AMONG THOSE PRESENT

AMONG THOSE PRESENT

By

D. B. DHANAPALA

M. D. GUNASENA & CO., LTD.,
CEYLON

M. D. Gunasena & Co., Ltd.
217, Norris Road, Colombo.
33, Yatinuwara Vidiya, Kandy.
2, Matara Road, Galle.
De Croos Road, Negombo.

First Published - June 1962

Printed in 12pt. Monotype and bound by M. D. Gunasena & Co., Ltd. Colombo. The monochrome blocks have been processed on plastic plates on electronic Scan-A-Sizer.

CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	
Anagarika Dharmapala	1
Ananda Coomaraswamy	11
D. S. Senanayake	24
Dudley Senanayake	35
John Kotelawala	42
S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike	60
Sirima Bandaranaike	82
Oliver Goonetilleke	92
Philip Gunawardhane	105
P. de S. Kularatne	114
G. P. Malalasekera	121
L. H. Mettananda	132
Senerat Paranavitana	139
G. P. Wickremarachchi	149
Yakkaduve Thero	155
Nicholas Attygalle	162
Herbert Hulugalle	170
Soliyas Mendis	178
Nittavela Gunaya	186
Victor Dhanapala	192
Arunachalam Mahadeva	203
Ediriweera Sarathchandra	207

ILLUSTRATIONS

	Facing Page
Anagarika Dharmapala	2
Ananda Coomaraswamy	11
D. S. Senanayake	24
Dudley Senanayake	35
John Kotelawala	42
S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike	60
Sirima Bandaranaike	83
Oliver Goonetilleke	92
Philip Gunawardhane	105
P. de S. Kularatne	114
G. P. Malalasekera	121
L. H. Mettananda	132
Senarat Paranavitana	139
G. P. Wickremarachchi	150
Yakkaduve Thero	155
Nicholas Attygalle	162
Herbert Hulugalle	170
Soliyas Mendis	178
Nittavela Gunaya	186
Arunachalam Mahadeva	203
Ediriweera Sarathchandra	207

PREFACE

Among the twenty two of those present in name in this volume are some who have shaped events in Ceylon and even made history. There are others who have contributed in their own way in the building up of a new Independent nation. One or two have been included only because they are very interesting persons in themselves.

Most of these sketches were originally written as articles for newspapers as occasion arose. Some of them have been revised; others brought up to date. A few appear as originally written.

These sketches have been arranged, as far as possible, to show the trend of events in Ceylon in recent times through the different personalities who tailored these trends.

I am thankful to Messrs. B. P. Weerawardhane, Motagedera Wanigaratne, Ananda Bulathgama, Daya Ranaweera, Indra de Lanarolle, Dakshina Photo and D. B. Suranimala for the illustrations in the book.

I am grateful to my revered teacher, Mr. G. P. Aryaratne, Lecturer in English at the Vidyalankara University, for reading the proofs.

I also owe gratitude to Mr. Lionel Lokuliyana, Mr. B. C. Wijemanne and Mr. F. M. Reynolds of Messrs. M. D. Gunasena & Co., Ltd. for the interest they have taken in the production of this book; and Mrs. Rathi Dhanapala but for whose nagging this book might never have been published.

D. B. D.

Colombo, May 1962

ANAGARIKA DHARMAPALA

WHEN I was about seven I happened to be a salesboy in a currystuffs boutique in a suburb of Galle, Kumbalwella. The chief salesman of the shop had certain pretentions to culture. When the day's work was done and the last plank of the doorway fitted into its groove and bolted and locked, he read to us, with the aid of a bottle lamp, interesting bits out of the Sinhalese papers.

Over and over again in these passages from the Press would occur the name of one Anagarika Dharmapala.

The chief salesman also had an urge for the higher spiritual life and would indulge in subtle moral coercion in taking us to the temple every Poya night. I did not mind so much the visit to the temple as I did the interminable "bana-preaching" which often lengthened into an all night session.

Imagine the chief salesman's excitement when one morning it was announced by the beat of the tom-tom that Anagarika Dharmapala would preach that night at the Galle Market Square. We all

caught the infection and were all burning with a pious fervour to hear the "Bana".

I do not quite remember all the details of the long trudge to the Galle Central Market. Nor the long walk back by the aid of a "Chulu" torch at midnight.

But what I do remember is almost every word I listened to, standing as I did at the edge of the crowd in what little space there was, sandwiched between a buxom basket woman and a "chandiya" with his sarong hitched up.

It was the strangest kind of "Bana" I have ever heard or ever will hear.

He did not dress like a Buddhist monk. He did not sit cross-legged as did the monks. He did not quote the scriptures as did the monks.

Instead, dressed in a strange garb of his own invention, standing upright like the unwavering decision of an honest man, he delivered a magnificent onslaught on Imperialism and the White Man's Burden in such a resounding voice that my ears almost went hoarse with hearing !

I remember almost every word he spoke—not because I have a good memory ; but because interest is the secret of memory and I must have been interested to remember them across the lapse of many years.

Big machines and good clothes did not make a civilized man, he said. The English were uncivilized barbarians who exploited helpless people. The Sinhalese were a civilized race when the Britons were savages. Those who imitated the English were like African savages who bartered good diamonds for cheap coloured glass beads. Be

proud of your civilization, your language. Stand erect before the conquerors. Don't bend double. Have self-respect. Be yourselves and not cheap imitations of barbarians if you want to have a place in the world.

Soon after, even as a child, I begged my father to discard my Portuguese surname and English given name, which did not mean anything to me, and adopted the Sinhalese system of nomenclature with a Sinhalese given name.

II

Anagarika Dharmapala was the only aristocrat who walked with his head held high among a fawning cringing, crawling multitude of his own fellow men in Ceylon at that time.

He gave the Sinhalese a sense of self-respect—made them walk erect. His voice was the first whisper that later developed into a clamour for political freedom.

He felt that unless the Sinhalese was made to feel that he was equal, if not superior, to the Englishman, he would be content to be for ever fallen. By his fearless crusade for cultural emancipation he gave courage to the faint-hearted to stretch out the hand for political emancipation.

He felt that religious revivals were out of the question as long as the people were in a state of mind that accepted political and economic subjection as a matter of course.

What the other Ceylon world figure, Ananda Coomaraswamy, did to Indian art—put it on the map of the world—Anagarika Dharmapala did to the spirit of the Sinhalese.

Influenced greatly by Colonel Olcott, Dharmapala became Ceylon's crusader who was as much feared as he was respected.

A high forehead that could often be low-brow on occasion ; a pensive brow that bespoke a good deal of power ; firm lips that brooked no hindrance but could speak kind words to a child ; a personality oozing with energy but at the same time pervading a sense of peace and quiet ; this was the aspect of this aristocrat wearing sack cloth who was a visionary with the ideas of a warlord.

The warlord in him organized the crusade to re-establish Buddhism in India, the land of its birth, as his mission in life. A vocative volcano in eruption when roused, which was often, he was, withal, a man of action who could organize things on a vast scale in order to translate his zeal and fervour into useful practical movements.

Ceylon became known throughout India and the world through his propaganda and crusade which never ceased until his voice was stilled for ever.

He fired a whole generation of Sinhalese to refuse to accept the old world Colonial mentality as a matter of course. This led not only to cultural and political emancipation but also to the religious revival which was his aim.

He was the forerunner, the pioneer, who blazed a trail for people like Piyadasa Sirisena, W. A. de Silva, P. de S. Kularatne and Gunapala Malalasekera.

This perhaps was the greatest work he did for Ceylon.

The Buddhist schools he established, the Sinhalese Newspaper Press he started, the Ayurvedic dispen-

saries he commenced—all aimed at the regeneration of a degenerated race. He stopped the rot—for those who may come later to heal.

III

The next and last time I saw him some twenty years later at Benares, I met him face to face—not from the edge of a crowd.

I had by then become a journalist. He had become a Buddhist monk under the name of Devamitta Dhammapala.

I could hardly believe that the mellowed, kind, reposeful monk before me, talking of his vision of reclaiming India to Buddhism at the newly built Mulagandhakuti Vihara, was the same eruptive volcano that I had listened to at Galle.

As Jawaharlal Nehru, the impulsive, headstrong aristocrat, by degrees, schooled himself into a statesman of world importance, the fiery pioneer tamed himself into a venerable figure of infinite patience and charm.

Two thousand five hundred years ago, it was near Benares, that the wandering Beggar Prince, Gautama, preached his first sermon in the deer park at Isipathanarama (modern Saranath). It was there that the Buddha trained His disciples to go forth into the world and spread His message of compassion.

After the lapse of many centuries, another strange figure in a saffron coloured Buddhist robe wandered about Saranath once again. His head clean shaven, his form bent with age, this new Sadhu was also a follower of that first great Beggar Monk of two thousand five hundred years ago. He

haunted Saranath laying the foundations of a new missionary centre, to convert India to a faith that had been driven clean out of its native shores. This venerable, noble-looking dreamer with tender visions in his eyes had gained a fame that had the sound of holy bells and the chantings of strange 'mantrams' in far-off tongues.

This was the man whose international career began when, at the Chicago Parliament of Religions he represented Buddhism. Later he travelled in most quarters of the globe—from New York to Yokohama—founding Buddhist "viharas" or temples, starting new missionary centres, lecturing, preaching, propagating his faith. He had been the main spring of all Buddhist activity since the days when Colonel Olcott revived Buddhism and fired it with a new zeal. He was the founder of the Maha Bodhi Society, the greatest of all Buddhist organisations in India. The Buddhist Missions in New York and London, the "Vihara" at Calcutta and the temple at Madras and at a host of smaller places were all the work of this one man.

Coming from an aristocratic family, having had a brilliant educational career, he soon captured and fascinated a vast following. Then an arch enemy of British Imperialism, a nationalist agitator, he it was who roused his native island from its national stupor.

IV

With the coming on of age, the old fire seemed to have gone out. And Dharmapala left politics for the younger generation to grapple with. His passion was his religion. Ceylon politics was all

very interesting in those days when he was a mere Anagarika (Brahmachari). But after he became a Bhikku, he dedicated his life wholeheartedly to his religion. When the history of the Buddhist revival comes to be written in the future mists of time, Dharmapala might be canonised. He was the Peter the Hermit of Buddhism, the Crusader who came to capture back the Holy land from what to him were the "Hindu heathen".

One of the tenderest dreams of Dharmapala was fulfilled before his death when the new Buddhist Temple at Saranath was formally opened.

It was a rare but remarkably harmonious combination of ancient Buddhist architecture and modern "straightline" style of building. The main tower is an adaptation of the temple at Buddha Gaya but simplified and modernised, with large bells in bas-relief running down the sides. The big hall, paved with marble, ends up with a modern portico with tall arched doors with three bell-shaped towers on top. Over each door is a little wheel in bas-relief signifying the Wheel of Law that the Buddha began to turn at Saranath.

It was a hard thing that Dharmapala in his old age was trying to do in those days when people cared more for a blanket than for a Buddha, more for the silver change in their pockets than for their souls. And his attempt to re-convert India with this little band of dusky monks, was like trying to stir the Bay of Bengal with a teaspoon ! But religious faith can move mountains and shake empires. And there is the undying glory of trying the impossible which only the fanatic knows.

Dharmapala's dark eyes gleamed with that glory as he talked to me of the future.

"This is an ideal place for an international Buddhist University", he told me, "and I have ideas . . . . who knows it might come into existence some day. Certainly there is no fitter place for a centre of learning and culture and peace. Here will come as of old students from the far corners of the earth, to learn the sacred Law, to work in harmony and peace". As he talked he would bend forward and peep through the little window of his bed-room at the new shrine glistening in the noon-day sun. As I listened I got fascinated with the spirit of this adventurous "crusader" trying to capture the Holy land. His voice was deep-toned and loud and he spoke roughly like all fanatics. Whenever I spoke, I had to raise my voice to the tone of a megaphone for the old priest was hard of hearing. "What is there to prevent the future to shape Saranath into another great missionary centre?" he asked me. And not waiting for a reply carried on : "The Government of India asked the Mahabodhi Society to build a suitable temple to cost about Rs. 30,000 to receive the newly found relics of the Buddha at Taxila. But you see, this is my idea of a suitable shrine". He paused and looked once again through the barred window of his bed-room.

Before I saw the 70-year old Dhammapala, I talked with his secretary for over an hour over a cup of tea flavoured with malted milk. The design of the temple and the engineering work in the construction I learnt had both been done by Indians. But for their help Dhammapala might

have peeped through his window till he got the cramp on his back but he would not have seen the soaring towers of the Buddhist temple that sultry September afternoon.

V

Twenty-five centuries ago, a wild, vagabond prince of Bengal named Vijaya was set adrift on the ocean wave along with a band of his riotous followers by his royal father to appease the wrath of his subjects at the dreadful, disgraceful conduct of his scapegrace son. Eventually, the frail barques found their way to the spicy-groved island of Lanka where they conquered the aborigines and married their women. Later, Asoka according to tradition sent his son Mahinda and his daughter Sanghamitta to convert the mango shaped island to Buddhism. Since then the inhabitants of Ceylon have been Buddhists. By and by, Buddhism was hounded out of the land of its birth. But in the little island it has flourished in its purest form to the present day. And after many centuries the little island is sending missionaries to reconvert the great Motherland !

Even though it seemed a little futile then, but for his work in India, that country perhaps would never have adopted the Asoka Wheel as its emblem and had a Buddha figure dominating the scene at the climax of political emancipation.

But for his work in Ceylon, we might yet be a Colony of the British Empire ; our culture a primitive pretence ; our language a vernacular according to the classic meaning of the word ; and our religion a secret ritual.

He gave new sight to our eyes ; new hearing to our ears ; a new touch to our finger tips ; a new feeling to our hearts.

We in Ceylon might forget Devamitta Dhammapala Thero ; but who will ever forget Anagarika Dharmapala of the old days ?

ANANDA COOMARASWAMY

THE Ceylonese are easily pleased with their doings and mighty proud of what they can call their own. Anything new and a little out of the ordinary in the Island—a new cinema, a broad road, a tall building—but becomes "the best in the East". It is even said that once a Ceylonese called the new University of Ceylon "the best in the East, excepting those in other countries !"

But usually they are oblivious to and unaware of what they can legitimately be proud of. The ancient irrigation system of the country for instance, is a wonder over which any people might Justifiably stretch out their chests. Then there was the modern phenomenon of Dr. Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy.

While the whole world from China to Chile bowed in rapt veneration for over quarter of a century before this mighty giant only Ceylon was vaguely unaware that such a person even existed, let alone realising that he was a Ceylonese.

II

In the middle of the last century, when an egotistic Whig aristocracy devoid of sentiment and a merciless middle class absorbed in the pursuit of a new wealth were crushing beneath an unyielding mechanism the common man of Britain, a young man from Ceylon crashed into London Society. He was soon hobnobbing with the greatest in the land, particularly Lord Palmerston, Lord Tennyson and Benjamin Disraeli, later Lord Beaconsfield, who were fascinated with this mysterious young Hindu talking philosophy and learning law. When Disraeli wrote his novel "Tancred" it was found that the young Hindu from Ceylon was one of the important characters in the book, in which the author openly held out to troubled, diseased Britain the vision of the Holy East, India of the Rishis, where the source of inspiration never runs dry.

This young Hindu Muttu Coomaraswamy who made such a deep impression on the minds of a future Premier of England as to be the model for a character in a book was the father of Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy. Muttu Coomaraswamy, on his return to Ceylon served as the Tamil Member in the Island's Legislative Council in the eighteen sixties and ended up, as all celebrated Tamils had to, with a knighthood. His nephews, Arunachalam and Ramanathan, both followed in the footsteps of their uncle ; only the son, Ananda Coomaraswamy, was a man of a different mould.

III

Coomaraswamy was without a peer as a scholar among Orientalists. It would be a great discovery

if one could find another like him anywhere in the whole world, whose studies and publications cover as wide a range and are at the same time as numerous in quantity as excellent in quality. The place he occupied in the Oriental Art world was something like the position acceded to Mahatma Gandhi in the political field in India.

Yet he seemed to be a combination of Marco Polo, Ibn Batuta and Fa Hien in his scholarly wanderings across Asia in search of research.

There seemed to be hardly any subject worth mentioning connected with any corner of Asia that he had not studied, mastered and expounded. He was as much an expert in philosophy as he was an adept in religion ; as much a master of metaphysics as an authority on mythology, or geology. But these subjects were merely sidelines to his absorbing erudition in the realm of Oriental Art where he reigned supreme. There were other scholars, great in their own way, who studied particular aspects or periods of development of Oriental Art in India or elsewhere. But Coomaraswamy was the only stalwart who took in his stride the whole of Asia. His mind probed, his fingers caressed, his eyes examined the arts and crafts, sculpture and music, dance and drama of most countries in the East. India itself he covered almost province by province, period by period, piece by piece.

He went straight to the original sources and gave first hand, straight from the horse's mouth, as it were, the vision he had witnessed. That in itself would not have won for Coomaraswamy the absentee Maha-Art-Maship of the Oriental world of Culture. He had the temperament, the training and the

talent to put forward in clear cut and uncompromising terms what he had seen and learnt first hand so that it sounded true as a theorem in geometry and at the same time as inspiring as the revelations of a prophet.

IV

In 1900 as a young man of 23 he saw with a thrill his first paper on "Ceylon Rocks and Graphite" in print in the Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society. By the time he died he had written more than five hundred publications, some bulky monumental works like "Medieval Sinhalese Art" and "A History of Indian and Indonesian Art", other slimmer volumes of fair size and the rest pamphlets and papers in the best learned magazines of the world.

For the Encyclopaedia Britannica (14th Edition) alone he wrote eight articles ; on Indian and Sinhalese Art and Archaeology ; Indian Architecture ; Indonesian and Further Indian Art ; Iron in Art ; Textiles and Embroideries in India ; Bronze and Brass Ornamental Work in India and Indonesia ; Dance in India ; and Yakkas. Time was when the Encyclopaedia Britannica entirely ignored Indian and Asian Art—up to its 13th edition. This was perhaps because there was no outstanding authority who could deal with the subjects. Coomaraswamy put Indian Dance, Architecture and Art in the National Encyclopaedia of America in addition to editing the English words of Indian origin in Webster's New International Dictionary.

V

Profuse writing in itself is nothing very remarkable. What was really astounding in Coomaraswamy was the quality that accompanied this quantity. Extraordinary profundity of study, originality in research and brilliant insight into the heart of things combined to make anything written in his marvellously firm and flowing handwriting a deep influence on both scholars and laymen all over the world.

His books, memoirs (in the learned sense of the word), articles and monographs were published not only in India, Ceylon, England and America but also in France, Germany, Finland, Holland and Rumania in translation.

In every country in the world whenever the subject of Indian Art came up, scholar and student, expert and layman, all had one name in mind as an authority : Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy.

As Spenser was the Poet of Poets Coomaraswamy was the Critic of Oriental Critics. He was the model, the authority for half a hundred other top-rank critics of Oriental Art. Most of his books, expensive in production, were published in small editions at very high prices and were found mostly in libraries. It was from these beautifully produced books that other famous connoisseurs sought inspiration and instruction and learnt the rudiments of art and philosophy and theory of Oriental beauty and broadcast them to a waiting world. His precise language was so concise, packed with matter and condensed to such an extent that Mulk Raj

Anand expanded one chapter from "The Dance of Siva" to a full sized book entitled "The Hindu View of Art".

He was firstly a scholar ; secondly a scholar ; thirdly a scholar. He dealt with questions of Asian aesthetics invariably in the particular, focussing undivided attention to bring the special characteristics of a type of art into sharp relief. Never did he present personal ideas or novel theories. The task he set himself was discovering the truth and stating the principles he had discovered by which a particular culture rose, declined, fell and rose once again or remained for ever fallen.

He gave us the philosophy of the beautiful as conceived by artists in different countries and different times from sources none may question with the accuracy of the trained scientist.

VI

For, originally, Coomaraswamy, the Doctor of Science of the London University, was a scientist pure and simple. He started his life as a geologist at the beginning of this century and carried out for the Ceylon Government a minerological survey of the Island from 1903 to 1906.

When the young Director of the Survey who could write a "Note on the Occurrence of Corundum as a Contact-Mineral at Pont Paul near Morlaix, Finisterre" in the Journal of the Geological Society turned to something nearer home and addressed an "Open Letter to the Kandyan Chiefs" in not so unemotional words pointing out the utter neglect of their artistic heritage due to the mimic imitation of the West, and followed it up with an

article on the Ceylon National Review on "Anglicization of the East", there were frozen frowns on the brows of the colonial tin gods who sat guarding Imperial interests in the seats of the mighty in the little crown colony. Young Coomaraswamy was not to be curbed in that manner. With other stalwarts like the late W. A. de Silva, Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam and F. L. Woodward a movement was initiated for a system of national education, teaching of Sinhalese and Tamil in all schools and the encouragement of national culture, history and art.

It has taken nearly fifty years for thick skinned Ceylon to become conscious of what Coomaraswamy campaigned for in his twenties. But the earnest young man with a scientific turn of mind but a pulsating heart for the pearls of a cultural heritage which the swine of those and even these days spurned was shown that he was not wanted in Ceylon. Thus it was that from then onwards till his dying days the most famous Ceylonese in modern times, Ceylon's only world personality, lived in exile from the land of his birth, away from the things he loved.

It may be that if Coomaraswamy had stayed behind and adapted his warm enthusiasm to the decadent colonial atmosphere of those days he might have become at best a local celebrity in a turban like his cousins, Arunachalam and Ramanathan, and succumbed by degrees to the inevitable knighthood. But with his departure his stature grew to that of a personality of world importance in the realm of Asian Art.

But before he left the Island he had done the greatest service any cultural crusader could have done for the land of his origin : he had finished "Medieval Sinhalese Art", a monumental work in which he has most faithfully recorded the folk-art forms of the Sinhalese before they disappeared. The bulky volume, a by-product of his wanderings as a geologist in search of mineral resources, was in the nature of a dying disposition of a fast sinking culture before it was done to death by the onslaughts of a foreign civilization.

VI

In this testament of beauty of 400 double royal pages with 50 full page plates and innumerable line illustrations secured with the greatest difficulty, the author deals with the history, social economy and all art forms of the Sinhalese with examples.

While explaining to the culturally blind Sinhalese the beauties of their own art Coomaraswamy gave in this book in a nutshell the difference between Oriental and Occidental Art, which was an example of his lucid, clear, precise prose.

"Medieval Sinhalese Art" was the first of a series of over thirty memorable books on Oriental Art by which he guided his readers on to the threshold of a new wonder world where with sensibility and patience they were made at home as he expounded its intrinsic character. He made it accessible by stating the philosophy of Asian Work and illustrating it by selected examples all unquestionably of the highest quality of their kind.

"To know Indian Art in India alone is to know but half its history" wrote Sir John Marshall. To

tell a story in the round, as it were, Coomaraswamy, in his "History of Indian and Indonesian Art", followed its trail over the great passes to Central Asia ; he watched it assuming new forms and breaking into new beauties as it spread over Tibet, China, Burma and Siam ; he gazed in awe at the unexpected grandeur of its creation in Cambodia, Java and Sumatra ; he saw it encountering a different racial genius, a different environment in Japan and under its influence taking on a unique garb. In each country he delved deep into forgotten ages, as he did in India itself, giving examples, of each style, age and country in reproductions.

In his 400-page volume with 100 full page illustrations called "History of Indian and Indonesian Art", Coomaraswamy proved the living spiritual unity of Asia in all its myriad diversities first proclaimed by Okakura in 1904. Here for the first time the curtain that had long hidden her was lifted and Asia was revealed in all her majesty decked with resplendent riches.

There was a time when the Westerner's conception of Oriental Art was nothing short of a buffoon's view of Beauty. It ceased to be funny or even pitiable when it became, as often it did, impertinent and patronising. Even Vincent Smith, an authority on the history and archaeology of India, wrote at the beginning of this century in no less a place than the Imperial Gazetteer of India, that "After A.D. 300 Indian sculpture properly so called hardly deserves to be reckoned as art".

Such opinions showed that even the greatest archaeological knowledge was no guarantee of any

comprehension of true Oriental Art unless the patronising ignorance was dissipated and the Westerner emancipated from the fetters of western art formulae in the evaluation of Eastern Art Forms. It was this kind of barbarian's opinion of Oriental Art that Coomaraswamy set out to correct.

In his introduction to the "Art of Eastern Asia" he took in hand the education of the West in the ideals of the East. The technique of this pedagogic prophetship was to explain the ideals and prepare the mind for a better understanding and readiness for appreciation. It was not enough to enable them to admire only what happened to appeal to their taste at first sight. Such liking may be based on purely accidental qualities or even on complete misunderstanding. He showed them as to kindergarten children, typical and great Asian Art, and then told them how to understand and appreciate it. He told them that no art was exotic or quaint in its environment, and as long as such feelings existed they were far removed from properly understanding what was put before them.

To bring about this understanding and sympathy Coomaraswamy put down in precise terms what was art from the Eastern point of view. It was not (as the Westerner thought) an individual creation, produced only by persons of peculiar sensibility, working in well-lit studios and driven by an irresistible urge for self expression. It was on the contrary, a form of civilization, produced by trained professional craftsmen, a statement informed by ideal beauty. Statement was the body ; beauty the soul. These could not be divided into separate entities. A work of art was both an occasion for

ecstasy and the fulfilment of a utilitarian purpose, sacred or secular, in an age for which it was meant, for a people for whom it was made. We could understand without effort and at first sight only the art of our day and place. But the more absolute the beauty of an alien work, the more fully it was what it was intended to be, the less intelligible would be its functioning. But to call it, therefore, mysterious, quaint or grotesque would be only giving our own ignorance ugly names. Such works were never obscure to those for whom they were originally meant.

Coomaraswamy gave the explanation required, the background necessary to enable the idle mind to acknowledge ungrudgingly the splendour of the work itself, to relish its beauty and its grace.

A bibliography of his work on art alone would fill 20 pages. But his studies for 40 years were not confined to art alone. He touched many subjects connected with Eastern culture that would make it easier for the Westerner to understand the East and the Easterner to realize the greatness of his own heritage. In all his books and writings, throughout all the dispassionate language ran a message of co-operation through fellowship, understanding and sympathy between the East and the West as equals.

VII

The aim of his book "Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism" was to set forth as simply and as clearly as possible the message of the Buddha according to the Buddhist scriptures and to make pointed references to the part which Buddhist thought had played in the development of Asian thought and

to suggest the significance it might still possess for modern thinkers. Here were set down definite statements which should be either true or false and a clearly defined goal which the West had either to accept or reject. At a time when the Western world was beginning to realize that it had failed to attain the fruits of life in a society based on competition and self-assertion, Coomaraswamy pointed out the profound significance in the message of Asian thought where it was affirmed with no uncertain emphasis that the fruits of life could only be attained in a society based on the conception of the moral order and mutual responsibility. He illustrated by a single quotation the marvellous directness and simplicity of the social ethic to which the psychology of Buddhism affords sanction and which had great significance for the warring nations ; "Victory breeds hatred for the conquerred is unhappy". The supreme tenderness and compassion associated with the Buddha was brought out by a passage in the Kuru-deer Jataka where the Bodhisatva asks : "Who would willingly use harsh speech to those who have done a sinful deed, strewing salt, as it were, upon the wound of their fault ?"

He thus had in his studies, be they on ethics or art, philosophy or religion a meaningful message and implied injunction suitable for the modern Western world, in which he lived most of his life.

Even in his "Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists" his aim, most apparently was to relate in a manner close to the original such myths as are familiar to every educated Indian so that the foreigner who desired to understand India would have the essential

knowledge of the cultural background of folk tales that went to the making of the modern Indian.

But Coomaraswamy was not merely an interpreter of India to the West but very much more : the inspiration of a new race of Indians who were no longer anxious to be anglicised, convinced that real progress was based on national ideals, national culture, and national individuality based on these.

He made us open our eyes to the beauty, the grandeur, the glory around us. We who thought we were primitive he ennobled. He rescued us from poverty by digging deep and discovering treasures we never thought we had. From blindness to light, from poverty to riches, from darkness to sunshine Coomaraswamy delivered us.

D. S. SENANAYAKE

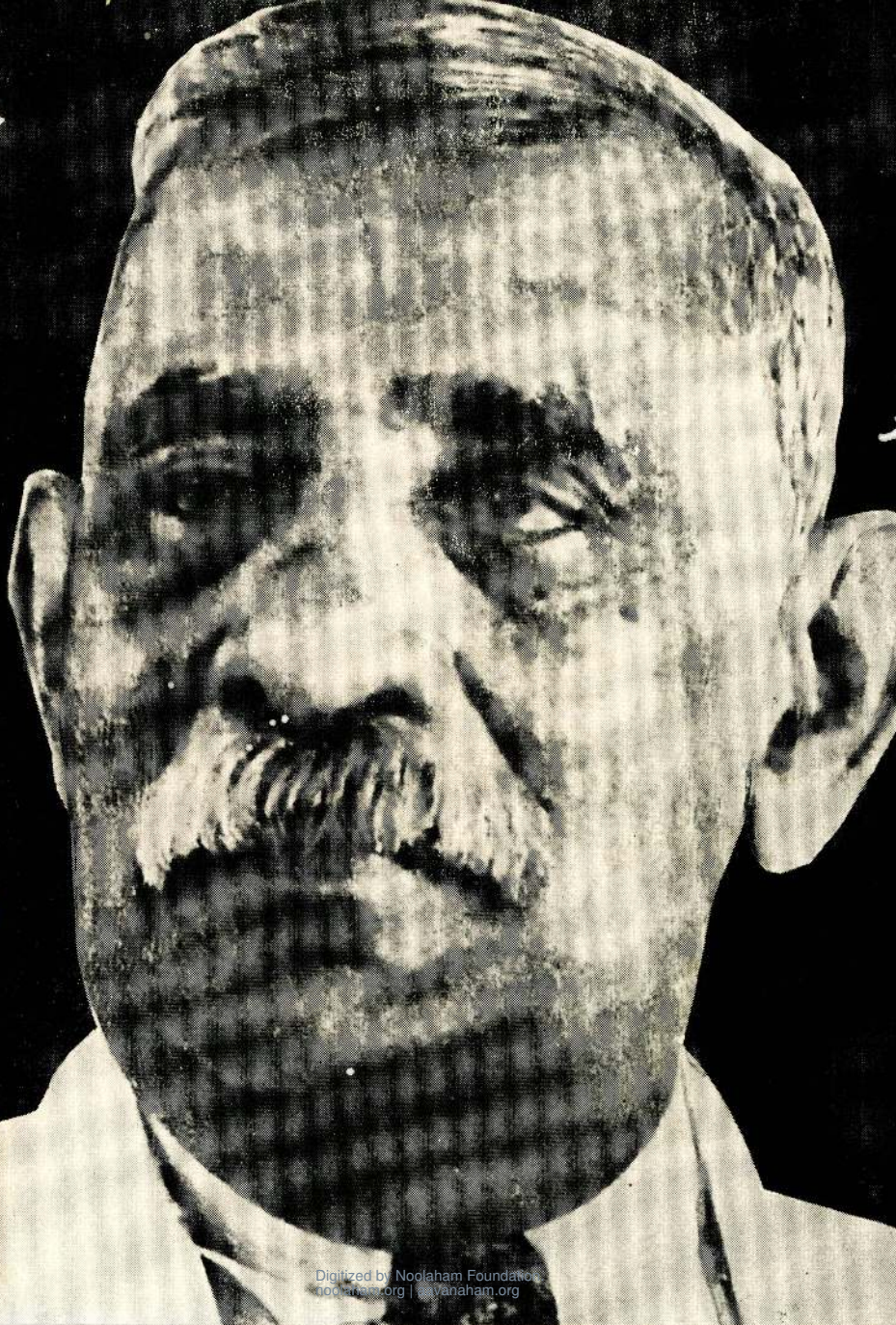
THE remarkable thing about the first Prime Minister of Independent Ceylon was that with nothing very remarkable about him he proved to be the most remarkable Ceylonese in modern times.

Don Stephen Senanayake who had been in politics for 30 years acted like a human Juggernaut crushing all opposition under his overpowering personality.

A burly, big-made man with a hefty chunk for a chin he looked the type that brooked no nonsense. But as his thick-set lips cracked open in a smile, there shone forth vivid genuine geniality out of his rugged face. Generous, friendly and hospitable, around his rocky figure tempests lost their force.

