The Tamil

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The Tamil

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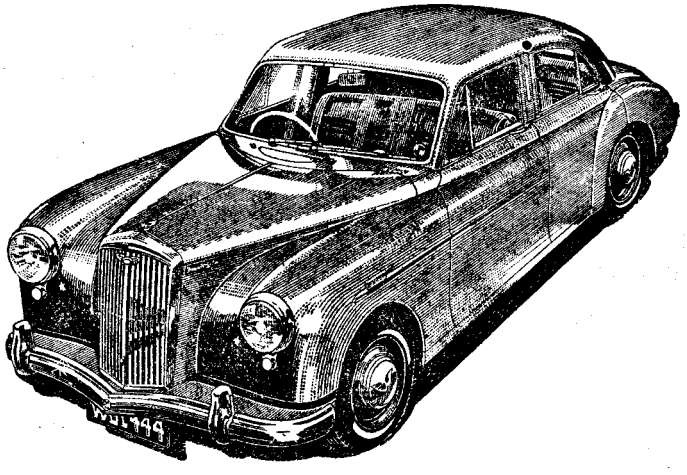

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SEQUENCE

SIR P. ARUNACHALAM'S PREVISION OF "THE TAMIL"

By JAMES T. RUTNAM

[WE are deeply indebted to the author of this article, one of the few genuine researchers of Ceylon, for the information that Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, the greatest Ceylonese of our time, embittered by the colonialism and communalism of his own day, had himself envisaged a monthly Journal on the lines of The Tamil. *In these days of the* temporary *triumph of the tribalists and individualists today in power, it is no longer remembered that Arunachalam is the true Father of Ceylon's modern liberty. He dreamt a dream of a Free, United and Cultured Lanka, with* equality *for all of its peoples. He would have spurned with contempt the communalist notion so prevalent with the hireling stooges of the clique in power for the time being, that Democracy is but a counting of skulls : because, forsooth, ninety per centum of the population of Lanka is Buddhist then ninety per centum of every aspect of the country's public activity—executive, administrative, educational—regardless of merit or capacity or aptitude—should be Buddhist ! This is not Democracy but only Anarchy and Totality under the cloak and guise of religion. Sir Ponnambalam hoped for the founding and perpetuation of a monthly journal which will* stand forth without fear *for the negation of these nihilist notions, which sent Hitler and his herrenvolk to deserved perdition.]*

SIR Ponnambalam Arunachalam, the father of the modern Ceylonese renaissance, had occasion when he founded the Ceylon Tamil League in 1923 to indicate in broad outline the aims and ideals of the Ceylon Tamils. They are well worth repeating now. I give below some extracts from the League's Report, dated 1st September, 1923, and read at its general meeting on the 15th September, 1923. Sir Ponnambalam, the President of the League, was the author of this report.

The " real aim," Sir Ponnambalam says, " should be, and is, to keep alive those great Tamil ideals, enshrined in such works as the *Kural* of Tiruvalluvar, which have

helped to make the Tamils what they are. With a civilisation going back to the days when they traded with Babylon and Egypt, they have still some of the ancient vigour and keenness. Their colonies extended from British Guiana and the West Indies, South Africa and Mauritius, through Ceylon, the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States to Fiji. In Ceylon, the Tamils are its oldest inhabitants. What they have done for the Island's development, prosperity and civilisation through more than two millenniums is a matter of history. To their work and influence at the present day His Excellency the Governor in a recent speech at Jaffna bore testimony. What would Ceylon be without the Tamil labourer, the corner stone of the Island's prosperity, without the Tamil trader, Tamils in every walk of life and Tamil leaders of public life ?

" A British officer who commanded Tamil soldiers in the recent war wrote to the *Pioneer* of Allahabad : 'No records adorn any page of military history prouder than those of the Tamil regiments with which Clive and Wellesley won India for England.' Latterly, the Tamil was supposed to have lost his soldierly qualities and recruiting was suspended until the war. But this officer, having led them in battle in Mesopotamia, sings a paean in their honour and declares that 'they can be put by the side of the best British infantry regiments and stand the test. They can hold their heads as high today as when they blazoned on the standard of the Madras army an imperishable lustre.' Worthy sons these of the Tamil mother who in a classic poem of 1800 years ago went forth, sword in hand, to slay her son reported to have fled from battle and, finding his dead body on the battlefield with wounds on his breast, rejoiced greatly. *

" The British officer's praise recalls the heroism and devotion sung by the poet of the *Kural.*

' The heroes, counting up their days, set down as vain
Each day they no glorious wound sustain.
Fearless they rush where'er the tide of battle rolls ;
The King's reproof damps not the ardour of their souls.

*Lord Wavell, Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief, when departing from India, gave special directions that the farewell salute to him should be fired by Tamil Soldiers, for the Tamil Regiments, although decimated by a murderous fire, had stood by him to a man in beating off the valiant and valourous Rommel.– *Ed.*

Who says they err and visits them with scorn
Who die and faithful guard the vow they have sworn?
If monarch's eyes overflow with tears for hero slain,
Who would not beg such boon of glorious death to gain ?'

" The role of the hero is deemed fulfilled when he is capable of magnanimity to the fallen enemy . . .

' *Fierceness in hour of strife heroic greatness shows ;*
Its edge is kindness to our suffering foes.'

" These matters are mentioned here in no spirit of vain boasting but only to impress upon our Tamil countrymen, and especially upon our youth, that they have a great past, a marked vigour of life and individuality, and high ideals which should not be allowed to fade or die.

" There are men among us who, in the name of cosmopolitanism and with taunts of tribalism, would fain see the Tamils lose their individuality and become ' neither fish, flesh, fowl nor red herring.' A great British statesman, speaking of the imperial policy of Britain, has said :—

' There are some people, who seem to believe that the only way in which a great Empire can be successfully maintained is by suppressing the various distinct elements of its component parts, in fact by running it as a huge regiment in which each nation is to lose its individuality and to be brought under a common system of discipline and drill. In my opinion, we are much more likely to break up an Empire than to maintain it by any such attempt. Lasting strength and loyalty are not to be secured by any attempt to force into one system or to remould into one type those special characteristics which are the outcome of a nation's history and of her religious and social conditions, but rather by a full recognition of the fact that these very characteristics form an essential part of a nation's life and that, under wise guidance and under sympathetic treatment, they will enable her to provide her own contribution and to play her special part in the life of the Empire to which she belongs.'

" The Tamils have seen many empires and civilisations rise and fall. Their language, the oldest of living languages, is, in the opinion of competent Western scholars, ' one

of the most copious, refined and polished languages spoken by man ' (Dr. Taylor), ' more polished and exact than the Greek, more copious than the Latin ' (Dr. Winslow) ' a wonderful organ of thought ' (Dr. Pope). Old as it is, it remains the vigorous speech of millions throughout the world. In our best books there is, according to Dr. Pope, ' a strong sense of moral obligation, an earnest aspiration, a fervent and unselfish charity, and generally a lofty aim, that are very impressive. I have felt sometimes as if there must be a blessing in store for a people that delight so utterly in compositions thus remarkably expressive of a hunger and thirst after righteousness."

" Of the Tamil ideal of home life Dr. Pope says: ' The ideal householder leads on earth a consecrated life, not unmindful of any duty to the living or to the departed. His wife, the glory of his house, is modest and frugal; adores her husband; guards herself, and is the guardian of his house's fame. His children are his choicest treasures; their babbling voices are his music. Affection is the very life of his soul: of all his virtues the first and greatest. The sum and source of them all is love. His house is open to every guest, whom he welcomes with smiling face and pleasant word, and with whom he shares his meal. Courteous in speech, grateful for every kindness, just in all his dealings, master of himself, strict in the performance of every assigned duty, patient and forbearing, with a heart free from envy, moderate in desires, speaking no evil of others, refraining from unprofitable words, dreading the touch of evil, diligent in the discharge of all the duties of his position, and liberal in his benefactions, he is one whom all unite to praise. '

" Surely these are ideals we should keep fresh in our hearts and cherish and strive to realise in our lives. It is because we have done so in the past in some measure that the Tamils have not been swept into the limbo of dead and forgotten races and civilisations. Never was there greater need for these ideals than now, especially in the city of Colombo. **It is dominated by a spirit of coarse materialism, greed of money, love of ease, vain show of frippery. Its poisonous influence has spread far and wide and is the greatest obstacle to that simplicity of life which is our most urgent need and was our fathers' prized possession."**

Sir Ponnambalam had hoped to make the Tamil League " an effective instrument for resisting these deadly tendencies and for propagating our ideals and culture and language adapted to modern needs and conditions." " Instead of a thin veneer of Western habits," he declared, " we shall aim at all that is best in Western life and culture and make it part of our life-blood and thus reinvigorate and vitalise ourselves."

Sir Ponnambalam had contemplated the establishment of a daily English paper in Colombo, " a vital necessity, " in his opinion, and also **the publication of a monthly periodical under the name "TAMILAKAM" or "The Tamil Land" which would be " a record of Tamil activities throughout Ceylon, South India and the Tamil colonies and an exponent of Tamil ideals and sentiments." It was to include :—**

(1) Tamil language, literature, philosophy
(2) Education ; especially higher education and vernacular education in Ceylon
(3) Politics
(4) Economics, commerce, industry
(5) Tamil labour in Ceylon and abroad
(6) Correspondence and news from the provinces, from South India and the Colonies
(7) Proceedings of Tamil associations, political, literary, educational, social, dramatic, sports, &c.
(8) Translations from the Tamil classics into English, and reviews of books.

" Such a periodical," he announced, "will keep us in touch with what is being done and thought by our brethren and sisters throughout Tamil land, and will be not only a medium of inter-communication and knowledge but a bond to link them together and keep alive Tamil ideals."

Sir Ponnambalam concluded his report with the following clarion call to his fellow Tamils :—**" Let us make ourselves worthy of our inheritance . . . Resolutely minded, preserving all those characteristics which form an essential part of our national life, welcoming all that is good in**

Western life and culture . . . let us work out our development . . . and make our contribution to the world's civilisation and happiness."

It is sincerely hoped that *The Tamil*, will serve as a fitting medium to express and foster the vision of Arunachalam.

"Man must rest, get his breath, refresh himself at the great living wells which keep the freshness of the Eternal."—MICHELET.

