

and
Sri Lanka
and
The Netherlands



A Book of Dutch Ceylon
by: R. L. Brooker

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James J. Rafter
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LINKS BETWEEN

*Sri Lanka
and*

The Netherlands



A Book of Dutch Ceylon

by: **R. L. Brohier** Hon. D. Litt. (Ceylon)

Netherlands Alumni Association of Sri Lanka.

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FOREWORD

Dr. Richard Leslie Brohier needs no introduction to Sri Lankans. He has written many books on our country which adorn every library worth its name. His career in the public service of Sri Lanka was a distinguished one. This has exposed him to many situations, in the jungle, village, town, city and office, through which he has gained first-hand knowledge of whatever subject he wrote, be it the Ancient Irrigation Works of Ceylon, Lands Maps and Surveys or Dutch Period Furniture.

I yet remember when two decades ago I bought his monumental work on the Ancient Irrigation Works of Ceylon. This was my first purchase with my first salary in the Public Service. He stands like a colossus among contemporary historians and writers. Unlike others, he wrote at first hand, with an intimate knowledge of what he wrote about, bred of familiarity by actual visits.

Dr. Brohier has been honoured by all well-known literary associations of our country and was given the Honorary degree of Doctor of Letters by the University of Ceylon. He is also a distinguished Member of our Association which conferred the first honorary membership on him. In addition to his learning, he is all the more qualified to write this book, since his ancestors settled in Sri Lanka during the Dutch Period and his family has always been one of the most prominent and accomplished of Dutch Burgher families in Sri Lanka.

This book brings back nostalgic memories during the Dutch Period and contains a compendium of information and facts that have been brought together in a single volume for the first time. It also brings into focus the Dutch influences that have been integrated into the social milieu to the present day. This book written in his inimitable style, intertwining historical facts with legends into a single picturesque canvas, was compiled by him prior to Ceylon being declared a Republic in 1972, when our country adopted its original and ancient name of Lanka. It has therefore been decided to keep the name Ceylon intact in the text without any change.

There is one event that I need mention that epitomises the spirit and courage of Dr. Brohier even today. Though over eighty years of age, he has the will and the tenacity that puts to shame those half his age. When this book was being published, the unique and original photographs and maps that were given for Block Making to Messrs. Aitken Spence & Co., Ltd. were destroyed by fire. I was thunderstruck by this irreplaceable loss. I dreaded to think what

would happen when this news reached Dr. Brohier. I was surprised when Dr. Brohier told me that all his good work and love's labour had come to naught, but he continued that he would continue to work afresh on this publication. I am glad to say that what is presented here is even superior to the earlier collection and it is now a clear case of Love's Labour not lost but enshrined for ever.

It needs to be mentioned that this publication was possible due to the efforts of Drs. Evert Jongens of NUFFIC and the Sri Lanka Netherlands Foundation in the Netherlands, who gave our Association the finances and support for this unique publication, for which we are very grateful.

A. DENIS N. FERNANDO,

President,

Netherlands Alumni Association of Sri Lanka.

4th February, 78.

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PREFACE

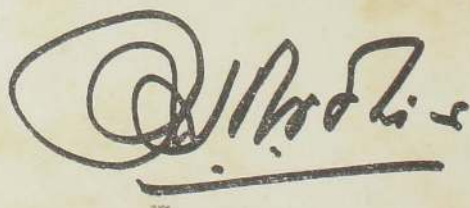
THIS volume ventures to provide a visual pageant which interlaces Sri Lanka and the Netherlands. Within these pages the reader will find the story, (as accepted by modern historians) of the influence and legacies bestowed by the Dutch East India Company on the littoral regions of Sri Lanka over which they held sway from 1656 to 1796. The writer's aim has been to present not new facts but rather, old ones focussed in the light of present experiences, and to avoid portraying controversial diplomatic and revolutionary episodes which all nations have subscribed to in the heat and burden of colonization and empire building three centuries ago.

For the most part, the Dutch vestiges extant in Sri Lanka are confined to a small and circumscribed field where population pressure has been gradually building up, and is felt most today. Beginning in the latter half of the nineteenth century many of them have disappeared. Some have been demolished and trampled under foot in order that effect may yield to usefulness in the modernisation or expansion of towns. It was not until 1942 that a weak attempt was made by appropriate authority to undertake the maintenance of the few which are left today. Such being the case, it appeared to the author that if some attempt was not made to catalogue the surviving examples, and link the story of the Colonial Dutch cultures in relation to the places which once knew them, they will be lost for ever to posterity.

The attempt made to put these facts together in comprehensive form has moreover perhaps been inspired by a very long family connection with this serenely beautiful island. The author's Huguenot ancestors arrived in the East about the year 1740 under the aegis of the V.O.C., and the family name has been associated with Sri Lanka for five generations. Thus, with a life-long residence in the Island assisted by a professional environment which ranged over every town and back-block, the author has had every opportunity to leave no Dutch vestige of any importance unvisited. This book is therefore the result of on-the-spot investigations and notes, supplemented by research into earlier studies and literary labour on the subject scattered in forgotten pages of old books, files, gazettes, registers, magazines, and pamphlets.

Special mention is called for concerning the writings of the late Mr. J. P. Lewis of the Ceylon Civil Service, who interested himself in the Dutch monuments perhaps fifty years before the author did. These, although not in comprehensive form have helped considerably in rendering an informative account of the monumental evidence which has disappeared. It remains to express the author's debt to others who have helped in the production of this review.

I wish to acknowledge the work of Caxton Printing Works Ltd., in this publication and particularly mention Mr. Lakshman Umagiliya but for whose personal effort and enthusiasm this book would not be the reality it is today.



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Map taken from Cornelis de Houtman's first voyage to the East Indies. (1595 — 97)

1 :- THE ERA OF EXPANSION

THE tales of discovery and adventure which choke the nooks and crannies in the history of the hundred years following the second decade of the 15th century, read even in our astonishing modern era more like fairy tales than fact. Whereas today man claims everlasting honour by cosmic exploration, in the bygone times — not much more than 500 years ago, he tempted the perils of capricious winds and the storms of unchartered ocean wastes in frail craft with the same object: to seek the unknown which he knew lay beyond.

The wildly imaginative maps of those mediaeval times testify to the limit of western knowledge. They show a world unaffected by Europe's later colonization, and afford but a vague notion of even the greater land-masses. It may well be accepted that in the Middle ages the countries and peoples of the earth beyond the fringes of the Mediterranean, were in the main unknown. True, there were astonishing or barbaric stories brought back by bands of traders, or by explorers who undertook still more daring, long-continous journeys by land, which intensified the mystery enshrouding the rich negrophil lands beyond the Sahara, or the Middle or the even lesser known Far East. All this perhaps stimulated desire to know more of those fabled realms.

Then suddenly, springing from somnolence to activity the West awakened to a burst of maritime exploration and discovery. The new era was inspired in the first instance by a small country in Europe which lay exposed to the battering waves of the wide Atlantic. This Portugal which had come into existence at the cost of the Spaniard and the Moor had attained its present size by the middle of the 13th century. Her people had got on terms with the ocean, and while Portuguese fishermen pushed into its turbulent waters, her sailors and landmen were gleaning secrets of wind and tide, and designing bigger and better craft and putting out the best sailing

ships afloat. Little did they know that in a few generations they would be the fountain-head of geographical study and practical exploration destined to encompass the earth : much in the same spirit which has led to the world-embracing space-movement of our modern age.

Concurrently, Holland (not the complete Netherlands) with over two fifths of her present territory from 2 to 16 feet under water, was ambitiously seeking to extend her possessions. Her towns, and her prosperous burghers were seeking freedom to live their own lives. They had become a considerable power in a feudal state.

Geographically the home country was small, but in the course of emancipation the Netherlands of a later period included much land which had been reclaimed by raising dykes and nursing sand-dunes to keep out the storms and rumblings of the North Sea.

Indeed, the sea which the Hollander had long looked in the face — not as an enemy but as a capricious friend, played a great part in furthering his small country's sphere of influence. Not unlike Portugal, the sea bred intrepid men who took to the water as fishermen. They were destined later to become inspired explorers who were to make the Netherlands the equal of her powerful neighbour.

Holland had doubtless heard of Portugal's capture of Ceuta off the Strait of Gibraltar on the African coast in 1415. She realised the advantage this offered them in the suppression of hostile Moorish shipping between Africa and Spain and the inducement it provided for further advance to countries beyond the limits of Europe's knowledge. She saw the geographic bounds of Europe burst as the Portuguese explorers inspired by that bold mariner Prince Don Henrique (1394 — 1460) surnamed "the Navigator", developed their search for better knowledge of the Western ocean, and later found sea-way along the unknown coasts of northern and western Africa.

Stories came of the more astonishing later discoveries, and of all the fame Portugal had gained by the daring enterprize of Diago Cao and Bartholomew Diaz. They had prepared the way for Vasco da Gama's Expedition which completed the south-eastern sea route to the East Indies in 1498. Six years earlier they had heard of Colombus — an adventurer in the service of Spain, who had discovered America when he expected to find India.

The sphere of navigatory activity having thus been extended, the outer world came to be parcelled out — the west for the Spaniards, the east for the Portuguese. The galleons of Spain and the caravels of Portugal rode the seas colonising new country, coming back to home-ports with cargo which reaped rich economic returns for their countries. A Papal award in 1493 confirmed this division of the non-European world between the two powers.

All the oceans except the North Atlantic were accordingly closed to the navigators of other nations.

The best Holland was able to do in these circumstances was to use their ships as local carriers. Unloading wheat which they picked up from Baltic ports, at Lisbon and Cadiz, they returned with produce which had been brought there from the Indies, and distributed them in northern Europe. Gradually and with increasing daring she both determined and ventured to circumvent the *mare clausum* which declared the sea under the jurisdiction of Spain and Portugal.

When in the year 1580 Philip II of Spain by an union with Portugal bestrode the world and tried to keep Holland away from even the Lisbon trade, she challenged the monopoly which the Spanish power sought to establish. This naturally led to frequent sporadic conflict, and ultimately came to grips in open war — and a desperate one at that which lasted for eighty years.

About this time a new move towards centralized government was making itself felt in Holland. The nation was however hardly organised to present a united front to the might of Philip of Spain. Nevertheless, a national instinct to look the oceans in the face and beat the enemy at his own commercial game inspired her merchant ship-owners.

Two hardy navigators : Heemskerk and Barendtz, set out to discover a sea-way to the East which would be free of interference from the Spaniards and Portuguese who swarmed the southern seas. They planned to get to China by keeping to Siberian waters off north Europe and Asia. Three voyages were undertaken with this object, but the ice-drifts and great cold compelled their ships to turn back. The northward route was accordingly abandoned as impracticable, but Spitsbergen and Nova Zembla among other places, were discovered.

When these plans failed, Holland boldly sought to wrest the secrets which her enemies closely guarded by intruding on the route they blazed to the Indian Ocean round the Cape of Good Hope. Certain merchants of Amsterdam formed themselves together under the name of *Maatschappy van Verre* or "Company for distant lands" and equipped four ships to make the hazardous voyage. They were manned by 250 bold men who were prepared to fight their way through.

This expedition, the first fleet of free merchantmen to leave Holland for the East sailed on the 2nd April 1595. It was commanded by Cornelis de Houtman, a tried navigator and an adventurous voyager who in frequent earlier visits to Lisbon had gleaned considerable information concerning the

sea-route, and the merchandising of cargoes brought by the Portuguese from the East.*

Navigating by strange stars, and in hostile seas, the voyagers faced many disasters and losses. They were buffeted by violent storms and gales in murky and uncharted waters, pitched and rolled by mountainous waves which broke fast and choppy, or plunged them heavily into the dip. At times their vessels seemed ready to founder as though the fight had gone out of them. Blankets of sea and foam covered their decks and water seemed to be infiltrating everywhere adding to the discomfort of the toiling crews, while all the while whirling spray gummed their eyes and reduced visibility.

Who will deny that those alternate spells were not equally trying when becalmed, under a brazen sun, on a sea of glass. Commander and crew breathing air that was foul and heavy kept watching the small clouds on the rim of a world that never came closer, never brought wind or blessed rain.

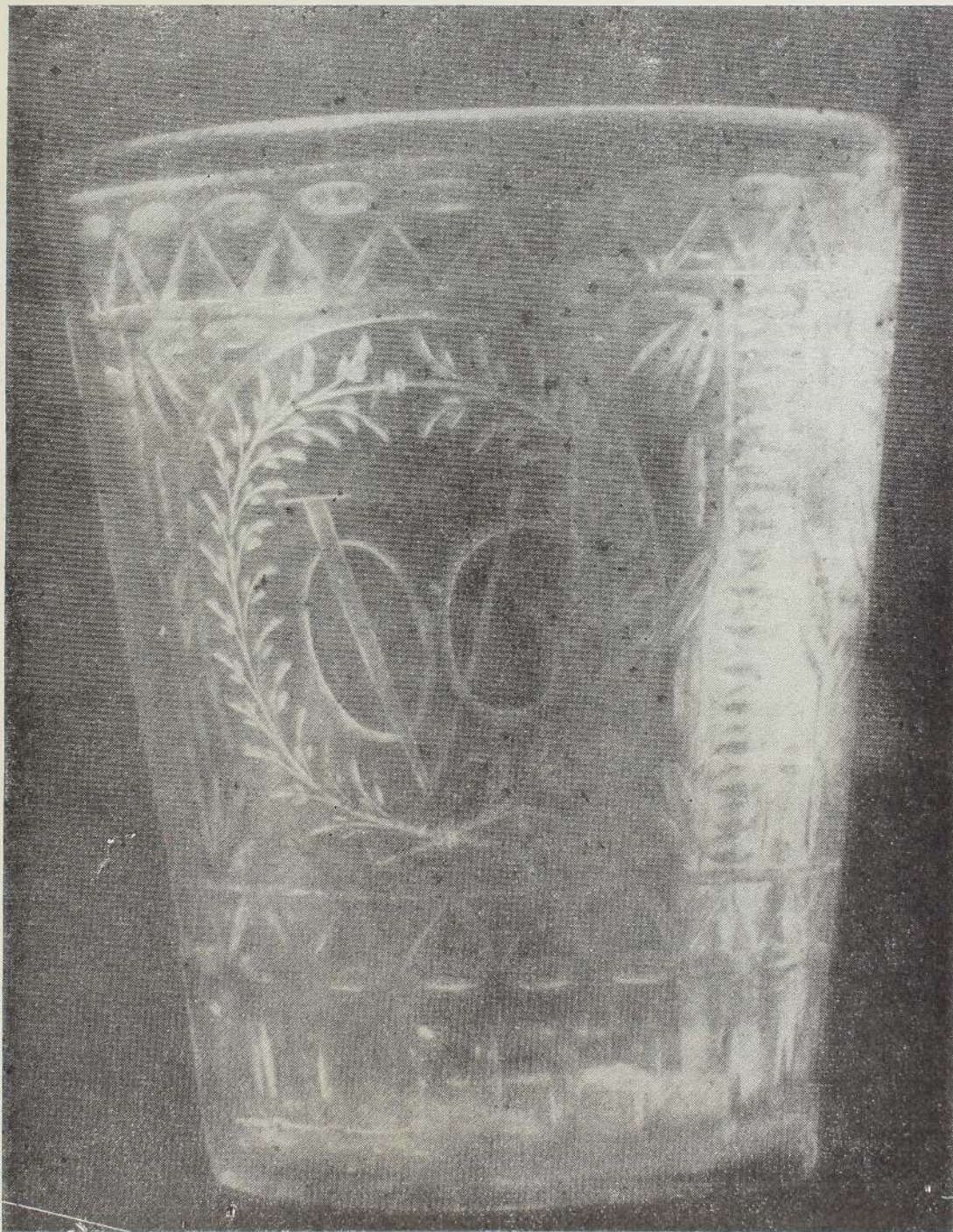
They suffered from scurvy, from bad food and constant exposure to all weathers. Yet, forging their way obstinately, tossed about like corks, they won through. They by-passed Ceylon, reached the Spice Islands of the Malay Archipelago, and visited Java. The survivors returned to the Fatherland laden with ship-holds full of rich cargo and a treaty made with the Sultan of Bantam. It had taken them over two years to get there, and back.

Encouraged by the results of this pioneer voyage and the glowing accounts of the great opportunities for commerce, the East called loudly in their ears. Burnt with yearning for its treasure, other companies were formed independent of one another and led to a great outburst of commercial ardour. With good reason the Hollanders called the 17th century their "golden age". It proved an amazing age too.

It was soon evident that these several trading companies — each garnering their own profits and risking their own losses in far-away tropic seas, were sending out in their ships hard and intolerant pioneers who trod the path of desperate adventure. They could neither be controlled by the Directors, nor protected from the Eastern potentates or governments. They fought the Portuguese they fought among themselves, and fought with the natives of the fabled lands they visited. Moreover, their competition with the Portuguese sent up the price of commodities procured in Eastern markets, and brought prices down in the markets of their home-countries.

*The Portuguese enacted ruthless penalties, including sentences of death, against persons found guilty of possessing maps of their overseas trade-routes. Despite unsparing vigilance there was a steady leakage of geographical secrets : *de Jonge de opkomst ven het Gzeag in Oost Indie*, Vol : i p. 93.

Rare specimens of the V. O. C. emblem engraved on crystal.



..... and painted on ceramic ware.



These factors were weakening, rather than strengthening Holland's cause among the nations, and were proving disastrous to themselves in the light of the economic principles of those times. Accordingly, the States Governor General of the United Provinces of the Northern Netherlands took steps to combine the scattered trading and colonising efforts into one grand enterprise.

The "Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie" (United East India Company) received its Patent or Charter on the 20th of March, 1602. It was vested with extensive powers to regulate and protect the eastern trade which soon become their monopoly, to discharge the functions of a government in those remote East Indian Islands and waters, and in the course of their pioneering adventures to carry on the war with Spain and Portugal. In short, the company was authorised to maintain armed forces, to make war and peace with all holding power and sovereignty in Eastern lands, and to exercise full administrative, judicial and legislative authority over the entire sphere of its operations.

This was the beginning of the link between Ceylon and the Netherlands. It is recalled by the monogram of the Company which confronts us from the old Ceylon forts, or is cut in stone or wood, cast in metal on cannon, swords, bayonets and coins, engraved on glass or painted on Delft ware or placed as a hall-mark on picturesque buildings, and serves as a symbol from the past to draw attention to the Dutch occupation of maritime Ceylon (which ended with the last decade of the 18th century). By a resolution of the 28th February 1603, it was decided that the monogram should be in the shape depicted below, and that the letters should be blue on a silver field.



2 :- EARLY CONTACTS

WHO was the first envoy of Holland to Ceylon, and what is the date of his formal and famous visit to the Sinhalese King to plead the cause of trade for his Fatherland? Before we proceed to the answers to these questions, suppose we venture to learn more of a few earlier pioneer visits of the Hollanders to Ceylon.

Their first visit very obviously was accidental. When Cornelis de Houtman had returned to his home-port after successfully navigating the exploratory fleet of ships which the "Company for distant lands" had sent out to test the hazards of the sea-route to the Far East, he was doubtless much sought after by mercantile Houses to undertake trading voyages for them. The House of Moucheron of Vere in the Island of Walcheren, had apparently won him over to command a fleet of ships they had organised. Within a year of his return de Houtman set out on a second voyage, as Commander of a fleet of two large ships : the *Leeuw* and the *Leeuwin*, and a number of smaller vessels. It took him nearly a year to get to his destination which was Acheen, a port two miles from the mouth of a river at the north-western extremity of Sumatra. The king of the Acheenese we learn, was the chief merchant of the capital and known at that time to have been carrying on a considerable trade with the coast of Coromandel in India. He knew nothing of hard currency or coin and made payments in gold dust. "This he kept in divided parcels contained in a piece of bladder, and weighed by the person who takes them in payment".

De Houtman's trading venture proved decidedly unfortunate. It would appear from all accounts that he found himself in trouble with the king of this dark-skinned race, whose treacherous and sanguinary character was amply exemplified in their earlier transactions with the Portuguese. Their expert and bold seamen made a sally and captured the *Leeuwin* and the smaller vessels of the fleet. The incident culminated in the death of de Houtman, and the death or capture of several others who were in the expedition. Commander de Houtman having been killed, and the person appointed

by sealed letter to succeed him having shared the same fate, a second sealed letter was opened. In this letter, Guyon le Fort who had been serving on the *Leeuw* as treasurer, was mentioned. He too had been taken captive by the Acheenese, but escaped captivity as the King selected him to carry a message to the Company in Holland. He was put aboard the *Leeuw* which had escaped capture, and in his new role as Commander of the Expedition set sail for the Nicobar Islands: "the vessel being much in need of provisions — principally rice".

Apparently, they obtained no rice in the Nicobars. John Davis, who was the pilot of the vessel has fortunately left to posterity an account of what subsequently took place. He writes: "the sixteenth (November 1599) we departed shaping our course for the Ile Zeilon, for we were in great distress, especially for rice".

There does not appear to be any contemporary reference which helps to clarify why Ceylon was chosen as a place where they hoped to get rice. One can but presume the Hollanders were acting on a suggestion by the people of Nicobar. Yet, it may well be, that Davis' entry connotes the first intimation to a Hollander that Ceylon was a rice-growing country, and in parenthesis recalls that there was a past when the grain was grown in Ceylon in excess of the needs of its population.

The *Leeuw* was however destined to carry back much more news concerning Ceylon's claim for recognition as an Eastern mart. "The six (December) by God's great goodness", writes Davis, "we took a ship of Negapatam . . . laden with rice bound for to Acheen". On this prize there were threescore persons including some traders of Ceylon. Davis says: "by these people we learned that in Zeilon there is a Citie named Matecalou (Batticaloa), a place of great trade and that we might load our ships with Cinnamon, Pepper, and Cloves. They also said that in Zeilon were great store of precious stones and Pearls: that the country doth abound with all kinds of victuals and that the King was an exceeding Enemie to the Portugals, they also told us of a Citie named Trinquanamale, where was the like Trade. So they promised to lade our ship and royally to victual us, for little money".

Lured by this information the *Leeuw* reared and plunged, ploughing its way towards the east coast of Ceylon. Making slow headway, it was a matter of some time when in the distance the Island grew out of a haze. The wooded tops of scattered foot-hills defined themselves, and the flat coast-line lifted progressively with sections of landscape showing chaotic rocky headlands, dazzling beaches and foam-topped barriers of reef.

The north-east trade wind was blowing and, as is usual when such is the case, mountainous rollers were ceaselessly pounding the coast into a line of seething foam. The *Leeuw* was being laboriously trimmed, and cautiously

navigated, but the winds being exceedingly contrary, try as its crew did by every possible means, they were not able to bring their ship inshore.

Having spent sixteen days sailing up and down Ceylon's eastern coast without being able to locate Batticaloa or make landing, the Commander decided to set a course homewards. They released the captured vessel they were holding as prize, but took aboard twelve of the thirty persons who were in it. The *Leeuw* arrived at Midelburg, on the 29th of July 1600, after an absence of two years.

We may be sure that Guyon le Fort — who was the first to carry any definite information concerning Ceylon to Holland, had much to say about its great and profitable opportunities for trade ; of how he had heard “ that its stones are rubies and sapphires, that amomum scents its marshes, and cinnamon the forests, that the most common plants furnish precious perfumes, and that elephants run there in herds as the wild boars do in the forests of Europe while brilliant peacocks and the bird of Paradise occupy the place of our rooks and swallows.”

The shrewd merchants of Holland — hard pioneers who built up the country's trading and brokerage — were quick to recognise the importance of le Fort's information. It was naturally, information secret of the House of Moucheron who fitted out the expedition, but an inkling of it somehow seems to have got around, and a rival merchant House resolved to forestall the preparations being made by Moucheron to fit out a third expedition, this time to Ceylon.

There is very scanty information available of the fleet of four ships which the rival House despatched on the 28th of January, 1601 (six months after le Fort's return)*. It is documented that “ on the 14th of August (1601) the ships anchored before the Island of Ceylon, and understanding from the people that no profit was to be made there in respect of trade, they pursued their voyage to the town of Acheen ”.

The coastal plain of Ceylon was at the time overrun by the troops of Portugal. The legitimate Sovereign of the realm meanwhile was making feeble resistance from behind the lofty escarpments which separated the maritime districts from the central mountain-country. The date of the fleet's arrival off Ceylon implied that the South-Western trade winds were blowing, and had brought rough seas off the western coast. One is therefore led to

*The fleet included two large ships 200—300 tons burden : *Zeelandia* and *Middelborch* commanded by Captains Cornelis Bastiaens and Hans Huybrechtss Tonneman respectively. The smaller ships were *Langhebereque* and *Sonne*, 150 and 70 tons burden commanded by Captains Nicolaes Antheunissen and Cornelis Andriaensz—(de Jong op. cit. 1. 114 et seq.)

presume that the ships anchored off the eastern coast where correspondingly at that season of the year calm seas prevailed.

The vagueness of the documented record is indeed tantalizing. Did any of the ship-captains take a landing party ashore, and make enquiries of the people of the country regarding trade? If so, the answer they carried back was possibly inspired by fear of the Portuguese. It is more likely though, that no Hollander in this expedition ever stepped ashore. The enquiries were possibly made of Moorish traders who from self-interested motives gave them incorrect information. These eastern traders are known to have taken advantage of the fine weather period every year to sail this coast of Ceylon in considerable numbers. They traded in "spicerie, cotton-cloth, and China commodities" which found their way to the King's domain, for rice, precious stones and other Ceylon produce. No results seem to have accrued from this visit by the Hollander to Ceylon.

Meanwhile, the House of Moucheron had fitted out the expedition they were preparing to send out to Ceylon, which as we have just been reading was forestalled by a rival House four months earlier to no material advantage. It comprised three ships: The *Schaep*, the *Ram* and a frigate the *Lam*. They set sail on the 5th of May, 1601, from Campvere — a sea-port in the Island of Walcheren in Zeeland. The first mentioned ship was commanded by Joris van Spilbergen (claimed to be more correctly spelt with the letter "e" before the "i"), a very trusted Captain who was also Admiral. The *Ram* was commanded by the same Guyon le Fort we have been reading so much about, and the frigate by Cornelis Spek. This voyage is specially noteworthy as it achieved the first pre-arranged contact between Holland and the Island of Ceylon.

There are many writings concerning this voyage. All of them have however been appropriated from a central source, a "Journal" in which the places visited and the daily events have been carefully recorded. The author of it has veiled himself in anonymity. On account of the decidedly calvinistic bias of an otherwise splendid narrative it came to be believed that the author was the Protestant chaplain who accompanied the expedition and was on board the Admiral's ship. This still remains unchallenged.*

Confining ourselves to the events connected with Ceylon, we glean from the translation of the journal that after an adventurous voyage — which included an encounter with three Portuguese caravels and references to being disabled by storms and delayed by gales which drove the vessels apart

*This Journal was first published at Delft, in 1605, by Floris Balthazar, and in slightly abbreviated form, in 1617. An authoritative translation in English by Donald Ferguson is published in *Ceylon Literary Register*, Vol : VI (1892), p. 308 *et seq.* In the "Journal" is the entry : "On the 15th June (1603) died the pilot Cornelis Jannsz. . . who had noted down and written this Journal up to the 27th of May." This may only mean that he wrote it from dictation.

the *Schaep* having lost her two consorts, found herself opposite Cochin on the Malabar coast of India on the 23rd of May (1602) after erratically sailing for twelve months. The South-Westerly winds were blowing and the ocean was rough and inhospitable. The pilot of the vessel in fear of being driven upon a lee-shore kept well off Cape Comorin, and steered for "Ponte de Galle" which was sighted five days later. The "Matecalou" he was making for, which had been described to them "as place of great trade", lay off the sea-coast nearly 180 nautical miles further. So sailing on: "along the Land of Ceylon", they passed: "the first and second shoal", which we to-day call the Great and Little Basses, and two days later seeing a bay with a "pagode" and other evidence of habitation under the greenery of a grove of coconut palms on its shore, they came to anchor in its waters. This coastal hamlet which they took to be "Matecalou" could have been no other than Tirukkovil.*

The eastern coast of Ceylon has changed very little in form or aspect with the passing of 360 years since the visit of the *Schaep*. Imagination is therefore not unduly taxed to picture in the mind's eye a ship of that period riding at anchor on the calm, blue sea which lazily laps on glistening white ribbons of shore, in the month of May.

Nor is it difficult to picture the animated scene which the arrival of this strange ship caused. A concourse of dusky people—half-clad, for they are mostly fisher-folk, stand and gaze, gesticulating, talking loudly in excited amazement and hysterical with the anticipation of what was happening next. Some of them are heaving, with backs bent to the task, and are in process of launching a canoe—the identical type of canoe which you see today on those beaches...they have got it into the water, and are rowing to the ship. Other canoes follow, and soon a multitude of the inhabitants have gone alongside the Dutch vessel.

Turning to the page in the Journal, one reads: "we asking them of Matecalo, they told us that it was yet more northerly; they also were able to name to us Capelle de Ferro.† We presented them with some knives: they promised to give us people the next day to bring us to Matecalo, the which took place on the 31st of May, (1602)...the same evening we came into the roadstead of Matecalo...which is a bay where they build many ships and the King has his town a mile from there".

The "Matecalou", which was in the mind of Spilbergen and the earlier navigators was in effect a vast rice-growing district designated "Battacalou

* Identified by the reference in the Journal to the pagode. At no other place on this section of coast is there a Hindu shrine with a gate-pyramid or *pagode* visible from the sea. It is an ancient shrine and place of worship to this day.

† Friar's Hood: a prominent rocky-hill-top, 20 miles off the coast, used as a landmark by mediaeval navigators, and so called as it leans over and resembles a friar's hood from the sea when bearing S.W., but a pyramid when to N.W. The Dutch translated it as *Monnikakap*.

Regnum " on contemporary maps. The town and mart were near the village we today call Samanturai. It stood off the southern end of a muddy lagoon. (which in the vernacular was rendered *Mattaikalapu*, Battacalou being a corruption from it). This lagoon connects with the sea about 25 miles north. It was, as it is even so today, largely used by small ships and native craft.*

The roadstead of Matecolou where Spilbergen dropped anchor is a small cove off the coastal village which bears the melodious name : Saintamaruthu. I have verified that fishing folk still take advantage of a small back-water there, to run their craft into before beaching them. Howbeit, the distance from this spot to the place we have identified as " Matecalou " is not one mile as the Journal has it but about four miles scaled off modern maps. To account for this difference one has to remember that the writer of the Journal is no doubt reckoning distance in terms of the continental measure of those times. This happens to be between four to five times greater than the standard English mile.

On the day following the arrival of the ship at Saintamaruthu, a delegate was despatched to acquaint the Chief at " Matecalou " of Spilbergen's mission, and to solicit a parley. Meanwhile, a deputation from the inhabitants accompanied by an Interpreter who could speak Portuguese would appear to have boarded the *Schaep* on a similar mission from the Chieftain ashore. There seems to have been an exchange of free reciprocal cordiality at both meetings with assurance of opportunities for trade in pepper and cinnamon.

On the morning of the next day, the 2nd of June, in the too familiar tropical setting of a sky which is obstinately blue with a gentle wisp of sea-breeze stirring the hot air, a concourse of people had collected on the fore-shore at Saintamaruthu. The Nilame or headman, in quaint ceremonial attire and deputising for the local chieftain, was predominantly the central figure. He was attended by a band of pipers and drummers and a group of professional dancers. Away from the people, but nearby, five docile elephants stood lumberously in their trappings, watched by their mahouts.

The eyes of the people were all turned on a ship-boat which had set out from the *Schaep* and was making for the shore over the limpid and unwrinkled waters of the roadstead. As it came nearer in, the *Nilame* stepped forward. When he had taken up a position of precedence the drums began their rhythmic throb of greeting, the pipes rose and fell in cadence, and the dancers in gyratory movements gave an exhilarating oriental welcome in the

*Hence the name Samanturai which derives from *Sampan Turai* : "the port of the *Sampans* (dug-out-boats). Spilbergen's "Matecalou" should not be confused with the town of Batticaloa which grew to be the capital of the Eastern Province of Ceylon, on the small island called Pulliyan Tivu, near the embouchure of the Lake. This did not find a place on maps until the Portuguese built a fort, in 1628 and named it (*Mattai-kalupa*).

traditions which Ceylon was heir to. In the words of the Journal: "the five elephants performed much ceremony in kneeling and some also with their trunk took a man and set him on their body . . ."

Such is the picture one may build from the remarkable narration of the landing of Joris van Spilbergen — the first envoy from Holland to set foot on Ceylon's soil. He promised the *Nilame* that he would come ashore the next day in order to visit "the king of Matecalou".

3 :- HOLLAND'S FIRST ENVOY



A Mohottala, in ceremonial dress
(From Davy's "Interior of Ceylon")

ON the 3rd of June (1602), Spilbergen proceeded to "Matecalou". He took with him an assortment of presents, and a few musicians who could perform ably on various wind and string instruments. He was received with ostentatious cordiality by the *Disawa Mohottala*,* who stood with unsheathed sword at the head of "a guard of more than six hundred men with naked weapons in their hands". After a formal presentation of the baubles he had brought as gifts, there was an entertainment by musicians in the Admiral's party, which appeared to greatly please and intrigue the *Mohottala*. Spilbergen and his retinue were thereafter conducted for the night to the *Nilame's* house and treated "right well according to custom".

The subsequent behaviour of the *Mohottala*, or the "king of Matecalou" — as he is called in Spilbergen's Journal, roused the Admiral's suspicions of his *bonafides* and veracity. Originally promising him much "pepper and cinnamon", he unaccountably delayed the transactions, and appeared to be plotting to out-wit the Admiral who was hoping to

* The "lieutenant" of the Governor of a Region. He possessed executive, civil, military, and judicial authority.

make a business deal.† The *Mohottala* even perfidiously charged the Admiral with being a Portuguese and by holding him captive, attempted to seize his vessel, but having convinced the potentate otherwise, Spilbergen obtained his freedom.

The position was clarified when the Admiral later learnt he was dealing with a regional over-lord under the King and Emperor of Ceylon whose Court was at Kandy, and that the *Mohottala* could not provide them with cargo or render any assistance without the orders of his sovereign. He moreover came to know that the local chieftain was under subjection to the Portuguese and was under compulsion paying tribute to them.

Spilbergen thereupon, despatched a clerk with presents to the Kandyan capital. Meanwhile he bartered with the inhabitants and “got together a tolerable quantity” of precious stones, among them, “Ruby, Balass, Topaz, Baccan, Garnets, Spinels, Jacinths, Sapphires (white and blue), Catseyes, and Crystal”. On July 3, the clerk returned from the King of Kandy, with two royal envoys (bearing letters) and many presents of gold rings and large arrows. The king offered “all friendship and cargo that he was able, begging the Admiral would come and visit him in his Kingly Court, Kandy”.

It was then unanimously decided by the advisers he habitually consulted that Spilbergen “should proceed to the king, as also because he had much pressure from the Gentlemen his Owners (owners of the ship presumably) to go and speak with the aforementioned King” and, in the quaint idiom of the translation present to the monarch, “letters from His Excellency (His Highness the Prince of Orange according to Valentyn) and the friendship of his friends, and enemy of his enemies”. “So”, continues the Journal, “the Admiral departed on the 6th July together with the King’s envoys, taking with him divers presents and accompanied by ten of his men . . . not shunning the long way and the great trouble”. Needless to say, the party included his musicians.

The journey undertaken by Spilbergen and his entourage, from the eastern coast of Ceylon to the Sinhalese King’s mountain capital, involved a coverage of 120 miles. Having myself travelled often over the route he took, I can vouch that to a person unacquainted with the topography of Ceylon, unaccustomed to tropical conditions and exposed to the hazards of attack by destructive forces, such an enterprise undertaken three and a half centuries ago, can present itself in but one form : namely, the desperate adventure which lured, and continues to lure, men and nations.

† It merits notice that Spilbergen was not sailing under the Charter of Dutch East India Company. That was issued nearly a year after he sailed. His was one of the last expeditions operating under “Company for distant lands” and his presence off Ceylon was purely commercial, Owing to friendly relations between the Merchant House he was sailing for and the Prince of Orange, he was the bearer of a friendly letter to the unknown monarch of Ceylon, and was empowered by the Prince to promise the Sinhalese King all the help he might need against his Portuguese enemy.

Howbeit, the complete change of heart which seemed to have come over the *Disawe-Mohottale* of Matecalou (whom Spilbergen had mistakenly thought to be King) contributed largely to the Admiral's comfort and safety on his perilous journey. No sooner had the petty chieftain come to hear of the Emperor's invitation, and the presence in his District of envoys from the Court at Kandy, he dropped his cunning and chicanery, and seemed not to be able to do enough to ingratiate himself and gain the Admiral's good-will. The Journal narrates : that on setting out on their journey, when the Admiral and the agents from Kandy came to the house of the Chieftain of Matecalou, he lavishly entertained them, " presented the Admiral with gold rings (and) provided elephants, men and *pallenkins* to carry him and his goods also any of his people who could not walk ".

The triumphal passage of the long journey, punctuated as it was with the warm welcome which consistently marked its progress, can be pictured in considerable detail from the Admiral's journal. The country which it explored remains exactly as it apparently was from the times of its formation and as Spilbergen saw it, but for very few changes made by man.

The route followed by the expedition trailed for the first thirty miles over the maritime plain through which a river the Gal Oya flows. In the beginning it traversed vast stretches of marshy paddy-growing land irrigated from man-made lakes built to hold up the waters of the rainy season, and to soak the parched earth the dry season brings. In these open stretches, the sun bears down with an almost unbearable dazzle, and vibrates before the eyes in liquid waves, but on leaving the coastal strip there come successively patches of dry savannah forests where the trees spread their taut un-moving branches over stretches of lemon-grass and provide welcome shade for the traveller.

Within the last two decades this stagnant river valley which used to be flooded every year with the monsoon rains, and lay scorched and baked in the drought which followed, has made way for one of Ceylon's largest multi-purpose development and land colonization schemes. Consequently, what the Admiral and his party found in this section was not the large, placid sheet of water which converges on a bund thrown across the Gal Oya, or the quarter million acres of cultivated land below it, but a seemingly limitless sea of forest intermingled with low scrubby jungle above which, occasionally, a splintered or rounded rock appeared to burst from the undulating swell of tree-tops.

Leaving the maritime belt and entering the region of the foot-hills, the trail winds, crazily over wild and untamed country, where long before the story of Ceylon began to be told in lithic record or monument, there lived roving clans of the aboriginal Veddha in rock-caves or very primitive huts. They roamed the primeval wilderness with bow and arrow and were still there by geographical accident at the time of Spilbergen's visit. Alas !

today they are a vanished race of quaint people who kept within tribal boundaries of their own making, inhabited narrow belts limited in area fronting springs and streams, where water, wood, and food secured by hunting, fishing and collecting were readily obtained.

At *Nilgala*, the only *aldea* or village of importance in this wilderness where even today herds of wild-elephants roam, where it is dangerous to go into caves or hollows of the surrounding rocks for they are favourite haunts of the Ceylon bear, and where the savage wild-buffalo and the daring leopard join the other wild denizens as tenants, the Admiral and his party sojourned in a Chieftain's house. Over the "chamber and sleeping place there was be hung a white cloth", one of the greatest honours accorded a visitor to Ceylon.

The next halt to which the Admiral "was carried with folk and goods by *pallenkin*" was the residence of a queen a daughter of the host at his earlier stopping place. She was "one of the wives of the King of *Candy*, who had given her the *aldea* (village) in which she resided". There seems little doubt that the *aldea* referred to was the backwood townlet we call Bibile.

Thereafter the Admiral's trail lay through less barbarous country which had been rendered old in story ever since man in an incipient stage secured a means of subsistence by growing rather than collecting food. In this section of the route, between sprawling masses of impenetrable scrub interlacing grassy lands clothed with trees of larger growth locally termed *damma*, and patches of low-jungle, which then as even so now, impose on the dry-zone plains, there are isolated pastoral village settlements of a peculiar Indo-Aryan type which have stood there for centuries. The houses are of jungle-timber, plastered with mud, their roofs thatched with paddy straw. They lie clustered together to secure protection from primitive fears and the entire settlement is encircled by a glade 50 to 100 yards wide which the village calls the *tis-bamba*. This is communally kept clear of small trees and bushes up to the edge of the ambient jungle and is maintained for the three-fold object of pasturing cattle, sanitating the immediate surroundings by compelling the use of the jungle to satisfy the needs of nature, and lastly to ward off predacious wild animals.

Spilbergen must have passed many such villages where any intrusion from the world outside must have raised the same commotion and excitement it does today. The women, usually found busy in the open quadrangle facing their scantily built houses husking rice by pounding the paddy in a mortar, or squatting before fireplaces preparing a meal, scamper away to peep at the intruding party from a hiding place. A troop of hungry mongrel dogs barking in staccato offer a doubtful welcome. The children, presenting pathetic figures gaze, petrified, completely overcome by indecision whether they should join their mothers in hiding, or the dogs in the persistent wail.



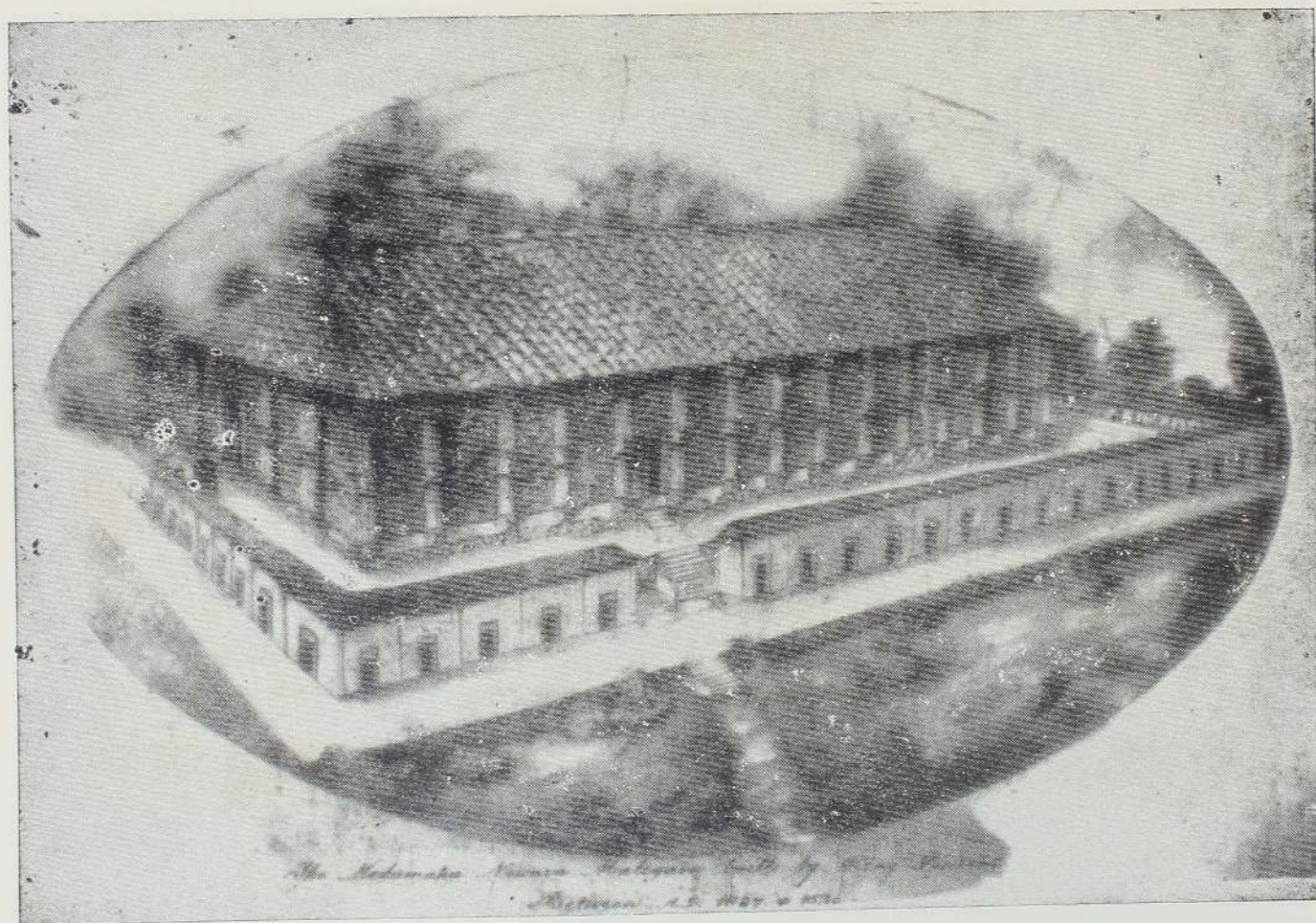
An aboriginal Veddah of Sri Lanka. In his left hand he carries his bow and arrow and holds an axe over his right shoulder. With these implements he collects his food.



The dwelling of a Veddah. Note the deer and skins of animals put out to dry in the sun.



Other people met on the journey are families of Indo-Aryan settlers who tilled the land and grew . . . instead of collecting food. (Photo by Conrad Felsing)



The Meda Maha Nuwara Maligawa (palace) built on the site of the rest-house used by Admiral Spilbergen between 1627 — 1634. This unique picture from a sketch made by a British Officer is in the possession of Mr. M. S. S. P. Siriwardene, Wasala Walauwa, Dematagoda, Colombo. Original with Mrs. Pearl Goonatilake of Bullers Lane, Colombo 7.

With these impressions we again join the Admiral's party and find ourselves approaching *Vintane* : as he calls it in his journal. It is referred to as Alut Nuwara on modern maps, and more popularly in the present day as : Mahiyangana.

This historical city of the Sinhalese Kings bathed in the reflected glory of the past, is acclaimed (literally) the *alpha* and the *omega* of the ancient history of a small nation. It is mentioned in the first, and in the last chapter of a chronicle : the *Mahavamsa* which deals with the period 500 B.C. to 300 A.D. The shrine which renders the place famous had weathered two thousand years before Spilbergen was conducted to the city in procession : "accompanied by much folk, with pipes, drums, horns and other instruments", and taken to the lodging got ready for him. On the east of the City the Mahaweli Ganga (Ceylon's largest river) rolls its waters to the sea at Trincomalie, 65 miles away. Off the river's further bank a backdrop of mountain clothed in forests, leaves nothing bare except for a few infrequent clearings on the lower edge where a few burnt skeletons of trees tell too plainly of the fleeting human incursion by an incipient system of shifting cultivation, which we today call *chenaing*.

Spilbergen's impressions of the city are best presented in the archaic form used by the chronicler of his journal :

"In the town of Vintane is a great *pagoda** the base is in circumference a hundred and thirty paces (it is) very handsome and high, all white and gilt above, in the manner of a pyramid, but from below ascending ovalwise up to a four-cornered point. And there are yet other *pagodas* besides, also a monastery wherein are monks clad in yellow clothes, and they go along the streets with large sombareros† . . . They are clean shaven after the manner of the monks in this country, only that one sees no corona . . . They are held in great honour, and are free from working and all other burdens. Their monastery is after the manner of our monasteries in this country, with their galleries, corridors and many private chapels which are gilt, wherein stand many figures of men and women, who they say lived holily. These carved figures stand adorned with silvern gilt clothes ; they are honoured day and night with lamps and wax candles . . ."

Apparently the Admiral's sojourn at *Vintane* coincided with the annual religious festival celebrated at Mahiyangana with *perahera* in the month of July or August when the sacred relics the people worship are taken in procession round the City. Perhaps he was the first westerner to set eyes on the glittering spectacle of pageantry and antiquity which continues to retain

*This stupa or dagoba had crumbled and lay in ruin after Spilbergen's visit. It has since been restored to erstwhile form.

† Umbrella.

hold on national sentiment — and what an impression it must have left on the minds of the tough, hardy mariners who looked on. Their manifest interest and wonder is reflected in the graphic manner their observation have been set down. We read :

“ The chief abbot or priest sits upon an elephant clad in silver and gold, and the abbot holds a golden staff above his head, fast with both hands. Before him go in order other monks with much playing of horns, trumpets, cymbals, clanging of bells and basins, which altogether gives a very good harmony. Many lamps and torches are also carried, and there follow many men, women and maidens. The most beautiful maidens, ere the processions goes out and comes in again, perform many wonderous feats with dancing, they are all with naked bodies bare above, the arms, hands, and ears half adorned, with gold and precious stones ; below they have handsome embroidered clothes . . . They also have the custom of presenting flowers to their idols which stand everywhere on the road, some near trees, and others in built niches . . . ”

The old mountain road from Alut Nuwara to Kandy wound its way up the forest-clad slopes of the range flanking the left bank of the Mahaweli Ganga. It attained an elevation of 3000 feet above sea level, near Madugoda, a little more than five miles from Alut Nuwara scaled from a map.

Spilbergen and his party must have sensed a great change in the weary travel they had got accustomed to over flat jungle paths in the low-country plain when they found themselves again on the road after a two-day stay at Vintane. Ahead of them lay a journey of 50 miles to Kandy. The ascent over the initial section of the trail which was the steepest, must have proved the most heart-breaking part of the journey. One may well picture the fragile but sinewy *pallenkin* bearers toiling on foot, puffing under their loads. We are not told how the Admiral covered this part of the route, but if he did ride in a *pallenkin*, he exposed himself to enormous and excessive discomfort, which only one who has traversed that mountain track on foot is in a position to appreciate.

On the damp floor of the forest which cloistered this mountain slope tropical creepers luxuriate, and spread irrepressibly some like giant serpents twine upwards seeking the sunlight, others spread their tendrils to assail unwary feet. In grass, moss and fern and other sap-gorged vegetation, the Ceylon land-leeches betray their avidity for human blood by springing sideways to attach themselves to passing bodies. There never seemed to be a break from the aching strain of the severe gradient.

Howbeit, there were compensations. Every mile brought the scrambling tired traveller into more temperate regions. The sun, even when well up,

barely penetrated the thick mane of leaves, and the knotty branches of the secular trees spreading far and wide effused a coolness through their sheaths of moss. When the summit was reached, and their eyes feasted on perhaps the most spellbinding scenery, any mid-country sector of Ceylon has to offer, all difficulties were doubtless forgotten in a sense of wellbeing.

The Dumbara Valley where the Admiral and his party now found themselves is in open country. Magnificent mountain ranges meet the eyes in all directions and lie blued by distance on the horizon. Forests bedeck the slopes of these mountains in patches and merge into the terraced paddyfields nestling in valleys a couple of thousand feet below the road which clings to the mountain-side. The growing paddy on these fields would have seemed to any stranger pieces of moistgreen plush taken out of a dyer's vat and laid in the sun to dry.

Here too, mountain hills and streams aplenty incessantly mutter to a traveller as he picks his way on foot, and may occasionally surround him in soggy marsh-lands. The voice of the waters sound more loudly when over boulder-strewn beds they break into kettledrum roll. When hurtled down in waterfalls over cliffs they swell to crescendo with a dull boom.

In the Admiral's Journal we read : " Departing from the town of Vintane we came to the aldea of the King's son, where all good entertainment was given to us ". There is no dearth of evidence to show that this was near Meda Maha Nuwara, and that the host was Senarat actually the King's cousin* who later succeeded to the throne.

Meda Maha Nuwara,** which was so called because it stood nearly half-way between Alut Nuwara, and Maha Nuwara (Kandy), is identified to this day by the knobbly, precipitous out-crop of rock on the summit of the mountain-top off the gap now named Hunasgiriya. It was once an impregnable fort, used as a place of retreat by the later Sinhala Kings. Further down the mountain slopes stood the rest-house in which Spilbergen stayed the night. Two years after his visit it was converted to a Palace. Even the ruins of the Palace cannot be traced today. The gently sloping site on which it stood has made way for a terraced paddy field which slopes down to a rivulet called the Guru Oya.

Spilbergen was now faced with the last lap of his expedition : a day's journey to Kandy. According to the Journal nothing could have exceeded the pomp and pageantry with which he was conducted over this final section of the route. The " King sent his own pallenkin with certain elephants equipped with gilded trappings to escort him ".

*It is a Sinhalese custom for cousins who were brother's sons to call themselves brothers.

**Meda means "middle", Maha : "great", Nuwara : "City of the King", and Aluth : "new".

Howbeit, the City which the first Hollanders to set foot in Ceylon entered, had no pretensions to the majesty which the royal capitals, in the north-central plains retained for twenty centuries. It had been the capital of a sub-king during the turmoils which beset the Sinhala monarchy in the 16th century, and was of little political importance before it came to be seized by Vimala Dharma Suriya (Spilbergen's host) in 1592. The Portuguese dubbed this monarch "the defiant and unconquerable *Kande uda rata raja*".* This title soon shortened to *Kande raja* and read to mean King of Kandy; the term Kandy has survived and is in use today: the modern Sinhalese name for which is Maha Nuwara or Nuwara.

Hence, Kandy had been the capital, and the established seat of the Kandyan Sinhala monarchy for no more than ten years at the time of Spilbergen's visit. The palace could not have been a structure with any special pretensions to architectural adornment or craftsmanship, and that palladium of Sinhala royalty: the sacred Tooth-relic which had but recently been brought from a secret hiding place, was doubtless placed in a simple temple shrine-room attached to the palace. The Octagon was but a pleasure-pavilion intentionally built in two tiers so that the King and his attendant ministers could watch the elephant-sports, the wrestlers, sword-fighters and dances on the green, from the upper tier, while alas! the queen and ladies did so from the lower. The historic Audience Hall had not then been adorned with its richly carved pillars and pendentives.

It was the last King of Kandy, Siri Vikrama Rajasinha who nearly 200 years later did much to add to the attraction of Kandy. Even the artificial lake, that most aesthetic addition to its scenic splendour, whose limpid waters ever reflect the verdure clad hills which surround the hill-capital, was not constructed until the year 1805.

From this digression, by which I have tried to bring the Kandy as Spilbergen saw it into correct perspective, we rejoin the Admiral's entourage, as he makes his exultant entry into the city in the morning of a day in the month of August, riding in the King's "nobly equipped pallenkin with gilded coverings", with a body guard of "a thousand armed soldiers of all nations, such as Turks, Moors, Singalese, Caffers and renegade Portuguese". The chronicler of the Journal says: "In the reception there was much noise of all kinds of instruments, among others there were sackpijpen** which played several pieces of music in good time. And thus was our Admiral conducted to his lodging past the palace of the King where they made a great demonstration with firing... three trumpeters preceded him, and one that bore the bannerol or prince's (Orange) flag... Having come into the lodging, all was

*meaning: "ruler of the realm upon the hills."

**bagpipes



King Wimala Dharma Suriya and Admiral Joris van Spilbergen
(From the 1605 edition of Spilbergen's Journal)



arranged and put in order, not in the Singalese but in the Portuguese fashion . . . ” Nothing could exceed the hospitality and attention with which the Admiral was received.

In the afternoon of the day of arrival “ the King sent three horses equipped with their saddles, and begged the Admiral to come to him. Accordingly he went to the King taking with him some presents, after the King had received them from him, the presents were laid upon a carpet, the King clothed in white clothes stood up, and showing the aforementioned presents to his young prince and princess, began to walk along the hall with the General ”. The next day again the King sent for Spilbergen and received him ceremoniously. Their negotiations regarding Pepper and Cinnamon were only the preliminaries to many other discourses ” which took place between them on subsequent days.

They discussed business, geography, the strategy of war, architecture, religion and near philosophy. In the words of the journal : “ the General was for 5 days most of the time with the King ”, who introduced the Dutchman to his Queen and children in their private chamber, which was considered a signal honour and a royal gesture of great favour. The King’s admiration for his new found friend was so deep that he . . . “ began to learn the Netherlandish language, saying : “ Kandy is now Flanders ” and so great was his anxiety for the expulsion of the Portuguese that he went on to say, he himself with the wife and children, would carry stones and mortar for the erection of a Dutch fortress.

“ The King seemed delighted with everything ”, says the chronicler. When Spilbergen on departing from Kandy, took his leave of the King, he was “ given many elephants and people in order to return to his ships ”. He was also loaded with presents, which included a gilt hat and four or five slaves “ to serve him ”. Reciprocally he left with the Emperor two of his musicians. “ Thus the General returned through the whole Land, free and easy without any cost, except only some presents which he gave voluntarily, and was on his journey two and twenty days ”. The days and weeks that followed were spent in making preparations for departure and in the words of the Journal, “ setting fire to two Portuguese ships . . . to show the Sinhalese that we were enemies of the Portuguese ”.

On the 3rd of September Spilbergen’s ship, together with her consort the *Ram* which had dropped out of the convoy when rounding the Cape and had subsequently found her way to “ Matecalou ” roadstead, set sail for Acheen. There they found the other consort *Lam* waiting their arrival. The Admiral had obtained for his countrymen full protection and commercial privileges from the Sinhala King Vimala Dharma Suriya. So ends the graphic account by an unknown chronicler of the first link forged between Sri Lanka and the Netherlands.

4 :- THE TERRITORIAL LINK WITH SRI LANKA

EVEN before Spilbergen's experiences in Sri Lanka had been made known in Holland the newly founded United (Dutch) East India Company (V.O.C.) had decided to equip an expedition under its Charter, and to establish a political and commercial link with the Sinhala Court at Kandy. They despatched a fleet of fifteen vessels to the East, three of which were to proceed direct to Sri Lanka with this object in view. In this sequence of happenings, less than three months after Spilbergen had sailed for Acheen, Vice-Admiral Sebald de Weert brought his ships to anchor in the very roadstead Spilbergen had used, and was on the torturous land-trail, making for Kandy. He was received with enthusiasm by Vimala Dharma Suriya, who is said to have given him such a hearty embrace that he "creaked".

The King was as urgent with de Weert as he had been with Spilbergen that the Dutch should come in force to Ceylon to help him expel his enemies the Portuguese from the Island, in return for which they would be allowed to hold a fortified position on the sea-coast. The proposal was enthusiastically received by the Vice-Admiral and he formulated a scheme for the capture of Galle with the assistance of the Kandyan Sinhala sovereign.

To this end, de Weert set sail for Acheen, which had been decided on as the rendezvous, to consult the Supreme Commander of the East Indian fleet and obtain help. He returned to Ceylon with three other ships added to his earlier fleet of three, and on arrival lost no time in getting in touch with the Sinhala King. He apparently met the Emperor on the sands at Saintamaruthu on the 30th of May 1603. The meeting was cordial and there was much feasting and drinking of wine, a good supply of which the Vice-Admiral had brought ashore.

Of what followed at Nilgala, on their way to Kandy we have a number of conflicting accounts. Apparently owing to de Weert's lack of self-control

he made some disrespectful remarks which brought him the wrath of the King. He was killed together with forty six of his men while resisting an order by the King that the intoxicated Vice-Admiral be bound. One authority says : "Sebalt de Weert in his last voyage paid for the banquet and had with his men to bite the dust".

About this time there was much controversy whether it would be more advantageous to place the rendezvous for Dutch shipping and the headquarters of the V.O.C., in Ceylon, or further East. de Weert had favoured the claims of Ceylon but his unfortunate contretemps broke off good relations which had been already forged, resulting in such a decision being put off fifteen years. The question was finally resolved in favour of Java by Governor General Coen in 1619. For twenty years thereafter there was little contact between Ceylon and the Netherlands except for occasional calls made on the coast by Dutch vessels voyaging further east.

Meanwhile, Spilbergen's host and patron, King Vimala Dharma Suriya, had died. The Emperor : Senarat (Spilbergen's host at Meda Maha Nuwara) who had succeeded to the throne in 1604, had abdicated in favour of his son. This youth who is described "as mighty dowered with the bravery of war-skilled heroes", had proved his valour when he was but 17 years of age, by defeating a Portuguese army* under that noble warrior and General, Constantine de Sa Noronha — who fell himself in the battle.

Being bitterly hostile to the Portuguese, barely a year after his accession as Raja Sinha II, he turned in perplexity to the Dutch at Batavia, and tendering friendship, offered active co-operation if they helped him expel the Portuguese from Ceylon.

Thus, contact between the Ceylon and the Netherlands was renewed in 1637 on the initiative of the Kandyan court. It was however not until two years later that Admiral Westerwold, appeared with his promised fleet in the waters of Ceylon's eastern coast, and two decades more had to pass before the task of taking possession of the forts and fortresses built by the Portuguese to ward off attacks from the sea, and to guard the passes which gave access from the central mountain zone to the low-land terrain, was accomplished.

Batticaloa was taken by the Hollanders in 1638, and immediately thereafter Westerwold entered into a treaty with the Emperor Raja Sinha. This treaty laid down the lines on which future relations between Holland and the Sinhala King were to subsist. Apparently article 3 of the version of the treaty drawn up in Batavia, in Dutch, differed from that on the Portuguese

*At Randeniwela, in Lower Uva (off Wellawaya, 1680.) (Randeniya on the Ella—Wellawaya Road).

copy given to Raja Sinha. This augured unpleasantness and the good relations did not long persist.

Disputes broke out the following year when Trincomalie was occupied and garrisoned by the Dutch forces (1639). Raja Sinha demanded according to the terms of his version of the treaty that the fortress should be handed over to him. The Emperor made similar demands after the Forts at Galle (1640). Matara and Negombo (1644) were captured and occupied. When the Dutch refused to do so the breach opened wider. Whereas Raja Sinha contended that he had been swindled out of his territory, the Hollanders said : " Meet the charges of the war and we will evacuate the Forts when you please ". It may well be, that Van Diemen* who wrote as much to the Emperor on the 26th of September 1640 would not have been so free in his offer had he not been certain the Emperor could not meet their claim !

The fascinating story of the ding-dong struggle for position in that span of twenty years, of the diplomacy, the strategy, the drama or the tragedy call it what you will, which expanded in those spacious times when one Empire fell and another rose leaving the Dutch virtual masters of the seaboard and low-lands of Ceylon, is a gift to posterity by two historians from opposite sides.

The Portuguese historian Ribeyro, served as a soldier in the army ; Baldaeus the Netherland's writer was a Chaplain to the forces of Holland. They graphically describe how both powers strove to consolidate themselves, sometimes losing, sometimes gaining, until on the arrival of Director General Hulft in 1655, the fortune of war took a decided turn.

General Hulft's advance was made from Galle with the intention of reducing the fortress at Colombo. In an effort to hold Colombo, the Portuguese lost their fort at Kalutara and found Colombo besieged. Though heroically defended by them for seven months, Colombo capitulated on the 12th of May, 1656, and the Orange flag was raised on the siege-scarred battlements of the fortress. Although friendly relations between the Hollanders and the Emperor, Raja Sinha had been temporarily re-established by a fresh agreement signed in August 1649, they deteriorated once again over a bitter quarrel as a result of the capture of Colombo.

Raja Sinha, soured in mind, entrenched himself within the zone of his impenetrable mountains, while the Hollanders carried on their war with Portugal. The stronghold at Mannar was captured on the 22nd of February, 1658, and Jaffna capitulated after a short siege of three months on the favourable terms that the garrison would be transported to Europe and the ecclesiastic to the neighbouring Coromandel coast.

*Antonio van Diemen, Governor General of the Netherlands India, resident at Batavia.

This review, briefly summarises the course of events which led to the Hollanders' finding themselves virtual masters of the entire seaboard and the low-lands of Sri Lanka, under the authority of the Dutch East India Company. It was taken for granted that the Company had succeeded to the rights of this territory under three categories — Negombo, Galle, Colombo, and their respective districts in payment of the debt owed to them by the Emperor, Mannar and Jaffna, by right of conquest from the Portuguese, since they were captured without the assistance and co-operation of the Emperor and in spite of his hostility towards the manoeuvre. The claim to Kalpitiya, Trincomalie and Batticaloa, was made as a strategic necessity for the protection of their other possessions and in order to prevent any hostile nation seizing them.

Howbeit, Raja Sinha never accepted these distinctions. He pronounced himself Emperor of the whole Island and lord of all the territories held by the Dutch Company. Even when he was most peacefully disposed towards his neighbours, he always spoke of the lands as his lands, the forts as his forts, the Dutch Company as his servants and the Dutch governor as his governor.

This the Hollanders did not mind, and shielded by a military policy which showed no lust for further conquests but on the other hand was purely precautionary and defensive, turned attention to administrating and developing the country under the Company's sway, not unmindful of securing the utmost profit from their victory.

Up to the year 1658 when the last of the Portuguese forces were expelled from the Island, the government of Dutch maritime Ceylon was primarily of a military composition and character. It was not until a year later that it became possible to set up a regular civil administration. To this purpose the Company's territory excluding the Castle (Fort) of Colombo which was the seat of government, and place of residence of the "Governor and director of the Island of Ceylon and its Dependencies" was delimited into three territorial divisions. The Jaffna and Galle divisions were called *Commandements* since they denoted the jurisdiction of an officer called *Commandeur* or Lieutenant-Governor. The Colombo division (excluding the Castle or Fort) was termed *Dissavony*.* The whole was subject to the supreme authority of the Government of the Dutch East India Company established at Batavia. The possessions of the Dutch Company came to be known as the Littoral in British times.

The dissavony of Colombo, lay off the western coast, bounded by the Maha Oya (which the Hollander called the river Caymelle) on the north and

*This means the jurisdiction of a *Dissava* (a Sinhalese word for the Chieftain of a province). The Hollander adopted the term for convenience, when early in their occupation they had occasion to replace some of the local chieftains by officers of their own.

the Bentota river on the south. It extended on an average about 15 miles inland up to the frontier of the Sinhala King's domain. One fortlet at Hanvella and two stockades at Anguruvatota and Pitigala, were erected to command the passes on this frontier while two forts at Negombo and Kalutara supported the Castle-Fortress at Colombo in guarding the sea-approaches. It was one of the richest tracts of country in Ceylon at that period as it produced the finest cinnamon procurable in the world.

The Commandement of Jaffna comprised the town and fortress at Jaffna together with all the territory north of a meandering frontier on the land approach from the domain of the Emperor, and thirteen islands off the western coast-lines. Eight of these islands the Hollands renamed Amsterdam, Leyden, Middleberg, Haarlem, Rotterdam, Horn and Enkuysen. The largest of these islands was Delft.

There were two fortresses in this Commandement, at Jaffna and Mannar respectively. The latter was regarded as the key to Jaffna. It was known to be an ancient commercial emporium which had drawn the ships of the intrepid Phoenicians from the Red sea, even before their experienced seamen piloted the fleets of Solomon in search of the treasure and luxury of the further East. The lure of Mannar was the precious pearl which the adjacent shallow seas produced, and it drew in an almost unparalleled kaleidoscopic procession down the corridors of Time, merchants and mariners, adventurers and thieves. There were also two other fortlets on the islands Kayts and Hammenheil, which guarded the northern sea-approach to Jaffna.

The extensive southern limits of the Commandement known as the *Vanni* was a jungle clad country under Vannia Chieftains, to which fact it owes its name. They were a roving lawless people from whom the Dutch Company extracted elephants as tribute. Many fortlets were erected in strategic positions to keep the rebel bands in check. These will be described later.

The Galle Commandement lay adjoining the Dissavony of Colombo off the south coast, and terminated at the Walawe Ganga. There were forts established along the coast at Galle and Matara, and landwards on the frontier at Katuvena. Other smaller watch-posts were established as occasion demanded. Like the Dissavony of Colombo this Commandement too covered a rich tract of country famous for its cinnamon, and cardamom which the Hollander later cultivated rather largely in the Matara district.

The remaining country, both mountain zone and maritime plain, was acknowledged by the Company as the domain of the Kandyan Sinhala Emperor. They allowed him free-trade therein, but were always ready to close them to him, or even occupy any tract, on the first news of the Emperor's dealings with a foreign nation. By a treaty between the Dutch Company and the Kandyan Sinhala monarch in 1766, the former claimed a coastal

strip “ to the breath of one Sinhalese mile in land, more or less as the situation of the hills and rivers will permit ”, outside the limits of their Commandements and Dissavony, as ceded to them.

In the introduction to the “ Catalogue of the Archives of the Dutch Central Government of Coastal Ceylon, 1640 — 1796 ”, the compiler, Miss M. W. Juriaanse says : “ Although the Dutch possessions were limited to the coastal lands, it is interesting to note Governor Schreuder’s comment in his memoir of 1762* “ there is no place or comptoir in the whole of the west of the Indies, where the Company possesses so much territory and of which they are sole masters to such a degree as here . . . ”

“ Rijckloff van Goens the Elder seems to have overrated the importance of this island to the Company, but a more accurate view was that set out by Hendrik Adriaan Van Reede** : this was the point of view generally adopted, as may be seen from the memoirs of various governors, and from the description of Sri Lanka by Pieter Van Dam in 1701, as “ the difficult burden ” of the Company. This was due to the constant trouble with the Kandyan kingdom, not really overcome until the treaty of 14th February 1766***, which brought to an end an exhaustive war lasting for five years. Towards the end of that century the Dutch may be said to have been their own enemies, for the administration was becoming less efficient and more corrupt.”