II

He entered the political field in 1922 when he was returned unopposed to the old Legislative Council as one of the three Territorial Representatives for the Western Province. During the nine years he sat in that Council he acted as the



Secretary of the sixteen Elected Representatives of the Island and for a short time in 1929 was appointed one of the three Unofficial Members of the Governor's Executive Council. With the inauguration of the Donoughmore Constitution in 1931 he was returned again unopposed and was unanimously elected Minister of Agriculture. In 1942, Senanayake was elected the Leader of the State Council and Vice-Chairman of the Board of Ministers.

But at each step in his spiralling to power Senanayake confounded, if not dumbfounded, his critics, and made his friends raise their eye-brows in surprise. For Senanayake was the square peg that, for once, fitted into the round hole ! A thimble would have comfortably contained all the training and talent, education and aptitude he possessed for a political career as a young man. He entered politics as a stop-gap by accident and remained there as though by right by an irony of fate.

III

The old laird of Botale, Mudaliyar Don Spater Senanayake, the owner of large acres of coconut and deep mines of graphite, had three sons : Don Charles, Fredrick Richard and Don Stephen. The eldest looked after the extensive business of exporting graphite and copra from Colombo and was affectionately called by his friends "Colombo John". The second, "F.R." had returned from London in a haze of glory having been called to the Bar to be known as "London John". The third son, as in the fairy tale, was a good-for-nothing.

He had preferred cricket to calculus ; wrestling to writing ; and riding fast horses in the open to reading slow Shakespeare in the class-room. Besides, he was an engaging young ruffian who loved to roam the woods and pastures. The father promptly called him "Kelle (jungle) John".

At St. Thomas' College, Colombo, the then Eton of Ceylon, "D.S." had never passed a public examination. But one could not get a sharper man behind the wickets.

The youngster could speak to the point too. Once when the three sons had returned home for the holidays the old father asked them for their positions in class. The eldest admitted he was the 20th ; the next said he was the 12th ; the youngest said he was the fourth without batting an eye-lid—to see his father raising his. The Reports arrived by post. True to his word Stephen was indeed the fourth in the class. But there had been in the whole class only four boys !

In later years "D.S." would relate how he would manipulate to carry the Inspector's bag from class-room to class-room on Inspection Day and manage to get a pass in his annual promotion test without being tested at the end of the day.

The scapegrace Stephen was a junior clerk in the Surveyor-General's Office in Colombo for a short term before he ended the episode by kicking down-stairs a cheeky superior and walking out ! For his mind was in the countryside, and the deep mines of his father. Leaving the political and financial world to his two brothers, Stephen Senanayake went to the country residence, "Botale Walawwa". where he became the Manager of the family estate,

F. R. Senanayake built up for himself a unique place in the esteem of the people in the battle for Reform waged against the British in the Crown Colony, the while Stephen would ride on his bicycle all over the Pettah in search of estate supplies and mining tools. His knowledge of mining became so thorough that in 1914 he was sent on an investigation mission on graphite to Madagascar along with Sir Henry de Mel and Mr. Hunter, the mining expert. At the time he was as little interested in politics as in the cosmos.

But a Temperance Movement had been started in the neighbouring village centre of Mirigama by the Buddhists. In order to please his father, D. S. Senanayake joined it. In some curious way the British Colonial Government viewed the harmless Temperance Movement as a subtle war against its might. When the 1915 Muslim-Buddhist Riots broke out, D. S. Senanayake found himself locked up. When eventually he came out of jail he found that he was himself a hero in the eyes of the nation in addition to his brother ! You just could have knocked him down with a feather !

IV

Politics came to him ; he never went in search of politics. Helped by the momentum of a term in jail and his brother's fame as a patriot, D. S. Senanayake entered the Legislative Council, more as a claimant to a legacy that had by rights been his brother's than as one who was seeking a new world to conquer on his own.

Soon he made up for what he had lost at school by a painful process of wide reading and educating

himself. A tutor whom he had taken with him for his sons to Nuwara Eliya for a holiday was amazed to find that it was not the sons but the father who gave his days and nights to study on his own. "F.R." died in 1926 and "D.S." came to stay in politics.

When he became Minister of Agriculture in 1931, if he could not cut a figure in the realm of political oratory, this practical agriculturist fired the nation's imagination by vision of restoring the giant tanks of the ancient irrigation system of the Sinhalese Kings. And he was as good as his word. He set about fashioning rural Ceylon nearer his heart's desire. Today, what once used to be vast wastes are smiling expanses of thriving corn.

Intense sincerity and large visions alone might have turned him into a false prophet with an orchid button-hole, if he had not the driving power to translate his dreams into realities. It was the infinite capacity for getting things done on a staggering scale that made him into a legend, that he was the ancient King Parakrama Bahu the Great, the builder of the giant tanks in the 12th Century, walking the earth once again !

He brought to the State Council a sense of the great open spaces as though he had just dismounted after a long jungle jaunt or a ride across rice fields, as he stood up in the House battling with eloquence, which he could never master, with his spectacles pushed back on his forehead and his hands in his trousers pockets.

In course of time Senanayake's technique in debate improved. He became sometimes not quite innocent of moving passages of painful eloquence. He could even be accused of brilliant repartee.

I remember once in the course of a debate on the question of throwing open to the public the hill streams, so far the preserve of the European Fishing Club Members who had introduced trout, one European member interrupted Senanayake with the question "Who put the fish there ?" Back came the question from Senanayake "Who put the streams there ?"

On another occasion the Tamil leader, G. G. Ponnambalam taunted Senanayake : "The Hon. the Minister suffers from a swollen head". Senanayake with ferocity observed : "It would be somebody else who would soon suffer from a swollen head if that remark is uttered outside this House.

V

It was during the War years that Senanayake came to the zenith of his power. From a stern critic of the British Government he had become, by degrees, a staunch supporter of the Imperial regime. He walked out of the Ceylon National Congress. He had come to a point when he need not care for parties. He was the greatest party in the Island ; he contained multitudes. A nod of his head could bring nemesis on that of another ; a pencil mark could spell peril.

The secret of his success was the success of his secrecy. He preferred the closet to the conference room. He tackled his opponents, one by one, behind closed doors, with geniality, friendliness and flattery. With implied promises of plenty, veiled threats of calamity, at the right time this burly, genial giant nobbled all opposition in making

a united demand for the first time in the Island's history for a reformed constitution.

He was so successful in rallying all round him that during the General Strike, in 90 minutes he got one of the worst repressive bits of legislation in Ceylon history passed in all its stages. It could deprive the public of free association, public meetings and appealing to the law courts for redress of any wrong done in its name. He got the Inspector-General of Police sacked and appointed a man of his own choice to the post with special powers to deal with any situation.

He put forward a united demand for a Dominion Constitution according to the conditions imposed by the British Government in 1943, supported by Sir Andrew Caldecott, the Governor, and Sir Ivor Jennings. Senanayake was flabbergasted when the appointment of the Soulbury Commission was announced in 1944 to examine the proposals. He determined to boycott it. It was the strangest kind of boycott known in history. Officially the Ministers did not make representations to the Commission. But no Commission that came out East ever had such lionizing. They were wined and dined entertained and amused in a series of unofficial private functions that left them exhausted.

The background to the final scene of this eventful drama of boycott was the famous Lake Isle of San Michele at Bolgoda owned by Justin Kotelawala.

Here all the Commissioners were bewildered by the lavishness of hospitality as the champagne flowed freely and the music kept rhythm with the merriment.

Not a word was spoken about politics and the constitution in the making. But, it is said, each Commissioner was, in turn, offered the Governor-Generalship in case the Commission happened to recommend a Dominion Constitution !

VI

When the Soulbury Constitution was granted for the first time in eleven years during which Ceylon had had no elections, Senanayake thought of the public.

He was a man without a party. But to get ready for the elections, overnight he created the United National Party and persuaded the Ceylon National Congress, the Sinhala Maha Sabha and the Muslim League to join it along with a whole lot of others who scrambled to get in.

But little did he realize that while he had ascended dizzy heights the country had changed beyond recognition.

For the first time in his political career he found himself challenged at the General Election by one of his own nephews in his own Pocket Borough of Mirigama which had never known a contest ever before. What was more, the young challenger polled 10,000 votes. The juggernaut was confronted with new forces.

Every seat except one was bitterly contested and his United National Party hardly got a bare majority.

He was so devoted to the family that his enemies accused him of primitive tribal feeling and family bandyism. In his first Cabinet his own son, Dudley, and three nephews were included. The

Senanayake clan became something like what the Cecils were once in England.

There was thunder in the air. All signs indicated storm.

But the same old genial, good-natured smile greeted you when you saw him in his sarong at "Woodlands" where with his mighty arms as strong as iron bands, he tended his horses, dogs and orchids—and severely left alone the watches which he never could wind without disaster.

In between the General Election and the summoning of the new Parliament, D. S. Senanayake, produced from his hat, as it were, the Independence of Ceylon—something bigger, better and bolder than what the Soulbury Constitution had granted.

VII

This Independence came to Ceylon not, as in other countries, by a nation-wide demand or after an orgy of bloodshed.

In fact, it was a hush-hush Independence smuggled in by the back-door, fashioned in secret, and made public as a surprise, after the event—as though it were scandal that could not be suppressed !

When Streamer headlines in 72 pt. type screamed the news across the front pages, people could not get over the surprise of this freedom offered on a platter, served hastily with haphazard history and peppered with a plentitude of platitudes.

Dressed in the morning dress of an English Peer, complete with a top hat, looking very much like Paul Robeson as Emperor Jones, Senanayake received the prize of Independence from the Duke

of Gloucester at a formal ceremony in a left-over hangar of the R.A.F.

But soon it became quite apparent that freedom was only for the Boston Brahmins of Ceylon among whom the Senanayakes spoke only to the Jayawardenas and the Jayawardenas spoke only to God !

A brown set of Englishmen born in Ceylon had replaced a white set born in Europe. The Boston Brahmins gladly and openly bore on their shoulders the whole of the white man's burden left behind.

Unmindful of the people's aspirations, national, cultural and religious, the same old Colonial system was carried on with only a few super Civil Servants called Permanent Secretaries super imposed on the old order. The leaders, educated in missionary schools and under the dominance of superficial English Bond Street culture, were unaware of the feelings of the people who wanted release from the bondage of Colonialism.

VIII

D. S. Senanayake's personality had all the qualities of an elephant's trunk : it was strong enough to wrench an offending tree from its roots while it was sensitive enough to feel for and pluck a tiny blade of grass.

By a series of triumphal marches all over the country with pandals spanning the roadways, he rode his way into public acclamation on the bare backs of elephants to be seen by multitudes. Celebrations added to the gaiety of the nation.

Ceylon had accumulated sterling reserves during the war. Commodities fetched good prices. There

was money in the Country. And all was right with the world.

Somehow the Boston Brahmins associated all this new prosperity, this newly-won independence, this new subsidy on rice at a time when the poor were passing rich, the new consumer goods flooding the markets, to the one man striding across the Island.

He became the Father of the Nation. It almost seemed as though he had invented the Sinhalese race !

Senanayake's position now became so strong with the enormous development of the party that opponents like G. G. Ponnambalam almost fell at his feet !

He kept political places vacant—tantalizing his followers—to keep them within party discipline.

He launched schemes that caught the imagination of the people.

Bandaranaike, the next in line of succession and a strong personality, was encouraged to fight John Kotelawala openly and was eventually driven out of the Cabinet. Senanayake looked on smiling, as he heard ambitions crashing down in an unequal fight.

Through it all, his sensitive elephant's trunk carefully felt the small print in the newspapers and subtle were the ways by which he made them eat out of his hands. They could not have done better even if he had owned them !

Thus he weathered the storm which never broke !

By the time he died, all was set by a secret understanding behind John Kotelawala's back for the next Senanayake to step into his shoes.

DUDLEY SENANAYAKE

D. S. SENANAYAKE had an idea that the best way to learn how to ride a horse was just to ride a horse. It was the modern version of learning how to play the flute.

That was how he taught his sons and nephews riding when they were yet at school. He would put the boy on a horse, tie up his reins to the saddle and whip the horse. The boy had to stick to his seat for fear of a fall and incidentally learn how to keep his balance. The theory seems to have been that if you were afraid of a fall you would never learn to master a horse.

This technique of teaching riding by the man who rode his way to death, though unorthodox, might not have been quite such a fancy as one supposes. All those who were taught to ride by him became excellent horsemen, even though some might not have had the horse sense that he possessed.

Exactly as he taught his boys riding he taught them politics.

A family of wealth and position, not bothered with earning a livelihood, the Senanayakes have

always been sportsmen. Polo, cricket, golf they excelled in, led by the old man himself.

The newest game with the birth of the Donoughmore Era was politics. When Siripala Samarakkody died and the Ministers were faced with the challenge of presenting united demands on the question of Reforms, R. G. Senanayake was brought out from his club-rooms and put on the saddle vacated by Samarakkody in order to be sure of another vote on the Reforms question.

Likewise, earlier, when Dudley Senanayake had complained of a stomach disorder that cricket, polo and the doctors combined could not cure, he was put on the Dedigama Seat with the able assistance of John Kotelawala and asked to sit pretty and be cured or head for a fall and fail.

II

It was an unwilling young man who gave up his polo for politics. But the unwilling patient was a willing sportsman. To him politics was another type of sport which, though unfamiliar, was all the same exhilarating.

He took his politics as seriously as he had taken his sports. Having been educated at St. Thomas' and Cambridge, he knew no Sinhalese. He got himself a Sinhalese tutor and set to work at getting at the rudiments of the language.

As soon as he had a working knowledge of Sinhalese syntax and grammar, he turned to religion. Since he had first learned in early childhood the first principles of Buddhism under Heenatiyana Dhammaloka Therunnanse, he had not paid any attention to religion. Along with his life long

friend, J. R. Jayawardena, he began a course of intensive Buddhist studies which resulted in Dudley taking it all in and J. R. writing "Buddhist Essays".

Then came a study course in Politics and Marxism which became so serious that it all but ended in catastrophe. The two friends became the new driving force of the moribund Ceylon National Congress and by degrees became so pink in outlook that they invited the Communists to join forces with them at the Ambalangoda Session, thus driving out D. S. Senanayake himself out of the fold.

In a way this was a blessing in disguise. When the time came for new elections after an interval of eleven years and a party had to be formed, "D.S." the man without a party was able to rally round him all the parties he cared to muster.

When the "Father of the Nation" became the first Premier, the son was once again hoisted up to the vacant saddle at the Ministry of Agriculture, the reins tied and the horse whipped.

It was an unwilling rider once again who had to be cajoled and persuaded to the saddle.

The son's queasy feeling of accepting a gift from the father could be understood. But one of the most daring acts of the father was this appointment of the son as the Minister of Agriculture. The father had enough faith in the son as one who would make good on his own merits that in spite of the charge of nepotism he took the risk. And no son could have fulfilled the hopes of a father better. He studied his files. He learnt things at first hand. He pried and prodded. Soon he knew his Department almost by heart. Without any fuss and flapdoodle, but slowly and surely, the son

schooled himself to be a Minister for whom even the opposition came to have great regard.

In debate in the House he became a formidable foe whom the opposition feared. His previous studies of Marxism stood him in good stead and he could cut clean at the roots of an argument without clumsy hacking and uncouth rhetoric.

And by the time "D.S." came to the zenith of his power and prestige, the father himself saw in the son the image of a successor and made secret arrangements for the succession as it turned out.

III

But once again, it was with reluctance he rose to the occasion. He had almost to be forced into it. But, as in the past, luck was with him. It can almost be said it was the reluctance he displayed that made the Party sign on the dotted lines left behind by the father.

We all have a sneaking regard for the modest man, as we have for the blushing bride. Bravado is all very well in the ring ; clamour fits well into the market place. But diffidence is the badge of those who are called to the highest offices.

There is an Oriental tradition that in the old days when the King died without an heir a caparisoned elephant was sent out in search of a suitable candidate for the throne.

It was then a diffident, unwilling, and unknown man who was brought on the back of the sacred elephant to be elevated to the throne.

In modern democratic Ceylon, we recognise no heirs, at least in theory, but the Governor-General, perhaps, is the present day version of the old world

sacred elephant. The selection of the son according to the wishes of the dear departed as the heir to the father combined something of the old with the new, legend with legislature.

What the father had bequeathed the son accepted unwillingly.

Not only could you take this horse to water; here was a horse who would drink as well.

But Dudley Senanayake was no carbon copy of the father or cast in the same mould.

IV

If the father's personality had the qualities of an elephant's trunk, the son's personality has the characteristics of an umbrella. It can shelter you from the sun when it is fierce or from the deluge when it pours but can be folded up and hidden away unobtrusively in the intervals between.

The son's personality, it is true, is more subdued in force and less subtle in texture.

On the other hand, what the father lacked in the finer points of cultural refinement that comes from wider reading, and polish and elegance required of a democratic Premier, the son had more than enough to make up for.

He understood not only the practice of Democracy that the father did but also the theory of Democracy which the father never grasped.

The father was rough hewn granite on majestic lines; the son is seasoned timber sand-papered and Polished—and fashioned on modern lines. Wherever the father was he took possession of the scene; dominated it; laid down the law. Self-effacement, that alluring modesty that goes with

the highest intellects, is the keynote of the son's personality. He does not bestride the horizon. He sits in a corner and mopes. He is different from his father in his approach, manner and method. The father preferred the closed-door conclave to the open-door conference. The son chose the conference in preference to the conclave.

But this also meant that the son in some kind of way was a Hamlet unable to make up his mind. If Hamlet had been the chairman of a committee that made the decisions for him there would have been no play.

If a modern Premier had not be only a Chairman of a Cabinet, resignation as a climax to a melodrama enacted by Dudley within two years would not have happened.

The disciplined intellectual virtues of justice of heart and mind, the proud shyness that comes of high mental attainments, and the sensitive dignity, the result of exceedingly good breeding, in themselves are great qualities devoutly to be wished.

But to be able to mould events and not allow events to mould him, to impose his will and not be imposed upon, a leader needs some dynamic force from within or even some strong urge from without to give him stamina.

The intellectual calm, so becoming in an impartial chairman, breaks down at moments of crisis when the man has to be also a path-finder and explorer to point the way to others. The lack of this driving force, without which there can be no creative power in politics, was Dudley Senanayake's great limitation.

Here was a man who, the larger he grew in public life, the smaller he felt within himself.

His attempts at playing the part of his father in the same terms of Crown Colonialism without the same conditions were bound to come to disaster.

If tragedy there was in the many episodes of his career when he failed his followers it was that Dudley was the son of the Father of the Nation.

It is always better to be the father of a famous son rather than the son of a famous father.

JOHN KOTELAWALA

It would be interesting to recall now how John Kotelawala first burst into politics.

Thirty-two-year old Captain John Lionel Kotelawala stood before a Provincial Planters' Meeting as a likely candidate for the seat of Kurunegala under the Donoughmore Constitution in 1931.

But instead of making a toady speech flattering the white Planters as the 20 odd other aspirants had done before him he told the Planters that he was ashamed of them to see them applauding hypocritical flattery.

He was called to order by the Chair.

"You and your order be damned", he thundered, banged the table, and shouted : "I am going to fight until all of you are chased out of Ceylon. You are a disgrace to England. If anyone tries any nonsense, I will thrash him !"

He stood a moment longer in a challenging attitude for dramatic effect. And then marched out smartly as behoves a soldier.

His friends were aghast. For those were the days when Planters were king-makers.

And what was more, young Kotelawala could easily have thrashed them as he had done so often whenever he thought a white man had taken some unwarranted liberty !

Although people shook their wise heads at his fool-hardiness Kotelawala won his election !

The second time, there was none to contest him !

II

There is a story that when Dudley Senanayake had just returned from England after his studies he fell off a horse and sustained serious injuries. The doctors wanted to perform an operation but would not take the full responsibility without the consent of the father, D. S. Senanayake, who was not in Colombo at the moment.

Then burst into the room the burly figure of John Lionel Kotelawala. When he heard of the situation, without a moment's hesitation, he told the doctors : "I take full responsibility. You perform the operation."

Needless to say, the doctors, who would not take the responsibility themselves, did not give the responsibility to J. L. Kotelawala either. And no operation was performed and the patient, of course, recovered.

When D. S. Senanayake and Dudley Senanayake heard of the incident they laughed heartily but Lionel did not see anything funny in his magnanimous gesture of friendship in order to save Dudley's life.

These stories are typical of this man of action who is always ready to bear responsibility even though it was not his ; who could make a decision on the spur of the moment even though it is the wrong decision ; who could go out of his way to help others even though he hurt himself in doing it.

John Kotelawala dominated Ceylon politics from the days of the first State Council in which he started his political career by being the understudy to his uncle, D. S. Senanayake, as the acting Minister of Agriculture. It was even said that Senanayake took leave to go to England in order to give his promising nephew a chance to act as Minister.

But during the time the uncle was away, the young acting Minister wrote some of the cheekiest notes to the Colonial Office that any Minister had dared to in those colonial days. But that enhanced the nephew's reputation in the eyes of the uncle.

III

There has always been a dash of King Farouk in the make-up of Sir John. Importation of Zou-Zou was not the only association he had with Oriental glamour. Cares of a Ministry did not prevent him from enjoying the good things of life. He could laugh heartily and liked to see others laugh as heartily as he did.

He was the play-boy of the political world not only in Ceylon but also in the whole of Asia.

Of an evening he would be driving his own motor-boat at break neck speed on the Bolgoda Lake if you did not find him riding a horse at the gallop on the Polo Ground.

His garden at Kandawala, with its picturesque bamboo bridge, beautiful bowers and Sinhalese gateway, became famous throughout the world as the most hospitable carefree corner in Ceylon where liquor flowed freely and dancing went on till dawn.

His sense of publicity was as keen as a razor blade. Everywhere he went he said something startling that could be put into a bright headline ; did something surprising that made a good story or struck an amazing pose that made a wonderful picture.

Because of this and his well developed sense of humour, he was the darling of the journalist. When he returned like a conquering hero from trips abroad, he brought his favourite publicists, gifts—perhaps a pipe or a wallet.

He was so much spoilt by the Press that when he was not mentioned in the newspapers he felt he had been wronged beyond measure. His mother made him a spoilt child ; the Press made him a spoilt personality ; and the politicians made him a spoilt statesman—by giving him always what he asked for.

There is a story that once in London, Lionel Kotelawala and his brother, Justin, were not allowed to get into a restaurant because of the colour bar. Both became very angry. Justin at once wanted to buy up the place. Lionel, it was who reminded him, that even to buy up the place, they had first to get into it, and hit the man who barred their way and got inside.

His sense of power is as overpowering as his sense of money.

Sir John himself relates an amusing story in his characteristic manner of how he was taken, when in Rome, to see a very famous picture by Michael Angelo to a Cathedral by Ananda Tissa de Alwis who was determined to improve his chief's cultural education. The unwilling victim listened long before a picture to a lengthy lecture on the subtler points of artistic merit that his eyes would not normally believe. Tired and weary after this cultural crusade he was on the point of leaving when he found the official guide to the Cathedral showing another picture to visitors. When he inquired, he found to his horror that the long lectural onslaught on him had been inflicted before an indifferent picture by an unknown artist and the actual Michael Angelo was the one they had nearly missed seeing !

He was invariably shown not only the wrong picture but also the wrong side of the picture. But in all his simplicity he believed what was put across to him, without question—implicitly, child-like. It was only by the merest chance that he realised that the blind had tried to lead the blind.

Sir John always loved a good fight. If he could not fight with the opponent, he would fight with his friends. If he didn't have the chance to quarrel with Dr. N. M. Perera, he fought with S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike even when he was in the Cabinet.

He had courage. He had brawn. He was frank. He had money. He had friends. He had background. He had personality. He could cut a figure wherever he went. He was the well graced political actor who could play the hero strutting across the stage.

Thus he was able to draw loyalty of an unknown kind from his followers and friends. For there was nothing he would not do for his friends.

When there was trouble or turmoil, he was at his best slapping his arms, jutting out his chest. When there was work to be done, he was there to do it.

When money had to be spent, he was there putting his hand in his pocket.

But in spite of all these sterling qualities people thought he would always remain a kind of political King Kong for ever challenging others to a fight. For, although he had courage there was a doubt whether he had enough caution to prevent his courage from becoming foolhardiness. He was not afraid to say anything. But what he was not afraid to say was often the wrong thing.

He had a legion of friends to each of whom he had done innumerable favours. But he would not listen to any of them if they did not applaud him at each step. He listened only to those voices that echoed his own thoughts.

His colossal vanity was matched only by his amazing self-confidence and supreme belief in himself. He was a man of action but every action of his had to be commemorated by the infliction of his name in big letters. He told a good story. But the central figure of the story was himself.

He had a passion for saving the country. It is the cussedness of the countries that they would rather be lost than be saved by those who select their own selves for the task at a particular time of their own choice.

That same spirit that prompted him once to take the responsibility for another's operation, worked

in him to take upon himself other people's responsibilities that ruined him.

Often others wrote what he had to answer for. Others did what he was blamed for.

He called a spade, a spade ; a Burgher, a Burgher ; and felt proud of it. But he said it in such a way that the spade would never forget it to its dying day. There was hardly a man among his friends whom he had not hurt some time or other.

A childish admiration of everything he did and everything he said had grown in the course of years to make him into a megalomaniac oblivious to the effect of his blustering personality on those around him.

He knew not how to mix his kindness with the elegance of culture ; his courage with courtesy. Not for him were the velvet gloves when this King Kong of politics entered the ring.

His vanity was not confined to his person. He inflicted it even on the country. A poor country like Ceylon was committed to an Air Line Scheme which even big nations would shudder at and which meant the loss of recurring millions.

All his life he had been used to spending—and not earning. As a Minister he spent as no other Minister perhaps had done—lavishly, like the proverbial Prince.

The Railway, one would think, ran on money—not coal. The Air Lines ran through money—not space. The houses he built, the roads he constructed were the last word in comfort, and luxury. But what it cost, few people found out or cared to. He always thought the country was as rich as himself.

He was all for democracy. But it was a curious kind of democracy.

Once he asked me what—after he had done so much for his constituency if there came a stranger as his rival at the election claiming his caste as his qualification—what was he to do ? And then gave the answer : "I will prevent those castes from voting. I will then be elected. And this is Democracy ! "

He showed a contempt for the intellectual. Whether this was to fight his own inferiority complex or not one does not know.

But it was quite a thrill to feel all the time that he was the superman—the man come to rule, born to lay down the law.

IV

When this Asia's foremost play-boy politician became the Prime Minister of Ceylon, I wondered in print whether he would ever become tame, important and dull enough to be a Premier true to type.

We all know the Prime Minister true to type in most countries. Mentally he seems to wear a starched shirt. His words wear a strait-jacket. His face looks as though he were all the time attending his grandfather's funeral. He is so cursedly important that he thinks twice deliberately before he asks you to pass him the salt and decides to let it pass. He is ao abominably dull that he talks like an act of Parliament and smiles tiredly and patiently like a henpecked hippo.

H. G. Wells makes one of his characters promise never to be grey and grubby, never to be stiff and

stuffy, never to be respectable and dull and a little fat—like every body else.

From the moment the political King Kong of Kandawala became Prime Minister it seemed as though he had taken the Wellsian oath to be different.

He preferred to remain at Kandawala—with its gates wide open to being locked up in the ivory tower at "Temple Trees" in lone majesty.

He threatened to hold his Cabinet meetings at Galle Face. Banned words were flung across the front pages like bars of iron in a spirit of utter defiance.

The egg-hopper was elevated to the status of an institution for the handling of problems of peace and war.

He took with him to high level conferences the atmosphere of the club, into assemblies the informality of intimates.

He interspersed bargaining with banter, quibbling with quips and legislation with levity.

Indiscretion seemed to be the worse part of his valour and when he opened his mouth he silenced all by putting his foot into it.

Blunt, frank, straightforward and direct, he pooh-poohed all the flapdoodle of orthodox prime -ministry in his approach to men and matters. He refused to be a popinjay Premier mouthing ready-made platitudes and talking according to the book. He just loved to talk out of turn, to turn off all other talk.

There was something risque about his repartees, ribald about his retorts.

A new fashion of outspoken epithets, hiding little, came into vogue along with the women's choli showing much. Shady ladies and she-sheiks came out into the open as if to keep pace with this he-man Premier's new ways of political life.

There was something loud in his manner as though he were thinking from the house-tops. He was expansive, hearty and full of gusto.

As time passed and the more his technique succeeded the more the wonder grew how he could put it across with such ease of manner and naturalness of method.

Here was something new, fresh and vigorous. There was life and laughter. There was also hurrying feet and eyes fixed on the clock.

Here was a ruler clean out of the common run but all the same determined to have his way.

Here was a man who remained interesting in spite of being Prime Minister. Here was a Premier who persisted in being happy in the company of the young, bursting with ideas in between bouts of laughter and bountiful spells of banter. Here was a dancing Premier who remained the treasure of hostesses and more popular than any eligible bachelor. Here was a man who could translate political questions into the idiom of human relations and illumine a realistic view of affairs by a fund of good stories. He was a phenomenon who behaved like a blunt weapon but could cast a spell like a secret wand. Here was a man whose sense of humour continued not only to laugh unhurtingly at others but also at himself until it hurt.

There was a barbaric splendour about his gestures that took our breath away.

In this technique of being a Prime Minister, he refused to tie himself up into knots of sad-sounding theories and brave-sounding abstractions from which escape was difficult.

V

To him, politics seemed to be in essence nothing but the conflict of human feelings, the enlargement of ideas and pleasures shared and returned which really added up to make the best part of our life. In such a conception, high animal spirits, a sense of great adventure and an overfondness for the stuff of human nature were virtues that counted.

He always chose the human approach, the human appeal and the human angle in tackling the intricate problems that came his way. The simplicity of solution was astounding : the quickness of decision was dumbfounding.

With his sharp sense of humour he would cut through tons of verbiage and theories and get at the heart of a matter with a crude jest that jarred or a wisecrack that shocked. There was a pause. Then, once again life began to move as laughter drove the momentary silence out of the room into the great world outside.

It was judgment by jest and rule by retort. There was nothing he could not laugh at; nothing he seemed to take seriously, however serious it appeared to be. Worry did not worry him ; trouble did not trouble him.

But all the bluster and banter, jests and gestures were merely short cuts to satisfy his passion for getting things done, getting things going and getting along with people. Above the loudness of manner

there was the still, small voice of humanity to be heard.

He worked hard, played hard. He could work all day and dance all night all the better for it. But the man who could play the fool with everybody could be fooled by nobody.

Along with the short cut of a joke came a quick decision, daring and devastating.

The man was human. He could feel, he could laugh, he could forget, he could forgive. The man was human. Nothing else mattered.

The people who waited to see him make a mess of things began wondering whether they were seeing visions.

The bull was in the China shop right enough, but he was moving about like a dancing master neatly avoiding the crockery. A miracle was happening before our eyes.

There were no crashes, no major calamities.

The party which took him on as some kind of necessary evil began to treat him like a new-fangled Daniel come to judgment.

He meant business. Irreverently, irrelevantly, he wore the air of an Abraham Lincoln, to make the real urge for horse trading.

It was as though Farouk had suddenly turned prophet.

He did not buy the goods without prodding the sack, even though ever so very jocularly. While cracking a joke his eyes were searching for the loopholes on which he concentrated without a wrinkle on the brow.

His prestige grew so much that he should have burst but for the fact he was vain enough as he was.

While he danced with an abandon, his mind was walking a tight rope, balancing ever so carefully lest he fell to the delight of his closest enemies.

Revelry never made him blind to rivalry ; tamashas never made him unmindful of tricks.

The atmosphere he created of frank goodwill and blunt friendship of the club room he took with him to the world at large.

And his technique came as a breath of fresh air to the chancelleries of Europe, driving away years of mustiness.

He girdled the globe in 50 days, bringing Jules Verne up to date. He hunted the world's greatest celebrities in a whirlwind, aerial saga that ripped the rigours of travel into ribbons.

He added pleasantry to politics. He mixed politics with seeing places.

The world's capitals and the world's newspapers conspired to make Ceylon something left over from an eighth wonder. It is true some might have talked of Alexander, some of Hercules, and great names like these ; but all of them talked also of Flying Kotelawala and his funny hat.

