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Prof. Haeckel and the Human Soul.

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Few pages in the story of science are more interesting and instructive than the picture of "man in the making." The immense complexities of the physical structure known as the human body with its highest achievements of thought and the wonderful manifestations of consciousness about which man in his orthodox reverence to things established has been wont to be satisfied with obscure and hazy notions have from time immemorial provided, among others, the *substratum* for all religious beliefs, Eastern and Western. The soul of man, as entirely distinct from his physical body, has ever been assumed as a true and necessary postulate, a foundation for building up the complex edifice called religion and no attempt was made, more out of reverence and fear, to systematically examine the strength and the exact nature of the foundation. Various Theistic schools and their followers were consequently satisfied in holding conceptions of

the soul as they conformed to their original doctrines and hence enquiries in that direction, at least so far as the Eastern religions were concerned, were considered unnecessary and unimportant. But the dark ages are no more; modern science with its torches of investigation has penetrated every nook and corner and laid bare the truths and assumptions of bygone ages. To name one distinguished name in the field,—Professor Ernest Haeckel of Germany, revolutionised the world a few years ago by giving out his conclusions based on a weary and lifelong scientific research. It is wellknown how the *Riddle of the Universe*—which embodies his purest conception of a monistic philosophy—raised a storm of controversy from interested quarters. And scarcely have the ashes cooled down before another monumental work by the same distinguished *savant* has been placed within the reach of every reader of the English tongue through the kindness of the Rationalist Press Association, London. *The Evolution of man* first published in 1874 and subsequently enlarged, as translated by Joseph McCabe and made available in a popular edition in september last, throws abundant light on many a dark point in the development of the human body as well as on the nature and evolution of the soul. As Prof. Haeckel's conclusions and remarks as regards the latter are well worth study and reflection I beg leave to extract the following paragraphs relating to the subject.

“ But there is another important Psychological question—the most important of all—that has been definitely answered by the recent discoveries in connection with conception. This is the question of the immortality of the soul. No fact throws more light on it and refutes it more convincingly than the elementary process of conception that we have described. For this copulation of the two sexual nuclei indicates the precise moment at which the



individual begins to exist. All the bodily and mental features of the new-born child are the sum-total of the hereditary qualities which it has received in reproduction from parents and ancestors. All that man acquires afterwards in life by the exercise of his organs, the influence of his environment and education—in a word, by adaptation—cannot obliterate the general outline of his being which he inherited from his parents. But this hereditary disposition, the essence of every human soul is not “eternal” but “temporal”; it comes into being only at the moment when the sperm-nucleus of the father and the nucleus of the maternal ovum meet and fuse together. It is clearly irrational to assume an “eternal life without end” for an individual phenomenon, the commencement of which we can indicate to a moment by direct visual observation.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“But it is said : “That is all very well, as far as the human body is concerned; on the facts quoted it is impossible to doubt that it has really and gradually been evolved from the long ancestral series of the Vertebrates. But it is quite another thing as regards man’s mind, or soul; this cannot possibly have been developed from the vertebrate-soul.” Let us see if we cannot meet this grave stricture from the well-known facts of comparative anatomy, physiology, and embryology. It will be best to begin with a comparative study of the souls of various groups of Vertebrates. Here we find such an enormous variety of vertebrate souls that, at first sight, it seems quite impossible to trace them all to a common “Primitive Vertebrate.” Think of the tiny *Amphioxus*, with no real brain but a simple medullary tube, and its whole psychic life at the very lowest stage among the Vertebrates. The following group of the *Cyclostomes* are still very limited, though they have a brain. When we pass on to the fishes, we find their intelligence remaining at a very low level. We do not see any material advance in mental development until we go on to the *Amphibia* and *Reptiles*. There is still greater advance when we come to the *Mammals*, though even here

the minds of the Monotremes and of the stupid Marsupials remain at a low stage. But when we rise from these to the Placentals we find within this one vast group such a number of important stages of differentiation and progress that the psychic differences between the least intelligent (such as the sloths and armadillos) and the most intelligent Placentals (such as the dogs and apes) are much greater than the psychic differences between the lowest Placentals and the Marsupials or Monotremes. Most certainly the differences are far greater than the differences in mental power between the dog, the ape, and man. Yet all these animals are genetically-related members of a single natural class.

"We see this to a still more astonishing extent in the comparative psychology of another class of animals, that is especially interesting for many reasons—the insect class. It is well known that we find in many insects a degree of intelligence that is found in man alone among the Vertebrates. Everybody knows of the famous communities and states of bees and ants, and of the very remarkable social arrangements in them, such as we find among the more advanced races of men, but among no other group of animals. I need only mention the social organisation and government of the monarchic bees and the republican ants, and their division into different conditions—queen, drone-nobles, workers, educators, soldiers, etc. One of the most remarkable phenomena in this very interesting province is the cattle-keeping of the ants, which rear plant-lice as milch-cows and regularly extract their honied juice. Still more remarkable is the slave-holding of the large red ants, which steal the young of the small black ants and bring them up as slaves. It has long been known that these political and social arrangements of the ants are due to the deliberate co-operation of the countless citizens, and that they understand each other. A number of recent observers, especially Fritz Muller, Sir J. Lubbock (Lord Avebury), and August Forel, have put the astonishing degree of intelligence of these tiny Articulates beyond question.

"Now, compare with these the mental life of many of the lower, especially the parasitic, insects, as Darwin did. There is, for



instance, the cochineal insect (*Coccus*) which, in its adult state, has a motionless, shield-shaped body, attached to the leaves of plants. Its feet are atrophied. Its snout is sunk in the tissue of the plants of which it absorbs the sap. The whole psychic life of these inert female parasites consists in the pleasure they experience from sucking the sap of the plant and in sexual intercourse with the males. It is the same with the maggot-like females of the fan-fly (*Strep-sitera*), which spend their lives parasitically and immovably, without wings or feet, in the abdomen of wasps. There is no question here of higher psychic action. If we compare these sluggish parasites with the intelligent and active ants, we must admit that the psychic differences between them are much greater than the psychic differences between the lowest and highest mammals, between the Monotremes, Marsupials and armadillos on the one hand, and the dog, ape, or man on the other. Yet all these insects belong to the same class of Articulates, just as all the mammals belong to one and the same class. And just as every consistent evolutionist must admit a common stem-form for all these insects, so he must also for all the mammals.

