

TRAVELS ON A CYCLE

BOOK I

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1937

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THE AUTHOR—MR. Y. S. HIRLEKAR.

INTRODUCTION

I do not know how the cycle fever came upon me. Early contact with travel books and globe trotters offer a partial explanation. I coupled myself with one of my friends, a magician, and out of funds collected from public performance we could buy the more important items of a traveller's outfit. But when I started on a tour through India, my friend backed out, and that unnerved me to some extent.

I was working as a clerk in the office of the Indian Music Circle at Bombay and I naturally approached my boss, Mr. S. B. Kokate who, in conjunction with the other members, gave me a generous donation.

Mr. P. Ranachhodlal, helped me to buy a cycle. Seth Chandulal, the proprietor of the Gold Filled Leather Works, gave me a free equipment of leather goods. Others helped me by giving letters to their friends all over India. Mr. Marathe, Superintendent of the Veterinary Hospital at Poona, gave me a general letter of introduction to the Veterinary doctors of the Bombay Presidency. Very soon I found my equipment quite sound—Royal Benson cycle, Agfa camera, small bed, clothes, medicines, rain-coat, woolen wear, water bag, road map, certificate book, diaries, etc. I tried for a revolver, but did not succeed. I did not try for a passport, for I was not courageous enough to project a tour beyond India. But now I am a different man, and I feel that the world is not big enough for me!

What a happy start I had! On Deepavali day (26th October 1935) I was cheered and garlanded in the

'Congress House at Bombay, and Mr. Kokate took a movie film of it all. Many of my friends followed me up to a distance of ten miles; and I was thus literally pushed forward into an enterprise, so mysterious then, and so enjoyable now.

At Poona I was afraid of talking in English; and at Ceylon I met most of the English planters. All through the trip I was forging new friendships, irrespective of caste, creed or colour. I found vegetarian diet a handicap, and I threw it off quite readily. My amiable manners, sociable disposition and robust health made it easy for me to get on with all manner of people and conditions. I was punctual in my appointments; as far as possible I gave 'every man mine ear but few my voice'; and I feel that I have garnered a deal of wisdom far beyond my expectations and limitations. As I had an idea of writing a book, even at the start, I kept an accurate diary which is the background of the following survey.

I have covered nearly 6000 miles, and I am planning to explore North India and even foreign lands, if fortune favours me and opportunity presents itself; and I shall add to this volume at the end of each programme. Perhaps the cycle will be my companion in the future also; for one thing, it is cheap and handy, and its accessories can be got even in wayside villages. It has some serious disadvantages also; roads and climate are often unfriendly, and the clock runs much faster than the cycle. Allowing for all these, I still feel that it is the best compromise between hurried comfort and

longing ease. After all, one travels to see and learn, not merely to be done with it.

I need not comment upon the following survey of my tour; it speaks for itself. In about hundred pages I have tried to rouse the interest of the young and the old, the curious and the indifferent, in the life and environment of the peoples of India and of Ceylon. The present has been far more emphasised than the past, and the cyclist is made to thread through a series of facts and features that would have otherwise remained isolated. The why and wherefore of customs and manners are hinted at and historical emblems are made to speak through the animation of the observer. The tourists' discomforts and difficulties are touched but not harped upon. Benefactors are thanked in particular and in general, but never flattered. Biased criticisms have been eschewed and hasty conclusions avoided.

Being merely a series of personal impressions, the survey may not tally in every detail with the experiences of others. It may even be defective in vital respects. But I do hope that it will suffice to demonstrate the wisdom and value of travel. It is certainly superior to the spoon-feeding of schools and colleges; it develops the mind and enlarges the heart. It rounds off prejudices and rectifies beliefs. And to a country like India, so full of divisions and differences, it is the only road to understanding and unity. I specially appeal to all young men to beautify an academic education with the coping stone of travel—whether on a cycle or a donkey “it reeks me not.”

THE MAYOR OF BOMBAY

With the best of Luck.

Sd. JAMNADAS M. MEHTA.

BOMBAY

25-9-1935

THE LEADER OF MAHARASHTRA

I wish all success to young Hirlekar's proposed tour in INDIA on a two wheeler. The enterprise is bound to brace him up for his life's work.



"KESARI OFFICE"

POONA

30-10-1935

THE MAYOR OF COLOMBO

Mr. Hirlekar paid a visit to-day. I am pleased to have met him and wish him bon voyage.

Sd. W. L. MURPHEY

TOWN HALL

COLOMBO

29-7-1936

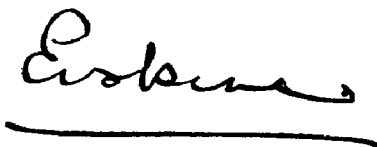
I wish you good luck.

Sd. M. R. JAYAKAR.
BAR-AT-LAW

MALABAR HILL, BOMBAY

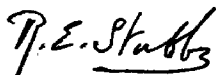
4-10-1935

H. E. THE GOVERNOR OF MADRAS



GOVERNMENT HOUSE
OOTACAMUND
25—5—1936

H. E. THE GOVERNOR OF CEYLON



QUEENS HOUSE
COLOMBO
27—7—1936


H. H. THE RAJA OF JAMKHANDI
Wish you all Success.



RAMTIRTH PALACE
JAMKHANDI
27—12—1935

THE DIRECTOR OF TATA INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE
BANGALORE

Wish you Success.



BANGALORE
5-4-1936

SUPERINTENDENT, KOLAR GOLD FIELD
MYSORE

Mr. Hirlekar has visited underground and surface workings of Nandydroog mines, Kolar Gold Field, Mysore State.

Sd. W. T. HUDSON.

KOLAR GOLD FIELD
8-4-1936

MILITARY SECRETARY TO HIS EXCELLENCY
THE GOVERNOR OF MADRAS

Mr. Hirlekar came to see me to-day, having arrived here some days ago in the course of his tour. He tells me he has been laid up with fever as a result of climate. I wish him better luck during the remainder of his tour.

Sd. T. F. KELLY

OOTACAMUND
25-5-1936

Mr. Y. S. Hirlekar who is touring India, Ceylon and Burmah by bicycle, visited me to-day and took photos of the Tea Factory here, which is the original of the model, exhibited in the Wembley 1924 Exhibition.

I wish Mr. Hirlekar every success in his very sporting tour.

Sd. GORDON PIPER.

HANTANE TEA ESTATE

KANDY, CEYLON

3—8—1936

I know Mr. Y. S. Hirlekar since his boy-hood. It is therefore natural that I should look to his project with a special appreciation and interest. Young men who undertake such ventures really deserve the admiration of their countrymen. I therefore very strongly commend the spirit of this young gentleman and wish him a big success.

Sd. S. V. KIRLOSAR.

KIRLOSARWADI

DIST. SATARA, INDIA

25—11—1935

I know Mr. Y. S. Hirlekar for many years. He is an honest young man of a sacrificing spirit, devoted to social service. The enterprising spirit in him is worth being imitated by every Indian youth.

Sd. M. B. VELKAR.

THAKURDWAR, BOMBAY

20—10—1935

A SURVEY OF MY TOUR.

From Bombay I cycled off to Thana, a distance of 22 miles, and spent the night there. The next morning I went to Panvel (24 miles) and visited the Aryoushadhi Dhoot Papeshwar factory, where all medicines are prepared out of roots, herbs and other natural materials. It is a very big factory and has already achieved an all India reputation. On the same day I left for Khopoli.

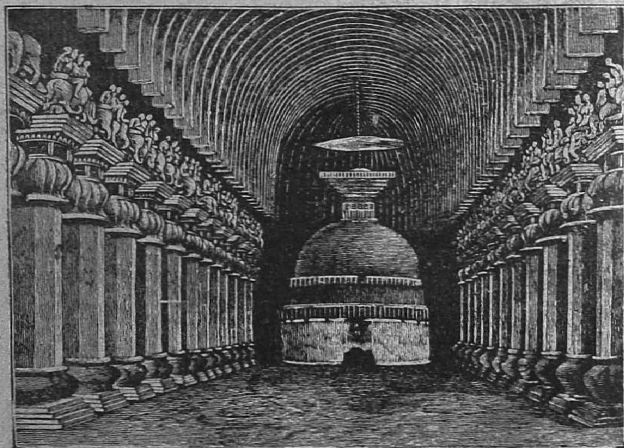
I found my visit to the Tata Hydro-Electric Power House here extremely instructive. The station is built at the foot of a waterfall, about 1,700 ft. high. The water of the Indryani river, collected in the lakes at the top, is conducted down by stages by huge steel pipes resting on rocks. Five huge turbines produce a current of 5,000 volts. It is then transformed at the station to 100,000 volts, and conveyed to Bombay, 43 miles away.

From here I ascended six miles up the Bhor Ghat; the ascent was so steep that it took me three full hours to reach the top. I was bathed in perspiration. It began to rain. The cold wet feeling that crept over me was almost unbearable. But the panorama of hill and valley soon made me forget all unpleasantness. Standing at that elevation I could not help admiring that magic word "Tata" which forged the first Indian link between modern science and the ancient nature of Hindustan.

I spent the night in the Lonavala High School.

**The Karli
Caves**

Next morning I got up early, had my breakfast and went to see the celebrated Buddhist caves at Karli. These are by far the most complete Chaitya Caves in India. They date back to 160 B.C. The people who once inhabited them were Saivites (worshippers of Lord Siva), and one of the Caves is a temple dedicated to Siva, the dagoba performing the part of a gigantic "lingam" which it resembles a good deal. The big Sabha Mandapam has a "stoop"

**KARLI BUDDHIST CAVES**

in which a thousand people can assemble at a time. In olden times sages were staying here in rooms made out of the rock. It took me $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours to finish my round.