HOLY HILL OF LORD MURUKA

[Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam's famous essay on "The Worship of Muruka" is well known to the older generation of Ceylonese. Kathirkamam, revered throughout South India, from the Vindhyas to Dondra, is a Holy place well fitted to proclaim the union and unity of all Ceylonese, for in those sylvan shades, with the gleaming Menik Ganga leaping and laughing along the Temple glades and gates, dwell Peace and Reverence for ALL the communities which equally, and with equality, compose the Ceylonese Nation].

THERE is on the South-east coast of Ceylon a lonely hamlet known as Kataragamam in the heart of a forest haunted by bears, elephants and leopards and more deadly malaria. The Ceylon Government thinks of Kataragamam especially twice a year, when arrangements have to be made for pilgrims and precautions taken against epidemics. Hardly anyone goes there except in connection with the pilgrimage.

Kataragamam is sacred to the God Kárthikeya, from whom it was called Kárthikeya Gráma ("City of Kárthikeya") shortened to Kájara-gáma and then to Kataragamam. The Tamils, who are the chief worshippers at the shrine, have given the name a Tamil form, Karthirkámam, a city of divine glory and love, as if from kathir, glory of light, and kamam, love (*Sk. káma*), or town or district (from Sk. *Grama*). By Sinhalese and Tamils alike the God Karthikeya is called Kandasámi ; by the Sinhalese, also Kanda Kumára (Kanda being the Tamil form of Sans. Skanda and Kumára meaning youth), and by the Tamils Kumára Svámi, "the youthful god." More often the Tamils call him by the pure Tamil name Murukan, "the tender child." He is represented in legend, statuary and painting as a beautiful child or youth. The priests worship him with elaborate rites and ceremonies, the rustic with meal and blood offerings, the aboriginal Vedda invokes him also with dances in the primitive manner of the woods. The philosopher meditates on him in silence, adoring him as the Supreme God, Subrahmanya,—the all

pervading spirit of the universe, the Essence from which all things are evolved, by which they are sustained and into which they are involved,—who in gracious pity for humanity takes form sometimes as the youthful God of Wisdom, God also of war when wicked Titans (Asuras) have to be destroyed, sometimes as the holy child Muruka, type of perennial tender beauty, always and everywhere at the service of his devotees.

" In the face of fear," says an ancient and popular verse, " His face of comfort shows. In the fierce battle field, with ' Fear not,' His lance shows. Think of Him once, twice He shows, to those who chant Muruka."

" A refreshing coolness is in my heart as it thinketh on Thee, peerless Muruka. My mouth quivers praising Thee, lovingly hastening Muruka, and with tears calling on Thee, Giver of gracious help-hand, O warrior ! With *Tirumurukárruppadai* Thou comest, Thy Lady in Thy wake."

The scene of his birth is laid in the Himalayas. His birth and exploits are described with poetic embellishments in the Skanda Purana, an epic poem which in its present Sanskrit form dates from about the fifth century and in its Tamil version from the eighth. " Dearest," cries a Tamil poet of the 1st century, " whom the cool blue waters of the tarn on great Himalaya's crest received from the beauteous hands of the peerless one of the five (elements, *i.e.*, Agni, god of fire) and who in six forms by six (Naiads) nourished became one."

Though born on those distant northern mountains, his home now and for over twenty centuries has been in the south, and his worship prevails chiefly among the Tamils.

Wherever Tamil influence prevails, he is held in pre-eminent honour and dignity. The Tamils regard him as the guardian of their race, language and literature and are bound to him by special ties. He is reputed to have arrived in Lanka (Ceylon) in a remote age when it was a vast continent,—the Lemuria, perhaps, of the zoologists, stretching from Madagascar to near Australia,—and was ruled by a Titan, the terror of the celestials. In answer to their prayers, the god was incarnated as the son of the

Supreme God Mahádeva or Siva. He led their hosts to Lanka and destroyed the Titan after mighty battles, his lance seeking the foe out in his hiding in the ocean. The Titan was then granted forgiveness for his sins and was changed into a cock and a peacock, the former becoming the god's banner and the latter his charger. These events, with their moral significance of the expiation of sin, are yearly celebrated by festivals and fasts in Tamil lands in the month of Aippasi (October-November) ending on the 6th day of the waxing moon (Skandha Shashthi). On such occasions, the Tamil Kandapuranam is read and expounded with solemnity, also at times in private houses, such reading being deemed efficacious, apart from spiritual benefits, in warding off or alleviating disease and danger and bringing good fortune.

The worship of Skanda has suffered no decline in Ceylon from the introduction of Buddhism 24 centuries ago. The " Kataragam god " (Kataragama Deviyo) has a shrine in every Buddhist place of worship, and plays a prominent part in its ceremonials and processions. In the great annual perahera of Kandy, he had always a leading place ; Buddha's Tooth, now the chief feature of the procession, formed no part of it till the middle of the 18th century, when it was introduced by order of King Kirtti Sri Rajasinha to humour the Buddhist monks he had imported from Siam.

It is possible now to travel from Colombo comfortably by train to Matara and by motor to Hambantota and Tissamaharama. The last stage of about 11 miles beyond Tissamaharama is over a difficult forest-track and an unbridged river, the Menik ganga, which in flood time has to be swum across, there being no boats. In the thirties of the last century, when good roads were scarce even in Colombo, my grandmother walked barefoot the whole way to Kataragamam and back in fulfilment of a vow for the recovery from illness of her child, the future Sir Mutu Coomara Swamy. The hardships then endured are such as are yearly borne with cheerfulness by thousands travelling on foot along the jungle tracks of the Northern, Eastern and Uva provinces and from India. Nearly all are convinced of the god's ever-present grace and protection and have spiritual experiences to tell or other notable

boons, recoveries from illness, help under trials and dangers, warding off of calamities. I once asked an elderly woman who had journeyed alone through the forest for days and nights if she had no fear of wild elephants and bears. She said she saw many, but none molested her. " How could they ? The Lord was at my side."

An old Brahmin hermit whom I knew well, Sri Kesopur Swami, was for about three quarters of a century a revered figure at Kataragamam. He had come there as a boy from a monastery in Allahabad in North India in the twenties of last century. He attached himself to the Hindu foundation (next the principal shrine) of the Teyva yánai amman temple and monastery. This institution belongs to a section of the Dasanámi order of monks founded by the great Sankarachárya of Sringeri Matam (Mysore). The lad after a time betook himself to the forest, where he lived alone for years, until he was sought out and restored to human society by a young monk, Surajpuri Swami by name, whom also I knew. The latter was a beautiful character, pious and learned, and with a splendid physique. He had been a cavalry officer of the Maharaja of Cashmere and, being resolved on a life of celibacy and poverty, found himself thwarted by his relatives who pressed him to marry and assume the duties of family life. Failing in their efforts, they brought the Maharaja's influence to bear upon him, whereupon he fled from home and travelled as a mendicant until he reached the great southern shrine of Rameswaram, well known to tourists and a great resort of pilgrims. There (he told me) he received a divine call to proceed to Sri Pada, the " Holy Foot " (Adam's Peak of English maps), which the Hindus revere as sacred to Siva and the Buddhists to the Buddha. Here he was ordered to proceed to Kataragamam, where he would find a hermit in the forest whom he was to wait upon and feed with rice. This he did and brought the hermit to the temple. He soon gave up rice or other solid food and confined himself to a little milk, hence he was known as Pál Kudi Báwa. A very saintly and picturesque figure he was, revered for his childlike simplicity and purity, spiritual insight and devotion, and much sought after for his blessings.

Robert Knox, who in the seventeenth century spent 20 years of captivity in Ceylon, in his " Historical Relation of the Island of Ceylon " published in 1861 in London, in speaking of the Eastern Coast says : " It is as I have heard environed with hills on the landside and by sea not convenient for ships to ride ; and very sickly, which they do impute to the power of a great god which dwelleth in a town near by they call Cotteragon, standing in the road, to whom all that go to fetch salt, both small and great, must give an offering. The name and power of this god striketh such terror into the Chingalayas that those who are otherwise enemies to the King and have served both Portuguez and Dutch against him, yet would never assist either to make invasion this way." In the great Perahera at Kandy, in Knox's time, there was no Buddha's Tooth, but " Allout neur dio,* God and maker of Heaven and Earth, and Cotteragom Deyyo and Potting† dio, these three gods that ride here in company are accounted of all the others the greatest and chiefest." Davy himself says (p. 228) : " Of all the gods, the Kataragam God is the most feared . . . and such is the dread of this being that I was never able to induce a native artist to draw a figure of it." This unwillingness was rather due to the fact that at Kataragam there is no figure of the god. He is not worshipped there in any image or form. A veil or curtain, never raised, separates the worshippers from the Holy of Holies, where, according to the best information, there is only a casket containing a Yantra or mystic diagram engraved on a golden tablet in which the divine power and grace are believed to reside. It is this casket which in the great festivals of July and November is carried in procession on the back of an elephant.

The history of this tablet, according to a native tradition reported to me by Kesopuri Svami, is that a devotee from N. India, Kalyánagiri by name, grieved by the god's prolonged stay in Ceylon, came to Kataragamam to entreat him to return to the North. Failing to obtain audience of the god, he performed for 12 years severe penances and austerities, in the course of which a little Vedda boy and girl attached themselves to him and

*Alutnuwara Deiviyyo, represented in the procession, according to Knox, by a painted stick.

†The Kataragam God and the Goddess Pattini.

served him unremittingly. On one occasion when, exhausted by his austerities and depressed by his disappointment, he fell asleep, the boy woke him. The disturbed sleeper cried out in anger, " How dare you disturb my rest when you know that this is the first time I have slept for years ?" The boy muttered an excuse and ran pursued by him until an islet in the river was reached, when the boy transformed himself into the God Skanda. The awe-struck hermit then realised that his quondam attendants had been the God and his consort Valli. Prostrating himself before them and praying forgiveness, he begged the God to return to India. The Goddess in her turn made her appeal (மங்கையப்பிச்சை) and begged that the god might not be parted from her. This the sage could not refuse. He abandoned the idea of the God's or his own return and settled down at Kataragamam where he engraved the mystic diagram (yantra) and enshrined it there for worship in buildings constructed or restored with the help of the ruling King of Ceylon. When in due course the sage quitted his earthly body, he is believed to have changed into a pearl image (muthu lingam) and is still worshipped in an adjoining shrine under that name (Muthulingasvami).

The earliest account of the worship of Muruka is to be found in an ancient Tamil lyric, the delight of scholars and often on the lips of others, even if not fully understood. To appreciate its significance, religious, historical and literary, some idea of the early literature of the Tamils is necessary.

