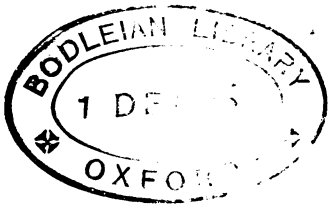
PEEPS AT

CEYLON LIFE AND PEOPLE.

BY

THE WIFE OF A MISSIONARY.

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY
56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD;
AND 164, PICCADILLY.



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CHAPTER I.

CABIN AND DECK LIFE.

'MAKE his little engine run, nurse; and don't let him see me going away,' I said to the woman who was to take charge of our two little boys on their voyage to Ceylon. It was a wild night, and the old P. & O. boat was nearly ready to start from Southampton, for her trip to Ceylon, India, and back again. My husband and I were to go a good part of this journey by land, for I am a terrible sailor; so having found a motherly woman to take care of Monty and baby, we went down to see them all off, hoping ourselves to follow in a day or two, to catch up their steamer at Suez.

It is cosy in the children's cabin—such a tiny room, with its four little berths. They are really beds, placed like shelves one over another, two on one side of the room, two on the other;

between them a wash-hand basin, fitted so firmly that no rocking of the ship can ever throw it over. There is just room under the berths for some small, low boxes; and a looking-glass on the wall, a rack fitted with bottles and glasses, and a swinging oil lamp, this is the furniture.

It was sad to say good-bye to the little ones, even for so short a time. The night was boisterous, and every one seemed too busy to spare a thought beyond looking after their baggage, or seeing that they had the cabin they preferred; so unpacking a few toys, and giving some loving kisses, without a good-bye, we crept away unnoticed. The toys were enough for that moment, and children do not think much of the future.

These little ones had been born in Ireland, and a happy time they had had in the old home, with plenty of pets, and a garden well filled with fruit and flowers; but to all children it is fun to pack, and delightful to think of going in a train, and above all enjoyable to know that you are to live for some weeks on board a large ship. So Monty was not sorry to be off; his hands were full of parting gifts from many a friendly heart,—toys for the voyage, a large cake from the kindly baker, a whole sovereign to spend in London, and many other treasures.

But there was a journey to London, and that was long and tiring, and when there it was hard to choose which toy to buy: but thinking how many a grand house or church might constantly be built with a good box of bricks, the choice was made; and from Regent Street there came such a grand box of pillars and arches, it seemed as if they could never all be built into one block.

A few days of London fog and noise; mother so busy shopping and packing; a new nurse; so many friends coming and going that it was saying good-bye all day long; and little baby crying constantly at the sight of all the strange faces. But it was time at last to start, and once on board, Monty was, as we said before, quite happy with his clockwork engine as he started on his first voyage.

And now I must leave the little ones till we meet them again at Suez, and only tell you how we started from Dover by another route to overtake the steamer.

You will see in a map how far round a ship has to go after it leaves England before it can get into the Mediterranean Sea; but once there, it is an easy line to trace straight along to Alexandria. The railway route will be more troublesome to follow. First the short but rough little crossing to

France, then the railway to Paris, the long journey through France, the Mont Cenis tunnel, and then Italy, till we come again to the seashore at Venice, and a lovely blue sea that is. And here we got on board a vessel which was to go all down by that long leg of Italy, and right across the Mediterranean to Alexandria.

We heard one terrible sound on that voyage—a sound we have only heard once besides—and that was the thrilling cry, 'A man overboard!' And then the hurrying feet of crew and passengers, all wildly longing to save the poor man who was in the deep, wide waters. And by night it is no easy thing to find such a small thing as a human head appears, as it rises and sinks amidst the enormous waves.

But in a case like this, when the warning cry is heard at night, the officer on watch has his part to do. He hears the shout, and close at hand, ready for such an accident, is a short plank of wood, with what looks like the head of a rocket fitted into it. The officer rapidly cuts off a piece of this rocket-like tube, tears a hole at the other end, and immediately throws it overboard, to mark as nearly as possible the place where the man fell in; for the moment this tube touches the water, it lights up brightly at one end, and continues

burning a long time, so that the boat's crew which are let down to look for the missing man know in what direction to row in search of him.

One of these lights was then thrown out, a boat let down, and in about fifteen minutes our hearts were gladdened at the sight of a dripping figure brought on board, and we knew that the life so nearly lost was given back again.

We were glad enough when our boat landed us at Alexandria, and the station was soon reached, where the train stood ready, waiting for passengers to Suez; and we longed to be off, fearing the children's vessel might have reached there before us. We were seated in a carriage, we heard the snorts and puffs of the engine, and even the final whistle, but still we did not move. Patiently we sat on, on, on—till one of us opened the door, and shouting loudly for the guard inquired, 'Why don't we go on?' 'Engine gone on,' the porter answered; and so it was, without the train, for the carriages by some mistake had not been linked on, and neither guard nor driver discovered that the passengers had all been left behind until the first station was reached, and there a telegram was found awaiting the driver, ordering him at once to return with his engine to Alexandria, there to link on the forgotten train.

Arrived at last at Suez, we waited for some hours, watching the children's vessel as it came down the long Suez Canal, with its banks of baking sand—in some places high above the deck,—and its pretty peeps of native life. Here and there a line of camels with Egyptian drivers, and sometimes a large steamer drawn up in a siding to make room for other vessels to pass slowly by; for the canal is eighty-five miles long, and so narrow that one vessel has to be pulled into an opening made in the side of the canal here and there, to let other boats pass by, and steamers are only allowed to go at the rate of five miles an hour, except through the great Bitter Lake, which lies large and wide between the two parts of the canal.

You will like to know what a children's dinner is like on board these boats, and that is at what we found our little ones busy, when we reached their vessel, and ran on board, and downstairs into the dining-saloon. A long, large table, with benches all round, and nurses and children seated closely; on the floor several Indian servants, for they like better to sit there, and either feed the babies, or take their own food from a plate on their laps.

There is something to suit all. First, the soup —which is easy enough to manage on a smooth

day, but awkward when the vessel rocks about, and the soup can hardly be kept inside the plate. Then meat of various kinds, for one nurse thinks her little Jack may only eat mutton, and another feels sure that Tom will be ill again unless he has chicken; and the cook has had to think of all, and to try and please all, and he makes so many nice puddings and sweets, that it is quite a cheery sound to hear the bell going for dinner, and none are sorry when the cabin boys, or waiters, go round to call the children in. 'Come, Master Dick, or Miss Mary; I'll carry you on. Nurse is coming all right; you come on with me, and I'll get you your soup.'

But once a day there is a great battle on board —and that is, a battle for the bath-room! It is all very well to ask nurse at home to get your bath ready, while you wait a few moments for its coming; but when there are perhaps forty or sixty children on board one boat, and only two bath-rooms, you must wait a long time for your turn.

The poor stewardess stands in sight of the bath-room door to keep order; while little figures in dressing-gowns, or nurses with babies, are constantly appealing to her, 'Is it ready now?' 'May I go next?' But the stewardess is stern. 'No,

no, Master Tom; you're only just out of bed, and there's this nurse has been this half-hour waiting with her babies. She must go first, and then you, little Polly, for I've seen you waiting ever so long. Ah! there's the door opening at last! Run, run, nurse! In with you, or some one else will be first!'

Sometimes there is a little grumbling, for one stays too long in the bath-room, or another takes an unfair means of getting in first; but no troubles like these last long at sea, for captain and sailors are so cheery, and kindly voices and smiles seem to outshine all the grumbling.

And now we go down the long, narrow Red Sea, passing Egypt on one side, and Arabia on the other. Past the very spot where, so long ago, the Israelites marched through that dry path in the midst of the sea; and past those grand old mountains of Sinai, where Moses talked with God.

And in this Red Sea we saw many flying-fish; yes, real fish, but with pretty, transparent sort of wings, with which they can fly some distance out of the water. Some few flew so high that they dropped on our deck, and we kept the wings as curiosities.

CHAPTER II.

SHOPPING AT SEA.

OUR last stoppage was at Aden, where we took in coal, and here the natives of this part bring beautiful ostrich feathers on board for sale. You know the bird is wild there, so the feathers when you buy them are just as they have been dropped from the bird, not nicely cleaned and curled, as you have them in your hat or bonnet. Now this is how we manage to buy of these natives. We watch the boats coming from shore close up to our ship, and then some of the sellers are allowed to come on deck, and show their bundles of goods.

'Lady buy nice big feather—very cheap.'

'Master like this long feather—very good feather. I sell master best feather. Master buy?'

We look and choose a good bundle; for all are tied in bundles of four or six, and often the outer ones are good, while the inside ones are worthless, for these poor souls well know how to cheat.

'Well,' we say, 'how much for this bunch?'

'Two pounds, lady. I not take less.'

This, we know, is far more than the feathers are worth, so we try again.

'I will give *one* pound—no more.'

On this the seller pretends great indignation, packs up, and goes the round of the ship, trying to make others buy; but before long he returns again, and, offering a very inferior bunch, he says: 'I give this to lady for one pound. These very good feathers.' But no, we are determined; and after several feints of going, he finally returns—often only just as the vessel is starting—and, holding out the feathers wished for, he says, 'Lady, take.' And so the bargain ends; and after coal and other necessaries have been shipped, we start again for our last sail of about seven days.

It is very, very hot, though we have double awnings up over the deck, and punkahs in the saloon all day. There seems no breeze, though the vessel is going fast. At night the captain allows us to have our mattresses brought up on deck, and to sleep there, for the cabins seem too stifling; and so the last few nights and days pass by, till we are told one night that the faint spark of light which we can see in the distance is the lighthouse on the

coast of Ceylon; so we know we must be getting near our journey's end.

Suddenly a lovely blue light flashes out; it is answered by another from a passing steamer, showing that they are boats belonging to the same company.

But where are the 'spicy breezes' that 'blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle'? We certainly did not scent them while on board, but as soon as we landed we were struck with the fragrance.

At last we near the shore, and what a lovely fringe the cocoa-nut trees make, standing up straight and tall from the water's edge, sharp against the bright blue of the cloudless sky!

Have you ever seen a boat with an outrigger? Just a thick log of wood, shaped like a boat, only not hollowed out; and this is fastened by long bamboo sticks, so that it shall float alongside the boat itself. Sometimes a native will sit astride an outrigger; but this is, of course, close in to shore, where there is no fear of sharks. These outrigger-boats are very safe, for it would be hard to upset anything so wide as this.

The people who row them are dark-skinned, fine-looking men; some with heads closely shaven, others with a patch of long hair. They wear a piece of calico round their bodies, and some few

have also a loose calico jacket; but this is all their clothing, except the full turban which most wear. These are the Tamils, or natives of South India.

But some men look so like women that we can hardly believe they are really the Singalese *men.* Did you ever see men with long hair combed back from the face and wound up into a knot behind, something like the old-fashioned chignon? They wear a round comb placed lightly on the top of the head, and so like women do they look, that I must tell you what one of our English guards at a railway station said of one of them. We were at a London railway platform once, when our Singalese servant was with us, dressed in usual native costume, his hair wound into a knot, and the comb on his head. The guard eyed him carefully as he took his ticket, had a good stare at his back hair and comb as he moved on, and then winking merrily at the opposite collector, he said, 'I say, Bill, is it a man or a female?' 'Well,' said Bill, doubtfully, 'I should say 'twas a man, for he has whiskers!'

But we must not run away again from our landing scenes, or we shall never reach the shore. What a number of rings these people wear! Rings on their fingers, and rings on their toes, and in their ears too, even the men sometimes! And

SINGALESE MEN.

how shiny and oily their black hair looks! But then we are told it has been well saturated with cocoa-nut oil, and so too near an approach is not pleasing; indeed, we soon found that if our servants used this too copiously we could not allow them to wait on us; so we had to forbid the use of it, so disagreeable and powerful is the scent. I have been told of another plan of greasing the hair which the Singalese sometimes adopt, and which they fancy protects them from the fierceness of the sun. They place amidst their thick hair a small lump of lard, and as the sun beats on their uncovered heads this melts, and anoints face, neck, and back with copious streams.

Not understanding a word of the languages spoken, we were thankful, on landing, to call in the aid of some English-speaking clerks and servants, who had been sent by friends to meet us; for in Ceylon there is much kindness, and many a welcome for the stranger. We proved this; for before we left our ship notes were sent on board, offering us every help,—sent too by people we had never met, but who, knowing that our ship was due, had ordered servants to be ready with boats to meet the vessel, and bring us these tokens of kindly welcome. So we landed, and walked up to the Galle Hotel, followed by some of these valu-

able helpers, in charge of our smaller baggage. Then we did smell the 'spicy breezes.' Large trees, bright with showy flowers, were so sweetly fragrant that they scented the air; and some of the blossoms we picked up in passing were as sweet as our jessamine, only the scent was more powerful. The quiet tread of the people seemed so strange —no shoes or boots, only the bare feet treading noiselessly on the dusty roads.

The glare was great, and the sun so fierce that we were thankful to reach the hotel, with its huge, shady verandahs. A motherly-looking English-woman had the management of this hotel, and after securing our rooms we told her our trouble. Our English nurse had forsaken us, wishing to go on to India; what could we do? 'In an hour's time I will have some ayahs here, for you to see if any will suit,' she said so cheerfully, that we felt this difficulty would soon be at an end.

How nice and cool the dining-room looked, with its large punkahs waving, and the long table covered with exquisite flowers,—the flaring shoe-flower, with its scarlet or cream blossoms as large as your hand, and the drooping, graceful cocoa-nut blossom, which looks like ivory chains! Then the fruit; and the lumps of ice gave such a refreshing look to all.