I then cycled off to Poona, where my father was living. It was a big surprise to him. He did not know anything about my cycle tour. But when I explained to him my plans, he was quite

Поона

sympathetic, and readily gave me his blessings. His sportsmanlike behaviour put a lot of courage into me. I could not help feeling that my spirit of adventure was but inherited. He took me to the "Kesari" Office and introduced me to the great Maharashtra leader, Mr. N. C. Kelkar; the latter was kind enough to publish an account of my projected tour in his paper. It is interesting to note that this leading vernacular newspaper in India was founded by Tilak.

Poona was the seat of the Mahratta Rulers. It is now the seat of the Government of Bombay during the rains. It abounds in schools and colleges, and is one of the leading educational centres in India. I was greatly pleased with my visit to Professor Karve's University for Indian Women, a magnificent private enterprise, the only one of its type in the whole of India. Another interesting enterprise of progressive Poona is the Prabhat Cinetone, which is known all over India for its finished talkie pictures in Hindi, Marathi and Tamil. One of the partners, Mr. Shantaram, was kind enough to take me round the studio. I was greatly struck by his artistic genius and scientific knowledge. Poona can boast of having one of the most modern observatories; but there is nothing to beat its old historical places and numerous temples. In the Shanwar wada (Saturday Division—is not curious that parts of a city should be named after the days of the week?)—lies the "old palace" the remains of the Peshwa's castle. In 1827 it caught fire, and only the massive walls now remain. Interesting legendary lore has collected round the building; and the gardens of the palace, with their well-developed irrigation system, have recently been excavated. To the extreme south of the city stands the Hill of Parvati on whose top is the celebrated temple of the goddess Durga (Pati). There are also little shrines dedicated to Suryan, Vishnu (Protector) and Kartik.

In 1750 Poona became the capital of the Mahrattas, under Balaji Baji Rao.

Sinhagad (Lions' Fort) 16 miles to the South-West of Poona, fascinated me with its beautiful scenery and historic association. At the close of the Moghul War (1662-1665) Shivaji ceded this fort to the Moghuls. His mother once challenged him to a game of dice and won the match. She demanded as forfeit Sinhagad. Legend describes the recapture of the fort by Shivaji somewhat as follows: his friend Tanaji Malusare made a heroic escalade, the Imperial Standard was torn down, and Shivaji's banner was hoisted in its stead. Shivaji hastened to the spot and saw the corpse of his gallant comrade. His men crowded round him and congratulated him on his capture of the Lion's Fort. But he silenced them with the bitter laconism: "I have got the fort; but I have lost the lion."

When I left this historic place, my mind was constantly reverting to the soul-stirring annals of the Mahratta Empire; and the slow, uneven motion of my cycle—a direct result of my reminiscent mood—provided good food for the passers-by who must have taken me to be the idler par excellence. I came back to Poona and left for the Bhor State (31 miles away).

Bhor State On my way I saw the Bhadgar Dam, 146 ft. in depth and 17 miles in circumference. It was completed in 1928 at a cost of Rs. 172 lakhs. It is so broad that two motor cars can pass against each other at the same time. It is the second biggest dam in India, the first being Metur. It irrigates the vast stretches of sugar cane fields around. Bhor is only 30 miles away from here. It is a well-governed native state now ruled by His Highness Rangunath Rao Pant Saheb, one of his ancestors was a minister of Shivaji. Here is a railway station and I could see only the Y

Primary education is free and scholarships are awarded for higher studies. A legislative assembly with a non-official majority, an independent High Court, and a fixed privy purse, mark the progressive nature of this little state.

Cycling through the Khandala Ghat from *Bhor* to *Wai* (28 miles) is a pleasant experience. *Wai* is one of the most beautiful towns in Deccan; it is situated on the left bank of the Krishna River.

Behind it are many hills of curious shapes. On the top of one of them is a fort called the **Wai** Pandavagad. Tradition identifies this place as Viratnagar of the "Mahabharata," where the Pandavas spent a portion of their banishment. The river is lined with beautiful temples, the most important of them being devoted to Ganapati. I went to Menavali, a small village one mile from *Wai*. The palace of Nana Fernavis is full of historical lore. It contains two interesting portraits—one of Nana Fernavis, and the other of Mastani (Baji Rao's consort). There is a huge well, about five feet in diameter, called Naroshankar.

Wai is surely one of the loveliest spots that I had so far visited. I had to cycle up nine steep miles to reach Panchagani. I heard the roar of tigers and I had finished only half the journey. It was biting cold and I was really afraid of cycling any longer. For once I did not hesitate to jump into a bus.

The sanatorium and the Hindu High School for **Panchagani** royal families at Panchagani are worth mentioning. I found the surrounding country covered with low jungle and patches of cultivation. There are several boarding schools for European Parsi, Hindu and Mohammedan Communities. But the place is full of tigers, and so let me leave it at once.

After covering 11 miles I reached Mahabaleshwar, a hill station of the Bombay Presidency. **Maha-baleshwar** The plateau is about 4500 ft. high. It is full of ever green jungle. I saw no big trees. Everywhere I saw in bloom roses, orchids and lilies. The old temple here is supposed to be the origin of the Krishna river. Many palaces have been built here; and it is perhaps superior to many of the Himalayan hill stations, owing to its proximity to the sea and its impressive view of the Konkan (the narrow strip between the ghats and the sea). Panthers are quite common here and I did not like to tarry long.

Ten miles slope and I was at Pratapgad (the fort of Victory). **Pratapgad** My approach to this historic scene was quite momentous. A huge serpent entangled itself in the front wheel of my cycle; and it was a job for me to get off the cycle and then to get the snake off. It was indeed a lucky escape.

I reached the foot of this hill fort at dusk. It is impossible to record the emotional stir with which I gazed upon this monument of one of the most remarkable events in Indian history—the founding of the Mahratta Empire. When the Bijapur army laid siege to this stronghold of Shivaji, the famous “Tiger claws Episode” was enacted; Afzal Khan’s head was struck off and buried under the old tower in the fort. Afzul Khan’s Tomb and the temple of Bhavani (Shivaji’s guardian-deity) are worth seeing. After spending the night there, I went back to Mahabaleshwar.

I had to cover 41 miles to reach Satara, a pleasant and salubrious place in Deccan, full of historic recollections of Mahratta rule. The royal family of this small state descends from Shahu (Shivaji’s grandson). Raja Shahaji, the last direct descendant, died in 1848 and the British Government then annexed it. I approached the

minor chief through the Diwan and got an autograph from him. He is in possession of the crown jewels as well as the famous sword of Shivaji and his other arms. The weapons are decorated with precious stones and the handles are too small for a European hand. Shivaji captured the old fort, Ajinkyatara, in 1673 and made Satara the capital of the Mahratta Empire.

I visited the Hanuman Temple, so sacred to the Hindus. According to legend, the lofty hill of Amboli, on which it is built, was a pebble that slipped from a mountain which Hanuman was carrying for the construction of the bridge from India to Lanka.

I went ahead for 27 miles and reached the "Go-ahead" little state of Aundh. On my way I had to cross the Krishna river with the cycle on me—a pleasant inversion for the cycle! The ruler, Shrimant Bhavan Rao Balasaheb Pant Pratinidhi is one of the most enlightened men in India. He has synthesised in himself the very best of Western and Eastern cultures; and hence the educational and industrial progress of his state. Primary education is free and compulsory; and all boys and girls are made to perform "Suryanamaskara" (worship of the sun) than which there is no better exercise for the simultaneous culture of the body and the mind. There is an independent High Court and a Representative Assembly with power to vote the budget.

The ruler wears only clothes spun and woven in the state itself; and the movement "Buy Aundh Products" is very strong here. I visited the Ogale Glass Works and the lantern factory—the only one of its type in India. About 1,500 people work here. I visited also the other famous industrial concern here—the Kirloskar Iron Works. Agricultural implements, furnitures, machinery

oil engines (up to 7 H.P.) are all manufactured here. About 2,000 people work ; and the Kirloskar magazine is highly popular in Maharashtra.

Both these institutions rose from very humble beginnings; but the sympathetic co-operation of the Aundh State soon brought them up to a prominent position.

I was not fortunate enough to see so enlightened a ruler. But I saw his studio—quite a big one displaying the artistic refinement of its owner. I was told that the chief, though very old, was very healthy. He gets up early in the morning and after bath goes by walk to the temple “Moolpeeth” at the top of a hill. He has travelled widely in Europe and is extremely popular with his subjects.

I spent about four days here under the hospitable roof of my aunt and the travel fever was now well on me. On the Poona—Bangalore Railway line there are several native states and I visited a few of them—Sangli, Miraj and Budhgaon. Miraj is a railway junction and famous for its American Mission Hospital. My next halt was Pandharpur, 78 miles away.

After cycling for 22 miles from Miraj, quite merrily as I thought, my right knee began to pain so much that I could hardly walk a furlong. I rested in a small hut and started cycling on the next day. Heaven knows how I managed to reach Pandharpur! My knee was fully swollen and I could not walk at all for four days.

