# THE NEW LANKA

## A QVARTERLY REVIEW

VOL 1 OCTOBER 1949 NO 1

CONTENTS




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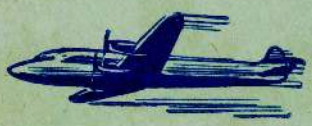

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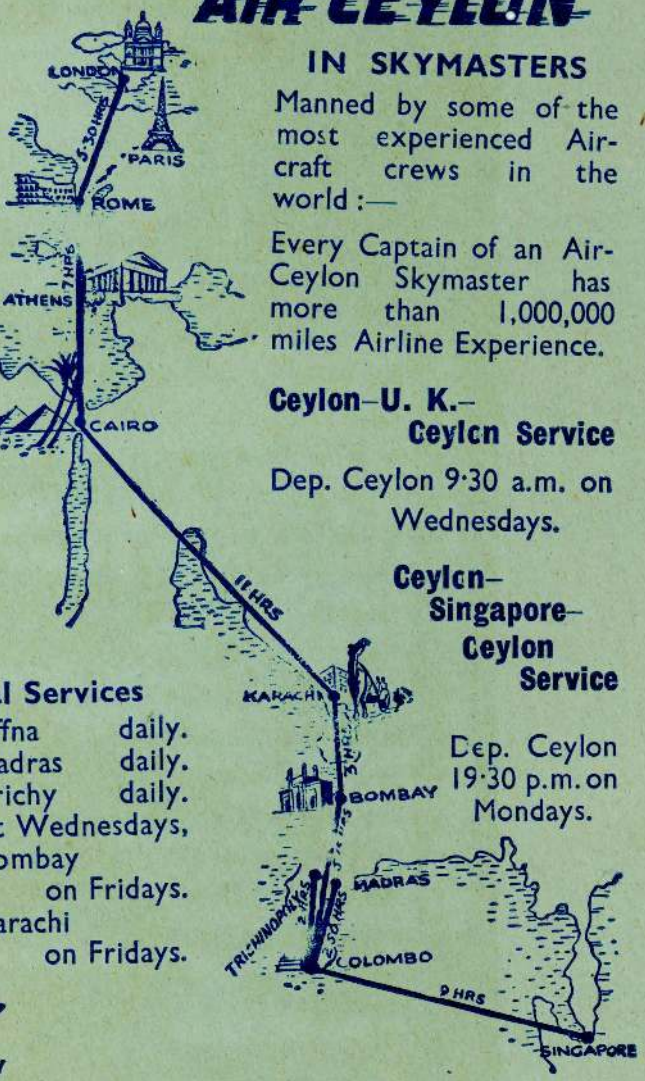


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AIR CEYLON

# THE NEW LANKA

## A QUARTERLY REVIEW

**Vol. I.** **OCTOBER, 1949.** **No. I.**

CONTENTS



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# THE NEW LANKA

## WE

in making this our first bow to the people of the New Lanka should wish to say, at once, that our canvas is, by no means, as large as that of Juvenal. He set out to survey Mankind from every point of view for, in his own words :—

> " *Quidquid agunt homines, votum timor ira voluptas*
> *Gaudia discursus nostri farrago libelli est.*"*

Ours is a much less ambitious project. Our aim is to lend a hand to help the advancement of the renascent Lanka by offering to the men and women of our country a medium, in the form of a Quarterly Review, in which they could discuss from different points of view matters of general or special interest to the different parties and classes of the people of our country. We, accordingly, solicit contributions from all quarters but, the fact that we accept and publish those contributions must not be understood to mean that we share or take responsibility for the views expressed in them.

One word more ; we should wish to repeat and to endorse cordially what His Lordship Bishop De Mel says in his article in this issue :— " In looking forward as a free country our horizons need to widen if we are to buy up the opportunity that is now ours . . . There is also the need to remember that the reform of political institutions is no substitute for the regeneration of a people's spirit." It is this regeneration which we aim at encouraging by means of this effort of ours and we, therefore, venture to look forward confidently to a full measure of support and co-operation.

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* All that men are engaged in, their wishes, fears, anger, pleasures, joys, and varied ursuits, form the hotch-potch of my book.

# THE NEW LANKA

## "EAST AND WEST"

By Lord Soulbury.

WHEN Rudyard Kipling wrote that "East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet," meaning presumably that Eastern and Western peoples never had and never would understand each other, he coined one of those flashy generalizations that do a lot of mischief.

His dictum is demonstrably inaccurate as a matter of history and as a forecast of the future has been falsified daily by subsequent events. It is one of those plausible slogans of which Arthur Balfour once said—"that part which is true is trite and that which is not trite is not true."

Of course mountain barriers, seas, climate, language, religion serve to differentiate one people from another, wherever they may live, but today, as a result of the aeroplane, wireless and countless other scientific discoveries, the contacts between East and West have become infinitely more intimate than Kipling could ever have dreamed of. And as a matter of fact, ever since the dawn of history, considering the distances and physical obstacles involved, the intercourse between Oriental and Occidental races has been remarkably close. Almost every year fresh evidence of cultural affinities between them are brought to light and I can imagine no more fascinating field of research for the historian.

Here are one or two examples. To an amateur student, like myself, of the history and literature of ancient Greece, it is most interesting to find that Herodotus, the father of history, has narrated as actual events, almost contemporaneous with the period during which he wrote, certain episodes described in the Jātaka stories, and has substituted the names of historical characters for the beasts and birds of those delightful tales.

For instance he tells the story of Cleisthenes, the despot of Sicyon, and how that potentate had a daughter for whom he desired to find the best man amongst the Greeks as a husband. Cleisthenes issued a proclamation summoning all who considered themselves to be suitable sons-in-law to come to Sicyon and compete in various athletic contests. There was a very satisfactory response and the most eligible young men from Italy, Ionia, the Peloponnese, Athens and elsewhere presented themselves as suitors. Herodotus tells us that Cleisthenes kept them

at his Court for a year, making trial of their manly virtues and dispositions, training and temper, and during the whole period entertained them magnificently. At the end of it the most favoured competitor was an Athenian by name Hippocleides, and when the appointed day came for Cleisthenes to announce the name of the winner a great feast was given and the suitors competed in music and speeches for the entertainment of the company. There also seems to have been a good deal of drinking, and Hippocleides attracted the attention of everybody. He called for a flute to play a dance measure and danced to it, and it so befell, says Herodotus, that " he pleased himself in his dancing, but Cleisthenes looked on the whole matter with suspicion." In the light of what followed that is not surprising, for Hippocleides proceeded to order a table to be brought in and then danced upon it, first Laconian figures and then Attic, and finally planted his head on the table and gesticulated with his legs. This last extravagance proved too much for his prospective father-in-law who exclaimed, " You have danced your marriage away," to which Hippocleides replied in words that became proverbial throughout Greece " Ouphrontis Hippocleidei " —" Hippocleides doesn't care." Another husband was found for the lady. (Herodotus VI, 126—130).

Now let us turn to the Jātaka story (Nacca Jātaka). The King of the birds, the Golden Mallard, had a lovely young daughter to whom he promised any boon she might ask. So she asked to be allowed to choose a husband for herself. Like Cleisthenes of Sicyon, the Golden Mallard summoned all the birds in the country of the Himalayas and they flocked together on a great plateau of rock. The King bade his daughter choose a husband ; she reviewed the crowd, saw the peacock and chose him. Carried away by his good fortune, the peacock spread his wings and began to dance most indecorously. The King of the birds was greatly incensed by this immodest performance, refused to give his daughter in marriage to the peacock and married her to a young Mallard, her cousin.

There is another and perhaps better known Jātaka story which found its way into the pages of Herodotus.

Three men ploughing on the outskirts of a forest were mistaken for robbers disguised as husbandmen and carried off as prisoners to the King. While they were in prison there came to the King's palace a woman who pleaded for their lives. On being asked what relations the three prisoners were to her she said one was her husband, one her brother, and one her son. " To mark my favour," said the King, " I will give you one of the three ; which will you take " ? " Sire," said the woman, " if I live I can get another husband and another son ; but as

my parents are dead I can never get another brother. So give me my brother, Sire." Pleased with the reply the King set all three men at liberty. (Ucchanga Jātaka).

This story reappears in Herodotus as follows—A Persian nobleman by name Intaphrenes was suspected by King Dareios of plotting an insurrection. The King seized him and his sons and relations and put them in prison for execution. The wife of Intaphrenes came to the palace and wept and Dareios was moved to pity and offered to save from death any one of her relations whom she might choose. She chose her brother, and the King being surprised at this selection enquired why she preferred to leave her husband and children to die and chose her brother to survive, "seeing that he is surely less near to thee in blood than thy children and less dear to thee than thy husband." The woman made answer "Oh King, I might, if Heaven willed, have another husband and other children if I should lose these; but another brother I could by no means have, seeing that my father and mother are no longer alive." Dareios was so well pleased by this reply that he released not only the woman's brother but the eldest of her sons. The others he slew. (Herodotus III, 118—119).

Incidentally there are some lines in the Antigone of Sophocles written a few years later than the history of Herodotus, which repeat the same theme in much the same form. They are, however, quite out of keeping with the dignity and pathos of the rest of the passage and most scholars regard them as an interpolation.

Herodotus wrote his history about the middle of the 5th century B.C.; the Jātaka stories must be a great deal older. According to Professor Rawlinson,[1] these stories had crept into the narrative of Herodotus through Persia, but that does not fully explain how Herodotus came to incorporate them as factual events in the lives of characters in Greek and Persian history. Perhaps he has given us versions of tales that had already become Western legends. They may have been derived from a common source even more ancient than the Jātakas and be evidence of an ancestry shared by Indian and Greek civilizations. If so, they are a pleasant reminder for peoples who have drifted away from each other during the passage of time that in days long past they enjoyed a common childhood.

1 Intercourse between India and the Western World, p. 25.

# LOOKING FORWARD

By The Right Reverend Lakdasa De Mel.

A NEW situation in South-East Asia has already stirred writers elsewhere. "New Lanka" comes to publication not a day too soon, for our own land has been powerfully affected in the past decade and our reactions need to be shared at home and abroad in a Quarterly of this type. As our responsibilities and problems grow, there is need for an increase of informed discussion, just as there is now a wider circle of genuinely interested people not only within the country but without.

Geographically an Island, history has saved us from insularity. In the ancient times came settlers or invaders from India; also Greek, Arab, Malay and Chinese mariners. The voyages of Vasco da Gama and Sir Francis Drake were earnest of the coming of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British, all with permanent contributions to the life of the country, especially the ideas and the industries gained through Britain. Not only have we three main languages—Sinhalese, Tamil and English, but four of the great religions—Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam—and an even greater variety of nationalities, visitors apart, which are being moulded into one Ceylonese nation. Whatever their defects the greater schools of Lanka, some of them over a century old, based on the British public school system went far to spread amongst the intelligentsia doctrines of political liberty which were not long in finding expression locally under men who had had the privilege of studying at Oxford, Cambridge or London Universities. An ably conducted constitutional agitation for reform with the acceleration brought about by the events of the last ten years finds us a free dominion within the British Commonwealth, wherein we have freely elected to stay. But it is not only to our leaders that we owe thanks. Our people by their real religious tolerance, their openness to modern ideas and respect for lawful authority, have deserved well. Bitter race hatred and religious fanaticism have found no home in a country where socially and on the field of sport people mix freely. Our historical and political background is not without significance to a troubled world, for here is something really like harmony in the midst of a population racially and religiously heterogeneous. More, there exists in Lanka something like

a bridge between East and West. We may perhaps be pardoned a certain measure of exhilaration now that our political frustrations have been removed by the wise actions of Mr. Attlee's government after a sane appraisal of the Asian upsurge following European exhaustion in a second world war. It was but sane to realise a new age had dawned with the fall of an outmoded colonial Bastille at Singapore. We in Lanka do not ungraciously belittle our debt to Britain for enlightened political thinking, contrasting as that does with the brutal doctrines preached in our own generation by a Hitler and a Mussolini and accepted by the vast majority of their unhappy and misguided countrymen. The day of empires is over, but the greatness of a nation is not to be measured by how much of the map it can colour red, but by the extent to which it can dye the thinking of the world with the nobility of great ideas. Here then is a vocation which can come even to small countries. Palestine and Greece by their example in olden time beckon to Lanka. A small country has its advantages both as a seed plot and a laboratory.

In looking forward as a free country our horizons need to widen, if we are to buy up the opportunity that is now ours. So much thought and effort have gone in the past to political matters that there is real danger of stalemate if quick adjustments to the new situation are not made. Inevitably politics is the obsession of a subject nation. Once the frustrations to sovereignty are removed the wind tends to be taken out of the sails of national activity. There is also the need to remember that the reform of political institutions is no substitute for the regeneration of a people's spirit. Every appropriate agency must be used to bring a sense of responsibility into the hearts of all our people now that the country is theirs as never before—even under our own kings. The days of opposition and imitation must give way to initiative and creativeness. Beyond politics the eye must pierce to the more fundamental fields of economics whereon the national standard of living is to be nourished, and to those vistas of intellectual activity in language and learning, in song, dance, architecture, art and sculpture, which lift man from the brutish to the eternal. In all this surely, the need is to rise above the constant appeals made by your typical politician of any party to the cupidity of his listeners and to take our people into realms where stirring demands are made on them for the highest causes. Can we ever bring out the best in a people who are all too frequently reminded of what they can get rather than give, of rights rather than duties, of privileges rather than responsibilities? New institutions, unless filled with a patriotic regeneration of spirit, may suffer from a moral vacuum.

It may be said that the matter of economics has been prominent and that the change over from colonial to national economics has been

planned over a period of years especially in the vital matter of a food supply. There are great colonisation schemes like Minneriya which are beginning to yield results, while light industries have been fostered in many parts of the Island. Great strides have been taken with education and co-operatives, in the improvement of health facilities and the elimination of the malarial scourge. Roads and transport have improved. And yet anyone in contact with many parts of the country is bound to ask thoughtfully exactly how much of this benefits our village folk. A modern bourgois civilisation the world over has developed an arrogant attitude to the land in whose soil its forgotten roots lie, and perhaps the spectre of famine may be necessary to redress the balance. We, like a great many other countries, are a nation of village dwellers, and to these people who make up 84 % of our population the advantages of modern science and sanitation must be taken. Yet—to give an example—how many village homes have had light from the hydro-electric scheme at Laxapana ? One may see here a reflexion of the extraordinary reversal of normal political progress, for in Lanka power in central government outstripped local government, doubtless though the peculiar fascination Colombo has had for the Ceylonese intelligentsia, amongst whom may be numbered a certain proportion of absentee landlords. The bulk of the material benefits of modern civilisation have been safely segregated within municipal limits, away from the mass of the people whose malaise is lengthily debated by legislators on both sides of the house, few of whom have any intimate knowledge of rural problems. There is abundant cause for thankfulness over some of the prosperous villages in the wet zone, such as Vijayatunga perfectly mirrors in " Grass for my Feet," but it would be costly negligence to forget that the bulk of our population still lives under-nourished in a green slum. For such there is no deliverance, until a change of outlook brings the leaders of the nation closer to our people and educated men and women go forth with a dynamic sense of service to the lonelier undeveloped parts, whether village or jungle. Only a reverent, understanding sympathy for the traditional props of our society and determined action in face of present needs can bring to fruition the future we would wish for our people as a whole. Hopes raised at the threshold of independence cannot be allowed to turn to disillusion. A change of institutions is not enough : great social changes do not create automatic prosperity. To borrow the thought, the slogans and attitudes of other nations will not be a substitute for the effort, the thinking and planning which must locally be done by local brains against a local background. Here " New Lanka " can help.

There remain boundless opportunities for development in higher

spheres than the material. What can we give as our contribution to the world's culture? Here is opportunity for clear thought and an unravelling of much confusion. Nothing in this sphere need be alien to us if it is of real worth and our feet must be set in a large room. Let all noble influences from every part of the world blow into our national life. But need we be blown off our feet? Need we forget the environment and tradition that have formed us? It would be an unbearably monotonous world if some neutral world culture made us the robots of uniformity. There is naturally that local idiom and reaction which give a rich diversity to the arts even where quite rightly, cross fertilisation takes place. All culture is part invention and part borrowing; but woe to the nation that lives solely on borrowed tastes, criteria and fashions. It ceases to make its proper contribution to the rest of the world. "New Lanka" will doubtless give encouragement to a real renaissance of art, music and drama in our land. Some of it is immature, some superficial and unworthy; but here too we have great traditions and much local talent which, when quickened with modern vitality, may well burgeon into fresh beauty. Perhaps if one were to hazard a guess, our most likely contribution to the world may emerge through Kandyan dancing with its matchless virility, and a revival of the sculpture which rose to such heights in the Polonnaruwa period. We must look for achievements in art which will glorify a nation's intellectual activity long after details of politics or economics are forgotten.

As we look forward then, with something of the vision without which nations are apt to perish, we shall strive to match the new situation with a new spirit, and to use the highest intelligence in the facing of new problems. In so doing, we shall need one thing more—faith in the highest we know and in the genius and destiny of Lanka.

# THE POST-WAR UNDERGRADUATE

By Sir Ivor Jennings.

IT is twenty-four years since I was *in stat pup.*, and after I first put on my hood of rabbit's fur—long since disposed of in the moths' black market—I had never lived in College for more than a few nights at a time until I recently went into residence in Oxford. Besides, I had been bred in the other place. For both reasons I felt like an anthropologist living among the natives to study their social customs and personal habits.

Some of the ex-service men were still up, though most of them were taking schools and were due to go down at the end of term. I had met the tail-end of the last lot when I went up from school in 1922. A hard-drinking, hard-swearing, riotous crowd they were—the people who created the Ceylon tradition that a university was a place for rowdy rags, a tradition which, I am glad to note, is disappearing. Our ex-servicemen had gone into battle as young subalterns and little snotties and had never expected to come out of it alive—many thousands of their fellows did not. They had a code, and they have apparently settled down as quite respectable fathers of families, but they knew nothing and cared less about anything written by anybody more intellectual than Miss Victoria Cross (was that her name ?).

This lot is quite different. The second war was a secondary-school war, led by the backroom boys from the Cavendish Laboratory and Redbrick University. The politicians made the speeches and the generals got the medals, but the scientists won the war. The secondary-schoolboys went into the ranks, were pulled out to go back to school to study what the examiners used to call Heat, Light, Sound, Electricity and Magnetism, and were then sent back to desert or jungle to manipulate a lot of wires and valves until they were called home to Poole or Weymouth or Brixham to be taught how to be happy though seasick. One young man turned up in Colombo after a voyage round the Cape sharing a ship with 5,000 others. I asked him how he liked it. He said he was perfectly happy. He had read a French book on Buddhism and therefore had been absolutely alone. Another, who had been a student of mine, came round to borrow some books on Jurisprudence : he said his job took two hours a day, and he wanted something to occupy his mind.

True, both were graduates, but the schoolboys were the same. They could go into battle like their fathers, as the snotties showed when they took the army off the beach at Dunkirk ; but they found it rather a stupid diversion, apparently necessary because a set of politicians had proved once more with what little wisdom the world is governed.

An ex-major picked me up at Magdalen to take me round to Oriel. They were having a meeting to discuss British policy in the East, and they wanted somebody to keep them straight on the facts. My presence proved to be quite unnecessary. They knew as much about Burma and India as I did ; a few of them had a very fair idea of conditions in Malaya ; and several of them could tell a Ceylonese undergraduate a few things about his own country. Their chief complaint was that there were so few books about South-East Asia and that Englishmen had written most of them.

The schoolboys are less mature, but they exhibit some of the same characteristics. The great majority are what we used to call scholarship-wallahs. Seventy-five per cent. of Oxford undergraduates are receiving financial assistance from the State, local authorities, the Colleges or trust funds. The play-boy from the public schools is conspicuous by his absence, for he cannot pass the highly competitive entrance examination. Two thousand five hundred students wanted to come up to Magdalen this year : seventy-five (including one Ceylonese graduate) were accepted. A man who has obtained the Higher School Certificate, been a prefect, won his colours, and learned how to behave sensibly before a committee of dons, has a good chance of getting in. The others are wise to try something or somewhere else.

Now this is a fundamental change. I was a scholarship-wallah twenty-seven years ago, but there were only about a dozen of us in a College of two hundred men. Inevitably we were a highly selective group. A friend and contemporary of mine from the west-country, who is now a 'Fellow of All Souls,' has written the story of his struggle to get to Oxford. (A. L. Rowse, *A Cornish Childhood*). Strait was the gate and narrow the road. Not all of us found it quite so difficult, but we were undoubtedly an exceptional crowd. It was not that we were more learned but that we had more character than those we left behind in the elementary schools ; and, since the public schools, then as now, emphasised character, few of us had difficulty in adapting ourselves to College life. As freshmen we did as the other freshmen did. We worked in the morning, played games in the afternoon, worked a little more after tea or read at the Union, and talked about life after Hall. We got our Firsts as we were expected to do, but we also shared in the general education which Oxford and Cambridge were expected to provide for the sons of the wealthy.

Now the scholarship-wallahs are the majority and the atmosphere has changed. They have to get their Firsts or Seconds because life has become highly competitive. At Magdalen I was given a set of rooms near the Law Library. It was left open day and night without being watched because it can still be assumed that an undergraduate is an honest man. Sometimes I would find it necessary near midnight to look up a case ; and always on such an occasion there would be undergraduates reading. The change, the dons said, was for the worse. Many of the scholarship-wallahs came from the schools without the general education which we picked up somehow ; they read too hard at Oxford and failed to secure the general education which it is Oxford's peculiar province to provide.

Perhaps the change is exaggerated. There were so many boats on the river that the Eights were rowed in six divisions (there were seven in the Mays at Cambridge, but them, alas, I missed through returning to Ceylon on time). Never was there such a boat-race as this year's. Being in the west-country I could do no more than listen-in, but it was magnificent. Oxford were the lighter crew and had to get well ahead at Hammersmith. They succeeded in gaining a length and a half and they had the bend in their favour. But cox gave Cambridge a ten and they started going up around the bend. One need not be a rowing man to realise that a crew cannot pick up half a length on a bend unless it has all the guts in the world. Even so, the Oxford crew hung on, seeing from the corners of their eyes the Cambridge boat creeping up. It was as near a dead-heat as anybody will ever see, but the judges said that Cambridge were a canvas ahead. So, perhaps, they deserved to be for that magnificent spurt around the bend, but Oxford were the lighter crew and rowed themselves out.

Nor was that all. Cambridge beat Oxford at Lord's, but Oxford beat the New Zealanders in the Parks. True, they got the New Zealanders on a sticky wicket, but a University team never settles down till the end of term and the New Zealanders have been able to hold off the England XI. Oxford won the Athletics very easily, and Oxford and Cambridge beat Harvard and Yale.

Another feature which deserves to be noticed is the enormous increase in amateur dramatics and in musical performances, both amateur and professional. The University has decided to build a theatre and to institute courses in Dramatic Art, but it has been dilatory, for every College has its annual play and its annual concert, while some, like the Worcester-Somerville Society, have several concerts a term. The Magdalen Players, for instance, gave a Restoration comedy in the Grove every night for a week. The new Library at the Union was packed out with

readers every day and all day, and I was never alone when I went to the old Library to read Hansards. I don't think they were all working.

Nor is the tradition that an undergraduate is a gentleman being ignored. I have mentioned already that the Law Library at Magdalen is never locked, because one can trust the young men. I noticed, too, the very great courtesy with which I was always treated by the undergraduates. I was a Cambridge man and a guest of the College, but nobody ever reminded the undergraduates of the fact because they needed no reminder. There was, however, even better testimony. Trinity created a record by rowing Head for the sixth successive time. A celebration being obviously in order, the Proctors arranged with the President to gate the whole College at nine o'clock, lest there be a riot in the Broad. Even so, half the University turned up to cheer Trinity after the bump-suppers ; there was a good deal of noise and the Proctors took a couple of hundred names. The Junior Proctor was a Magdalen man and he took out a couple of Magdalen Pro-Proctors. At lunch next day they discussed the experience, and all agreed that the undergraduates had behaved excellently. They had been cheerful and noisy, but invariably courteous to the Masters of Arts. The Proctors held different views about the townees who turned up to see the fun.

What, then, is the conclusion ? There seems to be no doubt, for one hears it in every College, that many of the scholarship-wallahs lack the general education which one normally expected from undergraduates in the last generation. Many of them have parents educated in elementary schools and went to secondary schools which have yet to create traditions. The School Certificate (which is, after all, only 30 years old) has had a bad effect on education and is being held for the last time next year. The sixth form is raw and tends to be a forcing-house for over-worked and under-educated " scholars," whereas those of us who came from the older schools thought it to be a place in which we read some of the books from the School Library, won our colours and our O.T.C. " stripes," learned how to handle hundreds of schoolboys, ran school societies, and more or less incidentally won scholarships. On the other hand, not all the scholarship-wallahs are of this type : my own school, which is now famed for its drama and its general aesthetic sensibility, won fourteen College scholarships this year. There is in fact a sufficient leaven of educated undergraduates to overawe the mere examinees : and though the dons notice a deterioration Oxford is winning.

One thing which proves it is the great revival of interest in religion. Oxford is never likely to go back to the tradition of the late eighteenth

and early nineteenth centuries, which gave birth to Methodism and to the Oxford Movement (which, of course, started in Cambridge); but one of the functions of an undergraduate must be to settle for himself, on some rational basis, his relation to the universe and to human society in particular. My generation was sceptical about ultimate causes and tended to overemphasise both scientific rationalism and political action, though somehow it managed to work out a system of personal, or perhaps conventional, ethics. The new generation realises that the scientists know only a very little about the universe; nor has it any great faith in politicians of any brand, who are recognized to be mere expounders of the popular prejudices which arise through the filtering down of tentative philosophies through layers of social and economic relationships. Marxism, for instance, is now rarely alleged to be another name for truth. It is an interesting and suggestive hypothesis formed by an intelligent German a century ago. One ought to know something about it, just as one ought to know something about molecular theory; but *Das Kapital* is really less significant than, say, Newman's *Apologia* or Plato's *Republic*.

This does not mean that the Christian Churches are making much headway. For one thing, they suffer from a plethora of second-rate minds. This is of course partly the result of the scepticism of my own generation. In the environment of the twenties only a very exceptional or a very ordinary undergraduate could think of the Church as a career (or, for that matter, as a call); and those among my own friends who are now rising in the hierarchy were just nice fellows who never did any harm to anybody. I expect they are doing good, but there is no Wesley or Pusey or Newman among them.