We ran up to our rooms—oh, so large! and the beds so small, each with net curtains all round to keep out those troublesome mosquitoes. But what seemed very odd was to see all the legs of beds and tables standing each in a saucer of water. And this is to keep the troublesome little ants from running up, for they like to be everywhere, over your brushes, on your sponge, on your clothes. The beds had no blankets, it is far too hot for them, only the thinnest of sheets; and the floors were covered with matting instead of carpet, as it is cooler.

Outside our door sat an old man on a mat; I found there was one waiting at each landing. There are no bells in the Ceylon houses, and for whatever you want you must call; so it is convenient to have a servant at hand. And now, think how odd it seems, instead of ringing a bell for anything, to shout out, 'Boy, boy!' for all the servants are called so, even if they are old men with silvery hair. So, wishing to know how soon our lunch or tiffin would be ready (and the sight of the fresh fruit seems such a luxury after ship's fare, that we quite long for our meal), we open the door and call, 'Boy!' The old man is at hand, and inquires, 'Yes, lady; what lady want?' Then he goes on to tell us in his funny English that he

will take care of the little ones while we go down to tiffin ; so hastily I get out some toys to amuse the children while we are away. But baby does not like the dark face of 'boy' when he comes to take him, and screams in terror. So, finding it better to give up this plan, I send the old man for some food, and undertake the children myself. Some hours go by, and still no ayah has been found for us ; so the little ones are put to sleep, and 'boy' comes noiselessly in and whisks out the mosquitoes from the beds, and tightly tucks the curtains in, to keep out any more of these intruders, and we ourselves stroll out into the cooler air.

Such a perfect evening it is, but, oh! so warm ; even our white clothes seem far too heavy. The sun sets by seven o'clock all the year round, and as there is no twilight the evenings are long. But that night the stars shone brightly, and the fire-flies danced about everywhere ; and all looked so strangely new, and unlike old England. The insects, however, are not a delight. Should you like a large, buzzing sort of cockchafer to fly into your hair, and buzz there loudly while its legs are being disentangled, or to feel a constant succession of mosquitoes biting your cheek or arm ? You want to fan yourself incessantly, and thus keep

SINGALESE WOMEN.

them off; and keep far away from the lamps, for there the insects are thick; the light attracts them so.

Two days passed while we waited for a suitable ayah; and then, having found a promising Singalese woman, who agreed to come with us to Colombo, we ordered the coach, said good-bye to the kindly manager of the hotel, and started for our first inland trip.

CHAPTER III.

A NIGHT DRIVE THROUGH THE JUNGLE.

How nice it sounds, having a long drive in a coach! You think at once of the grand feeling of being perched up high, and being able to see all the country round, as the horses dash along. But in Ceylon you must travel inside, and it is best to go by night, for that is cooler. So we engaged the whole coach, thinking we might be glad to fall asleep, and have plenty of room to stretch out, without fear of kicking our neighbours.

At 7.30 one evening, when the stars were shining brightly, we heard a great blowing of the horn, and the sound of a heavy carriage. It was our coach. Bright lamps were hung each side; the top was soon piled with our boxes, more were swung in a sacking underneath, and three men were already mounted on the outside. We were five inside. The doors were shut, the horn blew wildly, and we were off; but as we moved a coolie

mounted each step of the carriage doors, and held on by the handle.

We settled ourselves as comfortably as we could; but the seats were high and hard, and it seemed impossible to get into a position in which we could stay; we were always slipping, slipping, for our feet did not touch the floor of the coach. Then that dreadful horn was blown close to our ears and constantly, by the man on the step. Of course the baby woke, and seeing the strange face of the ayah, who held him, he roared. Alas for all sleep that night! At each turn of the road the blast begins again. The old coach rattles and bangs over the stones and roots of trees; we seem all shaken together. But we are crossing a bridge; bump, bump over every plank, for it is a wooden bridge, and very old, and the boards are very uneven and rotten.

The men jump from the steps, seize the horses' heads, and drag them on. Round a corner we go, so sharply, we shall surely be turned over! But no; we are still safe, though sorely shaken.

What a sight it is to look upon! All jungle each side of us for miles; trees so thick, with creepers twining round them so heavily that you can scarcely see the tree beneath. Fireflies every-

where; they look like stars far up among the trees, and like fairy lamps below. Now and then we see a blazing fire in the wood where a few natives have halted on their journey to cook their evening meal. Seventy miles of jungle and groves of cocoa-nut trees; and the scenery is grand, as it lights up by the sudden flash of very vivid lightning, and we can just see the endless lines of tall black trees, or the shining of some river as we dash over a bridge. Oh, for a halt! we are so tired of the shaking, and baby will cry.

Suddenly we stop; the ayah interprets the driver's remark, that we can get out, and out we get gladly. But where? There is no house, people, nor anything; all jungle, all darkness, except the little bit of roadway lighted by our coach lamps.

But they tell us of a 'rest house' close by, where we can get some food while the horses are changed. We borrow a lamp, and, led by a coolie, we find the house. But no living being can we find. The coolie shouts, we shout; in vain. Ten, fifteen minutes of our promised thirty minutes' halt is gone, and still no one comes. We are in despair, and begin our return to the coach. Looking back, we see a light appearing, and a welcome

PALMS AND JUNGLE.

sound of 'ready.' We conclude this must mean that food is ready, and feeling famished, we walk back, swallow a few mouthfuls of soup, which has suddenly made its appearance from we know not where (it is *cold* soup!); then we hear the warning sound of the old horn again; we must go.

But what about the little ones and the ayah? We promised to bring back food for them. *We* cannot speak to the rest-house keeper, he cannot understand us; so, pointing to a chicken ready cooked and a loaf, I seize the two, lay some money on the table, and we get in again for our last long shake.

You have read of fairyland, but I never pictured such a fairyland as I saw on that journey. The darkness of the night seemed suddenly to end. The rays of the rising sun, just tipping the shiny leaves of the cocoa-nut trees, made them shine like polished silver, and the yellow tiny cocoa-nuts stood out like golden balls. Down below, where the light had hardly yet reached, the tall stems of the trees stood like black pillars, out of a mass of tangled leaf and feathery grass. Yes; night was gone, and the fresh coolness of the morning air revived us all. The coach stops; by the road-side stands waiting a most comfortable-looking

carriage, with two horses, each held by a native, dressed in scarlet and white. One of these men salaams and gives us a letter. What! more welcomes? Yes; and plenty more. I think out there they have well learnt that old command, 'Be not forgetful to entertain strangers.'

But how dusty and dirty we are! The roads are red, and the dust is red, and it lies thick on our faces and our clothes. We try to give a few finishing touches, but the result is only red smears; it is useless, we look like Red Indians; so, somewhat ashamed of our begrimed appearance, we mount into the carriage sent to meet us, and enjoy the luxury of an easy motion, instead of the weary bumping and shaking of the old Galle coach. The letter says: 'All of you come to my house, which is large and roomy, and stay with me as long as you can, or till your own house is quite ready.' How pleasant it seemed! No more hotels, but home life at once. Soon we reach some large gates, and turning in, find ourselves stopping under a shady verandah, which runs round the whole house. 'A warm welcome to you all! and what sort of a journey have you had?' says our host. 'Quite tired, I suppose, of that abominable coach; it broke down twice when I last came in it, and it ought to have been

made into firewood long ago. Now, Appoo, show the rooms, and we will have breakfast as soon as you are all ready.'

The appoo is the head servant, or, as we should call him in England, the butler. This one is tall and stately, with *two* combs, and a crimson silk handkerchief round his waist. His jacket and cloth are of spotless white, and he looks such a superior old man. What a sweet scent, just as if you had upset a bottle of 'jockey club.' Where can it come from? Oh! I see; a tree is close to our windows, covered with exquisite white blossoms; it must be those which smell so sweetly. The windows open down to the ground, and there is a shady balcony outside, where the children can safely go, for it is shaded by lattice work, and covered thickly by creepers. A bath-room is attached to each bedroom, and we are thankful for a bath after our dusty journey.

And now for breakfast. It is ten o'clock, and we are feeling rested and freshened. A boy in white stands behind each chair, the table is gay with flowers, the punkah is going, and doors and windows are all wide, for it begins to get very very hot. The pineapples look very tempting, and we are told we can now buy them for threepence each,

as they are just in season. Plantains too abound; indeed, we can see them hanging in huge green bunches on trees in the compound, for they do not leave them to ripen on the trees, or the crows would help themselves too freely. The stem, bearing the fruit, is cut, and the whole bunch is hung up in some place of safety for a week or more, till the fruit turns yellow and is ripe.

We spent some days with this kind host, and then, our own bungalow being fairly furnished, we engage our servants, and make our final flitting.

We made up our minds to have *Christian* servants *only*, though we were told by friends: 'I don't think it's much use. You will find you get no better or more faithful servants because they call themselves Christians; for these poor souls have, many of them, so little idea of any reality of belief, that when asked, "Of what religion are you?" they mostly reply, "What master like."'

Still we resolved to make the attempt. It will be better to know that all our men will at least each hear the good message, and join in the same service Sunday; and if they only go at first 'because master like,' they may in time have some better motive. And this is how I engaged the servants.

I sat on the verandah in a low easy-chair, with such wide arms that I could place my books or work on the arms beside me. Several men were waiting, each with his book, for in Ceylon every servant must have a registered book, with his name and age, etc., written down; and when a place is left, the servant must get the master to fill in a page of the book, saying what sort of a servant he has been. This is then taken to the office and signed, and no one would think of taking a servant who had no book filled up and signed. The servants come up one at a time, and I read:

Name—Devanayagam.

Age—Fifty-nine.

Reason for leaving—Too old for his work.

Honesty—Honest as far as I know.

Cleanliness—Fair.

General Character—A fair servant, but too lazy.

Well, this will not do. We tell him he is not quite what we want; so, as I hand him back his book, he salaams very low, and says, 'Thank you, lady.'

Now another.

Name—Carolis.

Age—Thirty.

Reason for leaving—Not required, as the family are leaving for England.

Honesty—Honest.

Cleanliness—Very clean in person and work.

General character—A thoroughly good servant.

This seems very hopeful; so he is engaged for twenty rupees a month, which is nearly two pounds of our money.

But these are appoos' books, and we must have two boys to work under the appoo, one house coolie, to carry the water from the well, milk the cows, and sweep the verandahs; a cook, and a little boy to help the cook; a horsekeeper, to attend to the horse and carriage; another appoo, to take charge of the church (for the church is inside our own compound), and a coolie to help the church appoo. So there are plenty of men's books to be looked at.

And then come the women servants. One for the little boys as nurse, and a little girl to help her, and a sewing woman; but this latter comes only by day, and goes home at night. You will wonder how large our house must be, to take in so many servants; and when I tell you that we generally had visitors staying with us, you will think our house must be very large indeed. But only the ayah and the little girl sleep *inside* the house; all the men servants are locked out at night. They sleep in the kitchen or the verandahs, and some in

the schoolhouse, which is in the compound. And it keeps things safe to have servants sleeping in different places, for there are many thefts and robberies, and unless the servants are about, many a thing will be missed.

But you must not think that *all* the natives are bad. Indeed they are not. I can tell you of many a kind-hearted, faithful servant, who served, not only us, but our Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, with true and willing service. I will just tell you of one old man we had, Juan, who saw another servant robbing us daily for some weeks, and felt afraid to tell us of what was going on; till one day he could bear it no longer, and came to me, saying: 'Lady, I not tell lie. I see that man, he take every day one of lady's loaves, and plenty things he taking. Then I think lady will say, "Old Juan, *he* take the things"; but Jesus Christ my Master, He know I not touch.'

I think the reason some are so dishonest and untruthful is really because they have seen nothing good all their lives; and they have no shame about doing these evil things, because they have seen their fathers and mothers do the same, and no one has taught them of the better life.

To you at home it seems grand to start off to some foreign land to carry the 'good news'; and to

us abroad it sometimes seems so hopeless, and so hard to make any impression. But often the quiet, Christ-like life which a European leads will influence a native to think *why* there is such a difference; and the wish to know why will take the servant inside one of the native churches, or to a room where catechists hold services for the passers-by of some crowded spot.

When we first settled, we were asked to keep on one old man who had been a servant for thirty years in the very house we were to occupy. He wanted to take the place of cook; so, though he looked very old for this post, we agreed to try him. 'What can you make for tiffin to-day?' I said on the first morning that he came for orders. 'Minch, lady, I can make, and risholes.' By this he meant to say mince and rissoles, but these words were a difficulty to him always. We contented ourselves that day with these dishes; but when I found the following day that the bill of fare was only varied by his saying, 'Risholes and minch,' I began to suspect that the old man's powers were few, so we moved him to another kind of work, and filled his place by a more competent man. This one did so well that I often told him I was pleased; but I soon learnt my mistake. I praised him once for some ices which he had turned out very well the night

before, when he at once remarked, 'Lady say I do all very well; lady must give me bigger wage!' So I resolved to be more sparing of praises in future.

CHAPTER IV.

OUR BREAKFAST, AND THE CROW'S BREAKFAST.

NOW you must try and follow me through one morning's work in our pretty Colombo home. You must remember that it seems always summer there, even in the dark winter mornings, when you want to light your candle and stay a little longer in the snug little roosting-place. The night in Ceylon is so hot that you are thankful to get up soon after five o'clock. Doors and windows have been wide open all night, just a light curtain drawn across the doors, and the lower part of the windows secured by open venetians. You lift the mosquito curtains and creep out, putting your feet at once into slippers, for fear of any insect which may be on the floor; and the sting or bite of some is a very painful matter.