This place is sacred to the Hindus on account of the shrine of Vithoba, an incarnation of Vishnu. It attracts periodically huge swarms of people from all parts of India. An idea of the crowd may be formed

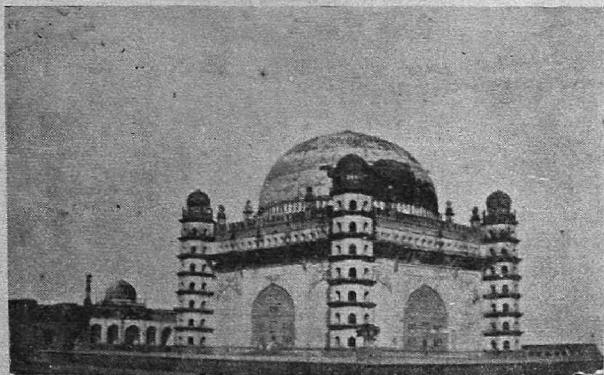
from the holes in the Lord's feet made by the devotees' touch.

To reach Sholapur, I had to cycle 42 miles. The day was hot and the wind was against me. It took me eight long hours, and when I arrived at Sholapur I was more dead than alive. But the hospitality of Dr. Kirloskar soon restored my spirits. In 1818 General Munro attacked Baji Rao's infantry and the fort of Sholapur, after a short siege, surrendered. Today it is one of the busiest towns of the Bombay Presidency. It has as many as six cotton mills. It is the headquarters of the American Marathi Mission which runs several schools and a leper asylum. I was very much struck by the strength of the Congress movement here. From this place the land of the Canarese starts. Most of the inhabitants are Veera Saiva Lingayats, named after Linga, a form of Lord Siva. They wear on their body a small silver box containing a stone phallus which is the symbol of their faith. They speak Canarese and are chiefly found in Belgaum, Bijapur and Dharwar.

I next visited Bijapur, 61 miles away. I had to cross two rivers, and there were no bridges or boats. Well, I hoisted my cycle high up in the air, and moved forward—half wading and half swimming. My pains were amply rewarded by the attractions that Bijapur gave me.

The city was originally called Vijayapura (City of Victory). On the decay of the Bahmini dynasty, Yusuf Khan became the first King and founded in 1489, the Adil Shahi dynasty. In 1686 the city was taken by Aurengazeb. The place is full of architectural splendour which originated in the capture and spoil of Vijayanagar, in 1565. In 1883 the British Government made the city the

administrative headquarters of the Kaladgi district. The glory of only a few buildings of this place can be sung here; those who ask for more must visit the place. Bole Gumbaz (Round Dome) is the Mansoleum of Mohammad Adil Shah, the seventh King of Bijapur. It is built on a pedestal 600 ft. square and 2 ft. high. The tomb is a



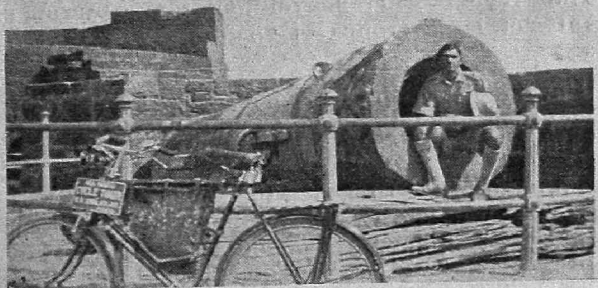
BOLE GUMBAZ

square (each side 196 ft.); there is a seven storied tower at each corner and in the centre is the great dome (124 ft. diameter). There is a broad gallery inside the dome—a carriage may pass round it. A remarkable, whispering gallery it is.

“One pair of feet is enough to awaken the echoes of a regiment.” The slow ticking of a watch or a low whisper at one end can be distinctly heard at the other end, 136 ft. away; but a loud sound is echoed clearly nine times. It is on the whole a magnificent structure, and can be seen from a distance of 25 miles. It contains a museum where the famous Bijapur carpets are exhibited.

The Jumma Masjid is one of the finest mosques in India. It was commenced by Ali Adil Shah I (1557-79), but was never completed. Aurengazeb is said to have carried away velvet carpets, a large golden chain, and other valuables belonging to the mosque.

The famous gun Malik-i-Maidan (Lord of the Battle plain) was cast at Ahmadnagar by a Turkish officer in 1549 in a bell metal which takes a very high polish. It is 14 ft. long, and the circumference is about $13\frac{1}{2}$ ft. The



MALIK-I-MAIDAN

diameter of the bore is 2ft. 4 in. A man of average height, so I was told, can sit in the centre of the bore conveniently and tie his turban; my height would not permit such a feat, but the adjoining photo shows me seated in the gun fairly comfortably. At the sides of the muzzle the representation of the mouth of a monster swallowing an elephant is wrought in relief. There are several other huge guns rich in historic association.

I then covered 48 miles and reached Jamkhandi State, where I had my early education. The ruler, Shankarrao Appasaheb Patwardhan, who is renowned for his learning and culture. Medical relief is provided absolutely free. No fees are charged for education. Even higher education is free. He has donated two lakhs of rupees to the Poona College (now re-named after his father Sir Parashuram Bhau) where students from his state can study freely up to the B. A. Class. My alma mater, the P. B. High School, is an excellent institution.

Ramatirtha is a beautiful spot where the palace is situated. The chief is a great patron of sports. The December races and annual athletic contests, consisting of 50 miles cycling, 30 miles running, tennis tournaments, etc., attract large groups of visitors from all parts of India.

I owe my adventurous spirit more to my early training here than to anything else; and with a heavy heart I left this place after a week.

Through Miraj I reached the small state of Kurundwad and was hospitably treated by the chief, a minor, whose hobby is photography. I was in fact a state guest and my three days' stay here was quite pleasant and instructive. I then made off to Ichalkaranji, nine miles away. This is an interesting small state mostly peopled by weavers. It is famous for its sarees. The place is dotted with many small sugarcane fields. The chief is very kind-hearted.

I next visited Kolhapur, one of the foremost of the Deccan states. The land struck me as very fertile. Shahu Maharaj, tracing his ancestry from Shivaji, is quite true to Mahratta traditions. He displays a keen interest in physical culture.

He finds great pleasure in the races and is very fond of wrestling. The famous wrestlers, Gunga and Burud, have wrestled under his distinguished patronage. He is singular in going round the town in a motor bus where he does a lot of useful work, including writing. When I was there, there was a great scarcity of water and people were seen everywhere digging wells. People in the street struck me as very fashionable—perhaps a sign of prosperity. The famous Rajaram College (named after the father of the present Maharaja), a science college, and a B.T. College (the only one of its kind in this part), are doing good work in advancing the cause of education. Two cinema studios—the Kolhapur Cinetone and the Shalini Cinetone—have already acquired an all India reputation. The sugar factory here is well worth a visit.

The place is celebrated for its antiquated temples and fine modern buildings. The old palace contains some wonderful portraits; the picture of a mansoleum at Florence, erected over the place where Raja Ram's body was cremated, first tickled my curiosity and then made me very sad indeed. I saw the sword in the Armoury, belonging to Aurengzeb with the inscription in Persian "Alamgir." The temple of Amba Bai, the tutelary deity of this place, has an old bell of Portuguese origin.

The state possesses important Jagirs—Torgad, Bawda, Kagal Malkapur, Ichalkaranji, Kapshi state, etc.

Elephant baiting, a favourite sport of the late Maharaja, is still continued. On the "Sathmari", an extensive ground—a wild elephant is let loose and roused into fury. It attacks its tormentors, usually four or five in number, who hide themselves in holes only to come out soon and start teasing the beast once more. The game provides all the thrill of "Hide and Seek" and "Blind-Man's-Buff," with a touch of the forest.

Before leaving this place, I visited the cenotaphs of Shivaji Sambhaji and Tara Bai, names to conjure with in Indian history.

Panhalgad is only twelve miles away, and I naturally went there. This hill fortress, **Panhalgad** 2992 ft. above sea level, was the stronghold of Shivaji between 1659 and 1690; from it he made some of his most successful expeditions. The Shivaji Tower near by stands at the brink of a precipice; and at a little distance from it are the stone quarries (each 130 ft. long, 57 ft. broad and 30 ft. high) which supplied enough food to Shivaji's troops during a siege of five long months. This fortress is indeed one of the most interesting sights in Western India. But my cycle, like the caravan, must pass on.

It was a pleasant slope down and I glided on to **Kapshi State** Kapshi State. I enjoyed my interview with the chief, Santaji Ghorapade, a great hunter who has been awarded several medals by the Viceroy.

I visited Shankaracharya's Mutt in **Sankeshwar** Sankeshwar near by. Situated on the banks of the Hiranyakshipu river, the place is full of Samadhis of Dravidian saints. Tobacco and chilly have also found comfortable shelter here.

So good-bye, Maharashtra! Your ancient history **Good-Bye to Maharashtra** and modern progress will never be forgotten by me. Your men and women have always been noted for personal valour and intellectual refinement. Perhaps I shall be able to pay you a handsome tribute at the end of my pedalling, when I cannot only note but also weigh things.

THE LAND OF THE CANARESE

I pedalled for sixty two miles and reached Belgaum. This is a military cantonment and the headquarters of the Canara District. My quarters, however, was the Veterinary Dispensary. It was very cold and there were no pipes anywhere in the place. Here it was that I heard the sad news of the death of King George V.

The place is a babel of two tongues—Canarese and Marathi. The Karnatak Education Society has built the Lingraj College here. The Welling Camera Works, an Indian Industrial Concern, has made great head way; everything save the lens is manufactured. Two Jain temples take us back to the days of Mallikarjuna. The pillars and pillasters are very complicated, and they carry interesting figures of human beings, “sinhas” (lions) and “chawkas” (sacred geese).

