entire herd, and occasionally a cow, with adventure stirring in her bosom, has been known to trot off into the jungle in search of romance. But tame or wild, the buffalo is not to be trifled with, and has an inveterate dislike of the smell of a European. To meet two or three of these shaggy beasts walking mildly along a confined jungle track with a six-year-old Sinhalese urchin as their only custodian is a disturbing experience.

Not far away from the tamarinds there will be a cattle-fold, or *gala*, with a pathetic thorn hedge surrounding it to keep out jungle marauders. Into this the miserable cows—when full-grown they are hardly bigger than an English calf—are driven at night and released to forage for themselves during the day. The gala, by the end of the year, is a richly manured area, sometimes devoted to a tobacco crop for a small piece of tobacco leaf adds the last epicurean touch to the concoction of lime, areca nut and betel leaf which is the villagers' chewing-gum. If they cannot grow this tobacco, they will barter any surplus crops that they may have at the *boutique*, or village shop, for it. The betel-chewing habit is widespread, with both men and women, throughout the entire Sinhalese and Tamil peoples in the island. I suspect many of the "trouser-karens" secretly indulge the habit, for their trousers are a sign of ambition rather than change. But to hide betel-chewing is not easy, for it produces a blood-red saliva which calls for frequent expectoration and the smell is most offensive. People new to the island view with horror islander after islander vigorously spitting what they take to be blood.

More often the gala ground is used for the growth of the year's supply of chillies, that most prized of all curry ingredients.

Most villages have their *maduwa*, a shed erected as a resting-place for strangers travelling through on the road to another village. Sometimes the maduwa is the property of the headman, who will clean it out and give it gay decorations if he knows that the village is about to receive a guest.

The Sinhalese villagers, when not emaciated by fever or semi-starvation as in some jungle areas, are physically a fine race. Light brown in colour—Tamils are considerably darker—they are well built and finely muscled, and their womenfolk can be very lovely indeed, with superb figures and carriage. The men wear a plain cloth—when at work only the very minimum necessary to hide their nakedness—from the waist downwards, and their hair, black and luxuriant, is worn long. High-caste women may wear a single robe, twelve feet in length, skilfully wound round the breasts and hanging in full skirts from the hips. The usual feminine wear, however, consists of two pieces of clothing, a bodice with short sleeves and lace at the throat, usually of white material, and a coloured cloth from the hips downwards. There is a gap of about three inches of firm brown flesh between the two garments, a most attractive form of dress said to be a legacy of the Portuguese.

When visiting, both sexes wear their "best," white or brown jackets over their best clothes for the men, and a similar garment for the women but with puffed shoulders, wide, frilled collar around the neck and puffed sleeves reaching only to the elbows. The men seen wearing a semi-circular comb of tortoise-shell perched upon the top of their heads are proclaiming to the world that they are of a high caste which has never carried burdens upon its head.

The day begins early for the women. Before the first light curry stuffs are prepared in the warm darkness at the sound of the crowing of the first cock. Coconuts are scraped, rice husked, millet ground, the rice-milk squeezed for the day's requirements. After the cocks come the crows, those eaters of carrion to whom the Sinhalese attribute supernatural qualities.

To me the crow, even more than the elephant, is the symbol of Lanka. The ubiquity of these birds is equalled only by their audacity and the villagers, taking a leaf from the book of the Greeks and Romans, say that they are the bearers of auguries and omens. They will deduce, from the direction of their flight, from their numbers, their antics, the very sound of their raucous clamourings, a hundred portents of the day. There they are, at the first sign of daylight, perched upon any branch which may give a platform to their insatiable curiosity.

There are three main families of these brave and insolent robbers. *Corvus splendens*, small, glossy and impudent, is man's

inevitable attendant. *Corvus culminatus*, a convex-billed bird, prefers rural to urban life—although he is seen in towns—and may often be seen seated upon the backs of buffaloes, removing ticks from their hides. Thirdly, there is the jungle crow, found almost entirely in the jungle, a large, untidy black bird with copper-coloured wings.

The cocks, the crows and the call of the ground cuckoo presage the arrival of the day, and with its coming the squalling parakeets make for their feeding grounds in groups or flocks. Loveliest of all the songsters, the magpie robin swells the chorus with a haunting melody; one of the earliest impressions of the island, one of the last memorable things that one hears before leaving it. Each of these birds seems to possess one particular theme around which he weaves an everchanging musical score.

If the time of the year is a time of cultivation, there is no sign of enervation or indolence about the men. They are at their best and go off to the fields in the first light. Rice-fields, baked into a sort of cement by long drought, must be prepared with no waste of time at all when the fickle rain has fallen and softened them, for rice is life. Wooden ploughs, drawn by buffaloes, in no detail different from those of the Old Testament, work the earth into a smooth sheet of mud some eight or nine inches deep. The sight of this age-old labour is quite thrilling, and so essentially right for the island that one hopes that it will never change except in the widening of its application and the improvement of the methods employed. The buffaloes, patient beasts, plodding along guided by the ploughman, who encourages them, and himself, with a series of "Ho! Ho! Ho's," the wheeling paddy birds, large and white like seagulls following an English plough, and the luxuriant background of the forest present a lovely summary of man's peaceful conquest of the soil and the culling of the fruits of the earth.

The men work all day in the blazing heat, for they know that time is short. At the end of the day, therefore, they feel socially inclined, and after the evening meal they call upon neighbours or, perhaps, a short visit is paid to the *boutique* to hear a wag expound the news from one of the many vernacular newspapers, or, best of all, they themselves are visited by neighbours and sit on their verandas gossiping or telling the immemorial tales of the East.

But first the men must have their evening meal. It is in-

variably the same; boiled rice and curry, but the curry stuffs have a score of subtle differentiations. The Sinhalese, being Buddhists, will not eat meat or even eggs, but dried fish is permitted to them, I do not know why. Buddhism is essentially a religion of compromises in its present form, and although the new government has prohibited the killing of game, fish will no doubt continue to appear on the family menu as it always has done. Yet the fishermen caste are considered a lowly one, because they take life.

The villagers eat squatting, the husband served first with a huge pile of rice upon the plantain leaves which serve for plates. If there is no guest present, the wife will then serve herself and eat companionably with her husband, but if there are guests she will probably retire to the back room, after having served the men on the veranda, and have her meal afterwards. After the rice there may be fruit, followed by the inevitable betel chew, the men squatting on mats. They may even smoke the rank-smelling although very mild cigar known as the Jaffna cheroot, of which I personally grew very fond. I wish they were procurable in England, and why they are not I cannot imagine for they are an excellent smoke.

Before the serious business of gossip begins, the women may pound some paddy or grind millet into flour, but, these tasks finished, all will sit around exchanging the small-coin of gossip so beloved of the countryman anywhere. This is the time, too, when the shadows deepen sharply and quickly and the little hush that preludes nightfall descends upon the roaring life of the tank, for the teller of tales to begin his immemorial trade.

With darkness comes the deep diapason of the bull frogs as bass to the screaming of the cicadas, the hoot of an owl, and dull plopping where fish are jumping in the waters of the tank, and it is time for sleep. The neighbours depart to their own huts and the members of the family dispose themselves to slumber. The body must lie from east to west, for in the south lives Yama, God of Death, Hindu Lord of Hell, while in the north is the abode of demons. That is the villager's day.

When the ploughing of the rice-field has been done, the ridges that separate each bed from the next must be repaired and trimmed. They are then flooded, this time by irrigation water, and buffaloes put in to trample the flooded plough furrows into a sea of liquid mud which finds a perfect level ready for the

sowing. As soon as the plots are ready, their ridges in order and spill apertures prepared, the sowing is done at once by hand; I regret to say, however, in most cases very inefficiently. Within a fortnight the tender green shoots will be two or more inches high. An expert on rice-growing to whom I spoke put the efficiency of the average village plot—through poor cultivation, bad tillage, inefficient sowing and careless cropping—as low as twenty-five per cent of what might reasonably be expected, and seldom higher than forty per cent.

Before the rice is sown it has to be germinated, and the women do this, spreading it a few inches thick on large mats. The seed throws roots within three days and it must then be sown at once.

Water from the tank is led to the rice-fields by little canals or *ellas*, some of which wander for many miles in hilly country, feeding paddy fields over a wide area of land. These, too, must be repaired and kept in trim.

Seed-time in the south depends upon the rains, which arrive in November and May, and give to the wet zone two crops of rice, Maha—sown in July and reaped in January, and Yalla, sown in April and reaped in August. There are, of course, many deviations from this exact programme, according to locality and even to types of rice grown.

In the central and northern plains, which depend upon the reservoirs for their crops, there is normally only one crop of rice which may be put in almost at the discretion of the owner of the field. One favourable rainstorm or a combination of auguries pointing irresistibly to planting is good enough for the villagers, and the soil of the ancient kingdom is always ready to do its best provided that it is irrigated.

The calamitous waste of potentially rich rice lands in the wastes of the central and northern provinces is tragic. While hundreds of thousands of countrymen are forced to work in Colombo, Kandy or Galle in order to live, the plains lie there deserted, awaiting development.

"The waters which would fertilize a Province," writes Tennent of one huge tank alone, now broken and neglected, "are allowed to waste themselves in the sands, and hundreds of square miles capable of furnishing food for all the inhabitants of Ceylon are abandoned to solitude and malaria whilst rice for support of the non-agricultural population is annually imported

from the opposite coast of India." To-day, eighty years after those words were written, more rice than ever is imported into Lanka, the only difference being that most of it now comes from Burma.

In preparing the chenas for the annual crops of fruits and vegetables—again the wet zone has two, compared to the single harvest of the dry plains—the men work with sustained energy and cheerfulness. It has always seemed to me that the villagers are never so happy as when they are engaged in heavy labour, although the legacy of centuries has loaded them with chains of indolence. Certainly preparing the chena is toil of a very heavy nature indeed. First the jungle must be slashed, dried in the sun and burned off. No effort is made to root out the larger trees, which are simply hacked across. From the blackened, tangled mass that is left after the flames have burnt themselves out, the women collect bundles of wood for domestic fuel, and what cannot be used for firewood is roughly stacked or pitched into the jungle. Then the ground—often rich soil untouched for a thousand years, sometimes virgin soil—is hoed, for Sinhalese rarely plough land except for rice. This is thoroughly done, but at most it gives a tilth of some three or four inches. After the hoeing, the patch is weeded and a strong fence put round it to keep out wild animals.

The crops planted are optimistic to a degree, the widest possible variety being put into one small area, the villager apparently leaving it to the many gods and demons, auguries and omens to decide what comes up and what does not. Breadfruit, brinjals, millet, beans, melons, cassava, ginger and kurrakhan, tobacco, cinnamon, papaws and sometimes coffee are often all mixed up together with, as may be surmised, indifferent success. One curious little point about millet, for which I heard no explanation, is that the harvesting of this crop is left entirely to the women. Indeed, men are not allowed to help with the reaping, carried out by the women with tiny knives. It is an occasion for a good deal of merriment, badinage and song.

Bad cropping may be due to indifferent tillage, lack of shade, water or manure, destructive animals, insect and fly pests, weeds or a score of other agencies, but none of these concrete and cogent reasons mean anything to the villagers. They believe only in omens, auguries and spirits good or evil. The day and hour for everything that is done, not merely in his work but in

his whole life, must be propitious, and at seed-time, in particular, the Vedderallas—doctors of ayerverdic medicine with a knowledge of astrology and magic lore—have a busy time providing spells exactly as do the pandarams on the tea estates. These Bali ceremonies are a mixture of astrology, demon worship and ancestor worship and take place always at night, for Bali are the controlling planets and Rahu the spirit which causes eclipses. The planets are thought by the villagers to be controlling spirits who must be propitiated. Each man has his own horoscope—*handahana*—which is consulted by the Vederalla before prescribing the necessary ceremonies of propitiation. Even these, however, are not always enough, for planets or no planets, some days are simply unlucky. Lucky days, when they come, must be seized without delay, and if it so happens that several important works await a lucky moment, a token start will probably be made with all of them at once. It is sufficient if the beginning is auspicious. If, however, with a particularly lucky moment all sizzling hot on his hoe the villager rushes off to commence a work of cultivation and encounters on the way a strange pariah dog that will not move from his path when he shouts at it, it is clearly an omen that he must go home. And he goes home, no matter how urgent the work in hand. The warning note of a gekko—the wise and kindly house lizard—the hoot of an owl or the scream of a woodpecker will tell him that he must not leave his house that morning, however propitious the stars.

When fly attacks the field, the only remedial measure that can be taken is to call at the pansala where the bhikku is meditating. The priest will repair at once to the chena and march round it with a sturdy blowing of chank shells, culminating the proceedings with an imperative command to the evil spirits to begone and to take the fly with them. Should the priest so far forget himself as to speak to a single person while carrying out this ceremony, the evil spirits will triumph.

Harvesting the rice is an occasion for all. The grain is gathered in and brought to the threshing floor, an arena of beaten earth surrounded by a fence. Four buffaloes in line walk round and round a central post all day long, trampling out the corn as corn was trampled before the birth of Christ. It is then collected and winnowed by a most skilful and graceful process of pouring it slowly from mats held high above the head, the air separating the husks from the grain. The latter is then sacked and stored.

Although Buddhists, the villagers are profoundly ignorant of the real tenets of the faith, now so hopelessly corrupted by Hindu idolatry. They live in a perpetual nightmare of good and bad omens, of evil spirits and demons, the beliefs of their Yakkho forebears. They are, in fact, devil-worshippers still, and even in their worship of Buddha they do not disguise their devil-worshipping proclivities. Cruelty and death, sickness and pain, all these are in the hands of legions of devils and spirits with which the unseen world teems. Many bhikkus share those beliefs. One must remember, however, that the Christian creed talks of descending into Hell, and the intelligent Buddhist priest will ask what difference there is between the spirits and devils in which he believes and Satan and his angels. Yet, in the concrete and actual form in which one meets the spirits of Sinhalese beliefs, the mind is sickened and appalled by the black depths of superstition revealed.

Four poya days, corresponding to the Sabbaths of an English month, are observed by the villagers at each quarter of the moon. As soon as the first light of dawn, like a chemical reaction, stains the eastern sky, a kettledrum from the wihara, or more likely the dewale, announces the poya day. The worshippers—in Lanka as in England largely composed of the women—wend their way to the temple each with presents of cake or milk-rice, very daintily prepared, for the bhikku, or monks, if there are any. A service, somewhat perfunctory in character—a little chanting, a reading from the ancient Pali understood by no one, not even the priest—is held, after which everyone goes back for the business of the day, homage having been paid to the god of reason.

But the spirits are not so easily satisfied, although Buddhism, in theory, forbids their propitiation.

There are good and bad spirits. Among the demi-gods the Yakshyos are notable, living in all the waters and the sides of Mount Meru. They are gentle and kind, with a veneration for Buddha Gotama who was himself, in a former incarnation, a Yakshyo. On the other hand the Rakshyos are fierce and malevolent, the authors of evil. They inhabit the places where the bodies of the dead lie buried or, like dryads and hamadryads, in forests and groves. Each has his own particular tree from which he will leap out and seize the passer-by if given the chance, and strike him with madness. This is quite frankly and openly the worship

of the Grove, and is of an earlier origin in Lanka than Buddhism, or even Brahminism, and far more real to the villagers with whom I came into contact.

They have a demon, or *sanne*, for every disease, a recognition, no doubt, of the fact that some positive agent—which we label a germ—is responsible for sickness. These sanne must be invoked, while others, which delight in causing accidents or misfortune, must be propitiated. Kappuralas—devil priests—are as much in evidence as the pandarams of the Tamil coolies, and at bottom there is no difference in the degree of superstition suffered by both races, for the ceremonies of the kappuralas are as outlandish and barbarous, if slightly less crude, than those of the pandarams. In sickness or danger, the devil dancers are always in demand and incantations, dances, the ceremonial killing of cocks—although, in theory, the Buddhists do not kill—and other mumbo-jumbo are as prevalent to-day as they were when Wijayo first set foot upon the island.

The gentle creed of Buddhism has been forced to find some *modus vivendi* with the crude idolatry of Brahminism, for its purity and simplicity could not withstand the ignorance and superstition of its devotees. We find it using pitiable evasions to maintain its hold. There are probably more dewales than wiharas in Lanka, while Hindu gods are worshipped under some form of Buddhist gilding. The tutelary deity of the island, for instance, is Vishnu, under his name of Ramachandra, while Siva the Destroyer is worshipped under the name of Nata, said to be the next Buddha designate. Katragama, God of War, and Pattini, the Goddess of Chastity, both find themselves in Buddhist dewales, strange companions indeed of Siva and Gotama. Katragama has received his name from the centre of his worship, a fever-stricken village in the south-east jungle. His priests are Brahmins, and it is to this once inaccessible spot—the motor-bus has brought it closer now to the estates—that one of the largest annual pilgrimages of the year takes place. Another name for this god is Mahasen, confused with the apostate king of that name; and yet another, Minnerya Devo, from the wonderful tank built by King Mahasen.

The whole of the art of the kappuralas, many of whom are attached to dewales, is to propitiate the inflictors of famine and pestilence, the genii of fire, water and wind, and evil spirits generally with crazy and contortionate dances and wild excesses

of gesture. As some sign of the importance attached to demon worship—so much more real to them than the abstractions of Buddhism—harvest home pays as much attention to the local dewale as to the bhikku. Offerings of cleaned rice go to the priest, but gifts of all firstfruits are given to the dewale.

The villagers are not without their festivities, the most popular of which, the Sinhalese New Year, is a time of family reunion all over the island. No trouble is too great for members of separated families to take to try and meet together in the home village for this great occasion. Those returning to the home village on a visit put on their best clothes and pay a round of formal calls upon the headman and other dignitaries. There are quite a number of these, for village committees have been reconstituted of late years. The British saw that all the old binding institutions of village corporate life had atrophied, much as the strength of English rural life had been sapped by the illusory material prosperity which had followed the Industrial Revolution. They took great pains, therefore, to build them up again, with some success. A sense of pride in the affairs of their village is now quite common with the villagers, and there is no little ceremony observed on the occasion of the New Year visits.

The women begin their preparations weeks before this happy festival, spring cleaning, polishing, collecting stores of grain, plaintains and curry stuffs and, of course, buying themselves new clothes from the local *boutique* or wandering Moormen. Astrologers, too, do a roaring trade, for everyone must know the exact moment for the lighting of the first fire of the year, the opening of the first door and the cooking of the first rice on New Year's day. The time for the anointing of heads—most important of all—must not, under any circumstances, be fixed under the wrong auspices.

When the long-anticipated festival arrives, it brings in its train evils that might well be numbered among the legion of devils to be exorcized by the kappurala—particularly gambling and drinking. Under the stress of excitement, complicated perhaps by toddy, the excitable side of the Sinhalese nature overcomes the habitual passivity and indolence. Quarrels flare up suddenly and stormily, and the island preference for the knife rather than fists produces numerous tragedies. Stabbings are frequent and the murder-rate in Ceylon is very high. The education of the West, the public schools, universities and constant talk about team

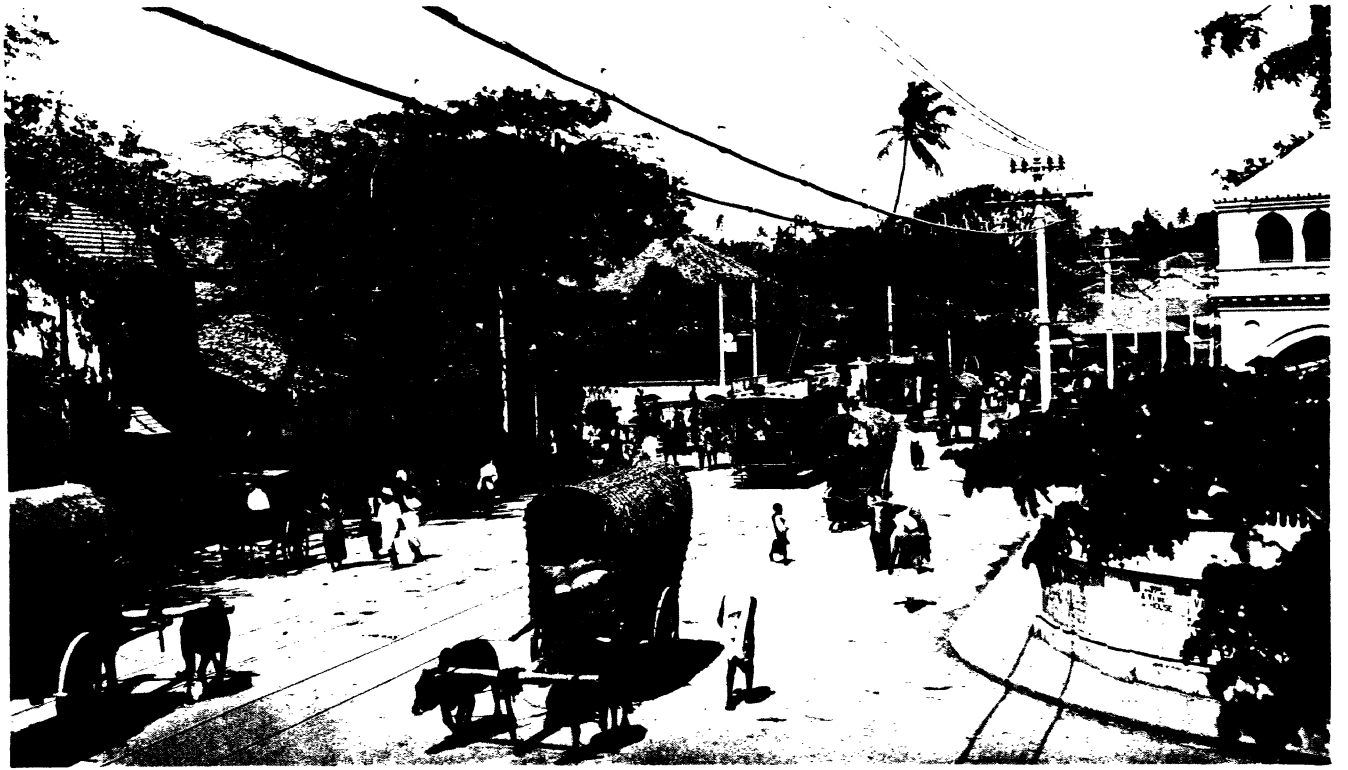
spirit have, in fact, left the vast majority of the island people as unmoved as the talk about democracy. They are not democratic. The curious paradox of democratic thinking is that it permits people to think as they please provided that their thinking is democratic. The fact that there are many people, and indeed peoples, on the earth's surface that do not want democracy is unacceptable to the democrat. Yet it is so. The Sinhalese villager does not care who rules the island so long as his life is his own.

There are other events to liven the tranquil existence of the remoter villages—the weekly fair, for example. This is largely a social gathering and is as popular as market day in an English farming district, and for the same reason. The business of barter is keenly enjoyable but it is secondary to the delights of gossip.

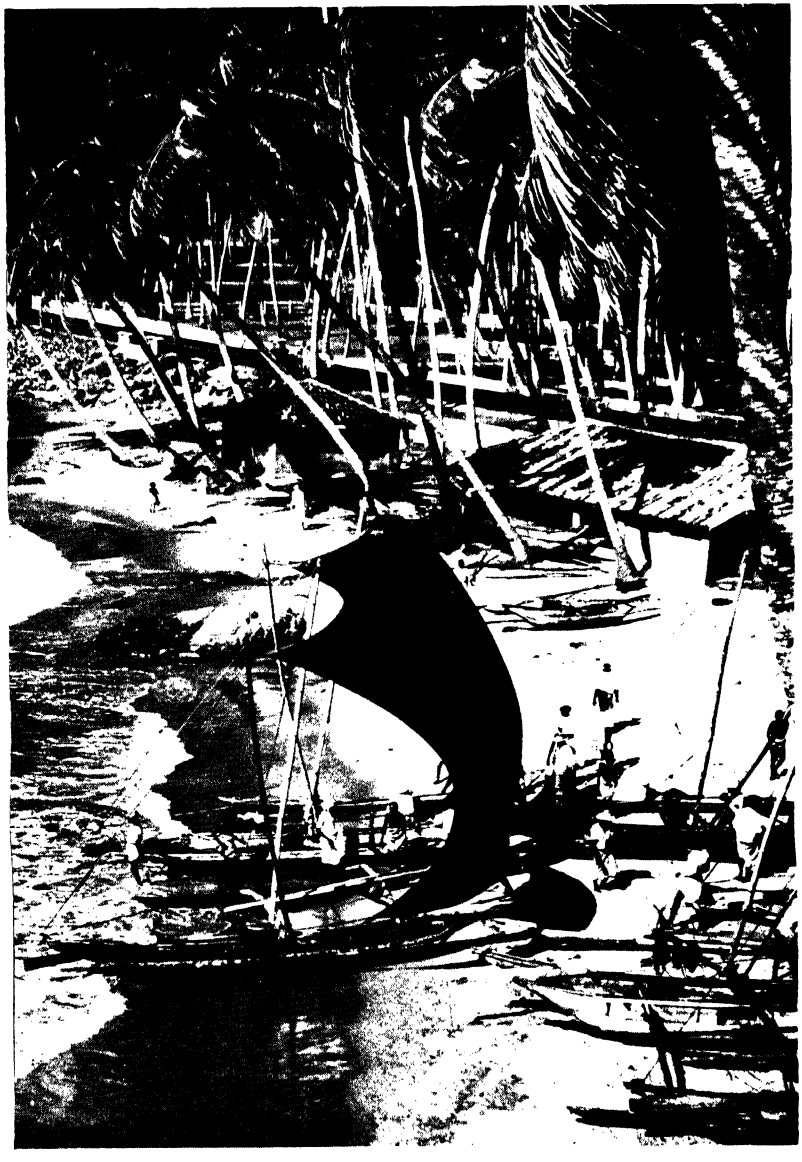
Then there are the visits from gipsies, Ahikuntakayo and Madhilio, those same snake charmers and monkey dancers that from time to time visit the estates. They ply the same trade, fortune-telling, snake-charming, monkey-dancing and—the supreme delight in Eastern villages—the spinning of yarns. Occasionally, too, in the most remote parts of the island, a solitary Chinese pedlar of silks, ignorant of any language other than his own, will appear from nowhere. Since they are without protection they are sometimes beaten and robbed, but nothing stops them in the exercise of their mysterious traffic.

The civil organization of the village life of the old Kandyan kingdom has come down through the ages, working as smoothly to-day as in the time of the Mahawansa. Under the king there was an Adigar—or more usually two—corresponding roughly to our Prime Minister but with rather different powers. Those powers no longer exist, but the office is still there. Under him, or them, were Dissaves, the chiefs of large districts, so powerful that their allegiance to the king was often of the slightest. These large districts were subdivided into smaller but still large areas over which a Ratamahatmaya presided and still presides. His chief officer is the Korala, served by an Aratchi, the headman of a group of villages. The final link in the chain of office is the Gamarala, headman of a single village.

Village courts, or *Gansabhawas*, which once had considerable powers, were reorganized under British rule and are now courts of very real local importance, trying the minor cases of civil offences—limited to Sinhalese offenders—under the jurisdiction of the Aratchi. Before the advent of the British there were also



The main thoroughfare of the Pettah, or Black Town, Colombo's native quarter



Catamarans drawn up on the beach of Ceylon's most popular tourist resort—Mount Lavinia

District Councils as well as village committees, whose main function seems to have been to try to disentangle the eternal disputes that arise among the Sinhalese over property. Landed property is so minutely divided and blood relationship so inextricably interwoven that with equal division of property among children and plurality of husbands among women—still prevalent—the riddle of ownership can, in many cases, never be settled. It is no uncommon thing for fifty families to dispute the ownership of a single tree.

The trials are conducted by the Aratchi and his councillors in Sinhalese without proctors. Each court has a monthly circuit and it is supervised by the Government Agent of the province who decides appeals. Crime is very common, but rape and abduction charges, which are frequent, are not infrequently faked. Serious offences which cannot be dealt with by these village tribunals go before the local assizes where they are tried under the Roman-Dutch law of the island. Major offences are tried in the supreme court at Kandy or Colombo.

As Buddhists, the Sinhalese are supposed to be free from the caste system, but nothing could be further from the truth. The chains do not bind quite so fiercely or so obviously as those of the Hindu system, but their presence is very real indeed. They cannot be shaken off altogether even in that small, strange and in many ways inimical world known to the villagers as the abode of the "trouser-karens" or Westernized Sinhalese, who use English as their native language and monopolize the machinery of government and civil service. Even among them, although the cleavage between them and their own villagers is so great that they are virtually another race, the shadow of caste is still strong. As with their opposite numbers in India, they rise superior to the anomalies of caste in the public arena, but behind the political scenes there is a different story to tell. Caste, with them, is still strong, but with the villagers it is absolute.

The cultivating class, the Vellalas, are the chiefs and noble families, the first people of the land, who alone may wear a single garment. A minority of them, having adopted Western ideas, are absentee landlords of large and well-run estates, very wealthy capitalists indeed who live in splendid bungalows in Colombo, Kandy, Jaffna, Galle and Matale. They have long since given up wearing a single garment and are indistinguishable, except for their brown faces, from the city gentlemen who flock

across London Bridge in their tens of thousands every morning between 9 and 10 a.m. But they remain a minority, even among the Vellalas, the Mahawansa of modern times.

The Sulawansa are subdivided into many castes of which the Nayaday are the highest. Nayaday are smiths, superior to the next caste, Atchary, or painters and sculptors, followed by Baddahyla, the potters—a very highly skilled caste—Mukkara, the fishermen, Maddina, the toddy-drawers, and all Moormen who are lumped together under the name of Moormen. Then there are the Radawa, Dhobies or laundrymen, who have peculiar powers as arbiters of social behaviour. No one else may do the washing, but if a Radawa disapproves of a villager's behaviour he may and does refuse to take in his washing. The whole village instantly knows, for, in this respect as in many others, they are strangely like their Western brothers who dwell in villages. Radawa, too, officiate at devil-ceremonies.

Berawaya, the tom-tom beaters, is a caste which takes its obligations very seriously indeed. All boys born into the caste are put through a most rigorous training in rhythm and harmony, but the finished product, as far as I was concerned, although very impressive, is incomprehensible to the layman. To watch and listen to the Berawaya at a Sinhalese festival or ceremony, thrumming crazily to the shrieking of chank shells, is to find oneself in bedlam. Caste decrees that singers and dancers must sing and dance no matter what nature has arranged to the contrary, and good voices or athletic figures are as rare among the Kandyan performers as among the rank and file of their spectators. Singers improvise as they go along, and often libel their listeners or aim shafts of crude wit at them with impunity.

The Durawaya are porters, a low caste but respected, but the Rodiyas, rat-eaters, are what their name would suggest—outcastes and gipsies, although they too have a caste function which is the making of ropes. They are the watchers of the fields, the beggars, thieves, and despised by all, and until the British changed the law, they were not permitted to stay in one place for long, build houses or own land. Their touch is contamination and to this day they will step wide of any path at the approach of human beings. To kill them, until the law was altered, involved no punishment of any kind.

As a permanent mark of their low condition their women were forbidden to wear any clothes above the waist, a slightly disturb-

ing decree in view of the superb figures possessed by Rodiyan girls. Yet it must be remembered that the English, even in the reign of our greatest queen, Elizabeth, had the same decree for all unmarried girls.

The story of the Rodiyas is lost in the mists of time, and there are many versions of the reason for their degradation. I like best the version given to me in excellent Tamil by a Rodiya who was headman of a village of these outcastes situated on the same hill on which my own bungalow was built. It was about seven hundred feet beneath my house, well clear of our tea boundary, set out comfortably and decently in a clearing of jungle and scrub. I never had cause to mistrust these people in particular, but I had a suspicion that there was a good deal of doubtful work going on in that village, illicit toddy distribution and a clearing-house for stolen goods being two activities which I suspected but was not able to prove.

They were quite friendly and had largely lost their cringing avoidance of other people, for they had been settled there as villagers for some years. The story the old man told me was as follows:

Many centuries ago, a king of the Mahawansa sent for his nobles and requested them to bring him a tender young stag from the forest for a feast to be held on the following day. The nobles, on leaving the presence, themselves feasted and drank and carelessly left the hunting of the stag in abeyance. They were all expert foresters, and it was the simplest matter to go out and fetch in the beast at a moment's notice, but, unfortunately, none did so, each leaving the hunt to someone else. Within an hour of the time of handing over the stag to the royal cook they found, to their terror, that none of them had been out hunting. One of them went into the forest at once, but, as always when urgently needed, there was no game. He was at his wits' end when, chancing upon an isolated jungle hut, he found a tiny girl-child playing by herself with no one in sight. Hastily he killed the baby and dressed its flesh to look like venison. It was cooked as such and served to the king.

But the king discovered the crime and in his terrible anger outlawed all his nobles and their descendants for ever, saying that never again in Lanka should they have land or possessions or be able to stand face to face with their fellow men. Thus, said the old man, we, the descendants of princes, are now the despised

rat-eaters, but none will deny our noble blood. It is a fact that this is not disputed by any other caste.

Low as they are in the social scale, they are not the lowest of all, a distinction reserved for the Kinnaras. Of themselves the Kinnaras are a well-ordered and well-behaved village community, who possess their own tanks, rice-fields, chenas, huts and gardens, all distinctly above the average as regards organization and cleanliness. Their caste occupation is mat-weaving, and there is a mystery behind their origin, for they would appear to be a distinct race on their own. They have thick, short and curly hair, unlike any other race in Lanka, but although they are Buddhists, they are considered of so low a caste that they are not permitted anywhere in the temple precincts or even within the enclosures. Nor, of course, are the Rodiyas.

Marriage among the Sinhalese is a matter cautiously approached, ceremoniously carried out on a curious double basis—there being two kinds of husband, one living with or near his wife's family, and the other taking his wife away to live among his people—and very easily brought to an end if desired, in strong contrast to the customs prevailing among Tamil coolies.

The girl has no choice in the matter at all before marriage, but seems to exercise a very strong one afterwards. If the proposed bridegroom is not of sufficiently good family or has undesirable propensities, the girl's people will say so in no uncertain manner on being approached by the first emissary of the proposer. This is usually a friend of the man's family, sent ahead to say, casually, that there has been a strong rumour to the effect that an engagement will shortly be made public. This is the accepted method of approach and if the girl's family protest violently that the rumour is absurd, no more will be heard of the matter. If they favour the match, the engagement progresses through further diplomatic stages until the matter is finally settled and the wedding will take place according to the rank of the principals engaged. The observance of the full ceremony is so long and so expensive that none but the wealthiest can undertake it. All others carry out as much of it as they can afford.

The two kinds of marriage are Beena and Deega, still observed in rural places—and probably in towns—and the Beena husband, living with his wife's people, is considered to have slight hold over his spouse. She can and does exercise the faculty of choice denied to her before the ceremony, and if she does not like him

will send him home and divorce him. By so doing she loses nothing, for as a Beena wife she retains the right of inheritance to the possessions of her own family in common with the other members of her family. Marriage in Deega, however, is a more serious matter for the wife, and seems to be a more binding form of matrimony. She loses her own inheritance but has the right to a share in her husband's patrimony.

The lower castes of the Sinhalese practise polyandry on a large scale. All the brothers of the bridegroom expect to enjoy full marital rights with the new wife, who accepts it as a matter of course, thus complicating a system of inheritance already confused beyond straightening out. This devil's tangle of inheritance is one of the reasons why the Sinhalese are one of the most litigious races on the earth's surface. Another is that they have a real flair for legal argument which, in the highest caste, has shown in the production of Counsel of high merit.

The pollution of death, a relic of their Hindu ancestry—for one has always to remember that Wijayo was a Brahmin—still clings to the islanders. A sick person is immediately suspect and is placed in a room by himself, his head to the east for safety. If the attentions of the vederalla alternated by the efforts of the same man in his capacity as kappuralla fail, and the sick man should die despite the sacrifice of a cock, the head is turned to the west and the corpse arrayed in all the finery that its earthly wardrobe permits.

Priests and Vellalas are cremated—in imitation, I believe, of the Brahmins that all Sinhalese admit to be their superior in caste—but others are all buried head to the west. It is thus that Yama, Lord of Death, comes for the villager in the island of Lanka.

2. Towns and Townsfolk

The Sinhalese people, judging from the noble ruins of Anuradhapura, Polonnaruha and Maagama, once possessed a genius for building cities. It has been atrophied for centuries. Of the five notable towns in the island—Colombo, Jaffna, Galle, Kandy and Trincomalee—only Kandy is in any real sense a Sinhalese town, and in its present form it owes little to indigenous enterprise.

Colombo, the one considerable city of the island, has been a

trading centre for centuries. Indeed the small hill to the south of the harbour was known and marked by Ptolemy but only as a landmark by which mariners might navigate their ships to Galle. Nevertheless, ships called there as far back as the twelfth century, for the Moors converted the mouth of the Kelani Ganga into a harbour which they named Kalambu, by which name it was known to Ibn Batuta. This was turned into Colombo by the Portuguese in honour of the great Columbus. It became the centre of the distracted monarchy in the fifteenth century, but its rise to eminence as a seaport is recent history. It is in fact a British creation, and the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, laid the first stone of the four-thousand-feet-long breakwater (that nostalgic promenade of the white race) in 1875. The resultant harbour, a square mile in extent, is purely artificial, for the coast, at that point, is singularly unfitted for harbourage although there is a safe road for shipping a mile or so out to sea. The mouth of the Kelani Ganga is little more than half a mile away, but it was not considered suitable for shipping and has not been adapted or utilized in the present haven.

Once built, Colombo harbour supplanted Galle immediately as the port of Lanka and quickly became one of the foremost maritime clearing houses in the world. The volume of shipping which called there before the war was greater than the combined tonnage calling annually at Bombay, Calcutta and Rangoon. Ships of all nations were to be seen moored in the open harbour, and as many as sixteen lines of nine different nations connected Lanka with Europe, but all the shipping which puts in at Colombo does not bring trade or even passengers to Ceylon. It is merely a port of call for a large proportion of the tonnage and—since the building of the harbour was a Government undertaking—an ever-present source of revenue to the island economy.

Where the outer world impinged so violently and so frequently upon the affairs of Lanka, it was natural that a city should grow up. It is very beautiful, perhaps the loveliest tropical city in the world which has no claim to natural advantages—for the land upon which it is built is flat, with the exception of Ptolemy's headland, for many miles in all directions—with a population now numbering between three and four hundred thousand people of many races. But it possesses a most curious characteristic, so marked as to be obvious after a very short stay:

it is not regarded as *home* by any of the many people who use it, with the exception of the relatively small proportion of Moormen and Hindus who own their businesses in the town. It is an alien growth in the island soil.

Nevertheless its importance to the new Dominion cannot be exaggerated, for the problem of whether or not the civilization of the new nation is to be based upon Western philosophy and economics is concentrated in this one city. It is the heart of the old system, and if the heart ceases to beat or even produces a feebler pulse, the present organization of Lanka will totter and may even collapse.

The income from foreign trade before the war amounted to £50,000,000 annually in Colombo, and the population of the town is there because of that trade, or to administer the machinery of government which it made possible. There are no major industries, for the island is essentially a village organization still, and I myself do not remember meeting anyone who regarded the capital as their real home, with the exception of the *boutique* keepers previously mentioned. Rickshaw coolies live for the day when they can return to their villages in southern India—their trade, despite the extortion practised upon casual European trippers, is a precarious one; Afghans make their fortunes by usury and depart; Chinamen sell their silks and depart; Sinhalese make money if they can and leave for the village; Europeans work in order that they may retire; only the Burghers, the Moormen and a handful of Tamil *boutique* owners have no ambitions to move. Of all that cosmopolitan population, the racial percentage of the Sinhalese is the lowest, although, of course, they are numerically the largest section of the townspeople. For every hundred Sinhalese in the island, only three live in Colombo. Even the Tamils, a half-million of whom were brought over specifically to work upon the estates, have a larger proportion than the Sinhalese, with five in every hundred. Nearly one-half of the total European population lives there, and roughly the same proportion of Burghers, Malays and all other visiting races. Colombo, very clearly, is in no sense a Sinhalese city—although now under the complete control and domination of the Sinhalese English-speaking class—and whatever may be claimed for it it is not Ceylon. When the Japanese sent their bombers over the capital on Easter Sunday 1942, the explosion of the first bomb brought to an end the cohesive life of the place.

Partial paralysis prevailed. The Sinhalese and Tamils melted away. Tram and bus services ceased; sanitary services, hotel services, government administrative business, the staffs of banks, large European stores, rickshaw coolies, all such people departed, producing much the same effect as a general strike. The Europeans, Burghers and Westernized Sinhalese remained, although many of the wealthy absentee landlords among the Sinhalese left their Colombo houses and went to their country estates. For a brief interlude, Colombo was a deserted city, for it was nobody's home.

The Europeans showed no surprise at this strange event for to them it seemed a characteristic display of cowardice. Personally I do not take that view, for I know that neither the Sinhalese nor the Tamils are cowards. They are both timid and have no well-thought-out philosophy of courage as have the British, but given a *reason* which seems to them conclusive and there are no more courageous people. They did not consider a city, built by white men for world economics of which they know and wish to know nothing, a cause worth suffering for. Over the centuries invaders have descended upon them—Arabs, Portuguese, Dutch, British—and Colombo represents the energies and activities of an alien race. I am convinced that there would have been no more active resistance to the advent of the Japanese than was provided by the Malays, and no less co-operation with them than that given to the British.

It is important to remember this national outlook. The small proportion of the island people who follow Western ways have not been able to resist the delights and prizes of metropolis, but to the rest of their own people it is an alien organization which possesses no roots. The villager may be forced to sojourn in Colombo to work as a labourer in order to live, but he belongs to the village. At the first hint of danger he fled back to his village, as at the first hint of economic inadequacy or depression he will do again. He does not care who rules him or who is the dominant race. Such things are of no interest to him so long as the life he knows and loves is there for him to pick up whenever he wishes to do so. People swarm to the spider's web of London and stay there, caught irrevocably in its toils. It is not so with Colombo.

Trade figures are seldom of any general interest for they change from year to year, but there are two fundamental returns

of vital importance in the story of Colombo. The first is that rice formed one-quarter of the total imports into Ceylon before the war. Not one-quarter of the imported foodstuffs, but one-quarter of the total imports! Without discussing the details of Western economics, it is common knowledge that a country which imports on a large scale must export to pay for its imports. Ceylon does so. It exports a great many commodities, but one of them—tea—supplies sixty-five per cent of the total income into the country. It is impossible to escape the conclusion that the present population of the island is large, prosperous and happy by reason of one great dominating industry—the modern Mahabadde.

The race which now has to manage its own affairs—and those of the vitally important European community—is divided by education. The chasm between the English-speaking Sinhalese and those speaking the vernacular is wide and difficult to bridge, and for this fact the British must accept a large share of the responsibility. All the business of government and of the judiciary is carried out in English. The banks, the shipping firms, the merchants, all insist upon English as the basis for their transactions, and government servants there, even the clerical grades, must speak English. No position of any real importance outside village communities can be held except by English-speaking Sinhalese—or, of course, Burghers—and a small number of other races, but principally Sinhalese. An "English education" is regarded as an open sesame to the comfortable, safe—for pensions exert the same hypnotizing effect among Orientals as among the British—service under government. This service, in no matter what capacity it may be, carries with it a social status of such importance that many wealthy high-caste Sinhalese will work as clerks at small salaries for the sake of the cachet that it bestows.

It is true that public instruction has made great strides since 1875 in the opening of public vernacular, Anglo-vernacular, and English-speaking schools by the government; schools run by Christian missionaries; by Buddhists; by Hindus; technical colleges; "agricultural schools"; Colombo University; and now, about to be built, a vast new university at Kandy. Ceylon, therefore, has an "educated" people, but education has come to mean a stubbornly uniform curriculum, a pursuit of knowledge without any particular search for wisdom. Although Ceylon is perhaps the best "educated" Eastern country, it has had no

political education whatever and the illusion of a democratic system of voting does not bear impartial investigation.

