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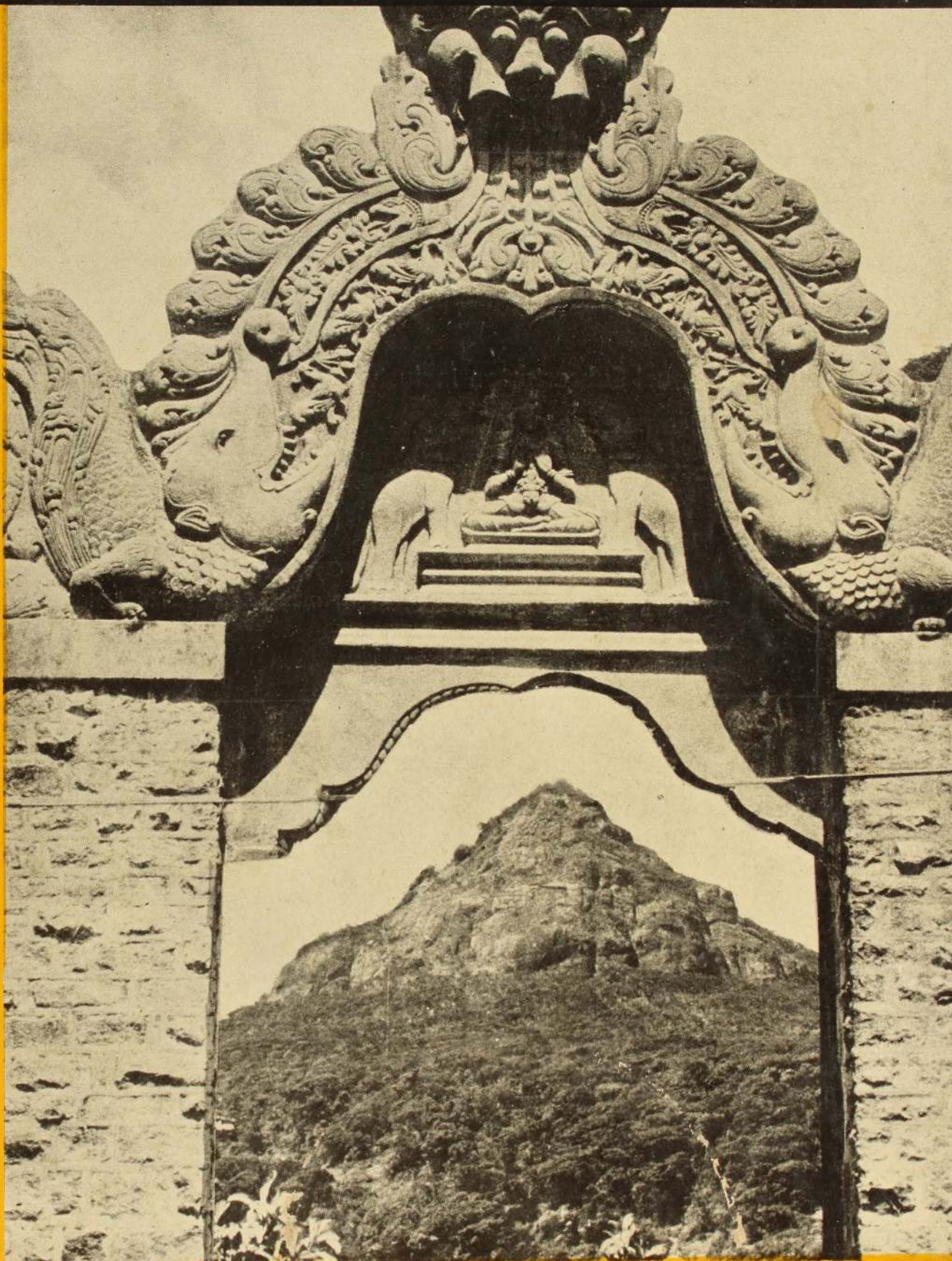
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The Buddha Jayanti Celebrations in Ceylon

THE Wesak this year was more significant than in previous years to Buddhists all over the world, since it marked the 2,500th year of the passing away of the Buddha. To Buddhists in Ceylon, where Theravada Buddhism flourishes in all its pristine glory, the occasion was one for which they had been waiting for many years.

The dawn of the 2,500th year of the Buddhist era was heralded on May 23, with the pealing of temple bells and the sounding of conch shells. White-clad devotees began to foregather in the temples from the early hours of the morning to take "ata sil" (eight precepts) at the feet of the monks, and to worship the Buddha. These devotees had a full day's programme, listening to 'bana' preaching, participating in 'Buddha Poojas' and meditating at the temples.

The illuminations this year were done on an elaborate scale befitting the occasion. Large illuminated pandals at roadsides and skilfully decorated lanterns were a general feature in Colombo and in the provincial towns. Nearly all public buildings in the city and elsewhere were illuminated for the occasion.

To see these pandals and illuminations, large numbers of people thronged Colombo and the provincial towns on Wesak night. Nearly

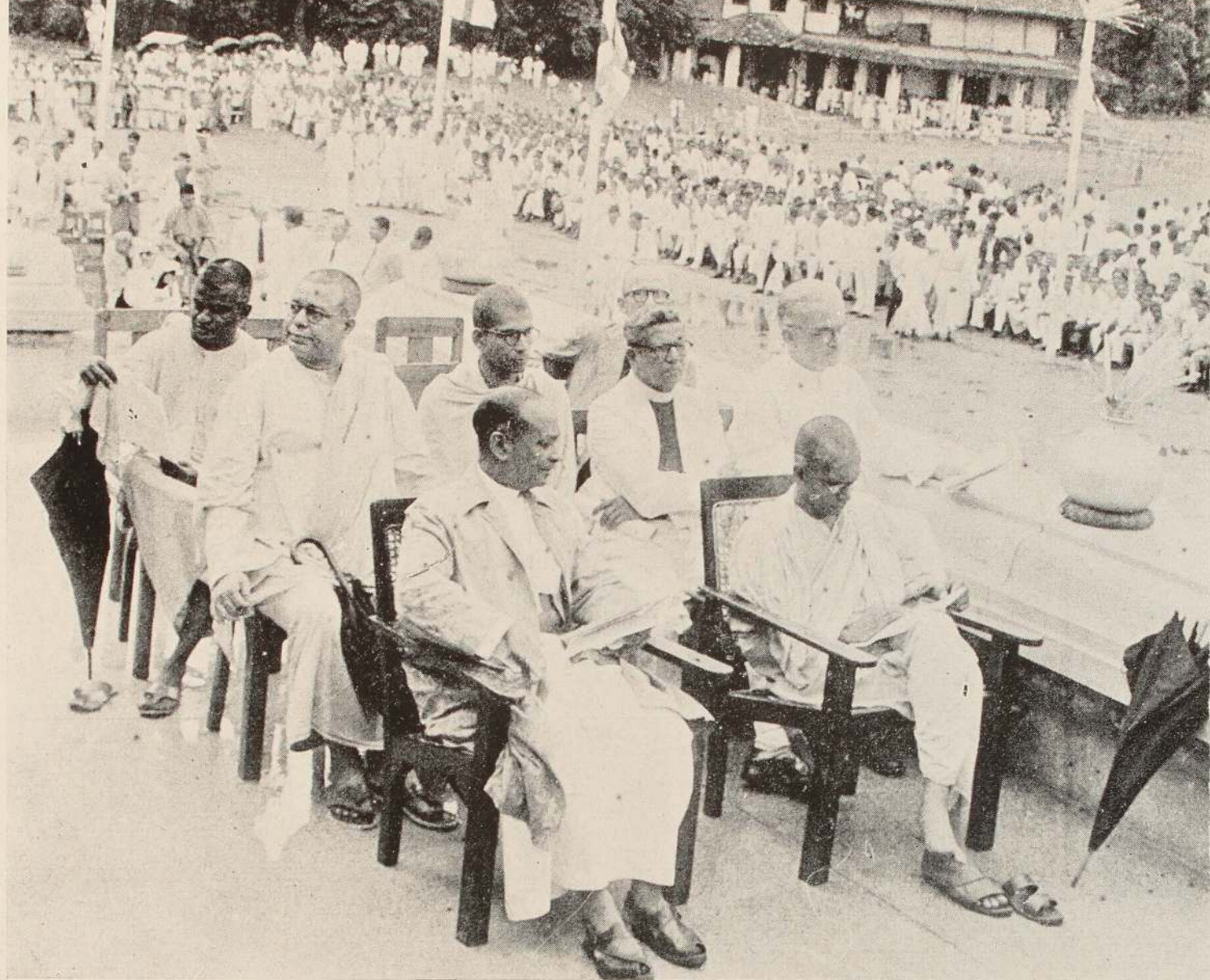
two lakhs of pilgrims are reported to have been at the Sacred City of Anuradhapura on this day.

The Government, perhaps for the first time, participated in these celebrations to a large extent.

Memorial Meeting

ON the Second day of Wesak, a memorial meeting, organised by the Lanka Bauddha Mandala, was held at the Independence Square in Colombo. At the commencement of the meeting, the Minister of Local Government, Mr. Jayaweera Kuruppu, read out a message from the Governor-General, His Excellency Sir Oliver Goonetilleke. In his message, the Governor-General said that that day was an important day for the whole world. To them in Sri Lanka that day was doubly important because it marked the end of 2,500 years after the death of the Buddha and the end of 2,500 years of the Sinhala race. It was rarely, he said, that there was an occasion to celebrate the 2,500th jubilee of both a religion and a race. There was no precedent in history of such an occasion.

Continuing, His Excellency said that in the Jayanti period the whole world was waiting to



Representatives of the various religious bodies in Ceylon at the meeting held in the Independence Memorial Hall in Colombo on May 24, the second day of the Buddha Jayanti Week

take a lead from Buddhist Sri Lanka. It should be the duty of Buddhists to fulfil that hope. "If we follow the principles of the Buddha, we shall not only set an example to the rest of the world but we shall thereby be paying the greatest homage possible to the revered Buddha," concluded the Governor-General.

The Prime Minister, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, addressing the gathering said that it was his good fortune in the 2,500th year of the Buddha Jayanti to have been selected by the people as their Prime Minister. He said that the Jayanti was important not only to Buddhists but to others all over the world. Not only in Asia but in other countries too the Jayanti was being celebrated and honoured. In Ceylon, that

celebration had special significance because Ceylon occupied a very important place in the Buddhist World.

Preserved Buddhism in its Purity

SPEAKING further, the Prime Minister said that for 2,500 years Ceylon had preserved Buddhism in all its purity and had also given to the world the word of the Buddha. The Sinhalese nation had done a great deal in preserving Buddhism. Other countries had become great due to success in war and achievements in art, literature and sport. Ceylon's greatness lay in spreading Buddhism to the world.