Ancient Tamil history has for its chief landmarks three successive literary Academies established by the Pandyan Kings of South India, who were great patrons of literature and art. In this institution were gathered together (as in the Acadèmie Francaise found by Cardinal Richelieu in 1635 and copied in other European countries) the leading literati of the time. The roll of members included royal authors of note and not a few women who were poets and philosophers. New works were submitted to the Academy for judgment and criticism, and before publication received the hall-mark of its approval. The Academy was the jealous guardian of the standard literary perfection and showed little mercy to minters of base literary coinage.

The first two Academies go back to an almost mythical period and their duration is counted by millenniums. The Tamils having a good conceit of themselves and a passionate love (equalled in modern times, I think, only by the French) of their mother tongue have assigned to it a divine origin and made their Supreme God Siva the president of the first Academy and his son Muruka or Skanda a member of the Academy and the tutelary god of the Tamil race. Both deities are represented as appearing on earth from time to time to solve literary problems that defied the Academy. The seats of the first and second Academies (old Madura and Kapadapuram) were the two first capitals of the Pandyan dynasty, and are said to have been submerged by the sea.

The God Muruka has many shrines and modes of worship. Some of them are described in Tirumurukarruppadai (a Poem of the third Academy) which thus serves, as its name indicates, as a "Guide to the Holy Muruka." The shrines are all in Tamil land. The first shrine mentioned is Tirupparankunram, a hill about 5 miles south-west of Madura.

"He dwelleth gladly on the Hill west of the Clustered Towers—gates rid of battle, for the foe hath been crushed and the ball and doll defiantly tied to the high flag-staff are still,—faultless marts, Lakshmi's seats, streets of palaces.

"He dwelleth on the Hill where swarms of beauteous winged bees sleep on the rough stalks of lotuses in the broad stretches of muddy fields; they blow at dawn round the honey-dripping *neithal* blooms and with the rising sun sing in the sweet flowers of the pool as they open their eyes." (v.v. 67-77).

The other shrines specifically named are "Alaivái (wave mouth,v. 125), now known as Tiruchendur, a shrine on the southern coast about 36 miles from Tinnevelly; Ävinankudi, v. 176), now known as Palanimalai (Palni Hills), about the same distance from Dindigul and a well-known hill station; Tiru-Erakam (v. 189), now called Swámimalai, a hill about 4 miles from Kumbakonam. Each of the shrines with its appropriate incidents and associations is the subject of a little picture—making a

sort of cameo or gem strung together in this poem forming a perfect whole (v.v. 1-77, 78-125, 126-176, 177-189). Three of the shrines are situated amid mountains and forests, for they are dear to Muruka. One section (v.v. 190-217) describes his "Sport on the mountains" and another (v. 218 *ad fin.*) describes him as dwelling in "Fruit-groves" and worshipped by forest tribes. The shrine of Kataragamam is understood to be included in the last. The poet enumerates many other places and ways in which the god manifests himself:—festivals accompanied with goat sacrifices and frenzied dancers, grove and woods, rivers and lakes, islets, road-junctions, village-meetings, the kadamba tree (eugenia racemosa), etc., and lastly wherever votaries seek him in prayer (v.v. 218-225), recalling Jesus' saying (Matth. XVIII, 20) "where two or three are assembled in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Muruka would thus appear to be a deity in whom were amalgamated many legends and traditions, many aspects of religion and modes of worship, primitive and advanced, and to embody the Tamil ideal of God immanent in all things and manifesting himself wherever sought with love.

Muruka means tender age and beauty and is often represented as the type of perennial youth, sometimes as quite a child. There is in Vaithiswaran temple near Tanjore an exquisite figure of the child-god. He is also worshipped in the form of a six-faced god.

"One face spreadeth afar rays of light, perfectly lighting the world's dense darkness; one face graciously seeketh his beloved and granteth their prayers; one face watcheth over the sacrificial rites of the peaceful ones who fail not in the way of the Scriptures; one face searcheth and pleasantly expoundeth hidden meanings, illumining every quarter like the moon; one face, with wrath mind filling, equality ceasing, wipeth away his foes and celebrateth the battle sacrifice; one face dwelleth smiling with slender waisted Vedda maid, pure-hearted Valli." He is thus worshipped as the god of wisdom by those who seek spiritual enlightenment, as the god of sacrifice and ritual by ritualists, as the god of learning by scholars, as the giver of all boons, worldly and spiritual, to his devotees.

EMERSON ON OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE

[Ralph Waldo Emerson is perhaps the greatest American in the field of letters. He has imbued into English speech all those qualities for which America is famous : self-reliance, sincerity, love of liberty, and strenuous loyalty to freedom of Body, Mind and Soul. Emerson's magnificent Essay on the glories of the glorious Universities of Oxford and Cambridge brings home to us, as only Newman has done, the ideals of true university life. Let those young men and women of Sri Lanka who find it a matter of dis-ease to enter the portals of the University of Peradeniya console themselves. There are far, far greater Universities, of which we can all be members in spirit, by reading this, and similar, essays, which " The Tamil " will publish from time to time. Let Peradeniya prove itself by producing one great Book or one great Man.]

OF British universities, Cambridge has the most illustrious names on its list. At the present day, too, it has the advantage of Oxford, counting in its *alumni* a greater number of distinguished scholars. I regret that I had but a single day wherein to see King's College Chapel, the beautiful lawns and gardens of the colleges, and a few of its gownsmen.

But I availed myself of some repeated invitations to Oxford.

My new friends showed me their cloisters, the Bodleian Library, the Randolph Gallery, Merton Hall, and the rest. I saw several faithful high-minded young men, some of them in the mood of making sacrifices for peace of mind,—a topic, of course, on which I had no counsel to offer. Their affectionate and gregarious ways reminded me at once of the habits of *our* Cambridge men, though I imputed to these English an advantage in their secure and polished manners. The halls are rich with oaken wainscoting and ceiling. The pictures of the founders hang from the walls ; the tables glitter with plate. A youth came forward

to the upper table, and pronounced the ancient form of grace before meals, which, I suppose, has been in use here for ages, *Benedictus benedicat ; benedicitur, benedicatur.*

It is a curious proof of the English use and wont, or of their good nature, that these young men are locked up every night at nine o'clock, and the porter at each hall is required to give the name of any belated student who is admitted after that hour. Still more descriptive is the fact that out of twelve hundred young men, comprising the most spirited of the aristocracy, a duel has never occurred.

Oxford is old, even in England, and conservative. Its foundations date from Alfred, and even from Arthur, if, as is alleged, the Pheryllt of the Druids had a seminary here. In the reign of Edward I., it is pretended, here were thirty thousand students ; and nineteen most noble foundations were then established. Chaucer found it as firm as if it had always stood ; and it is, in British story, rich with great names, the school of the Island, and the link of England to the learned of Europe. Hither came Erasmus, with delight, in 1547. Albericus Gentilis, in 1580, was relieved and maintained by the university. Albert Alaskie, a noble Polonian, Prince of Sirad, who visited England to admire the wisdom of Queen Elizabeth, was entertained with stage-plays in the Refectory of Christ Church, in 1583. Isaac Casaubon, coming from Henri Quatre of France, by invitation of James I., was admitted to Christ's College, in July, 1613. I saw the Ashmolean Museum, whither Elias Ashmole, in 1682, sent twelve cart-loads of rarities. Here indeed was the Olympia of all Anthony Wood's and Aubrey's games and heroes, and every inch of ground has its lustre. On every side, Oxford is redolent of age and authority. Its gates shut of themselves against modern innovation.

As many sons, almost so many benefactors. It is usual for a nobleman, or indeed for almost every wealthy student, on quitting college, to leave behind him some article of plate ; and gifts of all values, from a hall, or a fellowship, or a library, down to a picture or a spoon, are continually accruing, in the course of a century. My friend Doctor J. gave me the following anecdote. In

Sir Thomas Lawrence's collection at London, were the cartoons of Raphael and Michel Angelo. This inestimable prize was offered to Oxford University for seven thousand pounds. The offer was accepted, and the committee charged with the affair had collected three thousand pounds, when among other friends, they called on Lord Eldon. Instead of a hundred pounds, he surprised them by putting down his name for three thousand pounds. They told him, they should now very easily raise the remainder. "No," he said, "your men have probably already contributed all they can spare; I can as well give the rest; and he withdrew his cheque for three thousand, and wrote four thousand pounds. I saw the whole collection in April, 1848.

In the Bodleian Library, Dr. Bandinel showed me the manuscript Plato, of the date of A.D. 896, brought by Dr. Clarke from Egypt; a manuscript Virgil, of the same century; the first Bible printed at Mentz, (I believe in 1450); and a duplicate of the same, which had been deficient in about twenty leaves at the end. But one day, being in Venice, he bought a room full of books and manuscripts,—every scrap and fragment,—for four thousand louis d'ors, and had the doors locked and sealed by the consul. On proceeding, afterwards, to examine his purchase, he found the twenty deficient pages of his Mentz Bible, in perfect order; brought them to Oxford, with the rest of his purchase, and placed them in the volume; but has too much awe for the Providence that appears in bibliography also, to suffer the reunited parts to be re-bound. The oldest building here is two hundred years younger than the frail manuscript brought by Dr. Clarke from Egypt. No candle or fire is ever lighted in the Bodleian. Its catalogue is the standard catalogue on the desk of every library in Oxford. In each several college, they underscore in red ink on this catalogue the titles of books contained in the library of that college,—the theory being that the Bodleian has all books. This rich library spent during the last year (1847) for the purchase of books £ 1,668.

The logical English train a scholar as they train an engineer. Oxford is a Greek factory, as Wilton mills weave carpet, and Sheffield grinds steel. They know the

use of a tutor, as they know the use of a horse ; and they draw the greatest amount of benefit out of both. The reading men are kept by hard walking, hard riding, and measured eating and drinking, at the top of their condition, and two days before the examination, do no work, but lounge, ride, or run, to be fresh on the college doomsday. Seven years' residence is the theoretic period for a master's degree. In point of fact, it has long been three years' residence, and four years more of standing. This "three years" is about twenty-one months in all.

Oxford is a little aristocracy in itself, numerous and dignified enough to rank with other estates in the realm ; and where fame and secular promotion are to be had for study, and in a direction which has the unanimous respect of all cultivated nations.