Figures for the schools of the island are as follows:[1]

	No. of Schools	*Proportion of Children Educated*
Western Province	1,275	1 in 7
Central Province	1,066	1 in 10
Southern Province	697	1 in 7
Northern Province	610	1 in 5
Eastern Province	239	1 in 8
North-west Province	572	1 in 7
North-central Province	166	1 in 9
Uva Province	333	1 in 12
Sabaragama Province	640	1 in 8
TOTAL	5,598	1 in 8
	(for 805,456 children)	

Ceylon University was born literally under fire in 1942. An air-raid alarm went while the Bill was being considered, but if the island means to run on Western lines it will have to try and emulate Western determination and refusal to panic. The State Council adjourned!

All this might not be so important to the future of the new Dominion if it were not for the fact that Western education has failed to provide either a code of behaviour or a standard of values. At its best education has given scope for the remarkable ability of the Sinhalese to pass examinations, but, with a few exceptions, it exists for one purpose only, to provide entry into government service, the law or medicine. The public schools—pathetic imitations of their English prototypes now themselves disappearing—and universities are regarded purely as stepping stones to office. The village schools are such queer hybrids that, in nine cases out of ten, they serve the useful purpose of keeping the children out of the way. The schoolmistress—in Lanka, as in London, teaching is considered largely a feminine trade—is a rich prize in the matrimonial market, whether in Colombo or the country. She has that sort of security which delights the Sinhalese male, to whom unnecessary work is a form of insanity. Two in every three schoolmistresses support not only their husband and children but probably the husband's relations as well.

[1] 1947.

The vernacular schools teach reading and writing but attendances are erratic and the enforcement officers, an unpopular job, do the minimum of enforcement. In Colombo efforts are made to implement the law, but in outlying districts efforts vary in inverse proportion to the distance from Colombo. A Sinhalese cannot be made to attend school, even if it is the only one in his area, if it is a Tamil school, and vice versa; while girls are not permitted to attend any school that is more than three-quarters of a mile distant from their homes. The reason for this is not the distance but fear of assault. The result is that the peasant population of Ceylon is not illiterate, but among the broad masses standards of behaviour owe nothing to Western education. It has had literally no effect. They remain Orientals, unpredictable and quite unreliable. In England there is a reverence for education and none at all for educated people. Indeed the culture that education is meant to inculcate is derided. In Ceylon, among the masses of the people, there is mistrust of both.

From these ordinary Sinhalese the English-speaking Sinhalese are a race apart. They are the trouser-karens and in public they ape, in every particular, the race they have denigrated politically for the last quarter of a century, although in private the veneer is apt to wear a little thin. I remember once calling upon a graduate of Cambridge who was serving as district medical officer in a small village a long way from Colombo. Thoughtlessly I had given no warning of my coming. He was not pleased to see me, for one of the worst results of the British occupation of Lanka is the snobbery it has produced. Perfectly correct in European environment, he had relapsed, as do the Brahmins, to a state of comfort natural to him when there were no Western pretences to be upheld.

Nevertheless the wealthy Sinhalese keep great state. Often their bungalows far eclipse those of their European counterparts in magnificence, in the number of servants employed and in size. They purchase large American cars. They are the ruling class, more exclusive by far than anything obtaining in England in the high noon of her aristocracy, when countryfolk and gentry possessed warm bonds of sympathy.

Ordinary Sinhalese families have almost no chance of entering this magic circle, for it is an expensive business to send their sons to an English-speaking school and more expensive still to follow this up with a university course. Previous to the war,

even these steps were insufficient to make the chance of high public office probable. For such appointments a visit to an English university was almost essential, preferably Cambridge, although, paradoxically, the Sinhalese who have brought the bitterest condemnation of England to the political forefront have displayed no sense of gratitude to the university which gave them their opportunity of doing so.

Apart from government service, there are only two professions in Lanka—medicine and law. At its highest, medicine is good. I owe my own life to the devoted care of a Tamil doctor who had taken his degree in Edinburgh. There are several Sinhalese doctors of the same high standard, with the same public sense of duty, but, on the whole, the state system of medicine is deplorable. The doctors and staffs are overwhelmed and, after a time, lose heart. Red tape and lack of initiative are widespread. The hospitals are poor, inadequately equipped and faced with special difficulties—caste, for example—unknown to European medicine.

There are 134 government hospitals in an island of seven million people, with rather more than 12,000 available beds. The government maintain 846 central and branch dispensaries supplemented by 99 estate hospitals and 666 estate dispensaries. When it is remembered that this total of approximately 100 hospitals and 650 dispensaries run by the estates deals with a population of only three-quarters of a million coolies, the inadequacy of the government arrangements will be realized. Nevertheless in 1944, the last year—doubtless for reasons of security—in which figures were published, some 5,700,000 patients were treated; one realizes the immensity of the problem, for it is certain that four times that number were not treated who should have been.

The incidence of diseases which, if not peculiar to the tropics, are more prevalent there—such as malaria, sprue, dysentery and leprosy—treble the difficulties normally encountered. Venereal disease, too, is prevalent to a distressing degree. Of course, these afflictions do not appal the Oriental in quite the same way as they do the Westerner. Malaria is universal—it would be hard to find a single Sinhalese in Ceylon who has not suffered from it—and dysentery almost as prevalent. Even leprosy does not carry quite the horror that its name conveys in England. The leper asylum of Hendala, close to Colombo, permits its patients to spend holidays in their home villages. Hydrophobia is far more com-

mon than in more temperate climes, although in this case hardly less feared. The Sinhalese, being Buddhists, will not kill pariah dogs no matter what ails them. Since the majority of these unfortunate beasts do not belong to anyone, as their name suggests, and although they cannot be killed are vilely ill-treated, severe drought sends them mad in large numbers. Planters and police organize themselves and shoot the dogs, mad or not, in scores, but although temporarily their numbers may be reduced, by the following year they are as numerous as ever. Colombo possesses a Pasteur Institute and I imagine that in times of drought its devoted staff must be heavily overworked.

Many of both classes of lawyers—advocates and proctors, roughly analogous to barristers and solicitors—have political leanings and consider these more important than the law they practise. It is, in some respects, a curious law, for although its framework is Roman-Dutch, the island has evolved its own system compounded of Roman, English, Indian and even South African legal decisions. The English law of evidence has been instituted, but juries number only seven, from the difficulty experienced in finding enough educated people to sit on them. It will be even more difficult when the Mahabadde is nationalized and British planters find life in Lanka no longer tolerable. But, of course, when that day comes the language of the island's jurisprudence will probably revert to Sinhalese. If it were to do so now, many of the more skilful advocates and proctors would have to set to and learn the intricacies of their own native tongue.

The courts provide a never-ending source of entertainment to the native population. Where a man is in any way a principal, he will take with him, to share in the fun, not only his own family but his relatives and probably those of his wife as well. The processes of law seem to exercise a great fascination over them and every man is a potential lawyer in his own right. But although the profession of law has the same standards as those associated with English jurisprudence, the conduct of trials, even in the highest court, cannot compare, for impressiveness, with those carried out in England.

The police force, whose training college is in Colombo, faces a heavy task. Police are a relatively recent innovation and are not popular with the indigenous population. They receive very little support from the people and the tradition which has sprung up

in England—that the police are right unless proved wrong—carries no weight in Lanka. The buying and selling of witnesses by litigants is so widespread, and their intimidation so obvious a proceeding that the unravelling of the simplest case may give endless trouble. Then, too, there are large areas which are not policed at all. These are under the supervision of the Aratchi and his Gamaralas, none of whom wish to bring the police into matters unless no other course is possible. Taken all in all, the little men in their khaki uniforms, broad-brimmed hats and dark blue puttees have done remarkably well in the past. Now that the Europeans who trained and inspired them have gone, they may find it difficult to retain an *esprit de corps* not natural to their environment.

The European backbone, not merely of the police but of the whole Civil Service, has now gone or is going. Within a very short space of time there will be no Europeans left and it is upon the Westernized Sinhalese that the full burden of government will fall. They are a small section of the community and very vulnerable, especially to the tactics with which they harried the British for so long. The years of working for themselves in an atmosphere of hostility to government have come to an end. It is their turn now to discover that good intentions, unless they command general co-operation, are not enough. Around them the broad masses of the people are as indifferent to them as they were to the British, perhaps even more so. The sniping that they themselves found so useful in breaking down the power of the British is now being directed upon themselves and Communism of a sort hardly bargained for is in the air. The new Dominion, at the time of writing, is in the hands of a handful of moderate, sober, patriotic and, I believe, badly frightened men. There are not many more of their own sort to follow, for the methods they used to attain power have been only too easy to copy.

Nothing on a national scale has been effected by the Sinhalese themselves for centuries. The whole framework of the island's economy, administration, judiciary and education was created by the British, with Sinhalese co-operation if they could get it, without it if they could not. The road system, the railways, the hospitals, the courts, there they all are, and the new rulers in Colombo have to make what they can of them. In former years the administration was backed by power and wealth. Now the Sinhalese, even as a member of the British Commonwealth of

Nations, know that they can rely upon neither. But, wisely, they have chosen to stay with a system that still retains some entity in a chaotic world. Even the failing strength of Britain is better, in a world where force is more than ever the determining factor in policy, than the terrors of isolation.

The town of Colombo, as it stands to-day, is entirely the product of British enterprise. The Sinhalese imprint is scarcely discernible, for it would hardly be fair to say that the slums—which are purely Eastern—have any national characteristics, although, paradoxically enough, the Sinhalese townsman is there seen at his best.

Nature has made the city beautiful and it possesses a spaciousness by no means common in modern cities. Indeed its layout, although conforming to no plan, is as generous as any city that I have seen, far more so than those of the British Isles. With this open aspect goes a clear atmosphere, for there is no smoke in Colombo other than that which drifts across the face of the city from ships in the harbour. There are no industries and none of the bungalows possess fireplaces, for in this town it is always summer.

Architecturally it is almost devoid of interest. On landing one is impressed with the pleasant solidity of the commercial and shopping section known as the Fort—so called because it is built on the site of the old Portuguese fort which stood there four centuries ago. The hotel facing the docks, the old banqueting hall of the Dutch now used as a church, the surprisingly handsome stores, the Gordon Gardens with the massive Queen's House—residence of the Governor—the blocks of government offices, the post office and the curious clock tower—in reality the port lighthouse which may be seen from twenty miles out at sea —all these are reasonable specimens of commercial and governmental architecture which would credit any city, but none have outstanding merit.

The streets are very wide and most of them are lined with rain trees—*katu Imbal*—so called because of their habit of folding their leaves at night into small sacks in which moisture condenses. At sunrise the leaves open, with the effect of moderately heavy rainfall upon the passers-by.

The charm of the capital is that it is built along a seashore and around a tropical lake—originally one of the "Gobbs of Serendib." Whichever direction one takes, the shores of this

lake are encountered except only to the north, where the shores of the Kelani Ganga are reached. Whether there was any conscious town-planning or not I do not know, but the material needs of the city have not been allowed to override the natural beauties of water. Buildings rarely appear at all along the inner lake shore, and when they do they are bowered in trees. Parts of the shore give no indication that within a short distance of their tangled vegetation, their tropical luxuriance of palms and bamboos, are the main highways of the capital.

Slave Island, on the way to the Pettah, gets its name from Kaffir slaves incarcerated there in 1840. These Kaffirs, cruelly treated, murdered a Sinhalese family in revenge for their wrongs. After sunset, from that time onwards, they were rowed out to an island in the lake and heavily guarded until morning; hence its name.

A refusal to crowd humanity is shown in all the central layout. The wide Galleface Green, a mile in length, stretching along the seashore; Victoria Park; the superb residential area known as Cinnamon Gardens; two golf courses and a race-course; all these, together with half a dozen fine playing fields, are part and parcel of the town. Such an arrangement has its drawbacks—notably transport—but its advantages far outweigh any such considerations.

This handsome treatment does not apply to the native quarters which, probably from choice, are crowded, tumbledown, noisy, garish slums differing only in their surprising gaiety and picturesque colour from the better slums of London. Nothing in Colombo, or anywhere else in the island, can compare in grim and depressing horror with such places as the Walworth Road, offshoots of the Commercial Road, parts of Deptford or the robot uniformity of Barrow-in-Furness.

Broadly speaking, the native town begins wherever the European and English-speaking Sinhalese city ends. Thus, in the north, it begins as soon as the commercial area of the Fort has ended. That part of the town, known as the Pettah or Black Town—a famous and almost professional "native quarter" to which all voyagers, ashore perhaps only for the day, repair for a quick run round the gorgeous East—was once inhabited by the Dutch, but the British never settled there, nor further north at Mutwal close to the banks of the Kelani Ganga. So the native population settled there instead.

To the south they begin living again where the Europeans end, beyond the Cinnamon Gardens, but the Pettah–Mutwal–Madampitiya area north of the port is the real heart of the native town. It is here and in Galle that the Ceylon Moors are mostly found, a strange race of debated origin, descendants of Arabs. There are 300,000 of them in Lanka, traders, shopkeepers and moneylenders. They are not popular, for they are shrewd and grasping, but they are useful to the easy-going Sinhalese and Tamils, since they own nearly all the *boutiques* and run their business largely on credit. Tamil is the language mostly used. They still practise the purdah system and wear the fez in their everyday life.

The Afghans, a small community, are also Muslims, a more or less hated race of uncompromising moneylenders, huge, fierce, hook-nosed, bearded men dressed in white turbans, black waistcoat and full white trousers. They give displays of wrestling from time to time, no doubt as a warning to erring customers. The Afghan and his stick is a dreaded—but again useful—figure in Colombo.

The only other Muslims in Ceylon are the Malays, said to be the descendants of a Malay regiment brought into the island by the Dutch.

The railway system radiates from Colombo. The main line runs north-east to Kandy, to Nuwara Eliya and to Badulla—full gauge, and equipped with dining-cars and sleepers; the only railway in the world, I believe, which carries such facilities over a range of mountains well over six thousand feet at the highest point on the line. Perhaps the finest appreciation of the whole island may be obtained by making this trip, for it is frankly hair-raising in places. Sensation Rock, for example, where the train crawls round a sheer rock on a ledge just wide enough to permit the track with a drop of eighteen hundred feet on one side, fully lives up to its name. Some historians believe that "it was from this precipice that the Kandyan kings hurled unwanted prisoners," but the more generally accepted scene of this savage habit is Alagalla Rock to the left of the line, a sheer precipice rising to a height of 3,395 feet. In ancient times it was known as Chitra-Parvata. It so happened that the first time I made this journey the train stopped on this ledge for some minutes, I do not know why. A high wind was blowing and the carriages rocked, ever so gently, but conveying a sense of such utter

instability that a Tamil gentleman left his seat looking out over the precipice and, crossing over to the other half of the compartment, waited there with his back to the view until we started again.

The line, whose terminus is Badulla, 180 miles from Colombo, is a masterpiece of British engineering. It crawls along ledges, it bores through great mountains, it crosses ravines hundreds of feet in depth, it climbs to a height of over six thousand feet from sea-level and drops to two thousand feet the other side. Altogether it gives the newcomer a glimpse of almost every aspect of the island.

The first part of the run to Badulla is across the teeming plains of the wet zone where native agriculture, coconuts and rubber-growing are highly developed. Then the line rises through the historic Kandyan mountains with many a view of the arid plains of the North-western and Central Provinces. From Peradeniya, the junction for Kandy, it begins to climb in earnest and at one point, Hatton, is within a few miles of Adam's Peak. As it winds its way through the tea districts, glimpses may be obtained of the forests of the southern part of the island, while at Pattipola the train is almost on the wonderful Horton plains, that lost wilderness at close upon seven thousand feet, dear to the memory of Ravanna and even dearer to the European for the sambhur that may be hunted and the trout that may be taken from streams indistinguishable from those of a Scottish deer forest. This station, Pattipola, is the highest point of the main line, 6,224 feet above sea-level. The descent at first is not steep, for Idulgeshina some miles further on the line is still over five thousand feet up, and the station is built upon a thin neck, or col, on which the motionless train in a high wind rocks gaily. To the north, at this point, there is a stupendous panorama of the whole mountain system of Ceylon, the rolling plains of Uva and the Central Province seen through gaps in the distant hills. To the south the mountain drops so steeply that, from the train, nothing can be seen of it. One gazes out from a height of five thousand feet over many hundreds of square miles of Southern Province jungle with the salterns close to Hambantota, sixty miles away, white ovals against the blue of the Bay of Bengal. The train has a habit of waiting a long time at this spot, as though conscious of the stupefying beauty of the panorama.

Two other lines, both very picturesque, start from Colombo.

One hugs the sea coast as far as Matara, the most southerly town in Ceylon and the last inhabited place between Asia and the South Pole. Although uncomfortable, this too is a memorable ride, but it is preferable to wait until one is offered the use of a car before making the journey. By car it is full of interest, although it is substantially the same journey, for the road and the rail-track stay side by side almost all of the way. The second line runs into the luxurious Kelani Valley, immediately to the south of the great massif of Adam's Peak.

This valley is supremely beautiful in its forested grandeur and so full of history that the journey should be made—but not by railway. With a track somewhat inadequately bolted down by Western standards, the standard of personal comfort is low.

To complete mention of the railway routes of the country, there is another line which branches off the main line at Polgawela—before the climb to Kandy begins—and runs through Kurunagalla, Anuradhapura and Mankalam to Jaffna and Kankesanturai in the northerly tip of the island. In all there are over nine hundred miles of railroad in Lanka, a sound enough system for a land only one-fifth of which is inhabited.

The railway serves several of the suburbs of the capital, but other methods of communication are poor. Trams run to the native sections of the town, north and east, but they are not used by Europeans nor by Westernized Sinhalese except in moments of dire necessity. They are open, without sides, and although, in theory, the first two rows of seats are reserved for first-class passengers, nobody takes any notice of such an inhibition. During the rush hours they resemble nothing so much as a perambulating swarm of bees, passengers of a score of nationalities clinging wherever a human being can cling. The smell alone is enough to warn off, once and for all, any but people long hardened to the violent odours of the East.

The buses are worse. There are no corporation buses, I do not know why, and the cut-throat competition cannot be believed by any man who has not witnessed it. The most ardent supporter of private enterprise would hardly commend the buses of Lanka any more than the most perfervid supporter of nationalization could praise the medical service, the railway service, or indeed, any service carried out entirely by the government. But that is the East. Until education stands for different things than it does at the moment, any enterprise, private or national, is at

the mercy of the harum-scarum temperament of the human beings who are called upon to carry it out.

The motor-buses of Ceylon are quite iniquitous. They are invariably of ancient American manufacture—cars, since they have to meet each other on almost equal terms in Ceylon, mostly come from the United States—their bodywork falling to pieces, their brakes, lubrication and tyres suspect every inch of every journey. Not infrequently engines fall from their beds. It is seldom indeed that any machine gets from one end of its route to the other without incident. Sinhalese are violent drivers, fond of furious speeds and obeying no laws for long. They are very poor mechanics and possess no time sense, so that such things as time-tables quite literally do not exist. One may begin a journey with no hint as to when one is likely to end it. Indeed, if a rival bus should happen to chance upon that in which one is travelling in a lonely part of the road, a pitched battle may result. In all this the law is exemplary with regard to driving tests, safety regulations and bus inspections, but few of these laws are observed.

The trams, the buses, the jostling crowds in the narrow streets, that, to my mind is the true Colombo of the Sinhalese in so far as there is one. In the Pettah one may see a microcosm of the kaleidoscopic East, all races and all costumes from loin-cloths to the brilliant garb of some high-caste chief. Few cities in the world can show such a mixture of nationalities. There are no pavements and, since the people of the Orient are still masters of time, people do not necessarily give way to traffic. Bullock carts creak, groan and rumble, rickshaws—their sweating coolies pounding along head down—threaten instant death to their occupants, battered buses rock along heavily overburdened. Everywhere is violent noise, for the East does not believe in half-tones in colour or sound. The horns of cars blare ceaselessly, whether anything is in the way or not, people shout and sing, in every *boutique* dreadful old gramophones wheeze out raucous tunes through rust-eaten horns. In all this confusion, turmoil, noise and constant stink, the lives of the people go on in public. The buildings, mostly deplorable single-storied shanties without windows or doors, hide nothing. Their occupants live, eat, sleep, work in full view of everyone else. Over all the varied stinks and the constant noise, one smell reigns supreme. It is that of pepper, the quintessence of the Orient.

Here and there, in all this seething mess, there is some

reminder of the past. Occasionally one comes across an old Dutch bungalow, still almost perfect, in the middle of a row of tumbledown sheds. Then there is the stolid Dutch church at Wolfendhall, and for people who like variety in their architecture, there is an occasional Mohammedan mosque, or a Hindu dewale. There is in particular one mosque of some pretensions to architectural eminence, a pleasant building to behold, and a Hindu temple in Sea Street, of no great antiquity but covered with a wealth of carvings very finely executed. It is one of the sights of Colombo, but I confess that, to me, this rank prolixity and exuberance is typical of the debased idolatry for which it stands.

The dwellings of the people are beneath contempt, and it is noticeable that the rigorous conditions laid down by statute for the line rooms which planters must build for their labour force do not apply to any part of the national life in which Europeans do not appear. The messy slums of Colombo suit the cheerful improvidence of the people who live in them, and it remains to be seen whether a nationalist government, so acidly observant of such shortcomings when the British were in power, will take any steps to rectify them now that their own turn has come.

Messy, impoverished, insanitary the slums may be, but the newcomer cannot but be impressed with their vitality and their versatility. The conviction—a slightly guilty one, for the social improvers could hardly accept such a finding—is born that this is how these gregarious people want to live. They ask very little of life, for their material needs are small. A roof, a mat, a blanket, a few domestic utensils and good food—the framework of their lives is complete. Upon this framework they like to embroider the graces of existence—gossip, fables, demon-worship, procreation—but their philosophy is superior to the desire for wealth or possessions unless and until they come into contact with Western education. There they all are at this moment: tinsmiths, merchants, jewellers, basket-makers, astrologers—these latter doing, as ever, a roaring trade, for the urban Sinhalese is no different from his rural brethren in his belief in the stars—cobblers, hairdressers, toddy sellers, a hundred individual trades plying their cheerful wares side by side. If noise is any criterion, the native quarters of Eastern towns harbour contented populations to whom life is a merry interlude and death an unpleasant necessity.

To the south of the city lake, Colombo wears another aspect. This is the Western city, the capital of a wealthy economy, a fine, open, spacious, dignified dwelling-place for the leaders of commerce, government, law and medicine.

Immediately upon leaving the Fort, one encounters the new Parliament Buildings, a fine block in the modern style, adequate but not architecturally impressive. It was in this building that the Duke of Gloucester, acting for His Majesty King George VI of England, opened the parliament which started the Sinhalese off on their career as a Dominion. This was on 4 February 1948, amidst the inevitable pomp and ceremony which means no more on the tablets of history than a wisp of sea-spray from the breakers crashing on the beach across the Galle Road.

Behind this splendid block is the Echelon Barracks, with a large parade ground in front. The Galle Road then traverses the mile of the Galleface Green, that pleasant open stretch of grass upon which horse-lovers exercise their horses before the sun gains power, while pedestrians walk along the sea road looking at the breakers which, during the south-west monsoon, never cease to throw up clouds of spindrift along this much-pounded beach.

Halfway across the Green, on the left of the Galle Road, is the Colombo Club, that painfully exclusive organization of a past era, the rulers of which must be wondering where now on earth's surface such exclusiveness may still be possible.

Beyond that again, on the right, is the Galleface Hotel, a truly romantic caravanserai. It is in itself an ordinary hotel, but he who has sat on the sea wall of this heavenly place, with seductive music drifting out from the ballroom and a moon weaving its magic spell upon the sea-spray, must have sampled content. All along the coast the palm trees lean out over the ocean, but in this garden is the father of all leaning palms, familiarized by picture postcard to tens of thousands of people all over the globe. When at last it falls, a landmark will have departed from Lanka. Sophistication and blasé boredom with life can go no further than to belittle this resting-place of travellers upon the world's highways.

Two most curious phenomena may be seen from the sea wall from time to time. The first is the strange, visual impression of a green spot immediately underneath the sun as it sinks into the sea at sunset. This, despite consistent unbelief from residents in

Colombo, I have seen for myself beyond any doubt. It is, of course, possible that the effect of brilliant sunlight and a tropical seascape affect individual eyes differently, but I myself will vouch for Colombo's famous green spot.

The other curious effect, which I have not seen, is that of a vermilion ocean, visible occasionally from the town. This is well authenticated and has a simple scientific explanation, for the sea becomes filled with infusoria and turns literally vermilion in colour.

Cinnamon Gardens, as the name implies, did once provide the spice for which men were prepared to do murder two hundred years ago. It was the closely guarded central plantation of the Dutch, under the guns of Colombo fort, but now it is a residential area that for graciousness and beauty can have few rivals anywhere. The roads, where not metalled, are of red cabook, brighter than the red loam of Devon, and all are bordered by brilliant flowering trees. "Cabook" is laterite, a product of disintegrated gneiss, and the colour is said to derive from an oxide of iron produced by a catalytic action on magnetic iron ore, particles of which are found in the original gneiss.

Space seems to have been no object in the building of Colombo and each bungalow stands in its own gardens, bowered in rain trees, talypot, flamboyant and half a dozen species of palms and other flowering trees which, from time to time, carpet the earth with white, yellow, pink or red petals which stay there unfaded for days. The effect is quite lovely. In the gardens, too, orchids and flowering shrubs give massed banks of colour.

The insect life, once so vigorous, is now well in hand. Ants and flies find the polished floors and airy rooms very different from former days, when low shacks of wood or earth bricks gave harbourage not only for insects but snakes, scorpions and other unpleasant denizens of the tropics. Eye flies remain—those tiny little helicopters of the fly world, no larger than a pin-head but capable of producing most unpleasant conjunctivitis from their sudden, darting attack upon the eyes—but they are no longer a major scourge. On the outskirts of Colombo all these unwelcome visitors are as prolific as ever, but in the bungalows of the wealthy they are rarely seen. Mosquitoes, too, have disappeared, but butterflies and birds are as numerous as ever.

The Colombo crow, who lives on an island dedicated to his species off the mouth of the Kelani Ganga—Crow Island—is a

positive nuisance, commented on by every writer who has ever visited Lanka. He is an inveterate thief and since windows and doors are made only to be left open in the everlasting summer, he will seize any opportunity to explore the interior of houses and steal anything that excites his curiosity. The bulbul and the cinnamon thrush, the magpie robin and the sunbirds are seldom long out of the picture. The first three make most of the song of an ordinary day, punctuated by the raucous conversation of the crows; but minivets and bee-eaters, tailor birds and the ambling seven sisters, kingfishers and barbets and, loveliest of all, the golden oriole, all make up part of the vivid life to be seen in the countless trees of the city, trees so close together that, from the air, Colombo looks like a forest.

There is other life, too, in the branches of the trees. Bats and squirrels, tree rats and fruit bats, or flying foxes, the last of which are worth watching when the fruit is in.

The privileged inhabitants of this beautiful place are the Europeans and the English-speaking Sinhalese.

Unfortunately for them, the English do not *live* there. They are, in the broadest sense, permanent boarders building up their finances until the time comes for them to go home. Yet, as the years go by, many of them find that England becomes more and more remote, her people colder, more distant, unfriendly; while Lanka becomes part of their lives. It is an ever-recurring tragedy and a problem for which, hitherto, there has been no solution. It seems likely to solve itself in the not too distant future.

But, presumably because they did not make their homes in Lanka, the English foolishly left their culture behind them also. There is no theatre, opera, orchestra—the lack of music, even of concerts, is remarkable—ballet, or even a library of note in Colombo, and the European social structure has evolved along curious and sterile lines. Broadly there are two divisions, the married and the unmarried. The married live in their own bungalows in considerable comfort, but rarely with the attributes of a home, for few of them think of it as such. Home is to be, at some future date, in Western Australia, in the Cape, in the West Country, but never in Ceylon. The white women have a difficult life to live, for they have little work to do—the dignity of labour is not recognized by the Sinhalese and the rigidity of the caste system makes it quite out of the question for a white woman to be a housewife in the sense that she has to be in

England—and exist in a community of women who have no domestic work to do and are not permitted to take part in the commercial life of the town. Consequently they fall back upon sport; golf, swimming, tennis and riding being the main activities, with bridge, dancing and gossip as indoor occupations. Club life forms a large part of their existence, but a club life in which intellectual pursuits are missing—and family life suffers accordingly. White children provide the acid test of matrimony, for when they are six or seven years old they need to live for some years in England. There are no schools above the kindergarten stage in Ceylon for them, and the unfortunate wives of Europeans are faced with losing their children or their husbands.

The men are all engaged in sedentary occupations and an office life in a climate which never relaxes is very trying. Although, during the south-west monsoon, rains crash down upon Colombo and the air is filled with storm clouds and lightning of a peculiar brilliance, the storms afford no relief. Rather the reverse. The atmosphere becomes stifling and exacerbating to the nerves. Orientals, conditioned to the vagaries of the climate by centuries of experience, meet these problems with the sure shield of indolence, but the reaction upon Europeans is exactly the opposite. Their energies seem inexhaustible. They work longer hours in the office than is usual in England and fill in every spare second with sport, riding, dances or the inevitable club. Rugger, polo, cricket and hockey flourish all the year round.

The tempo of life, in fact, is much too fast and it is not surprising that drinking is a popular pastime. It is; but once again it never reaches the high level attributed to it by common consent in England. It has gained its notoriety, I think, from the perverse delight that white people who have to live in the tropics take in their reputation for being fast livers. When visitors from ships in particular are entertained by Europeans, the lavish hospitality shown gives a skilful impression that that is what goes on all the time, visitors or no visitors. It seemed to me that life in Colombo for Europeans was good fun while a man was young, but that it lost some of its attraction as he grew older and found that he did not want to live in England and could not continue to live in Ceylon. The new government have the opportunity, here, to make permanent retirement in the island a big inducement for Europeans. They would promote good feeling and at the same time keep considerable capital in the country.

Marital fidelity is apt to stray under the stresses of lovely surroundings, the heat, the tempo of life and too much alcohol. Certainly the percentage of marriages broken up in the hothouse atmosphere of Colombo is high and the level of destructive gossip higher. With too little to do, with their children in England and their husbands either at the office or spending their leisure trying to get some exercise, the white women are faced with a great many temptations. The colour bar, so obnoxious to social reformers, has at least reduced misconduct between white women and high-caste Sinhalese to a minimum. It has not prevented white men from taking pretty Sinhalese girls in the past, but the custom of frank concubinage has long since ceased. The great proportion of mixed marriages are Sinhalese men with white women, but most of these come about through meetings in England, not in Ceylon. If English girls saw Sinhalese people in their proper environment there would be few marriages. They are rarely successful and usually tragic, quite as much from Sinhalese aversion to such *mésalliances* as from British social snobbery.

European bachelors lead an even more artificial life than their married brothers. Boarding-houses, although they exist, are not popular except among the lower grades of European employees. Caste is as much a fact among Europeans in Lanka as among Sinhalese—almost inevitably so from the habit of mind of the entire population with the exception of a handful of white people —but it is simplified into two rough categories, commercial and non-commercial. There is a real but subtle division between the two, quite indefensible no doubt, but arising out of the conditions of life in the island. The people in executive positions alone can afford Cinnamon Gardens. The commercials—engineers, port officers, heads of small departments in stores and junior appointments in banks and offices—keep away from it. They are much the smaller section of the white community and dwindling rapidly, and live in boarding-houses, cheaper hotels and chummeries out of the expensive suburbs. The executive class live in chummeries as a rule, although some of them cannot stand the life and have small suites in the more expensive hotels.

A chummery is an odd institution. Several bachelors club together and take a large bungalow which they run as a communal establishment. Each has his own room and his own boy, but the Appu—the head boy of the establishment—the cook,

houseboys and other domestics are common to all and the expenses are shared. It is superficially a gay life, but although an outward form of good fellowship prevails, friendship rarely goes deep. There is no home atmosphere and little or no chance of following intellectual pursuits. I never met a man with a hobby, though no doubt there were some. The communal gramophone or wireless set in such establishments is perpetually playing for one or other of the company; visitors are constantly popping in and out; a party of some sort two or three times a week seems inevitable. I stayed in chummeries on many occasions, deeply impressed by the goodwill and hospitality of all concerned, but I do not know how anyone stood the pace for long. Seldom, if ever, was it possible to read a book. To write even a letter was an exercise in perseverance.

Communications, when bungalows each has its own compound and space was not considered by the planners of the suburbs, can be very difficult in Colombo. I doubt if the average is more than two houses to the acre in Cinnamon Gardens. A European is almost helpless, therefore, without his own car, for there are no buses or trams in that part of the town, the suburban trains are miles away and to take a rickshaw every time he wishes to go into the Fort would speedily ruin all but the wealthiest, quite apart from being so slow. Distances of three or even four miles are common between bungalow and work. The resident, therefore, almost always possesses his own car or shares one with a friend, but the planter on a visit to the city finds himself in great difficulties. Being lean and not prone to perspire, I sometimes cut the Gordian knot by walking, but pedestrian exercise in the heat of the day is not to be commended in the tropics, except in the hills.

Europeans suffer perpetually from the swindling instincts of the native population. Hire-cars—the equivalent of English taxis—do not have meters and the driver demands the maximum that he thinks he can get. A scale of charges is laid down for rickshaw coolies but is a waste of time. Touts innumerable, *boutique* keepers, servants of all kinds and Appus all live their lives in an atmosphere of complete corruption where money is concerned. Successfully to eradicate swindling from the island, even if attempted, will take many years and a complete revision of the educational system. I do not allude to that small section of any race which lives by its wits but to the broad masses of the people

who, in Ceylon, do not understand the conception of honesty by which the British have lived. Even among lawyers, the most highly educated section of the community, bribery and intimidation are accepted as legitimate tactics in a court case. Among the ordinary people there are no standards at all. Each gets the best that his ingenuity can force out of any transaction.

The loss of British civil service personnel is irreparable, therefore, in my view, for it means that the people of the island are trying to run before their tottering footsteps have enabled them to walk with any certainty. The fabric of public life will crumble with the eradication of the British as surely, if not as swiftly, as that of Burma, now verging upon chaos. With their final departure, a strong stabilizing element in the affairs of the new Dominion—so necessary to stiffen the promising, lovable but mercurial people of the island—will go with them.

Jaffna, the second of the five towns, is fundamentally different in its origin and purpose from Colombo. It is part and parcel of the soil and it is impossible to consider it except in its relationship with the peninsula that has taken its name.

The inhabitants of this amphibious area—there is at least as much water as land—seven hundred square miles in extent, are the descendants of those all-conquering Damilos who for a millennium and a half carried fire and a sword, whenever it suited them, to the irrigation civilization of the Lion Race. They are Tamils and for the most part of a high caste, and this small country bears unique testimony to their capacity for hard work. It is an astonishing place, the Holland of the East, and its people have acquired very much the same reputation for thrift, common sense and indefatigable energy that the Scots have won for themselves in every quarter of the world.

Geologically speaking this neck of land is of recent formation, produced by the upward growth of coral beds upon which sand brought down by the tides and currents of the Coromandel coast has banked itself in a flat plain rarely more than a few feet above sea-level.

It is a watery domain, the coast broken up by a series of inlets, while shallow lagoons stretch almost from sea to sea. Indeed, but for the embankment which allows the railway to cross over into Jaffna at Elephant Pass, Jaffna might claim to be an island rather than a peninsula.

At first sight the whole place seems to be a forest of palmyra

palms, the predominant tree. Elephants are particularly fond of the succulent leaves of this palm and the neck of land, once a shallow lagoon, connecting the mainland to the island was used by them in the distant days to make attacks upon their favourite food. Hence the name Elephant Pass. The rest-house at this neck of land used to be a Dutch fort.

The palmyra palm is to the Jaffna Tamils what the ordinary palm tree is to the Sinhalese villagers, the universal provider. It is the Kalpa tree of the Hindu religion, the "tree of life," as holy to them as is the Bo-tree to the Buddhist, but it is not in fact the only or even the most valuable product of the peninsula. Closer inspection will reveal a hive of industry north of Elephant Pass, village upon village, all neat, clean and vigorous, with thousands of acres of tobacco plantations, highly cultivated market gardens producing chillies, brinjals, ginger, melons, cassava, sweet potatoes, yams and other vegetables, with acres of beautiful flower gardens. After the indifferent husbandry and slothful lack of pride of the Sinhalese villagers, this intensive cultivation is an object lesson in what can be done, particularly as rainfall is light in Jaffna, and droughts long and frequent. With all these handicaps, industry and energy have produced a prolific countryside, comparable to the best to be found in Java, where a desert might reasonably have been expected.

There is one saving grace about this naturally arid district—the conservation of water. Although rainfall is light, none of it is wasted, the soil retaining it because of the limestone formation of the coral foundation. There are large, cavernous reservoirs underneath the top and subsoil, and a well may be sunk anywhere with reasonable hope of striking water. Irrigation, therefore, is by wells, and even springs are not uncommon, springs of pure rainwater untouched by the seawater being prevalent everywhere. One of these springs at Keeramalai, a few miles from Kankesanturai, has miraculous powers of curing disease. Many Hindus claim that it is the holiest place in the world, and of course it has become the centre of an annual pilgrimage, similar in character to that of Lourdes.

The Malabaris held Jaffna from earliest times and apart from sporadic incursions by the Sinhalese—stung into retaliation by the destructive raids so constantly made upon their own fertile civilization—it has been a Tamil stronghold for over two thousand years and the seat of Damilo kings.

The Portuguese captured the peninsula in 1618 and held it for forty years. Manaar was the site of St Francis Xavier's mission which brought so much blood in its train. Conversion by force to the Christian faith led to the martyrdom, not of the missionaries but of the miserable converts, for the Jaffna Raja, resenting the presence of the Portuguese and their interference with the millenniums-old faith of his subjects, butchered some six hundred converts, or apostates, depending upon which side of the controversy one is situated. Renewed efforts by the missionaries led to another massacre. The Portuguese, on this second occasion, took punitive action in the form of sacking the town of Jaffna and seizing the celebrated Tooth Relic, then, by some mischance, given into the Raja's safe-keeping by the tottering monarchy of the Sinhalese.

The loss of this holy relic was a blow to the whole Buddhist faith and subsequently the King of Pegu offered a huge sum to ransom it. He sent an embassy to Goa, but his offer was refused by Archbishop Don Gaspar, who considered that to return the Tooth would be to encourage idolatry. Instead he had it placed in a mortar, ground to powder and burned in the presence of the Portuguese court, the ashes being scattered over the sea. This did not prevent Wimala Dharma from making the discovery that it had reassembled itself and flown back to Lanka of its own accord, a happy and convenient discovery, which regained for him the support of the people—lost when he became a Christian in the early part of his intrigues with the Portuguese—and the Kandyan throne.

The Portuguese were themselves expelled by the Dutch in 1658, the Hollanders using one device surely unique in the history of war. This was to break up the tombstones of dead Portuguese and fire the pieces from their mortars at living ones.

The town itself is the most complete memorial to the Dutch occupation to be found anywhere in Lanka, and the whole area, even outside the peninsula, retains names which show how important the Netherlanders considered it. The islands of Palk's Bay they named after the cities of Holland, because of the strange similarity with their own homeland. Thus Karativu became Amsterdam Island; Anelativu became Rotterdam; Naynativu, Haarlem; Kunkudutivu, Middleburgh; Neduntivu, Delft; and Mandetivu, Leyden.

These lovely islands of the northern shallows have a character

all their own and an atmosphere of the magical coral islands of many a South Sea story. The people who live in them, backward but hardy and courageous, have the reputation of being simple. "Tival," a man from a "tivu" or island, is a term of contempt to the townsmen of Jaffna, but without justification in my opinion.

In early times the Palk Straits did not present the obstacle that it does to-day to deep-sea ships, and was the obvious route for shore-hugging, oar-propelled craft trading with India. Legends abound. In Velanaitivu (Leyden), Labeh, King of Persia, landed what must have been the mightiest fleet which ever put to sea, seeing that it transported two million warriors and no less than sixteen thousand war elephants! Not only did this vast panoply of war land on the island but defeated there the army of King Bahu, who opposed him, presumably, with a comparable army. Marco Polo knew these islands, landing on them and commenting: "The people were idolaters, naked except for a cloth round the middle, ate flesh, drank tree wine and grew sesamam." An edict of Parakrama, engraved on Naynaturi Temple, tells of the countless vessels wrecked upon these shores.

On Karativu West are the ruins of the elephants' quay where, says Baldeus, "the elephants are embarked by means of a bridge and transported to Coromandel and Bengal." The islands are rich in ruins of Portuguese and Dutch forts and defences.

Before the advent of the Portuguese they were ruled by a single Tamil sovereign, King of the Islands, who built a huge palace on Karativu West, the centre of his maritime kingdom.

Haarlem derives its Tamil name, Naynativu, from the number of jackals found on it. There are the abandoned ruins of a Buddhist wihara here, and a flourishing Hindu temple, Nagama, which still receives its pilgrims yearly from the mainland and from India.

Delft is now irretrievably bound up with the already legendary figure of an Irishman, Lieutenant Nolan, who lived there early in the nineteenth century. Before his time, however, this mystic island was a place of myths and legends stretching back hundreds of years before Christ. The first inhabitants of all, as with Lanka, were Nagas, or devils, creatures of colossal size. Later came Mukwars from the Coromandel coast, and then King Vadiresan left his impress upon the island in the shape of a canal which runs across it, connecting two fresh-water tanks. In due course the Mukwars were defeated in a great sea battle by the Tamils

from the Jaffna Pensinsula. After the Tamils came the Portuguese, who left the ruins of a small fort, which the Dutch followed with barracks and a residency.

But the heroic figure of Nolan obliterated all previous history. A lieutenant in the English Army, circumstances placed him at the head of an army stud of horses, descendants of those brought there by the Portuguese, in the island. This charge, faithfully performed, developed in such a way that the Irishman became uncrowned king of the island. The huge horse plains cover the south-west of the islands and although the Irish king has long since gone, horses still wander in the swamps and plains of Delft.

Nolan lived in the Dutch Residency and behaved like an Eastern potentate, including the harem. But he was a beloved tyrant.

It is said, to-day, that "all Delft people have grey eyes," but even for the gallant Irishman the word "all" is a little hard to credit.

One or two of the towns still retain their Dutch names, such as Keyts in the island of Leyden, said to be the old port of Kala, known centuries ago. I think that in Jaffna and its surrounding islands the Dutch felt themselves at home as nowhere else in Ceylon.

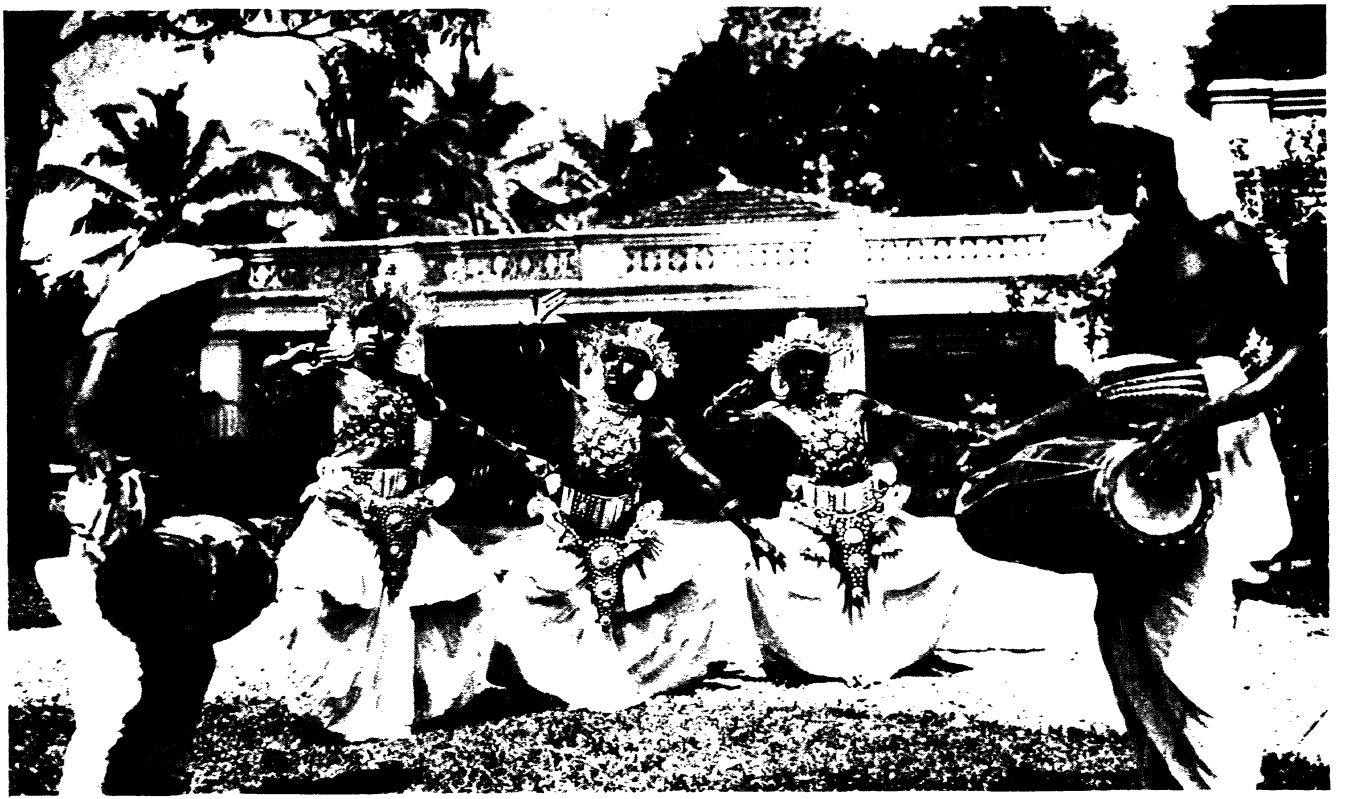
In Jaffna town the fort, a colossal place in an almost perfect state of preservation, is built of breccia, or coral stone, quarried far *inland*. Much of this stone still shows the imprint of marine animals. The stolid immovability of the fort, never put to the test of assault, is typical of the Dutch temperament. Within the large area enclosed by the walls there are a few surviving Dutch buildings, although, as with Portuguese memorials, destruction has done its work only too well.