Mr. Bandaranaike said that the Sinhalese nation came into being 2,500 years ago. During that

period the nation had to go through difficulties. There was a belief that a new era had dawned with the Buddha Jayanti.

He added that when they had celebrations of that nature they must see that the Dhamma was well observed. They were faced with great problems and it was their duty to give to the world the message of the Buddha.

In conclusion, he said : " Buddha had preached the doctrine of compassion and love. He had spoken of the middle path. We are faced with great problems and it is therefore necessary for us to maintain Buddhist principles. If we maintained them, the country would have peace and prosperity."

Religious Dignitaries from Abroad

PARTICIPATING at this meeting were the Sangharajas (religious chiefs) of Burma and Thailand, — the Ven. U. Jagara Maha Thero and the Ven. Somdet Phra Vanarata Sangha Nayaka Thero — and the President of the Buddhist Federation of Japan, the Ven. Kosho Ohtani. They came to the meeting along with the Mahanayake Thero of Malwatta Chapter in four decorated chariots, which were conducted in procession.

Messages of felicitations were read out by the visiting Sangharajas, while the President of the Japanese Buddhist Federation, in his speech, congratulated this country for its leadership in convening the first World Buddhist Conference and for compiling a Buddhist Encyclopaedia.

The General Secretary of the Lanka Bauddha Mandalaya, Dr. Ananda Guruge, read a message from the British Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Eden.

Sir Anthony stated in his message that his country sent its greetings to Ceylon and her people on the occasion of the celebration of the Buddha Jayanti. Ceylon, he stated, was a country famed for preserving the religious teachings of Lord Buddha in its pristine purity.

The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Mohamed Ali, in a message stated that they in Pakistan rejoiced with the millions of Buddhists the world over. Buddha's name was illustrious in the annals of human race, which he raised to great moral heights through dedication to the noblest ideals of selflessness and service to humanity. The spirit that pervaded his teachings of over two milleniums ago was needed now more than ever before for the maintenance and promotion of world peace, observed the Pakistan Premier.

Exposition of Relics

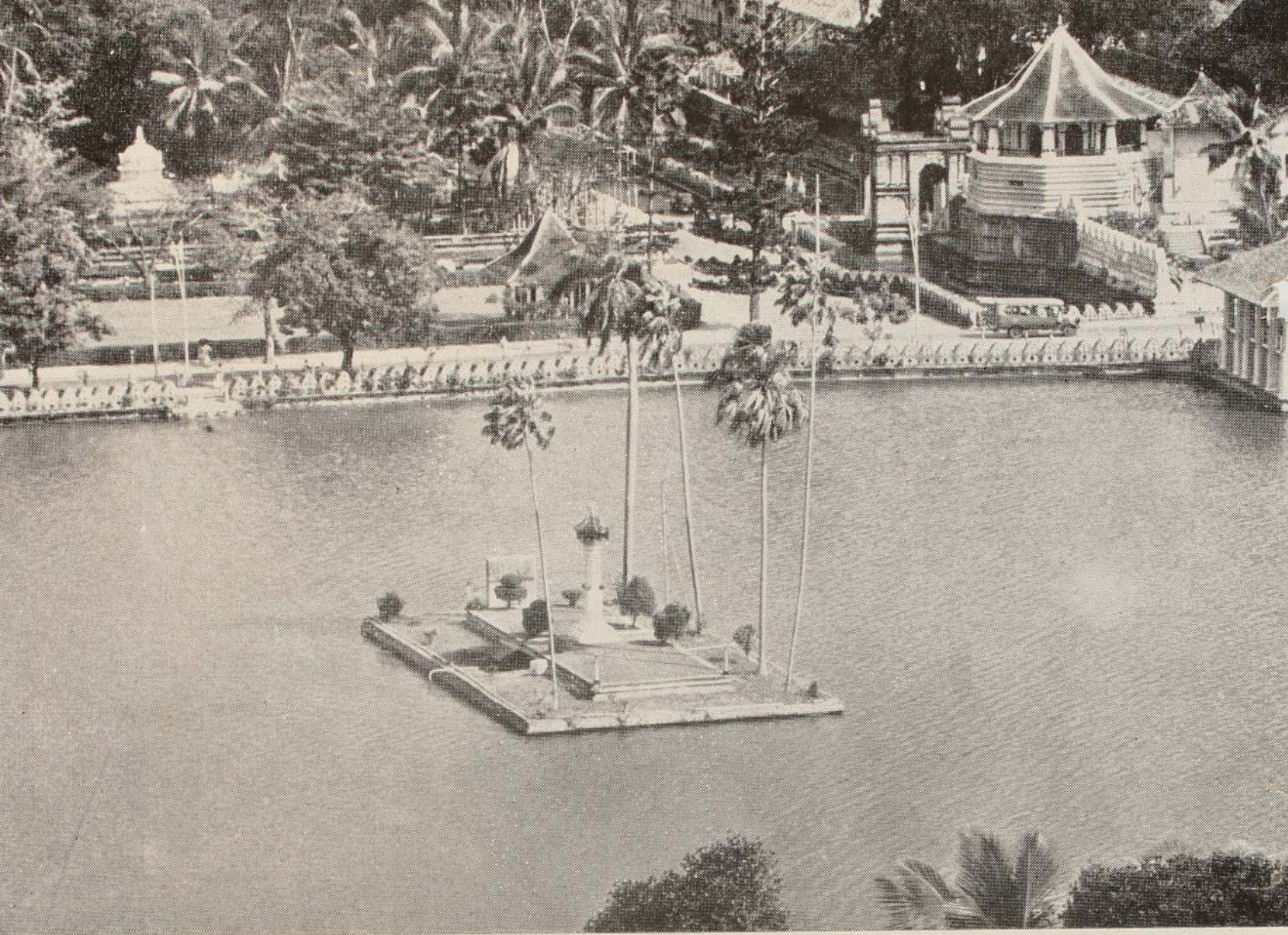
ON the 3rd day of the "Jayanti Week", the sacred relics of the Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa Thero were taken in procession from the Colombo Museum to the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy. The route was decorated for the occasion and there were several receptions on the way.

On arrival at the outskirts of Kandy town, the relics were received by the Mayor of Kandy, Sir Bennet Soysa. Associated with him were the Diyawadane Nilame, Mr. C. B. Nugawela, and Mr. P. Tennekoon, M. P. for Kandy. The Prime Minister, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, and the Minister of Home Affairs, Mr. A. P. Jayasuriya, were also present on the occasion.

After a brief stop at the Pillayar Temple, the relics were taken in procession to the Dalada Maligawa (Temple of the Tooth). There the relic casket was taken off the tusker by the Prime Minister and handed over to the Diyawadane Nilame, who carried it into the inner chamber of the Relic Room.

The relic casket was then opened and foreign dignitaries were invited to the chamber, where they paid homage to the relics. A public exposition followed shortly afterwards and continued for several days.

The final day of the Jayanti Week witnessed an impressive fireworks display at the Independence Square in Colombo. Large crowds were present again to see this grand finale to an eventful and memorable week.



The Kandy Lake and the Temple of the Tooth, Kandy

Archæologists on Ceylon

CHARLES ABEYSEKERA

ARCHÆOLOGY in Ceylon is a science of fairly recent origin. Systematic writings on archæological subjects began with the establishment of the department in 1890, but even before that some archæological work had been done by interested officers.

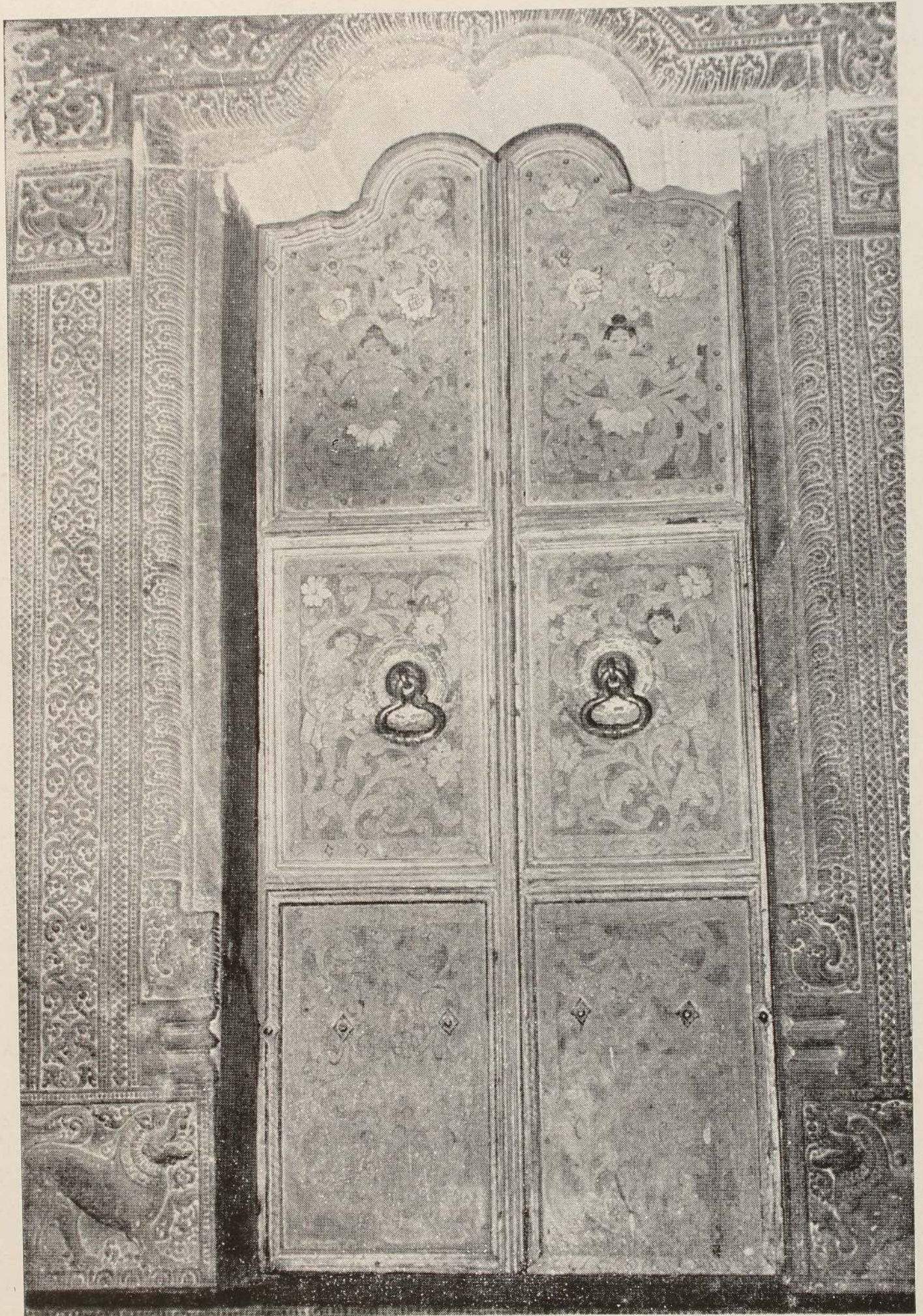
The reports left by them are very revealing in comparison with our present-day knowledge, but they are usually buried in Annual Reports and Sessional Papers which are difficult to come by.

