

CEYLON *Today*

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APRIL, 1956

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CEYLON TODAY

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CEYLON

Today

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The New Government

THE General Elections to the Third Parliament which was held on April 5, 7 and 10, 1956, resulted in an overwhelming victory for the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna, a coalition of parties led by Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, the Leader of the Opposition in the last Parliament.

On the Rt. Hon. Sir John Kotelawala tendering his resignation to the Governor-General, Mr. Bandaranaike was called upon to form the new Government.

Mr. Bandaranaike, the new Prime Minister, was born on January 8, 1899. He is the only son of the late Sir Solomon Dias Bandaranaike, one of the most distinguished personalities of Ceylon many years ago.

The new Premier was a brilliant scholar at St. Thomas' College, where he had his early education. From St. Thomas' he went to Christ Church College, Oxford. A gifted orator, he played a prominent role in the Oxford Union and had the distinction of being elected its Secretary. After graduating he was called to the Bar.

Returning to Ceylon in 1925, he started practise as an Advocate but also took to politics and joined

the Ceylon National Congress, the leading political organization of the day fighting for self-government for the country.

He was elected to the Colombo Municipal Council in 1927 and, on the introduction of the Donoughmore Constitution in 1931, he came into the State Council unopposed as Member for Veyangoda. Again at the next election in 1936 he was returned to that seat unopposed.

When the second State Council met he was elected Chairman of the Executive Committee of Local Administration and became a member of the Board of Ministers. He acted as Leader of the House in 1945 for Mr. D. S. Senanayake who had succeeded Sir Baron Jayatilaka in that office.

When the House of Representatives replaced the State Council in 1947, Mr. Bandaranaike—a member of the U. N. P. then—was returned as M. P. for Attanagalla.

As Minister

MR. BANDARANAIKE held the portfolio of Health and Local Administration and was also

the Leader of the House, but resigned from the Cabinet and the U. N. P. on political grounds in July, 1951. With him certain other M. Ps crossed the floor.

After going over to the Opposition, Mr. Bandaranaike dissolved the Sinhala Maha Sabha, of which he was the Founder and President, and founded the Sri Lanka Freedom Party.

At the General Election in 1952, he was returned again to the Attanagalla seat with a record majority of 32,544 votes but his party was able to capture only nine seats. He became Leader of the Opposition in the House of Representatives the same year.

On the eve of the General Election, this year, he formed the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna, which

is a political alliance of four parties: the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Viplavakari), the Samasta Lanka Bhasa Peramuna and a group of Independents. He also entered into a "No-Contest" Pact with the Nava Lanka Sama Samaja Party and the Communist Party. The M. E. P. subsequently swept the polls and out of the 60 seats it contested was able to capture 51 seats.

Mr. Bandaranaike himself was returned to the Attanagalla seat with the highest ever majority in a General Election in Ceylon.

Mr. Bandaranaike was a contemporary of the present British Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Eden, at Oxford.

The New Cabinet

Prime Minister and Minister of Defence and External Affairs: Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, M.P.

Minister of Education: Mr. W. Dahanayake, M.P.

Minister of Lands and Land Development: Mr. C. P. de Silva, M.P.

Minister of Justice: Senator M. W. H. de Silva, Q.C.

Minister of Industries and Fisheries: Mr. P. H. W. de Silva, M.P.

Minister of Finance: Mr. Stanley de Zoysa, M.P.

Minister of Agriculture and Food: Mr. D. P. R. Gunawardena, M.P.

Minister of Labour, Housing and Social Services: Mr. T. B. Illangaratne, M.P.

Minister of Home Affairs: Senator A. P. Jayasuriya

Minister of Local Government and Cultural Affairs: Mr. Jayaweera Kuruppu, M.P.

Minister of Posts, Broadcasting and Information: Mr. C. A. S. Marikkar, M.P.

Minister of Transport and Works: Mr. Maithripala Senanayake, M.P.

Minister of Health: Mrs. Vimala Wijewardene, M.P.

Minister of Commerce and Trade: Mr. R. G. Senanayake, M. P.



The Prime Minister greeting the Governor-General before handing him the Speech from the Throne

Speech from the Throne

The following is the text of the Speech from the Throne delivered by H. E. the Governor-General, Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, at the Opening of the First Session of the Third Parliament on April 20, 1956 :—

Mr. President and Members of the Senate.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives.

THE free votes of the people democratically cast at the last general election are a clear indication of dissatisfaction with many aspects of policy and administration hitherto pursued.

My Government intends, in pursuance of its declared policy, to effect many changes with expedition and efficiency but in a manner that will neither result in injustice nor cause confusion and dislocation.

My Government regrets that it is not in a position to enumerate in detail today the various measures which it will adopt to implement its policies. You are aware that My Government assumed office only a few days ago and that it has not had sufficient time to formulate its full programme.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives.

The detailed programme of My Government will be reflected in the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the forthcoming financial year which will be laid before you.

Mr. President and Members of the Senate.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives.

In its foreign policy, My Government will not align itself with any power blocs. The position of the bases at Katunayake and Trincomalee

will be reviewed. Every endeavour will be made to establish close collaboration and co-operation with other countries. Consideration will be given to the exchange of diplomatic representatives with countries in which Ceylon is not at present represented.

Admission to U. N.

MY Government welcomes the success of the previous Administration in securing the admission of Ceylon to the United Nations and intends to make the fullest use of this position in making its contribution to the preservation of world

The Earl and Countess Mountbatten arriving at the State Opening of Parliament accompanied by Mrs. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, the wife of the Prime Minister.



peace and the furtherance of friendly relations with other countries.

Among the constitutional matters to which attention will be paid in due course will be the question of establishing a republic and of ensuring the more effective and efficient functioning of the principles of democracy.

My Government will also take steps to effect changes in the law and practice relating to Parliamentary elections.

All repressive legislation, including subsidiary legislation, will be reviewed and amended or repealed as the best interests of the country require.

My Government will take such measures as are necessary to provide satisfactory social services, including such services as health, education and housing, and an adequate and comprehensive plan for agricultural and industrial development, and to deal with growing unemployment amongst all classes of the people.

My Government will give early attention to the Report of the Commission on Local Government and take all steps required to remedy the defects in local government structurally, financially and administratively.

Nationalization

IN pursuance of its socialist policy My Government will take early steps, where the best interests of the country so require, to nationalize certain essential services such as transport.

Early steps will be taken to reduce the price of rice, sugar, and, wherever possible, of other necessaries, and to restore the mid-day meal of school children.

It is the intention of My Government to set up a department of Cultural Affairs. It will also take necessary steps for the adoption of Sinhalese as the one Official Language of the State. The legislative measures necessary for this purpose will be submitted for your approval as early as possible.

My Government will take all steps necessary to celebrate the 2500th anniversary of the Sambuddha Jayanthi in a manner befitting this memorable occasion.

In matters affecting labour, My Government will remove all undemocratic restrictions of trade union rights and establish labour conditions which are in keeping with modern practice.

Steps will be taken to ensure contentment and efficiency in the public services. Any legitimate demands made by public servants regarding the terms and conditions of their service will receive attention. The position of public servants who have been penalised under undemocratic regulations will be reviewed. Such legislative and administrative measures as are necessary will be taken to stamp out effectively all forms of graft, corruption and nepotism.

The question of any necessary reform in the Public Service Commission will receive the early and careful consideration of My Government.

My Government wishes to assure minorities, religious, racial or otherwise, that they need have no fear of injustice or discrimination in the carrying out of its policies and programmes. My Government will ensure to all citizens the rights, privileges and freedoms to which they are entitled in a democratic State.

I commend all these matters to you for your deliberation and I trust they will receive your most careful consideration.



Entrance to the Kataragama Dewale

Kataragama — The Sylvan Shrine of Ceylon

M. D. RAGHAVAN

ON the left bank of the Menik Ganga, the river of the wooded groves of South-East Ceylon, nestles in its enchanting jungle setting, the mystic shrine of Kataragama—literally the abode of God Kadira.

Ruhunu Maha Devale as it is known, is a shrine of great antiquity, foremost in all Ceylon as a popular pilgrim resort. Tradition has it that King Dutugemunu in the second century B.C. built the present shrine in fulfilment of a vow commemorating his successful expedition against King Elara (205–161 B.C.). Round this episode has grown the Sinhala folk poem “Kanda Mala”

opening with a narration of the coming of the God of Lanka. God Siva once told his sons Kanda Kumaru (Skanda Kumara) and Ganidu (Ganesa), that he would give a mango to whoever would first encircle the three worlds. Skanda started off on his golden peacock to carry out the adventure to the very letter. Ganesa cleverly encircled Iswara, saying that the God in Himself constituted the three worlds. Siva was so pleased that he gave the mango to Ganesa. Skanda returning was so enraged that he delivered a well aimed blow at Ganesh, who rolled down breaking one of his tusks. Siva banished Skanda,

who coming to the world of mortals, took his abode at Kataragama in South Ceylon.