*Memoir by Governor Schreuder (in photostat), Chapter II.

**Valentijn V, p. 247 et. eff.

***See nos. 3344, 2444, of note. p. 315 of the Catalogue by Juriaanse.

5 :- ARMORIAL BEARINGS



The Coat-of-arms of the entire Dutch Territory.

THE Dutch East India Company had separate arms, or wapen, blazoned for each of the administrative divisions, besides one which comprehensively represented all their territorial possessions in Ceylon.

The former included the "Commandement" or divisions administered by a Commandeur, and the "Comptoirs", or sub-districts, under an Opperhoofd or Chief Resident.

The wealth and variety of Ceylon's resources were attractions which from the dawn of Commerce drew men of many races to its shores. "The Helen or Bride in the Contest of this Isle", said Baldaeus, "is the finest and purest cinnamon". Next to cinnamon came the "lordly Ceylon Elephant", prized above all others. From the scenic point of view, Ceylon's palm-fringed shores, and its central mountain zone have been accepted from earliest times as subtle niceties of its magical landscape.

It is therefore, not strange to find these objects conspicuously blazoned and forming the basis of the Dutch Wapen, or Coat-of-arms of Ceylon. The device is a typical example of an armorial bearing which is descriptive of the country.

The four objects on the ground beside the figure of the elephant in the illustration are bales of cinnamon quills, three by the fore-legs and one behind. Above the left tusk of the elephant and gripped by the animal's trunk there is a branch, with leaves of the cinnamon tree. The landscape shown as a background for the design conveys in perspective an impression of the mountains of the island.

Emblematic recognition of the plant which flourished in rich luxuriance in the sea-belts of the Dutch territory in Ceylon, the cultivation of which they extensively encouraged, is represented by a grove of coconut palms, three on each side to harmonise the design.

The two shields suspended from the elephant's trunk have been "quartered". That on the right is emblazoned on each quarter with the heraldic arms of Colombo, Galle, Jaffna and Mannar. The shield on the left displays the arms of Trincomalee, Matara, Batticaloa and Calpentyn. For heraldic purposes the coat-of-arms is regarded from the point of view of the man who carries it. What looks to be the left-hand side of it is called the dexter or right-hand side, and what looks like the right is the sinister or left.

The entire pictorial achievement appears on an "argent", or silver shield, and is ornamented with external accessories including a crest or crown, and a scroll work which most strikingly relieves the design of bareness. The crown is surmounted by a jewelled orb and the cross. The external accessories are embellished in deep red with the tonings in old gold.

COLOMBO,



The Coat-of-arms of the Castle (Fort) and the Dissavony of Colombo.

The escutcheon, or field, of the Dutch Coat-of-Arms of the Castle (Fort) and the Dissavony of Colombo is very simply blazoned with a leafy tree and a bird perched on one of the branches. A device with such simple characters can hardly be expected to stimulate any special interest. Nevertheless the charges on this shield conceal a fanciful rendering, and illustrate one of the many whimsical tales often invented in order to account for the origin of a place name.

There are several versions of the origin of the name of Colombo. Some say that from the contiguity of the ancient township to the Kelani River it took the name Kolantota ("tota" meaning ferry or port). Long before the arrival of the Portuguese, the Moors of the 12th and 13th Centuries who regularly used the roadstead to anchor their craft, transformed this name to Kalambu. In Sinhalese it has generally retained the form Kolamba, with accent on the first syllable. It is popularly claimed that this Sinhalese form originates from Kola-Amba, a term for a species of the mango tree which has an abundance of leaves.

The Dutch appear to have picked up this tradition. When blazoning the coat-of-arms, they gaily punned on "Colombo" by introducing a leafy tree (Kola-Amba). Playing further on words they included a bird, meant to be a dove (Latin: Columba) in the device. Such arms as these belong to the class known as *armes parlentes*, or "canting heraldry". They are called *sprekende wapenen* by the Dutch armourists, because they pun on or illustrate the name.

In the elaborately decorated cartouche of one of the oldest maps of the "Fort and City of Colombo" in the Dutch period, an attempt is made to show the Coat-of-arms. Above it, there appears the legend:

"Colombo in Sinhalese is a mango tree without fruit, whereof the name Colombo is derived".

The original of this old map at the Hague is said to have many references by Ryckloff van Goens and Adrian van der Meyden, which fact assigns a period 1653 — 75 to the adoption of this device as the coat-of-arms of Colombo.

JAFFANAPATN. am,



The Coat-of-arms of the Jaffna Commandement.

Before the Portuguese or the Dutch gained a footing in North Ceylon, the peninsular was known as Yalpanam. The sea port of the ancient kingdom was called Pattanam. Sailors and merchants in course of time combined the two names and called the present capital of the Northern Province, Yalpanam-pattanam, meaning "the seaport of Jaffna". The Portuguese shortened this to Jaffna-patam. The Dutch used the same combination to refer to both the principal town, and the northern territory or "Commandement" under their sway.

A remarkable characteristic of the landscape of the peninsular and the adjacent islands is the profusion of the palmyra palm. It is popularly claimed that no single production of nature is capable of being put to so many uses. Consequently in as much as the plant has long been celebrated in legend as a special creation by the Brahma to "assuage hunger and cure disease, to feed the people and enrich the race", it has also been traditionally venerated as the "Kalpa Tree" or Tree of life and dedicated to the deity Ganesa.

It is not possible to imagine that these outbursts of simple gratitude, or sentiment, inspired the selection of the palmyra tree as the device for the Dutch coat-of-arms of the Commandement of Jaffnapatam. The legends and traditions are, nevertheless, pointers to the signal economical possibilities of the plant. This fact, and the peculiar geographical distribution which associates the plant with the northern portions of Ceylon, are reasons which are more apparent. Admittedly the connection between the charge of the shield and the territory the armorial bearing represents could hardly have been more appropriately established.

The palm tree is shown on the device in its natural form, rising vertically to its full height without a curve or deviation. The broad fan-like leaves are gracefully arranged round the crown of the tree, with patches of colour to

indicate the clusters of fruit. The design also exhibits one of the peculiar features of the tree and minutely shows the stalks which remain for many years attached to the trunk after the leaves have decayed.

The shield on which the arms are displayed is surmounted by a barred helmet and mantling. The crown, the coronet and the barred helmet transmitted in Dutch armorial bearings did not carry the same significance that they have in English heraldry where they are the peculiar privilege of royalty and nobility. The crown on the *wapen* of Ceylon bore allusion to territorial possessions in this Island being held in the name of the States General or Parliament of the United Provinces.

The coronet on the wapen of the "Commandement" of Colombo signified its priority in circumstances that Colombo was the seat of Government and the residence of the Governor: styled in full "Governor and Director of the Island of Ceylon and its Dependencies". The Commandeurs of the two remaining provincial territories, namely Jaffna and Galle, were Lieutenant Governors whose rank was just next to that of the Governor of the Island. The barred helmet has been used to signify this rank.

The heraldic tinctures on this coat-of-arms are natural for the object shown on the field, and azure for the scroll work, with edging of old gold. Red and black with lines of gold, are used for the helmet and mantle.



The Coat-of-arms of the Galle Commandement.

The coat-of-arms of the "Commandement" of Galle is in the same heraldic class as the arms of the "Commandement" of Colombo. It is another example of *sprekende wapen* (speaking arms) and plays on a connection between the charges or designs on the shield and the name of the

territory it stands for. The design is simple. It represents a cock, standing on a rock.

The etymology of the name Galle is explained in two ways. The version more difficult to follow is that the name originates from the Sinhalese for cattle-pen or caravanserai (Gala). This is associated with a legendary belief thousands of years old. It singles out a spot outside the Fort of Galle, called to this day Pattiawela, as the site of the cattle-pen of Ravana, a king of Lanka, who was associated with the events narrated in that famous epic the Ramayana.

The simpler, and more popular theory, however, is that the name is from the Sinhalese Gala, a rock. The Dutch armourist struck by the similarity in the sound of Galle, and Gala, used a rock as one feature of the device. He then proceeded to duplicate the idea by adopting a cock (Latin : Gallus), as further charge on the arms. The "canting" allusion which is perpetuated in the armorial bearings of the "Commandement" of Galle, could hardly have been made more apparent.

The shield which carries the device is argent (silver). The charges on the shield are in natural colour. The external ornaments, namely, the scroll and the crest, are in form and colour identical with the coat-of-arms blazoned for the "Commandement" of Jaffnapatnam.

TRINQUENE, MANNAR, male



The Coat-of-arms of the "Comptoirs" or sub-districts.

It has already been said that the organisation under which the Government was administered by the Dutch in Ceylon, included eight sub-districts subject to one or other of the three "Commandements" hitherto described.

Each sub-district had its distinctive heraldic arms. The respective designs were blazoned on a shield of a standard pattern, edged with old gold

and banded in red. None of these bear the external accessories such as crest or scroll work featured in the arms of the "Commandements". The tendency has been towards simplicity but there are, of course, variations in the design, or "charge" on each coat-of-arms, which as usual, had some allusion to the sub-district represented.

The charge on the arms of "Trinquemale" (Trincomalee) is that of a lascorin, or Asian soldier, in full uniform armed with sword and pike. It is an established fact that the Dutch originally imported Javanese and Malay lascorins for military service in Ceylon. Why this soldier figures as an emblem on the arms of this eastern fortress-harbour is not apparent. Possibly these imported mercenaries were used in large numbers to man the forts at the foot of Pagoda Hill (Swamy Rock) and Oostenburg; or maybe, the design merely symbolises the port at which these troops were usually landed.

The Mannar "Comptoir" has used a weed for its emblem: the Indian Madder* called in Sinhalese Saya and in Tamil Chaya.

Before chemical or synthetic dyes were discovered, the Chaya-root was much used by painters and dyers in north Ceylon and south India to obtain the bright red, purple and brown orange tints which are popular in rendering temple paintings, and colouring muslins. The plant, six to ten inches in height with leaves of the grass type was known as Ramiseram Vair from the locality in which it grows. The roots dug up in the Mannar districts were known to excel all others in quality, and during the times of the Dutch Government formed a very important article of revenue.

MATURE, BATTICALO



Mature, or Matara, draws on a familiar scene for its device: the Nilwala Ganga spanned by a bridge and a Martello fort. Batticaloa, like Mannar, goes to good earth and typifies the produce of the dry "chenna lands" which

*Oldendia (Hedyotis) unbellata.

are a feature of the district. The design represents three cobs of Indian Corn (See Mays), called in Sinhalese Iringu and in Tamil Muttu-sholum.

CALPENTYN, CHILAUW,



Calpentyň, which is the melodious name the Dutch gave to Kalpitiya, proclaims its past importance as a trading post by its five-bastioned fort still in good preservation, and by the design on its arms. The significance of the two ships, as opposed to one on the arms of Chilaw, is that Calpentyň incorporated a second port, Puttalam, at the southern end of the estuary, or “gobb”, between the peninsula and the mainland. Calpentyň eventually came to be called the Company’s sea-port, and Puttalam the Sinhalese King’s inner port. No vessel was permitted to pass Calpentyň until it was searched.

NIGOMBO, COTIAAR,



The design on the arms of Negombo is that of a clay pitcher of a type commonly used to store water. Charles Pridham, an old-time writer, tells in his account of Ceylon that owing to the water in the district being brackish it was the custom to sink empty pitchers in the sand overnight, which in the

morning were found full of pure and sweet water that had filtered into them during the interval. Perhaps this simple domestic practice, coupled with the fact that pottery was a handicraft in the district, inspired the design for the arms.

Cotiaar was a small sub-district south of Trincomalee, and is commemorated today in corrupted form by the name Koddigar Bay which has been given to the sheet of water which separates it from Trincomalee. If you delve for its history, you will find that the Danes built a fort there in 1622, which the Dutch took over. The delicious palm commonly known as "wild date", (*Phoenix Seylanica*), Sinhalese Indi, is common in this sandy part of the Island. This doubtless is why it figures on the arms of the "Comptoir".

Territory held by the Dutch in Ceylon

Map of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) showing Dutch territories and key locations. The map is titled "Territory held by the Dutch in Ceylon".

Key locations and territories marked on the map include:

- North:** Karfasanturai, Point Pedro, Jaffnapatam, PAS PYL, PAS BESCHUTTER, PAS ELEPHANT, Mullaittivu.
- West Coast:** Mannar, Arippe, Kalpitiya, Puttalam, Chilaw, Negombo, Colombo, Kalutara, Galle, Matara.
- Central:** JAFFNA, COMMANDEMENT, QUANT'S TANK, Trincomalee, KANTALAI TANK, Medamahanuwara, Alutnuwara, Ruwanwella, Sitawaka, ANSUTTA, Galle, Matara.
- East Coast:** Kaddiyar, FORT FREDERIC, Batticaloa, Kalmunai, Lamanthurai, Tirukkovil, Little Basses, Great Basses.
- South:** Galle, Matara.

Annotations on the map:

- "Territory ceded to the Dutch by Treaty of 1766" (pointing to the area around Trincomalee).
- "Territory ceded to the Dutch by Treaty of 1766" (pointing to the area around Kaddiyar).

செவ்வாய் கி. பி. 1898
புதுச்சேரி
புதுச்சேரி

6 :- *MONUMENTAL LEGACIES OF THE COLONIAL DUTCH*

I. **Forts and Fortresses**

The most tangible memorials which help us today to visualize the early efforts of the Hollanders to hold and develop their littoral in Ceylon are what remain of the grim and picturesque strongholds which stood off some of Ceylon's wind-swept bays and harbours, and the four-square granite ramparts or the earth-embanked blockhouses which guarded the passes from the central mountains to the low-country terrain.

Some of these old forts and fortresses are in a fair state of preservation. Others, in more ruinous state, reward such efforts as may be made to trace them under mantles of low-jungle and thorny scrub. Many have been divested in modern times of their appurtenances, to be turned to other uses.

Nevertheless, one and all of these memorials are sufficiently intriguing to an imagination which can picture them in past centuries. They are storied heritages to those who would read into them the glamour and achievements in the days of sailing boats and elementary firelocks.

The Portuguese, who preceded the Hollander and contested dominion over Ceylon for nearly 150 years chose the sites and built most of the forts and fortresses at stations of importance on the coast, or inland, as their territory extended. Most of these were entirely re-built or strengthened and enlarged by their Dutch successors. On the other hand, the British who followed the Dutch found these defences to be in a satisfactory state when they took over. The only change made would appear to be in replacing or adding to the ordinance. What therefore remains of old forts in Ceylon is chiefly Dutch, but there is nothing distinctly Dutch about them, except in their gate-ways and a few other features which close search discloses.

Perhaps, to fit the plan of this narrative, it would be best to describe the forts in the order they happened to be taken over by the Hollander.



BATTICALOA

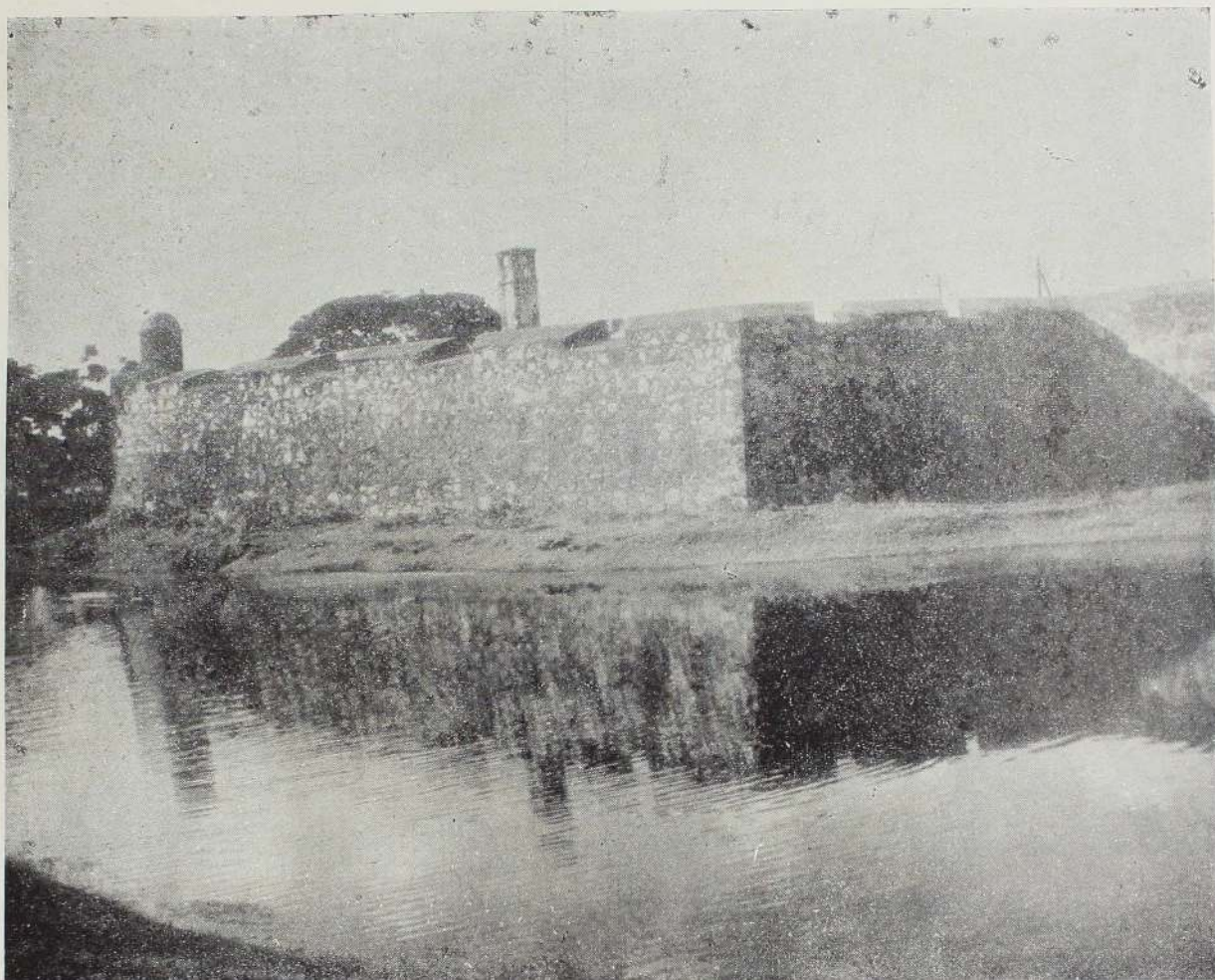
The grim little quadrangular stronghold at Batticaloa with a battery at each angle connected by a loop-holed wall, is perhaps the most picturesque of the small Dutch Forts, which have weathered the tropical fret and wear of three centuries and more. It is built of coral stone. In writings a hundred years old it is described as "surrounded by a ditch swarming with crocodiles." Apparently, in the past the estuarine waters off Ceylon's coast were infested with

these amphibious reptiles, and the original Portuguese builder took full advantage of this hazard in selecting the sites. This applies more particularly to Batticaloa, Negombo, Matara and Colombo.

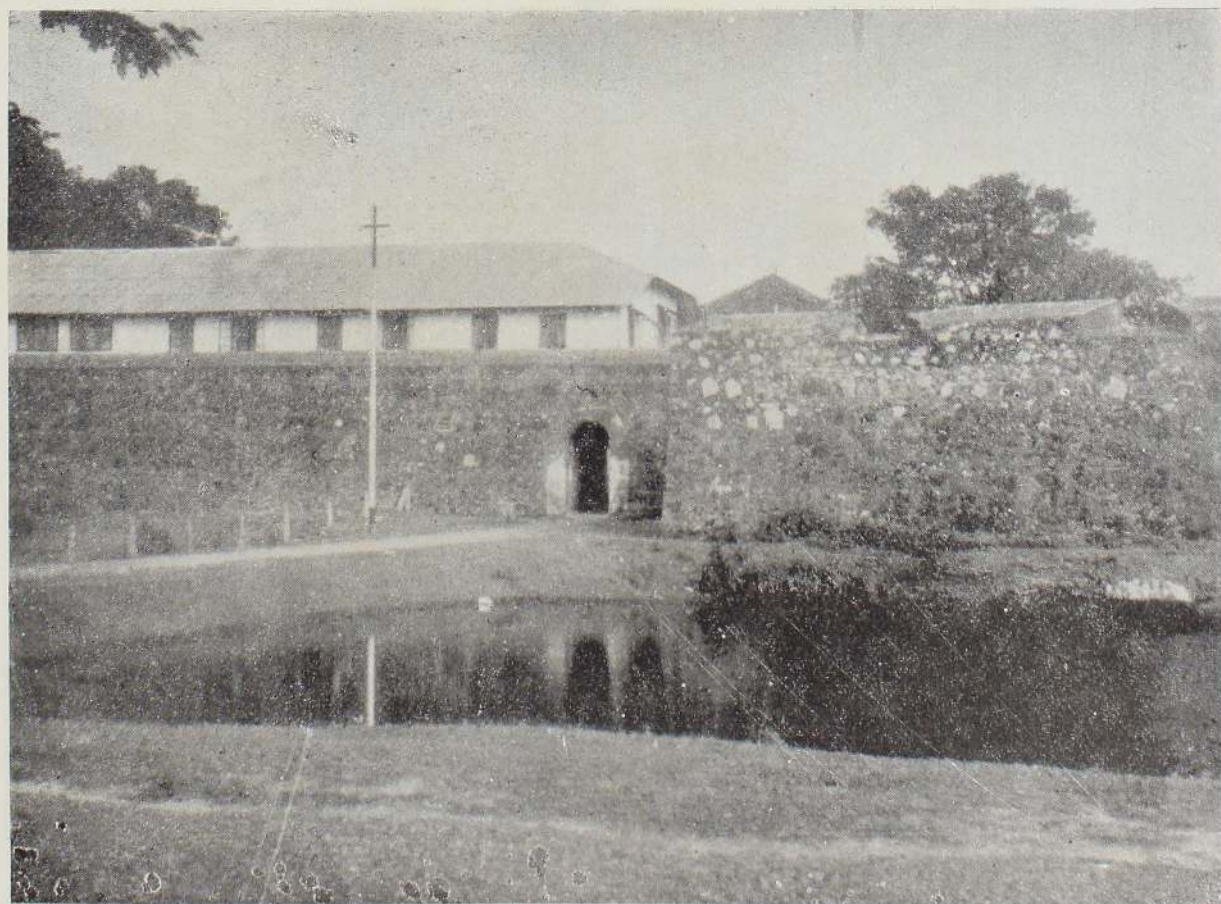
Damian Botado, an officer under General Constantine de Sa Y Noronha, built this fort for the Portuguese in 1628.* It was besieged 10 years after it had been erected, and was the first fort in Ceylon to be captured by the Dutch. We have earlier noticed how impatient Raja Sinha II was that the Dutch should come in force to Ceylon, to his help. Adam Westerwold's main fleet at the moment being busy harrassing the Portuguese in the Bay of Goa, he sent Vice-Commander Jacobsz Coster to reconnoitre and make the preliminary preparations for an assault on the Forts at Trincomalee and Batticaloa. He had so thoroughly planned the attack on Batticaloa that when Westerwold arrived in May 1638, the Fort surrendered after a resistance of four hours.

The Sinhala Emperor was camped a mile from the scene of operations, and was jubilant when he saw a flag of truce raised over the Fort. Seven hundred people had sheltered in the Fort : " 50 Portuguese and Mistices, the rest being blacks, women and children, for they had burnt down their *negrye* (black-town) outside the fort and brought the people inside." Much powder and shot, and rice, to last a month were found within the Fort when it surrendered. The only supply of good water was a well, " more than a musket-shot from the fort ".

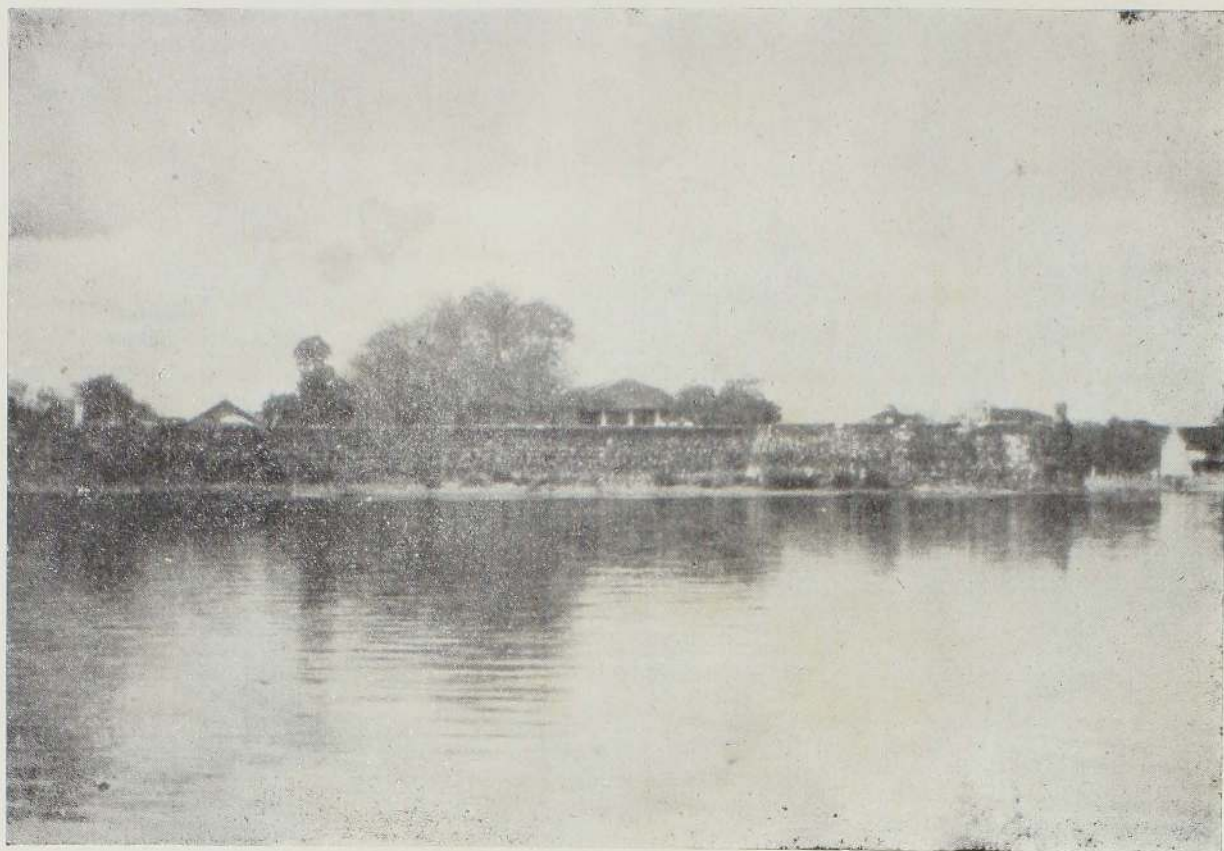
*Loc. cit. Note ** on page 5 ch. II



Batticaloa — The picturesque north-east bastion and moat.



The northern face of the Fort — showing the old water-gate.



Batticaloa Fort — from the lake.

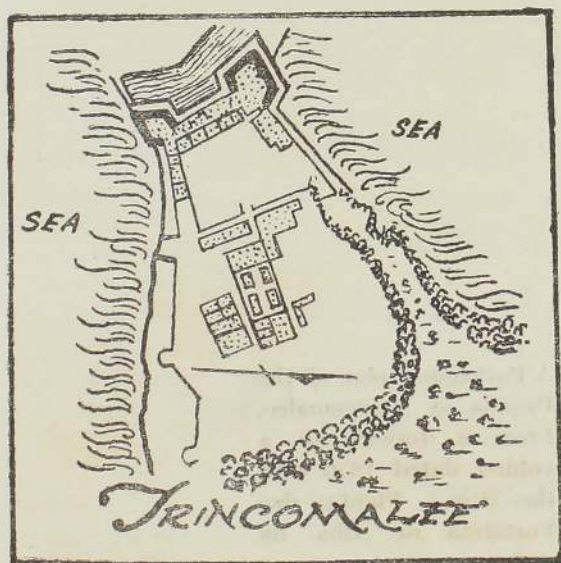


Insignificant gate-way to Batticaloa Fort. Over it is the date — 1682.

Incidentally, details of the assault and capture of the Fort were graphically described in a letter* despatched by Coster to the Governor General of the Netherlands India, at Batavia,. In parenthesis he says : " the Admiral decided to leave me in the fort with 100 men . . . I had hoped to be allowed to go to Batavia . . . I am here as a *dood eter* (useless person) without hope of any promotion. If I must remain here I should like my wife to be sent here by the first opportunity . . . " He addressed the letter to the Hon'ble Wise, Valiant etc : Heer Antonio van Diemen. We shall read more about Coster when we discuss the Fort at Galle.

Writing 75 years later, the Governor and Director of Ceylon Hendrick Becker,** refers to Batticaloa as " a strong and well-built fort . . . 120 roods in circumference . . . garrisoned with a view to prevent smuggling going on there ". Quarters for the troops and for the Commander and officers were within the ramparts.

The fort surrendered to a detachment of British troops under Major Fraser, without any resistance, on the 18th of September, 1795. Many alterations have been made within the walls of the Fort in modern times to render the building suitable for use as Government Offices.



TRINCOMALEE***

Although it is perhaps one of the most picturesque and greatest natural harbours of the world, Trincomalee is known to but few people who go about the earth to see and to admire. The trading ships and the mighty passenger liners of today prefer Colombo, where the capital city and the business centre of sea-girt Ceylon have been established.

Nevertheless, fighting ships and fighting men have been familiar with this land-locked harbour, up on Ceylon's eastern coast-line from those early days of sail when swift caravels swept the seas to build Empire and monopolise the georgeous trade of the Orient.

*Ceylon Literary Register Vol. II pp. 45, 52 - 54 (1887)

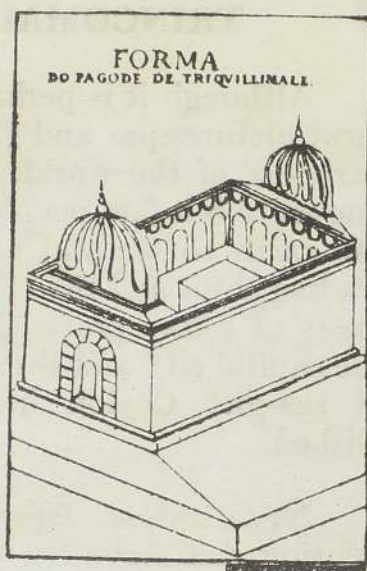
**Memoir of Hendrick Becker to his successor Issac A. Rumpf. 1716

***Generally called by the Dutch : Trincinomale

“He who holds Trincomalee holds India”, is a slogan which sprang from the minds of thinking men of a generation long gone. A narrator writing a century and a half ago remarks : “the naval power which commands this harbour may keep all Asia in awe, and easily intercept the trade of other nations to and from every corner of Hindoostan”.

Is there any reason to wonder that history has time and again been written in the blue waters off these rocky promontories? Portugal and the Netherlands, France and Britain in equal measure realized the truth so indelibly embedded in the slogan and contributed to its story.

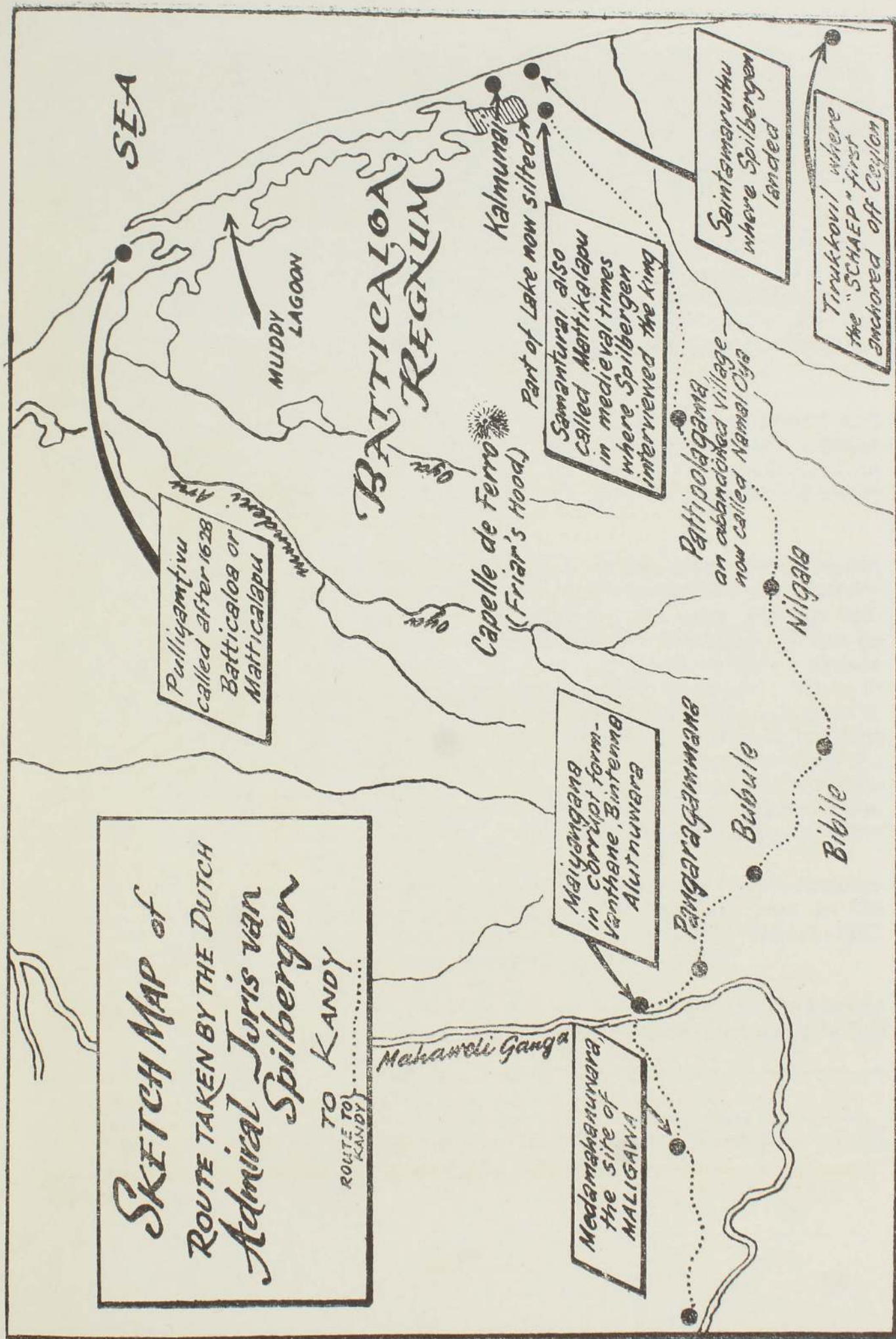
The Portuguese were the first nation to recognise Trincomalee as the key to the Orient. Quickened to action by the rival challenge of the Dutch to their power in the East : with feverish excitement they built themselves a Fort in 1634, at the base of the craggy promontory we call “Swamy Rock”. Time was when there stood crowning this summit, a celebrated : “temple of a thousand columns”. The temple was demolished and the stones used to build the fort*, which was in the form of a triangle, with a bastion at each corner. Though considered impregnable by position and surrounding terrain, the Fort possessed only fourteen guns in all : 6 pounders, said to have been taken from a wrecked Danish ship.



A Portuguese plan of the Pagoda at Trincomalee. From a drawing in a volume dated 1650 with the title : Plantas das Fortaleza de Ilha de Ceilao.

Don Anthonio Mascarenhas was in command of this fort and had with him forty European soldiers and a hundred others, when a “Dutch fleet of twelve ships of sorts including two yachts”, under Admiral Westerwold, came in to attack it. The landing force was commanded by Heer Antonio Caen.

*Jacobs Coster, in a letter to Van Diemen : Ceylon Lit. Register Vol. II p. 53 (1887).



The Hollanders landed in what is now called Dutch Bay, at the end of April 1639. The next day they prepared to attack. They made paths for their cannon and mortars, built their batteries using four *halve cartouwen** with which the loopholes of their batteries were strengthened and armed them with 24-pounders and 18-pounders. While these preparations were going on the Portuguese shot stones from their guns** and fired lead bullets which had been “chewed, contrary to all the rules of war”.

The attack was made on the 1st of May. The plan was to effect a breach between two bastions. In an hour and a half the Portuguese guns were silenced and three hours later the breach was made. A drummer carrying a flag of truce who was sent to call upon the enemy to surrender was fired upon. This so enraged Caen that he proceeded with the bombardment relentlessly and resolved to storm the fort at dawn.

The attack did not come off. The Portuguese captains appeared and apologised for their soldiers firing on the flag of truce, and later a priest handed over the keys of the Fort. The Dutch entered the fortification on the 2nd of May 1639, and found the Fort battered and the guns buried under debris***.

In the latter half of the same year Heer Anthonio Caen reconstructed the Fort they had captured. The Portuguese had named the larger battery intended to guard against attack from the mainland St. Jago, and the battery at the other end of the rampart guarding the bay, St. Cruz. These he renamed Zeeburg and Amsterdam, respectively. Howbeit, within a decade the Fort was abandoned. In a contemporary writing**** we read : “When in 1661 we passed this pretty bay, we could not see any fortification ; afterwards, during the second English war (1665 — 67) another Fort, with four bastions was built there, so as not to give any chance to those who were seeking the ruin of our country”. This would mean that for over a decade the only protection provided by the Dutch for this important strategic harbour was a small out-post on the shores of Koddigar Bay, bearing the same name.*****

The new Fort which came to be built at “Trincomalee” when rumours of French and British expansion reached the Dutch in 1658, was on the same site of the earlier Fort on Swamy Rock. They called it Pagoda Hill. Concurrently Koddigar was also strengthened and re-fortified.

Considering the important part that Trincomalee has filled in the history of the European occupation of Ceylon, it is indeed strange that so little has

*It is said they were short of powder and shot.

**This was a prefabricated contrivance with crenells which shielded the troops firing with muskets.

***Excerpts from the Journal of Antonio Caen, Jnl : Royal Asiatic Society (CB) Vol. X, p. 123 - 140.

****Wouter Schouten's Account of Ceylon (1661), Ibid Vol. XI. p. 334.

*****Spelt Koddiga, Coutijar or Cottiar.

been written about its strategic fortifications. Howbeit, this deficiency, has been met by a fairly comprehensive collection of Dutch maps and charts of the harbour of "Trincomalee" and its environs, to which we owe much of the information which follows.

The anticipated French expedition against the Dutch came off in 1672. A Royal Squadron commanded by Admiral de La Haye, with whom was Francois Caron, made a descent upon Trincomalee. The little post at Koddigar "greeted them amiably with seven guns in salute". The French replied with five guns in earnest! The surprised Dutch garrison destroyed the out-post, and sought refuge in Pagoda Hill.*

The French fortified the two islands at the entrance of the harbour which the Dutch had named *Dwars-in-de-weg* meaning "right in the way" and *Compagnies Eyland*.** They named the former "Isle du Soleil". Their ambassadors who had been despatched to the Kandyan Court returned with greeting from the Emperor, Raja Sinha and, as a gift from him, permission to occupy Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Koddigar.

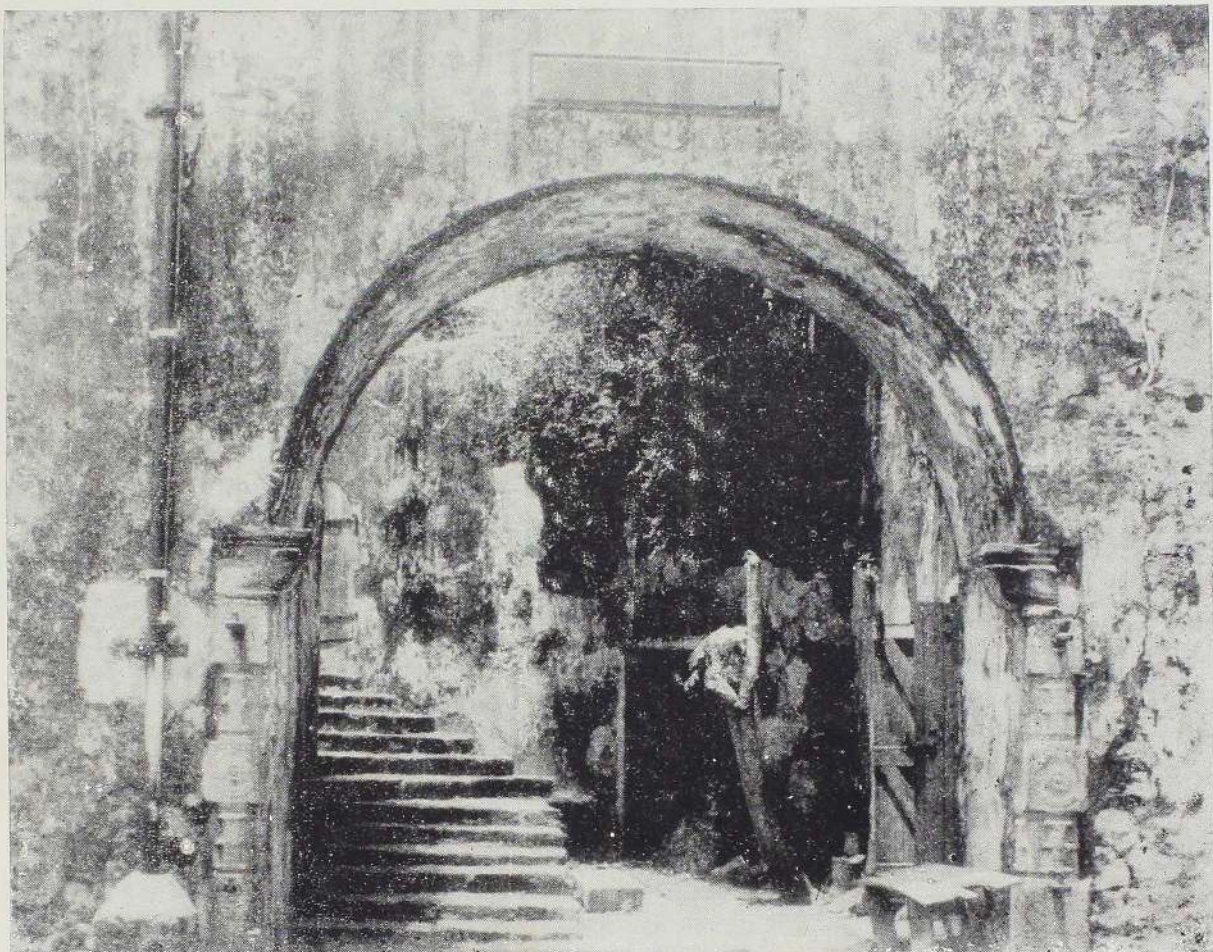
This threat to the Hollanders was short lived. The Dutch fleet appeared and anchored below Pagoda Hill. "De La Haye called on the Dutch Admiral and dropped cards. Van Goens returned the call and dropped hints". Two ships sent to collect provisions were intercepted and captured by the Dutch. De La Haye with many sick men on his hands and no food, sailed away within four months of his arrival abandoning a garrison placed on Koddigar. This force ere long was compelled to surrender to the Dutch. All that was left to recall this episode were two "stone moles" the French had constructed on the islands they occupied. These appeared in the Dutch maps fourteen years later.

Writing of Pagoda Hill 45 years later (1716), Governor Becker describes the Fort in his memoir to his successor, as a fortress "with many strong accessories, such as batteries, redoubts, bastions and moats some of it in decay". He rated the importance of the Fort on account of its close proximity to Coromandal and the Bengal coasts, and had not only strengthened it, "but as a further safeguard had a new Fort constructed on Oostenburg".

"This Oostenburg" he writes, "is a small stone fortress... on a hill east of the entrance to the inner bay, and serves to protect the bay". He also refers to a *waterpas* (fortified dam or mole) on the west of the entrance which he considered should be strengthened. All these defences though

*History of Trincomalee, Lt. G. P. Thomas (1940).

**Which the British named Little Sober Island and Great Sober Island after a British Officer Lt. Sober.



Trincomalee — Old entrance, part of Pagoda Hill Fort, which possibly dates from Portuguese occupation. Note the ornamental guard-pillars brought from the site of the “ Temple of a thousand columns.”



Vestige of Fort Ostenburg erected at the entrance of Trincomalee harbour,

much delayed, had their origin in the lessons learnt when the French occupied the islands in the harbour, and the Dutch found themselves very feebly fortified to resist.*

Between 1759 — 1769, with another threat of war the Dutch “Trincomalee” appeared in a revised set of maps which discloses that much attention had been paid to its defences.** The rather clear statements on these maps concerning the fortified positions is also significant.

The pagoda Hill fortification : which in the British period came to be called Fort Frederick*** consisted of the Zeeburg, Amsterdam and the Enkhysen Bastions ; the Cat (a mounting or platform on which guns were placed), and at the top of the hill : Portuguese Point. Below Pagoda Hill, there was a fortified mole facing North Bay and a redoubt near it.

The entrance to Inner Harbour was covered by the guns of *Fort Oostenburg* (described as new battery) and by a battery erected on the island *Dwars-in-de-wea*. Koddियar Fortlet seems to have been abandoned at this stage, and only its foundations are shown and described on the maps.

From 1782, the fortifications at Trincomalee underwent bewildering changes in possession. The British Admiral, Hughes, took possession in the name of his country for a brief space of 8 months. Admiral Suffren outmanouvered him and kept the colours of France Flying over its Forts for a little less than a year. When peace was declared in 1783, Trincomalee was ceded by France to Great Britain, and subsequently, in a round-about way, to Holland at the Treaty of Versailles.

A remarkable statement is made by William Hiche in his memoirs relating his adventures at Trincomalee while it was in the hands of the French. He writes : “in spite of the fact that the British and then the French held Trincomalee, the Dutch Governor**** and his wife were still living in Fort Frederick on good terms with everybody”.

The Dutch held the Forts at Trincomalee for twelve years thereafter and until they were surrendered to the British in 1795.***** The developments of modern warfare have deprived places like Trincomalee of the strategic importance they possessed in the past. Her great days accomplished, now to the never ending melancholy of the waves of the Indian Ocean which break at the base of her cliffs, Trincomalee has curled up lazily,

*Hafner says that this neglect to fortify Trincomalee was due to the economical policy of the Dutch.

**Land, Maps and Survey (R. L. Brohier) Vol II, pp. 116 - 121.

***Frederick, after the Duke of York.

****Possibly he means the Commander of the Fortress.

*****There are several versions of the events which led to the surrender. A very detailed statement based on the documents available in the Madras Record Office by the Author appears in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (C.B.) New Series Vol. IX, Part I published in 1964.

tired of guarding against foes, and gone to sleep draped in an enchanting mantle of scenic-visitas, and at peace.

Chronological dates

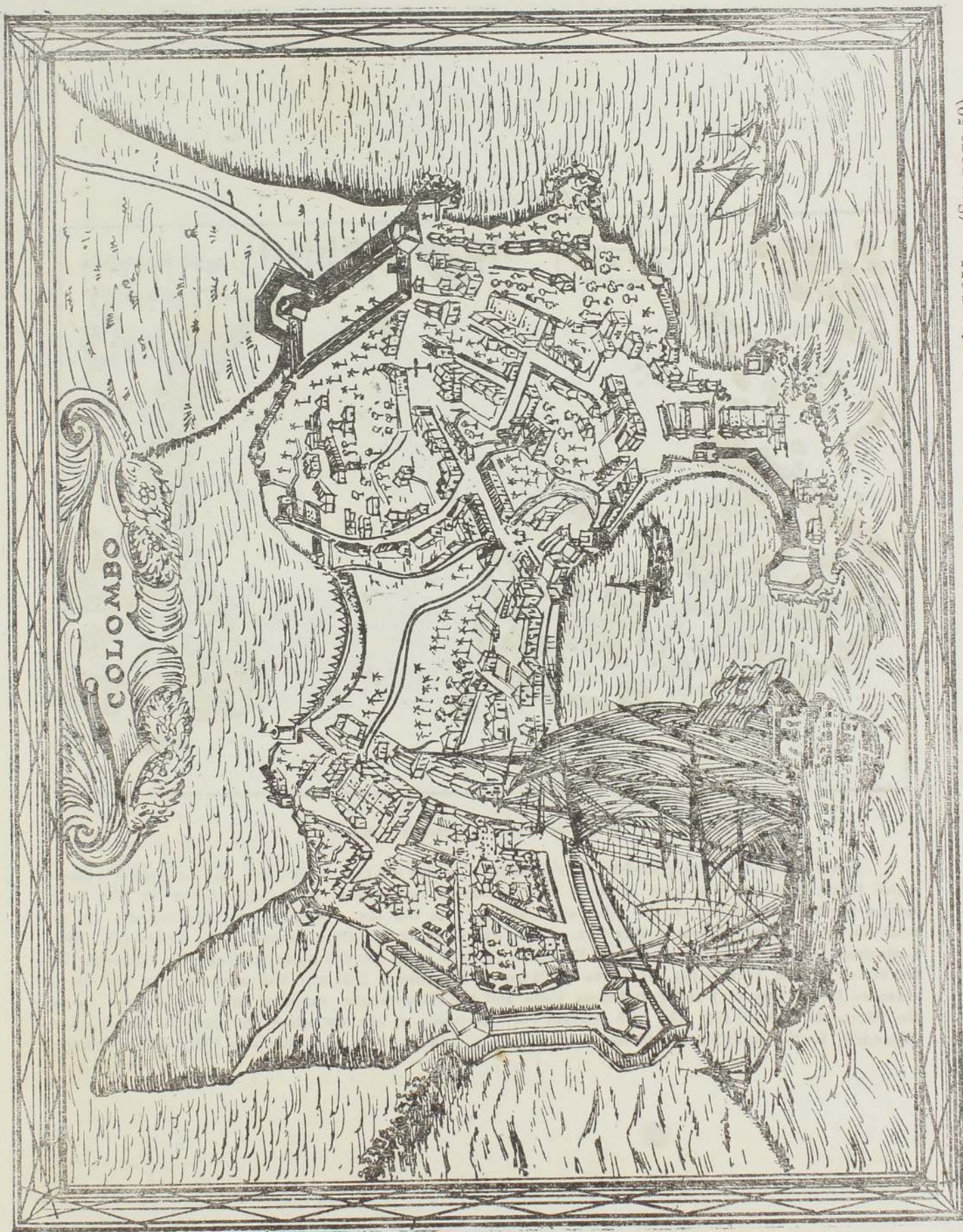
- 1624 Built by Portuguese
- 1639 (2nd May) Captured by the Dutch, landing at Dutch Bay.
- 1640 Dismantled by the Dutch.
- 1658 Expanded (as Pagoda Hill) by the Dutch.
- 1672 Unsuccessfully attacked by the French.
- 1782 (8th Jan.) Captured by the British 98th, 78th & 42nd Foot 62 guns and 6 mortars.
(29th August) Captured by the French.
- 1783 Ceded by the French to the British and by the British to Holland at the Treaty of Versailles.

GALLE

History holds that the Portuguese discovered what they called "Punte-gale", anglicised into Point-de-Galle. The credit must go to the Dutch for having made it what it is. They decidedly gave this coastal township a character when they restrained it in austere outer completeness by ringing it with coral lime, stone and stucco ramparts, which the century and a half since they left have barely touched, and the good sense of the people who followed has left alone. Today, sleeping under the sun, and dreaming of days which had seen Moorish traders give way to Portuguese adventurers, Dutch merchants and British colonists, it still remains the one Fort in Ceylon typically colonial-Dutch, and as its builders conceived it.

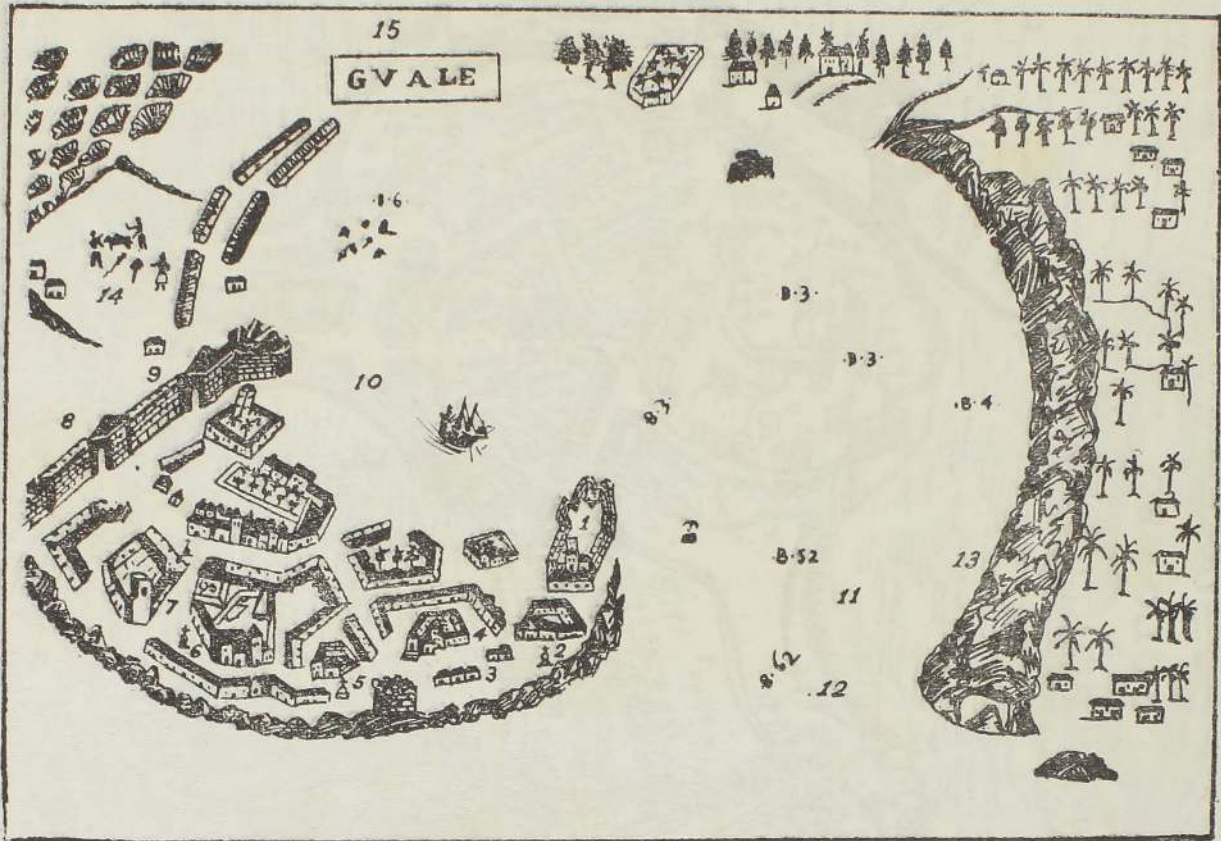
It was on the 8th of March 1640, that Vice-Commander : Jacobsz Coster, whom we last read as being in Batticaloa and at Trincomalee, made his appearance before the Portuguese Fort at Galle. Casting anchor in the beautiful palm-fringed bay which forms the harbour, he landed his force of 2000 men with little opposition, at a point on its shore a mile away from the guns of the Fort.

In an early Portuguese map by Constantine de Sa, Galle is shown to be surrounded on three sides by the sea, its bay and harbour are described as "studded with shoals and rocks". On the land side, from the bay to the



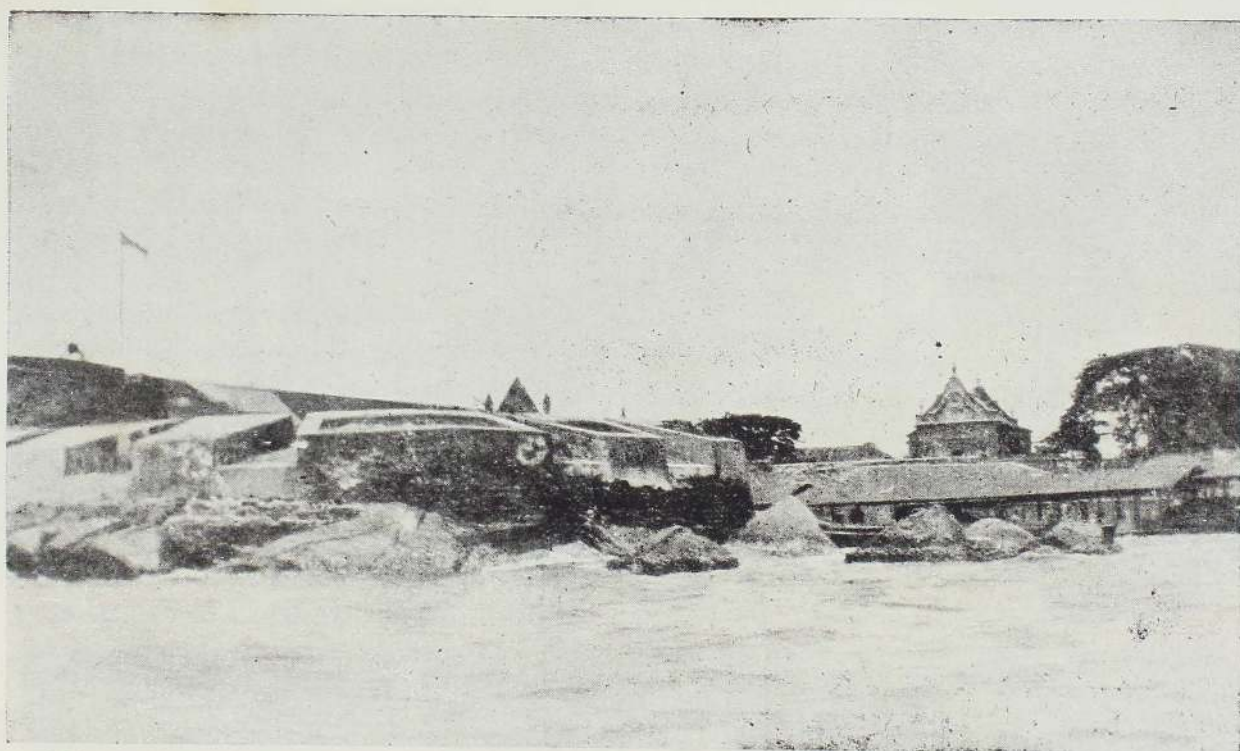
The Portuguese Fort of Colombo (Circa 1640) which the Dutch laid siege to in October 1655. — (See page 50).

GALLE (circa 1640)



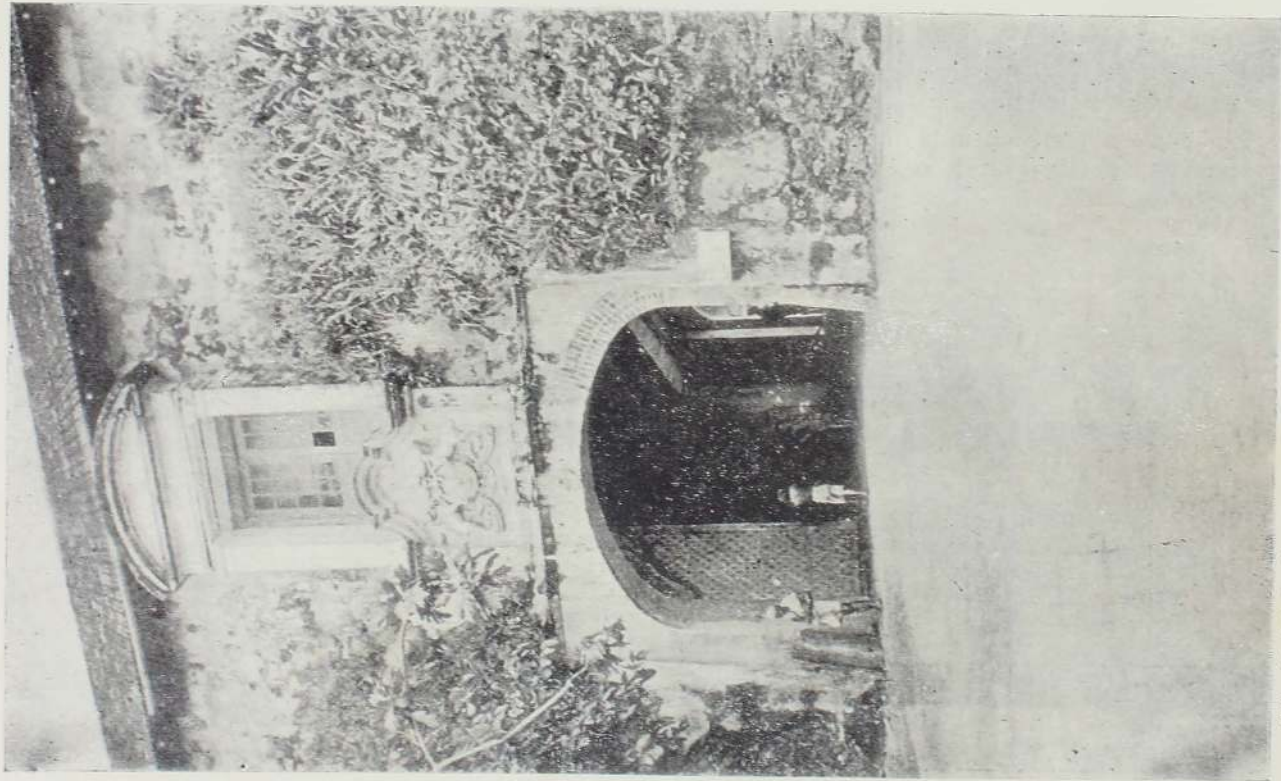
From Barretto de Resende's map

According to the cartographer the Fortaleza (1) stood on the rocky spit in the Dutch period called Zwart Bastion. The map shows it had a gateway over which was a high tower on the land side, a similar tower being on the other end jutting in to the sea. A monastery, Misericordia (2) is near the Dutch bastion named Akerslhr. The feitoria or factory (3) a monastery St. Pedro (4). The Cathedral (Se) (5), St. Domingo (6) St. Francisco (7) two gates on the rampart from the harbour to the sea - Porta da Traisao (8) and Porta da Muro (9) Surgidoura (10) was the anchorage in the bay, entrance to the Bay (11) and (12) Buona Vista and the Unuwatuna range of hills are referred to as the "Serra da Navto" (13) the fish market (14) occupies a site on which the present bazaar has expanded. In the tradition of old-time cartography a drawing, of a man chopping fish, lends vividness.

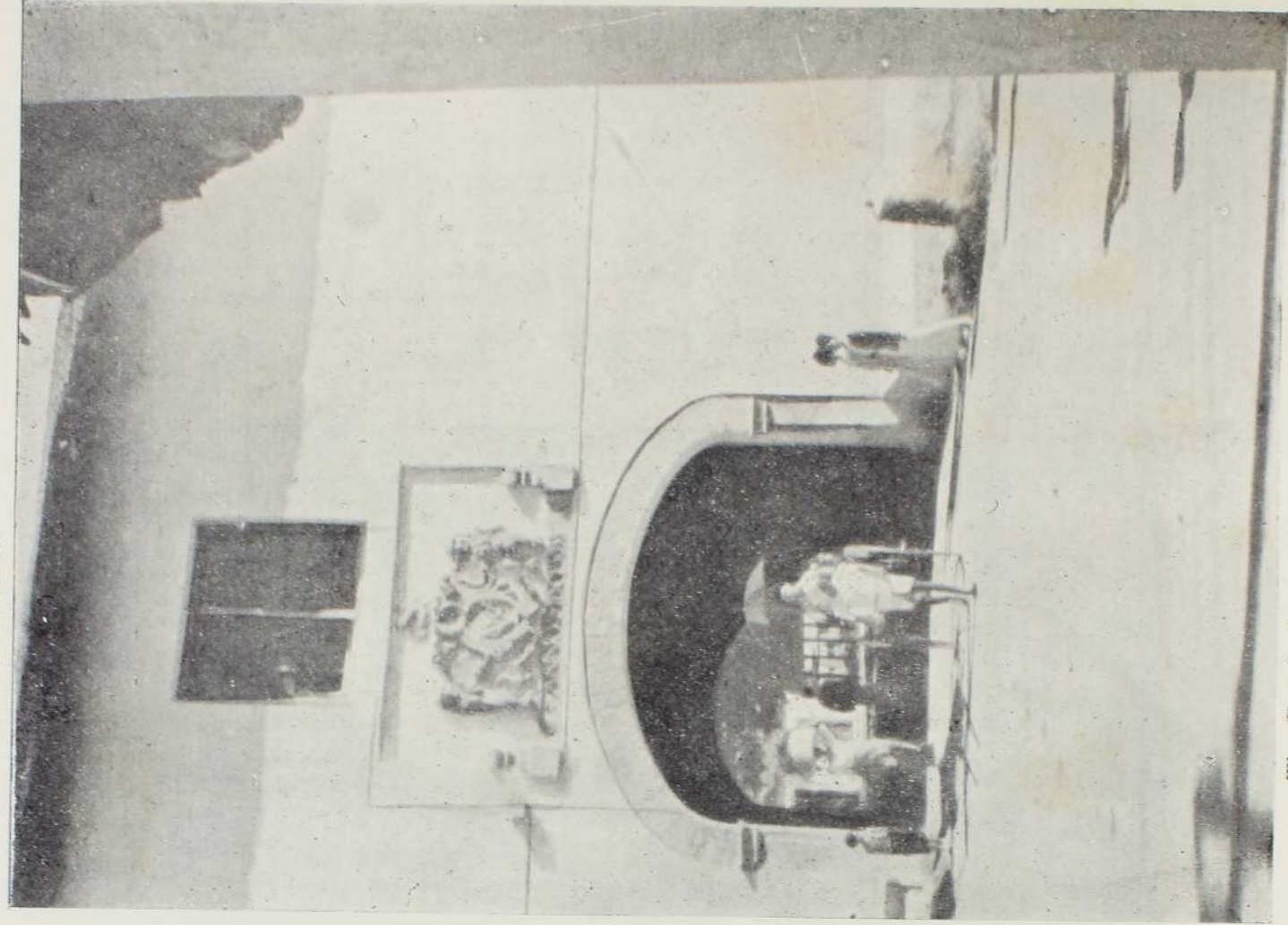


The earliest fortifications of Galle — The Zwart bastion or Black Fort. They were erected by the Dutch on the site of the earlier Portuguese Fort Sancta Cruz Fortalese.

The old gate which led into the Fort of Galle.



The British Coat-of-Arms over the outer archway.



The Dutch Coat-of-Arms over the inner archway.

sea they had raised a strong wall supported by a moat. This wall had three bastions, St. Jago near the bay, Conceycao in the middle and St. Antonio at the end near the open sea. At either extremity of the wall a *guarita* (water-tower) was constructed to check any attempt to wade through the water at the ends of the wall. A Fortalessa, called Sanota Cruz Bastion, stood on a rocky spit covering the harbour. It had a terrace capable of holding 20 guns. A breastwork six feet high ran along the harbour front up to St. Jago. It also had a *waterpass* or portcullis which served to let people into and out of the Fortalessa when the draw-bridge was raised. All these defences, more particularly the sea to harbour wall with the *guarita* at the harbour end, and the Fortalessa, are picturesquely displayed in Barretto de Resende's map which appeared, just about the same time that the Hollanders attacked Galle.

Heer Jacobsz Coster planned his attack by dividing his strength into three task forces. He found himself unexpectedly reinforced by the arrival of three fighting ships and 400 soldiers from Negombo, and on the 12th of March decided to storm the fortification by making a concerted attack on the bastion St. Jago. This was the weakest point in the defences and was therefore the scene of the most severe fighting and carnage.

The Dutch artillery, and the rallies of men who succeeded each other in waves of attack, finally battered down the curtain between St. Jago and Conceycao, and entered the town. The fighting within the walls proved equally severe, but although the Portuguese too had been reinforced from Colombo, one by one, the strategic points fell into the hands of the Dutch. It was on the 13th of March, five days after the attack started, that the valiant resistance weakened and Galle was occupied by the Hollander. It remained the headquarters of the Dutch Government in Ceylon until the conquest of Colombo, 1655 — 56.

