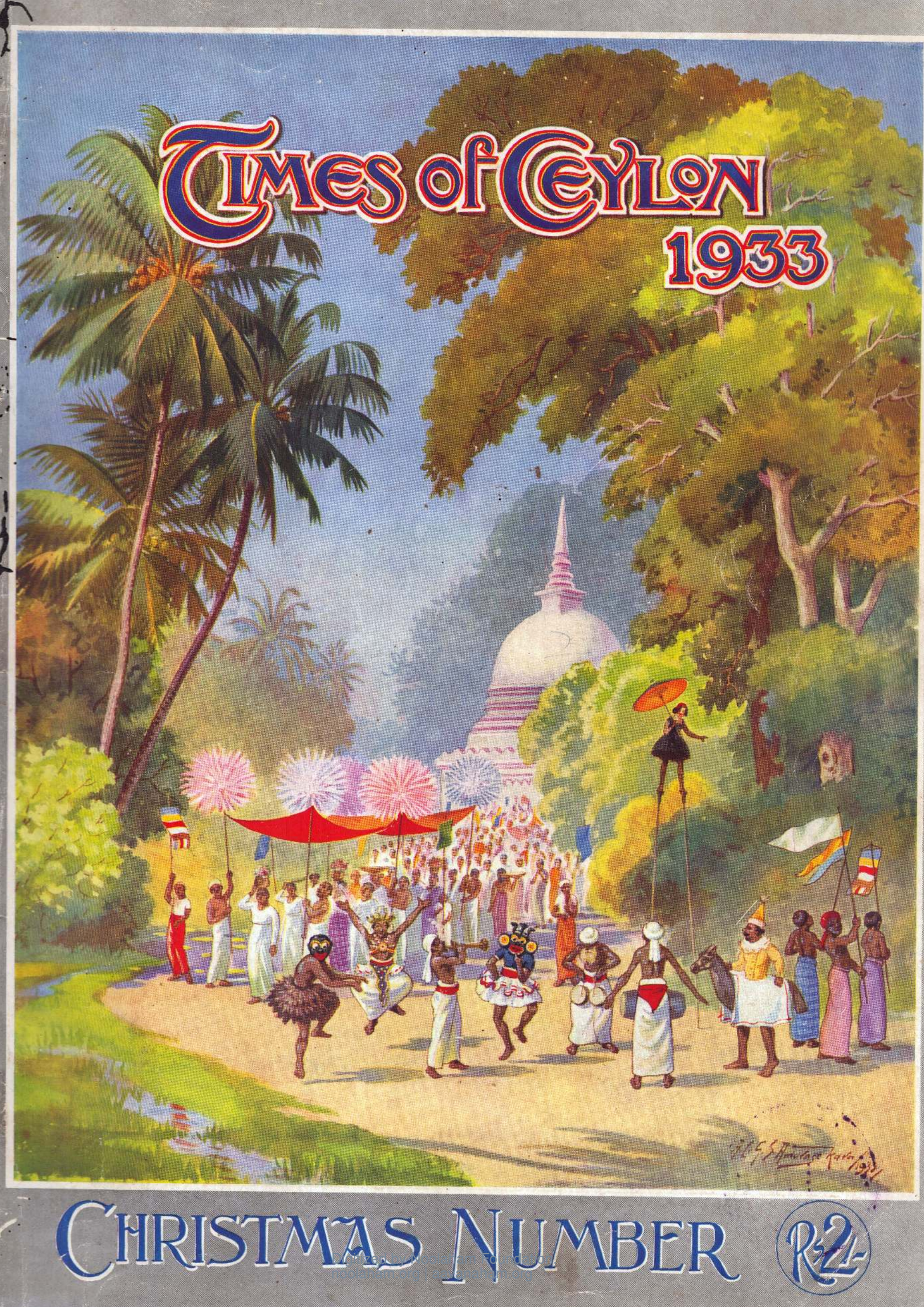
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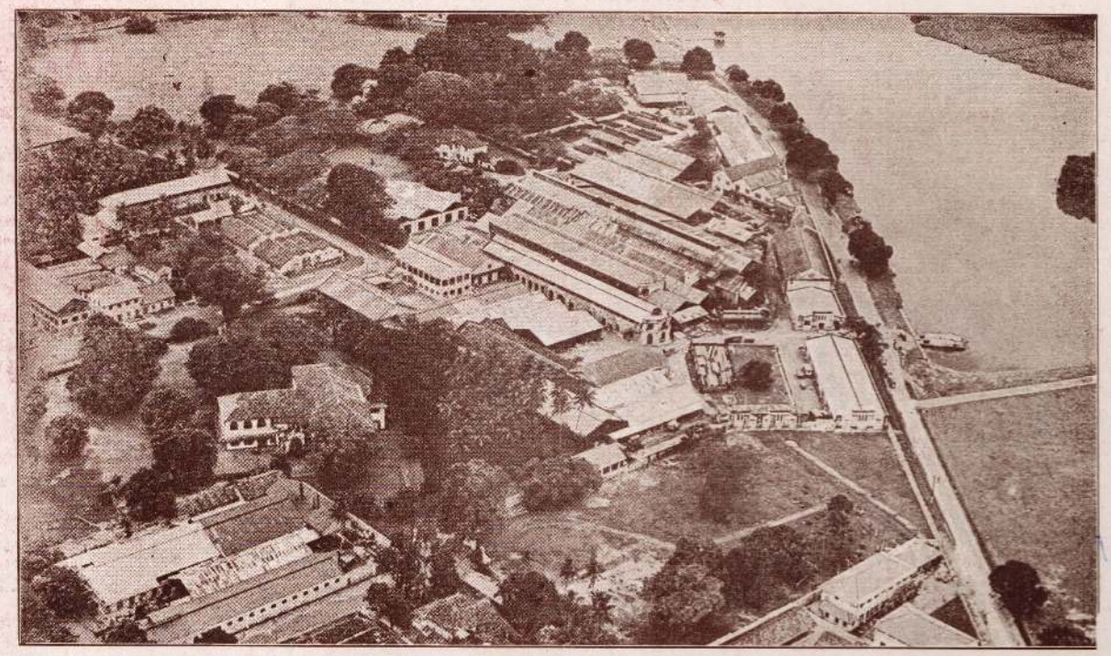

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CEYLON

Thirtieth Year of Publication

The Times of Ceylon Christmas Number

Editor
A. C. STEWART

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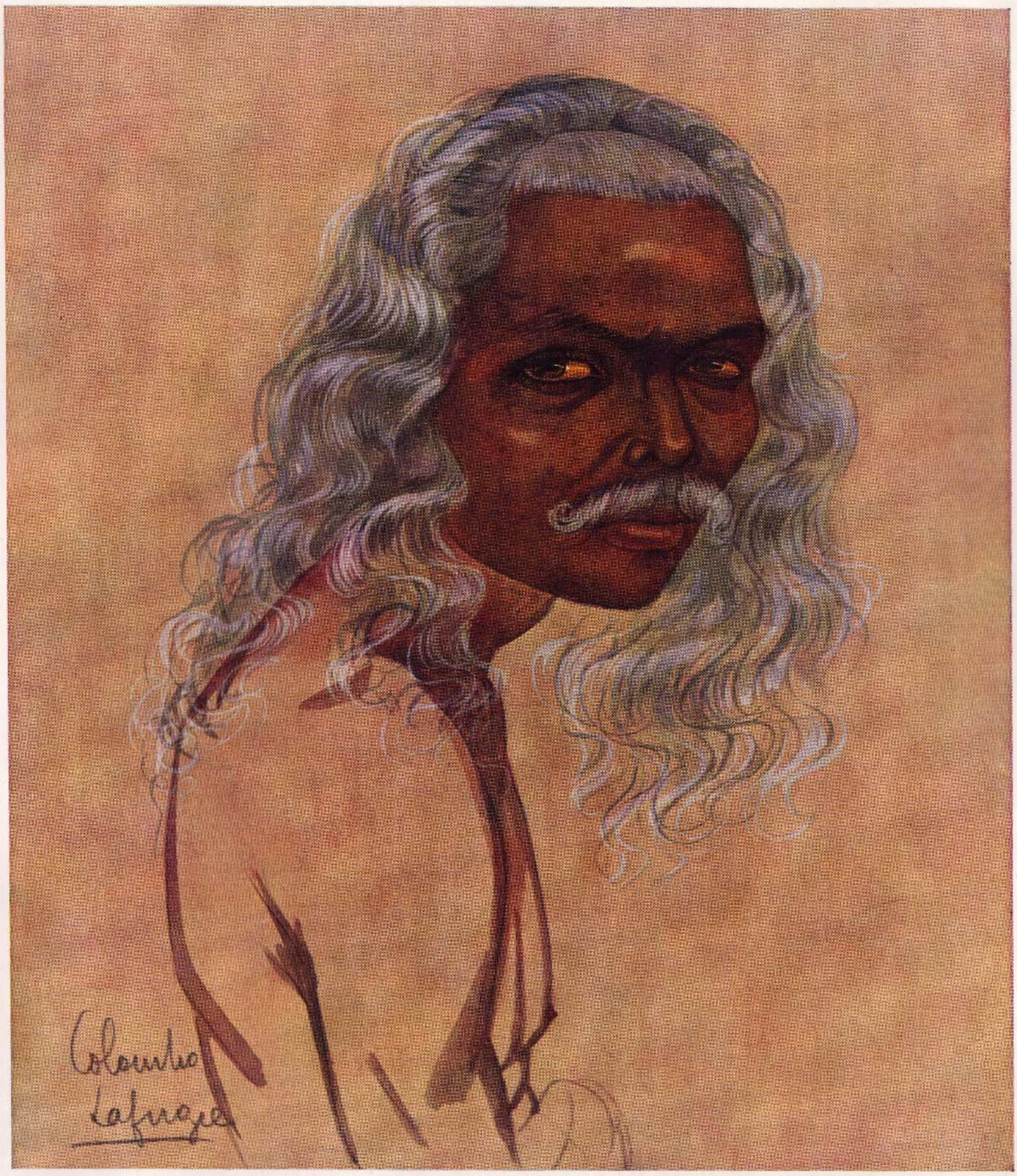
THE COVER DESIGN

by Mudaliyar A. C. G. S. Amarasekara, depicts the pageantry of a Buddhist procession.

The Times of Ceylon Christmas Number



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A BRILLIANT moon hangs, surrounded by flashing, gem-like stars, in the deep indigo of the sky.

All is still save for the cicádas, whose whirring and chirruping swells and fades on all sides, and the busy clatter of the knife-grinding insect who works away noisily at his trade.

As far as the eye can reach in the cold rays of the moon, stretch the motionless tree-tops of the jungle "sea"—all of a uniform dark grey. In one direction only is this "sea" broken, for immediately before us rises the frowning cliff of the marvellous mountain of Dimbulágalakandé, that wonderful mass of jungle-crowned granite which thrusts its huge bulk to a height of 1,700 feet, rising sheer and alone from the surrounding level plain, about half a mile from where we sit. The moonlight throws this amazing mountain into sharp relief and makes it stand out as an immense block of ebony, menacing and aloof.

From time immemorial this rocky mountain has been the haunt of hermits and of the jungle denizens, separated as it is from civilization by miles of dense forests and a wide river.

At one time a monastery flourished here, perched high up in one of the niches in its rocky face; now, alas, deserted, and the temporary lair of bears and leopards, who ramble about the crumbling ruins of what must have been a Cyclopean labour in the misty past.

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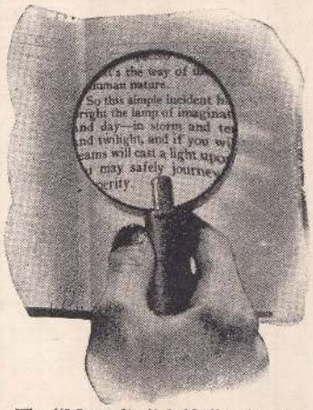

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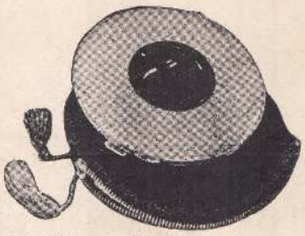

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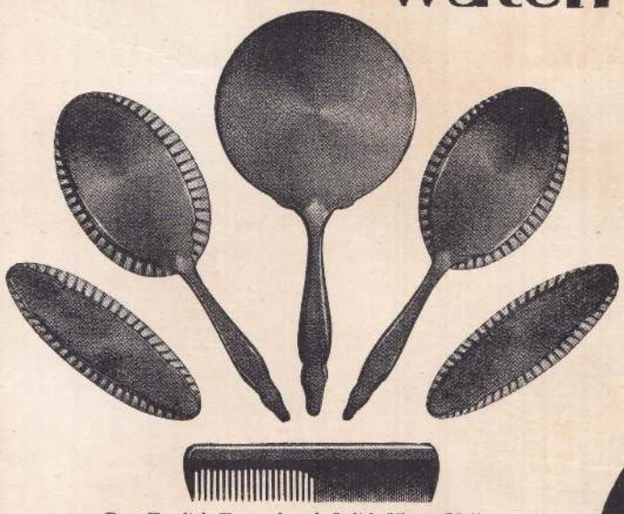

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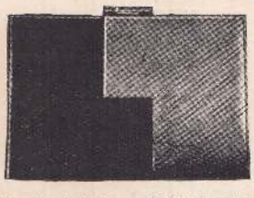

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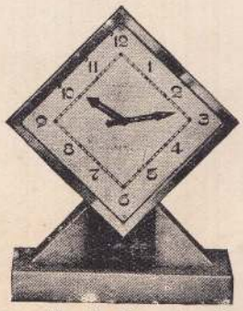

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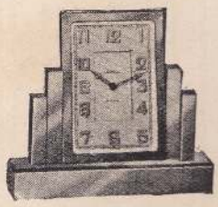

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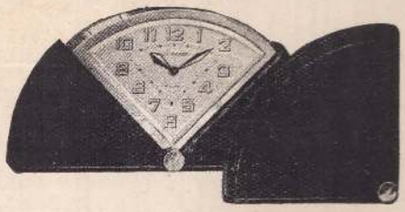

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parching drought. All must remain stored for ever within the bulk of this Sleeping Giant. To this day too, can be found, buried in the jungles, remains of huge temples, dágobas and palaces.

To be here thus at midnight when the moon is at her full is a very awe-inspiring experience, when, from around, and near you, can be heard the snuffling of a bear, the coughing bark of a leopard, or the trumpeting of an elephant, while nightjars, owls and cicádas provide a fitting accompaniment to your thoughts.

Faintly wind-borne, from a far-off, abandoned, 2,000-year-old irrigation "tank" you can hear the fretful, quarrelsome cries of the huge white egrets, settling down for the night, and the occasional high-pitched bark of a startled deer.

A shadow appears on the little boulder-strewn plateau on the rocky outcrop near where we sit, but being so near to the huge central boulder is hardly discernible in the general play of light and shade, making you wonder if your eyes have played you false.

No! There it is again—and another—and yet another, all creeping stealthily towards the boulder.

Your eyes, now focussed correctly, soon tell you that they are wanderoos, the big grey, whiskered monkeys who are ubiquitous in the Low-country jungles. The old man of the party climbs to the top of the boulder, while the rest sit in silence around its base, and you suddenly realise that you have, all unwittingly, come to attend a meeting. Shall we "listen-in" to their deliberations, to try to discover what has brought them out to-night, what deep and dark secrets will be discussed, what tragedies disclosed?

The patriarch emits one or two harsh barks, presumably to call for silence, which is already intense. Then . . .

"I have called you here this night, to this clear space where we should be safe, to discuss with you the necessity of moving our home to another place where we shall not be so harassed by our hereditary enemy—Kóttiyár" (leopard). As he mentioned the dread name his voice became a snarl and his audience shivered in fear, and cast apprehensive glances around. "From time immemorial," he went on, "our peoples have lived in these mighty cliffs," and he pointed to the frowning mass of Dimbulágalakandé, "but, as you all know, during the last ten moons, owing to the infamous Kóttiyár taking up his dwelling in the ruined houses of the two-legged apes, we have been sorely used, and have lost several of our people."

He paused a moment to let his words sink in, and, during this pause, a sudden coughing roar awoke the echoes in the mighty cliff. Kóttiyár was on the prowl!

The effect was electric on the party of monkeys. They bounded to their feet and began chattering and gesticulating wildly until the patriarch, who alone had been unmoved in the general panic, called for silence. "Fools," he exclaimed scornfully. "Do you want to bring Kóttiyár up here? Remain silent, and he will soon be in the jungles stalking a deer. Go on with your noise and he will come up here at once." His words seemed to have the desired effect, and the mutterings died away.

"Come here, Durà," he said, and a young female climbed up beside him. "This, my daughter, will tell you of Kóttiyár's latest infamy."

Hers was a pitiful tale as told to the little company. She told how, only three days before, while playing in the huge "palu" trees near the tiny spring with her little ones, Kóttiyár had suddenly sprung down from an overhanging branch and killed two, with two successive bounds. His destruction was wanton, for he only ate a little of one of them, and her harrowing description brought muttered curses to the lips of her listeners. One young male jumped up, "Let us snare this wretched Kóttiyár!" he exclaimed, "Are not *we* the cunning people of the jungle? We can easily snare this killer of babies." Others said the same thing, and the talk became general, if somewhat subdued in noise, and many were the vain boasts and threats uttered.

You are suddenly aware of a very gentle rustle near you, and, as if slung from a gigantic catapult, a living mass of muscle and sinew, clad in a tawny, spotted coat, hurls itself into the midst of the chattering monkeys. With a few remorseless strokes and a crunching of teeth, four of them are laid stark on the tiny plateau, while the rest take

to the surrounding trees and swing themselves rapidly out of sight, their terrified barks fading away in the distance. Alas for them, their early clamour had betrayed their presence, and Kóttiyár, whose evening hunting had been barren, needed no persuasion to obtain such easy and desirable prey.

Alone on the rock, he settles down, and half growling, half purring, begins to feed. Hunger appeased, he rises to his feet, then, stretching himself lazily like the enormous cat he is, very quietly descends to the jungle to sleep. His passage is noted by a deer who winds him, and barking wildly, makes off as fast as he can, and the jungle settles down again to quiet, broken only by the din of the cicádas.

The moon sails serenely on, and, save for the bodies of the dead monkeys, there is little to suggest the drama recently enacted before your eyes. A sudden chorus of yelps and demoniacal wailings, interspersed with barks, is borne to you on the gentle breeze which stirs the jungle tops fitfully, and soon a pack of jackals, those scavengers of the jungles, comes into sight, their keen sense of smell having detected food, and with many a snarl and yelp they settle down to clear away what remains of the unfortunate wanderoos.

They too, leave when no more is left, and an occasional porcupine, spines aloft, drifts noiselessly across the plateau, looking for all the world like a turkey cock.

The moon is beginning to pale, and the stars grow dim, when, just before dawn, a belated bear comes ambling along to drink, inky-black in the uncertain light.

The first lights of morning appear behind the brooding cliffs, and the whirring of the cicádas fades to silence.

As you watch, the sky becomes blue overhead, flushed here and there with rose. The jungles are bathed in softest pink-grey radiance, and the mass of Dimbulágalakandé alone remains jet-black against the brightening East. Great beams of crimson are rayed from behind the mountain; the sky takes on an intenser blue, and a gentle breeze ruffles the jungle "sea," now green in the morning light.

A distant family of wanderoos breaks into harsh booming grunts, and from far away come the querulous cries of the egrets.

An eagle soars into the blue overhead. The glowing disk of the risen sun crowns the mighty mass before you with celestial fire, and nature settles down to another day, the nocturnal jungle dwellers being at rest. A number of jungle cocks, scratching in the scrub below, shout their challenges, and with a faint preliminary tuning up, the birds awaken and sing anthems to the morn.

A REVERIE

The cold white rays of the Queen of Night
shine athwart the jungles' loom,
And shadows black as ebon logs chequer her light
with gloom.
A hush has fall'n on grey-green sea of forest-clad plain and hill, and a Sleeping Giant before you lies,
dreaming the long night through.

A shatt'ring roar breaks the hush, arousing the echoes wide, and the startl'd cry of a lonely deer proclaims to the night his mortal fear . . .
when the leopard hunts beside.
While a chattering mob of monkeys cry, shouting their woes to the highest sky,
. . . as up to the lone tree-tops they fly,
evading a fate most drear.

The price is paid, the deed is done, the claims of the wild are met,
But the Slumb'ring Monster still sleeps on . . . ,
dreaming the hours away,
Till the conqu'ring sun raises spears of gold, and the hoary tales at last are told,
In the light of a new-born day.

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THE SLAVE CHILD

by KATHLEEN HAWKINS

THE big room, shadowed from the afternoon sun, seemed full of a bubble of feminine voices, and of the rustle of silks. The main portion of Mevrow van Honden's toilette was already accomplished. She was laced into her long bodice. This, her festival one of gold and plum colour brocade, was a thought tighter than the one she wore on ordinary days; and Mevrow's colour and temper were accordingly a thought warmer than usual. Before her one of the tailors, who had been sewing on the verandah for the last two months, was displaying a small gown of blue, in the Hollanders' fashion, with cuffs and collar of that lace which the women of Galle had lately learned to make. Catherina remembered that the tailor who made that gown had once measured it against her; her heart sank still lower.

"You are long in coming, child." The mistress turned on her sharply. "There, put it on her; now the cap."

Catherina could feel the envy and malice flowing out of the fingers which obeyed the order; but when it was done, she stood there, slender and solemn, her dark eyes very grave, her pale olive skin that shewed, maybe, the strain of two races, looking very clear against the prim whiteness of the collar, the long, stiff bodice emphasising her childish dignity. And Mevrow clapped her hands, as a child might do, who sees a new doll, the possession of which will render her the envy of her companions.

"So, you shall stand behind my chair when the Captain sups here to-night. And after that—well, we shall see what will happen."

But Catherina stretched her body in relief when she was told that she might take off the strange garments; and the spite which the other girls showed her for the rest of the day passed almost unnoticed.

And at supper time fear grew to certainty. She was standing, in the hated new clothes, behind her mistress's chair, waving a wide fan of peacock's feathers, when that good and very resplendent lady turned to the burly Captain Girike beside her, who was still busied with the bones of his stuffed goose. Captain Girike had arrived that day in the ship, long expected from Batavia and now bound for Holland.

"Yes." Mevrow was enjoying herself; for the Captain, wearied of sea fare, had lavished praise on the food set before him. "Yes, I shall take one slave to Holland with me. I vow she will be the prettiest handmaiden in Leyden. It is a good child too, the little Catherina."

Catherina did not drop the fan; she was too well trained for that. But when the long feasting and deep drinking were done, and she was free to take off the blue gown and creep to her mat, she slipped out into the moonlit garden, past the shadow of the alamander, and so down where the cool sands of the bay kissed her small, tired feet. Then she was scrambling up beneath the palms, till she came to the door of a small house. A lamp of coconut oil still burnt there; and a fretful crying filled the room where one woman sat on a low stool and rocked a child upon her lap, whilst an older woman knelt beside them. She looked round as the small figure entered silently.

"Ayoe, Catherina! You come late. Yet we hung the yellow cloth, to let you know that he is no better."

But the boy, who was about two and a half years old, had opened his fevered eyes and seen the new-comer. His wailing stopped; he held out arms that were but skin and bone. "Catha! Catha! take me."

"Ah!" With an inarticulate murmur of love she dropped down on the floor, and gathered the tragic bundle of babyhood to her, whilst the other women rose to their feet with sighs of relief. The lamp-light on their faces showed the younger one pretty, despite a touch of weariness and slovenliness; but the face of the elder one, under her snow-white hair, was like drawn parchment. The terrible history of a people's ruin was written in the fine wrinkles that covered it; but through them there shone the beauty of a dignity that could meet all life's reverses with a fine and gentle serenity. As the lady of a great house, Donna Isabella de Sousa, with her husband and children beside her, had, on one March day, now long ago, watched the fleet of the Hollanders sail into Galle Harbour. As a fugitive, widowed and homeless, she had left the city ten days later, with two faithful slaves and the baby Manuel, the one child that remained to her. This poor coconut garden had been their refuge; and here, in bitter poverty, she had brought

up her son and seen her grandson born, and watched meantime the ruin of her people's power, and the triumph of their enemies. And of late years perhaps it had comforted her, going often barefoot in her native cloth, to see that in the eyes of the little Catherina, slave-daughter of a slave, her mistress was still the great lady who had been wife of a Fidalgo da Casa, a nobleman of Portugal. It might have been this fact which roused Donna Isabella to fierce protest when her son told her that the Dutchwoman in the big house, having seen Catherina on the beach, coveted her childish beauty, and wished to buy her.

"And we have naught else to sell," said Manuel bitterly. "And Joao, my little son, will die unless I can buy him medicines and better food."

So, silently and sorrowfully, the grandmother acquiesced. For the sake of Joao, Catherina was sold; and for the sake of Joao she crept away at times, back from the new, luxurious form of slavery to the house of poverty and the pitiful claims of this small scrap of fevered humanity who wanted her.

"I WOULD STAY," SAID THE LITTLE CATHERINA STEADILY.

"See now, she has made him sleep," said the mother, pointing where Catherina's dark head was nodding above the baby sleeping on her lap.

"And Mevrow would take me away," said Catherina, heavy-eyed in the paling starlight, when the child had been lifted from her lap, because she dared stay no longer. "She would take me across the water to the Hollanders' own country."

"That would, no doubt, be good for you: and Lisbon is over the water there," said Donna Isabella wistfully; for though her ideas of geography were very vague, her memory of those bells which had rung through her own girlhood was very clear.

"But it is far from Joao; and none can put him to sleep and play with him as I can. And if he frets for me and I do not come, he—he may even die."

"Mother of Mercies grant not!" But Donna Isabella shrank from the shadow of what might be a coming sorrow; for the child was the dearest thing yet left to her.

"Then I will not go," said Catherina valiantly. "Ah, Madame, if there were some place where I could hide until the ship had gone!"

And then Donna Isabella, who had known the big house on the other headland very well indeed in the old days when its splendours were borrowed from Portugal and not from Holland, bent down and whispered in her ear. "It will take courage, child," she finished. "Dom Manuel shall see that the passage is clear this side the headland; but to swing on the rope—! You will see that it is knotted carefully round the fourth coconut tree? You will not be afraid?"

"It is for Joao."

"The Saints bless you," said Donna Isabella. "I will go and find the best rope we have; you shall hide it under your cloth. Pray Heaven that it is long enough!"

Wearily, and perhaps a trifle absent-mindedly, the little Catherina did what was required of her during the following days; helping to pack bales and coffers with goods and with such food as would keep well and help to vary the terrible fare which was then the lot of travellers by sea. Then, on the day when Mevrow had appointed to move in to Galle to be ready for sailing on the following dawn, the child quietly disappeared.

Donna Isabella, questioned by Mynheer's head clerk, had said gravely that Catherina was not there; and the garden cooly, who had been sent to search along the top of the cliff, did not think it needful to report that he had found a rope tied to one of the coconut trees, and dangling loose over the rocks. Mevrow took her place in her palanquin, almost crying with vexation.

And meanwhile, in a tiny cave, half way down the face of the cliff, the narrow entrance to which was concealed by a bush that sprang from cranny in the rock, Catherina sat, and felt sick every time she thought of that one dreadful moment when she had swung over space; and thanked various saints with queer names when she remembered the blessed relief of finding the narrow ledge, of which Donna Isabella had told her, firm beneath her feet. But the Saints would take care of her, and she had brought a little food to eat, and, above all, she was very, very weary. Like a kitten, she curled herself up in a corner of the narrow place; and, for the greater part of twenty-four hours, she slept the sleep of an utterly exhausted child.

"The ship will sail at dawn," Donna Isabella had said. "Nevertheless it would be well that you should wait till the evening; for it is when the sun is setting that his light shines right in to

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the back of the cave, and so will give you light down the passage."

And it was by the help of that last Western beam that Catherina dared what she felt to be the terrors of that short, secret way through the heart of the rock, which brought her out, like a small Persephone returned from the shades, amongst a scrubby growth of bushes on the grassy slope where Mynheer's cows were feeding. Ah! but it was good to see the sky again, and watch the sunset golden on the sands of the little bay. And amongst the palm trees near the small house on the opposite hill, she could see Donna Isabella moving. Catherina began to run down the warm, sweet grass.

But, alas for Persephone; she had returned too soon! It had been a matter of the non-arrival of expected "bahars" of cinnamon which had caused Captain Girike to postpone the sailing of the ship for four days; and Mevrow Juliana had refused to spend the time of waiting in Galle, preferring rather to return to her own house. Her palanquin had but just been set down at the door, when the cattle-keeper rushed to the house to report that he had seen an apparition. The spirit of the missing slave-child had come out of the earth, and moved before him on the slope of the cliff!

But a spirit which is seen by daylight is never so awe-inspiring as one glimpsed by moonlight. Mevrow had the superstitions of her day; but she had also a natural shrewdness of her own. As she heard in what direction the spirit had disappeared, her first alarm changed to an angry suspicion. "Stop!" she cried to the palanquin-bearers, who were turning away. "You shall carry me to the house on the other cliff. I will look into this for myself."

But perhaps she had not realized that the palanquin could not be carried right up to the door of the little house. She, who never walked, had perforce to mount the last slope on her own feet. And, as she was one of those women who cannot move silently, Donna Isabella came out to see who it was that creaked, and rustled, and breathed heavily under the palm trees.

"Ah!" For a moment, while Mevrow fought to regain her breath, they faced one another in silence, the women of two bitterly opposed traditions. Then she of the conquered race, in her poor cloth and straw sandals, swept a low curtsey that had such a grace of ancient Court days about it that Mevrow felt suddenly clumsy and red-faced. Then she remembered her just wrath.

"Ha!" she said. "I have come to look for my runaway slave; that girl my husband bought from your son; she whom I would have taken with me to Holland—to Holland, do you hear?" She had recovered her dignity now, and with it the sense of her wrongs. This old Portuguese woman might curtsey with fine grace; but in all probability she was harbouring a runaway slave; and there were penalties for such an act. "But she hid, and made me grieve, thinking that she was dead," Mevrow went on, her voice growing shrill. "If she is hiding here, she shall be well punished, I promise you: and you too; for it is robbery." "She stamped her foot, annoyed because she felt herself grow hotter and hotter under the sad gaze of those calm, dark eyes."

"No, Madame," said Donna Isabella. "You have the right to be angry, but yet you are mistaken. It is not robbery, it is love."

"Love—that child?"

"Yes love—but for a smaller child than herself. He is my grandson, and it was to buy better food for him that we had, much against my will, to sell the little Catherina; and always he has fretted after her, especially of late since he has been ill. No one could hush him to rest as she could."

"So she has been coming back here—my slave?"

"Yes, Madame. We have done you wrong. I know. But when the little one is ill, one would do anything—anything."

"Ah!" said Mevrow: and for a moment her thoughts flew back to that golden year when she and Mynheer had looked forward to taking back to Holland a treasure dearer far than pretty hand-maiden or talking bird. "One would do anything," said this stately old woman. But nothing that Mevrow, with all her riches, had been able to do had availed to keep sorrow from the big house on the headland. And now she tried not to think of that long-past year.

"Come and see," said Donna Isabella.

And Mevrow stepped to the doorway, and stayed there. She was a good Protestant, and had been trained to a distrust of "Popish pictures." But the memory of one that she had seen somewhere rose in her now. There was a Mother in it, with a Baby on her knee; and a little angel knelt close by, with just the same expression of adoring love as shone now on the face of the little Catherina, bending over a sleeping child. Suddenly he opened his eyes, and screwed up his wasted features to cry; but, seeing who was near him, changed the cry to a smile; and held out his arms.

But at the sound of the voice Catherina looked round; in the act of stretching out her arms to take the child, she turned her head and saw her mistress; but she only hugged the little fellow more closely to her; and her frightened eyes gazed at Mevrow above his soft, dark hair.

"You are my slave," said that good lady; but not at all as she had intended to say it. And then she forgot her brocades and her laces, and all the splendours with which she had intended to dazzle the folks of Leyden." "But God knows that it is this poor child who needs you most," she cried. "You say you would stay with him; but think first of the fine sights you might see if you come with me, of the good marriage I might make for you. Yet you would stay—?"

"I would stay," said the little Catherina steadily.

"Then," said Mevrow, wiping her eyes, and feeling that it was high time she got back into her proper position of superiority. "I will send across here some fitting medicine of my own making that shall take away his fever."

So when the ship set sail for Holland, though Mynheer had with him his talking minah, Mevrow went lacking her favourite handmaid. But on the cliff under the palm trees, the little Catherina tried to make baby Joao's eyes turn towards the white sails flushed with sunset.

"It is a fine ship," she said. "May it carry her who was my mistress safely to her own land."

"A blessing go with her!" said Donna Isabella piously.

THE SPILL

by

F.A.E. PRICE

I WAS always sorry for Wilfred (it wasn't his real name of course). Not that he really made himself very pleasant to anyone. "Most people" either disliked him or left him to himself—said he was rude, boorish, uncouth. Yes, so he was. It was his pose, his way of hiding his feelings from the world, and very well he carried it out too. "Most people" took him at face value. He once told me that he was a misogynist, a woman hater. He may have been, but, as I fancy I knew him better than "most people," I am inclined to think that *that* was the cause of it all, but of course he didn't enlarge on it, simply shut up like an oyster. During his lifetime he would not accept sympathy. He just wore his cloak of hard cynicism, and, well, it wasn't everyone who knew that it but hid an aching heart.

I did though. I have at times an uncanny gift for seeing through the poor little rags in which most of us try to drape ourselves, hoping, often successfully, to hide our wounds from the outer world. At times it enables one to help a little, at others—well, take Wilfred's case. I met him first at a Resthouse in the N.C.P. when the teal season had just begun, and was naturally somewhat annoyed to find that another gun would be wandering round my favourite tank (it was only a small one, but usually carried a good number of birds). However, during dinner, over one or two "splits," I came to the conclusion that after all it was just as well to have two guns, one each side of the tank. We might get more sport. Somehow or other, when you meet "strangers" in the wild, they don't seem so "strange"; or perhaps it is the spirit of the jungle. It was during our nightcap that the talk drifted to womenfolk, and—"Are you married, Hayter?" I asked him, knocking the cigarette end out of my holder. Wilfred got to his feet, "No," he said abruptly, "Good-night. I am going to bed. I hate women," and off he went without another word.

I turned in just afterwards, "Damned funny," I thought as I blew out the lamp and tried (not very successfully) to adjust my anatomy to the somewhat lumpy bed. "Must be something behind that remark. Darned rude too," I said sleepily as I eventually dozed off among the lumps, to sleep like a log until the boy brought in my tea at 4.45 a.m.

Wilfred seemed to have got over his queer behaviour of the night before. He was never expansive, and naturally I said nothing about it, I bore no malice, nor did I dare to probe into his affairs. Still, I wondered a bit. It was a topping morning—sunrise wonderful, colour effects and temperature just perfect, still forest all round, placid tank full of birds and shimmering in a blaze of radiance; and then we met at the far end, our followers well laden with teal. We shot again that evening. It was equally delightful, but still Wilfred made no reference to the night before.

I had to go back in the morning, and the next episode was on boardship a year later. I was on leave, and the Purser, an old friend, and I were having a quiet gin and bitters in his cabin before dressing for dinner. We were two days out from Colombo.

"Did you ever run across a fellow called Hayter?" he asked after a while. "I believe he is somewhere in Ceylon, or was."

I sat up at once, "Yes, I've met him once or twice," I replied. "Why do you ask?" I queried. "Oh, nothing very much. He once travelled with me," said the Purser, "and if any man ever had a really bad 'let down,' that man was Hayter. The usual sort of thing. A quiet reserved sort of man he seemed. Then he met a girl, a Miss Haughton. She had been staying with friends in Ceylon. They hadn't met before. I could see that she was determined to catch him, and catch him she did too."

He paused to light a cigarette, and pushed the gin bottle my way; I liked this Purser.

"It all happened before we got to Suez," he went on, "and Hayter had persuaded her to marry him as soon as they reached town. At least he imagined that he had persuaded her. I think it was really the other way about, but he couldn't see it. He was absolutely infatuated, treading on air, thought she was the most wonderful being in the world and himself one of the luckiest. It wasn't just the usual boardship affair with him, but I'm afraid I'm cynical (he was barely 32), for I could see with half an eye that she didn't really care two pins for him, or perhaps for anyone." (He was

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BS

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a cynic, he was also wrong). "Hayter came to the ship's office and drew all his money out of the safe, he cabled to London for a special licence, bought up half the barber's shop, and then we tied up in Port Said. We were scheduled to wait much longer than usual, something like 14 hours, if I remember aright. There were several big passenger ships there, so one of the hotels laid on a dance to which everyone went, as we were not due to sail until 9 a.m. the next day.

"I drifted along later, when I had finished with the office. At least I was on my way when I saw a smartly-dressed girl run down the pontoon bridge and climb up the gangway. It was Miss Haughton, Hayter's fiancée. 'Anything the matter, Miss Haughton?' I asked as she spied me and came running up panting. 'Yes, er, no!' she stammered breathlessly. 'I've changed my plans. Can I get my baggage on board the Opato?' and she indicated a vessel lying alongside, outward bound. 'Good heavens, Why?' I asked, astonished. She seemed nervous, 'Oh!' and she twisted her hanky, 'I've decided that I would rather go out East again for a bit. I'm—I'm awfully sorry to give you any trouble. All my baggage is either in my cabin or in the baggage room. There is none in the hold.' It was no business of mine; the 'Opato' sailed at 6 a.m., so there was ample time. What a nuisance these women are, I reflected as I went back to the office to give the necessary orders.

"Within an hour she had gone, bag and baggage, and there was no sign of Hayter. It must have been nearly midnight when at last I got a taxi and drove to the hotel. Near the Post Office I saw a man, an Englishman in evening dress, slouching along the pavement, and in the rays of a street light I was horrified to see that it was Hayter. I stopped at once and got out. He was drunk, dead drunk, not just inebriated. No! he was cold, hard and brusque; seemed to have been drinking deliberately; and in his eyes there was a look I didn't like. It was the look of a man whose soul was dead!"

The Purser paused. The bugle sounded dinner.

"Well, what happened?" I broke in. "Oh! Nothing very much . . . I told you I was cynical." He laughed, rather mirthlessly I thought, "she had apparently met someone, a man, from the Opato and had given Hayter his congé, all in a few moments. I wonder that Hayter didn't kill him. Cheer Oh!" he went on again. "This must be our final and then we shall have to run." Hayter took it very badly. On the surface he appeared indifferent, but his eyes gave him away, he looked in torment.

"Wish I were married," the Purser went on apropos of nothing. "I never saw him again, and I hear the girl went to Malaya. Bye bye old chap, see you after dinner," and we rushed off to make a hurried change. I had a quick meal and ordered coffee and liqueurs in the smoke-room, but the Purser could tell me very little more. "We often see, and have to do odd things on boardship. It's a funny life being a Purser!"

When I returned to Ceylon again a few months later I was very glad to find that Hayter had taken up a billet next door to mine in Dumboya, and we got to know one another fairly well, at least, up to a point. I knew he was lonely—wanted a woman companion, a pal always there, a wife; but he never said a word.

Then it was that I had an inspiration, due really to a real desire to help him, aided by an extraordinary coincidence, although I didn't for a moment—God knows—think that it would have such an ending. Down in Colombo one day I met some friends at the Club who introduced me to a lady staying with them—"Miss Haughton, Mr. Marten"—and we murmured the usual platitudes.

"Miss Haughton"—I raised my eyes—"did you ever, by any chance travel in the Safee?" I asked her, knowing instinctively that she was the Miss Haughton, Hayter's finacée. "Yes," she seemed surprised, "Why?" "Oh, nothing . . ." I stammered. "Just sheer curiosity. A great friend of mine, Hayter, you know, or, of course, you don't know . . . ." I floundered, watching her closely.

She flushed, then paled, her fingers playing with her hanky, "Oh!" she gasped, "Do you know him? Is he in Ceylon? Is he in Colombo?" "No!" I said, now certain, "he is on his estate, Up-country, as far as I know." "Oh, God!" she said, almost under her breath, "I'd give everything I possess to meet him again, to explain . . ." "That's easy," I said gaily, feeling rather like a little Cupid, for I felt, and knew that she now really cared for him. I could almost feel wings sprouting on my shoulders. "Listen," and I hastily told her of a plan that had just occurred to me.

"I say." I turned to my friends who were chatting nearby. "Would you care to come on a shooting trip with me next week-end? I had thought of a few teal at Kantalai. They ought to be in by now." Mrs. Sparshott sighed, "I would love a change," she said, "and I'm sure that George would love it too if he could manage it." George hastily assured her that he could. "Then what about you, Esmée?" The girl played up well. "Oh!" she said, "I don't know what it all means, but it sounds exciting, I should love to go." "Consider it settled then," I said delightedly, feeling somewhat of a demi-god.