What is happening, I think, is that the undergraduate is refusing to accept scientific rationalism as an axiom. He knows that there is more in the world than is dreamed of in his philosophy, or in any philosophy. He thinks that the Greeks knew a thing or two; he suspects that Aquinas wrote a lot of sound sense even if he is doubtful about the fundamental assumptions; on the whole he is prepared to accept the Hebraic—Greek—Roman tradition in Christianity without necessarily conforming with the rites and ceremonies which, he sometimes suspects, some of the Churches have inherited from a less sophisticated age. However, this is a generalization made by a detached observer who has had no means of delving into the recesses of the mind, and it may not be accurate. I hope, though, that I did no harm in suggesting to the new Master of Balliol that Oxford needed a second Jowett without his foibles.

However sound be the dons' complaints, I must confess to liking

this new generation. It can be forgiven if it is confused, for our generation, or perhaps the generation before, has not given it much assistance. Those who are now in the fifties are the relics of the gay cavaliers of the first World War, and we who followed them had to fend for ourselves without our fathers, our best teachers, and our elder brothers. On the whole the schoolboys of the first War have not done badly. I remember how seriously I took as head prefect the responsibility of raising the " tone " of the school, which had deteriorated through the absence of teachers and older prefects. When I think of the responsibility now placed on my colleague and successor Sir Oliver Franks, I sometimes wonder whether our experience was not good for us. On the other hand, the undergraduates seem to think that something is lacking in the universities, and not all the dons are satisfied with themselves. Sir Richard Livingstone's arguments for a return to the humanities and Sir Walter Moberley's suggestion for a Christian ginger-group are as significant as the search for the means for " general education " in the United States.

It is clear enough that we cannot teach the undergraduates what to think and, though we hear the case put in Ceylon occasionally, it is plain that nobody in England will allow professional Christians of any sect to gain control of a university. We shall fight to the death for freedom of thought. Even if I believed my philosophy to be truth and the other fellow's to be heresy I should surely be justified in remembering the admonition of the member of my own University who warned us for all time : " Bethink ye in the bowels of Christ that ye may be wrong." One might use even stronger language in Ceylon, where there are many philosophies. We have particularly to be wary of those who talk about " a national University." They do not know what they mean ; but their specific proposals would require us to teach some sort of dogma as eternal truth. If a University is concerned with truth it cannot be national, for nationalism at best is but a convenient hypothesis adapted to an imperfect society.

We can sympathise with the undergraduate's desire to be given the answer for which Pontius Pilate would not stay ; but it cannot be done. Each must find the answer for himself, giving such weight to the accumulated wisdom of the ages as he thinks fit. Even so, I believe that the profound scepticism of my own generation has done harm as well as good. On the one hand it has destroyed conformity for the sake of conformity ; on the other hand it has compelled us, in all humility, to hide within our shells and carry on with our " research," whether it is significant or not. The profound scholar who knows all about the writ called praecipe or the development of the Wardrobe, is

really of little use to a University. The classical scholar who has some of the broad humanity of Aristotle is of far greater value than the authority on the Greek particles, unless of course the particles are a mere hobby like stamp-collecting. They do no harm, but they do not help the undergraduate.

England has virtually decided that all the Universities except London, which cannot, should become residential, so that the undergraduates can educate themselves. But why should not the dons help? Is it good enough to appoint a man because he wrote a good thesis on Chaucer's adverbs and will not be a nuisance in the Senior Common Room? My own tentative hypothesis is that the English universities—and I see no difference in Ceylon, though it will take longer—should appoint dons who possess a broad humanity, an enthusiasm for knowledge in the broadest sense, an ability to follow an idea to its conclusion, a set of principles which they are prepared to defend in all humility, and an accessibility which is not learned as part of the course for the D. Phil. If I am asked where such people are, I fear that I must reply that they may be found in the next generation if we will play what part we can.

# LAW REFORM

By N. E. Weerasooria,

THE problem of Law Reform in Ceylon has never yet received careful consideration as a whole, and no attempt has yet been made to combine into one legal system the various laws and statutes that have existed and have been enacted from time to time.

## Section I—Our Legal System

Some idea of the laws that obtain in the Island, of the constitution of our Courts and of the rules of procedure that govern them is a necessary requirement for a correct approach to the question of law reform. The general picture is somewhat as follows :—

### (*a*) Common and Customary Laws

The common law of the Island is the Roman-Dutch Law and when no special law governs and no statute exists aid is sought from the wisdom of the Roman-Dutch Jurists. Judicial decisions and the weight of legal precedents also occupy a prominent place in the solution of our legal problems. The customary laws of the different inhabitants still prevail and are enforced in the case of all individuals who fall within the description of the particular communities to which they apply. There is, for instance, the Kandyan Law which applies to Kandyans, the Thesawalamai which is applicable to the inhabitants of Jaffna and the Muslim Law which governs the Muslim community. If, however, one looks at the matter in broad perspective, it will be found that these particular laws apply in the main to the laws of persons, inheritance and matrimonial rights and in some cases to rights over property. In other spheres the old customs have become obsolete or the legislature and the English Law have stepped in or it has been the practice to decide the issue on the basis of the Roman-Dutch Law.

### (*b*) Statutory Law

There has been no systematic effort to codify the substantive laws except in the case of the Penal Code which is based on and is almost identical with the India Penal Code. This Code is more or less a complete codification of the substantive law that is administered by the Courts which exercise a criminal jurisdiction. The English law of Trusts has been introduced by the Trusts Ordinance and the English Law applies as a rule to such questions even when no express provision

is made. In all maritime and commercial matters and questions relating to the effect of war the law of England was made applicable in 1852 and 1866 and the old enactments are now consolidated in the Civil Law Ordinance (Cap. 66). The English Sale of Goods Act. (Cap. 79) was introduced in 1896, the English Bills of Exchange Act (Cap. 68) in 1928 and the English Companies Act in 1938 (Ord. No. 51 of 1938). The tendency has been to take over in bulk the English law or statutes subject to a few modifications. It is not always that the subsequent modifications of the English law have been also introduced into our enactments. A glaring instance of a failure to do so is the Insolvency Ordinance (Cap. 82) which still embodies the English law as it stood in 1853 which was the date when our Ordinance was passed.

(*c*) COURTS AND PROCEDURE

The constitution of our Courts is laid down and their powers and jurisdictions defined by the Courts Ordinance (Cap. 6). The procedure applicable to civil and criminal Courts has been codified and is found in the Civil Procedure Code and the Criminal Procedure Code while the law relating to evidence is found in another Code, the Evidence Ordinance. These three Codes were almost identical with the corresponding Indian Codes at the date of their enactment in 1889, 1898 and 1896 respectively with the exception that the portions of the Civil Procedure which deal with testamentary actions are based on English law and the portions which deal with the accounting and settlement of estates of deceased persons have been taken over from the New York Code of 1890, while certain sections which deal with Matrimonial actions are based on English Statutes.

(*d*) A COMMITTEE ON LAW REFORM

The general picture which one gets of our legal system on a very broad view is, therefore, a foundation of Roman-Dutch and customary law on which has been built at haphazard an irregular edifice of English and Statute law with Indian, English and local statutes dealing with procedure running in all directions.

Different Commissions and Committees have examined and reported on particular aspects of our law such as the law relating to mortgage, partition and registration but no comprehensive survey has yet been made. The legal system of a country should keep pace with its development and have a real relation to its economic, social and political structure. It would, therefore, appear essential that a Commission or Committee with wide terms of reference should analyse and report on the suitability of our present Legal System to meet our present requirements and the changes that are in contemplation.

## Section II—The Place of Legal Precedents

In the history and development of our law legal precedents have always held an important place. The report of decisions of the Supreme Court dating back to the earlier part of the British period up to date are available. They are cited with great frequency and are almost invariably followed unless an error in the decision is apparent or unless the decision does not apply by reason of amendments to the law introduced by subsequent legislation. Our judiciary as in other countries has sometimes attempted to interpret the common law as laid down in the Roman-Dutch texts and in the older statutes in such a way as to give effect to modern needs, but a Court has no power to legislate and it has not been always easy for the Courts to interpret the law in such a way as to make a coherent system out of the varied statutes and principles which comprise the laws of the Island. Our Judges have from time to time indicated with more or less emphasis the need for a change in some of the existing statutes, but it cannot be said that the legislature has given sufficient heed to their dicta.

In a country where legal precedents play so important a part the absence of a set of Revised Reports, Consolidated Digests and a Statement of the Law with due regard to decided cases in the nature of Halsbury's Laws of England is a vital defect. Unless the present legal system is scrapped and a new one created with no historical or legal connection with the past the first step in a scheme of law reform must of necessity be to ascertain what is the present law. A full statement of the law would greatly facilitate future action and aid the judiciary and the profession in the administration of justice. A work of this nature can be undertaken and executed with success only by a Board of Editors and the cost of its publication should be subsidised by the State.

## Section III—The Nature of Litigation

The nature of litigation reflects the economy of the country. Until quite recent times the economy was almost entirely agricultural. Commerce and industry were until then almost exclusively in foreign hands, controlled and owned by foreign capitalists. In the event of any disputes arising among them they invariably settled their differences outside the civil Courts of the Island. It was only in an exceptional case that any litigation of theirs was brought up for decision in the Courts. In the result the civil work of the Courts was confined mainly to disputes in regard to title to property, either agricultural or buildings, and in some measure to questions of law arising in regard to procedure.

(*a*) Rei Vindicatio Actions

The reported cases, therefore, deal in the main with prescriptive rights to property, partition of lands held in common, the registration of deeds and instruments affecting lands and the construction of documents which purport to create a *fidei commissum*, i.e., an entail which imposes a fetter on the free disposition of property and creates rights which pass over from one generation to another or to different parties on the happening of certain events.

On a general view it would almost appear that the value attached to landed property and the importance given to suits of this description have been, perhaps, more sentimental than real. But the answer is that land was the only source of income, however small, other than the learned professions.

(*b*) Divorce Actions

In recent years, however, a type of litigation somewhat new to the Island has appeared in the form of divorce actions and running down cases. In former times it was the exception rather than the rule for parties who had been married under the General Marriage Ordinance to seek a divorce in a Court of Law. Communities which were subject to customary laws such as the Kandyan Law and Muslim Law obtained redress or divorce in terms of the procedure which was applicable to them and on grounds which amounted often to nothing more than mutual consent. But spouses who married under the General Marriage Ordinance could seek a dissolution of marriage or other redress only on proof of such matrimonial offences as were accepted to be valid grounds according to Roman-Dutch Law, which were mainly adultery, malicious desertion or cruelty amounting to danger to life. The procedure for relief in such cases is laid down by the Civil Procedure Code, the relevant sections of which are taken over substantially from the English Matrimonial Acts of the corresponding period. Matrimonial suits are now much more common than they were before and take a fair proportion of the time of the District Courts, more particularly in Colombo.

(*c*) Running Down Actions

And again the increase of motor traffic all over the Island, together with the emphasis laid on the necessity for insurance against accidents, have both contributed to a proportionate increase in actions for damages arising from accidents due to negligent driving. At first the quantum of damages awarded was comparatively small, but the tendency has been in more recent years for our Courts to award more substantial damages in appropriate cases.

(*d*) Buddhist Temples and Temporalities

Another type of litigation which is not infrequent arises out of disputes in regard to Buddhist Temples or Buddhist Temporalities. In regard to Buddhist Temples the litigation is mainly due to conflicting claims as to succession to the office of the Incumbent or as he is termed the " Viharadhipathi " of a Buddhist Temple. Such claims are based on Buddhist Ecclesiastical Law. But in actual practice a great part of the ecclesiastical law is not recognised by our Courts. The result is not always satisfactory and has created difficulties in the administration of the temples.

The Buddhist Temporalities, however, are governed by legislative provisions which have been laid down in different statutes. At the commencement of British Rule the Incumbent or Viharadhipathi of a Buddhist Temple was in sole control both of the religious activities and of the temporalities. As the combination of both the spiritual and the lay office in one person was thought undesirable and in the hope that better management of the temporalities would result the right to control the temporalities was taken away from the Incumbent and given over to lay trustees who were supposed to function under district committees. It was subsequently found that the change brought about no improvement and the mismanagement of temple lands and monies was frequent. Legislarion was in consequence introduced in 1931 (Cap 222) by which, in the main, Buddhist temporalities were brought under the supervision of the Public Trustee and the Incumbent was given the right to manage the temporalities but could at his option nominate a lay trustee for appointment by the Public Trustee.

In spite of the somewhat disconnected efforts to place the management of the temporalities under a better footing the present system leaves much to be desired and the surrender of the right to decide purely ecclesiastical disputes to lay tribunals, however eminent or impartial, has led to decisions which have entirely undermined the control of Buddhist Temples.

It is not uncommon to find on the same side two priests both of whom claim equal right in the same temple sometimes dividing one temple into two parts. Such a situation, from the point of view of the maintenance of discipline and proper management, is intolerable and a reform of the law in this direction is much to be desired.

Section IV—Land Laws

The history of our land laws from the commencement of the British Rule gives a fair clue to the policy adopted by the Government

in the administration of the country. From time to time legislation was passed which provided for taxation of both paddy and high land and also attempted to deal with the question of ownership. Many of the Ordinances that dealt with the earlier methods of taxation have been repealed and it serves no useful purpose to discuss them. But an examination and an analysis of the legislation in regard to the title to land is instructive and is a necessary basis from which the problem of reform in regard to our land laws can be approached.

### Crown Lands and Waste Lands

Two of the most important Ordinances from the point of view of the inhabitants of the Island were the Crown Lands Ordinance and the Waste Lands Ordinance. These two Ordinances caught up within their provisions nearly all lands which are not situate within the towns and densely populated areas. They were, as it were, the symbol of the Imperialistic policy then adopted. All lands which came within the description of forests, waste lands and chena lands were deemed to be the property of the Crown. The only exception provided was such lands as were claimed upon a grant or sannas or by prescriptive possession for a long period of time of permanent plantations. Such possession was difficult to prove and was rare in early times and the position of the subject was rendered more hopeless by the interpretation of what was regarded as " chena land." This interpretation broadly put was " once a chena, always a chena." In result the greater part of the land in the country was, in an arbitrary manner and regardless of the hardships such a policy worked on the subject, declared to be the property of the Crown. The Crown retained certain extents as forests and sold for nominal sums a great part of the cultivable land, more particularly in the wet zone, to capitalists who more often were not the inhabitants of this country. In recent times, however, after 1931, the attitude of the Government has changed in regard to its land policy. The Waste Lands Ordinance has been repealed and under the new Land Settlement and Land Development Ordinances extents ranging up to 50 acres have been given to Ceylonese under the Village and Town Expansion and Land Development Schemes.

### Private Property

While the land policy of the Government is a matter to be decided on the principles of good statesmanship, the title to land is a matter which comes more directly within the question of Law Reform. The great problem, that has not yet been faced and has sometimes been considered and reported on, is the problem of land fragmentation under

the present system of land tenure. According to the Law of Inheritance that now obtains, if the owner of property does not make a Will, his title devolves on his heirs who are in the first instance his wife and children. The property in consequence is owned on his death by a number of people in undivided shares. In the absence of a surviving spouse or children the property passes to persons related to him in other degrees and in such cases also to several persons in undivided shares.

(*a*) FRAGMENTATION

The fragmentation of lands, both in Ceylon and in other countries, has made the economic holding of lands impossible and has also given rise to complicated questions of title. One of the first steps in a policy which is intended to reform our land laws should, therefore, be an attempt to grapple with this problem face to face. There seems to be no option but to change the laws relating to land tenure so as to prevent the fragmentation of holdings. This result has been achieved in some measure in different countries in different ways. A new system of land tenure and devolution of property has been introduced with some success by the Land Development Ordinance (Cap. 320) in respect of new grants. It may be necessary to change the law of inheritance, introduce, perhaps, rights of pre-emption and adopt such other methods as are most suited to our social economic and legal structure.

(*b*) REGISTRATION—SURVEY—SETTLEMENT

Our law provides only for the registration of deeds and other instruments dealing with lands. It does not provide for the registration of title to lands. In consequence if a person wishes to know who is the owner of a land at any time, he can ascertain this fact only after a laborious inquiry which is beset with many pitfalls. The register merely shows that deeds have been executed in regard to lands bearing certain names having certain boundaries and of a certain extent. It is only by a tedious process of search and inquiry that it is possible, if at all, to identify the land which has been dealt with. If, on the other hand, the system of registration of title is adopted, the register will show who the owner is on the day of search and what charges, if any, exist on the title.

The provisions of the Registration Ordinance operate in favour of a person whose deed has been correctly registered, if he is a purchaser for valuable consideration, but it is no easy task to ascertain what in fact is the correct folio for registration, in view of the frequent changes in the name of the land itself and of the lands which constitute it

boundaries. The extents often vary and the problem becomes more complex when there is consolidation or sub-division.

The difficulties that arise in the ascertainment of the correct registration of a land are connected with the presence or absence of proper surveys. Except in the towns and in the case of large estates it is seldom that proper surveys are available. The extents are described sometimes in acres and sometimes in the land or paddy sowing measures of the country. In the latter case the extents vary according to the method of sowing adopted and for other reasons. So that in result in the absence of a survey it is impossible to be certain of the identity of a land. Furthermore, the sporadic surveys that exist are not fitted into town or district surveys and cannot be availed of at present for the purpose of the registration of title.

It is only in the course of land settlement proceedings that large extents covering several villages have been surveyed and blocked out. But the usefulness of these surveys has been in a great measure lost, as in most cases a great part of the extent surveyed has been merely declared private and in regard to them no title plans have been issued and there has been no declaration of ownership. The complicated claims of rival claimants remain unsolved. The surveys of these proceedings are available only to the extent that the Crown has been declared the owner of certain areas and other areas have been settled on private parties and in both cases title plans have been issued.

In order to solve the problem of title to land, surveys on a systematic basis of entire areas or at least surveys of such portions as are the subject of transactions should be made and located in plans, which can form the basis for the registration of title. A system of registration of title based on such surveys in preference to the present system of the registration of deeds should be adopted in all areas where such a system can be introduced with success. Land settlement proceedings should not end with a mere separation of Crown property, but should result in the settlement of the title to all lands within the area under survey and settlement.

The delay in registration, survey and settlement is the cause of considerable hardship and tends to fetter transactions and development of land. In consequence of the present system of land tenure examination of title is a tedious process and even after the execution of a deed its registration may take a period of even two months. The value of immovable assets for business purposes is in consequence much diminished and a transaction can be advised in some cases only after the reason for it has disappeared. The delay in Land Settlement proceedings is proverbial and a period of five to seven years common. Every effort should be made

to remove these defects in the machinery that now exists, if immovable property is to be regarded as a realisable asset and a ready security.

(c) FIDEI COMMISSA

Another problem of great doubt and difficulty is the law of *fidei commissa*. Under the Roman-Dutch Law which applies in regard to deeds which purport to create *fidei commissa* the period for which such an entail would extend unless expressly limited was four generations. In 1876, however, an Ordinance was passed which restricted an entail to the lives of persons who were then alive or *en ventre sa mère*. This change was a useful one and prevented property being tied up for too long a period. But even under the present law a fetter placed on the ownership of property tends to retard its development and a fiduciary owner does not, nor, indeed, can he be expected to, improve the property save in exceptional cases. He cannot deal with it for a period longer than his life or the term during which he is the owner. The property becomes, as it were, immobilised in his hands and it is not seldom that one sees buildings in a dilapidated condition and estates left uncultivated owing to the existence of an entail.

But what is even more deplorable is the uncertainty which exists as to the interpretation of deeds which purport to create *fidei commissa*. There is no uniform set of words which are used and the phraseology is left to the choice of the person who writes the instrument. In regard to the phraseology it varies in the same way as the Chancellor's foot did in the Equity Courts, and the interpretation of the words used have varied with the views of different judges. It has not been uncommon for different judges to have taken different views in regard to the construction of the same instrument. The classic case in recent times is the one which arose in regard to the construction of the Last Will of a wealthy Muslim land-owner who many years ago owned large extents of land in the City of Colombo which at the time of the litigation were of very considerable value. There were several judgments of the Supreme Court in which different judges took different views as regards the construction of the instrument and the matter was subsequently settled, if indeed anything is settled in this branch of the law, by a judgment of the Privy Council.

In this state of the law it is a moot question whether *fidei commissa* should not be entirely abolished. Whatever may have been the usefulness of creating an entail many years ago, it would appear that the matter can with reason be approached now from a different stand-point. In an age when even the propriety or usefulness of the private ownership property hangs in the balance it seems strange that a private owner

should still be in a position to tie up his property in the hands of future generations. *Fidei commissa* have in the main led to non-development of lands and to litigation. A strong case, therefore, can be now made out for its abolition.

SECTION IV—CONCLUSION

In this article only a few of the more important and pressing questions have been reviewed. A full consideration of the problems involved must necessarily precede any concrete suggestions. But it is essential to point out that any schemes of reform should be broad-based and not a mere attempt to deal with isolated matters. It should pay regard to the change in social and economic conditions and have as its object the unification of our legal system and not a separation of its constituent elements to give effect to ideas and customs which have ceased to exist.

# THE EAST-WEST PHILOSOPHERS' CONFERENCE

By G. P. Malalasekera

THIS Conference was held in the University of Hawaii, in Honolulu, under the auspices of the Rockefeller Foundation and the Watumull Foundation, from the 20th June to the 29th July last. It was envisaged as part of a world-wide effort, now being made in many countries, at various levels of activity, to bring about peace in the world and happiness amongst men. It was an attempt to achieve some kind of harmony with regard to the fundamental issues which have succeeded in dividing men into warring camps, leading to the most serious and tragic conflicts of nations and cultures. It was the result of a recognition of the fact that men's ideologies and their codes of conduct spring from metaphysical bases. Now, metaphysics is but a part, an integral part, of philosophy. If the philosophical systems that influence the actions of a particular group of men could be understood, it was felt that, then, it would be easier to bridge the gulf that existed between them and other groups with different ideologies. Philosophy had never been an affair of the " Schools " alone, nor of disputations between handfuls of learned men, but an important factor in the life of the community. Every philosopher of note had been an outcome of his *milieu,* crystallising and concentrating thoughts and feelings which, however vague and diffused, were common to the community of which he was a member. We all know how the results of scientific research are universally accepted, " science," from whatever quarter it may come, being regarded as one, though there are many "sciences." Similarly, though there are different philosophical systems, would it be possible to evolve a " synthetic philosophy " which could be reconciled with the diverging systems ? This was the question which the Conference set to itself. It had to be remembered, of course, that " science " is concerned with only limited phases of " reality," particularly its measurable phases, and not the basic structure of " reality " itself. It is with " reality, " however, that philosophy is concerned. Moreover, philosophy is a distinctive discipline with a peculiar aim of its own, requiring peculiar methods and the devotion to it of lives of complete concentration for the attainment of any lasting results.

It had been the fashion up to now to describe systems of philosophy by such names as Indian, Chinese, Greek, American, etc. This had also led to a great deal of misunderstanding and set up barriers where

none should exist. For, if a philosophy is sound, it must be universally true. But, on the other hand, such a description might also be taken as merely indicating that the system of philosophy so-named represents an effort to achieve philosophic truth, an effort which had been made in some particular place, say Greece or China. It cannot also be denied that such efforts must be affected by certain peculiar cultural attitudes and limitations in what is always a most difficult and arduous enterprise. Nevertheless, investigations often reveal that the differences are more apparent than real. It was in order to ascertain how much agreement there was amidst apparent diversity that the Conference was held. To those privileged to participate in it, it was a most memorable experience. The philosophers who were gathered together from many lands set about their task with great humility. Their attitude was that of men who had come not to impose their views on others but rather to compare notes, to see whether they could bring together into some stable solution the tiny drops they had severally collected from the great ocean of Truth. They were not concerned with achieving some sort of cultural or philosophical synthesis at any cost, by adopting an attitude of " relativity " towards all systems and trying to discover the best points of each system in order to create a delectable ensemble from them all. What they desired was not just a synthesis, but a *true* synthesis, if that were possible, which could be verified by accessible evidence, against which the charge could not be laid that, in their attempt to achieve unity, they had abandoned the very concept of truth.

Thus, they were prepared, when confronted with philosophic views that divide human minds and cultures, to regard such views not only impartially, but also to ask for the facts to which those views referred in order to discover, if possible, some bases in those facts which could account for the particular views under consideration. It was acknowledged that in a world which contained a great many different things, each view saw something, which was really there, but which the others did not see. It was felt that a particular system might be correct in its affirmations but wrong in its negations, or *vice versa*. Proceeding on these principles, the philosophers, in order to make their discussions embrace the widest possible scope, went on to ask themselves whether some topic could be found that was all-inclusive. Agreement was reached that such a concept was symbolised by the words " being " or " reality " and it was, thereupon, decided that the papers read at the Conference should deal with one or more aspects of " being " and " reality. " It was originally maintained that only " nothingness " lay beyond what was regarded as the absolutely uni-

versal scope of " being," that the concept of " being " was presupposed by all other concepts. The opposition between " being " and " non-being " was regarded as the most absolute and unqualified of all oppositions. It was also maintained that there was no " structure " that could bridge the gap between these two concepts, which could embrace them both. This last assertion, however, had to be modified when it was pointed out that the concept of " becoming," which formed a fundamental teaching of Buddhism, especially Theravāda Buddhism, did, in fact, bridge the gap and did embrace both " being " and " non-being," because, according to Buddhism, " reality " is not something that " is " or " is not " but something that is always in the *process of becoming*.

As the discussions proceeded, it became evident that there did exist underlying differences between the " Eastern " and " Western " systems of philosophy, though some of the philosophers showed reluctance to refer to them explicitly. There were two views on this matter that found expression. One was that no generalisations could safely be made concerning either " Eastern " or " Western " philosophy, the situation being too complex. In each field was a vast variety of different philosophies some of which were extremely opposed to each other. The other view was that there were differences in the two systems, and they were to be found chiefly in the realm of epistemology, *i.e.*, in the methods of obtaining knowledge about " reality." In " Eastern " thought there is greater emphasis laid on the apprehension of something which, though quite concrete, is yet relatively vague and hard to put down in precise definitions, especially in concepts like those of Brahman and Nirvana. In " Western " thought, on the other hand, the stress is on fixed and determinate objects which can be clearly and distinctively defined and deductive consequences can be drawn therefrom, more readily. " Eastern " philosophy does not consider logical analysis and determinate definition and deduction adequate. It maintains that there are certain important things which have to be grasped by a less abstract mode of apprehension, such as intuition or contemplation. In other words, the East uses " concepts by intuition ; " the West assigns a very important role to " concepts by postulation." The West wants concrete and empirical proof for any belief and Westerners want to experience everything for themselves before being convinced. The Easterners are prepared to accept as essentially true the experiences of their sages and elders. Western philosophies are primarily theoretical, Eastern philosophies primarily practical, aiming to show men how to realise identity with " reality." The West is concerned basically with the present world ; the East with an

ultimate, beyond this world, deep within it, transcendental. Western thought tends to centre its primary attention on the external world ; Eastern thought on the inner " Self," with its spiritual and social potentialities. Western philosophy shows a zest for analysis and is convinced that analysis is significant, independently of any ulterior consideration ; for Eastern philosophy analysis is almost always related to some further enterprise and is insignificant when detached from such purpose. The West, generally speaking, is convinced that the result of any search for knowledge is fully expressible in verbal symbols, whose relations are subject to the ordinary logical rules ; for the East the intuitive " higher " knowledge is not capable of verbal expression and communication. Westerners regard " intuition " as an infra-rational apprehension, while the East regards it as supra-rational and of the highest philosophical respectability. Its attainment requires preparatory disciplines which are intellectual as well as non-intellectual. Logical reasoning is necessary, but only so that the path may be cleared of contradictions. Moral disciplines are requisite to clear the mind of obstructions that arise from selfish desires and turbulent emotions. Western thinkers find it hard to accustom themselves to this idea since by them no moral virtues except honesty and intellectual integrity have been regarded as necessary. The " higher " knowledge gained by intuition is regarded by the Easterners as not being communicable to others by the medium of words. Words attempting to describe it would be meaningless to those who have not attained the experience and, to those that have, such descriptions are superfluous. The West characteristically distrusts any sort of " esoteric " knowledge that cannot be " verified " by experiment and proved by the inductive method.

