


THE CEYLON FRIEND.

October, 1876.

THE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE OF THE SINGHALESE.*

BY THE LATE

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 N looking at the geographical position of Ceylon we naturally conclude that it was first peopled from the southern part of the continent of India, the distance between this island and the mainland being so short that it is now not unfrequently passed upon kattamarans, the most primitive of all modes of water conveyance, save that of the simple log. But between the language here spoken, and that of the continental nations whose position is the nearest to Ceylon, there is an essential difference. The languages of India have been divided into two great classes: the first, or northern family, includes, among others, the Hindustani, Bengali, Gujaráti and Maráti; the second, or southern family, includes, the Telugu, Tamil, Karnataka and Malayalim. The dialects of the first class are derived from the Sanskrit; but those of the second class, though also including numerous terms from the Sanskrit, must have had their primitive derivation from some other source. The dialect now spoken upon that part of the continent which is the nearest to Ceylon is the Tamil. But the Singhalese, the vernacular language of the island, is decidedly allied to the northern family, as it is supposed to have nine-tenths of its vocables from the Sanskrit.

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Vol. vii]

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28

[No. 82.

This predominance of Sanskrit roots has been accounted for upon the supposition that it is owing to the influence of Páli, which is the sacred language of the Buddhists, and a derivative from the Sanskrit. But this position is not tenable, as from the little knowledge I possess of a few Sanskrit and Páli words, it appears to me to be more nearly allied in its structure to the Sanskrit than the Páli, and there can be little doubt that it was a language long previous to the introduction of Buddhism into Ceylon.

The earliest legends contained in the native chronicles relate to the three visits of Gotama Buddha to Ceylon, and the arrival of the prince Wijaya, with five hundred followers, who are said to have taken possession of the Island. As their birth-place was in a province of India where a dialect of the northern family of languages was spoken, we might thereby account for the anomaly, that the Sinhalese, although spoken in the most southern of the Indian regions, is derived from the Sanskrit, if we could receive the assertion of the Sinhalese authors that their race derives its origin from these invaders. But the arrival of Wijaya is said to have taken place on the very day that Buddha died, a circumstance too singular not to excite suspicion; the immediate successors of the prince, nearly all, reigned even number of years, reckoned by decimation; the fourth king died at 107 years of age, and yet was succeeded by his son, the offspring of a marriage that took place when he was 20 years old, who reigned 60 years; and in the space of 200 years there is scarcely a single incident related that is not connected with the personal history of the kings. These discrepancies have been noticed by TURNOUR, the translator of the *Mahawanso*, and that able chronologist came to the conclusion that the Ceylonese histories are not to be relied on in that which they relate previous to the arrival of Mihindu, who introduced Buddhism into the island, B. C. 306.

The legend of Wijaya further states, that on his arrival the Island was inhabited by demons; and it is also said that a few years previous to this event, when Buddha came here through the air it was in the possession of the same mysterious beings; but I have little doubt that it will one day be proved, even from the most sacred books of the Buddhists themselves, that the accounts we have of his visits to Ceylon are a pure fiction. In all the Sinhalese books that I have read, the narration appears out of the regular order of events, like an after thought; and it is entirely at variance with the traditions of Nepal and Tibet. It is generally supposed that by the demons we are to understand the aboriginal inhabitants, who

were so called from their rude habits and savage dispositions, and that they are now become extinct, with the exception of the Veddas of Bintenna and the adjacent forests. But even allowing the truth of this supposition, as it has been discovered since they were recently brought under Christian instruction by the Rev. R. STOTT, of the Wesleyan Mission, that their language is Sinhalese, varying but little from that which is spoken in the more civilized districts, it would not assist us in our present researches.

I have stated the probability that the Sinhalese language was spoken long before the arrival of Wijaya. Either this prince imposed his own language upon the people whom he conquered, or his descendants adopted the language previously spoken in the Island, or there was an amalgamation of the two languages in the course of time. The first supposition is the most improbable as history furnishes us with no similar example; and if the third be correct, there must originally have been a great resemblance between the two languages, as the mere fact that nine-tenths of the words composing the Sinhalese can be traced to one common origin is itself a proof that as a dialect it is singularly uniform in the character of its etymology. The second of these hypotheses seems to me the most probable, as I am far from thinking that the ancient race of the Island was so rude and ignorant as it is generally regarded.

Soon after the arrival of Wijaya, he visited the city of Lankápura, which is not a mere city of the imagination, as its site can still be pointed out in the district of Mátales. The existence of a city, in whatever place, is a proof that there must at some period have been connected with it a government, sufficiently wise to promulgate laws, and sufficiently powerful to enforce them. The inhabitants of the interior still refer the erections with which many of their localities abound to the yakás, or demon race.

Another proof that the Island was peopled by a civilized race before the era of Gotama Buddha is to be found in the fact that many of the places mentioned in Rámáyana as being visited by Ráma during his invasion of Ceylon, may still be traced. They must therefore have been in existence at the time this epic was written, one of the oldest in the world; and there must at the same period have been at least occasional intercourse between this Island and India.

On the arrival of Mihindu, B. C. 306, he orally promulgated the atuwáwas, or commentaries, on the three great

sections of the sacred books of the Buddhists; and it is expressly stated that this was done in the Sinhalese language, and that they were subsequently translated from Sinhalese into Páli by Buddhaghósa, who visited this Island in the reign of Maha Náma, A. D. 410—432. The period that elapsed between the arrival of Wijaya and that of Mihindu, 237 yrs, was too short, in the then state of the country, to have allowed of the formation of a language, from crude materials of dissimilar origin, sufficiently copious in its terms and regular in its structure to have been capable of the enunciation in it of discourses so varied and abstract as the *atuwáwas*.

