


SRI LANKA FROM LEGEND AND HISTORY

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SUJATHA UDUGAMA

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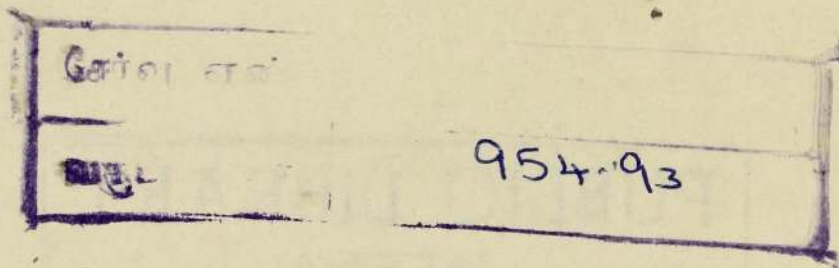
COVER AND LINE - DRAWINGS

By

LAKDASA HEMANTHA ABEYWARDENA

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First Edition 1983



Published by

NILOO BHATT

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Printed in Sri Lanka by M. D. Gunasena & Co. (Printers) Ltd., Colombo.
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THE HONORABLE MEMOIR
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MY FATHER AND MY MOTHER

PREFACE

“Sri Lanka from Legend and History” is intended not only for the visitor to Sri Lanka, but for all those who, like me, love this little Island with its natural beauty, its strange and fascinating history, and are deeply interested in its antiquarian matters.

Sri Lanka lies just south of India, and is separated only by a narrow strait. It is considered one of the most beautiful places in the world, and the history of this island is very ancient. It is over two thousand five hundred years old, and has been recorded in the “Mahavamsa,” the historical chronicle of the Island of Sri Lanka. It is interesting to find that statements made in the “Mahavamsa,” have, in many instances, been verified by monuments, rock inscriptions, coins and various other discoveries. The ancient kings of Sri Lanka built beautiful cities, great lakes or tanks for irrigation purposes, and mighty dagobas or bell-shaped structures. Today, only ruins of these great and beautiful cities are to be seen, but the tanks and dagobas still remain.

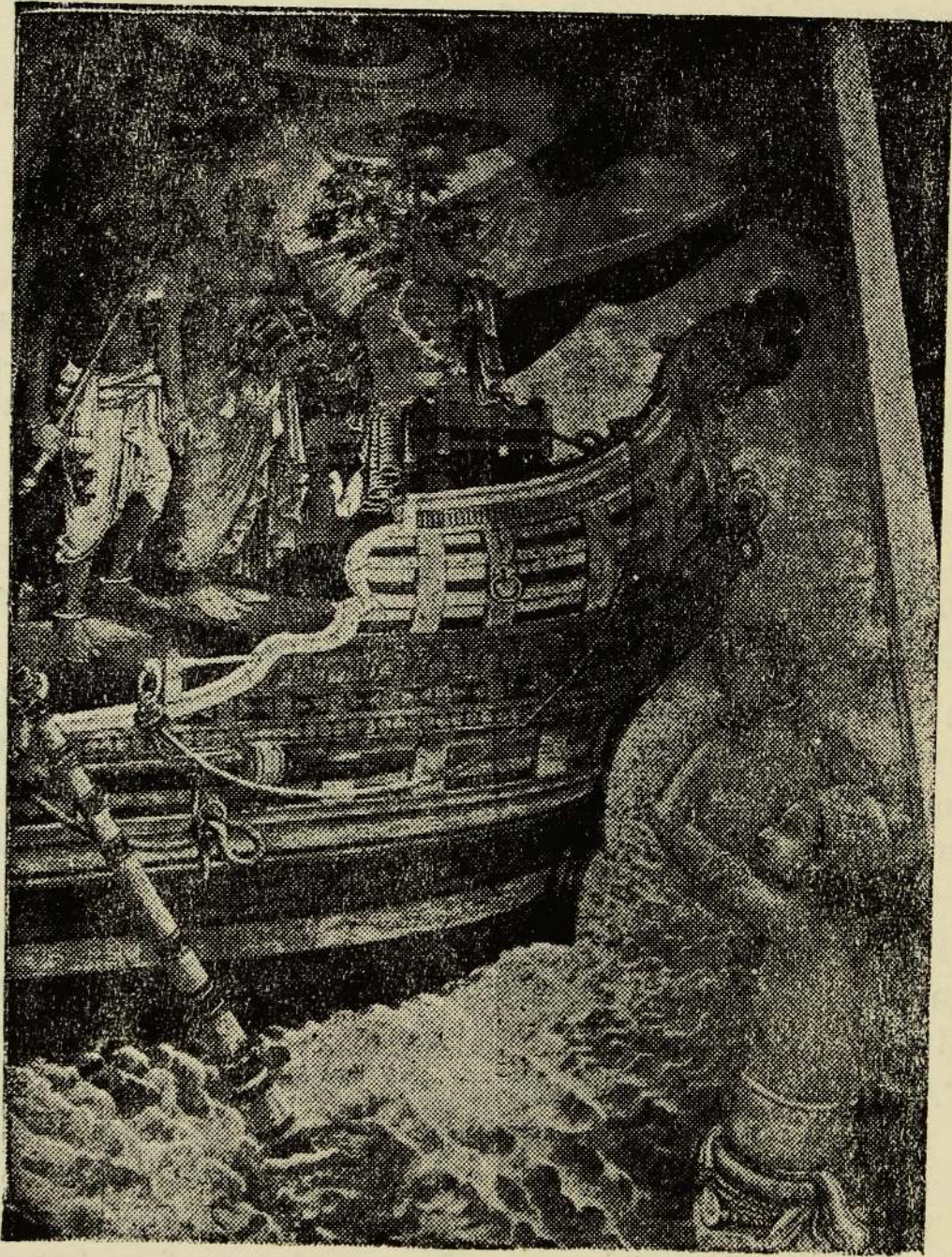
From very ancient times Sri Lanka was noted for her ivory, pearls, gems, camphor, cinnamon and other spices, and from the beginning of the sixteenth century three great European powers, the Portuguese, the Dutch, and finally the British captured her.

The Portuguese declared that they would “rather lose all India than imperil Ceylon.” The Dutch regarded it as a “Jewel in the Company’s Coronet” and the British prized it as the “Key to the Indian Ocean and the Great Insular Outpost of the British Empire in the East.”

In 1948 Sri Lanka became an Independent Member within the Commonwealth and a Republic within the Commonwealth in May 1972.

“All history begins with legend. First the dark age when truth is inseparably blended with fiction, and the fancies of the poet prevail over the dull facts which the analyst records. Then the middle age when, like some hidden shrine in the Buried Cities, truth struggles to free herself, and occasionally contrives to lift her head above the luxuriant but ruinous growth of fancy and imagination in which she is involved. Last comes the modern age, the age of prose, of scepticism, of research; though it is difficult to say whether the legends of old are not often more true than the pretended facts of our own time, when party bias, personal prejudices, and even darker blots, mar beyond recognition the record of the simplest incident.”

SUJATHA UDUĞAMA



Sanghamitta arrives with a branch of the Bo-tree.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
1. Sangamitta arrives with a branch of the Bo-tree ...	vi
2. From the Gal Vihare, Polonnaruwa—The Introduction of Buddhism into Sri Lanka has inspired works of art such as this, which has withstood the ravages of Time ...	xi
3. (1) The steps leading to Mihintale, the sacred Mountain where Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka	
(2) The Thuparama Dagoba—where the Buddha's Collar Bone Relic is enshrined ...	5
4. A Mural from the Kelaniya Temple—Prince Danta and Princess Hemamala arriving in Sri Lanka, in disguise, with the Sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha, hidden in the tresses of her long black hair	10
5. Parakrama Bahu the Eighth met de Souza, the Portuguese Ambassador under a "Makara Thorana" seated on a throne of ivory ...	15
6. President's House ...	16
7. Sri Pada ...	20A
8. (1) Maligawa Tusker, Kandy Perahera	
(2) Dancers and Torch Bearers ...	24A
9. Bahirawakande—where the annual sacrifice took place ...	27
10. He cut the creepers that bound her and carried her to the shelter of a rock ...	30
11. (1) Drumming Hall, Embakke	
(2) Motif—Embakke ...	33
12. Entrance, Lankatilleke Vihare ...	35
13. To his surprise blood flowed from the wounded tree, and for the first time the drummer began his tom-tom beating ...	37
14. (1) Diyaluma Falls (2) St. Clair Falls ...	40A
15. A runaway couple, linked in each others arms, jumped down the top of these falls ...	42

	Page
16. (1) & (2) Sigiriya Frescoes (3) Aerial view of Sigiriya Rock	46A
17. Sigiriya, the Fortress of a King	47
18. Kurunegala—Massive rocks constitute its landscape	51
19. Ancient Doorway—Entrance to Ridi Vihare ...	55
20. Today Panduwasnuwara is only a heap of shattered ruins	59
21. Munneswaram—preparing for the festival ...	68
22. Fire Walking	70A
23. Entrance to Kataragama "	73
24. He cut off the royal suicide's head, and took it to King Gothabaya, who gave him the promised reward	76
25. Clock Tower and Ramparts	80A
26. Dutch Church	82
27. (1) Dutch Ramparts (2) The Dutch Gateway leading to the Pier—over the gateway is a Court- of-Arms with a monogram	83
28. Matara Fort	87
29. Dondra Lighthouse—an important beacon for ships is the modern landmark of this historic town ...	91
30. Swami Rock	98A
31. Anagarika Dharmapala—A Great Buddhist Leader	118
32. Robert Knox—a Prisoner in the Kandyan Kingdom	128
33. Sardiel awaiting trial in Kandy	132

CONTENTS

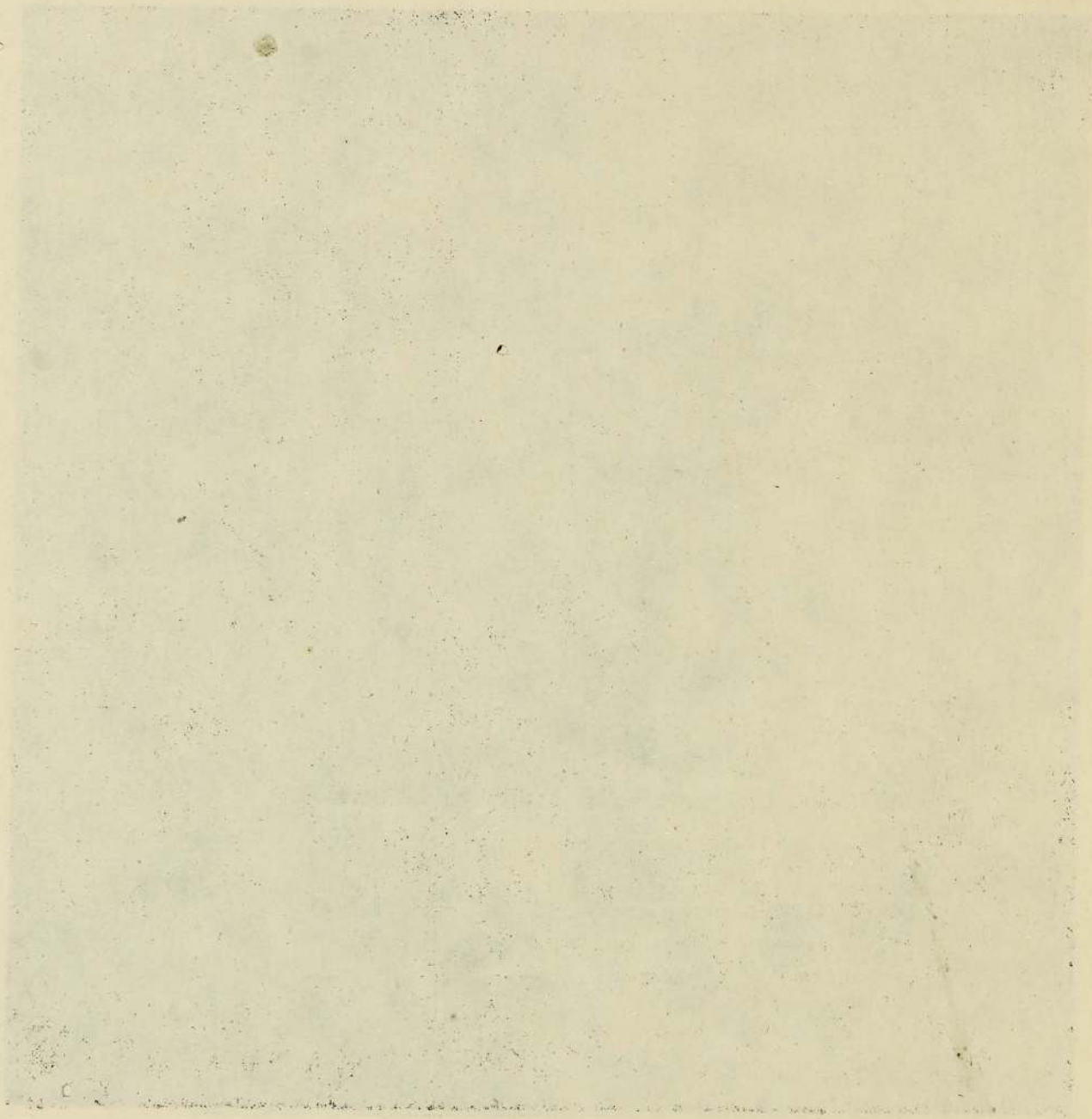
	PAGE
1. The arrival of Vijaya	1
2. The Introduction of Buddhism	3
3. Kelaniya	7
4. The Glory that was Kotte	11
5. The History of "President's House"	17
6. Sri Pada,—the Sacred Mountain	20
7. The Esala Perahera, its History and Customs	23
8. The Annual Sacrifice at Bahirawakande	26
9. Embakke, Gadaladeniya and Lankatillaka	31
10. Medamahanuwara	38
11. Waterfalls	40
12. Wahakotte, its History and Religion	43
13. Sigiriya, the Fortress of a King	45
14. Kurunegala, an old-time Capital	48
15. The Ridi Vihare or Silver Temple	52
16. Panduwasnuwara	56
17. Dambadeniya and Yapahuwa	60
18. The Festival of St. Anne of Talawila	65
19. Munneswaram, the Shrine of Ishwara	67
20. Kataragama, the Forest Shrine	70
21. The Stone Statues on the bund of Minneriya's Tank	74
22. Siri Sangabo, he enriched a poor man by Noble Sacrifice	77
23. Galle, the Romantic old-world town	80
24. Matara	84
25. Devinuwara, the City of the Gods	88
26. Mulkirigala	92
27. Batticaloa and Trincomalee	95
28. Women in Sri Lanka's History	100
29. Keppetipola Maha Dissawe, A Great National Hero	108
30. A Kandyan Rebellion that caused the fall of a British Cabinet—when Matale Revolted against heavy taxes	112
31. Anagarika Dharmapala, A Great Buddhist Leader	116
32. Charles Henry de Soysa, a Great Philanthropist	123
33. Robert Knox, a Prisoner in the Kandyan Kingdom	126
34. Sardiel the Outlaw	130
35. Tales Our Place Names Tell	137

CONTENTS

1	The arrival of Vishnu	1
2	The introduction of Buddhism	2
3	Kalmasya	3
4	The Glory that was Kalmasya	4
5	The history of "President's House"	5
6	Sri Pada—the Sacred Mountain	6
7	The Esala Perahera, its History and Customs	7
8	The Annual Sacrifice at Bahawadpur	8
9	Temple of Gadaladeniya and Lankathilaka	9
10	Keddenawara	10
11	Wimala	11
12	Wimala, its History and Religion	12
13	Sri Lanka, the Fortness of a King	13
14	Kumbhakar, an old-time Capital	14
15	The Kumbhakar, its History and Religion	15
16	Pandawara	16
17	Dambadeniya and Pambadeniya	17
18	The Festival of the Tooth at Pambadeniya	18
19	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	19
20	Kumbhakar, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	20
21	The Stone Statue on the head of Manikgama	21
22	Sri Lanka, its history and religion	22
23	Galle, the Roman Catholic world town	23
24	Manikgama	24
25	Devanagiri, the City of the Gods	25
26	Manikgama	26
27	Manikgama and Trincomalee	27
28	Women in Sri Lanka's history	28
29	Kumbhakar, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	29
30	A Kandyan Rebellion and the role of the British	30
31	Colony—its history and religion	31
32	Manikgama	32
33	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	33
34	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	34
35	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	35
36	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	36
37	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	37
38	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	38
39	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	39
40	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	40
41	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	41
42	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	42
43	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	43
44	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	44
45	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	45
46	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	46
47	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	47
48	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	48
49	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	49
50	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	50
51	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	51
52	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	52
53	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	53
54	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	54
55	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	55
56	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	56
57	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	57
58	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	58
59	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	59
60	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	60
61	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	61
62	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	62
63	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	63
64	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	64
65	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	65
66	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	66
67	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	67
68	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	68
69	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	69
70	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	70
71	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	71
72	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	72
73	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	73
74	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	74
75	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	75
76	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	76
77	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	77
78	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	78
79	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	79
80	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	80
81	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	81
82	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	82
83	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	83
84	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	84
85	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	85
86	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	86
87	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	87
88	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	88
89	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	89
90	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	90
91	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	91
92	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	92
93	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	93
94	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	94
95	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	95
96	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	96
97	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	97
98	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	98
99	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	99
100	Manikgama, the Shrine of Pambadeniya	100



From the Gal Vihare, Polonnaruwa. The Introduction of Buddhism into Sri Lanka has inspired works of art such as this, which has withstood the ravages of time.



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The Arrival of Vijaya

The first chapter of Sri Lanka's long and turbulent history opens with the arrival of Prince Vijaya and his seven hundred followers, banished from the kingdom of his father about the year 543 B.C. During this time, according to some historians, the Buddha had just passed away peacefully in India, with his head towards the north, under the cool shade of the great Sal trees at Gaya.

Vijaya was the eldest son of Sinhabahu, the king of Lala, a district of Magadha in Northern India. The mother of Sinhabahu, Suppadevi, was a princess of Wangra, the modern Bengal. She was married to a man who was as strong as a lion, that he came to be called a "Sinhaya," meaning lion.

Vijaya grew up to be very troublesome, and committed innumerable acts of violence in his father's kingdom. He and his followers were terrorising the people that they complained to the king, and in spite of his father's threats, Vijaya continued his acts of oppression. The people then wanted Vijaya put to death, but the king decided otherwise, and put him in a large ship, along with seven hundred of his followers, and having shaved half their heads as a mark of disgrace, sent them adrift.

The ship sailed slowly southwards, and landed on a wild and lonely spot near the present town of Puttalam in our beautiful little island of Sri Lanka. Vijaya got off the boat, and beckoned to his men that they should keep together as they were on strange soil. One by one, the men got off the ship, and as they were very tired and travelworn, it was indeed very invigorating for them to rest after the rough voyage they had. When they stretched themselves on the sandy beach, they noticed the palms of their hands were stained red, hence they called the place "Thambapanni", meaning copper.coloured. Later, the whole island came to be called by that name until the Greeks and Romans derived the name Taprobane from it.

At the time Vijaya and his followers arrived in our island, there were no human beings to be seen, but while they were resting, there suddenly appeared a dog. Although Vijaya had asked his men to keep together as they were in a strange land,

one of them thought, "Where there are dogs there surely must be human beings", and he followed the dog until he reached a tank. The dog suddenly disappeared, but there under a banyan tree, sat a woman spinning thread. The man, having bathed in the waters of the tank, began to collect edible roots and water to take with him, when the woman rose and shouted, "Stop, thou art my prey." She was Kuveni, a princess of the Yakka tribe.

The man was spell-bound, and before he could speak, Kuveni cast him into a subterranean cave, and the others too, who accompanied Vijaya to Sri Lanka, met with the same fate. When Vijaya realised that his men were missing, he went in search of them until he reached the tank. Seeing their foot-prints lead to the water, he became very sad and helpless. Then he noticed a woman spinning thread, and suspecting her to be the mischief-maker, he questioned her as to where his men were, when Kuveni rose and asked haughtily, "What need have you of attendants, Prince?"

"The woman even knows my lineage", muttered Vijaya, and thereupon he seized her by her hair, and threatened to kill her with his sword. She then screamed in agony, and promised, not only to release his men, but also to make him supreme king of Sri Lanka, if only he consented to make her his queen. She then transformed herself into a most beautiful girl, and Vijaya agreed, for he knew, that with her help, he would be able to conquer the Yakkas and other existing tribes. Vijaya now became supreme king of all Lanka, but after a time he cast Kuveni away for a princess from his own country.

Such is the history and legend connected with Vijaya, the first king of Sri Lanka and the founder of the nation.

The Introduction of Buddhism

"Oh! King what is this tree called?"

"It is an amba (mango) tree."

"Besides this amba tree, is there any other amba tree?"

"There are many other amba trees."

"Besides this amba tree and those other amba trees, are there any other trees on earth?"

"Lord, there are many trees, but they are not amba trees."

"Besides the other amba trees and the trees that are not amba, is there any other?"

"Gracious Lord, this amba!"

"Ruler of men, thou art wise"

Thus says the Mahawamsa, the great historical chronicle of this Island of Sri Lanka, that the Thera Mahinda questioned King Devanampiyatissa before he preached to him the doctrine of the Buddha.

This was indeed one of the greatest events that took place in the history of our land—the introduction of Buddhism in the year, 246 B.C. when Devanampiyatissa reigned as supreme king of Sri Lanka. This great event took place in Mihintale, situated in the North-Central Province of the island, one hundred and thirty miles from Colombo, the capital city, and just seven miles from Anuradhapura, the ancient capital of long ago. This little place comes to life every year during the Poson festival when thousands of devotees wend up its one thousand eight hundred stone steps to pay homage to the founder of their faith.

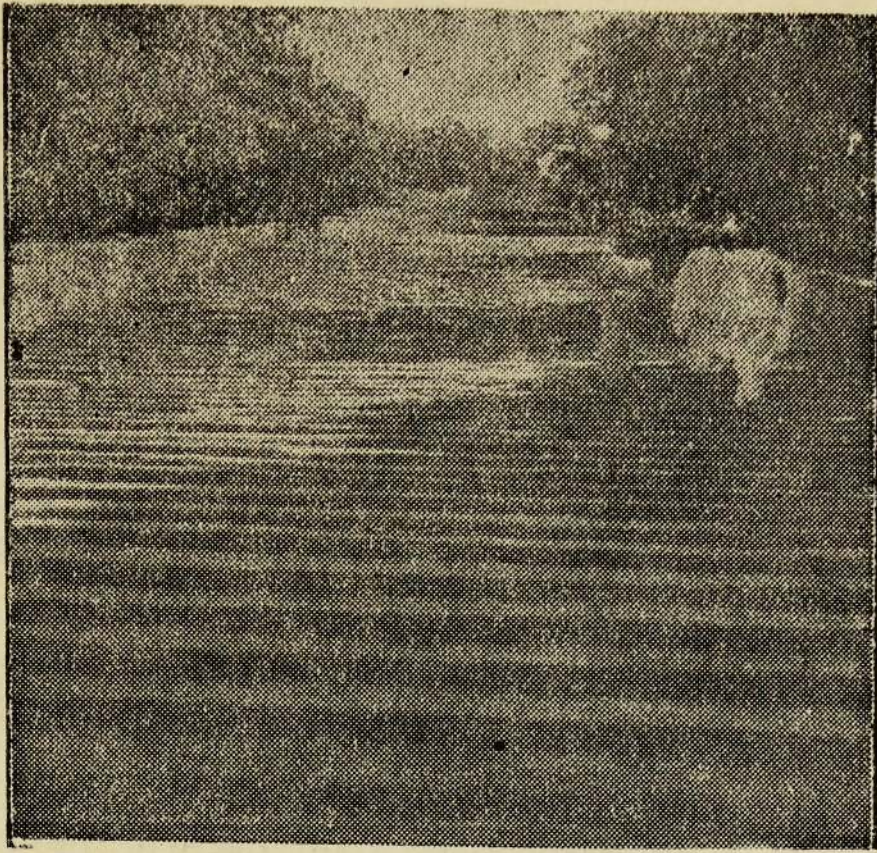
It all happened in a very strange way. The Mahawamsa tells us that one day King Devanampiyatissa arranged a water festival for the citizens of his capital at Anuradhapura, and set out with thousands of his followers to the Missaka Mountain, which is known today as Mihintale, on a hunting expedition. Suddenly the king saw an elk grazing in a thicket. He pursued the animal and was about to strike an arrow when he was confronted by a stranger dressed in a yellow robe. Seeing the monarch, he called out to him in a very familiar tone, "Come here, Tissa."

The king was taken aback at the stranger's familiarity, and he was about to ask him what he wanted, when he said, "We are the Ministers and Disciples of the Lord of the True Faith, and out of compassion for you Maharajah, we have come from Jambu Dvipa to preach the Doctrine of the Enlightened One."

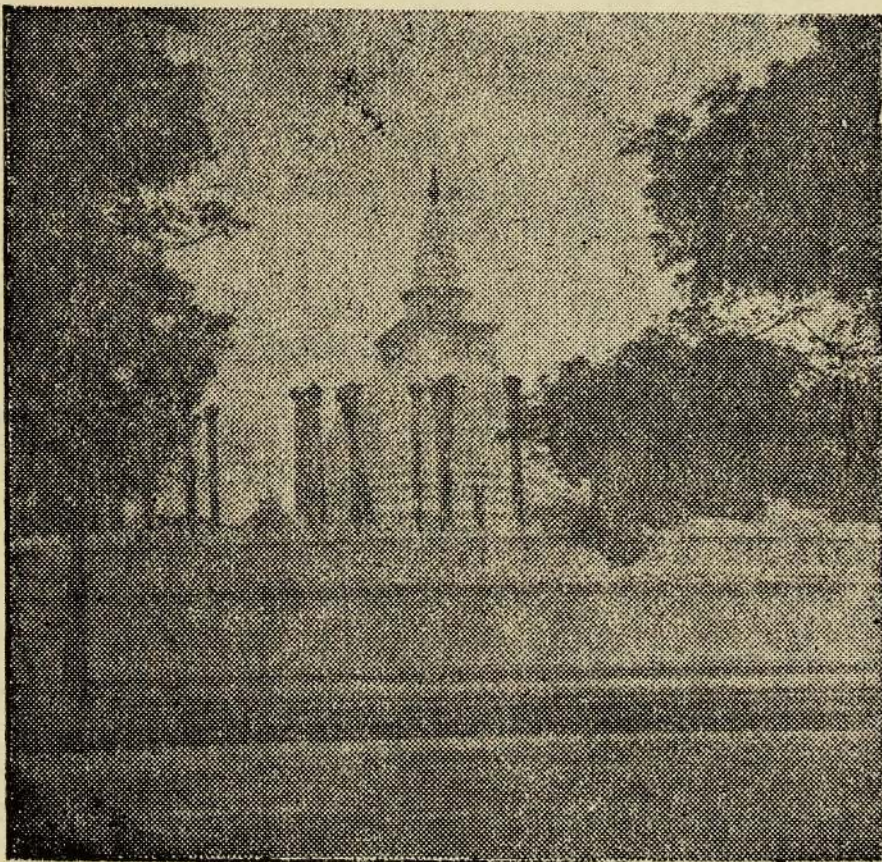
The Lord of the True Faith, he spoke of, was the Buddha, and Jambu Dvīpa was the old name for India. As for the stranger, he was Prince Mahinda himself, the son of the great king Asoka of India, king Devanampiyatissa's good friend. When the monarch learned who the stranger was, and the purpose of his visit, he put aside his bow and arrow, and listened to Mahinda's first sermon. Thereafter king Devanampiyatissa and his followers who accompanied him to Mihintale, became the first converts to Buddhism and before long, the new religion spread throughout the land.

Mahinda and the other preachers then came to Anuradhapura, where a suitable dwelling place was provided for them in the king's garden. Every mark of honour and reverence was given to them, and Buddhism flourished throughout the land. It was now necessary that places should be set aside for worship and for the residences of monks and attendants, and for the training of pupils for the teachings of the Buddha. Devanampiyatissa discussed all these with the Thera Mahinda, and then agreed to mark out a portion of land, which should ever after be sacred to the new faith. The day on which the marking was done was declared a holiday, and notice of it was given to the people by beat of drum. On the appointed day, the king, dressed in his grandest robes, riding in his royal chariot, and attended by his troops of soldiers, went first to the temple, where the monks lived, and with them to the spot, where the marking was to begin. The whole city—every house and every street was gaily decorated with flags and wreaths of flowers, and there was a great procession, and crowds of people assembled to greet the king. The marking of the boundaries was done with a golden plough, drawn by two of the king's elephants, while the king himself held the plough.

When the ground had been drawn out, a Vihare or Monastery was built for the monks, with preaching halls and rooms for quiet thinking and for rest by day and by night. Later on, this Vihare became very famous, and was known as the Maha Vihare. It is spoken of as a great seat of learning and the home of great men. The ruins of the Vihara are to be seen to the present day.



1. The steps leading to Mihintale, the Sacred Mountain, where Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka.



2. The Thuparama Dagoba, where the Buddha's Collar Bone Relic is enshrined.

The next thing required was a relic of the Buddha. The Thera Mahinda pointed out that there were no relics in Sri Lanka to which the people could make offerings, and he advised king Devanampiyatissa to ask for some from India, whereupon messengers were sent to Asoka, the great king of India at that time, and he sent the right collar-bone of the Buddha and a bowlful of other relics. The king then built a Dagoba over the collar-bone of the Buddha. This was the Thuparama Dagoba, the first dagoba ever to be built in Sri Lanka. It is to be seen to this day at Anuradhapura, surrounded by slender and graceful monoliths, and measuring fifty-five feet and six inches in height.

King Devanampiyatissa was also responsible for the building of the Isurumuniya Vihare in the third century B.C. A feature of this Vihare is its fine rock carvings which are of great artistic value. Visitors to the island from many parts of the world have seen and admired these monuments.

During this period in the history of Sri Lanka, many women embraced Buddhism, and special attention had to be paid to their religious needs. A princess named Anula, and the wife of king Devanampiyatissa's younger brother, was one of the converts. She with five hundred of her ladies asked permission to enter the priesthood. Mahinda then suggested to king Devanampiyatissa to write to his father, the great king Asoka, to send his younger sister Sangamittha, for she was very learned, and could ordain these ladies. "Tell him also," said Mahinda, "that she should bring with her the right branch of the Bo-tree, under the shade of which, the Buddha found salvation."

The request was soon granted, and Sangamittha arrived in Sri Lanka with a branch of the very Bo-tree under which the Buddha meditated.

She was received with the greatest honour, and the sacred branch was planted at Anuradhapura in the garden attached to the Maha Vihara, where it still stands, the oldest historical tree in the world. Princess Anula and her ladies were admitted to the priesthood, and Sangamittha was as active as Mahinda in spreading Buddhism throughout the land.

The introduction of Buddhism into Sri Lanka has had a tremendous influence on her art, literature and architecture, as well as on her cultural, intellectual and spiritual development.

Kelaniya

On the nights of the full moon when the temple drums of Kelaniya throb aloud, thousands of pilgrims, in spotless white, kneel before a recumbent image of the Buddha, with offerings of jasmins and lotus blossoms.

Kelaniya, on the outskirts of Colombo, is famous throughout the Buddhist world for it has been sanctified by the Buddha's third visit to Sri Lanka, our picturesque little island. Today it is a seat of Buddhist learning and a centre of religious and cultural revival.

In its milk-white Dagoba is enshrined the gem-set throne, on which the Buddha sat, and across its vivid history is splashed the blood of a holy monk. To this day, the people of Kelaniya will show you a spot in the bund of the great Kelani river, opposite the sacred vihara, where the Buddha bathed in its waters.

According to tradition, about six hundred years before the Christian era, there lived in Sri Lanka a race of people called the Nagas who occupied the very north of the island—Jaffna, the land of the talipot. It was then known as "Maninaga Divayina" meaning the isle of the jewelled Nagas, and was ruled by Mahodara, a son of the sister of the mighty Naga king, Maniakkhika, who lived at Kelaniya. Behind Kelaniya was Vadunnagala, yet another Naga settlement ruled by Culodara, a nephew of Mahodara.

Bound together by ties of blood, these great territories of the mighty Naga kings were full of peace and contentment, but alas! this atmosphere was not for ever, for the hand of fate had sown a seed of discord amongst the rulers. There was, a gem-set throne which belonged to Mahodara's mother, who, before her death, gifted it to her daughter (and not to her son). The daughter in turn gave it to Culodara, her son, and this so greatly enraged Mahodara, that he declared war on the kingdom of Vandunnagala.

When Maniakkhika, the chief king of the Nagas, heard of the forthcoming battle, he was very unhappy—his great kingdom over which he ruled justly and well was to be split asunder, all because of a gem-studded throne. He tried his best to prevent the battle, but his kinsmen were determined to fight. As a last resort, he decided to seek the help of Gautama, the Buddha, whose great teachings were already drifting into Sri Lanka.

Falling at the feet of Gautama, Maniakkhika implored of him to visit the island and save his land from war. The Buddha listened to the Naga King and assured him that he would follow.

On the day the rival armies were ready to attack one another, the Buddha appeared, and preached to the Nagas on greed and selfishness. This was at Nagadipa, the little island off the north coast of Sri Lanka, known today as Nainativu. The Buddha's words brought about a change of heart among the contending groups. Kinsmen again mingled with kinsmen and as a token of gratitude, they offered the Compassionate One the gem-set throne over which they had fought.

Three years later, Maniakkhika, greatly impressed by the Buddha, invited him to Sri Lanka, who in the eighth year of his Enlightenment, visited Kelaniya with five hundred followers. This was by far the most important visit he made to the island. He not only bathed in the waters of the Kelani River, but he preached to the Naga King and his people, and converted them to Buddhism. On this sacred spot, where the Buddha preached, Maniakkhika built the milk-white Dagoba, which is to be seen at Kelaniya to this day. Here, he also buried the gem-set throne on which the Buddha sat. The old chronicle of Sri Lanka, the "Mahavamsa," describes this visit thus:—

"Under a canopy decked with gems, the Buddha took his place together with the brotherhood of bhikkus upon a precious throne. And greatly rejoicing, the Naga King with his followers, served him with celestial food."

Even now they say, when the night is dark and lonely, when the great temple doors are shut, when the pilgrim cries of Sadhu ... Sadhu ... are no longer heard, and the temple drums have ceased to throb, the Nagas come in spotless white to Kelaniya to pay homage to the Buddha!

The later history of Kelaniya is a story mingled with romance and tragedy. About 200 B.C. there reigned in Kelaniya a king named Uttiya who had two sons, Kelanitissa and Uttiya. When the old king died, the elder of the sons became heir to the throne, and married a woman who was more beautiful than virtuous. By and by Uttiya fell very deeply in love with her, and the queen returned his affection, until one day, Kelanitissa realised this, and banished his brother.

Prince Uttiya was heart-broken, but "all is fair in love and war," and one day he decided upon an ingenious devise to communicate with the queen. News reached him that there was to be an alms-giving ceremony in the Royal Palace, and he induced one of his trusted followers to shave his head and don himself in the saffron coloured robes of a holy monk. He was then requested to mingle with the clergy, invited to the alms-giving and deliver a letter safely to the queen.

The messenger agreed and took a position just behind the Chief Monk of the sacred Kelaniya Temple, who led the long queue of monks into the spacious Alms Hall. As he entered, the king and queen bent low to greet him, when the messenger dropped the letter written upon an ola leaf. It fell to the floor, and the king picked it up, and as he read its contents he grew angry. He ordered his guards to capture the Chief Monk of sacred Kelaniya, for the hand-writing on the ola leaf resembled that of his. In his blind fury, the king did not for a moment think that his brother, Uttiya, was a pupil of the monk, and could write in the same fist.

The enraged monarch soon sent for his executioners, and ordered that the Chief Monk should be placed in a cauldron of oil. As for the monk, he did not protest, for he knew that he had not the power to go against the king's wrath and orders. But just before he was lowered into the cauldron, he began to preach a sermon on "Maitri" or Universal Love. And then as he sank into the boiling oil, he closed his eyes. He had expiated his Karma and attained Nirvana.

Not long afterwards, the sea began to encroach the west coast of the island, and Kelanitissa believed this was a curse for the sacrilege he had committed. Thereupon he consulted his court astrologers, and they advised the monarch to offer a human sacrifice to appease the angry sea-gods, and that the sacrifice should be someone very dear to the king. Kelanitissa then decided to make a sacrifice of his only daughter, Devi, and she was placed in a covered boat, bearing her name and royal connection, and sent adrift on the ocean. Strange as it may seem, the floods subsided, and when the king went round inspecting the havoc caused by the floods, the earth opened up at a place known even today as Etahunwela, and swallowed up the king and his elephant.