These differences were frankly recognised and fully faced as difficulties to be overcome. Numerous suggestions were put forward to harmonise the two attitudes of mind which seemed to divide broadly the two systems of philosophy but none of them could provide complete solutions to the problems involved. It was felt that a truly synthetic philosophy must combine the exact, structural analyses of the West with the great integrative insight of the East. The general consensus was that there is something in each of the suggested contrasts if they are not pressed too far or regarded as more than dominant " tendencies." The greatest service done by the Conference was to reveal to the philosophers that there are intelligible areas of discourse other than the areas with which they were familiar and thus awaken them to a realisation of their previous provinciality. As the discussions proceeded, they became vaguely and hesitatingly aware of their own

limitations and they felt that it should ultimately be possible to arrive at a complete synthesis at some point upon which it was not yet possible to lay a finger.

At present, systems of philosophy seemed to regard existence from two standpoints : some were concerned with the ever-changing, material things of nature, the finite entities which are subject to scientific and logical analyses ; others were concerned with an ultimate or "over-arching" existence, which can be understood only by the insight of sages, by the practice of concentration and meditation. In the second group logic and ethics would be no longer regarded as formal sciences but as means to evolve a moral law which would enable man to realise his own, inner nature. The national antagonisms of our time emphasize the need for such a moral law, not based on any arbitrary, moral decree but on the recognition of the metaphysical principle that nature is originally good, that it is incomplete, that its frustration is bad and its realisation always good.

That this should be the end aimed at was agreed upon. It was evident that the area of agreement was very much larger than the area of division and that the task of integrating the various systems was not a Utopian dream but something very much in the realms of possibility. There was every hope that the conflicting ideologies that now divide nations could be resolved and that such resolution would have positive and fruitful consequences for contemporary life and thought. The Conference ended with a great degree of optimism that a philosophic basis could be evolved for a common human ideology, essentially compatible with the social and ethical ideals that should find expression in a universal recognition of human rights. Lanka should feel proud to know that in the evolution of such an ideology she would be called upon to make a substantial contribution by reason of the fact that her people had for twenty-five centuries been the custodians of the philosophy of the Buddha which for its humanity and basic principles of freedom still remains unsurpassed.

# A CEYLON EMBASSY TO ROME

By W. T. Keble

WHEN Nero was Emperor of Rome, there lived in Italy one of the most inquisitive and inquiring minds that ever existed; in an age when every book must be written by hand and was consequently both rare and precious, the owner of this mind is credited with having read 2,000 volumes. His name was Gaius Plinius Secundus, and he is now commonly known as Pliny the elder. He was at one time a soldier in Germany, then a procurator in Spain, and he once wrote, "When we were in Africa," implying that he had been there also. He was the intimate friend of the Emperor, Vespasian, and he was appointed admiral of the Roman fleet at Misenum. And that is about all that is known of his life, except that he wrote, among other works, the Historia Naturalis, which contains 20,000 important facts collected from the 2,000 books already mentioned.

Pliny the Elder is particularly interesting to us because he met in Rome and conversed with the Ambassadors sent thither by the King of Ceylon in about the year 44 A.D. A Roman tax-farmer collecting revenues on the coast of Arabia had been carried by the monsoon winds to some point, presumably in the North-West, of Ceylon. He was kindly received by the King, who, it is said, was so interested in the account given him of the Romans, that he sent his ambassadors to the Emperor.

Something of the perils of such a journey, and the enterprise required to undertake it, may be judged from the fact that the tax-farmer had been carried against his will two thousand miles out of his way in a fortnight at the speed of about 150 miles a day in a ship with a fixed sail that could not tack and was only intended for coastal travel. The return journey may have taken a year or more.

Pliny writes, "Legatos quatuor misit principe eorum Rachia"—"The king sent four ambassadors under the leadership of Rachia." In his paper to the Ceylon Asiatic Society, 1848, Mr. Casie Chetty suggests that Rachia may mean Arachia.

Which King sent these ambassadors? If we take Dr. Geiger's chronology of the Kings of Ceylon, they would seem to have been sent in the reign of King Bhatikabhaya, A.D. 38—66. Unfortunately the

Mahavamsa makes no mention of the embassy. Bhatikabhaya lived in the bright early days of the Buddhist faith in Ceylon. Of this King the Mahavamsa says, "commanding that the (Ruanweli Dagoba) from the *vedika* at the foot to the parasol at the top, be plastered with (a paste of) sweet-smelling unguent four-fingers thick, and that flowers be carefully embedded therein by their stalks, he made the thupa even as a globe of flowers. . . . Then when he had raised water by the means of machines from the Abhaya-tank, he, by pouring (masses of) water over the thupa, carried out a water offering."

So was the King busied in his pious works, and if it was Bhatikabhaya who sent the embassy, his monastic biographers in the Mahavamsa very naturally thought these good works more important than the embassy.

Any one who likes to look in the Colombo Museum can see coins of the Emperors Nero, Claudius and Vespasian amongst those which have been dug up in Ceylon. Roman merchants had good reason for being interested in Ceylon, for the Eastern trade was so profitable that cinnamon, some of which may have come from the jungles of Ceylon, was sold in Rome for the equivalent of £8 sterling for a pound. The Eastern trade in fact threatened Rome with a financial crisis, for, writes Emmerson Tennent, "it became a subject of apprehension at Rome, lest the empire should be drained of its specie to maintain the commerce with India. Silver to the value of nearly a million and a half sterling, being annually required to pay for the spices, gems, pearls, and silks imported through Egypt."

So the Ambassadors from Ceylon stood in the court of the Roman Emperor, Claudius, and were, no doubt, a matter of curiosity to the Roman courtiers. Among the courtiers was Pliny who had for years studied all kinds of curious knowledge, and who was particularly interested in Geography. He took his opportunity to converse with the strangers, and he has left us, in the Natural History, Chapter 24, an account of what he learned from them.

Pliny was a man of his age, his work is unscientific, lacks arrangement and gives evidence of much credulity. He would have judged of the fortunes of the coming day by the flight of birds seen from his front door in the morning ; yet his credulity was not greater than that which belongs to us who seem ready to believe that the same day is lucky or unlucky for all six million of us at once. So his account of Ceylon should not be treated as history but as a collection of facts of extraordinary interest, because they throw for a moment a brilliant light upon a period of our history which is otherwise but faintly illumined.

While reading Pliny's facts, we must imagine the difficulties that he and the Ceylon Ambassadors had in explaining their thoughts to each other ; how they must have translated and retranslated their ideas between their different languages ; how far apart was the background of government and social customs of each ; how they must have struggled to reconcile each others' strange ways of measuring distances, and how inaccurate the results must have been ; how completely unfamiliar to each were the mental picture and names of the heavenly bodies used by the other, and how remote were both from our present day knowledge. How difficult it must have been to explain the mysteries of Buddhism and Hinduism to one who believed implicitly in Jupiter and his family as the only gods. All these complications must be taken into account, and allowance made for them, if we are to get the full value out of the Roman's picture of Ceylon.

The translation of Pliny's account of Ceylon which follows was very kindly obtained for me by Mr. C. F. Amerasinghe, from the work of Rackam.

" Ceylon, under the name of the Land of the " Counterlanders " (Latin—Antichthones) was long considered to be another world ; but the epoch and the achievements of Alexander the Great, supplied clear proof of its being an Island. Onesicritus, a commander of Alexander's navy writes that elephants are bred there of larger size and more war-like spirit than in India ; and Megasthenes says that it is cut in two by a river, that the inhabitants have the name of Aborigines (Latin—Palæogoni), and that they produce more gold and large pearls than the Indians. Eratosthenes further gives the dimensions of the Island as 875 miles in length and 625 miles in breadth, and says that it contains no cities but 700 villages. Beginning at the Eastern Sea it stretches along the side of India from East to West ; and it was formerly believed to be a distance of twenty days' sail from the nation of the Prasii, but at later times, inasmuch as the voyage to it used to be made with vessels constructed of reeds and with the rigging used on the Nile, its distance was fixed with reference to the speeds made by our ships as seven days' sail. The sea between the Island and the main-land is shallow, not more than 18 feet deep, but in certain channels so deep that no anchors hold the bottom : for this reason ships are used that have bows at each end, so as to avoid the necessity of coming about while negotiating the narrows of the channel ; the tonnage of these vessels is as much as 3,000 barrels. They take no observations of the stars in navigation—indeed the Great Bear is not visible ; but they carry birds on board with them, and at fairly frequent intervals set them free, and follow the course they take, as they make for land. They only use four months of the

year for voyages, and they particularly avoid the hundred days following mid-summer, when those seas are stormy.

So far the facts stated have been recorded by the early writers. We, however, have obtained more accurate information during the principate of Claudius, when an embassy actually came to Rome from the Island of Ceylon. The circumstances were as follows ; Annæus Plocamus had obtained a contract from the Treasury to collect the taxes from the Red Sea ; a freedman of his, while sailing round Arabia was carried by the gales from the North beyond the coast of Carmania, and after a fortnight made the harbour of Hippuri in Ceylon, where he was entertained with kindly hospitality by the King, and in a period of six months acquired a thorough knowledge of the language ; and afterwards in reply to the King's inquiries, he gave him an account of the Romans and their Emperor. The King among all that he heard, was remarkably struck with admiration for Roman honesty, on the ground that among the money found on the captive the denarii were all equal in weight although the various figures on them showed that they had been coined by various Emperors. This strongly attracted his friendship, and he sent four envoys, the chief of whom was Rachias. From them we learnt the following facts about Ceylon : it contains 500 towns, and a harbour facing South, adjacent to the town of Palæsimundus, which is the most-famous of all the places in the Island and a royal residence, with a population of 200,000. Inland (we were told) there is a marsh named Megisba measuring 375 miles round and containing Islands that only produce pasturage : and out of this marsh flow two rivers, Palæsimundus running through three channels into the harbour near the town that bears the same name as the river, and measuring over half a mile in breadth at the narrowest point, and nearly two miles at the widest, and the other named Cydara, flowing North in the direction of India. The nearest cape in India is the cape called Comorin, at a distance of four days' sail, passing in the middle of the voyage the Island of the Sun ; and the sea there is of a deep green colour, and also has thickets of trees growing in it, the tops of which are brushed by the rudders of passing vessels. The envoys marvelled at the new aspect of the heavens visible in our country, with the Great and Little Bear and the Pleiads, and they told us that in their own country even the moon only appears above the horizon from the eighth to the sixteenth day of the month, and that Canopus, a large and brilliant star lights them by night. But what surprised them most was that their shadows fell towards our sky (that is to the South) and not towards theirs, and that the sun rose on the left hand side of the observer and set towards the right, instead of *vice versa* ; (Tennent thinks the ambassadors used

a Hindu reckoning which place North and South, left and right). They also told us that the side of their Island facing towards India, is 1,250 miles long, and lies South-East of India : that beyond the Himalayas they also face towards the country of the Chinese, who are known to them by intercourse in trade as well, the father of Rachias having travelled there " . . .

The word translated ' Chinese ' in the above paragraph is only one of the many uncertainties and doubts that cloud the account of Ceylon that Pliny gives. In Philemon Holland's translation of Pliny (1634) this word is given as ' Seres,' and his translation goes on to say that ' If strangers came thither, they were encountered and assailed by wild and savage beasts : and that the inhabitants themselves were giants of stature, exceeding the ordinary stature of men, having red hair, eyes of colour blueish, their voices for sound terrible, for speech not distinct nor intelligible for any use of traffic and commerce. In all things else their practice is the same that our merchants and occupiers do use ; for on the further side of the river, when wares and commodities are laid down, if they list to make exchange, they have them away, and leave other merchandise in lieu thereof to content the foreign merchants.'

As this story of barter is told by several travellers who came after of the Veddahs, it has been thought that it may be a garbled account of local thought and ideas about the Veddahs of that time.

Rackam's translation continues :—

"But even Ceylon, although banished by nature beyond the confines of the world, is not without the vices that belong to us : gold and silver are valued there also ; and a kind of marble resembling tortoise-shell, and pearls and precious stones are held in honour ; in fact the whole mass of luxury is there carried to a far higher pitch than ours, but that we made more use of our riches ; with them nobody kept a slave, everybody got up at sunrise, and nobody took a siesta in the middle of the day ; their buildings were of only moderate height : the price of corn was never inflated ; there were no law courts, and no litigation : the deity worshipped was Hercules ; the King was elected by the people on the grounds of age and gentleness of disposition, and as having no children, and if he afterwards had a child, he was deposed, to prevent the monarchy from becoming hereditary. Thirty governors, they told us, were assigned to the king by the people, and capital punishment could only be inflicted by a vote of the majority of these ; and even then there was a right of appeal to the people, and a jury of seventy members was appointed to try the case, and if these acquitted the

accused, the thirty governors were no more held in repute, being utterly disgraced. The King's costume was that of Father Liber, and the other people wore Arabian Dress. If the King committed a delinquency, he was punished by being condemned to death, though nobody executed the sentence, but the whole of the people turned their backs on him, and refused to have any communication with him, or even speak to him. Holidays, they told us, were spent in hunting, tiger hunts and elephant hunts being always the most popular. Agriculture was industriously practised, but the vine was not grown, although orchard fruit was abundant. They were also fond of fishing, especially for turtle, the shells of which were used as roofs for family dwellings—they were found of so large a size. They looked upon a hundred years as a moderate span of life."

That is the end of Pliny's account. The Ceylon ambassadors doubtless returned to their own country where they must have had a wonderous tale to tell. Pliny wrote down his account of the meeting, and, years afterwards, drawn by his insatiable curiosity, he went in 79 A.D. in a Roman war-ship to Stabiæ, near Naples, and there he was overcome by the noxious fumes from the volcano and so perished, to live on in the pages of his Historia Naturalis.

## UNSCANNED UNCERTAIN HISTORY.

*In a thousand B.C., or about that date,*
*Or p'raps more early or more late,*
*They say, that Solomon had a port-of-call*
*At the Fort of Galle.*
*The Lion People, one and all,*
*Were still in, or near, Bengal :*
*So, may be, he met a Veddah maid at Buono Vista,*
*And there he kissed her :*
*If so, perchance, the bark of the ritti stem,*
*Which Veddah ladies wore, without a hem,*
*Became fashionable in Jerusalem*

K.

# ARTHUR RIMBAUD

By Lucian A. E. de Zilwa

THE case of Arthur Rimbaud is unique in the history of literature. Before he attained the age of nineteen he wrote poems which, when they were published many years later, set the Seine on fire, and revealed to the world a new star of the first magnitude. But, on the eve of his nineteenth birthday, he put the finishing touches to his "A period in hell," made a bonfire of his papers, and renounced literature for ever. He neither read nor wrote another line of verse during the rest of his life. Mallarmé said that he had had poetry cut out of him by a surgical operation, and that the man in Aden was someone who once had been Rimbaud. He was Kipling's "The man who was."

One might imagine a wicked fairy to have waved her wand, and caused a handsome prince to disappear, leaving in his place an ugly little dwarf. It is a mystery which has baffled all the contributors to the now extensive Rimbaldiana, but one hopes to throw some light upon it.

The judgment of his contemporaries has been confirmed by posterity, as will be seen from the three following extracts.

André Gide notes in his Journal, on November 28, 1905 : "The reading of Rimbaud and of the Sixth Chant of Molodoror has made me ashamed of my works, and of everything that is merely the result of culture."

On Christmas day, 1886, Paul Claudel, (who was eighty last year) was suddenly converted, like St. Paul on the road to Damascus. But it was Rimbaud who, six months earlier, had fired the train which caused the spiritual explosion scattering to the winds all his materialism and agnosticism.

"Rimbaud alone has had that influence which I term seminal and germinative, and makes me believe that, in the spiritual as in the physical order, there is such a thing as actual fatherhood. I shall never forget the morning in June 1886 when I bought the slim issue of *La Vogue*, which contained the first part of *Les Illuminations*. For me the word Illumination was not too strong. At last I felt myself breaking away from that hideous world of the Taines, the Renans, and the other nineteenth century Molochs : from that prisonhouse, that hideous mechanism, governed from top to bottom by laws whose perfect inflexi-

bility was rendered infinitely horrible by the fact that they could be neither learnt nor taught. At last I had a revelation of the supernatural."

The sudden change of personality which Rimbaud underwent at the end of his eighteenth year had its counterpart in Claudel's experience. In order to get local colour for some verses he attended Mass at Notre-Dame on Christmas morning, but received no inspiration. He returned for Vespers in the afternoon, and the miracle happened.

"I was standing in the crowd near the second pillar at the entrance to the sacristy. It was then the event occurred which revolutionised my whole life. Suddenly my heart was touched, and I believed. I believed with such power, with such force of my whole being, with a conviction that was so overwhelming, and a certainty that shut out any tiniest doubt, that nothing since,—neither books, nor reasoning, nor the vicissitudes of an extremely varied life—has been able to shake, or even to touch, my faith."

The third modern opinion is from an English critic in the Times Literary Supplement of December 27, 1947. "Rimbaud indeed is a poet easier to admire than to follow; yet, whether we welcome or deplore his influence, we have to agree that no more influential poet arose during the later nineteenth century."

There are some people to whom publicity is the breath of their nostrils. They can do nothing without cackling about it. An occasional paragraph in a newspaper acts like a whiff of oxygen or a tablet of benzedrine, by reviving their spirits and stimulating their self-confidence. But Rimbaud had no inferiority-complex. His poems were born of an irresistible urge to self-expression. He had no more thought of readers to praise or condemn him than a singing-bird has of a listener. He took little interest in the ultimate fate of his compositions. A few autograph copies were made for some school-mates and for a teacher, a word or a rhyme being altered here and there each time he wrote them out. Delahaye, a classmate who could write like copperplate, also made some copies. A boy called Demeny received a large number of poems. Twenty-eight of these were found and published twenty-one years later. From M. Izambard, a young professor, eight poems were retrieved. And so with others. We do not know now many were lost or destroyed. *A period in hell* was discovered ten years after his death, while the *Album Zutique*, with some of his finest work, remained hidden for thirty-one years longer. His Latin prize poems were unearthed more than sixty years after they were written. Only once in his life, when he was fifteen, did he send a poem for publication to an obscure weekly magazine, which ran for nine months.

Rimbaud's poetry might have remained unknown to the present day but for Verlaine, who was destined to wreck his life. Ten years after Rimbaud had parted from Verlaine and disappeared into the wilderness, in 1883, the latter contributed an article to *Lutèce*, reproducing from memory no less than ten poems, including *Le bateau ivre*. All Verlaine's papers, with copies of Rimbaud's poems, had been left with his wife, from whom he was separated. When autograph manuscripts eventually came to light it was recognised that Verlaine had performed a remarkable feat, for his reproductions were substantially accurate, although there were naturally some omissions and alterations.

In April 1935, Mr. Meyerstein wrote to the Times Literary Supplement that he had discovered a poem by Rimbaud in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1878, and guessed it must have been sent by Verlaine, who was at that time French master at an English school. One naughty monosyllable had been altered, as it would have been too" shocking " for English ears. Incidentally, Mr. Meyerstein still believed that Rimbaud had burnt all the printed copies of *Une saison en enfer* in September 1873. The fact is Rimbaud sent the manuscripts to a printer in Brussels, ordering 500 copies. In due course he received the six copies the printers present to the author, and these he posted to six of his friends. The 500 copies lay unclaimed in the printer's lumber room for 28 years. In 1901 a Belgian lawyer who was hunting for a legal pamphlet stumbled on a pile of *Une saison en enfer*. Seventy-five copies, soiled, dusty, and damaged by water from the roof, were destroyed. M. Losseau acquired the remaining 425 copies, which he presented to various institutions.

The next publication was the greater part of *Les Illuminations* (a title bestowed by some other hand than the author's) in 1886. When Rimbaud was in Stuttgart in 1875, after the rupture with Verlaine, he was visited by the latter's brother-in-law, Charles de Sivry, to whom the sheaf of prose and verse was given. Although Sivry had been repeatedly pestered by Verlaine for these papers, it was only after eleven years, in 1886, that he came across some of them (1 to 29), which were thereupon published in *La Vogue*. This manuscript was sold by auction in 1929 for 24,500 francs. Later Sivry discovered some more sheets, and these were included in Vanier's Poésies Complètes of 1895.

What of the poems presented by Rimbaud to his school fellows, Demeny and others, and to Professor Izambard? When the whole world was talking about Rimbaud's poetry, they realised they had entertained an angel unawares. There was probably an intensive search of attics and lumber rooms for papers of whose value they had had no inkling. Demeny's manuscripts were acquired by M. Darzens and

published in *Le Reliquaire* a few months after Rimbaud's death. Now manuscripts kept coming in from all sides, and enthusiastic critics were busy comparing them and noting the variants, with the meticulous anxiety of scholars comparing the Codex Bezae with the Codex Sinaiticus. Then began the comedy of publishing the author's "Complete Works." Since the Vanier edition of 1895, there have been no less than eleven such, each of which, except the last, was by the discovery of new material proved to be incomplete. A portfolio of drawings, sketches and caricatures first saw the light in 1930.

The last "Oeuvres complètes" is a beautifully printed and elegantly bound volume of the Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, under the sign of the N.R.F. It may well prove to be really complete, but one never knows. All Rimbaud's correspondence, with letters from his family, are included. The text has been cleared of the additions and emendations of the egregious Berrichon. Rimbaud's Latin poems are found in this book. Written between his thirteenth and sixteenth year they were supposed to have been irretrievably lost, as his old school, the College de Charleville (now the Lycée Arthur Rimbaud) was destroyed by fire in 1876, with all the documents in the library. At last, in 1933, M. Mouquet found in the University of Lille, copies of the fortnightly Bulletin Officiel de l'Académie de Douai, for the relevant period, with Rimbaud's work of sixty-three years back.

In three successive years he won the first prize offered by the Académie de Douai for competition among its lycées and colleges. A subject was set, and 3½ hours allowed for the composition. His first prize poem, of sixty hexameter lines, was written in his thirteenth year, in answer to the following paper. "Develop the subject indicated by Horace in the following lines, (Ode IV, Book III,) . . . Me fabulosa, Vulture in Apulo, etc. (8 lines).

Rimbaud's poem, entitled "The dream of the scholar," ends with a prophetic vision of Apollo himself handing him the plectrum, crowning him with laurel, and writing on his brow in letters of fire: THOU SHALT BE A POET.

*Ast ubi laurifer**â** frontem cinxere coron**â**,*
*Ecce mihi patuit coelum, visusque repente*
*Attonito, volitans super aurea nubila, Phoebus*
*Divina vocale manu praetendere plectrum*
*Tum capiti inscripsit coelesti haec nomina flamm**â** :*

TU VATES ERIS.

The subject set on the last occasion was : " The address of Sancho Panza to his dead ass." In the allotted time Rimbaud, who was now sixteen, wrote not only the Latin Prize poem, but a Latin prose essay, and a poem and an essay in French. Owing to the Franco-Prussian war these were not printed.

The existence of the so-called Album Zutique (30 pages) was not known to the public before 1936. Research has proved that it was really the livre d'or or manuscript album of the Vilains Bonshommes, who included Verlaine and Rimbaud. The members amused themselves by writing original poems or parodies of well-known authors, and making sketches and caricatures in the album. One of the Vilains Bonshommes, M. Cros, founded in 1883, ten years after Rimbaud had left Paris, a new club called Les Zutistes, and he took the album with him. The new title with a fantastic design round it was made by Germain Nouveau, who was not acquainted with Verlaine. Where was this album hidden for over fifty years ? M. Cros, the president of the Zutistes, presented it to the actor Coquelin cadet, who gave popular recitations from it. On his death in 1909 it became the property of his god-daughter, who did not know what it was, and actually sold it in 1932 as a collection of Victor Hugo's poems. It was sold by auction in 1938 for 25,000 francs, and again in 1940 privately for a price not stated

Arthur Rimbaud was born in October 1854, two years before Bernard Shaw. He was the son of a captain of infantry, who left his family when he retired from the army, and went to live in his native town of Dijon. His wife was a woman of property, a capable manager of the house and farm lands, puritanical in morals, thrifty to an extreme degree, and with a gift of literary expression in her letters, which remind one sometimes of the incomparable Madame de Sévigné. One can well imagine that the old soldier felt it would not be easily possible for him to live up to her standards. She was harsh to those who crossed her will. Her elder son Frédéric married against her wish a girl without a dowry, and he was cut off permanently from any communication with her and the other members of the family. Had she treated her son Arthur with understanding and sympathy in the critical period of adolescence disaster might have been averted. She did not approve of his wasting his time in reading works of imagination, and in writing verses. The only money he handled was the two sous he received to pay for his seat in church on Sunday. When he was sixteen she said he must get a job in Charleville by a certain date, otherwise there was the door. (p. 263). When Izambard lent him a copy of *Les misérables* she wrote to him that it was not the sort of book to put in the hands

of a boy of fifteen. She did not guess that little Arthur, besides reading Juvenal and Catullus, had already written things (like *Soleil et Chair*) which would have made Victor Hugo feel queer.

Rimbaud refused to take a permanent job at Charleville, because he felt stifled by the dull village life. He longed to be free and in Paris, even if he had to get his living as a labourer. He had written a letter to Banville in 1870, enclosing some of his poems, which he hoped would find a place in *Le Parnasse Contemporain*. As " a child touched by the Muse " he begged for encouragement. " To me, dear master ! Raise me a little! I am young. Give me your hand ! " Banville wrote a letter of appreciation but regretted there was no room for the poems.