Wrapped in cool dressing-gowns, every one soon reaches the dining-room, where by six o'clock stands ready the *early* breakfast, as we call it. Bread, jam, plantains, mangoes, sometimes butter;

but this is scarce, and the tin butter we cannot eat, as it seems more like oil than butter in this heat. 'Boy,' the first comer shouts; and in a few moments a boy, dressed as always in white dress and comb, comes up from the kitchen buildings, his bare feet treading noiselessly on the matted floor. He brings the tea and toast, for appoo is allowed to sleep at home twice in the week, and so has not yet put in an appearance. Before this meal is ended, more than one figure has appeared in one or other part of the verandah. 'Is reverend master at home?' is the general question; and schoolmasters wanting advice about their schools, or poor or sick ones needing help, mostly choose this early hour, knowing that probably there will be time and quiet to listen to their tale. Soon cook is seen coming back from the bazaar with a few smaller articles in his hand, followed by his little helper, who carries on his head a basket piled high with fire-wood for the day, for we need no coal for our kitchens there.

Now 'lady' must do her work; so, carrying a big bunch of keys, away she goes to the low line of buildings which belong to the servants' quarters. The store-room door is opened, and the call is heard, '*Wigahata!*' (Come quickly!) The horse-keeper comes with a basket and a measure, and measures out the food needed for the horse that

day. The coolie comes to carry out any cocoa-nuts that are wanted; the cook and his boy take the sugar, rice, jam, flour, etc., needed for the day's cooking; then the door is locked, and on a table outside are spread out all that has been bought that morning in the bazaar.

'Well, cook, for what is this cucumber?'

'I make curry that cucumber, lady. This meat I get make soup. Two chickens'—but the same chickens are gone, and it takes a good chase by several of the servants to secure them again. In Ceylon poultry is bought alive, and killed, plucked, and cooked often in the course of an hour and a half.

This is the time for all the little requests. The men come generally to 'lady' to ask what they are afraid 'master' may not grant! 'Please, my mother sick; I come back before tiffin. Lady, let me go now.' Or, 'My wife, she say she not seen me long time. I go after tiffin; I come back before breakfast to-morrow.' Or, 'Lady, please lend me two rupees. That dhoby' (the man who washes the linen), 'he lose my jacket; I must go buy new jacket.'

Then a walk round the verandah to see if all has been well swept and clean; and then, over the little rising ground which leads to the sea, we

can see the little ones coming home from their morning walk, for the little boys must be up early to keep healthy and strong in that climate —out at six and in by seven, and then carefully kept in shaded rooms or verandahs all day, till five p.m., when it is cool enough for another walk. But one of the little ones is crying.

'Oh, Monty, what is the matter?'

'That naughty crow has taken the bread out of my hand and bitten my finger!'

And these crows are troublesome birds! When there is any food in the hands of the little ones, they fly round so closely, and in such numbers, that the children are frightened. One crow I saw fly into the nursery, and taking a spoon off the table, fly out again; only the ayah threw something after him to frighten him, and the bird dropped our spoon.

And now it is time for baths and dressing. And then there are more natives waiting about, either 'to see master' or to sell their wares. Then prayers, and then big breakfast.

And now the heat of the day is felt in real earnest. No one must go out, except in a covered carriage, or under a pith helmet and shady umbrella. The little children are already at school —Tamils, Singalese, and Burghers, or those whose

parents are mostly descended from the Dutch and Portuguese, and have in some cases intermarried with the natives of the island. You can hear them singing the same tunes as those you know so well, and in many cases the same hymns, in their own language. 'Jesus loves me, this I know!' and, 'Shall we gather at the river?' were those I often heard. Poor little children! they seem so old and grown up in their ways. Little women of six can cook the curry and shop in the bazaar, and at twelve years of age they are generally taken from school. So while we have them we must get them to learn all they can, but chiefly 'the sweet story of old'; for who knows how often that will come back to their minds when teachers and Christian friends are things of the past?

'But had you not to learn the language?' you ask. 'Yes, indeed, I ought to do that.' So I got the kind little Burgher schoolmistress to come over daily to teach me. But this was slow work; I wanted to be able to take some class at once in the schools. This mistress would repeat very slowly for me the words of a hymn in Singalese, and I copied these sounds as well as I could in English, and learnt them off; then I could go over and play the harmonium, and teach the little ones

a hymn in their own tongue. Sometimes I saw a little smile on the dark faces looking at me, and then I knew I had said something which sounded very funny to them; but the teacher soon put me right, and we got on famously. The elder class of girls could read and speak English very nicely; so each morning I had them to a Bible class, and they answered as nicely as many English girls.

The lessons with the mistress were rather amusing, for she thought it was not polite to correct me. So after I had read my Singalese words for some time, and found she said nothing, I would ask—

'Is it all right?'

'Very good, very good!' she would say.

Then I begged her to tell me how *she* called the words, and I found my reading had been quite wrong. It was a long time before I could induce her to put me right, and then she made so many apologies that we did but little work.

Afterwards we tried a master, who was much the same; and as our congregation were English and English-speaking, we found our time so full of work for them that the lessons were not very regular, and we kept up our efforts to learn chiefly by talking with the servants.

CHAPTER V.

A WEDDING AND A FUNERAL.

THERE is a wedding in our church this morning. Shall we watch the parties from our verandah? Carriage after carriage drives up. It must be a wealthy Singalese. The men all wear combs, showing they are not Tamils. They have wound their cloth so very tightly round them that the only way to get up the church steps is to go sideways; but then, to their eyes, a tightly wound comboy is a type of good dressing, so no wonder they have tried to put them on extra tight on a wedding day!

The bride is all in white, with low-necked jacket and short sleeves; and the dark neck and arms and face look such a quaint contrast to the white dress and lace and veil! She is loaded with jewellery—rings, ear-rings, several necklaces, and bangles halfway up her arms. Very likely she has borrowed much of this, for that is the plan amongst the natives. The service is read by a

missionary who has been abroad some years, and knows the language well. As soon as service is over, the couples come out to their carriages, and the horsekeepers rouse themselves from the roofs of the carriages, where, for the most part, they have been stretched asleep. All drive home for a feast, which often lasts some days. The house has been decorated with coloured papers hung together in festoons, and groups of palm leaves and bunches of plantains adorn the entrance.

A wedding costs a great deal with them; for one day all the near relatives are feasted, another day a large number of poor are fed, and the tom-toms go on unceasingly.

The Burghers enjoy being thought like Europeans, so they copy our dress and manners as far as possible, and consider themselves far above the natives. Our schoolmistress wished to wear a chignon, but it was too much trouble to dress her hair in that fashionable style daily; so she bought a frisette, and pinned it on behind, leaving all her own dark long hair hanging straight down as usual!

My Burgher Bible-class gave me plenty to do. Will you come with me now, this hot afternoon, and call on one or two of the missing girls, and see

why they have not come? I must take a 'boy' with me to direct the horsekeeper where to drive, and to find out the houses for me. 'Boy' borrows an umbrella of the cook, for he has none of his own, and it is such a post of dignity to sit up in front of the carriage. That 'boy' wishes to look like the upper servants, none of whom would be seen out without an umbrella. I must take my note-book, to write down the names, as they are so hard to remember, and some cards with my own and my husband's name on them, to show them clearly who I am. Out we go, under the cocoa-nut trees, which stand thickly in our garden, Monty beside me, supplied with a large picture book, to amuse him while I am in the houses.

The coolie opens the gates, and we go round the lovely lake, till we come to the cinnamon gardens. There is no smell of the spice unless the stem is cut; so 'boy' is sent to pick a stalk of it for Monty, and to gather a few of the big pitcher plants, which we see twining up one of the bushes. We stop; boy thinks this is Pereira's house, and goes to ask. Yes, it is; but there are two or three dogs, all snarling, growling, and showing their teeth! I don't think I can go up that long lane to the

house, followed by these dreadful-looking animals! 'Boy,' I say, 'go and call the appoo, and tell him to take these dogs away.' Soon they slink off, and, escorted by 'boy,' I go into the empty drawing-room, and sit down. I never once found any member of a Burgher family ready to receive a visitor; they all run at the approach of one, and begin to tidy themselves, or dress.

I had a long time to wait, and one of those dogs came peering into the room. I am afraid of the dogs out here, they look so fierce, and growl so horribly. 'Boy, wait here by me till some one comes.' After a long time a rustling, and my absent Alathea appears, dressed in a very bright-coloured dress, ribbons in her hair, and a good deal of jewellery.

'Well, Alathea, I have come to see why you have not been to my class for these four weeks. Have you been ill?'

No answer, only smiles.

'Perhaps you have been away from home; have you?'

Still nothing but smiles.

'Will you be able to come again to-morrow?'

'I will try.'

This is promising, so, after a little more talk, I

again try to find out why she has been missing for so many weeks. It leaks out at last.

'I have no new dress.'

And this, I find, is the great difficulty. It is not considered proper with them to appear in the same dress many times; so having worn one to the last limit, they will remain at home, for weeks if necessary, until a new one has been made. But when I say stay at home, I mean merely from any public place. Their usual dress is untidy, shabby, and dirty, and they do not mind running in and out of each other's houses or to the bazaar in that state; but to go to church or a class, or a walk on the sea-shore, this means full dress, and full dress which demands a constant change.

Another house. Here lives a large family. The father lets out carriages for hire; the little boys are in our day school; the girls come to church regularly, even to the English service, for though they are half Portuguese they think they know English better than any other language, and the mother is the only one who can read Portuguese. The little boys run out to meet us, dressed in nothing but a sort of long nightshirt. They had been white once, but as all the roads in Colombo are red, so all the dust is red; and these little men were well

streaked and grimed, after their games on the roads.

'Why does not your sister come with you, Lydia, to the class? I see her in church on Sunday.'

'My sister, she cannot read.'

'Oh, never mind, she can come and listen. Try and bring her next time with you.'

Then the mother comes in, and we chat; she would so like a Portuguese New Testament, for she cannot read English, and she has had no Bible since she was a child.

And next week Lydia brought her sister to the Bible class, and for some months these two came very regularly; then we went up country for three months, and coming back to Colombo again I sent to invite them to the classes, which were to begin again. But these girls were not there, and as soon as I could I drove round to their house. The cool lettuce trees shaded the front; one of the little boys, in his loose and grimy dress, was playing about.

'Willie, is your mother in, and your sisters?'

'Sister's very bad.'

'Shall I come in and see her?'

'You can't see her, she's very bad.'

'Well,' I said, 'go and fetch mother or Lydia.'

Soon the poor mother came in crying, to tell me she thought Alice was dying. She had caught a chill, and for the last two months had got rapidly worse.

'May I go and see her?'

'Oh yes; but she won't know you. She hasn't spoken all the day, and the doctor says she can't last long.'

I went into the little stifling room, full of people, who had all come to look at the poor thing lying so quiet and still. I scarcely thought she was alive. I spoke several times, but she took no notice, and then suddenly she opened her eyes and looked at me.

'You know your teacher, don't you, Alice?' But the tired eyes closed again, then we had prayer, and still she lay as if she heard nothing.

I had to go, but I did wish for one word from her, just to know if she knew she was dying, and if she felt any fear.

'Alice,' I said, 'good-bye; you remember me, don't you?' Once again she looked, and as I held her hand I said, 'Don't you remember the old class, and how we used to read about Jesus, the same Jesus that has come to fetch you now?' Just one little smile, as though she knew what was meant, and again she seemed to sleep.

Early next morning a little brother came running round, to say that Alice was gone; she never spoke again, but passed away very quietly in the early morning.

CHAPTER VI.

A DINNER PARTY.

WHO is this grandly dressed man riding up to the house? He has a scarlet turban with a long piece of scarlet cloth hanging down his back; he carries a pointed pennon, and wears a broad belt with a leather bag. This is a messenger from the Government House, bringing an invitation to dine, and I must tell you what an evening spent there is like.

It is seven o'clock, and Monty has had his evening visit from mother, and is singing his last little song before he goes to sleep.

> 'Now that I lay me down to sleep,
> I give my soul to Christ to keep,
> Wake I at morn, or wake I never,
> I give my soul to Christ for ever.'

Ayah is hushing off the baby, the carriage stands waiting, and Appoo has his lantern to light us down the verandah steps, for we are going to dine at

the Government House, where the Governor lives, who rules the island for our good Queen. He is appointed for five years, and he has to try to do all he can in those few years to leave the island in a better and more prosperous state than when he came to it.

We are ready; it is a still, hot evening, and we are quite glad to think of the nice cool drive in our open carriage, all round by the lake. 'Boy' steps up ready dressed in clean white clothes. 'No, boy; we do not want you to-night.' For Government House is the only house where you need not take a servant with you when you go out to dine. At any friend's house you would always take your own 'boy,' and he stands behind your chair, and waits upon you through dinner time; then when he has done all he can to help, he finds his own way home, unless the distance is so great that he prefers to wait, and get a lift in master's carriage home again.

Government House is a large square building, very plain outside, but cool and comfortable inside. It is brightly lighted, and the hall and staircase are dressed with ferns and flowers in pots. The servants who are in the hall look gay in scarlet waistcoats and gilt buttons, and each wears a very high comb at the back of the head, as well as the round one always worn by the Singalese in front.

The wide staircase is carpeted, which gives a cosy look, for we seldom use anything but matting for the floors in Colombo. The aide-de-camp receives us, and takes us to the drawing-room, a large and pretty room, with verandah round. There are plenty of guests, some of them high caste natives. There is an old mudliar, a man of position under Government; he wears a native cloth, but above it an English coat, cut for evening dress, and a large white shirt-front, with frills down the front. He wears also a huge tortoiseshell comb, and his studs gleam so brightly, for they are diamonds.