This aristocracy, of course, repairs its own losses ; fills places, as they fall vacant, from the body of students. The number of fellowships at Oxford is 540, averaging £ 200 a year, with lodging and diet at the college. If a young American, loving learning, and hindered by poverty, were offered a home, a table, the walks, and the library, in one of these academical palaces, and a thousand dollars a year as long as he chose to remain a bachelor, he would dance for joy.

The effect of this drill is the radical knowledge of Greek and Latin, and of mathematics, and the solidity and taste of English criticism. Whatever luck there may be in this or that award, an Eton captain can write Latin longs and shorts, can turn the Court-Guide into hexameters, and it is certain that a Senior Classic can quote correctly from the *Corpus Poetarum*, and is critically learned in all the humanities. Greek erudition exists on the Isis and Cam, whether the Maud man or the Brazen Nose man be properly ranked or not ; the atmosphere is loaded with Greek learning ; the whole river has reached a certain height, and kills all that growth of weeds which this Castalian water kills. The English nature takes culture kindly. So Milton thought. It refines the Norseman. Access to the Greek mind lifts his standard of taste. He has enough to think of, and, unless of an impulsive nature, is indisposed from writing or speaking, by the fulness of his mind, and

the new severity of his taste. The great silent crowd of thorough-bred Grecians always known to be around him, the English writer cannot ignore. They prune his orations, and point his pen. Hence, the style and tone of English journalism. The men have learned accuracy and comprehension, logic, and pace, or speed of working. They have bottom, endurance, wind. When born with good constitutions, they make those eupeptic studying-mills, the cast-iron men, the *dura ilia*, whose powers of performance compare with ours, as the steam-hammer with the music-box ;—Cokes, Mansfields, Seldens, and Bentleys, and when it happens that a superior brain puts a rider on this admirable horse, we obtain those masters of the world who combine the highest energy in affairs, with a supreme culture.

It is contended by those who have been bred at Eton, Harrow, Rugby, and Westminster, that the public sentiment within each of those schools is high-toned and manly ; that in their playgrounds, courage is universally admired, meanness despised, manly feelings and generous conduct are encouraged : that an unwritten code of honor deals to the spoiled child of rank, and to the child of upstart wealth, an even-handed justice, purges their nonsense out of both, and does all that can be done to make them gentlemen.

Again, at the universities, it is urged that all goes to form what England values as the flower of its national life,—a well-educated gentleman. The German Huber, in describing to his countrymen the attributes of an English gentleman, frankly admits that, " in Germany, we have nothing of the kind. A gentleman must possess a political character, an independent and public position, or, at least, the right of assuming it. He must have average opulence, either of his own, or in his family. He should also have bodily activity and strength, unattainable by our sedentary life in public offices. The race of English gentlemen presents an appearance of manly vigor and form, not elsewhere to be found among an equal number of persons. No other nation produces the stock. And, in England, it has deteriorated. The university is a decided presumption in any man's favor. And so eminent are the members

that a glance at the calendars will show that in all the world one cannot be in better company than on the books of one of the larger Oxford or Cambridge colleges."

Oxford sends out yearly twenty or thirty very able men, and three or four hundred well-educated men.

The diet and rough exercise secure a certain amount of old Norse power. A fop will fight, and, in exigent circumstances, will play the manly part. In seeing these youths, I believed I saw already an advantage in vigor and color and general habit, over their contemporaries in American colleges.

English wealth, falling on their school and university training, makes a systematic reading of the best authors, and to the end of a knowledge how the things whereof they treat really stand: whilst pamphleteer or journalist reading for an argument for a party, or reading to write, or, at all events, for some by-end imposed on them, must read meanly and fragmentarily. Charles I. said that he understood English law as well as a gentleman ought to understand it.

Then they have access to books; the rich libraries collected at every one of many thousands of houses, give an advantage not to be attained by a youth in this country, when one thinks how much more and better may be learned by a scholar who, immediately on hearing of a book, can consult it, than by one who is on the quest for years, and reads inferior books because he cannot find the best.

Again, the great number of cultivated men keep each other up to a high standard. The habit of meeting well-read and knowing men teaches the art of omission and selection.

Universities are, of course, hostile to geniuses, which seeing and using ways of their own, discredit the routine: as churches and monasteries persecute youthful saints. Yet we all send our sons to college, and, though he be a genius, he must take his chance. The university must be retrospective. The gale that gives direction to the vanes on all its towers blows out of antiquity. Oxford is a library, and the professors must be librarians. And I should as soon think of quarrelling with the janitor for not magni-

fying his office by hostile sallies into the street like the Governor of Kertch of Kinburn, as of quarrelling with the professors for not admiring the young neologists who pluck the beards of Euclid and Aristotle, or for attempting themselves to fill their vacant shelves as original writers.

It is easy to carp at college, and the college, if we will wait for it, will have its own turn. Genius exists there also, but will not answer a call of a committee of the House of Commons. It is rare, precarious, eccentric, and darkling. England is the land of mixture and surprise, and when you have settled it that the universities are moribund, out comes a poetic influence from the heart of Oxford, to mould the opinions of cities, to build their houses as simply as birds their nests,* to give veracity to art, and charm mankind, as an appeal to moral order always must. But besides this restorative genius, the best poetry of England of this age, in the old forms, comes from two graduates of Cambridge.

"The true University of these days is a collection of books"—CARLYLE.

THE HINDU NEW YEAR

By S. J. GUNASAGARAM, M.A., London

WHEN Ceylon was a European colony the New Year celebrated by the Hindus as well as the Buddhists in Ceylon was known as the " Hindu New Year." Under independent Ceylon today, the New Year has come to be called " The Sinhalese and Tamil New Year." While in our little Island the New Year has assumed a racial significance, in India the New Year continues to be termed and celebrated as the " Hindu New Year."

The Hindu New Year begins on the day when the Sun moves into the House of Aries (The Ram). It is based on an astronomical event and involves a knowledge of the Zodiacal signs.

Till recently it was supposed that the Chaldaeans (Sumerians and Babylonians) were the originators of the Zodiac. The decipherment of the Mohenjo-Daro inscriptions has brought to light, among other new historical facts, the revelation that the Dravidians had made use of this knowledge long before it reached Sumer. It is now patent that the Dravidians were the original inventors of the Zodiac.

One of the inscriptions in a Mohenjo-Daro seal reads—

Kāl Tīrtu Mīn Édu Mīn Adu Ten Parava

" The Paravas of the South of (the period) the Fish, the Ram (and) the Fish (which period) has finished a canal "—a poetical construction under which a fact is stated :—that the Southern Paravas finished one canal in the period of time from the Fish and the Ram to the Fish. Now since the Fish is the last Zodiacal constellation of the year and the Ram is the first, this period covers one full year (from the Ram to the Fish) : (Heras—Studies in Proto-Indo-Mediterranean Culture : (pp. 176-8).

We give below a transliteration of the inscription in modern Tamil.

Kāl Tīrtu Mīn Édu Mīn Adu Ten Parava

	Tamil	*Meaning*
Kāl	.. கால்	.. Canal
Tīrtu	.. தீர்த்து	.. Completed
Mīn	.. மீன்	.. Fish (constellation)
Édu	.. ஏடு	.. Ram (constellation)
Mīn	.. மீன்	.. Fish (constellation)
Adu	.. அது	.. Of
Ten	.. தென்	.. South
Parava	.. பறவை	.. Bird (Sinhalese ' Parawa ').

Father Heras goes on to say : " therefore the epigraph discloses two of the signs of the Zodiac, the Ram and the Fish, used as unit of a system of reckoning time. Evidently they were portions of the year which correspond to the full Zodiac. Little by little several other constellations were found : the Scale, the Crab, the Water-Jar, the Mother (for the Virgin). ' But one day, in the course of the research,' he adds, ' a new and a greater surprise was in store for me ' (Ibid).

Another seal indicated that the space round the Sun was divided into eight parts which Fr. Heras interpreted as showing the ' Houses of the Sun.' The examination of the lists of Zodiacal constellations of the Tamils and the Tulus showed that " in those lists eight constellations are referred to with a Dravidian word, while the other four are mentioned in Sanskrit. Moreover, the Dravidian months are solar and the Sanskrit lunar. All this seems to be an evident proof that the constellations were originally eight . . . In Sumer the constellations of the Zodiac, as far as we know now, were already twelve. Evidently, therefore, the idea of the Zodiac was taken from Mohenjo-Daro to Sumer, not from Sumer to Mohenjo-Daro :" (Ibid).

The original Dravidian months accordingly consisted of 45 days. Ayurvedic doctors in South India still order that their medical preparations be taken for a period of 45 days.

Referring to the ancient civil calendar of the Tamils Gilbert Slater (Dravidian Element in Indian Culture, pp.71-2) states :—

" The Civil calendar is solar, truly and completely solar, and is not like ours, an originally lunar calendar modified to fit the solar year. It is so uncompromisingly solar that it does not even concern itself to make a month consist of so many days. The ecliptic is divided into twelve divisions, and at whatever moment in the morning, noon or night, the sun enters a new division, at that moment the new month begins. Days began at sunrise, not the local time of sunrise for any place in India, but at the calculated moment of sunrise at the spot on the equator which is also in the meridian of the site of the ancient Tamil Observatory. I do not know whether anyone has ever assigned a date to the adoption of this unique calendar. That it is unique, and that it aims at a degree of astronomical accuracy and consistency beyond that of any other calendar in use, even at the sacrifice of some partial inconvenience, is very significant. It proves the independence and continuous activity of Dravidian Science in the past by India least exposed to non-Dravidian influence."

That the Ram (Aries) was the first constellation of the year is already old in Tamil tradition. The *Pattupattu* 7, 150-161, speaks of " the fast moving sun going from the horned Ram (adu)—♈—to the other Houses."

" In ancient Dravidian the Ram was called edu. In Kannara ' edu ' means sheep." Since edu was the first constellation of the year, another year was ' another edu.' Hence the year was called ' edu,' a word which is reproduced in the Greek ' etos '—Heras—ibid. 176 n. 4). (Sinhalese elu : Tamil adu).

The Mohenjo-Daro pictograph depicting the constellation Harp, Fr. Heras points out, is almost the same as the harp described in the Tamil Epic Silapadikaram, and " has still the same shape in the sculpture of Sanchi and Nagarjunakonda." The Emperor Samundra Gupta played a similar harp, as represented in his gold coins. According to ancient Tamil tradition " this was the only instrument that could imitate the human voice to perfection." In Sumer musical instruments of the same shape were found.