Finding it impossible to live at home, Rimbaud raised some money by selling his prizes, and took the train to Paris with a ticket for an intermediate station. On arriving at the terminus, being unable to pay the balance, he was consigned to the Mazas prison, whence he despatched an S.O.S. to Izambard, who had him released and sent home.

Ten days later he literally shook the dust of Charleville off his feet. He walked to Brussels in search of employment as a journalist : but the quest being unsuccessful a friend of Izambard's sent him to Douai and so home.

The third flight was in February 1871, his silver watch providing the fare to Paris. He wandered about the streets in a state of utter destitution for a fortnight, and returned on foot through the German lines. It was in May of this year, when he was sixteen, that he wrote his now-famous letter (p. 253) to Demeny, expounding his conception of poetry, and stressing the supreme importance of inspiration and vision. " I am a spectator, while my thought is unfolding. I look at it. I listen to it. I shoot an arrow. The symphony murmurs in the depths, or, with a bound, comes to the surface. The first study of a man who wants to be a poet is his own consciousness." Musset he considered to be " fourteen times execrable." He had vision, but he saw things through a screen of curtains. Gautier, Lisle, and Banville had vision, but they could not see the invisible, or hear the unheard, like Baudelaire, the first of the Voyants—*a real god.*"

It is interesting to note with what unerring judgment this young boy picked out Baudelaire, whose greatness was not fully appreciated at that time, and whose gigantic stature becomes more evident as he recedes into the past and is seen in truer perspective.

In September 1871 he wrote to Verlaine, whose *Fêtes Galantes* and *La bonne chanson* he greatly admired, enclosing copies of his poems, including the exquisite masterpiece *Le bateau ivre*. He referred to his

mother's harshness and financial meanness, and to the impossibility of writing a great poem at home. Verlaine replied : *Venez, chère grande âme, on vous appelle, on vous attend.*

And so Rimbaud went to Paris, and in an evil hour met the fallen angel who was to lead him into hell, and wreck his stupendous genius.

From the maturity and accomplishment of the poems Verlaine had expected a man of thirty. What was his surprise and delight to meet a raw country lad not yet seventeen ! He was twenty-seven, and lived with his wife and infant son in the house of her parents. He added Rimbaud to the family circle, and immediately began the devil's work of initiating him into all the vices of which he was an adept. Their days and most of their nights were spent in the cabarets of the Latin Quarter or of Montmartre. Demeny, an old school fellow, gives in his *Familiar Recollections* (one of the numerous volumes of Rimbaldiana) an account of a visit to Rimbaud, just two months after the latter had gone to Paris. He was led to the Club of the Vilains Bonshommes in an hotel on the boulevard St. Michel. Rimbaud was asleep on a bench. When he woke up he rubbed his eyes, and, making a grimace, said he had been taking hashish. He also became addicted to absinthe. " C'est le plus délicat et le plus tremblant des habits, que l'ivresse par la vertu de cette sauge de glaciers, l'absomphe ! Mais, pour après, se coucher dans la merde !"

Such behaviour naturally led to violent scenes between Verlaine and his wife ; and, at the end of three months, Rimbaud was obliged to get lodgings elsewhere. In March 1872 he returned home, and wrote some poems, but was back again in Paris very soon at Verlaine's request. In July he went to Brussels, and Verlaine followed him, not caring what his wife thought about it. They went to London together, and spent the summer drinking and fighting. Towards the end of the year Rimbaud was disgusted of the life, and he abruptly returned to Charleville. The Hound of Heaven was hot on the trail, and Rimbaud knew it.

In January 1873 Verlaine was ill, and his mother went to London. Rimbaud was wanted, and she sent him his travelling expenses. He went to London but refused to stay a day longer when the patient was better. The revulsion against Verlaine was evidently acute : but it was pull devil, pull baker. In April he began writing *Une saison en enfer,* and the devil was losing ground. But the wily fiend made a Herculean effort. And Rimbaud felt that life in the country was dull, and the attraction to Verlaine began to revive. In this mood he received a seductive letter from Verlaine, calling him to Boulion. The last sentence, though printed, is really unprintable.

The baker was pulled over headlong. On May 24 Rimbaud rejoined Verlaine at Boulion, and they went together to London. " It was among the flaring public houses of Tottenham-Court Road and the murky thoroughfares of Camden Town that some of the horridest scènes of this horrid friendship were destined to be played out. . . In their paroxysms of drunkenness and fury they fought with table knives."

Verlaine's wife had meanwhile instituted proceedings for a separation on various grounds, including alleged immoral relations with Rimbaud. Verlaine was anxious to get reconciled to her in order to avoid the publicity of a trial. He suddenly left Rimbaud penniless in London, having lost his temper over a trivial matter, and went to Brussels. He bought a revolver, and informed his mother and his wife that if the latter did not join him within three days he would blow his brains out.

Rimbaud, in dire distress, wrote appealing letters, which read more like those of a lover than of a friend. " Oui, c'est moi qui ai eu tort. Oh ! tu ne m'oublieras pas, dis. Non, tu ne peux m'oublier. Moi, je t'ai toujours là. Dis, réponds à ton ami, est-ce que nous ne devons plus vivre ensemble ? N'écoute que ton bon coeur. Vite, dis si je je dois te rejoindre." Next day he writes, " Si tu ne veux pas revenir, ou que je te rejoigne, tu fais un crime . . . Le seul vrai mot, c'est : reviens. Je veux être avec toi ; je t'aime."

At this point Madame Rimbaud, who had heard of Verlaine's threat to commit suicide, wrote him a beautiful letter (p. 278).

Rimbaud sold his clothes and books in London and went to Brussels, where Verlaine's mother had come without his wife. On the third day Rimbaud said he was going home to Roche . . . Verlaine insisted he should remain, and go with him to London. Finding that Rimbaud was adamant in his resolution, he fired two shots at Rimbaud, one of which wounded him in the left wrist. They went to the hospital, and had the wound dressed. In the evening they were all going to the railway station, Madame Verlaine having given Rimbaud 20 fr. for the journey; and Verlaine was walking ahead, in a very bad temper, with a hand in his revolver pocket. Suddenly he turned and walked back. Rimbaud, fearing he was going to be attacked, took to his heels, and called a policeman. Verlaine was sent to prison for two years. In prison he heard that his wife had been successful in her lawsuit against him.

Rimbaud returned to Roche, shut himself up in a barn for a fortnight, and finished his account of hell on earth. *Une saison en enfer* is a heartbreaking document. It is a confession of the sin of pride, and an admission of defeat and failure. " Moi, qui me suis dit mage ou ange, dispensé de toute morale, je suis rendu au sol, avec un devoir

a chercher, et la réalité rugueuse a étreindre! Paysan!" Debauchery is stupid. Vice is stupid. We must throw the rotten stuff away. And again: "I now hate the mystical transports, and the peculiarities of style. Now I can say that art is folly." "Maintenant je puis dire que l'art est une sottise."

The final note is one of victory and hope. "It is the eve. Let us receive all the inflow of vigour and real tenderness. And at dawn, armed with a burning patience, we shall enter the splendid cities."

And so the curtain is rung down. Exit the poet. When we see him again, after a few years of vagabondage, it is in the form of an avaricious, scheming peasant, of the kind described by Maupassant. There is not a spark of literary grace in his letters, which used to be enlivened with impromptu verse and seasoned with Rabelaisian wit. Intellectually he had mutilated himself as completely as Atys had once done physically.

A commercial traveller who had seen Rimbaud at Aden a few years later reported to Claudel that he "looked absolutely insignificant, and spent his days smoking, sitting on his haunches in the oriental manner. He entertained visitors with trivial scraps of gossip, occasionally putting his hand in front of his mouth as he laughed the sort of private laugh of an idiot."

In prison Verlaine was converted, and wrote religious poems. *Poésies religieuses*, with an introduction by Huysmans, is one of the finest collections of that kind in any language. Huysmans says that whereas the Parnassians extended poetry to the frontiers of painting, Verlaine carried it to the frontiers of music. But when Verlaine regained his liberty the missionary zeal which got him the nickname of Loyola did not last long. He relapsed into his old habits, and died miserably in 1896.

The puritanical instincts which Rimbaud had imbibed with his mother's milk, and the rigid discipline of his childhood, against which he had rebelled, had asserted themselves, and given him strength in a tremendous moral crisis. He parted for ever from Paris and his boon companions, thus avoiding the occasions of sin. The fascination of the Latin Quarter can be really understood only by those who have come under its spell. At the beginning of this century, as a student of the École de médécine, I lived in the rue des Carmes, the heart of the quarter, and led la vie Bohème in the conventionally unconventional manner of a modern pagan. Hard reading till midnight, with an eye on the clock, and then, on the stroke of the hour—off to the boule-miche, where one's copains made room for one beside them. With a tall glass of coffee and a self-rolled cigarette of caporal one discussed energetically

until two and three in the morning every topic under the sun. The temptation of the lotus eater was nothing to that of one who entered the magic precincts of the Latin quarter.

Rimbaud's moral victory and psychical leucotomy were followed by some years of restless vagabondage.

After teaching French in Great Britain for a year, he went to Stuttgart as a family tutor. As soon as Verlaine came out of gaol he went to Stuttgart with the intention of leading him back into the fold. But Rimbaud's letter to Delahaye a few days later suggests that Verlaine attempted perversion rather than conversion. " Verlaine was here the other day, with a rosary. Three hours later he had denied his God, and caused to bleed afresh the 98 wounds of Our Lord." Their meeting ended in a fight, Verlaine being left unconscious at the roadside. They never saw each other again.

We next hear of Rimbaud wandering on foot through Germany and Switzerland to Brindisi, whence he was sent home with sunstroke. He enlisted in the Dutch Colonial Army and went to Batavia, and returned to Europe in a British sailing ship, walked through Holland to Hamburg, and toured Sweden and Denmark as interpreter to a travelling-circus, and worked as a dock labourer at Marseilles. In 1879 he once more went on foot through Germany, over the St. Gothard, into Italy, and took ship to Alexandria. He toiled for a year and a half in Cyprus, as foreman of a quarry, for 150 francs a month.

In 1880 he got a job in Aden, under a dealer in coffee and skins, for Rs. 90 a month, all found. The man who as a boy wrote Latin verses in the mathematics hour now ordered books on hydraulics, metallurgy, brickmaking, etc. He ordered " instruments of precision." He wrote that when he had saved sufficient money to be a rentier he would like to retire, and have a son whom he would educate to be a great engineer and a man of science.

From Aden he was sent in charge of the branch in Harar ; and there he lived " maritalement " with an Abyssinian woman. He writes that he buys for the firm Rs. 50,000 worth of coffee every month, but his pay is only Rs. 3,000 a year, with board and lodging. " I don't spend a sou of it. I drink only water which costs me 15 francs a month, and I don't smoke."

But he was born a poet, and he had only buried his faculty, not changed it into the capacity of a business man. Hence the fortune he so laboriously sought never materialised. He did gun-running for Menelik, in association with Savouré, and after incurring great dangers and undergoing many hardships, found himself out of pocket over the transaction. He learnt not to put his trust in princes, for Menelik

paid him just what he considered reasonable. After eleven years of strenuous exertion he had saved only 13,000 francs (about Rs. 6,000). In gold coins this weighed over 8 kilo, about 17 lb., which he carried in his belt on all his long journeys, because he would not trust it to any person or institution. At last in Cairo he deposited it in the Crédit Lyonnais.

The following two extracts from letters written by M. Ilg, the Abyssinian who acted for Menelik in dealing with European merchants, throw some light on Rimbaud's activities.

October 8, 1889. With regard to caravans, I must make one reproach. You never give enough provisions. There is not a single caravan which has not arrived in a starving condition, with all the servants in a deplorable state, and everybody complains of you bitterly. It is not worth while saving a few thalers on provisions, in order to have all the servants ill, and worn out for some months. Similarly with regard to the loads for camels. . . Asses cannot go far unless they are lightly loaded. All the asses which came from Harar are in a deplorable condition, and I have been obliged to put them all on my lands in order to let their wounds heal. There is not a single one of them which can be used.

August 23, 1890. As for slaves, pardon me, I can have nothing to do with it. I have never bought any slaves, and I am not going to begin it. Even if it were for myself I should not do it.

In the autumn of 1890 he asked his mother whether by next spring she could find him a wife who would accompany him to Harar. But next spring found him dying of a malignant growth of the right knee. In May he was in a hospital in Marseilles, and high amputation of the leg was performed. He went home to Roche, where signs of recurrence appeared. The local doctor with singular tactlessness suggested that the patient might find a little distraction if he did some poetry. Rimbaud replied in the language of Cambronne at Waterloo : Il s'agit bien de tout cela ! Merde pour la poésie. He returned to the hospital in Marseilles, and his sister Isabelle waited on him with singular devotion. At her request he consented to see a confessor, who told Isabelle afterwards : " Your brother has faith, my child. What is this you were telling me ? He has faith, and indeed I have never seen faith of this quality." In his delirium he would murmur : Allah ! Allah kerim !

*Le Sabbat* by Maurice Sachs (1946) ends with a renunciation of Paris, which recalls the history of Rimbaud. After a "stormy youth," described without the suppression of the most shameful details, he discovers that the only way to save his soul is to leave Paris, " with

its restaurants, drapers, boulevards, debauchery, intoxications, luxury and intrigue." . . . " I have no desire to be great, or famous, or perfect . . . I wish to go where I can be, obscurely, a man who does not disgust me. I do not know where I am going, or where I shall go. To the East, if I have any luck." . . . But just as *Une saison en enfer* ends on a note of hope and confidence—" At dawn, armed with glowing patience, we shall enter the splendid cities "— Maurice Sachs writes: " I have a distant glimpse of the paths, the glades in the silent morning, after the demons of the night have fled. The future, the ageless future, when there is always time to build. And other adventures, less sordid."

This was written in 1942, and the publishers had heard nothing of him since.

The numerous schools of poetry in France have become an international joke. It has been truly said that there is a new school every fifteen years. There have been the classicists, the romantics, the Parnassians, the symbolists, neo-classicists, fantaisists, futurists, dadaists, surrealists, etc. Many of the distinctions are arbitrary, and not capable of perception by a foreigner. But every one can recognise that the Romantics were born as a reaction against the dreary monotony of the 18th century. The Shropshire Lad has said that he could not define poetry, but he could recognise it by his physical reactions. When the Romantics degenerated to maudlin sentimentality they made certain young people feel sick, and these decided to banish emotion, and live on the intellectual heights of Parnassus. But the perfection of form of Banville. Hérédia, and others, in cold marmorean beauty, did not elicit the characteristic physical reactions. Verlaine and Baudelaire began as Parnassians, but broke away and developed into symbolists. The chief symbolists are Mallarmé, Verlaine, Baudelaire and Rimbaud, who may claim to be the father of the surrealists.

It is as impossible to translate Rimbaud into English as it is to render " Tiger, tiger, burning bright," or Kubla Khan, in another language.

A much discussed sonnet on the colours of the vowels may perhaps be quoted :—

VOYELLES

*A noir, E blanc, I rouge, U vert, O bleu : voyelles,*
*Je dirai quelque jour vos naissances latentes :*
*A, noir corset velu des mouches éclatantes*
*Qui bombinent autour des puanteurs cruelles,*

*Golfes d'ombre ; E, candeurs des vapeurs et des tentes,*
*Lances des glaciers fiers, rois blancs, frissons d'ombelles ;*
*I, pourpres, sang craché, rire des levres belles*
*Dans la colère ou les ivresses pénitentes ;*

*U, cycles, vibrements divins des mers virides,*
*Paix des pâtis semés d'animaux, paix des rides*
*Que l' alchimie imprime aux grands fronts studieux ;*

*O, suprême Clairon plein des strideurs étranges,*
*Silences traversés des Mondes et des Anges ;*
*—O l' Oméga, rayon violet de Ses Yeux!*

In Rimbaud's poems there are a few words of the Ardennes patois, e.g. *darne* and *fuiveux*. But even Vergil could not escape Patavinity any more than we can avoid Ceylonisms. The later poems, especially those in *Une saison en enfer*, are, in spite of their lyrical beauty, as incomprehensible as Sordello's tale.

The most popular poet of to-day, Louis Aragon, is of the lineage of Rimbaud. He began as a surrealist, passed through the phase of communism, and, after the last war, successfully voiced, in Crève-Coeur, the feelings of France under the harrow. Apart from France, his other passion is devotion to his Russian wife Elsa. Anglo-Saxon and Oriental people do not talk of their women-folk in public, and they feel embarrassed when others make a song and dance about them, as Aragon actually does in his Cantique d'Elsa. Like Rimbaud he uses words which would give fits to a traditional poet, *e.g.*

*J'ai retiré ce radium de la pechblende*

In the rather aggressive preface to Les Yeux d'Elsa he explains his technique, and petulantly says : if you are not interested shut the book and don't read my verses. " Que ceux que cela gêne ferment ce livre, et ne lisent pas mes vers." But why, oh why, is it necessary to avoid every single mark of punctuation in order to be a modern poet ? Mallarmé had a similar mania. " To be a great poet you must break all the rules." Aragon says : " Presque tous les poètes ont fait des vers admirables en transgressant les règles, parce qu'ils les transgressaient." But he is a singer who has caught the ear of the French in their present mood, just as Béranger and Déroulède did in their day.

The shipwreck of Rimbaud's life, like that of so many others, was caused by the universal ignorance of the biological significance of

the period of adolescence, and of the physical and psychical changes occurring at that time. Adolescence has been aptly compared to the pupa stage in the metamorphosis of an insect. (The Practitioner, April 1949). • Three phases are recognised, (1) the period of isolation, when the individual is out of harmony with his surroundings, (2) the disintegration of the personality, just as in the chrysalis the larva may by histolysis be reduced to formless pulp, and (3) the re-integration of the personality. It is especially in the second period, when moral principles are in a state of flux, that sympathetic and intelligent handling is needed. The whip and the spur will only lead to disaster. Rimbaud was doubly unfortunate. The harshness of a good woman drove him into the world, and he fell into the clutches of a vicious and depraved sentimentalist, who bound him hand and foot, having hypnotised him with the music of his poetry. But Rimbaud burst his bonds, and regained his freedom, although the plectrum of Apollo was shattered in the struggle.

# THE SANSKRIT DRAMA

By O. H. de A. Wijesekera

JUST as the origin of the early Attic tragedy—the most elementary form of the Greek drama—is associated with the myth of Dionysus, so too, according to Indian tradition, the Sanskrit drama is closely connected in its origin with the god 'Shiva-Rudra'—the mythological counterpart of Dionysus—and his consort Párvati, as well as with other gods like Indra, Brahmá and Vishnu. The only difference is that, whereas in the case of the Greek drama no attempt is made to father the creation of the dramatic prototype on the gods themselves, in Indian tradition mimetic or dramatic art (nátya) is considered to be the direct product of divine effort, the ultimate source of which is the play of Shiva himself who is thus called the dramaturge *par excellence* (Natarāja, Natésha, Natanátha, Mahánata and Ádinata). It is recorded in legend that Brahmá, the All-Father, after the victory of the gods over their enemies, the Asuras, first composed the Nátya-veda or the science of gesticulation for the glorification and gratification of Indra, the leader of the divine hosts, and that this science had been learnt by Brahmá, the Self-born, from Shiva himself. The tradition kept alive till classical times (see *Sangïtadámódara*) does indeed emphasize the close affinity between dancing and the drama, just as the Dionysiac origin of the Attic tragedy indicates its indebtedness to the chorus dances of the votaries of that wine-god. This point of resemblance, however, is no indication of borrowing on either part, and can justifiably be explained as being due to their common inheritance of certain cultural propensities from their Indo-European period of unity, which fact is very often the historical basis for the so-called 'similarity of development' between sister cultures.

A tradition preserved in the *Nátyashástra*, the oldest text on the theory of drama and music, has it that Brahmá at the request of the gods to create a new Véda for popular entertainment took from the Rigvéda the element of recitation, from the Sámavéda song, from the Yajurvéda the mimetic art and from the Atharvavéda sentiment (rasa), and thus created the drama. His task accomplished he ordered the divine architect Vishvakarman to build a playhouse and instructed the sage Bharata to produce the first play. The gods welcomed this new creation with delight, and Shiva contributed his share in the form of the Tándava dance expressing violent emotion, Párvati added the

tender and voluptuous Lásya dance, while Vishnu was responsible for the invention of the four dramatic styles. Bharata being the first producer, having learnt the art from these gods, subsequently transferred to earth this divine art in the imperfect and truncated form of the Nátyashástra or the worldly science of dramaturgy, the above cited text on which subject has thus come to be attributed to the authorship of Bharata himself.

The above legend of the origin of the Sanskrit drama is at least of some value, according to Prof. Berriedale Keith (*The Sanskrit Drama*, 1924), if we draw therefrom the inference that it indicates the absence of any Sanskrit drama in the Vedic period (*c.* 1500-800 B.C.), since it was necessary for the authors of this tradition to assert that Brahmá had to create the drama as a completely new type of literature. But, to my mind, the most valuable hint suggested by it is undoubtedly the intimate connection indicated between the primitive ritual dance and mimetic art leading ultimately to the development of histrionics. Many analogies from other cultures can be adduced for this phenomenon and, as pointed out above, the Greek parallel is highly significant.

As natural in the circumstances, modern scholars have made many attempts to trace the origins of the Sanskrit drama from the literary antecedents provided by the Rigvéda itself (1500 B.C.) This earliest of Aryan literary documents contains a fair number of hymns which are obviously *dialogues* (Samvádas) and expressly recognized as such by early Indian tradition. Max Müller (1869) thought that the dialogue between Indra and the Marut gods, for instance, was repeated at sacrifices in honour of the Maruts or that possibly it was acted by two parties, one personating Indra and the other the Maruts. Sylvain Lévi took up this suggestion in his *Le Théatre Indien* (1890) and urged furthermore that the music of the Sámavéda, the Book of Psalms, could have helped in the development of spectacular shows of a religious character in the Vedic age. It was also noted that the Rigvéda as well as the Atharvavéda referred clearly to dancing by both men and women as a popular pastime. From all this L. von Schroeder (*Mysterium und Mimus im Rigveda*, 1908) developed his elaborate theory that the Sanskrit drama was evolved in the Vedic atmosphere of dancing, singing and *soma*-drinking out of the dialogues and the monologues contained in the Vedic hymns. Another famous Indologist, Hertel, actually compared these to the western mystery plays and assured that here we had the drama *in nuce*.

These scholars are all protagonists of the theory that the drama in India had a ritual or religious origin. But several others like Pro-

fessors Windisch, Oldenberg and Pischel have opposed it, and, supported the view that these hymns indicate an old type of composition of *epic* character, perhaps Indo-European in antiquity. Pischel, however, was cautious enough to add that they might have been the prototype for both epic and drama, and, whatever objection can be raised against this view, it has the satisfaction of explaining a good deal of the problems confronting the student of the origin of Sanskrit drama. In fact, Bhavabhúti a dramatist of classical fame, records the tradition that a part of the great epic Rámáyana was composed by Válmiki as a separate work full of sentiment (rasa) and adapted to theatrical exhibition which he sent to the sage Bharata for the express purpose of having it acted by the Apsarases or heavenly nymphs.

There are a host of other theories as well, as to the origin of the Sanskrit drama. One school of opinion maintains that it can be discovered in Vedic ritual such as the Mahávrata ceremony which consisted of a number of episodes of a dramatic nature, even if the enigmatic dialogue hymns of the Rigvéda be altogether left out of consideration. But to cite the words of Keith " There are, however, nothing but elements here, and we have reasonable certainty that no drama was known," *i.e.*, in the Vedic period. On the other hand, Hillebrandt and Konow insist that here we in fact have ritual dramas, but the dramatic elements in them are derived not from the alleged source but from the popular mime which must have existed at the time. This hypothesis merely takes the issue one step backwards, and apart from suggesting a secular origin for the drama throws very little light on the matter. Among other exponents of the theory of a secular origin for the Indian theatre, there is Pischel who argued that the origin of drama is to be found in *puppet-plays*, and Lüders who emphasized the importance of the *shadow play*.

The above theories having failed to win general acceptance, Weber suggested that the necessary impetus to the creation of the drama in India came from the contact with Greece, although there is hardly any evidence for the exhibition of Greek plays at any of the courts of Greek princes in India. Windisch supported this view but was vehemently opposed by scholars like Pischel. The theory was then modified to imply only Greek influence on the Sanskrit literary drama and much value was attached to the fact that the Sanskrit word *Yavanikâ* for the background curtain of the stage was derived from ' yavana ' signifying Ionian Greeks. But the glaring fact that the Greek stage knew of no such curtain has made the argument for borrowing look pretty insignificant. Other facts too adduced to show Greek influence on the evolution of Sanskrit drama like the apparent analogies between

the dramatic characters, etc., can easily be dispensed with as being due to similarity of development. Thus we are left with the conclusion that the origin of drama in India cannot be attributed to any one single cause, however plausible it may seem, but must be considered to be the resultant effect of many trends of culture, mainly indigenous, like the dancing and mimetic tendencies, involving gesticulation—the influence of which is recognized even by Indian theory which defines drama as ' the imitation of situations ' (avasthá-anukriti)—and the penchant for dramatic diction and expression as discovered in the Vedic dialogues and monologues, the epics, and even in other literary forms.

The actual Sanskrit drama as a literary type begins with the plays ascribed to Ashvaghósha, the celebrated Buddhist poet-philosopher probably of the first century of the Christian era. A palmleaf manuscript of a play called *Shâriputraprakarana* by him was discovered by Lüders, at Turfan in 1911, along with two other fragments. Being a great Elder of the Buddhist Order, the author naturally selected the theme of the life of the Buddha's greatest disciple Shâriputra for dramatization. The remarkable fact about this drama is its developed technique and close correspondence to classical form. It is regarded highly probable that the two fragments are also parts of plays by the same author. One of them is of particular interest as it belongs to a very rare type of the Sanskrit drama, the allegorical play. In it we find the allegorical figures of Wisdom, Fame and Courage appearing in conversation.

Next we have the plays ascribed to Bhása, whose fame Kálidasá knew as firmly established, probably written not later than A.D. 350. But it was not till 1910 when an Indian scholar discovered these 13 manuscripts in S. Travancore, that the existence of any dramas by this great poet became known to scholars. The name of Bhása was held in high esteem by Sanskrit writers of the classical period, and these plays undoubtedly do justice to his reputation. Bhása generally borrows his plots from the epics, the *Rámáyana* and the *Mahábhárata*, as well as the romance (kathá), and his *Svapnavásavadattá* in six acts is a work of intrinsic value, full of fine sentiments. The harmony and melody of Bhása's style, sparkling with humour, have resounded even in the works of Kálidása.