From these premises we may infer, if any faith whatever is to be placed in the ancient chronicles of the Island, that the Sinhalese must be one of the oldest of the living languages. But of its state in these early periods no examples are now extant, as even the original *atuwáwas* have all perished, though the translations made by Buddha-ghósa still remain. It is probable that the oldest examples now in existence will be found on the slabs and rocks near the temples of the interior. The inscriptions thus preserved are numerous, generally in the square character in use upon the continent during the supremacy of the monarchs who professed Buddhism, the alphabet of which by a process of patient induction, was discovered by the late JAMES PRINSEP; but there are many also in the Sinhalese language and character. The oldest book that I have read, the date of which can be ascertained, is the *Pújáwaliya*, written in the reign of Pandita Prákrama Báhu, A. D. 1267—1301, by the priest, Mairúpáda. Another book that I have read, the *Amáwatura*, if we are to judge from the style alone, must be a much older work; but it is supposed that the style is rather affected than antiquated. The name of the author is Gurulugómi, but I cannot discover in what age he lived. There are many works mentioned incidentally in the books yet extant that are not now to be procured. This disappearance of the ancient literature of the Island is to be accounted for by the ravages of the Malabars and the prevalence of heresies, some of which were patronised by the kings, who, to show their hatred to the orthodox priests, commanded that their books should be destroyed. Even of the comparatively few works that are now in common use, several have had to be recovered from Burma or Siam, though they were originally written in this country.

The Sinhalese alphabet, as to arrangement, is formed upon the model of the Dévanágari; but in the place of the *au*, of the Dévanágari there are in Sinhalese two vowels, *æ* and

æ, which have been likened by your Vice President to "the bleating of a sheep," and by no means add to the euphony of the language. The *v* of the Dévanāgarī is changed into *w* in Sinhalese, there being no *w* in Sanskrit, as there is none in the classical languages of Europe. The alphabet, which is peculiar to the Sinhalese, and not used for any other language, in its general character bears a considerable resemblance to the ancient Karnataka, as seen in the copper-plates of a grant made to the Syrian Church by one of the early native princes, the date of whose reign is not known. Fac-similes of these plates are inserted in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, No. XIV; but whether the letters that are similar in shape have the same sound I am not able to state.

Soon after my arrival in Ceylon, in 1825, I began to note down the names of all the works I could hear of as being in the possession of the Sinhalese. The list now includes the names of upwards of 400 separate works, reckoning the whole of the Tun-Pitakas as one book. They are in the Sinhalese or Elu, Pāli and Sanskrit languages, with a few in Burmese and probably others in Siamese, as the priests have intercourse with both these countries. The dialect in which the Sinhalese works are written is called Elu, and differs considerably from the colloquial dialect both in structure and in the words that are used; but the native authorities whom I have examined upon the subject are not agreed as to the meaning of the word Elu, nor has the difference between Elu, and Sinhalese been very well defined.

The works in Pāli consist principally of commentaries upon the sacred canon, with other works in explanation of these commentaries, and a considerable number are on grammar.

Of the works in Sanskrit, a few are on religious subjects, and the others are upon grammar, medicine and astrology. The medical works are the most numerous, the more popular of these being accompanied by an explanation or paraphrase in Sinhalese.

The works in Sinhalese are on religion, grammar, history and medicine; and a considerable number are written in verse. There are numerous sannés or paraphrases of the discourses of Buddha, the Pāli text being given, and then an explanation clause by clause, in Sinhalese. In some instances the sanné is a literal translation, and in others there is a long commentary upon a single word. The poetical works are principally legends. They are very popular among the natives, who will sometimes sit up whole nights listening to their recitation. The Pansiya

panas-játaka-pota is the most extensive work I have seen in Sinhalese; it extends to upwards of 20,000 lines, each line being 22 inches long.

The principal subjects upon which the native writers treat are:—the various divisions of the universe; the origin of the present systems, with the manner in which they will be destroyed; the primitive condition of men, and their gradual fall from purity to their present state; the history of the first monarch, and of his successors during many ages; numerous legends relative to the actions of Gotama Buddha, in the births through which he passed previous to his acquirement of the Buddhahood; the history of the Buddhas immediately preceding Gotama; the birth of the prince, Siddhárta, the history of his ancestors and of his youth, the manner in which he became a supreme Buddha, the beauties of his person, the manner of his life, the journeys that he undertook, the discourses that he delivered, and the wonderful acts that he performed, with the manner of his death; explanations of the precepts, and legends relative to the rewards received by those who have obeyed them or the misfortunes that have overtaken those who have despised them; the commands imposed upon the priesthood the discipline to which they are subject, and the mysterious powers obtained by those who become perfectly pure and are not subject to a repetition of existence; disquisitions upon such subjects as karma, or moral action, whether good or evil, by which the universe is governed and the destiny of all beings controlled, and arguments to prove the impermanence of the body and the non-existence of a separate and immortal soul; and descriptions of the déwa-lókas and brahma-lókas, the various states and places of suffering, and nirwána, or the cessation of existence.

It is almost a misnomer to speak of the literature of the Sinhalese, as nearly all their works are either translations or paraphrases. Not unfrequently the whole of the difference between one work and another consists only in the style and arrangement. This similarity soon offends the student and deters him from the further prosecution of his researches. There is sometimes a long series of epithets attached to the name of Buddha, and the same epithets are repeated again and again, almost without any variation throughout the whole of the work. Upon the authority of Sir WILLIAM JONES the Asiatics have usually been regarded as “soaring to loftier flights in the sphere of imagination” than Europeans; but the works of the Sinhalese cannot be included in this category, as their creative powers appear to be extremely feeble, even in

the discussion of subjects about which they must necessarily have a perfect understanding, and which in themselves naturally tend to induce the exercise of the imagination.

It is with extreme regret that I speak in these terms of disparagement of the native authors, as I have spent much time in the study of their writings, and once supposed that they contained more valuable matter than on examination they have presented. They are principally of importance as media by which we can ascertain the light in which the tenets of Buddhism are here regarded; and I trust the language thus preserved and perfected, the sound of which falls not unpleasantly upon the ear, whilst it admits of great beauty and force of expression, will one day be consecrated to the noble purpose of teaching the sublimest lessons of Christianity, and of raising the people around us to a high state of excellence in science, taste and social order.