If we now turn from the comparative study of psychic life in different animals to the question of the organs of this function, we receive the answer that in all the higher animals they are always bound up with certain groups of cells, the ganglionic cells or neurona that compose the nervous system. All scientists without exception are agreed that the central nervous system is the organ of psychic life in the animal, and it is possible to prove this experimentally at any moment. When we partially or wholly destroy the central nervous system, we extinguish in the same proportion, partially or wholly, the "soul" or psychic activity of the animal. We have, therefore, to examine the features of the psychic organ in man. The reader already knows the incontestable answer to this question. Man's psychic organ is, in structure and origin, just the same organ as in all the other Vertebrates. It originates in the shape of a simple medullary tube from the outer membrane of the embryo—the skin-sense layer. The simple cerebral vesicle that is formed by the expansion of the head-part of this medullary tube

divides by transverse constrictions into five, and these pass through more or less the same stages of construction in the human embryo as in the rest of the mammals. As these are undoubtedly of a common origin, their brain and spinal cord must also have a common origin.

Physiology teaches us further, on the ground of observation and experiment, that the relation of the "soul" to its organ, the brain and spinal cord, is just the same in man as in the other mammals. The one cannot act at all without the other; it is just as much bound up with it as muscular movement is with the muscles. It can only develop in connection with it. If we are evolutionists at all, and grant the causal connection of ontogenesis and phylogenesis, we are forced to admit this thesis: The human soul or psyche, as a function of the medullary tube, has developed along with it; and just as brain and spinal cord now develop from the simple medullary tube in every human individual, so the human mind or the psychic life of the whole human race has been gradually evolved from the lower vertebrate soul. Just as to-day the intricate structure of the brain proceeds step by step from the same rudiment in every human individual—the same five cerebral vesicles—as in all the other Craniotes; so the human soul has been gradually developed in the course of millions of years from a long series of craniote-souls. Finally, just as to-day in every human embryo the various parts of the brain differentiate after the special type of the ape-brain, so the human psyche has proceeded historically from the ape-soul.

It is true that this monistic conception is rejected with horror by most men, and the Dualistic idea, which denies the inseparable connection of brain and mind, and regards body and soul as two totally different things, is still popular. But how can we reconcile this view with the known facts of evolution? It meets with difficulties equally great and insuperable in embryology and in phylogeny. If we suppose with the majority of men that the soul is an independent entity, which has nothing to do with the body originally, but merely inhabits it for a time, and gives expression to its experiences through the brain just as the pianist does through his instrument, we must assign a point in human embryology at which the soul enters into



the brain ; and at death again we must assign a moment at which it abandons the body. As, further, each human individual has inherited certain personal features from each parent, we must suppose that in the act of conception pieces were detached from their souls and transferred to the embryo. A piece of the paternal soul goes with the spermatozoon, and a piece of mother's soul remains in the ovum. At the moment of conception, when portions of the two nuclei of the copulating cells join together to form the nucleus of the stem-cell, the accompanying fragments of the immaterial souls must also be supposed to coalesce.

On this Dualistic view the phenomena of psychic development are totally incomprehensible. Everybody knows that the new-born child has no consciousness, no knowledge of itself and the surrounding world. Every parent who has impartially followed the mental development of his children will find it impossible to deny that it is a case of biological evolutionary processes. Just as all other functions of the body develop in connection with their organs, so the soul does in connection with the brain. This gradual unfolding of the soul of the child is, in fact, so wonderful and glorious a phenomenon that every mother or father who has eyes to observe is never tired of contemplating it. It is only our manuals of psychology that know nothing of this development ; we are almost tempted to think sometimes that their authors can never have had children themselves. The human soul, as described in most of our psychological works, is merely the soul of a learned philosopher, who has read a good many books, but knows nothing of evolution, and never even reflects that his own soul has had a development.

"When these Dualistic philosophers are consistent they must assign a moment in the phylogeny of the human soul at which it was first "introduced" into man's vertebrate body. Hence, at the time when the human body was evolved from the anthropoid body of the ape (probably in the Tertiary period), a specific human psychic element—or, as people love to say, "a spark of divinity"—must have been suddenly infused or breathed into the anthropoid brain, and been associated with the ape-soul already present in it.

I need not insist on the enormous theoretical difficulties of this idea. I will only point out that this "spark of divinity," which is supposed to distinguish the soul of man from that of the other animals, must be itself capable of development, and has, as a matter of fact, progressively developed in the course of human history. As a rule, reason is taken to be this "spark of divinity," and is supposed to be an exclusive possession of humanity. But comparative psychology shows us that it is quite impossible to set up this barrier between man and the brute. Either we take the word "reason" in the wider sense, and then it is found in the higher mammals (ape, dog, elephant, horse) just as well as in most men; or else in the narrower sense and then it is lacking in most men just as much as in the majority of animals. On the whole, we may still say of man's reason what Goethe's Mephistopheles said :—

Life somewhat better might content him  
But for the gleam of heavenly light that Thou hast given him.  
He calls it reason; thence his power's increased  
To be still beastlier than any beast.

