



Historical Sketches

(CEYLON CHURCH HISTORY)

BY

FATHER S. G. PERERA, S. J.



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Review by

Dr. G. C. MENDIS,

B.A., Ph.D., D. Litt. (Lond.)

*(Ex-Reader in History at the
University of Ceylon.)*

No comments of mine are necessary to commend this work of Father S. G. Perera to the public of Ceylon. As a student of Ceylon history there are few to equal him. As a scholar his thoroughness in sifting fact from fiction is evident in all his writings. He will always be remembered on account of his translation of the three large volumes of the *Conquista* from Portuguese into English, his other works, and the numerous articles he wrote to various journals. He is still the best authority on the Portuguese Period and on the history of the Roman Catholic Church in Ceylon.

Father Perera's *Historical Sketches* is a valuable supplement to his works on the history of the Roman Catholic Church in Ceylon. As they are written from the standpoint of the Roman Catholic Church for Roman Catholics, those outside may not at times agree with his interpretation of the facts which he so carefully assembles. But there is no question as to its value as a contribution to the understanding of the history of the Roman Catholic Church in Ceylon and of the history of Ceylon in general.

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FOREWORD

Historical Sketches

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FOREWORD

By the Rt. Rev. Dr. Edmund Peiris, O. M. I.
Bishop of Chilaw.

"**Historical Sketches**" is "a collection of some articles and lectures on the history of the church in Ceylon, contributed to various Reviews or spoken on diverse occasions to different audiences" by the late Father S. G. Perera, S. J. It is the fruit of his cherished studies, and presents a cross-section of the chequered history of the church in our country, "so often misunderstood and misrepresented at home and abroad". The work was published in 1938 and dedicated to his friend and admirer, the late Mr. Albert A. Wickramasinghe, a devout Catholic and a great lover of his people.

No one could have written or spoken about the history of the Church in Ceylon with greater authority than Fr. Perera. With the co-operation of his brother Jesuits abroad and the support of his Religious Superiors he obtained, at much cost, photostat copies of over two hundred documents, which he translated and published. These documents contained accounts of Ceylon by those who had lived through the events in the Portuguese days. In 1930, the Ceylon Government Press issued Fr. Perera's monumental work, the translation of Fr. Fernao de Queyroz' **The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon**, in three volumes running into 1,254 pages, with 77 pages of index. Fr. Queyroz' work was considered to be second only

to the **Mahavansa** in its importance to the history of Ceylon. The translation and edition of such a work, especially when it had been written for Portuguese readers of the 17th century, required not only a good knowledge of old Portuguese but also a thorough acquaintance with the history of Ceylon. One who had accomplished such a task could speak with authority on the missionary activities of the Church in this country during the Portuguese incident.

From 1932 to 1933, Fr. Perera was in Europe, delving deep into the Archives of Lisbon, Paris, Hague, London and Rome. In Lisbon he collected a large number of unpublished documents relating to the apostolate of Fr. Joseph Vaz and his Oratorians in Ceylon, and ranging from 1686 to 1787. Of these, 55 documents were translated and published under the title "the Oratorian Mission in Ceylon"; they cover the period from 1686 to 1743. The rest, too, were translated by him, but have not yet been published. His knowledge of the Oratorian period was thorough. If evidence is wanted, you have it in his "Life of the Venerable Fr. Joseph Vaz", a masterpiece of historical reconstruction, and "the Life of Fr. Jacome Goncalvez".

With the assistance of that profound Oriental scholar, the late Mr. M. E. Fernando, Fr. Perera edited Alagiyavanna's **Subhashitaya** and **Kustantinu Hatana**, and **Ehelepola Varnanava**. When he pointed out that the great poet, Alagiyavanna,

had become a Catholic towards the end of his life and the **Hatana** was his work, there was a flutter among certain Buddhists; but, Fr. Perera was not the man to make statements without valid evidence. It may be truly said, that he, of all writers made the Catholics in this country feel that they have a history worth telling and proclaiming from house-tops.

Although Fr. Perera's contribution to the history of the Church in Ceylon is pre-eminent, his knowledge of his country's history was not less considerable. The learned and scholarly articles he published in newspapers and reviews, the lectures he delivered on various occasions and the books he published bear witness to his ability as a historian. In fact, the standard hand-book on the history of Ceylon from the Portuguese period to the present day is his work.

Fr. Perera was learned, hard-working, and critical. He avoided the dramatic school of literary historians, although, when he gave the reins to his imagination he commanded an impressive diction. On the other hand, he does not belong to the modern type of researchers in archives who are not ashamed of the dryasdust method. Although he had an admirable grasp of the whole range of Ceylon history and every aspect of it, he was strongest on the Portuguese period and the history of the Church in Ceylon, and weakest on the pre-Portuguese period, probably because of the difficulty of studying the subject from documents written in the Oriental

languages. Unlike many another historian, ancient and modern, he makes history tell its own tale, with great effect but without the wonted trimmings and exaggerations. This led him to deal out praise and blame with an even hand, to friend and foe alike, according to their deserts. *His services to the study of the history of his own country are, indeed, so considerable that they are worthy of being recorded, preserved and gratefully remembered.*

The Catholic Literature Committee of the Archdiocese deserves to be congratulated for republishing the "Historical Sketches". We hope that the same Committee will find the ways and means of making available to the public similar collections of important articles and lectures, which form part of the literary heritage of the greatest Catholic historian this country has produced.



Rev. Fr. S. G. PERERA, S. J.

Father S. G. Perera was born on the 5th June, 1882, in Kalutara. He received his early education at Holy Cross College, Kalutara, then at St. Joseph's College and finally at Wesley College. After leaving School he joined the Government Service and was posted to the Land Registry, Ratnapura. It was here that he came under the influence of Rev. Fr. J. D'Herde, S. J., who soon discovered that there was only one vocation before young Simon. The promising young Clerical servant soon rose from his desk, renounced the world and decided to dedicate his life to God.



In September, 1905, Simon Perera left Ceylon to join the Jesuit Novitiate in India. In 1911 he returned to Ceylon and taught at St. Aloysius' College, Galle. In 1914 he left for India again for his final studies. **He was ordained a Priest on 21st November, 1917.** For several years he taught at St. Aloysius' College, and was for sometime Principal of St. Servatius' College, Matara. Generations of Aloysians will remember Fr. Perera, the Priest with a large heart, ever ready to help and advise on matters spiritual, temporal or historical.

Fr. Perera was proficient in several languages, and he devoted his entire life to the study of historical subjects and Christianity in Ceylon. He wrote several books, and contributed valuable articles on history to various papers and journals. He was on the Council of the Ceylon Royal Asiatic Society, a Member of the Ceylon Historical Commission and Editor of the Ceylon Literary Register. He was Professor of Missiology in the Gregorian University of Rome, (1932-1933), was Secretary to the Delegate Apostolic for India, Burma & Ceylon, and was the first Ceylonese to be appointed Vicar General of the Galle Diocese (1939). As Dr. Andreas Nell, another historian, said of Fr. Perera: "The first Ceylonese Jesuit has been an ornament to his Order, a faithful servant of his Church and an honour to his country".

He died at Galle on the 19th February, 1950, and was buried at the cemetery at Dadalla. But the memory of Fr. Simon Gregory Perera, Patriot, Scholar, Historian and Man of God will live as long as Ceylon history will be studied and as long as there is a story to tell about Christianity in this Island.

DEDICATION

To

ALBERT A. WICKRAMASINGHE,

Proctor of the Supreme Court, Kegalle.

President of the Catholic Union

of the Diocese of Galle.

Dear Mr. Wickramasinghe,

I wonder whether you remember how one day, long ago, when you and I were both students and chanced to spend a holiday with some mutual friends, I made my way in the early morning to a neighbouring church for Mass and found that, all unknown to me, you had also stolen there already for the same purpose. I do not recollect whether you noticed me but I have a very vivid recollection of the pleasure I felt on discovering that a companion of mine, a student-at-law, in the last stage, I think, of legal studies, should, in the midst of the diversions and distractions to which law-students of the day were particularly given, be found so fervent in the practice of the faith as not to miss an opportunity of hearing Mass even on an ordinary week-day. That incident happened something near forty years ago. Since then we have trod different walks in life; but when we did meet, off and on, our conversation ended, whatever topic we may have begun with, by drifting to the interests of our common faith. I have an idea that we generally agreed in our views; namely, that our Faith is the greatest of our possessions; that the profession of the Catholic Faith enables a man to satisfy the noblest aspirations of the human heart and to give his country the

fullest service; that if our countrymen do not share our faith, it is, in great measure, because the doctrines of Christ seldom get a fair hearing on account of prejudices; and that, in consequence, the greatest service we can render to those we love is to put them in the way of knowing Our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ and his Church.

I am afraid, if the truth must be told, we were often severe in our criticism of men and institutions; seldom spared any person or thing in the vigour of our denunciations; and we were generally very impatient when the manner or method of the presentation of the Gospel of Christ to our fellow-countrymen did not come up to our ideals. One thing I realized was that in spite of our differences in life and profession and surroundings, we invariably agreed in what we considered the best and the most efficacious means of spreading the Kingdom of God. In fact I rarely had a talk with you on this familiar topic without recalling to my mind that day when I first felt the spiritual kinship as I saw you intently following the Mass from your massive prayer book in the church of St. Joseph, years ago.

If I refer to it now it is only to explain why it is that I want you to let me write your name on the dedication page of this little book of mine. It is nothing much of a book, being only a collection of some articles and lectures on the history of the church in Ceylon, contributed to various Reviews or spoken on diverse occasions to different audiences. I have submitted them to some slight revision without changing the form or style in which they were originally cast for publication or taken down from oral delivery; and they contain in consequence allusions to the occasion that called them forth and not a few repetitions. The only reason why I have collected them in

book form is that, being the fruit of my cherished studies, I naturally think them worthy of preservation. If they are not, you will have to shoulder some responsibility for my misjudgment, for you greatly aided and abetted me to think they were, and once even clinched the matter by offering to take any financial risk the publication might involve. That is typical of your impulsive generosity whenever a good work of any kind appealed to you.

May God bless and prosper you!

Yours very sincerely
S. G. PERERA, S. J.

St. Aloysius' College,
Galle.



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VIII FATHER JACOB COMAR, M.A., Secretary, LITERATURE COMMITTEE, THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE INDIAN DIOCESAN UNION.

XI THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE INDIAN DIOCESAN UNION.

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Hony. Secretary,
LITERATURE COMMITTEE
COLOMBO CATHOLIC DIOCESAN UNION.

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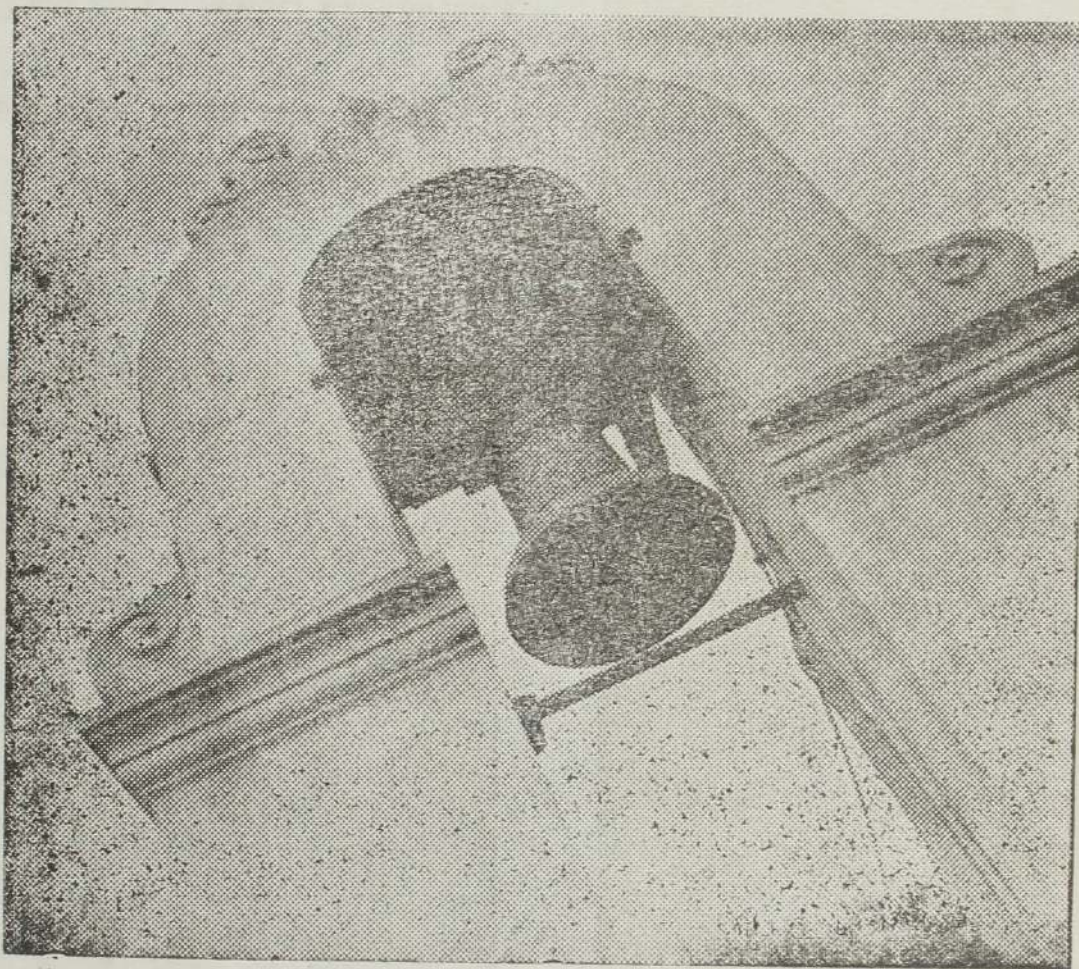
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This book is published by the ... Union. The author is indebted to the ... for their kind assistance in the preparation of this book. ...



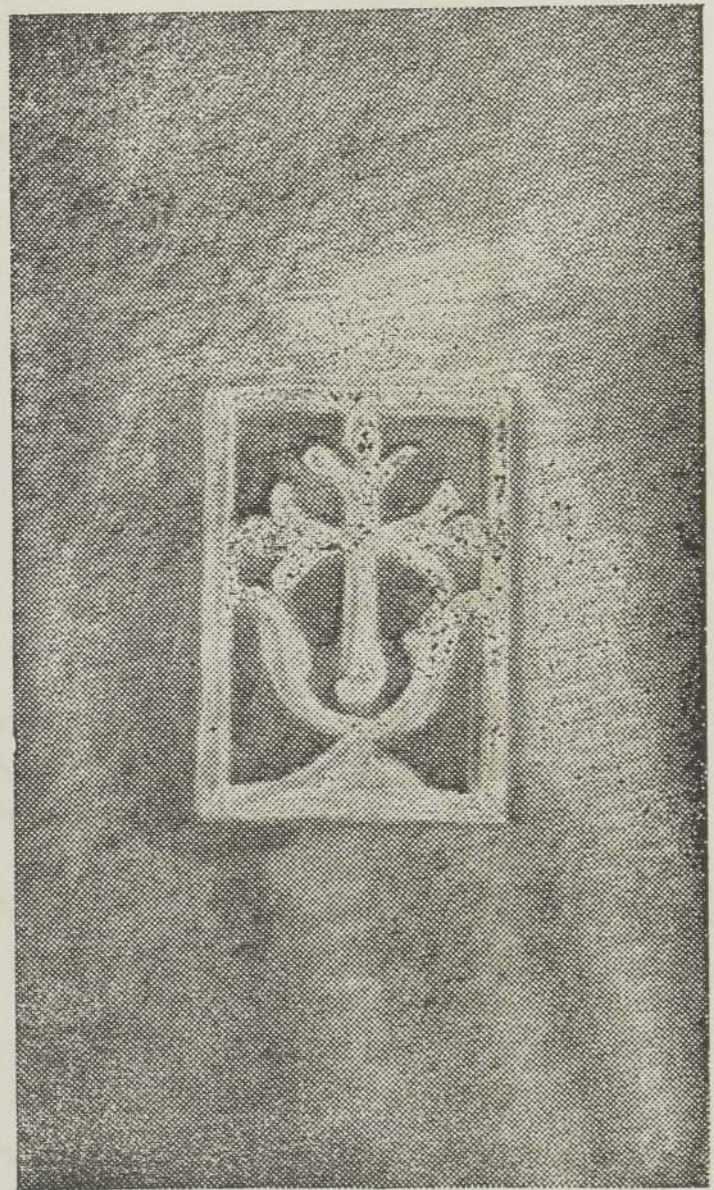
This bell which belonged to a Catholic Church of Kotte during the Portuguese Period, now hangs from a belfry at Kayman's Gate, Colombo. (see: page 75.)

It bears on it the inscription *Ave Gratia Plena Dominus Tecum Benedicta Tu in Muliers* (for *Mulieribus*): Hail, full of Grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women (*Spolia Zeylanica* viii, p. 69)—see article on "Some Historical Monuments of Ceylon" by Bishop Edmund Peiris, O.M.I., *Catholic Christmas Annual*, 1956.



The statue of our Lady of Release or Livramento belonging to an old Church in Jawatte, Colombo, during Portuguese times. (see: page 80)

It is now at St. Mary's Church, Bambalapitiya.



The Persian Cross which is now at the Anuradhapura Museum.

(see: pages 10 & 71)

The resemblance between this and the "Bleeding Cross" of St. Thomas, in the ancient chapel on St. Thomas' Mount, near Madras, is remarkable" says Bishop Edmund Pieris (page 5 of Catholic Annual, 1956)



EARLY CHRISTIANITY IN CEYLON.

When the Portuguese 'discovered' Ceylon at the beginning of the sixteenth century, great interest was roused in Europe regarding this Island of ours. Marvellous stories of its wealth and resources, its cinnamon and pearls, its plants and animals were brought home to Portugal; and strange tales they told of the customs and worship and origin and history of the islanders. It was discussed by the learned whether Ceilao, as the Portuguese came to call our country, was the island which the Greeks and the Romans called Taprobane. That is a question still considered open¹, for though it is quite certain that Ceylon was called Taprobane it is equally undoubted that the name was also given to an island obviously not Ceylon. But geographers of the sixteenth century had little hesitation in answering the question in the affirmative, and Strabo, Pliny and Ptolemy were read and marked for what they told of Taprobane.

In the meantime Portuguese missionaries landed in the East, and Christian Europe watched the progress of the gospel with keen interest. The success of St. Francis Xavier and the early missionaries kindled enthusiasm to an extent unknown in our days. The spirit of the Crusades was still abroad, and priests sailed out in large numbers, regardless of trials and discomforts, in poor vessels, on hazardous voyages, to convert the heathen. Their friends were busy copying, publishing and translating, the long letters and 'relations' they received from the missionaries in India and Ceylon; while Portuguese historians, official and otherwise, described in glowing terms the exploits of their countrymen. Thus what was called the East Indies loomed large in literature.

Ceylon was no insignificant portion of the East Indies, and stories told of the island exercised the ingenuity of various writers. There were some among them who thought they saw traces of an early Christianity in Ceylon. They called them legends. These legends, if such they deserve to be called, have a most dubious

1. Cf. Journal, R. A. S. (C. B.) 60, p. 80. Tennent. *Ceylon*, 1, 10, 549: Burnouf *Recherches sur la géographie ancienne de Ceylon*.

flavour, but almost take our breath away by their boldness, for they would take us back to nothing short of apostolic times, and tell without a blush, how the gospel was preached in Ceylon by personages mentioned in the New Testament.

The first of these, and the least deserving of our respect, relates that among the Magi or Wise Men of the East, who went to Bethlehem to adore the new born King of the Jews, was one who hailed from Ceylon. He was, it seems, called the Black Magus, by name Gaspar Peria Perumal, and was king of Jaffna. The story is thus told by a recent writer¹.

“There is (also) a tradition that one of the Magi, who came to adore the Lord, was a native of Ceylon. He was king of Jaffna, and bore at home the name of Peria Perumal. This must be the Black Magus, for Perumal is a Tamil name, pretty common even to this day in South India and Ceylon. This *Roi-Mage*, they say, joined St. Thomas in India and there won the crown of martyrdom, together with the Apostle, at Mylapore. They were buried in the same grave.”

This writer evidently takes the story from Maffei, who in turn had it from Joao de Barros, and Barros professed to have received it from the lips of a Syrian Christian. Barros was thus the first to give it a local habitation and a name. He says² that one of the Syrian Christians of Malabar who came to Portugal³ “related to us that in the house of Coulam, which was built by another disciple of the apostle St. Thomas, stood

1. Courtenay *Histoire du Christianisme a Ceylan*, p. 60.

2. Decado iii, Book vii, chapter ix.

3. Documents in the Vatican Library show that in 1490 the Christians of India sent three men, Joseph and two others, to the Patriarch of the East to beg for bishops. Joseph sailed for Lisbon in 1502 with the Portuguese admiral Cabral. From Lisbon he made his way to Rome, where he had audience of Alexander VI. This Syrian Christian aroused much interest in Rome, and from his talk was published in 1506 an anonymous pamphlet called *Navigatio Novi Orbis* or *The Travels of Joseph the Indian*, giving his description of the Thomas Christians. See *Dublin Review* 1906, pp. 110—11; Assemani Cod. Lit. xii p 229; *Paesi Novamente Retrovati* cxlii; James Hough *Christianity in India* 1,153.

a sepulchre of the Sybil, which they call Indica, and that church was an oratory of hers. And that through her warning announcing the birth of Jesus Christ, a king of the island of Ceilam, called Pirimal, went in a ship to the coast of Mascate to join two other kings, who were going to adore the Lord at Bethlehem, and that he was the third." How this story was received is hard to judge. It does not seem to have gained credit, for many writers ignore it altogether. One, however, Maffei in his *Historia Indica* refers to it very cautiously. Speaking of the Magi, he says in a parenthetical passage, that "Pirimal, king of Ceylon, is reckoned to be of that number¹" In the hands of later writers the story received its full development.

It is needless to say that the story runs counter to all we know about the Magi from the early Fathers, little enough though it is. At any rate the Syrian's story, if his it is, is improbable to a degree, to put it at the lowest. The Magi, in the first place, were not kings, in the usual meaning of the word, though they are popularly called "the Three Kings"; and a king of Jaffna, if there had been a kingdom of Jaffna in the first century A. D., I fancy, would have a long way and a hard time to perform the astounding feat of a journey to Palestine in the brave days of old. It is not, however, the antecedent improbability of the tale—which alone would be fatal to the Black Magus—that makes us rule the story out of court. Unfortunately for his legend Barros himself gives another version of the selfsame story in an earlier Decade; nor is that earlier version the only one of its kind. "Barros does not seem to have realised" wrote D. W. Ferguson, "that this story was a strangely garbled version of the one he had related in Decade I, Book IX, Chapter III, of the king of Malabar, Sarama Pereimal, who was converted to Muslim, abandoned his kingdom and went as a pilgrim to Mecca²." This earlier version of the story and others of the same ilk are refuted at learned length by the Jesuit

1. Joannes Petrus Maffei *Historiarum Indicarum Libri XVI*, Lib ii p. 55.

2. Journal R. A. S. (C. B.) 60, p. 54.

historian of Ceylon, Fernao de Queyroz¹. This Sarama Pereimal, Ceram Peroumal, Xarao Perimal Sho Ram, or Shermanoo Permaloo, Raja of Malabar, was a personage of some importance. The Mahommetans claim him as a convert, and he is said to have been a protector of the Christians of Cranganor, and to have given them charters of liberty, engraven on copper plates². Some copper plates were indeed handed to a Portuguese Governor by a dying Malabar Bishop in 1549. The plates were lost, but were afterwards found by Colonel Macaulay, British Resident in Travancore. Photographs of these plates are published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society* (vii, 1843, pp. 343—4) and they are generally supposed to belong to the eighth century. This legend that turned Perumal into a Magus owes its origin to the garbled version of a conflicting story, and is entitled to undisturbed oblivion.

The second legend is no whit better than the first, though it has this redeeming feature that it is based on words attributed to an early Christian writer, misapplied to Ceylon. It is built on a Buddhist legend *tires par les cheveux*. According to this story the footprint on Adam's Peak was the work of the Eunuch of queen Candace baptised by the deacon Philip (Acts, viii, 25—40). It was Maffei who first gave it utterance, but he gave it only as a conjecture, to which he was misled probably in this way³. It was reported from Ceylon that on Adam's Peak were venerated the footprints of a "a great saint," who had come to the Island from abroad "to preach the true God." The well-known Buddhist belief (*Mahavansa* i, 77) expressed in this language, was, naturally enough, misunderstood in a Christian sense; and Maffei remembered that some writers, among them Dorotheus of Tyre, say that this eunuch preached the gospel in Arabia Felix, Erythra and Taprobane. Now Taprobane was believed to be Ceylon: so putting two and two together, Maffei wrote, in connection with the footprint on Adam's Peak:

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1. *The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon*, pp. 170—1.
 2. Hough o. c. 1024: A Fortescue *Lesser Eastern Churches* 362—3.
 3. Mine, I must own, is just as much a conjecture as Maffei's.

“ It does not seem unlikely that in this footprint, of which I have spoken, is venerated, as some say, the Ethiopian eunuch of the queen Candace, though the name of the old time stranger had long since been forgotten. Some writers, especially Dorotheus, Bishop of Tyre, who flourished in the reign of Constantine the Great, and was reputed for learning and holiness, say that he preached the gospel of Christ in Arabia Felix, throughout Erythra and in Taprobane¹.” Thus the story was only proposed as a probability, on the strength of a statement believed to be of Dorotheus, who is said to have been a bishop of the fourth century.

But *fama crescit eundo*, and Diogo do Couto “having read what Dorotheus Bishop of Tyre says, and it is related by Maffei in the third book of his History of India” makes that ‘learned man’ say “that in this footprint is venerated the memory of the eunuch of queen Candace².” Queyroz likewise ascribes the story to Dorotheus and blames him for the ‘fable³.’ But the mistake was not his: Dorotheus did not say that the eunuch’s footprint is venerated on Adam’s Peak. That was a conjecture of Maffei, and a bad one at that. What Dorotheus is alleged to have said is that the eunuch preached the gospel in Taprobane, which he may very well have done. But this statement ascribed to Dorotheus cannot be traced⁴, nor will it be of any use if it can be found, for the writings circulated under his name are not genuine, but Byzantine fabrications of the eighth century⁵. The Byzantine cleric seems to have ‘lifted’ it bodily from another writer Sophronius (A. D. 560 - 638) who wrote: “The eunuch of the queen Candace preached the gospel of the Lord in Arabia Felix and in Taprobane an island in the Red Sea. They also say that he suffered martyrdom there and received honourable burial.”

1. Maffei o. c. lib ii p. 78.

2. Journal R. A. S. *sup. cit.* 116.

3. *The Tem. and Spir. Conq.* 39.

4. Some of his writings are given in Migne *Patrol. Graec* Vol. 92.

5. Cathol. Encyclop. sub voce *Tyre*.

The eunuch's connection with Adam's Peak is a bad guess, of which the less said the better. But did he come to Taprobane? Sophronius first said that he did, and is therefore the fountain head of the legend. All other writers, past and present, depend on him directly or indirectly for the story, which rests on the authority of a solitary writer of the seventh century. All earlier writers, who speak of this eunuch, such as St. Ireneus and St. Jerome, say that he preached in Ethiopia, whatever they may have meant by Ethiopia. Cave in his *Life of Philip the Deacon*¹, says that the legend of Sophronius is confirmed by the "current traditions of the country". It is not clear what country is meant, and the statement is too vague to have much value.

It may well be doubted, moreover, whether this Taprobane is Ceylon. Ceylon was indeed called Taprobane, but who would dare to maintain that Taprobane always means Ceylon? That name has been used far too vaguely for us to be at all sure about it. Often it was Ceylon that was meant; sometimes the descriptions given apply better to Sumatra: at other times no known island corresponds to the description. When the bare name is given, it may stand for anything at all for ought we know. The "Taprobane, island in the Red Sea" may well be such. Such certainly is the Taprobane of that arrant knight, Sir John Mandeville. He was a plagiarist and wrote *Voiage and Travaile*—"the most unblushing volume of lies ever offered to the world²." In this work Mandeville says:

"Toward the Est partye of Prestre Johnes Lond, is an yle, gode and gret, that men clepen Taprobane, that is full noble and full fructuous: and the Kyng thereof is fulle ryche and is undre the obeysance of Prestre John. And alle the weys there thei make hire Kyng be Eleccyuoun. In that Ile ben 2 Someres and 2 Wyntres; and men harvesten the corn twyes a Zeer. And in alle the Cesouns of the Zeer ben the Gardynes florisht. There dwellea gode folk and reasonable, and manye Cristene men

1. Quoted by Hough in I, 42.

2. Tennent ii 6.

amonges hem, that ben so riche, that thei wyte not what to done with their Godes. Of olde tyme, whan men passed from the Lond of Prestre John unto that yle, men maden ordynance for to pass by Schippe, 23 dayes or more; but now men passen by Schippe in 7 dayes. And men may see the botme of the Sea in many places; for it is not fulle depe¹ ”

This Taprobane may be anything or nothing, probably the latter, as fabulous as Prestre John². At all events it need not surprise us that Taprobane was used so vaguely for islands real and imaginary. Even ‘Lanka’ was not used exclusively for Ceylon. The island ‘Lanka’, through which the first meridian of the Indian astronomers passed, is not Ceylon, as Tennent hastily concluded (1, 6) but an island as imaginary as the meridian. For purposes of calculation the Indian Astronomers imagined an island to lie on the equator at the same longitude as Ujjain and named it Lanka³.

But to come back to Couto. He was not satisfied any more than we, with the story of the eunuch, for he writes: “We cannot discover whence that learned man” (that is Dorotheus) “could have inferred this, since it is not said in any writing that this eunuch left Abyssinia, of which he was a native. And we made diligent inquiry throughout India, and spoke with many ancient and learned Moors, heathen and even Jews, and in no part of it is there any knowledge or tradition of this eunuch⁴”. So far Couto is right enough, but to our consternation he proceeds to opine that the footprints—since there they were and Couto could not let them alone but must needs find a Christian Saint to explain the phenomenon—must have been imprinted by the

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1. Mandeville speaks of Ceylon in ch. 18 under the name ‘Silha.’ What he says is taken mostly from Friar Oderic.
 2. Prestre John is the name of a legendary eastern priest and king. It was believed that a vast Christian kingdom existed in the heart of Asia, and the legend furnished a wealth of material for poets, writers and explorers.
 3. *Indian Chronology*. Swamikannu Pillai p. 60.
 4. Journal l. c.

Apostle St. Thomas. His reason is simple, and it is just this that "At that time there went out to India no one, who could do such a miracle but this holy apostle."

Thus was born another legend, which Joao Ribeiro¹ gives in this wise: "The one whom the Chingalas reverence above all and whom they call Bodu .. was, they say, a great *Deo*, who spent a very holy life on the island; and they count their years which they call *Aurudu*, beginning from the new moon in March, from the date of his stay. By calculation we find that this occurred forty years from the coming of the Redeemer, and according to many conjectures they refer to the apostle St. Thomas, who, all assert, lived in this island and passed thence to the coast of Choromandel, where is still preserved a good deal of the Christianity which he established; and this is confirmed by their statement that Bodu was not a native and that he did not die in the island, but departed to the opposite coast." It must be owned to Ribeiro's credit that he did not give the matter as certain, for he added: "God knows what the truth of his story may be: I can only state what their tradition is." But Couto and Ribeiro were neither the first nor the only ones to suggest a possible visit of St. Thomas to Ceylon. All Greek, Latin and Syriac ecclesiastical records bear testimony that St. Thomas evangelized India. The discovery of inscriptions and coins of Gondophares, a king of India mentioned in these ecclesiastical records but hitherto unknown to history, gives unexpected confirmation to the tradition. Moreover the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar, whose presence in India can be traced back at least to the third century A. D., ascribe their conversions to St. Thomas according to their traditions.. As the Indian apostolate of St. Thomas thus rests on solid tradition², one cannot easily reject the possibility of a visit to Ceylon, especially as, according to these traditions, St. Thomas laboured in the East as well as in the West coast of India, both of which had communication with

1. Capt. Joao Ribeiro, *Fatalidade Historica de Ceylao*, ch. xiv.

2. See Medlycott *India and the Apostle St. Thomas*.

Ceylon in ancient times. But Ribeiro certainly overstates the case when he writes that "all assert that St. Thomas lived in the Island." His connection with Adam's Peak at all events rests on very tall conjectures, like Couto's "reason" and Ribeiro's "calculation" It is hardly necessary to say that St. Thomas' visit to Ceylon is only a mere possibility.

These writers do not say that any inhabitants of Ceylon were converted to the faith of Christ by these visitors, which is poor compliment to such apostolic men. If they had said that there were Christians in Ceylon once upon a time, they would have said something, which, unlike these legends, is quite true. For Cosmas Indicopleustes has left on record the existence of a Christian Church in Ceylon in the sixth century, and there is every reason to show that he states a fact. But the *Christian Topography*, the quaint book of that much travelled monk, was then unknown. The manuscript existed in the Vatican Library, but it was long afterwards that historians became aware of it. In this work first published in the original Greek by a Benedictine, and now translated into several languages¹, Cosmas says.

"Even in Taprobane, an island in further India, where the Indian sea is, there is a Church of Christians with clergy and a body of believers."

This Taprobane is undoubtedly Ceylon, for Cosmas says: "It is called Seilediba by the Indians, but by the Greeks Taprobane". Referring to this Christian Church, he says again in the Eleventh book, in which he describes Ceylon: "The island has also a Church of Persian Christians, who have settled there, and a Presbyter who is appointed from Persia, and a Deacon and a complete ecclesiastical ritual. But the natives and their kings are heathen."

Cosmas is the only writer who speaks of this Christian community, and his statement has been unreservedly accepted by all historians. A little before Cosmas, however, we find a passing

1. Migne *Patrol Graec.* Vol. 88: J. W. Mc Crindle *The Christian Topography.*

allusion to these Christians, for a Persian biographer, Zâdoe, contemporary of Mar Yonan, is described as "*pretre et solitaire, chef du manastere de Saint-Thomas dans le pays de l'Inde, dont le siege est fixe sous le pays des Quatrave, a Ceylan, l'ile noire*"¹. But all that we know of these Christians we know from Cosmas. According to him both the pastors and the flock were Persians resident in Ceylon. They probably became Nestorians, for the Persian church began to follow the Nestorian heresy towards the end of the fifth century. We know from extant inscriptions that the Persian Christians carried their religion with them wherever they went. In fact they were the first to carry the name of Christ to China. It is well known also that Persians had commercial intercourse with Ceylon in the sixth century.

One would, however, search the Sinhalese chronicles in vain for even a passing reference to these foreigners, for our chronicles are generally very reticent on such matters. There is, however, a passage in the *Mahavansa* which states that Pandukabhaya, "laid out near the West gate of Anuradhapura" among other things "a ground set apart for the Yonas (*Yonasabhagavatthu*)." This passage is an anachronism² and may well be an allusion to the Christian strangers. 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 certainly was at the time. It would therefore be most natural to find a foreign quarter in that city.

A more satisfactory confirmation of the presence of Christians in Anuradhapura is the Persian cross found in 1912 by the archaeological department while excavating the citadel of Anuradhapura³. The cross is cut in sunk relief on the side of a smooth granite column of which a fragment was dug up in the citadel. It had been used as the foundation of a house and probably belonged to some ruined Christian building in the

1. Labourt *Le Christianisme dans l'Empire Perse* 306.

2. Ceylon Antiquary I. Notes and Queries i, viii—ix.

3. *Archaeological Survey of Ceylon*, 1912—13, p. 5.

neighbourhood. The cross is undoubtedly Persian, and is very similar to the crosses found in the Syrian churches of Malabar. Another cross called by the Portuguese a cross of St. Thomas, was found at Mutwal, a suburb of Colombo at the mouth of the Kelani river, in early Portuguese times¹. As the Kelani was the outlet for the produce of the Kelani valley, and as the ancient township of Kolamba also stood at the mouth of a flood-outlet of the Kelani and was the chief mart of the Moors who succeeded the Persians in the carrying trade of Ceylon, it is not improbable that the Mutwal cross is also a relic of the presence of Persian traders in Ceylon.

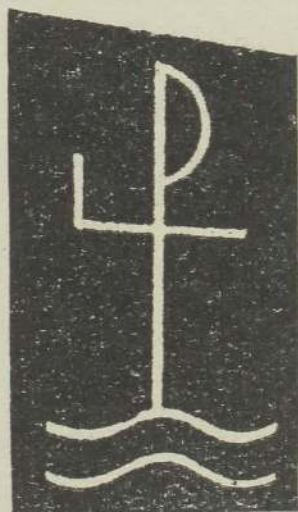
We do not know anything about the fate of this Christian Church in Ceylon. We know that the Nestorian missions in the East were destroyed after the thirteenth century. Friars Oderic and Marignolli who visited Ceylon in the fourteenth century had not heard tell of any Christians in Ceylon. Probably there was none to speak of and the Persian Church had decayed long before that. But Cordiner in his *Description of Ceylon*² ventured to say that "of the churches established (by the Nestorian missionaries from Persia) scarcely any vestiges now remain, or if they do, they make a part of those buildings afterwards erected by the Portuguese". Cordiner is here enlarging upon the data of Cosmas, who spoke only of a Christian Church of *Persians*, with a priest and a deacon, leaving no room for the assertion that "the faith was planted in Ceylon by Nestorian missionaries". Such speculations are a dangerous pastime, for subsequent writers turn them into actual realities. At least so it happened in this case, for Hough laid hold of Cordiner's conjecture and wrote: "Of the Christian churches which they [the Nestorians from Persia] erected in this island scarcely any vestige remained at the time of the Dutch conquest. When the Portuguese had subdued the maritime provinces, they almost obliterated the monuments of the natives' religion: and no doubt the Nestorian Church shared the fate of the temples of Buddha, which they pulled down, and with

1. *Tem. and Spir. Conq.* 715.

2. I, 54.

the materials erected churches of their own religion on all parts of the coast", just as from the 'materials' of Cordiner's conjecture Hough himself erected this structure of his bitter polemic.

All these legends of an ancient Christianity in Ceylon are wild statements. All that can be safely stated is that there was a Church of Persian Christians in Ceylon about the sixth century, but that there were no Christians or Christian legends in Ceylon when Lourenco de Almeida made landfall in Galle in 1505. That is the common conclusion of two such dissimilar writers as Emerson Tennent and Courtenay, each of whom produced a work on "Christianity in Ceylon." Tennent was a Protestant and a former Colonial Secretary of Ceylon who is often carried away by his imagination. Courtenay on the other hand is a Catholic, who has a wealth of information gathered from various quarters, but published without discrimination or historical criticism.



THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CEYLON

The Catholic Church has now existed in this island of ours for well over four centuries. In point of numbers the Catholics form the third largest religious persuasion in the country: we outnumber all the Protestant sects put together several times over; and in organization, educational work and social activities, we are, to put it mildly, second to none. There are five dioceses in this small island, with an Archbishop, four suffragan bishops and about three hundred priests. We have churches and chapels all over the country; we have colleges and convents and schools for boys and girls in every town of importance with priests and brothers and nuns, native and foreign, engaged in works of beneficence. The Catholics are of every race, belonging to every walk of life; and fitly enough, this city of ours, the metropolis of the island, is one of the most Catholic in the East. A Church, therefore, which fills such a large place in the public life of the country, which has existed so long and spread so wide and taken root so deep; a Church which has subsisted under the rule of two Christian nations, the Portuguese and the Dutch, and has survived the impolitic favours of the one and the political persecution of the other; a Church which existed under the kings of Kotte, Jaffna and Kandy, and enjoyed their benevolence with gratitude or endured their hostility without finching, and still lives while the royal lines are extinct; a Church which has lived for over a century under the British government of Ceylon, formerly frankly Protestant, but now officially neutral, and yet never gave in to its unjust demands or refused to yield when its demand was just and reasonable; a Church which has numbered among her children, men and women who have figured in Ceylon history, like Don Joao Periapandar, 'by the grace of God king of Ceylon', or Dona Catherina, queen of Kandy; which has nurtured a Sir Thomas de Sampayo, who was dubbed a knight by both the Pope and the King, and converted a poet like Alagiyawanna Mohottala, or a man-of-letters like Simon Casie Chitty or a noted highwayman like Sardiel of Utuwankanda; a Church which claims an apostolic man like the venerable Father Joseph Vaz, or a Sinhalese scholar

like Father Jacome Goncalvez, or an administrator like Archbishop Coudert: a Church which can point to six hundred of her children who laid down their lives for the faith at one time, or a township like Wahakotte, which, though isolated and lost in the highlands, kept the torch of faith alit for many generations without church or priest, or to a whole class of people like the Portuguese descendants, who preferred to be degraded, impoverished and ridiculed, rather than give up their faith; a Church which owns such shrines as Madu, Talawila and Kochchikade as souvenirs of the dark days of persecution and memorials of the three patrons of our forefathers,—the Blessed Virgin, St. Ann and St. Anthony—a Church in short of such age and vitality, of such diverse adherents and multiple activities and chequered career, must needs bear on her features the traces of her eventful life. She must needs have a tale of weal and woe, of loss and gain, a tale of suffering indeed but of triumphs none the less, a tale which brings home to us the great lesson that the welfare of the Church and her progress do not depend on the smiles of rulers or on the extent of our resources, but on the purity of our faith and the promise of her Founder.

Of this long and eventful history of the Church in Ceylon, I cannot hope to give you anything like a satisfactory sketch in the course of a single lecture, and all I propose to do is to place before you a bare skeleton of it, by tracing the origin and growth and development of the Catholic Church in Ceylon by epochs and periods, showing the characteristic feature of each period and bringing out above all the thread of the guidance of Providence that runs through the whole of her history.

The Catholic Church is in the world, but not of it. It consists of men, good and bad, but is independent of man in its efficiency, though dependent on him in a multitude of ways. One of these ways is that faith comes by hearing, and we may have ears to hear but hear not without the voice of a preacher. A preacher of the word of God never came to Ceylon till the discovery of the Cape route to India led Christian people to visit our shores. There was indeed a Christian Church in Ceylon in the sixth century,

with a priest and a deacon of the Syriac rite to minister to the Persian Christians sojourning at Anuradhapura; but it was an exotic Church of foreigners and for foreigners, and no attempt appears to have been made to preach Christianity to the sons of the soil. It was only ten centuries later, namely eight years after Vasco da Gama had doubled the Cape, that the first Christians that preached the gospel in Ceylon chanced unexpectedly to arrive in this island.

For the first four decades after this visit there were Portuguese Christians in Ceylon with chaplains who even made some converts, but there was no mission, no regular and organized attempt to preach the gospel. The first regular mission came in 1543, when a few Franciscan friars were sent to Ceylon on the invitation of the king of Kotte. They were faced with formidable difficulties. First of all, though they were invited by the king, that invitation was not a genuine and sincere one, but merely a make-believe, in order to secure Portuguese assistance; and the king was not at all prepared to allow his subjects to become Christians, and actually harassed and oppressed those who became Christians. There was, moreover, the insuperable difficulty of making Christianity understood by the people. Christian doctrines, thoughts and ideas, could not be easily expressed in a language so steeped in centuries of Buddhist thought and feeling that words connoted concepts alien to Christianity. A profound knowledge of the language and great familiarity with its usage and idiom were necessary to state in Sinhalese even such elementary Christian ideas as God, Soul, Heaven, Hell, Sin, Grace and Salvation.

To add to this there was the difference of customs, there were deep political troubles and misunderstandings, and above all there was the scandal of the misconduct of the Portuguese Christians, to hamper the work of the missionaries. The king was hostile in spite of his external benevolence; the people imbued with the Eastern religious theories of Karma and Rebirth and Nirvana, which they believed to be facts which no one ever disputed, could not be brought to give a hearing to a religion which presented a completely different outlook on life. Thus, humanly

speaking, the time and circumstances were unpropitious, and Ceylon seemed a most unpromising field for the seed of the Christian gospel. But where was ever the missionary who could be dismayed by reflections of this kind? Though there was small chance of success the friars bravely preached through interpreters in public places and even held disputations with the learned men of the country and convicted them of error to their own satisfaction, and actually even made a few conversions.