Amusing as an imaginative story is the playful encounters of the two brothers. The puranic background of the God is narrated in Skanda Purana, which tells us that God Skanda came into being in the course of the devastating war between the Devas and Asuras. Smarting under the blows inflicted on them by the Asuras, the Devas in a body waited upon God Siva, so as to devise a means of crushing the Asuras. The answer was the creation of God Karthikeya. Endowed with the lance, the gift of his mother Paravati, Skanda encountered the Asuras annihilating the Asura forces.

His Love for Valli

THE next we hear of the god is of his love for Valli, the hill maiden, daughter of a Vedda Chieftain. Pursuing the daughter of the jungles, Karthikeya arrived at the village, now known as Kataragama the abode of God Kadira, where the God married her. The visitor to Kataragama today if he scans the walls outside the pillared hall, will notice a series of panels in colours, none too bright, illustrating scenes in the life of Valli from infancy to maidenhood, ending with her marriage to the God. One of the scenes shows the abundant hill crops of maize, with birds hovering over and settling over the maize cobs, Valli sling in hand scaring away the birds—a pictorial version of the episode in the career of the God.

To resume the incidents as sung in the Sinhala folk chronicle "Kanda Mala":—Dutugemunu preparing for a final assault, was warned in a dream, not to embark on the expedition against Elara, unless he secured the aid of the God of Kataragama—appearing in dreams being among the notable features of the cult of this particular divinity. No time was lost to do the trek to Kataragama "where the river flowed with water, though no rain fell" in the words of "Kanda Mala". Miracles are yet another feature of the supernatural here, and many are the miracles

which are part of the chronicle of Kataragama. The Prince reaching Kataragama went through severe penances for divine intercession. Lost in meditation as the Prince was, an ascetic suddenly appeared before him and the Prince fainted. Recovering consciousness, the great God stood before him and conferred on the Royal Suppliant, the boon sought. The Prince recovered sufficiently to make a vow that on his return from victory, he would rebuild and endow the temple. Confident of victory, Dutugemunu entered the field. A single combat between the two adversaries marked the final stage of the fight. Elara was vanquished and killed, Dutugemunu recovering the throne.

The garland of verses "Kanda Mala", in true poetic imagery speaks of the King erecting a building of three storeys with an entrance gateway of seven steps as thanks offering to the God of war. On the South, he erected the shrine to Ganesh, a kitchen for making offerings, an altar for flowers, and a kovil for goddess Pattini. Four furlongs off, he built the Kiri Vihare and formed parks (Udyana) round the seven sacred hills.

If the structure of the Maha Devala as Dutugemunu built it, was of the imposing proportions described in the folk poem, nothing of it is evident today. The shrine room is of moderate proportions, with the outerwall bearing a series of mouldings, reminiscent of the outer aspects of the octagon of the Dalada Maligawa in Kandy. Architects do not consider the present building to be very ancient in structure. In front is a pillared hall where the devotees assemble, offer prayers and make offerings. Within the quadrangle, is the temple to Ganesh. Outside to the right is the Kovil to Theivayani (Deva-Yani) Amman. A few yards away from the Maha Devala, is the Kovil to Valli Amma.

The splendour of Kataragama is typical of the saying, "Unpretentious as the structure is, the God is omnipotent". No God in Ceylon is so assiduously propitiated as the God of Kataragama. All the year round votaries come in hundreds, despite the arduous long journey,

either to perform vows for favours received, and boons bestowed, or to seek divine succour in a thousand causes. Some are moved by the urge to visit a site held in high esteem, replete with traditions and legends.

The Sacred Month

ESALA (roughly July-August) is the month sacred to the annual festivals of the Ceylon devalas, the first of such gorgeous events being the Kandy Esala Perahera, the celebration in honour of the sacred Tooth Relic at the Dalada Maligawa, jointly with the festivals of the Natha, Maha Vishnu, Kataragama and Pattini devalas of Kandy. During the season of the annual celebrations at Kataragama, the pathway from Tissamaharama—the nearest halting station to the shrine a twelve mile tract—is closed to vehicular traffic, left unrestrained to the thronging mass of pilgrims. Foot-sore and tired, the pilgrim reaches the gently flowing Menik Ganga. A sense of calm and tranquility overpowers him, reaching his

destination. Bubbling over the sandy bed, the stream here has but knee deep of water. Wading over to the opposite bank, the pilgrims prepare for a full bath. Quite a few cross the river over the suspension bridge, creaking and groaning with age. Refreshed by the dip in the cool water, no time is lost to collect the essential offerings of coconuts, plantains, camphor and jog sticks, neatly disposed in brass, rattan or basket work trays; and the pilgrims wend their way to the shrine to be in time for the morning Puja. The resonant sound of bells ringing and conches blowing proclaim the Puja in progress. Crossing over the arched gateway, you enter the hall of offerings. The sight here is ecstatic. To the peeling of bells and blowing of the conch, men and women of all classes, high and low, rich and poor, mix freely, moving about between huge brass lamps, in an air thick with the perfumed smoke, lighting jog sticks and camphor, and offering prayers, down on their knees or standing with bowed heads and hands in salutation. The learned in the sacred lore, chant long verses

Rear view of Kataragama Dewale

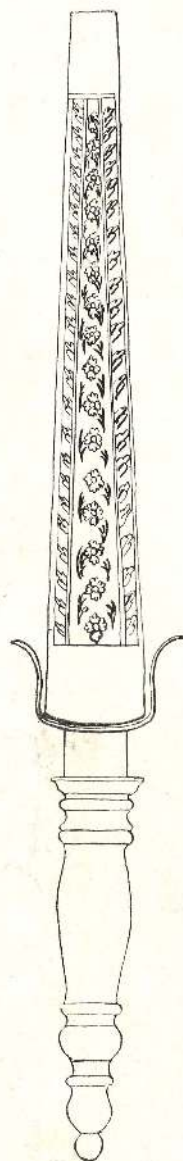


in Sinhalese or Tamil in adoration of the one God revered alike for spiritual salvation as for his virtues of delivering you the goods of this world, the God who is looked to in all the ills that man is heir to. Whether in personal or national causes, prayer is laid at the feet of the God of Kataragama. In the midst of the devotees engaged in prayers and offerings, the officiating priest (Kapurala) emerges from the sanctum (sanctorum), chanting prayers in hushed tone, holding a brass plate of the holy ash, and sandal paste. This is the occasion for the worshippers to drop their offerings in the plate ranging from a few cents to rich gifts in money or jewellery. Theertham (Sacred water) and sandal paste are offered to all, and every one has a helping of the holy ash. Charmed coconut oil, is another little thing that women do not omit to collect. The faith is great in the efficacy of the "Kataragama Oil", a family remedy for such ailments as headache.

Penance

WHILE this, in short, is a normal day at Kataragama, the scenes and sights during the days of the annual celebration are too exuberant and exultant for words—mysticism and the supernatural reach their climax during these days. Round and round the devala go pilgrims with mouth gagged, silver arrow-headed pins piercing lips or cheeks end to end, or tongue pierced. With hooks pierced in his back, a pilgrim hangs from a beam or drags a decorated cart. Others measure their length on the burning sands, falling, rising and walking alternately. Mortification of the flesh and infliction of physical pain for atonement of and reparation for sins, and acquiring of spiritual salvation, are characteristic of the abundance of religious zeal at festival time at Kataragama. Sacred and special to the God is the Kavadi, the arched shoulder pole, gaily decorated with lustrous tinsel and coloured paper, adorned with bunches of peacock feathers, which the devout pilgrim sports about on his shoulders stepping and

dancing to the tune of the drumming. The pilgrim carrying it, is invariably one who has taken a vow to do the pilgrimage on foot all the



A sketch of the sword used at the water-cutting ceremony at Kataragama

way. Mysticism underlies the wearing of the arrow-headed silver skewer by the devout votary. The faith is that the particular devotee is the

chosen of the God for this investiture. The God appears in a dream to the particular devotee enjoining him to wear the insignia of the God, the *Mudra*, as it is called. The belief is also held that the same night the goldsmith of the place has a dream that he is to make the spike for the man who will duly appear. The actual investing of the Kavadi pilgrim, with the sacred insignia, has its own ceremonial ritual. This in short, is the creed surrounding the wearing of the *Mudra*.

The Kavadi in a portable form, symbolises the elaborate Kavadi car (the *ter*) the annual progress of which from the Sea Street Hindu Temple to the temple at Bambalapitiya, and back to the Sea Street, is an annual event of sacred and spectacular interest. The *Vel*, the "ayudha" or the weapon of the God—the long lance, has given the name to this festival celebrated at this season in the shrines sacred to the God.