"If, then, we must reject these popular and, in some respects, agreeable Dualistic theories as untenable, because inconsistent with the genetic facts, there remains only the opposite or Monistic conception, according to which the human soul is, like any other animal soul, a function of the central nervous system, and develops in inseparable connection therewith. We see this *ontogenetically* in every child. The biogenetic law compels us to affirm it *phylogenetically*. Just as in every human embryo the skin-sense layer gives rise to the medullary tube, from the anterior end of which the five cerebral vesicles of the Craniotes are developed, and from these the mammal brain (first with the characters of the lower, then with those of the higher mammals); and as the whole of this ontogenetic process is only a brief, hereditary reproduction of the same process in the phylogenesis of the Vertebrates; so the wonderful spiritual life of the human race through many thousands of years has been evolved step by step from the lowly psychic life of the lower vertebrates and the



development of every child-soul is only a brief repetition of that long and complex phylogenetic process. From all these facts sound reason must conclude that the still prevalent belief in the immortality of the soul is an untenable superstition. I have shown its inconsistency with modern science in the eleventh chapter of *The Riddle of the Universe*.

"The human "spirit" or "soul" is merely a force or form of energy, inseparably bound up with the material substratum of the body. The thinking force of the mind is just as much connected with the structural elements of the brain as the motor force of the muscles with their structural elements. Our mental powers are functions of the brain as much as any other force is a function of a material body. We know of no matter that is devoid of force, and no forces that are not bound up with matter. When the forces enter into the phenomenon as movements we call them living or active forces; when they are in a state of rest or equilibrium we call them latent or potential. This applies equally to inorganic and organic bodies. The magnet that attracts iron filings, the powder that explodes, the steam that drives the locomotive, are living inorganics; they act by living force as much as the sensitive *Mimosa* does when it contracts its leaves at touch, or the venerable *Amphioxus* that buries itself in the sand of the sea, or man when he thinks. Only in the latter cases the combinations of the different forces that appear as "movement" in the phenomenon are much more intricate and difficult to analyse than in the former."

\* \* \* \* \*

Thus we find our conception of the soul as a separate and distinct entity from the human body is materially different from what the sciences of Embryology, Philogeny and Ontogeny reveal to us. In fact it is diametrically opposed to the scientific view of the question. The natural question that suggests itself to a serious thinker now is: "What is the significance of this direct conflict between the truths of Science and what have been till now popularly accepted as the truths of Religion? And what will be its consequences?" It remains to be seen whether the time-honoured faiths and systems of beliefs that mutually revile at each other and unceasingly fight for supremacy that for ages have dominated the hearts and swayed the passions of myriads and have heaped pious tortures on their heads will patiently see one of the principal corner-stones of their edifice being mercilessly snatched away by science without a word of defence or protest.

A. STUDENT.

## TEACHING OF GAUTAMA

How some five-and-twenty centuries ago an Indian Nobleman for the peace and prosperity of mankind left his home and the prospects of a brilliant career at the age of nine-and-twenty and went into homelessness, is all a matter of History. Moved by pity for the sorrows of his fellowmen, Gautama went out to find the truths that would liberate them from misery. He suffered much and learned the truths. And these he called the Dharma which is now known as Buddhism. It is proposed here to give a brief account of the teachings of Gautama Buddha.

These truths form the basis of his system.

1. All component things are impermanent, momentary, unstable, disintegrating, as temporary as a phantom, as the mirage, or as foam.

2. We are all subjects to sorrow and suffering. We sorrow and weep for things which we love and cannot obtain : for things which we abhor and yet cannot get out of them.

3. There is no underlying reality beyond the elements of being, organic or inorganic.

We are here for the time being, as determined by *Karma*, as the Result of Action, destined to disappear, leaving the influences of the character of our deeds to prevail amongst those amidst whom we lived and amongst those that may come after us. Life is short. But this short tenure of life does not promise us any lasting joy. In the other hand, it means more sorrow than joy. We long for a thing : we fail to obtain it : and as a consequence we feel miserable. We hate a certain condition of life : We put forth our best efforts to remove it : We fail in our attempts : and as a consequence we feel miserable. We feel miserable because of the selfishness of selfhood, a bubble of an hour. Selfishness exists because of ignorance of the truth of things. And where there is ignorance there dwells sorrow. Take away the ignorance, and you take away the morbid cleaning to the passing things. And where there is no attachment, there is no fear of loss ; there is no hope of gain, there is no self seeking. And where there is no self-attachment, no wrong, no sorrow, would disturb the serenity of the soul.

This blessed state of mind, this Nirvana is attained by Right Views, Right Aspirations, Right Mindfulness, Right Rapture, Right Effort, Right Speech, Right Conduct, and Right Livelihood.

In a word : To cease from sin, to be free from all personal attachments, and to be pure in thought, word and deed, and thus lead a wealthy, joyous life, is the teaching of Gautama Buddha the First Rationalist known to History.

A. S. MUDALIAR.



## Correspondence.

### The Inner Meanings of the Vedas and the Agamas.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE LIGHT OF TRUTH.]

Sir,—I have endeavoured to point out in brief some of the real inner meanings of the *Vedas* and the *Agamas* revealed by God Siva, refining then as far as it lies in my power with the help of the principles relating to these *Sruties*. A close attention to the following few lines in the light of a philosophic inquiry is earnestly solicited.

(1) The first books of knowledge, viz., the *Vedas* and the *Agamas* have been written in an obscure manner with the twofold means for the attainment of bliss viz., *Kamya* (காமியம்) and *Nishkamya* (நிஷ்காமியம்) underlying them and enshrouded in the imaginary unreality of *Aropa* (ஆரோபம்) as illustrated by the water in the mirage, thief in the post and the serpent in the rope. It is mentioned therein that they are to be investigated by the twofold processes of *Aropa* and *Apavatha* (அபவாதம்) examined with the help of the threefold figures\* of expression prescribed for their proper understanding and reduced to perception, inference or theory, as the case may be, and their legitimate practical end is to be attained by removing the shroud of unreality enveloping them and thus finding out their real significance.