Mr. H. C. P. Bell was one of the early Archæological Commissioners whose writings are of interest. At the time of his appointment, he was

stationed at Kegalla and, therefore, started his work with an exploration of that District. Strictly archæological ruins in Kegalla are few. However, there are many inscriptions in vihares and devales, like Aluthnuwara Devale, which are of rather ancient origin. Mr. Bell examined all these sides, monuments and buildings, made detailed drawings and plans and went into their architectural qualities. He also examined the history and geography of this District. His work was so thorough that his 'Report on the Kegalla District' would, even today, serve as a model for localised studies of other areas.



The Octagon of the Temple of the Tooth, Kandy



The Doorway, Temple of the Tooth

Besides these, Mr. Bell produced the Annual Reports of the Survey from 1890 to 1912. These reports give not only the bare facts of archæological excavations, but also record some of the impressions made on this sensitive officer by what he came across. He was one of the first to explore the Wilpattu region, and he writes as follows of the views there :

“The calm beauty of these ancient lakes is indescribable. The bright blue of the still water, ring of white sand fringed with grass and forest, mingled greens and browns, the varied bird and animal life, and with all these the wondrous hush which pervades and sanctifies nature uninvaded by man's encroachment”.

Series of Memoirs

THE Archæological Department has published a series of Memoirs which is of great interest. One Memoir is on the Temple of the Tooth. This was published by Mr. Hocart, who is, of course, more widely known for his book on Kingship. In addition, Mr. Hocart also published a second memoir on the excavations at Anuradhapura. The third volume on the excavations in the citadel at Anuradhapura was published by Dr. Paranavitana sometime after 1932.

And with Dr. Paranavitana we come to one of the most important archæologists who have written on Ceylon. He has continued a series of memoirs with one on the Stupas of Ceylon, and another on the Upulwan Devale at Devundara.

These memoirs are not dry official documents. They make absorbing reading. They set out the full historical account of the site or monument, its evolution and its excavation as well as the steps taken towards conservation. Dr. Paranavitana's book on the Stupas in Ceylon is one of the most important of these. It traces the origin of the Stupa idea and its evolution down the ages in Ceylon, and also shows the influences that have been brought to bear on it from other countries.

Equally important, is Dr. Paranavitana's recent book on the Sigiriya Graffiti. The verses carved

on the gallery walls at Sigiriya commonly referred to as Graffiti, have been meticulously recorded by Dr. Paranavitana. A few of them are of real poetic merit, but this is a very scholarly work intended chiefly to look on the verses as a means of tracing the evolution of the language.

In his essay on Sigiriya, Dr. Paranavitana does not believe in the popular theory that Sigiriya was a fortress built by Kasyapa as a means of defence. He feels that in Sigiriya there are duplications of certain salient features of the mythical cities of Alanamanda and Kailasa, and he concludes that Kasyapa, who styled himself Kuvera, tried to duplicate in Sigiriya the heavenly abode of this God.

Because of the abundance of inscriptions on stones and on plates of copper and gold and because of their importance, epigraphical research has formed a large part of our archæological writings. Since inscriptions must be regarded as contemporary documents meant for contemporary eyes, they sometimes are very valuable in supplementing historical records and in correcting certain distortions and cases of wrong emphasis.

Epigraphia Zeylanica

THE Epigraphia Zeylanica is the journal that is devoted to a systematic recording and interpretation of the inscriptions. This journal was begun on Mr. Bell's suggestions on the lines of the Epigraphia Indica. Its first editor was Dr. D. M. de Silva-Wickramasinghe who, in addition to being a Sinhalese Scholar, was also at one time lecturer in Tamil and Telegu at the University of London.

The Epigraphia Zeylanica has now gone into five volumes. The first two are chiefly the work of Dr. Wickramasinghe, while the others are mainly the work of Dr. Paranavitana.

The writings which I have so far mentioned, with the exception of certain of the memoirs, are really scientific treatises. There is no book that, like Leonard Woolley's on the Chaldees,

sets out for the general reader the results of archæological excavations and studies carried out so far. Neither is there anything like Stuart Piggott's Prehistoric India or Viallant's The Aztecs of Mexico which combine archæological findings with other studies to give a whole picture of our ancient civilization.

But there are two people who were popularisers of archæological knowledge. They are H. W. Cave and G. E. Mitton. Cave wrote about the "Ruined Cities of Ceylon" while Mitton called his book the "Lost Cities of Ceylon."

Mr. Cave's book was first published in 1897 and attempted to gather all archæological knowledge available up to that time. It is also a sort of travel guide that purports to inform the traveller of the sights he is likely to see as well as the hazards involved in getting there. The equipment necessary to see a party of travellers through to Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Sigiriya included a pair of horses and a spring waggon; two bullock carts to carry provisions, beds and camp furniture, three pairs of bullocks, one as a reserve in case of lameness or accident to others; two horsekeepers, three bullock drivers; a cook, cook's mate and fifteen coolies. Probably Cave has slightly exaggerated the hazards. He describes the routes taken and the sites with care. One is struck often by the differences time has brought to various places. The bazaar of Matale that he describes as extending for almost a mile in one long street shaded by a fine avenue of rain trees is indeed a far cry from today's hot and dusty main street without a single tree to shade its entire length.

Mr. Cave responded to the beauty of the country and its luxuriant vegetation. About coming in to Anuradhapura, he says: "We now push on to the wonderful city. As we approach, greater variety of colour is noticeable in the foliage; open park-like scenery takes the place of dense forest, and we are particularly attracted by the beauty of the trees, especially the ebony, the satinwood and the halmilla, with its large cabbage leaves, pretty cassias, the great kumbuk which lines the banks of the river with its

buttress-like stems, the wood apple which favours the swampy ground and the fig in all its varieties".

Richly Carved Specimens

G. E. MITTON calls himself merely an interpreter of archaeological knowledge and goes on to say: "The mighty monuments of Egypt left me cold, the many attractions of Burma amused and interested me superficially, in Ceylon from the first moment I was at home. May be in one of those previous lives of which we sometimes have a shadowy notion, I lived there." Mitton's "The Lost Cities of Ceylon" is not a tourists' guide in the sense that Cave's book is. Being published in 1916, it incorporated a great deal of the findings of Bell.

And he was alive to the beauty of the sculpture and the architecture he saw. He says of the moonstones at Anuradhapura: "A few examples of semi-circular stones in a comparatively plain style have been found in South India outside temple entrances but they have little in common with the richly carved specimens in Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. The carving on the stones in these cities is as fresh as the day it was done and is alive with the spirit of the artist whose hand fashioned the life-like elephants and bullocks, the strange horses and still stranger lions, which run incessantly after one another in a race beginning some 2000 years ago and stretching to infinity.

"Egypt has attracted its tens of thousands and of the books that have been written about it there is no end, but mysterious and awe-inspiring as are the mighty monuments and temples of Egypt, they lack the individuality, the varying touches, the humanness of these works of Ceylon where one is perpetually reminded by a thousand inimitable touches that all is handicraft and not machine made."

May be Mitton was carried away by his own enthusiasm, but still he does manage to convey a sense of the beauty of the remains.

(Adapted from a radio talk.)



Pilgrims on summit of Adam's Peak



Crabs bought from the trapper are being tied up alongside a road, and put into leaf-boxes to be taken to the market for sale

The Art of the Crab-Catcher

S. V. O. SOMANADER

HOW ingenious are the contrivances which man adopts to capture various animals which form his food or other means of sustenance !

Not the least interesting of these devices is the way he catches crabs living in the beds of briny lagoons, from which a good many of our fisher-folk draw their wealth, if not find a means to eke out their livelihood. Let us have a look at the clever art the crab-catcher practises in order to bag these elusive creatures.

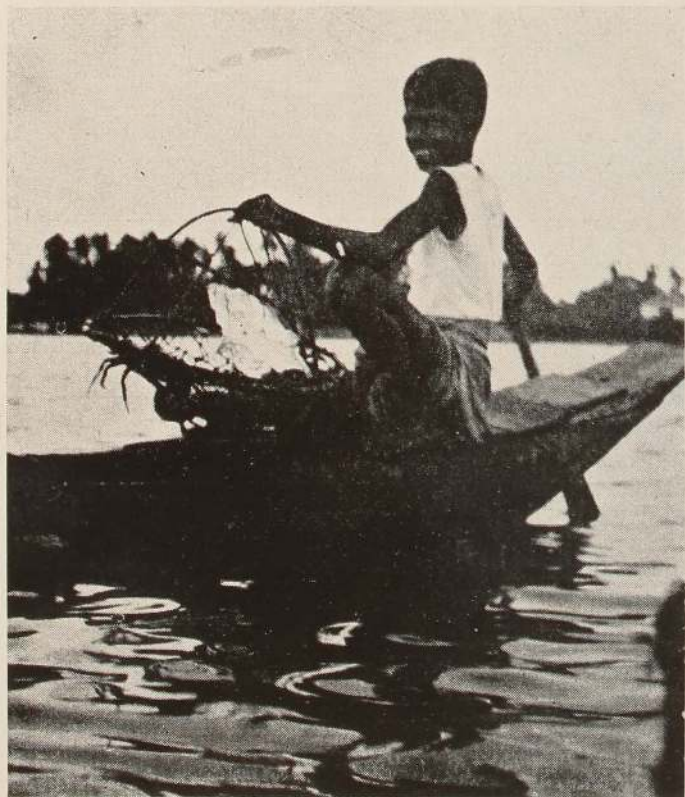
Taking a cone-shaped net woven out of fine string, or rope made of coconut husk, he fastens the broad end of it to a pliable stick cut from the jungle, and this frame is shaped into a ring, about twenty inches in diameter. The simple device looks like a butterfly-net without the handle.

He now bends another piece of this flexible stick in the form of a bow, and lashes either end of it to the circular frame of the net, so that it turns like the handle of a pail. Across this curved



At the margin of the lagoon, the crab-catcher is setting the fish as bait on the stick horizontally fixed across the circular frame of the net

An urchin raises the baited trap off the surface. Note the legs of a crab entangled in the net



handle, he ties, horizontally, another stick to which he attaches a large chunk of fish to serve as a tempting bait for his quarry. The whole net collapses flat when placed on the ground, and it is weighted down, on either side and right under the closed apex, with pieces of brick or stones.

Before the net is let down to the bed of the lagoon, a long rope, made of coconut husk and adjustable to the varying depths of the water, is attached to the handle. The upper end of the rope is tied to a coconut husk which floats on the surface, indicating the position of the trap.

