The Tamil

A CEYLON JOURNAL IN ENGLISH

Vol. I No. 9

September, 1955

One Rupee

The Tamil

EDITORIAL OFFICE:

2, Buller's Lane, Colombo,

Ceylon.

T'phone: 84560.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: **Ten Rupees**

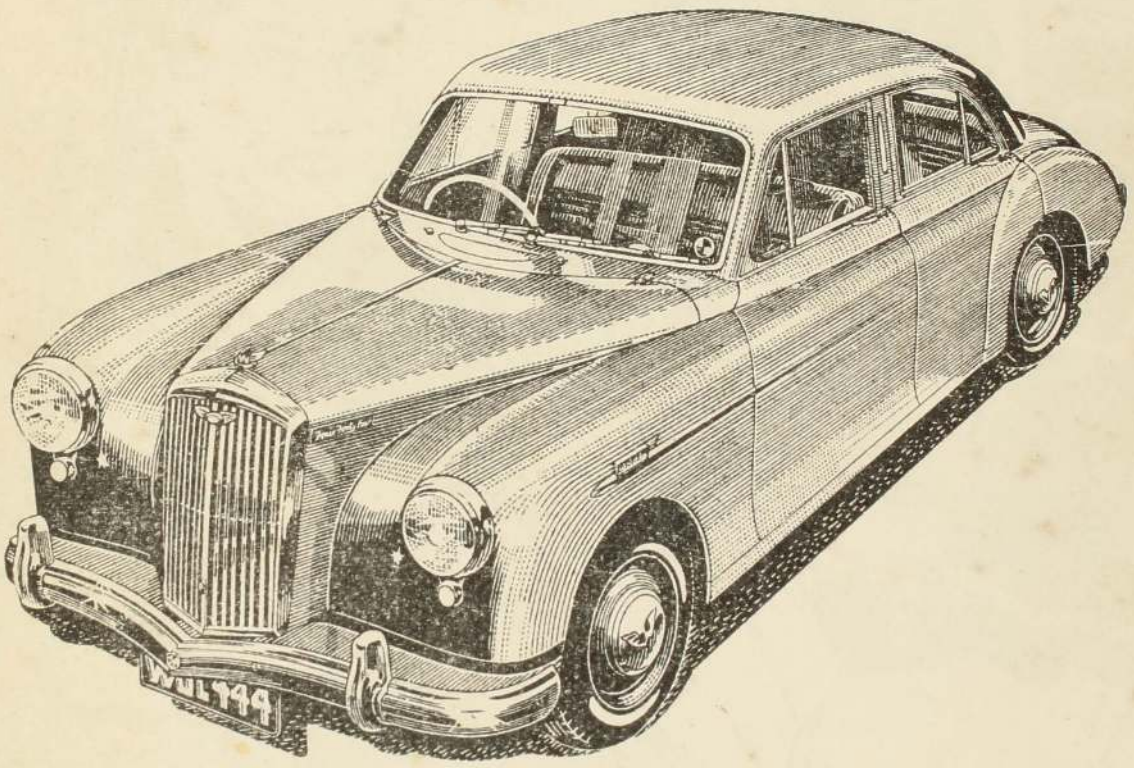
Twelve Shillings

for twelve numbers

ADVERTISEMENTS: Seventy-five rupees per Full Page.

For further particulars please communicate with the Editorial Office.

Brilliant scion of a very good family...



Here is a car of unmistakable distinction capable of lion-hearted performance. The forward positioning of its lively 4 cylinder engine and a well-balanced power-to-weight ratio give good performance and the utmost comfort for both driver and passengers. You must let us show you this unusually attractive car.

Buy wisely – buy

WOLSELEY

FOUR — FORTYFOUR

BRITISH CAR CO., LTD.

"OXFORD HOUSE"

ALSTON PLACE—COLOMBO 2

CATERING

Any Time—Anywhere—For Any Occasion

Entrust it to us

for All ROUND EXCELLENCE

ELEPHANT HOUSE

CEYLON COLD STORES LTD.

78221

8 LINES

SEQUENCE

THE ELOQUENCE OF RAMANATHAN

[*WE reproduce with great pride the Speech delivered by Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan of Ceylon to the New York Bar in* 1905. *Sir Ponnambalam was at that time on a tour of America at the special invitation of many leading Americans of culture. He spoke to Congresses, to Societies, to University groups, to individuals—with equal acceptance to all. Wherever he went, his snow-white turban, his melodious voice and his charm of manner made an entrancing appeal. He was gladly welcomed, and received, as a worthy representative of the East. "Sir," said one American gentleman to Sir Ponnambalam, "what is your religion?" Sir Ponnambalam said: "My religion is called by Westerners the Hindu religion. We do not know it by that name. We call our religion the way to Siva or* **Saiva Marga.** *It is the worship of the one Lord of* **all** *nations who is all Peace and all Power, for that is the meaning of Si-va."*

"Sir," said another person, "what do you think of Western progress?" Sir Ponnambalam said: "The minds of the Westerners are never at rest. They do not believe in rest. Rest they fancy is stagnation. They call this love of change **Progress.** *The ancient Greeks, who in the days of Pericles were politically and commercially in the height of prosperity, soon spun themselves out of existence by running after new things out of mere love of change. That is our danger too."*

Such was the great impression made by Sir Ponnambalam upon his hearers in the vast and varied Continent of America that the exclusive and highly critical members of the New York Bar Association invited him to speak to them. The hall of the New York Bar Association is a vast structure decorated with marvellously attractive Doric columns, metopes, triglyphs, and statues of the world's greatest rhetoricians—and on all sides reminiscences of Greek architecture in all its ancient grandeur. The hall was packed as Sir Ponnambalam noiselessly glided in and took his seat. He beamed with interest upon all those seated in front of him. They saw at once that he was the very essence of courtesy. When invited to speak, he arose and held his audience spellbound. Here is the Speech.]

'THESE pillars are very fine, very beautiful,' he said softly, touching one near the statue of Demosthenes.

'It is an excellent work, and all so new and sparkling. In India, also, we have pillars in the temples; only they are much more massive and hoary with age.'

"'You are putting up fine buildings in this country, and there is great wealth and what you call progress,' he said. 'You are proud of all this, enthusiastic even, and consider that in your civilization you have reached the pinnacle of the ages. But—it is all so new and sparkling, like these pillars here! Wait until years have passed over them and they become hoary like those in the great temple of Madura; then will there be wisdom among you, and a venerable history from which to judge of progress. America is so young, Europe also, it is no wonder you are proud and so certain that you are on the right road.

"'How far back does India go? Dear, dear! Millions of years. Westerners have their fads about us, and, as their chronology goes back no further than forty centuries before Christ, they are naturally chary of giving an older ancestry to another race. But among the savants of Europe and America the antiquity of Indian civilization is beginning to be recognized. In our books there are historical incidents described that took place thousands of centuries ago. Furthermore, it is of importance to remember that we are in possession now of the very same ideals and practices which were common to us centuries before the era of Babylon and other ancient cities. From the height of this great age India is able to gauge, with something of the eye of experience, the new countries and races that rise and fall around her.

"'What do we see? Possibly much that a newer race does not, can not, see. It is the past that gives a proper perspective, a right angle of vision; and, having that, we Hindus are not so carried away by the enthusiasms of the moment when we view this period of development and material prosperity through which Western civilization is passing. Material grandeur is all very well, but the Hindu is accustomed to look for something beneath it that is more enduring and real before concluding that a nation is on a right or wrong path.

"'Our own evolution, you know, has been largely on the spiritual plane. We live for the imperishable plane, on which the changing things of the world appear and disappear, like passing bubbles. Our ideals are based on that plane. But for some time we have been suffering from the materialism of the West, which mistakes passing phases for eternal glories, misleads our boys and girls, and makes a complete miscarriage of their life. There is much that Western civilization has taught us, but at its root it is materialistic, and against that we protest and strive, just as your own cultured men protest and strive against it.

"'As for your vaunted self-government by the multitude, you cannot say it has achieved eminent success, can you? I can find nothing admirable about it. It seems more like a political cry than a real achievement. An enlightened Government can come only from enlightened men ruling the unenlightened masses, an oligarchy of cultured intellect, if you will. In the body politic it is the head, or spirit of light and love, that must rule, not, as too often happens in the case of popular Governments, the feet, or selfishness. That is one of the sparkling pillars in your temple that time may prove to be—not made of marble!

"'You point with pride to your buildings, your prosperity, your achievements in wealth. Similar heights were attained ages ago by us, and other nations now no more, and we have found that the greatness of a race does not consist in them. You point out, in addition to this visible growth, what you call the altruistic tendency that is showing itself in your civilization. But these altruistic theories and efforts of which you boast, are they not isolated cases of development rather than racial, which is really all in the other direction? Your great ideas here are industrial development and social amelioration—but experience does not show that these help in the development of the individual in the plane of spirituality.