Back on the estate I said nothing to Wilfred about the others. Just casually asked him to come on a shoot with me, an invitation he, of course, accepted eagerly.

It so happened that we were the first to arrive at the Resthouse, and when their car drew up and they wandered into the verandah, Hayter's face was a study.

Luckily he had been oiling his gun, so didn't have to shake hands, and silently went to his room. The Sparshotts, of course, knew nothing of it all. They merely raised their eyes at his manner. They knew him and he was always the same when unknown ladies were about.

Miss Haughton played up nobly and even asked some light questions about the "morose young man," but I could see that she was terribly upset by his pretended ignorance of her. I felt very sorry for them both. After a rather strained tiffin Wilfred picked up his gun and some cartridges, murmuring something about going to have a look at the weather, and wandered off along the great bund. The tank

was full, perilously full. I had noticed how the water was pouring over the great masonry spill at the far end, where the road takes a sharp turn before ascending to the top of the bund, and the sluice near the resthouse was wide open, with tons of water cascading merrily through it.

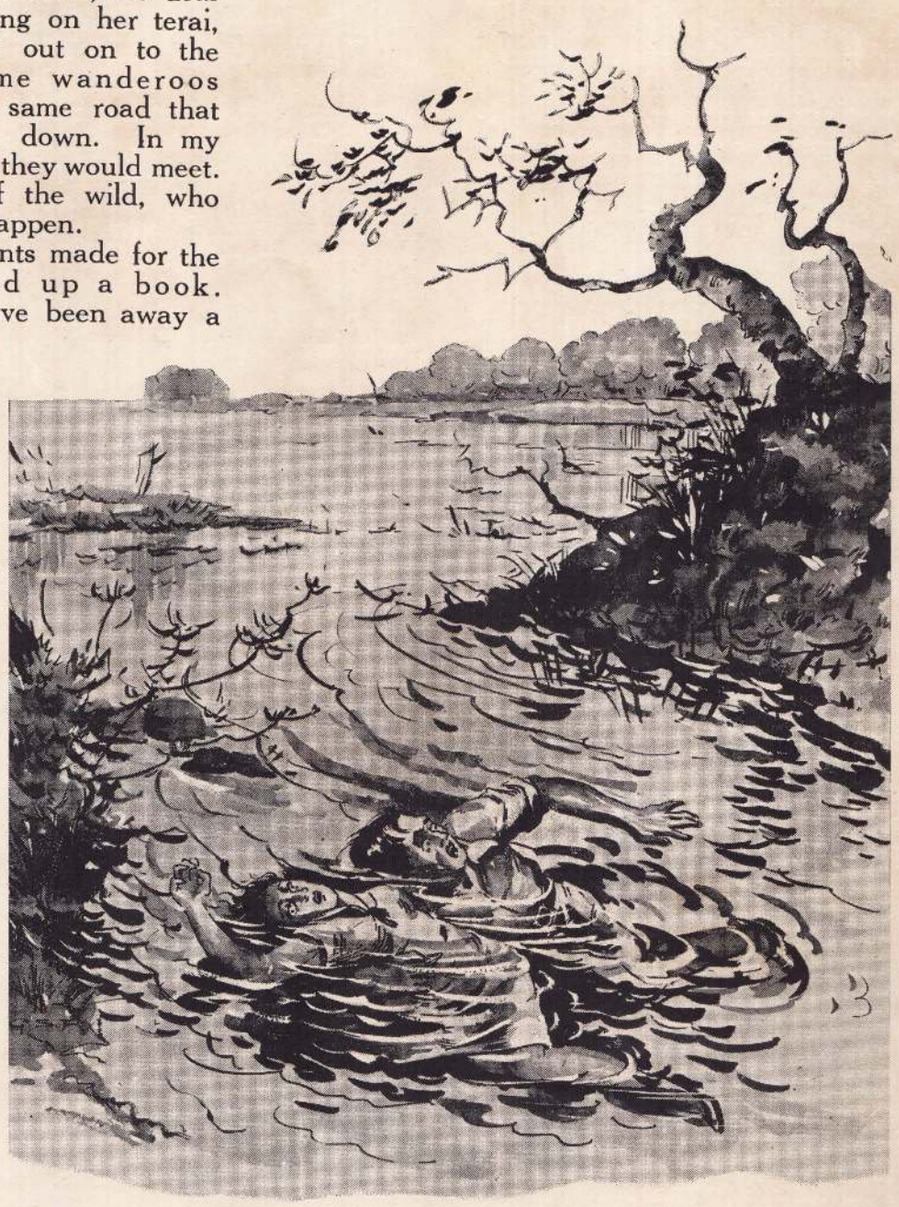
We were going after the morning "flight" and were busy making the necessary preparations. Suddenly Miss Haughton made an exclamation. "Why, there are some monkeys. I must go out and have a look at them, the dear things," and, putting on her terai, she too wandered out on to the bund where some wanderoos played—along the same road that Wilfred had gone down. In my heart I prayed that they would meet. In the solitude of the wild, who knew what might happen.

Our arrangements made for the morning, I picked up a book. "Those people have been away a long time, it's getting late," Mrs. Sparshott said suddenly. "I wonder what they are up to. It would be too marvellous if Esmée tamed 'the misogynist'! Poor girl! I believe she once made a very great mistake, and has been miserably contrite ever since. She never told me anything about it, though."

I looked at my watch. By jove! she was right. It was high time they came back. So I, too, wandered along the bund to meet them. It had begun raining again, and I was annoyed at seeing no sign of them when I got to the end of the bund, so I called out at some P.W.D. lines and was told that a *dorasani* had gone down the road. So on I went. When I turned the last corner before the spill my heart missed a beat and a deadly fear grew chill over me. Miss Haughton was standing, fascinated by the surge of the water, on the brink of the great spill. How or why she had got there goodness only knew, but there she stood, facing the enormous expanse of water, with thousands of tons of its surplus pouring thunderously beside her.

I could see that half of the massive cut-stone masonry had given way under the strain and the pent-up waters were tearing savagely at the remaining stone blocks. I shouted to her to run while there was yet time, but my voice was carried away in the thunder of the flood.

As I rushed to the spot I saw another huge stone topple over and fall with a crash, to be carried away like a bit of matchwood, and then, out of nowhere, I saw Wilfred leap on to the remaining stonework and jump from boulder to boulder to where she stood, now in midstream, the last remaining link with the land falling from under his flying feet. The waters, feeling their freedom, now pounded in savage, insensate fury against the solitary islet where these two stood with 20 feet of dark tumbling waters each side of them many feet deep. I have never felt so ineffectual or utterly miserable in my life. There was literally nothing I could do to help them; no power on earth could save them. It was only a question of moments before the triumphant waters would sweep away this last little obstacle in their mad rush to the sea. Already it was beginning to totter.



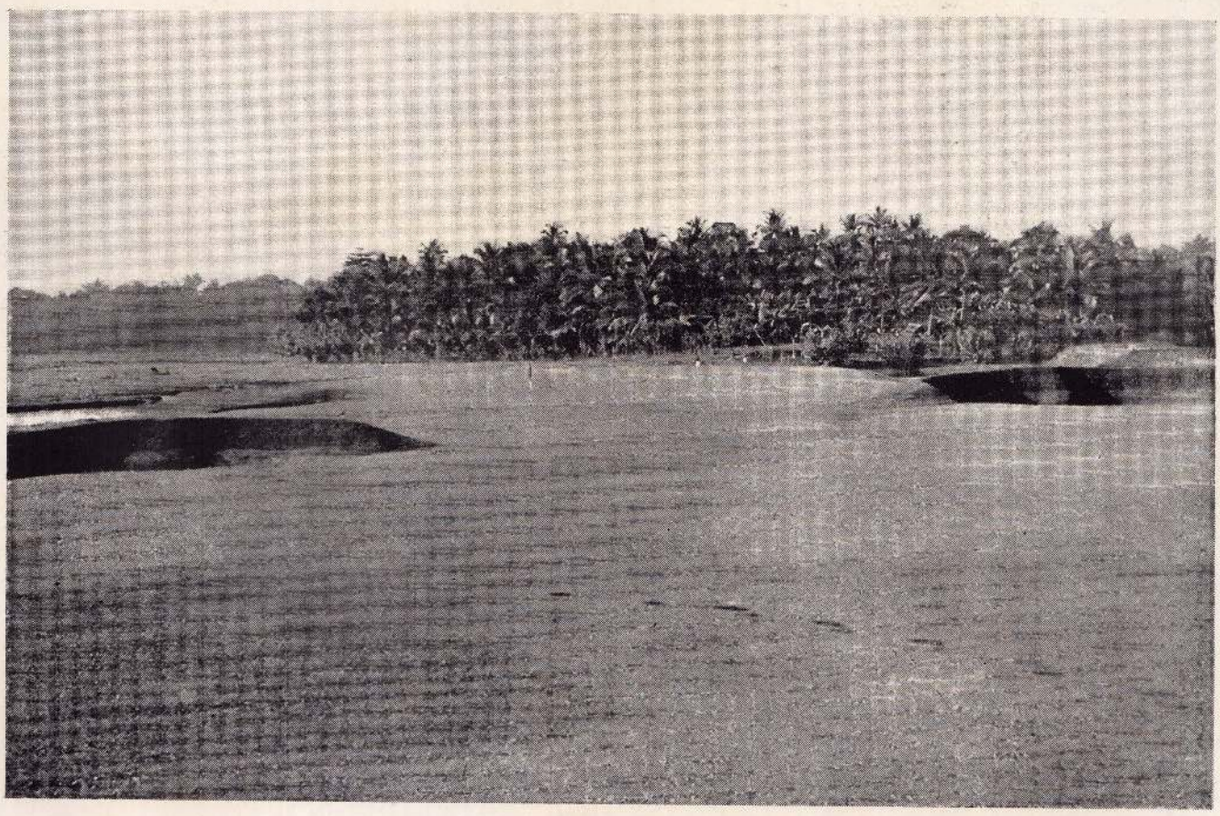
THE TRIUMPHANT WATERS SWEPT AWAY THE LAST LITTLE OBSTACLE IN THEIR MAD RUSH TO THE SEA . . . WILFRED TOOK HER IN HIS ARMS.

Then it was that I realised that perhaps it was all for the best, for, with a marvellous revulsion of feeling, I saw Wilfred take her in his arms, and, as they waved to me (I'm not ashamed to say that the tears were running down my cheeks), I caught the look in their faces. They were happy, really supremely happy at last. There was no fear there, only a great glory, a great joy.

* * * *

We found them, a long way down stream, tightly embraced in one another's arms, and on their faces was a smile such as I hope to, but fear I never shall see again, and I dare to presume that their second meeting was justified and well worth it . . . . Life is a funny thing, isn't it?

THE FIRST GREEN ON THE RIDGEWAY COURSE OF THE ROYAL COLOMBO GOLF CLUB.



A VIEW OF THE GREEN AT THE LONG FIFTEENTH.

SAD STORY OF

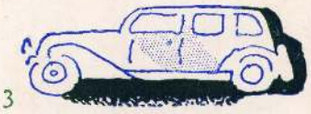
JACK'S *CHEAP-JACK* OIL

1

This is the oil
that Jack bought

2

This is the shilling
that seemed to be saved
on the price of the Oil
that Jack bought



3

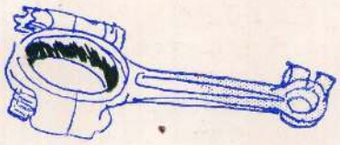
This is the car that's worth
more than a shilling
That seemed to be saved on
the price of the Oil
that Jack bought

4

This is the carbon hard and
black that formed on the valves and
caused poor Jack
to curse at the car worth more than the
shilling,
That seemed to be saved, on the price of
the Oil that Jack bought

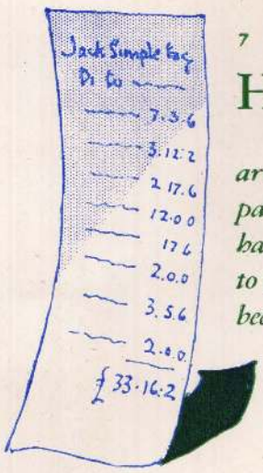
5

Here is the sludge
that formed in the oil,
and stopped the pipes,
and helped to spoil
the works and all of the brand new car
(that was ruined before it had gone very
far) because of the Oil that Jack bought



6

Here's the big end, all ruined and done,
because of the oil that would not run
and stopped the pipes,
and gummed the valves,
and ruined the pistons new and clean
(such terrible cylinders never were seen)
because of the Oil that Jack bought



7

Here is the Bill
as long as your
arm that had to be
paid to cure the
harm that was done
to the car
because of the
Oil that
Jack
bought

A GOOD NEW YEAR RESOLUTION

USE SHELL OIL

BEYOND the spacious north verandah of the Club a large lawn sloped down gently. Verandah as gallery and lawn as stalls—an ideal auditorium !

Beyond the lawn the ground sloped upward to a bit of *patna* with a delightful background of jungle. Groups of trees and shrubs, "Right" and "Left" would make picturesque "Wings." A little platform erected in one of the trees would be a splendid position from which the master of the pageant could direct the proceedings.

With all these assets, we decided to have a pageant !

Several literary people came forward and evolved a Series of Twelve Episodes. The chronology was a bit mixed, but pride of place was given to a Sinhalese episode of the time of the lion-like King Vijaya. Some Sinhalese families, with quite long pedigrees of their own, would represent members of the ancient royal family of Ceylon. If the costumes were not absolutely correct, who knew better ?

Big "hops" were made. Romans and Greeks were introduced because someone had read that Grecian architecture and Roman coins had been found in the north of the Island. Also, one of our actors had such a very pronounced Roman nose we felt it a pity to let it blush unseen. Hence, the Roman Legion fishing for those Ceylon pearls that Cleopatra dropped into Marc Antony's cocktail !

Boadicea came into one episode prominently, because one of our actresses possessed the complete costume which had been worn

by her as the queen of the Icenii in a pageant in England. This ancient British touch gave us a chance to exploit our long-ago lineage.

At last, the pageant committee "passed" the programme of twelve episodes. And as some of these required "crowds" of aborigines, real Veddahs, early and later Sinhalese, Portuguese, Dutch, English, right along to the period of Boy-scouts and Girl-guides, it can be imagined what a big *en masse* crowd there would be to assemble, pageant-fashion, for the finale.

Luckily, our pageant-master, Guy Wakefield, was a splendid man for the job, with experience of Viceregal shows in India. As for the lighting, some enthusiastic engineers of our district would be responsible.

Now for the story !

CHAPTER II—The Star From Hollywood

All the men sat up. That alert look that the pageant-master had so vainly striven to obtain at rehearsals, appeared as by magic—the magic of a name. Yes, large type, please—

THELMA LALANGE ! !

"Is this really *true*?" asked our pageant-master.

"Quite !" replied pretty, blue-eyed Mrs. Clunes. "I was introduced to her just before I left Colombo. She is out here for a holiday, but her business manager is with her to take notes in case something strikes her fancy in Ceylon. She is just crazy to see our show. Wants a 'part' in it !"

"Wh-a-a-t?" chorussed the pageant-master, authors, and committee.

The older talent thought a special episode should be written in for the star, otherwise she would outshine the other ladies uncomfortably.

"Who will put her up?" asked one woman. Half-a-dozen planter-actors rose as one man. Their wives sat like marble-statues.

"I've already invited her to our bungalow," said Mrs. Clunes with a glance at her husband.

"My dear Saidie ! it can't be done. Stars radiate so, they need so much room."

Clunes was a terror with the "drums," as good as half-a-band. Fierce ! but, *sans* drums, as mild as milk. Of course, Saidie got her way. Equally, of course, we men all revolved round the star. And if she didn't throw a sweet biscuit by way of a smile, we started snarling amongst ourselves.

Happier without her? Yes ! but our fame increased. Head-lines in the papers—"*Wanted—an Orbit for the Hollywood Star!*" "*Authors' Great Chance ! Write an Episode worthy of Thelma!*" and so forth.

Plenty of advance publicity for our pageant without paying for it.

But it was Thelma who spotted a winner.

Watching a rehearsal of Episode Twelve, a playlet of the pioneer days of King Coffee, she suddenly rose from her chair :—

"That's *my* part ! It's fine ! plenty of scope for thrills !" Now, we had all realised that Episode Twelve was going to be one of the big successes of our pageant. Only two principals, but they were excellent, especially Bea Chester as the young wife. For the purpose of this little story the action of this drama-in-a-nutshell must be referred to. Briefly, then—A young pioneer-planter has to leave his wife alone while his work takes him some distance away. Out riding, during his absence, the girl is suddenly attacked by a horde of wild men, with bows and arrows. Trying to escape on the rough patna gave Bea a good chance to show off her fine horsemanship. Then dismounting hurriedly she frantically tries to gain the foot-bridge over the stream, a short cut home. The stream had been widened for this and a ravine built up and cleverly camouflaged, Bea could be seen, springing wildly from rock to rock, bounding as lightly as a young fawn, as the Veddahs drew in more closely. Last, the broken bridge, one of those narrow bamboo ones that start swaying madly directly a foot is placed on the narrow plank. All this had been well thought out and Bea did splendidly all through. In Scene II of the Episode the culminating horror of the bungalow set on fire, with the trapped girl within and the Veddahs at every window threatening her ! Then, of course, at *the* last moment, a good old melodramatic rescue by the husband. Now this was all going to be most realistic with a fine "fire" effect on the scenic "bungalow" by our engineers-in-chief !

And now—what was happening? The first scene finished, Bea came towards the verandah during the short wait before the rehearsal of Scene II. "Yes," she heard Thelma say, in her high voice, "You boys can write up another episode for Miss Chester and I'll take over her part in this pioneer episode. Early Victorian dress suits me, too !"

"We have still to ask Miss Chester if she will give up her part," said the pageant-master tersely. And at this Thelma Lalange did open her fine eyes widely.

Bea came nearer. Slender, but beautifully formed; brunette colouring with chestnut hair and beautiful brown eyes.

"Miss Chester," said Thelma, "I feel I can really *make* that pioneer part, make a real live wire of it. I'd be glad to have it handed over to me."

Bea recoiled a little. She had sensed some upset, so this was it ! She was a sport, however, and could not let the committee down.

"I am quite sure," she said in her charming voice," that it would make all the difference in the world to have you in our pageant. I can easily stand aside. I hope you agree?" she turned to the pageant-master.

The latter had been swearing under his breath. It was a most outrageous *contretemps*, but he followed Bea's lead with as much grace as possible.

"I wish to say," he replied stiffly, "that I am more than satisfied with your work, Miss Chester. A fine interpretation, which can *not* be improved upon. But, in view of the committee's wishes, I will fall into line."

"What an expressionless face !" thought Thelma. She has no idea of the restraint he was using. But Mrs. Clunes caught the look he gave Bea.

"Why !" she thought, "he is in love with Bea ! and she has not the faintest idea *yet* !"

Regarding the change of actresses in Episode Twelve this was not too successful in Scene I. The thrilling gallops across the patna became a pleasant amble, the broken old bridge became a solid structure which failed to rouse enthusiasm, and Thelma ruled out the rocks as impossible.

"You see," said her manager to the worried pageant-master, Thelma misses the mechanism which joins up the "bits" and creates the effect of hair-breadth escapes when there 'aint any."

But, at long last *the* night! Our story is more concerned with the final episode. Suffice to say that on "Boxing" night, all the episodes were performed very well indeed, performers and audience being equally delighted. The kiddies had had *their* show on Christmas Day. A Father Christmas Episode with appropriate music and acted nurseryrhymes by some of the elder children. Presents galore!

But, naturally, the greatest interest centred round Thelma in Episode Twelve. If, in Scene I her performance lacked the brilliance and reality of Bea Chester's acting and *vim*, the star came into her own in Scene II, that tragic scene of peril and horror. She was just immense! giving all the various notes of emotion from tip-top terror to pitiful pleading that drew tears from some of the women spectators. Trapped in that burning bungalow (a most realistic effect of lights achieved by our engineer-staff) with the Veddahs' bows and arrows threatening her at every window Thelma was really magnificent. Her final terror as she flung herself down into a corner of the room in a fainting condition. Marvellous! Marvellous too the return of the hero-husband, his rapid shooting down of the Veddahs, then his heroic leap through a window into the flames to search for his poor bride.

Up to this point we had got all the thrills of a first-class melodrama. And though we did not know it there was another thrill to come. While the young planter was searching madly round for his wife, another actor was making ready.

"THAT'S MY PART! IT'S FINE! PLENTY OF SCOPE FOR THRILLS."

CHAPTER III—Enter Billy Rustam!

The name has a certain comedy flavour, but though he had a wicked eye he was not a first comedian. He was a very fine first tragedian.

Of unusual height for a Ceylon elephant he was quite a useful personage with his own *mahout* to guide and cajole him, and could do the work of many men.

He had been at work during the past few weeks widening the stream and collecting big boulders which he placed with wonderful precision to form a "stage ravine." His work done, Billy had been tethered to a big tree down near the river, ready to remove his "ravine" after the pageant.

The fusillades of firing necessary for several episodes had upset him. Now, a culmination of noise and those sharp rifle-reports in Episode Twelve stirred him to a terrible rage. Those quick shots awakened a corner of his brain moving it to memory—memory of that kraal which had ended in mad terror and a crushing captivity.

Possibly, after so many years of his passivity, Billy's *mahout* had become careless, heedless of his enormous strength—the rope may have frayed. The rifle shots were repeated. Billy Rustam made his entrance into the pageant!

Quietly, but swiftly through that bit of jungle! but as he came out into the blaze of light from that "burning" bungalow he came crashing with a terrific trumpeting and squealing right into the picture. He made straight for that frail erection.

"Lights *out*," megaphoned the pageant-master. He hoped the sudden change to darkness might check the elephant. But in the dimmed light his great bulk could be seen heaving heavily against the stage-bungalow.

It quivered, then went down flat, like pancakes. As the elephant started trampling on the débris a sickly shudder went through the remaining crowd. The women, shepherded by some of the men, were already getting within the Club.

The pageant-master had slithered down from his tree. "Sykes! Sykes!" he shouted.

"Here!" came the relieving reply. "We're both here, behind the tree. But for God's sake! head the brute off while we do a rush for the Club."

Too late! Having vented the first part of his rage on the ruins of the bungalow, he came for

the tree. Led by Guy Wakefield some of the men went a little aside and started shouting to distract his attention from the tree. He never budged, but he kept a wary watch.

A girlish figure slipped round by the side of the men and faced them.

"Keep back!" she commanded, "and *keep quiet*!" Bea was holding a huge bunch of plantains, one of the "properties" for the performance. She went close to the elephant, giving him space to turn about. There was a pause in his trumpeting. Bea cut in quickly in the momentary silence. She raised her voice, calling clearly:—

"Billy! Billy!"

He gave the tree a mighty whack with his trunk. He could so easily have killed the girl with one such blow.

"Billy!" Her voice rang out more insistently. He stood perfectly still. Listening!

Then Bea started crooning a little song in Sinhalese. Over and over again she sang that quaint tune. At last Billy gave a half turn, eyeing her sideways, then fully round, sending his trunk waving quite gently towards the plantains. Bea continued to sing that little song, giving him the plantains one by one. She was playing for time. Then she softly crooned some new words into the song. "*Get away, away! you two, softly, softly creep away!*"

Then, the Sinhalese words once more. The escape was effected. What next? A new voice from the rear.

"Out of the way, girl! Run, *hard*. To the right! Ready? *Go!*"

Bea dropped the bunch of remaining plantains in front of the elephant. The moment she was clear a stout rope came whizzing through the air, with unerring aim. As the Californian-manager tightened the noose he said:—

THEN BEA STARTED CROONING A LITTLE SONG IN SINHALESE.

"Huh! thought I'd not forgotten that trick. But it would have been too late if that little heroine hadn't held him up. Talk of *pluck*!"

Billy was roped safely to the tree. Oddly enough he offered no resistance. The sudden rage had spent itself.

Thelma, hugging Bea in a tight embrace, cried—"To stand up *alone*! To that mammoth!"

"Really, nothing!" protested the girl. "When he was working here a few weeks ago, I seemed to remember him being on my father's estate. His *mahout* used to teach me *elephant-talk* and that song."

"But he might not have recognized *you*!" said Thelma, gravely. But she cheered up when shown some wonderful pictures her photographer had taken of Episode Twelve. "Carl has *some* grit. He went on taking pictures to the very end. And *you* are in the final scenes. Yes, *you*! as the brave Ceylon girl who saved me from the huge Ceylon elephant! Lovely posters *he* will make, too!"

"*That* must come out," said Guy Wakefield later. The pageant-master pointed to a form just behind Bea, in the scene with the elephant. "I don't want her to know I was there. You see, I couldn't let her be there *alone*, to face the brute, so I slithered along in the grass to be handy in case he turned on her."

"I can blot you out easily. Wish you luck!" said the astute photographer.

But Bea did get to hear of the incident and thanked him shyly. And she forebore to say that his action might have spoiled her effort utterly. Wakefield was quite as shy as Bea, and actually started stammering "D-—d-—d!" he stuttered.

"Let me say it," said Bea, surprisingly, "I know how terribly disappointed you must be over the scene being spoiled—so I'll say it—*Damn*!" He gasped. "It wasn't! It was *d—darling*!"

JUNGLE EVENSONG

Jan Cooke

A POEM BY R. L. SPITTEL

Throned upon the treed horizon,
The lordly peacock calls—
Va, kova, kovaa—
Come slayers, come, the day is done,
The pall of evening falls.

Afar resounds his plaintive wailing,
The drowsing leopard stirs—
Va, kova, kovaa—
Out of his dark roost a-sailing,
The hungry owlet whirrs.

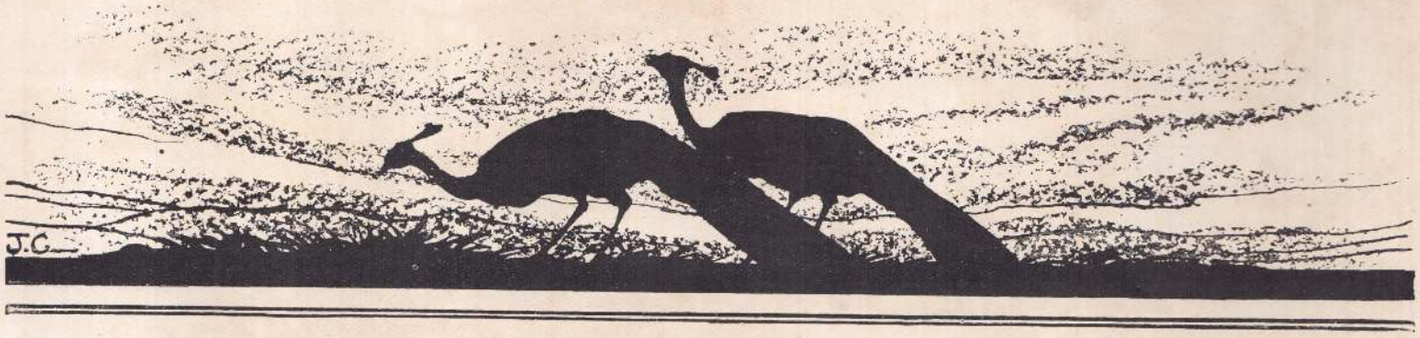
Sambhur, from your lairing brake,
Bear, from forth your den—
Va, kova, kovaa—
All creatures of the night awake—
Within their homes are men

Arise and roam, the night is long,
But not too long for you—
Va, kova, kovaa—
Who must before the coming dawn
Hunt high and low and through

The tangled copse that flouts and leers,
The breeze that ever shifts—
Va, kova, kovaa—
For food that sees and smells and fears,
And on fleet pinion lifts.

So stalk each other, chase and slay :
And hail ! I wail to you—
Va, kova, kovaa—
Full-gorged victor of to-day—
To-morrow carrion too.

Bagari, 1933.



COLOMBO HARBOUR

By ALAN C. McKAY

WHEN some chance acquaintance mentions Colombo to me and my thoughts turn to happy years spent in Ceylon, it is not of the Galle Face I first think, or of the Race Course, or even of Mount Lavinia. These all are happy memories, they can tap the deep well of reminiscence within me and bring light to my eyes, but although they are among the dearest of my past recollections it is of the harbour I first think when my thoughts turn to Sunny Ceylon.

This is strange, perhaps, as Colombo Harbour has no place among the beautiful and natural harbours of the world. Naples, Venice, Toulon, Plymouth, these harbours alone, visited on the voyage to Ceylon, remain in one's mind through their beauty of surrounding and their natural formation, but Colombo Harbour is a disappointment to one's senses from which it takes a long while to recover.

In its size, and in its suitability for its purpose it is, indeed, far from what one would expect, especially as it must rank as one of the most important harbours in the world.

As the Clapham Junction of the East, more ships must pass through the port of Colombo than through many more-vaunted "busy" ports. Every ship (with very few exceptions), proceeding to the Straits, the Dutch East Indies, the Far East and Australasia calls at Colombo. Every Western-bound ship makes it a halting place. Its value as a Clearing House is, therefore, incalculable, and Colombo Harbour is to be judged not from the point of view of its beauty—which is frequently too common a criterion—but by its undoubted importance to the mercantile and naval fleets of the world.

But I do not consciously think of all this when my mind calls up the days of the past. I think of the hours spent along the breakwater, of the sunsets witnessed from the lighthouse parapet, of moonlight over the harbour, of sunrise breaking away over the Kelani Valley and etching the ships' masts in black silhouette against the wonderful tints of the morning sky.

The breakwater, to me, was the most interesting place in Colombo, perhaps one of the most interesting places I have ever known. Brought up far from the sea and knowing little of ships, beyond a stray moment spent leaning over London Bridge, I discovered a deep satisfaction, a thrill of excitement, an unending fascination in studying the ceaseless procession of ships that entered into and departed from Colombo Harbour.

I have heard of men—or should I say boys?—haunt railway stations and know the names, the timetables and the route of every express. In time, I came to haunt the harbour and there were few steamship lines I could not recognise, few details with which I was not familiar, few flags I could not read.

Every morning found me walking the breakwater, usually before most folk were out of their beds. I liked to be on it just before the sun rose as the beauty of the sunrise over the harbour never failed to impress me.

There was nothing unusual or outstanding, I suppose, about this sunrise, only the sun coming up behind its little bank of cloud, sending beams over the tall masts, over the dark waters, gleaming on the lighthouse, and glinting over the sea. There were only the ships black against the skyline, only the riding lights twinkling feebly against the increasing daylight, but it was a new world to me each dawning, a world I could not share with anyone else, but hugged close to myself.

The sun would be well up by the time I reached the lighthouse, and I would sit on the parapet watching the catamarans of the fishermen come skimming over the water, from the villages at the mouth of the Kelani River.

In their thirties and forties and more, they would speed past the harbour entrances and out to sea. With the early sun on their great sails, and in the freshness of the new day, they made a picture of beauty.

At times a siren would sound from within the harbour, and looking back, I would see a steamer under weigh, warning the fishing fleet to beware. Then would there be a commotion among the out-

riggers and they would scatter to allow the ship to pass through. How they must have anathematised the ships and the pilots fulminated against the fishers !

It was good to sit there, feeling the sun's increasing strength, glorying in the faint breeze, listening to the sounds of the harbour behind me, and the waves of the sea beating steadily against the breakwater rocks. It gave a happy start to the day.

In its sunsets the harbour also fascinated. The breakwater occasionally became a promenade and this detracted from the loveliness of the evening, but if one were alone, or with a friend, there was much to make one think.

The sun set right out to sea and at certain periods of the year it set in amazing splendour and majesty. The most magnificent sunset I have ever witnessed was from the breakwater in 1927—that year of beautiful sky effects.

More often than not a buggalow would be approaching the harbour with the evening wind, and was the waters reflected the radiance of the sky, the sail of the buggalow would be lit up, the ornamental prow would gleam as it cleaved the waves.

Slowly, pitching noisily with creak of boom and strain of ropes, it would pass between the breakwaters as the daylight faded, the men shouting to each other as they made ready to lower the sail. Always these buggalows brought with them a sense of romance, expressly, typically Eastern, something beyond our knowledge, something appealing to our imagination.

Time and again I have seen a ship bound for Home head straight into the sunset and Heaven knows the thoughts that were mine. It took with it much that brought a catch to my breath and sent me back to my bungalow a little homesick, a little sad.

There always seemed to me to be something symbolical in the sight of a ship sailing into the sunset. The long day done, the eventide falling fast over sea and land, the ship bearing its precious cargo of human souls into the darkness of the Great Unknown, and from that darkness into the light of another day. Fanciful, I doubt not, but one's fancies play strange tricks with one as the waters little by little give up the crimson aftermath of the darkening sky and take on a deeper hue, the darkness of the night.

Looking back, the lights of Colombo would be glittering in the distance, and the harbour would be indeterminate in the night. And away on the far horizon the twinkling lights of the Home-bound steamer would grow faint and disappear.

What an allure ships were to me, and how bountifully Colombo Harbour catered to my tastes. I had but to sit long enough on the breakwater for nearly every type of ship imaginable to pass before me.

Rarely did I forget to carry my camera with me, and always when I thus erred, I had the gravity of my omission brought sharply home to me. I received many delicious surprises on my morning walks ; I never knew what to expect, and frequently the unexpected did occur.

One morning when I stepped through the gate on to the open breakwater I saw in the distance five small dots heading for the harbour. As they were in formation I realised that they must be Naval vessels and I hurriedly judged whether I had time to sprint back for my forgotten camera. It was impossible, however, and never have I so regretted being without it.

By the time I reached the lighthouse five destroyers were nearing the harbour entrance, travelling at a colossal speed, the seas breaking right over their prows. In a moment a flag fluttered at the mast of the leader, and the flotilla dropped into single line ahead. I stood on the edge of the breakwater to see them pass, and without any appreciable slackening of speed the leader shot before me and I had to run back quickly to avoid the wave that swept viciously over the wall.

One after another the destroyers flashed into the harbour, turned at an amazing speed, and before I could fully comprehend it, they were lying at their buoys as if they had been there for days. I felt like cheering, and shouting, " Good old Royal Navy ! ".

Before evening the destroyers had gone. They were rushing to China where they were urgently required to safeguard British lives and property.

While the disturbances were at their worst in that much-disturbed country the harbour became doubly a place of interest.

Each week Naval ships hurried in, and as hurriedly sped on their way again.

H.M. aircraft carriers " Hermes " and " Eagle " came in, their Marine Bands playing as they entered

Photo by M. K. Nadarajah.

the harbour ; a submarine flotilla arrived with their parent ship, destroyer after destroyer went on their way. The cruisers of the East Indies Squadron were wirelessed for, and they, too, left the harbour for China.

After them came the troopships, and what delight they gave to Colombo as they unloaded their passengers for a route march through the City ! It was strange to see the Green Howards marching along the Galle Face !

To this day I can see the " Carnarvon Castle " and the " Neuralia " steaming out of the harbour, China-bound, their decks crowded with troops waving to those of us on the breakwater. How we longed to be aboard, as they cleared the point and were soon hull down for China.

What a miscellany of ships I watched from the lighthouse wall ! The proud mail ship of the P. & O. and Orient fleets ; the " Maloja," the " Mooltan," the " Orford," giant 20,000 ships, the graceful " Narkunda " and " Chitral," the old " Osterley "—the names bring back many memories.

The fine ships of the Messageries Maritimes, the attractive sounding Marus of the Nippon Yusen Kaisha, the homeward-bound Blue Funnel with their Grecian classical names, "Hector," "Patrocles ;" the friendly Bibby, the busy Bay boats of the Commonwealth Line, the beautiful motor ships of the Lloyd Triestino and Sabaudo—it was a wonderful education to watch them all and think about them, their passengers, their cargoes, their Home ports and their destinations.

The gay passengers, the beautiful women who waved to us, the shouting children, the busy crews —they all made us a little restless, a little dissatisfied with the routine of our daily life.

Almost more interesting to me were the countless cargo steamers. Goodness knows how many lines call at Colombo, but I know my list was a lengthy one and that I was continually adding to it. As long as one is not wooing sleep, or endeavouring to solve some abstruse problem, the rattle of winches, the roar of engines, the shouts of coolies, can be a most pleasing divertissement of sound, while one continually is curious as to the cargo a ship is either loading or discharging. There is much to divert one and rouse one's curiosity in such a cosmopolitan harbour as Colombo.

Photo by M. K. Nadarajah.

The tugs dashing to and fro pulling the lighters, the water-barges and oil-barges, the stevedores with their ships' provisions, the passenger launches, the police launch on patrol—they all add to the din, the bustle, the liveliness of the port.

Occasionally an additional thrill would be mine when a private yacht would enter the harbour, some Alan Gerbault on his way, lone-handed, round the world, or some millionaire entertaining a ship's party, or off to seek for hidden treasure.

And again I would eagerly hug the breakwater wall when a survivor of the old sailing ships would come up from the sea like a dream of the past. Rarely, rarely did I see such a lovely sight, unless it were a Training Ship of some of the Navies of the

world. But this, too, Colombo Harbour vouchsafed me, and I do not forget.

What of the days spent in our own little yachts tacking here and there between the ships, ever alert for fussy tug and careless launch, ever alert for the slightest puff of wind! Is there not happiness in such a memory as this? To be not only an observer of the harbour, but one of its many component parts, one of those busy on the face of its waters—surely this, too, was good, and I think of the day when I was cast away upon a ship's buoy in the middle of the harbour, so that I could take photographs of the yachts as they rounded it. A little incident, may be, but of such is my kingdom and I treasure my memories. Those days may not come again and he would be foolish who put them from his mind, and did not, at times, lean back in his chair and let the past recall the past. I dip my flag in grateful salute to the Royal Colombo Yacht Club.

Photo by M. K. Nadarajah.

How many, I wonder, remember Squadron Leader Cave-Browne-Cave and the fine flight of flying-boats that landed in the harbour on their way from England to Singapore—or was it Australia? A red-letter day, this, in the annals of the harbour, as the gleaming machines glided to rest across the safe waters. "Home Sweet Home," we called Cave-Browne-Cave, but he laughed last, as he took us aboard, and watched us become green and yet more green as the flying-boats rolled to the swell.

On the day the flying-boats left the harbour on the continuation of their flight, I too, left Colombo Harbour for Home. My thoughts went winging quicker than any aeroplane's flight, went winging Home straighter than any bird could fly.

But before I take leave of this surprising port I have other memories that crowd upon me. There are the Sunday mornings, when, taking the lines from the hands of some old fisherman, I would become—in appearance—a perfect Isaac Walton—but an Isaac Walton who rarely caught a fish! Yet it was pleasant to sit there in the sun, with now and then a ship slipping her moorings and steaming out to sea, now and then a ship clearing the entrance and gaining safe anchorage.

Fish there were in plenty, I would see schools of them earnestly engaged in examining my bait, but always they gave a scornful flick of their tails and were gone to find more animate and less deceptive food. They seemed to sense me sitting there above them, and sometimes when they knew my thoughts were with the questing seagulls, or with those who go down to the sea in ships, they would jerk my line and then insolently swim away.

One day I *did* catch a fish—a huge fish (of course!) indeed, so large that it nearly pulled me into the water. I was delighted, as I heaved with a will. I shouted to my old fisherman to assist me. For a moment he pulled on the line, and then with a snort of disgust he left me. Evidently the fish I had caught was—no, not an old boot!—but of so rank and bony a species that it was unfitted for human consumption!

The glory of my achievement was taken from me, and I sat down again to rebait the hook feeling somewhat humbled.

When the moon shone over the sea, over the harbour, over the tall ships—then did I steal away to my beloved breakwater, but I walked not alone. Another walked with me, and because of her the moonlight was more perfect, the night more lovely in its mystery, more mysterious in its loveliness.

Photo by M. K. Nadarajah.

And because of the moonlight her hair gleamed darker, her eyes shone deeper, and the confiding hand that lay in mine linked us with the night, made the music of the waves mellifluous, and the soft breeze the repository of age-old and yet ever new secrets.

It was a thrilling interlude this, perhaps even a dangerous one, but youth will be served, and youth will take no heed of the morrow. It all ended when an Orient liner left Colombo for Australia, and in the fitness of things it was midnight when it passed the breakwater, passed the lighthouse and so out to sea. I stood on the parapet wall and shouted the name of her who had walked with me—perhaps the wind carried my voice, perhaps it was tossed scornfully in shreds—I never met her again to ask her, and so ended yet another of life's little romances.

There were other ships that left the harbour, ships carrying Home our friends, our office companions, sweethearts of later days. There were ships bringing to us new friends, new companions, fresh sweethearts, never did we grow weary of this continual coming and going; the arrivals from the uttermost ends of the earth, the departures that were mostly for Home. It was an exciting human kaleidoscope; an eventful interim in our busy lives.