The huge Dutch church has granite tombstones let into the floor, carved with innumerable names of soldiers, merchants and governors. One wonders how it was so many of them decided to die in this remote spot. Certainly I do not believe that in the whole history of the British occupation of the island so many Englishmen died in Ceylon as there are Dutch names in that one church. In leaving these tombstones behind them, no doubt in reverent memory of the dead, the honest burghers presumably forgot the treatment meted out by them to the no less reverent tombstones left behind them by the Portuguese.

As well as this squat and singularly unattractive church, the



The potters immemorial art. Tamil craftsmen working at a pottery near Cotta



Governor's House still stands and various other government buildings. In the main street, too, Dutch bungalows may be found still in a good state of repair among the ordinary little square boxes of the native houses.

The Portuguese left behind them very much less than their supplanters. Their church stood on a corner of the fort green opposite to that occupied by the Dutch church, and some small sign of it still remains. The church bell, bearing the inscription "N. S. de Milagres de Jafanapatao"—Our Lady of the Miracles of Jaffna—is now in the Dutch church and one will have to travel some miles along the road to Kayts to find any considerable ruins. Here the still recognizable shape of a church and a fine monastery may be seen, but on the material side the Portuguese have left little else behind them. Enriques says that in the whole of Lanka there are only sixteen Portuguese inscriptions surviving.

The present town, while architecturally insignificant, is spacious, well built, clean and obviously a home town. People live there because they want to, and indeed successful Jaffna Tamils from all parts of the island, from India and from Malaya return to the peninsula for their retirement much as the British dream of Devon. It is home, a family colony with roots going back thousands of years. The difference of emphasis of such a town—of no world significance whatever—and the vast international port of Colombo needs no stressing.

The keynote of the place is vigour, and for this, possibly, the climate has some responsibility. It is warm, even, dry and invigorating, and although from April to August an incessant wind blows across the flats with considerable force, it is notably health-giving. It seems to have bestowed upon the people of the locality both health and strength, qualities reflected everywhere one wanders in the town and the surrounding countryside. Roads are wide and tree-lined, open spaces in the centre of the town have not been forgotten, gardens are well tended and bungalows bright, neat and spotless. Altogether Jaffna must be considered a unique colony in the general colourful shiftlessness of the island's peoples. Its capital town—in no sense a city for its population is rather less than fifty thousand at the moment—is outstanding in its purposefulness, and the ordinary people have no rivals for their energy, enterprise and thrift. It claims that it owes nothing to British rule or patrimony apart from the

superficial Western conveniences of the railway, the telephone and newspapers, but that is not strictly true. It owes to the British occupation one blessing that it might not have had under any other set of circumstances—opportunity. But for the *Pax Britannica*, Jaffna might not have had the uninterrupted peace and tranquillity in which to develop its many qualities.

Galle, in the extreme south of the island, is far more beautiful and colourful than Jaffna and historically fully as interesting, but it presents an almost complete contrast. Agriculture is not its strong point, nor are the domestic virtues, but it has one central fact in common with the northern town—a Dutch fort. This faces the sea on three sides and is separated by a green lawn from the town. As with Jaffna, all the main administrative buildings are within the ramparts, which are one and a half miles round with embrasures still holding the ordnance of Dutch times. The views from this promontory, favourite evening parade of the entire population of the town, are enchanting.

There are no really large bays or even inlets along the coast of Ceylon; for the "Gobbs" are invariably shallow lagoons created by the changed courses of rivers and rapid silting; and only two natural harbours. The first of these is Trincomalee, perhaps the supreme example of beautiful natural harbours in the world, and the second that of Point-de-Galle. The latter, although small and in fact dangerous, was at such a vital point on the highways of the world that it assumed an importance at one time in its history probably unparalleled of its kind.

The entrance to this small and lovely harbour is defended by coral reefs which, when the wind is in one particular quarter, make it accessible only to the mariner who has made the journey before. Many fine ships in the days of the windjammer feared to make the entrance and put into Trincomalee instead. Winds and reefs are bad, but there is virtually no tide at all so that the ships of all the world, throughout the ages, have found their way to Galle.

It is still, in its present condition, essentially a Dutch town architecturally, built in and around the fort which dominates the town. The Dutch church and the fort and the large English church—one of the very few churches of any pretensions to architectural merit put up by the British in their occupation of the island—are perhaps the only buildings worth a visit, but the town itself, although it has lost the destiny that seemed

imminent before Colombo sprang up to divert the ships of all the nations, is both lovely and lively.

Tennent believes that it is the Kalah of Haroun Al Raschid, which seems to me almost incontestable in view of the fact that the Moors—probably descendants of the Arabs of that day—call it Kaleh to this day. The Arabians of those days met the Chinese in their wandering junks at this convenient half-way house, but centuries before that Galle was the nodal point of Persian, Egyptian, Greek and Roman sailors. Even more interesting than these claims to ancient fame is the probability that the little port was the Tarshish of the Bible. Solomon's ships were built for coasting work rather than deep-sea voyages and if, as seems probable, Malacca was the golden magnet of Solomon's enterprises, they must have found their way to Ophir by way of this unavoidable headland. These vessels, propelled by rowers, were built upon the Red Sea at Ezion-Geber, and we know that Tarshish was "situated in an island, governed by kings, and carrying out an extensive foreign trade." Gold, silver, ivory, apes and peacocks—with what singing familiarity these words appear—were the rewards, we are told, of these great voyages which took three years for the round trip. Gold, no doubt, was shipped by them at Galle, having been brought there by the vessels of Ophir across the Indian Ocean, for Galle, like Colombo to-day, was an ideal entrepôt harbour. The Sinhalese favour silver beaten into plates, and ivory, although rare to-day, was known to have been far more plentiful centuries ago. As for the apes and peacocks, the jungles resound to the lively evidence of their presence to this day and it is significant that the Hebrew scriptures use names for these various sources of wealth which correspond almost exactly with the ordinary Tamil words for them. Without didacticism, therefore, it seems to me more than probable that the vexed question as to the locality of Tarshish has been solved. It is Galle, and after all why not?

It is an extraordinarily beautiful place, both from the sea and from the land, and occasioned one of the very few "purple patches" in Tennent's careful prose. "No traveller from Europe," he wrote, "will ever part with the impression left by his first gaze upon tropical scenery as it is displayed by the bay and the wooded hills that encircle it . . . the sea, blue as sapphire, breaks upon the fortified rocks which form the entrance of the harbour, the headlands are bright with verdure, and the yellow

strand is shaded by palm trees that incline towards the sea, and bend their crowns above the water."

Perhaps the loveliest thing of all about this tropical town is the view of the up-country hills, too far distant to loom over the freedom and wide spaciousness of the plains that surround the port, near enough to show up in all their precipitous majesty.

The fourth of the five main towns of the island, Trincomalee, is on the east coast and has remained throughout history curiously inaccessible.

It overlooks the Bay of Bengal and is one of the most wonderful and beautiful of the natural harbours of the world. The entrance is so guarded by two headlands as to be absolutely impregnable by any known methods of warfare before the advent of the atom bomb, and the inner harbour is so vast that the whole of the British Fleet at the time of its full power might have sought and obtained refuge within. And yet, although a naval station for many years, it has never achieved real importance at any time in history as a city, a naval base, or as a commercial centre, presumably due to the fact that so far the current of trade and enterprise in the maritime world has always swept from west to east. By such small threads does the fate of nations hang. It is hard to conjecture what might have been the course of events in Lanka had Trincomalee been upon the west coast instead of living in widespread beauty on the east.

To the north of the inner harbour is Dutch Bay which has on one side of it a rocky peninsula with some magnificent cliffs running out into the Bay of Bengal for the best part of a mile. This is Fort Frederick, a place of sacred interest to Hindus all over India and the object of countless legends. The cliffs rise sheer from the blue water of the bay to a height of over four hundred feet and are, as steep places seem to be all over the world, an object of veneration. They go by the name of Swahmi Rock. The word "Swahmi" means God in Tamil, and it is certain that for centuries before the coming of Buddhism to the island this fascinating headland was holy ground to the Brahmins. The earliest Malabar invasion of all, after the Sinhalese had established Buddhism as the religion of the Wijayo dynasty, saw the establishment on this rock of a colossal temple, destroyed by the pious Portuguese in 1622. It was called the Temple of the Thousand Columns and to it, in pilgrimage, came Hindus from all over the sub-continent of India. Nothing but the site remains,

for the Portuguese, with the ruthless savagery so inevitably linked with their name, razed it to the ground precisely as they did the wonderful temple at Dondra. Yet the site remains holy and each year pilgrims hold a service to their gods from the summit of this remarkable hill, a service in which sun-worship is an obvious concomitant.

On a solitary pillar still standing on the headland, said to be one of the pillars of the original temple, is an inscription to Francina Van Reede, a Dutch girl who threw herself over the cliff in despair at the loss of a faithless lover.

The town itself is small, spacious and tree-shaded, so happy a feature of all the five main towns of the island. All around it is the sea and the jungle for, as with almost all the rest of the eastern side of the island, Trincomalee is curiously cut off from the Westernized economy of the wet zone, although the railway line now visits the town. The form of the harbour, the huge Bay of Cottiar and the Lake of Tamblegam to the south, is irregular, wooded, rocky and hilly by turns, and even the frenzied activities of the aerodrome and specialist camps on the islands of the bay during the war could not disfigure for long the infinite beauty of the place.

One of the sights of this heavenly and peaceful by-path of modern life is a great banyan tree, *Ficus Indica*; there are, of course, many banyans, for this tree is found all over the island, but the specimen found in Trincomalee is alone worth a visit to the town.

To use Tennent's term—and it must have been noted, by now, that there is hardly an aspect of the natural life of Ceylon which has not been explored, described and annotated by that remarkable man—the banyan tree is one of the "thugs" of the vegetable world. It lives and flourishes at the expense, and with the ultimate destruction of, some other tree or plant. The seed, passing undigested through the body of a bird, falls upon another tree, often a palm, and germinates. The growth thrusts *downwards*, wrapping itself around the body of the host, and eventually reaches the ground, but this is the *root* of the tree, which throws no buds. The tree itself grows upwards and from its branches are thrown more pendulous roots which grow through the air until they too strike the earth. Thus from the central bole, which eventually blots out the unfortunate host, huge branches spread upwards in every direction and from each branch falls a root

which itself becomes a bole. There appears to be no limit to the number of boles that a single tree may have, and this huge specimen at Trincomalee—in the gardens of Admiralty House—by no means outstanding by comparison with others on the sub-continent of India, is said to be capable of affording shelter for one thousand people. There is a banyan tree in south India so vast that its shadow, at midday, is four hundred yards in circumference.

It is said that Trincomalee harbour was once the site of a volcano which, reversing the usual process, sank into the earth. The supporters of this theory point to the hot springs of Kanya, eight miles north of the harbour, as evidence, but the Tamils have a more satisfying, if less probable, explanation of this phenomenon. According to them King Ravanna, during his long war with Vishnu, was informed by that deity that Kanya, virgin mother of the ten-headed King of Ceylon, was dead. Ravanna naturally had to set about the task of performing the necessary obituary services for the beloved dead, and Vishnu, to help him—and incidentally to accomplish his main design of delaying him—caused hot springs to burst out of the ground for the giant's use. And there they remain.

Robert Knox was one of the Englishmen captured in the Bay of Cottiar by the half-crazy Raja Singha, whose whim it was to imprison at Kandy all white men upon whom he could lay his hands. The very spot where this remarkable man was taken is kept in memory locally at what is known as Knox's Tree. The actual place is a little to the south of the bay, half a mile up the mouth of the Mahawelli Ganga, where the good ship *Anne*, on which Knox was a member of the crew captained by his father, was anchored while taking aboard fresh water.

The last of the five main towns of the island, perhaps the best known of all, with what I cannot help feeling is a largely spurious reputation, is Kandy, the romantic hill capital, heart of a resistance to the encroachments of the white man that did not end until 1815 when Ceylon became a Crown Colony. The town is known to the Sinhalese as Maha-Nuwara, the Great City.

It will perhaps have been noticed that the four towns already described very roughly mark the west, north, south and eastern points of the island. Kandy is, as it were, dead central, in a sense the obvious capital and centre of communications for a balanced national life. That it might be so is as undeniable as that, in fact,

it has not happened. Kandy has that indefinable quality, glamour —an appeal enhanced by the massed beauty of the approach and surroundings—but if the Western framework of economics to which the life of the people has so far been moulded is the criterion, it is not of great importance to the economy of the country. Nor is its history of any great antiquity and the colourful life, so conveniently grouped for the delight of ship passengers, is but one aspect of the infinite variations to be found in other parts of the island.

It is necessary to say all this, not in belittlement of this lovely town but to dispel the impression, widely held by outsiders, that one has only to see Colombo and Kandy to become acquainted with the secrets of Lanka.

The site of this city is superb. The Mahawelliganga curves in a giant V in the hills and the town stands almost surrounded by water, "a necklace of pearls" in the poetic words of the Sinhalese. All around, despite the encroaching uniformity of tea estates, sharp crags and steep mountains rise, a vast amphitheatre of hills, forest-clad to their peaks, and as if to emphasize the supreme importance of water in the philosophy of the island people there is a splendid artificial lake around which the tree-bordered drives and promenades of the town curve, not only at lake level but again high up the hillsides. The small island in the centre of this lake once accommodated the king's harem.

There can be little doubt that this prolific valley sheltered hill people from earliest times, but the first mention of Kandy as a settlement of any importance at all is during the reign of Parakrama Bahu III in the thirteenth century, when a temple was built to give sanctuary to the Tooth Relic. The fact that the Tooth found a permanent home there gave Kandy its importance to the Buddhist hierarchy and attracted the kings to this elysium as the seat of royalty. In fact, however, it was not until the end of the sixteenth century—recent history in the long story of the Sinhalese—that Wimala Dharma, following upon the defeat of Raja Singha and the end of Cotta as the capital city of the island, declared Kandy to be the capital. This was in 1592, when all that then existed of the town was a handful of huts in the hollow subsequently filled to make the modern lake.

Wimala Dharma, as may be remembered, lived through troublous times and saw his capital burned down not once but several times, by both Portuguese and Dutch. When the British

came into the historical picture and took Kandy in 1815, the only buildings with any claim to antiquity at all were the royal palace and the Temple of the Tooth, both beyond contempt in an architectural sense. Much has been said and is said to visitors about the antiquity of this valiant centre of resistance, but the truth is that what remains of the royal palace was not built until the year 1600, for Portuguese prisoners were used to build it. To this circumstance is due the architectural novelty—by Sinhalese standards—of the octagonal tower of the Dalada Maligawa, but it cannot be claimed that either of these buildings has any real merit. As for the rest of the town, until the advent of the British it was a collection of hovels, for the Kandyan kings, in their jealous preservation of their own glory, would not permit houses to possess windows or tiles and even forbade them to be whitewashed. The British, when they entered Kandy in 1815, were astonished at the pitiable little collection of huts and sheds which constituted the legendary city of Kandy. Almost the only part of the original palace with any claim to dignity or grandeur is the old audience hall of the kings, now a court of justice, and even that, in its present form, is not of earlier date than 1783.

The poor group of buildings which once constituted the royal palace and the temple which gave sanctuary to the Tooth relic stand in their separate grounds but linked by a low, crenellated wall, with a moat in front of it now partly filled in. In fact only a large pool remains, inhabitated by turtles said to be over one thousand years of age. If the fact itself is true, they have been in this particular water at most only since 1812 for it was in that year that the paddy field which now forms the bottom of the lake was dammed and flooded by the king. Yet this temple is the lodestar of the Buddhists in Ceylon on account of the relic of Buddha that it is supposed to enshrine. I say "supposed," for to European brains the story of Gotama's left canine tooth is quite unacceptable after its destruction by the Portuguese.

The Buddhists believe that Guhasiwa, a prince of northern India, worshiped this Tooth in defiance of the paramount lord of India, Pandu, some centuries before the birth of Christ. Pandu, a Brahmin, seized the Tooth and threw it into a dish of burning charcoal, but a lotus rose from the flames, the Tooth, unharmed, lying upon it. Struck with a massive hammer it

broke the hammer but remained unharmed. Finally hurled into a disgusting sewer, a beautiful flower garden grew up immediately. This was too much for Pandu who not only restored the relic to Guhasiwa but himself embraced Buddhism.

One other sacred object in this temple, second only to the palladium itself in reverent esteem, is the "Patra," or alms-bowl of Gotama.

The legend of the magnificence of the court of the Kandyan kings did not come into being entirely by chance. It was part of the policy of successive monarchs to instil into their visitors, whether ambassadors or merchants, a sense of overwhelming wealth and luxury. Levées were held only at night to hide the miserable poverty of the town, in the really beautiful audience hall, the king reclining on his throne almost in darkness, a figure of mystery. The colourful setting, the tom-toms, the crowds and the obsequious ministers approaching the king "on all fours, their faces close to the floor," all these things must have conveyed a powerful but purely fictitious atmosphere of might to the newcomer.

Both of the main temples of Kandy, Buddhist and Hindu, are poor affairs, given the necessary atmosphere of mystery by being enclosed in compounds with a garden containing the monuments of the mighty dead—the Kandyan kings—in the same locality. The ritual in respect of the royal dead had a certain poetry, and the usual element of chicanery. The bodies were burned and the ashes carried by a man heavily masked to conceal his identity to the Mahawelliganga. From the shore he pushed off in a canoe and, scattering the ashes of the deceased upon the waters, plunged into the river, swam to the far bank and disappeared into the forest never again to be seen. It is probable that he merely returned to the temple to repeat the performance as required. The canoe, too, was allowed to drift away, and even the elephants and other creatures—including the women—taking part in the obsequies were set loose in the woods. One may be quite sure that all were marked down and carefully retrieved by someone!

Attached to the temple, even to-day, is a stud of elephants which, during the year, are let out as required for heavy tasks. But in August their great hour comes and the festival most beloved of the Sinhalese—the Kandy Perehera—takes place. The actual devotions and festivities last for ten days, but the

most famous, grotesque, colourful and noisy incident of the week is the Perehera itself, known all over the world. It has taken place, with few breaks, upon an August night every year for over two thousand years, and although now it is doubtful if the deep religious significance of the original procession at Anuradhapura is maintained, it is still as popular as ever with Buddhists, and indeed with Hindus, for much of present-day Buddhist worship is inextricably mixed with Hindu gods.

The route to be taken by the procession is lighted all along the way with lamps and torches. The team of elephants, some forty strong, headed by the mightiest of them all, solemnly walk round this route, conveying the Tooth relic to be viewed by the faithful. It is doubtful if the Tooth itself has been taken from its sanctuary for many years, but the march is as symbolic without its actual presence as when it reposed in its casket upon the back of the gorgeously caparisoned beast. The howdah, the tusks, the head and front of this king of beasts are all covered with rich trappings, silver, gold and jewelled embroidery, and nearly smothered with flowers. The whole is surmounted by an image of Buddha. With two smaller beasts at its side, also richly caparisoned, the sacred elephant, ridden by Kandyan headmen in all the glory of their traditional uniform, moves out from the temple to a bedlam quite indescribable, followed in procession by the rest, nearly a mile in length. Yelling and shrieking crowds, the honking of countless conch shells, the clanging of cymbals, the thin wail of pipes and the maddening reiteration of the tom-toms, all driving the devil dancers in their garish but splendid trappings to greater and greater excesses and contortions, provide a superb and fantastic exhibition, far more in keeping with the exhibitionism of the Hindu creed than the quiet contemplative precepts of Gotama.

The town at night and by moonlight has a quality of fairyland that I have never seen equalled. All around the lake, at varying heights in the velvet jet blackness of the hills, the lights from bungalows glow, to live again in the waters of the lake. The outlines of the hills are etched with delicate precision against the powder blue of the sky, teeming with stars quite able to hold their own with the blazing radiance of the moon. In wavering hordes, countless and dreamily unpredictable, the fireflies thread their tiny gleams through trees and shrubs or across the silhouettes of the mountains. The spectacle presents all that

is inherent in the phrase "the glamorous East," the personification of beauty, shorn of all the problems that the daylight so surely reveals.

To these five towns may be added Nuwara Eliya and Batticoloa and the story of Ceylon towns is told. Only Colombo is in any sense a city as known to the West. The others, larger than villages, or even hamlets, are settlements rather than towns, and the population of all seven centres put together numbers rather less than half a million. The island remains essentially rural, and it will be a sad day for its people if the siren lure of industrialization prevails and the Sinhalese are induced to take the Western road of mass production to spiritual ruin.

3. AGRICULTURE

Lanka is potentially an agricultural paradise, but the soil, although immensely responsive, is not particularly rich and is therefore a hard taskmaster. Farming, wherever it may be situated, demands love, devotion and conscientious toil—more perhaps than any other occupation practised by the human race —if it is to be successful. If the rulers of the new Dominion intend to emancipate their people from the economic thraldom of Western civilization—as appears to be their policy from the many fine agricultural development schemes now in hand—they must make the most of their wonderful heritage—the soil.

A promising start has been made. In the North-central Province the Deva Huwa tank training scheme is well on the way to completion. By use of ultra-modern methods it is designed to bring into production, presumably as rice-land, some three thousand acres of jungle within a matter of months. By older methods such a project would have taken years to accomplish. The men trained at Deva Huwa are being transferred, as they become skilled, to the colossal Galloya irrigation works, the control of which, humiliatingly enough, has been vested not in British but in American hands. Here a dam nearly three-quarters of a mile in length and 154 feet in height will contain a lake holding 260,000 million gallons of water with which to irrigate 100,000 acres of the Eastern Province, hitherto jungle. There are many other such schemes, such as a proposal to turn Polonnaruha, the ancient capital, into a thriving centre of village development. Here a new road, nine miles in length,

has been cut through the heart of the jungle, the tank is to be enlarged and modernized, and huge jungle clearing schemes have already started at the time of writing. In all these major irrigation works, and many similar though smaller ones, the government of Ceylon is offering favourable terms to the settlers who take advantage of the opportunity to return to the land from the towns. It is certainly an excellent programme, the full development and subsequent extension of which is of paramount importance to the Sinhalese.

Despite this far-sighted policy, the fact remains that progress so far is on a relatively tiny scale. At the moment Ceylon is still completely at the mercy of an alien economy through no fault of her own. Two vast industries—tea with its ancillaries and rubber with its important by-products—are the hosts upon which the rest of the island's agricultural activities are only parasites, economically speaking. No quick release from this position of economic dependence is possible, except by methods of anarchy quite foreign to the gentle disposition of the Sinhalese people, but whether Ceylon sturdily develops its own way of life, freed from Western economics, or attempts to tread the paths of an industrial conception of the human destiny, the low-country resources of this most lovely island, miserably exploited in the past, are infinite.

The growth and production of rubber must rank among the most temperamental of all enterprises. While Ceylon is not one of the world's main sources of supply, she is sufficiently interested in this sport of the world's markets to hope for some more common-sense arrangement than that by which great demand is chased, with monotonous regularity, by over-production.

Owing to the mysterious requirements of security, the figures for rubber production—published faithfully during the years in which it seemed probable that Britain might suffer defeat—were withheld the moment victory began to appear certain. But rubber is such a mercurial product, in any event, that a good average year is the nearest approach to a norm that can be found and 1943 seems as good as any in this respect.

At that time the rubber-producing countries had agreed: (1) to reduce existing world stocks to a normal figure; (2) to adjust, in an orderly manner, supply and demand; (3) to maintain a fair and equitable price level which would be remunerative for producers.

It was hoped to implement these eminently sensible aims by the imposition of a quota system—adopted in the tea industry also—and the quotas fixed were as follows:

British Malaya . .	651,500,000 lb.
Netherlands . .	651,000,000 lb.
Ceylon . . .	102,000,000 lb.
Sarawak . . .	40,000,000 lb.
North Borneo . .	19,750,000 lb.
India . . .	17,750,000 lb.
Burma . . .	12,250,000 lb.

To give some idea of the changing conditions of this industry Ceylon, three years previously, had exported nearly double the amount sanctioned by the quota agreement, namely 197,500,000 lb. for the return of Rs. 11,300,000 or about £8,000,000. On the quota basis the price obtained would be in the neighbourhood of £5,000,000, which is a fair average figure at which to set the intrinsic annual worth of this product. Although small by comparison with the tea industry, it is nevertheless a highly important contribution to the economy of a tiny island such as Ceylon.

About one mile from the rest-house of Gampaha, nineteen miles from Colombo, are the Heneratgoda Botanical Gardens, where the rubber industry of the East was born. Mr Henry Wickham imported rubber seeds into England in 1876 from whence plants were subsequently sent out to Ceylon and planted out in Heneratgoda Gardens. Some of the original trees still stand, the progenitors not only of the rubber industry in Ceylon, but of the whole East.

Although the first seed was planted as far back as 1876, by 1890 the planted area was only three hundred acres; but by 1943 it had increased to 637,739 acres, all of which, by now, is in production if required.

What is known as "rubber" is a product of latex, derived not from one but from several trees. Commercially, however, the species *Euphorbiaceæ* is pre-eminent, and nearly three-quarters of the world's producing trees are *Hevea Brasiliensis* which, as the name suggests, are natives of Brazil. This tree grows to a height of one hundred feet or more, and it needs a tropical or subtropical climate, moist and equable, to give of its best. The ideal growing height above sea-level is from sea-level itself to

one thousand feet, but in Ceylon there are some good producing estates as high as two thousand feet above the sea. Light sandy soils with gentle and easily drained slopes are desirable, but there again the tree can grow on quite steep hillsides, provided that the root system is carefully protected by means of stone terraces. They are planted from seed, the offspring of carefully selected high-grade parents, and the seed is allowed to grow first into small plants in the nursery. When these plants, reared in pots, are sufficiently vigorous, they are put out at intervals of twenty feet by twenty in well-dug holes in which a little manure or good virgin soil has been deposited. Where a plantation exists already and needs replacements, the grafting of young shoots or buds on the worn-out trees has made great progress of latter years.

While the immense variations of type, height, temperature and theory that characterize the growth and manufacture of tea are lacking in the growth of rubber, the idea that it is only necessary to put in the plant and wait for results is quite erroneous. It is an industry that calls for close and careful research, for exact treatment, for close supervision, enterprise and energy in following out new theories in regard both to growth and to manufacture.

The latex is a somewhat mysterious milky liquid secreted in tiny sacs in the cortex of the tree, a tissue lying between the outer and inner bark. If it is "tapped" it flows very readily before the heat of the day, but quickly coagulates in warm temperatures. The mystery about this milky secretion may be a mystery only to myself, but certainly I never heard an explanation of the fact that it seems to play no essential part in the make-up of the tree. It is not a sap, and specimens of *Hevea Brasiliensis* in which the lactiferous system is entirely lacking have been known to grow and flourish on complete equality with those members of the family who are in possession of the system.

Whether trees are tapped every day, every alternate day or even every third day is now of less moment than their health, for increased production is not the deciding factor. Superintendents of estates, therefore, do all they can to keep the trees free from root or leaf diseases and tapping is generally light and careful.

Tapping coolies, highly skilled Tamil men and women,

muster before daylight and go out at once into the rubber forest due to be tapped. In this operation cleanliness in all the apparatus of cutting and collection is vital, for dirt is the enemy of quality. The knives with which the incisions in the bark are made, the "cups" or half-coconut shells into which the latex flows, the buckets in which it is collected, all these must be kept spotlessly clean and preferably free from water. Before a coolie begins work on a tree, he or she must clean old bark shavings from the cup, remove any dew or rainwater and take great care that there is no dirt on the knife with which new parings are carefully removed from the cambiam to liberate the day's crop of latex.

The trained tappers move round their allocation of trees at high speed and with accurate neatness. Speed is essential—one of the reasons why, even in this comparatively light labour, there are so few Sinhalese labourers—for as soon as the sun is well above the treetops the latex will cease to flow. Accuracy in paring will give the maximum of crop while ensuring that no wounds are inflicted upon the delicate bark.

The crop is taken at once to the factory, where it is received on a wide veranda outside the factory and weighed, for the coolies are paid by results. Accepting it outside the factory obviates the necessity for any but factory coolies to enter the building, which keeps down the incidence of dirt.

Manufacturing processes are simple but require considerable skill and careful supervision. The usual type of rubber product in Ceylon is either smoked sheet or crêpe, the former of which is dried in smoke and pressed with a rough pattern in order to prevent adhesion in packing.

The latex is put into a bulking bath and standardized to a constant caoutchouc content, after which it is poured into coagulating dishes exactly uniform in their measurements. There the acetic acid mixture ensures the coagulation required, which takes about eighteen hours. The amount of acid used is important, for too strong a mixture may result in harm to the final product.

When this process is complete, the sheets are turned out of their moulds and passed through rolling machines uncommonly like an ordinary housewife's mangle on a larger scale. They are rolled through this mangle several times until the required thickness of sheet has been obtained, and then go through another type of roller which impresses upon them a pattern to

prevent adhesion in packing, after which the sheets are carefully washed and hung up to dry before being smoked.

Smoke houses in Ceylon are nearly all of the "Kent House" type in which smoke from the furnace rises from below floor level. By the time it reaches the loft in which the sheets are hung it has lost its dirt and impurities. The hanging sheets are out of contact with each other, suspended so that the smoke-house coolies can reach them to turn them over every second day to smoke them evenly. The time taken by the whole process depends, as with the withering of tea, upon several factors such as thickness of sheet, type of factory, quality of fuel employed, weather and market reports; but it takes several days.

Even the agricultural side is not as simple as it might appear. Good draining, manuring and careful tapping are vital to the health of the forest, but even with constant care and attention the trees are still the natural prey of many enemies. Fungoid growths on roots are perhaps the worst, for they cannot be forestalled and are seldom discovered in time to save the first victim of their attack. As soon as that victim's condition attracts notice, swift action to save its neighbours is essential. Even so, by the time the first above-ground symptoms are apparent in one tree, the root fungus will certainly have made its initial attacks upon several of its neighbours. The superintendent is always on the look-out for a falling off in yield of high-bearing trees, for leaf wilt, irregular flower or the sudden collapse of trees before a strong breeze.

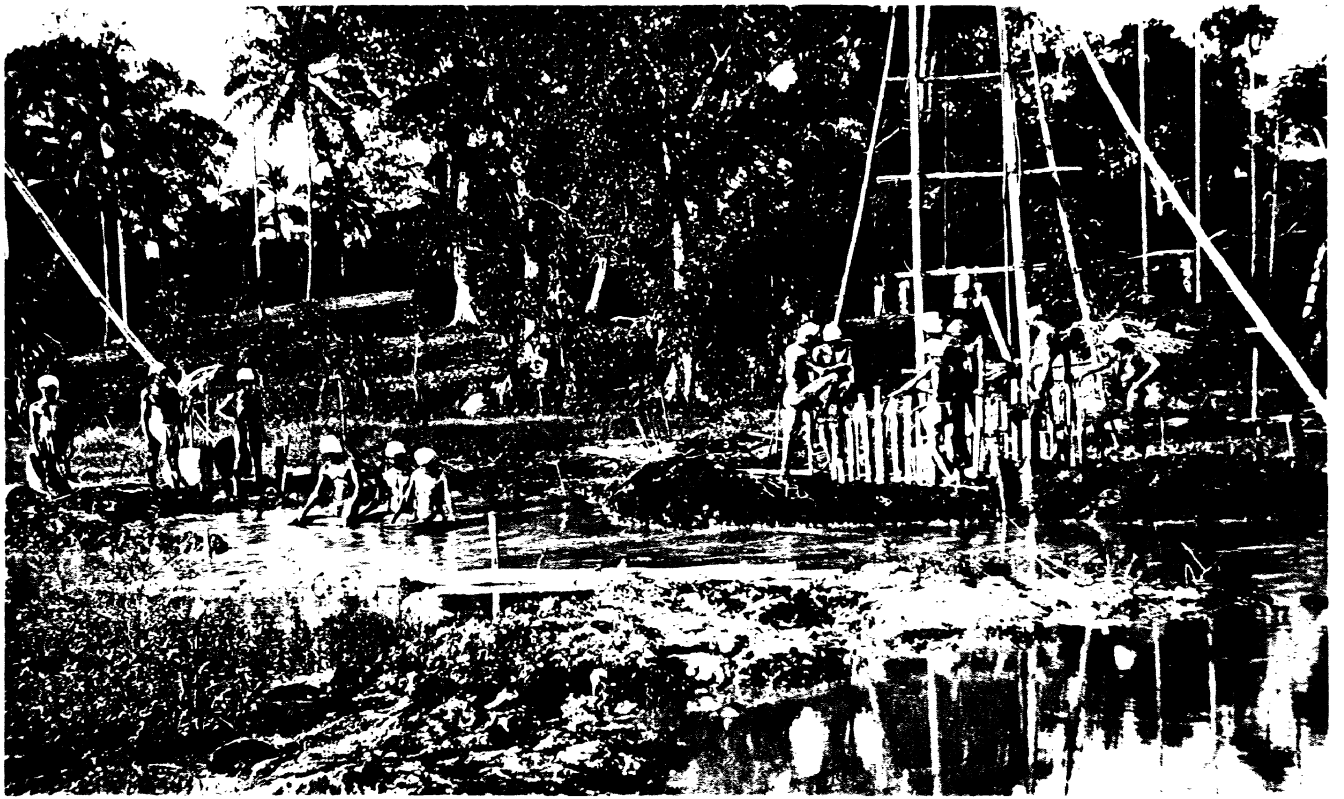
Besides root diseases there are stem diseases and bark rot, pod and leaf afflictions, all of which may cause havoc unless checked in their early stages.

After rubber, in the Western scale of values, comes the growing of coconuts and the manufacture of its various products. Coconuts come from those marvellous palm trees *Cocos nucifera*, immeasurably the most important gift to the Sinhalese peasant that the good earth has to give. It is the most valuable tree in the island—with the palmyra palm, the beautiful and bountiful provider of the northern peninsula of Jaffna—perhaps in the world. From earliest times it has been an object of veneration to man for obvious reasons, but in this chapter its function as the central factor in an export trade is the only one considered.

It is a graceful feathery tree, and has an elasticity in its stem and a tenacity in its roots which permit it to grow at all angles



Flooded paddy (rice fields) in the Low-country plains



from the perpendicular. The Sinhalese say that no man has ever seen a straight coconut tree and it is true that however close to that erect posture they may come, some bend or variation from the straight is invariably to be found.

Ceylon coconuts are exported to one country alone, India, and the economic benefits of estates covering the largest areas devoted to a single section of agriculture in the island—over one million acres—are meagre to an astonishing degree. Of course, the domestic requirements of the products of *Cocos nucifera* are immense, but making every allowance for this fact, this Sinhalese-owned industry is in a poor state of efficiency. The same atmosphere of cheerful *laisser-faire* that produces so low a condition of efficiency in the rice-growing areas of Ceylon obtains on the majority of the coconut estates.

It is true that the figures provided are not very reliable, but as far as they go they are illuminating. The last few years of peace have seen a swift and deadly spreading of the *malaise* of distrust and suspicion which is the seed-bed of war, and one of the consequences of this poison is that statistics are suppressed from force of habit. In the case of coconuts, however, only a very general review of the situation is required, and this may be obtained from the figures given for 1941—the latest available—when the coconut industry was entirely under the control of the government purchase scheme. As far as I am aware, the scheme is still in operation, but since in that year the government was prepared to take all that the industry could give, the figures shown are reliable as it is certain that the estates produced the best results at their command.

Coconuts. 7,000,000 nuts were exported for Rs. 280,000, say £21,000.

Desiccated Coconuts. 106,500 cwt. produced Rs. 1,100,000, say £82,500.

Copra. 2,138,000 cwt. produced Rs. 14,800,000, say £1,120,000.

Coconut Oil. Ordinary oil was all absorbed by internal needs.

Grade White Oil. 536,000 cwt. produced Rs. 7,643,000, say £573,000.

Coir Yarn. 35,000 cwt. produced Rs. 260,000, say £19,500.

The industry thus received a total annual income from overseas sources approximating to two million pounds sterling;

possibly five per cent of the national income from exports. On the other hand, none of this income leaves the island, while a considerable amount of that produced by both tea and rubber does so. There is no great injustice in this, for the largest single leakage of income from the island by far in respect of these industries is the wage bill paid to estate labourers. Every cent of that vast sum might have remained in the hands of the Sinhalese if their countrymen had been educated to believe in the dignity of labour. As it is, although there are no exact figures available, the amount of money paid out annually to the Tamil foreigners exceeds the income derived by Ceylon from all its other exports put together.

The planting, cultivation and manufacture of the products arising from coconuts owe very little, even in modern times, to Western scientific methods or machinery. It remains largely a primitive agriculture, although on the best estates progress has been made. This main source of Sinhalese wealth is beginning to receive a little more care and imaginative treatment than in former years. The old idea that it was only necessary to put a nut into a hole, cover it with sand and a little salt and leave it to nature, although obviously still prevalent in many of the estates, has been abandoned by those with serious claims to consideration as commercial enterprises. Even so, I believe, it is still true to say that there is less work done in the running of a coconut estate than in any other comparable enterprise in the world.

The largest nuts in husk do not necessarily contain the best nut in fact, and in opening up a new plantation care is given rather to the proved history and weight of the seed nuts than to mere size. Round nuts are better than long ones, for the latter rarely contain large kernels.

Having chosen the seed nuts they are placed out in nurseries, carefully sited near water, for they need water every second day. They are placed two feet apart, in land from which all roots, weeds and stones have been removed. After two years the plants are put out in the plantation in holes, three feet deep by two and a half feet square, into which some good, rich virgin soil has been poured. The collar of the baby plant is put as close as possible to the ground level, for roots which sprout above ground are not only wasted but weaken the tree.

Cultivation, although so seldom carried out comprehensively, is repaid as gratefully by the palm as by any other form of

growth. It is a "friendly" tree, from selfish rather than altruistic motives, and its well-known liking for the presence of human beings has nothing to do with an instinct for sociability. The Sinhalese say that the tree "will not flourish unless you walk under it and talk under it," but the homely truth is that where men live, there waste and sewage are to be found. Manured palm trees produce leaf and fruit astonishingly in excess of those which receive no such stimulation.

Superintendents of the good estates manure their trees regularly with mixtures containing nitrogen, phosphoric acid and potash, particularly valuable in time of drought, and they take care that husks, leaf fall and green manures are put into the soil or mulched. Lime, too, is given from time to time as, although it has no food value in itself, it sweetens the soil and breaks down natural food previously withheld from the root system of the trees. Clean weeding, largely confined to the eradication of grass, ensures that all available food shall go to the trees. In addition to food, the growing trees need constant watching, for they have many natural enemies such as termites, rats, porcupines, squirrels and flying foxes, and the coco beetle, whose larvæ feed upon the tender stems of young trees.

Trees which receive all this careful husbandry are apt to repay it almost too bounteously, for the rich clusters of fruit that they bear are so heavy that the immature stem is liable to break unless the branches are well propped.

The coconut palm blossoms six times a year at conveniently spaced intervals of two months. There are, therefore, six crops of fruit, and with each cropping the head of the tree is cleared of dead branches. The nuts for domestic use have their husks removed immediately after picking and are dispatched without delay for sale in the market. The crop designed for copra or export is sent to copra kilns or central warehouses respectively, where the former are left to dry for a month before being made into copra or sent to the desiccating mills.

On one occasion I spent a valuable and instructive holiday with the superintendent of a coconut estate situated upon the eastern seaboard. The bungalow, large and cool, was built upon the sandy beach, shaded during the day by the lovely palms, with a large lagoon, coral-reefed and of a vivid blue colour, almost at the foot of the veranda steps. At night the lights of fishermen spearing fish along the reef bobbed up and down,

strange variants of the silver stars steady in the sky or dancing upon the surface of the water. It was a most lovely place and I cannot forget it, lost and haunted, dreaming in its everlasting sun by day, silver in starlight by night. But neither am I able to forget the superintendent, a man of gentle culture and keen intelligence, living in lotus land, for although he was responsible for more than a thousand acres, the truth is that he had nothing to do and all his life in which to do it. I think that man, if he is still alive, must be one of the very greatest authorities living on the subject of the jungle, for he spent most of his time there, but his knowledge will die with him, for he could not be persuaded to write down one word. He was lazy; he was saturated in laziness, and had gravitated to the laziest way of earning a living to be found anywhere in this bustling world. It is to this fact, I am afraid, as much as to the wonderful versatility of *Cocos nucifera*, that its popularity with the Sinhalese people is due.

A much neglected product of the soil in Ceylon is cacao, the berry of which we know by the name of cocoa. In 1878 there were three hundred acres of cacao in the island and 1000 lb. of cocoa were exported. In 1943 there were 35,000 acres from which 72,500 cwt. was exported for a return of approximately £165,000, but such a total is only a drop in the ocean of the world's cocoa. There may be excellent reasons for this failure to extend the industry, but quality is not one of them, for the Ceylon product ranks high among the best cocoas. It is true that the plant needs a combination of circumstances not readily found—deep soil, moderate rainfall, absence of wind and a moderate, even temperature—but I am convinced that many areas offering these requisites are still to be found in the foothills of Ceylon.

Cocoa is prepared from the seeds of the *Broma cacao*. How delicious this drink was considered in early days is reflected in that name, which means "the food of the gods." The tree is small with large glossy leaves and clusters of small flowers each of which yields one fruit-pod about eight inches in length. Within this pod there are five cells, each holding about seven or eight seeds, the cocoa bean that we know, not unlike almonds when first removed from the pod.

In Ceylon cocoa is rarely grown by itself, but interplanted with rubber, coconut or even tea bushes. The tree eventually reaches a height of up to twenty feet, and comes into bearing in its fifth year, after which it gives two crops annually. When

gathered—a simple process involving cutting the pods and then shelling them by hand—the seeds are removed and placed in baskets. They are then "sweated," or fermented, to remove the sugary substance adhering to them, by piling them into heaps covered with leaves and sand. These mounds require stirring from time to time, a process which destroys the pulp and takes away the acrid bitterness of the seeds. They are then washed and dried in the sun, after which they are polished and packed ready for export.

Nearly nine hundred thousand acres of paddy or rice may sound a large area, but it is considerably less than that covered by coconuts and it may be regarded as almost a fictitious figure in view of the poor state of efficiency of the agricultural methods employed. Certainly with scientific care, the judicious use of manures and a reliance upon common sense rather than astrologers, the present rice crop could be doubled with ease without addition to the acreage. There should be no difficulty in doubling the acreage also, thus quadrupling the yield and making the island all but independent of foreign imported rice.