The dinner table seems to bring a whiff from old England; for there are roses in abundance, red and cream-white roses, which have all been sent down from up country, where they grow well, but Colombo itself is too near the seaside and too parched for them to come to perfection. The punkahs wave steadily all the time, and it is pleasant to feel the breeze they make, for the dinner is a very lengthy affair, and we are longing to get a little more air upstairs. Music and singing follow, and there is an opportunity for a little chat with the Governor's wife. On one of these evenings we had a great deal of amusement with a phonograph which a friend had made and exhibited there. It is an instrument which repeats sounds, so all in turn we put our

mouths to the brass plate and made any speech we liked. One gentleman said nothing, but only gave a ringing laugh.

By-and-by it was time to make the phonograph do its work, and repeat all these sounds; and it was amusing to hear our own words repeated in tones very like our own voices. The laugh too came back wonderfully well, and made us all laugh again.

Our drive home is lovely, along by the sea-shore, where the tide never goes down or rises more than a foot, so that it seems always high tide. On reaching our house we see that nearly all the lights are out; only a dim glimmer in the dining-room. But all is locked up, and until 'boy' appears we cannot get in! Soon we see a figure, wrapped up like a mummy, lying on the verandah; and after a few gentle reminders the figure rises, unwinds itself, and shows 'the boy.' We are soon let in. Appoo locks all but one door; through that we let him pass, and finally lock him out; and so ends that day.

CHAPTER VII.

'LADY, TAKE.'

WE have not been shopping lately, so let us start this morning, as soon after breakfast as possible. We must put on our elderly garments, for the red dust of the native bazaar will cover everything. We pass the old fort, with its clock-tower and lighthouse—the same light that is seen so far out to sea. Past the English shops, which look like huge, shady warehouses—nothing to be seen in the windows, because the sun would fade and spoil the goods; you cannot enjoy the look of the pretty, tempting shops as you do in Regent Street. Down by the harbour we notice what flags are up, telling us which boats are in sight; and always one eager look is given up to the old flagstaff, to see if the well-known white pennant with its centre red ball is flying, saying that the English mail is in.

At last we reach a dusty, dirty street, where

each house is a shop; but you would hardly think so from the outside. The windows are thick with dirt, and the floors uneven, with the stones broken away in many places. But if you want to buy, you must go in. We want some velvet, so we try the first shop; then, if they have not got it, we can go regularly into every shop this side of the street, and come back the other side, trying every likely place. No one takes any notice of our entrance, so we walk up to the shelves, and pull over the stuffs to see for ourselves. No sign of velvet anywhere; but there is a man sitting reading, we will ask him.

'Tamby, have you any velvet?'

'Not got.'

Still we know this is a usual reply, so we rummage farther, open a few drawers and cupboards, and finally decide there is none, and out we go. We try again. This time the seller appears more interested in his customers, and declares he 'will get for lady.' Soon he returns, bringing all kinds of material, but no velvet. We cannot make him understand what we mean, so saying, 'No thank you,' to all his offers, we try again. At last we find what is needed; and now for the bargaining, which is such a tiresome feature of all dealings with the natives.

'How much?'

'That, lady, nine rupees (about 18*s.*) a yard; cannot say less.'

'Now, Tamby, that is a great deal too much. If *you* can't say less, *we* can't take.'

'Lady, I say eight rupees (16*s.*). I cannot give more cheap. This very good velvet; this cost me plenty money. This English velvet; cannot buy in England so good velvet for eight rupees.'

'Well, we want three yards, and will give you fifteen rupees for the three yards; no more.'

'Lady, I cannot; lady must not ask. I say seven rupees the yard, not less.'

'Very well.' We gather up our umbrellas and fans, and make for the door. As we depart we hear a voice,—

'Well, lady, take. That too cheap; I give more for that velvet my own self. I lose money; but lady take.'

This seems cruel; but knowing well that they usually ask double what they intend to get, we feel sure we have not cheated the poor soul, and taking our parcel we get into the carriage to go to the book shop. This is a clean, tidy little place, kept up by the missions. You can get Bibles in many languages there; books of all kinds—penny books of stories, magazines, picture

books and picture cards, most of your favourite hymns too, in Singalese and Tamil. The 'Pilgrim's Progress' we got there. One afternoon, later on, finding the servants all gathered round a book, which was being read aloud by one of them, I asked what interested them so, and found it was the old tale we love so well—Bunyan's story of the Pilgrim.

Now we are opposite the coffee stores. Ranks of women are busy, sorting the coffee berries, picking out the spoilt ones, and putting all the larger into a different heap. There they sit, with their babies in their laps or laid down asleep on a mat beside them. Sellers of sugar-cane are passing, and a few cents are handed out by the women, and the little ones are supplied with a piece of the cane to chew. We pass a large crowd of people, following some men carrying oysters, and as it is just the time when the boats are returning from the pearl fisheries, we will go home by the harbour, and find out if we can see anything of the oysters being brought in. We do not stay long in that part. The scent of thousands of putrefied oysters is not pleasing, so we move on, resolving to get a few at home some day, and open them out of doors, and see for ourselves what the pearl oysters are like. Appoo undertakes

that afternoon to get us a few at about fourpence a dozen.

We order chairs to be placed under a shady tamarind tree, and a coolie brings the shells. Strong smelling-salts are needed, or we shall not be able to stay here long. After opening a shell, the man squeezes the oyster carefully over and over again, to see if he can feel a pearl; then he washes the oyster, and strains the water through a fine sieve. In this way he goes on till all the shells have been opened, and the odour is almost unbearable; but we sit it out. We should so like a pearl as a curiosity, found by ourselves in its own shell. The result is about twenty seed pearls, nothing large, though we heard that many beautiful ones were found that year, some valued at several pounds.

We have been shopping; but the contents of the native shops are often offered at our own house for sale. The Bombay merchants bring beautiful things, and strangers always enjoy a peep at their wares. These men come over from India for a few years, and then, having laid by a little money, sell the remainder of their stock, and go back again to their Indian home. Embroidered cachemires and muslins, silk handkerchiefs, sandal-wood boxes, ivory chessmen, beetles'

wings, jewellery, puzzles, toys, etc.—such a choice! They are a pleasant set of men to deal with; but you must bargain with them as with the natives of Ceylon. I was looking at a carved fan one day, when the man, thinking I wished to buy, told me it was ivory. I saw it was not; it was very inferior, and looked more like bone.

'I think it is bone, not ivory,' I said.

'Yes, lady,' he said at once; 'I not tell lie; that not ivory. When I go to big house (the hotel) then I tell plenty lie. I come master's house; master good, I not tell lie.'

To these men we offered books, but they would not accept them. They said that their priests would not let them read anything but their own books. They are chiefly Hindoos, and are very particular about washing before eating, and other small details.

The Mussulmans, chiefly Afghans, used to interest us much. When the sun was setting we were generally out driving, for that is the cooler time, when every one tries to get a breath of the evening air. Wherever these men might be at the time of sunset, they would spread their little mat, and kneel down facing the sun, because that is the direction of Mecca, their holy city; and, not

noticing the passers-by, they sway themselves to and fro, repeating their prayers, some of them looking so earnest; the shoes being always taken off first, and laid beside the mat.

CHAPTER VIII.

A NATIVE BAZAAR.

FROM our verandah we can see the flagstaff, and as we have a key to the flags, we can find out as soon as flags are run up what vessel is in sight. Often we are watching some days for an expected vessel. Some friend is looking for a relative, and stays at our house in order to know as soon as possible when the boat nears the island; or sometimes we hear of those coming out for work who will be glad of a kindly welcome—missionaries for Ceylon or India, the latter only able to stay the few days that their boat is in harbour, ladies going out to zenana work,—these and others we so constantly have with us that our little house seems very lively, and nearly always full.

We had been looking out for two days, and a boy or coolie is ordered to be in sight of the flagstaff to give us the first notice of the flags we are looking for; the horsekeeper is ordered to

eat his rice in our compound, and not to go home for food all day; the carriage can be ready at a few moments' notice; and all we want is the flags, for we have a friend with us whose wife is on board the coming boat, and his tired eyes have been strained the whole of these two days looking through a telescope to make sure of the first view of the flags.

Suddenly at tiffin time the coolie brings word, 'Ship coming.' We all rush out; yes, there are the flags. Order the carriage, get the umbrellas, for it will be blazing as we go out to the ship. Soon we are driving along the shore, and there, coming rapidly in, is the vessel. We hasten to the wharf, engage a canoe, and off we go, the rowers keeping time to a sort of chant which they sing in Tamil. We are soon on board the boat, and many glad meetings take place. The captain is an old friend, and will gladly come to dinner this evening; but he has special friends on board, and would like to bring them too. Of course we are glad. Our friend's wife too has friends, who would so like to sleep on shore, they are weary of the hot cabins and the tossing of the boat; yes, there is room for all. We must put up an extra bed in one little morning room; but this is soon done, and we remember our own welcome, and

we think of a future welcome, 'Ye did it unto Me, enter thou.' So with glad hearts we promise all we can give,—quiet from the tossing waves, a roomy bed instead of a stifling cabin berth, fresh fruits and ices after the monotony of ship food, and a sight of the lovely green trees and cinnamon gardens of Colombo. Our old house has had a name for hospitality for many a year, and we must keep it up.

One Sunday morning we had a note brought in, mentioning that a young Englishman was invalided at the hotel, could we do anything for him? Well, it *is* good to be able to show a kindness, so we had the carriage out; though this was the rest day for horse and horsekeeper, still a deed of mercy might be done, so off we go. We find the invalid very lonely and very depressed, and we fancy that, to judge by our experiences, hotel life is a very costly thing, especially when funds are low, and no new resources are coming in.

'Will you come to our bungalow for a few days? It is so near the sea, and you can sit on the shore every evening and enjoy the breeze, and we have plenty of room for all your boxes.'

Gladly is the offer accepted; then and there the smaller baggage is collected, and we go home

together and install our new friend in his room, appointing one boy specially to look after that master, keep his room in order, brush his clothes, wait on him at meals, and generally serve him. And many a happy week we had with our guest —till health came back and brightness, and the doctor gave leave for the homeward voyage, and we felt quite lonely after we had seen him sail. Months after, we ourselves were home, and the warm greeting from our former guest and his home circle was well worth getting.

When friends arrive, they generally want, first a meal, then a drive, then to buy some curiosities. One drive we always take if time allows, for, to a stranger, it is the most picturesque and interesting of any.

This is through the cinnamon gardens right out to Cotta, a mission station about six miles off. Nothing I can tell you could make you picture the beauty of that drive. The roads, being red, make such a brilliant contrast to the green of hedge and field. Areca-nut palms and cocoa-nut palms line the road a good part of the way; and the great jak trees, with their fruit as large as the largest pumpkin you ever saw, look so handsome and so shady.

The mission house itself is a long low house

overlooking a lake. There are many buildings round: boarding-houses for girls and boys, day-schools, a room used as a chapel, masters' rooms and boarding-houses—and a grand number of pupils they have. The girls are taught to read and write in Singalese and English, to work plain and fancy work, and to sing both merry songs and some of our well-known hymns. It is a country part, and the women of the place are mostly lace-makers: you see them sitting on the floor of their huts as you pass along, making such beautiful lace, and making it in so spotless a way, that you do not hesitate to buy and use it. And this is wonderful when you see the little hovels in which they live. One small room, with a mud floor, no table generally, only a few stools or a bench, and some pots for cooking—no fire-place, the sticks are placed together on the floor, or outside the hut if the rains are not set in.

Twice a year the native Christians of these parts get up a bazaar for the benefit of their own mission. The money gained goes to restore some church, or buy some needed church furniture, or to pay the salaries of schoolmasters and catechists. The bazaar is very amusing. We will fancy ourselves there now—just able to make out the chief words of the sellers and the auctioneer, as they

chatter in Singalese, and help out their European guests by a few words of English now and then.

Heaps of things have been brought for sale, all *given* by these natives. Even the poorest gladly bring something. You would think them odd things for a bazaar, but as they are just the things that every native needs, and as they are chiefly natives who are going to buy, the auction goes on with great vigour.

A catechist mounts a table, and, holding up a great bunch of the yellow king cocoa-nuts, he asks for a bid. One man makes an offer, a child will bid a few cents higher; on again the price goes, a few cents only at a time, till that bunch is knocked down and a live duck is produced. Oh, the loud quacks and the louder roars of laughter! Then a basket of jaggery, a sweet sort of toffee made from the cocoa-nut tree.

Eggs, onions, cocoa-nut oil, cakes, clothes, books, baskets, fruit, potatoes, anything and everything seems to be there. The children enjoy it as much as any one, for their few cents will buy some of the offered goods, and sugar-cane sticks can be had for a mere nothing. These girls and boys look neat and clean, and are living in an atmosphere of love and kindliness, with every effort round them being made just for one aim only—

to serve and follow the Master—Christ. Many of the girls are trained as ayahs or work-women, and the boys as schoolmasters or clerks.

We had a work-woman who came daily to sew and mend for us, and a great help she was; but few of the *women* could undertake to make a dress, and our dresses being mostly of white or washing material, they do not last long out there, and we want a constant supply of new ones.

I suppose you have seen your own laundress washing her clothes, so carefully rubbing them with her hands, or on a board, and if your things come home torn you are vexed and think the woman has been careless in her work. But out there you must not be surprised at anything which befalls the linen! It is never *rubbed*, but banged and flapped violently on a stone till the dirt is washed out. By the lake-side you can watch numbers of these dhobies, as they are called, washing the clothes. Each one has chosen a flat large stone like a slab, and there he stands and flaps his garments one after another, till you wonder how his arms can go on with such energy. Every pearl button comes back as a rule cracked or broken, and trimming is torn at the first wash.

So we must often have new dresses, and the proper person to make these is a tailor. Appoo,

knowing our needs, finds us a respectable man who shows us a set of papers, saying for whom he has worked before, and if the testimonials are satisfactory we engage him.