"'True charity is good for the giver as well as the receiver, but it cannot come through legislation or by tinkering State Constitutions, or by an increase of industrial occupations. That Americans believe it can come in this

way merely emphasizes the hope of those who do not know the true methods of converting self-love into neighbourly love, and neighbourly love into perfect love. Instead of wasting so much time on social and political movements, society would be far more benefited if a greater degree of attention were paid to the inner improvement of the individual, by training the mind to prefer the needs of the spirit to the cravings of the flesh. Concerted action for social ends will be far more effective if the units, the individuals, composing it are first perfected. This is the old Hindu doctrine, and it has been brought to you by your own religious teacher, Jesus Christ. Ah, yes! Americans are past masters in the art of concerted action, in organization; but how futile your efforts, what a waste of legislation when, as individuals, you ignore the mandates of your own religion and neglect to look within and cleanse your own souls!

"'It is this lack of the spiritual leaven in your civilization that impresses a traveller from the East more keenly than the multiplication and largeness of your cities and industrial objects. In India the care of the needy and the sick is everywhere practised, not through organized effort, but through an impulse that is universally felt and obeyed by individuals. Here the beggar is not invited to your house. With us he is. Our religion teaches us that he is a brother, and we treat him accordingly. In treating him thus, the rich are benefited as much as the poor. The ordinary charity, the charity of the West, mere money-giving, is no cure for worldliness, no balm for suffering. When the rich man, instead of giving his cheque for a hundred dollars to some charitable society, goes out among the needy and gives *himself*, as he has been commanded to do by God, he will get more in spirit, in light and love; with these he will enrich himself as well as those whom he serves. This truth is contained in all religions. The spirit of our Eastern civilization labours for the development of this leaven of spirituality,—tries to escape, by hard work and harder reflection, from sensuousness and intellectual arrogance into the peaceful region of light and love.

"'The coming of the Western nations, however, into our country is changing India. They bring with them their selfish mercantile principles, and their worship of

manners and wealth, and, as a consequence, the religious simplicity and the beautiful devotion to God and neighbour that prevailed among us are in danger. It is the wedge of selfishness and sensuousness that, entering in our midst, will destroy us if we do not take care. This downward tendency is today throughout the world.

"'The Americans and Europeans are firm in the belief that they are in an era of progress, of advancement. We do not think so in India; and it is your triumphant materialism that confirms us in our belief of the contrary. You see, we judge history by centuries, you by years. Undoubtedly the decades in which we are at this moment living are an advance on the decades that immediately preceded them. But the course of the age of sensuousness is like the river that broadens and then loses itself in the arid desert for want of depth. This age, or "yuga," in which we are living is broadening with many a flash, but the eternal springs of spirituality are not feeding it. There is no depth in Western civilization. The shaking off of the barbarism of the Middle Ages in Europe, the blossoming forth of the Renaissance, and the general reform of modern times, due to invention and discovery, are well and good; but humanity is plunging more and more into sensuousness. Spiritually considered, the age is at low ebb.

"'Ages are measured by thousands of centuries; a period of darkness is followed by a period of light, when man retraces his steps up the mountain of life. In the dark yuga, or age, that is upon us now, and that has 427,000 years to run, according to our sacred writers, all that can be done is to work individually to escape from the impending ruin of the spirit. The spiritual regeneration of a whole nation is impossible to be attained in this yuga. The only lever that will uplift a nation is the conviction in the individual that one's own character must be cleansed of its worldliness and sensuous tendencies. Unless a contempt for worldliness and sensuousness is assiduously cultivated, neither the individual nor the nation can be raised. Among all races there are small groups of individuals believing in the broad religion of love and light, and their number should be increased as quickly as possible, in order that their austere influences may check the downward course of the masses.'

" ' Since all religions at bottom teach love and light as the means to reach God,' he declared, ' one religionist should not tear the hair of another or be too proud of his own beliefs, but should rather practice a thoroughly sincere tolerance. As for unity of belief among all nations, that is impossible. What wonder that the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago, consisting of an army of speakers from every part of the world, each holding his own theories, was ineffective for this end, when we know that the 400 Bishops who assembled at Nicea under the orders of an Emperor to harmonize the one creed of Christianity, some three centuries after Christ, failed to produce a harmony that was effective upon the votaries of that religion !

" ' My purpose in coming to this country is simply to answer the invitations of certain kind friends and learned societies here, not to make proselytes. These friends and societies have expressed a desire to hear from me on the great problems of civilization, and after I have been with them for a few months I expect to return to my home in Ceylon.'

" Never sacrifice the basic principle that the human being is the important thing on this planet. "—EISENHOWER.

MR. G. G. PONNAMBALAM

THE other evening I travelled to Galle by train. In my compartment was only one other person—a Sinhalese lady. She was a venerable and respectable dame of several lustres, and we fell to converse. In the course of it she casually asked me from where I came; and when I said "from Jaffna" a smile lit her face. "You grow tobacco there?" she said. I could see she herself had grown the size of Carnera on tea and rubber dividends and the notion of Tamils posing as the proteges of Lakshmi upon the weed of tobacco seemed to amuse her. I merely said: "We grow not only tobacco but also onions."

I should have said: "Jaffna's greatest product today is Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam."

In the amiable Ceylonese way of slitting each other, the cry has often been raised of late that "G. G. is finished." But those able to peer into the future, and to see beyond the superficialities of the passing surface scene, know that far from being "finished," G.G. holds the keys of the days to be. And none know it better than the pundits of the U.N.P.

Like Dutu Gemunu of old, pressed upon the one side by blind buddhistic fanaticism and upon the other by the stern and cold eye of Rome, u-n-peeists know only too well that the day of reckoning is at hand, their very "independence" at stake. If upon all this, the Tamils should unitedly d.d.t. the Unlimited Nonsense Party . . . Therefore, indeed, G. G. Ponnambalam is the Keyman of Sri Lanka.

This article does not purport to be a biographical sketch of the Tamil Leader. But surely not without Guidance was he called Ponnambalam by his father. A Ponnambalam come to judgment and deliverance, after the name, firm and style of the Ponnambalams who gave freedom to Ceylon.

In Ceylon today, nothing happens, or can be said to have happened until Uncle Flycatcher says so. Events of infinite significance, utterances of great import, are taking place, are being made, throughout the land. But

Uncle has no note of them. Uncle has not pontificated upon them. Uncle's baleful and pompous Nelsonian Eye has not played on them. And so they are as if they never were. They are the dream children of u-n-peeism.

> *" Here the children fell a crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for uncle John . . . While I stood gazing, the children gradually grew fainter, receding, still receding . . . ' We are not of U.N.P. nor are we children at all. The children of U.N.P. call John and Fly father."*

Such is the power of a stooge press.

Despite the local press, it can be said with truth that Mr. Ponnambalam's capacity and integrity are beyond question.

In the field of forensic power he has no equal. Whether at the Agora or at the Areopagus, whether confronted by Lysias or Andocides, he is effortlessly first in the field. The wonder is that a man of his calibre should deign to set foot within that Storehouse of infantile fun, the dregs of language, with their cheap and godayatic repartees, their crass presumption that even such as they can aspire to " poetry "—the local House.

As to Mr. Ponnambalam's integrity, it is enough to say that, without it, he would not have held Leadership in Jaffna for one day. Mr. Ponnambalam's income at the Bar must exceed the U.N.P. Fund, American aid and everything else. It is obvious, therefore, that Mr. Ponnambalam is in politics only for the love of his people.

If only Mr. Ponnambalam had been born a goigama-buddhist, today he would be at the helm of Ceylon. The ship of State would be directed with the skill and foresight of a Nehru, a Nasser, a Nu.

" For every false word or unrightness, the price has to be paid at last. "— J. A. FROUDE.

AN ENGLISHMAN WHO LOVED TAMIL

By A. THEVA RAJAH

IN the past, not many Europeans have acquired a mastery of Tamil. The reason is that it requires special powers of tongue, cheek and lip-volution to speak Tamil well. It is said that, even among the Tamils, only the pure vegetarians can enounce true Tamil speech.

Little wonder then that most of the European scholars who came out to India have found it far easier to train their lips to North Indian speaking. To give only one example, Tamil has ல, ள, ழ.

An outstanding exception was Doctor Peter Percival of England who, in his day, laboured in the missionary fields of India and Ceylon—and, having savoured the best of East and West, found heart's ease and mental joy in the language, ways and customs of the Tamils.

Dr. Percival was an ardent Christian. In those days—nearly one hundred and fifty years ago—there were *two* strongly opposed schools of thought as to the best means of preaching the Christian Message to the people of Asia. The one school believed that direct contact through the Churches would achieve this end. The other believed in educational institutions as evangelistic agencies.

Dr. Percival stood strongly for the latter. Differing from those of the other view, he gave up all other connections, and found his life's work in South India and Ceylon. In c. 1834, he founded the Jaffna Central School, now the Jaffna Central College. In c. 1838, he established at Point Pedro the Wesleyan Mission Central School, now Hartley College.

