

LETTER XVIII.

ELEVEN DAYS IN CEYLON.

THE somewhat dangerous approaches to the Galle harbor delayed our coming to anchor until 7 A.M. on the morning of February 1, and so our ship steamed round and round in the open sea all night, in full sight of the lights of the town. We had no sooner stopped than we were surrounded with the peculiar boats of Ceylon. They consist of a canoe, not over a foot and a half wide, with an "outrigger," or a log attached by means of bent poles, some ten feet long. This is necessary to prevent the upsetting of the boat. We found them very steady, notwithstanding the heavy surf that is always beating on the shore, even in the very harbor. Galle is a fortified town, and as we entered the walled city we very naturally thought of China, and were prepared to see Chinese, but if any ever came to Galle they were so disgusted by Singhalese peddlers and beggars that they took ship to Australia, where they are found in large numbers. One gets a bad impression of Ceylon and the Singhalese from stopping at Galle. As he looks upon the palm groves on every side, and is charmed with the mountain scenery, the persistent assaults of beggars, petty shop-keepers, who carry their wares with them, jugglers, snake-charmers, and peddlers of all kinds, recall the lines of Bishop Heber's well-known hymn:

What though the spicy breezes
Blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle,
Though every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile.

They will not be shaken off. They follow you to your room in the hotel. You cannot pick up a paper to read but that several of them are around, and touching their hands to their foreheads, say "Salam." Your attention once attracted, they begin, "Master, want to buy nice tortoise-shell, ebony, ivory, stones, rings, birds—every thing very cheap; look, master." The only thing I ever saw like them in America is a certain class of insurance agents or Jew peddlers. In fact, the well-kept Moors among them are known as the Jews of Ceylon.

The business of Galle is so wholly dependent on the steamers which touch there that travelers are looked for eagerly, and persecuted mercilessly. Exorbitant charges are made for every thing, to offset the dull business intervals when no steamers are in port. But this state of things happily does not properly represent all of Ceylon. Eleven days spent in different parts of the island sufficed to counteract the bad first impressions, albeit we had to suffer the same things again before reëmbarking.

Calling a "bandy," we hastened out of the fort into the beautiful surrounding country. A "bandy" is a one-horse vehicle for four passengers; two get up from behind and sit facing the rear, while the other two face the front. Driving through the native town we get a fine view of Singhalese life. All classes wear as little clothing as possible, the smaller children none at all, the men either a simple loin-cloth or a sort of skirt fastened about the hips, with all the rest of the person bare; while the women in the towns wear a loose jacket in addition, but in the country often dispense with even

that. The men wear long hair done up in a knot behind like the women. The women wear no combs, but the higher-class men wear round combs, such as are worn by little girls in America, and very often also a large tortoise-shell comb in their back hair. Even such men as wear foreign coats often have their simple skirt, or petticoat, fastened about their loins. All classes, with rare exceptions, go barefooted.

Both men and women are often seen with rings on their toes. But the women excel in wearing jewelry. Aside from toe-rings, finger-rings, nose-rings, bracelets around the ankles, wrists, and above the elbows, their ear-rings surpass any thing I have ever known. I have seen laboring women with each ear pierced in no less than fifteen places—all around the entire rim of the ear, in fact, and with a large ring in each hole. Even those who are less ambitious as to the number of holes make up for it in the size. The ear is distorted until, in many instances, the hole is an inch and a half in diameter, so that one or more fingers could be put through it. The women are the burden-bearers, carrying every thing on the top of their heads. At one hotel where we stopped, in Colombo, we saw women serving as hod-carriers, bearing the mortar on their heads to the workmen building the wall. These, however, were Tamil women, there being seven hundred thousand Tamils in Ceylon, out of the entire population of two million five hundred thousand. Tamil women are usually distinguished from the Singhalese by wearing a scarf, which passes over one shoulder and is fastened around the waist. The better class of the Tamil men wear a white turban. Tamil coolies are employed exclusively on the coffee-plantations, and occupy the whole northern part of the island. They seem to be the Chinamen of India, as we found them over-

flowing in considerable numbers into the Straits Settlement, as well as into Ceylon. The present famine in the Madras Presidency is increasing the number in Ceylon.

What most impresses the traveler are the immense groves of cocoa-palms. They are of all sizes and ages. Strange to say, the oldest trees, while the tallest, are usually the smallest in diameter. You never see a straight one. The natives have a saying that "whoever sees a straight cocoa-palm and a white crow will never die." I have no hope of immortality from this cause. A native with a small grove of, say, twenty-five or thirty cocoa-palms has a fortune. Each tree will yield him about two or three dollars a year. On the same tree I have very often seen the bloom, much like a tassel of corn, and the fruit in all sizes from that of a marble to the ripened nut, nearly two feet in circumference. An intoxicating drink is made from the blossom. Ere the milk of the nut has begun to harden into the white it affords a refreshing drink. Many are gathered for that purpose and sold to laborers or travelers. When the nut is ripe the husk is beaten, and ropes and mats are made out of the fiber; while the nut is cut in two and laid out in the sun to dry, when the shell is easily removed, and the substance of the nut is ground up and pressed for the cocoa-nut oil, which is used for lights and for making soap. The refuse, after the oil is expressed, is used for feeding cattle. The leaf is often twenty or more feet long, and is used either to tie around the tree to keep thieves from climbing without being detected, or is used for mats or for thatching either houses or wagons. Thus every thing is a source of revenue.

The wagons are invariably drawn by little Burmese bullocks. They are very strong, and have great powers of endurance. They are more used

singly than in pairs. I have often seen one less than four feet high drawing a passenger-cart containing from six to ten natives. These carts ply between the toll-gates, which are some seven miles apart, and the natives walk through without having to pay, and take another cart. The horses are all from Australia and India. They are large and spirited, and are not much used by the natives.