These two great poet-dramatists are the fore-runners of the classical theatre which found its highest efflorescence in the immortal works of Káliadása. What is most notable in the master's works is their freedom from immaturity, but this must have been the result of prolonged and diverse efforts of earlier dramatists extending over a long

stretch of time. In Kálidása the Indian literary genius finds its fullest and liveliest expression. He was like his predecessors both poet and dramatist and composed along with several poems three plays, *Vikramórvashí*, *Málavikágnimitra*, and the world-famous *Shakuntalá*. This last work alone would have sufficed to accord to Kálidása the foremost place among Indian writers, if not in the galaxy of world dramatists. If proof were needed of the excellence of his art one has only to turn to that greatest of German dramatist-poets and literary critics, Goethe, who voluntarily bestowed the highest encomium on Kálidása and his masterpiece :—

> " Wouldst thou the young year's blossoms and the fruits of its decline,
> And all by which the soul is charmed, enraptured, feasted, fed?
> Wouldst thou the earth and heaven itself in one sole name combine ?
> I name thee, O Shakuntalá, and all at once is said."

It was the first Englishman to translate this immortal work of the master, namely, Sir William Jones, who coined the phrase ' the Shakespeare of India ' for Kálidása, and when one realizes the inborn reserve of Englishmen, particularly when confronted by ' foreign ' greatness, one begins to understand the full implications of this comparison.

After Kálidása, two other writers of distinct merit, Harsha and Bhavabhúti, kept the drama at the high level to which the master had brought it. But the climax had been reached, and the subsequent history of the Sanskrit drama reads very much like the story of its decline. Harsha (7th century A.D.) has been called, with considerable justification, the most colourful writer among Sanskrit dramatists and his *Ratnávalí* ranks as a superb product. The works of Bhavabhúti (8th century A.D.) stir us deeply by his human sensibilities and by his deliberate and gifted use of sentiment (rasa), but neither of these can be considered a serious rival to Kálidása who excels all others by his grace and elegance and above all by his noble rhythm. In him we find an unity of purpose and inevitableness of effect which remain unsurpassed in the whole history of the Sanskrit drama.

A very important fact that emerges from a study of the classical drama of India is that the Indian theatre from the very beginning was aristocratic and not open to all like the Greek drama. There was, however, a middle-class and political drama too in Sanskrit, the chief exponents of which were Shúdraka and Vishákhadatta. An operatic adaptation of the former's play *Mricchakatiká* or the ' Little Clay Cart '

ran for a number of months in London and also was popular in Germany. "This drama breaking all rules and partaking of two forms of art is really a novel set forth on the stage." The *Mudrárákshasa* of Vishákhadatta is a political drama of the first order and reflects the intrigues of the Indian courts of the period.

In all there are about seventy dramas in Sanskrit, but the majority of them are post-Kálidásan examples of its decline. Many of them are typical of the major aspect of this decadence, namely, its lifeless conformity to external rules and rigidity of theme. The plot is very often a weary repetition of some previous model or an ineffective borrowing from dreary myth and legend. Originality is conspicuously lacking and naturally they are devoid of the charm and grandeur of the previous masterpieces of a Kálidása or a Bhavabhúti. But however few, the works of these great masters are sufficient to secure for Sanskrit drama an honourable place in world literature and will for ever remain a monument to the literary genius of that most versatile and complex of races, the Indians.

# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FEMININE

By Lucy de Zoysa

A STUDY of the place given to the feminine in Indian thought and philosophy is a subject of interest to Ceylon, in the wake of her newly-won independence and freedom ; particularly, taking into consideration the fact that Ceylon owes her culture and civilization in no small degree to the civilization that was Ancient India.

Characteristic of the ancient civilization of India, Persia, Mesopotamia and Egypt, is the predominance of the female principle, which originally took the form of the worship of mother Earth and her fruitage. Of such origin is the Asiatic myth of Attis and Cybele or the Cult of Isis and Osiris which sprang into prominence in Egypt (c. 1700-1000 B.C.). Earlier still is the worship of the mother goddess in India, as seen from the archeological finds at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. Figurines of the Mother Goddess which abound in the excavations of Mohenjo-daro, bear proof of the existence of a mother-cult among the peoples of the Indus Valley as far back as c. 3000 B.C.

What is significant of India is her higher appreciation of the feminine principle.

Nature goddesses spring up in agricultural societies where civilization is bound to the mother, who is less nomadic, by nature, than the father. But with the rising of larger cities and the breaking up of matriarchal societies nature goddesses suffer degradation. Lower functions are assigned to them ; they become consorts and are gradually superseded and nearly forgotten. India is unique in possessing an opposite history.

The civilization of the cities of the Indus Valley bears proof of an advanced mother-cult which, we may say, persists in the Vedic age in the concept of Aditi and, later, as the Śakti of Śiva, or as Prakṛti, the productive female potentiality of the Śāṃkhya system.

A prominent figure among the many nature gods of the ṚgVeda—the oldest extant literary work of India—is Aditi the universal mother, the goddess of Illimitable Light, the Boundless One. Aditi is the mother of all gods and men. Aditi is represented as the sky and all intermediate space ; she is father, mother and son ; Aditi is all that has been, and all that shall be. The existent and the non-existent are in the womb of Aditi. She is described as the daughter, or mother, of Dakṣa, Intelligence or Efficiency ; or Dakṣa, the deity presiding over

generation. Aditi, in brief, is the all-pervasiveness of Nature—the cosmic force that drives and propels all things.

Besides Aditi, another oft-recurring term in the Vedic hymns is Dyāvāpṛthīvī, the dual concept of Heaven and Earth, which represents the parenthood of the universe. In the Vedic pantheon, the parentage of all gods and goddesses, *i.e.* all life in the world, is attributed to this divine pair. It is worthy of note that the term for heaven 'Dyaus' is feminine, while Pṛthivi, Earth, is also a feminine concept. Heaven and Earth are here spoken of as two mothers. (cf., *contra*, the Western concept of Dyaus-pitar, Jupiter, which is masculine).

Āpas (feminine), Waters, like Aditi, is recognized as the first principle, the origin of the universe, in India, as well as in the cosmologies of many lands. Likewise, all rivers and streams in Indian mythology are ranked as goddesses, *e.g.*, Sarasvatī, Gotamī, Sutudrī, Yamunā, Irāvatī, Rodasī, and Gangā, the ever-flowing, translucent and productive waters.

Vedic society being warlike, nomadic and virile, the tendency in these texts is to make the female subordinate to the male. Besides Yama is his wife Yamī; Indra, the war-god, has as his spouse Indrāni; Varuṇa, Varuṇānī, and Agni, Agnāyī. Yet, single goddesses also appear in the form of Uṣas (Dawn), Rātrī (Night), Araṇyāni (Forest), Urvī, Pṛthivī, Bhūmi (Earth), and Āpas, Saraṇyu and Saramā, (Waters).

The feminine is more comprehensive than the masculine. Hence, the feminine stands by itself without a masculine counterpart. The subtle pervasiveness of the feminine earns for it this singular power which is denied to the static male.

Araṇī, the two fire-sticks from which Agni, fire, the all-important factor of life, is produced, are also feminine, and are called mātarā, the mothers.

It is noteworthy that the concept of mother often supersedes that of wife and daughter.

The Vedic metres, and hymns, being the only means of communication between men and gods, are, in their dynamic efficiency, reckoned as female goddesses, Gāyatrī, Jagatī, Anuṣṭubh, Triṣṭubh, Paṇkti, Bṛhatī and Uṣṇīk; or they are called the spouses of the gods.

Besides the singular feminine concepts mentioned above, the chief male gods of Indian mythology figure as deities whose efficiency lies in their femininity. To Prajāpati, the male 'creator' god of the Brāhmaṇas, female characteristics are attributed. Prajāpati is called Hiraṇyagarbha, "having a golden foetus;" or he is the "golden egg" that arose from the waters. Prajāpati is said to bear the foetus for a year, the period of gestation being reckoned as a year.

Similarly Śiva, the supreme deity of later Hinduism, also figures as the male god to whom femininity is ascribed. This concept underlies his manifestation as Ardhanārīsvara, the male god, who is half women.

Śiva is powerless without his Śakti, signifying ability or strength, his female counterpart. The three functions of world-creation, preservation and destruction are attributed to the three Śaktis of Śiva, who variously appear as Pārvatī, the generating power, Śrī or Lakṣmī that of preservation ; and Durgā, that of destruction.

In Hindu mythology, god is inefficient and ineffective without his Śakti, and to each god is attributed a Śakti or consort. Indra is Śacīpati, husband of Śacī, Power, or, he is lord of Paulomi ; Viṣṇu is associated with Padmā or Laksmī ; Rohini is the wife of the Moon-god, Svāhā of the Fire-god, Gaurī of Hara, and Śri of Hari. Smara or Kāma, the God of Love, is inefficient without Rati, his consort. Kṛṣṇa is always depicted in the company of Rādhā and the gopīs, and Śiva, as mentioned above, is variously associated with his Śaktis, differently styled : Pārvati, the gentle ; Bhavāni or Sarvāni, the productive ; and Caṇḍī, the violent and emotional.

This idea of Śakti, the inherent power in all things, reaches its climax in the Sāṃkhya system of philosophy, where Prakṛti (fem.), Primordial Being, predominates Puruṣa, the Soul of the Universe. Prakṛti is the ever-existent, uncaused principle, Pradhāna, the origin of the universe. It is primary matter which by transformation and evolution brings about single objects.

Prəkṛti, being composite, produces by herself (*atmanah prabhavati*). By the disturbance of the equilibrium of the guṇas, constituents, and by their co-operative action and union with one another is brought about evolution. Prakṛti, the material world, comes into being for the enjoyment and salvation of Puruṣa, Cosmic Being, who is inactive (*udasina*) quiescent, self-existent, solitary and impersonal. Once it becomes conscious and personal it acts through the associated female principle, Prakṛti, which, unlike Puruṣa, is possessed of a high degree of activity and personality.

Ingenious imagination is attributed to Prakṛti. She is active and mobile, divergent, all-pervasive and industrious—the purposeful woman undeterred in her actions. She is ' *svatantra*,' independent, and ' *anasrita*,' unsupported by Puruṣa ; she creates through her innate power, Śakti.

Śakti is identified with Prakṛti, the whole world being merely an unfolding of the Root, Śakti, which is no other than Brahman, the highest divine principle.

Connected with the Śākta religions is the Devī Cult of the Tantras,

which lends itself to magic and occultism. Devī, ' the Goddess ' like Prakṛti or Śakti is the embodiment of all the energies (*Saktis*) of the gods. Since the Highest Deity is a woman, every female form is said to be an embodiment of her efficiency. In the Devī Cult, the extra-rational qualities of the female make her rise above the male. This is often popularly attributed to magical powers wrested by women.

The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad mentions a story, where the daughter of Patañjala Kāpya, possessed of a Gandharva, explains things beyond the range of vision. She also explains the *vyasti* (individuality) and *samasti* (totality) of beings. In the same text, the wife of Patañjala, also possessed of the spirit Gandharva, explains the ' inner controller '—the Soul which controls this world from within.

The inborn wisdom of feminine subtlety has the ability to probe into the unseen, while these tender emotions are lost to man. Mythology here attributes this power to woman's special obsession to spirits or extraordinary powers.

In the psychological sphere Puruṣa (mas.) is the power of Pure perceptivity, while the Intellect, Dṛk (fem.) is the perceiving power (action). Similarly, Buddhi (fem.) is characterized as insentient, but it is illumination beyond reasoning power. Higher than the ' devas ' (mas.) of ' manas ' (mind) is Sarasvatī the Devatā (fem.) of Buddhi, Intelligence ; and Prajñā (fem.) Intelligence, is said to be the life-force that upholds life.

We may mention here the parable of Indra and the damsel given in the Kena Upaniṣad. Here, the gods entrust Indra with the task of exploring the nature of Brahman (God). " He ran into It (Brahman). It disappeared. In that space he came upon a woman, extremely beautiful—Umā. She enlightened Indra as to the nature of Brahman."

Here Vidyā, Knowledge, on account of its pervasive illumination, is conceived as the female concept, Umā.

God Kṛṣṇa in the Bhagavadgītā, proclaims that he appears in the following feminine manifestations : " Kīrtiḥ, śrīr vāk ca nārīṇām smṛtir medhā dhṛtir kṣamā ; Of feminines, I am the goddess of Fame, Prosperity, Speech, Memory, Intelligence, Steadfastness and Forgiveness."

The number of feminine forms used in the sense of intelligence and knowledge is remarkable.

Besides the feminine nouns already mentioned are the following :—*mati* (thought), *dhî* (intellect), *jñapti* (cognition), *abhigñā* (discrimination), *manîṣa* (will-power), *juti* (impulse), and *cintā* (reflection), all synonymous with knowledge.

Allied to this, we may say, is the Chinese and Japanese concept

of Kwan-yin, the future Buddha Avalokiteśvara, who assumes varied incarnations of gods and men, like Aditi—potentiality. Here the future Bodhisattva (the Enlightened Being) is often depicted as feminine. The latent future lies in the feminine and not in the masculine.

Goethe, the pantheistic philosopher of the West, similarly finds in the feminine the mysterious secret of everything. Real knowledge, he says in his 'Faust,' is to be found in "Müttern," in the universal Urgrund or Cosmic Origin—the latent force.

# OUR EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM

By P. de S. Kularatne

THE Permanent Secretary to the Minister for Education has made a survey of the educational problems of Ceylon. Before examining his proposals it would, I think, be useful to outline first, the educational structure of the Island when the Special Committee was appointed, secondly, the main recommendations of the Special Committee in its report published in November, 1943, and finally the present educational position which is the outcome of the resolutions approved by the State Council in 1945. Some of these resolutions were sponsored by the Executive Committee of Education and the others were either amendments to the proposals of the Executive Committee or new resolutions introduced by private members. The responsibility for the present position, therefore, rests with those members of the State Council who constituted themselves into a body of educational experts and thought fit to amend the recommendations of the Special Committee which were made after several years' deliberation by a body consisting of most of the leading educationists of the country.

Before the year 1945, primary education of over 90 per cent. of our children was given in the Sinhalese and Tamil schools through the medium of their own language, Sinhalese and Tamil respectively. A small percentage was educated through the medium of English, although the majority of even these children were not sufficiently conversant with English to use it as a medium of instruction. In some of these schools there were special classes for children who had passed at least the 3rd standard in Sinhalese or Tamil. They were given an intensive course of English and promoted to the 5th standard at the end of two years to work along with the other students.

The English primary schools were fee-levying and were attended by the children of well-to-do parents and of others who, in their anxiety to send their children to the best available schools, paid fees with great difficulty. Even in these schools there was no uniformity of standard and hence no equality of opportunity as the fees varied and the richer parents were able to send their children to the schools which were better equipped and better staffed.

The Sinhalese and Tamil primary schools were free, but, here too, there was no equality of opportunity as there was no uniformity in the quality of the buildings, equipment or staff. Parents who could

afford to do so provided books for their children. In rare cases books were supplied by the State. Even though there was annual financial provision for the supply of free books to a few children in assisted schools, Managers and Head Teachers apparently hardly ever made use of this grant as it involved a certain amount of labour and responsibility.

It should be stated here that a few poor children from the Sinhalese and Tamil schools were admitted to the English primary schools by scholarships provided by the State or by the schools themselves.

There was theoretically compulsory education up to the age of 14, but no honest attempt was made to enforce the ordinance and money spent on attendance officers could have been used to better purpose. A large percentage of children attending free schools dropped out from the age of 10 or 11 and therefore, post-primary education through the medium of Sinhalese and Tamil was given only to a small percentage of children. This post-primary education was free and consisted of a five years' course leading up to the Sinhalese or Tamil Senior Certificate Examination.

The standard of education given in these schools was very low and though a little English may have been taught in some schools as a second language, Pali and Sanskrit, the classical languages of our country, were not taught at all. No Science was taught with the exception of a little Geography, Physiology, Hygiene and Rural Science. Mathematics was practically neglected. In the case of girls, a little Domestic Science, chiefly Needlework, was attempted.

Most parents, therefore, saw no purpose in sending their children to these free schools. The poorer parents could not be blamed for removing their children from school at an early age. The only profession for which this education equipped them was Teaching in Sinhalese and Tamil schools but the State made no provision for a boy or girl who wished to be a teacher to prepare for the Sinhalese and Tamil Teachers' Certificate Examinations or for admission to the Training Colleges. The Sinhalese and Tamil Training Colleges were ill-equipped and poorly staffed.

Post-primary education through the medium of English was available to the children who could afford to pay fees with or without a struggle and to a few scholarship holders. Here again the education given was not of uniform standard as the equipment and the quality of the staff depended on the income of the school. All these schools vied with one another to give the same type of education. The goal of the pupil, the teacher, the parent and the manager was the English Senior School Certificate or the London Matriculation Examination. Parents never considered what their children were going to do until

they had passed one of these examinations or failed three or four times. It was almost impossible to persuade a parent or child to leave the beaten track and take up commercial or technical education. The result was the numbers in our English schools continued to grow and the aim of all students was an academic education, whether they were capable of profiting by it or not. The expenditure of the State on education kept on increasing but there was no proportionate return for this investment. Sixty to eighty per cent. of the children in the post-primary schools were not able to benefit by the type of education provided for them. Neither parents nor children would listen to the advice given to them by heads of schools for they were all intent on " White collar " jobs and no parent would believe that his child was incapable of reaching this goal.

This was the educational situation when the Special Committee on Education was appointed (*a*) to suggest ways and means of stemming the rising cost of education, (*b*) to propose necessary reforms in the educational system in order to get the best return for the money invested. The Committee found early in its deliberations that the cost of education could not be reduced and that if compulsory education was to be given to the children of the country, the expenditure was bound to increase. The Committee, therefore, concentrated on the second objective and proceeded to consider the reform of the educational system and indicated in its proposals, as the Permanent Secretary rightly points out " how it would be possible to spend on education to the best advantage."

It was not possible for a Committee appointed to suggest ways and means to stem the rise in the cost of education to propose an alteration in the school-going age which meant increased expenditure. The Committee, therefore, suggested that the compulsory age should be from 5 to 14, more or less as it was in the past, with this difference that the Committee wanted the law enforced.

The main recommendations of the Special Committee were :—

(1) Schools shall be divided into two grades, primary and post-primary. Post-primary schools shall be of three types, Secondary, Senior and Practical ;

(2) The division of children into the three types of post-primary schools shall be made on the result of a fitness test held *at the end of the primary school stage*. Records kept by the school authorities during the child's six years progress in the primary school as well as the wishes of the parents shall be taken into consideration. If the decision of the State as to the type of school the child shall attend is not satisfactory to the parents, the child may be given a second chance at this fitness

test to gain admission to the type of school desired by the parents. Finally, the child shall go to the school to which he or she has obtained admission according to the decision of the State or the parents may educate the child at their own expense.

(3) The medium of instruction in the primary schools and practical schools shall be Sinhalese for Sinhalese children and Tamil for Tamil children, but the medium of instruction for others shall be English, Sinhalese or Tamil. The medium of instruction for Senior and Secondary schools shall be English, Sinhalese, Tamil or Bilingual.

(4) State and Denominational schools shall be allowed to exist side by side.

(5) Education both primary and post-primary shall be free, in other words *education given in accordance with these proposals was* to be free to all children.

(6) In the assisted schools the salaries of the approved staff shall be paid by the State and in addition a maintenance grant shall be given. *Post-primary assisted schools, instead of receiving a maintenance grant, were allowed to charge an equipment fee from their pupils.*

(7) Training Colleges shall have at least 100 students, shall be well-equipped and staffed and if possible, a Secondary, a Senior and a Practical School shall be attached to each Training College, in order to form a complete educational centre.

(8) Polytechnics, Trade and Agricultural Schools shall be established in order to give higher education to the best students from the Senior and Practical Schools.

(9) Recommendations were also made as regards free books, clothing, medical inspections and mid-day meals, and the number of teachers to be allowed to the different schools.

(10) To give equality of opportunity it was recommended that primary education should be of equally high standard in all schools. English was to be given as a second language to all.

The road was clear and well-defined up to the end of the primary school stage, normally 11+. The Special Committee visualised a time when the State would place before every boy and girl in this country a clear cut goal according to the child's ability and aptitude and show a well-defined road along which the child could travel to reach that goal.

The Committee realised—and it is necessary for all of us to realise—that all that has to be done in our country for the maintenance of its well-being must be done by the children of our schools when they become citizens and that it should not be necessary for us to import outsiders for any task high or low, whether that of Chief Justice, Director of Education, rubber tapper or tea plucker.

The State Council accepted *in toto* the recommendations as far as primary education was concerned. Yet, in actual practice to-day, some primary schools are still allowed to charge fees, and some, I fear, do not strictly follow the rules and regulations dealing with the medium of instruction. There seems to be no definite policy about the teaching of English in primary schools, at what stage it is to be started and how many periods a week are to be given to it. Are the rules different for village schools, town schools, free schools and fee-levying schools? There was a difference even in the maintenance grant given to free primary schools. Those who were previously using the medium of Sinhalese or Tamil were given Re. 1/- and those who changed from English to the medium of Sinhalese or Tamil were given Rs. 2/50. The present Minister for Education has fortunately done away with this anomaly but he still maintains the Royal Primary School, attended by the children of the rich, on a different footing from other primary schools. *I regret to say that the principle of equal opportunity for the children of the country does not exist even as far as primary education is concerned.*

I would suggest, therefore, that the Minister for Education should see that, without any delay, all assisted primary schools are made free like the State schools and that all primary schools are governed by the same rules and regulations with regard to salaries, qualifications and strength of staff, maintenance grant, medium of instruction and the teaching of a second language.

In order to supply these schools with well-educated Sinhalese and Tamil teachers, the Ministry should establish and assist the establishment of a number of Sinhalese and Tamil post-primary schools, well-equipped and well-staffed, which will not only train pupils for the Sinhalese and Tamil Senior Certificate Examinations, but also give post-senior education for a year or two, through the medium of Sinhalese or Tamil. Only such students should be admitted to the Training Colleges. Many other occupations besides teaching will, in time to come, be open to the products of such schools.

All primary schools which do not fall in line with these proposals should be refused State assistance but such unaided schools should be subject to State supervision in order to ensure that children are educated on the right lines.

In this connection I should like to draw attention to the Montessorri and Nursery Schools in which, I fear, Sinhalese and Tamil children are still being taught through the medium of English. In keeping with the present educational policy this should be forbidden and all such schools be forced to conform to the policy of the State.

The proposal to make Sinhalese and Tamil the medium of instruction in the primary schools for all Sinhalese and Tamil children was not such a revolutionary reform for already over 90 per cent. were being taught in accordance with this recommendation. The charge that the Special Committee helped to widen the gulf between Sinhalese and Tamils by this reform falls to the ground unless the critics think that the Special Committee should have made the really revolutionary recommendation that all children in Ceylon should be taught through the medium of English to make us into one nation. Nor was the proposal to make education free so remarkable for a similar season, namely, that already over 90 per cent. of the children were being taught in free schools.

The real revolutionary reform recommended by the Special Committee was *not the Free Education proposal nor the change in the medium of instruction* but the proposal to divide post-primary schools into three types and the consequent tri-furcation of students at the end of the primary school stage. The Special Committee wished that at the end of the educational road along which the child was to travel up to the end of the primary school stage, normally 11 +, there should be a sign post pointing to three roads, one leading to the secondary schools, the University, the engineering and other professional colleges, one leading to the senior schools, Polytechnics, Trade and Agricultural schools, and one leading to the Practical Schools, from which most of the students would go out to unskilled occupations or as apprentices to skilled occupations, while a few of them might be able to go to the Trade and Agricultural schools. The Special Committee also visualised the possibility of misfits in all types of schools and made provision to transfer students from one type of school to another if necessary.

The proposal of tri-furcation was the very essence of the recommendations of the Special Committee but Mr. T. B. Jayah, along with several others felt that a fair division of children according to their abilities could not be made at so early an age and moved as an amendment to the proposals of the Special Committee that there should be uniform education up to the end of the Junior stage and that students at this stage should be divided into two groups on the result of a fitness test and sent to two types of schools, namely, Senior Secondary and Senior Practical. Junior schools, though apparently uniform in standard, were to be of diverse types suitable to local requirements, whatever that may mean.

It is generally considered that in a country about 5 per cent. of the children are fit to go to the secondary schools, 15 per cent. to senior

schools and the rest about 80 per cent. to practical schools. I remember defending the proposals of the Special Committee in the State Council with all the arguments I could bring forward, pointing out the alternatives that would be placed before parents and children, such as the second chance to be given to take the 5th standard fitness test, the possibility of transferring a child from one type of school to another and the option given to parents to educate children at their own expense. But it served no purpose. It was easy for Mr. Jayah to appeal to the House on sentimental grounds and to convince it that uniform education should be given to the end of the Junior stage, normally the age of 14+. I believe if anyone had moved a further amendment that education should be uniform to the age of 16+, a good case could have been made out for it with the arguments brought forward by Mr. Jayah for his amendment. The majority of the members of the House would not have had the courage to oppose such a resolution. Another of Mr. Jayah's arguments in support of this amendment was that " he did not wish 80 children out of 100 to lose at that tender age, namely, 11+ to 14+, the advantage of going to a school run on "*proper educational lines.*" This argument holds good even against bifurcation at the age of 14+, for I see no reason why children of 14+ to 16+ should not have the advantage of attending schools run on proper educational lines. There are two assumptions in Mr. Jayah's argument: first, that the children, about 80 per cent. who will be sent to the practical schools according to the proposals of the Special Committee, will be able to secure the best that education can give them in his junior schools, secondly that the practical schools proposed by the Special Committee would not be run on proper educational lines. With regard to the first assumption, Mr. Jayah himself qualifies it by stating that the children will secure the best that education can give them in such schools only if they are capable of benefiting by such higher education. The fact that Mr. Jayah himself agrees in his amendment to turn out 80 per cent. of these junior school children to the senior practical schools shows that he believes that 80 per cent. are not capable of benefiting by such higher education.

As for the second assumption, that the practical schools proposed by the Special Committee would not be run on proper educational lines, necessary alterations could have been made to enable those schools to function properly. It would not be a great loss to the country or to the children, even if some capable of benefiting by an academic education were sent to a senior or practical school. Such capable children, whatever type of school they attend, will soon distinguish themselves. I cannot blame the Permanent Secretary for accepting

Mr. Jayah's proposal as a satisfactory one, as having no practical experience of educational work, he does not see the disadvantages of the proposal.