Dr. Percival's love of Tamil was *most* genuine; his knowledge of it both deep and profound. He learnt the language in the only way any language can be truly mastered—by himself becoming one of the people. He moved freely among the Tamil people of Jaffna and became conversant with their habits and customs from within, so to put it. Thus the nuances of the Tamil language and Tamil idiom became part of his being.

Dr. Percival had one further advantage. *He had the inestimable privilege of the friendship and mental companionship of none other than Arumuga Navalar himself.* It was as though a Greek anxious to learn Latin should have been able to mix and converse with Virgil or Cicero or Horace. Thus assimilating Tamil at both ends of his being—at the summit level of Arumuga Navalar and the domestic level of Tamil as spoken in simple peasant homes by Tamil mothers and Tamil children, it is small wonder that Dr. Percival became, in course of time, a great Tamil savant.

Dr. Percival's admiration of the language and literature of the Tamils was unbounded. The Tamil Poetess Avvai—far greater than Sappho : " burning Sappho '—was an especial favourite. Of her maxims and sayings he wrote that " they are of great beauty and value, replete with lessons of wisdom. They have never been surpassed for sententious brevity ; generally they are equally distinguished by purity of principle." Of the *Thirukural*, which occupies a singular place in Tamil Literature if not in world literature, Dr. Percival said that it " will be read with pleasure as affording proof of the existence, of the loftiest sentiments, the purest moral rules and equal power of conception and expression. **Nothing certainly in the whole compass of human languages can equal the force and terseness of the sententious distiches in which the author conveys the lesson of wisdom he utters."**

Expert philologists have expressed the opinion that Tamil is superior to Greek and Latin in poetic polish and literary content. They have praised the terseness of the language, its brevity, its force, its power of subtle expression. One savant says of Tamil that " in its fulness and power it more resembles English and German than any other living language."

Dr. Percival was of the same view as these other great scholars. He said this of Tamil :—" perhaps no language combines greater force with equal brevity ; and it may be asserted that no human speech is more close and philosophic in its expression as an exponent of the mind. The sequence of things—of thought, action, and its results—is always maintained inviolate."

Again, on another occasion, Dr. Percival paid this remarkable tribute to the genius of the Tamil language and to the greatness of the people who have evolved it. He said :—" Rank and station are provided for by the use of various pronouns extending to several degrees of honorific expression. The language teems with words expressive of the different degrees of affinity. Where, in European languages, a long periphrasis would be required, Tamil presents the thing in its own single term. And this fecundity extends to all ramifications of the family tree. If I speak of a sister I may either take a word that gives the relationship subsisting between us or I may select one that will indicate our relative ages. Measures, and divisions of time, are equally minute and expressive. **The language thus specific gives to the mind a readiness and clearness of conception, whilst its terseness and philosophic idiom afford equal means of lucid utterance.**"

Perhaps Dr. Percival's most enduring contribution to the Tamil Language is his rendering into Tamil of the Bible. *In this he had the assistance and collaboration of Arumuga Navalar.*

Dr. Percival also composed the Methodist Catechism in Tamil. His translation of the Liturgy, with little alteration survives to this day.

In 1851 Dr. Percival was appointed to the Chair of Oriental Studies in the great University of Madras. There also he played a worthy part in the propagation of his beloved second mother-tongue. He took a principal part in the compilation of the English-Tamil Dictionary, which was published by the Madras Literature Society.

Dr. Percival's statue is now in the Senate House of Madras. *Finis coronat opus* !*

---

*When, some day soon, Jaffna has her own University, it is certain that Dr. Peter Percival will be duly and adequately remembered.—Editor of *The Tamil*.

THE LAST DAYS OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

[THIS writer has visited the Holy Place of Mayavati, which lies at the feet of the Himalayas, and seen Nanda-Devi and the Trident in their morning glory, bright as the Morning Star. Mayavati was the favourite spirit-home of Naren, (the beloved disciple of Ramakrishna), known to the wide world as Vivekananda. But if Vivekananda was great, how much more so was Ramakrishna whom Vivekananda worshipped and saluted as "My Master." The power of Ramakrishna glows with young vigour throughout the world. But it is as yet in the stage and state of the Mountain Spring. The mighty river of the **Shakti** *of India, and of her wonder-sons, is yet to be. Ramakrishna died at the age of fifty only a few years ago. The grandeur of his end, as narrated by Romain Rolland, equals in majesty and soulpower the last days of Christ, Socrates and Gautama.]*

THE RIVER RE-ENTERS THE SEA

HE was nearing the Ocean. The end was approaching His feeble body was almost daily consumed in the fire of ecstasy and worn out by his constant gift of himself to the famished crowds. Sometimes like a sulky child he complained to the Mother of the flood of visitors devouring him day and night. In his humorous way he said to Her :

"Why do you bring hither all these people, who are like milk diluted with five times its own quantity of water ? My eyes are destroyed with blowing the fire to dry up the water ! My health is gone. It is beyond my strength. Do it Yourself, if You want it done. This (*pointing to his body*) is nothing but a burst drum, and if You go on beating it day in and day out, how long do You think it will last ?"

But he never turned anybody away. He said :

"Let me be condemned to be born over and over again, even in the form of a dog, if so I can be of help to a single soul !"

And again :

" I will give up twenty thousand such bodies to help one man. It is glorious to help even one man !" [1]

He even reproached himself for his ecstasies, because they took time that might otherwise have been given to others :

" O Mother, stop me from enjoying them ! Let me stay in my normal state, so that I can be of more use in the world."

During his last days when his disciples protected him in spite of himself from the importunity of devotees, he said :

" How I suffer because no one needs my help today !"

His great friend, the illustrious chief of the Brahmo Samaj, Keshab Chunder Sen, preceded him in death. He died in 1884. With tears in his eyes, Ramakrishna said of him shortly before his death that " the rose tree is to be transplanted because the gardener wants beautiful roses of him."

Afterwards he said :

" Half of me has perished."

But the other half, if it is possible to use such an expression, was the humble people. He was as easy of access to them, if not more so, as to the most learned ; and among the familiar friends of his last years he counted, in the same category as the disciples so dear to his heart, simple people, madmen of God. Such a one was old Gopaler Ma, whose simple story is worthy of a place among the Franciscan legends :

An old woman of sixty, widowed while still a girl, she had dedicated herself to the Lord. The hunger of her unassuaged maternal love had made her for thirty years adopt the child Krishna, Gopala, as her own, until it had become a harmless mania. No sooner had she met Ramakrishna than his God-filled glance made little Gopala issue from her. The warm compassion of the Master,

1. Vivekananda : *My Master*.

which made the hidden desires and sorrows of those who came near him his own, lent inspiration to the unsatisfied dream of the childless mother, and he put the God-Child into her arms. From that moment the little Gopala never left the mother, who had adopted Him. Henceforward she did not pray ; she had no need to pray, for she lived in unbroken communion with her God. She threw her rosary into the river and spent her days prattling with the Child. This state lasted two months and then was mitigated ; the Child only appeared in moments of meditation. But the old woman's heart was filled with happiness, and Ramakrishna tenderly regarded her joy. But his ever present sense of fun made him ask the old woman to tell her story to the haughty Naren, so proud of his critical reason, who held such visions to be stupid and morbid illusions. The old woman quite simply interrupted her maternal chatter, and made Naren her judge :

" Sir," she said to him, " I am only a poor ignorant woman. I do not rightly understand things. You are learned. Tell me, do you think it is true ?"

Naren, deeply moved, answered :
" Yes, mother, it is quite true."

It was in 1884 that Ramakrishna's health took a serious turn. While he was in a trance he dislocated his left arm and it was very painful. A great change took place in him. He divided his infirm body and his wandering soul into two. He no longer spoke of " I." He was no longer " me." He called himself " This." The sick man more intensely than before perceived " Lila . . . the Play . . . the God who disports Himself in men . . . The man roughly seized his real Self and then fell into silent amazement ; his joy knew no bounds, as if he had suddenly and unexpectedly met one of his dear ones . . . When Shiva saw his real self he cried : " Such am I ! Such am I !" and danced for joy."

In April the following year his throat became inflamed. Overstrain from constant talking and the dangerous Samadhis, which made blood flow in his throat, certainly had something to do with it.[1] The doctors he consulted

1. But there was more in it than this. Like some famous Christian mystics he healed others by taking their ills upon himself. In a vision his body appeared to him covered with sores, the sins of others : " He took upon himself the Karma of others." And to this fact he owed his last illness. He had become the scapegoat of humanity.

forbade both speech and ecstasy, but he paid no attention to them. At a great Vaishnava religious festival he spent himself without measure, and in return the disease grew worse. It became practically impossible for him to eat. Nevertheless he continued to receive those who came to him day and night. Then one night he had hemorrhage of the throat. The doctors diagnosed cancer. His chief disciples persuaded him to put himself for a time under the care of Dr. Mahendra Lal Sarkar of Calcutta. In September, 1885, a small house was rented where Ramakrishna's wife found a corner for herself so that she might supervise his regime. The most faithful disciples watched during the night. The majority of them were poor, and they mortgaged, borrowed or pawned their effects in order to pay the expenses of the Master's illness—an effort that cemented their union. Dr. Sarkar was a rationalist, who did not share the religious views of Ramakrishna, and told him so frankly. But the more he came to know his patient, the deeper did his respect for him become, until he treated him for nothing. He came to see him three times a day and spent hours with him. He said to him :

"I love you so dearly because of your devotion to truth. You never deviate by a hair's breadth from what you believe to be true . . . Do not imagine that I am flattering you. If my father was in the wrong I should tell him so."