Fifteen miles of dangerous descent through the Amboli Ghat to reach Sawantwadi State, and the prospect did not stimulate me. To add to my dismay, I saw a huge serpent crossing the road; and you can guess my horror when I tell you that my retreat covered almost a furlong.

The place is beautiful, surrounded as it is on all sides by hills. The climate is agreeable. I could not meet the chief as he was then in far off Vienna. But I was quite occupied with collecting orders for photographs—by the way, that was how I was for some time making money to meet my travelling expenses.

Eighteen miles of pedalling now took me to Venugurla. The harbour of this sea-port was under the Dutch—a fact which accounts for the many buildings here in the old Dutch Style. The B. S. N. steamers

touch here. There is an American Mission Hospital, (branch of the Miraj hospital). I was greatly struck by the large quantity of mangoes exported from here to England. This was the first time that I found myself in the Konkan area, and the people struck me as curious. They are somewhat short, nimble and black. They drink tea even without milk. Most of them eat rice; and everything is dirt cheap. I was not so much surprised at their language as I was at their habits; for the Konkaneese is merely a dialect of Marathi.

I went back to Sawantwadi and started off to Goa. **British Customs before Goa** A jungle road with ups and downs must be interesting to all cyclists, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Before entering Portugese soil, I took care to get all my articles certified at the British Customs House at Satarda, so that I need'nt be hauled up again by the British Customs officer at the other end of the Portugese soil. The British and Portugese boundaries are marked by a river.

Whom did I meet at Naibag but the Goa Customs man! He was not so tough as I expected. **The Goa Customs** He demanded a fifteen rupees deposit, I had not that much to plunk down. He was by no means baffled. He cooly surveyed my cycle, put it at 20 Rs. face value and calculated 15 per cent. on it. I gladly shelled out Rs. 3-5-0 and paddled on Scott-free.

PORTUGESE TERRITORY

My first job was to get familiar with Goanese coins, which are mostly nickel; and fancy having **Goa** currency notes for 4 as. and 8 as! 5 Rs. Rs. 2-8-0 Re. 1 notes are also current; but British Indians are not new to them.

The scenery is picturesque beyond description. Why not see Goa and die? A ferry ride across a river costs just a quarter anna; and there are many rivers to cross, and to enjoy while crossing. I was put up with Mr. Bapu Saheb Desai, a big Zamindar, who introduced me to the administrator. My host had to act as an interpreter also, for I knew no Portuguese and the administrator had not a farthing of English.

The Portuguese people are very hospitable provided their purse is not affected. Wines and cigarettes are duty free and furnish great attraction to the British Indian people close to the border. The streets are quite full of bars and toddy shops; and no one here seems to be more sober than when drunk.

Oddly enough the Roman Catholic Churches flourish alongside the pubs. Odder still is the Goanese dress.

Most of the low class migrate to Bombay and become highly satisfactory Ayyas and Boys to Europeans.

I have pleasant recollections of Mapuca. The "Brahmins" roads are good, and the people clean. The **take care!** buildings are mostly made of red stone. The common food is rice and fish. Brahmins take care! I went into a hotel; and the first question the proprietor thought fit to ask me was whether I was a Brahmin. I said in a slightly irritated tone, 'yes'—and wondered why he could not see the brilliance of a Brahmin beaming on my face.

He served me with what I thought an attractive dish of rice and soup, when I poured the soup on the rice, what did I see? Blast it, it was a fish! I looked daggers at the proprietor who politely directed me to a Bhat Hotel where pure vegetarian diet was served.

At the point of satisfied hunger I learnt that the Brahmins here (Saraswats) eat fish while the Bhats are vegetarians.

I then went to Panjim (Noa Goa). This is the capital of Goa. It is a small beautiful town—in fact it is the second best town on the West Coast. Lord Joao Craviers Lapes is the present Governor-General. The important news papers are the Journal de India and Heralds. Education is free in Portugese Schools. The British Indian Matric is treated as the Intermediate Standard here. There is no University Examination at all. Institution of Vasco-da-Gama, a huge museum, contains many old paintings, and cupboards and tables of enormous size made for the fathers in the Church years ago.

The place is full of mosquitoes and another type of pest is the seller of lottery tickets, who is found anywhere and everywhere. He makes a lot of money, and there is a big lottery office.

One saving feature of the place is the absence of many advocates. Obviously crimes are scarce.

The Government officers do not understand English; and a Portugese, working in the military department, took a great fancy for me; but we couldn't talk to each other, for want of a common language. He introduced me to the Scouts and acted as my cicerone. But how long can we continue the dumb-show? I couldn't cut him off for nearly a week; but then I moved on to old Goa, full of Churches—a refreshing change from the lottery air. This Christian city was founded in 1510 A. D. by Alfonso d' Albuquerque who took it from the Bijapur State. It was the first Christian city in the Indies and the scene of the labours of St. Francis Xavier. (1542—52). The most important Church is the Bom (the good) Jesus

as it contains the body of this great saint. The tomb is a stately structure and contains ornamented tiers with scenes in the life of the saint worked in coloured marbles. The coffin is made of silver and weighs 600



THE TOMB OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

marks. For the past 400 years the body has preserved itself wonderfully, although it has now shrunk to a mummy.

It was a pleasure to visit Mangeshi, the famous Saraswat temple in Goa. It is covered all over with coconut trees, and looks as if God has put on a green shawl. Shanta Durga and Ramnath are two other interesting temples here.

The Kalvantini dance before God is a common feature of all these temples. Naikinees (or **The Kalvantini dancers** Kalvantinis) are singers and dancers, deriving their name from Kala (art). They trace their ancestry to the Apsaras (the heavenly women of Hindu mythology); and are, so far as talent and beauty are concerned, quite worthy of such divine origin. They left their former abode in Vijayanagar, when it was captured by the Mohammedans, and migrated to the Canara coast. All girls of this class are the hereditary property of the temples, and they seem to be proud of it. They are now supposed to wait upon God, while their former job was merely to wait upon kings. Though they are inheritors of great artistic tradition and talents, they have chosen for their patron deity Kartikeya (God of war) rather than Nataraja (the King of dancers). The pernicious system of Devadasis is practically dead in many parts of India, thanks to social enlightenment and bold legislation. But in Canara, Ratnagiri and Goa it seems to take an unconscionably long time in dying.

I also visited the other famous Saraswat temples near Phonda, all of which have beautiful finds and are surrounded by picturesque scenery.

I then went to Margao, the second most beautiful town in Goa. It is a busy centre with **Margao** a Sanitorium at the top of a hill, maintained by the Goa Lottery—a unique case of good coming out of evil.

Marmagao attracted me next. Land, sea and air **Marmagao** seemed to meet there, for it is at once a railway terminus, an important harbour, and an aerodrome (for the Bombay-Goa-Trivandrum Service). All the foreign steamers touch here; and it

is cheaper to travel to Bombay by sea than by land. The place is really beautiful.

After seeing Vasco-da-Gama, an old town originally chosen by the Government for its capital, **Majali, the British Customs** I reached Majali where the British Customs House is located. I stayed in Goa for nearly a month, and I enjoyed every bit of it. I can never forget the hospitality of the Goanese, specially that of, the Christian section.

ONCE MORE ON BRITISH SOIL

What a sudden and unpleasant change from the beautiful roads of Goa! I had to cross many rivers and pedal on the worst possible roads, neglected for want of adequate traffic. My cycle was twisted out of shape; and Karwar, 20 miles from Majali, had to look to my cycle first before I would look about it.

This extremely beautiful town of North Karnatak **Karwar** is situated mostly on the slope of a hill. Some years ago, so I was told, tigers were harassing the people; but I found them not, nor did I care to go in search of them. It is a district place and has a fine harbour. It never rains, but pours here; and it is interesting to watch the steamers sheltered in the harbour, utterly indifferent to the raging billows beyond. What a beach it was! Three sides hill and one side sea! I had the good fortune to witness a Sea Scout Camp—an All-India affair. The beach is one of the biggest and finest in India.

The great Indian poet, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, **A cocoa-nut tree with 11 branches** once resided here for many years and wrote several poems under the inspiration of its gorgeous scenery. The rainfall is

as heavy as 125-150 inches. Every five years there is an epidemic of either plague or small-pox. Electricity had not yet visited the place and tar roads were under construction. Four miles from here brought me to a huge coconut tree with eleven branches, yielding no fruit. I could not help exclaiming "What a waste of nature!"

The people are very fair in complexion, and speak either pure Canarese or Konkanees mixed with Canarese.

I covered twenty miles and halted at Ankola, a small town. The 1931 Satyagraha movement penetrated even the jungle here and the people suffered grave loss for their country's sake. The lot of the Kalvantinis, whose houses are numerous here, was no better, and they have all migrated to Bombay in search of better prospects!

Nine miles more and I reached Gokarna Mahableshwar, a place of pilgrimage, attracting swarms of people from all parts of India on Sivaratri day. A curious legend is attached to this place. Once Lord Siva gave a Lingam to Ravana on condition that he should never place it on earth. Ganapati was sent soon afterwards to recover the Lingam by a trick. He met Ravana on the way and agreed to keep the Lingam in his hand and thereby enable Ravana to perform his Sandhya Vandanam. Oddly enough, the Lingam grew heavier and heavier till at last Ganapati had to drop it; the moment it touched the ground, it vanished into earth. Ravana grew angry and smote Ganapati who fainted in consequence. A temple is built on the spot where the above incident is supposed to have taken place.