But soon the Providence of God intervened, as it always does when the faith is first preached in a country. He inspired the people of Mannar who had heard of the preaching and miracles of St. Francis Xavier among their kinsmen in South India, to invite him to come and preach to them also. The Saint was busy in Travancore and sent another missionary to preach in Mannar. This priest, an Indian, soon preached, converted, instructed and baptized all the inhabitants of that island. Upon this the Raja of Jaffna swooped on them and put to the sword every one of those who refused to abandon the new faith, to the number of six to seven hundred men, women and children.

Now if there is one thing that the history of Christianity has demonstrated, it is that massacre is the wrong way to root out the religion of Christ, for the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians. And so it now proved to be. The blood of the martyrs of Mannar germinated, and all the people living along the southwest coast of Ceylon, from Mannar to Dondra, forming a whole community, of some seventy thousand souls sought instruction in Christianity in a body. This wide-spread movement so encouraged the young king of Kotte that, though he had been instructed in Christianity from his youth but had after his sudden elevation to the throne resisted all the entreaties of the Portuguese on the grounds of state policy, now of his own accord and publicly embraced Christianity with his household, and was followed by the nobles of his court. Thus was born the Church of Ceylon towards the middle of the sixteenth century.

Thenceforth it continued to increase. Many of the king's subjects, dissatisfied with his change of religion, abandoned him

and went over to the king of Sitawaka, thus strengthening that monarch's hand and reducing the Christian king to depend solely on his Portuguese allies and his Christian subjects. That spelt the ruin of Kotte, but it made for the spread of Christianity. The zeal of the king and the activity of the friars and the support of the Portuguese led the greater part of the inhabitants of the kingdom of Kotte into the bosom of the Church. The missionaries even penetrated to the highland kingdom of Kandy, the king of which was beginning to realize that the most speedy and effective means of securing Portuguese assistance was to offer to give ear to the preaching of Christianity. Though the Kandyan Church did not prosper at this time, owing to political turmoils and the inability of the Portuguese to give effective support to the princes who sought their aid, yet these incidents made the new religion known even in the highlands.

The people of the lowcountry had now heard of Christianity for some years, and the difficulty in converting them was not the same as at the beginning. The missionaries were now able to express themselves intelligibly in the language of the country: the people were familiar with the fundamental ideas of Christianity; and the example of the king and the nobles was not lost on the country at large. The chief difficulty now was the misdeeds of the Portuguese. Their lawlessness and greed, their oppression and tyranny, and their neglect of the convert king and disregard of the commandments of God and the Church, scandalized the people and told against Christianity. The Portuguese authorities did not put on the field enough troops to uphold the king whom John III had crowned in effigy at Lisbon and whose conversion was an additional claim on their assistance, since it was the chief cause of the enemies' power. Hence it was only those who were secure of Mayadunne's vengeance that could think of conversion; and of these it was only those who felt secure from the tyranny of the Portuguese that would actually embrace the Catholic faith.

These gradually increased and the faith spread so wide that after the death of Mayadunne and his son, the Christian king of Kotte had the consolation of seeing the greater part of his subjects

entering the fold of Christ. Large numbers of parishes were instituted and the king even transferred to the Franciscans the lands that were formerly devoted to Buddhist temples. But this king had no children, and fearing that if his throne passed to a non-Christian king according to the Sinhalese laws of succession, the work of the missionaries would be undone, he bequeathed his kingdom by will to the king of Portugal, at the instance of the Portuguese, as we may well believe, supported, as we are told, by the Franciscan friars.

Accordingly on the death of Don Joao Periapandar in 1597, the king of Portugal was acclaimed king of Ceylon. It was the intention of the Portuguese to make Ceylon a New Portugal by proclaiming the laws and ordinances of Portugal in Ceylon to the extinction of the time honoured laws of the Sinhalese. But seeing that the temper of the people was opposed to such a drastic step, the Captain-General thought it expedient to summon an assembly of representatives from each district to discuss the matter. This first parliament of the lords and commons of Kotte met at Malwana, and the delegates held out for the Sinhalese laws and customs with the exception of religion, and though they were mostly Christians themselves, and eager to see their kinsmen adopt the faith of Christ, they voted against any use of methods of constraint or compulsion as the Portuguese in their eagerness would fain have done.

Now was an opportunity, if ever there was one, for the Portuguese to Christianize the country; but they were blind to their own true interests and the interests of the Catholic faith. If they had been true to their promise given in the name of the king of Portugal, to uphold and administer the laws of Ceylon; if they had only fulfilled their obvious duty, Ceylon would have been Catholic in a short time, and the history of the Portuguese in Ceylon would have had an entirely different tale to tell. But by their incompetence and covetousness and misrule, by their grandiose schemes of conquering the highland kingdom also and thus subjugating the whole island before they had made sure of keeping Kotte, and above all by their disregard of the law of God and his justice, they soon alienated the feelings of the people, Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

And from that time up to their final expulsion from Ceylon, the Portuguese had to face an endless succession of revolts and rebellions, headed not infrequently by Catholics. In most of these rebellions the infuriated people destroyed all that was in any way connected with the hated foreigner, but priests and churches were generally spared even by non-Christian rebels, for the revolt was against the Portuguese maladministration and not against Christianity. But naturally enough as even the godless Portuguese often identified themselves with the faith, it sometimes happened that in their bitterness against the oppressor even Catholic rebels did injury to the Church and the cause of Christianity.

I need not remind you that it is a lamentable fact that intense national feelings, however, good and lawful in their own province, often lead men to think and act and speak in a way that compromises their faith. The Portuguese appear to have thought that the people of Ceylon would not be Christians in the full sense, unless they adopted Portuguese names and customs, and became imitators of the Portuguese, just as in the beginning of Christianity the Jews thought that the gentiles could not be good Christians unless they first became Jews and adopted the Mosaic law. That was a delusion. Just as many Portuguese, even missionaries, through love of their national customs, tried to impose them on the people on the ground that they were Christian customs, so also many a Christian Sinhalese was led to unchristian acts out of hatred of foreign Christians, who seemed to use Christianity for their national aggrandizement. This was a great set-back to the progress of the gospel, for it required great calmness and self-possession to be able to fight the Portuguese without injuring Christianity.

Alagiyawanna Mohottala, the most distinguished Sinhalese poet of the century is a case in point. He was a great admirer of Rajasinha of Sitawaka, but after his death and the downfall of that kingdom, he became a Portuguese subject and was soon led to the study of Christianity. He read the New Testament, discussed religion with the Jesuit Fathers and eventually received baptism, and was employed by the King of Portugal in the

composition of the Tombo or the Domesday Book compiled at that time. But though he felt that the Portuguese and even the ecclesiastics, were not true to the doctrines of Christ in all things, yet he was so convinced of the truth of Christianity that he laboured to convert his countrymen.

Having become masters of Kotte, the Portuguese soon annexed the kingdom of Jaffna. By that time Christianity had penetrated to that kingdom and priests and churches existed from the time of its natural kings. But once the country was brought under their rule the Portuguese showed themselves oppressive. They were so anxious to make the people Catholics that there they even adopted measures, perhaps the only instance of that kind, that came dangerously near compulsion. They obliged all and sundry to listen willingly to the exposition of Christian doctrine, and those who would not do so, or deterred others, were ordered out of the country. The reason for this unusual action was perhaps the Governor's eagerness to convert the country, for the first Governor of Jaffna, was a man who, unlike many others, sincerely wished to do good to the people. In Kotte, on the contrary, we have instances of many officials trying to prevent the people from becoming Christians for fear that the priests would protect the converts from oppression. They were hostile to ecclesiastics and interfered in Church matters, harassed the missionaries and even robbed them of their endowments.

As this went on for some time Our Lord had good reason to be dissatisfied with the Portuguese Christians and their ways, and at last he permitted the island to fall into the hands of the heretical Dutch. It is on record that when a Jesuit lay-brother of Cochin was praying to God to punish the Dutch for the damage done to the Churches of Negombo and Galle that fell into the hands of the Dutch in 1640, a vision appeared to him and bade him not pray for punishment but for the conversion of the persecutor, adding that the Dutch were an instrument in God's hands for the punishment of the Portuguese. "When that work is done", added the vision, "they will disappear as salt in water".

This vision, found recorded in the Brother's own hand, and narrated by a Jesuit Father in a book written and published long before the Dutch were driven out of Ceylon, has been fully and amply verified, for there is no more glorious page in the history of Ceylon than the manner in which the Church in Ceylon came out of the crucible of the Dutch persecution, purified, ennobled and strengthened in the fire of persecution; while no religion ever disappeared from Ceylon so fast or so completely as that of the converts of the Dutch Reformed Religion in Ceylon, who melted away as salt in water.

When the Portuguese were finally expelled from Ceylon (1656—1658) they left behind them thousands of Christians scattered over the Island, especially in the territories that fell under the sway of the Dutch. These Catholics consisted of new converts, children of converts, and descendants of the Portuguese who had settled down in the country. To make short work of the Catholic Church and to make the Catholics become professors of the Helvetic Confession of Faith, the Dutch seized all Catholic places of worship and turned them to profane use; banished all Catholic priests under pain of death; proscribed all acts of Catholic worship, compelled all Catholics to baptize, marry and bury according to the Dutch rites, and send their children to the proselytizing schools; and held out the most tempting inducements to apostacy.

But it was not our Lord's intention to abandon His Church: He only sought to purify it as the goldsmith refines the gold. He therefore showered his graces in such abundance, that in spite of the want of priests and churches and sacraments and the absence of any means of instruction for the young or comfort for the old, a very large number of Catholics, first the descendants of the Portuguese, then the Sinhalese and Tamil Catholics, remained loyal to their faith in a manner without parallel in the history of any other religious community in the Island. Neither fines nor flogging nor imprisonment nor refusal of office, could make them abjure their faith. To escape the persecution many migrated to the territories of the King of Kandy at that monarch's express invitation, and founded the Catholic communities of Sitawaka,

Ruwanwella, Kendangamuwa and Saffragam or Ratnapura on the Southern frontiers, or of Galgamuwa, Weudda, Narangoda, and Wahakotte in the highlands, while those who remained in Dutch territory continued to practise their religion in secret.

The chief sufferers in this persecution were the descendants of the Portuguese, towards whom the Dutch showed neither pity nor mercy unless they conformed to the Dutch religion. They had therefore to pay a heavy price for their faith, for they were degraded, humiliated and reduced to abject poverty and forced to eke out a miserable existence by the pursuit of the mechanical crafts. To this day they bear the traces of their bondage.

Though the number of people that remained faithful was surprisingly large, considering the frailty of human nature, the powerful inducements to apostacy and the rigor of the persecution, they were not a few that fell away. Of these the first and the worst was the class of men to whom Mudaliyarships was the be-all of existence. The Dutch, unlike the Portuguese, employed no Ceylonese in any salaried post in the administration of the Company or in the civil or military posts. They revived the caste-system to which the Portuguese gave no recognition, and exacted caste-services and refused to give any headmanship to those who would not embrace their religion. This bait was swallowed by many who turned coats and became Mudaliyars under the Dutch. When the British came a century and half later, their descendants became Christians of the Church of England, with the same facility and reaped the rewards of their servility by retaining the offices in their families.

Another class apostatized gradually. Why is it that while all the seafaring people from Alutgama to Puttalam are still generally Catholics or at least Christians, their kinsmen from Bentota to Dondra are neither Catholics nor Christians? The reason is first, that the lands from Dondra to Alutgama were among the first to fall under the Dutch power, and secondly that by the time the venerable Father Joseph Vaz arrived in Ceylon, the first generation of Catholics were dead, and their children born and bred without

ever seeing their religion practised, gradually fell away under the influence of their surroundings, as the Oratorians could not succeed in penetrating so far south of Colombo. That is why the people who still bear Portuguese surnames, a token of the religion of their ancestors which many now actually reduce to an initial or drop out altogether, are non-Christians now. Similarly in Jaffna many new converts who had not been fully weaned from Hindu habits relapsed or swelled the number of the nominal converts of the Dutch.

When the Church had been thus purified for a couple of decades Our Lord inspired a noble and holy son of India, the venerable Father Joseph Vaz, to come to this island and raise up a new Church out of the ashes of the old. He, like all his companions and successors were members of the Congregation of the Oratory of Goa, Konkani Brahamins, though a malicious writer of history in Ceylon tried to fix on them the opprobrious name of half-castes, because they bore, as that writer did also, Portuguese names. Being an Indian Father Vaz was able to pick up Sinhalese and Tamil and elude the vigilance of the Dutch. The magnitude of the task that he achieved in Ceylon as well as his holiness of life and sufferings, have made him by far the greatest and the most renowned son of the Catholic Church in the East Indies. He came to Ceylon in 1686 when the Dutch persecution was at its highest, and in spite of incredible hardships, he visited, consoled, and ministered to the Catholics of Jaffna in disguise, went boldly to Kandy, where in the teeth of opposition, he succeeded in winning the goodwill and admiration of the king; then making the highland capital the base of his peregrinations, he visited all the Dutch territories undeterred by priest-hunts and brought peace and the consolation of the sacraments to the Catholics. He then pleaded and secured a supply of priests, and with them he not only revived the Church in Ceylon, but added large numbers of converts to the fold. On his suggestion one of his companions, Father Jacome Goncalvez, set himself the task of creating a Catholic literature in Sinhalese and Tamil to counteract the propaganda of the Dutch press, and by the intrepid labours of the Oratorians the Catholics of

Ceylon were soon enabled not only to hold up their head but even to force the Dutch to abate the persecution and eventually tolerate the Catholics.

As long as the Sinhalese rulers of Kandy flourished the Oratorians were greatly favoured in Kandy. But when the Malabar dynasty came on the throne the Church began to be persecuted in that kingdom also with a rigour never equalled by the Dutch. But meanwhile the Dutch were beginning to learn the truth once impressed by Gamaliel on the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem, that if the Catholic faith was the work of God they could not stop it. Thus the Catholic Church in Ceylon came out of the persecution, renewed and purified, increased and strengthened.

The arrival of the British in 1796 brought the Church peace and relief from penal laws. Though the English were as bigoted as the Dutch and were actually persecuting the Catholics in their own country at that time, in Ceylon, for reasons of policy, they immediately liberated the Catholics from the penal laws of the Dutch, giving full liberty to the Church in Ceylon, which thus became the first country under the British flag to emancipate the Catholics. But the British, who in 1815 became masters of the whole island, introduced the English language as the medium of government, of the administration of law, of education, commerce and the means of influence. Being unable at the time to provide the people of the country with the means of acquiring that language, the British government of Ceylon took the fatal step of favouring the Protestant Missions, giving them sites and government grants for the establishment of schools. The Protestant clergy, moreover, were placed on the government establishment and paid salaries from the revenue of the country.

Those who flocked to the Protestant Mission schools and adopted the tenets of the Church of England as by law established, were raised to power and influence and had the ear of government, while the Catholic priests, being Portuguese subjects of Goa, unacquainted with English, were without the means or the ability to set up English schools for the Catholics who formed the

overwhelmingly large majority of the Christians of Ceylon. Thus for many decades the Protestants held pride of place and power with results that can be seen to this day.

In the meantime the Holy See was greatly concerned with the organization of the Church in the East Indies. The Congregation of Propaganda which had been instituted so far back as 1620 for the special purpose of curbing the growing national tendencies of the Catholic missions, and preventing them from becoming identified with the country and nation of the missionaries, was trying to find ways and means of making the missions of India independent of Portugal, which continued to enjoy the rights and privileges of the Padroado without being able to fulfil its legitimate obligations of supplying the men and the means for mission work. Pope Gregory XVI who had been Prefect of Propaganda before his elevation to the Papal throne, decided to institute Vicariates-Apostolic in the East Indies. By that means he would bring the missions under the immediate direction of the Holy See through the Congregation.

For Ceylon he appointed two of the Oratorians in succession as Vicars Apostolic. But owing to the crying need of schools the people of Ceylon, especially the Catholic Burghers who suffered most from the want of schools, agitated for European priests. And as the hostility of Goa and the suppression of the Congregation of the Oratory, had cut off the supplying of priests for Ceylon, Dr. Cajetano Antonio himself asked for European missionaries, and received them.

It was no easy matter in those days to find European missionaries for a British colony like Ceylon. Propaganda had entrusted most of the other Vicariates in India to various Missionary Orders and Societies, but Ceylon was being administered by the members of an Indian congregation which the king of Portugal had recently suppressed. To find missionaries ready to work in a Vicariate of an Indian Oratorian in a British colony was no easy task. In 1842 Propaganda sent an Italian Oratorian, Horatio Bettachini, in 1844 there came a Frenchman Andrew Reynaud, in

1845 a Silvestrian Benedictine Joseph Maria Bravi, and two Spanish Cistercians Floriano Garcia and Floriano Oruna. There followed three Italian secular priests, Vistarini, Cassinelli and Mola.

But the Church needed more priests. Thereupon Dr. Bettachini who had first become Coadjutor to Dr. Cajetano Antonio, then Pro-vicar of Jaffna and finally Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna, which was separated from Colombo in 1849, went to Europe in search of missionaries. He found so few that he had to turn to the new Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. A few Oblates came with him to Jaffna where St. Patrick's College was started. Very soon the Oblates obtained the administration of the Northern Vicariate for the Congregation, which in consequence supplied the missionaries needed to make up for the departure of the secular priests to the Southern Vicariate.

This Southern Vicariate of Colombo was in very great need of priests. Dr. Bravi who became coadjutor to Dr. Antonio and eventually succeeded him as Vicar Apostolic, was a Silvestrian Benedictine and he sought assistance from his Order and received moreover a number of European secular priests. St. Benedict's College for boys, Good Shepherd Convent for girls were started, a printing press set up, which published two weekly papers in English and Sinhalese, and several churches were erected and the construction of a large cathedral, St. Lucia's, was begun. But the dearth of the priests was pressing. The clergy, moreover, had no principle of unity, being Benedictines, Oblates, Oratorians, secular priests, Italian, Spanish, Ceylonese and Indian. Propaganda continued to press for a first rate boys' school, especially with the view of recruiting a local clergy. Dr. Pagnani, who had become Vicar Apostolic, asked for men from his order, and when on account of the troubles in Italy he was unable to procure any, he offered to Propaganda to give up the Vicariate to the Oblates retaining the Central Provinces and Uva for his Order. This offer was accepted. Ceylon was divided into three Vicariates: Colombo and Jaffna in charge of the Oblates, and Kandy in charge of the Silvestrian Benedictines. This transfer of the administration of Colombo to

the Oblates was not acceptable to the secular priests in the Vicariate many of whom in consequence left it for good. However in 1887 the three Vicariates were made canonical dioceses and the Hierarchy was established in Ceylon. But as there was stagnation of missionary work, Rome withdrew the Southern and Eastern Provinces and Sabaragamuwa from the existing dioceses and set up the two new dioceses of Galle and Trincomalie and entrusted them to the Society of Jesus.

These constant divisions and changes of territory and personnel showed the difficulties of the Church of Ceylon at this time. The absence of a first rate college militated against the recruitment of priests from the country: the exclusive administration of dioceses by religious orders prevented the Church from reaping the benefit of the special work which each order is founded to serve. In Portuguese times there were members of different orders, Franciscans, Jesuits, Dominicans and Augustinians working along with secular priests in the same place as for instance in Colombo, Jaffna, Kandy and Galle. But now the different orders worked in different dioceses, with the result that there was a great waste of energy and resources, great disproportion and misapplication of labour at a time when the Church was in need of expanding in different directions. Moreover, the new missionaries from Europe had in most cases to learn three languages, English, Sinhalese and Tamil on arrival in Ceylon, and it was but natural that they should be unprepared to carry the gospel to the heathen of a country of which they were not sufficiently familiar with the language or customs or institutions. Thus it happened that while the Church in Ceylon made great progress in her educational policy, in erecting churches and intensifying Catholic worship and devotion, it was losing sight of the essentially missionary character of the Church.

Such was about the state of affairs when the present generation of Catholics was born. The subsequent development is modern history into which I do not propose to enter today, and I will conclude by making an observation to which I am led by the history which I have recounted. The prosperity of the Church

and her success and efficacy in the work of salvation of souls do not depend on any human means, but on her Founder. The world made her not nor can the world unmake her. But on the other hand Our Lord has left the external development of the Church dependent on the goodwill and wisdom of men, and it is inevitable that the internal history of the Church in good and evil should reflect the human frailties, the character and temperament of the clergy and the people. It is therefore necessary that the one and the other should from time to time search their hearts. Men like Father Joseph Vaz and Father Jacome Goncalvez and Archbishop Bonjean and Monsignor Zaleski have left their mark on the Church in Ceylon, and a study of the methods and traditions of the great Oratorian missionaries of Ceylon must be combined with a study of the policy and aims of later churchmen if we are to benefit by the lessons of history. And of what use is history if we do not learn from the past its lessons for the present and the future?



CATHOLICS AND NATIONALISM.

That natural feeling which makes a man love his kindred, his country and his nation, is a God-given instinct. The Catholic Church recognises it as such and fosters it in the hearts of her children. She also encourages, blesses, and protects, every effort of nations to work out their national advancement, to grow and to develop, each according to its natural genius, its opportunities, and its culture. But at the same time she is aware that, like all forms of self-love, national sentiments stand in constant need of the curb and control of reason, for there is nothing so mischievous as National feelings run amok. When a nation breaks out into unrestrained Nationalism it rides rough shod over the most sacred and elementary rights of weaker men and nations.

The Church therefore instils into her children a charity which embraces all mankind. The fraternal charity of the Christian is based on the fundamental Christian doctrine that the same God is Father of all men; that all men are brothers; that as the conditions of birth, life and death, are the same for all men, so all men have the same origin, the same duties, and the same destiny. The Catholic Church thus stands for the reconciliation of these opposing tendencies of man. She inculcates what is good and noble and sacred in National feeling, and condemns what is excessive, arrogant, and harmful, in Nationalism. And in the long course of her history perhaps no other human passion has given the Church so much ado as unrestrained Nationalism. I propose to show you how this conflict arises and how it is met, and how it has arisen and must be met in this island of ours.

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The word Catholic means universal. When we say that the Church is Catholic or Universal we do not mean merely the bare fact that the Church we belong to exists in every country and

nation, embracing within her fold all classes of society from the highest to the lowest in the four quarters of the globe. We mean that also, of course, but we mean much more. We mean that our religion is universal in her very essence, in scope and aim, in principle and teaching, in doctrine and practice; that it is destined for mankind all the world over, without distinction of Jew and Gentile, Greek and Roman, Scythian and Barbarian, Bond and Free. Being destined for all men the Catholic Church is, from the very nature of the case, not bound up with any race or any groups of them. She stands completely outside these distinctions, on a different plane, and cannot possibly be narrowed down, for the very good reason that she is founded on the fundamental truth that all men are equally the children of God.

The common rational nature of all men makes all men really and truly brothers. The division of men into tribes and nations and races and tongues, on the other hand, springs from our bodily peculiarities. Though all men have the same rational nature they differ from each other in their physical characteristics, their social and geographical environments. There is first of all the difference of sex; there are the differences arising from physiognomy, from the physical build of the body; there are the differentiations due to climatic conditions; there are the variations of type which we designate from localities, the Caucasian, the Mongolian, the American or Red Indian, the African or Negroid. These classifications and others and their subdivisions are based directly or indirectly on the body; from them arises the division of men into races.

The division of men into nations springs from his social nature, for man is a social being and as such tends to form groups. The reproductive instinct leads man to take a lifemate and to found a family; but this instinct is physical, and the family is not a social group: socially the family is a unit. These units living within a certain area tend to group themselves for social, economic, and political purposes; and these groups in course of time develop

on distinct lines into a larger social family with certain social traits. Just as the members of a family have a certain family resemblance due to their common parentage, so also the members of such a social family resemble each other in their social deportment by reason of their community of manners, their history, their religion, their language, and their culture. Their mutual intercourse, their social affinities and their traditional upbringing, even affect their character. As time passes, and generation after generation has lived the same social life, that social family assumes a distinct individuality. The members of that family become linked together by common traditions, the institutions gain a fixity, the customs become a social law, and institutions and customs become endeared to the people by long association: and the group assumes a character all its own, which distinguishes it from other groups. Such a social group is a Nation.

The individuals forming a nation may have many features in common, and the more of them they have the firmer are the bonds that bind them together. They may have kinship of blood by descent from common ancestors like the Jews who are the descendants of Jacob or Israel. They may have a common language like the English, who are a nation composed of Britons, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Danes and Normans with a plentiful sprinkling of many other races besides. They may have a common Fatherland like the Americans, or common aspirations like the Poles; but a Nation can exist as such without these common characteristics; and the more civilised and cultured a nation is, the greater is the individual liberty.

The Americans for instance have no common ancestry, but are none the less intensely national. The Jews had no Fatherland before they came to Palestine, and are now scattered over the globe. The Swiss and the Belgians have no common language. The former share their three official languages with the three neighbouring nations, but they are nevertheless one of the most patriotic of nations. The Belgians have two languages but are however a vigorous nation.

What all nations have, and what seems necessary to constitute Nationality, is a community of the ordinary interests of life, common customs, a common civilisation, a common history coming down at least for some generations. To have common memories of the past, a common endeavour in the present, and common hopes for the future, are the essential characteristics of a Nation. It knits the members of that nation, past, present and future, into a corporate unity, and gives that nation a distinct individuality. The individuals become conscious of their mutual interests, and share the weal and woe of the community as a whole. And the longer this common life is led, the greater the mutual interests, the more compact and firmer are the ties of Nationality.

If such a Nation has an hereditary domain linked with its history, that land is its Fatherland. But a Fatherland is not essential to the idea of a Nation though on the contrary the idea of a Nation is involved in that of a Fatherland. The Fatherland bears to the Nation the same relation as the Home bears to the family. A family may be without a Home; the place it lives in may be merely a house. The idea of Home carries with it the tender associations of family life. So is it with the Fatherland. One's fatherland is not the land he lives in; it is not even the land his fathers lived in. It is the land associated with his sires, which will be the heritage of his sons. It is the home of the Nation. One consequence of this is that there is no Patriotism without Nationality.

If a Nation is politically autonomous, that is independent of other nations, with an organised government of its own, that Nation is a Sovereign Nation or a State. But autonomy is not necessary to constitute a Nation, though of course the well-being of a Nation demands it, and the natural culmination of national life, its full flower and fruit, is political autonomy.

A State may be composed of several Nations. Such a State is an Empire. On the other hand the same Nation may form different States, or be parts of different States, as are the Poles.

States can be made and unmade in a day, by a scrap of paper called a Political Treaty. 'A breath can make them as a breath

has made.' But a Nation is a more stable thing. It takes generations and centuries to make or unmake a Nation. In the course of the world's history Nations have been made, modified and unmade. Like the perpetual renovation of the material world around us, Nations are born, flourish, and decay. Fresh Nations sprout out of the seeds of past generations. For Nations are made up of men, and man, so far as this world is concerned, is born only to die. He lives indeed in his children, his works survive him, but he himself must needs end in the grave. His children's children may be born into a social system vastly different from that of their grandsires.

No Nation remains ever the same for any great length of time, least of all in modern times. It improves or degenerates; and every Nation has its ups and downs. Social stagnation is the lot of backward Nations, and by stagnation a Nation does not escape dissolution. Growth is the normal condition of life: stagnation only hastens the break up.

Nations can receive additions from outside. As the son-in-law or the daughter-in-law becomes a member of the family by marriage into the family, likewise individuals or groups of individuals, who are brought into contact with a Nation, are absorbed into it and become part and parcel of it. America for instance, freely received immigrants from all countries and in a few generations made them as typically American as the original colonists.

Nations not only receive individuals but even customs and institutions and ideals, social and political, from friends and foes, Nations come under foreign influence of some sort or another, or even deliberately seek such influence. Japan, for instance, deliberately went out of her way to Europe and America for models whereon to fashion her national and political institutions adapted to modern times.

I hope I have made clear to you what I conceive by a Nation. A community of men, a large social family, bound together by common mutual interests of life, a common civilisation and a common history differentiating it from other like communities is a

Nation. And the sentiment engendered by the consciousness of that family feeling is Nationalism.

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Nationalism is the sum total of the feelings, aspirations and activities, the thoughts, the deeds, and the hopes, which tend to preserve national individuality, which make for its progress, and defend its rights. These sentiments are similar to the physical instinct of self-preservation, and like all human feelings into which self-love enters, Nationalism is only too apt to break out into excesses. Nations generally form conceited estimates of themselves in great things and small. The Greek called all others Barbarians. The Jew despised the Gentile. John Chinaman is convinced that there is no civilisation outside the great wall of the Celestial Empire. In a smaller way the Englishman thinks his plum pudding superior to all the resources of the French *cuisine*. And so on.

It is so common a phenomenon to see Nations setting up exaggerated claims and endeavouring to uphold them, that the word Nationalism, like Militarism, and Jingoism and other isms, is most often used disparagingly, to indicate these excesses. These excesses of Nationalism are often exploited by Civil Rulers, National Leaders and Religious Fanatics, for purposes of political, national, or religious propaganda. Nationalism arouses the worst instincts of men. Fling upon the gale the faintest whisper of a slur or an insult or even an appearance of such, and the flood-gates are opened and Nationalism deluges the land. The Nation mobilises its Army, and summons its Fleet to declare war on the aggressor. It is seldom that truth and justice and fairplay get a hearing before the National indignation has spent itself.

Though mankind is thus divided into tribes and nations and races, there is one point which makes the whole world kin, and that is our rational nature. Religion is a need of our rational nature and belongs to this common ground of humanity. Man is man all the world over, and what is true in the North and West is likewise true in the South and East. And a religion that claims to satisfy the rational nature of man, must needs be as universal as

man, and the same for all men. It is for this reason that Religion is the great educative and civilising force that it is. It softens racial antipathies and national antagonism, just as it establishes just relations between man and man. It is the only influence that acts equally on all men. It reduces the King to the level of the subject and makes the master the equal of his slave.

A Religion that is true to itself, therefore, cannot be narrowed down to the peculiarities of a group or groups of men, or to their racial or national characteristics. A Rational religion cannot be National. A religion that claims to be true must be independent of race and nation. It must be able to set up a claim for universality. It must be Catholic.

Though a true Religion cannot be national, and every religion claims to be true, yet men are so inconsistent that they sometimes attempt to nationalize the religion they believe to be true. A religion can be really and truly National only if it has been made to the image and likeness of a given nation, or has at least been modified by that nation to be the expression of its peculiar national mentality.

There are religions that have succumbed to this human tendency. Only a religion that is independent of man can successfully resist the attempts to subordinate it to the racial or national interests of men. Such the Catholic Church has ever been. It is no small proof of her divine origin that though attempts have been made none ever succeeded in nationalizing her.

The Jews, for instance, tried to nationalize the Gospel of Christ. Forgetting that the Messiah promised to their fathers was to be the Redeemer of the world, they looked forward to a Messiah, who would restore the temporal kingdom of Israel. Contrary to their expectations when Our Lord appeared on earth He preached a message of Peace and Goodwill to all men. He maintained that the Jews were not the only children of God, 'that power was given to all men who believe in His name to be made the sons of God'; that he had other sheep not of that fold; that his mission was to unite all sheep into one fold with one shepherd. All this was intensely distasteful to the national arrogance of Jewry. Embittered

by the Roman yoke they would have nothing short of a national Messiah; they would have nothing to do with a salvation which was merely a spiritual one to be shared with the gentile; and the High Priests and Scribes and Pharisees, assembled in National Conclave, repudiated the Christ, and delivered Him over to be crucified. 'He came unto his own and his own received him not.'

Though the National organisation of Judaism rejected the Redeemer, many individual Jews accepted his teaching. These believing Jews retained the national observances of Israel without let or hindrance; but when they saw their heritage passing over to the gentiles, the smouldering embers of Nationalism burst into flame and they tried to impose Jewish observances on gentile converts. But this effort was checked by the Spirit of God who abides in His Church, and who prompted the Apostles to assert the Catholicity of the Church of Christ. You must not suppose that this was due to the broadmindedness of any man. The Church is essentially independent of man, and her Catholicity must needs assert itself in any surroundings. Thus it is that the same thing happened when the next conflict with Nationalism took place in the bosom of the Roman Empire. That Empire represented a great civilisation. Enriched with the spoils of Greece it was the embodiment and the culmination of all pagan culture. But underneath the magnificence of the *Pax Romana* there lurked a sink of iniquity. Corruption, and luxury, and sensual licence, sapped the life blood of Roman society. The National religion of Rome was the faithful reflex of this chaos of morality. There were gods many and lords many. The gods of Latium had been ousted by those of Egypt and the East, but the well-being of the Empire was thought to be bound up with the cult of these gods. This imperial religion was established with pomp and pageantry, and the deification of the Emperor fitly symbolised the imperial character of the worship.

In defence of this national religion of Rome the cruel arm of the divine emperors was raised against the defenceless Christians who had the audacity to refuse to burn incense to the image of the Emperor. Alas, many Christians there were, even in the household

of the Emperor, many Christian Romans, who would gladly have shed their blood for the Emperor, who yearned to lay down their lives in the cause of the Empire; but burn incense they would not. It was therefore decreed: *Christianos esse non licet*. None shall be permitted to be a Christian. Every true Roman must be a worshipper of the divinity of the Emperor. And Nero and Domitian and Trajan, Decian and Valerian, Aurelian and Diocletian, one after another, rose up to avenge the Nationalism of Rome. Every public calamity was laid at the door of the Christians though they were convicted of none. If the Tiber overflowed its banks, or the Nile did not rise high enough, they raised the cry: *Christiani ad leones*. To the lions with the Christians! And to the lions they went, into the arena, to the rack, and to torture, a white robed army of Martyrs. But the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians. The more Christian blood was shed, so much the more did the Christian Church increase. And

“Greece, Rome, Carthage, where are they?”

They have had their day and ceased to be, while the two hundred and sixtieth successor of the Apostle now sits on the See of Rome. What happened in Rome happened elsewhere within and without the empire, and out of the ruins of that vast empire the Church formed a Christendom. She Christianized the civic, legal, and municipal lore of Rome and handed the spoils to the nations that were brought into being out of the wrecks of the Roman empire. The Frank, the Goth, and the Barbarian, were tamed, christianized, and regenerated; and each barbarous horde as it came in contact with the Church was moulded and civilised into a Nation under the restraining influence of the Gospel.

Through them Christian ideals made their way far beyond the pale of Christendom; and the world of thought and ideals in which we live to-day is essentially Christian. Christian concepts have sunk into the minds of men and have moulded the thoughts even of those outside the fold of Christ. Even the world that rejects Christianity cannot emancipate itself from sentiments that are distinctly Christian. They may not acknowledge the teaching of the Church regarding the relations of men to God, but they cannot

deny the excellence of her teaching on the relations of man to man, deduced from man's dependence on God. It answers to the highest instincts of the human breast.

The leaven of Christianity has thus leavened mankind. But this work of regenerating man and moulding nations is by its very nature a slow work: a laborious, a gradual, a progressive work. It has been centuries in the doing. It is never complete, never finished and done with, it never can be. For nations like men are wayward creatures, and true Christian civilisation requires self control and subjection of the baser instincts of man.

The Church, therefore, has not always succeeded in overcoming evil. Her remedies are in the realm of doctrines and principles; and principles act only so far as they are present to the mind, to the collective conscience of a nation. And the most the Church can do is to keep her doctrines and principles constantly before men's minds. Wars, strifes and revolutions break out and subside; but in the midst of these warring elements the Church has to keep her ground and proclaim her principles and influence men by her teaching and by her prayers. Directly she can influence only her own children, and of her children she can influence effectively only those who are loyal and dutiful to her. And alas not every child is always a dutiful child.

Thus it happens that Nationalism breaks out even in the bosom of the Church as well as outside it. Gallicanism, Febronianism and Josephism are names for such outbursts which in course of time yielded to reason. One nation that asserted its nationalism in good earnest was the English nation. A lusty English king once carried things with a high hand in a matter of Christian morality in defiance of Rome. Then followed a period of confusion and turmoil and reform and counter-reform and excommunication and the Spanish Armada. The successors of Henry VIII exploited the Elizabethan nationalism of Englishmen to broaden the breach. The heresy of Germany was imported and Protestantism was established by law as the religion of England.

It was decreed that the Vicar of Christ had no jurisdiction in those realms. That jurisdiction, they said, belonged to the crown; and this doctrine of the Spiritual Supremacy of the Sovereign was enforced by law and oath on the Lords and Commons, the Courts of Justice, the Universities and public institutions. The decree of the English Caesar went forth that every true Englishman must be a Protestant. It took some time to do all this thoroughly, but in course of time it was done. That state of affairs lasted a long time; but to-day Englishmen have undone what their fathers did. Catholic disabilities were repealed; the Coronation oath has gone, and Catholic Englishmen are no longer traitors. Philip Sober has made amends for Philip Drunk. England has learnt that one can be a good Catholic and a good Englishman. Catholics knew it centuries ago, but it is only in recent times that the English nation realised that recondite truth.

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Something analogous has come to pass in this country of ours. We are now at a period of reaction and transition, social and political. There is widespread activity, a desire for unity, a popular demand for constitutional and social reform, an aspiration for larger liberties and wider responsibilities. In short a wave of national consciousness is sweeping over the land, and bids fair, thank God, to link the people of this country into one social family, a Ceylonese Nation.

It is inevitable that even at so momentous an hour there should be found people who have the heart to ride their own barks on the wave of Nationalism; men who seek to fish in troubled waters and abuse the National awakening for selfish purposes of caste, creed, and race. There are such movements afoot. But I am at present concerned only with one particular move, namely the attempt made in certain quarters to make out that only a Buddhist can be a true Sinhalese. It seemed at first to be merely the unguarded outburst of a religious enthusiast, but the Buddhist press has taken it up in right earnest and there are indications to show that it is being widely preached for purposes of propaganda.

I have been at some pains to understand what is exactly meant by this contention. A visitor to our island who wrote and spoke a

good deal in praise and defence of Buddhism, once proclaimed that all Sinhalese should be Buddhists because "no other religion is so well fitted to their innate and peculiar racial characteristics¹." This is, I fear, a calumny on Buddhism; for if you ask an intelligent Buddhist friend why he professes that religion, his answer, I fancy, will be that he is convinced that it is the true religion; and no man can give a better reason for the faith that is in him. But he will deny emphatically that his religion is the outcome of racial sentiment; he will maintain that Buddhism appeals to reason and not to racial prejudice.

What our Buddhist countrymen seem to mean is quite a different thing. What they say is a misconception, not to say a calumny, of Christianity. Because Christianity is independent of race they try to make out that it denationalizes, that it is anti-racial. This is of a piece with the popular misconception that all the present evils in this country are due to western influence, and that Christianity is the stronghold of that influence.

Their contention is that though one's race is a question of birth and not of beliefs, yet a Sinhalese who becomes a Christian cannot be true to his race, not because of any racial characteristics but because of racial history; not that Buddhism has been excogitated by the Sinhalese people according to their peculiar mentality, but that the Sinhalese nation has been formed by Buddhism and is indissolubly associated with it. They contend that Sinhalese history is so bound up with Buddhism that a Sinhalese who becomes a Christian forfeits historic continuity with his fore-fathers in point of religion.

This is a contention which, in a way, no one can deny, for it only means that a Sinhalese who becomes a Christian ceases to be a Buddhist like his ancestors. But the point of the contention is to imply very much more. They insinuate that a profession of Buddhism is the one thing of all the most necessary for Sinhalese

1. 'Buddhism is the Faith intended by the Guardian Law for the Sinhalese people in this cycle of time. No other religion is so well fitted to their innate and peculiar racial characteristics.'—Dr. Evans-Wentz in *The Buddhist* 24 Sept., 1921.

nationality. They do not mean thereby that Buddhism is essentially racial, but that the Sinhalese race is essentially Buddhist.

From what I have already pointed out it is clear that this is a preposterous claim, as if any race in the world, least of all a civilised race, can be so bound up with a religion as to make it an essential condition of nationality. It is as much as to say that one may break off continuity with his ancestors in any other matter save religion. A Buddhist may call himself by a Christian name and a Portuguese surname without detriment to historic continuity. He may adopt European ways in food and dress and lodging; he may live in western style, surround himself with foreign influences, foreign furniture, and foreign luxuries, and even take a foreign wife; he may forsake the social and political ideas of his forefathers and adopt foreign ideals and follow foreign occupations different from those of his ancestors, and profit generally by the social liberties of the West:—he remains a true Sinhalese for all that. Only let him not embrace Christianity; for then all historic continuity is snapped and broken and sundered for good and all. He loses the quintessence of nationality. This is the gist of the contention though I cannot expect that everyone will be quite satisfied with the way I have expressed it.

I have heard it said that this is merely an insidious attempt to harness Nationalism to the chariot of religious propaganda, either because the propagandists are not sanguine of success by the usual methods of preaching and convincing, or because they think that the argument of nationality is the most powerful one at this juncture. It may be so for aught I know to the contrary; but I think it only fair to accept the reasons they avow, and discuss the point on its own merit, from an historical and national point of view.

I do not think that anybody really believes that Christianity denationalizes, and I have taken special pains to bring home to you that religion is not an element of nationality, and that therefore difference of religion does not prevent unity of nation. I am even fully persuaded that our Buddhist countrymen do not approve this attempt of a few extremists to introduce religious discord.

Cooperation between Buddhists and Christians in matters of national interest is so striking a feature of our public life that I need not waste time carrying coals to Newcastle. Moreover you must bear in mind very clearly that the main point in question is not whether a Christian Sinhalese is different from his ancestors, but whether he is different from his Buddhist brother of to-day. It is not a comparison between the Christian of to-day and the Buddhist of the past. The question is between the Christian and the Buddhist of to-day; whether a profession of Buddhism gives our Buddhist friends any title to claim monopoly of national feelings; whether a Christian is precluded by his religion from working for national advancement. And this point is most conclusively settled beyond all controversy by actual deeds. Buddhist constituencies have returned Christian candidates, and even a Christian Minister to the Legislative Council. Christians and Buddhists work shoulder to shoulder in the National Congress and in Council, as well as in civic and social assemblies.

The further historical point whether Buddhism is the hall mark of Sinhalese nationality has only an academic interest. I have no wish to deny that at first blush there is much to be said for it; but I think I am able to show you from history that Religion has not always been an element of Sinhalese national life in past times, though of course it ever was an element in the private and individual life of the Sinhalese.

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Once upon a time this island was inhabited by people whom our histories call *Yakkas* and *Nagas*. What they were by race and religion we cannot say for sure. We know that a settlement of Aryan colonists came to this island several centuries before the Christian era under a Prince called Vijaya. What the religion of the Vijayan adventurers was we are not told. We presume they were of the Brahmin religion. They obtained wives from the kingdom of Madhura in South India. With these womenfolk came craftsmen and a thousand Pandyan families. (Mahavansa VII 57).

The social system of this early Sinhalese society was no doubt a compound of the three distinct components. The men and

leaders were North Indian and Aryan, their womenfolk and domestic customs largely Dravidian and South Indian. The mass of the common people Dravidian and aboriginal.

This social system was a little more than two centuries old when according to our Chronicles, confirmed by the inscriptions of Asoka and other archaeological discoveries, the Sinhalese were converted to Buddhism in the reign of Devanampiyatissa. Thenceforth the Nation grew to adolescence and manhood under the influence of Buddhism and the fresh stream of Aryan culture introduced by religious intercourse with North India. The customs and institutions of the nation were shaped under the genius peculiar to Buddhism. They received a Buddhist significance, and were adapted to Buddhist ideas, and Buddhism called forth a literature.

Whatever we know of the early history of the Sinhalese we know only from this literature, from the standpoint of Buddhism, from Buddhist books. Our ancient Chronicles are not histories of Ceylon or of the Sinhalese people. There are purely and solely ecclesiastical histories which narrate the origin and growth of the Buddhist Church, its introduction, establishment and endowment in Ceylon. Our Chronicles are thus only histories of the Buddhist Sangha.

When these Chronicles speak of Sinhalese people or Kings it is only to indicate, directly or indirectly, some ecclesiastical event. Hence there is little recorded of the Sinhalese people that has no bearing on Buddhism, from which fact arises the fundamental misconception that everything Sinhalese is Buddhist.