We saw a number of bread-fruit trees. The fruit is three or four times the size of an orange, and of the same color. It is usually sliced, boiled, and baked before it is eaten, and tastes so like a baked potato that one may eat it without knowing the difference. The jack-fruit is much like it, only several times larger. The odor is quite offensive, but the natives are very fond of the ripe fruit, and foreigners use it freely as a curry with rice. The fruit usually grows very near the trunk of the tree, necessarily, too, for it often weighs fifteen pounds. The timber of Ceylon is mostly of the wood of the jack-tree. We often saw wicker-work baskets around the ripening jack-fruit or bananas to protect against the ravens, which are hardly less numerous than in Japan.

If we hoped to get out of sight of people or houses by our drive, it was a vain hope. Although we traveled several hundred miles in Ceylon, only for a very few minutes did we lose sight of either. The houses are usually of mud, but often whitewashed with lime, made from burning coral, and hence look very well. They have no chimneys, and the smoke escapes as best it may. Even the houses of foreigners are, as a rule, without ceilings, in order that there may be a free circulation of air. They are usually covered with tiles, but native houses are thatched. Wherever we saw a native house we generally found a group of children, scantily clothed, while one of them or the mother carried the naked

baby straddled across the thigh. As a consequence the children are never bow-legged. Boys and men are excellent climbers. They put their feet in a noose, to keep them from slipping back, and away they go up a cocoa-nut-tree, almost a yard at a leap.

Our ride brought us to Richmond Hill, the Wesleyan mission-house, where we learned much of the history of their mission, first inaugurated by Dr. Coke, who was buried in the Indian Ocean shortly before his six companions landed at Galle, to begin the important work. The jubilee year was 1864, fifty years having elapsed since they landed. They have now sixty-five chapels, one hundred and twenty preaching-places, three thousand members, some ten thousand scholars, and some sixteen thousand regular attendants on public worship. In the South Ceylon District alone the native Church contributed last year for various objects thirty-five thousand four hundred and thirty-three rupees. A rupee is about forty-eight cents of our money. Many of the native chapels were wholly built by native Christians, and some of the circuits are self-supporting. The missionary society at home agrees to give twelve hundred and fifty dollars a year for erecting new chapels in hitherto unoccupied places, provided double that amount annually shall be raised in Ceylon for the same purpose. Last year the necessary amount was actually exceeded, in addition to the usual missionary contributions of the native Church. The schools of the mission, where tuition was originally given gratis, are now held in such high esteem by the heathen that the amount of tuition paid not only supports the schools, but yields a handsome annual revenue. Two of the Wesleyan schools in the island are affiliated with the Calcutta University, and fit young men for college. There are also girls' schools, but hardly so successful as those for boys. English is taught in these schools, and thus the

pupils have access to all that is valuable in English literature. All the native preachers talk English, and native theological professors give instruction in English text-books, such as "Watson's Institutes."

Thus by means of these schools, and the Singhalese preaching-services, a general knowledge of God's word and of the truths of Christianity prevails throughout many parts of Ceylon, just as in America. The Spirit's sword is made ready, and it only needs the Holy Spirit to wield it that the slain of the Lord may be many. Several gracious revivals, followed by large ingatherings, have blessed the Church in Ceylon, as they have in America. Several of these have occurred under the ministry of the Rev. Wm. Taylor, formerly of California, and that, too, notwithstanding the necessity of preaching through an interpreter. The fruits also remain just as largely as in our own country. In fact, the one thing which has grown upon my mind in this inspection of the great missionary field, now more than half completed, is that what is needed is to give the people, by means of the Bible in their own tongues, by schools, and by preaching, a general knowledge of Christian truth, and they are brought in time about on a footing with the unconverted in our own country, for whose salvation we look to the help of the Holy Spirit. The salvation of the heathen is just as practicable as that of the unregenerate in England and America, and by the same means. To despair of the conversion of either is equally discreditable to our faith and dishonorable to the Saviour of all men. It has required time to bring about this state of things in Ceylon. Faithful hands more than half a century ago dropped the mustard-seed which is fast growing to be so great a tree. There are still a million and a half Buddhists to be reached, as well as a third as many Hindoos, and many Moham-medans; but children from all these sects are in con-

siderable numbers in the different schools of the Wesleyan, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Church Missionary societies throughout the island, and in time the desired result will come.

Our drive back to the hotel led us to Wakwella bungalow—a one-story house located on the top of a hill—from which we obtained an inspiring view of the rice-fields, winding river, and palm-groves at our feet, with the distant mountains in the background. The "Haycock" was quite visible, but "Adam's Peak," the highest mountain in Ceylon, was hidden by the intense glare of the sun. On this peak is an indentation of some sort in the rock, said to be Buddha's foot-print. It is some five feet long, and was made, as is believed, by Buddha when he quit the island. There is one like it in Burmah, which the faithful also worship, under the belief that he stepped there next, notwithstanding *it points to Ceylon*. The one on Adam's Peak, I am informed by the Rev. George Baugh, who has examined it several times, was undoubtedly shaped in mortar, at least part of it, while the rest is simply an indentation in the rock. Ceylon is the Holy Land of the Buddhists, and many make pilgrimages here to see this foot-print, and to Kandy to see the casket which contains Buddha's tooth, which was found in the ashes after his body was burned. The tooth is on about as large a scale as the foot-print, and is believed by such as have examined it to be a piece of the horn of a deer. On the annual festival occasion, in August, an elephant procession is formed, when the casket is placed on the back of a tame elephant and borne in state through the streets. The procession increases in size daily for a week, until usually no less than twenty elephants, the property of native chiefs, march in the line on the last day. All over the island are white, dome-like structures, generally about twenty feet high, and located where the