But he openly censured the religious adoration rendered to him by the disciples :

"To say that the Infinite came down to earth in the form of a man is the ruin of all religions."

Ramakrishna maintained an amused silence, but the disciples grew animated in these discussions, which only served to increase their mutual esteem ; their faith in their Master, whom suffering seemed to illuminate, was strengthened. They tried to understand why such a trial was imposed upon him, and divided into groups holding different views. The most exalted, headed by Girish the redeemed sinner, declared that the Master himself had willed his illness, so that he might establish the communion of apostles round him. The rationalists

with Naren as their mouthpiece admitted that the Master's body was subject to the laws of nature like other men's. But they all recognised the Divine presence in the dying man ; and on the day of the great annual festival of Kali, of which Ramakrishna to their surprise made no mention, but spent it absorbed in ecstasy, they realised that the Mother was indwelling within him. The exaltation excited by this belief had its dangers, the chief of them being an access of convulsive sentimentalism. They had—or pretended to have—visions and ecstasies with laughter, song and tears. Naren then showed for the first time the vigour of his reason and his will. He treated them with contempt. He told them that "the Master's ecstasies had been bought by a life of heroic austerity and desperate conflict for the sake of knowledge ; that their effusions were nothing but the vapourings of sick imaginations—when they were not lies. Those who were ill ought to take more care of themselves ! Let them eat more and so react against spasms which were worthy only of ridiculous females ! And let them beware ! Of those who encouraged a religion of ostentatious emotion eighty per cent became scoundrels and fifteen per cent lunatics." His words acted like a cold douche. They were ashamed and the majority humbly confessed that their ecstasies were shams. Naren's action did not stop there. He gathered these young people together and imposed upon them a virile discipline. In their need for action he advised them to devote themselves to some definite object. The young lion's cub began to assert himself in those days as the future sovereign of the Order, although he himself was not free from his own difficulties and struggles. For him these days marked the crisis of despair, when he had to make the final choice between the conflicting forces of his nature—harrowing days, fruitful days, preparing the soul for harvest.

Ramakrishna grew worse. Dr. Sarkar advised his removal from Calcutta to the country. Towards the middle of December, 1885, he was taken to a house in the suburbs in the midst of the beautiful gardens of Cossipore, and there he spent the last eight months of his mortal life. Twelve of his young chosen disciples never left him until

the end.[1] Naren directed their activities and their prayers. They begged the Master to join with them in praying for his recovery, and the visit of a Pandit, who shared their faith, gave them an opportunity to renew their entreaties.

"The Scriptures," said the Pandit to Ramakrishna, "declare that saints like you can cure themselves by an effort of will."

Ramakrishna replied :

"My mind has been given to God once and for all. Would you have me ask it back ?"

His disciples reproached him for not wishing to be restored to health.

"Do you think my sufferings are voluntary ? I wish to recover, but that depends on the Mother."

"Then pray to Her."

"It is easy for you to say that, but I cannot speak the words."

Naren begged :

"For our sake !"

"Very well," said the Master sweetly. "I will try what I can do."

They left him alone for several hours. When they returned the Master said :

"I said to Her : 'Mother, I can eat nothing because of my suffering. Make it possible for me to eat a little !' She pointed you all out to me and said : 'What ! Thou canst eat through all these mouths !' I was ashamed and could not utter another word."

Several days later he said :

"My teaching is almost finished. I cannot instruct people any longer ; for I see the whole world is filled with the Lord. So I ask myself : 'Whom can I teach ?' "

---

1. Narendra, Rakhal, Baburam, Niranjan, Yogin, Latu, Tarak, the two Gopals, Kali, Sasi, and Sarat.

On January 1, 1886, he felt better and walked a few steps in the garden. There he blessed his disciples.[1] The effects of his blessing manifested themselves in different ways—in silent ecstasy or in loquacious transports of joy. But all were agreed that they received as it were an electric shock, an access of power, so that each one realised his chosen ideal at a bound. (The distinguishing characteristic of Ramakrishna as a religious chief was always that he did not communicate a precise faith, but the energy necessary for faith ; he played the part, if I may say so, of a mighty spiritual dynamo). In their abounding joy the disciples in the garden, whom the Master had blessed, called to those in the house to come and share the bliss of his benediction. In this connection an incident took place that might have come from the Christian Gospel : the humble Latu and Sarat the Brahmin were taking advantage of the Master's absence to clean his room and make his bed. They heard the calls and saw the whole scene from above ; but they continued their task of love, thus renouncing their share of joy.

Naren alone remained unsatisfied. His father's loss, worldly cares and the fever in his own heart consumed him. He saw the fulfilment of all the others and felt himself abandoned. There had been no response to his anguish, no comforting ray to cheer him. He begged Ramakrishna to allow him to relieve his misery by several days of Samadhi ; but the Master rebuked him severely (he kept his indulgence for those from whom he expected least) and reproached him for such " base thoughts :" he must make some arrangement for his family and then his troubles would be at an end and he would receive everything. Naren wept like a lost sheep, and fled through Calcutta and the fields, covered with dust and the straw of a stack into which he had run ; he groaned, he was consumed with desire for the inaccessible, and his soul knew no rest. Ramakrishna, tenderly and pityingly, watched his wild course from afar ; he knew quite well that before the divine prey could be brought down panting, he would have to pick up the scent. He felt that Naren's condition was remarkable, for in spite of boasting his unbelief, he was home-sick for the Infinite. He knew

1. Each received an appropriate benediction, so it said.

him to be blessed among men in proportion as he was proven. He softly caressed Naren's face before the other disciples. He recognised in him all the signs of Bhakti—knowledge through love. The Bhaktas, unlike the Jnanins (believers through knowledge of the spirit), do not seek liberation. They must be born and reborn for the good of humanity ; for they are made for the love and the service of mankind. So long as an atom of desire remains they will be reincarnated. When all desires are torn from the heart of mankind then at last they will attain Mukti (liberation). But the Bhaktas never aspire to it themselves. And that is why the loving Master, whose heart was the home of all living beings, and who could never forget them, always had a preference for the Bhaktas, of whom the greatest was Naren.

He did not hide the fact that he regarded him as his heir. He said to him one day :

" I leave these young people in your charge. Busy yourself in developing their spirituality."

And in preparation for a monastic life he ordered them to beg their food from door to door without distinction of caste. Towards the end of March he gave them the saffron robe, the sign of the Sannyasin, and some kind of monastic initiation.

The proud Naren set the example of renunciation. But it was with great difficulty that he abdicated his spiritual pride. The devil would have offered him in vain (as to Jesus) the kingdoms of this world, but he would soon have found a chink in his armour if he had proposed sovereignty of soul to him. One day in order to test his spiritual power Naren told his companion, Kaliprasad, to touch him while he was in a state of meditation. Kali did so and immediately fell into the same state. Ramakrishna heard of it and rebuked Naren severely for casting his seed into the ground for a frivolous object, and he categorically condemned the transmission of ideas from one to the other. To attempt anything against complete freedom of spirit was anathema. You should help others, but you must not substitute your thought for theirs.

A little time afterwards Naren, while meditating, had the sensation of a light shinning behind his head. Suddenly he lost consciousness and was absorbed into the Absolute. He had fallen into the depths of the terrible Nirvikalpa Samadhi, which he had sought for so long, and which Ramakrishna had refused to allow him. When, after a long time he returned to himself, it seemed to him that he no longer had a body, but that he was nothing but a face, and he cried out : " Where is my body ?" The other disciples were terrified and ran to the Master, but Ramakrishna said calmly :

" Very well, let him stay like that for a time ! He has worried me long enough."

When Naren again came down to earth, he was bathed in ineffable peace. He approached the Master. Ramakrishna said to him :

" Now the Mother has shown you everything. But this revelation will remain under lock and key, and I shall keep the key. When you have accomplished the Mother's work you will find this treasure again."

And he advised him what to do for his health during the succeeding days.