The concluding stages of the festival, are marked by the fire walking ceremony. Fire walking emblazons the annual festivals at a number of other shrines too in Ceylon, notably the Draupadi Amman Kovil at Pandrippu in the Eastern Province, and Udappu near Chilaw, a kovil of Hindu Karawas—dedicated to the Pandava Princes and Draupadi, the annual celebration of which terminates with the Fire Walking ceremony. Fire walking is the expurgatory ceremonial at all these shrines, refining, chastening and purifying everything evil by the performance of the ritual passage over fire. The ceremonial at Kataragama is among the most elaborate and spectacular of all, walking over an incandescent mass of embers raised by burning logs, about fifteen feet long and four feet high. The leader, and the group of fire walkers proceed to the Menik Ganga at dawn. After a bath in the stream a procession starts for the temple, reaching which, led by the leader, all walk over the red hot cinders with faith in the God as their only physical protection.

Yet another ceremony follows, which rounds off the festival, the *Diya Kepima* or the water cutting ceremony. Observed in the early hours

of the morning, the *Diya Kepima* is the consummation of the annual festivals at all the Devalas of Ceylon. Headed by the Kapurala a procession starts for the Menik Ganga. Reaching the river, the Kapurala wades in the water and flashes the golden sword (Specimen Illustrated). As the waters heave about, he empties the *Kendi* of water in his hand, plunges the vessel in, and fills it with water. The procession starts back to the devala, where the vessel of water is deposited in the shrine room and here it remains until taken out at the next annual festival.

In Ceylon, Kings and the State have ever been deeply conscious of the place of water in the life of the Island. As a ceremony in sympathetic magic, *Diya Kepima* is meaningful, seeking divine intercession for copious rains and adequate supplies of water to man and beast alike. Filling of water vessels and the pouring of water, are symbolic of the rain-making magical ceremonies. Instituted by the Sinhalese Kings as an occasional ceremonial in seasons of famine or extreme drought, rain-making rituals became ingrained in time as the dominant idea in holding annual festivals at the devalas, propitiating the gods for the prosperity of the country.

Legends of Kataragama

AMONG the legends of Kataragama, is the one relating to the Sacred Chair or throne of Kataragama Deviyo, a description of which, often quoted, runs thus:—"A sort of easy chair covered with the skins of Cheetahs, on which the bows and arrows of gods and goddesses are placed and having a fire by its side which is never allowed to be extinguished. The chair is said to be formed of a sort of sacred clay from the banks of the river Ganges, and is held in great veneration as having been the seat of the founder of the devala, who is represented to have stepped from it from earth to heaven without passing through the gates of death".

Kataragama is not a study in isolation. Viewed against the background of early history

and the geographical setting, the study becomes more objective and intelligible. More than any other factor, its situation in the heart of South-East Ceylon determined the part it was to play in the life of the land. South Ceylon—the Ruhunu of early ages—was not the neglected and the comparatively little known corner of Ceylon that it degenerated to be following the decline of the Sinhalese monarchy. It was a region very conspicuous in the Middle Ages, next in importance only to Raja Rata, within which was included the capitals of the Kings. That Kataragama in the 2nd and 3rd centuries B.C. was the seat of a Kshatriya clan whose representatives, “the nobles of Kajaragama”, were present at the festival held at Anuradhapura on the arrival of the great Bodhi-tree, we are told in the Mahavamsa. Ruled by the sons of the Kings, and a refuge of the Kings themselves in times of political reverses, Ruhunu was next to Raja Rata, the best governed part of Ceylon. As the Ruhunu Maha Devala, the war God of Kataragama was the supernatural force to whom Kings and Princes, supplicated and prayed in a difficult situation, such as confronted Dutugemunu, the prince of Ruhunu at the time, in performance of his vow, the Prince endowed, enriched and extended the temple. How far back, the temple dates, we are left to surmise. Traditions, reflections of which are caught in the Yalpana Vaipava Malai, ascribes to Vijaya, the building of a temple to “Kadirai Andavar”,

a tradition which disposes us to trace the worship of the God, at least to the days of Vijaya. However impious Vijaya of the legends may have been—and this is largely a totemistic story to account for the totem of the tribe, the Sinha—his actions reveal him to be very realistic and farsighted. With the goal of political stability set before him, it is conceivable that he was not unmindful of divine aid in his task of overcoming all impediments towards attaining full sovereignty. That he either inaugurated or advanced the worship of an already existing shrine, as his illustrious successor Dutugemunu did later, is a reasonable conclusion. Continuing his way over South Ceylon, the God of Kataragama commands the allegiance of all Ceylon, with the numerous shrines dedicated to the God, distributed all over the Island.

The cult of the God has declined in North India since the early Middle Ages, when it was vigorously functioning, a reflection of which may be found in Kalidasa's great classic “Kumara Sambhava” or the God's birth. The great centres of Skanda worship today are situated in Ceylon and South India, where several shrines are dedicated to the God known under a plurality of names—

Karti Keya, Kartikesa, Kadira, Katiramen, Kadirgamar, Skanda, Kandaswami, Muruga, Arumugan, Shanmuga, Subramaniya and Bala-Subramaniya.



A gipsy mother and child cooking the family meal of "kurakkan" (porridge). Note the various kitchen utensils and the low, arched talipot tent.

The Gipsies of Ceylon

S. V. O. SOMANADER

A HIGHLY interesting people are the Gipsies of Ceylon, and a visit to the forest country of our beautiful island will give an insight into the ways of this strange, itinerant tribe, their queer tribal laws, and quaint social customs, so very different in many respects from those of the gipsies found in European countries. In Ceylon, the gipsies do not roam about in gaily-painted caravans, nor are they makers of pegs or sellers of trinkets. The farmers and the police do not dislike them as they do in certain parts of the West. And the Ceylon gipsies are not musicians. But, in spite of these and other differences, due perhaps to the fact that gipsy folks become imbued with some of the character of the countries in which they settle, one can discern similarities

in the mode of life of the gipsies of the East and of the West.

Called in Tamil "Kuravar", and in Sinhalese "Ahikuntakiyo", these nomadic jungle-dwellers occupy broad, undulating tracts of open land skirted by forest, although, like all primitive peoples, they are fast diminishing in numbers. There are, of course, so many hordes among the Ceylon gipsies, each clan consisting of a score of families or more, and occupying a sylvan glade far away from the others, but not too remote from fields or villages where they can procure their means of livelihood.

In the course of their wandering march, the Ceylon gipsies pitch in the plain a temporary

'camp', which consists of as many as twenty-five to thirty 'tents', made usually of the huge leaves of the talipot palm, each shelter being placed a few yards away from the next, and facing either north or south to avoid the direct rays of the tropical sun. Untidy in appearance and ill-ventilated, these low, crude huts, which resemble the arched hood of a bullock cart (without the wheels, of course), are dotted all over the grassy plain, though they are regarded as forming one encampment. Each 'shanty', which is about ten feet long and three feet wide, houses not only a family of three or four members, but also their household requisites, comprising brass pots and other kitchen utensils, javelins and other weapons, leaf-mats, bags of clothes and snake-charms, sacks of grain, and sometimes dried meat put by for a 'rainy day'. Sometimes one may see, within, a breeding hen sitting on its eggs, or one of the mangy-looking dogs sleeping with half of its body thrust outside the tent.

The gipsies themselves—men, women and children in one encampment—number well over a hundred, and, with their cattle, goats, donkeys, pariah dogs, and poultry, not to mention the indispensable cobras and the flutes to charm them with, the place where they come to sojourn is soon transformed into a noisy, bustling settlement.

Interesting though these gipsies may be, very little is known or recorded of their early history. It is quite possible that they are the kith and kin of the gipsies of the West, for these, coming first to Europe in the fifteenth century, it is said by way of Egypt, are held to have consisted originally of Hindustani tribes fleeing before Timur's (the Tartar chieftain's) conquest of India at the end of the fourteenth century. But this theory does not hold water when one takes into account the fact that mention was made of these roving folks in Buddhist records written before the Tartar chieftain's invasion. The problem, therefore, remains unsolved to this day.

Snake-Seizers

GREAT adepts are the Ceylonese gipsies in the art of capturing snakes, and how they came to be snake-seizers is not a little interesting. It is said that the Bodhisatva, at one of his births was born a cobra with a thousand hoods, and that his inveterate enemy, Devadatha, a member of the gipsy clan, caught the reptile and kept it in captivity. Not only that, he played tricks with it, and even earned money by exhibiting it. The story goes that the Devas (Gods), being very angry over this, cursed the gipsy Devadatha, and condemned his descendants to be snake-catching nomads for ever. And so it has come about that the gipsies of Ceylon are snake-charmers to this very day.

The language which the Ceylonese gipsies speak is not intelligible to those outside their clan. They say they speak Telugu, but it is probably an admixture of Telugu and Tamil, with a strong predomination of words of the former language. But they are able to speak fluently in Tamil, and are equally conversant with Sinhalese.

Primitive and nomadic though these forest-dwellers are, they yet conform to an organized system of life. At the head of the gipsy community is the "Vidhana" or Headman. Usually he is a grey-headed, bearded 'elder' with betel-stained lips, and he is chosen by the tribe as the accredited leader by virtue of his age, character, experience and commonsense. An embodiment of gipsy characteristics, such a 'patriarch' has a wonderful influence upon the whole clan. And no wonder, for this chief is their judge, lawgiver, priest, physician, marriage-registrar, and what not,—all in one! The post, however, is not hereditary, nor is it necessarily offered by the gipsy 'council' to a veteran.