Vice-Commander Heer Coster might well have been accepted as the chief personage in the town of Galle after this victory had he not left for Kandy, to make some demands of the Emperor Raja Sinha. He apparently received no satisfaction from the Court and in a fit of depression and anger both threatened and addressed the Courtiers in unseemly language. They brought this to the notice of the Emperor, who gave Coster permission to depart for Batticaloa but denied him the usual honour. The Vice-Commander left Kandy with some of the Emperor's soldiers who were attached to him under pretence of giving him safe-conduct and protection on the journey. The hero of Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Galle never reached his destination or was ever heard of thereafter. It will be recalled that this unhappy man complained bitterly in a letter to Batavia of being obliged to be in Ceylon. His wife who was sent out at his request arrived in Galle on November 25th 1640, but alas ! too late to greet her husband.

The Hollander appreciating the importance of Galle set about fortifying it to defy any invader. Gradually instead of the Portuguese rampart of

earth reinforced with tree-trunks which showed scars of the battering they had received, formidable solid stone and lime-bounded ramparts rose on their line of foundation across the land approach. The bastion St. Jago was renamed the Sun Bastion, or "Hoofdwacht", as the main guard was stationed there; St. Antonio at the other end, was named "Zee Punt", or Star Bastion; while Conceycão became the "Middle Punt", or Moon Bastion. The present entrance to the Fort under the "Middle Punt" is a modern conception.

Valentyn's plan of Punto Gale*, indicates that the above-mentioned restorations by the Hollanders had been completed by 1663, although the bastions, were not known by the new names until four years later.† The *fausse braie*, running from the salient angle of the Sun Bastion along the exterior of the entire length of the fortification on the land approach and terminating at the salient angle of the Star Bastion can yet be traced. The "wet ditch" or moat, said to have been eighteen feet wide has now been filled in.

Off the shores of the harbour, the wall seems to have extended from the Sun Bastion to Santa Cruz Bastion, which was renamed Zwart Bastion, or "Black Fort". Aker Slood, named after the birthplace of Vice-Commander Coster, is depicted as an isolated work. On the sea side which is constantly washed by a heavy surf, the rampart at that time did not extend beyond Eolus which is described on the plan as "New Bastion". Beyond this what came to be called Clippenburg Bastion is shown as a breast-work and described "new work".

The entire fortification of Galle Fort, based on plans associated with Ryckloff van Goens, and Adrian Vander Meyden (circa 1653) was not actually completed until seventy six years later. We read that the fortification was strengthened and completely overhauled during the administration of Governor Petrus Vuyst (1726 — 1729)***.

Galle was delivered to the British in terms of a treaty signed at Colombo on the 16th of February 1796. Three days later, Lachlan Macquarie,****

*Valentyn's "Oude en Nieuw Oost Indien".

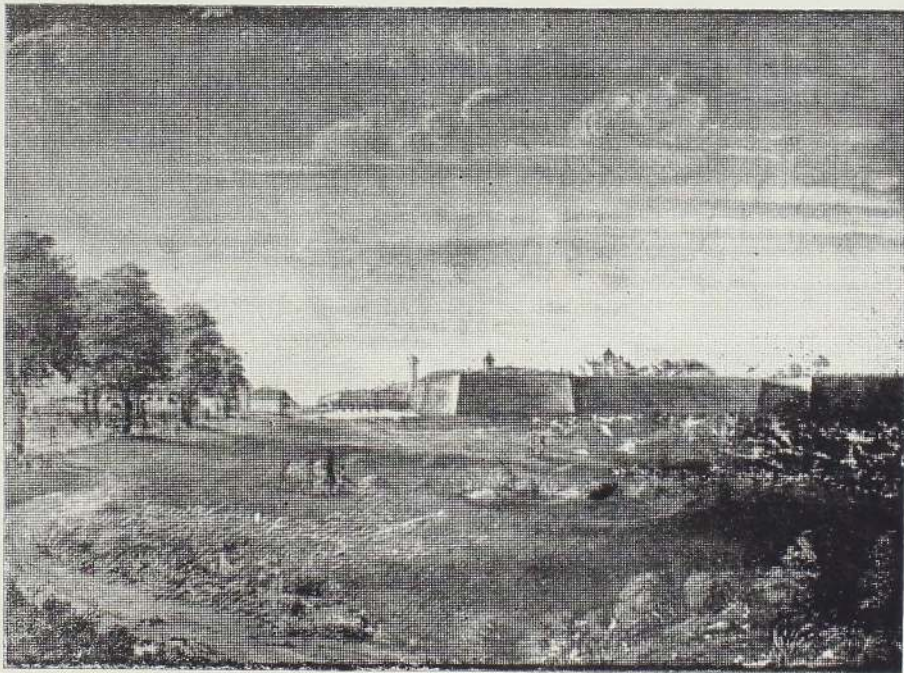
**August 4th 1667. It being considered in Council that as the three new bastions had not been named as yet, it was resolved that Juffrouw Hester de Solemme (widow of the Director Adrichem), the wife of the Commander Roothaas, and the eldest daughter of the Commandeur, should go out and name the bastions.

On Sun bastions was fired the first cannon by Juffrouw Solemme, a second was fired on the Moon by Juffrouw Roothaas, and a third on the star by the eldest daughter aforesaid.

This pleasing function seems to have heralded the announcement seven days later of the engagement of the Governor Van Goens, with Hester de Solemme (summarised from the Diary of Commander Roothaas, of Galle and a reference to it by Mr. F. H. de Vos, D.B.U. Journal, Vol. No. 3, 1908.)

***His first act on landing at Galle, says a biographer was to clap a plaster over one of his eyes to show the people of Ceylon that he did not require two eyes to rule a land of such small dimensions. He was later recalled to Batavia, and was dealt with there for his misrule.

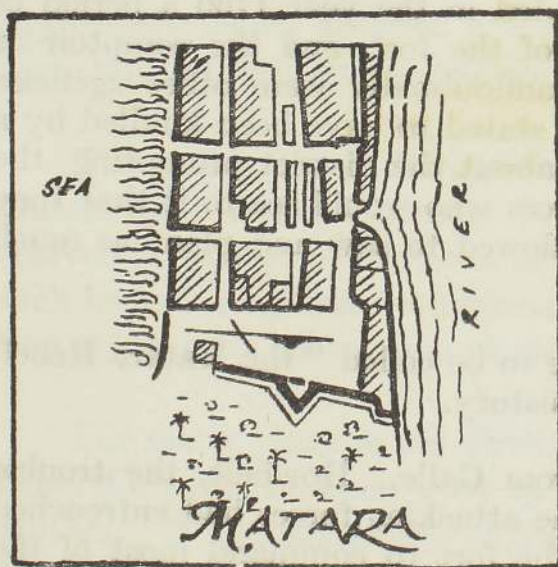
****He later ruled Australia as its 5th Governor and lent his name widely to river and lake, mountain and plain, street and square which appear on maps to this day.



Jaffna — The Ramparts from the Glacis. From a water colour painting (in Rijks Museum) by C. Steiger. Early 18th Century.

a comparatively unknown officer in His Majesty's 77th Regiment of Foot, set out from Colombo at the head of a detachment of 30 artillerymen, and seven companies of Madras sepoys, each company a hundred strong, together with three subalterns, to take formal possession of the town and fortress of Point-de-Galle. At 12 noon on the 23rd February 1796, Macquarie having stationed his detachment outside the Fort of Galle, was conducted to Government House. He was met by the Commandeur Fretsz "very much affected and shedding tears, who in a formal manner presented the British Officer with the keys of the different gates of the garrison, on a large silver salver . . . The British detachment then marched in through the main gate to the Grand Parade in the middle of the Fort, drums beating, colours flying. The 650 Dutch troops already assembled saluted. The Dutch guards were relieved, the Dutch flag struck, formal possession was taken in the name of His Britannic Majesty and a Royal salute fired".

Any visitor to Galle, who casts his eye over the old main gate-way through which the British troops marched into the Fort, will notice the British crest the lion and the unicorn, set above the archway. On the inside of the old entrance there is another coat-of-arms with the date 1669, and the monogram of the Dutch East India Company. Busy as Lachlan Macquarie was during the month he was at Galle officiating as Governor of the Fortress, he found time inbetween to have the British coat-of-arms set over the outer archway of the gate, and the Dutch arms relegated to a similar position over the inner archway.



MATARA

This coastal townlet in south-Ceylon, with pretty views, both riverine and seascape, is another spot in Ceylon which offers many a link with the Netherlands. Within the Fort the Dutch built there are streets and nooks where time seems to have stood still. It presents atmosphere in which one may almost sense the Dutch burgher lolling in the cool verandah of houses, smoking his long clay pipe and sipping his Schiedam, before partaking of his "rijst-tafel" and indulging in his noon-day siesta!

Towards the end of the 16th century the Portuguese seem to have been impressed by the strategic importance of Matara. The historian Valentyn says it was "fortified by King Dharmapala with the aid of the Portuguese so early as 1550 A.D." However Ribeyro (the Portuguese historian), only notices Matara as a camp intended for a concentration of Portuguese infantry

to be used in defending the territory against the King of Kandy. It therefore seems doubtful that any actual fortification was erected at Matara until the Dutch proceeded to build a fort sometime after 1640, when the surrender of the territory was effected by Vice-Commander Coster after Galle fell to the Hollander.

The fort the Dutch erected was sited on the left bank at the mouth of the Nilwala Ganga, on a triangular spit of land between the river and the open sea. The land-approach to it was spanned by a grim rampart with two half-bastions at each end, and a gate in the middle of it which provided entrance. Both rampart and gateway are in a fair state of preservation, but on the grass-covered ramp of the former and over the gate, there has more recently come to be erected a desecration indeed of antiquity, in the form of a clock-tower.

Within this sanctuary afforded by rampart, river and sea, the Dutch troops were barracked and their officials lived. As seen today, it presents the results of cumulative additions — the old buildings of Dutch style standing cheek by jowl with the new, flanking two narrow parallel streets.

With the broad “Blue river” flowing by and the open sea stretching as far away as the eye can reach, it must in days gone by have breathed a quiet, which scarcely comports with the rush and bustle of modern times.

On such a serene quiet, there descended in the year 1760 a period of ferment which shattered the tranquility of the fort, and the comptoir or “District” which environed it. There undoubtedly were other agencies responsible for the ferment, although it is stated to have been kindled by a bank of disgruntled lascoreens who went about the district prompting the rural inhabitants to join the Kandyan forces who would see to it that they paid no tithes in future but, would be allowed to sow and plant as much land as they liked.

Such was the beginning of what came to be called “the Matara Rebellion”,* which added a stirring page to history.

The Dutch rushed reinforcements from Galle. Howbeit, the trouble spread so rapidly that by March, 1761, the attacking forces had entrenched themselves close enough to the wall of the fort to command most of the houses with their cannon and musketry. They poured in grape and case-shot, as well as arrows, with such deadly effect that shelter within the fort was not possible.

*Old Matara and the Rebellion of 1760 — 61 (E. Reimers) Jnl. Dutch Burgher Union of Ceylon Vol. XV Nos. 1.2.3. (1925).

On the 25th day of the same month, the Dutch spiked their cannon on the ramparts, the ammunition and provisions left in the Fort were thrown into the sea. The fort was thereafter evacuated, and the surviving garrison was picked up by a ship and a sloop which were standing by, and removed to Galle. Matara continued in the hands of the insurgent forces for a period of nearly one year, and was reoccupied by the Dutch, without much resistance, on the 26th of February 1762. They found eight cannon on the walls — among them an English gun.

The fruit of this bitter lesson is the unique little “star-fort” erected on the right bank of the river in 1763 — 65, by Baron Van Eck — known to fame as the Dutch Governor who invaded Kandy in 1765. Its walls have been designed to the shape of a six-pointed star — hence its popular name. Old records refer to it as the “redoute van Eck”, thus identifying the structure with the Governor who built it.

Time was when the walls of this redoubt were hidden and protected by banks of earth which gently inclined up to the level of the top, and were surrounded by a moat. The earthwork has since been cut away leaving the walls exposed, and the earth so removed has covered up the moat. The drawbridge which afforded access over the moat to the redoubt is also no more but the picturesque gate-way remains in particularly good preservation.

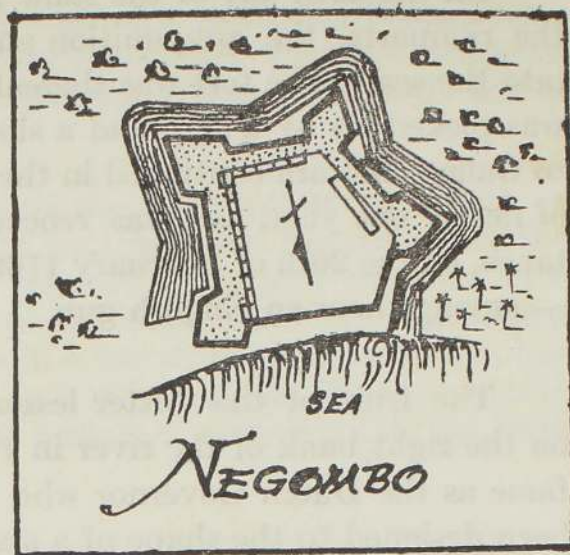
The pediment of the gateway is decorated with the monogram of the Dutch East India Company in an ornamental setting. Over the arch (carved in wood) are the arms of Governor van Eck. The Key-stone of the arch bears inscriptions — both outside and inside, respectively commemorating the date of completion of the redoubt and the engineer who built it.

For many years in the British period, this unique and interesting relic from the past has been used as the residence of a government official at Matara. It has since been entrusted to the Urban Council of the town to be put to use as a Library.

Immediately after Lachlan Macquarie took over the Fortress at Galle, in the name of His Britannic Majesty, he appointed his second in command : Lieutenant Harris, to take over the Fort at Matara. This was ceremoniously carried out on the 24th of February, 1796.

NEGOMBO

The Portuguese Fort at Negombo was a weak irregular structure, and is said to have been unworthy of the name of a fort, sandwiched as it was on a spit of land, by the lagoon and the sea. It appears to have been built about the end of the 16th century and consisted of a square enclosed by stone and lime walls, with two small redoubts.* The Fort commanded a superlative cinnamon district which rendered it a rich and important trading post.



On the 29th of January 1640 (just two months before Heer Coster appeared before Galle) Heer Philip Lucaszoon, a Director General of the Dutch East India Company, sailed with a squadron towards Negombo, and came to anchor off a spot called Kammala.** While the landing force was encamped there they were attacked by a Portuguese force sent from Colombo to oppose them. The Dutch beat off the attack on the 5th of February and on the next day moved with six battalions, 3500 men strong, to Negombo. Four days later, after meeting with severe opposition they carried the Fort by storm.

As soon as Raja Sinha heard of Philip Lucaszoon's success, he again made trouble over the Hollander's remaining in possession of Negombo. He wanted the Fort demolished which Lucaszoon was loth to do after undergoing all the hazards of capturing it. The situation however solved itself. Philip Lucaszoon was taken severely ill, and within twelve days of his victorious entry to Negombo, was carried on to a yacht which sailed for Batavia. He died on the voyage and was buried with great honours when the yacht reached its destination.

The Hollanders continued to hold Negombo against desperate Portuguese attempts to recover the post. Scarcity of provisions and ammunition

*Ceylon Literary register Vol. II p. 53, 54.

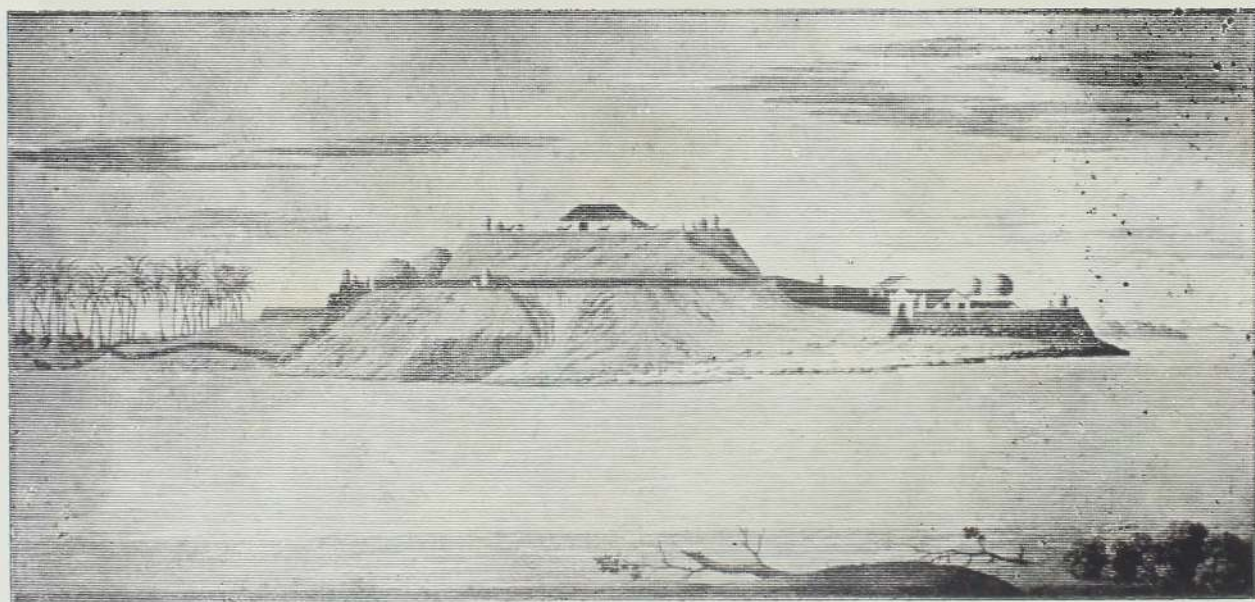
**Five miles north of Negombo on the northern bank of the Maha Oya, the Dutch gave the name Cymalle to both the village and the river — sometimes Caymel.



The gate-way of the Negombo Fort. The clock-tower of the remnant of the Rampart is of modern construction.



The "Star-Fort" at Matara erected in 1763 — 65. Picture shows the entrance. (See page 48).



Kalutara Fort from a water-colour painting by Steiger (1760), looking from the right bank across the river. — (See page 55).

took toll, and the morale of the troops defending the Fort gradually weakened. Eventually, on the 9th of December, after a cannonade lasting eight days the Portuguese succeeded in retaking Negombo. This was the first and only Fort the Portuguese succeeded in winning back from the Hollanders.

The Portuguese thereafter made Negombo a strong Fort, while the Dutch kept nursing designs to recapture it. These were brought to a head four years later. Francois Caron, a member of the Council of India who had but recently arrived from the Netherlands and had been commissioned Commander, Chief-ruler and General,* sailing from Batavia, arrived off Negombo on the 9th of January 1644, and landed his forces a few miles north of the Fort. The Portuguese troops poured out of the Fort to give them battle, and the invaders were furiously attacked even before they could get themselves into order of battle.

Howbeit, the surprise land-attack ended after two hours of sharp fighting. Losses on both sides were heavy : the Portuguese losing two Generals, the Dutch four lieutenants and 4 Ensigns besides rank and file. The Hollanders thereafter made a rapid march to the Fort, "into which they soon gained an entrance, for there was no garrison to defend it except some invalids. The Captain of the place met with his death heroically.** The fighting which began at 10 in the morning left the Hollander in possession of the Fort by 1 o'clock in the afternoon.

The years have rolled on, and the sturdy fortress, the Dutch raised over the older Portuguese defences at Negombo might today have been a picturesque mediaeval fort within easy reach of Colombo and an inspiration to both cultural sources and tourism, but for an unimaginative mind destitute of vision which had it demolished to make way for a drab out-station gaol.

And so, this monument of historical and architectural interest, which might have helped the antiquarian and excursionist to visualize the functions of its moats and draw-bridge, its rare old walls and bastions, its half-moons, ravelins, curtains, horn-works, fausse-braies and its quaint "pepper-pot" bartinets, reposes in a few fragments which barely help to build in the minds eye anything like the picture the historian Baldaeus had left of it.

*He appears after 1650 to have taken service under the French East Indian Company and was with Admiral de La Haye when the French raided Trincomalee in 1672. He is said to have been one of the biggest land-owners in Java. Royal Asiatic Society (CB) Vol. XVIII No. 55 (1904).

**Ceylon Literary Register Vol. II p. 85.



There still stands on the site today a section of the eastern rampart. At its northern and southern extremities are two mounds with sloping sides which represent the positions of bastions that commanded the "glacis" or open space on the land-approach. A banked-up roadway spans the moat where once access was possible only by the draw-bridge, and leads to the main gateway set about 25 feet back in the fragments of rampart left, at a point midway between the two bastions. The circular arch of the gateway rests on two moulded stone capitals. Over the key-stone, is a rectangular slab of granite bearing the inscription A-1678. Over this again are the remains of a pediment flanked by abutments. The whole is surmounted by a gable.

Entering through the gate-way one traverses a vaulted passage with a shallow arched recess on each side of it — with a platform running the whole length, possibly for the guard to sit on. The passage opens (into what must have been a court-yard or parade ground) under a circular arch of brick, in all respects similar to the archway described, even to the stone with the date.

There are still other mounds on the site which indicate the positions of other bastions, with underground vaulted recesses : probably powder magazines, and a few ruined "cabook" walls which seem to be echoes of the stronghold which once covered the site. They all help to knit the threads of the story of the Fort, which the Hollanders built, and Saar* describes as : "a strong place, with four bastions, two facing the sea called Hoorn and Enkhuizen, two towards the land called Delft and Rotterdam, with high walls made of soda about 22 feet broad, each bastion holding eight guns. There are two ports, the Water Port and the Land Port. Inside there is a castle, protected by two other bastions, called Middelburg and Amsterdam". The stones from most of these have gone to build the gaol.

What however, is the *piece de resistance* which this ruined site has to offer towards knitting its story was brought to light by labours of an ardent antiquarian.

In the southerly recess of the vaulted tunnel under the segment of rampart and gateway remaining to posterity, there is set into the wall a rectangular inscribed slab of stone approximately 4 by 3 feet, with the following lettering (curiously in latin), cut in high relief,

* Johann Jacob Saar's account of Ceylon (1647 — 57), Translation in Jnl : Royal Asiatic Society (CB), Vol. XI, No. 39 (1889).



RAJA SINHA II

Emperor of Ceylon who turned in perplexity to the Dutch tendering friendship.
A plate in Knox's "An Historical relations of Ceylon" (1681).



IBI CINNAMOMI ODORANTIS

D.T.O.M.

NIGOMBO

QUAEPRIMARIA

ARCIUM REGNI CEYLON

AN : NBATAV : IND :

SCIETATE

A NNIS MDCXL x XLIV

INLUSITANOS SEMEL ITERUMQ

EXPUNG : FELIXAEQUE PIUS AC

ILLUSTRIS : IND : A. CONSILIIS

SUPREMIS TOTAE INSULAE

CUMREG : ADIAC NOBIL

d.d. ISAAC. AUGUS-

TINUS RUMPHIUS

JUAR DUM DABAT

RESTAUR : PET : MAZOT

ISTI : MOLIS EX ORD : PRAEFEC

ANNO CHR : MDCCXX

ATQUE UTILES TRAHUN

Translation

“ Dee Ter Optimo Maximo
Nigombo
which (one of the) chief
of the forts of the Kingdom of Ceylon
annexed by the New Dutch Indian
Company
in the year 1640 and 1644
was stormed against the Portuguese once and again,
was restored while the fortunate, pious and most
illustrious
Isaac Augustinus Rumphius (appointed) by the
Supreme Court of the Court of the Indies
Noble Governor and Director of the whole Island
with the dependencies thereof
was holding office
Pieter Mazot*
Superintended the beginning of that structure
A.D. 1720 ”.

“ There abundance of fragrant Cinnamon is at
all times gathered, and useful timber is drawn
by sea ” (or by water).

How this inscribed slab came to be found and to be set up where it is a story as exciting as the information it reveals is potent. Let me tell it to you in the phraseology of a note in my possession written by that antiquarian and scholar, the late Dr. Andreas Nell — other than whom there were few greater Dutch Burgher patriots of Ceylon. Writing in 1939, he says : “ a short time ago I made an interesting discovery. I heard that there was a stone in the compound of the house at the back of the Assistant Government Agent’s residence with an inscription on it. It was lying close to a well to which it formed a convenient stepping-stone. A part of the stone was covered by hard mortar, and it was cleaned with some difficulty . . . the stone has now been since placed in one of the recesses within the Fort gateway ”.

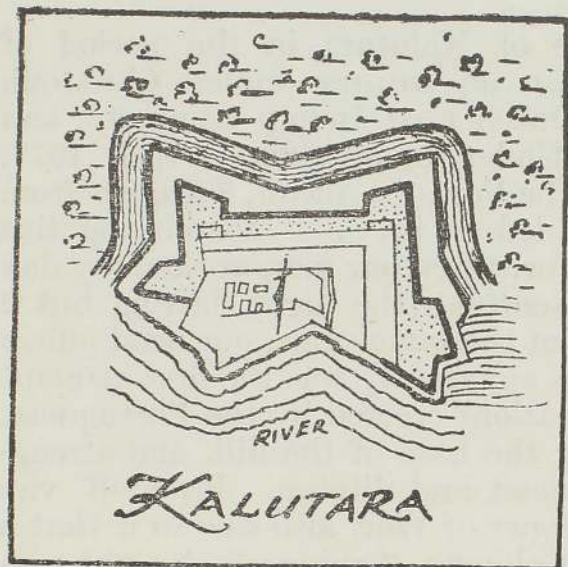
The Negombo Fort made no resistance to the British Forces which landed near it in the first week of February 1796. It was from here that they marched to the attack of Colombo. Captain Percival,** writes : “ in the gate-way (of Negombo) are guard houses, with an arched cupola for a bell ”. He was no doubt referring to the *Klokketoren* which the Dutch usually placed over the gateway of their Forts. Tradition holds that late into the British period

*Then an ensign was detailed to carry the Standard, and occupied the 9th Place in procession at the funeral of Governor Rumph, 12th June 1723 (Valentyn p. 360).

**Robert Percival of H. Majesty 19th Regiment of Foot : “ An account of the Island of Ceylon ” 1803.

this old bell was rung every hour. It was replaced by a stone clock-tower which was set up as a jubilee memorial to Her Britannic Majesty Queen Victoria, and marks the identical position of the old *Klokketoren*.

KALUTARA



This fort which crowned a small hillock off the left bank near the mouth of a major river, was about a day's march from Colombo, and about the same distance to the south of it, as Negombo was to the north. Early in the 17th century a Portuguese Governor, Don Jeronimi de Azavado, cast his eye on the hillock which from a military standpoint effectively commanded the river-crossing at Kalutara, and the approach from Colombo. There was an ivory-white dagoba poised on the crest of the hill, and it was known as Gangatilaka Vihara. Thereafter,

the shrine knew its place no longer. Palisade and *tapai* or earth walls, came to be raised on the green hill instead, and its summit was mounted with artillery.

In October 1655, Heer Gerald Hulft, the Director General of India, appeared off Ceylon with a formidable fleet. Since the re-occupation of Negombo by the Hollanders on January 1644 friction between Raja Sinha and his allies had reached breaking-point. Notwithstanding, Hulft, taking advantage of the northeast monsoon calm off the western coast of Ceylon, brought a part of his fleet to the bay at Beruwela, and landing his troops marched them over the intervening ten miles to Kalutara. His intelligence service had done their work well, and Hulft knew that only about a third of the Portuguese garrison was at Kalutara and that the fort could not hold out very long even on the strictest seige rations.

There were at the time 225 soldiers to man the Fort, besides, it was filled with Portuguese residents, and Franciscan ecclesiastics who had rushed in for shelter on the advance of the Dutch. The odds were much against the defending forces nevertheless, they gallantly held on, keeping the Dutch and the Sinhala at bay, in the hope that relief would come from Colombo. The hapless garrison eventually surrendered on the 15th of October 1655. The Dutch artfully kept the news of the surrender from reaching Colombo in order to entice the Portuguese to keep on sending relief detachments which they intercepted.

Historians contend that Kalutara lost Colombo for the Portuguese. Had they adopted the course of abandoning Kalutara and conserving all available man-power to defend Colombo, the gallant defence they subsequently put up at their main fortress may not have been in vain.

One of the earliest notices we have of Kalutara in the period of Dutch occupation, comes from a German adventurer named Christoph Schweitzer, who took service under the Dutch East Indian Company, and kept a diary of his strange experiences. Under the date 22nd April 1677, he wrote : " I was sent with 30 soldiers to the Fort of Caltura, 8 leagues from Colombo to have some new ramparts added to it . . . " Amplifying this later he wrote : " I was upon duty in the Fort when our men worked by day on the fortifications and at night stood sentinal (the night lasting but 2 hours) from April to the 1st of September of the same year ; our head officer was Adam Slecht, a Bohemian . . . " This apparently was the first attempt by the Dutch to remodel the crazy fortifications erected by the Portuguese. They raised a strong wall circumvallating the base of the hill, and strengthened this first line of defence with a moat and ditches. Ryckloff van Goens, the Dutch Governor and Commissioner of War, also saw to it that a road was made connecting Kalutara with Colombo, " along which eight men could march abreast taking with them field guns ".

Passing along the stream of time to the early 18th century, we see this historic landmark of Kalutara converted into a compact residential fort, complete with a drawbridge. Houses lie behind the high wall on the lower level, and a fortification on the summit terminating in four rondels, or angles, conspicuously surmounted by bartizans, or quaintly picturesque stone sentry boxes shaped like pepper-pots. The glacis, or open spaces fronting the fort extended westwards and southwards.

The plan of the Fort is of a standard type, which accounts for the striking similarity of general details presented by most of the Forts built by the Hollander in Ceylon. It is authoritatively stated that the military engineer worked on plans sent out from the home country, falling back on building material procurable in the country. Even in this respect, the Hollander sometimes used stone brought as ballast in their ships when coming to Ceylon.

Kalutara Fort was occupied by British troops under General Stuart in February 1796. Colonel James Welsh, who was with the detachment taking over describes it as : " a beautiful little post in excellent repair ". The garrison was withdrawn from the Fort shortly after the capitulation of the Kandyan Kingdom, in 1815.

When the post was neither, a residence nor a ruin, utilitarian aims raised on the top of the hill within the Fort, a modern official government residence.

It rose over remains of disintegrated sections of rampart, crumbling brickwork, which was all left for the imaginative mind to speculate. Today, even that residential building has been razed, to the ground. The land has reverted to a Buddhistical Trust, and a dagaba has now been built on it.

COLOMBO

The time had at last arrived when Holland was in a position to render the Sinhala Emperor, Raja Sinha, the long-desired service of storming Colombo. A letter had been received from the Court (dated October 1655) expressing much pleasure at the arrival of Heer Gerald Hulft, and his fleet, as well as at the capture of Kalutara. The Emperor was also supposed to have said that "although a promise had been made to deliver the city of Colombo up to him, he was indifferent, provided he could have the honour of the conquest, and that the Company might expect special benefits . . . "*.

It was on the 17th of October (1655), after many skirmishes and a pitched battle with Portuguese troops sent to oppose the Dutch advance from Kalutara, that Heer Hulft appeared before Colombo, and advanced within sight of St. Sebastian. They found themselves masters of the field for the Portuguese had withdrawn behind the city's walls, the Fort gates had been closed and barred, the draw-bridge destroyed and the bulwarks were being hastily strengthened.

General Hulft having selected a "fine residence" on a hill-top overlooking the eastern defences of the city to serve as his headquarters (which to this day bears the name Hulftsdorp), proceeded with little opposition to set up his batteries and mount them with cannon. On the 20th of October (1655) the Dutch opened fire on the defences of the beleaguered city, and continued to do so unceasingly day and night. One of the besieged who wrote of this preliminary bombardment** said "the batteries directed towards us in one day at least 800 thunderous discharges from 18, 20, 23, and 28 pounders".

Perceiving that the eastern ramparts and parapets of the city had been partly demolished, Heer Hulft and his Council resolved to storm Colombo by both land and sea. Suppose we venture to portray the many sequences of the episode which followed, by using chimerical postulates on a strictly historical frame.

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In the quickly fading twilight of an evening in November, a few officers of the Dutch Forces in Ceylon sat assembled together in a large room of the

*Short History of the Principal Events that occurred in the Island of Ceylon (1602 — 1757) Trans; from the Dutch by F. H. de Vos Jnl. Royal Asiatic Society Ceylon branch Vol. XI, No. 38. p. 50.

**From a Portuguese account of the Siege — Baldaeus Appendix pp. 205 - 232.

General's quarters. Scattered on a table in the centre of this room there lay a motley collection of maps, drawings and other documents, over which earlier in the day the small company had pored in serious thought as they held a council of war. The business for that day was finished, the scheme of attack was drawn up with profound deliberation the most minute contingencies were judiciously provided for; yet they lingered, discussing in subdued tones the part which each one of them had to play in a human drama.

Heer Hulft, gravely rose from his seat to break up the assembly; he knew too well that they would all be better for a good night's rest. "There is work to be done on the morrow, lads" he said, and added as a smile spread over his face, "Ere the sun sets again we shall raise the Orange flag over the battlements of Colombo!" Thus with light expressions of banter they parted, the General turning into the house, and the others taking the road which wandered forth from the door-step into a bleak night.

Retracing his steps, Hulft entered the room he had but just left to see his officers out. A single flame flickered in a large square lamp hanging from the ceiling, which rather enhanced than dispelled the setting gloom. "Tomorrow and ere the sun sets we shall raise the Orange flag over the battlements of Colombo", he soliloquized. Stooping, he picked up a document which had dropped off the table. As he replaced it his eye rested on the text. Taking it up again he read, "The issue of battles is at the disposal of God, who giveth it to whom He pleaseth. As He has hitherto proved favourable to Your Excellency, He has it also in His power to alter the course of success since your attack on us is so very unreasonable".

General Hulft had read this missive once, he had read it many times — yet he read on. "This place belongs to the King of Portugal, my Sovereign, by whose command its preservation is confided to me, and of which I am to render an account. The arguments made use of by Your Excellency can by no means induce me to set aside the consideration of defending the town. Time and experience will teach Your Excellency how different our present situation is from that which Your Excellency imagines. May God preserve your Excellency" — dated the 9th November 1655, signed Antonio de Sousa Coutinho.

It was the reply he had received to his letter which was carried by an envoy accompanied by a drummer, with a white flag addressed to the Portuguese General, requesting an immediate surrender of the town.

A sombre expression spread over his features. He laid the document on the table. He was too wise a General to be reminded that the success of war was mutable, the final issue doubtful, and he pondered over the words he uttered on parting from his loyal band of officers — "there is work to be

done on the morrow, lads ! Ere the sun sets again we shall raise the Orange flag over the battlements of Colombo ”.

The night wore on. Occasionally a yellow flash followed by a deafening report marked the discharge from cannon or mortar, while bright streaks of flame sprang forth from invisible muskets to vanish in the instant. For a few fleeting moments the uproar grew to its crescendo, then dwindled off to a few sluggish reports. It was war, grim war, with a watery moon overhead giving out just sufficient light to mellow every outline of the sombre fortifications which girdled the town.

The waves from the open sea dashed on to a rock-bound coast. This sea-front was known as Galboka and formed an effectual barrier provided by nature on the western flank of the fortress. On the north a rampart skirted the edge of the roadstead. This was breasted by five bastions great and small. At the one end, near the root of the modern breakwater, there rose the bastion of Santa Cruz or the “ Water Castle ”, while the other end terminated in the formidable bastion called St. Jaco. In between was the bastion of St. Francis Xavier, also called Curaco or Couras. On the land side the flank most open to attack, a massive rampart further strengthened in places by a moat, marked the eastern limits of the town. The bastions, St. Stephen, St. Sebastian and ‘ Madre de Deos ’ meaning the “ Mother of God ”, and named after the church at the end of the Cross Street within the town, frowned down on this approach with meaning both sinister and threatening. The Southern flank was bounded by the lake called Lagon by the Portuguese, a sheet of water described as full of frightful alligators or crocodiles.

The waning moon melted into the sky as the sun rose to terminate a night of tension. Bleary-eyed sentinals on the ramparts saw that something unusual was happening for four of the most stately ships of the Dutch Fleet riding at anchor some distance from the land were moving from their positions. A concerted attack on the fortress was anticipated, and the news spread through the ranks of the besieged — still, the details of the deeply thought out plan was a secret known but to a little band of Dutch officers.

The *Maid of Enkhuyzen*, the *Workum* and two other fighting ships were to leave their moorings at dawn. The two named, having a picked crew and a liberal supply of ammunition on board, had orders to approach as near the Water Front, as soundings would permit and draw the fire from the battery, simultaneously carrying out a vehement cannonading. Hidden by the screen of smoke the other ships were to disembark the troops they carried in sloops, longboats, and skiffs with a view to occupying the bastion after the bombarding broke down the breast-work.

The land manoeuvres were to consist of simultaneous attacks on the breast-work of the Curaco, the bastion and gate of St. Jaco, and the line of wall between this point and the bastion of St. Stephen.

An attack from the lake, the weakest flank, was entrusted to Naval Commander Jacob Lippens with two companies of fighting men and a body of sailors. It was arranged that this force should embark in eight "champongs" (a type of Chinese boat) brought over for an emergency such as this from Batavia.

With sails spread to a fresh breeze the ships steered for the harbour. A clang of trumpets and a hoarse sound of drums rent the air as the *Maid of Enkhuyzen* ploughing the waves almost under the "Water Castle" threw out her challenge to the battery. She was near, perilously near the enemy guns. Ere the blare of the martial music had died away, her decks quivered under the effect of a thunderous cannonade, and a heavy shower of ball shook the wall of the fort to its very foundation.

There followed a vehement cannonade returned from the shore defences which, aided by the short range, was so effective that in an hour the *Maid of Enkhuyzen* was completely divested of her riggings and had all her sides reduced to splinters. A few of the men on board took to skiffs and escaped by reaching the other ships, which taking a lesson from the fate of their companion, kept out of range.

Meanwhile, the land forces had taken up their positions of attack, presenting a formidable array. Major Jean van der Laan, assisted by Captain Cuylenberg, ventured under the Cuirass and St. Jaco Bastions advancing even within reach and lash of the sword with a wonderful display of gallantry.

The defenders lost ground and fell back, but rallied at the opportune intervention of Father Antonio Nunes, Jesuit who, armed with a rapier rushed about the Portuguese ranks and awed them into holding their position. The ultimate issue was yet in doubt. The ladders were brought up three times, and the attackers swarmed upon them with great courage, throwing grenades on the walls. Those who were hurled down as they almost stepped on to the ramparts climbed up again with greater determination.

But the defenders were reinforced by a fresh detail of troops, which decided the outcome of the issue. Finding his forces outnumbered, the intrepid Major was compelled to leave the field with what was left of his forces.

General Hulft in person appeared at the head of 800 picked men to effect an escalade in the quarter of the Radjua Gate (the Porta Rainha or the Queen's Gate the main outlet of the east of the town). In taking up this position he was open to the cross fire of the St. Stephen and St. Sebastian,

and sustained considerable loss while nearing the walls of the town. Here he fell in with an additional fabric of defence in the form of a *banque* — (a foot-bank behind a parapet on which the besieged stood sheltered and fired upon the enemy) which had not been anticipated. Nonetheless, he rallied his forces and advanced to the attack, but his men flinched and would not hand the ladders as they ought to have done.

General Hulft, noticing the approaching disorder, gallantly started forward. Rushing among the thunders of the hostile cannon he grasped a ladder, setting an example which a few of the other officers followed. In the very attempt to plant the ladder in an advantageous position and scale the wall, a ball from an enemy musket lodged itself in his left thigh. Sinking under the pain of the wound, the General was about to retire in order to get it dressed when a report reached him that Major Van der Laan's battalion had already penetrated the town. "Quick there! my boys" he shouted, "behold the Orange flag already at the point of St. John"! and boldly rushed forward forgetting his wound.

Yet, what a sight now met his eye! Not the triumphant Orange banner which was to mark their victory — but the ghastly head of Lieutenant Van Schonenbeck, one of his gallant and distinguished officers, raised on the head of a pike. This soldier of all the attacking forces gained the top, but not having the support of his comrades, sacrificed himself on the walls as dearly as he could for his country's cause.

Sickened by the spectacle, General Hulft turned away, only to face the saddest of all sight which may fall to the lot of a Commander — his battalion joining in the rout. Sad at heart and temporarily broken in spirit he limped back following in their train.

Very little success crowned the effort made on the one remaining flank, the approach from the lake. The Portuguese officer in command at that station hailed the approach of the attacking force in their "champons" by sending out five "manchoses" (a large type of boat) to meet them. A cannon ball directed from one of the shore batteries swamped the "champong" which carried the chief of the squadron. Yet by good fortune although wounded, he together with four others was able to reach the nearest boat and return to shore.

The effort to combat the invasion was, however, weak, and the remainder of the assailing force entered the town over the low wall which girt the quarter. The defenders continued to steadily oppose them, throwing several fire-post and gradually thinning the ranks by the discharge of muskets. Still they advanced and pushed forward through a narrow street. Here they were held in check by a Portuguese officer who, armed with a *bacamarte* or blunderbuss (a short gun widening towards the muzzle taking a charge of a handful of small ball which is fired off in one loading), wrought havoc in their ranks.

But the cry had by now gone round that the enemy were within the walls of the fortress. A force stationed in reserve hastened to the scene and the small band of attackers bereft of the support of their comrades fell easy victims to the fury of the besieged.

It was long past noon, with a sun fairly low in the western sky, when the furious onslaught ceased. The fusillade dwindled to a few sultry reports and gradually died off, a tense silence fell like a pall over the scene.

Truly it was a day of the utmost pain and affliction to the Dutch. Scattered over the battleground the bodies of the fallen lay mingled with the banners, ladders and innumerable other accoutrements of war — and the living, torn and buffeted almost past the limits of human endurance, contemplated in the deathly silence, only broken occasionally by the moan of a wounded comrade, the tragedy of the conflict.

The sun sank — setting in a sky tinted by the whorls of crimson cloud. The placid waters of the lake seemed as it were transformed into the blood of the fallen. The surface of the sea faded to a dim grey nothingness stretching away towards the mystery of a lost horizon line. Dimly silhouetted in the mid-distance three stately ships of war with the troops on board, originally designed for the escalade of the Water Castle could be seen contending with a stiff gale in an effort to regain the shelter of the roadstead. Over all, night softly dropped her black veil.*

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A pleasing episode in the history of the relations between the Dutch and the Sinhala Emperor took place after the Portuguese victory referred too, which they were without the means of profiting by. Raja Sinha came down from the security of his mountains expressing great anxiety to meet General Hulft. An audience was arranged at the Emperor's temporary Court Rakgahawatte,** and took place with great pomp and ceremony on the 9th of April 1656. Emperor and General parted with every mark of friendship.

On the 9th of April, Heer Hulft returned to Colombo. The following morning he went out to see some new siege works which he had given orders should be constructed under the Bastion of St. Jaco. He did so again at sunset the same day, and with words of encouragement to the men, he himself gripping a crowbar, took a turn at the work.

*Mainly based on a translation of "The Siege of Colombo by the Dutch" appended to Baldaeus Ceylon by Pieter Brohier 1836. *Jul. Royal Asiatic Society (CB) Vol. VIII (New series) 1962.*

**About 10 miles from Colombo on the road to Hanwella.

The Portuguese meantime were harassing the troops and impeding the progress of their operations by throwing down fire-pots, stinkers, and fire-brands smeared with pitch in order to set the gallery they were constructing on fire. Heer Hulft in helping to draw some of the inflammable material away, thoughtlessly exposed himself to the view of the enemy's ramparts. He was seen to rush back crying out "My God, make way, make way". He was fatally wounded, the shot having been fired from one of the bastions out of a fire-lock or bacamarte.*

The Portuguese continued to hold out, frustrating all attempts by the Hollanders to undermine the bastions, and repulsing three further full scale attempts by them to storm the city, which by now had been reduced to the extremes of misery. Dogs, cats and rats were caught and eaten publicly, and while many died of starvation; a fearful form of pestilence which appeared in the later months of the siege, claimed whole families living in the same house. In the throes of despair over the relief they daily expected from Goa, which never came, the hapless besieged (it is said): "wearied Heaven with their prayers, and stormed the celestial Gates with their importunate supplications."**

On the 7th of May (1656) the Hollanders made another concerted assault on the bastion St. Joao, and occupied it after a protracted resistance. Their losses exceeded 400 men, exclusive of a large number who had been wounded or burnt. On the following morning, the Prince's flag was planted on the bastion.

Howbeit the city was not yet taken. The Portuguese — lacking in men, food, ammunition and any means of defence, yet held out by blocking the streets within the ring of fortifications. The attacking force on the other hand hourly swelled with reinforcements of the Emperor's Lascoreens, who had come to help.

The Portuguese in despair had planned to blow up the city with all the besieged left in it. But finding themselves with powder "insufficient even for two more loadings" they were compelled to send out the same day, a bearer with a flag of truce. The Hollanders grasped the offer and conceded honourable terms before the Emperor could come to hear of the turn in events. What the Dutch had already expended in outlay and human lives in their attempt to reduce Colombo had greatly exceeded all expectations.

On the 12th of May 1656, ninety bedraggled men, haggard and woe-begone — some wearing swords at their sides, but all gripping muskets with

*Saar's account Jnl : Royal Asiatic Society (CB) VOL. XI. p. 300. Jnl. Dutch Burgher Union Ceylon Vol. IX p. 83, 92.

**Translation, Appendix to Baldaeus Beschryving . . . Ceylon.

their left hand and supporting themselves on a stick carried in the right, staggered out from the "breastwork" to lay down their arms and surrender the city. A hundred more non-combatants hobbled out with them.

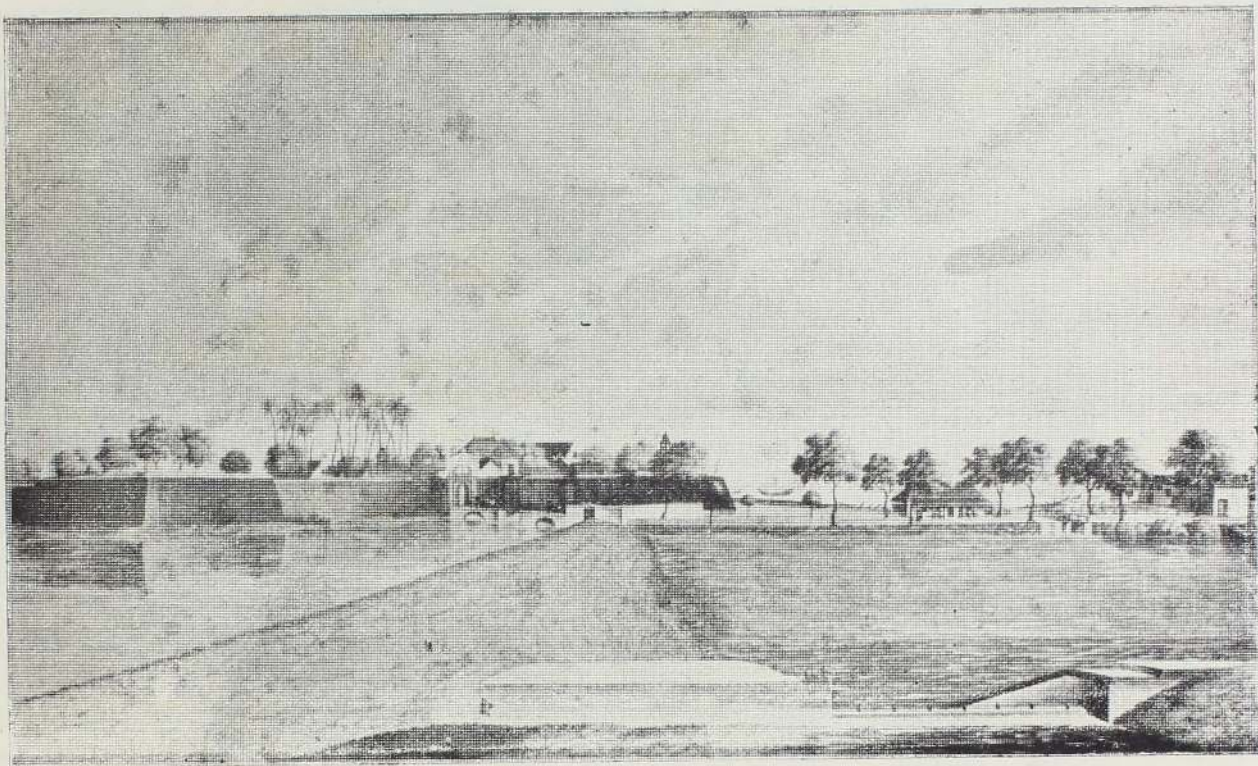
History bears testimony that the gaunt victorious Hollanders who were witnesses to the scene, gazed in stupified amazement. They would not believe that it was only this remnant of starving invalids who had offered them resistance. What choler they bore towards the enemy was at the moment tempered by admiration for the valour and prowess with which the fortifications were defended for seven long months, without any succour, and by so few. Surely one may read into this the echo of those well-known lines in Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* : " Even the ranks of Tuscany could scarce forbear to cheer ".

Hardly had Colombo fallen to the Dutch before their Commander-in-Chief Ryckloff van Goen's began the re-planning and re-shaping of the city. The continuous bombardment during the seven month's siege had laid in ruins so many buildings that it seemed easier to carry the work of destruction to a finish and demolish whatever was left standing so as to build afresh more solidly from the foundation. " He smote it from top to bottom so that not one house was left upright".*

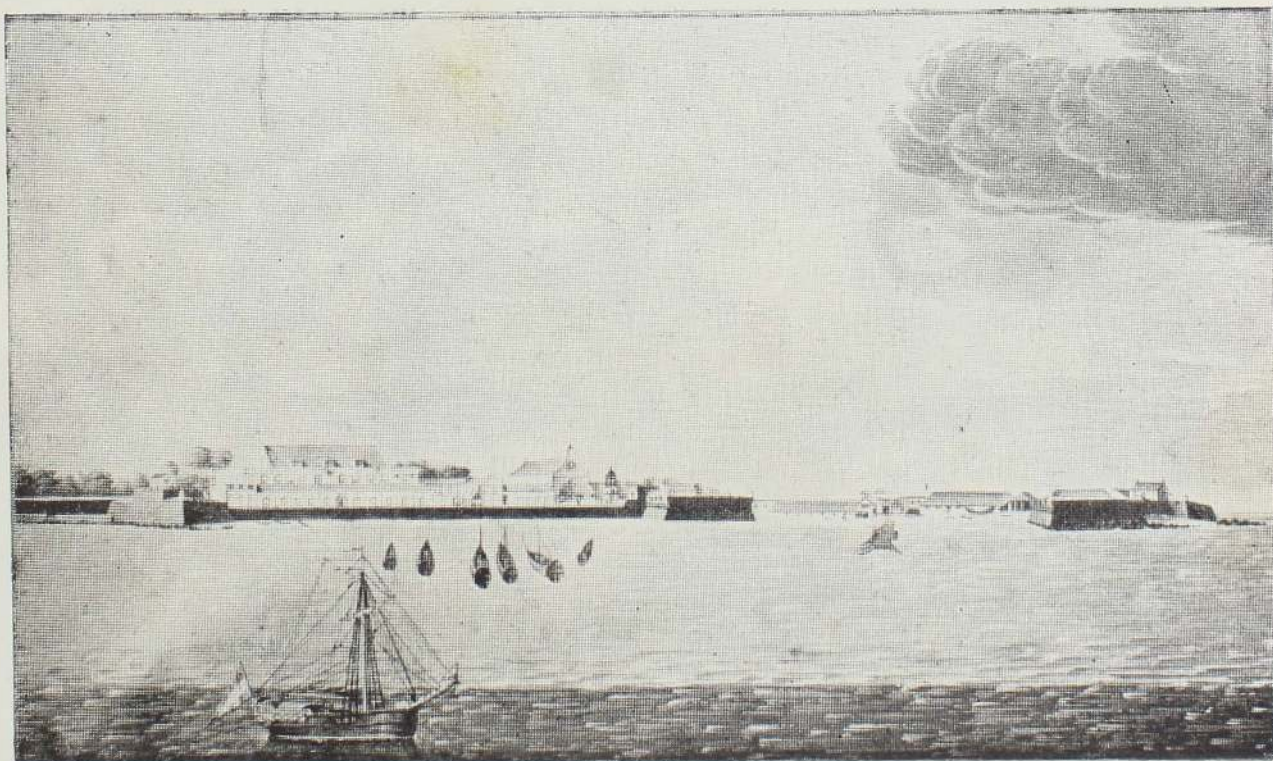
The old roads, some of which were narrow and crooked, were replaced by straighter and broader thoroughfares. But his chief concern was the fortifications. Slaves and hired workmen in great gangs were made to toil unremittingly at restoring and strengthening them with the utmost speed. The eastern Portuguese rampart which had been battered into rubble, was replaced by a temporary stockade extending to the edge of the Lake. In compliment to the Sinhala Emperor the bastion St. Estavo was rebuilt and named Raja Sinha, likewise another rebuilt on the site of St. Joao was called Victoria Punt.

An inner citadel enclosing the zone today known as the Fort was now for the first time devised. Eight bastions were built or reconstructed on bigger lines — Leyden by the old Passenger Jetty, Delft partly on the Caffoor block and partly on our Main Street with its apex reaching almost as far as Lotus Road ; Hoorn where Transworks House now stands and two more on the Barrack Square : Rotterdam at its eastern corner by the overhead bridge and Middleburg at the opposite and overlooking the Galle Face Green and the sea. Enkhuyzen arose from the ruins of St. Augustino in Flagstaff St. and Amsterdam over the site of the main Customs Gate.

*Van Dam : BK. " Vol." p. 351. The statement is not literally true, as a few isolated Portuguese houses were left intact.



The eastern face of the Colombo Castle-Fort as seen by Steiger in the early 18th Century.



View of Colombo from the Water-front showing the Government House, and (to the right) the Portuguese Church of St. Francis which was used as the official Church of the United East India Company until 1757.

From a water-colour painting (in the Rijks Museum) by C. Steiger.



The eastern gate-way to the Castle-Fort of Colombo. This was demolished circa 1876. A cause-way over the moat gave access to the 'Pettah'.



A postern gate (bearing date 1675) at the north-western corner of the ramparts. Demolished about 1935.

What is now called Lotus Road bordered the outer moat which cut off the Pettah from the bastions Delft and Hoorn and can yet be traced along the hollow occupied today by the Central Telegraph Office. At a later date an inner moat or canal was dug along York Street on a line still marked by the depression into which the Bristol Hotel and Registrar-General's Office are sunk. This inner canal is shown as only partially completed in maps of 1681 but was brought to a finish by 1698.

In the Delft bastion along its northern flank was a gate opening towards the drawbridge over the outer moat and leading to the Negombo Road. On the west side of Middelburg which fronted the Galle Face Esplanade was built the Galle Gate to replace the Mapana Gate and this too was furnished with a drawbridge. The flagstaff was planted on the outcrop of boulders known to this day as Flagstaff Point, a few yards below the modern Flagstaff Street.

There had been less urgency over the fortification of the Galbokka (western) front which was sheltered against a direct attack by rocky and difficult approaches, but before 1681, two more bastions had been added on this side as well. Klippenburg which was ranged alongside Enkhuyzen ; and further north, somewhat withdrawn from the shore, the battery of den Briel, overlooking Flagstaff Point. The harbour entrance was covered by the "Waterpas" or Water Fort, an armoured platform on the tip of the headland and by Battenburg a fortalice halfway down the hook.*

The Directors of the Company were already fretting under the strain imposed on their dividends by these ambitious works. The Supreme Government at Batavia had also taken alarm at this prodigality and, after lengthy deliberations lasting over six weeks, ordered Ceylon to submit plans for a reduction in the strength and range of their defence works. The existence of an inner fortress behind the bastions of the Fort proper had suggested to their minds that this Castle, as it was called, would alone be large enough for the Company's purposes. From two maps of Colombo dated January, 1697, and October 1698, respectively, it is clear that the outer fortifications raised on the foundation of the Portuguese Colombo had by that time already been razed to the ground.

No enemy force ever broke through these defences, but strange to say, on the 25th of November 1751, a wild (tusker) elephant did find its way into the Castle at 2 o'clock in the morning. Having crossed the Lake the pachyderm entered through the Rotterdam Poort after wrenching off the arm of one sentry and dashing another to death on the ground. Thereafter the intruder walked the streets of the Castle terrorising the people.

*Land, Maps and Surveys, Vol. II pp. 68 - 70.

Eventually, at 5 o'clock in the morning, a crowd which had by then gathered drove the wild denizen by the Matroos Point into the sea. The record has it that at 3 o'clock in the afternoon the next day, "some Maldivian fishermen who had gone out to it in their *thonies*, drove the elephant ashore — about three quarters of a mile south of the Castle, and it took flight back to the woods.*

The story of how the Castle at Colombo, which the Dutch had held for 140 years came under the sway of Great Britain is told in many versions. Of these several versions, Captain Percival, an English officer of His Majesty's 19th regiment of Foot, endeavours to lead the readers of his *Account of the Island of Ceylon* to believe: "That the fire of patriotism which had once animated the Dutch in Europe was completely extinguished in this Colony at the time". He proceeds further to say, "Rapacious exactions, the want of any regular plan or policy, and a total neglect of military defence were other causes which deprived the Dutch of their hold over the maritime regions of Ceylon".

On the other hand, another British officer Major Agnew, who visited the Castle with certain letters to the Dutch Governor van Angelbeek, ere the British forces appeared before Colombo, says From what I saw in passing through the Fort of Colombo and parts of its environs, I conceive it to be strong, in good order and the garrison very respectable.**

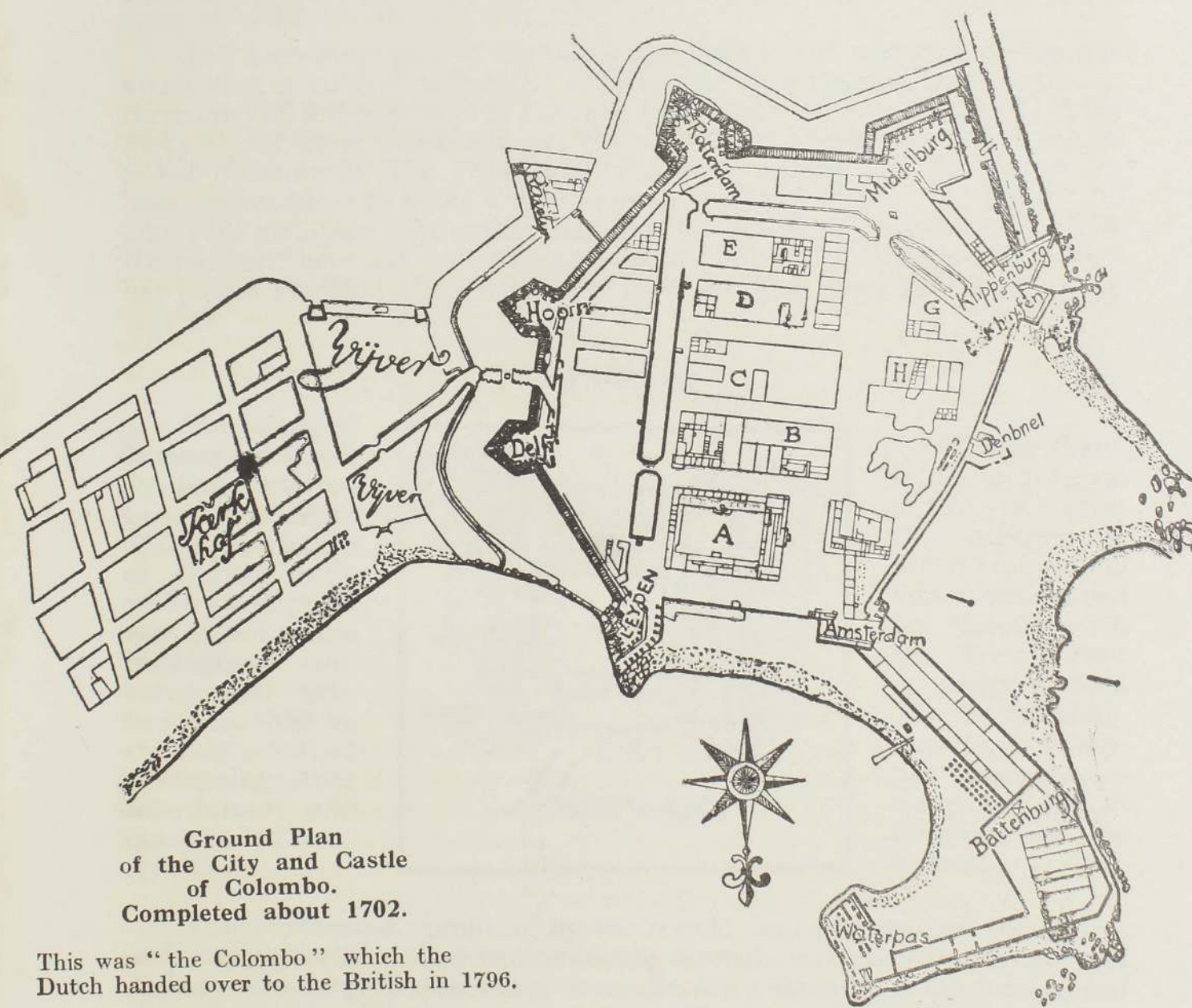
Finally, M. de La Tombe, a French contemporary observer has left "A collection of notes on the attack and defences of Colombo and its surrender to the British. He thought otherwise, and declares that: "Mr Percival... is far from allowing that treachery alone procured for his country the capture and occupation of this beautiful Colony".

Howbeit, Dutch Colombo, capitulated to the British Forces on the 16th of February, 1796, The only attempt to oppose the advance was made by Colonel Raymond of the Luxemburg Regiment when he lost his life while attacking some mariners from the ships of the British fleet who landed off the mouth of the Kelani river at Mutwal. The twenty six articles of treaty subsequently drawn up were attested to the previous day by J. G. Van Angelbeck, Governor and Director of the Dutch possessions in the Island of Ceylon, and P. A. Agnew, Adjutant-General on behalf of the British; and further, approved and confirmed by Colonel James Stuart, Commanding the British Expeditionary Force in Ceylon.

During the first fifty years of British rule there was little change in the picture of Colombo left by the Dutch. The defences were found to be in a satisfactory state. The only change effected was confined to the ordinance.

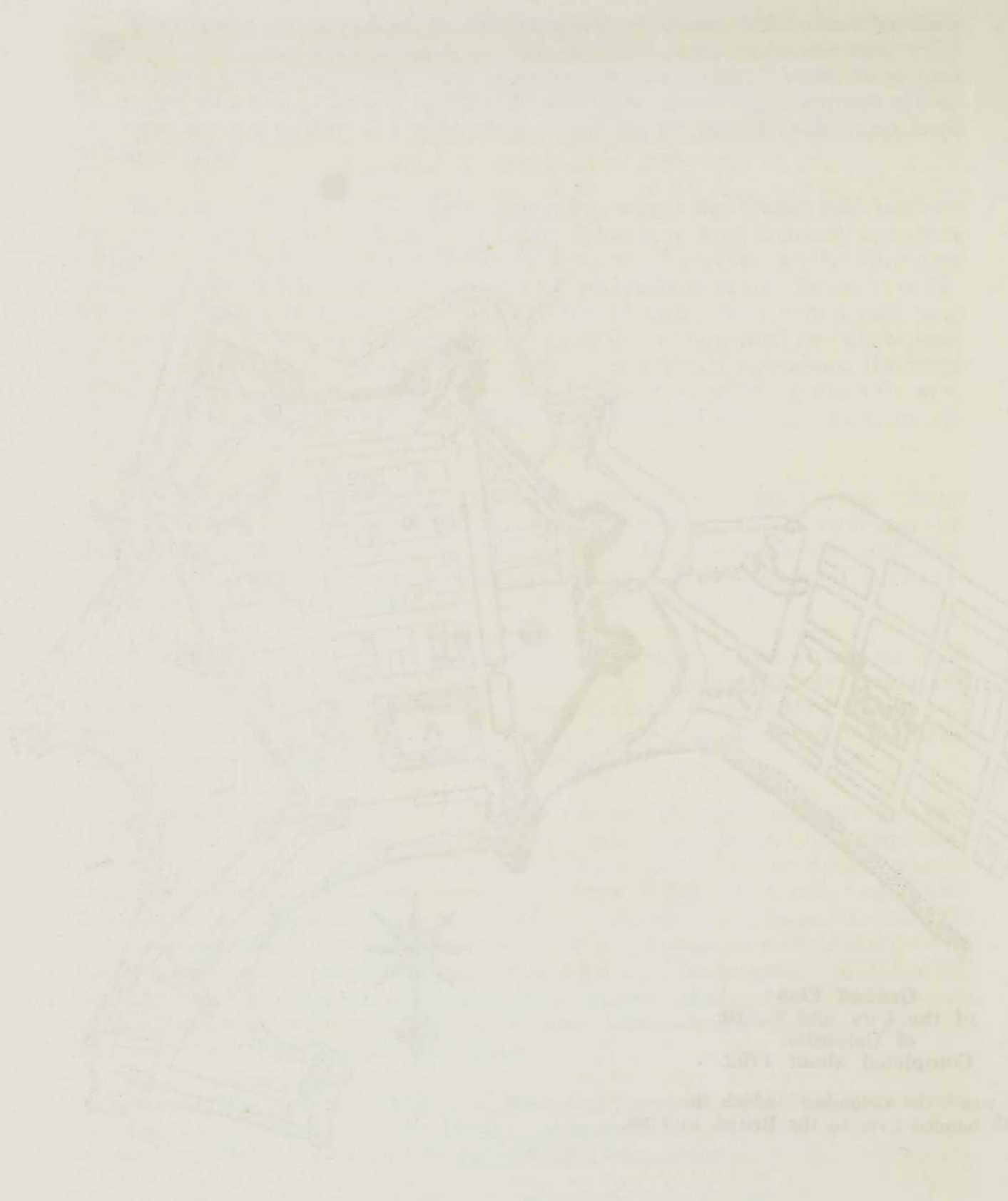
*From an official diary of the year 1751, The Dutch Records by R. G. Anthonisz. p. 51.

**In a letter to Brathwaite: Madras Office Records Vol. 197, A 2542 *et seq.*



Ground Plan
of the City and Castle
of Colombo.
Completed about 1702.

This was "the Colombo" which the
Dutch handed over to the British in 1796.



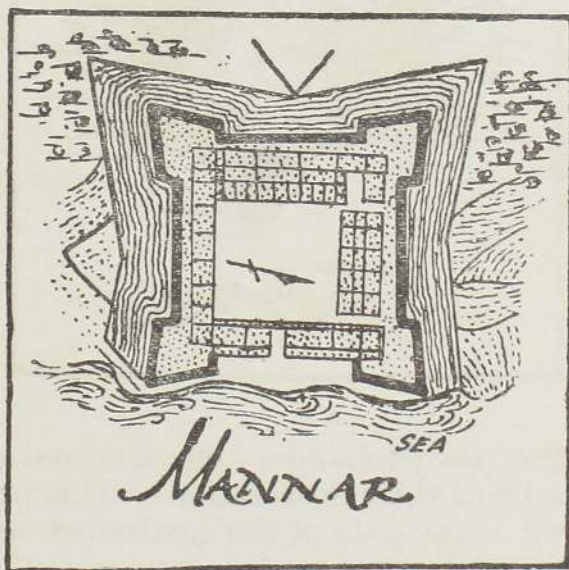
In the second fifty years, the methods of warfare decreed that the forts and ramparts with which this "Old Lady" had girdled herself in the past were unnecessary.

Accordingly, about the year 1870, bands of workmen with pick and shovel, began to undo the solid work of three and a half centuries, and afforded the practical precedence over the picturesque. All that remains of the Dutch (Castle) Fort savouring of old mystery are the walls of the bastion Punt-den-Briel, over which the flag of the Royal Ceylon Navy floats today.

The main inner gate of the Castle approach in the eastern defences was much more recently demolished. Off Flagstaff Street behind Queen's House, there are still left segments of rare old walls, and a postern gate, and off the rocky tip of shore which anchors the south-west breakwater, the fortalice called Battenburg, The grim moat, the draw bridges and the tally-ports have all vanished to make Colombo more spacious. The "Old Lady" (to adopt the metaphor used earlier) has agreeably benefited by the breezes which the ramparts kept out and although deprives of her "old silk and lavender" has passed gracefully into richer and more exciting years with space, light, and air.