As for the boat containing the comely princes, Devi, it drifted towards the southern coast of the island and was rescued by some fishermen at a place known today as Kirinda. Soon king Kavantissa of Ruhuna heard this, and proceeded to the spot. When he learned that the girl in the boat was of royal birth, he led her in a great procession to his capital, Mahagama, and made her his queen.

Throughout Sri Lanka's turbulent history, she is known as Vihara Maha Devi, and the union between her and king Kavantissa of Ruhuna, gave this country the great hero, Dutugemunu who reigned from 161 to 137 B.C.

In the historic shrine of Kelaniya, one sees both ancient and modern Sinhalese art—paintings and sculptures depicting scenes from the Buddha's life and Sri Lanka's history.



A Mural from the Kelaniya Temple.

Prince Danta and Princess Hemamala arriving in Sri Lanka, in disguise with the Sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha, hidden in the tresses of her long black hair.

The Glory that was Kotte

Most of us think of Kotte, the little suburb, five miles out of Colombo, as the subject of the famous Sinhalese saying, "Parangiya Kotte Giya Wage," which means, "Like the Portuguese who went to Kotte." But when we look back on the ancient past and scan our forgotten history, we find that even this little saying is full of historical significance.

It is almost unbelievable that Kotte was once the seat of kings and the hub of political activity. It is also unbelievable that this little place in the suburbs of Colombo was once the centre of many a bloody battle, and that it echoed with the thunder of cannons and the shrieks of fighting men, and that its brown water was stained red with blood.

Kotte is of great historical importance, and there came to this place in the past Emmissaries from India, Burma, Siam and far-off China, bringing with them tributes to the kings of long ago. Kotte existed as a town in the middle of the 14th century, and was the seat of many rulers until the 16th century. Kotte was originally founded by Alakeswara, the powerful Prime Minister of Wickrema Bahu the IV. He lived in Peradeniya, three and a half miles from Kandy, but he fortified Kotte and called it Jayawardena Pura." He did this to protect the land from invasion, and he was right, for not long afterwards the king of Jaffna, Arya Chakra Varti, waged war against Gampola and Kotte, but Alakeswara's forces defeated him.

The next two rulers of Kotte after Alakeswara were Bhuvenaka Bahu V and Vira Bahu II, of whom we hear very little in the annals of our history. Then there came to the throne of Kotte, Vira Alakeswara, the son of the famous Alakeswara, the founder of Kotte. He took the name of Vijaya Bahu VI, during whose reign there came to Sri Lanka a Chinese General named Chang Ho, with gifts of great value, and various offerings for the sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha, but we are told, he was shamefully insulted, and that he escaped to his ship with much difficulty. This incident took place in the year 1405.

But the Chinese did not forget this, and in order to avenge the insult, they returned in the year 1408 and captured the king of Kotte. Many others were taken prisoners to China, but the Chinese Emperor was filled with compassion, and he restored them to liberty on condition that the crown should be taken

from Vijaya Bahu and given to the wisest of the captive king's family, but for the next fifty years Sri Lanka paid a tribute to China. However, there is much controversy amongst historians with regard to the capture of Vijaya Bahu to China for some have reported differently.

We next hear of Parakrama Bahu VI, under whose rule Kotte flourished, and was in the height of its glory. He took over the kingdom in 1412 when there was confusion and dissension in the land, caused by ambitious chieftains, who were attempting to seize imperial power. Parakrama Bahu soon restored peace and order, and for the first time in many years brought the whole island under one ruler. He also adorned Kotte with numerous public buildings, palaces and temples. He built great roads and enlarged its fortifications, and amongst other fine buildings, he put up a three-storied temple for the Tooth Relic of the Buddha, which was brought to Kotte, and placed in the innermost of four golden caskets. He constructed a Vihare at Pepiliyana, near Colombo, in the vicinity of Dehiwela, in memory of his mother. He called it the Sunethra Devi Vihare after her, and the place is still held in great veneration. Buddhism was greatly encouraged by this king of Kotte, and in addition to the customary gifts to the monks, the king assigned lands for the maintenance and comfort of those who were set apart to make copies of the sacred books.

Parakrama of Kotte was also a great patron of the arts, and during his reign there flourished bards and writers and many great and learned men. One of them was the famous monk, Totagamuwe Sri Rahula, who was the principal of a college of monks, which was established by Parakrama near Kotte. He was a great favourite of this king and belonged to his household at Kotte before he became a monk. He was also famous as a linguist and knew sixteen eastern languages. Then the great "Sandesa" poems, the "Kokila," "Gira," "Paravi" and "Sela-lihini" were also written during this period for this was indeed the golden age of Sinhalese literature.

But Kotte was not without her troubles. During Parakrama's reign first there came a fleet of ships and a large army from Canara, a country on the west coast of South India, but the king of Kotte was not defeated. Next a trading ship of his was seized and plundered by a Malabar Chief of the Chola country,

but Parakrama of Kotte sent an army to Chola, and from some of its villages he managed to get an annual tribute. Next there took place a rebellion in the five Kandyan districts of Udu-nuwara, Yatinuwara, Harispattuwa, Hewaheta and Dumbara for the prince ruling these districts tried to withhold the taxes due to Kotte, and establish his independence. And finally the king of Jaffna came to war with Kotte, but Parakrama overcame all these troubles and he also managed to stop the payment of tribute to China.

The next king who ruled at Kotte was Parakrama's grandson, Jaya Bahu II, but he was murdered at Kotte by Bhuvanaka Bahu VI, who took over the kingdom, and ruled for a period of 8 years when Parakrama Bahu VII came to the throne. His reign is significant because the Portuguese arrived in Sri Lanka during his reign.

On 15 November 1505, he received a strange message. The people came to him and said. "There is in our harbour of Colombo, a race of people, fair of skin and comely withal. They don jackets of iron and hats of iron, they rest not a minute in one place, they walk here and there; they eat hunks of stone and drink blood; they give two or three pieces of gold and silver for one fish or one lime; the report of their cannon is louder than the thunder when it bursts upon the rock Yugandhara. Their cannon balls fly many a 'gawwa' and shatter fortresses of granite."

All Kotte shook at the strange news and the white-bearded king of Kotte soon summoned a meeting of his ministers. He asked them whether he was to make peace with the strange white men or fight them. However, it was decided that one of them should go in disguise to find out the truth of the news they had heard. He soon came back and said that the newcomers were dangerous and that it would be wiser to form an alliance with them. The king then agreed to this suggestion, and the Portuguese selected one of their officers named Cotrim as their envoy and sent him with a Sinhalese escort. But the escort made it a point not to bring him to Kotte, the capital city, by the usual road. He had led him through dense jungles and thickets and the journey lasted three days for he did not want the envoy to know that Kotte was so close to Colombo. And now to come back to the Sinhalese saying "Parangiya Kotte giya

wage," meaning "like the Portuguese who went to Kotte," that is the incident which gives rise to the proverb which is used to the present day.

Cotrim arrived in Kotte, but he was not granted an audience with the king, but friendly negotiations were carried on with the ministers. It was for peaceful trade and the exchange of yearly presents between the two countries for which the Portuguese agreed to protect the ports against all enemies as they were powerful at sea.

Next the Portuguese had an audience with the king of Kotte and they sent another officer, Payoe de Souza, a Portuguese general, who arrived as ambassador. In accordance with Sinhalese custom, the audience took place by candle light. The city was gaily decorated for his arrival, and the king of Kotte, Parakrama Bahu VIII, met de Souza in a spacious hall under a "Makara Thorana" seated on a lion throne of ivory, and de Souza, the Portuguese ambassador, was dressed in green velvet. The King promised him cinnamon and a "Sannas" written on a sheet of gold was presented to him, and he was granted permission to return to his vessel.

But this was the turning point in the history of our land. Not long afterwards, they came to Kotte again when Bhuvaneka Bahu was king. They sat with him as his allies at Kotte to curb the growing power of prince Mayadunne, one of the ablest of Sri Lanka's chieftains who was building up a kingdom for himself at Sitawaka. But after a time he was shot by a Portuguese soldier and there came the first Catholic king of Lanka, Don Juan Dharmapala, who was baptised at Kotte in 1557 by the Portuguese, who forcibly removed him to Colombo. The Portuguese then destroyed Kotte—its forts and its palaces were broken down and much damage was done to the ancient capital, until the arrival of the Dutch.

In spite of the vandalism of several centuries, some memories of Kotte's ancient past are still to be seen. The more important of them are the Subadra Ramaya Dagoba and the Wijeyarama Temple, both in the vicinity of Gangodawila, the Kotte Vihare and the Pepiliyane Temple.

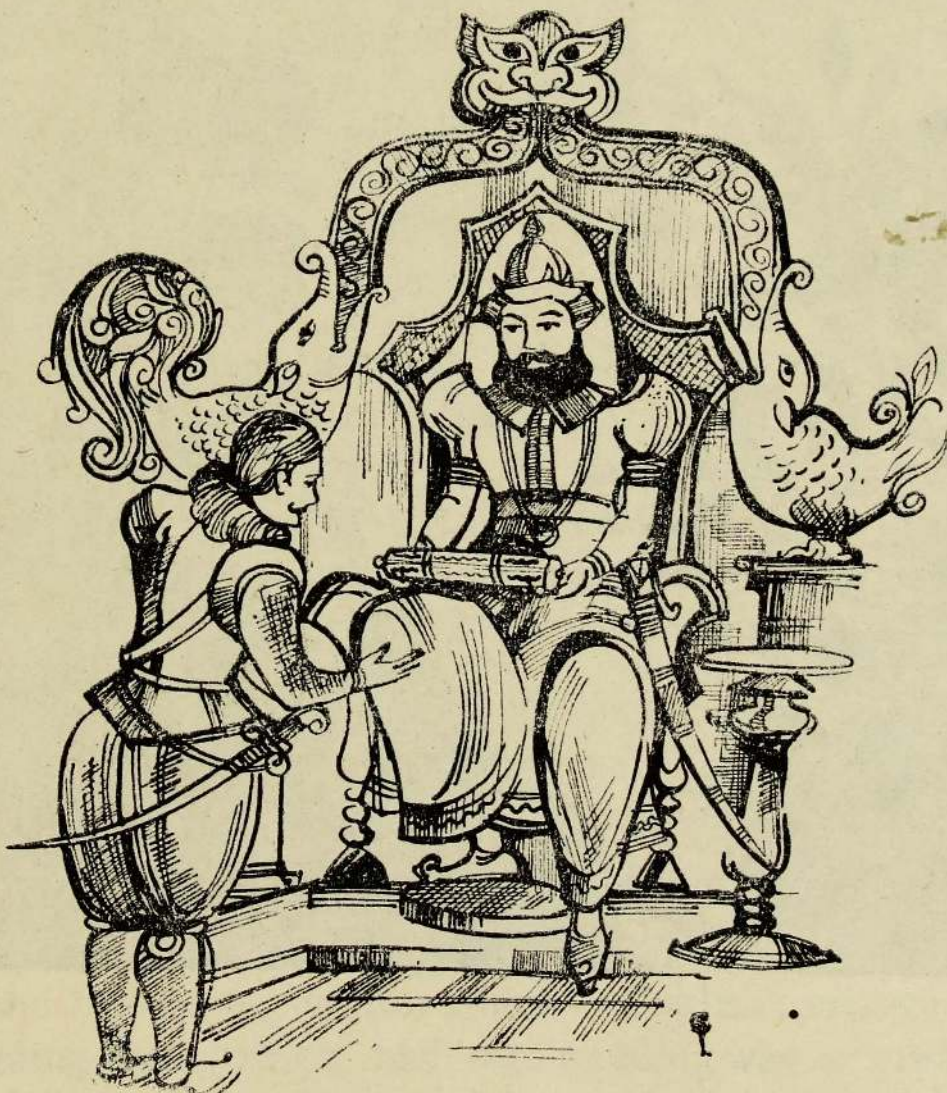
Recently, the Archaeological Department's excavations revealed among other things in the ruins of Kotte, the site of the Temple of the Tooth the ancient palace and the tomb of Alakeswara.

In the Colombo museum are to be seen a number of broken sculptured pillars and other objects from Kotte dating about the 15th century.

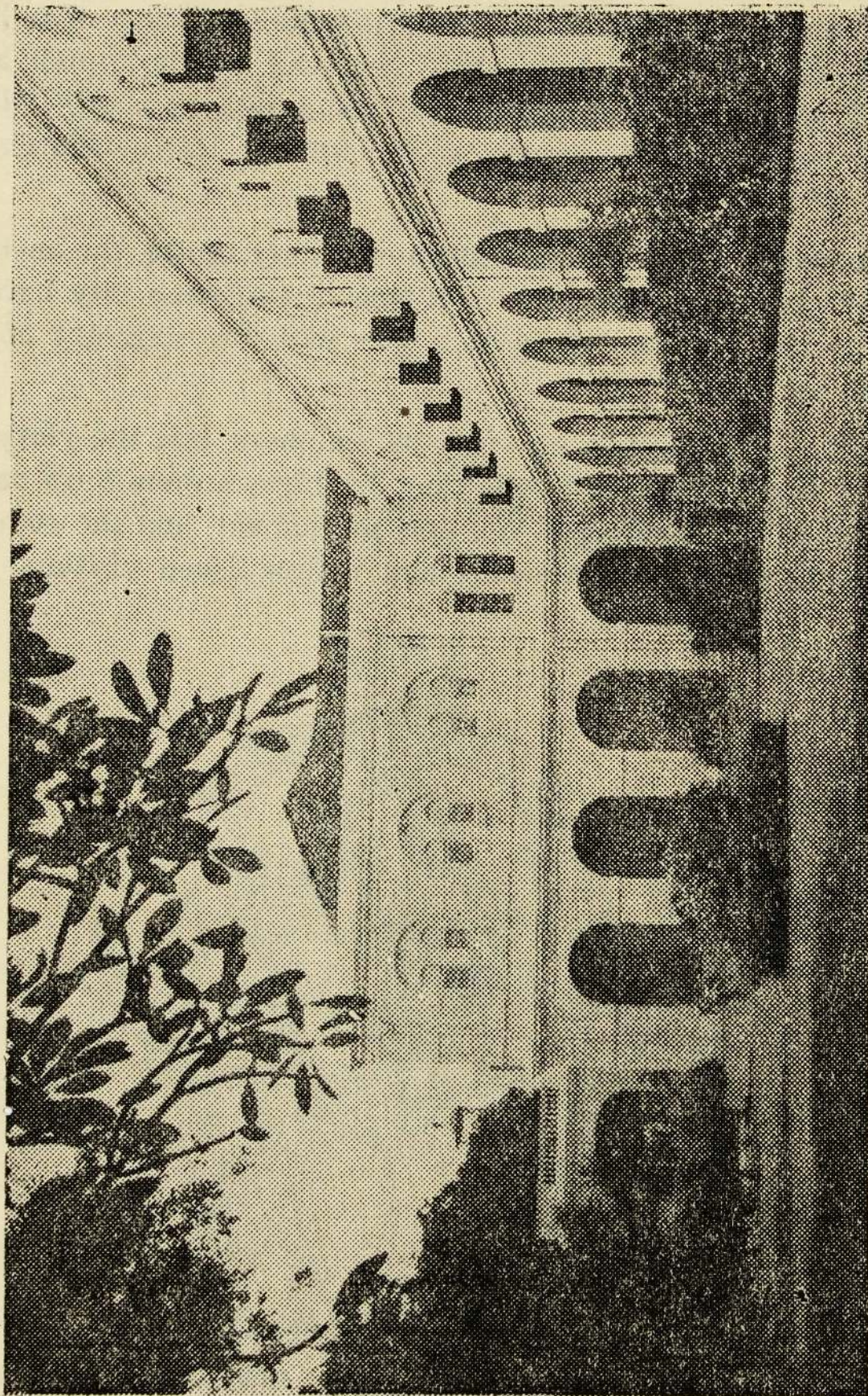
It is also interesting to find that the Portuguese erected a church on the site of Don Juan Dharmapala's palace. The bell of this church was subsequently removed by the Dutch and hung in the belfry of Kayman's Gate, and today it is still tolled to call worshippers to prayer at the famous Dutch Church at Wolfendhal.

Considered against the backdrop of history, Kotte, the ancient capital sank into obscurity. It was a forgotten city except that it came to life just once a year with the pagentry of its annual perahera.

But Kotte has woken up from its slumbers, and the glory of its past is coming back as the new Sri Jayawardene Pura came to life with the opening of the new parliament, and the coming and going of parliamentarians and distinguished visitors.



Parakrama Bahu the Eighth met de Souza, the Portuguese Ambassador under a "Makara Thorana," seated on a throne of Ivory.



"President's House"

The History of "President's House"

"President's House", that elegant and palatial building in the heart of the Fort of Colombo, which was known as "Queen's House," until Sri Lanka became a Republic has been the official residence of the Governors of Sri Lanka for over a century. It has a most curious story connected to it—a story imbued in romance and lost in the mists of antiquity, and if the son of an English Earl did not lose his heart over a beautiful Dutch maiden of noble birth this building would surely not have seen the coming and going of the Governors of Sri Lanka and finally become "President's House".

The first owner and occupant of the original building was the Dutch Governor, John Gerrard Van Angelbeek. After the British captured Colombo he lived there in 1796 and died in the same place three years later. After this the building came into the hands of General MacDowall, the Ambassador Frederic North sent to the King of Kandy, Sri Wikkrema Raja Sinha. He made use of the building as his residence as well as his office.

Later the building became crown property and in order to find out how this could have happened one has to go back to the early 19th century when the Hon. George Melville Leslie, fifth son of the Earl of Levan, arrived in Sri Lanka.

He was one of those early British Civil Servants, who came out to the island during the time Frederic North was Governor of Sri Lanka. He succeeded the famous Mr. Joinville as Superintendent of the Cinnamon Plantations. Having served in this capacity for a time the next appointment George Melville received was that of Paymaster-General of Sri Lanka.

During this period there lived in the capital many ladies of distinction, and the young Englishman fell deeply in love with the beautiful Miss Lacomina Gertruda Ven de Graff, only daughter of the Dutch Governor of that time and niece of Governor Van Angelbeek.

Soon the blossoming of the Dutch - English romance had its happy ending in marriage, and the wedding was a great social event of which, the erstwhile historian J. P. Lewis has written ".....It was a most elegant and sumptuous entertainment, given

by the bride's uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Christian Van Angelbeek at their residence in Colpetty, at which Governor North and the leading residents of Colombo were present. 'This was followed a few days later by an elegant ball and a supper given by the Governor in honour of the married couple.....'

With a beginning such as this, one might have expected their married life to have been happy, but it was by no means "all love and roses," for Leslie within the short span of a year found himself in great financial difficulties. There was a deficit of nearly £10,000 in his accounts and the young Paymaster-General was reduced in office in April 1803. He would have suffered greater penalties had not Mr. Christian Van Angelbeek come to his rescue. He offered Frederic North the house of the late Dutch Governor for 35,000 rix dollars to rescue his niece and her husband from the embarrassment.

Leslie then informed Governor North that the offer to the building was that of a voluntary one, made by his wife's uncle in order to help him. The Governor pitied the young man, and exclaimed that the need of a house was far from necessary, but under the circumstances he was willing to accept the offer.

Yet Frederic North felt that the price of 35,000 rix dollars was too high for the old Dutch building and replied thus:— "I precisely informed Mr. Van Angelbeek that I could not avoid making His Majesty's Ministers acquainted with the whole correspondence, which had passed between you and my Government on the subject of your accounts but that my communications to them should be secret. From that intention, I will certainly on no account depart, as nothing but a full exposition of the circumstances of the case could exculpate me in their eyes for the acquisition of Mr. Van Angelbeek's house in the Fort at so considerable a price."

The Dutch building was therefore taken over by deed, dated 17 January 1804, as part payment of the deficit.

Governor North tried his best to keep the matter as secret as possible, but the story regarding the deficit spread as to Leslie's reduction in office. Shortly after this he left the island with his wife and daughter and died in England in the year 1812.

During the time Sir Thomas Maitland was Governor of Sri Lanka, the building was known as "King's House." In 1831 Sir Robert Wilmot Horton, who was Governor urged the necessity of a suitable residence in the capital city as the house in Mount Lavinia, which he occupied at the time, was seven miles away from Colombo.

He suggested that "King's House" which during that period was in an old and dilapidated state, should be renovated and made the official residence of the Governors of Sri Lanka. The building was therefore extended periodically with the coming and going of Governors, and in 1852 it was practically rebuilt at a cost of £ 7,000.

If not for a Dutch English romance and an act of humanity on the part of the first English Governor of this island, Frederic North, "Queen's House," which came to be called "President's House" with the advent of Republican status, would not have become the important building it is today.

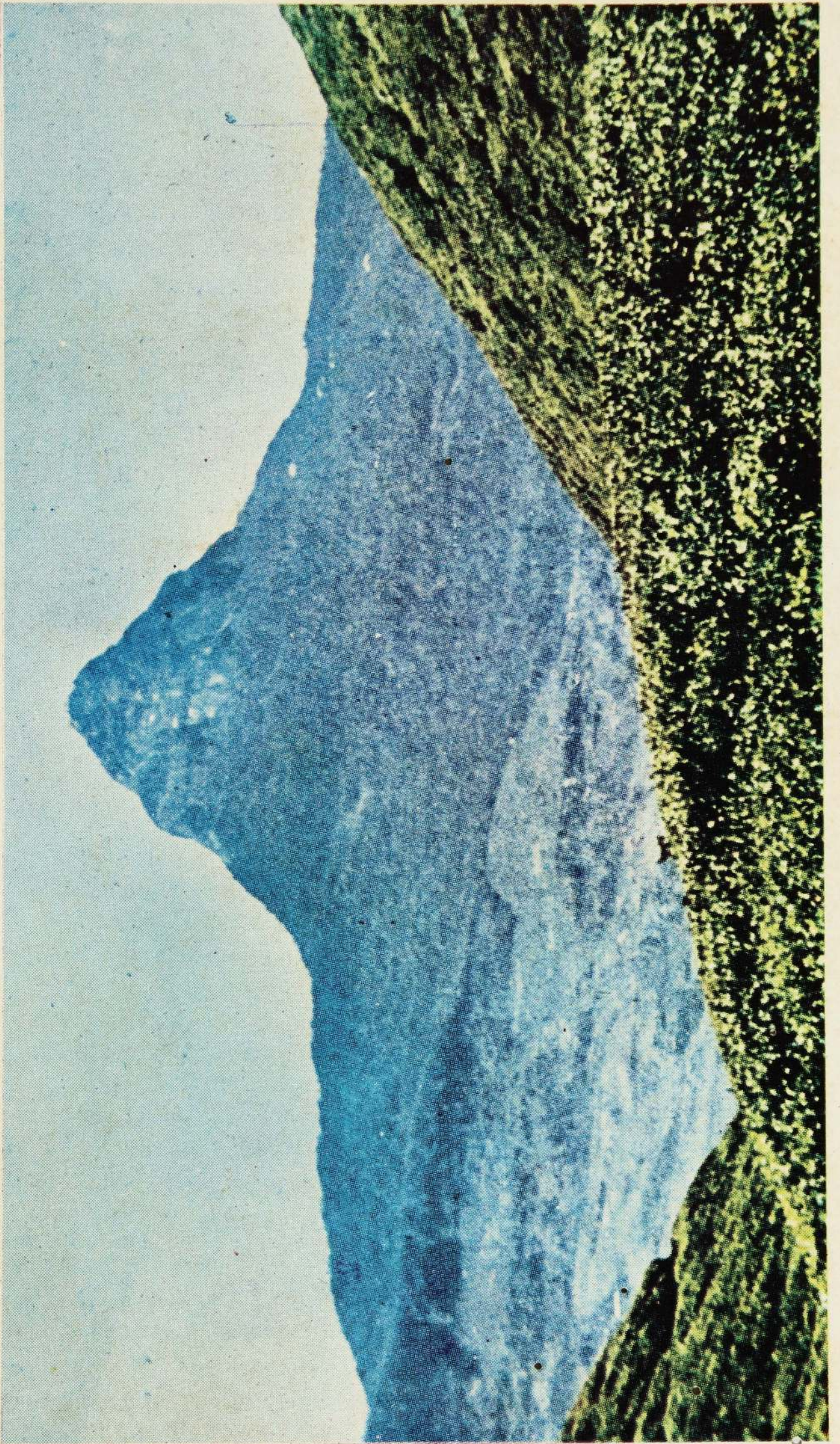
Sri Pada—The Sacred Mountain

Sri Pada or Adam's Peak, Sri Lanka's most sacred and picturesque mountain, attracts many visitors and pilgrims, who climb its rocky height in fulfilment of vows to Saman, its guardian God or deity.

Situated in the central hills of the island, the peak is visible to travellers approaching our shores for miles out at sea. It is only 7,360 feet in height, but its reputation is worldwide, as it is the only mountain in the world which has the distinction of being sacred to the followers of three great faiths—Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims. Thus Sri Pada has remained an object of great veneration for many centuries, and it is also the subject of many strange and fascinating legends.

The Buddhists believe the foot-print on the summit of Sri Pada to be that of Gauthama, the Buddha, as he arrived here on his third visit to Sri Lanka. It is said that even four previous Buddhas in remote and mystic ages, came to this holy spot, and left some mark of their passing. The Hindus claim it to be the foot-print of God Siva, and the Muslims, borrowing their history from the Jews, believe it to be that of Adam. They say that Adam fell on this mountain, on his expulsion from Paradise, and the Eastern Christians believe that the foot-print is that of St. Thomas, the Apostle of India.

The Peak can be reached from Maskeliya in Hatton, or from the valleys of Ratnapura, the city of gems. The climb from Ratnapura is almost from sea level, and very severe. Many pilgrims prefer this route, because they believe that the greater the hardship they undergo, the greater the merit acquired. This route is along miles of jungle land, where one comes across exquisite vegetation, ferns and beautiful flowers, pitcher plants and orchids of rare varieties. Along this route is a treacherous precipice, eight hundred feet in depth. It is named after a beautiful maiden named Nilihela, and according to tradition, she is believed to have slipped down the precipice and dashed headlong to pieces on the rocks below. Her spirit they say, still haunts the spot, and the echo of her voice rings through the midnight air.



Sri Pada

Not far away from this spot is a sacred mountain stream, the Sita Ganga, which is the subject of many romantic legends and superstitions. This stream provides the pilgrims to cleanse themselves before they reach the top of the mountain.

At a certain spot along this route is to be seen the famous "chains." The history of these rusty chains with their shapeless links of various sizes is lost in antiquity. Much myth and mystery have been woven around them, and it is the belief of all true followers of the Prophet that the chain near the top of the Peak was made by Adam. They believe that he was hurled from the Seventh Heaven of Paradise upon this Peak and that he stood here on one foot, until years of penitence and suffering had cleared his offence. As for his partner Eve, they say, she fell near Mecca, and was separated from Adam for two hundred years. But with the help of the angel Gabriel, Adam fetched her to Sri Lanka, as being in his opinion, the best substitute for Paradise.

A Persian poet by the name of Ashreef tells us that these chains were fixed by Alexander the Great, who voyaged to Sri Lanka about 330 B.C. They are also mentioned by the Mohammedan traveller, Ibn Batuta, who journeyed to Sri Lanka from distant Morocco in the tenth century. Marco Polo, who visited the island in the thirteenth century, refers to these chains thus: "In the island there is a very high mountain, so rocky and precipitous that the climb to the top is impracticable except by the assistance of iron chains employed for the purpose."

We are aware that Sri Pada had many great and famous visitors, such as Alexander the Great, Marco Polo and Ibn Batuta. Many monarchs too have visited the Peak. Parakrama Bahu made a journey on foot to worship at its shrine, and he caused a temple to be built at its summit. King Kirti Sri Nissanka visited it in 1201 and Parakrama III in 1267. Later on, in 1833, the top of the Peak was occupied by a little hut made of talipot leaves containing a camp bed, a folding chair and a table. They belonged to Major Skinner, an Englishman who was making a map of the district. He lived upon a daily ration of boiled rice and salted fish until the purpose of his visit came to an end. In the early days the whole country was covered with thick jungle and

the elephants in the Wilderness of the Peak were so numerous that their tracks were of immense help to the map-maker. It is interesting to know that from the sacred mountain Major Skinner took some angles from which the first map of Sri Lanka was made.

The climb to Sri Pada from the north-eastern side of the Peak or Maskeliya is 3,600 feet, and easier than from that of Ratnapura. On this route too, suspended over every cliff are chains of mysterious origin. Pilgrims, both young and old, begin the climb to the Peak at night in order to arrive at the summit in time to see an unforgettable sight—sunrise from the Peak. Once the summit is reached everybody awaits the sunrise which rises in all its glory, and the shadow of the Peak is indeed a strange and fascinating sight, which is better seen than described. Instead of being cast on the forests below, the shadow lies parallel to the Peak. It is a most curious phenomenon for which there is no satisfactory explanation.

The view from the Peak, it has been said: "Is one of the grandest in the world." Emerson Tenant, a British Colonial Secretary, who has written a great deal about this country, says in his book: "No other mountain presents the same unobstructed view over land and sea. Around it to the north and east the traveller looks down on the dome of lofty hills that enrich the Kandyan Kingdom, whilst to the westward eye is carried over undulated plains threaded by rivers, like cords of silver, till in the purple distance, the glitter of the sunbeams on the sea marks the line of the Indian Ocean."

The Esala Perahera, its History and Customs

The most beautiful and colourful of all festivals held in Sri Lanka is the Esala Perahera, which takes place in Kandy, the historic hill capital, every year in the month of Esala, July/August. It is a most magnificent sight and millions from many parts of the world have called to see it with its Kandyan Chieftains in glittering clothes, its nimble dancers and rhythmic drummers, its trumpeters and innumerable elephants and temple tuskers, gaily caparisoned for the occasion.

The origin of the perahera is lost in the mists of antiquity. At first it had no connection with Buddhism, but was held in honour of the four Hindu deities, Vishnu, Natha, Kataragama and Pattini, until the arrival of some monks from Siam in the year 1775, when King Kirti Sri reigned over Sri Lanka. When these monks saw the Perahera they exclaimed their surprise at such an elaborate festival being held in honour of Hindu deities in a Buddhist country. The king respected their feelings, and thereafter decreed that the Perahera should give pride of place to the sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha. And ever after that memorable day, in the reign of Kirti Sri, the perahera of the Temple of the Tooth, which is known as the Dalada Perahera, took precedence over the four Devala Peraheras.

This Esala Festival begins with a ceremony known in Sinhalese as "Kap hitaweema". In the old days the "Kap" used to be the sapling of an unproductive and fruitless esala tree. But instead of this, they now use a sapling of a "jak" or a "rukattana" tree. Before the sapling is cut, the ground around the tree is cleaned and incense burned around it. Then the selected tree or branch is cut into four stumps by the "kapurala" or lay-official of the Temple. These stumps are washed in milk, honey and turmeric water and then wrapped separately in a clean white sheet, and ceremoniously taken to each of the Devalas of Vishnu, Kataragama, Natha and Pattini. The kapurala then walks round the premises of the Devala and fixes the "Kap" in the ground at an auspicious time. By the side of this he plants a coconut flower and places lighted wicks, betel and flowers.

After this strange and fascinating ceremony, there begins the Esala Perahera, which continues for five days within the precincts of the Devale. On the sixth day it parades the streets of Kandy, first calling at the main entrance of the Dalada Maligawa where it joins the Perahera of the Temple of the Tooth.

The main perahera is composed of five separate processions—the procession of the Dalada Maligawa and that of the four Devalas, Natha, Vishnu, Kataragama and Pattini. For five successive nights the procession parades the streets of Kandy, and is known as the Kumbal Perahera.

The Randoli Perahera which is long and magnificent commences on the sixth night. Whip crackers announce its arrival and the temple trustees or Basnayake Nilames wear glittering and colourful costumes. Hundreds of brilliantly caparisoned elephants participate in the perahera striding in stately procession with tinkling bells around their necks. One also sees in the Perahera the Kandyan dancers of various types, and the most renowned Kandyan drummers and flute players. Set against the back-drop of a tropical starry night, the ancient capital of long ago echoes and re-echoes as it did in days gone by, to the roll of massed drums, the music of flutes and Kandyan oboes, the pistol crack of whips, the ringing of elephant bells, and the solemn cries of "Sadhu" from the fervent multitude.

And now for something about the Perahera of the Dalada Maligawa—whip crackers lead the procession and announce its approach. Next come the flag bearers, who follow in single file on either side of the procession and on elephants. The Buddhist flag takes pride of place, but during the reign of the Kandyan kings, the flags of various Dissawas, Principals, Chiefs and Kings were carried in order of precedence. The official who rides the first elephant in this procession is known as the "Peramuna Rala". He carries in his hands an old manuscript known as the "Lekam Mitiya". It is a register of the Maligawa lands, tenants and their services. In the old days the "Peramuna Rala" carried the king's mandate giving the authority for holding the Perahera. He too wears the costume of the Kandyan chieftains, and is followed by drummers accompanied by flute players. They play the "Gaman Hevisi," the War March of the Sinhalese, and this is one of the finest items of the Perahera.



1. Maligawa Tusker, Kandy Perahera



2. Dancers and Torch Bearers

After the drummers comes the Gajanayake Nilame riding an elephant, carrying in his hands a silver "Henduwa". He is in charge of all the elephants. In the old days it was the duty of this official to be in charge of the king's elephants. In the Perahera he is followed by elephants in rows of twos and threes and different types of drummers and dancers.

After him comes an official known as the "Kariyakarana Rala" who is responsible for all the internal ceremonies at the Dalada Maligawa. He is also attended by dancers and drummers, and it is his duty to direct the Perahera on the correct route. He is followed by the most magnificent and stately of elephants, the tusker of the Temple of the Tooth. The animal is gaily caparisoned and walks majestically on yards and yards of white cloth called "Pavada," spread along its route. He carries on his back the golden casket of the Dalada Maligawa in a "Ransivige" and a canopy is held over the elephant. According to tradition, the "Ransivige" is the same one which king Kirti Sri Rajasinha captured from the Dutch in 1780. It is also believed that the two drums beaten on either side and in front of the tusker symbolises the defeat of the British in the Battle of Wagolla on the 10th of October 1780. The tusker of the Dalada Maligawa has two other tuskers on either side, and the uniformed officials on them carry trays of jasmine blossoms, which they strew on the golden Perahera casket.

Behind the tusker and the large number of drummers and dancers there walks the chieftain of the Maligawa, the Diyawadana Nilame in his glittering costume, surrounded by the attendants and "vidanes." Next there follow the four Devale Peraheras in their respective order. The drummers who take part in the Maha Devale procession are skilled exponents of the art and are a magnificent sight. The "Randoli" or Palanquins are carried at the tail end of the Perahera.

On the last night of the Perahera there takes place at Getambe the water-cutting ceremony known as "Diyakapuma" and on the following afternoon the Day Perahera is held, bringing to an end the grandest of the Esala Festivals, the Kandy Perahera, for yet another year.

The Annual Sacrifice at Bahirawakande

The lone hill of Bahirawakande in Kandy, rising abrupt and formidable, is believed, according to tradition, to be the abode of the earth demon, Bahirawa Yakseya, and many a man, living in the vicinity, will tell you the eerie story connected with this picturesque hill.

There is a belief that if you climb Bahirawakande when the moon is full, the ghostly, young figure of a woman of exquisite beauty, draped in white like gossamer, will stand before you, and you will never leave the hill for the love of the ghost maid! There is also a story that if you venture up there on a dark and lonely night, a hideous creature, dark as Erebus, with large, bulging eyes and long, grinning teeth, will strangle you to death or fling you down the precipice.

It is therefore no wonder that we hear so many strange stories about Bahirawakande, for here on this lone hill, in the days of the last king of Kandy, Sri Wickrema Raja Sinha, year in and year out, a human sacrifice of the comeliest maid in the land was offered to Bahirawa as a bride.

As to the origin of this strange sacrifice, there is a story that a certain queen was childless for many years, and on consulting the court astrologer was told that she was in disfavour with Bahirawa Yakseya, and that a sacrifice of a young maiden should be made to appease the demon. After several children had been born to her, the king discontinued the annual Kandyan tragedy. But the last king of Kandy, Sri Wickrema Raja Sinha resumed the practice, for he believed that if he did nothing to appease the demon he and his followers would meet with disaster and great misfortune.