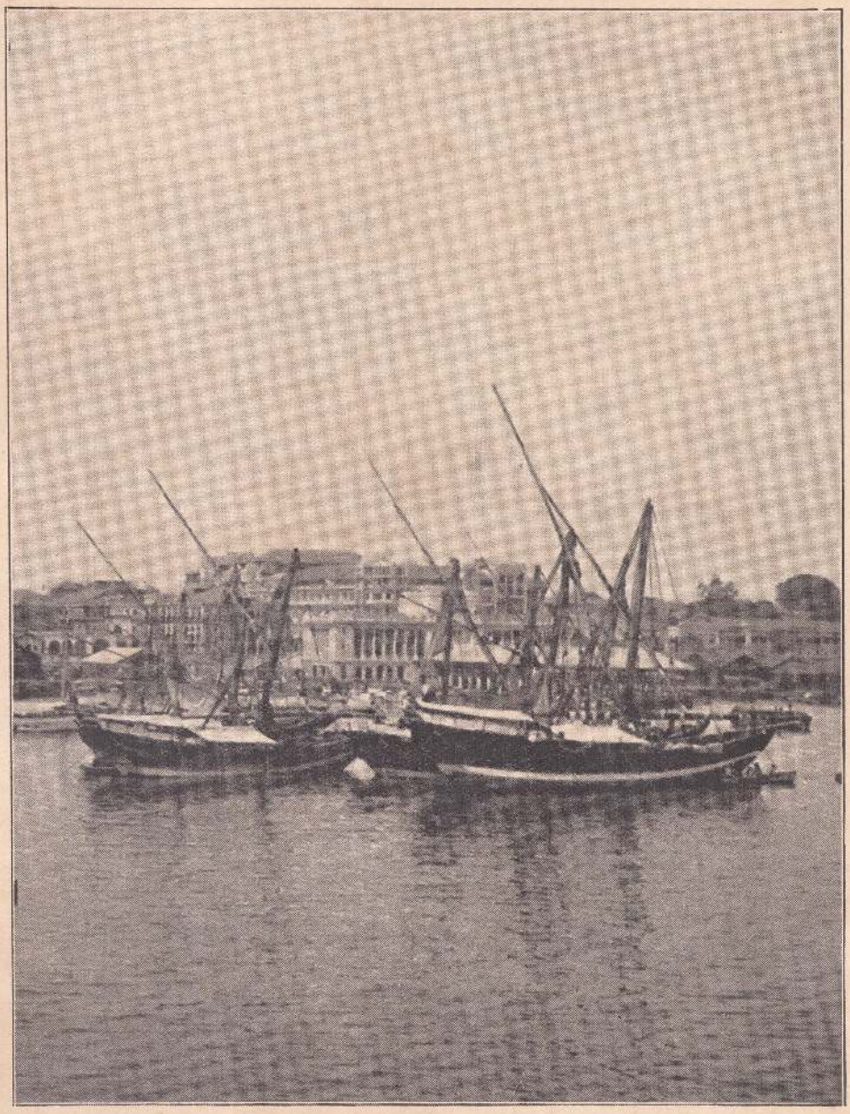


Photo by R. West.

My memories throng in upon me, they tumble one over the other as they demand expression. Incident after incident leaps fresh to mind and I only now realise how great the impression is that Colombo Harbour has made upon me. And I am glad it should be thus; my life will never be empty, I will always be able to cast my mind back and live in a past that was more colourful than I realised.

When my days in the East are over and there come

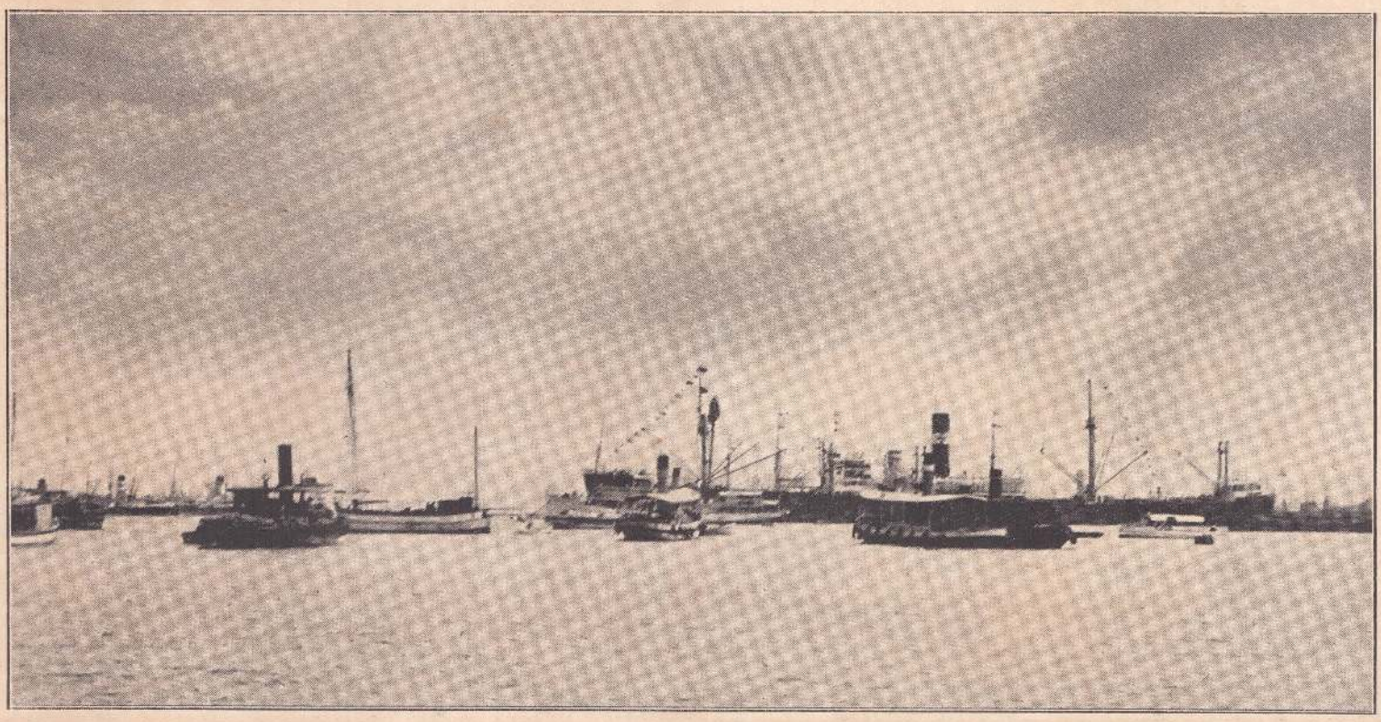


Photo by M. K. Nadarajah.

hours of ease, my mind will be a treasure-house to enrich my quiet moments and I will be able to draw on the wonderful bank of my memory in delightful reminiscence.

Now the time comes for me to leave the harbour. There is much that I have left unsaid, many tales that remain untold. I have related nothing concerning the days when we unloaded bullion from the mail ships and went in dread of a box of sovereigns, or several ingots of silver, slipping from the slings into the water. Once it had so happened and the enormity of the deed had been driven well home to us. Nor can I write to-day of the eve of the Flagship's departure for her annual East African tour, when, lit from prow to stern with glittering lights, flag-decorated, and with orchestra performing deeds of marvellous endurance, we danced on her decks till midnight, or else sat in the wardroom over a last parting drink.

I left it all, somewhat unexpectedly, somewhat broken in body, not altogether as I had dreamed of leaving for Home. My ship sailed not into the sunset, as I had hoped it would, but left the harbour late one January evening.

There were friends to see me off, to bid me the usual farewells, not knowing whether the fates would allow us to meet once again. As they left the ship and waved to me before their launch shot into the night, I said " Goodbye " to Colombo.

As my ship slowly turned, as she almost imperceptibly moved past my old breakwater, now only dimly seen, I realised that one chapter of my life was ending and that on the morrow I would know Colombo no more.

Only the lighthouse remained, and behind it the lights of Colombo. The ship rose to meet the freshening waves and one by one the lights faded out astern, but still the lighthouse shone out.

Away behind me I could see the row of lights I knew to be the Galle Face promenade, but soon they, too, faded and only the lighthouse remained.

The ship ploughed her way into the night, the darkness seemed to close more compactly about me, the wind blew fresh and free.

And away in the far, far distance a light shone for a second, was obscured, shone again and then was lost in the night. There was now only the darkness ahead . . .

As a footnote, it may be interesting to record that Colombo was originally an open roadstead and that the construction of the first breakwater was put in hand in 1875, the foundation stone being laid by the Prince of Wales. The construction of the South-West Breakwater led to an increase in traffic as the result of the shelter, and a scheme of further breakwaters to enclose 643 acres was put in hand in 1894 and completed in 1898. Through the years further facilities have been added—a graving dock, a guide pier, coaling jetties and an extension of the S. W. Breakwater—and altogether the capital expenditure on the harbour has amounted to nearly 67 million rupees.

CEYLON TYPES

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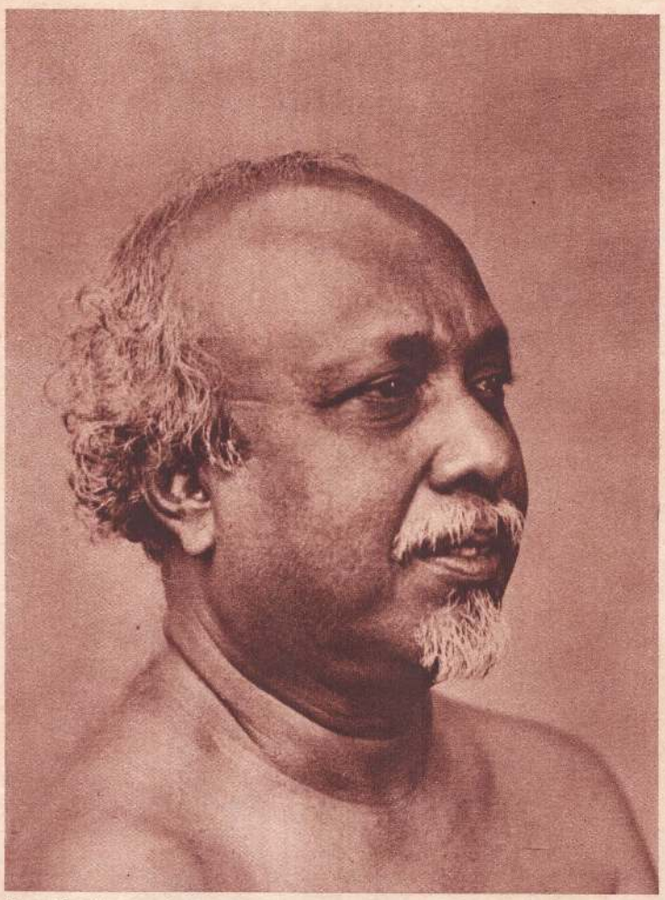
A GIRL OF THE RODIYA CASTE.



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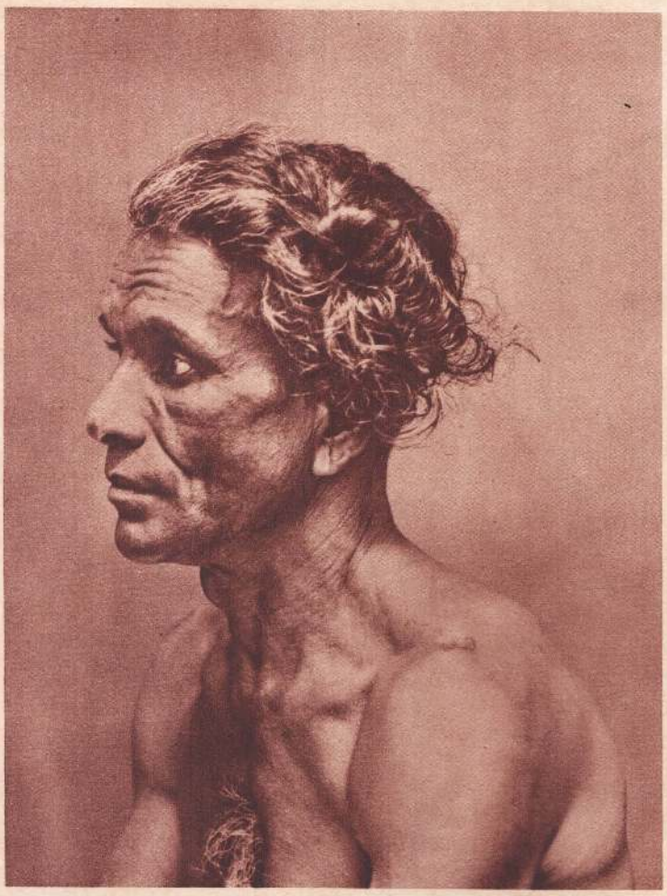
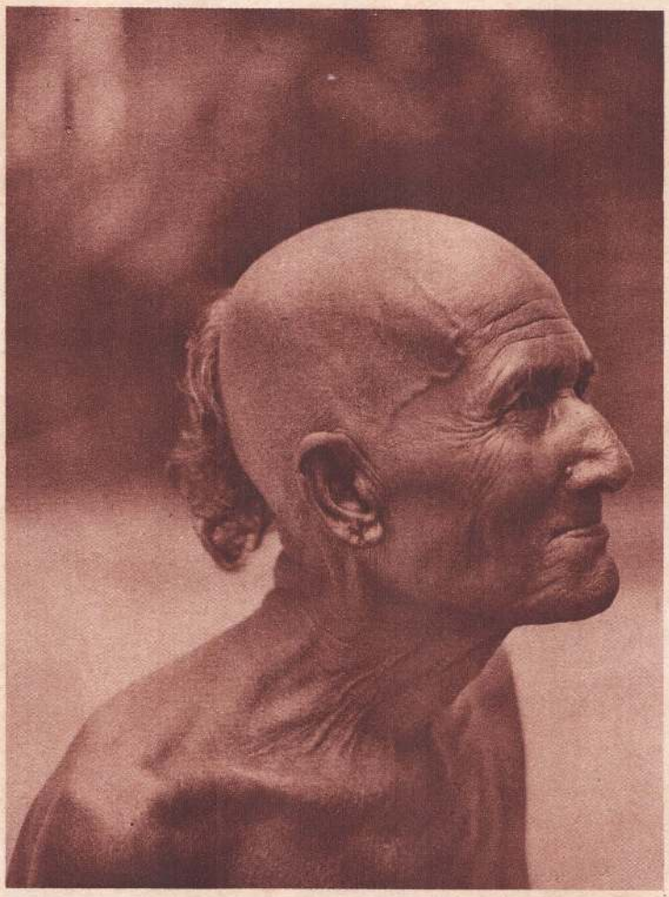
A SINHALESE ARTIST.



N. K. Nadarajah

A MALAYEE WITH SIDE "KONDE."



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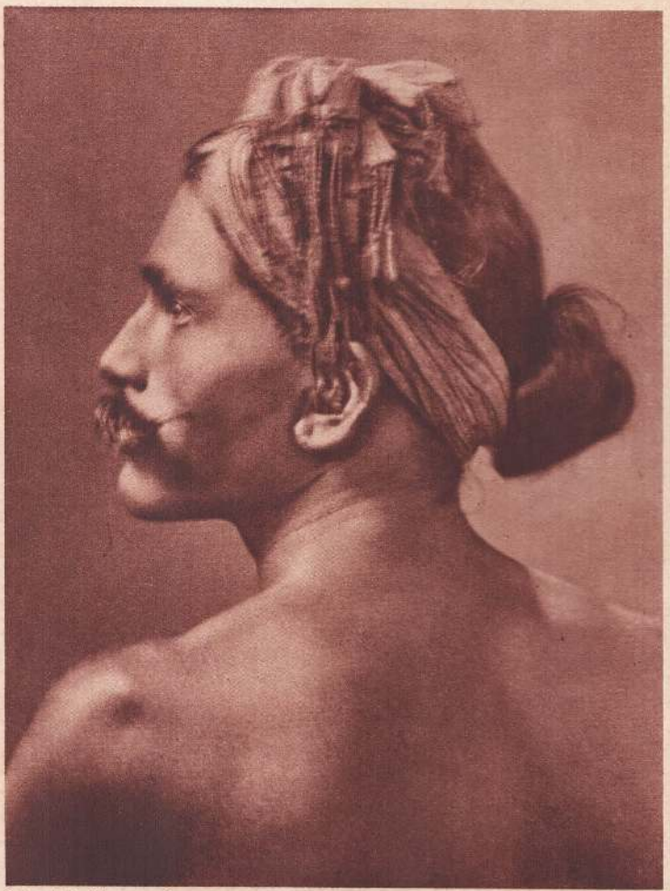
AN OLD TAMIL MAN.



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AN ESTATE TAMIL KANGANY.

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A TAMIL MOTHER AND CHILD.

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AN IMMIGRANT TAMIL GIRL.

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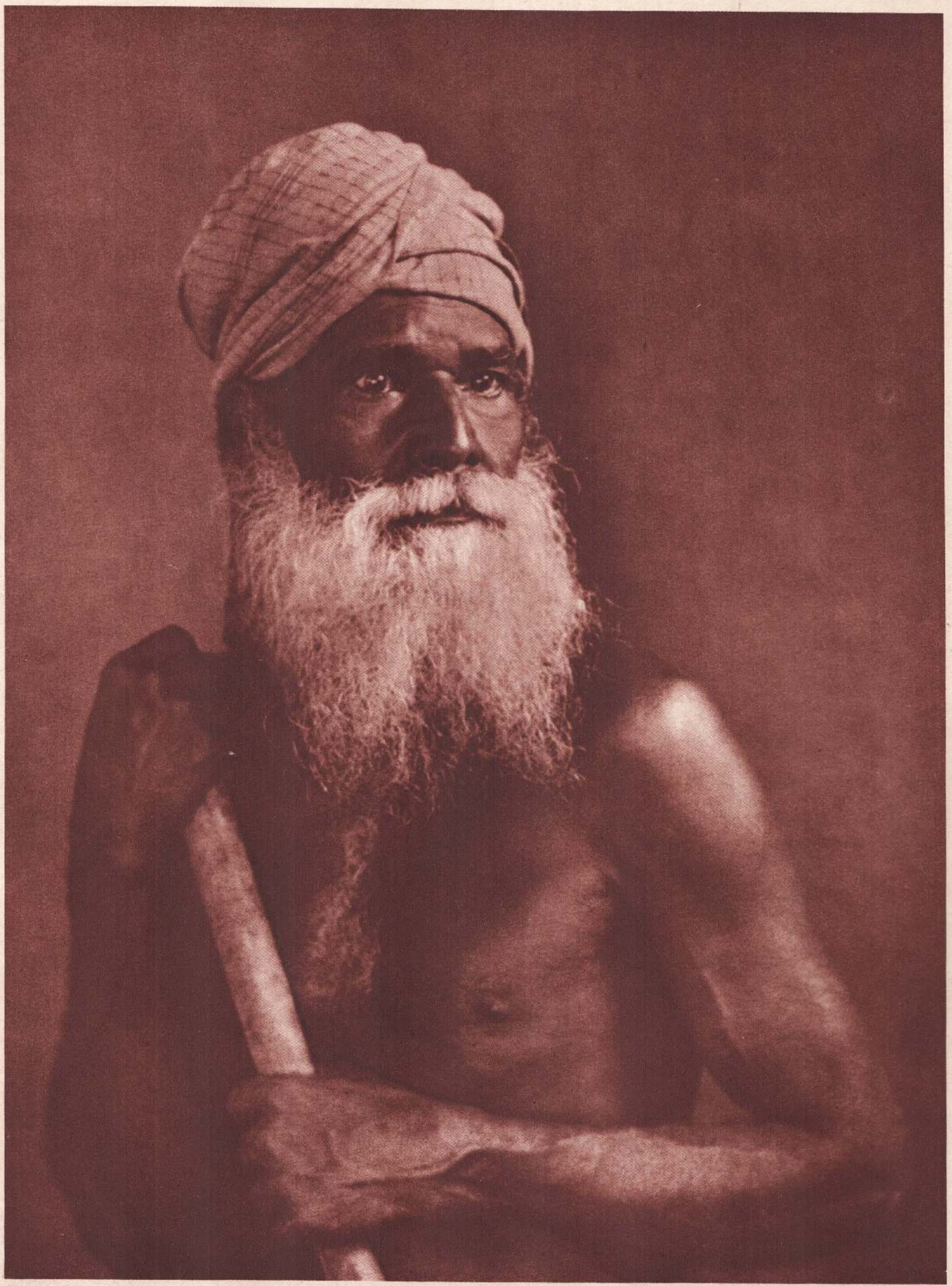
A YOUNG TAMIL BRIDE.

THE VILLAGE PATRIARCH



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A SINHALESE GOIYA.

THOSE LETTERS HOME

SOME SOLUTIONS FOR A PERPLEXING PROBLEM

By N. O. WRIGHTER

ONCE upon a time there lived in the East a love-sick swain, a Scotsman to boot, or to wit, as the case may be, who wrote a letter every day for seven long years to the girl he had left behind him. No, it is not a fairy tale. He did, and the breach of promise jury awarded £1,200 damages, with nothing off for the epistolary labour expended. Which shows that the art of letter-writing has a value—six shillings per missive in this case—and there's no saying who makes the profit.

Nevertheless, all the laggards in letter-writing—and who in the East is not?—must raise their hats to this phenomenon. There may be people whose moving fingers write, and having writ, move on to cover page after page of notepaper, but they are people of unusual powers and are few and far between. The average person finds the weekly letter home a terrible business. Some bachelors have extraordinary difficulty even in sending the weekly message of the heart to the Chosen One, however receptive she may be to the outpourings of the kind that such young men pour out. When billets-deux present such difficulty, judge the feeling of helplessness experienced in attending to the ordinary letters, the will to write which is not inspired by the same dynamic force.

It is not necessary to give an analytical examination of all the causes which make us regard the outward mail day with fear foreboding. It may be all summed up in the Great Excuse: It's the East. Everywhere East of Suez it is the same. First of all, there never seems to be any time to do anything. No matter how zealously the early days of the week are kept free from engagements, people will call, and when all the formalities of departure have been carried through, beginning with the "last one" and ending with the "swing of the gate," writing is altogether out of the question. At the end of the week, on the other hand, the engagements which have been carefully noted in the little grey book seem to get cancelled and no one dreams of calling.

But even when the desk is cleared and pen and paper are put ready to hand for an attack on the correspondence, there is another snag. There is never anything to say, the mind is also blank. If you tell all you have been doing in the evenings, it brings back a stern reproof, and advice to lead a quiet life. If you do not say anything about it, you are asked how you use your spare time, and the hope is expressed that due regard is being paid to the need for healthful exercise and mental improvement. If reference is made to a hard game of "rugger" or "soccer," a solemn warning comes back about the dangers of strenuous exercise in a hot climate. Again, if the good intentions you have had about writing come to naught, back comes a letter suggesting that you are going where good intentions usually lead.

Apart from the manual effort involved, it is all so perplexing and difficult, and much thought has been expended in trying to find a solution for the problem. If left long enough most letters answer themselves, but there are some which simply have to be faced. One method that has been successfully adopted is to write a standard letter with as many carbon copies as may be necessary, but, of course, this system has a very limited application. The despatch of copies of the Christmas Number helps to lessen the demand for the written word, but that only comes once a year, and does not offer a permanent solution. The sending of presents may also save considerable mental strain, but this method is not to be commended as it involves a financial strain which may become even more cataclysmic.

* * * *

One of the most attractive solutions yet offered for the Home mail problem is the Foreign Service Card, on the lines of the Field Service Card which simplified the soldier's correspondence in war-time. This, if you remember, contained bright little sentences like the following:—

I am well.
I have just recovered from malaria, quinsy, lumbago, pleurisy, trench feet.
I am in hospital with (as before).
I am in hospital wounded, slightly, seriously.
I am down with (as before).
The enemy gives me no rest at nights.
I have been promoted Lance-Corporal (unpaid), pioneer sergeant, mess orderly (and so on).
Our battalion are doing splendid work, and I am doing most of it.
I have received your parcel, letter, "Christian Herald," postal order.
I have not heard from the Bosch, the paymaster, the War Office for a long time.

* * * *

You have the idea now. All it wants is some

adjustment for the requirements of the East, as for example :—

I have just recovered from malaria, rabies, rinderpest, tetanus, plague, cholera, Ceylon sore toes, gout, August Week.

I am down with fever . . . . .

I have been playing "rugger," "soccer," hockey, golf, cards.

I have been shooting elephants, leopards, crocodile, snipe, cards, and got back safely.

I have a feeling that I shall win the Calcutta, Stock Exchange, Galle Sweep.

I have not won the . . . . Sweep.

Business is quiet at the office, but I am doing all the work.

Business is brisk, but the other fellows are not pulling their weight.

I have to-day had my first drink for six weeks, beginning from to-day.

This place is frightfully expensive.

I am keeping my head above water, only just.

I am slowly getting into debt.

It is fearfully hot and I wish the Monsoon would burst.

The Monsoon has gone astray.

The Monsoon has burst. The bungalow is flooded out and everything is moist and clammy.

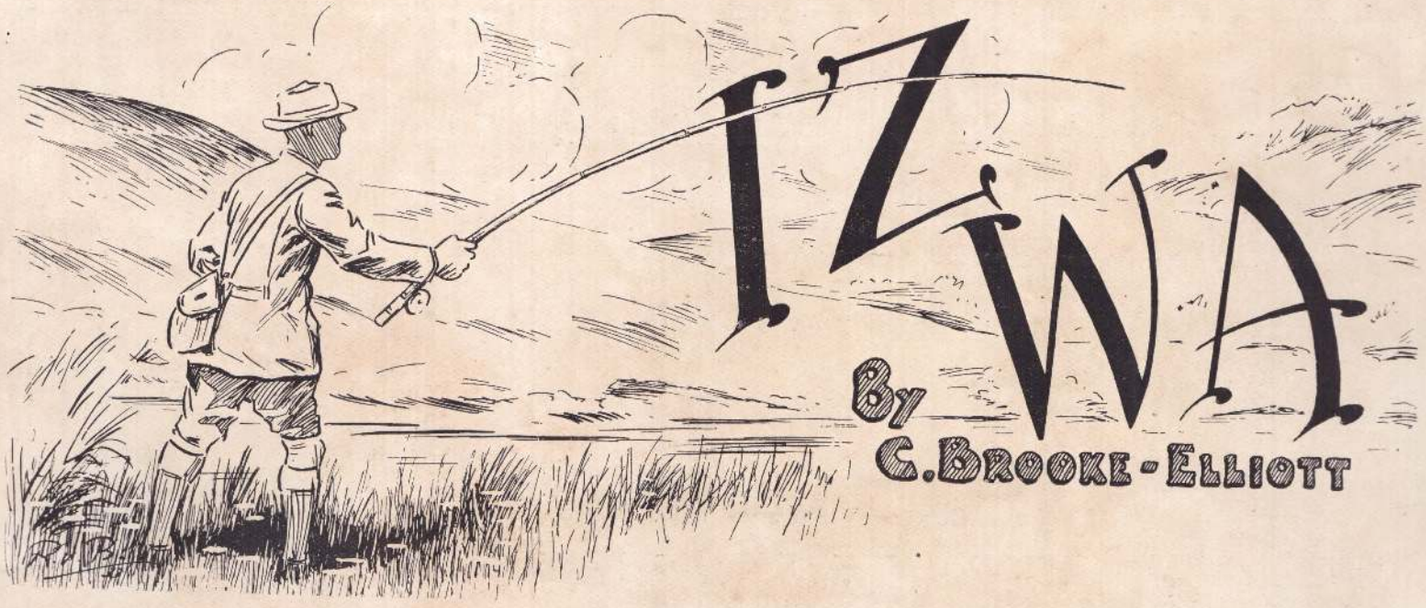
I have . . . weeks to wait for leave.

I have received the remittance ; many thanks for prompt attention.

I can never forget your unremitting kindness.

Satis verborum ! You take your choice, deleting the items which don't apply. The system is certainly good, but it does not get over the difficulty of constant sameness, and the recipient is apt to have a grievance after the novelty has worn off. The old-fashioned "Guide to Letter-Writing" is not much help either. It gives one sample of every conceivable kind of letter, whereas what is wanted is a series of 52 different letters which may be written to the same person, mother or father, the rich uncle or aunt, or to assorted acquaintances. Perhaps some benefactor of the human race will do some benefacting in the right way. In the meantime, it behoves the exile to conquer the inertia induced by an enervating climate and make valiant weekly efforts to "keep in touch." In this land of "nalike" it is well to strive never to put off till to-morrow what you can put down to-night. This refers to the exercise of the pen fingers and not of the elbow.

A VIEW AT LABUGAMA, COLOMBO'S BEAUTIFUL RESERVOIR.



IZWA

By C. BROOKE-ELLIOTT

I SHALL never forget that morning; never. It was ten years ago in the beginning of May; which can be a lovely month up-country in Ceylon if it likes, before the south-west monsoon blots out the landscape with a terrific burst of whirlwind and rain.

I had been camping below Pedro some three miles from Nuwara Eliya with a few Scouts, sons of soldiers mostly, sent to the hills during the hot weather. Below our camp ran the lovely Bul-Ela, the silver stream from Kandapola.

I slipped out of camp alone that morning very early, leaving the Scouts still fast asleep. By law in Ceylon no trout may be taken before six a.m. or after seven p.m. This is to prevent poaching by people who find that a trout makes a good addition to vegetable curry. One venerable poacher, I remember, once bathed in a stream in Nuwara Eliya town with a line attached to his big toe. Attached to the hook was a worm; and deeply attached to the worm was a trout! He, the poacher, was caught by an observant watcher and fined for poaching. He almost deserved to get off!

On this morning at the stroke of six I was down the green hill and on the water, and took two fair-sized trout with my first cast. I kept what I caught, as the Scouts were to join me later, and grilled trout was the dainty dish designed for lunch.

About nine o'clock I had reached Left-Elbow Pool, so named by me after its shape, just below the long rapids. It is a singularly lovely spot. To my left were the rapids streaked with foam on the face of the tumbling waters, and at my side the slow glassy glide of deep grey-green water, clear as crystal. All around was high jungle, rising steeply and enclosing the valley of the Bul-Ela in a ring of green.

My early tea in camp had consisted of hot tea and a plantain, nibbled on the way down. So I enjoyed my breakfast of hard-boiled eggs, bread-and-butter, and a flask of hot coffee, which I ate about nine o'clock, seated on a tuffitt like Miss Muffitt of nursery spidery days and ways. At my back was a slender tree that added to my comfort. Sitting there, somehow my thoughts went back to a talk on camping and fishing that I gave to some Scouts long ago at Roland House in Whitechapel, London, and I recalled how one Scout had yearned to come with me for a day's fishing in this valley of Piscine Delight. I longed to have that little London lad with me to share that loveliness. Two are better than one: and a joy shared is doubled out fishing.

I was quite alone. My fishing-cooly had melted silently into the jungle, patiently awaiting a summons to carry on. I slipped down from my grassy seat and lay on the ground, like W. S. Gilbert's hero. The sound of running waters came softly; my head was pillowed on Mother Earth; high up in the sky fleecy clouds were scampering along . . . All was peace . . .

II

I usually sing in my tub, but more rarely when fishing. So, when presently I heard a strong clear voice rolling out a song I wondered dimly who the sweet singer could be. For usually, only three of us fish this stream, of whom the other two are not musical.

I listened lazily and soon caught these words :—

God quickened in the sea and in the rivers,
So many fishes of so many features
That in the waters we may see all creatures,
Even all that on the earth are to be found,
As if the world were in deep waters drown'd.

And then I saw the voice, or rather its owner, coming towards me along the path cut through the jungle beside the Bul-Ela.

He was a stranger to Nuwara Eliya and presented an odd yet sporting appearance. He wore a large sun-stroked, rain-soaked hat, in shape rather like a large *Terai*, with a curly brim. His collar was such as Puritans wear in pictures, and the tunic round his ample waist was gripped by a broad leather belt. His baggy trousers were gartered at the knees with gay green ribbons, and his yellow hose ended in stout shoes decked with silver buckles. I confess I was puzzled at the sight of this unusual figure in such surroundings,

till I remembered that there had been a Fancy Dress Dance the night before at the Club, and this worthy gentleman was apparently soothing a fevered brow in the cool of the jungle.

He evidently had the grace of humour: for he was still carrying a fancy fishing rod made of two pieces of hazel, the butt bound with hoops of iron. The top of the rod was fitted with a noose, through which ran a hair line. In his left hand he carried a very jolly-looking fat book.

As he came near me he bowed and said, "You are well overtaken, gentleman."

I got up, feeling somewhat of a clumsy fellow, gave a stiff little salutation in return, and found myself saying, "Sir, I trust you are enjoying of good sport in your angling?"

"Sir," replied he, "I for my part trust shortly to make answer to your hopes. For I perceive you are an angler, and it shall be my purpose to profit by your skill, and learn which of my Jury of twelve flies shall prove most profitable to dysporte within yonder stream."

I noticed that he was looking with great interest at my hardy split-cane rod.

"Some use a wheel set near to the hand," he remarked, examining my reel, "but for my part I find them cumbrous."

THE ANGLER'S DREAM, *Sketch by J. T. D. Savary*

With this sentiment I agreed; for I always prefer to hand-line a fish, and gently apply pressure as needed.

My fly-box with its medley of brilliant silk and feather lures next caught his eye.

"Once," said he, "was I given in my youth by an ingenious brother of the angle twelve sorts of flies with which to cast upon the top of the water; though I be by persuasion a bottom-fisherman. This being the month of May I adjudge a ruddy-fly to be most suitable in these waters."

I nodded; and he added, "Three or at most four flies, neat and rightly made, and not too big, serve to catch trouts in skilful hands."

Hastily I thrust my fly-box in my pocket; for with me it is a case of safety in numbers; and his rebuke went home.

"Pray, Sir," I said, "cast now a cunning fly straitly, that it may return graced with a fat fish."

His reply was to make ready his rod, singing softly,

The jealous trout, that low did lie,
Rose at a well-dissembled fly,
Then stood my friend, with patient skill,
Attending of his trembling quill.

"But enough of song," he said, "we will now seek a likely spot and do nought but angle."

"It is a match, Sir," I said, "I pray you take precedence in casting."

A little way down-stream was a much-loved spot of mine, where a good fish often lay, right in under the grassy bank. Just there a tiny brook trickles in from the hillside bringing down juicy jungle-grubs and other trout delicacies to the tenant of this trout-lair for the time being. My friend came to this spot; saw; and was conquered. He had a good eye evidently for trouty country.

"First," said he, "I need a grasshopper to set upon my hook, making him to stir up and down."

"Oh, but you mustn't," I said horrified; "for no baits are permitted in this water, but only flies."

He bowed courteously and took from his capacious pocket an ancient pouch that I instantly yearned to possess. He selected a rough-looking fly of medium size and remarked drily. "In this stream I have observed trouts remarkable for their number and smallness."

"Some are pretty big," I retorted, for the honour of the Bul-Ela. He smiled, and just then a faint smell reached me. I sniffed.

"Camphire placed in the bag with moss," said he, "imparts to baits a strong and so tempting a smell that the fish fare the worse and you the better for it." Which sage counsel I duly noted.

He then tied what he called "a blackish fly," and I noted that it had a body made of black wool and was lapt with the harle of a peacock's tail.

Then he cast skilfully under the bank. Up rose a fish like a flash and took his fly, and was away.

"Oh me!" he cried, "he has broken all. There's half a line, and a good hook lost."

"Ay, and a good trout too," I added.

"Nay," he replied, "the trout is not lost, for pray take notice that no man can lose what he never had."

I accepted correction with a smile, and longed to offer to lend him my hardier tackle; but out of delicacy refrained.

He was soon ready with another fly and cast of a single horse-hair; and then to my surprise, after a pause, he cast again rather lower down. At his third cast there was a swirl from the deep such as our big Bul-Ela fighters make, and I trembled for his slender line. But he played his tugging fish like a Master, and presently when it leaped high in the air, he said, "Look you, friend, I have hold of a good fish. I see it is a trout . . . .I pray you put that net under him, but touch not my line, lest we break all . . . Well done . . . Friend, I thank you."

And up the bank came a lovely sheeny rainbow trout of about two pounds, fat as butter. I really believe I was as happy as he was.

"Here," said he, "we have a good dish of fish for supper."

III

It was now my innings; and I confess I had little hope of winning the match, for two-pounders are rare in the upper waters of this jungle-stream.

I chose an Ogden's Invicta, which is a good fly here on a bright day. The water was gin-clear. I decided to try my luck at the foot of a baby-waterfall where a fish often lies feeding in a narrow run. I soon rose a fish and got him at a second venture, but he was only a half-pounder when hung upon my scale.

I raised my *topee* in token of the stranger's victory, and suggested we might now have our lunch.

"Agreed," said he. "Let us go to yonder sycamore tree (if indeed it be such), and there we will make a brave meal with a piece of powdered beef and a raddish or two that I have in my fish-bag. With these I warrant you, we shall make good wholesome eating. Thereafter we shall sing, and later I will give you direction for the better making and the using of your flies, so that you shall catch bigger trouts. Now to a Grace; and to fall to meat. What say you to the Providence of an old angler? Does not this meat taste well?"

I admitted that it did. Though camphire—which proved to be *henna*—might be used to better purpose than as a relish to powdered beef.

After our simple meal he said, "Come let us thank God that we enjoy such days, and woodlands, and flowing waters." Which we did in silence awhile; and then he burst into song:—

As inward love breeds outward talk,
The hound some praise, and some the hawk,
Some, better pleased with private sport,
Use tennis, some a mistress court:
But these delights I neither wish,
Nor envy, while I freely fish.

I care not, I, to fish in seas,
Fresh rivers best my mind do please,
Whose sweet calm course I contemplate,
And seek in life to imitate;
In civil bounds I fain would keep,
And for my past offences weep.

As well content no prize to take,
As use of taken prize to make:
For so our Lord was pleased, when
He fishers made fishers of men;
Where, which is in no other game,
A man may fish and praise His name.

The first men, that Our Saviour dear
Did choose to wait upon Him here
Blest fishers were, and fish the last
Food was that He on earth did taste;
I therefore strive to follow those
Whom He to follow Him hath chose.

At the end I said a soft "*Amen*"; for this was indeed a psalm of fishing life.

* * * *

"Sir, Sir, wake up and come and look, quick, for we've just seen a leopard's tracks on a sand-bank!"

Not quite awake, I blinked and muttered, "Scouts, I've found something much better."

"What is it, Sir?" the Scouts asked eagerly.

"One of the Immortals," I said.

But they comprehended me not.

* * * *

If ever you go down the Bul-Ela, you will find a tree with my friend's name roughly carved upon it, ISAAK WALTON.

Some day, I hope, we shall fish together again. I wonder if there are rainbows in Heaven?