THE ORGANIZATION AND RELATIONS OF MANKIND.

BY

JAMES LOOS ESQ., M. D.

LECTURE III.

MAN IN RELATION TO ANIMALS.

(Continued from page 156.)

THE theory of progressive development, or the "transmutation hypothesis," as it has been also termed, was, as I said, but revived in the "Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation." The theory originated with Lamarck, a distinguished French Naturalist. In a work published in 1809—the philosophy of Zoology—he maintained that all species, including Man, are descended from other species.* He believed that the existing gradation of organized beings arose from successive development, animals of one class rising into another. The powerful influence at work was the physical conditions of life by which animals were surrounded.

* Vide Lyell's Principles of Geology.

His belief was that the organization of animals arose from their habits, and that their organization originally bore no relation to those habits. The alteration in structure arose from the disuse of certain organs, and the demand for the possession of new ones. An animal driven by its wants to new or peculiar habits acquires the variation of organization necessary for its existence. This does not take place in the course of one, but of many generations. Thus, for instance, a bird is driven by its wants to take to the water and either swim or wade; in the course of many generations, the outstretching of the claws produces a web between them, and it becomes a regular water-fowl. The descendants of an ourang-outan were, according to Lamarck, converted in course of time into Mankind. One group of the quadrumanous animals, which had reached the highest state of perfection, lost, in some unaccountable way, the habit of climbing trees or holding by their hind as well as fore-limbs. The individuals of this race being obliged for a long series of generations to use their feet exclusively for walking, were gradually transformed into bimanous animals; what were before thumbs in their hind limbs became transformed into toes, no separation being required when their feet were used solely for walking. Having acquired a habit of holding themselves upright, their legs and feet assumed insensibly a conformation suited to support them in an erect attitude, till at last these animals could no longer go on all-fours without much inconvenience.

There were philosophers even in England who thought that Man and monkeys were closely linked. We found that Lord Monboddo entertained the idea that Man was derived from monkeys. Another eminent individual, Dr. Darwin, the poet, philosopher and naturalist, derived Man from creatures still lower. I will read to you a passage from Dr. Mason Good's "Book of Nature," referring to the opinion of Dr. Darwin.

"The Mosaic statement has met with two distinct classes of opponents, each of which has assumed a different ground of objection. The one has regarded this statement as altogether untrue, and never intended to be believed: as a mere allegory or fiction; a beautiful mythos often indulged in by other oriental writers in the openings of their respective histories:—as an enlivening frontispiece to a book of instruction. The other class has been in some degree more guarded in its attack; and has rather complained that the statement is inexplicit than that it is untrue. These last philosophers have found out that in its common interpretation it does not accord

with the living volume of nature; and they hence contend that the common interpretation is incorrect; they perceive, or think they perceive, a variety of chasms in the sacred text, which it is necessary to fill up before it can be made to harmonize with natural facts and appearances.

At the head of the former class stand the names of some of the first natural historians and scholars of modern times, as Linnæus, Buffon, Helvetius, Monboddo, and Darwin. And from whom do these philosophers, thus departing from the whole letter and spirit of the Mosaic history, pretend to derive the race of man? The four former from the race of monkeys, and the last, to complete the absurdity from the race of oysters; for Dr. Darwin seriously conjectures that as aquatic animals appear to have been produced before terrestrial, and every living substance to have originated from a form or nucleus exquisitely simple and minute, and to have been perpetually developing and expanding its powers, and prodigiously advancing towards perfection, man himself must have been of the aquatic order on his first creation: at that time, indeed, imperceptible from its exility, but in process of years, or rather of ages, acquiring a visible or oyster-like form, with little gills, instead of lungs, and like the oyster produced spontaneously, without distinction into sexes; that, as reproduction is always favourable to improvement, the aquatic or oyster mannikin, by being progressively accustomed to seek its food on the nascent shores or edges of the primeval ocean, must have grown after a revolution of countless generations, first into an amphibious, and then into a terrestrial animal; and, in like manner, from being without sex, first also into an androgynous form, and thence into distinct male and female.

It is not necessary to notice this dream of a poetizing philosopher, which had also been dreamt of long before his own day, any further than to remark that it is in every respect inferior to the opinion of two of the most celebrated schools of ancient Greece, the Epicurean and the Stoic; who though they differed on almost every other point, concurred in their dogma, concerning the origin of man; and believed him to have sprung, equally with plants and animals of every kind, from the tender soil of the new-formed earth, at that time infinitely more powerful and prolific; produced in myriads of little wombs that rose, like mole-hills, over the surface of the ground, and were afterwards transformed, for his nourishment, into myriads of glandular and milky bulbs, so as to form a marvellous substitute for the human breast.

“In the correct and elegant description of Lucretius,—

*‘Terra cibum pueris, vestem vapor, herba cubile
Præbebat, multa et molli lanugine abundans.’*

Earth fed the nursling, the warm ether clothed,
And the soft downy grass his couch composed.

And frivolous as such a theory may now appear, it was the only one which was current among the Grecian or Roman philosophers, except that which supposed mankind to have been propagated by eternal generation, and of course the universe, like himself to be eternal and self-existent: compared with which, an origin from the dust of the earth, even after the manner of vegetables, is incomparably less monstrous and absurd.”

(*To be concluded.*)



THE ELDER TO THE ELECT KYRIA AND THE BELOVED GAIUS.

A STUDY FOR THE TIMES.

BY THE

REV. J. O. RHODES.