(2) Of these two paths, *Kamya* (காமியம்) consists in fortifying the evanescent human body against the incursions of old age and its attendant signs of grey hairs and wrinkles and rendering it imperishable by the help of what is known as *Mahakalpa*, in understanding the nature of the *Prana* (பிராணன்) and *Abana* (அபாணன்) Vayus and practising Yoga and living for ages together like the ancient Siddhars.

(3) *Nishkamya* (நிஷ்காமியம்) consists in holding that the universe is born of matter, and that while the former is temporal the latter is

\* These are known in Tamil philosophical treatises as (1) விட்ட விலக்கண (2) விடாத விலக்கண (3, விட்டும் விடாத விலக்கண.

eternal, in keeping the mind under control by the aid of *Pranayama* (பிராணாயாமம்) emancipating oneself from the carnal pleasures of the world, in understanding by silent contemplation that the Universe is the manifestation of Brahman and in finally being absorbed in "the Great Original." This is also known as *Videha Mukti* (விடேதக் முக்தி).

(4) Of these two paths for the attainment of bliss preferring the former known as *Jivanmukti* I spent several years in examining the Vedas, Agamas, Puranas and Itihasas in the light of the above-mentioned figures of expression provided for their proper understanding and began the practice of *Pranayama* in the year 1895 as a preliminary for the attainment of *Mani*, *Mantra* and *Oushadha* (மணிமந்திர ஒஷதம்) the three essential requisites for *Jivan Mukti*. For this purpose, abstaining from all kinds of food and drink except a small quantity of milk taken once a day I practised *Yoga* by controlling the *Prana Vayu* as a means of bringing the senses under the influence of the mind. The result of this was that my body became lean day by day and lost all strength. I then directed my attention towards the preparation of the great *kalpa* necessary for the preservation of the body, spent large sums of money and am glad to announce that I have been almost successful in the attempt.

(5) It is revealed in our ancient books that some centuries ago a few became such *Jivan Muktas* understanding these mysteries by the help of Cheraman Perumal Nayanar.

(6) With a view to enable me to procure the necessary requisites of *Mani*, *Mantra* and *Oushada* and help me to crown my efforts with complete success I appeal to the enlightened public for encouragement and if some small assistance is rendered to me I would do what help I can to the world and proceed to Mount Pothiyil to spend the rest of my days in contemplation.

M. KANDASAMI PILLAI,

Dindigul.



## SKETCHES OF CEYLON HISTORY.

(Continued from page 263 Vol. VII.)

### XIII.

Between the tenth and the fifteenth centuries the trade of the Island gradually passed into the hands of the Arabs, who became undisputed masters of the Indian seas. The trade was exceedingly valuable, and embraced not only pearls, gems, spices, and elephants for which the Island was celebrated from remote times, but the products of Eastern and Southern Asia brought here by the Chinese to be exchanged for the wares brought by the Arabs from the countries beyond the Euphrates.

Arab adventurers settled on the Indian and Ceylon coasts, inter-married with the natives, and in time acquired great political influence over the Sinhalese king, who, reduced to impotence, reigned at Kotte, while the seaports were virtually in the hands of the Arabs, the northern half of the island and the east coast (Jaffna, Vanni, Nuwarakalawiya, and Batticaloa) were ruled by Tamil kings, and petty chieftains held mimic court in different parts of the west and south.

Among the exports of the Island cinnamon was the most prized. It was a luxury so rare as to be a suitable gift for a king, so costly that a crown of cinnamon tipped with gold was a becoming offering to the gods. It is believed to have been originally obtained by the Arabs from Eastern Africa and to have gained a footing in India and afterwards in Ceylon where, favoured by natural conditions of climate and soil, the Ceylon variety became the most perfect sample and grew wild in the woods.

Strangely enough there is no reference to Ceylon cinnamon in the account of the travels of Marco Polo who towards the end of the 13th century visited Ceylon on his homeward route to Venice from China where he had for 17 years resided in the court of the Emperor Kubla Khan.

"And the king of this Island," says Marco Polo, "possesses a ruby which is the finest and biggest in the world. . . You must know the great Khan sent an embassy and begged the king as a favour greatly desired to sell him this ruby, offering to give him for it the ransom of a city or in fact what the king would. But the king replied that on no account whatever would he sell it, for it had come to him from his ancestors. Furthermore you must

know that in the land of Seilan there is an exceeding high mountain. . . . . Now it befel that the great Khan heard how on that mountain there was the sepulchre of our first father Adam, and that some of his hair and of his teeth and the dish from which he used to eat were still preserved there. So he thought he would get hold of them somehow or another, and despatched a great embassy for the purpose in the year of Christ 1284. The ambassadors with a great company travelled on by sea and by land until they arrived at the Island of Seilan and presented themselves before the king and they were so urgent with the king that they succeeded in getting two of his grinder teeth which were passing great and thick, and they also got some of the hair and the dish from which the great personage used to eat, which is of a very beautiful green porphyry" (Colonel Yule's *Travels of Marco Polo*, Vol. II., page 295).

The earliest reference to Ceylon cinnamon is by Ibn Batuta, the Moorish traveller from Tangiers, who visited Ceylon, 1347 A.D. on a pilgrimage to Adam's Peak. He landed at Puttalam and found the shore "covered with cinnamon wood which the merchants of Malabar transport without any other price than a few articles of clothing which are given as presents to the king. This may be attributed to the circumstance that it is brought down by the mountain torrents and left in great heaps upon the shore." He found the greatest king in the Island to be the Tamil king of Jaffna, Arya Chakravarti, who had a powerful fleet commanding the western coast and under whose protection he accomplished the pilgrimage to Adam's Peak via Chilaw and "Konakar" (?Kurunegala), extending his journey to the temple at "Dinaur" (Devinuwara or Dondra) and returning by way of "Kale" (Galle) and "Kolambu" (Colombo) which he calls "the finest and largest city in Serendib."