Floating husks

WHEN going out after crabs, the trapper, who is usually accompanied by an assistant to take charge of the oar, carries a good many of these ingenious traps—sometimes about a dozen or more—in his boat. Reaching the middle of the lagoon, he drops them in single or double file at regular intervals of about twenty-five feet for a hundred yards or more, leaving a line of floating husks bobbing in and out of the water as he moves along.

After all his traps have been thus set, the crab-catcher returns home to await developments, and in time comes paddling back again in his canoe. Trained as he is in the fine art, he can very often detect the presence of crabs feasting on the bait beneath, by the movement of the submerged rope or the partial sinking of the coconut float.

Taking the clue and directing his canoe to the spot, he deftly gets hold of the submerged rope, and pulls the trap with a sudden jerk. Up comes the net swiftly, but so intent are crabs on their free meal that they have no time to sidle out of the trap. Instead, they slip down to the bottom of the tapering pocket, from which escape is not now possible. They also get entangled in the meshes, and so have no other option but to surrender. The crab-catcher has won by his ingenious art !



Crab-catcher collecting his nets in canoe, after dropping the trapped crabs into it. In one net (on extreme left), a trapped crab can be seen

He now removes his crabs cautiously—with due respect for their terrible pincers—and, if the bait of the fish has not been completely eaten, he re-sets the trap after transferring the crabs on to his boat. This process goes on, and, finally, he makes for the shore, where middlemen wait with their gunny-bags, ready to ply a roaring trade at village fairs or even by the open roadside. Sometimes women buy the crabs cheap, and hawk them about in the streets in leaf-boxes, each crab fetching from 15 cents to 25 cents or more, according to size.

Poor Man's Food

MANY a local inhabitant regards crabs as a luxury, and so they are greatly in demand not only in the homes of the rich and poor, but also in our hotels and rest-houses, which often vie with one another

to provide dainty fare for their patrons, including visitors from abroad. And we must also not forget that, in the absence of dhal or maldivé fish, crab-curry with rice is not infrequently the poor man's food in the village. Many a time have I found rural folk feasting on crab, not excluding crab-roe, little realising that they were indulging in what to many people is a luxurious delicacy.

At our restaurants and other eating-houses, very dainty menus comprising crab-soup, crab-cutlets (prepared in the shell itself), crab-pie and other appetising preparations are supplied ; so it is little wonder that the resourceful crab-catcher is kept busy at all seasons of the year.

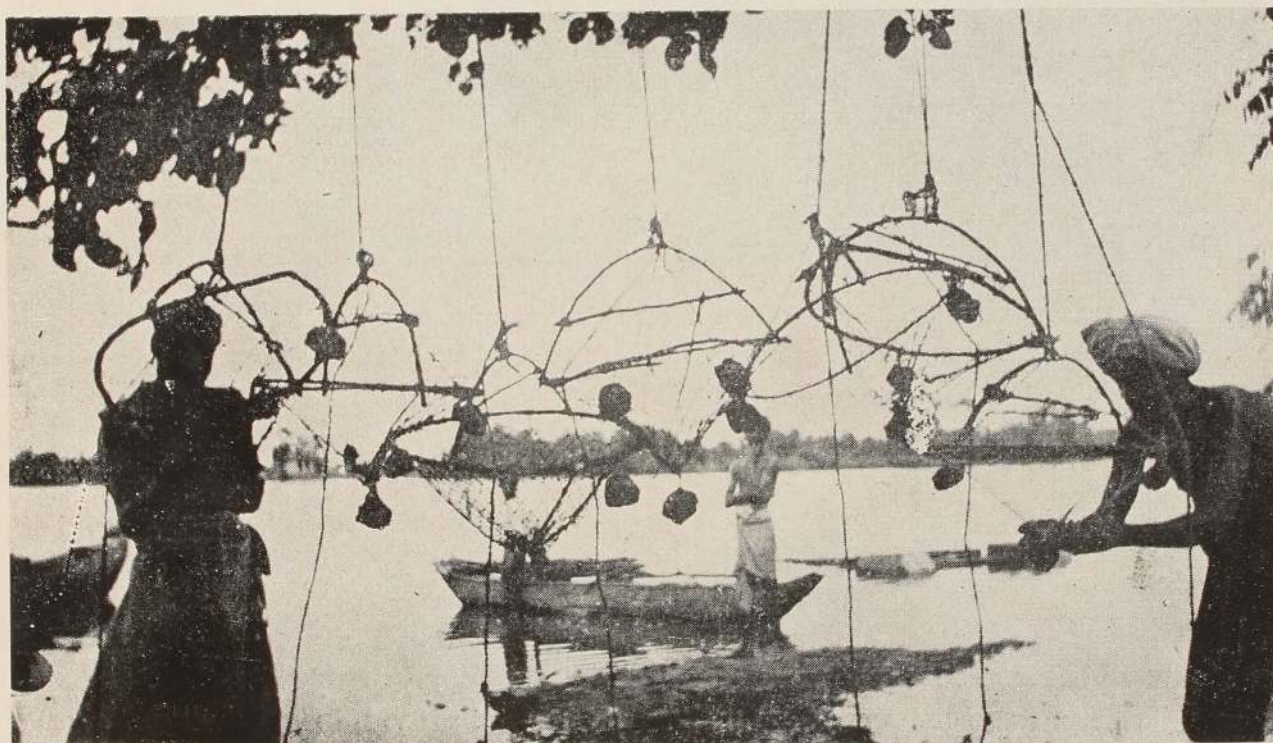
True, his existence is often precarious, for even during seasons when crabs are plentiful, he may not be lucky enough to reap a good harvest.

But (as he has often told me) he loves adventure and the open air ; and so heavy floods, strong winds and other adverse climatic elements have no effect on him. In fact, he seems to bear disappointments with a cool philosophy. " Better luck next time ", he appears to say, when he draws blank.

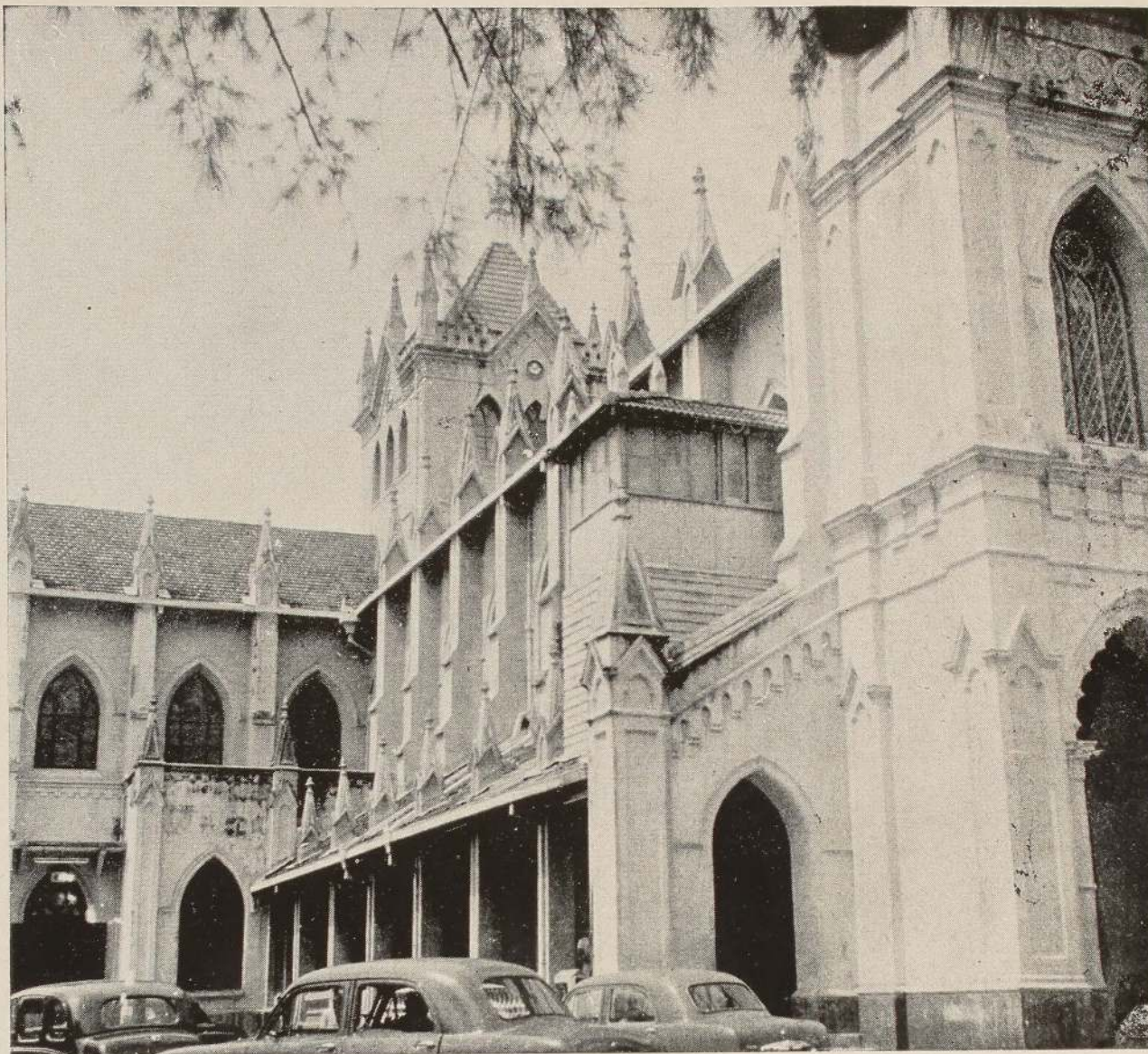
But I have slightly digressed. To return now to the crab-man's art. After disposing his catch for a fair price, and returning home with

his well-earned money tucked in the betel-bag placed within the fold of his loin cloth, he takes good care to draw his canoe ashore with a sense of satisfaction, if not with a sigh of relief. Not only that, he does not fail to suspend his nets on the branch of a bordering tree, or hang them on a fence by the lagoon margin, in order to dry them thoroughly for the next day's use.

And that, in short, is the " daily round " and the " common task " of the cute crab-catcher.