We may be a small country. But we felt that we had here a man big enough not only to run our own country but also run round the world telling others how to run theirs. His running commentary on other people's affairs was a running commentary with a vengeance. Not only did the commentary run (like the office ink) but also the man himself. What was more, he had the run of the whole world for his commentary.

He all but shifted Colombo to Switzerland and made it Geneva !

In this effort of bringing up the World's Statesmen to Ceylon standards it was not the adult alone who was impressed.

To Ceylon children the Prime Minister became the ideal modern model of the old-world fairy story Wizard with the ten-leagued boots, the magic carpet and signet-ring.

To enjoy going places you have to have a sense of time like an alarm clock ; a digestion like an ostrich's after two stiff brandies ; a skin as thick as of a rhinoceros suffering from mumps, a ready made smile of a quality of the hardest India rubber on your lips, and a tailored speech of the finest phrases in your pocket.

When it came to a Prime Minister, this ordeal by air by the modern Ulysses had to be performed with a cowcatcher against gate-crashers, extra sealing wax in the ears against Hula Hula and Geisha dancer syrens and a barge pole with which you would not touch things below your dignity.

The rigours of modern travel is not confined to customs officials who look hen-pecked and passport people who look like bottled lobsters minus labels.

Besides, along with smugglers, and spies, Prime Ministers are not bothered by such persons who are there merely as irritants to purge the soul of hatred for humanity common to the common man.

But where the common man feared to tread, Prime Ministers rushed. This was the torture chamber of the banquet hall where as your belly became full and your indigestion became acute

your desire to give back a "bellyful" yourself has to be curbed to make the indigestion worse confounded.

His directness they took in good part because it was something new. His humour amused them because there was good will behind it. His vigour was vitalising ; his fervour, friendly.

By his unorthodox diplomacy he blazed the name of Ceylon across the world.

It was difficult for them to find Ceylon on the map, it was true, but when they found it they thought of it with an extravagance associated with the exuberant personality of the first man in the land.

People talk of making a mountain out of a mole hill. Here was a man who made a continent out of a puny island by the sheer force of his personality thrust so fearlessly into the focus of international force.

He rushed where angels feared to tread and created a Colombo Power out of this little nation, rubbing shoulders with the mighty and demonstrating its little sling against the Goliaths that infest the earth.

What India might have failed to do, what Burma might never have done at all, Ceylon did. Ceylon's weakness was her strength and her littleness helped her to achieve greatness.

He realised the truth behind this paradox and made great nations eat out of his hand with his barrack room tales and broad stories.

VI

Unorthodox were his methods. In winning his battles he made use of everybody who came his

way, giving them the idea they were making use of him.

Nobody was too big for him ; nobody too little.

After having attended a family funeral he recounted in public who his relations were : "There were senators and ministers at the funeral. There were big businessmen and small mudalalies. There were also people with shabby clothes and hungry looks. But unfortunately those relatives who were in jail were unable to be present", he said sadly, to the general merriment of the audience.

If he did not care who his relatives were he cared a curse who his friends were if they could be useful. Vain journalists to whom he gave the idea they ran the country, self-conceited politicians who were supposed to be able to twist him round their fingers, petty officials, society women with a passion for passion, paupers waiting on his largesse—he made use of them all.

There was a time when people prayed that he should be saved from his friends. The time came when his friends should be saved from him !

Having achieved his ambitions he transferred his ambitions to the country.

This green and pleasant land shall sit among the highest in the world.

That he should have achieved his ambition for this nation to enter the United Nations is perhaps the crowning glory of his political life.

He seemed to have done so much, we have had such a hectic, active time when he was Premier it is difficult to believe that he was on the Premier's "gadi" only two short years.

Whenever I shook hands with him amidst the leafy glitter of a myriad lights at "Temple Trees" I could not help feeling that I was touching the hand of a myth-in-the-making.

Instead of changing himself to fit the pattern of a Prime Minister true to type this aging combination of Peter Pan and Puck changed us to fit the unique character he created all by himself and showed other statesmen how to be happy though a Prime Minister.

VII

But he was not happy for long.

In a very short time he created a little world of his own tailored to fit his fancy, where his fabulous self moved surrounded by a gang of "yes-men" and a glitter-group of faded beauties. He ceased to be aware of the pulse of the people.

In a bid to get absolute power he risked an election betimes in 1956, having nobbled the Press and loaded the dice in his favour.

When the results were announced declaring the utter rout of the U.N.P. it was not so much of a shock as the end of the world for him. The bloated myth became a pricked baloon. With his past background, all his "yes-men" dropping him, he felt a stranger in the new world to which he awakened after his defeat.

Soon after Bandaranaike came to power he left for England to buy a country house where he lives playing the country squire to perfection hunting with the hounds, and paying flying visits to Ceylon whenever there is any kind of crisis, real or imaginary, always ever ready to play de Gaulle to a

nation which will one day send for him to save it. So he thinks.

During one of these flying visits he attended the wedding of Cyril Gardiner at which two ex-Prime Ministers, Dudley Senanayake and himself, and the then Prime Minister, S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, officiated in one capacity or other and the Governor-General, Oliver Goonetilleke, himself proposed the toast. John Kotelawala, in seconding the toast, remarked that all the four people who had deceived the country had been associated with the ceremony ! There was a riot of laughter. Kotelawala to his dying day will not be able to resist a joke even against himself.

There is something ironical, pathetic and even amusing about this most human of men waiting, awaiting his recall, listening for the cue of a crisis in the wings. Crises come and go. But there is no call.

S. W. R. D. BANDARANAIKE

TWENTY-FIVE years ago I described Solomon West Ridgeway Dias Bandaranaike as a man with a future behind him.

It was a time when in that Mecca of mediocrities called the State Council of Ceylon he stood out as an infidel, with cleverness as his creed and smartness as the manner of his mind.

He had what is called 'back-ground'. That in itself was not anything unique. Many of those in the State Council could with an engaging gesture, point in a leisurely way towards some kind of estimable association, family prestige and good education. But Bandaranaike combined 'back-ground' with brilliance ; a familiar name with unfamiliar talent.

He certainly was one of the three best speakers we had then in Ceylon. Never at a loss for a word with a fluency and a diction that even Radhakrishnan might envy, he would reel off one perfect period after another with an astounding ease that baffled slow-witted men like me.

When he rose of an evening especially immediately after one of our fathers of repetition, his speeches shone like burnished gold in the sunlight.

For a moment or two he would play, with velvet-pawed syllables, with his opponent—he might even throw him the sop of a left-handed compliment.

Then he seemed to roll up his sleeves and get down to business. He hurled choice epithets at the subject. He stabbed the foe with jewelled phrases, made on the spur of the moment—but made to hurt, all the same.

He would pat a favourite—or better perhaps himself—on the back. And then he rode away in a storm of oratory, all spontaneity and splendour with the distant thud of his galloping prose resounding in our ears.

It was neither lightning nor thunder ; nor was it an earth-quake. It was just the Member for Veyangoda.

But his speeches were not faultless. He had the heavy habit of talking in italics—at the top of his voice. And he underlined almost every other word of the italics with an absolutely unnecessary emphasis. The effect of stressing too much was not stressing anything at all !

With this distressing disease of underlining his megaphone voice he combined an irritating appreciation of himself at every turn of phrase and parenthesis. Maybe, he paused for just a moment ; looked round for applause ; then, finding not enough forthcoming, remedied the defect himself by giving a little chuckle of appreciation—something between the clucking of a hen after laying

and the laugh of a juggler on doing a celebrated trick.

He talked in jewelled prose well enunciated. But the magic was entirely in the fine phrasing; the appeal, in the strong epithet.

He knew how to say it. If only he had known then what to say !

Not that there were no occasions when he did know to a point of cruelty the right thing to utter. Hurt his vanity and he started to the quick. Give him a personal pinprick to see how quick he was on the uptake. Pat came the retort, crushing in vengeance, killing in venom.

He was the master of the retort discourteous, the apostle of the sharp invective in the country.

I remember once Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe, the Communist Leader, after attacking the Member for Veyangoda pretended not to be interested when Bandaranaike's turn came for counter-attack. Some Member, with the instinct of the sportsman, pointed out that Dr. Wickremasinghe was asleep !

With a sneer the enraged Member for Veyangoda turned to the interrupter and, with high hauteur, said, "Let sleeping dogs lie" !

On another occasion Dr. N. M. Perera, the Trotskyte Leader, during a Budget Debate, said that Bandaranaike could not help being merely the "famous son of a famous father".

The words of the merciless retort in reply was dipped in the poison of the Borgias when Bandaranaike alluded to his opponent as the "obscure son of a still more obscure father".

It was but natural that Bandaranaike should feel wronged when referred to as typical of the headmen 'aristocracy'.

He had with a good deal of difficulty said goodbye to all that—the traditions of the feudatory overlord, the pompous prestige of the hireling chieftains, the dignity of the magic circles.

But I believe the phrase hurt more because there was the ring of truth in the idea.

II

Although brought up from childhood in an atmosphere of salaams and a cheap sense of superiority of birth and breeding that comes of class consciousness, not allowed to mix with other boys of his own age—except for a year or so at St. Thomas' College—it is true he had the courage to throw overboard the trappings of pompous position. In this he wisely chose to be human rather than be comic in a fast-changing world. He preferred to be a symbol of the future to being an anachronism of the English Squire legend of the father, Maha Mudaliyar Sir Solomon Dias Bandaranaike, in a modern world. The son had the independence of mind to kick the white gods from across the seas at whose altar the father had always offered pooja with great profit.

He chose his own religion, Buddhism, instead of taking it ready-made and chosen for him.

But taking to a simple dress, writing well but not too wisely on the "Ploughshare and Socialism", even embracing Buddhism—however sensible and suitable these were—had not changed, it appeared, the spots of the leopard.

The change seemed to be entirely academic in interest ; perfect as a mental pose.

In and out of the State Council it seemed to be a kind of mission then with Bandaranaike to found parties and societies, to plan circles and cliques.

If these did no good, they did no harm either.

Party-mindedness would be the best thing for politics if guided by principles and ideals. But the only principle he had then in mind for these boy scout troops of politics was his own personality ; the only ideal his own idol as the figure-head.

He was not in search of followers, intelligent men who would be loyal to policy and principle. His search was, it seemed, really for flatterers who would do his bidding.

Politically, he seemed to be the petty chieftain with a pocket borough mentality, in search of legislative hirelings and henchmen—and not followers.

That was why his parties never then achieved fruition ; his societies existed only on paper. If he had then the gold of sincerity to cover the currency notes of brilliant promises he issued, he would have been acclaimed the young leader of a great party.

He wore the simple national dress of a future day. But I suspected the underclothing to be a Maha Mudaliyar's pompous uniform of a past era.

III

Bandaranaike was a backward child. Until eight, I believe, he could not master the Alphabet. But the proud father thought no school in Ceylon good enough for his son and heir. He got down

from England a graduate called Radford to teach Bandaranaike at home.

When the father saw the son passing his Cambridge Senior with the third place in the Empire, he was so proud of the young boy he took him on exhibition to the then Governor of Ceylon, Robert Chalmers.

"Are you going to make the little fellow a Mudaliyar ?" asked Chalmers after an appreciative inspection of the sickly-looking Bandaranaike brought up in cotton wool.

Without waiting for the father to reply, young Bandaranaike said : "No thank you, Sir, I shall work for my country."

Chalmers raised his eyebrows. This was high treason ! The father was so embarrassed that he felt the ground was opening under his feet. He hurried the boy home before he talked more, all the way back giving him a sermon on not bandying words with his betters.

IV

He went to Oxford in 1919 with wonderful ideas of heroic leadership of the most dazzling kind among the undergrads, coloured by recollections of "Tom Brown at Oxford".

Before going to Oxford while wandering about Horagolla he would compose his speeches for the Union ! On one occasion he was so engrossed in his peroration while riding, that in a moment of inspiration he dropped his reins in order to gesticulate—only to fall off his seat !

Later in life, it was the peroration that always mattered to him—even if it meant being thrown off his seat of sense.

While at Oxford some Sinhalese friends had expressed surprise that Bandaranaike had not cultivated the Oxford manner.

"That is true", said Bandaranaike, "but I hope I have taught Oxford a lot of the Bandaranaike method."

The first year of Oxford, once the novelty of things had worn off, was a period of disappointment and frustration. The most humiliating disappointments were reserved for the social sphere.

"With positive rudeness and brutal frankness one might be able to deal more or less effectively ; bounders and snobs can be suitably handled", said Bandaranaike. "But the tragedy of it was that the vast majority of my fellow undergraduates did not behave in the former manner and were certainly not the latter. The trouble was more subtle and deep-seated ; in a variety of ways one was always being shown, politely but unmistakably, that one was simply not wanted."

But his conceit saved him from the fate of most Eastern students who often throw up the sponge. Although at the Union he never seemed to be able to catch the eye of the President, he knew that he could make a better speech than most of those who were given preference ; he knew that there were many members of the tennis team he could beat if he were only given the chance. He knew he could write better Greek prose than many of the scholars with their long rustling gowns who looked so superciliously at the "darkie".

He also realized that within the cold outer Oxford of mere routine, snob cliques and silly prejudice,

there was a wonderful inner Oxford into which it was well worth travelling to win an entry.

A well-meaning young man seeing the rather pathetic and lonely state of many Eastern students thought he would alleviate their suffering by inviting some of them to tea one day. Bandaranaike was also asked.

"An Englishman is not fitted for this type of occasion", wrote the not too thankful guest. "He lacks that tact and bonhomie which a Frenchman for instance, possesses, and which are essential to the success of such a function .... Of easy conversation there was none .... The whole thing was ghastly. I found myself gradually becoming more and more angry with my fellow-guests as well as our host. I saved myself from doing something desperate by making a hasty excuse and running away".

While working off his anger by having a long walk, he paused to look at the typically beautiful English scene before him touched by the mellow light of the evening sun, the river winding into the distance through soft meadows. Suddenly the solution of his problem flashed through his mind.

"Before I am their equal", he thought "I must be their superior".

This audacious paradox was Bandaranaike's golden key to the wonderful inner portals of Oxford.

"An Englishman is generous in recognising merit in others ; it is more difficult to overcome the various barriers to his friendship. Once, however, his respect is obtained, it is easy to become his friend. And what a true and loyal friend he can

be !" exclaimed the man who found the golden key to English friendship.

He strove hard at tennis and came on top with a Frenchman called Heidsieck who was connected with the champagne people and therefore, not unnaturally, rather popular.

But it was when Bandaranaike stormed the citadel of the Oxford Union that he entered the pale.

One November evening he tried many times to catch the eye of the President, Beverly Nichols, without success. In desperation he sent up a note asking whether he would be given a chance. Back came the note with the words : "Print your name". He sent his name in block letters. Late in the evening there was a nod from the chair and the maiden speech was delivered.

A few days later he found himself famous when the "Isis" hailed the speech as the best of the evening.

From then onwards at the Union, Bandaranaike debated with Horatio Bottomley, Hore-Belisha, Rupert Gwynne, M. C. Hollis, V. A. Cazalet, Lloyd George, W. M. R. Pringle and other famous men who would go up to Oxford.

The most memorable of the speeches was in March 1922, on India.

The mover, H. J. S. Wedderburn of Balliol, made according to the Isis, "a dull speech, badly delivered. The depression that now weighed as a pall over the House was ruthlessly swept away by Mr. Bandaranaike. It was extremely fluent, able and moving".

Majoribanks, at the end of his term of office, referring to the debates during his presidency wrote

in the Isis : "Mr. Bandaranaike's speech is one of the few speeches that will be remembered by his audience some time hence. It was a tour de force of eloquence, and in my opinion, Mr. Bandaranaike is the most eloquent speaker at the Union."

No wonder the peroration worked ! It was the self same peroration that had thrown him off his balance while riding at Horagolla as a boy !

Bandaranaike was elected secretary of the Union later beating Robert Bernays and Evelyn Waugh.

Anthony Eden and Malcolm MacDonald, his Union friends and rivals yet think of Ceylon as the place from where Bandaranaike came rather than as a mark on the map, even though they might not have imbibed the Bandaranaike manner.

V

When he returned to Ceylon in 1925, after being called to the Bar, Sir Solomon, his father, had made all preparations for him to enter the Attorney-General's Department if the "young puppy" refused to become a Maha Mudaliyar.

But the young man had been bitten by the political bug. He would have none of the father's plans. To teach the "cub" a lesson and tame him into docility the father cut off his allowance. Bandaranaike promptly began to practise at the Bar and earn his own keep. He also became the Chairman of the Nittambuwa Village Committee.

Exactly as he went to Oxford he entered politics, hardly thinking out what he wanted or sorting out his ideas.

The same technique of early youth kept on persisting. He cared more for effect than for efficacy ; more for peroration than principles.

When "Sonny" Bandaranaike, as he was then affectionately known, beat A. E. Goonesinghe, the labour leader, at the height of his meteoric glory and entered the Colombo Municipal Council. Ceylon took him to its heart.

There was a dash of the daredevil hero in him in those days in breaking traditions associated with the family. Men were ready to follow him if only he had had something to offer them to follow.

But he had only ideas—no ideals.

Hoping from agricultural reform to Socialism, from Indian nationalism to Ceylon Buddhism, the man who once dreamed of being the Jawaharlal Nehru of the Island kept falling off his horse while making perorations. Hasty for reward, he often lost in the race many times because he ran too fast. He had the gift but not the grit, the stature, but not the greatness. His desire to be all things to all men made him fritter away his enthusiasm. His fear of temporary unpopularity slowly egged him on to semi-oblivion.

Not that Bandaranaike ever became ineffectual. Far from it. But the mention of his name, which earlier thrilled young Ceylon, later often resulted in a shrug of the shoulder. People became indifferent.

This forceful personality with a quicksilver sense of humour and a respectable walking-stick, whom we all expected one day to become the prophet-leader of the nation with the magic power of inspiring the race, little by little, became a mere politician with only a bachelor eligibility and a passion for greyhounds, to recommend him.

In the making of a politician there is the age of belief and the age of battle to follow. Those who mix up these two are either geniuses who get away with it—like Napoleon, Julius Caesar, Alexander, Pitt—or conceited introverts who are doomed to only a little success.

Bandaranaike never waited till his age of belief passed—allowing him to settle his doubts and form a political handwriting before he plunged into acts of bravery.

Bandaranaike had not the patience to wait. This would have been a virtue if only he had had the valour. He gave up the formative age when fight is the zest of life before he had attained the age of action when one gets a great courage. Which means he then had neither sincere belief nor deeds of valour in his make-up. Essentially made to be a thorn in the flesh of an opponent he became ineffectual as an upholder of a regime or an architect of a scheme as a Minister.

However many times he fell off the saddle he rode pretty on his hobby horse. But in essence it seemed a feat in the circus ring.

There was a suggestion of James Barrie's Earnest Wolley, man about town, in Bandaranaike as he sat sometimes in the State Council, a happy smile playing on his significant face. And I took this to mean that he was thinking of himself. I believe when he was not pre-occupied he was busy thinking of himself. But, on the other hand, he almost never seemed to think of any one else.

Perhaps Bandaranaike was not entirely to be blamed if he thought a little too much about himself. Everybody else forced him to do it.

There seemed to be a conspiracy against him. In the struggle between the old Aristocracy of birth and breeding of Colonial times and the new "temperance Aristocracy" of wealth and influence of later times Bandaranaike was caught like an arecanut in a cutter. The older looked upon the younger as upstarts and social climbers for which the younger gave a good deal of punishment. The new aristocracy stood firm and said : "You shall not pass".

It was not only at Oxford that Bandaranaike was shown unmistakably that he was not wanted. There was in Ceylon higher circles an inner portal of politics to which he had to find the key. One cannot say that the Ceylon politician behaved as suavely towards him as the Oxford snob.

Even after he had become a Minister in the State Council, married into the Kandyan aristocracy, and had been included in the Cabinet in the new Parliament he was at best tolerated as affectionately as a toothache and as tenderly as a thorn.

Short of breaking actual bones, they made no bones about it either. Obstructed at every turn, insulted every now and then, spurned without provocation, his place was always between the pillar and the post hanging by the skin of his teeth.

It was once again his conceit that saved him.

In desperation when he resigned from the Government and party as a Minister I could easily imagine him looking out toward the sea at sundown saying to himself : "Before I am their equal, I must be their superior."

VI

No politician ever had so bad a press and so consistently in any part of the world for twenty-five years as Bandaranaike. He was consistently maligned without mercy, libelled this side of the law more than any other man in the Island. He was called a "drummer boy" and other stinking epithets in respectable newspaper editorials. For years he was the butt of journalistic political prophets who deserved reboring if only they had not been boring enough already. He never had what is called a "build up". In fact for twenty-five years he had a journalistic demolition squad working overtime on him but unable to finish the job.

The wonder was not that Bandaranaike took so long to arrive but that he survived at all.

He fought the Press of Ceylon single-handed with a contempt that astounds us.

With each campaign of attacks the stature of Bandaranaike grew. It almost seemed he battened on the bludgeon. His career was an experiment in the crucible of criticism. The "sword" of the nation, that he claimed he was, was forged like a damascene blade tempered with the cruellest of journalistic savagery.

Bandaranaike had to be thankful for all this civilised thuggery.

For the people whose imagination he once fired could thus never forget him. To them he was always Diyasena, the Prophet Ruler of the future, who would usher in a new era in the green and pleasant land.

To defeat the Press, 10,000 monks went from house to house singing his praises. To them this

prodigal son of the old Colonial Aristocracy was the man to do away with the last vestiges of Colonialism in the Island and take over the country as a trustee of the people.

VII

What a show it was !

The whole of Ceylon yet wonders how Bandaranaike did it in 1956. When the Unknown Voter, like the Unknown Soldier, won his war for him and gave him the key to the inner portal, he was the most surprised by his own grand show.

An air of mystery hung over the little Island of Lanka as we held post mortems. Nobody seemed to be able to explain how or why or wherefore all good men came to the aid of the party.

People who can explain away anything to their wives failed miserably when it came to this new dream come true. Astrologers tried to re-arrange the planets and count backwards the steps of the stars.

Before our eyes was the day when a horde of what looked like a rabble in plain white " vertis " and " banians " ascended the steps of Queen's House and were sworn-in as Her Majesty's Ministers when some felt like swearing a good deal themselves. This reminded me of the time when Winston Churchill felt horrified at the thought of a ' naked fakir ' called Gandhi ascending the holy Viceregal steps at New Delhi.

After a century of British rule and Bond Street culture was the time coming when these gentlemen had begun to imagine they could think without trousers and work without a tie and a coat ?

This spectacle of natives going native with a vengeance was perhaps a sign of more horrible things to come.

After the British had so painstakingly turned us into gentlemen after the " Master and Cutter's own pattern", if we reverted to sartorial barbarism the time was not far when these selfsame gentlemen might get the notion that what they had done with English clothes they could do with the English language.

They did not appear to be even ashamed of themselves to be seen outside their gates in these native negligee that caused no perspiration. In fact they seemed mighty proud of themselves.

Bandaranaike had shown as he had done at Oxford, who was the superior man to those who did not consider him their equal.

VIII

A new epoch had dawned.

Freedom could not for ever remain freedom only for the men at the top. Freedom had to be passed on to the common man. And Bandaranaike was the man for the job.

The untouchable of the Press Brahmins was installed in the holy of holies of politics as the new deity.

The backward child — who learnt his alphabet at eight to beat the best in the land in education — took an equally long time to form his political handwriting to beat the best who were considered invincible.

He had learnt many lessons. He had been tricked many times, passed over a few times,

cribbed and confined in his own Ministry for a long time to be at last driven into the wilderness — hoping that he would never return.

But he emerged an epic figure that could not be crushed.

His age of belief was past. The age of battle had begun.

His brilliance which was once suspect was no longer irritating ; his oratory which was once crushing was now almost kind. His laughter, like that of any man who laughs last, was tinged with compassion.

Ceylon had taken a long time to realise the sincerity of Bandaranaike when there was so much of tinsel to confuse the country.

But in the meantime he had sorted out his ideas and fixed his ideals.

IX

After he became Prime Minister, Bandaranaike developed scholarly theories of present day international politics which he enunciated at international assemblies. According to these the world was in a state of change and flux today, going through one of those rare occasions that happened at certain intervals, of a changeover from one society to another, from one civilisation to another, a transition between two civilisations, the old and the new. During a period like this, all kinds of conflicts arose — ideological, national, economic, political. That had happened in the past, and in the past those conflicts were settled by some nice little war here or there. Today we could not afford the luxury of war, for we all knew what it meant.

Therefore, the task for us today was a far more difficult one than ever faced mankind before : to effect this transition to some form of stable human society and to do it amid a welter of conflicts, with reasonable peace and with the avoidance of conflicts that burst out into war, for war was unthinkable today. This was an age when we had to live and let live, when we could not afford to hate each other and so sacrifice all mankind in the name of peace.

He was the first man who expounded what may be called the philosophy of neutralism so long preached and practised by Nehru.

We had to build up a new society which best suited the genius of our country. A coherent form of society had to be made up that suited our own people in the context of the changing world of today. That was why we did not range ourselves on the side of this Power-bloc or that Power-bloc. That was the philosophy of neutralism. It was not something dishonest ; it was a position that was inexorably thrust upon us by the circumstances of the case. It was a position that would be of great help in the world situation today, for we did provide a bridge over the gulf between the two opposing factions.

He strongly objected to Eastern neutral countries being called " uncommitted " nations.

We were committed up to the hilt he said. We were committed to preserve decency in dealings between nations, to the cause of justice and freedom, as much as anyone else was. That was our position in Asia.

There were times when a feeling came over him that the fight was not worth while — that there was, in fact, no hope of escaping the perplexities, problems, conflicts, hatreds and enmities that seemed to be arising every day. At such moments he was fortified by the thought that through the dark fabric of human history there passed one golden thread of unfailing strength and firmness — the unconquered, unconquerable spirit of man. It had manifested itself through the ages in various diverse, different ways ; first of all, the unconquerable spirit of man fighting for bare survival and existence : later, fighting for various causes — national causes, maybe, or the cause of justice, the cause of freedom or the pursuit of truth on the part of the great religious leaders down through history. Today it was needed in the cause of human friendship and of peace.

Bandaranaike was a sincere friend and great admirer of Nehru. These two had much in common. They both thought almost alike in many matters. Their attitudes were the same. Their outlooks were very similar.

Only in the matter of Ayurveda, Bandaranaike was far ahead of Nehru in his understanding and realization. This was mostly due to his contact with Pandit Shiv Sharma, the celebrated physician of Bombay, who perhaps is the best propagandist for Ayurveda India has today and who came to Ceylon a number of times at the invitation of Bandaranaike.

X

Independent Ceylon had lain for nine long years in the womb of history. When Bandaranaike

delivered it in 1956, he slapped it and it cried for the first time for all the world to hear. And the world wondered.

The back-bent Britisher packed up his tents and departed from the Island in 1947 handing over the country to a set of brown Englishmen all but in birth who proudly took the place of the departed white men from across the seas and ruled in the same old Colonial pattern, guarding the British bases, safe-guarding British interests, living an alien life as though nothing in the world happened.

Then in 1956 like a clap of thunder from a clear sky Bandaranaike became Prime Minister after the most amazing surprise victory of modern democracies. Bandaranaike tossed over to the common man the jealously guarded substance of freedom charged with a dash of Socialism for full measure.

The fat of brown flunkeydom was in the fire. The sizzling of the diehards carrying the white man's burden by proxy could be heard echoing through the infuriated Press.

But Bandaranaike was a man with a mission, a man with a vision. Nothing would deter him from blazing a new trail of freedom for the common man.

Bandaranaike made Sinhalese the official language ; gave Buddhism an honourable place in the country ; revived Ayurveda as a system of medicine under a Commissioner ; increased wages all round ; gave legitimate rights to the workers ; established a cultural department to encourage the country's literature and art ; inaugurated a Provident Fund Scheme for all workers ; created two new Buddhist Monastery Universities ; nationalised the Colombo Port and the Omnibus services in the

country ; rescued farmers from the clutches of their absentee landlords ; established diplomatic reciprocal missions in Russia, China and other red countries ; drove out the British from the bases ; and joined India as a neutral force in South East Asia.

All this within two and a half years !

The while, the opposing forces of brown Colonialism of their own people conspired to set the country in flames, create communal riots and frighten Bandaranaike to a standstill. This uncommon man who had become the prophet of the common man was not to be deterred.

He had cleared the decks for action to reform and reorganise the framework of the old creaking but crushing Colonial system of administration,to make Ceylon a Republic on the Indian model, to change the wage and salary structure and to make finance facilities available to the rural population when suddenly dramatic tragedy overtook him.

In the new pattern of Asian society that Bandaranaike had in mind, the language of the country, its traditions and creeds, systems of medicine and philosophy, were to be streamlined and brought up to date and into working condition. The Common man would be supreme, but not fashioned by any foreign ideology but as a free man, developing on his own style and steam. He would rule not according to the dictates of Party politics but according to the merits of each question.

Six bullets from an Assassin's weapon on the morning of September 25th, 1959 laid him low.

If Bandaranaike seemed a man with a future behind him twenty five years ago, he passed away as a Prime Minister with an epic past.

He was a symbol of a new age in Ceylon when the common man had become master.

Bandaranaike fulfilled the promise of his youth during the last three years of life.

SIRIMA BANDARANAIKE

SIRIMA Ratwatte Bandaranaike has made Lanka a land of prophecy. The hand that rocks the cradle rules the Island today.

Those who make history naturally have a place in it by rights.

But what placing will history of Independent Ceylon give this unique woman of quality who fights for equality ? Only time can tell.

When six bullets from an assassin's revolver on the morning of September 25th, 1959 laid low S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, the Premier, the country was aghast.

But the brown Sahibs driven into the wilderness by the Party of Bandaranaike, were openly full of glee. They naturally thought that with the death of the arch architect of the new deal in freedom his ideas and ideals were for ever scotched.

But they were counting without the common people of the country and the uncommon widow of this uncommon man.

To the people of the country Bandaranaike became overnight almost a divinity, a Bodhisatva, to be cherished, adored and worshipped.

The widow became overnight a warrior. There was no male equal in calibre to Bandaranaike to lead his Party. Mrs. Sirima Ratwatte Bandaranaike, her face swollen from tears, came forward as if in answer to a nation's prayers. She reorganised a broken down leaderless party, gave heart to the downhearted, inspired the despairing and campaigned for the ideals of the dead hero stirring the country with her quiet call for action.

As a result in the March 1960 General Election the Sri Lanka Freedom Party which the opposing forces thought was doomed to decay and decline returned to Parliament full of vigour and vitality with a force of 46 members as against 50 of the United National Party that had bargained for a walk-over.

But the real test of her leadership came when the United National Party in order to form a government tried to entice her party candidates to cross over by means of bribes, promises of office and patronage. She kept her team in tact despite colossal temptations. None left her just for a handful of silver, a ribbon to stick in their coats.

From the word " go " it was on a diet of defeat that the U.N.P. Government held on before they begged for dissolution of Parliament and another trial of strength.

She emerged from the next General Election, in July 1960, with a greater glory which even the ranks of Tuscany itself could scarce forbear to cheer. It was the fiercer of the fights in that the

opposing forces backed by British financial interests put their all into it. A frail woman David went forth to fight the ghost of a Goliath with the sling of nationalism. In this struggle between purse and poverty, she marshalled all available forces into a pact of unity that was another master stroke.

The Press became more vulgar than ever. Her opponents became glorified vendors of dirt and filth. This outrageous behaviour only made her win more and more sympathy. She assumed the stature of a feminine colossus striding across the Island taking everything in her stride with a calmness that astounded her foes.

It was an epic victory that should be celebrated in pentametre and immortalized by chisel on granite.

It was a miracle in leadership rarely shown in any country. We think of Boadecia leading the primitive Britons or Joan of Arc spurring the French in the dark age. In Ceylon itself there was Vihara Maha Devi who inspired her own son Dutugemunu and his army to wage war against the Tamils in the Anuradhapura Era before the birth of Christ. Our minds also go back to Laxmi Bai, the Rani of Jhansi, the twenty-year-old princess who died fighting while leading her army in the Indian Mutiny, to be called the "best and bravest" of the rebel leaders by the British. There was also Annie Besant who stirred India to fight for Home Rule. Later emerged Sarojini Naidu and Vijayalaxmi Pandit in the fight for Indian Independence.