#### XIV.

The power of the Tamil king, Arya Chakravarti of Jaffna, was felt all over Ceylon and the Sinhalese king at Campola was ill-fitted to cope with him. The resistance of the Sinhalese people was headed by a man, alike remarkable as a warrior and statesman, the foremost figure in the history of Ceylon for the next half a century — Alakesvara or Alagakkonara, a Tamil prince from Kanchi, the ancient capital of the Chola kings, who had settled in Ceylon and intermarried with the Royal house and was the *de facto* ruler of the land, though he held the rank only of *Prabhuraja* or Viceroy. Contemporary historians and poets\* speak in no measured terms of his services to the Sinhalese people and the Buddhist church.

\* Mahawansa; Nikaya Sangraha; Attanagala Wansa; Mayura Sandesa.



His seat was at Raygama in the Kalutara district. It took him 20 years to complete his preparations against the mighty king Arya Chakravarti. Having fortified and provisioned Raygama and the seaboard capital Kotte, then known as *Jayawardanapura* (the city of victory), and raised an adequate army, he hurled a challenge at Arya Chakravarti by hanging the tax collectors whom he had stationed in different parts of the country. The reply came in two great hosts, numbering over a hundred thousand, simultaneously attacking Campola and Kotte. The Campola king fled to Raygama but his brave troops defeated and dispersed the enemy. The force intended for the capture of Kotte was brought in ships and disembarked at Colombo and Panadure. Alakesvara himself took the field and inflicted a crushing defeat which effectually broke Arya Chakravarti's power and paved the way for Jaffna shortly afterwards becoming a Sinhalese Province for a time.

Alakesvara, now become a national hero, administered the country with wisdom and vigour. He rescued the country from anarchy, purified the Buddhist church, summoning for the purpose a convocation over which he presided, patronized learning, adorned the cities with noble buildings and well deserved the affection of a grateful people.

About this time an event occurred which is ignored or slurred over in the Sinhalese chronicles. About 1408 a Chinese Admiral arrived with a mandate from the Chinese Emperor demanding tribute from Alakesvara or Alagakkonara, who in the Chinese chronicles is described as 'Alee-ko-nae-wahr a native of Solee (Chola country in South India) and an adherent of the heterodox faith and who, so far from honouring Buddha, tyrannized over his followers.' Alakesvara was thus apparently of the Brahminical religion,—a statement confirmed by a contemporary poem *Mayura Sandesa*, where he is described as "the friend of Mahesvara" (Siva). But it is not true that he tyrannized over the Buddhists, who on the contrary found in him an enthusiastic patron and protector. "He was a mighty prince of great wisdom endued with majesty and faith and such like virtues," says the *Mahawansa*, "and desired greatly to promote the welfare of the church and the kingdom."

To avenge the defeat inflicted by Alakesvara the Chinese Emperor sent another expedition which about 1412 succeeded by a night attack in capturing the king and taking him and his family to China. Who the captive was, is not certain. He is called "Alibunar" and "Alee-ko-nae-wahr"; and the name Alagakkonara or Alakesvara was borne by many members of the royal family. The captive king may have been Wira Alakesvara *alias* Wijaya

Bahu VI. In the 6th month of the year 1411, says the Chinese chronicle, the prisoners were presented at Court. The Chinese Emperor took pity on them and set them at liberty and ordered them to select a virtuous man from the royal family to occupy the throne. All the captives declared in favour of "See-ay-nae-na," and an envoy was sent with a seal to invest him with the royal dignity as a vassal of the Emperor. For fifty years afterwards the kings of Ceylon paid tribute to China. Another Chinese chronicle identifies "Seay-pa-nae-na" with "Pu-la-ko-na Ba-zae-La-cha," in whom we seem to recognise Parakrama Bahu Raja, who as Parakrama Bahu VI. ruled with lustre at Kotte for about 50 years till A.D. 1462 and whose glories are chanted by the poet Tategamuwa.

### XV.

At the close of this century the kings of Ceylon were threatened with danger from a new quarter. A Portuguese fleet, despatched from Goa to capture some ship of their Arab rivals in the Eastern trade, was carried by the current to the harbour of Galle (1505 A.D.). The Portuguese found Arab ship loading with cinnamon and, unable to prevent it, erected a stone cross at Galle as a memento of their arrival in the Island, and put to sea again.

Twelve years later the Portuguese re-appeared in Ceylon, this time at Colombo. "It came to pass," says the chronicle, "that in the month of April a ship from Portugal arrived in Colombo, and information was brought to the king that there was in the harbour a race of very white and beautiful people who wear boots and hats or iron and never stop in one place. They eat a sort of white stone and drink blood and they have guns with a noise louder than thunder, and a ball shot from one of them, after traversing a league will break up a castle of marble."

With the assent of the king, the Portuguese erected a factory, which they ultimately converted into a fortress. They soon ousted from trade and power the Arabs, or Moors, as the Portuguese called them, identifying them, by reason of their religion, with the Moors who ruled the Spanish peninsula. The Sinhalese king soon repented of the imprudent concessions he had made to the Portuguese and withdrew from his engagements. Hostilities then commenced between the Sinhalese and Portuguese, which continued without intermission until the final expulsion of the Portuguese from the Island by the Dutch in 1658.

The policy of the Portuguese was governed by territorial ambition, commercial greed, and religious proselytism. Every pagan was looked on as an enemy of Portugal and of Christ. The policy was prosecuted with a bigotry and cruelty which would be incredible, if there was not the testimony of their own historians.



During this period Christianity gained a footing in the northern and north-western coasts, chiefly by the zeal of the Missionaries under the direction of Saint Francis Xavier, the great "Apostle of the Indies," whose tomb at Goa, the capital of Portuguese India, is periodically the scene of an imposing pilgrimage. The descendants of his converts form the vast majority of the Christian population of the Island.