I am well aware that in making so simple and straightforward a statement as that I am falling into precisely the same fundamental error as that which causes the amateur humanist and sociologist to make stirring orations about the self-determination of subject peoples from his vantage point of ignorance seven thousand miles away from the country itself. What I have said with regard to the enlargement and increased efficiency of the rice-growing agriculture of Ceylon I believe to be possible and even obvious, but the difficulties are considerable and involve, first and foremost, a revolution in education. This would take many years of careful and gradual evolution, but I believe it to be the vital core of Mahatmaya Gandhi's teaching, a teaching not even vaguely apprehended in the Western world. It is not too much to say that I believe Lanka has a chance to organize the first cultured and balanced village-state in the modern world, based upon agriculture and the depths of philosophic wisdom inherent in the common people. It has always seemed significant to me that to see the Sinhalese villager at his vigorous best and happiest, one has only to watch him at work in his rice-field, all devils and psychological distaste for labour completely forgotten.

At the moment the cultivation of rice, the staple food of the island, has made no advance upon the methods used in Biblical

times, and it is a curious commentary on the blindness of policies controlled entirely by Western economics that, as far as I know, there is not a single estate of a thousand acres or so under capitalist ownership in the island. Such an estate, using advanced methods, might have revolutionized the growth and cultivation of rice. Indeed, even the small experimental plots grown by the government agricultural department endorse this certainty. Small as they were in my time in the island, they showed crops as much as one hundred and fifty per cent in advance of those grown by present village cultivators. The truth is that the provision of the staple food of the land, the daily bread, is dependent upon foreign agriculture because the villagers have made no effort to improve upon their immemorial methods, and have received little encouragement to do so, while steadily impoverishing the soil.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, new schemes are afoot to alter this state of affairs. Perhaps, at last, a new day is dawning for the villagers of Ceylon.

In 1941 approximately 14,000,000 lb. of citronella oil were exported to India, bringing in £200,000 to the island. It is easy money, for the grass which produces the essence grows in the poorest of soils, requires almost no attention and receives no cultivation whatever. It is grown on the south coast of the island between Matara and Tangalle, where the thick cover of coconut palms begins to thin out, fading into the jungle of the Eastern Province. Some thirty thousand acres of the grass have been planted along this coastal fringe, and rude distilleries press out the aromatic oil for the use of perfumiers. These distilleries may be seen at frequent intervals along the road.

There are over 70,000 acres of areca nut palms in Ceylon. The produce of these slim, graceful and beautiful trees is all used internally in the island or exported to India. The palm's slender stem, with its gracious feathery head, may be seen anywhere in the inhabited parts of Lanka, and the clusters of nuts just underneath the crown are prolific whether the tree receives cultivation or not. I never saw a large estate of these trees and I do not know whether there are any run on scientific lines, but the produce exported to India alone is worth £100,000 to the vendors of these much prized nuts, which go to form the delightful mixture of betel, areca and lime without which the lives of Sinhalese and Tamils alike would be empty.

The famous cinnamon of Ceylon has fallen from its high estate, not from any lessening of its excellence but by a change in the world's habits. The spice that Moses was commanded to use in the manufacture of anointing oil has few uses now, but there are said to be 26,000 acres of it still under cultivation in small estates between Negombo—once the centre of the finest cinnamon in the world—to Matara in the south of the island.

Cinnamon needs moist air and heavy rainfall, with a light sandy surface soil and a heavier soil underlying it. This is to be found, as perhaps nowhere else in the world, along this strip of coastal land, and although efforts were made to grow the spice further inland, the results were never as good as those obtained from the western seaboard.

In its wild state—the state in which the Portuguese used to farm it by enslaving a whole tribe of people, the Challias, and sending them out into the forests to collect it—the tree grows to a height of thirty feet, but in its cultivated form it is not allowed to get out of hand and is topped at about ten feet. Incidentally these same Challias are mentioned in the first recorded reference to cinnamon which appeared in the *Mahawansa*. That journal records the action of the king in organizing the Challias or cinnamon cutters to go into the forests to fetch for him a year's supply. Branches of the tree about three feet long and an inch to an inch and a half thick are lopped off when ready and peeled. There are no quick returns for this crop, since the first branch can be cut only in the third year, and it is not until the twelfth year that the tree is at the height of its powers. After that it remains prolific, certainly for a hundred years and perhaps considerably longer.

The tree blossoms in January and a rarely beautiful sight it is. By April the fruit is ripe, and if it is bearing well it is considered good for cutting since the bark will peel easily. Usually a trial cut is made, without severing a branch, and if the bark peels back well, the cinnamon is ready for market. The sticks are then taken to the peeling stores where the bark is removed in long strips, a skilful process. Even more skilful is the next process, that of skinning the bark itself, for the outer part is not wanted in the finished article. The skinned bark is then left for half an hour or so to ferment and dry, after which it is rolled into quills or rods for market. From these quills cinnamon oil is

distilled, as and when required, while clove oil comes from the leaves.

Cinchona, used as a catch-crop by the planters in their gallant turnover from coffee to tea, is now unknown as a commercial crop in Ceylon although the soil is admirably suited to its production. It is a straight, slender tree with a hard stem, the bark of which produces quinine. At one time as much as twelve million pounds were exported in a single year.

The last agricultural product grown on a commercial scale in Ceylon is tobacco, a rough coarse leaf produced by the vigorous but primitive cultivation of the northern peninsula. In the extension of this form of agriculture I am convinced that there is real scope and the lack of many scientifically run estates in the island is just one more example of *laisser-faire*. The enterprise of the Jaffna Tamils does not extend beyond the growth of a tobacco and the manufacture of a cigar which suits the taste of the local population and that of similar peoples in India and Malaya, but I am convinced that a tobacco suitable for Empire use could be grown within a comparatively short space of time.

At the moment some fifteen thousand acres are under cultivation, mainly in Jaffna, although the Dumbara Valley, near Kandy, grows tobacco on a fairly extensive scale. There are a few scattered, primitive holdings too along the banks of the Mahawalliganga close to Batticoloa, but they have no claim to serious consideration.

That the industry could become a major one seems to me obvious from the results obtained by the hard-working but rudimentary methods at present employed. Some 10,000,000 lb. of leaf were produced in 1943, a very considerable crop, and although the quality is coarse the flavour is good. The attempts made some years ago to grow leaf with a more delicate flavour were entirely successful, but the product was not required by the local market. Since, however, the needs of that market are now fully met from existing plantations, an effort to produce a gentler leaf for the Empire market, almost entirely dependent upon the New World for its supplies and an obedient slave of the dollar for many years to come, would seem worth while. It would certainly be worth while if Britain would guarantee to the new Dominion a market for all the tobacco that she could produce during the next ten years provided the quality was acceptable.

Another industry, once promising, now moribund, is the growing of sugar cane. At Buddegama, not far from Galle in the Southern Province, sugar-cane growing was tried out and proved highly successful. I cannot believe that, properly handled, this industry has no future. Plantains, the delicious small banana of Ceylon, have never been grown commercially, I cannot think why. Refrigerator ships would not be long in calling at Colombo if loads of that appetizing fruit were available. Grapes, although successfully grown, have not been persevered with. These and many other products neglected by the people mark the contrast between the vigorous enterprises introduced into the island by the Europeans and the miserable agricultural industries of the indigenous Sinhalese, and give food for thought to anyone who wishes the new colony a prosperous future. Tea—the Mahabadde —is the pole which holds erect the tent of the nation's prosperity, and rubber is the canvas. Without these two, the Western form of life which is held up by the ruling class as an ideal at which the country must aim would collapse, for all other industries are purely parasitic, economically speaking. Only the growth and development of the coconut industry, copying the estates of Europeans, is in any sense an achievement of the indigenous Sinhalese, and the main contribution made by this simple and lazy agriculture is domestic. The conclusion is unavoidable that agriculture in Ceylon, apart from the specialized cultivation introduced by the British, is miserably poor, backward and unimaginative. Hope for the future lies in the reorientation of education in an effort to rejuvenate the vigour and spirit of enterprise of the villagers. If this is done, the other qualities of this gentle, humorous and intelligent race will carry them forward into a future in which the vast areas of the dry zone, now abandoned to the wild, will be reclaimed and made to bloom again as they did in the Golden Age of Sinhalese history two thousand years ago.

4. Gems and Pearls

In the *Arabian Nights*, Sindbad extols the virtues of the precious stones of Serendib when writing to his master, Haroun Al Raschid. The magnificence of the jewellery of the Sinhalese

king, at whose court he stayed after his journey through "the subterranean river" (in the existence of which the Sinhalese believe to this day), seemed to him dazzling beyond words. Centuries before Sindbad, legend speaks of Taprobane as a land of incomparable gems and pearls of a lustre unmatched elsewhere. That fabulous past has gone and the modest present, if interesting, does little more than suggest that formerly there may have been truth in the legend of wealth where now is nothing but disappointment and mediocrity.

Although in the days of the Kandyan kings gemming was a royal monopoly, the industry is now entirely in the hands of the Sinhalese and the Moors, the former, broadly speaking, being the mining half of the monopoly and the latter the lapidaries and merchants. The law of the island in this matter is curious. In England the owner of land possesses all rights to the minerals beneath its surface. In Ceylon it is the government which owns the minerals found beneath all surface ownership. Although a Sinhalese landowner may believe that gems are to be found in his own back garden, he must pay the state for the right to dig for them. Moreover the state superintends his digging and presumably takes a share of his find, although if I know anything of the wily Sinhalese gem digger, he finds more than the state is allowed to suspect. It is this illicit aspect of the gem industry that has provided the greatest stumbling-block to the investment of European capital in an effort to put it upon a rational basis. No form of supervision yet discovered is capable of preventing the genius for theft with which the Sinhalese peasant is blessed or cursed.

The right to dig for gems on government land is decided by tender or even by auction to private speculators. Whether the new government will decide to try its hand in this fascinating lottery I do not know, but there is a certain amount of evidence to suggest that it might be worth the attempt.

Methods used at the moment are primitive to a degree. The usual procedure is to dig a hole in the ground—which, incidentally, must be filled in according to the law to lessen risk of the spread of malarial infection—and sift the soil so unearthed by hand. Many of the diggers allow the nail of one finger of the right hand to grow like a claw, with which they become expert at sifting small stones from the ordinary soil.

There are some seven hundred such pits operating at the

present time during the dry season, most of them between Ratnapura and Balangoda—with a centre at Pelmadulla as well as in both those towns—to the south of the Adam's Peak massif. Gems are mined, too, at Rakwana and Matara, and once they were sought on the misty heights of the Horton Plains, but the Sinhalese have not taken this industry seriously for many centuries. The precipitous ravine and river valley area of the great stretch of mountains grouped round the Peak is potentially an Eldorado, but no determined attempt has ever been made to discover the mineral formations, known as matrices, in which the gems originate. Perhaps that is not altogether true. It is said locally, with what truth I do not know, that at the time of the arrival of the Portuguese, the sites of two or three of these matrices were known to the Sinhalese who took such extraordinary precautions to keep them secret from the invaders that in course of time they lost track of them themselves. Certainly, at the present time, no one knows the site of a single matrix.

The gems which are found to-day are only segments of the main masses of precious stones which originate, obviously, in the rocks high up the mountainsides. No scientific survey of these mountains has been made, although Dr Gygax, in a mineralogical report made to the Government of Ceylon early in the nineteenth century, spent some time among the rocks at high altitudes. It is significant that he included in this report a statement that, in his opinion, the gem strata being worked at Ratnapura were only secondary and that a scientific search might well reveal primary strata among the main rocks higher up.

As far as I am aware nothing resulted from this pronouncement, which, in view of the indolent nature of the Sinhalese people, is hardly surprising. For to sink a mine at high altitudes, even if prospects of success were rosy, would entail many processes. It would mean, for example, building line rooms to accommodate the workers among the rains and mists of the wilderness of the peak. It would mean hard and constant work under trying conditions, special machinery and an energy and determination seldom if ever found among the indigenous population. But I am surprised that no Western company has seen fit to take a chance on finding Eldorado, with Tamil labour to assist them in the venture.

In addition to casual prospectors who wander along river beds and up ravines in the peak district, the Sinhalese work mines on

the simplest possible basis. They sink pits some twenty to thirty feet into the alluvial plain until they come to a lower deposit, called by them "nillan." This seems to be in every case some primeval river bed, a hardish stratum of pebbles interspersed with lumps of gneiss. Under these granite lumps, or held in pockets bored into the pebbles by currents of streams which ran millenniums ago, are hidden small accumulations of gems. It is these accumulations that the miner hopes to find and still does find from time to time.

The commoner gems—moonstones or selenite, spinels, garnets—are produced in good numbers, but the more valuable stones—rubies and sapphires—are seldom found in large sizes. Sinbad's diamonds, if they ever existed in Ceylon—and the Sinhalese declare that they were once to be found in the neighbourhood of the peak—are never found there now. Many are sold in the island at enhanced prices, but these are all imported from India. The best and most reputable of the Moorish dealers will not lend themselves to deceptions of that nature, but many of the lesser-known merchants do so. A small stone known as the Matara diamond is in reality a white zircon.

The sapphires vary in colour through blue, azure, indigo and grey to green, and so exquisite are some of these stones that upwards of £4,000 has been paid for one of them. Garnets are common, and so is a species of garnet known as cinnamon stone. Cat's eye, a rare variety of chrysoberyl, is, as its name suggests, a greeny-yellow quartz. These stones are popular, but amethysts, some of them very beautiful, suffer the usual fate of something which is plentiful—they are not valued highly. Zircons, violet amethysts, topazes, tourmalines and aqua marina are all to be found in considerable numbers, but perhaps the island's prettiest stone is the moonstone, so called from the image of the moon that is said to be reflected in its depths. This again is so common that it fetches only a poor price in the market.

The City of Gems itself, Ratnapura, is also a city of adventurers as is to be expected. The tougher elements from many races gather there for the mining, particularly at the time of the annual Jewel Fair, and the mixture of holiness and rascality during the pilgrim season, when people from all over the island flock into the town on their way to the Peak, has to be seen to be believed. Unfortunately the lure of gems, which attracts adventurers, attracts also women whose personal virtue is suspect.

The harlots of Ratnapura are an island proverb and the place itself is known by a word meaning Womantown. With its superb site, however, underneath the very shadow of the Peak and on the banks of the brawling Kaluganga, and with the beauty of its setting and layout, it is a lovely settlement.

More important than gems to the island economy is the plumbago industry. Plumbago, which is the same as blacklead or graphite, is found in many places in the world, but nowhere of a better quality than in Lanka. It has refractory resistance of a high order and is much sought for its value in the manufacture of war munitions.

The mines which produce this mineral are scattered in districts as far apart as Kurunugalla in the north, Ratnapura inland and Weligama in the south, and although, of late years, modern machinery has been installed in some of them, the general level is as primitive as that of the gemming industry. Bamboo ladders tied with coir and slippery with the all-pervading dust of plumbago descend into the bowels of the earth, sometimes to a considerable depth. The only "mine" I have seen was a mere twenty-feet-deep hole in a field at Ratnapura, but I was assured that some penetrate to a depth of two hundred feet. The excavated graphite is brought to the surface in baskets, balanced precariously upon the heads of coolies, to whom the swaying bamboos appear to present no difficulties whatever. At some mineheads a rude winch has been installed which pulls the plumbago up without the necessity of the miners leaving their labours, but most of them still retain the system used a thousand years ago. Once on the surface, stones are sorted from the large plumbago lumps, the rest being graded according to size and quality. Despite this typical inefficiency, out-of-date methods and lack of organization, plumbago has made many Sinhalese families wealthy and is one of the very few industries for which the indigenous population is responsible. At Dumbara, thirty miles from Kalutara on the Kalu Ganga, is one of the exceptions to the rule of primitive inefficiency. Indeed a model of this particular mine was exhibited at the great Wembley Exhibition, including models of the power plant, the electric lighting system installed right up to the working face and the compressed air drills used by the mines.

Most romantic activity of all and, sad to say, even more disappointing in modern times than the search for gems, is the

pearl fishery for which Lanka has been famous for close upon three thousand years. There has not been a fishing for many years and during the present century, with the brilliant exception of the year 1905, the trend has been ever downwards.

Many centuries before the birth of Christ, Chinese writers praised the size and purity of the pearls of Lanka, although the first mention of them in the *Mahawansa* is in the sixth century B.C., when King Wijayo sent his father-in-law presents of chanks and pearls. The *Mahawansa* tells us, too, that King Devenipiatissa in 306 B.C. styled himself "Lord of the Pearl Fishing." Pliny mentions that "the Indians seek for pearls in Taprobane" as does many another early historian, but Ralph Fitch, the first Englishman to mention Ceylon, introduces a note of discord into the general pæan of praise by writing that the best pearls came from the Persian Gulf, "the worserer from Piscaria, off the coast of Ceylon."

A pearl is a protective excretion made by the pearl-oyster against an irritant introduced into its shell. It was thought at one time that any irritant such as a grain of sand would produce the pearl-forming excretion, but although it proved to be true, the result was not a pure pearl. That seems to come only when the nacreous substance forms round the body of a minute worm which gets into the shell and, presumably, begins to feed upon the body of the fish itself. When this protective process happens to the worm on the shell, the result is an imperfect pearl flat on one side, but when the worm has attached itself to the soft oyster, the resultant pearl is perfectly round; most sought after of all.

Although pearl oysters have been found and are still fished in Tamblegam Bay south of Trincomalee, the banks which have brought fame to Serendib are some twenty miles to the west of the mouth of Modergam river on the north-west coast of Ceylon, where the Gulf of Manaar may be said to commence. The base of operations, therefore, is at Maduchchukaddai—a hutment town which comes and goes almost in a night—situated on the somewhat dreary flats of the river mouth.

A pearl fishery is one long exciting gamble, with the government as the croupier. Although a fishery has not been held for many years, one may be held at any moment should the mysterious molluscs choose to return to the "paars," or banks in the Gulf of Manaar which is one of their natural feeding grounds.

They must be mature oysters, between five and seven years old, for the baby fish are useless as manufacturers of pearls, and they should be pronounced ready for fishing by the government inspector before the barbecue begins. Before the war a constant watch had to be kept, at no light cost, against the depredations of pearl smugglers who unsportingly scooped up the oysters from their favourite paars in the dead of night.

Unfortunately the oysters, although extremely tenacious of their hold, are not proof against strong currents or violent storms. In 1902, for example, the experts estimated that eighty million molluscs were congregated upon the Periya paar—the great bank—but a short spell of stormy weather dissipated all of them and many potential fortunes were lost. The two best banks from which the molluscs are not easily dislodged are the Cheval and Modergam paars.

No pronouncement on the subject of pearl fisheries has as yet been made by the government of the new Dominion, but there is no reason to doubt that, if the oysters have returned, there will be a fishery as soon as they are ready for collection. Unless new methods are introduced, this is what will happen.

Having inspected the paars, the government inspector will then publish notice of an impending fishery. This original survey will be made some four or five months ahead of the season and, general notice having been given, another inspection will be carried out shortly before the opening day to make certain that the oysters are still there. On the second occasion sample oysters will be taken ashore and left in a heap to rot—incidentally under an entirely necessary armed guard—until the fish have been eaten by parasites and only the shell and pearls, if any, remain.

If the test is successful the starting day will be confirmed and then from every corner of the Eastern world the pearl gamblers will descend upon Maduchchukaddai. A few empty huts, a quiet river mouth and a lonely and desolate shore will turn in the twinkling of an eye into a seething township, a roaring bedlam. Two or even three hundred vessels will eventually be chosen or will successfully draw lots to form the fishing fleet itself, but at least twice that number of "dhoneys" will arrive, for this is most truly a case of "many are called but few chosen." Their crews will file ashore and as if by magic a paper town of cadjan huts will spring up to form a fair imitation of a wild western gold town. But since all this has happened many times before, every-

one will know where to go, for the "ghost" town is already planned. The traders, the divers, the crews, the hangers-on, the doctors, the nurses, the hospitals, the *boutiques*, the police—there will be plenty of seeming confusion but no real hesitation. Each man knows what the town will be like when it has risen from its ancient ashes, and those that are new to the game have heard every detail of what happens over and over again in tale and fairy-tale. Amid shattering noise this veritable tower of Babel will be found to work perfectly smoothly from the beginning, one of the great virtues of Orientals, who do not ask much of life and have a childlike love of excitement and noise. Every man jack of them will be out to enjoy his or herself, and to help them in this admirable desire a small army of snake-charmers, conjurers, astrologers, vendors of betel, coloured drinks and other delicacies will be ready to take their money almost from the moment of landing.

The paars or pearl banks, twenty miles out to sea, lie at depths varying from four to ten fathoms. Whether modern methods of diving will be given a trial next time I do not know, but I venture to prophesy that the system used will be exactly the same as that described at length by Marco Polo. The divers will take to the water feet first, as their fathers before them, holding a rope on which a heavy stone has been tied to help the speed of their descent. At the bottom, for the space of time that a trained man may hold his breath, oysters will be heaped into a basket or into a net hung round the neck and then, jerking the rope as a signal to those in the boat to heave up the basket, the diver will spring from the bed of the sea and shoot to the surface. The men stay down between fifty seconds and a minute, but they make as many as fifty descents in a day and each time blood comes from the ears and nose.

At the end of the day's work the little ships will wait for a given signal and then race for home. There is a real purpose in the race, for the winner has the benefit of the first sales, in which high prices are offered, for nobody knows what the pearl content of the molluscs may be and hope springs eternal in the human breast.

Bribery and theft throughout this thrilling and colourful performance are rife, reaching the proportions of fine arts. Whichever system has been tried in the past—royal monopoly, state monopoly, company monopoly under government super-

vision—the individual has found a way round all methods of inspection imposed. Usually the divers take twenty per cent of the haul and the rest is auctioned. At these auctions huge bids are made, largely by Moormen, entirely on a gambling basis, although the produce of previous days is, perhaps, some indication of the sort of percentage of pearl oysters there may be. Having bought his lot, the dealer takes it away to his own compound where it is heaped in the sun and left to dry and rot. All along this desolate shore hummocks, grass-covered, may still be seen, reminders of former years when countless oysters have here died and rotted. During the drying process the merchant hardly takes his eyes off his property for he has no faith in human nature. Then will come the moment for which he has waited, the opening of the shells, a thrilling event. The thrill is likely to give way to rage if oyster after oyster is opened and found to be empty, but that is the gamble. One of the finest pearls ever taken at Maduchchukaddai fell to a man who paid the equivalent of one halfpenny for three oysters!

The fishery of 1905 was the most successful in at least three centuries, and five thousand divers fished up eighty million oysters from the bed of the ocean. They were sold for one-quarter of a million pounds sterling, but no one can say what crop of pearls was produced.

It is certainly a romantic industry and by its very impermanence its appeal is enhanced. The tropical river, the sun-flecked sea and hot nights, the vast human activity going on in an atmosphere of vigorous hope and optimism, the clouds of small sails racing for the shore in the early morning light; these things, and the ancient fame of Serendib, have inspired the only grand opera written upon the subject of Ceylon. *Les Pecheurs de Perles*, composed by Bizet, was first produced in England under the title of *Leila* in 1887. He based his libretto on a highly fanciful version of the powers of the shark-binders who, in earlier times, were Brahmins. It is said that these "Abraims"—many people hold that Abraham of the Old Testament and Brahma the Giver of Life of the Hindu hierarchy are one and the same—weave spells which keep sharks away from the divers, and certainly no pearl diver would dream of making a single descent without first purchasing the necessary protection. The charm is valid only for one day and has to be renewed—for a separate fee—for each new day's fishing. It is curious that

although the terrible sawfish has been known to leave his trail of mutilation among the divers clawing up shells from the sea bottom, there is only a single recorded death from sharks. It is curious, but it is hardly miraculous, for the tiger of the deep is frightened of noise, and the noise which emanates from a crowd of Tamils or Sinhalese at any time is considerable. I believe that sharks are too frightened to go within a mile of a pearl fishery, but no diver is likely to believe such heresy. He knows that the "mantram" of the "pillakatta" is the certain foundation upon which he can place his trust as he commits his brown body to the deep in search of pearls.

5. Flora and Fauna

The botanical wealth of Ceylon is, in proportion to its size, the equal of that of any other country in the world. It is prolific to the point of exuberance. Between three and four thousand different species of plants and trees have been listed, something like one-twenty-fifth of all of the known species of the globe and over twice as many as those known in the British Isles.

It is clearly impossible to treat so huge a subject exhaustively, even if I were qualified to do so, for a plain enumeration of species would fill many pages. An outline of the more prominent of the trees, ferns, plants, flowers and fruits with which the island is so prodigiously blessed is all that can be attempted.

The south-western side of the island, which faces the milder winds and heavier rains of the south-west moonsoon,[1] is generally more luxuriant in its growth than the east coast, or even the north-western shores. The east coast faces the hot winds and the long periods of drought of the north-east monsoon, and while the north-west section does not bear the full brunt of these deterrents to full growth, the effects of the south-west monsoon cease somewhere in the region of Puttalam. From that town to Jaffna, the north-west coast receives little more rainfall, if rather less wind, than the other side of the island.

From Chilaw southwards to Dondra Head, the luxurious green groves of palm trees seem to spring from the very sea, but northwards of Chilaw the coast bears another aspect. Here the shores are low and muddy, with areas of swamp in which rhizophoria serve a useful purpose in building up solid land. The mangrove has this peculiarity, that its seeds germinate on the

[1] See p. 414.

parent tree, from which they send down shoots to seek the soil, much as the banyan does. After a time a tangle of these roots is growing, against which the sand gradually forms in banks, becoming in the course of time solid land. Not only are these mangrove swamps to be found in the deltas of the rivers, but in abandoned tanks and stagnant pools in the interior of the northern plains.

These plains, thin in the north, with large areas of scrub, thorn and stunted euphorbias, soon thicken out as the coastal influences are left behind, becoming magnificent forest land the further south one travels. There are certainly not less than ten thousand square miles of virtually uninhabited jungle in the dry zone north of a line drawn very roughly from Chilaw to Batticoloa—perhaps twelve thousand. In this vast area the palm tree is hardly to be seen except where there are human settlements such as Chilaw itself, Jaffna and Batticoloa, for the palm tree prefers civilization.

It would be an unimaginative man that could not wander for days in the wonderful central forests of the island just drinking in the marvels of vegetation alone, without thought of the bird, insect and beast life with which they are vibrant. The fecundity of tropical growth, its savage strength and remorseless sense of purpose, and the endless combination of colours that make a glory of the flowering trees and shrubs, the orchids, the fantastic fungi, these things are the stuff of which memory is made. Having once moved through the central forests of Ceylon, it is impossible ever to forget their wild beauty and teeming life.

Everywhere one is struck by the size, luxuriance and variety of climbing plants, particularly the epiphytic species, which make a passage through the undergrowth sometimes impossible except along well-worn animal tracks. Ferns, orchids, convolvuli, vines and rattans choke the way and trip unwary feet, and in places malevolent thorn bushes, *Acacia tormentosa*, bar progress even to the elephant. These thorns, known as jungle nails, are large, strong and sharp as razor blades, but they are only one variety of an unpleasant family. The *Mahawansa* did not fail to comment on the thorns of the Ceylon jungle, which were used extensively in the defence of military positions in bygone days. A climbing plant, known to the villagers as "kudumirris," has exceptional powers as a stopper. It weaves itself from side to side of a trackway, or from tree to tree where there

is no path, an immensely strong cable some four inches thick covered with knobs. From each of these knobs protrudes, with evil intent, the most vicious of thorns. It is a formidable obstacle, the barbed wire defences of two millenniums ago.

Even the giants of the forest, some of them two hundred feet in height, pay the penalty of their survival, for they are helpless to defend themselves against attack from the huge epiphytes, the vines, lianas and rattans which grow everywhere in forested Ceylon. The tendrils of these colossal climbers weave fantastic patterns in the treetops, falling to the earth again in marvellous festoons. Nor do these parasites rest content with the ultimate destruction of a single host. Eventually they envelop several trees, so covering them and becoming so heavy with the course of time that even the strength of the giants proves insufficient in the end and they collapse. That is the end of the trees, which disappear within a very short space of time under the attacks of innumerable termites, but it is not the end of the parasite which continues to thrive in one monstrous, tormented heap on the floor of the jungle.

In the early days of coffee, this habit of the epiphytic growths in enveloping large areas of forest with their strangling tendrils was put to good use by the planters when clearing land. A hundred great trees or more, on sloping ground, would be sawn through, leaving just enough wood to allow the giants to remain standing. Then the highest tree of all would be sawn clean through, and as it fell it would set in motion the connecting weight of the parasites so that the whole area would crash to earth in a matter of seconds, laid low like a swath of corn. It must have been a wonderful sight to see a complete forest collapse, all in a moment, in this way.

Banyan trees, similar to the one described at Trincomalee, are found in the low-country jungles and at heights up to 2,000 feet. Similarly the Pipul, or Bo-tree—the tree sacred to Buddhists and Hindus alike—and other fig trees are found. The Tamils hold that Vishnu was born under a Bo-tree and to touch one is sacrilege. The Margosa is also a sacred tree, this time to Siva, and the two trees are often ceremoniously married to each other by devout Hindus. Although in theory capable of growing by themselves, the fig family is in fact an epiphyte, seizing upon a host tree to start its career which ends eventually in the death and disappearance of the host. There is another species of the fig

family, known as *Ficus repens*, an ivy which climbs rocks, buildings and trees.

The camphor tree is a fine tree now little used for the camphor that was once reckoned among the riches of the fabulous East. There are many specimens of lesser known trees such as the traveller's tree—something like a plantain—the mustard tree (*Salvadoria persica*) of the Bible, the Ceylon oak, innumerable acacias, yuccas, or the giant casuarina, which is shared only with Australia and is found nowhere else in a natural state in the world. Then, too, are the many members of the Euphorbias, cacti of varying sizes and shapes, nutmeg trees, wild cinnamon, betels, vines, sack trees, coffee trees and a glorious variety of plants; pepper worts and guava are common; indigo is found there, and the glorious lotus—*Nymphæa L.*—which is in a sense the national bloom of Ceylon. It is found on any abandoned tank and stagnant pool and has a huge flat leaf larger than the water-lily, with its beautiful pink or white flower floating in the heart of it. The seed is a genuine narcotic, though a mild one.

The devil's apple and castor oil plant grow everywhere all over the jungle, but it is perhaps as well that hemp, which is to be found, is not so prolific. Jungle dwellers deliberately cultivate it, however, for its delicious opium-like qualities—the drug is known as "ganja," productive, incidentally of the inevitable hangover—but claim that they do so for the fibres which are made into ropes.

Another very nasty denizen of the low-country jungles is the Goda-kudduru, or *Strychnos nux-vomica*, from whose seeds strychnine is extracted. Its fruits look rather like small oranges, enveloping the deadly seeds. Villagers still believe that one seed a day will act as a vaccination against the bite of the cobra, but I should not like to risk it.

One more jungle tree, very imposing to see, is the kumbuk, found anywhere in the nine provinces, particularly on the banks of rivers and tanks.

The timber trees of Ceylon are met at any altitude, not only in the vast forests of the northern and central plains. Forestry, neglected by the Dutch, received very little attention in the early years of the British occupation, and although, towards the end of their stay, the worst abuses of tree destruction were checked, the constructive side of forestry has been restricted to the replanting of felled trees above the five-thousand-feet line.

The timber wealth of Lanka has been neglected, even partially destroyed, but its possibilities are great.

The most valuable of Ceylon's trees is the satinwood, a magnificent tree to be found all over the island, but particularly around Trincomalee where it is exceptionally fine. It has a rough bark and small white flowers, with a wide stretch of branch which makes it a splendid shade tree. The wood, of which the best pieces are used for cabinet making, is the finest in the island.

Calamanders provide a most beautiful timber, stronger and finer than rosewood, but very few of these trees remain, for they have been virtually exterminated. The blame for this must rest largely with the Dutch, who exploited this fine timber without foresight. It was from the Dutch that it derived its name of calamander, supposedly from the Coromandel coast of which it is a native.

The eastern forests provide what few specimens of the ebony tree remain. It is said to excel any ebony tree in the world in the excellence of its texture and the darkness of its colour. The kaduberiya, too, is a species of ebony tree in which the central core of black is striped with brown, but although an attractive carpenter's wood, it has not the quality of the true ebony.

The jak tree, an indigenous growth in Ceylon, is second only to the palm trees as a provider to the villagers. It produces a monstrous fruit, fifty pounds or more in weight, which adheres by the shortest of stems to the trunk of the tree itself. Its timber is used for every purpose for which villagers require wood, and wherever a jak will grow, there you will see one where Sinhalese are living. It has a grain and texture of wood not unlike mahogany, but its colour is much yellower. The jak has a brother, the breadfruit tree, a fine sight and very prolific of its fruit, a heart-shaped rind covering the fruit which, when baked, tastes not unlike bread and is very valuable to the villagers.

Nedun trees are found all along the western seaboard and their wood is highly prized, particularly by cabinet and furniture makers. Then there is the tamarind, or Indian date, which gives from its roots in particular a valuable cabinet wood. But this timber has the disadvantage of being so hard that the villagers seldom have the necessary tools to deal with it. It is a beloved tree, found in every village where it will grow, and looks very pretty in bloom, its prolific yellow blossoms veined with red. The dell, or wild breadfruit tree, is used as timber almost

entirely for building the dhoneys, the coastal vessels of the northerners. The tree has a fruit not unlike a water-melon. Carts, casks and boats are made also from the halmilla tree, which has family connections with the linden tree of England. Lastly there is the teak tree which, if certain limitations could be overcome by research, would provide a timber finer than any other. So far neither teak nor mahogany, both of which grow well up to a point, has been entirely successful in Ceylon, mainly because no one has given the problem the attention which it deserves, but I am convinced that both could attain success. Now that the teak industry of Burma is moving into Burmese hands, there would appear to be room for tentative efforts to be made to build one up in Lanka.

I have left the palm family, so luxuriantly growing all over the west and south-west of the island, to the last because they are the most important of all trees to the people of the East. Mohammed is said to have commented on the palm tree that "it was like a virtuous and generous man standing erect before the Lord" and this is certainly true of the talypot and palmyra, although the more humble but even more useful *Cocos nucifera* finds the greatest difficulty in standing erect.

There is no other country in the world where the palm flourishes as it does in the sandy soil and humid air of west and south-west Ceylon. Yet of the six hundred varieties of this tree known, only fifteen are indigenous to the island. Of these the coconut is unquestionably the most useful, perhaps the most wonderful tree in the world. Wherever there is a village, there are coconut trees, for it would be considered a form of insanity to try to live without them.

They are graceful trees, about eighty feet in height as a rule, and although they prefer the littoral they will grow anywhere on the island up to a height of two thousand or even more feet. The old idea that they must be within sight of the sea is not borne out in Ceylon. The composition of the trunk, or stem, has no counterpart in that of any other tree, but that does not prevent it being highly useful as a timber. It is, in fact, highly useful in so many ways that the villagers have a saying that if a man has half a dozen coconut trees, a jak, a cow and part share in a rice-field, he needs nothing else in life.

First of all this "Tree of Life" provides food and drink. The scraped flesh of the inner nut is delicious in curry, the cabbage,

or unexpanded leaves, makes pickles and preserves, the young nut medicine and sweets. The slightly more mature nut provides milk or can be cooked, the sap of the tree gives toddy which, when it is distilled, gives arrack. Incidentally the milk, or "curumbu," if taken before the heat of the sun is upon the land, is absolutely delicious, an infinitely delicate lemonade.

Then there is the oil with which the village beaux plaster their hair. From it too comes soap, oil for the lamps of Ceylon, oil for manufacturing candles; while from the nut, after the oil has been expressed, comes poonac, a food for cattle and poultry. The actual shell makes charcoal, tooth-powder, knife handles, spoons, cups and receptacles for rubber latex, while the fibre which is wrapped round the shell becomes coir. From coir innumerable things are made: ropes, nets, fishermen's nets, bags, cushions, canvas, brushes, mats and fuel. The leaves of the tree, when woven together, are known as kadjan, which has the property of swelling in rain and affording complete protection against wet. Many villagers build their homes of this material, and sheds of all kinds; while baskets, "chules" or torches, brooms and other implements for domestic use come from it. It is a splendid fertilizer or, at the right moment, good food for cattle. Its stem is made into "pingoes," the curious yoke carried by villagers which, by its whippiness, makes the burden of very great weights quite tolerable. The stem, too, makes the garden fence, fishing rods, broomhandles and any other domestic article involving a handle. Finally its wood, known—I do not know why —as porcupine wood, although not a good timber, is used extensively by the villagers for doors, windows, beams, shelves or cupboards in their houses.

The villager would laugh at so short a list, but it will suffice to show the incredible utility of the graceful coconut palm.

The palmyra, seen in such profusion in the Jaffna peninsula, is second only to the coconut in its usefulness, and superior to it in beauty. It is shorter and sturdier than the coconut, crowned with a thick sheaf of huge leaves. Like the elephant, it is said to live three hundred years, but what is perhaps even more important, it produces an excellent toddy. It is a lovely tree and it is said to provide a quarter of the means of life for the whole of the industrious community of Jaffna Tamils. Its wood is particularly good for rafters and its juice, if it does not give so good a toddy as the coconut, makes the wine of the country in Jaffna.

Thirdly, there is the talypot, or great fan palm, most majestic and beautiful of the palm tribe, with gigantic, fan-shaped leaves one of which is said to provide cover for twenty men. This tree grows to a greater height than other palms, seldom less than one hundred feet in a good specimen. It flowers only once, about its fiftieth year, and then dies. I have never seen one of these lovely trees in flower and must, therefore, quote another's account of their magnificence: "The case, or bud, in which the flower is packed, being four feet long, bursts when ripe with a sharp cracking noise. Each tall spike of bloom at least thirty feet high, is composed of myriads of small, pale, yellow flowers. . . ."

It must be an imposing sight. On occasions of civic ceremonial, the chief or headman walks about followed by an attendant holding above his head a huge fan made from a single leaf of the talypot.

Ceylon owes its unrivalled dynastic history to the talypot palm, for from it came the "olas," the sacred books, on which it was written. The manufacture of these leaves is simple, but there are two kinds, coarse, for ordinary writings, and refined, for the use of monasteries. The first are known as "karak" olas and are made simply by taking the flat portions from young leaves, cutting them into strips from which tendons and other woody parts have been removed and then boiling them. After that they are left to dry, first in the shade and then in the sun. The more refined type of ola is made by the priests themselves who take a karak ola, damp it and then rub it over the sharp edge of a board, thus filing it down into perfect smoothness.

The areca palm, which needs moisture, is found wherever it can be grown by villagers, but I never saw a plantation of these highly prized trees. It is tall and very slim, with its dainty, feathery crown almost fern-like in its slightness, and with large clusters of the prolific fruit which makes life so well worth living for the Sinhalese. It is this nut which is the astringent part of the betel chew, a delicacy said by an old Sanskrit poem to contain thirteen qualities not to be met with even in Heaven. If there is no betel-chewing in Paradise, I do not believe many Sinhalese would wish to reside there.

The kitul palm produces not only toddy but the coarse sweet sugar known as jaggery. This again is highly popular with the villagers, and is found wherever it will grow, but particularly in

the central hills. One near relation of the palm—the screw pine —or more correctly the screw palm—may be mentioned. This pandanus looks rather like a small palm tree but has prickly leaves arranged spirally terminating in a pendulous crown from which hang clusters of fruit rather like pineapples in appearance.

The west and the south-west is largely the land of palms, rubber and rice, for with the hills it is the cultivated fifth of the island, as we have seen. But the hills, although large areas are given up to rubber and tea cultivation, not only share the varied vegetation of the jungle plains but have many species peculiar to themselves.

For the first two or three thousand feet the nature of the trees, plants and creepers does not appreciably change from that which characterizes the low-country jungles, but the higher one climbs, the more one notices an increase in size, particularly of leaf. Then the beauty of the flowering trees, noticeable on the plains, becomes accentuated; plantains, bamboos and ferns appear and at high altitudes the forest, equally lovely and even more impenetrable, has become entirely different in character, a remarkable transformation. There are many plants above four thousand feet which have European forms although a tropical variation. The guelder rose, violets, geraniums, buttercups and campanulas are interspersed with magnolia and oleander and that most curious plant, *Repenthes distillatoria*, sometimes known as the monkey jug. The forests at these higher levels, too, are given variety by the hills upon which only the coarse grasses grow, the patana lands; and altogether it is a new world which reveals itself to the seeker after beauty.

It is a curious fact that although trees grow to greater heights and appear to be far more substantial on the higher mountains, they are not naturally of much use as timber trees. Of late years reserves have been grown specifically as timber reserves, and these have been successful, for the trees are planted at proper distances, the land is drained and kept free from weeds and undergrowth. But in the competitive jungle, the great trees struggle beyond their strength to get their fair share of light, air and water, and seem to fall into powder almost as soon as they fall.

The flowering trees of the uplands are so beautiful that I cannot understand why the artists of the world do not rush to paint them in all their infinite delicacy of colour and shape.

Lost in these thicker forests are the immense varieties of feathery bamboos, orchids and mosses, herbaceous plants and balsams. In the ravines and valleys grow giant tree ferns rising sometimes to a height of more than twenty feet, and almost everywhere is to be found a thick undergrowth of nelu which, from time to time, breaks into a great sheet of colour.

At about six thousand feet begin the rhododendrons, one of the glories of the island. Many planters have cultivated all sorts of trees, ferns, bamboos and rhododendrons out of their proper height ranges with great success, but left to themselves rhododendrons prefer the higher altitudes. There they attain the proportions of a tree, every branch of which flames with its brilliant load of flowers during June and July. Of the two distinct varieties one is similar to that found in the Nilgiris of south India, but the other is peculiar to Ceylon. Almost the equal of this superb tree are the magnolias, myrtles and various cousins of the camellia, of which the tea plant is itself a sample. *Vaccinacieæ*, small shrubs with lovely bell-shaped flowers and coloured berries, are to be found in all these hill jungles, and orchids of fifty or more varieties.

Kittu-imbul, the silk-cotton tree, is at the time of its flowering a heavenly sight. The branches of this tree go away from the bole at right angles like the yards of a ship. The bark is protected with sharp spikes. It is a deciduous tree and before the first leaves come the glorious, tulip-like petals in an almost crazy profusion. The ground beneath the cotton tree at the height of its bloom is carpeted inches thick with petals, a crimson rug which remains fresh for days. After the blossom come the pods, large and oblong, filled with "kapok," a floss of silky cotton too short to be woven.

The iron tree has buds and shoots of a brilliant crimson, but they turn into white blossoms, almost a replica of an English rose. These trees, together with temple trees and champac, are to be found hard by almost every Buddhist wihara in the island, for Buddhism is a religion of flowers. The pale yellow or delicate white champacs give out that sickly perfume so beloved of Buddhist and Hindu temples. Indeed the tree is as beloved of the Brahmins as of the Buddhists, and it is one of the more attractive of their beliefs that the Hindu God of Love tips his arrows, which he shoots in the same fashion as Cupid, with this blossom.

Asoca trees have orange and crimson flowers which the poets

of all Eastern countries have never ceased to praise in verse, but it is hardly more magnificent than the coral tree, a thorny tree which derives its English name from the strong resemblance of the red blossoms to red coral. The murutu challenges any other tree anywhere in its versatile beauty. It is used, with the suriya, to form avenues of beauty along highways, particularly in the Southern Province, and its flower, panicles two feet in length, varies in shade from pink to purple. The suriya, a maritime tree, has flowers so incredibly like a tulip that it is known to Europeans as the tulip tree.

The sight of up-country forests, if two or three varieties of flowering shrubs or trees should happen to be in bloom at the same time, is almost unbelievable, a mosaic of brilliant colours. Whole stretches of jungle flame red with a million blooms, yellow-gold, white-pink, purple and even blue, where the ever-present nelu carpets the ground with its rare bloom. Added to this wonderful variety of bloom, there are the constant changes of leaf colours, going on at all times of the year since every tree has its own time of production of flower and fruit. The leaf colours come, not from the decaying leaves but from the fresh young leaf buds. On one tree will be found the vivid fresh green of mature leaves and flashes of yellow, pink, red and purple from the bursting buds. Add to this patches of brilliant and varying colours from blossoming trees and the effect is of some vast flower garden of the gods.