This misconception is even encouraged by our Chronicles like the *Dipavansa* and the *Mahavansa*. These Chronicles were not written by the people, or for the people, or in the language of the people; but in Pali, by the monks, for the monks; not in prose but in verse, as memorials for the religious edification of posterity.

The monks who wrote them, and who were the teachers of the people and the guardians of their literature, were great patriots. Like the churchmen of all nations they were the depositaries of learning and traditions. What they wrote was not history as

history is now understood. It is history as history was then understood not only by them but by people all the world over. All ancient history is epic poetry and the *Mahavansa* is undoubtedly an epic development of the *Dipavansa* and other traditions¹.

These patriotic monks naturally connected the fortunes of the Sinhalese people with the welfare of Buddhism. Their religion and their nation were the only two things which mattered to them. The monks were unquestionably the best representatives of the one and the other. Nation and religion were identified in their thoughts, and they were identified in their writings.

For instance, they loved to represent the Buddha as visiting this Island on three different occasions in his lifetime to make "our island a fit dwelling place for men." (Mv. I 43) They state that he sanctified the very spots which were renowned sanctuaries of Buddhism at the time the *Mahavansa* was written. Anuradhapura, Kelaniya and Adam's Peak, the spot on which the Bo tree grows, the sites of the Ruwanvelisaya and Thuparama, were all visited and hallowed by the Buddha². Nay more, it was not Gautama Buddha alone who visited Ceylon, but each of the three previous Buddhas. Following a style of narrative familiar to readers of Pali books each of the Buddhas is said to have done exactly as his predecessor, in exactly the same way. The four accounts are almost identical, and differ only in proper names. (Mv. xv. 51 & sq.)

1. "What we find in such Chronicles is not, indeed, sober history, as we should now understand the term, but neither is it pure fiction."—Rhys Davids *Buddhist India* 27-4-5.

"As is self-evident these Chronicles contain no pure history,"—Geiger *Mahavansa*. Introduction. Cf. also *The Dipavansa and Mahavansa, and their Historical development in Ceylon*, Geiger.

2. "What truth underlies the graphic accounts we have of these alleged visits, it is impossible now to determine. The Pitakas are silent on the point. The Master's activities during the first few years of his public ministry are recorded in the Scriptures with a fair degree of fulness. But they contain no references to any visit to Ceylon.....The religious enthusiasm of the early converts and in no less degree, their national sentiment doubtless cooperated in producing a belief which associated the founder of their new faith with the dawn of history in their island home and made it for ever sacred to them by the hallowed touch of the Master's feet".—Mr. D. B. Jayatilleka in *The Buddhist* 1st October, 1921.

Not only is this island thus connected with the founder of Buddhism, but even the Sinhalese nation. The arrival of Vijaya and the beginning of the nation is chronologically connected with the Buddha¹, for the colonists landed in Lanka on the very day “on which the Tathagata lay down to pass into Nirvana” (Mv. vi. 47.) The *Dipavansa* and the great commentator Buddhaghosa himself were content with a vague synchronism, but the *Mahavansa* would have nothing short of exact coincidence of time.

Another link is that of person. The national heroes were warm supporters of the Buddhist church, and most national events were due in some way or other to ecclesiastics and most of those who did anything great were monks in this life or at least in a previous life. The kings of Ceylon who won popularity are invariably represented as the strongest pillars of the Buddhist church. These statements are probably true; but the *Mahavansa* emphasises and gloats over the connection, and it is on account of that connection the Chronicles mention them. The central theme of the *Mahavansa* is the exploit of Dutugemunu, and what the *Dipavansa* describes in a few lines the *Mahavansa* expands into ten chapters of a most dramatic interest². It represents the great national hero as “bringing glory to the doctrine of Buddha in manifold ways” (Mv. xxv. III). It even obscures the significance of the popular name of Dutta-Gamani, “the wicked Gamani”, so as not to jar on his role of a patron of the Buddhist church³,

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1. “A wrong synchronism, which is the cause of much confusion in their early chronology” Rhys Davids “In this attempt at synchronism the same influences were evidently at work as were responsible for the story of the Buddha’s visit to Ceylon” Mr. Jayatilleka, *The Buddhist* 8 Oct., 1921.
 2. “Priestly tradition has seized the figure of the popular warrior and made him a hero of the faith. The great swordsman who united the kingdom of Lanka had naturally to be surrounded by the halo of a patron of the Buddhist Faith”—Gieger *Dipavansa and Mahavansa* 21.
 3. “The undoubted popular name of Duttagamani, the wicked Gamani, suits the unruly warrior, rising to the throne over blood and dead men, far better than the founder of monasteries and the builder of dagobas”. Ib.

These instances will suffice to show you the ecclesiastical bias of our Chronicles, how the patriotic monks ever loved to connect their religion with this country by the links of person, time, and place. This is no great reproach to the Chronicles or their writers, for as a learned authority expressed it, "they do not suffer in comparison, with the best European chronicles of even considerably later date." Besides you must not forget that it is precisely to the religious enthusiasm of these good monks that we owe the preservation of national traditions in Buddhist writings, like the proverbial fly in amber.

One inevitable result of this is that all who read these Chronicles, and believe them implicitly, imbibe the same spirit, and their hearts glow with pride as they reflect on the part which religion has been made to play in national growth. Though we have an abundant historical literature, we have never studied it critically. Historical criticism is a recent product of western culture which has not yet been fully assimilated in the East. Our historical literature has been analysed and studied in Europe, especially by German scholars, not by those of our own nation. The traditional methods of scholarship that obtain in Ceylon are slavishly conservative. Our scholars do not dare to question or discuss, or if one does so he is silenced by the weight of ancient authority. Authority is our guide. We swear by the word of the masters, and we resent any doubt cast on our ancient writers, as if forsooth, it were a reproach to them that their view of history is not ours.

Another point which makes for the belief that everything Sinhalese is Buddhist is our ancient monuments. We have in Ceylon a number of magnificent ruins which have evoked the unstinted admiration of beholders from every clime. The great majority of them are Buddhist shrines raised by the pious hands of our fore-fathers. To the Buddhist they are, above all, sacred. To the Christian they have only the sanctity of historical and national heirlooms. We look upon them in the same spirit as the Buddhist contemplates the royal palaces, the tanks, and other

public works and Hindu shrines. In the matter of the viharas and dagobas the Buddhists score a point over us; but that point is religious not national.

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Though our Chronicles give the impression that Buddhism was not merely a factor of national life but the only one, you will arrive at a far more modest estimate of the matter if you turn to the other sources of history available to us. To deny the influence of Buddhism altogether would be an exaggeration more gross than the one I am animadverting. But the share of Buddhism in the development of national institutions is not such as we are made to believe. The influence of Hinduism on the many races that inhabit India, or of Christianity on European nations, is greater and deeper and far more constant than that of Buddhism on the Sinhalese people. I will go further still and say that so far as national life is concerned Hinduism and Dravidian culture had more to do with the Sinhalese than Buddhism.

My reason is this. Consider the social system of the Sinhalese. If there is one institution which has influenced national life more than any other, and which is at the heart of all Sinhalese customs, it is the system of Caste. Caste pervades all Sinhalese institutions, it colours all customs, and most customs and institutions are reducible to it. Its influence on the body politic is of all the most profound. Now this system of caste is not a Buddhist institution. It is originally the religio-political organisation of Brahamanism, which was not fully evolved till after the rise of Buddhism¹. The system of caste which obtains in Ceylon, moreover, is not the Brahamin system but the Dravidian system, which we share with the Tamils. But though obviously of Dravidian and Hindu introduction, it has struck deep roots into the national life of the Sinhalese. In theory and practice the system of caste is

1. *Buddhist India* 62. There is not even a word for caste. *Varna* is colour, *Jati* is birth, *Kula* family or clan. They have something to do with the question, but do not mean caste.

Cf. "*The Origin of Caste among the Tamils*" By Revd. Father S. Gnana Prakasar, O. M. I., C. T. S. (Indian)

antagonistic to the spirit of Buddhism, but it has held sway over the Sinhalese people for over so many generations in defiance of their religion ; it has even invaded the Buddhist Sangha and has succeeded in foisting religious disabilities on the outcastes. Here is a system, foreign to Buddhism, the offspring of Hinduism and Dravidian culture, stalking the land as a fundamental National institution of the Sinhalese !

But caste is not the only institution we have taken from the Tamil people. Their influence on the Sinhalese was most far-reaching and prolonged. The earliest social system of the Sinhalese was modified by Dravidian influence. The introduction of Buddhism revived Aryan culture, but it was not long-lived. Soon after the introduction of Buddhism there began that series of Tamil invasions which drove the Sinhalese gradually southward and diverted their national growth into a different channel. Dravidian influence was once more superimposed. It was renewed, and repeated, and reimposed, time and again, by invasion, and conquest and alliance, and colonisation, and immigration. This state of affairs has now lasted well nigh twenty centuries, and its influence is writ large in Ceylon history and Sinhalese national institutions.

If one considers the enormous number of customs which we share with the Tamil people ; if one remembers that even in the case of Aryan institutions it is the Dravidian modification of them that survives in Ceylon ; if one calls to mind the number of Dravidian words in our familiar language, indicating food and dress, and relationship, and occupations, and weights, and measures, and arts, and sciences¹ ; if one reflects that Sinhalese art, in its technique and design and detail, contains unmistakable Dravidian elements² ; if one notices that the dress of the Sinhalese womenfolk now surviving in the Kandyan districts is Tamilian ;

1. *Comprehensive Grammar of the Sinhalese Language* By A. Mendis Gunasekera, Mudliyar, pp. 356—368.

2. *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art*. By Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy.

Reports of the Archaeological Department, passim e. g. "Any one interested in comparative architectural styles who visits the Demala-Maha-Seya of Polonnaruwa, after seeing the temples of Kanchipuram in South India,—the Vaikuntaka Perumal in particular—will at once understand whence the Ceylon architect got his inspiration".—Report 1909 p. 16. "Dravidian influence in exterior ornamentation is plainly observable at the sister Vihares, Thuparama and Jetawanarama, but is not pushed there, as it is at Demala-Maha-Seya, to that undesirable extent, destructive of the very artistic effort striven after." 1b. p. 12 cf. also Report 1910—11 p. 50.

if one recollects the number of persons of Dravidian descent who have played prominent parts in our political and national life; if one recalls that the last surviving members of Ceylonese royalty were Tamils:—then he will realise to some extent the profound influence which the Dravidian people wielded on Sinhalese national life.

The Dravidian and Hindu influence is not only social, it has very largely affected the religious practices of the Sinhalese people. The Sinhalese have adopted and adapted a considerable number of religious observances alien to Buddhism, and this not in the same way as a Christian, for instance, may be influenced by the superstitions of his surroundings, not as a covert and hidden act done in privacy and secrecy; but openly, quite regardless of its inconsistency, recognised as national and public ceremonies of the Sinhalese people.

The *Bali* ceremonies, and *Thoil* and *Huniyam*, *Dehikepun* and *Diyakepun* and other forms of devil dancing and sorceries, that are so prevalent among the Sinhalese people are partly pre-Buddhistic and partly Hindu. The numerous ceremonies of a semi-religious character, observed in the home and in the field, in public and private; the ceremonies and observances connected with homelife, of birth and death and puberty and marriage; the religio-social observances connected with the different occupations, the sowing, and the reaping, and the harvesting ceremonies, are all either Hindu or largely tinged with Hinduism.

The *Kapurals* and *Kattadiyas* and *Yakeduras* and *Pattinihamys* of our villages, the *Nata*, *Saman*, *Vishnu*, and *Pattini* Dewales in ancient Kotte, and modern Kandy; are these of Buddhist origin? Vishnu is the titular deity of Lanka. Saman is the guardian of Adam's Peak which is called *Samantakuta* or *Samanala Kanda*. *Kataragama Deiyo* is said to be the patron of Elara. They have Dewales, ancient and modern, up and down the country. The worshippers at the renowned Dewales of Kataragama, Deundara, Alutnuwara, and Sabaragamuwa, are mostly Sinhalese.

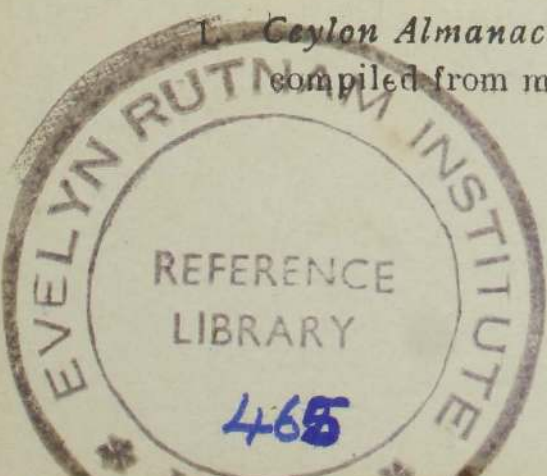
Or take our national games like *Ankeliya* or *Porapolgehima*. The former was perhaps the most noted in days of old. It was so well known a pastime that the word enters into place names. Yet they are both religious games of Hindu origin.

Take our festivals. Four great festivals are held in Kandy amidst great concourse of people, and they are held elsewhere in the island as national festivals. Those of Kandy are the most magnificent. The *Maha Perahera* is said to have a political significance and to commemorate the Indian triumphs of Gaja Bahu. They partake of the nature of State festivals, and Political festivals of the Sinhalese people. But they are all Hindu feasts. The *Awurudu Mangalya*, the *Essela Perahera*, the *Kartiya Mangalya* and the *Alutsal Mangalya*, and their attendant ceremonies are of Hindu origin¹. Yet they are celebrated by the Sinhalese people in Sinhalese towns, as well as in the heart and court of a Sinhalese kingdom.

How does this phenomenon come to pass? How does it happen that in the important events of life, social and political, the Sinhalese turn to Hindu gods? This was the question that occurred to the mind of the Siamese Buddhist priests who came to Ceylon to restore *upasampada* ordination. They were shocked to see Hinduism rampant in a Buddhist country; and Kirtisri Raja Sinha appeased them by a compromise. He directed the *Dalada* to be carried in procession along with the anklet of Pattini and the insignia of the other Hindu gods. This practice, I believe, is still observed.

It would be unjust to reproach Buddhism with these accretions, for the Buddhist doctrine does not sanction them, and the Buddhist Sangha would have nothing to do with them. They are only popular and national celebrations of the Sinhalese. The only satisfactory explanation of this inconsistency which occurs to me is that Buddhism is not a religion, properly speaking, but a

¹ *Ceylon Almanac 1834* "Description of the four principal Kandian festivals compiled from material furnished by a native Chief".



philosophy. Buddhism has no official cult, no organized worship, no clergymen. The *Bhikkhu* is not a priest, not a minister of religion. He is rather to be ministered to. He has renounced the world and all its pomps, and corresponds in a measure to our contemplative monk. The Pali term for taking the robes means 'forsaking' the world, 'going forth' into the homeless state. The monk stands aloof from all rejoicings and celebrations as befits his character of a *Bhikkhu* which means literally 'almsman'. Hence it has happened that the Sinhalese people from the earliest times under alien influence satisfied the popular craving for feasts and ceremonial and worship by the observances of Hinduism. Being Buddhists at heart and in religion they oftentimes gave these ceremonies a Buddhist significance without realising the incongruity on account of which the monks disowned them.

These things do not show that the Sinhalese people lost faith in Buddhism. They only show that Buddhism was not the guiding force in the formation and development of National life; that Buddhism was not the National religion of the Sinhalese, which as you will remember was what I undertook to show you from history.

Though the private life and individual devotions of the Sinhalese were influenced by Buddhism, the people never paused to ask whence a given custom came, or who brought it, or how it squared with Buddhism. In the beginning, I conceive, they must have looked askance at new-fangled institutions, but in course of time as they became familiar with them, they took up what they liked and dropped what they disliked; and their likes and dislikes, I fancy, were regulated, not by their religion but by convenience and the influence of alien kings. Under that influence they adopted customs and institutions from almost every nation with which they came in contact.

This is, of course, not a peculiarity of the Sinhalese people, though our insular position and paucity of numbers made us peculiarly liable to it. But it is a very common thing for nations

to be influenced by their neighbours, just as it is common to all men to be influenced by their moral and intellectual surroundings. English ladies still take their fashions from Paris, just as their husbands take their philosophy from Germany. Though the East is proverbially unchangeable the only country that has changed its national polity thoroughly and completely in modern times is Japan. Japan is now in the forefront of Nations. In Japan Buddhism was disestablished in 1871; disendowed in 1874. The Gregorian Calendar was introduced in 1873, liberty of conscience proclaimed in 1889. The Napoleonic code is the basis of its laws. Its constitution, Army and Navy and Public Institutions, were organised by French, German, British and American experts imported for the purpose.

The Japanese had self-command enough to pick and choose what is best from others. In the case of the Ceylonese the social changes were not due to deliberation but were the result of circumstances. The Sinhalese and the Tamils, the Buddhist and the Christian and the Hindu, who adopted the Portuguese, Dutch, and English customs and institutions in modern times were thus only walking in the footsteps of their ancestors.

During the last three centuries Ceylon was influenced by Western nations and Christianity just as it was influenced by Dravidian people and Hinduism in mediaeval times. Christian ideas and ideals, western customs and institutions, were very largely copied by the Ceylonese. Intercourse with western nations, the assimilation of western culture and Christian concepts, the study of European history and literature and politics, have broadened their mental outlook; and though incidentally we have lost much in the process and have neglected our own things, there is no denying that western education, and the free intercourse of all races and castes in our schools and playgrounds, in the public offices and private gatherings, in the liberal professions and in the public service, have destroyed the barriers of race and caste, and have raised the minds of the rising generation from the narrow racial caste-ridden groves into the wider atmosphere of social and

national solidarity. This is how we stand at present. This it is that has produced the national revival. It is not the Christian alone who was affected by the changing conditions of the country. All the people of Ceylon have been equally affected by it, the Sinhalese and the Tamils, the Buddhists and Hindus and Christians. And it has gone on to such an extent that the cry has been raised that we are carrying things too far. The blame for it lies at the door of the Buddhist and the Hindu quite as much as of the Christian. In the excitement of the reaction we must at least take care not to pour away the child with the bath.

For it is not only in matters social that the Ceylonese have been aping the foreigner, but in ideas and principles most of all. The modern ideas of democracy and freedom and equality, the political and social views we now profess, the increasing dis-regard of caste, the growing spirit of sportsmanship; are these products of the soil? A learned pandit may perhaps discover in our literature the principles which underlie these activities: but as a matter of fact and of history it is the western ideals that produced them. It is the West that has made us take pride in our ancient things, that has shamed us into reviving our language and our customs. It is the West that originated even the Buddhist revival.

If a Ceylonese Rip Van Winkle were to revisit the land of his sires, he would be at a loss to recognise his descendants in the public streets as well as in their homes. He would be as much bewildered by our thoughts and actions as by our dress and habits and homes, as much shocked by the Buddhist as by his Christian descendants. I doubt very much whether difference of religion will be the first, or the chief, or even one of the most prominent features of the change he would notice. His greatest astonishment would be the absence of any public recognition of caste. Religion will trouble him little. Eastern people are remarkably tolerant in matters religious. When the Christian Dutch persecuted the Catholics of Ceylon it was the Buddhist Kings of Kandy that

protected and befriended them. At the capture of Colombo Raja Singha invited the Catholics to his dominions. Raja Singha's mother, it is true, had died a penitent Christian, and he himself was tutored by Catholic priests in his youth, and he may therefore have retained a lingering tenderness for Catholics. However, it was not Raja Singha but his successors on the throne of Kandy who were the protectors and even the personal friends of the Venerable Father Vaz and his companions. Kandy was the head-quarters of the Catholic mission in Dutch times and Catholic priests gratefully breathed the free air of Kandian liberty at a time when a Christian power set a price upon their heads. Robert Knox also tells how both the King and people of Kandy esteemed the Christians. Nay, it must be said to the credit of the Ceylon Buddhists and to the confusion of Europeans, that the Sinhalese were remarkably free from anti-Christian prejudice till European Theosophists came on the scene.

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No, Gentlemen, Buddhism is not the hall mark of Sinhalese nationality, I have shown you in a general way that religion is not an element of Nationality; that one who has a true conception of a Nation will not connect it with religion. I tried to show you also how and why it happens that people sometimes connect religion with nation, and I have pointed out how religion has not been an element of Sinhalese national life, and that therefore religion is not a wall of separation dividing the Buddhist from the Christian in matters national.

I should like to emphasize also the fact that race is no more a factor of nation than religion. Though people sometimes drag race into national questions you must steadfastly resist the attempt, and co-operate with those who differ from you in race and religion to work out the advancement of the Ceylonese nation. The Sinhalese, the Tamils, the Burghers, the Moors, and the Malays, have successfully become settlers in this island. Ceylon is their permanent home, and will be the home of their descendants. It is the common fatherland of all. The Sinhalese and the Ceylon

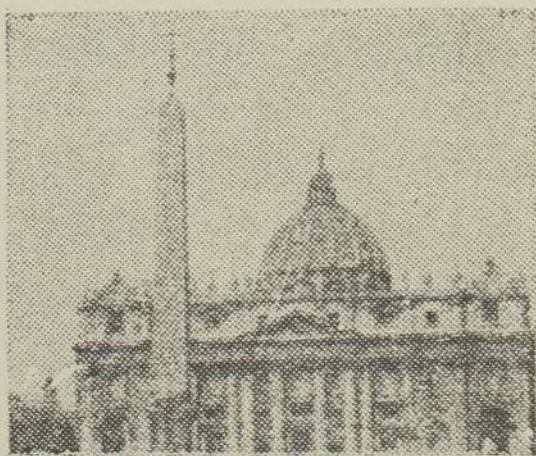
Tamils have been so intimately associated in history and have been subjected to the same influences and for so long a time, that the bonds which bind them together cannot be severed by such petty things as the allocation of Council seats. That is only a domestic quarrel which is soon forgotten when common interests are at stake. In the case of the Burghers, the Moors, and the Malays, I believe they recognise that their interests are the same as those of the other races, for their interests lie in the recognition of this island as their fatherland. Their interest is altogether unlike that of the mere sojourner in this island who, however fond he may be of this lovely island, does not share the tender feelings of the son of the soil. In Ceylon moreover the different races do not live in racial isolation as in most other countries. Whatever differences there may be in our domestic customs, in matters social, civic, and political, the Ceylonese mix very freely. Disagreements occasionally arise but there is in Ceylon a healthy public opinion which declares unhesitatingly and openly and frankly against them. We are educated together, we work together, and play together, and live together in such term of friendship and intimacy as is marvellous to behold.

What a powerful bond for union ! If I read the signs of the time a right these bonds are fast linking us together into national solidarity. It is beginning in the realm of ideas and principles. It is beginning with the educated classes. Let it come down to the masses, let it come down to concrete acts ; give a common grievance, a common cause, or a common need that lasts for some time, and the bonds will be knit definitively and conclusively. That is a consummation devoutly to be prayed for. And we Catholics have an obligation to labour for its achievement. The fusion of social interests of people who are racially different is possible only when they do not obtrude racial and religious differences. It needs a really civilised and cultured people to do so, and it is our constant boast that we have ever been a civilised people.

We Catholics have to contend with prejudice, with the prejudice of those who do not know us, who misrepresent us, and make us mistrusted. The only remedy is to make ourselves known. Cardinal Bourne said of the late Duke of Norfolk that the greatest service rendered to the Catholic cause by that nobleman was that he stood before Englishmen as the embodiment of a true English Gentleman and a genuine Catholic. The Duke was by no means a great man, but his position as the premier Duke of England made him a public man, and his unblemished life as a virtuous, high-souled, public-spirited Englishman, and his frank undisguised Catholic piety gave the lie to calumny. I appeal to you to do the same; to hold before your countrymen of every race and creed the true principles for which you stand; not to argue, for prejudice does not yield to argument; not to discuss, for discussion generates more heat than light; but to show by the invincible argument of deeds that the more faithful a Catholic is to the teaching of his Church, the more ardent he is for true national welfare.

Throw yourself therefore into every movement that makes for national advancement. As Catholics you have a grand heritage of principles that have stood the test of time, and have moulded men and nations. And when principles are not concerned you have for your guidance the practical wisdom of a venerable Mother who has weathered many a storm, who has lived in every clime, and has solved many a problem. There is a Catholic solution of almost every public and social question. And if a Catholic were to go forth into public life inspired by Catholic principles, and fired by Catholic enthusiasm, I am sure he will be able to contribute largely, very largely, towards our national welfare. To be effective you must be thoroughly and loyally Catholic, loving God above all things and your neighbour as yourself, with a deep sense of the dignity and equality of men whatever be their caste or creed or race. To be effective you must never allow yourself to be swayed by petty feelings of self, which would be inconsistent with your Catholicity.

You must bear in mind that racial feeling is one thing and national feeling quite another. You must be able to detect in yourself as well as in others the tendencies that are racial and the tendencies that are national. The former divide, the latter unite. Of the former we have by far too much already; of the latter we never shall have enough. Chastened national feeling requires the practice of virtue and self-denial, it habituates one to subordinate self and caste and class and race, in thought and word and deed, in public and private, when the interests of our fellow countrymen are concerned. In other words true nationalism requires Christian virtue. One caution, however, I must give you. Do not put forward your views as those of the Church, but those of the Church as your own. Outsiders do not want to know what the Church teaches, they do not like to be dictated to by any Church. They want to know what you hold. The principles of the Church are your own. They are your heritage, and your birth-right. Master them, and express them as your own. Then they will both listen to you and agree with you, for the Catholic views gain support by their sweet reasonableness. And then, perchance, if they ask you where you learnt them, say that you learnt them at the knee of the common Mother of all Nations, the Church, Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman.



PORTUGUESE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN CEYLON

Education has always been associated with monks. Both in the East and in the West the monasteries of a country were the country's schools, its homes of education and seats of learning. Though it was so all the world over, it was perhaps especially the case with the monks and monasteries of Christendom. Christian monks were the teachers of Europe, and when these monks came eastward they brought with them the hallowed traditions of Christian monasticism. It was of course the desire to spread the faith that brought these monks to India; but the Catholic Church is preeminently a teaching body. "Go ye and teach all nations" was the Master's behest to his apostles. It was indeed not the learning of this world that they were thus commanded to teach, but to impart religious truth and ensure its understanding, it is necessary to prepare the hearer by instructing him in the natural truths, for what fellowship has truth with error?

With this object, therefore, the Christian monks began to open schools, colleges and even universities in India for the benefit of those whom they converted to the faith of Christ. While a large number of monks who came hither after the discovery of the sea route to India were engaged in teaching and instructing the young in the towns brought under the sway of Portugal, others of their number penetrated into all parts of the country to preach the gospel. The former became the pioneers of Western education in the East, and the latter the pioneer Western students of Eastern lore, for Christian monks were the earliest scholars of Sanskrit and the Indian vernaculars. Their services to Western scholarship are recounted with admiration by Max Muller¹, and it was indeed a well-deserved compliment Grierson² paid them when he said that "the Asiatic Society was only continuing the work begun by Roman Catholic missionaries."

1. *Science of Language* 165—167.

2. *Asiatic Society's Journal (Bengal)* 1893, 41—2.

From India these monks soon crossed over to Ceylon in the wake of the Portuguese armadas, but their position in Ceylon was at first far different from what it was in India. In India there were towns and fortresses held by the Portuguese in which the monks were able to work. In Ceylon, on the other hand, they had no permanent settlement for well nigh fifty years after their first arrival in these shores. During the first four decades of the sixteenth century the Portuguese came to Ceylon merely as traders or allies of the Sinhalese kings. It was only when the king of Kotte was unable to maintain his throne against the attacks of his brother-kings without the aid of the Portuguese that the latter settled in Ceylon for good,—and evil. But even then it was only within the narrow limits of the fort of Colombo that they lived. They were mostly soldiers, adventurers and traders who needed little schooling. But by and by as Portuguese families settled in Colombo and the missionaries made converts among the people of the country need arose for schools.

Once the tide of conversions had set in the monks became in Ceylon as in India, the pioneers of western education, and the first western students of the history, literature and antiquities of Ceylon. Western learning were first taught in Ceylon by Christian monks. The first Sinhalese Grammars¹ arranged in the western method were composed by Jesuit priests. The first Europeans to write books in Sinhalese and Tamil², the first Europeans to write verses in Sinhalese³, to translate European works into these languages⁴, were Catholic priests. The first Europeans to investigate into our antiquities, to measure the ruins of forest-clad Anuradhapura, the first to consult Sinhalese chronicles for historical purposes, the first to make mention of our cave inscriptions⁵, the first to detect

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1. *Ars Chingalensis linguae*—Emmanuel de Costa S. J.
Grammatica da lingua Chingala—Pierre Bergoim S. J.
 2. Costa, Bergoim and Ignacio Bruno S. J.
 3. Friar Antonio Peyxoh O. S. F.
 4. Antonius Abreu S. J.
 5. Francis Negro O. S. F.

resemblance between the legends of the East and the West¹, were Franciscan friars and Jesuits. Nay, the first and the only history of the Portuguese Era in Ceylon was written by a member of the Society of Jesus.

Though such were the literary and educational labours of the Catholic missionaries in Ceylon in days gone by, their activities in that direction remained long forgotten and unheard of in this country. The chief reason for that neglect was that few records of those times have come down to us. 'The historical fatality of the Island of Ceylon'—which is the title that a Portuguese writer gave to the book of his Ceylon reminiscences—the fragmentary character of the surviving documents and the lack of historical research in this country, all contributed to leave these facts in oblivion. It is only in recent times that the enterprise of Dr. P. E. Pieris brought to light the existence of the valuable history of Ceylon by Father Fernao de Queyroz, of which he published translated extracts under the title of "Ceylon: The Portuguese Era." The records of the Franciscans have not yet come to light except for the manuscript of Friar Paulo da Trindade the discovery of which in the Vatican Archives has now been made known in Ceylon. The available records of the Society of Jesus have been recently published in this country². And though even now we are not able to do full justice to the work of the Portuguese missionaries in Ceylon, we at least know enough of the labours of the Franciscans and Jesuits to form some idea of the extent of their educational activities in this island.

However, no writer of history has yet thought it worth while to record the work done by the Christian monks in Ceylon in the matter of education. In the existing books of history there is little mention of the doings of the monks in this direction in Portuguese times though their influence has been long and abiding and their activities the most pleasing feature of the period. This negligence of modern writers of history has not been without effect

1. Pedro Francisco S. J.

2. Ceylon Antiquary and Literary Register I—IV.

on the reading public. The general public takes historical facts from popular writers, and when one finds therein no mention of any good done by the monks, he is disposed to think that nothing good was ever done by them. At any rate within the last five years some public men, speaking from public platforms, took it upon themselves to say that the Portuguese never did anything for the education of this country. And they went on to compare the Portuguese with their successors, as if what the latter have done in a more enlightened age, and at a time of peace and plenty, can bear comparison with what the Portuguese did four centuries ago, in troublous times, in a very narrow domain under great hardships and at no small cost. I propose therefore in this sketch to give a brief outline of the educational activities of the Portuguese monks in general and of their schools in Colombo in particular.

The first Christian monks to come to Ceylon were the friars of St. Francis, and their first regular mission was sent to Ceylon in the forties of the sixteenth century on the invitation of the king of Kotte. In course of time they made converts in Ceylon and erected a college in Colombo, an orphanage in Mutwal and two other colleges, one in Nawagamuwa in the Hewagam Korale and the other in Jaffna. These "colleges" were monasteries, in which Catholic children were educated. The instruction imparted in them consisted of the traditional "religion, reading, writing, singing, Latin and good customs." Over and above these colleges the Franciscans had parish schools attached to their churches. Of such schools we have mention of 25, attached to the parishes of the Jaffna peninsula. Outside Jaffna, the Franciscans are said to have had "over a hundred parishes" of which 56 were in the kingdom of Kotte. And though there is no explicit mention of schools in connection with these parishes, we may rightly infer, in view of their general policy and their actual practice in Jaffna, that at least the majority of these parishes had schools.

These schools and colleges were erected and maintained by the Franciscans with state support. The scholars, as a rule, were the

children of Catholic parents, sons of converts and boys preparing for baptism; and we have occasional mention of non-Christian pupils. All Portuguese schools, Franciscan, Jesuit, and Dominican, from the highest to the lowest, were free schools, without anything like "school-fees." When the number of conversions increased after the baptism of king of Kotte and of the greater part of the Sinhalese nobility, Franciscans determined to build other schools and colleges in various parts of Ceylon, especially in Negombo and Galle. They accordingly turned to the king of Kotte and pointed out to him that it was his duty to found institutions for the education of his subjects. Thereupon the king transferred to the Franciscans the lands that had hitherto been devoted to Buddhist temples.

This transfer of temple endowments to Christian monks by a convert king was a step as impolitic as it was ineffectual. At any rate it gave rise to endless troubles. The Portuguese never really understood the traditional interpretation of the laws and customs of Ceylon. They understood them in the light of European jurisprudence and thought that the kings of Ceylon could do what kings did in Europe. The withdrawal of these lands from the hallowed institutions of the country not only embittered the people against the new religion, but it even made them suspect that the monks were after the country's wealth. It was all the more impolitic in that all these lands were not in the domains that still acknowledged the Christian king. This acknowledgment had to be won by Portuguese arms and retained by the same means, which made the bitterness and resentment all the greater.

These lands, moreover, never really came into the hands of the Franciscans during the lifetime of the king. When they eventually came into Portuguese hands on the death of the king, the Portuguese officials began to worry the Franciscans and finally robbed them of the revenues. The result was that the purpose for which the lands were gifted was frustrated. But the Conde de Vilafermosa sent imperative injunctions from Portugal to promote education in Ceylon, and it was eventually decided to call in the Society of Jesus.

That Society had sent one of its first members to India in the person of St. Francis Xavier; and town after town in India then demanded the establishment of Jesuit colleges. Such colleges were accordingly erected in all the important towns of the Portuguese state in India. Their number increased to such an extent that fifty years later it became necessary for purposes of administration, to group them into two Provinces, Goa and Malabar. It was this southern province of Malabar that was called upon to undertake educational work in Ceylon.

The first batch of Jesuits came in 1602 to found a college in Colombo. Within twenty years another was opened in Jaffna and a third begun in Galle. Besides the college the Jesuits were also called upon to do missionary work and they erected parish schools in their districts. Of such schools there were twelve in the Jaffna peninsula and four in Mannar. There has come down to us a Jesuit letter giving even the number of pupils in these schools as well as the very much larger numbers attending the catechetical schools. But unfortunately this letter does not mention the schools erected by the Jesuits on the West coast, from Mannar to the Maha Oya. Of the schools in this district we have incidental mention only of those of Kammala, Chilaw, Madampe and Malwana. But we are told that there were schools in "other places", in fact "in many other places". There was also an attempt to found in Ceylon a College for the study of Sanskrit and the vernaculars, especially Tamil. Mannar was at first chosen as the site of this University, but the plan fell through and the institution was eventually erected at Punnicael with Jesuit and convert Brahmin professors. There the Jesuits cast the first Indian type and printed the first Tamil books.

After the Jesuits, there came to Ceylon other religious orders, the Dominicans, Austin Friars or Augustinians and the Capuchins, each of whom erected a monastery in Colombo and parish schools in the districts that were entrusted to them for evangelization. The Austin Friars erected a convent at Rambukkana and the Dominicans in Jaffna and Galle. That these convents had schools

attached to them is undoubted, but we have no direct mention of any save of the Dominican school of San Sebastian in Colombo. In 1615, while the Portuguese Tombo was being compiled the Controller of Revenue received a letter from the king inquiring about the need of erecting colleges for the education of teachers. He was asked to inform the king what must be given to them as revenues. Antam Vaz Freire thereupon wrote to the king on 26th November, 1616 :

“ As in this matter there are certain points worthy of consideration, I consulted some zealous and intelligent persons and very grave religious of St. Francis and of the other orders, and according to the opinion of all, it appears more useful and necessary for the spread of Christianity to erect colleges for the training of teachers, natives of the country, to teach and instruct others in the Catholic faith, selecting for the purpose some orphans and some of good caste among the Sinhalese as they are more docile by nature and more respected and consequently what they teach better hearkened to by others.

And though the Fathers of St. Francis are of opinion that there should be three such colleges situated in Galle, Colombo and Negombo, yet for the present, till the affairs of the island take a better turn, it seems enough to begin the work in Colombo where there can be gathered up to two hundred Collegians, for whose sustenance the least that should be required would be eight hundred pardaos, for a *candil* of rice would be necessary for each Collegian for a year, which at the rate of four pardaos the candil would make four hundred ; and a hundred cachas for apparel, which makes another hundred pardaos ; and for two religious that would be necessary to be there in the said college, one to be master and the other for the administration of the house, there would be necessary another two hundred pardaos. There is need also of a barber, cook, buyer, washerman for the washing of clothes and other servants that cannot be avoided, all of which would cost the aforesaid sum of eight hundred pardaos more or less.”

Besides these schools and colleges mention must be made of the priests who were tutors to royal princes. Don Joan Peria Pandar, king of Kotte, as is well known, was educated by the Franciscans at Kotte. When Senerat, the King of Kandy made peace with the Portuguese he desired that a Franciscan should live in Kandy and be tutor to his children. Father Francis Negrao lived nine years in Kandy as tutor to Rajasinha and his brothers and sisters who were taught, it would seem, even Latin and Italian over and above Portuguese and the accomplishments of princes. It was during these nine years that Friar Negrao gathered the abundant information about Ceylon which Father Queyroz has embodied in his book as coming from this Friar.

Thus to summarize, we have explicit mention of three Colleges, and an Orphanage, twenty schools and a College for the training of teachers conducted by the Franciscans, two colleges, twenty one schools conducted by the Jesuits, and one school conducted by the Dominicans, which makes a total of fifty three educational establishments conducted by these three orders, over and above the still larger number of schools of which we have no explicit mention, but which we have very good reason to believe, existed wherever there was a Parish church.

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Colombo in Portuguese times was nothing like the extensive city of today. For a long time it consisted only of a part of what is now the Fort. But when Kotte was abandoned and its king and court transferred to Colombo, the town was greatly enlarged and included the Pettah as far as the last Cross Road. It then assumed the proud title of 'City.' In different quarters of this City stood five monasteries belonging to the five orders. That these monasteries had each a school seems most likely, but we have explicit mention of only four educational institutions in Colombo. These were the Jesuit College, which was the foremost, the Franciscan College, the Franciscan orphanage and the Dominican school.

This last was opened for "all boys of the country" and the course of studies consisted of "reading, writing, singing and the

elements of Latin." There were six Dominicans and they manned the Parish of Sebastian, outside the walls of Colombo. Attached to this parish was the church of Our Lady of Life, which the Dutch seized during the siege and made their headquarters during the siege and is now known as Hulftsdorp. There is reason to think that the school was attached to the parish, for the Dominicans received for their scholastic labour "one hundred seraphins, besides a supply of rice." This is all we know of the Dominican school.

The Franciscan Orphanage or College of Orphans, as it was called, stood in Mutwal, one of the suburbs of Colombo in the parish of St. Thomas. It was erected by the side of the "handsome and well built church of St. John the Baptist, upon the bar of the river which the Sinhalese call Modere," but was under the direction of the Rector of St. Thomas. This orphanage received a part of the revenues of the two villages of Dunga and Orna (Dunagaha and Horana), but the cupidity of the Portuguese officials deprived it of the endowment, for "the officers of the king do not pay what was granted by his Majesty."

Of the Franciscan College of Colombo we know very little. The convent was dedicated to St. Anthony, and we may well suppose that this popular Saint was also the Patron of the College. We find occasional mention of the College in connection with Sinhalese and Tamil princes who are said to have been educated there. One of these is Don Philip Nikapitiya Bandara, grandson of Raja Sinha of Sitawaka, another was Don Joao Prince of Kandy, son of Yamasinha and another Don Constantine, son of the King of Jaffna. These princes were educated first in Colombo and afterwards at the Franciscan College of the Magi at Bardez. Don Philip subsequently went to Portugal and entered the famous University of Coimbra, being the first Ceylonese to be entered on the rolls of a Western University, though he died before he actually entered upon his studies. Don Joao also went to Portugal, was ordained priest, and lived and died in Lisbon.

Don Constantine became a Franciscan and is, I believe, the first Ceylonese to take the habit of that order.

The Jesuit College of Colombo was the foremost educational institution of the Portuguese in Ceylon and is referred to by many writers. When the Jesuits first came in 1602, the general, Don Jeronimo de Azevedo, whose brother was a Jesuit, bought them a house for 2,000 pardaos in a central part of the town, namely in front of the Town Hall. This house was subsequently enlarged by the purchase of the neighbouring houses; and the Jesuits built a college, with class-rooms, chapel, dormitories, residence for the Fathers, and a Church with an imposing facade. This building was 'Corinthian in style' and was an "elegant and commodious edifice." It was situated in the Straight Road or Rua Direita. The situation is approximately where the harbour railway now crosses the Main Street near the old Racket Court. Facing the College was the Camara with its offices, on the site of the old Pettah Cemetery, now Consistory Buildings. Between the college and the sea stood the hermitage of St. Francis Xavier which gave its name to the breastwork by its side.

This College comprised three departments; an elementary school, where "reading, writing, arithmetic, singing and Latin" were taught; a secondary department with classes in Grammar, Poetry, Humanities, and Rhetoric according to the Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum*; and thirdly a superior course in Moral Philosophy started at the request of the Bishop of Cochin and frequented especially by ecclesiastical students. It is recorded by Tavernier that "a native Philosopher named Alegamma Motiar, as we might say, Master of the Philosophers" came to this Jesuit College to discuss religion. This philosopher who is no other than the famous Sinhalese poet, Alagiyawanna Mohottala, learnt Latin, read the New Testament, became a Christian and "afterwards laboured for the conversion" of his countrymen.

The regular students of the College were the sons of Portuguese parents and Sinhalese Catholic boys of the better class. The only students mentioned in the Jesuit letters are the sons of the

Sinhalese princes who were educated there. It was a Portuguese pupil of this college who wrote the first Sinhalese Grammar after he had become a Jesuit. The students of this College are said to have produced dramatic performances regularly on College Day for the entertainment of visitors. Tavernier says that the Fathers found "the youth of Ceylon were so quick and intelligent that they learnt in six months more Latin, Philosophy and other sciences than Europeans acquire in a year and they question the Fathers with such subtilty and so deeply that they are amazed."

The number of Jesuits on the college staff gradually increased and there is mention of at least one lay teacher whose services were discontinued. This staff was maintained by an endowment granted by the Captain-General and confirmed by the King of Portugal. This endowment was the Kalpitiya Peninsula, at the time "an uninhabited tract of jungle land," where now stands the well-known church of St. Ann, Talawila. When the Jesuits began to cultivate and improve the lands, they were forthwith withdrawn by the local officials; and when the government renters had destroyed them, the lands were again restored, to be withdrawn once more by a Governor who, as a Jesuit writer observes, was wrecked off Kalpitiya when he was leaving Ceylon.

The withdrawal of the grant caused great distress, but the townsfolk of Colombo came to the rescue of the Fathers, and a rich lady gifted 8664 pardaos, which helped to tide over the difficulty. In spite of this and other vicissitudes the Jesuit College continued to be the leading educational institution in Ceylon up to the end of the Portuguese domination. One of the teachers of the college, a scholastic named Damian de Vieyra, became one of the most prominent figures in the heroic siege of Colombo. He is even said to have written an account of the siege, which has not yet come to light.

When the town finally surrendered to the Dutch on 6 May 1656, the Portuguese prisoners were lodged in the Jesuit College

till they were embarked, and the college along with all other churches, monasteries and schools passed into the hands of the Dutch who "reformed" them. They underwent a second "reformation" at the hands of the British, and on the sites of the Catholic institutions of Portuguese times there now stand, Government offices, Protestant churches, Cemeteries, Temples, Rest Houses and the like.



Lorenco de Almeida, son of the first Portuguese Viceroy of India and the first Portuguese to set foot in Colombo (1505) "had the Cross of Christ and the arms of Portugal engraved on a rock overlooking the bay as a memorial of their 'discovery' of Ceylon." It was close to the foot of the present breakwater.

The rock was removed to the Gordon Gardens in 1913, and placed on a pedestal.—(A HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CEYLON by Rev. Fr. S. Gnana Prakasar, O. M. I.)

CATHOLIC COLOMBO.