I now proceeded to Kumta, 21 miles away. It was once a famous harbour. But the goods (chiefly cotton) are now transported by rail. The poorer women tickled the curious and romantic in me; they were dark in colour, wore



WOOD CUTTERS IN NORTH CANARA

short saris, and decorated themselves with hundreds of necklets, made of small beads; and their heads were regular flower gardens. I was eager to snap them, and they were no less eager to pose for me. They are wood cutters.

I cycled off to Honawar, ten miles away, and took a sail boat up the Sharavati river. Eighteen miles more and the Gersoppa Falls would greet me! The thought was refreshing indeed. In the middle the boat got into shallow waters, and the passengers had to help the crew first by getting into the water, and then by pushing forward the boat.

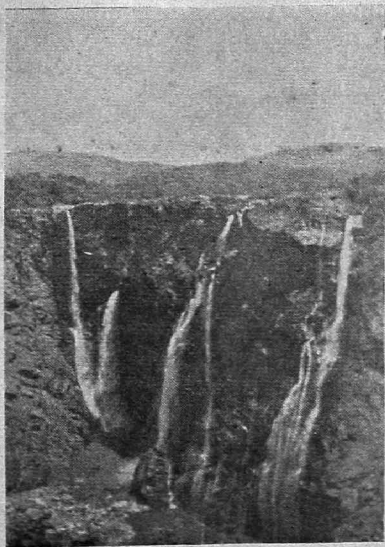
Another cause of alarm during this protracted and wearisome glide was a Mohammedan whose temperature began to go down as the boat began to go up. My medicine chest came in handy and averted what all of us thought a first-class tragedy.

After five long hours I alighted at the Gersoppa village. Hundreds of bullock carts, carrying paddy and other things, diverted me for a while. I was somewhat tired, and I spent the night in the village.

Early morning I got up and cycled for twelve miles across a jungle region, full of tigers, panthers, bears and bisons. Suddenly a panther came very near me. Heroically enough I cycled back for two miles at a speed that I have failed to reproduce ever since. I met a healthy fellow who offered to escort me to the Gersoppa Falls for just two rupees. I readily agreed, and the rest of the trip was quite peaceful.

The Falls are four in number—the Raja, the Roarer, the Rocket, and La Dame Blanche. A considerable volume of water, leaping down a depth of 980 feet and forming a boiling chaos below, is surely a magnificent sight; even an atheist will quail before this certain manifestation of God. In point of abruptness of fall it is said to stand foremost in the

world. Looking down from the top of the Raja, I saw the abyss, 829 ft. below. The Roarer is less abrupt; but it foams down a twisted channel into a cup-like cavern. The Rocket, as the name indicates, throws out jets of foam which burst like fire-rockets into showers of glittering drops. The last fall is by no



GERSOPPA FALLS

means the least; it goes through a succession of cascades over the sloping surfaces of the rock wall underneath it. A leap, a pour, a shoot, and a stream—such is in short the Gersoppa. It finally disappears through dark walls of a gorge and hurries to the sea. The foot of the falls has even greater thrills than the top; a splendid

spray of water touched with rainbow glories in the tropical sunlight is a sight to observe and not to describe. It is by no means an exaggeration to say that "in its full glory there are few more wonderful effects of nature to be seen anywhere in the world." I tore myself away from this witchcraft and got into the adjoining travellers' bungalow; the visitors' book contained numerous records of impressions even more striking than the elemental wonder I had left behind. The whole world seemed to have united in a joint tribute to Nature, free from all geographical, racial or other differences. A solitary criticism is penned by Sir M. Visveswarayya, an ex-Diwam of Mysore, a great Engineer, and one of India's foremost men, "What a huge waste!"

THE MYSORE STATE

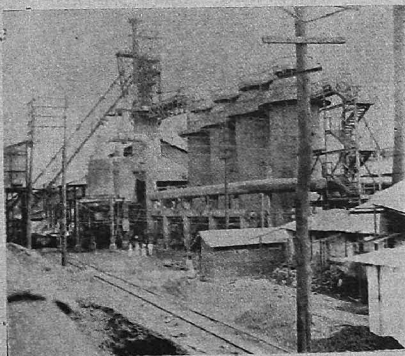
Let me pass through Siddapur, Sirsi, Hubli, Haveri and Ranibennur and begin the account of my tour in the Mysore State from Harihar, about 200 miles away from the Gersoppa.

Standing on the right bank of the Tungabhadra river, this place marks one of the boundaries of the Mysore State. The fine temple here, built in 1223 and added to by Soma, the founder of Somanathapur, is dedicated to Hari Hareshwar—idols of Vishnu and Siva placed side by side. The devotees worship both the idols, although ordinarily Vaishnavites and Saivites are prone to much religious rivalry. There is also an idol of Brahma, which is, however, not worshipped. This is the first Mysore Station on the Poona-Bangalore Railway Line.

Nine miles of cycling took me to Davangere, one of the foremost industrial towns of Mysore.

is full of cotton ginning factories and oil mills. Groundnuts are exported ; and the huge quantity of their pulp, thrown out here, makes it an ideal site for the proposed paper mill. It admits of great development in the future and is, from the commercial point of view, even more important than Bangalore. I remember Davangere most for the hospitality and kindness shown to me by Mr. P. S. Sirur.

From here I went to Shimoga, 72 miles away, which is the third biggest town of this state. It is noted for coffee and areca nuts. On account of heavy rains it is marshy, malarial and unhealthy—in fact the western side of Mysore (they call this Malnad—the Coastal area) is so.



BHADRAVATI IRON WORKS

It was from here that I went to see the Bhadravati Iron Works, 12 miles away. With the help of a guide I could understand all the process. First the wood is brought from the

forest, put in a wagon, and changed into coal. While the coal is in formation, the heat below throws out a liquid from the wood, called the "liquor."

On one side there is a furnace to melt the ore brought from the mines which are located in the adjoining Kemmangundi hills, about 6,000 ft. above sea level. The ore is conveyed by means of an aerial rope way, about three miles long. The mines and forests belong to the company. Wood-charcoal and gas is the fuel used in the various metallurgical and chemical processes. The coal is brought up in a trolley from a depth of 100 ft. and put in the furnace. All this is done by an automatic machine and hundreds of tons of cast iron are produced at a time.

I then went to the Pipe foundry. Moulds are first made according to the size of the pipes required (from 3" diameter and 16 ft. long to 30" diameter and 20 ft. long pipes are made).

I then went to see the by-products of the liquor—tar, spirit, alcohol, paints, disinfectants, necessaries of wine, wood oil etc. As there is no market for these, the enterprise is not remunerative. It is run on a capital of 3 crores of rupees and about 1,500 men work. There is a 2 ft. railway to carry goods. A steel plant has recently been introduced, and about 90 tons of steel are produced every day. The quality of steel and iron got from here is considered to be the very best.

I then visited Chitaldrug (60 miles), an interesting historical place with an impregnable Chitaldrug fortress protected by seven layers of strong walls. It is supposed to have been built by a Palayakar, one of the ancient Cannada Kings subjugated by the present Mysore dynasty.

Through Hiriyr (25 miles) I went to Sira (25 miles) in the Tumkur district, noted for its home industries, specially the making of combs out of blackwood.

I passed through Tumkur (30 miles), a district head-quarters, full of coconut plantations. The tender coconuts here are very big, and I could hardly drink off the entire water contained in a single fruit.

I now covered 44 miles and reached Bangalore, the seat of the Mysore Government. I had a miraculous escape on the way : a huge tree fell in front of me on the road—just 20 yds. off. Even fate seemed to co-operate with me in completing my ambitious tour through India and Ceylon.

Bangalore enjoys a salubrious climate and is a popular health resort. A portion of it is British soil where the largest cantonment of South India is built up. There is a rumour to the effect that the Imperial Government is thinking of handing over this area to the Mysore ruler—a change which the people of the locality do not seem to relish.

I was struck by the abundance of fruits and European vegetables and even more by its industrial activity. The White lead syndicate, the Porcelain factory, the Soap factory, Brick and Tile factories, cotton-mills and other organisations thrive under the generous support and encouragement of the state and have considerably added to the public wealth of the place. The Science College of the Mysore University is located here. The Indian Institute of Science has made it one of the leading research centres of India. It was started at the suggestion of the great Parsi Merchant Prince Tata, who also made a magnificent endowment. The Mysore

Government gave a large tract of land and has provided for an annual grant. The Imperial Government also contributes annually to the resources of the Institute.

It is intended to promote research in practical science. Electro-technology, Bio-chemistry and pure Physics are the branches of study now taken up by the scholars here. The tuition is free, and a hostel is attached, for the convenience of students and staff. A three-years course is rounded off with the recognition "Associate of the Indian Institute of Science" (A. I. I. Sc), and in some deserving cases, even fellowships are granted. There is an influential committee of management, consisting of eminent scientists. The first director was Sir William Ramsay, discoverer of the rare gases; and the present director is Sir C. V. Raman, winner of the Nobel Prize for an effect now named after him.

My visit to the Institute had a rather exciting beginning. I saw a fairly big man, sitting in the laboratory, and I pressed him to purchase some of my photographs. He showered upon me a volley of critical questions and I could by no means please him with my slow and halting answers. He instructed somebody (soon I learnt that it was his clerk) to give me a handsome donation and went away. To my surprise and dismay the clerk informed me that his boss was no other than the great scientist, Sir C. V. Raman. Luckily for me, a party of students had come from Trichy to go round the Institute; and I joined them. Sir Raman walked with us and patiently explained to us many knotty things for two long hours: but I did not feel the flight of time at all in the invigorating presence of this enthusiastic and 'scientific' personality. We were hungry after the task, and Sir

**A famous
scientist at
close quarters**

Raman seemed to have anticipated the effect. He took us to his house and entertained us with a substantial tiffin. His wife was extremely kind to us; and I could easily guess her high culture. I now apologised to the scientist* for my inability to recognise him in the first instance, and he simply smiled with the broadest of smiles that I had ever seen lighting up a human face. I knew I was throughly forgiven; and yet my sense of shame persisted. In my awkwardness I looked for a way of escape. My photographs came to my rescue; I took out the very best of them and quietly handed them over to him with the words, "these are different from the ones I wanted to sell in the laboratory."