(*Concluded from page 198.*)

BUT let us take another illustration. Here is a society composed partly of Christians and partly of heathens. There are in the community several Christian pastors, one of whom by virtue of his lofty social position, or great influence in the ecclesiastical world, or something else, has obtained amongst his brethren the standing of *primus inter pares*: suppose we call him bishop. He is glad to get his own way, and to keep it. Age and experience, though the former be double and the latter thirty-fold his own, he regards as lighter than vanity compared with the office he holds. “Unquestioning obedience to *me*” is his only rule, and he shuts his eyes to all probable consequences, even though the ruin of hundreds of undying souls be involved, blinded by a belief in his own infallibility as well as in the ignorance and inefficiency of all who do not bow down to him. “In short he is a masterful self-willed man, very ready to fulminate ex-communications against any of his flock, who will not think

as he thinks, and do as he bids them." We have quoted the last sentence from an author, the Rev. S. Cox, to whom we are deeply indebted not only for this study but for many other profitable Bible studies lately enjoyed. Mr. Cox concludes, "What a happiness for us, my brethren, that that type of priest has been extinct—O these many hundred years."

Still the thing that hath been, it is that which may be; and therefore it is worth groping a little in the dark ages to know the possibilities of the future. And here damp with the mildews of a few score days are some documents, whose venerable pages bear painful witness to the "hardness" which some of the good soldiers of Jesus Christ have had to "endure." Take a few specimens of the productions of some of their foes, belonging to this—shall we say?—now mummified order of the hierarchy. One described as a "youthful Father in God," after stating that "the good hand of his God is upon him," entreats Protestant clergymen, whom he styles "priests," to attach themselves to his person and fight under his banner, but demands that each of them shall "regard his bishop as the spiritual leader whose voice in directing his work is to him as the voice of God." Another, after committing acts of unparalleled and "wild injustice," calmly prays that the victims may have grace to submit to the will of the Holy Spirit, and invokes the Triune Deity, as though, to quote an analyst of the period, "as though the Deity could be hoodwinked by one of his creatures in lawn sleeves." Lest we seem to exaggerate in referring to weapons, now so obsolete, we will quote, word for word, from one or two of the anathemas of this gracious prelate. Here is one addressed to native evangelists, calling upon each of them, peremptorily and at once, to do what in the estimation of all impartial judges, and in the consciences of the evangelists themselves, was nothing less than to pull down the work they had been trained to build up, and for the building up of which they had long been and still were being paid; and they were to do this without the slightest reference to those who, at a great cost, and with much anxiety had in time past educated and supported them. The mandate proceeds:—"If you do not so, I must, of course, withdraw your license" ("*to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord*"), "and once withdrawn it will never (1) be restored..... Consider the terrible sin which you will be committing if you set at nought the authority under which God has placed you" (that of a bishop!) "in deference to any merely human directions" (that is, from a Christian missionary—"a mere brother priest" the Bishop calls him—and the Missionary Society who

by God's blessing made the evangelist all he is).....“ Desist for the present from the action which you have begun in defiance of my authority and in opposition to the work sanctioned by me; even if you are not convinced that you are bound to do so, yet do it unconvinced, rather than run the risk of committing sin of which you hardly know the magnitude. That you may be guided by the Holy Spirit to a knowledge of His will, is the prayer of

“Your faithful servant in Christ.”

Again we come upon another document inhibiting twelve faithful pastors from all spiritual functions, and its history shows how much better we manage ecclesiastical matters than they did in mediæval times. The prelate, who issued it, was a young man, if, in those days, it were courteous to speak of a bishop as a mere man, who had just come to be the chief spiritual Shepherd in a foreign country over a people of the majority of whom he knew neither the habits nor the language. Nevertheless, he almost immediately announced a certain policy affecting a large proportion of the presbyters under his oversight, which those experienced elders regarded as illegal and injurious to the work of God. Consequently, the bishop went to meet a conference of them. What for? To calmly reason about their difficulties? To give conscientious men a fair hearing? No! but with a deed of revocation in his pocket, prepared and sealed, ready to be at once fulminated unless those tried and true men, would yield implicit obedience to the bishop's absolute authority, and hand over, in silence, or at most under protest, property and rights which they deemed not even their own. And this deed was actually, there and then, put into execution against all present, though some neither said Yea nor Nay, but were simply passive.

This reads like an ancient story, though the date *might be* about 1553 or 1662. But supposing such times come back again and, in spite of canons and homilies, such a bishop again exert such power; supposing, we say, that by virtue of his position he should silence a band of ministers of a right royal spirit, and bearing apostolic credentials, men who have devoted their lives to the service of their Master and have proved themselves wise to win souls. What, we ask, under such circumstances, should pious laymen do, who love order and respect authority, and yet who feel that good men are being wronged by one who ought, above all others, to strengthen their hands? Shall they let these brethren suffer, and content themselves with friendly condolence and private prayer? Or, do truth and love demand something more—a public stand against a public injury, and that though it may seem to slight

and even defy their chief pastor? Would that we had an apostle to write to! Would that the loving St. John were at hand! But is he not at hand? Turn again to the old book. Read this letter from the elder to the beloved Gaius, whom he "loved in the truth."

We do not know exactly who Gaius, or rather Caius was. The name was such a very common one in the apostle's time, that a saying of a Roman bride to her husband was, "Where you are Caius, I am Caia;" i. e., "Where you are master, I am mistress." But as Professor Plumtre, and most modern commentators are of opinion, "he was probably a convert of St. John (v. 4), and a layman of wealth and distinction (v. 5) in some city near Ephesus." Of that city Diotrophes was the leading presbyter—call him Superintendent or Bishop as you like. He "loveth to have the pre-eminence among them" (v. 9) and is rather given to "prating malicious words" (v. 10). Remember it is an apostle who flings the epithet at this bishop. To the district or diocese under his direction the church with which John was connected (v. 6) had sent out "strangers" or "missionaries," whose one charge was to "go forth on behalf of THE NAME"—such is the literal reading of verse 7—that

"Sweetest note in seraph song,
Sweetest name on mortal tongue,
Sweetest carol ever sung,
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus."