During this time there lived in a house in Galagedera, a girl named Dingiri Menika. She was extremely beautiful, tall and slender, with lustrous, dreamy eyes and chiselled features. Her beauty made her parents very unhappy, for in those days, when Bahirawa had to be appeased, to be beautiful was dangerous. "We must do something about Dingiri," her mother had said many a time, "or else we will lose her for good." But her father



Bahirawakanda—where the annual sacrifice took place.

was calm and collected. "Do not be afraid," said he, "for tomorrow the day is auspicious, and I shall go out and find her a suitable bride-groom."

But Dingiri Menika, enthralled by the beauty of the evening, was unmindful of her parent's conversation. It was the hour of twilight. All Galagedera was still—only a bird sang to its mate, breaking the tranquillity of the evening. She stopped pounding her rice, and gazed dreamily over the hills and far away.

Her mother sighed again, and choked by a spasm of sobs, strolled down the pathway to conceal her sorrow. She was far from wrong, for next day the king's ambassadors entered her house, and ordered Dingiri Menika to go with them to the palace. Her mother screamed in agony, "Dingiri, Dingiri, my daughter." No, she was not going to part with her child, but she had not the power to disobey the royal command. But Dingiri Menika tried to be cheerful, and consoled her mother. "Ah! mother, do not be afraid," said she, "I will come back and wed the man of your choice."

So saying, she departed, and the grief-stricken parents followed the palanquin which bore her, and waited outside the palace gates. There were many beautiful young maidens, collected from all parts of the kingdom. They were ordered to assemble in the audience hall of the king of Kandy and kneel before the throne. Dingiri Menika, sad and lovely, began to look around at the others who were with her, unaware how often the king had looked at her, unaware of the admiring glances of an official of the court, when suddenly, to her great astonishment, the king pointed a finger at her, and said, "Come forward. We are going to offer you to the demon, Bahirawa."

She was led from the audience hall and bathed in perfumed waters. She was dressed like a bride in purest white, jasmines and temple flowers were entwined in her jet-black hair, and she was garlanded with white blossoms. But Dingiri Menika trembled with fear, and turned pale with apprehension when she remembered how a year ago, on that lone hill, jackals and vultures had torn to pieces, the last girl who was offered to Bahirawa.

Dingiri Menika was taken in a colourful procession with gaily caparisoned elephants, nimble dancers, tom-tom beaters and banner-bearers. When the palanquin which bore the girl was lowered on Bahirawakande, tom-toms were beaten aloud, elephants were made to trumpet, and horns and conch shells sounded out aloud. On the hill were placed strange offerings to Bahirawa, the demon—red flowers and betel leaves, boiled rice and curries, a fowl, opium, lizard's eggs and the ash of burnt hair.

Dingiri Menika was then bound with twisted creepers to a stake, and the people, awe-stricken, stood in silence, while dancers chanted incantations. The chief dancer with rolling eyes and dishevelled hair then stepped forward, and with an unearthly yell danced frantically invoking the demon.

And so was a young human life offered to appease a deadly demon, which existed in the superstitious mind of a king. Usually the maid who was offered died of fear, and on the following day the Rodiyas or outcastes would drag the carcass away, or she became the prey of some prowling leopard.

But someone in the stillness of the evening came to Dingiri Menika's aid. He cut the creepers that bound her, and carried her to the shelter of a rock. The stranger stroked her head gently and spoke to her in soft whispers. When Dingiri Menika revived she was taken aback, for there in the haze of the evening, she saw the silhouetted figure of a man.

"Who are you, and why have you come to save me from my doom" she asked the stranger who happened to be the man who had admired her in the audience hall—an official of Sri Wickrama Raja Sinha's court. He was Dunuwille Gajanayake Nilame (Lord of Elephants). He was a handsome and accomplished man, a poet and a wit, and was at one time a great favourite of the king. But he had given the glad eye to a noble lady of Sri Wickrama's court, and was now in his disfavour.

When Dingiri Menika realised who he was, she was frightened, and she said, "Go and save yourself. The king will put us both to death". But the chieftain did not give ear to her words, and of all the maids who were sacrificed, she was the only one who survived to tell the tale. Thereafter, the king discontinued the sacrifice, and before long Dingiri Menika became the gallant man's wife.

After the decline and fall of the Kandyan Kingdom, she lived in a house at Cross Street, Kandy, and was known as Welligalle Maya. She possessed some rare and beautiful pieces of jewellery, received from the royal family.

So did a Kandyan Perseus rescue a village Andromeda over a hundred years ago, but the story is still fresh in the minds of the Kandyan people for it has come down from generation to generation, and will continue for many years to come.



He cut the creepers that bound her, and carried her to the shelter of a rock.

Embakke, Gadaladeniya and Lankatillaka

EMBAKKE, GADALADENIYA and LANKATILLAKA are three of the most beautiful temples in the central province of Sri Lanka, situated in the vicinity of one another.

EMBAKKE Devale, the shrine dedicated to the God of War, Kataragama Deviyo, is situated about nine and a half miles from Kandy, in the shadow of the Daulagala Hill.

This devale is undoubtedly the sole remaining evidence of the craftsmanship of the college of wood sculpture of the early days. Its wooden pillars, still in a state of preservation, reveal the skill of the ancient master-craftsmen, and although the date of the construction of this devale is not clearly known it may be attributed to the fourteenth or fifteenth century. Tradition connects it with the old ruler of Gampola, Vikrama Bahu III, during whose time the capital shone with some lustre, and glowed for a while along with that of Kotte.

Legend tells us how this devale came to be built. A "Bera-vaya" or tom-tom beater was once afflicted with a contagious disease of a very violent type. Not knowing what to do, he rushed to the temple at Kataragama, and made a vow that he would serve them annually as a tom-tom beater should he be cured of the disease. He was soon restored to his former self, and he kept his promise to the deity. But by and by, he grew very old, and on one of his annual visits he asked the God to forgive him, for his failing health would not permit him to continue his duties to Kataragama thereafter.

The God of Kataragama then appeared to him in a dream, and said, "Go to thy village in peace. I will soon show thee a mark on a tree, and on that spot perform thy wonted service." Day after day, the tom-tom beater looked forward to the fulfilment of the divine prediction. One day it so happened that when the "Kankanam-Gamaya" (supervisor) of the orchard of Henakanda Biso Bandara was clearing the garden boundary, he cut down a kaduru tree. To his surprise, blood flowed from the wounded tree, and for the first time the "Drummer" began his tom-tom beating at the spot. After this he hurried to break the news of the God's oracle to the villagers. He further began to build a



temple of sticks and leaves on the spot. When news of this reached the king, he soon constructed a very substantial devale and endowed it with funds. The legend continues that this is the Embakke Devale we see today.

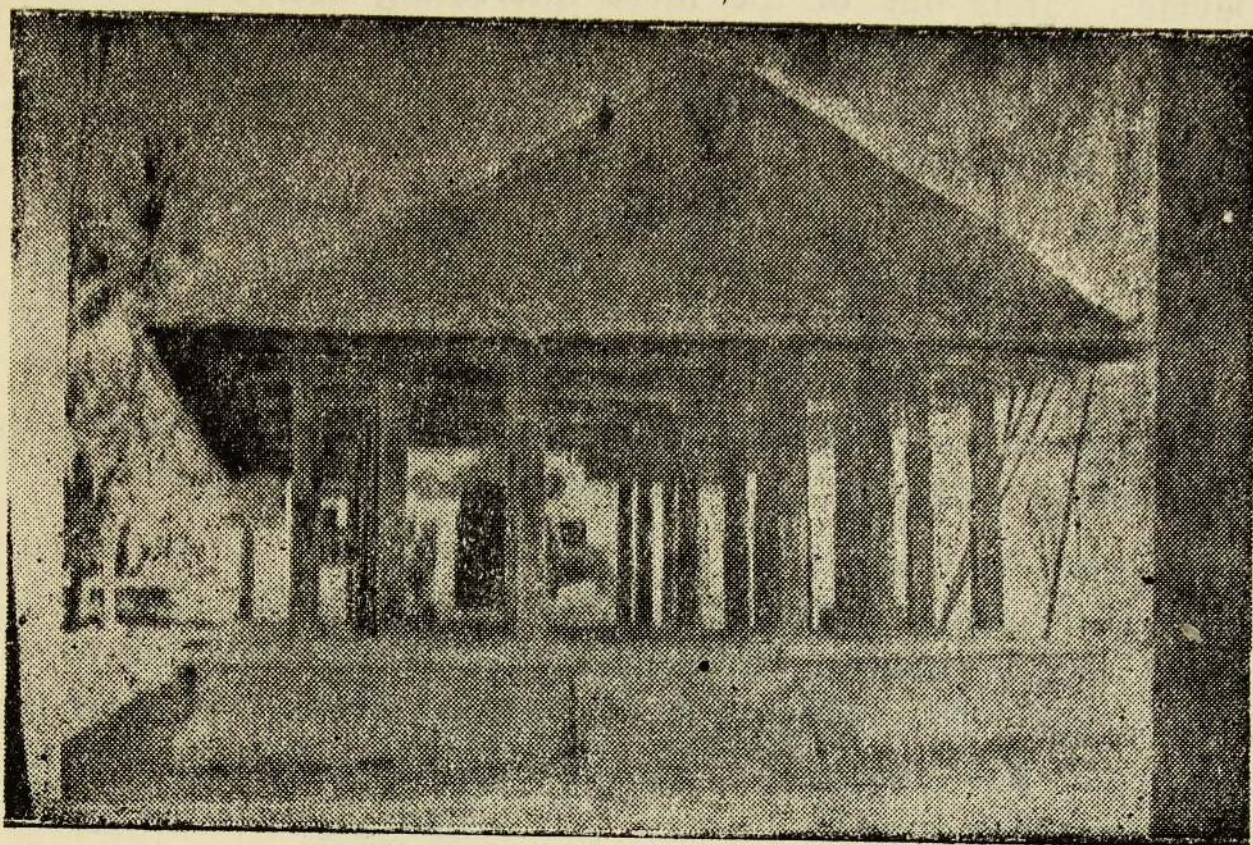
The pillars of the Embakke Devale are full of delicate and intricate carvings. Every pillar is different to the other, and the wide range of motifs in the panels is very striking; being ornamented to such an extent, they seem fantastic. The greatest attraction of the devale is the "Dig-Ge" or drumming-hall, used by the tom-tom beaters. It is similar in plan to the Audience Hall in Kandy.

In this devale are to be seen figures of the Goddess Lakshmi, of warriors mounted and on foot with sword and shield, of dancers and wrestlers, of mythical animals, lions and birds, creatures half bird-half man, birds with heads like the Russian or German eagles, the goose called the "Hansaya" in Sinhalese, either in pairs or single with their necks entwined, in addition to lotus and other geometrical designs. Among these is also an intimate carving of a mother, seated on a low stool, suckling her baby, while her little son stands by touching her left shoulder with his left hand, a very realistic picture.

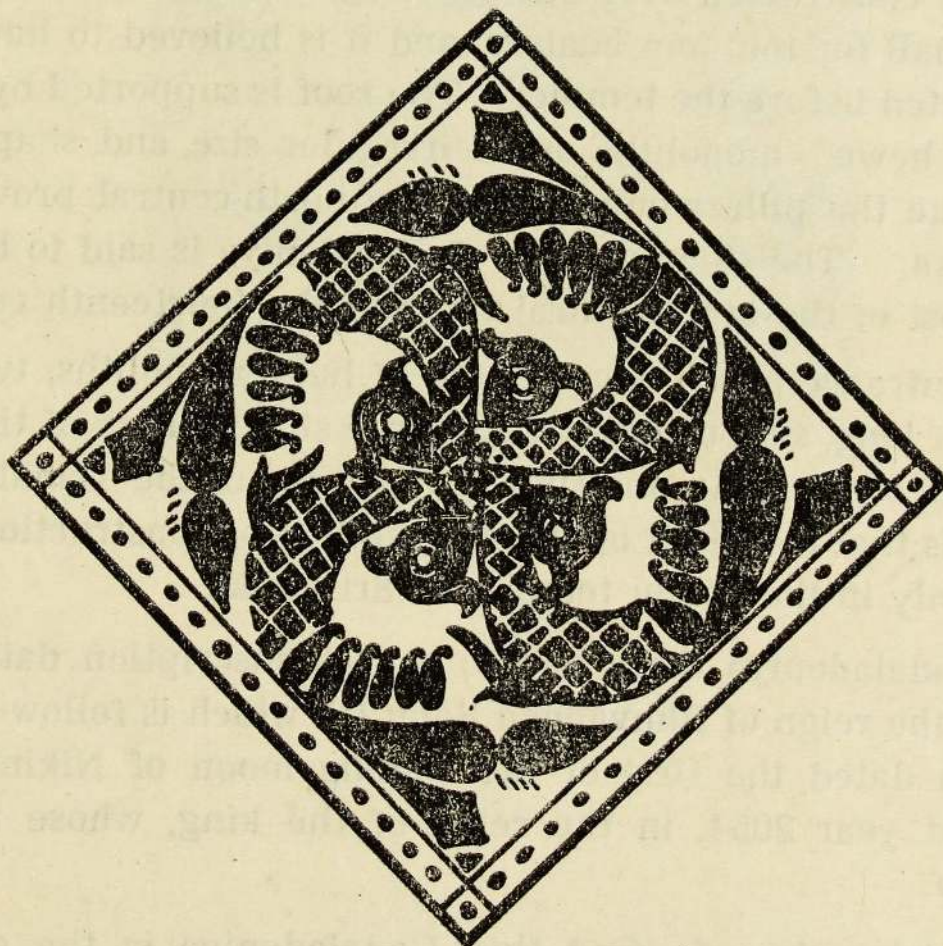
The most curious specimen of Kandyan roof construction is to be seen in the "Dig-Ge" or hall for tom-tom beaters of this devale, the wood work being of a massive character.

There is a distinctive difference in the Kandyan architecture of the last three centuries to that of our history. The remnants of this type of architecture being so few, is due to the fact that the king did not permit any person to have a house two storeys high, or to build one with windows, nor even to tile the roof or whitewash mud walls without obtaining the royal sanction. Only the king's palace and religious buildings were allowed to have doors with ornamental tops or tiles to the roof, or to have flags hoisted on them.

Embakke Devale is without doubt the expression of a highly developed tradition in wooden construction, a landmark for all time.



Drumming-Hall, Embakke



Motif—Embakke

GADALADENIYA Vihare is not far away from Embakke Devale. It is one of the most interesting and picturesque vihares in Sri Lanka, and dates back to the year 1344. This vihare has survived the ravages of time, and is in a remarkable state of preservation.

Situated two and half miles from the main road to Kandy at Embilimigama near the 65th mile post from Colombo, a pathway on the southern side leads to a typical temple village. Here a quarter of a mile from the main road stands the famous Vihare of Gadaladeniya. The temple forms a link connecting Kandyan architecture with that of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa.

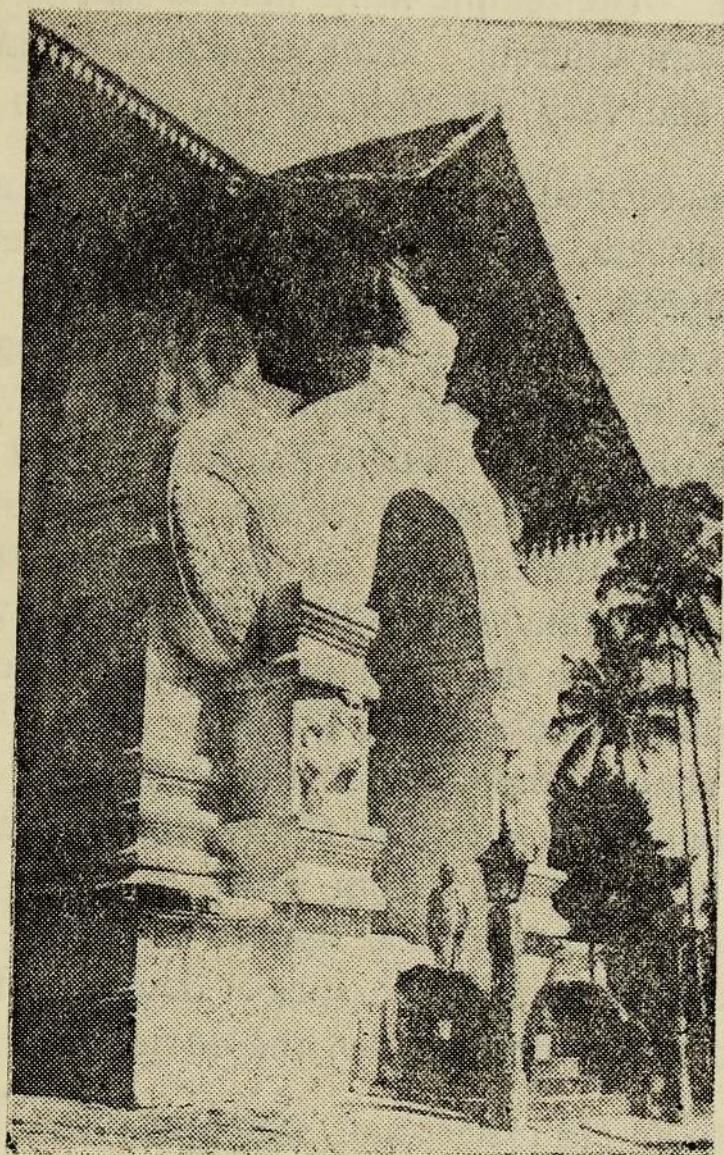
The main building is occupied by the vihare. The entrance which is through a narrow room, opening out on the right to a chapel with a domed roof of stone, capped by a peaked and tiled wooden one. The chamber is the Vishnu Devale. Its door is flat-topped, but the frame is of stone, exquisitely carved with figures of elephants and dancers. The chancel is covered by an octagonal dome of stone, approached by a flight of steps, which is used as a second vihare. The wall of this chamber is beautifully and artistically painted with scenes from the Vessantara Jataka. These paintings date back to days when the temple was first constructed over 600 years ago. Outside is the "Dig-Ge" or hall for tom-tom beaters, and it is believed to have been constructed before the temple. The roof is supported by pillars roughly hewn, monoliths of an irregular size and shape, very much like the pillars one sees in the north-central province of Sri Lanka. The stone work at Gadaladeniya is said to be older than most of the architectural types of the fourteenth century.

The entrance porch is composed of huge monoliths, twelve to four feet long, supported by very large stone pillars of the usual Kandyan style. An unusual feature about the Gadaladeniya temple is that it is built of stone, a method of construction so far found only in the Hindu temples of Sri Lanka.

At Gadaladeniya there is also a rock inscription dated 1344 A.D. in the reign of Bhuvaneka Bahu IV, which is followed by an epigram dated the first of the waning moon of Nikini in the Buddhist year 2054, in the reign of the king, whose name is Jayavira.

It is interesting to find that Gadaladeniya is the only all-stone Buddhist temple in Sri Lanka.

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Entrance, Lankatilleke Vihare

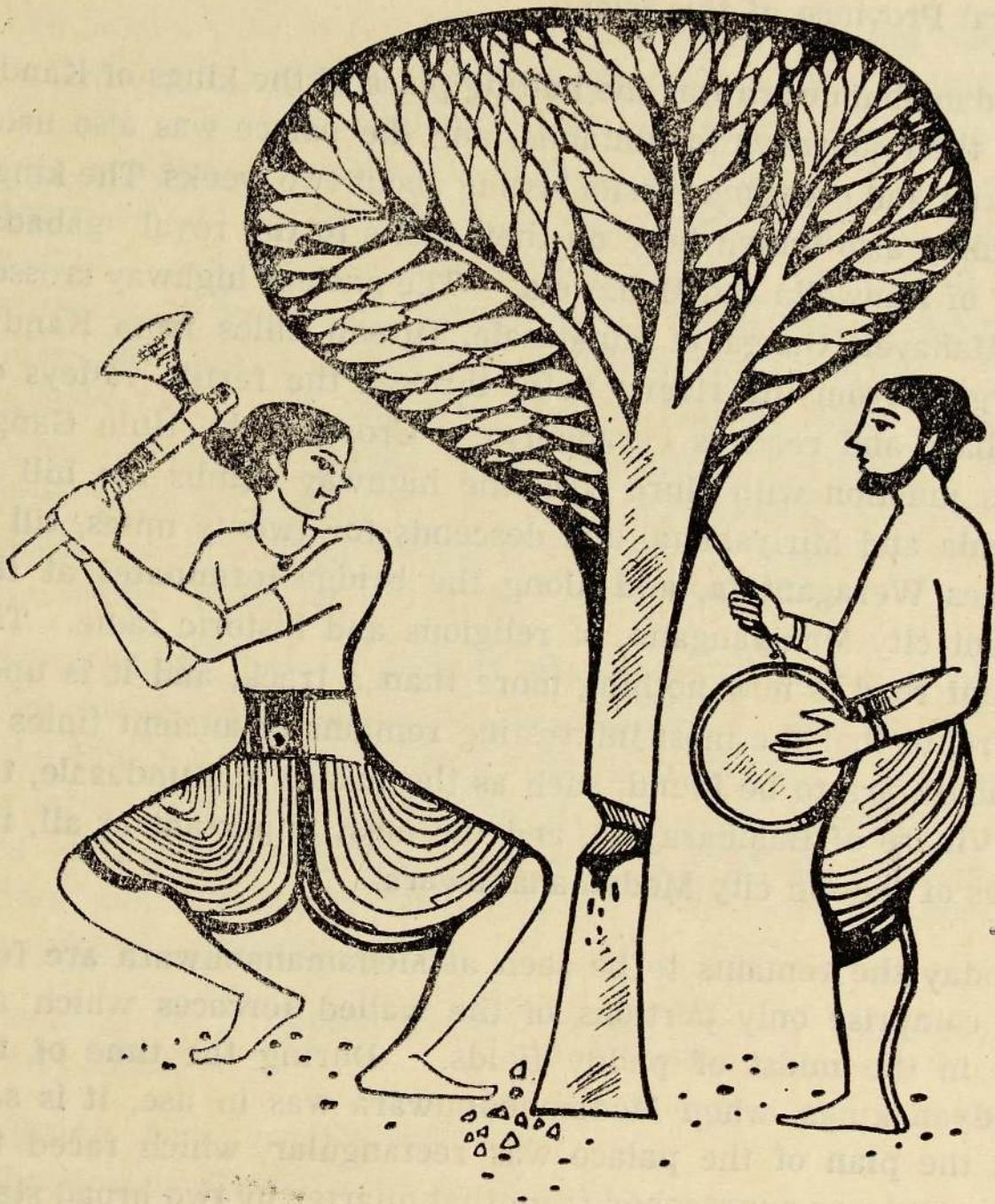
LANKATILLAKA is yet another famous temple not far away from Gadaladeniya. It is by far the most beautiful of all the Kandyan temples. Despite the ravages of time, wind and weather, it is still in a good state of preservation. Situated five and half miles from the Peradeniya bridge, Lankatillaka was built during the reign of Bhuvaneka Bahu IV. "Lankatillaka" signifies the "Jewel of Lanka," and is so called, probably owing to the beautiful and picturesque position of the temple, set on the brow of a hill. The temple in its plan is said to be very much like a Norwegian Church. Lankatillaka is remarkable for its architecture, and very different to any other in Sri Lanka.

It has been described by many writers as having an appearance of being cruciform, and bearing an outward appearance to a Christian Church. The transept and "Chancel" and four side chapels occupied by four devales are very striking. The main building which is the vihare forms the nave. Within it there reposes peacefully a large sedent Buddha, carved in stone. The wall and ceiling are exquisitely painted, the former with figures of the Buddha and the latter in geometrical and floral patterns. This temple and Gadaladeniya Vihare form a link with the older Sinhalese architecture of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. It is a picturesque example of the Kandyan style. The "Makara Thorana" or canopy under which the Buddha is seated is supported on each side by a female figure who, in her hands holds up over her head the base from which it starts, and seems to bend with the weight. Mythical figures composed of crocodiles, elephants, fish and lions which sprawl down the balustrades of the steps, and up the archways of the doors, are also to be seen.

According to an old inscription, which has been translated, we learn that this vihare was built by king Bhuvaneka Bahu IV of Gangasiripura at Gampola, who ascended the throne in 1266 of the Saka year.

The "Nikaya Sangarahawa" mentions that the king's minister, Senalankadhira, sent pearls and precious stones to South India, where he got a beautiful stone image made for the Lankatillaka temple. During the time Lankatillaka was built, that area was known as "Sinduruwana" now divided into two parts which form the modern Udunuwara and Yatinuwara. It is said that in those days there lived in this place two sets of monks. Some

lived in the villages, while others dwelt in the forests, secluded from human society. Thirty six million pieces of gold were spent in building the Lankatillaka Temple, and it is said that the men who helped in the construction of this vihare were given paddy, gold, silver and clothes. A metal image of the Buddha was placed in the temple, and there are to be found two inscriptions, one in Sinhalese and one in Granta or old Tamil. The former is dated A.D. 1344. Lankatillaka is indeed an unique and beautiful Buddhist Temple.



To his surprise blood flowed from the wounded tree and for the first time the drummer began his tom - tom beating. (Page 31)

Medamahanuwara

Medamahanuwara is situated on the famous highway from Kandy to the ancient city of pilgrimage, Aluthnuwara in the Bintanne country. At Medamahanuwara there linger the interesting remains of the regime, which preceded British rule in the Kandyan country, foremost being the ruins of the royal palace. Medamahanuwara, the royal seat, can lay no claim to such hoary antiquity or colossal structures found in the North Central Province of this island.

Medamahanuwara was the halting place of the kings of Kandy upon their journeys to Bintanne, and the palace was also used for brief and occasional visits lasting about two weeks. The kings of Kandy also halted here on their visits to the royal "gabadagam" of Hanwella and Mahawela. The ancient highway crosses the Mahaveli Ganga at Kundasale, fifteen miles from Kandy, diverging from the river's path, through the fertile valleys of Dumbara and reaches Peradeniya. Crossing the Hulu Ganga at its junction with Guru Oya, the highway climbs the hill at Urugala and Miriyahena, and descends for twenty miles, till it reaches Weragantota, and along the bridge terminates at the ancient city Mahiyangana, of religious and historic fame. The ancient road is now nothing more than a track, and it is upon this route that the most interesting remains of ancient times in Dumbara are to be found, such as the palace of Kundasale, the Gal Vihare of Bambaragala, and the most important of all, the traces of the old city Medamahanuwara.

Today the remains to be seen at Medamahanuwara are few, and comprise only portions of the walled terraces which are now in the midst of paddy fields. During the time of the Kandyan kings, when Medamahanuwara was in use, it is said that the plan of the palace was rectangular, which faced the south, and was approached from that quarter by two broad stairs consisting of seventeen steps. At the foot of the upper flight, and surrounding the main palace, stood the straw-thatched lines of the king's guards. The steps conducted to an open space, which formed a compound running round the four sides of the main central building between it and the lines of the guards.

From the compound there rose another and smaller flight of stone steps, leading to the verandah of the central edifice and its principal entrance. The three stairs were in line with one another, and stood immediately in the front and centre of the southern side of the palace. A verandah with carved wooden pillars encompassed the central building, which was the palace proper, the quarters of the king. The walls of the main building were of chiselled stone, and the roof was covered with tiles, and rose on the four sides to a central ridge running east and west.

The foundations of the city of Medamahanuwara are fast disappearing. It is believed to have been at the height of its glory at the end of the 16th century, but it is more than probable that it was a place of importance in far more ancient times, often being a city of refuge for the kings during times of internal dissension. It assumed this character when the British took permanent possession of Kandy in 1815, for it was to this place that the last king of Kandy fled, only to be captured later, on an adjoining hill. The mountain which takes its name from the city was strongly fortified, and to this spot the Kandyan kings retired when in danger of capture by the earlier European invaders. It is precipitous, and rises to an elevation of 4,300 feet, its view from the top being magnificent.

Adjoining the palace grounds was the temple, once renowned as the resting place of the national palladium, the Tooth Relic of the Buddha, before its final removal to Kandy. All that is now left of it are some carved pillars and a few chiselled stones, used in the construction of the modern building, and the old wooden door-frame now doing duty as an entrance to a modern and somewhat squalid vihare.

Looking at Medamahanuwara today, one is reminded of Byron's lines:—

“Shrine of the mighty! can it be
That this is all that remains of thee?”

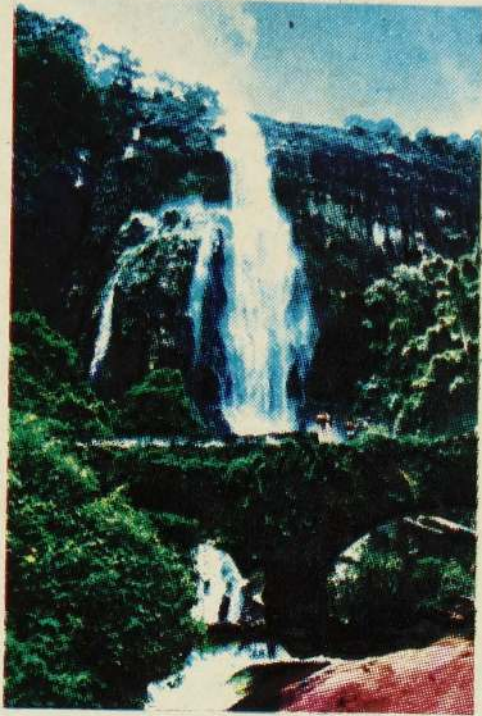
Waterfalls

The grandeur and beauty of falling water has an everlasting appeal, and throughout the ages it has inspired poets, painters and musicians. Sri Lanka's waterfalls too which are numerous and varied, are not without their appeal and inspiration, and most of our waterfalls are the subject of many strange and fascinating stories.

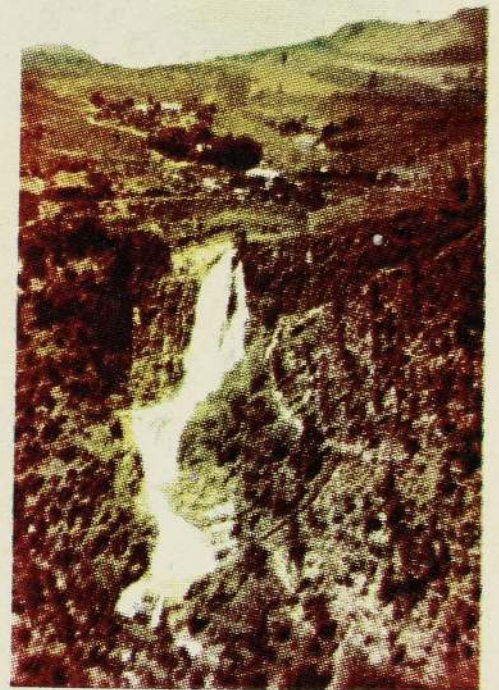
Our chief waterfall is Diyaluma. It is two and a half miles from Koslanda on the Wellawaya road from Haputale, and is the world's sixth highest fall with a drop of six hundred and seventy feet. It is one of Sri Lanka's most magnificent sights, and has its source on the hills of Uva, entering the sea near Kirinda. Diyaluma has no legend attached to it, but the name Diyaluma is very significant being a corruption of "Diyahaluma" meaning "Spilling Waters" in Sinhala.

The next best known waterfall is Dunhinda. It is situated about three miles away from Badulla, and has its source in the Badulu Oya, which is a tributary of the Mahaweli Ganga. Dunhinda is full of mysterious caverns and treacherous depths, and many a tragedy has occurred here. There are many legends about the Dunhinda Falls, and there is a belief that in the depths of its waters lives a beautiful fish with a golden ear-ring, and that it comes to the surface once a year. There is also a belief that in the depths of the Dunhinda Falls is buried an untold treasure, which belonged to Kumarasinghe, the prince of Uva. This treasure is believed to be carefully guarded by armed men bearing golden swords. There is a superstition that they take an annual sacrifice of human life, and perhaps that is the reason for so many bathers losing their lives at Dunhinda!

Another legend connected with Dunhinda Falls goes back to the Gampola dynasty. A princess from the royal palace is said to have eloped with a commoner named Kahatapitiya Arachchi Bandara. The king of course was very annoyed, and he sent a search party to track the couple. They were found in a village called Kosgolla, near the Dunhinda Falls. When the lovers realised what had happened, they did not want to be separated from one another, so they fled to the highest ledge on the falls and flung themselves down the precipice. And that night a



1. Diyaluma Falls



2. St. Clair Falls

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- strange thing happened. A terrific storm arose and a number of villages were swept away, including Kosgolla. Through the storm was heard the shrieks of the lovers, and it is said that the voices of the lovers can be heard even now, whenever there is a storm in the area.

Lover's Leap bearing a romantic name is another famous waterfall of Sri Lanka. It is situated in Nuwara Eliya and has its source in Pidurutalagala, our highest mountain. The stream meanders through jungles and tea estates and falls over a precipice in Nuwara Eliya, where at its foot the waters are used by Sri Lanka's first brewery. The legend of Lover's Leap is also connected with frustrated love and fleeing lovers. One moonlight night a run-away couple, linked in one another's arms, is said to have jumped down the top of these falls, in order to avoid an angry father, and today this spot is believed to be the haunt of ghosts.

Laxapana, a waterfall of great importance, is one that will be remembered for all time. It takes its name from "laksa-pahana," meaning a million lights in Sinhala. This fall has its source in the Hardenguish and Aberdeen streams, and from the power of the fall, the hydro-electric scheme which supplies electricity to the whole island is worked.

The St. Clair and Devon Falls are also two well-known waterfalls, which are to be seen in Talawakelle. They are both very impressive and beautiful, and the St. Clair Falls is also known as the Bridal Falls, as the water cascading down the mountain resembles the veil of a bride. The Devon and St. Clair Falls are named after the tea estates through which the rivers flow.

The Ramboda Falls seen on the road to Nuwara Eliya from Kandy bears its name from a rumbling noise heard from its flow sometimes. Not far from these falls is a vihare, which once housed the Tooth Relic of the Buddha.

Gallegama Falls, near Horton Plains, attract many visitors and holiday-makers. The Bambarabotuwa Falls, not far away from the Balangoda approach to Sri Pada or Adam's Peak and the Baker's Falls in the highest part of the Laxapana stream are

worth visiting. The Baker's Falls are named after Sir Samuel Baker, the famous explorer and discoverer of the Nile. He set up a farm in Sri Lanka at Mahagastota, and he introduced the growing of English vegetables in this island.

More waterfalls worth mentioning are the Kataboola Falls of Kotmale which form a beautiful cascade, the Hunasgiriya Falls in Kandy which has its source in the Mahaveli Ganga, the Maturata Falls in Udapussellawa, Leymastota Falls in Haputale and Bobathipitiya and Katugasella in Ratnapura. These are some of Sri Lanka's most beautiful and inspiring waterfalls which add greatly to the beauty of its picturesque landscape.



A runaway couple linked in each other's arms jumped down the top of these falls.

Wahakotte—its History and Religion

The little village of Wahakotte, with its rustic rural setting, its appearance of peace and quiet, overlooking a small tank, and situated on the picturesque range of hills, between Kurunegala and Matale, is exceedingly beautiful.

Wahakotte was once a flourishing city, where stood a royal palace, the ruins of which are still to be seen. It was the stronghold of king Elara, who was subdued by Dhutugemunu at Anuradhapura in the year 164 B.C. Here also lived in the days of old, the queen of Bhuvaneka Bahu, who on hearing of the king's death, took poison concealed under her pillow, and died—hence the name “Wahakotte,” meaning poisoned pillow, in Sinhalese. Here also lived a colony of Portuguese, Catholics by religion, who, without churches or priests, surrounded by Buddhists on all sides kept the torch of their faith alive for many generations.

During the time of the Kandyan wars, when Rajasinghe of Sitawaka usurped the throne of Kandy, Yamasinghe, a member of the previous king, was baptised at Goa, and named Don Phillip. He returned to the island, and was proclaimed king at Wahakotte in 1590. After a short time, Don Phillip died suddenly, and Konappu Bandara, better known as Wimala Dharma Suriya, usurped the throne, and Don Phillip's son, Don Juan, fled to Wahakotte. He remained there for some time, when the Portuguese took him to Mannar, and then to Portugal where he became a priest.

In this village, the kings also imprisoned the Portuguese captured in times of war, but later in 1656, when Rajasinghe II sat on the throne of Kandy, enraged by the behaviour of the Dutch, he invited the Portuguese to live in his territories. Thus many, with their families migrated to the king's realms, afraid of the persecutions carried out by the Dutch, who had captured Galle and Negombo.