Unlike the Bombay Presidency where coffee is practically unknown, here everybody was drinking coffee. The method of cooling the coffee struck me as very odd and quite ingenious. An empty tumbler in one hand receives the the hot coffee poured down from another tumbler held aloft by the other hand; and the air in between does the cooling! The coffee thus treated becomes frothy, which seems to improve the appearance and even the taste of the stimulant.

Most of the buildings here are made of stone, perhaps due to the abundance of natural rocks nearby. The state must have spent a good deal of money on roads and illumination—one is almost tempted to feel that here is an advertisement stunt. I visited the Cubbon Park, a fashionable afternoon resort. It contains all the important offices, the Secretariat, the Public Library, the Museum, etc. The Museum contains valuable geological and other scientific collections, native ornaments and dresses, and a most remarkable collection of fishes.

I then went into the Lalbagh garden which is really very beautiful. It is supposed to have been laid out at

the time of Hyder Ali, and has a fine collection of tropical and sub-tropical plants. It is of great use to film companies. I was told that there was formerly a zoo, and the animals had been shifted to the Mysore Zoo. I did not mind this change at all for I was contemplating a similar change to myself.

The prevalence of plague in the city has led to the delightful extensions of the city.

The old mud fort here, built by the famous Kempe Gowda (a Magad Chief) in 1537, is replete with legend and history. The gateway alone is now in tact. Opposite to it is seen a part of Tippu's palace now used as the Head Quarters of the Mysore Boy Scouts.

After visiting the Serum Institute and the Government Agricultural Farm at Hebbal, about four miles away, I headed towards the Kolar Gold Fields (59 miles) famous not only for its "gold-digging" but also for its historical and archeological contents. The Kolaramma and Someswara temples and the Makbara, or the tomb of Hyder Ali's father are the principal old buildings.

What a busy industrial area it appeared to be ! Huge machines and shafts and hills of mud dug out from the earth were all that I could see on a superficial glance. The thought almost forced itself upon me that the bowels of the earth would soon be touched. The mechanical stir with which these secretions of the earth were thrown out would soon give place to volcanic emotional eruptions in all parts of the globe, and Midas' temptation in its origin did not lure me ; it simply represented the birth-throes of human misery.

Long before 1873 the existence of gold here was known ; but it was only in that year that a European, Mr. Lawelle, thought fit to obtain the permission of the

Mysore Government to mine away the ore for twenty years on a 10% royalty basis. A number of companies were floated, but in the early stages they were so unsuccessful that their closing down became almost inevitable. The catastrophe is said to have been averted by one John Taylor who at first kept up the concerns by his courage and later on by the huge dividends that could be declared. It is time for me to dive into the mines and come back empty-handed.

The area of the mines is 10 miles by 3 miles. Out of the fourteen mines, only four are now working—Ooragaum, Nandydroog, Champion Reef and Marikuppam. Even these, I am told, are not very remunerative and may soon be closed; but I am bearing the news quite courageously. But the things of the locality—Robertsonpet, Andersonpet, the small bazzars, the travellers bungalow and the musafarkhana (a canarese edition of the South Indian Choultry and the North Indian Dharma-sala)—are all quailing at the prospect; if the gold is not dug up, they will be done up.

I had to give one day's notice to the authorities to get their permission to visit the surface and the underground. The company took an undertaking from me in writing to the effect that they should not be held responsible for any accident that might befall me.

A lift took me down a depth of 4,800 ft. I felt that I was almost deaf when I reached the bottom. A guide, a carbide lamp and a straw hat were supplied to me. It was extremely hot, although compressed air was ventilating the inside fairly well. The lift could carry thirty-five persons at a time, and I found two lifts in each mine, one going up and the other going down, within two minutes' time.

The digging has gone on up to a depth of 7,800 ft.; but after 4,800 ft., the digging is very much inclined; tunnels (5 ft. by 6 ft.) connect the mines, and electricity is brought from Sivasamudram, 92 miles away. There is also a local power station to serve in a contingency.

The rocks full of gold are cut into stones by huge **Gold Digging** machines and brought to the surface by lifts and stored in big boxes. Then they are sent to the crushing department to be broken into small pieces. The pounding is done by rock breakers—great steel pillars which exert considerable pressure upon the ore. The broken bits are crushed with water into fine sand by the crushing mills. The sand and water are then poured into nets containing 1,000 holes per sq. in. The nets are spread on tables on which are large sheets of copper with a thin layer of mercury at the top. The particles of gold adhere to the mercury and form an amalgam. The amalgam is scraped out after some time and put into chamois leather bags. The mercury is squeezed out, and the gold remains within. There are several other processes to purify the gold and to extract cent per cent gold from the ore.

It took me five hours to see all these; and I was now quite rich with experience.

The mud taken out from the ore is called cyanide. In Ooragaum mica is also found. A funny sight was in store for me at the top. The sweating workers are stripped naked and examined by Pathan watchmen—who can escape their rough handling?, and then let off. The lot of these poor workers is pitiable indeed. Several disasters occur, and it seemed to me that most of them could have been avoided by proper precautions. Except on Saturdays and

The lot of the gold diggers

Sundays, the mining goes on incessantly ; it is a regular cutting off the golden goose !

After two days I came back to Bangalore and went along the Bangalore-Mysore Road. At the end of 35 miles lay the town of Channapatna where there is a Government Silk Farm. Raw silk is produced in small quantities. I was told that Mulberry trees are abundant all over Mysore, and the temperature of the area provides an optimum for the growth of silk worms. The authorities told me that owing to competition and rapid decline in the number of mulberry trees, the industry had received a severe set back. Channapatna is chiefly noted for its celebrated lacquerware and wooden toys. Fine steel wires for musical instruments and glass bangles are also made here.

I then touched Maddur (about 15 miles away) which is the Railway station for Sivasamudram. I covered thirty miles more and was right in front of the Cauvery Falls and the Cauvery Power Scheme. The river branches off into two streams and plunges down from the Mysore plateau (400 ft. high) to the plains of the Carnatic by a series of waterfalls. The Gagana Chukki Falls, on the Western branch of the river, forming the boundary between the Mysore and Coimbatore districts, is perhaps the most striking ; the stream divides to form an island, Elikur, the parted waters darting downwards with deafening roar over huge boulders of rock, kicking up a cloud of foam, and uniting again in a pool below. The Barchukki (on the Eastern branch of the river) is not so impressive; but it is certainly more enjoyable. During the rainy season they present a large volume of water. The glimmering white cascades, the purple rocks, the dark green jungles—the combined effect of them all is beyond description.

The scheme by which this power of nature is harnessed by man is even more wonderful. **Siva-samudram Power Scheme** Sir Seshadri Iyer, a clever Brahmin Dewan, inaugurated it ; and the electricity generated here is carried to distant places. .

Most of the villages of Mysore are electrified, and industries get their power at an amazingly cheap rate. The Power House is built at a depth of 700 ft. and I went down in a trolley. There are thirteen pipes (4 ft. diameter) which lead to this place. A voltage of 76,000 is generated, and very ambitious projects of exploiting the abundant natural resources of this beautiful province are made to depend upon it.

30 miles more, and the transition from the nature of **Somnathpur** Sivasamudram to the art of Somnathpur was at once agreeable and striking. The Chenna Kesava Temple here is very old and is a fine specimen of Hoysala architecture.

Cycling 25 miles on fairly good roads was quite easy for me and I reached Mysore with great expectations.

It is the capital of the province and the Maharaja **Mysore** resides here in a magnificent palace of black marble. The fine buildings and beautiful roads mark out the city as one of the handsomest in India ; but they are all of recent origin. Numerous are the lovely parks, and elegant and tasty is the electrification. The university buildings (the arts section) and the Government Silk Factory (famous for its filature sarees) are well worth a visit. The Zoological Gardens and the race course are easily the very best in South India.

The Chamundi Hill (3489 feet above sea-level) lies on the south-east ; and at its top is a huge temple containing the favourite goddess of the Maharaja. On the steps leading to the summit I saw the colossal figure of

the Nandi (vide adjoining photo) in a recumbent posture, 16 feet high and hewn out of solid rock. Mark how accurate and life-like are the features! At night, one could see the outline of the hills in electric light.



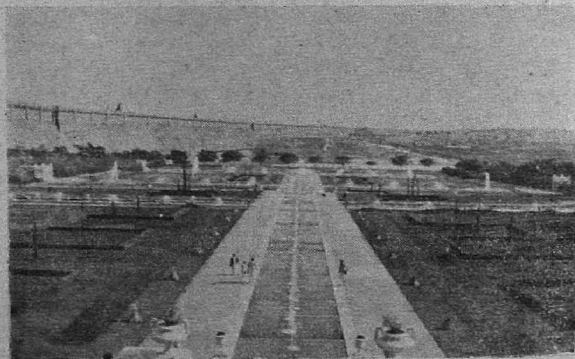
THE NEOLITHIC BULL ON CHAMUNDI HILL

I was not fortunate enough to see the Maharaja, as he was not there. I was told that he was a very pious man.