The nearer Ramakrishna drew to his end, the more detached he became. He spread his serene heaven over the disciples' sorrow. The *Gospel*, written practically at the bedside of the dying man, records the harmonious murmurs of his soul like a stream in the night, amid the heavy silence of the apostles, while in the moonlight the branches of the trees in the garden rustled gently shaken by the warm breeze of the south. To his friends, his loved ones, who were inconsolable at the thought of his loss, he said in a half whisper :

" Radha said to Krishna : ' O Beloved, dwell in my heart and do not come again in your human form !' But soon she languished for the sight of the human form of her Beloved. But the will of the Lord had to be fulfilled and Krishna did not appear in human form for a long time . . . The Lord came and was incarnate in man. Then he returned with his disciples to the Divine Mother."

Rakhal exclaimed : " Do not go away until we do !"

Ramakrishna smiled tenderly and said :

" A troupe of Bauls suddenly entered a house ; they sang God's name and danced for joy. Then they left the house as suddenly as they had entered it—and the owners did not know who they were . . ."

He sighed.

" Sometimes I pray that the Lord will grant that I should no more be sent into this world."

But he went on at once :

" He (God) reclothes Himself with the human form for love of those pure souls who love the Lord."

And he looked at Naren with ineffable affection.

On the 9th of April Ramakrishna said, looking at the fan, which he was waving to and fro in the hot night :

" Just as I see this fan I am holding in front of me, I have seen God . . . And I see . . . ."—he spoke quite low, laying his hand on Naren's and asked : " What did I say ?"

Naren replied : " I did not hear distinctly."

Ramakrishna then indicated by signs that *He*, God, and his own self were one.

" Yes," said Naren, " I am He."

" Only a line intervenes—for the enjoyment of bliss," said the Master.

" But," said the disciple, " the great remain in the world even after they have realised their liberation. They keep their own ego and its sufferings so that they may fulfil the salvation of humanity."

There was absolute silence and then the Master spoke again :

"The roof[1] is within a man's sight, but it is very difficult to reach it; . . . but he who has reached it can let down a rope and pull others up to him upon the roof."

This was one of the days when he realised in full the identity of all within the One Being; when he saw that "all three were the same Substance—the victim, the block and the executioner," and he cried in a feeble voice: "My God, what a vision!" He fainted with emotion, but when he came to himself he said: "I am well. I have never been so well."[2] Those who knew how terrible was the disease from which he died (cancer of the throat) marvelled at the loving and kindly smile that never-left him. If the glorious death upon the Cross was denied to this man, who is the Christ to his Indian followers, his bed of agony was no less a Cross. And yet he could say:

"Only the body suffers. When the mind is united to God, it can feel no pain."

And again:

"Let the body and its sufferings occupy themselves with each other. Thou, my mind, remain in bliss. Now I and my Divine Mother are one for ever."

Three or four days before his death he called Naren and asked to be left alone with him. He looked lovingly at him and passed into an ecstasy. It enveloped Naren in its folds. When he came back from the shadows, he saw Ramakrishna in tears. The Master said to him:

"To-day I have given you my all and am now only a poor fakir, possessing nothing. By this power you will do immense good in the world and not until it is accomplished will you return."

---

1. The metaphor of the roof is often used in Ramakrishna's sayings:

"Divine Incarnations can always achieve knowledge of the Absolute in Samadhi. At the same time they can come down from the heights into human guise so that they love the Lord as father or mother, etc. . . . When they say: 'Not this! Not this!' they leave the steps behind them one after the other until they reach the roof. And then they say: 'This is it!' But soon they discover that the steps are made of the same materials of bricks and mortar as the roof. Then they can ascend and descend resting sometimes on the roof, sometimes on the steps of the staircase. The roof represents the Absolute, the steps the world of phenomena." (*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, 1, p. 324).

2. Ramakrishnananda, the disciple who nursed him said: "He never lost his cheerfulness. He always said he was well and Happy." (*From his unpublished Memoirs*).

From that moment all his powers were transferred to Naren. The Master and the disciple were one.

Sunday, August 15, 1886 . . . The last day.

In the afternoon he still had the almost miraculous energy to talk for two hours to his disciples [1] in spite of his martyred throat. At nightfall he became unconscious. They believed him to be dead, but towards midnight he revived. Leaning against five or six pillows supported by the body of the humble disciple, Ramakrishnananda, he talked up to the last moment with Naren, the beloved disciple, and gave him his last counsel in a low voice. Then in ringing tones he cried three times the name of his life's Beloved, Kali, the Divine Mother, and lay back. The final ecstasy began. He remained in it until half an hour before noon, when he died.[2] In his own words of faith : " He had passed from one room to the other."

And his disciples cried :

" Victory !"[3]

---

1. On the subject of Yoga.

2. According to the witness of Sarkar. *Cf.* the unpublished Memoris of Ramakrishnananda :

" On that last night Ramakrishna was talking with us to the very last. . . . He was sitting up against five or six pillows, which were supported by my body, and at the same time I was fanning (him). . . . Narendra took his feet and began to rub them and Ramakrishna was talking to him, telling him what he must do. ' Take care of these boys,' he repeated again and again. . . . Then he asked to lie down. Suddenly at one o'clock he fell towards one side, there was a low sound in his throat . . . Narendra quickly laid his feet on the quilt and ran downstairs as if he could not bear it. A doctor . . . who was feeling his pulse saw that it had stopped. . . . We all believed that it was only Samadhi."

3. Literally : " Victory to Bhagavan Ramakrishna !" as they carried him to the place of cremation, where his body was burned the same evening.

RESIDENCE AT CAMBRIDGE

[IN former numbers we have published Emerson's famous account of life in the University of Oxford and Newman's even more fascinating description of university life at Athens. We now give our Readers a picture of university life at Cambridge from the glorious pen of none other than—William Wordsworth.]

It was a dreary morning when the wheels
Rolled over a wide plain o'erhung with clouds,
And nothing cheered our way till first we saw
The long-roofed chapel of King's College lift
Turrets and pinnacles in answering files,
Extended high above a dusky grove.

Advancing, we espied upon the road
A student clothed in gown and tasselled cap.
Striding along as if o'ertasked by Time,
Or covetous of exercise and air ;
He passed—nor was I master of my eyes
Till he was left an arrow's flight behind.
As near and nearer to the spot we drew,
It seemed to suck us in with an eddy's force.
Onward we drove beneath the Castle ; caught,
While crossing Magdalene Bridge, a glimpse of
Cam :
And at the Hoop alighted, famous Inn.

My spirit was up, my thoughts were full of hope ;
Some friends I had, acquaintances who there
Seemed friends, poor simple school-boys, now
hung round
With honour and importance : in a world
Of welcome faces up and down I roved :
Questions, directions, warnings and advice,
Flowed in upon me, from all sides ; fresh day
Of pride and pleasure ! to myself I seemed
A man of business and expense, and went
From shop to shop about my own affairs,
To Tutor or to Tailor, as befel,
From street to street with loose and careless mind.

I was the Dreamer, they the Dream ; I roamed
Delighted through the motley spectacle ;
Gowns grave, or gaudy, doctors, students, streets,
Courts, cloisters, flocks of churches, gate-ways,
towers :
Migration strange for a stripling of the hills,
A northern villager.

As if the change
Had waited on some Fairy's wand, at once
Behold me rich in monies, and attired
In splendid garb, with hose of silk, and hair
Powdered like rimy trees, when frost is keen.
My lordly dressing-gown, I pass it by,
With other signs of manhood that supplied
The lack of beard.—The weeks went roundly on,
With invitations, suppers, wine and fruit,
Smooth housekeeping within, and all without
Liberal, and suiting gentleman's array.

The Evangelist St. John my patron was :
Three Gothic courts are his, and in the first
Was my abiding-place, a nook obscure ;
Right underneath, the College kitchens made
A humming sound, less tuneable than bees,
But hardly less industrious ; with shrill notes
Of sharp command and scolding inter-mixed.
Near me hung Trinity's loquacious clock,
Who never let the quarters, night or day,
Slip by him unproclaimed, and told the hours
Twice over with a male and female voice.
Her pealing organ was my neighbour too ;
And from my pillow, looking forth by light
Of moon or favouring stars, I could behold
The antichapel where the statue stood
Of Newton with his prism and silent face,
The marble index of a mind for ever
Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone.

Of College labours, of the Lecturer's room
All studded round, as thick as chairs could stand,
With loyal students, faithful to their books,
Half-and-half idlers, hardy recusants,

And honest dunces—of important days,
Examinations, when the man was weighed
As in a balance ! of excessive hopes,
Tremblings withal and commendable fears,
Small jealousies, and triumphs good or bad—
Let others that know more speak as they know.
Such glory was but little sought by me,
And little won.

I looked for universal things ; perused
The common countenance of earth and sky :
Earth, nowhere unemblished by some trace
Of that first Paradise whence man was driven ;
And sky, whose beauty and bounty are expressed
By the proud name she bears—the name of
Heaven.
I called on both to teach me what they might ;
Or turning the mind in upon herself
Pored, watched, expected, listened, spread my
thoughts
And spread them with a wider creeping ; felt
Incumbencies more awful, visitings
Of the Upholder of the tranquil soul,
That tolerates the indignities of Time,
And, from the centre of Eternity
All finite motions overruling, lives
In glory immutable.