In the struggle of women warriors of the past with mighty forces of their time there was an old

world gallantry, courtesy and manners, though rough, of some sort, displayed by their foes. But in these modern days of enlightened savage equality Mrs. Bandaranaike had none of these advantages in her fight against the gigantic forces working against her national ideals and political principles.

The difference between the Sri Lanka Freedom Party led by Mrs. Bandaranaike and the United National Party led by Dudley Senanayake is the difference of altitudes and attitudes — lords and commons. The U.N.P. live in the clouds clinging to colonial privileges of the upper class while the S.L.F.P. is of the people with their feet firmly on the ground trying to divide freedom among the masses. The issue is between British Commercial interests and the new belated nationalism that has stirred all Asia into action.

II

What kind of woman is this new forty-four year leader of Ceylon who has given a new faith, a new courage, a new hope to a little nation fighting against great odds ? As a young girl Sirima Ratwatte was an aristocratic Kandyan beauty delicately nurtured and painfully well brought up in her family of six, two sisters and four brothers.

There was nothing in her make-up of younger days to mark her off as any one extraordinary, except the deep penetrating eyes. She cut her teeth in the most orthodox manner, came of age at the normal time, became interested in powder and perfume and clothes according to the best text books of medical mediocrities on the miracle of

girls growing up to womanhood. Even at St. Bridget's Convent where she studied she always had poise, beauty, grace and charm and a devastating smile that broke down all defences.

Add to these very womanly qualities the background of her family of chieftains from the fastnesses of the Kandyan hills. Calculated in the mathematics of matrimony she became soon the country's most eligible maiden.

It was no wonder that the most eligible bachelor of the country at the time, S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, the aristocratic rebel, thought of paying court to the celebrated Kandyan beauty on the pretext of having political parleys with her father, Barnes Ratwatte, squire of Balangoda.

Beauty could never have matched brains better than as at this dynastic alliance of these two famous families in Ceylon twenty years ago.

Baron Jayatilaka, the then Leader of the State Council, said that the wedding was a historic occasion worthy of a niche in the annals of the country in that the like of which had not been witnessed for the last one hundred years.

The bridegroom, dressed in white khaddar national dress woven in his own constituency, arrived in Balangoda shortly before noon, in the company of his father and other close relatives, along 33 decorated miles from Ratnapura, and was received under a pandal by representatives of the bride's family. From there he was taken in procession to the Walauwa, headed by elephants and Kandyan dancers.

The ceremony was marked by all the observances of Kandyan aristocracy, the bridegroom going

through it all as though to the manner born. " Astakas " were chanted, gifts of cloth, betel-leaves and jewellery were exchanged, and the bride served the groom with " kiribath."

In the background, Kandyan chiefs in their decorative attire set off the pale costumes of the bride and the bridegroom, both of whom looked extremely graceful and tremendously happy. Anxious uncles and aunts hovered about in their eagerness to see that no detail was left out.

There was applause from the gathering when the bridegroom handed over to the bride his gift of cloth and jewellery, and for a moment as the photographers fired their flash lights, there was a blaze of jewels of many colours, both in the gift and the beautiful ornaments in the headdress of the bride as she bent down making a graceful Sinhalese salutation to receive the bridegroom's gift.

The decorative scheme was characterised by the many-coloured frills, the famous Kandyan reli-paalam. The tiny electric jets concealed in the reli-paalam, served to set off the brilliance of this form of decoration which also proclaimed to the world that the ancient and the modern could, if properly mixed, produce effects not only harmonious but exceedingly beautiful.

The pandals at the different entrances to the Walauwa heightened the effect of the decorative scheme which was further enhanced by the variety of garments worn not only by the men who vied with one another in displaying the costumes that belonged to their several ranks. There was played only Oriental music right throughout the ceremony. The bride carried a spray of white lotuses.

Mr. Bandaranaike in reply to the toasts said that he had been a sort of Galahad in search of the Holy Grail. Galahad found it at the end ; so had he. If he had been of service to the country, primarily to the Sinhalese race, he thought that the future would enable both of them to do that work with greater zeal, keenness and sacrifice.

III

But as long as Bandaranaike lived she was only the embodiment of graciousness, poise and beauty, always in soft focus, providing the necessary rich background for a brilliant politician.

Not that she did not display quickly enough her talents as a mother by the production of three children, two girls and a boy who are all now in their teens.

She was also something more than a decorative figure in the Mahila Samiti movement to which she devoted all her time she could spare from looking after her children, the greyhounds and the two mansions, the country residence at Veyangoda, Horagolla Walauwa, and the town house at Rosmead Place in Colombo.

Once when the Pilgrim Fathers' Day was being celebrated in America a long suffering woman said : "While we remember the Pilgrim Fathers let us not forget the Pilgrim Mothers who faced the same hardships, the same dangers as the Pilgrim Fathers. In addition to these they also had to put up with the Pilgrim Fathers, themselves !"

Mrs. Bandaranaike, likewise, had not only to face the political and social struggles of Bandaranaike but also had to put up with Bandaranaike

himself who was a very difficult man to live with, being highly individualistic, if not eccentric, living as he did at a terrific pace.

But it was on the death of her husband that the ancient chieftain drums that beat in her blood inevitably called her to battle. The adventurous spirit of her ancestors who guarded the hill fastnesses in the days of yore, began pulsating in her veins urging her to the fight.

Intellectually she is like a rapier ; emotionally, like a pair of scales.

Absurdly simple in habits and dress, unusually unsophisticated in manner, charmingly gracious by nature and astoundingly undaunted in spirit, Mrs. Bandaranaike commands great beauty of person in her shining hour of fame even though she would be a little more spic if she had a little less span !

She is able to command respect wherever she goes by the sheer force of her personality that vibrates. The result is a natural, quiet, if dynamic, dignity that approaches stateliness. Mrs. Bandaranaike's dignity is something intrinsic ; it comes from the inside out instead of being put on like a harness, the result of a long arduous training as in the case of royalty. There is no touch of formidable pomposity in her natural stateliness of manner aided by a slight greying at the temples.

Almost naive in the manner of approach she is a shrewd judge of people and often keeps her own counsel and her head at moments of crisis. Eager to learn, animatedly she listens as eloquently as her husband talked. But when she does talk in public or in private in a voice that trembles often with

emotion there is something magical in her capacity to win sympathy and understanding.

Sirima lived for some time on the fringe of politics as hostess at "Temple Trees", the official residence of the Prime Minister. Here she entertained and came into close contact with the world's topmost politicians, statesmen and leaders like Nehru, Chou-en-lai, Tito, Rajendra Prasad, Harold Macmillan, U. Nu, Kishi, Mountbatten and others too numerous to mention.

Her name is also well known in many of the chancelleries of the world, having visited the United States, Britain, France, India and Burma with her husband.

From the fringe she has plunged into the whirlpool of politics not entirely unknown to her. With a woman's light step, a woman's sure instinct and a woman's wiles she moves in this world dominated by men.

No woman could be prouder of her heritage of good background, broad acres and all the ceremonial pageantry associated with squirearchy. Withal, there is an innate humanity in her that is altogether devoid of snobbery, haughtiness and vanity.

In fact there is an alluring casualness about her, dress, habits, manners and conversations that puts one at one's ease straight away.

IV

Though she is not obsessed by the idea of socialism as a bugaboo to be shunned, she has deep in her a touch of the feudal tribal overlord in her make-up. But in the struggle that is going on in Ceylon today

between British commercial imperialism by proxy and the new nationalism of a free people she has become the symbol of the mood of the people.

Tradition has it in Ceylon that the woman must not expose her navel when wearing the Saree nor all her teeth while smiling. Sirima is the typical Sinhalese woman and her slight Mona Lisa smile has the power of a secret mantram. But when her sense of humour and fun gets the better of her and she laughs heartily one thinks of over boiling milk bubbling over the pot.

Ceylon has always been behind India in progress by at least thirty years. In the delayed action of forces of nationalism that is being worked out today this woman champion is fighting with valour on the side of her people against the ghost of a dead Empire in a house haunted by spectres of decadent brown pucca sahibs who know not that they are shadows.

Nobody ever thought that she had this prowess in her—then.

Nobody doubts that she has it in her—now.

OLIVER GOONETILLEKE.

In the Colombo Museum is a world famous bronze depicting the Dance of Siva or Nataraja. It is a symbolic representation of the stir of energy within the universe.

The figure has two legs but four hands. One hand carries a little drum ; another bears a little flame ; the third makes a gesture as if saying : "Do not fear" ; and the fourth points to the uplifted foot. One foot tramples a dwarf and the other is suspended in the air in a well-balanced pose.

It is difficult to say why—but Sir Oliver Goonetilleke always reminds me of this wonderful bronze statue.

For one thing he appears to be energy in a static form. One hand always carried an invisible little drum, Sir Oliver being his own publicity agent ; another has a little flame the light of which never fails him ; the third is always advising you never to fear, mostly on the telephone, for he is there to protect you ; the fourth points to the power of his uplifted foot, which may, for all we know, be made of clay.

One foot rests on the civil service which he dwarfed and trampled. The other foot is suspended in the air—and so is the judgment of his fellows about this man who symbolises in himself in a static form the stirring spirit of our times.

II

Sir Oliver has never quite escaped that suspicion especially reserved for those who are public servants by profession and politicians by preference.

His normal work as a public servant he always did in public as did the Pharisees their praying, so that with a little help from his little drum, which he carried in one hand, the public knew all about it.

His political work he always did in the back apartments, by stealth, by darkness, moving gingerly as though walking on eggs, whispering mysteriously, as a priest might carry on an affair with a prostitute.

This subtle combination of public servant and private politician resulted in achieving the realities of life for him ; the enjoyment of the phantasmagoria of life and power mixed with a certain magnificence which Aristotle included amongst the virtues.

As a teacher at Wesley, as Manager of a Bank that failed not because of him, as the Manager of a Newspaper that has succeeded in spite of him, he learnt how to add to his income by giving a certain amount of private tuition. As Colonial Auditor, as the Auditor-General, the Civil Defence Commissioner he added to his reputation and power by giving political tuition in the back apartments. Thus, even as he issued in public, as Auditor-General, the famous Goonetilleke Reports full of

purple patches of vitriolic prose against Government extravagance and waste, behind closed doors he calculated how to balance the Budget for others.

As Civil Defence Commissioner even as he defended, clothed and fed Ceylon in public, he walked with the right people in private until his feet broke out in blisters.

In the old State Council the Ministers could not balance the Budget without the whisper that O.E.G. was the wizard who did it. The beautiful daughter of a famous house could not get reconciled to her parents soon after a run-away marriage unless O.E.G. played the domestic diplomatic envoy. A homogeneous Ministry could not be elected but with his genius for permutations and combinations being tried to the breaking point of the pencil. A deserving young man could not be appointed to any responsible post without his telephone working overtime. Let a dark horse win a big race, a quiet professor marry an enemy alien, a rich Sinhalese be cured of small-pox in India,an untipped Deputy Mayor be elected, a rebel son be reclaimed from Red clutches—rumour must needs pay toll to the fame of Sir Oliver Goonetilleke.

But all these rumours, which did not spurn Sir Oliver perhaps did not altogether spurn truth either. If all the stories were true he had become a unique character; the Polonius of D. S. Senanayake, the Solon of the Audit Clerk, the Santa Claus of his friends, the trump card of the public service, the pet poodle of Sir Andrew Caldecott and the Man Friday of Sir Geoffrey Layton. In spite of his picking holes in everybody's art of spending (except in his own) cutting down most

salaries (except his own) arranging everybody's domestic affairs (except his own), he became an idol among the High Command.

In the whole course of the history of the public service in British times there has been no other instance of so much power being concentrated in the hands of one Sinhalese official in so short a time as in his as Civil Defence Commissioner.

In the organisation of Civil Defence which, by the way, was neither civil by any means nor defence by any chance, he showed a magnificence associated with a Curzon or a Birkenhead.

He paid good money to people for twiddling their thumbs in A.R.P. Depots. He gave them cheap lunches at their expense. He cared not the cost. He spent like the Rothschilds and fed you as though you were Shylock. He created new Departments overnight as easily as we create trouble for ourselves. He made men as others made money. He picked up those with guts from the gutter and gave them life and five hundred a month—which gave them still more life.

When food ran short he spent thousands of rupees to grow it on the blast walls in pithy English or in English newspapers in big type with such cocksureness that the University College boys celebrated this bit of cleverness in a famous baila :—

අපේ ගොවියො වපුරන්නේ ගමේ කුඹුරේ
සර් ඔලිවර් වපුරන්නේ නිවුස් පේපරේ

He sold you rotten eggs at double the rates. He added fuel to your hearth by salughtering live rubber trees. He bought costly milch cows and sold them for dead weight to butchers.

He spent sometimes over ten rupees to produce a measure of rice. But it was a time when you could not eat a thousand rupees ; but you could a measure of rice even if it cost that much.

When the whole world was on the verge of starvation, in Ceylon we were counting the calories before they were cooked—but never the cost.

He handled cash as carelessly as we handle trash. His expenditure could not be questioned in the State Council. His accounts were too sacred to be defiled by the green pencils of his own erstwhile pet audit clerks.

It was a time when it did not matter who ruled the country. It was the man who made you fill up forms that governed it. And Sir Oliver made us fill up enough forms to make the best of us feel like worms by his side.

A pencil mark of his on a map one night became a yawning fire gap across expanses of slums by morning, driving masses away from the city ; a nod of his was as good as a long pompous judgment from the bench. The slight pressure of his index finger could topple a pillar of state in an instant.

Through it all, he had one eye on the stately homes of Cinnamon Gardens and the other on the newspapers of Ceylon. Colombo, as far as he was concerned, was Ceylon. Those who mattered did not mind. Those who minded did not matter.

III

The amazing part of all this overpowering Olivergarchy was not that we survived—but that he did !

Another man might have easily fallen victim to his own propaganda.

He survived because he never lost his head. In fact he could keep it when all about him lost theirs and blamed it on him.

Sir Oliver always has had that excellent quality of a thermos flask which is warm within but cool to the touch without. The more panic he felt within, the calmer he seemed. Most of the panic was the image of his own fertile imagination. This panic he could not only create in himself but also re-create in others. But whether the panic was in his own mind or in other people's his was the "mantram" that drove the panic away.

He became in part, the modern version of the old 'Purohita' of the Oriental Court who was summoned when a crisis arose and asked for advice and a consultation with the stars, and in part, the new model in wellcut clothes of the village 'Kattadiya' who appeased the devil with whom he was on talking terms.

The Oliver cult became as near superstition as the enlightened could reach as he moved mysteriously his wonders to perform within the precincts of the court and seldom far from the shadow of the throne.

If the madding crowds did not care for him, he did not mind for he did not care for them either.

His was always a rarified atmosphere where envoys extraordinary mingled with ministers of state, where a Governor's style could be cramped with a stutter and a Prime Minister's hand be made firmer with a toothful smile meaning nothing.

He painstakingly cultivated what might be called the Oliver technique in tackling customers. Long before we heard of the Point Four Programme

Sir Oliver had received unconscious American aid. This was the Yankee smile which could be switched on and off as occasion demanded without leaving any strain on the lips or the feelings. Added to this was the bed-side manner of cheerful hopefulness straight from Dale Carnegie. His words were confidential and intimate. The fervour implied that your life mattered to him as much as it mattered to you. There was a certain caressing of your being, as it were, as he met you, with a slight well-timed gesture of his hand on your back just for a passing moment—not a patting, not a stroking, not an embrace, but something in between. Your hand was so tactfully shaken that your confidence in him never would be.

This is the celebrated platinum plated ingratiating technique of friendship that a lot of others have copied—Major Montague Jayewickreme, Mr. N. U. Jayawardane, Mr. Raju Coomaraswamy. They may imitate him in the broader lines of approach like the artificial Yankee smile or the breezy welcome but never in the finesse and delicacy of touch that made the Guru the great master.

Coupled with this delicate touch there was a suave liberality of mind that made Sir Oliver let you have his way before you knew where you were.

This technique never failed him in the lobbies of international assemblies where great diplomats stood astounded by his urbane and velvetty way of stalking his prey. Here was an Oriental who streamlined the traditional Eastern craftiness with designs stolen from the West. This was paying them back in their own coin.

He seldom failed in a mission abroad. His magnificence swept them off their feet. To them he seemed a combination of the Aga Khan from the East and Dale Carnegie from the West.

There is a story that one of the Diplomats from abroad, used to the grand style of Sir Oliver, inquired from him whether the Parliament building was his residence !

IV

However much his methods and style might have worked in the rarified atmosphere of Geneva or the spacious mansions of Cinnamon Gardens, the Ceylon man, at large, he has found a hard nut to crack.

He who survived six Prime Ministers might have succumbed at one election.

He was one of those rare Yes-Men who got others to say "Yes" to him without his saying "No" ever. He was that kind of Number Two who gave you the impression that he was really Number One. Whoever reigned it did not matter ; it was really Sir Oliver who ruled.

The country had begun to believe this so much that the late Mr. D. S. Senanayake had to send him to London for two years to show the country and Sir Oliver that we could, if we wanted to, do without him.

But Sir Oliver had the sportsman's spirit of taking a defeat with grace and waiting for his chance to get to the winning post.

Before long he was back in Ceylon hammering out a new Constitution with the help of Sir Ivor Jennings for D. S. Senanayake.

When the time came for announcing Independence it was Sir Oliver, not "D.S." who had to do it. I remember how I saw the Independence cat being let out of the bag.

V

Now the thirteenth of November, 1947, was just another day in the newspaper offices of Colombo. That was, until 7 P.M. That was the time fixed for the Press Conference by the Home Minister, Sir Oliver Goonetilleke.

There was a vague, unexpected air of expectancy as the august Editors themselves arrived with their supporting casts.

The atmosphere of the Press Conference combined the lavishness of the Galle Face Hotel and the informality of a merry, Christmas party minus the decorations.

Sir Oliver received us all as though we were fortunate relatives who had just won the Galle Gymkhana Sweep but had not yet written their Last Wills. As he ushered us in he called each by a pet name ; shook hands with both his, and one of his stole gently, almost caressingly round the shoulder. No other way would have been just Sir Oliver's.

It was not until the first round of drinks had been sipped that the consummate showman allowed us to keep our tryst with Independence.

Then, as casually as a player deals out a pack of cards, he distributed, as he sat at the stately long table of sleek satinwood freshly smelling of wax-polish, the stiff covered draft of the new "Independence of Ceylon Act" that was being

introduced in the House of Commons at Westminster about the same time that evening.

There was a pause.

You could almost hear the Gentlemen of the Press breathing again !

Flashing his famous smile, revealing the landmark of one broad tooth placed at a stance in a toothful mouth, Sir Oliver seemed, as he sat at the head of the table keeping this rendezvous with freedom, the phenomenon of a hen that had laid the biggest egg under creation.

Sir Oliver's weight does not usually carry a lot of words. And what words he haltingly utters are as sure-footed as a millepede.

With that verbal sure-footedness, he then announced suavely that the agreements on Defence and External Affairs between Ceylon and the United Kingdom had been signed two days previously in Colombo !

It was past nine, I believe, when the momentous Press Conference was over on that day which had been like any other until 7 P.M.

VI

He knew everybody's secrets. No one knew his. The success of his secrecy depended on the secrecy of his success. No one exactly knew how far successful he had been behind the scenes.

He knew the inside working of a newspaper better than any other politician in Ceylon, having been once the manager of a newspaper. And he knew how to nobble the Press. If gentle suggestions failed he even went to the length of veiled threats of dire consequences.

Once I asked the late Mr. D. R. Wijeyawardene, owner of Lake House, why he allowed O.E.G., to leave the "Ceylon Daily News", his reply was cryptic : "If I did not allow him to go, he would have allowed me to get out of Lake House".

His ability was unquestioned ; his cleverness beyond doubt ; his initiative without an equal.

If Sir Oliver had defeated the late C. E. de Pinto and passed into the Civil Serivce he would have been just another of those Rulers of Routine thinking out why something should not be done and perhaps by degrees through sheer weariness become at best a Permanent Secretary with an enormous amount of impermanency in history.

But as luck would have it he failed the Civil Service Examination. His initiative had no chance of being tortured by red tape ; his ability had no possibility of being ravaged by routine.

He got into the habit of finding a hundred ways of doing things instead of not doing them.

His success was the greatest indictment against the Civil Service that ever happened in the Island. He made Civil Servants mere hewers of wood and drawers of water to him.

It is said that fast women and slow horses brought about the downfall of some of the British aristocracy. Fast horses and slow politicians brought about the rapid rise of Sir Oliver.

In the riding of these slow politicians his power lay in the presence of mind he displayed on the spur of the moment on any occasion. He also had a showmanship that Bertram Mills would envy.

Nobody knew when he lost his temper or with whom. But when he did kick, the victim had only

a vague and shrewd suspicion at best that it was the suspended foot of clay of this dancing Siva that did it. To add kindness to cruelty Sir Oliver was all sympathy with the victim !

Sir Oliver is a whirlwind in a state of suspended animation. That such a phenomenon could be cribbed and confined to Queen's House and his clear, precise, beautiful handwriting reduced only to an occasional signature on the dotted line was almost impossible to believe.

VII

Some years ago I was driving down Galle Road at what might be called a cruising speed when a baby Austin whizzed past me at a giddy speed and was, within a few moments, a speck on the horizon.

The speed fiend at the wheel was an old man. As he overtook me I felt like craning my neck out and asking : "At your age, is it right"?—but he was too quick for me.

The demon-driver was no other than Sir Oliver's father, the late Mr. A. E. Goonetilleke, who, after retirement at 65 from the General Post Office, learned driving and became a danger to the public on the highway.

This is the stuff that Goonetillekes are made of !

But all the same time was passing. Even a whirlwind had to quieten down some day. And the great halls of Queen's House were calling Sir Oliver where in true magnificence that he loves he would be paid court to instead of having to pay court.

Number Two who always liked to give the impression of being Number One became at last Number A 1.

And when Bandaranaike came to power we thought that the unreal dancing Siva of flesh and blood at Queen's House would become a real Museum piece in a corner of history. But soon it was a different story to tell.

The Communal Riots of 1958 put Sir Oliver back in his element as he fired orders to "fire" to nine telephones on his desk many of them ringing at the same time. He played Layton to perfection, minus only the barrack-room slang and obscene oaths. We went back straight into war time tactics with sudden commandeering of ships, long convoys of buses pulling out at midnight and camps in charge of captains all complete.

It did not matter who the Prime Minister was, Sir Oliver would bend but never break, like a bamboo struggling in a gale.

Dancing Siva became some kind of sacred cow doing acrobatics on a tight rope to keep the balance with one leg suspended in mid-air (as will be the judgment of history about this remarkable man).

Even when eventually a dark cloud came over Queen's House, as it inevitably had to, and Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike removed him in the normal constitutional way, she fought shy of saying she removed him. The sacred cow was just no longer at Queen's House. That was all.

PHILIP GUNAWARDHANE.

Most men gain their place in politics by their faculty of understanding the people. But there are others who demand their place by frightening the people into understanding them.

Mr. Don Philip Rupasinghe Gunawardhane belongs to this frightening fraternity of compelling comrades.

He has never been anything other than himself. He cares not in what mood you are ; what fears, anxieties are in your mind. He adds ponderously to your burden, your fears.

He is the plain man who derives his power from high character, plain thinking and corrosive candour.

Thus he has been the 'bogey' man in Ceylon politics for quite some time. The very sound of his name drives fear into the hearts of the hardy hedonist. I would not be surprised if the 'ayahs' of Cinnamon Gardens are trained to frighten children into their beds by the cry : "There comes the man from Boralugoda !"

He himself does not boggle at the bogey-hood he has been bestowed. In fact, he delights in painstaking promotion of the myth. He invents choice epithets of invective for all his political opponents and even erstwhile political followers. He spares nothing in venom, nothing in sting or in virulence in the coining of these biting phrases. It must be admitted that these darts are extremely picturesque if not exceedingly apt. They smack of calculated caricatures in words though hurled on the spur of the moment from the rostrum to the accompaniment of amused approbation.

Philip Gunawardhane is the Poo-Bah perfect of the smearing taunt, of the jaundiced gibe, of the enduring insult and of the sniggering sneer.

There is almost something almost animal in his sincerity and uncanny in his candour that often enables him to put his foot in his 'big mouth'.

A man of undoubted ability, masterly strategy, and undaunted perseverance, Philip Gunawardhane has many times failed to make the grade because he refuses to understand the people and is determined to frighten the people into understanding him. He scorns the normal graces of a successful politician, the personable charm associated with the popular hero and the social art of cultivating friends and influencing people.

II

From the day he joined the Bandaranaike Cabinet to the day he left it with disgust, he growled in it, a lone wolf. He was unable to attract to himself a single friend or sympathiser. Every month, unerringly, laboriously, he added to the list of his

enemies by the brusque word flung across the Cabinet table, by the sledge-hammer blows in bounty he wielded accompanied by flying sparks.

Engrossed in only his own place and work, devoting more hours to his task than all his colleagues put together, Philip Gunawardhane was unconcerned with the unending battle on his behalf that Bandaranaike had on his hands. Bandaranaike was his only friend, sponsor and champion. Conscious only of his own greatness and his sincerity Philip did nothing to help Bandaranaike in the protection he was given. If anything Philip began often grappling with Horatius himself holding the bridge against the hosts.

He did not make an effort to meet a single of his colleagues on a social level at 'Sravasti' of an evening to cultivate them or make the slightest move to win them over to his side and lessen Bandaranaike's troubles. On the contrary, by dare devil challenges, untimely threats and uncharitable caustic epithets he roused them into open battle with Bandaranaike himself because of him.

The strange bedfellow who should have slept with as little stirring as possible, turned and twisted and put up such a howl and kept pushing everybody out of the bed so much that the time came when they all in a body told him where he got off.

And when he did get off it was on his lone defender that he turned on his wrath full jet ! The amazing part of the episode of Philip's resignation from the Bandaranaike Cabinet was that Philip, with the wisdom of a prophetic seer, warned Bandaranaike in Parliament that the conspiracy

was against the Prime Minister and not against himself.

But knowing this, consciously, he left the Cabinet, leaving Bandaranaike to the tender mercies of the enemies he had created on Philip's behalf!

Philip was ever concerned with his own ideas, his own sincerity, his own plans, his own troubles by force of sheer habit.

It is something alien to his make-up to appreciate another's trials, to see things from another's point of view. Compromise, he had no nodding acquaintance with. Accommodation, he had none. He must always have his way, go his way and you too can, if you choose to, have *his* way, go *his* way.

There are people who get these things done with subtlety and finesse, without your knowing you are being led and influenced and guided, by their charm, appeal and influence. But Philip is cast in a different mould.

Scratch this normally mild-mannered friend and comrade to find the Boralugoda thug in him wake up with a spring, breathing fire and brimstone like a dragon.

The technique has ever been the same since the far off days when this Ceylon Lenin founded the Left movement in the Island.

III

I well remember one of the first meetings of the fathers of revolution at the house of the late Terence de Zylva at Borella in the thirties soon after Leslie Goonewardhane, Colvin R. de Silva and N. M. Perera had returned from abroad intent on setting the Thames on fire in this little Island. There were also Vernon Gunasekera, Roy de Mel, Dr. S. A.

Wickremasinghe and (curiously enough) Justin Kotelawala among those who gathered together. The strong man among these founding fathers was Philip. I found him rather a mild kind of man who liked to listen to you with as little comment as possible and, may be, a certain amount of impatience. Only the unruly head of hair indicated the unruly spirit within.

Soon after the Samasamaja Party (a name invented by Bhikku Walpola Rahula) was formed there was an open challenge from the then uncrowned King of Labour, A. E. Goonesinha. At a meeting at Wellawatte we heard how hired thugs broke in and hit Philip on the head with a chair. Another man would have been rushed to hospital to come back to consciousness by slow degrees. But Philip was back again on the platform inside of fifteen minutes with a bloodstained bandage round his head and fire breathing out from his frothing mouth.

That was the kind of Boralugoda bravado and blood that helped to fertilize the roots of the new Party.

The transplanted exotic plant, grown according to the book of rules, deriving succour from an alien economic philosophy and nurtured by a set of impetuous young men who every now and then uprooted it to scrutinize its scientific growth and pruned it mercilessly to an inch of its life, has had hardly a chance to take proper root, let alone bear fruit. Once in a while a storm would arise to shake it to its roots.

Philip was himself Varuna, the mysterious god of the wind, in these various storms of doctrinal differences and torrential abuse.

If he could not fashion all his friends in his own image of doctrine and deed, he transformed himself from Varuna to Siva, the Destroyer, and performed his dance of destruction in frenzy's fancy.

IV

After many years of incessant fireworks, Philip seemed to have come to his senses and realized that if you wanted the people to listen to you, it followed that you had to listen to the people yourself.

If you pushed a rope or a string as hard as you can nothing would happen but if you took it in your hand and pulled, it would come whichever way you pulled it.

Philip ceased pushing the people and pulled them the way they were prepared to go when he joined Bandaranaike and spoke an idiom they understand, their language, their culture and their religion.

At long last Philip, along with a few staunch Philip-pinoes, seemed to be on the right path, became a Minister and we all thought that the sky was the limit.

But he did not realize that this was the time to adapt himself to circumstances, to school himself to self-discipline of some sort and pay back in loyalty and civil behaviour for what he had received from Bandaranaike as a generous gift.

He thought too much of himself and his future and not enough of Bandaranaike and his awkward situation. He fought a battle with the only man who had refused to believe in the myth of the 'bogey man' from Boralugoda and had extended to him the hand of co-operation. By his impatience

and selfishness, instead of making Bandaranaike not repent for accommodating him, when he need not have, he threw him to the lions and sat watching the spectacle.

Then, while his enemies, like N. M. Perera, followed his footsteps, showing how right he had been, he chose once again to play the part, true to type, of the bogey man from Boralugoda in campaigns of verbal thuggery and threats from which he alone suffered.

And today Philip Gunawardhane is where he started from—in the wilderness.

V

The secret of his failure is the failure of his secrecy. There was something at the back of his mind which he alone knew. He trusted nobody, and nobody trusted him.

The fact of the matter is that by temperament, make-up and habit he was the strong, silent man, bent on action, efficiency and hard, honest work, out to please himself and nobody else. He would have been a wonderful Number Two to a supreme leader who would have taken care of both the people and Philip Gunawardhane himself. He would have been an ideal Patel to a Ceylon Nehru.

But the tragedy is that Philip Gunawardhane will never realize the limitations of his own personality. He must needs aim at being a Number One.

His love of power, it is true, is for its own sake, not a lust for personal gain or glory. It is possible that if he gains full power he may use it as a cross of duty like a grey eminence of the middle ages.

But today is not the middle ages. The technique of frightening people into following him like Nasser,

will hardly work in a mature democracy where the people are prone to give the leaders a lead. And until he learns to understand the people, they will certainly refuse to understand him.

Although Philip has in him all the urge of a Dictator in a highly developed form more than in any other leader, he is the one man who brought to the Left movement in Ceylon something original as a contribution.

The habit of copying, owing to sheer lack of originality has been the curse in Ceylon whether in the practice of Democracy or the theory of Communism or Socialism.

All silver may be of the same kind but unless a country puts its own seal on it, a bit of silver does not become a coin of the realm. Adaptation of the thing, whether it is silver or Socialism, to the needs, environment and background of the country is the real test of originality.

The Leftists in this country have been bereft of any sense of originality in the preaching of their doctrines—speaking an idiom the people do not understand, referring to musty books that the people have no belief in.

Philip is the only man who has shown originality of approach to the masses in the adaptation of his theories to the background and needs of the country. How much of this was technique, how much change of heart, we do not know.

Nor do the people.

That is why he became suspect just when victory tantalised him most.

VI

Bandaranaike left the Senanayake Cabinet with only a handful, leaving behind him the larger number of his Sinhala Maha Sabha followers. At the first occasion of his opposition at the elections he was unable to make much headway. But the second time he swept the board.

Philip did much better in his departure, as he has always done. He took with him not only his Philip-pinoes but also five of Bandaranaike's own old faithfuls. The first time he tried a come-back he might have naturally failed, going by precedence. But that he should have failed so dismally the second time to repeat history is a reflection on his personality, technique and ideas.

When he departs he does depart in style, it is true. But he never arrives at all. That is his tragedy.

The trouble is that Philip is an incorrigible idealist whose idealism is mixed up in his own mind with personal affronts, grudges and grievances, most of them very real.

But you can no more make a Premier out of old grievances than you can make an omelette out of the Pythagoras theorem.