These junior schools of " uniform standard and of diverse types to suit local requirements " cannot possibly reach as high a standard of work or have the same curriculum, as the junior section of the secondary schools proposed by the Special Committee, for the latter would contain select pupils of a higher standard of ability. The same is true, although perhaps to a lesser degree, of the junior section of the senior schools of the Special Committee proposals. Therefore, the 20 per cent. students, who would have gone to the secondary and the senior schools at the age of 11+, would lose considerably in their studies in this uniform Junior school. Their loss is the country's loss. On the other hand the 80 per cent. children, who are to be sent later to the senior practical schools as a result of bi-furcation, will not be so well-equipped for the task ahead of them as they would have been, had they been educated in the practical schools proposed by the Special Committee. Having to work with students of greater academic ability, they would not have been able to benefit by the education given to them between the ages of 11+, and 14+, as they would have done, had they attended the practical school. The introduction of a practical study to the junior school will not solve this problem.

There is also this important fact. Having received a uniform education up to the age of 14+, students will have a definite grievance when on bi-furcation they are asked to go to the senior practical schools, the State refusing to give them what is called higher education *for a mere two years more*, to enable them to take the Senior Certificate Examination which opens the door to further higher studies and "White collar " jobs.

The Permanent Secretary justifies the setting up of a single type of junior school in place of the three different grades desired by the Special Committee with quotations from the report of the Special Committee. I am afraid he has not understood the full significance of the sentences he quotes. A student of the senior school and the secondary school will study certain subjects in common in their first three years and the standard reached in these subjects by the student of the senior school will be only slightly lower than that attained by the student of the secondary school. But a student in the secondary school will surely study other subjects. A very bright student in the senior school may therefore be able to go over to the secondary school. The same applies to the transfer of a student from the practical school to the senior school but the methods of teaching in a practical school

should be very different from those adopted in the senior school. *The blending of the three types of schools into one is therefore a grave blunder.*

I truly believe that if regulations are made to enforce bi-furcation at the age of 14+, sending 80 per cent. of the children *irrevocably* to the practical schools, there will be an outcry on the part of the parents on the ground that, having been given uniform education along with the other children to the age of 14+, their children are to be deprived of the benefit of higher education within two years of sitting for the Senior Certificate Examination. The cry of equal opportunity which will be raised will be irresistible to the politician. As a matter of fact, the Permanent Secretary points out that an attempt was made to introduce this bi-furcation in the Veyangoda Central School. The parents disapproved and the attempt was abandoned.

It was because several members of the Special Committee as heads of schools knew the Ceylon parents and knew what difficulty they had experienced in directing students under their care to suitable studies, that the Committee made recommendations that this division of students should be made at the end of the primary school stage. If the money spent by the State on education is to be an investment bringing in a good return, *free education must be regulated and directed by the State.* As the State pays for the education of the child, the parents must agree to accept the education the State is prepared to give the child. If parents wish to take the responsibility on themselves and educate the child in a different way, they should pay for such a privilege. The responsibility for finding employment will then rest on the parents. But if the State is held responsible for unemployment, parents cannot demand the right to educate their children as they like. *I therefore cannot agree with Mr. Jayah or with the Permanent Secretary, who supports the proposal of bi-furcation.*

I have heard from educationists who were opposed to tri-furcation at 11+, and who supported bi-furcation at 14+, that they now feel that they made a mistake. As far as parents are concerned, the poorer parents have never objected to the proposal of tri-furcation. The opposition comes from the middle class and the rich who are anxious that their children should all attend secondary schools and not be compelled to attend senior and practical schools. They apparently want to get free education of the type *they* wish their children to have. As for the poor parents, they are willing to accept any proposal, for their position will naturally improve by any division of their children which will enable them to get higher education in some school or other.

The Permanent Secretary has grasped the real difficulty behind the division of children into different types of schools when he states

that " if the white collar occupations, for instance, are enjoying a popularity in excess of their value, the real remedy is to give larger salaries than to the former to the less attractive but equally useful occupations." Quite apart from tri-furcation or bi-furcation, salaries should be revised, taking into consideration the conditions of our country, remembering that we are no longer a British Colony and that Ceylonese high and low should be paid as Ceylonese and not as Britishers or other foreigners imported into Ceylon. A reasonable salary or wage should be paid to all persons in all occupations to enable them to live a decent life and meet the normal requirements of their families. An urgent reform therefore is the levelling down of the vast difference that exists between the salaries of those at the top and those at the bottom.

There is another important point to be remembered in connection with bi-furcation. Senior secondary schools, which are to be created as a result of the bi-furcation plan, are intended to serve the 20 per cent. children that were to join the Senior and Secondary schools of the Special Committee's report. The Permanent Secretary says that these Senior Secondary schools will assume the function of the two latter schools, *i.e.*, the Senior and Secondary schools of the Special Committee's report and should train their students with one eye on the University and the Professional Colleges, and the other on the Polytechnic and Technical Institutes. He says that this is not incapable of achievement but I fear that these pupils and their parents will have *both eyes* on the University and the Professional Colleges. I should like to know who is going to choose the students who are to go to the Polytechnic and Technical Institutes.

The curriculum suggested by the Permanent Secretary for Senior Secondary schools shows how impracticable it is to blend the senior and the secondary schools into one. I agree that wood-work and metal-work should be taught to all male students whether in senior, secondary or practical schools. Domestic Science should be taught to all girls whatever schools they attend. The idea of teaching applied mechanics, engineering practice, applied electrical work, shorthand, typewriting, etc., to all students in the Senior Secondary schools is a task beyond human achievement ; for the Science students will have in addition to learn Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Applied Mathematics and Arts students Pali, and Sanskrit or Latin and Greek. They will also have to learn Mathematics, History, Geography in addition to English, Sinhalese or Tamil, Drawing, and Music. I do not envy the Headmaster who has to draw up a time-table for the Senior Secondary school, providing for the teaching of all the subjects suggested above with the

staff that will be provided for him by the new quota, about which I shall have more to say later.

The Permanent Secretary is of opinion that Senior Practical schools should be vocational and should be handed over to the Departments of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture. I agree with him when he says that children sent to his Senior Practical schools may not have fully reached the attainment expected of them in a Junior school. In fact, in his Junior school which is to be *a heterogenous mixture of good, bad and indifferent,* this 80 per cent. would not have learnt much. It would have been much better for them to have been grouped together earlier for academic and practical studies. In that case the academic studies of the 80 per cent. could have proceeded at a pace with which they could have kept up and they would not have been a drag on the 20 per cent. ; besides they would have " learnt by doing," which is the correct approach to their academic studies. The Senior Practical schools should in my opinion be vocational as well as educational and while the Department of Education may obtain the help of the Departments of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, it should not hand over the responsibility of the Senior Practical Schools to any other Ministry.

The Permanent Secretary proceeds to discuss the various other resolutions passed by the State Council dealing with the fitness test, Senior School Certificate and other examinations, religion in schools, mid-day meals, medical inspection and physical education, free books and clothing, estate schools, educational research, the quota of pupils per teacher, the system of giving grants to assisted schools, the compulsory school-going age, etc.

There will be very little difference of opinion with what the Permanent Secretary has to say about them, except in the case of the quota of pupils per teacher, the compulsory school-going age and the system of grant to assisted schools.

To take first the proposals as far as quota of pupils per teacher is concerned, the Special Committee fixed 27 units of average attendance per teacher in Primary, Senior and Practical schools and 22 in the case of Secondary schools where a choice of subjects has to be given, some students studying Science and some Arts. Even this quota was considered too high by most heads of schools. The Permanent Secretary, however, suggests that the unit should be 27 per teacher in all sections except in the post-senior department of Senior Secondary schools.

I wish the Permanent Secretary with or without the help of his educational experts would draw up a time-table for a model secondary school showing us how a school could be staffed efficiently by the

quota proposed by him. Even the quota allowed by the Special Committee would not be satisfactory unless the schools were very large and the choice of subjects was restricted. If the State alone organised the secondary schools in the Island, it might be possible to effect some economy in the matter of the number of teachers employed. I have visited several assisted Sinhalese schools during the last few weeks and found classes of 60 and 70 being looked after by one teacher. I do not think that conditions in the State schools are any better. If all schools belonged to the State and *the State was really keen on giving a good education to our children,* no quota of pupils per teacher would be necessary as each school would be given the staff it needed.

If schools are to be run on proper educational lines, the rule should surely be that *no teacher should be expected to teach a class of more than a certain number of children.* The number used to be 35 in England and the aim of the educational authorities there was to reduce this number to 30. I am not sure whether this has not been done already.

With regard to the reduction of the compulsory age from 16 to 14, I consider it a retrograde step. A large number of youths will be unemployed and with no one to look after them, they will come under bad influences and later become a dangerous element in the community. There is also the fact that if, as the Permanent Secretary suggests, the compulsory age is reduced to 14, a large number of children will leave school at the end of the *uniform* Junior school stage, ill-equipped for life.

The really revolutionary proposal made by the Permanent Secretary is in the system of paying grants to assisted schools. At the beginning of his survey he tells us that its purpose is administrative and not educational. This is very true at least with regard to his proposals in this connection. He wishes to go back to the system of paying grant per unit of attendance, a system which prevailed some years ago, and was given up in order to enable the introduction of the teachers' incremental salary scales. The Permanent Secretary has calculated theoretically the average cost of education per child in the different types of schools and he suggests that this amount should be paid as grant per unit of attendance for the different schools. He points out several advantages. The first is the immense relief to the accounting system of the Education Department which has at present to calculate separately the salaries of teachers considering every month such matters as the leave taken by them. He says payment has often to be made to each individual. He should realise that it has to be done in the State schools and therefore there is no reason why it should not be done in assisted schools. Besides, if he wishes to put the responsibility for the work on the

Managers, the Department could do so by giving the Manager sufficient money to pay one month's salary of the approved staff and, on the receipt of the Manager's statement and teachers' receipts for salaries, refund to the Manager monthly the amount of money actually spent. *But I am firmly of opinion that the present arrangement is much better.* All that should be done is to give the Accountancy branch of the Department the staff necessary for the work.

Secondly, the Permanent Secretary says that the equipment grant has to be computed for each school after scrutinising the annual returns. Surely this is better than giving money for equipment to Managers without considering whether any money has been spent on such equipment.

The third advantage he points out is that this method could enable free schools to admit fee-paying pupils, in other words a combined free and fee-levying system can function in a school. This raises some interesting points. What would be the staff approved for such a school? Would the attendance of the fee-paying pupils be counted in fixing the number of pensionable teachers? Should the Government give grant to a school which gives secondary school education to children who in the opinion of the State should be sent to the Senior Practical schools? Is it sound to educate in the same class, the fit and the unfit? Is not the Permanent Secretary thinking too much of administrative convenience? The Permanent Secretary also proposes that in the case of some schools which are not so efficient as others the block grant should be reduced and to others which are considered efficient, the amount so saved be paid on some pretext or other, for he does mention in his report the loss and gain on swings and roundabouts. I should have thought that he would have taken something from the efficient schools and given to the poorer schools in order to increase their efficiency and ensure equality of opportunity.

Let me point out some of the disadvantages of this proposal, obvious as they may be. (1) A charge of favouritism and invidious discrimination will be brought against the State when the rate of grant per unit of attendance is not uniform. (2) The income of the Manager on this system will be a fixed amount. To pay increasing salaries according to teachers, salary scales, Managers will have to save a portion of this grant. Therefore large sums of public money will be in the hands of individuals instead of lying in the Government Treasury as at present. (3) Teachers will be at the mercy of the Managers. It will be financially advantageous for an unscrupulous Manager to discontinue a teacher whose salary is increased. Such teachers will find it difficult to find employment. (4) Deductions may once again be

made by Managers from teachers' salaries. (5) The quality of the staff will be just sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the Department—in other words it will be profitable for a Manager to appoint the minimum of qualified teachers. To prevent all these abuses, the State will have to make various rules and regulations and also check carefully the accounts of the Managers to see what funds are lying in their hands and take steps to prevent misuse of this money. *I would therefore advise the Minister and the Cabinet to make no change in the present system of payment of grants to assisted schools.*

I should like to make the following suggestions to the Minister for Education and the Cabinet for the purpose of restoring order out of the present chaos :—

(1) All primary schools, State and Assisted, should be free and should be staffed and equipped on the same lines, so that every child in the country should have equality of opportunity as far as primary education is concerned.

(2) With regard to post-primary education the recommendations of the Special Committee should be accepted. Assisted schools which join the free scheme should be given a more reasonable maintenance grant or be allowed to charge an equipment fee. Assisted schools which wish to levy fees should be allowed to do so and should be given whatever grant is possible on the lines of the present system for such schools. I say this because it would be impossible for schools of the type of St. Thomas', St. Joseph's, Ananda, or Trinity to continue to maintain their present standard as free schools, under any set of rules and regulations made by the State for free schools.

(3) The State should undertake the responsibility for free education and provide for the children who are willing to accept the decision of the State. The State may accept the assistance of denominational bodies in establishing schools if they are willing to be governed by the rules and regulations of the State.

(4) In order to give higher Technical, Commercial and Agricultural education below degree standard, the State should establish Polytechnics, Trade and Agricultural schools in different parts of the country.

(5) The present rules for medium of instruction in primary schools should be enforced even in unaided schools including Montessori and Nursery schools. As far as post-primary schools are concerned the medium of instruction in the practical schools should be the same as in the primary schools but *no change should be made for the present in the medium of instruction in the existing Senior and Secondary schools.* This should be English for some time to come. I suggest, however, that Senior Secondary schools should be established as soon as possible which will use

Sinhalese or Tamil as the medium of instruction. Such schools should be as equally well-staffed and equipped as those using English as the medium. They should provide a course of instruction for the Senior School Certificate Examination and a post-senior course of one or two years. When these schools have been successfully conducted for some years and their results compared with those of parallel English schools it will be time to consider whether English should not be given up as a medium of instruction.

(6) In the free assisted schools salaries of the approved staff should be paid direct by the State. The number of approved teachers in a school should depend on two considerations, (1) the quota of pupils per teacher, (2) the maximum number of children in a class. A certain amount of elasticity should be allowed in fixing the number of teachers in order that the educational needs of the children may be fully considered.

(7) To reduce the cost of education *there should be a local service of teachers on a lower salary scale.* However, teachers, with the same qualifications, should receive the same pensions. A local service of teachers should not mean a lowering of standard.

(8) As salaries are not based on the principle of family allowances, women teachers should be put on a lower scale than men except in the case of widows with dependent children.

(9) Salaries of teachers should not depend on the medium of instruction but on the type of school and the qualifications of teachers, *e.g.*, trained, graduate or trained graduate.

(10) In the revision of salaries, which I hope will soon take place, teachers should receive due recognition and a scheme for pensions provided for widows and orphans of assisted school teachers.

Owing to the non-implementation in full of the recommendations of the Special Committee, today we have educational chaos. There was some system in the past even if that system was not satisfactory. Many schools that were doing some service to the country, having adopted free education, have become financially bankrupt and are unable to give the country the services rendered in the past. The schools that are maintaining the old standards and have perhaps improved on them are the schools that clung to the fee-levying principle to the last, refusing to accept the "pearl" of free education. The only exception is Royal College which has been fortunately well-cared for, even as a free school by the Minister for Education.

The Sinhalese and Tamil schools of the past have in many cases lost their importance and have been converted into primary schools. The higher education given through the medium of Sinhalese and

Tamil in such schools has ceased to exist except in a few cases. *It is curious that while the aim of the new proposals was to encourage the study of Sinhalese and Tamil and introduce them as the media of instruction, the proportion of children given instruction through Sinhalese and Tamil has been considerably reduced as most of the children after the primary schools stage go to the mushroom Junior schools and central schools established in the different parts of the country by the State.* In these schools the children who have learnt through the medium of Sinhalese and Tamil and who hardly know English, are taught through the medium of English.

The disease for which the Special Committee attempted to find a remedy namely, the anxiety of all parents to give their children an academic education whether they were fit or not, has become a hundred times worse. The only gain as far as I can see is that more people are becoming literate. I feel that we are spending more money and getting less in return than in the past. Unless immediate action is taken to stem the tide, we shall be swept away by it in a few years' time. There will be a large number of so-called educated unemployed, while many occupations will be going a-begging.

I can only hope that the Cabinet will review the educational policy of the country, having realised in the light of the experience of the last few years that the present educational chaos is mainly due to two causes, firstly, the haste with which the reforms were introduced, secondly, the non-implementation in full of the recommendations of the Special Committee.

# SINHALESE CULTURE

By

M. D. Raghavan.

## The Age of Culture

If we may designate this age by one name, it may rightly be termed the age of culture. In the past decade mankind has been awakening to a sense of its common heritage, objectives and ideas, stimulating the concept of the cultural unity of humanity. Forces of cultural dynamics are re-moulding nations and peoples, directing their thoughts towards a better understanding of the common grounds of all humanity. Of geographical isolation, there is none today, and economically, the problem of feeding the world's teeming millions evokes a sympathetic chord in the minds of all nations. All these are sign posts of the march of humanity and are symptomatic of the present age.

Among the several forces that have been working towards a common world outlook must be reckoned the growth of Anthropology, as an integrated social science which it has been developing into during over a hundred years of its existence. In the survey of the world's basic populations by anthropologists all the world over, it has been revealed that despite divergences, humanity is essentially one ; and that underneath the differences, there runs an undercurrent of thoughts, feelings and aspirations which is basically alike. It is the canalisation of this basic common factor for the welfare of the world that is behind the efforts of such bodies as the UNESCO towards a common planning and development of society and culture.

## The Content of Culture

Before we proceed further, let us first be certain as to what we mean by culture. The two sides of the science of anthropology are racial and cultural, or physical anthropology and cultural anthropology. So far as physical anthropology is concerned, the peoples of the world have been so much in the melting pot for ages that to classify peoples according to a standardised set of physical characters, has been proving

too baffling a task ; and the futility of the endeavour is being steadily recognised today. Cultural anthropology studies human societies with reference to their living conditions, each in its particular pattern of life. So far as Ceylon is concerned, the cultural outlook predominates.

It used to be the fashion, and perhaps it still largely is, to speak of culture as something too big to be understood by the common man, as in its application to mean what are known as the fine arts. Now that is too narrow a view of culture. Today the scientific view of culture is nothing less than the totality of man's response to life's needs and problems.—What are called the higher arts or fine arts, is really one aspect of art, which after all is one of the many factors of a people's life and should not therefore be confused with the wider issues of the word ' culture.'

We will not be far wrong really, if you visualise this word culture, as an ethnological tabloid. For in this little word you sum up the entire life history of a people in all its aspects, whether as an individual standing on his own legs, or as a member of a family or as a limb of the wider sphere of the society, in which he lives and moves and has his being. The Sinhalese attitude and reaction to life in all its multifarious manifestations is what gives us the Sinhalese culture. It is difficult to think of a more comprehensive word than culture in the English language. The customs and habits that regulate life in such matters as the production and preparation of food, dress, conditions of housing, matrimonial relations, behaviour and courtesy, symbolisms, traditions, ballads, myths and legends, folk songs and folklore, system of medicine, magic and charms, religious doctrines, rituals and practices, festivals and ceremonials, system of education, music and dance, agricultural life, arts and crafts, all these and many more too numerous to detail, are all implied by the word culture. In a detailed study of Sinhalese culture, therefore, we have to study what may be called the cultural content under each of these several factors. It is obvious that the field of culture is too vast to be traversed by any one man working all his life.

Having set out the implications of the field of culture, we may try to form a picture of the component elements of the Sinhalese culture ; though in speaking of an analysis of cultural factors, we cannot be too precise,—for culture is not an objective element, which we can isolate or put to a test-tube test as in chemical analysis, but is one that can be analytically studied only by observations in the field of social life.

### Pre-Vijayan Lanka

Of social life in Lanka before the colonisation of the Island at the

dawn of history, we have little or no knowledge, though it is not culturally blank either. That the historical edifice of Sinhalese culture has been raised on the earlier foundations of pre-Vijayan Lanka, if we may so call the earlier period, there seems however to be no doubt. The Nāgas and the Yakkhas have evidently been more than the mere myths that they are today. Both the factors are present today in Sinhalese culture, enlivening the past and enriching the present. Myths are not mere traditions, they are part of the people's life and are re-lived today in popular cult forms of Tovil and Bali ceremonies, etc. The Naga has been a universal factor of the culture of the ancients extending over wide tracts,—from the Mayan culture of Mexico, to the Naga traditions of Lanka, and the Naga cult of South India, where the Naga is an object of worship, especially in rural Kerala.

Though the Naga cult does not prevail in Ceylon, the Naga is a live force in rites of exorcism, as described in *Naga-Malaya,* in the legend of the Nagas as a race of semi-divine beings dwelling in Patalaloka or the subterranean world, and in various charms and legends. Not only have the Nagas carved a niche for themselves in the traditions associated with Kelaniya, and in their place in Buddhist literature, the Naga has been an inspiration to the sculptural art of the Island, as witness the impressive five-hooded Naga keeping watch over the silent waters of the Naga Pokuna on the sacred hill of Mihintale. Today the term "*Nagaswaram*" or the tune of the Naga, serves to remind us of the possible association of the Naga culture with the classical Carnatic music of South India. The term "*Nagaswaram*" signifies not only the particular "wind instrument," known by that name, it is extended to cover the entire musical band played with the complex technique of the principal instruments of Carnatic music. From all accounts therefore we may conclude that the Naga and Yakkha cultures must have been a great force in early Ceylon, though whether the Nagas preceded the Yakkhas as a human factor in Ceylon, or the one followed closely on the other, is a matter largely of surmise.

No account of the life of Ceylon can avoid mention of the Veddah, who has stirred so much the imagination of scientists and travellers alike. While popular conception views them as the lineal descendants of the Yakkhas, anthropologists are in the main agreed on the view that they are the aboriginals of the Island, of Proto-Australoid race, more definitely known in recent years as the Veddoid, in which group is included allied hill tribes of India and elsewhere. How far this racial affiliation is justified is not relevant to our present purpose. What matters is the recognition of the fact that the Veddah who once occupied large tracts of Ceylon, as shown by the evidence of their once vigorous

settlement in the Province of Sabaragamuwa, and who in the time of King Bhuvenēka Bahu VI of Kotte, were seen in the vicinity of Puttalam, scarcely survive today as the true Veddah in their jungle life of old. That in the course of the ages past they have to a certain extent been absorbed in the social structure of the Island may well be presumed, in view especially of the social status with which the Veddah is traditionally associated in the mind of the Sinhalese.

The Nagas and the Yakkhas, and in later days the Veddah, may thus be considered as the foundation factors in the social structure of Ceylon, over which has been raised the historic structure of Sinhalese culture.

In dealing with a people's culture we may either present it as a narrative description of life as found today, or present it against the historic background of the country. I here follow the latter method, for the sake not only of greater clarity, but also of co-ordinating, as far as this can be done, of the facts of history with the social culture.

## Colonisation Movements

Whatever the future may or may not disclose to us, we may safely assume that Ceylon must have been subjected to the population movements which profoundly influenced all countries in proto-historic times, before the dawn of history. We may therefore visualise the colonisation of Ceylon as having taken place in successive waves of migrations, and not in the tabloid form presented to us in the pages of the Mahawansa, of a single prince coming over with a retinue of seven-hundred companions. There are strong grounds to believe that the two arid regions of Ceylon today were among the earliest to receive colonisation settlements, the North-West coast in the neighbourhood of Kudiramalai, in the vicinity of which are the ruins associated with the doughty queen Alli Arisani of the Tamil folk traditions and the South-East coast, in the vicinity of Hambantota.

## Buddhism and its Social Functions

Both historically and culturally viewed, the one factor of Sinhalese culture that has moulded and modelled the life of the Island, has obviously been the religious factor, or the religion of Buddhism, so dramatically introduced into Ceylon by Prince Mahinda, son of Asoka, about 246 B.C. The output of religious literature that followed, such as in expounding the doctrines of Karma and Nirvana, the teachings of the Buddha and his philosophy of life, etc., has been very considerable, and are among the contributions of the Sinhalese to Buddhist

life and thought. As an instance of Sinhalese religious literature may be mentioned the Amawatura, of the 11th century, by Gurulu Gomi, the elegance of which has won for it the name of a "prose poem." Buddha is pictured as the charioteer of humanity establishing the Dharma in this world by exercising its influence and refinement for the uplift of mankind.

### Social Integrative Factors

The religious aspects of Buddhism apart, the functions of Buddhism in the social life of the land are of great significance in the cultural life of the land. The place of Buddhism in the social side of Ceylon's life is as important as its service on the religious plane. The domestic and family ceremonies enjoined on the peoples, such as the Sanghika dana, Bana preaching, Pansakula ceremony, Pirith chanting and so forth, are the same for all the different social groups and function as a great integrative force today in the social life of the Sinhalese Buddhists. The social function of religions is a matter of special interest to the student of culture and anthropologists have already propounded the theory that "an orderly social life among human beings depends upon the presence in the minds of the members of the society certain sentiments, which control the behaviour of the individual in his relation to others." These integrative factors, taken in conjunction with the fact that the original functional and the strictly occupational character of the several social groups, is today fast disappearing, together form a cultural factor of great import in the national life of Ceylon.

Another factor in Sinhalese ethnology is the kinship system, or the system of relationship that prevails among members of a family including the several kinsmen or relatives, far and near, that makes one integrated kinship unit. In cultural studies, kinship system is an important chapter. Now, it is a feature of the major Sinhalese social groups, that the prevailing kinship system is very much the same. Another of the planks of modern ethnology is the pedigree, which in Sinhalese society, has already had a great vogue, as the proverbial tracing of one's ancestry to the seventh generation,—Atha, Mutha, Kitha, Kiri Kitha, etc., which defines and fixes your social prestige. Pedigrees solve many a social problem. It shows at a glance the constitution of the social group, what has been the practice in regard to marriage, the marriageable relations, the history of clan life in the past, etc.

Equally with these social customs that make for a unified social life, may be mentioned the wedding customs and the wedding ceremonies

of the Sinhalese Buddhists which are also essentially the same for all the social groups.

### Customs of Salutation

An important aspect of Sinhalese culture is that side of social life which is reflected in the customs of courtesy and salutation. The Indian "Nameste" is an adaption to social life of the attitude or the pose in religious worship,—the "Nameskara" attitude. This consists in bringing together the palms which are held up against the forehead or right above the head. This is the devotional attitude of the Hindus in worshipping their great divinities—Vishnu or Siva, and it is also the attitude of the Buddhists in the worship of the Buddha. As found in Sinhalese literature, the ancient Sinhalese custom of greeting each other was in this *namaskara* attitude (the anjali pose), with the difference that the two palms are held together in front of the chest, and not taken to the forehead, as in religious worship—This hand pose is accompanied by the benedictive expression prevalent today, "Ayu bovan,"—a Sinhalese version of "*Ayur Bahavan,*" or, "may you live long." As an expression of courtesy, this sentiment is most ennobling. If therefore the *anjali* pose, is today restored in social practice, we are only restoring an ancient custom.