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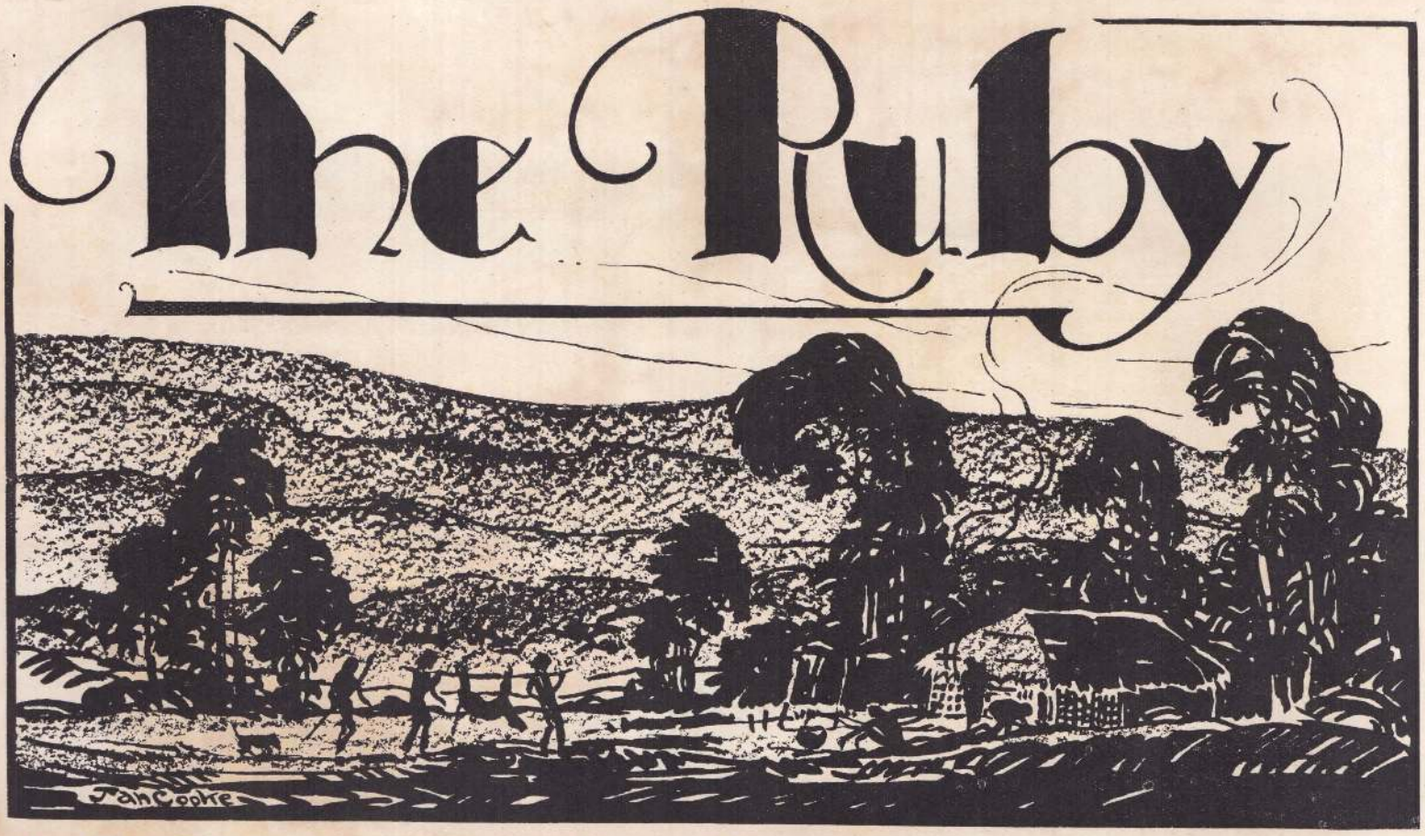


A VEDDA STORY BY R. L. SPITTEL

IN 1898, when I was a young Assistant Superintendent of Surveys in Ceylon, I was set the task of defining the contours of two ruined tanks, Padawiya and Wahalkada, buried in the jungles of the uppermost jut of the North-Central Province. I had at the same time to define the boundary thereabout between the Northern and North-Central Provinces.

How I was assisted in these difficult undertakings by the jungle folk, and how I came to solve a most baffling mystery of their forests, is what I now set out to relate.

Turning off with my coolies at Kebitigollewa on the Vavuniya-Horowupotana road, I made for Padawiya by a jungle track which eventually peters out at the Kokkilai Lagoon on the eastern coast.

I have said that my work was concerned with tanks—this is the name by which the great artificial lakes built over a thousand years ago by Sinhalese kings are called. Everywhere the remains of them bescatter our arid low-lying jungles which they at one time made fertile with fields of rice.

Wahalkada certainly, and Padawiya probably, were built by Mahasena who ascended the throne in 277 A.D. With him ended the Mahawansa or Great Dynasty of Sinhalese kings. Ruthless iconoclast of monasteries (including the sacrosanct Brazen Palace) in his earlier years, he later repented his misdeeds, and not only restored the sacred places he had razed but built many new ones. The Jetavanarama Dagaba at Anuradhapura, a mighty dome of brick, 321 feet high, is evidence of his piety to this day.

It is, however, by his tanks that Mahasena is best remembered. Of these he built sixteen, the largest of them Minneriya, some twenty miles in circumference; here, after his death in 304 A.D., a temple was built in his honour and he was worshipped as a god.

All there was, and still is, of the Padawiya tank were glades of high *ramba* grass split up by islets of jungle; while the Wahalkada tank was entirely in forest.

It was a disheartening prospect that confronted me. And yet I had but to unravel by means of theodelite, level and chain, what men with far cruder means than I possessed had planned and achieved centuries ago. How they did this is a problem that baffles modern engineers.

Those early men must surely have had some way of ascertaining levels to enable them to trap the waters of streams into vast cisterns bounded by hill ranges, and where these were lacking by artificial bunds of earth so colossal that *yodayas* or giants had to be postulated to account for their possibility.

The contour of a tank, technically speaking, is its highwater level at which the surplus begins to spill, and one sets about determining it by first locating the spill. This, therefore, was my initial problem.

Beginning with Wahalkada, I had reconnoitred the jungle with my coolies for days, without being able to find any trace whatever of a masonry spill. The northern bund of the tank abutted against a hill at one end and merely melted into high ground at the other. Examining the latter spot closely I gradually realised that what I was looking at was

actually a fairly large channel in a rocky bed which had been scoured out by surplus water. I had solved my problem, here was a *natural* spill.

This discovery after days of patient labour elated me no end, though I was yet only at the beginning of my task. I had still to trace the flood-time circumference of the tank.

One noon after breakfast I was seated under a shady tree, roughly plotting out my work, when there approached me two elderly men. One carried a bow and arrows and the other an axe ; they were accompanied by two dogs that barked viciously at me and my coolies. I knew the men at once for Wanniyas (as the Veddas of these parts are called), of whom I had heard but so far seen nothing.

The strangers stood hesitantly, undecided whether to advance towards me or pursue the iguana hunt on which they were engaged. I beckoned them, and soon we were on easy terms, for they spoke the *kaelabasa* or jungle language, a patois which anyone familiar with Sinhalese could easily understand.

And so I got to know these forest folk intimately. Their village Morakewa was a few miles from my camp. Often I met them hunting in the forest, and always welcomed the opportunity of a talk with them, for their knowledge of the locality was a great help to me.

One day, I was contemplating some monoliths that, ever since I first noticed them at a desolate place called Rambewa, had greatly puzzled me, when a voice behind me said, " That is a bridge over which men of old used to cross."

I turned to find Randu, the elder of my two friends, behind me.

" A bridge ! " I said ; " here where there is not the remotest possibility of water ? "

" We don't know about that," he replied ; " but so it has been handed down to us."

Examining the stones more closely in the light of the information, I found sockets at the sides of some of the long rectangular monoliths, and proportionate projections at the ends of others which seemed to indicate that the longest of them had been placed horizontally on the others, and that these stones, after all, may possibly have served such a purpose as the old Vedda suggested—though what a bridge did there was more than I could imagine.

I explained to my friends the nature of the work on which I was engaged, and said I was greatly puzzled by the extent of land the tank waters must have covered.

They told me of a slab of rock many miles away in the forest which the waters must have reached, for their fathers had related that people used to fish from it in the old days.

I dismissed these tales, at the time, as moonshine.

Later, however, I was to learn the reliability of the information I had received. The level half way up the isolated rock proved to be the exact level of the spill ! And more wonderful still, when, having completed my survey, I had plotted out the contours of the Padawiya and Wahalkada tanks, I found that they met precisely at the spot where the legendary bridge was said to be ! To enable them to do this those tanks must each have covered an approximate area of fifteen square miles, making them two of the very largest tanks in Ceylon.*

Can you wonder that I treated with the greatest respect whatever my jungle companions said ? I often employed them as guides through the tangle of those forests, as their sense of direction was amazing. When it came to demarcating the province boundary, I do not know what I should have done without them, for the line had been haphazardly blazed by a previous Government Agent using a rock here, a stream there and a tree elsewhere as landmarks, impossible for me to establish.

I once had occasion to put to the severest test the sense of direction of the Wanniyas. There was a small rock buried in the jungle, called Bola-bandagala, which was a boundary landmark. Some eight miles from this was a tree on a stream bank, *Ira-hantha-kapuwa gaha* (tree blazed with emblem of sun and moon), which the men said was the next landmark. My duty was to connect these two by a straight line ; and I was anticipating an arduous survey, when suddenly it occurred to me that I might with advantage exploit the sense of direction of my friends.

Standing by the blazed tree, I asked Randu to indicate to me the exact position of the rock that was separated from us by the wide stretch of dense jungle. He looked up at the sky and into the forest alternately, considered a moment, then deliberately stretched out his hand pointing, shifted it an inch and, being satisfied, turned to his friend for confirmation. He agreed.

Planting a pole where the man stood, and two others a hundred yards away from each other in the exact direction he pointed, I commenced my lining. So I carried on for days, clearing the jungle as I went and shifting my poles from point to point throughout the eight miles. When I got to the end I was but two chains to the left of the rock. What this saved me in labour any surveyor will readily appreciate.

One evening, tired out after a long day in the field, I had loitered in the Wanniya's hamlet. Five mud huts thatched with grass stood round a bare space where the knot of us were seated : I on a rice-pounder overspread with a mat, the others on the ground chewing quids.

It was a restful hour, and gradually our talk drifted to jungle mysteries. It is remarkable how real things ridiculously incredible to civilized ears are to forest folk always in the grip of the eerie solitudes of the wilderness. In their simple convincing way they told me many a tale of their actual experiences garnished with traditional beliefs.

" Why don't you tell the gentleman about the red stone ? " asked a hitherto silent youngster during a lull in the talk.

" What is that ? " I asked, all alert.

" A glittering gem, in an inaccessible hole," said Randu, with a reproving look at the youngster.

" You must show it to me," said I. " Why have you not told me of this before ? "

" What is the good ? You cannot take it Sometimes it is there and sometimes not. No one

* A subsequent survey questions my computation and estimates the tank areas at but about six square miles each, adding, " It is impossible that the waters of Wahalkada and Padawiya can ever have joined." I am confident, however, that if the work of restoration is ever accomplished my figures will be found the more correct.

knows what it is. Demons guard the place. It is not good to be too curious about such things."

"Never mind. You must show it to me to-morrow."

"Not to-morrow. Some other day perhaps."

A woman, bent with age tottered out of her hut. "What talk is this, I hear?" she chided in a loud piping voice. "Don't take the gentleman there."

"Ah, *ammay*, I must see that gem," said I.

She fell at my feet beseechingly, saying, "Don't go there, I beg. Only harm will come of it."

"You talk as if you know of evil it has wrought."

"If I don't, who does?"

"Tell me about it."

For a long while she was deaf to my entreaties; but patiently I coaxed her into reminiscence, and was able to piece together a remarkable tale:—

Some sixty years ago this wizened creature, Bevini, was the joyous newly-wed wife of Vela, the finest young fellow in the village. One day, as they travelled the forest together in search of food, her husband peered into a cave in search of iguanas, and called her excitedly to him. There, far within, was a scintillating gem, wonderful to see. For a long while they had watched its ruddy glitter and wondered how it came to be there.

That night, when they spoke of it in the village, their old chief said: "So you have seen the stone again after all these years. I too beheld it once. Trouble lurks there. That's the place where they say one of our women, heavy with child, was buried alive long years ago to appease the god who caused the flood waters to break the bund down at that spot as often as the king had it rebuilt. After that sacrifice the bund held; but ever since then our folk have held the place accursed. Never go that way again, any of you."

"Since then," continued the old woman, "we talked of it no more. One day, about three moons later, my husband did not return from the hunt. All night I waited for him. In the morning his dog came, whined as if it had something to say, and lay down sadly. For two days we

HER HUSBAND PEERED INTO A CAVE IN SEARCH OF IGUANAS, AND CALLED HER EXCITEDLY TO HIM. THERE, FAR WITHIN, WAS A SCINTILLATING GEM, WONDERFUL TO SEE.

sought my man everywhere. The jungle echoed to our calls till our throats were hoarse; our limbs ached with walking from dawn to night. Then one by one they gave up the search.

"Overwhelmed with grief I was seated apart from the rest, when suddenly it occurred to me that a few days before his disappearance, when my husband seemed preoccupied and I had asked him what he was thinking of, he had answered, 'That ruby,' and I had flippantly said, 'Ah, what a gem for the breast of a woman.'

"The remembrance of this so worried my mind that I determined to look for Vela myself in the cave of the gem, for I knew that none of my people would accompany me there.

"Coming to the cave I parted aside the dense growth at its mouth and looked in. There was nothing to be seen, not even the shining thing—only dense blackness. My broken heart was proof against fear and, impelled by what power I cannot say, I crawled in, feeling with my hands. Suddenly I clutched the cold foot of a man, and dragged out the body of my husband. There was no mark of injury on him whatever. He was dead. That was all. We brought him away and buried him. Since then no one in the village talks of the place but in fear. Go your way, son, I beg, back to those that love you. Do not tempt the fearful gods of these desolate lands." She bowed down, kissing my feet with her tear-stained face.

"All right, mother," I said, gently lifting her up, "I'll do as you say."

It was too late for me to return to my camp that night, and I made myself as comfortable as I could in the hamlet. Having dined off a savoury dish of iguanas and manioc the kind folk offered me, I stretched myself on a mat in the moonlit verandah of Randu's hut. Into my restless dreams were weft the cruel deeds of ancient kings, the agonies of immured victims, the horror of dark fathomless passages.

The episode I have described had occurred during the early months of my stay in those parts. And true to my promise to old Bevini, I had put away all thought of prying into the mystery.

When, however, the time for my departure was nearing with the completion of my work, I found the matter of the wonderful gem occupying my thoughts more and more, and I determined at least to see it before I left, that is if such a thing existed at all.

At length my opportunity came with the final visit of inspection of Moorcroft, my superior officer. Seated outside my tent, refreshing ourselves with *his* whiskies and sodas (for I was but an impecunious junior long estranged from the good things of civilisation), I told him the legend of the ruby. His curiosity was instantly fired.

"We must investigate this," said he. "It sounds incredible, but there may be something in it. How about to-morrow? Have you a man who can show us the place?"

"I know two who will do whatever I ask them; but this will put their regard for me to a severe test."

"Well, ask no more of them than to take us to the spot."

Early the following morning, in answer to my summons, Randu Wanniya and Sutha were at my camp. When I put our proposal to them they did their best to dissuade us, saying only harm would come of it. They even pleaded ignorance of the exact locality, and wished to leave us on the grounds of pressing business. I entreated with them, saying this was the last service they would be doing me, promised them a good reward, and gave our assurance that we would attempt nothing rash. All we wished was only to be shown the mysterious stone. And so I overcame their scruples—though they would have nothing to do with any gift.

They appointed an hour for our starting, saying that only at a certain time in the afternoon would the stone be visible.

To my surprise they led us after a walk of some six miles to a spot on the Wahalkada bund with which I was already quite familiar. It was the *bisakotua* or ancient sluice that ran through the base of the earthwork and connected up with the ruined *Yoda Ella* or irrigation channel that formerly conducted the water away to the fields.

Reconnoitering from the tank side of the bund we found the mouth of the *bisakotua* to be a fearsome cavern densely overgrown with scrub. Hacking through this we found the remains of wooden sluice gates that were let into grooves of dressed stone. Beyond was a dark tunnel, about six feet by three, built of rock slabs, except the upper portion which was of brick.

Randu went down on his abdomen and peered in.

"It is not yet to be seen," he said, getting up. "We must wait a little while."

"So much for your 'gem of purest ray serene,'" said my sceptical boss. "These tales, when you really test them, are usually twaddle. No wonder they were reluctant to bring us here!"

But I was not so sure. I knew my men, and felt they would not have brought us merely on a wild goose chase.

"Well, if we must wait, let us do so under that shady tree and smoke our pipes," said Moorcroft sauntering away.

The Veddas sat by the cave mouth looking in from time to time.

After about an hour, when even I was beginning to lose hope, they beckoned us, saying the gem was visible.

Moorcroft was the first on his face.

"By the lord Harry! it is there all right," he said excitedly. "You look!"

There could be no doubt about it. Far within, in the black darkness of the tunnel there glimmered a blood red stone about the size of an apple. We could hardly believe the evidence of our eyes, as each of us in turn lay gazing at the peerless thing.

It was Randu's voice that broke the spell: "Now that you have seen it, let us begone. Soon it will disappear."

His remark but whetted our curiosity. We held counsel. The passage as originally built we knew would easily admit a man; but it was now so ruinous and choked with fallen brickwork that we could see nothing but blackness beyond the first yard or two. To invade it seemed impossible. The mere suggestion of such an idea brought an expression of horror into our guides' faces.

"It is no use staying here," they urged. "You gentlemen promised us you would attempt nothing reckless. That stone can never be got by man. He who attempts it will not come out of that hole alive. Let us go away, sirs."

The appeal was irresistible, and reluctantly we agreed to leave. I bent down to have a last look. The ruby had gone!

Back in camp we could not get the thing off our minds. Far into the night we discussed it, and the more we did so the more puzzled we were, especially the phenomenon of its sudden disappearance. At length wearied we dropped off to sleep.

About five the next morning I was awakened by a shout from Moorcroft: "I have it," said he. "Let's reflect sunlight from a mirror into the channel; that will show us what it is like inside, and perhaps help us to solve the mystery." It was before the days of electric torches.

So, armed with guns and a shaving mirror, we set out after an early lunch, accompanied by a couple of survey coolies, as we knew it would be too much to expect to press the Wanniyas again into our service.

SUDDENLY THERE WAS A DEAFENING ROAR, AND A TAWNY STREAK SHOT OUT OF THE CAVE

Coming to the spot, we saw the glittering beauty challenging us from the gloom. With a hatchet I began clearing away what remained of the thicket at the entrance to the cave. Moorcroft was standing behind me, while our superstitious coolies kept at a respectful distance.

Suddenly there was a deafening roar, and a tawny streak shot out of the cave hitting me on the side of the head as I ducked instinctively, and sending me toppling over the boulders.

I staggered to my feet, dazed, to find Moorcroft on the ground with his knee buried in the jaws of a leopard. The brute grinned malevolently at me, but would not relinquish its hold, lest it lost anchorage on the steeply sloping ground it happened to occupy. This circumstance saved Moorcroft's life, for it just gave me time to get a grip of myself and recover my gun. Placing the muzzle to the animal's chest I gave it its quietus, just as it was about to spring on me. The coolies had vanished imagining demons were loose.

Luckily the boss was not seriously hurt. His thick corduroys had saved him with only a few scratches.

Thoroughly shaken, we waited some time undetermined whether to pursue our investigations or obey the importunities of our terrified coolies. But when the shock of the adventure had passed, we found it had only served to spur the spirit of adventure in us. So, after a short rest, we resumed our activities, but this time better prepared for trouble.

To assure ourselves no other beasts lurked there, I fired my rifle into the tunnel. The only answer was a flurry of bats, some few of which escaped outside to flutter blindly in the sunlight.

Soon we had cleared the cave mouth sufficiently to enable Moorcroft to use his mirror to advantage. The beam of light he reflected revealed the passage to be cluttered up with rubbish.

Over-riding his scruples on my behalf and the vehement expostulations of my coolies, I now began crawling into the cave. I wormed myself along, clearing a passage as I went, and dragging after me my breach-loader charged with ball and heavy shot.

I must have penetrated about a dozen yards when I became conscious of a purring, snarling sound that came from a recess on my left. I found, as I had expected (for the leopardess I had killed was in milk) two leopard cubs a few weeks old. Not big enough to show fight, they growled protestingly and scratched. Soon I had them both out by the scruff of their necks, in the safe-keeping of Moorcroft.

Determined to see this thing through to a finish, I re-entered the cave. I wriggled along foot by foot over fallen stones, heavy dust, and occasional ant-hills, always on the *qui-vive*. Here and there the stones that lined the channel had fallen in, all but obstructing my way.

Now I had progressed beyond the beam of Moorcroft's light and was in absolute darkness, except for the glimmering brilliance of the gem before me. Bats flitted about making quaint unearthly noises ; the foetid smell of them and their accumulated droppings made the hot still atmosphere of the tunnel absolutely stifling ; my heart thumped in my ears, my limbs trembled, for the place seemed eerie and bewitched ; there was a sense of impending doom ; as I grovelled painfully along, every now and then I stopped to listen, for I could see nothing.

Suddenly, from within a couple of feet of my face there came a menacing hiss ; and, even as I felt the blood surge through me in a blush from head to foot, involuntarily I recoiled, just as a heavy thwack on the ground told me a snake had struck—and missed by the fraction of an inch. I slid back and stayed motionless, for I could hear the reptile blowing as it swung poised ready to strike again. Thus we stayed awhile. Nothing happening, very slowly I reached out for my gun and, pointing it where I thought the snake to be, fired a barrel of shot.

The reverberation in that confined space nearly split my ear-drums and set the pulses of my head hammering agonisingly. A legion of bats beat a tattoo about me, like malignant sprites of a strange underworld. The smoke of my shot suffocated me, and induced a paroxysm of coughing which, lying as I was with my mouth close to the ground, raised the powdery dust and made me choke the more.

I could hear the faint insistent shouts of my companions outside ; but what they said I neither heard nor cared.

Gradually, the bats resumed their claw-holds, and I my senses. I strained my ears, and hearing no hissing, began moving quietly forward again, groping ahead with quivering hands. I touched the cold sleek form of a snake and recoiled, but stirring no sign of life in the object, I dragged it aside and moved on, but not before reloading the spent barrel.

There before me glowed the lustrous gem more vivid and mocking than ever. Nothing could hold me back from it now. Ignoring caution, I wriggled nearer and nearer as rapidly as the obstacles I thrust out of my way would let me. In a smother of dust and sweat, and with my heart pounding against my ribs, I panted on, feeling the excitement of it would kill me.

Now I was within a yard of my prize. I stretched a trembling hand hungrily towards it. My fingers closed on it, and gripped—no solid thing, but merely a handful of water ! I withdrew my hand, and as the ripples played there danced before my eyes the ruby more taunting than ever.

I laughed a hollow mirthless laugh, and a grim echo replied, when I realised that the phantom I had chased was but the reflection of a shaft of sunlight, through a minute crevice in the bund, on a little pool ! No wonder it was only visible during certain hours. Its glimmer was due to the ruffling of the water's surface by the stir of the imprisoned air caused by the flitting of bats that homed there in plenty.

I made my disillusioned way painfully back, dragging out into the light of day two things :—One was what felt to my groping hands like a potsherd in the far end of the cave ; the other, the snake my gun had shattered. The latter turned out to be a seven-foot cobra of great age, almost white, with its eyes blinded by membranes—a circumstance to which I owed my life. Had it been otherwise, I too, like Vela, the husband of Bevini, might have been drawn out dead with no mark to show how I had met my fate.

The other object I had brought out proved to be the parietal bone of a human skull—then was I reminded of the tale of the Vedda woman immured alive as a sacrifice to a vengeful god.

It is now almost forty years since the events I have faithfully recorded here occurred. I often wonder whether that "ruby" still shines in that dark depth.

The History and Conditions of the RODIYAS

By ANDREAS NELL

THE Rodiyas, outlawed in Sinhalese times and even in the present times, treated as an inferior caste by every other caste, originated from a separate tribe of hunters, who immigrated into Ceylon in the retinue of the Bo-tree from Magadha. The "Mahavansa' tells (Chap. xix, verses 2 and 3) us of the " the hyena and sparrow-hawk clans," which are explained in India to mean hunters and bowmen. Their services were to gather white wild flowers for offering at the services to the Bo-tree, to prepare toddy and jaggery, and to supply dried venison. Two sections of the clan, the Ranghawadiya and the Wayali-pediya, gathered the wild flowers and performed services at the temples and Bo-tree. A third section prepared the toddy and jaggery. This *pediya* once gained kudos and privileges by making white sugar-candy from the syrup of the jaggery palm, which so pleased the king that he granted them permission to wear hat and jacket, though only of bark, and to carry a cane-staff, their headman being allowed to deck his jacket with "gold." The fourth section, who provided the dried venison for the royal household, were the Rankot-pediya. One of these hunters and a royal princess were the cause of the ban from Sinhalese villages and the outcasting which has been the unfortunate fate of their descendants for nearly 600 years. The versions of the tradition, which one can gather here and there, vary slightly in some details, but all agree in the main particulars. We need only consider the two principal accounts, one short, the other longer and more widely known.

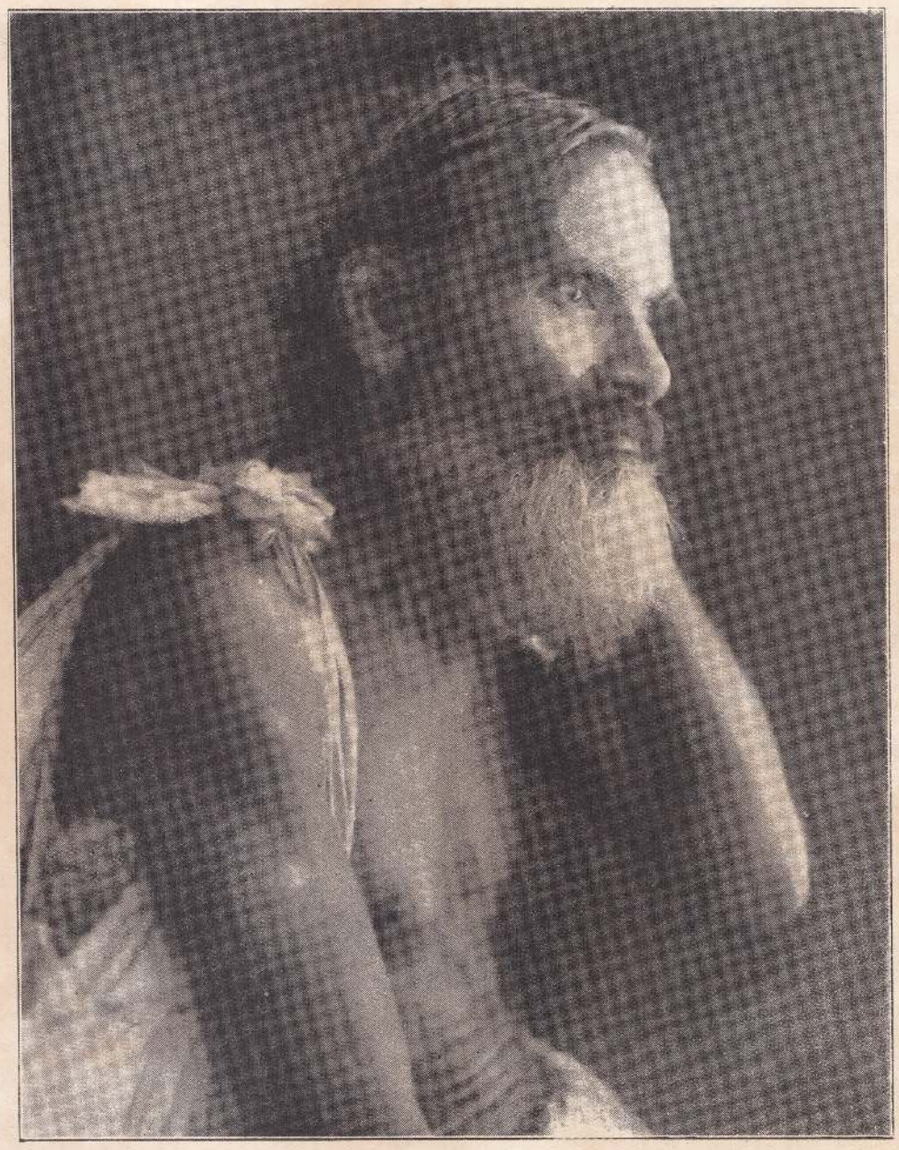
One account of the fall of the royal princess, the daughter of King Parakrama Bahu V (*circa* A.D. 1344-1359), at Gampola, is given thus in many parts of the Kandyan districts :—

The hunter, or *dada-vedda*, whose duty it was to supply venison once a week, failed to secure any, and in dread of punishment supplied the tender human flesh of a child instead. The king's daughter, Princess Ratnavalli, relished the flesh and insisted on the hunter supplying the same regularly. He did this either with her full cognizance or secretly. The young child of the king's barber was the hunter's victim on one occasion. That day, when the remainder from the royal provender was distributed, the barber and a mat-weaver (a *kinnaraya*), were the recipients. The barber found a finger-nail in the food and suspected it was that of his lost child. Though overcome with disgust, he hid the finger-nail, but the *kinnaraya*, noticing his agitation and his stopping his meal, was inquisitive and finally wrung an explanation from him. Thereupon the *kinnaraya*, taking the finger-nail to the king, boldly made a public denunciation. The king was angered but had to institute an inquiry which brought out the partnership of the king's daughter. Before the king, overcome by the disgrace, committed suicide, he ordered severe punishment. The hunter was degraded to be the public scavenger, *rodda*, and the princess, degraded still more. She was given in marriage to the outcasted hunter, and both were expelled the city. Their descendants are since known as *rodiya*, worthless. The term is offensive to them, and they used the term *gadi*, which it is usual for well-disposed visitors to use when addressing them, and which they use in speaking to each other.

The other and longer version of the tradition, as given by the late Mr. Hugh Nevill, and found more widely known, is as follows :—" At Parakrama Bahu's court, the venison was provided by a certain Vaedda archer, who, during a scarcity of game, substituted the flesh of a boy he met in the jungle, and provided it as venison for the royal household. On the following day Navaratna Valli, the beautiful and idolized daughter of the king, called the Vaedda aside and said emphatically, 'Just so, Vaedda, bring such venison again, or fear my anger.' It would seem that the princess had penetrated the horrible deception, but, fascinated by a sudden longing for human flesh, had determined to satisfy her morbid craving. Terrified at the risk of exposure, the Vaedda continued to waylay youths in the woods, and purveyed their flesh to the royal kitchen, urged on by the princess. At last the whole country took alarm at the mysterious disappearances of so many youths, and dark and sinister rumours began to circulate that a devil haunted the vicinity of the court, preying on young men whose bodies were devoured by it. At this crisis a barber, who happened to be waiting at the palace for audience, and who had to complain of the disappearance of his only son on the previous day, having been long in waiting, was given, by the servants at the royal scullery, a leaf of rice and venison curry. Just as the bereaved father was about to put the first mouthful to his lips, he noticed on his leaf the deformed knuckle of the little finger of a boy. Recognizing it by the deformity as that of his son, he at once feigned illness and a choleraic attack, and, explaining that the unwonted smell of meat after

his long fast had made him ill, he left his food untasted and crawled away. When once beyond the purlieus of the palace, he quickly spread the alarm that the king himself was killing and eating the youths of the city. On this an angry crowd collected at the palace demanding 'justice of the king' against the king. The facts then came to light."

This variant of the tradition makes the king give his daughter to a scavenger. The outcasted couple are refused any lodging by a *kinnaraya* first, by other castes later, and their descendants will not eat food obtained from any of these castes and regard the *kinnaraya* people with intense hereditary hate. Other versions in different Kandyan districts agree with these two in the ancestry of the Rodiyas; a royal princess degraded for eating human flesh, and a scavenger, or hunter degraded to be a scavenger, were the progenitors.



AN OLD RODIYA. *Photo by A. S. Lazarus.*

Subsequent to this semi-royal origin, nearly 600 years ago, the tribe have had occasional accretions of royal blood from royalties banished into their midst. The nobility have also contributed members as frequently as the king wished to inflict the most degrading penalty he could think of. The threat to inflict this punishment was effectually used by the last king against the wife of Ehelapola, the traitor Adigar who was beyond his reach. The last king's resort to this dread punishment was once the cause of enrichment of a Rodiya settlement near Kadugannawa by the addition of a whole clan of noble Kandyans. It was proved that Nahalu Mudianse, of high family and holding high office in the Temple of the Tooth Relic, had stolen a golden image of Buddha, and melted it down. The usual procedure followed the sentence passed upon him of degradation to the Rodiyas. The Rodiyas were notified and waited at the river Mahaveliganga at Peradeniya. The *duraya* gaoler and his assistants conducted the condemned to the river and bid them cross to the Rodiyas, to whom the king's decree was announced. They express sympathy and promise friendship to the newcomers; a quid of betel from a Rodiya's mouth is thrust into each woman's lips, an irrevocable adoption, and the men are driven by sticks to the settlement. In the case of the banishment of Nahalu Mudianse, his family and all his male and female relatives shared his fate; their new home was Udugalpitiya, where their descendants are still to be seen in the Rodiya settlement above the Kadugannawa-Kandy road about half a mile from Kadugannawa. Descendants of those formerly employed about the court of the Tamil kings of Kandy and some spurious claimants to such descent are those who exhibit the most extreme degrees of scorn towards these descendants of royalty and nobility.

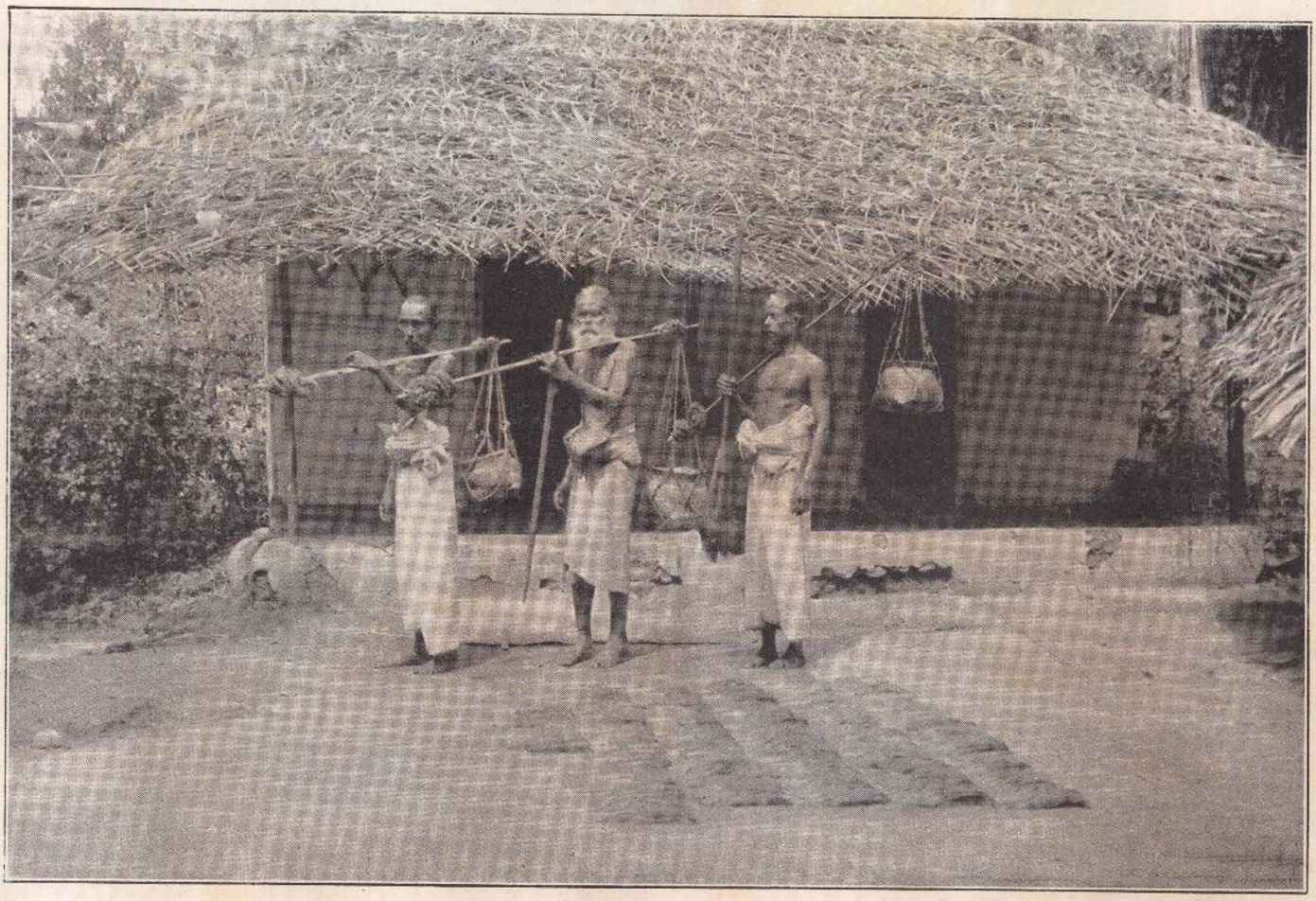
The respectable Sinhalese and the commoner folk have never been free from feelings of compassion and kindness, even in their modes of address to these people. In Uva and Sabaragamuwa provinces, their tribal name, the term *Gadi* was often used in speaking to them, instead of *Rodiyas*. To flatter and gain something, the term *Gasmanda* is used; this was the former term for the headman appointed from their body. The headman is now given the term *Hulavaliya*, which formerly was used for the Kandy gaoler's assistant (from among the *duraya* gaol-guards) appointed to convey orders to the *Gasmanda*, the Gadi headman. These changes have come out about during the period of British rule in Ceylon along with other gradual alleviations, though much still remains to be done.

Nowadays, no local bigot is able to prevent the *Gadi* folk from building huts like those of any other Sinhalese; instead of a bare upper half of the body and naked breasts, the women at first used a kerchief to cover their chests and now wear proper jackets in many districts. The old type of dwelling

was merely a piece of thatch leaning on the ground and open in front, and the path leading to the encampment was marked by a dried skin hung up as a banner. These have happily disappeared in most districts. The *Gadi* people may now cross a river in a boat or walk through a village or on the bund of a channel. This was prohibited in Sinhalese times by a royal order affectng royal villages and imitated by great lords, then adopted by the lesser nobility for the sake of prestige, finally adopted everywhere as a means of pretence to higher rank. The same downward spread of conceit marked the conduct of other ranks towards them. The kings, especially the Tamil kings (A.D. 1739-1850), for political reasons, heaped insults and wrongs upon these people so as to intensify the degradation the king could inflict upon an overbold baron or a traitor chief. The two territorial Adigars had the power of life and death over them; lesser lords would shoot or otherwise kill them without punishment; the Goigama people treated them with scorn and would not buy from or sell to them. The Adigars were severe in their judgments; in a case of robbery by an individual, the whole camp was summoned to the ferry and his fellows flogged the culprit with thorny twigs and knotty sticks, after which he was banished to another camp. If the charge was one of seizing a Goigama woman, all charged were tied in stocks and placed in elephants' tracks to be trampled upon or to die of starvation. In the case of a whole settlement being condemned the people of neighbouring villages of other castes surrounded the camp, and shot down men, women and children without compunction, then burnt all the dwellings and destroyed the place.

The changes under British rule were startling to most of the Sinhalese. In 1829 the Judge at Kandy had the offending *Gadi* people from four Kandyan districts brought into Kandy jail, confined for a few days, and then sent home, "with a suitable admonition." In 1830 the Judge, who was another gentleman, had a gang, accused of violent assault and robbery of the servant of a noble, brought in for admonishment and discharge. In another case, a landowner having stinted the allowance given free from the paddy reaped, the *Gadi* man poured it back upon the heap thus rendering it polluted and useless; the landowner was much aggrieved that he was not permitted to shoot the outcaste out of hand, but referred to a legal proceeding. In 1834, a man charged with murder escaped from the Kurunegala jail and took refuge in a "Rodiya" village. The consequences were visited upon his own village, which was strictly ostracized by its own barbers, dhobies, tomtom-beaters, etc., as well as by its neighbours. The intercession of the headmen failed even fourteen years later, and the ban was noted to exist even forty years later; but the feeling died out in time, though the death of the culprit was much prior to the cessation of the ban, and seemed to make no difference.

It is difficult to comprehend the indifference of many Sinhalese towards this cruel attitude against a tribe who can boast of royal descent and of many



A SURVIVAL OF FORMER KANDYAN LAW. THE RODIYAS ARE PERMITTED TO CARRY A LOAD ONLY AT ONE END OF THE PINGO. *Photo by Andreas Nell.*

accretions from royalty and nobility. These "outcaste" people have more blue blood than many a proud family, and the original sin of an ancestor should not be a perpetual bar to common charity. The allegations of thieving by the men and immorality on the part of the women simply show that other avenues of life have not been left open to them by those who could help them.

The demon worship which regulates much of their lives is common to many other classes of Sinhalese Buddhists. They are Buddhists as much as permitted by the neglect of the monks and the people. One Buddhist monk in the days of Sinhalese rule taught religion to this tribe, and when reprimanded by the king was brave enough to reply "Religion should be common to all." Adherence to their religion, despite neglect by the professed teachers and interdiction from the temples, has been shown when occasion arose. An instance often quoted is that of two men condemned to be hanged in 1834, who were heard repeating Pali stanzas before their execution in Kandy.

Their means of livelihood are at present restricted; the women sing and dance and perform simple jugglery for money; the men make ropes, whips of the fibre of the Ceylon wild hemp, tassels and cords dyed with vegetable dyes, and ornamental whisks: they do not make mats of the dyed hemp fibre, which the *kinnaraya* do. One source of gain is attendance at the houses of the well-to-do for money or food. These are seldom or never refused; and, when reaping of paddy takes place, any one of the tribe is always given a part, perhaps to avoid animosity, injury to the cattle in the woods or secret damage to the grain or food plots, or some witchcraft being practised against the family of the niggardly giver. There is no better provision that could be made for their general welfare than the allotment of lands for more cultivation than they have at present.