MANNAR

The island of Mannar has already been referred to as the custodian of the pearl banks of Ceylon from which great profit was reaped. The Portuguese captured, and fortified it in 1550 by erecting a fort as a stepping stone to a future conquest of Jaffna.



Giving themselves an interval of two years after the capture of Colombo, Ryckloff van Goens sailed for Mannar with the Dutch fleet in January 1658. The Dutch historian Rev. Philipus Baldaeus accompanied him as Chaplain of the Forces.

The Portuguese, profiting by the respite, had re-organised themselves and strongly fortified their last remaining strongholds in Ceylon, Mannar and Jaffna. The large Dutch Force soon effected a landing at the former, but thereafter met with strong resistance. History acclaims the battle they fought the most sanguinary encounter between two nations in Ceylon. The defenders, beaten back with great loss even to the death of their Governor. Antonio de Menezes, took refuge in the Fort which the Hollanders then

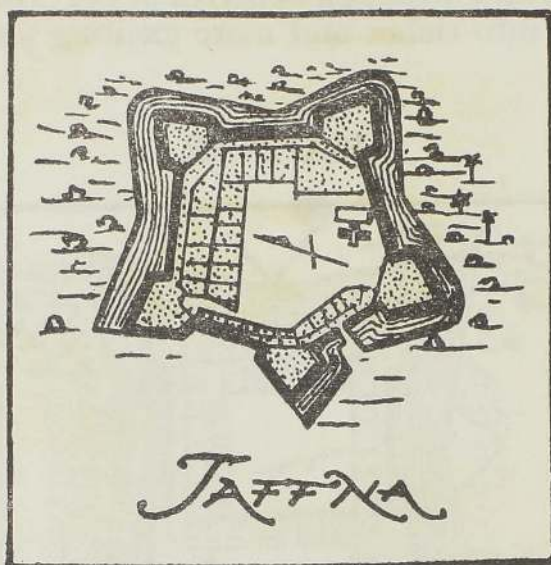
invested. The besieged held out for four days and surrendered on the 22nd of February 1658, Two days later Baldaeus preached in the principal Church a thanksgiving sermon.*

The Portuguese Fort, improved and re-built by the Hollanders in 1686, stands close to the strait and fronts the mainland end of the cause-way and bridges which crosses the strait. The Fort is four sided, with bastions at each angle, and a very complete moat and glacis. The Fort and island of Mannar surrendered to a British Force under Captain Barbut on the 5th of October 1795. Three decades later the garrison was composed of a Subadar (an Indian Officer) and 20 sepoys.

The Fort, with its cupola-like belfry or Klokketoren rising from its ramparts over the fortress are in good preservation. One of its old buildings serves as a country gaol.

The victorious Hollander lost no time in marching from Mannar, through the trackless jungles of the Vanni, in the hope of surrounding the Castle-Fort at Jaffna before the Portuguese could recover from their most recent defeat. The historian Ribeiro describes the Portuguese fortress at Jaffna as a

JAFFNA



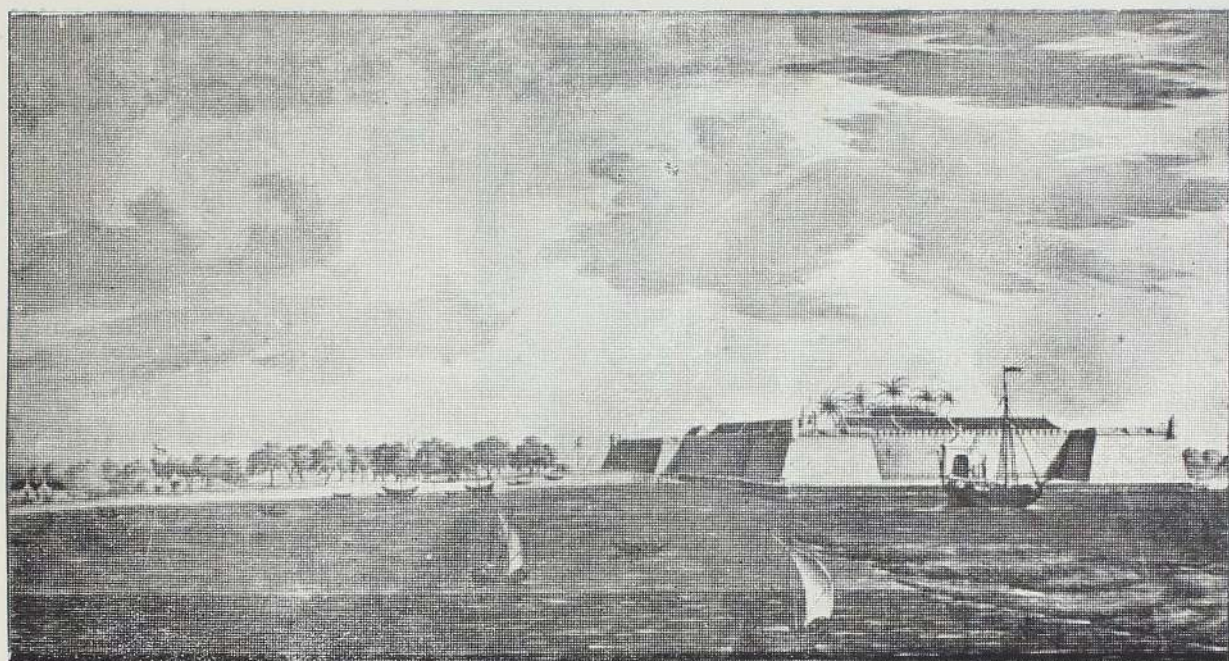
structure raised on "a regular square with four bastions . . . with certain towers or half-oranges** in the middle of the stretches of wall from one angle to another . . . all very circumscribed in the old style," On the side it was bounded by the Lagoon, the other three sides were protected by a ditch.

The only opposition the Hollanders encountered on the march was at Chundikuli, within a mile of their destination. This proved ineffectual, and they advanced, arriving at the gate of the castle-fort before the garrison had settled down to a siege.

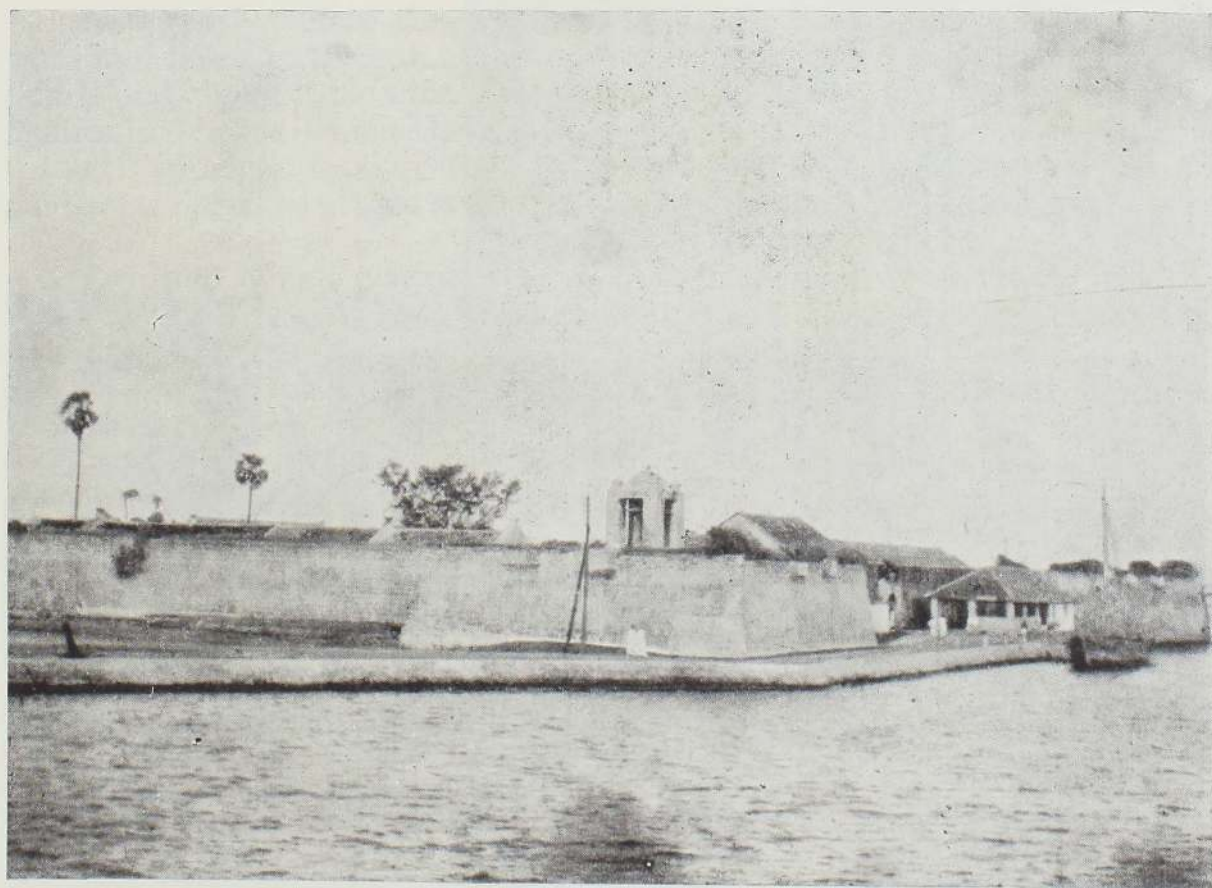
Having made themselves masters of the outer city, the Hollanders brought their siege-guns to bear on the battlements, and also using mortars,

* He took for his text : " When the Philistines heard that the Children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel : And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines." I Samuel. VII - 7.

** These appear to have been semi-circular crenellated projections used as musketry platforms.

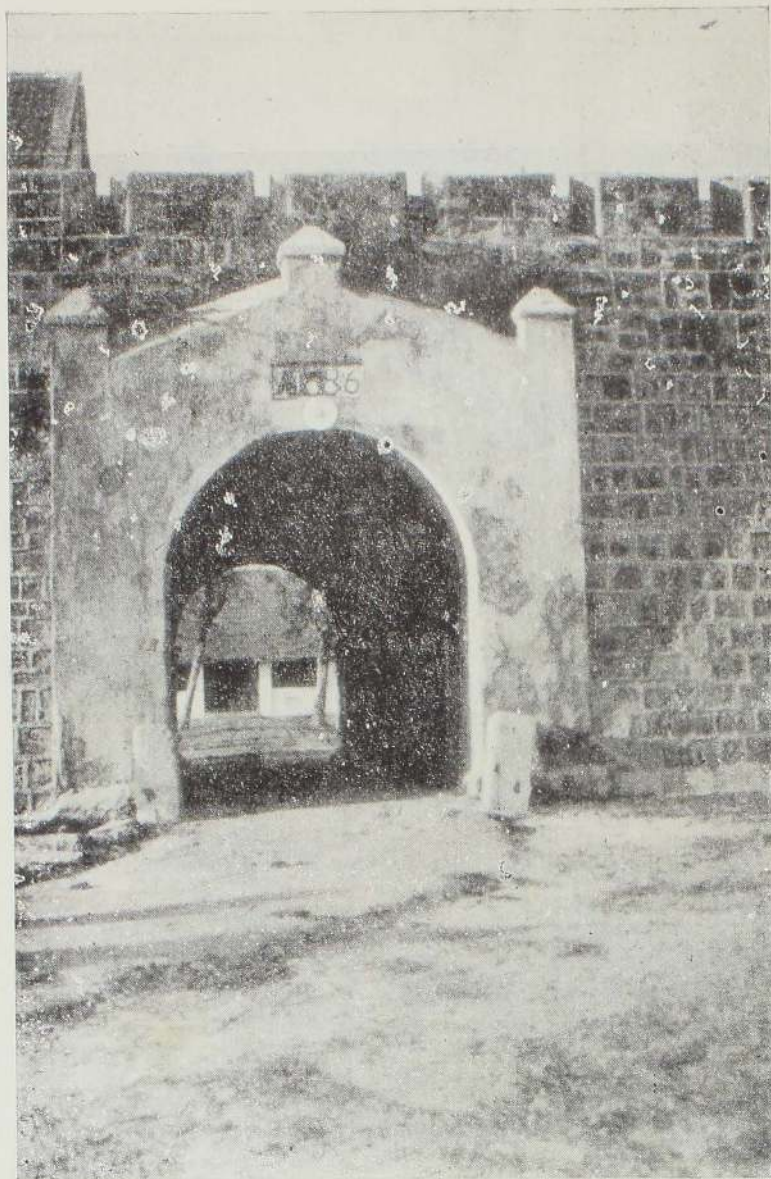


Mannar Fort : as seen by Steiger in the early years of the 18th Century.

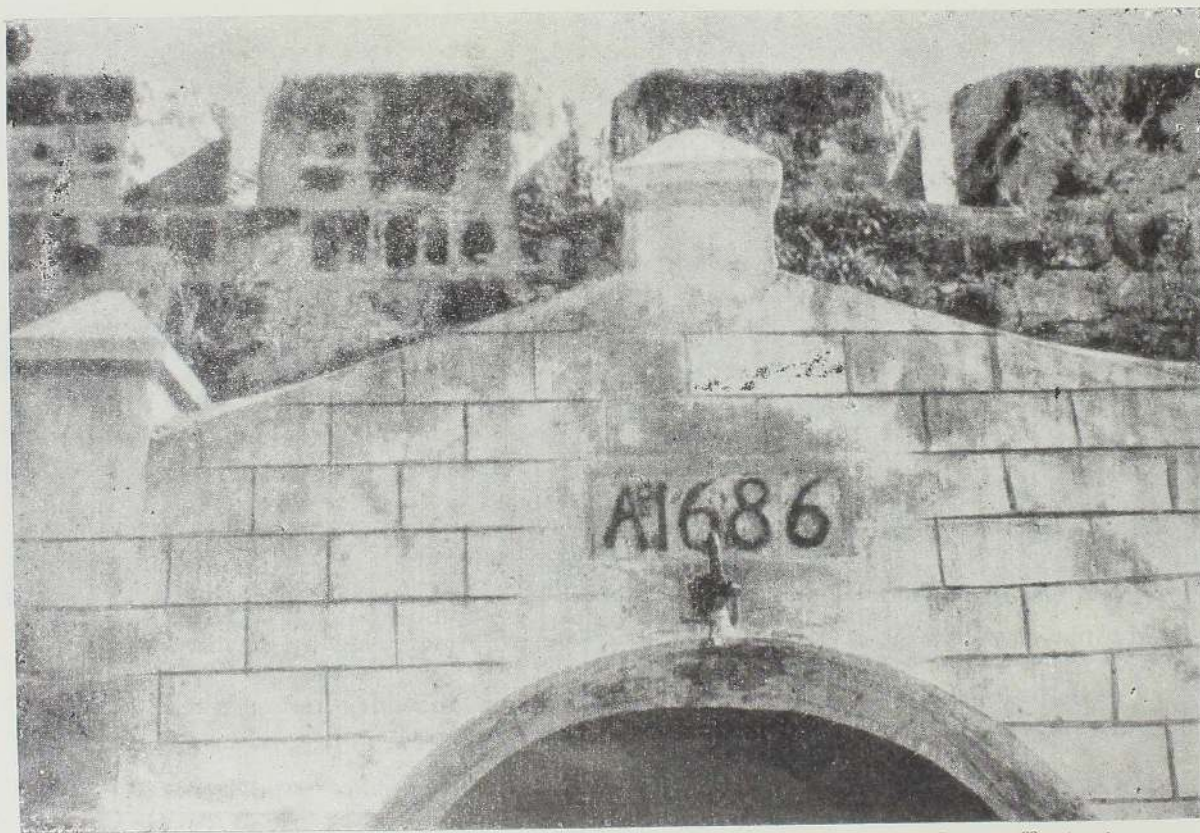


Mannar Fort : as seen today, with its " Klokketoren " * set up on the ramparts.

* A belfrey composed of four pillars supporting a masonry dome where a large gong was hung to indicate the time and in case of alarm.



The gate-way of the Mannar Fort 1686.



Indicating what a poor effort has been made in a more modern effort at restoration.

they incessantly hurled stones over the walls destroying the buildings and killing many of the 3000 souls in the castle. This continued for a fortnight but there was no surrender despite a scarcity of food brought about owing to the circumstances that the fortress had been surrounded before any food could be collected. The luckless Portuguese held out for three and a half months before they capitulated. The Hollanders took possession of the Castle Fort on the 21st of June 1658.*

Obviously the Dutch originally intended to establish the capital of the northern Commandement at Kankesanturai. Anybody who visits this pleasant sea-side suburb, which is very nearly the most northerly point in the land-form of Ceylon, can hardly fail to notice a coral-masonry foundation which is being treated roughly by the action of the waves of the sea. It was on this aged and weather-worn foundation that the Dutch proposed to raise the fortress in North Ceylon. Valentyn, mentions the "new castle Cangianture", and shows it on his map, and Ryckloff van Goens in his memoir for the guidance of his successor, written in September 1675, affords further evidence of Dutch intentions when he refers to the "new Fort at Cangianture", discusses its utility, and dwells on the need of building a new fortress at Jaffna, the old Portuguese ones being out of fate.

Apparently before the Dutch raised their escarp walls at Kankesanturai and failed in the gun embrasures on this foundation they changed their minds and thought it better economy to reconstruct and improve the fortification at Jaffna which they had wrested from the Portuguese. The date "1680" which appears over the main gateway, is the best evidence that they made this decision within two decades of the expulsion of their rivals.**

Two and a half centuries have done little to fret and wear this most perfect military work, built on a style in vogue in the Dutch school during the latter end of the seventeenth century. In a setting fair and peaceful, its gaunt ramparts, its revelins and curtains, its bartizans or quaint picturesque stone sentry-boxes so conspicuously perched on the angles of the bastions and gun-embrasures, singularly or collectively, are eloquent of "old, unhappy far-off things and battles long ago".

The main approach from the original Dutch town crosses the glacis and leads over a dry ditch to an arched gateway in the outer bulwark. In this entrance revelin there is nothing remaining of the gate itself. Between this and the main gate there is a wet ditch spanned by a masonry causeway. There is no evidence of a drawbridge. Presumably, the causeway would have been cut in any case of emergency.

*At a thanksgiving service held two days later Baldaeus preached on the text "And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi. Exodus XVII. 15.

**Unlike the Castle-Fort of Colombo, and Galle Fort which enclose a town the Jaffna Castle Fort is an adjunct to and on the outskirts of the town.

The main or inner gateway, is placed in the entrance of a curtain and the road passes under the **rampart** through an arch on either side of which are guard-rooms. The original gate, a solid structure of timber, is still standing and in use. The wood-work on the outer side is thickly studded with long iron spikes, a precaution long associated with eastern forts and meant to prevent the gate being battered by trained elephants which used to be brought up by the attacking forces.

On the fringe of the four acres of green which is today bordered by a drive, stand what used to be the quarters of the garrison officers. Seeing that these buildings have been put to use from the early days by British civilian officials of the Government, it is pleasing to notice that little or any vandalism in the form of modern additions to the buildings had invaded the serenity of their old-time appearance.

The building which served as the residence of the "Commandeur" of Jaffnapatam, an officer in rank next to the Dutch Governor who made his permanent resident in Colombo, stands off the northern edge of the open green, complete to even its old source of water supply, a well. It is today known as "Kings House", and is maintained as a gubernatorial residence. Nearby and overshadowing it, the massive walls of the handsome and imposing Dutch Church with its shapely tilted roof dominates all else.

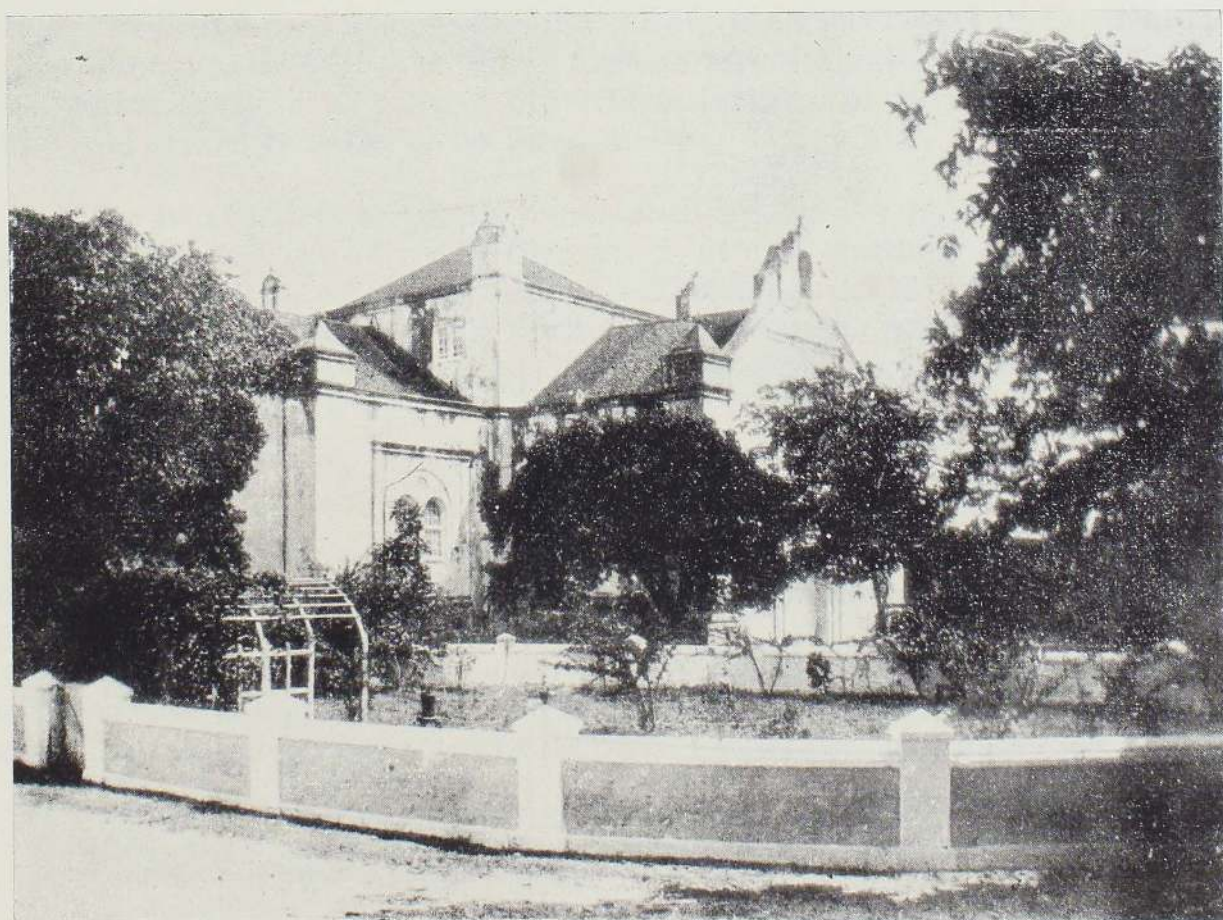
Leaving the story of the Church to be later told, we turn to a quadrangular recess between the old building presently occupied by the Chief Jailer and the Superintendent of Police. Let into the outer wall of another old building which now serves as a gaol (fortunately hidden away) there is a block of granite, one by four feet long, bearing an inscription in bas-relief. The letters are 3 to 4 inches in height. The inscription reads : GOD IS DEN OPPERSTE REGTER, which rendered in English is : "God is the Supreme Judge".

It is a tradition that on the open quadrangle there once stood the old Portuguese church : "Nossa Senhora dos Milagres". The Dutch converted this Church to suit their form of worship and used it for over two decades until they built their own Kerk. It is not improbable that the inscription first found a place within the Portuguese church when it underwent reconstruction at the hands of the Dutch. Possibly too, the inscribed slab, was salvaged when the church was demolished and set in the wall of another building later erected by the Hollander near the site. Howbeit, the more popular modern belief is that this was the place of execution in the period of Dutch occupation and, that the inscription inspired the last thought which the hapless prisoner was permitted to ponder over.

Few monuments of Dutch Ceylon have weathered better, than the ramparts, battlements and picturesque stone sentry boxes of the Jaffna castle-fort. They stand out crisp and clear, as if they were just finished by their



The 'Plaats' within the ramparts of the Jaffna fort, showing the Church and the Commandeur's House. (now called "King's House.") Steiger.



The walled garden plot opposite the Commandeur's House, next to the Church,

builders. Two circumstances have contributed to this. First, the dry climate of north Ceylon, and secondly that the structure has been built using blocks of "pumice stone" and white coral, both of which were procurable in the peninsula. The glacis or open approach on three sides of the fortress have been left unbuilt and this contributes to show off its massive outline, dominated from all points of vantage by the pyramidal tower of its old church within the walls.

The old Klokketoren still incongruously crowns an angle of the ramparts. The strength of this castle-fortress has never been actually tested by an attack, and fortunately so, for it carries a picture for posterity which if imprinted on the mind towards evening, or when mellowed by moonlight will be recalled at its best.

After the Dutch forts at Trincomalee capitulated to the British, Colonel Stuart proceeded to the reduction of Jaffna. He was in a great hurry to get this finished before the North-East Monsoon set in. The troops were landed at Point Pedro, and marched to the gates of the Castle-Fortress. Commandeur Racket, the Dutch Lieutenant Governor, surrendered with a garrison consisting of 39 European troops and 98 sepoys on the 28th of September, 1795.

The Commandement of Jaffnapatam was so much exposed to invasion both by land and sea, more especially during the earlier part of the Dutch regime, that besides two other small fortlets which functioned in the Portuguese period, quite a number of other little fortlets, block-houses or stockades,* and redoubts came to be later erected.

Of the two fortlets originally established by the Portuguese one was on Kayts island, and the other further north at the entrance of the straits, between Karaittivu and Kayts, which the Dutch named Hammenheil. Both were erected on the orders of the Portuguese Governor : Antonio de Menezes, and were strengthened and occupied as soon as the Dutch advance to north Ceylon was evident.

KAYTS

"Fort Erie", for such is the name by which this shattered relic of old-time warfare is known to a very few, was a fortification about 150 feet square. It would appear to have consisted of four circular bastions with bomb-proof walls of great thickness. The sea washed its northern face and the remains of a glacis are still visible to the west. The south face suggests that it was protected by an outwork which extended in a half moon from

*Sometimes referred to as Pagers (a Netherlands-Indian word), or "Tranqueiras". Both terms are used vaguely to indicate an enclosed defence of limited size.

bastion to bastion and commanded the plain to the rear. We are told that entrance to the fort was provided through gateways in the eastern and western curtains, but there is little evidence at all left to prove this.

The fortlet held out for a fortnight against the Hollanders despite a severe bombardment, and surrendered for lack of water.

For some obscure reason the Dutch made no attempt to restore this fort. A significant note is struck by the historian Baldaeus who records that the stronghold was in a very bad condition when the Dutch conquered Jaffna.

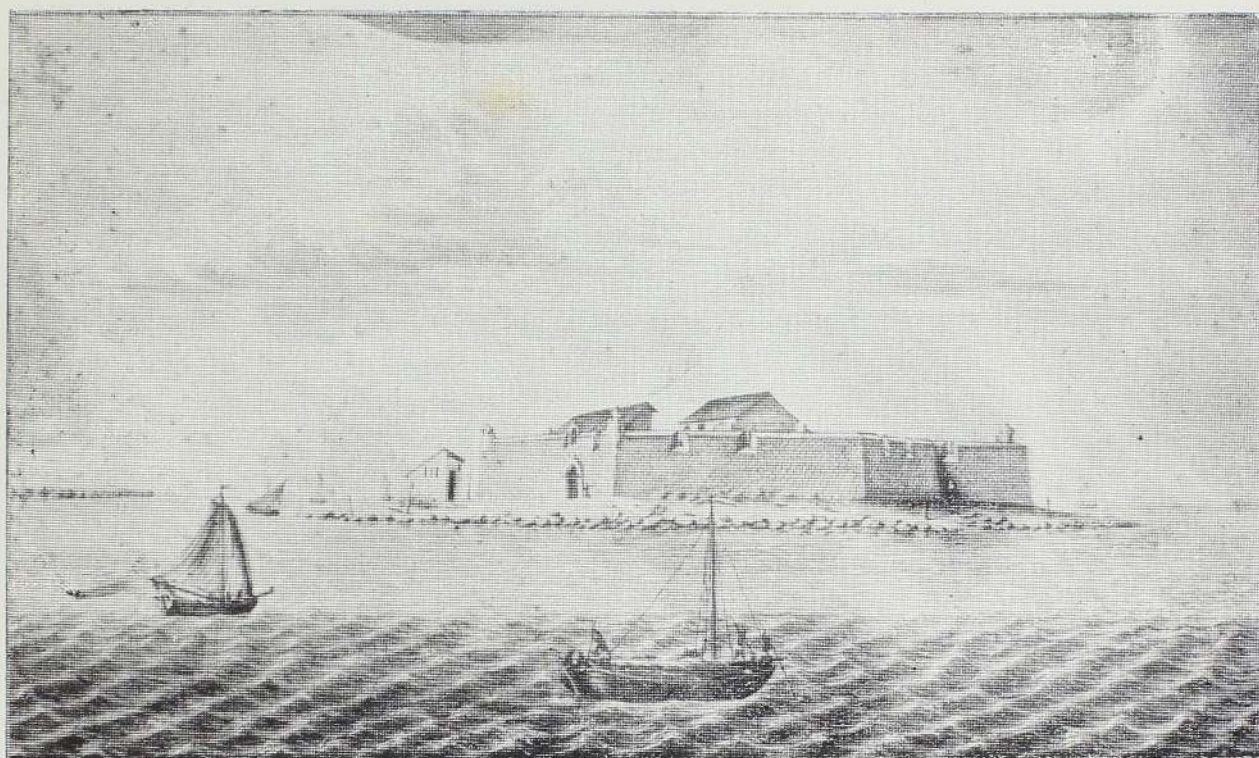
HAMMENHEIL

The strange serenity of the little water-fort, Hammenheil, invests this memorial with a sense of departed usefulness which is most striking. It stands on a rocky shoal at the entrance to Jaffna Lagoon and its ramparts are lapped by the surf. The Portuguese named it *Fortaleza do Caes*. In those days of tumult, Hammenheil served on the north just as Mannar Fort did on the south, to guard the passage by water to the Castle-Fort at Jaffna.

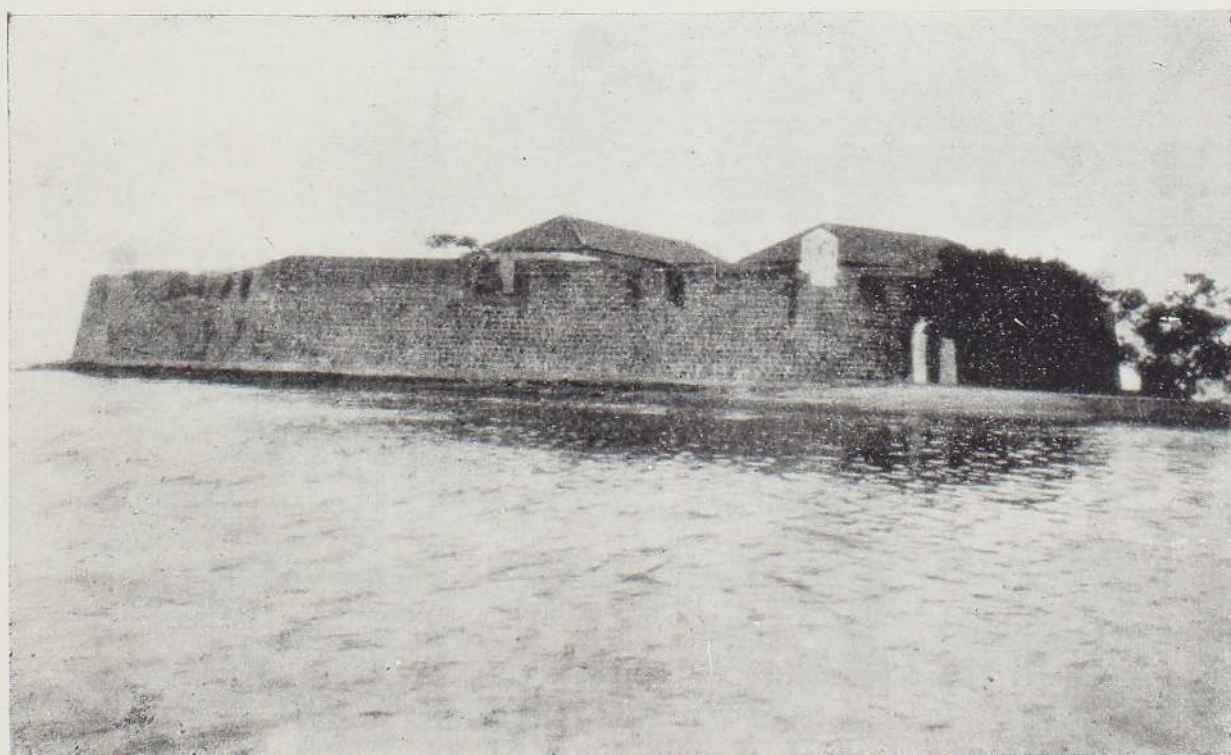
Accordingly, it was not permitted to remain long in Portuguese hands and was captured by the Dutch in March 1658, under Captains Cornelis Reb, Pieter Waset and N. van de Reede, soon after the occupation of Mannar. Its new owners named it Hammenheil. The Hollander saw in the shape of Ceylon the resemblance of smoked ham. Since this picturesque water-fort was at the point where the shank bone projects, they gave it this strange name : Hammen-heil (heel of the ham), and fortunately nobody has changed it. The Portuguese held out for a short while, but in this case too had to surrender for want of water.

When the Dutch occupied this water-fort they found that the sand bank on which it was built had been undermined by the storms of the north-east monsoon. They remedied this by piling up a breakwater of stones. The Portuguese had built the ramparts hollow, and had roofed them with beams, which supported an upper floor of stone and chunam, with a view to the space being utilised for storing provisions and ammunition. Since the beams were liable to decay, and the floor had to support the weight of the cannon without fear of it giving way when the guns were moved about and turned round, the Dutch considered this a mistake and they replaced the roof by an entire stone vault.

Finally, profiting by the error of their predecessors, the Dutch took special pains to ensure a satisfactory water supply. On the northern side of the fortress they built a huge reservoir, paved with "Dutch Bricks" to collect and preserve the rain water. This reservoir had however been built so high that it reached above the parapets and was, therefore, exposed to the fire and possibility to destruction by an enemy. The defect was pointed



The Island-fort, Hammenheil — as painted by Steiger — early in the 18th Century.



A picture of Hammenheil with its low vaulted gateway taken in 1949. It was used in the Insurrection of 1971 as a prison for the captured leaders.

out time and again at subsequent inspections of the fortress, but since it was a recent work, it was allowed to remain until such time as alterations could be effected. It nevertheless stands as originally constructed and is still used to conserve a supply of clear fresh rain-water.

A low vaulted gate-way not more than seven feet in height is the only entrance to this water fort. The living quarters consist of three or four rooms in the courtyard. The vaults under the ramparts were doubtless used as a store room. The Dutch invariably maintained a garrison of thirty men under the charge of a Lieutenant or Ensign on this spot, and the early Dutch Governors make very special mention in their memoirs that Hammenheil must be carefully guarded, "none but Dutch being stationed there".

Pas Beschutter : Early in their occupation of north Ceylon, the Dutch Commandeurs found it necessary to provide a chain of forts between the peninsula and the mainland, to protect the former from the warring Vanni Chieftains and pirates. Thus four small forts came to be erected on the northern shore of the Lagoon, and were called Pass Beschutter, Pas Pyl, Pas Elephant and Pooneryn.

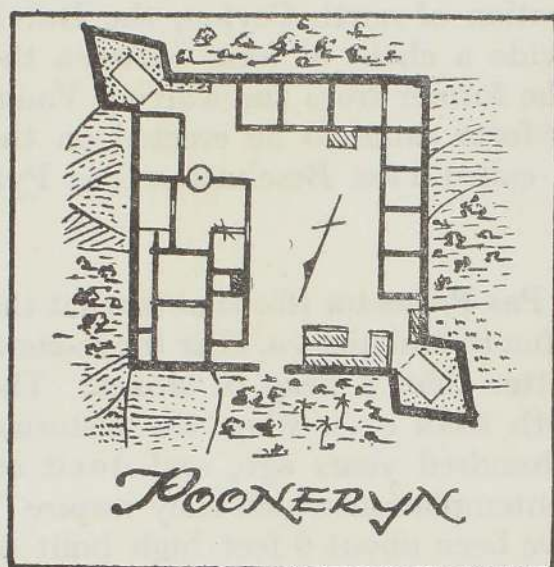
Pas Beschutter, which was also called Pas Protector (for that is what the word means), lay on the old track from Jaffna to Mullaittivu, near the modern village Koyilvayal. It is today little better than a heap of stones. The decaying battlements were overgrown with trees even when the historian Cordiner visited the spot well over one hundred years ago, and dwelt on "the romantic appearance and solemn contemplation which they inspire". The walls of this fort would appear to have been about 9 feet high built of very strong material cemented together with mortar with two bastions at opposite angles. Under each bastion there was a vault, which from the nature of the architecture would seem to have been proof against bombs.

Pas Pyl : also spelt Pijl and meaning the "Pass of Arrows", is about three miles from Fort Beschutter in a north-easterly direction. It stood on the sand dunes off the modern village Verrilaikkeni. A raised terreplein is all that is left of it, and an obelisk built of the materials of the old Fort affords a useful and very necessary landmark to fishing boats.

Pas Elephant : Elephant Pass, now does duty as a Resthouse. It appears to have been constructed on much the same plan as Fort Beschutter, and served to guard the shallow ford where the Jaffna Lagoon narrows to the width of a small river. It is the Vanni which helped Jaffna to its extensive trade in elephants. When tamed, the elephants were driven across this shallow ford,

and kept in "elephant stals"* which were dotted all over the peninsula. Hence the name Elephant Pass.

This chain of forts was apparently also used to prevent persons without passports entering the peninsula, and to check run-away slaves or the theft of slaves. Commandeur Zwaardecroon recounts in his memoir (1697), that although in close communication one with the other, and despite the continual patrol of the militia, persons and goods often passed without a licence. As a means of drawing these posts together several proposals appear to have been made. Some advocated a hedge of palmyrah trees, others a fence of thorns, some suggested a moat, and others again a rampart wall. It would appear that eventually a trench had been dug with look-outs at suitable points. This feature of the line of defence has entirely disappeared.



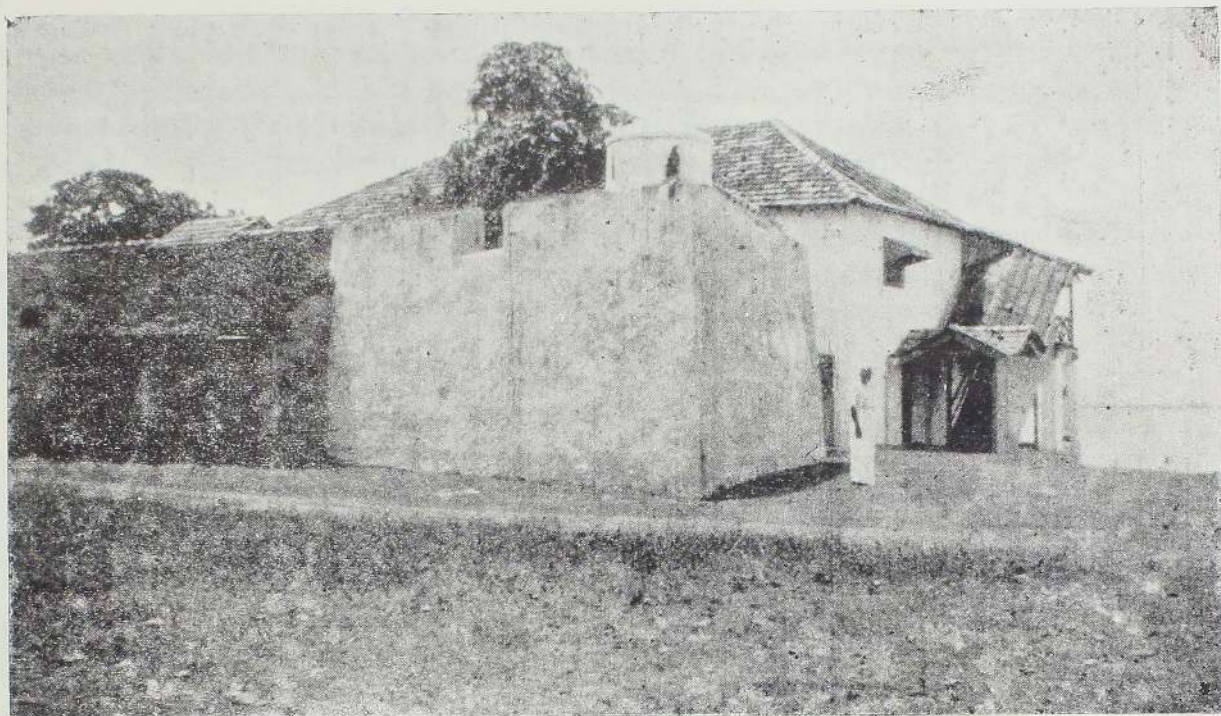
Pooneryn : west of Elephant Pass, is situated south of the Jaffna Lagoon and about three miles inland from the Nagatevan-turai Jetty, in the village, Poonaryn or Poonakari. This out-post was a link in the coast road from Mannar to Jaffnapatam, and the fort, a larger structure than that at Elephant Pass, had two bastions with their bartizans and was quadrangular in shape.+

The traveller Haafner who has left a record of his "journeys" in Ceylon (1782) says that this fort was built by the Portuguese. This is possibly correct, for the report of a Dutch Governor nearly a century earlier refers to Poonaryn as good redoubt which only required a stone water-tank. The rather significant statement follows that Dutch bricks were applied for from Jaffnapatam to build the tank, and that His Excellency the Governor and the Council of Colombo promised to send them as soon as they should arrive from the Fatherland.

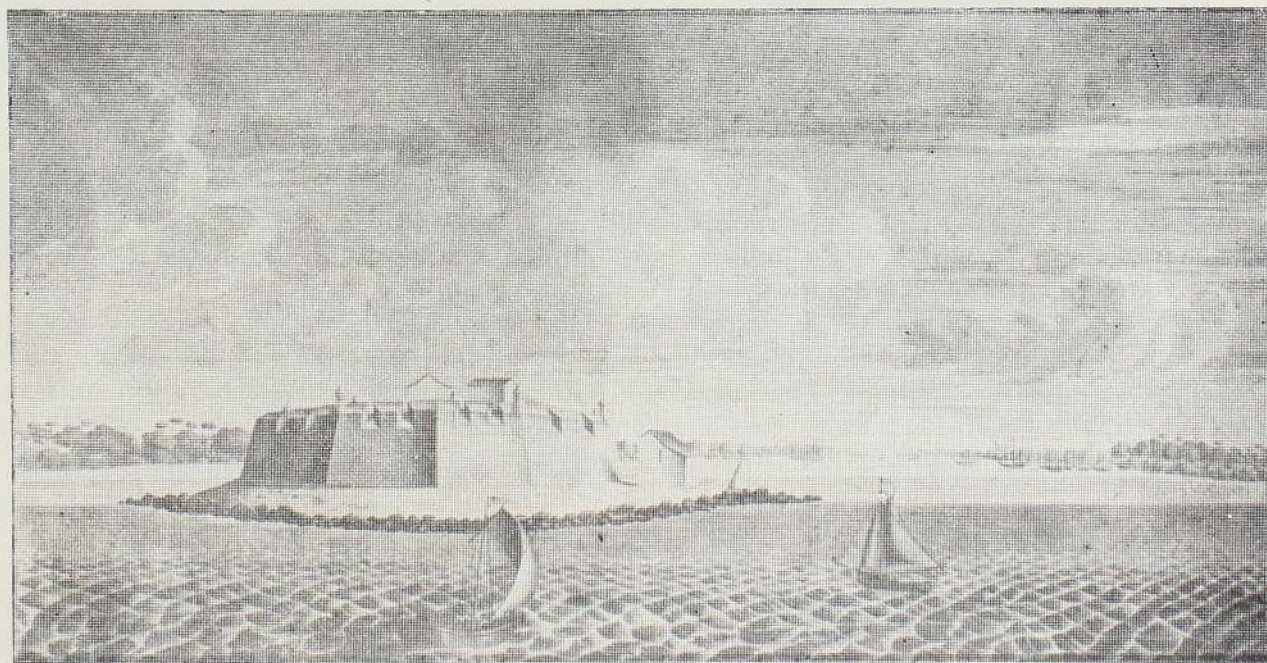
In very early days of the British occupation a verandah flanking a barrackroom within the Fort pushed its way through the weather-worn coral

*A map of the peninsula of 1720, shows numbers of these "Elephant Stals" and also a feature marked Elephant Brug (or bridge) on the island Karativu where the elephants were loaded into boats and shipped to India. It is also noteworthy that when captured — the animal was marked and again marked when sold. The two marks then presenting the appearance X a combination of two V.O.C. seals.

+Governor Van Rhee refers to it as "Redoubt (Veldschans)".



Elephant Pass : A “ rondel ” with bastion and quaint bartizan, are all that remains of a Fort which overlooked a dreary waste of sand and scrub-jungle. It does duty today as a Rest-house.



Another of Steiger's 18th Century pictures of Hammenheil Fort looking from the open sea and confirming its important position as the key to Jaffna.



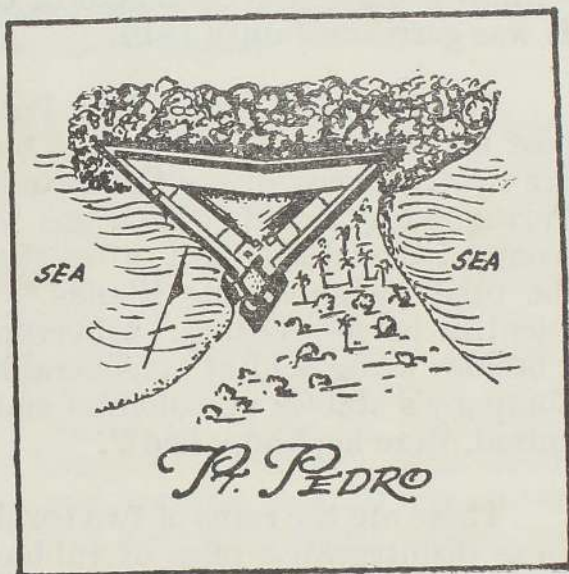
Neduntivi or Delft : A Portuguese block-house, which was used by the Dutch.
A view of the ruins from the South West. See page 76.

stone rampart. White walls, a red-tiled roof which overtopped the battlements and green bamboo tats now rob the old Fort at Pooneryn of its war-like appearance. What was chosen for strength remained to give shelter to the traveller who found himself benighted in this inhospitable region.

Today, no longer even a resthouse, the old and new architectural virtues rub shoulders in that companionable way peculiar to most of the historical monuments of Ceylon, hiding much of its story from the eyes of archaeologist and antiquarian.

Punt de Pedro: now called Point Pedro, is another Dutch Fortlet we must notice before we leave the Jaffna Peninsula. It stood two miles to the east of the most northerly rim of Ceylon.

It would appear to have been a structure generally described as a "Pagger" (more or less a stockade) built of wood and mud. Governor van Goens, in written instructions for the Commandeur of Jaffnapatam five years after a footing had been established in north Ceylon, mentioned that some masonry work was being constructed and that the work would be completed before the rains.



All traces of this fortlet have been rubbed out by time. It appears conventionally marked on Dutch maps which name the place Punto Pedro corrupted from the Portuguese version Ponta das Pedras meaning "the rocky point". One Corporal and four Lascoreens, who were "chiefly employed in the sending and receiving of letters to and from Coromandel and Trincomalee... and in the search of departing and arriving vessels..." comprised the staff stationed at this post.

Governor Zwaardecroon mentions in his memoir, that this resident staff had to supervise the erection of the Church and the breaking of coral stone from the old Portuguese fortress. This reference to a Portuguese fortress at Point Pedro is distinctly interesting but like the Dutch fortlet, its fate can be summed up in the expression: "the place that once knew them, knows them no more".

Mullaattivu is a solitary station on the east coast, and once stood on a wild sea-beach of the Bay of Bengal, without harbour, road-stead or any shelter to recommend the presence of a military post. Hendrick Becker,

when Commandeur of north Ceylon (1715) gave orders for a small wooden structure of pallisades and earth to be built, in order to prevent smuggling of elephants tusks and other articles to the coast of India, and the importation thence of cotton goods that had paid no duty and found their way to the Kandyan territory. Sixty years later Lieut : Thomas Nagel, who was land Regent and Administrator of the Vanni, erected a fort to keep the Vanni Chieftains in check. It must have been a poor affair, merely a quadrangle of earth-work thrown up around barracks and officer's quarters. The British made a good fort of it, and in 1803 used it to withdraw their troops when attacked in force by one of the Vanni Chiefs. The garrison ultimately withdrew under the command of Captain Von Driberg to Jaffna, in boats. It was garrisoned until 1819.

The Island of Delft : The Portuguese, and possibly the Dutch, had a post on Neduntivu, one of the far-flung units of the northern Islands off the western coast of the Commandement, and the largest of them all. The Portuguese called it " Illha das Vaka " (the island of cows). The Dutch renamed the island Delft, after the town in the Netherlands as they did all the other neighbouring islands.* They made Delft a famous centre for scientific horse-breeding. Governor Hendrick Becker writing in 1716 says : " besides being sold at considerable profit to the public in this manner the Company's stables at Colombo and other places where many horses are required, were kept supplied ".

There are the ruins of two coral-stone strongholds on Delft. Concerning these disintegrated piles of rubble " where ruin greenly dwells ", little is known other than that one of them sited about a quarter of a mile from the circuit bungalow on the eastern sea-shore is definitely a Portuguese block-house, while that sited on the western sea-shore, three or four miles away, is traditionally ascribed to be the " castle of Vedi Arasen, a warring Mukkuvar** King of a much earlier period of history."

The blackened, lichen-covered southern face of the Portuguese block-house is still standing, and here the floor-line of the upper storey is clearly marked at a height of nearly 30 feet. The northern and eastern faces are very dilapidated, but afford sufficient evidence to enable one, after careful examination, to reconstruct in the mind's eye the structure which it once was. Roughly speaking it is rectangular in shape with lower walls strongly built and sufficiently buttressed to suggest that it consisted of two storeys and served as one of those enclosed defences of limited size called " tranqueria ". There is no authoritative statement that the Dutch used it as a fortified post, but it is very possible they did.***

*Memoir of Thomas van Rhee.

**A name applied to fishermen on the coasts of India near Cape Comorin derived from Dravidian *mukkuha* " to dive ".

***Notes on Delft, Jnl. Royal Asiatic Society (CB) Vol. XXI No. 62, 1909.

Aripo : There was yet another small fort within the jurisdiction of Mannar. It fronted the sea, and commanded one of the most barren and desolate stretches of Ceylon's coast-line, strewn with thorny thicket and scrub-jungle. Its importance lay in the proximity to it of the richest pearl-banks Ceylon had to offer in the past. The Portuguese had erected and held a post here with two bastions, and the Dutch took it over after the fall of Mannar. In Governor Van Rhee's time it was : "in charge of a Toepas* Corporal and garrisoned by an arachechi** and 29 Lascoryns.***"

The fort was in existence in 1800 and the British Governor, North, when on tour describes it at the time as composed of : "two bastions and containing one building of two storeys and some lower houses".



Kalpitiya Fort : The tales which recall political strategy in the past make it self-evident that he who held the trade routes held the country. Kalpitiya Fort bears out this story. It stands at the northern tip of a sandy, coral bound peninsula brought to notice by the Portuguese in 1544. They called it "Illha de Cardigar" (the Island of Cardiva). The roadstead and townlet nearby was given the sweet sounding name Calpentyn. Here, a Society of Jesuits in due course erected a church which they dedicated to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.

Casie Chitty, who has written a good deal about this district says, "The Dutch occupied Calpentyn by strategam in 1640". Yet apparently, they did not hold it long, for with the arrival of a new Viceroy at Goa, in the person of the Count d' Aveires, activities were renewed by the Portuguese to recover the possessions in Ceylon which they had lost. The siege and subsequent surrender by the Dutch of the Fort of Negombo, on the 8th of November 1640, left them once again in possession of this maritime zone.

When four years later, the Dutch re-captured Negombo, the tide of possession definitely turned. With their advent the Society were compelled to surrender all their interests, and the Jesuit Fathers had to quit the "Island of Cardiva".

*A term which corresponds to "mixed nationality" in English.

**A petty headman, originally military in character.

***Native soldiers. Ceylon Gazetteer (1834).

Being too engrossed in endeavours to consolidate their position and to make themselves masters of the sea-board, the Dutch in those early days had apparently little time to spare for Kalpitiya. Yet they had hardly achieved this end when they found themselves thwarted by their ally, the Kandyan Emperor.

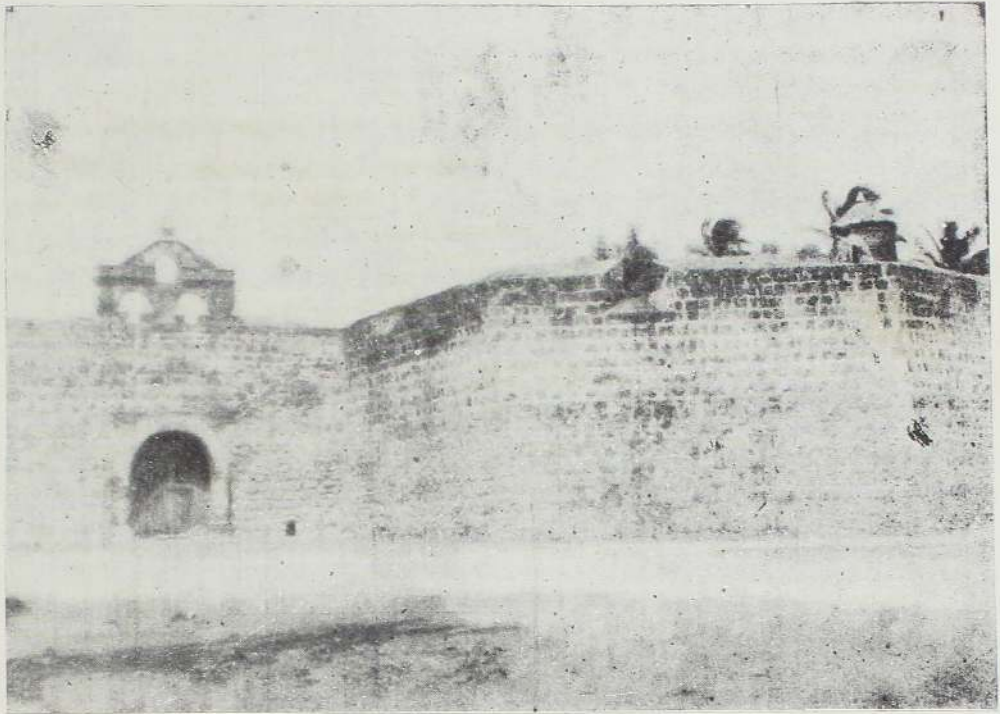
Nearly all the road-steads affording facilities for foreign intercourse and barter which had presented the one means of providing both Raja Sinha and his subjects with many of their wants, had fallen into the hands of the Dutch. The only one apparently left open to them on the Western coast was Puttalam.

Anticipating the difficulty which would arise if he did not secure for himself control of Kalpitiya the outer port, he sent out a company of men to hold that post. To all intents and purposes the attempt they made was feeble. A Dutch force under Adrian van de Meyden, which was rushed to the spot immediately the King's intentions were evident, easily dispersed them and in 1659 the Dutch occupied and fortified the old Jesuit Chapel, which possibly at the period stood derelict.

Meanwhile, the affairs of the Company inasmuch as it concerned Ceylon, prospered. The revenue from arecanut and cotton goods, most of which passed through Kalpitiya had produced 3000 rix-dollars within eighteen months. Under these circumstances it is a matter of little surprise that their Excellencies in Batavia decided to further safeguard their interests by erecting a small Fort at Kalpitiya.

Their decision was made known to Governor Ryckloff van Goens in a letter dated the 13th September 1666, and in the course of the following year the Fort was erected, completely enclosing the earlier stockade or whatever it be they had there. The chapel of the Jesuit society in this scheme of construction was converted into a barrack-room. Other buildings confined to the Fort were a Commandant's house, a prison house, and several godowns for the storage of paddy, salt and arrack, besides the underground powder magazines.

The year 1675 saw Raja Sinha once again on the aggressive. His forces were reported to be threatening all the outlying posts held by the Dutch, and under such a scheme of conflict Tennekoon, the Dissava of the Seven Korales, marched northwards and hovered round Kalpitiya with a strong band of followers. The Dutch on hearing of this despatched reinforcements by sea to strengthen the garrison. Howbeit, they apparently overestimated the danger in this direction, for Tennekoon's forces, armed with nothing more formidable than hatchets, spears, thongs and inchiados (mattocks or hoes) did nothing else than maltreat the Company's people in the vicinity of Kalpitiya — took their way back.



Kalpitiya Fort which commanded the entrance to Puttalam, and completely controlled all trade between the King's country and India.



The Gable of the Jesuit Church within the Fort. The wall of the old Church appears to have been raised in Dutch times.



From this complicated recital of troublous events we turn to an incident which we might infer was no small importance at the time. We are told that on the 14th of July 1687, the Dutch Governor and Director General, Gerrit de Heer, visited the station. His Honour was met on arrival at "Calpetty" by the *Onderkoopman*, Lambertus van Buren and the *Boekhouder*, Jacobus Swart. Maybe, this gubernatorial visit had special significance to the settlement of a long-standing grievance which had found expression in cajolery, threats and force, for it was about this time that friendly relations with the Kandyan Court had been ratified by the opening of the Port at Kalpitiya to Indian traders. Or again, it may be, the visit was undertaken to assess the wisdom of the concession from both a strategic and the commercial viewpoint. Nevertheless, we are left to infer what we will from the reference that after he inspected the fortress, the Governor ordered the removal of six cannons from its defences to the Fort at Colombo.

Down the succeeding years (which very nearly mark a century) writers testify to the prosperity and continued importance of Kalpitiya as a trading centre. Its story crystallised in vigorous protests urged from time to time against the capricious policy which prompted the opening or closing of the port at the will and pleasure of the Hollanders. Its strategic importance stands emphasised in a series of references to the control exercised over smuggling, but we pass on to a period when van Angelbeck, was Governor and Colonel Stuart's army was collected at Trincomalee. Hostilities of another type than mere frontier raids were imminent. Nevertheless, when Sir John Bowser, in command of the 52nd regiment which had been sent from Negapatam, arrived at Kalpitiya on the 5th of November 1795, the fortress offered no resistance. Nearly the whole of the garrison had been previously recalled in haste to Colombo, and on instructions from Governor van Angelbeck, the keys of the Fort were handed to the British Colonel by Adigar Simon de Rosairo, who was Administrator of affairs at the time.

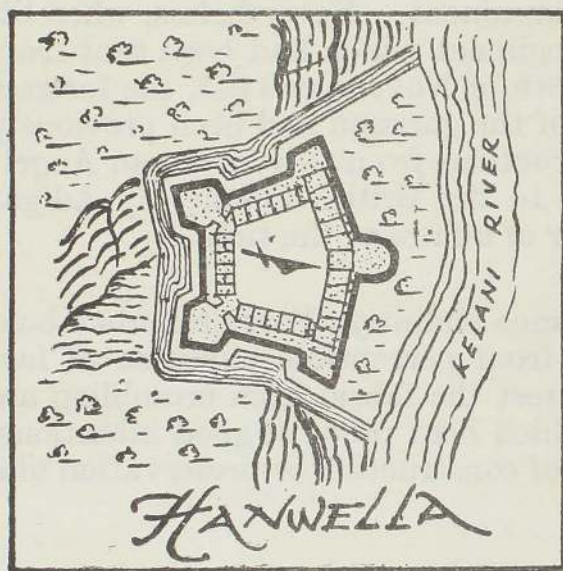
Today, in grim and imposing appearance Kalpitiya Fort presents a bold front in an effort to distract attention from perceptible evidence of fast approaching ruin. Attempts made to arrest the fabric from crumbling are indicated by liberal patches of cement which bear proof of good intentions, but very bad effort in the technical sense of construction or preservation of a monument of the past.

The gate-way in the east wall is the only point of admittance to the Fort. Enter through it and you see a series of barrack-rooms to the right and left flanking a quadrangle which no doubt did service as a parade ground. Until a short time back the barrackrooms served to store salt, but at the present day, found unsafe even for such a purpose, they stand roofless and abandoned. Near the angle formed by the northern and eastern walls there are the ruins of the old Jesuit temple, unrecognisable but for the crumbling facade, the tiled floor, and the niches let into the wall for statuary.

Scramble on to the ramparts, and you will see gun emplacements, yet intact, which afford an idea of its four bastions. Swinging one's sight away from those old moundy and abstruse vestiges of war to sweep the horizon a strikingly uncommon panorama awaits the eye. Standing from out the azure main, innumerable little wooded islets range themselves till in the distance they finally merge into wistful specks. To the northeast, a low forest-fringed cliff brought into focus by a silvery line of fore-shore outlines the mainland. And in these sheltered waters, visible to the imagination if not to the eye, we might picture the rendezvous of all vessels which sailed the seas in ancient mediaeval and near modern ages.*

Frontier Forts: There remains now to refer to a few forts, which studded the frontier separating the Colombo Dissavony and the Galle Commandement, from the dominion of the Sinhala monarch. Only three of them appear to have been built of masonry or with masonry adjuncts, the others were small posts: "tranqueiras", stockages and paggers, all merely earthworks which were temporary and inconspicuous and in consequence are now all but effaced.

Of the three larger forts two at Hanwella and Sitawaka were near the Colombo Dissavony, and on the old route from Colombo to Kandy. The third fort was at Katuwana** on the frontier of the Galle Commandement.



Hanwella Fort: Until comparatively recent times Hanwella was called Gurubewila, and under this name it proclaimed its strategic position in 1539, when the first of a long series of battles between the Sinhalese and the Portuguese was fought there. Subsequently, and until the annexation of the Kandyan Kingdom it was a post of great importance as it commanded the routes both by land and water from the Kandyan territory to Colombo.

Taking advantage of a projecting bluff at the base of which the Kelani Ganga flows, the Portuguese originally erected a stockade on its summit. In 1595 the stockade endured a long siege. A gallant attempt to hold out

*Jnl. Royal Asiatic Society (CB) Vol. XXX. No. 78, 1925. Jnl. D.B.U. Vol. XVII No. 3, 1928.

**"Cattoene", as it is frequently spelt in Dutch records.

against the forces of the Sinhala Army was, when on the verge of failure rewarded by the arrival of reinforcements.

When the Portuguese lost Colombo, Hanwella was occupied by the Dutch. About three decades later realizing the need for a strong fortification on this frontier the Hollanders converted the Portuguese "stockade" into a Fort. Governor van Rhee refers to it in his "Memoir" as : "The fortress Hangwella, situated about five hours eastward of Colombo, in charge of Captain Gregorious de Costa, who, however is not to interfere with the rural administration."

During period of tension with the Kandyan Sinhala Emperor, the Dutch suffered even worse than the Portuguese did before them at Hanwella. They had no well within the walls, and man after man was lost in courageous attempts to bring water from the river. On one sporadic skirmish, the fort was besieged, for many weeks. It was thirst which drove the garrison to make terms offering to surrender if the wounded would be sent down the river in barges to Colombo while the active troops gave themselves up as prisoners for removal to Kandy. The terms however, were not observed. Wounded and unwounded were massacred to the number of about one hundred, when the fort surrendered.

Under the terms of the Dutch capitulation of 1796, Hanwella fell into the hands of the British. Howbeit, many years had yet to pass before this beautiful spot held in the curve of the river which sweeps down on its course between banks marged by an endless variety of magnificent forest trees, palms and feathery clumps of bamboo was to find peace and serenity. During the campaign of 1803, the strength of the Fort built by the Dutch was put to its final test. The Kandyan forces repeatedly harassed the British troops under Captain William Pollock of His Majesty's 51st regiment, who were garrisoning it.

On the 6th of November at 10 a.m. it was unsuccessfully attacked by the grand army commanded by the Kandyan Emperor in person. Had ball been used the consequences would have been different, but the walls proved too strong for the "grape-shot", fired by the attacking artillery. Eventually a clever enfilade on the left flank of the attackers by a detachment of troops who escaped by a secret passage from the fort, led to a rout of the Kandyan attacking forces.

The present rest-house at Hanwella overlooking the Kelani River, is almost surrounded by the old moat of the fort. Much of its has been filled by silt and earth-slides, but it can still be traced. This is all that remains to recall its turbulent history.

Sitawaka : or Avissawella as it is now called, is about 10 miles up-river from Hanwella, It nestles at the base of bluff hills of black rock which rise almost perpendicularly from 900 to 1000 feet in height. In this setting there came to be located successively, a Portuguese Fort, a Dutch Fort and a British cantonment, for through Sitawaka there passed the principal route which linked the low land terrain and the central mountain zone.

Down to the first half century of the British occupation of Ceylon this route although frequently used by envoys and embassies to and from the Court of Kandy, was all but impassable. It wound its way to the capital of the Sinhala Kandyan Kingdom through country kept unopened even by cleared paths. It crossed rivers which were unbridged, mountains densely clothed in primeval forests, and more often than not zig-zagged up steep precipices inaccessible to all but the most courageous and prudent.

In the early Portuguese wars when rival princes were making a bid for kingship, Sitawaka was the stronghold of their most daring opponent, Raja Sinha. The palaces and temples which lent it grandeur were destroyed by the relentless Portuguese General Azavedo, at the close of the 16th century. They built a fort in 1595 - 7, on top of a low hill, about 300 yards off the left bank of the Sitawaka Ganga (river). The hill is still called Belum-gala, "the look-out hill", and has low-ground all round it.

From descriptions available it would appear that this Portuguese Fort was a small structure, with walls raised to a height of 10 feet which rose from a base built up by laying down horizontal courses of rough stone. The enclosed space was in the form of a nine-sided polygon, In the centre there was a lofty tower.*

The strong fort which the Dutch erected subsequently, in 1675, was on a smaller hill, near the left bank of the river, but no more than 200 yards to the north of the older Portuguese fortlet. Tradition holds that the magnificent Palace, which the Portuguese razed to the ground on the final overthrow of the Sitawaka chieftdom, originally occupied the hill-top on which the Dutch built their fort. No idea of the extent or appearance of the palace can now be formed. There is little doubt that the Dutch turned the supply of worked stone on the spot to good account in buildings they erected.