Of customary salutations on annual festival days, as on the Sinhalese New Year, the practice of the younger members falling at the feet of the elderly uncles and aunts, with an offering of a bundle of betel leaves and a leaf of tobacco, is a time honoured ceremony which today prevails in rural Kerala, as in the less sophisticated parts of Ceylon. It is a refreshing sign of the times, that the offering of betel is coming back to its own on occasions of public functions in place of the garland, though the garland is also an oriental custom.

### Sinhalese Art

To consider now the reaction of religion on the art of the land, both the popular cults of the propitiation of the gods and planetary deities, as well as the practices and rituals of Buddhism have drawn out and fostered an art, which is among the greatest of the heritages of the Sinhalese culture of the past to the present generation. Religion in daily life has enriched the life of the people with a living art, which in spite of the modernizing influences, continues to be a factor of great interest in the religious and social life of the Island today. In the making and the decoration of a Pirith mandapa, for example, considerable artistic skill is evident, which speaks for the artistic disposition of the common man.

The greatest accomplishment of the Sinhalese was no doubt in the field of art, art in all its forms, architectural, pictorial and plastic—Words fail to capture the architectural splendours of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa, the monumental edifices of the glory that was Lanka of the early Sinhalese. Of pictorial art, we have representative paintings of the several historical periods beginning with the Sigiriya frescoes, and continued in later days in the pictures of Dambulla, Polonnaruwa and the other viharas of Ceylon—In the field of decorative art we have a wealth of very pleasing designs of aesthetic appeal and artistic merit. Of all the patterns of Sinhalese decorative art, the lotus stands as the dominant motif in Ceylon. It is a feature of early decorative art of most countries, that one particular design figures conspicuously as the 'key design', the most dominant of all designs, and which opens the door, as it were, to the interpretation of the art of the area. The lotus design, whether of the whole flower, or the individual petal, has been so recurring a design in Buddhist art of Ceylon that the lotus may be regarded as the "key design" in Ceylon decorative art, and the most prominent motif in Sinhalese architecture and art. Whether in stone, wood or metal, the lotus is the dominant ornamental factor. Art designs get conventionalised, and in Ceylon the petals have been so transformed to form many patterns, so much so that in some the original lotus petal form is even hard to trace.

Among other patterns, may be mentioned the Sinha and Hansa forms, the bo-leaf form, in which pattern the Kandyan eaves-titles are made ; the *liya-vela*, the creeper pattern largely used in paintings, wood carvings and stone sculptures ; the *tiringi tale*, the mass of rhythmic spirals, and a number of other patterns used in Kandyan art ware.

Portrait sculptures occupy the pride of place in Ceylon art, by virtue of their proper setting in the architectural scheme, their artistic workmanship and their expressive realism. Portraiture in sculpture has been among the earliest form of artistic expression in India, dating from the days of Mohenjo-daro, and the tradition has been vigorous in South India as in Ceylon. A study of the notable portrait sculptures of Ceylon, such as that of Parakrama Bahu in Polonnaruwa, and the Toluvila sedant Buddha of Anuradhapura, to mention only two out of the many outstanding figures, would lead the student of art to conclude that portrait sculpture in Ceylon equals the best in Asia.

I should not omit to mention the "moonstone," which stands unparalleled as a harmonious grouping of figures in rhythmic movement, combined with art motifs,—a very "sermon in stone."

## Folk Arts

Leaving fine arts, let us for a moment consider what are aptly called the folk arts. Of these, the art of the Kandyan dancing is the most expressive of the life of the Kandyan villager. Though it ranks today as the living dance art of the nation, there is no doubt of its having arisen under conditions of rural life going back to very early days. That it must have been magical in function, with its place in the popular religion of the country, is also I consider most probable. Fortunately for the country, folk arts are very resistent to modernizing impacts, and are today among the few things in Ceylon least influenced by external factors, and have a habit of clinging to the traditions of the past. That accounts for the fact that in the solitary retreats of the Kandyan villages, the Kandyan dance has come down to us in its pristine glory. Nevertheless unless some vigilance is exercised, the day will not be far off when Kandyan dancing will be subjected to modernizing influences, and the colourful costumes and the art as a whole degenerates in technique. The degenerated version that is today shown on the stages of India and Europe, as the Kathakali of Kerala at the hands of certain enthusiasts from outside Kerala, who get a superficial knowledge of Kathakali, and present it to the world as Kathakali, is a reminder to Ceylon that if Kandyan dancing is to be preserved as Kandyan dancing, its imitation by outside enthusiasts and modernizing it to suit their own ends and ideas, is a risk to be guarded against.

There are numerous other directions in which the villager lived a full life in the past, which he scarcely lives today. I may here briefly allude to what may be termed art in domestic life, examples of which are collected today in the Museums of Ceylon—Such are the wood-carving patterns of ladle holders,—generally known as spoon racks,—the jaggery moulds, game boards, etc., representative of folk arts which have all but disappeared today– An object at once useful and artistic, was no doubt the ideal that the people lived up to.

## Village Studies

This takes us to village study in general, for despite the modern tendencies, villages are still the reservoir of indigenous culture, though not to the extent that they were of old, when the best minds of Sinhalese life and thought took shape in the village. The indigenous system of imparting knowledge through the Pansala worked well, and fostered a knowledge of the Sinhalese language and even of Pali, the language of the sacred literature of Ceylon. Studies of village life are essential not only in the interests of the villagers themselves, but also to present an aspect of Ceylon's cultural life, which has received little

attention hitherto. The situation and lay out of a village, its paddy fields and tanks, canals and waterways, roads and lanes, temples and dagobas, social groups and patterns of social life, customs and habits, arts and crafts, plays and dances, agricultural practices and ceremonies, folk songs and legends, history and tradition, all these will come into a comprehensive picture of village life. The picture of a single village epitomises rural Ceylon. To understand Sinhalese culture, it is necessary to read in the open book of village life, and how villages have responded to the needs of life—moral, material and spiritual.

### Culture Changes

Before I conclude let me refer to a modern factor in Sinhalese culture—I refer to what are correctly called culture changes. The mode of life today is not what it was during the Anuradhapura times, or even during the times of the Kandyan monarchy. Time marches on, and peoples and their ways of life change. This phenomenon of culture contact and culture change is among the most fundamental of the sociological factors today in all lands, and counts for a great deal in Ceylon. It is for the historian of culture, as the ethnologist is, to note, evaluate and assess these changes in the social fabric and culture of the Island. The study of culture changes and the culture processes, is thus among the main responsibilities of the ethnologist today. To review the cultural changes of the past few centuries, in the space of a short paper will be to attempt the impossible. We can not even recognise the main trends of cultural changes. These are the changes that inevitably take place when an indigenous culture, such as that of the Sinhalese, comes into intimate contact with foreign ways of life. A common feature today in all Asiatic lands, such changes have been more profound in Ceylon than for example in our big neighbour India. For, as a smaller geographical unit, the changes have gone far more deep into the social life of Ceylon and because of the unbroken succession of Westernizing influences, from the time of the coming of the Portuguese in 1505, the culture changes have been both intensive and extensive—The changes beginning with the coastal cities have permeated, though in varying extent, to the villages. It will take me long even to make a rapid survey of the culture changes.

These are the days of nationalism. With the mounting national consciousness, people are awakening to a realisation that their own customs serve their purpose better than Westernized ways. Nationalism is something more than national dress. Nor is it all a matter of national languages. It is more a matter of how we live, as true or as nearly true, to our traditional life, and how we cherish our social insti-

tutions. When you find that Europeanisation has spread from the city to the village, and has influenced such domestic institutions as wedding customs, and the village bride is dressed in borrowed or hired bridal dress, and decked out with the outfit of the European pattern, it is time we realise that one's own traditional wedding customs are good enough for any Eastern society. Even the orthodox South Ceylon, reputed to be the seat of the traditional institutions of the Island, is not free from these Westernizing influences.

In the *Kavya Sekhara,* the well-known Sinhalese poet, has given a vivid description how a Sinhalese bride of the day looked :—

1. In fine white garments dressed, the bride
Enhanced the joys of those who beheld her,
A very goddess Lakshmi on the Ocean of milk
Rising above the snow-white waves.

2. Her tresses long and black and wavy,
Bathed in sacred incense and perfume,
Knotted up with the Kusa grass
And braided heavily with garlands of flowers.

3. Her eyes shaped like the lotus petal and
Dyed and blackened with the collyrium,
Shone with a lustre reflecting the Kama
Shot from Cupid's shafts.

It is significant that the tresses were heavily braided with flowers, such as you see in the pictures of the women painted in the Sigiriya frescoes. As a picture of the dress and toilet of a Sinhalese bride of about the fifteenth century, the above lines are of obvious interest.

Side by side with Westernizing the bride, has been the modernising of the wedding feast which even in villages, will not be complete without intoxicants, cakes and patties ; for, it will not be up to date to entertain the guests on the traditional confectionery of the country, —the delicious *imbul kiri bath, kavun, kokis,* etc., and the ceremonials associated with the making of these delicacies have also gone by the board.

The picture of Sinhalese culture, that I have here presented, is but a representation as brief as possible, of a vast subject ; a subject which will repay close attention and study. In the scheme of national Lanka, there is no study of greater value or of more absorbing interest.

# RURAL WELFARE

By Theja Gunawardhana.

IT is now generally recognised that the resources of womanhood afford an undeniable constructive force in national reconstruction and especially in the field of rural welfare.

The world-wide Federation of Women's Institutes has proved the truth of the saying, "Service in the cause of a country's peasantry is the service of the Nation," for this rural women's movement is universally acclaimed as an example of an essentially constructive ideal surviving and forging ahead on its own intrinsic merits, as it offers a well-tried and tested socio-economic renaissance to rural women since 1897.

The Women's Institutes or rural women's associations were first inaugurated in 1897 by the Agricultural Department of Ontario, Canada, as an ancillary organization to the Farmer's Institutes, for the purpose of giving care, study, and service to the country home, and its human content, the family. It had as its ideal the raising of rural standards in agriculture, education, and health, economic conditions and cultural activities. Being non-sectarian and non-party, and uniting all in a common bond of friendship, on a common platform of human interests, the movement has proved to be a unifying force. The idea spread from village to village throughout the provinces of Canada, each Provincial Government supporting financially and with departmental facilities the institutes within its border. The co-operation of over 2,700 branches with the Health Authorities in the prevention of disease and the promotion of better health conditions resulted in a great decrease in the rate of Maternal and Infant Mortality in Canada. This solid foundation of scientific nation building soon spread to the U.S.A., Great Britain, Europe, Africa, Australia, India, and Ceylon, each country adapting the working of the idea to meet its particular rural needs and receiving the sympathy, co-operation, and in most instances, financial support from its local Government. To Ceylon the movement was introduced 19 years ago by Dr. Mrs. Mary Rutnam. Ceylon followed Bengal, in adopting the Sanskrit rendering (Mahila Samiti) of the term "Women's Institutes."

The Lanka Mahila Samiti (Association of Women's Institutes in Ceylon) today controls 270 branches spread throughout the Island in all nine provinces, aided by provincial and district committees which

are linked on to the Parent Association in Colombo. The Central Board or governing body is elected annually by members both urban and rural and has on it Government Departmental representatives, thus embodying a co-operative spirit.

The Lanka Mahila Samiti is the only voluntary organization in Ceylon acting as a co-ordinating agency between Government Departments and the vast, voiceless, poverty-stricken people in rural areas. The movement grew slowly but steadily, for it is one that grew from within, a democratic movement embodying the fundamental ideal of self-help and differing from schemes thrust on the people by external pressure or from schemes that were poor in personal contact and soul force and rich only in the dry bones of administrative machinery.

It is of paramount importance that rural-voluntary welfare work should be done by sincere well-organized bodies financed and financed liberally by the Government. Rural work embodies all aspects of life and should receive the close and active co-operation of Government bodies and all private agencies working for the common purpose of Rural Welfare. What all that life requires and claims is the possibility of functioning in the most perfect way possible—not through individual units of life which have little regard for other such units, but through groups of sympathetic individuals sharing a common life.

There are many things the state can do for rural women, many things which other agencies can also do for them, but there are yet fundamentally important matters which women well-versed and trained in the technique of rural welfare alone can successfully plan for women. This task of nation building which starts with the home is essentially a woman's mission.

Hence the state should utilize to the full this great instrument for national welfare so lavishly used by other Governments. It has been tried successfully for 19 years here and it *will* be a great force in revitalizing and re-orientating rural Ceylon.

### Importance of Rural Work in Ceylon and Place of Women's Work in the Scheme.

Eighty-six per centum of our population is rural. Therefore rural prosperity spells Ceylon's prosperity. Denationalization of so-called middle and upper classes in the towns is, one fears, almost complete. Due to a better type of education or perhaps no education at all the rural folk are far more national minded. Rural life still retains some of the framework of our ancient culture belonging to and

inseparable from the people. Therefore welfare work in the villages will ultimately bring forward a race of loyal countrymen and women. Rural mothers through their children furnish a perpetual stream of vitality which flows not only into rural but also to city life. Nothing can be more important than safeguarding the health and guaranteeing the vitality of the mothers and children of the villages. Women are the homemakers who wield the power of moulding the future generation.

## Health

Any rural welfare scheme must start in the field of health which is threatened by malnutrition, endemic diseases, and by ignorance of the fundamental laws of health and hygiene. The Medical Department has used the L.M.S. to put into operation its comprehensive rural sanitation programme in close co-operation with sanitary officers wherever they are available, and where they are not, with the Samiti's well-trained rural workers (Grāmasevikas). The Samiti have helped the villagers to realise that health authorities come to them in friendliness and are no longer to be feared or shunned. In planning their six monthly programmes, our branches arrange for talks from local health authorities, lantern lectures, etc. They have also agitated for clinics, dispensaries, midwives and have got them where possible. Without the Samitiya none of these rural women would have the courage of action which the co-operative spirit of the Samitiya gives them. They have learnt to voice complaints politely, as free-thinking, free-speaking individuals and they know that to voice complaints to Government is the fundamental right of a free people.

## Agriculture

Health in turn is bound up with economic conditions. Ceylon being predominantly agricultural, the L.M.S. initiated the easy method of improving the country's economy through home-garden drives. Today pioneers of the movement feel happy to see entire villages self-supporting in home grown vegetables and subsidiary foodstuffs like chillies, onion, ginger and turmeric. The problem of co-owned small holdings due to fragmentation of land has been surmounted by fostering co-operative plots on crown land or a few acres given by a more well to do member. During increased food production activities in the war years, one Samitiya brought 4,480 lbs. of yams to the foodcraft exhibition and fed over 6,000 visitors. One centre preserved fruit going waste to the value of Rs. 5,020/-.

## Cottage Industries

Most villages in Ceylon need to supplement their agricultural income. The importance and need of *cottage industries* in Ceylon cannot be over-emphasised. There was a time when rural areas were self-sufficient. Today they must have a subsidiary occupation unless they own sufficient land to make agriculture a paying concern. Therefore cottage industries are essential under the existing conditions. There is greater intercommunication between town and rural areas now. Rural conditions are less primitive ; therefore there are more wants and now there is need for money where it was hardly needed before. Then, money was merely hoarded. A small unit of land to cultivate means more time to spare and cottage industries help the villager to use his spare time profitably, for idleness leads to quarrels, crime and litigation. The Samiti have succeeded in persuading the villager to this view.

Within the category of cottage industries also come our rich heritage of handicrafts like rata mat-weaving, Dumbara cloth weaving, old Sinhalese embroidery, lace work, etc. Out of these we strive to revive those crafts, the pursuit of which is the most remunerative. The movement has always done its best to resuscitate our old designs of great artistic merit and to make people eschew cheap imitation of Western art. We do not advocate the mere embalming of what is antique nor do we encourage blind antagonism to what is foreign. Members are encouraged to evolve new designs based on old designs, thus rising from being mere imitators to creative minded beings, contributing their share to a cultural background. Today our Samiti handicrafts command good prices in the world market.

Besides these specialised crafts, the L.M.S. with the help of the Industries Department laid the foundations of Wetakeya weaving as a cottage craft on scientific lines, paving the way for thousands of women to earn a substantial subsidiary income.

The Induruwa Mat Weavers' Co-operative Samitiya is an example of how co-ordination with the Co-operative Department has helped a Samitiya to deal with its own business. It has supplied to Government mats to the value of Rs. 9,000/- this year.

## Thrift

The Savings Drive too is forging ahead. Morakelle (N.W.P.) and Korase (W.P.) for example, have Rs. 17,000/- and Rs. 2,234/- to their credit respectively, all through sales from surplus home garden produce and handicrafts.

### Adult Education

While remembering that mere literacy is not an end in itself, the L.M.S. has introduced adult education, linking it up with general social education, especially in regard to health, agriculture, child training and citizenship.

### Nursery Schools

Child training forms a no less important part of the scheme. A ' swabasha ' nursery school—the very first of its kind in Ceylon—was opened in the Alubowila Centre six years ago, with the co-operation of the officials in charge of it and the men's Gramasanwardhana Society. The Rural nursery school movement is now growing slowly but steadily.

### Cultural and Social

The social aspect of the scheme—monthly meetings, lectures, cinema shows, folk singing and folk dancing, educational tours, community harvesting and transplanting, is a great blessing in the lonely and colourless life of our rural sisters. If one of our aims is to restore Social Unity to the ideal of national life and to recreate community of interest between people of different classes, then the Mahila Samiti are playing an important part in the civic life of the nation. The life of one becomes the life of all. Each Samitiya is allowed to plan its work and encouraged to conduct its own work. Thus hidden talent is discovered and a spirit of responsibility and capacity for organisation is developed. Its self-government teaches practical democracy. Although the training in good citizenship is based on the home, the *spirit of the movement* goes far beyond the mere details of housing and growing foodcrops.

Thus this work, wisely and delicately handled, will lead to a regeneration of rural life. At present for want of enlightenment some rural women believe that the town offers a comfortable haven and this leads to an exodus of young girls into towns. The Mahila Samiti offer a solution to this problem by making village life sufficiently attractive to them so that they lose the desire to leave it, in the blind pursuit of the glamour of the town which most often for them becomes only a land of sighs.

### Spiritual

Though the movement is non-religious, it encourages all religious activities whatever the religion may be. In rural work, a spiritual basis, personal earnestness and sincerity are of vital importance. Rurla

development is synonymous with a sincerely spiritual, emotional, intellectual and psychological approach to rural needs and problems, which vary in each province, district or even in each village. Training is therefore all important and is now available at our Kaduwela Training Institute. Some enter it totally ignorant of village development technique but leave it fully fledged leaders, inspired with the spirit of service. Many villages bear grateful testimony to our Grāmasevikas (paid workers) and 'Swecchа' sevikas (voluntary workers) who are contributing in no small way to the success of our movement by their devotion to it. Leaving their homes they dedicate their lives to rural welfare, often taking up work in remote jungle villages, suffering much hardship but accepting it cheerfully.

### A Call for Collaboration

The Movement has now 147 trained-women leaders from among the rural folk but only a handful from among the hundreds of so-called educated women of the towns. Is it because they have acquired at much expense and effort only a shallow intellectualism of no practical use to themselves, or to the body politic? The idea hardly occurs to them that they have a duty by their motherland. Our younger generation, however, is being attracted to this work but not fast enough. We can cover the entire Island with model villages if our educated sisters come to the forefront and make their legitimate contribution to the civic life of the nation.

### State Recognition

After the movement had struggled on in the face of many a handicap for 12 years, it won State Recognition in 1943 when the first grant of Rs. 2,000/- was passed in the State Council as a Supplementary Estimate. Since then the grants-in-aid have increased and in 1948 a total sum of Rs. 32,000/- was voted. This movement in other countries, however, is financed much more liberally as those Governments have realised that what they give to the Women's Institutes comes back to the nation in far greater measure, for no amount of money can buy the fruits of single-hearted and selfless voluntary service. According to leading authorities on the subject, Ceylon compares very favourably with the rest of the world in this work.

We have during the last 19 years only touched the fringe of a vast problem. A more abundant harvest awaits us. Volunteers aflame with the spirit of service, and with the ability and willingness to move

in perfect comradeship with our rural sisters, are needed to cope with the rapid expansion of the movement.

Ours is an essentially constructive movement which without revolutionary measures, by the awakening of thought, self-help and self-respect in the rural personality, brings about a new life and a new order which is its right to know and ours to plan.

By offering rural womanhood knowledge, by removing ignorance and poverty, we, the women of Ceylon, will make an impressive contribution to the re-orientation of the status and solidarity of the rural life of Ceylon, which once embodied the country's culture and the soul of the Nation.

# MAINLY ABOUT PEOPLE

By Janus.

LET'S talk about Journalists for they are a peculiarly interesting tribe.

They can put a halo round a man with a headline or fell him with a phrase. They who spotlight others are themselves always in the shadow. They who make others famous remain unknown themselves, for the most part. The Freedom of the Press evidently stops dead at the iron curtain of reticent self-effacement that hides the Fourth Estate from the public which, for this very reason, has some strange fascination for it.

Regularly keeping irregular hours, these old hands at digging out something new are a lonely clan with a wide circle of foes to choose from and few friends to be saved from.

* * *

There are two distinct types of the tribe : the Journalist and the Newspaperman. The difference between the two is subtle : almost a pen-point. The one writes up the views ; the other, the news. Journalists can afford to wear two shirts in one week ; Newspapermen one shirt in two weeks. The Journalist, after a good deal of mooching about which is called " training," writes those four-storeyed, fire-proof sentences that go to make up what are called " Leaders " which nobody ever reads. The Newspaperman, raw from school, writes, with one eye on the clock, plain, simple S.S.C. English sentences which are devoured by the public as hot news stories.

* * *

Mr. H. A. J. Hulugalle, the Information Officer of the Government, has been both. When the " Ceylon Daily News " printing office was at Maradana, every morning he used to draw ten cents for tram fare from the office and travel to Fort in search of news. He grew up with the " Daily News." When the mighty Editor, S. J. K. Crowther, at the height of his fame, threw down the gauntlet in a letter of resignation, to the amazement of all, the nervous young man was placed on the Editorial throne at the " Daily News."

He was a remarkable kind of Editor. He reigned ; he never ruled. The change from Crowther to Hulugalle was the difference between buckram and brocade.

Hulugalle seemed unaware that he had any weight to throw about. " Side " was something one could not associate with him.

There are some people to whom a joke is a serious thing. To Editor Hulugalle a serious thing was a joke. Raillery, good-humoured laughter and alluring banter comprised the technique of his rule over the staff. He could talk lightly of serious things. But there was no kindlier and more human figure in the whole office.

His knowledge about men and things was something amazing. And his intimacy with every branch connected with journalism at Lake House made him almost a wonder.

* * *

As a writer, he refrained from making up brilliant phrases or saying anything novel. But whatever he wrote was clear, chaste and elegant. It was good English—direct, precise, with no straining after effect. Above all, it was eminently readable. Hulugalle was free from that terrible jargon called " journalese " which enabled a " Leader "-writer to express the minimum amount of idea in the maximum number of words.

He gave an order to his staff as though he was asking for a favour. He made the new-comer learn his work without giving him the impression that he was being taught. And before you knew where you were he made you feel that you knew about the job he taught you more than he himself !

* * *

Sometimes he could be devastating in his remarks.

I remember once Hulugalle discussing the " Observer " with its Editor.

" Why don't you put more news and pictures in it ? " asked Hulugalle.

" Don't forget that the ' Observer ' is a five-cent paper," replied the Editor of the " Observer."

" Nobody who reads the ' Observer ' is ever likely to forget that ! " replied Hulugalle.

* * *

Another lovable figure at Lake House in those days was Willet de Soysa.

Some say it in phrases ; others in flowers. Willet said it in pints—usually pints of whisky. Anything was good enough for him for a celebration.

On the slightest of pretexts he would lure us to a low down pub in the Fort, just before midnight, and order a pint of whisky. He did not believe in " quick ones." The Soysa blood flowed in his veins. He was never so happy as when getting rid of his money. I believe he spent all his salary on his friends. He always drank. But I never saw him really drunk.

He had a theory that unless one drank overmuch one could never be a good Journalist ! Judging by the amount he drank he certainly was a wonderful Journalist.

Willet's mission seemed to be to make other people happy. I believe, he himself was thoroughly miserable.

The goodness of his heart got Willet into some trouble or other and he left Colombo. I lost sight of him.

* * *

Orion de Zilwa was one of the most brilliant Journalists who ever lived in Ceylon. He was a man difficult to fathom and difficult to understand. He spoke very little. You would have needed a corkscrew to extract a word out of him by way of conversation. But he was a marvellous listener.

His place at the " Daily News " was rather vague for quite a long time. But that he was somebody " big " we all knew. He would disappear from the office for long periods and appear as suddenly and carry on as though nothing in the world had happened. The " Daily News " could not do without him ; he could not do without the " Daily News."

As a Sub-Editor, able to think quick and think right, he had no equal. He was so smart in his headings that often he got into trouble.

Once, I remember, there was a story of herds of cattle being a nuisance on the Railway line at night. The paragraph " subbed " by Orion appeared with the heading " Cows that cross at Night ! "

A rather unimaginative Sub-Editor scratched his head for half an hour over another story about an Excise party which had hidden itself in a box to detect an illicit sale. Every heading he thought of would not fit into the size of the type that required only 12 letters in the first line. Orion, without a moment's hesitation, took up his pen and wrote the heading :

## JACK-IN-THE-BOX

### RAID

He lived a lonely kind of life, and few people other than Mr. E. L. F. de Soysa knew him well. But he did not want people to know him. And until his death he was the enigma at Lake House, the sphinx-journalist who never spoke out his mind.

* * *

Frank Moraes, the former Editor of the " Times," was the very opposite of Hulugalle in manner and mien. He seemed quite a " superior " kind of person who had wandered into the Editorial chair from an Embassy. Wherever you saw him you would have thought he was somebody important. And the wonderful part of it all was that, actually, he was as important as he looked.

Here certainly was the supreme type of the Journalist—the man who could afford to wear two shirts in one week.

At the daily Conferences I always felt that I was at a Durbar. I cannot remember a single occasion when we laughed heartily. Everything seemed to be rather grim.

Not one laughed even when somebody mentioned Keppetipola and Moraes took the word to mean some strange Sinhalese dish !

Well read, highly cultured, sociable, Moraes shone best against a background of " big shots " with any of whom he could hold his own. One British Journalist spoke of him as an Indian while being in whose company one never thought of any barriers of colour.

He was inclined to lean heavily on cliches and " journalese " in his " Leaders " but he had also the gift of writing direct, dynamic prose to some purpose when he pleased.

He could always rise to an occasion ; could strike back as hard as he was hit—if not harder.

* * *

When the " Times " published last year the present Bishop's father's picture mistaking it for the son's, the " Sunday Observer " could not help commenting on the lapse.