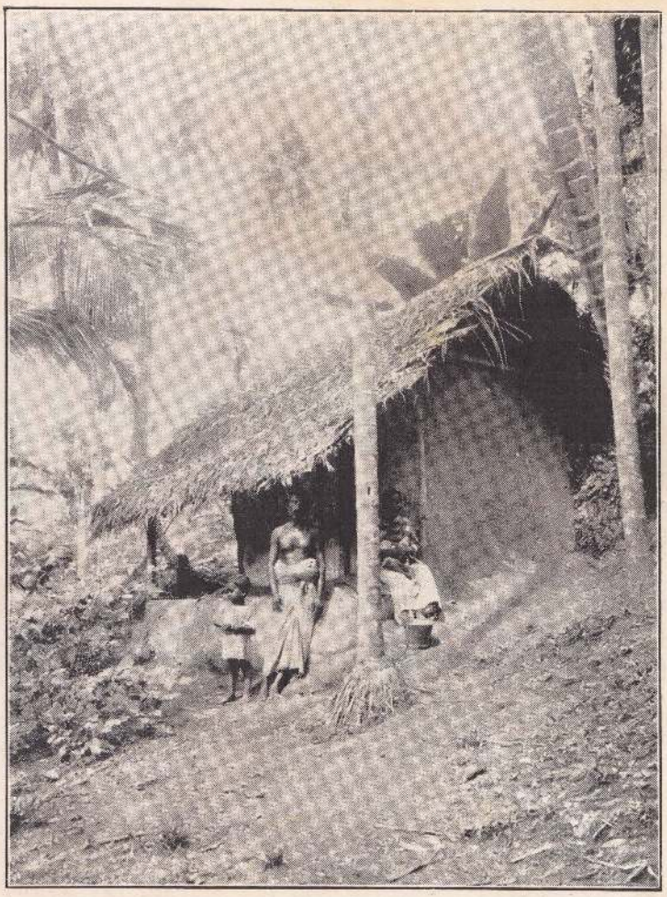
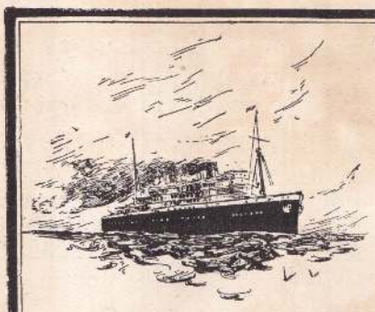


Photo by Andreas Nell.
A RODIYA HUT OF THE PRESENT DAY, A VAST IMPROVEMENT ON THE LEAN-TO OF A FEW DECADES AGO.

Accounts of these people given by early British writers such as Davy and Forbes and D'Oyly were collated from statements made by Kandyan chiefs and represent their condition fairly. The full account given by Robert Knox (captive in Ceylon, A. D. 1659-1679) was borne out by the later accounts. Knox was extremely careful in his observations and very accurate in his accounts of the interior of Ceylon. Another careful chronicler was Major Forbes, whose "Eleven Years in Ceylon" was published in 1840. The most work was by the late Mr. Hugh Nevill, whose papers in the journal he edited, "The Taprobanian," contain much about the Rodiyas of the North-Central Province. Sir Emerson Tennent was given an estimate in 1859 that they numbered about a thousand, an enumeration in 1903 gave the number as nearly 1,500, and in 1911 the estimate was nearly 1,600. To break up the settlements in which they live may destroy their state of untouchability. Certain peculiarities in their language, survival of their Indian tribalism, can be removed only by

Photo by Andreas Nell.
DR. DRUMMOND SHIELS, WHEN A MEMBER OF THE DONOUGHMORE COMMISSION VISITING A RODIYA VILLAGE.



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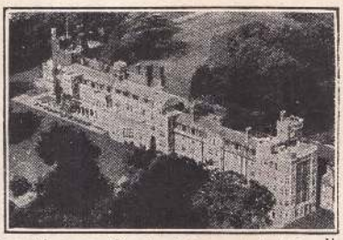

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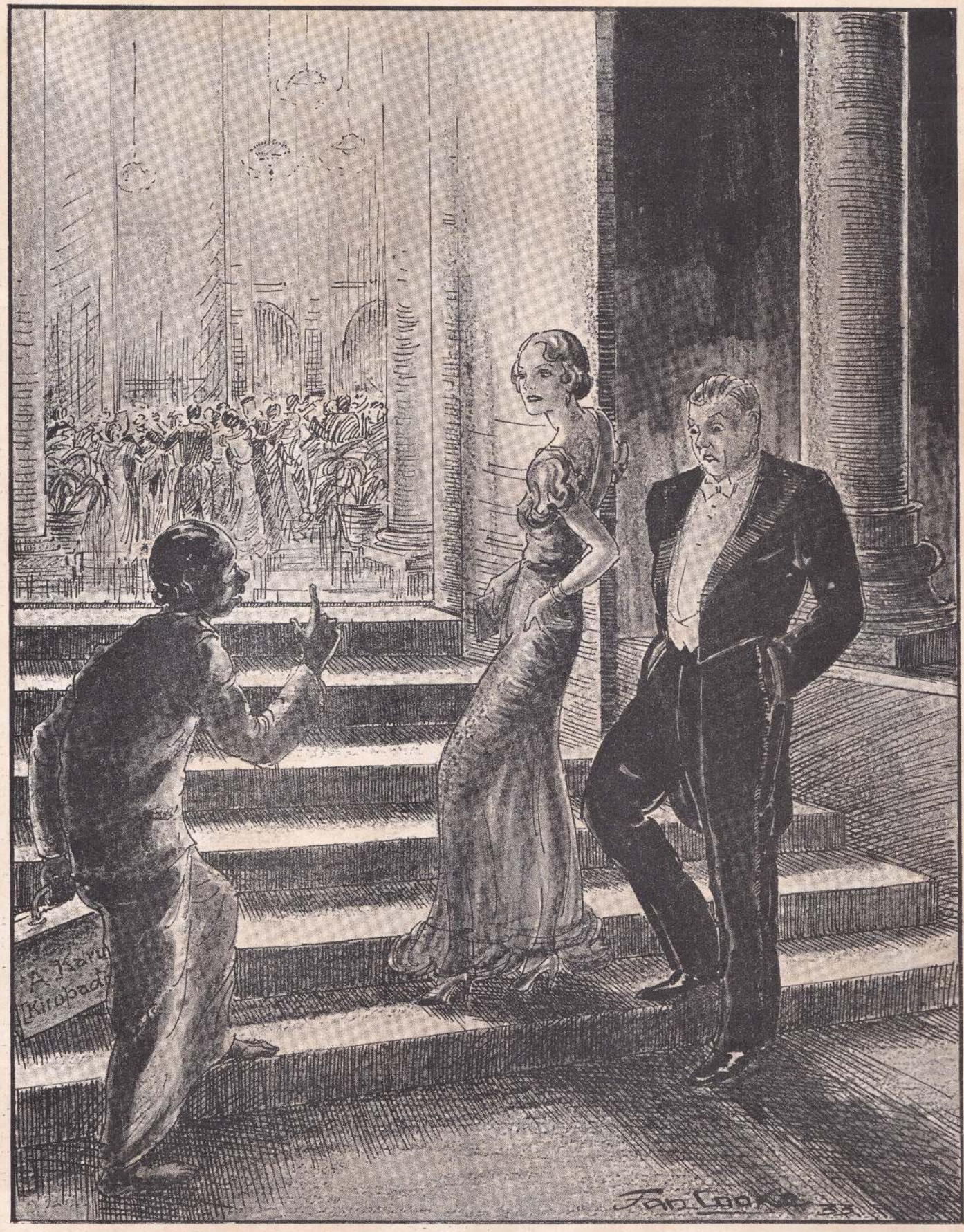
education. One of the young men in the group photographed has been educated in a bilingual school and has reached the sixth standard in Sinhalese and in English, but one swallow does not make a summer, and wider enrolment in the available government schools seems very necessary. In Uva and in Sabaragamuwa Provinces, they are not hated and harassed as in the nearer Kandyan districts, where the degradation is emphasized by the behaviour of the other Sinhalese towards them. That "untouchables" should be permitted is of course illegal in Ceylon, as well as contrary to the dictates of civilization, but social and civic privileges cannot be enforced only by laws; the customs have to be changed even if only gradually. The name Rodiya, which means "worthless," could be replaced by their tribal designation *Gadi*. Their headman used to be called the *Gasmanda*, and the *Duraya* headman, channel of orders from above, was called *Hulavaliya*. At present the people call themselves *Gasmanda*. and their own headman *Hulavaliya*. The next step to the calling of the people Hulavaliya is being taken, and the official authorities may go further and call the headman an Arachchi as in the case of other villages. The village has been always called a *kuppayama*, *i.e.*, a camp or settlement not a *gama* or village; that is in an official distinction which might be abolished along with the special name for their headman.

The restriction of the *pingoes* to a load at only one end of the pole is not enforceable by law, but dread of the anger of other rural folk ensures the continuity of this custom. That they do not have to jump off the road into the drain is a most gratifying advance in many Kandyan districts, but in remoter parts they are still compelled to do so. To move them to fresh settlements seems practicable, since they have been fond of migrating when not forcibly prevented. The group in far Kumani in the Eastern Province went from the Kandy district during the wars of the 18th century and later, and migrations from Uva to Colombo have been recent. Each generation under the British rule of freedom has made some slight advance towards liberation from the cruel conditions enforced by the edicts of the Kandy kings, but there is still a great deal to be done by the Sinhalese towards improving the conditions of life of the tribe called Rodiya, but properly to be known as *Gadi*, until the names and their implications can be abolished.

The existence of the Rodiya community, labouring under severe disabilities, was one of the considerations which led the Donoughmore Commission to recommend manhood suffrage for Ceylon, with no qualifications as to income or literacy. Among the Tamil community the Commission noted the existence of 70,000 or 80,000 persons of low caste or of depressed classes, and it was the hope of the Commission that many of the members of the inferior castes, by receiving the vote, would not only be plaeed in a better position to obtain redress for their grievances, but would also gain a new status in self-respect as possessing one of the highest privileges of citizenship.

FOR MANGLED FEET



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AN ANGEL'S VISIT TO CEYLON

BY J. P. DE FONSEKA

MY friend E. V. Lucas (the gentle-hearted successor of Charles Lamb, the angelic visitant of earth's many paradises) likes Ceylon. This is, to be sure, a perfectly valuable testimonial to Ceylon. It is also an advertisement. I do not suppose there is a better hand in the world to depict the charms of a place than E. V. Lucas. There is no more charming writer who can better convey the delectations of travel and of quaint topographical discovery.

Those who have read a certain book called *Windfall's Eve*, which E. V. Lucas wrote in 1928, will remember a dedication which runs as follows : " To Pando, a ship, which took me on an even keel to a tropical Island and brought me back with equal felicity." ' Pando ' was a transparent way of mentioning a certain shipping company who ply their vessels from London to Australia and to the Far East; the tropical Island was ours. He, it seems, wrote this book on board on the outward and the inward voyages. In between he saw Ceylon, exploring it with that acute eye for those original and commonly neglected little sights, which only E. V. Lucas possesses; so luminous are his interpretations of our human settlements, his angel eye looking gently at them through his wings. He promised a sequel to *Windfall's Eve*, and *Windfall's Eve* as a narrative of all that befell a good-hearted elderly bachelor who wins the Calcutta Sweep (in the days before Dublin) was capable of many sequels. The sequel was *Down the Sky* into which is worked E. V. Lucas's glimpses of Ceylon. Two or three hundred years hence *Down the Sky* will be one of the classic places containing reference to Ceylon in the world's literature; like Fa-Hien. But unlike Fa-Hien, it will reflect the Ceylon we know, our Ceylon.

In the later years E. V. Lucas has come to find that the winter months in England are not compatible with the best of health. He is now constrained to get away for a while from the cold, looking for blue skies and sunshine in the more equable climates. He calls himself for this reason a winter-escaper. The people in his already mentioned two novels or entertainments (as they are technically called by their author) are all winter-escapers too. His Ceylon visit was one of his winter-escapes. In his winter-escape of 1930 he saw Ceylon again, only passing through Colombo this time on his way to Java. In a letter to me he makes an affectionate salutation to Colombo. This time there was more personal commony ground between him and me, and he had been received here by my brother and sister-in-law who represented to him, he said, the friendliness with which the permanent heart of Colombo entices the passing visitor. And there was over again the sempiternal sunshine, which is our own gift from the Most High.

Now, how precisely does one come at last to select Ceylon as a desirable place to visit? In E. V. Lucas's entertainment called *Down the Sky* the thing is quite simple. The adorable Richard, who has bagged the Calcutta Sweep First Prize, must hit Ceylon somewhen. All those who draw that kind of smashing First Prize must take notice of Ceylon. The adorable Richard selects ; so much the more delicate his compliment to our tropical Island. " What about South Africa? " he is asked in the club by one counsellor. By others in turn : " What's the matter with Rio? " " What about Bombay or Calcutta or Madras? " " What about Samoa? " " Why not Cuba? " It was amid these suggestions that the Oracle among travellers (in the club) put in, " Why not Ceylon? Ceylon fills every requirement. All you have to do is to fix the passage and then cable for the right rooms at Colombo." " Are there palm trees in Ceylon? " enquired the sweep. Answered the Oracle : " Palm trees? My dear fellow, the palm is the principal tree of the Island." " And lagoons? " " There are great natural inland lakes anyway, and tanks, as the artificial ones are called, made by the kings long before our ancestors over here had begun to paint their bodies blue." So Richard settled on Ceylon. His boon companion and old friend, Jenny, Mrs. Jenny Candover, the only other character of the story and the heroine of all its continuous speaking parts, concurred. " If you are not afraid of curry," said Richard, " then it's Ceylon." " I adore curry," Jenny replied. So they came.

I wish a few of us could have joined this party of two when they came here. It would have been a new experience seeing Ceylon, which we had never seen before. It would have shown us how we had gone about all our lives in Colombo without seeing Colombo; without seeing just those familiar and everyday objects, which we do not enjoy seeing enough or don't enjoy seeing at all. E. V. Lucas is the kind of traveller who has a keen eye for those very things. With him we should have seen what exactly makes the homeliness of Colombo, we, who should be supposed on all counts to be perfectly at home in it. E. V. Lucas's readers would know how that peculiar felicity and native charm which clings to different cities have been so exactly distilled by him in the books he has written on Paris, Florence, Venice, Rome and the cities of Holland. There is a

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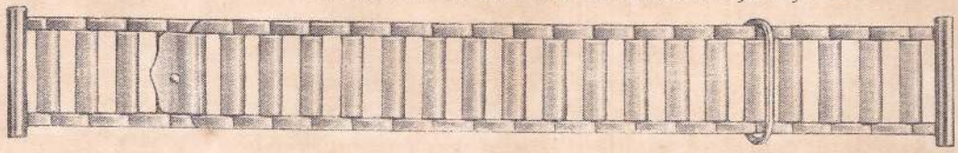

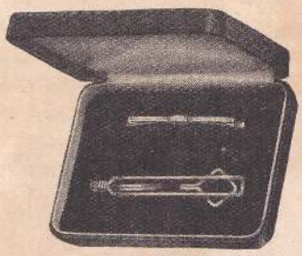

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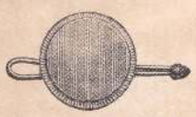

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special London which the publishing firm of Methuen have called E. V. Lucas's London. So there is a Colombo waiting for the explorer who has faith is in the harvest of the quiet eye. There is a Colombo whose hurried permanent inhabitants hardly see at all as they go about blind in their own city. The adorable Richard and Jenny, Mrs. Jenny Candover, were bound for exactly this Colombo. They were coming to introduce us to E. V. Lucas's Ceylon.

" It was to Ceylon that we were bound " (writes the pen of the adorable Richard, the narrator): " Ceylon, the Isle of Spices, or the Spicy Isle as it used to be called, because it was alleged that wafts of perfume met the mariner when still far from its shores and drew him thither by the nose." The adorable Richard, so ready to subject himself to be drawn here by the nose, continues : " To me, having now first-hand knowledge of it, Ceylon is not the Isle of Spices but the Isle of Sunshine ; for the sun, to an inhabitant of Great Britain, is an indiscribably seducing idea . . . . By five o'clock, the Sinhalese let their long, black tresses fall and glisten over their shoulders . . . . The fragrant darkness comes with swiftness, bringing with it the sinister cries of the flying foxes as they anxiously cross the sky, and the glint of the fireflies' fugitive sparks is impossible to anticipate. A magnificent sunset is the rule. That is why the Galle Face Hotel is unique : the whole pageant is punctually unrolled." With that memorably graceful word for our Galle Face, the adorable Richard plunges into a descant on Ceylon's many names in history.

" The fact that I call it the Isle of Sunshine will never be remembered, but it is a record in all the books that it is the Serendib of the *Arabian Nights*, the scene of Sinbad's adventures ; that by its first Indian conquerors it was known as the Resplendent Isle ; by the Buddhists as the Pearl on India's brow ; by the Chinese as the Isle of Jewels ; by the Greeks as the Island of Hyacinths and Rubies ; while Mahomedans 'assigned it to the exiled parents of mankind as a new elysium to console them for the loss of Paradise.' No wonder then that every day there are passenger ships in Colombo's harbour."

I do not know whether we should ever beguile ourselves into thinking that Ceylon has a noteworthy architecture except, of course, the historic ruins and the small accidental residue in Kandy. Colombo has none. But even in Colombo there's an exception, which opinion coming from E. V. Lucas, who is the author of *A Wanderer in Holland*, is specially interesting and authoritative. " The Dutch may have gone, but you find their grave, solid buildings—their churches and their forts—all along the south-west coast. There are churches in Colombo and Galle that might have been transplanted from any town in Holland, and in Colombo

MONSOON, AMBEGAMUWA—" CEYLON'S BEAUTY IS THE BEAUTY OF NATURE."

Photo by R. West.

you pass the old cemetery filled with the neglected graves of the dead and otherwise forgotten Mynheers and their wives, who lie under crumbling stones between open railings beyond which the ceaseless traffic of the city they won and lost goes for ever on. Dutch names perpetuate the old regime —such as Bloomendaal and Rosendaal." This tribute to our Dutch memorials is followed by another Colombo discovery which is simply delightful in its surprise. "Colombo is unique in my experience in combining in one building, very ingeniously and thriftily, the functions of a clock-tower and a light-house. By day you look upon this structure, which is at the meeting of four cross-roads in the thick of the town with a traffic policeman at its foot, as you would look at any clock-tower in any main street and think no more about it; but at evening, at the moment the sun's rim dips and the dark prepares to stride, the beacon springs to life and shines on, through its revolving shutter, through the night: a thing of romance." I do not know if any permanent Colombo-dweller, living or dead, ever saw our wretched, common-place clock-tower in this light. But E. V. Lucas was bound to; because of that exquisite eye he has for such things, because of the magic alchemy of his wanderer's pen, because of the angel in him. It is E. V. Lucas all over.

Then there are pictures of even quieter things. Our cricket in Ceylon: "Colombo provided me also with a new cricketing experience. I have seen in my life much cricket but never till then had I watched a man make a hundred on Christmas Eve. This was the only cricket I saw, except for desultory games on the Galle Face lawn in one of which the participators were a very small boy, in; his father, bowling and fielding anything in front; and his grandfather, with a big cigar, keeping wicket and making a unsportsmanlike use of his skirts. Could one see such a sight in England, the home of the game?" Our Ceylon crows: "I shall always remember the Galle Face Hotel for its bodyguard of crows. This, the omnipresent bird of Ceylon, differs from the crows of India and Jamaica in being smaller and bolder. He does not keep his eye on the city from the sky, as those sinister fowls ever do, soaring and watching, but descends in noisy flocks to the streets or makes his observations from roofs and window ledges. The Galle Face Hotel is entirely under his claws." Our common Ceylon cart-bull: "The real transport power of Ceylon is the bullock. This loyal creature, although no bigger than a Jersey calf at home, pulls considerable loads, to which are added their owners and often a friend or two, and keeps up a gallant trot. I saw no sign of cruelty on the part of the drivers who, having no reins, steer by digs and persuasion. Ourselves: "The Sinhalese, if not actually laughing, have a contented air and seem to be on the friendliest terms with each other. As for the children, they are always merry and never anything but of an adorable comeliness; straight-limbed, care-free children, all with shining teeth. Upon the women of the East the heat is, of course, hardest. Some splendid full-bosomed dark beauties in rich silks fluttering in the monsoon I saw, descending from cars on the Galle Face lawn. But Ceylon is a man's country. All the servants are men, all the shop-keepers, all the walkers on the roads; and all wear camboys or skirts. Never were bipeds better built to show off trousers to advantage; and none wear them. The road-menders are naked and have the most beautiful backs and shoulders. The trite companion between them and bronze statues is continually in the mind. Except for the shaven head of the Buddhist priests in the yellow and orange draperies, you see no baldness. Also you see no bowlegs. Nor are there cripples."

There are the official guide-books and tours, even for Ceylon. These are more or less a bore; and they copy from each other the usual appreciation of the ruined cities, Kandy, the Perahera, and so forth. One may be pardoned for skipping these, though even here E. V. Lucas can bring the charm of his pen to transmute the banal and the blasé. One, anyhow, prefers those vignettes drawn of less sensational but very familiar things. There is the portrait of an elephant (anonymous): "We saw him building a sea-wall somewhere between Colombo and Galle, on the south-west coast. One end of a chain was fixed to one of the great blocks of granite which had been dumped on the sands, and the other to a thick pole about six inches in diameter and five feet long. The pole the elephant grasped in its teeth and then began to pull, slowly but surely dragging the block to the wall and under the directions of the mahout, pushing it into the required position. There was no sense of effort, and no sense of display, although one felt that the elephant was conscious of its ability and proud of it. No doubt he was concentrating as a labourer, but he was able none the less to keep one of his little eyes on us to see if we were properly impressed. I shall never forget him." There is the portrait of an old Sinhalese gardener (anonymous) at Peradeniya: "A very charming old man. All the Sinhalese, whose employment bring them into a helpful relation to the foreigner struck me as being kindly and thoughtful and hospitably bent. Would Master like this? What would Master eat next? and so forth: all very soothing and gratifying. But the nicest of them all was the old gardener or guide—wrinkled and smiling, with a ragged white beard—in the Kandy Botanical Gardens, who led us from flower to flower and tree to tree and, in his gentle voice, with an admirable choice of words, described their properties . . . . The principal occupations of the attendants at Kew, if I remember right, is to prevent anything being picked; but this dear old gentleman picked everything . . . " And there is a portrait of a Ceylon blue bird (anonymous), which E. V. Lucas liked better than all our hawks and water-birds, kingfishers and fly-catchers, and so on. This special little blue thing "flew away from me as a gentleman should." So the praise of him is as follows: "I think that blue bird was the most beautiful thing I saw in Ceylon. An assurance that I could find it, somewhere, at a given hour, flying not across the sky but away from me, as a gentleman should, would make me cheerfully again face those five thousand miles of tedious waters and all the languorous fatigues of the Arabian Sea."

Perhaps the finest of E. V. Lucas's observations on our Island take the shape of two general appreciations of its natural beauty, written in his beautiful quiet prose, instinct with a quiet and beautiful poetry. "Ceylon," he thinks, "is an Island of

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many waters. There are rivers, muddy after heavy rain, which often break out into rapids and in which elephants lie in paradisal sloth and drivers bathe both themselves and their bullocks, pouring the water from a pail solicitously over the little, patient animals. There are the mountain streams tumbling in waterfalls over the grey rocks beside the road and escaping under it to splash riotously again on their way to the valley. There are the great shallow lakes, with turtles at their edges and white cranes alert for fish or frogs. There are great artificial tanks made by the old kings, where flocks of water-fowl rise up and you notice black excrescences on the surface which might be pieces of wood but are really crocodiles' snouts. There are irrigation channels for the rice fields, some of them under water, some of them squares of vivid green, and some of them mere soft mud being re-puddled by teams of water-buffaloes. There are the grassy pools beside the road where these same slate-coloured ruminants take their siesta, and lastly there are the constructed baths, each with its bucket, for passers-by who feel drier than is good for them." The second is a passage of the beauty of Ceylon mingled with the beings who have been favoured to own it for a permanent background, as they live and have their being. "Ceylon's beauty is the beauty of nature—of palm trees, mountains and rivers; of palm trees, lagoons and rice fields; of palm trees, butterflies and blossoms, and of sunsets of amazing and even frightening splendour. Now and then the white dome of a temple, gleaming amid the greenery, alights sweetly on the eye, and there are agreeable flashes of colour among the clothes of the wayfarers who walk ever along the roads. (Closing my eyes and thinking of Ceylon, that is what I see: the Sinhalese walking, on both sides of the road, slowly, gracefully, independently: walking, walking, walking.)"

That is pure idyll; this charming presentation of this Island or of ourselves, even on his very short second visit to Colombo he did not forget. He penned a note to me in London referring again to his own Ceylon discovery, Colombo's admirable magic-lantern which is at once also Colombo's clock-tower. He wrote: "A very beautiful morning just as hot as I like it. I woke early enough to see the sun rise and to watch the lighthouse say 'Good-bye' to the sea and become strictly municipal again." And he added the post-script: "Colombo is a most hospitable and warm-hearted city."

To finish off, I should add my own post-script too to my friend E. V. Lucas, the latest and most companionable and most angelic of His Majesty's Companions of Honour. This is to say: Thanks awfully. Come again.

TOILERS OF THE DEEP—LOOKING DOWN FROM SWAMY ROCK, TRINCOMALEE. *Photo by P. J. C. Durrant.*

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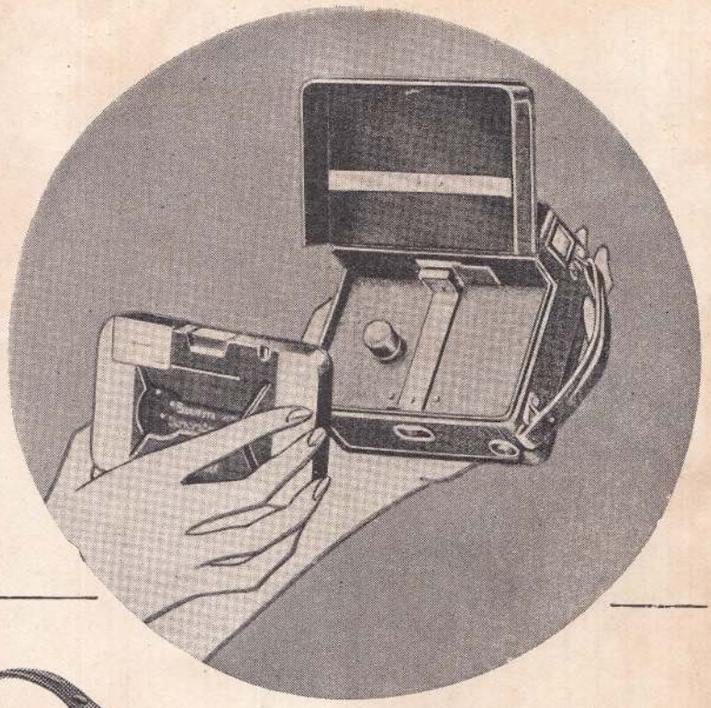

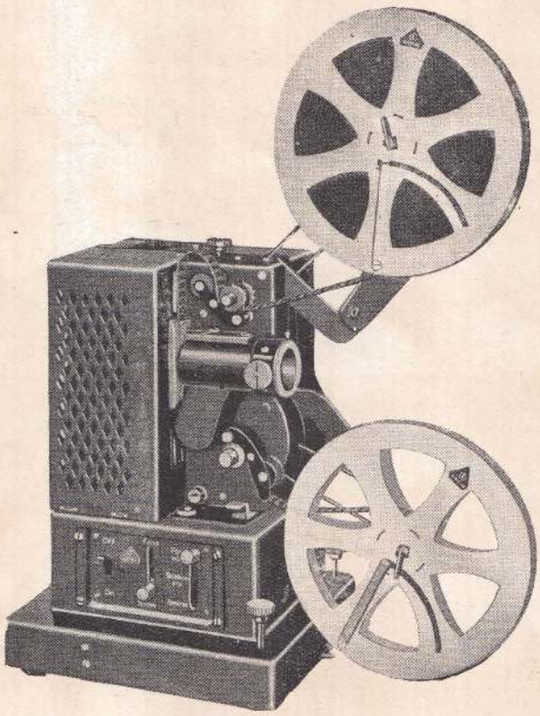

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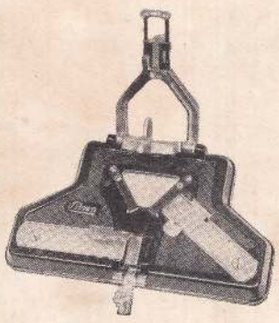

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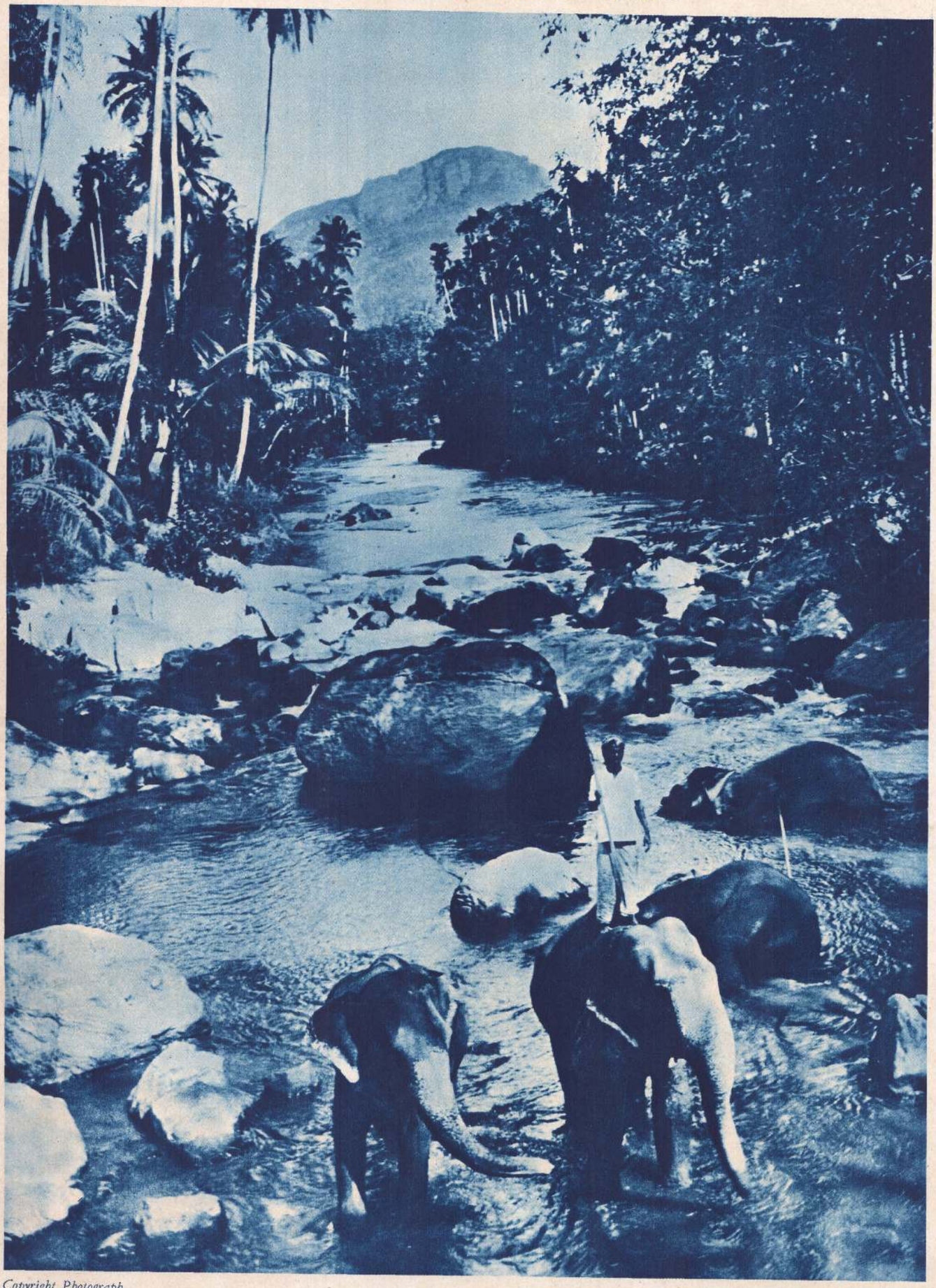

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Hope Gaster

A view from the KANDY road at HINGULA, at the foot of KADUGANNAWA PASS. The stream is a tributary of the MAHA OYA.

RESTFUL GALLE

Copyright Photograph *M. K. Nadarajah*

VICTORIA PARK, GALLE, showing the DUTCH CANAL in the foreground. The photograph was taken in front of the old DUTCH FORT.

A BREWING STORM

M. K. Nadarajah

Copyright Photograph

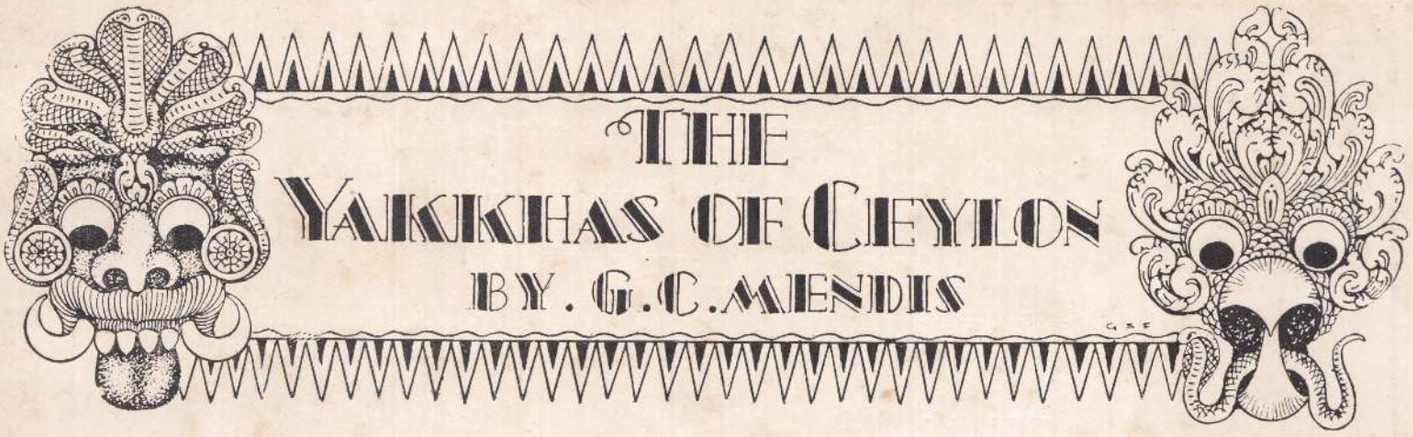
A scene at NAVALI in the JAFFNA Peninsula. The dark clouds are ominous portents of an evening storm.

SHIMMERING WATERS

A striking sunrise view of the sea at TRINCOMALEE.

P. J. C. Durrant

The evening hour on an up-country estate.



THE YAKKHAS OF CEYLON

BY. G. C. MENDIS

TAMBAPANNI, before the days of the Buddha, was not a land inhabited by men. It was a land of romance, the mysterious island, where, abandoning their celestial abodes, the yakkhas, the hosts of Vaisravana, delighted to spend their term of life. Mariners, who had been ship-wrecked on its shores, on their return related wondrous tales of strange adventures never experienced in other countries.

It is not surprising that the island was hedged round with mystery. The yakkhas, who inhabited it, were not *manussa*, human beings, as some believe, but *amanussa*, non-human beings, and belonged to the first of the upper worlds. They were invisible like all spirits, but by their magic powers they could take the form of any other being. One yakkhini was wont to appear with the face of a mare. Others, assuming the forms of comely maidens, lured men into their haunts, killed them, and devoured their flesh. Yakkhas at times played also the role of protectors of men, and cast their favour on those who honoured them and offered them sacrifices.

One of them was the yakkha Cittaraja. In the month of Kattika (November) the Indian kings of old held a feast every third year. They clothed themselves in great magnificence like gods, and standing on the bank of a lake in the presence of this Cittaraja, shot in the four directions arrows painted in diverse shades of colour and wreathed in beautiful flowers.

* * * * *

THE VALAHASSA JATAKA

Long, long ago, Tambapanni was the dwelling place of yakkhinis, and Sirisavatthu was their chief city.

Once a ship was wrecked near this island, and the five hundred merchants and their chief who travelled in it, succeeded in reaching its western shore.

At this time the yakkhinis were walking along the coast from Kelaniya to Nagadvipa in search of prey. When they saw these men they did not wish them to run away finding that this was not a land where men lived. To dispel all fears they caused the merchants to see cattle and dogs, and men ploughing their fields. They themselves dressed beautifully, and, carrying children on their hips and accompanied by a band of maids who carried food, they approached the men.

After a few words of greeting were exchanged, the yakkhinis offered the merchants gruel and rice, and the latter, who were famishing, partook of the food, little thinking that they were being entertained by cruel yakkhinis.

When the repast over, and the men were resting, the yakkhinis made friends with them, and questioned them as to where they dwelt, where they had come from, whither they were going, and why they had come there. The merchants replied that their ship was wrecked and for that reason they had sought refuge there.

"O merchants," said the yakkhinis," our lot is not better than yours. Three years ago our lords departed in a ship. They have not returned, and are probably dead. Stay with us, sirs, and we shall be your wives."

The yakkhinis then won the hearts of the merchants with the wiles and charms of women, and lured them to their city. The men, whom they had made their husbands earlier, they bound with magic chains, and cast into the prison-house. The chief yakkhini made the leader of the merchants her lord, and five hundred yakkhinis took the five hundred merchants for their husbands.

That night when the merchants had fallen asleep, the yakkhinis rose, slew the men in the prison-house, and devoured their flesh. When the chief yakkhini returned after this dreadful deed, the chief merchant, who awoke, embraced her. He found her body cold, and understood at once that she was a yakkhini and had just devoured human flesh.

The next morning the chief merchant, when he went out to wash his face, told his companions that they had taken as wives not women but yakkhinis, and that they must escape immediately from their clutches, as otherwise when other men came to the island they would be killed and devoured. Half the number agreed, and fled with the chief merchant. The rest were loth to leave their beautiful wives, and in course of time were killed and devoured by the yakkhinis.

* * * * *

The ancient Sinhalese knew this tale, but the *Dipavansa*, their oldest chronicle, though it gives the story of Vijaya and his landing in Ceylon, does not mention that he met any yakkhinis on his arrival. This is as it should be. The Buddha had come to the island years before the landing of Vijaya, expelled the yakkhas, and settled them on another island called Giridipa.

THE EXPULSION OF THE YAKKHAS FROM CEYLON

On the full-moon day of Phussa (January), eight months after his enlightenment, the Buddha left Jambudvipa, and came to sanctify the island of Lanka. He knew that here his doctrine would shine in glory and that the yakkhas, who inhabited it, had to be driven out to make it a place fit for the dwelling of men.

At that time there was a great gathering of yakkhas in their usual place of meeting, the delightful Mahanaga Garden, twenty-four miles long and eight miles broad, which lay on the right bank of the Mahaveli Ganga. The Buddha came here, and stood hovering in the air over their heads and above the place where the Mahiyangana Dagoba now stands. To frighten the yakkhas he produced rain, storm, and darkness, and they in fear begged him to release them from those terrors.

"I will banish this fear and relieve you from your distress," said the Buddha. "Give me a place where I may sit down."

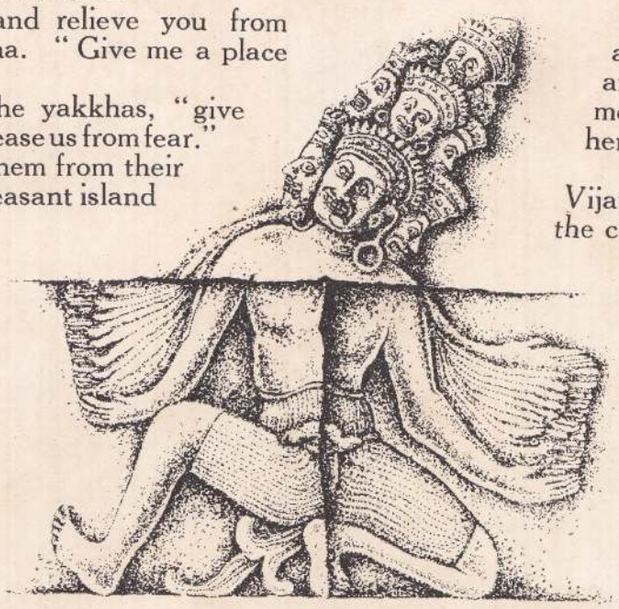
"We, O Lord," replied the yakkhas, "give you even the whole island. Release us from fear."

The Buddha then freed them from their terror. Next he caused the pleasant island of Giri to come near, and when he had settled the yakkhas on it, he made it return to its former place.