A happy fact about these forest-rovers is that they have no concern with the law-courts, and litigation is unknown among them. Any dispute arising between members is settled by the "Vidhana", who inflicts fines of several rupees

on the offender. The money is usually paid in toddy or arrack which is consumed by the whole gang, even women and children participating in the revelry. For alcoholic spirits, the gipsies have a great weakness; and it is not unusual to see a party of them visiting the nearest village-tavern to have a jolly good drink. Apart from fines, there are several other forms of punishment for the miscreants. For a very serious moral offence, such as adultery for instance, the judge orders that the delinquent be placed flat on a shallow pit filled with the thorny branches of the "karai" tree (*Canthium parviflorum*) and other prickly plants, and the spines be pressed against his flesh. Of course, such an order is seldom or never executed, but it is generally uttered as a threat to frighten the offender, should he refuse to pay a heavy fine of, say, a hundred rupees, which would be frittered away on drinks for the whole colony. In this way, he is taught the great lesson of his life, and an example is set at the same time for others who are likely to create similar mischief.

The lives of the gipsy men, women, and children themselves are not without interest. The adult males are usually clad in squalid and scanty rags, wearing their hair long and tying it in a bun at the back. Baths do not seem to be a regular feature in their life, nor even the washing of their clothes. How can they be, when all the water that is to be used for cooking and drinking purposes is drawn from a hole dug in the ground, and even then the pit fails, or takes a long time to fill?

Gayer Clothes

DURING marriage ceremonies, however, and on other festive occasions, the men, like the rest of the family, don gayer clothes, and indulge in singing, dancing to the beat of the "Tappu" (a drum made of goat-skin), drinking, feasting, and other forms of merry-making. As husbands, they are very amiable to their wives, and divorce is unknown among them. As fathers, they are usually more fond of daughters than of sons.



A gay gipsy damsel with her queer dowry—a rattan basket with a cobra inside it, a flute with which to charm the reptile, a javelin for hunting and a country-bred dog to help in the chase. The dowry is given to the bridegroom.

Apart from snake-charming, the Ceylon gipsies also practise begging, going from village to village and exhibiting their snakes. Sometimes there is a sluggish young python in the basket in addition to a wriggling cobra. The men also claim to possess marvellous powers of healing snake-bites. They sell snake-stones, resembling black, polished seeds, which are reputed to have the power of drawing out the snake-venom when applied to the wound. Besides these, they carry, in their dirty cloth-bags, various other antidotes in the form of roots, seeds, and pills, and offer them to their patrons for money.

Not only snake-charms, but also talismans that are supposed to avert evil, and ensure success in litigation, marriage and other ventures, are sold, sometimes at fancy prices, by these quaint

but gay deceivers. They likewise possess amulets, to be worn around the body, for warding off accidents, or for defeating the power of evil spirits.

So skilful are these snake-charmers in the art of capturing snakes that their services are often requisitioned in the village to get rid of the cobras which the inhabitants, being Buddhists or Hindus, do not like to kill. It is interesting to watch how a gipsy captures a snake. Squatting on his haunches before an ant-hill, and swaying his right knee to and fro, he blows a few weird notes off his gourd-shaped flute in piper-fashion and produces a cobra to the astonishment and amusement of the spectators. The reptile, charmed by the music, rears with distended hood and hisses with rage, but the charmer holds before it the "Nágathárana" root—and the snake cowers under his magic spell. For this work, the snake-seizers are handsomely rewarded—so much so, that they are often tempted to practise a hoax on unsuspecting folks by secretly releasing a captured snake out of their waist, and then recapturing it.

More entertaining than this is the way the gipsy catches a snake (cobra) in the jungle for his own needs—that is, to train it to perform for his livelihood. Discovering some good snake country near his forest encampment, the gipsy proceeds thither with a forked stick, and perhaps a crowbar for digging the earth and for other purposes. Recognising a snake track left on the sand, he traces the snake to its 'home', and finds it curled up in its nesting place, which may be a thick shrub. Now the gipsy's bushcraft comes into full play. Pushing aside the twigs with the crowbar with the one hand, he prods the cobra with his stick with the other. The snake stirs, hisses with fury, and raises its head to strike, when down goes the forked stick, straddling the reptile's neck and pinning it to the ground. In vain does the slimy creature writhe or attempt to bite—it is caught! Gradually its poison-fangs are removed. Enticed into the rattan basket, it is now taken home.

Clever Hunter

A CLEVER hunter, indeed, is the gipsy. With the help of his well-trained, country-bred dogs, and the javelin and knife he carries, he displays great ingenuity in bagging such wary animals as the sambhur or spotted deer, the wild boar and the porcupine, the flesh of all of which he relishes. Not infrequently, he hunts the iguana, the mongrels assisting him in the chase. The spoils he carries pingo-fashion to his awaiting family on his long-handled knife or spear, or, if he is very hungry, he will just eat his kill almost raw on the forest roadside after partially roasting it over the fire. In addition to the flesh of the animals mentioned, the chief food of these wandering people is rice 'kanjee', maize porridge, 'kurakkan-kaly', and boiled manioc—all prepared rather crudely by the womenfolk in earthen pots in front of the shelter.

The gipsy shows great skill, too, in capturing field-rats, which serve as food, not for himself, (as he often wrongly alleges) but for his cobras. He digs the holes in the open to find the rats, his pariah dogs again helping him not only to nose the quarry, which makes several false holes to deceive the enemy, but also to recover the small rodents after a hot pursuit. In this way, a good many rats are caught in one day. The reptiles, over which he takes great care, are often fed, for a change, on eggs, frogs, and lizards, which are procured more easily in his jungle surroundings.

The gipsy women of Ceylon are even more interesting than the men. They wear no jackets and seldom tie up their hair in a knot, but they are adequately dressed with a coarse, cotton saree, and their person is set off with 'jewels'. Their necks, first of all, are heavily bedecked with vari-coloured bead-chains of different sizes and lengths. Nickel bangles surround their wrists, and there are adornments of the same metal for the ankles as well. Rings decorate their noses, fingers and toes. Nor are these all. There are studs for the deeply-bored ear, besides



The author watching the preparation of "Kurakkan-kali" (staple food of the gipsies) at a gipsy encampment in East Ceylon

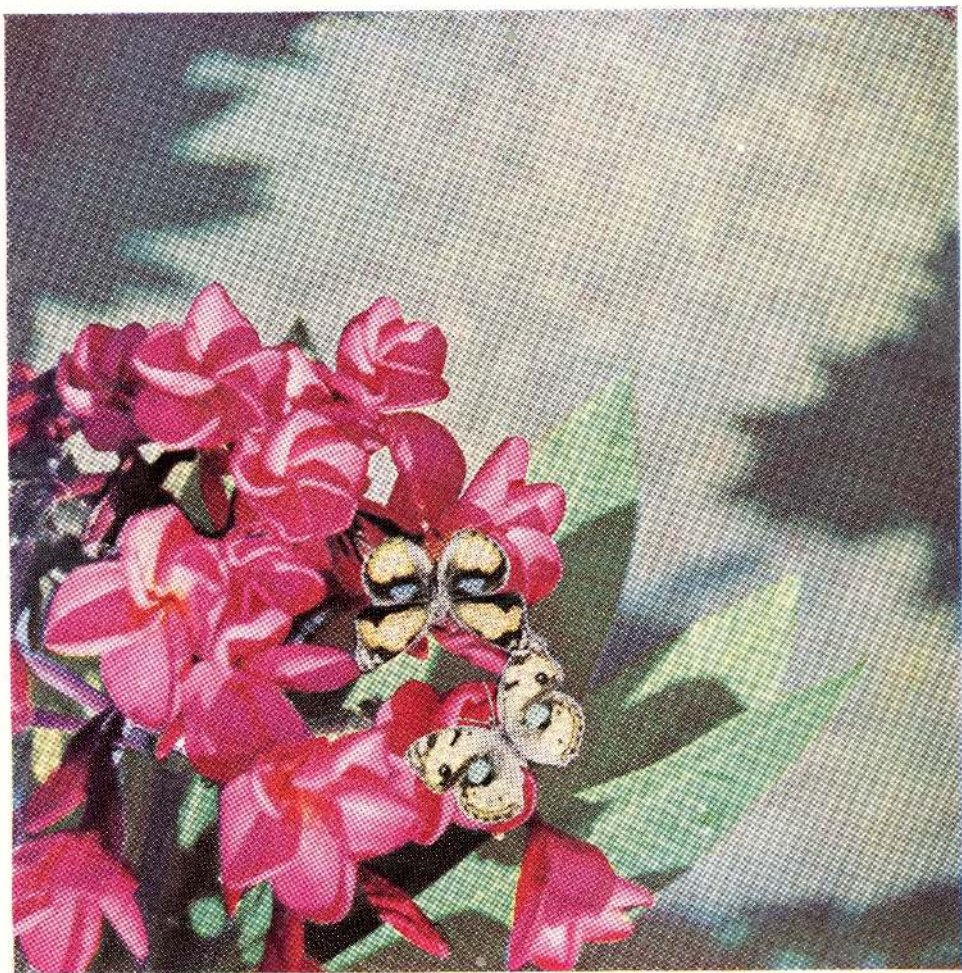
zigzag silver bangles, to complete what their menfolk consider to be a most charming and picturesque outfit.