'Come to-morrow by ten o'clock, tailor,' I said one day, after the man had disappointed me several times: 'be sure to be here at ten, for I want these things made.'

'I will come, lady, ten o'clock sharp, no humbuggy!'

Evidently he had caught the word humbug from some one, and thought it sounded assuring. Punctual to the hour next day there he was, his spectacles on, his scissors and thimble in his hand. I give him a dress I wish copied, and the material to cut out. He works away, seated on the verandah matting, till tiffin time, then he gets some plantains and a slice of bread given to him. Works on again till sunset, when he receives his 1*s.* 6*d.* and goes. It takes him about a week to finish a dress, but he copies it perfectly, and finishes it off carefully: and he makes a coat or a jacket as neatly as a dress.

CHAPTER IX.

A HOT SUNDAY.

OUR Sundays in Colombo are busy days. At eight o'clock the bell goes for service, which is held in Tamil. We must not waste time to-day, for ayah and some of the men will go to this service, and they like to have time to dress themselves neatly. Ayah puts on her prettiest dress, scarlet with yellow spots; she draws it up over her head, takes her Tamil prayer-book and another book of hymns, and we watch her waving good-bye to the baby as she steps barefooted across the grass into church. The large girls' school from Borella is there, and the people come flocking in over the bridge from Slave Island.

The sound of their lyrics is very sweet, and they all seem to join in the sing-song of their quaint tunes. Then we hear well-known tunes sung heartily to Tamil hymns. But why do the little children sit outside on the steps of the church? Well, that is because the poor mothers must bring

all the little ones to church, or they could not come themselves; so, fearing the tiny ones will disturb the congregation, they put them outside, and an elder child takes charge of them.

We must run and see if the dogs are tied up, for one of them is so affectionate that when he finds there are people in church he likes to come in too, and see if he can find a friend. Once, I am sorry to say, no one remembered to tie them up, and in the middle of service we saw Huz and Buz both marching in. They sniffed their way to Monty, and seemed quite inclined to settle down peaceably; but the church appoo could not allow the intrusion, so he dragged one out, and the other followed. All the doors and windows in the church are always wide open, making you feel as if you were almost in the open air. We had a turkey who would go in and sit behind the organ; she was missing once, and we sent to her favourite hiding-place, and there she was, sitting on some eggs.

'Yea, the sparrow hath built her a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even Thine altars, O Lord of hosts.' How true that seemed! The nests in the ceiling of our church were so many that we were obliged to get ladders sometimes and have the nests removed

for the twittering of the birds quite disturbed the congregation. At Christmas, when the church was decorated, the birds seemed so to enjoy the green, and pecked off bits and flew about with them in their bills.

But there were more trying things than birds—rats, and not your English rats, but the disagreeable musk rat, which leaves such an unpleasant scent behind. The frogs too would come in on a damp day, hopping along with a loud croaking sound.

When it rains, and the wind blows, people are obliged to rise and close the doors as quietly as possible. The sound of the wind and the rain coming is tremendous, and it is sometimes more than one man can do to shut the door against the storm. The sound of the rain as it pours down is louder than ever you heard it, and the thunder is sometimes very awful. I have known a minister conclude the service without a sermon on account of the deafening noise, not a word of the service having been heard by any, except those directly in front of the desk.

But our Sunday is only just begun. While the Tamil service goes on we begin breakfast, for at ten o'clock our Sunday-school meets. We have only one class of Singalese here, for they are mostly at other schools, so we have Burgher children, and

as they are English-speaking, we can give our own congregation work to do in this way as teachers. Some friends drive over a distance of four miles to teach in this school; another calls for one or two friends who otherwise could not come, and brings them in his own carriage. Our organist takes the big boys; and there is an infant class, where we read the 'Peep of Day,' and teach chiefly by pictures.

All want to be in time, for there are prizes given for punctuality; so, a few minutes before nine, the room seems nearly full. Then we sing, generally a hymn with a well-known chorus, because then all the very little ones can join, and you would like to peep in as we are singing, 'Shall we gather at the river?'

All the girls are in English dress, but unless they are of the *upper* Burgher class, you seldom see a button or a hook—pins everywhere! All down the front of the little frock—ribbons pinned on to the hat even!

The scent of the cocoa-nut oil is rather strong, for the heads look sleek and well anointed, so we will remember to put a little scent on our handkerchiefs next time.

It is so very hot that the children are restless, and we have to try and keep them thoroughly

interested and amused. At last the bell rings, we all sing again and join in the Lord's Prayer, and school is over.

Then the elder ones go into church for the English service, and the tiny ones go home. The teachers are hot and tired; they come over to our house and get some iced water to refresh themselves, and many of them then help in the choir. Our church has no punkahs, so nearly every one brings a fan. Outside, the compound is crowded with carriages, the horsekeepers sleeping on the roofs of the covered ones, or lying full length on the grass. The lake runs all along one side of the compound, and from the open doors and windows of the church we can see the natives bathing or washing their clothes. Service over, it is quite a work of time to find your own carriage, but there is always a policeman on duty during service hour, to keep order and quiet among the horsekeepers and arrange that there shall be no difficulty about the carriages.

After church, friends come across to our verandah; then comes tiffin; then, at three, the Singalese service in church, while the Tamils have a short meeting in the schoolroom. This is an hour when we leave that side of the house nearest to the church to itself as much as possible.

To hear two tunes being sung at the same time, in different languages, is very trying, but the two meetings do not seem to disturb each other.

At this afternoon service we generally have the most wealthy native of the island. He comes a distance of some miles, and he and his large family and their nurses require three carriages. Each carriage has a pair of horses, and two horsekeepers, besides the driver. The master himself is in European jacket, shoes and socks, but he wears the native comboy or cloth round the waist. The daughters are as tastily dressed as you would be, only they like a great deal of jewellery. The mother wears a dress, and sometimes a shawl, but she will not wear a bonnet, and this looks strange in such a handsome open carriage with the nicely dressed daughters beside her.

When this Singalese service ends, the missionary who has conducted it often drops in for a cup of tea on our verandah. We have a few hymns for the children, and then comes evening service, in English, at five o'clock. Again the church is thronged, and more so than in the morning, for this is a pleasanter hour to be out—those who are not strong cannot stand the mid-day heat. Service is over soon after six o'clock, and then every one goes in the same direction, up to the sea-shore.

The carriages are in two long lines, one going, one returning, and many people, at this hour, walk along the beach. We always do, for unless obliged to use them we give our horse and man their needed rest. Then it is that we have many a little chat and plan for the coming week.

At last it grows quite dark, all the remaining carriages have their lamps lighted, and we stroll across the green towards home. Then dinner, with generally a friend or two who have remained from the evening service; coffee on the verandah to wake us up, for we feel hot and tired and sleepy; and at last, hearing the nine o'clock gun go off at the Fort, we agree that we must separate, we were up so early and feel so weary we can keep awake no longer.

CHAPTER X.

COCOA-NUT PICKING, AND A SILVER WEDDING.

It must be very early, and yet I hear a drum beating, yes, and a sound of music too: we must look out and see what it is. There they come from the barracks. It is, indeed, a soldier's funeral, the thrilling 'Dead March' and the beautiful air 'Adeste Fideles' being played alternately. It is a solemn sound, and the poor man gone was preparing for another journey—he had received his leave for going back to Old England; his health broken, this was his hope: the voyage back, and the bracing cool of the old home country, would surely bring back strength. But this longer journey must be taken, the call had come. So the poor worn body was laid in its coffin, and that was placed on a gun-carriage, and covered by a flag, and on it was placed the white helmet which the owner had worn. Slowly the soldiers tramp along, a perfect line of white, broken only by the officer's scarf. Many a hat is lifted

as the sad procession goes by up the dusty road to the far-off cemetery.

These funerals are always early in the morning or late in the afternoon, to avoid the great heat of the day. At the gates of the cemetery the troops divide and form two lines; the coffin is then carried by some of the men, and the service is read in the chapel; then over the grave, when the coffin is lowered, three volleys are fired into the air, and all is over. Quietly the men form into ranks again, and the comrade is left in the quiet stillness. There is something touchingly sad about these funerals—they take place so soon after death, on account of the great heat, that often the first news you get of a friend's illness is a notice of the funeral.

An evening drive on the Galle Face is always an enjoyment; the air is so cool, the sunset so lovely; the vessels coming and going, the numerous carriages with their brightly dressed drivers. All looks so strangely picturesque.

The Governor's carriage with its outriders is generally to be seen, and Parsee ladies just peeping out of their close carriage, dressed in handsome green or purple silks.

We noticed sometimes a man digging very eagerly in the sand, and asking what he was

searching for, he produced a turtle's egg which he had found. The turtles are often caught on the shore here as they come up to deposit their eggs. Sometimes twenty eggs, we were told, were found together; they seem to be just like a hen's egg, only quite round and having no shell, with a semi-transparent white skin which incloses the whole.

Cocoa-nut picking is always a delight to the children. About every six weeks we are obliged to send for a man who can climb the trees and is accustomed to picking. I say we are obliged, because, as soon as we notice that the nuts begin to fall, it is not safe to allow the ripe ones to hang on the trees, and the falling is a sign that some have ripened. The trees are so very tall, and the nut so heavy, that it would cause severe injury if any one were passing and were struck by the falling nut.

The picker having come, he ties a small circle, made of a dried piece of cocoa-nut leaf, round the trunk of a tree. This is as strong as a rope, and placing his feet inside it he begins to climb, holding firmly with both hands, and swinging up his feet after by pressing them against the tree. Once up,—and it looks such a perilous height,—he begins to throw down all the nuts that are ripe or nearly so. The coolie keeps watch as to how

many trees the picker ascends, and gathers the fallen nuts into a heap. When the man is tired, he stops for that morning, and is paid by receiving one nut from each tree he ascends.

We then have the nuts counted, and often there are about two hundred. We keep as many as we shall need for the next six weeks, and send the remainder to the Borella boarding-schools. There they are very acceptable, as native curries cannot be made without cocoa-nuts, and the usual price is six shillings a hundred.

I daresay you know how many uses this beautiful tree has. But we will count them up once more, in case you have not noticed all. The nuts make curry, they give milk, and oil for the lamps can be extracted from them. The outer shell is used for matting and ropes. The leaf serves to cover the roofs of small houses when well dried and plaited. The shells are made also into spoons and bowls.

The trunk of the tree is used for timber, and it is a beautifully specked wood when polished. The centre part of the stem, at the very top, is eaten as a vegetable, and is something like a cabbage, only perfectly white. Sometimes after a heavy gale we found that a tree had fallen in our compound, and we were always glad to secure the

'cabbage' at the top: for of course this can only be taken from a tree which is down—it is the very heart of the tree, and would destroy all prospect of future crops if cut from a standing tree.

There is a beautiful compound where some friends of ours live; and it contains such an old inhabitant that most visitors go to see him. Even the Prince of Wales, when he came to the island, paid him a visit there. This is a huge tortoise known to be more than a hundred years old. His eyes look quite shrunken with age, and the skin of his neck, as it shows from under the shell, is withered and wrinkled. He lives chiefly on the sea side of the compound, but on the approach of the monsoon climbs the steep hill, passes the large bungalow which is built on the top, and retreats to the more sheltered regions behind the house. He can still move, without apparent effort, with the weight of a strong man standing on his back.

But now let us pay a visit to the wealthy native whose way of coming to church we have described. Let us go there to-day, for the eleventh child of the house is to be named after me and the wife of our doctor; and as the ceremony is to take place at eleven o'clock, we are asked to go early, and breakfast with the chaplain.

The train runs very near our house; so, as it is only eight o'clock, we will take umbrellas and walk to the Slave Island station. The carriages of the train are painted white on the roofs, so that they may attract the heat less, and each window has also a venetian to keep out the glare. Our journey is close to the sand and sea-shore—thick groves of cocoa-nut trees to our left, sand and sea to our right. There is a coral-reef here which shows at low water, and pieces of coral are constantly dredged up with shells and placed in large heaps to be burnt for lime.

Reaching our station at last, we are met by one of the many carriages of this kindly native. We drive to the chaplain's house, who is a Singalese and is in clerical dress, except the black comboy and the white socks. He receives us kindly, and promises that his wife and daughter will soon join us.

The wife cannot speak a word of English, so we can only smile at each other and use the few Singalese words that we do know. After breakfast, with its invariable curry and plantains, of which we never tire, we set out for the church. Such a sandy walk, trees shading us delightfully overhead, and groups of native huts here and there with their usual accompaniment of ominous-

looking dogs. The service is held in English, but the baptism is in Singalese. The tiny dark-faced baby looks very dark in its white clothes. All the family are present—grown sons, daughters who are being educated by an English lady, and are therefore partly English in manner and appearance. The mother tells me they consider baby very fair!—(this, I suppose, means that her skin is not quite so dark as some of her brothers and sisters)—and therefore they call her in Singalese 'little white sister.'

After service we all go to the house of baby's father, and there we meet some of the catechists and schoolmasters; for this man, with all his wealth, has proved a kindly and useful helper to many. He has built large schools. The boys' school is called the Prince of Wales' College, and the girls' school is very flourishing under an English lady as mistress. While here, we see that sad sight, a procession of devil-dancers, going to the house of some sick people to try and drive away the sickness by violent dancing, jumping, and beating the tom-tom.

There is a native jeweller at work. Let us watch him for a few moments. He has his tiny fire of coke and sticks. He blows through a bamboo cane to increase the heat, and promises,

if one of us will give him half a rupee (about one shilling) that he will make, then and there, a pair of sleeve buttons, and ask nothing for his work. So the half-rupee is given; he blows, melts, hammers, works away, and finally polishes and hands us two neatly finished studs, and the remaining bit of melted silver (for he melted the money given) is quite enough to repay him for his trouble.