" The Tamils say even today that the first note of the Yal was *sa*, which is the human voice, but the second note was *ri*, which is supposed to be the bellowing of the

bull " (Galpin). This shows that even from early times the harp was identified with the bull and came to be replaced by the Bull (Taurus) as the second constellation of the Sumerian Zodiac. Beschi in his work " A Grammar of the Common Dialect of the Tamil Language " says : " In the modern pictures and signs of the Zodiac, the Tamils represent the second Zodiacal Constellation, ' Gemini,' as two female twins holding one a club and the other a lyre, *i.e.* Yal. The Constellation besides is called Yal."

Similarly Sir William Jones states : " Since their second constellation was Yal, they also call their present second constellation Yal, being practically unacquainted with the change of Taurus instead of Yal made by the Sumerians."

Enough has been said to vindicate the Dravidian origin of the Zodiacal signs. The Sumerians would appear to have taken over the eight constellations of the early Mohenjo-Darians and added on four new constellations which together with the original eight constellations form the twelve signs of the Zodiac found in the modern calendar. It should be a matter of pride to the Ceylonese, be they Moslem, Sinhalese or Tamil, that the New Year the Hindus and Buddhists alike celebrate in India and Ceylon today is the self-same New Year established by the ancient Mohenjo-Darians who spoke a language so much akin to Tamil and not altogether unrelated to old Sinhalese. The New Year which was brought forth by the Dravidians, and recognised as such in India and Ceylon through several milleniums, is quite appropriately termed the Hindu New Year. It has remained as a permanent sign-post of the essential unity of Indo-Ceylon culture. It deserves to be allowed to continue to be so without being twisted to give it a racial significance.

The Tamil

REVERENCE

[The Tamil truly believes that Reverence—reverence for God, for Parents, for Elders, for all that is noble, lovely and true is the only sure basis of all Knowledge. The fine flower of Tolerance grows on the stem of Reverence. And the Fruit thereof is true Culture.]

O Lord, how manifold are thy works !
In wisdom has thou made them all.
The Earth is full of thy riches
So is this great wide sea.

Psalm, CIV.

* * * *

Wisdom seeks the truth of all things which are heard or written irrespective of time and place.

Thiruvalluvar (Kural) (Translation from Tamil).

* * * *

Out of death and ruin the wise fashion things enduring.

Thiruvalluvar (Kural) (Translation from Tamil).

* * * *

Life, like a dome of many coloured glass, stains the white radiance of Eternity.

Shelley (Adonais).

* * * *

Leave all ; take refuge in Me ; I will cleanse thee of all thy sins : grieve not, my son.

The Gita.

Let incense ascend from every altar, let every chapel and chantry ring with the voice of prayer. You will be founding on the meadows and lawns of this earth a Kingdom that is to be.

Nammalvar (*Translation from Tamil*).

* * * *

Of the fire, thou art the heat; of the flower thou art the fragrance;

Of the stone, thou art the lustre; of the word thou art the truth.

Paripadal (*Translated from Tamil by Father Xavier Thaninayagam*).

* * * *

He who falls a victim to inaction, and does not labour strenuously, first meets censure from friends, but will finally have to put up with everyone's contempt.

Kural (*Translated from Tamil by C. Rajagopalachariar*).

* * * *

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

Tennyson.

* * * *

Renovate yourself today, renovate yourself tomorrow, renovate yourself every day.

Emperor Tang.

BURGHER ASSOCIATIONS WITH JAFFNA

[IT has been said that all good Americans, when they die, go to Paris. Equally, all good Burghers of the upper jat have gone to Jaffna to be born ! We publish an extract from the Reminiscences of the late Mr. Joseph Grenier where he tells of the first-class Burgher families associated with Jaffna. From Lorenz to Lucian de Zilwa—the Burgher contribution to Ceylon has been very great indeed. If, today, Ceylon is at all known in the world of culture it is because of Collett and Keyt and Wendt. It is a pity that in these days of parochial communalism, when halfwits have been pushed into temporary power, the services of this great community have been so quickly forgotten that many of the best of them have decided, like the Arabs of old, to fold their tents and go away. The Burghers forget that the present phase of tribalism and individualism, under the guise of religionism, cannot last.]

IN 1867, when I left Jaffna for Colombo, there were resident in this town, which was a typical Dutch one, a larger number of the Dutch Burgher community bearing these names :—

Grenier, Toussaint, Arndt, Krause, de Rooy, Koch, Vanderstraaten, Krickenbeek, Leembruggen, Anderson, Maartensz, Margenout, Strantenberg, Ebell, Modder, Speldewinde, Heynsberg, Vanzyl, Claasz, de Hoedt, de Lile, Jobsz, Breckman, de Neise, Schneider, Wittebron, Lieversz, Vandergucht, Bartholomeusz, Van Hagt, Thiele, Gratiaen, Altendorf, Keegel, Boudewyn, Mattysz, Janseque, Thiedeman, Beekmeyer, Meyer, Francke, Rulach, Roelofsz.

There were others, with Dutch or European names, who were not regarded as Burghers. The Burghers owned slaves before the British Occupation and after, and it was a common practice with them to give their names to them. I know of two cases, at least, where the descendants of slaves prided themselves on having Dutch names. I believe some of them are on the Burgher Electorate.

I have already said that my father was Secretary of the District Court of Jaffna. The Toussaints were a numerous family in Jaffna. The head of the family, as early as I can remember, was Peter John, the District Judge, or Sitting Magistrate, of Point Pedro. I saw him more than once travelling into town with his wife, in a carriage drawn by labourers. He was a portly old gentleman, and I think he administered patriarchal justice in Point Pedro. Punishment for thefts and robberies was simple and sure. Culprits were generally whipped instantly on sentence being passed, which, of course, had a very salutary effect. There were no appeals, and there were no Appellate Courts to reverse findings on fact, which reminds me of an interesting conversation I had with the then Brigadier-General, at a dinner at Queen's House in 1910, and on the mistake of allowing appeals in petty criminal cases. He told me that he had to exercise magisterial powers when stationed at a certain cantonment, and that when the prisoner expressed his intention to appeal from a sentence of whipping, he would advise him to do so after the sentence had been duly carried out.

The head of the family of Arndt was the Colonial Chaplain at Jaffna. His grandson and great-grandson both entered the Anglican ministry. The former is living in retirement now ; the latter is the Vice-Principal of St. John's College, Panadura, and his brother is a member of the Indian Civil Service.

Krause was the Town Constable of Jaffna and was a giant in stature. He claimed to be of Austrian descent. Vanzyl was another giant in stature and was the Sub-Collector of Customs at Point Pedro for many years. He married my cousin, Sophia.

There were two de Rooys in Jaffna—John William and Edward. The latter became blind after a severe attack of typhoid fever. The former was the Secretary of the Minor Courts and was very much esteemed and respected. I believe the family was of Belgian descent. One of the grandsons of John Williams is a partner in the legal firm of De Vos and Gratiaen.

The Kochs, like the Toussaints, were a numerous family. The best known among them were the brothers

Cyrus Koch and John Koch, who were proctors; Charles, who was a son of the former, was Colonial Chaplain for many years, and Edwin Lawson, a son of the latter, was one of the most eminent surgeons and physicians of his day. The Kochs were a musical family and were, I think, of German descent.

The Leembruggen family had for one of their ancestors Count Van Ranzow. The Krickenbeek family was rather a small one but was one of the best families in the Burgher community equally with the Grenier, Toussaint, Koch, Ebell, Anderson, Maartensz, Modder, Gratiaen, Breekman and Theile families. The only Beekmeyer in Jaffna whom I saw was the Colonial Surgeon. He had received only a local training in medicine and surgery and had to attend on the prisoners in jail in the Fort. He used to go about in what was known as a push-push—a vehicle, curiously constructed, with a man in front drawing it and another pushing it from behind. In murder cases his duty was to perform post-mortem examinations as best he could. He got on very well before Mr. Justice Temple, but one day, unfortunately for him, he was called in to give evidence before Sir Edward Creasy. A question arose in the course of the trial as to the direction in which the knife had travelled after it had entered the body of the deceased. The doctor said he had made a careful autopsy, and gave particulars. "What instrument did you use, Sir?" asked the Chief. "A pakotes," replied the Doctor with some hesitation. "A pakotes?" exclaimed the Chief, "and what is a pakotes?" he asked. The doctor stammered and stuttered, and not being ready with the description of the instrument, said, "A pakotes is a—a —pakotes." This put the Chief Justice into a good humour, and he appealed to the Interpreter, thinking it was a Tamil word, for an explanation of the meaning of the word. "The word, my Lord," said the Interpreter, "is, I think, a Portuguese or Italian word, and is pronounced "pakotti" and means an arecanut cutter, something like a pair of sharp scissors."* It presently transpired that the Doctor was not provided with surgical instruments and had to perform *postmortem* examinations with any sharp instru-

* The word is obviously derived from the Tamil word: pakkuvetti.

ment that came handy. The good old Doctor was ever afterwards known as " Dr. Pakotti," which he did not mind at all. It was remarked that the Chief bowed to him politely on his leaving the witness box. The Doctor and some others thought that the Chief was pleased with his knowledge of surgery and his skill as a surgeon, but I am afraid there were many others who thought differently.

In the Speldewinde family there was, in the remote past, a judicial functionary who held the office of District Judge of the Vanni. His descendants were very proud of the distinction and introduced the fact even in ordinary conversation. In the old edition of the *Thesawalame* there are a few deliverances of Judge Toussaint and Judge Speldewinde on moot points relating to inheritance and the dowry system, which are not very enlightening, but they might well form models for terse and crisp judgments.

The proctors I knew amongst the Burghers at the time I have mentioned were Cyrus Koch, John Koch, Tom Anderson, Maartensz, and Strantenberg. The Tamil proctors were Brown Sinnatamby, Mc Gown Tampoo, Drummond Sinnacutty, Clark Changarapillai, Gabriel Puvaraisingham, Benjamin Santiagopulle, Sinnacutty (who had escaped an American name), Ambalavaner and two or three others whose names I cannot recall.

The leading proctor was Mr. Cyrus Koch. After work he used to take a short walk on the Esplanade opposite the District Court before going home, and once I remember his speaking to me and asking my name and other details. The other Burgher proctors shared the practice with the Tamil proctors, but living was cheap and they earned enough to live upon comfortably.