If only he thinks less of the past and more of the future, less of himself and more of the country, Philip may yet have a chance to carry his cross of duty.

P. de S. KULARATNE

And we, being poor, have only our dreams. We are all poor in one thing or another. Often the more extraordinary or talented a man is in one thing the more he craves to shine in another field, chasing after dreams and shadows.

Wolfe, the conqueror of Quebec, wished he had been the author of " Gray's Elegy " rather than the conqueror he was. Lord Byron, the great Poet, wished to be a warrior. Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian Poet and Savant, was determined to be a painter.

Patrick de Silva Kularatne is Ceylon's supreme example of a man doped by a dream. If only this man had not chased after shadows betimes and bided his time perhaps today he might have been the most dominant personality in Ceylon. The tragedy was he did not have the patience.

Kularatne was perhaps the greatest man we have produced in modern times. He was not only a great teacher, he was also a great maker of men, builder of many schools, usherer of a revival,

inspirer of a new outlook. If greatness is to be measured by the yardstick of influence exerted on one's generation a man lives in, Kularatne has certainly made his contribution more than any other single individual of our time.

Within two decades small, frail Ananda was built up into a strong, sturdy, stalwart of a school by Kularatne with the energy of a giant and the patience of a jeweller. No money from abroad or from Government went into the development of Ananda as in the case of missionary institutions. Kularatne had to find the money from Ceylon in small sums, from the betel-seller, the kiosk-keeper. He picked up the best teachers and paid them well and encouraged them more. Soon Ananda began shining like a bright star in the educational firmament. Examination results pushed Ananda to the forefront. It became the pride of the Buddhists.

Kularatne had the knack of picking out the right men for the right jobs. With an amazing faculty for organisation he fitted each man into a pattern that brought out the best in each making up, little by little, a great school.

It is true that in numbers, examination results and sports Ananda excelled. But the true greatness of both Ananda and Kularatne lay in other directions. In addition to the instruction and education imparted, Ananda gave its pupils an intense love for their country, their language, their religion and their culture. There was a certain honesty and openness on the face of the Anandian. Civil servants who had been old boys of Ananda were cast in a different mould from the others. Theirs was something more than mere performance of

routine jobs. There was patriotism in their preferences, idealism in their ideas. They were earnest in serving the country while drawing their handsome salaries.

In the new Ceylon that came into being after Independence it was the Kularatne brand of nationalism fostered at Ananda that prevailed in general. The demand for one's own language, religion, dress, culture and customs as symbols of a national self-respect and self-esteem was begun by Kularatne long before politicians thought of Independence. While keeping to the English pattern of education followed by other schools and competing with them on equal terms, Kularatne insisted on giving his students a sound grounding in Sinhalese, Ceylon history and Buddhism.

At the same time all visiting Indian nationalist leaders whom other schools shunned were always welcome at Ananda. From them the pupils derived inspiration to build a better Lanka. Ananda College was also the venue for Temperance meetings, national political parleys and talks from Buddhist leaders.

Nationalist Ceylon had its roots at Ananda and its sons spread the message of nationalism all over the Island.

Ananda College grew so big that Kularatne had to make two schools out of it — thus was born Nalanda Vidyalaya.

Kularatne did not confine his interest to Ananda and Nalanda only. The whole of Buddhist Education was his province. There was hardly any Buddhist school in Ceylon which Kularatne had not helped, encouraged or positively adopted. For a

little while he reigned over Dharmaraja, when that school was in a bad way.

Kularatne started the "Buddhist Chronicle" which stirred up Buddhists from lethargy and inspired them into activity. He also organised a debate between Dr. Evans Wentz, a learned free thinker, and Fr. Le Goc, which debate reminded us of the famous debate held at Panadura between Buddhists and Christians that drew Olcott to Ceylon.

Col. Olcott when asked why Buddhist children should study at Buddhist schools had, it would appear, given a prophetic reply. It did not matter very much during a Colonial regime getting instruction in missionary schools in order to secure jobs in the Government. But what would happen when a nation became free? These bad Buddhists and good Christians would be so slavish in their mentality towards the Colonial Christian set-up, it would be difficult to wean them from it. Mentally we would never be free.

Kularatne set about training students for a future, free Lanka — independent in views, able to think for themselves, and yearning to be better men.

II

While he trained others, it would appear, he unlearned all that he taught others in terms of the national future.

If only Kularatne had had the patience to carry on quietly at his educational work until the time came for retirement, as did Sir Baron Jayatillake! If only..... If only..... If only.....

Sir Baron was always elected uncontested. Nobody dare contest him with his background of continuous service and steadfast devotion to educational work.

Kularatne would have had the same kindness from the Ceylon voter and today he would have been the most dominating force in national affairs. If only..... If only.....

But Kularatne did not have the patience. He was in a hurry. Even as Ananda grew in stature Kularatne was bitten by the political bug. It would not let him be. It was something like the wanderlust of Gerald Gould which worked in him like madness and to which there was no end of voyaging when once the voice was heard.

Even as Kularatne became the lord of the Buddhist Schoolmasterdom his slip was apt to show. People became rather suspicious of his voyaging on to the hustings and began inwardly doubting his bona fides.

How many times Kularatne lost at elections one really cannot be sure. It would be easier to count his rare victories.

His voyaging has been always in vain. Every time he just missed the bus.

The U.N.P. ignored him altogether and condemned him to a back-bench when he sat in Parliament in 1947, after giving up the Principalship of Ananda. Squirming under the insult he joined Bandaranaike and became the first Secretary of the S.L.F.P.

But by the time the S.L.F.P. came to power Kularatne had changed horses and was once again in the wilderness, voyaging in vain.

In March 1960 when even for a space the U.N.P. was able to form a Government Kularatne was once again out of it, having lost his election. In July 1960 election when he was victorious he found the U.N.P. had suffered a terrific defeat !

It would seem the Fates had turned cussed and loaded the dice against him every time he made a move, trimming his doctrines to the varying hour.

The sense of values of Kularatne has been appallingly blunted. He prefers a back-seat in Parliament to a kingly place in the Buddhist educational world. He prefers to be a defeated candidate to Parliament rather than be the President of the Buddhist Congress.

In politics he has sought a place among strange bed-fellows who have no sympathies with him. But he is determined to get sympathy against their will.

The man who might have been a leader's leader has been a follower's follower, voyaging for ever but never arriving anywhere, with a wanderlust that will not let him be.

Thus Kularatne, the man who might have reshaped Ceylon, who might have given us new spirit, new courage, who might have been the greatest force in the Island, remains today a puny monument to failure in politics, a symbol of defeat and a little quantity left out of the reckoning.

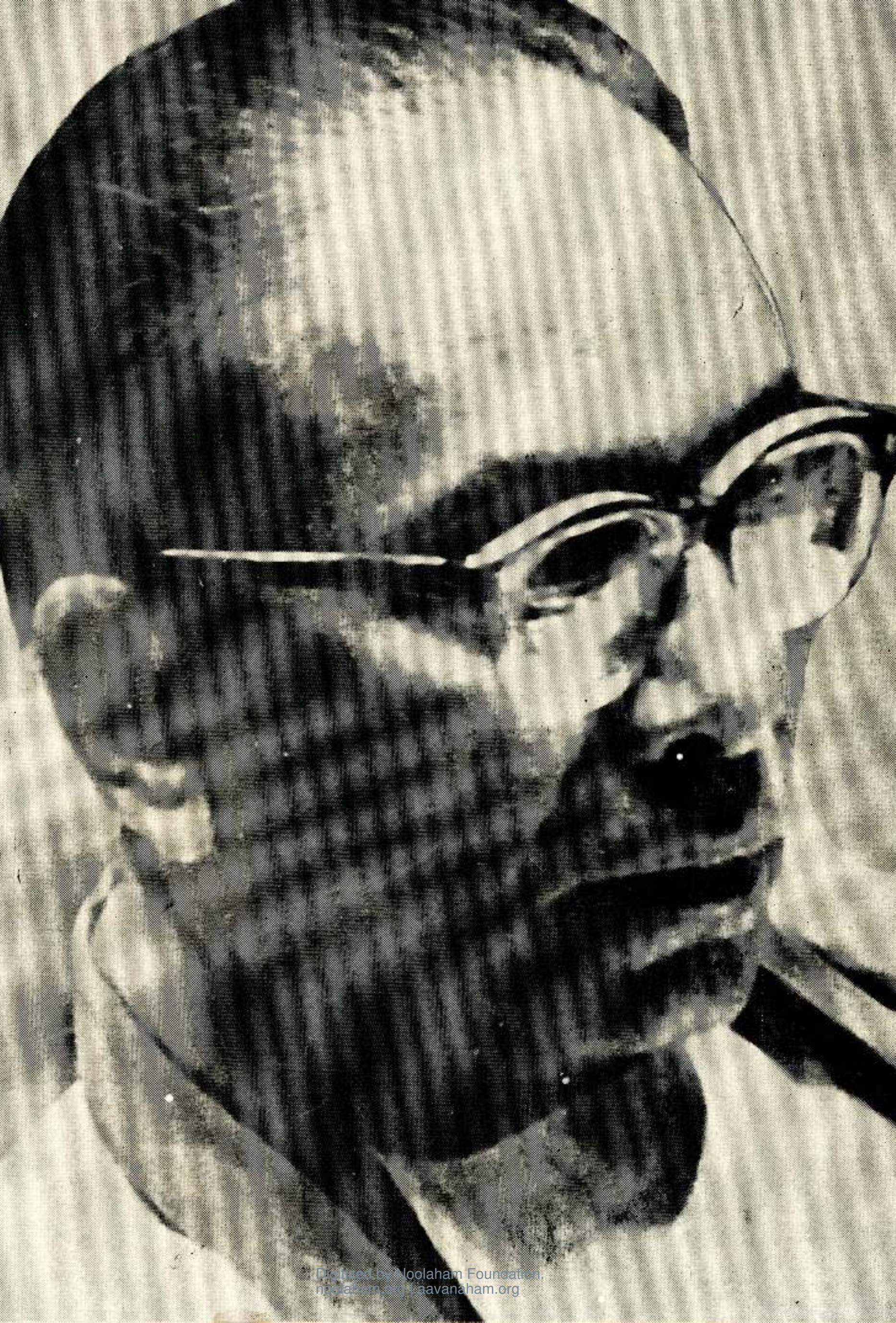
He remains the great Might-Have-Been.

But Kularatne at sixty is yet a dynamo of energy. He has yet the same spirit that built up Ananda and inspired Buddhists with the clarion call : " Arise ! Awake ! or be for ever fallen."

We arose. We awoke. But he has become a walking tragedy in a long "baniyan" on the Ceylon stage.

What a man he might have become ! What a man he has become !

But there is no touch of disappointment, no sense of bitterness, no cynicism born of frustration in Kularatne. Even today he has the same old superficial freshness, the same optimism, the same self-confidence of the old days. If he did not, he would not be Kularatne the great might-have-been of Ceylon.



G. P. MALALASEKERA

ABOUT fifty years ago a father would journey with his son in the family hackery visiting nearby relations in the Panadura area. As they returned after sundown, to keep the child from nodding, the father would recite Sinhalese verses aloud. The child would repeat them after the father and learn these by heart. Little by little, the child found he could remember any verse if repeated twice.

It was not only this training in memory that Gunapala Piyasena Malalasekera received from his father, a well-known Ayurvedic Physician of the time. He also became familiar with a vast amount of Sinhalese folk poetry, popular stanzas and classical verses.

The boy was studying at St. John's, Panadura, where a knowledge of Sinhalese, not to speak of Sinhalese poetry, was something to be ashamed of. If you spoke or wrote or sang in Sinhalese you were a " Godaya," not coming within the pale. So he kept his home-spun scholarship to himself. Malala-

sekera brought his lunch wrapped up in an old newspaper. His father bought only Sinhalese newspapers and it would not do at all to have his lunch wrapped up in Sinhalese newspapers at St. John's. His classmates might think that he was a 'Godaya'. So he would go to a boutique and buy old English newspapers for the express purpose of wrapping up his lunch !

He studied Latin, English and Science and went up to the Medical College for a year during which time he sat for the London Degree Examination and passed as perhaps one of the youngest Bachelors of Arts in the then far-flung Empire.

P. de S. Kularatne and W. A. de Silva were on the look-out for promising young men for Buddhist Education and Malalasekera could not escape their lynx eyes. When Malalasekera was installed at Ananda College the Buddhists thought they had found another Kularatne, who would dedicate his life for Buddhist education.

Before long Malalasekera became Number Two at Ananda and in an Islandwide campaign collected vast sums for the College aided by Arthur V. Dias.

W. A. de Silva, that wonderful philanthropist and idealist reigning from famous " Sravasti," was so struck by the young man's enthusiasm, powers of organisation and getting on with and round people, promptly created and tailored to size a school for Malalasekera. Thus was born Nalanda Vidyalaya, out of the overflow from Ananda.

Malalasekera made such a phenomenal success of Nalanda within a year or two of its founding that

W. A. de Silva packed off Malalasekera, the Latin and English Scholar, for higher studies to England.

II

By now Kularatne had given Malalasekera a brain-washing in nationalism — not to be ashamed of his own race, religion, language and Culture. Malalage George Peiris became Gunapala Piyasena Malalasekera, put on the national dress and was proud to be a " Godaya."

This happened to be the time when what was called Indo-Aryan had been included as a subject for the London Degree.

Malalasekera with an eye for the future switched over to Pali and Sanskrit for his higher studies and, thanks to his father's tutelage in the family hackery, his own cleverness and concentration, passed his Master's Degree in Indo-Aryan in two years.

Mrs. Rhys David took a especial liking to this pleasant young man from Ceylon and helped him not only with her own wealth of Oriental knowledge but also with the research heritage left behind by her late husband.

He returned to Ceylon not only with a white wife by his side, a volume on the history of Pali literature in his hand but also with a Lectureship in the University College in his pocket.

The far-seeing Malalasekera saw in the new business of Indo-Aryanism a new ladder to eminence that he could be the one of the first to climb.

Before long, Malalasekera, with his winsome ways, captivating amiability and genial manner became perhaps the pleasantest man in Ceylon. As a public speaker both in Sinhalese and English

he was in a class by himself, full of humour and telling phrases and could keep an audience spell-bound by his delightful talk.

He became also a scholar of great repute by the research work he turned out as a result of the training he had received in London from Mrs. Rhys David. His "Dictionary of Pali Proper Names," a monumental work in two volumes, which made him a Doctor of Literature, won him international fame.

A man of great energy and incessant activity, in temperament more like a Sales Executive than an absent-minded scholar, how Malalasekera with all his rushing and dashing and scurrying could manage to turn out so much of research work is a secret we fail to understand.

With his students at University College and later at the University of Ceylon he moved very freely and those who came into close contact with him considered him in the nature of an idol of some kind of new cult of great fascination.

In all their literary, cultural and spiritual activities Malalasekera was there more as a friend and guide than as a dutiful Don doing his routine bit of drudgery which most of the others neglected.

Malalasekera's interests were like the Haputale Gap — wide and opening on to a vast vista.

It was the Malalasekera dynamo that worked overtime in the Ceylon Society of Arts and enabled it to build an Art Gallery. He collected folk poetry, patronised Kandyan dancing, spoke week after week on the Radio, oragnised the first Ceylon Beauty Contest, staged plays, sponsored artistes, ran carnivals for charity and had round him all

the time a flock of lame ducks who looked up to him as their patron and protector.

If there has been in Ceylon one man who combined in his person personable pleasantness, diplomacy in dealings and charm of personality, it has been Malalasekera. If there has been one man whose cleverness has not been questioned, whose ability has been unblemished and whose intelligence has been untarnished it has been Malalasekera. Equally, if there has been one man who has never failed to take advantage of an opportunity it has been Malalasekera.

III

Even if W. A. de Silva, Arthur V. Dias and Kularatne and all the Buddhists put together forgave Malalasekera for preferring the flesh pots of University College, afterwards the University of Ceylon, to the hardships of Buddhist education, the one man who seemed never able to forgive him was Malalasekera himself. From that day to this his conscience seems to trouble him. And in the manner of top-class Socialites taking an interest in the slums, Malalasekera has always taken an abiding interest in Buddhist work as if to ease his conscience.

It is difficult to say who has profited more by this work, Malalasekera or the Buddhist public. But it must be said that leadership of the Buddhists did raise Malalasekera above the common run of Lecturers and Professors of the University.

Every year the Buddhist Congress under Malalasekera's Presidentship met in different parts of the country and passed various resolutions. The Executive Committee of the Congress also met now

and then during the course of each year and passed more resolutions. There were also various sub-committees which also met and had discussions.

Malalasekera had got round him a delightful set of " faithfuls " who included two persons whom everybody began calling Raigamaya and Gampalaya.

And the sun shone, the wind blew, the rain fell, the birds flew and Malalasekera was happy.

When Independence was celebrated with fanfares in Ceylon Arthur V. Dias put up a tiny black flag in his house along with the lion, as a protest against the new Government not paying any attention to the religion of the country. But the Buddhist Congress and Malalasekera had nothing to say.

When pressure was mounting up from the people Malalasekera did go to D. S. Senanayake, the new Prime Minister, and begged of him to appoint a Commission regarding the rights of Buddhists.

Senanayake turned round and asked him—whether he wished to change the first refuge of the five precepts to " I take refuge in the Government," in place of " I take refuge in the Buddha."

And Malalasekera came back empty handed to pass the word round in whispers.

When enraged Buddhists suggested that they themselves should appoint a Commission if the Government neglected its duties Malalasekera thought the idea impracticable, unworkable, absurd.

In the meanwhile Malalasekera got a brainwave to shake up the Government. The Buddhists were to assemble in great strength at Anuradhapura

on a Poson Day and offer prayers to the gods to redress wrongs inflicted on them by Christian Governments in the past.

The Poson Day dawned — but nothing happened.

The resolution proposing the Buddhist Commission had to be sprung behind Malalasekera's back without putting it down on the agenda. It was passed unanimously and the commission began its work in right earnest owing to the enthusiasm of people like the late D. C. Wijewardane, L. H. Mettananda, Kotahene Pannakiththi Thero, T. U. de Silva, C. D. S. Siriwardhana and N. Q. Dias among others.

The appointment of the Buddhist Commission was conceived in the same way as the Motilal Nehru Commission appointed by the Indian National Congress after the Imperial Government had refused to appoint Indians to the Simon Commission on political reforms. It worked on the same lines, having sessions in many parts of the country taking evidence from the people. When the Report had been completed the question arose how it was to be issued. Malalasekera was for giving it ceremonially but privately to the then Premier John Kotelawala. But those who were really the architects of the Report insisted that it be issued to the Buddhists at a public meeting at Ananda College. And that counsel prevailed.

Awakening of Buddhist opinion on account of the Buddhist Commission's Report was immense but Malalasekera was not one of those who campaigned for the cause.

He was otherwise rather occupied.

The Vice-Chancellorship of the University of Ceylon was vacant with the departure of Ivor Jennings from the Island. Malalasekera was pretty busy and engrossed getting ready for the biggest battle of his life. But even his comparing John Kotelawala to Dharmasoka at public meetings and the then Premier's actual canvassing among the University Court did not get Malalasekera the Vice-Chancellorship which seemed to be the prize he was after.

The auspicious day of his eldest daughter's wedding happened to be the day of election. What might have been a double celebration turned out to be a day of the greatest disappointment in his life. The man who never failed to make use of any opportunity found that opportunity did not make use of him either.

Personal disappointment, however, did not embitter Malalasekera. His diplomatic anxiety to avoid trampling on corns had become a set habit.

At the hour of need of Buddhists for great leadership, Kularatne had backed out laboriously. Malalasekera's silence became ominous. Mettananda's lone voice alone could be heard above the great silence of the leaders and the uneasy hum of low clamour of the populace.

IV

Malalasekera's talent for accommodation degenerated into utter ambiguity. His reluctance to rush made his tread very suspicious. The hawk whom everybody expected to swoop became a bat hovering about the rafters.

But there were other worlds for Malalasekera to conquer. With the coming of the 2500th anniversary of the Buddha the whole world became his province and before we realized what was happening, behold! there was brought into being a world Fellowship of Buddhists with himself as President.

Just then Bandaranaike who had immensely profited by the Buddhist Commission's Report was on the lookout for a scholar of Radhakrishnan's calibre to be sent to Russia as Ambassador. Malalasekera who, all this while, had been on his best behaviour waiting for crumbs from the brown sahibs' tables, gave up the effort and looked towards opportunity and Bandaranaike with pathetic eyes. Bandaranaike showed himself to be a great man in his selection of the most famous Professor of the Ceylon University to be sent to Russia.

Bandaranaike could not have chosen better. Diplomacy has been as much a part of Malalasekera as grammar has been part of language. Fond of gracious living, given to good taste, gifted with scholarship, learning and the easy art of making friends, Malalasekera filled the bill to perfection.

By worshipping false gods he had missed being the uncrowned king of the Buddhists. Even if the country lost a great deal in Malalasekera being rejected as the head of the University we have gained a good deal by his stature as a diplomat.

But one always suspects that yet Malalasekera has a sneaking fondness for the brown pucca sahibs who have always treated him as some kind of untouchable. That schoolboy habit of wrapping up his lunch in English newspapers to keep up

appearances at St. John's, Malalasekera seems to have to this day. He wraps up his hopes with the wishes of brown sahibs with whom he has hardly any affinity and who consider him a false prophet.

Malalasekera has retired from Presidentship of the Buddhist Congress but his Raigamaya and Gampalaya remain day by day reducing the organisation to a mighty fine kind of joke on the Buddhist public.

V

And today Malalasekera lives in the heaven of diplomats wearing a crown of gold and suffering to live a life of ease for the sake of his country.

Radhakrishnan relates the story of such a saint who went to heaven and saw there all the other saints wearing their jewelled crowns while he himself was given a crown of gold without any jewels.

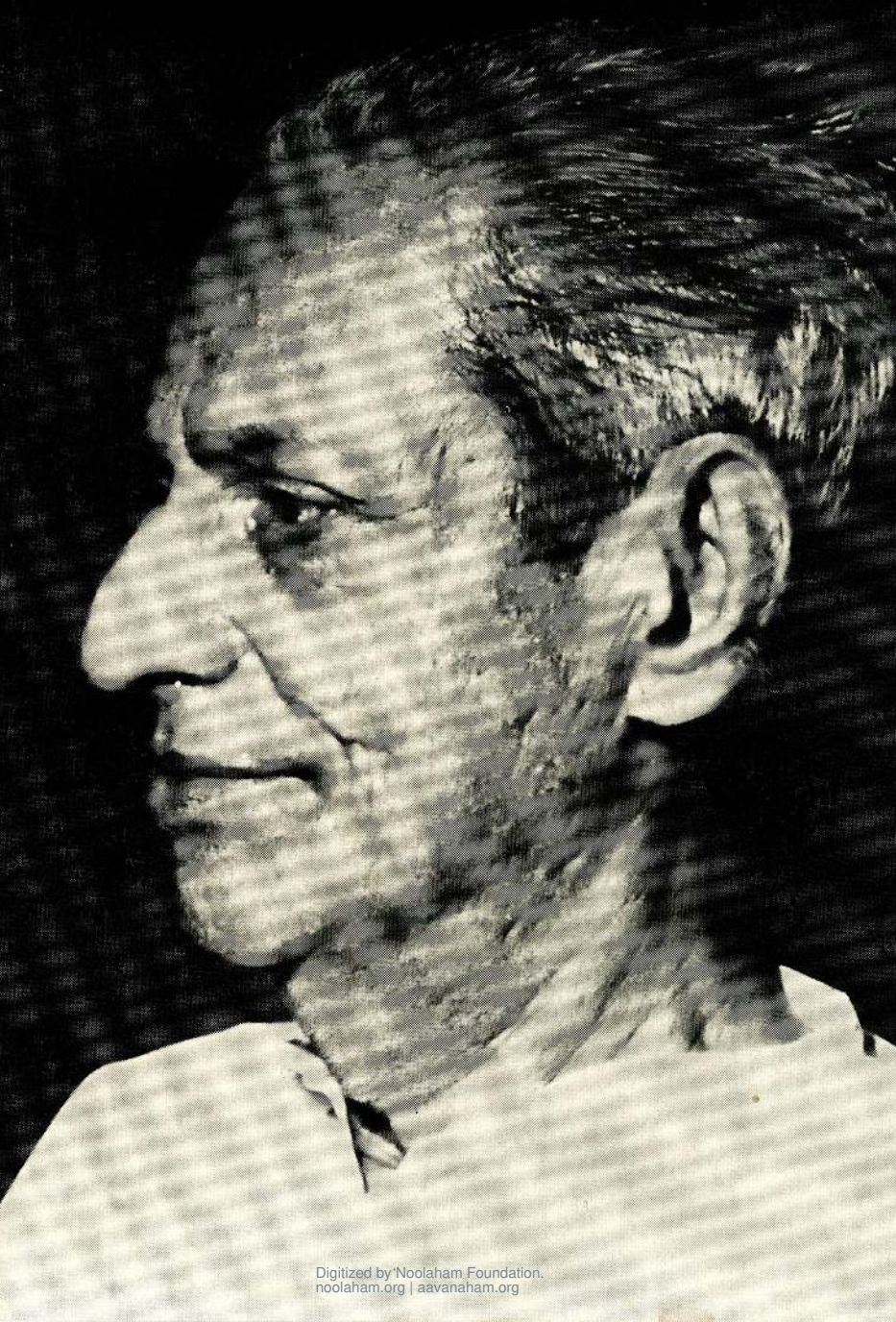
"Why has my crown no jewels?" he asked sounding most unlike a saint.

The Angel replied : "Because you provided none. These jewels are the tears that saints have shed on earth. You shed none."

"How could I ?" he asked "when I was so happy in the love of God ?"

"It is much", said the Angel. "Here is your crown, and it is made of gold ; but jewels are for those who wept."

Malalasekera has taken his rightful place in his heaven and because he was not given to sacrifice and suffering and tears his crown has no jewels. Even if he had tears he was not prepared to shed them.



But he has his crown of gold and he is in his heaven where he should be happy today.

But he just cannot have jewels.

L. H. METTANANDA.

Of course L. H. Mettananda is a fanatic. Anybody who dare talk of Buddhists' rights in a Buddhist country is bound to be called a fanatic bent on disturbing the peace and rousing up religious feelings.

A general amiable amnesia about the inequities perpetrated on the Buddhists and Hindus during the past four hundred years will make us gentlemen of tolerance and broadness of outlook. The Patricians must not be disturbed in their afternoon siesta of complacency by a cacophony of clamouring for the restoration of Buddhists' rights. For the sake of peace the old order must not give place to the new. For the sake of harmony no word of protest should be voiced lest a nation's conscience be awakened. Mettananda's vitriolic voice should not mar the mysterious march of Christian domination in the Army, the Navy, the Police, the Civil Service and the general administration.

These unseemly outcries seem so inartistic. They jar on the refined, delicate, feelings of those

with turned up noses sweating in tweed suits and kneeling at high altars. It is all so disgustingly out of taste. It is so appallingly vulgar.

Mettananda cannot care less. A plague on all your sense of good taste. He cares tuppence for all your finer sensibilities and refinements. He is proud of his vulgarity. He is not ashamed of hurting those who choose to get hurt.

He opens cupboards and shows you skeletons. He parts Catholic curtains and shows you filing cabinets for petitions in modern offices working overtime to bring about acts of God under suspicious circumstances.

He has all the percentages worked out, the names in neat lists and all instances tabulated. Everything is nicely taped out. He has all the right quotations noted down.

His facts cannot be questioned. Verification makes the charges all the more virulent.

He is the lone crusader who does not sheath his sword. He is the boor who walks into the drawing room with muddy shoes. He is the fanatic who has made fanaticism fantastic.

He catches the rulers dealing in short weight to Buddhists. He rings the coins always whenever the Buddhists get change.

His voice is insistent, insolent and almost instinctive.

He cares not on whose corns he tramples. He is unconcerned whose conscience he pricks. He does not mind what you call him, what you think of him and who you think you are.

He has to be heard. That is all that matters.

But those that matter do not hear him much and those that hear him do not matter much. That is Mettananda's tragedy.

But nobody ever doubts his sincerity, his honesty, his earnestness.

Here is a man who has no axes to grind. He is devoid of ambition. If he has nothing to lose, he has nothing to gain for himself either.

His honesty of purpose rises above our horizon like the rock of Sigiriya over the landscape it dominates. No one can question his sincerity.

II

Having no political ambitions himself, he is eternally searching for the right man who will give unto the Buddhists that which is theirs by rights, reserving for Caesar what is his.

When Bandaranaike was in search of supporters to beat his drum Mettananda he moved in with gusto. He organized thousands of Bhikkus to walk from door to door reading choice extracts from the Buddhist Commission's Report and denouncing the U.N.P. He carried on a whirl-wind campaign throughout the country, reviving hopes in the breast of Buddhists and painting Bandaranaike as a new hero born to right wrongs suffered by Buddhists.

In 1956 when Bandaranaike won the General Election he thought Mettananda would get into the spirit of practical politics and be satisfied with the fun he had had plus an Ambassadorial job and not bother about his blessed Buddhists any more.

But Mettananda is made of sterner stuff. He spurned efforts to placate him with cushy jobs and

spoke out loud and bold once again about the unredressed grievances of the Buddhists. Bandaranaike turned round and called Mettananda a mad man. The man with a load of grievances was only amused. He lost hope and began another search.

Then who should come along but our friend Mr. Philip Gunawardhane, his lips full of promises and his heart full of vengeance.

Mettananda adopted Philip as he had earlier taken over Bandaranaike and scoured the country with battle cries. But Philip by trying to make Mettananda a minor prophet in his hierarchy of the hustings could hardly make enough of an impression. Mettananda's words were sincere it was true. But the big question remained—were Philip's intentions honest ?

Mettananda was himself in for a rude shock when immediately after the March 1960 Election Philip without any reference to Mettananda issued a declaration that showed him in his true colours.

Mettananda perhaps was relieved that by the merest chance the horse he had wrongly backed had not won.

But there is no bitterness in this crusader out to build once again an El Dorado for Buddhists in this green and pleasant land. In the July 1960 General Election he once again backed Mrs. Bandaranaike in a quiet but more efficient manner.

He sits in his Nawala house a lone man surrounded by unfulfilled hopes, unsatisfied desires of the majority of this land. But there is iron in his spirit that refuses to waver, to give up the fight.

He is a hermit with a home, a big prophet with a small pension. His wants are few ; his tastes, simple. His smile is benign and reminds me of a grey eminence of intrinsic worth. He waits patiently for the day of deliverence after a long, long period of occupation of the country by those whom he considers aliens in their own land.

He does not give up the ghost.

Ever moving in mysterious diverse ways he guides a set of quiet people with determined chins and tight lips to whom he has become a god in flesh and blood.

In his person he combines the force of more than half a dozen Buddhist Congresses and a hundred Y.M.B.A.'s put together.

In the eyes of the country he is the one honest man we have yet left. He is a power ever to be reckoned with.

III

When after working as a teacher for over twenty-five years at Ananda and Dharmaraja he became Principal of Ananda, one never thought that this Latin scholar would become such a crusader in the near future as we saw him organising carnivals, flattering the rich and begging for donations to build up a great school after it had almost been reduced to ashes. Then no word of criticism passed his lips.

He was the exemplary Guru who evidently had no political opinions. While he never crawled before the high and mighty he did not prod or probe either.

Once he retired from Ananda, all pent up feelings, unexpressed grievances and bottled up bitterness seem to have made him into quite another man, a kind of reincarnation in the same old body of a new personality alive with character, pulsating with vigour and unreckoning of pace and energy.

This pedagogue who became prophet is not without a peculiar sophistication. Mixed with his load of grievances there is also a burden of suspicion. He walks warily, gingerly, carefully, always on the lookout for conspiracies, plots and mysteries.

If he has to walk on the carpet of a Catholic he will be careful not to trip over the woven flowers!

If a Catholic asks him the time, Mettananda is apt to think there is some catch in it!

He is disgruntled as a petition, as decided as a magistrate and as suspicious as a wife.

IV

Of course, Mettananda is a fanatic if revolt without reward, battle without booty and enthusiasm without fulfilment can be summed up in a cheap epithet.

Very few things are achieved by people without fanaticism. The great thing is to keep one's humanity along with one's fanaticism. And that Mettananda has achieved in great measure.