You know what a 'silver wedding' is, do you not? When I was in Colombo we received a card printed in silver letters, asking us to go one evening to the house of a Singalese to celebrate his silver wedding. We were glad to see so thoroughly native a scene, and readily went. A large shed was erected for the occasion. The roof was one mass of moss; the pillars, which were chiefly of bamboo and wooden planks, were covered with palm leaves and moss, inlaid with white lotus roses and other flowers. The whole scene was brilliantly lighted, and seemed quite dazzling as we stepped from the darkness outside into this fairy palace.

The Singalese ladies had placed themselves together, and seemed to shine with jewels. The diamonds and sapphires of Ceylon are noted, and there were many there that night. How curious

the different dresses looked! The Singalese in their combs and comboys, the Burghers in their European dress of the most exaggerated type, European ladies in evening dress, servants in white,—one great throng. There was music, and native dances as well as English dances, and then we were asked to go upstairs and see the wedding presents. Such a mass of silver! many of the gifts looking as if they had just come from some London shop, others were of purely native work.

The kind-hearted host had supplied a costly supper, but we did not stay for that; we only walked down the tent where it was laid, and admired the exquisite flowers and tasteful arrangement of the tables. We left early, for our home life was too busy to allow of very late hours at night, for that meant late too in the morning, and we were there for work, and must place that first.

CHAPTER XI.

BUDDHA'S TOOTH AND THE BUDDHISTS.

AFTER being a year in the island we arranged to go up country for a change, taking the little boys with us and their new little sister. Our train journey was very tiring. The stations amused us, but the babies were tired with the heat. At each stopping-place they brought young cocoa-nuts to the carriage windows, and chopping off the top of the nut, we could drink the cool milk, which was very refreshing.

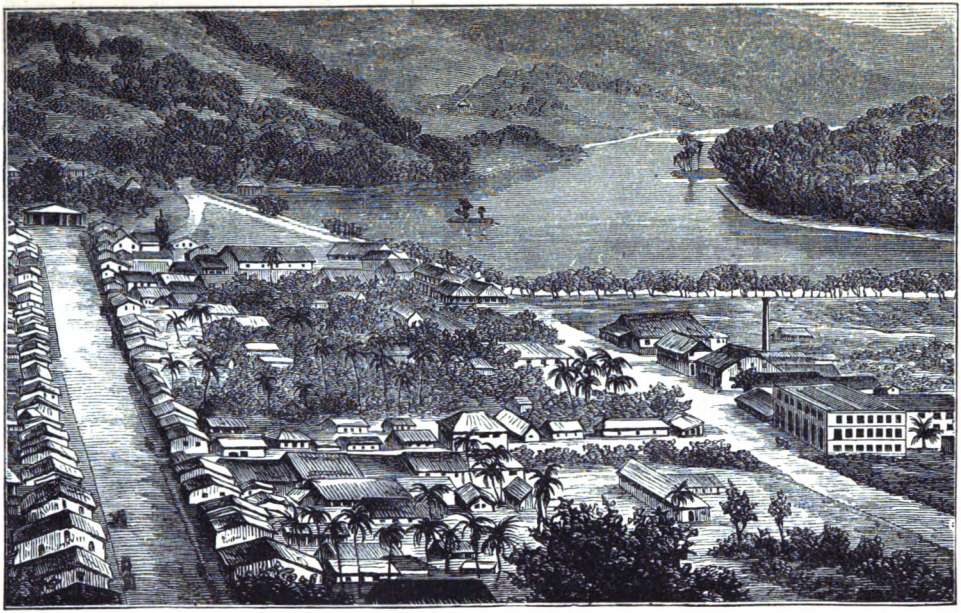
The 'pass' is rather alarming, for the train seems to be running over a tremendous precipice; indeed, the name of that part is called 'Sensation Rock,' and no nervous person ought to look out of the window. But if you can look without growing dizzy the sight is grand. We are ascending, slowly, very slowly, and beneath us are the paddy fields and masses of trees and shrubs; we can see the hanging nests built by

a weaver bird, and the great pods of the cotton tree.

Kandy itself, where we shall stay for some time, used to be the capital of the island, but Colombo takes its place now. We are to stay at a friend's house, who promises to show us all there is to interest us, so surely we shall have an enjoyable visit.

How different from our home! There are hardly any cocoa-nut trees here; it is so much cooler, and the flowers are much more luxuriant. Heliotrope, verbena, and roses abound, and huge purple and scarlet passion-flowers shelter the verandah. We actually need blankets at night, though the mid-day heat is almost as great as that of Colombo. But how our eyes ache! Why is it? Because here the roads are glaringly white, a great contrast to the red cabook of Colombo.

We must visit the great Buddhist temple, which we have long been anxious to see; and a fine large building it is. Numbers of priests are about in their yellow robes, and some holding the brass bowl in which they have collected alms from the natives they passed on the road. But the scent of sweetness is almost sickening. It comes from baskets of flowers which are brought as offerings to Buddha, and are laid in heaps in the temple.



KANDY.

The beautiful temple flower with its white blossoms is almost overpowering.

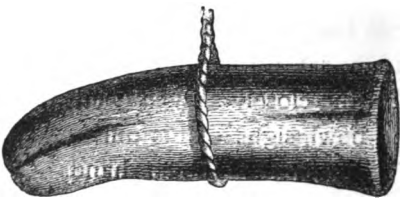
A kind friend who is with us offers to take us into the library and introduce us to one of the Buddhist priests. The library is well worth seeing: many of its books are rolls, written on something very like parchment, which is really dried leaves of a palm.

The priest showed us some of the most ancient and valuable books; and then, turning to our little Monty, he asked him in English if he could read Singalese. Of course he said he could not. 'Then,' said the priest, 'I will give you the letters, and you can learn them as soon as you like.' And the old man sat down and we watched. The yellow robe, the closely shaven head and face, and the fan and bowl, signs of his office, were all very quaint. And as his brown hands traced the characters on a piece of a palm leaf, we wished we could teach him something of our creed and our hopes. We have kept that leaf, for we value it much. The kindliness of the old man was in itself a lesson—not too busy, amidst all his books and work, to sympathise with a little child.

The Buddhist religion teaches kindness, as we proved in many ways. We noticed often by the roadsides a chatty, or clay bowl, standing in a

little niche in the wall, the bowl carefully covered with a board. We were told this was water placed there for the use of travellers or passers-by; and no one was ever paid for refilling the bowl, though it always was kept filled. This is a deed of kindness which all must be willing to perform, as it gains them merit, and merit will, they believe, receive its reward.

But we are still in the temple, and the most important thing has yet to be seen—that is, as much of it as we are allowed to see. And this is the shrine of Buddha's tooth! Think of a shrine



BUDDHA'S TOOTH.

built to hold only what they believe to be the tooth of a man who lived many hundreds of years ago. This tooth is inclosed in several gold cases, and no one is allowed to see it except on very rare occasions. The Prince of Wales was shown it when he visited Kandy, and it is carried in procession at the time of their yearly festivals.

I want you now for a moment to try and picture the life of a little Buddhist child. Such strange lessons it learns! You can remember how your mother or your nurse taught you to kneel down and say your prayers, and ask that the 'tender Shepherd' would keep you safe. The little Buddhist child has no such lesson as this.

A few sweet-smelling flowers are put into his tiny hands as soon as he can grasp them, and he is led into a large dreary temple, where lies a huge figure of Buddha, cut out in wood or stone. Then he leaves his gift of flowers: no prayer—Buddha does not hear that: no looking up to say 'Our Father, who art in heaven.' Buddha does not watch over or care for the little children. There is no beautiful land in the sweet by-and-by for the Buddhists—they are taught that it is better to wish to die altogether, to sleep one long unbroken sleep, never to wish for a glad waking.

What a contrast to our hopes and our future! They have no Friend to guide them as we have; they know nothing of the Lord Jesus, who became a little child, who lived and toiled for them, and who at last died on the cross for their salvation. Beyond this world they have no home to look for. Here they must work and toil to merit that long quiet rest, a state of no feeling, no sight, no thought.

For us *here* there is a work to do; but side by side with us, though unseen, the loving Master walks. Beyond this life we have a home—certain and sure, where sin and sorrow and death can never come. Would you not like to be able to tell these heathen children the great difference between your religion and theirs? would you not gladly try to show how the Saviour died because He loved them and us, and that His death has won for us a better rest than one of unbroken sleep?

I should tire you if I told you of other creeds. I will only name a few quickly, for I want you to feel how grand it is to know the truth, and how sad to be without a Saviour, a hope in this life, and a heaven in the life to come.

There are the poor devil-dancers. We had one servant who belonged to this sect. When any one is ill, the devil priests go with painted faces and curious dresses, and carrying tom-toms, they beat them furiously and dance wildly, to drive away, as they say, the devil out of the sick person.

The Hindoos, who worship idols of many kinds; the Mahometans, whose creed is, 'There is only one God, and Mahomet is His prophet;' the Parsees or fire-worshippers—all these and many others throng that little island of Ceylon. And these are

the various peoples which our great Missionary Societies are trying to reach and to bless.

There are day-schools and Sunday-schools for the children of each language; missionaries who can speak in Portuguese, Singalese, and Tamil; catechists who visit from house to house and read to the natives and try to get them to hear what the Christian religion is like: and from hearing, they often get interested, and ask the reader to come again and again; and many, through simply hearing the New Testament read to them by one our of themselves, have come to see the beauty of Gospel story, and have left their own people's faith, to cling to ours.

The boarding-schools are a great means of good. I remember one where an English minister is the head-master. A chapel is built in the school compound, and there are masters' houses and a large building for training young men to be school-masters and catechists.

On prize day, which comes once a year, there is a goodly gathering of English friends, who drive out from Colombo to see the scene. There are rows of girls, each neatly dressed in white cotton jacket and coloured comboy. Each of these receives a piece of English print long enough for a dress. Then come the boys, and they receive

either a piece of cloth or a book, and they give as good a cheer as any boys at home, and then join in 'God save the Queen,' with a hearty shout.

The teaching at these schools goes on in many ways. Besides the actual Scripture classes and services there is the daily influence of Christian lives. When a boy sees that his master is gentle and kindly, he begins to wonder what makes him so. Why does this master never tell a lie, or cheat, as he sees his own people doing? And why do all so reverently kneel each day, and talk so earnestly to their God? All these things strike a new boy, and he soon begins to wonder, and to ask, and he likes the pictures of Jesus and of heaven and home, and begins to wish he too had such a Saviour and such a home.

In many parts of the island there are rooms built which are kept open all day for passers-by. A catechist preaches there, and natives are invited to come in and talk over their religion and ours. One room I can remember, where the number of natives who came in monthly to talk and to learn was over three hundred. Books are given away, and some poor coolie, who has been tempted in by the sight of a book and the promise of a story read to him from it, carries away the gift to his up-country home. Often after the long day's work

in the coffee estate is over, he sits down to read his book—probably the only one he has ever possessed; or very likely he cannot even read it himself, but is obliged to get some more learned friend to read it to him. So the good seed is carried and spread abroad.

The Tamil Coolie Mission, which is supported by the Church Missionary Society, sends missionaries and catechists to the coolies working on the coffee and tea plantations. The only time to speak to them together is when they are mustered for work in the early morning. It is a strange and a sad sight to look upon that muster. There they stand at six o'clock in the morning, shivering in their blankets. The up-country air is fresh and cool in the early hours, but to them it feels very, very cold, and they keep the blankets in which they have slept tightly drawn round their shoulders.

When the address begins they all sit down on the ground, most of them chewing betel, and some of the worn faces look greatly interested. Soon they must move off to the day's work, but the memory of the words must remain. It may be weeks before another catechist comes round, for there are not nearly enough in the island to visit each estate constantly; but, however seldom, all are visited, and this is something to be thankful for.

I will now tell you about two of these people, just to show you something of the result of this Christian teaching.

There was a very very old man who came often to our bungalow selling sticks—'The old stick man,' he was called. He had been a Buddhist, but had learnt from a native preacher the story of the Cross, and had believed, and taken the Lord Christ for his Master. Whenever he came to a house to sell his wares he would lift up his turban, put his old withered hands together, and offer a short prayer for the inmates. After that he would gladly show his sticks and sell any, and his selling was according to his Master's own rule of measure, 'Good measure, pressed down and running over.' After concluding a bargain, he invariably *gave* one stick, if not more, either to the children or ourselves, and you may be sure he was no loser in the end. At last he ceased to come, and we heard he was very ill. Relief was sent out to him for some weeks, and friends visited him. Once again he came in to see us, drawn in a bullock bandy, but the jolting was too much, and he never ventured again. He knew he could not last long, and told us, 'I shall not come again; I am very old now, and shall soon go to my Master the Lord Jesus Christ.' A few days later and the old man went home: he

had lived a Christ-like life, and he died knowing that death was for him only a change of room and not a change of company—the same Master he had served here was with him through the valley, and would be with him still on the other side.

Another native Christian, who is still living, is old Abraham. He was formerly a Buddhist, but after hearing about Christianity he became persuaded of its truth, and spent some time in studying and inquiring into all its facts. He soon became an earnest Christian, and used his own trade of medicine-man as a means for spreading the good news.

Perhaps you would like to know what sort of medicines he makes. Boiled tamarinds are a cure for fever. Plantain leaves serve instead of lint or rag for binding round a sore. Quinine, from the bark of a tree growing up country; wood apple, a yellow fruit which seems like a wooden ball, it is so hard; and many other fruits and leaves are the chief remedies. And so, unpaid, this old native doctor works as hard as any catechist or paid agent of any society, preaching sometimes to a crowd of his people as they gather in the bazaar or market, chatting with the coolies as they go along with their loaded bullock carts, and rousing them to ask further about old Abraham's God.