Black Beads

ONE noteworthy feature of married gipsy women in Ceylon is that they wear a string of black beads behind one of the necklaces, instead of the 'thali' or nuptial necklace which the Sinhalese or Tamil brides wear. The explanation of this strange gipsy custom is said to be that, once upon a time, a bridegroom, who forgot to bring the thali, was sent to procure the necessary piece of gold from a goldsmith. The parties waited and waited, but the young man did not return. Since then, it appears, the chain of black beads has been substituted for the nuptial knot of gold.

Nor are the gipsy women shy. Apart from tattooing, practised chiefly by the women of

the lower tribes of gipsies to supplement the meagre family income, they can sing a few songs and lullabies, and they will offer to tell the visitor's fortune for a silver coin. But fortune-telling among the higher 'castes' is more the exception than the rule. The gipsy women, however, are chatty and communicative—and their love for their children is unbounded. It is not an uncommon sight in the encampment to see a mother lulling her baby to sleep in a suspended cloth-cradle, or nursing the little one in the open, or riding, after the noonday meal, on a specially-improvised swing lashed with woody jungle-creepers, the baby on her lap and the younger members of the camp sitting beside her. Life to them is jolly indeed. And they are very busy, too, with various duties, like pounding or winnowing flour, or cooking the family meal, or drawing water from a pit, or weaving palm-leaf mats,



Butterflies on Temple Flowers

or washing the pots and pans, and doing other things to put the camp-hut in general order. The girls help the mothers considerably in their domestic work.

A word or two about Ceylonese gipsy marriages will not be found uninteresting. They are arranged when the parties are quite young. When the bride is being selected, the tribe is careful to observe the rules of relationship in choosing partners. For instance, the children of a brother and sister are eligible for marriage, but a union between the offspring of two sisters, or of two brothers, is regarded by the clan as incestuous. The promise of marriage is uttered loud before the members of the clan. In due course, the nuptial knot is tied by the 'priest' or 'registrar' in the presence of the adult members, and then the conjugal pact is regarded as 'registered'. If, however, the marriage does not take place, the party at fault is fined by the 'patriarch'. A curious thing about these marriages is that, prior to the union, the bridegroom has to pay the bride's mother a sum of seven and a half rupees as "Pál-kasu" (milk-money). This is a sort of payment made to the mother as a price for the suckling of her babe in infancy, and to redeem her, as it were, from further maternal responsibility.

Dowry

AND what do you think is the dowry offered to the bridegroom? It includes, curiously enough, a pariah dog, a javelin or a knife to help in hunting, and a cobra, with a rattan basket to house it, and a flute with which to charm it. The more well-to-do parents-in-law of course, may give cattle or goats in addition. Some of the gipsies are not really so poor as they seem, for, apart from the small hoardings they make by begging and snake-charming, they count their wealth by the number of animals they possess, and these beasts, which sometimes include donkeys, have fine pasture-grounds in the gipsy country. It is no wonder, therefore, that the animals look sleek, fat, and glossy. But the pity is that they do not provide the

owners with meat or drink, except in an indirect sense, for the gipsy simply sells the beasts to the villagers when he requires money to buy food-grain or arrack. Sometimes, the cattle earn him a tidy income by providing manure for the fields of extensive landowners, who, in turn, may reward him in kind—that is to say, in paddy or rice.



A gipsy mother lulling her baby to sleep in a cloth-cradle suspended in the open. The "rope" which holds the cradle is made of twisted jungle creepers.

Now for a word about gipsy boys. They are good herdsmen, helping their parents in the grazing of their animals, and watering the stock at noon, or at the end of the day, before they are rounded up in the open, alongside the forest encampment. The boys are also a jolly lot, and would not fail to entertain the visitor with a peculiar dance and song—for a small consideration. Clapping their arms alternately to forehead and chest, and slapping their thighs, they would essay a shrill chorus, bending their knees the while,

and moving to a certain rhythm. And then one or two of them would fall at your feet, and beg for a few copper coins, which sum, they think, is legitimately their due.

Curious practices are attributed to the gipsies during the birth of a child, but it must be stated in fairness that not all of them are true. For instance, a Tamil proverb says that, if the wife of a gipsy is brought to bed, her husband takes the prescribed stimulants. This refers to the supposed custom of the father going to bed and getting doctored until the wife bears the child. There is no evidence, however, of this practice among the Ceylon gipsies, and more than one leader of the tribe totally denied, when asked, that the custom obtained among them. But there is evidence that certain invocations are made at the birth of the gipsy child. One of them runs as follows: "Ye spirits of our elders, descend on us, give us health, and increase our cattle and wealth. Save us from the government, and shut the mouth of the police. We shall worship you for ever and ever".

A gipsy burial is conducted without much elaborate ritual. It is said that, when a gipsy dies, the body is buried as quickly as possible. The Tamil saying, 'No one ever saw the dead body of a monkey or the corpse of a gipsy', lends point to this belief. But the gipsy again denies this, stating that the remains are kept for several hours before interment. The grave, moreover, is covered with the leaves of the "vady" (hut) occupied by the deceased, the camp being broken up at once. It is also stated that a small quantity of arrack, with some cooked rice and curry, is placed over the resting-place.

Not only at death, but also during ordinary times, the gipsies have a practice of shifting their talipot shelters and belongings, once a fortnight or so, from place to place on the same camping grounds, as they believe that if their huts were allowed to remain for a considerable length of time on the same spot, they would become infested with vermin—ticks, worms and so forth. But this affliction may be due to their insanitary conditions of life, and not to any

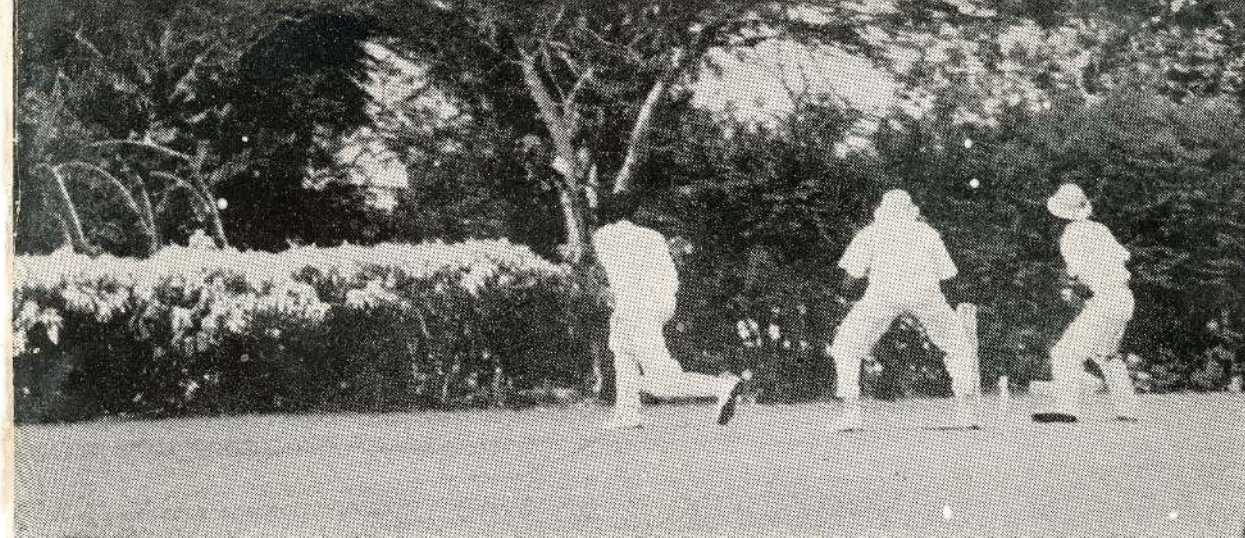
superstitious experience. The transport is usually effected with the help of their cattle and donkeys.

Religion

OF religion, these nomads seem to have no particular form. If asked, they would not hesitate to say that they belonged to the same faith as that of the village folks among whom they happened to be sojourning at the time. Their outlook on life seems to be: 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die', and they would scoff at you if you did not possess their epicurean philosophy. They are, however, not utterly devoid of religious sense, for they often spread rice cooked with milk before the image of a Hindu deity (generally Valiammai or Kandaswamy), and light coconut-oil lamps around the spot. The rice is then distributed among those present. Friday is usually the day selected for this ceremony, the "Vidhana" generally acting as the priest.

Some of the gipsies also worship Kali, the patron saint of robbers. In case of sickness or death, they appease the goddess with the sacrifice of cattle. Not infrequently, they are found to attend big temple festivals, when they, like the Hindu devotees, not only burn incense and bathe in the sacred pool, but also present offerings which are regarded in the light of a propitiatory sacrifice.