* * *

In spite of this legend the chance for weaving a romantic tale was probably too tempting. Before long the story of Circe-like Kuveni took shape, and was included in the *Mahavansa*, the medieval epic of Ceylon.

* * *



RAVANA.

VIJAYA AND KUVENI

Vijaya, the first king of Ceylon, was the eldest son of King Sinhabahu of Lala, and he and his seven hundred followers were banished by Sinhabahu from his kingdom on account of their evil ways. Leaving their country in a ship, they wandered for some time finding no place of refuge on the coast of India, and at last reached the unknown shores of the island of Lanka.

Soon after they disembarked a yakkhini appeared before them in the form of a bitch. As dogs are found only in a place where there are people, one of Vijaya's companions followed it hoping to find a village. Before long he came to a pond, and here seated at the foot of a tree was Kuveni, the mistress of the yakkhini, spinning like a woman-hermit.

The man, who was weary, bathed in the pond to refresh himself. Then when he was about to depart, Kuveni stopped him. "Stay, thou art my prey!" she cried.

Kuveni, according to her habit, wanted to devour the man, but she did not find it possible, as Vijaya and his followers each wore a magic thread. She, therefore, seized him and hurled him into a chasm. The rest of the seven hundred came in turn, and she did likewise with them.

Last of all came Vijaya. Seeing the woman-hermit he said, "Lady, hast thou seen my men?"

"What dost thou want with thy people, prince?" she replied. "Drink thou and bathe."

As she knew his rank Vijaya at once understood that she was a yakkhini. Drawing his bow he caught her in the noose about her neck. Then seizing her hair with his left hand, and lifting his sword with his right, he cried, "Slave, give me back my men or I slay thee!"

"Spare my life, sir," replied Kuveni. "I will give thee a kingdom, and do thee a woman's service and any other task that pleases thee."

Vijaya was afraid to trust her. But she, to satisfy him, took an oath, and restored his men to him. To fill their hungry stomachs she gave them rice, which had been in the vessels of the merchants who had been devoured by her.

When the meal was over, Kuveni assumed the form of a lovely sixteen-year-old maiden and adorned herself with ornaments, and Vijaya, attracted by her beauty, made her his wife.

Not far from this place, where Vijaya landed, lay Sirisavatthu, the city of the yakkhas. That night all the yakkhas gathered there to celebrate the wedding of the daughter of their chief who dwelt at Lankapura.

Kuveni, who feared that she would be killed for allowing men to make their habitation in Lanka, suggested to Vijaya to destroy all these yakkhas and seize for himself the kingship of the whole island.

"How can I slay the yakkhas?" asked Vijaya. "They are invisible."

"I will utter a sound wherever they are," replied Kuveni, "and whenever you hear my voice, strike. By my magic power your weapon will fall on their bodies."

Kuveni took the form of a mare, and Vijaya, riding on her, struck with his sword whenever she made a sound. Having thus slain the yakkhas he wore the garments of the yakkha-king, and bestowed the other raiment on his companions.

After this the followers of Vijaya settled down in Lanka. When they had fully established themselves they wanted to consecrate Vijaya king. But this could not be done as a maiden of a *kshatriya* or royal family had to be consecrated queen at the same time. Messengers were therefore sent to Madura in South India to ask for a royal princess, and the king of Pandya consented to give his daughter in marriage to Vijaya.

Vijaya could not have Kuveni as his wife any more; for no princess would agree to live under the same roof as a yakkhini. "Go thou, dear one," said Vijaya, "leaving the two children behind. Human beings are ever in fear of non-human beings. I will spend a thousand pieces of money and make thee an offering."

Kuveni was seized with fear. She knew what reception awaited her at the hands of her own kith and kin whom she had helped Vijaya to destroy. She reminded him of the services she had rendered and of the son and daughter she had borne him. At last when Vijaya paid no heed to all her pleading and tears, she took her son and daughter, and left for Lankapura.

When she reached the city, she entered it leaving the children outside. The yakkhas, who saw her, thought she came to spy on them, and one killed her with a blow of his hand. The children, who heard what had happened, fled to the region around Adam's Peak. There the brother took the sister to wife, and founded the Pulinda, the race of hill-men.

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Once the yakkhas came to be associated with Vijaya there was nothing to prevent them from playing an important part also in the legend of Pandukabhaya.

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PANDUKABHAYA AND CETIYA

Pandukabhaya was the third king of Ceylon after Vijaya. Long before his birth it was predicted that he would slay his uncles and ascend the throne of Lanka. The uncles tried their utmost to change the course of destiny, but the yakkhas saw to it that what the gods had decided should not be disturbed by the interference of man.

Even when Pandukabhaya was in his mother's womb, the yakkhas Citta and Kalavela kept guard over him. After his birth Pandukabhaya was taken in a basket to Dvaramandalaka by a serving-woman to prevent him from being slain by his uncles. The princes, who had gone hunting, met her on the way, but before they could discover that the basket contained the little Pandukabhaya, Citta and Kalavela caused a boar to appear, and made them pursue it leaving the woman to continue her journey.

Later when he was fighting against his uncles he took possession of the fortified camp near the huge rock, Dimbulagala, called Dhumarakkha Mountain in ancient times and Gunner's Quoin to-day. When he was residing there he heard that a mare with a white body and red feet wandered about the Tumbariyangana Pond, which lay close to his camp. This was really a yakkhini called Cetiya, who lived on the rock and often assumed this form.

One day Pandukabhaya saw her, and, desiring to capture her, followed her with a noose. When she noticed him, she fled without making herself invisible, and he pursued her. She circled the pond seven times, plunged into the Mahaveli Ganga, and returning ran seven times round the rock. Once more she went three times round the pond, and plunged into the river near Magantota.

Here Pandukabhaya seized her by the mane. At the same time he caught a floating palm-leaf feared by the yakkhas. The palm-leaf transformed itself into a sword on account of his merit, and he thrust it at her to kill her. Cetiya begged him to spare her life, and promised to conquer the kingdom for him. Pandukabhaya accepted the offer. Mounting her, he went up the rock, and lived there for four years.

In the war that followed Pandukabhaya rode on her, and followed her counsel. When he became king he placed the yakkha Kalavela on the east side of the city and the yakkha Cittaraja at the lower end of the Abhayawewa. The slave-woman, who had helped him and was re-born as a yakkhini, he settled at the south gate of the city. Cetiya, in the form of a mare, he placed within the royal precincts. He made annual offerings to these and other yakkhas, and on festival days he sat with Cittaraja beside him on a seat of equal height. Gods and men then danced before him, and the king passed the time merrily.

* * * * *

In India too the belief that Ceylon was inhabited by yakkhas or rakshasas, a term which was often interchanged with yakkhas, persisted, and this led to a fresh episode being added to the story of Rama.

* * * * *

THE DASARATHA JATAKA

Dasaratha, king of Benares, had by his chief queen two sons, Rama and Lakshman, and a daughter called Sita. The chief queen died while these children were yet young, and the ministers raised another queen to her post. The new one very quickly won the love of the king, and after some time succeeded in obtaining from him the promise that he would appoint her son Bharata his successor instead of his eldest son, Rama.

After that Dasaratha, fearing the jealousy of his queen, banished Rama and Lakshman; and Sita, unwilling to stay behind without them, accompanied them into exile. When the old king died, Bharata refusing to be king went to the Himalayas, and offered the kingdom to Rama. Rama returned, ascended the throne, and made Sita his queen.

* * * * *

THE RAMAYANA AND LANKA

Valmiki chose this story, which was well-known in ancient India and Ceylon, as the subject for his famous epic, the *Ramayana*. The story of the abduction of Sita and of the war that followed was probably invented to make the tale more suitable for an epic poem. Sita was made the wife of Rama to fit the moral conceptions of the age, and the Deccan was made the place of their exile. Ravana, the rakshasa king of Ceylon, was chosen for the villain, and the mysterious island of Lanka itself for a part of the setting.

* * * * *

When Rama and his wife, Sita, were wandering in the forests of the Deccan accompanied by Lakshman, Sita was seized by Ravana and carried away to Lankapura in Lanka. Rama, with a large army, went to rescue her, and was assisted by Hanuman, the leader of the monkeys, who, in order to help Rama to cross to Lanka, set up the line of rocks now called Adam's Bridge. In the war that was waged by Rama, Ravana and many of his rakshasas were slain, Lankapura was razed to the ground, and Sita was taken back to India.

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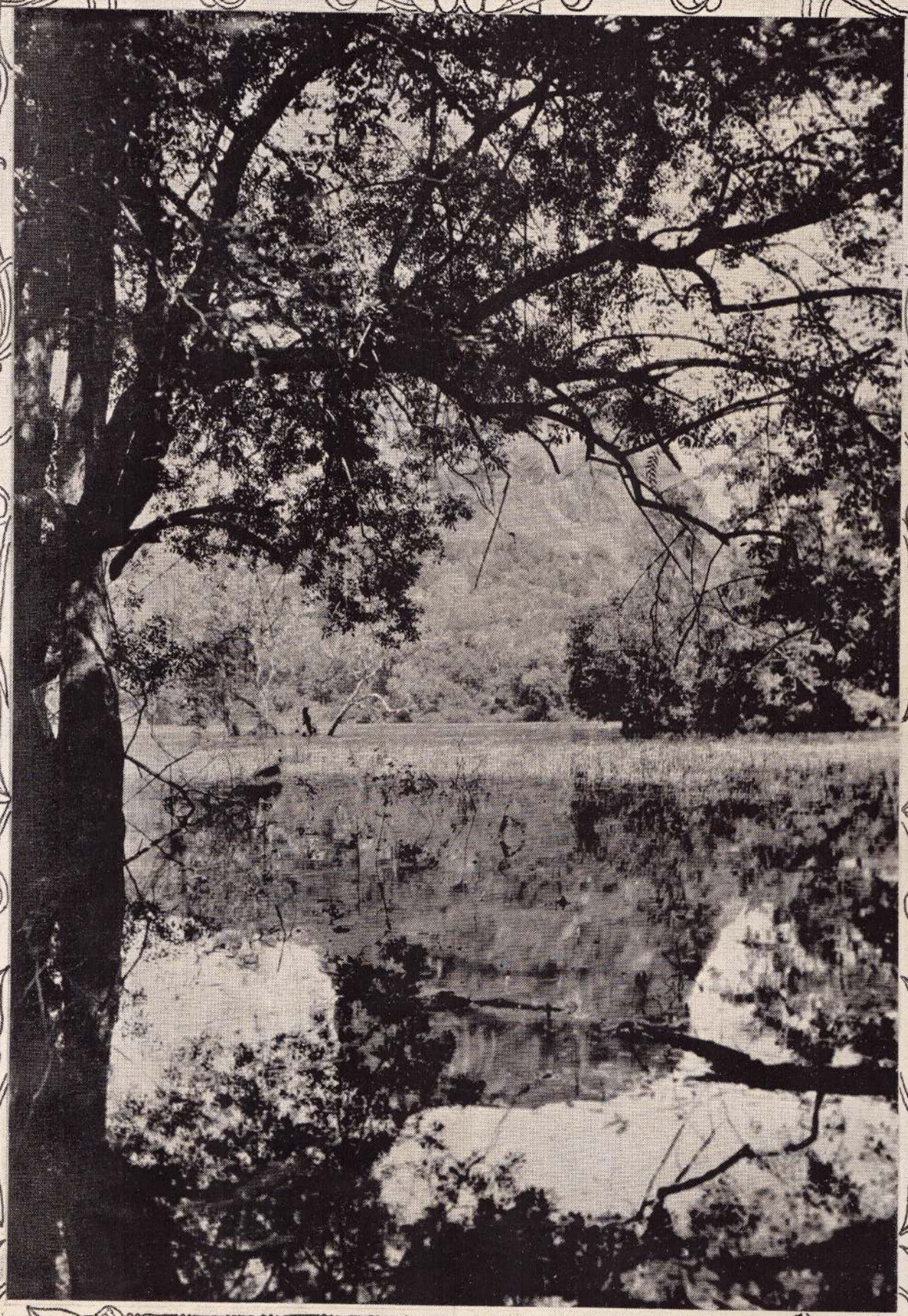
When Ceylon was occupied by the Sinhalese, and the island came to be known as Sinhaladvipa, instead of Tambapanni or Tamradvipa, the *Vala-*



SIGIRIYA HIDDEN AND REVEALED

PHOTO BY A.S. LAZARUS

hassa Jataka had to be adapted in India too to fit in with the new conditions. A new tale soon came into existence, and was included in the Buddhist Sanskrit work, the *Divyavadana*.

* * * * *

THE STORY OF THE MERCHANT SINHALA

"This is not a king's daughter," said Sinhala. "She is a rakshasi from Tamradvipa."

"All women," replied King Sinhakesari, "are rakshasis. Forgive her. If you will not accept her, I shall take her."

"O king!" said Sinhala, "she is a rakshasi. I shall neither take her nor give her to you."

Sinhakesari was the king of Sinhakalpa. During his time there dwelt a rich merchant by the name of Sinha, and Sinhala was his son.

Sinhala was of matchless beauty, and the father did not deny the son any pleasure that he wished to enjoy. Sinhala, however, was not content. He wanted to travel, cross the seas, and see other lands. Sinha tried to dissuade him, but finding it useless allowed him to go.

On a lucky day, accompanied by a large caravan of five hundred merchants, Sinhala started his journey. He travelled through many countries seeing towns and villages. At length he reached the shore of the sea, and alone arrived at Jambudvipa. Here he met a rakshasi, and in ignorance took her for his wife.

THE LANDING OF SINHALA

The rakshasi at first did not wish to kill Sinhala, but, urged by her companions, she assumed a frightful form and went up to him. Sinhala, understanding that she intended devouring him, drew his sword to kill her, and she in fear fled from him.

When Sinhala returned to the caravan the rakshasi followed him. She fell at the feet of the caravan-leader, and told him that she was the daughter of the king of Tamradvipa, and was given in marriage to Sinhala. When they were travelling their ship was wrecked in mid-ocean, and she was abandoned to her fate by him. She succeeded, after great difficulty, in saving herself, and followed him.

The caravan-leader spoke to Sinhala, and pleaded for her, but Sinhala replied that this was not a king's daughter but a rakshasi from Tamradvipa, and narrated the story.

When Sinhala went back to Sinhakalpa the rakshasi took the form of a pretty maiden, and followed him carrying a little boy, beautiful in appearance like Sinhala. She entered the capital of Sinhakalpa, and stationed herself at the gate of Sinhala's palace. When the people, who passed by, noticed the similarity between the boy and Sinhala, she repeated the story she narrated to the caravan-leader.

This story was conveyed to the parents of Sinhala, and they asked their son to forgive her, and take her back as his wife. Sinhala told them, as before, that this was not a king's daughter but a rakshasi from Tamradvipa, and refused to have anything to do with her.

The rakshasi next went to the palace of the king. When the king heard that a beautiful woman desired to see him, he ordered his ministers to bring her before him. When she arrived, the king inquired why she had come. In reply, she complained to him about the cruel treatment meted out to her by Sinhala, and begged him to interfere on her behalf.

The king summoned Sinhala to his presence and asked him to take her back, but Sinhala refused, and warned the king against her. The king, however, was loth to send away such a beautiful woman, and in spite of what Sinhala said admitted her to his harem.

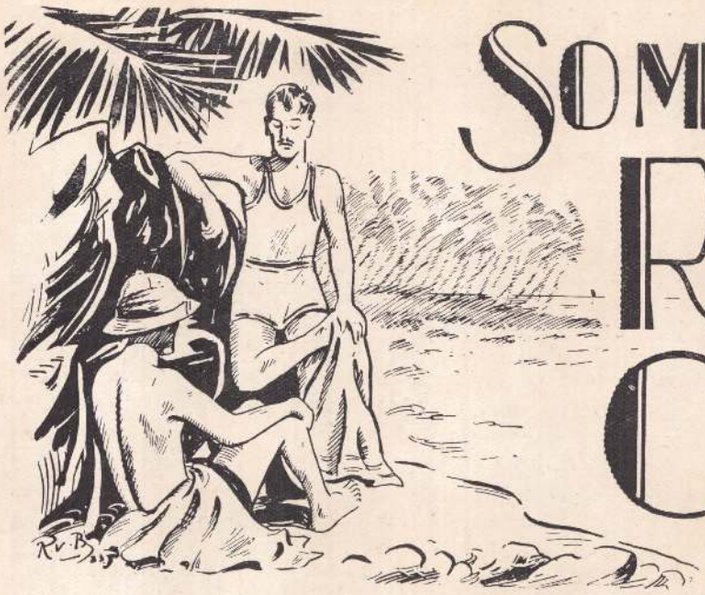
Sometime afterwards when the king and his wives had gone to sleep the rakshasi returned to Tamradvipa. There she collected her companions, came with them to Sinhakalpa, and devoured the king and the whole harem.

The next morning the news spread that the gates of the palace were not open and that birds of prey hovered over the buildings. Sinhala, when he heard the talk, told the ministers that the king and his harem must have been devoured by the rakshasis, and the ministers when they entered the palace saw only skulls and bones.

King Sinhakesari had no heir, and the people asked Sinhala to be their king. Sinhala at first was unwilling to take up such a responsibility, but yielded finally to the wish of the people when they pressed him and promised to obey him faithfully. He ruled the country with great wisdom always working for the welfare of his subjects. The country soon became prosperous and the people quite happy.

After some years, however, Sinhala gave up the government of Sinhakalpa. He collected a large army, and set sail to destroy the rakshasis who had killed Sinhakesari and the other inmates of the palace.

When Sinhala approached Tamradvipa the rakshasis collected to meet him. Sinhala and his soldiers put a large number of them to the sword. The rest of the rakshasis then submitted and begged for their lives. Sinhala granted them their request, and became the first ruler of the island. From that time onwards Tamradvipa, from the name of its first king, was known as Sinhaladvipa.



SOME PRE-WAR RECOLLECTIONS OF CEYLON

By C.W. GRANGE

SO many healthy-looking veteran Ceylon planters call at the London office of the *Times of Ceylon* and casually remark that they went out to the Island in 1869 or thereabouts that I feel quite a podian; and yet it is nearly a quarter of a century since I landed at the old Jetty and was taken into the G. O. H. by Mr. R. A. Hodges, then of Messrs. Ford, Rhodes & Church.

In January, 1911, Colombo was a much quieter city than it is to-day. Although the Fort possessed that atmosphere of bustle and worry which seems inseparable from any busy port of call, yet once outside it and bowling along in a rickshaw to the Galle Face Hotel a peaceful feeling came over one, for motor cars were few and far between. Thence along Colpetty—a narrow lane, and smelly withal—to Flower Road, beautiful then as now. This flamboyant-bedecked thoroughfare is one of the few Colombo roads which do not seem to have altered in appearance with the changing years. I was taken to the Garden Club that first afternoon, where the famous Norman Brookes from Australia had been playing in an exhibition match. The lawn was crowded, and I was soon made deeply sensible of the sartorial convention of that day, it being explained to me that straw hats, dark coats and white flannel trousers were considered *bon ton* after 4.30 p.m. "Only passengers wear topees during the evening," I was told, and, as I had ceased being a "passenger" only that same morning, I was properly impressed. I remember that some of the more senior members wore beautiful white flannel suitings of the type sported nowadays by Colombo bridegrooms at "white weddings."

The "posh" tennis-court by the lawn was then Number Seventeen, and the Singles giants of those days were Mr. "Willie" Mitchell and Mr. Steuart Hayley. In Doubles, Mr. F. F. Roe, partnered by Mr. J. B. Dufall, were the supreme pair, and, if I remember correctly, their handicap in tournaments was owe-forty!

At the time of which I am writing, Ceylon was extremely prosperous, for the rubber boom of 1910, during which the price of the commodity had touched over eight rupees per pound, had brought fortunes to many and contentment to most. There was plenty of hard work to be done, and I remember that for many weeks on end several of us never thought of leaving the office before darkness had set in, and as we had invariably begun work at an early hour and taken only a short respite for tiffin—served in the office—we were usually in a state of mental exhaustion at the end of the day. Remember, too, that punkahs, not always available, were more usual than fans, and I do not recollect any lifts in Colombo in 1911. A working day of eight hours in the tropics is equal in terms of energy-units to an eleven or twelve hours' day in a cold climate, I should imagine. Here in London I see every day thousands of City workers arriving at their offices at 10 a.m. and streaming away again at 5 p.m. These are the people who cherish the illusion, which nothing seems able to dispel, that the European in the tropics conducts his morning's work from a comfortable long chair, aided by a punkah-wallah and a gin-sling, and sleeps all afternoon "because of the heat"!

"LOOK AT MR. C . . . ," SAID ONE OF THEM, "ISN'T IT DISGUSTING. HE LOOKS AS IF HE HAS JUST COME FROM THE OFFICE"

I have long ago given up any hope of correcting this impression.

There was one feature of the social life of that day which I remember was the cause of some profanity especially in the hotter months of the year. To be invited out to dinner by any Colombo hostess automatically necessitated wearing full evening dress ; it was a solecism to arrive in a dinner-jacket unless the welcome words " short coat " had appeared on the invitation. The ladies—bless 'em —were responsible for man's painful correctness of attire, only relaxed, I believe, in post-war years. I can vouch for the accuracy of the following story :—

About twenty years ago, at one of the Saturday night dances at the Galle Face Hotel, a young Colombo man had the audacity to dance wearing a white dinner jacket and black evening trousers. I could not help over-hearing the comments of two scandalised Colombo ladies, who were watching the dancing. " Look at Mr. C—," said one of them, " isn't it disgusting—he looks as if he has just come from the office " !

The week-end was eagerly awaited. The cricket " fans " were able to look forward to seeing Frank Crawford bat and " Bill " Greswell bowl, and, although I have watched a good deal of first-class cricket since, for sheer enjoyment. good fellowship and sportsmanship, those days remain cherished in my memory.

At the Golf Club, too, the Sunday morning round was invariably followed by what might be termed a " social gathering " of surpassing cheerfulness. Those were rickshaw days, and once one had arrived at a club there was no temptation to dash off again to another club, for transport facilities were limited.

For the same reason, a visit to Bentota, Negombo, or even Mount Lavinia for a bathe was an undertaking not usually attempted by the Colombo resident except on a Saturday or Sunday. Many of us, however, who lived on the Bambalapitiya coast, had our own sea-bathing from the bungalow, the particular chummery which I have in mind being the one presided over by genial John Wall, now, alas, no longer with us. There we had a raft, christened H. M. S. " Shark," and in the light-hearted manner of those days each member of the bungalow was awarded a rank commensurate with his natatory ability, and to this day I answer to the sobriquet of " Seaman," the humblest rank of all !

It is, indeed, difficult to imagine, on looking back on those days, what we had to worry about. We were happy and care-free, the bungalow possessed a tennis-court, gramophone, piano, the sea-bathing facilities above mentioned, and we even laid out what we were pleased to term a nine-hole golf course among the coconut palms ! Peaceful during the week, Saturday and Sunday were hospitable days, and if my memory serves me correctly, seventeen guests once arrived, *suma*, one Saturday evening. We had our financial troubles, of course, but the big stores were always very obliging. It was a difficult business at the end of each month to allocate the distribution of one's stipend fairly and with discretion. I well remember how a colleague and myself used regularly to spend much

time and mental energy in apportioning our respective salaries to the various claimants. We began by writing down the salary, "x" rupees, and on the other side of the account put the claims in order of precedence. First came the bungalow *kannik* and boy's wages, then the club *kanniks*. We then struck a balance, which my friend humorously called "Profits available for distribution," and then the argument began. The various stores' accounts were produced. "'So-and-so' can have twenty chips this month"—but stay! they got

WE BEGAN BY WRITING DOWN THE SALARY, "X" RUPEES, AND ON THE OTHER SIDE PUT THE CLAIMS.

twenty last month, so it will have to go to "Such-and-Such." On the other hand, "So-and-So's" last letter of demand was found to be couched in much more acrimonious terms than that which had been received from "Such-and-Such." It was all very difficult!

While on this subject I cannot refrain from repeating a true story of "Blank," who was in a chronic state of impecuniosity. "Blank" received by the morning *tappal* a really severe letter from So-and-So's stores, threatening legal action if their long-standing account were not substantially reduced forthwith. By the same post he received a peremptory communication from the long-suffering manager of his Colombo Bank, to the effect that his unsecured overdraft could no longer be tolerated. "Blank" scratched his head. Clearly they could not both be satisfied. So he pinned the Bank's letter to the one from the stores, and sent both epistles, without comment, to the latter!

Another "credit" story may perhaps be inserted here. In those days the hotels gave considerable credit, and advances could be obtained from the hotel cashier against one's chit. The yarn is told of one who, on receiving a severe letter from a Colombo hotel regarding his outstanding account, went to the cashier of the said hotel and signed a cash chit for rupees one hundred. Armed with this hundred rupees he then proceeded to the other side of the hotel where the Secretary's office was situated, and there paid in this cash to the credit of his account!

Rest-houses, of course, were not so comparatively palatial as they are now. It was usually advisable to warn them by telegram of one's impending visit, and in this connexion I recollect that two friends, who dislike hot curries, telegraphed to a rest-house somewhat as follows:—

"ARRIVING NOON PREPARE CHICKEN CURRY NOT HOT"

Soon after arrival they sat down to tiffin and were given a curry, the first taste of which made it only too plain that here was about the hottest curry ever made in Ceylon! Furious, wiping eyes and mopping perspiring brows, they summoned the rest-house keeper. That very worthy man at once said:—"But masters ordering very hot curry by telegram!" "Produce the actual telegram," they said. It was duly brought, and it read as follows:—

"ARRIVING NOON PREPARE CHICKEN CURRY *HOT HOT*"!

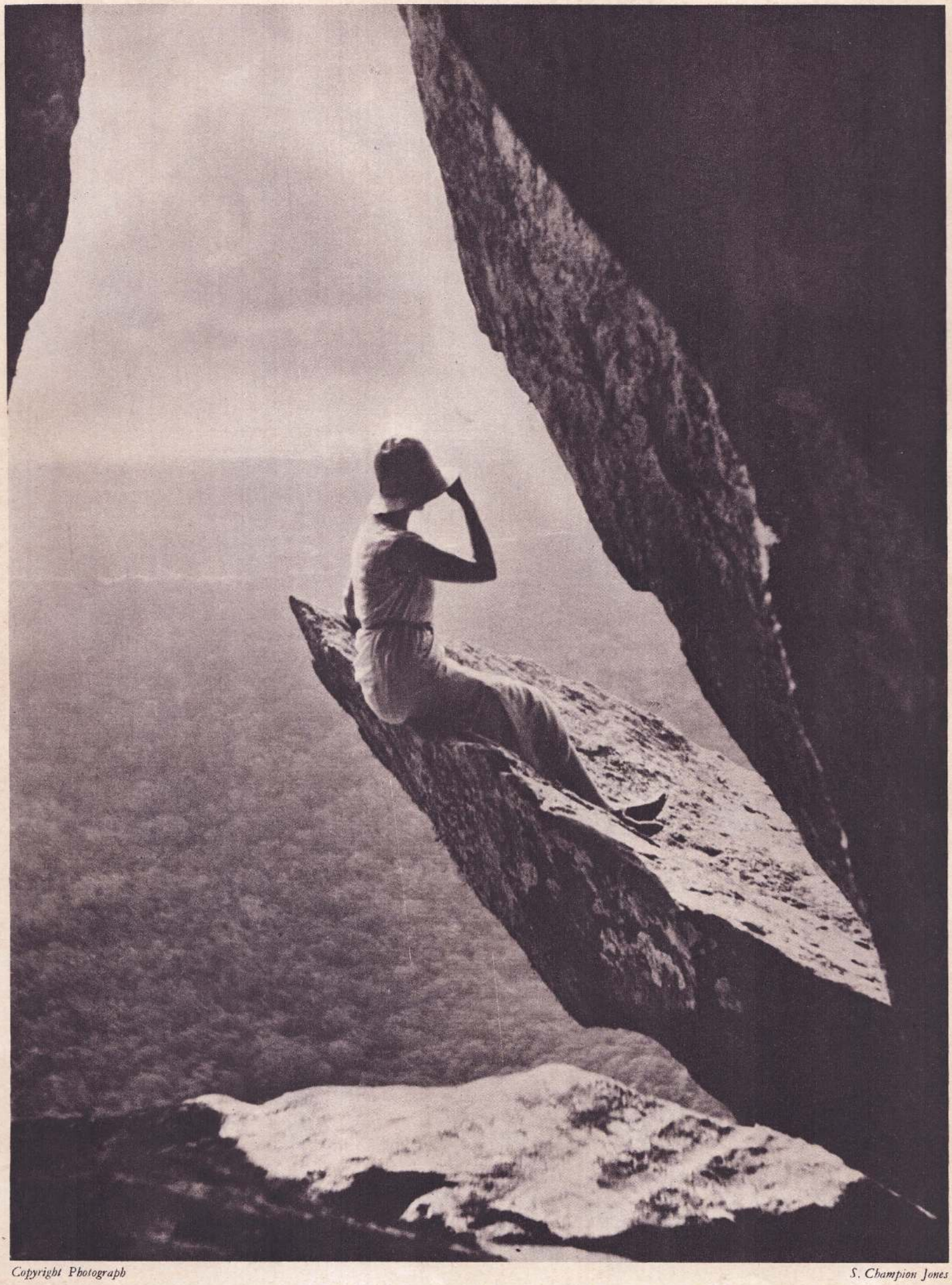
The European community in Colombo in those days was not very large, and everyone knew everyone else, a strange face immediately exciting comment and enquiry. The men, of course, greatly outnumbered the women, some of whom, I dare say, developed a "spoilt-child-complex" in consequence. I knew of one man who gave up dancing for years because a certain Colombo lady, having insisted that he should waltz despite his protests of unskilfulness, rounded on him severely at the end of the dance, and said: "You young men really ought to practise more!"

The festive seasons, as now, were August week and Christmas-tide. There was one particular bungalow where a Colombo host and prince of good fellows always gave a huge party on Christmas night. After one such party the host, in checking up stores with his appu on the following morning, found that the number of bottles of whiskey consumed was out of all proportion to the number of sodas which had been drunk. The appu's explanation—perfectly true—has gone down to history, but at the risk of repeating the story, already well-known to many readers, I will

THE TELEGRAM WAS DULY BROUGHT, AND IT READ AS FOLLOWS: "ARRIVING NOON PREPARE CHICKEN CURRY HOT HOT"!

summarise it as follows:—"Sah! about two o'clock in the morning we running out of sodas. I sending house-cooly next door bungalow asking borrowing sodas. They say they also run out of sodas. I then sending to Master Blank's bungalow to borrow, but no sodas got it. Then I telling house-cooly fill our empty soda bottles with water from tap, and serving to masters. *By that time masters not noticing the difference*!"

A GLORIOUS VISTA



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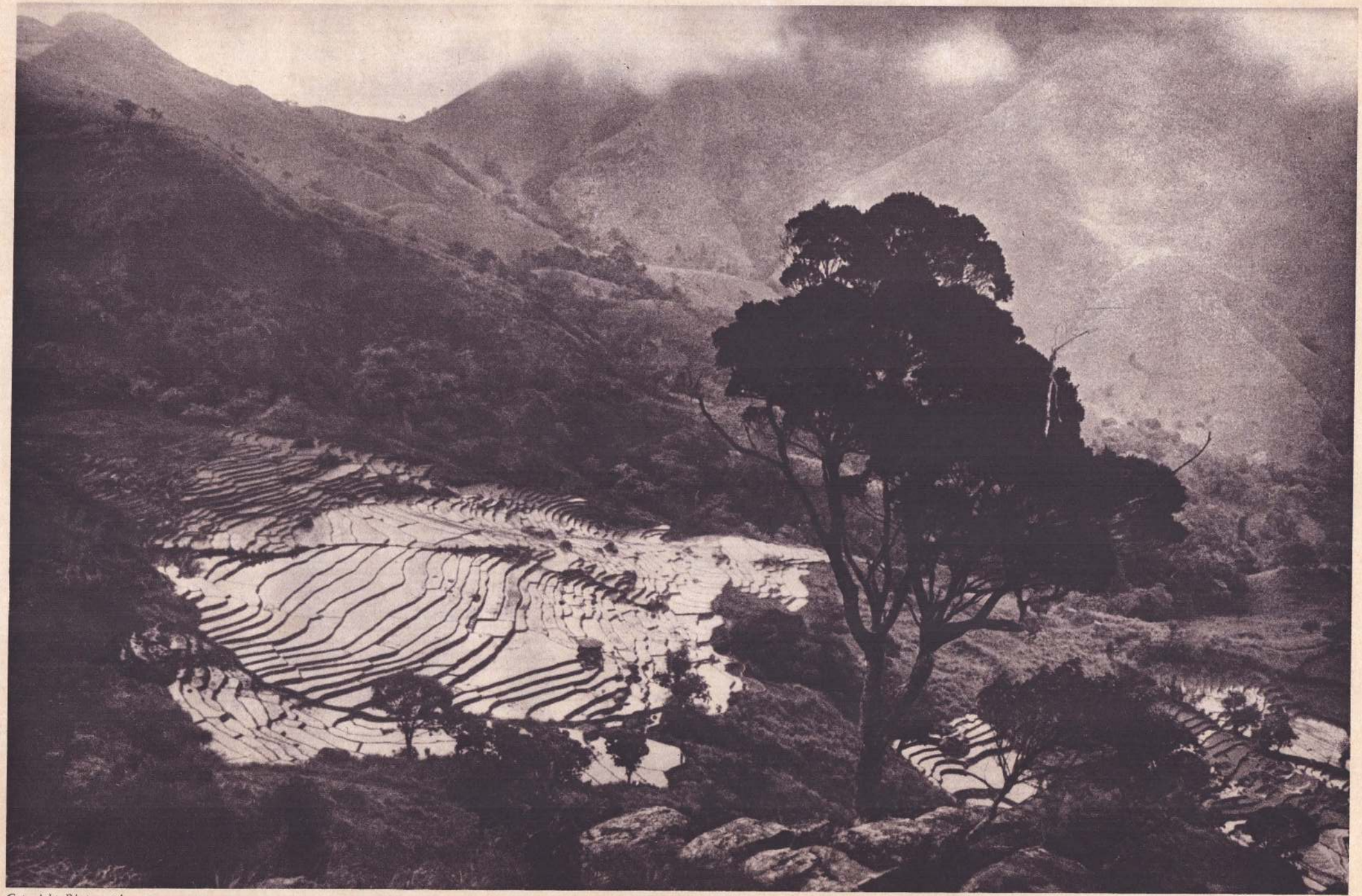
FROM THIS PERILOUS AND ALMOST UNKNOWN PERCH AT THE TOP OF MIHINTALE ROCK A MAGNIFICENT VIEW IS OBTAINED.



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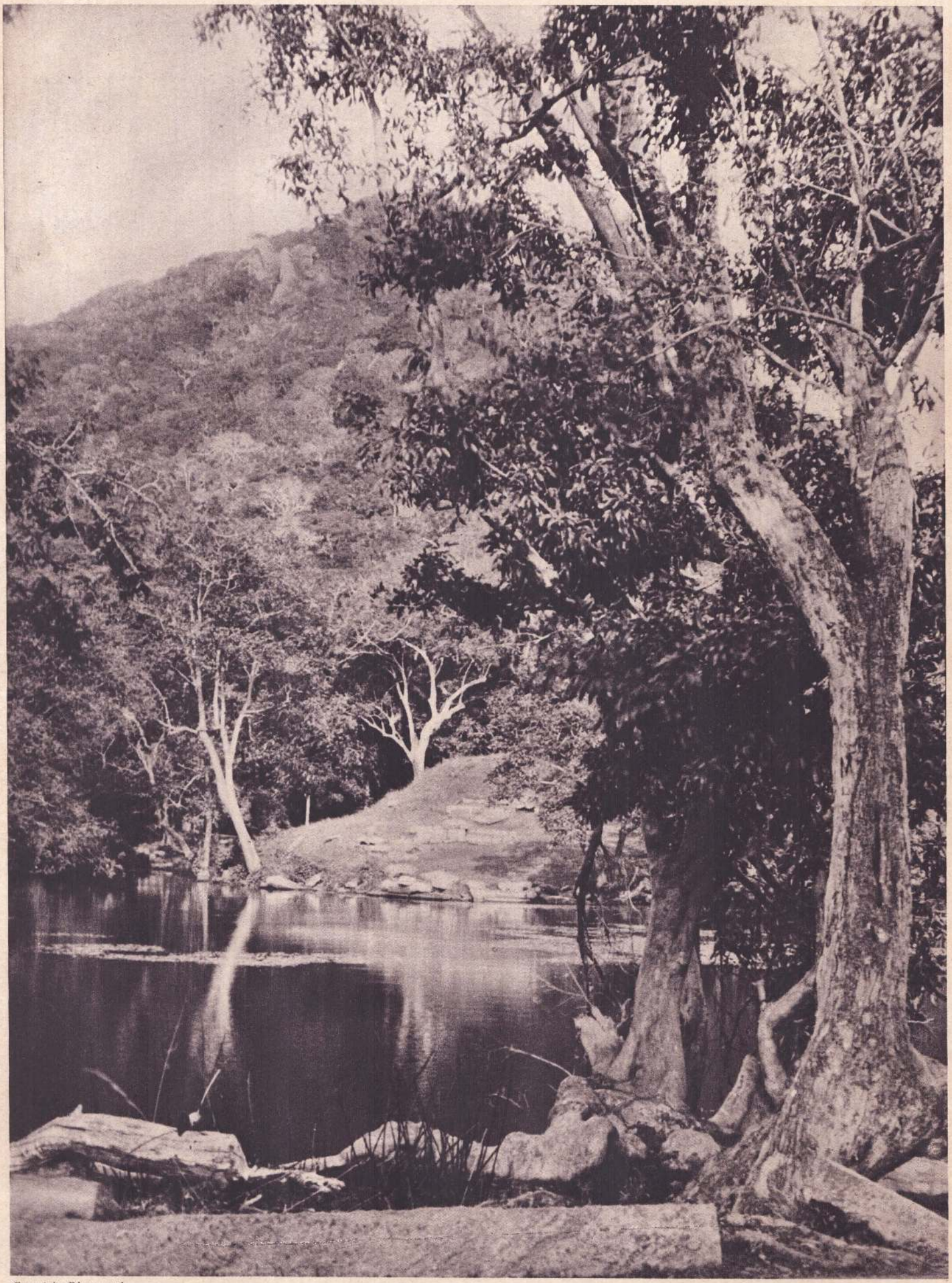
THIS VIEW OF THE RICE FIELDS NEAR MADULSIMA, WITH THE MIST CLAD HILLS IN THE BACKGROUND, PRESENTS A UNIQUE STUDY.

THE LAGOON

Copyright Photograph *G. A. Smith*

EVENING CLOUDS AND SUNLIGHT MAKE A PICTURESQUE SETTING FOR THE PALM FRINGED LAGOON AT CHILAW.

PLACID WATERS



Copyright Photograph *G. C. Mendis*

THE KALUDIYA POKUNA (OR BLACK LAKE) AT MIHINTALE.

THE PRICE OF ENMITY

by Alfred Duncan

AT sight of the visitor her long dark lashes drooped modestly, her smooth cream cheeks assuming a delicate blush. But quickly recovering her serenity, she stepped forward a pace and beamed forth radiance as she extended her hand in welcome.

"The rains have now gone, John," she said in cheerful welcome.

"Yes, Celena," was all John could say in reply. He was gazing almost spell-bound at the grace and beauty of the creature before him. Many times had they met before and they were good friends, but he had never seen her look so charming.

Celena de Silva was the daughter of a contractor of moderate means in the village of Ranastenne, and John Jayawardene was the owner of the Palwatte Tea Estate on the outskirts of the village. There had been bad blood between the fathers of the two, but from occasional meetings over a number of years a warm attachment had sprung up between them. De Silva had objected to his daughter's association with the planter, but for some months had even shown active acquiescence to the hitherto forbidden friendship. John had gone to the village to order supplies, but at the back of his mind he was half-hoping that there would also be a pleasant encounter with the girl to whom he had become so strongly attached.

"My father has gone to Kandy on business," Celena remarked. "Yes, I know, but I didn't come to talk about him."

"Oh, then you came to see me?" queried Celena, with another enchanting smile.

There was a moment's pause before John spoke, somewhat hesitatingly, but no less fervently. "Why, yes, but I have never seen you look so beautiful as to-day, Celena."

"Is that what people call flattery?" asked Celena mischievously. "Really John, I am becoming an old woman. I'm twenty-three this very day."

"Do you mean that to-day is your birthday, Celena?" "Yes, John, and this blue silk saree and all these jewels are presents. That's why I appear beautiful to you."