So many happy youths, so wide and fair
A congregation in its budding-time
Of health, and hope, and beauty, all at once
So many divers samples from the growth
Of life's sweet season—could have seen unmoved
That miscellaneous garland of wild flowers
Decking the matron temples of a place
So famous through the world? To me, at least,
It was a goodly prospect : for, in sooth,
Though I had learnt betimes to stand unpropped,
And independent musings pleased me so
That spells seemed on me when I was alone,
Yet could I only cleave to solitude
In lonely places ; if a throng was near
That way I leaned by nature ; for my heart

Was social, and loved idleness and joy.
Companionships,
Friendships, acquaintances, were welcome all.
We sauntered, played, or rioted ; we talked
Unprofitable talk at morning hours ;
Drifted about along the streets and walks,
Read lazily in trivial books, went forth
To gallop through the country in blind zeal
Of senseless horsemanship, or on the breast
Of Cam sailed boisterously, and let the stars
Come forth, perhaps without one quiet thought.

Such was the tenor of the second act
In this new life. Imagination slept,
And yet not utterly. I could not print
Ground where the grass had yielded to the steps
Of generations of illustrious men,
Unmoved. I could not always lightly pass
Through the same gateways, sleep where they
had slept,
Wake where they waked, range that inclosure old,
That garden of great intellects, undisturbed.
Place also by the side of this dark sense
Of noble feeling, that those spiritual men,
Even the great Newton's own ethereal self,
Seemed humbled in these precincts thence to be
The more endeared. Their several memories here
(Even like their persons in their portraits clothed
With the accustomed garb of daily life)
Put on a lowly and a touching grace
Of more distinct humanity, that left
All genuine admiration unimpaired.

Beside the pleasant Mill of Trompington
I laughed with Chaucer in the hawthorn shade ;
Heard him, while birds were warbling, tell his
tales
Of amorous passion. And that gentle Bard,
Chosen by the Muses for the Page of State—
Sweet Spenser, moving through his clouded heaven
With the moon's beauty and the moon's soft pace,
I called him Brother, Englishman, and Friend !

Yea, our blind Poet, who in his later day,
Stood almost single ; uttering odious truth—
Darkness before, and danger's voice behind,
Soul awful—if the earth has ever lodged
An awful soul—I seemed to see him here
Familiarly, and in his scholar's dress
Bounding before me, yet a stripling youth—
A boy, no better, with his rosy cheeks
Angelical, keen eye, courageous look,
And conscious step of purity and pride.
Among the band of my compeers was one
Whom chance had stationed in the very room
Honoured by Milton's name. O temperate Bard!
Be it confest that, for the first time, seated
Within thy innocent lodge and oratory,
One of a festive circle, I poured out
Libations, to thy memory drank, till pride
And gratitude grew dizzy in a brain
Never excited by the fumes of wine
Before that hour, or since.

"Sweet fire the sire of Muse,
My soul needs this." **—GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS.**

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.

கற்க கசடறக் கற்பவை கற்றபின்
நிற்க அதற்குத் தக.

Pursue knowledge faultlessly and then act accordingly.

* * * *

யாதானும் நாடாமல் ஊராமல் என்னொருவன்
சாந்துணையும் கல்லாதவாறு.

No country and no place is alien to the learned : it is strange that men should remain ignorant to the end of their lives.

* * * *

சால்பிற்குக் கட்டளையாதெனில் தோல்வி
துலை அல்லார் கண்ணும் கொளல்.

The touchstone of nobility is the capacity to take defeat at the hands of lesser men.

* * * *

அரம் போலும் கூர்மையரேனும் மரம் போல்வர்
மக்கள் பண்பு இல்லாதவர்.

Their keen intellect may be as sharp as a steal file, but men without character are verily no men but trees.

Thiruvalluvar (Kural) (Translated from Tamil.)

Whatever in the world is powerful, beautiful or glorious that you may know to have come forth from a fraction of My power and glory.

The Gita.

* * * *

This above all : to thine own self be true, And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou cans't not then be false to any man.

Shakespeare.

* * * *

The best man is the man who is friendly to, even if he cannot himself enter into, each one of the great forms of human experience; and the worst man is the man who is willing and desirous of throwing all but one form of experience on the scrap heap.

Joseph Needham.

* * * *

Only one who can read books without words (*i.e.*, the book of life itself) can say strikingly beautiful things ; and only one who understands truth difficult to explain by words can grasp the highest wisdom.

* * * *

All immortal literature of the ancients and the moderns was written with blood and tears.

The Epigrams of Changcha'o.

* * * *

I have not left any calamity more detrimental to mankind than woman.

* * * *

The world and all things in it are valuable, but more valuable than all is a virtuous woman.

Prophet Mohammed.

A PAGE OF SCIENCE.

IN a previous number of *The Tamil* we promised to give our Readers a description of the Heavens from the pen of one of the great masters of English prose—Thomas Hardy. Thomas Hardy's life and works are worthy of deep study and contemplation. He had a Shakesperean approach to human life.

In his novel *Two on a Tower*, written in 1882, which has been described as 'a long excursion in constructive irony,' Hardy tells the story, with all its tragic implications, of two persons, a woman of about thirty and a youth of twenty, who were thrown together for a period of about eight months. In Hardy's own words, the book was "the outcome of a wish to set the emotional history of two infinitesimal lives against the stupendous background of the stellar universe."

"*Love's native hours were set,*
Whatever starry synod met."

On an early winter afternoon, a lady was driving in a carriage. In the middle distance she saw a circular isolated hill and, on its summit, a tower in the form of a classical column. It was not a convenient evening for a walk across the fields; but, a few months later, when the soil was hard and dry, she decided to make an inspection of the pineclad protuberance. She found a site which seemed the remains of an old Roman camp, with an outer and inner vallum. She walked round the column and found a door.

The lady had been living a life of extreme *ennui*, "a walking weariness," and the time of evening, the scene and the setting made her decide to enter the tower, come what may. Let the Great Novelist tell what befell thereafter, in his own words: "The trap door leading on to the roof was open, and on looking through it an interesting spectacle met her eye. A youth was sitting on a stool in the centre of the lead flat which formed the summit of the column, his eye being applied to the end of a large telescope that stood before him on a tripod."

Their eyes met and they found an awakening of magnetic streams between each other. He had a complexion " with which Raffaelle enriches the countenance of the youthful son of Zacharias." She was of a totally opposite type. " Her hair was black as midnight, her eyes had no less deep a shade." They parted after a few friendly words.

Ten days later, the lady again went to the Tower. The young astronomer was in his seat jotting down notes on a paper.

" You said you would show me the heavens if I could come on a starlight night. I have come." Swithin (that was the young man's name) swept round the telescope to Jupiter and—the story proceeds—" exhibited to her the glory of the orb. Then he directed the instrument to the less bright shape of Saturn. " Here," he said, " we see a world which is to my mind by far the most wonderful in the solar system. Think of streams or satellites or meteors racing round and round the planet like a fly wheel, so close together as to seem solid matter !"

The young poet astronomer warmed to his theme, and, in our next number, we shall see more of him, and of her, and of the heavenly bodies, and of the astrology of tiny humanity begotten of the mighty astronomy of the Maker.

" Against the splintering
Of that Screen which shields
Man's puny consciousness ;
Over the edge of a thin inch's fraction,
Lie in wait for him,
Bottomless depths of roaring emptiness. "

—GASCOYNE.

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 time was now coming for me to leave Kandy, for Colombo, and long and deeply did I ponder the question of making a change.

All who know Kandy know the various drives cut in the jungle-muffled hills above the town and its lovely lake : Lady Blake's Drive, Lady Gordon's, Lady Anderson's, Lady McCallum's, Lady Horton's.

Lady Horton's is nearest Trinity College, and has the finest views. Often did I walk alone, or with my wife, along its sun-flecked gravel, crossed by the occasional snake, under the dense and varied tropical foliage that compelled quotation from Marvell :

Annihilating all that's made,
To a green thought in a green shade.

At three points the muffle has been cut away, and seats placed to allow unhindered contemplation of Alagalla's saddle, of the glorious twin Matale mountains, Etapola and Asgiriya, above all of vast solitary Hunasgiriya drawing his seamed and sloping sides up in all directions to his Peak, clear in the dry season, clouded in the rains, on the far side of the broad and rich valley through which Mahaweliganga rolls. The middle seat of the three I christened ' The Watercourses of Reuben,' according to the traditional interpretation of ' great searchings, great resolves of heart ' because there so many decisions were pondered and were taken.

It was there on the stone seat, with the armies of black ants at its base on their ceaseless march in column, with the wonderful butterflies of the jungle floating and settling round, with the dark green serrated leaves of a noble bread-fruit tree pushing up to my feet from the

steep slope beneath, and with Hunasgiriya gazing from beyond the great valley in front, that I considered matrimony, considered crises in the character and career of schoolboys, and now at last this crisis of my own.