Such, then, is the life of these quaint Ceylon wanderers. "Children of the open, bronzed by the sun, soaked by the rain, born on the way, buried on the way"—that is their life! The four walls of a modern and up-to-date mansion have no charms for them, for they rejoice in the glorious uncertainty of their *al fresco* existence. Their carefree joviality and queer manners decline to be bounded by social conventions or to be trammelled by modern civilisation. To march has always been their profession, and, in spite of the vicissitudes of life, it will ever remain so. The world changes, but their world will not!



The Royal-Thomian match in progress

School Cricket in Ceylon, 1956

THE first term of the year in schools in Ceylon is devoted to cricket. So increasingly popular has this game become, that unlike in the past, there is now a whole host of schools, Metropolitan, suburban and rural, which take part in several series of matches, which unfortunately does not conform to the rules of any regulated competition. For this sorry state the reason is twofold. The multiplicity of schools all over the island makes any island-wide competition impossible during the confines of the first three months of the year, while even a regional tournament will be difficult to run efficiently.

The second reason is that for many years now the heads of the leading schools have set their face against competition cricket on the ground that it engenders rivalry of a type which is considered obnoxious. To my way of thinking this attitude is similar to that of the ostrich that hides its head in the sand, for it should be well within the competence of the school authorities to foster the right spirit among their boys so that the danger of rivalry of the wrong type would not emerge.

As matters now stand school matches are haphazardly arranged and for the purposes of this review I propose to confine myself to what

might be called the "big" eleven of cricketing schools, all of which, bar two, are sited in Colombo. They are St. Thomas', Royal, St. Peter's, Trinity, Wesley, Ananda, Nalanda, Zahira, St. Benedict's and St. Anthony's.

It is in the fitness of things that the two schools which have done their best this year are two of the oldest cricketing rivals, Royal and St. Thomas', whose big match brought the season to a climax towards the middle of March.

Records of Rival Teams

ROYAL played two matches more during the term than did St. Thomas' before they came to their meeting with St. Thomas' and their record up to then was six wins, one draw and one loss in eight games against the Thomian tally of four wins, one draw and one loss in six games.

Up to the big match Royal had beaten Ananda, Nalanda, St. Joseph's, St. Benedict's, Trinity and Wesley while they drew with St. Peter's and lost to Zahira. St. Thomas', on the other hand, beat Ananda. St. Joseph's, Trinity and Wesley drew with St. Benedict's and lost to St. Peter's in their opening match of the season.

Royal led by F. B. Crozier can point to an outstanding batsman in S. Perimpanyagam who, in his last four matches before the Royal-Thomian clash, scored three centuries and one 99 which is a record of which any batsman can well be proud. Crozier himself has scored a century while M. Wille, B. Gunaratne and R. de Silva also found themselves in the runs on occasion. Of this quintette Perimpanyagam showed himself the complete batsman and should when he leaves school, be an acquisition to club-cricket. Three of these batsmen played a dual role in the success of their school in that they bore the brunt of the bowling as well. They are Gunaratne, Crozier and R. de Silva, of whom Gunaratne was the more consistently successful with 8 for 18 vs. Wesley and 6 for 14 vs. St. Benedict's as his best performances. De Silva, too, once took 8 wickets against Nalanda when he gave away only 32 runs but on the whole Crozier bagged more wickets throughout the season.

St. Thomas' sheet anchor has been its captain, J. D. Piachaud, who has dominated the batting throughout the term. His best innings which was a gem in its execution was his 150 against St. Joseph's. Although this was his only century before the big match he had three other scores of seventy or thereabout to put him well on top of the tree. The only other centurian on the side was Bulankulame who knocked up 106 against Wesley. Another very consistent scorer who has not been blessed with very much luck this season was R. J. Reid who scored very nearly a half a century in four of the five matches he played. Of the rest of the team L. R. Amarasekera and G. A. Wickramanayake did tolerably well.

The Big Match

WITH their records very similar, Royal and St. Thomas' came to their big clash, each hoping to find a chink in the batting armour of the other but both more or less resigned to a draw. When the Thomian attack had accounted for six Royalists for under one hundred it looked as if the Achilles heel of Royal had been found. But

Jothilingam came on the scene with determination writ all over him and he proceeded to score an invaluable 122 which put Royal well on top with a total of 283.

Chasing this score, St. Thomas' went after the runs from the start in a manner which suggested that they were far from overawed by the Royalists' tally. An overnight score of 63 for 0 put them in a sound position but on the second day two early wickets changed the complexion of the game slightly. Piachaud, however, breezed his way to a sparkling 37 and then it was left to R. J. Reid, one of the most consistent, if luckless Thomian batsmen, to carry his team to a glorious first innings lead. Fortune smiled on him once or twice—only a Bradman does not need the aid of the fickle goddess. Reid went on to make history by scoring 158 not out, which was the highest individual score in the series, beating Norman Siebel's 151 in 1936. In carrying out his bat after going in first he equalled Dr. C. H. Gunasekera's feat many years ago but his score was about three times the doctor's tally.

Reid was brilliant in his on-driving which gave him scores of runs while his cover drives also pierced a well-set off field. Deservedly mobbed when he had scored 100, he went on imperturbed to his ultimate goal.

Mention must be made of the excellent spin bowling of Ranjit de Silva who cleverly spun five Thomian batsmen out for 55 runs.

Honours were evenly shared between the two teams.

Other Cricket Matches

APART from Royal and St. Thomas', St. Peter's and St. Anthony's also can look back on this year's season with considerable satisfaction.

Up to the time of writing, St. Peter's had played 8 matches, of which they had won 4, drawn 2 and lost 2. They owed their success mainly to their skipper, Ken Duckworth, a prolific scorer in all their matches. His highest

was a brilliant century against Royal while he scored over 50 against Nalanda, St. Anthony's and Zahira. He was assisted very ably by Saravanabhavan and Jayanta Fernando. The bowlers who did yeomen service for their side were, in the main, L. Serasinghe, A. Paul Pillai and their captain Duckworth, who showed his versatility by finishing well among the wickets in practically every match his school played.

St. Anthony's, for one reason or another, had only 4 matches during the season, of which they won 2 and drew the other two. They showed themselves to be a very powerful batting side, their star performer being A. Rambukpotha, whose top score was 122 against St. Benedict's. Their captain, Premaratne, actually scored more runs, with a century to his credit against Ananda, but, I think, Rambukpotha was the more accomplished batsman. Berenger also lent very useful support while R. Samarasekera carried out his bat for a brilliant 104 against Nalanda.

In attack, Berenger was the spearhead, his record of 11 for 90 against St. Joseph's being the highlight of his performances. The only other bowler to give him measurable support was C. Joseph who twice took 4 wickets in each innings.

Ananda College too had a fairly successful season, with 2 wins, 2 draws and 2 losses in six outings.

The mainstay of their batting were D. Amerasinghe and A. P. Jayasinghe who scored consistently in all their matches.

The former had 2 centuries to his credit against Dharmapala and Trinity while Jayasinghe also hit up a 100 against Dharmapala. Towards the end of the season Mollegoda struck a brilliant patch and followed up a sound 80 against Dharmarajah with a stylish 111 when Ananda met Zahira in a drawn encounter. Star bowler on the Ananda side was A. Ranasinghe who picked up several wickets in practically every match, his best performance being 4 for 30 against Royal. Equally successful was P. Premasiri, who took

4 wickets or more in most of the matches he played with 5 for 35 against Royal as his best effort.

Repeated Failures

TRINITY and Wesley plumbed the depths this season. Trinity played 6 matches, lost 4, drew 1 and won 1, while Wesley had an equally poor record of 3 losses, 1 draw and 1 win in 5 games.

To those of us who used to follow Trinitian cricket in the past the repeated failures of the school came as a rude shock. Even in the department of fielding where Trinity stock was always very high, the present team did no justice to that great tradition. Their batting was mediocre and their bowling, though meritorious in spin, lacked pace, and, for that reason, was comparatively innocuous.

To old Trinitians the only consolation remains that now and again every school goes through the doldrums and every cricket lover will hope that it will not be long before Trinity gets back to her rightful place in the cricket hierarchy.

Wesley, in spite of having in her ranks one of the four best schoolboy cricketers for the year in L. Adihetty, also experienced a very lean spell. Apart from Adihetty who scored 3 centuries and 2 other knocks of over 50 runs in 5 matches, B. P. Wickremasinghe and H. Juriensz fared tolerably well, each of them scoring over 80 in one of their innings.

In bowling H. Claessen dominated the scene, bagging 5 to 6 wickets in each innings he bowled except against St. Peter's, his best performance being 5 for 39 in Royal's first innings against Wesley.

Other School Matches

OF the rest of the schools Zahira alone won a match out of four fixtures two of which were drawn and the remaining one lost. Nalanda, St. Joseph's and St. Benedict's went through the season without a win to their credit.