Once the old man was near a court of justice at a time when the judges were sitting, and some man having roughly struck and ill-treated Abraham, he was advised by his friends to go at once into court and get redress. 'No,' said the old man, 'I could not do that, for I remember the time when I stood near a preacher, ready to strike him for teaching, as I thought then, false things.'

Abraham is now a white-haired old man. I wish I could show him to you in his Singalese dress; he is a tall fine man, but stoops now a little with age.

You know that the great British and Foreign Bible Society, which prints Bibles in all languages, sells them so cheaply that any one can buy; it also gives them away in numbers if they are needed. We got this society to give us Testaments in Tamil, Portuguese, Singalese, and English, for we had some poor women of each of these nationalities who belonged to a sewing-class.

Many, indeed most of them, had never possessed a Testament before, so one day we had a tea for all the workers, and asked the Governor's wife to come and give away the gifts for us. About two hours before the tea-time we saw the poor things coming in and sitting down at once under the shade of our cocoa-nut trees, for they had had a

long and hot walk, all of them having come from the far side of the lake. They looked so nicely dressed that I asked how they managed to get such nice clothes, knowing that each one was desperately poor and needy. They told me they had borrowed or hired their dresses and shawls for the day, so as to look nice. They wear no bonnets, but a shawl is the one thing which means style and finish for them, so of course all wore shawls that day. After tea, a short address was given by one of the missionaries, each woman received a packet of tea, sugar, money to the amount of 5*s.* in their own coin, and a Testament in their own language. They were very grateful, and said they never had had such a day before, and had never in their lives been invited out to tea!

CHAPTER XII.

THE CITY OF LIGHT AND 'A BURN.'

BEFORE we leave Kandy, I must tell you of another very interesting place, and this is the beautiful gardens of Peradeniya. These are botanic gardens, and we saw more there than I can now remember.

Great india-rubber trees shaded the entrance. We knew them by their tangled roots, which spread widely over the ground, and seem to insist on being above ground to a great extent. Nutmeg trees with their fruit, very like an apricot. We broke off the juicy fruit, and inside found the kernel, which is inclosed in the lace-looking mace. This mace, when you first open the nut, is a brilliant red colour, and we tried to preserve some with this colour by drying the fruit and nut all in one; but as the fruity part withered and burst open, the mace lost its brightness, and turned to that brown shade that you see it now when you take it from the spice box.

Then the pepper plant, the leaves being nearly as hot and biting as the peppercorns themselves. The talipot palm, with its wonderful blossom like a huge feather bursting from the top of the long bare trunk of the palm. One part of these gardens is called 'The Ruins,' and as you come near, you really fancy you see the ruins of some old building, thickly hung with a massive green plant, with large blue blossoms. It is in reality nothing but groups of trees, covered and weighed down with this beautiful creeper; but it grows so thickly, and makes such a dense shade, that it destroys the undergrowth of trees in time.

There are cocoa trees, with very large, deep red pods; and giant bamboos, the stems of which are so useful, being hollow. At each joint the stem is solid, while the spaces between the joints are hollow. These, then, make useful flower-pots: cut just beneath a joint, and you can choose your size of stem according as you need a small or a large flower-pot. The stems are so very strong, though hollow, that they are used for scaffolding, and for fastening the outriggers on to the little native boats.

After some few days in Kandy, we went on to the great resort of all Colombo people, that is up to the hills to Nuwara Elliya, which means

'The City of Light.' It is a plain surrounded by hills, and the cold is so great in early morning and at night that we are glad of fires and warm clothing, and sometimes there is frost. All our luggage has been brought up in bullock bandies, and the delight of being able to walk about, instead of driving always, is great. The famous mountain called Adam's Peak is near, and the view from the top is grand. On the way up, you can sometimes see the footprint of a cheetah, for they are found in the jungle parts near. A kind of blackberry grows in abundance, only there it is yellow in colour, and more like our white raspberries. The Buddhists say that the footprint of Buddha is on the top of this mountain; and there is a mark like the print of a huge foot, but so enormous that Buddha must have been some hundreds of feet high if this were the size of his foot.

The jungle parts are cleared for planting coffee. There are so many large trees to be felled that the labour is great, and hundreds of coolies are needed. If the clearing happens to be on a slope, these coolies have a clever way of saving themselves some of the trouble. They cut the trunk of each tree halfway through, or a little over the half, just as much as will keep it still

standing and no more. So they work gradually up the hill, half cutting all, until they reach the top. And now comes the grand result: the top trees are cut quite through, and as the heavy trunks fall with a crash they bring down in their fall the half-cut trees around them, and they again in falling crash against lower ones, and so on until there are few left which have not been broken down in the general fall.

After this, these logs must lie and bake for weeks in the sun. Meantime any wood that is needed for firewood is removed, and when the place is pronounced thoroughly dry, notices are sent round to the neighbouring estates to give warning of 'the burn' which is to take place on some given day; so then the estate owners near must be ready to watch that no flying sparks alight on any of their property, and so cause damage. A 'burn' is a very grand sight. The sun is darkened for some time by the dense smoke which first rises, and then the roar of the flames over the dry timber and crackling leaves is a strange sound.

CHAPTER XIII.

PICNIC LIFE.

I SHOULD like to tell you what it is like to start from Colombo to an up-country house, far away among the hills beyond Kandy. To stay with friends, as we did in Kandy, was pleasant, easy work, and needed little packing; but to take a bungalow for ourselves, and settle into it for three months, requires great preparation. Four weeks before we start, we pack most of the eatables we shall require—rice, cocoa-nuts, groceries, paddy for horse food, potatoes, flour, etc. We put them in nailed cases and sacks, and load one or two carts with them. Then we must all have thick clothes, so we fill some big trunks with these, and with blankets, rugs, and quilts. These are sent on, and generally arrive only a few days before ourselves, as the bullocks take so long upon the journey. They do not

travel during the heat of the day, but only at night and in the early morning.

Then, two days before we go off, we start our cook and one boy, to go by train to a station or two farther on than Kandy. From there they walk, sleeping by night in some native rest-house. Each servant is given a blanket and a warm jacket before starting, and they must receive sixpence extra for each day that they spend up country, because their rice and curry costs so much more there.

One year we had agreed to take for one month a bungalow on a coffee estate. A friend had written telling us of its size, etc., and though it was very small we decided to try it for these few weeks. The boxes had gone off long before, and were promised to be delivered at the same time as cook and boy arrived, *i.e.* a day before ourselves. We expected to find all ready for us when we should reach the bungalow. We had the three children and an English nurse, and we intended to live very much in picnic style, and do a great deal for ourselves, as the house was too small to allow of many servants.

We went by train as far as possible, then took our own horse and carriage from the train, in which they had come with us, and we all packed

in. It was a tight fit, so we went slowly, the horsekeeper walking most of the way, and we elder ones getting down at every hill, for they are terribly steep and rugged. After some hours of ascent we decide upon tiffin; so we choose a shady spot, loose the horse from the carriage and give him his food, while we open our sandwiches and pop our ginger-beer bottles. There are streams in plenty, but all the water is not good to drink, so it is safer not to venture. We are near a coffee estate, and we are quite disappointed at the look of it. We expected something so pretty, and here are nothing but miles of shrubs all cut to about the same height and size and standing at equal distances from each other. It is neither in blossom nor in berry, so it looks much like laurel bushes.

We pass many bullock bandies travelling on this road, but mostly resting in sheds during the heat; large white bullocks many of them, and all have a hump on their necks. The drivers are so proud of the finest of these animals, they dress them up with shells or bells hung round the neck.

We reach, towards evening, the rest-house where we have engaged rooms for the night, and a lonely little spot it is, perched quite high among the

hills, shaded by pummelo trees, which are just now heavy with fruit. The pummelo is like an enormous orange as large as your head. It tastes like an orange, only it has very little juice, and it is not much cared for. Then there is a tree with a very large white blossom, which is called there the moon-flower. It has a delicious scent, and it is a round, perfectly white flower. As soon as it gets dusk we watch the lightning playing over the distant hills, and we so hope no storm is coming, for it is impossible to sleep in Ceylon during a thunder-storm, the sound is so appalling. We breakfast at six o'clock next morning, and start soon after. We feel sure that by evening we shall reach our bungalow, and find servants and everything in readiness. About four o'clock, after a weary hot day, we reach the estate on which stands our little house. We see cook and boy coming to meet us; then all must be right.

'When did you get here, cook? and are the boxes all safe?'

'No box come, lady; nothing we can get to eat; no coolie come to help us; no fire, no wood, no anything!'

This seemed hopeless. What could we do? The nearest European lived nearly a mile off, but we

despatch boy at once to beg him to lend us some coolies, and to send us some firewood.

Even the bungalow is locked up: we must sit down by the roadside and be patient. But no, we will not waste time: the children can pick up some dry sticks for our fire, and ayah can keep watch for any passing coolie to get any help we can from him.

At last some bullock-carts come up, and to our joy we see our boxes have arrived. They ought to have been here some days ago, but we must be thankful to get them now. We are so hungry; we have eaten all our provisions, and cook has nothing but a live fowl and a few rather questionable-looking rolls, evidently some days old. The coolies deposit all the heavy boxes and sacks in the road. We offer rupees if they will help to carry them to the house, which is nearly a quarter of a mile farther on—amidst the coffee. No, they will not; they want to reach some certain spot to-night, and it is already growing dark; so they leave us.

Here is a plight! but we are cheered by the sight of boy returning with keys. He has the key of the house, but says that as the master is away, he can get no coolies to help. So here we are—on the road, evening coming on fast, nothing unpacked

of bedding or food, and three little ones who ought soon to be in bed.

We do not lose heart, though cook is despairing; but we promise that he shall share the food, if only he will manage to cook some, so off he goes to his kitchen. You cannot well imagine the kitchen: a mud hut, with a mud bank at one end supporting a flat stone; and as this is the only fire-place, there is a good heap of dried mud, flattened on each side, to make some sort of shelter and keep out the draught. We open our heaviest boxes on the road, produce a kettle and saucepan and spoon, and thus armed cook proceeds with his fowl, rice, and curry stuffs, to make us some dinner. We are all busy opening the boxes and carrying in the things, when to our joy a coolie appears with a bottle of milk and a little butter. He has been sent up from some near bungalow to see if we have arrived, and if we want anything.

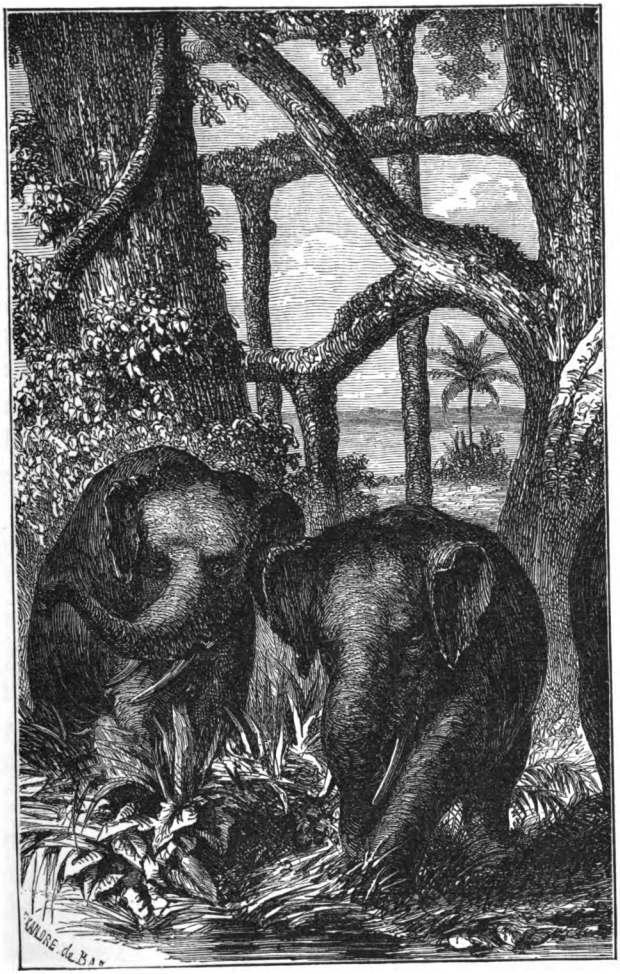
We seem to want almost everything, especially another pair of hands—and he is willing to stay and help. He shall certainly get a rupee, for this is a grand aid. He and boy carry in all the luggage, and the little ones being settled off for the night, we begin to hope that cook can really produce something for us. At last, a dish of curry and the stale rolls appear. We manage to leave

a portion for our nurse and the kitchen parties, but we should gladly finish all if we only had more.

Oh the noise of that night! There was a large waterfall near our house, and as the rains had been heavy lately the roar was deafening. In the garden was a group of plantain trees, and this was a source of attraction to a wild elephant, who was sometimes heard and seen to come down and feed. Indeed, the marks round the trees were so fresh, we felt sure he had been there lately, and for the first night we could scarcely sleep, thinking we heard him passing the window.

Morning cheered us a little, for it brought a very kind letter from a neighbour, saying how sorry he was to have missed seeing us as we passed, as he had men all ready to help us unpack and settle, and anything we needed he would gladly lend if he possessed it. Bread and milk, therefore, we at once sent for, and many other needs afterwards this kind friend supplied.

I cannot say we very much enjoyed the month here: it rained incessantly, and we were too far from other people to meet them, except very rarely. The roads were not fit for driving, so we contented ourselves with long rambles, and when it was too



CEYLON ELEPHANTS.

wet for that, we went to the coffee store and watched the pulping.