Magnolias—of which the lovely moonflower, whose dainty chalice opens only at night, is supreme—are grown almost everywhere, as are plumierias for use in the temples. The *plumieria acuminata* has few leaves, but at the end of its crooked branches it produces clusters of small red and yellow blossoms very strongly scented. Jasmines, as fine as any in the world, and oleanders all find favour with the Sinhalese, for all are acceptable at the shrine of the Conqueror. Incidentally, Ceylon oleanders are extremely lovely, finer far than their more famous brothers in Italy. The Sinhalese say that it was an oleander upon which Eve found the forbidden fruit. It still bears the mark of her teeth and, since that fatal day, it has been poisonous.

Fruit is disappointing in Lanka, although there are numerous varieties, of which many hold the mango to be king, I cannot think why. It bears a crop of tough green fruit containing a yellow, fleshy pulp which should be eaten, says the epicure,

within thirty seconds of plucking. Certainly it is cool and melts in the mouth but, to me, it had a disgusting flavour of bad soap. The papaw, equally beloved in the island, was, to my taste, equally disappointing. It is not unlike a melon in its general configuration, but very far from a melon in its taste. This must be a personal idiosyncrasy, for it is held in the highest esteem. Pineapples are plentiful and absolutely delicious, particularly the red ones, and the mangosteen, a visitor from Java, does very well on the island. It tastes very faintly of acid drops, a cool, dainty and fragile fruit that does not get the attention it deserves. As a contrast, the impossible durian has so foul a smell that I could not pluck up the courage to taste it, but I believe the taste to be far worse than the odour. For that reason, no doubt, it has the reputation of being a connoisseur's fruit. Certainly the ordinary man shudders at the first impact of it on the nostrils. Green oranges are common and, while not as good as the familiar article from Jaffa or Seville, are pleasant enough, while the limes are very good indeed. There is a peculiar cross between the two known as a shaddock, or poncolo, which I did not appreciate but which is not unpleasant, and the loquat, a small, apple-shaped fruit with an acid flavour, is quite acceptable. There are several species of plums, and the sweet-sop or custard-apple attracts a good deal of attention. The yellow pulp is almost exactly like custard and is very sweet—too sweet—to the palate. Strawberries, raspberries and gooseberries all do well above two thousand feet, but are not indigenous to the island. The rambutan, avocado pear, morro—beloved of the Veddha—bilimbi, cashew nut and rose apple all have their advocates, but I confess that I remained stubbornly indifferent to them all and would barter any of them for a good English apple or pear. The guava, which looks and tastes rather like a squashed strawberry, has its points, but the pomegranate is a most disappointing and coarse fruit which I found very little better than the jak. My own personal preference, equal to the pineapple, was the plantain, the small banana of Ceylon which is absolutely delicious and should not be denied the chance of conquering the English market as I feel convinced it would do. It grows in clusters on one of the prettiest if perpetually dishevelled trees, or giant shrubs, to be seen anywhere. Gigantic, drooping green leaves grow in sheaves in almost every garden or chena up to a height of nearly three thousand feet. I have no doubt at all that they would be grown more readily and

on a far greater scale in the low country but for the fact that the elephants appreciate them at least as much as the villagers. To make one's garden too attractive to elephants, in the low country, is not altogether wise. There are several varieties of the plantain, of which one has no rival anywhere in my estimation. It is small and almost red, with a nutritive value at least as high as any comparable food. Lady's finger, pineapple plantain and cinnamon plantain are all delicious, but the first named is superlative.

The hopelessness of attempting a detailed description of the flowers and ferns of Lanka may be seen from the fact that of ferns alone there are over three hundred species. The flowers, at first sight disappointing—perhaps because in the vast tracts of evergreen forest they have to be sought—are in reality as varied as the ferns and bamboos and even more beautiful.

The premier bloom in the island is the orchid, of which there are over one hundred and fifty varieties. Not all of them are beautiful or even pretty. Indeed some of them are frightening and one, at least, positively obscene. In the jungle, although sometimes hard to find, they are incredibly prolific when found and appear to grow anywhere. First in the opinion of the Sinhalese—and since it has been ranked first in beauty for two millenniums other views would seem to be superfluous—is the orchid known to them by the name of Wanna Rajah, the King of the Forest. Very kingly it is, too, although the bloom itself, pretty enough, is not remarkable. But the leaves are rarely, startlingly remarkable. They are seemingly made of rich black velvet, reticulated with veins of gold and pale red in colour on the underside. The effect is breathtaking in its beauty.

There is another orchid exactly like an owl's head, and one which might be mistaken for a child's doll, while the tiger orchid, as its name suggests, is uncommonly like a botanical tiger.

Many flowers in Lanka are common to England, such as the geraniums, lobelias, arum lilies, foxgloves, lilies of the valley and the rose, which prospers exceedingly at higher altitudes. So, too, do the sweet pea, the harebell and the violet. But in the wild places it is the magnolias, the champacs, temple flowers, orchids, oleanders and, above all, the lotus that are the particular glory of Lanka.

In the vast, neglected lakes of the plains the aquatic plants reach a profusion and a beauty equalled, possibly, but surpassed

I will not believe, in any other place in the world. Of these the giant lotus, both red and white, is king, so supremely magnificent that it is not hard to understand the reverence felt for the people of the East for this superlative flower. In such reverence is it held that one theory of Hinduism is that before creation was, the lotus was self-existent, and that from its serene perfection all things sprang. After that any prosaic description of it is bound to be an anticlimax, but the flower is like a deep red rose, reclining on a flat platform of green, floating leaves.

Nymphæa rubra, another glorious water-lily but with rather smaller "roses," is as common and, to my mind, as lovely as its regal brother; and the blue lotus, particularly in certain lights, is hauntingly unreal in its exquisite fragility. And there I must leave them, stricken by my own inadequate botanical knowledge. Yet I find comfort in the certainty that, no matter how profound one's knowledge of this subject may be, the English language does not contain words to do justice to the inexhaustible ingenuity of nature in the disposition and varieties of the grasses, ferns, flowers, trees and shrubs of the new Dominion.

In this last section of all I intend to take the line of least resistance and give an impression only of the wild life, insect, animal and bird, with which I myself came into contact.

The first, lonely years in the island served me well in this respect. Such time as I could take from the work of my division —and it is possible that I took more than was strictly my due— was spent wandering round the patanas and small pockets of jungle to be found everywhere in the Cobo Valley. Occasionally, too, I made a day of it and went down into the Valley of Death beyond our farthest division. In all these places, and indeed on the ordinary daily rounds of the estate, the fecundity of nature in the tropics provided all the material that a naturalist could wish. Unfortunately I am not a naturalist, nor am I a particularly observant man, but I will do my best.

In the rocks of the high hills live the eagles. They are supposed to be rare, but certainly they were not uncommon in that part of the island. One crested eagle lived very close at hand and was not averse to giving occasional displays of his magnificence. In the plains there are two other kinds of eagles, the Brahminy kite, a monstrous bird found along the beaches of the coast, and

the serpent eagle that lives up to his name and lives upon snakes, more especially sea snakes.

Of hawks there were plenty, the commonest being the kestrel. These were to be seen any day of the year, but the rarer peregrine is not so common a sight. The goshawk prefers mountain crags, but the ordinary kite is a scavenger and will be found anywhere in perpetual search for carrion.

The estate upon which I worked was situated in a land of owls. The commonest of all was a brown owl, rather larger than his English brother, the barn owl, but similar in appearance. The Buddhists call this bird the "ulama" or devil bird, but I am not convinced that they are one and the same with the creature that gives tongue to a hideous cry which curdles the blood and is one of the mysteries of the island. This banshee sound is quite terrible to hear and the coolies say that it drives men mad. It is a gurgling, strangled shout rising to a high-pitched scream which ends in a bubbling diminuendo as of a creature in its last agony. To ascribe that noise to the ordinary indranee seems to me an impossible hypothesis, for the woods close to my own bungalow sheltered many of them and I never heard the cry once in the five years that I lived there, whereas I heard it three times on the few occasions that I was able to spend some time in the low-country jungles. The Buddhists say that a man forced his wife to eat her own baby and that her spirit passed, on death, into the body of an owl which gives tongue to the horror and grief which never leaves her. That a man could do such a thing is by no means unlikely, for we have only to remember the Portuguese General Azevedo forcing women to grind their own children between millstones, but I refuse to believe that I could live for five years with these birds all round me and not once hear their cry. No, the naturalist must look elsewhere for the perpetrator of that sickening shriek.

The swallows were the strongest reminder of the England that I had renounced and their seasonable coming was an inevitable signal for a fit of nostalgia. Apart from the ordinary English swallow and innumerable martins, the island also possesses the esculent swift, which builds those glutinous nests so acceptable to the Chinese. Although offered one of these delicacies, I could not sublimate my English prejudices enough to accept, but I believe the soup made from them has a delicate flavour and pleasant consistency.



Polishing precious stones from Ratnapura, city of gems. A lapidary at work



A magnificent specimen of the Fan palm tree in the botanical gardens, Peredeniya, near Kandy

Within twenty yards of my home there was one of those isolated patches of jungle rising from the depths of the valley which cling to the deep gullies in the hills. To clear these tangled networks of vegetation was not considered economic, for which I could never be sufficiently thankful, for I had many friends living in that primeval forest. To reach the outer world at all I had to pass through it, a terrifying business in my early days, although it was less than fifty yards across. There was some reason for my terrors, for once I have walked into buffaloes lying in the coolness of the stream late at night, and on one awful occasion an elephant—whose rightful home was in the temple stables at the bottom of the mountain—crashed away down the stream bed at my approach. But familiarity, while it bred love rather than contempt, did efface my fears, and very quickly. Small as it was, the place was alive with wondrous life. I have seen monkeys there and many small beasts from pangolins to bandicoots, but the reigning spirits were the birds. At times they swarmed and the loveliest of them all, in that setting, were the halcyons, or kingfishers which are very common in Ceylon. They are small, red-billed and resplendent, their bodies sapphire blue, quite the bluest blue it is possible to imagine. The wings have a touch of deeper blue in them, while the back is lilac and the feet red. No matter how often I encountered this bird, I could not accustom myself to its flashing, jewel-like beauty. Green bee-eaters were there too, and paradise fly-catchers with their rich chestnut plumage. Orioles, black-headed and golden; copper, green and grey pigeons, and black-backed robins. Blue-tailed pittas, mynahs and butcher birds, magpies and flower peckers, rollers and ordinary English thrushes, all of these feathered beauties lived in, or visited, my single kingdom within a stone's throw of my front door.

The elephant is the king of beasts and I have never understood why the crown was bestowed elsewhere. He has no rival, and to slay one of these amiable beasts, unless he is a villain who has broken the tribal laws, seems to me to be quite simply a crime. It is true that there comes a time in Lanka when the forests hold too many of them, and then they must be rounded up, tamed, or perhaps even destroyed, but that is a different matter. Happily, for many years now, slaughter has been curbed and, better still, the new Dominion has passed as one of its very first laws an edict against killing.

Elephants live almost entirely upon a vegetarian diet of wood-pulp, which they grind with their four enormous teeth from the branches of trees. There are three widely different varieties of the genus, of which the Ceylon species is the least impressive. These are the Sumatran, the Indian and the African elephants, and one of the curiosities of the animal life of Ceylon is that its most prominent animal has no connection with the sub-continent of India at all. It is of the Sumatran breed, smaller than the others, with tuskers few and far between. Ivory, therefore, although it exists, is not a real consideration, and it is no doubt due to this fact that the elephant in Ceylon thrives so conspicuously. The more one thinks about the differences between the fauna of India and that of Ceylon, the more mysterious it becomes, and never more so than in the case of the elephants. When these animals crossed in herds into the forests of palmyra palms growing on the Jaffna peninsula, they were within a few miles of the sub-continent of India. It does not seem beyond the bounds of possibility for them to have crossed into India by way of Adam's Bridge, before ever man thought of it, but clearly they have never done so. There is no connection at all between the tribes of elephants in the two countries, a few miles apart, while there is absolute blood brotherhood between those in Lanka and those in Sumatra over a thousand miles away across the sea. Nor is this strange difference the only one. There are over forty birds which are *peculiar* to Ceylon, a really astonishing fact, while many beasts and birds of India—notably the tiger, the antelope, the gazelle, the gaur, the real cheetah, several snakes and many birds—do not appear in Ceylon.

The men who have to live in the jungle will not mention the elephant by name for fear that it will hear and take offence. They speak of him as "the great ball," "the old one" or, more commonly, simply "him"; a principle applied to all dangerous animals, for it is well known that to mention the name of one of them is likely to precipitate a meeting that would not otherwise have occurred. The leopard is known as "mutta," or grandmother, and the bear as "asvedda," or eye-doctor, from the creature's habit of attacking the eyes of an opponent.

Personally I never managed to become blasé when in the presence of an elephant in the jungle, or even upon the estate. Incidentally one unpleasant factor sometimes encountered upon estates through which ran "gansabhawa," or public paths, was

the narrowness of the track, which often possessed a steep "khud" or precipice on one side. Along these paths all traffic, including elephants, had to pass. Along them, too, the Durai had frequently to ride his horse, and as the mutual terror inspired between horses and elephants is extraordinary, a meeting of the two is a thing to be feared. The one occasion in my life when I was compelled to sit a runaway horse was as the result of such a meeting, but luckily for me it took place on open patana across which the gansabhawa road wound its way. We were galloping gaily up a steep rise, on the other side of which was as steep a descent. As we climbed our side, an elephant was climbing the other. When the two beasts saw each other, the result was electrifying, both of them wheeling and bolting with their helpless riders—the mahout could do as little with his steed as I with mine—at frantic speed. For many weeks after this incident my horse sweated and jigged about whenever we crossed this patana.

The "rogue" elephant, as described elsewhere, has little in common with the ordinary, respectable member of the herd, who is timid to the point of cowardice.

The only other pachyderm in Lanka is the boar, or "walura" to the Sinhalese. He is a happy, grubbing, greedy, stinking brute, extremely vicious if cornered and incredibly fleet if allowed to run for it. He is certainly as fast as any horse, probably faster. I shot one or two of these beasts for villagers in my early days, for it is one of the more sickeningly hypocritical aspects of Buddhism that while the Buddhist is not permitted to kill, he is only too ready to hang around the gun in the hope of being allowed to benefit from its bag. I confess to a preference for the villagers who possess their own guns and openly get for themselves what the others are prepared to accept if it comes their way.

The most fascinating animal in the jungle, to me, was the panther, *Felis pardus*, commonly called a leopard although it is in fact a true panther. Its beauty is breath-taking, its grace even more so, and it has the trick—possessed by no other animal—of appearing on a spot without any perceptible approach. I have witnessed this "leopard trick" on three distinct occasions and find it hard to credit, even after the evidence of my own eyes.

To lie in wait by a water-hole during the drought is a remarkable experience. During drought the animal paths all find their way, sooner or later, to fast-drying tanks, vanishing rivers or

providential water-holes, many of which never dry out. They form in outcrops of gneiss, huge slab rocks, which serve as a catchment area for what rain there may be. Any fault in the rock becomes a reservoir, which may be very deep and long.

On such oases in the desert converge the animal tracks from all directions, and to watch one of these nerve-centres of wild life while one is stretched out on a "mesa," or platform of cadjan, built high in the branches of a tree, is an education. Like most jungle experiences it is perhaps more thrilling in retrospect than at the time, for the discomforts, verging upon torments, of such vigils must be suffered to be fully appreciated. Every nocturnal thing, encouraged by the passivity of the victim —for movement of any sort is inimical to success—bites or bores or stings. Such discouragements to the attentions of mosquitoes as citronella oil and other deterrents are impossible, for no animal will visit a water-hole if the place reeks of strange scents. One can only endure, and an hour of such endurance feels like many days. A single movement, an unguarded slap, a sneeze, will scare away the entire jungle population, and the night's work may prove a waste of time.

Incidentally, if human beings enjoy watching water-holes, so do monkeys. They bring their families to the trees surrounding the water and pass obvious comments on the visitors.

It was at one of these water-holes that I first saw bear, leopard and sambhur all in one night, another example of the beginner's luck I enjoyed when passing through the jungle on my motor-cycle on my first trip to Anuradhapura. I subsequently enjoyed, or endured, two more nights watching water-holes— with no thought of shooting, for shooting animals who come to drink during a drought is plain murder—but, apart from porcupines and one or two small beasts that I could not identify, I had no luck. But that first night repaid any sufferings that I had to endure.

The bear arrived with no pretence of silence or sign of fear, confounding all my previous notions of wild life. After all the warnings that I had been given, the strict admonitions against breathing or moving a finger, I confess it annoyed me to see this huge beast, grumbling and muttering, stalk straight up to the water, lower his muzzle and swagger off without a glance either to right or to left.

In point of fact his size was an illusion. Moonlight and long

watching has something to do with it I suppose. The Ceylon bear is small, with a black, scruffy coat of no use as fur, and a remarkable collection of parasitic fellow travellers. He is the most feared of all the beasts of the wild except a "rogue" elephant. He is wickedly ferocious when startled, and he is apt to be startled very easily for he has poor sight. As he is fond of the same things that the jungle people covet—honey and wild fruits —they encounter him often and fear him accordingly. He is numbered among the carnivores, but I don't believe he eats anything but honey, fruit and yams, unless termites—the white ants which he loves—can be called flesh.

The second visitor was the leopard. It was a brilliant night, the moonlight flooding down in blue-white intensity, etching every branch, every leaf in black velvet silhouette against the mottled ground on which each stone stood out clearly. The bear had hardly disappeared; we could still hear him grumbling somewhere among the rocks; and my eyes were fixed intently upon the long oval of the water-hole waiting for the next visitor. In the calm mirror of the water was reflected the whole panoply of the sky, for we were at exactly the right angle and I was studying this marvel with the closest possible attention. Yet, one moment the verge of the pool was empty of all life, the next, with no perceptible movement, a leopard was standing upon it.

I wish others had commented on this attribute of the panther, but I have never read any such comment. All the same I will write of what I saw, not this once, but twice subsequently. The brute, on this occasion, had to cross an open space several yards wide to reach the water, but I did not see him cross it.

These glorious beasts are not dangerous to man under normal circumstances. They bring down deer and cattle and exercise a mesmeric power upon the monkeys whom they seem to regard as their natural enemies. The monkeys, for their part, are just foolish; there is no other word for it. Their inquisitiveness is their undoing, for wherever the great cat goes, they are inclined to follow. Almost imperceptibly, they get lower and lower in the trees until, at last, one of them, more foolish than his fellows, gets within range of the enormous spring of which the panther is capable, and that is the end of him.

The Ceylon leopard has spots only upon his legs and black rings round his body rather like those of a tiger, but much less clearly marked. There is also a pure black leopard in the island,

or rather he is black in certain lights. If the light is exactly right, he is seen to have vague spots on his body. There is a third and much smaller breed commonly known as a cheetah, although he is not of the true Indian breed of cheetah. Then there are many other members of the cat family, of which the civet cat, or genette, is the commonest and the most offensive. It stinks, except when it is dead, when the aromatic musk is said to be taken from it. There is also a palm cat, found on the coast, which sleeps all day in the crest of a palm tree and raids poultry runs all night.

The last visitor at the water-hole was a sambhur which is really a member of the axis family of deer, but is known in Ceylon as the elk. It is a huge and noble beast, with fine antlers, and this one made a splendid sight as it stood, its head well up, listening. After several seconds, in which he appeared to be trying to make up his mind to drink, apparently afraid of every shadow, he suddenly emitted a vibrant, belling note and pawed the ground furiously. However quietly he had come, he had now given notice to every creature within miles of his presence. Then he lowered his head and drank before vanishing as silently as he had come. The whole performance was completely contradictory.

The spotted deer moves about the low country in great herds and a graceful sight they present. They are not unlike the fallow deer in England, covered with white spots and very fleet of foot. Then there is a smaller edition known as the barking deer, a pretty beast, but not so captivating as his dwarf brother, the mouse deer. There were several of these tiny creatures—*Moschus meminna*—in the patanas behind my bungalow. They are veritable dwarfs, no larger than an airedale and, unfortunately, very good to eat. To see one of these graceful little deer dashing across a rock face is a charming sight. How anyone had the heart to kill them is beyond me.

I never encountered a loris, but as I heard so much about this curious little creature, I must make an exception to the rule laid down in my opening sentence and briefly describe it. It is known as the Ceylon sloth, and there are two species in the island, one brown and the other black. Its movements are those of a man in a slow-motion film, and this flowing method of approach so deceives birds that they are seized before they are aware of movement. But lorises feed chiefly upon insects, fruit and vege-

tables, and are almost entirely nocturnal in their habits. The villagers believe their tears to have power as love potions, a fact which gives rise to a revolting practice. The little beasts have singularly beautiful eyes, very large for their skinny little bodies, and the seekers after love potions hold their eyes close to scorching flame, making them weep copiously. These with, presumably, a mantram or two from the kappurala, form the philtre which makes the course of true love run smoothly.

Monkeys in the forest are a perpetual joy. The smallest is a macaque, or rilawa, brown with a tuft of hair upon his face and the most mobile features it is possible to imagine. He can be a great comedian when trained by the gipsies, but I hated to see him thus confined, just as I believe the Western world will awake, one day, to the disgusting anachronism of institutions known as zoos. But for the fact that our senses become dulled by custom, the mere sight of a tiger, curled up in heart-broken disdain in a cage, would sicken any ordinary kind English man or woman. But tigers have been kept in cages as long as anyone can remember. Why change?

There are four other kinds of monkey in Lanka, all wanderoos. I never tired of watching them and never ceased to thrill when a family decided to show me that locomotion through the trees was equal to that of a car through the jungle. Provided I kept my car at low speed, they would race along the marge of the jungle, almost in one sweeping movement, their babies clinging to the tuft of hair on their necks, delighted at the game their parents were playing. Their speed and control is little short of miraculous, but they do make mistakes. There are times when they miss a hold, or a bough breaks, and they fall. John Still records finding a monkey with a broken back, alive and full of fight, but doomed to an unspeakable death from the red ants that were already on its track. Of course he put it out of its misery at once, for, as he says, the jungle has no further use for its failures.

In the hills the wanderoos are larger than their gregarious cousins of the plains, larger and a trifle more pugnacious. I have been pelted with fruit by an irate family of these hill monkeys, though I do not know how I had sinned against them. They are said to be dangerous if roused, but I never heard of anyone being attacked by them other than by pelting, a common amusement with monkeys.

The grey ape of the northern and eastern provinces is the

largest of them all and even more gregarious, for he appears to wish to share human life at times, and becomes something of a nuisance to the people of Jaffna.

The Sinhalese believe that no one ever sees a dead monkey, by which they mean, of course, one that has died, or at any rate has not been killed by human agency. Certainly I have never seen one, but then the jungle gives short shrift to any dead thing. Death is just about the commonest occurrence of the day in the forest, but it is rarely that one comes upon its signs. Nevertheless there is a faint echo in this belief of the universal legend that elephants organize death and see to it that no member of their fraternity shall be left to lie where he dies. There is a place near Anuradhapura—a locality to which no one can give an exact geography—where elephants are reputed to go to die. Some such belief seems to me inevitable, for I never met a man who had come across so much as a single bone of a dead elephant, apart from elephants shot by hunters themselves. The bones of these animals are not inconsiderable but they disappear. Where? The elephant population of the northern plains is not inconsiderable either, in fact they swarm.

The majority of the accounts of Ceylon that I have read say little about the buffalo, but it is a splendid beast and more to be feared than any other after the bear. He is found in a wild state all over Lanka, but particularly in the central, northern and eastern provinces where are the abandoned lakes and canals and the vast fresh-water lagoons of the coast. All day long these powerful animals immerse themselves, with only their nostrils, eyes and ears above the water, or even the mud in which they love to wallow. Their feet are large, flat and spongy, admirably adapted by nature to take their cumbersome bulk through soft mud, and there is something very formidable about them when they are roused. I do not wonder at Valmiki's description in the *Ramayana* of the buffalo's charge, which he likens to the rush of the tiger. I am by no means certain that, in an encounter between these two beasts, the tiger would invariably win.

Once I saw a bull buffalo mate with a cow, a truly epic spectacle, with an atavistic thrill about it far removed from purely sexual pleasure. Before the consummation itself, the bull had had to dispose of a rival. The two roared at each other from a distance of a hundred yards or so, the desirable female waiting quietly—I swear with pleasurable interest—a little to one side. This was

courtship of a rough sort, but somehow going deep to the very roots of life. I must confess to a sort of pride in my own sex in the nobility of those two splendid beasts whose charge, when it came, was of unbelievable ferocity and speed. One of the pair was struck so exactly squarely by the other that it seemed to rise in the air before crashing into the mud, an astonishing sight. It lay there for a second, motionless. I thought it had been killed out of hand, and so I believe did the victor, for he stood staring at the fallen bull as if astonished at the completeness of his victory. Then quickly the vanquished rose to his feet and, obviously with no desire to try conclusions again, lumbered away across the marsh.

There are albino buffaloes, pure white in colour, as there are albino axis deer, mouse deer, elk and even elephants.

Jackals, called "nurri" by the Tamils, hunt in packs and obey the command of one leader. They have been known to pull down deer and they are bold enough to make themselves a nuisance to owners of poultry. The Sinhalese have a strange belief with regard to a small horn, covered by a tuft of hair, found in the skulls of some of these animals. The protuberance, known as the jackal-horn, is found, they say, only in the leaders of packs, and its possession is regarded as a great prize, for it is a charm of high potency.

The cries made by these slinking raiders when on the hunt are blood-curdling, a banshee chorus which strikes a chill to the heart. Across valleys miles in width this concerted howl penetrates with the same force as when the pack give tongue in one's very garden.

The ichneumon, or mongoose—sometimes known as the Ceylon badger—has gained a legendary reputation for cool courage in its encounters with its hereditary enemy, the snake. In fact there is one species of mongoose that never attacks a snake. The common sort, however, does, and with a sort of relish, as though enjoying the fight. The snake, on the other hand, seems to regard the issue as hopeless from the very first, at least in the encounters that I have seen, which were all staged by gipsies. The cobra springs with desperate speed at what it conceives to be the right moment, but it is invariably the wrong one, induced, I am certain, by the mongoose's trick of appearing to have lost interest in the proceedings. As soon as the snake strikes, however, the mongoose whips to one side and then fastens himself

upon the back of his unfortunate opponent, burying his teeth in the snake's brain.

The Sinhalese say that the mongoose has an antidote to snake poison, a belief caused, I think, from the fact that the little beast will often trot off into the brush and start eating grass or some herb. But I do not think that there is any scientific ground for the belief. The mongoose wins because he is quicker, although I am given to understand that he does not always win and sometimes pays the price of carelessness.

The tanks and even the ellas, or canals, of the low-country jungle teem with crocodiles, huge reptiles up to twenty feet or even more in length. There are two varieties, the larger frequenting the estuaries and rivers, the smaller living in the tanks and fresh-water lagoons. Neither are carnivorous in the proper sense of the word, but both would gratefully accept a cow, a dog, poultry or even a human being if chance sent such rich gifts. They are certainly prepared to wait their time in the shallows and then, with a sudden lunge, pull anything incautious enough to get within their reach into the deep waters of the lake or river.

During the dry season, when the smaller tanks dry out altogether and even the great ones shrink to mere pools, crocodiles make amazing cross-country journeys in search of relief. I met one walking resolutely along a jungle track three miles at least from the nearest tank, Yoda-wewa, in which water still remained. As a rule, however, they are content with burying themselves in the soft mud and hibernating there—if the term may be used of a land where there is no winter—until the rains come.

The brutes have very small brains and are correspondingly hard to kill. Twice I have presumed death in crocodiles and suffered rude disillusionment. The first time was when I took a twenty-yard snap shot at a semi-immersed crocodile and to my surprise saw the great snout stand up straight in the water, the preliminary to the death plunge. I paddled my rubber canoe to the spot and noosed my victim in some six feet of water. Paddling to the shore with my kill in tow, I received a surprise in the form of a tug, weak at first and then so strong that I was powerless to resist it. The brute had come to his senses and was making off, in the most determined way, in the opposite direction. Happily the effort was in fact a dying one, but it was an anxious moment,

for I had no wish to be precipitated into a tank, however shallow, which was filled with crocodiles always ready for an extra meal.

The second occasion was even more alarming. A friend of mine, with whom I was spending a few days in the jungle, shot a crocodile which remained dead all the afternoon. Towards evening we stowed the corpse in the back of a baby car—a very early model—and set out for the rest-house at Hambantota. For twenty miles our passenger remained quiescent and then began to thrash about in the tiny back seat in no uncertain manner. The speed with which my friend brought the car to a halt was equalled only by the haste with which we flung ourselves out of it, for the thrashing tail of a crocodile is one of the most powerful incentives to action that may be found.

Lanka is an island of bats, from the huge fruit bats known as "flying foxes" to the tiny little fellows, hardly larger than a thumbnail, that call on the occupants of bungalows with every appearance of having been invited. No matter where a man travels in this island of gneiss, he is never far from rocks, cliffs and caves, a paradise not merely for man. At sunset these dark recesses disgorge their armies of bats in search of their daily bread. Twilight is their hour, and for insects, for all things in fact with wings. As lamps gleam out in the homes of people all over the island, the countless multitudes of the winged insect world flock to them, lured by a mysterious attraction. Then the air is filled with swooping bats, the swish of their wings and their tiny, high-pitched squeals creating a positive commotion as they gorge themselves to repletion.

Tennent says that there are sixteen species of cheiroptera, of which two are peculiar to Ceylon. Incidentally, some of them are as brilliantly coloured as the birds.

The "flying fox," or rousette, is a fascinating creature, particularly when seen on a fruit tree in season. Then you may study him, with countless of his own kind, as they fasten on the fruit, making the most deafening noise, like an army of frightened hens. He measures as much as four feet from wing tip to wing tip and has, I believe, fewer joints in his frame than any comparable creature. Thus, if he is placed on the ground, he cannot walk, and if he is rolled on to his side, he cannot even fly. During the daytime he hangs upside down from a branch fast asleep, but with the advent of evening he awakes and the rumpus is comparable to that made by a colony of rooks in

England. This bat appears to have no fear of human beings, for I have seen a tree in the busiest part of Colombo burdened almost to breaking point with rousettes. When feeding they know no moderation, and on certain kinds of fruit they manage to get themselves dead drunk as do bronzewing pigeons. One of the most amazing sights I have seen in my life was a kong tree in fruit, in the southern province, covered with a living, faintly seething mass of bronzewings. As I watched, first one and then another of these lustrous birds fell languidly to the ground, as fuddled as a judge. Within the space of minutes, the ground was covered with a squirming mass of birds, hopelessly drunk.

This regrettable human frailty is shared too by the splendid jungle fowl of Lanka. These fowl, delicious as table birds, suffer some sort of toxic effect if they eat too much of the nelu flower, which they invariably do when they can find it. They are then in no state to fly and can be caught by hand.

There are squirrels in profusion in the island, one of which is happily named the "flying" squirrel. If by flying is meant propulsion through the air, this attractive little beast is not a flyer, but it possesses a thin membrane, packed with all the cunning of a parachute, which bellies open when he takes a long leap. He is thus enabled to travel long distances through the air, landing on distant branches as though he knew the precise branch at which he had been aiming. Perhaps he does. The little red squirrels may be found anywhere, perky and attractive as their English brethren.

The bandicoot is a cross between a small pig and a large rat. It is over two feet long and has a long nose for grubbing out roots and tubers, and it is disconcertingly rat-like in appearance. The true rat is very destructive and sometimes moves with his kind in huge swarms, rather terrifying to see. He is no more popular in the East than anywhere else and the lowest form of epithet is to call a man a rat. The gipsy caste known as rodiyas, or rat-eaters, who do in fact eat rats, will always hastily deny the fact unless caught at it. They split the beasts open and fry them in fat, and are adept at catching them even when their presence is unsuspected by anyone else.

Ordinary village cows and oxen are frankly mysterious animals which appear to have no known use in places where they are not used as beasts of burden. The gentle creed of Gotama is not carried to its logical conclusion in Ceylon, where animals, as a

whole, receive shocking treatment. These little oxen, for example, are undersized, underfed, neglected and ill-treated to an extent that would bring instant prosecution in Britain. It is part of a national failing, this indifference to the well-being of animals. It does not seem to occur to Sinhalese villagers, however much they may profess to believe that they themselves, in their next incarnation, may be oxen, that the little beasts have feelings. They are left to fend for themselves, and, apart from the fact that the Buddhist will not take life, he appears to have no respect for life whatever. It is a curious anomaly, but it is also, from a purely material standpoint, very shortsighted. The oxen are a case in point. They pull gharries—small, two-wheeled traps—they struggle as beasts of burden, or—more frequently—they just wander about the roads and fields of the island without restraint, but they are never well cared for or properly fed. They are, therefore, possibly twenty per cent efficient, rather like Sinhalese rice production or the average native-owned tea estate. Covered with sores, prone to die of disease, useless for milk production or meat, the little village cow of Ceylon is valuable only as a barometer of the social progress of the island.

The pangolin, or scaly ant-eater, is the only specimen of "edentata" in the island. His name is derived from Malay words meaning an ability to roll into a ball, which is what happens when the creature sleeps. The Sinhalese call it kabballaya, not to be confused with the giant lizard known as a kabragoya.

Hares abound in the up-country patanas but, perhaps fortunately, the rabbit is unknown in Lanka, as is the sheep, with the exception of a queer, rangy-looking brute called a sheep which lives in the Jaffna peninsula and nowhere else.

Lizards are cheery little fellows. I must confess to a partiality for them since the days when loneliness drove me to cultivate the companionship of a gekko.

The iguana, known as the tallagoya to the Sinhalese, grows to a length of five feet and his flesh is much prized, particularly by the jungle people, who hunt him with dogs specially trained for the task. The kabragoya is even larger, over six feet at his biggest, with a partiality for marshy land. He will take to the water if pursued, a sort of land crocodile, but although the villagers believe his fat to have healing virtues, his flesh is not edible. Indeed, it is said to be poisonous. It seems strange to me

that this lizard, which is not found anywhere in India, is common in Burma.

From these giants down to the tiny gekko, or house lizard, there is a whole range of intermediate types. Bloodsuckers do not derive their name from any desire to suck blood. They are green lizards which, when angry, change colour, the blood rushing to the head so to speak. Their head and throat turn a brilliant scarlet, while their green body changes to yellow. The chameleon, of course, can change to any colour which suits his fancy, but is not common except in the north of the island. Gekkos are found anywhere, attractive, perky and swift, dashing about with quick, short rushes, supremely self-assured as though well aware that the people of the land hold them in awe. So do the Tamils. My boy was wont to chide me anxiously for braving the sounded warning of the house lizard, which I did frequently and always without fatal results. Once a gekko fell on me from the roof—a warning of death—and the boy saw the occurrence. He implored me not to leave the bungalow that day. The fact that I went my rounds as usual and that the worst did not occur made no impression upon Kandasamy, who remained certain that the gekko was right and that I was wrong to ignore the warning.

These little creatures have pneumatic pads on their feet which enable them to run about upside down on the ceiling. If, as frequently happens, they become preoccupied, they lose their grip and fall to the floor with a resounding smack, whereupon they pick themselves up again and dart away, leaving their tails behind them in their agitation. It takes some time for the new tail to grow.

They are very useful for keeping insects down, but have startling methods of dealing with their victims, particularly moths which they seize in their jaws and then proceed to beat out their brains against the roof with a loud, knocking sound. There is one species of moth which screams while it is having its life dashed out, a most unpleasant accompaniment to an evening meal.

Snakes are a disappointment to the romantically inclined. They are rarely seen except in one's first tense days when a walk alone through the roaring tropic night is a huge adventure. Then, it must be confessed, one is inclined to see anything. But normally they are heard—in the roof in particular—but rarely

seen. The coolies sum up this fact in one of their pithy, common-sense sayings which is to the effect that "only he who fears snakes sees them."

The largest snake I ever saw was a python, some twenty feet long. Pythons were known, formerly, as anacondas, and they achieved a reputation, in the bad old days of exaggeration, which it is distressing to have to refute. They are not to be trifled with by any means, but their diet rarely achieves more heroic proportions than a small goat, chickens, or an occasional pariah dog. That they could crush the life out of a man I do not for one moment doubt, but he would have to chase them hard to get himself entangled in their coils for, as with almost any jungle creature, they are naturally timid. There are very few cases on record of Europeans being killed by any kind of snake in Ceylon annals.

Nevertheless there was one kind which I feared heartily and, in accordance with the coolies' dictum, I did see it and did, in fact, inadvertently corner it. This was a ticpolonga, one of the four poisonous breeds in Ceylon, the others being the carawilla, which I never saw, the cobra, which I saw more than any other kind of snake, and another serpent so rare that it has no name. The bite of the ticpolonga is almost certainly fatal if one waits to be bitten. In my case I had closed my bathroom door too suddenly during a long drought in which snakes in particular were getting desperate for water. The room was very small and I found myself on the wrong side of the door, sharing my bathroom with a ticpolonga. These unpleasant brutes jump at their opponents, and with this in mind I waited not upon the order of my going but plunged, fully clothed, into my bath. From thence I opened the window and leapt into the garden.

The cobra, a faint-hearted snake, is considered sacred both by the Buddhists and the Brahmins. I am quite sure, in my own mind, that this deification—for it is nothing less—is the old Naga cult, or worship of serpents, which is not only older than both faiths but retains its hold upon the masses even to this day. The Sinhalese say that there are four kinds of cobra, the rajah, or king cobra, the vellianda or merchant, goar or agriculturist, and babuna, the hermit snake. They all looked alike to me. One of the many stories about cobras I can verify, and that is the belief that, if one kills a cobra, its mate will come in search of it. This is undeniably true. Apart from the mongoose, the

unfortunate "nulla parmbu" has another inveterate and deadly enemy—a wasp. This small blue insect settles on the cobra's head if given the chance and, stinging it through the brain, kills it. Cobras are said to be good swimmers and have been known to take long trips, stirred no doubt by a spirit of adventure, out to sea.

The rat snake is so like the cobra—although it has no hood to erect if teased and is of a lighter green colour—that one receives occasional shocks if one lives in a very old bungalow which is infested with rats. Rat snakes haunt the roofs of such buildings and are so little afraid of human beings that, although rarely seen, they exhibit no fear when they are. To hear a rat snake thrashing about in one's rafters and the squeals of its victims is an unpleasant experience at first, but one to which the planter becomes acclimatized. In modern bungalows there are, of course, no rats and therefore no rat snakes, but in the villages many houses consider their rat snake as a member of the family. Indeed many villagers domesticate them and feed them at regular intervals to see that they do not take up residence elsewhere.

Another family exists which is neither serpent nor lizard, although it looks uncomfortably like the former. Schlegel calls them "false snakes" for ease of nomenclature, and the name is certainly descriptive.

Some species of snakes in Ceylon take to the trees in search of food, but it is not primarily tree-snake country. One does not have to keep one's eyes open for dangling snakes when passing through the forest. In fact I saw only one snake up a tree in fourteen years. There are many water snakes, too, most of them living in fresh-water lagoons and tanks in the interior, but they are all harmless.

The frogs and toads, which give such an astonishing nightly performance from the paddy fields, swamps, lakes and rivers of Lanka, are legion. I have seen, indeed I made friends with, a toad certainly six and probably eight inches in height, and the harsh diapason of his conversation gave me an insight into the immense rolling waves of sound that come from flooded rice-fields at night. There were frogs so small that it was almost possible to mistake them for the crickets which contribute so brave a tenor to the bass of the frogs in the nocturnal symphony of the tropics.



The basket makers of Kalutara



Lands End. Dondra Head light-house, last outpost of terra firma before the South Pole is reached

I feel something akin to helpless despair in attempting any description of the pullulating insect life of the new Dominion. Because it is an island, neither too large nor too small, with a temperate climate but with moist heat and a fecundity of tropical growth possibly equalled but nowhere eclipsed, Ceylon is the perfect laboratory for nature's experiments—ants and spiders, flies and eyeflies, bees and hornets, moths and beetles, an endless army of a form of life that remains for ever indifferent to the alien world of human existence.

To me the ants were marvellous beyond measure, inhabiting a world as diverse, and lords of an organization almost as vast, as any invented by man. I never ceased to forget my worries in watching these dauntless insects, particularly their armies on the march, complete with skirmishers and scouts, sentinels and dispatch riders, with workers and warriors. The huge mounds that they build are cities of wonder, but there are so many varieties of these incredible creatures, from the tiny darting black ant to the clumsy pregnant termite queen, twice as large as and infinitely more obscene than the largest slug, that only a book could hope to explain them in full.

The red ant is the bane of plucking coolies, building his great nest of leaves, most cunningly woven into a ball the size of a coconut, in the tea bushes. Tea fields have a dense cover of bushes between the rows of which the coolies have to push their way and they cannot see under the top "table" of the bushes as a rule. But when they have the misfortune to brush against one of these nests the fat is in the fire. Disturbed, every ant rushes out to the attack, and the serrated mandibles of these vicious insects inflict a most painful though not poisonous bite. To receive the contents of a nest on one's person is terrifying, a terror eclipsed only by pursuit by a swarm of hornets or bambara bees.

Flying ants, too, are fascinating. Strictly speaking they are not ants at all but termites, and in a sense they are the silliest and most helpless of God's creatures. They sally forth from the nest—fat, white succulent bodies to which are attached large, flimsy wings—in countless hordes. In the evening, after heavy rain in the early monsoon, one may see them taking to the air in wandering, wavering hordes, in countless millions. The twilight air is filled with them and the soft, raspy hum of their temporary wings. And then it is a marvellous sight to see the swallows, the martins, the weaving, darting bats, as they

tumble, flash and whirl their way through this bountiful provision of Providence. Even the coolies like these helpless insects for their curry. They have no defence of any kind. Instinct drives them forth, male and female, and for a very brief spell they are given the power of flight, mating as they fly. Once mated the role of the male is ended and, having fulfilled himself, he dies. Of the swarming millions of females, only a handful survive the countless perils of their journey, living to create new colonies and perpetuate the species by the same wasteful process. It is an odd experience to light your lamp at a time when the flying ants are migrating and leave all windows wide open. Soon they will come, making, with what perverted instinct one can only guess, for a false light. Before long the room is full of them and the air quivers to the strange, slightly eerie rasping of their wings as the process of discarding them commences.

Termites destroy wood to such an extent that, if left unattended or if wood is not treated with protectives, a house may be eaten through in a matter of months. The problem is not such a large one in modern times for large-scale buildings, as wood is not an important component of such erections, but the villages have not changed from earliest times and wood is extensively used for the huts of the villagers.

Bees and hornets both find Ceylon very much to their liking. The bambara bees provide a delicious honey and the swarms are much coveted. Hornets are not so popular and indeed they can be very dangerous even to human life if roused. It is said that half a dozen stings from a few members of a swarm can be fatal and, having endured a single sting, I can well believe it. Wasps are not so common, the little mason wasp being the most commonly noticed. This insect has the curious habit of filling up cavities, including keyholes, with a red clay. Inside the enclosed space so formed it deposits the pupa of some other insect within which it has injected its own eggs.

Of spiders the island is so prolific that one was for ever discovering strange creatures apparently widely different from any hitherto noticed. The most feared was the tarantula, vile and intimidating in appearance but much maligned for its vindictiveness. The largest was anything up to eight inches across in span, a revolting-looking creature that caused one to shudder, more with disgust than with fear. As far as human beings are concerned, I never heard of anyone having been hurt by a tarantula.

In the early mornings the dew shows up the empire of the spiders in a flashing, scintillating world unbelievably widespread. Their webs seem to be on every tree and bush, across paths, strung from rock to rock, a perpetual snare for the armies of the winged things that use the highways of the air.

Butterflies are not fond of sunlight. They prefer the shady places and the damp, dark places of the woods where the light has a deep green quality rather like a stage spotlight. Their variety is endless, as though in no department of the cosmic experiment had the Creator so given reign to the glory of improvisation as with these heavenly creatures and their nocturnal brothers, the moths. Yet although there are so many varieties, the butterfly is probably the most rarely seen of all the living things of the tropics. To see them at their favourite pastime of flirting with the spray of a waterfall, or hovering over the quiet depths of a rockpool, is entirely satisfying as an experience. The largest species is an enormous black and yellow butterfly at least six inches across, and the smallest, of a lustrous, periwinkle blue, would be lost in the middle of a farthing. The moths are far more numerous and, I should imagine, with a greater variety of species. The atlas moth, if encountered suddenly, is a little frightening, for its wings are more than a foot in width from tip to tip, as are those of the silk moth. There are many other silk-producing moths in Ceylon, but since the time of the Dutch no effort has been made to establish silk production as an industry. Other moths are so varied and so numerous that I have no doubt whatever that many of them still remain to be "discovered."