The Portuguese were employed by the king in his services, and given freedom of religion, but ere long, the king was so worried by the Dutch that he had no time for the Portuguese. They were

a forgotten and neglected race, and their church in Kandy was pulled down. Many of them then migrated to Wahakotte. Those who remained in the Kandyan kingdom were persecuted by the succeeding kings, and Christian worship was prohibited, but Wahakotte being far away and secluded from the rest of the territories, escaped the wrath of the kings.

Here, in secret, the newcomers kept a statue of St. Anthony in great veneration. It was hidden away in many places—sometimes it was buried in the soil, sometimes it was concealed in the hollows of trees, and at one time it was hidden away in a pot of boiling rice.

But by and by, a church was built, and the spot on which it originally stood is now depicted by a mound, and the same statue of St. Anthony, which has had many a hurried place of concealment, is to be seen in the present church.

The settlers of Wahakotte adopt the Sinhala language and they dress in the Sinhalese fashion, distinguishing themselves only by their manner and their rosaries, but still they did not win the favour of their neighbours, until there broke out a severe drought in the Kandepotha Korale. Then the Portuguese of Wahakotte prayed to St. Anthony and fasted for days, when there came down a heavy shower of rain. The neighbours, then, in deep gratitude, came with offerings to St. Anthony, accompanied by "Hevisi" (tom-toms), only used in the king's court and at Buddhist festivals. Thereafter, the Catholics of Wahakotte were allowed the right to have "Hevisi" in their church festivities.

The Feast of St. Anthony is celebrated annually at Wahakotte, bringing to mind the first and only Catholic king who sat upon the throne of Kandy. Today, the visitor to this village sees nothing to make him believe that the inhabitants of Wahakotte are the descendants of the Portuguese, however proud he might find them to be of their honorary title of "Don" and of the unrivalled beauty of their daughters.

Sigiriya, the Fortress of a King

The story of Sigiriya is one of the most dramatic episodes in the history of Sri Lanka.

Sigiriya is a little village 103 miles away from Colombo, where proof of the story is still to be seen, and it is famous on account of a massive mass of granite, rising abrupt and sheer, some 400 feet in height. It was built into a fortress by a king in the year 473 A.D. and right on top of this rock are to be seen the ancient ruins of a palace, gardens, baths, cisterns and temples, which tell a strange tale of a king, who walled his father, and made for himself an impregnable fortress.

The "Mahavamsa" says: "The wicked ruler of men, Kasyapa, sent his groom and his cook to his brother, Mogallana, to kill him; finding that he could not fulfil his purpose, he feared danger and took himself to the Sihagiri rock, that was hard for men to climb. He cleared it round about, and surrounded it by a rampart, and built galleries in it, ornamented with figures of lions, wherefore it took its name of Sihagiri, "The Lion's Rock."

Fourteen hundred years ago there ruled in Sri Lanka a great King named Dhatu Sena, who had two sons, Kasyapa and Mogallana. Kasyapa's mother did not belong to a royal family, and he was aware that he could never be the heir to the throne. The king also had a daughter of whom he was very fond. She was married to his nephew, Migara, Commander-in-Chief of the Army. One day, in a fit of jealousy, Migara beat his wife, when she ran to her father, the King, in her blood stained clothes, and complained of what had happened. The king was very angry, and he did a very strange thing to punish Migara—he burned his mother alive. Kasyapa, who could never hope to be king, took advantage of the situation. Together with Migara and the wicked men of the land, he imprisoned his father and took over the kingdom. Mogallana, who was neither able to save his father nor himself, fled to India and decided to raise an army there.

Kasyapa believed, or at least heard, that his father had hidden away immense riches. So he sent messengers to ask him for them, but to all who came, Dhatu Sena turned a deaf ear. At last, one day, he wanted to see a good friend of his, a

monk, named Mahanama, and the tank he had built Kalawewa, the greatest achievement of his life. Then he requested Kasyapa's ambassadors to take him to Kalawewa. He bathed in its waters and said to Kasyapa's men, "Well, this is all the wealth I have in life....."

Dhatu Sena was then taken back to Anuradhapura, and when Kasyapa heard of this, he grew very angry. Believing that Dhatu Sena was preserving his wealth for Mogallana, he and Migara walled up Dhatu Sena alive. But Kasyapa could not be happy, and as all attempts to slay his brother failed, in great fear and a guilty conscience hanging heavily upon him, he took himself to the impregnable fortress of Sigiriya. Around the rock he built a wall to safeguard himself from his enemies, and he began to work very hard for Buddhism and the priesthood, but nothing could soothe his guilty conscience for what he had done to his father.

In the seventeenth year of his reign, Mogallana came to Lanka, and defeated Kasyapa, who killed himself in great shame. Mogallana buried his brother with all the honour due to a monarch, and took over the kingdom of Sri Lanka. On the top of Sigiriya he built a temple, which he gave over to Mahanama, his father's friend.

Visitors to Sigiriya have been fascinated by the art of its frescoes, the ladies-in-waiting of a king's court, carrying offerings of blossoms. These are the only paintings in Sri Lanka that do not have a religious significance. There are 22 frescoes of women mostly in pairs, sensuous in appeal, and therein lies most of their charm. For thousands of years these exquisite paintings have baffled and fascinated all those who have gazed on them, and inspired the famous Sigiriya graffiti inscribed by visitors to the rock many hundreds of years ago. There are six hundred and eighty five inscriptions, the characters of which vary in height from one eighth of an inch to three quarters of an inch. Until recently no one could find their meaning. Then Dr. Paranavitane, the Sri Lanka archaeologist, recorded and translated these eulogies:

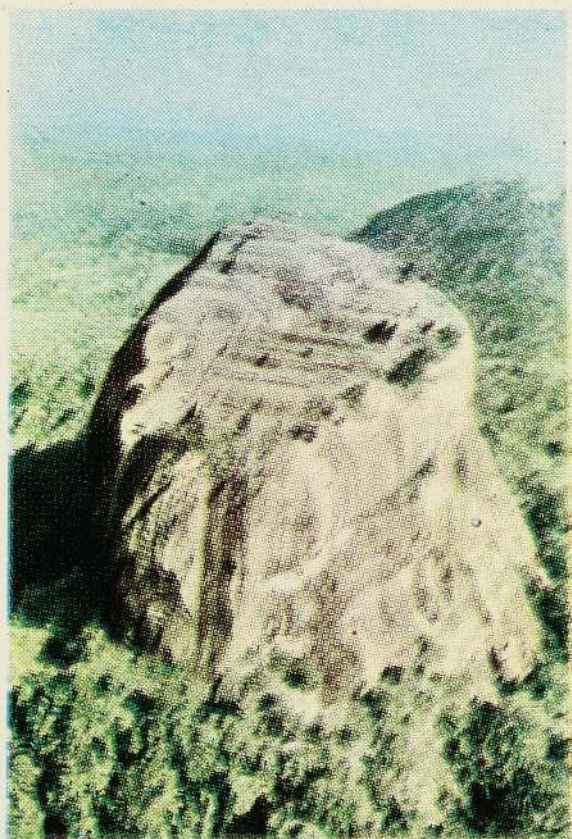
"The golden-coloured creeper of a woman on a mountain side smiled at me—she whose eyes are like water lilies and who has a garland of flowers taken in her hand.



1



2



3

1 & 2. Sigiriya Frescoes

3. Aerial view of Sigiriya Rock

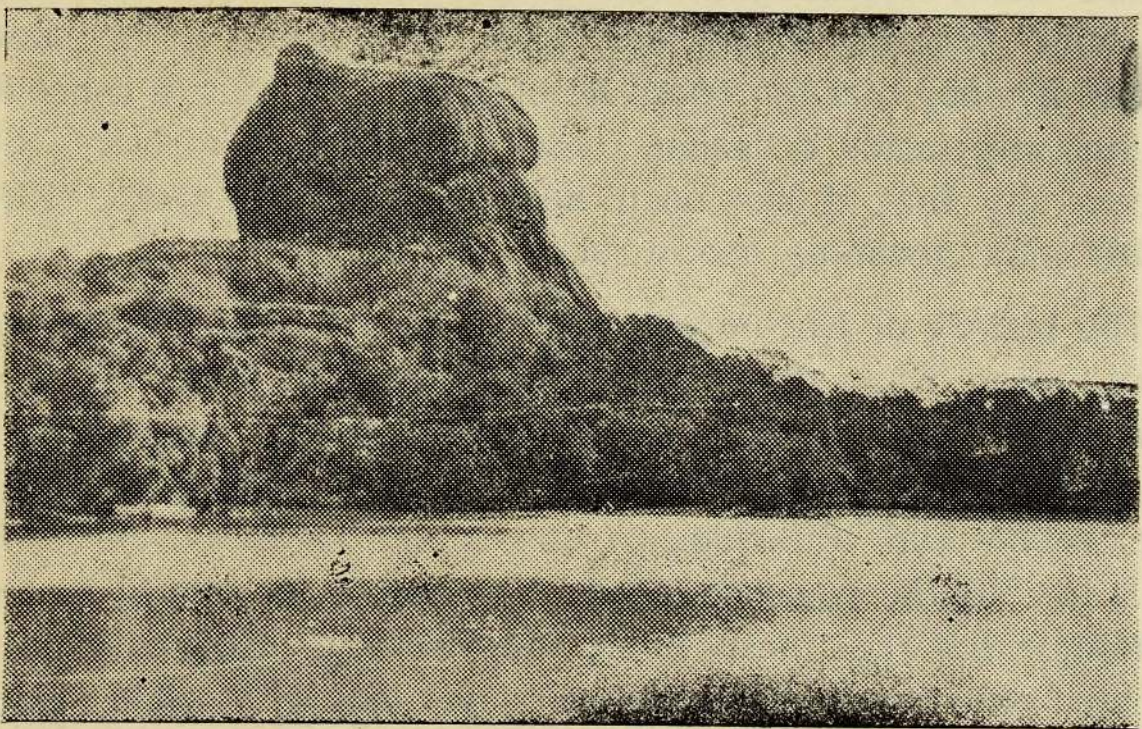
After having gone to the mountain side and looked at the damsels, some people as able to speak of getting down. As for me the golden-coloured one, having taken the flower in her beautifully radiant hand, shattered my heart.

We saw Sigiri. We also saw the damsels in such manner as to remember them. When this deer-eyed one who stood here becomes remembered, in what manner will your heart bear itself up?"

Hail !

How the long-eyed one, without speaking even a word, bewitched these people who have come here ! These people, when so much of them come leaping here and there, will become ruined just as the king was ruined of yore."

Kasyapa has left to posterity a monument of great fascination, a quiet sanctuary, a great work of art and an impregnable fortress, though only the ruins of Sigiriya's glorious past are to be seen today, depicting a tale of intrigue and treachery of which past history is so full.



Sigiriya, the Fortress of a King

Kurunegala, an Old-time Capital

Unlike other capitals of a by-gone age, Kurunegala has nothing to show that it was once a royal capital for time has effaced everything except its massive rocks which constitute the picturesque features of its landscape. These rocks rising abrupt and sheer once formed the natural ramparts of the city, and bear such names as Atagala (elephant rock), Ateinigala (she elephant rock), Kuruminiyagala (beetle-rock) Andagala (eel-rock), Elugala (goat-rock), Gonigala (sack-rock) and Yakdesagala, meaning she demon's rock. Many tales mingled with romance and tragedy have been woven around these rocks, and even now you hear many a tragic tale connected with them. You will hear of a Moorish usurper, who was hurled down Etagala or Elephant Rock and of the frail figure of a woman, which sometimes appears and re-appears on Yakdesagala and is known to strangle men and pushes them down the lonely precipice. In the 13th century, when Kurunegala was the capital these rocks were referred to as symbols of eternity in the old-time "sannas" or title deeds to grants of land, and phrases such as "to be held as long as the sun or moon or Etagala or Andagala shall endure" are to be found.

The name Kurunegala has been derived from the words "Kuruni" meaning bushel and "gala", rock, for it is the solemn belief of many that the Tooth Relic of the Buddha was concealed in this city inside a bushel, under the cover of a rock. Still others say that it has been derived from the word "Kuruminiyagala" meaning beetle rock.

The history of Kurunegala goes as far back as the 13th century, when Bhuvaneka Bahu II brought the Tooth Relic to Kurunegala in 1291, and for a short time the city became a royal capital. In 1325 his son, Parakrama Bahu IV, came to the throne, and "Culavamsa," one of our historical chronicles, tells us, "In the royal courtyard he erected in careful fashion, a temple for the Tooth Relic, fair, with its walls and pillars painted with bright lined pictures, provided with golden spires, with gates and posts of gold, splendid, three storeys high. There he set up a canopy of coloured stuffs, strips of cloth and the like. This he decorated with garlands of gold, silver and pearl, which hung down on all sides, and he attached to it a wall of silken curtains adorned therewith. Here in the tent

he spread a seat, radiant with coloured draperies, and decorated it on every side with rows of golden and silver vases and with candelabra of silver, gold and precious stones. On this seat, he then with full reverence, placed the casket with the bowl relics."

To this day people climb the stone steps up the precipitous sides of Atagala or Elephant Rock to visit the remains of this ancient temple and the replica of the foot print of Adam's Peak. On the top of Atagala are also to be found the tumbled remains of a king's palace, and we are told that when Bhuvanika Bahu and king Aggabodhi were at war, a trick played by Bhuvanika Bahu proved to be a great tragedy. It was the custom in those far off days for the king to hoist a white flag in order to denote good news, while a black flag denoted defeat or bad news. Bhuvanika Bahu, who was victorious, decided that a black flag should be hoisted, just before the hoisting of the white flag, in order to tease his subjects, but when the queens saw what had happened, they rushed out hastily and flung themselves down the rocky height of Atagala. As for the king, when the news of the tragedy reached his ears, he too put an end to his life, and it is said that on the nights of the full moon, the queens of Bhuvanika Bahu are still seen wandering around the steep and rocky height of Atagala.

In the vicinity of Atagala is a shrine dedicated to the Moorish usurper, Wathimi, better known as Gale Bandara, and around it is a strange story, which explains why Kurunegala ceased to be a royal capital. After the death of Bhuvanika Bahu, his son by his Muslim wife, Wathimi, ascended the throne, while the rightful heir, Kalinga, was an infant at the time. He was abandoned in the palace and a cultivator, pitying the child, took him to his hut and adopted him as his own son. He was named Appuwa by his foster father, who knew that he was Bhuvanika Bahu's son by his Sinhalese queen.

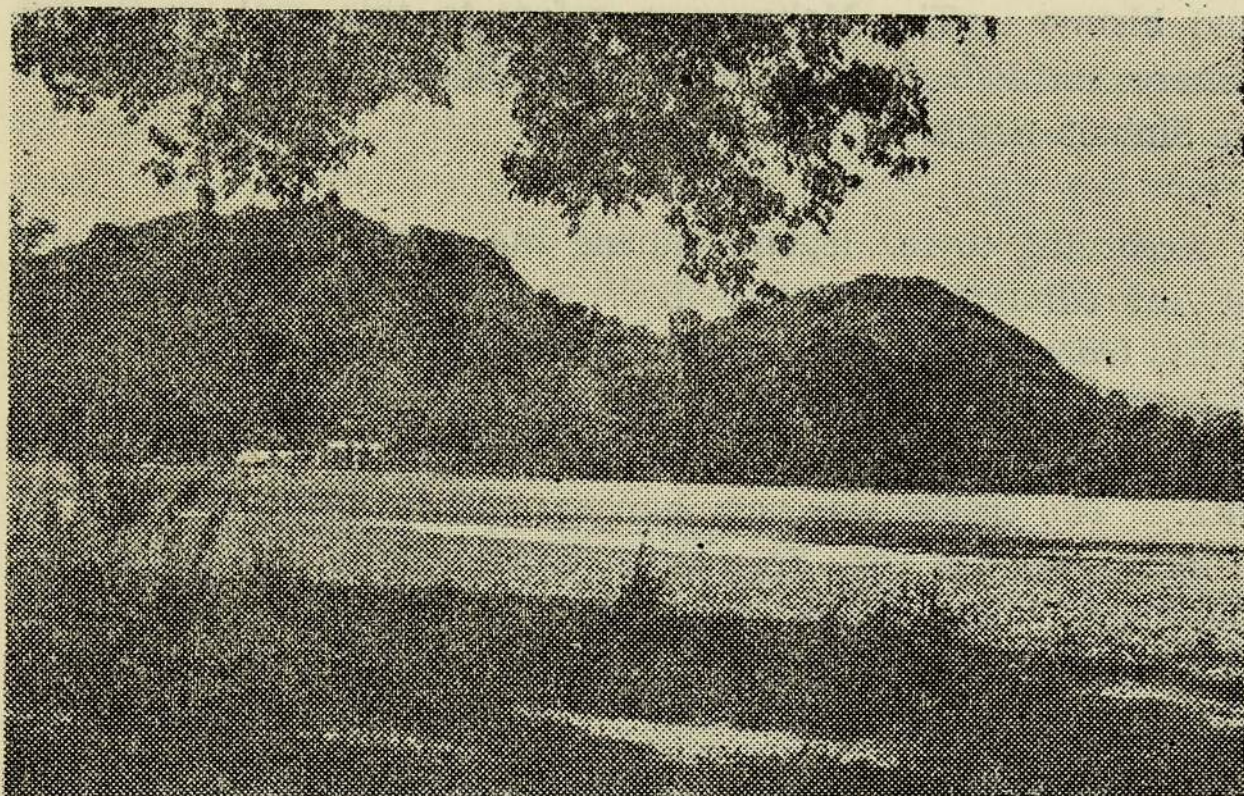
Appuwa grew up to be a sturdy young man, married a village girl, and worked as a farmer for his livelihood. During this time the people of Kurunegala grew tired of the rule of Wathimi, especially when he adopted the religion of his Moorish mother. The Buddhist monks were very upset and the ministers decided to plot on the monarch's life, and many attempts were made.

but without success, until one day, they decided to have a Pirith ceremony—on top of Atagala or Elephant Rock. The king was then requested to honour the occasion by attending the ceremony. Wathimi least suspected that this was a well planned conspiracy to put an end to his life. He therefore attended the ceremony without hesitation, but when the ceremony was at its height, the king was pushed off his seat, off the top of Atagala. His mangled remains were found below, and some of his followers, taking pity on the man who ruled over them, built a shrine sacred to his memory, and this is still a place of pilgrimage to Muslims.

After the king's death there arose the question in the capital city, Kurunegala, as to who should be king. This greatly puzzled the ministers, but it was believed in those days that if the state elephant were gaily caparisoned and sent out, he would kneel before none other than the rightful heir to the throne. The ministers lost no time in doing this, and at the moment "Appuwa" home from the fields was telling his wife of a strange dream he had. He dreamt that a colony of bees had built a hive on the handle of his plough, and the dream readers he consulted said that he would become a king. As for his wife, she laughed aloud at the thought of becoming a queen, when quite suddenly the state elephant knelt before Appuwa! Not long afterwards he became king Kalinga, the rightful heir to the Sinhalese throne.

More romantic by far is the story connected with Yakdessagala in Kurunegala, which rises some 1700 feet above sea level. The story dates back to the 6th century B.C. when Prince Vijaya, the first settler, arrived in Sri Lanka from northern India, and espoused Kuveni, a princess of the Yakkas or first inhabitants of the island. By her help he became supreme king of the great dynasty, but with cruel ingratitude he then discarded her for the love of an Indian princess. Deeply afflicted, the love-lorn Kuveni then entered the forest and climbed the precipitous height of Yakdessagala in Kurunegala, and here from the summit she screamed in agony and implored of the Gods to punish the man who betrayed her. Even now they say that if you stand alone by Yakdessagala, you still hear the agonising screams of betrayed Kuveni ring through the midnight air.

Today, Wathimi, the Moorish usurper of days gone by, is known as Gale Bandara, the guardian saint of Kurunegala. There are two shrines dedicated to him, and he is believed to guard Kurunegala, the city of the Elephant Rock, every night, and ride round his capital of long ago, mounted on a white horse!



Kurunegala - massive rocks constitute its landscape

The Ridi Vihare or Silver Temple

Eleven miles from Kurunegala is a little village called Ridi-gama, which is famous as the home of one of our most ancient temples, the Ridi Vihare or Silver Temple, which is full of antiquarian interest. Both the temple and the village derive their names from a curious legend, which explains how "ridi" or silver is connected with them.

The approach to the Ridi Vihare is through a verdant avenue. A high wall hides the monastery from view, and a wooden doorway guards the entrance into a spot, which abounds in legend and history. The Mahavamsa refers to this spot as Rajata Vihare, and Pali records use the term Rajatalena. Ridi Vihare is its Sinhala name.

According to the legend, during the reign of Dutu Gemunu at Anuradhapura (164—140 B.C.) a trader who hawked curry stuffs from village to village arrived at this spot, and as he was walking along he chanced to see the overhanging branch of a jak tree which contained a ripe jak fruit of an unusually large size. The trader was very hungry, and in desperate need of a meal, and was very keen to sit down quietly and partake of the fruit. But before doing that, he wished very much to offer a portion of it to the priesthood. The legend continues that at that very moment three "arahats" or Buddhist saints appeared through the air. Soon the trader offered them his alms, and having partaken of his share, he was surprised to find that one of them had disappeared suddenly. The trader began to search for the missing monk when he soon found him in a cave very deep in meditation. As he looked on, he was most amazed to find a column of silver spring up from the ground. The trader carried the news of the strange incident to the king, who decided to build a temple on the spot. As for the temple, it exists to the present day, and was named "Warakavelendu Vihare," meaning the temple where the ripe jak was eaten by the trader.

There is also another version of this legend. King Dutu Gemunu when he was building the Maha Thupa at Anuradhapura ran short of money to pay the workmen. Feeling very unhappy, the king walked into the jungle and began to con-

template very deeply when a strange thing happened. He entered a cave, when quite suddenly a column of silver sprang from the ground. The king was then able to cut off sufficient pieces of silver to pay his workmen. After he did this, the column disappeared, and the king set to build a temple here on this spot—And ever after that incident the village came to be known as Ridigama, and the temple Ridi Vihare.

According to the old chronicles, King Kirti Sri is believed to have provided the means to repair the larger Vihare at Ridigama, which was in a state of decay during the year A.D. 1747. The king gave a large quantity of gold for gilding the image of Buddha to be painted with exquisite artistry. And at the feet Siddhatta, whose duty it was, not only to look after the temple, but to renovate it from time to time. And the old chronicles continue "that he (Siddhatta) removed everything that was old and decayed in the Vihare, and made the thick high wall there, of solid stone to shine, and the floor and the outer walls also. And he caused a picture of the Supreme Buddha, as he was engaged in the battle of Mara to be painted on the roof of the rock and diverse flowers and creepers also". These paintings are still to be seen...

The recumbent image of the Buddha is about eighteen feet in made with fine brick and mortar and clay, and many other images of the Buddha also, sitting and upright. And in the inner wall he got about a thousand pictures of the Supreme Buddha to be painted with exquisite artistry. And at the feet of the sleeping image paintings of Ananda the disciple.

The recumbant image of the Buddha is about eighteen feet in length, and occupies almost the whole of the left wing of the interior and in addition to this there are images of the Maitri Buddha, Bodhisatva, Maha Vishnu, Maha Kasapa, King Dutu Gemunu and Tibbotuwawe Maha Nayake Unnanse, an early incumbent of this monastery, at the foot of the sleeping Buddha. In front of the dais on which this image rests are two rows of glazed pictorial tiles, which were a gift given to King Kirti Sri from the King of Siam.

There are ten images of the Buddha in a standing position, a larger one of him seated and yet another of about eight feet in an erect position in the right wing. And in the middle of the building stands a gilt image of the Buddha.

And the old chronicles say, "That he Siddhatta gilded with gold the fine large images of the Buddha and completed the other works that had to be done inside. On the outside wall also he caused to be painted a beautiful row of figures of Devas and Brahamins carrying flowers in their hands as if they had just come to worship. He also caused to be made a large arch, beautiful and pleasant to the sight and two figures of lions at the two sides of the door and figures of demons on other spaces between the walls."

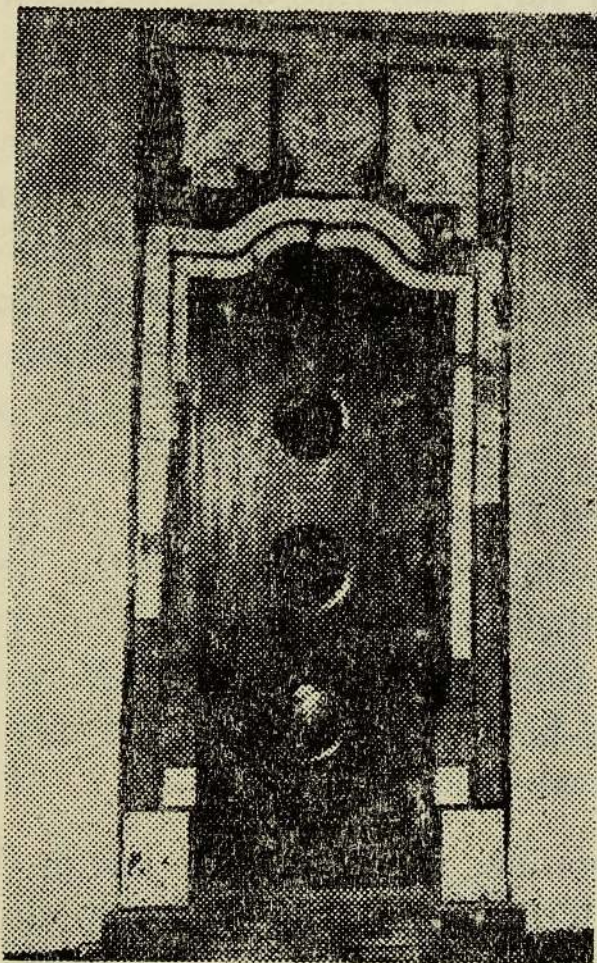
Close by is a little shrine room and the framework of its door is most remarkable in that it is of exquisite workmanship. It is elaborately and intricately inlaid with carved ivory and believed to be a gift from King Kirti Sri.

An old description of the Uda Vihare is a reference to more than one of the buildings which are in existence today. It says, "then in the beautiful cave that is on top of the self same rock he made a fine large and excellent image house pleasant to the sight, and many works in stone that were wrought to perfection. In it he made a large beautiful and life-like sitting image of Buddha pleasant to behold, and on both sides thereof two fine upright statues. He also caused to be made the images of Mettiya Bodhisatva and Uppalavanna and many images of Buddha and hundreds also of "arahats." Likewise there were figures of twenty-four Buddhas of Gauthama, many Bodhi trees, the events of twenty and four predictions, pictures of the sixteen principal shrines and of demons and of other evil spirits, and diverse other paintings of exquisite beauty. In that very place he placed relics of Buddha and built thereon a Cetiya and adorned it with a pinnacle of gold. And on top of the image-house in that excellent rock he caused a delightful picture to be made of the sage seated amidst his five hundred disciples with Sariputta and their head. And even in the different courts to the Vihare, he built walks and open halls and diverse gates also and rows and steps and other excellent works. He repaired many old walks and also built many new ones, and completed all in a beautiful manner."

Later there was a grand ceremony which took place in connection with the setting of the eyes of the images. An auspicious day was chosen for the purpose, and the king sent his Minister with apparel and ornaments to conduct the feast.

In more recent times there were rumours of a good library in the Ridi Vihare, and the well known oriental scholar, Luis de Zoysa was attracted to this temple. But what he found was only a small number of documents and one or two rare ones inside a wooden box beautifully painted and set with precious stones. There were three Pitakas and ancient Commentaries composed of plates of ivory exquisitely carved and set in precious stones and decorated gold.

Some ola manuscripts about the Ridi Vihare were discovered by Dr. Andreas Nell at a London auction and purchased by the government. These belonged to Henry Parker, who served in the Irrigation Department in the old Colonial days, and if not for this fortunate discovery the manuscripts would have been lost for ever and gone to a collection in some other country.



Ancient Doorway—entrance to Ridi Vihare

Panduwasnuwara

Panduwas Nuwara, situated in the hot dry zone of the Kurunegala District, was the principal city of Sri Lanka over 2,500 years ago and the scene of activity in the old Sinhala civilization. The site of the ancient citadel and palace are still to be seen, and to the present day we hear many interesting stories about the place.

When Vijaya ruled over Sri Lanka, and he felt he was too old to continue, just before his death; he wrote to his brother to come, and take over the kingdom from him. But not being in a position to leave his own kingdom, over which he had ruled for many years, he sent his son, Panduwas, to take his uncle's place, as Vijaya had no heir to the throne.

Panduwas arrived in the island on his 16th birthday. Soon after which, he summoned a meeting of the Ministers and requested of them to build him a city after his name. The Ministers obeyed his command, and they began accordingly to build a city on a very elaborate scale to the west of Hastipura, the modern Kurunegala.

When the city was complete it was most beautiful, and they called it Panduwas Nuwara, after the king's name. It consisted of exquisite palaces with ornamented thrones, and there were treasuries, stables for horses, for elephants and hunting buffaloes. There were fine buildings for the women of the harem, for dancing girls and musicians, barracks for soldiers and quarters for officers. There were wide streets and colossal buildings and a palace three storeys high. In the centre was the palace with the "pundupal asana" or the seat of Sakra and legend tells us that when the city of Panduwas Nuwara was being built, the God Sakra empowered Wiswakarma, the wonderful builder of heaven, to beautify the city, and this he did with marvellous alacrity.

Recent excavations reveal what is left of the city of Panduwas Nuwara. Within the sight of the citadel and palace is a brick wall, the upper part of which has collapsed, and lies buried under debris... The palace is strewn with bricks and lumps of lime and mortar, and a fragment of stone "asana," similar to those found at Polonnaruwa, gives an idea of the colossal structure that stood here in days gone by. On the site, though

covered with jungle, one can discern the remains of a gateway, platform, galleries, stone pillars and a stone conduit. On this ancient site now stands a modern vihare to which devotees flock on full moon days. It has been built on the ruins of ancient structures, but the most interesting site of this locality is a circular rampart of earth work. Inside this are two mounds, marking the places where there were buildings, known as "Biso kotuwa," the queen's fortress. The people of the area point to this ancient site, and tell you that it was the one-roomed palace of the beautiful and legendary Princess Ummada Chitra. She was kept in captivity, and has since been the subject of many an interesting legend.

King Panduwas had seven sons and an only daughter, at the time of whose birth it was prophesied by Brahmin astrologers that one day her son would murder his uncles and usurp the throne. Dismayed by the prophecy, all her brothers, except one, resolved to do away with her, but Abhaya, her eldest brother, could not consent to such a step, and to prevent the fulfilment of the prediction, he ordered her to be placed in solitary confinement in a chamber having but one pillar. She grew up to be the most beautiful girl in the land, and so fascinating were her features that she was called Ummada Chitra. Many princes came to woo the beautiful princess, but they were all turned away, until one day a Prince, Dirgha Gamini by name, hearing of her beauty, stepped into her palace secretly to have a glimpse of her. She was seated, combing her long black hair, and seeing her reflection in the mirror, the Prince fell very deeply in love with Ummada Chitra, and continued to meet her secretly. When King Panduwasdeva heard of this, he was compelled to allow the Princess to marry the man of her choice. As for her brothers, they were furious, and decided to kill her child should a son be born to her. When news reached Ummada Chitra of what her brothers resolved to do, she made plans to defeat them and overthrow their plans. Thus when a son was born to her, she got a female infant from a woman of a neighbouring village and substituted it for her son, whom she named Pandukabhaya, coupling the name of her father and that of her eldest brother. A few days after the birth of her son, King Panduwasdeva died, having reigned for 35 years. By and by, the prophecy of the Brahmin astrologer did come to pass, for when the young Prince grew up, he put his uncles to death, and became King of Sri Lanka.

There is also a curious legend about King Panduwasdeva. We are told that the curse of Kuveni fell on him, the second traditional King of Sri Lanka. Kuveni was Vijaya's first Queen, but when he, with cruel ingratitude, discarded her in favour of an Indian Princess, the love-lorn Kuveni climbed the steep and precipitous height of Yakdesa Gala in Kurunegala, rising 1,700 feet, and from the summit she screamed in agony and implored of the Gods to punish Vijaya. She cursed him for what he did, and shouted that it was she, and she alone, who gave him and his men food and shelter when they arrived in Sri Lanka, and that it was she who won for him the kingdom, and now he had forsaken her after all she had done for him, giving him her true love and affection. Thus Kuveni shrieked in agony and cursed the man who betrayed her, but the legend tells us that Kuveni's curse fell on the second King of Sri Lanka, Pandu. kabha.

One day when the king was seated on his throne, seven cubits high, he saw the weird figure of a demon, in a blaze of fire. He was wearing a huge hat, emitting a flame from his mouth, and carried a massive club in his hands. On seeing this, the king fell in a faint and when he regained his senses, he was gravely ill. They say it was the curse of Kuveni that befell the king. The best physicians of the day were consulted but, no one was able to cure the king of his illness. Legend continues that the King of the Malayadeva knew what was wrong, and he offered oblations and sacrifices to the Gods with due formalities. It was a form of exorcising the demon, and so originated the Thovil ceremony practised in the rural areas to this day.

Today, what we see of Panduwas Nuwara is only a heap of shattered ruins, lone and withered and weather-beaten, for over the centuries the jungle began to spread over the great and famous city of long ago, leaving for us only the memories of a by-gone age.



Today Panduwasnuwara is only a heap of shattered ruins.

Dambadeniya and Yapahuwa

Dambadeniya is a little village eighteen miles from Kurunegala. It was once a royal capital, founded by King Vijaya Bahu III in the year 1236. According to an old-time legend, it is said that during the time of the Buddha, over two thousand five hundred years ago, a holy ascetic arrived at Dambadeniya, and made a hut for himself in order to be able to sit quietly and meditate. Around his hut he planted Damba trees, and ever after that, the place came to be known as Dambadeniya.

There is also another legend, which the people of Dambadeniya relate. It is about a massive rock, and the story is in connection with the stone steps on it. In the old days criminals were hurled down this rock, but one day when a man was taken up there to be flung down the following day, a strange thing happened. His wife pleaded to the Gods to save her husband, who was innocent, and that night someone appeared to her in a dream, and showed her a secret passage to the rock. She rushed out and began her ascent, and each time she placed her foot on the rock, a step was made for her, and thus she was able to bring her husband back, and he escaped the miserable death that awaited him.

In the past, Dambadeniya was also known as Jambudhorni. It was Vijaya Bahu who made it a capital. When Magha, an Indian prince usurped the Sinhalese kingdom, Vijaya Bahu remained in concealment for a time, and then one day he gathered together a great army of Sinhalese soldiers and defeated the usurper, thereby gaining full power over all the Wanni country. He then fortified Dambadeniya and made it a picturesque city, and the old records describe the place in the height of its glory—

“The place was full of beautiful temples, royal stores and watch houses. There were also several tanks and ramparts right round the city. And during that time there lived in Dambadeniya a magistrate, military officers and other chiefs. There were also twenty four thousand Sinhalese soldiers paid

by the royal treasury, nine hundred sculptors, eight hundred potters, the priesthood with the Sangharaja, nine hundred elephant-keepers, eight hundred horse-keepers who belonged to the city."

And the old chronicles further state that exclusive of their houses, seventy-five thousand others belonging to the potters and seventy-five thousand wells were within the city walls.

The records show that Vijaya Bahu built a temple and an "Aramaya" or monastery dedicated to the priesthood. The temple is to be seen to this day. The entrance to it is surrounded by a wall built of rock-stones, crudely hewn. On the right of the temple is a dagoba roofed over with tiles, and on the left is a vihare, which leads into the chamber, which once protected the Tooth Relic of the Buddha.

Parakrama Bahu was crowned king of Dambadeniya, and it was he who ordered that the Tooth Relic should be brought to his city. And so the sacred symbol of faith was brought to Dambadeniya from Beligala with great pomp and ceremony. He built a house of great beauty for the safety of the Tooth Relic, and also made a receptacle out of precious stones and two gemset caskets of pure gold, and placed the Relic within them.

To the south of the temple lies Maligakande, and on it stood the palatial residence of Parakrama Bahu. On the way to this hill are to be seen some remains of a wall and some stone steps which lead to the spot where once stood a "Patthirippuwa" or octagon. Here on this spot in the days of old, Parakrama Bahu held audience with his people. From the top of Maligakande one gets a picturesque view of the surrounding country with Kotgala and Waduwigala in the distance. It is said that offerings to the king were placed on Galgala on the opposite side, and the king viewed them from the top of Maligakande.