Tom Anderson had a large house in town and a country house in one of the small Islands, Manditivu, about three or four miles from town. He was, so I was told, a very first-rate cross-examiner, and had the largest practice in the Police Court. He was very popular with the Jaffnese and I have often heard him referred to as " Tompulle." He was a handsome old Dutch gentleman, but fell into great poverty in his declining years and emigrated to Negombo and, I believe, died there. He had three sons,

one of whom was Port Surgeon in Colombo. He had a horror of being assigned to appear before the Supreme Court in criminal cases, and, a week before the advent of the Judge, he would retire to his country seat, and return to town when the Supreme Court party was on its way back to Colombo. The only Burgher proctor who faced the terrors of appearance before Sir Edward Creasy was Cyrus Koch. I believe Mr. Justice Morgan made some not very complimentary remarks in his diary, published in Digby's book, as to the way in which Mr. Cyrus Koch conducted the defence in some sessions cases heard by him.

John Koch excelled more in the art of photography than in the exercise of his profession, but he brought up a large family in comfort, and was an accomplished musician.

Strantenberg was just beginning his practice, but I know that when I went to Jaffna in the early seventies he had a large business and briefed me in several big cases. He was never tired of speaking to me about my father, who had shown him great kindness when he was a friendless youth. He was a quiet, well-mannered man and a good friend.

THE PROSE OF THOMAS GRAY

[THERE was never a sweeter being than Thomas Gray, the English Poet. His life, as given by Edmund Gosse, in the English Men of Letters series, once read, will become a possession of all time. The prose writings of Poets are always of the greatest interest, for it is through prose that they emerge to Poetry. Would you be a Poet? Then write prose; and, if you can, Prose such as this.]

JUST beyond Helen Crag, opens one of the sweetest landscapes that art ever attempted to imitate. The bosom of the mountains, spreading here into a broad basin discovers in the midst Grasmere Water; its margin is hollowed into small bays with bold eminences, some of them rocks, some of soft turf that half conceal and vary the figure of the little lake they command. From the shore a low promontory pushes itself far into the water, and on it stands a white village with the parish church rising in the midst of it; hanging enclosures, corn-fields, and meadows green as an emerald, with their trees, hedges, and cattle, fill up the whole space from the edge of the water. Just opposite to you is a large farmhouse at the bottom of a steep smooth lawn embosomed in old woods, which climb half-way up the mountainside, and discover above them a broken line of crags, that crown the scene. Not a single red tile, no flaring gentleman's house, or garden-walls, break in upon the repose of this little unsuspected paradise; but all is peace, rusticity, and happy poverty in its neatest and most becoming attire.

* * * *

In the evening walked alone down to the Lake by the side of Crow Park after sunset, and saw the solemn colouring of light draw on, the last gleam of sunshine fading away on the hill-tops, the deep serene of the waters, and the long shadows of the mountains thrown across them, till they nearly touched the hithermost shore. At distance heard the murmur of many waterfalls, not audible in the day-time. Wished for the Moon, but she was *dark to me and silent, hid in her vacant interlunar cave.*

Our path here tends to the left, and the ground gently rising and covered with a glade of scattering trees and bushes on the very margin of the water, opens both ways the most delicious view, that my eyes ever beheld. Behind you are the magnificent heights of Walla Crag ; opposite lie the thick hanging woods of Lord Egremont, and Newland Valley, with green and smiling fields embosomed in the dark cliffs ; to the left the jaws of Borrowdale, with that turbulent chaos of mountain behind mountain rolled in confusion ; beneath you, and stretching far away to the right, the shining purity of the lake, just ruffled with the breeze, enough to show it is alive, reflecting rocks, woods, fields, and inverted tops of mountains, with the while buildings of Keswick, Crossthwaite Church, and Skiddaw for a background at a distance.

* * * *

Walked over a spongy meadow or two, and began to mount this hill through a broad and straight green alley among the trees, and with some toil gained the summit. From hence saw the lake opening directly at my feet, majestic in its calmness, clear and smooth as a blue mirror, with winding shores and low points of land covered with green enclosures, white farmhouses looking out among the trees, and cattle feeding. The water is almost everywhere bordered with cultivated lands gently sloping upwards till they reach the feet of the mountains, which rise very rude and awful with their broken tops on either hand. Directly in front, at better than three miles distance, Place Fell, one of the bravest among them, pushes its bold broad breast into the midst of the lake, and forces it to alter its course, forming first a large bay to the left, and then bending to the right.

* * * *

The country is all a garden, gay, rich, and fruitful, and from the rainy season had preserved, till I left it, all that emerald verdure, which commonly one only sees for the first fortnight of the spring. In the west part of it from every eminence the eye catches some long winding reach of the Thames or Medway, with all their navigation ; in the east, the sea breaks in upon you, and mixes its white transient sails and glittering blue expanse with the deeper and brighter greens of the woods and the corn.

I set out one morning before five o'clock, the moon shining through a dark and misty autumnal air, and got to the sea-coast time enough to be at the Sun's levée. I saw the clouds and dark vapours open gradually to right and left, rolling over one another in great smoky wreaths, and the tide (as it flowed gently in upon the sands) first whitening, then slightly tinged with gold and blue; and all at once a little line of insufferable brightness that (before I can write these few words) was grown to half an orb, and now to a whole one, too glorious to be distinctly seen. It is very odd it makes no figure on paper; yet I shall remember it as long as the sun, or at least as long as I endure.

"Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires."—GRAY.

A PAGE OF SCIENCE

THIS is to be a thrilling journey—away from the greenswards and marigolds of Mother Earth and on to the cold and bleak domains of the Moon. We have flown clear of the Earth's pull. We are heading away up and up and up. We shall get to the Moon in a little over two days. As we look down we find that the geographers were right, after all. The Earth **is** round in shape. How small she seems ! If we could see her from some distant Star, our Earth would appear in the sky as a blue and twinkling piece of tiny light.

The blue sky, which we know so well, is changing colour. We are passing away from the atmosphere around the Earth. Now the sky has become a very dark blue. Now the blue is giving place to violet. Heavens ! What a lovely deep violet—as though it were the robe of a Queen. Now the violet is growing deeper and deeper as though it were blood. And suddenly the colour of the sky is getting to be black—and, in a trice, **it is all coal black and cold.** We have left the Earth's atmosphere. The Sun is now terrible to behold. He stands forth in all the splendour of his naked glory. The clothing through which we saw him upon Earth—the air, the dust, fog, rain, vapour—all have fallen away. His fiery, steely light stabs our eyes. The Moon, on the other side of the sky, is also bright and perfectly clear. There is no atmosphere to scatter the Sun's light as it falls upon the Moon. The Stars no longer twinkle. They are steady lamps lit with the glory of God.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A POET AND SAINT

[WE continue in this number, extracts from the Autobiography of the late Rev. Walter Stanley Senior of Balliol College, Oxford, and Trinity College, Kandy.]

THE first fives-court at Trinity was built with money generously given by a friend of my wife's, one who spent the Christmas of 1906 in Kandy, and there first heard the mission-call to herself, now a Bishop's wife in China. That fives-court, and two others added later, were a boon to me and to many. In the course of such economical remodelling and furnishing of class-rooms, some old wood becoming available, I called in a Sinhalese carpenter who made of it a bench, my most intimate memory of Kandy. For wherever it stood, whether in the broad Dutch verandah of the old College Bungalow, or awhile in the open on the hillside when the Gibsons were in the new-built house on the hill-top, or again in the verandah of that hill-top house when we succeeded the Gibsons, there my heart's work was done. There many a lad, Sinhalese, Tamil, Dutch descendant, English, Eurasian, either at my request or his own, after evening prayers sat with me. There I think I gave myself to the youth of Lanka, best fulfilling the impulse which made me a schoolmaster and a missionary.

There we spoke of life, and I maintained to each in turn that God had a place for him. Those interviews often seemed vital: and I trust that some power of them still after years persists.

The Pan-Anglican Congress took place in 1908, and Fraser, miraculously (we thought) recovered, was among the effective speakers. So persuasively did he press the claims of the school and related enterprises that £5,000 of the Pan-Anglican collection was assigned to work in Ceylon. A friend whose generosity in the mission-field has been princely is said to have given an equal sum, bringing the equipment in money with which Fraser

returned to Ceylon, two years after he had left it, supposed a dying man, up to £13,000, which made mighty extension possible. Better even than the equipment in money was the equipment in men: for at his instance came with him, or just before him, Gibson, now Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge: Kenneth Saunders, later Doctor of Letters, well-known for his Buddhist studies: and Norman Campbell, killed on the field of battle, a brilliant scientist from Balliol. Is it wonder the College leaped into wider life?

The Prize-giving of 1909 was a great event, partly for the restoration of Fraser himself to Ceylon, partly for the coming of these fine recruits, and partly for the visit, to give away the prizes, of Fraser's father, Sir Andrew Fraser, on relinquishing the Governorship of Bengal.

The first five-year period of service with the Church Missionary Society ended in 1911, and early in that year we travelled home to England, my wife, myself, and two boys aged five and three, for the first time by Bibby liner.

In the Bay of Biscay the Derbyshire encountered heavy but regular seas, which she rode well as all Bibby liners do: the motion mothering down later to a gentle cradling, more soothing even than stillness. Further, the approach to England after five years of absence was actually painful. As we passed Ushant and slid into the silver haze of the Channel from which Start Point emerged I understood again the Psalmist's words, 'My reins chasten me,' for the pain in the back, like the crack of a whip, which sometimes attacks me under sudden, excessive emotion, was very marked at that moment. I did not then know Newbolt's poem, 'Homeward Bound,' nor Villiers Stanford's setting of it, nor Peter Dawson's singing of it; but it has for long been a cherished record: and as "Simple Aveu" brings back Kandy, so 'Homeward Bound' brings back Biscay and Ushant, the Devon and Dorset coast.

Northward she glides, and through the enchanted haze
Faint on the verge her far hope dawns at last,
The phantom sky-line of a shadowy down

Whose pale white cliffs below
Through sunny mists aglow

Like noonday ghosts of summer mòonshine gleam—
Soft as old sorrow, bright as old renown—
There lies the hope of all our mortal dream.