During this period the two most magnificent temples in Ceylon were ruthlessly destroyed and plundered: in 1587 the temple of Vishnu at Dondra, then "the most sumptuous in Ceylon, built on vaulted arches on a promontory over-looking the sea, with towers elaborately carved and covered with plates of gilded brass," and in 1622 "the temple of a thousand columns" sacred to Siva on the rock at Trincomalee, now known as Samy rock.

In 1617 A.D., the most sacred object of Buddhist worship, the Dalada or Tooth-relic of Buddha, fell into the hands of the Portuguese. It had an eventful history. Rescued from the flames on the cremation of Gautama Buddha at Kusinara (about 540 B.C.), it was preserved for 800 years in Kalinga. About 310 A.D., when the king of that country was about to engage in a doubtful conflict he despatched the precious relic to Ceylon in the charge of his daughter, concealed in the folds of her hair. The greatful king and people of the Island established its worship on a magnificent scale at Anuradhapura, and afterwards at Polonnaruwa when the capital was transferred there. When the relic had remained about a thousand years in Ceylon, it was captured and taken back to South India. It was covered by Parakrama Bahu III., and brought to Polonnaruwa. During the troublous times that followed, it was hidden in different parts of the Island, and finally came into the possession of the Tamil kings of Jaffna, from whom it was taken by the Portuguese on the capture of Jaffna. They carried it to Goa and rejecting offers of vast treasure by the Buddhist king of Pegu, reduced it to ashes. Soon afterwards a copy, or as the Buddhists claim, the original itself,—the destroyed tooth being a counterfeit,—was set up, which is enshrined at the chief temple at Kandy, the Dalada Maligawa, and draws worshippers from all Buddhist lands.

#### XVI.

The Sinhalese kings, unable to resist the arrogant demands of the Portuguese within the range of whose guns, at Colombo, their capital Kotte almost lay, and alarmed by the indignation of their own subjects at repeated concessions to the Portuguese, were compelled to draw closer their alliance with the Portuguese. But the masses of the people, and especially the Kandyans, maintained a heroic struggle for 150 years against the foreigner till he was expelled. At first greatly handicapped through ignorance of the

use of firelocks and gunpowder, it was not long before they excelled the Portuguese in the manufacture of muskets. Among the leaders of this great national movement Mayadunne and his son Rajasinha, "the lion king" of Sitawaka, will ever hold honoured places in the grateful recollections of their countrymen.

It was during this period that the Sinhalese kings as Kotte, in order to gain the favour of their Portuguese patrons, began to embrace Christianity and adopt Portuguese names. This fashion was largely followed by the people on the coast, and we see the result in the large number of Portuguese names which continue to puzzle the visitors to the Island. Rajasinha gradually extended his dominions over the greater part of Ceylon. He inflicted a severe defeat on the Portuguese and their Sinhalese allies at Mulleriyawa. He took Kotte and laid siege to Colombo with an army of 50,000 men supported by a naval force. This so alarmed the Portuguese commander that in anticipation of a long siege he caused the flesh of those killed to be salted as a provision against famine. Rajasinha was, however, called away by an insurrection fostered by the Portuguese and their Sinhalese adherents. He died in his 120th year of a wound received in battle. "Since my eleventh year," he said he as neared his death, "I have been fighting. No king was able to stand against me, but he who has appeared in the hill country this time is a favourite of fortune, the power of my merits has declined." Thus died king Rajasinha who, as the chronicle says, "had reduced this beautiful Lanka under one canopy."

The struggle against the Portuguese was continued with unabated vigour by his successors now seated at the hill capital of Kandy, and especially by Rajasinha II. who ruled over Ceylon for 50 years (1637-87). While yet heir apparent, he inflicted a crushing defeat on the Portuguese viceroy, Constantine de Sa, at the city of Badulla. Not a Portuguese soldier escaped and the head of the brave commander, carried on a drum, was presented to Rajasinha. The Kandyans, flushed by this signal victory, followed it up by a march on Colombo, which was only saved from their hands by the timely arrival of assistance from Goa. Seven years later Rajasinha inflicted a not less disastrous blow, at Balane, on the Portuguese under general de Melbo.

The first Dutch ships were seen in Ceylon waters in 1602, commanded by Admiral Van Spilberg, and the Sinhalese kings were glad to accept the offer of the Dutch alliance in their war against Portugal. That though the Portuguese were finally driven out, the Dutch did not prove more faithful allies. Rajasinha II., in his letters which are extant and which at times polite to excess, at others blaze out into fierce anger, often bitterly regretted having invited the Dutch to Ceylon.



Of Rajasinha II., we have an excellent account from the pen of Robert Knox in his *Historical Relation of the Island of Ceylon* published in the reign of Charles II. Knox and his father sailing in their good ship *Ann* of the East India Company from Madras were overtaken by a storm and had to put in for repairs at Kottiyar, in the Trincomalee district. They were captured and sent to the king who had a strange fancy for detaining foreigners. Knox's father died in captivity at Bandarakoswatte in Kurunegala district in 1601, and Knox himself escaped after a captivity of 20 years born with exemplary fortitude to write his famous book, admirable alike for careful observation, tenacious memory and simple truthfulness.

The policy of the Dutch was peaceful, and their ruling principle the monopoly of trade in spices. They developed cultivation, improved the means of communication, especially by canals, and established a lucrative trade with the interior. Cinnamon was the staple export. It was "the Helen or bride of contest" (as Baldæus called it) for whose exclusive possession successive European invaders had in turn contended.

For the peeling and preparation of this precious bark the Portuguese had utilized the Salagama caste, of whom Sir Alexander Johnston, Chief Justice of Ceylon, gives an interesting account in a paper contributed by him to the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain, of which he was Vice-President (vol. III. of the Journal.) The Sinhalese inhabitants of Ceylon were, previous to the thirteenth century, ignorant of the art of weaving fine cloth and their kings offered great rewards to any subject who would bring over some weavers from India for the purpose of introducing that art to Ceylon. Early in the thirteenth century a Moorman of Beruwala, in the Kalutara district, induced by the offer, brought over from India eight weavers. The king received them with great kindness, had them married to women of distinction, gave them houses and lands, established a manufactory for them in the vicinity of the palace, and conferred the highest honours upon their chief.