In more recent years, Dambadeniya played an important part in the history of our land. Dambadeniya was the post of defence for the British in their famous campaign of 1803. British troops under the command of Major-General MacDowall, on their march from Kandy, encamped at Dambadeniya on 11th February that same year. Here they built a small fort on the crest of the hill, which was blockaded, but held out until relief came from Colombo.

Cordiner, in his book on Ceylon, gives us the following paragraph: "The encampment was formed upon a hill on which paddy was growing, and the prospects of it were highly picturesque and delightful. On each side below the camp were pleasant valleys, terminated by ranges of mountains. A small fort was erected and a detachment of one hundred men left it under command of Ensign Grant. The troops continued to enjoy good health, although the nature of the climate did not seem salutary.

The heat during the day was oppressive and intense, and cold and heavy dews during the night were no less unpleasant, the temperature ranging in the course of twenty-four hours, from 60 to 100 degrees."

It is also interesting to find the Earl of Guildford narrowly escaped being kidnapped at Dambadeniya during an interview he had with Pilimatalawa, the Prime Minister of the last king of Kandy on 3rd May 1803.

After Dambadeniya was abandoned, another capital was founded. The people in ancient times called it Subhagiri, their descendants, Yapahukande.

Yapahukande is a rock that rises abrupt and sheer from the plain, three miles from the present railway station at Maho. On every side its walls rise in forbidding precipices, and it would easily have been rendered as impregnable as Sigiriya. And here, for the second time in the history of our land, a capital was founded on the brow of a cliff. It was Bhuwenika Bahu, like Kasyapa at Sigiriya, who took his stand on a rock fortress. Yapahuwa, the capital, lasted only eleven years, for the relentless Pandians overthrew it. It is interesting to contemplate what the Sinhalese might have accomplished in the way of architecture if they had been left in peace, but the speculation is idle. No doubt the fate of the Sinhalese has been the same as that of many artistic people since the days of Egypt and Greece.

There is something very pitiful about Yapahuwa. It makes one ponder on the past. The former capitals had spread gloriously but here was a capital on a cramped hilltop. No doubt it was, the choice of despair in order to keep the enemy away.

Now let us recall how Yapahuwa became a capital—King Parakrama Bahu II entrusted his government to his eldest son, Vijaya Bahu. Then his first venture was to keep the country secure against attack. So he sent his brother, Bhuwenika Bahu to take command of the great army, that held the northern country, and to defend Yapahuwa, where the danger was at its greatest. Then one day Vijaya Bahu, set out with his cousin Vira Bahu and a large army, and arrived at Yapahuwa. Here he met the invading army of Chandra Bahu, whom he defeated after a hard and difficult battle.

The old chronicles tell us that after this battle the king fortified Yapahuwa. "He enclosed the city with a high wall and a moat. He built a palace of exceeding beauty, made provision for the priesthood that dwelt in the city, and encouraged his younger brother to remain there."

But after all that Vijaya Bahu's reign was short. He was treacherously murdered by Mitra, a general in the army. Bhuwenika Bahu, who was now at Dambadeniya, escaped from the city, and went to his old fortress at Yapahuwa.

Shortly after that the usurper, Mitra was killed, and Bhuwenika Bahu was brought back to Dambadeniya, and was appointed king. However, after a few years, he removed his seat of government, and the Sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha to the security of Yapahuwa. Soon Yapahuwa was in the height of its glory—it was greatly extended and adorned, but after the death of Bhuwenika Bahu, Yapahuwa fell in about 1324 A.D., and the Pandians captured the citadel. Yapahuwa was then abandoned in 1319 in favour of a site still further south of Kurunegala under the shelter of the Kandyan hills.

Today, at Yapahuwa, one sees heaps of ruins, all that is left of a royal city. A very old vihare still exists. A stone pathway leads by it to the pansala, where some ancient coins, olas and manuscripts are carefully preserved.

Leaving the pansala, one comes across a flight of steps with heavily carved balustrades. Terraces and ledges rise higher and yet higher to the entrance, far above the rocky steps. Lions,

with open jaws, carved with great skill and perfection, guard the narrow landings. They seem to challenge his intrusion on the peace of centuries, and along with legendary beasts like lions such as the tusked "gaga-sinhas" with curling trunks, they share their vigil.

Climbing still higher one reaches the ruins of what was known as the "Raja Maligawa" or the palace of the king. Only a carved pillar stands alone, and through the broken archways one has a panoramic view of the countryside. Flanking the main door are two window spaces, and a rare specimen of stone carving, which fitted into one of these, is carefully preserved at the Colombo museum. A slab of granite, 3' x 6' has been carved into forty-five circles, through which light was admitted into the hall it once adorned. Each circle contains a sculptured figure, among them are nautch girls, beasts and birds and lotus blossoms. As for the other window, it lies in fragments.

Yapahuwa lasted for eleven years as a capital, and then there came disaster and misfortune, the death of the monarch who made it his capital, a famine which ravaged the land, battles and invasions, which plundered and destroyed the once beautiful city, leaving only a heap of smouldering ruins...And gradually the jungle crept over them, preserving for us the artistic skill of unknown craftsmen—and such is Yapahuwa today.

The Festival of St. Anne of Talawila

The little village of Talawila in the district of Puttalam is well-known throughout Sri Lanka on account of its annual festival dedicated to St. Anne. This festival, which takes place every year in the month of July, is held in great veneration by Roman Catholics. But people of all creeds, from far and near, flock to this festival, and thousands of pilgrims visit the church in order to fulfil their vows.

1503c
The statue of St. Anne seen in this church at Talawila is a very ancient one, which has a strange and curious story connected with it. According to tradition in the latter part of the 17th century, a very wealthy French trader sailed in a schooner, named "St. Anne," from Galle to Kalpitiya for the purpose of trade. At that time, Kalpitiya was a leading trading centre, and laden with rich merchandise, the "St. Anne" was homeward bound, but unfortunately, when she had travelled about ten miles off the coast of Kalpitiya, a very sad thing happened. She collided on a reef, about a mile and a half from Talawila, and the ill-fated schooner was destined to reach the dark, unfathomed caves of the Indian Ocean with the gloomy prospect of a watery grave for the Frenchman and his crew. In the schooner they carried a statue of St. Anne, and the Frenchman and his crew knelt down, and prayed to her to save their lives for there was nothing else they could do at so desperate a moment. And strange as it may seem, their prayers were answered, for they were able to reach land in safety.

As for the schooner, it sank down with all its belongings, but the men escaped, and managed to bring ashore the statue of St. Anne, which they valued very much. They were all safe ashore in Talawila, and they stretched themselves under a huge banyan tree for the night. With the break of dawn, the Frenchman and his crew observed a hollow in the bark of this banyan tree, and they decided to leave the statue of St. Anne in it. But before their departure, the Frenchman made a vow to St. Anne, that should he reach his home safely, and prosper in his business, he would return to Talawila and build a church in her honour.

After some days it so happened that a weary Portuguese traveller, as he was travelling from Mannar to Colombo in search of a livelihood, stretched himself under this same banyan tree for the night. He was very tired and frustrated in all his attempts to find a living that he soon fell asleep, but suddenly he was roused by a strange dream. He dreamed that he saw an image brilliantly lit with tapers. Shaken and startled he sat up, and was bewildered to see an actual image there, under the tree, just as he had seen in his dream. He soon knelt down and began to pray, when he saw someone standing before him. He couldn't believe his eyes for there before him was St. Anne herself, the Mother of the Holy Virgin. And then she said to the poor Portuguese traveller in a very soft and beautiful voice that the image he was seeing was a representation of herself, and that he should build a church at that spot, name it after her, and preserve within its portals the relic which he had seen

So saying, she vanished and the man, struck by the vision he had seen decided to obey her. He soon brought materials from Kurunjupitti near Kalpitiya, and began building a church. The story continues that St. Anne appeared to him again, and gave him some gold coins. With this, he is believed to have returned to his country, and there raised funds to build a better and more substantial church to St. Anne.

St. Anne is believed to have appeared to him for the third time, and the man returned to Talawila with two slaves, with whose aid he pulled down the chapel he had built, and in its place constructed a larger church. Having completed it, he returned to his country, leaving the two slaves in charge of it.

Meanwhile, the shipwrecked Frenchman had been prosperous in his business and returned to Talawila to fulfil his vow. He gave a large sum of money to the church and visited it annually.

In front of this church there is a huge banyan tree and this is believed to be the same one which afforded shelter to the shipwrecked Frenchman and his crew as well as to the weary Portuguese traveller in the 17th century.

Munneswaram, the Shrine of Ishwara

Munneswaram is situated one and a half miles from Chilaw, and is famous for its fire-walking ceremony. We first hear of Munneswaram in the "Ramayana," in which it is mentioned as the shrine at which Rama worshipped during his invasion of Sri Lanka to rescue Sita, who had been abducted by Ravana.

The "Ramayana," which contains the earliest reference to Sri Lanka mentions that Ravana, king of the Yakkas, was an accomplished musician and an ardent follower of Siva. He is said to have sung the praises of this God to the accompaniment of music, and Munneswaram, we are told, was the place of his worship.

There is also a legend which tells us that Rama, having rescued Sita, was riding his air-chariot, but his heart was troubled and full of sorrow. He was worried over all those who had been slain in his battle with Ravana, and in order to seek solace, he descended to the earth, when he found himself near a shrine, where he fell on his knees and began to pray. Soon his pain of mind left him, and in gratitude to the God who consoled him, Rama built a temple, and according to legend it is the temple of Munneswaram we see today.

Coming into more recent times, we read of Munneswaram in the "Kokila Sandesaya." The route taken by the "Kokila" or dove is described in this book, from Matara to Jaffna, and amongst the many Hindu temples which are mentioned, Munneswaram is the chief one.

This temple is dedicated to the God Siva, under the name Muniya Iswara or Iswara, the penitent, whose image was discovered in a mysterious way. It was found in a pool of water in the neighbourhood of Munneswaram.

This temple is remarkably old, and it is built of sandstone and lime, unlike similar shrines, which are built of stone and elaborately carved. The roof is arch-shaped and built of the same material, to its west-end is a small dome, surmounted with a copper vase, originally gilt. On the wall of the temple are some inscriptions in grantha characters, but worn out by the ravages of time, they are hardly legible. Around the temple is a mud wall, and within its premises one sees an ancient well, the water of which is used for ablutions. Inside the temple, apart



Munneswaram—preparing for the festival

from the images of Siva and Parvati, nearly all the deities of Hindu mythology are represented. Amongst these images is one with six heads and twelve hands representing Skanda. This is believed to have been gifted by a king from Malabar many thousands of years ago.

Many Sinhalese kings made gifts and grants of land to Munneswaram, and one such instance came to light, not so long ago, when a "sannas" was read in the Chilaw courts. It was a translation of an inscription found in the Munneswaram temple, and was read in connection with lands claimed by the officiating priests of the temple. Parakrama Bahu of Kotte bestowed lands to this temple in the thirty-eighth year of his reign, and his ancient grant made in the 15th century was indeed irrevocable, for such was the finding of the Chilaw courts in more recent years, when the inscription was used as evidence in a claim.

Shortly after the British occupation, in digging a tank near Munneswaram temple, two pieces of sculpture were unearthed, a bull's head and an image of Subramaniam.

Every year in the month of August, the little village of Munneswaram comes to life, when thousands flock to the premises of the temple to see its famous fire-walking ceremony, which is the culmination to a festival which is continued for eighteen days. As for the festival, it has a most interesting origin, and is held in memory of the appearance of a Goddess to an old Hindu ascetic. We are told that many years ago, an aged Hindu ascetic arrived from India, and lived at Munneswaram for a while. One full-moon night in the month of "Nikini," as he was seated under a banyan tree in deep meditation, someone appeared to him, and asked what he wanted. The ascetic startled and when he looked up he saw the figure of a Goddess. She was Amman, the mother of Skanda. He replied that he was very pleased with her son, Skanda, who had granted him his wishes, and what he now wanted from her was just a prayer... He wanted her to bless all the pilgrims, who had assembled there to worship at the shrine.

Ever after that August night, when the moon was full, they held a great festival at Munneswaram in memory of the meeting of Agasti, the ascetic, and Amman, the Goddess, and this tradition is continued to the present day.

Kataragama, the Forest Shrine

The shrine of Kataragama, the Hindu War-God, is situated at Kataragama, on the south-east coast of Sri Lanka, amidst jungles infested with elephants, leopards, bears and other wild animals.

Its annual festival, which takes place every year in the month of July, attracts thousands of pilgrims and sadhus from all parts of Sri Lanka and India, with matted hair and spikes and nails pierced through their flesh, their bodies smeared with ash and sandalwood, in redemption of vows and suffering self-mortification.

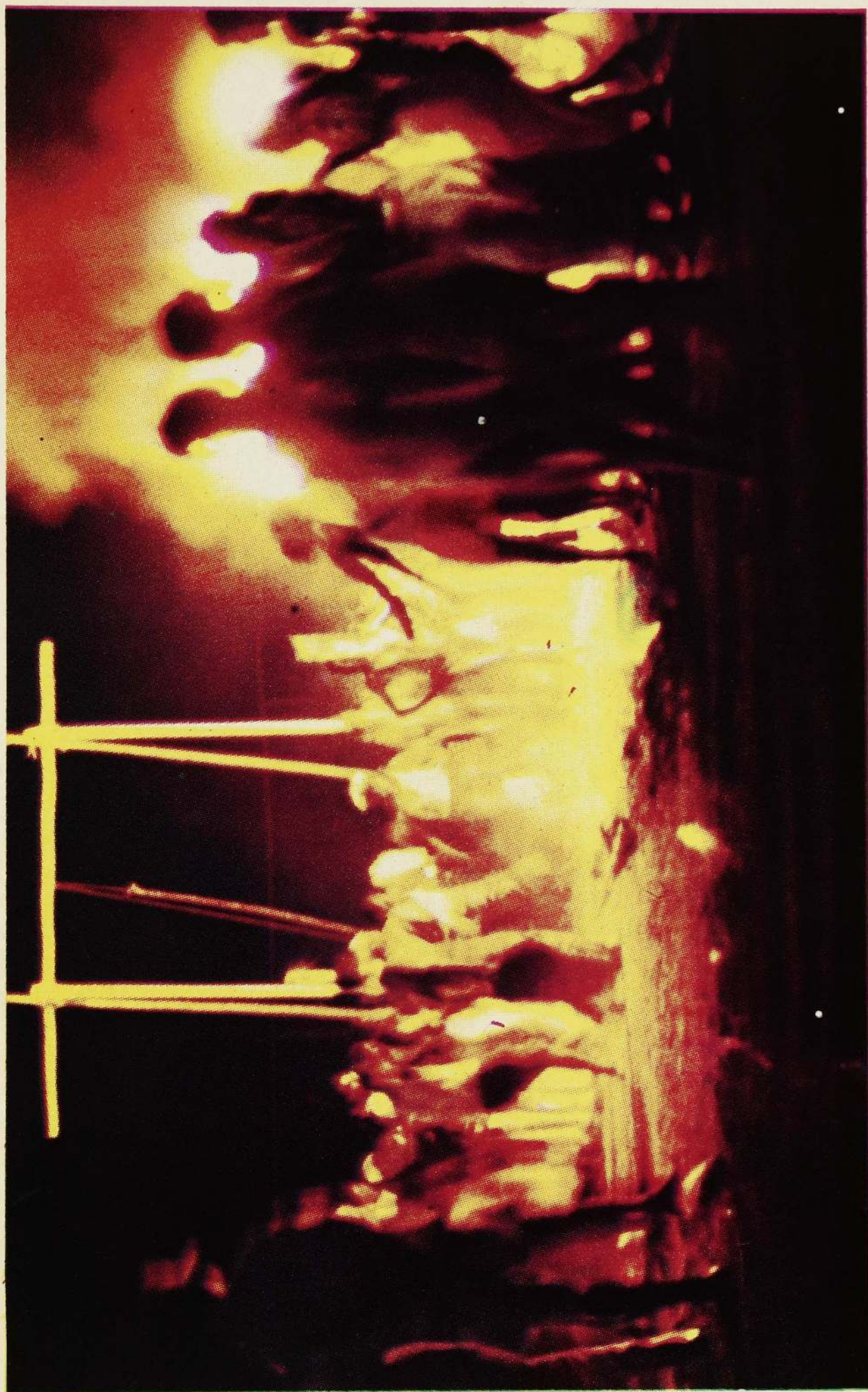
Kataragama abounds in legend and history, and it is visited by Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims. For over 2,000 years Kataragama has been sacred to Buddhists, for it is a spot hallowed by the Buddha on his third visit to Sri Lanka.

Many Sinhalese Kings took a great interest in Kataragama. Here King Devanampiya Tissa planted a shoot of the sacred Bo-tree, which Sangamitta brought to Anuradhapura from India. King Aggabodhi, Chief of Ruhuna, built a vihare and a monastery at Kataragama in 661 A.D. In the past it was also the capital of several kings—Lokeswara, Kesadatu and Vijaya Bahu I.

The God of Kataragama, the Hindu God of War, is greatly feared, for He is believed to be an avenging God, and it is for this reason that the Hindus visit the shrine year after year to fulfil their vows. Even the traveller to this place must be cautious, they say, not annoy or cause disrespect to this deity, for it is believed that whoever dares to do so has to pay for it dearly.

There are many legends as to why this God of Kataragama is feared. According to tradition, we are told that when he arrived in Sri Lanka at a place known as Magampura Nuwara, he had no place to live in, so he went to the Tamils and begged of them to build him a house or give him shelter, but they drove him away rudely.

Then, in despair, he decided to go to the Sinhalese and ask them to help him, although he had his doubts whether they would do so, as he was a stranger in their land. But to his



Fire Walking

surprise they built him a house of leaves. And the legend continues that the God kept his revenge on the Tamils and when he made Kataragama his home, he said to them: "Because of your unkindness to me, as a punishment, you shall be compelled to come to my temple, year after year, and torture yourselves in redemption of vows."

Even, today, we see grim scenes of torture enacted at Kataragama. Perhaps, a holy mendicant rolling up and down the burning sands of Kataragama or walking on red-hot cinders or hanging on spikes in order to fulfil some vow.

The God of Kataragama is called by various names. To the Sinhalese he is known as Mahasen, Bara-ath, Kanda Kumar and Dev Senavi, and to the Tamils as Kandaswamy, Kannan, Kumaran, Kadiraman, Arumugam, Kugan and Kulagan.

Legend tells us that the God of Kataragama was a Hindu Prince named Kumar, who came to Sri Lanka from India on a granite raft and landed at Devi Nuwara known today as Dondra. He was married to an Indian Princess named Thevani Amma. He was a very skilled hunter, and one day he met a beautiful maiden called Valli Amma. She was the foster-child of a Veddah chief, and he wished to make her his second consort, but she refused to go with him. However, in the course of conversation, he found out that the only thing she was afraid of was the elephant. He then decided upon a plan to win her.

The legend continues that Kumar told his brother, Ganapathi, of his love for Valli Amma, who promised to help him in his venture to win the girl. Ganapathi decided to take the form of an elephant, but before doing so, he gave Kumar a pot of water to be poured on him when the plan was successful that he might regain his former self.

And so, in the guise of an old hermit, Kumar went to meet the maiden, and he found her eating a meal of millet. Seeing him she got startled and the meal choked her. Kumar then rushed forward to offer her a drink of water, but in his excitement he spilt all the contents of the pot.

At that very moment Ganapathi appeared in the form of an elephant, and Valli Amma begged of the hermit to protect her. He agreed to do so only if she promised to go away with him,

and the girl, in her fear, complied with his request, and he took her to Kataragama. Ganapathi appeared again, but unfortunately for him he had to remain in that form with an elephant's head and a human body, because Kumar had spilt the magic water which had to be poured on him.

The story continues that the Veddah chief set out with all his retinue in search of his foster-child, and when he saw her with Kumar at Kataragama he waged war, but was killed with all his men. Kumar was proclaimed King of Kataragama and he made Valli Amma his queen, but his former wife, Thevani Amma, also came to Sri Lanka.

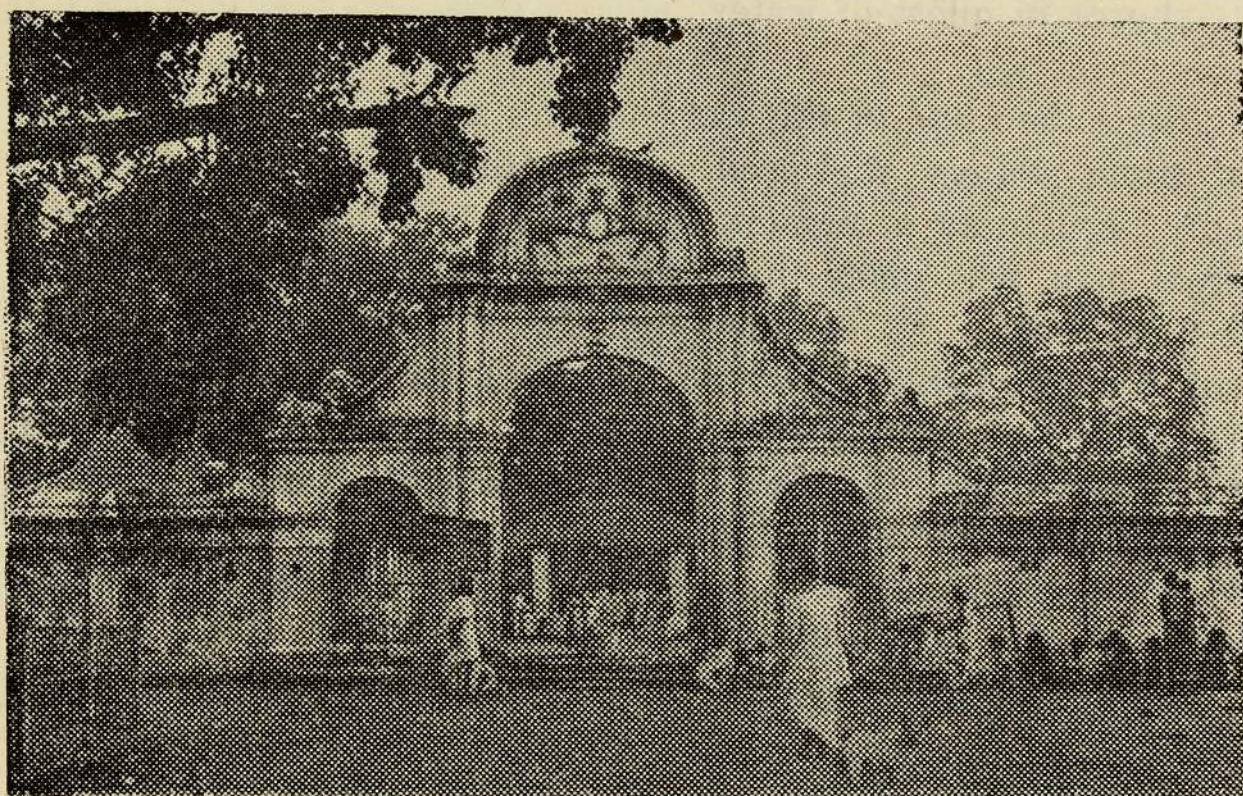
At Kataragama there are temples dedicated to Valli Amma, Thevani Amma, Ganesha and various other deities. The temple or kovil dedicated to Valli Amma, the consort of the God, is situated about 300 yards from the maha devale or the chief shrine, and the sanctuary is screened off by a curtain on which is a painting of Valli Amma and a doe, supposed to be her mother. The kovil of Thevani Amma belongs to a class of Brahmins, and is in charge of a Hindu priest, but until 1858 it was under the management of a Hindu Princess named Bala-sundaree.

The Muslims, too have a monument dedicated to a saint known as Kumari Nabi, who is believed to have discovered a spring many centuries ago at this spot. It is believed to be the fountain of life, which had the power to cleanse all sins.

Every pilgrim who enters Kataragama makes it a point to bathe in the Menik Ganga as its waters are believed to be sacred. It is also a custom for the officiating priest or "Kapuwa" to enter the temple of the God, with his mouth bound with a bandage, as an act of ceremonial cleanliness.

The annual festival of Kataragama lasts a fortnight, and during this time the casket of the God is taken in procession by the chief official of the temple, known as the Basnayake Nilame. He is followed by nimble dancers, caparisoned elephants, "kavadi" and banner bearers. Tom-toms beat wildly, conch shells moan, bells tinkle and trumpets sound aloud,

and the air is humid with the fumes of frankincense and camphor, and the spectacle in its mysterious moon-lit jungle-setting is awe-inspiring. The festival culminates with the famous fire-walking ceremony in the premises of the temple, when dusky devotees walk on red-hot embers, and strange as it may seem, their bare feet are always unscathed.



Entrance to Kataragama

The Stone Statues on the bund of Minneriya's Tank

In the North-Central Province of Sri Lanka, midway between Habarana and the ancient city of Polonnaruwa, is a side road, which branches off to one of the most beautiful and largest tanks in the island, the Minneri Wewa. This place abounds in wild life, and wood-cock, wild fowl and birds of gorgeous plumage haunt its shores, and in the stillness of the night wild animals—the bear, the leopard, the elephant, the deer and the wild boar, and even the buffalo steal down softly to its shores in quest of water.

Along the bund of this famous tank are to be seen a number of stone statues, shattered and weather-beaten, but they not only perpetuate a memory, but tell a tale not unworthy of a great man, who made this tank a possibility for the welfare of his subjects. As for the man, he was king Mahasen, who ruled in Sri Lanka over one thousand six hundred years ago. Today he is worshipped as the God of Minneriya, for he sacrificed all he had and loved best to build this tank. His tank still survives, and is considered a marvellous feat of engineering that helps to irrigate thousands of acres of rice fields.

Behind the stone statues is the story of Mahasen and the building of this tank. King Mahasen was worried over the hardships Minneriya underwent without water. Then, one day, a group of hunters came to him with the news that there were three lakes in the midst of the jungle, which were owned by three chieftains, who belonged to the Veddahs or aborigines of Sri Lanka. It was indeed good news to the despairing king, who thereupon decided to go to the elusive jungle dwellers, and ask them for the lakes in their possession. Two of the chieftains were willing to help the king, but one of them was obdurate, and not even the king or his fellow chiefs could persuade him to give over his lake. Yet the lake was necessary not only for the king, but for all those who lived in the area. There seemed but one way of obtaining the lake, and although the king hated the very thought of it, he had to give orders

under the circumstances, and with much reluctance, that the owner of the lake should be put to death.

The king's orders were carried out, and Mahasen lost no time in getting one huge lake built out of the three, which had belonged to the Veddah chieftains. At last the king's dream was fulfilled, but alas! quite unexpectedly the dam burst and nothing could stop the surging waters. People believed that the spirit of the Veddah chief had taken revenge, and again king Mahasen began to despair.

But the story continues that one night, a stranger came to the king and said: "Oh! great king, you have failed in your great enterprise of building a tank for the people of Minneriya, but there is one thing left for you to do. The Gods are angry with you for putting the Veddah chief to death, so now you have to offer a sacrifice of someone very near and dear to you—your son and your sister's son—get them walled up in the bund of the tank, and prosperity shall prevail. It is for the welfare of your people, so don't fail to do this."

In the morning, the king, accompanied by his son, Hingurak Bandara, and his nephew, Kaludagala Kumaraya, walked towards the tank. Then, calling his chief workman aside, he related the story of his mysterious visitor, and told him the purpose of his visit.

The workman promised to carry out his orders, but when he saw the children he was filled with deep compassion for them, and had not the heart to do so cruel a deed. However, he had an idea. He made the children stand on the wall while he built up the broken parts of the bund. Nearing completion, he substituted a goat in place of the children. The spirit was thus appeased and the bund saved.

The tank was now complete and the happy event was celebrated with great feasting and rejoicing, but suddenly in the midst of all the fun and revelry, the king remembered the two little children, his son and his nephew, whom he loved very dearly. "Alas!" exclaimed Mahasen, "If only my children were here how happy they would be."

The king's minister, hearing the remark, replied, "Your Highness, the royal children are not dead. We made a different sacrifice to appease the spirit." In great despair the king shouted out, "Oh! my tank," and he fell down dead.

Such is the story behind the stone statues built in memory of Mahasen on the bund of the Minneriya tank. It is believed that Mahasen's spirit still protects the tank, and he is now worshipped by the people of the area as the God of Minneriya.



He cut off the Royal Suicide's head and took it to King Gothabaya, who gave him the promised reward. (Page 79)

Siri Sangabo

He enriched a Poor Man by Noble Sacrifice

Attanagalla Vihare, with its beautiful paintings of the Devas and images of the Buddha, situated a few miles away from the Veyangoda railway station, and held in great reverence and veneration by Buddhists throughout the island, has a very curious story attached to it.

One day three friends, Sanga Tissa, Siri Sangabo and Gothabaya, who belonged to the noble families, set off from Mahiyangana to Anuradhapura to meet king Vijaya II on some official business.

On the way, as they passed the Tissa Wewa, a blind astrologer, hearing their footsteps, cried out. "There they go, the future kings of Sri Lanka." Two of them paid little heed to what the blind man said, but the third, Gothabaya, who walked behind the others, went up to the man, and shrewdly inquired, "Tell me, which of us will reign as king of Sri Lanka for the longest period." And the blind man soon replied, "Lord, he who walks last shall reign longest." Having listened to the astrologer with great enthusiasm, he walked back to his companions and did not utter a word about the incident.

Soon the three friends entered the palace and were not only hospitably entertained by the king, but were given high positions under him. The eldest of them, Sanga Tissa, was made commander-in-chief of the army, and ere long they became the true and trusted friends of the king, and gained much power and influence in the land.

However, at the end of six years there arose grave trouble, and Gothabaya, who plotted treason, joined Sanga Tissa and murdered the king. Sanga Tissa then usurped the throne, but won the goodwill of all the people, for he did much for the religion and built various thupas and viharas. But one day, a very unfortunate thing happened—the new king who was very fond of eating jambus, made constant visits to a certain island, Pasinadapaka, in the north of Lanka, for the fruits found there were more luscious than those grown anywhere else. These

visits put the poor inhabitants of the island to much trouble and expense, for they were compelled to set up decorations in the king's honour. For a long time the people bore the burden cheerfully, but by and by, the frequency of the king's visits proved more than they could bear, and one day they poisoned the fruits of the king's favourite jambu trees. The king arrived as usual, ate the fruits and fell dead, having reigned king of Sri Lanka for four years.

Then Siri Sangabo was made king, but he reigned for only two years. Spending most of his time in religious observances, the affairs of the state were more often than not, neglected. The city was in a state of disorder, and crimes and criminals began to increase very rapidly. The king added to the gravity of the situation by not allowing criminals to be put to death. He could not bear to cause the death. He could not bear to cause the death of insects or animals and even strained the water he drank lest he should swallow the microbes.

In addition to all the trouble in the city, there broke out a disease—the plague of the red eyes, and thousands of people lost their lives. The king was deeply grieved, but it is said that the disease came to an end when the monarch made offerings of rice to the demons, from which act there originated the present day “Bali” offerings and devil dancing ceremonies.

Siri Sangabo was far too kind and generous for a ruler, and the third of the chiefs, Gothabaya, whose ambition had been roused by the blind astrologer's prediction, was impatient himself to usurp the throne. Taking advantage of the situation, he came over with an army to fight Siri Sangabo. Now Siri Sangabo who was very peace-loving and disliked bloodshed, was not going to fight, and declaring that no one should fight for him, he secretly left Anuradhapura, and taking with him his water strainer lived in hiding, away from the rest of the world, on the lonely summit of Attanagalla.

Meanwhile, Gothabaya was growing nervous, for unlike the pious Siri Sangabo, he was not loved by the people. Thus he announced by beat of tom-tom throughout the country that he would give a handsome reward to anyone who should come to him with the head of Siri Sangabo.

Now, a poor, miserable woman happened to be living in the vicinity of Attanagalla, and hearing of the great and handsome reward offered for Siri Sangabo's head, urged her husband to make an endeavour to earn it. Handing him a 'bathmula' (bundle of rice) she said to the man; "Instead of idling at home, go in quest of Siri Sangabo and bring his head for the king's reward, which would enable us to live in comfort for the rest of our lives. We have lived in poverty and misery, and suffered too long."

The man obeyed, and with the bundle of rice slung over his shoulder, he walked hither and thither, till at last he felt tired and hungry. Then he decided to go to the rock of Attanagalla and partake of his meal in solitude. As he ascended the rock, there on its top he saw the figure of a man, and having shared his meal with him, told him why he left the village, and added that many innocent people were killed by mistake, and their heads taken to Gothabaya.

Siri Sangabo listened with diligence to the man's story, and was filled with deep compassion. Then, after a while, he said to the villager, "Ah! man, I am Siri Sangabo. Go, take my head to the King, Gothabaya, and earn the great and handsome reward, which will enable you and your poor family to live in comfort for the rest of your lives."

When the man heard this, he was greatly astonished, and tried to run away from the scene, but Siri Sangabo called him back, for he was determined to sacrifice his life to enrich the poor man. Thereupon Siri Sangabo hanged himself, while the poor villager stood there pale and awe-stricken not knowing what to do. When he had recovered from his astonishment, he cut off the royal suicide's head, and took it to king Gothabaya, who gave him the promised reward.

During this time Siri Sangabo's queen had come to Attanagalla in search of her husband, but in her quest had fallen into a pool of water known thereafter as "Nivan Pokuna" (Pond of Repose). Her body was discovered not far from that of Siri Sangabo's headless trunk, and Gothabaya had the two bodies cremated with all the pomp and glory due to royalty.

On the summit of Attanagalla, where Siri Sangabo sacrificed his life, Gothabaya built a beautiful temple, and such is the tragic and curious story of Attanagalla vihare.

Galle, the Romantic old-world town

Galle, the romantic old-world town and picturesque sea-side resort, lies on the south coast of Sri Lanka, seventy two miles from Colombo. We are told by historians that it is the Tarshish of the Bible, the great eastern mart, to which there came in days of old, the ships of Tyre and Judea...to which king Solomon, in all his glory, relied for his spicy gifts and precious gems. Those were the days when men with raven tresses sold gems and jewels, rubies and sapphires, emeralds and pearls, gold and silver, ivory and spices, cinnamon and sandalwood, porcupine quill boxes and apes and peacocks...Galle was then known to the eastern world as a great and famous emporium, when ships from Arabia, Egypt and Persia, Java and China called at her port. Her prosperity, in days gone by, was mainly due to her natural harbour.

In the year 1344 when the Arab traveller, Ibn Batuta, came to Sri Lanka, he made it a point to visit Galle amongst other places of interest, and in more recent years, Galle was the mart of the Portuguese and then of the Hollanders. In 1505 a Portuguese vessel appeared for the first time off the coast of Sri Lanka and discovered Moorish traders loading cinnamon and elephants in the harbour of Galle. It happened in a strange way...News reached the Portuguese viceroy in India that the Moors trading between Malacca and the Red Sea, were now sailing far south of Sri Lanka by the Maldiv Islands in order to avoid being captured by the Portuguese. Thus, to prevent this and in order to discover these islands, from which coir was obtained for the ships, the viceroy thereupon sent his son, Don Lourenco de Almeida to the Maldives. But it was not the right season for these ships, and the strong monsoon winds and the currents of the Indian Ocean drove Don Lourenco to Galle.

In 1504, the Portuguese built a stockade here, and in 1625, according to the plans of the Portuguese governor, Constantine de Sa, the fort of St. Cruz was completed. But this fort was protected only on the island side, and the year 1640 saw the Dutch capture the city. They constructed the present fort of Galle, which adds greatly to the scenic splendour of its landscape.