Bugs, fleas, mosquitoes, centipedes, millipedes, ticks, leeches, eyeflies and flies live in endless profusion to bedevil the human inhabitants of Paradise Island, no doubt to remind them that, although Adam was given a lovely earthly substitute, the genuine Paradise has merits denied to the terrestrial one. There is some sort of providence about the distribution of this vast mass of insect life, for in dry zones where the disgusting tick abounds, leeches are not found, and conversely, where leeches live in abundance the tick is absent. Mosquitoes, too, are not generally found above the two-thousand-feet line, and are discouraged altogether if a little care is taken and measures instituted to remove them.

From the bite of the mosquito comes malarial infection, but

happily for mankind it is only a tiny proportion of these insects that are capable of carrying the disease. These are known as anopheles and if they could be exterminated malaria would disappear as the scourge of the East. Tea estates take very considerable precautions and markedly reduce the incidence of malaria by oiling the stagnant pools of streams, old garbage in which water can linger and standing water in line-room drains. This destroys the larvæ and the mosquito disappears. But precautions such as these are taken only by the European-owned estates, which form only a small proportion of the inhabited acreage of the island. The rest pursues its usual policy of *laisser faire* and the scourge is universal.

Only one of the many scorpions of Ceylon is dangerous, but that one is very dangerous indeed. It is nearly a foot in length, of a dark purple colour, with strong armour-plating and a fighting disposition. The bite is poisonous, extremely painful, but only fatal if the victim of the bite is not in good health. There are many smaller scorpions, which have an unpleasant habit of secreting themselves in the toes of slippers and other unexpected places, and the newcomer to the tropics soon gets into the habit of shaking everything in the way of clothing before he dons it.

The giant millipede appalled me more than any other form of life, I think, in the tropics. It is surely one of the most disgusting of God's creatures in appearance, but, as is so often the case, appearances are deceptive for it leads a blameless life. The largest, which rightly could claim the name of centipede, for it has about one hundred legs, is some eight inches in length. I felt a sort of nausea whenever I saw this bloated insect and wanted to sprint madly in the opposite direction, but people of sterner stuff take it up in their hands, for it has no bite at all.

There is something obscene about the leech, of which there are, very roughly, three types and a score of different species. The land leech, happily, dislikes the low-country plains of the dry zone and is found only in the damp vegetation and on the edge of swamps. It never takes to the water at all, contrary to popular belief. The leech seen in pools and tanks is of another breed, the water leech, and fastens itself to the nostrils of drinking beasts. The land leech, the commonest variety, is about an inch in length and, in its gorged state, about an inch in width also. It has no legs but possesses a sucker at one end, on which it can erect the whole length of the body which waves about, the

four eyes in the thin end searching for oncoming prey. When the creature wishes to move, which it can do at considerable speed, it progresses in a series of loops, using its nose to balance upon while heaving its bulk forward. Having seen its victim, the advance of the leech is a revolting sight. Their strength is that they are not seen or heard—they advance under cover of vegetation and their progress makes no noise at all—and having fastened themselves to their victim, man, woman, child or any kind of beast, they can slip through any protective covering. Their initial bite is not noticed, and indeed they often drink their fill of blood and roll off, distended balls, without being noticed. But if one should see them and strike them off, they leave their teeth behind and the result is certain to be a poisoned bite. A lighted match applied to them causes them to curl up, one hopes in agony, and depart, taking their teeth with them. The Sinhalese carry a piece of lime with them. One touch from its astringent juice and the leech falls off, discouraged.

The second type of leech is the water leech already mentioned, and the third is the horse leech, a giant some three inches in length. Of these foul creatures John Still records a dreadful story. A man who went exploring by himself in the wilderness of the Peak fell from a tree and hurt his spine. He could only crawl. In low-country jungle, however painful his progress might have been, he would have had a sporting chance of reaching home, but in that damp forest the leeches attacked him. When his body was discovered, no drop of blood remained in any of his veins.

Of the fishes to be found in the seas, estuaries, lagoons, tanks and rivers of Lanka I am grossly ignorant. Frequently whales are to be seen blowing some miles out to sea, particularly in the Bay of Bengal, and to watch the fishermen drawing in their colossal nets, hundreds of yards in length, which they drape across a whole bay, is a fascinating sight. It takes an hour or more to pull the nets in and, as the catch approaches the shore, the water becomes quite smooth from the masses of bodies beneath it. Brilliant-coloured fish of all shapes and sizes are taken, wonderful creatures of the deep, but not many of them are edible.

I think if I were to be offered my next life as one of the castes of Sinhalese peasant life I should choose that of a fisherman. The life is not without its hazards. To see the frail catamarans—outrigger canoes with a single powerful sail—putting out to sea is

to realize that courage is a vital essential for this work, for if and when sudden tropical storms arise, the tiny craft are hard put to it to remain afloat. Losses, as with fishermen all over the world, are not light. But the men seem the most carefree people I have ever encountered, full of fun, always ready to laugh, with an ability to do nothing at all which verges upon genius. The fishermen of Hambantota, many of whom are Malays, work about one day in four, taking out their handy little craft into the sunset of one day and returning as late as noon the next, and the rest of their time they sleep, eat, make love, lounge about the beach and spend hours in the tepid sea. They shout and splash like so many schoolboys and, for Orientals, are good swimmers and neat divers.

When they return with their catches, the whole small town turns out to see what has happened and an impromptu market is held at once on the beach. The children dance about, shouting, chasing each other and yelling with laughter as some strange piscatorial freak is thrown at them by one of their elders. The cares of the Western world are unknown to this happy, indolent, humorous and brave race. Long may they remain unknown.

The seir fish is a large item in the diet of the Europeans in Lanka. It is not unlike a salmon. Of English fish, mackerel, whiting and sole are caught and are good to eat, but they lack the quality of their northern brethren. Crabs, prawns and lobsters, on the other hand, are perhaps even better than those of Britain, and one of the famous "fish tiffins" of such places as Hambantota rest-house is an epicurean education.

Sharks—the tigers of the deep—are a constant peril all round the shores of the island. They are bold raiders and not infrequently carry someone off, but they do not like noise. The shouting and splashing of native bathers is not due entirely to carefree happiness but is partly protective.

The sawfish is an ugly customer. I can believe it to be the match of any marine monster, for its rush is terrific and the razor-sharp saw projecting from its proboscis would, I imagine, rip clean through the bottom of a catamaran.

The most astonishing fish of all the gaudy beauties landed by the fishermen of Hambantota is known to them as the flower parrot, for obvious reasons. Its colouring is brilliant, the hues even more vivid than those with which the feathers of the halcyon are dyed. Whether it is good to eat or not I do not know.

One of the freak fishes of Ceylon is known as the climbing fish. It is a species of perch which, when necessity drives it, such as the final drying out of a tank, climbs the banks of the pool and travels across country in search of other water. They are said to have been found up trees, with what purpose no one has been able to guess.

I never saw a dugong, said to be similar to the manatee of northern waters. It is found in the waters of the Jaffna archipelago, and its resemblance to a woman is supposed to have given rise to the belief in mermaids. Certainly the Dutch caught one of these creatures and sent it home to be dissected. The subsequent report said that it conformed in every particular with the human skeleton but one can conclude from this astonishing statement only a stubborn refusal to admit, in public, an honest mistake.

Edible turtles, sometimes five feet in length, are found in the north-western shores of the island, where they emerge to lay their eggs. The "bulls" stay in the sea rather than risk the perils of dry land, for the turtle has many natural enemies.

Tortoiseshell is taken from the back of the living creature, the hawksbill, an inhuman practice that finds perpetual encouragement from the popularity of the product.

Finally, in the fresh-water tanks and marshes terrapins swarm.

The birds of Ceylon are enchanting. Hardly a memory of the island comes back to me in which birds are entirely absent, by day or by night. I am informed that, from the naturalist's point of view, they are a little disappointing, but I cannot believe that anywhere in the world is there a happier bird life than in the new Dominion. Yet, curiously, one's first impression is of a lack of bird life apart from the strident and ubiquitous crows. In the hills, too, there are curious blanks in which nothing seems to be happening in the feathered world. And then come days when their colour, grace and infinite variety captivate the eye and haunt the inner recesses of memory.

There are, I am told, over four hundred known varieties of birds in the island, forty of which are not found elsewhere. While there are no songsters to compare with the incomparable thrush, blackbird and nightingale of Britain, there is a far wider range of melodious calls, many of them having curiously distinct notation as if composed especially for the flute. On the other hand, nowhere among British birds is there quite so shock-

ing a sound as the strident scream of that superb bird, the peafowl.

You may see the peafowl in flocks of fifty or more birds in low-country jungles. The spread fans of their tails are dazzling to the eye but their eldritch screech is most hurtful to the ear. Peafowl is delicious to eat, but I could never bring myself to destroy so beautiful a thing.

The hornbill, or Ceylon toucan, is surely one of the strangest of all the feathered tribe. He is usually to be seen on the highest branches of all hanging out his beak, say the Sinhalese, for the raindrops, since he cannot drink in any other way. The female builds her nest in a hole in a tree trunk, and then she must take her farewell from the frivolities of life, for her stern partner proceeds to wall up the aperture so that only her beak can protrude. With this formidable weapon she can fight off the monkeys, her only natural foes, but she has to stay in her home from that time onwards and the villagers say that she loses her power of flight. The flesh of the male is eaten as a specific against rheumatism, and one of the oddities of this strange bird is that it eats nux vomica—the strychnine plant—not merely with impunity but with relish.

The tailor bird twists together a cotton thread and with it sews together leaves as neatly as any human seamstress to make her nest. It is a constructive marvel.

The woods of Lanka abound in jungle fowl and pigeons. The Ceylon jungle fowl, which cannot live in captivity, is a wary bird and difficult to shoot, but is excellent eating when it is shot. It has an early-morning cry so clear that it seems to be part of the dew, the clarity, the cool, clear perfection of a jungle sunrise. There is one disease incurred by sojourn in Ceylon for which no remedy has been found, and that is nostalgia. It is many years now since I had an attack of malaria, but nostalgia becomes more frequent and more potent with the passing of the years. And always the first symptoms are the smell of the jungle in the early morning and the sound of jungle fowl, doves and pigeons.

Of these latter birds there are a score of different varieties, some of which are said never to alight on the ground. They are all frugivorous birds, gentle, soothing and invariably beautiful.

Barbets, woodpeckers, owls, humming birds, bulbuls, parakeets, snipe, quail, oriole, magpie, robin, starlings, wagtails, the

cotton-thief—darting, weaving, flashing in the sun, the forests are bird-infested. And yet the glory of the bird life of Lanka is not so much in its wonderful forest and mountain birds as in the wealth of waterbirds with which the lagoons of the coast, the estuaries, rivers, tanks and canals of the island are infested.

The mud flats of the coast, particularly in the regions uninhabited by man, are absolutely astonishing. Storks, herons, spoonbills, egrets, flamingoes, teal, ducks, terns and gulls wheel, stand or march in countless multitudes. Pelicans gather largely in the estuaries, standing in wait for the passing fish, but they are to be seen, too, as are egrets, storks and flamingoes, in the shallows of the abandoned irrigation tanks.

I have left the best until the last, for all that is most gracious and lovely in nature is to be found in the vast lost tanks of Lanka in the last half-hour before the setting of the sun. The sky has its most wonderful moment then—metal blue and lighter blue, merging into saffron, and shot with streamers of brilliant gold, sometimes in a clearly defined aureola—and is doubly lovely in that it lives again in the surface of the lake. The forest, too, dark, luxurious and brooding but momentarily benign, narcissus-like finds a moment to glance at its own reflection in the mirror of the water. The shallows are broken by the spears of vegetation which serrate the surface of the water, with large areas covered entirely by the flat lotus leaves across which jacantha pheasants dart as though on firm land. The manifold hostilities of the wild seem, for a breathing space, to be suspended. I have seen deer standing in the shallows as if relaxed, while crocodiles basked openly on adjacent sandbanks and buffaloes flicked their ears at the clouding gnats. Monkeys were swarming in the trees, leaping about the branches within a few inches of the surface of the lake. They scolded and gambolled, throwing the rinds of fruit at the submerged buffaloes, gesticulating and chattering, as demonstrably happy as any creatures, human or otherwise, may hope to be. The steel-blue surface of the tank close at hand broke into ripples as fish jumped or were snapped at by crocodiles.

I was waiting, at the time, for the return of whistling teal, standing nearly up to my waist in the blood-warm water, sheltered from the sight of living things by the rotting stump of a tree. As the teal came flighting past, calling busily to each other, the rest of the teeming bird life of the tank awoke to clamorous life. It induced in me a feeling of wonder and awe, yes, and of

worship. My tracker implored me to take toll of the calling birds, now dropping lower in their circling, ready to rest on the water with flotillas of other water fowl already there, but I could not. It was no time for killing. Far out in some shallows walked a line of splendid flamingoes, a solitary egret, snowy white, stood apart on a boulder, while, from the jungle close at hand, burst a squabbling, joyous rabble of parakeets. Above my head a hawk hung motionless in the sky, now flushing a deeper red, selecting with his telescopic eye his evening meal.

That lost and lonely tank, saturated with the unnoticed beauty of the wilds, will always remain in my memory as a symbol of the ancient glory and the present fascination of the new Dominion.

EPILOGUE

CHAPTER XVI

GUIDE BOOK

IT may be that the new rulers of Ceylon have strong views on the inevitable vulgarization of a country which results from a policy of encouraging the tourist trade. They may have taken the decision—and who can say that it is not a wise one?—that the dignity and beauty of the island must be maintained even to the detriment of economics. Those are matters that the future alone can reveal. Meanwhile it must be clear to the most superficial investigation that the British did little to publicize this, the loveliest island in the world, and neglected; with that intense concentration upon their own affairs which is one of the indictments of their otherwise beneficial rule; to make any but rudimentary arrangements for the comfort of visitors.

I have no doubt, in my own mind, that the attractions of this one small island have no rival elsewhere, for the most catholic of tastes must marvel at the immensity of interests, the never-failing beauty and the perpetual summer with which the Pearl of the East has been blessed by nature. Palm-fringed shores, surf-riding, deep-sea fishing, coral lagoons, a wide range of tropical vegetation and agriculture, buried cities, jungle, up-country moors with trout streams, hill stations, gems, a good road system, flora and fauna to delight collectors and a ceaseless cornucopia of wonderful views, all these things are blushing largely unseen at this moment. The run up to Kandy, a perfunctory rush to Anuradhapura, a week-end at Nuwara Eliya and some first-rate sea bathing at Mount Lavinia seven miles from Colombo, these are the beaten tracks offered to tourists at the present time. While visitors look at these things they are plagued, robbed and mobbed ceaselessly by touts, hiring-car drivers, rickshaw coolies and vendors of indifferent or fake jewellery. In Colombo, the capital city, there is nothing to entertain them apart from some swimming-baths at the Galleface Hotel, and no inducements whatever to the casual tourist to

postpone his departure for a few weeks to see what Ceylon has to offer. Means of communication in Colombo are bad and, in other parts of the island, shocking. Without a private car, a visit to Batticoloa is all but impossible, and accommodation in places off the accepted tourist round is so poor that a man must be keen indeed to risk it.

Even before the war the tourist trade of the island was paltry, beneath contempt. A handful of Europeans from India and perhaps as many again from Australia were all that could find the time to spend a holiday in Ceylon. Americans on world tours arrived in Colombo, dashed round the usual tourist route and departed in haste, shocked by the subhuman standard of comfort provided, disgusted by the food and deeply resentful of the rapacity of all with whom they came into contact. In all the years I spent in Uva, I do not recollect the arrival of any visitors into that breezy province apart from those invited to enjoy the personal hospitality of planters.

And yet, if there be merit in such a thing, I am certain that Ceylon could be made, with little expenditure, the most lovely, serene and fascinating holiday island in the East, perhaps in the world, without sacrifice of dignity and permitting no interference with the immemorial life of her people.

Name

Some hint of Ceylon's place in the historical sun is conveyed by the extraordinary number of names bestowed upon it by countries throughout Asia and Europe.

Since in the *Ramayana* (see pp. 18–20) the island was the centre of the god Rama's activities, it is highly renowned among Hindus. The Brahmins have always known it as LANKA, although they maintain that nearly all the original land of that name has sunk beneath the waves. It is by this name, however, that it is best known to the Sinhalese, for in the ages before Wijayo they themselves were Hindus.

TAPROBANE is the name bestowed upon Ceylon by the Greeks, either from the Pali "tamba vanna," meaning "copper-coloured" in reference to the red earth that attached itself to the hands of Wijayo when he and his followers, weary and sea-sick, first rested on Lanka's shores, or the Sanskrit "tambrapani,"

the "pond covered with red lotus" (see p. 40). Ptolemy speaks of it as SIMUNDU and SALIKE, while the Moors knew it as TENERISIM, the "Isle of Delight," and the Tamils as ILANARE. The early Portuguese called it variously TRANTE, CAPHANE, or HIBERNARD, and the Chinese PA-OU-TCHOW, the "Isle of Gems," but it was known to the Sinhalese themselves as SINHALADWIPA, the "Island of the Lion race," a corruption of which probably gave Ptolemy his SALIKE. From the Sinhalese name it became corrupted by the Arabs to SELEDIBA, SERENDIVA, and SERENDIB. This the Portuguese turned into CEILAO, the Dutch ZEILAN and the British CEYLON. It is possible that by the time this book is printed the island will have reverted once more to its ancient title of LANKA.

POSITION

Ceylon is separated from the southernmost part of India by the Palk Strait. It lies between North 5° 55′ and 9° 51′ and East 79° 41′ and 81° 54′, wholly within the tropic of Cancer.

SIZE

Extreme length of the island is 271½ miles from north to south, with a mean width of 100 miles and an extreme width of 137½ miles. It has a total area of 25,332 square miles, of which the mountain zone, known as the Kandyan country, covers 4,212 square miles.

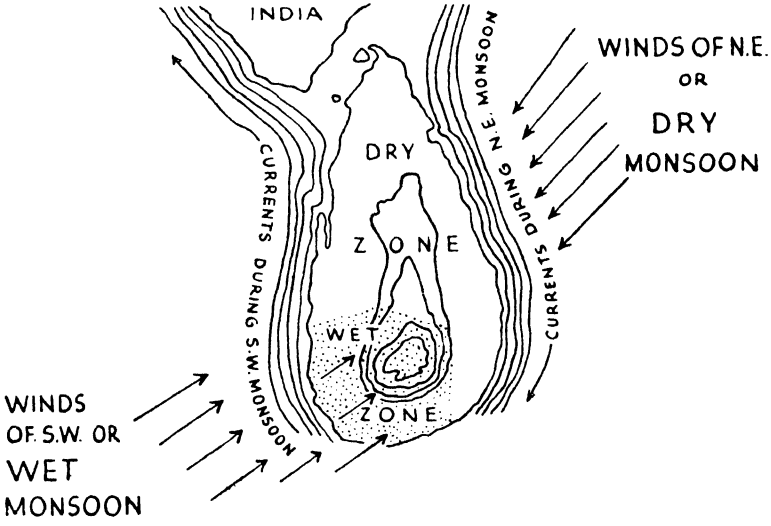
CLIMATE

Since the island is almost on the Equator, the rays of the sun fall upon it very steeply and the climate, which varies hardly at all in the low country, would be very hot but for the fact that no part of Ceylon is more than sixty miles from the sea. It is in the doldrums, or belt of equatorial calms, and rarely experiences high winds. There are no "seasons" in the low country, but the two monsoons, or prevailing winds, produce two zones, the wet and the dry zones.

From October to May the prevailing monsoon winds are from

the north-east, and for the rest of the year they come from the south-west. The north-east monsoon, being a land wind—the last part of its journey from the land masses of Asia is across the relatively small sea area of the Bay of Bengal—has lost most of its rain content by the time it arrives in Lanka. What rain it picks up on its last swift passage across the sea is quickly expended. It is known, therefore, as the DRY MONSOON.

The south-west winds, however, sweep across thousands of miles of ocean wastes, picking up water all the time and meeting the great mountain core of the island soon after crossing its shores. Rain descends in torrents upon all that area to the west and south-west of the hills which the mountains cover. This, therefore, is the WET MONSOON.



WEATHER CHART FOR WET ZONE

January	Occasional showers. Hot, dry, disagreeable. Cool nights.
February	Dry and hot. Less rain than January. Cool nights.
March	Hot and oppressive. Hardly any rain at all. Hot nights. Thunder at the end of the month.

April Very hot, sultry, and unpleasant in the low country. The hottest month of the year, with signs of a coming change. Vivid lightning.

May Break of the SOUTH-WEST MONSOON. Terrific lightning and banks of cloud. About half-way through the month the rains arrive, with all the attendant phenomena of tropical storms, almost frightening in their violence. For a time the rainfall is fantastic in its violence, the very noise of the downpour being so great that ordinary conversation is sometimes impossible. The result of all this upon parched earth and precipitous mountains may be imagined. Bridges roads, trees are swept away. Floods maroon large sections of countryside. These terrific rains seldom last more than an hour or two each day. The sunsets are absolutely magnificent.

June Not quite so hot as May. The monsoon abates its violence somewhat, but maintains constant and heavy rainfall in the wet zone. By the time the clouds have battered themselves on the lofty central cone of mountains, however, there is no rain left for the dry zone.

July The same as June, but a little less violent.

August The rains have now abated. The weather is very hot, but fair.

September Slightly cooler than August. Most of the time very fine weather with cool nights. Towards the end of the month increased rain.

October Winds veer to the north. The weather now becomes more variable, with rain and cooler temperatures.

November The wind now goes round to the north-east, bringing in the NORTH-EAST MONSOON about the middle of the month. All the same phenomena as at the opening of the south-west monsoon appear, but on a much reduced scale.

Lightning, cloudbanks and rain visit the DRY ZONE, east and north-east of the mountains, particularly the Uva highlands, but very little rain falls on the central, north-central or northern provinces.

December Light and frequent rains, with a diminution of the storms and of the lightning. Rainfall is very heavy

December (cont.) indeed on the Uva mountains on the dry side of the great watershed, but in crossing the plains to reach these hills, not a great deal of moisture falls upon the jungle plains.

CHART OF RAINFALL AND MEAN TEMPERATURES

Monsoon	Colombo		Kandy		Trincomalee	
	Rain	*Temp.*	*Rain*	*Temp.*	*Rain*	*Temp.*
North-east	*In.*	*Deg.*	*In.*	*Deg.*	*In.*	*Deg.*
Mid Oct.	13·09	80·3	11·71	75·8	8·34	82·6
November	11·71	79·6	10·59	75·4	14·03	80·0
December	5·38	79·0	8·95	74·5	14·16	78·6
January	3·45	79·0	5·18	74·5	6·67	78·7
February	1·97	79·8	2·21	76·0	2·07	80·4
March	4·72	81·4	4·00	78·3	1·67	82·6
Mid April	7·99	82·6	6·66	79·0	1·92	85·2
South-west						
Mid April	7·99	82·6	6·66	79·0	1·92	85·2
May	13·38	82·6	5·69	78·7	2·44	82·6
June	8·25	81·6	9·45	76·6	1·25	85·6
July	6·71	81·0	7·49	75·8	2·08	85·2
August	3·25	81·1	5·76	75·8	3·99	84·8
September	6·38	81·0	6·02	75·8	4·41	84·6
Mid Oct.	13·09	80·03	11·71	75·8	8·34	82·6

Rainfall, it will be seen, is therefore very unevenly distributed throughout the island, and the dry zone, but for the mountain spurs which run into Uva, fares badly as regards rain. One monsoon brings quite different results to the two zones. In the south-west monsoon Colombo and the south and south-west are deluged almost daily for nearly four months, while on the other side of the watershed the rest of the island grills under the sun and sometimes dries out completely with drought. During the north-east monsoon, the dry zone gets rather more rain for three months than the wet, but only in the mountain area east and north-east of the watershed. The area east and north of the mountains receives very little rain throughout the year, except

in violent falls of several inches at a time, almost valueless unless caught and held in reservoirs as in the time of the great irrigation civilization, since the evaporation rate is exceedingly high. North of a line Trincomalee to Chilaw, rainfall averages less than 30 inches as against 63 inches at Trincomalee and 86 inches in Colombo. This 30 inches descends almost entirely in the months of November and December, leaving the rest of the year a time of drought.

Finally, waterspouts are common off the coasts of Ceylon but hurricanes, although not unknown, are rare.

Provinces

For administrative purposes the island is divided into nine provinces. Although the central government, which has no connection at all with the Government of India or of Pakistan, has representatives in each of the nine provinces, Ceylon is almost completely centralized. The representatives are known as Government Agents, and they are assisted by Assistant Government Agents. There are no local authorities as known in Britain, but some of the municipalities have certain powers of local administration. Colombo, Galle and Kandy each have councils which correspond roughly with town councils in Britain with greatly reduced powers, and there are urban councils in Jaffna, Trincomalee and Batticoloa. Apart from these and village committees (see pp. 304–5), comprehensive government is vested in the Ceylon State Council operating entirely from Colombo.

The provinces are:

	Square miles
Western Province	1,432
Central Province	2,299½
Northern Province	3,363¼
Southern Province	2,146¼
Eastern Province	4,036½
North-west Province	2,996⅞
North-central Province	4,002¼
Uva Province	3,154½
Sabaragama Province	1,901⅛
Total	25,332¼

Communications

Railways (*see pp.* 321–3)

There are approximately nine hundred miles of broad- and narrow-gauge railways in Ceylon, administered by the state. There are five hundred miles of broad-gauge main-line track, and although the trains are slow, noisy and cumbersome, they are very comfortable. The small coast and Kelani Valley lines are not comfortable by Western standards, but they are useful.

Roads

The road system of Ceylon is one of the best in the world, although there are no fast trunk roads. The highways are all narrow, but the surface is almost universally excellent throughout the island. There is hardly a settlement in the nine provinces which is not on or within easy reach of a road, of which there are over sixteen thousand miles. But the *means* of transport are bad. Apart from the railways which serve the main centres of the island, there is no other reliable means of getting about, one of the main reasons why the island is so little known. Motor-buses are almost impossible for tourist use and hire-cars are impracticable except for very short local journeys. There is no "drive yourself" system and, unless the tourist buys himself a car for his stay in the island or has many friends, he is compelled to stay on the beaten track despite the fact that Ceylon is one of the loveliest motoring countries in the world.

Hotels and Rest-houses

Only Colombo, Galle, Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Hatton, Bandarawella and Anuradhapura possess hotels, all of which are reasonably good. For the rest of the country there is a system of rest-houses, and these are reasonably good too if the difficulties of maintenance are remembered. They are state-owned and they are not intended to replace hotels. At the moment, permission must be obtained if the traveller wishes to stay more than five days in any one rest-house and in most of them notice must be given before a visit. The rest-house keeper is paid by the government, but he normally does the catering, from which he takes the profit. The main drawback to these competent but slightly dismal caravanserais is that they are there to meet a need and

not to create or encourage one. The standard of comfort is low and in out-of-the-way areas cleanliness is sometimes conspicuous by its absence. Broadly speaking tourists are unknown in these establishments.

Coastline

From Point Pedro in the north to Puttalam on the north-west coast, the landfall is open and lacking in vegetation owing to the scarcity of rainfall. The water along this coast is shallow, owing to a protecting underwater shelf which runs out from the land. From Puttalam onwards, all round the coast as far as Trincomalee, this submarine shelf ends abruptly a little distance from the shore. Deep water is quickly reached, making the whole of this coastline safe for the largest of ships, with the exception of such dangerous rocks as the Great and Little Basses off Kirindi on the south-east coast.

From whichever direction the island is approached one is confronted with green and luxuriant beauty, an enchanting sight. The western and southern coasts, from Chilaw to Tangalle, are palm-fringed, with many inlets, lagoons and backwaters. From Tangalle in the south-east to Trincomalee the line of the shore becomes bolder and in places even precipitous. The eastern coast is remarkable for the piling up of the sand brought down from Point Pedro to Hambantota by the currents and heaped up by the winds. There are virtually no tides round Ceylon, owing to the abrupt ending of the subterranean shelf previously mentioned, and the daily fall—excluding spring tides—is only a matter of inches. There are also no natural lakes in which the numerous rivers rushing to the sea during the time of spate might clear themselves of silt. The result is that great bars of sand and silt form at the mouths of the rivers, turning the course of the river water, which flows for longer and longer distances parallel to the sea in an effort to find it. Thus there are few navigable rivers, for no dredging work is carried out. Only the Kelani Ganga and the Kalu Ganga are navigable rivers under present circumstances, but the Mahawelli Ganga was once navigable as far as Alutnuwara and could be made so again.

The sandbanks at the mouth of the larger rivers cannot keep them indefinitely from entering the ocean. Eventually they find a weak place through which they burst their way to the sea, making new mouths for themselves and leaving the old course

to become a shallow lake or lagoon, the "Gobbs" of Serendib. This is more noticeable on the east than on the west because of the lack of currents, but even so there are many "Gobbs" on both sides of the island and fascinating places they are, especially for students of bird life. The massed ranks of the birds from brahmani kites to pelicans have to be seen to be believed.

Bleaker on the west, these "Gobbs" are luxuriantly lovely on the east, and one of the most beautiful and exciting journeys that can be made anywhere is the coast road from Trincomalee south to Batticoloa. The road crosses many of these "Gobbs" by ferry, and if the journey is undertaken at evening, darkening into night, these crossings are a slow but quite lovely experience beyond all words to express.

Mountain System

The centre of maximum energy, when Ceylon was raised as a land mass, was ADAM'S PEAK (see pp. 281–8), not the highest mountain in the island but the focal point of the upraising process æons of time ago. This massif covers one-sixth of the total area of the island, one of the most enthralling stretches of country in the world. It is grouped in a compact mass in the centre of the southern half of Ceylon and the railway reaches the most convenient centres from which it may be explored. Primeval jungle, precipices, huge contorted rocks, trout streams, peaks and unparalleled vistas, all are packed into the ancient "Garden of Ravannah." The waterfalls in particular bear comparison with those in any part of the world for the sheer leaps that they take, although the volume of water is comparatively small in most cases. The Diuluma Falls, for example, on the Haputale–Wellawaya road to Hambantota, have an unbroken drop of six hundred feet.

Rivers

Throughout the island there is a network of rivers, great and small, many of which dry out altogether during the long season of drought in the dry zone. The island is all within the influence of oceanic evaporation, but the mountains are so steep and the plains so flat that water makes straight for the sea. Tributaries feed these watercourses in the hills, but the heat is so fierce on

the plains that any tributaries which might form there are quickly dried out.

When the monsoon rains fall the hill rivers are wonderful to see, but when they subside, all along their courses through the central, northern and eastern portions of the island they leave pools and vast swamps, ideal breeding places for mosquitoes, the anopheles species of which played so large a part in reconquering the plains of Ceylon for the wild.

Flat-bottomed paddy boats navigate the Kelani Ganga and the Kalu Ganga for fifty and thirty miles respectively, and the Bentota as far as Pittagalla, but broadly speaking the rivers of Lanka are neglected as far as trade is concerned.

The heaviness of the tropical rains and the innumerable feeder tributaries that they create in the mountains have produced some of the most magnificent scenery to be found anywhere. Ravines and glens in thick forest country, cascades and high falls, all winding through luxuriant vegetation, abound in flowering shrubs, flowers and undergrowth. On the plains, the sandy and porous soil presents few obstacles to the onrush of the waters and the rivers make their courses in a direct line for the coast. The whole of their route in the low country is through thick jungle—with the exception of the rivers of the densely inhabited area of south-west Ceylon—until they are close to the sea where coconut plantations, tamarinds and mangrove swamps replace the forest.

The main rivers of Ceylon are:

	Miles long
Mahawelliganga	206
Malwatta-oya	104
Kala-oya	97
Yan-oya	94
Kelani Ganga	90
Dederu Oya	87
Maduru-oya	86
Walawa Ganga	83
Menik Ganga	81
Maha-oya	78
Kirindi-oya	73
Kalu Ganga	70
Ginganga	70

	Miles long
Kumbukkan Oya	70
Mi-oya	67
Gal-oya	62
Nilwata	42

Population and Races

The present population of the island is something over six million people, although this is based upon an estimate and not a census, the last census having been held as far back as 1931. By far the larger part of this relatively large population—not far short of that of Australia—is grouped around Colombo and the wet area generally, and in the Kandyan country now opened up by British enterprise. The small area of the Jaffna peninsula is also thickly populated, but altogether the bulk of the peoples of the island are crowded into one-fifth of the land space while the other four-fifths cannot be said to be populated at all. Around the coast there are various settlements and along the main arterial roads villages are clustered, but immense tracks of land are abandoned to the animals which find there sanctuary from man, but not from other wild animals.

The indigenous race, the Sinhalese, are themselves divided into two distinct races, lowlanders and highlanders or Kandyans, the latter of which claim direct descent, in many cases, from the island's aboriginal race, the Veddhas (see pp. 170–88).

In 1943 the population was estimated, on evidence obtained presumably for war purposes, and the figure given was 6,197,000. It is now believed to have reached the seven million mark.

Sinhalese (lowlanders) / Sinhalese (highlanders)	4,113,000
Tamils (indigent and immigrants)	1,527,000
Moors	389,000
Burghers and Eurasians	39,000
Malays	18,000
[1] Europeans	11,000
All others	36,000

[1] Now down to approximately 5000 (1948).

Agricultural Acreages

The following is the approximate acreage under cultivation:

	Acres
Coconuts	1,100,000
Rice	900,000
Rubber	600,000
Tea	555,000
Chenas (vegetables)	80,000
Areca nuts	70,000
Palmyra	50,000
Cacao (cocoa)	35,000
Citronella	33,000
Cinnamon	26,000
Tobacco	15,000
Other grains such as millet, kurrakhan, etc.	50,000
Total	3,514,000

In addition to agriculture there are several flourishing village industries, the most prominent of which are pottery, silverware, brassware, mat, net and rope weaving, and furniture making. These are of great importance, but they are domestic industries only. In the Western sense, there is no industrialization in Ceylon.

Places of Interest

Adam's Bridge in the extreme north-west of the island consists of a long line of sandy embankments rising out of the sea, with some coral rocks providing the backbone. This strange "bridge" links Talammanaar on the island of Manaar, from the Ceylon side, with Rameswerам, a small island just off the mainland of India. The channels between the sandbanks average four feet in depth, and only flat-bottomed boats can navigate these waters. The Paumben passage, however, has been artificially deepened and is used by small ships plying between the Malabar and Coromandel coasts.

Geologically speaking, the "bridge" is a recent growth of sandstone and conglomerate, covered with tidal alluvial deposits

brought down by the currents of the Indian coasts, largely from the Coromandel side. It obtains its name from the Mohammedan belief that Adam and Eve, after being reunited close to Mount Ararat and being given the choice of anywhere on earth to live, chose Ceylon. Returning across the continent of India, they crossed over into the island by means of Adam's Bridge.

The clarity of the water in this exquisite amphibian world is unbelievable. Even the coral groves, fathoms deep, may be seen, faintly purple at the tips of their ivory fronds, a fragile beauty of colouring which disappears immediately the coral is taken out of water.

ALUTNUWARA in the Bintenne country is 116 miles from Colombo by road, although this phrase is deceptive, for the road does not quite reach the town. This holy fane of Buddhism is described at length on page 185, but there is another religious centre of the same name more easily accessible to the ordinary tourist. It is situated 6 miles west of Kadugannawa, and may be reached quite easily from Kandy, and it is very interesting as the site of a dewale dedicated to the chief demon, a most unusual dedication even in a country which has long since ceased to pretend that it follows the precepts and teaching of the Hinayanist Buddhists.

The legend goes that Wimala Bandara Devo, the most dreaded of the demi-gods, waited upon the top of the adjacent mountain while the temple was being erected in his honour. Indeed, finding that the exertions of his worshippers were insufficient for the task in hand, he rendered much-needed assistance himself, removing, in a night, a rock eight hundred feet in height in order to level a site for his temple. When the building was finished he took up residence there, and remains in occupation to this day.

There is thought to have been a temple on this spot since the days of Parakrama the Great in the twelfth century.

Both Sinhalese and Tamils, when possessed by devils, go to this dewale to be rid of them. Any one who has seen a native possessed by a devil can only marvel at the manifestation. No doubt it is a species of self-hypnotism, but it is decidedly convincing to witness.

AMBALANGODA, 52 miles south of Colombo by both road and rail, is a most lovely seaside resort, one of many on the coasts of Lanka and chosen as a typical specimen. All round this village

agricultural pursuits of every kind are carried on for the tourist to study at his leisure if he be so minded. Coconuts, paddy, cinnamon and areca nuts are the main crops, but even tea is grown on a small scale. The bathing is safe, a great advantage along a coast which can be most treacherous, and the coastline itself is a lovely and refreshing sight.

ANURADHAPURA, see pp. 120–41.

AVISAWELLA is a busy market town 36 miles by rail from Colombo, rather less by road. It is in the heart of the Kelani Valley, a richly tropical stretch of country lying in the foothills of the Adam's Peak massif that can have few superiors anywhere for fecund beauty. Tea, rubber, coconuts and chena products here grow in profusion, surrounded by valleys, waterfalls, vast twisted crags, forests and wonderful glimpses of the Peak. This is the site, too, of Sitawacca, the home of fighting old Raja Singha and his Kandyans.

BADULLA, the capital of the Province of Uva, is the terminus of the main railway line, 181 miles from Colombo. By road, a superb drive, it is only 137 miles. Formerly the site of the palace of the Princes of Uva—the younger sons of the reigning Kandyan king—it is now a tea-planting centre and the seat of local government administration.

The old town was burned down by the Portuguese and again by the British little more than a century ago, but if these disasters destroyed historical monuments, at least they gave the builders a chance to build a planned town. They did so with a delightful spaciousness rarely seen. The roads, central open spaces, park, race-course and Botanical Gardens are splendidly laid out, but in my time the rest-house was so bad that no one would willingly stay there. The beauties of the town, therefore, remain unknown to any but the residents, and are likely to do so until efforts are made to offer a reasonable welcome to strangers.

The Kachcheri was built upon the site of the old palace of the Prince of Uva, but nothing of it remains and apart from a tepid spring, the "smoke-mouthed well" still venerated by Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims, there is little of historical interest left in the town. This is certainly odd, for this most beautiful and relatively distant part of the island was ravaged constantly by war in distant times.

Badulla might well be used as a centre for exploring the Bintenne country. In journeying to Alutnuwara down the

magnificent Taldua Gorge, the tourist should find time to turn aside for a glance at the sombre splendour of the Dunhinda Falls.

BALANGODA, a small town situated at the 83rd milestone on the Colombo–Badulla road, is not on the railway, although it is only 9 miles from the Kelani Valley line railhead at Opanaike. The visitor might brave the shocking hire-car service for so short a distance, for the town is worth a visit.

It is an attractive market centre, colourful, beautiful and spacious, and is almost as important a centre for gems as Ratnapura itself. Tea makes its first appearance on any considerable scale here, but if the visitor is prepared to brave the jungle, it is as a starting-off place for exploration that it is most to be recommended. Mr Bassett says that the only madara tree in Ceylon can be reached with the least discomfort from Balangoda, but points out that "in the dry weather the trip is excessively hot, and in the wet weather objectionably wet." Nevertheless the southern and eastern parts of Bintenne are close at hand and no discomforts should debar the traveller from seeing them.

The climb from this town to Haldemulla, from whence the Haputale Pass over the great mountain barrier really commences, takes the traveller out of the thickly populated belt of the wet zone. The scenery is superbly beautiful, beetling cliffs and crags to the left of the road, an ever-broadening vista of the shimmering Bintenne country to the right. Along the winding road itself, the picturesque villages grow ever fewer and their inhabitants correspondingly more kindly and obliging.

BANDARAWELA, 160 miles from Colombo by rail and 119 by road, is a health resort which, if it were ambitious, might rival any in the world. It is quite superbly situated at a little over 4000 feet in altitude, giving it a climate of almost perpetual summer, without undue extremes of heat and with nothing colder than a delicious touch of frost at certain times of the year. All round the town is glorious mountain scenery, but with little of the dense, lush, tropical aspect of other parts of the island. Here it is much more open, the heart of the rolling Downs of Uva, but the hills almost seem to line up for the admiration of the onlooker. Pedro, Hakgalla Peak, Udupussalawa, Haputale, the Horton Plains and Namunukula, all are visible, with occasional glimpses between mountain masses of the sun-drenched plains of the jungle. There are enchanting walks in all directions, a small golf-course almost humorous in character during the dry weather—

when the greens become "browns" and are known as such—and a very pleasant local club known as the Bow Club because it started its career as a centre of archery. The tea estates in this area are very fine and I cannot imagine any planter displaying anything but pleasure if asked to show a visitor the beauties of his own estate.

BATTICOLOA, which is 237 miles by road from Colombo, is a beautiful little port on the eastern side of the island, very far indeed from the haunts of man. It can be reached by railroad, via Trincomalee, but I admit that, for myself, I should prefer to walk. Yet it has enchanting things to offer, not found elsewhere, and the tourist who has time and determination should find his way there.

The settlement is 85 miles south of Trincomalee, separated by a series of "gobbs," inlets and streams over which the road traffic crosses by a system of ferries. Batticoloa itself is built upon a lagoon, surrounded by so many other lagoons and inlets of the sea that it is a positive Eastern Venice. It is the centre of a very flourishing coconut industry, for the palms do particularly well in this soil, but although the town was once a port of considerable importance, the harbour is now little used except by coasting "dhonies" and fishing craft.

This part of the island, although the coast for some distance on either side of the town is now built up and supports an increasing population, is relatively cut off from the rest of Ceylon. The town itself is pleasant and open, the rest-house—when I was there—a delight to visit. In the surrounding countryside there are remnants of old customs not to be found anywhere else in the island and a little to the north there are several settlements of "coast Veddhas," a particular type of the aboriginal race of the island.

Batticoloa derives its name from the Tamil words "mada kallupu," or muddy lake, and is an ancient foundation, certainly in existence as a town in the seventh century A.D. The Portuguese fort, built in 1627, was taken and destroyed by the Dutch in 1638, but the fort that they built in its place still stands.

One claim to distinction made by Batticoloa is the presence, in the main lagoon, of "singing fish." The townsmen say that these musical fish perform best at night when the moon is at the full, and certainly, whether they give a performance or not, to drift around Batticoloa lagoon at the full of the moon is an experience

that no one should miss if he visits the town, for it is alive with tropical magic. In fact these marine songsters do sing, in good voice, gentle, but quite full sounds "like the vibrations of a wine-glass when it is rubbed," and on every kind of note. It is an eerie experience listening to them, and as far as I know, although they are said to be molluscs jingling together, the mystery has not yet been authoritatively solved.

BELIHULOYA is a village at the 92nd milestone on the road from Colombo to Badulla. It is immediately under the towering wall on top of which are the Horton Plains, and a path winds some 9 miles up the cliffs to the Elk Plains. This great mountain wall is clad in thick forest, but cliffs, with sheer precipices of granite, may be seen all round the rest-house, which must be one of the most magnificently sited buildings upon earth. Thin spears of water leap into space hundreds of feet above, the tops of the cliffs are often lost in mist and the river itself winds past the rest-house garden. The scenery in front of the garden is magnificent, stretching out ahead 60 miles to the coast, blue, serene and peaceful beyond description. There is a swimming-pool in the grounds of the rest-house which, in my time at least, was one of the best in Ceylon.

CHILAW, a small coastal town on the west side of Ceylon, 49 miles north of Colombo, is the Salabham of the Tamils and the Salawat of Ibn Batuta. Taken from the Sinhalese kings in the fourteenth century by the Malabaris, it was captured in turn by the Moors, Portuguese, Dutch and British, and although it has little to show as a result of these various occupations, it is well worth a visit. Although hot and dry, with little of interest in the town itself, the jungle to the east, beyond the coastal fringe of coconut plantations, is full of interest for the antiquarian. The ruins of famous cities such as Dambedeniya, the capital city of Wijayo Bahu III in A.D. 1235, and the rock fortress and capital of Yapahuwa are within 20 miles of the rest-house. So also is the Hindu temple of Munersseram, a place of pilgrimage.