For the Committee of Christ Church, Galle Face, Colombo, guided perhaps by some who knew that life did not always run smoothly in Kandy, had sent me an invitation to become their Incumbent.

After very long thought I decided to accept and with no light heart sent in my resignation as Vice-Principal of Trinity College, after a nine years' tenure which, despite shortcomings and failures, was probably the most wholehearted and successful period of my life.

This feeling is embodied in a sonnet, written I am not sure when, but having a place appropriately here.

VOX : VISIO

Palm-coasts of emerald Zeilan, girdling round
Piduru, blue dome of all the distant hills,
Though endless beauty all your borders fills
To sate the senses, sight and scent and sound :

And though in wind-kissed solitudes are found
Mysterious relics of old royal wills,
Carved stones, blue lakes, the haunts of dipping bills,
Enchanted Silence, holy Slumber-ground :

Yet is my heart's immortal yearning set
Less on yon far-off dreams of ruined Eld
Than these young-hearted hills where passed my prime,
Lush Kandyan hills where lingers, lovely yet,
Aye, and will linger till the last of time,
The Voice once heard, the Vision once beheld.

The Voice of one calling in the Bidston Bells: the Vision of One claiming fealty of all the lands, and of Lanka.

Boys and Masters alike showed kindness to the departing. Two brass candlesticks recalling the richly carved wooden pillars of the old Kings' Audience Hall in Kandy and the stone pillars, their replicas, of the magnifical School Chapel, still rising as I write : together with the two volumes of Hastings' Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, and a chain for my wife, set with specimens of all Ceylon's many gems, are the monuments of their generosity. Richard Aluwihare, the Senior Prefect, the lad at his father's knee of my second day in the Kandyan country, watched and admired through nine years of growth to a fine high-spirited manhood, made the presentation, and the slip of paper in his handwriting, ' as a token of our affection ' is among my cherished possessions.

Galle Face Church, Colombo, stands a little back from the Galle Face Esplanade, that broad mile of turf, brown in the hot weather, a beautiful green in the rains, which lies along the sea between the Galle Face Hotel, and the Fort, the heart of Colombo.

Opened in 1853, it was from its earliest days a great Evangelical centre, and a long succession of earnest men had held the incumbency. I entered upon it in September, 1915, and relinquished it, the last of the C.M.S. Incumbents, in 1922, when the patronage passed to the local Church Committee. This period of seven years included a furlough of eighteen months, from March, 1919, to December, 1920.

As I look back I find it rich in activities and friendships, and I can no more give a connected account of it in the inaccessibility of diaries, which for some of these years are quite full, than of the life at Kandy before it. It is the theme of the next two chapters.

The Church in 1915 was without the fine tower of reinforced concrete which it has today. The history of this is curious. Lady Mitchell, whose husband Sir William Mitchell, a great Colombo merchant, died just before we came, wished to make him a worthy memorial. He had always disliked the old bell of tinkling tone rung from the little belfry of the adjoining school : and she having often

listened to the deep and lovely bell, the bass of three belonging to St. Mary's, Bambalapitiya, found it so rich and mellow that she would fain have one like it. Enquiring on her behalf I learned that the bell was French, and that there was no possible hope of a replica during war-time from any French foundry. At last some firm in England produced from its stores, and despite submarines managed to ship to Colombo, a bell the best of a ton in weight. The Committee, unprepared for a bell so big, considered the Church fabric and were clear that it could nowhere stand the strain. Such a bell demanded a tower.

With abounding generosity the tower was given, built to the design of Hubert Walker, and built strong enough to carry, should other donors arise, a peal of eight : which, tubular bells apart, would, I think, be the first proper peal in the East.

Even this single bell was noble indeed in its effect : its masculine yet musical resonance rang far over land and sea : and I remember a special access of feeling one midnight of New Year.

The Watch Night service was over. The large congregation had dispersed. My wife and I, having drunk cocoa in the Mission House, our home hard by, walked on the Galle Face front. The lights were out all along it, and but for us it was empty. Lines of breakers rolled in through the darkness. The Lighthouse flashed its silent circle of light along the coast. The stars shone as they shine only in the tropics. The great bell's rich voice rolled, solemn and sanguine, through the first moments of one more year added to the tale of life in ancient-modern Ceylon. What was the heart and meaning of it all ?

The congregation comprised merchants and business men of Colombo, an occasional military officer or Civil Servant, and educated folk of the Sinhalese and Tamil communities. The Ladies' College, Colombo, not then having a Chapel of their own, attended Christ Church, and the Incumbent wa invited to prepare its girls for Confirmation.

The Choir was voluntary, far better than average England, having a choir-master of exceptional ability and vigour, of whom as of many friends I could wish there were space to write more. There were not a few good voices in the English community of Colombo, and their musical capacity may be gauged from the cantatas, 'Rebecca' and 'The Woman of Samaria,' that were excellently rendered from time to time in a crowded Church.

The pulpit was much more exacting at Christ Church than at Kandy. At Kandy one's turn to preach among other members of the staff came only at intervals, and the visits to planters' churches were refreshment rather than tax. At Christ Church there were two sermons a Sunday, with the occasional relief of some special preacher, visitor to the Island, or some 'local holy man.'

The visitor whom I best remember was Professor Sayce. Seeing his name in the Visitors' List at the Grand Oriental Hotel (always known as the G.O.H.) I called upon him and asked him to preach, which he courteously promised to do. His theme was the Te Deum Laudamus ('We praise Thee as God') which, relying on the correct translation, and on Pliny's letter to Trajan (They sing hymns to Christ as God) he conceived as this very Hymn of the early Christians to Christ, afterwards, by addition, turned into a hymn in the Trinity's honour.

He also lectured before the Colombo Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. "I got down from my camel and I had discovered Meroe." He also stated that Candace was not, as generally taught, a dynastic name like Pharaoh, but the name of an individual whose inscriptions, confirming Acts, were known.

I had an impression, without a shred of evidence, that the Professor was not unacquainted with secret service in war-time.

Descendants of the early Portuguese settlers in Ceylon are still found in towns of the Island, in Jaffna, in Kandy, in Colombo : and still speak a form of the language among

themselves. A small community was attached to Christ Church, and once a month, in the afternoon, I read service in Portuguese.

The idea presented itself of a kind of settlement house in the slums, of which Colombo has its share. 'The School of Hope' as it came to be called, situated in Wekande, the district just across the narrow lagoon that edges the Church grounds and the old Mission House garden, is one of the happiest memories of my incumbency.

It was a pleasant little house, built round a small court-yard, in the middle of which stood a tree and an invaluable pump. There were rooms in the rear for a resident Sinhalese teacher and his family, while the two larger rooms of the front were used for classes, talks, entertainments of a simple kind. I recall the graceful Portuguese dancing of which one lad in particular, a stable-boy in the service of some racing owner in Colombo, used to give delightful displays, to the accompaniment of a single violin, and the rhythmical clapping of hands. There were also organized games on a parcel of waste land near. Wekande House did good work for about two years, when the increasing pressure of the war closed it by cutting off the subscriptions up till then most generously given. One of the happiest moments of my seven years at the Galle Face Church was when a respectable resident of Wekande, whose word had weight, averred that the 'School of Hope' had raised the whole tone of the neighbourhood.

Wekande House was my only experiment in social service as commonly understood but it brought me into touch with wealthy and kindly English merchants on the one hand, and on the other with men and lads of the country in humble ways of life: an intercourse which I came to value not much less than intercourse with those of a higher station. It was a keen pleasure to know how well some of the lads did: to be greeted on the streets by some messenger, neat and clean in his dress and of self-respecting bearing, who would say, 'Sir, I was at the School of Hope.'

There was also a troop of boy-scouts, rather loosely attached to the Church with whom I had touch. One of these, my only Chinese friend in the flesh, though I have read a good deal of his wonderful country and people, was baptized at Christ Church and is godson to me and my wife. He was a fine soccer player, working also well at his book, though his book was less to his liking. I cannot forbear to say at this point, what must have been patent for long, that the observance of the colour-bar spells loss and poverty to the observer : while to others like myself, who simply have not felt it, there have come great human riches.

If nothing else comes of this tale, that lesson alone would justify the telling.

" Thanks to this human heart, by which we live. "—**WORDSWORTH.**

PAGES FOR THE YOUNG.

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

§ 24

MR. MURDSTONE then sat on a chair and, holding David standing before him, looked steadily into David's eyes. Opposed thus, face to face, David's heart beat fast and high.

"David," said Mr. Murdstone, pressing his lips, "if I have an obstinate horse or dog to deal with, what do you think I do?"

"I don't know," said David.

"I beat him," said Mr. Murdstone.

David became breathless with fear.

"I make him wince and smart," Mr. Murdstone went on. "If it cost me all the blood I had I should do it."

David was silent.

"What is that upon your face?"

"Dirt," David said.