I believe I am right in saying that this city of Colombo is one of the most Catholic cities in the East. According to the last census, the Catholics of this city form a fifth of the total population within the Municipal limits. Considering, therefore, that Colombo is a very extensive city inhabited by people of many races and creeds; that the Catholics consist mostly of the permanent inhabitants of the country, Sinhalese, Tamils and Burghers, of whom all are Christians and the vast majority Catholics; considering that in absolute number we are over fifty thousand souls, spread over more than a dozen parishes, with large churches, colleges and convents; and considering, moreover, the great part which the Catholic Church has played in the origin and growth and population and education of this fair city, I think it is no exaggeration to say that you are citizens of no mean city in the Catholic world of the East.

But, like Rome, Colombo was not built in a day, nor small was the price that Colombo had to pay in order to remain Catholic. And I propose, with your leave, to tell in general outline the Catholic history of this city: how a Christian cross is perhaps the oldest known memorial of antiquity that this city possessed, and a Catholic church the first building ever erected in the Fort of Colombo; how Catholic shrines arose on every eminence and hill-top, giving rise to various suburbs and giving their names to various quarters and streets; how churches and monasteries and schools multiplied up and down the broad city, while the Catholic faith held pride of place and the peal of bells and the music of chants resounded in its streets; but how, alas, a time came when all this was swept away by a rude hand, churches desecrated and turned to profane use, priests proscribed and the Catholics made to bite the dust and hide their religion and its rites to be practised in fear and secret within closed doors under cover of night; and yet how in spite of it all, through thick and thin, in fair weather and foul, the Catholics of Colombo

held out in faith and hope, till at last about three hundred years after the erection of the first Catholic building and one and half centuries of ruthless persecution, the British power by one stroke of the pen abolished the penal laws and gave the Church a fair field but no favour; and how that was all that the Church needed, for she began to grow and develop till about a hundred years ago the Vicar of Christ made this city the seat of a Vicar Apostolic, to become half a century later the see of an archbishop enthroned in a cathedral, which is reckoned one of the largest in the East and modelled after no less an edifice than the basilica of St. Peter's; and finally how this eventful history is a living testimony to the vitality and vigour of the imperishable Church that Christ built on the rock of Peter.

Thus the period of history, which I intend to cover, is almost four centuries. But you need not take alarm, for I have no intention of keeping you here till the stroke of midnight, and intend to give you only a bare outline. In fact a detailed account is scarcely possible in our present state of knowledge. Until the archives of Rome and Lisbon are ransacked and the manuscripts now buried in the Dutch Archives are brought to light, it is not possible to tell the Catholic history of Colombo in its entirety. At least today you will have to be content with a fragmentary sketch.

It is probably unknown to the majority of you that by far the most ancient fact recorded of Colombo is that it once possessed a cross dating from the early period of Christianity. In the church of St. Thomas, at Mutwal, there was preserved in Portuguese times a cross carved on a column of stone, which was ascribed to St. Thomas the Apostle. A Persian cross was dug up in Anuradhapura and is now exhibited in the Archaeological museum in that town; and presumably the cross in Mutwal was of the same kind, and was the second of its kind in Ceylon. It is not at all unlikely that it belonged to Christians of the same race as those of Anuradhapura, namely the Persians, in whose hands was the carrying trade of Ceylon before the advent of the Arabs and their descendants the Moors.

In the early sixteenth century that part of modern Colombo which may be described in metaphorical language as the brain centre of the city and the hub of its commercial and business activities, and in military language the 'Fort' or 'Castle' of Colombo, was a bleak stretch of unoccupied and tree-less land, save for a solitary mango-tree 'that never bore fruit', from which it is sometimes said the city got its name. It was on that dreary spot that the first Portuguese visitors to this island erected the first building dedicated to Christian worship. In 1505, when Lourenço de Almeyda landed in Colombo, he piously set up a little shrine, a hermitage, as he called it, on a site between the present Gordon Gardens and the foot of the breakwater. By a hermitage, I believe, they meant in those days a chapel or shrine so constructed as to serve also as a shelter for a monk or hermit. This little hermitage of Colombo was not actually meant for a hermit to live in but for the devotions, I suppose, of the small band of soldiers that Almeyda meant to leave behind. It was dedicated to St. Lawrence, the name saint of the twenty-year old commander of the fleet; and in it his chaplain, Friar Vicente, a Franciscan, said the first Latin Mass ever recorded to have been said on Ceylon soil, for at Anuradhapura Mass was said in Syriac according to the Persian rite. By the side of this chapel Almeyda built what was called a "factory",—which is not the well known short form for 'manufactory', but a word used in those days to mean a trading station of foreigners. On a rock lying by its side and facing the open sea, he caused to be inscribed the coat-of-arms of Portugal as a memorial of his visit; and you can see it to this day on the boulder now placed in the Gordon Gardens for safety and exhibition.

The old township of Kolamba stood further to the East, at the bend of the sea, between the modern Fort and Modera or the river mouth. This old town has been described by Ibn Batuta and lay at the mouth of a flood-outlet of the Kelany, which a Portuguese Captain of Colombo afterwards dammed to form the Beira Lake for the better defence of the city. This town was for the most part a Moorish town, with two mosques and a Mahometan cemetery, where a Cufic inscription was discovered many years ago

carrying the date of the Mahometan settlement far back to the tenth century. It was not this township that grew into the modern city, but the Portuguese settlement begun in 1505. The chapel and the factory were abandoned in 1507, but in 1518 there was built a regular fortress, called the "Fortress of Our Lady of Victories" and sometimes also "the Fort of Santa Barbara". It was soon improved and a few houses erected in the neighbourhood. But a few years later the King of Portugal sent orders to dismantle the fort, which was done in 1524.

Now we are not told of the erection of a church; but as the garrison is said to have had a chaplain, and as the Portuguese always had a chapel wherever there was a chaplain, we may presume that the church of St. Lawrence was rebuilt. At all events we know that on the tombstone of Joao Vaz Monteiro, the first Vicar of Colombo, of which fragments now exist in the Colombo museum, it is stated that he built a church of St. Lawrence. As the King of Kotte, at this time often procured Portuguese troops from Goa, and not a few of them preferred to remain in Ceylon, there grew up a small community which needed the services of the Vicar.

The name St. Lawrence was given to the headland jutting into the sea which now forms the foot of the breakwater. It was called the 'Point of St. Lawrence'. Likewise the little hillock that occupied the greater part of the new settlement and had its summit more or less on the spot on which the clock tower now stands, was called the Hill of St. Lawrence. And when later on that settlement developed into a city or *cidade*, with civic rights and a town hall and a chamber and aldermen, it took St. Lawrence as its patron. His banner was carried in every procession, and his heraldic symbol, the gridiron on which he was martyred, became the coat-of-arms of the city, and was figured on the Portuguese coins struck in or for Ceylon. St. Lawrence is a popular Roman saint who is one of the few daily commemorated in the canon of the Mass. The Catholics of Colombo always invoked him in their trials, and we may well believe that he extended his patronage to them. I know at least one devout Catholic who happening in

recent times to live in the city of St. Lawrence, prayed to him in his great basilica in Rome for a son, and when the son was born, gave him the name of Lawrence.

Joao Vaz Monteiro was Vicar of Colombo for at least thirty years as he says in a letter to the Queen of Portugal which I saw in the Torre do Tombo of Lisbon. He also made some conversions. The indigenous population of Colombo embraced the Catholic faith. There are royal despatches of the King of Portugal referring to the Christians of Colombo. There was, however, no regular mission yet. The first batch of missionaries came in 1544, at the request of the King of Kotte: not that this king was anxious for the salvation of his soul, but rather because he was anxious for the safety of his crown. He thought that the best means of securing Portuguese auxiliaries for his wars with his brother, was to offer, or rather make pretence of offering, to open his kingdom to the gospel.

When these Franciscan missionaries came to Ceylon they made Kotte, the capital of the kingdom, their residence; but as there were some Christians in Colombo they built a monastery of St. Anthony in the settlement, and later on built a church of St. Francis near the church of St. Lawrence, that is at the back of the present Gordon Gardens. The Portuguese Christians of Colombo were a pretty bad lot from all accounts.

A Portuguese Viceroy whom the misadventure of the pilots of his fleet brought to Colombo, gave orders to erect the town-walls of Colombo and appointed a Captain of Colombo directing the Portuguese who were in Ceylon to live together in the settlement within the town-walls. This was the beginning of the modern Fort of Colombo. There are two long letters of two Jesuits that came to Colombo in 1552. These letters, preserved in the archives of the Society of Jesus, tell a very sad tale. Most of the Portuguese in Colombo were refugees from justice. They lived shameless lives, and the poor Jesuits who were preaching Christianity to the people,

were confronted with the scandal of the lives of the Portuguese in the island. What is more they found that the people who had been converted had not been fully instructed in the faith. Fr. Manoel de Moraes, therefore, spent some time in Colombo rebuking the people from the pulpit and instructing the Christians.

The actual king of Kotte at this time was a little boy, who had succeeded to the throne unexpectedly on the murder of his grandfather. He had been crowned in effigy at Lisbon as the heir to the throne. His father, who was a very warlike prince, had fallen out with the Portuguese and was making bitter war on them and on the Christians. From his earliest years the boy-king had been educated by the Franciscans, but he did not for a long time receive baptism, because he feared that as the Portuguese were so much detested and as his subjects were gradually going over to Sitawaka, a change of religion would alienate them the more. But in 1557 when a large number of people had already become Christians, and he had little to lose by publicly proclaiming himself a Christian, he received baptism with his queen and many of the nobles of the court. The Portuguese who were garrisoning both Colombo and Kotte soon found it difficult to defend two towns; and as the young king was completely dependent on them, they decided to remove him also to Colombo. Accordingly in 1564 Kotte was abandoned and the king and his court were transferred to Colombo. Kotte soon became a deserted village, "where", according to an old English translation of a traveller's account, "elephants are caught." Its churches were destroyed and the only survival is the church Bell that now hangs from the belfry at Kayman's Gate. The rest supplied material for the erection of Wolvendaal Church in Dutch times, and for bridges and culverts of the Public Works Department down to quite recent times.

But Colombo had to be enlarged, for now for the first time, Colombo was not a mere Moorish town as in pre-Portuguese times, nor a Portuguese settlement, but a city of the King of Portugal and the court of a Sinhalese king, with a large Sinhalese population.

It is a pity to have to record that the fate of the Sinhalese king was a very pitiable one. He held court, lived in a palace, with a body guard and a Private Secretary and all that. He even had his Proctors in Goa and Lisbon and Rome, but he was to all intents and purposes a pensioner of Portugal, at the mercy of his Portuguese friends. A reliable Portuguese writer says that if the king had cared for it, he could have thrown up the Portuguese and thrown himself on his subjects, who loved him because even in personal appearance he greatly resembled the old king his grandfather; but that he feared he could not give up the Portuguese without sacrificing his faith and that for this reason he suffered many things in silence. If such were really the case, as it may well have been, this poor king rises in our estimation. He appealed to Pope Gregory XIII, who wrote to the King of Portugal on his behalf. But the fault was not with the King of Portugal, but with the rascally crew of petty officials who were beyond the reach of the royal arm; and poor Don Joao 'by the grace of God king of Ceylon', had no remedy.

He was unfortunate even in other respects. He outlived two queens, princesses of Kandy, and married for the third time a noble Catholic lady of the lowlands; but no child was ever born to him. As the crown would in consequence pass to his bitter enemy; the foe of the Portuguese and an opponent of Christianity, the king decided, on the advice of the Franciscan friars, to bequeath his crown to the king of Portugal, on the understanding that if a child were ever born to him, the donation would be null and void.

Raja Sinha of Sitawaka thereupon laid siege to Colombo many a time, might and main, and reduced it to extremity, but without avail. In 1597 Don Joao died and was buried with great honour in the main chapel of the church of St. Francis in which burials were not permitted afterwards out of regard for the first Catholic king of Ceylon. His epitaph was spared by the Dutch when they "reformed" that church for their own use. In early British

times the edifice threatened to collapse and the tombstones were removed and the church dismantled, but the tombstone of Don Joao is not forthcoming now. Some say it is under the foundations of St. Lucia's cathedral: but let us hope it is not true. On the death of the king the Portuguese domination began in right earnest. The king of Portugal was acclaimed king of Ceylon and the streets of Colombo rang with "Long Live the King". The Portuguese were not made of the stuff that succeeds as colonial administrators. Though in many respects, in social and personal intercourse with the people, they stand out far above other races that administered this island, their government was a hopeless failure. On the death of Raja Sinha they were freed from the fear of any siege of Colombo, and this city reached the height of its glory.

Imperative orders came from Portugal to foster education in Ceylon, and in 1602 the Jesuits were invited to open a College in Colombo and take a hand in the evangelization of the country. Hitherto the Franciscans had insisted on retaining the exclusive privilege of preaching the gospel in Ceylon. When this ecclesiastical monopoly was thus broken, other Religious orders, the Dominicans and the Hermits of St. Augustine or Austin Friars came to Ceylon and erected churches and monasteries and schools. As the city developed suburbs arose in St. Sebastian and Mutwal, and to give you some idea of the Catholic activities of the city, I invite you to make with me a tour round old Colombo and its churches within and without the walls.

At the base of the modern breakwater stood the church of St. Lawrence, Patron of Colombo and its oldest church, and before it the Street of St. Lawrence leading to the bastion of the Holy Cross which faced the open sea. Not far from it was the Church of St. Francis, the most noted church in the city, and the Franciscan monastery of St. Anthony, with a garden—from which the wife of Vidiya Bandara caused a mine to be dug to the dungeon in the tower to rescue her imprisoned husband successfully,

apparently not without the connivance of the Friars. The street leading to the monastery was the Street of St. Francis. On the summit of the Mound of St. Lawrence — near where the clock tower now stands — was the cloister of the Austin Friars; and the road leading thence to what is now Galle Face, was the Street of St. Augustine, and the bastion facing it was the bastion of St. Augustine. In every important Portuguese town in Ceylon there was a charitable institution called the Misericordia, and the chapel of the Misericordia of Colombo stood where the present Protestant church of St. Peter's stands. The road running along it was the Misericordia Street. At the end of the street, near the present landing jetty, stood the Hospital with its chapel, an institution that the Jesuits took charge of in 1552. From this point there ran a long and straight road, terminating in the modern Pettah, near the junction of Maliban Street and Fourth Cross Street. On this Straight Road, stood three churches. At the Fort end was the principal parish church of the city, served by secular priests, and the residence of the Vicar-General of the Bishop of Cochin, the diocesan of Ceylon. Half way on this road was the City Chamber or Town Hall, where now are the Consistory Buildings.

Facing the City Chamber, and between it and the city, was the Jesuit Church, and by its side the Residence and the College. This church was the handsomest in Colombo, built in corinthian style, and said to be one of the best in Portuguese India. The college consisted of a pile of classrooms and dormitories, and the school was attended by about two hundred students. There was also a higher department in which lectures were given on Philosophy and Moral Theology. At this point the Straight Road was traversed by a cross street. At the lake end of the cross street was a Capuchin monastery and church, from which I believe comes the name of Our Lady of Good Voyage which is the title of St. Mary's Pettah. At the Harbour end of this cross street was the city residence of the General, first occupied by Don Jeronimo de Azevedo. The first part of the cross street was called the Street of the Mother of God; the other the General's Street. This General's Street terminated in the breastwork of St. Francis Xavier, which in time of siege was

manned by the students of the Jesuit College. Half way between the City Chamber and the end of the Straight Road, where was the Queen's Gate leading out of the city, there was a church of our Lady served by secular priests, on the spot where even in early British times stood the church held by the Portuguese Mission in opposition to the Vicar Apostolic of Colombo. Here was a cross street at the harbour end of which stood the church of St. Dominic and the Dominican monastery, and the street was the Street of St. Dominic. An inscribed stone from the arch of the chapel of the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Rosary, belonging to the Dominican church, is now in the Colombo Museum. The cross road running towards the lake was called the Road of the Mother of God of the Clerics, apparently to distinguish it from the other street of the same name. At the termination of this street was the Bastion of the Mother of God. Thus within the city of Colombo were ten churches, four monasteries with schools, a College, and two charitable institutions.

Outside the walls of the city were seven churches, five perched on hill-tops. In Mutwal there was the handsome church of St. John the Baptist, with an Orphanage. Next, on an eminence, stood the church of St. Thomas with a catechumenate. It was in this church that the ancient cross was preserved. In British times Governor Brownrigg granted the site of the old church to the Protestants who took the name of the Patron into the bargain, and gave it to a college which has now carried the name to Mount Lavinia. The stretch of low-land facing this church was known in Portuguese times as the Plain of St. Thomas' in Portuguese "San Thome" which became in Sinhalese *San-tum-pitiya* and has now been corrupted into Gintupitiya and used as a street-name.

On the next hill-top, called Boralugoda, was built the church of Our Lady of Guadeloupe. That name was generally pronounced by the people without the first inconvenient guttural, and became *Adilippu*, which is the name still used in Sinhalese for the church. The Dutch imagined that the name represented 'Agoa-de-lupo'

which they imagined to mean the "marsh of wolves" and translated 'Wolvendaal' or 'dale of the wolves'; and Wolvendaal is still the name of that quarter, a curious survival of a Catholic name in disguise. On the next hill, now called Hulftsdorp and associated with the Courts of Law and Justice, there was built the church of Our Lady of Life. The plain which it commanded, of which Price Park is now the only remnant, was called the 'Plain of Our Lady of Life.' It was occupied by General Hulft during the siege of Colombo and received in consequence his name (Hulftsdorp) as he was killed during the siege.

On the continuation of that hill stood the church of St. Sebastian which became a Parish church when that quarter became a suburb of Colombo. The name is still in use and that locality forms the 'San Sebastian Ward' of the Municipality. The neighbouring canal first cut by Raja Sinha to drain the lake into the marshes of Colombo, and afterwards reopened by the Dutch to give water communication with the Kelany, is still called San Sebastian Canal. Moreover that is the only Catholic parish in Colombo that still retains the name of the original church, for the present Parish church is St. Sebastian's in Silversmith Street.

At this point begins the lake which in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was an extensive sheet of water covering the present Suduwella and the Cinnamon Gardens, with Maradana or 'gravelly soil' on its borders. The next church was in consequence a great way off, on a little eminence in Jawatta on which was built the Church of Our Lady of Release or Livramento. It was a place of pilgrimage in Portuguese times and a meeting-place of Catholics during the persecution. There is a most romantic story attached to the image of that church, which was put into a well at the outbreak of persecution, afterwards taken up and removed to Galle, whence it was brought back to Colombo, and is, I believe, now in St. Mary's, Bambalapitiya. That part of the city still goes by the name of Livramento, and the site of the old church is now the cemetery of South Colombo.

The last church in the environs of Colombo is nearest to the place we are now, and was situated on an elevated ground now called Milagiriya, which is a corruption of the name of the church, Our Lady of Miracles, in Portuguese 'Milagres'. This church was served by the Austin Friars and the Lady well by the side of the church, is still extant though in Protestant hands. It is referred to by Cordiner in early British times. The Protestant church of the neighbourhood even obtained from the Government Agent of Jaffna a large bell that once belonged to the Church of Our Lady of Miracles, Jaffna, and has the title of that church and the date inscribed on it.

Hereditas nostra versa est in alienis, mournfully sang the Jews when Jerusalem was desolated, and I must now turn to the mournful story of the fate of these churches. In 1655 the Dutch army advancing on Colombo first occupied the church of Our Lady of Miracles. Marching on they seized the churches of Our Lady of Life, (Hulftsdorp), St. Sebastian, Our Lady of Guadeloupe (Wolvendaal) and St. Thomas. On those hill-tops they set up the batteries that were to batter the city. From that day they have all been in heretical hands, and their fate can be imagined from the fact that the large statue of St. Thomas, that was found in his church, was mutilated in derision and thrown from a mortar into the city during the bombardment. The Dutch delivered two or three general assaults on the city but were repulsed with great loss, Hulft himself being wounded in one and killed in another. The spirit of the beleagured and abandoned Portuguese was indomitable, and the Dutch decided to reduce them by slow siege. Colombo was blockaded by land and sea and reduced to the utmost straits, whereupon, after seven months of relentless siege, defended with a valour and determination unparalleled in the history of warfare in the East, the remnants of the defenders of Colombo surrendered in May 1656.

When the Dutch entered Colombo, they seized all the churches and began a most heartless persecution, which a Jesuit lay-brother

had predicted in Cochin fifteen years earlier. When he was praying to God to punish the Dutch, a Vision appeared to him and bade him not to pray for punishment. 'For I have chosen the Dutch, to punish the Portuguese for their evil deeds. When they have done their work they will disappear like salt in water'. The Dutch not only seized the churches and expelled the priests, but forced all the Catholics under severe penalties to attend their religious rites held in old Catholic churches, compelled the children to attend their proselytising schools, and refused to let the Catholics baptise, marry or bury, save in Protestant churches, where they were made to recant the doctrines of their faith. But Raja Sinha of Kandy who knew the bitter affliction of the Catholics offered them a refuge in his territories, and many a Catholic family settled down on the Kandyan frontiers, at Sitawaka, Kendangamuwa, Ruanwella and Ratnapura. The others had no help but to put up with the tyranny of the Dutch.

This went on unabated for 30 years, during which time three priests, who happened to be on board ships that put into the roadstead of Colombo, and paid stealthy visits to the city in disguise, have left recorded the misery of the Catholics of Colombo. Through one of these the pitiful story reached the ears of a young and zealous priest of Goa named Joseph Vaz, who after many trials and adventures succeeded in making his way to Ceylon, and when he had secured a footing in Kandy and gained the benevolence of the Kandyan monarch, he began to pay visits to Colombo in the disguise of a beggar. Many attempts were made to capture him or at least to terrify him out of Colombo. But undeterred by such threats Father Vaz often made his way to Colombo in disguise under cover of night, visited, consoled and rallied the Catholics, and when he succeeded in inducing other priests of Goa to come to his help, he sent one regularly to Colombo.

With an intrepidity that is marvellous to tell these Oratorian priests regularly entered the walls of Colombo in spite of the most active vigilance of the Dutch, and not only ministered to the

Catholics, holding services at night and hiding themselves by day, but brought back to the faith those whom the long persecution had led away, made many conversions, even erected places of worship within the city of Colombo, in all outward appearance like ordinary buildings but inwardly adapted to the meeting of Catholics for Mass, sacraments and even for prayer. They were often hunted and we have most graphic accounts of priest-hunts held in the streets of Colombo; and one priest Fr. Ignatius de Almeyda was even captured and immediately shipped off to Holland; but the noble deeds of the priests and their heroism, and the fidelity and perseverance of the Catholics of Colombo, won the admiration even of the foe, and cases are known of Calvinistic Dutchmen who gave the Catholics timely notice of raids and hunts; and many a Dutch household was brought to the bosom of the church by the example and efforts of the priests and the people.

The Catholics of Colombo were numerous, and when priests began to visit them they realized their numbers and the justice of their cause, and made protests and demonstrations, which, though ineffective at first, gradually brought the Dutch Government to moderate the vehemence of its persecution.

At first they persecuted the Catholics of Colombo for fear that by their means the Portuguese might make an attempt to regain the island when they had fallen out with the king of the country. But little by little they could not but see how ineffectual the persecution was, since the number of Catholics gradually increased and included many converts from Dutch households; and when the danger of a Portuguese invasion disappeared they began to connive at the presence of priests in Colombo. When they broke out in war with Kandy in 1762-5, they felt that it was not safe to embitter the Catholics, and relaxed the rigor of their laws. Most of the Catholic Church Registers in Ceylon date from this time, for it was only then that the priests were able to remain permanently in the city. In 1774 the Dutch

openly allowed Catholic priests to live in Colombo, provided they signed a declaration that they did not intend to undermine the Dutch government: and a volume of these declarations made by Catholic priests can still be seen in the Dutch archives of Colombo.

Catholics were now able to build churches, and not a few churches of Colombo date from Dutch times, such as the Church of the Holy Rosary in Slave Island, St. Mary's Pettah, St. Anthony's Kochchikade: and many a church in Colombo stands on property that belonged to the church even in Dutch times. The number of Catholics in Colombo was too large for them to provoke with impunity, while the Christians made by the Dutch were, on their own admission, Christians only in name.

During this persecution those who had most to suffer were the descendants of the Portuguese. They were degraded, humiliated, and impoverished because they would not abandon their faith, and they still bear traces of the pass to which the Dutch reduced them. At a certain time when people wished to speak contemptuously of the Catholic faith they called it 'the religion of the Portuguese mechanics'. No greater tribute, I think, could possibly have been paid to the descendants of the Portuguese than that they should be identified with the faith they professed! The Dutch in Ceylon have in great measure made amends for the persecution, by giving the Catholic Church a large number of converts. The first Ceylonese bishop bears a characteristically Dutch name, Beekmeyer; some of the earliest Ceylonese to become Catholic priests bore Dutch names like Vanderstraten, Vanlangenberg, Direckse, Cramer, Caspersz. The Dutch reformed religion which the Government endeavoured to propagate is now dead, so far as the indigenous population of Colombo is concerned; and a large number of their converts subsequently embraced the Catholic faith. It is true, no doubt, that some weak Catholics fell away under the fire of persecution, but though it is a disaster to them, the Church had the advantage of having the true gold purified in the crucible while the dross due to the favours which the Portuguese held out to the converts was

reduced to ashes. Thus when all is said and done, the words expressed to Br. Pedro de Basto have turned out true. The Dutch have done their work and disappeared like salt in water.

On their departure from Colombo General James Stuart, the first Military Governor of Ceylon, issued an order within a month of the capitulation of Colombo, informing 'all persons acting under the English authority' that "the priests belonging to the Roman Catholic churches on this island" are permitted to exercise "free and uninterrupted the functions of their religion". Six years later the Governor by an Order in Council gave full emancipation to the Catholics of Ceylon a right which was not at the time enjoyed even by Catholics of British nationality in England.

With this *magna charta*, issued almost 300 years after the erection of the first Catholic hermitage, Colombo entered on a new era of Catholic history. I am afraid the short time that is still left to me is scarcely enough to give you a picture even in outline of the Catholic history of Colombo in the British period. There were troubles and difficulties no doubt, difficulties within the Church itself owing to the troubles coming from Goa, difficulties from without owing to the educational policy of the government which favoured Protestants and left in the cold the Catholics who out-numbered all the protestant sects put together; there were difficulties arising from the Marriage laws, for which we had to fight; but the organisation and development of the Church in Colombo in British times is simply marvellous; not that more could not have been done, but that so much was done in spite of obstacles.

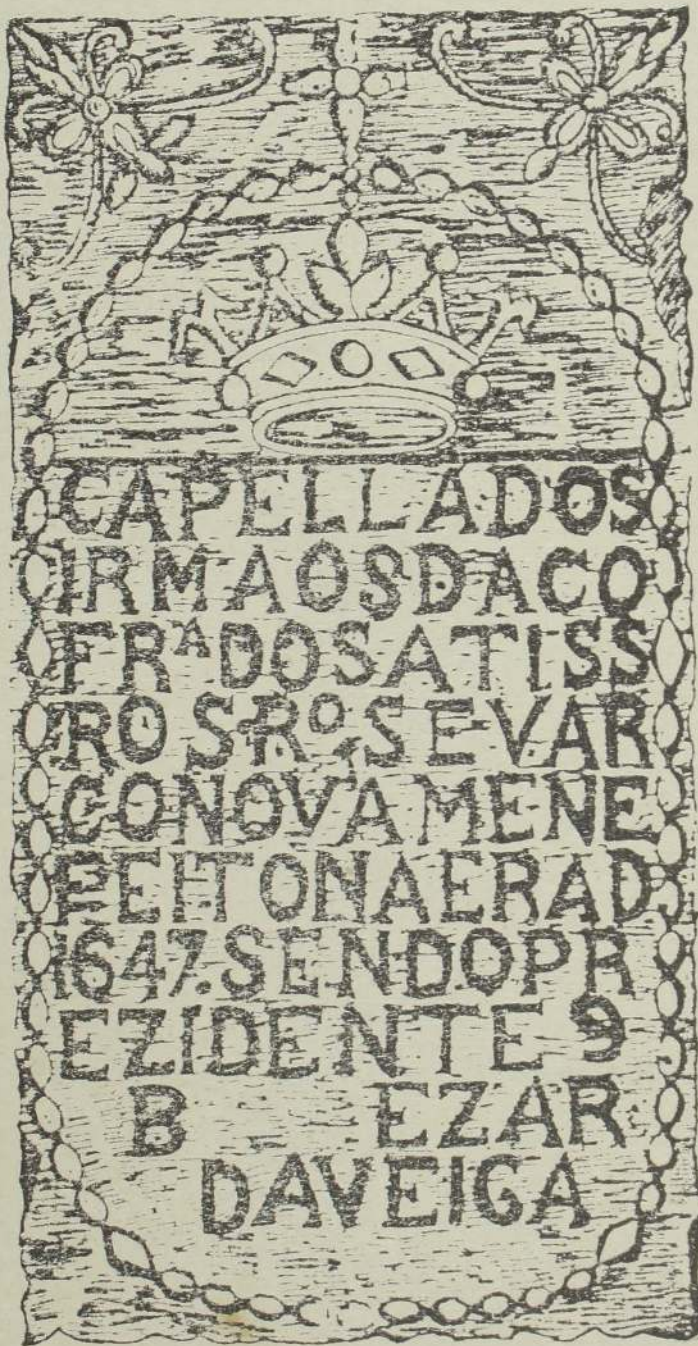
The Oratorian Fathers of Goa, successors of Father Joseph Vaz, were still ministering to the Catholics of Ceylon, though their Congregation was not able at this time to supply the priests needed for a growing British colony. But they had outstanding men who had laboured long in the island, and the Holy Father determined to raise one of them to episcopal rank and make him Vicar Apostolic of Colombo. Accordingly Ceylon was detached from the arch-bishopric of Goa, and made an independent unit of the Church,

depending only on the Vicar of Christ. But an organisation of the kind needed a supply of priests in the country itself, and the chief difficulty was the absence of a Catholic college in which the future priests could be educated in their youth. This was gradually attempted, and in the meantime some young Catholic Ceylonese were sent to Europe to be trained for the Catholic priesthood.

Churches and schools began to spring up and the two successive Oratorians who ruled the Vicariate of Colombo realized that the Church in Ceylon was in need of priests who could give a fresh impetus to education. Accordingly at the request of Dr. Cajetano Antonio, the last Oratorian Bishop, missionaries were sent from Europe to man the Church in Ceylon, and Schools were set up in Colombo, first St. Benedict's, then St. Joseph's, and finally St. Peter's; so that now the city of Colombo has the unique spectacle of seeing three very large colleges set up by one and the same religious community, the only religious community that has had to expand in that manner.

1887 Colombo was erected into an archbishopric and the Catholic Church in Ceylon became canonically established. Under the able administration of one of the most active leaders of the Church, Dr. Christopher Bonjean, the Church in Colombo developed by leaps and bounds. It is true we never recovered the old Catholic Churches; many a Protestant church still stands on the site of old Catholic Churches: it is true also that we have not had large conversions, as in the time of the Oratorians, but in Catholic activity and charity, in intensity of Catholic life, in educative work and in charitable institutions, in the number of missionaries and nuns, the Church in Colombo can proudly bear comparison with any other large town similarly situated. For above all we have temples not made with hands, temples of flesh and blood, living temples, consisting of one fifth of the population of Colombo. And I think we may confidently say that no religious community in this city has been so bitterly persecuted as the Catholic Church, no community has had to make so many sacrifices as the Catholics

of Colombo and no community has contributed more to education and charitable work in the city ; and though we have not made the progress in many directions in which we should and might have made, and though there are many things still wanting to the Church of Colombo, yet we can say that by the Providence of God no community has made greater contribution to the progress of the city as the Catholic Church ; and I hope you will bear with me if I conclude by expressing the hope that at no distant date a church in Colombo will be dedicated to the martyr St. Lawrence under whose patronage the Church of Colombo has become what it is today.



This slab is now
in the
Colombo Museum

Inscribed stone slab from the Dominican chapel of the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary, in Colombo 1647

THE VENERABLE FATHER JOSEPH VAZ

The Venerable Father Joseph Vaz is the Apostle of Ceylon, the acknowledged founder of the present flourishing Church in this Island. But though Ceylon is the scene of his labours, and its



Church the fruit of his apostolate, yet he belongs to India by right of race, to Goa by right of birth and upbringing, and to Portugal by right of education and political allegiance. He may thus be considered to be the greatest product of the Catholic Church in the East Indies and to combine in his person the Catholic traditions of Ceylon and India and Portugal. But this grand hero of the Catholic faith in the East is most unfortunately but little known in the land of his birth and even in the country of which he is

the apostle. The chief reason for this ignorance is that his life and his work are inextricably bound up with historical events not generally known. To understand the greatness of his achievement or the excellence of his career one must look at his life and labours in their historical background. Most people are content to regard Father Joseph Vaz as merely a good and holy priest who did a heroic work in Ceylon in his day. But to look upon him in that light is to see only a part of him, and a very small part at that. For though it is no small thing to be a good and holy priest in difficult times, it was not merely the ordinary work of a priest that Providence had set him to do in Ceylon. He was chosen by God not merely to minister to the faithful, which is the proper work of a priest, but to found a Church, to win souls to Christ, to weld them together

and organize them and give them priests, to rule and regulate the shepherds and the sheep, which is the work of an apostle. He was called upon to do for Ceylon what St. Francis Xavier did for India or *si parva licet componere magnis* he was to be within the narrow limits of this Island, what St. Paul was to the gentile world, a vessel of election to carry the name of Christ.

As you know there is a divinity that shapes our ends. There is an undoubted divine purpose running through the history of human events. This purpose is often quite different from that which the actors in the drama of history actually intended, and consequently secular historians are blind to it. But those who believe in the Incarnation of the Son of God know that every country and nation and person has a part to play in the divine purpose of mankind. The course of temporal events sometimes takes an unexpected turn in a certain direction through the activities of a nation or an individual. Events work out in particular direction because of a particular man. Had Prince Henry the Navigator not busied himself with maritime explorations, or had Vasco da Gama not doubled the Cape at a particular time, the evangelisation of the East would not have taken place at the time it did. Had heretical nations not obtained supremacy in the Indian seas after Catholic Portugal, the history of the Church in India would have been different from what it is. In the same way the Catholic Church in Ceylon would, humanly speaking, have scarcely had a history worth telling, had not Father Joseph Vaz come to its shores at a particular time and acted in a particular way.

He was born in Goa; he had no knowledge of Ceylon; nor was he interested in any way in this island of ours. But Providence had a work for him to do in Ceylon, for though many priests were in Goa in those days, yet to none of them was the word of God sent save unto the humble and simple Joseph Vaz, for the situation in Ceylon needed not any priest, not merely a good priest and a

holy priest, but an apostle. Ceylon needed a man who would be a fit instrument in the hands of Providence for founding a Church. And the word of God came to Joseph Vaz.

The situation in Ceylon that called for the intervention of Providence and a saintly apostle is that the Church in Ceylon was reduced to a most miserable and pitiful state. The island had been evangelised by Portuguese missionaries in the XVI and XVII centuries. They had at first much trouble and great opposition from the King and the people of the land; but in the end their success was astounding. At first some six hundred people of Mannar, men, women and children, baptized through the intervention of St. Francis Xavier, preferred to lay down their lives than abandon their faith and were cut down to a man. But the blood of martyrs has ever been the seed of Christians, and the people living along the seaboard from Mannar downwards were inspired to embrace Christianity in a body and the Sinhalese King of Kotte received Baptism with all his court. This monarch was prevailed upon to bequeath his crown to the king of Portugal, and upon his death, when the political power of the Portuguese increased, conversions became frequent and plentiful and the entire West coast of Ceylon from Point Pedro to Dondra Head was baptized. There were over a hundred parishes manned by Franciscans and Jesuits, and it seemed as if this fair land of Lanka would soon be Catholic.

But alas, when the Church has position and power and privilege, the ecclesiastics cannot foresee the storms to come. The king of Kandy, whose realms were being continually invaded by the Portuguese, bargained with the Dutch United East India Company to attack the Portuguese forts from the sea while he threatened them by land. The Company fulfilled its part of the bargain quite successfully and within twenty years expelled the Portuguese completely from the island in 1658. The seaboard which had been the domain of the Portuguese and where the Christians were, thus fell completely into the hands of the Dutch.

The Church in Ceylon was absolutely unprepared for the blow. All priests being Portuguese, were forced to quit the island as prisoners of war; and the Company which had in the meantime fallen out with the King of Kandy, finding that the very large number of Catholics was a menace to their power, because being Catholics they were bound to the Portuguese by the strong ties of religion, determined in cold blood to wipe out the Catholic faith root and branch.

In other lands the Dutch Company did not persecute the Catholics, but in Ceylon they did so fiercely and ruthlessly for political reasons. And as the Catholics had been left by their pastors completely unprovided, without priests and without any means of instruction, and as the Dutch seized all the churches, and the upheaval disorganized, dispersed and cowed them, it was not difficult for the rulers to work their will upon them. Many of the Catholics, moreover, were new converts or children of recent converts; and the Company set to work in right earnest, proscribing the Catholic religion thoroughly and systematically, penalizing every Catholic act without mercy. Priests were forbidden the country under pain of death; Catholics were forced to attend the Dutch kirks for baptism, marriage and burial according to the rites of the Helvetic confession of faith; and all Catholic children were compelled under severe penalties to attend the heretical schools and listen to anti-Catholic instruction: Catholics were denied all civil rights and apostates were rewarded with offices and honours. The Portuguese descendants were crushed; humiliated and degraded in such thorough fashion that they have not yet recovered. This went on for several decades. Catholics had fallen away or were falling: those who escaped to the territories of the king of Kandy were indeed free from persecution; but they lived without priests or churches or instruction surrounded by pagans.

That was a sorry pass if ever there was one. The work of more than a century was being undone; and there went up to heaven from the hearts and homes of the Catholics of Ceylon a cry for mercy. It is related in the life of a holy lay-brother of Cochin, Pedro de Basto, S.J., that one day when he was praying to God to chastize the enemy of the Portuguese who were doing so much damage to the Church, a vision appeared to him and reproached him for praying for punishment. And the Vision went on to declare that the heretics were only an instrument in God's hands to cleanse the Church. "And when that work is done" said the Vision, "I will disperse them as salt in water."

Just as the Church is in danger when it relies on the secular power, so also when the Church is deprived of every human means then is its redemption at hand. When the bark of Peter is tossed on the foaming billows then Christ awakes and says to the storm "Peace, be still". And so it was now. The word of the Lord came to Joseph Vaz in Goa and forth he went to brave every danger. It would be a long story to describe how Providence prepared his chosen apostle for the task before him in a strange land of which he knew neither the people nor the language. I have attempted to narrate it several times elsewhere, and need not do so now. It is enough to say that the humility and patience of Father Vaz made him most docile to the whispering of Providence, and though penniless, unassisted and alone, in spite of the utmost vigilance of the enemy, he penetrated into the very heart of the island and began a career of ceaseless activity, amidst perils and dangers, the bare narration of which reads like the adventures of a knight errant in the romances of mediaeval chivalry.

Bent on saving the faith of Catholics, who had had no priests for nearly forty years, whose children had grown up without instruction or sacraments, without ever setting eyes on a Mass or a priest, Father Vaz wore himself out in long and toilsome journeys, barefooted and in the disguise of a coolie or a beggar,

up hill and down dale, over rugged hills and pathless forests, from one end of the island to the other, to bring the consolations of religion to the homes of every faithful Catholic, dispersed over the island, or in search of the lost sheep, encouraging the one and reclaiming the other, instructing, exhorting, and organizing them in such fashion, that though the violence of the persecution forced him to work only in the secrecy of night and under cover of darkness and with small groups at a time and with a price set upon his head, yet within the space of his short lifetime, he revived the Church most effectively, brought large numbers of converts to the fold, and not only won for the Catholic religion the veneration and esteem of the King of Kandy and his subjects, and even the admiration of the very persecutor, but also by his example and method and institutions laid the foundation of a Church that has now grown to the dimension of an ecclesiastical province with an Archbishop and four suffragans, soon to be increased, if reports speak true, to five.

This is an achievement little short of marvellous. From whatever point of view you regard his work, it must be declared to be a marvel. Whether you consider the difficulties and dangers he had to face, or the absolute lack of means or the strength and forces of the enemy, or the extent of country and the distances and the want of the means of communication, or the helplessness of the people or their cowed spirit before a bullying persecutor or the physical weakness and isolation of the apostle: from whatever point of view you examine it, and compare the inadequacy of the means with the grandeur of the result, you will be forced to confess that there is not in the history of the Church in the East, if indeed of any other quarter of the globe, a parallel to a country inhabited by diverse races and speaking different languages and subject to different political governments and crushed under a ruthless persecution, rescued from the jaws of death by one single priest, working alone and unassisted for nine years and then with

a bare handful of helpers obtained from the Congregation he had founded by the earnestness of his appeal and guided and directed by his example and exhortation.

The great success of his work and the absence of any human means, is, moreover, a proof that the hand of God was with him. The man who did that must have been in very truth a man of God, for not otherwise could he have done what he did. The Catholics of Ceylon at the time had most touching stories to tell of his great charity and zeal, his miraculous deeds and prophetic words, of his immunity from attack by the wild beasts in the forests which he had to traverse so often and from the priest-hunts of the Dutch so often organised against him. He seemed to them to bear a charmed life, and the enemy even called him sorcerer because he passed between Dutch troops undetected. Yet of all these thrilling adventures we have unfortunately very little record, for the good reason that Father Vaz was so humble a man with such a low opinion of himself that he never spoke, never wrote, never described or narrated his experiences. We have scarcely a single letter of his about his work, nor any account of it coming from his pen or traceable to his lips. Some time after his death Pope Benedict XIV exempted the process for his canonization from some juridical requirements in order to enable the testimony of living eye-witnesses to be recorded before they perished. But it could not be done; and his heroic labours during the years when he was alone are unknown to us except in bare outlines.

What we have is the testimony of his fellow missionaries, of those priests who came to assist him, one and all of whom spoke of him with bated breath and wrote of him with enthusiasm during his lifetime as of a saint, a veritable man of God. They speak of him in their letters to Goa as one speaks of a living saint, describing how he looked and what he did, or how he ate or drank or slept. As you know it is those with whom we live and move in the intercourse of private life that know us best, and notice our little weaknesses and defects and faults of temperament and

character. It is our daily companions who are our best critics; it is from them that it is difficult to elicit praise. So much so indeed that it has passed into a proverb that No man is hero to his valet. And yet in the case of Fr. Vaz it is these very people who shared his labours and lived with him, who depended on him and whose superior he was ecclesiastical and regular, that pay the greatest tribute to his holiness and speak of him with unstinted veneration. According to them he was most simple and most humble. His charity knew no bounds, his zeal no diminution with age or toil, his patience was inexhaustible. Fathers Pedro Saldanha and Jacome Goncalvez, who were the two most intimately associated with him and lived in the same house, speak of him as 'the saint' and tell us that the people of Ceylon regarded him as a saint sent by God for their salvation.

The work he did in Ceylon was soon bruited abroad in Goa and Lisbon and Rome; and soon after his death a Biography was written and published in Europe and a process was instituted at Goa for his canonization. The reigning Pope who had been apprized by the Bishop of Cochin of the great labours and holiness of the servant of God, expressed an earnest hope for his speedy elevation to the honours of the altar and exempted the process, as I said, from certain technical requirements to enable the testimony of eyewitnesses to be recorded. But alas political upheavals continued to hinder the cause and with the passing of years and the vicissitudes of the Church and the suppression of the Oratory of Goa, even the very name of the apostle of Ceylon and his inspiring example were forgotten in the country of his birth and his method and traditions lost sight of in the very country of which he was the apostle. Nay more, there came a time in Ceylon when the missionaries of the island "knew not Joseph", and when the ecclesiastical squabbles even disinclined them to believe that any good could come from Goa; and Father Vaz and his methods and his life and apostolate became a faint legend without effect on the life of the priests and people of Ceylon.