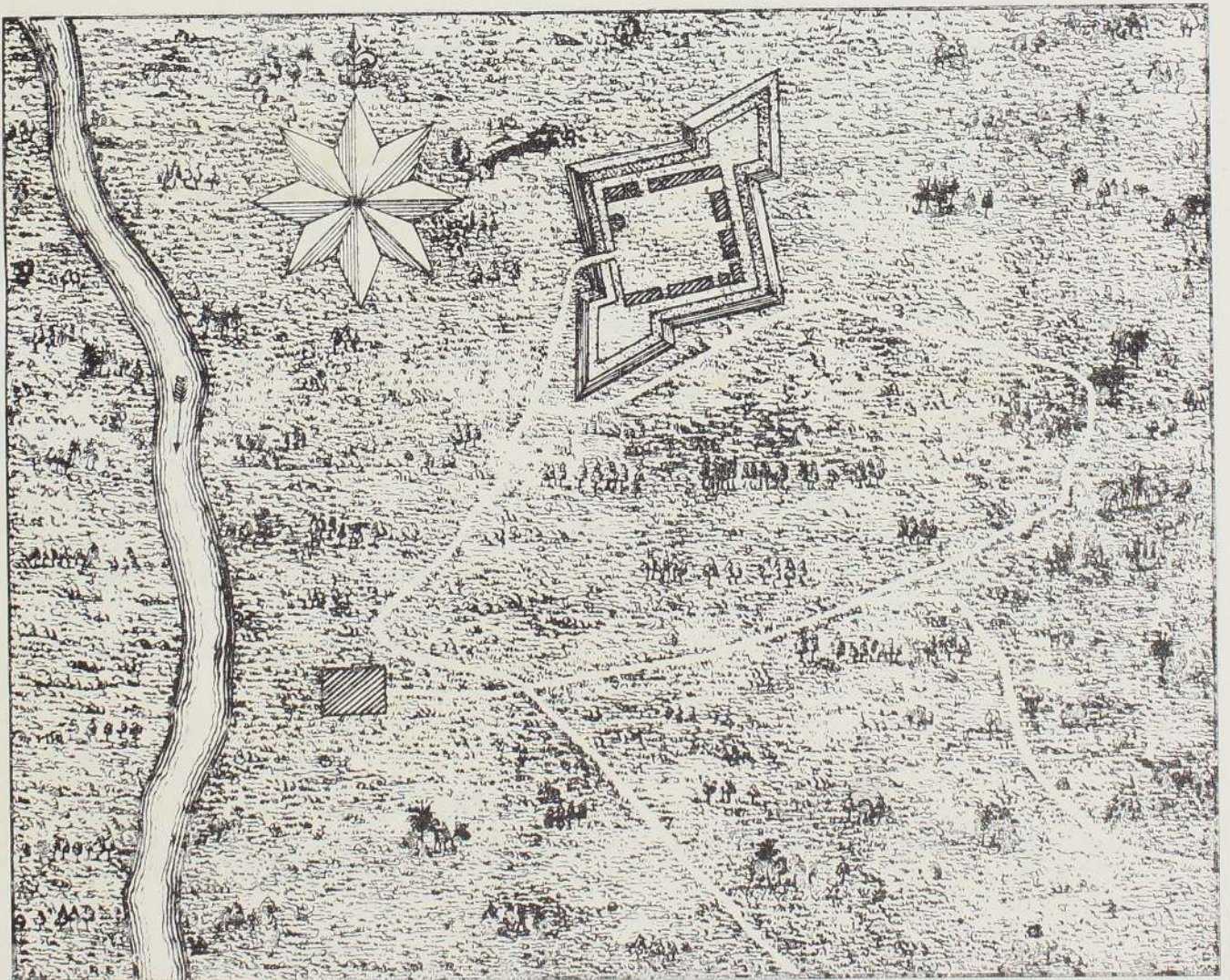
Christopher Schweitzer, a soldier in the Dutch Company, served here for a short while soon after the Fort was built, and has left a succinct account of it.** "The Fort is about four hundred paces in circuit. It is built four square, with four Bastions called Rycloff, Louisa, Colombo and Gale, each

*Ceylon Govt. Sessional Paper XIX of 1892 Bell's report, Kegalle District. Orientalist Vol. II p. 33 - 37. White's paper on Sitawaka, and its vicinity.

**A relation of a voyage to and through the East Indies, from the year 1675 to 1688". Trans : Ceylon Literary Register Vol. IV. p. 132. 1889.



Gate-way built by the British (1817) when they converted the Dutch outpost at Ruwanwella into a Fort.



Katuwana Fort, built circa 1697. This Fort, situated in rugged forest covered foothills, guarded the approaches to Matara and Tangalle from the Sabaragamuwa frontiers.

of these bastions had two pieces of large cannon. In the middle of this place is a large square Bulwark : Under this are kept the Provisions as Rice, Flesh, Salt and brandy ; and the Ammunitions of War, Powder, Granadoes and Balls. Over that was the Guard Room where all the Men lay, at each corner of which were five small Pieces of Cannon. Half the Men might have leave to be out of the fort in the day time, but at night they were to be in, every man, upon pain of Death. Every night the names were call'd over and Prayers read, and Sunday night we had a Sermon preached in the Guard-Chamber. Here is also a Company of Amboineses continually kept in the Dutch Service '.

Explaining the *raison d'être* of the fort, Schweitzer says : “ it is design'd to resist the King of Candi . . . this fort besides, serves for a Guard upon the precious stones, as Rubies, Emeralds, the Topaz, and Azure Stones, that lie in and upon the Ground. They are sometimes wash't into the rivers by the great Rain and water Floods.*

When Hanwella Fort was remodelled and strengthened by the Dutch about 1685, Sitawaka was abandoned to the King of Kandy. Hence it was one of the earliest Dutch forts to fall to ruin. There are to this day traces of stone steps leading from the river to the fort, and not long ago the outlines of the structure could also be traced if one searched in the undergrowth and jungle which buried what remained of it. The four corners bastion were lichen bound masses of cabook,** the well, sunk within the walls of the fort, was when last seen by me a yawning pit. It might possibly have caved in by now.

Ruwanwella : Yet another Dutch outpost which was sited to afford succour to troops who into danger or difficulty on the often hostile road to Kandy was a “ palisaded encampment ” erected in 1665 at Ruwanwella. Albrecht Herport*** refers to it as “ a fort fortified outside with piles and inside with an earth wall.” The same writer says : “ it was strongly garrisoned under the pretext that (it) was to be used by the King in case of need . . . these garrisons were relieved every three months from Colombo ”. This post was of high importance since it was positioned at the furthest point inland, and within the Kandyan Dominion, to which water communication from Colombo was possible, using the “ Kelani ” river.

*Schweitzer loc Cit. p. 139 .

**Laterite a produce of weathered gneiss.

***Travels in East Indies : He was a Bernese who served under the Dutch from 1659 — 1668. Literary Register Vol. I p. 382 et seq.

It was here that the Dutch embassies were met by the Kandyan Chiefs — sometimes to receive presents intended for the king* at others, to escort, the Ambassadors to the capital city. Howbeit, there seems little doubt that Ruvanwella must have proved a very difficult position to hold. It was abandoned within a few years of its establishment.

The British, in 1817, erected a strong fort with two bastions on the site of the abandoned Dutch “palisaded encampment” facing the Kelani Ganga, and garrisoned it with “five officers and one hundred and sixteen men”. After the subjugation of the interior it was abandoned as a military post about 1837.

A tall gateway, the single entrance to the fort, which bears the date 1817, and the initials of Sir Robert Brownrigg the Governor and Commander-in-chief of the Forces, is still there, and calls to mind the great part Ruvanwella played in the wars of the past. Around the site of the old fort, there has grown an extensive bazaar. The quarters of the Officer Commanding the Fort was converted to a Rest-house for travellers, but its erstwhile “restfulness” had departed with the many signs of busy, throbbing life around it.

Anguruwatota : marked on old Dutch maps by a “flag” to indicate that it was a fortified post, stands on the water-way called the Kalu ganga, which flows into the sea by the fort at Kalutara. The post was 10 miles inland and important in the sense that it controlled the entire navigable section of the river down which valuable timber was floated from rich forests in the interior. The Hollander called the place *Anguratota*, and erected there “a strong stockade and garrisoned it with 140 men, one company of Bandanese and 400 lascarins from the district of Galle”.

This was how Ribeiro described the post in early times — before Kalutara had been finally occupied by the Dutch, and when the merciless Portuguese soldier Gasper Figueira was making every endeavour to keep the Hollanders south of the Bentota Ganga. Howbeit, when Figueira marched on Anguruwatota, “he found the enemy strongly entrenched with such defences as redoubts, flanks and a moat which protected the fortified post”.

From all accounts the stockade must have stood on a site near the modern bridge which spans the river at Anguruwatota. There is no trace whatever of it on the ground, nor can any oral information about it be elicited.

*“An ambassador by name Hendrik Trak brought a valuable present too be sent to the King... on behalf of the Dutch Company. (It) consisted of some pieces of scarlet cloth, silk and cotton stuff, a boxful of Venetian mirrors, a cask of Spanish wine and all sorts of valuable oils of spices and three fine horses”. *Loc. Cit.*

Katuwana : This fort stood on the frontier at the southern end of Galle Commandement, where rugged foot-hills in dense forest, separated the Hollander's domain from the southern region of the King's territory where trouble always brewed and plots to raid the low-country frequently fermented. *Katuwana* stood on the mountain-pass which was the gateway to the salt-producing country, and the rich Matara Dissavany.

Katuwana (Cattoene), placed in command of an Ensign, was built some time prior to 1697. The traveller and historian Johann Wolffgang Heydt visited this stronghold in 1734, and he wrote :* " It has a strong and high wall, of good stone, about 16 shoes high, a rampart passage of 11 to 12 shoes. Although it has no more than two bastions, danger could be spotted. The fort has only one door overlooking the ammunition house, which is a high structure, and so is the watch to the left, but the other buildings being low are not visible from outside. The whole fort is built to accommodate only twelve cannon, and since it is not provided with a garrison as it should (only about 40 men being attached to it), a considerable opposition or resistance could be offered by the enemy if they were only provided with sufficient lead, powder, and provisions ".

" It has one wall and because of its size does not require any more. Looking it over, at its broadest diagonal line it is not more than twenty one and a half rods. Just by the wall to the right is the home of the Commander who is also Sergeant and alongside the length of the court-yard is the Pack House, in which all sorts of supplies are kept. At the end is the Ammunition House. The last is two storeys high. The upper section for living quarters. Next to it is the Constable's Lodge and on this stands the soldiers watch. On this they have built a turret of quite sufficient walking space and large enough for a number of soldiers. At the end of this is the Surgery Lodge which is well furnished. The building has three exposures on the Courtyard, which is a four-cornered open space. To the left of the entrance is a well and at both sides stairs to reach the wall ".

" About twenty-two rods from the fort there runs a nice river from North to East. It is about thirty to thirty-six shoes wide and about the same distance away stands the house of the Dissava of Matara, who lives in it when he comes here. By this house is a road going to Bentota and to Maragatta."

With these impressions we drift slowly on to a day early in the year 1761 when a large Sinhala-Kandyan force marched against *Katuwana*. They erected a battery and mounted four guns which they fired continuously for two days at the fortress. They were treated in turn to grapeshot and bullet

*Geographical and Topographical Views of Africa and East India and Report about the Holland-East India Companies in Africa and Asia ". (1767).

from within the walls. But the odds were all against the small band of defenders — on the 3rd day, a white flag fluttered on the battlements. An envoy was sent to the gate of the fort and he returned with the report that the Hollanders were ready to stop fighting and to surrender the fort on the condition that no harm should befall them.

Accepting these terms, the Commander of the attacking force approached the gate. Finding it wide open he and some followers entered the fortress. The defenders were led away to the jungles and never heard of again. Six Javanese, a piper and a drummer were carried away as captives. The buildings within the fortress were then destroyed, anything of use including the artillery were removed. After a day rest, the victorious force dispersed*.

The curtain thus rang down on the little part this fortress played in forgotten drama, the ever-encroaching and relentless jungle has crept in to mantle it. A few years ago, finding myself in the village of Katuwana—off the bank of the Urubokka Oya, I hailed a villager who was revelling in its cool waters enjoying his evening bath. I enquired if he knew where the old fort stood. “There ” said he, pointing to a hill-top on the opposite bank. “But there is nothing there”, I remarked, “only jungle ! “A . . . h ! you must go inside and find it ” was his laconic reply.

I went. After a scramble through a barrier of prickly undergrowth we came upon a crumbling rampart wall, proceeding along its base we came to a gaping breach. It was the gate-way of old. On all sides there rose the picture of crumbling ruin, of desolation. The space within the walls was occupied by a thick growth of jungle. Giant trees rose from tops of the ramparts. Their mighty roots had penetrated the crevices between the built up rocks and held them poised in iron grip but in fantastic disorder. Traces of the foundation and flooring of the buildings within the fort were all that remained and — the well. I peeped down and looked at a dry bottom.

Scrambling to the top of the ramparts, I was able to catch a glimpse of the surrounding country from an opening between the trunks of the trees. The massive mountains frowned down — they had possibly changed little. A setting sun threw into patterns of light and shade the deep ravines and stony defiles, the naked precipitous sides and the narrow path which wound its way up, and was lost in the country beyond where in bygone days trouble brewed and mysterious plots fermented.

*Old Matara and the Rebellion. 1760 — 61. Reiners. Jnl. Dutch Burgher Union Vol. XV No. 1, 2, 8, 1925.

II — Town Planning and Architectural Norms

At the time of its surrender to the Dutch in 1656, the Portuguese Colombo was a spacious city of churches and convents, monasteries and hospitals together with stately dwellings for the conquistadors, their wives and families and houses of lesser degree for the Porto-Sinhalese — the offsprings of mixed marriages which conditions at the time vigorously encouraged. The eastern portion of the city had endured such heavy cannonade during the seven months of siege, that nearly every building was left in ruin. Consequently, the city the Dutch subsequently established at Colombo — but for a few isolated Portuguese houses, was on a Colonial Dutch pattern.

In the other maritime stations where the Portuguese had established forts and fortresses very little had been done in the way of town-planning. The townships which sprang up at every other station of importance in the maritime zone occupied by the United Dutch East India Company were therefore also developed basically on a style their engineers had known in their homeland. In both instances there were many modifications to suit equatorial conditions. Except in Galle and Matara the residential areas were sited just outside the walls of the fort.

It is to be expected that initially the talent of the engineer was claimed for the important work of re-fortifying the strongholds captured from the Portuguese. Secondary to this urgency a regular civil administration was set up under the Sub-Inspector of Public Works whose appointment as Special Surveyor and Engineer was necessary for the planning of their towns.* The executive was composed of engineers, and quantity or building surveyors. The latter, who officiated in similar capacity to a Clerk of Works, was termed *Rooimeester*.

Passing mention was made earlier that there was nothing characteristically Dutch about the forts and fortresses described in the earlier chapter. They were built on a style in vogue in the European military schools during the latter end of the 17th century. Consequently, it was in their domestic architecture, and in the lay-out of their towns, that the Colonial Dutch Engineer seems to have been afforded most scope for introducing distinctive ideas.

These distinctive norms which contributed to a Colonial Dutch pattern were seen in their street-grid systems which provided for regular avenues and cross streets, which are a characteristic feature of all the towns they planned. They thereafter appeared in a variety of forms in the architecture of the residential houses facing these street-grids in their public buildings, and in their churches.

*Instructions from the Governor General and Council of India to the Governor of Ceylon (1656—1665)

In contradistinction to the "Castle" or Fort, which took the Dutch thirty years to raise on the western half of the Portuguese city of Colombo, they called the eastern half outside the walls the *Oude-Stad*, or "old town".

Incidentally, the *Oude Stad* came in early British times to be called "Pettah" an Anglo-Indian term derived from the Tamil expression *Pettai*, which was used in India to describe the extra mural suburb of a fortress. The nomenclature has survived in Colombo, and the distinction has also been perpetuated in Jaffna, Negombo, Kalutara etc., where the residential area stood outside the Fort.

By the year 1705 (when Colombo had been nearly half a century in the possession of the Dutch, and had fallen into pattern) great improvements had been made in the lay-out of both the Fort and the Pettah.

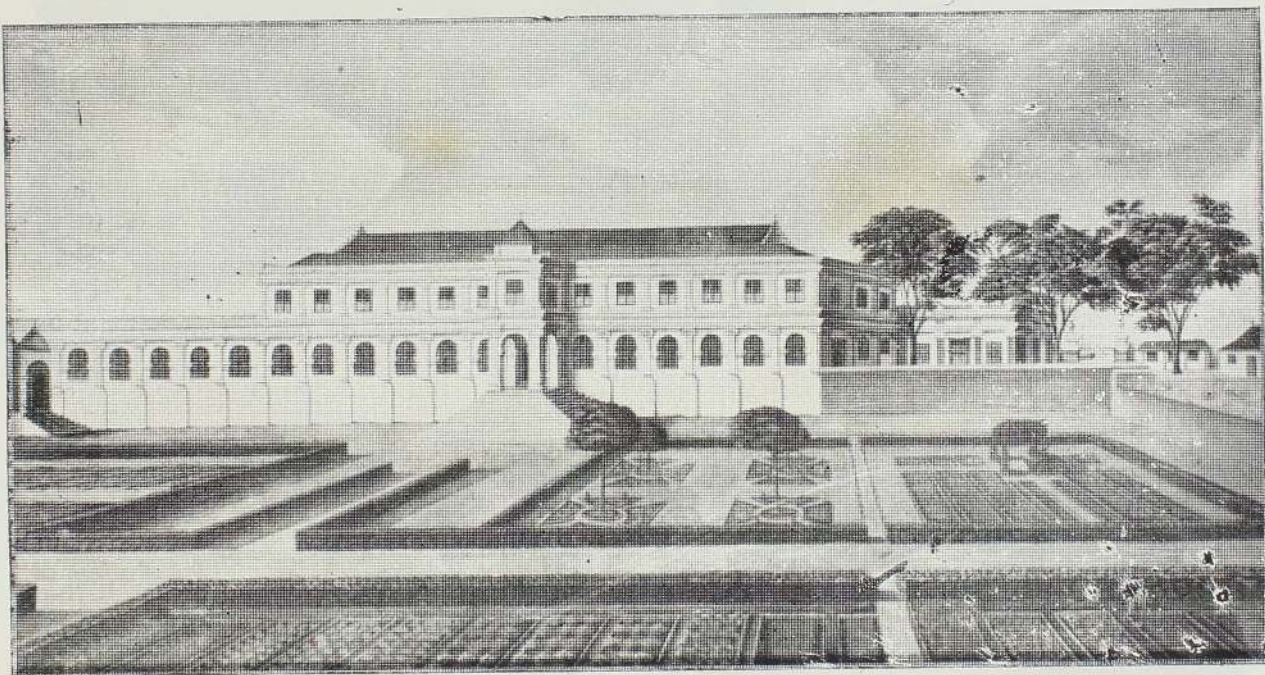
Main Street — as we call it today (measuring 60 feet across) had been laid in its present setting and the straight and narrow cross streets had on each side of them long rows of one-storeyed houses with roofs slanting from a central ridge and pitched low over a deep verandah or *stoep*, supported by slim wooden or rounded brick pillars. Along the outer edge of the verandah of each house a wooden railing separated it from the street which lay a few feet below the *stoep*. In perspective, if you looked down a street what you would have seen were two parallel rows of pillars diminishing in the distance.

By 1757, a British naval officer Surgeon Ives, describing Colombo, wrote: "The Streets are very wide with a beautiful Row of Trees on each Side, and between them and the Houses is very smooth and regular pavement. Between the Trees is a very fine Verdure . . . and ye whole so elegantly dispos'd . . . that we could not help admiring ye Wisdom and Genius of ye Dutch.*"

In British times, with the removal of the grass-grown ramparts of Colombo's Castle about 1869 — 1872, the Dutch houses and villas the tree-shaded streets, and the lush verdure, yielded to a mighty flood of industrial enterprise, to stores, shops, and dingy dens where humanity massed to make a work-a-day world. Subsequent demolition, or modernisation of the Dutch buildings — both in the fort of Colombo and the Pettah have left, but for very few exceptions, little architectural evidence of a distinctly Dutch character, — to assist in recreating the scenes of that period.

Nevertheless, there remained bits and pieces hidden by later buildings grafted on the old, but the demolition effected during the last world war to provide fire-gaps in the congested part of the city by widening the streets in the Pettah, has claimed much of even these scraps as prey.

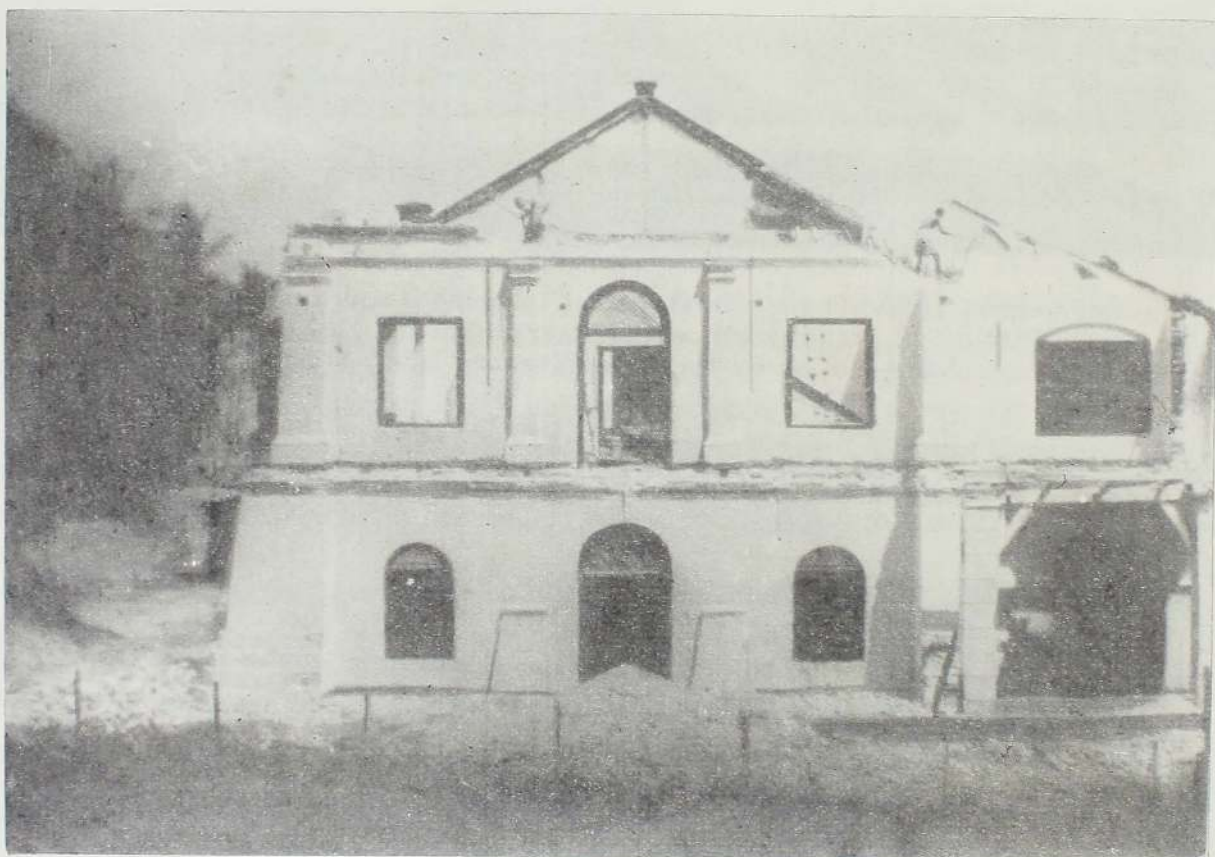
*Ceylon literary Register (3rd series) Vol. I. 1931. pp. 44, 45, Dr. Andreas Nell.



The Government House of the Dutch period. Facing it are the famous workers gardens. Part of the building is now St. Peter's Church.
From a water-colour painting (in the Rijks Museum) by C. Steiger.



“ Dutch House ” — an 18th Century building which had many “ modern ” additions to it, before demolition.



A cross section which in the process of demolition.

The most massive yet comely and elegant building of the Colonial Dutch style erected in Colombo fronted the sea on the north side of the Castle-Fort. It was of two storeys, with two additional wings of one floor. An arched portico of cubicle form, open on all sides with flat-roof, projected from the centre of the building and led into a large and lofty vestibule. On each side of this vestibule there were two spacious rooms occupying the full length and half the breadth of the principal building. Parallel to the vestibule and two rooms, a spacious hall 300 feet in length extended from one end of the building to the other.

The upper storey was equally spacious and had several windows which afforded light and air. Laid out below the southern face of the building a sunken garden, elegantly landscaped and pleasing to the eye, was approached from the building by a flight of steps. The whole comprised "The Government House", and was the residence of the Governor and Director of coastal Ceylon. Rows of buildings extended to two sides of it at right angles to the House. These were various offices of the Government.

In 1804, by demolishing the upper storey and grafting on to the ground fabric which was left, additions in a quasi-classical style — essentially British, "The Government House" of the Dutch period was converted to a church for the use of the British garrison. It was named St. Peter's when consecrated by the Bishop of Calcutta (Dr. Thomas Fanshaw Middleton) in 1821.

The beautiful sunken garden originally laid out with cascades of flowing water and fountains, was soon rendered a morass through want of attention. It was subsequently drained and filled up. Despite all these changes rung in by passing decades one is yet permitted to capture the pageant of its past history by passing into the side verandah of St. Peter's Church. Here one may take measure of the thick walls, the wide doors and windows and the large lofty hall that was, where Council Meetings were held in the past, where Ambassadors from the Kings of Kandy handed over gifts and were entertained. The sunken garden extended from the verandah to where the New Secretariat Building raises its tiers of floors in a skyward surge.

There is no better example extant of the spacious old houses which the Dutch built in the Pettah of Colombo than a building in Prince Street used both as a Post Office and store, till 1974 when a small part of the building collapsed and the Post Office shifted. Despite the changes which have been subsequently effected and its shabby weather-worn face, the building has lost nothing in stateliness or dignity, and is typical of the architecture of the period. This building is now being restored to House the Dutch period Museum.

The high solid and substantial pillars of brick and plaster supporting the facade of the structure give it a character which can hardly fail to make an

impression on the eye. They even today dispel the drabness of its surroundings. Rising from the edge of the stoep the pillars appear to have once been interposed by a low wooden railing and gate which screened off the open verandah from "Prins Straat" — so called by the Dutch as a compliment to the son of Raja Sinha.

This railing has made way for a barricade of welded wire mesh in order to keep out the beggars and gamins who swarm today around this modern place of business.

Stepping onto the stoep from the road, one is confronted by the old-patterned door-way of which a very few similar types are to be found in Galle and Jaffna, but not so far as my knowledge goes, anywhere else in Colombo. Set as a lintel over this main door, there is a dressed slab of rock which bears an inscription within an ornamental border. It reads as follows, and also indicates the year in which the building was erected :

PSALM CXXVII
NISI JEHOVA AEDIFICET DOMUM
FRUSTRA
LABORANT AEDIFICATORES
Ao MDCCLXXX

(Except the Lord build the House they labour in vain that build)
1780

This historical landmark served as the *Weeskamer* or Orphans Chamber, and was under the control of the Diaconate of the Church. It was maintained partly out of the public funds and partly out of the voluntary donations. Apart from the Dutch "*weeskamer*" the government had also established native "*weeskamers*" or "*boedelkamers*" which were entrusted with the care of the goods of the children of the islanders. These Boards were established in Colombo, Jaffna, Galle, Matara, Negombo, Trincomalee, etc. Although these Boards have left no records, various references to their management are found in the council minutes. Apparently all communities were represented on the Boards of management*

Another monument which should have remained a valuable link with the country's past in Colombo, was a house of 18th century period type — which today would have been reckoned over 200 years old. When originally built, it rose in isolated grandeur over "the dreary cinnamon plantations which once lay spread over Maradana and Borella".

Little is known of the early story of the building, except that it was reputed to have been "the hunting-lodge of a one-time Dutch Governor".

*Catalogue of the Archives of the Dutch Central Government of Coastal Ceylon — p. 268 et. seq. M. W. Jurriaanse.



A street scene in Jaffna indicating the changes since affected, on the frontage of houses.



An old street in the Fort of Galle with its double chain of masonry pillars.



Showing the same street a decade later with the graft of changes and additions.

In early British times it had become the property of a wealthy Colonial Dutch family, and later passed to the ownership of T. W. Collette—the pioneer of motor transport in Ceylon.

There came the time when its characteristic gable, its doorways and windows, its pillared verandah, its spiral wooden staircase, and its other Colonial Dutch features of architecture, earned for it the name : “ Dutch House ”.

In the past decade, the fatal effects of haphazard commercialization of property ruthlessly robbed Colombo of this last typical 18th century citizen's home — which stood off Kanatte Road (Senanayake Mawata). “ Dutch House ” knows its place no longer, having surrendered its dignified design and privacy to a nest of drab garage hangars and workshops. Thus has been lost a link with history which authorities and societies in other countries are much alive to the necessity of preserving.

Off Colombo's old-time water-front one saw even in recent times, several *pakhuisen*, “ or warehouses ”, of quaint, squat pattern with cupola-like rounded domes. These buildings of a rather unique type, also originated with the Hollander, who used them for storing the varieties of cured meat and supplies of butter, cheese and other food-stuffs sent out from the homeland in ships which arrived in the months from November to early May. They were also used to store the cinnamon delivered in from circumjacent tracts and the other spices, which were shipped to Amsterdam, the timber and arrack for Batavia, the arecanut and black sugar or “ jaggery ”, for ports on the Malabar and Coromandel coasts.

The modernization of the Port in the middle decades of the present century saw the demolition of many of these “ brick-barrel roofed ” buildings of distinctly Dutch appearance, but two of them have been left *in situ*, out of keeping with the other buildings which surround them.

Fortunately, the distinctive character which the Dutch engineer bestowed on some of the other coastal stations, has not altered very much — especially so in Jaffna, Matara and Galle. Their picturesque co-operative legacies which good sense has left untouched or unscreened by any graft — though instances are not wanting to show that some have suffered from vandalism, still exhale an atmosphere which is pleasantly stimulating of the past. Howbeit, to get into tune, with this atmosphere, one cannot necessarily use a yard-stick and judge on standards which have been created by our modern surroundings.

In the walled seclusion of Galle, even some of the streets still bear Dutch names recognisable though garbled. There is a “ Leyn-Bann ” (Lijnbaan, meaning “ ropewalk ”) to indicate where the heavy coir cables for mooring

ships were made. Great and Small Moderabaay streets (Modderbaay: "mud bay", the spelling is still *baay* indicating its origin) are two others, and Light house street is still remembered by many of the older inhabitants by its old name *Zeeburg Straat*.

In Colombo too, Dutch nomenclature of places survive in Korteboam, Bloemendaal Hulftsdorp and Wolvendaal. Maliban Street appears to have been named after Maliebaan in the Hague or Utrecht, and Dam Street, after Dam Straat in Haarlem.

Until recently, Dutch names were also preserved in the names of old houses at Galle. One of them was "Oropuwa" — probably derived from *Orfas*: meaning "orphan girl". The house is traditionally said to have been a Dutch orphanage. Most of the Dutch dwelling houses which exist to this day are of the solid and comfortable type associated with all Dutch architecture in Ceylon and are provided with lofty roofs, massive walls and spacious and well-ventilated rooms. The deep outer verandahas, which to a large extent constituted the living rooms had been so constructed to secure both coolness and shade.

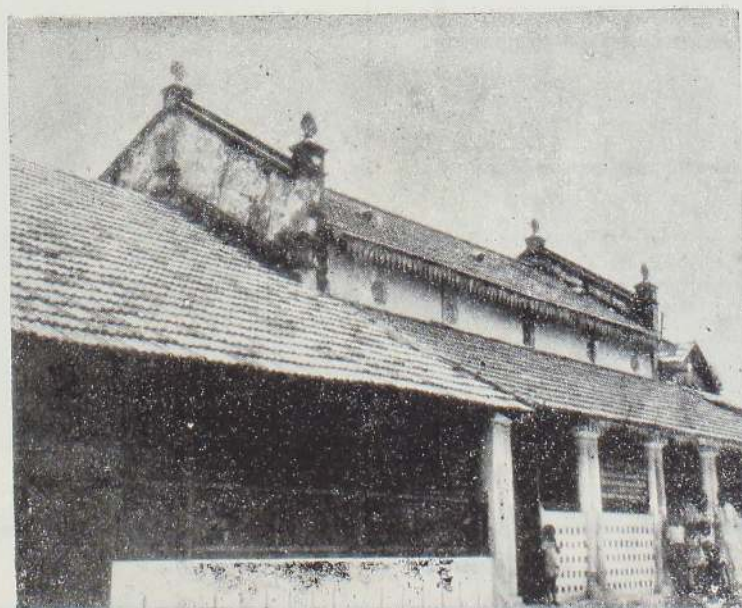
I have already referred to the *stoep*, the railings and the perspective which showed two long rows of pillars flanking every street. The two illustrations of Lighthouse Street in Galle, actualize both descriptions and the changes. What perhaps were originally wooden pillars have made way for plaster and brick, at the expense of the picturesque, and the disfigurement which has taken place is indicated by the broken line of street caused by new two-storey structures being substituted for the overhanging eaves.

In these one-time Dutch houses, there may be seen to this day a vast variety of fanlights and ornamental lintels over windows and doors which catch the eye. It was in this manner the Dutch craftsmen dispelled the drab sameness of their domestic street architecture. But the dominating feature which they used to achieve this, in nearly all large buildings they erected in Ceylon, was by the gable. Evolved from an inspiration of the Renaissance, it spread to Holland, and was reproduced in their settlements abroad in every possible variation. This feature, which doubtless grew out of the architect's desire to end a building in a comely manner, was seized on by the Dutch Colonial Engineer as the one means by which he could diversify the stern and solid style of Dutch architecture.

Of these legacies of curve and scroll-work and moulding, we have the best examples extant in the stately churches of quasi-classical style of the period which replaced an earlier squat meeting-house model erected in every station of any importance. Many of these durable edifices survive to proclaim the genius of the Dutch builders, and will be described later.

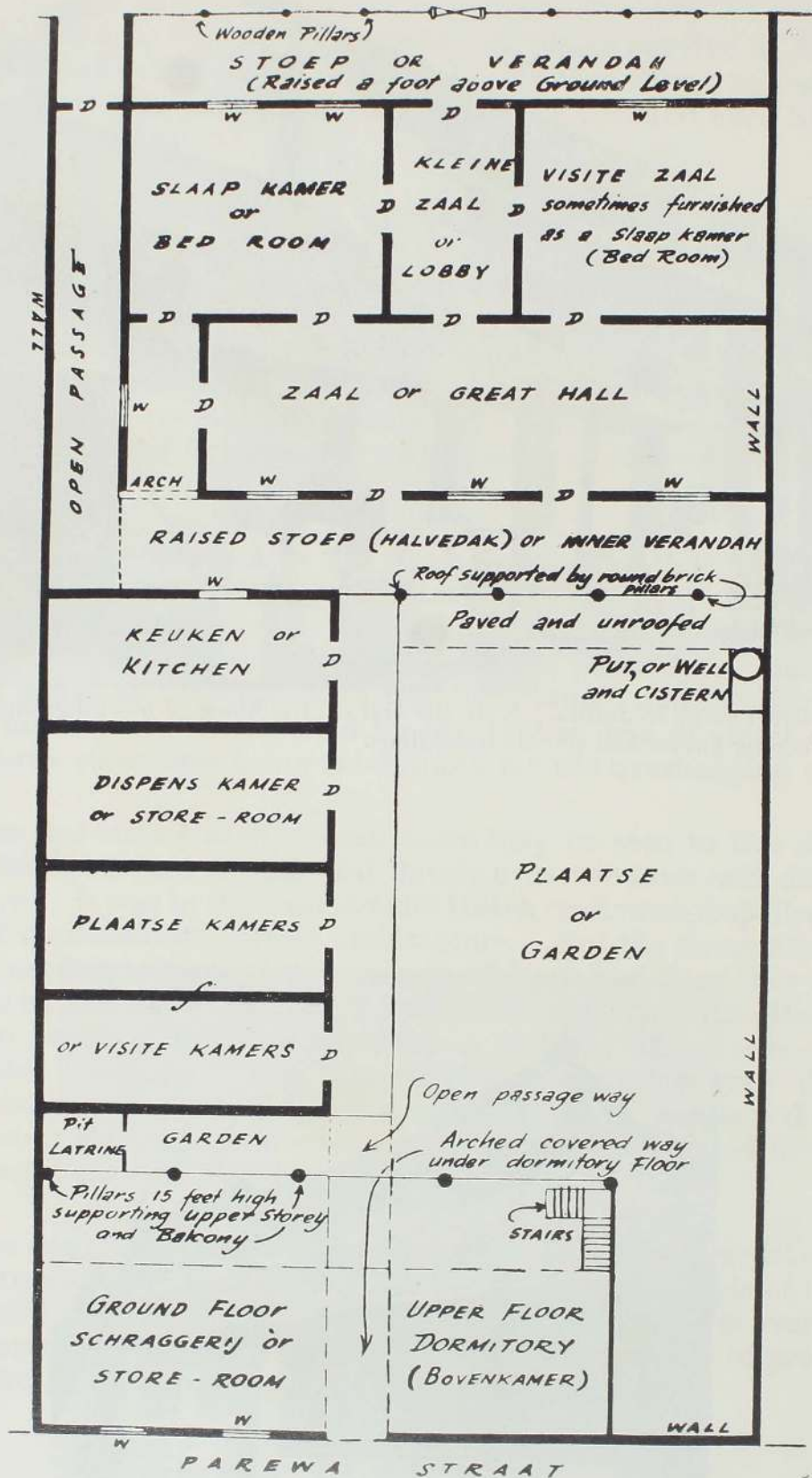


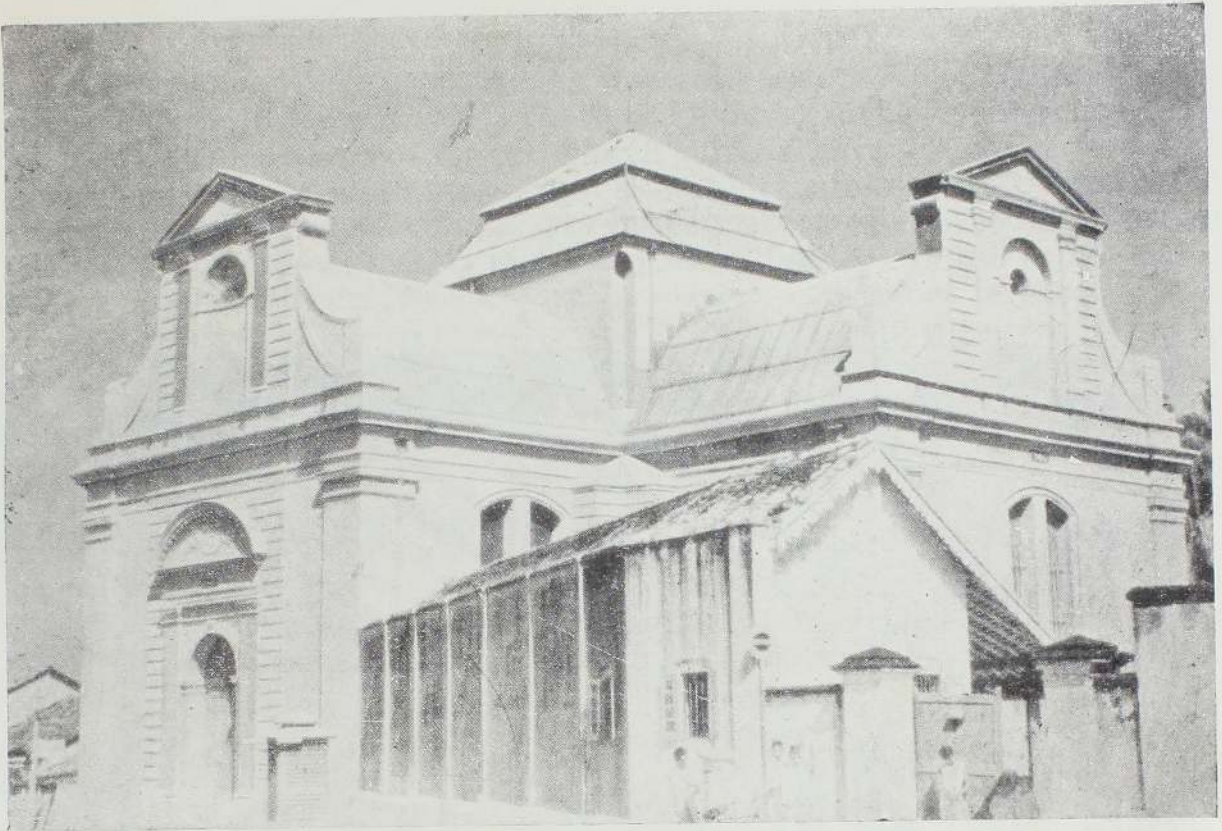
An old street scene in Jaffna. Note the end of the block of buildings finished off with sweeping gables and plastic mouldings.



PLAN of a 17th Century Dutch House in the Fort of Galle

ZEEBERG STRAAT (now Light House St)

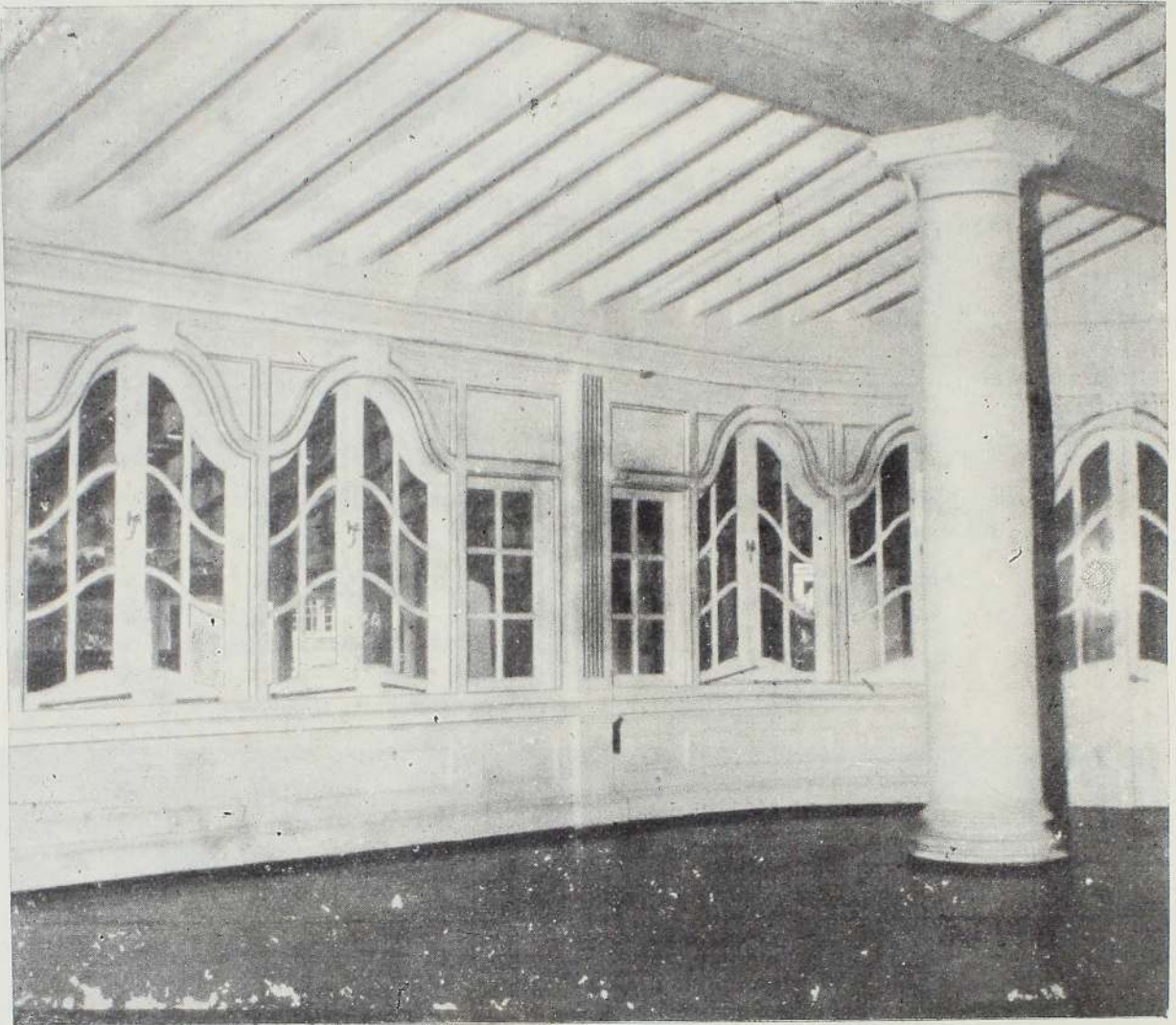




This ensemble of gables is to be seen at Wolvendaal. The small building in the foreground is a later intrusion.



A typical ornamental fanlight on the main doorway of a Dutch house in Galle. That the Colonial Dutch loved wavy lines is abundantly illustrated by the architectural evidence available in the principal towns.



Distinctively Dutch decorative building norms in an early 19th century building in Colombo. This building was demolished recently to make way for the Hotel Lanka Oberoi.

Since there are no examples extant of country houses standing on extensive grounds (except Dutch House in Colombo which has been demolished) for the most part except for the church gables, the craftsmen had to confine themselves in Ceylon to the end gables of blocks of houses of a street. This form of gable which was common in Dutch stations was in the form illustrated in the old picture of streets in the Pettah of Jaffna. It will be noticed that the slope is formed of scroll-work in plaster, sometimes in the shape of a "double-bracket", used in writing which is crowned at the apex, and capped at each end, with a vase, or a leaf, or a ball turned out in plaster. It may be laid down that whenever the Dutch built a gable they endeavoured to ornament it in some way with plaster mouldings and finials.

Suppose we imagine ourselves taking a peep into one of these Dutch houses in Pettah of Colombo, or Jaffna, or in Galle or Matara. The Portuguese, being the first builders of the modern house in Ceylon, contributed to the Sinhalese language most of the words used in connection with the buildings of today. In our tour of the old Dutch house, since it merits interest, the Dutch words which enrich that vocabulary are linked up.

Opening onto the *stoep* (Sinhalese "Istoppuva") there is a wide, massive framed door, with heavily panelled shutters, and on either side of it equally massive lofty windows, nearly four feet from the floor level. Passing through the door one enters a lobby or passage called the *Kleine Zaal*, wide enough for two rows of chairs to be ranged against the wall on either side. Two doors lead from this lobby into bed-rooms on either side — the Dutch called them *kamers* (Sinhalese : "Kamaraya").

From the lobby we pass into the *zaal* (Sinhalese : Sale") or great hall which is wide and lofty room stretching across nearly the whole breadth of the building. It is really the eating-room of the family — its principal furniture, a long dining table, of four square pieces, each standing on a single centre pedestal, and around it high-backed chairs.

Over the *zaal* are stretched several beams (Dutch *Balk*, Sinhalese "Balke") supporting planks which form a ceiling. This also serves as a solder or "attic" for storing lumber — hence the Sinhalese word "Soldera", (a floor above).

Leaving the *zaal* we step out into the back-verandah of the house or the *Halve dak*, so called because only half of the paved space is covered by the roof. From the *Halve dak* we step down into a square or oblong bit of compound which is called the *plaats* paved like the rest of the house with large square bricks set in lime-mortar.

On festive occasions liquid lime and water is laid on with a brush on the mortar between the brick — (which the Dutch termed *kustur*, and the Sinhalese "Kusturer"). On two sides of this are the side rooms, out-houses, the

offices of the house, and the kitchen. In the plaats is also the well, with its masonry coping and cross-beam and pulley. At the end of the plaats is a strip of garden where stands the water-closet (Dutch Kak-huis, Sinhalese, "Kakkussiya") curtained off by bowers of "jasmine", "Mougrin", and "queen of the night".

The inclusion over two centuries ago of such a modern accessory as a water-borne sewage system in town-planning must be counted extraordinary. Yet, this is what the Colonial Dutch engineer did when he laid down the street lines for the settlement within the Galle Fort. The greater part of this walled town being below the level of the sea, he utilized the simple expedient of harnessing the tide at its flood to wash the sewers, and at its ebb to carry its contents away.

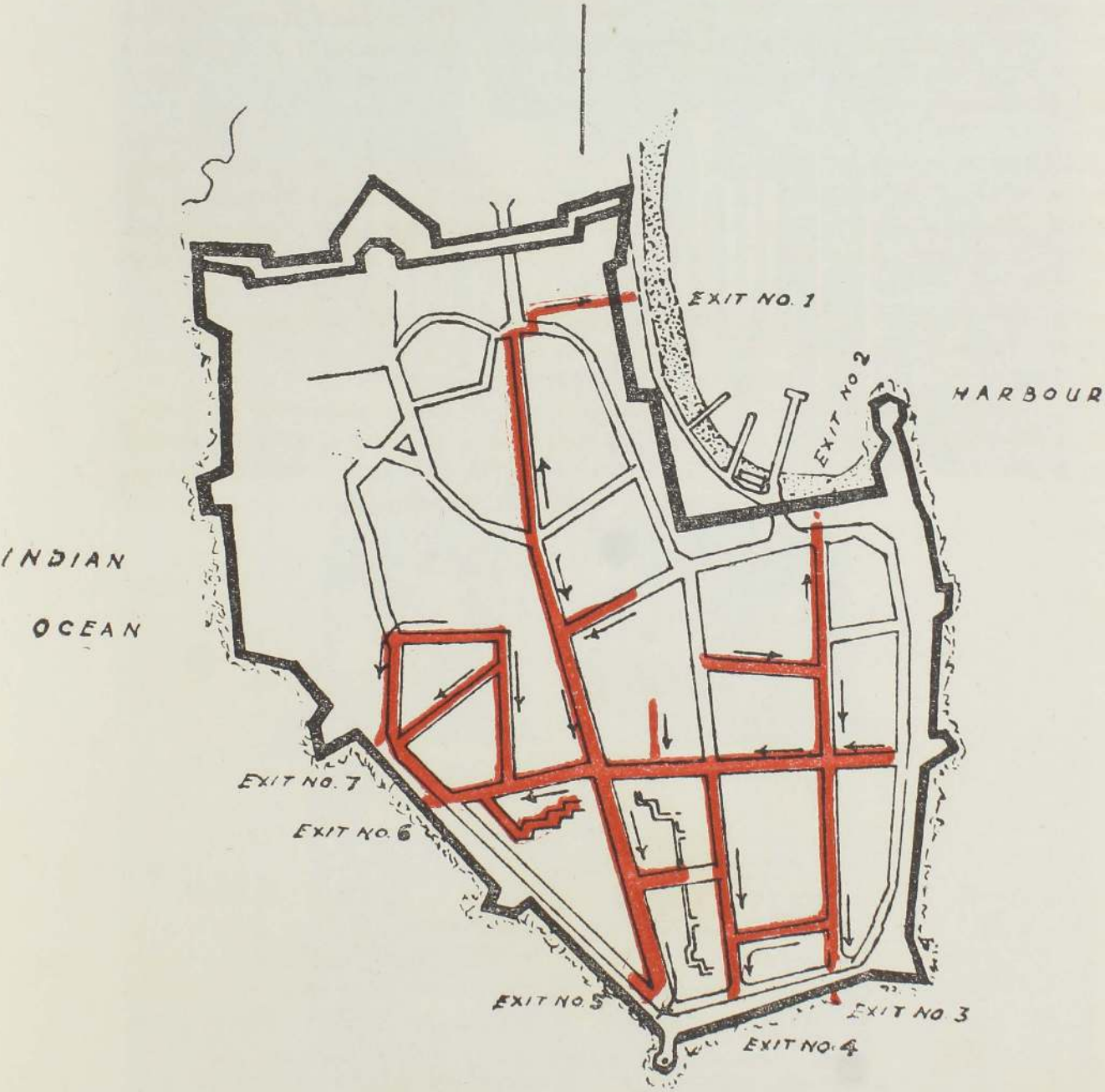
Little was known of this net of brick-lined drains in the Galle fort, approximately 6 to 12 feet below normal ground level, until an epidemic of Bubonic plague in 1922, compelled attempts to segregate and exterminate the enormous rat population in these sewers. The illustration, which attempts to show the positions of such of these old sewers as the local authorities discovered, is compiled on the distribution of manholes erected by trial and error in the circumstances referred to.

This main net with its auxiliary honey-comb of house connections, functions to this day to carry off water used for domestic purposes, despite decay. The sea has receded from some exits, but the tide continues to run in and out of others. A similar system but much more limited in its scope, is extant in the Mannar Fort.





Facsimile of the design of a seal used by the Weeskamer at Colombo, circa 1666.
(See page 90)

STREET PLAN
OF THE WALLED TOWN OF GALLE
showing
OLD DUTCH SEWAGE SYSTEM



REFERENCE

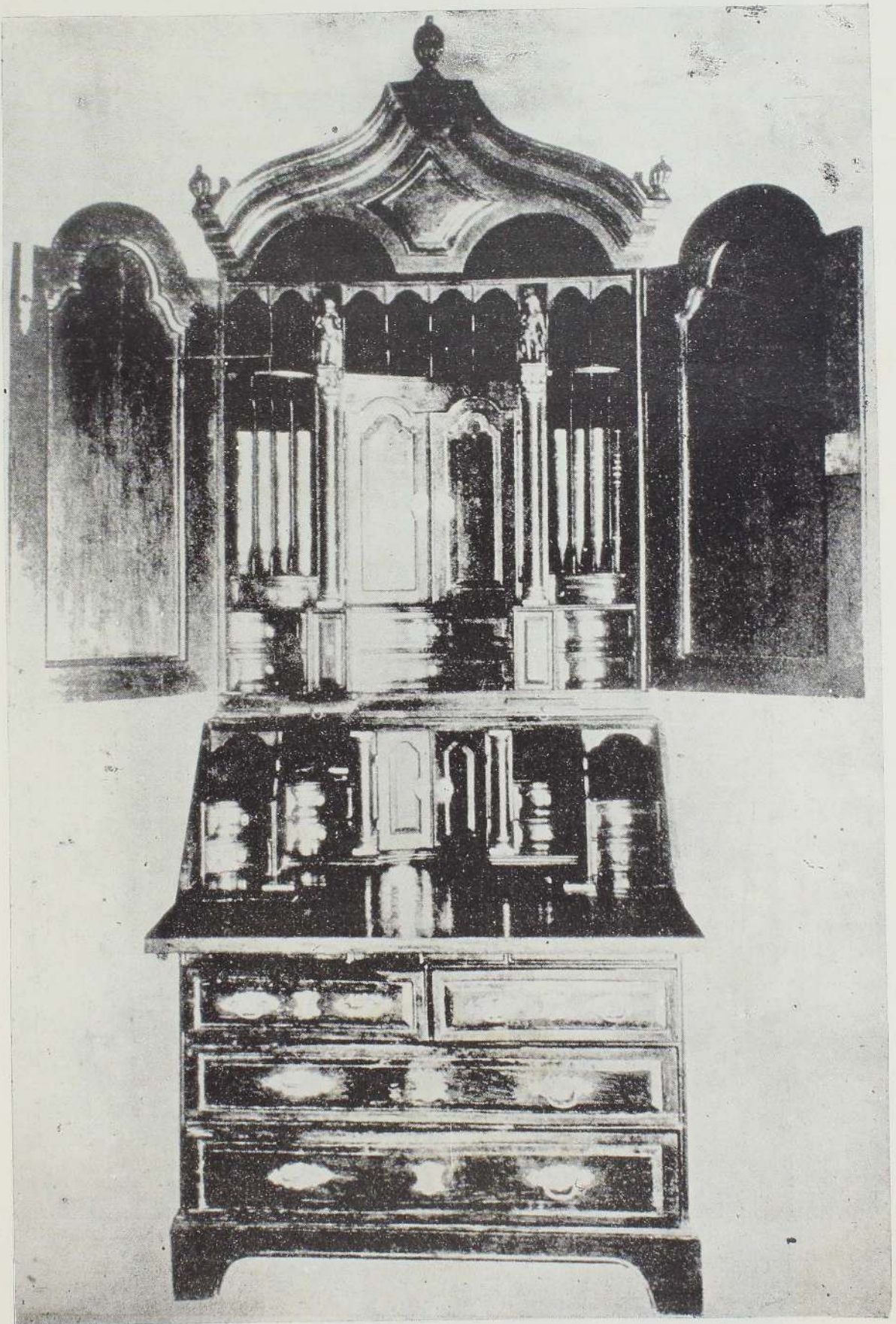
-  INDICATES SEWERS
-  INDICATES ASSUMED DIRECTIONS OF FLOW FROM SPOT HEIGHTS

OLD DUTCH SEWAGE SYSTEM

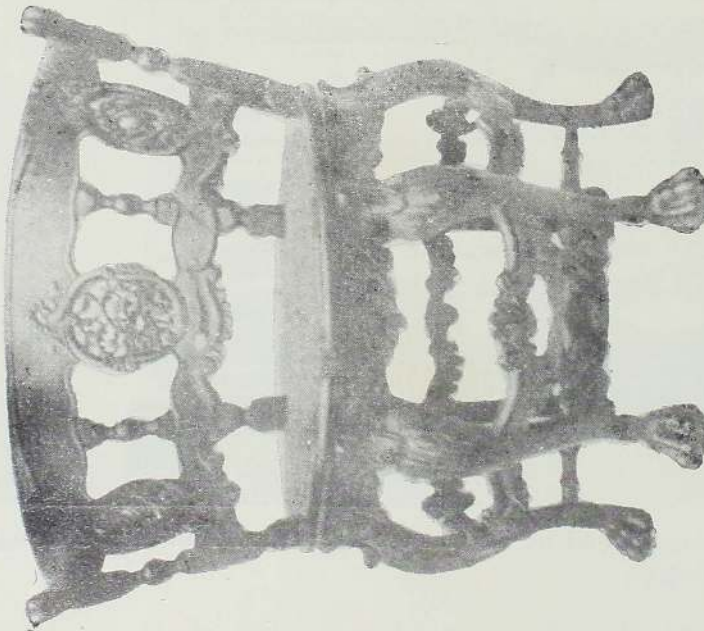
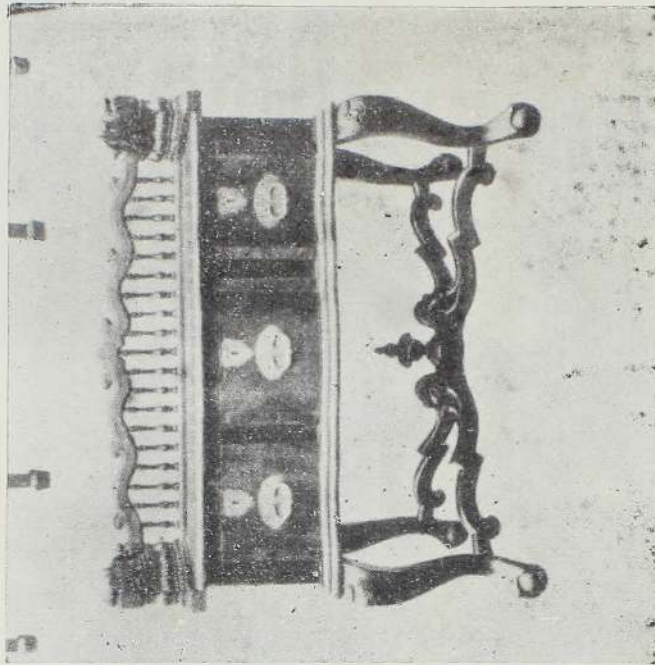
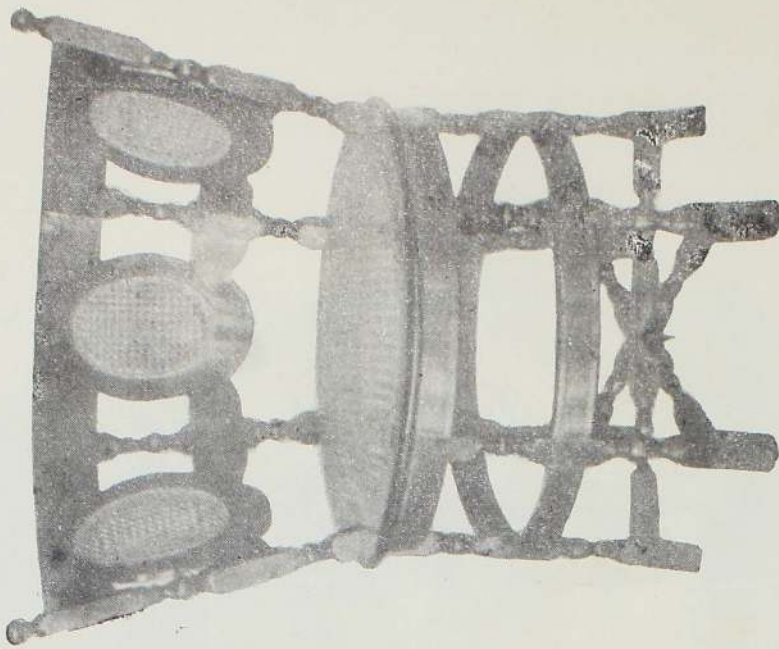
OF THE WALLER TOWN - DALLAS

STREET PLAN





The lessenaar — distinguished by its valuable wood and intricate design, is peculiarly Dutch in origin.



Burgomaster Chairs : They are distinctively of Dutch origin. The illustration on the right is an older and original model of the 17th Century, the more decorative one on the left appeared in the mid-eighteenth century.

The 18th Century sideboard in the centre has been described in the text.

III — Colonial Dutch Furniture

The intrinsic quality of the contribution made in the form of Colonial Dutch Furniture, and the distinctive styles — simple decorative and homely, which they illustrate remain to this day another interesting survival which held sway over the coastal regions of the Island in the 17th and 18th centuries. Authorities on the subject would have us understand that this period synchronized with the “Golden Age” of furniture development in Europe. It is said to have been a period of artistic activity never equalled ever before, or since, in the history of furniture.

The genius of the Dutch for transferring the atmosphere of the home-country to their colonies and settlements has been the means by which Ceylon was bequeathed a wealth of Dutch furniture modelled on styles of the period which found favour in their beloved Netherlands. We cannot be far wrong in assuming that officials of the Company would have brought out with them a few favourite pieces. These doubtless formed the models from which the furniture in the colonial homes were designed.

As to craftsmen, there were the master-carpenters who accompanied the “merchants the clerks and the soldiers and sailors, who were regularly drafted to the Company’s service.” In fact, records show that there was an Artizans Department where all the furniture was turned out in the early days. In the main the work was done by Sinhalese carpenters, inspired by Dutch designers.

Specimens of genuine Dutch colonial furniture which remain in the open market today are unhappily very few. Some fine pieces, even if rather solid, are treasured by a few private collectors. A small collection, mostly chairs, is still extant in the old Dutch churches, and the larger collection — of a miscellaneous variety is in the Colombo Museum.

Three explanations may be offered for the disappearance of this old type of furniture. The zeal of foreign collectors has no doubt eliminated some. In this same category comes the British Civil Servant and the Planter who have removed choice bits to give their homes in retirement a colonial atmosphere. Many have possibly disappeared owing to the rigorous climate, for one has to be kind to old furniture inasmuch as one should be to old people. Lastly, and possibly the most cogent reason; Dutch furniture is usually massive and immovable. They therefore take up a great deal of space which modern houses are not prepared to offer. Besides, they need much hand-polishing which nobody today has time for. Thus many a specimen of heavy articles of Dutch furniture, such as the ebony four-posted bed with tent and curtains, known as the *kooi*; the *kapstok*, or hat rack; the *rustbank* or sofa; the *comptoir* or cabinets for books, linen or clothes, and many other bits too numerous to mention which were built more with the view to strength than

luxury, found their way into junk-shops to make room for modern, streamlined elegance which was less austere and more comfortable.

One of the articles of Dutch furniture which the amateur collector yearns most to possess is the Dutch chest. The origin of this showpiece displayed in many a Ceylon bungalow even today, is interesting. It was the custom of all recruits who desired to serve the Dutch East India Company, to give their names in at the Oost-Indische Huis, in Amsterdam where their dossier was examined, their origin was investigated and the conditions of terms under which they were prepared to serve were considered. Those who were selected were given earnest-money, and a wooden box and key in which they could lock anything they wished to carry on the voyage.

The Dutch chest brought from Holland was lightly decorated, if at all, and soberly restrained with brass handles and lock-pieces. Later, those who stayed ashore made feet for their sea-chests, and for greater convenience, by abolishing the cover and making the legs higher, provided the chest with drawers, and doors with a lock thus converting them into cabinets. The article retained the rudimentary brass handles, but such survivals of the original chest must be very rare.

Meanwhile, against this background Ceylon craftsmen were delighting Dutch fraus by producing gaily decorated family chests with hinges, handles and lock-pieces of heavy brass, and adding those familiar brass blobs that conceal projecting bolts and screws. In those days timber in Ceylon was of gigantic size. The older chests made out here were turned out therefore entirely from single planks of finely grained wood. This affords some clue to the connoisseur who would put a date on these antiques.

The modern counterfeit — of which there are many, is usually made of small pieces of old wood skilfully joined together to cover up the seams. To this is added modern brass decorations. But what one has to guard against is the possibility of confusing a Dutch chest with the Sinhalese chest known as *Pettagama*: they too can be very similar in design and decorated with brass. Some, naturally, are much older than the Dutch chest. The *pettagama* usually, but not always, stands on squat, bellied, ball-like legs, as do some Dutch chests too.

The round burgomaster chairs are well-known in Ceylon and are the pride of many a collector. The original chair of this type is said to have been made in Holland about 1650. They are said to have been brought to Ceylon before the close of the 17th century. The semi-circular backs of these chairs usually have three oval panels, which like the seat were woven in cane. They had six legs joined by stretchers.

Apparently, in the mid-eighteenth century more decoration appeared in an adaptation of the earlier plain pattern. The panels were fitted in with

arococo design in wood, while the legs, joined by ornamented stretchers were of cabriole type. Nearly all these chairs were turned out of kumbuk, or sooriya wood, used largely to this day in the construction of cart wheels. The later models of this chair were stained black in the early part of the 19th century — to look like ebony, as ebony was then the rage. The burgomaster chair shown illustrated is an adaptation of the earlier type to ideas of the mid-eighteenth century.

Have you ever tried sitting on a burgomaster chair? None will deny that they must have afforded mynheer, or his ample spouse, a ready means of taking his or her ease without the discomfort of abdominal compression after a full meal of rijstafel!

Another popular article was the "settee" distinguished by its valuable wood and intricate designs used as ornament on back and seat-ends. Many of these indicate the unparalleled patience of the workmen. The settee was almost entirely confined to ebony and the specimens where the flower-work or the figure-work are in low relief are undoubtedly the oldest.

An article of furniture which was peculiarly Dutch in origin, and commonly found a place in the zaal was the lessenaar. This was a combination of book-cabinet and writing desk, described by authorities on old European furniture as "bureau bookcase of Dutch origin". The upper part of this piece of furniture was divided into numerous recesses and pigeon-holes for papers, and by many secret drawers.

Another article in common use was the knaap (sinhalese kanappuwa) — sometimes a table, sometimes a stand which served a number of domestic uses. Some of them are of intricate pattern and inlaid for purpose of ornamentation with different kinds of wood. The value of the material and the difficulty of working on such ornamentation have made imitations of this type of Dutch colonial furniture rare.

Yet another striking antique model in Dutch furniture is the heavy side-board of the 18th century period which is illustrated. The spindles used as baluster ornament to support the "strap-work" pediment on three sides, and the ornamental stretches to the legs with the urn-shaped vase as finial bespeak even to the uninitiated, what the world has lost since machines took over the work done by the hands of the patient craftsman. The escutcheons, or keyhole plates of brass and the drop-handles on the three fitted drawers are components in a modest scheme of decoration — rather different to the "brazen" adornment on modern fakes passed off as Dutch antiques today.

The wood used for this antique piece of furniture is Nadun. It is beautifully grained, chocolate-brown in colour, and has acquired an exquisite natural lustre from years of polishing.

The legs of the sideboard illustrated are of the cabriole type that is to say a curved leg depicting a knee with a convex bend, and an ankle with a concave sweep. It is claimed to be an eastern inspiration, probably Chinese, and to have reached Europe principally through the Netherlands, when the Dutch East India Company were doing the bulk of the carrying from China to the West.

This inspiration was much in vogue in the 18th century. The principal characteristic of the "cabriole leg" was a claw and ball terminal — interpreted to represent the "Chinese dragon's claw grasping the Buddhistic pearl-jewel". There came to be many innovations in this terminal such as the lion's foot, eagles claws and talons rams' hoof, or more simply, a club foot.

The device in this instance carved on the knee of the cabriole legs is a favourite ornament used by the Dutch craftsman. It is called : "scallop-shell". This was frequently used architecturally as well and may be seen to this day niched between the pediments of the gables in the Wolvendaal Church.

IV — Their Churches

From these piquant domestic scenes we pass over to the Churches which have survived from the days of the United East India Company's rule over coastal Ceylon. When the Company's merchants and officials had established themselves as virtual masters of the lowlands, they initially redesigned time-honoured Roman Catholic places of worship in the forts they had captured, and used them for preaching the Reformed Religion of Holland in the spirit and beliefs subscribing to the doctrinal standards set up by the Synod of Dordrecht. There is much evidence to indicate that the Hollander was not averse to appropriating Roman Catholic places of worship which had belonged to the Portuguese, for the ministration of the Reformed Faith.

The state religion the Hollander introduced was formally established on the 6th of October in the year 1642, at Galle which at that period was the headquarters of the Government. Collaterally with this edict Antonius Hornhovius of Utrecht was appointed the first Predikant, but death claimed him on the voyage from Batavia to Ceylon. Ministrations were therefore not actually started until the arrival of Johannes Stertemius, in July the following year (1643).

Records are few and vague concerning the first Protestant Church at Galle. Occasional references to *De Groote Kerk* — an expression implying both size and importance, supported by Valentyn's map of Galle on which its position is indicated sum up the information available. There are therefore no precise answers to such questions as : Was the Groote Kerk built by the Dutch, and if so when ? Was it a Portuguese edifice transmuted to serve the new form of worship ?