The nets being suspended on an over-hanging branch to be dried before use on the next day. Note the stone-weights to help the nets to sink to the bottom



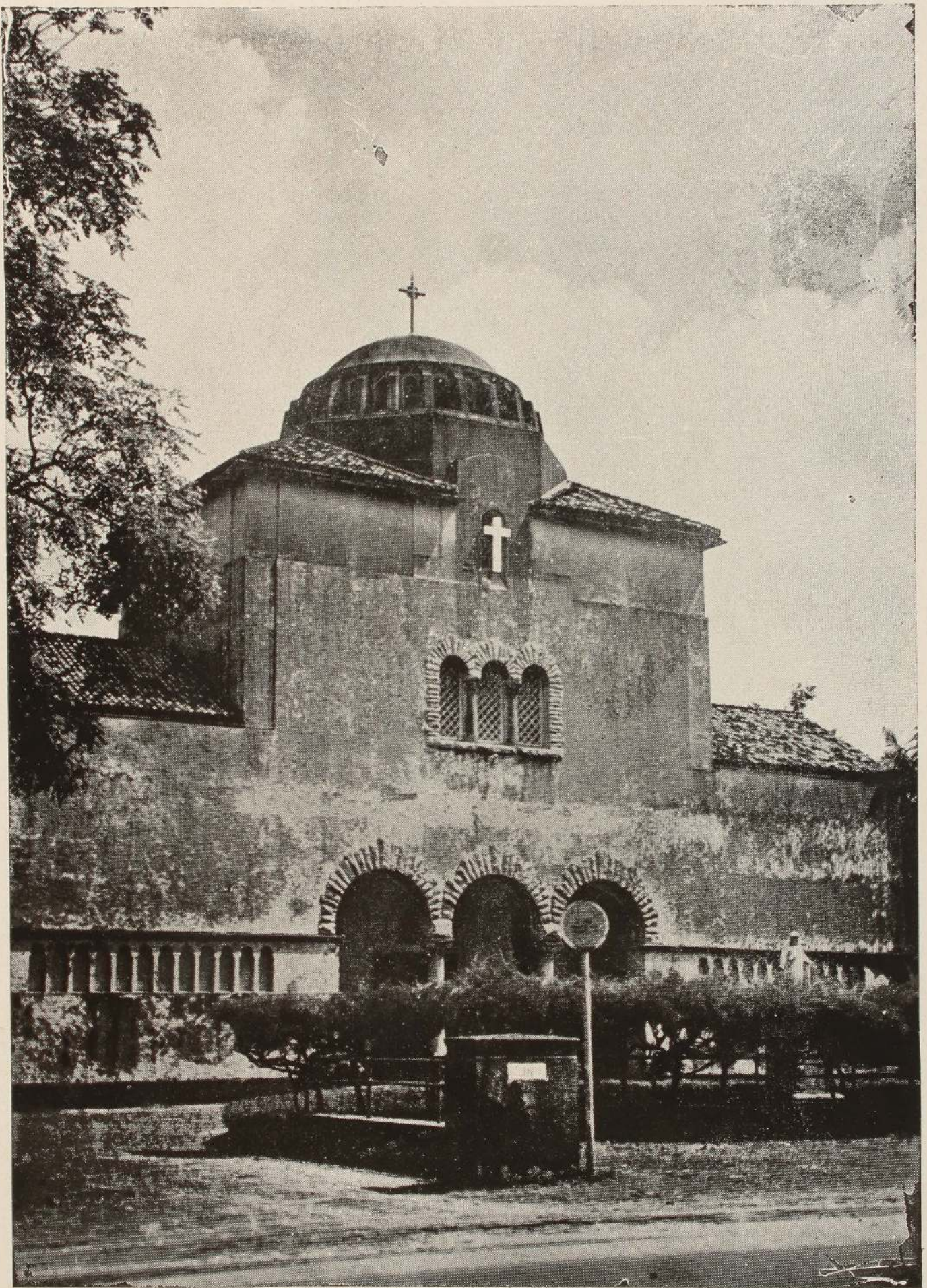
All Saints' Church, Borella, Colombo

Early Christianity in Ceylon in Pre-Portuguese Times

CELESTINE FERNANDO

THE earliest forms of religion in Ceylon, as in every other land, appears to have consisted of animistic beliefs and the worship of local gods and demons. Doubtless, as time went on, the peoples of this island were also influenced by the Hinduistic beliefs of the neighbouring continent. During the reign of Devanampiya Tissa (B.C. 247–207) at Anuradhapura however, there came to Ceylon a band of missionaries led by Mahinda proclaiming the religion of the Buddha. By

converting the people of this island from their former religious beliefs, Buddhism spread in various parts of the Island and in about two centuries influenced many aspects of life for it was a religion loftier than any the inhabitants had known before. It was about eight centuries after Mahinda's visit that Christianity appears to have been introduced to Ceylon. Christianity, like Buddhism, came from a foreign land.



The Church of St. Paul the Apostle, Colombo

The earliest record¹ of Christianity in Ceylon appears in *The Christian Topography* of Cosmas Indicopleustes (The Indian Navigator). Cosmas was most probably a native of Alexandria of Greek parentage. He was educated to be a merchant and his mercantile activities took him to the East. After his travels, on his return to Alexandria, he took to the cloister and the composition of his book of travels. The *Topography* appears to have been published about A.D. 547 although the different books may have been compiled at varying dates. This work which is partly a defence of ancient Cosmography gives detailed descriptions of the countries which he visited.

The earliest relevant record in the third book of *The Christian Topography* reads: "*In Taprobane, an island in further India where the Indian sea is, there is a Church of Christians with clergy and the faithful, but I know not whether there are any Christians in the parts beyond it.*"² In the next record in the eleventh book of the same work Cosmas elaborates on the above and says: "*The island has also a church of Persian Christians who have settled there and a presbyter appointed from Persia and a deacon and a complete ecclesiastical ritual. The inhabitants and their kings are of a different religion.*"³

It is well known that the Persians had commercial intercourse with Ceylon during this period. These Persians would have formed the

Christian community to which Cosmas referred⁴. Cosmas however does not tell us where the Christians lived. But it is probable from other evidence that they were in Anuradhapura. As Fr. S. G. Perera points out in his paper on "Early Christianity in Ceylon": "a priest with a deacon implies a number of worshippers; and Persian traders resident in Ceylon would in all probability live together in a centre of trade; and such Anuradhapura was at the time. It would therefore be most natural to find a foreign quarter in the town."⁵

Indeed the *Mahavansa* records that even before this period there was such a quarter in Anuradhapura laid out by Pandukabhaya near the west gate of the city.⁶ The discovery of a Persian Cross in Anuradhapura during recent excavations also lends support to this conclusion that the Persian Christians might have been in this city. E. R. Ayrton commenting on the discovery believes that the Cross is probably from a Church. H. W. Codrington agreeing with this view has drawn attention to the fact that this is a Persian Christian Cross and that it is almost identical with another Persian Christian cross found in Madras Presidency. No date seems to have been assigned to the Cross so far but it does seem most probable that it is a relic of those ancient times when the Persian Christians had their church in Ceylon.⁷

¹ The statements of certain early writers that Christianity was prevalent in Ceylon much earlier than the sixth century are not reliable. It has been said that Christianity was preached in Ceylon by S. Thomas the Apostle and even by the Eunuch of Candace, the Queen of the Ethiopians (Acts VIII 27-39) but there are no reasonable grounds for believing in these statements except as popular legend. For an examination of these legends, see J. Hough: *A History of Christianity of Ceylon* (Lond. 1839-60) Bk. I, Ch. II, pp. 30-42; also Fr. S. G. Perera: *Ceylon Antiquary and Literary Register* Jan. 1923, pp. 184-190 and Fr. S. Gnanaprakasara: *A History of the Catholic Church in Ceylon* I, Colombo, 1924, pp. 1-12.

² The Greek text of Cosmas is found in Migne, Jacques Paul; *Patrologia Graeca*, Tom. 88, p. 170 (Ed. 1860). The English translation is found in "*The Christian Topography of Cosmas Indicopleustes*" (Ed. McCrindle) Bk. III pp. 118-119. See also K. A. Nilakanta Sastri: *Foreign Notices of South India*: University of Madras 1939, p. 88 and Raymond Beazley: *Dawn of Modern Geography*, London 1897, p. 193.

³ Cosmas, Bk. XI. p. 446, (Migne op. cit.); p. 365 (McCrindle op. cit.).

⁴ J. E. Tennent: *Ceylon*, Vol. I, p. 584; H. W. Codrington: *A Short History of Ceylon*: p. 32, Nilakanta Sastri, pp. 88 ff. op. cit.

⁵ C. A. and L. R. Jan. 1923, p. 191.

⁶ Ch. x. v. 74. Eng. Trans. p. 74.

⁷ *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey* ed. A. M. Hocart, Vol. I, 1924, pp. 51, 52. See Editor's Note p. 52 and plate 76 at back of Volume. Codrington op. cit. p. 27, 32, 35.



The High Altar at the Church of St. Paul the Apostle, Kynsey Road, Colombo

This seems to be the only data on which we can go for this early period. We do not know when these Christians first came into the Island. The travels of Cosmas seem to have taken place in the early part of the sixth century so that the Christians would have been in Ceylon at that time. Towards the fifth century the Christian Church in Persia became Nestorian¹ through the influx of Nestorian leaders.² If the Persian Christians came to Ceylon after this it is probable that they too were Nestorian. We do not know what became of the Church after the time of Cosmas and how long the Christian Community existed in the Island. The Persian trade with Ceylon appears to have ceased in the seventh century when Persia was captured by the Muslims. The Christian Community probably disappeared sometime about this period.

Between the sixth century A.D. and the arrival of the Portuguese in the early part of the sixteenth century no mention is made in our annals of a Christian Community in Ceylon. Nor can any evidence on the subject be gathered from foreign sources. The two Muslim Travellers, Ibn Wahab and Abou Zeyd, who went through India and China and describe Ceylon in the ninth century do not mention anything about the

presence of Christians in the island although one of them states that "there is a very great multitude of Jews as well as many other sects even Tanwis and Manichees, the king permitting the free exercise of every religion"³. Four centuries afterwards when Marco Polo visited Ceylon in the course of his Eastern travels, he wrote at length on the wealth of the island and the quality of its peoples but pointed out that the inhabitants "worship idols"⁴. Marco Polo has taken care to mention in his *Travels* several places where the Nestorian Missionaries had penetrated. His silence in this connexion is therefore significant⁵. Then again Friar Oderic⁶ and John de Marignolli⁷ who visited Ceylon in the fourteenth century, are also silent on this point. And finally Muhammad Ibn Abu Allah, commonly known as Ibn Batuta, who visited Ceylon in the same century, also makes no mention about the presence of any Christians in the island, although he speaks of Buddhistic and Brahminical practices and describes the country at length. He says that neither the ruler of the country nor the people were believers⁸. If there had been any Christian Community in these times it is very unlikely that these men would not have mentioned the fact in their writings.

¹ The Nestorians were adherents of the doctrine of Nestorius Patriarch of Constantinople, who denied the unity of the Divine and Human in Christ and said that it was not right to speak of things true of him in his human character as true of God. In 431 the Council of Ephesus affirmed that Nestorius' view was wrong and that the union of the Divine and Human in Jesus was of so close a character as to justify such phraseology. The career of Nestorianism in the East was remarkable. By the sixth century they established a strong church in South India and its adherents are still found in Travancore and Cochin among "the Syrian Christians."

² L. E. Browne : *The Eclipse of Christianity in Asia*, p. 5.