If Mettananda examines Buddhist grievances with his magnifying glass without relating them to forces of history his impatience would burst out into religious war to the knife. But he knows more

about the background than most of us. His humanity keeps his impatience under perfect control.

He knows that four centuries of Christian chronocity cannot be cured in four years of Buddhist balm.

But the effort is the great thing as far as he is concerned.

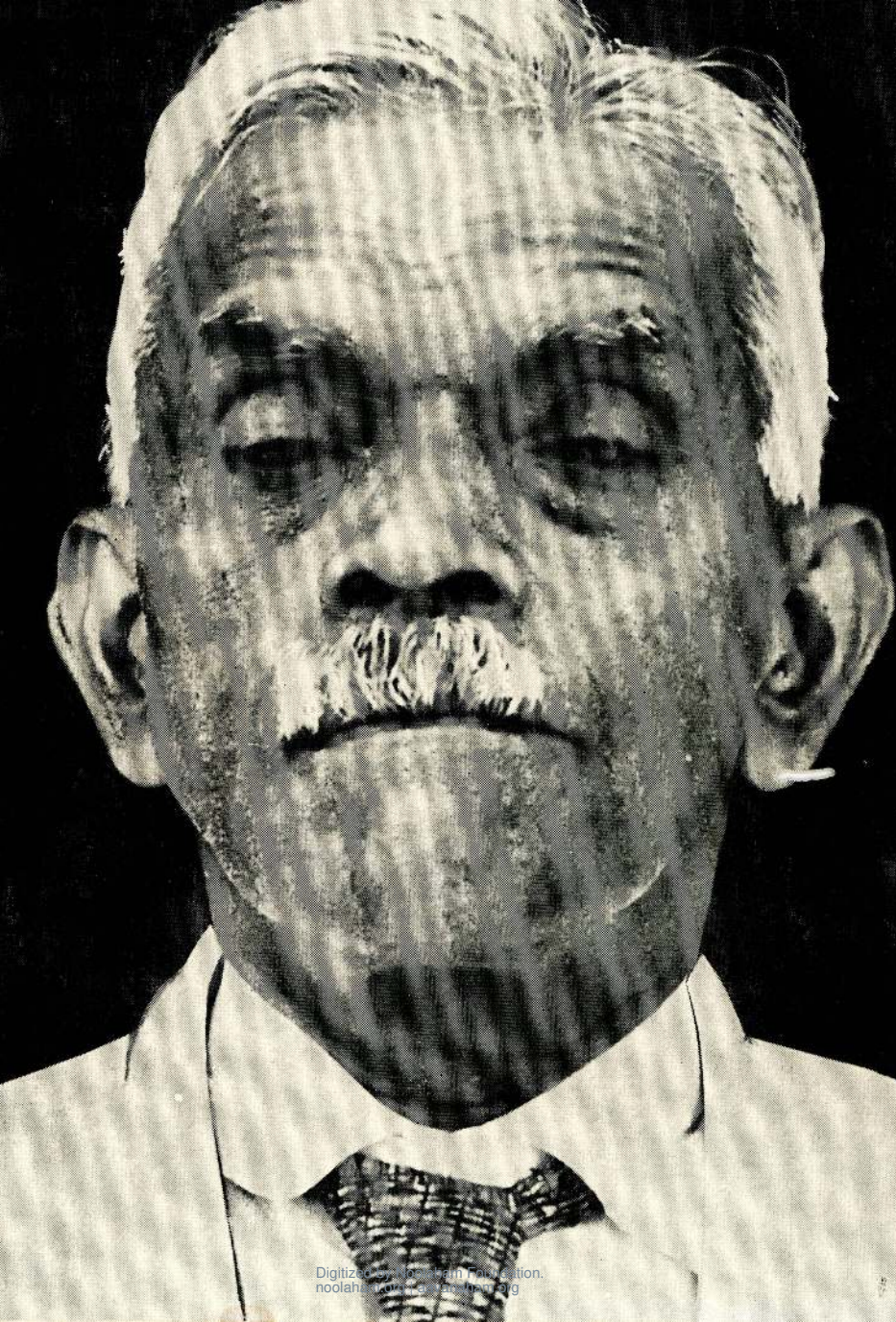
And one honestly cannot say that his effort has been entirely in vain.

But on the other hand if Christianity could only make this little headway for four centuries helped as it was by the conquerors with bribes and the sword, is it possible for it to make further progress in discrimination and inequities in the future when free democracy rules Ceylon ?

Is it not wiser to allow it to fade away through disuse and indifference rather than fight it tooth and nail and perhaps putting it on its guard and making it fight back from the last ditch ?

Of course this is where most people disagree with Mettananda.

If he did not disagree he would not be Mettananda, the fanatic who disgusts the refined, disturbs the complacent, jars the cultured—but inspires his followers.



SENERAT PARANAVITANA.

He looks like a Perera or Silva or, may be, even a Fernando. There is something as common as a comma or a semi-colon at best about him. There is nothing distinctive to mark him out from the crowd.

But in actuality Senerat Paranavitana is one of the very few men of real distinction we have in modern Ceylon. He has become a name. The best Scholars, the best archaeologists, the best epigraphists, the best Indologists, the best philologists of the world acknowledge him as an authority, cite his theories, quote his opinions.

He started life as any Silva or Perera or Fernando as a teacher at a little school at Udugampola. Hocart, the Archaeological Commissioner of Ceylon at the time, was on the lookout for talent in the sphere of epigraphy through advertisements in the newspapers. Paranavitana tried his luck as we would buy a lottery ticket. At the interview Hocart was so impressed by the young man's learning and aptitude for epigraphy and philology

that Paranavitana, to his own amazement, found himself selected.

He was trained in India for a short time under the world famous epigraphist, Krishna Shastri, and the great archaeologist, Sir John Marshall of Mohenjo-Daro fame. But most of the training Paranavitana has done himself, spending long, long hours over each little cypher-letter in inscriptions, pouring over each brick, each stone that yielded from the excavated earth.

More an epigraphist than an archaeologist, more an expert in consenescence than in conservation, more a self-taught scholar than a trained scientist, Paranavitana combined in himself all that was necessary to make a great pioneer, undertaking an enormous task. The courage of his curiosity and the sense of high adventure that accompanies those voyaging into the unknown went to make his journey into Ceylon's past through the centuries of dust and debris a fascinating story not only to himself but also to us.

II

Henry Schliemann, the untrained genius who discovered the site of ancient Troy and excavated the grave of Agamemnon at Mycene, followed his intuition as he became inspired by the *Iliad* to dig at the right spots to prove to sceptics that Homer had not nodded.

Paranavitana had a touch of the Schliemannic genius in believing in his intuition and the *Mahawansa* in his archaeological work in Ceylon. Legend has it that Schliemann went about on a hill near Hellespont pacing distances for digging, with the

Iliad in his hand as though it were a Surveyor's blue-print. I can quite well believe that Paranavitana went about Anuradhapura pacing distances for digging with the *Mahawansa* in one hand and a measuring tape in the other to prove, as he has done, that the Great Chronicle never lied in good Pali. The chuckles of the pompous historian who once thought the *Mahawansa* was a lot of legends strung together with perspiring piety, have been silenced by the granite evidence of Paranavitana.

He could easily get the feel of the past. He could enter into the spirit of the ancients. He understood the idiom of the ghostly stones, fashioned by unknown people under whose very skins he could get. His advantage was that he was a man of the people.

As a result in modern times we have had a succession of fascinating stories of the past dug up by the Paranavitana spade.

III

Perhaps the greatest of the work in archaeology Paranavitana has done is the unearthing and conservation of the Citadel of Sigiriya so that all those who run round can see. This has been done with imagination and insight. Sigiriya which was once only a bare twist of rock with a few crumbling frescoes has been made by Paranavitana into a living ghost of an elfin city of a factual fairy tale, a monument to a crime, an episode in history surrounded by moat and rampart and a treasure house of rare art and rich poetry all in one with the spirit of once-upon-a-time brooding whisperingly over it.

The scribblings on the Mirror Wall of Sigiriya he collected painstakingly, one by one, examined each under his magnifying glass of scholarship for years and turned out two enormous volumes of the earliest Sinhalese poetry extant. This, I believe, was as heroic a task as the original building of Sigiriya itself, taking, as he did, nearly twenty years for the work.

The genius of Paranavitana was not satisfied with giving Sigiriya a new life and its scribblings the new status of precious poetry. He must needs invest it with a new theory.

Dealing with Kassapa and Sigiriya the *Mahawansa* says : " Then he built there a fine palace worthy to behold, like another Alakamanda, and dwelt there like the god Kuvera."

Now, most historians and archaeologists are apt to dismiss this sentence as a mere figure of speech to embellish the narrative.

But not so Paranavitana. With the intuition of Schliemann he goes to Sigiriya with the passage in the hand as though it were a surveyor's blueprint to pace distances and arrive at parallels to build up the theory that, in fact, Sigiriya was created, fashioned and finished as Alakamanda, the abode of Kuvera, the god of wealth, with all its parallel topographical characteristics as described by the ancients, Mount Kailash, Mirror of the damsels, the Plateau of Red Arsenic, Manasa Lake all complete. Step by step, quoting chapter and verse, Paranavitana proceeds with his theory in a fascinating wealth of detail and parallelisms to prove to us that Sigiriya as

visualised was nothing but a replica of the abode of the God of Wealth.

Is the great theorist satisfied ? Oh, no ! He goes further and proves that Kassapa fancied himself as Kuvera, a god-king, in keeping with the politico-religious ideas prevailing at the time.

Are we satisfied ? Hardly. There are still more tricks in the bag. The very figures of the frescoes, famous throughout the world, are but the symbols of clouds and lightning round Mount Kailash of the God-king Kassapa posing as Kuvera !

We may smile at the theories within the theory, we may wonder at the coincidences cited ; we may marvel at the scholarship displayed in enunciation ; but we just cannot help being fascinated by Paranavitana. How much of this is fact, how much fancy, we really don't care. Until a greater genius arises to convert us to the contrary by prodding these proofs for fallacies we are prepared to give this seer the homage of implicit belief.

Here is a Sherlock Holmes of Archaeology, smoking a cigar instead of a pipe, who, by a phrase in a Chronicle, solves half a dozen riddles of the past and produces the answers to half a hundred questions.

After that I am even prepared to believe if he asserts that Kassapa was minus a big toe or that there was a wart on the thigh of the Chief Queen. I am reduced to the level of credulous Dr. Watson to this devastating sleuth of archaeology.

Paranavitana's fascinating, scholarly theories of the past have no end. And if I but give half of

them this essay will become bigger than one of his own hefty volumes.

A few more theories taken at random from hundreds he has aired that take my especial fancy might take your fancy as well.

The sunken relief of a seated figure of a man with the head of a horse cut out of living rock at Isurumuniya Shrine is one of the masterpieces of plastic art of ancient Ceylon.

But nobody seemed to know what it was supposed to represent. Who was the mysterious figure, majestic to behold, gazing intently over the horizon, in a pose of power, strength and dignity rarely forgotten once seen ?

We shrugged our shoulders and went our way having put on our shoes once again at the Isurumuniya Shrine.

At long last comes Paranavitana with the most plausible of the theories advanced. The man represents the Rain God Parjanya ; the horse, the Fire God, Agni.

To prove this conjecture Paranavitana wades through the elements of Hindu Iconography, the wealth of Vedic mythology, Buddhist Scriptures and Ceylon Chronicles, quotes past poets and present experts until we begin to be impatient with him and say : that will do, there is nothing more to argue about.

Paranavitana, the scientific researcher, is not concerned with popular beliefs and traditions and often has given rude shocks to Buddhists with his inordinate inquisitiveness.

While conserving the Galge at Devinuwara he inquired into the bona fides of the god worshipped as Vishnu at the township only to find he was none other than Varuna or Upulvan, the Lord of the Waters.

Paranavitana is no respector of persons, whether it is Ananda Coomaraswamy or Baron Jayatilaka, when it comes to scholarly probes. But there is alluring decorum when he differs.

Who is Saman, the god of Sri Pada, that sacred mountain, surrounded by an aura of legend, which takes its story back beyond the dim beginnings of Ceylon history ?

One fine morning our uncanny Sinhalese sleuth of antiquities takes his magnifying glass of clairvoyant history and looks into the past.

Many years and seventy eight pages after, we learn the awful truth. He is none other than Yama, the guardian god of the Southern quarter. Tracking down Saman to Yama is an adventure in scholarship, search and research that makes us rather dizzy in its incessant movement, thrilling voyages of exploration and sense of courage in quest.

No less exciting is Paranavitana's search for the symbolism in the Sanda-Kada-Pahanas or Moonstones placed at the foot of a flight of steps leading to a Buddhist Shrine. The pursuit of this inquiry leads us to a lost world of blazonry and mystic mystery. We find that the four animals—elephant, bull, lion and horse—represent the four perils of birth, decay, disease and death ; the swan stands for discrimination between good and evil ; and the lotus signifies the substance of existence.

Paranavitana's curiosity is not quenched with the unveiling of the moonstone mysteries. His quest takes him up the flight of steps as well. Each of the steps he finds symbolizes one of the jhanas in samadhi which lead to the Great Awakening. And what is more the guardstones on either side of the flight of steps and the makaras represent Time in the two forms – Time, the preserver, and Time, the destroyer.

IV

Of course not that all this high pressured research did not have its funny side. We did not quite know when to call Abhayagiri, Jetavanarama, or whether it was safe to call Demala Mahaseya, Tivanka shrine, or how or when Ananda became Buddha or Parakrama Bahu changed to Agastya or vice versa, and whether Isurumuniya was Vessagiri or Vessagiri was Isurumuniya and which was which and who was who and when !

Before our very eyes, as if in a film, the old book in Parakrama Bahu's hand faded into a rope, then changed into a yoke and became once again an ola!

This incessant changes in name boards of even wellknown sites was elaborate erudition and great fun in turn.

But it was not all a feat of jugglery in headstrong history and newly painted name boards. Paranavitana has made some very great archaeological discoveries that filled us with immense cultural satisfaction.

While working at Mihintale he uncovered a relic-chamber in which were found eighth-century paintings which went to prove that the Sigiriya

style of painting had had a continuity hitherto unsuspected.

To this knowledge he added later when he opened a relic-chamber at Mahiyangana revealing the same style prevailing up to the eleventh century.

Paranavitana also identified and excavated the first Tooth-Relic Temple at Anuradhapura along with the famous Mahapali Alms Hall and the romantic spot where Prince Sali and Asoka Mala met in tryst, the Magul Uyana. He also traced the funeral pyre of Mahinda at Mihintale.

It was very recently that he amazed archaeologists assembled at New Delhi by reading the letters in the seals found at Mohenjo=Daro which had baffled scholars for thirty five years.

V

In course of time Paranavitana cultivated an English style of great charm to expound his trains of surefooted theories.

The caustic or often cynical humour with which he splashed his beautiful prose added a touch of humanity to his writings. He made archaeology a living thing. I shall never forget the pleasure I derived more from his style than from the substance as I read his first paper on the Sigiri Graffiti.

But alas ! Paranavitana, the inspired archaeologist, is no more in the field, counting bricks, numbering pieces and directing operations. He packed up his greatness along with his books and departed to the Peradeniya University when his time was up.

Having trained himself, he was unable to train others to take his place. Not having had a University education he had a contempt for University scholars. And today ironically enough, while the Department of Archaeology has no idol for us to worship, the University has installed him as a minor prophet drawing a pension.

There is an imp somewhere in Paranavitana that likes to shock people, and he will always remain a cynic.

When he smiles he seems to do it with difficulty, slowly and twistingly, from one side of his lips set at an angle on an already angular face. It is as though your own smile were trying to push itself through a corner of Paranavitana's lips !

But the warmth of his kindness as shown in the windows of the heart – the eyes – behind the cynical guffaw, the stolen smile and the awkward movements, those who know him have ever well felt.

G. P. WICKRAMARACHCHI

SOFT-SPOKEN, slightly-built and self-effacing, his is a personality as quiet as a thought. Yet the slow words come as though they had gone through a sorting machine in the mind. The small frame seems to be clothed in an invisible mantle of natural dignity. And the austerity in behaviour makes his humility seem like saintliness.

There is something quaint in the sparce white locks curling up at the back of the neck, the peculiarity of his lapelless thin white coat of coarse cotton and the queer coy smile that seems almost reluctant.

The piercing penetration in his eyes and the complete refinement of his calm countenance make us put him straightaway in the niche we reserve for seers and prophets.

But Gabriel Perera Wickramarachchi is no idol set apart on a pedestal for occasional treatment with incense, myrrh and flowers. He is a physician working twelve hours a day writing prescriptions at a clinic, teaching pupils at a College and treating patients at a hospital.

II

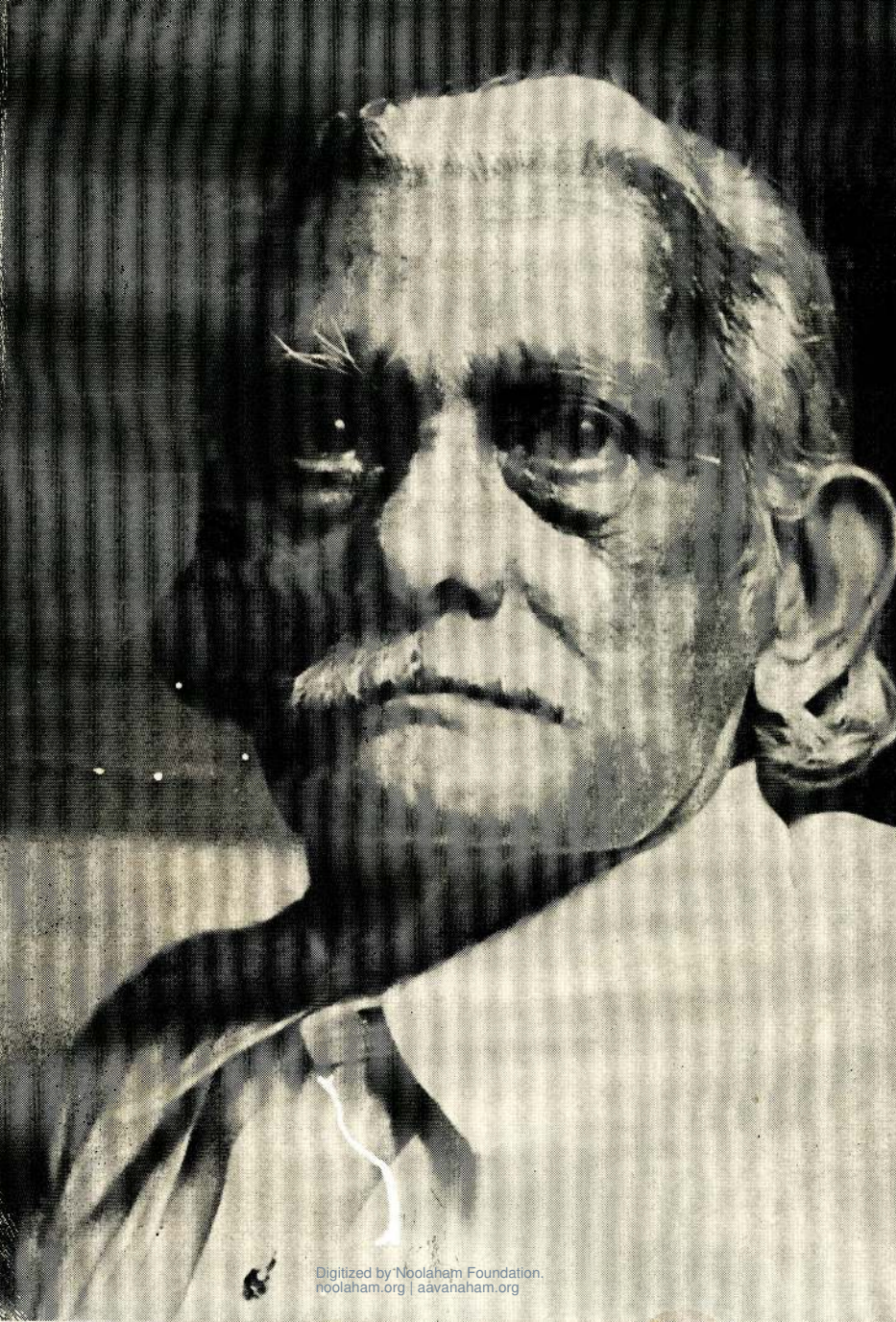
This wisp of a man is the chief of a race of courageous healers who among them on their own resources look after the health of about eighty per cent of the population leaving the rest of the twenty per cent to about a thousand doctors who are the favoured, spoilt children of the Government, for whose work the Government spends about one hundred and fifty million a year.

The Ayurvedic physician is not trained at enormous expense by the State, is not given a job by the State, is not given a well-equipped hospital or dispensary by the State, is not supplied with the costly ready-made drugs bought at enormous cost from abroad and distributed free by the State, is not given a pension by the State at the end of his career.

He has to take up arms against a sea of troubles, training himself with great handicaps, establishing his own dispensary, making his own drugs and selling them to his patients to his dying day as he has no pension except his own savings to fall back on.

But all the same this brave band of healers stand on their own against the competition of the darlings of the State, the Western qualified doctors on 900 of whom all the State boons are lavished.

The Ayurvedic physician takes this injustice with a shrug of the shoulders and carries on his healing more in the spirit of a missionary than as a professional, determined that his heritage that has come down to him through the ages shall not die.



As the Sinhalese language and religion were preserved by the monks against the onslaught of foreigners for four hundred years, the Ayurvedic system of medicine has been preserved and practised by this battered band of balm-dealers practising in every village in Ceylon.

They receive no recognition by the State, they receive scant respect and patronage from the powers that be ; they are treated to a good deal of obstruction and discouragement. They are even laughed at as quacks.

But the gratitude of his patients and the modest income he gets is enough compensation for the Ayurvedic physician. He is not only a healer to his patients but also a kind sympathetic friend who is not out to squeeze them as against the rude Western-trained allopath who has a contempt for his patients and is an out and out snobbish boor in comparison.

III

Wickramarachchi is the high priest in this hierarchy of kindly, simple healers. His leadership has made them find their voice; his courage has given them heart.

His centre for Ayurvedic studies and practice at Gampaha is a spot from where fame has spread all throughout Ceylon among the faithful. Carried on from the beginning entirely at his own expense, Gampaha Siddha Ayurvedic Institute is an oasis at whose springs numberless healers, having their habitations and name boards in diverse places in the Island, have drunk. To be called a "Gampaha Vedamahattaya" is a term of honour that indicates that he has sat at the feet of the Master.

Wickramarachchi's pupils, influential men in their own villages, and often rolling in riches and prancing with prestige pronounce his name with a kind of "salaam" in the tone of their voice, and always pay the same respect that we pay a monk or a priest of religion.

To begin with, he was really a Notary, like his brother G. P. Wickramarachchi, having studied Sinhalese and Sanskrit at the Vidyodaya Pirivena. But I suppose he, on second thoughts, realized there was little room for two brothers in the same profession in the same area. So, off went Wickramarachchi to Calcutta, having won the Obeysekera Scholarship, to study Ayurveda, Bengali and Sanskrit. He came back full of life and inspiration, his life dedicated to the art of healing and determined to give to others what he had mastered for himself.

Thus was born the Siddha Ayurveda Institute of Gampaha curiously enough situated at Yakkala, on his own land and conducted with his own money and effort. After nearly a quarter of a century, today, Wickramarachchi reigns over the Ceylon Ayurvedic world as Guru, Grand Duke of Healers, walking Oracle and perambulating Pandit all rolled into one little whisper of a man with a visionary gleam in his eyes.

IV

He has been subjected to bitter attacks by those darlings of the State, favoured of fortune but not of fame, the scientific quacks who know not what they talk about. But he is kindly to his critics and is amused by their prattle. He is only imperious

and quick-tempered with his friends and followers to whom he is not often unwilling to lay down the law.

Unrecognised, unseen and unsung by the Government as his work has been, he was overwhelmed when Bandaranaike alone honoured him by—nomination to the Senate in 1956. Thankful for small mercies, this humble walking Oracle of Ayurveda is today a happy man because our own mental slaves of the West are opening their eyes to the glories of a great heritage still among us.

Wickramarachchi's knowledge of Ayurveda is phenomenal ; his faith that the system is superior to the Western allopathy is unshakable ; and his energy in its practice is unparalleled.

At five in the morning you will (if you are that much an early riser) find him in his vegetable patch at the backgarden of his Yakkala home digging away for all he is worth. After this manual labour for about an hour and an early breakfast Wickramarachchi goes into the desiccated coconut business he carries on as a side line from which I suspect he gets a good deal of material satisfaction. He arrives at his Siddha Ayurvedic Centre by about ten in the morning, to find patients overflowing from his waiting room to all the verandahs available. Once he sits down at his consulting table, he does not leave until the last man in the queue has been attended to round about nine by the clock at night !

On certain days he finds time to give a lecture or two at his College attached to the hospital where he attends to indoor patients. He also gives

consultations to other practitioners who come to consult him in urgent, difficult cases.

He never names his fee as is the tradition of all Ayurvedic practitioners. But if a man has nothing to pay, there is no comment. If he pays too much as a fee a part of it is immediately returned. And the heap of betel offerings by evening assumes the proportions of a little hillock.

V

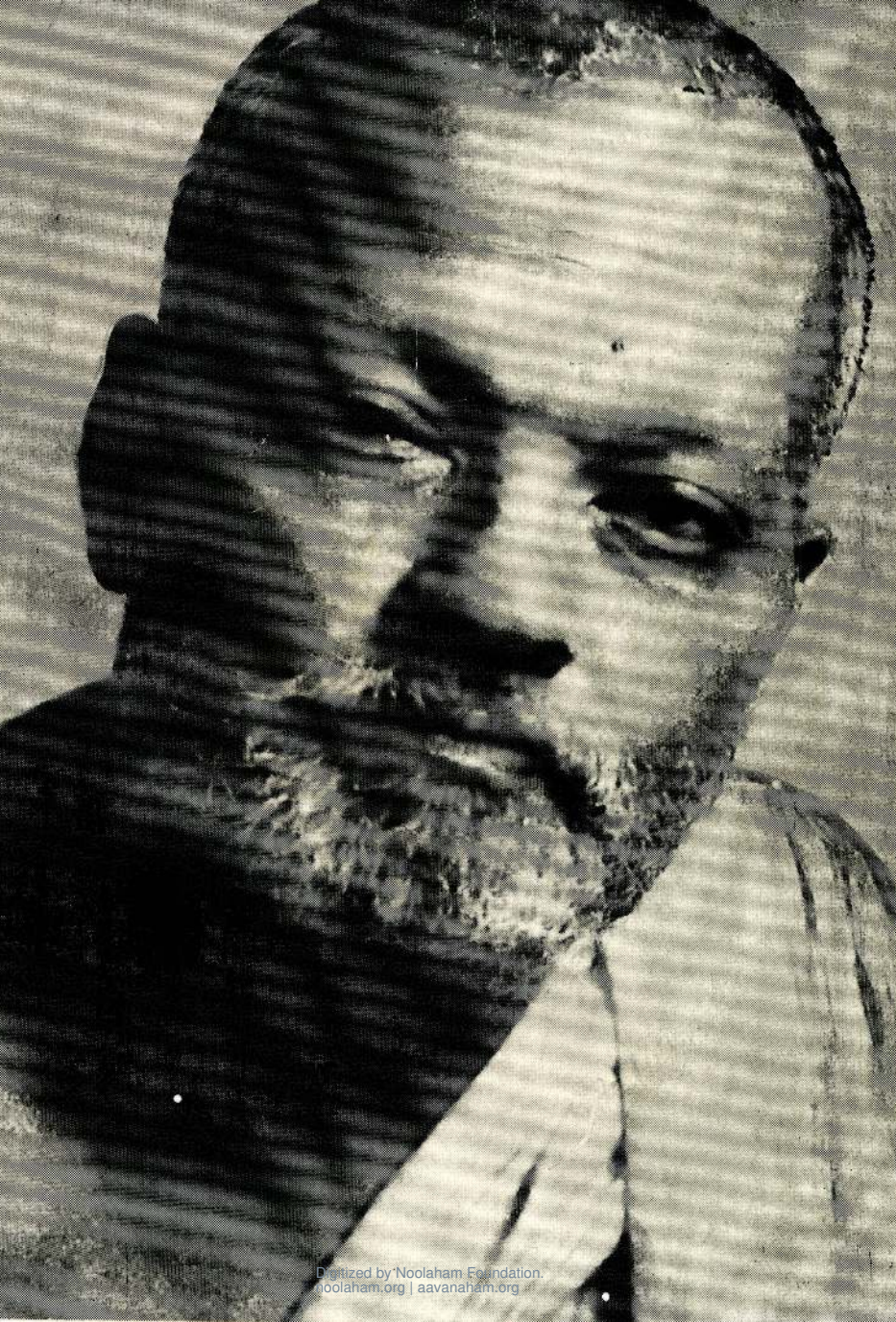
The Gampaha Institute is managed by a band of selfless teachers who have sacrificed a great deal for the privilege of working with him, learning from him. He might neglect himself – but never his co-workers whose value no man knows better.

Wickramarachchi is a great fighter when roused and the occasion arises to choose between right and wrong. And he never gives in until the fight is won.

There is the finality of a dropped egg in the verdicts of Wickramarachchi.

To the Ayurvedic fraternity and the battalions of patients all over the Island, Wickramarachchi, carrying on the old-world traditions of medicine, is a treasure of the nation.

Quiet, soft-spoken and inconsequential he appears but he is one of the greatest forces at work today in giving a sense of values to those whose god is success calculated in terms of Mammon. The charm of this grand old man cannot be easily forgotten. It often lingers in the mind for days after you meet him, like the tune of a spell-binding song or the throb of a distant drum heard across the fields at dusk.



YAKKADUVE THERO

He would sit cross-legged on a long, old-fashioned high-backed couch, behind a tall desk with innumerable pigeon-holes. Right throughout the night he would work and in the small hours of the morning, he would lie down on the same couch and sleep till it was time for his lunch.

If you wanted to see him the proper time would be soon after midnight when his mind was most alert and his laughter most abundant.

He turned night into day and day into night. By sleeping most of the day he avoided seeing a number of people who had very little to say and used a whole lot of words to say it. By his working at night a large number of men avoided seeing him so that, free from disturbances, he could concentrate entirely on his work.

Very rarely clean-shaven, chewing his betel-cud every moment of his waking life, Yakkaduve Sri Pragnarama Thero, has always been a monk with something so individualistic in his routine, his life, his attitudes and his ideals that you might

consider him on first impressions as an eccentric or a faddist.

So slow in movement and of speech is he that you would think him lazy. So preoccupied and far away he seems that you would think he is a bundle of absent-mindedness wrapped up in an old yellow robe.

In actuality it is rarely you come across in Ceylon a monk so nimble in mind, so sharp in intellect, so agile in activity and so overpowering in personality.

Yakkaduve Hamuduruvo is a monk in a class by himself.

There are monks in Ceylon who are erudite scholars. There are others who are well-known for their piety. Monks there are also who are great orators and preachers. Great inspirers of people have also arisen from the Sangha. Able organisers also have achieved much.

But Yakkaduwe Hamuduruvo is unique in that he combines in himself a great scholar in Sinhalese, Pali, and Sanskrit, a monk of great piety, an inspirer of innumerable followers, and an able organiser with hardly his equal among the Sangha.

When this slow man stirs, his capacity is a giant's. He works day and night and afternoon, without sleep, without rest, unceasingly, ungrudgingly until the work is done. When the slow words are spoken he stands by each syllable uttered as though it were an agreement signed on a revenue stamp. When the decision is made it matters not what odds are in the way, there will be no change in the plan of action.

The boldness of his vision, the firmness of his decisions, the limitlessness of his scholarship, the breadth of his mind and the compassion of his heart confound and confuse mere mortals by their staggering proportions.

II

The famous Vidyalankara Declaration calling upon monks to take an interest in and work for the progress of the social, economic and political conditions of the people created an uproar among politicians and priests, and gave rise to what was called by the newspapers the "Political Bhikku".

It was a declaration that was issued after great deliberation, thought and study. Before it was drafted Yakkaduwe Hamuduruvo re-read all that was relevant in the Buddhist texts and commentaries, studied carefully the history of the development of the Sangha through the ages in India, Ceylon, Burma and other countries.