Layman Caius had recognized these "strangers" as "brethren," and had manifested towards them much love and goodwill (vv. 5, 6), giving them a hospitable welcome and kindly furtherance. But Bishop Diotrophes did not like these missionaries, though introduced and commended to his flock by apostolic credentials (v. 9). He is not going to be dictated to even by St. John himself. Is there not reason enough for his dislike? These messengers are bent on carrying the Gospel, in all its simplicity, to *the Gentiles* (v. 7), and, no doubt, Diotrophes belonged to the Jewish faction, who would not allow that anybody could be saved unless they were good ritualists and kept the whole law of fasts and feasts, of ceremonies and ordinances. More than that, and worse than that, these missionaries "*took nothing*" (v. 7) on principle from the heathen, "lest the heathen should misconstrue their motive and confound them with the priests who cared very little for serving the altar so that they lived by it. Pastor Diotrophes, however, did not care to have strange teachers, who possibly saw through him and did not see much in him to admire,

going about among his flock, staying a month with this friend and a month with that, pleading in every house the cause of the neglected Gentiles." "Their example might be very dangerous, it might suggest unwelcome comparisons"* Diotrophes will have none of it; he does not shrink from depreciating a work which God has crowned with his blessing; he does not hesitate to dishonour those whom God has honoured. He "prates against them," and the apostle too, "with malicious words," or as Dean Alford translates, "with wicked speeches," he suspends their licenses to minister in spiritual things; and "not content therewith neither doth he himself receive the brethren, he forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church" (v. 10).

One brother, named Demetrius, stands pre-eminent amongst these "objectionable missionaries," as Prof. Plumtre styles them, and he is especially marked for the arrows from his bishop's quiver. He was, perhaps, the leader of the little band, or somehow had got pushed to the front of the fight. Demetrius had "good report of all, and of the truth itself," and to the righteousness of this testimony, the apostle and his colleagues add their emphatic "record" (v. 12)

We should not wonder if Caius were sore pressed as to the course he ought to take. He did not care to put himself into opposition to Diotrophes, nor to join in thwarting his designs; still he was convinced that Demetrius and his friends were in the right, and "his chivalric instincts prompt him to a very special sympathy with the weak and the oppressed." He is in a strait betwixt two; how highly privileged he was that he could appeal from a bishop to an apostle!

The suffering and suspended missionaries having gone for counsel to St. John, he tells them just to return to their posts, whether Diotrophes be willing or unwilling, and he bespeaks, on their behalf, the help and encouragement of layman Caius. Caius need not doubt his duty, though that duty clash with and cross the plans of so big a man as a bishop. "Thou wilt do well if thou forward the missionaries on their way, after a godly sort" (v. 6); literally, "worthily of God," in a manner such as is due to Him whose messengers they are and whose servant thou art (Alford). As the apostle put this letter to Caius into the hand of Demetrius, when he was bidding him good-bye, and sending him away with the kiss of peace, we can imagine the venerable saint, to whom the use of ink and pen had now become irksome (v. 13) and

* The Private letters of St. Paul and St. John,
by the Rev. S. Cox.

whose written sentences were therefore very curt, though he loved to converse with his friends "mouth to mouth" (v. 14); we can imagine the old man, "with a face so noble that kings might do him homage, and so sweet that children would run to him for his blessing," saying, "Be of good courage, brother Demetrius, though now for a time, if need be, you suffer for your resistance against unlawful authority, this thing that thou doest shall be spoken of for a memorial of thee throughout the world, whilst Diotrophes shall find his apparent victory turned into lasting defeat, and his name shall remain as a beacon to warn the church that even bishops may deserve to be called, and that too by an apostle, 'prating lovers of pre-eminence,' though in their exceeding madness against men far better than themselves they verily think that they do God service."

Now it seems to us that the problem which troubled Caius is not unknown to good Christian laymen even in this day. How thankful should we be for the "sure word" of an apostle's teaching! How gladly should we bow before a decision so unimpeachable! Whom shall layman Caius follow? —the humble, self-denying Demetrius, or the popular and powerful Diotrophes? Ease and dignity point one way, truth and love the other. Where is the magnet that shall decide, which is the pole of duty? Thank God, we have it in inspired words. We must obey God rather than man. What then saith the Scriptures?

"We therefore ought to support such persons (as Demetrius) that we may become fellow workers with them for the truth.

Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God; he that doeth evil hath not seen God." (v. 8, 11.)



Correspondence.

THE *MAPILA*, A SUPPOSED VENOMOUS SNAKE OF CEYLON; DOES SUCH A SNAKE EXIST?

(Concluded from page 208.)

Now to return to the subject of the *Mápilá* which is, I suppose identical with a dreaded snake called the *Mawila*.

In 1872, Major Tranchell told me about a deadly snake found in houses in Kurunégala and which he called the

"*Puff Adder* or *Night Assassin*" I at once applied to the Hon'ble W. D. Wright, then Acting Government Agent of Kurunégala for specimens of this snake, and for the very kind and willing manner in which Mr. Wright continued for months to aid my researches by securing and sending me dead and living specimens of this "night assassin" I cannot be too grateful, and I am glad to say Mr. Wright's specimens proved the utter harmlessness of this much dreaded snake. I fear I have mislaid some of Mr. Wright's most interesting letters, but the following extracts of those in my possession will I trust suffice —

On the 8th August, 1872, Mr. Wright wrote, "I am assured that there are several kinds of the *Mávila*, and have given general notice of my wish to have them brought in; but the natives are very averse to kill any snake and I fear it will be some time before I can gratify your wishes for specimens." Again: "I caught a specimen for you but I regret to say it is not in a fit state to send you. It is called the *Mápila*." "I shall send by tomorrow's train a specimen of the *Mávila* (not *Mápila*) about which I wrote to you the other day. I believe that Bennett calls it the *Mápila*. Examine the snake's tongue, and sides of his jaws. It is said that he punctures the skin of his victim over an artery or vein, sucks the blood through the tongue which is tubular, and during the operation uses his jaws like bellows to blow on the wound so as to allay pain! The lower part of the tail is very strong. It is said too that these snakes are found in companies of seven." This snake was a species of *Dipsas*, and either *D. Fostenii* or an allied species, and measured $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet in length. Again, writing from the *Máligáwa*, "I caught a snake in this house yesterday. It is believed to be the veritable *Lé Mávilá* which I mentioned to you in a former letter. It is so large that I cannot get it into a bottle, so have put it into a tin box soldered down. I shall be glad to know whether you have ever seen a snake like it. Examine its mouth and tongue carefully. You will notice that its tail is similar to that of some other snakes called *Mávila* which I have sent previously." This was a very large specimen, speckled grey and black, of the same or an allied species of *Dipsas*, but too far gone to enable me to make a careful examination of it. In sending me a living specimen of the same species of snake, Mr. Wright wrote: "Here is a (ලේ මාවිල) *Lé Mávilá*, I believe. Mind—it is alive. I bottled it yesterday afternoon at the *Máligáwa*, Kurunégala, but it wants a larger habitation if you are inclined to keep it alive; so I would advise you to transfer it at once from this bottle." This was a magnificent specimen of the same species of *Dipsas*