The coffee-berries are very like cherries—round and red, and the coolies were busy picking while we were there. Shivering they were, poor souls, in the early mornings—all with their blankets pinned round them over head and shoulders; and miserable they looked when the rain poured down, and the dripping bushes soaked them through and through. About four o'clock they all go to the store, where the conductor measures out what each has picked, and they are paid accordingly. The process of squeezing the berries is very curious to watch. There are the heaps and heaps of berries: they then pass through a part of the mill where the pulp is squeezed off, and pulp and berries float down long troughs of running water. The pulp is carried off into a shoot, and allowed to fall down into some deep place below, where it remains until wanted for manure. The beans undergo another process —they must be separated from the parchment in which they grow. This parchment is rubbed off by heavy rolling wheels, and after being dried, it is used for lighting the fires of the great mill engines. The beans go through several drying processes, the last being that over a large flat court, called a barbicue, where the berries are spread in the sun to

dry. When sufficiently done, they are swept up into sacks, sewn up, and carted to the wharf for exportation.

The coolies on these coffee estates have, I think, a hard life. While the shrub is in berry, they must work incessantly to pick before the berry falls—often it is in drenching rain they work; and when they go home they must light the fires and cook their curry—there is no one left at home to prepare for them, all hands are needed in crop time.

But the Tamil Coolie Mission has done a great deal for these poor souls. About once a month, if not oftener, on most estates a clergyman or catechist is allowed to address these poor coolies at muster time, and they listen attentively, and gladly take any little books offered—that is, those who can read, but most of them are very ignorant.

There was a lovely walk we used often to take in this part, where a little wood seemed the favourite spot for the green parrots that you know so well by sight. They chattered so fondly, and seemed so to enjoy their little lives. The guavas, which make guava jelly, grew thickly there, and as soon as they were at all ripe these parrots pecked away at them, so that we could never find a ripe one untouched.

Now there was one thing which we found there, which was almost worse than anything in the island. Can you guess what it could be? As we walked along the narrow paths, with the long grass each side, we suddenly felt such a sharp bite on our ankles or our knees, and often I have seen Monty's little socks all stained with blood. They were leeches, and we walked in dread of them. They stretch out their long thin black bodies from the top of a blade of grass, and manage to cling to the passer-by; they are soon inside the stocking, and then they feed away. Pulling them off, too, is a disagreeable process. They look so fat and short while feeding on you, and then, when you seize the creature, it pulls out into such a long black string, that you wonder if it is going to break. The native quarters are all surrounded with that lovely white flower which we have in our greenhouses here—they call it the fever plant, we call it datura. Its scent is so strong, as to be almost overpowering.

There were tea estates, too, in these parts, and cinchona plants, from the bark of which our quinine is made. English fruits will grow up in this colder climate, and we had plums and apricots while there.

Our Sundays were spent at home, for we had a

seven miles' walk, and then a wide stream, with only a foot-bridge across, to reach the nearest place of worship.

Whenever a missionary can be had in these lonely parts, he is asked to hold service in the coffee-store, if there is no church; and many of the planters get up a regular service in this way, reading service themselves, if no clergyman is available, and they invite all the neighbours within reach to come and join them.

Before we leave up country and its scenes, I should like to tell you of another part of the island where we once spent three months. We were on the top of a hill. To reach the road which led to the bazaar or the church, we had to descend three-quarters of a mile to the river, cross that, ascend another half-mile, and then we were at last on the road. As this was our only means of getting about, you can fancy we did not often leave our estate. There were, however, chairs to be had, into which we got, and sat; and borne by four coolies we could be carried one at a time up and down this distance. Once on the road, we had seven miles to go before we reached the church, so we could only manage this on fine Sundays.

A little wood was near our house, where there were a great many monkeys, and they made such a

noise, chattering at us, if we happened to pass near the trees they were on. The jackals at night were very disturbing, and we were not sorry when the time came for us to go back to our Colombo home.

The servants too were always so pleased to go home. They did not like the up-country life at all. It is too cold for them, and they cannot enjoy the long chats with their friends which they so delight in at home, where their relatives live near to them. The price you pay for things, and the difficulty of getting them from such distances, are great drawbacks to up-country life. But they are now making a railway to these parts, and this, when finished, will remove many of the present difficulties. You have seen an elephant at the Zoological Gardens, have you not? But you would like to see them at work on the roads in Ceylon. We often watched them. It was wonderful to see how clever they were. In making one road, large blocks of stone had to be placed one against another. The keeper seated on the elephant gave the order, and a chain being placed round the stone and attached to the elephant, he patiently pulls the huge block into position. The chain is unfastened, and the elephant draws slightly back, to see the result of his work; if not per-

fectly straight, he pushes it with his trunk or foot, and lays it exactly in position.

When an elephant is at work on the roads, a man carrying a red flag walks up and down in front of the animal some little way, to give warning that the elephant is there. For the roads are narrow, with often only a deep precipice one side and a steep ascent on the other, and some horses are so terror-stricken at the sight of the animal that it would be terribly dangerous work if a carriage and its load came upon the elephant unawares. As our horse was very timid, and we had sometimes to pass where these huge creatures were at work, we were always on the watch for the man with a flag, and we waited till he had shouted to the keeper to put the elephant as much to one side as possible, while our horsekeeper, walking at the horse's head, and holding it sideways towards the bank, led the poor thing on; but he shivered all over with a feeling of terror, as if he well knew in what company he was.

After the day's work is over, the elephant is led to a deep stream, and set free. How he enjoys his bath! He takes up the water in his trunk and pours it all over his back and shoulders, and stands still, evidently enjoying the cool feeling of

his feet and legs. When he has had enough he quietly walks up the bank to his shed, and begins munching the plantain leaves and other food laid ready for him. A chain is then fastened to his leg, and he is secured to the hut.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

I AM sorry to end my little chat about Ceylon. It has taken me back in thought to many a pleasant and happy time in my life there; but little minds are so soon tired, and perhaps you are very tired now. I will not say much more, only I want you to look at two little pictures with me, and if you are a good hand at drawing, well, you might make a little sketch of them.

A little girl of fifteen years is sitting in my room learning to sew. Her black hair is decked with two gold arrows. A gold chain is round her neck; ears, nose, fingers, toes, are loaded with rings. She cannot speak English. She has just come over from her Indian home to be married to a schoolmaster. One short year, and little Arokian has passed away—gone to the other world, the other life.

Did you do anything for India or Ceylon

during these last few years? If so, perhaps you helped that little wife to enter the kingdom.

One more picture.

A muster of coolies on a coffee estate—so dirty and offensive that you would rather not go too near. The roll is read out: they answer one by one to their names. The master notices the missing ones, and sends the others off for their long day's toil among the coffee. Do you look forward to another grand roll call, when these very same people will answer to their names in the same place as your name will be called? Will you answer gladly to the Master that day? and will you thrill with joy to remember that you did a *something* for the least of these, in days gone by?

'But it is so little, it hardly seems worth doing at all,' perhaps you say. But it can be said of your work as of hers of old, 'She hath done what she could.' Will not that be grand?

Remember these Ceylon people in your work and in your prayers, and while you are singing

'What though the spicy breezes
Blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle,'

say, 'I will do what I can,' for these wandering

sheep who are among those 'for whom Christ died.'

FROM Greenland's icy mountains,
From India's coral strand,
Where Afric's sunny fountains
Roll down their golden sand,
From many an ancient river,
From many a palmy plain,
They call us to deliver
Their land from error's chain.

What though the spicy breezes
Blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle,
Though every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile!
In vain with lavish kindness
The gifts of God are strown;
The heathen, in his blindness,
Bows down to wood and stone.

Can we, whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high,
Can we to men benighted
The lamp of life deny?
Salvation! oh, salvation!
The joyful sound proclaim,
Till each remotest nation
Has learned Messiah's name.

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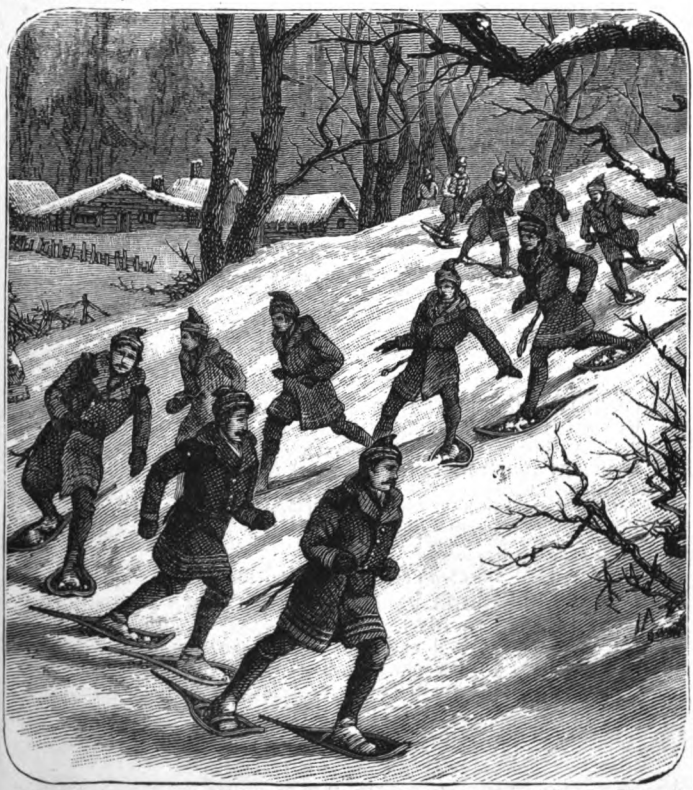

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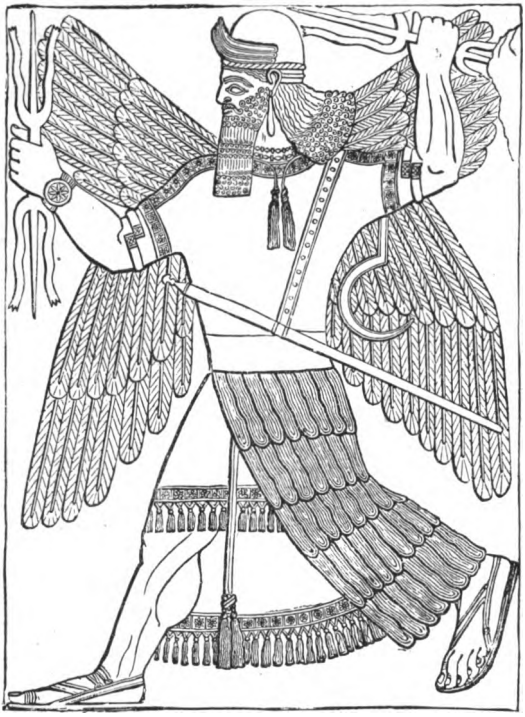

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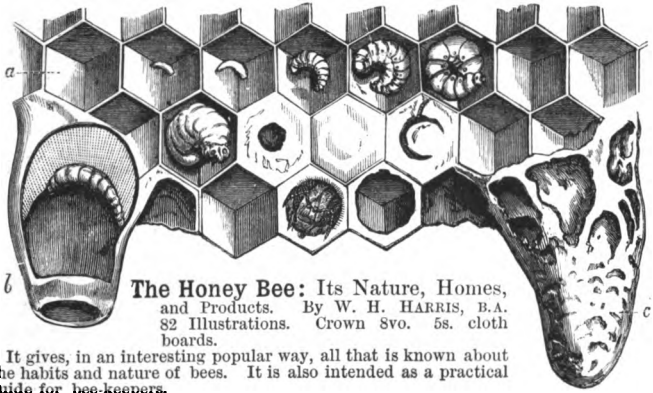

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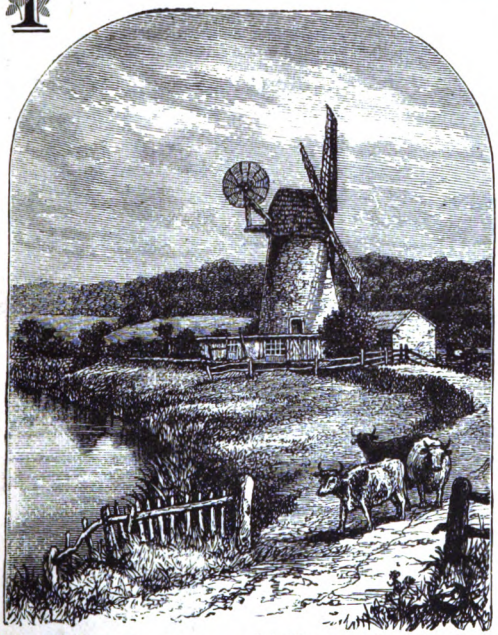

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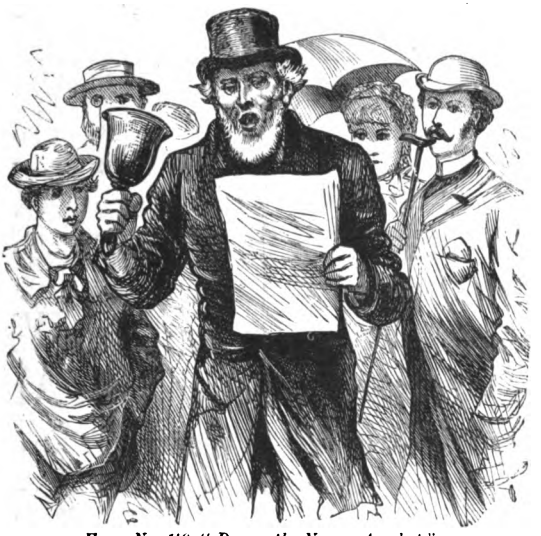

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