Such was the state of affairs at the end of the last century. It was left to Monsignor Ladislaus Michael Zaleski, the Delegate Apostolic in the East Indies, to be the first in modern times to revive the memory of the holy apostle. Zaleski was a very far-sighted and noble-hearted churchman, who made it the great work of his life to create an Indian clergy in these parts. He made the town of Kandy the seat of the Apostolic Delegation and the site of the Papal Seminary. But Kandy was the city of Father Vaz. There he had lived, there he suffered imprisonment, there he laboured and there it was that he died and lies buried in a grave once honoured by the King of Kandy, but alas, unknown today. Mgr. Zaleski was thus led to a knowledge of the whilom saintly apostle of Ceylon and he strove might and main to do justice to that great man.

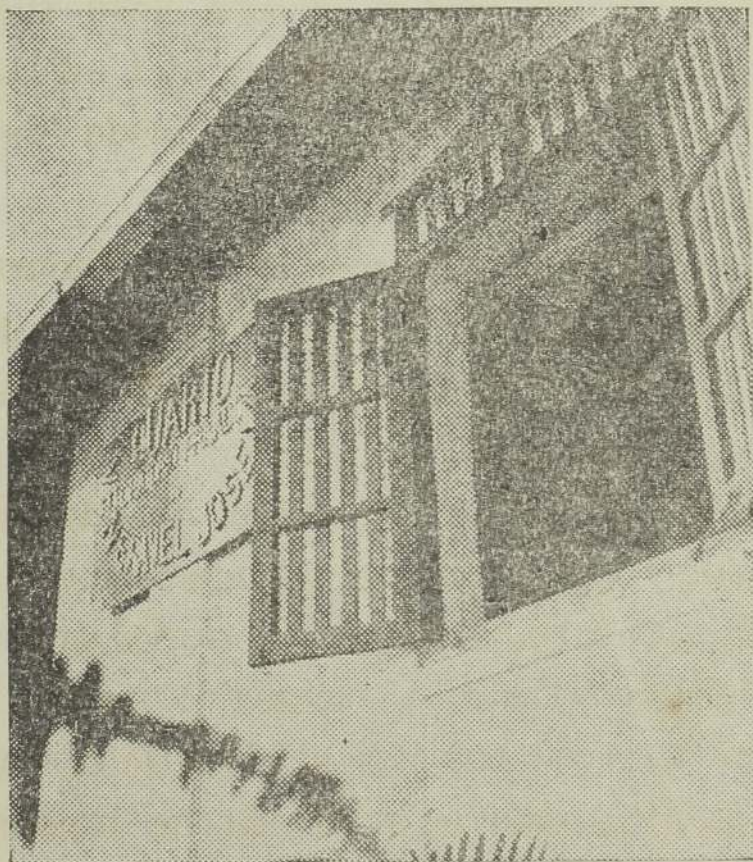
But unfortunately the very warmth of his ardour in proclaiming the virtues and merits of an Indian priest seemed to many who knew little of Father Vaz, to be a piece of special pleading on the part of the great propagandist for an Indian clergy. Every suspicion would die out if people only knew what Father Vaz was and what he did. Zaleski therefore caused his old biography to be translated and reprinted in many languages, and his labours are now beginning to bear fruit. The people of Goa, who are justly proud of the greatest of their countrymen, have procured the re-establishment of the preliminary process for his canonization. The admiration which Mgr. Zaleski conceived for Father Vaz will be driven home to any Catholic who studies the history of the Church in Ceylon; the miserable state to which the Church was reduced at the beginning of Dutch rule; the havoc caused by the persecutor; the arrival of Father Vaz; the slow and steady and patient growth of a new Church from out of the ashes of the old as a result of the activity of Father Vaz; the large number of converts he made and the remarkable development and vitality of the Church founded by Father Vaz; all this cannot but impress the student of history. And when he remembers that the Catholics

of today are the descendants of those whose faith Father Vaz saved or whom he and his companions converted; when he bears in mind that the very Catholic literature now existing in Sinhalese and Tamil, the Gospels read every Sunday at Mass, the form of prayers, the catechetical instruction, the ecclesiastical discipline, the organisation of the Church and its usages can all be traced to the traditions of which Father Vaz is the originator; he will see that Father Vaz dominates the whole course of Ceylon Church history.

At least this truth was driven into me with such force that the Superiors of the Society of Jesus permitted me to undertake a search for contemporary documents which I was convinced must exist somewhere. There was none in Ceylon; none in Goa; but it turned out that some at least of the authentic records of the Congregation of the Oratory of Goa, of which Father Vaz was the real founder, and which manned the Catholic Church in Ceylon for 150 years were found in the public libraries of Lisbon. These records I have been engaged in making accessible in Ceylon and India in translations, because I am persuaded that a wide-spread knowledge and appreciation of Father Vaz will not only further the cause of his canonization, but will greatly further the cause of the conversion of Ceylon and India as well. The conversion of souls was the object of his life; for it he worked and wore himself out in life; and the greatest characteristic of his apostolate was the way in which he effected conversions. He was the best embodiment of what a missionary should be. He was one who made Christianity intelligible to the Easterner, for he was a master of the science of missiology and knew how to make people feel that culture and the civilisation of the East can find its true development only in the faith of Christ, which removed the chief stumbling block for the conversion of the East. I feel that in these days of national stirring and political and social upheavals all over the world there is nothing that must be so strongly stressed by the missionary of Christ in these parts as the independence of the

Catholic faith from any form of social, political or economic order of the past or the present. And nothing will bring this home to the missionary than the simple narrative of the apostolate of Father Vaz, and no better object lesson can be given than the success of the missionary method of Father Vaz.

Was it perhaps for this reason that the canonization of Father Vaz was held up for two centuries, that it might take place in our day, in the Twentieth century, and be the beginning of a new movement of conversion in the East? For when the Catholics of India and Ceylon, lay and clerical, learn to appreciate Father Vaz and his work; when missionaries know and imitate the method of this servant of God; then will God glorify his servant by miracles, so that, as Benedict XIV expressed it in 1742, the external light thrown on the truths of Christianity by miracles wrought by the intercession of the Venerable Father Joseph Vaz, will lead those that now sit in darkness and in the shadow of death to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which is the one means under heaven whereby man may be saved.



*The old house belonging to the Vaz family, at Sancoale, Goa.
(as appearing in 'A Saint for New India'
by Fr. C. Gasbarri.)*

**THE MISSIONARY METHODS OF
FATHER JOSEPH VAZ
AN OBJECT-LESSON IN MISSIOLOGY**

The present movement for the canonization of the Venerable Father Joseph Vaz makes us pay special attention to his heroic sanctity, his love of God and man, his fortitude, his intense humility and his confidence in God; but there is an aspect of his apostolate that has a particular interest in these days when every Catholic University has set up a chair of Missiology. For, apart from being a man of remarkable holiness of life, Father Vaz was a churchman who displayed great penetration and sagacity in his missionary method, and, in his own humble and unobtrusive way, adapted his work, in great things and small, to the needs of the country and people. In Ceylon he established a missionary tradition and institutions peculiar to himself, which gave the labours of his companions and successors a direction and efficacy, brought large numbers to the fold of Christ, and made the Catholic faith indigenous to Ceylon.

It was this peculiar character of his labours that made his contemporaries hail him 'the Apostle of Ceylon'. By that title they meant something more than the mere fact that he saved the Church from extinction. That he did, no doubt; and it is no small credit to him that he did so at a time when abandoned by priest and bishop and crushed under the heel of a persecutor, the Church was in imminent danger of being completely wiped out. It was no small achievement to have initiated a successful revival at such a time. But Father Vaz deserved the title of Apostle of Ceylon by the very effective and fruitful manner in which he organized the Church anew. For the Church founded by Father Vaz was built upon the ruins of the older Church established by the Portuguese missionaries, it was far different from it in almost every particular, in policy, institutions, traditions and permanence.

The Church raised in Ceylon by the Portuguese was, when all is said and done, an exotic Church, manned solely by Portuguese priests for over a century and Lusitanized in a hundred ways. To become a Catholic in those days, one had to be first a Portuguese, very much in the same fashion as the Judaizing Christians attempted to do in the infant Church of Jerusalem, with this exception, of course, that the efforts of the Judaizers were based on a doctrinal error, while the Portuguese indiscretion was only the result of haste and ignorance. But there is no doubt that in Portuguese times it was impossible for a Ceylonese to be a good Catholic without becoming thereby a very loyal and submissive subject of Portugal, and breaking away completely from the culture and polity and traditions of his forefathers, as shown in the tragic instance of the last Sinhalese King of Kotte, Don Juan Peria Pandar.

On baptism the new convert had not only to take a Christian name but a Portuguese surname to boot. He had to cut off his hair-knot, because the missionaries believed it to be a symbol of heathenism, which it clearly was not in Ceylon, where every Buddhist monk and lay devotee shaved his head. The convert had to adopt a host of Portuguese customs and drop those of his race and country which he had hitherto regarded with veneration. He had to take up a number of Portuguese words into his religious and domestic vocabulary, which made him the laughing stock of his countrymen. He had to forego the use of his literature, which was undoubtedly steeped in Buddhist ideas and phrases and imagery, without anything to take its place: he had to adopt Portuguese devotions and celebrate feasts in the Portuguese fashion in Churches built, adorned and fitted in the Portuguese style and administered according to the Portuguese institutions; and he was submitted to the ecclesiastical discipline and enactments peculiar to Portugal. In short the Church of Ceylon was a bit of the Church of Portugal, bodily transplanted in this island without any regard to the difference of soil and climate. It was, therefore, no wonder that at the departure of the Portuguese the Church rocked and reeled and tottered to its very foundations.

Father Vaz saw this from the very beginning and set about, at first by sheer force of circumstances, to adapt his ways and his ministry to the state of affairs prevailing in the island. Later on, when it became his privilege to organize the Church in Ceylon, he deliberately continued the methods and institutions that had proved so effective. He was the first and perhaps the only Indian that had the opportunity of organizing a mission according to his own ideas. This great advantage he had by the mere accident that no European ecclesiastic could, without detection, set foot in Ceylon where it was death for a priest to land. And it was a very great good fortune that the first Indian to have such a tremendous responsibility should have been a man as remarkable for his foresight and wisdom as for his humility and holiness. He had, moreover, an experience which no priest ever had before or after him. For nine long years he was the one, solitary, priest in the island; and thus he became acquainted with Catholics of every variety and race and condition of life. He visited the country of the Tamils as well as the country of the Sinhalese: he sojourned in the territories of the Dutch as well as in the realm of Kandy. He lodged in many a Catholic home; every loyal Catholic had come in contact with him; he learnt their difficulties, religious and political, their trials and their anxieties, their likes and dislikes, their weaknesses and their good qualities. Verily, never was an ecclesiastic called upon to undertake the organization of a mission who knew his flock so well and thoroughly as Father Vaz knew the Catholics of Ceylon, when after nine years of single-handed work, he received the first batch of helpers and a patent appointing him Vicar General of the Bishop and Religious Superior of his companions.

A Brahmin by caste, he had to work in a country where there were no Brahmins to speak of. Though a Portuguese subject, he was in a land where that allegiance was a source of suspicion and hindrance. He therefore soon forgot his race and kindred, his King and country, and made himself all things to all men. The people whose spiritual jurisdiction was now vested in him, though differing

from him in many respects, were fundamentally of the same complexion and culture, of the same sentiments and outlook, as he was. But he was a descendant of generations of Catholic forefathers, bred in an intensely Catholic home, with Catholic orthodoxy running in the veins of his Oriental bodily frame. Thus from every point of view he was eminently fitted to attempt to make the Gospel of Christ acceptable to the people of Ceylon.

Adaptation of the Gospel to oriental peoples is a very thorny subject bristling with problems that require for their solution great delicacy and firmness of faith and mind and character. Many an ardent missionary has burnt his fingers in the attempt, either unwittingly compromising the rigid orthodoxy of the faith or hopelessly failing to make an impression on those whom he vainly would win to Christ. That work needs a saint; above all a saint who is humble and ready to place himself under the guiding hand of Providence without trusting to his own wisdom. It was perhaps for this reason that Father Vaz was so eminently successful. His constant and inflexible purpose was ever to do, not what he thought best, but what God wished him to do and suggested to him at the right time and place by the voice of another. This confident trust in the guidance of Providence was at the base of his successful apostolate as well as of his holiness. Men go wrong; even the wisest; but no man ever goes wrong when he obeys the voice of Providence.

If there is anything in the life of Father Vaz as striking to a careful reader as the complete trust he had in Providence, it is the most providential way in which God guided him in the whole course of his missionary life. We always find him doing, unexpectedly and often unwittingly, and as a mere result of accidental circumstances, what in every case we know from after events to have been the wisest thing he could have done, though it did not appear to be so at the time. Thus when he first thought of coming to Ceylon, a country of which he knew nothing, Providence sent him to Kanara. There he unwittingly served a probation for his future work, learning the best means of ministering to abandoned Catholics subject to a

hostile power. When after three years he returned to Goa intent on his Ceylon-project, Providence led him to join a religious community that was on the very verge of dissolution. But, unwittingly again, he was in the hands of Providence the means of founding a religious Congregation that was destined to be the salvation of Ceylon. Without the Congregation of the Oratory of Goa, the work of Father Vaz would have had neither continuity nor permanence. He left for Ceylon with two companions, but Providence separated them from him; and it was undoubtedly easier and safer for him to enter Ceylon alone than in company. When he tried to cross over to Colombo from Tuticorin, Providence deflected him to Jaffna, where a priest was least expected by the Dutch and most needed by the Catholics. On arrival in Jaffna, he was stricken with a severe illness, which not only averted suspicion but taught him that love for the sick and the poor and the destitute which bore fruit during the small-pox epidemic in Kandy and made the whole island resound with his name. When he had done his work in Jaffna, Providence intervened to send him to Puttalam. Instead of going from Puttalam to the south-west coast, which was the most natural thing to do as the large majority of the Catholics of Ceylon were there, Providence took him to Kandy. There he was suspected for a spy and imprisoned, but God who can draw good from evil, made use of that incident to give him favour in the eyes of the King of Kandy. The benevolence of that monarch played no small part in the security and safety and success of the mission. Every missionary of the time assures us that without the protection of the King they would not have been able to do what they did. Thus, Father Vaz was marvellously guided by Providence.

It was with this guidance of Providence that he organized the Mission. When he had established himself and opened a path for others, he wrote to his Congregation for helpers. He told them very frankly of the trials that awaited them, and the qualities needed for missionary work in Ceylon. He said that, above all, whoever was willing to come to his help must be prepared to come to Ceylon

for good, without any hope of ever returning to his country. When they came he himself took in hand their direction and formation; and by imitating him they learnt the best way to act.

His first and foremost direction to his assistants might appear foolhardy and quixotic; but he was convinced of its necessity. He bade them continue his practice of never accepting, much less asking, any payment for ministrations. The reason for this is apparently the prejudice of Buddhist people against the practice, once expressed in words by a very prominent convert of Portuguese times, the great Sinhalese poet Alagiawanna Mukaveti. The prevalent religion in Ceylon, has, properly speaking no clergy, no priests, nor anything corresponding to our idea of sacraments. The religious men are monks, penitents, ascetics, who make profession of despising the things of this world. Consequently the concept of 'a priest that serves the altar and lives by it' is unknown to them. They admire almsgiving and penance. Father Vaz, therefore, desired his comrades to conform to this ideal of the people in order to win them to Christ. For not only did he forbid the acceptance of money, but he actually directed that all offerings spontaneously made by the faithful should be collected by a layman and used for the expenses of the Church and for charity. In his own Church of Kandy, and in every chapel wherever a priest was, rice was distributed daily by the priest to all comers irrespective of creed. This charity and disinterested service made a deep impression on the people who came to regard Catholic priests with the utmost veneration.

Father Vaz made his companions apply themselves to the study of the languages of the country, which were to be the medium of evangelization. He saw how necessary it was that if the people were to be converted to Christ the missionary should be able to converse with them freely and easily in their own language. He even took steps to create a vernacular Catholic literature, and made one of his companions, Father Jacome Goncalvez, learn the languages to perfection, giving him the time and opportunity and

the means for it. Many a Mission even in modern times in spite of men and means and the greater facilities of to-day, forget this essential point which Father Vaz considered so important that at a time when priests were few and books and teachers scarce and the persecution at its highest, he set aside a priest for that work alone.

The result of his foresight is incalculable. Not only were the Catholics supplied with books for their instruction and edification in their own language, not only were they provided with a literature which made them hold up their heads with pride, but the writings of Father Goncalvez produced numberless conversions and gave the Catholic faith a reputation in the land.

It was not only the language of the land that Father Vaz adopted, but even the customs and manners and etiquette of the country. Catholic priests went about the country with the decorum and ceremony that is usual in the land. They lived in the penitential fashion that the people admired and did deeds of charity and self-sacrifice which are expected from men of religion. When a priest arrived in a village, he was received with ceremony to the strains of drums. The neighbours attracted by curiosity watched the Father address his flock and were encouraged to visit the priest and talk religion. In places where the passing priest had made an impression, he deliberately settled a Catholic family in order to have this opportunity of contact with the heathen which led to frequent conversions.

Though at first Father Vaz and his companions lodged in a Catholic house when they visited a village, very soon he introduced the practice of erecting chapels, small thatched huts for the most part, in every place where there were some Catholic families. It was built by the people, to their taste, and fitted and provided by them. Every such chapel had a person who had charge of it, who instructed the young and read the devotions every Sunday and feast-day to the assembled faithful throughout the year. For the priests themselves, Father Vaz caused two residences to be built, both in the territories of the King of Kandy, at Kandy and

Puttalam, to which the missionary retired for rest or convalescence or spiritual conference, and from which he sallied every year on long tours, visiting every Catholic community and almost every Catholic home within the domain assigned to each one's ministrations. In each of these residences there was a priest always at the disposal of any Catholic for the sacraments or for consultation. In Dutch towns it was not possible to have chapels as in the Kandian country, but a house was built or rented, externally like any other, but used as a place of meeting for Catholics even in the very heart of Colombo. There was an elder appointed to read the devotions, to instruct the young and to make arrangements and give notice of the visit of a priest. Father Goncalvez composed for the use of these chapels his well-known book, containing all the Gospels of Sundays and feast-days with a short and appropriate exhortation on each to be read to the congregation when the Father was absent.

The method adopted by Father Vaz and his companions to deal with the accursed caste system was at once novel and effective. He permitted each caste to build a chapel for itself, if it were so minded. It was built, looked after and maintained by that particular caste, but was open to all castes without exception. On the occasion of feasts, processions and external celebrations, the particular caste of the chapel had the precedence in its own chapel; but all other castes had to come there when the priest was present, and take part in all celebrations. Within the chapel and in purely religious matters there was no distinction. By this simple method Father Vaz left the people free to do as they liked in private and domestic affairs, but pleased all castes by putting them on the same level, and undermined caste feeling by removing the sting of caste. Many a new priest coming to Ceylon from India, was impressed by the absence of caste feeling that Catholics of Ceylon showed as a result of this artless expedient.

The Fathers, however; permitted the people to follow their ancestral customs, provided they were Christianized by prayer or a blessing or the sprinkling of holy water. Thus they were free to observe the traditional feasts and ceremonies connected with domestic

events or social occasions, which many foreign missionaries are apt to regard as heathenish. Father Goncalvez even composed prayers for these occasions. But if any practice smacked of heathenism or superstition the priests were adamant. Father Vaz obtained from the King of Kandy permission for the Catholics who served in court or cultivated temple-lands not to be obliged to take part in any religious act so long as they fulfilled their obligations in social and other ceremonies. Likewise he directed the Catholics in Dutch territory not to submit to the persecuting law requiring them to attend the Dutch kirk. At first, before the mission was organized, the Catholics used to go to the Dutch Church for baptism and marriage as required by law, as those acts practically amounted to registration of birth and marriage. But when the mission was fully organized, and the number of Catholics gave hope of effective remonstrance, even outward conformity was discouraged and finally forbidden under pain of ecclesiastical censure and ultimately completely eradicated.

As a result of these measures the Catholic faith became a religion which the people of the country admired. Non-Catholics saw that Christianity did not make them foreigners; and the number of converts made by the Oratorian Fathers is astounding. Not only individuals and families in large numbers, but whole villages at a time embraced the Catholic faith. The missionary spirit that burned within the priests was shared by the people. There is, for instance, a most striking case. When some prominent men of Matara came to Colombo on business in 1734, some Catholics showed them the writings of Father Goncalvez, which made a great impression on them. The Catholics immediately sent word to the Father who was in Sitawaka, and coming down to Colombo he followed them to Matara and made numerous conversions in that district.

In short there never was a time in the history of the Church in Ceylon, when the Catholic faith was higher in popular esteem, when the conversions were so frequent and numerous, or when

the natural appeal which Christianity makes to all good men and true was so forcible, as in the days when Christianity was preached to the people of Ceylon by missionaries trained by Father Vaz and imbued with his spirit and inspired by his example.

Father Vaz was succeeded in the government of the mission by three of his companions in succession, Joseph de Menezes, Pedro de Saldanha and Jacome Goncalvez, each of whom held the reins till death. All of them had been in close contact with the Venerable Father and trained by him. They upheld and enforced the institutions of the founder of the mission. Father Goncalvez died in 1742, when the Catholic Revival was not only fully accomplished but was bidding fair to emancipate the Catholics. By 1763 the Dutch found themselves obliged to grant the Catholics some measure of toleration.

The Oratorians continued to man the mission up to the



*The Baptismal Font in the Church at Benaulim, Goa, where Fr. Vaz was baptised.
(from the life of Fr. J. Vaz by Fr. S. G. P.)*

suppression of that Congregation by the King of Portugal in 1834. By that time the faith had fully taken root in Ceylon, and the new ecclesiastical organization, begun in 1834 and completed in 1836 by the erection of the Apostolic Vicariate of Ceylon, with one of the Oratorians as the first Vicar Apostolic, was the crown set on the labours of the Congregation. On its suppression the Mission had to be manned by priests sent from Europe. Unfortunately these missionaries had no knowledge of Father Vaz or of his methods, and were

principally concerned with looking after the existing Catholics. The Church of Ceylon in consequence developed in many directions,

especially in the matter of education and the consolidation of the existing Churches; but the missionary methods of the Oratorians were forgotten. This was a great pity for the establishment of the Pax Britannica and the introduction of constitutional reform in the Island gave the Church a unique opportunity for missionary work, and if the Church did not rise to the occasion it was in no small measure due to the disuse of the example and methods and institutions of the Venerable Father Joseph Vaz.



*The authentic signature of Fr. Vaz.
(From the General Archives of Goa)
as appearing in 'A Saint for New India', by Fr. C. Gasbarri.*

JACOME GONCALVEZ

1676—1742

The name of Father Jacome Goncalvez stands out in the annals of the Church in Ceylon as second only to that of the island's venerable Apostle, Father Joseph Vaz. It is to these two priests, under God, that the Church owes her present position in Ceylon. Father Joseph Vaz came to the island at a time when priests were banned under pain of death, the Faith proscribed, churches confiscated, the faithful downtrodden and bitterly persecuted by a relentless though Christian foe. With heroic charity he toiled singlehanded amidst perils and hardships, with a price set upon his head, to rally the Catholics, large numbers of whom, though dispersed and cowed by persecution and deprived of Mass and the sacraments for nearly forty years, had yet retained the faith



under most trying circumstances. Such, however, was his devotion, his singular holiness of life and prudence that within a short time he made the persecuted faith and its adherents honoured and respected by the people of the land, and esteemed by the Sinhalese king of the interior whose benevolence gave him protection and whose capital became a refuge and a base of operations.

But in Dutch territory, where most of the Catholics lived, he was obliged to go about in disguise, ministering in secret and under cover of night. Thus, though he soon succeeded in summoning a little band of Oratorians to his aid, they were not able to give to Catholics the religious instruction they badly needed. It wa

never safe for a priest to remain in a place long enough to attempt catechetical instruction or edification in either of the two vernacular languages spoken in the island. Foul calumnies against the Faith, as well as heretical doctrines, were being taught in the Dutch proselytizing schools which Catholic children were forced to attend under pain of severe penalties. Father Vaz, therefore, decided to set apart one of his companions to write books to instruct and fortify the Catholics.

The person he chose for the task was Jacome Goncalvez, and right royally did he rise to the occasion. In spite of an arduous life of active apostolate, he acquired the vernacular languages of the island to perfection. At his death he left behind him a large number of Sinhalese and Tamil compositions in prose and verse, written with such elegance of style and purity of diction, that they not only served the immediate purpose of fortifying the Catholics, not only brought thousands of converts to the Church, but even made him the greatest literary man of the age in a land in which the Buddhist priests hitherto gloried in being the foremost writers. Father Goncalvez has therefore been hailed 'The Father of Sinhalese Catholic Literature', and though nearly two hundred years have elapsed since God called him to his reward, his work has not, down to this day, been equalled either in volume or excellence, much less surpassed.

Jacome Goncalvez¹ was a Konkani Brahmin born at Goa on 8 June, 1676. After a brilliant scholastic career in the Jesuit College of Goa, he chose the ecclesiastical state and was already Deacon and Bachelor of Arts when in 1700 despite the opposition of his family, he was inspired to seek admittance to the young and struggling Congregation of the Oratory of Goa. After his religious formation he took to a life of study with such success that in 1705 he was chosen to fill a chair of philosophy in the University, being the first Oratorian to be so honoured.

1. The sources used for this sketch are chiefly contemporary manuscripts found in the various libraries of Lisbon.

But that very year, when heart-rending appeals for help came from Father Vaz, the young professor threw up his post and volunteered for missionary work in Ceylon.¹

In those days a journey from Goa to Ceylon was no small undertaking. To a Catholic priest attempting to evade the vigilance of the Dutch and to enter the island in disguise, it was even a hazardous one. Father Goncalvez and his two companions were thus obliged to bide their time and opportunity and spend three months on the journey. These months the young missionary, with characteristic zeal, devoted to a careful study of the Tamil language which in consequence he was able to read, write and speak with accuracy, by the time he reached Ceylon.² Father Vaz at first assigned the district of Mannar and its dependencies to his ministrations, but hearing of his proficiency in Tamil, he felt that God had sent him this new recruit for his long cherished purpose. Accordingly, he at once called him up to Kandy, and, finding him apt and ready for the task, set him to a thorough study of the Sinhalese language.

Sinhalese is an Aryan language of Sanskritic origin, cognate with Konkani, the mother tongue of Father Goncalvez, though influenced to some extent by Dravidian speech. The literary form of the Sinhalese language requires careful study even on the part of those who speak it as their mother tongue, the written form often employing inflectional terminations not used in daily speech. There is a persistent tradition in Ceylon that Father Goncalvez was schooled in Sinhalese by Buddhist monks. Indeed, it is known that Father Vaz had recourse to their aid to compose the simple prayers and exercises of devotion which he attempted to write.³ But there is no support from any contemporary document so far brought to light for the tradition that

1. Vida do P. Jacome Goncalvez MS. in the Torre do Tombo.

2. Relacao dos Progressos da Missao de Ceylao MS. 1706.

3. Chronica da Congregacao do Oratorio de Goa Liv. 3: Cap 16 Sec 55°
(Cf. Vida do Ven. P. Jose Vaz. 2nd. Ed. 159).

Father Goncalvez sought assistance from any monk. In the Sinhalese capital there was no lack of lay teachers to instruct a foreigner who was able to speak Tamil. The only person, however, who is mentioned¹ as having assisted Father Goncalvez, is Gascon Adigar, a very romantic figure in Kandyan history who, from being the son of a Frenchman by a country-born mother, rose to hold the highest office next to royalty, and enjoyed the reputation of being a man of Sinhalese letters and a poet.

Father Goncalvez appears to have made very rapid progress, as is to be expected from a keen student familiar with Konkani and Tamil. We first find him revising the compositions of Father Vaz, adding to them some from his own pen, both in Sinhalese and Tamil. These were chiefly the much needed prayers, litanies, mysteries of the Rosary, Way of the Cross and the like. After two years of assiduous study he is found² at Kammala busily engaged with twelve Sinhalese scribes in making copies of his works for distribution among the churches. Writing out with stylus on palm-leaf or ola was the only way to multiply copies. From Kammala Father Goncalvez was hastily summoned to Kandy on account of the death of the Sinhalese king Wimaladharmasuriya II, who had been friendly to the Oratorians, and had permitted them to make his capital the headquarters to which they could flee for refuge when hunted in Dutch territory.

At Kandy the Father laboured at the composition of the *Upadesa*,³ a catechism of Catholic doctrine in Sinhalese. In spite of a malady which came upon him⁴ and never fully left him, he devoted all his energies to literary compositions, perusing, we are

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1. Letter of Jose de Menezes, Sup. of the Mission of Ceylon, 24 Feb. 1713 MS.
 2. Letter of Manoel de Miranda, 1707 (Translated by the present writer) in *The Ceylon Antiquary and Literary Register*, Vol. VI.
 3. Letter of Jose de Menezes.
 4. Relacao, 1713 MS, Torre do Tombo.

told, Sinhalese classical works late into the night, and spending the whole day in composing and in supervising copyists. He had already met all urgent needs when, in 1711, the death of the holy apostle Father Vaz brought him greater responsibility. He was made Vigario da Vara of Kandy, as the new Superior, Joseph de Menezes, transferred the headquarters of the Mission to Puttalam, a busy commercial port in the territories of the King of Kandy. Father Goncalvez, who was very much respected by the new King Narendra Sinha, remained at Kandy, though entrusted with the care of the two largest Catholic communities in Ceylon, Negombo and Colombo. But, amidst the labours of the ministry, he continued to wield his pen most assiduously.

By 1713 he had already composed and perfected the *Upadesa* both in Sinhalese and Tamil, and had begun the *Purana*,¹ a resume of Bible history, one of his best known and most esteemed compositions in exquisite prose based on the Christian Purana², that marvellous poetical effort of an English Jesuit written in Father Goncalvez's mother tongue. He was also led to hold a disputation with a Calvinist in the house of the friendly Protestant, Gascon Adigar.³ This gave the Father occasion to write a refutation of the errors of Luther and Calvin. A short time later he had an opportunity of presenting a copy of the work to the king, when that kindly monarch, hearing of his disputation, invited him to confute the heretic in his royal palace of Hanguranketa.⁴

For the use of the churches he wrote a book of the Gospels for every Sunday and feast day,⁵ together with a short exhortation on each, to be read in the absence of the priest. This book still serves the Church in Ceylon, being written in language intelligible

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1. *Deva Veda Purana*; first printed 1864; 2nd ed. 1924, 400 pages.
 2. The Christian Purana, By Fr. Thomas Stevens, S.J.
 3. Letter of Fr. Jacome Goncalvez: 8 Sept, 1712 MS.
 4. Letter of Fr. Jacome Goncalvez: 18 Oct. 1714 MS.
 5. *Suvisesa Visarjanaya*.

to every Sinhalese, but with a grandeur and choice of expression suited to the sublimity of the theme. Being intended to be read aloud to a listening congregation, there is a cadence and modulation in the rise and fall of the balanced sentences that is as pleasing to the Sinhalese ear as it is adapted to the chanting style of reading customary in the East. Though other translations of the Gospels have been made and remade by Protestants and Catholics in modern times, none has yet reached the high literary level and grace attained by Father Goncalvez.

These compositions, so laboriously made and copied at great cost with the aid of alms which Father Goncalvez begged from India, spread over the island and produced results which must have rejoiced the heart of the valiant missionary. For the first time in the history of Ceylon, Catholics were able to read explanations and vindications of their faith in their mother tongue, in compositions that vied with the Buddhist classics in elegance and purity of language. The Catholics, in consequence, were able to hold up their heads, and they proudly displayed the priest's writings to their neighbours. As that was a time of great literary decay¹ in Ceylon, the works of Father Goncalvez were eagerly read by those who otherwise would never have given a hearing to Christianity. Many began to inquire into the Catholic religion, and conversions multiplied, especially from the ranks of the better classes of the people, from high-born and noble families, from pundits, *vederalas* or physicians, and most of all from the ranks of the schoolmasters employed by the Dutch to propagate the Reformed religion of Holland.

Father Goncalvez, moreover, gained a great reputation and influence in the country. That he had made a thorough study of the language and literature was obvious from every page of his writings. He makes explicit and implicit quotations from well-known literary works. His writings show him to have acquired an extensive vocabulary and a surprising familiarity with idiomatic

1. Cf. *Guttala Kavya Varnanava*. By Mudaliyar Gunawardana, pp 9-10.

expressions, the Sinhalese turn of sentences, metaphors and comparisons. Apt phrases and happy renderings of Christian thought please and impress the reader. Perhaps his greatest achievement was that he enriched the Sinhalese language with a copious Catholic vocabulary, choosing his words with greatest precision and perspicacity, often coining new compound words to convey the essentially Christian ideas of the one true God, Church, Sacrament, Eucharist, Gospel, Confession and the like, to displace the grotesque Portuguese words hitherto employed, which made the Catholics the laughing stock of their neighbours.

Encouraged by the success of his literary efforts, and realizing that the pen was a powerful means of effecting conversions, Father Goncalvez worked with great ardour and produced a number of compositions of various kinds, hagiographic, poetical, devotional and controversial, with the purpose of enlightening the faithful and inducing the adherents of other religions to give Christianity a hearing.

The controversial works were often called for by some actual circumstance. For instance, in 1732 a Special Commissioner of the Dutch Company arrived in Ceylon to regulate the affairs of the island. To meet this personage a number of Sinhalese chieftains came to Colombo from Matara. This is a district where Sinhalese literature was greatly cultivated, and the chiefs, hearing of a Catholic priest who wrote Sinhalese with classical purity, read his works and were so struck by them that they expressed an earnest desire to meet Father Goncalvez and discuss religion with him. The Catholics of Colombo immediately informed Father Goncalvez, who came to the capital in disguise, met the chiefs in secret conferences and received a warm invitation to preach the faith in Matara. Father Goncalvez immediately set to work and composed a book called the *Matara Pratyaksa*,

refuting the errors of paganism and establishing the truth of Catholic doctrine.¹ Copies of this work were distributed in Matara, so that when the Father arrived there, he was able to instruct and baptize a large number of the prominent people and erect seven chapels.

Similarly Father Goncalvez wrote a kindred book for the special use of the Crown Prince of Kandy, Astana Kumara. This young man was a Hindu by birth, but had to profess Buddhism on accession to the throne. In spite of this fact he asked the Father for a refutation of Buddhism, and the *Budumula*² which Father Goncalvez presented to the prince made a great impression on him, though it failed to convert him.

Availing himself of every opportunity, and at the earnest request of Catholics who asked for books, Father Goncalvez made good use of his marvellous facility and wrote on a variety of subjects. Most of the books were translated into Tamil by himself and as many as two hundred copies were made at one time for distribution, there being a demand for the Tamil works even from South India. He also wrote devotional works in Portuguese for the use of the Portuguese descendants in Ceylon. For the use of fellow missionaries he composed a book of *Cases of Conscience* especially adapted to Ceylon, and a number of vocabularies in Sinhalese and Tamil for young missionaries. Seeing the number of conversions effected among Buddhists by his writings, he was even led to attempt the same among the Dutch. He studied Dutch, and composed a work in that language, confuting the errors of the Dutch Reformed Church.

Towards the end of his life he produced also a *Lives of the Saints*,³ books of meditations,⁴ another of Sermons⁵ and other

1. Relacao 1733 MS.

2. Relacao 1742 MS.

3. *Dharmodyana*, Colombo, 1911. 310 pages.

4. *Sukrita Darpanaya*. 3d., 1908; *Gnananjanaya* 3rd. ed. 1903.

5. *Dukprapti Prasangaya*.

similar works of edification, the fruit mostly of his later days and, consequently, full of the charm and grace of easy flowing sentences of great beauty. He even composed by request a number of Hymns¹, Poems of the Passion², and the well-known and highly esteemed *Veda Kavvya*.³ Besides these metrical compositions, he also wrote prose works in poetical language⁴ in imitation of similar Buddhist books. The poems on the Passion are still widely used, being chanted aloud during Lent in Catholic villages, while the *Veda Kavvya* still holds its place as the greatest Catholic poem in Sinhalese. For liturgical use he compiled *Atma Raksanaya* or *Prartana Malaya*, containing prayers, devotional exercises and litanies for the different ecclesiastical seasons of the year, which, in the modern printed text, run to over six hundred pages. He also translated the benedictions and prayers contained in the *Missale* and *Rituale* under the title of *Christiyani Palliya*.

For a number of years before his death Father Goncalvez was the religious Superior⁵ of the Oratorians, and Vicar General in the island for the Bishop of Cochin. In these capacities he regulated the ecclesiastical usages introduced by the venerable Father Vaz, and transferred the headquarters of the Mission from Puttalam to Bolawatta, a town on the borders of the Kandyan kingdom, near Negombo and within easy reach of Colombo. Around Bolawatta were a number of villages converted by him, and the new Catholic settlement became the scene of great activity. There he lived when broken down by age and infirmity. To the very end of his life he was engaged in literary occupations, and died on 17th July, 1742, in his sixty-sixth year, after a life of forty-two years in the Congregation, thirty-seven of which were spent in the mission of Ceylon. The concourse of mourners

1. *Mangala Gitaya*.

2. *Pasanpota*.

3. *Veda Kavvya*. 2nd ed. 1934.

4. *Ananda Kalippuva* and *Dharma Sarinjna*.

5. 1730—1742.

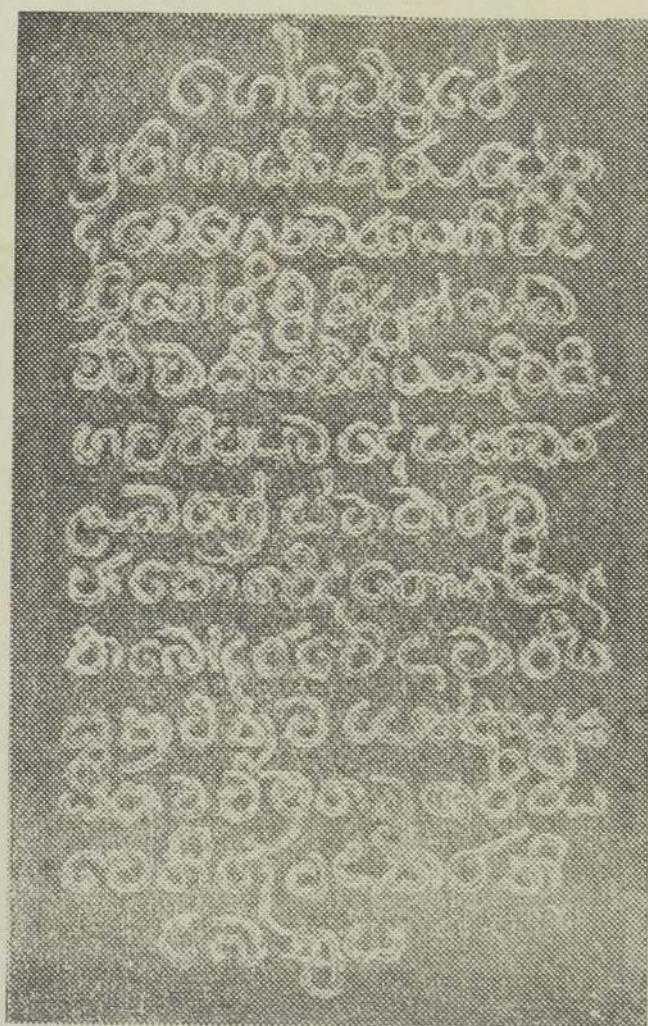
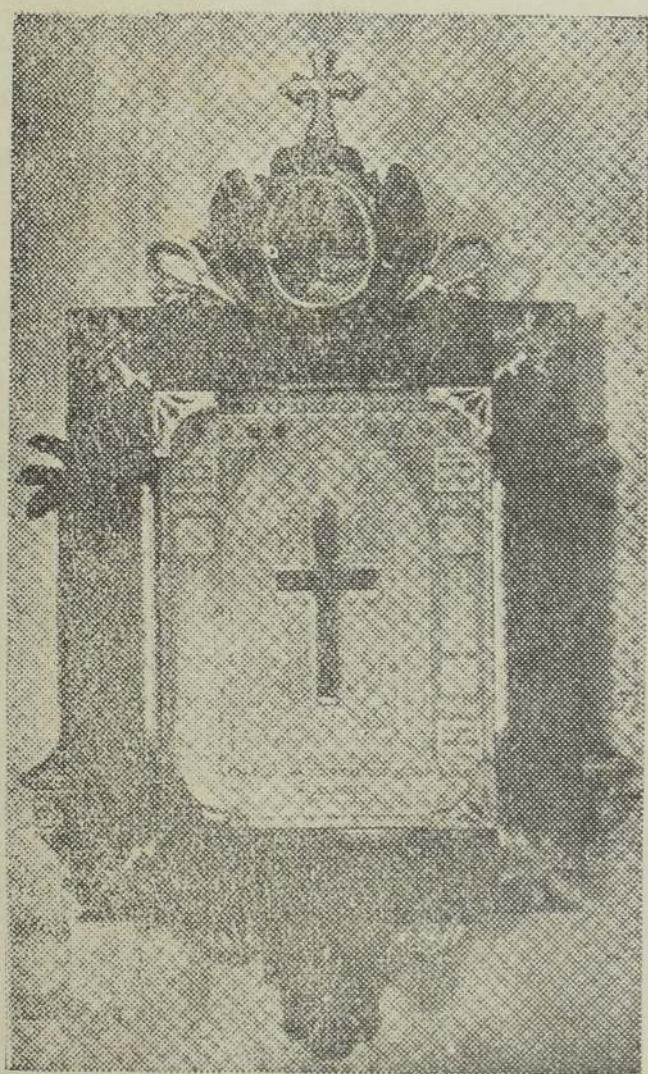
from all parts of the island was so great that the funeral service had to be deferred to the third day, when he was laid to rest in the church of Bolawatta. A rough Sinhalese inscription in the modern church still marks the site of his grave.

No priest in Ceylon, save only the venerable Apostle of the island, has played so large a part in the history of the Church in Ceylon. The wisdom of his administration, his intense labours, the benefits resulting to the Church by his great reputation in the court of Kandy, his great humility and the edification of his life, have been scarcely mentioned in this brief sketch. We have confined ourselves to the services which this eminent Oratorian rendered to the Catholics of Ceylon by his writings in Sinhalese. But his services to Tamil literature are no less remarkable. The number of converts he made by his writings¹ alone was reckoned at ten thousand at the time of his death. How many have been gained to the faith since² cannot be known. For *defunctus adhuc loquitur* His works have still the same efficacy.

It is true, indeed, that a time came when social and political upheavals in British times and a change of ecclesiastical regime after the extinction of the Oratorian Congregation led to a neglect of the vernaculars. A new generation of priests unable to read, appreciate or utilize the labours of Father Goncalvez, made even the laity disregard his works, except those which the Church in Ceylon can never dispense with. But times are now changing. The Sinhalese revival has affected the Catholics also, and the Catholic Literature Committee of Colombo has decided to bring out a new and complete³ edition of his works. But one of the

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1. Especially by *Agnanausadaya*; *Devaniti Visarajnaya*; and *Deva Parihara*.
 2. Relacao, 1757 MS.
 3. A list of 42 works of Fr. Goncalvez is given in the Vida and also in Relacao 1740. A XIX cent. MS. copy of his works is found partly in the Ajuda Library of Lisbon and partly in the Arquivo das Colonias. These manuscripts once belonged to the Oratory of Lisbon. The books not mentioned in the text or notes are: *Dina Baktiya*; *Buddhabana Tarkaya*; *Vandana Karmasthanaya*; *Sattya Upadesa*; *Veda Parihariya* and *Deva Veda Sanksepaya*.

chief difficulties—tell it not in Gath!—is that of finding editors sufficiently versed in classical literature to eliminate critically the numerous copyists' errors that have crept into the manuscripts. But so long as Sinhalese is read, the name of Father Goncalvez will be held in benediction as the 'Father of Sinhalese Catholic Literature'. Up to this day he is still far and away the greatest Catholic writer in that language.



The Cross of Fr. Goncalvez and the inscription on his tombstone at present in the Sanctuary of Bolawatte Church.

(vide "At the Tomb of Goncalvez" by Bishop E. Peiris O. M. I.)