³ Eusebius Renaudot : "Ancient Accounts of India and China by two Mohammedan Travellers", pp. 2-3 and 83-4, refer to Ceylon. Renaudot's translation with slight alterations—is used in J. Pinkerton's "General Collection of Voyages and Travels" (London Longman & Co. 1811), Vol. 7 Asia, p. 179, ff.

⁴ W. Marsden (Ed.) : "Travels of Marco Polo, A Venetian in the 13th Century", Bk. III, Ch. XIX, p. 621 ; "The Book of Marco Polo" by Sir Henry Yule : revised by Henry Cordier : also *The Travels of Marco Polo* translated by John Frampton Ed. N. M. Penzer (London, Black 1937), p. 106.

⁵ A. Mingana : "The Early Spread of Christianity in Central Asia and the Far East" (Manchester, 1925), p. 20-1 : Here Mingana gives a list of the Places in which Marco Polo had found Nestorians and their Churches.

⁶ Odoricus (B) de Porto Naono Peregrinatio, Ant. 1643 Folio. Vol. I p. 989 ; see also C. A. and L. R ; Fr. S. G. Perera : July, 1918 pp. 1-4.

⁷ John de Marignolli : "Recollections of Eastern Travels" Vol. II (pp. 308-394) in Henry Yule's "Cathay and the Way Thither." The Narrative concerning the mountain Seyllan &c. p. 354 ff.

⁸ S. Lee : "Travels of Ibn Batuta" Ch. XX, pp. 183-191. "The Emperor is an Infidel" (p. 186) ; H. A. R. Gibb : *Ibn Batuta : Selections*, p. 96 ; "I visited this Island of Ceylon. Its people still live in idolatry, yet they respect (for) Muslim dervishes, lodge them in their houses, and give them to eat and they live in their houses amidst their wives and children. This is contrary to the usages of the other Indian idolators who never make friends with Muslims."

Alphonse Mingana commenting on Cosmas' well-known passage on the Church in Ceylon says : "Ceylon had no native Christian Church in the beginning of the sixth century, and it is a century after this date that the Nestorian Missionaries succeeded in establishing an indigenous Christian Community in the island"¹. James Cordiner in his *Description of Ceylon* says : "The Christian Religion was first planted in Ceylon by the Nestorian Missionaries from Persia. But of the Churches established by them scarcely any vestiges remain, or if they do, they make a part of those buildings afterwards erected by the Portuguese"². James Hough in his *History of Christianity in India* thinks that the Persian Churches survived till the arrival of the Portuguese in 1505 and "no doubt the Nestorian Churches shared the fate of the temples of Buddhoo, which they (the Portuguese) pulled down and, with the materials, erected Churches for their own religion in all parts of the coasts"³. None of these statements about the existence of an indigenous Christian Community and the survival of the Persian Church till Portuguese

times appears to be based on sufficient evidence.

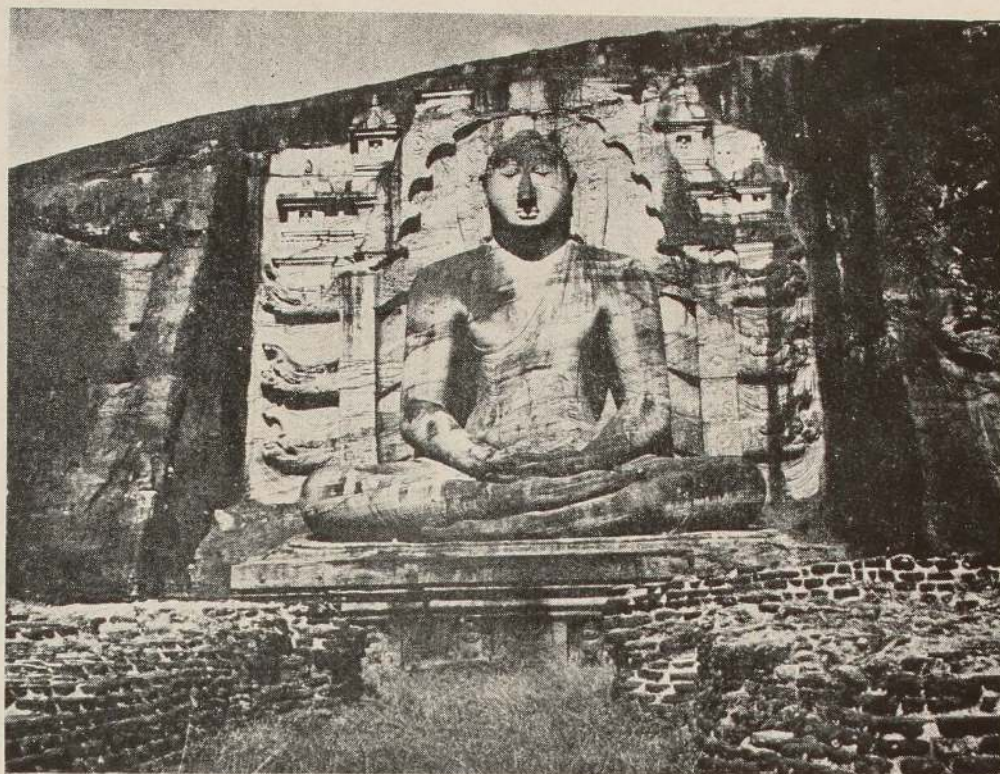
It is true that the Nestorian Church in the East was intensely missionary and it may be this general characteristic of the Nestorian Church that made Cordiner, Hough and Mingana to come to the conclusions they did⁴. But though the contact of the Nestorian Missionaries with the early Christians of Malabar in South India had given that Church too a great impetus, the Nestorians in Ceylon do not seem to have been very evangelistic. It is most likely that the Church was confined to the trading community of Persians in the island. Even if they did convert some of the inhabitants, their religion could not have been firmly rooted. These reasons account for the early disappearance of Ceylon's first known Christian Community. When Lorenzo de Almeida landed in Ceylon in 1505 there were no Christians found in the island. Then a variety of animistic, Buddhistic and Hinduistic beliefs prevailed. And the presence of the early Christian Church in Ceylon had by this time long been forgotten.

¹ A. Mingana : "The Early Spread of Christianity in India." pp. 29—30.

² J. Cordiner : p. 154 (1807).

³ J. Hough : Vol. III, Bk. 7, p. 74. Vols. I-V (1839-1845)

⁴ J. N. Farquhar : *The Apostle Thomas in South India* (Manchester, 1926) pp. 32-33.



A close up of the statue of the Buddha at Madirigiri Vihare

Madirigiri—A Treasure Trove in Stone

RAY BLAZE

REFERENCES to Mandalagiri Vihare date back to the Seventh century. Some are found in the Mahavamsa, and inscriptions brought to light at the site indicate that the monastery was in a flourishing condition, with hospitals attached to it, in the 9th and 10th centuries. Sena II, in the ninth century, is reported to have richly endowed it with a number of villages. During the unsettled times of the 12th century, Mandalagiriya was at the height of its glory. Then, with changing periods, the tide of civilization ebbed away leaving this famous shrine hidden in the forests for over six centuries.

Situated some 14 miles to the North of Minneriya, one reaches the site of this ancient vihare along a winding road, almost a footpath, which crosses the Kandula-oya at one stage,

making it almost inaccessible in rainy weather. The work of clearing and restoring a part of it was undertaken during the war, in June 1941. Despite discouraging circumstances which included food rationing, labour problems, roads being closed because an aerodrome was established in the neighbourhood, and a scarcity of water during the dry season, work was determinedly carried on by the Archæological Department. As an ancient pokuna close to the site did not ensure an adequate supply of water, a well had to be sunk, and very fortunately they struck a spring of good water. Renovations mean tedious and laborious work, such as testing broken stones and noting how they fit together; shaping ordinary bricks to fit into mouldings where the original is missing, remembering

always, that utilizing old material is more desirable than making new shapes, for bricks were picked up in the debris with mason's marks of Brahmi letters of the most archaic type. After four years of patient labour a section of the work was completed in 1945.

Five Buddha Images

NOW a vatadage of singular beauty and interest has been wrested from the surrounding jungle. Flights of steps lead to a circular building of three concentric rings of pillars which archæologists think must at one time have supported a dome-shaped roof; carvings and statues speak mutely of its one time grandeur. Five images of the Buddha, made in lime-stone, have been unearthed and set up again on their pedestals which rest on slabs of stone; these slabs serve as lids for stone receptacles underneath them. The receptacles are divided into hollow compartments in which were found several auspicious objects fashioned in copper and in marble—the subject of an interesting article by Mr. Paranavitana in the "Illustrated London News".

Most of these objects were reported to be of crude workmanship, except one, the copper figure of a deity some three inches in height;

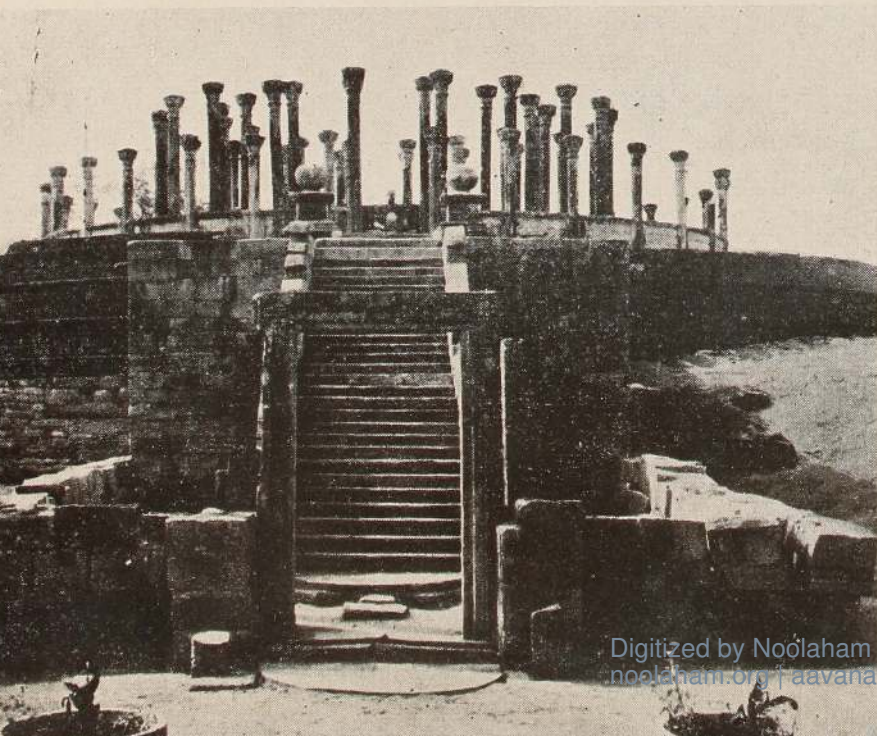
Circular shrine from Northern end. Flights of steps lead up to concentric rings of pillars which may have at one time supported a dome



Figure of the seated Buddha at the entrance to the circular shrine

the deity wears ornaments and head-dress, and is attended by two dwarfish figures set on either side of the feet. Amongst other articles was a wheel-symbol made of copper and ornamented on either side with six-petalled lotus; garlands hang from the hub on both sides. There were marble plaques with the figures of bulls, lions, and elephants in low relief, a copper swastika, copper plaques, and figures of deities.