The cartographer Barretto de Resendo, specifies the presence of a Portuguese Cathedral (Se) and three Churches in the Fort of Galle. In these circumstances it is scarcely likely that in the midst of their hostilities the Dutch diverted attention to the erection of a Kerk at Galle within two years of their occupying the Fort. It seems a very reasonable deduction that they used one of the old Portuguese churches both for their church practices and for burying their distinguished dead. In the course of time when conditions were more settled they built the characteristically Dutch Church within the walls of the Fort, which to this day bears witness to their achievement.

Bearing testimony to the fact that *De Groote Kerk* was used for burying eminent persons, we have it on record that the body of General Hulft was received at Galle three days after his untimely death with full honours by Governor Adrian van de Meyden and the townfolk, and placed within a masonry catalogue in De Groote Kerk* for one year. Thereafter it was

*Jnl. Royal Asiatic Society (CB) Vol. IX p. 90.

lowered into a grave on the right of the pulpit within the church — his arms sword and spurs being hung on the wall over the grave.*

Very definitely, it was on the schools that the religious and educational efforts of the Dutch were focussed. The early buildings erected by them to serve as churches were also used as schools and were usually of the meeting-house type, large, squat, barn-like structures, with two triangular gables raised on the rectangular wall at the two ends. These buildings illustrated the gable reduced to its most primitive form. Massive masonry pillars support the roof on the two longer sides, and sections of half-wall with upright wooden railings fill the open space above the half-wall. The general construction is typical of the builders who preferred solidity to aesthetic element.

There are two examples of this rural type of "meeting house — school — church" conveniently sited off the arterial road from Colombo, to Galle. The prototype at Ambalangoda serves today as a garage for the motorist who makes the adjacent resthouse a week-end holiday resort. In this building — so one learns, services were conducted in Sinhalese by school-masters, Proponents, and in Dutch during church and school visitations by the Clergymen from Galle.

But what gives the touch of pathos to this retrospect is that the floor of the building is said to have once been paved with many tombstones commemorating people buried in the hallowed precincts. There is however one visible link left in this vestige of the past to kindle a visitor's interest. On the outer wall below the eastern gable there is an inscription roughly chiselled on a stone let into the wall. The inscription translated from Dutch reads: "Built by Adrian Oostdyk, Onderkoepman, Gale Korale, 1750". The moulding in which the inscription is set has been touched by the ravages of Time's slow but steady hand.

The second example is within a quarter of a mile of the Bentota Beach Hotel, and is a replica of the Oostdyk model at Ambalangoda. It is now being used as a Government School. Over its entrance a stone slab bears the inscription:

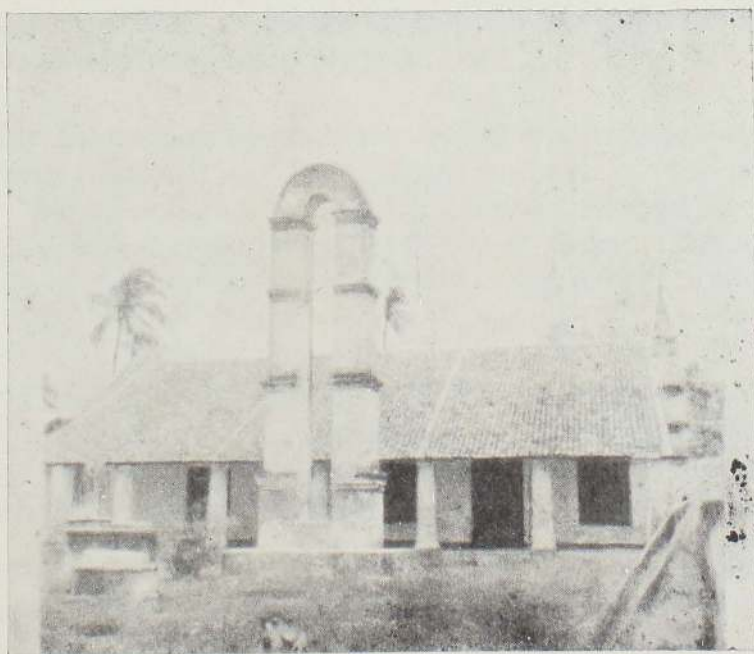
Fecit
C : A : S :
A.D. 1755

In spite of the pains the builder had taken to hide his identity the initials have been traced to a French or Swiss officer: Claude Antoine Scoffier,

*Ibid: The following year (1658) the Dutch conquest of coastal Ceylon being complete the body was removed to the State Church in Colombo and laid there in a tomb, over which was placed a large grave-stone. This grave-stone has disappeared and given rise to the curious story that it was utilized in 1818 for a new inscription out in the reverse side and set up on the wall of St. Peter's Church to commemorate another dignitary.



The facade and ruined porch of Kalpitiya Church. The three spires appear to have been built on the gable, in the early half of the 19th Century, when the building was taken over by the Church Missionary Society. Symbolically this refers to the Holy Trinity. Only two Churches in Ceylon have the three spires. See page 104.



Kalpitiya Church — Side view of Church, with belfry.

who was at the time commanding a small post which the Dutch had established up-river, at Pitigala. He probably belonged to the French Regiment of Du Flos — then under service with the Dutch.

The Dutch Church at Matara bears the date 1769 over the doorway, but there can be no doubt that this was not the date of its erection. The "Map and Travellers Notes" on Matara by Johann Wolfgang Heydt* are testimony that it existed in 1735. The grave-stones on the floor of the Church are evidence of even greater antiquity. The earliest is dated 1686. The only forthcoming explanation for its presence is the early Dutch custom of affording eminent people sepulchre within the walls of a church. This building may therefore well be a Sanctuary wherein generations of members of the Reformed Church have worshipped for nearly three centuries.

Architecturally it is based on the old-meeting house type, yet superior in many respects — with round-headed windows on each side and a verandah on the south side with masonry pillars and railings in the familiar domestic style prevalent in the street-architecture, and a massive door in the middle of the southern wall. The verandah has obviously been tacked on to the main structure some time later.

The structure is finished off with a simple form of end-gable. Mr. J. P. Lewis, the only person to the knowledge of the author who has essayed to write on "Dutch Architecture in Ceylon", regarded the *tout ensemble* as very Dutch.

Another form of the gable which appears to be of very early date is to be seen within the walls of Kalpitiya Fort. To account for its presence is puzzling. It is distinctly a Dutch gable, and appears to have been raised on an older wall identified as fabric of the old Portuguese church dedicated to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.

It is possible that when the fort was being constructed in 1659, the Dutch erected a building within it for Protestant worship on the site of the Portuguese Church. Apparently at some later period the need for a bigger church, to serve an expanding congregation, came to be felt. This church was built outside the walls of the fort on the site where the present church at Kalpitiya stands.

We are told the church built by the Dutch outside the fort had become a ruin by 1832, in which year (according to Lewis) it came to be described by a correspondent to the Government Gazette thus: "the walls were falling out, and the whole building tottering to its foundation".

*He was a German in the service of the Dutch East India Company, and spent two and a half years in Ceylon. His Travels were published in 1744.

The present structure was raised in 1840, and presents a fusion of architectural norms. The pyramidal shaped pinnacles, the semi-circular porch, and the brick and plaster pillars with Corinthian capitals, appear to be a pseudo-classical addition and debase the original Dutch gable which seems to have been incorporated from the earlier structure. The remainder of the building suggests a conservation in its original form. It has a striking old-world air about it redolent of sanctity.

The illustration affording a side view of the Church shows one of the two parallel verandahs which flanked the building. The pillars and the low-slung roof are characteristically Dutch. The detached belfry is also Dutch. The bell which hung on it, together with the furniture, were removed about half a century ago to an Anglican Church in Puttalam.

The flat roof over the porch has collapsed and even the rotting timber beams which the pillars shown in the illustration supported, are no longer there. The building is not now used and is "protected" under the Antiquities Ordinance. The Church contains a number of mural tablets and grave-stones.

The early Dutch churches at Batticaloa and Negombo are just two of several others which have disappeared entirely. The former apparently occupied a site within the Fort, at right angles to the line of buildings which serve to this day as the Batticaloa Kachcheri. A stone bearing the following inscription, discovered on this site, is all that is left for conjecture :

Dese Kerk
Is Gestigt Den 13 Feb.
AO 1740 Waarven Den
Eersten Steen Is Geleyt
Door Majuffw Ma M. De Moor
Huysv Van T. Opperht
De E. Mr. Rd. Buyk.

(This church was founded on the 13th of February 1740 of which the first stone was laid by Mejuffrouw Ma M. de Moor, wife of the Chief of Batticaloa the noble Mr. Rd. Buyk).

Many a visitor to Mannar fort, built close to the strait, and fronting the level, sandy, stretch of coast-line, crowded with low brushwood which forms the mainland of Ceylon, carries away the impression that the quaint little church within the square hewn-stone walls is the building in which past generations of people of the Dutch Reformed Church worshipped.

This, in fact, is not so. Writings which are one hundred and fifty years old, describe a neat little town which stood at that time about the distance of one furlong from the fort, "containing many comfortable houses, a small



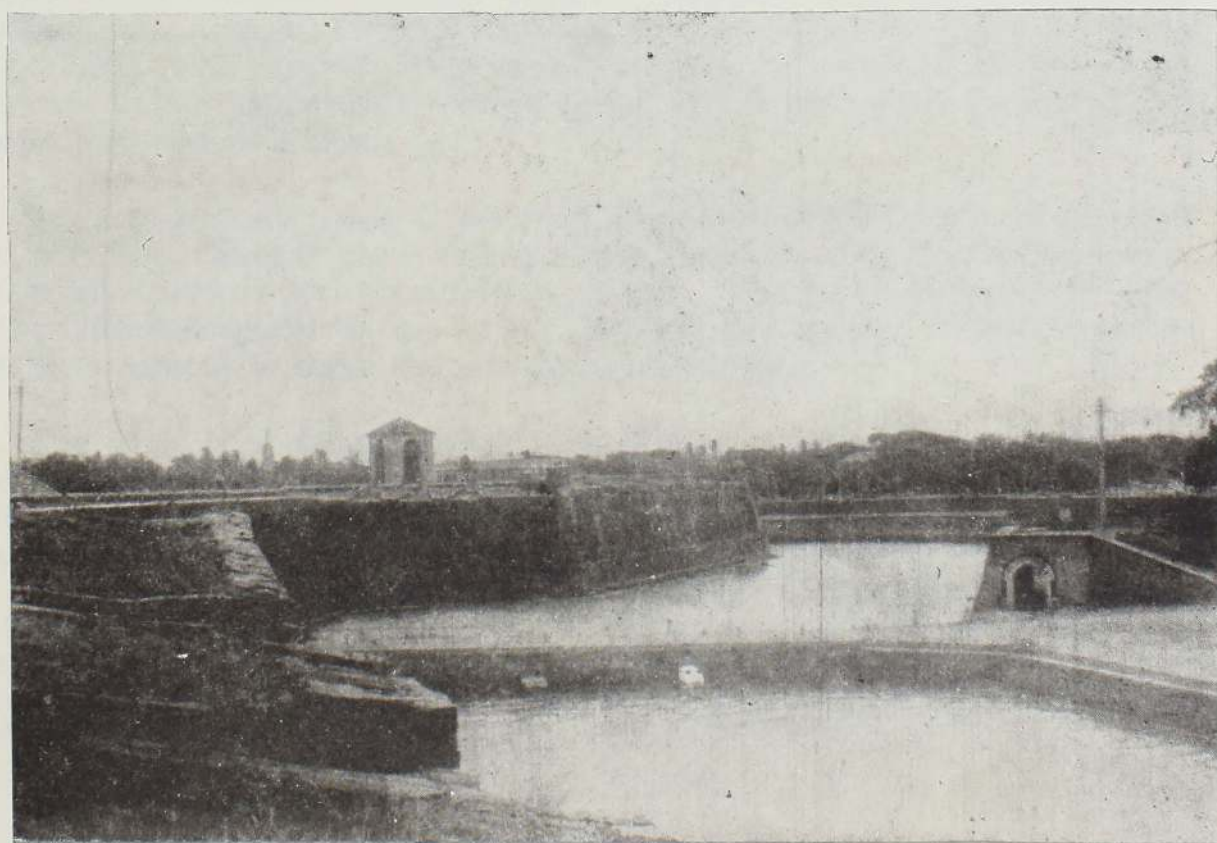
The crumbling walls of the Myliddi Church. There are two pictorial features in these ruins — the belfry by the entrance, and the “Church House” the ruined wall pierced by arch openings.



What is left of the Church at Chankanai. It is still possible to trace a nave, a chancel and side aisles. The chancel built in the form of a stone-worked vault, is ascribed to be the only example of its type in Ceylon.



The building in the Mannar Fort which was used as a Church when the 'old Church' in the town was destroyed by a cyclone in 1814.



View of Jaffna Rampart & Mote showing the Klokketoren,

Dutch Protestant Church, and a spacious mansion occupied by the Commandant of the garrison ”.

The island of Mannar experienced a severe cyclone in the year 1814. It is related that many a house in the little town was damaged by falling trees and among other buildings which tumbled down at that time was the Dutch church.

A long rectangular building, within the Fort, was consequently set apart as a church for the garrison and residents. The pulpit, so characteristic of the type found in all Dutch Reformed Churches, was moved into this building. An altar was erected to conform to the Anglican form of Worship, and it is also probable that about this time (1814) or shortly afterwards, the Dutch tombstones in the old church were also removed to the fort and let into the floor of the building.

The story is told that when the British garrison and the residents moved from Mannar, the church was used by the sub-collector of the Customs as a part of his quarters, “ the pulpit for storing provisions in and the altar for keeping sundries belonging to his family ”. Reclaimed however, from such sacrilege, although still subject to much neglect this consecrated building survives as a museum of brick and stone, and memories.

The disappearance of nearly all the Dutch records of Jaffna has deprived posterity of many details concerning missionary activities and the history of the Churches in North Ceylon. Happily, some Dutch maps help in small measure to reconstruct much which is obscure. The earliest of these maps dated 1720, precisely illustrates nearly all the churches which were in existence half a century after the departure of the old Dutch Predicant and master historian, Baldaeus.

The explanatory notes on the map disclose how the circuit was divided into parishes. There were twenty six recognised Churches in the peninsula, and seven scattered over the adjacent islands. The parish system and many of the Churches appear to be a legacy from the Portuguese. The latter were rebuilt or altered to serve the new form of worship.

The Church at Chankanai, in the Valikamam division is historically referred to as one of the largest and most important Jesuit Churches in the Jaffna District which the Dutch took over. It was built in 1641, and is illustrated in Baldaeus’ famous work. Time has made easy conquest aided by years of neglect and abandonment. Local vandals requiring building material have helped to demolish the decaying structure in more recent times. Nevertheless it is still possible to trace in this ruin a main building which originally had a nave with two rows of massive round pillars, a chancel and side aisles.

Nearly all these old Jesuit Churches had a building adjoining which the Dutch called the "Church-House", and used as a school. They invariably featured a pillared hall and stood in a walled enclosure containing a garden. The ruins of the Atchuvveli Church fretted by time and weather and rubbed out of form to much the same extent as the Chankanai Church, shows the old "Church house" to best advantage. The site now belongs to one of the local missions.

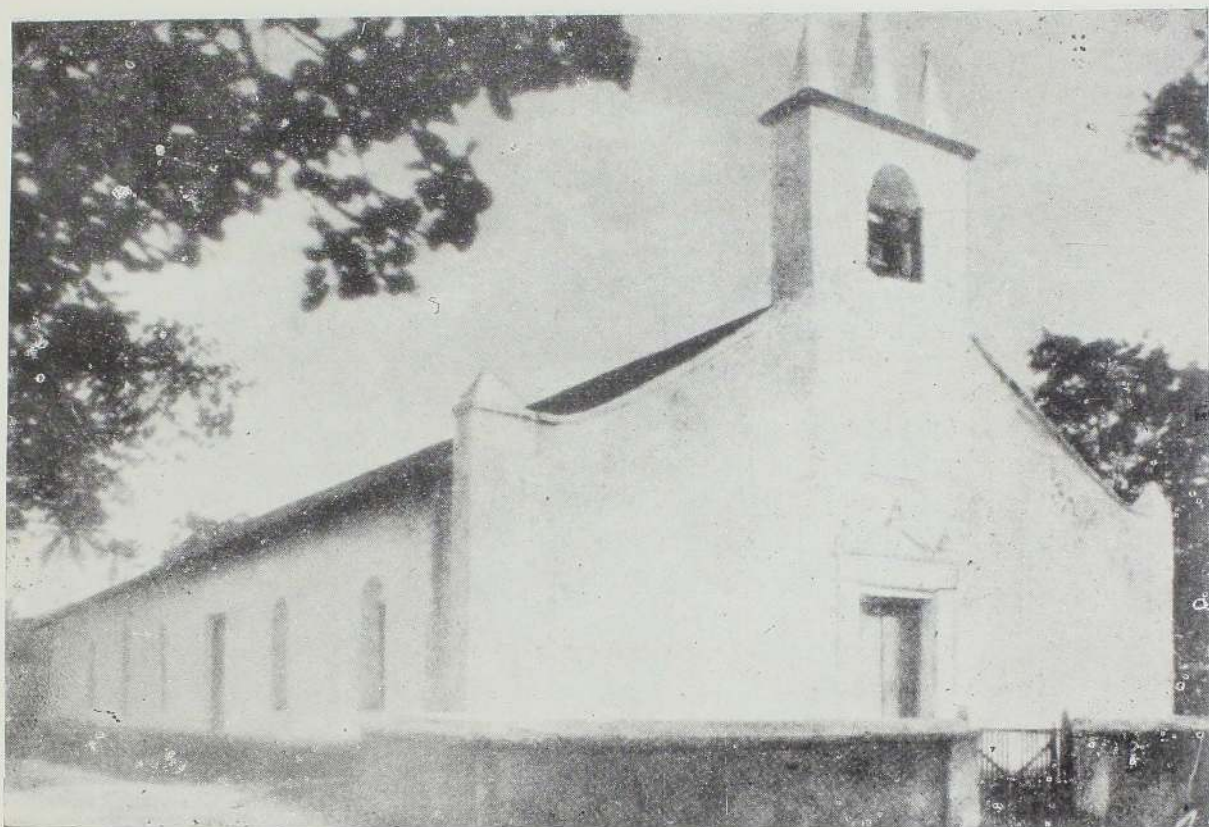
Another picturesque ruin which calls to mind the history of the Portuguese and Dutch "parishes" of Jaffna is to be found at Myliddi. The illustrations show that only weathered walls fast crumbling to decay remain to conjure up the shadows of the past. There are two pictorial features in this ruin. One is the little belfry above the side entrance, the other "the Church House" a ruined stone wall pierced with arch openings. This site too belongs to a local mission.

The Church at Chundikuli, belonging to the Church Missionary Society, stands on the site of the Jesuit Church of St. Joao, one of the fourteen churches in the Province of Valikamam". The Dutch appear to have re-built a church on the same site.

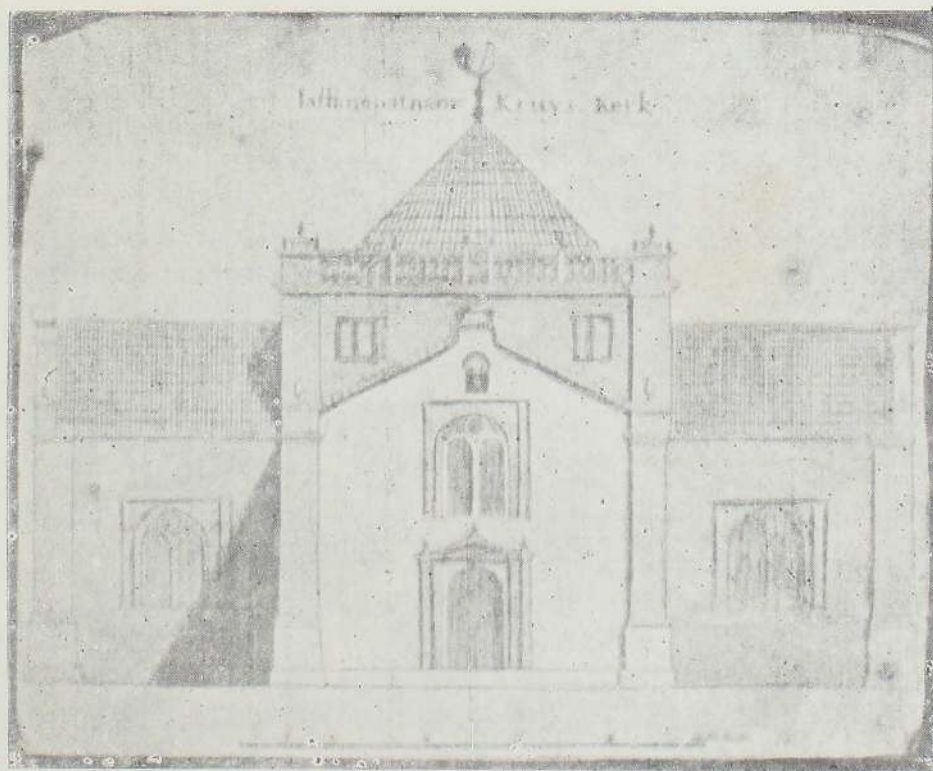
The Dutch building, with walls over five feet in thickness, whose doors and windows were as deep and massive as castle gates almost, was with its "Church House" a conspicuous landmark of Chundikuli in the early days of the British occupation. Eighty years ago it was partly demolished to rectify an awkward bend in the road, and only the Church House, used at that time as a school, was left standing. Eventually even this remnant of old times, made way for the present airy and elegant building called St. John's Church.

The church at Vaddukoddai, now the Cathedral of the Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India, is yet another link with the old Portuguese churches of the Jaffna Peninsula. An inscription which reads: "*Doen maken door den Heer Commandeur Laurens Pyl, Anno 1678*", affords evidence of the date the building was adapted to the Reformed religion by the successors of the Portuguese. Even with one third of it partitioned off as a dwelling house, the church is said to be large enough to accommodate 2,000 people. This seems to be another case where what was originally a Dutch gable has been debased. The flat wall surmounted by three spikes came into favour about 1840, on churches belonging to the American Board of Mission.

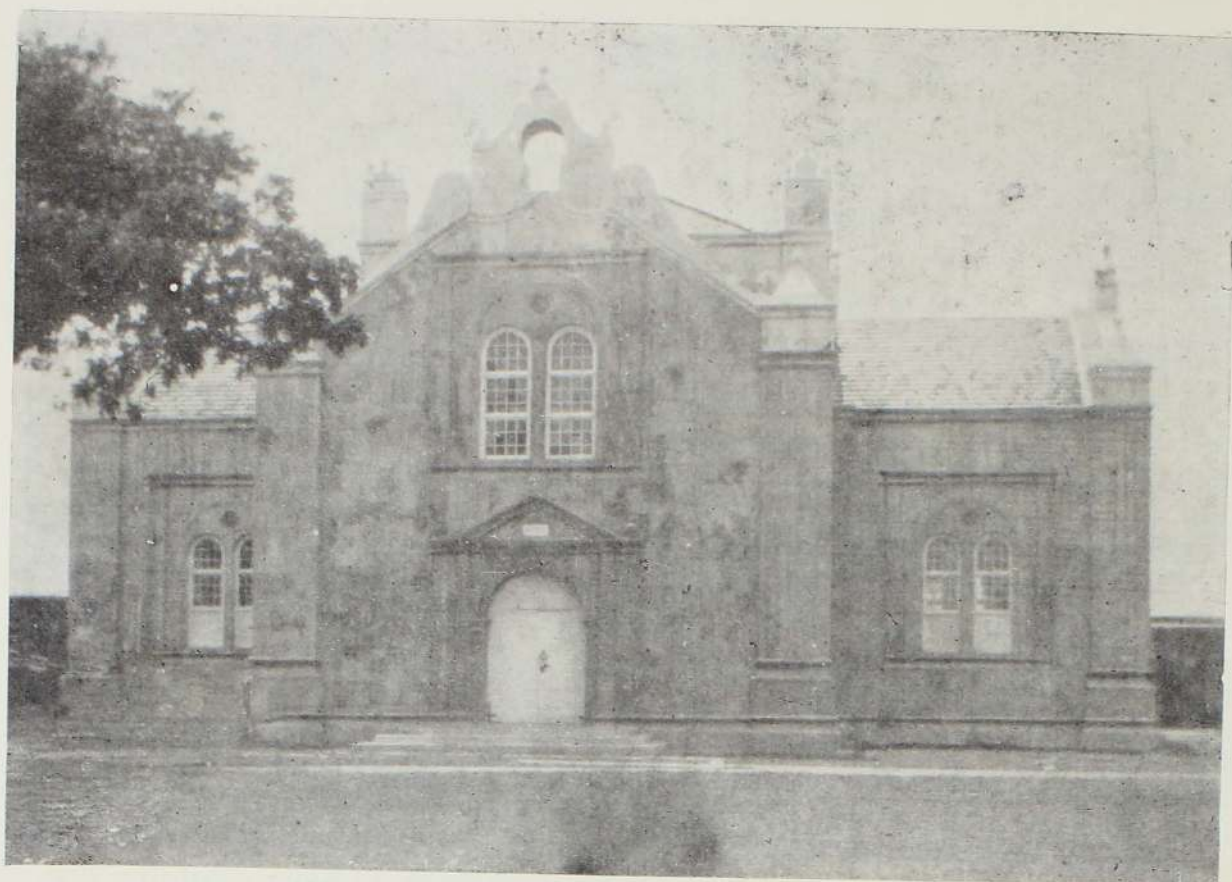
The Dutch church at Point Pedro was demolished long ago, but in the market place there stood until recently a picturesque relic which commemorated the activities of the early Dutch Predicants to build up their Church in this land. "Baldaeus Tree" as it was called, marked the spot where this celebrated preacher is believed to have addressed his first discourse in



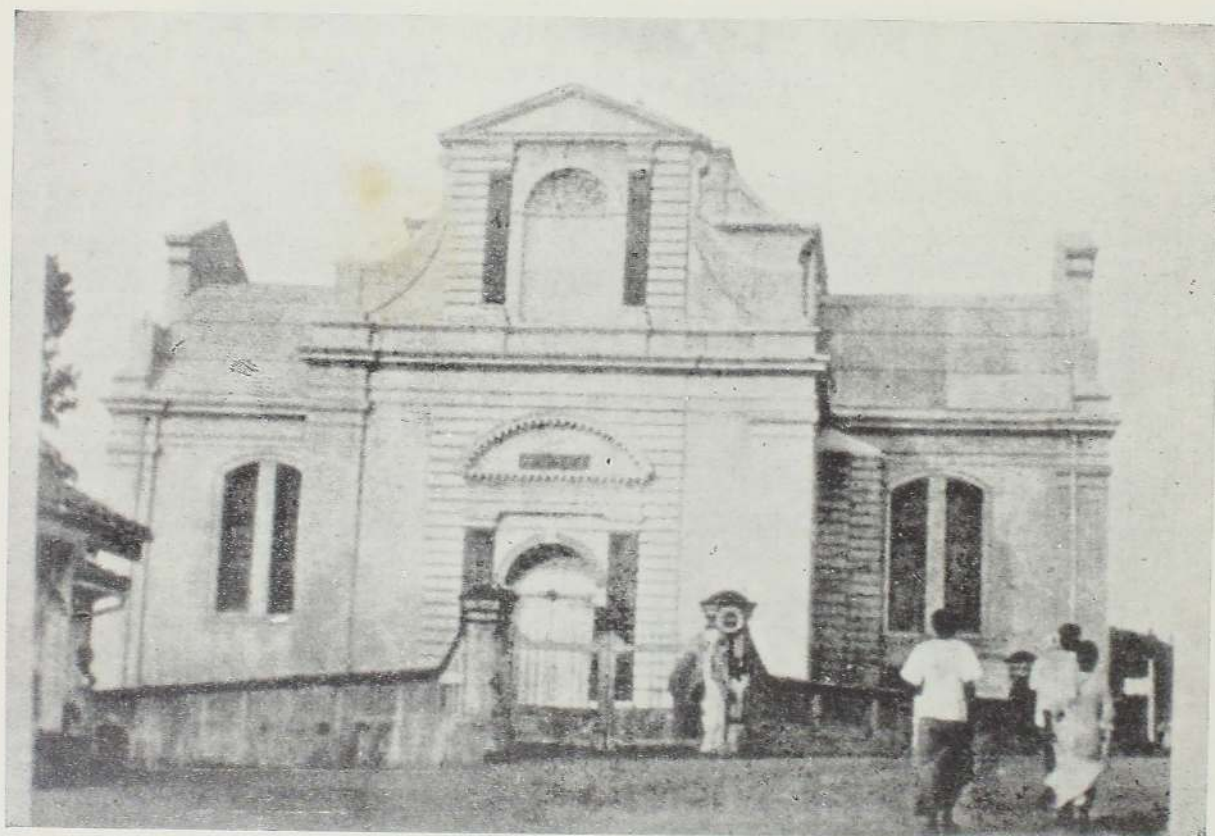
The Church at Vaddukuddai. (See page 104).



Jaffna's "Kruys Kerk" — as shown by Francois Valentyn in *Beschryvinge Van Ceylon*.



The Church at Jaffna.



Wolvendaal Church — western entrance

this northern-most point of Ceylon. Subsequently referring to it in his book, he wrote : " Just before the church stands a tall tamarind tree, which affording a very agreeable shadow in the heat of the day, the people are often instructed by the minister to the number of three thousand ". The book also contains an illustration showing a preacher in a pulpit and a crowd before him under a tree which stands close to the landing place, opposite the present pier. The tree was destroyed by a cyclone in 1952.

We now turn to the three churches at Jaffna, Galle and Colombo which reflect the greatest credit on the Calvinistic builders. Built in the 18th century they preserve at least the main features and plan, if not the details, of Gothic or mediaeval architecture — which seem to have survived until late among the Dutch. When Jaffna fell to the Dutch as the spoils of war there was a famous Portuguese Church, named the Church of Our Lady of Miracles (Nossa Senhora Dos Milagres) within the walls of the Fort. It occupied a corner opposite the site on which the Dutch later erected their church. The historian, Valentyn, has supplied what is probably one of the earliest references to " Jaffnapatam's Kruys Kerk ", of the Dutch period. He has indicated its position on a plan of the new Fort which replaced the original Portuguese fortification, and what is more has left to posterity a drawing showing a frontal view of the edifice soon after it was built.

The date, 1706, inscribed over the main entrance to the Church no doubt commemorated the year when the work of erection was started. There is consequently good reason for the inference that for nearly 48 years in the early Dutch period of Jaffna the Portuguese Church was used and that it was demolished after the *Kruys Kerk* was erected. The architect and builder was Martinus Leusekam who is described as *Bao Landmeter* in the Company's service, at Jaffnapatam. In other words he was chief of the Survey Department. His name appears on several Dutch maps of the period.

The quaint ensemble of gables, central tower, belfry, and many paned, heavily mullioned windows, is nowhere displayed to a better advantage than in the Jaffna Church. Everything is simple, with little effort at ornament. The edifice is in the form of a Greek Cross with a wide central area. The loftiness and thickness of its walls render it very cool and airy, and it is well lighted by the large deeply recessed windows of the nave, and the four smaller ones in the lantern. The pillars, arches and pediments of the door-ways are built with imported Dutch bricks. The floor is paved with stones two feet square, and the walls are built of rubble and coral stone. The dry climate, and the substantial material used in the construction, have contributed largely to the preservation of the building.

When the Dutch completed this Kerk, the bells which hung on the earlier Portuguese church were set up in the belfry. It is interesting to recall that the larger bell is today used at St. Michael's Church, in Colombo. The smaller bell was taken down from the belfry about four decades ago,

and was placed in the vestry from where it was recently removed to the Jaffna Museum for safety. Both bells bear the legend "N.S. dos Milagres de Jafanapatao" and the date 1648.

Jaffna capitulated to the British forces on the 28th of September 1795. The minutes of a special meeting of the Consistory, held that very day, a Monday, "In the morning at 9 o'clock sharp", forges a link with this turning point in history. Translated from the Dutch writing these minutes read: "After the usual prayer *Dominee Praeses* (the Rev. President) suggested to the meeting what should be done in the sad and distressing circumstances in which we are now placed. Which proposal having been carefully considered, it is unanimously approved and decided to postpone the Service for the present".

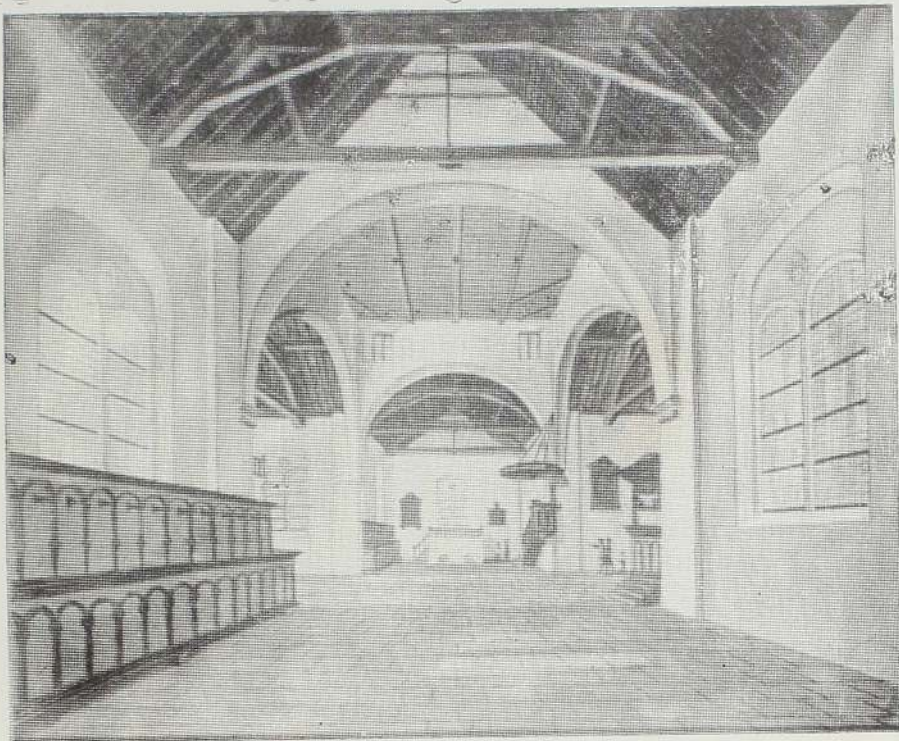
The Articles of Treaty entered into by the British Commanders and the Dutch authorities at the capitulation of Jaffna and the other Forts, and subsequently confirmed by the supreme authority, guaranteed the inhabitants the free exercise of the Reformed religion as practised in the Dutch Church and the independence and functions of its form of Government. Nevertheless, the year 1812, saw the departure of the last Dutch Clergymen from Ceylon, and for seven years anterior to that date the churches and congregations in the Jaffna Circuit were left without a resident ordained Minister.

This marked the beginning of the rapid decline of the Church Organisation the Dutch had established in North Ceylon, and disintegrated the congregation. They gradually identified themselves with other churches and denominations in their attempt to secure Christian ordinances.

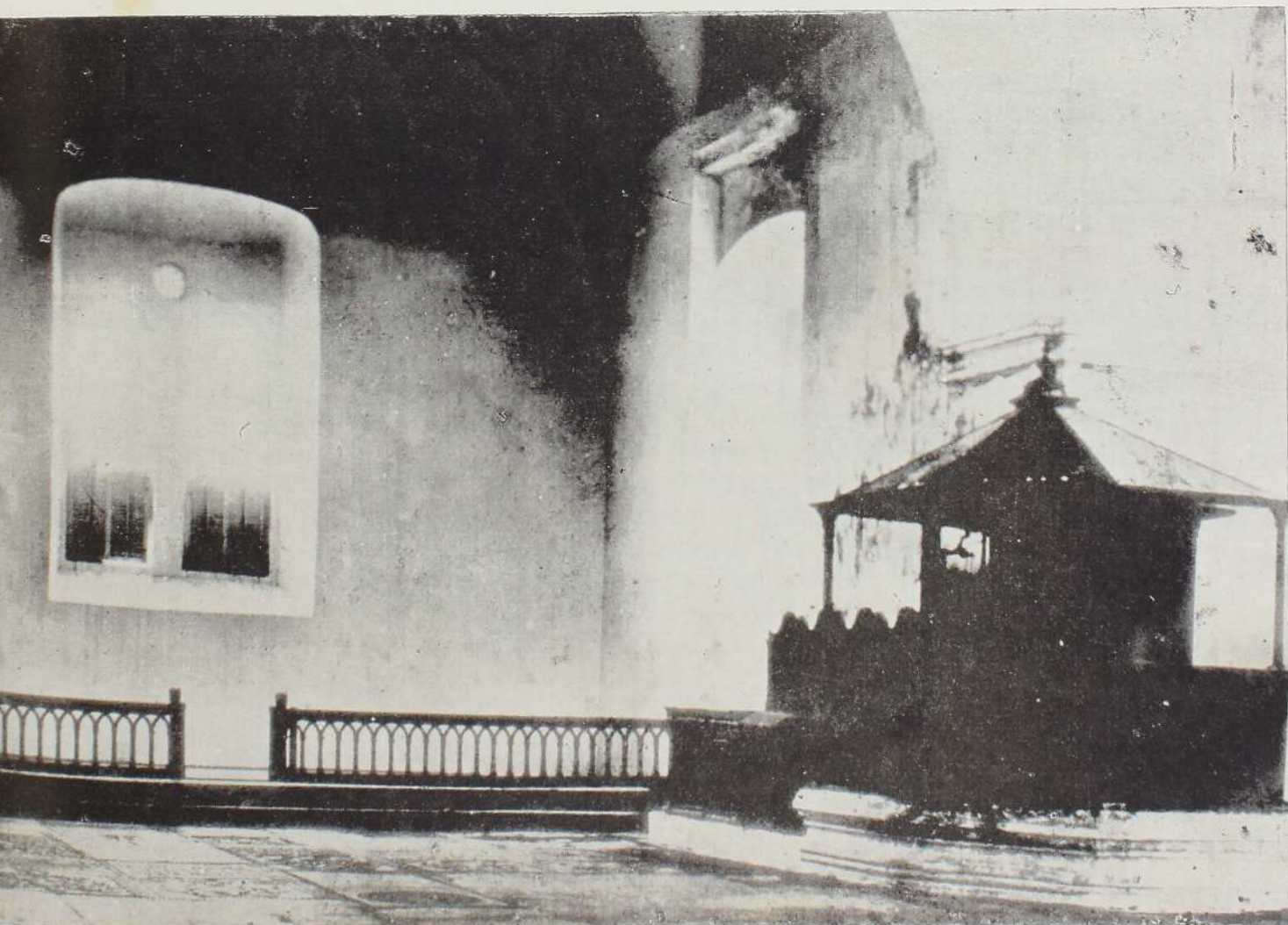
As time introduced other vicissitudes, the smaller Churches scattered over the Peninsula passed into other hands, or went to decay, unused and uncared for. The historic Dutch Kerk, which was the most flourishing in its day, was reduced to the poorest conditions both as regards its members and its finances.

Eventually in 1892, the building was handed over to Government and by agreement services were occasionally held in it. In more recent times it has ceased entirely to fulfil its original purpose even in restricted measure, and only serves to satisfy antiquarian interests.

The interior of this beautifully proportioned building as seen from the south in the illustration by Steiger, was laid out as like as possible in form to the mediaeval churches of the Netherlands. Adapted to the severe plainness calculated to harmonise with the doctrinal standards of Reformed worship, it contained no carved work, tracery or paintings, but yet preserved such characteristic features as nave choir, transepts, chancel, and tower. The pulpit which is reached by a stair and hand rail is set up where the northern transept meets the wall of the chancel and is of a type now known as



Interior of Jaffnapatnam's Kruys Kerk, built in 1706. From a water-colour painting (in the Rijks Museum) by C. Steiger.



Commandeur's pew, and the Communion rail set up when the Church was used by the British in the early 19th Century.

the " chalice pulpit ". The shaft or column on which it rests is of different workmanship confirming as Steiger's picture does, that originally the pulpit was attached to the wall. The sounding-board suspended by a twisted iron rod, seems unchanged. Until recently there was to be seen a hat-peg on the front panel of the pulpit on which the Predicant, before seating himself used to hang, just above his head, his three-cornered hat.

At the angle of the chancel and the south transept and opposite the pulpit, there stands the Commandeur's pew handsomely constructed of a dark wood not common to the neighbourhood, with a canopy over it held up by the wooden pillars. It is of typical Dutch outline, and so are the stalls next to it, meant for members of the Consistory of the Church and other senior servants of the Company. These too were all built of select Ceylon woods, and seem to have once had mouldings in ebony, and the peg behind each seat for the hat.

Stalls of plainer pattern were built into the western walls of nave and transepts for the humbler members of the congregation. Heydt observes that " the women are accustomed to sit on chairs, which they at all times have carried behind them by slaves and when church is over, they are taken home again. Each takes care, not only to have a fine seat, but that it be provided with a stately cushion ".

The organ and singers' gallery raised on a platform four feet above the floor of the church is in the northern transept. It has a carved panel (the only effort at ornamentation) showing a carved figure intended apparently to represent David the Psalmist. He is depicted seated clothed in a dark robe, with a harp resting on his knee, and his eyes turned on a scroll of music.

In more recent decades, this valuable vestige which reflects the thoughts and life which contributed to an episode in Ceylon's past, has fallen faster into the hands of decay and dry-rot than during the century earlier when it only served as a monument. Its massive doors have been replaced by corrugated iron sheets, its windows patched by beaten-out casings of empty tar-barrels. The roof no longer keeps the monsoon rains out. The pulpit is in woeful repair. It today stands propped up against the wall and the sounding board over it has fallen in. A rickety desolateness prevails over what was once the Commandeur's pew — its canopy has disappeared. Even the entire solid masonry structure is disintegrating and moving fast into a state of ruin. A brooding melancholy pervades the atmosphere evoking in a visitor a feeling of great sadness.

The floor of the Church is paved with many tombstones of both high and low estate. On the western wall of the southern transept there hangs a wooden hatchment set up in 1769, in the quasi-classical and sentimental style of the period. It is blazoned with a coat-of-arms surmounted by the

figure of Time, commemorating Friedrich Wilhelm Baron de Reder, a German nobleman who took service in the V.O.C. Pondering over these emblems of office, family and glory departed, the visitor as he leaves this sanctuary is confronted with the question many ask, and has never been answered.

HOE LANG
is
DE EEUIGHEYT
(How long is Eternity)

This admonition is inscribed on a slab of stone on the floor at the entrance and catches the eye, as with bent head one passes out through the main door-way.

Elsewhere reference was made to the spacious rectangular courtyard rounded off at the corners, and to the residence of the Commandeur within the walls of the fortress. The perspective has changed very little since Steiger's picture (here depicted), was painted just 250 years ago. In the centre of the courtyard or *plaatsie* there used to be a sun-dial which has disappeared more recently. So have the tame elk and spotted deer which wandered about, in the courtyard and on the ramparts.

The commodious mansion adjoining the church has been carefully maintained, and to this day possesses some of the finest specimens of antique carved furniture in ebony and calamander — cabinets, arm-chairs, ponderous bedsteads, and sofas, as befits the dwelling of the former ruler of the northern Commandement.

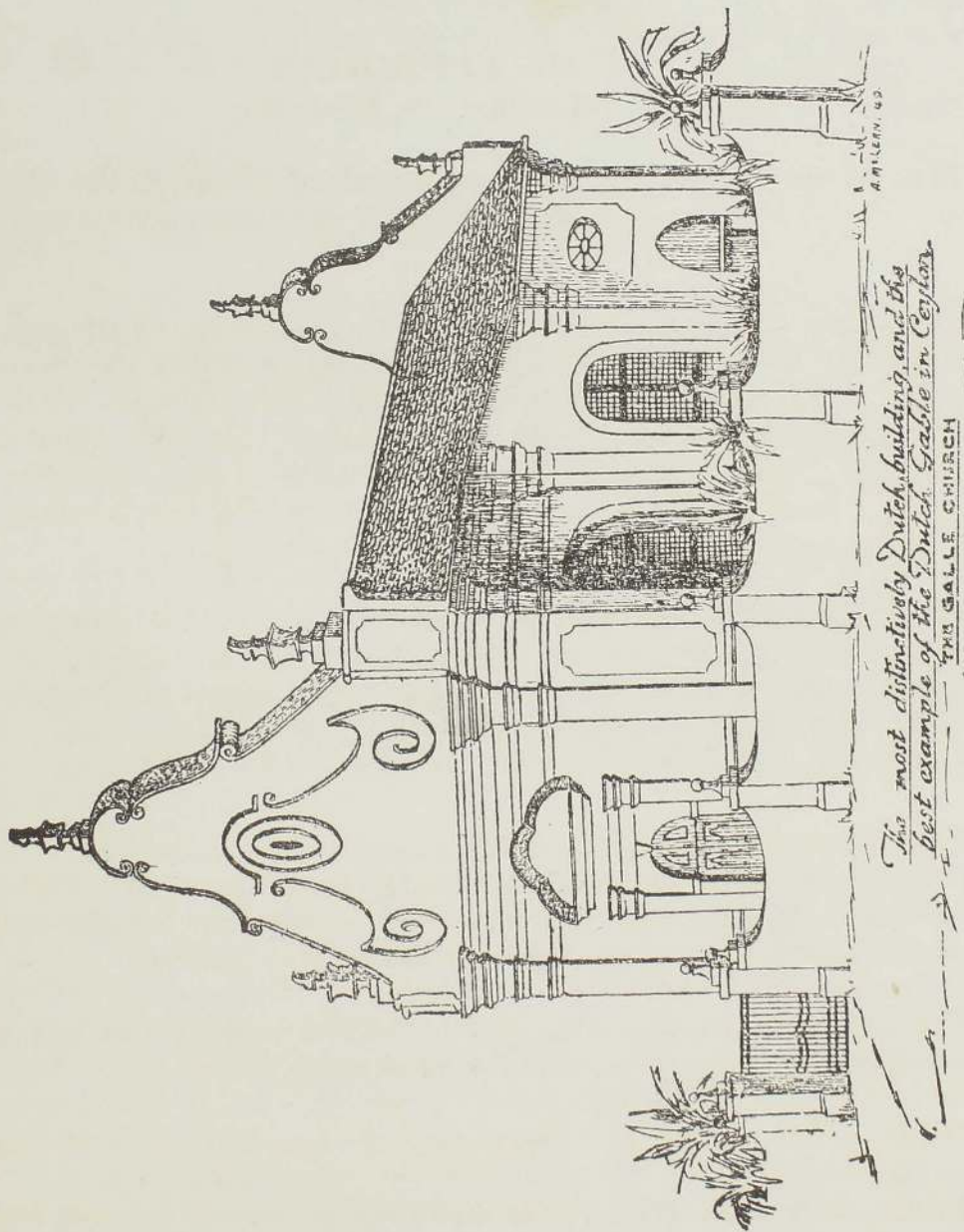
The characteristic 18th century churches which the Dutch built at Galle and Colombo are still in regular use by congregations of the Dutch Reformed faith, though the language has long been forgotten. In the circumstances they have fared better than their counterpart at Jaffna.

The following extracts from the Galle Diary (1752 - 54) afford particulars regarding the erection of the church at Galle.

Monday 4th July 1752, "Beginning of the erection of the new church".

Friday 24th May 1754, "the walls of the New Reformed Church, which is now being erected at the expense of His Excellency the Hon. Casparus de Jong, having been through God's blessing, thus far, without any mishap, raised to their appropriate height and become dry, a beginning is made with the construction of the roof by the architect of that building, Abraham Anthonisz, the respected Superintendent over the ship's carpenters and house builders of this town".

The most unique type of Dutch gable attempted in Ceylon.



*The most distinctively Dutch building and the
best example of the Dutch Gable in Ceylon.*
THE GALLE CHURCH

The tradition is that it was built by de Jong, as a thanks-offering to God for the birth of a daughter, the couple having been for many years childless, but this is hardly borne out by the facts, as the daughter was baptised in Galle, 24th August 1755.

Unlike the quasi-classical or Renaissance style of the two other churches built in the same century at Jaffna and Colombo, the Galle Church has no central tower and has shallow transepts. As if it were to compensate for this deficiency the architect has crowned his handiwork with two gables on the eastern and western walls which may very truly be acclaimed unique and the first specimen of the Dutch gable erected on any edifice in Ceylon. The moulding has been described as "unusual double scroll". They are both finished off with three "flame-like" finials, one on each of the pedestal at the two ends and another on the apex.

The rectangular portion of land on which the Church stands is surrounded by a chastely built boundary wall as unique as the Church itself. It lends completeness to the old sanctuary. The interior is lit and kept cool by five rounded windows which are deep and spacious, and a high vaulted ceiling, which in former times was painted a beautiful cerulean blue and studded with silver stars to represent the heavens.

The orthodox pulpit is the finest specimen of its type in Ceylon built hexagonal in shape of finely grained calamander with panels of flowered satin-wood and attached to the wall. The slats of the hand-rail leading to it are also of differently grained calamander. The whole is finished off with an exquisite carving in "pomegranate pattern" underneath the platform of the pulpit. The sounding board is massive and suspended from the wall with iron rods and hoops.

An organ loft — which once had an elaborately painted front representing an organ runs across the end of the Church over its main entrance. Here, up to the middle of the last century stood an old Dutch organ, a huge cumbrous instrument, blown by means of detached bellows worked by the feet of three men. The last of the Dutch organists who survived the cession of the island to the British was Fredrik Pieter Schols, a popular figure, known to people of a bygone generations as "Oom Schols".

The pews along the walls of the church fare very similar to those described in the study of the Jaffna Church. There are still two of these high pews on the western and northern sides. Those on the southern and were dismantled to accommodate an Altar and the Communion Rail, for the use of the Anglican Community. The Galle Consistory acceded to this request and the Anglican congregation worshipped in this sanctuary from early British rule till 1867, when the present Anglican Church of All Saints' was

completed. The Consistory was criticised for sanctioning architectural alterations, but today the presence of the Communion Rails in a Presbyterian Church is an embodiment of Christian charity and amity.

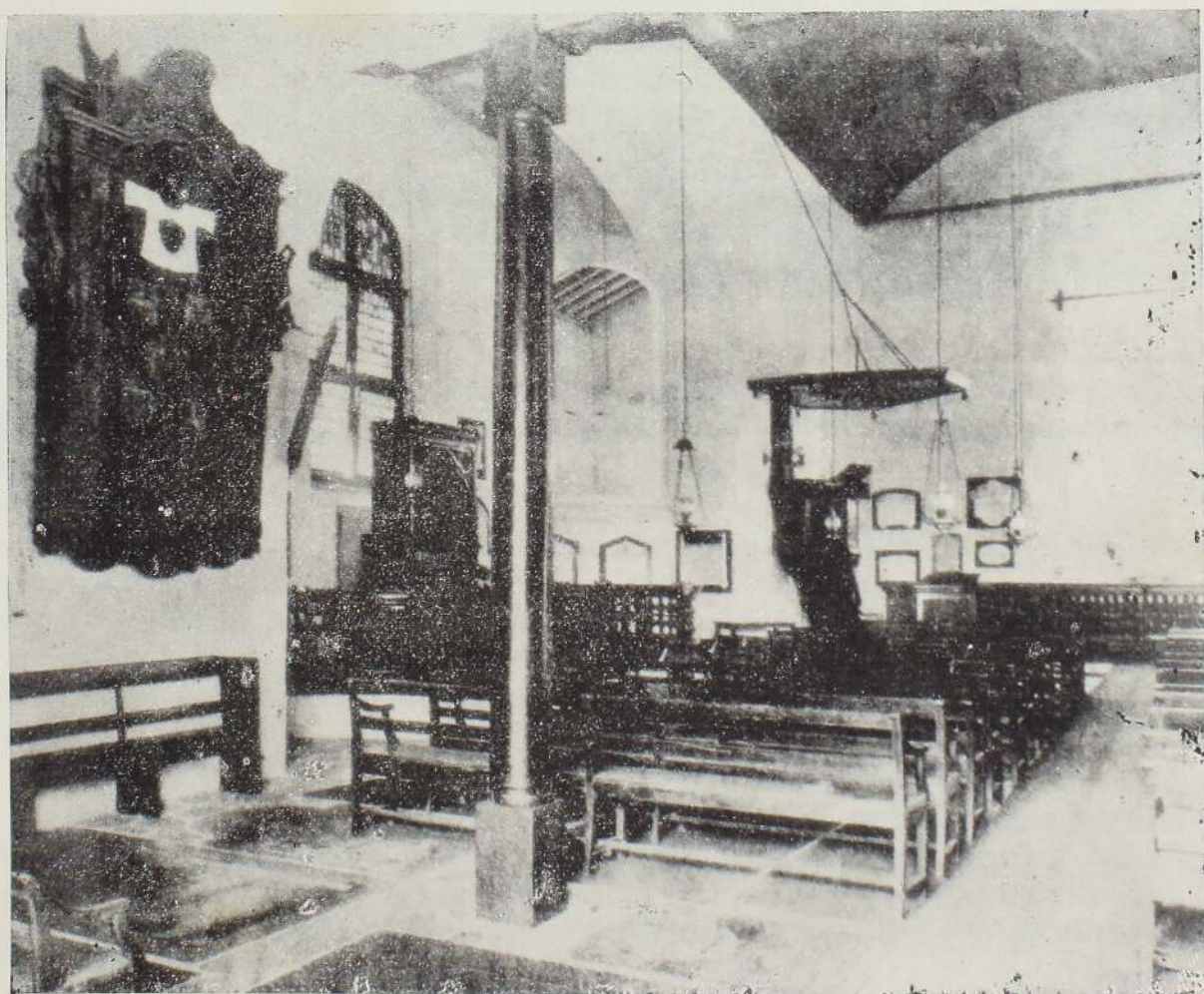
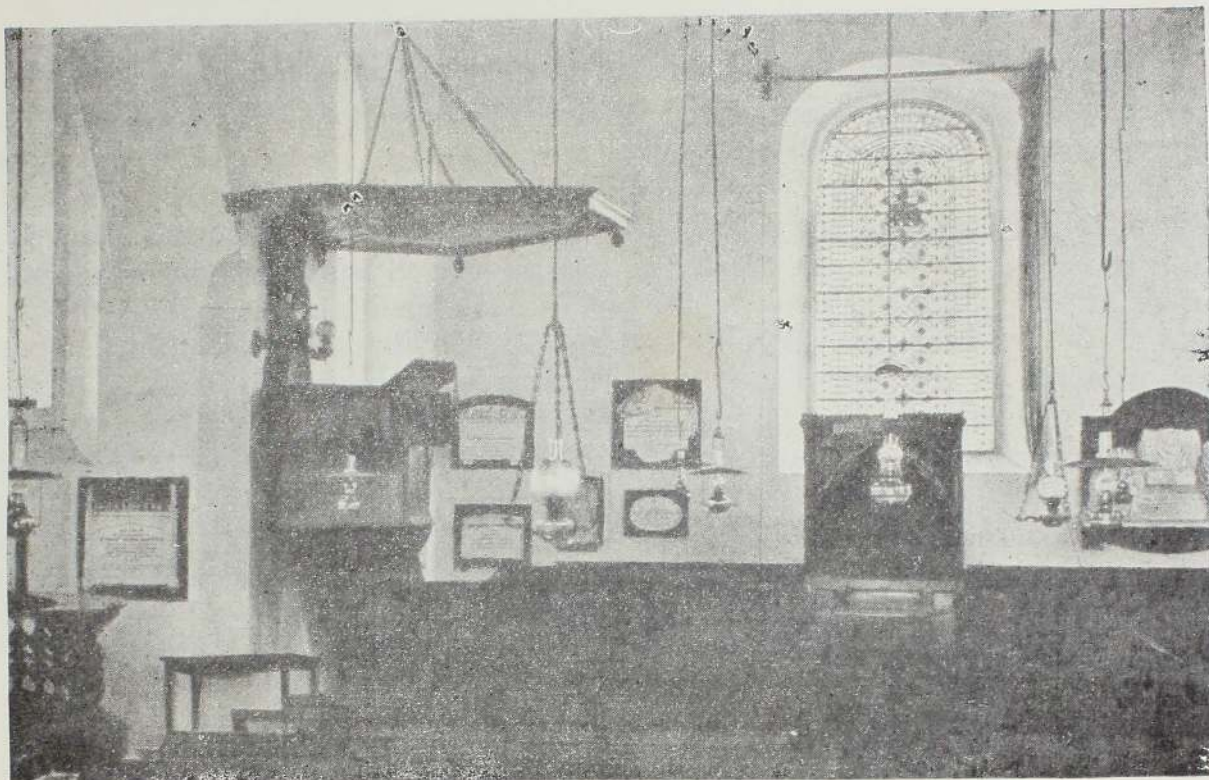
The seats which made way for the altar and Communion Rail were reserved for officials and company merchants. After the Capitulation the Commandeur's pew made of satin wood and lined with scarlet velvet was sealed, lest a minor dignitary or a nobody should occupy it. The law of life is, what is not used must decay. And in course of time, white ants completed the tragedy.

During repairs effected in 1925, the Church was without a roof. The heavy rains made the flooring sink in certain places. There was a fear that one of the vaults which were believed to be under the floor at the western end of the nave had collapsed.

The late Mr. R. G. Anthonisz* was consulted with regard to the opening of the vault. His reply was very illuminating, "I have a perfect recollection of the opening of the church vault on the very last occasion this was done on the 23rd February 1863. It was for the burial of Mrs. C. P. Walker, wife of the District Judge. She was a Miss Brook and I believe the right of burial in the Church vault was claimed through the connection with the Tabinels and the De Moors, at any rate, permission had to be obtained for the Government because already burials within places of worship had been much restricted by law . . . to get at the entrance the tombstone of Mathew Vander Spaar opposite the vestry door was taken away. When the sea sand was removed to a depth of about 6 feet there was a stone gate from which a couple of steps led into the vault. I got down into the vault . . . there were a number of coffins in a fair state of preservation, some of these were lined with black velvet".

According to the directions received the vault was opened in 1925. It was in good preservation but much smaller than expected, a mere 6 by 9 by 5½ feet. The remains of the last coffin were there, the lid covering the bones. On a side there were fragments of old bones and bits of coffin. It is possible that there is another vault to the northern side, but the one opened was found quite detached and in perfect condition. Coins, an account giving the history of the vault, and the reason for opening it, were bottled and the vault closed. Outside the Church there is a two-chambered vault and the last occasion when one of these was opened was in 1808. Little is known of the other. The earliest tablet on the floor of the Church is in memory of Burchart Coq who was buried in the "Groote Kirk" grounds in 1662.

*He was the first Ceylon Government Archivist and Librarian — a scholar and historian who dedicated his life to unravelling the sources and facts of the history of the Dutch in Ceylon.



Two scenes of the interior of the Dutch Church at Galle. The hatchment of Abraham Samlant which has been called the most elaborate and martial mural to be found in Ceylon, is on the wall to the left.

The walls of the Church are furnished with many elaborate and interesting tablets and family coats-of-arms. The largest and most interesting is the hatchment of Abraham Samlant, Commandeur of Gale. Lewis calls it the most elaborate mural tablet in Ceylon. It is the only one found in the East or in South Africa, decorated not only with armorial designs, but also with designs of martial insignias. The coat of arms belonging to the Samlant's family and those of the collateral families are inserted in it. It was originally fixed on the western end of the Church, but was removed to its present position to accommodate the stained glass window in which is depicted the emblem of the Church " *Spes est Regerminat* " a fallen stump and yet growing. Samlant had a son who held a responsible post in the Dutch Service. At the Capitulation his name appears along with Angelbeck and other signatories. He was also an elder of the Galle Church. His sister married Jacob Vander Graff, Commandeur of Galle, who at the death of Falck became Governor.

There is a tombstone in front of the deacon's pew to the memory of Anna Jacob Vander Leur. She was the wife of the Commandeur Kraayenhoff. She was buried in the vault, very likely the second vault inside the Church. There is also in the south near the pulpit, just by the vault another tombstone, that of Maria Cornelia Schuttrup, the wife of Commandeur Arnoldus de Ly. De Ly succeeded Krayenhoff as Commandeur. He had a son, Abraham Everhardus de Ly. In 1807 Abraham was an elder of the Church. With his death, the family of De Ly ceased to exist. He left instructions in his Will that his sword and other armorial designs were to be broken and thrown into the grave that the world may know that there were no more of the De Lys. This, it is understood was done in accordance with the terms of the will.

Another beautiful hatchment is a coloured oil painting in memory of Theobold Von Hugel, Colonel Commandant of the Wurtemberg Guard. He died in 1800, and was buried inside the Church.

When Colombo fell to the Dutch there stood, in the present day open space between Queen's House and the Gordon Gardens in the Fort, a notable Roman Catholic place of worship named the Church of St. Francis. This erstwhile Portuguese structure was redesigned in the early days of Dutch occupation and became the official Church in Colombo of the United East India Company.

Besides being used as a place of worship, the Church was also used as a place of sepulture and in course of time came to be crowded with vaults in which had been laid to rest the mortal remains of several Dutch Governors and their relations, also those of many others who were eminent in their day.

The Governor, van Imhoff, (1736) brought to the notice of the " Authorities in Batavia " that the Church (which by then must have been about 180 years old) was falling to decay and was becoming dangerous for use. He appealed for sanction to erect a new one on its site.

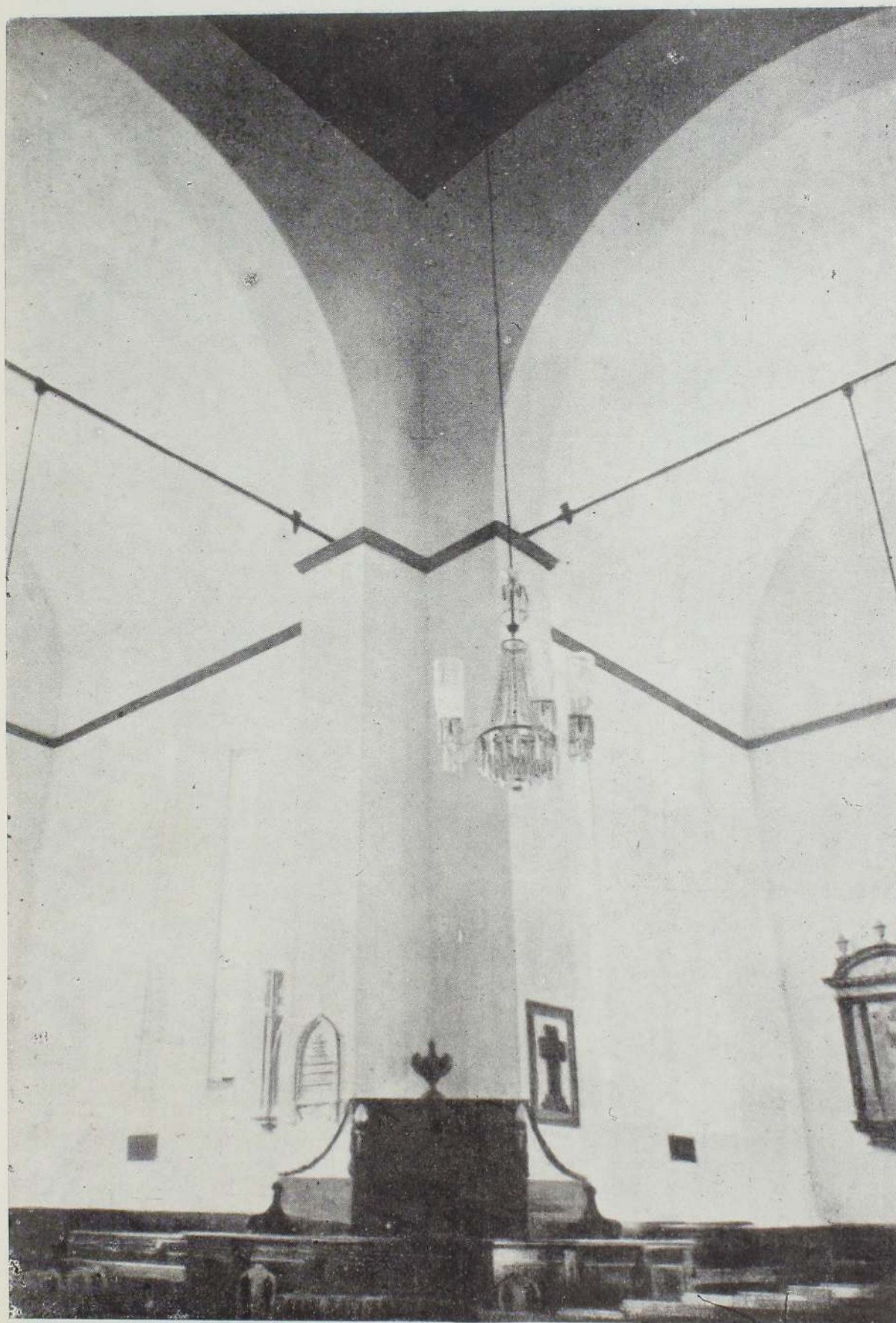
The Supreme Government at Batavia did not readily approve of the proposal. Matters seemed to have remained at a standstill until Governor van Gollennesse arrived seven years later. It was due to his zeal and interest in the project that the Wolvendaal Church came to be built. The choice of a site for the new Church outside the walls of the Fort is easy to explain. The hill on which it stands commands the finest view across the town and over the sea. The Church appears substantially the same as originally designed by the Dutch builders. The four gables of Wolvendaal Church are supported by flat pilasters with spreading scrolls at the sides. The surface of the wall is broken up by horizontal lines to suggest it was constructed with blocks of stone. Engrossed in the fascinating game of playing tricks with construction the architect has been influenced by the classicism then prevalent.

The initial letters I.V.S.G. niched into the gable over the southern entrance, associate the building with the name of the Governor Julius Valentyn Stein van Gollennesse, and the date 1749 prominently displayed below the four gables is accepted as evidence of the year in which the foundation stone of the structure was laid. It apparently took a little over seven years to build. The Church was dedicated for public worship on the 6th day of March 1757, when a numerous assembly of Civil and Military Servants of the Company were present. The event has been recorded in " The Official (Dutch) Colombo Diary ".