COLOMBO, see pp. 309–32.

COTTA, a suburb of modern Colombo, is 5 miles from the centre of the city and is now virtually part of it. It is interesting from the fact that it was once the seat of Sinhalese kings, in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. At the end of the fourteenth century it was rebuilt and renamed Jayawardenapura by Alekeswara, minister and general to King Wikrama Bahu III,

but the only notable ruin left is a trace of the five-storied palace of the king.

DAMBULLA, see pp. 156–9.

DICKOYA is a village which has given its name to one of the major tea-planting districts situated round Hatton, which is 77 miles from Colombo. Some of the finest tea in Ceylon is grown here and in the district of Maskeliya, from which the easiest ascent of Adam's Peak may be made.

DIMBULA is the largest of all the tea districts and has the town of Talawakellie, on the main line, as its centre, and the sub-districts of Lindula and Agrapatana as offshoots. It is a first-rate centre from which to study the growth and manufacture of tea, but the glorious mountain scenery has had to pay tribute to the disciplinary effects of scientifically planted estates. The whole once lovely area is now undeniably tame and monotonous.

The river Agra, longest tributary of the Mahawelliganga, rises in an area known as the Agrapatanas on the slopes of Kirilgalpota, the second-highest mountain in Ceylon.

DIYATALAWA is 156 miles from Colombo by rail on the main line to Badulla, and 118 miles by road over the Haputale Pass. It was originally a camp for Boer prisoners of war during the South African campaign, and is now a rest camp for the ships' companies of H.M. ships in Eastern waters. It is on the wonderful Downs of Uva, 4000 feet above sea level.

DOLOSBAGE, one of the earliest tea districts of all, is in the exotic and beautiful forested mountain lands of the Kandy district. The station for this lovely stretch of country is Gampola, 77 miles from Colombo.

DONDRA HEAD, the most southerly point in Ceylon, is a headland 103 miles from Colombo by road. It has a history stretching back into the dawn of human existence. Known as Sunium centuries ago, Ptolemy called it Dagana, "Sacred to the Moon," but Tennent believes this to be simply a corruption of the word "dagoba," one of which existed there from the dawn of Buddhism. The most famous temple of all, however, with origins far anterior to those of Buddhism in Ceylon, is the Hindu dewale dedicated to Vishnu. This place was of imposing magnificence when De Souza d'Arronches sacked it in 1587. Previous to that punitive raid, Dondra Head was the holiest place of pilgrimage in all Ceylon, not excluding Adam's Peak, but subsequently it declined. The temple, say the ancient records, appeared

from the sea like a great city and the plunder taken from it as given in the annals of the Portuguese was immense. Dondra is still a thriving place of worship for two religions, Buddhist and Hindu, and no visitor to the island should fail to see this beautiful headland with its lighthouse, the last building between Asia and the South Pole. The annual pilgrimage, religious in origin, has now become something in the nature of a festival and is known as Dondra Fair.

GALLE, see pp. 338–40.

GAMPOLA is 77 miles from Colombo on the main line to Badulla, and was once known as the Ganga-sri-pura, as early as 502 B.C. "The Stately City by the River" was the last capital city of a more or less united Sinhalese race, and after it had fallen, unity gave way to the rule of a dozen petty chieftains and princes. The "Stately City" was built by Bhuwenika Bahu IV, *circa* 1347, who was visited there by the great Arab traveller Ibn Batuta. In 1405 his successor was defeated at Gampola by the Chinese General Ching Ho and carried off as a hostage to China. There are no signs of all this greatness remaining, with the solitary exception of the Niyangampaya wihara, a mile out of the town.

The modern Gampola, the first place in Ceylon where coffee was systematically planted, is a thriving, colourful place well worth a visit. Incidentally it harbours tarantulas, a giant spider which, like the jungle, has been given an undeservedly bad reputation, for I do not know of a single instance of any man dying as a result of tarantula bite. Tennent records that one of these fearsome creatures was brought to him "covering, with its legs, an ordinary-sized breakfast plate."

Although the fiery beauty of this loveliest of all the Kandyan fastnesses has been tamed and subdued by the irrepressible tea plantations, it is still full of fascination for the visitor.

HABARANE is a lonely rest-house, 107 miles from Colombo by road, and 50 from Trincomalee, in the very heart of a vast jungle wilderness covering many thousands of square miles. With three huge "tanks"—Minneriya, Kowdelai and Kantalai—all within a few miles of the rest-house, it must be one of the most suitable centres in the island for the sportsman and the naturalist. Bird, beast and reptile life is there in an endless profusion, to reward the industry of the seeker after information.

HAKGALLA, a mountain exactly 7000 feet high, guards the

gap leading from the Nuwara Eliya Valley to the Province of Uva. It is 110 miles from Colombo, and is the site of the famous Hakgalla Botanical Gardens, second only to those of Peradeniya in beauty and diversity of vegetation. The gardens themselves are at the foot of the peak which crowns the mountain mass, 5400 feet above sea-level, and it is hard to imagine a more perfectly sited botanical garden.

HAMBANTOTA, 148 miles from Colombo on the coastal road, is a little-known fishing town on the south-eastern corner of the island, and the centre of the "leways" or salterns from which Ceylon largely derives its salt, a government monopoly. During the dry season—and it is dry nearly all the year round at Hambantota—salt water is let into the shallow basins, called leways, where it evaporates in the intense heat of the sun. Crystals of salt form, which are allowed to "ripen," during which process a chance storm is greatly to be feared as it might ruin the crop. After the crystals have ripened, they are stored in large government-constructed sheds for a year, drying all the time.

Apart from salterns and the salt trade, Hambantota is a fishing village largely populated by Malays who own the fleet of catamarans drawn up along the oval beach. They are said to be the descendants of a Malay regiment which was brought into the island by the Dutch.

The rest-house is built upon a small conical hill or headland overlooking and protecting a beautiful sandy bay, perfect for bathing at all hours of the day or night. To the south, on the other hand, the seashore is very wild and dangerous, fanged with rocks and swept by vicious currents, but it is quite romantically beautiful, fringed with every kind of palm tree and visited by every variety of marine creature.

From Hambantota the ancient capital of the fighting province of Rohuna, then known as Maagama, and now called Tissamaharama, is only a few miles distant, while some of the most richly populated game country in the island, the Yala Game Sanctuary, is close at hand, a paradise for naturalists. The sea offers an abundance of fish and whales are often seen blowing from the shore. A place drenched in perpetual sunlight, with one of the happiest races I have ever seen living contentedly with the minimum of work to sustain them, this is a quiet paradise, rich in every kind of natural beauty but one which,

no doubt, would swiftly lose its charm and most of its happiness if made available to humanity in the mass.

HAPUTALE, a small hamlet perched on the top of the grand road pass from the plains to the eastern mountains 112 miles by road from Colombo, is the gateway to Uva from the low country. It is on the main railway line also, 153 miles from Colombo, and from whichever direction it is approached it is magnificent for the panoramas that it provides. To stand on the very crest of the road pass as the dawn breaks, looking across the plains of south Bintenne to the sea, is almost harrowing in its superlative beauty.

HATTON, 108 miles by rail or 76 by road from Colombo, is the business heart of the tea districts of Dickoya, Maskeliya and Bogawantalawa. Its attraction for the tourist is that it is the nearest point to the easy ascent of Adam's Peak on the Maskeliya side, and possesses an excellent hotel from which all arrangements may be made to climb the holy mountain.

HORTON PLAINS are 102 miles from Colombo by road, but may be approached by railway. The nearest station to this most lovely and perhaps least characteristic part of Lanka is Ohiya, almost 6000 feet above sea-level and 143 miles from Colombo, but the plains, sometimes known as the Elk Plains because of the presence there of that noble animal, are 1000 feet above the station, a steepish climb through thick forest.

The railway line at Ohiyo deserves some mention as one of the great engineering feats of the world. It winds in and out of rock masses, spans dizzy gulfs where mountain torrents have torn precipitous valleys in the hillsides, tunnels through walls of solid granite and turns so violently at times that the people in the front compartments of a train are almost in the position to converse with those in the rear.

After the thick forest, the plains themselves are a surprise. Huge, treeless, rolling patanas, with small clusters of jungle here and there in which the elk find sanctuary, they spread for miles in every direction at a height of 7000 feet above the sea. For long periods of time these plains are wreathed in thick mist, resembling nothing so much as Scottish moors, for the streams hold splendid trout and the patanas feed fine stags. Copses of juniper and rhododendron are scattered here and there in these savannah lands and a cover of buttercups astonishes the eye at certain seasons of the year. According to Enriques, some of the

butterflies to be found here, notably *Lethe daretis* and *Vanessa pyramis nubicola*, are seen nowhere else in the world, a puzzling fact.

From the purely spectacular point of view there is probably nothing else in Lanka to compare with the abyss known as World's End, where the southern side of the plains ends so abruptly that the world does indeed plunge into nothingness. The sheer fall is, I believe, in the nature of 5000 feet, but figures convey nothing of the wild fascination of the place and the cold grandeur of it. Rivers and forests, plains and hills stretch like a cunningly woven carpet to the delicate line of the horizon, rimmed by the sea. Certainly no less than one hundred miles of the south-eastern and eastern coast may be seen at some moments of the day flashing back the golden light of the sun to the observer standing in thick cloud and driving rain. To this day, World's End is rarely visited by man. Incidentally, not only is it held to be the end of the world but the extreme limit of the Garden of Ravannah.

JAFFNA, see pp. 332–8.

KADUGANNAWA, 62 miles by road and 3 more by rail from Colombo, is on the borders of the true Kandyan country, a small village at the foot of the magnificent pass of the same name which carries the main road from Kandy to Nuwara Eliya across the great mountain chain. The scenery here is superb, and it is a centre from which three very famous temples may be reached, although, since there is no real accommodation here, it is better for the average visitor to stay in Kandy. Gadaladeniya is two miles distant on the Kandy side, at the 65th milestone. It is situated on a small conical hill a mile or so from the main road, a curious structure reputed to be very beautiful, but one which, frankly, seemed to me to be a block of crumbling masonry which might once have had architectural merit, surmounted by two Kandyan roofs perched on the top. Certainly the mason work of this fourteenth-century temple is fine. The dewale here stands side by side with the Buddhist temple.

Two miles further on is the Lanketilleke, reputedly the loveliest temple in Ceylon. Balanced on its rock, with gables and high-arched roof, the comparison with a Norwegian church, so frequently made, is almost inevitable. Cruciform in plan, it has a brilliantly coloured and decorated front more akin to the Burmese decorations on a pagoda than anything else I saw in

Ceylon. The nave, which is the main building, is the Buddhist wihara, but there are no less than six dewales leading out of it, rather like side chapels in an English cathedral.

KALKUDAH, which is no less than 238 miles by road from Colombo, is a tiny rest-house some 10 miles north of Batticoloa on the east coast. The food, the peace, the serenity and the bathing from this tiny retreat bordered, when I was young, upon perfection.

KALTURA is a comparatively large, colourful and cheerful Oriental town, beautifully sited at the mouth of the Kalu-ganga, 26 miles south of Colombo by both road and rail. The Kalu-ganga is one of the three navigable rivers of Ceylon, and boats travel as far into the interior as Ratnapura, 50 miles away. Whether it is possible or not to arrange a trip on one of these padda barges I do not know, but it would be worth the effort to find out. On the flood, these lumbering craft can cover the 50 miles downstream in a day, but they take several days to return, moving through some of the loveliest river scenery in Lanka. It is an interesting place, Kalutara, both historically—for it was the ancient capital of Wikrama Pandu in 1041—and in modern times, as it is one of the main centres of the rubber industry. The inhabitants, too, are most enterprising, and the domestic industries of basket- and hat-weaving are flourishing.

It was from this town that the system of canals inaugurated by the Dutch began, stretching as far north as Negombo, using the gobbs along the west coast as the links in the chain. The town is well planned and spacious, with many echoes of Dutch occupation including the inevitable fort.

KATRAGAMA, 176 miles from Colombo, is a Buddhist-controlled temple to Katragama Devo, the Hindu War God who is supposed to have given Rama assistance in his campaign against Ravanna. The annual pilgrimage to this weird spot in the south-eastern jungle is on a colossal scale, but it would not be a simple matter for the tourist to witness it, although the attempt should be made to do so. Among other demonstrations of devotion, fire-walking is still carried on at this religious festival, much more sacred to the Hindus who attend it than to the Buddhists who control it.

KANDAPOLA railway station, 112 miles from Colombo, is the highest point reached by the Ceylon railway system, although this part of it is narrow-gauge on the line to Udupussalawa. The actual height is 6316 feet above sea-level.

KANDY, see pp. 342–7.

KATUGASTOTA, 3 miles from Kandy on the banks of the Mahawelliganga, is famous for the elephants which bathe there daily. These sagacious temple beasts engage in mock battles and river sports if given any encouragement at all, a joyous sight to witness.

KELANI VALLEY is a historic and very beautiful valley guarding the ancient borders of the Kandyan kings. It may be said to stretch from Hanwella, 21 miles from Colombo, to Yatiyantota, 47 miles out from the capital, and teems with life, colour and romance, particularly historically. In the more prosaic present, it is noticeable that the tea and rubber estates, which are numerous, have blended more with the luxurious tropical beauty of the forest than anywhere else in the island. From Yatiyantota the road climbs the barrier of the hills to the Dickoya district by means of the steep but fascinating Ginigathena Pass. From Avisawella another main road forks to the south-east and climbs through Ratnapura, Pelmadulla, Balangoda, Belihuloya and Haldemulla to Haputale, thence descending through Bandarawela and Dickwella to Badulla, the capital of Uva.

KELANIYA is a small hamlet, in modern times, 5 miles out of Colombo at the mouth of the Kelani-ganga. Here is one of the holiest of all Buddhist shrines, the Kelani dagoba. At the time of the full moon, Buddhists in their thousands bring offerings of fruit and flowers to this temple, built upon the site of one where Gotama himself feasted with the Naga king. Although this event took place in the sixth century B.C., the legends of Kelani go back to the shadowy figure of Wibhisana, king over a united Ceylon in the eighteenth century B.C., nearly 4000 years ago if tradition is to be trusted. The story rests upon tradition alone, for there are no records nor inscriptions of the existence of any such monarch. Nevertheless there is a Wibhisana dagoba built in his memory almost next to the one in honour of the Buddha's visit.

In the third century B.C., King Yatala Tissa built a city around the existing dagoba. His successor, according to the *Rajavali*, threw an innocent monk into a cauldron of boiling oil, as a result of which the sea avenged the victim by flooding immense tracts of land around Kelaniya. Although there is no documentary evidence, once more, for any of this, no Buddhist

questions the truth of all these stories and the dagoba and other wiharas are of great sanctity.

KIRINDI, once the bathing place of the kings and queens of Mahagama, is now a tiny fishing village at the mouth of the Kirindi river, and a few miles distant from Tissamaharama. Immediately opposite the village, but ten miles out at sea, are the formidable rocks known as the Basses, on which in modern times is a lighthouse. These are thought to be all that is left of the legendary Giridipo Islands which so obligingly came in close to the shore to take aboard the fleeing Yakkas of Mahayangana Once out to sea again, the islands sank, presumably drowning all on board, and only these sharp crags remain to show where the islands disappeared beneath the waves.

KURUNUGALLA, 58 miles from Colombo on the northern line of the railway, and also on the main road to Anuradhapura from Colombo, is the capital town of the North-west Province, and the marketing hub of an important agricultural district. This small place, although historically most interesting, was a fever-stricken village when the British occupied Ceylon less than a century and a half ago. Its present condition shows the immense incidental benefits that have followed that occupation, for all around the town coconuts, vegetables and rice thrive annually with increasing vigour.

Behind the pleasant and spacious town are situated a curious string of rocks, some of them small mountains, for the highest is no less than 1700 feet above sea-level. Six of these rocks bear the names of animals or insects—the Elephant, Tortoise, Beetle, Goat, Crocodile and Eel rocks. The remaining two are known as the Gonigalla, or Sack rock, and the Yakdessagala, or She-demon's Curse, this last being the highest hill of them all, 1712 feet in height.

All the rocks have their legends, but that of the She-demon's Curse is the most romantic and tragic, for the She-demon is none other than the unfortunate Kuweni, betrayed by the first hero of the Sinhalese, Wijayo. It was to this wild rock that she retired to call upon the gods to avenge her wrongs. No doubt the Hindus believe that this call was answered, for Wijayo, who was a Hindu, had no male issue and as such was doomed to a hell of peculiar unpleasantness.

There are many rock caves and dagobas around and inside the town and the Kachcheri, like that of Badulla, is built upon

the site of a royal palace, for Kurunugalla was once the capital of the retreating civilization of the Sinhalese. The Kachcheri is known still as the Maligawa, or palace, in memory of former days.

LABUGAMA, 28 miles out of Colombo, was once the centre of elephant-hunting country, but is now the site of an artificial reservoir which supplies Colombo with its drinking water. It has a catchment area of some 3000 acres, and as the rainfall here is in the region of 130 inches a year, Colombo is assured of a regular and good supply of water.

MAAGAM, OR MAHAGAMA, the ancient name for the present hamlet known as Tissamaharama, was the capital city of Rohuna, tributary kingdom to Anuradhapura in the days of the nation's greatness. It is first mentioned in the third century B.C., when Mahanaga fled there after having narrowly escaped death by poisoning at the hands of his sister-in-law, queen of the devout Devanipiatissa or Tissa. Rohuna was a wild and inaccessible place—it is still the least-known part of Ceylon in many respects—but Mahanaga built there a flourishing civilization and a beautiful city. In later years it had direct communication with Anuradhapura by road and its buildings rivalled those of the Sacred City itself.

To-day Maagam, under its new name, is more beautiful and, although smaller, more alive than Anuradhapura. It is the centre of a flourishing agriculture far removed from civilization and its inhabitants appear uncommonly happy and contented.

MANAAR, 198 miles from Colombo, is a flat and sandy island on the Ceylon side of Adam's Bridge, a forlorn place, given a deformed appearance by the prevalence of the misshapen, squat trees known as baobabs, which are literally as broad as they are high. Nevertheless it was considered by the Dutch to be of great strategic importance, "the key to Jaffna," arid desert though it seems to-day. They fortified the small town of Manaar, confident that the Portuguese, if they attempted to recapture Ceylon, would make their greatest effort in the north.

MADICHCHUKKADDAI, 124 miles north of Colombo at the mouth of the Modergam river, is a vanishing township famous as the heart of the pearl fisheries. This romantic pursuit of pearls has a spasmodic history of over 3000 years in the Gulf of Manaar. Madichchukkaddai comes and goes with the pearl banks, and has not been a live town now for many years. It is by no

means impossible that the oysters may decide to return at any time, in which case Madichchukkaddai will once again spring into active and noisy life.

MATALE, see pp. 153–4.

MATARA, 98 miles from Colombo by rail or road, and the terminus of the narrow-gauge coast railway, lies at the mouth of the Nil-ganga, the Blue river, four miles from Dondra Head, the extreme southerly point of the island of Ceylon. There are two Dutch forts in this town, the smaller built in the form of a star in 1763 and known accordingly as the Star Fort. The larger faces the sea and has its back to the river, and within this enclosure, as at Jaffna and Galle, are all the official buildings, including the Kachcheri and the court. Everywhere in this part of the island will be found beautiful avenues of flowering trees providing deep shade at any time of the day, even for motorists. What was once the inside of the fort is now a public playing-field and park, with a bathing-place fenced off in the Nil-ganga to keep off the crocodiles which swarm in its waters.

MEDAMAHANUWARA, the "Middle Great City" of past centuries, is 92 miles from Colombo by road through Kandy. It is in the fertile Dumbara Valley, half-way along the pilgrims' route from the Kandyan capital to the Bintenne Alutnuwara, a holy shrine of 2500 years' standing. Medamahanuwara is the site of the capture of the last of the Kandyan kings, the savage and half-mad Raja Singha, taken by the British in 1815.

The mountain, which bears the same name as the city, was strongly fortified, a hide-out to which the Kandyan kings made their way when in trouble. There is nothing left in modern times to mark the place of the royal palace except some fragments of wall and a few scattered ruins said to have been part of the temple in which the Tooth Relic, when on one of its periodical flights for safety's sake, rested prior to its final journey to Kandy.

MIHINTALE, see pp. 123–6.

MORATUWA is built at the mouth of the Panadure river on the coast road to Galle, 13 miles from Colombo. It is the usual colourful and teeming small town of the wet zone, but it is interesting because of its special industry, that of furniture making and carpentry in general. Coconuts and cinnamon are grown in this area also, and there is some plumbago mining, but the little town is famous throughout the island for its furniture

and particularly for the bull-hackery carts which, even to-day, are such a feature of Ceylon roads. The carving and workmanship of the tables, chairs and beds turned out by the craftsmen of Moratuwa is of a high standard, although the design by Western standards leaves something to be desired. The lagoon at the river's mouth is a heavenly place.

MOUNT LAVINA, which is only 7 miles from the port area of Colombo, is the famous bathing-resort of the capital. Sir Edward Barnes, governor of the island in the early nineteenth century, built himself a fine house on a conical promontory thrusting out into the sea at this place. It commands a truly magnificent view of the coast for miles in either direction and is the Mecca of all passengers passing through Colombo on their way to the Far East, India or Australia. The hotel is an extension of the Governor's House built in 1824, and from it visitors may swim, fish or play tennis until it is time for their voyage to be resumed. The reef, some hundreds of yards from the shore, keeps away sharks and makes the bathing tolerably safe, but the currents there have their treacherous moments.

MULLATIVU is 217 miles from Colombo on the north-east coast. It is a small port for native coasting vessels and the centre of a salt industry. It is also the seat of local government, an Assistant Government Agent having his bungalow in the town.

The beach is a wild-looking place, for during the opening of the north-east monsoon the surf comes in huge combers. All around the town there is a desert of thorn and scrub, and only the romantically inclined will wish to make the journey to Mullativu. Yet historically it is very interesting. The Dutch were compelled to build a fortress here, mainly of earthwork, to defend themselves against attack from the Wanniyas, those strange jungle people of the northern wastelands whose origin is as debatable as that of the Veddahs. All that is known for certain of this now desolate area—once highly cultivated and thick with towns and villages—is that after the decline of the Sinhalese irrigation civilization in the thirteenth century, the Malabaris, left to themselves, found that they could not maintain so high a standard of life. They fell into disunity and broke into several warring factions. Of these petty chieftains and princes, the King of the Wanni was one of the last to survive. The Dutch defeated them wherever they put up an organized resistance, but they were never subdued, even when their redoubtable queen,

Wanninchee Maria Sembatte, was captured and taken off to captivity into Colombo. Unfortunately the Wanniyas preferred to ruin themselves by the abandonment of their agricultural pursuits rather than bow the knee, and took to the life of bandit raiders, after the manner of modern resistance groups. From their forest fastnesses they raided all the settlements of the white men and forts had to be erected at such key places as Elephant's Pass and Mullativu to keep their depredations within bounds. Even as recently as 1803, Pandara Wannyah, the King of the Wanni, drove out the garrison at Mullativu and even occupied Cottiar, south of Trincomalee. Although thoroughly defeated subsequently, this success completed the ruin and lawlessness of the guerrilla bands who were all that remained of the once hard-working farmers of this strange area. The central forests were left, once again, to the elephant and the dominion of the wild.

NEGOMBO, 23 miles north of Colombo, is, at certain seasons of the year, a seaside paradise. It was once world famous as the centre of the finest cinnamon grown, but cinnamon figures very little in its modern agriculture, most of which is devoted to coconuts. Its name is supposed to have been derived from the words "naga-bouh," the land of serpent worshippers, but it was of no importance historically until the Portuguese took it with a view to making of it a sanatorium for their troops. They were so strongly impressed with its agricultural possibilities that, having built the customary fort, they surrounded it with cinnamon which Valentyn, the Dutch chronicler, stated to be "the best in the world, and the most abundant."

The fort and the white bungalows of the Dutch burghers are still in a fair state of preservation, but its supreme attraction for visitors is its lovely lagoon and seaside amenities. The lagoon provides good and safe sailing, but the bathing has its treacherous moments. The place is a favourite with Europeans living in Colombo, for the rest-house has always been maintained at a high standard and the fish caught here are very fine eating. There is still a canal connecting Negombo with Chilaw, a memory of the Dutch whose canal system once reached from Negombo to Kaltura south of Colombo.

NUWARA ELIYA, see p. 278.

OHIYA, 143 miles from Colombo on the main line to Badulla, is the station for the Horton Plains.

PANADURE is a small town 17 miles south of Colombo at the mouth of the Panadure river. The lake and river scenery here borders upon perfection, for even to-day the bird life and vegetation is exquisite and prolific to an astonishing degree.

It is a busy market town for agricultural products and is the centre of many cottage industries such as silver beating, brassware and, like Moratuwa, carpentry, including the building of hackeries and furniture.

Two battles famous in Sinhalese history took place at the mouth of this river. Alekeswera, the famous general who did so much to create the fame of Parakrama the Great, here smashed a Malabari invasion; and here, too, the Dutch surrounded and annihilated a small force of Portuguese who, to the last, refused to give up Lanka without a fight.

PEREDENIYA, 68 miles by road and 70 by rail from Colombo, is a town of some size a few miles from Kandy. It is the main-line junction for Badulla on the one hand, and Kandy on the other, and the site of the world-famous Botanical Gardens. These, before the war, were reckoned second only to Kew, but during the war, space being short presumably, European troops were quartered on the gardens with the inevitable desolation that such visitations bring with them.

Historically the town is of interest, for it was here that Wikrama Bahu kept his court and built his palace in 1371, although few traces of either remain. The modern town calls for no comment, but the gardens are of such exceptional beauty that some description of them is necessary.

They are within the sheltering arm of the river Mahawelliganga, on an isthmus cut on the south side by the main road from Peredeniya to Kandy. The opportunities offered by this wonderful site have been grasped to the full and the gardens are one of the sights of the world. They cover 150 acres and are situated at a height of 1600 feet above sea-level, the perfect mean at which high-altitude and all low-altitude vegetation may be grown.

A few small precautions should be taken by the visitor, as if he were in the jungle, for some of the denser undergrowth harbours snakes which, although generally harmless, bite if they are trodden on. The wet grasses, too, are the abode of the abominable leech, but leeches need not be feared where the grasses are dry.

The avenues of palms are among the loveliest on earth, rightly famous, and the bamboos of the lake have a delicate beauty that would alone repay a visit to this elysium. Waterplants, flowering shrubs, bamboos, palms, lianas, ferns of a hundred varieties, flowers, orchids, flowering trees and shrubs in a brilliant profusion, a museum, herbarium and library, the place contains the most remarkable collection of tropical vegetation to be found anywhere. The natural insect and bird life living there places Peredeniya Gardens, in my own estimation, very far ahead of Kew in its immense interest to the visitor, although, officially, it ranks beneath it as a botanical garden.

POLONNARUHA, see pp. 142–52.

PUTTALAM is a small town on the coast, 82 miles north of Colombo. It is held to be the landing-place of the adventurer Wijayo and his followers 2500 years ago, although this is disputed by Forbes, who adduces evidence to show that the famous landing was made at Kirindi, close to Maagama, now Tissamaharama, on the east coast. Nevertheless, the ruins of Tamena-Nuwara were discovered in the forest 10 miles from Puttalam in 1839, which would seem to settle the matter. Puttalam was also the "Battala" of Ibn Batuta's landing in 1327, surely a very curious coincidence. The great Arab traveller noted that the salterns then, as now, provided the main source of livelihood for the inhabitants.

A large lagoon, or gobb, separates Puttalam from the peninsula of Kalpentyn, now Kalpitiya, a bay noted for the abundance and excellence of the fish and turtles to be found there. The town has a very considerable Moorish population.

RAMBODA is a village 98 miles from Colombo which has given its name to the road pass which links Colombo with Nuwara Eliya. This pass is a splendid engineering feat which provides the motorist with a series of magnificent views of the mountains of Ceylon.

RAMESWERAM, an island sacred to Hindus, is situated on the Indian side of Adam's Bridge and is not part of the Dominion of Ceylon. The temple which dominates the island is visited by innumerable pilgrims annually, a large proportion of them formerly from Ceylon, although whether this exodus is now maintained I do not know. The island is 7 miles in length, a veritable *via sacra*, with minor temples, ambalams and baths all the way, and an avenue of sacred trees leading to Rameswerам

itself. All these subsidiary works, once in splendid repair, have been allowed to fall into decay and only the main temple is now kept in proper order. It is surrounded by a high wall and only the remarkable outer gallery may be seen by Europeans. All around this lofty passageway are magnificently executed carvings, second only to the wonderful temple of Madura.

It is said that the Paumben Passage was once crossed by a broad causeway across which pilgrims in millions used to visit Rameswerам, dragging, at the height of the festival, the great car Juggernaut to visit the God of the Temple. But since the British ban upon devotees hurling themselves under the wheels of Juggernaut, the fame of this particular festival has decreased. It is not now considered worth while, presumably, to keep up all the splendid paraphernalia of past glory.

RATNAPURA, see pp. 364–5.

SIGIRYA, see pp. 153–69.

SITAWACCA (see AVISAWELLA) is situated on a tributary of the Kelani-ganga still known as the Sitawacca river. Thirty miles from Colombo by road, this ancient site was the citadel of both Maaya Dunnai and of his son Raja Singha in the sixteenth century. But many centuries before it became the stronghold of this old bandit king, it was famous as the place in which Hanuman found Sita, the abducted wife of the hero Rama. It is true that this is disputed, for many Sinhalese say that Hanuman found Sita in the Nuwara Eliya Valley, but nevertheless the place derived its name from this belief.

As the capital of the centenarian Raja Singha, Sitawacca was captured and burned to the ground by the infamous Azavedo. Parts of the ancient palace are still to be seen, notably the bridge over the moat which consists of five huge slabs of stone, each 14 feet in length and 3 feet wide. A short distance from this bridge, on a knoll, is all that is left of what must have been a most remarkable temple, the Berendi Kovil. This was built in honour of Siva the Destroyer, and not of Buddha the Conqueror, for Raja Singha added apostasy to his other shortcomings towards the end of his fighting career. The *Mahawansa* explains this by repeating the charge—made in the first place by the Portuguese —that the centenarian king was a parricide. On appealing to the Buddhist priests for absolution presumably from this sin, Raja Singha had received the uncompromising answer that the consequence of such a sin was out of the hands of priests and had to

be answered for in the next life. The king, in furious rage, executed the priests who had given him this brave answer and turned to the more accommodating Brahmins for relief from remorse. The Brahmins directed him to build the temple "Berendi," a temple for the purposes of obtaining redemption, which he did after first bestowing the sri-pada, or Sacred Foot-step of Buddha on the summit of Adam's Peak, to some Indian holy men.

The whole of this area is crowded with fighting memories. The little fort of Ruanwelli—"Rang-welli" means the sands of gold, for gold was actually found in the river here in tiny quantities—is a few miles to the east of the Berendi Kovil. Ruanwelli was one of the key forts of the turbulent frontier of the Kandyan country, built by the Dutch in 1675.

At Medagoda, 6 miles from Ruanwelli, there is a dewale dedicated to Patini, Goddess of Chastity, the feature of which is a pillar carved with a delicacy and beauty equalled nowhere else in Ceylon, said to have originated as part of the Berendi.

TALAMMANAAR is the terminus of the Ceylon State Railways, 216 miles from Colombo. From here the ferries cross over into south India.

TALAWAKELLIE, 87 miles by road and 115 by rail from Colombo, is the heart of the Dimbula tea district. Although this great valley is devoted entirely to tea, reducing the grandeur of the scenery to the well-drilled uniformity of scientific agriculture, the overall beauty of the place still defies suppression. Particularly fine are the two great waterfalls, the St Clair and Devon falls.

TANGALLE is a most attractive seaside village on the south-east coast, 122 miles from Colombo. It is the last outpost of civilization, for the jungle begins immediately beyond the citronella plantations for which the town is noted.

TELDENIYA, a small village with important historic associations, is 84 miles from Colombo and 12 from Kandy by road. It is now the centre of a tobacco- and rice-growing district, but was said to have been a hunting reserve in the days of Raja Singha.

The attraction for the antiquarian is the wihara of Bambaragalla—the rock of bees—a mile to the west of the village. The wihara consists of two rock temples, one on top of the other, situated on a hill which commands glorious views of the Dumbara Valley, in which it is situated. The inscriptions on these

rocks are in Asokan characters, which indicates that the site is of immense antiquity. The caves themselves are adorned with the usual flamboyant paintings attributed to Kings Kirti Sri and Raja Singha.

Teldeniya is on the royal road to Bintenne.

TISSAMAHARAMA (see also MAAGAMA) is 167 miles from Colombo via Galle, Matara and Hambantota, a thriving little agricultural township in the middle of some of the most deserted country in Ceylon. Once the seat of the kings of Rohunna, and believed by many to be the place at which the founder of the Sinhalese civilization, Wijayo, made his first capital, it is built around a very lovely tank, the Yoda wewa, and possesses monuments of great historical interest. The great dagoba, known to the villagers as the dagoba of the two million bricks, has been restored and stands close upon 200 feet in height.

Game shooting in this area is the equal of any to be found in Ceylon, but now that the new government have passed a measure prohibiting killing—which seems an entirely admirable decree —the area must be considered from the points of view of the antiquarian and of the naturalist, and for both it must be rated very high indeed. The life of the tank and the surrounding jungles, the special attractions of the former game sanctuary of Yala and the tiny seaside resort of Kirindi, make this ancient capital of outstanding interest. Signs of the ancient highway, cleaving its way through the forests in a straight line to Anuradhapura, have yet to be found.

A tree found in large numbers in this district is the *Salvadora persica*, believed to be the mustard tree of the Bible.

I agree wholeheartedly with Bella Sydney Woolf when she calls Tissamaharama "one of the most alluring spots in Ceylon."

TRINCOMALEE, see pp. 340–2.

WELIGAMA, 89 miles by road or rail from Colombo, is situated on the south coast, a magnificent tropical bay with splendid fishing and bathing as its main attractions. Two places of interest to the antiquarian are close at hand, the temple of Rasmakunda and the rock carving of a strange figure from the past known as Kusta Raja. This latter was supposed to have been a king of northern India smitten with leprosy who had a vision in which he was told that coconut juice, then unknown, could cure his leprosy. He was told to journey south until he should behold the

golden nuts in which would be found the healing fluid. In due course he arrived at this ultimate spot, the last land between northern India and the South Pole, and found this glorious bay bowered in the miraculous new tree, the coconut palm. They duly freed him from his leprosy and in return he made known to the inhabitants of the island of Lanka the wonderful properties of the coconut in general. His statue, thirty feet in height, has been carved from the living rock.

WORLD'S END, see HORTON PLAINS.

YAPAHUWA, 91 miles north-east of Colombo by road, is a few miles inland from the coast. When Polonnaruha fell before the advancing tide of the Malabaris, it was followed, as the capital of the unfortunate Sinhalese people, by Dambedeniya, which in its turn gave way to Yapahuwa, three miles from Maho. The new city was built by King Bhuwenika Bahu I on the brow of a rugged cliff, and even in the extremity to which the Sinhalese had been reduced, he found time to build with pride and permanence. The royal city survived eleven years but the royal buildings still survive after six centuries.

There is a very fine granite staircase up the face of the huge rock. It was built originally in three flights, of which the centre flight has disappeared. The upper one is, however, magnificent, built in the Hindu style, its balustrades heavily ornamented with lions, dragons, elephants and "gaja-singha," which is a composite beast, half elephant and half lion. These steps end in a truly impressive gateway with windows on either side. The summit is covered with other relics of past grandeur and commands a wonderful view.

The city itself was at the foot of the rock and its walls may still be traced in the surrounding jungle.

IRRIGATION TANKS

These tanks, the oldest of which is over 2500 years in age, are exquisite centres of wild life throughout the island. Some of them are large, some small, some fully restored, some lying in a ruined state, but all are attractive and the majority magnificent. Minneriya, to this day, is 20 miles in circumference and was more than twice that figure in its prime. The acreages given, of these few main tanks of the great plains, are approximate only.

	Acres
Allai, between Batticoloa and Trincomalee on the east coast	2600
Giant's Tank, 5 miles from Manaar, or Aripu, on the north-west coast	6000
Hettipola, 20 miles from Chilaw on the north-west coast	1360
Horaborawewa, 4 miles from Alutnuwara, in the Bintenne	4000
Irrakamam, 31 miles south of Batticoloa	1200
Kalu wewa, 24 miles from Talawa in the N.C. Province	4400
Kantellai, 15 miles from Trincomalee	3500
Minneriya, 13 miles from Habarane in the N.C. Province	4040
Nuwara wewa, 2 miles out of Anaradhapura, N.C. Province	2000
Padawiya, 2 miles east of Vavuniya in the N.C. Province	4060
Pandawewa, 20 miles east of Chilaw	1360
Rukam, 20 miles from Batticoloa on the Badulla road	2800
Yoda wewa, at Tissamaharama in the Southern Province	1200

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A Description of Ceylon, Jas. Cordiner.
Ancient Ceylon, Parker.
Book of Ceylon, The, H. W. Cave.
Ceylon, Vols. 1 and 2, Sir Emerson Tennent.
Ceylon Commentary, P. R. Smythe.
Ceylon Past and Present, Enriques.
Eleven Years in Ceylon, J. Forbes.
Encyclopædia Britannica.
Historic Relation of Ceylon, Robert Knox.
Jungle Tide, The, John Still.
Mahawansa, The, Sinhalese dynastic records edited by George Turnour.
Palms and Pearls, Alan Walters.
Rajaratnacari, The, ancient Sinhalese books.
Rajavali, The, ancient Sinhalese books.
Romantic Ceylon, R. H. Bassett.
Spolia Zeylanica.
Veddhas, The, Prof. C. G. Seligmann.
Wild Ceylon, R. L. Spittel.