* * *

The first fortnight of this first furlough was spent at the hospitable house of a lady whose family had known my wife's on another mission field. Two brothers were well-known actors, and one of them was at home at the time. Evening by evening after dinner he recited without book the poems of Rudyard Kipling, to me until then unknown. It was a revelation for which I have always been thankful. I had always been zealous in reading aloud, following my father who in this way also was gifted. I had won reading prizes. I had heard Canon Fleming at York recite ' The Bells ': still better, I had heard Canon Ainger of the exquisite voice read privately to the Sixth Form at Marlborough, in continuance of readings which Tennyson used to give (doubtless mouthing out his hollow 'o's and 'a's) in Bradley's far-off day. Indeed Ainger's reading of Tennyson's ' Brook,' with his marvellous modulations of tone where narrative yields to lyric, lives in my mind as the high-water mark in this kind of thing. But now I learned something further: not to be afraid of crude rhythm: not to be afraid of a voice lifted up to its loudest. ' The Song of the Men's Side,' duly explained beforehand, duly shouted as Kipling bids it be shouted, is one of the most effective of platform pieces: is moreover heroic poetry. " And with ' Boots,' " said my new acquaintance, " I have always scored a success. I have never known it fail." In my measure, a very inferior performer, I think I may make the same claim.

I gave many readings (book in hand—but no matter) at Kandy and in Colombo, and these two always succeeded.

What I learned thus at Limpsfield and fully made good in experience causes me gravely to doubt of the ' poetry speaking ' of which one sometimes reads: of which, however, I never heard but one exponent (but he a judge and an awarder) who after dinner in a Swiss Hotel once ' spoke ' some poetry so lamentably, with almost every word, certainly every pronoun, incorrectly empha-

sized, that when I was privately asked as Chaplain to return a vote of thanks, Yorkshire candour coupled with a keen jealousy for the honour of English, kept me indignantly silent.

Kipling was a new world to me. He became, and remains, a favourite. I realize the limitations of his verse: it is metallic, lacking in magic. Yet he gets us: we are wrought to sympathy with hopes and fears we heeded not till he taught us. Of certain moods he is 'the Master,' witness 'The Feet of the Young Men.' And is not 'The Explorer' great? And the tales! These, too, the test of reading aloud proclaims as among the finest. They go from strength, and the end is ever the best: for sample, take 'Toomai of the Elephants' from its opening words to its close in the chant of Machua Appa. And when we wish to forget dullness, staleness, routine: when we wish to quit England and Europe, we take up 'Kim' and are lost. Live India, India, for ever!

The main part of that first furlough was spent in Northwood, Middlesex, where, still dallying with the idea of a B.D. Oxford, I did a good deal of appropriate reading: at the same time helping the kindly Vicar of Holy Trinity Church. The little house we occupied at Northwood was new, and the builder allowed us to name it. We called it "Nalanda" after the Resthouse under the great tamarind trees between Dambulla and Matale, Ceylon, the last stage of the memorable tour with T. of the Civil Service.

At Northwood occurred an episode ending in an epigram too good to be lost. It was a Sunday afternoon and I was baptizing as infants two children, orphans, I think, who being nevertheless some years of age and able to stand on their own legs, chose to be frightened as at some surgical operation, and to cry with all their might. In vain I sought to insert the words of the service into interstices of silence: when one child ceased the other child began: and what should have been lovely became ludicrous. The Parish Nurse burst out laughing, and I could but do the same. At this moment up came with their pushcart, walking with their mother, the two little sons, to fetch me home to tea. 'Mummy, what is daddy

doing ?' was their question, hearing the cries. Mummy (who avers she said ' giving ' not ' calling ') casting round for an explanation of baptism suited to small understandings replied, ' He is pouring water on children, and calling them names.' They thought daddy very cruel.

Something similar befell in Ceylon. In the course of a Students ' Conference at Negombo the Anglican members felt in duty bound to support the Sinhalese clergyman of the town in a baptism then taking place. Here again the child, perhaps six years old, was frightened and gave trouble. Whereupon the Vicar, who spoke excellent English, as so many Sinhalese do, in continuing to read the service, insisted that the child, a girl, should ' renounce the Devil and all Her works', the (unconscious) mental processess of which seemed plain, and provoked our smiles.

At Northwood, having always had an interest in popular astronomy, I read two books by Professor Percival Lowell, of Flagstaff, Arizona, about the planet Mars, of which he made special study : noting of course his defence of the proposition that Mars is inhabited, the main burden of the book, and noting, still more, his inference that there is no war among Martians.

The idea slept in my mind until the great war aroused it, when it took shape in verses which, metallic as they may be, may yet be thought, in these uneasy days, to have a message.

Another book read at Northwood with much interest was the Life of E. E. Bowen, the Harrow master, of whose songs with John Farmer's settings I already had some knowledge. ' Byron lay ' and ' Sfemuel the Bethlehemite ' are surely something very much more than verse.

On my various furloughs I tried to see something of any good English schools within reach : and it may have been about 1911 that I visited St. Olave's Tower Bridge, London. I had a brief interview with a great Personality, W. G. Rushbrook, the Head Master, who then passed me on to an assistant. On our tour of inspection I enquired the differentia of the school. He answered, ' The Picture Gallery, and the Head Master's hymn-book.' Of

this, the St. Olave's Hymnal, though privately printed, I was allowed to buy a copy, a possession for ever. Like any good Olavian I have pondered it as it is meant to be pondered. I have used it in many a reading in Kandy, Colombo, and England. I have found in its range and ripeness of comment huge addition to mental treasure. 'God make thee good as thou art beautiful' has often been my prayer for a pupil. 'Hold Thou my hands,' a beautiful poem by William Canton, has often been my prayer for myself. These, with Shemuel the Bethlehemite, and verse by John Huntly Skrine, and very much else, I first found in the leaves of this book unique.

In 1912 I returned to Ceylon for a second period of service, about three months ahead of my wife and our two boys. I travelled by the Orient Line, the Orsova, and this time saw Toulon, Naples, Otranto.

We left Toulon just about sunset. The French Mediterranean Squadron were making their Autumn manoeuvres, and I have vivid recollection of the swift flashes of artillery that stabbed the dusk from the dim war-hulls seven miles distant, and the cracks of doom ensuing. There was an air of menace abroad : 1912 called to 1914.

Unaided memory retains little of the earlier part of my second period of missionary service in Ceylon. The Gibsons had moved long since to the Training College, Peradeniya, and the beautiful two-storeyed bungalow which they had occupied, on the very top of the building-sprinkled hill, passed to the Vice-Principal. There on my wife's arrival with the two boys we spent perhaps the two happiest years of our lives, and there our two daughters, the second pair of a well-balanced family, were born. The giant cotton-tree that grew on the slope below in all its scarlet glories, and the verandah's vista of lovely Kandyan hills, Spring Hill, Ambuluwawa and blue-distant Kabaragala, I have tried to describe elsewhere. But the colour and veriety of it all, the teaching, the preaching, the instructions of catechumens, the public baptisms, the masters' meetings, the debates, the readings, the expeditions, the visits to planters and their Churches in the tea-hills, the entertainments, the visits of distinguished people, the inauguration

of social service, the games, above all the individual friendships, the multiplicity which made life at Trinity as rich as anywhere in the world—all this I can never compass.

But I must make mention of Elkaduwa, not very far from Kandy, for in that region I experienced, once in a most marked manner, that same almost preternatural experience which came to me as a boy, alone on the moors near Sheffield.

The Elkaduwa Church was mostly served by ' padres ' from Trinity College, and the Elkaduwa Bungalow was occupied by a succession of hospitable planters. The common course was to reach Elkaduwa on the Saturday afternoon, take service on Sunday forenoon, and walk the six miles over Hunasgiriya mountain in time for afternoon service at Kellebokke, spend the night there, and make Kandy on Monday morning.

Elkaduwa is fourteen miles from Wattegama Station where a motor would be in waiting to take us by the mountain-road of magnificent prospects—Ceylon is full of such—under Hunasgiriya Peak and past Hunasgiriya Falls, up to Elkaduwa village and up beyond that to the bungalow. Once, electing to walk, I was impressed, almost oppressed, by the interminable miles of rubber-trees I passed. Getting clear of these I had time, on the open stretches of the mountain-road to sit and let the vast distance, the mountainous masses of Kandy and Maturata, sink in, a part of the mind.

Service and ' breakfast ' over, I started one Sunday about noon for Kellebokke. Big cloudy shapes of beauty screened the sun and made grateful shade. Guided and accompanied by a box-cooly, I climbed over Hunasgiriya on the further side from that which is seen, across the Dumbara Valley, from Lady Horton's Drive, Kandy. We had left the tea-fields behind: we had skirted the bracken in which the old polo-ground, now grazed by cattle, is framed: and we had addressed ourselves to the long ascent through the mountain-grass that leads, not unpleasantly steep, to the Galleheria Gap, with its disclosure of the ' Knuckles ' range, an entirely separate region.

Hunasgiriya's Peak was above me: Hunasgiriya's side, sloping to the polo-ground, seen little in its lap, below me: Matale and the smaller Matale hills at deep distance below me: Dambulla and the storied plains, Polonnaruwa and the north at yet deeper distance beyond me: the whispering wind in the little solitary bush beside me: and once again immortality came round me—the beaded lightning of life.

"If thou indeed derive thy light from Heaven,
Then, to the measure of that heaven-born light,
Shine, Poet!"—WORDSWORTH.

PAGES FOR THE YOUNG

[WE continue the story of David Copperfield. Little Reader, ask Mother to read this to you at bed time.]

MRS. GUMMIDGE did not always make herself as agreeable as she might have. She was rather of a fretful disposition. One day Mrs. Gummidge was in a low state of mind. In the forenoon, when the fire smoked, she burst into tears. "I am a lone lorn creature," she said, "and every thing goes contrairy with me."

"It will soon leave off," said Peggotty—David's Peggotty. "Besides, you know, it's not more disagreeable to you than to us."

"I feel it more," said Mrs. Gummidge.

§ 15

Mrs. Gummidge was always given the warmest and snuggest place in the room. Her chair was certainly the easiest. But it didn't suit her that day at all. Though she was seated nearest the fireside she complained of the cold. At last she shed tears on the subject. "It is certainly very cold," said Peggotty. "Everybody must feel it so."

"I feel it more than other people," said Mrs. Gummidge.

§ 16

At dinner, Mrs. Gummidge was always helped immediately after David. David as a visitor of distinction was given the first helping. The fish were small and bony. The potatoes were a little burnt. Every one at the table acknowledged that this was something of a disappointment. But Mrs. Gummidge said she felt it more than the others did, and shed tears again.

§ 17

Mr. Peggotty went occasionally to a public house called The Willing Mind. Accordingly, when Mr. Peggotty came home that night it was about nine o'clock.