What Moraes, as Atticus, wrote on that occasion, I shall always remember :—

" A Sunday contemporary has been regaling its readers with this newspaper's lapse in regard to the publication of the new Bishop of Colombo's picture. Such inter-newspaper pleasantries help to enliven work, and add perhaps to the gaiety of readers. But those who indulge in them should really be more careful. Yesterday our Sunday con-

temporary, after reading us yet another sermon on our pictorial error, proceeded to perpetrate one of its own. And on its front page. When a London photographic agency which is cabled for the new Bishop's picture, sends one of his distinguished father a newspaper can be forgiven for falling into error. But what is one to say of newspapermen who know not the countenance of their own country's outstanding athlete? The picture purporting to be that of Duncan White which our Sunday contemporary published yesterday on its front page was a dated photograph of an Australian cricketer who was a member of the Test Team of 1938! We resurrected the father for the son. But our contemporary outstrips us by resurrecting an unholy ghost!"

* * *

Moraes wrote in the "Times" the best daily column that has ever appeared in a newspaper in the East.

Who was Azzam Pasha, the Secretary General of the Arab League? What had H. N. Spalding done to justify a chair in Oriental Religion being named after him at Oxford? What was the nature of King Phumiphon Aduldet's family tree? He would deal with such information and add little tit-bits like Shaw's calligraphy or Seth Dalmia's craze for cows. He would touch on the fate of Gil Robles, the head of the exiled Spanish monarchists, and make a passing reference to Franz Lehar, the author of "Merry Widow."

The whole world was his province. But Ceylon entered into the column only once in a blue moon. Then he seemed the brightest.

Day by day he would give-off hand the background of innumerable personalities and events as they occurred in the day's news—Jamal Hussein, General Sir William Slim, Senator Vandenberg or George Robey.

It was an amazing column. But, for him, it was mere child's play.

He arrived at the "Times" to take charge with three "leaders" for the following day's paper in his pocket. He left Ceylon leaving behind him a sense of wonderment at his capacity but before he could get into his stride and know his Ceylon better.

# THE WORLD AT LARGE

## A quarterly review of world events and trends

By Victor Lewis

*Editor-in-Chief of "The Times of Ceylon"*

THE conflict which now divides the world into two separate camps is, at its root, economic rather than political. On the one side are the activities of the State ; and on the other the activities of the individual. The main human rights—freedom to live, move and act—cannot be secured without freedom to produce, trade and compete, and also transfer money. Yet those are the very freedoms which, it is argued, the State, in many parts of the world, seeks first to suppress and then to hold in permanent suppression.

There is a widespread desire to see the various currencies established on absolutely stable foundations ; that is, made freely transferable and convertible, at fixed exchange rates, under the control of the International Monetary Fund. It is worth recalling, at this period of the devaluation of sterling, that this institution was founded in 1944 with the very object of avoiding depreciation and promoting the stability of various currencies.

It makes no sense, it is argued, to observe, circulating in the world, thirty odd kinds of pound sterling, only one of which is freely convertible into U.S. dollars at the official "parity rate."

As we dwell on the decision to devalue—and the first effects thereof—that point of view is probably worth bearing in mind.

It is far too early yet to attempt to assess the effect of the sterling devaluation decision (since these notes were penned within a few days of that decision) but it is not too early to examine one of those things which led up to the decision.

One important aspect should be borne in mind. This devaluation is a world affair and not British domestic politics. Yet those current politics must have had an important influence on the decision. Britain goes into the fray of a general election next year and already the battle is on.

The British Government, it might reasonably be asserted, may well be opposed to the policy of the Monetary Fund—the policy of

making money freely transferable and convertible. Trading with healthy money through normal channels might put an effectual check on the passion for buying and selling. The stabilisation of money might mean the end, not only of regimented economy, but of socialist rule itself, of which the very essence is Government interference with the economic activities of the citizen, and with the conduct of international trade.

## The Influence and the Decision

BUT it would be unfair to dismiss the International Monetary Fund so briefly in this devaluation affair. Their annual report, issued just before the tri-partite meeting in Washington, and the devaluation decision, did the next best thing to plain, unqualified advocacy of devaluation as, at least, a temporary expedient. Indeed, the intelligent student must have seen, after reading that report, the inevitability of the step which was taken.

It stressed the danger of the world dividing itself into high price markets of countries with inconvertible currencies and low price markets made up of those with convertible currencies. If that phenomenon perpetuated itself, it argued, and hardened into an established factor in the world situation, it must undermine all the objectives for which the International Monetary Fund was established.

If the danger of that division of the economic world was to be avoided, the necessary relation between the two price levels had to be restored. The Fund, therefore, concluded that the deficit countries in their own interests could not afford to forego *any* suitable instrument, including *any necessary exchange adjustments* which could expand their dollar exports and thus provide their people with imports.

The International Monetary Fund had spoken. Then came devaluation.

## Ten-Point Agreement

BUT there was a prelude to devaluation, the significance of which, in the excitement of the accomplished fact, should not be overlooked. I speak of the ten-point agreement between America, Canada and Britain. Even though, as many hold, it was disappointing from an economic point of view, as a demonstration of the political consolidation of the Western Powers, it is a big step forward.

Britain and America had been indulging in a slanging match. There have been discords in Paris between the Marshall countries. There were rumours of disagreements between Lord Montgomery and General

Lattre de Tassigny over the defence of Western Union. All those things were beginning to make people think that Western Europe was falling apart.

If it did not, then, come up to economic expectations, the Washington agreement did something to stop the growing fear of political disintegration. It has shown the world in general, and Moscow in particular, that the desire of the West to stand together is as great as ever.

## Britain's Political To-morrow

IN writing of the devaluation decision I have already hinted that any British Government decision of the moment must be considered in the light of the fact that the general election campaign has already opened—though the actual election is many months ahead.

The first round of the battle was fought soon after the Conservative policy statement had been made ; and it became quite clear from the first clashes between Mr. Clement Attlee and Mr. Winston Churchill that this was to be a " no quarter " fight between the Socialists and the Conservatives.

Despite the bitterness of the early skirmishes, it is plain from odd unguarded remarks by lesser politicians from time to time that the possibility that circumstances might produce a deadlock soluble only by a return to a coalition government is not being overlooked.

The line-up is vastly different from that which obtained just before the 1945 general election which so emphatically swept the Labour Party into power. At that time the Conservatives were badly organised in the constituencies. They were, frankly, relying on the personal popularity of Mr. Churchill plus their own record in coalition government. The Socialists, on the other hand, were most thoroughly organised. Even then, few had any idea of the overpowering victory to which they would sweep.

To-day the story is different. The Conservatives have a highly efficient constituency organisation. And they are still working on it. They have learnt their lesson. Its success has already been indicated. In Local Government elections they administered heavy defeats to the Socialists and in parliamentary elections they have reduced government majorities.

The present great parliamentary strength of the Socialists has, paradoxically enough, become one of their own enemies. Party leaders are having to work very hard to destroy among their followers the feeling that " there's nothing to worry about ; it's ' in the bag.' "

The fact that since the general elections the Government has still not lost, in a by-election, any seat which it won or held in 1945, has added to that dangerous feeling.

The party leaders are now having to din into their followers the dangers of this complacency ; and are having to remind them that in a total of 50 by-elections the anti-Socialist swing in votes has ranged from four to 16 per cent and that a swing of that magnitude over the whole country in a general election might wipe out Labour's majority and, indeed, substitute a narrow Conservative win.

## The New Germany

A New Germany has been born and the peoples of the world who have seen two devastating wars swirling round this once great Empire will watch with interest—and maybe bated breath—the infant growth of this resurrected land. The West German Federal Chancellor has formed his Cabinet. The Ministers have been sworn in ; the three Allied High Commissioners in Western Germany have handed over the Occupation Statute : the Federal Chancellor has, in turn, handed over the official document of the Constitution and the Second Republic is in being.

It is still too early to say what sort of Germany will emerge. Already there are troubles—maybe only growing pains. The election campaigns showed, in the astute words of brilliant economist-writer Anthony Dorset " that no German party was prepared to advocate setting up the grateful, co-operative Government the Allies would have liked ; instead, all parties vied with each other in their abuse of Britain, France and America—in that order."

The two bodies which represent Allied control over German affairs—the High Commission and the Ruhr Authority—are already being challenged. The Germans want to be free of the High Commission and they want the Ruhr Authority abolished.

So what can the Allies do ? It is plain the Germans are determined to rule themselves and it might reasonably be argued that the best thing to do is to let them have their head (except in the matter of military security). It seems a sane argument. If it was right at all to let the Germans govern themselves, then it is only right they should be allowed to govern themselves their own way.

That way seems to lie the possibility of their eventually becoming full members of O.E.E.C. and the Council of Europe. As such the danger that they will abuse their powers will be less.

Even Lord Vansittart, unrepentant advocate of the " Keep Germany

down " attitude, admitted in a recent article " The only argument for rushing our fences is that Germany may thus be headed off from joining Russia."

## Progress of Communism

Communism is fast becoming a subject one prefers not to think about. That is the reaction of a good many of us. But there are more positive feelings at either extreme. There is a vociferous minority of fanatics who finds Reds in the most unlikely places. To them Communists are still hirsute dynamiters. At the other end are those who regard Communists as a misguided and rather pathetic minority blindly committed to an acrobatic policy dictated from abroad and operating in hopelessly unfavourable conditions. So it is, with people supporting one view or the other, that we have this phenomenon of the lively existence in our midst—by which I mean in the midst of half the countries of the world—of a body of men openly pledged to a revolution which will overthrow the State and harness the country to an international system run by a foreign power.

From back-stage Communist methods to openly belligerent Communist Russian world ambitions are natural steps ; and in the light of recent events it is as well to try and understand Russia's aims in the Far East.

In Massachussetts last March Mr. Winston Churchill said, *inter alia*, " We have no hostility to the Russian people and no desire to deny them their legitimate rights and security. I hoped that Russia, after the war, would have access, through unfrozen waters, to every ocean, guaranteed by the world organisation of which she would be a leading member ; that she should have the freest access, which indeed she has at the present time, to raw materials of every kind ; and that the Russians everywhere would be received as brothers in the human family. That still remains our aim and ideal."

That is another way of saying that the Western Powers have been, and are, ready to acknowledge the Soviet Union's national and vital interests as a basis of an enduring peace in the world at large. Those interests are related to Europe, the Near and Middle East, to Asia, and the Far East.

What, in the light of recent events, are Russia's national and vital interests in the Far East ?

I have yet to come upon a better summary than that given in the Yale Review by Mr. Robert J. Kerner, Director of the Institute of Slavic Studies, University of California, and I make no apologies for

quoting it extensively here, because I believe this objective study is one of the best contributions made on the subject.

## Why Did It Fail?

Professor Kerner speaks of the Treaty of Friendship and Alliance between the Soviet Union and China (1945) as "a decisive turning point not only in the history of the Far East but in world history, regardless of whether it would be lived up to in China by the Soviet Union. That it has not been lived up to is a further decisive development of the post-war period in the Far East."

Professor Kerner asks the question—"Why did this failure happen after the Soviet Union had obtained by treaty virtually complete security for its position in Asia and on the Pacific?"

And in his own answer is the story of Russia's aims in the Far East. It (the failure) was essential, he says, because the Politburo of the Russian Communist party, the Government of the Soviet Union, decided to pursue other objectives than that of the security of a great power on the basis of its national and vital interests.

"These," he says, "are the objectives of the Communist world revolution, which went into its second phase in February, 1945, and the goal of which is a Moscow-dominated world union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In the Far East this involves the creation of a Communist China, Korea, Japan, and South Eastern-Asia.

In the Far East a policy of national and vital interests on the part of any Government which may rule Russia will definitely include at least two major considerations: (1) Security of direct access to the open waters of the Pacific; and (2) because its avenue of approach is limited in size, climate and situation to a long, easily cut ribbon of land stretching from the Urals to the sea coast, security against interference from the State or States lying along the frontiers of this strategic roadway, or the great powers allied with them."

The problem of true Russian statesmanship is to achieve these aims in such a manner as to permit other nations to retain their independence and maintain friendly relations with Russia. Czarist Russia and the Soviet Union have both failed to solve the problem on this basis.

Both adopted grandiose plans that included domination of neighbouring States. Czarist Russia's effort ended in disaster at the hands of Japan, backed by Britain and America. The territorial ambitions of the Moscow Politburo of the Russian Communist Party court similar ultimate disaster.

## Indonesian Outlook

SLOWLY—very slowly—the Indonesian problem is being ironed out and there were high hopes for the Hague Conference which was still in session at this writing. After the failure of the Dutch "police action" in March they plainly became resigned to the fact that there was no alternative to handing over power to the Indonesian Republic.

That there must be settlement—and quickly—is patent. Neither side can stand the current instability, and the political, economic and military burdens which that state necessitates, much longer.

Holland's economy has been severely strained by the burden of maintaining an inconclusive military campaign for years. The Dutch people themselves are showing a growing impatience with the necessity for the prolonged absence of their soldiers. The Indonesian Republicans, on their side, have a dangerous internal problem. A large proportion of Republican followers are armed. They are, also, sceptical of the Republican Government's ability to obtain full independence. If the Republicans went empty handed from the Hague, these extreme and violent elements might very well sweep them away. And those elements would not even consider negotiations with the Dutch.

One thing must not be overlooked in viewing the Indonesian problem. The extremist elements in the country watch every move hourly, ready to seize upon any and every sign, however slight, of capitulation to "Dutch imperialism." Speed in settlement is, thus, of vital importance to the Indonesian Republicans.

One worrying facet of this problem has come my way in remarkable circumstances and it is perhaps worth placing on record. I hold no brief for it. But it cannot be ignored. When Sukarno declared his Republican aims and Sjahrir formed his first government I was in Java and spent many months in both their company. My diary records that Sjahrir created on me the impression that he was the most level-headed man in the country. The same diary records the doubts I had about Sukarno.

Now, years later, tragedy has reminded me of those earlier assessments. When a plane load of prominent American newspapermen were killed in the recent Bombay air crash they had just completed a close study of affairs in Indonesia. One of them, S. Burton Heath, the famed "Yankee Reporter" wrote a 1,750-word estimate of the Indonesian system and air-mailed it just before he left on his death flight.

Because it was known that I had earlier written a long on-the-spot

study of the problem, and would be interested, Burton Heath's estimate has come into my hands. It is a remarkable document which sets out to show (though I cannot agree) that " the sudden freedom which America *has forced on Indonesia* (the italics are mine) may turn the strategic East Indies area into a new Chinese-style conquest for Russia."

What is a much more interesting passage from this remarkable document is this :—" Before the end of 1949, the Indonesians probably will be free, after more than 300 years as a Dutch colony. Their freedom will be complete and unconditional. It will be at least five years, after that, before the government of the United States of Indonesia will be strong enough to resist strong pressure from Moscow. That is the estimate of Soetan Sjahrir, political adviser to the Government of the Republic, which the United States has backed unreservedly against both the Dutch and a majority of Indonesians. Even that five-year period, Sjahrir says, depends upon assistance from the Western world. But President Sukarno said he could not imagine any circumstances in which he (Sukarno) would invite help to resist Soviet or native Communist interference."

## The European Problems

The world is watching the formation and development of two great international measures. They are the Council of Europe and the Atlantic Pact. The Council of Europe is purely and simply a political institution with, as its aim, a Parliament of Western Europe for the time being and, presumably, for the whole of Europe later on. The hope is that in this " Parliament " every European country will discuss its politics from the wide European continent point of view and not just the point of view of the individual nation.

The Atlantic Pact, on the other hand, is a purely military council, a bulwark against Communism. The new problem, however, is whether the Pact is a democratic or strategic formation. People are already asking whether a completely democratic form of Government is to be the qualification for acceptance within the Pact. They are asking that question because they want to know the future of Spain and Portugal.

If the Atlantic Pact is to be exclusive to countries with democratic methods of political government then neither Spain nor Portugal could be accepted. But if the qualification for membership is purely a matter of military strategy, then it may be safely argued that Spain and Portugal should be let in.

It is a point which will have to be settled in the near future if the Pact is to be clearly understood and supported.

*Free Austria.*—It should not be long before British, Russian and American occupation troops are withdrawn from Austria, the Peace Treaty signed and the country left to a great degree to work out its own salvation. Whether the Russians will really withdraw remains to be seen.

What, then, is Austria's future? It may reasonably be expected that, despite her geographical position, she will apply for inclusion in the North Atlantic Treaty. She is already a member of O.E.E.C. and is certainly headed in time for the Council of Europe.

Whether those things will guarantee her future independence is a moot point. She must still remain, by the mere accident of geography, a part of Europe's No-Man's-Land.

*Poland after 10 years.*—It was just a little more than ten years ago that, for the fourth time in her history, Poland ceased to exist as a separate nation. In 1939 she lost much to Russia territorially. At the war's end she gained much from Germany in industrial wealth. Today she seems, on balance, to be satisfied.

But the satisfaction with what she now has ends abruptly. Her peace of mind is haunted by events; by the fear that at any moment the Soviet may decide to hand the coal and steel areas back to Germany.

That fear aside, she makes good progress. Low rates of pay make the ex-German coalmines a good thing and she is making a quite remarkable recovery. If it were not for that daily fear.

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# BOOKS IN REVIEW

## AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND OTHER ESSAYS

By G. M. TREVELYAN

IN this book the Regius Professor of History at Cambridge sits down in the Lodge at Trinity or in his Northumbrian home close to his beloved Roman excavations to write of those parts of his life which influenced his historical writings. He is fond in his book of talking of Professor Dryasdust, and here is to be found the dry humour of the don blended with the wisdom and scholarly charm of one who kept much company with the wise in many lands, in Switzerland and Italy, in Scotland and America, and in all parts of England : here too is to be found the vigour of a man who loved to set the mountain tops beneath his feet, and who could walk from Cambridge to Marble Arch in London, 52 miles, in twelve and three-quarter hours.

He was educated at Harrow school, and at Cambridge where he was placed in the First Class in the History Tripos of 1896. His account of *England in the Age of Wyckliffe* was written to win a Trinity Fellowship. A chance wedding present of Garibaldi's Memoirs led to his *Garibaldi's Defence of the Roman Republic*. " I began one day to turn over their pages, and was suddenly enthralled by the story of the retreat from Rome to the Adriatic over mountains which I had traversed in my solitary walks : the scene and the spirit of that desperate venture, led by that unique man, flashed upon my mind's eye. Here was a subject made to my hand ; if ever I could write literary history, this was the golden chance." He spent the next five years in writing his three famous books upon Garibaldi.

The first world war of 1914-1918 interrupted his work as a historian, but his adventures in a British Red Cross unit in Italy added to his experience of life. In 1922 he wrote his *British History in the Nineteenth Century*, and from 1923-26, upon the wishes of his friend, Robert Longman, the Publisher, he wrote his *History of England*.

In 1928 he moved to Northumberland where, under Hadrian's Wall, he owned the site of a civilian village that had supplied the needs of a Roman Fort upon the Wall. He set to work to excavate. "What fun it was ! Nothing could be more delightful than to watch the progress of the diggings on your own land, conducted by competent and

friendly persons. It was a great moment when the spade revealed the secret of a third-century tragedy, by exposing a skeleton with a knife in its ribs buried under the floor of a house. Murder will out, even after sixteen centuries. We also found the apparatus of a coiner of false money. They must have been a lively lot at Borovicinum in the brave days of old."

In 1928 he became Regius Professor of History at Cambridge, and he set to work to write *England Under Queen Anne;* he was the great nephew of Macaulay, and he says, "The idea of taking up the tale, where my great uncle's history had broken off, was perhaps a fancy at the back of my consciousness." His next work was the Biography of his Northumbrian friend and neighbour, Lord Grey of Fallodon, the great Foreign Minister.

Robert Longman again suggested his next task, the *Social History of England.* He records that this work sold well over 392,000 copies.

When his Professorship came to an end, he was given the post of Master of Trinity at Cambridge and he held that office during the last war.

Of the Historical Essays that follow the Biography, I am by no means qualified to speak, but I may set down some quotations to give an idea of their contents, and to whet the reader's appetite for more.

In *History and the Reader* he defines the purpose of History as an attempt to answer the questions (1) What was the life of men and women in the past ages? and (2) how does the present state of things evolve out of the past? History is "A revocation of the edict of destiny, so that Time shall not utterly, nor so soon by several centuries, have dominion over us." You cannot understand your own country, still less any other, unless you know something of its history. You cannot, for instance, understand the Russians, unless you have some conception of the long centuries during which they were hammered into the sense of community and of absolutism by the continual blows of Tartar and Teuton invasions sweeping over the unbroken Steppes.

Mr. Ford, it is commonly reported, once declared that history was "bunk." That remarkable utterance of his, if indeed he made it, was in itself an outcome of history: such contempt for all things past, and such engaging frankness in avowing it, were themselves the outcome of certain aspects of the Social History of the United States in the nineteenth century.

Some nations, like the Irish, are *too* historically minded, in the sense that they cannot get out of the past at all. And many of the countries of Eastern Europe, and above all the Germans themselves, have been brought up on one-sided, ultra-patriotic versions of things past. The

harm that one-sided history has done in the modern world is immense. When history is used as a branch of propaganda it is a very deadly weapon.

The sixth essay on Life in Roman Britain given as a B.B.C. talk is perhaps the most fascinating in the book. It tells how the Romans made their military roads, but when nature offered serious obstacles in the marshes and thick forests of the land the Romano-Britons declined the contest. Rome erected her own monumental civilization in cities, forts, Villas, inscriptions and statues up and down the conquered land, but spared to the subject his own gods, his own tribes, his chieftains and his ways of life, hoping that the barbarian would learn to imitate the civilized model so impressively set up before his eyes. In Villa and city Roman and Briton played at being Romans : yet, it was hard to be a Roman so far from Rome. It was chilly work lounging in the courts and porticoes, but it had to be done, for it was the Roman thing to do.

There is no space to give more than the titles of the other essays. They are : Bias in History, Stray Thoughts on History, The Call and Claims of Natural Beauty, The Coming of the Anglo-Saxons, Religion and Poetry, Cromwell's Statue, Milton's Areopagitica 1644, The Two Party System in English Political History, Influence of Walter Scott on History, Jonathan Swift, and three essays devoted to some recollections of lost friends.

We may end with George Macaulay Trevelyan's own last words of his Autobiography. " Here I bring my Autobiography to a close. Its object has been to record those circumstances that affected the production of my books. That production has now, to all intents and purposes, come to an end : I am too old to write another serious history book which involves the double labour of collecting and collating material and translating it into literary form, a prolonged effort beyond my remaining powers.

I make no apology to the reader for having written so much about myself : I set out to do it, and now it is done."

W. T. KEBLE.

## INDIAN HILL BIRDS

By SALIM ALI

THIS is a handbook in non-technical language which embodies not only the author's own work in this field for 25 years, but much that has been published in the Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society by various ornithologists. Since many of the species dealt with occur as " races " in Ceylon the work is of more than passing

interest to local students of birds. Each species is dealt with under its popular and scientific names, size, coloration, distribution and habits, including nesting, and Salim Ali has condensed into the minimum of space the maximum amount of information. The lack of vernacular names, however, will be regarded as an impediment by many beginners of ornithology in India. A few maps showing the distribution of the various races of a single species would also have been very useful.

Of special interest to Ceylon readers are the colored illustrations by G. M. Henry, who was until recently the Assistant in Systematic Entomology at the Colombo Museum. His ornithological paintings in the Colombo Museum Zoological series rank among some of the best paintings ever executed of Ceylon birds. His present paintings are no whit inferior and have made Salim Ali's book more desirable than if it had been illustrated by a less competent artist. A series of well-chosen photographs supplement these paintings and show birds in their natural surroundings. Until color photography emerges from its infancy, the ideal method of illustrating a scientific publication will be such colored sketches together with photographs, of each species.

The present volume will be a welcome addition to the library of everyone interested in Indian birds and will prove especially useful to the field worker, as its size enables easy transport in pocket or haversack.

P. E. P. DERANIYAGALA.

## THE ESSENTIAL NEVILLE CARDUS

(Selected by RUPERT HART DAVIS)

"ONLY on dull days and in dull places is cricket dull," the author tells us, and as we turn over the pages of this selection from the writings of Neville Cardus we are spared those long dull spaces, so frequently, to the uninitiated in particular, so long and so dull of the actual cricket day.

Cricket often needs a bolt from the blue to make the crowd sit up and in the excitement of the moment forget the dull hours of waiting for it. Cardus with his witty and imaginative writing creates for his reader a world of delight which keeps him alert on every page.

He writes "Life no less than Art achieves now and again an expressive picture." The picture he creates has the living movement of the intimate theatre of Elizabethan times and the play covers the whole world of cricket. The background, the backdrops are all of England, as varying in mood as English weather. Among the players are the great and small, giants and ordinary men.

" When June arrives, cricket grows to splendour like a rich part of the garden of an English summertime. In June the game is at the crown of the year ; from Little Puddleton to London the fields of village and town are white with players in hot action. Batsmen move along their processional way to centuries at Lords, while in a hundred hidden hamlets far and wide some crude but not inglorious Hobbs flings his bat at the ball, and either misses it or feels his body tingle as willow thwacks leather. Bowlers set their teeth and thunder over the earth, seeing nothing in the world but a middle stump. And when a wicket falls, fieldsmen in the deep give themselves to the grassy earth, stretch their limbs, and look up into the blue sky. Now is the time of cricketer's plenty—June and July. Let him cherish every moment as it passes ; never will he be so young again."

The spectators as in the Elizabethan Theatre are part of the play moving in the life of it, apathetic one moment, alert the next, cheering their heroes, barracking, appreciative of an occasional witticism, endlessly varying in mood and sentiment.

Cardus is clearly a person who subscribes to the view that there was a golden Age of cricket. And, he proves to be a most convincing advocate of that view. One finds oneself thinking of many pleasant reasons why the Golden Age must have existed. Writing of Hammond he reminds us that we have had opportunities of seeing one who would have " shone a bright light " in the company of many famous players in the early part of this century. But, he suggests, it may be argued that in later days a Hammond appears only once in a score of years. Perhaps when he wrote that he had reason to be despondent about cricket in England.

But, Cardus, we know, would enjoy watching and writing about cricket of any age. The grace and style of the player of genius gave him a glimpse of aesthetic beauty. In the precise art of the game well played, the physical activity, was also the aesthetic beauty he found in the abstract art, the intellectual activity of music. In both spheres he searched for and found the essence of the personality of its geniuses. The essential Schubert for him was the lyrical poet inspired with divine melodies transcending mere technique and the laws of counterpoint. Strauss is the imaginative realist who, with keen observation and dynamic energy, creates music as much for the sight as for the ear. The intellectuality of Wagner brings about a marriage of drama and music.

And the essential Neville Cardus becomes for us as living a personality as those he created for us in the pages of this book.

F. C. DE SARAM.