Zahira had the distinction of beating Royal early in the term when F. Saleem ably assisted by M. A. Farouk and S. Coomaraswamy knocked up 216 runs which in the final result sufficed to beat Royal by a narrow margin of 36 runs. Against St. Peter's and Ananda all they could do was to force a draw while Trinity beat them in a close match.

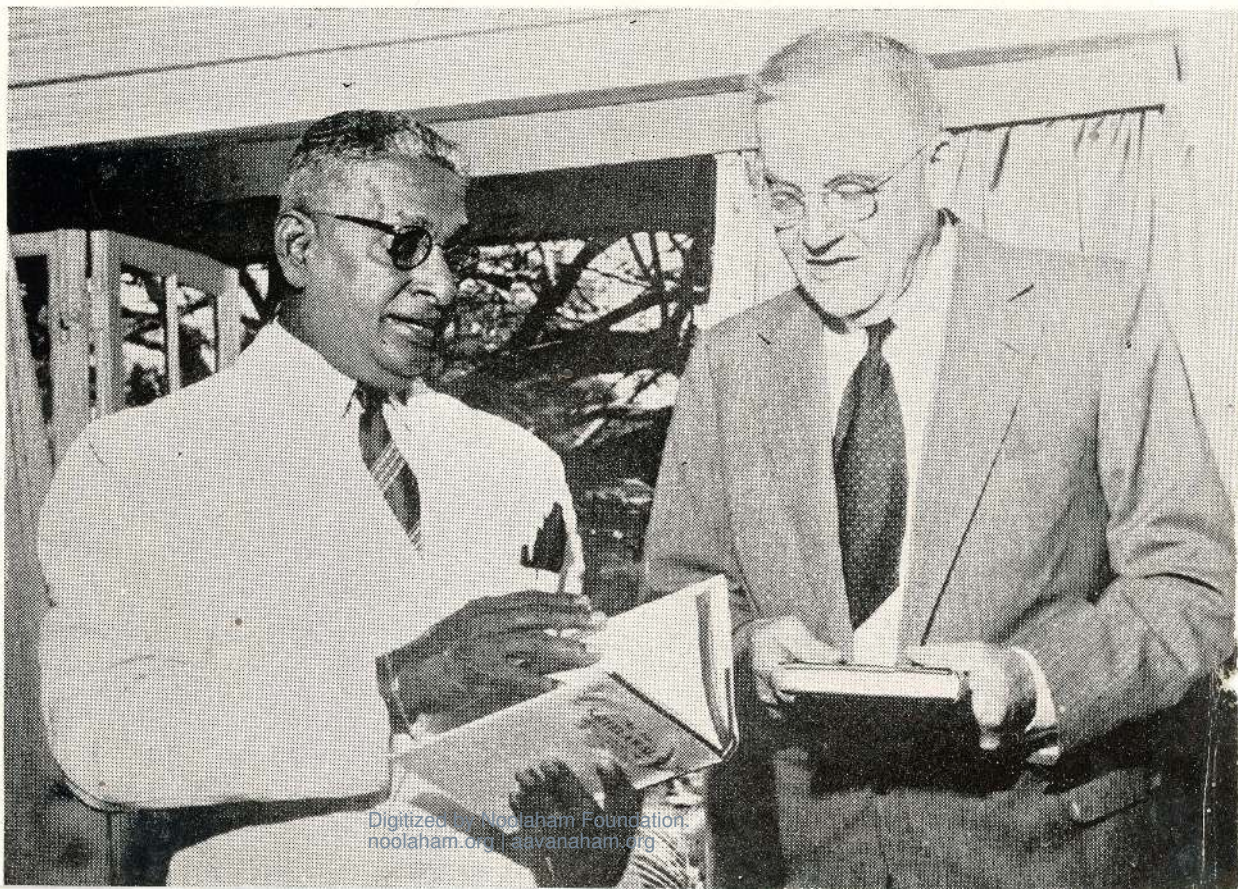
St. Joseph's played six matches, drawing three and losing three. The Josephians were generally very weak in all departments of the game and could not point to any distinguished performance either in batting or bowling with the possible exception of fast bowler P. Liyanage who had a match analysis of 8 for 83 against St. Anthony's.

As for St. Benedict's six matches gave them a record of four draws and two losses. They had some good batsmen on their side like N. Casie

Chitty, L. P. Rayen and their captain A. Alles each of whom had the satisfaction of scoring a century during the term. L. Saverimuttu was also a consistent scorer, his best effort being reserved for the match against Nalanda where he scored 60 and 69 in each of the two innings. The bowling honours for St. Benedict's were shared by R. Foulstone who once took 7 for 69 against St. Peter's, and C. Waidyaratne, who regularly took his wickets in all matches played by St. Benedict's.

At the time of writing the Catholic and Buddhist "Derbys" as represented by the matches between St. Peter's and St. Joseph's Colleges, and Ananda and Nalanda Colleges have not yet been played but so poor have been the form of these schools, St. Peter's excepted, that it will only be the "big" match temperament that will lift these games out of the ordinary.

The Rt. Hon. Sir John Kotelawala, presenting copies of "This Man Kotelawala" and "An Asian Premier's Story" to the U. S. Secretary of State, Mr. Dulles, who visited Ceylon in March





The American Ambassador in Ceylon, Mr. Philip Crowe, handing over to the Ceylon Premier, an agreement whereby the United States Government is to provide five million dollars this year for development projects. The United States grant is under the Colombo Plan.

Foreign Affairs

THE United States Secretary of State, Mr. John Foster Dulles, left Ceylon at midnight on March 11, after a day's stay in the Island. Mr. Dulles, with Mrs. Dulles and seven advisers of the U. S. State Department, arrived in Colombo in the morning and had talks with the Governor-General, Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, and also with the then Prime Minister, Sir John Kotelawala.

Mr. Dulles later told a press conference that the talks concerned matters of world importance in relation particularly to issues that concerned the United States and Ceylon. He described the talks as "good".

Referring to American aid to Ceylon, Mr. Dulles told the press conference that no special exemption from the Battle Act was needed because

the American Government, after a study of Ceylon's development programme, had found that Ceylon was qualified to receive American aid.

The U. S. Secretary of State also said that America was gratified at the admission of Ceylon to the United Nations. America too, had worked hard to get Ceylon into the United Nations. He was confident that Ceylon would strengthen the United Nations and make a substantial contribution at its deliberations.

He confirmed at the press conference that the United States had decided to grant aid to Ceylon to the value of five million Dollars from the current year's allocation. He said it would be difficult to say whether aid would be continued next year but he hoped and believed that it would be continued. The relationship which they were beginning now would be a continuing relationship, so long as there was some need for aid in Ceylon. Mr. Dulles added that the relationships between Ceylon and the United States had been close and friendly over the years, and they had felt there was close parallelism between the policies of the governments of the two countries.

Later at a reception at "Temple Trees" Sir John presented Mr. Dulles with two copies of the books, "An Asian Prime Minister's Story" and "This Man Kotelawala". At the American Embassy in Colombo, Mr. Dulles was presented with an album made from palmyrah leaf, containing seven pictures connected with the burial in the Uduvil Church in North Ceylon of his great great grandmother, Mrs. Harriet Lathrop Winslow, who was a missionary in the Island 123 years ago. The American Ambassador in Ceylon, Mr. Philip Crowe, presented Mr. Dulles with a copy of the Winslow Tamil-English Dictionary, a gift from Jaffna College.

Visit of the Australian Minister of External Affairs

THE Rt. Hon. R. G. Casey, Australian Minister of External Affairs, arrived here on February

28, and was received by Mr. G. de Soyza, Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of External Affairs, and Mr. Aubrey Martensz, former High Commissioner for Ceylon in Australia.