INDEX

A

Abayawewa, 24
Abhyagiriya dagoba, 39, 50, 133, 135–7, 139
Abhayagiri sect, 52, 136
Aborigines, *see* Veddhas
Abhayagiri sect, 52, 136
Abraims, 369
Acacia trees, *see* Flora
Adam, 15, 282, 288, 403, 424
Adam's Bridge, 20, 60, 423, 424, 437, 442
Adam's Peak, 80, 155, 273, 275, 277, 280–8, 420, 429, 432
Admiralty House, Trincomalee, 342
Æsop's Fables, 155
Afghans, 249, 311
Agrapatanas, 429
Agra river, 429
Agriculture:
  Acreages, 423
  Areca nuts, 358, 359
  Cacao, 356, 357
  Cinchona, 360
  Cinnamon, 359, 360
  Citronella, 358, 444
  Coconuts, 352–56
  Rice, 357, 358
  Rubber, 348–52
  Sugar, 361
  Tobacco, 360, 361
Ahikuntakayo, 243, 304
Aquatic plants, *see* Flora
Alagalla Rock, 321
Alekeswara, 428, 441
Alexander the Great, 145, 284
Alutnuwara (Bintenne), 177, 186, 187, 188, 205, 419, 424, 438
Alutnuwara (Kandy), 424
Alu Wihara, 154, 155
Ambalangoda, 424
Ambanganga, 157
Ambatthakalo, 58, 166
Ambatthalo, 33, 123
Ambustella dagoba, 34, 125
Amethysts, *see* Gems
Amiens, Treaty of, 105
Ananda, 37, 145
Anelativu, 334
Angelbeck, Van, 101, 102
Animism, 28
Anne, the good ship, 97, 342
Anne, Queen, 38
Annius Plocamus, 39
Annual jewel fair, 364
Anula, Queen, 51, 59
Anuradha, 127
Anuradhapura, 12, 24, 33, 35, 38, 40, 43, 46, 49, 50, 52, 57, 61, 64, 65, 70, 71, 74, 120–41, 142–9, 152, 154, 156, 158–60, 173 .283, 309, 346, 388, 392, 411, 425, 437, 445
Ants, *see* Fauna
Aposaka, 164
Aqua marina, *see* Gems
Arabs, *see* Moors
Arabian Nights' Entertainments, the, 361
Arahatship, 31
Aratchi, 304, 305
Archaeology, 130, 142, 144, 146, 150, 152, 167
Areca palms, *see* Flora
Arrack, 376
Ararat, Mount, 282, 424
Artillery, 82, 83
Asela, 45
Asoca tree, *see* Flora
Asoka, 33, 137
Asoka-aramaya, *see* Garden of Ravanna
Assembly Hall of Priests, the, 130
Astrology, 300, 303
Ata dagé, 150
Ataika tree, 128
Athakatha, 155
Audience Hall, Anuradhapura, 141
Audience Hall, Kandy, 111, 344
Australia, 373, 412, 439
Avisawella, 85, 425, 435
Axis deer, *see* Fauna
Azavedo, Don Jeronimo de, 89, 90, 384 443

B

Babylon, 61, 127
Badulla, 187, 206, 262, 263, 281, 322, 425, 435
Badulla Botanical gardens, 425
Bagawa Linna, 283
Bahu, King, 335
Balangoda, 363, 426, 435
Baldeus, 335
Bali, island of, 23
Bali, ceremonies, 300
Balkaduwa pass, 153
Bamboos, *see* Flora
Bana, sacred readings, 301
Bana pota, 155
Bandarawela, 170, 426, 435
Bandicoots, *see* Fauna
Banyan tree, *see* Flora
Baobab tree, *see* Flora
Barnes, Sir Edward, 113, 430
Barnsley, Corporal, 108

Basava the Bull, 36, 229, 252
Basawak kaluma, 43, 131, 139
Basses, the, 186, 277, 419, 436
Batiya Tissa, 48, 130
Bats, *see* Fauna
Batticoloa, 90, 108, 109, 187, 347, 371, 427
Bears, *see* Fauna
Bees, *see* Fauna
Belihuloya, 428, 435
Belsen, 86
Bengal, Bay of, 277, 340, 405
Berendi Kovil, 443, 444
Betel vine, *see* Flora
Betel chew, 176, 359, 377
Bhagavata, 224, 254
Bhikku, *see* Buddhism
Bhuwenika VII, 83, 84
Bibile, 177, 183
Bihar and Orissa, 60
Bimbisara, 130
Bintenne, 17, 174, 184, 424, 426
Birds, *see* Fauna
Bizet, 369
Bloodsuckers, *see* Fauna
Boars, *see* Fauna
Bogawantalawa, 432
Boro Bodeo, 35
Bo-tree, the sacred, 29, 34, 127, 128, 158
Bow Club, 427
Brahma and Brahmins, 18, 29, 155, 224, 227–32, 235, 239, 242, 248, 251, 253, 254, 302, 340, 369, 379, 444
Brahma Viharas, 30
Brazen Palace, the, 36, 47, 52, 70, 128, 129, 130
Brebis, La, 90
Breccia, 336
British in Ceylon, the, 25, 104–18, 191–272, 343, 344, 373, 425, 428, 436, 438
Buddegama, 361
Buddha and Buddhism, 17, 27–37, 120–69, 267, 283, 301, 302, 313, 340, 344, 346, 379, 429, 434
Buddha Gosa, 155
Buddhist Convocation, the, 50, 154, 155
Buddhist rail, 150
Budha Dasa, 56
Buffaloes, *see* Fauna
Buga Mugalama, 60
Bulam kaluma, 131, 139
Burghers, the, 103, 195, 264, 311, 422
Burma, 72, 299, 332, 375, 398
Burroughes, Mr, 149
Butterflies, *see* Fauna
Butterflies, annual migration of, 282–3

Cabook, 327
Cadjan, 376
Caesar, Julius, 38
Calamander tree, *see* Flora
Camphor tree, *see* Flora
Canals, Dutch system of, 434, 440
Candace, Queen of Ethiopia, 283
Candite, *see* Gems
Caphane, 413
Cardamoms, *see* Agriculture
Caste system, 224–44
Castor oil plant, *see* Flora
Catamarans, 405, 406
Catharina, Donna, 88–91
Cat's eyes, *see* Gems
Cave, C. W., 46, 140, 149
Cave of the Frescoes, 167, 168
Ceilao, 413
Centipedes, *see* Fauna
Ceylon, *see* Guide Book
Chain of the Creed, the, 284, 287
Chalias, 82, 90, 95, 99, 359
Chameleon, *see* Fauna
Champac, *see* Flora
Chandragupta, 33
Chandra Wankalang, 126, 132, 137
Chank shells, 366
Cha Pu, 197
Chena cultivation, *see* Villages and Villagers
Cheops, the Pyramid of, 140
Chilaw, 74, 108, 370, 371, 419, 428, 440
China, and the Chinese, 43, 56, 76, 192–4, 197, 339, 413
Ching Ho, 76, 430
Chitra Parvata, 321
Chola, 23, 61, 73
Chora Naga, 51
Chules, 376
Chummery, *see* Colombo
Chunam, 133
Christ and Christianity, 31, 33, 147, 158
Ciccadas, *see* Fauna
Cinnamon, 82, 95, 440
Cinnamon Gardens, *see* Colombo
Cinnamon stone, *see* Gems
Circe, 22
Cities, the lost, 120–69
Citronella, *see* Agriculture
Citta, King, 173
Civet cat, *see* Fauna
Civil Service, the, 332
Claudius, the Emperor, 39
Clergy of Reason, the, 27–37
Climate, of Ceylon, 413–17
Coastline, of Ceylon, 419, 420
Cobras, *see* Fauna
Cocoa, Cacao, *see* Agriculture
Coco beetle, 355
Coconut estates, *see* Agriculture
Coffee in Ceylon, 113–14, 372, 373
Coins, Roman, 39, 168
Colombo: references to, 81, 82, 83–7, 107, 108, 109, 310, 347, 412, 428
  Architecture, 319–20, 325–6
  Bird life, 327–8
  Chummeries, 330–1
  Cinnamon gardens, 320, 327
  Climate, 416
  Education, 313–15
  Europeans, 328–31
  Fort, the, 319
  Government, 318
  History, 309–10
  Hospitals, 316

Insects, 327
Law, 316, 317–18
Medicine, 316–17
Museum, 80, 152
Omnibuses, 323–4
Pettah, the, 320, 324, 325
Population, 311, 320, 321
Police, the, 318
Railways, 321–3, 418, 434
Shipping and trade, 221, 310–13
Slave Island, 320
Town planning, 319–20
Tramway system, 324
University, 313, 314
Colonial Service, the, 9
Columbus, 310
Commerce, 256–311
Communist party, the, 256, 318
Conan Doyle, 114
Confucius, 197
Coral groves, 424
Coral trees, *see* Flora
Cordiner, the Rev. 108
Coromandel coast, the, 223, 273, 332, 335, 374, 423
Cotta, 75, 76, 80, 85, 90, 95, 428
Cottiar, Bay of, 341, 342, 440
"Creeper," a, 196, 258
Crocodiles, *see* Fauna
Crows, *see* Fauna
Crow Island, 327
Culodara, 17
Currents, round Ceylon, 414
Curry, 297

D

Dadap trees, *see* Flora
Dagana, Sacred to the Moon, 429
Dagobas, description of, 35
Dahiakande, 157
Dalada maligawa, Anuradhapura, 138
Dalada maligawa, Kandy, 88, 112, 344, 345
Dalada maligawa, Polonnaruha, 150
D'Almeida, Dom Francisco, 80
D'Almeida, Lorenzo, 76, 79, 80, 81
Dambadeniya, 74, 428, 446
Dambadiva, *see* India
Dambani Veddhas, 184, 185
Dambulla, 46, 48, 156–9, 274, 429
Damilos, *see* Malabaris
Danes, the, 92
Dantepura, 138
Dapulul, King, 60
Darwin, Charles, 17
Dasaradha, 18
Dathiya, 135, 136
Davie, Major, 107, 108, 153
Davie's tree, 108
De Albargaria, 81
De Couto, 82
Dederu oya, 421
Dediminda yakka, 186
Deer, *see* Fauna
Deepvali, 252
Dekkan, 23, 174, 274
Delft, Island of the Sun, 334–5
Del tree, *see* Flora
Demala Maha Saya, 144, 145
Deschamps, 180
Detu Tissa, King, 56
Deva Huwa, 347
Devaki, 253
Devil bird, *see* Fauna
Devil dancers, 346
Devil's apple, *see* Flora
Devon Falls, 444
Dewananpiatissa, *see* Tissa King
Dharmarucci sect, the, 130
Dharma Parakrama Bahu, 81, 82
Dhatu Sen, King, 57, 58, 159–61
Dhonies, 375, 427
Dickoya, 200, 278, 429, 432
Dickwella, 435
Digganakhaya dagoba, 48
Dimbula, 200, 278, 429
Diuluma falls, 420
Diyabetma, 286
Diyatalawa, 429
Dogs, *see* Pariah dogs
Dolosbage, 429
Dombers, 244
Dominion status, 326
Dondra Fair, 430
Dondra Head, 39, 59, 61, 87, 229, 370, 429, 430, 438
Dondra Temple, 341
Don Juan, 83, 84
Don Juan Dharmapala, 91
Drums of death, the, 241
Dry Zone, *see* Zones
Dubois, 223, 225, 239
Dugong, *see* Fauna
Dumbara valley, 360, 438, 444
Dunhinda falls, 426
Durga, 252
Durian, *see* Flora
Dutch Bay, 340
Dutch in Ceylon, the, 95–103, 336, 343, 374, 407, 428, 434, 438–41
Dutthagamini, King, 35, 46–9, 66, 129–32, 135, 157, 159, 186, 187

E

Eagles, *see* Fauna
Eastern stupa, *see* Jetawanarama
East India Company, 104, 105, 197
Ebony trees, *see* Flora
Education, *see* Colombo
Ehelapola, 111, 154
Eightfold Path, the, 32
Elephants, *see* Fauna
Elephants' Pass, 59, 332, 333, 440
Elephants' stables, 130
Elk plains, *see* Horton Plains
Elahara canal, 157
Ellala, King, 41, 43, 45–7, 49, 74, 129, 132, 159
Ellas, 40, 298
Enriques, 337, 432
"Epitome," Turnour, 166, 186
Etwahara dagoba, 412

Euphorbias, *see* Flora
Europeans, 255–72, 328–32, 422, 440
Eve, 15, 282, 288, 380, 424
Evil Eye, the, 293
Ezion Geber, 339

F

Faction, 235, 236, 247
Fagan, Lieutenant, 144
Fa Hien, 21, 47, 57
Falck, Governor, 101
False snakes, *see* Fauna
Faria y Sousa, 94
Fauna:
  Ants, 401–2
  Axis Deer, *see* Sambhur
  Bandicoots, 385, 396
  Bats, 395
  Bears, 386, 388, 389
  Bees, 153, 168, 169, 402
  Birds, 383–5, 407–10
  Bloodsuckers, 398
  Boars, 387
  Buffaloes, 392, 393
  Bugs, 401
  Bulbuls, 328, 408
  Butterflies, 403, 433
  Centipedes, 401
  Chameleon, 398
  Ciccadas 122, 400
  Civet cat or Genette, 390
  Climbing fish, 407
  Cobras, 399, 400
  Crocodiles, 394, 395
  Crows, 295, 327, 328
  Deer, 390
  Devil bird, 384
  Dugong, 407
  Eagles, 383, 384
  Elephants, 385–7, 392
  Elephants (rogue), 121, 122, 387
  Elk, *see* Sambhur
  Esculent swift, 384
  False snakes, 400
  Fireflies, 112, 346
  Fishes, 405, 406
  Fleas, 401
  Flies, 401
  Flower parrot, 406
  Flamingoes, 409, 410
  Flying foxes, 395, 396
  Flying squirrels, 396
  Frogs, 400
  Genette, *see* Civet cat
  Giant millipedes, 404
  Gekkos, 397, 398
  Hares, 397
  Hawks, 384
  Hornbill, *see* Toucan
  Hornets, 153, 168, 169, 402
  Horses, 336
  Ichneumon (Mongoose), 393, 394, 399
  Iguana, 397
  Indranee, *see* Owls
  Insects, 395
  Jackal, 393
  Jaffna sheep, 397
  Jungle fowl, 396, 408
  Kabragoya, 397
  Kingfisher, 385
  Kite, 383
  Leeches, 404, 405
  Leopards, 386, 388–90
  Lizards, 397, 398
  Loris, 274, 390, 391
  Monkeys, 385, 388, 391, 392
  Mosquitoes, 388, 403, 404, 421
  Moths, 403
  Muntjac, 390
  Owls, 384
  Oxen, 396, 397
  Palm cat, 390
  Pangolins, 385, 397
  Panthers, 387, 389, 390
  Parakeets, 410
  Pea-fowl, 408
  Pelicans, 409
  Pigeons, 396, 408
  Porcupine, 388
  Pythons, 399
  Rats, 396
  Reptiles, *see* Snakes
  Rilawa, *see* Monkeys
  Sambhur, 388
  Saw fish, 370, 406
  Scorpions, 404
  Sea snakes, 384
  Sharks, 370, 406
  Singing fish, 427, 428
  Snakes, 393, 394, 398–400
  Spiders, 401–2, 403
  Spoonbills, 409
  Spotted deer, 390
  Squirrels, 396
  Storks, 409
  Swallows, 401
  Tailor birds, 408
  Talagoyas, 397
  Tarantulas, 402
  Teal, 409
  Termites, 402
  Tern, 409
  Terrapins, 407
  Ticks, 403
  Tic polonga, 399
  Toads, 400
  Toucans, 408
  Turtles, 344, 407
  Tuskers, *see* Elephants
  Wanderoos, *see* Monkeys
  Wasps, 400, 402
  Water snakes, 400
  Whales, 405
Ficus Indica, *see* Flora
Ficus Religiosa, *see* Bo-tree
Fig trees, *see* Flora
Fireflies, *see* Fauna
First Man, *see* Pawn Koo
Fishermen, 355, 406
Fishes, *see* Fauna
Fitch, Ralph, 86, 366
Fleas, *see* Fauna

Flies, *see* Fauna
Flower parrot, *see* Fauna
Flamingoes, *see* Fauna
Flora:
  Acacia, 204, 373
  Areca palms, 377
  Asoca trees, 379
  Aquatic plants, 382–3
  Bamboos, 378, 379
  Banyans, 372
  Baobab trees, 437
  Betel vines, 293, 373
  Cacti, 373
  Calamander trees, 374
  Camphor trees, 373
  Castor oil plants, 373
  Casuarina trees, 373
  Champacs, 379
  Climbing plants, 371–2
  Coconut palms, 375, 376
  Coral trees, 380
  Dadaps, 204
  Del trees, 374
  Devil's apples, 373
  Durian, 381
  Ebony trees, 374
  Euphorbias, 349, 373
  Ferns, 371, 378, 379
  Ficus Indica, 341
  Ficus religiosa, *see* Bo-tree
  Fig trees, 372–3
  Flowers, 382–3
  Fruit, 380–382
  Fungi, 371
  Ganja, *see* Hemp
  Grapes, 361
  Guava, 373
  Halmilla tree, 375
  Hemp, 373
  Imbul tree, *see* Kittu imbul
  Iron tree, 379
  Jak tree, 374
  Jasmine, 380
  Kitul palm, 377
  Kittu Imbul, 379
  Kumbuk tree, 373
  Lemon grass, 276
  Lotus family, 373
  Magnolias, 379, 380
  Mahari tree, 128
  Mangosteens, 381
  Mangroves, 370, 371
  Marghosa tree, 372
  Muruttu trees, 380
  Mustard trees, 373
  Myrtles, 379
  Nedun trees, 374
  Nelu flowers, 279, 285, 379, 396
  Oak, 373
  Oleanders, 380
  Orchids, 371, 382
  Pagoda fig tree, 42
  Palmyras, 375, 376
  Pandanus, 378
  Pepper, 373
  Pipul tree, 372
  Plantains, 361, 378, 382
  Plumiera, 380
  Rambutan, 381
  Rattan, 371, 372
  Rhododendrons, 379
  Satinwood trees, 374
  Sugar, 361
  Suruya trees, 380
  Tamarinds, 374
  Talypot palms, 375, 377
  Teak trees, 375
  Temple flowers, *see* Champac, Oleander, etc.
  Thorns, 371
  Timber, 373–4
Flowering shrubs, 379
Flowering trees, 378, 379
Flowers, *see* Flora
Flowers, religious uses of, 135
Flying Foxes, *see* Fauna
Flying squirrels, *see* Fauna
Fo, 56
Footprint, the Sacred, *see* Sri Pada
Forbes, Major, 110, 128, 129, 153, 442
Fort Frederick, 340
Franciscans, 83
French at Trincomalee, 100
Friar's Hood, 274
Frogs, *see* Fauna
Fruit, *see* Flora

G

Gadaladeniya, 433
Gajah Bahu, King, 61, 66, 154
Galagane, 153
Gallas, 90
Galle, 80, 81, 87, 99, 274, 309, 310, 338, 339, 430
Gallé, 10
Galleface Hotel, 326
Galle-pada-ulla, 187
Galloya, 347
Gal-oya, 422
Gal-pota, 149
Gamini, 24
Gampola, 76, 278, 429, 430
Gandhi, Mahatmaya, 248, 290, 357
Ganegalla, 96
Ganesa, 252
Gansabhawa, 147, 304
Garden of Eden, 288
Garden of Ravanna, 277–81, 420, 433
Garuda, *see* Malabar Eagle
Garnet, *see* Gems
Gaspar, Don, 334
Gedigé, 139, 155
Gekko, *see* Fauna
Gems, 362–4
  Amethysts, 364
  Aqua marina, 364
  Cat's eyes, 364
  Cinnamon stones, 364
  Garnets, 364
  Matara diamonds, 364
  Moonstones, 364
  Rubies, 364

Sapphires, 364
Selenite, 364
Spinel, 364
Topaz, 364
Tourmalines, 364
Zircons, 364
Gems, the law relating to their mining, 362
Gem mines, 362, 363
Genette, *see* Fauna
Giant millepedes, *see* Fauna
Gin-ganga, 421
Ginnigatenne Pass, 435
Giridipo islands, 186, 436
Gneiss, 274, 327
Gnostics, 283
Goa, 88, 334
Gobbs, 319, 338, 420, 427, 434, 442
Gold, 444
Gold-dust dagoba, *see* Ruanwelli
Gonds, 172
Goose, the Sacred, *see* Hansa
Gotama (or Gautama), 17, 21, 22, 27, 30, 31, 34, 36, 37, 50, 51, 123, 125, 130–2, 137, 147, 151, 154, 158, 160, 186, 225, 283, 302, 346, 396, 435
Government, *see* Colombo
Government Agent, 417
Granite, 274
Grapes, *see* Flora
Great Dynasty, *see* Mahawansa
Great Western, 275, 287
Greek gods, 244, 245
Greeks, the, 412
Griffiths, R. T. H., 18
Guhasiva, 344, 345
Guide Book, 411–47
Gutthila, 44, 45
Gygax, Dr, 363

H

Haarlem, 335
Habarane, 430
Hakgalla, 277, 278, 287, 426, 430, 431
Hakgalla botanical gardens, 278, 431
Hambantota, 395, 406, 419, 431
Hansa the Sacred Geese, 149
Hanuman (or Hanumento), 19, 20, 36, 85, 229, 252, 277, 443
Hanwela, 108, 435
Haputale, 278, 426, 432
Haputale Pass, 426, 429
Harbours of Ceylon, 338, 340
Haroun Al Raschid, 339, 361
Harvests, 298
Hatton, 322, 429
Hawks, *see* Fauna
Haye, Admiral de la, 100
Hemilia vestatrix, 114, 195
Heneratgoda botanical gardens, 349
Henry VIII, 52, 58
Hevea brasiliensis, 349, 350
Hibernard, 413
High Priest of the Peak, 283, 284
Himalayas, 56
Hiouen Thsang, 60
Hobart, Lord, 101
Hocart, Mr, 138
Holy mountain, *see* Adam's Peak
Homer, 22
Horaborawewa, 187, 188, 205
Hornbill, *see* Fauna
Hornets, *see* Fauna
Horoscopes, 300
Horses, 336
Horse plains, 336
Horton Plains, 277, 278, 287, 363, 426, 428, 432, 440
Hospitals, *see* Colombo
Hotels, 418
Hot springs, 342
Hulft, General, 96
Hunisgyria, 153, 287
Hurricanes, 417

I

Ibn Batuta, 284, 310, 428, 430, 442
Ichneumon, *see* Fauna
Idulgeshina, 322
Ieu, 283
Iguana, *see* Fauna
Ilanare, 413
Iliad, the, 19
Image houses, 141
Imbul tree, *see* Flora
India, 56, 63, 66, 138, 149, 172, 192, 194, 197, 222, 235, 299, 335, 342, 358–60, 412, 417, 423, 446
Indra, 253
Indranee, *see* Fauna
Infusoria, 327
Insects, *see* Fauna
International Tea Committee, 193
Iron tree, *see* Flora
Islands, of Palk's Bay, 334–6
Isurumuniya, 131, 132

J

Jackal, *see* Fauna
Jackal horn, 393
Jaffna, 75, 88, 91, 107, 108, 309, 332–8, 370, 371, 376
Jaffna peninsular, 59, 75, 273, 334, 386
Jaffna sheep, *see* Fauna
Jaffna Tamils, 195, 360, 376
Jaggery, 377
Jak tree, *see* Flora
Jambudipa, 21
Japan, 192–4
Japanese, raid on Colombo, 311, 312
Jasmine, *see* Flora
Jatakas, 155
Jataka frescoes, 144
Jaya Sri Maha-bodin Wahansa, *see* Bo tree, the sacred
Jayawardenapura, *see* Cotta
Jayawewa, 24
Jesus, *see* Christ and Christianity
Jetawanarama, the (Anuradhapura), 49, 133, 136, 138, 139
Jetawanarama, he (Polonnaruha), 146, 147, 149

Jidda, 282
John, King, 58, 162
Johnson, Captain, 109, 110
Jotiyo, 24
Juggernaut, 443
Jugglers, 244
Jungara parvata, 83
Jungle fowl, *see* Fauna
Jurisprudence, *see* Colombo, Law

K

Kabragoya, *see* Fauna
Kadugannawa pass, 278, 424, 433
Kaduwela, 85
Kaelebasa, 185
Kailasa, 227
Kakusanda Buddha, 128, 183
Kalah, 339
Kalambu, *see* Colombo
Kala-oya, 421
Kalinga, 138
Kalkudah, 434
Kaltura, 434, 440
Kalu-gal wihara, 131, 144
Kalu-ganga, 286, 365, 419, 421, 434
Kaluna Detutissa, 61
Kaluwewa, the, 40, 46, 157, 160, 161
Kamsa, 253, 254
Kandapola, 434
Kandulla, 46
Kandy, 89, 91, 104, 107, 111, 139, 153, 200, 278, 280, 309, 342–7, 411, 416, 435
Kandyans, 76, 89, 92, 95, 109, 111, 113, 153, 223, 291, 422, 425
Kandy University, 314
Kankesanturai, 333
Kanya, hot springs, 342
Kapili Vashi, 147
Kapok, 379
Kapparalas, 53, 302, 303, 309
Karativu, 334
Karativu West, 335
Karsyapa Buddha, 128, 283
Kasyapa, King, 58, 64, 142, 161, 162–7, 168
Katragama, 62, 66, 229, 434
Katragama, the War god, 52, 302, 434
Kattugastota, 435
Kayts, the island of, 337
Keeramalai, 333
Kelaniya, 17, 84, 435
Kelani-ganga, the, 310, 320, 419, 421, 435
Kelani Valley, the, 425, 426, 435
Kew, botanical gardens, 441, 442
Kingfisher, *see* Fauna
Kinnaras, 308
Kipling, Rudyard, 253, 254, 255
Kiri dagoba, 146, 147
Kirilgalpota, 275, 287, 429
Kirindi, 186, 419, 436, 442, 445
Kirindi oya, 421, 436
Kirti Nissanka, King, 134, 148, 157
Kirtisri Meghawma, King, 60
Kirti Sena, 60
Kite, *see* Fauna
Kitsiri Maiwan, King, 56, 138
Kitson Kisdas, 147
Kitul palm, *see* Flora
Knox, Robert, 96, 98, 126, 173, 174, 181, 342
Knox's tree, 342
Knuckles, the, 287
Konagama Buddha, 128, 283
Kong tree, *see* Flora
Koondasala, 100
Kosgodde, 87
Kottugodella, 85
Kousalya, 18
Kowdellai, 157, 430
Krishna, 153, 154
Kshatriya, 28, 224
Kudatissa, King, 51
Kumara Datu Sen, 60
Kumara pokunas, 151
Kumbuk tree, *see* Flora
Kumbukkan oya, 422
Kundasala, 110
Kunkudutivu, 334
Kurunagalla, 74, 274, 291, 365, 436
Kuruvars, 242, 243, 244
Kusinara, 138
Kusta Rajah, 445
Kuttam pokuna, 140
Kuweni, 22, 27, 59, 436

L

Labeh, King of Persia, 335
Labookellie, 198
La Brebis, 90
Labugama, 437
Lafreri's Atlas, 79
Lakshimi, 251
Lanka, 11, 17, 142, 147, 160, 172, 186, 197, 223, 256, 273, 282, 283, 289, 299, 301, 302, 309, 310, 317, 318, 334, 343, 347, 357, 358, 374, 375, 380, 382, 385, 392, 395, 406, 408, 412, 413, 433, 434, 441, 446
Lankapura, 15–17, 123, 172
Lankarama, 139
Lankatilleke (Kandy), 433
Lankatilleke (Polonnaruha), *see* Jetawanarama (Pol.)
Lapidaries, 362
Laterite, *see* Cabook
Latex, 350, 351
Law, profession of, *see* Colombo
Laxapana Pass, 283
Leeches, *see* Fauna
Lemon grass, *see* Flora
Leways, 431
Leyden, 334
Lightning conductor, early, 134
Lilawati, Queen, 74
Lindula, 429
Lingam, 146, 228, 230
Lion throne of Nissanka, 152
Lizards, *see* Fauna
Loha pasada, *see* Brazen palace
Loka-bambara-gaha, 153
Lokaiswara, 62, 64

Lokas, 53
London, 143
Loris, *see* Fauna
Lotus, *see* Flora
Lotus bath, 144
Lourenco, 80
Lover's Leap, 280
Lo Yu, 197

M

Maagam, *see* Tissa Maharama
Maaya Dunnai, 83, 85, 443
Macdowell, Fort, 153
Macdowell, General, 106
Macedonians, 40
Madampe, 87, 273
Madhillio, 243, 304
Madichchukaddai, 366, 367, 369, 437, 438
Madulsima, 205
Madura, 146, 239, 443
Maduru-oya, 421
Magadha, 17, 51, 130
Magha, 73, 74, 152
Magnolias, *see* Flora
Maha, rice crop, 298
Mahabadde, the, 82, 95, 114, 191–272, 313, 317, 361
Mahabharata, 224
Mahagama, 46, 436, 437
Mahagema Garden (also Maha Megha garden), 124, 127, 130, 132, 135
Mahanaga, 186, 437
Maha Nama, 56
Mahanamo, 57, 159, 160, 161, 166
Mahanava, 239
Mahari tree, *see* Flora
Maha Sen, King, 49, 52, 53, 139, 302
Maha Seya dagoba, 124
Magavellanam Vedia, 126
Mahawansa, the dynastic record, 9–12, 17, 20, 22–4, 33, 36, 42, 45, 46, 50, 52–70, 73, 76, 127, 129, 131–4, 142, 147, 150, 153, 159–61, 165, 166, 173, 285, 359, 366, 371, 443
Mahawansa, the dynasty itself, 11, 20, 38–54, 255, 304, 306
Mahawelliganga, the, 22, 45, 157, 205 342, 343, 345, 360, 419, 421, 435, 441
Mahayangana, 17, 35, 186, 436
Mahinda (or Mahindo), 33, 34, 123, 124, 125, 159
Mahinda's Couch, 125
Mahodara, 17
Majjhima, 30
Makara, 158, 159
Malabar eagle, 36
Malabars or Malabaris, the, 41, 59, 61, 62, 63, 66, 70, 71, 75, 88, 128, 138, 140, 142, 159, 160, 164, 166, 332, 333, 340, 428, 441, 446
Malacca, 339
Malaria, 316, 403, 404
Malaya, the wilderness of, 50
Malays, 72, 75, 102, 107, 153, 406, 422, 431
Malwana, 89
Malwatte-oya, 126, 137, 421
Manaar, 344, 423, 437
Manaar Straits, 19, 366
Mandetivu, 334
Mangosteens, *see* Flora
Mantota, 60
Maps, 79
Marco Polo, 284, 335, 368
Marghosa tree, *see* Flora
Maskeliya, 283, 429, 432
Matale, 51, 153, 154, 157, 173, 287, 438
Matara, 108, 359, 363, 438
Ma-touan-lin, 56
Mayaratta (Maya-ratta), 22, 45, 65, 71, 74
Mecca, 282
Medamahanuwara, 111, 438
Medawatchy, 122
Medicine, *see* Colombo
Menik-ganga, 421
Mihintale, 33, 34, 123, 124, 126, 149, 154, 438
Minneriya, 49, 53, 157
Minneriya devo, 302
Mi-oya, 422
Mirisweti dagoba, 130
Missionaries, 313
Mithila, 18
Modergama or Modergam river, 366, 367, 437
Mogallana, 58, 60, 162–7
Mohammed, 282, 375
Mohammedans, 15, 232
Moneragalla, 274
Monkeys, *see* Fauna
Monsoons, 413–17
Moonstones, *see* Gems
Moors (or Moormen), 81, 83, 303, 306, 310, 311, 339, 369, 422, 442
Moratuwa, 438, 439, 441
Moses, 95, 359
Moses, the Law of, 239
Mosquitoes, *see* Fauna
Mother India, 234
Moths, *see* Fauna
Mountains, 273–288, 420
Mount Meru, 301
Mount Lavinia, 439
Mukwars, 335
Mulgiri-galla, 10
Mulleriyawa, 85
Mullativu, 439, 440
Muersseram, 428
Muni, the, *see* Gotama
Muntjac, *see* Fauna
Muruttu tree, *see* Flora
Mustard tree, *see* Flora
Muttusamy, 107, 108
Mutwal, 102, 320

N

Nae Yaku, the, 179, 180
Naga Bouh, 440
Nagadipo, 17
Naga dwipa, Snake island, 15
Nagama, 335
Nagas, 15, 16, 21, 39, 135, 136, 172
Nagatharana, 243

Nalanda, 155, 156
Namam, 228, 230
Namunukula (Namunukulakande), 273–7, 287, 426
Nata, 52, 159, 302
Nayars, 16
Naynativu, 334, 335
Naynaturi Temple, 335
Nedun trees, *see* Flora
Neduntivu, 334
Negombo, 101, 359, 434, 440
Nelu flower, *see* Flora
Nigrodi tree, 128
Nilgalla Veddhas, 177
Nilganga, 438
Nilihela, 286
Nilwata, 422
Nineveh, 127
Nirvana, 29, 31, 32
Nissanka-lata-manda-laya, 150
Nissanka Mala, King, 149, 151, 152
Niyangampaya dagoba, 430
Nolan, Lieutenant, 335, 336
North, Lord, 105, 107, 111, 112
Northern stupa, *see* Abhayagiriya dagoba
Nuwara Eliya, 200, 277–80, 347, 411, 440
Nuwaragalla, 274
Nyan-ti, 56

O

Odyssey, the, 22
Ohiya, 432, 440
Olas, 123, 148, 377
Oleanders, *see* Flora
Opanaike, 426
Ophir, 339
Orchids, *see* Flora
Oudh, 20
Outcastes, 231
Ovid, 39
Owls, *see* Fauna
Oxen, *see* Fauna

P

Paddy, or padda, *see* Agriculture
Padma-purana, the, 233–5
Pagodas, 35
Pagoda fig trees, *see* Flora
Paichi Marca, 83
Pali, 10, 11, 23, 33, 155
Palk Straits, 58, 235, 334, 335, 413
Palm trees, *see* Flora
Palmyras, *see* Flora
Panadure, 438, 441
Pandals, 247
Pandanus, *see* Flora
Pandarams, 302
Pandara Wanniyah, 440
Pandu, 344, 345
Pandukabhaya, King, 24, 127
Panduwasa, 24, 38, 46
Pandya, 23, 61, 72, 73
Pangolin, *see* Fauna
Panthers, *see* Fauna
Pa-ou-tchow, 413
Parakrama the Great, 55, 59, 62, 64–73, 74, 142, 143, 146, 148–52, 424, 441
Parakrama III, 138, 343
Paranagantota, 107, 108
Pariahs, 28
Pariah dogs, 317
Parakeets, *see* Fauna
Parvati, 25, 253, 254
Pasteur Institute, 317
Patanas, 15, 276, 278
Patra, the, 345
Pattini, 53, 159, 302, 444
Pattipola, 322
Paumben passage, the, 423, 443
Pawn-Koo (the first man), 57, 283
Pea-fowl, *see* Fauna
Peacock palace, the, 128
Peak, the wilderness of the, 183, 184
Pearl divers, 368–70
Pearl fisheries, the, 366–70, 437
Pecheurs de perles, les, 369
Pedro (Pidarattallagalla), 275, 277–80, 287, 426
Pegu, King of, 334
Pelicans, *see* Fauna
Pelmadulla, 363
Pepper, *see* Flora
Perehera, the, 139, 345, 346
Peredeniya, 441, 442
Pettah, *see* Colombo
Philip II of Spain, 91
Pigeons, *see* Fauna
Pihitti-ratta, 57, 65
Pilgrim's path, the, 187, 283
Pilima Talawa, 47, 104, 105–8, 110, 153
Pingoes, 376
Pipul tree, *see* Flora
Place of Lamentation, the, 130
Plantains, *see* Flora
Planters, 255–72
Planters' Association, the, 272
Pleasure-house of Parakrama, the, 152
Pliny, 39, 366
Plumbago, 365
Point-de-Galle, 338
Point Pedro, 419
Pokunas, 125, 135
Police, *see* Colombo
Pollock, Captain, 109
Polonnaruha, 12, 59, 61, 64, 65, 69, 70, 74, 142–52, 309, 347, 442, 446
Polyandry, 309
Pongal, the feast of, 252
Population and races, 422
Porcupines, *see* Fauna
Portuguese in Ceylon, 79–94, 295, 310, 334, 336, 337, 340, 341, 343, 344, 359, 425, 428, 437, 440, 441, 443
Position of Ceylon, 413
Poya days, 301
Priestesses of the temple, 231
Prinsep, 33
Provinces of Ceylon, 417
Ptolemy, 38, 79, 310, 412, 413
Puja, ceremony of, 232, 233, 239
Pulastipura, 142

Purush-sukta, 224
Puttalam, 108, 370, 419, 442
Pyramids of Egypt, 35
Pythons, *see* Fauna

R

Rahu, 300
Railways, *see* Colombo
Rainfall, 416, 417
Raja Singha I, 85, 86, 87, 88, 342, 343, 425
Raja Singha II, 92, 93, 96–100, 106, 110, 185, 187, 438, 443
Rajaratnacari, the, 36, 43, 49, 61, 62
Raja-ratta, the, 22, 65, 67
Rajavali, the, 20, 39, 60, 75, 83, 86, 92, 147, 435
Rakkshas, 16, 21, 172
Rakshyos, 167, 301
Rakwana, 363
Rama, 16, 18, 19, 20, 52, 277, 282, 286, 412, 434, 443
Rama-chandra, 18, 159, 302
Ramasamy, 211
Ramayana, the, 16–20, 159, 224, 392, 412
Ramboda pass, the, 198, 442
Rambutan, *see* Flora
Ramesweram, temple of, 146, 423, 442
Rankot dagoba, the, 147, 148
Rangiri, *see* Dambulla
Rasmukanda temple, 445
Ratna pasada, 139, 140
Ratnapura, 9, 11, 200, 284, 285, 363, 364, 365, 426, 434, 443
Rats, *see* Fauna
Ratsnakes, *see* Fauna
Rattans, *see* Flora
Ravanna, the ten-headed giant, 17, 18, 19, 20, 53, 342, 434
Raxapana, 90
Reede, Francina Van, 341
Reptiles, *see* Fauna
Resthouses, 418, 419
Rice, *see* Agriculture
Richard the Lionheart, King, 45
Rilawa monkeys, *see* Fauna
Rittigala, 157
Rivers of Ceylon, the, 420–2
Roads, 418
Rodiyas, 307, 308, 396
Rohuna, the Province of, 22, 45, 46, 48, 57, 62, 64, 65, 67, 71, 75, 186, 431, 437, 445
Roman Catholicism, 80, 84, 99, 283
Roman Dutch law, 103, 105, 317
Romans, the, 39, 135, 140, 168
Royal crematorium, the, 130
Royal huntsmen, the, 24
Rubber, 348–52
Rubies, *see* Gems
Ruanwelli dagobi, the, 42, 47, 48, 132, 133–6, 139

S

Saa, Constantine de, 92
Sackraya, 137
Sacred Bo-tree, the, *see* Bo-tree
Sacred City, the, *see* Anuradhapura
Sacred Tooth, the, 88, 112, 138, 334, 343, 346
Saidatissa, King, 48
Sailiya Chettiar dagoba, the, 135
Sakiyas, 28
Sakti puja, ceremony of, 226
Salabham, 428
Salawat, 428
Salike, 412–13
Salt, 431
Salvadora persica, *see* Flora
Saman, 17, 20, 159, 282
Samanala, *see* Adam's Peak
Samanaliya, 282
Samyutta, 31
Sandalwood trees, *see* Flora
Sanghamuttu, 34
Sanghatissa, 60
Sanskrit, 11, 23
Sanyarssis, 229
Sapphires, *see* Gems
Sarasin, Messrs F. and P., 23
Sarasvati, 251
Satinwood trees, *see* Flora
Sat-mahal-prasada, the, 149
Sattya-loka, 254
Saw fish, *see* Fauna
Scorpions, *see* Fauna
Sea-snakes, *see* Fauna
Seas of Parakrama, the, 71, 75
Seed bearers, *see* Tea
Selediba, 413
Selenite, *see* Gems
Seligmann, Professor C. G., 15, 17, 175, 178, 179, 181, 184, 185
Sena, King, 44, 45, 144
Senaratne, King, 91, 92
Senghot, King, 59
Sensation Rock, 321
Serendib, 361, 366, 369, 413
Seven Corles, the battle of the, 91
Seven penitents, the, 239, 252
Shadow of the Peak, the, 287
Shaman, 179, 180
Shu-King records, the, 12
Siam, 63, 66, 69, 72
Siddhatta, 28
Simundu, 412
Sigirya, 58, 153–69, 274, 443
Sinbad, 361, 362
Singha, 20, 21
Singing fish, the, 427, 428
Sinhaladipa, 413
Sinhalese New Year, 303
Sinhalese history, 15–118
Siriwallaba, King, 154
Sita, 18, 19, 20, 85, 277, 286, 443
Sitaganga, 286
Sitawacca, 85, 87, 277, 425, 443
Siva, 18, 52, 227, 228, 251, 252, 253, 302, 372
Sivaites, 227–31
Siva's Bow, 18
Siva dewales 1 and 2, 151
Siwaka, 60

Size of Ceylon, the, 413
Slave Island, *see* Colombo
Snakes, *see* Fauna
Snakestones, *see* Nagatharana
Solomon, King, 339
Sorcerers, 246
Soviet Russia, 193
Spiders, *see* Fauna
Spilberg, Captain, 90
Spinels, *see* Gems
Spittel, Doctor, 172, 183, 188
Spoonbills, *see* Fauna
Spotted deer, *see* Fauna
Squirrels, *see* Fauna
Sri-pada (the Sacred Footstep), 86, 284, 287, 444
Sri Vastipura, 22
Sri Wikrama, 106
Still, John, 16, 168, 181, 182, 191, 192, 222, 284, 285, 391, 405
St Clair falls, the, 444
Storks, *see* Fauna
St Paul's Cathedral, 39, 136
St Thomas, 283
Stuart, Colonel, 101
Subho, 44
Suddhodana, 28
Sudra caste, 28, 224
Sugar, *see* Flora
Sugriva, King of the Monkeys, 19
Sulawansa, the, 11, 55–62
Sumana, *see* Adam's Peak
Suratissa, King, 43
Suriya trees, *see* Flora
Suttee, 231
Swahmi rock, 340
Swarga, 253

T

Tailor bird, *see* Fauna
Talagoya, *see* Fauna
Talamanaar, 423, 444
Talawakellie, 429, 444
Talawas, 183, 184
Taldua gorge, 187, 426
Talypot palms, *see* Flora
Tamarasa flower, 254
Tamarinds, *see* Flora
Tamblegam bay, 341, 366
Tambrapani, 40, 412
Tamena, 22
Tamena nuwara, 24, 442
Tamil language, 258
Tamils (Indian and Ceylon), 17, 65, 116, 225, 336, 413
Tamils (Jaffna), 225
Taneveram temple, 87
Tangalla (Tangalle), 10, 419, 444
Tanks, irrigation, 409, 410, 446, 447
Taprobane, 22, 362, 366, 412
Taprobane Isola, 79
Tarantula spiders, *see* Fauna
Tarshish, 339
Tathagarta, 31
Tea:
  Acreages, 193
  Altitudes, 199–200
  A planter's day, 206–13
  Clearings, new, 200–5
  Cultivation, 210
  Fermenting, 218, 219
  Firing, 219
  Grading, 220, 221
  History of, 114
  Manufacture, 213–22
  Packing, 222
  Plucking, 206–8
  Producing countries, 193
  Production, 193
  Pruning, 209–10
  Rolling, 216–18
  Seedbearers, 198, 199
  Weeding, 211, 212
  Withering, 215, 216
Tea Research station, 198, 219
Teak trees, *see* Flora
Teal, *see* Fauna
Teldeniya, 187, 444
Temple of the Thousand Columns, the, 340
Temple flowers, *see* Flora
Temple of the Tooth, *see* Dalada malagawa
Tennent, Sir Emerson, 25, 40, 45, 63, 64, 65, 69, 133, 135, 139, 143, 147, 151, 287, 298, 339, 341, 395, 429, 430
Teneresim, 413
Termites, *see* Fauna
Terrapins, *see* Fauna
Thorns, *see* Flora
Thuparama dagoba, the, 35, 137–9, 186
Thuparama temple, 146, 147, 149
Tibet, 51
Ticks, *see* Fauna
Tic polongas, *see* Fauna
Tides, 419
Tika, 10, 11
Timber, *see* Flora
Tirunansis, 69, 129
Tissa, King (Devenipiatissa), 33, 34, 36, 38, 49, 67, 123, 124, 125, 130, 134, 137, 186, 366
Tissa Maharama, 186, 309, 431, 436, 442, 445
Tissa wewa, 131
Toads, *see* Fauna
Tobacco, *see* Agriculture
Toddy, 376
Toluwila ruins, the, 126
Topa-wewa, the, 144, 147
Topare, *see* Polonnaruha
Topaz, *see* Gems
Topes, 35
Tortoises, *see* Fauna
Tortoiseshell, 407
Totapella, 275, 287
Tourmalines, *see* Gems
Tramway system, *see* Colombo
Trante, 413
Trees, sacred, 372
Trimurti, the Hindu, 52, 159, 228, 235, 253
Trincomalee, 91, 100, 153, 229, 274, 309, 338, 340–2, 374, 416, 419, 427, 445
Tri-pittaka, 155

Trouser-karens, the, 117, 294, 305, 315
Turnour, the Hon. George, 9–12, 40, 52, 72, 123, 166, 285
Turtles, *see* Fauna
Twelve Commandments of Buddhism, the, 30, 31

U

Udapussalawa, 278, 426, 434
Ulysses, 22
Unicorn, 128
Upasatha Hall, 48
Upatissa II, 144
Uva, the Province of, 200, 221, 264, 265, 270, 276, 278, 280, 412, 416, 425
Uva downs, 429

V

Vadiresan, 335
Vaikantha, 253
Vaisyars, 224
Valentyn, 98, 187, 440
Vali, 19
Valmiki, 18, 20, 392
Vasishta, the penitent, 233
Veddhas, the, 15, 17, 23, 24, 25, 59, 170–88, 284, 422, 439
  Art, 180
  Bintenne, 174
  Caves, 176, 178
  Coastal tribes, 427
  History, 172, 173
  Honey collecting, 177, 178
  Hunting, 176, 177
  Knox's description, 173, 174
  Marriage customs, 175, 176
  Music, 180
  Origin, 172, 173
  Religion, 179–80
  Trackers, Veddhas as, 181, 182
  Waruges, 174
Vederalas, 300, 309
Vedic Law, 28, 32, 232
Vejayanta, 70, 134, 149, 150, 151
Velanaitivu, 335
Via sacra, the, 126, 127
Victoria, Queen, 113
Vigitapura, 46, 157
Villages and villagers, 289–309, 423
  Caste system, 305–8
  Chenas, 299, 300
  Clothing, 295
  Day, a villager's, 296–7
  Demon worship, 301, 302
  Fairs, village, 304
  Gardens, 293, 294
  Homes, 292, 293
  Industries, 423
  Marriage customs, 308–9
  Meals, 297
  Organization, rural administration, 304–5
  Rice cultivation, 297–9
Vishnu, 16, 17, 18, 20, 36, 52, 159, 227, 228, 251, 252, 253, 277, 342, 372, 429
Vishnuvites, 226–31
Vishnuvite Brahmins, 229
Visiting Agent, 271

W

Walt, Mr, 273
Wahapp, King, 71, 141
Walagum Bahu, 47–50, 66, 136, 154, 158, 159, 283
Walawa ganga, 421
Walters (historian), 126
Wanderoos, *see* Fauna
Wanni, the, 16, 60, 75, 171, 181
Wanninchee Maria Sembatte, 44[illegible]
Wanniyars, 439–40
Waruges, *see* Veddhas
Wasps, *see* Fauna
Waté dagé, 150
Wayland, Mr, 15
Waterholes, 388
Waterspouts, 417
Water snakes, *see* Fauna
Weligama, 365, 445
Wembley Exhibition, the, 365
Westerwold, Admiral, 92
Wettulyan sect, 52
Wet zone, *see* Zones
Whales, *see* Fauna
White ants, *see* Fauna
Wibhisana, King, 435
Wickham, Henry, 349
Wickham, Mr, 197
Wijayo, 15–26, 27, 38, 47, 59, 74, 123, 139, 159, 173, 302, 340, 366, 412, 436, 442, 445
Wijayo Bahu I, 63, 64, 65, 66–9, 142
Wijayo Bahu II, 74
Wijayo Bahu III, 74, 146, 151, 428
Wijayo Bahu VI, 76
Wikrama, King, 107, 108, 110, 111
Wimala Bandara devo, 424
Wimala Dharma, 87–90, 334, 343
Wimala Dharma II, 100
Wiragantota, 187
Woolf, Bella Sydney, 445
World's End, 287, 433

X

Xavier, St Francis, 334

Y

Yakdessagalla, 436
Yakkas (demons and aboriginals), 15, 16, 21, 24, 39, 157, 172, 173, 186
Yakshyos, 301
Yala crop (rice), 298
Yala Game Reserve, 431, 445
Yama, Lord of death, 297, 309
Yan-oya, 421
Yapahuwa, 74, 157, 274, 428, 446
Yasa Silo, 44
Yatiyantota, 435
Yatala Tissa, 435

Z

Zeilan, 413
Zircons, *see* Gems
Zones, 413–14

लाल बहादुर शास्त्री राष्ट्रीय प्रशासन अकादमी, पुस्तकालय
Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Library
मसूरी
MUSSOORIE.
11528

यह पुस्तक निम्नांकित तारीख तक वापिस करनी है ।
This book is to be returned on the date last stamped.

दिनांक Date	उधारकर्ता की संख्या Borrower's No.	दिनांक Date	उधारकर्ता की संख्या Borrower's No.



954.93
Wil

~~8899~~

LIBRARY 115229

LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI

National Academy of Administration

MUSSOORIE

Accession No. _____

1. Books are issued for 15 days only but may have to be recalled earlier if urgently required.
2. An over-due charge of 25 Paise per day per volume will be charged.
3. Books may be renewed on request, at the discretion of the Librarian.
4. Periodicals, Rare and Refrence books may not be issued and may be consulted only in the Library.
5. Books lost, defaced or injured in any way shall have to be replaced or its double price shall be paid by the borrower.