MAP OF KANDY TOWN

**(Reproduced with kind Permission of the
Surveyor General, Colombo.)**

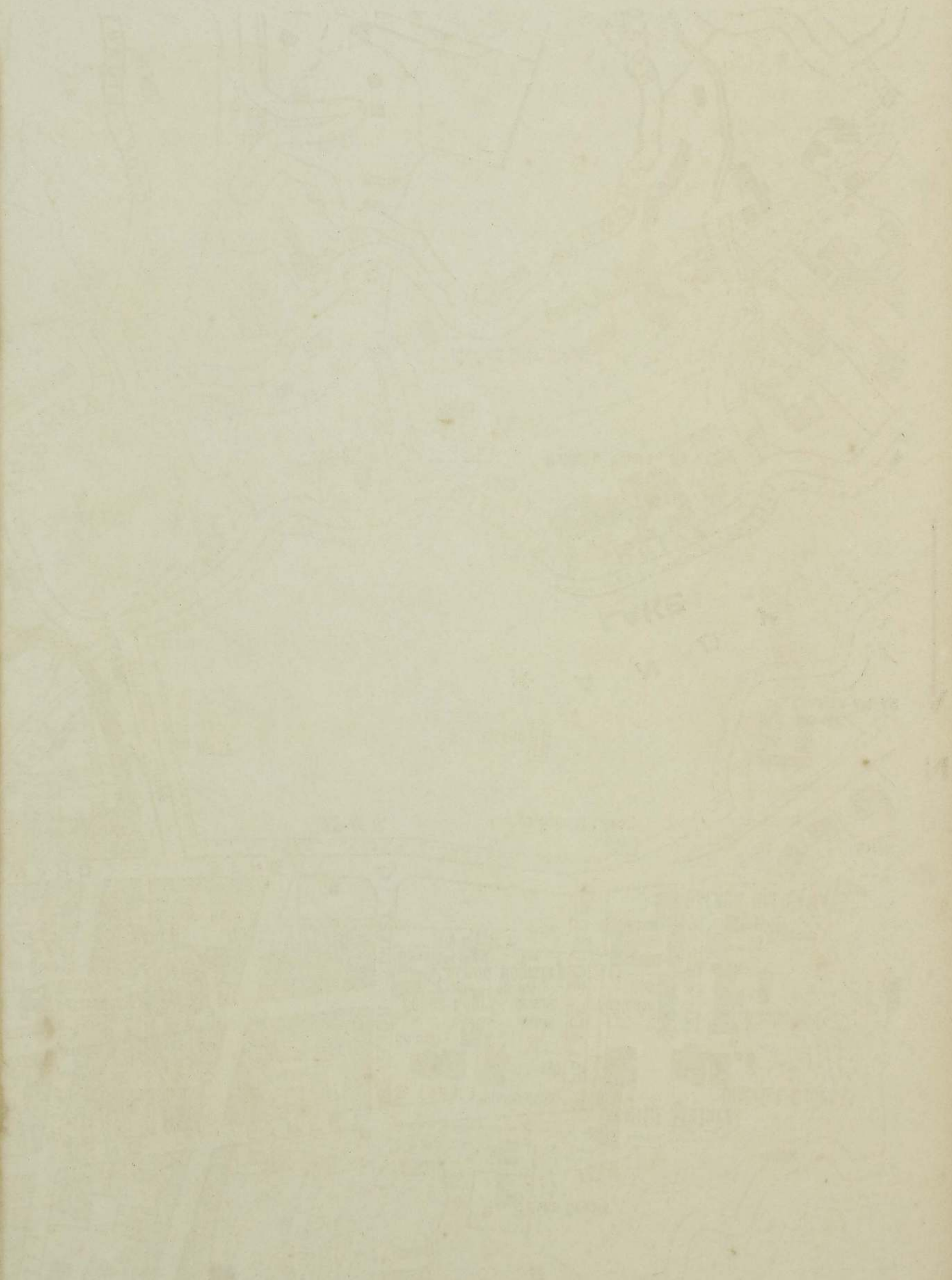


MAP OF KANDY — The thick line indicates the boundary of the lake. The map by John Davy, M. D., F. R. S. The body of Ven. Fr. Jos. Vaz of that lake.



boundaries of the old Bogambara Lake as shown in the
 . S., in his "Account of the interior of Ceylon", 1821.
 is said to lie at some spot not far from the shores

Faint, illegible text at the top of the page, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side.



CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE KINGS OF KANDY

No royal house in Ceylon had so much to do with the Catholic faith as the Sinhalese Kings of Kandy. The last generation of the old lineage of Kandyan Kings died Catholics, one of them being the first Sinhalese raised to the Catholic priesthood. The new dynasty though founded by a baptized Catholic who afterwards forsook the faith, showed during the three generations of sovereignty a sympathy for the Catholic religion which entitles it to our undying gratitude. Dona Catharina, who was the link between the old dynasty and the new, was brought up a Catholic from her infancy and died in the profession of the Christian faith. Her parents had died Catholics; her cousin, Yamasinha, who sat on the throne of Kandy for a while, was a Catholic and bore the name of Don Philip: his son, Don Joao, was educated by the Franciscans in their colleges of Colombo and Goa, became a Catholic priest and lived in Lisbon as a prince-priest and died there. Dona Catharina's second husband, though an ex-Buddhist priest, entrusted the education of his children to Catholic priests and one of them, Vijayapala, embraced the Catholic religion. The youngest son, the famous Rajasinha of Kandy, as Knox tells us "esteemed and honoured" the Catholic religion. And he of his own accord offered an asylum in his territories to the persecuted Catholics of the lowlands. This sympathy towards the religion of his mother, became characteristic and traditional in the royal family of Kandy, for his descendants, Wimaladharma Suriya II, and Narendrasinha became the patrons of the Catholic priests in Ceylon and not only protected them from the persecutions of the Dutch and the hostility of Kandyan chiefs and monks, but even admitted them to the councils of state and treated them with a benevolence and honour which those monarchs were never wont to show even to the greatest of their subjects or the most favoured of foreign ambassadors. We have, therefore, every reason to be beholden to

the Sinhalese Kings of Kandy. It is true, indeed, that this benevolence gave place to bitter hostility when the Nayakkars of Madura ascended the throne of the Sinhalese and the Buddhist revival was wrought by the well-known hierarch Weliwita Saranankara; but that fact only gives us a reason the more to cherish the memory of the Kings who rendered a great service to the Catholic Church in Ceylon, which we should never forget.

Before I proceed to discuss the attitude of the Kings of Kandy towards Catholicism, I must point out first of all that when I speak of the "dealings" of these monarchs with the Church, I am not speaking of any solemn or official transactions, but merely of the attitude of kindness or favour or opposition of the kings towards Catholic priests or missionaries as representatives of our faith. And secondly, as it will be necessary for me to refer to the history of the Kandyan kingdom in the course of what I am going to say, it will be good to tell you very briefly the genesis of that kingdom and name.

In ancient times this Island was divided into three parts, called Pihiti, Maya and Ruhuna. The chief king or emperor of the island had his capital in Pihiti, the Northern part of the Island, and it was in consequence often called Raja-rata. Maya was a subordinate kingdom governed by the heir-apparent; Ruhuna in the South and East, was ruled by a subking, a near relative of the emperor. These three parts were collectively styled Tri-Sinhala or the Three Sinhalas. The mountainous part of the Island was called Malaya, a word cognate with Malayalam and having the same meaning of 'hill-country'. It lay in all three kingdoms, and was not a political division, being according to the Suluwansa, a rugged and unfrequented country, infested by wild beasts, whither men fled for concealment. It was at times under a Governor.

In course of time the Sinhalese kings were forced to shift their capital from Pihiti to Maya. From Anuradhapura they went to Polonnaruwa, thence to Sigiriya, Dambadeniya, Kurunegala,

Gampola and finally to Kotte. When the capital was at Kotte, the outlying parts were governed by petty rulers, dependant on the suzerain of Kotte. In the fifteenth century we find this country divided into *Ratas and Koralas*, and a certain number of them grouped into Principalities bearing for the most part numerical names. Thus there were the provinces of Seven, Four, Three and Two Korales, and the Five Ratas. In all there were 15 Provinces large and small, subordinated to Kotte and some were governed by princes of the blood-royal.

The principality of the Five Ratas, lay on the hills and were called the *Kande-Uda-Pas-Rata*, "The Five-Countries-on-the Hills" or the *Kande-Uda-Rata*, "The kingdom-on-the-Hills" or simply *Uda-Rata*, "The Highlands". In it was the former capital of Gampola, and its ruler was a relative of him of Kotte. His power depended on the might of his arm, and as Kotte became weaker, he waxed stronger, and occasionally he asserted independence by refusing to pay tribute and had to be reduced to reason by the Prince of the Four Korales. In the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the empire of Kotte was in its decline and had to lean on the Portuguese arm, the ruler of the Kande-Uda-Rata, was fast becoming independent. The name Kande-Uda-Pas-Rata was too much of a mouthful for the Portuguese, who, therefore, spoke of it unceremoniously by the first part of the compound, Kande, which they spelt "Cande". As the kingdom of Kotte took its name from the capital city, so by analogy, they even called the capital of Udarata also Cande. Thus arose the double use of "Kandy", both as the name of the town and the name of the kingdom.

During the political upheavals of the Portuguese era, this kingdom of Kandy had many and painful vicissitudes, till finally a nobleman, whom the Portuguese had befriended, made use of the Portuguese to secure that throne for himself, and turning against them successfully defied Kotte and Sitawaka and the Portuguese; and when Kotte and Sitawaka fell, this king's successors not only became absolute monarchs of the greater part of the Island but

claimed to be *de jure* Emperors of Ceylon. The Portuguese likewise put forward a similar claim on the score of a donation of Don Joao, the last king of Kotte, and of the Prince-Priest Don Joao, the last lawful descendant of the old lineage of the kings of Kandy. But the Sinhalese king successfully asserted his rights by using the Dutch to oust the Portuguese.

Thus though the Portuguese and the Dutch continued to call him "King of Kandy", he was, as a matter of fact, not king of the petty kingdom once called Kandy, but the absolute monarch of "Sinhale", the heir to the traditions and the loyalty of the Sinhalese people. This the king asserted explicitly. "I am the lawful and natural Emperor of Ceylon" he said in his letters to the Dutch¹. "Mine is every district in this Island". "The lowlands are mine; and all the natives of this Island, wherever they may be, are my subjects". The lands held by the Dutch are held by "concession from me". This claim of the Sinhalese king was acknowledged by the Dutch² and by the Sinhalese people, who at all times, looked up to the King of Sinhale as their natural lord, for whom they plotted and intrigued, to whom they betrayed the foreigner, and to whom they all deserted whenever the foreigner invaded his territories. A Dutch governor has left on record that those whom they considered their subjects looked upon the king of Kandy as their "paramount lord". Thus the Sinhalese king was actually lord of Sinhale, though he continued to be called king of Kandy by all those who spoke a language other than Sinhalese. When the British acquired the Dutch settlements of Ceylon they called them the Maritime Provinces, and the territories of the king of Kandy the Kandyan Provinces. At the Convention of 1815 the word Kandyan received statutory sanction and a legal meaning³ obscuring the natural and current Sinhalese concepts.

1. See letters of Rajasinha edited by D. W. Ferguson in J. C. B. A. S. XVIII.

2 See letter of Maetsuicker ib. 188.

3. Those who were subjects of the king of Kandy at the time of the annexation.

I am afraid I have been rather too long over these preliminary observations and will proceed at once to show you the attitude of the kings of Kandy towards the Catholic Faith.

In 1545 the king of Kandy, Wickrama Bahu or Jayavira, found that his cousins, Bhuvaneka Bahu of Kotte and Mayadunne of Sitawaka, who had been enemies one to another, had combined in common hatred of the Portuguese and were meditating an attack on Kandy. He therefore sought to ingratiate himself with the Portuguese and invited them to open a Factory at Trincomalie and offered to become a vassal of Portugal and pay a vassalage of 15 tuskers a year¹. As his offers did not evoke a reply he thought he might make sure of Portuguese help by expressing a desire to become a Christian. He sent word to the Franciscans in Kotte, and one of the friars of Kotte took to Goa a letter of the king in which he promised to embrace the Christian faith along with his son and heir and people, and asked for some Portuguese troops for his defence. The reason for this strange request is twofold. First of all there were two princes of Kotte who had gone to Goa and embraced Christianity and whom in consequence the Portuguese were planning to place on the thrones of Kandy and Jaffna. Secondly he knew that it was only on account of Portuguese aid that Bhuvaneka Bahu had been able to hold out against his brother of Sitawaka. But he was now in bad grace with the Portuguese for not fulfilling the promise of becoming a Christian which the Portuguese were convinced he had actually made when he asked for Franciscan friars. The king of Kandy therefore thought that he could avert an attempt of the Portuguese to enthrone a Christian Prince in Kandy, and arm himself against both Bhuvaneka Bahu and Mayadunne by actually becoming a Christian. He not only offered to become a Christian but even to give his daughter, whom Bhuvaneka Bahu had bespoken for his grandson, in marriage to one of the Christian princes. He wrote letters himself, and made

1. Letters edited by G. Schurhammer in *Ceylon zur zeit de Konigs Bhuvaneka Bahu*. 148, 159, 161, 166, 199.

some Portuguese who were in Kandy write on his behalf, and requested the Franciscans of Kotte to recommend his cause to the Governor of Goa.

In Goa it was first decided to send a force to Kandy to enable the king to become a Christian and to settle the marriage. But the Christian prince of Kotte died of small-pox at this juncture, and the expedition set out and arrived at Kandy in April 1546 only to find that the king had been driven by Mayadunne to sue for peace and pay an indemnity, though he had been secretly baptized in March by a Franciscan hastily summoned from Kotte in the hope that baptism would expedite the force from Goa.

The king, however, was repelled by the coveteousness of the Portuguese commander and disappointed with his scanty force. He thereupon declared that he could not publicly proclaim himself a Christian unless the governor of Goa or his son came with a larger force. The friar thought the king was only shamming and had no real desire of becoming a Christian. The king's son on the other hand was said to be very much in earnest and beloved of the people. It was therefore decided to send a large force under Antonio Moniz Barreto. This expedition arrived at Kandy in August but the King had meanwhile been urged by the king of Kotte as well as the king of Sitawaka not to have anything to do with the Portuguese. He therefore declared that he could not openly declare himself a Catholic unless the Portuguese broke the power of Mayadunne. Moniz felt that there was some treachery and decided to retreat but was attacked on the way by the king's men. To his surprise he was befriended by Mayadunne who tried to poison the mind of the Portuguese captain against the king of Kandy as well as the king of Kotte. The trick succeeded, for Moniz returned to Goa with the tale that the true friend of the Portuguese was neither Bhuvanaeka Bahu nor Jayavira but Mayadunne, a story which led to considerable misunderstandings between the allies. A Portuguese force was next sent to Ceylon with secret instructions to chastise the king of Kandy for his treachery. But the Friars in Kotte

were in favour of the king of Kandy and an expedition again went to Kandy to help the king. They were suddenly attacked near Kandy and put to headlong flight and Mayadunne again befriended them.

From these dealings which reflect little credit on one side and on the other side, it is a pleasure to turn to a King of Kandy of a different stamp, the son of Jayavira. He was known as Karalliyadde Bandara and was born to the king of Kandy of a queen of Kirawella. This young man was a great friend of the friars from the very beginning. When the father came to hear of the Christian tendencies of the son, he decided to disinherit him and give his throne to a younger son born of a queen of Gampola. Karalliyadde Bandara had the support of the nobles, and one day when his father had crossed the river, he seized the throne and proclaimed himself king. The father fled to Mayadunne. Karalliyadde now invited the friars to Kandy and they soon baptized him and his queen and many nobles. This naturally displeased his subjects and Rajasinha of Sitawaka who had succeeded his father Mayadunne, now made overtures to the Kandyan nobles and with the help of Wirasundera Mudali of Peradeniya he invaded Kandy, defeated and drove the king into exile. A Portuguese force was sent to his help by Don Joao of Kotte, but the king and queen soon died of small-pox leaving their infant child, Dona Catharina, and his nephew Yamasinha to the care of the Portuguese who led them to Mannar. Rajasinha rewarded Wirasundera by procuring his death in the picturesque fashion described in the Rajavaliya; and his son Konappu Bandara fled to Colombo and thence to Goa.

Thus ended the career of the first Christian king of Kandy. The loss of his earthly crown was due in great part to his change of religion, and his death was a great blow to the Franciscans who had great hopes for the conversion of Kandy by

his means. They therefore took up the cause of the king's heir. Yamasinha was taken to Mannar and thence to Goa where he was baptized under the name of Don Philip. He sought to go to Lisbon to press his claims for Portuguese support, but he was refused permission. The friars and the Bishop however espoused his cause most warmly.

Matters were in this state when the Portuguese found it necessary to divert Rajasinha from the siege of Colombo by attacking Kandy. Konappu Bandara, who had now lived some time with the Portuguese and had received baptism under the name of Don Juan of Austria and had even married a Christian in Goa, offered to lead an expedition against Kandy. But in the meantime a Christian nobleman of Kandy, Don Francisco, rose against Rajasinha with success and sent an invitation to Yamasinha to come and occupy the throne of Kandy. The favour of the friars overcame the unwillingness of the Portuguese authorities and it was arranged to send an expedition to place Don Philip on the throne of Kandy. This was successfully done and a fort was erected at Gannoruwa, traces of which can still be seen in the Experimental Garden of Peradeniya. But Konappu Bandara or Don Juan of Austria who had come with the expeditionary force now took his revenge. He owed the Franciscans a grudge for putting forward Don Philip and ousting him. He therefore set up the people against the Portuguese and did away with Don Philip.

The Portuguese, thereupon, proclaimed Don Philip's son, Don Joao, king of Kandy; but they were soon forced to flee with their protege. This Don Joao it was, that afterwards went to Goa and Lisbon and became a priest, and lived in great state in Portugal leading a life more worthy of an ex-king of Kandy than of a priest¹.

1. Souza Viterbo. *O Thesouro do Rei de Ceylao*.

Don Juan of Austria now made his position secure. There was, however, one thing that he still lacked, namely a lawful title to the throne; and the Portuguese soon supplied him even with that. Intent on ousting him from the throne they brought Dona Catherina to Kandy. Her family was popular among the people who were quite willing to rally round her. But the Portuguese expedition was ill-planned and led by an inconsiderate and hasty General. He placed Dona Catherina on the throne but surrounded her with a Portuguese *entourage* so that her natural subjects became very jealous and suspicious. There was even a talk that the General himself, or at least one of the Portuguese, meant to marry her. His attitude seemed to the people like that of a hostile invader and soon the Sinhalese troops deserted him. He tried to retreat but before he could do so, Don Juan of Austria or Wimaladharma Suriya, as he now called himself, fell upon the retreating army, destroyed it utterly at Gannoruwa and seized Dona Catherina whom he took to wife, thus earning a title to the throne.

He was cruel in his triumph, and cut off the noses and hands and scooped out the eyes of a number of Portuguese prisoners, and made the others work at the building of a palace. He is related to have been most cruel to the Franciscans, but he was invariably kind and generous to the Jesuit captives. I do not know the reason for this distinction, and it may well be that it was due to the influence of Dona Catherina, who had lived all her life in Mannar where the Jesuits were, and had with her a Jesuit chaplain whose letter to the General of the Society of Jesus, written from Colombo after his release, is still extant¹.

Wimaladharma did not live long; yet he secured his position with great cunning and ability. At one time he even attempted to make up with the Portuguese, but died in 1604 leaving a son and a daughter. His half-brother or cousin, Senarat, an ex-Buddhist

1. Archives S. J.

monk, ascended the throne, married Dona Catherina and soon did away with his brother's son to make room for his own. This grieved the Queen so much that she sickened and died. She had attempted to escape to the Portuguese with her children, but failed. In her last days she greatly repented of having lived in forgetfulness of her faith. As we know from Dutch visitors she never abandoned her religion as her husband did, never visited a temple¹, and died, as we know from an eye-witness, praying to God for pardon, and with the name of Jesus on her lips². On her death Senarat took her daughter to wife. She too tried to escape to the Portuguese but failed. But in spite of all this, Senarat was in many respects a good man and a good king. A Portuguese prisoner who lived many years in Kandy, considered him one of the best and wisest of Sinhalese kings of his time. He was a man of peace, a scholarly man, and a great lover of books and studies³. He learnt Portuguese and even French and invited the Franciscan friars to Kandy and entrusted to them the education of his children. All the children were educated in the Western method in Western classics, and the queen is said to have known Portuguese so well that she was even something of a poetess in that language. Seeing the king so well disposed the friars were eager that the Portuguese should leave him alone; but such was not to be the case.

Senarat's youngest son, and successor, Rajasinha, retained all his life an affection for the religion of his mother; allowed the missionaries every liberty in his realms. Franciscans, Augustinians and Dominicans lived in his territories, and the king even made use of them to denounce the injustice of the Portuguese in invading his country. The friars in their turn served him most

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1. See *Earliest Dutch Visits to Ceylon* D. W. Ferguson J 80 398, 400.
 2. Baldaeus ch. xiii.
 3. *Expedition to Uva* 1630, pp 33-4.

faithfully. A Franciscan set out for Portugal at his request to represent matters to the king in Lisbon, but he was not allowed to embark. A Dominican who was friendly with the king was arrested by the Portuguese on the score of aiding him. Finally Rajasinha lost patience with the Portuguese and invited the Dutch to oust them. However he knew the difference between being Portuguese and being Catholic, and though he hated the one, he had love and reverence for the other. On the surrender of Colombo he quarrelled with the Dutch and caused a writing to be affixed in Colombo inviting the Catholics to come to his dominions, which many did. Around his person he retained Christians. In his old age he became whimsical and fantastic and though he never set free Father Bartholomew Bergonco S.J. who was seized while making his way to Colombo to assume duties as Rector of the College, he had no small regard for that old Father. Knox tells how on one occasion the King sent for "Vergonco" and asked him, "If it would not be better for him to lay aside his old Coat and Cap and take service under him and receive Honour from him." He replied to the King: "That he boasted more in that old Habit and in the Name of Jesus, than in all the Honour that he could do him." The King valued the Father for this saying. Father Bergonco who was a scholar in Syriac had a "pretty library about him... about Thirty or Forty Books, which the King, they say, seized on after his death, and keeps".

His son and successor Wimaladharmas II was the king who was reigning in Kandy when the Venerable Father Joseph Vaz came to this country. He at first imprisoned the Father suspecting him to be a spy, but soon came to know him for a Catholic priest and became an admirer of his holy life, gave him liberty to preach the gospel in the country, defended him from calumny and gave him royal favour and many privileges. At the

Father's request he freed his Catholic subjects from services to the temples, received the priests with honour in the palace, exempting them from the abject prostrations which he exacted from all others and gave them very great marks of reverence. What the Fathers valued most of all was the protection which the king gave them. The fear of offending the king of Kandy kept the Dutch from seizing the Fathers who therefore used to go regularly to Kandy to pay their respects to the king. The king's kindness towards Father Joseph Carvalho is thus described by Father Joseph Vaz in a letter of 28 July, 1702:

“ His Imperial Majesty, in his great desire for the recovery of Father Carvalho, was not satisfied with sending his own physicians to treat him, but sent courtiers to observe the progress of the patient under the treatment of the physicians, and directed a Christian physician to attend on him...After the Father died the king gave orders that we should bury him according to the Christian style and in the way that priests are buried and that we should inform His Imperial Majesty if anything was wanted for the purpose. He also granted permission to bury him in the church, a thing that is never granted to any one on account of the superstitions of the people, though the church is along the public road and near a place whither His Majesty is accustomed to go once a year, there to wait to go in procession with the water that is brought from the river with pagan ceremonies according to their superstitions ”¹. “ This was a privilege unheard of in the city of Kandy ” writes another Oratorian, “ where it is an inviolable rule that no dead body be interred within the city, even though it be of one of the royal family, a rule most strictly observed, especially in the case of places or streets by which the king passes, as was the case with our church. Some time after the death of Father Carvalho, the king happened to pass by the

1. *The Oratorian Mission in Ceylon.* p. 16—17.

church on the occasion of some solemnity of his sect, halted near the church and sent two courtiers to offer His Majesty's condolences to the Venerable Father Joseph Vaz and to tell him that the king gave full leave to get another priest to be his companion. This was an honour that caused great admiration and surprise throughout the kingdom"¹. On the king's death the Oratorian Fathers in the low-country were summoned to Kandy to pay their obeisance to the new king Narendrasinha.

This new king had known the Oratorians from his childhood and showed a great attachment to the Catholic faith. He had, according to the letters of the missionaries "a fairly good knowledge of the doctrines of Christianity" and caused religious disputations to be held in the palace, and "showed great pleasure and satisfaction when the Catholics came out triumphant in discussion with the heretics". Once he showed Father Jacome Goncalvez an *ola* writing containing a list of the Sinhalese kings and princes that had embraced Christianity. He presented to the Fathers some Christian objects that had been in the palace of Kandy from the time of the Portuguese, namely vestments, and Stations of the Cross. He even kept a statue of St. Anthony in the palace. In consequence of all this the Fathers even entertained the hope of his conversion.

In 1734 Narendrasinha came to hear that Father Francis Goncalvez was seized by the Dutch and was in a prison at Galle. He caused letters to be written to the Dutch asking for the release of the Father. But as the Dutch apparently took no notice, he caused representations to be made to the Dutch envoys; and when even that was ineffective, he sent two courtiers to Colombo with orders not to return without the priest. The Dutch Governor at first refused to liberate the Father but when he consulted his council they were of opinion

1. *Ib.* p. 22.

that the king's request should be granted. Accordingly Father Goncalvez was brought to Colombo and thence to Sitawaka where he was handed over to the ambassadors to be taken to Kandy in triumph¹.

Narendrasinha had so great a reverence for Father Vaz that hearing of a rumour that the body of the holy man had been removed to Goa he made Father Jacome Goncalvez open the grave in the presence of his courtiers in order to be assured that the rumour was false.

But in 1739 Narendrasinha died. On his deathbed he asked candles to be lit for his health in the church of Our Lady in Kandy. "But" writes an Oratorian "though the king knew our religion quite well he did not follow during life the light that was given to him. Father Custodio de Andrade who was in Kandy at the time was not able to do anything for this king, for no one can appear before the sovereign of Kandy and speak with him unless summoned for the purpose and conducted to the royal presence, a rare honour that is given even to the courtiers but seldom, and of our priests only to the Venerable Father Joseph Vaz, founder of the mission, to Father Ignatius de Almeyda and to Father Jacome Goncalvez, who at this time was away in Colombo".

Narendrasinha "was succeeded in the government of the country by Prince Kumara Astana [Sri Vijaya Rajasinha] the brother of the widowed queen, with whom he conducts the government till he is crowned. It may perhaps be that at his coronation he will change his name, for there are no descendants of the royal house. This prince is the one with whom Father Jacome Goncalvez had dealings and to whom he dedicated the book mentioned among his writings as written at his request. He has no blood relationship with the house of Kandy except that his sister is the queen. He is a native of Madras on the Fishery Coast, but as he is of the race which the Sinhalese call Surivanca, namely

1. Ceylon Literary Register IV 518-522.

descendant of the sun, of which the kings of Ceylon boast, and as there is no other in Kandy with that fantastic claim to occupy the throne, the Sinhalese do not hesitate to submit to a foreign ruler esteeming the nobility of another better than their own”.

This Nayakkar prince Kumara Astana, who was a Hindu, professed himself a Buddhist on his accession to the throne. Being a foreigner he had naturally to be very circumspect, and as the Buddhist revival wrought by Weliwita Saranankara was then preparing, the monks gained great ascendancy. Narendrasinha had caused Suriyagoda Nayaka Unnanse to be beheaded and his relatives sent to Bintenna: Weliwita himself was banished from the court. But on the accession of this king, Weliwita returned to court, effected the recall of the relatives of Suriyagoda and sent a deputation to Siam to bring Buddhist priests to restore ordination in Ceylon. The king was, however, very favourable to the Catholic priests and had expressed great satisfaction with the controversial work written for him by Father Jacome Goncalvez. This Father was a great scholar in Sinhalese and Tamil, and has far more literary works in prose and verse to his credit than any contemporary writer in Ceylon. He was at that time Superior of the Mission, and happening to be in Colombo at the time of the accession of the new king, he immediately sent a *dekum* or gift as is customary in the country. This present consisted of some curios and “sweets made in Colombo with great care and cost and perfection”. The king received the offering “most graciously and in return ordered a quantity of gold coins called pagodes to be sent to the Father”. The Superior, somewhat taken aback by the unexpected money gift, declined it with great courtesy saying that the Catholic priests had served the Kings of Kandy and their Catholic subjects for the last fifty years without accepting any remuneration”. Thereupon the king sent word to the Father that the money was meant to be an alms to be distributed through his hands. “The Father thereupon distributed the money among the missionaries, for the amount was very large, with orders to distribute it to the poor in the name of the new king and as coming from him”.

Soon after this Father Goncalvez came to Kandy in person to pay his obeisance to the king, and was "received in the palace, in the presence of the chief men of the court and many priests of their religion called Sangatares, with great demonstrations of honour, not only by the king but even by the queen, his sister. They accepted with great pleasure the presents the Father brought, consisting of some overseas trinkets. They treated him with much affability as they would a person of intimate confidence. When the Father took his leave the king sent the First Adigar to inquire whether the Father had any request to make. He replied that he lived quite content with the good will of the king and desired no temporal favour. The Adigar delivered this message adding his own comment that the Fathers do not seek their own interests. The king was pleased with the message and sent word to the Father that as he wanted neither silver nor gold, he would give him what he esteemed more than anything else, namely permission to build churches in any part of the kingdom he pleased, and to cover them with tiles, which is not the usual thing in that kingdom nor ever permitted to anyone, however great he might be, and is only granted to our churches". This last statement is confirmed by Knox who tells us that the peoples "are not permitted to build their houses above one story high, neither may they cover them with tiles".

In 1742 the king gave Father Goncalvez a great token of his respect, for he sent him an ivory statue of Our Lady. The statue was taken in procession from Kandy to Bolawatta, where Father Goncalvez was lying ill with the sickness that was to end his life. The statue was brought by a courtier, who was a Catholic, a Portuguese descendant in the royal service, who was in consequence "dressed in Sinhalese attire, which was stately and grand." About half a mile from the church a procession went out to meet the statue, which was in an andor or *charola*. It was received with great solemnity and placed on the altar of the church.

These favours, which Sri Vijaya Rajasingha showed to the Catholics in the early years of his reign, gave displeasure to two parties; first to the Dutch, who found that the priests whom they

rigorously persecuted in the lowcountry, continued to receive favour in the Kandyan kingdom in spite of their repeated protests; and secondly to those endeavouring to bring about a revival of Buddhism, who did not like the extraordinary favours shown to Christian priests in the very heart of the kingdom. These two parties now joined hands, and the Dutch obtained through the lay and clerical leaders of the revival, what they had in vain attempted to obtain from the kings of Kandy. They suborned the Second Adigar and two other Disawas, and through them conveyed to the leaders of the revival, copies of the works of Father Goncalvez, especially a book written in 1734 for the converts of Matara, in order to stir the resentment of the revivalists.

Accordingly in March 1746, while a Dutch ambassador was in Kandy actively intriguing against the Catholic priests, the clerical leaders caused an uproar in the palace demanding the expulsion of the Catholic priests from Kandy. The king being a foreigner and till recently a Hindu, was greatly alarmed, as the commotion was on the score of religion. He therefore thought he would allay the feelings of the rioters by referring the matter to the Second Adigar and two other Disawas, who unfortunately were just the persons that the Dutch had bespoken. The First Adigar and his son the Disawa of Sabaragamuwa were favourable to the priests; and so also was, or pretended to be, the king's father-in-law, a very ambitious Nayakkar, who was gradually becoming a person of great influence in the realm. The hostile chiefs, looked upon the king's timidity as a tacit concession of their demands, and set to work in right earnest.

The Second Adigar forthwith surrounded the church in Kandy and took the unsuspecting priest prisoner, destroyed the church and confiscated the property. The Disawa of the Four Korales did the same in his province, and brought a priest seized at Sitawaka in chains to Kandy. Five priests were captured in the same way in the Seven Korales. The church of Bolawatta was destroyed, and the ivory statue sent by the king was taken to Kandy. Three

priests and a lay-brother were taken in Puttalam, one in Batticaloa; and all the churches were razed to the ground. The captured priests were all brought to the metropolis where on Good Friday, 1746, they were arraigned before a tribunal, consisting of the three hostile chiefs and the priest Weliwita Saranankara. The prisoners were first of all invited to give up their faith in return for their lives; but as this threat had no effect, it was decided to banish them from the kingdom. Thereupon the Dutch ambassador eagerly asked that they be delivered to the Company. The tribunal was disposed to accede to this request, but the priests appealed to them, not to hand them over to their declared enemies. Upon this the king intervened, and directed that they be ordered to return to Goa. The priests then asked that at least their breviaries be returned to them, which was rudely refused and they were bidden to be thankful that they escaped with their lives.

On Holy Saturday accordingly they were led out on the march to Puttalam with orders to set sail for Goa. The poor missionaries found themselves in a sorry plight. For more than fifty years the kingdom of Kandy had been their refuge from the persecution of the Dutch; Kandy and Puttalam and Bolawatta had been their headquarters, whence they sallied out to minister to the persecuted Catholics in Dutch territory. Now they were banished from Kandy as well as from Dutch territory and far more effectively. There was some chance of making their way into Dutch territory in disguise as they had done so often before; but the Company knowing this kept a sharp lookout at the frontiers and prevented them from communicating with their fellow missionaries living in hiding in the lowlands. However Providence came to their rescue, for the Raja Vanniya, a petty ruler who considered himself independent both of the Dutch and of the king of Kandy, invited them to his little principality and offered them the liberty and favour that they had long enjoyed under the Sinhalese kings of Kandy.

The hostile party was apparently satisfied for the nonce with the expulsion of the priests from the metropolis, the destruction of

the churches and the dispersion of the Catholics. The king whose hands had been forced by the Buddhist leaders refused to accept the confiscated property, and only received into the palace the ivory Madonna of Bolawatta, the ivory crucifix of Weudda and the statues of the church of Kandy. He also made it known to the priests that he would try to recall them. But before he could do anything of the kind, Sri Vijaya died on 11 August, 1747, and was succeeded by a Nayakkar boy, the brother of his queen, who took the throne name of Kirtisri Rajasinha. The king's untimely death was popularly believed to be a retribution for the cruel expulsion of the priests who had deserved so well of the kings of Kandy. The many calamities that befell the kingdom at this time, were attributed to the same cause. Accordingly the confiscated statues that were in the palace were restored to the Catholics, and those of the church of Kandy were returned to the Portuguese descendants who had settled down at Wahakotte on the outbreak of the persecution. One hundred and sixty *ola* books seized at Puttalam were returned to the Fathers. The new king's father, who had already begun to wield power during the life time of his son-in-law, was now all powerful in court and expressed himself ready to recall the priests and sent a message to them to that effect. But his domination was exasperating to the Sinhalese chiefs, and the Nayakkar seems only to have been eager to get presents from the Catholics. Two Fathers, however, went to Kandy under a safe-conduct. They knew that presents must be made by suitors for favours, and accordingly took with them some amber, glass lamps, cloth of gold, and some gold coins obtained from Goa. The Nayakkar took for himself the presents intended for the king, and put off negotiations with a hint that he would like richer presents before taking up the matter in earnest. The two Fathers who were the guests of their old friend the First Adigar returned disappointed.

During the Sinhalese New Year festivities of 1749 there was a great commotion in Kandy on account of the altercations between the First Adigar and the all-powerful Nayakkar. The Adigar and

the Sinhalese chiefs who greatly resented the interference of the Nayakkar relatives of Kirtisri, demanded from the king the punishment of his father and of another Nayakkar, whom the Oratorian writings call "the Modeliar of Jaffna" who aided the king's father in his extortions. The king reproved his father and would have punished the Modeliar had he not taken shelter in the palace and worked on the king's feelings. Upon this there were rumours of conspiracies to enthrone another prince, and the king had some communication with the Catholic priests, as a result of which he restored to power and office the Disawa of Sabaragamuwa, who had been dismissed through the intrigues of the Nayakkars. This led to some hopes of the recall of the priests to Kandy; but nothing came of it, except that the priests were enabled to visit the Catholics in the outlying parts of the kingdom and work with greater liberty in Puttalam, Chilaw, Kotiyar and Batticaloa.

In 1753 after the arrival of the Siamese Buddhist priests to restore *upasampada* ordination in Ceylon, an unexpected means of returning to Kandy was made known to the missionaries. Among the visitors was a Prince of Siam, who it appears was willing to procure the recall of the Catholic priests. At last he conveyed a message to that effect to Father Pedro Paulo; but a conspiracy to place that prince on the throne was soon detected and the hopes were dashed to the ground. Again a new First Adigar sent a message of goodwill to the Fathers and inquired about a clock. The superior of the mission hastily procured a clock from Colombo and sent it to the Adigar, but he wanted a larger clock, one that would strike the hours: none such was to be had in Colombo.

Thus in spite of various promises and attempts the mission of Kandy could not be revived. The missionaries, however, managed to visit the Catholics living in the kingdom, but at rare intervals and for a short time only. Where the Catholics were influential and the Disawa sympathetic, the missionary was able to remain a few days, but the Catholics living in the interior of the kingdom could not be visited. The Catholics of Wahakotte, for instance, never received a

visit from a priest till the arrival of the British. Those who could manage it went to Negombo for the sacraments, and the Church Registers of Negombo show entries of marriages etc. of Catholics of Kandy.

There were some unforeseen consequences of this expulsion of the Catholic priests by the leaders of the Buddhist revival. In 1742 Pope Benedict XIV, in his desire to promote the canonization of the Venerable Father Joseph Vaz, relaxed the rigors of Canon Law, to enable the testimonies of eye-witnesses in Kandy to be recorded; but this Kandyan persecution prevented any juridical process. On the other hand in 1763 when the Dutch sought to invade Kandy through Negombo, they, in order to gain the support of the Catholics, invited two priests to accompany the expedition, which they did. As a result of these dealings the Dutch government became more tolerant and permitted Catholic priests to live openly in Dutch territory.

In Kandy, in the reign of Kirtisri, there was compiled the *Suluvansa*, or the continuation of the *Mahavansa*: and the compilers who were the Buddhist priests of Kandy, who had brought about the expulsion of the Catholic priests, took occasion to record the event, not as it took place, but as they wanted it to be regarded by posterity, and wrote the following :

“ The infamous parangis, the infidels, the impious ones who at the time of Rajasinha had still remained behind in the town and are now dwelling here and there, rich in cunning, endeavoured by gifts of money and the like to get their creed adopted by others and led a life without reverence for the Sasana. When the king (Vijayarajasinha) heard thereof, he became vehemently indignant, issued commands to his dignitaries, had their houses and books destroyed and banished from the country those who did not give up the faith ”.

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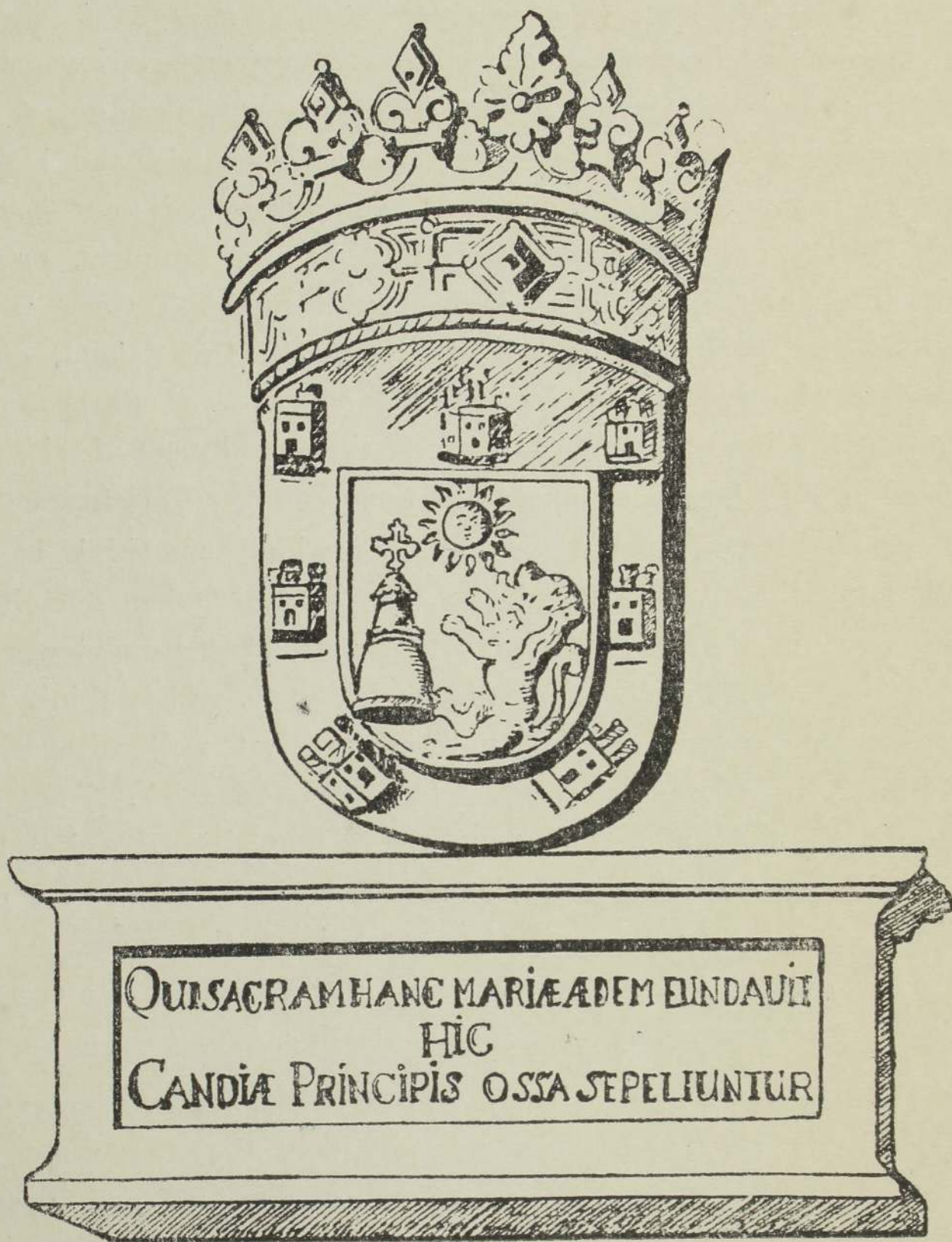
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Such is the tale of the dealings of the Kandyan Kings with Catholicism. The old dynasty of Kandy gave to the Catholic faith many converts and the first Sinhalese priest. The next generation of sovereigns treated Catholics with honour and respect and the last surviving members of Kandyan royalty endeared themselves to us by favouring Catholic priests and protecting them from the persecution of the Dutch as well as from the hostility of the Buddhist clergy. When, however, the throne passed to a foreign dynasty from Madura and the Buddhist revival took place, those who had so far unsuccessfully attempted to hinder the progress of the Catholic faith by persecution and calumny, at last had recourse to violence and put an end to the traditional toleration of the Kandyan kingdom. This would have been humanly speaking a staggering blow to the Church had not the long and zealous labours of the Oratorians raised up in this island a loyal and fervent Catholic community, so that while those living in Dutch territory were able to win toleration for themselves and their priests, the influence of the Catholics of the Vanni induced its ruler to extend his patronage to their persecuted priests. But the one glorious fact of history that will always be remembered with gratitude is, that, in the palmy days of Catholicism the last king of Kotte was the foremost convert to the Catholic faith and the last descendant of the royal house of Sitawaka a cleric in minor orders, the last scions of the Sinhalese royalty of the house of Kandy were the foremost protectors and benefactors of the church in the dark hour of her trials.



Signature of Fr. Jacome Goncalvez
(from "Life of Fr. Vaz" by Fr. S. G. P.)



Inscribed stone slab above the Tomb of Don Joao, Prince of Kandy, who became a Priest and died in 1642, in Lisbon.

This is a translation of what is inscribed: "Here lie buried the bones of the Prince of Kandy who built this sacred edifice to Mary."

(Block supplied by Bishop Ed. Pieris O. M. I.)