but of a uniform dark grey colour, and measuring no less than six feet and an inch in length. I kept this snake alive for several days, and when disturbed it looked very fierce, and hissed just like a Tit-polonga. I think these extracts will prove that the Mawila or Mapila is a species of *Dipsas*, and therefore not a venomous snake.

In November, 1872, Mr. Wright sent me several snakes with the following list of Sinhalese names, to which I have added the scientific ones:—

1. Polmal karawala—*Chrysopelea ornata*.
2. Le Mawila—*Dipsas* species.
3. Gerandi Mawila, the common rat-snake.
4. Tit-polonga, (Young) the tic-polonga.
5. Manminiya, alias Magamaruwa—*El Karawala*, *Aspidura brachiorros* and *Dipsas Ceylonensis*.
6. Dunukarawala.
7. Tit Mawila—*Dendrophis picta*, *Hypnale nepa* and *Dipsas Ceylonensis*.

On the subject of the belief that there is a venomous Mawila I beg to send you the following extract from a number of the Ceylon Examiner for 1872:—

“Besides the *Naja Tripudians* (the Naya of the Singhalese) the *Bungarus Cæruleus* (not identified?) the *Daboia Elegans* (Malpolonga) and the *Tic Polonga*, which he classifies as the only venomous kinds, we have the Mawila and the Lemedilla, two snakes with a bite as deadly as that of the cobra. These snakes have not perhaps been properly identified, and may possibly form varieties of the Polonga, but they are nevertheless sufficiently marked to demand separate mention.”

But as an illustration of the gross ignorance of most of the natives in reference to venomous snakes, I subjoin a list of those called in Sinhalese *Manminiya* or *Magamaruwa*, both of which means *death on the way*, that is, that their bite is so suddenly fatal that the party bitten dies at once on the way before assistance can be rendered.

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| 1. <i>Ablabes Humbertii</i> . | 2. <i>Oligodon sublineatus</i> . |
| 3. <i>Simotes Russellii</i> . | 4. <i>Cyclophis calamaria</i> . |
| 5. <i>Aspidura Guntherii</i> . | 6. <i>Aspidura brachiorros</i> . |
| 7. <i>Chrysopelea ornata</i> . | |

All these have been sent to me at different times under the above two names. They are all of them non-venomous, and so very small that they can scarcely open their mouths to bite a human being.

Here is another extract from the letter of a friend about the Mápilá: "The snake which stung the cooly, about which Dr. Brighthouse wrote, was a 'Maha-pela,' Singhalese name, and is deadly, so there is another to add to your list of poisonous snakes in Ceylon." This snake turned out to be the very common fresh water one—*Tropidonatus quincunciatus*! I received a small specimen of a snake a short time ago from near Kurunegala, called Mápilá and find it is *Dipsas gokool*, new to Ceylon. Among a lot of snakes sent to me by Dr. Pereira from Mutwal in October 1871, the *Cynophis helena*, a perfectly harmless snake, was called "Mapila."

Shortly after I began to collect the reptiles of Ceylon, I was highly indebted in 1871 to Mr. Obeyesekara of the Kosgamaya Farm, Veyangoda, for collections of snakes and other reptiles, and for a most excellently written series of letters about them. Mr. Obeyesekara, you will observe, is too intelligent to implicitly believe in the stories of his countrymen about venomous snakes, though he takes the trouble to give them to me in their integrity. Referring to a collection of snakes sent to me on the 15th of August 1871, and amongst which were two fine specimens of a snake called the Nága Mávila (and no doubt the same as the ubiquitous Mapila), *Cynophis helena*, one of which measured 57 inches in length, or 15 inches longer than the longest one ever seen by Dr. Gunther when his great work on the reptiles of India was published in 1864, Mr. Obeyesekara sent me the following account of the Nága Mávila in a letter dated 20th August, 1871:—

"I may here observe, with regard to the two *Nága Mávilas* I had the pleasure of sending you the other day, that they were both discovered by my servants in rat-holes in the flower garden just opposite my bungalow where certainly they could not have been harbouring themselves for more than a couple of days. From the fact of the entire disappearance of the numerous rats that, while baffling all the attempts of my servants to destroy them, had been making a mess of all my flower beds, since the time I had been honoured with the short visit of my two creeping friends, I cannot but conclude that the *Nága Mávilas* are prodigious rat eaters, and likely to prove very welcome guests in one way, at least, though not in all. The natives say that *Mávilas* are invariably found in families of seven, and that, when one is destroyed, the other six are certain to make their appearance by turns at the threshold of their comrade's destroyer and either to avenge its death or to share its fate. In my case only one has appeared

as yet after I captured the first: and the fact of your possession of both of them and that of my being able to be engaged as at present will enable you to guess, beyond all doubt, as to the degree of success which must have attended the second snake's attempt (if any such was intended) to avenge itself upon me. If the remaining five also are inclined to give me a call, they shall, by all means, be perfectly welcome; and you need not have any scruples on the score of my life's safety, on which depends the continuance of these odoriferous supplies I am sending you, but may, on the contrary, hopefully reckon upon getting a good sized bottle crammed with all the five *Máwílás* in such excellent style and redolent with such rank fragrance as will render the best and the dearest perfume yet known positively odious when placed by its side."