I visited the Kannambadi (or Krishnarajsagar) Dam.

Krishnaraj-sagar Dam This has done a lot of good to Mysore. The area under cultivation has greatly been extended (nearly 56,000 acres), and several dry taluqs have become wet on account of the Irwin Canal Scheme. A flight of steps from the dam took me to the Brindavan Gardens below, with numerous fountains, ornamental electric lamps and submersible lights. The effect at night is a real thrill and illumined sprays of water make it a glorious illusion.

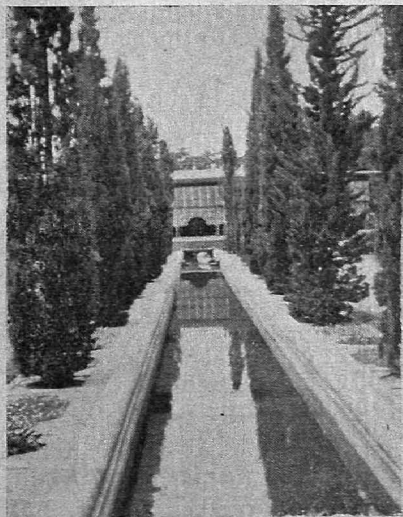
I went to Seringapatam, about 8 miles away, which is situated on an island of the Cauvery. It was once the capital of Mysore and is full of historic remains and associations. The British and Tippu Sultan fought many bloody wars in this neighbourhood, and the old fortress here had to face two first



BRINDAVAN GARDENS MYSORE

class sieges. In spite of its enormous walls and deep ditches, General Harris succeeded in making a breach in 1799; and with the fall of Tippu, Seringapatam also fell, and Mysore rose in importance. The temple of Sri Ranganathaswamy, inside the walls, is said to be of great antiquity. Tippu broke several Hindu idols, but not only spared the idol here but also worshipped it. His father, Hyder Ali was brought up by a Hindu family and must have unconsciously imbibed a sense of respect for the sacred things of his early benefactors, and his son must have inherited it to some extent. De Haviland's Arch, which has recently collapsed, was an experimental arch made of brick; any one jumping on the keystone

would make it oscillate. Is'nt it remarkable! It is said that Tippu wanted to demonstrate the possibility of constructing such a suspension bridge across the Cauvery. But I could not verify this statement, although his tomb was quite near. Just outside the fort, on the island, is the



DARYA-I-DAULAT BAGH

Darya-i-Daulat Bagh (Garden of the wealth of the Sea)—Tippu's Summer Palace beautifully built and decorated.

I could not leave this place without a tear. Even in the ruins of this place I could see Tippu's glory, not only his bigotry but also his wisdom; and the old furniture and fittings and the magazine in the Scott's

Bungalow brought many a melancholy recollection to me, and I cleared out as quickly as possible.

I then halted at Shravanabalagoda where there is a Jain statue of Gomateeshwara, 60 ft. high, carved out of one rock. It represents a sixteen year old youth, with surpassing majesty and dignity. Every twelve years it is bathed in milk, thanks to the efforts of a very influential Jain Mutt here.

I have not yet exhausted the art treasures of Mysore, although they have well-nigh exhausted me by now. I passed through Hassan (75 miles from Mysore), noted for its annual cattle show, and reached Belur (25 miles). The **Belur and Halebedu Temples** Chenna Kesava Temple and the Halebedu Temple are some of the oldest temples in Mysore and represent the very peak of Hoysala architecture.

I had to cover nearly hundred miles to reach **Saklespur** Mercara, and on my way I visited Saklespur, full of coffee plantation. It was interesting to study the culture of these plants. They can grow up to 15 or 20 ft. high ; but they are cut off after 5 ft. On the slopes of the hill they grow—as many as 1200 plants per acre ; and a single plant yields $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. seeds. Water must be plentiful ; at least one inch rainfall is necessary. Eleven days after the first rain (in March) the plants bear flowers ; and then they are kept without water for twelve hours. This precaution, I was told, would ensure a good crop. An acre yields about 20 maunds of seed (i.e., 4 to 5 cwts. of coffee). And in this taluq alone two lakhs of acres **All about coffee** are made to grow coffee. Mysore, Coorg, the Nilgiris, Wynaad, Palni, the Shevroys, the Anamalli are all famous coffee plantations. The plants require shade and are therefore always covered with big trees. The seed is first green, and then turns red, when it is gathered. It

is cured at Mangalore and Calicut. Two varieties of coffee are worth noting—the Perchment and the Native cherry.

At the point of my leaving the Mysore state, I can only say that my mind was in a welter—
Good-bye to Mysore Nature, Science and Art have vied with one another to decorate and to enrich the area ; and the wit of man, though the last to enter the competition, is by no means the least. A wise King and a series of wiser Dewans have taken their state forward step by step, and proved beyond doubt that Indians too can wisely order their country's affairs—given the will and the opportunity.

THE LAND OF THE COORGS

Thirty six miles of cycling brought me to Somwarpet, my first halt in the Coorg territory. The journey was somewhat unpleasant owing to the ups and downs of the road. On either side nothing but coffee was visible. I entered Kusbur, the estate of the richest man here.

And I sent my visiting card to Mr. D. Siddanna through a boy. The reply was "very busy" but I was by no means abashed. I sent my album in, and out he came at once, as if attracted by a magnet. He displayed great cordiality and wonderful powers of conversation, and I liked the long chit-chat with him.

I then went to Mercara, the capital of the Coorg district 37 miles away. The province is administered by the British Resident in Mysore, who is also the Chief Commissioner of Coorg, and by a Commissioner who has his headquarters at Mercara itself. It was once a native state ; but as the ruler proved a tyrant, he was removed by the British in 1834.

Mercara is at a height of 3,800 ft. and the Cauvery the holy river of South India starts from the Mercara † Brahmagiri mountains 24 miles away. The scenery is picturesque, filled as it is with bamboo jungles, orange groves, coffee plantations, pepper and cardamom fields.

I had the good fortune to attend a Coorg marriage ; there was no priest to officiate at the ceremony. I was informed that the marriage would take place either on a Saturday or on a Sunday according to the convenience of the parties. The bride was at Mercara, but the bridegroom was at Virrajendrapeth, 50 miles away. At about 11 A.M. the Muhurta commenced and the marriage ceremony was performed at the bride's house, strictly in the absence of the bridegroom. I was told that a similar function was going on at the same time in the bridegroom's house. All the guests were offering some presents or other to the party and I had to blink a little before I could strike out a plan for myself. I gave the bride a nice album full of photos, and she returned the compliments by allowing me to snap her. There was then a sumptuous dinner followed by a folk dance in which I too was given a chance. The next morning I eagerly looked for the bridegroom ; but to my great surprise I was quietly told that he had come before dawn and took the bride away to his house before sun rise. He did well, I thought, for after all that was his main job.

What sturdy people the Coorgs are ! The British have conceded them the rare privilege of carrying arms without a license, perhaps a virtue of necessity. The respectable people go about ordinarily in European costume ; but their natural dress consists of a half-sleeved long robe with a sash in the middle, attached to which is a knife in front and a sword behind. The women dress

A Coorg Marriage

Some peculiarities of the Coorgs

themselves in sarees and cover their heads with a silk handkerchief. I found the people extremely hospitable.

From Mercara to Mangalore it was a long long way—a stretch of 83 miles; and I covered it all in one day. The road was steep and uneven, and I felt that the marriage feast alone could have sustained me for so long.

Mangalore Mangalore is a sea-coast town of considerable importance on the West Coast. The place is famous for coffee and tiles. It is one of the most advanced educational centres of India. I could hardly come across an illiterate woman. Churches and charitable institutions are conducted by the Jesuits; I enjoyed my visit to the most prominent of these—Aloysiu's College, Father Muller's Homeopathic Dispensary and Hospital, the Jeppu Iron Works, the Leper Asylum and the first grade college for girls.

Eye at her best The main language is Canarese; but Tulu and Konkane are also spoken. I found a large number of Saraswat Brahmins here, and they struck me as a highly enlightened community. But the most vivid impression I have of Coorg is the exquisite beauty of its women.

Udipi I did not mind cycling for 59 miles to reach Udipi, as it is an important place of pilgrimage. It is a small town famous for its Krishna temple. At Karkal I saw a Jain statue 42 ft high and at Muddhedri a temple with thousand pillars. In Southern and Northern India as well as in Ceylon Udipi cooks are seen in large numbers, running successful hotels. I was struck by the tidiness of the people and the tastiness of their preparations.

How I got over an insult I should not forget to mention a little excitement I had here. I and a friend of mine went into a hotel and squatted on the floor with shoes on; and we were, so I learnt afterwards,

taken to be non-Brahmins. At the end of the meals, we were asked to remove the leaves which we did readily, thinking that the custom of the place must be respected. But when we were asked further to purify the spot with cowdung, I lost [my tongue and sent out a volley of abuses in English. The proprietor remained unaffected, for the excellent reason that he had never been introduced to the Anglo-Saxon, but my friend supplemented me with his quota in Canarese. My anger started on a fresh gallop, and I brought back the leaf and placed it in its original place. I cannot help blushing at my own stupidity when I recall the incident ; but it shows that cycle tourists too have a human side.