"Nonsense, Celena," he laughed. "I hardly noticed these things. But tell me, would you accept a birthday present from me, something old and not very pleasant-looking?"

"Oh! John," cried the excited girl. "Anything you gave me I would prize for life."

"Well," said John seriously, "I hope you will. The thing I am offering is myself."

"Yourself!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, Celena," came John's soft answer, gently taking hold of her hands, and looking into her lovely eyes. "I want you to marry me, Celena. I'm asking you to be my wife. Will you, darling?"

Slowly Celena raised her head to meet John's anxious gaze, and by the light burning in her eyes, he knew her answer.

De Silva received the news calmly and made no objection to the alliance, not that any should normally have been expected since John had ignored a vast difference in social status.

Truth to tell, De Silva was inwardly elated and, outwardly, he showed an unmistakable desire for the marriage to take place without delay. The happy couple offered no objections and the ceremony took place quietly a few months later.

Three weeks after the wedding John was enjoying afternoon tea with his beautiful bride. "Celena," he said, "something curious happened last night."

"I hope it was nothing serious?" she enquired anxiously.

"No, sweetheart," he replied, "but it might have been."

"You know I had to go to Kandy yesterday afternoon? Well, everything went off all right, so I dropped in at the King's Hotel, met a few decent fellows and decided to dine there. We spent a pleasant evening together, and it was just ten o'clock when I got into my car to return. Nothing eventful happened until I was getting near our turn-off. I had slackened speed, when suddenly my topee was wrenched from my head with terrific force. I thought my neck was broken."

"Oh! John," gasped Celena. "Did you hit a projecting branch?"

"No," he replied, "though I thought something like that had happened. Anyway, I managed to pull up, and then backed the car until the headlights showed the spot. What do you think I found? It was a huge flint stone, so big that I could hardly hold it in one hand."

"Thank goodness, you were not hurt," exclaimed Celena, taking his head protectingly in her hands.

"Quite scatheless, my dear, but not so the topee. I picked it up some yards away almost shapeless. I'm going to keep it as a memento, for it saved my life."

"Have you informed the police?" enquired Celena.

"No, I didn't want to make any fuss," he replied. "I haven't any enemies, so I came to the conclusion that the assailant mistook his man. I certainly did hear twigs snapping in the jungle by the side of the road, but it was useless to give chase."

Celena remained silent, obviously deep in thought.

* * * *

That afternoon Celena called on her father at the bungalow in the village. She had often observed a subtle mystery about him, but it had never been so apparent as now. There was something furtive about him and it was curious how he would frequently turn the conversation to the subject of her husband, only to switch over suddenly to some other topic. At last what he had in mind became clear. Coming close to Celena, he touched her shoulder. She shuddered instinctively.

"My girl," he said, with a trace of exultation, "the Jayawardene reign over Palwatte is drawing to an end at last. The time has come to strike the final blow and recover what is mine—mine, I tell you," he shouted.

"Be quiet, father," cried Celena, greatly alarmed. "Whatever are you talking about?"

De Silva extracted a small black cheroot from his pocket, and, lighting it, spoke again in a more collected voice.

"Listen, Celena. Many years ago Palwatte Estate belonged to my father, your grandfather, but he was compelled to mortgage the property. Old John Jayawardene held the mortgage, and when there was a lapse in the payment of interest, he foreclosed and got the estate for a mere song, through the aid of a rascally lawyer." Celena's father puffed his cheroot furiously and, expelling a volume of smoke, continued. "I have always been determined to regain the estate. Jayawardene died. His certificate read that it was from natural causes. Tchch! The son will pass away in like manner."

"I WANT YOU TO MARRY ME, CELENA."

Celena gasped, but standing erect and dignified, interposed, "you are now talking to a Jayawardene."

"I don't forget that," her father replied. "In fact, your marriage to that dog is part of my scheme."

Taken completely aback, Celena attempted to speak, but De Silva raised a protesting hand. "Now, girl, listen to me. I want your assistance to deal with him."

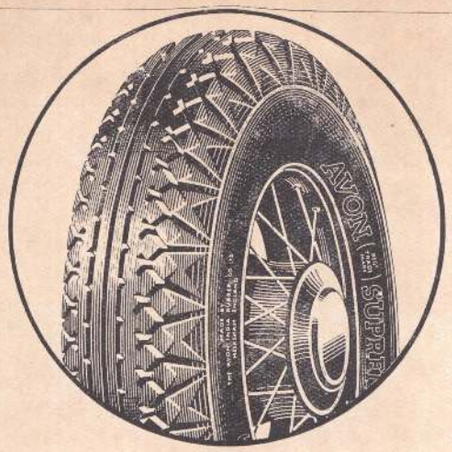
"I don't want to hear any more of your diabolical talk." Celena spoke defiance in the ring of her voice.

"Come, come, my child," said De Silva, coaxingly. "Surely you would not let me down when success is almost here?"

He drew from his pocket a small phial and held it towards her. "Now be a good daughter. Take this for your father's sake, put just one drop in his tea each day for one week, only one dr. . ."

"Stop!" shrieked Celena, "Have you gone mad? Do you think just because I happen to be your daughter that I would forsake a loving husband and bring about his death? You are asking me to murder my husband."

"Oh no, my dear," replied De Silva. "He would die naturally in his bed like his father."



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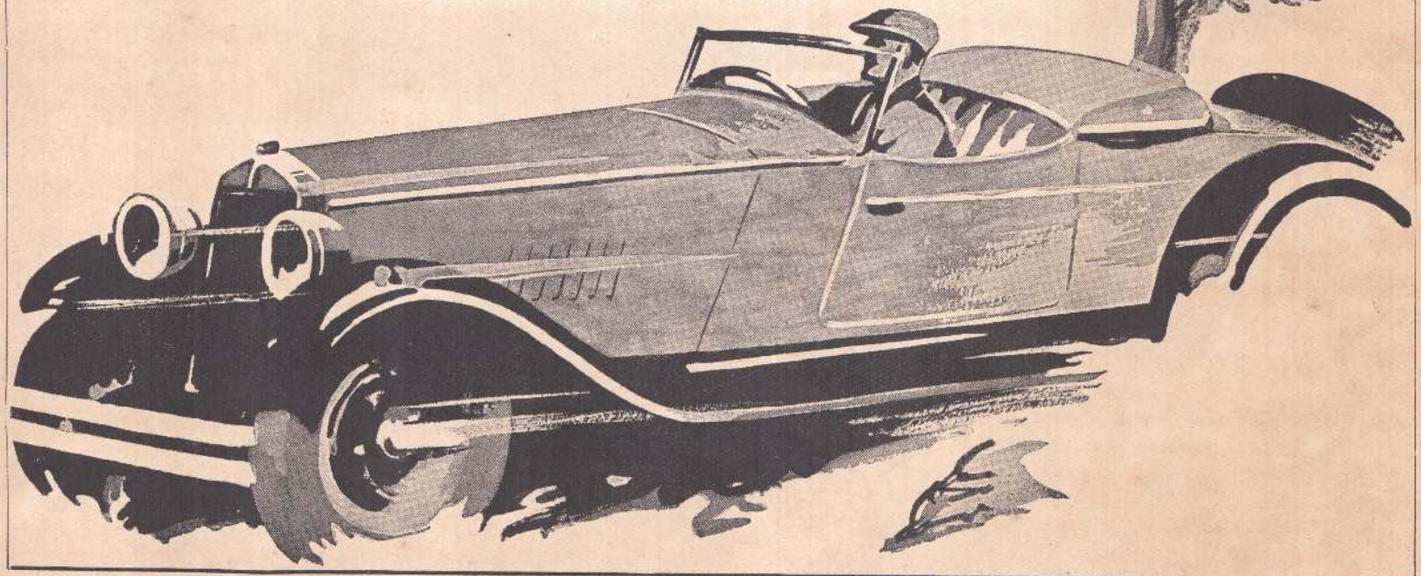

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"You brute!" Celena gasped. "I will have nothing to do with your dastardly plans."

"Very well, my beauty," he sneered. "I must rock the baby to sleep myself."

In a state of frantic agitation Celena rushed from the bungalow and did not stop till she had reached the estate road. She decided to warn John to watch her father, and on reaching the verandah told him guardedly of her father's enmity against the proprietor of an estate he considered should be his and that he would stop at nothing to secure revenge.

John laughed the story to ridicule, saying that her father could not wish to do serious injury to his daughter's husband, but, still, he was troubled by Celena's obvious concern.

* * * *

Next afternoon the eerie stillness of the bungalow was broken by the dining-room clock chiming four. Before the last stroke was finished, Arnolis came along the back verandah to waken his master. Standing outside the thin curtain which overhung the door, he called, "four o'clock, Master!" but, receiving no response, he whisked the curtain aside and entered the room. The bed was empty.

His keen eyes observed that it had been ruffled, so he thought his master had risen earlier. His attention was then attracted by a small teapoy overturned on the other side of the bed, and, stepping round to replace it, he suddenly pulled himself up, almost paralyzed with astonishment. The outstretched body of his master lay on the floor at the door leading to the dining-room.

"Master!" shouted the terror-stricken boy, rushing forward and stooping over the body, "Master!" But John Jayawardene lay still. Arnolis wasted no time in raising the alarm.

Celena rushed in, greatly distracted with the fate that had overcome her husband. She was well-nigh demented and could do nothing but sob her heart out.

It was Arnolis that had word sent to Kandy for a doctor to come at once. Meanwhile the estate apothecary was able to pacify the anxious wife by telling her that her husband was still alive.

The sound of a horn and the screeching of brakes, heralded the arrival of Dr. Mendis. Arnolis ran out to meet him.

"Well, what's the matter, boy?" shouted the doctor, jumping from the car and grasping his little bag. Arnolis tried to explain as they hastened towards the bungalow. The doctor's examination was over quickly and his face bore a curious expression as he spoke. "Was there no one here with your master to-day?"

"WHAT DO YOU THINK I FOUND? IT WAS A HUGE FLINT."

"Yes, sir," answered Arnolis. "David Master came morning time to stay long time, but Master going after tiffin. Master not to be found now."

"Well now, that's a pity," exclaimed the doctor. "Anyway, this is a matter for the police. I'll have to take your master to the Kandy hospital at once."

Willing hands executed the hastily directed orders, and the inert body was made as comfortable as possible in the big car.

De Silva had arrived at the Jayawardene bungalow soon after word reached him, but he kept in the background, a silent spectator. Soon he went to his daughter, with an air of sympathy and with soothing, comforting words on his lips. Celena's tear-stained eyes looked straight into her father's as she slowly asked. "Do you know why this happened?" Poor Celena, her grief was intense.

"Tchch"—De Silva shrugged his shoulder and raised his hands expressively. "It was fate. I do not know the cause. That will be for the doctor and the police to say."

* * *

The police held a strict enquiry into the affair and were convinced there had been foul play The doctor later reported that the victim was suffering not only from concussion, explained by a deep gash on his head, but also from the effects of poison, possibly injected into the arm by means of the hypodermic syringe that had been found in another room in the bungalow. He was receiving expert treatment at the hospital, but it was impossible to say how long the state of coma would last.

On the doctor's information, the police renewed their activities. The bungalow was combed for some clue as to the criminal who had committed the crime, and orders were quickly issued to find the whereabouts of David Jayawardene, John's cousin, who had paid what now seemed a mysterious visit to the estate just before the crime.

While John was in hospital it was arranged that Celena would stay with Dr. and Mrs. Mendis, so as to be near her husband and to avoid the embarrassing questions that might be asked her if she stayed in an hotel.

In the end the police constructed a chain of very strong evidence against David. It had been established that the cousins had not been on the best of terms, that, in fact, there had been frequent quarrels over money John had lent David and which the latter had refused to repay. David, moreover, was a neer-do-well. It was common

knowledge that he drank too much and the police readily established that he had been the possessor of a hypodermic syringe, the disappearance of which the accused was unable to explain. David came before the magistrate a sad-looking object, strongly pleading his innocence. It was useless for him to protest that he had thrown away his hypodermic syringe weeks earlier when he had decided to give up drugs. In spite of the efforts of the best lawyers to prove his plea, he was remanded to await his trial before the Supreme Court on a charge of attempted murder.

A sensation was caused when the Government Analyst informed the court that the syringe given to him for examination contained dregs of poison similar to that found in the body of the victim. The poison was that of the deadly Mapilla snake.

The motive of the crime was put forward as hatred. The pile of unpaid bills found by the police was sufficient to prove that the prisoner was desperate for money, the inference being that the accused had made a vain attempt to raise a further loan from his cousin.

At the hospital the news of John was distressing. He had pulled through, thanks to his strong constitution and moderate style of living, but his memory had completely gone. He did not know his own name, nor did he recognize his wife or anyone with whom he had been acquainted. It was decided to remove him to Colombo for special treatment.

* * *

De Silva was pondering deeply over recent events. Things had taken a different turn from what he had expected. Still, to his mind his son-in-law was as good as dead. Then Mrs. Jayawardene—he chuckled at the name—would soon have control of the estate. The rest would be easy. While he was inclined to congratulate himself, he was restless and—though he would not confess it even to himself—still a trifle anxious. He decided to seek distraction in Kandy.

In the main street Doctor Mendis came across him, unexpectedly to both. "You are just the chap I am looking for," said the doctor. "I am motoring your son-in-law down to Colombo this afternoon and I need someone—preferably a relative—to come with me. You'll come along, won't you?"

This was not what De Silva had planned for himself, but there was no alternative but to appear willing.

"HAVE YOU GONE MAD?....YOU ARE ASKING ME TO MURDER MY HUSBAND."

John Jayawardene, accompanied by Dr. Mendis, walked dazedly towards the car. He looked pale but otherwise seemed little changed. They made themselves comfortable in the roomy back seat, and De Silva got in beside the chauffeur. He looked hard at John, but there was no sign of recognition, nor any acknowledgment of Celena's approach to wish him farewell.

It was useless waiting. Mrs. Mendis waved to her husband, and led the grief-stricken girl away as the car began its journey.

The pass was cautiously negotiated, and the Low-country reached. Speed was increased, and the doctor had every hope of getting his patient to Colombo before sunset.

Ahead of them, going in the same direction, there suddenly appeared a long line of lumbering bullock carts. Attempting to get past quickly, the chauffeur accelerated. At that instant an unruly bull caused one of the carts to swing right across the road. There seemed no escape, but, keeping his head, the chauffeur wrenched the wheel round, causing the car to spin to the right. He avoided a collision, but the front wheels struck a low culvert wall with such terrific force that the car shot into the air. It made a complete somersault and dived radiator first into about five feet of muddy water.

Prompt assistance came from the carers, but John and the doctor managed to scramble out unaided, drenched to the skin and covered with mud. The helpers managed to extricate the chauffeur quickly, but the doctor had to administer first-aid.

In the meantime John was busy helping the men to find De Silva, calling out sharp instructions. The doctor started in surprise. He had not heard such rational utterances from his patient since he had recovered consciousness.

They soon located De Silva pinned under the open door of the car. At first glimpse the doctor saw that he was beyond aid. De Silva was dead.

* * *

The clock in Dr. Mendis's bungalow struck eight o'clock as two weird-looking figures, attired in misfitting clothes, quietly stepped on to the verandah.

"Wait here," whispered the doctor, as he made his way towards his wife's room. She had just finished dressing for dinner and ran out to congratulate John on his miraculous recovery. "Come," she murmured sweetly, "I will take you to Celena."

The dinner at Dr. Mendis's that night might have been festive, but the spirit of joy had to be suppressed out of respect for the dead.

When all the servants were out of the way, John Jayawardene was asked to tell his story.

"First of all," he said, making himself comfortable in a big chair. "Tell me if my cousin has been attending to the estate?"

The doctor then gave John a long account of what had happened.

"This is terrible," exclaimed John when he had heard all.

"Do you mean to tell me that David is in prison, accused of poisoning me?"

The doctor recounted briefly the events of the last few weeks.

"Good Heavens!" cried John, "what absolute rot. No one gave me an injection."

Dr. Mendis jumped to his feet. "If you are not losing your senses again, John, perhaps you'll explain? This is a very serious matter."

"I'm very sorry," said John, "but you have all been terribly misled. You see the puncture in my arm was not caused by any syringe, but by the fang of a Mapilla snake."

"A snake!" gasped the three listeners.

"Yes," continued John, "there can be no question whatever about that."

"Well, I must have slept very soundly, because I didn't feel the actual bite, but something did waken me, perhaps the irritation. I tried to rise but was held back by a sort of numb feeling. Then, through what I can remember as very sleepy eyes I saw a large Mapilla gliding out of the room. I realized then I had been attacked by the brute. With an effort I jumped out of bed, but the poison had acted, and as you know, I got no further than the door, where I crashed against a table and lost consciousness."

The doctor was the first to recover from the consternation which prevailed.

"I'm afraid I've got a very urgent duty to perform," he said, trying to control his agitation. "Dear me, that poor innocent boy must not suffer another night in prison."

* * * *

There was unbounded joy on Palwatte Estate. Pandals had been erected and a wonderful reception prepared to celebrate the return of the big Master who had been restored to health by a miracle. And there was excitement no less at the fact that a new Sinna Dorai was being installed.

David was in the centre of the celebrations. He was feted and garlanded like the others, and considered quite a hero.

In after years, Celena often spoke of her father, but never mentioned his terrible threats of vengeance. Throughout these happy years a locked secret in John's heart was the knowledge of two heavy flint stones, closely resembling one in his possession, and a phial of snake venom, found in De Silva's bedroom. Neither did he ever mention the receipt for a hypodermic syringe that had been found among the dead man's papers.

The MALDIVES

By ARTHUR H ABEYARATNE

FOUR hundred miles to the south-west of Ceylon, the blue waters of the Indian Ocean wash the coral strand of a palm-fringed Archipelago. These are the Maldive Islands, numbering some two thousand, divided into thirteen atols—a collection to delight the soul of Joseph Conrad !

On these islands, resounding to the boom of ceaseless breakers and liberally salted with their spray, live a hardy and highly contented population of 79,500 persons. They are ruled by an independent Prince who holds a miniature court and maintains a diminutive Army and Navy with tiny ships of war and batteries of cannon. Mohamed Shamsudeen Iskander, Sultan of the Maldives, is a friend and ally of His Britannic Majesty who has created him a Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George and whose Government is pledged to protect the sovereignty of the Sultan and the integrity of these islands. A yearly tribute is rendered by the Sultan of the Maldives to the Governor of Ceylon who returns him gifts in kind.

Eighty-second in the line of Sultans, who have upheld the faith of Islam inviolate through eight centuries, Sultan Shamsudeen Iskander, moving with the spirit of the times, carried through last year a bloodless revolution in his kingdom when of his own accord he granted his people a liberal Constitution establishing representative Government. It was my privilege to visit the islands on the occasion of the solemn inauguration of the new Constitution.

This Constitution provides for a Cabinet of seven Ministers nominated by the Sultan and a Legislative Council of twenty-one members elected by the People's Assembly, consisting of elected representatives from the various islands. There are twelve departments of State, administered by the Ministers who are each paid Rs. 6,000 a year and the Prime Minister Rs. 12,000. The total annual revenue amounts to Rs. 450,000.

The Army and a Navy are under the Supreme Command of the Sultan, who is the Commander-in-Chief of all the Forces. The Navy consists of eleven ships of war, manned by a total of 175 and equipped with guns up to 6-inch calibre. The Army consists of 600 men under a General and other officers after their kind, operating seven batteries and a number of field pieces. The Police Force numbers 124. There is in addition a personal bodyguard belonging to the Sultan, thirty men armed with rifles and taking their commands in English.

Since the new Constitution was initiated, trial by jury has been introduced. At the head of the Judiciary is a Chief Justice. In the one year of its existence the Legislature has passed thirty-five Bills and Legislative enactments.

Photo by Titus Perera.

A MALDIVIAN GIRL ENGAGED IN MAKING LACE.

The trade of the Maldives is estimated at six million rupees a year. The Borahs, of whom there are 250 in the islands, claim that 95 per cent. of the trade is in their hands. There are also 50 Moplahs and 50 Ceylon Muslim traders in the islands. No less than 46 firms are doing business in the islands with 52 places of business.

Nearly 60 per cent. of the Maldivian males depend on fishing for their livelihood. Enormous quantities of the dried fish known as Maldive Fish are exported to India and Ceylon, this country alone taking Rs. 5,000,000 worth a year. The returns furnished give 4,411 boats of all kinds, of which 1,730 are described as fishing boats and 1,598 as ordinary boats. Besides these there were at Malé 20 cargo boats, 4 brigs or large ocean sailing vessels and one schooner, which brings the annual tribute from Malé to Ceylon.

Next to fishing, coir-making is the most important industry. The coir of the Maldives has been famous for centuries for its light colour, fineness and strength. The Portuguese, when they ruled these seas, are said to have obtained most of the rope required for their fleets in the Indian Ocean from these islands. In 1921 there were 9,224 persons employed in the coir industry, all but ten of whom were women.

A PALANQUIN CONVEYING LADIES TO THE DURBAR HELD A YEAR AGO.

THE SULTAN ON HIS WAY TO THE DURBAR.

Maldive copra is said to be superior to Ceylon copra and to realise better prices. The system of drying the nuts is peculiar to the Maldives, as they are dried in husk and over ordinary kitchen fires. The Maldivians are also noted for their lacquer work and mat weaving, both of which display skill and artistic perception. But these arts are not encouraged as they should be, as they are not so remunerative as fishing.

Cut away as they are by four hundred miles of ocean from their nearest neighbours, one would expect to find the Maldivians a rude and semi-civilized people. But that is far from being the case. Their isolation tends to make them a people of simple tastes. Although the number of the inhabited islands is more than two thousand, yet the total population is less than 80,000. That gives an average of less than 40 persons to each island. And the largest of the Archipelago, the capital island Malé, the seat of the Sultan, is but one and a half miles in length and three-quarters of a mile in breadth. That is to say, the biggest and most important island of the Archipelago is little larger than the Galle Face, and, to make another comparison, would be comfortably dropped in Hyde Park. The population of the capital is 7,500.

Malé is a picturesque island with clean and well-planned streets, and white buildings standing up against the blue of the sea and the green of the surrounding islands. It has a natural outer harbour, where steamships can anchor in safety. There is also an inner harbour built of coral stone for small craft. Around the island is a high wall strangely reminiscent of the Galle ramparts. It is said to have been built in the fifteenth century as a protection against the Portuguese who alighted upon Malé on periodical looting expeditions. The island boasts three batteries, each manned with seven guns said to have been captured from the Portuguese.

One enters Malé as one does any other sea port—through the inevitable Customs House, only in Malé the Post Office finds convenient lodging in the same building. A more imposing structure is the Military Headquarters, a three-storeyed building dominating the whole island. This building dwarfs by contrast its neighbour, the Royal Palace, an old and unpretentious two-storeyed building lying secluded behind high walls in the cool shade of large trees.

Unpretentious as it is, once within the palace gates one becomes conscious of the sense of detached individuality associated with a Royal palace.

Photos by Arthur H. Abeyaratne.

A SWORD DANCE FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT OF DISTINGUISHED VISITORS.

Three roads, each forty feet wide and a mile long, span the island from east to west. They are crossed by many others, none being less than twenty feet in width. At most of the road-crossings there

are either public wells and bathing places or seats built under shade trees. High walls with quaint door-ways at intervals abut on these roads on either side, and behind them are well-built houses of coral stone and lime plaster. The roads of Malé are scrupulously clean, the secret being that each house-holder is responsible to the Municipal authorities for that part of the road in front of his or her house.

The people are small of stature, but are well proportioned. The men are very much like Sinhalese, but the dress of the women is distinct, consisting of a cloth worn like a skirt down to the ankles and over it a high-necked, well-fitting blouse with long sleeves. The women wear heavy ear-rings, bracelets and long chains to which are attached numerous gold sovereigns. Their hair is gathered to the right side of the head and twisted into a knot which is covered with a bit of coloured silk and falls over the ear. Except the ladies of the Royal family and the nobility, Maldivian women do not observe purdah.

Photo by Arthur H. Abeyaratne.

THE MILITARY HEADQUARTERS ARE SEEN IN THE BACKGROUND WITH THE PALACE ON THE LEFT.

The men are mostly sea-faring and fearlessly brave heavy storms in their small schooners and peculiarly built vessels called "Hodis."

Although Malé is so small in point of size and the numbers of the population, there are no less than fifty mosques and an equal number of burial grounds. The Maldivians are all of the Muslim faith, though at one time they were Buddhists. Mr. H. C. P. Bell, who once visited these islands and is an authority on matters Maldivian, thought that an archaeological survey would make it abundantly clear that Buddhist missionaries took the Dhamma to these islands. In Malé Buddhist remains have been discovered and identified. In the grounds of the Sultan's palace, there is a collection of sculptures brought from the various atols bearing the impress of Buddhism. There is no doubt that there is a strong admixture of Sinhalese blood in the Maldivians, who retain distinct marks of their Aryan origin. They speak a dialect akin to Elu or old Sinhalese.

The first Sultan to embrace the Muslim faith was Mohamed, son of Abdulla Sri Bawana Ditta Dharmawanta Maha Radun, who was a Sinhalese. He was converted in the year 1130 A.D. by Saint Moulana Al Hafiz Abul Barakathul Burbury and ever since then the Maldivians have remained true to the faith of Islam. Such island names as Lankanfuri (Lanka-pura), Vehimana-furi (Vihara-mana-pura, "City of the pleasing Vihara") and Manna-furi (Muni-pura, Buddha's City) are very significant, and point to the belief that the Maldivians were at one time Sinhalese and professed the Buddhist faith.

Malé is all flat land varying between four and six feet above sea level. As the seat of the Government it is more or less entirely residential, and there is little vegetation. The people are very cheerful and contented, and there do not seem to be any signs of depression although the Sultan in his speech at the Durbar referred to the world-wide depression and its repercussion on the Islands' trade.

The Maldives share with Bermuda one unique distinction. No motor car disturbs the stillness of these spotless streets although the motor car is not prohibited in the Maldives as it is in Bermuda. At times the silence seems weird and almost uncanny. But though there is no swift-moving traffic, the roads are wide.

Only once was a motor car seen in the Maldives. That was when the Governor of Ceylon, Sir Herbert Stanley, visited the Islands. His Excellency had his motor car shipped on the cruiser which bore him to Malé, where it was landed, used for His Excellency's transport and shipped back.

Whether after that memorable ride in the Governor's Rolls-Royce, Sultan Mohamed Shamsudeen Iskander ever hankered after a motor car we know not. If he did, like the prudent ruler he is, he suppressed the desire, even as he has strictly forbidden certain other luxuries which are taboo to the good Muslim, for instance alcohol and even scent with a high alcoholic content. Bicycles supply the quickest and commonest form of locomotion, for even carriages are not to be found there.

His Royal Highness has never left the shores of his territory and he does not consider that he has lost anything by this self-denying ordinance. He sets an example to his people of serene contentment.

Little use as the Maldivians have for modern luxuries, they are not slow to make use of the products of modern science when it serves their purpose. They abjure motor cars, but this race of hardy seamen recognize the use of motor boats, which may be seen churning the waters of the Archipelago.

Progress in other directions has been slow. Until about thirty years ago no interest appears to have been taken in developing the natural resources of the land which were being exploited by foreign traders from India. But now that the Government has passed into the hands of keen and progressive young men of education and liberal ideas, there is now a new materialistic outlook and, as a token of the new spirit, there is the promise of the early establishment of a steamship service and a wireless station.

THE ORDEAL

BY John Still

Despite the infiltration of new ideas, primitive customs linger on in Ceylon. One of these is the trial by ordeal, which of course finds no place in recognized legal procedure, but which nevertheless is occasionally practised to this day in the remote villages. Both accuser and accused are subjected to the ordeal, the principle of which is that something spiritually potent will automatically reveal their guilt or innocence. John Still describes how four persons are subjected to a terrifying ordeal, under the direction of the village Kapurala, who holds himself to be the dispenser of the justice of the God. In the European trial by ordeal of mediaeval times, the test was generally by fire or water, and usually the chances of escape were of the slightest. In this Ceylon parallel the ordeal is a terrifying vigil in temple premises, and, as things are ordained, there is little or no chance of escape for the one marked out by the God for punishment.

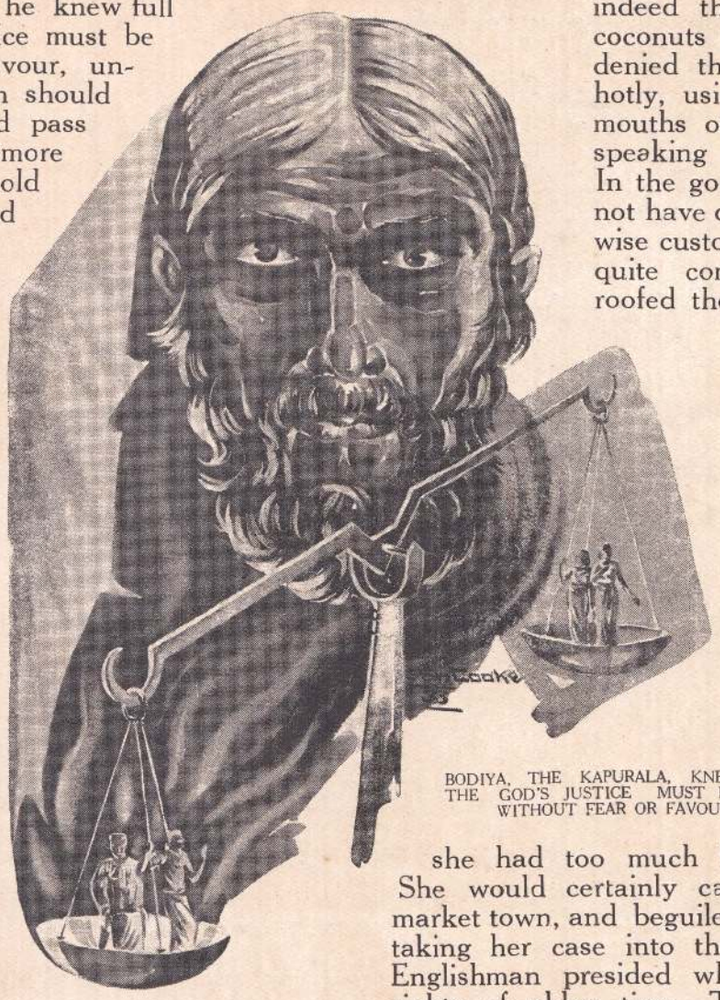
BODIYA, the Kapurala, lived in a coconut garden on the outskirts of the village. Like other villagers, he laboured in his field, singing in a high voice as he drove the hulking buffaloes round and round through yielding mud. Unlike other villagers, he had an inner life of his own, a secret priestly life, shared with none other in the world. When the time came, he would share it with his son, passing on the mysteries come down through his father from a long line of Kapuralas which reached to a day when the God they served ruled as a King upon earth. Bodiya had a wife, a garden, a field, and children like other folk; but of the temple's mysteries they saw but the outer manifestations, while he knew their inner cause.

He knew, for instance, that his God did not deal directly with mankind, smiting here or rewarding there, but acted through the agency of his servants, entering into their minds, and speaking with their tongues. And he knew full well that the God's justice must be done without fear or favour, unswervingly, lest inspiration should cease and the priesthood pass from his line to one more worthy. This had been told him by his father, and when he grew old he would tell it to his son. When he died, and his body went back to the earth, his son would own the field and the garden, the few buffaloes and the many goats, and would deal justly and impersonally as he himself had done.

In the commoner affairs of life, Bodiya was no honester than his neighbours. Why should he be? Buying and selling and bargaining were no concerns of the God's. When he rebuilt the earthen ridges that separated his field from the next, Bodiya, like other cultivators, was wont to slap down each dollop of mud on the outer side of the ridge rather than on the inner, so that in the course of many years and many rebuildings his widening plot might creep gradually outwards. He did not pay his debts readily, nor forgive those of others easily; and, more often than not, his views on mundane matters were tainted by prejudice or swayed by love of gain. Those were no affairs of the God's. They concerned him as Bodiya the man, not as the Kapurala, the priest. All men were unjust, and one could only deal with them on equal terms, or suffer injustice. But the God was different. Justice belonged to the core of his nature: perhaps it was simply another of his names. Him one could deal with only in equal value. So, while Bodiya ordinarily told as many lies as his neighbours, extraordinarily he spoke naked truth.

There was turmoil in the village. Podihami and Malhami, two brothers who worked for the Lekama, had accused a low caste woman of stealing their master's coconuts. The Lekama was a man of some wealth, who owned fields and gardens, and grew coconuts for sale. His bullock cart journeyed weekly to market, driven through the night by one of the brothers, for bulls travel better in the cool.

Kiri, too, dealt in coconuts; but having no bulls of her own, was accustomed to sell her crop to the Lekama to be carried in his cart. And now the brothers both swore that she was selling back to their master nuts that she and her daughter had filched from his garden. How else could his be so few and hers so many? Neither Kiri nor her daughter was of good repute in the village, where indeed their traffic in more than coconuts was notorious. But they denied the brothers' charge most hotly, using words unfit for the mouths of women, especially when speaking of men of higher caste. In the good old days they would not have dared to do this; but many wise customs had fallen into disuse: quite common people nowadays roofed their houses with tiles, and wore forbidden ornaments. Kiri's mother would not have dared to wear a cloth that hung below the knee, or any jacket to cover her breasts; but now these shameless women wore long skirts like their betters and decked their handsome bosoms in coloured bodices.



BODIYA, THE KAPURALA, KNEW THAT THE GOD'S JUSTICE MUST BE DONE WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR.

The Lekama was related to the Headman's wife; but it was not safe to knock sense into Kiri with a stick, for she had too much knowledge of the world. She would certainly carry her troubles to the market town, and beguile some upstart lawyer into taking her case into the police court where an Englishman presided who was unversed in the rights of olden time. That would cost a great deal of money, and might, after all, end in the public disgrace of defeat. The Lekama reckoned himself an advanced man, superior in knowledge to the villagers, but in this matter he preferred old-fashioned ways, and although he was precluded from using the most obvious, he still had resources he could fall back upon.

That night a mysterious shower of stones fell upon the roof of Kiri's house, startling a man who had no right to be there. The man fled by way of a hole in the fence, and the two women huddled together in expectation of attack. But none came, and even the bright-eyed daughter, peering out into the moonlight, could see no movement either of men or of devils among the surrounding palms. When the sun rose, and the women ventured out, stones were lying on the roof, and two tiles were broken.

"What do such people want tiles for?" snarled the Headman when word was brought of the outrage. "Thatch does not crack beneath stones." The following night more stones fell, several more tiles were broken, and in the morning the Lekama sent round a servant to demand payment for the coconuts. But Kiri had now found out who the stone-throwers were, and declared her intention of taking a case against them in the Gansabhawa, the village tribunal, which would be sitting in a few days' time.

"ON-VIEW" DAY TAMASHA!

APPU : AIYO ! AIYO ! TCHCH ! NO SALE IS HOLDING HERE. IT IS IN BUNGALOW FRONT SIDE.

A lull came in the feud, for both sides were busy preparing evidence. The Lekama had witnesses ready to swear that they had actually seen Kiri and her daughter carrying away the coconuts by moonlight. Kiri had found two men willing to testify against Podihami as the thrower of the stones. Both sides approached the President of the Gansabhawa with small gifts and large promises. He accepted all with impartiality, for he had already decided in his mind that it would be inexpedient to permit a low caste tribe of wantons to triumph over a man of the same caste as himself, and as well connected as the Lekama.

Before the case was called, practically all the inhabitants of the village had taken sides. From the number of willing witnesses, one might have supposed that most of the male population was accustomed to walk secretly abroad by night spying upon their neighbours. But of all the cloud of witnesses scarce one spoke the whole truth, and none at all spoke it without embellishment.

Bodiya, the Kapurala, stood apart from the quarrel. His house was separated from the rest by a belt of jungle, and he was a man in whom nature had implanted so strong a love of peace that, whenever he could, he stayed aloof from controversy.

Each morning that passed saw Bodiya busy in his field, and each afternoon, when the sun slanted low, he went forth alone and fetched his goats home. As a rule, they were to be found among the thorn bushes that covered the slopes of the bund, not far from the temple of his God. When they came to his call, he would count them carefully, for the great tank was infested with crocodiles, and leopards roamed along its shores.

The day of the trial came. Kiri and her friends bore witness against Podihami in the matter of the stone-throwing. Malhami and others swore that the accused was in their company at the time, playing cards in the house of a friend. The President recorded as much as he saw fit of the evidence, made a private note to the effect that the accused was certainly guilty, and reserved his judgment until he had heard the counter case. It might be expedient to decide one case for Kiri and the other against her. He would wisely bide his time.

Then the Lekama accused Kiri of stealing his coconuts. Podihami, still undischarged from the case just heard, swore positively that he had seen Kiri and her daughter Walli creep through the hedge and take eighty-four coconuts out of a shed.

"Why did he not seize us?" demanded Kiri, her bosom thrust forward indignantly.

"Because I thought at first that they were ghosts, and I was afraid."

"How did we carry them away?"

"In baskets," said Podihami, and stuck to it, though there was not a basket in the village that would hold a dozen coconuts.

"Let eighty-four coconuts be brought and weighed!" Kiri demanded. But the President intervened, and called upon the Lekama to give his evidence.

The Lekama knew that his servant had lied, and, despite careful tutoring, lied clumsily. Nevertheless, he felt certain that the woman had robbed him, and he thirsted for revenge. So brazen a creature must be punished and humiliated, or life would become intolerable. He backed up his servant, but cut down the number of the coconuts to twenty-four, and on this charge the President promptly delivered judgment against Kiri. She was ordered to pay the value of the twenty-four nuts, and a fine of five rupees into the bargain.

"It is false!" cried the woman, unsubdued by the dignity of the court. "There is nothing but oppression for the poor, and I, Kiri, challenge my accusers to trial by ordeal."

The President had not given his judgment in the first case, and now was glad to escape from doing so. Whether Kiri had stolen coconuts he was uncertain, but he was quite convinced that Podihami had thrown the stones. Yet, if he were to convict the man, his master, the Lekama, would have to find the money for the fine, and that would seem too much like a victory for that low caste trollop, Kiri. So he let the matter slip by unnoticed, while the whole village stood agape to see how the Lekama would meet the challenge which immemorial custom gave Kiri the right to issue.

"Let Kiri first pay for my coconuts," said that puzzled man, while he strove to think out his most dignified course of action.

"Here is the money!" she countered at once, laying on the President's table the assessed value of the nuts. "And the five rupees too," she added equally spontaneously. For she realised that the Lekama could not now escape. He was bound to accept her challenge, or the entire neighbourhood would hold him defeated and shamed.

The Lekama looked at the Headman, but the Headman looked out at the sky as though wondering if it would rain.

The Lekama looked at the President, but the President only looked back hard at him as though expecting an answer.

"I accept," he said at last. "Podihami and I will keep our vigil one night at the temple, and Kiri and her daughter shall watch for another."

But now another voice was heard, and the faces which had been turned towards the antagonists swung round to look at a thin dark figure which stood alone outside the court-house. The man was shaggy of breast like a bear, and his beard was tied in a knot after a fashion now grown rare. Bodiya, the Kapurala, spoke. "The ordeal must be undergone alone. It is not lawful for two people to keep vigil together."

The President rose and retired to his private room. It was out of his hands now. Kiri had paid her fine. He had evaded the difficult question of the stone-throwing. Procedure had passed from his control into the custody of the God. He was uncertain how far this delegation of his powers would be countenanced by his official superior, and concluded that his safest course was to provide himself with an immediate alibi, so he left the village hurriedly in his travelling bullock cart.

Accusers and accused returned to their houses escorted by their supporters. Knots of villagers gathered in compounds shaded by coco-palms, and the Kapurala repaired alone to the little temple on the bund to commune with his God.

The rest of the villagers were immeshed in their plots and feuds, but Bodiya knew now that

the sword-like justice of the God would shear through the tangle, and render all things sternly plain. He did not yet know what the judgment would be, but he knew how to find out; for the spirit was coming upon him as he hastened towards the temple.

Leaving the village, the Kapurala passed through a region where the trees grew to a height and magnitude unknown elsewhere in those forests; for their roots had been succoured for centuries past by the water of the mighty tank soaking through the pores of earth beneath the bund. He passed from daylight into twilit shade, and walked in silence to the foot of the vast earthen bund that contained the water stored above him. For five miles, from hill to hill, the bund curved as a bow. It had been built so long ago that the name of but one man then alive was remembered, and he was the King who had commanded the work to be performed. His name yet lived, and more than his name, for his being was now merged into the God whose temple Bodiya served. Here, by the mighty lake the King had dreamed, and planned, and brought into being, the King's justice still prevailed; but of the thousands of fields his tank had watered not three hundred acres still grew crops, and of the cities he had built not one roof remained. Bodiya climbed the steep slope and stood for a moment on the top of the bund. It was as though he stood upon a natural hill, for he could see out over the heads of the giant trees to the far horizon where sky and forest met in blue haze.