The descendants of these people, having in the course of two centuries, become numerous and powerful, excited the jealousy of the Kandyan Government, and were compelled by the king, as punishment for some alleged offence against his authority, to quit the interior and settle near the South-west coast, where cinnamon grew to perfection, and to peel and prepare for the Government without pay as much cinnamon annually as it might require. The Dutch continued the system and rewarded the cinnamon cultivators with many privileges.

About 1770, driven by the Sinhalese king's obstruction to the collection of cinnamon from his forests, the Dutch officials conceived the happy idea, in opposition to the universal prejudice in favour of wild-growing cinnamon, of cultivating the plant. The attempt proved a complete success. The whole European demand was thus supplied by the Dutch, who would even burn the cinnamon in Holland lest its abundance should reduce the price. They made the peeling of cinnamon, save by the appointed officer, the selling or exporting of a single stick, or wilful injury to a plant, a capital offence. The monopoly was continued under the English rule till it was abolished in 1833.

In 1740 Governor Van Imhoff, by a system of forced labour, planted the waste land along the coast south of Colombo with the cocoa palm, the result of which is seen in an almost unbroken grove of palms for 100 miles along the south-west shore. To the Dutch also was due the introduction of the coffee plant, which, though it failed to bring them profit, contributed very materially to the prosperity of the Island during the greater part of the period of the British rule.

#### XVII.

The British appeared on the scene at the close of the eighteenth century. In 1782, when Great Britain was at war with Holland, the English East India Company despatched a force for the reduction of the Dutch possessions in Ceylon. The force landed at Trincomalee, which, after a little resistance, capitulated, and an ambassador was sent to the king to propose a treaty of peace, which the latter declined. The ambassador, on his return to Trincomalee, found that the French, who also were at war with the British at the time, had surprised the fort and carried off the British garrison. Trincomalee was restored to the Dutch by the French in the following year.

In 1795, when war broke out afresh between the Sinhalese and the Dutch, the king solicited the aid of the British. A British armament was accordingly despatched to his assistance from Madras. The Dutch offered little resistance, and in 1796 all places in the occupation of the Dutch were ceded to the British, and in 1802, by the treaty of Amiens, were formally transferred to Great Britain.

The Dutch name will live in Ceylon as long as the Roman-Dutch law, which they introduced and which is virtually the common law of this Island. The Dutch descendants are among the most educated and useful members of the Island population, and form the upper stratum of the "Bargher" community of Ceylon, the lower stratum consisting of Portuguese descendants and Eurasians.

The Dutch garrisons consisted of Malays and Caffirs imported for military service. Among the former were descendants of Malay princes and their attendants deported hither from Java for political



reasons. The Malays in Ceylon still retained some of the military instinct. The Caffirs were imported from Mozambique and other parts of the African coast. Though as many as 9,000 were at different times imported into the Island, they had become so merged in the native population that even in the early years of the last century they could, according to a contemporary writer, Bertolacci, hardly be distinguished.

The territory ceded by the Dutch was from 1797 to 1802 placed under the English East India Company, and formed a part of the territory of the Government of Madras until 1802, when Ceylon was created a Crown Colony. In 1815 the British Government declared war against the last king of Kandy. His misgovernment had estranged his own subjects. He was able to offer but a feeble resistance, and was eventually taken prisoner. In terms of a convention held on 2nd March, 1815, at Kandy, between the British authorities and the Kandyan chiefs, the king was dethroned, and the Sinhalese voluntarily surrendered their Island to the British Sovereign with full reservation of their rights and liberties. They may thus claim to be one of the few ancient races of the world who have not been conquered. The Kandyan king was conveyed to Colombo and deported thence to Vellore in the Madras Presidency, where he died in 1832 of dropsy.

#### XVIII.

Thus ended the oldest dynasty in the world, after enduring for twenty-four centuries, and the whole Island passed under the sway of Britain. A few years ago at Tanjore in the Madras Presidency, I had the honor of being presented to the last surviving Queen of Kandy, who in spite of straightened means still maintained the traditions and ceremonial of a court. Speaking from behind a curtain, she was pleased to welcome me and express her appreciation of some little services rendered to her family since their downfall. She has now passed away. A lineal descendant of the kings of Ceylon holds a minor clerkship in the Registrar-General's Department of this Island,—a living testimony to the revolutions of the wheel of fortune.

Over the garden gate of my old college (Christ's) at Cambridge—the college of Milton and of Darwin—stands the motto of the noble foundress, the Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII. The motto is *Souvent me souvient*: “often it comes to my mind,” “often I am reminded.” It is a perpetual reminder to successive generations of the members of her family and of her college, of her ancestors' loyalty to duty, to king and country, and to high ideals. Well would it be for us Ceylonese if we too kept fresh in our hearts the great deeds done and the great ideals cherished by our ancestors, and strove to make ourselves worthy of our inheritance.

*Finis.*

## NOTES.

(CULLED AND CLIPPED.)

### A TAMIL-ENGLISH DICTIONARY.

The G. O. 616 20-9-06 dated Educational, related to the Tamil Dictionary which Dr. Pope is preparing. The correspondence arose from a letter written by Dr. G. U. Pope to Sir F. Nicholson in May, 1905 offering his services to re-edit Dr. Winslow's book with several additions, the result of his researches for a long time. Sir F. Nicholson wrote to Government recommending the idea and suggesting to them the desirability of materially helping Dr. Pope to bring out his Dictionary. On the recommendations of the Rev. Canon Sell and of the Hon. Sir S. Subramanya Iyer, the Government communicated to the University the fact that they were prepared to assist them in the matter to the extent of Rs. 10,500 as estimated by Rev. Sell. When the Registrar communicated this G. O. to Dr. Pope, the latter explained that it was his desire to have the publication done in England at the Oxford Clarendon Press, whose authorities had been found to be equal to the publication of such classical works. He therefore desired the Madras Government to allot a sum 2000 for the purpose. The Government therefore guaranteed by this G. O. a contribution of Rs. 6000 a year for five years towards the cost of such publication. It was resolved to record the G. O.