During the troublous times of the 12th century, Prince Parakrama was resolutely fighting his way to the throne of Lanka; Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa had fallen to his victorious armies, and the King Gaja Bahu, was a prisoner, confined to his palace but treated with all respect till





House of images. Figures of the Buddha set in place once again

a meeting could be arranged between him and his cousin, the prince. Then rebellion and civil war broke out again and the invaders were defeated for a period, but eventually Parakrama's armies conquered the cities and remained victorious, so that when the Prince himself arrived at the Capital, he naturally expected to be made king.

But the monks came to Parakrama. They pointed out to him that King Gaja Bahu was too ill to live long and had no son to succeed him. They suggested therefore that the prince could afford to wait a little longer. Parakrama generously consented and left Gaja Bahu on the throne. This time King Gaja Bahu kept to his agreement refusing to fight against Parakrama in spite of many tempting offers. "Indeed," says the chronicler, "he went to a neighbouring

monastery, publicly declared that he bequeathed Rajarata to Parakrama, and caused this declaration to be inscribed on a stone . . ." That monastery was Mandalagiri, now known as Madirigiri, but though the stone tablet has not yet been unearthed, a copy of the treaty was found on a rock on the old site of another ancient vihare in the Kurunegala area.

Places like Kelaniya and Dambulla attract thousands of devotees every year but Madirigiri, considered to be of equal sanctity, still remains unheeded in the forests which surround it ; and in the precincts of this once famous vatadage, and beyond it, lie carved stone pillars and crumbling masonry over which the jungle creeps relentlessly, covering once again a treasure trove in stone which may reveal to us many secrets of a historic past.

The Ancient Currency of Ceylon

J. D. BORGER

THE study of coins, or Numismatics, is both interesting and important. For besides (1) their absolute or intrinsic value, arising from their pecuniary or their artistic worth, and (2) their monetary value coins have also, (3) a great literary and historical value. They supply at once sensible, living, and portable evidences and illustrations of history and literature.

Moreover, within a limited area such as this island, coins acquire a peculiar interest and importance. For here we are, like the inhabitants of the coast on which the tide continually ebbs and flows; we see the tide of conquest and population advancing on the island and receding, and from the coins at different times deposited we ascertain the character and operation of the political power of which the coins were the representatives.

The subject has not yet received among us, however, the consideration it deserves; and the very limited nature of the specimens in our collections is such as to render a comprehensive study almost impossible.

The most ancient coins hitherto discovered in Ceylon appear to be those found at Kalpitiya, Mantota, and other places on the north coast. Those found at Kalpitiya were contained in a chatty (pot) buried in the earth at a depth of about three feet from the surface. It had been supposed by some that they were a hoard buried there for security; but the circumstance of the coins being all of one description, and so inferior, seems to militate against such a supposition.

The condition of the coins is extremely unequal, some being clear and in good order while others show the effects of exposure to the air or damp; and others are as much reduced and defaced as the old worn-out silver coinage of England. The best specimens weigh about

65 grains of metal, which is about the weight of the "Odeypoor Pysa" (Udaipur Pysa).

In one specimen we see on the reverse the monkey chief, Hanuman,

"Of strength resistless, and wide wasting wrath"

—Uttra Rama Cheritra, Act I, Sc. 2.

But this carries us back to mythological times, and to the old legend of Rama and his "fawn-eyed" Sita.

The figure on the obverse of the coins is supposed to be Vishnu, of whom Rama was an "avatara" or incarnation. Vishnu was also, according to the Mahawansa, the tutelary deity of Lanka, so assigned at the settlement of Vijaya and his followers to the Island. It is no doubt in the former respect only that he appears on the coins.

The union of Hindu observances with Buddhism, the notion of tutelary deities, and even the countenance of demon offerings, is common among Sinhalese; and this not, it would seem, in anywise by conquest or compulsion, but, throughout the whole period of the Sinhalese history, of their own choice and consent.

Among the gifts reciprocally given and interchanged as pledges of mutual friendship and alliance between Devanampiyatissa and Dharmasoka of India, both of them Buddhists, though the father of the latter was of Brahmanical faith, we find there was a "right hand chank," which is Vishnu's shell in the Ramayana—the shell of Sakko, Lord of Devas.

The emblems to the figures on the coins are not clear, and the characters inscribed on the reverse differ on different specimens. There are examples of different reverses. In one Hanuman

appears in his usual attitude, with a fish at his side to express the water whereby he acquired his celebrity.

In the Mahawansa, mention is made frequently of the *Kahapana*. Turnour describes this as a gold coin worth 10 *Masaka*, which he says is a silver coin called *Massa*. There are various values placed on these ancient coins but the real value appears to be unknown and the stories we have of them in the Mahawansa only throw greater obscurity and doubt.

One fact, however, is clear that there was at one time a common current money which included the *Kahapana* and *Masaka*, but the time of their actual currency was remote, short and limited.

There is also a small copper coin bearing on one side what seems intended for a lion—the symbol of the Sinhalese kings as descendants of Vijaya, the lion-born and lion-killer, so described in the fabulous story with which the Mahawansa veils his origin.

Another coin, dug up at Mantota, carries the representation of the fish. On one side is a bull or deer and on the other two fishes.

Then we have the *Ridi* which Davy says “resembles a fish hook and is merely a piece of thick silver wire bent”. This description accords much with the *larin*, an old coin and money of account in Persia and Arabia. It consisted of a silver wire, about half an inch in length, doubled up, and flattened on one side to receive the impression of characters.

Other ancient coins found in the island are of gold, silver and copper, and though of a different class are all apparently of the same general description.

Some Roman medals were discovered at Mantota in 1574. There were also coins of lead having on one side a Roman head, and on the reverse an eagle standing on a thunderbolt as in the Roman gold *scrupulus*.

The first coins in the modern period were those of the Portuguese. Their settlement in

Ceylon appears to have been fatal to the Sinhalese : it had the effect of completely separating the people of the coast from those of the interior, and shutting up the latter among their mountains, away from every opportunity of intercourse or communication with foreign nations. Generally, all trade was carried on by barter, and taxes were paid in kind ; so that, says Ribeiro, “there is not much money in the country.” The Portuguese had, however, it would seem, introduced the use of *Pagodas*, *Pardaons* and *larins*.

The king of Kandy had also allowed his subjects to make use of a kind of money which everybody was permitted to fabricate. It is described as of very pure silver, and made in the shape of a fish hook. It must have been the *Ridi*. The king also struck a kind of money called *panam* or *fanam*, and on pain of death no one was permitted to duplicate it.

Bertolacci says “whatever was the currency of Ceylon during the government of the Portuguese, no vestige of it now remains.”

Under the Dutch, the coins that were used in Holland were also current in Ceylon ; but, besides, there were copper coins, *stivers* or *pices* as they were called, and *challies*. The standing value of the pice or *stiver* was dependent on a regulation of government, which made 80 of them equal to one silver *ducatoon*. Thirty-six of them weighed a Dutch pound of the best copper. This coin, however, says Bertolacci, must not be confounded with the Dutch *stiver*, 66 of which were worth a *ducatoon* : the two coins, though bearing the same appellation, had no reference to each other. The term *chally* is equivalent to, and may have come from, the Greek *chalkos*, seven of which went to the *obolos* or *fanam* of 12 grains weight.

The earliest Dutch *chally* known as the usual monogram “V. O. C.” with the legend “*Sp nos in deo*” or, as it is more fully set out in a *chally* of 1791 (the intermediate ones not having any motto)—“*Spes nostra in deo est*”.

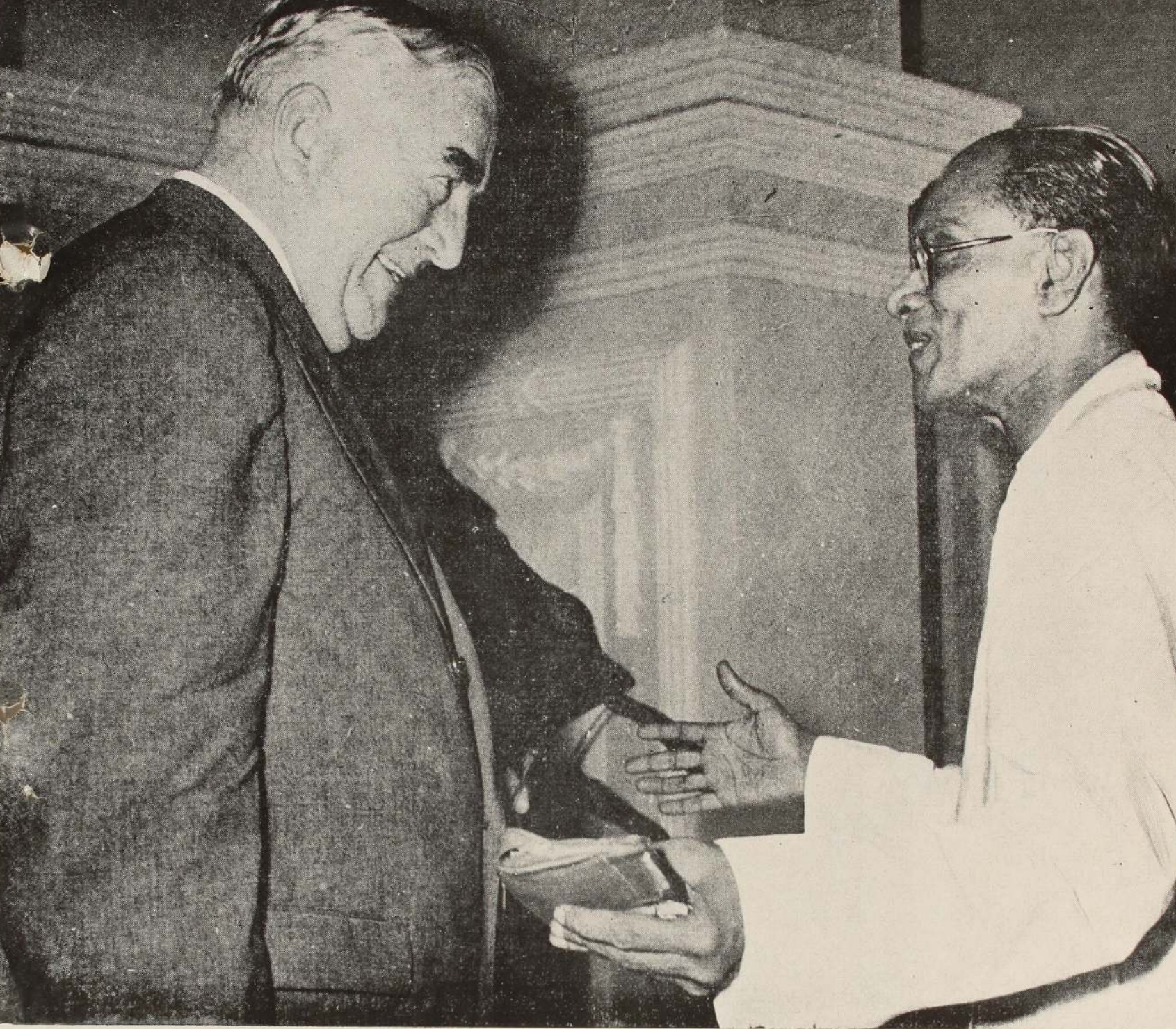
Some silver rupees were coined by Falck, who was appointed Governor and Director-General of India on August 9, 1765, and also by Governor Vandergraff; the coins were current for 36 *stivers* each.