Clock Tower and Ramparts

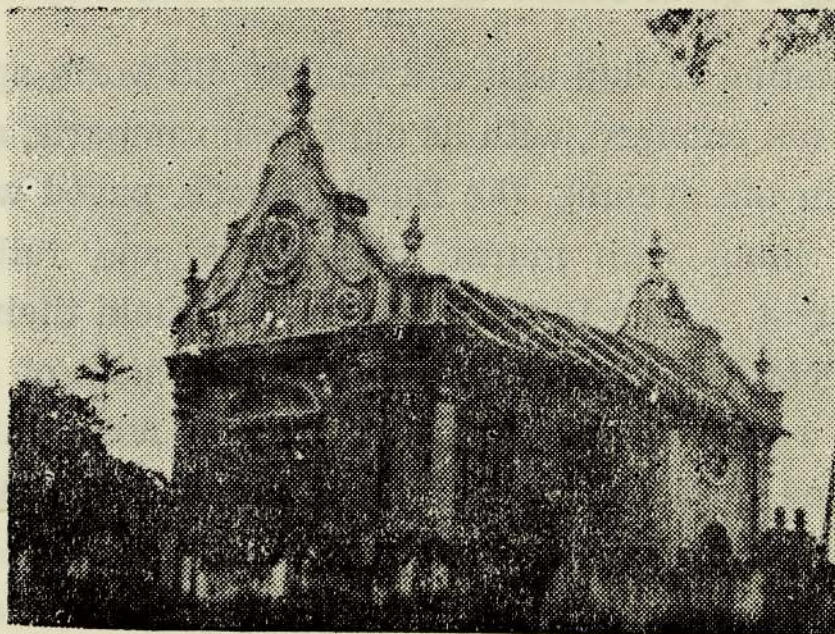
When the Dutch governor, Petrus Vuyst, arrived in Galle in 1726, his first act was to clap a plaster over his right eye, declaring that one eye alone was sufficient for him to rule a land of such small dimensions! But in 1796, Galle was captured by the British, and for some decades that followed travellers coming by the steamship lines, had for their first sight of Sri Lanka, the beautiful hills of Galle and its picturesque harbour. The town was alive with such trades as travellers alone could bring—its manufactures of jewellery and tortoise shell ornaments had a thriving business. But this was not for ever...for Galle was too dangerous for shipping, and many ships were lost in its very harbour—indeed a sad tale of treacherous rocks and stormy weather. Thus in the year 1875 the new harbour of Colombo sealed the fate of Galle's natural harbour, transforming her from the principal port to a quiet sea-side resort.

Nevertheless, Galle must remain a place of considerable importance. It is the seat of administration of a large and thriving population, and in commerce it holds sway over many a town, being a great centre of the coconut industry.

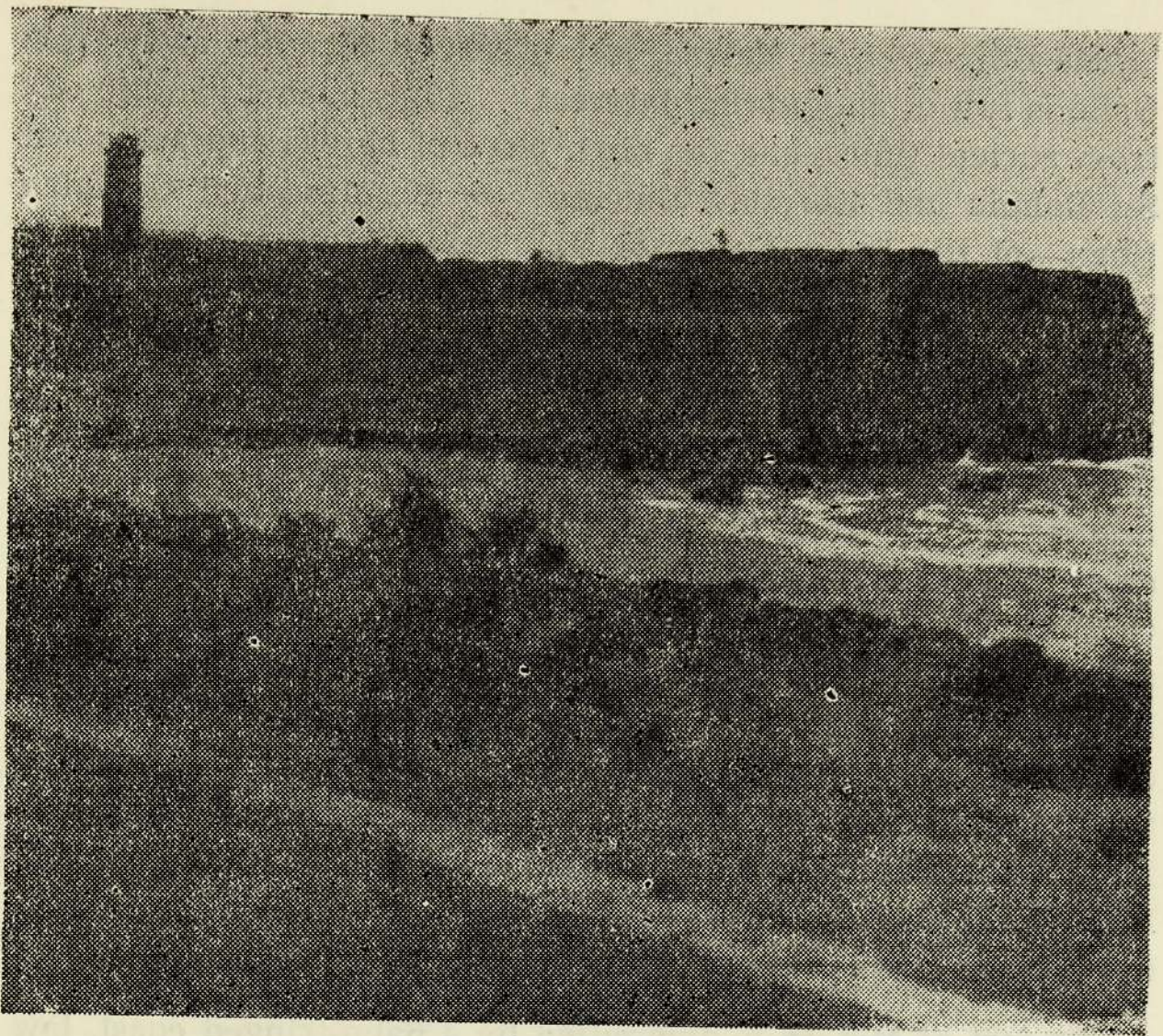
It is interesting to find that the remote, old-world appearance of Galle has not changed, with its old Dutch ramparts, a pleasant rendezvous in the evening, the Dutch church, paved with tombstones, and hung with mural monuments, and full of antiquarian interest. The Dutch Burghers still hold their services here, and according to tradition, lost in the mists of antiquity, this church was erected by a Dutch lady of noble birth, Gertuyda Adriana le Gaud, wife of the Commander, Casparus de Jong. There is a story that she was childless for many years, and she made a vow, that if she should ever bear a child, she would build a church as a thanks-offering. Not long afterwards her wishes were fulfilled, and she built the church. There is no record of any such story, among the archives of the consistory, nor a stone inscription, sacred to her memory, but many an old resident of Galle will tell you this story. They will also add that in former times the vaulted ceiling of this church was of a "beautiful celestial blue and studded with stars of gold to represent the canopy of heaven, although the blue is now quite faded, and no stars are to be seen..."

There is also in Galle an old-time Dutch gateway leading to the pier, where the Dutch used to embark their bales of cinnamon. Over the gateway is carved in stone a Court of Arms with a monogram V.O.C. with two lions on either side and a cock as a crest, dated 1669.

The Dutch ramparts of Galle, its lighthouse, Cloisenberg Bay, which offers splendid bathing facilities, its butterfly bridge, erected recently, add greatly to the beauty of this old-world town.



Dutch Church



1. Dutch Ramparts.



2. The Dutch gateway leading to the pier :
over the gateway is a coat-of-arms with a monogram.

Matara

The little town of Matara, just twenty eight miles away from Galle is full of antiquarian interest. It has been a historic city from ancient times, and the birth place of heroes and poets—of Sri Rahula and Koratota Unnanse—of Kalidasa and Gajaman Nona—of the Dutch Governor Van Falk and Henry Lawrence, who fell in the seige of Lucknow.

The Star Fort of Matara is very picturesque, with a thatched roof, shaped like a four-cornered hat. Between the walls of the fort runs a moat, twenty feet in width, and on its entrance is the Court of Arms of its Dutch builder, Governor Van Falk, dated 1763. Here also one sees the letters V.O.C. Verenegade Oost Indisch Campagne, meaning the United East India Company. On this spot stood, in days of yore, a fort built by the king of Kotte, Don Juan Dharmapala, in the year 1550. Later on, on this very spot the Dutch erected the star fort when Kirti Sri Rajasinha reigned over Sri Lanka, in order to safeguard the men of the Dutch East India Company from the Kandyan king. In 1834 the fort ceased to exist as a military station, and today in its place stands the residence of the executive engineer.

The fort of Matara is diversified by a palm-fringed coast, low ramparts covered by a ridge of turf, narrow streets, lined with beautiful shady trees, and the blue waters of the Nilwala meandering down to meet the sea. An atmosphere of peace and solitude broods over the once historic city of long ago.

The fort opens on the sea-side, while the ramparts, consisting of embrasures for cannons, face a green plain. On the battlements one sees a clock tower, erected in the year 1883, with an inscription which indicates that it was gifted to the city by the chiefs and headmen of the Matara district.

Within the fort, and facing the sea-shore, is the rest-house believed to possess sections of the old garrison stables. It is interesting to note that most of the houses in Matara are of Dutch architecture, with the characteristic lofty roofs and large spacious rooms and hard thick walls. The Dutch Presbyterian Church of Matara is also of great historical importance. It was built in the year 1706, and consists of tombstones dating back

• to the 17th century. Here in this church amongst others is buried Frank William Falk, the father of the governor who built the Star Fort.

The entrance to this church is different to that of most churches and it is modestly built and does not appear to have the Dutch style of architecture.

Matara also has an old Dutch cemetery, but the Dutch Burgher community sold it, and on its spot now stands a cinema. However, the memory of the dead has been perpetuated with a monument erected in a former cemetery. The Portuguese too made a camp in Matara to store gun-powder, and from here their expeditions went out to attack the Kandyans, and later, the Dutch, when they held the fortress of Galle.

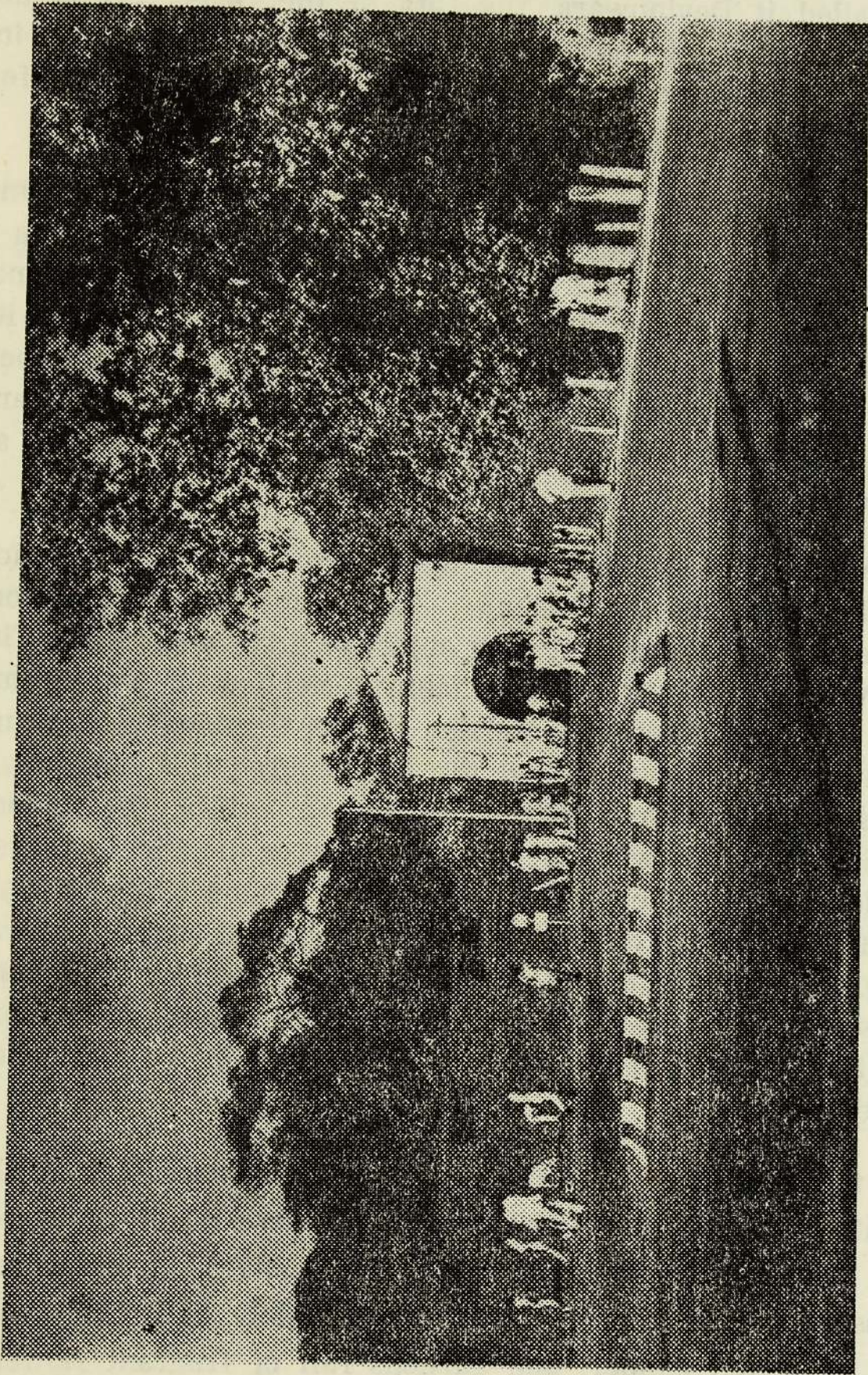
Matara is famous for its coral reef, and fishermen still call it the Maharawana Paruwatha. From this area southwards to Dondra Head is a little harbour where the Portuguese once burnt a large ship. The seas here are rocky and treacherous, but they have been rendered safe for mariners by the light house at Dondra, which flashes its beams over a radius of forty miles.

A building of great beauty at Matara is the Kathub Mohiyadeen Mosque. It was originally built by a Javanese regiment, brought to the island by the Dutch. It was a little building in the past in which they prayed to Allah for help and protection. Extended and enlarged, it stands on the banks of the Nilwala, a picturesque sight, especially on the nights of the full moon. Its reflection cast on the waters below compels many a passer by to pause and ponder at its splendour and quiet beauty.

Another building of historic importance, situated in the banks of the Nilwala, is "Rose Cottage." In this cottage was born a great man, Charles Ambrose Lorensz, the lawyer, legislator and political leader of days gone by. He was also the editor of the "Examiner" newspaper. Matara first saw him as a mischievous little boy, playing pranks on his neighbours, but in later years, when his name stood high in the land, he loved nothing so much as a visit to his birth-place. During that time, Matara was a little place and a narrow bridge carried bullock carts over the Nilwala Ganga.

Apart from such names as Lorensz, Falk, Sri Rahula, Koratota Unnanse and Henry Lawrence, Matara is associated with the famous poetess, Gajaman Nona, and also Kalidasa. We cannot leave Matara without a reference to the unfortunate incident which caused the death of Kalidasa, the poet. Legend tells us that the scholar king, Kumara Datu Sena, whilst in the house of a courtesan, watched a bee alight upon a lotus blossom, which closed its petals and imprisoned the insect. The king was soon inspired to compose two lines of poetry comparing himself entangled in the coils of the courtesan, with the bee secured in the lotus flower. He offered to grant any reward, that might be asked by anybody, who completed the stanza. The king's good friend, Kalidasa the poet, was shown the lines by the courtesan. He too had fallen deeply in love with the woman, and he lost no time in completing the verse. She then treacherously murdered the poet in order to obtain the reward herself. Hiding the poet's body, she went with the completed verse to get the reward, but the king soon recognised the fist of his friend, and when he discovered the story, he was filled with sorrow, and unable to overcome his grief, he plunged himself into the funeral pyre of Kalidasa, the poet. His sons, did the same and so the story continues that they planted seven Bo-trees over the graves, and the place is still called Hathbodiyawatte, meaning the land of the seven Bo-trees. Up to date people point to this spot as the site of the tragedy of long ago.

Today the Matara Civil Hospital stands on the site Kalidasa was believed to have been cremated. The seven Bo-trees were held in great veneration until 1783, when a ruthless Dutchman cut down these venerable trees and used the tombs as building material. And such is the history and legends connected with Matara.



Matara Fort

Devinuwara, the City of the Gods

There is a narrow peninsula, just four miles from Matara, known today as Devundara or Dondra. The people of long ago called it Devinuwara, the City of the Gods. It is the southernmost point of Sri Lanka, and is full of antiquarian interest. The towering lighthouse, an important beacon for ships, is the modern landmark of this historic town.

There is a conflict of theories regarding the origin of the name Devinuwara. Some say that the God Skanda landed here on a miraculous raft of granite, and then proceeded to Kataragama, where his shrine now stands. Others say the place owes its name to the celebrated temple of Vishnu, who was worshipped here, but we are aware that the place was called Devinuwara right up to the Portuguese period, for they refer to it as "Tanavara."

The history of Devinuwara is the history of its temple, which is dedicated to the God Vishnu. The temple has existed from very early times, and is still an object of great veneration. The Mahavamsa tells us that Virabahu, a nephew of Parakrama Bahu II, after defeating the Malay prince, Candabahu, went up to Devapura and worshipped the lily-coloured God, and made diverse offerings unto him. Again, Ibn Batuta, the famous Moorish traveller, who devoted 34 years of his life to travel, mentions this temple. He states that as a good Mohammedan, he could not enter this holy place, but he heard that inside was an idol of pure gold of the size of a man, with rubies that shone like stars for its eyes. He also adds that there were more than 500 Brahmins and 500 dancing and singing girls attached to the temple.

In the middle of the 16th century, Devinuwara was at the height of its glory and fame, and as a centre of pilgrimage, it even rivalled Sri Pada. It was full of palaces, temples and monasteries with numerous towers, ornately decorated, with roofs of gilded copper, and gardens full of fragrant flowers. Devinuwara was an imposing landmark to mariners out at sea, but it was not for long, because disaster was awaiting Devinuwara, the beautiful and far-famed city of the Gods.

It was the year 1588. Raja Sinha was besieging Colombo, the stronghold of the Portuguese, when de Souza, the Portuguese general, fired by fanaticism, decided to destroy Devinuwara. He sailed up to Dondra, and began his work of destruction—the glittering pagoda, its towers and columnades were overthrown; the beautiful images of wood, clay and metal, which numbered over a thousand, were demolished and the buildings were razed to the ground. The store-houses were opened and a fabulous treasure of jewels and gold, precious stones and ivory, silk and sandalwood were taken away, and the magnificent seven-storeyed car of the God was destroyed. Everything was then piled up in one heap and set ablaze, and as a final insult to the sacred premises, cattle were slaughtered therein, and the whole place reduced to ashes, after which de Souza and his men, who had little regard for the beliefs of other people, rejoiced over what was done. They felt that they had made an attempt to cure the heathen of his superstitions, and to tell the tale of the religious fury of the Portuguese, there still stands at Devinuwara exquisite remnants of architecture cut in various shapes, some of them depicting the figure of Rama with his bow and arrow carved in various forms.

The present temple of Vishnu is devoid of architectural interest, but in its honour, an annual festival or perahera, which has an unbroken history of nearly seven centuries, dating back to the reign of Parakrama Bahu II, is held every year in the month of July. This festival attracts thousands of pilgrims, who come to fulfil vows from all parts of the island, and is also an occasion for the famous fair at Dondra.

Adjoining the temple of Vishnu stands the Kiri Vehera, a dagoba held in great veneration by Buddhists, and believed to have been built by Dappula II over 1,500 years ago. The Mahavamsa records that, "Parakrama Bahu IV, who caused to be built at Devapura a two-storeyed image house, with exquisite doors, containing a sleeping image of the Buddha, dedicated the surrounding grove and the village Ganthimana to it." Incidentally, Ganthimana is known today as Getamana, a village in the Tangalle district. According to the "Nikaya Sangarawa," Parakrama Bahu IV's Minister, Senadhikara Seneviratne, put up a three-storied building as an addition to this temple. However, all these buildings, except the dagoba, were destroyed by the

- Portuguese, but there are still to be found some moonstones, guardstones and other monuments of the ancient vihare.

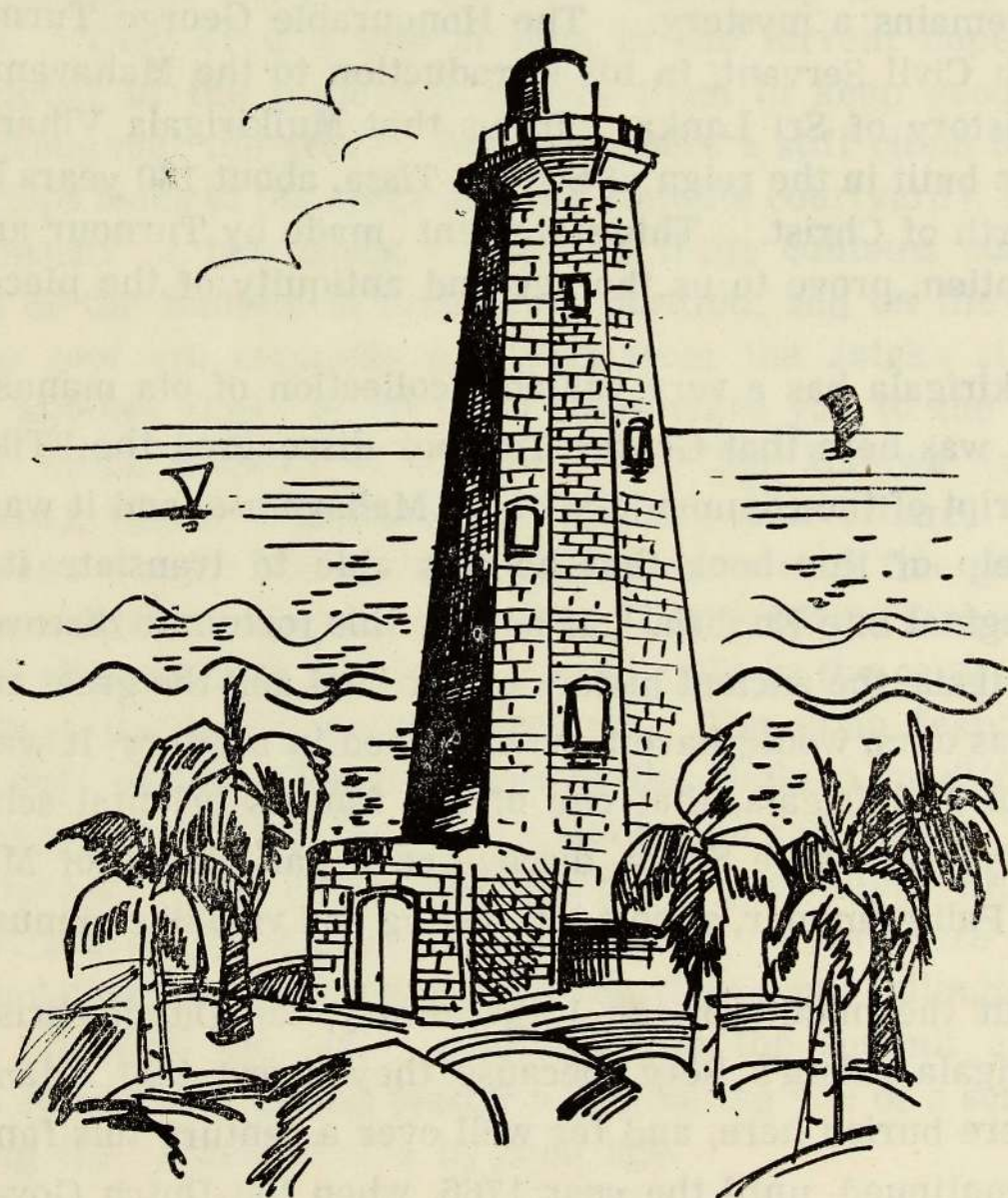
A little distance away from the vihare is a curious granite building called the "Gal-ge". It is a rectangular structure, gracefully proportioned, and its roof and walls, which are of hewn stone, exhibit excellent specimens of masonry. It has two apartments and is in an almost perfect state of preservation. Romantically situated on a hillock, it commands a picturesque view of the flat country around. Tradition assigns this building to king Dappula Sena, who had intended it as a retreat for monks, who wished to meditate. There is a story that over 150 years ago, a Buddhist monk by the name of Galge Unnanse, who is believed to have had supernatural powers and control over evil spirits, occupied this building.

There is also a legend current amongst the people of Dondra that more than 1,000 years ago an exquisite image of red sandalwood, fashioned by Visvakarma, the God of Arts and Crafts, drifted to the sea west of the lighthouse, and that nobody was able to take the image out of the water, until one day a strange thing happened. Someone appeared to the king in a dream and said that he alone should receive the image. The king having great faith in what was told to him, went in a great procession, and receive the image of red sandalwood. He carried it to the temple of Vishnu and installed it there at Devinuvara with much ceremony. The story continues that this image was included in the booty taken away by the Portuguese General, de Souza. But the wrath of the Gods caused the ship to meet with disaster and the image of red sandalwood drifted back to Devinuvara. According to tradition, the belief is that this same image is seen to this day at the famous rock temple at Dambulla.

The coast on the west side of the Dondra lighthouse is known as Sinhasana Valla, meaning 'throne beach'. It is so called because the God Kataragama, is said to have disembarked from his granite raft here and sat enthroned to receive the adoration of the faithful, before he departed for Kataragama. Close to this area, the remains of an ancient temple, probably of Hindu origin, is to be seen, and four or five partly submerged stone pillars are

pointed out as the identical spot where the God of Kataragama is said to have landed. The long line of treacherous rocks at Dondra Head indicate the position supposed to have settled itself down in the waters for ever.

Such is the story of Devinuwara, the City of the Gods, better known today as Dondra, the "Land's End" of Sri Lanka, which is famous for its fish and its towering lighthouse. It has been shorn of its pristine glory, but nevertheless it is still a place of pilgrimage to the faithful and devout.



Dondra Lighthouse - An important beacon for ships is the modern landmark of this historic town.

Mulkirigala

Mulkirigala is a sermon in stone, which stands amidst silvan surroundings. This rock-temple is situated in the southern province of Sri Lanka, 13 miles from Tangalle, and the origin of its name is lost in antiquity.

Sri Lanka's ancient chronicles, the Mahavamsa and the Dipawamsa, make no reference to this shrine, but from an ancient inscription on the rock, we gather that it has been founded by a king named Saddha Tissa. Again oriental scholars have identified Mulkirigala as a reference to a Dakkinagiri Vihare, built by Saddha Tissa. Dakkinagiri means rock in the south, and how this temple came to be known by its present name "Mulkirigala" still remains a mystery. The Honourable George Turnour, a British Civil Servant, in his introduction to the Mahavamsa, or the history of Sri Lanka, tells us that Mulkirigala Vihare is a temple built in the reign of Saddha Tissa, about 130 years before the birth of Christ. This statement made by Turnour and the inscription, prove to us the age and antiquity of the place.

Mulkirigala has a very valuable collection of ola manuscripts and it was here that George Turnour discovered the "Tika" or transcript of the commentary to the Mahavamsa, and it was with the help of this book that he was able to translate it from the original into English. If not for this fortunate discovery at Mulkirigala, the ancient history of our land and the great culture that was ours, would have been shrouded in mystery. It was also here in Mulkirigala, that one of our famous oriental scholars, Mudaliyar Louis de Soysa, discovered a paraphrase of Mogalanyana's Pali grammar, a most interesting and valuable manuscript.

About the middle of the 13th century, the Dutch christened Mulkirigala Adam's Berg, because they heard that Adam and Eve were buried here, and for well over a century this fantastic story continued, until the year 1766, when the Dutch Governor, Iman Willem Falck, visited Mulkirigala and exploded the legend. As to how this strange story originated no one could tell, but some were of the opinion that Mulkirigala had been confused with Adam's Peak, and thus they wove a fable around it.

As for the temple, it is hewn in the rock, which is very steep and precipitous, but a visit to this place in spite of the hard and tedious climb would not be in vain. Eighty-four stone steps take you to the cave temple at the foot of the rock or the Pahala Maluwa (lower courtyard) which consists of two huge caves. Each of these contains two massive images of the Buddha in a recumbent pose, and also the image of the Blue God, Vishnu. The walls and roof of these caves are adorned with paintings. The cave on the left, contains a pillar with a hollowed top from which burns a miraculous light, which is never blown off. A record of this has been left by a Dutch artist, Arent Jansen, who was commissioned in 1734 by the Dutch Governor, Van Domberg, to make drawings of various places in Sri Lanka. As for the cave on the right, it is very fascinating, for pilgrims come here on New Year's Day to make resolutions. They draw a line in lime in the fervent hope that the sanctity of the place would help them to keep good and pure throughout the year. And from here a stiff climb of 160 stone steps leads to the Meda Maluwa (middle courtyard), which also consists of two caves. Each of these contains colossal images of the Buddha in recumbent position, and on the walls and the roof are exquisite paintings from the Jataka stories. Again, another flight of 50 stone steps takes you to the third terrace which consists of 3 caves—the Uda Maluwa (upper courtyard), the Raja Maha Vihare and the Alut Vihare. The Raja Maha Vihare is the oldest, and it contains a fine pair of tusks presented to the vihare by King Kirti Sri Raja Sinha. On the roof of the vihare is a lotus, carved right in the centre, and the rest is painted in various designs. The main feature of these caves is the colossal images of the Buddha in different poses as well as that of the Gods Kataragama and Vishnu. And from there we come to the most steep and precipitous climb of all. It is from the terrace to the summit. There are small steps hewn on the rock, which take you there, and railings help you to climb to the top. And there on the summit a lone dagoba stands on a walled platform, reminding one of a sentinel guarding the treasures of a by-gone age.

The view from here is most picturesque. On one side stretches the placid waters of the Indian Ocean and on the other, far away, you see the blue-green hills of the Sabaragamuwa Province and the waters of a tank, glistening like silver in the sunshine.

Mulkirigala is indeed a sermon in stone—a landmark for all time, and looking at it one is reminded of what Cordiner wrote in his famous book on Ceylon: "There is something extravagantly romantic in those sequestered spots that they inspire the mind with unusual pleasure...and a person who is fond of meditation and recollection of past events may enjoy the luxury of solitude..."

Then one of the early British Civil Servants, Thomas Steele, who was in charge of the Hambantota District, once wrote: "Mulkirigala is an antiquity to which it need hardly be said no monastic establishment in the West can lay claim..."

Batticaloa and Trincomalee

Batticaloa and Trincomalee are two of the most fascinating places on the east coast of Sri Lanka, which is very picturesque, and made up of long, sandy beaches and lovely sheltered bays; of low-lying meads and calm lagoons, of verdant jungles and fresh green paddy fields.

Arugam Bay, on the east coast is 190 miles from Colombo, the capital city, and it is the loveliest bay in Sri Lanka. It was also an ancient port, which offered a safe anchorage to vessels eight months in the year. Arugam Bay is the gateway to the game and jungle country, stretching southwards to the borders of the famous Yala National Reserve. The lover of wild life finds the jungles here fascinating, as they teem with animals and birds of many varieties.

The famous bird sanctuary, Kumana, lies to the south of this jungle region, where one finds birds of every kind, even migrants such as the African flamingo and the fan-tail from distant Siberia. Arugam Bay has a delightful little rest house, perched on a sand dune, and it offers a most magnificent view of the sea. To the north of Arugam Bay is Sinnamuthuvaran, which lies midway between lagoon and sea. It is a quiet and peaceful place and one of its main attractions is its fine rest house. Not far from Sinnamuthuvaran is Kalmunai, which is very near the Gal Oya scheme, Sri Lanka's greatest and most ambitious irrigation scheme.

Batticaloa is the capital of the Eastern Province. The Sinhalese call it "Mada Kalapuwa," meaning muddy lagoon. Batticaloa has historic associations with the Dutch, the Danes, the French and early British sailors. When the Sinhalese held sway, the district of Batticaloa formed part of the Kandyan province, and then it was known as Puliyanaduwa. About the 8th century Arab traders came and settled in Batticaloa, and founded the Moham-medan community. Then in the 13th century there was a Malay invasion which was repulsed. Batticaloa was taken by the Portuguese in 1622, and they were its rulers until the year 1639.

It is interesting to know that when the Dutch first arrived in Sri Lanka, it was at Batticaloa that they landed. This happened over three hundred years ago. On the 31st of May 1602 two Dutch ships arrived at Batticaloa, under the command of Joris Spilbergen. In the year 1639 the Dutch defeated the Portuguese here and concluded a treaty with the king of Kandy.

In the past, many fierce battles were fought in Batticaloa, and on 21st March 1672 Louis XIV's fleet, under the command of de La Haye, appeared in the waters of Batticaloa with 14 vessels. Then the Dutch abandoned the place and thereafter Batticaloa fell into the hands of the kings of Sri Lanka until 1815 when the British took over the Kandyan kingdom.

There is a beautiful lagoon which practically surrounds the town of Batticaloa. And on the nights of the full moon, one hears the faint tinkling of music of its famous singing fish.

Next on our east coast is Trincomalee, which has the finest natural harbours in the world. Here are many creeks and bays, and an ideal place for bathing, boating and yachting. In Trincomalee our longest river, the Mahaveli Ganga, has two main outlets, through which it flows into the sea. In days gone by, for many centuries, Trincomalee was an arena of war and strife, where the Dons of Portugal, the Burghers of Holland and the Red Coats of England fought many a fierce battle. In 1624 de Sa, a Portuguese general, completed a fort at Trincomalee. But after some time the fort fell into decay, and after the Portuguese power in Sri Lanka came to an end, Trincomalee was still a battle ground for the European nations. The French took possession of the fort for a time, and were expelled by the Dutch in 1672. Early in 1782 Trincomalee was captured by the English admiral, Sir Edward Hughes, but soon afterwards the French admiral, de Suffren, forced the English garrison to surrender. At the Peace of Paris in 1784, Trincomalee was restored to the Dutch East India Company.

It is interesting to find that Colonel Wellesley, who later became the Duke of Wellington and commanded the British battle of Waterloo, walked through Trincomalee, and took up his quarters in the fort. He was in command of 5,000 troops intended for the reduction of Batavia, but the attempt was never carried out.

The Dutch captured Trincomalee from the Portuguese in 1639. The British took it in January 1782, but in August the same year, the French re-captured the city on behalf of the Dutch. Then in 1795, after a siege of 3 weeks, the British took it again.

Rising from the sea at Trincomalee is a huge crag called Swami Rock. It is 400 feet in height, and is a place of great antiquarian interest. Many romantic legends are interwoven with its history. On the top of this rock once stood "The Temple of a Thousand Columns," which was destroyed by the Portuguese in the year 1622. The site is held in great veneration by Hindus, and on the 23rd of January each year, many pilgrims with offerings of fruits and flowers visit the rock at sunset. They perform many ceremonies and dash coconuts against the cliff. There is an interesting legend connected with this place.

Long years ago says the legend, a certain king who lived in the Deccan, consulted his astrologers who told him that he was in great danger. They stated that war and famine and much pain and suffering faced him and his country and that there was only one way in which he could overcome the peril, and that was by sacrificing his only child. The king was very sad at what he was told. However, he made an ark of sandalwood, and in it he sent his little daughter afloat on the ocean. The ark was tossed about hither and thither till at last it reached the coast of Sri Lanka, and landed at a place south of Trincomalee known to this day as Pannoa, meaning "smiling child." The legend continues that when the king of the district heard of the strange arrival of the child, he ordered that she should be brought ashore to his palace, and as he had no children of his own, he adopted her as his own daughter. By and by the princess grew up to be a clever and beautiful woman, and became the heir to all her father's lands.

Meanwhile, a Hindu prince, hearing that the Swami Rock was a part of the Maha Meru mountain hurled in the course of a conflict of the Gods, came to Sri Lanka, and erected a temple on the rock, and dedicated it to the God, Siva. When the princess heard of this, she soon sent an army to drive away the stranger, but not long afterwards when the prince and princess met, they fell very deeply in love with one another, and the war terminated. But unfortunately, the princess did not live very

long, for after a few years she became very ill and died. As for the prince he was very, very sad, and in a fit of grief he secluded himself in the temple on Swami Rock. And the story continues that the Gods pitied the sorrow-stricken youth, and changed him into a lotus flower on the altar of Siva.

We cannot leave Swami Rock without reference to an event of pathetic interest. On the rock stands a monument of more recent years. It bears a Dutch inscription to a maiden of royal birth, Franceena Van Reede. She was the daughter of a Dutch nobleman, and was betrothed to an army officer stationed at Trincomalee. But one day he broke off the betrothal and shortly after that had to leave the island. On the day the officer was leaving, Franceena Van Reede, the forsaken maiden, climbed Swami Rock, and as the vessel bearing the false lover passed the rock, she flung herself down the precipice into the sea. And they say her ghostly young figure appears night after night and flings itself down these cliffs into the sea...