Australian Aid to Ceylon

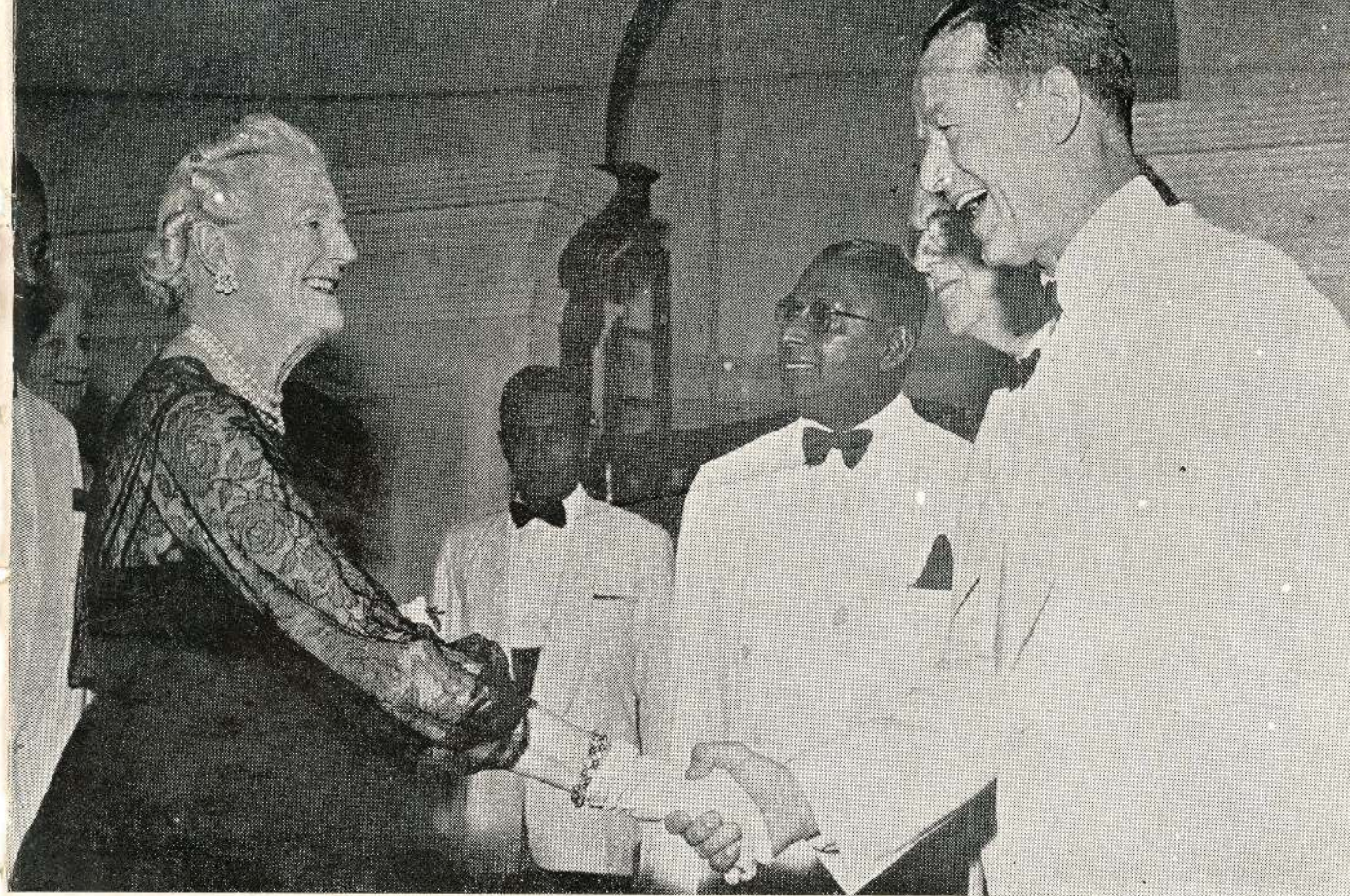
MR. CASEY stayed in the Island for three days as a guest of the Ceylon Government. In a statement to the press shortly before he left for Karachi, he said that since the start of the Colombo Plan, Australia had been glad to make available to the Government of Ceylon a total of about Rs. 30 million worth of capital goods and equipment.

This was apart from the cost of training Ceylonese in Australia and sending Australian experts to assist Ceylon. Of the above total, over Rs. 16 million worth of equipment and other forms of assistance had actually been received by Ceylon and the balance was either on order or in process of being acquired. He said that this represented roughly ten per cent. of all Australian Colombo Plan aid to all the countries of South and South-East Asia. Bearing in mind the population of Ceylon as compared with the total population of all the other free Asian countries, this was a gratifying percentage. However, it did not mean that Australia was able to allocate ten per cent. of its total Colombo Plan aid to Ceylon each year, but that it had come out at about ten per cent. over past years.

As far as the future was concerned, Mr. Casey said that the Acting High Commissioner for Australia, Mr. Peachey, had already announced Australia's willingness to provide another £A200,000 (approximately Rs. 2 million) for the construction and equipping of anti-T. B. Clinics.

Rice Research Institute

AFTER discussion with the Ceylon authorities, it had now been decided to make three further allocations. £A150,000 (approximately Rs. 1½ million) would be available for the establishment of a Rice Research Institute for the Ceylon



Lady Churchill, wife of the former British Premier, is greeted by the American Ambassador in Ceylon, Mr. Philip Crowe. She spent a three-week holiday in Ceylon recently.

Department of Agriculture. This would be in the form of Australian flour and would, they hoped, be provided before September, 1956.

In addition Mr. Casey said that he was glad to be able to say that Australia would provide an additional £A.100,000 (approximately Rs. 1 million) for the creation of an Institute of Hygiene to assist the Government of Ceylon's widespread public health campaign. This would also be available in the form of flour, it was hoped, by September, 1956.

Irrigation Projects

WITH regard to the impressive programme of rejuvenation of the ancient tank irrigation system

in Ceylon, Mr. Casey said that he had had a most interesting and stimulating visit to Padawiya, and was proud that Australia should be associated with this great enterprise. In 1954, Australia had provided £A250,000 (approximately Rs. 2½ million) in the form of flour and a similar amount for Australian equipment for the Padawiya and other tank rejuvenation schemes. Not all of this equipment had yet been provided but the undertaking remained. Late in 1954 a further £A500,000 (approximately Rs. 5 million) was granted by Australia in the form of flour, the proceeds of the sale of which were now being devoted towards the completion of the Padawiya and other tank projects.

More Aid for Food Production

MR. CASEY said that he had been so impressed with the national usefulness of this drive to increase food production in the dry zone of Ceylon, that he was glad, on behalf of the Australian Government, to offer a further £A500,000 (approximately Rs. 5 million) worth of agricultural machinery and other equipment for this purpose. He did not believe that Australia would necessarily be able to supply all this additional equipment in the next twelve or thirteen months.

He said that what he had seen on this brief visit to Ceylon was most heartening and he ventured to congratulate the Government of Ceylon on the vigorous and imaginative way in which they were tackling their development

projects for the betterment and advancement of the people of Ceylon.

Japanese Royalty due here in August

THE Japanese Government have been pleased to accept the invitation extended by the Government of Ceylon through His Excellency the Governor-General, and have decided that in connection with Buddha Jayanti celebrations Their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Mikasa will visit Ceylon to express felicitations of the Imperial Family and Japanese Government on the occasion of the Dalada Perahera to be held in August, 1956.

Born in 1915, His Imperial Highness Prince Takahito Mikasa is the fourth son of the late Emperor Taisho and the youngest brother of the

The U. S. Secretary of State, Mr. John Foster Dulles, speaks to Ceylon girls who performed oriental dances at a party given in Mr. Dulles' honour by Sir John Kotelawala



present Emperor of Japan. He is a scholar of Oriental History and Archæology, and is presently guest lecturer at Tokyo Women's Christian College. He is also President and Vice-President of many philanthropic and welfare organizations in Japan.

New Danish Minister to Ceylon

THE Government of Denmark has, with the concurrence of the Government of Ceylon, decided to appoint Mr. Viggo Theis-Nielson, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary designate for Denmark in India, concurrently as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Ceylon in succession to His Excellency Mr. H. P. E. Toyberg Frandzen.

Mr. Theis-Nielson was born on January 3, 1910, and entered the Foreign Service in Copenhagen in 1936. After a series of appointments in the Foreign Service he rose to the rank of Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1947 and finally to the post of Joint Secretary in the Economic Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1954.

Trade and Payments Agreement with Rumania

A TRADE AND PAYMENTS AGREEMENT was signed on March 16, between the Ceylon Government and the Peoples' Republic of Rumania.

Mr. S. F. Amerasinghe, Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Fisheries, signed the Agreement on behalf of the Ceylon Government, while Mr. I. Minou, leader of the Rumanian trade delegation to Ceylon, signed on behalf of the Peoples' Republic of Rumania. The agreement provides for most-favoured-nation treatment, and includes lists of items that will be available for export between the two countries.

Among the items available for export from Ceylon to Rumania are tea, rubber, coconut oil, graphite, copra, coir fibre, cocoa, beans and spices. The items available for export from Rumania to Ceylon include machinery, cement, electrical equipment, window glass, plywood chests, wheat flour, newsprint, paper and textiles.

The technical details arising from the operation of the Payments Agreement will be undertaken by the Central Banks of the two countries. Both agreements are initially valid for one year.

U. N. Expert to plan "Palace of Peace"

THE Rt. Hon. Sir John Kotelawala, has asked the United Nations Technical Assistance Board to provide an expert to advise Ceylon in her plan to build a "Palace of Peace". This followed discussions in this connection a few weeks ago between Sir John and the Director of the United Nations Technical Assistance Board when the latter was in Colombo.

The Public Works Department has now completed plans for the Palace of Peace. It will be a two-storeyed building constructed on the most modern lines, with oriental architecture. The palace will have a big assembly hall with accommodation for 200 delegates and a gallery which can hold one hundred people. The assembly hall will have facilities for simultaneous translation of speeches into several languages.

The Palace will also have another conference hall with accommodation for 70 delegates. There will also be a Conference Secretariat and four large committee rooms. Residence facilities for delegates will be provided in five hotel units, each with four large bed rooms and all modern conveniences.

The Cabinet has sanctioned a sum of Rs. 2 million for the construction of the Palace.

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(To be continued)

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