There were also a great many foreign coins, as the Spanish dollar or piastre, the *poo varahun* or star pagoda, the *parengy varahun* or Portuguese pagoda or Porto Novo pagoda, the Surat and Sica rupee, &c. The prices of these were well regulated by their intrinsic value compared with the silver *ducatoon*; and keeping the exchange of the island currency to 80 *stivers* for each *ducatoon*, these different coins bore a price in copper coin according to that standard.

The affairs of the colony became embarrassed when Vandergraff was made Governor on February 7, 1785, and the same year he issued for the first time a Ceylon paper currency. This consisted of Treasury notes called *Kredit Brieven*, payable to the bearer on demand in Ceylon, copper coins at the rate of 48 *stivers* per Rix Dollar.

There was it seems at that time no coin for the Rix Dollar; it was merely an ideal one divided into 12 *fanams*, and each *fanam* into 4 *stivers*. On the establishment of the paper money, the Governor not only made all payments in that way, but also, as a further means of raising revenue, put up the gold and silver to auction; and in the year 1795 the silver *ducatoon*, which ten years before had been exchanged for not more than 80 *stivers* each, was sold at 100. This result arose partly from the scarcity of the silver coin, for in 1787 Vandergraff had caused money to be coined from the brass of old guns instead of from fine copper.

Prior to these measures, says Bertolacci, the real currency was the *ducatoon*, which contained 1 oz. 1 dwt. 1 gr. of English standard silver; but afterwards the copper coin became the standard, and that standard was injured. This copper coin in its depreciated state formed with the paper money by far the greatest part of the currency when the British took possession of Ceylon.



The Australian Premier, Mr. Robert Menzies, who visited Ceylon recently, photographed with the Prime Minister of Ceylon, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike

Foreign Affairs

THE Prime Minister, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, returned to Ceylon on July 10th after attending the ten-days Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, in London.

He was accompanied by Mrs. Bandaranaike ; Mr. G. de Soyza, Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Defence and External Affairs; Mr. N. J. L. Jansz, Assistant Secretary to the

Ministry ; and Mr. Duncan de Alwis, the Premier's Private Secretary.

Australian P. M. Visits Ceylon

THE Prime Minister of Australia, Mr. Robert Menzies, arrived here on June 2, on his way to the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in London.

At a press conference at "Temple Trees", Mr. Menzies said that the question of British bases in Ceylon was one to be decided by the Government of Ceylon.

Mr. Menzies and his party were later entertained to lunch at "Temple Trees" by the Prime Minister, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, and Mrs. Bandaranaike.

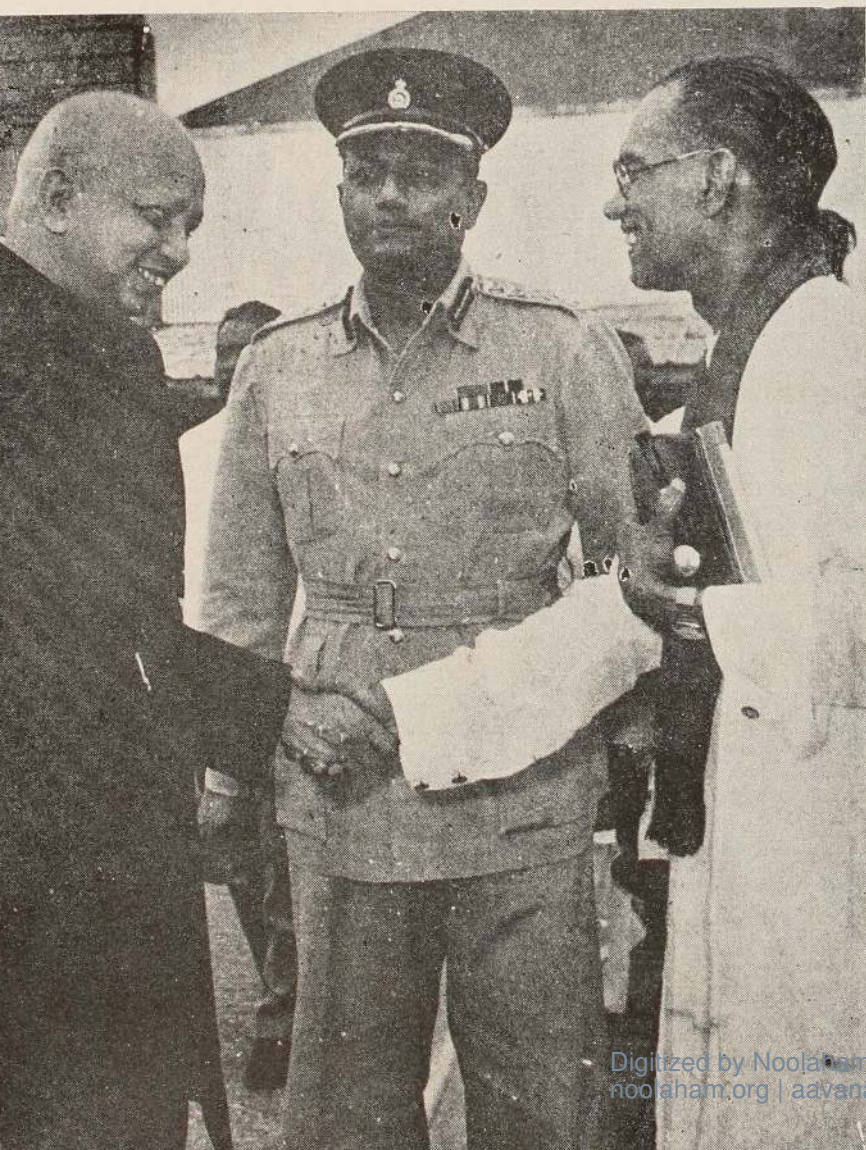
Mr. Menzies resumed his journey to London the same night after attending a piano recital in Colombo by the world famous pianist, Mr. Moiseiwitsch.

Statement on Bases

ON July 11, in the House of Representatives, the Prime Minister made the following statement on the question of the British bases in Ceylon :—

"The Defence Agreement of 1947 was merely a very brief general statement. The few sections

The Governor-General, Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, wishes good-bye to Mr. Bandaranaike, shortly before he embarked for London to attend the Commonwealth Premiers' Conference



in it were merely a general agreement rather than any agreement on any specific point. It merely stated that the Government of Ceylon and the Government of the United Kingdom agreed to give to each other such facilities as it may be in their mutual interests to provide. Whether these facilities were to be bases and so on were to be mutually agreed upon in the mutual interests of both. I have given a general idea of the Defence Agreement of 1947. It is therefore, wrong to assume that the provision of bases at Trincomalee and Katunayake was part of the Agreement. It is not so.

"What is the position in Trincomalee and Katunayake? There are no documents with reference to the position. There is no specific provision as to what Britain should do in Trincomalee or Katunayake. The position was that the British were using Katunayake during the war and after the war and, purporting to act under the Agreement of 1947, the British were permitted, apparently, to continue to use Trincomalee and Katunayake. Whenever we raised this question, the then Government denied they had conceded any right to the British to utilise either Trincomalee or Katunayake as bases."

"But the British Government has been under the impression that Trincomalee and Katunayake had been conceded to them as naval and air bases. That was the position."

The Prime Minister said that although the Ceylon Government denied the concession of the bases, the British Government had been under the impression that Trincomalee and Katunayake were their bases. One practical point which did prove it was that Trincomalee was the headquarters of the British East Indies Squadron. It showed that rights amounting to bases had been conceded. To his mind that was the position.

Mr. Bandaranaike added : "I have given this background history to show the position, at the time we assumed office. We are following a policy of non-alignment with any Power bloc, and are following what is generally known as



The Minister of Health, Mrs. Vimala Wijewardene, and the Minister of Commerce and Trade, Mr. R. G. Senanayake, say farewell in oriental fashion to Mrs. Bandaranaike (right), shortly before her departure for London with the Prime Minister

a neutralist policy, and, therefore, the bases, if indeed they were bases, could not continue as such. That is the position we took up, and I took the opportunity of discussing this question with the British Government after having indicated my attitude to Lord Mountbatten.

“I took up the position that the bases must be handed over to us, and Britain agreed to do so. The British pointed out that they would like to continue certain facilities. As to what the facilities are and as to the conditions under which such facilities could be given, I give this assurance to the House—whatever facilities I shall give will be subject to the over-riding decision of this House. We, and we alone, are in control of our bases at Trincomalee and Katunayake.

“It did not appear to me, in dealing with the request for facilities that we should deny facilities like the use of petrol, the ammunition dump and certain communications. It did seem to me that it would be unfair not to agree to consider suitable arrangements about such facilities. The House will know what the facilities are and under what conditions they are to be given, and it will be done in such a way as when we are dealing with a friendly people, but we will not derogate from the position that we have taken over these bases.”

The Premier said the British were already considering arrangements for another place for their East Indies Squadron headquarters. The main position he took regarding the control of the bases had been upheld.

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(1783-1826); Bishop of Calcutta; Born at Malpas, Cheshire, on April 21, 1783; Received his early education at the Grammar School of Whitchurch. In 1800, he was at Brasenose College, Oxford, where he had a brilliant career, and in 1807 received his Holy Orders; Brampton Lecturer at Oxford in 1815; Preacher at Lincoln's Inn in 1822; in the same year he was appointed Bishop of Calcutta, a post which he accepted with much hesitation. Heber visited Ceylon on August 25, 1825; visited Kandy in the company of Sir Edward Barnes—the road from Colombo to Kandy had just been opened—He held a Service at the Audience Hall, Kandy, on September 18, 1825, and finally left Ceylon on September 29. He died on April 3, 1826, and his remains were buried in the Cantonment Church at Trichinopoly.

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(To be continued)

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