How far the story of the Dutch maiden is true, no one really knows. There is no record of any such incidence, and who knows whether the monument pulls the leg of posterity!

In the neighbourhood of Trincomalee is a place called Kaniyai, which is well-known for its hot springs. There are seven springs in this place differing in degrees of temperature from 100 to 110. These springs are the subject of many interesting legends. According to one legend, it is said that there had been a very severe drought at Trincomalee for several years and there was no water to be found anywhere. Then, one day, there appeared a very saintly monk in a saffron coloured robe, who went from place to place asking for a sip of water, telling everyone that he was very, very thirsty. He went to almost every house in the city, but he met with the same refusal and rudeness from the people. Then he walked on quietly meditating on man's selfishness for even those who had stored water refused him a sip. He continued to walk on, and when he felt he couldn't bear his thirst any more, he stood before another house and begged for a sip of water. The inmates of the house shouted and chased the monk away, but a little boy, pitying the monk, poured his share of water into a coconut



Swami Rock

shell, and handed it to him. As soon as he drank the water, there emerged from the depths of the earth a number of springs. The people rushed to them to collect the water, but they were all boiling, bubbling and foaming, and no one could touch the water for so great was the heat. Yet when the little boy, who gave the monk some water, went near the wells, the waters cooled, and he was able to bathe and drink as much as he wanted, but to no one else did the waters cool. And such is the legend connected with the hot springs at Kanniyai in Trincomalee.



Women in Sri Lanka's History

From the earliest times women have played an important part in the history of the world, and in the building of our nation too, there have been women noted for their valour and bravery, for their beauty and accomplishments and for their kindness and compassion, and also for their deeds of treachery and violence.

The first woman we hear of in our long and turbulent history is Kuveni. She belonged to the race of Yakkas or first inhabitants of Sri Lanka. It was she, and she alone, who helped and guided Vijaya, the exiled prince, when he landed on our shores. She helped him to defeat the Yakkas, and it was Kuveni's power and influence that enabled him to become supreme king of the great dynasty. But hers is a sad and pathetic story ... She was deserted and jilted by the man she loved for he left her with cruel ingratitude for the love of an Indian Princess. As for Kuveni, whose help and guidance Vijaya sought, she entered the forest, and in her pain and despair, she screamed in agony, and cursed the man who betrayed her. She called upon the Gods to avenge her, saying that it was she and she alone who gave Vijaya and his men food and shelter when they arrived in Sri Lanka, and that it was she who won for him the kingdom, and now how could he forsake her after all she had done.

We next hear of Baddakaccana, the queen of king Panduvasdeva. The Mahavamsa speaks of her as a "woman made of gold, fair of form and eagerly sought". She arrived in Sri Lanka from Northern India in a strange way. We hear that seven kings were in love with her, but she spurned them rudely, and after that as her life was in danger, she put on yellow robes, and with thirty-two women friends she decided to leave her father's city, Kimbulwatpura. The king placed her in a boat and launched it upon the Ganges, saying: "Who-so-ever can, let him take my daughter."

The boat arrived at the mouth of the Mahakanadara Nadi Tank, and Baddakaccana and her friends proceeded to Upatissa-

gama, the capital, to meet the king, Panduvas Deva. The king was so enthralled with her beauty and loveliness, that he ordered her to cast away her yellow robes, and he made her his principal queen.

She bore Panduvas Deva ten sons and a daughter. The eldest was Abhaya, who succeeded his father, and the daughter was the famous and beautiful Ummada Chitta of whom we next read in the history of our land.

And now for the woman who helped and inspired Ummada Chitta's son, Pandu Kabaya. She was Suvanna Pali, his uncle's daughter. There is a legend as to how Pandu Kabaya took her for his bride. His tutor, Pandula the Brahmin, said to him: "The woman at whose touch leaves turn to gold, make thou thy queen," and Pandu Kabaya did not forget this. One day, when he was going forth with his army to fight his uncles, he arrived at a place called Giri Kanda. There he saw a beautiful woman, with a great retinue, and mounted on a splendid waggon. She was taking food for her father and for the reapers who worked for him. Enthralled by her beauty, Pandu Kabaya rushed up to her and asked for some food. He was very tired and hungry, and she pitied the youth, and under the shade of a banyan tree, she fed him in a golden bowl. And the legend continues that the banyan leaves, with which she meant to entertain the rest of the people, were changed at her touch, into golden vessels, and the "Rajawaliya" continues, "and when all had been served, yet the food became not less: It seemed that but one man's portion had been taken away." Pandu Kabaya, we are told, took her away for his queen in time, but not before he had won her in battle against her father at Kalaha-Nagara, a village which is now believed to be buried on the south of the Minneriya tank.

Suvanna Pali is remembered in our history for her kindness and compassion, and as the grandmother of the illustrious Sinhalese king, Devanampiya Tissa, in whose reign Buddhism was established in Sri Lanka.

The next woman we hear of in our history is Sangamitta, the sister of the Thera Mahinda, and the first Buddhist nun, who arrived in Sri Lanka in the reign of Devanampiya Tissa, with a branch of the Bo-tree under which the Buddha sat. This was

installed at Anuradhapura and is to be seen to the present day. After Sangamitta's arrival many women became Buddhist nuns, and she had a great religious influence over the women of Sri Lanka during that time.

Another woman, who merits some attention for her religious fervour as well as for her unholy ambition, is Anula Devi, queen of King Devanampiya Tissa. She was greatly admired and honoured for her love for religion, and she was the first Sinhalese lay-sister. She entered the nunnery of Upasika Vihare, passed her days there leading a holy life... But alas, it was not for long, for power and ambition had a firm grip over her. She wanted her son to become King of Sri Lanka, but her husband's brother, Maha Naga stood in the way of his succession to the throne. Thus she schemed and plotted against him until at last the opportunity arose. Maha Naga had gone away from the city, and was busy with the construction of tanks, and her own son had accompanied him. Anula Devi soon poisoned a mango, laid it uppermost amongst some others in a dish, and sent it to the king. Just as it was sent, the little prince, Anula Devi's own son, uncovered the dish and died from eating the poisoned mango.

But history draws a kindly veil over the distracted mother's sorrow, and continues how Maha Naga, who fled in fear, founded the Mahagama or Magama of today, and reigned there.

And now we come to the best loved woman in our history—the famous Vihara Maha Devi... She is the most interesting and best remembered Sinhalese woman of pre-Christian times, whose name will always be intimately connected with Buddhism. Her life has been full of strange adventure and propitious to the nation, to which she gave one of its noblest and greatest kings, Dutu Gemunu.

She was offered as a sacrifice by her father, King Kelani Tissa, in order to avert the impending, calamity, when the sea began to encroach the west coast of Sri Lanka, for he believed this to be a curse on him. Thus he ordered his lovely daughter, Devi, to wash her hair, bathe in perfumed waters and wear a sari of pure white silk and put on her jewels. He then placed her in a boat, bearing her royal connections and sent it adrift on the ocean.

As for the boat containing the comely princess, Devi, it drifted towards the southern coast of the island and was rescued by some fishermen at a place known as Kirinda today. When king Tissa of Rohana heard this, he visited the place, and when he saw the princess he fell in love with her. He made her sit on a heap of precious stones, poured water on her hands, and he made her his queen. He built a monastery on that spot, gave the princess the name of Vihara Maha Devi, and led her in a festive procession to the town of Magama.

The Mahavamsa continues that after some time the longings of a woman with child came upon Vihara Maha Devi...She craved for a honey-comb, 140 cubits in length, to present to the great community of bhikkus and to eat what was left, after they had partaken of it.

Such a stupendous honey-comb was not easy to get, but Velusumana of whom we hear in our history, made the discovery at the seaport, Migamuwa or Negombo, hence the name of the place to this day. He is said to have found it in an old boat, hauled ashore by fishermen, and brought it to the queen, whose craving was thus satisfied. But Vihara Maha Devi was also possessed with other morbid cravings...She longed to drink the water that had served to cleanse the sword with which the head of the first warrior among king Elara's soldiers had been struck off, and she longed to drink it standing on his very head. She moreover longed to adorn herself with garlands of unfaded lotus blossoms from the lotus marshes of Anuradhapura.

After some time Vihara Maha Devi gave birth to a noble son, the wise and illustrious Dutu Gemunu, the greatest warrior that ever lived in our land, and one of Sri Lanka's most beloved kings.

Leaving the greatly honoured and deeply loved Vihara Maha Devi there is yet another famous woman who stood between a prince and the Sinhalese throne—Asoka Mala Devi. The great Dutu Gemunu looked upon his son, Saliya Kumaraya, to take over the kingdom from him, but it was not to be, because of a woman of great beauty and accomplishments. It all happened in a strange way One day prince Saliya, feeling very lonely, strolled into a park full of flowers, birds and bees and butterflies. Here he began to muse on the beauty around him, when

he saw a tree laden with dew-wet blossoms. It was an Asoka tree, and as the prince gazed on it, he caught sight of a woman of great beauty, decking herself with Asoka flowers, and singing a sweet song, which rang through the flower-strewn park. Enthralled by her beauty, the prince questioned his retinue, "Who is this wonderful woman who sings like a bird, whose radiant beauty is like that of the Wesak moon?"

"Beware, my lord," came the answer, "of that worthless woman and her wantonness. She is a harlot, a miserable, good for nothing creature...."

The prince paid but little heed to these words, for he was greatly taken up with the woman, and he began to question her, "Ah, tell me thy name, beauteous one. Art thou a mortal or a goddess," he asked of her.

But she turned pale with fear, and she shook and she shivered, and she said softly, "Speak not thus to me, oh, noble one. I am a despised and degraded Chandala woman, and I hail from the village Helloli; I am shunned by everyone; touch me not—the untouchable. Do not even let my shadow fall on you, lest shame should befall you and your great father. My name is Devi, and to cull flowers have I come to this park." But the woman's beauty and charm had attracted prince Saliya so much, that he said to her, "Henceforth thou shall be known as Asokamala Devi, or Devi of the Asoka garland. I was wedded to thee in a previous life, and wedded we must be in this life and successive lives."

And so Saliya and Asokamala Devi were married, but history points out that though she was a woman of great charm, kindness and compassion, Saliya could never reign over Lanka because she was not of noble birth.

After Asokamala, the next woman we hear of in our long and turbulent history is queen Anula, who is compared to Catherine of Russian history. The records of the women we hear of, from that period, do not make a very favourable impression, but they give us a picture of the tumultuous state of society in their time.

Queen Anula was the first ruling queen of Sri Lanka. She ascended the throne in the year 48 B.C. and ruled for a period of four years. She was an ambitious woman with an iron will, and

had always wanted to become queen, but the way was far from clear for her ambitions, and in order to achieve that purpose, she used her deadliest weapon—poison. First of all, she poisoned her husband, Kuda Tissa. Then the rightful heir to the throne was Kutakanna Tissa, but he believed that discretion was the better part of valour, and he fled from the city in fear of Anula—seeking refuge in a monastery he became a monk.

Anula had now paved the way for herself, and she sat upon the throne, and became supreme queen of all Sri Lanka. But history records that the period which followed was full of “lust and cold-blooded murder,” the most disgraceful as well as the most horrible in ancient Sinhalese history.

When Anula became queen, she had already poisoned two reigning kings—first Cora Naga, after twelve years, and then his successor, Kuda Tissa, after a period of three years. Then after she became queen there were four others who met with the same unfortunate fate. The first was Balat Siva, an ex-watchman of the royal palace. He was raised to the position, not only of being the queen’s husband, but also to that of the governor of the city for a year and two months. But soon Anula grew weary of him, and transferred her affections to a carpenter named Vatuka. Balat Siva was poisoned, and so was Vatuka after sharing the throne for a short period. Anula then married a wood-carrier, Darubhatika Tissa, but the same fate awaited him. There then came on the scene the palace priest, a Brahmin named Niliya. Anula, was greatly enamoured of him, but alas! after some time, she wearied of him too, and after six months the precarious position he held also came to a bitter end for Niliya was also poisoned.

In four years Anula had poisoned four husbands and the people were up in arms against her. One day they marched to the gates of the monastery in which Kutakanna Tissa, the rightful heir had sought refuge. They persisted that he should assert himself to regain the throne. Kutakanna Tissa opened his eyes, and casting his robes aside, he marched to Anuradhapura with an army to defeat queen Anula. Her troops were at the gates of the city, but Kutakanna’s men were able to enter the palace apartments. In one of them stood queen Anula, but

when she saw them, she made a bold bid to escape. However, Kutakanna soon caught the queen and put her to death. He became king, and reigned for twenty years.

The scene now shifts to the year 32 A.D. when a woman sat on the throne of Sri Lanka for the second time. She was Sivali, sister of Culabhaya. When he died she ascended the throne for a period of four months, for at the end of that period Ilanga, son of her father's sister, marched into Anuradhapura with an army of men, and de-throned her. But to gain the confidence and co-operation of his subjects, he did a strange thing. He married Sivali.

Ilanga was the first Sinhalese king to be exiled out of Sri Lanka. He ruled for ten years, and after his death his ten-year old son, Candamukka Siva became king, but because he was too young to rule, Sivali again became queen, and took over the administration until he came of age.

The next woman we hear of in the history of Sri Lanka is Lilavati, widow of King Parakrama Bahu I. She married a minister, Kirti by name, and with his assistance usurped the throne. She reigned three times, and was de-throned twice.

The year 1202 A.D. saw yet another woman on the throne of Sri Lanka—Kalyanawati, who reigned for six years. Her period of office was full of trouble, but she died in possession of her throne, a rare occurrence indeed in the history of ancient Sri Lanka.

In the year, 1594, Dona Catherina became queen. She was brought up by the Portuguese in Mannar, educated and baptised, and given the name of Dona Catherina. When she was twelve years of age, the Portuguese decided to place her on the Sinhalese throne of her ancestors, not that they were interested in her welfare, but because they wanted to oust the ruling king, a great enemy of theirs. The plan had been suggested by the Portuguese general, de Souza, and so Dona Catherina was brought from Mannar. She arrived, richly attired, in a sedan chair, attended by Portuguese ladies-in-waiting and retinue, with great pomp and ceremony, and the booming of artillery, she was proclaimed queen of Kandy, the only female sovereign of Sri Lanka after many years. The people of Kandy were very pleased because she was the right-

ful heir to the throne, but it was not for long, for the queen was surrounded by the Portuguese, and her own subjects had no access to her. Moreover, she embraced their religion and was quite Portuguese in her ways and manners, in her attire, and fluent in their language. She had little in common with her own people, and it was rumoured that she was to be married to the Portuguese general, de Souza.

In these circumstances, Wimaladharma arrived in Kandy and stirred the people. He then defeated de Souza, who was killed, and he married Dona Catherina. She was now a prisoner in his hands, and sank into oblivion. She and her husband had moved with the Portuguese, and had adopted their ways in food, dress and language. They furnished the palace in Portuguese style, and received ambassadors with great pomp and ceremony. In 1604 the king died, and Dona Catherina tried to become queen again, but her husband's brother, Senarat, forced her to marry him. She had three sons, Wijeyapala, Kumarasinghe and Rajasinghe. Of these, Senarat loved the youngest, and was keen to give the throne to him. And in order to fulfil his plans he decided to do away with Dona Catherina's son by her first marriage. One day the boy was found dead and everybody suspected that he was murdered, when Dona Catherina became heart-broken and very ill.

On her death-bed, she sent for a Dutch envoy and asked him to pray for her. She left legacies to her servants and granted freedom to her slaves. Dona Catherina's death was greatly mourned by her family and her subjects, who spoke of her as the Great Queen or Maha Biso Bandara. And so ended the life of the last woman we hear of in our history.

Keppetipola Maha Dissawe, A Great National Hero

“Had the insurrection been successful, he would have been honoured and characterised as a patriot, instead of being stigmatised as a rebel, and punished as a traitor.”

Thus wrote Henry Marshall, who came to Sri Lanka in 1808 as Deputy Inspector-General of Army Hospitals, in his book “Description of the Island and its Inhabitants.” He was referring to Keppetipola Dissawe of Uva, the rebel chief of old, the first man in Sri Lanka who made a bold bid for independence and nearly succeeded. Like the mountains around Marathon, the Kandyan land is full of tales of patriotism that make the “pride of the past pulse hot in a people’s veins,” and names, like that of Keppetipola, ring like a clarion call.

When Sri Lanka first celebrated her independence in 1948 the name of Keppetipola was given pride of place along with that of other national heroes who struggled for freedom. Keppetipola was the William Wallace of Sri Lanka. Like the chieftains of Scotland, who were dissatisfied under the British yoke of Edward the First, the Adigars and Dissawes of the Kandyan kingdom were keen to get rid of the foreign power, that had established itself in Kandy, for the first time, in their long history.

There is no doubt, that in the long list of Sinhalese heroes, no chieftain has left the impress of his personality so indelibly in our later history as Keppetipola, the rebel leader of Uva. His attempt to dislodge the power of the foreigner proved both formidable and resolute.

Keppetipola Dissawe, the leader of the famous rebellion of 1817, the greatest of all the risings against the British hailed from the ancient family of Keppetipola Rajapakse Wickremasekera Bandaranayake in the Galboda Korale, in the historic Hatara Korale, which formed the vanguard of the Sinhala army. Members of the Keppetipola family held high positions during the Kandyan period of our history. Early in

the eighteenth century, the then Chief of the Clan was appointed Maha Dissawe of Matale and Tamankaduwa, and migrated to the Matale Disaveny (that is the area under the Dissawe). He married a lady of the Clan of Monaravila from Matale and his descendants too held high offices in the Kandyan kingdom. One of them was Dissawe of Matale and Nuwara Kalaviya, while other members of the family held the offices of Saluwadana Nilame and Maduwa Lekam. In 1804 we hear of Keppetipola Dissawe of Tamankaduwa, who was sent by the last King of Kandy to oppose the troops coming from Batticaloa, under the command of Captain Johnstone. Yet another member of this distinguished family was Diyawadana Nilame under King Rajadhi Raja Sinha. He married Monaravila Kumarihamy and had three sons and three daughters. The second son was the famous Keppetipola Dissawe of Uva, who is honoured throughout the land today as the great national hero. One of his sisters married Ehelapola, the ill-fated Maha Nilame, who fell in disfavour with the last King of Kandy.

The chief cause of the 1817-1818 rebellion was the Kandyan Convention of 2 March 1815, held in the Audience Hall of the Kings of Kandy between the Adigars, Dissawes and other principal chieftains of the Kandyan kingdom on the one side, and Lieutenant-General (later Sir) Robert Brownrigg, Governor on behalf of King George III of England, on the other, King Sri Wickrema Raja Sinha was deposed and his dominions vested in the King of England.

Thus ended two thousand three hundred and fifty-eight years of independence of the Kandyan people. The Portuguese and the Dutch did not rule over them, and when the British did so, they could not bear it—especially the proud chieftains, for in the past, the king and the king alone was above them. But now they were made to feel inferior to every Englishman in the service of the Government and to every officer in the army of occupation. Thus within the short period of two months of the signing of the convention to which Keppetipola as Dissawe of Matale was a signatory, the Kandyan monks, chiefs and people decided to overthrow British domination. And William Tolfrey, Chief Translator to the British Government, who was stationed in Kandy from 1815 to 1817 wrote to the Governor that “a deep and extensive plot to annihilate British

power" was being established in the Kandyan provinces and "that deep and extensive plot" was the 1817-1818 war for independence. Its chief leader was Keppetipola Dissawe, who after the signing of the Convention was appointed Maha Dissawe of Uva.

The Chiefs stirred up the people to revolt, and by October 1817 the whole Kandyan country was roused against the British. The rebellion caused great alarm to the rulers—not only did it spread rapidly, but almost every chieftain had a hand in it. All communications were cut during this period and the floods caused by the Kelani River prevented the despatch of troops from Colombo.

Small parties of troops were shot and attacked by unseen hands. When the floods had subsided, Major MacDonald was sent with a body of troops to quell the rebellion. But the situation did not improve, and from Major Davie it is learnt that the British troops too suffered greatly and "that it was a melancholy time for those who were on the scene of action." Then Major MacDonald decided to punish the inhabitants of the hill country. Their villages were burnt down, their plantations were laid waste, their cattle were destroyed, and all persons found with arms were placed under arrest and mercilessly put to death. The whole of the Kandyan provinces were placed under martial law. Even these atrocities could not break the proud spirit of the people.

But, by and by, the British became masters of the situation for troops were sent from Madras and Bengal. Sickness and famine broke out, and the leaders fell one after another into the hands of the British. Ehalapola Nilame was be-headed, Keppetipola, Pilamatalawa and Madugalle were taken by surprise and captured. The actual facts of this rebellion were suppressed during those times. Ten thousand Kandyans were killed and the number of the British troops that lost their lives is calculated as one thousand.

Keppetipola, who was the leader of the rebellion was a man of great courage and nobility. Henry Marshall describes him and the scene of his execution in his famous book on Ceylon. He speaks of him as a man of frank and affable manners.

Keppetipola was brought before a Court Martial on 13 November 1818, tried and condemned to death. On the morning of 25 November 1818, he and Madugalle were taken to the Dalada Maligawa at their own request. Henry Marshall tells us that at the Dalada Maligawa, Keppetipola removed his upper cloth from his waist and presented it to the temple, saying that although the offering was humble, the merit in giving it will not be diminished, for that was all he had to give.

They were then taken to the place of execution near the Bogambara tank. Keppetipola then requested that he be granted time for his religious ceremonies. After this he tied up his hair in a knot and then produced a small "banapotha" or book of religious scriptures. This, he requested to be given to Mr. Sawyers as a token of gratitude for his friendship and kindness while they were officially connected at Badulla.

Two strokes of the Executioner's sword on the back of Keppetipola's neck deprived him of life. His head was separated from his body, and according to Kandyan custom, it was placed on his breast.

Thus ended the life of Keppetipola Dissawe, a great national hero and the first man to make a bold bid for independence.

Henry Marshall took possession of Keppetipola's skull, which he presented to the Phrenological Society of Edinburgh. However, after Sri Lanka ceased to be a British Colony a request was made for the return of the skull. After it was returned, the skull was ceremonially interred on 26 November 1954 in the memorial constructed at the Kandy esplanade to the memory of Keppetipola Dissawe, whom we honour today as a great patriot and national hero.

A Kandyan Rebellion That Caused The Fall Of A British Cabinet when Matale revolted against heavy taxes

The beautiful little valley of Matale, surrounded by blue-green hills, and its atmosphere of peace and quiet, was not without her troubles in the past. An event that took place in Matale over a hundred years ago is revealed in an inscription found in a plantation in the Wariyapola Estate, which reads—

“WARIYAPOLA
REBELS DISPERSED HERE
BY TROOPS UNDER
CAPTAIN LILLIE, C.R.R.
29 JULY, 1848”

Behind this inscription is a story, grim with bitterness and tragedy—the story of a people who had conquered and failed, and risen in revolt—a people, of whom an English clergyman once wrote—“We cannot look upon a Kandyan without veneration when we remember the prowess and perseverance of the race whence he has sprung and the warfare he has long waged that their land might be free from the yoke of the foreign oppressor.”

It is the story of a rebellion, which caused the fall of the British Cabinet, when Earl Russel sat at its head as Prime Minister.

Many an anecdote about this rebellion, not recorded in the histories of the time, have I heard in the home of my ancestors in Udugama, Matale. They loved to tell of those dark and gloomy days, for they had heard all about them from Herat Abeykoon Bandaralage Loku Banda Udugama, who at that time was charged with treason, and sentenced to transportation. Having served his term, he returned to his home, “Egoda Walauwa” in Udugama, Matale, where he lived to a ripe old age.

The real facts of the Matale rebellion have been hushed—the suffering of the people of those times is not known today, and according to certain records could even hardly be called a rebellion:

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After the signing of the Kandyan Convention, things did not run too smoothly in the Kandyan districts and there broke out various risings. During these times many a proud and noble chieftain was ruthlessly executed or imprisoned; many a poor villager was mercilessly killed or publicly flogged. And Matale was not without her troubles. First there was a disturbance in 1820 which was squashed. Then in 1823 a Buddhist monk and a Chief Headman were hanged for claiming descent from Sri Wickrema Raja Sinha, and encouraging the people to revolt. We hear of another rising in 1825 at Laggala in the east of Matale, but the leader and his followers were easily imprisoned—only a torch-light proved sufficient for their capture. Then in 1831 and in 1836 there were two more risings—the people rose in revolt against the partitioning of lands for coffee cultivations. But that was not all—soon heavy taxes were imposed on the people and this was the chief cause which led to much discontent—not only had they to pay road tax, but they were taxed even on the mangy mongrels they possessed. Finally when the gun-tax came into force, the poor villager was truly afflicted, for a gun in those early days was a mere necessity, for without it he could neither protect himself nor his gardens and fields from the ravages of wild beasts.

Thus in July 1848, the people of Matale led by Gongalegoda Banda rose in revolt to overthrow British domination, and Lord Torrington, the Governor, not knowing what to do, lost his head and placed Matale, Kandy and Kurunegala under martial law. The military occupied Matale, and many hundreds, including some of the rebels found at Wariyapola, were shot without ceremony, and property was plundered and confiscated.

Despite the fact that the rebels had done hardly any damage, Lord Torrington, the Governor, listened only to his panicky councillors and continued martial law for a long time. Thirty-four men were tried in the Supreme Court, and seventeen were convicted. But later on, eighteen more received sentence, and the Chief Justice, Sir Anthony Oliphant, pleaded for the Governor's clemency on their behalf, saying: "When it is considered that no European has been put to death, that only one soldier has been wounded by the rebels, that no persons have appeared in warlike array against the troops since the outbreak at Matale

and Kurunegala, the blood which has been already spilt is sufficient for all purposes, whether of vindication or of the law or for example." This was more than sufficient to annoy the Governor, but he did not dare to go against the head of the judiciary.

However, Gongalegoda Banda, the leader of the rebellion, and Purang Appu, one of his chief men, were tied to a large Rukattana tree and shot, and a monk named Kudapola Unnanse was tried by court martial for failing to give evidence, which might have led to the arrest of a rebel.

He was sentenced to be shot and the Queen's Advocate H. C. Selby, declaring the evidence insufficient, begged of the Governor for clemency, but Lord Torrington, in strong language, refused to do so. And the monk was tied to the same Rukattana tree as Gongalegoda Banda and Purang Appu, and shot.

Indeed it was the blackest of crimes that a Buddhist monk should have been shot in his robes, and the Chief Justice threatened to resign if one more man was sentenced to be shot.

However, Dr. Elliot, editor of "The Ceylon Observer", A. M. Ferguson, Richard Morgan and Lawrence Oliphant led an agitation, and getting in touch with friends in England, placed the matter before the Members of Parliament.

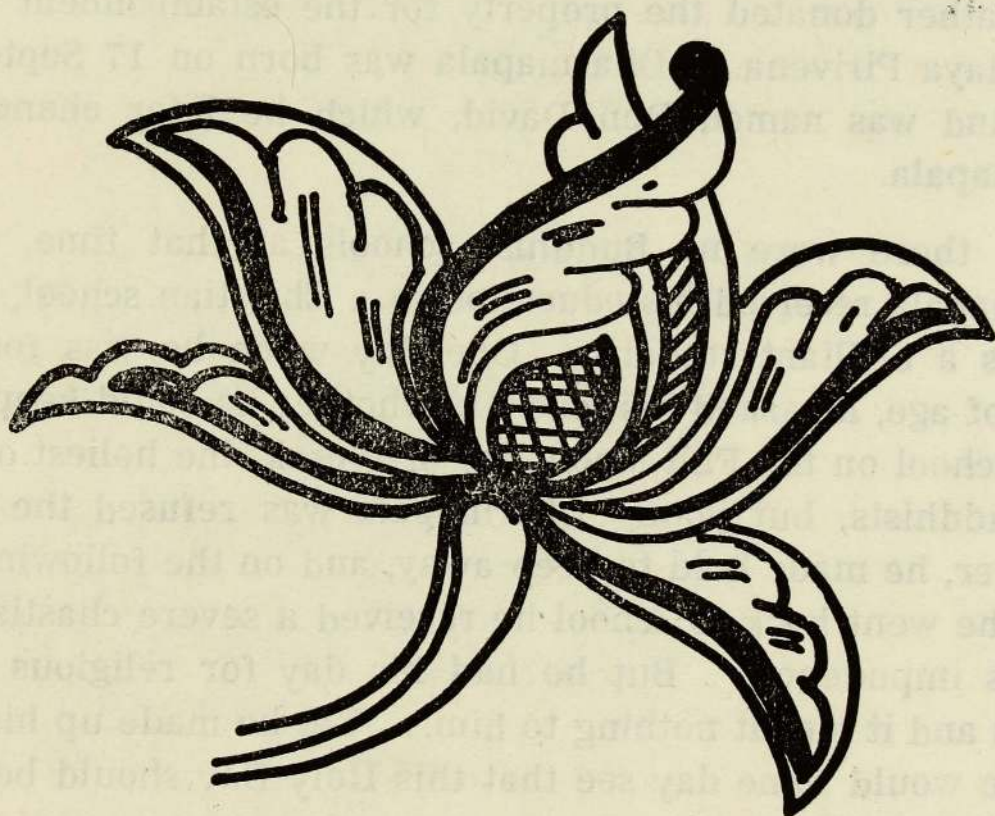
Soon they were called upon to submit their complaints and the Queen's Advocate, Selby, his brother, John Selby, and Lt. Henderson went together with Capt. Watson, who ordered martial law in Matale, and Lt. Drought, Commandant of Kandy, Emerson Tennent, the Colonial Secretary, and Woodhouse also went to represent the case, and took with them some of Lord Torrington's letter to clear themselves.

A Commission, consisting of Morehead and Rhode, was sent to Sri Lanka to investigate into the cruelties said to have been committed in the suppression of the rebellion. However, a tremendous struggle was made to defend Lord Torrington, for he happened to be a cousin of the Prime Minister of England, Earl Russel, who objected in the House of Commons to all inquiry, saying: "I believe that the rules and maxims that we have laid down must be the rules and maxims by which any Government will be guided which seeks to preserve this Empire.

and that if any Government was to take the dastardly part of sacrificing a Governor because there was a clamour raised against him, got up with great perseverance and industry, I believe that the Government while it would sacrifice the colonies would meet with the reprobation of the people of England."

There was much disagreement, and the unpopularity of the steps taken, led to the fall of the Cabinet of Lord Russel.

It is understood that Lord Torrington, on hearing that his private letters had been produced before the committee, sent in his resignation, but before the letter reached London, he was asked to resign. Sir Emerson Tennent and Woodhouse were also sent out of Sri Lanka.



Anagarika Dharmapala—A Great Buddhist Leader

One of the greatest Buddhist leaders Sri Lanka has ever known was Anagarika Dharmapala, whose worthy efforts for the revival of Buddhism have been fruitful to this day.

As the founder of the Maha Bodhi Society, as a great patriot and nationalist, as a devoted Buddhist and religious leader, the name of Anagarika Dharmapala is known, not only in Sri Lanka, but throughout the Buddhist world.

Dharmapala was a son of Don Carolis Hewavitarana, who was made a Mudaliyar of his philanthropy, and of Mallika Hewavitarana who founded the Mallika Home for the Aged. His grandfather donated the property for the establishment of the Vidyodaya Pirivena. Dharmapala was born on 17 September 1864 and was named Don David, which he later changed to Dharmapala.

As there were no Buddhist schools at that time, young Dharmapala received his education in a Christian school, where he was a brilliant student. One day when he was fourteen years of age, he asked his teachers whether he could keep away from school on the Full Moon Day of Wesak, the holiest of days for Buddhists, but young Dharmapala was refused the leave. However, he made bold to keep away, and on the following day, when he went back to school he received a severe chastisement for his impudence. But he had his day for religious observances and it meant nothing to him. Yet he made up his mind that he would some day see that this Holy Day should be made a public holiday.

On leaving school his parents were keen that young Dharmapala should enter government service, and in order to please them, he sat for the general clerical service examination and was successful in securing employment in the Colonial Secretary's office.

Soon after this Col. Olcott and Madam Blavatsky, attracted by the message of Buddhism, arrived in Sri Lanka in 1880, and called on the Venerable Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala, Principal

of the Vidyodaya Pirivena. Col. Olcott was now in need of someone to interpret his messages and speeches to the people of Sri Lanka. When young Dharmapala heard this, he resigned from his newly acquired worldly career and followed Col. Olcott from village to village translating his message—"Buddhists, wake up from your lethargy, protect your noble Dhamma...." Dharmapala put his whole life into his new work, and was a great asset to Col. Olcott who opened a branch of the Buddhist Theosophical Society in Sri Lanka. For nearly five years, Dharmapala spent many hours in hard work each day, striving to make the society a great success. He helped in the foundation of schools, in Buddhist propaganda, and he wrote to people throughout the island to visit the Head Office and contribute generously towards the progress of the cause.

Soon his cheerful manner, his eloquent words and the sincerity of his deeds attracted many people until the Colombo Buddhist Theosophical Society became a power in the land. Also through Col. Olcott's intervention, Dharmapala succeeded in making the Full Moon Day of Wesak, a National Holiday, an ambition he had from the time he was a school-boy of fourteen.

In 1884 Dharmapala accompanied Col. Olcott and Madam Blavatsky to Adyar, toured India, Burma and Siam, and reached Japan in 1887.

In 1891, Dharmapala made a pilgrimage to the holy shrines of India, and at Buddha Gaya his religious emotions were roused greatly that he determined to win the places sacred to Buddhists. The Bodhi tree, under which the Buddha had meditated, the holy temples and shrines were in a state of neglect. Dharmapala was very enthusiastic to restore them, but he wondered how he could do this. However, he launched out a scheme and founded the Maha Bodhi Society with but one aim in view—to restore to Buddhists the sacred sights of Buddhism and to re-establish Buddhism in its motherland. His new venture was met with great opposition, which he later overcame. At Buddha Gaya in Northern India Dharmapala erected a Pilgrims' Rest for the safety and comfort of pilgrims, and established a place for worship. He requested the Maha Raja, who was occupying the property, to give it over to the Buddhists. The property adjoining the temple belonged to the Rajah of Tikari and he made



Anagarika Dharmapala—A Great Buddhist Leader.

arrangements to purchase this too. The Buddhists in Sri Lanka as well as those of Burma and Siam made a generous contribution, but the administrators of the Rajah's lands refused to part with it. Dharmapala then decided to go to court and place before them the rights of the Buddhists, but the case went from court to court, and finally the High Court decided that the Buddhists had no claim on it.

Yet Dharmapala did not give up the pursuit, but he ventured to establish Buddhism in India. He thought that if India became Buddhist-minded, the Buddhist shrines in India would naturally fall into the hands of the followers of Lord Buddha.

In 1894 Dharmapala went to the Parliament of Religions in Chicago as the Buddhist delegate. On his arrival at the Albert Docks in London, he was received by Sir Edwin Arnold the author of "The Light of Asia." In London he also had the opportunity of meeting Professor Rhys Davids, the well-known Pali scholar, who gave young Dharmapala much encouragement.

In America Dharmapala's address—the sincerity with which he explained the life of the Aryan Sage, created quite an impression and the "Chicago Tribune" wrote, "For amidst all these millions from all parts of the world, the humble votary of the Dharma maintained himself with dignity and became marked out from thousands by the very absence of ostentation, by that mild, unobtrusive manner which was so distinctly his own." And so this dreamy-eyed easterner was well received in America, and for three months he was taken around the country. In industrial Chicago he was taken to various factories. In one they turned out pork sausages, and he was shown the wonderful process as to how a pig was put into one end of a machine and sausages came out at the other. The manager of the factory proudly asked, "What do you think of the inventor of this most wonderful machine?" "To me it would appear great," came the apt reply, "if you put back the sausages at one end and get the pig at the other."

Shortly after his return to Sri Lanka, he visited Honolulu, and here he met the lady whom he called his foster-mother. She was Mrs. Mary Foster, whose deep sympathy, whose kindly nature,

and benevolent gifts helped Dharmapala to realise his long cherished dreams. It was with her help that he was able to erect temples, schools and hospitals in the Buddhist centres of India. By now Dharmapala had forsaken his home and become an Anagarika—a wanderer preaching the Dharma.