As bearing on the subject of the ignorance prevailing amongst the Sinhalese in reference to venomous snakes perhaps you will have space for the following extract from the same letter of Mr. Obeyesekera on the *Katakaluwa*:—

"The *Katakaluwa* is both a creeping and a climbing snake. It feeds upon flies and vermin. The natives, who are ever ready with some strange story or other about every snake that is placed before them for their opinion, have made this reptile also the subject of a somewhat curious description. Not satisfied with condemning it as a venomous serpent they have been further pleased to ascribe to it a degree of malice and vindictiveness which finds no parallel in creation. They say it is an aggressive animal and, whenever it is bent upon attacking a man, gives him chase and, after attacking him, climbs up a tree, coils itself round it and remains in this attitude without descending until the death of its victim takes place. But if the snake either fail in his attempt or if the bitten man recover it becomes revengeful and resolves upon attacking no other until it effects the death of him that had been first marked out for its victim or the snake itself perishes."

With reference to a fine specimen of the *Simotes Russellii*, a perfectly harmless snake already referred to in the list of *Magamaruwas*, the following extract from Mr. Obeyesekera's letter of 18th August 1871 is interesting:—

"The bearer brings you a *Poloulla*, another *Tel-karawala* and two *Magamaruwas*. Although you consider the latter (which is also termed *Manminiya*) to be perfectly harmless, the general opinion of the natives is that it is an extremely venomous reptile; so much so that its bite is productive of almost instantaneous death. The very meanings of the words *Magamaruwa* and *Manminiya* which are "killer on the way" "corpse on the way" indicate that the danger of this serpent's

bite is such that it will effect its victim's death before he can arrive at the end of his journey."

Adverting to the subject of the lizard, called *Aranai* by the Tamils, the following is the report of an inquest held on the body of a woman who was supposed to have died from the scratch of this lizard. The case is taken partly from the report of the magistrate of Mullativo, Mr. Massie, as published in the Administration Report for 1870, and partly from Mr. Massie's notes of the case.

"Inquests in Mullativo in 1869. Five in number. The most remarkable case was one in which report was made to me that a woman had died from the scratch of a red tailed, streaked and venomous lizard called "*Aranai*." Discrediting the report, I went out myself to hold an inquest, but could find no other cause for the woman's death. I have been unable to find that any species of lizard is poisonous, but that the bite of this reptile is certain death seems to be an idea inherent in the minds of all the most sensible and educated natives. It has been suggested to me by a gentleman who disbelieves the native proverb—if a "leech bite leprosy will come," if an "*aranai* bite death will come"—that the woman died of fright. The jury, the foreman of which was the oldest and most intelligent Mudaliyar of the district, on which were two headmen, were unanimous in their verdict."

I received two days ago (viz., 10th August), specimens of reptiles from Mr. J. S. Drieberg, Police Magistrate of Point Pedro, and in one bottle were three or four full grown specimens of our most common Ceylon ground lizard, marked *Aranai*. This is the *Hihanela* of the Sinhalese, is very common about Colombo, and is the *Euprepes rufescens*, or *Tiliqua carinata* of Naturalists, and is easily distinguished by having from three to five longitudinal ribs along the scales on its back. In another bottle were some small specimens said to be young *Aranais*, but these were *Eumeces* (*Riopa*) *hardwickii*, and equally as common as the other. Judging from the several references to the *Aranai* as the "streaked lizard &c," I believe this latter to be the *Aranai* so much dreaded for its fatal effects and not the larger specimen. Mr. Drieberg has been good enough to send me a copy of the full report of the inquest and *post mortem* examination on a boy of about 9 years of age, supposed to have died at Sarasalie from the bite of an *Aranai* on the 19th of June last. The relations of the lad and the doctor who attended him believed that he died from the effects of a bite from an *Aranai*, but the evidence showing that two marks were on the part bitten, prove that if he died from the poison of a reptile it was from the bite of a two poison fanged

snake. From the report of the *post mortem* examination of this case by Mr. J. Harvard, I make the following extract, and send on the whole proceedings in case you should like to see to what extent egregious folly and superstition is carried by a set of otherwise intelligent people in the Northern Province. The following is the extract referred to:—

"I am of opinion that the deceased died from the effects of animal poison. I examined a case of alleged bite from an "Aranai" (streaked lizard) in the Vanny District about two years ago, but on a *post mortem* examination it appeared that death was caused by rupture of the stomach. There were two abrasions in the present case close to each other and appeared like scratches, the cuticle was broken, the blood was not dark over the seat of abrasures as in cases of snake bite. The size of each abrasure was of the size of this circle (about the tenth of an inch—W. F.) I have heard of cases of death from "Aranai bites," but have had no professional experience of such cases."

I trust that the missionaries in the North will use all their influence to dispel from the minds of the natives the idea that the poor maligned "Aranai" is a venomous reptile causing death by its bite. I hope also the Rev. Mr. Pereira will now see the wisdom of informing his countrymen that the much dreaded "Mápilá" is a creation of their imaginations, and no more to be feared than a frog or any other of our harmless reptiles.

I do not know whether the Sinhalese people understand what the English call "chaff," but in case they do, I take the liberty to give the following receipt for catching the "Mápilá," taken from a work by "Lewis Carrol" and entitled "The Hunting of the Snark." This little work is one of the most laughable in the English language, from the fact I suppose that its puerile stupidity is unequalled in any other work.

"You may seek it with thimbles—and seek it with care;
You may hunt it with forks and hope;
You may threaten its life with a railway share;
You may charm it with smiles and soap."

Apologising for the length of this article,

I am, Yours truly,

WM. FERGUSON, F. L. S.