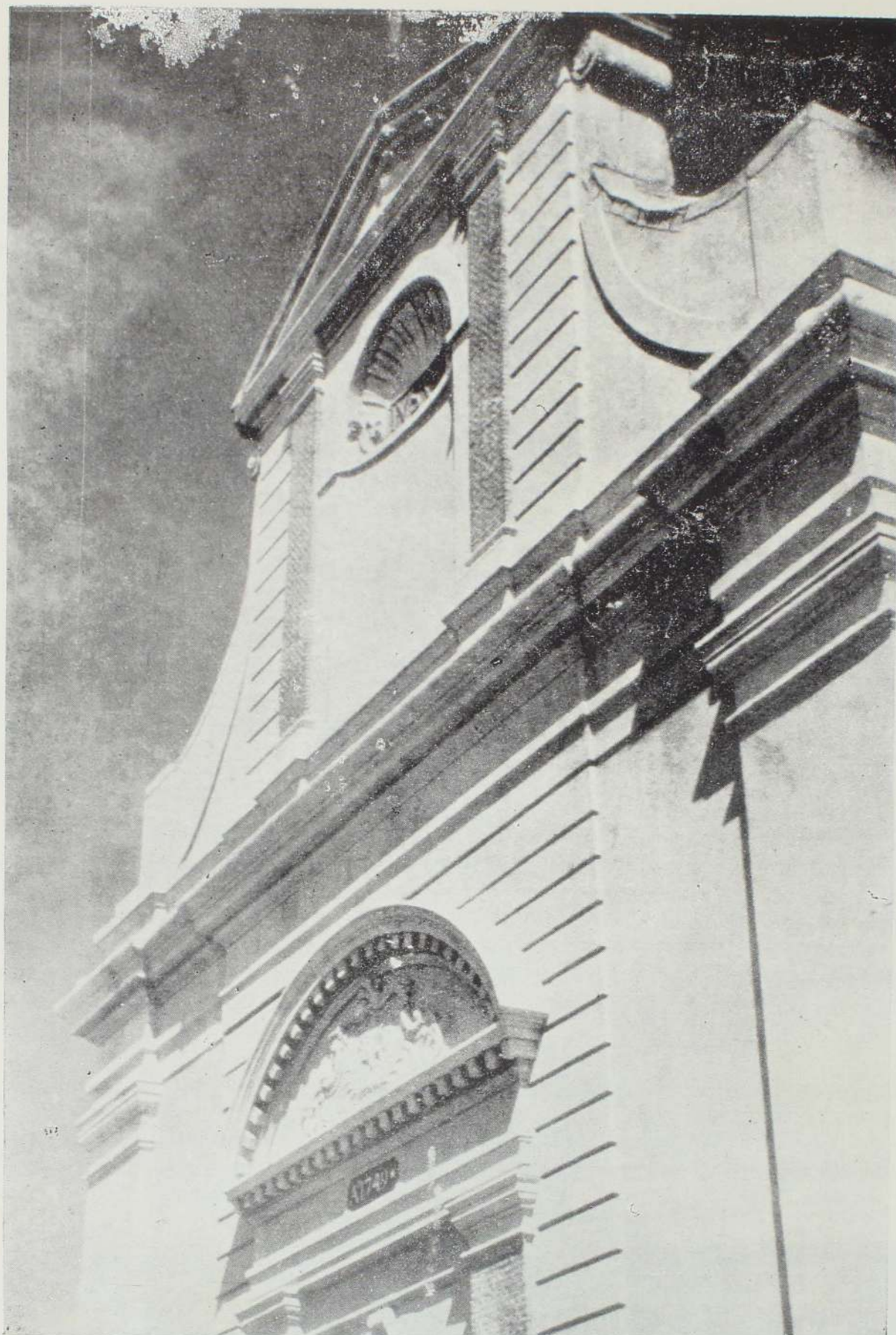
Wolvendaal Church has, therefore, withstood the storms and vicissitudes of over two centuries. It can look back on a time when it was envired by Dutch villas, clean shaded streets, and luxuriant gardens. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, a mounting flood of industrial enterprise, of trade and commerce, forced the merchant's godowns, the shops of the petty traders the labourers employed at the wharves, and that mysterious crowded life inseparable from Eastern posts, out of the principal business centres of the Dutch Castle-Fort into the girdling suburbs.

Yielding to a growing need and vital urge, the spacious gardens and the Dutch houses of the *Oude Stad* had to make way for stores, boutiques and dingy dens where humanity massed together. Hostling crowds, pestiferous hawkers, slow-moving bullock-carts, trams and lorries gradually invaded and clogged the narrow streets.

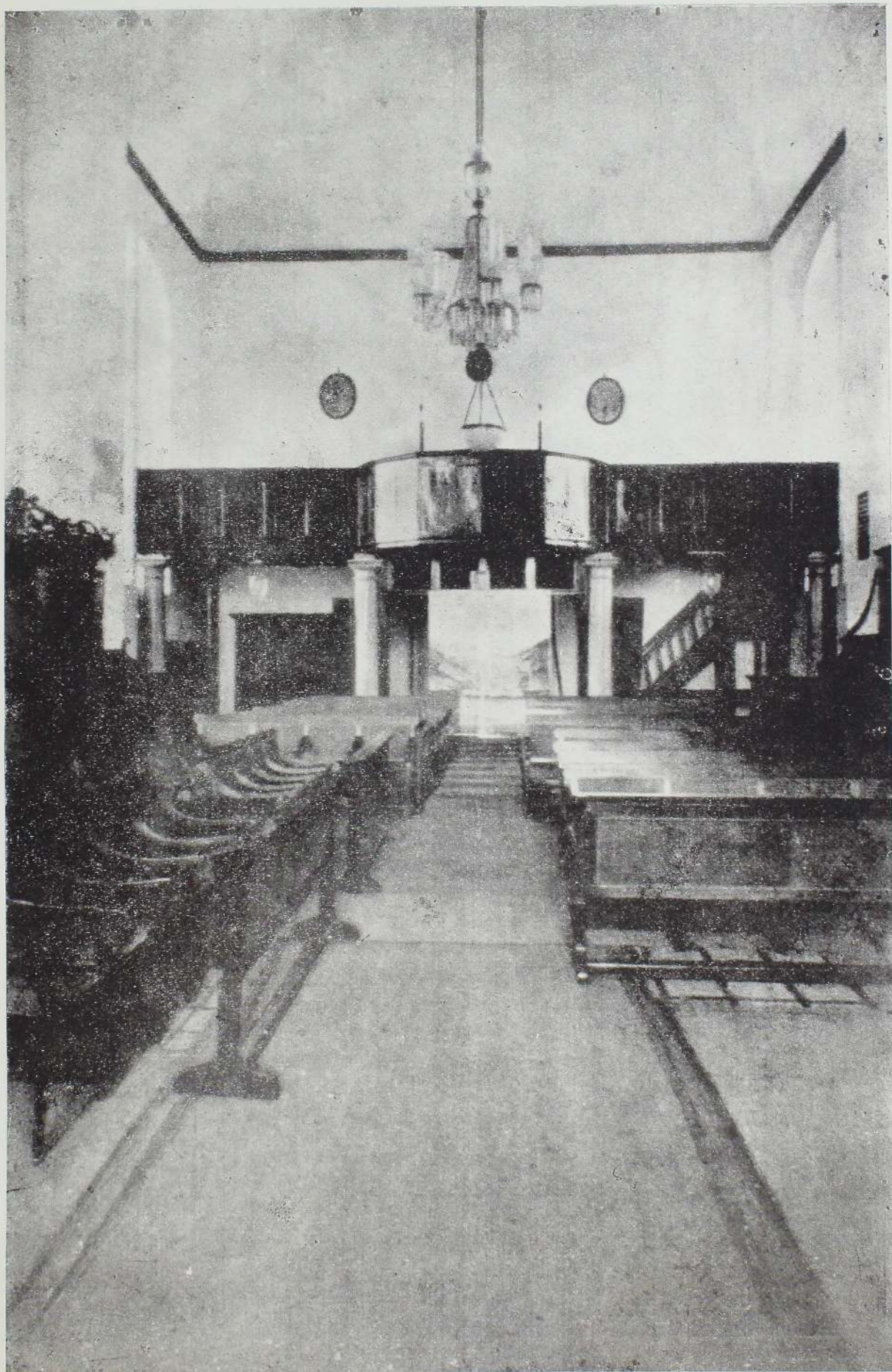
The sedate neatness and the order of those times when life moved leisurely in Wolvendaal is today no more than a distant dream which is conjured up only by the traditions and memorials within the walls of this old Church



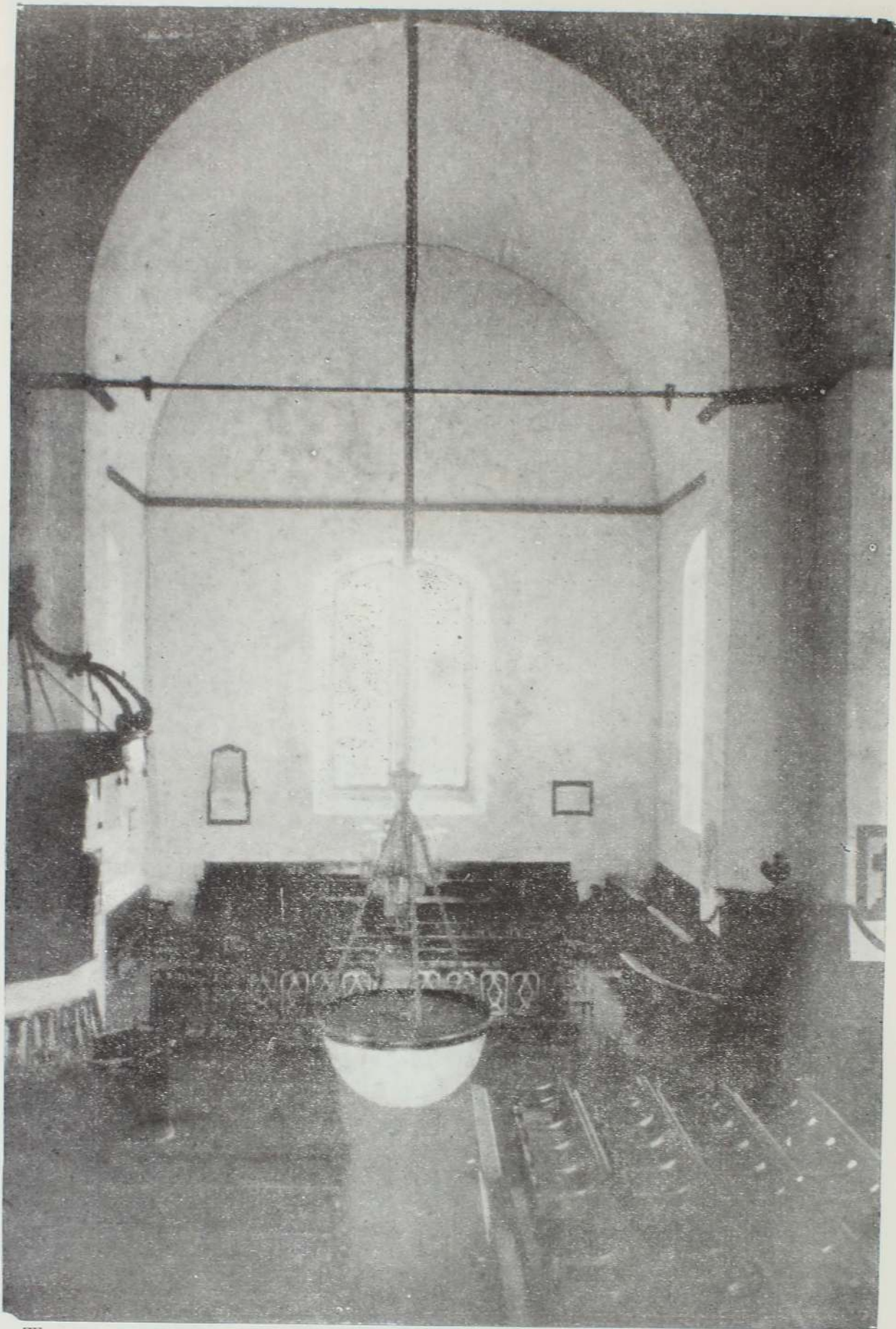
These arches, evolved from the genius of early Gothic, afford a grandeur and simplicity of line that is almost unique in the Island. This picture also shows the built-in pews for the Elders of the Church Consistory.



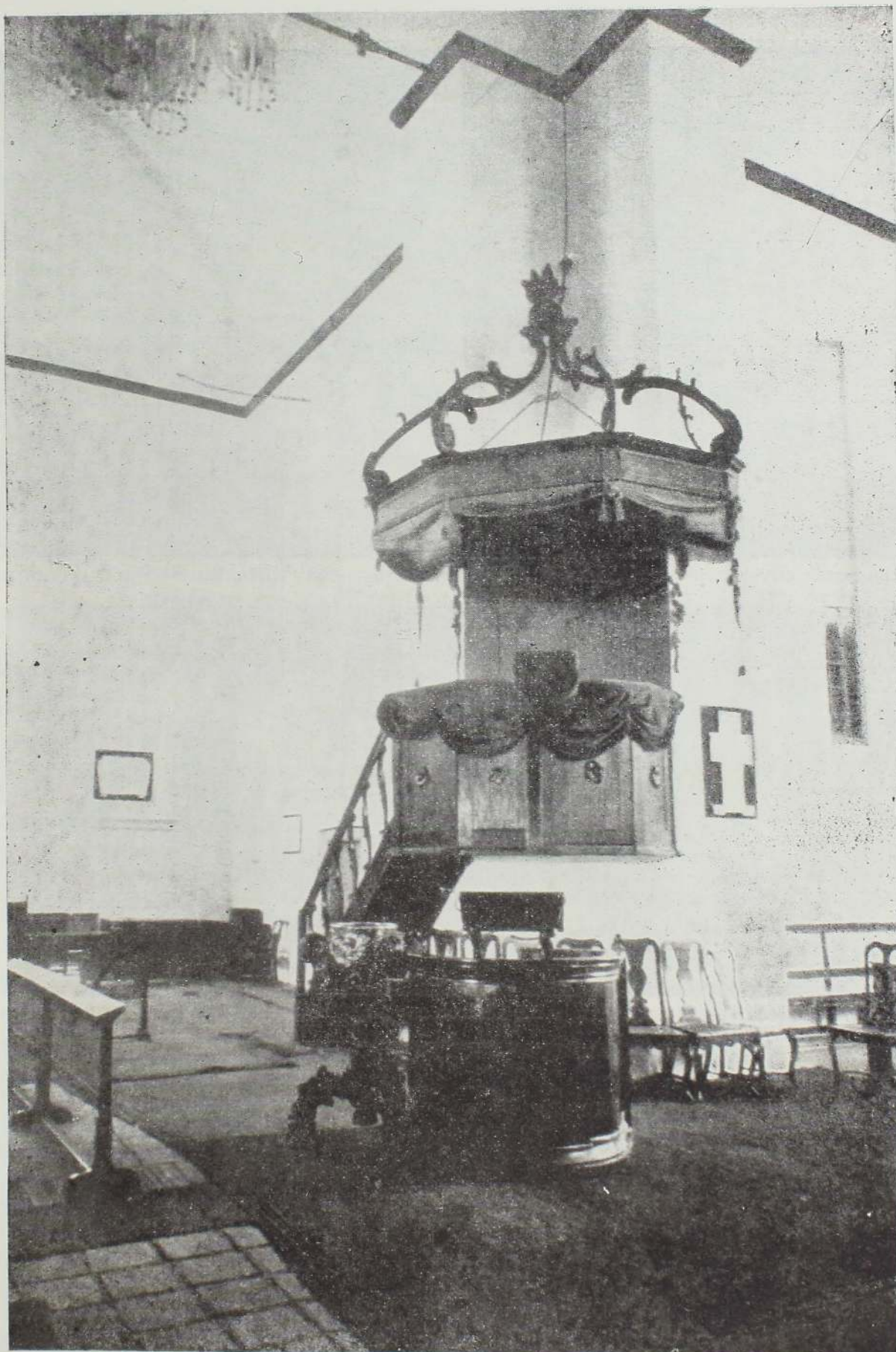
The Initials I. V. S. G. niched into the Southern gable of the Wolvendaal Church, indicate that the Church was built when Julius Valentyn Stein Gollenesse was Governor,



The Choir Stall and the Organ Loft above the western entrance. The Chandelier and the three globes suspended from the beam of the organ loft are memorials of the times when the Church was lit by candles and oil lamps.

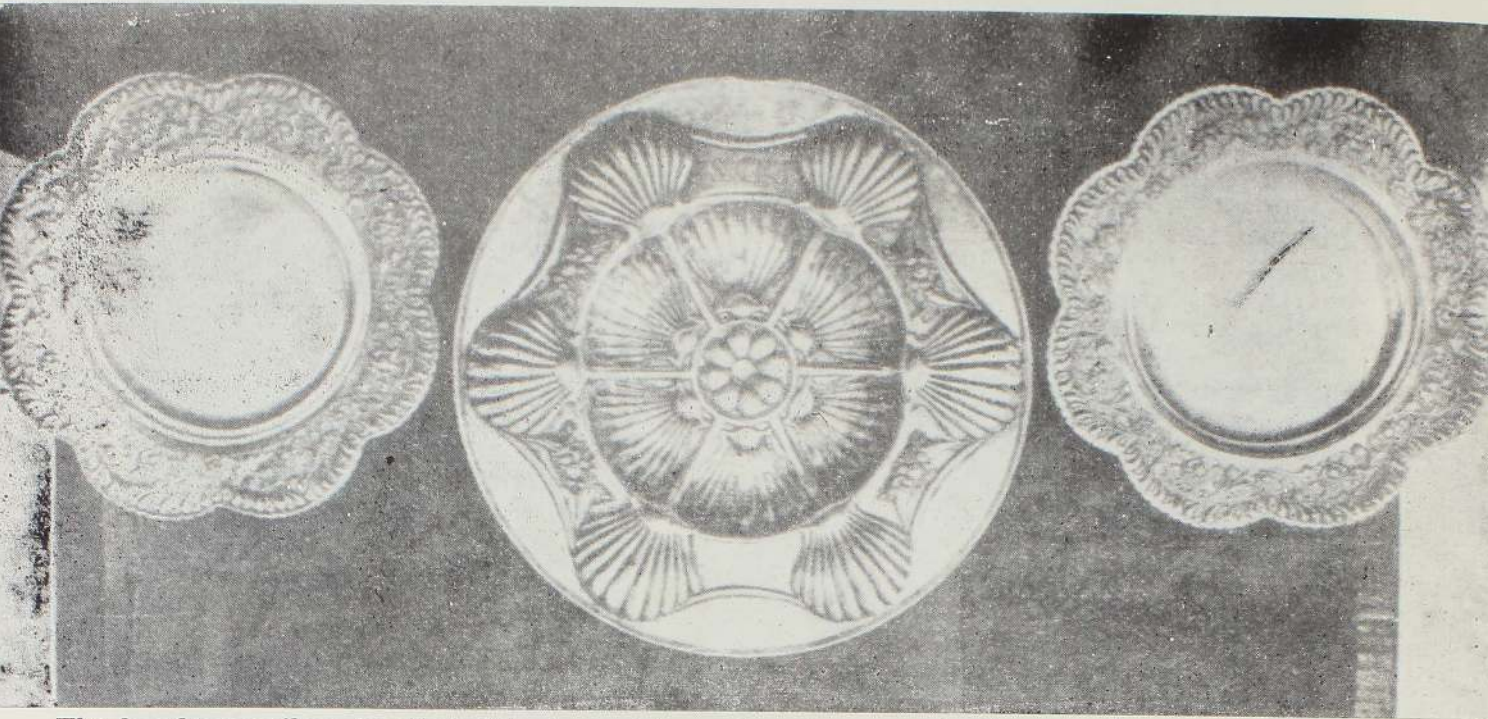


The eastern extension of the Church : all the year round the interior of the building is naturally cooled by the air wafted in from the sea.

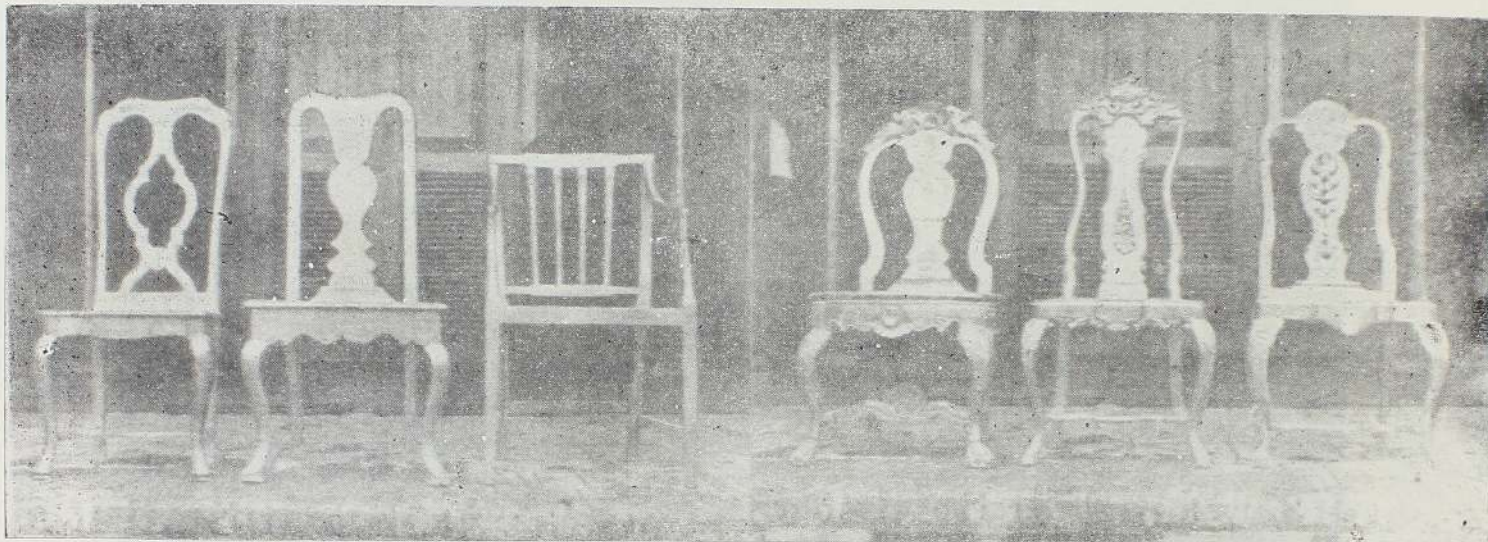


The Pulpit and Baptistry in the Wolvendaal Church - displaying the wooden ribbands and the tassels hanging around it.

The old silver used for the Communion Services in the Church.



The handsome silver baptismal basin and two silver trays used when the Sacrament is dispensed.



The variety of chairs to be seen in the Church captures the admiration of all connoisseurs.



The unique Silver Communion Service, including the Wine Toureen, the silver funnel and four silver Chalices on two silver patens.

which forms a bulwark to shut out a work-a-day world. It is the only unspoilt evidence in Colombo which reflects *in toto* the peculiar architecture of the Colonial Dutch.

Time was when this building served as a landmark to mariners to steer their ships into the roadstead of Colombo. It was originally roofed with brick-barrel arches and the central tower was surmounted by a gilt weather-cock. In 1856, a stroke of lightening carried away the weather-cock and so far damaged the central tower that it had to be taken down and replaced by a timber roof covered with blue Bangor slates. The monsoon storms of later years which spent their fury on the brick-lined plastered domes rendered the present modern iron covering necessary.

The interior of this beautifully proportioned cruciform building is everywhere stamped with details calculated to touch the most responsive chord of national sentiment. The organ-loft has been erected above the western entrance which opens to the wash of a stream of cool air wafted by a restless ocean. It is due to this circumstance that all the year round the interior of the building is naturally cooled. The organ-loft is today unoccupied.

The immense arches evolved from the genius of early Gothic, nevertheless erected in an age incapable of building in true Gothic, give a grandeur and simplicity of line that is almost unique in this Island. The stall fitted into the angle of the eastern and southern transepts is the Elder's Pew as originally constructed. Opposite it is the Deacons' Pew.

The windows constructionally are of the perpendicular style, a fashion chiefly represented in upright lines and enormous dimensions. The deep recesses were originally fitted with a heavily mullioned wooden frame and very simply glazed. The present stained glass windows of chaste and ornate design, fresh and unimpaired by the weight of tradition, were erected ninety-eight years ago.

The pulpit in Wolvendaal Church is placed at the north-east corner of the transepts. It had been developed on the national style. A certain simplicity and sensitiveness about the wood and carving in the selection and execution of which the Dutch so excelled, bespeak even to the uninitiated what the world has lost since machinery took the place of the patient craftsman. The wooden ribbands and the tassels hanging around the canopy display to perfection this forgotten art.

Immediately below the Pulpit are the Baptistry and the Lectern. The very handsome silver baptismal basin is two feet in diameter and weighs 206½ Surat rupees. This basin, and the exquisite carved stand on which it is placed when the Sacrament is dispensed, have borne a simple pathetic story down the tumultuous decades of Dutch history to our day.

In the words of an inscription on the carved stand, this baptismal font was gifted to the old Church of the Dutch Company (which stood in the Gordon Gardens) by the Governor Ryckloff van Goens over two-and-a-half centuries ago. Whilst commemorating the christening of his daughter named Celonia, these mementos also enshrine a tale of human life and love. The mother, Esther de Salome, died the very day after her infant daughter was baptized.

From the day of its dedication up to the end of the Dutch Rule in Ceylon, Wolvendaal Church was the principal place of worship in Colombo. This is borne out by the fact that special pews were provided in it for the Governor and other high officials of the Dutch Company.

The elaborately decorated Governor's pew, faced with velvet padding, stands just as it used to in the days of old when the Dutch Governors attended Church in State. It is directly opposite the Lectern on which the old Dutch Bible lies open, and spans the angle of the southern and western transept.

The interior of the Church is arranged to hold about 800 seats. On special occasions it has been found possible to accommodate over a thousand. The unromantic though comfortable modern pews provided for the regular members of the congregation have replaced a high-backed, wooden type introduced when the Church was originally furnished. Some of these old pews have been retained as interesting survivals of those bygone days and are placed against the walls on the transept. As mentioned in describing the Jaffna Church the custom which prevailed in the eighteenth century of keeping the *kerkstoel* or "church chair" in the home, and having it carried to church every Sunday, is a possible explanation of how such a large variety of chairs came to be collected in the Wolvendaal Church.

Even after the Wolvendaal Church was built the old Church in the Fort was used for interment of the dead. When the British took over, it was partly roofless, and crumbling to decay. Rank weeds and grass sprouted recklessly whenever their roots found a foothold and the crypts were exposed to the violent monsoon rains which they were never constructed to resist.

The forlorn state of this consecrated building was viewed in early British days with much concern, more so as it was an open confession of the desecration of the tombs of several men very eminent in their day.

The first step the British Government took was to consult the Consistory of the Wolvendaal Church and the Principal Dutch inhabitants who had elected to remain in this Island. Eventually a compromise was arrived at and the terms of the decision were published in a special supplement of the Government Gazette of the 2nd September, 1813. The announcement reads : "With the consent and approbation of the principal Dutch Inhabitants it

has been determined to remove the coffins and remains of the bodies interred, to the Church at Wolvendaal where proper vaults will be prepared for their reception ". The notification also informed the public that " This removal will take place on Saturday evening (the 4th of September 1813) at 6 o'clock " and gave expression to the wishes of the Government that : " His Majesty's Civil and Military Servants and the Inhabitants of Colombo would vie with one another in showing respect to the memory of the deceased, by their attendance upon the procession ".

The Order for the Ceremonial of the removal of the bodies is also found in the Supplement to the Government Gazette earlier referred to :

	Dutch Gentlemen	Troop of Cavalry Military Music A Captain's guard of Honour of His Majesty's 19th Regiment	Dutch Gentlemen	
		THE BODIES		
		borne by soldiers of His Majesty's 19th Regiment		
		Clergy of the Colony 13 Dutch Burghers.		
		Gentlemen of the Late Dutch Government		
		The Modeliars* of the Cutcherry of Colombo.		
		The Modeliars of the Commissioner of Revenue.		
		The Modeliars of the Chief Secretary.		
		The Modeliars of the Supreme Court. of Judicature.		
		The Modeliars of the Governor's Gate.		
		Military Officers of the Garrison of Colombo. (moving in files two deep) (junior ranks leading)		
		The Civil Servants of His Majesty's Government.		
		The Members of His Majesty's Council. (in their carriages.)		
		The Military Staff and Aides de Camp of His Excellency the Governor		
		The Governor in his carriage, accompanied by		
		The Hon'ble the Chief and Puisne Justices.		
		A Subaltern's Guard of His Majesty's 19th Regiment of Foot.		
		Orderly Dragoons.		

*Mudaliyar or (Modeliar), an honorific term employed by the Sinhala King to denote a person of rank derived from the Tamil term Mutaliyaar (Chief). The title was adopted by the Portuguese the Dutch and the British.

In the gloom between light and darkness rendered more soft by the strains of funeral music, the procession emerged, as arranged from the main gates of the Dutch castle-fort. In kaleidoscopic array produced by the multi-coloured uniforms and trappings of the participants, it moved along Koning's Straat (which corresponds identically with the Main Street of the Pettah), through the *Oude Stad*, and up the gentle slope of the hill on which the Wolvendaal Church was built.

Within the precincts of the substantial Church, vaults had been got ready for the reinterment of the remains conveyed in procession. In a soft and confused light of sepulchral gloom, which the trembling yellow flames from wicks floating in containers of coconut oil in elongated globular glass lamps failed to dissipate, the eye discerns a gathering of people which fills the Church to capacity.

In the pew with red velvet lining where since the dedication of the Church fifty years earlier the Dutch Governors had sat in dignified and wordly state, here sits equally dignified and stately, General Sir Robert Brownrigg Bart, the third of the British Governors of Ceylon, with the Chief Justice : The Hon'ble Sir Alexander Johnston, and the Hon. Mr. William Coke (Puisne) on either side of him. Both judges are attired in Wig and scarlet robes.

In the respective Elders' and Deacons' Pews there sit grey-headed old men, be-wiskered and in black coat, waist-coat and cravat. On a row of pegs let into the panelled wall behind their seats are ranged a line of top-hats which were the customary headgear for formal occasions. Accommodated on the high-backed chairs and the long wooden bench-pews according to precedence there sit, (compelled by the furniture to do so in stately erectness) the members of His Majesty's Civil and Military Services — all in uniform and trappings some with swords, some be-medalled, old campaigner and youthful cadet or subaltern as the case may be. The stately Church with its strange echoes also holds the Modeliars in resplendent gold-braided long coat with sarong cloth worn below it cleaning their hot faces after the long walk with cotton handkerchiefs, also the poor man, pious and devout, who has followed in with the crowd in his seedy garments, and the rich ones who look down on him in contempt who have come on the invitation to the "Inhabitants of Colombo to vie with one another in showing respect". A Predicant mounts the pulpit. He opens the Book, and pronounces in a dirgeful tone the appropriate portions of the usual services for the burial of the dead. Thus was another page in the history of diplomacy turned over.

The following are the names of the deceased Governors with the dates of their respective deaths, whose remains were removed in the procession and

thereafter a list of their relations and others whose remains were removed without ceremony on a later occasion.*

GOVERNORS :

The Hon'ble Meynheer Hertenberg	Died	1725
The Hon'ble Meynheer Vreeland	„	1752
The Hon'ble Baron Van Eck	„	1765
The Hon'ble Meynheer Falck	„	1785
The Hon'ble Meynheer Van Angelbeek	„	1802

OTHERS :

“ Relations of Governor VREELAND

Meynheer L. SCHMIDT

Vrouw SCHMIDT

Two sons of the late Commander of Galle Meyheer Fretz.

“ Relations of Governor Baron VAN ECK ”

Meynheer DE LANNCY

Vrouw DE LANNOY

“ Relations of Governor FALCK ”

Colonel PARAVACINI

Vrouw PARAVACINI

Formerly Widow of Governor FALCK.

“ Wife and Relations of Governor VAN ANGELBEEK ”

Vrouw VAN ANGELBEEK

Vrouw VAN DE GRAAF

Vrouw VAN DEVER

Vrouw VAN DE GRAAFF

Governor SCHRUEDER'S Daughter

Other persons whose remains have been ascertained.

Head Administrator VAN MINNEN

The son of Governor DOMBURG

Vrouw LOTEN wife of Governor LOTEN

*From the Supplement to the Ceylon Government Gazette Tuesday, 2nd Sept. 1813.
 (“ Lapidarium Zeylanicum ”. Ludovici 1877).

Meynheer ALEBOS
Maynheer LINDERBORN
Meynheer HOLST.

There also were interred the remains of three others whose names are unknown.

The tombstones appertaining to the distinguished persons whose remains were interred were in due course removed from the Fort to the Wolvendaal Church and laid over the new vaults. Several other memorial tablets and gravestones, scattered in the premises of the old Church in the Fort, were more leisurely transported from the site to Wolvendaal. Some of them have been set up on the outside walls of the Church, others in bits and pieces can still be traced in the walled compound.

There are three hatchments in Wolvendaal Church. The huge conical-shaped achievement on the wall of the western transept is the memorial of Governor Iman William Falck. The coat-of-arms is emblazoned at the head of the monument. The crest is a demi-falcon (the upper half of a falcon) of gold, with wings expanded. It is supported on the helmet by a wreath supposed to be composed of two strands of twisted ribbon. The helmet is barred, in semi-profile.

This truly excellent man in the course of his government, which lasted twenty years, retrieved the losses of previous wars. By the Treaty of 1766 with the King of Kandy he established Dutch sovereignty over the entire maritime areas of Ceylon, restored good order in every department, and died in 1785 universally respected.

The two other hatchments are on the walls on either side of the South entrance of the Church. These emblazoned heraldic devises are raised to the memory of Jacomina Lever, wife of Governor van Angelbeek, and her daughter Christine Elizabeth Van Angelbeek, wife of Governor van de Graaff.

The Records in the Wolvendaal Church consist of over 86 volumes and include unique registers of marriages and baptisms which are complete from 1743. There are other interesting documents dating to the seventeenth century, and minutes and letter books covering practically the whole of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Some of these records are in a good state of preservation, others have suffered by time. They are a mine of valuable information to the historian.

In the Main Street of the Pettah and at the foot of Wolvendaal hill, there stands the old Belfry with the bell which called worshippers to prayer at the Wolvendaal Church. Time was when it also served as a Curfew Bell "to mark the closing of the Castle Gates and lights out".



A mid-nineteenth century impression of the Belfry at Kayman's Gate.
(The bell dates from the 16th century and originally hung in a Portuguese Church dedicated to St. Francis in the Royal City, Kotte.)

Main Street was known as "Koning's Straat" in Dutch times, and terminated at Kayman's Gate, after which the belfry is called. Just outside this gateway there ran the so-called St. John's river from the lake to the sea - in reality the moat of the old Portuguese Fort of Colombo. Kayman's Gate a name, which is a little less easy to trace, is popularly considered to be of corrupt derivation, traceable to the Dutch patois as spoken in their Colonial possessions. In this sense, *kaaiman* meant alligator, and the name was given to the gate as the crocodiles, which at that period were found in large numbers in the Beira Lake, were wont to find their way to this spot along St. John's River, and feed on the garbage of the City.

The Kayman's Gate bell is said to date back to the sixteenth century, and to have originally hung in the Portuguese Church dedicated to Saint Francis, which once stood in the heart of the Royal City of Kotte. This city was abandoned in 1565 and became a howling wilderness. In Dutch times it was re-occupied. The bell, found amidst the ruins of palaces and temples and churches, was apparently removed in due course by the Dutch, and was set up on the Belfry at Kayman's Gate.

Here it hangs to this day, still doing service as a Church Bell. In the stream of commerce which whirls around it, both the bell and the belfry apparently fail to claim any notice except when, on festive occasions, or to mark special services at the Wolvendaal Church, it proclaims its existence by a joyful peal to that multi-coloured seething life of the East which had invaded this part of the City.



Facsimile of the design of the earliest seal of the Dutch Reformed Church of Ceylon. (See page 111).

V Canals and Irrigation

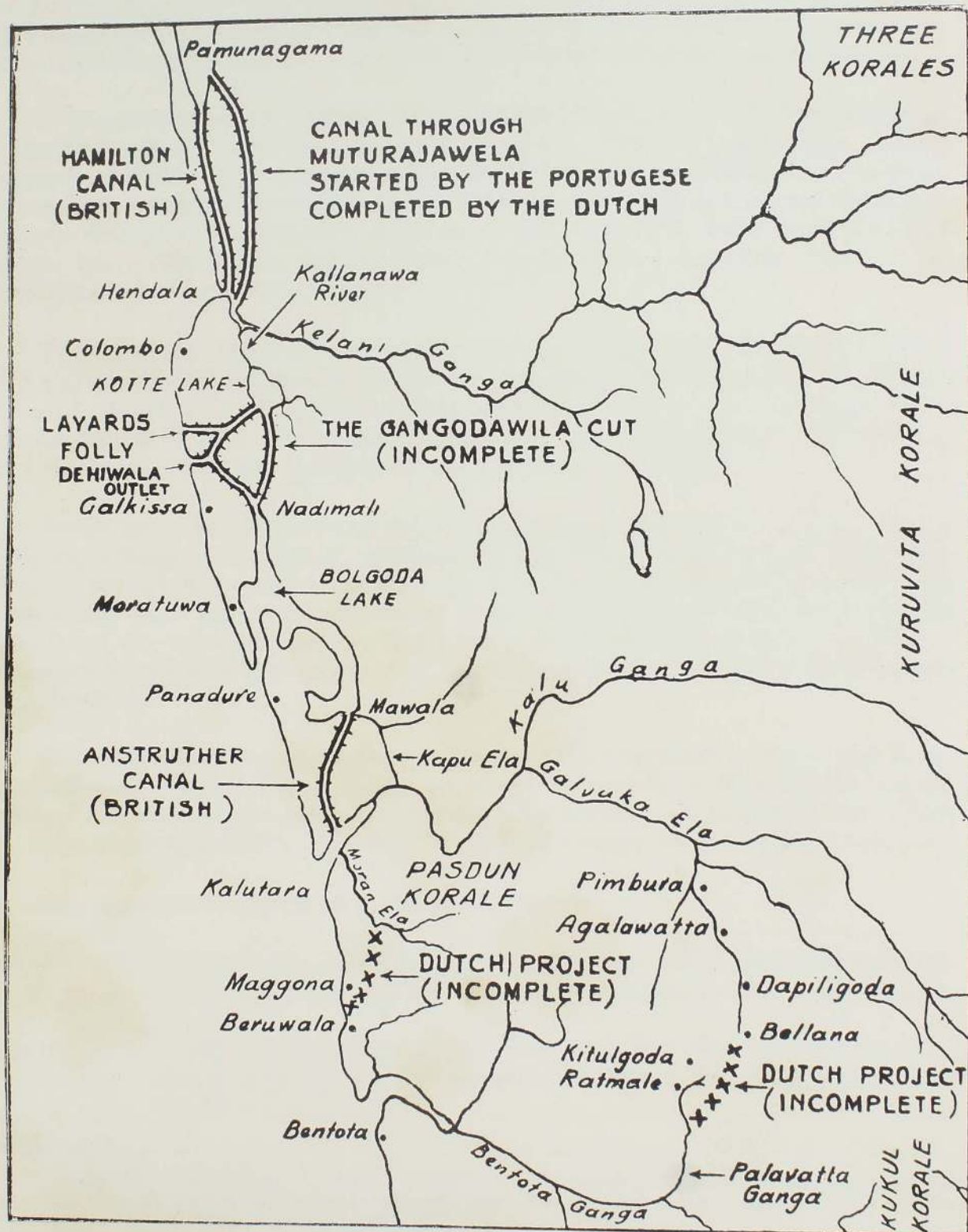
The fact that most of the home-country was situated below sea-level had made the Colonial Dutch engineer very much aware of the presence of water. It is therefore not surprising that he specialised in this aspect of engineering. The legacies to Ceylon which afford evidence of this water-sense are discernible in the commercial waterways they built — which have made history, in the works they undertook to prevent floods and in their contribution by way of restoring the ancient irrigation works or building new ones.

Few Dutch engineering projects in Ceylon have contributed in a larger measure to the splendid prosperity of the districts they served, than the canal-cuts made by their hydraulic engineers to link up streams, lakes and lagoons. At one period this canal system established a continuous line of water-way between the ports and remote parts of their territory. In a modern age we are no doubt apt to be unmindful of its scope and utility in establishing communication and providing transport facilities for agricultural produce and other products.

Over fifty years ago, a British Governor of Ceylon while publicly opening a railway which had been built in a Low-country District earlier canalised by the Dutch said : “ I am perfectly certain that if these canals had not been in existence, we should not have been privileged to witness the prosperity which it is our privilege to see today . . . we must not forget the services that have been rendered by the canals, especially the services of those who built them and are responsible for the prosperity ”.

All but two of the larger rivers of Ceylon have their source in the central mountain mass. When surcharged by monsoon rains, they make a short swift descent laden with sand and alluvium. Gradually losing velocity as they meander over the plains, the accumulation of sand and soil brought down, instead of being carried out to sea, is heaped up and forms bars at the river's mouth. These obstructions force the sluggish river-waters to flow behind the obstructions they have created in search of new outlets. Thus they form chains of tortuous lakes and shallow lagoons for considerable distances along the coasts. Such conditions are present both on the east and the west side of the Island.

The Arabian geographers called them “ The Gobbs of Serendib ”, into which their seamen were accustomed for short periods when the monsoons were rolling a surf alternately on the east or the west coast. The Dutch saw in these sheltered sheets of water the opportunity to establish lines of water-ways which provided both easy and cheap transport of goods from outlying areas to their ports.



Man-made waterways in the west-coast areas of Colombo-Kalutara,

9/Pamundor



The first canal they probably built was from the Kelani Ganga (north of Colombo) through the Mutturajawela (swampy paddy-growing country) to Pamunugama, (see diagram). Apparently this project had been started by the Portuguese, but left unfinished. The Dutch completed it, and taking advantage of the Negombo Lagoon to which it led established communications over the 23 miles between their stations at Colombo and Negombo.

It is on record that by 1706 the canal from Negombo was being extended to the Maha Oya. Possibly within that decade cuts had been made linking rivers, backwaters and lagoons which established water-communication from Colombo to Puttalam (120 Miles) and fifteen miles more across the Puttalam Lake to Kalpitiya. Although sections of this waterway have been long out of use, the entire route can be clearly traced from large-scale maps aerial photographs and on the ground.

These navigable lanes present many fascinating water-spreads of reposeful beauty, literally carpeted in certain seasons with water-lilies of various size and colour, with flat floating leaves anchored to the bed by stems three or four feet in length and smooth as a piece of rubber tubing. The leaves provide an endless crazy-pattern on the surface of the water.

Away from the towns and urban areas the padda-boats* is even today sometimes used to transport produce on the rivers, lagoons and canal-sections which are navigable : very rarely, but if not improbable, you may still come upon that patient padda-boat team chanting their age-old songs, as they tread the tow-path pulling their bulky craft over the sluggish waters — halting intermittently to clear the sand-bar, silt, or salvinia which blocks their progress.

The scheme of inland river and canal communication over the Low-country south of the Kelani Ganga appears to have been established largely through the zeal and personal endeavour of Governor Van Imhoff (1736 - 1740) He submitted his Memoir to the Council of Ceylon in February 1740.

The projects mentioned in this Memoir are :—

- Scheme (i) A link connecting Nedimala and Kotte, which provides a Continuous water-way from the Kelani Ganga to the Kalu Ganga.
- Scheme (ii) A link connecting Moran Ela and the Kaluwa-modera Ela which provides communication between the Kalu Ganga and the Bentota Ganga.

*A large flat bottomed boat (sometimes referred to as paddi-boats) with a removable roofing, which the Dutch introduced to navigate these canals with heavy loads of merchandise. They are towed, punted, and sometimes sailed down the rivers.

Scheme (iii) A link between the Galvaka Ela and the Palawatta Ganga for providing an alternate inland communication between the Kalu Ganga and the Bentota Ganga.

Let us briefly examine these schemes with the help of the diagram. The sluggish water course we call the Kolonnawa River leads to a marsh bound sheet of water called the Kotte Lake. The canal from the Kotte Lake to Bolgoda Lake is in present times popularly known as the Kirillapone-Dehiwela-Nedimala Canal. In his memoir, van Imhoff refers to "an old Portuguese water-way which flows from the Lake of Nedimala to . . . the river or stream of Cotta". This rather conclusively proves that the predecessors of the Dutch were responsible for this 8 mile stretch of canal.

A cut was made from this section to the sea at Wellawatte, about 1872, when C. P. Layard was Government Agent of the Western Province. It was intended to be a flood outlet, but came to be called "Layards Folly" because the bed of the canal was much higher than the flooded area.*

The trace which linked the Bolgoda Lake to the Kalu Ganga, and provided communication to Kalutara, is to this day called the Kapu Ela, literally "cut water-way". There is nothing to indicate whether the Portuguese or the Dutch were responsible for its construction. In later years, the British appreciably reduced the distance from the Bolgoda Lake to Kalutara along the Kapu Ela by a more direct cut. This is called the Anstruther canal.**

The project referred to as Scheme (i) in van Imhoff's list was a bypass intended to shorten the distance from the Kotte Lake to the Bolgoda Lake. A proposal to have this canal constructed had been discussed by the Dutch Political Council of Ceylon as early as 1706, that is to say 30 years before van Imhoff's time. The project appears to have been started and then abandoned on the advice of the Captain Engineer Jan Christians Toorzee, on the score of the high cost of construction and other difficulties involved, chiefly the high hill which had to be cut through.

Having stressed the advantages of this scheme, Governor van Imhoff urged that if the scheme was not undertaken it "would not only be lost labour and expense in respect of the past, but it would also be a great pity and loss in regard to the future, considering the fact that the high land (it is true somewhat an obstacle) and the emergency of the hillocks below could give work for a couple of years, while the lowland on the other hand could

*It was subsequently deepened and functioned for a considerable time as the best flood outlet of the Kelani Ganga. In more recent years it was converted into a rain water outlet, draining from the area protected by the Colombo South Flood Protection scheme.

**Philip Anstruther (1819 — 1845) was Collector of Colombo in 1829.

be opened on both sides with little labour ". The point was that even if the hill was not cut through, the inhabitants would profit by the opening of the canal on both sides for a " padda-boat " service, and that by experiencing the advantage of this limited service, the inhabitants would demolish the hill in course of time to get full measure of the benefits. His great concern, as he put it was, " after my departure perhaps these schemes may run the risk of being suspended as being impracticable or under some other pretence, as was already the case because it turned out to be more difficult than originally anticipated.

The following orders were issued in this connection by the Governor General and the Council at Batavia in 1740.

" From the reasons adduced, it appears that the earth-cutting in the Colombo disavany would prove beneficial and useful in every way, and the ministers (Councillors) are therefore hereby definitely recommended to expedite the progress and completion of this work, even by the employment of the 200 eastern artificers sent out to Ceylon both direct and via Mallabar (if the Councillors consider such a step expedient and necessary), in order further to expedite this work ".

The project was still under the construction in 1743, and the canals from the two ends terminating at the hill at Gangodavila, through which the Kelani Valley railway runs today in deep cutting, were eventually completed. The intervening distance was said to have been 120 Rhenish Roods, or nearly 500 English yards. Nevertheless, van Imhoff's convictions that the inhabitants would effect the connection by cutting through the hill, turned out after all to be a case of wishful thinking.

The canals which were cut could be traced to this day in sections along their routes. They have been long out of use.

Scheme (ii) was an equally ambitious undertaking. The object was to link up the port at Barberyn (Beruwala) for two principal reasons. First, to transport arrack from the distilleries, the coir fibre and other articles, to the warehouses for shipment by vessels which called at that port. Secondly to transport the cinnamon delivered at the warehouses at Barberyn, and the other produce mentioned by padda-boats to Colombo, when the monsoons prevent ships from finding anchorage in that roadstead.

Construction on this project too appears to have been started in 1740. In the month of March, three years later, the Hon'ble Arent Van Broyel Dissava of the Colombo suburbs, reporting to the then acting Governor, Daniel Overbeek, said : " In this district (Kalutara) the earth cutting for the new watercourse which is to extend from the river here (Kalu Ganga) beyond Payegalle towards Makoene (Magonna) has been completed for about

1,400 roods (3 miles, 474 yards) or $\frac{3}{5}$ of the entire distance, leaving a stretch of only 1,000 or 1,200 roods (about $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles) to be completed for which 200 men are required who with a spell of good weather, could complete the work within 4 or 5 months."

The endorsement made thereon by the acting Governor, was : " the Dissava and the Commandant of Kalutara are earnestly recommended to expedite the construction of this canal as a very useful work with a view to its early completion ".

This waterway is shown on modern maps as the Dummala-moderā Ela, and does not appear to have been carried beyond the cabook hills of Maggona. Apparently enough labour could not be found to work the deep cutting that an extension would have entailed.

The third and last scheme was intended to tap the remote areas of the Pasdum Korale and is of special interest since it has never been mentioned before.

The most outstanding feature of this proposal is its political rather than economic significance. While ostensibly it was to open up the back blocks of a district from which produce, principally valuable timber could not be transported without considerable expense, it held out the possibility of communication from the very gates of Colombo to an inaccessible but none the less important frontier separating the Dutch Maritime zone and the territory of the Sinhalese King. To the east of the country through which the canal was to pass, there lay the Kuruvita and Kukul Korales of Saffragam.

The story of the attempt to connect the two natural water-ways is told in a Resolution of the Dutch Political Council which is dated the 26th April 1747, seven years after van Imhoff's departure from Ceylon. It is supplemented with a report by Lieutenant Dissava Coenraat Pieter Keller who had been ordered to make a personal inspection of the earth-cutting between the Pelawatta Ganga.

A note on the margin of the report states : " It was observed that this report in no way helped further in the matter, for it furnished no additional information to what was already a matter of common knowledge, namely, that the channel from one river to the other is a distance of $11\frac{1}{4}$ hours, that 6 hours distance of this was already navigable, that a distance of $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours could be made navigable with a little labour, and finally that the hill would have to be cut through a distance of $3\frac{3}{4}$ hours, with the imprudent remark that no telescope was available to ascertain whether the area was generally hilly, which is all the less pardonable as the lay of the land was visible here and there. Therefore, since Keller himself is not so ignorant as to be unaware of the fact that the main point in this matter and one which we parti-

cularly wish to have information on is the extent of the hills that have to be negotiated in this earth-cutting and as to require telescope and other instruments for ascertaining this, it is resolved to send the said Lieutenant Dissava Keller thither once again, accompanied by the Engineer and Second Lieutenant of the Artillery Jacob Hendrick de Vries, strictly enjoining them to proceed with this work with great circumspection and provide themselves before-hand with the tools required for clearing the necessary gaps for discovering the cliffs, and also ascertain from the water levels to what depths it be necessary to cut through the cliffs in order to render this channel navigable and to connect up the aforesaid two streams of Galwecke and Pellewatte ”.

In the more recent decades the rubber lands which were opened in the locality have silted the valley and considerably altered the topography. Nevertheless a chain of paddy fields and water-logged deniyas (marsh-lands) reveal the only possible trace. There is not a fragment of evidence which shows that constructions were ever attempted.*

The Colombo rendezvous for all the very large canal traffic in the Dutch and early British times, was the “Grand Pass”, a name given to an old time ferry on the bend of the Kelani Ganga north of Colombo. It was veritably an inland port, constantly crowded with flat-bottomed padda-boats.

As a result, from the commercial view-point the most important Dutch canal in the Island was the San Sabastian Canal. It originated at Grand Pass (near the present Victoria Bridge) and thrust its way through the swamps of Bloemendhal, by the base of Hultsdorp hill to the Beira lake, and then to Colombo’s water-front. Enormous cargoes of copra, and cinnamon, pepper, fibre, arrack and other articles of trade, which found their way down the north and south-Colombo canal systems, were carried down the San Sebastian Canal and loaded into ships. It is in use to this day despite competition with quicker road and rail transport, and delays caused by ineffectual maintenance which periodically hold up traffic.

The suburbs of Galle and Matara too were in like respect canalized to facilitate transport of produce and for floating down timber from forests in the hinterland. The longest canal in Galle — still called the *Kapu Ela*, or the “cutwaterways”, takes off from the Gin Ganga and meanders over twenty miles of suburb with flood-outlets to the sea. A subsidiary canal traceable to this day is called the Muwangoda Ela. Further south, a canal system of about 30 miles, was based on the Polwatta Ganga at Weligama and the Nilwala Ganga which flows by the Matara Fort.

*The author acknowledges his obligation to Mr. S. A. W. Mottau, Assistant Government Archivist (retired) for the references from the Dutch records and the translations embodied in the text. These abstracts tell among other facts of the difficulties faced by those by-gone engineers who planned and constructed the miles of water-ways which linked the flourishing trade centres round Colombo to Puttalam on the north, and Kelutara on the south.

Howbeit, it is to the coast north and south of Batticaloa one must look for the best combination of advantages for water navigation, which the Dutch developed to a considerable extent. Both tradition and historical evidence show that the 31 mile stretch of water from Batticaloa to Samanthurai was one of the oldest lines of internal water-communication and the principal trade-route of this District. At the southernmost limit, in later years the Dutch established a mart and built large go-downs to store the produce from the extensive tracts of paddy lands, which they conveyed by boat to the large ocean going sailing ships which anchored off the Bar of the provincial centre today called Batticaloa.

Even so, in the near past, the bulk of the trade in the regions south of Batticaloa — particularly copra and paddy was carried by this waterway. Few people are aware that the northern regions of Batticaloa were similarly suited, and that the Dutch by a series of canal-cuts provided a water-way from Vanderloos Bay (26 miles north of Batticaloa), and thus provided a continuous line of inland water-transport for 57 miles.

Obviously it was the cheap and stolid means of transport afforded by the canals built by the Dutch which influenced trade and commerce in the coastal strips they occupied. No effective attempt was made to afford protection to inland water-transport against the competition of other modern methods, which have since stepped in. The old Dutch canals have therefore in the past six decades fallen increasingly into disuse.

One point generally overlooked, is that today they do not even serve their secondary function of importance — namely, as a protection against flooding which is proving so great a menace in the Low-Country plains of the Island, and in the expanding towns — more especially Colombo.

Ryclof Van Goens, one of the early Dutch Governors, observed in a Memoir for the guidance of his successors : “ The successful promotion of agriculture, the cultivation of paddy, relieves the mind of the ruler of all anxiety as to the supply of rice, the staple food of the people, and also saves a considerable amount of money which would otherwise be withdrawn from the Island ”. This sound advice led to considerable pains being taken by successive Dutch Governors, to encourage the cultivation of this commodity by restoring the ancient irrigation works in the Low-country and by the construction of new works.

There can be found no more eloquent testimony to this practical policy, and to the Dutch contribution to Ceylon irrigation engineers, than is found in the words of Sr. Henry Ward, a British Governor of Ceylon, when he addressed the Legislative Council in July 1858 :-



Sections of the old Dutch Canal through Negombo. The top illustration also shows the type of barge (provided with a thatched roof) which the Dutch introduced to Ceylon for use on their Canals. It is called locally : “ padda boat ” and was towed using a tow-path on the bank or poled or sailed.

“ The most thrifty of our predecessors, the Dutch, found it good economy to encourage the agriculture of the low country by costly works which have been allowed to fall into decay ; and I say it with regret as an Englishman, in traversing the Girawa Pattu and the fertile districts in the neighbourhood of Tangalla, the least observant traveller may trace the exact line where the Dutch irrigation system has ceased to exercise its beneficent influence. One-third of the rice-grounds between the mountains and the coast has been thrown out of cultivation since 1837 by the destruction of the dams at Urubokka and Kirama, with a loss to the Government of £ 20,000 a year in tithe, and to the population of ten times that amount in seed, labour and agricultural capital. I propose to remove that blot from our escutcheon by restoring the works both of Urubokka and Kirama ”.

In a part of his speech relating to the Eastern Province he makes the following remarks regarding a village in the Batticaloa District :—

“ Kaenkottativoe, the principal village of Akkarai-Pattu, stands at the commencement of that magnificent large range of paddylands, nearly 15,000 acres in extent, which has survived the destruction of the old irrigation works, though the crops are exposed to many risks from the two extensive droughts and inundations, against which the Dutch had successfully guarded them ”.

The Urubokka dam mentioned in the earlier context is the masterpiece of Dutch irrigation engineering. It was a challenge to nature and a victory over a curious climatic barrier which left one side of a mountain range plentifully supplied with rain and the other subject to excessive drought. By building a dam across the upper affluent of a river in the Matara District the engineer formed a reservoir, and dropped the surcharged waters from one to the other side of a mountain range called Rammeli Kanda by a channel in deep cutting. By linking this to a non-perennial river on the opposite side of the hill which was subject to the caprice of the monsoon and was practically dry for half the year, he unfolded a scheme which safe-guarded paddy cultivation under irrigation en route of several thousands of acres as far as Ranna in the parched Girawa Pattu Plains.

There are many references to this unique irrigation scheme. Governor Van der Graaf says in his “ Instructions ” left to his successor : “ In the Matara District a great deal of water was turned some years ago . . . this occasions a double benefit. In the first place it supplies a dry tract of country with water, and in the second place there is not so much water as formerly in the river of Matara, the land situated below the outlet is in proportion less exposed to inundation ”. The man responsible for this masterpiece was Lieut : and Land Surveyor P. Foenander, a zealous officer in the Company’s service whose name also stands frequently associated with many other reports concerning tanks and irrigation schemes. As was promised in Governor

Wards address, earlier quoted the scheme which fell into ruin was later restored and is to this day an important auxiliary to the agricultural possibilities of a region subject to long droughts.

Unfortunately none of the Dutch engineering plans and reports of the extensive restoration and re-designing they carried out in the Eastern Province under the Pattipola Aar (Gal Oya) have been traced locally, but there are a few maps which they produced under the tantalising possibility of reviving the ancient prosperity of the Trincomalee District, by restoring the immense old tank at Kantalai.

The immense possibilities for irrigation, and the advance which would be gained by the restoration of Kantalai were realized by early Dutch Governors. They were however not in a position to investigate the Scheme as the headworks lay in the Kings territory. Soon after the Treaty of 1766, whereby the Dutch gained control over the coasts round the Island "to the breadth of one Sinhalese mile inland . . ." a Chart was prepared by Engineer Fornbauer, and submitted with a detailed report to Governor Van der Graff.*

There are many maps and plans extant, and Reports by the Dutch engineers which testify to the intensive investigation they carried out in attempts to restore other works built by the Sinhala Kings they found in ruin. Of these plans, those of the large tank off Mannar — which the village traditionalist referred to as *Sodayan Kattu Kaeri* (the embankment built by a giant) bear greatest evidence to their methods and the accuracy of the data they collected. They helped to consolidate the traditional story by referring to this work as *Reusewerk* (Giant's work) which has given rise to its modern name Giant's tank.

Of the many flood-protection works the Dutch engineers bequeathed to Ceylon there are some in use to this day controlling flood-waters on the east coast between Batticaloa and Kalmunai, off the Nilwala Ganga at Matara and in the northern suburbs of Colombo. The Mulleriyawa Tank in the lower reaches of the Kelani Ganga is another example of a combined flood protection and irrigation scheme. It is recalled today in a badly breached bund, and an intensely populated suburb of Colombo which bears its name.

*A copy of the Chart is in the Surveyors Generals Office Colombo and is described in *Land, Maps and Surveys* (R. L. Brohier) Vol. II p. 135. The report is filed in the Government Archives Ceylon Lot. 82/210. A translation in English by George Lee, submitted to the Government in 1838, is also filed in the Archives with the certified Report. Also see the authors publications on the Ancient Irrigation works of Ceylon Vol. I for details of this scheme.

VII Administration of Land

"Whatever the faults of the Dutch administration in Ceylon they recognised the existing rights of the people and did nothing to interfere with this immemorial custom of land tenure. They rather encouraged the possession and cultivation of land by natives, and were content with the revenues derived from customary tithes. There never were Dutch landed-proprietors. The masses therefore held the land, and the greatest of these is the last". So wrote that most altruistic patriot and champion of the Sinhala nation — C. E. Corea, sixty years ago.

The land tenurial system of Ceylon, constituted by custom in ancient times, continued unchanged even after the arrival of the Portuguese in 1505. When the King of Portugal was proclaimed King of the realm of Kotte in 1597, and the Portuguese took over the administration of a territory extending from Chilaw to the Walawe Ganga and inland up to the frontiers of Kandy and Uva, they were not slow in realizing the advantages of modelling their machinery for settlement of land according to the ancient custom, and on the feudal registers of the Sinhalese.

It was there early in the 17th century that the Portuguese set about registering the individual land holdings in the realm bequeathed to them. To achieve this, they chose a board composed of Sinhalese "Commissioners" who were born to the traditions of the tenurial system, and empowered them to inquire and submit their findings on the holdings, the services attached to them and the dues payable from lands in each village.

The findings of the Commissioners were compiled in a *Tombo* or register*, which, in short, was a detailed entry of each village lord's holdings, their area and yield and the various tenures in each village. There was a supplementary register called *Foral* showing the quit-rents payable to the King of Portugal, and other dues or services to revenue. When finished, they proved to be a complete assessment of the land and tenures in 12,500 villages.**

The system of registration, as premised, was based on the *Lekammitti* which were kept by the Sinhalese King, and as the Tombos are by far the oldest existing records of the service tenure system prevailing in the western maritime districts of Ceylon, they are also valuable treasures in the Government Archives.

*The Tombos. Catalogue of the Archives of the Dutch Central Government by M. W. Juriaanse p. 242.

**The Portuguese Tombos of Ceylon were all compiled between 1603 and 1613 by Antao Vaz Freire, the Vedor or Controller of the Royal Exchequer, and his Secretary, Paulo Carvalho... with the help of the Commissioners referred to. Reimers "Feudalism in Ceylon" Jnl. R. A. S. (CB) Vol. XXXI, No. 81, p. 21. "The third book of the Portuguese Tombo... consisting of 336 folios was certified by Antao Vaz Freire on 26th January 1615; of this copy in 223 folios, prepared & certified by Lancarote de Seixas... (1618) is preserved in the Bibliotheca Nacional at Lisbon... from this latter a manuscript copy was obtained for the Ceylon government..." The Ceylon Littoral, 1593, by P. E. Peiris. Litt.D. (Cantab) 1949.

The principal differences evinced in the details, as recorded in the *Lekammitti* or Sinhalese Registers and the Portuguese Tombo, were the appropriation of villages and lands to the interests of the new administration. All *gabadagam* or royal villages, or *Ketta* and *Ratninda* lands belonging exclusively to the Sinhalese Kings were constituted as the Property of the King of Portugal. Similarly, all tithes payable to the Sinhalese sovereign as "lord of the land" were diverted to the Portuguese treasury.

The lands in Viharagam and Devalegam,* were distributed among the *Casados* and *Soldados* of the Conquest, and to *Mudaliyars*, *Arachchies* and *Lascarines* in their Service.+ Such lands came to be called *accomodessan* or maintenance lands.

Notwithstanding these adjustments, it was still the ancient system which operated, for the fundamental customs and traditions remained unchanged in the village. The dues paid by custom were diverted to the new holder of the "lordship", and the tithes were paid or service rendered according to the classification by cultivation, apportionment of crop or the system of tenure which had prevailed.

Extracts from the Tombo written in *olas*° in Sinhalese served as grants in the same way that the *Wattoru* and *Sittu*++ did in earlier times. These covered the right of any individual to occupy and cultivate the portion of land described in the *ola*. There is no evidence that allotments of land were surveyed in the Portuguese period, or that any organisation had been set up by them for the survey of land either on a revenue or development basis.

The Dutch Government of Ceylon remained primarily of a military character and composition from 1640 till 1658** in which year the last of the Portuguese forces were expelled. It was not until then that a regular civil administration could be set up.

For nearly the first hundred years of the Dutch administration the tenures of personal labour and official service were continued in conformity with the customs of the people. The system of registration was based on the Tombo which the Portuguese had borrowed from the Sinhalese. The Dutch motive initially was the same as that of their predecessors the Portuguese, namely to leave the customs and conditions under which the people originally held and cultivated lands, unchanged. As time went on, modifications and amendments filtered into the old traditions and safeguards, and gradually undermined the ancient system and its usages.

*Temple Lands.

+Reimers *Jnl. R. A. S. (CB)*. Vol. XXXI no 81. Feudalism in Ceylon p. 21.

°Palm leaf documents.

++A title to land.

**The earliest resolution of Council is dated 12th March 1640, which would imply that the Government was effective from that time. *Jnl. Royal Asiatic Society (CB)*. Vol. 17. No. 53.

In a general sense, property within the conquered territory was held at the will and pleasure of the Dutch East India Company as Lord Paramount, under the system established from time immemorial. That is to say, the possession of land was the foundation of the Company's right to the services and the contributions of the people. Entire villages were settled on the Headman, who as a rule were paid no salaries, but derived the rights and dues usually rendered by the village community to the Chiefs of the village in the past. They too adopted the Portuguese term *accomodessan* or "maintenance lands" for such grants, and measured or divided them roughly into classes on a basis of fertility.

Under this feudatory process, the Headmen were nominally village "lords" and they derived the rights and dues usually rendered by a village community to the "lord" of the village, and duly passed on to the Company a consolidated rate in money as an acknowledgement of overlordship, after deducting the moiety by which they were expected to support themselves and maintain their dignity.

The *majoraals* or husbandman working under the village lords were granted *Duvels* or exemptions, for which they paid no impost in return for the services they performed for their village lords, or other officials of the Dutch company who passed through the Districts.

Besides these grants, other grants were classified as *Ande*, meaning lands, from which half the produce was to be delivered to the Company, and *Ottu*, meaning lands from which only the tenth part of the produce was delivered. There were also grants which fell under the term *Paravenies* or private lands. No lands were private in the present acceptance of the term, because the Company always retained some claim on them whether they were *paraveni* land or *accomodessans*, or even if sold out right by the Company. The *paraveni* lands descended from parent to Children under the conditions attached to the original grant. Other curious conditions were attached to the possession of property. The smiths were in some instances to present the Dutch *Dissava** every year with a knife or a hatchet, the potters with a pot, sometimes annual payments on specified lands were compounded to furnishing straw mats and sometimes by a certain number of cakes of jaggery.

*A *Dissava* as explained earlier is a chieftain and in the times of the Sinhalese kings the sub ruler over a portion of the Island. The Portuguese continued the practice of placing the Government of the low lands under the *Dissava*. The Dutch borrowed the term since the people of the maritime zone were quite used to it, and appointed the Company servants to the office. There were 2 *Dissavonies-Colombo*, extending from Negombo to the Bentota river, and *Matara* which included the 2 *Giruwa Pattus*. The *Dissava* who was chosen from among the Company Servants and held rank next to that of the *Com-mandeur*, was primarily Land-regent and settled all disputes and disagreements relating to all the lands within his jurisdiction. The land regent was assisted by a tribunal which was known as the *Land raad*, for settling the most serious disputes.

This was known as the Oely Service.* A Dutch Governor commending the system to his successor, was prevailed upon by thrifty instincts to suggest that "Although this is a small matter, yet these things come in very handy for the store-houses while otherwise money would have to be spent on hatchets and mats expenditure which could be thus avoided". The intention behind all these several aspects of tenure appears to have been the same, namely to maintain the conditions and customs under which property was originally held.**

Although the need for more precise registration of lands became increasingly felt, the earliest attention the Dutch gave to the matter of *Tombo*, compilation was in 1663. This was at a discussion in the Galle Council on the re-organization of the system of land registration. The subject appears to have been postponed, and was not put into effect until 1765.

In that year by the issue of plakkaats, the chief of the Galle and Jaffna "Commandments"*** were called upon to render certain returns.

The earliest Dutch *Tombo* which combined the features of the Portuguese *Tombo* and *Foral* appears according to Governor Becker to have been compiled for the Jaffna District in 1677. The lands of some villages in the Bentota-Walallawiti Korale in the Galle District, were similarly registered in 1698.

The only references to compilations in the Colombo District are a statement by Governor Pielat that "though such a *tombo* was found with the Dissava it was very imperfect, and a remark by Governor Van Imhoff, that there are *tombos* of the Aluthuru and Hapitigam Korales, but for other Korales very poor lists.+

This system of tenure would appear to have operated until about 1740, when an attempt seems to have been made to replace it by a more progressive system of settlement eliminating the village lord. In effect, the relations subsisting between village lord and tenant were to give place to direct relations between the Company's officials and the tenant. By this means more

*This word is probably derived from the Tamil Uliyam corrupted into Oelium. Originally the obligation of a slave to his master it came in Dutch times to mean a service of a menial character which certain inferior classes were required to render.

**The following extract from the instructions to the Dissava holding jurisdiction over the Colombo Division is in conflict with this policy and would imply that the Company trimmed their policy to suit the special circumstances as applied to each area. "Because nearly all the lands in this jurisdiction are de-populated abandoned and laid waste, we have no need to follow any old laws, customs or practices of the Sinhalese in cultivating them but may be guided by such regulations as may be made in the interests of the Company and for the welfare of the Island". (Ins. touching the Govt. of the Island).

***Memoir Governor Piolet 1734.

+Minutes of the Governor in Council, February 1740 Folio 2748, Ceylon Archives.

attention was necessarily directed towards the individual. The motive for this change would appear to have originated from the instructions left by one of the Dutch Governors, Van Imhoff who stressed that "liberality such as this, is like giving away not only a branch from a tree where another will grow again, but like cutting its roots and allowing the tree itself to die". Lands, he declared, "should never be entirely given away".*

It therefore came about that alienation of land was suspended, the accomodessans in the possession of a deceased holder were taken back, and by a system of leasing direct to the husbandmen, were turned to the profit of the Company.**

This new system naturally promoted the essential need for a revision of the available tombos, and largely through the initiative taken by Governor Van Imhoff, a regular system for compiling tombos of the lands in the Dutch territory of Ceylon was introduced.+

The Dutch Tombos or Land Register is divided into two parts, one is called the *Hoofd* or *Head Tombo*, the other the *Land Tombo*. The *Hoofd* or *Head Tombo* is a genealogical register of the proprietors of the land described in the corresponding *Land Tombo*. It was called the *Head Tombo* because in each case names are tabulated under that of a head or representative of the family. The method of describing kinship between the person who claimed to be the head of the family, and the other family claimants whose names appeared on these registers, is specially interesting. For instance, there are such quaint entries as "father's brother's son's son"; or "Grandfather's sister's son". Where as to the European, the word father denoted his male parent alone, the Ceylon majoraal or husbandman applied the term *appa* or father, with the prefix *loku* (major) and *kuda* (minor) to his father, to all his uncles on the paternal side, and also to all his wife's uncles. Again, the terms *ayiya*, elder brother, and *malli* or *malaya*, younger brother are applied to include all persons of the family who are male cousins from the European standpoint. On the same basis an equal measure of uncertainty attached to the term mother, sister, uncle or aunt. This elasticity in tracing kinship which has grown by custom and tradition on the Sinhalese inhabitants of Ceylon, indicates the obvious necessity for the detailed entries which are a feature of the *Hoofd Tombos* compiled by the Dutch.