PORTUGUESE MISSIONARY METHODS

It has been brought home to me in many and various ways that there is in the minds of our countrymen who are not of our faith a very grave and very serious misapprehension of the history of the Catholic Church in Ceylon. To do our countrymen justice, it is, I think, not their intention to belittle our numbers, or our zeal, or to deny our success, or the beneficent institutions which the Catholic faith has called into being in this Island, or to under-rate the part it has played in the education of the country. They admit all this, and even pay us the compliment of taking a leaf from our book and adopting our methods of instruction and organization. But there is one thing which they think is our weak point, about which they believe we have misgivings ourselves: that we would fain bury it if we could, and hide it from view, and not expose it to the light of history and inquiry. They think that however matters stand with us now, all was not well with us at the start: that it was, in short, "force and violence", "fire and sword", the "thumb-screw" and the "inquisitional rack" that made the first Catholics in Ceylon: that we are, much as we may desire to hide it, the descendants, or at least the successors, of those who were converted at the point of the bayonet—to use the expressive but anachronistic phrase of the day.

This charge was not originally made by our fellow countrymen so clearly or in so many words. But now they have not the slightest hesitation in stating it quite frankly and openly. Formerly—that is, some twenty-five, thirty, or fifty years ago—it was never set down in black and white; but it was nevertheless at the back of their minds, because they had heard or read contemptuous references to Portuguese converts. Some writers wrote the word *convert* within inverted commas, or printed it in italics, to show the kind of article they meant, and went on to speak of "nominal Christians", or "Government Christians",

Christiani sine Christo, “Christians without Christ”, or “Baptized pagans”, or other words to that effect¹, by which Dutch writers meant their own converts; and as there are no Dutch Christians now, they foist these opprobrious names on us as if, forsooth, we were the same thing. The Christians of the Dutch Government, who ceased to exist when the Dutch left, just as readily as they came into being when the Dutch came, are poles asunder from the converts of the Portuguese, who were made of such sterner stuff that, as Sir Emerson Tennent expressed it, “neither corruption nor coercion could force them to abjure their faith”².

However that may be, the impression abroad among our countrymen is such as I have described. You must not suppose, however, that it is merely the outcome of malice, or of that common feeling of bigotry that makes people of one religion sometimes think and speak disparagingly of those of another. The impression I am speaking of is not so much in the minds of our unlettered countrymen, who do not know what they say, but rather in the minds of that ever-growing class of men who have been schooled in English, and are quite alive to the full significance of their words. For they think so, not from ignorance, but from knowledge; not because they are ill-disposed to us, but because they think that such is really the case with us. That

1. See “An Account of the Dutch Church in Ceylon, collected from the local Records deposited in the Wolfendahl Church, Colombo, by the Revd. J. D. Palm”, in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Ceylon Branch, Vol. I, No. 3.
2. “Notwithstanding every persecution, however, the Roman Catholic religion retained its influence and held good its position in Ceylon. It was openly professed by the immediate descendants of the Portuguese, who remained in the island after its conquest by the Dutch; and in private it was equally adhered to by large bodies of the natives, both Sinhalese and Tamils, whom neither corruption nor coercion could induce to abjure it”. Sir Emerson Tennent: *Christianity in Ceylon*, p. 42.

is the way they have been taught to read history. And if they cannot give you proof for what they say, or adduce facts or instances in support of their statement, it is not because they think the proof or the facts are wanting, but because they think that it is so notoriously true that it never occurs to them that it needs proving. They think that in our heart of hearts we admit it ourselves: that we cannot but admit it. In fact they have so often heard it said or implied or insinuated or suggested or taken for granted, as a matter of fact and of history, ever so far back as they remember, that they think it belongs to that class of accredited facts that none can gainsay, none can reasonably call in question.

And, indeed, there is no doubt that it has been dinned into their ears in season and out of it. Whenever and wherever a remark on the Portuguese converts was to the point, or called for, or even merely possible, that remark has been unhesitatingly made, and that remark has invariably been one and the same; to wit, that the Portuguese made their converts at the point of the sword. And whether you read the English preface to a Sinhalese poem, or the local appendix to a handbook of Yoga, or read a prize-giving address in the next morning's paper, you will learn what to think of Portuguese fanaticism and bigotry; and the picturesque phrase or the witty saying in which that opinion is expressed will linger in your memory, and be remembered and repeated and quoted by the man-in-the-street as confirmation strong as Holy Writ.

Thus the impression on the popular mind, of which I am speaking, is due in a very large measure to the current literature of the day, newspapers, magazine articles, pamphlets and lectures. Those who are responsible for them are men of standing and respectability, whose names are before the public, and whose opinions carry weight with the masses: and to them we must not attribute base or mean motives for what they say. They may

indeed be moved occasionally by that natural tendency to exaggerate the evils and minimize the virtues of those whom they dislike; but on the whole, judging them fairly and honestly, as we should, and putting the best interpretation on their actions, as becomes Catholics, we must admit that they think and speak in that strain from a kind of conviction. They are, we must suppose, really and actually convinced, as a result of their readings in history, that the converts made by the Portuguese were made at the sword's point.

They have, indeed, a good excuse, in that their predecessors drew, if anything, a very much darker picture of the Portuguese converts. It is true that neither Baldaeus, nor Valentyn, nor any of the Dutch writers, like Schouten or Saar or Schwitzer, ever accused the Portuguese of making forcible conversions, though of course they spoke ill of them in other respects. Baldaeus even went out of his way to say that he was striving to follow the methods of the Catholic priests¹. But in the early British period, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, many an Englishman who had held a military, ecclesiastical or civil appointment in this colony for a few years, on his return after his arduous labours in the tropics, safely delivered himself of a book. These books are very useful in their own way, as giving us a picture of ourselves as others saw us, and a record of the things that fell under their observation. The Portuguese methods of conversion was not one of the things that came under their observation, for the very good reason that the conversions had taken place, and the missions had ceased to exist, about a century and half before these gentle folk were good enough to grace this Island with their presence. But

1. "And I am very free to confess that I have frequently followed their footsteps in reforming the churches and schools in Mannar and Jaffnapatnam, so far as they were consistent with our religion and consonant to the genius of these nations". Philip Baldaeus: *Description of Ceylon* (Eng. Trans.), p. 792.

that did not hinder them from forming an opinion. On other matters their appreciation and comments are divergent, and they do not agree; but on this one point there is marvellous agreement: that the Portuguese “imposed the Christian religion by means of the inquisition”¹ as Captain Percival found out, or that the Portuguese “compelled the natives of that country to adopt their religion without consulting their inclinations”², as the Reverend James Cordiner discovered, or that they were forced to embrace the Catholic faith “by the lessons of the sword”, as said another reverend gentleman who concealed his name under a nom-de-plume. In fact nearly all those who wrote about Ceylon in the English language, Percival and Cordiner, Philalethes and Valentia, Davy and Knighton, Sirr and Pridham, and all those who drew their inspiration from them; all, with the significant exception of the veracious Robert Knox and the industrious Emerson Tennent, said the same, and said it as often as the occasion arose to say it. Some of them even shed a tear over the wretched dupes of the mummeries and superstitions of Rome, and proceeded to contrast the violence and fraud, the deceit and cunning of those wolves in sheep’s clothing, otherwise called Popish priests, with the pure gospel and unsullied apostolate of the missionaries of the Protestant persuasion, working under the spiritual direction of the British Governor of Ceylon, who, on

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1. “Nothing can be contrary to the spirit of the Christian religion than the attempt to impose it on mankind by force.....The Portuguese government was, however, still weak enough to yield to the arguments of the priests, who maintained that imposing the Christian religion by means of the inquisition was the only sure method of securing their dominion”. Robert Percival: *An Account of the Island of Ceylon*, p. 8.
 2. “Out of the ruins of Hindu Pagodas and temples dedicated to Buddha they reared Romish churches, set up their banners of the cross, and compelled the natives of the country to adopt the forms of that religion without consulting their inclinations”. Revd. James Cordiner: *A Description of Ceylon*, I., p. 154.

23rd September, 1799, officially proclaimed himself, by virtue of his letters-patent, the “ executor of ecclesiastical jurisdiction ” and the “ Ordinary of Ceylon ”; or in other words bishop of the British Settlements in Ceylon and of the dependencies thereof, in addition to his other duties which do not involve apostolic succession.

This charge continued to be repeated by a succession of writers from early British times down to our day; and now it has assumed a very serious aspect, for it has now received a scientific habitation and a place in history. Hitherto those who said it, merely repeated parrot-wise what others had said before them; but now two prominent men in Ceylon have expressed the same charge in more emphatic terms, not as a mere impression, but as an ascertained and well established historical truth. They are both of them University men, eminent, I believe, in their own line, who at any rate have been chosen to be, one a Lecturer and the other a Professor in the highest educational institution in this Island, the University College of Colombo. If ever we can expect sound and solid historical opinions it is from men of that kind, men bred in a University and holding academic degrees, and themselves engaged in giving that same university culture, that accuracy of statement, that circumspection and critical insight and dispassionate judgment that is generally associated with university education. Such men will not advance statements without proof: they will not be content to take their opinions from hearsay; and the more emphatically they assert a historical truth, the greater, we must suppose, is the conviction driven into them by their personal and independent researches into the history of this Island.

Such is the man, and such the statement of Doctor G. P. Malalasekara, Master of Arts of the London University and a Lecturer in the University College of Colombo. This learned Doctor, in a book published under the high auspices of the Royal

Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, stated that “Dom Joao III”, King of Portugal, or rather “Emperor of Portugal”, as the erudite lecturer writes, “was a staunch supporter of the church, fanatical in his zeal for the conversion of his heathen subjects. The Church itself was in a particularly aggressive mood.....A party of Franciscan monks accompanied the Ceylon Ambassadors. They immediately set to work.....Their instructions were to begin by preaching, but, that failing to proceed to the decision of the sword”¹. Lest his reader should doubt that so horrible an order was ever given by a Christian king to Christian missionaries going on a peaceful mission to a friendly sovereign; lest his reader should suspect that this order has reference to something else, or is at least capable of some other explanation than the bloodthirsty condemnation of those who fail to heed the gospel, our learned lecturer takes the trouble to give chapter and verse. And being a University lecturer accustomed to critical and scientific methods, he does not merely refer to some former writer from whom anyone may take such a quotation at second or third hand, but goes to the very source, so that the reader may see that he has read the sentence in its context and is quite persuaded that such actually were the instructions of the missionaries. It is true that he does not quote the King’s own Portuguese words, but only the English translation of the Spanish sentence as appears in another context in the *Azia Portuguesa* of Faria Y Souza—whom in this instance he calls by an evident printers’ devil “Faria V Souza”—Volume the First, Part the Second, Chapter the Fifth, in which Faria Y Souza had not yet even begun to speak of Ceylon!

But what more can you want than the *ipsissima verba* of the fanatical King, clear, unhesitating, unmistakable? How could

1. The Pali Literature of Ceylon, by G. P. Malalasekara, Ph. D., M.A., (London), Lecturer in Sanskrit, Pali and Sinhalese, University College, Colombo, p. 263.

the Franciscans hesitate to obey the behests of their liege lord? It is scarcely possible to go further. Yet he did not say that they actually did so; he does not say clearly and definitively that the Catholics of Ceylon were made that way; he did not say that the Franciscans proceeded to the decision of the sword. That final conclusion was left to a colleague, to Professor David Hussey, also a Master of Arts and a Professor in the University College of Colombo. He was not hitherto known as a student of Ceylon history; but being an Honours-man in history, and seeing that there was great demand for a book of history for schools, he took pity on the youth of Ceylon and undertook to supply the demand. And in the course of his work "Ceylon and World History" he gave expression to many opinions discreditable to the Catholic faith, but traditional in the school of history in which he was brought up—about which, however, I am not now speaking—but in the second book of "Ceylon and World History" he makes a statement which I must print in the thickest type possible, as it embodies the final conclusion of this student of Ceylon history on the all-important subject of the Portuguese missionary methods.

THE PORTUGUESE PRIESTS, says he, THOUGHT IT THEIR DUTY TO CONVERT THE HEATHEN BY ANY MEANS IN THEIR POWER. THEY THEREFORE CALLED IN FREELY THE HELP OF THE GOVERNMENT, AND EVEN OF THE TROOPS. MANY SINHALESE WERE BAPTIZED AT THE POINT OF THE SWORD.

Here is the oft-repeated charge laid at the door of the Portuguese priests, fair and square, without reserve, without qualification, without circumlocution, magisterially, as I may call it, being the verdict of a Master of Arts, a Professor writing *ex-professo*. For be it noted, he does not say that some *may have been* so baptized, but that *many actually were* baptized at the sword's point. And he is no mere pamphleteer carried away by

his feelings, but a sober and staid Professor, a matter-of-fact Englishman, writing history; and he says so not in some obscure book or lecture meant for grown-ups who may be expected not to swallow all they read, but in a text book of history intended for the school-room and approved by the Department of Education for the rising generation of Ceylon to quench their thirst for history.

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This is indeed a very remarkable phenomenon: that a very large number of persons, of all sorts and conditions of life, our own countrymen and foreigners, much as they differ in education and upbringing, in racial prejudice and religious convictions and outlook on life, all agree in one thing, that the Portuguese made their converts at the point of the sword. Such a unanimity is after all the only ground for our historical opinions. Few men have the leisure to embark on historical research, and most men are content to accept the verdict of the generality of writers on a given subject. The only rational explanation of such a unanimity in condemning with one accord the Portuguese methods of conversion, seems to be that the conclusion is forced on every student of history. Nothing short of this will explain that wholesale and monotonous unanimity. For these estimable persons were not alive at the time these methods are said to have been applied. They must have found them recorded somewhere, or deduced them from recorded data; or else they should not be so tremendously positive and assert it in such unqualified terms. It has been said of the Portuguese that they left the ten commandments behind at the Cape of Good Hope, if they brought them even so far; but we must not suppose that these righteous writers made a similar shipwreck of the commandment of God which forbids man to bear false witness against his neighbour. No! We must not do them that injustice.

The proof of their statement must be there, if only we look for it. If you and I keep an open mind and divest ourselves of any prejudice, because it concerns our family history, we too ought to find, what so many others have found, that the Portuguese landed in this country with the sword in one hand and the cross in the other; that they set to work with both hands, and that we are the outcome of that ambidextrous activity.

That investigation we must make. Truth and honesty require it. Truth we must have by all means. No Catholic has any reason to fear truth, whichever way it tells, as Leo XIII said when he opened the Vatican archives to all comers. If the Portuguese missionaries used force and violence to make converts, let us add our own execration of such nefarious proceedings. Their behaviour does not compromise the Church, for if Catholics are unfaithful to the teaching and principles of the Catholic Church, they doubly deserve our vituperation, and we should not have the slightest hesitation in throwing them overboard. The Catholic faith teaches that faith is an act of the free will aided by divine grace, and that what God Almighty has left free no man has a right to force. We know that to baptize at the sword's point is not merely ineffectual and vain, but that it is a sacrilege, an insult to our faith and to God. And if the Portuguese missionaries did so, they did not add converts to the Church, but only heaped coals for their own damnation.

Nor will the methods of the Portuguese missionaries be any reflection on us. For when all is said and done even our bitterest adversaries must admit that converts made by force did not outlive the Dutch persecution which began immediately on the expulsion of the Portuguese from this Island. The Dutch drove out all Catholic priests, seized our churches and schools, penalized the Catholic religion, made it death to harbour a priest, forbade even "private conventicles" of Catholics, enforced their attendance in the Reformed churches and schools under pain of

fine and imprisonment and chastisement, imposed the Reformed sacraments and the Helvetic confession of faith, held out tempting inducements to apostacy, and subjected the Catholics to a most bitter and relentless persecution.¹ Here was a time for forced converts to free themselves from the yoke! And as this state of affairs lasted several decades, and as there were no priests or churches or sacraments or instructions, many Catholics did actually fall away. It need not be presumed that all those who fell away had been forced into the religion; but if any had been forced, they must have fallen away. And the forced converts should be looked for among the ancestors of those who are not Catholics now, but still bear Portuguese names like Perera, Peiris, Silva, Fernando, etc., which show that their forefathers were once Catholics. The present day Catholics, on the other hand, are the descendants of those whose faith was salvaged by Father Joseph Vaz and his companions, or were converted by them. The former were men whom neither corruption nor coercion could induce to adjure their faith; the latter those who embraced our religion at a time when the profession of the faith involved suffering, penalties and imprisonment. The Oratorians not only saved the faithful Catholics, but converted a very large number of the people of this country to the Catholic faith. That number was so great that Father Vaz had to set aside one of his six companions to create a vernacular Catholic literature for their instruction. Thus there is no reason for us to shirk the inquiry. On the contrary there is every reason for us to seek the truth and proclaim it without fear or favour. Let us therefore make the plunge.

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For a study of the Portuguese period we have only the Portuguese sources. There is unfortunately no other. Of Sinhalese historical literature the *Rajavaliya* is about the only work that has some references to the Portuguese; but we have as yet no critical text. For our present purpose this does not matter, for the *Rajavaliya* does not say a word to support the statement that the

1. See Tennent's Christianity in Ceylon, Ch. II.

Portuguese baptized at the point of the sword. The writers of the *Rajavaliya*, like the compilers of the more recent part of the *Mahavansa*, have quite a different explanation of conversions. They say that the conversions were due to Portuguese gold. The *Rajavaliya* says so of the converts of the Portuguese¹, the *Mahavansa* says the same thing of the converts of Father Vaz and his successors². Neither the one nor the other says a word about force and violence. It is not necessary to discuss here whether the Sinhalese tradition, as expressed by the writers of the *Rajavaliya* and *Mahavansa*, has any foundation. As a matter of fact the Portuguese were not accustomed to fling away their gold so freely: they rather sought to lay their hands on whatever gold they could find here. Father Vaz and his successors, on the other hand, had no gold to give. But whatever we may think about the statement of our chroniclers, this much is true, that they give no countenance to the story of force and violence.

We are thus reduced to seek the history of the Portuguese in Ceylon in the writings of the Portuguese themselves, because there are no other sources available either to us or to our adversaries. The charge of forced conversions, if it is to be found anywhere, must be found in the only available sources of history. The Portuguese writers are not all of the same value. Some were paid chroniclers of state, who wrote with more patriotism than historical discrimination; others remained unpublished because they were too outspoken. Some of the things narrated by these writers are from personal knowledge; other things from testimony, oral or written; in many things they drew from the inexhaustible resources

1. "From that day forward" (*i.e.*, from the date of the arrival of the Viceroy, 1552) "the leading men of the city of Kotte, coveting the wealth of the Portuguese, and many low-caste people, unmindful of their low birth, inter-married with the Portuguese and became proselytes. "Raj. Erg. Trs. 80.
2. "The infamous Parangis, the infidels, the impious ones who at the time of Rajasingha had still remained behind in the town, and now dwelling here and there, rich in cunning, endeavoured by gifts of money and the like to get their creed adopted by others'. Mv. xxviii. Geiger's Trans. The allusion is to the Oratorians. See p, 166.

of their own imagination. We must therefore exercise some caution and discrimination, and examine them in the light of their antecedents, their opportunities for knowing the truth, their means of information and their purpose. One thing, however, is undeniable: there is no reason to suppose that they suppressed truth. The severest critics of the Portuguese are the Portuguese writers themselves. There is scarcely a single grave charge against the Portuguese which cannot be traced to their writings, or which does not rest ultimately on the authority of a Portuguese writer. The only Portuguese writer who gave a complete history of their doings in Ceylon is the Jesuit, Father Fernao Queyroz; and such was the frankness and candour of his criticism, such the wealth and accuracy of his information, that his manuscript was brought from Rio de Janeiro more than two hundred years after it was written, and purchased by the British Government of Ceylon to be published in the original and in translation at state expense.

Now if you study the Portuguese methods of conversion from the sources available you will be startled at the result. You will find that they give very little information, good or bad, about the methods of conversion; you will find that there is not the slightest justification in them for the statement of these local writers, that the Portuguese used force and violence. I hesitate to assert it too emphatically and say that you will find absolutely nothing; not because I fear that anything will be found, but because I know that it is never safe to make a sweeping statement in matters of history. I will therefore put it cautiously and conditionally and express myself somewhat as follows.

Neither Joao de Barros nor Diogo do Couto, neither Correa nor Castenheda, neither Bocarro nor Faria y Souza, neither Menezes, nor Ribeiro nor Queyroz, nor any of the others who are our authorities for the history of the Portuguese, nor the contemporary documents published from time to time in Portugal or Goa or England or Ceylon, speak of any single person forcibly

converted, nor suggest that any ever were,¹ nor give any solid ground for the assertion that the Portuguese converted at the point of the sword. Having said this, I will own that in my heart of hearts I feared, knowing the reckless ways of the Portuguese and having read this charge so often, that some individual acts of highhandedness might be found even in this matter, but I never found any. I have translated the longest of the Portuguese histories of Ceylon; I read the historical records of the Jesuits in Ceylon, and translated and published them. I am now engaged in translating and publishing the Oratorian records; I hope soon to be able to make the records of the Franciscans available in this Island; for to my great joy a full and complete record of the missions of the Franciscans, giving an account of the churches and Christians in Ceylon from the beginning to almost the end of the Portuguese period, written by a Franciscan has been recently found in the Vatican Archives, and will soon be published in Ceylon. But neither in the one nor in the other documents that I have seen, nor in any of the publications that came into my hands have I ever read of any person converted at the point of the sword.

Mark my words. I do not speak of what the Portuguese did elsewhere or intended to do here. I am speaking only of Ceylon. Nor am I saying how they managed to convert such a large number, or anything about their methods, or approving or defending or criticising their methods, whatever they were. I only say that I never found any proof of force, and that I very much doubt whether any of those who so pompously and emphatically and in such round terms asserted that the Portuguese converted this Island by force and violence has the faintest proof to put forward.

I must say it is sorely disappointing to find that the sources of information say so little, good or bad, about the missionary methods of the Portuguese. This is perhaps not surprising, for

1. There is a passage in Ribeiro's *Ceilao* that seems to suggest force; but the suggestion is due to an interpolation of the translator; and therefore I need not discuss it here, as the words are not in the Portuguese text of Ribeiro.

most of these writers only intend to narrate the conquests of their countrymen; and though all of them solemnly assert that the propagation of the gospel was the principal aim of their Majesties of Portugal, they say precious little about the missions. In support of my statement I will adduce one unimpeachable and independent witness, no less a person than Sir Emerson Tennent, who wrote a book on *Christianity in Ceylon*, and who had read up all the sources available in his day, and who was by no means satisfied with the Catholic missionaries, but who, unlike our University professors and lecturers, had the industry to seek information and the honesty to admit that he found no proof. Says Tennent:—

“Information is scanty as to the nature of the means adopted by the Portuguese for the introduction and establishment of the Roman Catholic religion in Ceylon. THERE IS NO PROOF THAT COMPULSION WAS RESORTED TO BY THEM FOR THE EXTENSION OF THEIR OWN FAITH OR VIOLENCE EMPLOYED FOR THE EXTINCTION OF THE NATIONAL SUPERSTITION.” (p. 8) And again: “Cordiner must have been but imperfectly informed when he states that the Portuguese compelled the natives of Ceylon to adopt the Roman Catholic religion without consulting their inclinations, and that the Dutch, unlike them, had refrained from the employment of open force for the propagation of their religious faith; and Hough, in his important work on *Christianity in India*, has adopted his assertion without examination. On both points the historical evidence is at variance with these representations. I HAVE DISCOVERED NOTHING IN THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE PORTUGUESE IN CEYLON TO JUSTIFY THE IMPUTATION OF VIOLENCE AND CONSTRAINT; but unfortunately as regards the Dutch Presbyterians, their own records are conclusive of the severity of their measures and the ill success by which they were followed.” Ib. 65-6.

It is true that Tennent found another explanation. But my point is not how they did it, but that they did not use force or

violence. Tennent found no proof. Since Tennent's day many documents have been published. But in none of them is the proof found.

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Now I think I ought to say something about the methods employed by the Portuguese. The conversion of people from one faith to another generally speaking, takes place in one of two ways, which, for brevity's sake, I will call the Vertical and the Horizontal way. I am not speaking of individual conversions, the method of which differs with individuals. What appeals to one man does not necessarily appeal to another. The reasons and arguments that weigh with a man depend often on his preconceptions, his education, his prejudice, his character and his temperament. But I am speaking of the generality of men, of movements of conversion, and these I think can be reduced to two.

The Vertical method is when the king and court and nobles of a country adopt a new religion, generally of a kind superior to the one they previously professed, and the people follow as a matter of course. This method is easy, quick, effective and complete. That was how the Britons became Christians, and that is how the Sinhalese became Buddhists. The Horizontal method, on the other hand, begins with the masses: the common people embrace a new religion which has some appeal to them, and in course of time it spreads till it becomes the religion of the nation. At first the converts come by twos and threes, in small groups, but the movement spreads, at first slowly indeed but surely, till it gathers momentum, and after some decades or even centuries the whole nation or country adopts that religion. This method is slower, safer, surer, but takes time, and is ultimately complete. That was how Rome became Christian, culminating in the conversion of Constantine the Great; or how a part of North India became Buddhist, culminating in the conversion of Asoka,

Now the Portuguese liked the first method, and generally tried it everywhere; but in Ceylon it did not succeed, and they had to turn from the Vertical to the Horizontal method, which was more successful, but was not complete. Had their own misdoings and their incompetence not led to their expulsion from this Island, that method would have ended in the conversion of this Island to Christianity.

Despite the blatant nonsense of the superficial writers, the Portuguese did not actually come to this Island with the cross in one hand and the sword in the other. They came to Ceylon in 1505, set up a small factory, entered into an alliance with the King of Kotte; but soon gave up the factory. In 1517 they built a fort in Colombo, but gave it up after some seven years, and the factor and the garrison went to live in Kotte. During all this time there was no attempt at conversion. We do not hear tell of a single priest who busied himself with conversions. Ribeiro says there was a priest in Colombo in 1517; Queyroz says there was a Franciscan in Kotte; but these were chaplains to the troops. There was no missionary. A tombstone discovered about a century ago made the public in Ceylon believe that Joao Vaz Monteiro was a missionary priest who "edified" this land with "churches and Christians" and died in 1536. But I found in the Torre do Tombo of Lisbon a letter of this very Joao Vaz Monteiro from Colombo written about thirty years after his supposed death. It shows that at all events he was not here so early as was believed. I presume that "1536" was a misreading for 1563", due to the irritating habit of the Portuguese who often wrote one figure within another. The tombstone is not forthcoming now, except for a few fragments in the Colombo Museum.

We know, however, that a few Franciscans had come to Ceylon about this time and were working far beyond the reach of Portuguese guns and swords. We also know that some people became Christians; at least so says Bhuvaneka Bahu; but neither he nor

the circumstances of the times give the faintest hint that force or compulsion was used to convert them. When the King of Kotte sent an embassy to Lisbon to beg the support of the King of Portugal for his grandson, whom he desired to place on the throne contrary to the laws of Sinhalese succession, he asked for Christian missionaries for his country, apparently without clearly perceiving what that request implied. In answer to this request came the first regular mission to Ceylon.

The Franciscans came with the idea that the King was going to embrace Christianity. They expected to follow what I called the vertical method. They came to baptize, not to convert, in fact. Great was their disappointment when they found that the King's request did not imply that he was going to embrace the Christian religion or even to permit his subjects to do so. On this point the King and the Portuguese soon fell out, and the superior of the Franciscans returned to complain of the Portuguese officials. Neither the priest nor the Portuguese officials were then in a position to use force or violence or compulsion of any sort. The missionaries were not yet sufficiently familiar with the language and customs of the country to be able to preach Christianity. But from that day they set to work adopting the Horizontal method.

Meanwhile the fame and miracles of St. Francis Xavier led the people of Mannar to invite him to come and preach to them also. Unable to do so himself, owing to the tide of conversions in South India, he sent an Indian priest, who preached, converted, instructed and baptized the people of Mannar. Thereupon the King of Jaffna called upon the converts, who thus became the proteges of the Portuguese, to abandon their new faith or suffer the penalty of death. The new converts, however, preferred to lay down their lives than to abandon their faith. This martyrdom made a great impression: *Sanguis martyrum, semen Christianorum*—the blood of martyrs is ever the seed of Christians; and soon afterwards all the people living on the seaboard of Ceylon embraced Christianity in a

body. Neither force nor violence was possible at the time: and whatever may have been the motive for the conversion, it certainly was not compulsion or fear or intimidation.

The Franciscans had also succeeded in making some Christians in the inland parts of the kingdom of Kotte; and when Christianity had spread over the country, King Dharmapala himself, who had been educated by the Franciscans from a boy, but had not received baptism so far on political grounds, finally decided to make public profession of his conversion, and he and his queen and court were baptized. Then followed a large number of the nobles, while others went over to Mayadunna. Neither in the one nor in the other case was there force and violence. And from that day to the final expulsion of the Portuguese the Franciscans continued to spread the Christian religion among the people of this country. At the beginning of the seventeenth century the hope of conversion was so great that Jesuits were called in, especially for educational work, and the Dominicans and Augustinians followed, though not in large numbers, and together they attempted to preach the gospel throughout the country.

At first conversions were few, but after some time, when the Portuguese power appears to be on the ascendant, there began a movement similar to the one that took place in early British times towards Protestant Christianity. When the British became masters of the Maritime Provinces there came a large number of Protestant missionary bodies, who with the aid and support and encouragement of the government set up schools in this Island. English was the language of administration, justice, commerce and fashion; and on the annexation of the Kandyan Provinces the English language became not only useful, but even necessary for holding office. Thereupon the pick of the Sinhalese and Tamils rushed to the Protestant schools, abandoned the comb and the hair-knot, encased their legs in trousers, which, being in their minds an indecent garment, they concealed under a cloth, and had themselves baptized as Christians and attended the Protestant churches and hobnobbed with the Britisher, the lord of the land. In the same way, towards

the end of the Portuguese rule there started a movement towards the Catholic religion. Whatever we may think about the motive for this tide of conversions, we have not the slightest reason for attributing it to force any more than the similar movement in British times.

I repeat that we have little record of the methods used by the Portuguese missionaries. Their methods depended, generally speaking, on circumstances of time and place, and varied with the character and temperament of the people, the prejudice and the opposition they had to contend with, and above all with the extent of their influence and their ability to protect the converts. It sometimes happened that instead of laying slow siege to the established religion, they attempted to carry it by storm. European nations, Catholic and Protestant, have been known to have attempted to beat down opposition by sheer force, where they were in a position to do so. Such was the method adopted by the Dutch in Ceylon¹. Before their time the Spanish theologians warned the Emperor Charles V that one cannot set about making converts as one hunts wild beasts; that conversion was an act of the free will inspired by grace. But the Portuguese in Ceylon were neither in a position—even if they wished it—nor were the dispositions of the people such, as to make forcible conversion at all feasible. In Ceylon force and violence were ever on the other side. It was the missionaries and their converts that were subjected to force. In the beginning the Portuguese had to negotiate with the kings of Ceylon for permission to preach the gospel; they had

1. In 1700 the Classis of Amsterdam remonstrated with the Consistory of Colombo, stating that they had heard on good authority that "Respecting natives, attempts were made by improper and unallowable means to coerce them to the reception of Christianity, that is, baptism; that they who were not baptized are declared to have forfeited a third of their property, and that fines are imposed on those baptized who do not come to church, nor send their children to school". Journal R. A. S., C. B., I., No. 3, p. 42.

"The proscription, both of popery and idolatry, was found to be insufficient without compulsion of converts, and this was resorted to so undisguisedly as to attract the attention and draw down the censure of the clergy in Holland." Tennent: 55,

to negotiate to prevent the confiscation of property. Barely ten years after the inception of the Franciscan mission the converts were persecuted. Vidiye Bandara, who had become a Christian in the hope of mitigating the severities of his imprisonment, but had been sadly disappointed, took revenge on the Portuguese, after his sensational escape from prison, by destroying the churches and Christians from Colombo to Weligama. He published edicts against Christianity; he used force and violence to make the Christians apostatize; and some Christians "of exemplary life received glorious martyrdom"¹; others were captured, ill-treated and tortured. Persecutions of this kind were of frequent occurrence. The Kings of Kotte, Sitawaka, Kandy and Jaffna forbade their subjects to become Christians. These measures prevented conversions, and converts fell away through fear. At every rebellion in Ceylon—and they were many—the Christians were persecuted. Though the Portuguese did not convert by the sword, they sometimes took up the sword to defend converts. Force and violence were ever used to prevent conversions.

Portuguese writers refer on occasions to conversions and they sometimes speak very disparagingly, often unjustly, of the people of Ceylon, for their opposition to conversion. They refer also to the attempts to convert kings and princes. These attempts are sometimes ludicrous. Fancy a warrior of the deepest dye concluding a career of robbery and plunder by calling upon the king to embrace Christianity. These were attempts of the Portuguese officials, though occasionally even priests are involved in them. The officials were very eager to win royal converts: they had their own reasons

1. Vidiye Bandara "began to wage a very bitter war on our people, and destroyed the villages of Paneture, Calature, Macu (Maggonā), Berberi, Gale and Beligao (Weligama), and wrecked all our temples that the friars of St. Francis had in all these places, having made in them many Christians of great and exemplary life, some of whom on this occasion received a glorious martyrdom at the hands of this barbarian; and many of the Christians he took captive, ill-treated and even put to the torture". Couto, *Journal R.A.S., C.B.*, XX. 170. "It is probable", says Donald W. Fergusons (Ib.) "that it was in this general massacre that Fernao Rodriguez lost his life at Berberim (Beruwala) as recorded on his wife's tombstone, now in the Colombo Museum".

for that. The missionaries likewise were very anxious to win those on whose good will the success of their labours depended. I will not say anything of these attempts, except that royal conversions, like royal marriages, are matters of state; and that the priest in politics may keep a clear conscience, but nevertheless brings discredit on himself and his cloth. Royal converts the Portuguese had in plenty, but they were kings without a throne or princes with a grievance, who had to be maintained with befitting state and splendour at the expense of the Portuguese state.

Conversions in Ceylon were the work of the missionaries, not of the officials; and the Portuguese missionary was as different from the Portuguese official as light is from darkness. Viceroys and Generals and Captains had standing orders to help and favour the missions and converts; and they often did, when it suited them: their help was sought and welcome, when it was given. But you must read the letters of the Missioners to see how bitterly the priests complained of the officials; that they were the greatest obstacle to conversion. Father Queyroz says, on the authority of his Franciscan sources, that the Portuguese in Ceylon made themselves and the Catholic faith hateful to the people. St. Francis Xavier expressed himself in no unmistakable terms. One of the earliest Franciscans returned to Portugal to complain to the King. The missionaries express themselves very freely on the Portuguese and their doings in Ceylon. Their rapacity and cruelty, their oppression and tyranny and evil lives called forth the bitterest complaints of the priests. The officials retorted by accusing the priests of various and grave misdemeanours. They never accused them of baptizing unwilling converts. The people of Ceylon when they represented their grievances to the Portuguese had to turn to the missionaries as their intermediaries. The promise of redress was exacted by the missionaries; and it was through the missionaries scattered throughout the length and breadth of the Island that the Portuguese General gave or promised redress. At a certain time there were broadcasted throughout the country proclamations or writings on *ola*, enumerating the misdeeds of the Portuguese and

calling upon the people to avenge themselves. In these writings nothing was ever said of forced conversions. The history of the Catholic Revival that took place a few decades after the expulsion of the Portuguese shows that the people of this country entertained great regard and respect for the priests and the faith of the Catholics. The King of Kandy invited the Catholics, when persecuted by the Dutch, to come over to his territories; and many Catholic families settled down on the frontiers of the Kandyan kingdom at Ruanwella, Avissawella, Kendangamua and Sabaragamua on one side; at Galgamua on the other; and even in the heart of the kingdom, at Weudda, Kalugala, Narangoda, and Wahakotte. Knox tells us that "The Christian religion he (Rajasinha) doth not in the least persecute, or dislike, but rather, as it seems to me, esteems and honours it"¹. So did the people of Ceylon. By a strange irony of fate when the Dutch persecuted the Catholic priests and hunted them in their towns it was the King of Kandy who protected them and befriended the missionaries and favoured the Catholic communities. These facts sufficiently indicate that the people of Ceylon did not think lightly of the converts to the Catholic faith.

This does not mean that the Catholic missionaries made no mistakes. They made a great many mistakes: mistakes of judgment, mistakes of policy, mistakes of methods, mistakes due to ignorance, mistakes due to haste and the spirit of the times. That is inevitable. Every pioneer missionary is liable to make mistakes. You will find such mistakes in every country, at all times, among all nations. Mistakes are being made today, and mistakes will continue to be made as long as missionaries of one race have to convert those of another. And if you bear in mind that the Portuguese were the first Europeans in Ceylon, that they knew little of the country and the people, that everything here was strange to them, that the warfare of the Portuguese was almost incessant, you will not wonder that they made mistakes. But you

1. Robert Knox: Historical Relation of Ceylon, 42.

will not find any proof that they stultified themselves and committed the suicidal mistake of baptizing men against their will to the dishonour of God and to the destruction of their own work.

It was the settled policy of the Portuguese to favour converts to Christianity. They were accorded certain privileges and exemptions. The Portuguese generals were somewhat hasty and indiscreet in their attempts to favour the converts. And indeed it cannot be denied that these favours led to many conversions. A Portuguese historian has said that the Sinhalese were so avaricious that their Christianity was suspect. Tennent likewise speaks of the "obsequiousness to the ruling power" as one of the motives for conversion. Other Portuguese writers say the same thing in a different way. They say that to a Sinhalese, religion is only a matter of convenience. What they mean is that religion is not to the people of this country what it is to a Christian or a Mahometan. To these to give up their own religion, or to pretend to do so, or to participate in another is an abomination, a most heinous crime. The religious sentiment in which the people are brought up in this country is not so uncompromising. What the people held dear were the customs and observances hallowed by time and the traditions of their forefathers interwoven into their daily life. The only real difficulty was to overcome that attachment. "A religion that was good enough for our forefathers is good enough for us": was the invariable argument of a Sinhalese against Christianity three centuries ago. And when he said that, he has said the sum and substance of his belief in his own religion and his objection to Christianity. The Portuguese placed a powerful motive to overcome this and lend an ear to the Christian teaching.

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I repeat again that there is no foundation whatever for the charge made against the Portuguese that they made converts at the point of the sword. You might well ask me: How then

do I explain the fact that so many persons, alive and dead, maintain a statement which has no foundation in fact and history? The explanation I think lies in the normal working of men's minds. Historical truth is not easy to attain. It requires a great deal of pains and constant selfcontrol, not to be carried away by one's preconceived views. It requires moral no less than intellectual discipline to find historical truth, while the ways of error are innumerable. I will therefore briefly indicate some probable explanations of how people come to maintain so positively a statement that is baseless and false.

The first reason is the vile reputation of the Portuguese. They have earned a reputation for themselves that is not altogether undeserved, though it is largely superficial, one-sided and uncritical. That reputation makes people ready to believe anything said against the Portuguese. Trifles light as air are taken as proof positive. The popular mind makes no difference between the Portuguese soldier and the Portuguese missionary. What is worse, the Portuguese themselves identified the church with their nation. So much so indeed that to be a Christian was to put oneself under the Portuguese protection, and to be Portuguese subject was a half-way house to Christianity. Portuguese generals and captains of questionable repute made themselves champions of Christianity; and every soldier, however godless, thought he was battling for Christianity and the glory of God when he was actually and truly battling for his nation and country. The Portuguese expeditions were viewed in the light of a crusade. The Portuguese King and nation took great pride and credit on this identification of church and state; and the Pope himself showered favours and privileges and gave his blessing to the Portuguese enterprise. The Portuguese believed it to be their duty to try to convert those whom their arms subjugated; and to use their arms against those who refused to let the gospel be preached¹. The fulfilment of this duty was a matter of state:

1. This is the explanation which Dr. Malalasekara did not suspect, of the king's words "begin by preaching, but, that failing, proceed to the decision of the sword". It had nothing to do with baptisms.

and they spoke of it as the "spiritual conquest", or "imposing the yoke of Christianity", and other words of this kind which in the eyes of superficial readers seem to imply force and violence. But that view-point was a very common one in seventeenth century Europe, when in England Catholic priests were hanged, drawn and quartered alive; when people burnt heretics and witches, or hanged pickpockets, and when men walked the streets sword in hand and turned at each other's throats on the slightest provocation.

All this impresses the ordinary man who skims on the surface, and leads him to expect force and violence. The people of Ceylon, moreover, attribute to the Portuguese the doings of their successors. Though the Portuguese favoured converts, they did not force unwilling men to be baptized, as did the Dutch in practice, who refused offices to any except those who submitted to baptism¹, and ill-informed writers speak as if the Portuguese did the same.

This general prejudice does not act alone. To the Buddhist and the Hindu the Portuguese are the ruthless destroyers of their ancient and venerated temples. Indeed they never spared any when they had the chance. They thought it fair game to rack and ruin the temples reared in this country by pious hands. They often did so with a light heart to fill their coffers; the missionaries often approved and encouraged such destruction in the belief that when the temple was gone people would hearken to the gospel more readily. They were mistaken in this, for such conduct only tended to exasperate the people at the time. And today it has the effect of making people ready to believe that the missionaries must have used force and violence to convert also.

1. "Proclamation was publicly made that no native could aspire to the rank of modliar, or be even permitted to farm land, or hold office under government who had not first undergone the ceremony of baptism, become a member of the Protestant Church, and subscribed to the doctrines contained in the Helvetic Confession of faith" Tennent op. cit., 45.

With this policy of the Portuguese they contrast that of the Dutch and the British. Though the Dutch persecuted the Catholics, yet reasons of state led them to help the Buddhist to regain *upasampada* ordination. The British soldiers escorted the tooth-relic to Kandy, and mounted guard over the Dalada Maligawa. The Portuguese have no similar acts of courtesy to show. They were far more consistent, and would never have done either. The non-Christian looks upon the destruction of temples as a part of Portuguese methods of propaganda, and are ready to see the other half in force and violence. These considerations taken with the general reasons mentioned above, and the common fault of taking history from tainted sources, are a sufficient explanation of how the Buddhists and Hindus are prepared to accept without proof the statement that the Portuguese made converts at the point of the sword.

The prejudice that warps the minds of Christians of the Protestant persuasion is of a different stamp, and far more culpable. The average Protestant cannot conceive that the Catholic faith can be propagated by fair means. If we succeed, it is so much the more reason to suppose that we use foul means. Are not force and violence, fraud and cunning, deception and trickery the usual weapons and stock-in-trade of the Church of Rome? How else could the Romans succeed where Protestant Englishmen fail? Thus even Sir Emerson Tennent, who acquitted the Catholics of force and violence, sought the explanation in duplicity and cunning.

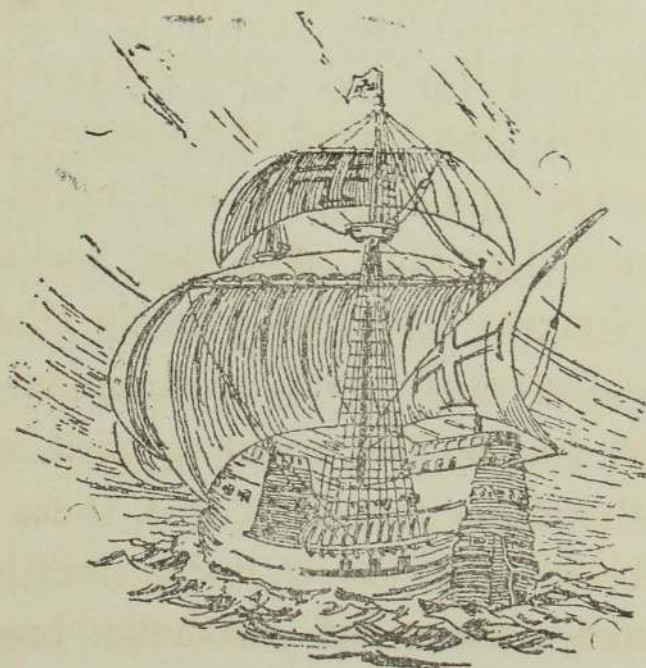
But by far the worst case is that of Professor Hussey. He professes to make that statement which I have quoted on the ground of history. He does not appear to have studied the history of the Portuguese in Ceylon. He read a few books, and made a rational summary, in which we can trace the books from which he has taken his facts and opinions second hand; and had the hardihood to repeat and perpetuate a foul calumny without the least regard to what is due to the University that bred him or what

is to be expected from a Professor of the University College of Colombo. His first statement is, that the Portuguese priests thought it their duty to convert by any means in their power. What a monstrous statement to make of the priests of a country, as if theology differed according to the country of priest's origin ! His knowledge of Catholics is so paltry as to make him imagine that Portuguese priests had a different teaching from British priests. What is really at the back of his mind is of course the famous slander that Jesuits teach that "the end justifies the means". Not satisfied with that he proceeds to say that not only did they think so, but actually did so, calling in the government and even the troops to drag men by their hair to the baptismal font. And his contention is not that one may have done so, but that many Sinhalese were so baptized; not Tamils, but Sinhalese only; not in the North, where the conversion of the people was almost complete, but in the South, where it was far from being complete. This is sheer travesty of truth—prejudiced, irresponsible writing, unworthy of an educated man, not to speak of a Professor; for nowhere in the whole of his book does he give any proof or any reason for this preposterous charge.