During this time, when he visited the villages in Anuradhapura and other undeveloped areas, he noticed the haughtiness of the British officials of that period, and the fear the villagers and subordinates had towards them. Dharmapala was determined to rid this complex from his fellowmen, so he spoke out—"You belong to the lion race: Do you know when you were building the great Ruwanveli and other edifices at Anuradhapura, the white man was but a barbarian running about the wilderness with painted faces." He therefore requested every villager to make up dummies, painted with white lime, and to get their boys to beat these every morning for exercise, shouting, "I am not afraid of the "Para Suddha." He wanted this done in order to thrash out the fear of the white man from the rising generation. One day the British Government Agent requested him to call at the Kachcheri to be questioned. In those early days there was only one chair in the G.A.'s office—that was for himself, and anyone who visited him had to keep standing. Dharmapala went at the appointed time, and when the G.A. asked him what he meant by calling the English "Para Suddha," he answered—"As a gentleman to a gentleman, I must sit down with you on equal terms." Immediately he was offered a chair and Dharmapala explained that what he had used was not in anger, and that he admired the British whose country he had visited. He was only keen that his countrymen would be free from fear like the Britisher. The word "Para" he explained meant outsider and "Suddha" was his colour. And the G.A., strange as it may seem, shook hands with Dharmapala before he left.

The manner in which Dharmapala adopted a little boy from the district of Kegalle is an interesting story. One day, while lecturing at Kegalle, Dharmapala noticed a number of little boys on the floor listening ardently to him. Dharmapala then said, "All those of you who wish to go with me to Dambadiva (India) put up your hands." All but one boy did so, and as this surprised him he asked, "Do you not wish to go?" "Yes," said the boy,

“but I must have my parents’ permission first.” Struck at the intelligent reply, Dharmapala went to his parents, and had their permission to take him to India. And so this eight-year old boy Valisinghe, got the opportunity of going with him, and was named Devapriya. Later he became a graduate and the General Secretary of the Mahabodhi Society—Devapriya Valisinghe, to whom Dharmapala handed over all his work when he became a Bhikku.

During the first great war, Dharmapala spent his time in India, and one day when he was travelling by train, a trip which took him two days, he noticed an European in his compartment. Every two hours he produced a bottle of whisky from his bag and began drinking. Dharmapala at first spoke to him on the evils of drinking, but when he did this a second time, he kindly requested him to stop doing this, as he could not bear the smell of the liquor in the compartment. All this seemed to fall on deaf ears, and again for the third time when he pulled out his bottle to take another sip, Dharmapala took the bottle off his hands and threw it out of the window. He went up to the foreigner, raised a finger and exclaimed, “If you move, you follow the bottle.” The stranger sat motionless until the next stop, when he took his bag and walked away.

In 1915, during the gloomy days of the riots and Martial Law, Dharmapala spent his time in Sri Lanka when his two brothers, Edmund and Dr. C. A. Hewavitarana, were imprisoned along with other Buddhist leaders. Edmund Hewavitarana died a martyr in prison at Jaffna.

In 1925, Dharmapala re-visited Europe, and on one occasion when he was travelling from France to Switzerland, at the frontier all passengers had to get out, show their passports to an official and return to the train. At that time Dharmapala was seated cross-legged in deep meditation, his yellow robes concealing his feet. The guard requested him to remain, and the official came up to him to frank his passport. A kind gesture to a religious man, but suddenly someone remarked—“Non pied” (no feet). They had come down because the guard had exclaimed that he had no feet.

During this time Dharmapala purchased a three-storeyed building to establish the Maha Bodhi Society in London. His last work was the building of the Mulgandakuti Vihare at Saranath, where in the year 1930, he decided to spend his days in the meditative life of a Bhikku.

In April 1933, having realised his ambition of restoring Saranath, Rev. Dharmapala closed his eyes in the peace and quiet of sacred Saranath. A great career had come to an end and it was Rabindranath Tagore who wrote—"I am very glad to pay my tribute to the memory of Anagarika Dharmapala, whom I know as one whose life was dedicated to making the teaching of the Gauthama Buddha more living for his age. As a great patriot he will be loved by his countrymen, and as a great Buddhist he will be respected no less in India than in his own homeland...."

Charles Henry de Soysa A great Philanthropist

It was the year 1890, Dr. Copleston, Bishop of Colombo said from the pulpit, "Know ye not that there is a great man fallen this day in Israel." And with these words of King David, he was referring to the death of a great man, Charles Henry de Soysa, Sri Lanka's first and greatest philanthropist.

In these days, when philanthropy is dead, it is indeed heartening to recall this genial personality, who gave away his wealth to alleviate the sufferings of his countrymen. As for the life of this great and noble man, Charles Henry de Soysa, it is worth studying as an inspiration to the young, as a guide to the old, and as an example to the wealthy.

Charles Henry de Soysa was born on 3 March 1836, at Moratuwa. He was the only son of Jeronis de Soysa, Mudaliyar of the Governor's Gate and Fransesca de Soysa of Moratuwa. His family has a most interesting history and bears the gē name Warsha Hannadege, which means armed soldier for many years. He comes from a family that came down to Colombo during the Dutch period in search of work as builders and contractors. And from a Dutch Thombu, it is learned that they were given 70 acres of land in Panadura for the work they had done in the Fort and Pettah.

As a child, de Soysa was weak in health, but undoubtedly strong in spirit. He received his early education under Rev. J. MacVicar and then entered St. Thomas' College. On leaving college he served under his uncle, Mudaliyar de Soysa, who was manager of his coffee and coconut plantations. Even at this early age he showed signs of being charitable, for he spent his pocket money very lavishly in helping the poor.

At the age of 27, he married Catherine de Silva, only daughter of Jusey de Silva of Moratuwa. And this union between an heir and heiress of the two wealthy families helped de Soysa in his philanthropic career.

Let us now see how he disposed of his wealth and the noble purpose for which he used it. All sections of the people received equally from him, and it was said, "At Moratuwa there is no institution, whether religious, educational or philanthropic, that owes its origin and maintenance mainly or wholly to his large-heartedness."

It was not only in Moratuwa that his light spread. He built churches, roads, hospitals and schools in Panadura, Marawila and Hanguranketha. He also built wayside resting places, and when the country was stricken with epidemics, floods or famine, he and his family were always there lending relief. Once when an epidemic of enteric fever broke out in an outlying village, de Soysa himself supervised the distribution of food and medicine supplied at his own expense. Further for the benefit of thousands of mothers he built the de Soysa Lying-in-Home. He also built the Victoria Home for Incurables, the Victoria Eye Hospital, and at Moratuwa the Holy Emmanuel Church, and established a Chair of Divinity at S. Thomas' College, his old school. He gave the school scientific apparatus, established the Alfred Model Farm and the Bacteriological Institute in Colombo.

Being a great patron of the arts, he liberally encouraged carvers, sculptors and other craftsmen. For the carpenters of Moratuwa he was instrumental in establishing the Moratuwa Co-operative Company in 1879. He founded the Ceylon Agricultural Association, serving as its President for many years. Under the leadership and inspiration of a man like Charles Henry de Soysa, the Association did much to help scientific cultivation.

In the year 1870 Charles Henry de Soysa entertained in lavish style the first royalty ever to visit Sri Lanka, the Duke of Edinburgh, second son of Queen Victoria, at his home, Alfred House in Kollupitiya.

He was very keen to work for the upliftment of the poorer classes and on the 14th of September 1876, he founded two schools in Moratuwa, the Prince of Wales College for boys and the Princess of Wales College for girls. He built these in memory of the visit to Sri Lanka of King Edward VII as Prince of Wales. At that time the building covered five acres of land beautifully situated by the Lunawa lake, about a mile

from the sea. He not only gave the land and the buildings, but also provided equipment for the two colleges. The institutions were supported by the de Soysa family, for many years. (They are now maintained by the government).

Every year during Christmas, Charles Henry de Soysa kept open house. He had a special treat for practically every resident of his home-town in Moratuwa. He entertained them very lavishly and the children were gifted with toys.

De Soysa was a lover of animals too. He had horses, elephants and various other animals except dogs. One day a terrier entered his house quite unexpectedly on the 2nd of August, 1890 and attacked him. On the 29th of September, 1890, Charles Henry de Soysa died of hydrophobia.

His death was deeply mourned by all. He was the first Ceylonese to be knighted, but before news reached Sri Lanka of the great honour Queen Victoria was bestowing on Charles Henry de Soysa he died. Therefore the Queen knighted his widow.

And so ended the life of a great man, but he will always be remembered, and a grateful public erected a statue to his memory in Cinnamon Gardens.

Robert Knox—a Prisoner in the Kandyan Kingdom

Robert Knox was a most remarkable Englishman who came to Sri Lanka in the seventeenth century, and became a prisoner in the Kandyan kingdom for nearly twenty years. The story of his arrival in this country and as to how he became a prisoner is indeed most interesting.

Robert Knox's father was the captain of a frigate named "Anne," and was employed in the service of the English West India Company. In November 1659, the "Anne" was caught in a very severe storm off the coast of Coromandel, and sought refuge in the Bay of Kottiyar, near Trincomalee. This happened in 1660, and Captain Knox, his son Robert and some of the crew were invited ashore. But when they came, a very unfortunate thing happened to them—they were captured and carried away to the interior. Captain Knox was determined to save his son, Robert, and he begged that he be allowed to return on board. Thus Robert Knox went back to his ship, and informed the others of what had happened. He told them that his father ordered them to leave immediately, but he thereupon returned to share his father's captivity. He was only nineteen years old at the time.

After sometime the prisoners were brought to Kandy as the monarch, Raja Sinha, wished to see them, and Robert Knox says in his book, "yet God was so merciful, thus not to suffer them to part my father and me."

In February 1661 both Robert Knox and his father caught fever in the unhealthy districts where they were forced to stay. Captain Knox died of his illness, but Robert recovered, and the King granted him a little liberty, allowing him to roam around as he pleased. He then went to the Matale district along with a Tamil servant, and the villagers began to treat him with kindness and respect. He got them to build him a house and began to rear hogs and poultry, and knit caps for a living. When his stock of money and provisions became small he went fishing in the brooks. On one of the expeditions he met an old man one

day, who wanted to know whether he could read, for if so, he had a book, which he obtained when the Portuguese lost Colombo. He also added that he was willing to sell it. Knox asked for the book and when it was brought, he was more than excited to discover that it was a Bible. But all he had was just one pagoda, and Knox was wondering how he was going to buy the book. However, next day, he was able to get the book in exchange for a knitted cap.

In the year 1664 King Raja Sinha received a letter from Sir Edward Winter, Governor of Fort St. George, begging for the release of his captives, and there also arrived a Dutch Ambassador to meet the king for the same purpose. Raja Sinha was very pleased, and he summoned the prisoners to his capital, Kandy. But during this time there broke out a great rebellion against the king, and after this Raja Sinha was in no mood to release his prisoners. He therefore ordered that Robert Knox and the others be sent out again, and to new villages this time.

Knox was sent to a little village near Kegalle where he remained from 1644 to 1666. He had two houses built in this village and continued his business of knitting caps, and also trading with the villages, when he was removed from here to a village called Lagudeniya. He spent three years here and saved the money he made on his knitting. Soon he was able to purchase a piece of property at a little place called Eladatte, five miles north of Kandy. Having built a house in this village, Knox settled down with three other bachelors like himself, who were also King Raja Sinha's captives. They were Roger Gold, Ralph Knight and Stephen Rutland.

Here in the village of Eladatte Robert Knox had a flourishing business—he made large profits with little trouble. This was to lend out corn at fifty percent. per annum. Thus Robert Knox continued to live at Eladatte with his companions but on the strict understanding that they had to leave, the moment they married, declaring that the house was only for bachelors. However two of his companions married, and left him, but Rutland continued to stay on.

During this time Robert Knox adopted a little girl to help him with his housekeeping, and as a safeguard should he “grow old and feeble” in his captivity. She was a child of one of his



Robert Knox — A Prisoner in the Kandyan Kingdom

companions who married. He taught her English and Christianity, and named her Lucea, but by the time she was seven years old, Knox escaped, leaving her his house and property and all his possessions.

Although Knox was very prosperous at Eladatte his greatest desire was to escape and go back to his own country. Thus in the year 1673 he began the life of a petty trader, and moved about the island, peddling his wares. By and by Knox and his companion Rutland escaped from the Kandyan kingdom. They entered Anuradhapura, and the guards, thinking they were traders, allowed them to pass through. After encountering wild animals and many hardships, they reached Arippe on the east coast, which was held by the Dutch. Knox and his companion met the Dutch Governor, who was very interested in all the valuable information he had, concerning the Kandyan country. He took them to Batavia, and then obtained for them a safe passage to Europe.

Robert Knox arrived in London in September 1680 having been captive in Sri Lanka for nineteen years, six months and seventeen days. His book, "The Historical Relation of the Island of Ceylon" was published in 1681, and he was the first man to publish a book on Sri Lanka in the English language. His book has a wealth of information and describes comprehensively Raja Sinha's court, administration and the Kandyan kingdom in the seventeenth century. The book also gives an account of what Robert Knox saw and suffered as a prisoner during his stay in the Kandyan kingdom. It is one of the most interesting and valuable books on Sri Lanka ever written, and it also inspired one of the best-known books of English fiction—Daniel Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe." Knox's book was widely read in the seventeenth century, and was translated into Dutch, German and French during his lifetime. Almost every writer on Sri Lanka has obtained valuable information from Robert Knox's "Historical Relation of the Island of Ceylon." He appears to be very critical and cynical too at times, but one must not forget that Robert Knox was imprisoned by Raja Sinha I for nearly twenty years.

Robert Knox died on 19 June 1720 and was buried in England at Wimbledon Church.

Sardiel the Outlaw

"The evil that men do lives after them," and so it has been with Sri Lanka's best known out-law Sardiel. Like the romantic Robinhood, who roamed the green glades of Sherwood Forest, Sardiel lived and wandered about the impregnable rock summit and environs of Uttuwankande, which rises almost sheer, from the plain as you enter Kegalle from the Colombo end.

To this day, we hear many an eerie story connected with this picturesque hill and the fugitive who made it famous. It is said that sometimes, at the hour of midnight, the summit echoes and re-echoes with the report of guns and screams of pain. It is also said that if you climb the hill on a dark night and alone, a huge hideous creature, with rolling eyes and long, grinning teeth, will follow you stealthily and strangle you to death.

The name of Sardiel is known throughout the island as that of a notorious outlaw, but what of his exiled life, his escapades and deeds of derring-do? How few really know of all he did, this lean man with the pale face?

Deekirikewage Sardiel was born in 1832, and lived with his mother, Pitchohamy, at Utuwankande. His father, who was in the tobacco trade, hailed from Haldanduwa in the Chilaw district, and was in the habit of visiting Pitchohamy in the course of his business journeys to Kegalle. Sardiel received his education at the Illukgoda temple school. He was small in stature, pale-faced and so innocent looking that he could not possibly be judged by appearance.

We first hear of his adventure as a barrack-boy in Colombo. Here he robbed his master and fled from justice to his mother's house at Utuwankande, but finding the fruits of his first lapse lucrative, he took to a career of lawlessness. A warrant was issued for his arrest, but he fled again, this time to his father at Chilaw. But the old man, who was living with a Roman Catholic priest, and had been converted at St. Anne's festival at Talawila, refused to harbour him.

It was then that he decided to return to Utuwankande, but in July 1862, he was arrested by the Minuwangoda police at Pilawatte on his way home. In the struggle to set himself free, Sardiel fatally stabbed the police informant, and was only secured after the headman of the village had knocked him senseless with a rice pounder.

Sardiel was taken to Hulftsdorp to stand his trial for murder by the Supreme Court, but on the 29th November, he escaped to Utuwankande again. It was a short-lived return for he was re-arrested by the village constable and on 19 December, when he was being brought to Colombo, under escort, by a constable and two peons, he escaped again. The peon in charge of the party, instead of stopping at the Mahara Police Station for the night, decided to break journey near a cattle gala at the seventh mile-post on the Kandy-Colombo road. The constable fell asleep, and when the others were occupied, preparing their dinner, Sardiel slipped into the jungle with his handcuffs yet on. A reward of £5 was offered by the government for his recapture, but every attempt to do so failed. Sardiel returned to Kegalle, and proclaimed his arrival there by burgling a house.

He chose the rock summit of Utuwankande for his hideout and like Ali Baba and the forty thieves, he with a band of ruffians like himself, dwelt away from the rest of the world. The rock overlooked the Colombo-Kandy road, and Sardiel spared not a man, who passed that way—the rich merchants, the tired and foot-weary travellers, the coaches and the carriages, all these he robbed and plundered, and even looted the mail-coach which ran between Colombo and Kandy.

On this rock summit, fenced in by high jungle, he was safe from arrest, and women hearing of his daredevilry, dubbed him a hero, and shared his life in exile.

In July 1863, it became necessary to open a police station at Aranayake to ensure the safety of the traffic off the Dolosbage road, and also to increase the strength of the stations at Hingula and Kegalle "in order that constant patrols might be kept to protect persons and property."



Sardiel awaiting trial in Kandy.

That December the chief Superintendent of Police wrote, "the reward offered for any news of the bandit should be increased to £20." He also requested that the force sent to apprehend Sardiel should be given arms and ammunition, for he declared that it was impossible for the police "effectively to act against an armed body without proper arms." But the officer administering the government turned down the suggestion saying, "that a police force so armed would have no chance of apprehending the accused."

In January 1869, a reward of £100 was offered to anyone giving information of Sardiel's accomplices, Hawadiya, Baya, Mammala Marikar and Samat. Not long afterwards, on the 19th of February, the head constable of Utuwankande, Amat, received information as to where Sardiel was hiding. He lost no time in searching the house with a police party. The outlaw was not to be found, but they confiscated seven loaded single-barrel guns, two pistols, one bag of shot and two cannisters of gunpowder. Next they searched the house of Sardiel's friend, Sirimala, and here they found a bunch of fifty keys of various sizes. On the 21st February, the house of Pitchohamy, Sardiel's mother, was searched, but nothing was found. The police never relaxed their hunt, until one day a member of the gang, Hawadiya, surrendered.

On 17th March head constable, Amat, received the news that Sardiel and Mammala Marikar were in Pitchohamy's house at Utuwankande, and collecting a party of villagers and constables, they surrounded the house at 7 p.m. Sardiel's mother, hearing the party approaching, came out to the verandah and gave the alarm. The light inside the house was quickly extinguished—Sardiel and Mammala Marikar looked through the peep-holes in the wall and fired into the crowd. George Van Hagt, a special constable, fell dead—Sergeant Muthusamy was critically wounded, and two others received slight injuries. The rest of the party who were all unarmed, ran for dear life, while Christian Appu, the local arrack-renter, hearing that his foster son, George Van Hagt, was killed, ran forward crying, "You have killed my son, now kill me also," and the poor man was shot down like a dog by Sardiel.

Soon the Assistant Government Agent at Kegalle, F. R. Saunders was informed of what had happened, and he arrived on the spot that night at 10 p.m., but found that both Sardiel and Marikar had escaped. He then lost no time in sending word to Kandy for some riflemen, and gathered together a number of villagers, and surrounded the house in which Sardiel and his friend were supposed to be hiding, but the men were not to be found..... Then all the jungles in the neighbourhood were scoured, yet no trace was found of the criminals. The Rate-mahatmayas or chiefs of the four korales (districts) were called upon to collect as many men as they could get, and come to the spot. Sardiel's mother's house was demolished, and all the friends and relations of the criminals were arrested. In the afternoon the search party was increased by a detachment of the Ceylon Rifles sent from Kandy.

On 19th September six hundred villagers arrived, and a second search was made in all the jungles, without success, and rumour had it that Sardiel and Marikar had escaped to Matale. The Assistant Government Agent then instructed three thousand men from Tumpalata, Galboda and Kinigoda korales to be on the look-out on Monday, and returned to Kegalle, and ordered the headman of Beligal Korale to collect four thousand men to beat the jungles from Kegalle to Utuwankande.

The chief superintendent increased the reward for the apprehension of Sardiel to £150, and returned to Colombo. The Governor severely criticised him for returning to Colombo, but Macarteny, the Police Chief, argued that Sardiel was no longer in the Kegalle district, and that the police had received information, which he believed to be correct, that they were in Matale.

On Sunday night Sirimala who had turned traitor and police informer met Sardiel by the river Kiringadeniya, and bent low and whispered in his ear. "Ah! brother, we are finished. Tomorrow as the cock crows, the four korales will be after you and none of us will be able to hide even under a tree. Therefore brother, take refuge in that two-storeyed house by the road near Mawanella." Next day, when Sergeant Mahat and Constable Sabhan were going up the road from Utuwankande towards Kandy with a party of villagers a stranger accosted them. It was Sirimala, and he whispered, "Sardiel is hiding in a two-storeyed house near Mawanella."

The party hurried to the house and found that peepholes had been cut in the walls, but they entered it from the rear, and found the ground floor had been deserted. Sirimala then climbed to the roof, and peeped through an opening in the ceiling and shouted, "Here he is", and quickly ran out of range. Mahat and Sabhan crouched behind the stairs and when Sardiel appeared with the gun in hand, Mahat fired wounding him on the buttocks. Sabhan thereupon captured the gun shouting, "Shoot no more, the Kandy police have got the day," and started ascending the stairs, when suddenly Marikar appeared on the scene, and shot him dead. He then fired at Mahat who ran out and sent word by a villager to the Government Agent on what had taken place, while he himself, with a revolver remained on guard outside the backdoor.

Soon Saunders arrived with a party of riflemen and surrounded the house. A shot was fired and one of the villagers was wounded. Saunders sent back the coach which arrived from Kandy to bring re-inforcements, and he and the riflemen set fire to the house, and when it was clear that there was no possibility of escape, he sent word by a villager to Sardiel and Marikar to surrender. There was some delay, but after the two men had been promised protection, they handed out all their fire-arms, six double-barrel guns, one single-barrel gun and a colt revolver. Saunders then entered the house and arrested both Sardiel and Marikar. Sardiel's injuries were very slight, and his one regret was that he could not shoot Sirimala, his betrayer.

The two men were placed in an American wagon, and given in charge of the fiscal in Kandy, by Saunders and a rifleman. On 4th April, 1884, they were tried by the Supreme Court and sentenced to death.

One day, while in prison Sardiel expressed a wish to speak to his mother. The aged woman was soon brought before him when Sardiel bit her ear saying, "Ah! woman, it is you and you alone who have brought all this misfortune upon me. The first thing I stole was a brinjal from a neighbour's garden, which you cooked in oil and spices and fed me... This naturally led me on to bigger thefts and ultimately to the hang-man's rope. Had

you only checked me as a child, I would be a man today." Of course there is no record of any such story, but it is still current in the village of Dodantale, which is not far from Utuwankande.

On the 7th day of May 1884, Sardiel and Marikar were hanged on Gallows Hill before a great throng of people. Just before the execution, Sardiel begged of the crowd to take warning from his fate. The Moor man spoke a word or two which could not be understood. The bodies were placed in two coffins and dragged through the streets of Kandy in a cart, by prisoners, to the Mahaiyawa cemetery. There were several applications for the corpses, but they were turned down, and to prevent any forcible attempt to possess them, a body of constables followed the cart and guarded the graves.

In the life of this daring out-law, there was a glimpse of goodness, for never once did he knowingly rob the poor. It is still told that if unwittingly a poor man was robbed, Sardiel saw to it that the loot was speedily returned.

Tales our Place Names Tell

In many parts of Sri Lanka, the names of places, streets and roadways have left the impress of history, customs and traditions of days gone by, and it is interesting to note how Kolontota became Colombo and Kottan Chena, Kotahena, and the various tales our place names tell.

The first object which catches the eyes of the sailor as he approaches the palm-fringed coast of Sri Lanka is a grand old Dutch church, grim with age, yet as sound and solid as on the day its Dutch architect pronounced it finished in the year 1749. The name of the church is Wolvendall, and so is also the name of the area. Although it has stood in our midst for so long, I might venture to say that few have cared to find the meaning of its name. Wolvendhall in the past was infested with jackals, and the place was called Naripitiya, which means jackals' plain in Sinhalese. When the Portuguese arrived, they named the place "Agoa de Loup", the dale of wolves. The Dutch in turn perpetuated the mistake made by the Portuguese by calling it Wolvendall, which also means the dale of wolves, and this name of course has remained to this day.

As for our capital city, we are told it was known as Kolontota in the past, but the Portuguese corrupted it into Colombo, and this name has not changed since.

It is also interesting to know how Slave Island came to be called by that strange name. The Beira Lake, as we all know, is its outstanding feature. In the year 1630, the Portuguese imported into Sri Lanka Kaffir slaves, the real originators of our Kafferinga tunes, from East Africa as slaves, camp followers and soldiers. Then, when the Dutch came along and conquered them, they took over this slave legacy from the Portuguese, and took these slaves into their homes in the Fort of Colombo. The slaves appeared very dutiful but worked under great protest, and soon rose in revolt, and murdered a Dutch couple, Fiscal Vander Swann and his wife, in their home on 11th June 1721.

The infuriated Dutch masters could not trust them any more and ordered that they should not remain in the Fort after 6 p.m. When their day's work was over, they were transported together to an island on the Beira Lake, which by and by came to be called Slave Island.

Kollupitiya in the heart of Colombo is purely a Sinhalese name, though it is often called "Colpetty." This name has come to us from "Kollan-pitiya," which means the plain of boys, for there is a belief that it was a kind of open air gymnasium for young athletes when the Sinhalese kings reigned at Kotte.

There is also another explanation regarding the name Kollupitiya, for this could also mean the plain of plunder. It is associated as the scene of a daring trick played on the Dutch by a poet named Ambanwela Rala from the court of the Kandyan King, Rajadhi Raja Sinha. Ambanwela Rala had fallen into disgrace and took refuge with the Dutch at Colombo, who gave him a licence to plant the Kollupitiya plain with coconuts. But his object was by no means to benefit his alien masters and he did something to make the palms barren and unproductive. Shortly after this Ambanwela Rala fell very ill, when he procured some large chests and filled them with rubbish, and left in one of them his last will and testament.

The moment Ambanwela Rala died, the Dutch who considered him a very wealthy man sent their officers to seal and take charge of his property. They gave him a grand funeral with military honours, after which they proceeded to open the chests and came upon heaps of rubbish, and with this his last will with the lines, "Honours paid to the dead are in vain....." And that is another explanation as to how Kollupitiya or the plain of plunder got its name.

Then there is Hulftsdorp, which we all associate with our courts of law. Its story dates back to the year 1655 when a great Dutch General named Hulft, stationed his army here on the hill to fight the Portuguese. The place is named after him for Hulftsdorp means Hulft's village in Dutch.

Kaymans Gate was known in the past as Kaymans Port, meaning alligators or crocodiles passage in Dutch, and recalls the time when alligators infested the lake nearby.

Kotahena was originally known as Kottan Chena, meaning the field of the almond trees. The Dutch, when they took over the maritime provinces of the island, retained this name, but the British, with their genial humour, changed this name to Cotton China, and this name survived until 1869, when it came to be called Kotahena and has thus remained to this day.

Then Messenger Street is a corruption of Masangas Vidiya, which means the street of the "Masang" tree in Sinhalese.

The most curious and at the same time, most mystifying transformation which name ever underwent is to be found in Galle Buck. This place was known as "Gal Bokka" which means stony hollow in Sinhalese.

We have Bloemendhal Street, which means the vale of flowers in Dutch. Barber Street, Silversmith Street, Chetty Street and Moor Street are of course anglicised names of the streets occupied by the respective trades and classes which they underwent.

There are several versions as to how Mount Lavinia got its name. It may be that Lavinia, a very beautiful Sinhalese maiden inspired the name—especially as we hear that her father, Aponsuwa, succeeded in inducing the Governor, Sir Edward Barnes, over a hundred years ago, to permit women of a certain caste to wear little jackets, as they had always been breasts. And that is a likely story as to how Mount Lavinia got breasts. And that is likely story as to how Mount Lavinia got its name.

One of the most residential places in Colombo, Horton Place, gets its name from a very remarkable man, who was appointed Governor of Sri Lanka in 1831. His claims to fame were many and varied—he was knighted by King William IV and was the son of a baronet. He was not only a Member of Parliament and an Under Secretary of State, but a prime mover in the matter of state aided empire settlement. He married a beautiful heiress Ann Horton, after whom we have Lady Horton's Drive in Kandy. And it was she who inspired the famous

English poet, Lord Byron, to compose the lines:

“She walks in beauty like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies
And all that’s best of darkness and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;
Thus mellowed to that tender light
When heaven to gaudy day denies. . . ”

Most of Kandy’s place names are full of historical interest. In Malabar Street there lived the royal families from Malabar, and it was known as Kumarappe Vidiya. The name is believed to signify a very precious gem and to convey the idea of exclusiveness. Only relations of the king were allowed to reside there. Then there is Hetti Vidiya—a part of Trincomalee Street, so called because in the old days it led to the roadway through the jungle to Trincomalee. In Hetti Vidiya or Chetty Vidi Street, there lived chetties who supplied the king with cloth and festive garments.

Dasakara Vidiya was once part of Brownrigg Street. The eastern end of the lake was at one time paddy-land belonging to the king. The village Daskara in Udu Nuwara supplied the labour for driving away birds which destroyed the paddy, and as these people lived in this street, it bore the name of their village. Then there was Swarna Kalyana Vidiya, known today as King Street. This street accommodated the king’s favourites to whom he gave houses in the area. Kavikara Vidiya was the residential quarters of the king’s musicians who sang and played before him. This was the south end of the Hill Street of today. Even in those times it was known as Kande Vidiya, meaning Hill Street. Again, we have Ridi Vidiya, meaning Silver Street. It was a part of today’s Colombo Street and here lived the king’s silversmiths.

There are some interesting legends behind place names in the Central Province of Sri Lanka. In Yatawatte, a few miles from Matale, is an ancient temple named Hunapahura, which got its name from a strange incident.

One day when a king named Wira Parakrama Bahu passed a temple in ruins, on his way to wage war against a Veddah king, he heard the chirp of a gecko. Incidentally, the gecko is called “Huna” in Sinhalese and there is a superstition which says that the chirp of a gecko brings bad luck. Of course, this

worried the king, and he consulted his court astrologers as to what he should do. They informed him that he would defeat the Veddah king only if he restored the temple he happened to pass. The king set to work and when he fully restored the temple he named it and its neighbourhood "Hunapahura," in memory of the incident.

He then resolved to re-open hostilities with the king of the Veddahs, but before his departure he told his queens that he would hoist a white flag to signify victory and a red flag for defeat.

King Wira Parakrama Bahu came victor in the great battle fought over the king of the Veddahs. However, on his triumphant return he wanted to play a joke on his queens and he hoisted a red flag denoting defeat, and since that day the place bore the name Ratalwewa. Ratu or rath means red in Sinhalese.

The legend continues that the queens ascended a high precipice and awaited the results of the battle. When they saw the red flag, believing the king to be dead, in great despair they flung themselves down the precipice and two of them were killed instantly. Ever since the day of the royal tragedy the place came to be known as "Biso-penapu-ella," meaning the stream into which the queens jumped.

One of the queens, we are told, was entangled in some creepers but was rescued by a village chief and concealed in a cave which got the name "Hora-gala" meaning secret rock. As for the village, it got the name Yatawatte from the concealment of the survivor of the three queens.

In Matale, there is a very ancient temple named Angili Vihare, situated in a village called Hulangamuwa. The name of the temple has now been corrupted to Ambili Vihare but it is very often called by its ancient name and it has a pretty legend attached to it.

The temple, it is believed, was built by a young queen who had run away from the Dravidian invaders. With her baby prince she is said to have taken refuge in a rock cave. After a while, the queen left the baby in the cave and went to the jungle to collect fruits for her food. She lost her way and was out the

whole night and quite worried about the baby. However, with much difficulty she found her way next morning and expected the baby to be crying in hunger. But when she arrived she found him sucking one of his fingers on to which a drop of honey was falling from a flowering tree above the cave. The royal babe was being nourished in this way until his mother arrived. In gratitude the queen, when her royal husband came into power, built a temple on this spot, and named it Angili Vihare. Angili means finger in Sinhalese.

And now for some place names in the Nuwara Eliya district, Sri Lanka's most popular hill-station and sanatorium. Nanu-oya is the present terminus of the railway to Nuwara Eliya. The name is derived from "nana" bathing and "oya" stream. There is a belief that during the time of king Rawana, the princess Sita had a bathing place here and thus the Nanu Oya.

Then there is Ramboda, a place noted for its very striking waterfalls. There is a belief that a plate of gold was buried here in a field called Ranbadagedarakumbura, and hence the name. In certain places in this village grains of gold are said to have been found, and a certain rumbling sound heard sometimes is attributed to a vessel of gold with twelve funnels or spouts with seven rims.

Jaffna, the northern capital of Sri Lanka, with its delightful and distinctive appeal and its tall, gaunt palmyrah palms crowned with fan-shaped leaves is often referred to as "Yal Pannam Nadu." And how it came to be known by this fascinating name is indeed very interesting.

Legend tells us that in a certain part of Southern India there lived a very clever musician who was blind and very dependent on his wife's earnings. The woman of course had no patience with the poor blind musician and nagged at him continuously, until one day he said to her, "I am sick of your nattering and therefore I am going away to Lanka."

She only scoffed and scorned at him saying, "So you are going away to Lanka! I suppose you expect to get a tusked elephant and rich estates there."

The blind man arrived in Sri Lanka and his skill as a musician spread throughout the land. The king hearing of this asked to see the musician and hear him on his lyre.

But the people who considered it unlucky for a monarch to see a blind man, arranged that the king should hear him sing and play without seeing him at all. The musician was taken to a room, across which a curtain was drawn, and behind the curtain was the king. The musician knew nothing of this. His skill in music and his cleverness as a poet were now to be tested. Hidden behind the curtain the king took off his royal robes and stood in the simple clothes of an archer with a bow and arrow in his hand. The blind man knew in some way of the change and he sang a verse he composed at that moment comparing the king to Rama, who defeated Ravana. Rama, as you may perhaps know, was famous for his skill in the use of the bow. Then the king changed, and put on the robes of the queen. The musician was now ready with another verse, which told the king that he was aware of his change of attire. Last of all the king wore his own robes, and again the musician sang to the music of his lyre a verse in praise of the ruler of the country.

The king was now convinced that the strange musician was a man of no ordinary cleverness. The legend continues that everybody praised him and showered him with rich presents. And the gift the king gave him was nothing less than a tusked elephant and the ownership of the whole of the northern part of Sri Lanka.

At that time the peninsula in the north of Sri Lanka was a sandy jungle known as Manattidal, the sand heap. The musician became the king of this area and many people came over here and settled down in those early days. People spoke of the place as Yal-Panam-Nadu, meaning the land of the lyre poet from "Yal," a lyre or harp and "Panam," a poet. The place is still referred to by this name. The Europeans who came to Sri Lanka changed its name to Jaffna.

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But the people who came to see a blind man, arranged that the king should hear him sing and play without seeing him at all. The musician was taken to a room, across which a curtain was drawn, and behind the curtain was the king. The musician knew nothing of this. His skill in music and his cleverness as a poet were now to be tested. Hidden behind the curtain the king took off his royal robes and stood in the simple clothes of an archer with a bow and arrow in his hand. The blind man knew in some way of the change, and he sang a verse he composed at that moment commending the king to God, who defeated Ravanna. Then, as you may perhaps expect, was famous for his skill in the use of the bow. Then the king changed, and out on the robes of the palace. The musician was now ready with another verse, which told the king that he was aware of his change of attire. Last of all the king wore his own robes and again the musician sang to the music of his lute a verse in praise of the ruler of the country.

The king was now convinced that the strange musician was a man of no ordinary abilities. The legend continues that everybody stirred up and showed him with rich presents. And the king gave him what was nothing less than a tusked elephant and the ownership of the whole of the northern part of Sri Lanka.

At that time the peninsula of the north of Sri Lanka was a sandy jungle known as Mantana, the sand heap. The musician became the king of this area and many people came over time and settled down in those early days. People spoke of the place as Yakkalamantana, meaning the land of the Yaks. The poet from "Yak", a tree of harp and "Mantana", a poet. The place is still referred to by this name. The King who came to Sri Lanka changed its name to Jaffna.

SUJATHA UDUGAMA has been acknowledged as an indisputable writer. She is an exponent on the art of writing short stories and poetry.

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Miss Udugama has now turned her versatile pen into a book quite different from her earlier ones. Most of the information in this book, "Sri Lanka from Legend and History," has been carefully gathered by her and obtained from sources only possible by a researcher such as herself. This would give the reader a new interest in most of the data of this latest publication.

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