*Memoir left by Gustaaf William Baron Van Imhoff Governor and Director of Ceylon 1736 to 1740 translated by Sophia Pieters.

**Extract from a letter dated 24th September 1745, in which the Government of Batavia lays down clearly its revised policy as regards the alienation of Crown Lands in Ceylon:—"The case may be mentioned of that in the village Bommerie, where sale took place notwithstanding that in the year 1740 positive orders had been issued from here totally forbidding any alienations on such a footing... the land must be recovered by the Company... all other lands sold or alienated since the order... must in like manner be taken back... so also must all the mistakes previous to that be remedied in a suitable way".

(Report on Dutch Records — Anthonisz R. G. p. 76).

+Minutes of the Governor in Council, February, 1640 Folio 2784 Ceylon Archives.

The land Tombos are registers showing the land belonging to each family entered in the Hoofd or Head Tombo. They are classified according to **Korales**, **Pattuwas** and villages. The high and low lands are described separately. It has already been observed that all the lands were assessed on a basis of fertility. The extents of high lands are therefore expressed by the number of coconut, jack or arecanut trees growing on the land. In the case of low lands or sowing fields the extent is stated in *ammunams* and *kurunies*,* that is to say, the extent of land which could be sown by the above measure.

Finally, they lumped together all the unallocated (namely, Crown) ratmahara lands, that is the waste lands in the villages. These included all the *chenas* which were given out for cultivation only on permits and were not included in any tenure.**

An impost known as the *watt-bedde* was chargeable on all the Company's high lands cultivated with or without permission. In the former case a tax was usually levied on one-third of the produce. In the latter case, where cultivation was done without permission, the tax was recovered on half the produce. There are two columns provided in the Tombo to show the extent of waste land and the amount in rix-dollars and stivers+ of the Company's charge on the land.

The revised tombo compilation was done successively in three registrations in the Colombo dissavony.++ They were kept revised up to the time of the British occupation.***

New Tombos were also compiled for the Galle Commandment from the Bentota River to the borders of the Matara District. The tombos of the Matara District would appear to have been wilfully destroyed by the Dutch at the time of the British occupation.‡ No Tombos existed for the Ham-bantota or the Chilaw and Puttalam Districts. The Tombos of the Northern Province too have disappeared but lists of lands were retained. These Northern Province Tombos were apparently in the hands of the headman in the

*An ammunna is generally taken as six bushels in the low-country. A kurunie is about $\frac{1}{2}$ of a bushel.

**There is not a single Chena Land registered as private in the Dutch revised tombos. They were all classed as belonging to the Crown and unallocated. Council Debates Hansard (1927) p. 441.

+ The full value of the rix-dollar was 60 Dutch stivers, but in the course of time, its local value appears to have depreciated, and as a denominations of currency it came to represent only 48 stivers. Yet, to preserve a fictitious identity with the original rix-dollar, the local mint turned out stivers of lower value, of which 60 were made to correspond to 48 of the Dutch stivers.

++ Which extended from Negombo to the Bentota River. The first in 1742 — 1759, the second in 1760 — 61, the third in 1766 — 71 (Catalogue) Miss Juriaanse, p. 245).

***Catalogue as files 3684 to 3930 in the Ceylon Archives.

‡The Matara Tombos are not among the records preserved in the Archives. There is conclusive evidence that all the Dutch documents pertaining to lands in the Tangalle and Matara districts were destroyed by the last Dutch Dissave while the British were in treaty for the Island. By this deplorable act, which was misjudged as loyalty, a portion of the Island in which public interest in lands was very specially centered during the early days of British occupation was devoid of public documents to help the Government to ascertain the former possessors.

early British period, as is evinced by Ordinance 1 of 1842, which compelled the headman to grant extracts from them which they had neglected to do.*

The Galle Tombos in the local Archives show the genealogical particulars and the corresponding land holding in one and the same volume. That is to say, in columns side by side. The Colombo Tombos, however are divided into two sets of companion volumes, one being the Hoofd Tombo, the other Land Tombo.

As to the necessity for keeping tombo compilation constantly revised, Governor Schreuder wrote in his memoir :-

“ A fully completed tombo is important not only in respect of the least detail which concerns the country but also of the good inhabitants thereof, and indeed in all civilized countries nothing is so proper and natural than that the particulars regarding ones own territory and subjects should be noted down in writing, in such a manner that it would not be possible for a child to be born or a grey beard, however old, he may be, to die, without some mention being made thereof ”.

Originally the procedure followed in effecting Tombo compilation was to summon the inhabitants to produce their deeds for purpose of registration by Commissioners. When the deeds could not be produced the matter was referred to the Landraad.**

The second method introduced in 1762 was that of sending Tombo Commissioners as they were called, with the necessary assistants and interpreters to visit each village in the various Korales and to carry out investigations or hear evidence bearing on disputed claims on the spot. After 1766 the second system was given up for the earlier one. The Tombo-keeper who was a senior staff officer in the Dutch service saw to it that all details were duly recorded in the registers.+

Numerous orders and extracts from the Memoirs of the Dutch Governors may be quoted which manifest the labour expended in compiling the Tombos, the “ stringent precautions ” taken for their preservation, and the effort made to ensure against the most distant suspicion “ that any spurious passage had been interpolated among the entries ”.+ The regulations further provided for the records being kept in the Council Hall, the contents of which were in the custody of the Onderkoopman.***

*There are in the Government Archives 45 volumes of Tombos of the latter half of the 18th century transferred from the Jaffna Kachcheri in 1911.

**A court which was instituted in 1741, to try disputes between the country folk and claims to land.

+For further details see, Memoir of Hendrick Zwaadecroon, p. 19 translated by Sophia Pieters.

***Duplicates of all these Tombos would appear to have been sent under a standing order by the Dutch Government in Ceylon to the headquarters at Batavia.

Such as it is, despite all the care which we are to understand was devoted to preserving these records, there are no more than a few readable pages of the earlier Dutch Land registers, available to posterity. The large royal folio volumes of Hoofd and Land Tombos in the Archives comprise more or less, the results of the later, Revised Tombo registration, started about 1740 when the Dutch altered their system of land settlement and registration. The bulk of these records therefore date 60 years prior to British occupation.

Apparently, with a few very stray exceptions, the term survey as applied to the registrations effected by the earlier Dutch Tombos merely implied an inspection of the various lots. No plan of the land in the present day sense seems to have been made by the surveyors who carried out the preliminary inspection. Extensive areas of smaller allotments were scheduled on what were termed *poth-olas* which were issued to an overseer.

There came a time when the accumulation of these olas caused considerable embarrassment from the point of storage.* It was also often proved that the system of issuing ola deeds and instruments affecting land was necessarily open to considerable abuse. As a matter of fact, one Dutch Governor after another, commenting on the facilities afforded for the fraudulent alterations of olas, stressed that, in order to bring the system of Tombo registration to perfection, an accurate survey in the sense of measuring each lot with a view to drawing a plan and fixing the boundaries between properties was very necessary.

There are references to many *Land-Karts* or plans of isolated properties within the limits and on the outskirts of the larger towns which date from about the year 1665, i.e. from 20 to 25 years after Dutch occupation but the first instance of an elaborate revenue survey by Dutch surveyors to which we have reference was done about the year 1695. Hendrick Zwaardecroon, the Commandeur of Jaffnapatam, records that "maps are being prepared for each aldea or village and each Province of which our authorities in the Fatherland desire to receive a copy.**

The value of a plan of every allotment of land brought under settlement or registration was recognised when the Dutch introduced their new system of tenure in 1740. This implementation of a record based on measurements by a qualified authority is very significant. It was the first time in the history of the Land Tenure and Land Laws of Ceylon that a figure of land was more or less regularly used as an accessory to a land grant. The motive for this merits closer notice.

*Zwaardecroon in his memoir to the Jaffna Political Council states: "it was decided" (1696) that a large number of olas . . . a great encumbrance, should be sorted and burnt. This was done in the presence of a Committee.

**Translation by Sophia Pieters, p. 18 The term Province is frequently used by the Dutch when they refer to a Korale.

Mention has been made of the change in the tenural system whereby *chenas* were disassociated from paddy and gardens, and all the unallocated *ratmaha* namely Crown or waste lands in every village, including the *Chenas* which had been given out for cultivation on permits were lumped together for registration. This development connotes the increasing value of high lands, and the need for holding them as properties for the profitable growth of cinnamon, coconuts, arecanuts and other permanent products. It recognised the conflict between the actual settler and speculator interests.

The United East India Company as represented by the Government in Ceylon, was a trading concern. Profit was naturally always kept in view. Although they had used their initial systems of registration of land as a source of income, just as their predecessors the Portuguese, and before them the Sinhalese had done, they came to realize that the character of the ancient land system which regulated the use of land by man, had changed.

Land was becoming a dominant economic question. Offset by the encouragement given to the cultivation of commercial crops on a systematic basis land had acquired greater value. It was apparent that by preserving the rights of the Government to land on a more flexible firm and free policy, by preventing speculative claims, and by demarcating boundaries to prevent encroachment, a greater source of revenue would accrue. Hence the origin of the Dutch Land-kart which came more generally to be attached to all grants of land made by the Company when the tenure was revised.

The unit of measure adopted by the Dutch surveyors was the morgen* rood and feet. The standard adopted for reducing Dutch linear quantities, locally is the Rhenish Roede, equivalent to 18.75 links, approximately 12 feet. Measurements were stated both in the Tombo and on the deed. For instance, "a piece of land and sowing field situated at Livermentu, north of Narahenpitti, three hundred and thirty roods from the high road to Galkissa from (a) to (b) thirty-eight roods, from (b) to (c) eighty-four roods, from (c) to (d) seven roods &c. . . in total extent 17 morgens and three hundred and ninety-seven square roods, like as the same was measured by Land Surveyor, Tatic Oliversz Helt, and figured in the annexed plan".

As far as it is possible to reconstruct the system adopted, it would appear that all lands registered in the Tombo were in the first instance measured by qualified surveyors drawn from the Company's servants. The surveyors had with them two Mudaliyars who arbitrated on minor disputes over boundaries which were brought up by the inhabitants. After the preliminary schedule and the plan were drawn up the Tombo Commissioners took over and completed inquiries under one or the other system in vogue at the time and already described.

*A morgen is a little over 2 acres in superficial extent.

For five years from the time Governor Van Imhoff introduced his new system of tenure the surveyors appear to have worked with no standardized instructions. This lack of system and command was remedied by Governor Van Gollennesse, who by a Council Resolution of the 29th April 1745, sanctioned a set of rules for surveyors for measuring "lands and gardens". This instrument affords a background of considerable historical importance on surveying in Ceylon during the Dutch administration.

The underlying function of these instructions was greater precaution than any in existence to prevent fraud. They directed that the first care of the surveyors was to render "willing and faithful service and to ensure that their plan bear witness of greatest circumspection (accuracy). They also stressed the absolute necessity for vigilance on the part of the surveyors to ensure that no "avaricious person obtain deceitfully by false declaration or underhand means, certain lands to the prejudice of the Company", and directed, moreover that "should such cases be discovered by the surveyor in the course of his survey" he should bring them to notice "on a penalty of forfeiture of his office" if he fails to do so.

The instructions were also full of minute direction on the system of field measurement and the plotted plan. They ensured much careful and written description of "how much space was taken up by hollows, tanks, hillocks or whatever is unsuitable for cultivation" and "likewise, the nature of the land surveyed, whether muddy fields, *owitas*, *deniyas*, *chenas*, *puranas* &c., and how often and at what time of the year they could be sowed, also with what water they are irrigated".

What moreover served, to explain the responsibility vested in the early Dutch land surveyors and the condition of affairs was a penalty that "no surveyor shall proceed to survey any garden or lands before taking the oath prescribed for surveyors". A confession of the dearth of capable and efficient surveyors at the time, is made by Governor Schreuder, who gives it as a reason why he was "not able to have more of the Company's lands surveyed" during his term of office.*

An entry in the Council Resolution of the 3rd October, 1758, shows these orders were revised and amplified to 28 clauses on the orders of Governor Jan Schreuder "according to the needs of the present times". On being read and approved it was decided not only to incorporate them in the minutes, but also "to send a certified copy to the Chief Surveyor, to the Courts of Justice and Landraads for their information, and to the Commandeurs of Jaffna and Galle".

*Schreuder's Memoir (1757 — 1762) translation by E. Reimers M.B.E. p. 54.

There was fundamentally very little difference between these orders and the instructions which preceded them. The amendments effected were witness to the change implemented by Governor Schreuder, namely that of sending out the Tombo Commissioners with the necessary assistants on circuit throughout the country, Korale by Korale to speed up the work of survey and registration.

What seemed most apparent in the policy of survey was that the Company's chief aim in the system of registration was to discover all the Free *Paraveni* lands* the Accomodessans or Diwel lands, the Malapala or lands escheated by the death of their possessors, and the Nilapala or deserted gardens.**

The amended instructions for land surveyors also contained a new clause which reflected the greater attention paid to the assessment of the Company's share in produce or tax from lands. The clause in this connection reads :—

The surveyors must also indicate in their reports how much seed corn can be sown in the surveyed lands, and whether the fields are of the first, second or third class according to the following methods of calculation : for a plot of marshy land of (the first class) 1 morgen and 180 square roods in extent, 8 parrahs. For a plot of land of (the second class) 1 morgen and 150 square roods in extent, 8 parrahs. For a plot of land of (third class) 1 morgen and 70 square roods in extent, 8 parrahs.

The computation to be made on the following basis : 1 amunam as equal to 8 parrah as 5 kurunies, 1 kurunie as 4 medieds.

To the same purpose and from the aspect of land value, another clause has been introduced directing a careful survey and report on " the fertility, quality and nature of the soil, whether they were Marandaan (cinnamon lands) and sandy or whether they were suited or adaptable for the cultivation of cinnamon, cane and other fruit trees all of which shall be carefully and minutely observed ".

In furtherance of the new policy conserving all land to which the Company claims right, special instructions were also issued regarding encroachments, directing that " any slight excess discovered beyond what really belongs to the owner shall not only be immediately withdrawn " but reported.

Finally, the amended instructions afforded what appears to be the earliest reference to " private surveys " by laying down fees which shall be

*These were investigated to secure to the Company such as were in private possession without legal proof of ownership. Schreuder's Memoir p. 65.

**Ibid pp. 64, 65, 66.

drawn for a surveyor's services to "private individuals at their own request for the survey of lands either gifted or sold for the preparation of deeds".

Generally speaking, the introduction of the property plan which had little history in Ceylon before the Dutch recognised its importance, coincided with a time of social change in the maritime regions under their sway. Besides the breaking up of the existing land system already described, and the premium which came to be placed on land available to the Company, there were other issues. The elements of a system of mapping the development of land was introduced and a resolution enacted: "that no piece of land be given to any person whatever from the high ground unless he takes therewith a piece of low and arable ground, and that any person taking a spot of arable land of four ammonams be added a piece of high ground calculated for twenty four trees which then may neither be disposed of nor alienated separately,"* Town planning and civic development were engaging attention and the cadastral survey within the enclosure of village, Pattu and Korale which was also introduced about this time on a progressive system, point to social problems which called for a record of limits and boundaries for lack of which mankind has suffered from time immemorial. Special mention has been made in this instance of the need for measurement to appraise the effect on property of siting "building of schools and resthouses, as well as for the cutting of canals.** There thus gradually grew a very able class of land surveyors, or *Landmeter*.

The cadastral surveys which had their beginning about fifty years after the Dutch arrived in Ceylon, gradually spread throughout the maritime provinces. The attempts to get on with the surveys in the Districts round Colombo appear to have been less successful. Governor Loten writes in this connection 1751, "the gardens and fields of the village Attedie, situated in the Salpiti Korale, those of the village Kosgamme in the Hewagam Korale, the village of Belleene in the Pasdun Korale, the village of Raygam in the Korale (or province) of that name, and the Vidany of Kelani situated in the Hina (Siyana) Korale have been surveyed by the sworn land surveyors and maps and registers made thereof: but the refractoriness of the inhabitants caused this useful work to be interrupted."+

Governor Schreuder commenting on the cadastral surveys in 1762 says: "I am however somewhat in doubt as to whether that important work could be brought speedily to a finish, as the villager does not gladly see the surveyors on his land and now and then has actually opposed them. I am of

*Extract from Council Resolution of 3rd June 1767.

**Ibid. p. 65.

+ Selections from Dutch Records Memoir of Joan Gideon Loten, translated by E. Reimers.

opinion we might conclude through experience that the work would be greatly facilitated, if we could impress on the people through trustworthy and well-informed agents its usefulness . . . we would have less to fear in the way of opposition to what we would achieve thereby".*

*Schreuder Memoir p. 56.

(A)

The Administration of Justice in Ceylon in the Dutch Period (1656—1796)

BY PROFESSOR T. NADARAJA, M.A., Ph.D. (Cantab)

The Judicial System

In the outstations of the East India Company, as in Batavia, all courts exercised jurisdiction "in the name and on behalf of their High Mightinesses", the States-General. In Ceylon justice was administered in three kinds of courts of record — the Raden van Justitie (the High Courts of Justice), the Landraden (the Land or Country or District Courts) and the Civile Raden or Stads Raden (the Civil or Town Courts). Judicial powers were also exercised by certain European officials (like the Fiscaals, the Chief Residents or the military officers in charge of subordinate stations and the Dissavas) as well as by the native chiefs, but none of these official's courts were courts of record.

The most important of the three types of courts of record mentioned above was the High Court of Justice (Raad van Justitie). There were High Courts of Justice in Colombo, Jaffnapatnam and Galle, each consisting of seven or more persons, appointed by the Governor in Council from the members of the Council and the civil and military services. Originally the Governor presided over the High Court of Colombo; but in 1732 Governors and Directors of the outstations of the East India Company were precluded from presiding over the High Courts of Justice and the Secunde or Second in Command, the Hoofd Administrateur or Chief Administrator, became president. In the High Courts of Jaffnapatnam and Galle the Commandeur, the chief executive official of these two provincial centres, presided. In each of the three chief towns there was an official called the Fiscaal who, amidst a variety of other duties played an important part in the proceedings of the High Courts: in civil cases he acted as a member of the court, while in criminal cases he was the Public Prosecutor. Few members of even the High Courts were trained lawyers; for the outstations of the Company, unlike Batavia, were badly provided with men learned in the law. The members of the High Courts were paid no salary apart from what they received from their civil and military offices, but they received a small sum as mantel geld or "cloak money".

The High Court of Colombo was the most important judicial tribunal in Ceylon and exercised an original and an appellate jurisdiction in both civil and criminal cases. It had an original civil jurisdiction, when the matter

in dispute was above one hundred and twenty six dollars in value, over natives residing in the Fort of Colombo or at any place (in the suburb of the Pettah) within Kayman's Gate and in suits between Europeans or the descendants of Europeans residing in the much wider area of the judicial district of Colombo. Within the areas under their jurisdictions the High Courts of Jaffnapatnam and Galle had the same powers as the High Court of Colombo. An appeal lay to the High Court of each judicial district from the inferior courts, the Landraden and the Civile Raden, situated in that district; and in cases exceeding three hundred six dollars in value an appeal lay from the High Courts of Jaffnapatnam and Galle to the High Court of Colombo. Subject to the same limitation of the value of the subject-matter of the action, an appeal lay to the High Court of Justice at Batavia from decisions of the Colombo Court (whether in the exercise of its original or its appellate jurisdiction), but in the case of decisions on appeal from the High Courts of Jaffnapatnam and Galle only if the Colombo Court differed from a judgement of one of those two courts sitting in appeal. From the decisions of the High Court of Batavia, "there was strictly speaking no appeal but the dissatisfied party might obtain a rehearing by petitioning the Governor (more correctly the Governor-General) of Batavia".

In criminal cases the High Court of Colombo had an original jurisdiction over all persons — Europeans, Asians and Eurasians — resident in the judicial district of Colombo in matters that were beyond the jurisdiction of the Fiscaal or the Disava, who had authority to try minor cases within the areas of the town or the disavany that came under their jurisdiction. Several offences carried the death penalty, but generally no death sentence imposed by a High Court could be executed without confirmation by the Governor. The Governor in Council had the power to suspend the execution of criminal sentences pronounced by a High Court, referring the papers to Batavia as soon as possible after the suspension. In the areas under their jurisdictions the High Courts of Jaffnapatnam and Galle exercised powers similar to those of the High Court of Colombo, and from their decisions there was an appeal to that Court. From the decisions of the High Court of Colombo there was an appeal to the High Court of Justice in Batavia in criminal cases conducted according to the "ordinary" (as distinguished from the "extraordinary") mode of procedure, but where the accused was a servant of the East India Company such an appeal could be taken only if he was of a rank higher than that of sergeant in the military service or its equivalent in the civil and other services.

Below the High Court of Justice stood the Landraad (the Land or Country or District Court), the establishment of which has been described as constituting "the greatest excellence of the Dutch regime". Before the establishment of this court the Disava exercised jurisdiction in minor cases, more particularly those that arose outside the limits of the town. But in the course of time it was found that the Disava had too much other work to be able to decide all the little disputes of the native inhabitants himself, and Landraden

were established “ to relieve him from a multitude of legal discussions. He referred to it all cases too complicated for his judgement, or such as he had not leisure to decide, and . . . the inhabitants could appeal from the decisions of the Disava himself to the Landraad, where forms of proceedings were simple and the charges attending the few written deeds these required were fixed at one half of those of the three (High) Courts of Justice . . . The Landraad was extremely popular and its decisions were generally respected”.

Landraden seem to have existed in Matara and Jaffnapatnam as early as 1661, though there is evidence that they sometimes ceased to function and were reestablished at various times. Landraden were established in Colombo and Galle in 1741. Apart from the Landraden of Matara, Jaffnapatnam, Colombo and Galle, Landraden existed at various times at Chilaw, Puttalam, Mannar, Mullaitivu, Trincomalee and Batticaloa.

Although the principal reason for the establishment of the Landraad was to deal with cases relating to land (which was the most frequent subject of litigation amongst the native inhabitants), it was decreed in 1743 that no civil causes of the native inhabitants residing outside the gravets of Colombo could be brought before the High Court of Colombo until the Landraad had first given a decision on them and leave to appeal to the High Court had been granted by the Governor. After 1789 this extension of the jurisdiction of the Colombo Landraad was applied to the other Landraden as well. The Landraden were primarily courts of civil jurisdiction; but in places where there were no High Courts of Justice close by, the Landraden also assisted in the preliminary stages of criminal trials. From the decision of a Landraad an appeal to the High Court which had jurisdiction in that district, and where the High Court in question was that of Jaffnapatnam or Galle there was a further appeal to the High Court of Colombo.

The composition of the Landraden varied in different districts. The Disava or the Chief Resident (Opperhoofd) of the district presided, the other members being a variable number of European officers of the Company and native chiefs. Thus, in the Landraad of Colombo the Disava, the Fiscaal (who was the Vice-President), the Tombohouder or Keeper of the Registers of Land, the Chief Surveyor, the Captain of the Mahabadde, or Superintendent of the Cinnamon Department — who were all Europeans — the Maha Mudaliyar of the Governor's Gate and the Atapattu Mudaliyar or Mudaliyar of the Disava, were permanent members, and they were reinforced from time to time by some members of the lower grades of the Company's civil service and a few less important native chiefs. The Disava or the Chief Resident of the District was usually a person with an intimate knowledge of local conditions and the presence of the “ native ” members in the Landraad ensured that the European members of the court would receive guidance on questions both of facts as well as of native custom, which formed an important element in the law applied in the Landraad. The full Landraad generally met once

a week, but a committee of a few members of the court met more often to conduct preliminary inquiries and to prepare reports and other papers for submission to the full court. The members of the court were not paid any salary for acting as judges, but they received a small sum as mantel geld or "cloak money" and they were paid their expenses when inquiries were held at a distance from the place where the court usually sat.

Before we leave the courts that had jurisdiction in the country areas mention must be made of an assembly which exercised judicial among other functions in the district of Batticaloa in the last three decades of the Dutch regime. This was the Lands Vergadering or Country Assembly, which was "composed of the members of the Landraad and of all the native chiefs of the country (that is, the district) who held their employment from the Governor" While the Landraad exercised jurisdiction over the Fort of Batticaloa and adjacent districts the "litigious causes of the interior of the country that the Chief Resident (of Batticaloa) did not wish to take upon himself to settle" were remitted to the Country Assembly, which decided them "generally upon a verbal hearing of the parties" and "no appeal lay from its decisions except directly to (the) Government in Colombo". Apart from its judicial functions, this Assembly also supervised the assessment and collection of the revenue of the district: in fact it constituted a provincial council of which all the heads of the Mogua families (i.e. families of the Mukkuvar caste, which owned almost all the land in the district) "were . . . members for the government of their province". There seems to have been a similar Assembly in the District of Puttalam where also the Mukkuvar formed a distinct element of the population.

To consider next the inferior courts in the towns, there existed in Colombo, Jaffnapatnam and Galle a court called the Civiele Raad (Civil Court) or Stads Raad (Town Court) or Collegie van Huwelijksche en Kleine Gerechtszaken (Court of Matrimonial and Petty Causes). It was composed of persons (usually eight in number), selected each year by the Governor in Council from the ranks of the servants of the Company and of the "free burghers" or colonists not in the service of the Company. This Court was established in order to relieve the High Courts of Justice of a number of small cases which had formerly been decided by them in the first instance. It had no criminal jurisdiction, but it exercised jurisdiction over all the inhabitants, the Europeans as well as the others, of the "town and its precincts" in cases not exceeding one hundred and twenty rix dollars in value. From the decisions of the Civiele Raden of Colombo, Jaffnapatnam and Galle there was an appeal to the High Courts in those towns, and there was a further appeal from the High Courts of Jaffnapatnam and Galle to the High Court of Colombo.

Apart from the Raden van Justitie (the High Courts of Justice), the Landraden (the Land or Country or District Courts) and the Civiele or Stads Raden (the Civil or Town Courts), which were all courts of record, certain

officials exercised more limited jurisdictions in courts which were not courts of record. Within the areas of the towns under their authority the *Fiscaals* exercised civil jurisdiction in cases of small debts not exceeding one hundred rix dollars in value and criminal jurisdiction "in assaults and other petty cases" with power to inflict a fine not exceeding one hundred rix dollars or to order the offender to be whipped. The *Disavas* had a similar jurisdiction in minor cases in the areas under their authority, and the Chief Residents or the military officers in charge of subordinate stations also exercised judicial powers in minor cases. The native headmen and chiefs of various grades (such as the *vidanas*, the *korals* and the *mudaliyars*) also had authority to decide the disputes of the local inhabitants, and from their decisions appeals lay to superior headmen and chiefs and thereafter to European officials like the Chief Residents or the *Disavas*.

The Law

We have considered the various tribunals which exercised judicial power in Ceylon under the Dutch regime and must now turn to the law that was administered in those tribunals. The practice of the Dutch courts with regard to this subject is stated in a memoir left for his successor by A. Pavilioen, Commandeur of Jaffnapatnam, in which he wrote in 1665: "Justice is administered to the Dutch" (and the other Europeans) "according to the laws in force in the Fatherland and the Statutes of Batavia. The natives (i.e. the Asian inhabitants) are governed according to the customs of the country if these are clear and reasonable, otherwise according to our laws". To the three sources of law mentioned in this statement must be added the enactments of the Governor and Council of Ceylon, which were binding *prima facie* on the European, the Eurasian and the Asian inhabitants alike. Each of the above mentioned sources of the law applied by the Dutch courts in Ceylon must be considered. We may begin by asking what Pavilioen meant by "the laws in force in the Fatherland and the Statutes of Batavia" and how these bodies of law came to be applicable in Ceylon.

The Charter (*Octrooi*) of 20th March 1602, by which the States-General (the federal legislature of the Republic of the United Netherlands) granted to the East India Company the right, *inter alia*, to administer justice in its territories, did not mention what law was to be applied there; nor did the *Artyckelbrief*, the code of disciplinary regulations issued by the States-General for the Company's servants, which those who formed the overseas settlements of the Company had sworn to observe. However, by a resolution passed on 16th June 1625 by the Governor-General and Council of Batavia in accordance with recommendations made by the Council of Seventeen in the mother country, some rules of procedure formulated by two courts at Batavia and certain statutes enacted by the States (or provincial legislature) of the Province of Holland were promulgated as laws to be observed in the administration of justice in the East Indies; and it was declared that in all cases for which these laws or the enactments of the Batavian Government

did not provide, "the common civil laws as practiced in the United Netherlands", should be observed. Seven years later Instructions dated 17th March 1632, issued by the Council of Seventeen to the Governor-General and Council of Batavia, directed them to secure that at Batavia and all other places under the dominion of the Company justice should be done, pending further instructions, in accordance with "the instructions and customs which are as a rule observed in the Provinces of the United Netherlands".

The above provisions of the Resolution of 1625 and the Instructions of 1632 elucidate what Commandeur Pavilioen meant by "the laws in force in the Fatherland". It will be noticed that both sets of provisions refer to the laws and customs observed in the United Netherlands and not to those prevailing in any one of the provinces which formed the Republic of the United Netherlands. In practice, however, the laws and customs of the Province of Holland came to be accepted in the overseas settlements of the Company in preference to those of any other province, largely because the Chamber of Amsterdam in Holland enjoyed a predominant influence in the Company's affairs. It would, therefore, be broadly correct to say that "the laws in force in the Fatherland" meant the Roman-Dutch Law, that amalgam of Roman Law and native Dutch custom which, as modified by legislation and declared by judicial decision, prevailed in the Province of Holland, the most important province in the Republic of the United Netherlands. The chief sources of that law were the statutes enacted by the States-General and by the States of the Province of Holland, the decisions of the courts and the "books of authority" written by celebrated jurists like Huig de Groot or, as he is commonly called, Hugo Grotius (1583 - 1645); Simon van Leeuwen (1625 - 1682), Johannes Voet (1647 - 1713) Dionysius Godefried van der Keessel (1738 - 1816) and Joannes van der Linden (1756 - 1835).

The Resolution passed by the Governor-General and Council of Batavia on 16th June 1625 and the Instructions issued by the Council of Seventeen on 17th March 1632 gave legal recognition to the natural presumption that the laws in force in the Fatherland (or so much of them as could be adapted to the conditions of life in the outstations) were carried to their new homes overseas by the early settlers from the Netherlands. General statutes issued by the Governor-General in Council at Batavia, as distinguished from statutes which were merely local in their application, also enjoyed legal authority in the outstations of the Company. A compilation of such Batavian legislation, "codified under proper titles" and "amplified where necessary from the common laws of the Fatherland or from the written Imperial laws (i.e. the Roman Law), was made in 1641 by J. Maetsuycker, President of the Court of Justice at Batavia (who was later to become both Governor of Ceylon and Governor-General of the East Indies). The last article declared that, in matters for which the code did not provide, the "laws, statutes and customs in use in the United Netherlands" and, failing these, the "written Imperial laws" (i.e. the Roman Law) should be observed so far as they were applicable

to local conditions; and, subject to the same restriction, the authorities in the outstations were required to "regulate themselves according to this book of ordinances". This compilation of what came to be known as the Old Statutes of Batavia or India, which was promulgated as a code by Governor-General A. van Diemen in July 1642 and approved by the Council of Seventeen and the States-General in 1650, in effect constituted a code for all the possessions of the East India Company.

In the course of time the need was felt for a new edition of the Statutes and a revised code, which is generally called the New Statutes of Batavia, was adopted by Governor-General P. A. Van der Parra in Council in September 1766. The preamble declared that the code was to be in force not only in Batavia but that it was also intended "for the enlightenment and direction of all the judges and judicial officers at all the outstations of the Netherlands Indies, in so far as they shall be applicable there and the conditions of those places and our authority there shall allow, as we desire that the said new local code to that extent shall be considered in force everywhere". These New Statutes were sent to Holland in October 1766 for the approval of the Council of Seventeen, but this was never given. Strictly, therefore, they lacked validity; but they continued to be observed in the East Indies for nearly a century after their adoption in Batavia and there are several indications that they were observed in Ceylon.

A former Governor of Ceylon, C. J. Simons, wrote in 1708: "The Statutes of Batavia are certainly clear but short and therefore do not make precise provisions regarding many matters which occur daily". For this reason and because "the laws in force in the Fatherland and the Statutes of Batavia" were not always applicable in the conditions prevailing in Ceylon, the Governor and Council of the island also issued their own enactments. This body of law regulated a wide variety of the day-to-day activities of the inhabitants of the Dutch settlements and was, therefore, in many respects of more real significance to them than the laws introduced from abroad. Attempts were made at various times to consolidate these local enactments. Thus, Governor Simons, who showed a keen interest in improving the administration of justice, was responsible for the preparation in 1704 of a compendium of the statutes and orders applicable in the Commandment of Jaffnapatnam. About two years later he took in hand the wider scheme of causing "the various orders issued by placcaats (i.e., edicts) "to be summarised under separate headings in a more convenient volume, which must every year be read to the people in the presence of the Fiscaal Independent".

The last element in the law applied by the Dutch courts in Ceylon that requires consideration is the customary law of the Asian inhabitants. Originally the policy of the Dutch authorities in the East Indies had been to apply the Dutch Law to both the European and the Asian inhabitants alike; but experience soon suggested the desirability of permitting the judges to

take the native custom into account. In Ceylon, according to a report on the administration of justice prepared by H. Cleghorn in 1799, "the religion, usages and customs of the different nations, who form the population of those parts of the Island . . . subdued by or ceded to the Company, did not permit of their being governed entirely by the Dutch Laws. In criminal cases these laws were generally applicable, but in civil causes between the native inhabitants they could seldom be applied. It was judged expedient and even necessary to allow the people to preserve the laws and customs which had been established by their ancient princes". Dutch policy regarding the recognition of native custom in Ceylon is explained in the memoir left for his successor by Commandeur A. Pavilioen of Jaffnapatnam in 1665. "The natives", he wrote, "are governed according to the customs of the country if these are clear and reasonable, otherwise according to our laws". There are instances of the Dutch authorities in Ceylon denying legal recognition to well-established native usages which were not in accordance with their own conception of morality and public policy, while some compilations of "clear and reasonable" native customs were given legislative force by those authorities.

The earliest of these compilations was the Tesavalamai Code of the "Ancient Customs and Rules" of the district of Jaffnapatnam. As early as 1661 a Dutch official had remarked on the obstinate attachment of the Tamils of Jaffnapatnam to their old customs and habits, and in 1697 H. Zwaardecroon, Commandeur of that district, had suggested the need for a "concise digest" of those customs which "might serve for the instruction of the members of the Court of Justice as well as for new rulers arriving here". In August 1706 Governor Simons, whose interest in legal reform has already been mentioned, directed that a compilation of the local customary law should be prepared; and the work was undertaken by C. Isaaksz, Disava of Jaffnapatnam, who had acquired an intimate knowledge of these customs by long residence in the district. In April 1707, Isaaksz submitted the draft of his code to the Commandeur of Jaffnapatnam, suggesting that it should be translated into Tamil and referred to "twelve sensible Malabar moedeliars" (i.e., Tamil mudaliyars or native chiefs) for their approval. The mudaliyars approved the draft, subject to certain modifications relating to the rights of masters over their slaves; and in June 1707 Governor Simons in Council approved the code as drafted by Disava Isaaksz, but without the modifications suggested by the mudaliyars. The main subjects with which the code dealt were Succession to Property, Adoption, Possession of Land, Slaves, Mortgage of Land, Pawn of Jewels, Donations, Sale of Land or Cattle, Hire or Loan of Cattle, and Loan of Money.

Apart from the Tesavalamai of Jaffnapatnam, some of the customs of the Tamil-speaking inhabitant of the district of Puttalam were also given legal recognition under the Dutch regime. The majority of these inhabitants were Muslim by religion, and people of the Mukkuvar caste, formed a distinct element in the local population. After the cession of Puttalam to

the Dutch in 1766, Governor I. W. Falck ordered that civil cases should be decided according to the customs of the district and a collection of these was made in 1767 on the basis of information supplied by the chiefs of the Mukkuvar and the Muslims of the district.

A third compilation of native custom which was also in force in the last quarter century of the Dutch regime related to the customary law of the Muslims, who were to be found in all districts of the Dutch settlements. Since "the people of the Mohammedan faith were totally ignorant of what was or was not their law and subject . . . to great oppression from each headman deciding causes according to his own partial or corrupted opinion". Governor Falck is reported to have obtained from Batavia in 1770 a "short code . . . relating to the Law of Inheritance and Marriage", which he submitted . . . for consideration to all the headmen of the Moorish inhabitants and thereafter "ordered . . . to be considered as law by all the Dutch courts of Justice". This code seems to have been derived from the chapter entitled "Bysondere Wetten aangaande Mooren off Mahometanen en andere Inlandsche Natien" (Special Laws relating to Moors or Mohammedans and other native races) in the New Statutes of Batavia of 1766.

Since no code of the customary law of the Sinhalese of the Maritime Provinces appears to have been compiled in Dutch times, it is not easy to say what "clear and reasonable" Sinhalese customs were recognised by the Dutch authorities. The Sinhalese tenures of land and the services incidental to those tenures, as well as the customary rights and obligations of the different castes, were recognised and enforced in conformity with the prejudices and customs of the inhabitants. It has been suggested that the Dutch "were not likely to extend to the native population in their integrity the personal laws by which they governed themselves and least of all their peculiar and strictly Christian views of the marriage relation". But a not inconsiderable proportion of the population in the territories occupied by the Dutch was at least nominally Christian, and instances are known of Dutch legislation regulating the personal relations of the native inhabitants in accordance with Christian conceptions. However, in the absence of a written code, it is not possible to state with certainty exactly what matters were recognised by the Dutch authorities as being governed by Sinhalese custom in the Maritime Provinces until a full examination is made of whatever is still legible in those enactments of the Dutch period and the judgements of the Dutch courts (especially those of the Landraden) which have survived. Yet, a report on the native customary laws made by Puisne Justice Alexander Johnston in 1807 suggests that, in the later stages of Dutch rule at any rate, the customary law of the Sinhalese of the Maritime Provinces had been largely superseded by the Roman-Dutch Law.

Johnston, who showed a keen interest in the history, antiquities and customs of the native inhabitants of the Island, collected a great deal of

material to enable the new British rulers of the country to understand the "systems of revenue and politics which were pursued at different times by the late Dutch Government". The Governor, Sir Thomas Maitland, had requested him to make a collection of the various "local and customary laws" which he found in the course of a judicial circuit round the Island; and in 1807 he submitted a statement of all such customary laws as are in use amongst the respective classes of natives who inhabit the several parts of these settlements." "Some of the customary laws which I have collected," he wrote, "relate to the four Provinces of Puttalam, Jaffna, Trincomalee and Batticaloa" (which he refers to as the "Malabar"—i.e., Tamil—Provinces), "others to the numerous Mahometans who are to be met with all over the Island, and some to those Chittys (i.e., Chetties) who live in or about the Pettah of Colombo". He reported, however, that "few or no customary laws peculiar to the Cynagalese (i.e., Sinhalese) can at present be discovered because the policy observed by the Dutch has, in general, established amongst that class of people the law of Holland". In the "Cyngalese Provinces of Colombo, Galle and Matara", or "the Western and Southern maritime Provinces", "the ancient laws and customs . . . seem (according to the most ancient Cyngalese histories) to have been the same as those which prevailed in the Candian (Kandyan) country; they have, however, been completely obliterated and but few of them are still to be traced in their original form for information relative to the local laws and customs of (those) provinces".

The question arises why the customary law of the Sinhalese of the Maritime Provinces did not possess the vitality exhibited by the usages of their brethren in the Kandyan highlands which did not come under European rule till 1815. Why was the Sinhalese customary law not codified by the Dutch Government and why was it supplanted by the Dutch law to a greater extent than the customary law of the Tamils and the Muslims? One answer may, perhaps be found in the progressive assimilation that had been taking place, ever since the advent of the Portuguese, between the habits and ways of life of the Low Country Sinhalese and those of their European rulers. The adulteration of native custom and its supersession by the Dutch Law must have been more pronounced in the towns and their environs than in the remoter country districts, and native custom probably continued to form a larger element in the decisions of the Landraden than in those of the Civiele Raden and the Raden van Justitie, which were located only in the large towns. The adulteration of the Sinhalese customary law may have been the reason for the Dutch authorities not having undertaken its codification, and the very absence of a code may well have contributed further to the disuse of that law. A code, crystallising its contents in an authoritative written form, has a much greater power of resistance to extraneous influences than a body of unwritten custom, and the Dutch policy of applying the Dutch law to the native inhabitants in cases where there was no distinctive

rule of native custom must have been easier to follow where nothing like the Tesavalamai or the Code of Muslim Law existed.

A judge of the Supreme Court of Ceylon complained in 1913 that "the extent to which the Dutch introduced their own law into the outstations is a subject of great difficulty and as yet very partial elucidation". Not less difficult nor less in need of elucidation is the subject of the ways in which the law, introduced from abroad or originating in Ceylon, was applied and developed in the island during the one and a half centuries of Dutch rule. Without making a close study of what is still legible in the legal records of the Dutch period no conclusions can be reached regarding the order in which the different kinds of authorities would have been considered by a judge engaged in deciding a case. There, is however, evidence to suggest that such a judge would have inquired first whether any local statutes dealt with the matter in hand. Where local statutes contained no clear provision on the point or were silent, and in the absence of any local custom having the force of law, he would have had recourse to the Statutes of Batavia. If these too were silent, he would then have turned to the law of Holland, excluding such customs and legislation as had reference to the special local circumstances of the mother-country; in practice this meant that he would have relied on the general principles expounded in those "books of authority" which were most commonly used. Finally, where all the above sources failed, the judge would have consulted the Roman Law as interpreted in Holland. In their attitude to earlier judicial decisions it may be presumed that the judges in Ceylon followed the practice that prevailed in Holland: while there was no rule of law binding judges to follow such decisions, a line of consistent decisions to the same effect would generally be followed by later judges unless there was some good reason for disregarding the current of authority.

In concluding this account of the administration of justice in Ceylon in Dutch times, some general observations may be made. The rulers of the Dutch overseas settlements had emphasised from the earliest times that "justice is the foundation of every good government and its administration must therefore be entrusted to the most honest and able persons that can be found". It is clear, however, that these ideals were not always realised in practice, especially in the later years of the 18th century when the administration in the overseas settlements had become moribund and corrupt. Although the supreme authorities occasionally interfered to remedy the worst excesses, serious defects in the administration of justice persisted, particularly in criminal proceedings, and formed the subject of adverse comment by the first British civilian Governor of Ceylon. Nevertheless, in spite of many defects, the administration of justice under the rule of the Dutch was an improvement on what had prevailed before their arrival in Ceylon. They codified some of the native customary laws, and the Roman-Dutch law which they introduced was so rich in the sources it could draw upon that it still remains

the basis of the common law of the Island in civil matters. Though the areas under Dutch rule were not extensive, the administration of justice in those areas may be said to have foreshadowed, faintly perhaps, the Rule of Law in the modern sense. For in the territories under their dominion the Dutch established a civil administration based on a regular hierarchy of courts with definite rules of procedure and judicial records, which limited the exercise of arbitrary power and secured a reasonable measure of impartial justice.

[The above account is based on an article by Professor T. Nadaraja, Dean, Faculty of Law, University of Ceylon, in Volume XII (New Series) of the Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1968 and on chapter one of his "The Legal System of Ceylon in its Historical Setting" (E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1972)].



Design of a seal proposed for the Raad van Justitie of Colombo in 1666.

(B)

A Symposium

The Dutch Records in Ceylon

1. The Origin of the Archives : R. L. BROHIER

The story is told that it was the urge to find the salt necessary for the preservation of the herring, and the determination to buy the commodity and spices at the place of origin, which drove Holland to far corners of the world in eastern waters. However it did happen that they forced their way on the Portuguese trail in ships, and in the face of great suffering and hardship ultimately crowned their efforts with success by securing for themselves the Indian sea-routes. This was the first step in the history of their expansion overseas and it manifested itself at the close of the 16th century. There followed the establishment of several trading companies founded by daring pioneers who set out on voyages of trade, exploration and adventure. But, eventually the Netherlanders combined their efforts into one single enterprise and established a limited Company the name of which rendered in English was : Dutch East India Company. It had for its Trade Mark the well-known interlaced initials V.O.C. The Company was authorized to discharge the functions of a Government in East Indian Islands and waters to maintain armed forces, to make war and peace and to exercise full administrative judicial and legislative authority over the whole sphere of its operations.

It was in this sequence of history that the maritime provinces of Ceylon came to be rendered a part of the Dutch Colonial Empire from 1640 to 1796 and explains how Holland's flag came to be flown for a period of a little over 150 years over Dutch fortresses round Ceylon's coast. Some of these Forts know their place no longer. All of those which remain, are crumbling to ruin, except for one at Jaffna. The connoting signet : The V.O.C. — can yet be traced if search is made for it, within these forts and on monument, furniture and china of the period, while the written word giving full details of the civil, military, political and ecclesiastical functions of the Company on matters pertaining to the Island repose in 7000 volumes which are in the custody of the Ceylon Government.

It would appear that the Dutch bestowed great care on their records. From very early times, about 1660, they had an official custodian, who in the later stages of their occupation of maritime Ceylon even adopted the modern designation "Archivist". Hence besides ensuring their physical safety the Dutch as custodians compiled lists and catalogues of their written records from time to time, and periodically weeded out the papers of transitory importance.

Unfortunately no records of the period of earlier occupation by the Portuguese had been passed on to the Dutch. In fact it would appear that most of them had been wilfully destroyed in order to embarrass the Dutch by depriving them of such information as would be necessary for efficient administration during the crucial period of transition. This was specially so in regards to the Portuguese records described as Tombus or registers of land revenue which would have been of priceless value to the Dutch East India Company, since they showed what the villagers were obliged to pay yearly to the Government for the property they possessed. The only documents in Portuguese which survived and had found their way into the Dutch Records were the letters exchanged between Raja Sinha II and the Dutch. In reality these too from the point of time, belonging to the Dutch period.

When the British took over from the Dutch by Article 4 of the Capitulation of Colombo, Governor van Angelbeek agreed to deliver to the British authorities : " all public papers " belonging to the Government of the Dutch East India Company in Ceylon. The handover was faithfully done, except for the records at Jaffna and of some smaller stations which were later found to have almost entirely disappeared. It must be presumed that they were either lost in transit or deliberately destroyed secretly by some misguided officials, for the same reason which prompted the Portuguese to destroy their records.

It will thus be seen that the bulk of the Dutch records passed into British hands, but sad to recall, during the 19th century the British Government's interest in the Dutch records proved to be fitful and fluctuating. Record-keepers were appointed from time to time, but there were many intervals when the documents were left without attention, stacked untidily in vault or godown and open to the ravages of white-ants. Their intrinsic importance came to be emphasised on the then Government in a strange manner.

Towards the end of the 19th century a retired Civil Servant : Mr. C. J. R. Le Mesurier, brought a series of land actions against the Crown claiming extensive properties on the basis of Dutch documents alleged to be land grants. The deeds he produced had to be checked against the originals and he challenged the Government to produce them. Forced in this manner to realize the value of the old Dutch Land Registers and spurred to it by a despatch from the Secretary of State to whom Le Mesurier had carried his complaint, Government set about having the registers examined, and also considered it expedient to keep all the other Dutch Records in safe repository in order that they would be available for reference. But where was there the man in Ceylon who could carry out the undertaking ?

Fortunately for the Government and for posterity, they had in the person of Mr. R. G. Anthonisz, who at the time was acting as office assistant to the Government Agent of the Sabaragamuwa Province, a person who had

a first rate knowledge of 17th century Dutch. He was seconded on the 15th of July 1899 as " Examiner of Dutch Records ".

The deeds Le Mesurier produced referred to lands in the Galle District. All the Dutch land Registers pertaining to this District had long reposed herded in a godown at the Galle Kachcheri but had about two decades earlier been sent to the Colombo Museum and lay dumped, helter-skelter, in several large tin-lined packing cases. They were transferred to the old Colonial Secretary's Office (now the Senate building) where temporary office accommodation had been found for Mr. Anthonisz. He set to work on them with a true feeling for the records in his custody.

So useful had been Mr. Anthonisz's early efforts that in January 1902 Government made his office permanent with a change in designation to that of : Archivist & Librarian ". In time he had retrieved all the Dutch records scattered in out-station Kachcheries and housed them in Colombo in his custody. When in 1907, there was published by the Ceylon Government Press a 140 page book by Anthonisz bearing the title " Report on the Dutch Records contained in the Archives at Colombo " he had amassed five distinct series of records which had never originally or ever before been brought together in one place. These were : (1) The General Records of the Dutch Government. (2) The Proceedings of the Political Council of Ceylon in Dutch times. (3) The Land Thombus of Colombo and Galle. (4) The Records of the Galle Commandment and (5) The School Thombus.

This in brief is the interesting story of the creation of the Government Archives. Nevertheless, far more interesting than the story told, is the brief description of the Dutch Records in a 54 year old printed report by R. G. Anthonisz.

The nature and contents of this publication by Anthonisz justifies its claim to be classed an old Ceylon book. What is more, since it has long been out of print it is a rare book found only on the book-shelf of collectors of old Ceylon books. Its special merit is that it is the only printed publication, besides the catalogue compiled by Miss Jurianse 36 years later. But it is this publication which in no small measure calls to life the seared and yellow pages and the old ink in the 7000 musty tomes which cover a comparatively unworked field and an unexplored section of Ceylon's history.

The few translated extracts and illustrations of the scripts which are reproduced in the report reveal secrets picked by the author which make the past very real and prove him a born Archivist. Any reader with a sense of the past will find the old publication as exciting as the smell of desert sand must have to the Egyptologist.

It is not possible in this short review to consider separately each of the five sections classified earlier. The largest of these is the General Records

which comprise nearly 3 of the seven thousand folios. The bulk of them fall under correspondence, but this section also included transactions with the Kandyan Court, references to educational matters, deeds and land court proceedings and most valuable of all the Memoirs left by the Governors on relinquishing office, also the Diaries and Journals kept in Colombo and during the circuits of the Governors.

2. The Memoirs of the Dutch Governors : S. A. W. MOTTAU

Two of the most important and valuable contributions of the Dutch to the culture of Ceylon are the Roman Dutch Law, which is the basis of most of our Legislative enactments, and the 7000 odd manuscript volumes of the record of their administration of the Island.

These records are a veritable gold mine of rare and useful information on the progress of the Government of this Island during the period of 150 years of Dutch rule over the Maritime Districts of Ceylon. They also furnish a valuable original source of documentary evidence for historical study and research on the political social and economic conditions that existed at the time, particularly in regard to the relation between the rulers of the Maritime Districts and the various Sinhalese monarchs of the Kandyan Provinces in the Interior.

Unfortunately for students of Ceylon history these valuable manuscript records are all written in the Dutch language, and are not therefore readily available for use by those who do not possess a knowledge of Dutch. Through the good offices of the Government Archives Department, however a fair number of the more important series of these records have been translated into English from time to time by the respective Government Archivists and their Assistants. Several of these translations have been printed and are now available for use, but not many copies of them are in current circulation. The major part of the translations that have already been published are the Memoirs left by the departing Dutch Governors of Ceylon for their successors. They form by far the most interesting and valuable series among the collection deposited at the Ceylon Government Archives.

According to the orders issued by the Governor General and the Council of India at Batavia, every Governor or Commandeur and in fact any high official in the service of the Dutch East India Company, was expressly required to leave a Memoir for the guidance of his successor in office, outlining the principal points in regard to the administration of his particular office. Although no strict rules were prescribed as to the form of these Memoirs, some sort of tradition of how this had to be done grew up. In many cases, the personality of the author was freely reflected in the Memoir.

The Memoirs left by the Governors as a rule, furnished a description of the country its resources, its people, their customs, industries, etc., with

special hints of a personal nature for the information of the incoming ruler. The subjects generally dealt with were treated more or less in the following order of precedence.

Firstly the General Revenue derived from the various commodities of which the Dutch held either the monopoly or a part monopoly and the various taxes levied on gardens and fields e.g. cinnamon, arecanut, paddy, salt, chank, and pearl fisheries, the trade in cotton goods, tobacco, elephants, timber etc. It is quite natural that this was the principal item dealt with in all these Memoirs, as the Government was administered under the direction of the Dutch East India Trading Company. Among the taxes, several items are dealt with which furnish an interesting source of study of the social conditions of the country at that period, e.g. taxes for licences issued for travelling in a palanquin, the use of a "sombreel" or sunshade the wearing of gold medals, for exemption from Uliyam service or other obligatory services by the several castes of grades of the local inhabitants and even the formalities to be observed at their funerals and weddings etc.

Other matters connected with the general administration dealt with are :—

The General state of the fortifications, which contain much useful information of topographical and local interest.

The Civil, Naval and Military Establishments. Under this heading some of the Memoirs contain a frank and free expression of opinion on the merits and demerits of the officials of the Company. A good example of this appears in Governor Jan Schreuder's Memoir which was written in the year 1762, during the disquieting period of their war in the Kandyan Kingdom where he makes the following interesting remarks on the efficiency of the Company's officials of that period :- "As to what now related to the efficiency of the servants of the Company at this place there is not much to enthuse thereover, seeing that the efficient and zealous officers are only a few in number and the rest are in such case as the Heer Imhoff testifies, for he who lives the truth cannot deny that I had to rouse and keep awake the majority of them as from a sleep of indolence and indifference which had totally crept over them by continual urging earnest admonition, threats and even the imposition of fines which were however usually remitted, in order to make them diligent and attentive to their duties, the which had such results that I have reformed many of them." "I must also confess" he adds, "to my regret that the expectations that I had formed of some of them have been abused, and that I have seen illustrated the truth of the proverb that they are not all cooks who wear long knives and that those upon whom one thought he could rely most committed the greatest errors in a moment of emergency."

Next in the general sequence was the description of the various religious establishments of the Dutch and the administration of their schools.

Then the ceremonies and events connected with the reception of the Ambassadors from the Kandyan Court, and the relations (political and economic) between the Dutch and the Kandyan kingdom.

Then followed a description of the various communities and castes, and their grades and peculiar obligatory services.

Lastly matters connected with the coinage mint and exchange of the country at the various periods and various other topics of lesser importance.

The Memoirs of the later period of the Dutch administration during the latter half of the 18th century particularly those of the Governors Julius Valentyn Stein Van Gollennesse (written in 1751) Jan Gideon Loten (written in 1757) and Jan Schreuder (written in 1762) also furnish useful and valuable information on the system of land registration and service tenures in vogue at the time, and the merits and demerits of the headmen system. This monumental work of the Tombo registration, which has been referred to as the Doomsday Book of Ceylon, was a survival of the Portuguese Tombo or register of holding and the Foral or Register of quit rents, both of which in turn had been modelled on the Lekam-miti or feudal registers of Sinhalese times. Governor Schreuder referring to it in his Memoir, says "A fully completed Tombo is important not only in respect of the least detail which concerns the country, but also of the good inhabitants thereof; and indeed in all civilized countries nothing is so proper and natural than that the particulars regarding ones own territory and subjects should be noted down in writing in such a manner that it would not be possible for a child to be born, or a graybeard, however old he may be, to die, without some mention being made thereof."

The rights of the Dutch East India Company to maintain possession of the territories occupied by them in Ceylon was also a subject that formed the preamble to many of the Memoirs, each Governor being apparently under instructions from the Supreme Authorities to put his successor in possession of the facts of the case that he might be able to resist any attempt either on the part of the Kandyan King or of foreign powers at so much cost. Governor Simons in his Memoir written in 1707 devotes much space to this subject and he refers to the earlier Memoir left by Governor Joan Maatzuycker as early as 1650. Governor Schreuder too devotes more than one Chapter to this subject in his Memoir written in 1762.

There were 30 governors in all who held office as such during the period of Dutch rule in Ceylon. Eight of these died while in office in the Island, and no Memoirs by them were therefore available for their successors. Nine of the remainder do not appear to have complied with the order of the Supreme Authority in Batavia in this respect, and left no Memoirs on their administration for the guidance of their successors. In the case of some of these the failure to do so must have been due to their sudden transfer or

removal from office. This was certainly so in the case of the infamous Governor Petrus Vuyst (after whom incidentally the place now known as "Vuystwyck) or Vuyst's retreat in Mutwal, where he had his country seat was named, who was apprehended and removed from his office after a short but tyrannical rule of nearly three years as Governor of Ceylon.

Fortunately for students of history in Ceylon, thirteen of the Dutch Governors left most interesting and useful Memoirs on their administration in this Island, and these furnish a more or less complete record for a study of the development of the political economic social and religious conditions that existed at the time. English translations of all these Memoirs but one are now available for students of Ceylon history. Ten of them, with detailed notes and introductions have already been printed and published from time to time during the present century, and manuscript translations of two others have been procured by the Government of Ceylon and are available for reference at the Government Archives.

While on this subject of the "Memoirs of Dutch Governors", mention must also be made of the valuable set of Instructions left as a Memoir by one of the earliest and ablest Governors of Ceylon Ryckloff van Goens the Senior, who later held office of Governor General of the East Indies at Batavia. These 'Instructions' do not really fall under the category of "Memoirs of Dutch Governors" for their successors which is the subject of my article but it would not be in appropriate to refer to them, as they contain a full and complete record of the Instructions issued from time to time during the very early period of the Dutch Administration in the Island from 1656 to 1675 and they form the basis on which this country was maintained throughout by the Dutch. The fact that Ryckloff van Goens the Senior was appointed a Special Commissioner to Ceylon in 1659, and later served as Governor from 1660 to 1675 with a short break, gives a special value to this compilation.

What I have so far said is more or less an introduction to the subject of the "Memoirs of Dutch Governors of Ceylon." In subsequent paragraphs I shall endeavour to give you a more detailed account of the salient features of some of the Memoirs themselves quoting extracts from them to illustrate the value of these historical records for acquiring a correct estimate and understanding of the aims and objects of the various Dutch rulers of that period and the several policies adopted by them from time to time in the discharge of their responsible duties on behalf of their Lords and Masters in the light of the peculiar conditions in which they had to govern the destinies of this land.

The possession of these historical Memoirs is a National cultural asset to this country and it is fervently to be hoped that the good work that has been accomplished in the past of translating and publishing them from the Dutch, in which language they are written, will be continued for the benefit of the future generation in this country.

I now proceed to an analysis of this rare and interesting documentary evidence on the history of the development of the administration of this country during the period of Dutch rule over the Maritime districts of this island from 1640 to 1796 A.D.

As I mentioned before, English translations of thirteen of these most valuable memoirs are available for those who wish to make a detailed study of the subject. It will hardly be possible for me in this brief talk to touch on the individual merits of all these memoirs. I shall however endeavour very briefly to give you a resume of the special features of some of the more important memoirs of the earlier stages of the Dutch administration quoting some extracts from them to illustrate both the wealth of first-hand information which they furnish and the elegance of the language of their respective authors.

The first of the series of Memoirs left by departing Dutch Governors for their successors was that of Governor Joan Maatzuycker for his successor Jacob van Kittensteijn, written in the year 1650 six years before the capture of Colombo by the Dutch when Galle was the official Headquarters of the Dutch East India Company's administration in Ceylon. Maatzuycker's predecessors were Willem Jacob Coster, who was murdered in 1640 a few months after his assumption of office and Jan Thyssen, who was recalled by the Dutch authorities at Batavia on his precipitating a crisis in the Company's affairs in Ceylon by declaring war against Raja Sinha the second, King of Kandy. Maatzuycker had the unenviable task of remedying the state of affairs in Ceylon for the Dutch, which he did finally by conducting a Treaty with Raja Sinha in August 1649 a few months before his departure from Ceylon. The friendly relations which then existed between the Dutch and the Kandyan King did not however, favourably impress Maatzuycker, who warned the Government at Batavia that no trust could be placed on Raja, who would never abandon his treacherous machinations". The usual presents were nevertheless exchanged at Maatzuycker's departure the King sending him a costly jewel and Maatzuycker for the despatch of a Tutucorin bell and a screw-jack "with other trifles". His Memoir is of special importance in that it includes a detailed recapitulation of the earlier history of the Dutch in Ceylon. He also narrates in detail the difficult relations which existed at the time between the Dutch and Raja Sinha who he says "was often more than a match for his sagacious allies".

His Memoir also affords valuable information regarding the ancient system of service tenures and illustrates the village economy in land where as he says "no workmen can be obtained for payment on hire".

The next Memoir that of Governor Ryckloff Van Goens (the junior) for his successor Laurens Pyl was written in 1669 A. D. Referring particularly to the importance of the cinnamon trade he says "Cinnamon is the bride round whom they all dance in Ceylon and that which must bear the burden

of the administration". An interesting comment in this memoir is that "boys who were of fit age to become soldiers were taken into the Company's service on salaries of from 9 to 10 guilders a month (i.e. less than Rs. 10/- in terms of current values). Referring to the annual Durbar called "Paresse" of local chiefs, he says: "Twice a year all the mayorals and chiefs of each caste have to appear before the authorities to suggest in general what is necessary. Each has to bring some present. The mayorals bring fowls and each caste offers some of the products of its trade. It is important to continue this custom. It was introduced in the time of the heathen king, was kept by the Portuguese, and is now still observed by the Honourable Company".

The next Memoir of Governor Thomas Van Rhee for his successor Gerrit de Heere was written in the year 1697 A.D. Governor Van Rhee's Memoir deals fully with many subjects either entirely omitted or only meagerly treated in other memoirs of prior or later date, e.g. the topographical description of the Company fortifications, factories and Civil stations and the characteristics and services of the various castes of the inhabitants of the Jaffna district ranging from the Bellales down to the Wallias whose duty was "to hunt and supply hares for the Commandant's kitchen". Detailed accounts of the names and properties of the seven different kinds of cinnamon are also given and the several grades of the Chalias or Salagama people, who according to a petition addressed by their representatives to Governor Rumpf in 1723 claimed to be a distinct race, which had been invited to Ceylon by the Sinhalese king some 650 years previously nearly the same time as the Norman invasion of England.

No memoir was left by Governor Gerrit de Heere, who died in Ceylon while holding office as such. The Next Memoir was that of Governor Cornelis Joan Simons for his successor Hendrik Becker, which was written in the year 1707 A.D. Governor Simons was a Graduate in Law, and two important events of permanent influence have always been associated with him e.g. the compilation of the Thesawalami, or Tamil Code of Laws, and the building of the first Leper Asylum at Hendala. Being a lawyer a good part of his Memoir is devoted to the subject of the legal rights of the Dutch East India Company to the territories possessed by them in Ceylon. He also refers in detail to the relations between the Dutch and the king of Kandy Sri Vira Parakkrama Narendra Sinha describing him as a lad "only about 17 years of age, but has already on various occasions shown a violent temper directly opposite to that of his father who was very mild and displayed much zeal for the religion of the country". This description tallies with that of the Dutch historian Valentyn who says that he was a lad of a very wild disposition, who showed in all his acts to be a dangerous man and a great tyrant, though the Mahawamsa on the contrary describes him as "a temple of wisdom and valour and virtue" and has nothing but praise for his character as a most religious and meritorious ruler. This may be accounted for by the further comment made by Governor Simons that "on this account, the

priests had a great deal of influence with him, and he chiefly followed their advice". The Governor also mentions a visit made by the late King to Adam's Peak to perform his devotions when he offered a massive silver "Sombreiro" or sunshade and other presents.

The next Memoir is that of Governor Hendrick Becker for his successor Isaac Augustyn Rumpf, which was written in the year 1716 A. D. He assumed office at a time when the Company's revenues were greatly depleted chiefly through neglect and dishonesty on the part of the Company's officials. The vigorous attempts to reform matters by a definite change in the general policy are best described in his own words: "From the commencement" he says "I made it a point to endeavour by every available means to discover the real state of affairs and with God's blessing I have worked on steadily from year to year and have been in a position to expose all the fraud and to lift the veil from the subtle mysteries presented before the eyes of rulers by dishonest servants. I met with many obstacles and much opposition especially because the evils I proposed to reform were longstanding". With a good deal of pardonable egotism he proceeds to enumerate the various reforms effected by him by which he says "larger revenues were obtained than at any time previous to my rule".

The next Memoir in chronological sequence is that of Governor Jacob Christian Pielat for his successor Diederik van Domberg. This was the first of the series to be translated and published in the year 1905. I do not propose to comment in detail on this memoir, but shall pass on to one of a later period, where I shall refer in passing to extracts from this memoir.

The Memoir of Governor Gustaaf Willem Baron van Imhoff for his successor Willem Maruts Bruynink written in the year 1740, demands special attention. This memoir throws much light on the policy of the Dutch, and will furnish sufficient proof of the fact that they were not always or entirely guided by mercenary objects, a charge which is often brought against them. It will be found that under the rule of large minded and enlightened Governors of the stamp of Van Imhoff, the interests of the country and its people were constantly kept in mind. The literary genius of the author is effected in the elegant and graceful style and language in which it is written. It is rich in proverb and metaphor, which the author freely uses to emphasise his arguments. A characteristic feature of the memoir is that the author does not hesitate to express time and again, in bold and outspoken terms, with even a tinge of graceful sarcasm, his disappointment and vexation over the rejection by the Supreme authorities at Batavia of certain proposals made by him for reform in the administration. Referring to this in his advice to his successor, he says: "I cannot give Your Excellency any better advice as no better was given to me when my considerations containing alternative propositions for reform were rejected. I know that the opinion of His Excellency the Governor General and the council of India does not agree with mine, and as a matter of course their suggestions have prevailed over mine

with their Excellencies in the Netherlands but how far why and to what purpose I cannot say. You will therefore have to make the best of the matter, and adapt yourself to time and circumstances ". He however modifies his criticism in the latter part of his memoir. He stresses the need for continuing the usual practice during the annual embassies to Kandy of giving presents to the King and his courtiers, a course which as he frankly admits, he himself once rejected as being prejudicial to the dignity and good name of the Honourable company. He discourages the practice of giving out too freely gifts of Company's lands (Crown lands in modern terminology) to the local chiefs to ensure their loyalty in the service though later, he carefully weighs the pros and cons of the existing native headman system and ends his remarks by quoting the saying " The chimney must smoke for both parties ". Governor Pielat too, in his Memoir commenting on the same subject says (this shows that the natives must be sometimes dealt with kindly as more flies are caught with a drop of honey than with a whole cask of vinegar ". Referring to the extravagance in the expenses paid for local purchases in connection with the Company's internal trade he again aptly quotes the saying " Even gold may be bought too dear ". Both Imhoff and Pielat before him refer to the general slackness and inefficiency in the cadre of the Company's service at the time stressing the need for constant supervision of their work. Pielat quotes the Dutch proverb " The eye of the master fattens the horse " and van Imhoff, in his final note of encouragement to his successor also quotes the old proverb " We must row with the oars we have. " He adds " We must not give way to our despondency although we sometimes feel inclined to exclaim " The wise and the foolish receive the same treatment as the one is dealt with so is the other. Such considerations do not make right what is wrong, and would only weary us. Therefore which ever way we may turn says he " it comes back to the same point of rowing with the oars we have in the vessel which is almost sinking from old age and decay. This I leave to Your Excellency as the principal axiom ".

English translations of six Memoirs in this series have been printed and published by Miss Sophia Pieters, who came out to Ceylon early in the present century as Dutch translator to the Government under the able guidance and direction of the late Mr. R. G. Anthonisz, Government Archivist at the time whom she eventually married in Ceylon. English translations of four others were later published by Mr. Anthonisz's successor Mr. E. Reimers. We owe a deep debt of gratitude to the Government Archives Department and to these officers in particular, for their unstinted labours in translating and bringing to light this wealth of historical material which so long lay buried and forgotten in the repositories of the Government Archives. Even these published translations are now so rare that they are well worth re-printing.

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