I wonder what the Catholic Vigilance Committees and Catholic Associations were doing when they allowed such a foul libel to pass unchallenged. How did the Department of Education come to approve such a book for use in schools? And how in the name of wonder did Catholic colleges and schools ever allow such a book to come into the class-room? I am afraid even Catholics had a sneaking fear that since a Professor of name had made that statement so publicly, so fully, and so frankly, there might be something to be said for it. That is the effect of letting charges of this kind pass unchallenged. The oftener it is repeated the more is it accredited. Some years ago I took up this charge and disproved it at a meeting of the Catholic Union of Ceylon, but to no purpose. Falsehood can run thrice round the world before Truth can put on his boots!

I am only sorry that I have to say all this at a time when the person in question is not in the Island. I was I think away from the Island when the book first came out. At least I did not see this passage till it was brought to my notice; or I should have challenged the writer to prove it or eat his words. It is not yet too late. Messrs. Wahid Brothers are the publishers, and they can be called upon to communicate with the author and to demand of him to prove his words or withdraw them; and if the gentleman wishes to justify them, I shall be ready to meet him any day. Meanwhile the Department of Education should be informed that we Catholics look upon this statement as a base, mean and foul calumny.

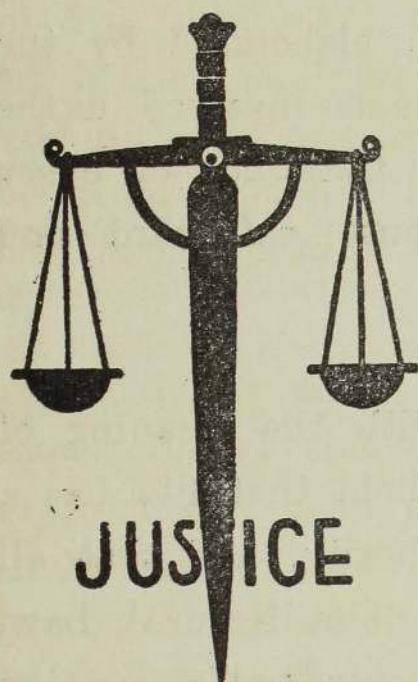
To conclude, we Catholics have reason to be proud of our history. There is no religious community in this Island whose faith has been so severely tried as ours. We have had martyrs and confessors; we have had men who suffered fines, imprisonment, flogging, banishment, execution, for the Catholic Faith. We have lived under the favours of the Portuguese, under the penalties of the Dutch, and have been ignored by the British; but in no case have we shrunk from professing our faith. The history of the Catholic Church in Ceylon is one on which we can look back with pride and satisfaction; and when taken to heart, it contains many a lesson profitable and instructive to the cleric and the layman, for the present and the future.



A Portuguese Caravel.

CATHOLIC AND CIVIC RESPONSIBILITIES

The Catholic Church, as all the world knows, is a great stickler for principle. She will not, or rather she cannot, compromise on principles nor allow her children to do so.



Success, position, wealth, influence, she might sacrifice for peace sake, but principles never. In fact it is precisely in order that there might be an unchanging guardian of principles in this changing world, that Our Lord invested His Church with authority and imposed on her the duty of proclaiming the immutable principles of Faith and Reason and of exacting from her children an unswerving fidelity to them.

Outside the Church, men are not very particular in this matter. Under the pressure of the urgent needs and problems of the day, the world adopts ideas and opinions, and reduces them to practice, without minding the underlying principles. Not so the Church of Christ. She tests the value and efficacy of new ideas and opinions, not by their popularity, or by the shifting standards of the hour, but by the touchstone of principle; and she would not espouse any idea or policy unless it rings true to principle. The world therefore calls her backward, reactionary, intolerant; and it happens not unfrequently that even Catholics, who have to live and move in this environment and breathe its tainted atmosphere, imbibe the secular spirit of indifference to principles. It is therefore necessary that those who will soon be called upon to shoulder wider civic responsibilities should realize the importance and bearing of Catholic teaching in matters political, social and economic.

The teaching of the Church in these matters is, of course, not a ready-made set of practical regulations in the concrete, but a body of root-principles in the abstract. There is, properly speaking, no Catholic Politics or Catholic Sociology or Catholic Economics, any more than there is a Catholic Hydrostatics or Catholic Gymnastics. What the Church has is a syllabus of fundamental principles of Faith and Reason, elaborated by the Doctors of the Church and handed down to us as involved in the articles of our creed, which, therefore, all Catholics of every political party and school of economics must safeguard and uphold.

These principles are chiefly concerned with the meaning of life and with the natural rights of man. We hold that life has a purpose, that men are bound by a moral authority, and that all authority over man is ultimately of God. The Natural Law, deduced from the exigencies of human nature, binds all men; the Revealed Law of Christ, regulating the higher life to which he has raised mankind, binds only those who believe in Him. The former has instituted two natural societies, for man's temporal welfare; and Christ has instituted a supernatural society for man's spiritual welfare. On the integrity and perfection of these three societies depends the welfare of man and human Society. All these are therefore invested with authority, each with the specific authority essential for the fulfilment of the need for which it was instituted by the Author of Nature and Grace. Each has duties towards its members and rights over them, and the members likewise have corresponding duties and rights. And all Catholic civic responsibilities arise from a true understanding of the nature and the functions of the Family, the State and the Church.

The Family is the primary and fundamental unit of human society, anterior to both State and Church in theory and in fact.

Its rights comprise everything that is essentially connected with its existence, its structure and its development. The State has no right to interfere in what is within the competence of the Family, for the State exists only to do for the Family what the rights and duties of the Family are unable to secure.

This very far-reaching and indisputable truth affects all Catholic teaching on Politics and Civics. The Church maintains the right of man to live and therefore the Labourer's right to a living wage, against Capitalism; man's right to private property, against Socialism: the right of man to marry, if he choose, against the extravagances of Eugenics; the right of the unborn child, against the abomination of contraceptives; the parents' right to choose the child's education, against modern States. Likewise the Church teaches that it is man's duty to obey lawful authority, domestic, civil, and ecclesiastical; she maintains the dignity of Labour and the sanctity of the marriage bond, the equality of man and the parity of sexes in the matter of marriage. All these are primary and elementary rights and duties of man, the neglect of which is the cause of many disorders in modern society.

But as the Family by itself is unable to achieve the full and legitimate development of man here below, Nature calls for a Society that shall have jurisdiction over the Family, a right to its allegiance, and the duty of promoting its welfare. To this Society, which is the State, Nature gives an authority which is supreme in its own sphere. The State has to procure the legal, social and industrial well-being of its subjects. It must maintain Law and Order, and promote the greatest good of the greatest number, and as much good as it can. It must ensure for each the fullest liberty and the amplest opportunity for self-development consistent with the like liberty and opportunity of every other member of the State.

The art of devising means and expedients to achieve the full purpose of the State is called Politics. The sphere of the State's activity is circumscribed by its nature and by the needs which called it forth, namely the temporal order. In that order the authority of the State is sovereign, supreme and unlimited. The form of the State is immaterial to its powers and functions. The ruler may be one and the government a monarchy, or there may be rulership by a few or an Oligarchy, or by many when it will be a polyarchy. This power may be despotic, constitutional or republican. All these and many others are feasible forms of government: none is essentially good and none essentially bad. If autocracy can be tyrannical, so can democracy. If kings have abused power, so have republics. Therefore nations are free to choose any form of government they think best suited to the genius and customs and history and enlightenment of the people.

Whatever the form of a government, the Church teaches that we must look upon it as a duty in conscience to give allegiance to the State acting within its rights. But there is a limit to its rights. For to serve man's spiritual welfare, Christ Our Lord has instituted a supernatural society, the Church, which is concerned with faith and morals and religious discipline. Her form is settled by her Founder; so is her authority. She is self-sufficient, independent and supreme in her sphere, as the State is in its own. The Church is not an opponent of the State or its rival but an ally. So long as the State remains in its own sphere, the Church is its prop and support, for the Church is concerned with a higher order.

The Church and the State are thus two societies totally and essentially distinct in office and functions, the one concerned with spirituals, the other with temporals. Where these two spheres stand apart, the Church and State also stand apart. But

as both have jurisdiction over the same subjects, it happens that some human actions come under the jurisdiction of both, from different points of view. In this mixed sphere, Church and State must each formulate its rights and try to attain their complete realization, so that Catholics may render to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's. When this complete realization is not possible, there must be a compromise by which each retains at least the essentials.

But unfortunately this mixed sphere has constantly given rise to friction. Take Marriage for instance. In the eyes of the State marriage is only a natural contract, and the State rightly claims to legislate conditions for its legal validity. But Christian marriage is essentially a Sacrament, and the Church alone can legislate for the validity of a Sacrament. Now it is not too much to ask the State to attach civil and legal effects to the sacrament of marriage as administered to Catholics in the Church; but not all States heed this reasonable demand. Another fruitful cause of friction is Education. The Church holds, and the State cannot deny, that education must be on a religious basis; she acknowledges to the State a right to ask that the education of its future citizens should conform to a standard. She maintains what the State does not deny, that it is the duty of the State to assist education. But now, States wish to arrogate to themselves the complete control of education which they have no sort of right to do. The Catholic Church cannot and will not consent to surrender her rights in this matter. Nay, not only has the Church a right to control the education of her children, but also a right to undertake the education of any child whose parents desire him to be educated under the influence of the Church. It is perfectly within the right of a parent to entrust a child's education to any institution he pleases, and the State has

no right whatever to oppose the privilege of a parent. Nor has it a right to ask that the Church should permit any religion save her own to be taught in her schools. She has no wish, nor was it ever her practice, to proselytize in schools. Had it been otherwise, non-Catholic parents would not have sent their children so freely to us. We have rigorous disciplinary measures on the point. But our right to teach, we shall never surrender. The Church has never done so in any country in the world, though many anti-Catholic States attempted it and persecuted the Church.

This sphere of mixed subjects is a delicate one, and the devising of means to bring about a harmonious agreement between Church and State is Politics properly so-called, and it is only in this manner that there are Catholic Politics. This Catholic Politics is the same all the world over and at all times, and it is the duty of all Catholics to keep the Catholic view-point before the public, so that the State may have no excuse for ignoring our position in these matters.

Politics, however important, are, after all, only a part and a small part of our civic responsibilities. Our chief responsibilities are our duties to the Society in which we live. And in recent times, Pope after Pope has called the attention of Catholics to their grave responsibilities in this matter, and a vigorous movement called "Catholic Action" is now fast spreading over the Catholic world.

The principles underlying Catholic Action are the practical complement of Catholic teaching on the Family, the State, and the Church. For though the spiritual welfare of mankind is the primary and *ex officio* concern of the Church she cannot be true to her office unless she work also for the betterment of mankind in temporal matters. In this field she has no rights based on

Justice, but she has duties no less sacred than those of Justice. For this reason the Church of Christ from its inception down to this day has been and is the most potent factor of the progress of mankind. Not only have the doctrines of the Church leavened the world, as Our Lord predicted, but her social work for the regeneration of mankind has been incessant, manifolded, ubiquitous, and unparalleled in the history of the world. She has initiated a service of beneficence for every need of man at all times and in all countries. She has multiplied her Religious Orders, dedicated to social works, such as the education of the young, the upbringing of orphans, the nursing of the sick, the relief of the poor, the care of the insane, the feeble, the leper, the consumptive, and the aged. She has inspired countless institutions to perform the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. These are services that are best and most efficiently performed under the inspiration of religion and the grace of God, and it is no small tribute to the active charity of the Church that the Government of Ceylon has confided some public charitable institutions to the care of Catholic religious.

The duties of charity the Church has ever discharged according to her opportunity, and she has a right to discharge them without let or hindrance from the State. But this right is a right of Charity, and the rights springing from Charity cannot be vindicated in the same way as rights of Justice. The duties of Charity the Church must discharge by her influence; and from the day her influence was undermined by the religious revolt called the Reformation the constitution of Society began to degenerate, and the Industrial Revolution carried on the fell work of destroying the ethical foundations of Society. Most of the Social and Economic problems of to-day are at bottom only moral problems, and unless Religion is brought into action, no

lasting or effective solution can be found. A remedy for modern evils that ignores man's moral and religious character cannot succeed: it can only lead to evils worse than the disease. And therefore the chief civic responsibility of Catholics as such is in the domain of Sociology.

It is the duty of Catholics, and especially of Catholic public men, to proclaim to the world that a state of Society that disregards the sanctity of the Marriage bond, the integrity of the Family, or the Dignity of man and the Nobility of Labour, or the duty of Charity and the virtue of patience, is doomed to misery and destruction. Catholics must therefore study the Catholic teaching on Social questions, both theoretical and practical. They must persuade themselves first of all, that the disorders of modern Society, the class warfare, the appalling poverty and moral degradation, are due to the rejection of the Catholic ideals.

The Popes have most zealously endeavoured to stir up Catholic opinion on this subject by a number of classic Encyclicals. Leo XIII analysed "The Evils of Modern Society" and "Social Errors". He expounded the Catholic doctrine of "Marriage", "The Constitution of States", "Human Liberty", "Christian Life" and "Duties of Citizenship". He defended the rights of the working man in his now famous Encyclical on the "The Working Classes", and explained the doctrine of "Christian Democracy". Pius X issued a *motu proprio* on "Social Action", Benedict XV on "World Peace", and the reigning Pope has now launched a campaign of "Catholic Action".¹ Every Catholic public man should be familiar with these pontifical declarations of Catholic social principles. Some years ago, if you remember, President Wilson put forward fourteen points, which all nations were called

1. Since these words were spoken Pius XI issued many famous Encyclicals: *Quadragesimo anno; casti connubii etc.*

upon to observe in order to secure peace. Whereupon 'Punch' gravely asked: "Why not give the ten commandments a trial?" Indeed, the idea that peace and concord between man and man, or between class and class, or nation and nation, could be secured without recourse to religion and morality is perhaps the greatest evil and the greatest mistake of modern Society.

Thus it is not enough for Catholics to be able to agree with other social workers in their aims. Unless those aims spring from true principles or at least are not opposed to them, we can have neither part nor lot in them, however much we may sympathize with the aims themselves. Take for instance the Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals. I am sure every Catholic sympathizes with the attempt to eradicate cruelty in any and every shape. But when people speak and act as if animals had rights, and hold forth on the pains and sufferings of the poor dumb beasts, and proceed to erect hospitals for cats, who can have patience with them? Men must not be cruel to animals, because cruelty is irrational, unworthy of men, and sinful, and an abuse of God's creatures; but it is a nobler and grander act to save one little friendless child from evil and suffering than to relieve all the cats and dogs in creation.

Similarly we sympathize with Temperance societies and even foster them, but on the distinct understanding that you do not make it a moral fault to drink but only to drink to excess, just as it is a moral fault to eat to excess or sleep to excess. The consequences of excess in drink are certainly more grave, and the only way to keep men from drink is to dissuade them, not by law or prohibition, but by moral suasion and exhortation.

Catholic Social Action has multiplied and intensified within the last few decades. In England, France, Germany and other countries in Europe and Asia, there is a very active and vigorous social campaign conducted by Catholics under the inspiration of

the Church and on Catholic principles. Unfortunately we hear very little of their activities from the English Press, from which alone we get our foreign news. Telegraphic companies that wire to us about the enthusiastic gatherings round Krishnamurti, have apparently never heard tell of the immense Catholic Social Congresses that are being regularly held now. Therefore if Catholics wish to hear how social problems are tackled by our Catholic brethren abroad, and what is the present trend of Catholic thought and action on social matters, they must read Catholic periodicals.

It is never wise to insist merely on what the Church condemns. Non-Catholics do not care what the Church condemns. But if you place before an outsider the Catholic teaching on any social question without stating that it is the official teaching of the Church, he will seldom hesitate to agree with you completely. And if you then proceed to draw conclusions and condemn errors, he will not only support you, but he will simply marvel at the clarity and coherence and sweet reasonableness of your views. It is then that you must say that it is the doctrine of the Church. And if our outsider has the good fortune to find in this way that there is practically no department of human activity in which the Church has not a similarly sober and reasonable teaching, he will perhaps feel the need of inquiring into the claims of the Catholic Church as the World-Teacher and finally become a Catholic, as some of the foremost thinkers of this generation have done.

What a grand spectacle it would be, if all educated Catholics conformed their public actions to Catholic principles. If every Catholic public man, if every Catholic professional man, if every Catholic official of high and low degree, were thoroughly familiar with the teaching of the Church in matters with which they are concerned, if in the

integrity of their public life they endeavoured to approximate to the Catholic ideal, and above all if they never forgot themselves to the extent of doing or saying anything that would reflect on their Catholic compatriots or compromise the Catholic teaching, what a grand example it would be to the world. And nothing short of that is what is expected from those who realize to the full the Civic Responsibilities which the profession of the Catholic faith entails.



THE ORATORY OF GOA.

1682—1835

The first and so far the only religious congregation of clerics ever founded in India is the Oratory of the Holy Cross of Miracles of Goa. It began in a small way, met with much opposition at the start, but flourished for one hundred and fifty years till the King of Portugal wantonly suppressed it to spite the Pope. Its origin is associated with the most eminent missionary that India has produced, the Venerable Father Joseph Vaz, whose heroic labours in Ceylon made the King of Portugal and the Holy See grant their approbation to the Congregation over the head of the Archbishop of Goa. By far the greatest work of the Oratory was the rescue of the Church in Ceylon from extinction and its revival in spite of persecution. To it, moreover, Ceylon owes its most distinguished Catholic writer, Father Jacome Goncalvez, and its first two Vicars Apostolic, Bishop Vincente do Rosario and Bishop Cajetano Antonio. The Island of Ceylon has thus good reason to be grateful to the Oratory of Goa; and it is for this reason that the present writer has endeavoured to find some authentic information about the origin and fortunes of a Congregation that ceased to exist a hundred years ago and is almost forgotten even in the country of its birth. The available sources of information are indeed very meagre, but there are enough contemporary documents¹ in the archives of Lisbon and Goa to furnish material for a brief and tentative sketch.

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1. *Noticias que da o P. Fr. Vaz, Prep. da Congr. de Orat. de Goa, da fundacao, della.* MS. Biblioteca Nacional Lisbon, Fund. Ger. 117. ff. 79-120; 2. *Noticia Compendiosa da Fundacao da Congr. do Orat. de Goa,* MS. Torre do Tombo. Liv. 636; 3. MSS. referred to in subsequent notes. Of printed sources there is: 1. *Noticia da Fundac. da Congr. de Orat. de Goa,* Appendix to the second edition of the *Vida do Ven. P. Jose Vaz* (Margao 1867), pp. 253-283, compiled from the lost *Chronica da Congregacao*; 2. An article on 'Congreg. de S. Felipe Nery em Goa', in *O Oriente Portug.*, II, 310-326, based almost entirely on the preceding work.

In the seventeenth century, Goa was the centre and source of Catholicism in the East. In that metropolitan city, the 'Rome of the East', as it was called, there were grand churches, monasteries and convents; there were priests, Portuguese and Indian, in plenty: the Catholic ritual was carried out in all its canonical completeness; but neither the intensity of Catholic life nor the abundance of vocations availed to open the doors of the existing religious orders to Indian aspirants.¹ Thus it happened that when a holy and aged priest, Pascoal da Costa Jeremias, felt called to a life of religious perfection, he had no help but to strike out a path for himself. He therefore persuaded four other priests of a like mind to join him in an attempt to lead a religious life in community. In 1682 they began the experiment with a brief and elementary Rule of Life approved by the Archbishop of Goa. They went into residence in the chapel of St. John of the Desert, Batim. Unfortunately for the venture, the place was ill chosen. A dilapidated building standing on a lone and unhealthy hill-top proved most unsuitable. The result was that the four companions gave it up and Father Pascoal found himself alone with St. John in the Desert.

Two other more intrepid souls, a priest, Custodio Leitao, and a layman, Bernardo Coutinho, came to share the hope and desolation and privations of Father Pascoal. But in the rainy season of 1663 the chapel collapsed, and the devastation caused by the roving Mahrattas under Sambhaji removed all hope of rebuilding it. The three spiritual adventurers therefore migrated to Goa and took their abode with due permissions, on 14th March, 1684, in the abandoned church of the Holy Cross of Miracles, so called because there was preserved in it the cross on which Christ Our Lord was seen in bodily form in 1619, as testified by a number of contemporary writings.²

1. *Arquivo das Colonias*, MS. Letter (Antam Vaz Freire to the King, 26 Sept. 1616.)
2. *Relacao Verdadeira mas breve do insigne Milagre*. Bibl. Nac. Lisbon. Fundo Ger. 176. Many contemporary printed books refer to it, e. g. Souza *Asia Portuguez* III c. 18.

But the venture proved singularly unattractive. Not only did no candidates seek admission, but even the small community was almost on the point of dissolution when on 25th September, 1685, God led thither a novice destined to change the face of affairs. This was Father Joseph Vaz, a young and zealous priest whose heart had been moved by the harrowing tale of the plight of the Catholics of Ceylon, left priestless, disorganized, and at the mercy of the ruthless persecution. He yearned to go there; but not knowing how to set about it, he had been doing missionary work in Kanara for three years and was returning to Goa with the idea of going to Ceylon, when he felt moved to join the forlorn community of the Holy Cross of Miracles. As this step was to all outward appearances the death-knell of his Ceylon project, but proved in reality to be the most efficacious means of saving the Church in Ceylon, we may be justified in thinking that, wittingly or unwittingly, Father Vaz was brought to it by the guiding hand of Providence.

He was heartily welcomed, and at the suggestion of the humble Father Pascoal he was forthwith chosen Superior of that still nameless community. Though he demurred, once elected he set to work in right earnest. The first thing was to decide what they wanted to be. He consulted his brethren and finally decided not to attempt to found a new Order, but to adopt the rules and statutes of some existing Congregation. On the advice of the Theatine, Dom Antonio Vintemilha, they chose to constitute themselves in an Oratory of St. Philip Neri. The Oratories of St. Philip are congregations of secular priests living under obedience but without vows. Their aim is prayer, preaching and the administration of the Sacraments. This seemed to suit the community of the Holy Cross of Miracles admirably. Accordingly they wrote to the Oratory of Lisbon (9th January, 1686) asking for their statutes, and Vintemilha himself wrote to the founder of the Lisbon Oratory to recommend the application. While waiting for the statutes, the new Superior organized the community.

Some recruits came, attracted by the reputation of Father Vaz ; and in spite of the extreme lack of temporal means and the absence of ecclesiastical sympathy, Father Vaz repaired the old building to suit the requirements of the new community, introduced religious and charitable activities to give occupation to the members, and when that was done decided to set out for Ceylon. He had learnt in Kanara that secrecy was absolutely necessary for an attempt to enter Ceylon. Therefore, without making his project known, he set out with two companions on a missionary expedition to the 'Missions of the South'. But when he had traversed Kanara he revealed his object to his companions, who, however, shrank from the peril and left him at Tellicherry and, sad to say, did not return to the community.

The Lisbon Oratory meanwhile dispatched a most favourable reply (12th March, 1687). Father Pascoal, who became Superior on the departure of Father Vaz, died in 1687,¹ and was succeeded by Father Custodio Leitao.² A new recruit who was subsequently to follow in the footsteps of Father Vaz and became his successor in Ceylon, Father Joseph de Menezes, had joined the community. The new Archbishop of Goa, Dom Alberto da Silva, to whom the Lisbon Oratory had recommended the Goa venture, himself brought the statutes. But unfortunately he died soon after his arrival, and Dom Pedro da Silva who came out to be Bishop of Cochin became Administrator of the Archbishopric. He was positively against the idea of an Oratory in Goa. What he did not like above all was the exemption from episcopal control that Oratories enjoyed. His Vicar General was openly against the 'Milagristas' as the community was generally called. He alleged the instability shown by the four companions of Father Pascoal and the desertion of Father Vaz by his two companions. The Administrator thought

1. *Vida do P. Pasc. da Costa Jeremias*, MS. Torre do Tombo.

2. Entered 4 May 1683, First Prefect of the Oratory ; died 6 Nov. 1718 aged circa 90—MS. *Vida do P. C. Leitao*, Torre do Tombo.

that Indian priests were wanting in perseverance. Another objection, and a more serious one, not generally mentioned in the official sources but found in an anonymous manuscript,¹ was that the Oratory was intended only for Brahmans and that the other castes rightly looked upon it as a piece of arrogance. The Milagristas replied that it was open to all, and actually received some member of the other castes. But as a matter of fact the Oratory consisted mostly, if not solely, of Brahmans: so much so, indeed, that some writers² actually state that it was an exclusively Brahman Congregation.

The Administrator Apostolic of Goa was, however, persuaded to refer the matter to the Jesuit Rector of Rachol, who reported most favourably, pointing out above all that Indian religious who knew the languages of India and the customs of the country and were kith and kin of the people, would not only be better able to win their countrymen to Christianity, but were actually the only missionaries that could venture to enter or succeed in remaining in those parts where the Portuguese had failed. Moreover there was no religious congregation which an Indian could join. The Bishop was not moved by these arguments, and insisted that the members of the community should say Divine Office in choir and take a vow of perseverance and be subject to the orders of the Bishop. St. Philip Neri had been positively against vows in his Oratory. But Father Custodio Leitao had no option but to submit, and an episcopal decree was issued on 13th January, 1691. The Superior, however, after consulting Father Manoel Carvalho, of the Society of Jesus, refrained from accepting the decree. He had in consequence to recall Father Joseph de Menezes from Kanara, but received into the community Joseph Carvalho, Father Vaz's sister's son, who cherished the desire of following his uncle to Ceylon and joined the community. This made it

1. *Noticias da India* MS. Bibl. Nac., Fundo Ger. 176, ff, 149-153.

2. Cottineaux, *Hist. of Goa*, p. 95.

necessary to increase the accommodation of the building, and with the help of subscriptions from Salsette, Ilhas and Bardes, the convent of the Holy Cross of Miracles was enlarged to meet the actual needs.

The Oratorians of Lisbon stood most faithfully by their Indian brethren and tried to secure the approbation of the King. But a new Archbishop arrived in the person of Dom Frey Agostinho de Anunciacao, who was also opposed to the idea of an Oratory. In the meantime, the great work that Father Vaz was doing in Ceylon began to be known¹ and admired, and the King of Portugal, when appealed to by the Lisbon brethren, placed the matter before the Junta das Missoens. Information had, however, gone to Portugal that Indian clerics were wanting in discretion and perseverance, and the Board advised the King to obtain further information from the Archbishop before acting. The order came in 1693; and as the Archbishop was slow to act, the Milagristas secured letters of recommendation from prominent men, including the Bishop of Mylapore and the Indian Bishop of Hieropolis. But nothing could be done without the Archbishop of Goa.

Meanwhile, urgent petitions for help came from Father Vaz, but Fathers Joseph de Menezes and Joseph Carvalho, who were eager to go, were held up owing to the deadlock. At this stage it is said that some members of the community conceived the desperate idea of seeking admission to the Society of Jesus *en bloc* and asking that the convent of the Holy Cross of Miracles might be constituted into an Indian college of the Society with one of its actual inhabitants as Rector. Father Francisco de Souza, the well-known author of the *Oriente Conquistado*, is said to have approved the plan. But when the matter was placed before the Provincial and the General of the Society, it was declared that the proposal could not be entertained.

1. Goa State Archives. *Liv. das Monc.* 61, f. 261; 63, f. 312-384.

The Milagristas then turned to the Viceroy of India, who pressed the Archbishop to act. He paid surprise visits to the community, made the members preach in his presence to judge their capacity, and ordered them to enhance their patrimony. The Camaras of Ilhas, Salsette and Bardes again came to the aid of the community and subscribed 30,000 xerafins. The prelate then passed an order, but introduced several modifications of the constitution of an Oratory with the intention of keeping the supreme direction in his own hands. He himself visited the brethren, published his edict and presided over the elections, as he desired to have a decisive vote in the choice of the higher Superiors. The Oratory of Lisbon again approached the King of Portugal, who, after consulting the Junta, approved the Oratory of Goa, subject to the modifications imposed by the Archbishop. There was no help but to have recourse to the Holy See.

Father Joseph de Menezes in the meanwhile set out for Ceylon along with Father Joseph Carvalho, and Goa, Lisbon and Rome learnt of the heroic work that was being done in Ceylon, and how the Fathers had succeeded in gaining the goodwill of the Sinhalese king and found a way of ministering to those in Dutch territory. All this redounded to the credit of the Congregation of the Holy Cross of Miracles; and when the Oratorians of Lisbon and Rome placed the case before the Pope, it turned out that the Roman authorities did not at all approve the Archbishop's modifications. Rome naturally wished the Oratory to be such as St. Philip Neri had instituted it, and in 1706 Clement XI issued a Bull approving the establishment of an Oratory in Goa. This was good news to the Milagristas. The Archbishop, however, wished to suspend the execution of the Papal Bull on the ground that it went counter to the royal decree which subjected the Oratory to the Archbishop's modifications. But at the instance of the Viceroy he refrained

from doing so, on condition that the members of the Congregation accepted his direction. This they were forced to do. Thereupon the Lisbon Oratory once more came to the rescue of their Indian brethren, and in view of the missionary labours of Father Vaz and his companions in Ceylon, the King declared his acceptance of the Papal Bull. Thus, on 30th March, 1709, the Oratory of the Holy Cross of Miracles received Papal and Royal approbation and was in consequence duly established in Goa.

When the Oratory was canonically instituted, novices began to come in and the Congregation felt the need of a large convent. They therefore asked for and obtained the Carmelite convent¹ that had been practically unused since the expulsion of Italian Carmelites from Portuguese territory. This grant of the Carmo to the Oratorians led to considerable trouble and ecclesiastical litigation, but the Oratorians continued to have the use of it. 'The Island of Ceylon and the Mission of Candia' became the distinctive field of the missionary activity of the Oratory. All priests sent to Ceylon had to be Oratorians, so that Father Pedro Ferrao, a secular priest who went to Ceylon to help Father Vaz, had to join the Congregation as he desired to remain in the Mission². The King of Portugal granted a subsidy³ of twenty-five xerafins a month to each missionary working in Ceylon, and the amount was afterwards increased. The Holy See also recognized the work done in Ceylon and granted the missionaries ample spiritual faculties⁴.

1. *Noticia da Merce do Convento do Carmo de Goa feita por Sr. Rey Dom Joao Vaos PP. da Congr. do Orat. da S. Cruz dos Milagres.* MS Torre do Tombo.

2. *Vida do Pedro Ferrao.* MS. Torre do Tombo.

3. Arquivo das Colonias. India 1701-1709. Letter of King, dated 9 Dec. 1709.

4. *Jus Pont. de Prop. Fide.* III, 135-6, *Scri.: Ref. nel Congr.* Vol. 24, ff. 17, 24-22. MS in archives of Prop Fide: *Scrit. Orig. Ref. nel Congr. Gen 2*, 20th May, 1711, Vol. 476, ff. 59-62.

At the request of the King, the Oratory sent missionaries from time to time to Malabar, Madagascar, Solor and Timor¹. On the suppression of the Society of Jesus, the Oratory was entrusted with the direction of the seminaries of Rachol and Chora; and though the former was at one time given to the Vincentians, it again reverted to the Oratory.

In 1736 preparations were made for a process for the canonization of Father Joseph Vaz, who was practically the founder of the Oratory. He had died at Kandy in 1711, and his reputation for virtue and miracles was fast spreading. The process seems to have been actually set on foot in 1738, and in 1742 Benedict XIV² exempted it from certain technical formalities to enable the testimony of eye-witnesses in Kandy to be recorded by the Oratorians working in that kingdom. But as the last Sinhalese king died in 1732 and the traditional benevolence of those sovereigns ended with him, Catholic priests were expelled from Kandy by the Nayakkar sovereigns with a rigour far greater than that of their exclusion from Dutch territory. The Papal dispensation could therefore not be acted upon. Meanwhile, Sebastian do Rego wrote a *Life of Father Joseph Vaz* which was published in Lisbon in 1745. Money continued to be collected for the expenses of the process, of which mention³ is found up to 1799; but apparently it fell into abeyance; and on the suppression of the Oratory all attempts ceased, and the money collected was confiscated by Government.

1. *Noticia de Outras Missoens*. MS. Torre do Tombo, 636.

2. *The Oratorians in Ceylon*, Caxton Press, Colombo 1936.

3. State Archives, Goa, MS. 1149 & 1404. *Mitres Lusit no Orient*. 11 169. The story that the process, which had cost the Congregation 30,000 xerafins, was annulled by Benedict XIV and that the Congregation was unable to afford a new process, given as a reminiscence of a cleric of Margao in *Vida do P. Jos. Vaz* (2 Ed., p. 232) can scarcely be true: at least there is no trace of it in any contemporary record.

Of the number of members of the Oratory statistics are lacking. According to an undated manuscript¹ in the Torre do Tombo, there were, about the middle of the eighteenth century, 66 Oratorians, 47 in India, 14 in Ceylon and 5 in other Missions. In 1758 the number is given as 72, of whom 16 were in Ceylon. In 1784 there were 61 members, but in 1800 the number is said to have been only 45, of whom 16 were in Ceylon. Four years later the number was 42, and in the last year of its existence, 1834, there were only 36. In spite of the fluctuations of membership the Oratory generally maintained the same number of missionaries in Ceylon.

The extinction of the Oratory took place when the King of Portugal suppressed all religious orders in Portugal in retaliation for the ecclesiastical support given to his rival claimant, Dom Miguel, in the civil war. The decree was issued in 1833, extended to the colonies in May 1834, and carried out in Goa in 1835. Though the suppression was a pure act of reprisal, charges of degeneracy were brought as usual against all Orders. The particular charge against the Oratory was that it did not send enough missionaries to Ceylon. The Oratorians, however, were admitted to have been, in personal behaviour, propriety and modesty, distinguished above all others in India². But they were accused of being rich. Judging from the Government records³ of Goa, which contain lists of the treasures and properties belonging to the Order at the time of the confiscation, the charge

1 Torre do Tombo, Liv. 636.

2. Antonio de Mello de Castro to the Bishop of Cochin, 6 March, 1775, MS. Goa, *Copia de Varias Documentos*, f. 39.

3. State Archives Goa, MS. *Inventario dos Conventos Extinctos 1833: Invent. do Convento do Carmo do Oratorio* (6 Ap. 1835); *Invent. Convento do Carmo: Liv. Novo e Reform, do Patrimonio do Congreg. do Orat. de S. Cruz 1751-1834*,

is baseless. Of their disunion it is not possible to judge. It is true that one Oratorian in Ceylon denounced his own Superior to the Dutch Government for political machinations against the Dutch Company, though the Dutch records show that the charge was unfounded¹. But it is an indication of disunion. The Oratory has also been accused of caste exclusiveness, which is apparently true. But it may be urged on behalf of the Oratorians in Ceylon that they not only did not show the least cast prejudice in their work, but actually undermined the caste system by wisely tolerating it outside, while ruthlessly ignoring and never permitting any distinction inside the house of God.

A modern writer² has charged the Oratorians in Ceylon with the far more serious crime of being Jansenistic and wanting in zeal. The foundation for the charge of Jansenism is that when a batch of new missionaries fresh from Europe and ignorant of local conditions began a course of action which the Vicar Apostolic and other missionaries reprovved, and obstinately persisted in it, Dr. Cajetano Antonio issued a formal order forbidding it under ecclesiastical censure. This batch of missionaries soon left the Vicariate, but they also left on record in their letters that the Oratorians were tinged with Jansenism, a judgment which this writer has accepted without scrutiny. The charge of lack of zeal so lightly made against a body of men who had heroically borne the heat of the day and the burden thereof is equally unfounded. Those missionaries who worked with the Oratorians and knew them well, secular priests³ and religious⁴, do not

1. Algem. Rijks Archief, Hague: *Orig. Secret, Briev.* 1790, ff. 117-138: MS. 40-958. Resolution of the Political Council, 14 Feb., 1789.

2. Dr. J Rommerskirchen, O. M. I. *Die Oblatenmissionen auf der Insel Ceylon* (Hunfeld, 1931), pp. 12, 164.

3. *Australia e Ceilan*, J. B. de Balangero, pp. 315, 351-3.

4. L. Cingolani, *Storia di Ceilan*, MS. Silvestrian archives, Rome.

mention any such lack of zeal, but rather the contrary. Even Protestants, like the British Governor, the Colonial Secretary and the Chief Justice of Ceylon, went out of their way to testify to the excellent work of the Oratorians¹. What is more, these very missionaries on whose letters this charge is based, occasionally refer to the profound veneration in which the people of the country held the Oratorians².

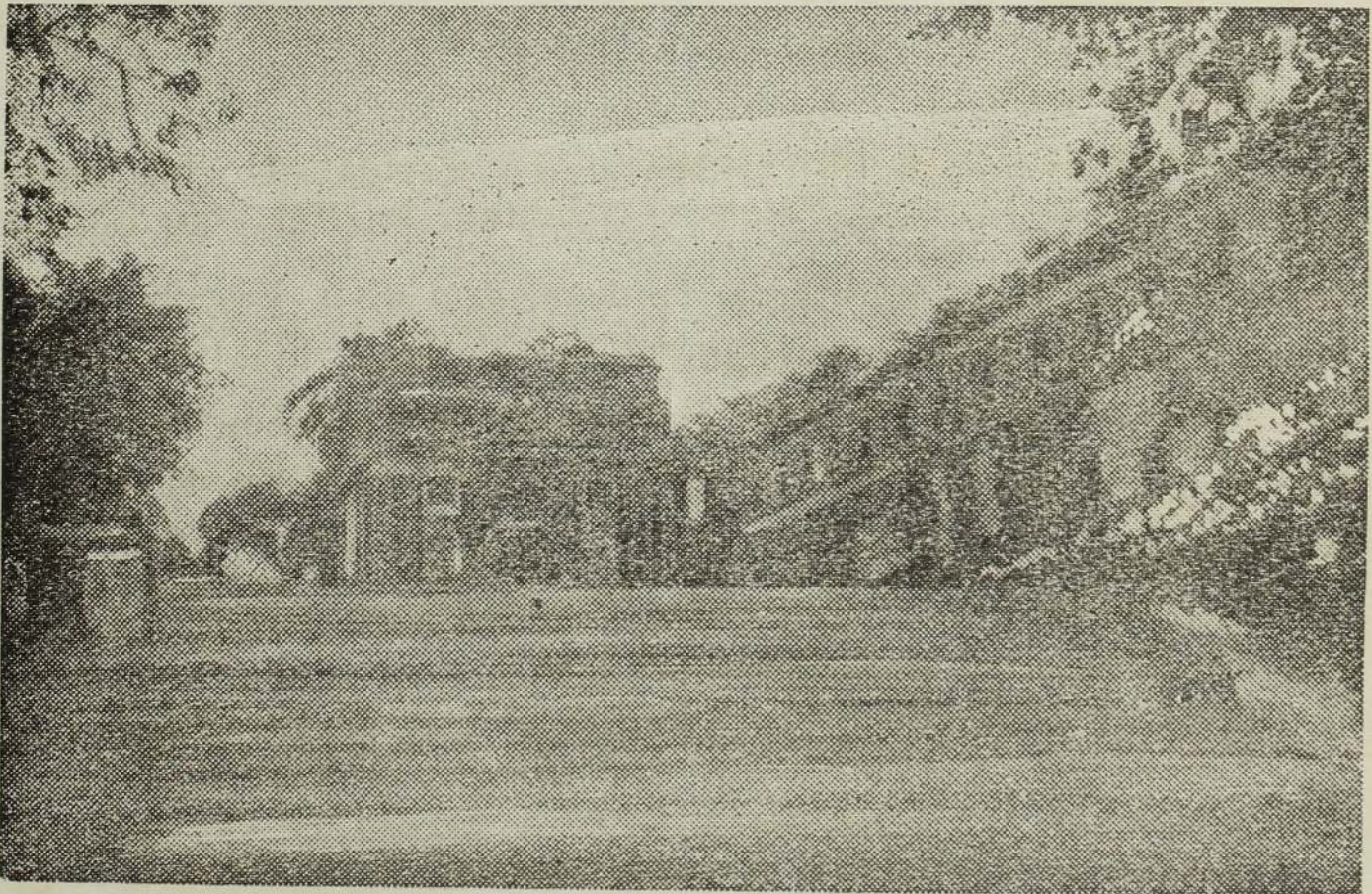
On the extinction of the Oratory, its members in Ceylon placed themselves under the jurisdiction of Propaganda Fide, for which Goa never forgave them. Rome, on the other hand, soon detached the Island of Ceylon from the diocese of Cochin and constituted it into a Vicariate Apostolic, selecting one of the ex-Oratorians to be the first Bishop and Vicar Apostolic, though the Government of Ceylon and some European Catholics expressed to the Holy See a desire for a British Bishop. Father Francis Xavier, who was nominated, died before the measure could be carried out. In his place was chosen another ex-Oratorian, Vincente do Rosario Dias, who was made Bishop of Tamacene *in partibus infidelium* and Vicar Apostolic of Ceylon. On his death in 1842 another ex-Oratorian, Cajetano Antonio, was chosen by the Holy See, in spite of the recommendation of a French Vicar Apostolic that a European might be appointed. Finally, when owing to the extinction of the Oratory Dr. Antonio could not find missionaries to man his diocese, he applied to Rome for European missionaries, one of whom was named his Coadjutor. The last surviving ex-Oratorian, Father Matthew Cajetano, was the Vicar-General of two successive European Vicars Apostolic, and even administered the Vicariate of Colombo for some time. Such was

1. Lord Clifford to the Governor of Ceylon, 8 June 1835.

2. P. Duffo, O. M. I., to Mgr. Mazenod, *Ann. de Prop F.* XXV, pp. 318-20. *Miss. O. M. I.*, 1882, pp. 22, 64; *Miss. Catholiques*, VI, p. 210 Ann

the esteem in which the Oratorians were held by their fellow-missionaries in Ceylon.

The Congregation of the Oratory of Goa was indeed the salvation of the Church in Ceylon. It did for the Island what no other religious order had done before or since. In spite of a violent persecution and amidst perils and privations, it ministered most devotedly to the Catholics of Ceylon for a century and a half. It not only effected a Catholic Revival and recalled fallen Catholics, but added an incredibly large number of converts to the fold, and gave the Catholics in Ceylon a name and a place and a vernacular Catholic literature. After the advent of the British, when the Island started on a career of peace and progress and social and political development, the Church in Ceylon was in great need of priests who could promote English education and save the Catholics from the proselytizing Protestant schools. The Congregation of Propaganda Fide accordingly sent European missionaries, secular priests and Silvestrian Benedictines, Oblates of Mary Immaculate, and finally Jesuits, who began to minister to the Catholics and open schools with great success; but ignorance of the vernaculars and of the customs and mentality of the people prevented them from attempting the spread of the Gospel as had been done by the members of the Congregation of the Oratory of the Holy Cross of Miracles of Goa.



*Ruins of the Convent of the Holy Cross of Miracles in Goa,
(once the Mother-house of the Oratorians of Goa)
(from the life of Fr. Vaz by Fr. S. G. P.)*

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OF

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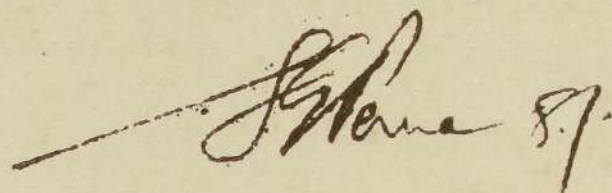
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