He patiently heard all opponents to the idea. He considered all the dire warnings given by D. S. Senanayake and other political big bosses. Those threats included the total boycott of the Pirivena and the possible starvation of the monks.

But having made the decision, Yakkaduve Hamuduruvo was undeterred by the gigantic opposition against him. The declaration was, issued as a collective decision with the approval of all the teachers of the Pirivena. It meant a long period of hardship, deprivation and vilification.

But there was no withdrawal from the position taken, even though the Vidyalankara Sabha cut off

all connections with the Pirivena, all the powerful forces in the country did everything possible to get a recantation. It was only the poor man in the street who never forsook the institution.

It was this bold step that inspired monks later to go from house to house with the Buddhist Commission Report in order to hand over to S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike the country.

Yakkaduve Hamuduruvo himself is supremely uninterested in politics. But his awareness of what is happening in the country and of the part that monks can play with a sense of responsibility for the progress of the country made him do what he thought was right, without any fear for the future and fully prepared to face the consequences.

He survived the ordeal and won the battle. The sleepy-eyed Buddhist monk woke up from his age-old stupor and became once again a live force, taking his place with the march of the people against the anti-national leaders who had mentally become slaves to the Colonial white men under whose tutelage they had grown up.

Yakkaduve Thero had taken under his wing an energetic, idealistic monk, who was so much of a live-wire that no temple would touch him. This was Bhikku Walpola Rahula, an Honours Graduate of the London University, a Doctor of Philosophy of Peradeniya, and an able, erudite scholar of Pali, Sinhalese and Sanskrit. Bhikku Rahula can be said to be the monk who germinated the idea of the monk, as a matter of duty, working openly for a new deal for the common man. He thought it was the duty of the monk to expose wrong statecraft because the Buddhist laymen

were prisoners of their livelihood and dared not open their mouths lest they were victimised by the big politicians. He who raised his voice, by his voice fell. The monk had no domestic responsibilities and could well afford to talk aloud. With nothing to lose they were best fitted for winning many rights, denied during Colonial times, for the common man.

Today, Bhikku Rahula is studying Mahayana Buddhism at the Sorbonne University in Paris, where he has been for the past nine years. Vidyalankara Pirivena it was which gave him a habitation and a name. Yakkaduve Thero's intelligent acceptance of the thesis and courageous encouragement of the idea put heart into some 30,000 monks in Ceylon who had up till then been timid creatures confined entirely to their temples and living a life as though they were living in a foreign land untouched by passing events.

In the bold step he had taken Yakkaduve Thero also had all the backing of a circle of other equally selfless, far-seeing learned, progressive monks like Kotahena Pannakitti Thero, Siri Seevali Thero, the Venerable Buddhadatta Thero and others whose natural leader Yakkaduve Hamuduruvo is. He acted as an alarm clock to sleeping monks.

III

Yakkaduve Hamuduruvo's next great work was the organisation of a new Council to examine and perfect Buddhist Texts. It was an occasion when the highest scholars in the land got together and pooled their wisdom in the preparation and annotation of the Buddhist scriptures.

When Yakkaduve Hamuduruvo first talked about making Vidyalankara Pirivena into a University all those intellectual snobs from modern Universities could not help laughing at the very idea. But when he is fired with an idea nothing can stop him. Little by little, step by step, he moved, discussed, begged, demanded, implored and commanded in his slow, sober voice. And when the idea was accepted, it turned out that instead of our having one monastery University we had two!

In matters he is not conversant with, he calls for expert opinion, listens to it, and acts according to it.

In the inauguration, working and organisation of the Vidyalankara University, at each step, this was abundantly clear. He is ready to give responsibility to those able to handle it. Once this is given he rarely interferes.

But for the most part, Yakkaduve Hamuduruvo likes to keep himself in the background, a man behind the scenes. He is rarely seen at pompous functions in honour of dignitaries. He avoids all the ritual associated with the clergy.

For behind his tall pigeon-holed desk, sitting on his long couch-seat, he is incessantly at work on his books.

His contributions to Sinhalese scholarship is vast but I am no authority to assess his tremendous output.

Close association with him has made me realize that scholarship in any language, any branch of knowledge makes any one a man of culture. His broad outlook, his lack of prejudice, his reluctance to prejudge issues before study, his

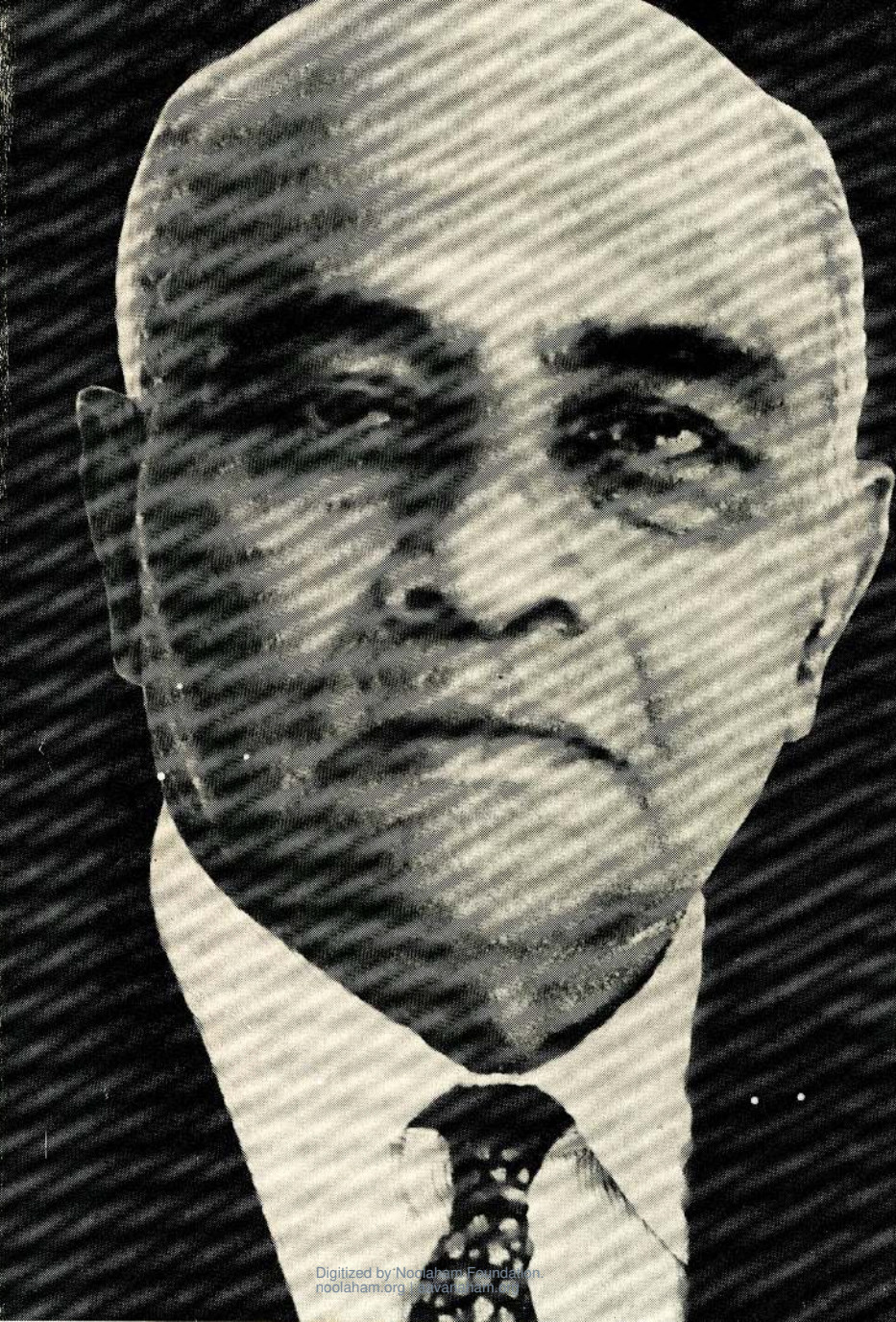
subtle sense of humour and his warm sympathies make this refined recluse who sleeps by day and works at night a delightful friend, a guru of great understanding and a leader about whom we can be proud among the Sangha.

NICHOLAS ATTYGALLE

TIME was when I could not meet him but had to come away with the gift of an excellent cigar in my pocket. Little by little, it became quite a little custom, like shaking hands, although it did me no good or him either for that matter.

Good cigars are not the only attractive weakness of Dr. Sir Nicholas Attygalle. A good game of poker, a good bit of his mind to somebody he intensely likes, some choice language of the purest English vernacular on the borderline of the army barracks are associated with this arresting and vigorous personality who has been a doctor by profession and a busybody meddling in other people's business by sheer presumption.

When Sir John Kotelawala frustrated to a point of frenzy after being passed over for Premiership, began to kick against the pricks with Dudley Senanayake, there was Sir Nicholas to give him a bit of his mind and taking in exchange a nice cup of tea in the evening to soothe the Minister's nerves to the accompaniment of the click of the camera.



The runaway horse quietened down and was tamely led back to the stable.

When that Hamlet of Ceylon politics, Dudley Senanayake, was pondering over whether to be or not to be Premier, Sir Nicholas was there at Mahiyangana with a tribute of tears to the gods to enable him to make up his mind as the flashlights worked overtime.

II

Here was a wonder Doctor clean out of the books of the East who could not only work miracles with inexperienced but expectant mothers but also with experienced but not unexceptionable politicians.

By choosing the dramatic moment he used sobs more effectively than syringes; tea more efficaciously than tinctures. His timing was so perfect that the prayer offered to the gods at the psychological second was answered before the offices of the gods closed for the day.

We would all relax our taut muscles and turn to the radio. And once more life would go on as usual while Sir Nicholas looked on with amusement chewing his high class cigars.

It was immaterial to him whether the storm in a tea cup he quelled with an overdose of the tincture of tannin or the qualms of conscience he conquered with a dramatic prayer to the gods rebounded and became bigger than storms at sea and resulted in resignations to be recorded in red. He treated the symptoms, that was all that mattered. The causes he was not concerned with. Relapses were other people's affairs.

And behold him with a Knighthood, the hollow halo of the Colonial mind, enthroned in the Senate situated so near Queen's House—yet so far, as it now turns out.

III

The race called doctors in Ceylon have turned out to be masters of many things not only of medicine. Dr. Andreas Nell, once an eye specialist, became the fountain head of all that was antiquity. Dr. Lucian de Zilva, the gynaecologist, was also the only novelist in English that we have turned out. Dr. S. P. Paul, the eminent surgeon, was a top-class planter; Dr. H. M. Fernando was more known as an agriculturist and an owner of a newspaper than as a doctor. Dr. R. L. Spittel is our supreme Voice of the Veddahs.

Attygalle too had a dual personality. There was Doctor Attygalle, the eminent gynaecologist, without whose help it was once almost a scandal for a Society lady in Colombo to have a baby. So renowned was his fame that I have known him being paid 50 guineas for smoking a cigar in the verandah while another surgeon performed an operation in the theatre.

There was also Sir Nicholas, the Senator, without whose help a politician could hardly make up his mind in a crisis or without whose knowledge top-level decisions could not be made.

He treated his women patients with a brutal bluff associated with James Mason on the screen. Not for him were the conventional bedside manners of our carbon copies of the Harley Street specialist. He did not believe in the soft impeachment. His

tongue whipped imperious spoilt women into obedient patients—for which they adored him and for ever became grateful. For, as a gynaecologist he had no equal. As a matter of fact, he respected his patients as much as they paid pooja to him.

Once I found the whole Attygalle household in an uproar and the Doctor erupting like a volcano. It appeared somebody had objected to a patient, sitting in the drawing-room instead of in the varandah.

"A Doctor's house is his workshop—not his castle", Attygalle was shouting, "My patients can sit where they please. How dare anybody drive them out of their seats !"

I have never had hot tea with Dr. Attygalle at his house. Dutifully the pot was brought at 3 in the afternoon ; but when the last patient had departed it would be 6 P.M. Not until then would he sit down to tea !

But a strong character like him would hardly be satisfied with amassing wealth and being at best a glorified midwife !

The self-same technique of brusque home-truths without mincing words he employed on stubborn statesmen who were worse than expectant mothers in moments of crisis, to make them follow his political prescriptions.

And they adored him worse than did the women.

And I don't blame either of them, either.

No one who knows him can help adoring him.

Here is a man whose bark is not only worse than his bite but who does not bite at all. Beneath the sneering snarl there is a sly smile, a soft sympathy.

IV

The Attygalles are perhaps one of the few remaining exclusive families in Ceylon. There are certain families into which an Attygalle will marry and from which they wed.

Generations of inbreeding among the families have produced what might he called the typical Attygalle nose—like the Cavendish jaw or the Hapsburg lip. There is a pride that passeth understanding in that aristocratic outlook on the edge of arrogance which seems to indicate that it did not care to whom the world belonged at the moment for it would have to come to them in the end.

And it has been a long time coming to them.

Although Sir Nicholas has laid claim to be from the lands of God Saman with the idea of making capital of what local patriotism even sundry gods might possess, the family really originates from that insignificant, intolerable and miserable village of Madapatha.

People often talk of taking a leaf from somebody else's book. But the early Attygalles look a leaf from the 'Viththipota' (Information Book) of Sri Jayawardanapura (Kotte) where their exploits at the famous battle of Mulleriyawa are recounted with mighty clashes of swords and battle axes. When the old Kings and Captains departed, the Attygalles became unruly heroes just within the law producing with an abundance Ayurvedic doctors, like Philip Attygalle, Notaries and Chieftains whose names are remembered even today.

From Madapatha one branch went to Colombo and gave the Ceylon Medical fraternity the first Sinhalese M.D., Dr. John Attygalle, who wrote the

"Ceylon Pharmacopoeia" and the Police a character who may be described as a Robinhood in reverse, whose thrilling exploits yet echo through the country : T. P. Attygalle, the first Ceylonese Inspector-General of Police.

Another branch went to Ratnapura and came under the jurisdiction of God Saman and produced a lawyer whose kindness, generosity and leadership made the name resound throughout Sabaragamuwa. This was Proctor Arnold Attygalle, the founder of Seevali Vidyalaya, who may be termed the F. R. Senanayake of the Attygalle family.

V

If King George I could have spoken English the Cabinet system of Government might have not been invented. If Cleopatra had had a snub nose, they say, the history of the Roman Empire might have been different. The "Ifs" of history can be intriguing.

If, for instance, Sir Nicholas had wished to cash in on his brother Arnold's popularity and fame, he might have, without a hitch, walked into Parliament, instead of sending his brother, Cyril, who knows—with a little difficulty and plenty of luck—to become the biggest power in Parliament.

Perhaps something like this might have crossed his mind when he woke from his paganism of religious indifference and slipped into the shoes of Sir Baron Jayatilaka, who vacated the Presidentship of the Vidyalankara Sabha at Kelaniya and went to India as an Envoy.

As President of the Vidyalankara Sabha he set his seal of approval on the famous declaration of the Vidyalankara Pirivena which proclaimed that it was the duty of a Buddhist monk to take an interest in the social, economic and political affairs of the country. It was this declaration that gave rise to what became virtually a new sect nicknamed the "Political Bhikkhu".

But Attygalle's enthusiasm for the declaration waned as the horror of D. S. Senanayake for it waxed until it became open warfare between the Society and the Pirivena.

In this struggle Attygalle lost his prestige but not his face. He was received back by the Pirivena with open arms but on its own terms.

It was during this time that he was my boss.

For my past sins, I was, for some time, a school master in charge of a school. The only compensation was that Dr. Attygalle who was the President of the Sabha that managed it had the faculty of drawing the best out of people and never interfering with them, except in increasing their salaries ! Even when he sacked me, he gave me the impression that I had resigned and offered me another good cigar !

It was at this time that the Buddhist Theosophical Society had fallen on evil days making its smell stink and the whole of Ananda College all but going up in flames.

Dr. Attygalle ascended the pedestal at the B.T.S. and with a few gruff words, the same kind that made women patients and patient politicians adore him, soon saw order was made out of chaos.

But the political path one thought he was following suddenly changed its course.

Perhaps he changed his mind. Or perhaps his mind changed him.

VI

This strong man combined with many weak men to lend them his strength and stamina in times of crisis.

Popular politics of the democratic variety is a mug's game where the sacrifices are many and thanks few.

Attygalle has always been a man who would like to eat the cake and also have it.

He chose the easier path of the back-door where the sacrifices are less and the satisfaction more.

He forgot the difference there is between the success of a Caesarean operation in surgery and the winning of a Pyrrhic victory in politics.

To his great advantage his rival for the Vice-Chanceliorship was G. P. Malalasekera who had himself never given up anything to have his cake.

So, he walked into the University, as we would go into the wilderness—but not without thoughts at the back of his mind of the Senate Chamber from which Queen's House is so near, yet so far, as it turned out.

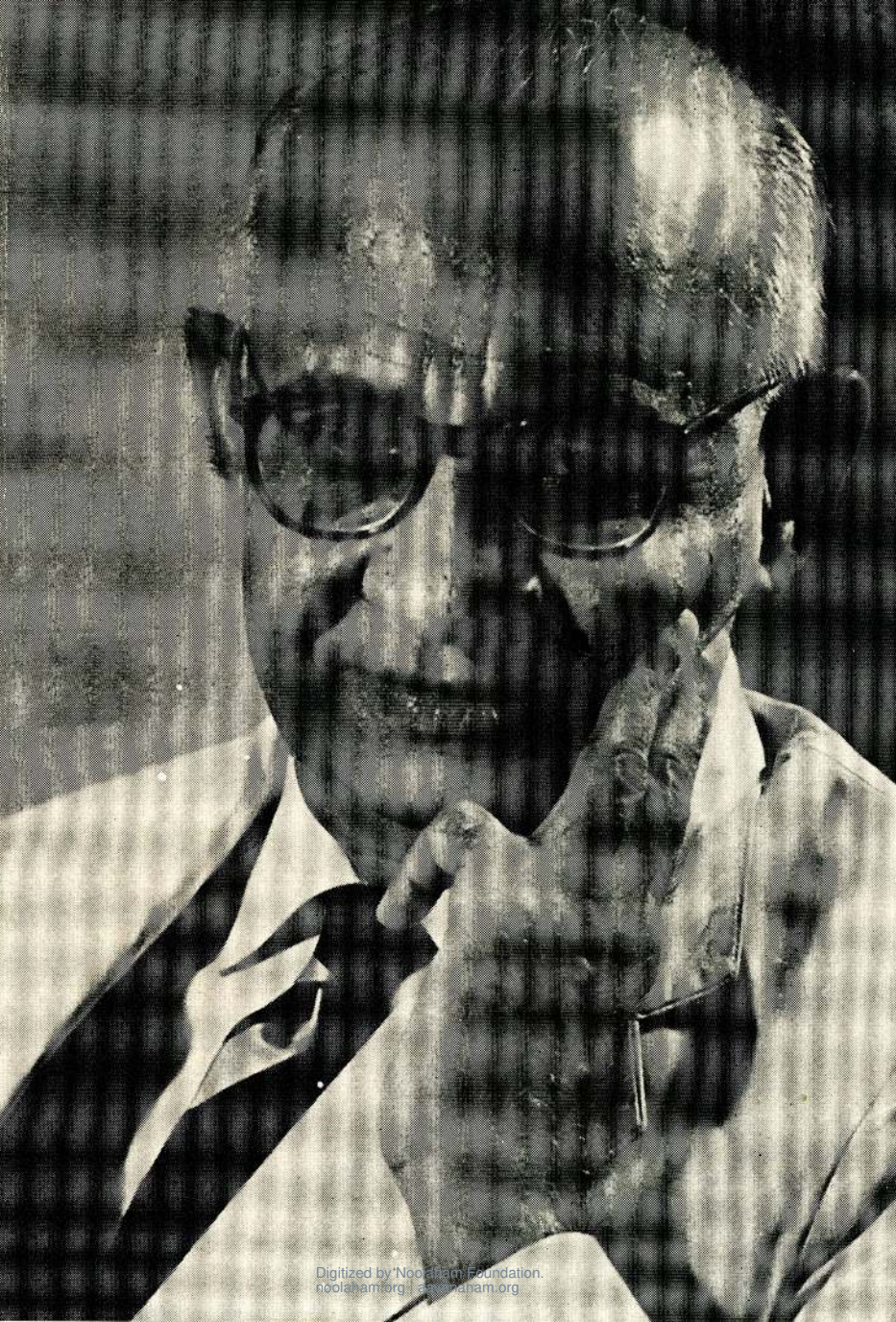
When strong men combine with weak men, the strong always take advantage of the weak ; but Attygalle should never forget that the weak always take advantage of this weakness in the strong.

HERBERT HULUGALLE

JOURNALISTS are a peculiarly interesting tribe who can put a halo round a man with a headline or fell him with a phrase. They who make others famous remain unknown themselves for the most part.

Regularly keeping irregular hours, these old hands at digging out something new are a lonely clan with a wide circle of foes to choose from.

There are two distinct types of the tribe : the Journalist and the Newspaperman. The difference between the two is subtle : almost a pen-point. The one writes up the views ; the other, the news. Journalists can afford to wear two shirts in one week; Newspapermen one shirt in two weeks. The journalist, after a good deal of mooching about which is called "training" writes those four-storeyed, fire-proof sentences that go to make up what are called "Leaders" which nobody ever reads. The newspaperman, raw from school, writes, with one eye on the clock, plain, simple S.S.C. sentences which are devoured by the public as hot news stories.



Mr. Herbert A. J. Hulugalle has been both. When the "Ceylon Daily News" printing office was at Maradana, every morning he used to draw ten cents for tram fare from the office and travel to Fort in search of news. He grew up with the "Daily News". When the mighty Editor, S. J. K. Crowther, at the height of his fame threw down the gaunlet in a letter of resignation, to the amazement of all, the nervous young man was placed on the Editorial throne at the "Daily News".

He was a remarkable kind of Editor. He reigned ; he never ruled. The change from Crowther to Hulugalle was the difference between buckram and brocade.

Hulugalle seemed unaware that he had any weight to throw about. "Side" was something one could not associate with him.

There are some people to whom a joke is a serious thing. To Editor Hulugalle a serious thing was a joke. Raillery, good-humoured laughter and alluring banter comprised the technique of his rule over the staff. He could talk lightly of serious things.

His knowledge about men and things was something amazing. And his intimacy with every branch connected with journalism at Lake House made him almost a wonder.

As a writer, he refrained from making up brilliant phrases or saying anything original. But whatever he wrote was clear, chaste and elegant. It was good English, direct, precise with no straining after effect. Above all, it was eminently readable.

Hulugalle was free from that terrible jargon called "journalese" which enabled a "Leader" writer to express the minimum amount of idea in the maximum number of words.

He gave an order to his staff as though he were asking for a favour. He made the new-comer learn his work without giving him the impression that he was being taught. And before you knew where you were he made you feel that you knew about the job he taught you more than he himself !

II

There was a time when I used to write an occasional article to the "Daily News" from New Delhi where I was attached to the "Statesman" office. Evidently these articles had impressed Hulugalle. One day to my utter amazement I received a letter in his beautiful hand-writing: "I wonder if you are thinking of returning to Ceylon shortly. There is a place here which may suit you and which offers good prospects. Perhaps you prefer the freer life you have been used to. But if you have my intention of settling down in Ceylon, please let me know".

When I wrote back asking him what he had in mind for me he replied that D. R. Wijewardane wished me to come to Colombo at his expense for an interview. I came to Ceylon for a week and met Hulugalle and the "Boss" who decided to have me and I decided to stay back.

I found Hulugalle like something very intricate and difficult to understand, told in simple, easy language so that everybody could follow, like a book by Lancelot Hogben or Hendrik Van Loon. In

addition the elegant, engaging flippancy, he had in him a highly developed sense of humour that could be sometimes devastating.

I remember once Hulugalle discussing the "Observer" with its Editor, H. D. Jansz.

"Why don't you put in more news and pictures in it ?" asked Hulugalle.

"Don't forget that the 'Observer' is a five-cent paper", replied Jansz.

"Nobody who reads the 'Observer' is ever likely to forget that !" replied Hulugalle.

One never knew whether Hulugalle was pulling your leg or being serious. It was often a little of both. He would come out with some fantastic story and quote you as the authority in your own presence while you stand there bewildered and grinning !

At the same time he worked hard and made others work hard giving everybody the impression that hard work was the easiest thing in the world.

III

To Hulugalle, Wijewardane on the spot loomed larger than God who was, after all, comparatively far away in his heaven. And all of us at Lake House instinctively cultivated this feeling of awe at the mention of the name.

Although there is an impression that Wijewardane was a ruthless kind of slave-driver I must admit very few men have treated me so fairly and so well as he. Now and then he would take me to his beautiful house, "Arcadia" at Diyatalawa, for a week-end when he wished to show, I suppose, that he appreciated the work that was being done.

It was there that I cultivated a taste for "Polkiri Kenda", the traditional rice gruel with coconut milk, that was taken with burnt mustard powder in the morning by Wijewardane. For the most part we would meet just before meal time for a drink and a chat. For the rest we would be left entirely to ourselves without the host making a nuisance of himself. Although being on one's best behaviour was a bit of an ordeal, Wijewardane was such a thoughtful host he never made one feel ill at ease.

Sometimes Wijewardane would call me to his office, give me a bundle of currency notes, (about Rs. 500/-) and ask me to take round the Island some foreign friend of his in a car that was provided. And for a couple of days I would feel as if I were the Aga Khan dispensing lavish hospitality in the guise of a tourist guide.

I suspected Hulugalle behind all these many kindnesses but he would never own them up. He liked us to feel that the "Boss" was taking a personal interest in us.

Hulugalle himself would sometimes collect a number of us and take us for an outing on a Saturday.

I remember an interview both of us had with Rabindranath Tagore when he was the guest of Wijewardane at "Sri Ramya" now occupied by the American Embassy. Both of us listened to Tagore for two hours only now and then putting a timid question to him. We came away without taking down a single note. He wrote down from memory half the interview and I wrote the other half in the first person singular in Tagore's own words. We sent the proof to Tagore for approval

keeping our fingers crossed. It came back with only one word altered—"catastrophe" changed to "cataclysm"—just in time to be rushed to the front page to be published as "The Island of Lotus-Eaters."

Evidently Tagore was highly pleased with our reproducing his poetic prose by an esoteric system of mental shorthand and had spoken to Wijewardane about it. He sent for me and complimented me on the interview. Hulugalle had fathered the whole thing on me, not even mentioning that half the work was done by him and even the other half corrected and edited by him. I came away non-plussed and in a haze of bewilderment.

Wijewardane always insisted that all news should be treated on its merits. Impartial presentation of news, without any wilful suppression or over-enthusiastic featuring, made up the reputation of the paper and built up prestige. This was not only good journalism but also good business.

Not that Wijewardane did not have his own prejudices. He was human like most of us. At one time A. E. Goonesinha's name was not to appear in the paper. Another time it was J. L. Kotelawala or P. de S. Kularatne. But his greatest abhorrence was for S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike who looked down on the Wijewardanes as the new rich social climbers in Society.

Hulugalle was his Master's Voice in all these matters of passing on prejudices and pet aversions, When Bandaranaike became Prime Minister, Hulugalle wrote to me from the Ceylon Legation in Rome where he was Minister as follows : "A little

while ago I was reading your article in the 'Sunday Times' on S. W. R. D. at Oxford. I also read with admiration your excellent biographical article published a couple of weeks ago. Although I was myself an early offender, I am bound to agree with you that no public man has been treated more harshly and wickedly by the Ceylon Press than he has been. History—or is it Nemesis ?—has caught up with his traducers."

IV

In his recent book "The Life and Times of D. R. Wijewardane", Hulugalle refers to his severing connections with Lake House in about two sentences. While dealing with life at Lake House, in passing, he says: "Jayantha Pathmanabha cam to the Daily News from Oxford and his work helped to raise the quality of writing in the paper ..... He succeeded me as Editor of the paper."

In another paragraph he says : "Important changes took place two years before Wijewardane's death with his delegating responsibility for the management of the business to L. M. D. de Silva, Q.C., and his two sons-in-law, Esmond Wickremasinghe and George Gomes, who are the present Managing Directors."

But here is one of the most tragic episodes of journalism in Ceylon set down in the briefest of understatements possible.

The reluctance to assert himself on the part of Hulugalle was a useful quality as long as the old "Boss" at Lake House ruled supreme. But when he began handing over control to younger men, Hulugalle having grown up under the shadow of

an over-powering personality, found some inferiority complex gnawing inside him. And just at the time that this man with all his years of experience at the job and thorough knowledge of the working of every wheel in the machine might have automatically assumed control over Lake House, he found himself surrounded by strangers who knew him not and who knew journalism less still.

Thus he faded out of journalism—a lovable figure.

SOLIYAS MENDIS

A LONG flight of steps, like logical arguments to a great principle, leads to the Kelaniya Temple from the red road below. A dagoba, shaped like a thought of devotion in the mind of a pilgrim, dominates the precincts above.

One Sunday morning in late January 1937, as I watched the devotees ascending the steps to the great shrine, I thought of the symbolic grandeur of the easy climb from the world of men to a region far removed from them.

By my side a large tusker stood whisking flies from its spacious territories. The Kandyan pillars of the new entrance to the Vihare took the morning light and shaded it in regular vertical columns down their octagonal selves. A pathway decorated with gentle greenery crept up to the many-pillared entrance.

About me stirred men and women—waiting . . . . watching. There was a hushed air of expectancy studded with whispers.

The new section of the Vihare had been got ready in flurried haste. The last touches were given to the bare new walls of the inner chamber.

It was the wish of the donor of the modern section of the Shrine, Mrs. Helena Wijewardane, to see it dedicated at an early date.

And this was the great day when, after ten years of careful planning and building, the extensions were to be handed over to the Sangha at a simple ceremony of consecration.

Yet the excitement prevailing was of the mildest. The moment awaited was a ceremony of dedication and not a mighty demonstration.

No announcement of the function had been made. For, although the architects had finished their task, the artists had only begun theirs—to complete the decorative work according to design.

Passing through the Old Hall of the Vihare with its mediaeval frescoes, one stepped into the new Inner Shrine—the Hall of Perfumes. It was a square room chaste in its simplicity, striking in its lack of over ornamentation. Sinhalese designs ran here and there on the pillars. The door was Kandyan in design. The ceiling was high and sky-like in appearance.

Garlands of flowers curtained off this Inner Chamber from the dominating recess within. In this was placed the new sitting figure of the Buddha, gilt gold, with a superbly decorated halo behind the well-cut head.

As the auspicious hour approached the Inner Hall of Perfumes was filled with an assembly of

Bhikkus—representatives of all the Nikayas, their yellow robes adding a gorgeous touch of rich colour to the scene.

A large lotus cut in stone embedded in the centre of the floor drew attention by its quiet serenity.

A sound of drums.

The donor was wheeled into the hall in an invalid's chair. She made a beautiful picture of piety, her aged face aglow with a new happiness—her grown up sons and daughters around her—and grand children looking on with mystified wonder.

On behalf of the donor, one of the sons asked permission from the Sangha to make an offering of the new section of the Shrine to the Buddha.

This was granted.

To symbolise the idea the donor handed a silver tray heaped with flowers to the Chief Representative of the Sangha. He received it and placed it on the altar of the new statue of the Buddha.

The sound of the conch-shell vibrated within the dome of the Hall of Perfumes.

Out of a unique Dakshina Shanka chank with its convolutions to the right and not otherwise as usual, water was poured by the donor on to the granite lotus in the centre, the while repeating thrice the stanza : *Iman Viharan Buddhassa pujemi.* (I offer this Vihare to the Buddha).

Immediately afterwards, there was the sound of drums and blasts of the conch-shell. The actual dedication was over.

II

In the little assembly confined mostly to members of the Wijewardane family and the Dayaka

Sabha there was one man to whom nobody paid any attention. He paid attention to everybody by observing and making mental notes of this scene of consecration. For he had to paint it on the bare walls of the new section of the shrine which had been gifted to the Sasana.

He had already finished the sculpture work round the new Shrine, having created three friezes of dwarfs, sacred geese and elephants, without repeating once any one pose and having endowed the outer walls with nine abodes of the gods above the friezes.

Now, the bare walls alone had to be painted. And he was all set for the task.

III

If genius means untutored, natural, instinctive but extraordinary talent, imaginative or inventive, modern Ceylon has produced at least one real genius.