P.S. Since writing the foregoing, I have referred to some portions of the great work by Sir J. Fayer on "*The Thanotophidia of India, being a description of the venomous snakes of the Indian Peninsula,*" and from several accounts given of the symptoms and sufferings of parties bitten by snakes proved

to be harmless, and others who only imagined they had been bitten, I feel now convinced that the bite of the Ceylonese "MAPILA" has not only terrified and tortured several natives at various times, but that it is possible several people may have died from the effects of this imaginary snake or bugbear. No snake in Ceylon is better known to Europeans and natives than the very common green "whip-snake." Its common Sinhalese name is *Æhætulla*, and under this name the natives believe it attacks people's eyes; but under the name of Henakandaya, it is considered such a dangerous snake that its very shadow is said to cause paralysis. "This snake is said to stand on the tip of its tail, and if its shadow falls on a man, he becomes paralysed. It is a common expression amongst the Sinhalese, when a man looks perfectly prostrated and helpless to say, has he been affected by the shadow of the Henakandaya." This is the *Passerita micterizaus*, and is a perfectly harmless snake. The following are just a few condensed extracts from Fayrer's work to prove the effects of fear on parties supposed to have been bitten by poisonous snakes.

Case reported by Dr. J. Roche p 59. I have seen the case of another woman who was bitten on the toe by Sarang. The patient complained of a sinking feeling and giddiness of the head, also imperfect vision and a great fear of death. She left the hospital well after twenty-four hours. On this case, Dr. Fayrer remarks, "I believe the snake to have been innocent; the symptoms described were probably due to fear."

Case by Dr. F. Day, pp. 59, 60. "The patient was in a state of utter prostration and dreadful alarm at the idea of closely impending death; he was covered with a cold clammy perspiration, had a rapid pulse, but the respiration was unimpeded." The doctor was firmly convinced that the patient was only suffering from fear, and to humour him he suggested to his master to allow a snake charmer to try his remedies for the purpose of relieving his mind. The patient now thought he was abandoned, there was now no hope, and he soon became worse. "As it seemed probable his words might come true, I again took the case in hand; a good blister and galvanism with stimuli were required before he came round; in fact, it was only by causing great bodily pain that I was able to draw his attention from his mental affection, as this in reality it was. Doubtless most medical officers in India can recall such cases as the above to their recollection, or those of cholera in which fear has been the cause of death, or the latter has only been prevented by such means as recorded in this instance."

From cases by Dr. J. Ewart (pp 60, 61), headed. "How the bite of snakes supposed to be poisonous may be cured." "Patient's pulse was irregular, and he was much alarmed and agitated; the surface of the body was cold; countenance anxious; pupils normal; quite conscious and intelligent; no dimness of vision, or vertigo." The patient was supposed to have been cured by cupping, ammonia and rum. The snake which bit the patient was submitted to Dr. Fayrer, who found it to be the *Lycodon aulicus*, some varieties of which are like the Indian Krait or *Bungarus caruleus*, but is perfectly innocent. This also is a common Ceylon snake.

"The effect of fear was well shown in this case, as producing several of the symptoms met with in men and animals poisoned by snakes. This fear was intensified by his having seen the reptile, and being under the belief that it was a Krait, well known by every native to be poisonous to a deadly degree. Had the snake not been identified by unimpeachable authority; the notion might be entertained that the patient had recovered, under the influence of cupping, ammonia and rum, from the effects of the bite of the deadly Krait."

In fact the work teems with cases of this kind, and I am convinced that when native cures of snake bites have been effected, they were those of harmless or not deadly venomous snakes, and that when patients have died from the bite of a *Mápilá* it must have been either from the effects of fear, or from the real bite of one of our deadly snakes already referred to.

Since writing the foregoing I have received a small specimen, from Assistant Colonial Surgeon Wytealingam of Mullaittivu, of the *Echis carinata*, Merr, which is a venomous snake of the same family as the Tit-polonga. This is the first specimen of this Indian viper which has been found in Ceylon and in this respect the assertion I so confidently made (on p. 204 of the *Ceylon Friend* for September) must be modified.

W. F.

Notes of the Month.

Prince & Princess of Wales' College. The foundation stone of this College at Moratuwa was laid on Sept. 15th. by His Excellency the Governor. The College is to be built and endowed by the munificence of C. H. de Soysa Esq.,

and will, we trust, be strictly undenominational so that no native Christians may be excluded from the benefit of this great gift made to the public in the name of our future king.^s

The Bishop and the Church Missionary Society

The vehemence of the controversy on the Bishop's attack upon the Church Missionaries having now subsided, it becomes easy to take a calm view of the entire subject. The claims of the Bishop, for instance, may be distinguished from the means he took to enforce them. For the claims something may be said; but for the means of enforcing them, in our opinion, nothing can be said. Even if it be conceded that the Bishop had a right to the entire control of the Tamil Cooiy Mission and the Church Mission in general, still it was a right that had never before been exercised. To carry out an innovation of this kind by the most extreme measure in his power was to say the least a great mistake; and this we believe reasonable men of all parties will admit.

It is true the licenses of all the missionaries but one have now been restored at the remonstrance of the Bishops of Madras and Bombay. Dr. Coplestone however in restoring the licenses has expressed no regret at having withdrawn them, and still insists on his claims being submitted to. It is gratifying to find that the Bishop of Madras strongly disapproves of Bishop Coplestone's action; and even the Ritualist Bishop at Bombay condemns his proceedings with regard to the Tamil Cooiy Mission. The superintendent of that mission (the Rev. W. Clark) is now the only one who remains inhibited; and in his case we hope the legality of the Bishop's course will be tried and decided on.

Though we have said that the claim for episcopal control over the Church Mission is one open to discussion, we do not intend to imply that we have any doubt upon the subject. That the Bishop ought to have complete control over every organization of Churchmen in his diocese cannot be proved either by the written laws of the Church or by the practice which has obtained in other dioceses at home or abroad. As a matter of fact, the Church of England is the result of a compromise. Parties of widely differing views have ever held their place in it; and if those churchmen who are zealous for the tenets known as evangelical cannot maintain a missionary society without having their efforts crippled and crushed by a Ritualistic bishop, their only course will be, as Dr. Coplestone has himself hinted, to leave the church.