Mrs. Gummidge was knitting in her corner. Every one else in the room was occupied cheerfully. But Mrs. Gummidge had not made any other remark than a forlorn sigh. She had never raised her eyes since dinner.

" Well, mates," said Mr. Peggotty in a cheerful voice, " and how are you all ? "

Everyone in the room said something to welcome him. Every one except Mrs. Gummidge. She only shook her head over her knitting.

" Cheer up, old girl ! " said Mr. Peggotty, with a clap of his hands. " What's amiss ? "

Mrs. Gummidge did not appear to be able to cheer up. She took out an old black handkerchief and wiped her eyes. But she did not put it back in her pocket. She kept it out, ready for use.

" What's amiss, dame ? " said Mr. Peggotty.

" Nothing," returned Mrs. Gummidge. " You've come from The Willing Mind, Daniel ? "

" Why ? yes. I took a short spell at The Willing Mind to-night," said Mr. Peggotty.

" I'm sorry I should drive you there,"said Mrs. Gummidge.

" Drive ! I don't want no driving," said Mr. Peggotty, with an honest laugh. " I only go too ready ! "

" Oh ! no," said Mrs. Gummidge, wiping her eyes. " You go there to be rid of me."

" Don't you believe a bit of it," said Mr. Peggotty.

" Yes, yes, it is," cried Mrs. Gummidge. " I know what I am. I am a lone lorne creature. Everything goes contrairy with me. I go contrairy with everybody. I feel more than other people do. I show it more."

BOOK REVIEW

NATURE IN ANCIENT TAMIL POETRY by Xavier S. Thaninayagam, M.A., M.Litt., S.T.D. Price Rs. 5/-. (Copies of the Book are available at The Book Centre, Colombo.)

ALTHOUGH unacquainted with the Sangam Literature available today to students of Tamil literature, Dr. G. U. Pope, nearly forty-five years ago, after a study of the Tamil classics known in his day wrote :—

" Although the very ancient, copious and refined Tamil language is inferior to none, it is regarded by most people as the (probably barbarous)vernacular of a people living somewhere in a remote district. Neither our Indian Government nor do our Universities (British) fully recognize the value of Tamil literature. So those who spend their lives in the study of the South Indian classics must resemble men seeking for pearls under water."

Dr. Winslow, another master of Western classics and a student of Tamil, declared :—

" It is not perhaps extravagant to say that in its poetic form the Tamil is more polished and exact than the Greek, and in both dialects, with its borrowed treasures, more copious than the Latin."

Their admiration for this great Dravidian language would have been many times greater had they lived to read the great classics of the Sangam Literature made known to us in recent years.

Early European scholars in India who came in contact with Sanskrit and found in it a language related to Greek, Latin and German, and still more ancient than these, gave it an importance and a recognition that made European scholars believe that Indian Religions, Poetry and Philosophy were enshrined in that Indo-Aryan language and that it was more or less the sole vehicle of Indian culture and thought. Tamil failed to interest them, partly because they had hardly any opportunity of studying it but mainly because of the prejudice formed in favour of Sanskrit

due to its affinity with the European languages. Tamil and its sister Dravidian languages continued to remain a closed book to the vast majority of European scholars. The Tamil people, however, proud of their great heritage, continued in their quiet and confident manner to love, to cherish and to express their deepest thoughts in their own matchless tongue. The enthusiasm with which the Tamil studied English has enabled some of them to inform the world of its antiquity and its all pervasive cultural influence in the life of the peoples of the Indian sub-Continent and to reveal to the world some of its hitherto unadvertised treasures.

This delightful work by Rev. Xavier Thani Nayagam, " Nature in Ancient Tamil Poetry," is, without doubt, the most valuable contribution made in English, in recent times, dealing with a neglected aspect of Tamil literature.

The author illustrates the approach to Nature by Tamil poets from the works of the Second Sangam period ' which was probably contemporaneous with the age of the Hebrew Prophets and the Greek Philosophers, of Buddha and Confucius, an age which marks the dawn of a new World.' The works referred to are *Agananuru*, *Aingurunuru*, *Kalittogai*, *Kuruntogai*, *Narrinai*, *Paripadal*, *Patirupattu* and *Purananuru*.

It is the learned author's opinion that some of the poems in *Purananuru*, for instance, ' may be classed among the best of Nature Poetry in World literature,' an opinion he has convincingly illustrated by quotations translated wherever he could ' without violating completely the beauty of the original.' A study of Tamil literature, he tells us, will show ' that in a corner of Peninsular India a people developed an interpretation of Nature the like of which was never conceived on the plains watered by the Ganges or on the banks of the Nile, or the Tiber or on the shores of the Aegean Sea.'

In the introductory chapter the author defines '*Agam*' and '*Puram*' poetry, a fundamental division in Tamil poetics, made on the basis of psychological and psychic experience. '*Agam*' deals with love, while '*Puram*' consists of didactic, elegiac and panegyric poetry.

In the first chapter he describes the 'background'—the geographical features of the TamilNad—which have had a decisive influence on the character and culture of the Tamils and the inspiration of their poets. In the second chapter the author gives us a picture of the 'Nature, and Life of the People'; in the third chapter he explains the concept of Nature of the Sangam poets and the poetic conventions followed by them. He points out how the Tamils divided the land occupied by them into five regions, corresponding to the five different landscapes found therein, and "ordained that poetic themes were to have a definite geographical district as their background; and the imagery for each theme was to be taken from objects belonging to its appropriate region and from none other." 'It seems impossible,' says the author, 'that more than two thousand years before Le Play, the Tamils could have focussed their attention on natural environment and on nature-occupations which are the foundations of material culture.' Each region was named by the most significant flower that grows in the region; and a complete and accurate study of the flora, fauna and the seasons was imposed on the Tamil poets by poetic tradition and rule. To the Tamil poets Nature was important only in relation to man and they 'made man their greatest study, not man of one class or society, but universal man'. A familiarity with ancient Tamil poetry, the author suggests, should certainly make the studies of even Western scholars on 'the poetic interpretation of Nature far more accurate and complete.'

Chapter four is devoted to the 'Historical and Ethical interpretation of Nature' and the fifth chapter to the 'Religious Interpretation of Nature.' In this connection, the Author gives expression to a profound observation which can be appreciated only by those who have studied the Religion of the Tamils as separate from 'Hinduism,' the Brahmanical interpretation of the Indo-Aryan. He points out that the belief in one God, Creator and Supreme Ruler of the Universe, was prevalent in Sangam times, and once the elements of Brahmanism and Puranic religion are separated from Sangam literature, the elements that remain present a very elevated stage of religious thought.

This high ideal of monotheism is found developed in pure Saivaism which is still the dominant creed of the ' Hindu ' Tamils.

Chapter six illustrates ' the Five Fold Division ' and the poetic conventions associated with them, while in chapter seven we are given a picture of the landscape of the Tamil country as painted by the Sangam poets. The chapters, studied with care, will enable the reader to appreciate the original outlook of the Tamil poets in their study of Nature and in their approach to Nature. In the final chapter the author gives us a comparative study of Nature poetry in Tamil with European and Sanskrit Nature poetry, and incidentally points out that ' where European poetry took inspiration from the pageant of the seasons, Tamil poetry based itself on the regions ' and that the Tamil poets, like the greatest of English poets, made ' Nature second poetic thought.'

This is a remarkable and fascinating study which keeps the reader thrilled to the end. It is a work which not only reveals profound scholarship, and an appreciation of poetic thought and expression as illustrated in the works of European and Tamil classical poets, but it is at the same time a work of art which unfolds a devotion to truth and an impartiality of outlook not often ascribed to Christians who touch on aspects of indigenous culture.

Father Thani Nayagam, the author, is a Catholic priest and one steeped in Christian lore and the European classics. His knowledge of his mother-tongue and his candid appreciation of the religious life, the ethical outlook and the high purpose that inspires the love of Nature as presented by the Tamil poets, is a clear rebuttal of the taunt of denationalisation made by non-Christians against Christians, and Christian Missionaries in particular. He belongs to that great ' family ' of Catholic Fathers such as Beschi, Gnanaprakasar and Heras who, in the midst of their priestly duties, devoted their time and intellect to the study of Tamil culture and the religious and literary treasures found embedded in ancient Tamil poetry.

S. J. G.

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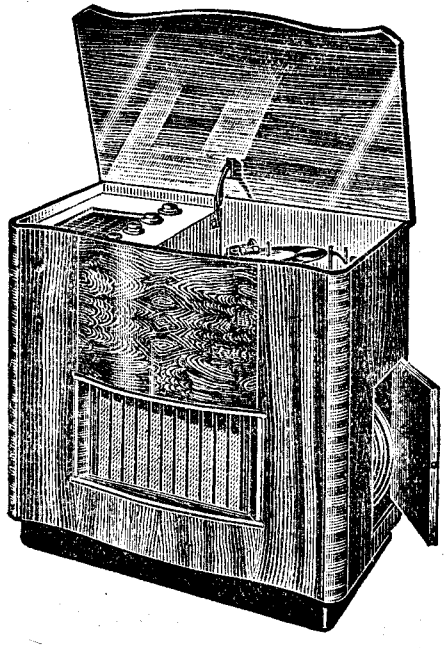

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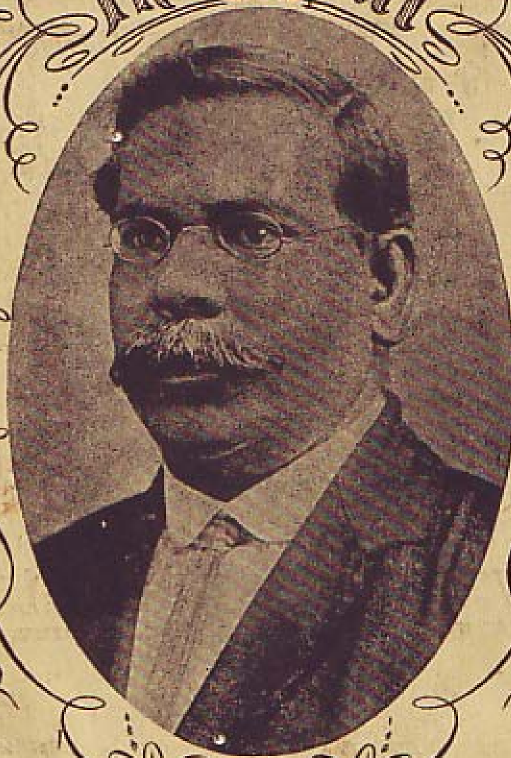

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