"IT IS FALSE!" CRIED THE WOMAN, UNSUBDUED BY THE DIGNITY OF THE COURT. "THERE IS NOTHING BUT OPPRESSION FOR THE POOR, AND I, KIRI, CHALLENGE MY ACCUSERS TO TRIAL BY ORDEAL."

Almost the only clearings visible in the dark woods were the fields belonging to his village a mile away. A little nearer the glittering green of palm-tops hid the village roofs. From the green and bronze sea of leaves, Bodiya turned to look upon the lake. Wind ruffled its wide blue surface and drove little waves to break upon the bund. Not far away, several crocodiles lay floating, and the waves rocked them and splashed against their sides.

Bodiya hurried along the top of the bund. The spirit was upon him, and he hastened to the place of the God. As he neared the great sluice, built of cut stones a thousand years before, he glanced at the deep water below him. Men said that an age-old crocodile dwelt there, snowy white with years, and possessed of strange powers. But none had ever seen him. So far as Bodiya knew, it was legend and nothing more. Nevertheless, the largest crocodile he did know haunted that part of the lake. It was full sixteen feet in length, but was not white, though its eyes were pale, perhaps with extreme age. Bodiya reached the sluice, and then the path he followed turned sharply down the slope till he could see the lake no more, though as he stood before the temple the lapping of waves against stones still reached his ears.

The temple was one tiny square room with a peaked roof. It was built of old narrow bricks, and roofed with old flat tiles different from those used in the village. The door was made of roughly adzed planks, black with age, and held by enormous wrought-iron hinges. In the centre of the door, a

heavy loop of iron hung from carved bosses, and served both as handle and knocker. Low walls ran out from the building to make a small porch, not roofed, but paved with slabs of stone. The temple faced away from the tank, and from the porch a man had a wide view over the forest, and might even catch a gilmpse of the distant fields. Down below, a broad channel of water ran gurgling from the sluice towards the village, but its curved course was soon lost to view among the giant trees.

Bodiya, the Kapurala, drew a key from his waist-band and opened the temple door. He passed inside and closed it behind him, but light still crept in under the eaves, and showed a room so small that when he stood in the centre he could touch the four walls with outstretched hands. The room contained no image, nor any altar. There was not even a box with a slit in the lid to receive offerings. The only box there was an ancient chest, hinged and ornamented with plates of hammered iron. It was not locked, and, stooping down, the Kapurala took from it a pair of heavy bronze anklets and clasped them on. When he moved, they clanged with harsh music, and his eyes began to look strange, as though their pupils were enlarged by a drug. From the chest, he took an old jacket made of white and red home-spun cloth, and the Kapurala thrust his bare brown arms through the sleeves, and fastened it across his hairy chest. Above his elbows, he slid several pairs of hollow metal bracelets that rattled and clashed as he moved, for iron shots ran loose inside them. In two of the corners of the room there stood long iron-bladed spears with lacquered staves, and he took one of these in either hand. Then he stood with his back to the door, his face toward the sound of the lapping waters, and waited, for he knew that the God was at hand.

Presently the Kapurala raised his arms till the spear-points touched the ceiling, and then he brought their butts down upon the stone floor with a startling clash of the hollow bracelets. His eyes were glazed. They no longer saw the plain wall of narrow bricks, but were focussed on eternity. Again the arms were raised, and again the spear-butts stamped with a clash upon the floor, and his body began to sway in a measured dance while his feet shifted rhythmically from figure to figure. The anklets clanged with a tone deeper than the clash of the bangles, and again and again the spears were raised, and shaken fiercely, till the little room was filled with clamour. Sweat ran down the Kapurala's arms and came out through the back of his coloured jacket in a dark patch. And then, quite suddenly, the spear-butts rested on the floor, and all was silent. But silent only for a moment, for then a voice began to speak. It came from the Kapurala's mouth, and yet was not his voice. Nor were the words those of his own rustical speech, but more ornate and archaic in form ; high words, such as he would comprehend but never bring into ordinary use. Nor was this use ordinary. It was the voice of the God speaking by his servant's tongue : the strength of the God that had shaken the spears : it was the wisdom of the God directing his servant's thoughts.

A hundred of the Kapurala's ancestors had owned this faculty. For half a thousand years, each father had passed on this strange gift to one of his sons, together with the field and garden appertaining to the temple. Then it had failed in the male line, but passed through a daughter to her son, and for hundreds more years through their sons, until it reached Bodiya. They, with their bodies, provided an image for their God to dwell in when he had dealings with mankind. Decked with his attributes, garbed in his livery, filled with his moving spirit, they became the God himself, each in his time and day. When the spirit withdrew, once more they were simple unlettered village folk who worked in fields.

The God was speaking through the mouth of his Kapurala, Bodiya ; and when the possession was ended, Bodiya's mind would retain the message his ears had heard.

The voice spoke on for several minutes, mentioning by name the various parties to the challenge, and dissecting their characters briefly, accurately, mercilessly, and without malice. A lawyer would have hailed it as the masterly summing up of a ruthless but impartial judge. But he would have shuddered at the sentence passed. Truth was admitted that lay quite outside the case at issue. Thus, said the voice, the Lekama was an acquisitive man, one who had added field to field none too scrupulously ; a man unbalanced by his pride. Kiri was a strumpet who had robbed a man in a town when she was young. Podihami and his brother were gamblers and deeply in debt. Walli had taken from Malhami presents he could not afford, and had then given her fleeting affection to another man. None of these things had been mentioned in court, but they were taken into account by the God, and dropped one by one into the balanced scales of justice, some on one side, some on the other, until the heavier scale dipped and came to rest. It almost seemed as though the weighted scale must have rung upon the stone-paved floor ; for, when sentence was pronounced, the Kapurala moved, his body relaxed, anklets and bracelets clanged, and the common vision of men came back into his far-straining eyeballs.

In a matter-of-fact and business-like manner, Bodiya disrobed, and replaced the emblems of ritual in the chest. He stood the spears in their corners, but the red and white jacket he spread upon the lid of the chest carefully. It was soaked with his sweat, and must be dried before being folded up, or it would rot.

Then he went out, locked the door behind him and called to his herd of goats. An old she-goat with a bell hung round her neck put up her head and listened. He called again, and she stepped out from among thorny bushes and walked towards him. The others followed, and soon the whole herd of some forty goats and kids had assembled before the temple. Bodiya counted them carefully. Then, passing into their midst, he separated one of a pair of kids from its mother, and tied a string round its neck. The little white creature tugged at the cord, but Bodiya led it out from the herd and tethered it to the heavy wrought-iron handle of the temple door. Then, with a cry, he drove the rest before him, and took the path by the channel to his homestead.

An hour later, Bodiya stepped briskly towards the village to interview the Headman.

The Kapurala had evidently been expected, for three or four village elders sat in the verandah discussing the challenge, and on Bodiya's appearance the Headman invited him to join them.

"These elders were saying," began the Headman, "that it was well the woman claimed trial by ordeal. The stone-throwing case was like to have been decided against the Lekama, and propriety was at stake; but now a judgment will be given which cannot be appealed against."

"The Gods' judgments are final as death," said the Kapurala solemnly. "We shall see," commented an elder. "I shall not be surprised if tomorrow finds Kiri far from this village. She will never face that long lone vigil in the dark."

"The Lekama is determined to go through with it," said another. "He has brought Podihami and Malhami into his house until the trial is over, for he will risk no more foolishness."

The Headman looked official and severe. "If any one of the parties fails to appear, I shall distrain his or her property in the name of the Crown."

The elders nodded sagaciously, and wished they were headmen themselves.

"Now," said the Headman, "what is the procedure, Kapurala?"

Bodiya stood up, and his body assumed the attitude it had taken when the God spoke through his lips. It was noticeable that he enunciated with precision, as one who delivers a message and strives to be word-perfect. "The trial must begin after the tenth day of the waning moon. Each in turn, the challenger first, must keep lone vigil in the temple porch, from the setting of one sun to the rising of the next. There he must stay until I come with the elders to release him in the morning. If no judgment be given by the God, then all must be held guiltless."

"But," said the Headman, "in this case there are four of them."

"Kiri, as challenger, will watch for the first night. The Lekama for the second. Then, in turn, Walli and Podihami."

"Very well," said the Headman, "in two days' time I will produce Kiri." Unless she flees, he thought to himself, when I will attach her possessions.

With formal excuse, Bodiya retired to his home. All was settled now. Fate had been set in motion.

The next morning, as soon as there was light to see by, he led his goats to the bund to browse. They scattered among the thorns, and he walked up the slope towards the temple. As he had expected, the white kid had gone. The string was broken off, and he untied the end of it from the door-handle. For a moment or two he studied the ground, but the paved floor and the smooth grass slope alike betrayed no secrets. Then Bodiya climbed the bund behind the temple, and stood gazing over the miles of rippling water. A cloud-like flock of teal came circling over the tank with whistling cries. White pelicans rocked on the waves. Far away, on an island, crocodiles lay like logs; and still further, black dots he knew must be wild buffaloes moved along the distant shore.

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For two days each side watched the other. The Lekama's party hoped that the God might deal some signal punishment to Kiri. She and Walli prayed secretly that their opponents' hearts might fail them. The village in general only hoped that no one would abscond, for that would spoil sport; but the Headman prayed that all of the antagonists might flee by night, leaving him to seize their goods in the name of the Government.

On the appointed day, when the sun touched the far rim of the forest, the Headman, the elders, the Lekama, the Kapurala, and Kiri, mounted the bund and stood in a group before the temple. The last gleams of the setting sun painted its brick walls red as new shed blood. Two crowds of villagers, severed by their rival sympathies and by the gurgling water that rushed along the channel, looked on in silence.

Then, as the sun disappeared, Bodiya, the Kapurala, stepped forward, and, standing before the locked door, addressed Kiri.

"You issued a challenge, and your opponent is here, ready to stand in your place if you quail."

The Lekama nodded, but he hoped the woman would not retreat now. Darkness was already falling, down among the trees, and the wind sang eerily through their branches. He hoped that Kiri might die or go mad.

"I am ready," said the woman stoutly.

"Then stand upon the pavement in the porch, and do not move off it until I come at dawn to see if you are still alive."

"I shall be alive," she said; too arrogantly, the Headman thought, too confidently, the Lekama. "Am I allowed to sit down?"

But the Kapurala did not answer. He signified to the Headman that the trial had begun, and that important man ordered all and sundry to depart to their homes, and followed immediately himself, with the Kapurala close behind him.

When they had departed, Kiri sat down, took a bottle from her shawl, stood it against the flanking wall, and looked around her.

Trees stirred in the breeze. Water gurgled in the sluice, and she could hear waves lapping against the stones on the other side of the bund. The voices of the villagers dispersing to their homes sounded thin and distant. Then a clarion call rang through the heavens, and a great white-headed eagle that swept by on stiff dark wing turned his head as he passed, and glared at her with an eye like a topaz. There was nothing very terrifying in all this. The branches moved again, more purposefully, and Kiri saw the black face of a monkey peer at her through the leaves. She shook her fist at him, and he fled. A jackal trotted across the open, caught her scent, and bolted. "It is they who are afraid," she said aloud.

Night fell swiftly, and, soon after she had seen so clearly the brilliant eye of the eagle, Kiri was in complete darkness. In all her life before she had never been alone, beyond the sound of human voices. It was worse than she had expected. What a variety of noises one heard up there at night. Not only owls and jackals, horrible though they were, but strange cries from the tank that might be the voices of birds, or might be . . . well, what might they not be? And that gurgling sluice, with its dark tunnel leading under the bund, sounded quite different now that she was alone. Below the bubbling and breaking up of water, there was a deeper note, a constant hum which never varied; and there was a splashing sound as though some one was bathing there. However, that was only water; and she had something better than water in her bottle. Besides, she had not stolen the man's coconuts. There was nothing an honest woman need be afraid of.

One of the great trees that grew at the foot of the bund bore edible fruit. Its dome-like mass rose from behind the thorns to a level with Kiri's face where she sat, and she could hear things moving there. A scrambling, leathery noise, a squabbling and squealing and the woof woof of membraneous wings. It was unpleasant to hear that so close when one was alone; but, after all, flying-foxes don't attack human beings; if they really were flying-foxes whose wings made that curious reedy noise. Had gods wings, she wondered. Some of the devils had. But she was here to be judged by a God, not by a Devil. She did not question that the God would act justly; but would he restrict his judgment to this particular case, the affair of the coconuts, or would he weigh her whole life? The thought was disturbing, for her life had held queer happenings. Some day, when she grew quite old, Kiri intended to reform and live a holy life; like the devotees who sweep the precincts of dagabas. Some of them had not always been pious and holy, and she could tell a tale or two. But how would that help? Their sins were not her virtues. Yet, to be judged now! It was too soon. It would not be fair. She had challenged the Lekama on one point only, and on that sole issue should be acquitted or condemned. That was only common sense; human common sense: but was it the way of the God? Men appealed to his judgment only when their own had failed. An appeal to a higher court than the village tribunal, even to the Supreme Court, was but a step higher up the same ladder. But God stood apart, all unconcerned with the dignity of human laws. Perhaps he *would* judge her by her whole life, and not by part of it.

There came a sound among the thorns where the Kapurala's goats had browsed, and Kiri's heart thumped when she heard it. Her speculation dissolved in fear, for the thing was coming nearer. She tried to remember a prayer, but could not. She longed to scream, but that would be to abandon her case. If she called for help, she would be bundled out of the village for good and all. Besides, who would come? No one she wanted to see; no being she would dare to welcome. The thing moved again, and breathed heavily. Then a dark form emerged from the thorns, and with a silly cackle the woman saw dimly the shape of a buffalo who lumbered down to the channel to drink.

"What a fool I am!" she cried. "Why, it may even have been my own buffalo."

Nevertheless, it had unnerved her, and her hand shook as she drew her shawl closer. She wished she had brought a blanket, for the night was cold; but it was too late now, so she reached for her bottle and took a long pull at the arrack. The neat spirit ran down like liquid fire, warming her

body, and rousing her courage. "What God would punish a woman for being such as I am? We all do it." She felt quite certain now that it was only the coconut affair that counted, and, taking another gulp of arrack, she chuckled to think how the Lekama would keep vigil on the morrow, and she sleep comfortably in bed. So Kiri finished off the liquor, curled up against the door, and fell asleep.

Very early in the morning, Kiri awoke. Nothing had disturbed her, and, save for slight nausea and a burning thirst, she felt perfectly normal. It was lucky she had thought of bringing the arrack. She hid the bottle in her shawl, and sat up. What would happen if she were to run down to the channel for just one little drink? But she put the temptation from her, and sat stolidly awaiting her release. When, at last, in broad day-light, she heard the voices of approaching men, she stretched her stiff body, and stood up before the door. Now that she had won, she was not going to give a single point away, and the Kapurala had not told her she might sit down.

Led by Bodiya, the Headman and elders climbed the path. When they reached the temple, the Kapurala looked narrowly at Kiri, but said nothing. The others were inclined to talk, and began to ask questions. Had she seen or heard anything abnormal? Yes, many things; she had seen a dark form, and heard voices she had never heard before. The Lekama was standing on the outskirts of the official group, and she was determined not to make it appear too easy and safe. "No one can imagine what sounds there are here until he has watched through the night as I have done. Even the stones move and speak." The Lekama's eyes were fixed on her. She saw that his fingers were fidgeting as he longed to hear more, and wisely she said not another word. Let the old liar find out for himself.

So Kiri took leave of the assembled dignitaries, and went home to her daughter, who brewed her a cup of tea. "Be not afraid, Walli. It is nothing: nothing at all. But don't forget to take a blanket, and don't you try arrack, my girl, for your head is not seasoned like mine."

The second evening of the ordeal came with a dark and threatening sky. All day long, the Lekama's friends had brought him tales and rumours. One said that Kiri bore the white impression of a gigantic hand printed upon her breasts, though how he knew this he did not explain. Nor was it clear whether this stigma was a punishment or an emblem of good fortune. It might even have been an amulet. Perhaps the Lekama would be well advised to brand himself in like manner. Another described Kiri's exultation. Her justification by the God proved, she claimed, that her adversary must perforce be condemned.

Evening came, and the Lekama was left standing before the temple. He did not sit down, but paced the flags with restless stride. Day-light fled before the clouds. It was chilly, and he had not even brought a shawl. But his conscience was clear. He did not fear the God. Had not the woman always been an evil liver, while his own life so shone before men that even a God must recognise his merit. Unlike Kiri, the Lekama was familiar with the voices of the woods. Camping, on pilgrimage, watching by waterholes with a gun, he had slept in the open many nights and the noises that had startled the woman held no terrors for him. But it was very cold. A restless wind searched the corners of the porch and set dead leaves dancing. It had been a worrying day, and he had hardly eaten a mouthful since waking. As he paced the stones, he shivered, and wished he had been wiser. When, in a town, he had been clerk to a surveyor he had been far wiser than now. Living among these backward people had sapped his judgment. They were hardly less ignorant than the animals. That Kapurala who posed as a sort of wizard; had he ever shaken hands with a Government Agent? The whole affair was ridiculous and degrading. What could that ignorant man know?

Heavy drops of rain began to fall; slowly at first, so slowly they might have been counted. The Lekama felt with outstretched hands in the dark corners of the porch, but found nowhere to take shelter. His fingers strayed over the massive door and weighty wrought-iron handle. He heard rain come roaring across the trees as a squall swept towards him, and he dragged at the handle and shook the old door of the temple until it rattled.

He would get soaked to the skin and go down with fever, and then that fat strumpet would proclaim it as an act of God. Women like Kiri ought to be destroyed by the police, like stray dogs. The storm raced across the woods, and struck the bund almost as a wave. The Lekama could scarcely breathe, so densely wet was the atmosphere. He must get inside before he was chilled to death. Suddenly he thought of his bunch of keys. One of them, the key of an old storehouse, seemed nearly as large as the keyhole his finger fitted into. He thrust in the key, turned it, and heard the bolt slip back with a click. Now he could go inside and find shelter.

But he found that he could not. When it actually came to the point, he could not bring himself to open that mysterious door. What was there inside? He did not know, and he realised that he had never even wondered, or troubled to inquire. Some image or other, he supposed. Perhaps a warm curtain he could wrap round his shivering body, for images were often screened from view by patchwork curtains. But perhaps there was no image, and so no curtain. There might even be something that was not an image, something that was alive. What if the Kapurala kept a cobra there to guard his mysteries? Such things had been heard of. He must think for a minute or two before he decided. He must not make a fool of himself, or fall into a trap. Nor must he be rash. Weird tales were told about this temple : especially about its ordeals and few men would pass near it after dark. It was very, very dark now, and he was alone : almost as much alone as if he were dead. At least, he thought so, but was there not a faint sound, like snoring? Perhaps it were wiser to stay where he was. The rain did not seem quite so heavy now. It might be a slumbering owl who snored : but, on the other hand, it might not. And with that he came to a decision, and determined to stay where he was.

When the elders released the Lekama at dawn, he was still wearily pacing the wet flags of the porch. Very cold, and feeling sick and miserable, he crept back to his home and went to bed burning with fever.

Kiri failed not to proclaim loudly that the God had dealt all too lightly with a perjuror : but, perhaps, he might die even yet.

When the people departed, Bodiya turned to his temple. Into the lock he inserted his key, tried to turn it, and found to his amazement that the bolt was not shot. He was certain he had locked it, and at once concluded that the Lekama had somehow opened the door and taken refuge inside. But there came to him a picture of the Lekama's wet clothes and haggard face. It could not be that, for the man was soaked through and through. Very carefully he pushed the door open and looked in. The stone flags inside bore no imprint of a wet foot. He must have been mistaken, and left the door unlocked. He folded up the jacket, put it away in the chest, locked the door, and went about his business. The Lekama's secret remained his own.

Walli went to her trial armed with blankets, betel to chew, and an amulet lent her by an admirer. In spite of her mother's encouragement she felt very much afraid. Owls, she had been warned about, and flying-foxes, and jackals, and the buffalo ; with two blankets to cover her shapely body she did not fear rain ; and she knew quite well, and knew that the God knew too, that she had stolen no coconuts. Yet she felt dreadfully afraid, and cast piteous glances at the last of the elders as he disappeared among the trees. It was not the justice of the God that Walli feared, but the revenge of Malhami. She knew that her behaviour towards him had been abominable, even by her own standard. How easy it would be for him to creep up in the dark and stab her. The God would take the blame. But presently she began to hope that perhaps the God would not allow this wicked thing to happen before his own door, and she commended herself to his care in a short prayer. "O Great God ! I stole no coconuts, as you know well. If Malhami comes, I shall call out to you." And when her eyes could watch no more, she slept like a child until she was woken from her dreams by the voice of an elder saying : "Here sleeps innocence. Friends, we have misjudged this woman." Walli opened her sleepy eyes, smiled as she stretched herself, and walked modestly behind the elders back to the village.

Bodiya was puzzled. Was the girl so innocent as the elder thought? But her sound sleep assured him, and he concluded, despite all rumour, that her life was blameless. So Walli, like the Lekama, kept her secret to herself.

Podihami remained to be tried, and he felt very anxious. There were young optimists among the villagers who laughed at the ancient superstition. The others had seen nothing, why should Podihami? But old men wagged their beards, and muttered that never an ordeal took place without some one suffering. Since ordeals were rare events, perhaps their hopes outsped their knowledge : besides, the Lekama *had* suffered. Podihami tried hard to gain speech with his master. He longed for first hand assurance that there was nothing to fear. But the Lekama's wife barred the way, for the fever still ran high.

Kiri was brutally exultant. On her side, both had escaped scatheless, and "if," she said, "a Lekama is struck down like that—and, mind you, it may yet turn out to be plague—what on earth will befall a common man like Podihami?"

The Headman looked glum. He cared little what befell Podihami, but resented the open humiliation of his wife's relative, and the slight to his caste. He wished he could declare the trial ended ; but how could that be done without admitting that the fever had been sent in fulfilment of justice? No, it must run its course, and probably Podihami would come through safely like the others.

Bodiya, the Kapurala, avoided the village that day. Even his own wife he shunned, busying himself about his field until it was time to visit his goats. He had business with one of the noisy little kids, and had barely done it and reached his home when the procession arrived there for the fourth evening in succession.

The Headman hurried the people impatiently along. There were fewer spectators this time, for the complete immunity of the women had disillusioned some, and others feared rain. The wind moaned in a lowering sky, but Kiri thrust her stout figure forward among the elders, regardless of

decorum, for she desired, she said, to see the last of Podihami before he went mad.

Of the four who underwent the ordeal, Podihami was the most deeply awed. Kiri had feared ghosts, devils; she knew not what. The Lekama had feared ridicule and chill. From Walli's mind, suspicion of Malhami had driven the less tangible terrors. But Podihami went in deadly dread of the God. Immediately he was left alone, he began to plan escape. His first idea was to hide away in the jungle, returning at dawn to face the release party. But when he came to think it out, that seemed dangerous, too. If the God were to deem himself slighted, he might take revenge when he returned. It would be better never to return at all. But if he were to go, he must go at once, for rain was threatening, and in a few minutes it would be pitch dark. He stepped towards the entrance, and then stopped. Some one was coming up the path by the channel, crooning a song as he came. The man would pass by, Podihami supposed; and he went back and stood by the door, to show how unconcerned he felt. But the singer, whoever he was, seemed in no hurry. Podihami heard him snapping sticks, and soon a flickering light told him that this unknown person had lit a fire. Who on earth could it be? The man no longer sang, but the light flickered upon the trees, and Podihami wondered, hesitated, and let slip the last few minutes of twilight. Night fell like a blow. A gust rushed through the trees, whirling aloft sparks from the hidden fire; and on the heels of the blast, rain advanced like a wall, quenched the fire, and blotted out the last glimmer of daylight.

Podihami drew his blanket round him, crouched into a corner of the porch, and abandoned his intention to fly.

The rain drummed upon the tiles, and sluiced off the peaked roof. Closer into the corner by the door, Podihami shrank for shelter, and then sprang up with an oath, as though he had been stung; for something moved within the temple. He heard a pattering sound, as though strong fingers beat a tattoo upon a wooden chest.

Podihami dared not move. He scarcely dared to breathe, or even to think. Gods could read human thoughts, he had heard; and his thoughts were not happy ones, open for Gods or men to read. Darker they were than the night he shivered in, for it was he and his brother who had stolen the nuts. Taking advantage of the opportunity the cart gave them, the brothers had plundered their master regularly, and sold their plunder in the market. When the Lekama grumbled that his crop seemed light, they concocted this false case, relying upon Kiri's dubious record to drag her down. These were no thoughts to be shared with the God on a night like this. But the God claimed to share them, and his hard fingers drummed upon the chest as though he grew impatient. Podihami trembled. His only chance, he feared, lay in confession, now at once, before he was struck dumb or driven mad. "O Lord God," he cried, "Malhami took the nuts, but I helped him." The women were so bad already that we thought there could be no harm in blaming upon them this one sin they had not committed.

He paused, for a voice answered him. Not terrible like thunder, not piercing like the scream of an eagle, not savage like the roar of a leopard, the voice cried aloud in the sanctuary behind the door, and to Podihami's guilty ears it seemed like the bleating of a goat. He stood dumbfounded. The door was locked, and yet the sound came from behind it. He uttered an exclamation, and again the voice answered him. He who had spoken through the lips of a man, now chose to speak through those of an animal. This time there was no possibility of error. The voice was a goat's voice, the bleat of a kid that calls its mother.

IT WAS NOT THE JUSTICE OF THE GOD THAT WALLI FEARED, BUT THE REVENGE OF MALHAMI.

Podihami's fears fled. He laughed, and rattled with the knocker on the door. Either the Kapurala had placed the animal there to frighten him, or, more likely, it had strayed inside and been locked in when the Kapurala led his flock away. It did not occur to his mind that the Kapurala might intend to sacrifice it to his God. Probably, after the manner of goats, it had climbed as high as it could, and was now standing on the image. If there was an image. He was not quite sure about that. But of two things he was absolutely certain: that the bleating was the voice of a kid, and that no living God would be found where there was a living goat.

"So my confession was made to a goat! Well, that's safer than confessing to a woman, or even to a God." Podihami settled back into his corner and tried to sleep. But sleep would not come. That accursed kid's bleatings effectually banished it. The little beast was hungry for its dam, and there was no way of silencing it; but he would sleep all day on the morrow.

Podihami began to make new plans. This god business was evidently a fake, and now that its mystery was unveiled he felt no qualms at all. Often, through the moonlight, he had driven the cart alone, and the voices of the woods and the lake were not new to him. He felt safer now than for many days past. No more court cases for him. If his honesty were impugned, he would straightway claim trial by ordeal, and ten to one his accuser would withdraw. Even the Lekama had been afraid and had fallen ill of his fear. Now he could rob with impunity, for one night of lonely vigil had established his innocence for life. Had he uttered that thought aloud, or was it imagination that echoed his last words "for

life?" Well, he would try once more to sleep.

Rain still fell heavily, but less gustily than before, and by lying along the doorstep of the temple, Podihami gained the shelter of the eaves. The kid bleated less often now, though its curiously piercing voice was still uplifted from time to time as though it feared something. Podihami muffled his head in his blanket and tried not to hear it. Where he lay upon the stone, his knife and pouch stuck into his side, so he took them off with his belt, and laid them close to his head. Then he drew the blanket closer, made a determined effort, and soon was snoring.

Into Podihami's dreams, the bleating of the kid thrust like a blade. He moved restlessly, and muttered in his sleep. But soon he sat up and swore aloud, for sleep had fled once more. He called to the animal, hoping that his voice might reassure it; but the kid cried louder than ever, and into its incessant complaint there crept a note of agony which disturbed Podihami, and frightened him. Surely hunger alone would not wring from the little creature so bitter a lament. How strong the goat smelt. Perhaps the damp air intensified its natural odour; for it stank like the rankest old he-goat, pungent, and musky, and horribly foul. Its hard little feet rapped a devil's tattoo upon the wooden chest till Podihami banged upon the door with the heavy loop of iron. For a moment, the creature ceased its cries, and then a slow and heavy footstep crunched upon pebbles behind the wall. They paused without the porch, and Podihami stooped silently down and felt for the matches in his pouch. The footsteps moved one more yard towards the entrance, and something huge loomed dimly in the space between the walls; something vast, and formless, and placed so that all egress was barred. In a spasm of horror, Podihami struck a match and held it before him. His hand shook, and the trembling light glinted upon a wet hide. The light of the match was reflected like a spark by a pale unwinking eye.

With a screech of dread, Podihami flung himself at the door and wrenched at the iron handle. The goat was silent, but the man screamed, and drummed upon the iron with his fist. "Oh God!" he shrieked. "Oh God! Oh God!" until there came a rush of feet, and the iron loop he clung to fell with a clang upon the stone.

When the Headman, the elders, and Bodiya, the Kapurala, climbed the slope towards the temple, the sun shone, and birds were singing merrily. "We shall find him asleep, like Walli," said an elder.

"Sleep is good evidence of innocence," remarked the Headman sententiously. He was tired of these daily interruptions to his peace of mind, and called out to Podihami to wake up and come out. But no answer came from the porch, and when they reached its level and looked in, the place was empty.

"So he bolted after all!" cried two men at once.

"What, and left his knife and purse?" asked the Headman superciliously. "He must have gone down to the tank to wash."

They climbed the bund, and a huge old crocodile, who floated motionless upon the water, turned a pale eye to look at them before his great bulk was silently submerged. For miles to north and south, wavelets lapped along the waterline, but no man was in sight. They turned towards the thorny thicket, and shouted, singly at first, and then all together. The echo of their shouts rolled back from the solemn wall of trees. An eagle rose from a branch and flapped away. Somewhere below them, a kid bleated for its mother.

"We must spread out and look for tracks," said the Headman. "Some can go north, and some south. I myself will search the margin of the lake."

"I," said the Kapurala, "will scout back along the path we came by." They spread out, and scanned the earth with the keen speed of men accustomed to tracking; but the rain had washed the earth clean, and search proved useless. When they gathered again at the spot where they had stood and shouted, the Kapurala mounted the slope and joined them. At his heels trotted a little kid, but no one took heed of so trivial a happening.

"He lost his head and ran away," one of the elders said again. "He did not," growled the Headman dogmatically. "A man does not start upon a journey with his cloth slipping down," and he held up Podihami's belt in proof.

They all fingered the belt, the knife, the purse, and the match box in turn. The Headman emptied the purse into the palm of his hand, and showed some silver coins. "Does a man leave his money when he goes on a journey?" he asked sarcastically.

"Come," said the Kapurala. "I will show you something more." They trooped back to the temple, led by the guardian of its honour. Bodiya entered the porch and pointed to something which lay on the floor. "The handle is broken off," was all he said.

They crowded to the door, and the Headman picked up the iron loop. "It weighs pounds and pounds," he said; and look at the pivots. "They have sheared clean through." He held up the ponderous loop, and they all saw new fractures glint in the sunlight. The loop had hung from bronze bosses, cast in the form of makara's heads, mythical beasts compounded of lion, and elephant, and crocodile. Their massive faces still frowned at the trees their eyes had seen grow up from the ground to become the canopy of the forest. But the pivots were sheared off close, and the fractures shone.

"Friends," said the oldest man, after some moments of silence. "The strongest among us could not have torn that iron from its sockets. This is the deed of a God."

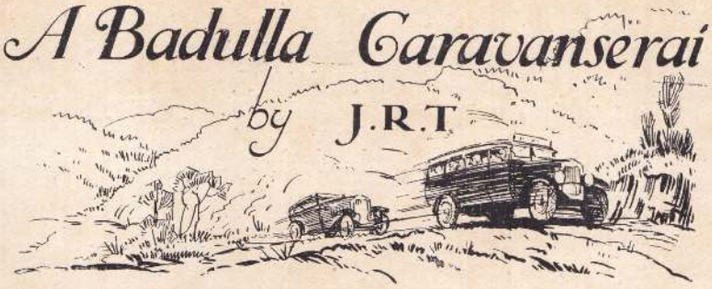
They passed in awe and silence from that place, and departed in a body to the village to announce the judgment.

Bodiya, the Kapurala, stayed on alone. As he entered the shrine of his faith, his face shone; and he sang an old hymn as he swept the temple floor and the top of the chest with a broom of wild peacock feathers. In his heart dwelt the peace which comes of communion with God, the contentment of a sacrifice fulfilled.

He closed the door. The kid was awaiting him outside. "Come, Nannikin, thou hast played thy part. Thou art hungry; we will go and find thy mother." And he strode down the hill to his home.

A Badulla Caravanserai

by J.R.T.



GUEST of an estate superintendent near Badulla, I soon had experience of his ancient car, the carburettor of which was a source of constant trouble. At the most awkward times and for no apparent reason, the engine would conk out, and no power on earth could persuade it to function.

It was fortunate on an occasion that my host's bungalow was high on a hillside, enabling the old 'bus to coast almost the whole way into the town. At other times, of course, it was not so fortunate, nor were we.

The Badulla Meet was most successful, finishing off with a morning's polo on the Sunday. As a grand finale, dinner and bridge were arranged for my host and self at another bungalow in the district, my host, however, being a doubtful quantity owing to his deep immersion in a discourse on the finer points of polo and many other things, without time-limit. A conveyance was provided for me, and my domiciliary host was left to follow as and when he could. We did not delay dinner for him, but he did arrive ultimately, dusty, dishevelled and in a state bordering on collapse. He explained that the carburettor had played up badly, but luckily he had only pushed the car for a mile or so, most of the way being downhill. He had apparently lost all sense of proportion, however, for his one idea was to get back to his totem at once, to "sleep for years and years" as he feelingly pleaded with his host. Likewise, he had apparently some mind to follow his doctor's advice to "shake the bottle" as a change from the club motto, "Please whack the bottle."

He was also heard to murmur that I would have to drive the car, which put me in solid terror, what with useless footbrakes and the refractory carburettor. But there was nothing else for it and, after the usual courtesies in parting, we set forth, having pushed the car to the top of a slope which most conveniently dispensed with the need of cranking up the engine. Despite the ornamentally useless brake pedal underfoot all went smoothly down hill, but, after the long drop into Badulla, we started to climb the three odd miles to our destination and ran straight into trouble. The car spluttered venomously and then the engine subsided into a death-like silence, from which no amount of coaxing, wheedling or beating would rouse it. Nor for that matter did it rouse my host, who, without deserving it, was sleeping soundly enough for four just men.

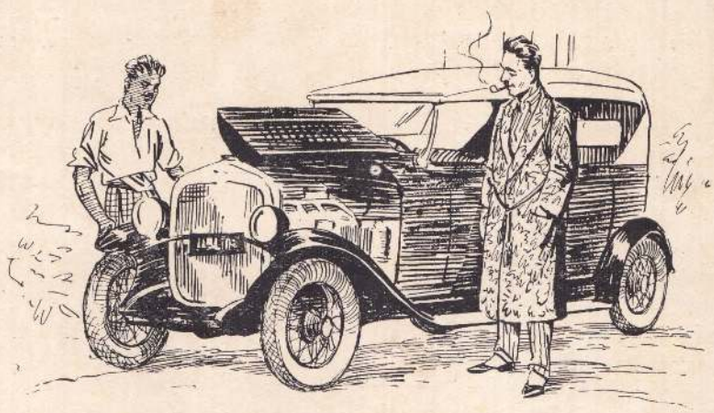
I smoked a last cigarette and prepared to spend the night huddled down in the car, when, luckily enough, there came the most welcome hum of a motor vehicle, followed by the gleam of head lights. The sympathetic 'bus driver backed into a suitable position and prepared to take us in tow. Then the fun really began. The only rope available for towing was being used to secure a most evil-smelling if appetising roof-load of dried fish, plantains, and curry-stuffs. In daylight that rope would have taken a full quarter of an hour to untie, but in the dim light of the hour after midnight it took ages for the sporting 'bus driver to disentangle it from the cargo, which he then had to stow inside. In due time, however, the rope was in position and securely lashed—thanks to a few tricks learnt in my gunner days. Four or five strands were taken as tow, and off we started.

All went well for a matter of 300 yards when, all of a sudden, the interior of the 'bus gave forth mysterious, turgid noises and the engine gave out.

After carefully pillowing my host's head in the corner instead of on my left shoulder—I did not want his beauty sleep to be disturbed a second time—I stoically descended to be greeted with the 'bus driver's news that he was out of petrol. He had no spare tin, but would master please give him a chit to the estate teamaker? He would send down the petrol and also a good hemp rope and an odd cooly or so in case of need!

Perhaps five minutes, but more likely an hour, passed before I was awakened by the estate teamaker, complete with rope, coolies and petrol. Soon we were again in tow and in a short space of time were able to unhitch the car and push it into a spare lean-to near the factory. The last lap had now been reached, and the sporting 'bus driver took us up beside him in front, the inside being really too stenchful for comfort, and we slowly but surely accomplished the last few furlongs to the bungalow.

I am still debating in my mind whether my host, who had latterly shown some slight interest in the proceedings, was being mildly satirical when—at 4 a.m.—he bade me goodnight at his bedroom door and said, "It's been a topping Meet, old boy. Everything went swimmingly!"



In the early morning, sound asleep as I must have been, there came to me more and more insistently the sound of a car engine which had a familiar rattle, so familiar that I was tempted to investigate. Sure enough, there was the fractious car, the engine running merrily, whilst the estate mechanic was doing some odd job about the main shaft.

"Charles," I asked in the reproachful tone I can assume on occasions, "what the devil was the matter with the wretched car?"

"Car quite all right, master. Tankie bone dry!"

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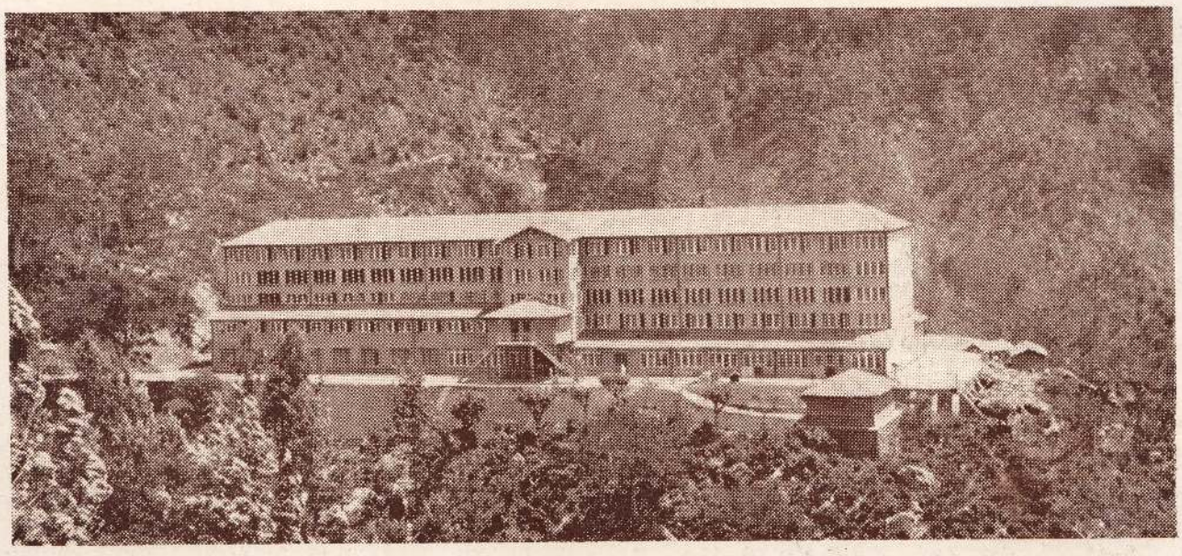

CANNAVARELLA TEA FACTORY, ONE OF THE FINEST IN CEYLON.

FACTORIES

Since our establishment in 1854 we have been directly connected with Estate Engineering and place our mature experience at the disposal of all Estate Owners, Agents and Managers.

We are in a most favourable position to quote for complete Factories, Steelwork, Woodwork, Steel Windows, Elevators, Installation of Withering Schemes, Electrical Accessories, Engines, Ropeways, etc., etc.

Our prices are always competitive and we will submit estimates free of cost.

MACHINERY

Besides holding the finest Agencies for British Manufactured Machinery, we are makers of the following well-established machines :—

"Walker's" Pressure Tea Drier
"Colombo" Automatic Tea Drier
"Economic" Tea Rollers
"Michie's" Tea Sifters
"Improved" Tea Sifter
"Pentagonal" Roll Breaker
"Improved" Roll Breaker
"Improved" Tea Cutter
"Walker's" Tea Blower
"Little Giant" Tea Roller,
Etc., Etc.

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ESTATE ENGINEERS,
COLOMBO, KANDY, TALAWAKELLE, BANDARAWELA, RATNAPURA, GALLE.

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