He is Walimuni Soliyas Mendis, the man who painted the frescoes in the new wing of the Kelaniya Raja Maha Vihare.

Born a peasant, bred a peasant, Mendis never had any professional technical training of any sort. He was the son of a village Ayurvedic physician. But Ayurveda proved a bitter pill to him that he refused to swallow. He preferred to do quick drawings for the delight and amusement for his friends studying in the Pirivena where he had his higher studies.

Later, he was interested in painting frescoes on temple walls in his area round about Negombo.

Paint seemed to be mixed in his blood. The frescoes just flowed from his brush according to the traditions.

The late Mr. D. C. Wijewardane who was in charge of the execution of work in the new section of the Kelaniya Temple went in search of this remarkable man to his home. He found him not only a good painter but also a great student of history.

Wijewardane sent Soliyas Mendis on a study tour to Ajanta, Ellora and Bagh caves to see for himself what the old Buddhist artists had painted. He came back inspired and fired by the Masterpieces in these Buddhist caves. But he had made no notes, copied no pictures, taken no photographs.

Out of these masterpieces of the past in India, out of the extant ancient frescoes in Ceylon, out of his own imagination and out of the historical traditions of the Sinhalese, Soliyas Mendis re-created in modern Ceylon something of his own on the walls of Kelaniya for nearly twenty years.

These pictures painted at Kelaniya may be considered the best work done in Ceylon since the Polonnaruwa period, if not Sigiriya.

IV

The Kelaniya frescoes are a throw back in easy but masterful handling of mass compositions of the original Ajanta Art, while keeping to the regular rectangular panels of Kandyan Art, in the picturisation of incidents in a story. The line work has the same robustness and rhythm while delineation of character by a sureness of modelling has been

achieved to an amazing degree equalling in craftsmanship the Sigiriya frescoes or the Bodhisatva discovered among the Polonnaruwa frescoes.

In fitting the incidents of stories into the wall spaces with imagination it is difficult to say whether Soliyas Mendis has not benefited from the work of the Bengal school of painting. The two panels showing the arrival of Sanghamitta and the bringing of the Tooth Relic to Ceylon, for all we know, might well have been painted by the brush of Nandalal Bose or Sarada Ukil.

One new feature has been introduced to the traditions of temple painting by Soliyas Mendis at Kelaniya. Almost all our murals of the past had been confined either to events associated with the Buddha or Jataka stories. But here at Kelaniya we get a series of panels dealing with history, investing dry dates of the past with something rich and strange. The scholar in the Soliyas Mendis has done a good deal of research for the painting of the costumes, furniture and general background that appear authentic, derived as they are from Ajanta and old Sinhalese sculpture.

Ananda Coomaraswamy at one time thought the Sigiriya frescoes were the examples of an isolated school of painters who disappeared soon after their achievement leaving no trace behind. But later discoveries at Polonnaruwa, Mihintale and Mahiyangana and the earlier finds at Hindagala, Dimbulagala and Anuradhapura have shown evidence that the Sigiriya style had had a continuity until the fourteenth century.

Soliyas Mendis has brought the Ajanta style from Sigiriya to modern times, linking the past with the present.

V

When Mendis had finished all but the last fresco in the Kelaniya Temple, for some mysterious reason, he was requested not to proceed with the work. The last fresco was to be the biggest, the best, as the background to the new seated Buddha of granite in the innermost shrine room, the Hall of Perfumes. A white wandering artist of a very mediocre type was brought in to paint this last bit of bare wall. How out of place, out of tune with the rest of the paintings, this last bit of work is apparent to anybody who visits the Kelaniya Temple.

Showing the Himalayas with a wealth of an alien kind of blue and white the picture is a cultural hammer blow to good taste and appropriateness of things.

This barbaric treatment of a man who had dedicated his life to a mission of art at what may be considered not very attractive rates left a very bad taste in the mouth.

Mendis, in unexpressed disgust, gave up for ever painting and retired to his village to live once again the life of a farmer. He had bought a small coconut estate out of the money he had been paid for his work. Here he built a house and gifted both estate and house as an orphanage to the nation.

A simple peasant, Mendis is. But he is the only genius we have produced who could not only create something new of his own but who could also give away in a spirit of self-sacrifice all that he had made in the attempt.

NITTAVELA GUNAYA

H. R. PREMARATNE had converted an enormous, ugly aeroplane hangar left behind by the R. A. F. at Torrington Square, into a veritable Place of Pageantry. Kandyan "Reli Paalams" by the hundred, each the size of a bridge turned into a solid rainbow, spanned overhead turning the ceiling into the finest riot of colours this Island had ever seen on a single occasion. Sinhalese designs, writ large, blazoned from all the pillars, themselves richly decked. It seemed the palace was some kind of new Oriental Valhalla transported into Ceylon by a new electroplated Vishva Karma working with all his hands.

At one end of the gigantic Hall there was built the largest rostrum ever seen in the Island in three different elevations and provided with a background curtain, the size of Galle Face Green, hanging in innumerable folds that played delightfully with the myriad lights.

The previous evening here had been enacted the great scene when the Duke of Gloucester had

handed over to the Ceylon politicians the fate of our own country at a formal ceremony at which weighty speeches had been made to resound throughout the country.

II

The evening after, once again the Hall was full in a continuation of the celebrations.

One item of this Pageant has kept recurring in my mind at odd moments now and then throughout the years.

A lone Kandyan dancer clad in the usual costume that changes a normal peasant into a glorious, resplendent prince came on the vast open stage and strutted across it in such a majesty of step and poise and dignity that a hush fell on the assembly.

Then slowly the dance began to the rhythm of a lone drum echoing through the vastness. The dancer as slowly assumed the gait of a somewhat showy horse. He displayed his flanks, strutted and pranced, showing the creature's noble proportions; head light and moving in majestic rhythm as he confined himself to the top-most part of the three tiered stage. Then, we became aware, as the dancer proceeded, that the horse had turned to be the rider, proud of his seat on the stallion, controlling the beast and urging it on as and when he pleased completely enchanted with the joy of movement and the power he had over his beast.

By turn many times we saw the Dancer becoming the Horse and the Rider as it took his fancy without our being aware at what exact moment one became the other.

It was as though we were seeing a Centaur of the fabulous age in flesh and blood dancing before us as a split personality of a dancer.

And when the dance had run to its climax there was a sudden pause. In a split second the Centaur Dancer leaped from the top to the lower stage. It was a dramatic moment.

Then the dance continued for a few more minutes and it was all over.

It was Kala Guru Nittavela Gunaya Yakdessa dancing the Thuranga (Horse) Vannama.

It was a stage fit for a dancer of his calibre ; an occasion fit for such a dance.

III

Gunaya is perhaps one of the greatest dancers in the East and certainly the greatest in Ceylon. He has only to take a few steps when the drums begin to throb to know that there is a man born to dance.

Since that day of the Advent of Independence Gunaya has danced right round the world, in Europe, America, Russia, India, China, Japan. And wherever he went people of good taste, men of culture and experts in dancing have all considered and treated him as a Master of the dance.

To Ceylon have come discerning pilgrims of culture especially to see him dancing, having heard of his fame spread from mouth to mouth among dancing circles of the world. Students from abroad have come to study Kandyan dance forms as expounded by him.

Uday Shanker, Ram Gopal, Shanta Rao, Gopinath, Shirin Vasifdar, Menaka, Ragini Devi, Kay

Ambrose, Beryl de Zoete, Fred Fogl, G. Venkatachalam, all these experts in the dance have paid pooja to Gunaya as a dancer of the very top-class with an exquisite technique of effortless ease.

IV

Long years ago Shanta Rao, the famous Indian dancer, arrived in Ceylon in search of Kandyan dancing and Gunaya after having mastered most of the dance forms in India. I invited Gunaya to my home in Colombo and here he taught her his art for a month for about six hours a day. Of course, at the end of the period the whole of the cement floor where they had practised had to be re-done.

But I realized what a great teacher Gunaya was as I watched him teaching the vigorous technique and the intricate, quick footwork.

This was certainly not by any stretch of imagination folk dancing but a most laboriously learned professional dancing of a high order. Shanta Rao was too much of a good dancer to pretend that she had learnt anything more than a smattering of the mere style during her one month of training. But Gunaya was exceedingly proud of his pupil and made her feel that she was a genius.

On an earlier occasion when Chandralekha, the wife of Mr. J. D. A. Perera, wished to study Kandyan dancing, we went up to Katugastota where about twenty dancers had been brought for a display of their art. Among these twenty Gunaya showed up like the moon among the stars. That was my first acquaintance with Gunaya. That

was how Gunaya came down to Colombo to teach Chandralekha dancing for about six months.

During that time and later, off and on, I have come into close contact with Gunaya and have learnt to have great respect for this master of the Kandyan Dance. He may not be unconscious of his own greatness but that does not seem to make any difference to him. The years have made no difference to him either except for cutting off his long hair during his trips to Europe, under compulsion. A weakness for gold-plated teeth seems to be the only rhetoric that he allows himself in his emergence from an unknown Kandyan peasant to the greatest dancer of modern Ceylon.

V

No film star, no politician has been photographed as often as Gunaya dressed in his regalia of Ves. His pictures have appeared in all parts of the world in technical dance magazines and popular weeklies.

His is a technique that is virile, inspiring, incomparable and unparalleled. Dancing is his life. When he dances, every muscle in his body dances, as in the case of Uday Shanker.

Although the dance is traditional, the greatness of Gunaya lies in the fact that he gives it the stamp of his own style, impresses it with his own personality and originality.

He is the only dancer who introduced into Kandyan dancing two new Vannams composed by himself and based entirely on traditional steps and movements—the Samanala and Sri Maha Bodhi Vannama.

To see what finding fulfilment means you should meet Gunaya after he has enjoyed himself dancing to his heart's content. It is the picture of a man who has found happiness and contentment.

Gunaya is perhaps the only great dancer I know who is not temperamental. He is always calm, collected and under control even at moments of great stress. Seeing him thus is a lesson for us all to learn.

He may be exploited. He may be treated not as a great master but as a mean servant as often he is. But to Gunaya these things do not matter. Perhaps in his own mind he may be having an utter contempt for the uncultured snob who has no proper sense of values. But even this he does not show. He is above pettiness.

To look at him, he is a simple, humble typical, well-built peasant from the hills as he arrives carrying with him a small package. In half an hour, dressed in his gorgeous costume as he comes to dance you wonder how a puny creature has been transformed into something out of this world. And as he dances you are transformed into somebody out of this world yourself, another being full of fascination and ecstasy engrossed and entranced by quick, majestic but extremely rhythmical movement of which you seem to become a part.

It is only after the dance is over you come back to earth with almost a sigh and light a cigarette as he himself, by removing his gorgeous costume, recovers his own self.

You become once again your dull self. He returns to the role of simple Gunaya.

VICTOR DHANAPALA

SOME time ago the film critic of the London "Sunday Express" devoted a whole column to "a business man from Ceylon with a face like an amiable Eastern god."

I wish Ceylon newspapers had taken the tiniest bit of notice of him when he was in the Island even if they did not feel like being that much generous.

Our newspapers are notorious for their lop-sided sense of values. A wedding which is planned for over a year with all the calculating care usually spent on a conspiracy is often disposed of in a few callous lines. But columns would be given to the vague vapours of a glamour boy politician who speaks on the spur of the moment and flies off at a tangent.

A few years ago there appeared in the Ceylon newspapers a laconic paragraph which said :

"Back in Ceylon : Mr. Victor Dhanapala, who has been engaged in business and is well known in art and theatrical circles in London, returned to Colombo yesterday after 20 years in London."

Behind this brief announcement of Charles Victor Dhanapala's arrival was a story that should draw children from play and old men from cross-word puzzles.

II

About twenty-five years ago a Ceylon youth with a little more spunk than the usual and less education than the average set sail for England *via* Burma. He was half Burmese and half Sinhalese. An accommodating Burmese aunt is said to have given the youth a considerable fortune. Whether this was ready cash or a priceless gem one cannot be sure. But I choose the fabulous gem as in keeping with this story.

For a few years nothing was heard of the young man. Then brief articles began to appear in the more popular weekly English magazines signed by "C. V. Dhanapala, the famous Cingalese novelist".

After about ten years, strange tales of a "Community" in the heart of London headed by a Sinhalese reached Ceylon. These stories had the aroma of Sabarmati and the Arabindo Ashram at Pondicherry, but with a difference. This was a streamlined, air-age version of an Oriental ashrama. It had all the shine that comes of expensive polish and all the grandeur that comes of fat bank balances.

To Ceylonese who went to England the West End flat of Dhanapala became one of the sights of London. They all came back mystified, bemused and highly impressed.

He became the friend of most Ceylonese visitors and holiday makers and the show piece of his

friends. There was nothing that Dhanapala did not know about London ; nothing he could not procure ; nothing he could not get done.

In his luxurious London flat Victor Dhanapala would hold court, against a background of the best of things and the best of people. He carried with him the complexes of a connoisseur, the mystery of a mystic and the manner of a millionaire. He used to entertain people from Ceylon with the grace of a Mandarin and the style of a Sahara Sheik.

As the guest arrived and pressed the bell, soft Eastern music would be heard in the hall, and as he crossed the threshold the dim lighting would brighten up and mysterious hangings would part, automatically. While the mystified guest stood wondering what would happen next, a tall, beautiful girl with a broad smile would welcome him as if he were a long-lost friend.

This was merely the prelude to the entrance of the Master himself, clad in the latest and the best Bond Street clothes, the very glass of fashion. With a gesture and a jest he would put the guest at his ease.

The meal itself was superbly stage-managed with effective showmanship. Fruits out of season, vegetables strange to England and wines of rich vintage that could not be bought in the shops would be served. There was nothing that Victor did not know about food or anything else for that matter. The meal it would transpire, was worked out by Dhanapala himself and prepared under his own direction and invariably would be something clean out of the Arabian Nights served by a beauty

parade of fair women from many nations and eaten off a gigantic mirror table.

After the dinner would come the talk. Great English names would be casually flung across the carpet indicating familiarity associated with family friends. There would be flashes of wit as names of famous business magnates or literary giants were turned over on the tongue and tossed aside in a stream of contemptuous raillery.

In the midst of all this monologue, faster than shorthand, the telephone would be brought to Victor on a trolley by a damsel announcing that Bernard Shaw or J. B. Priestley or Clement Attlee was on the line. With a gesture of impatience the Master would have communion with the ringing curse of modern civilisation and turn with an excuse to his audience.

Then would come the readings from the plays, the essays, the scenarios or the poems that Victor himself had written (but never published), as the guest sipped coffee or strange liqueurs, and the vision of fair women listened with rapt attention, some sprawling on the carpet at the feet of the Master, some sunk deep in eiderdown divans.

Once Victor talked to a new found friend one whole night and half the next day until the victim began to snore in his chair !

As the small hours of the following morning approached, the bewildered guest would be taken in a high powered car and dropped at his hotel by a fair owner-driver of the Community.

The following morning the guest would wonder whether it was all a dream or a drama he had seen or a real dinner he had had the night before !

For each meal was drawn and planned and directed by a great showman with all the stage craft of make-believe to give the rich food served a strange flavour and calculated to give the guest enough zest to enjoy an adventure.

But those who have tested the veracity of Dhanapala's vague allusions to celebrities have invariably found nothing false in his claims.

Oliver Goonetilleke, John Kotelawala, C. H. Z. Fernando, A. E. Goonesinha, G. G. Ponnambalam, H. A. J. Hulugalle, Justin Kotelawala, J. D. A. Perera, F. B. de Mel, N. U. Jayawardane—all these and others—will tell you of the unique adventure of being entertained by Dhanapala in his London flat.

III

How he got his enormous income to entertain so lavishly, to go to the best places, to know the best people, nobody seemed to know. For he was a glamour boy of the Eastern World in London with no particular job of work to do.

Some said that judicious investment of his Burmese aunt's fortune allowed him to be the Lucky Man of Leisure that he was ; others said that he dabbled in high finance and plain thinking.

But to the " Community ", peopled by wealthy heiresses, famous actresses and high brow damsels with alluring looks, Victor Dhanapala was a combination of Jiddu Krishnamurthi, Arabindo Ghose and Meher Baaba all rolled into one.

These women came from the best families. They had not only good money but also good looks. They had not only good looks but also good brains.

Perhaps the most famous of these serving angels around Victor was the famous actress Elizabeth Sellars, a top-notch star on the London stage and screen. He groomed her to stardom and seems today anxious about her future. Another was Betty Frames, co-owner of Frames Tours with an interest in Thomas Cook and Sons.

There was also the daughter of Rayne the fashionable Shoe King of London who later left the community and joined the Ramakrishna mission. A niece of Sir Cedric Hardwicke, Jeanne Hardwicke, also came under this Sinhalese Victorian spell.

The most intellectual and talented of them all was Kamila Tyabji whose academic distinctions included a Master of Arts degree, a Bachelor of Civil Law degree and Bachelor of Literature of the Oxford University. She created legal history by being the first woman to appear before the highest court of appeal in the Commonwealth, the Privy Council, and by being congratulated by Sir Herbert Cunliffe who appeared opposite her on that occasion. Her range of interests was as multi-coloured as her sarees and included cooking, cricket and languages. Her grandfather, Badrudin Tyabji, was the first Muslim Barrister for the whole of India and the first Muslim to be made a High Court Judge and wrote the present standard work on Muhammedan law and is considered the greatest authority on Muslim Law in the world. One of her cousins was a Governor of Assam, and an uncle was one of the Chief Justices of Pakistan.

Victor Dhanapala, as he led this lotus-eating existence surrounded by wealth, beauty and talent,

seemed to have stepped clean out of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam via Mariyakadde into the West End of London and the lap of luxury.

IV

After twenty years in London when Victor Dhanapala became long past forty and a little fat like everybody else, he thought of returning home.

But before he decided to return to the wilderness of Ceylon he had to make sure that we were worth his while. If we were very good and were sophisticated enough to appreciate his greatness, he was prepared to do something for us in his charity.

So he set out with his secretary, Miss Bridget Burke, the beautiful niece of the Earl of Mayo, and arrived in Colombo on an adventure of exploration in the wildest Ceylon.

It was on that first visit in 1948 that I met Victor for the first time at the Sundae Tea Rooms.

I was introduced as " one Dhanapala to another Dhanapala " by H. A. J. Hulugalle.

" The Dhanapala to the only other Dhanapala!" I retorted. And we both laughed.

He talked to me for nearly an hour by the tea room clock. There was such an intensity in his tone of voice that many bearded ideas that fell from his lips he evidently considered absolutely new. His enthusiasm for nothing in particular seemed so dynamic that the repetition of the alphabet from his lips would have seemed like a new invention to a devotee.

But alas ! For my part, try as I might, I simply could not be enthralled by the monologue of this fabulous figure stepping out of Omar Khayyam and sipping tea in a Chatham Street restaurant.

His clothes were distinctly cut in Bond Street. But his accent was definitely Maradana. His ideas were conceived on a gigantic manner but his verbalism smoke-screened his vision.

He told me that if he decided to return to Ceylon with his " Community " he would do something colossal in Ceylon.

He invited me to London and his flat of which I had heard so much. " I don't know," I said hesitatingly, " whether there is enough room in London for two Dhanapalas !"

V

Victor bought a country house at Diyatalawa and returned to Ceylon in November, 1949, with the " Community " and a few odd things packed in 264 large crates.

A brace of Ministers of State, a sprinkling of Permanent Secretaries, half a dozen or so Heads of Departments and a score of other top-notch citizens met the Master and his Lady Disciples on board and conducted them ashore with all the importance attached to a whole diplomatic corps.

Thus did the former school-boy author of a Sinhalese novel, Charles Victor ("Sonny") de Zilva, son of the late Mr. Marshal de Zilva, the Maradana photographer, and nephew of the late Dr. K. H. T. de Zilva of Kurunegala return home to the land of his forefathers.

The return of the Native, though for some reason blacked out by the Press, became the talk of the town.

" Mountain Rest," the retreat of the " Community " at Diyatalawa, became the mystery place

No. 1 in Ceylon and its fame went soon echoing through the halls of select circles in Cinnamon Gardens.

Dreams were poured into concrete in the fashioning of a Venetian Garden, a Chinese Garden, a Sinhalese Garden, a Japanese Garden and a Moghul Garden in the three-acre precincts of the picturesque Diyatalawa home. Right in the heart of the house he had a well dug out !

There Victor lived over again his fabulous London life, surrounded by talented beauties and rich damsels and meeting the top people in Ceylon in an El Dorado which was almost next door to Shangri-la.

VI

Name me any former Cabinet Minister who was not a friend of Victor and I tell you he has no political hunch.

Name me the big businessman who has not sipped his green drink at Diyatalawa and I tell you he has no bank balance. Name me the big journalist who has not been shown round the diverse gardens and I tell you he cannot write. Name me the well-known artist or author who has not seen his textile designs and heard him read a short story and I tell you he is not genuine. Name me the connoisseur of food or wine who has not had dinner prepared by him and I tell you he has no palate.

Victor Dhanapala not only knew the first four hundred but called them all by their first names.

He would casually refer to his various factories in London, Paris, to his villas in the Riviera in his conversation. That was the real Victor-ian-touch.

He would spend Rs. 200 sometimes a day on long-distance telephone calls to London, Paris, Rome or Delhi. It was just routine ringing to him. While travelling in Colombo he would stretch out his hand towards large expanses of Maradana or Kollupitiya and impressively inquire how little the selling price of the plot would be. His light green station wagon full of devoted beauties doing their round of marketing became a familiar sight at Diyatalawa and Bandarawela.

They were also available by the eyeful at Colombo's fashionable parties where they would often punctuate Victor's talk with appreciative smiles.

The fabulous life that Victor led in actuality surprised his former schoolmates at Ananda like D. N. W. de Silva and classmates at Wesley like Dr. E. W. Adikaram. Balaam could not have been more surprised when his ass broke out into a speech !

But for the most part the return of the Native was a downright flop except for a brief moment when the German Radio announced that he was the Industrial Adviser to the former Premier Sir John Kotelawala, he lived in a black-out.

VII

Although there is something alluring in mystery we somehow become suspicious of a mystery that continues to baffle us. And nobody could find out what kind of magic "sesame" was the secret of Victor's Ali Baba existence.

The Press boycotted him. The politicians did not take him seriously. The businessmen found Victor not their business.

But they all ate the food he prepared with such consummate skill and drank the drinks he mixed with such great relish and said he was a great fellow. He was their "very good friend"; nobody was his !

Month after month swept over " Mountain Rest " without Victor's dreams of doing something colossal, stupendous, in plays, in business, in the cinema, in journalism, with the help of his bevy of talented women, ever becoming a fact.

At long last, he heaved a sigh, felt sorry for those around him who knew not his greatness. Abandoning his beautiful El Dorado in Diyatalawa Victor went back to London with his Girls Friday whose devotion alone he carried back with him whole to London.

And a tiny little paragraph once again appeared in the Ceylon Press announcing the departure of Victor Dhanapala from Ceylon.

And that was that.

ARUNACHALAM MAHADEVA

CURIOUSLY enough, a great politician and a little ill-breeding somehow seem to go well together.

In politics a certain amount of brutish blatancy, a vestige of vulgarity of voice is necessary to cut a figure on the rostrum or be heard above the din from the gallery.

Sir Arunachalam Mahadeva, though born a baby like all of us, grew up to be a well-bred gentleman that he all but missed being a great politician.

It was not so much his fault as his family's. Three generations of exceedingly good breeding were bound to produce a tragedy in a turban.

When the founders of most of the big families that dominate politics today were no better than glorified cattle-lifters, the stock from which Mahadeva comes was studying life and talking philosophy in the best universities of Britain and hob-nobbing with the highest in the land.

Not one other family in Ceylon can equal his in eminence, match it in brilliance or approach it in the wealth of personalities.

II

Not satisfied with having conceived two of the greatest political sages at whose feet Western poets and Eastern pundits sat during the Colonial regime, it produced without effort, like an all-too-fertile mother, that greatest Ceylonese of modern times, Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy.

This long legacy of background, good breeding and gracious living made Mahadeva what he is : the greatest Dravidian gentleman of his day.

His corners have been so rounded that there is no angularity left : his personality has been so polished that there is no trace of eccentricity in emotion, thought or action.

As smooth regular features defy caricature, the great gentleman always eludes definition. His distinction is that he is the hero of no story : author of no epigram : echo of no example. He is too proud to be pompous ; too shy to be arrogant ; too afraid to be arresting.

He is no unforgettable character. But he is more than that : a great gentleman whom all those who meet him will always remember.

Two of the happiest years of my life I once spent in a Jaffna school, Parameshwara College, where I had been sent by my father to learn Tamil after I had been given a smattering of English.

All the Tamil I learnt can be stacked conveniently on a pin head. If I failed in the mastery of the Tamil language, I was fortunate in my selection of schoolmasters. One was Mr. S. Natesan, the former Minister of Posts and Broadcasting, who was then being groomed to be a son-in-law by the

great Ramanathan. Another was no other than Mahadeva himself, who was being groomed to be a politician.

III

My first impression of the chain-smoking Mahadeva was that he did not impress. But soon I found he was the most popular personality in the school in spite of being its principal! This might have been partly by way of contrast to the dreaded task-master Ramanathan, who really ruled the institution, no matter who was its head. But mostly it was because of the schoolboy's fondness for elegance, perfect manners and cultured approach to students as little gentlemen without any trace of snobbishness or arrogance.

After 12 years of political tutorship under the Grand Old Man when Mahadeva entered the political field it was a heritage he became heir to as Secretary of the Ceylon National Congress that his father had been father of.

The name of Ponnambalam Arunachalam used to be pronounced with a "salam" and all eyes were turned on the new Arunachalam. In the glare of this glamour Mahadeva entered the State Council.

But much had happened since the days when the Ponnambalams with their rich oratory had forged progress with vision.

IV

Dravidian demagogues had entered the political china shop.

In a struggle for supremacy between a cultivated mind with a sense of balance and a raving demagogue bulging with political muscle, Mahadeva naturally had to lose. Goliath for once won

because David was far too much of a gentleman. He preferred reason to rhetoric ; wisdom to vanity ; vision to vulgarity.

This was how Mahadeva, the well-trained politician, became a tragedy in a turban.

The political climate was against him. Political brutality was too much for him.

But the true greatness of a man can be measured more by his sacrifices.

The fact that his erstwhile opponent himself chose the path that he had once blazed, showed the Tamils who was the truer prophet.

And it speaks tomes for the political wisdom of our leaders that Mahadeva's work was reckoned by his sacrifices and not by his political success.

Not that Rustom would have sulked very long in his tent in any case. But it is good for the soul of a nation to feel that the greatest Dravidian Gentleman among us was no mere discarded ornament but was burnished by use and not allowed to rust in the store room.

EDIRIWEERA SARATHCHANDRA

SARATHCHANDRA started producing plays at a time when J. D. A. Perera was throwing away money like Vessantara himself in producing "Vessantara Jatakaya" at the Town Hall.

If you had Rs. 50,000 to spend it would be easy to produce a spectacular play. But the fun in producing an amateur play is to get this Rs. 50,000 feeling with a thousand rupees and your wife's last year's saree.

Sarathchandra got this fun out of a play and showed he had a flair for drama when he produced "Pabavati" for the Ceylon University Sinhalese Drama Circle in the forties. It gained greatly in subtle suggestion and soft simulation what it lacked in tinsel and mock lightning.

By his production in the form of a play the well-known Jataka story of the taming of the shrew Pabavati, the stubbornest, proudest and beautifullest of all women in ancient India, he showed not only how a vivacious, wilful woman with a

temper like a house on fire could be tamed by long-distance music and the effect of beauty and bravery but also how vulgar, popular, gaudy tastes of the Sinhalese drama audiences could, by degrees, be tamed into finding entertainment in chaste and simple but high class drama.

It was questioned whether making "Kusa Jataka" into an entertaining farce without a moment's dulness was depriving it of its dignity and loftiness as a piece of celebrated literature. But the emphasis on the human side of each situation to wring out humour was nothing more than giving dry bones of the classics new flesh and blood and bringing it nearer the human heart.

When I saw "Pabavati" I knew Sarathchandra was on the road to discover treasure in the dreary world of Ceylon Drama.

II

I had known Sarathchandra for a long time. We had often tired the Sun with talking and ragging each other which often extended to the small hours of mornings.

I knew him first as a shy, small-made youth.

Later I learnt that the almost beardless youth was a graduate teacher at St. Peter's College. His preference for philosophy was as strong as his partiality for patent pills. As much as he read Hindu and Buddhist philosophy he swallowed patent pills to make himself strong, healthy, and hearty.

I suppose he unconsciously knew that E. R. de Silva was hardly the name for a budding philosopher. He called himself E. R. de S. Sarathchandra, gave up his job and went to Shanthiniketan for a time.

He was a strange kind of philosopher. Not only was he curious about the Atmistic Pluralism of Vaisesika or the principle of continuity in the Samkhya system but was also interested in the 'Mudras' of Kathak dancing and the soulful melodies of Bengali music.

He came back from Bengal a changed man. He had discarded his trousers and had taken to flowing clothes that made him look a little mystic, if a trifle mad. He was some kind of authority on Oriental dancing and Indian music and could easily tell where Kathak ended and Kathakali began.

But his passion for patent black pills was the same as ever. Every new pill in the market he would sample and feel all the better for it however much we laughed at him for his zest.

III

Soon after he joined the University of Ceylon he became a cultural Pope in the little world of the University where he was a kind of informal institution.

Ediriweera Sarathchandra has more than most other Dons at the Campus given a sense of values and good companionship to the students who have come in touch with him.

The more he grew in stature as a scholar, as an author, as a Don, as a cultural Pope, the less he seemed to feel his importance. He has given his friendship freely and easily to his students and as they associated with him they learned the greatness of simplicity and the pleasure of intellectual and cultural efforts.

Sarathchandra sang songs with his students during off hours, staged plays, wrote books talked long into the night, taking them into his confidence and shaping their enthusiasms to the pattern of cultured gentlemen.

In these academic adventures of a delightful Don, Sarathchandra had produced a large number of plays from "Pabavati" to "Maname." All his plays were produced on a shoe string. Sack cloth and ashes looked more regal and spectacular than red velvet and heavily gilt regalia when handled by Sarathchandra and his wife Eileen who is herself a fine actress.

IV

He has tried many experiments on his own with the help of others on the stage. But the finest he has so far done certainly is "Maname."

This is done in the age old style of the village Nadagam which is a second cousin twice removed of the ancient Sanskrit drama.

As I watch the play I am once again in my boyhood in a far off village in Ruhuna gazing fascinatedly at familiar figures, magically made rich and strange with the touch of Sarathchandra.

There was Maname, Prince of Benares, receiving his degree at Taxila with the daughter of the teacher thrown in just for luck. The couple set out for the prince's home together! All of a sudden the king of the forest through which they pass appears on the scene and asks for their "visas" none too politely.

Their papers are not in order. As a matter of fact, there are no documents at all. There is trouble.

Actually the king of the forest has his eye on Mrs. Maname who is quite an eyeful with a lot of 'it' tucked in all over her scantily clad torso. There is a lively bit of rhythmic aggression. But the well-nourished prince fells the tall chief of the forest to the ground and asks for his sword which is in Mrs. Maname's trembling hands. But the damsel hands over the sword not to her victorious husband, but to the defeated forest chief who kills the prince, and carries away the girl – only to throw her away in disgust at her shameful betrayal of her newly-wedded prince.

All this is done in great style with the formal announcements of the "Pothegura" on the stage, little bits of stylised strutting and an enormous amount of imagination which is entirely the audience's contribution to the play.

The tunes sound genuine. The dresses seem correct. The chorus sings true. And the "Pothe Gura's" voice, aided by a wise look, speaks true to type.

Yet it is not the same as the old Nadagama. It is something entirely new. The genius of Sarathchandra has transformed an old form of drama into a new drama of form. It is the same, yet not the same.

V

The real hero of the drama never comes on the stage. He is Sarathchandra the man behind the scene, the philosopher with a partiality for patent pills, the cultural ambassador without credentials, the pundit who is always ready for a play and the teacher who is never tired of learning.

Everybody, I suppose, can produce or write one good play. But with Sarathchandra he can do it over and over again.

He has not only created a new style, new drama, but also made new playwriters and producers.

We who neither take pills or produce dramas age with every year. But Sarathchandra today looks exactly as I met him twenty years ago. He is our eternal youth among Professors and producers.

THE END