It was not dirt. It was the mark of David's tears. But, baby as he was, not twenty blows by Mr. Murdstone would have made David admit that he had been crying. Mr. Murdstone understood it very well. So he merely said: "Wash that face, Sir, and come down with me."

§ 25

After David had washed, and dried his little face of its tears, they went down together into the parlour, Mr. Murdstone with his arm on David's shoulder. "Clara," said Mr. Murdstone, in his pompous way: "We shall soon improve this young man's youthful humours." David's mother said nothing. David knew she was sad to see him standing in that room so scared and strange, but she herself was too much in terror to say anything. When David stole to a chair she followed him with her eyes more sorrowfully still, but not a word was spoken.

They dined together. David gathered that an elder sister of Mr. Murdstone's was coming to stay with them, and that she was expected that evening.

After dinner, when they were sitting by the fire, a coach drove up and Mr. Murdstone went out to receive the visitor. David's mother followed Mr. Murdstone. David was timidly following his mother when, hurriedly and secretly, but tenderly, she put out her hand behind her and held David's in it.

It was Miss Murdstone who had arrived. A gloomy-looking lady she was; dark, like her brother, whom she greatly resembled in face and voice. She wore very heavy eyebrows which met over her large nose, as if, being disabled by the wrongs of her sex from wearing whiskers, she made up for it with her eyebrows instead. She brought with her two hard black boxes with her initials on the lids in hard brass nails. When she paid the coachman she took her money out of a hard steel purse. She kept her purse in a heavy jail of a bag which hung upon her arm by a heavy chain, and shut up like a bite. Altogether a metallic lady.

"Children sweeten labours."—BACON.

BOOK REVIEWS

கதிரைச் சிலேடை வெண்பா

By T. K. SOMASUNTHARA PULAVAR

(*Thanalakumi Press, Chunnakam. Price Rs.* 2/50)

கதிரைச்சிலேடை வெண்பா by T. K. Somasunthara Pulavar, Navaly, Jaffna, consists of 100 stanzas written in 'Venpa' metre, in praise of Murukan or 'Karthikeya,' the Lord of Kathirkamam.

A characteristic feature of a சிலேடை is that the writer has to use a word or a phrase, in each stanza, with a double meaning. The nearest analogy to a சிலேடை in English verse is 'pun.' To employ this rhetorical device effectively in Tamil verse, a deep study of words, a wide knowledge of literary works in Tamil, and high skill in versification are necessary. The author has handled this difficult device with great success.

The first two lines of each stanza, in this variety of சிலேடை, describes the shrine, and the last two praise the grace and love of the Deity who honours the shrine.

Although the author died only two years ago, his fame as a poet and as a great teacher had established itself in his peninsular home in North Ceylon early in his life-time.

Two prefaces, one written by Mr. Arulnandy, described as "கலைமாச் செல்வர்," and the other by Mr. P. K. Ratnam (Pundit Vidwan), adorn the book. Pundit P. Parameswari, has in her commentaries unravelled many of the allusions and other difficulties in the text. There is also a brief biography of the author.

The book deserves the notice of all lovers of Tamil and particularly the devotees of the Lord of Kathirgamam.

S. J. G.

ASIYA ELIYA

Sinhalese translation of Sir Edwin Arnold's
'The Light of Asia.'
Translator : V. Vitharana

"ÁSIYÁ Eliya," a prose rendering of Sir Edwin Arnold's 'The Light of Asia' is yet another conspicuous addition to the over-expanding library of Buddhist Sinhalese literature. The custom among the outstanding

Sinhalese writers has been to translate or adapt Pali works into Sinhalese. But here is a translation of an English work which in turn is the versification of the Sanskrit tradition of the story of the Buddha.

Whatever may be said of 'The Light of Asia' as a specimen of English poetry, it can safely be said that it is the only 'original' English poem on the Buddha; and hence, so long as Buddhism lasts, it is certain to possess a niche, all to itself, in a Buddhist library. The translator's attempt to give such a work a Sinhalese rendering is worth while.

Except for a proper noun and a few doctrinal terms, the translator has wholly adopted the Hela style of Sinhalese, and has expressed himself, from straightforward narrative to the expounding of the Doctrine in simple words instead of in their Sanskritised counterparts. This style of writing is not quite popular as yet, and may be read for its novelty, if for nothing else.

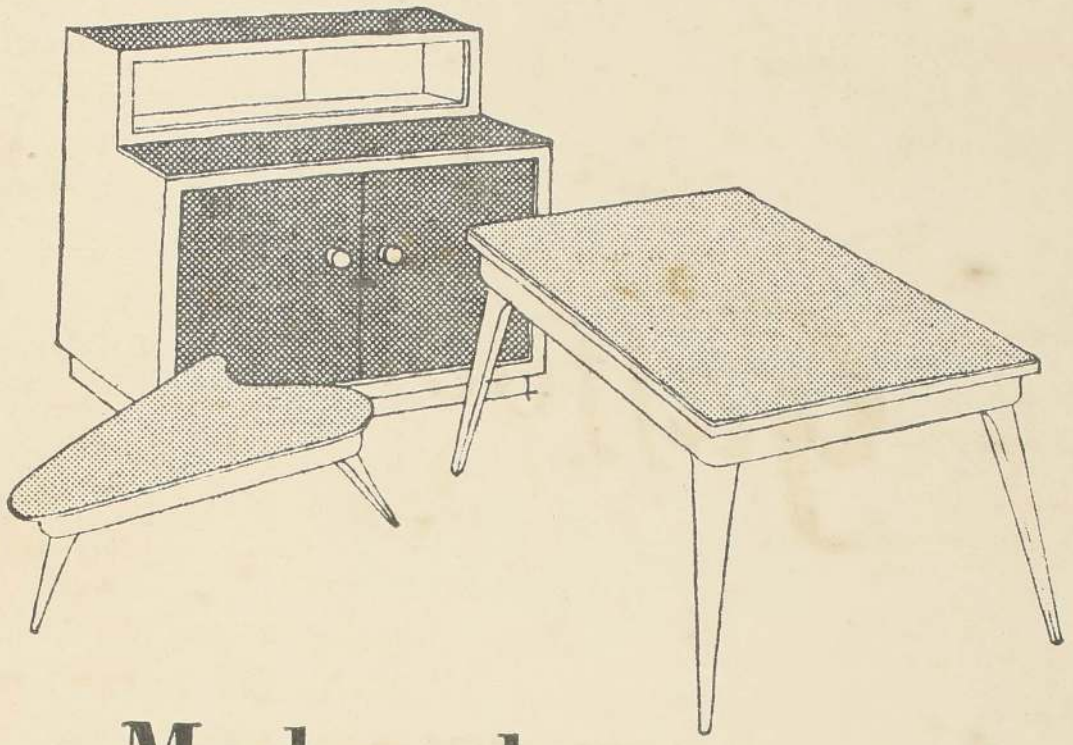
Vitharana's Hela, unlike many another which I have had the occasion to read, is quite lucid and outspoken. The foot-notes are valuable, and the new simple words (perhaps of the translator's own coinage) are quite expressive of the meaning they are intended to convey.

The original, 'The Light of Asia,' is in verse; the translator has given us a prose rendering of the book. The attempt may look escapist at first —if one agrees that versification is more difficult than writing prose! But all the same, 'Ásiya Eliya' is a book of good prose, and there are many passages in the book composed with felicity.

The Hela of the book may, at first, sound unusual, mainly because of its unfamiliarity. But to the reader who has a fair command of Sinhalese, 'Asiya Eliya' is certain to be welcome fare.

Vitharana is a young writer and it is premature to estimate him. May we hope that this work is a forerunner of further literary attempts from his pen.

PREM.



Modern homes need FORMICA surfaces . . .

Oh what a difference when furniture is surfaced with 'FORMICA' Laminated Plastic! This modern surface material is wonderfully *easy to clean* — and will save you work and time for a lifetime.

** For tables, dressers, shelves, cupboards, walls and all surfaces subject to hard wear throughout your house.*

** Easily cleaned with a damp cloth and cannot stain in normal use.*

** Heat-resistant up to 266°F. or 130°C.*

** Proof against rot, damp, termites.*

** Will not chip or crack when fixed.*

** Lowest cost per year of service of any known material.*

** Over 50 gay, attractive colours in glossy or matt finish.*

Please pay a visit to our Fort Showroom and see the comprehensive display of **FORMICA.**

SOLE DISTRIBUTORS:

WALKER SONS AND CO. LTD.,

MAIN STREET, COLOMBO

THE TAMIL

A Tribute by a Very Great Man :—

" Received with

Interest and

Pleasure. "—

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL

The Tamil

EDITORIAL OFFICE:

2, Buller's Lane, Colombo,

Ceylon.

T'phone: 84560.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: **Ten Rupees**

Twelve Shillings

for twelve numbers

ADVERTISEMENTS: **Seventy-five rupees per Full Page.**

For further particulars please communicate with the Editorial Office.