### ARTIFICIAL SILK.

A short time ago a new artificial silk factory was established at Coventry. It is now reported that the development of the business has been extremely rapid. So extensive has the trade become that arrangements have been made to rebuild the present factory, with extensions which will make it three times its present size. It is stated that the output will be increased six-fold. Broad fabrics woven from the product have been sold, and the makers, Messrs. Courtauld and Co., Limited, have further contracts in hand for the same class of goods.



## NOTES.

### PHOTOGRAPHS ON SILK.

#### A WONDERFUL PROCESS.

The production of direct photographs on silk formed the subject of an intensely interesting paper read by Mr. F. J. Fanell, M.Sc., before the Society of Dyers and Colourists, recently. The process suggested by this writer is broadly as follows: The silk is first carefully washed to remove all finishing matter and other objectionable matters, and is then immersed for five or six hours in a solution of nitrous acid, prepared by adding 1 per cent. of concentrated hydrochloric or sulphuric acid to a 5 per cent. solution of sodium nitrite in cold water. The product is diazotised silk and after rinsing in water is dried under tension in the dark. The silk is printed in daylight under a photographic positive, when the light causes decomposition of the diazo compound, turning it a pale-buff colour. When sufficiently printed, which is presumably judged much the same as a platinum print, the silk is immersed in the developer at a temperature of  $25^{\circ}$  to  $30^{\circ}$  C. The developer used may be a solution of any aromatic hydroxy compound in caustic alkali, and the usual strength is 0.5 per cent. hydroxy compound in a 5 per cent. solution of caustic soda or potash. Using beta-naphthol, the author obtained a crimson-colour picture which, when washed and treated with dilute acetic acid, turned to scarlet. Alpha-naphthol produces a somewhat colder colour, and resorcinol gives a bright-red image, which, when treated with acetic acid, becomes golden orange. The colour of the pictures produced by these developers may be considerably altered by immersion in solutions of certain metallic salts. A weak, slightly warm solution of ferrous sulphate gives a dark-brown picture with the golden-orange image developed with resorcinol, nickel salts give a maroon, and cobalt a red violet colour. The photographs produced by these means are very permanent, and it is suggested that the process might be made of considerable commercial importance as a means of artistic decorations. The possibility of producing photographs on silk in shades to harmonise with the colour scheme of a room should lead to its adoption for producing cushion-covers and panels. Mr. Fanell states that the process so far is not protected in any way, and persons wishing to make experiments in the production of artistic silks are therefore at liberty to apply it in any manner they desire. The negatives most suitable are those with plenty of contrast and broad effects, as naturally the coarseness of the fabric tends to soften contrasts and obliterate detail. Of course, a positive has to be made first either on glass or negative paper, and the silk printed from this and not from the negative itself.

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## COCOANUT OIL AND LUNG DISEASE.

I have heard it asserted that the natives living on the Western Coast are to a marked extent immune from consumption, the reason for this being the large use they make of cocoanut oil both externally and internally. How far either of the above statements is founded on fact I do not profess to know, but it would be interesting to find out if there is any truth in them. I have been assured by a medical man (European) that he was cured of consumption in early life by the use of cocoanut oil which he had daily well rubbed in all over his body. The process must have been rather a tedious and unpleasant one, but still the result is of great significance. While so much attention is being paid to finding a cure for this terrible scourge, any reliable information suggesting a possible remedy would, I am sure, be welcomed by many engaged in the work.

## HINDU IDEA OF FORESTS AND TREES.

Dewan Bahadur R. Ragunath Row writes in the "Madras Standard" as follows:—I am afraid this is generally not known to the European public what the feelings and opinions of the Hindus are regarding forests and trees. Their religion tells them that trees have souls like men; that cutting down a living tree is as bad as killing a living man; that their twigs, even branches, leaves, when absolutely required should be removed without any harm to the trees; that only dried trees should be cut down for fuel; that forests should not be destroyed because, in addition to other reasons, they are the residence of the third and fourth superior Asramas of the Dwijas; that trees also are the tabernacles of God, and that to plant a tree is a very virtuous act, and so on. The Hindus do not and cannot therefore advocate the indiscriminate destruction of forests.

Before they came in contact with foreign nations, they used to raise topes for the use of the general public on the banks of rivers, channels, tanks and in *Goprachara Bhumies*, that is, pasture grounds at considerable cost. There is a belief that one is allowed to live in a more pleasant world than this so long as the trees planted by him here exist. Any indiscriminate destruction of trees is very abhorrent to a true Hindu. It being so, it is rather strange that people should say that they are for such destruction and that the foreigners should and do teach them not to do so. What the Hindu people complain is that they are indiscriminately not allowed now the legitimate use of trees for the most necessary purposes. In answer to this complaint, they are lectured on the use of preservation of trees, a most irrelevant answer and very often a provoking reply too. Nobody objects to conserving large forest areas, but everybody protests, in vain indeed, to his being deprived of the use of trees in tracts which are out of the large forests and of such as are intended and used from time immemorial, for the most absolutely necessary purposes. The aforesaid lectures therefore fall and must fall flat upon the Hindus.

I say, conserve, by all means, large forests, clothe the bleak hills and mountains with verdure, punish severely all that injure them and thus secure the good of the ryot population and people in general. Reward also planters of trees, give grants-in-aid to those who wish to plant trees for the use of the public and dub them with titles. At the same time leave the minor forests for the use of the present generation. Trees and wells are indeed the saviours of agriculture!



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