MALABAR

I had to be on the road for nearly sixty two miles before reaching Payyanur, on the boundary line of Malabar or Kerala—"the land of Payyanur and a hungry man's conduct" "cocoanut palm." The journey, being interrupted by twenty ferry rides, proved highly tedious, and I was thoroughly fatigued at the end of it all. I entered a shop and asked for a favourite eatable of mine, *Poha* (beaten rice). No one seemed to understand my language, and I was greatly enraged. I took the law into my own hands, searched all the tins, and at last succeeded in getting what I wanted. I had to pursue a like method to get milk and sugar.

I then went to Cannanore 23 miles off. It is a military station ; and I could honour the place no better than by staying with Mr. Bal, a military officer. It is one of the most important industrial centres on the West Coast—the chief industry being weaving. The climate is mild, equable and remarkably healthy. Good sea bathing can be had here. The

cantonment is built on a projecting piece of land forming one of the sides of the bay. On a promontory near the end of this land stands the Fort St. Angels, originally built by the Portugese in 1505 and now improved and strengthened by the British.

Fourteen miles more, and I reached Tellicherry.

Tellicherry The natural setting of the place is indeed picturesque—wooded hills interlaced with valleys, a fine river and a reef of rocks forming a back-water deep enough for a 600 tonner to ride at anchor. The coast scenery thrilled me to the extreme.

It is from here that most of the coffee and cardamoms of the Wynaad (a plateau about 3,000 ft. in East Malabar, full of tea and coffee estates) are exported. The English factory here was opened as early as 1683 for the purchase of pepper and cardamoms; and the East India Company obtained in 1708 a grant of the Fort from the Cherikal Raja. The place is now noted more for its tea than for its coffee.

Mahe—a French possession On my way to Calicut I halted at Mahe, a territory of $2\frac{1}{2}$ sq. miles belonging to the French—their only possession on the West Coast. Like all other French parts of India, it possesses republican institutions—adult franchise, vote by ballot and representation on the councils in India and in France. I was told that the place provided excellent fishing. It was quite a surprise to me to see so many of my compatriots here speaking fluent French. I had to pay a cycle toll of 4 as—by no means a big price for seeing something “French.”

Calicut Calicut is the principal town of Malabar, a port of call for all cargo steamers with two piers, and the main outlet for tea from the Wynaad and groundnut from the southern districts. It has the distinction of being the first landing place of the

Portuguese under Vasco-De-Gama on 20th May, 1498. It was then ruled by a native Raja (called Zamorin by the Europeans) whose memory is kept alive by his still existing family on whom the British have conferred the title of Chieftainship. Zamorin is the anglicised form of Zamuri, a corruption of Samudri (sea-lord).

The people consist of Moslems and Hindus (mainly Thiyas and Nayars). The chief industries are Timber (Saw Mills), fish-curing, weaving, dyeing, oil mills and soap making (the Government Soap Factory is well worth a visit). There is also a brisk trade in coir, copra, oil, rice, tea and groundnut. Calicut tiles are famous throughout India.

Nearby lies the Wynaad famous for its tea, coffee and rubber cultivation. In modern Indian history, the place will be remembered as the centre of the Moplah rebellion of 1921. The Mappillas, commonly called—Moplas, are a turbulent people, descended from the Arab settlers on the coast. It was here that I met for the first time the true Malayalees.

I now covered 108 miles, passing through unimportant places—Manjeri, Nilambur and Gudal-
Ootacamund lore—and reached Ootacamund, the summer seat of the Madras Government, at the end of three long days. It stands at a height of 7,500 ft. and I had to provide myself with highly warm clothing. But the enormous strain of cycling up and the sudden change of climate affected my health, and I was laid up for four days.

An important and beneficent government industry flourishes here—the manufacture of quinine from the bark of cinchona, a tree introduced from South America in 1862. It is from the factory here that quinine is distributed annually to dispensaries throughout India.

Another important industry here is the extraction of eucalyptus oil, a good disinfectant from the blue gum of the eucalyptus tree.

It is not possible to describe the superb panorama here. Flowers of all kinds, and English vegetables of excellent taste grow in profusion. It is the European's favourite health resort, and the Maharajas of India seem to have a like attraction for the place, as is evident from the numerous palaces here. The Nilgiri Mountain Railway, beginning at Mettupalayam and passing through tunnels and over ravines, takes the passenger



TODAS HUTS. OOTACAMUND

through a scenery ever changing and beautiful. Those who shoot and angle can have good fun here.

The Todas have been elaborately studied by several anthropologists—European and Indian. They still retain their archaic speech, customs and manners; they worship spirits, mountains and trees. There are numerous aboriginal tribes within India. Their total strength is about 25

Aborigines of
India

millions, four-fifths of them being found in British India. They live mainly in hill tracts and jungle regions which for administrative purposes are known as "backward tracts. They are getting slowly civilized some having become Christians, Buddhists or Muslims. and others having joined the ranks of the Harijans.

I reached Mettupalayam at the bottom—a distance of 32 miles from Ooty. From there I went to Coimbatore, 22 miles away. It is a district headquarters, full of cotton mills, and a distributing centre of the products from the estates on the Nilgiri Hills. It is comparatively cool throughout the year and possesses a healthy climate. It was instructive to visit the Agricultural and Forest Colleges here, the only institutes of their kind in the whole of South India. Three miles from here is Perur, or "Mela Chidambaram" (Mela west), is a renowned Saivite pilgrim centre. There is a temple of Nataraja, at least as old as the 12th century, built during the reign of the Naicks (Tamil Kings); it is indeed a fine specimen of Dravidian architecture. The Dhwaja Stambha (stone flag-staff) is about 35 ft. high, and the single gopuram (tower) with five storeys is about 55 ft. high. In the corridor leading to the Vimana (dome) there are richly carved pillars representing various adventures of Lord Siva—Siva killing Gajeshwar, the elephant headed demon, Vira Bhadra slaying his foes, Siva dancing the Tandava Dance in order to curb the arrogance of Kali (principle of feminine power and perfection in Hindu mythology) etc. This was my first experience of South Indian temples and it filled me with a rare thrill.

Perur
Temple a fine
specimen of
Dravidian
architecture

COCHIN STATE

, , I passed through Palghat and reached Trichur (55 miles), one of the important towns of the native state of Cochin. Some of the Government officers are here; besides many other educational institutions, there is a first grade college conducted by the Roman Catholics. The Vadakanatham temple is at once ancient and interesting. It has a tank in front and no one is allowed to enter the temple without first bathing in that tank. I also visited the Guruvayur temple, now famous for the temple-entry agitation of the untouchables.

I returned to Trichur and proceeded on to Ernakulam (46 miles), the capital of Cochin State. The educational and administrative institutions of the State are, really speaking, distributed between this place and Trichur. Between Ernakulam and Cochin lies a picturesque and extensive backwater, crossed over by ferry boats and steam launches.

Cochin is an important sea port on the West Coast. It has recently developed its wonderful natural harbour and cargo and passenger steamers can now call at it. It is said that ere long this port will steal a good march over all the other harbours of South India and even of Ceylon. The British Government as well as the native states of Travancore and Cochin control the financial interests of the scheme. The town is divided into three parts—Mattencherry, Jew Town, and British Cochin. In the first section live the principal Indian merchants who appeared to me as quite prosperous. The second part is peopled by two different Jewish sects—the White Jews and the Black Jews. They do not mix with each other nor with the

native population. They are said to have migrated to Malabar about a thousand years ago. There are two chief synagogues (Jewish temples) —one at the northern end of the town belonging to the White Jews and the other at its southern extremity used by the Black Jews. They have entirely neglected the Hebrew language, and save for purposes of worship, they use Malayalam. Cochin is a town of great commercial importance, trading as it is with foreign countries in spices, rubber, tea and products of the coconut tree.

Cochin is historically important as being the first European settlement in India after Alexander the great. As early as 1496 the Portugese landed there and built a fort and a large cathedral. In 1663 they were expelled by the Dutch and the British took it in 1795. It is this area which is called British Cochin, comprising only about 800 acres and forming the northern and southern abutments of the Harbour entrance.

The synagogues, the Raja's palace and the Konkani Brahmin's temple are the chief items of interest. But I was diverted most by the Chinese nets (waterside fixed fishing nets and apparatus), rude in form but quite scientific in operation. They are to be seen nowhere else in India; and the Dutch are supposed to have introduced them.

Cochin is a small native state ruled by a Hindu King, assisted by a Dewan and a council consisting of elected and nominated members. The Raja is a Kshatriya by caste, and succession to the throne is matriarchal (*i.e.*, the nephew, not the son, of the ruler succeeds him). At present there are about 155 such nephews; I was a guest of one of them. He was very hospitable and courteous.

TRAVANCORE STATE

I now went to Alleppy by steam launch, a distance of 37 miles, by night; and the moonlight scenery was quite enjoyable. The first stop was at Arookutti, the frontier between the two native states, where there is a customs House. Here my baggage was searched and found to contain none of the objectionable articles—tobacco, opium etc., and so I was easily let off. I arrived at Alleppy the next morning at 8 o'clock.

This place is a commercial town, producing coir mats, ginger, cocoanut, pepper etc. I saw several European and Indian firms manufacturing articles of coir and exporting them to different parts of the world. I would have gladly stayed here for a whole week but for the sudden outbreak of plague I was told that the epidemic was quite new to the place. Rigorous preventive measures were taken, one of them being the burning of the huts of a fishermen's colony, and the shifting of the people to another part of the town.

The town has not only a beautiful harbour but a pair of parallel canal lines, each three miles long, running across the town; it has, therefore, been appropriately called the Venice of India. But the gondolas were missing.

I took a steam launch for Kottayam, 12 miles away; and as it was daylight, I could distinctly see and admire every detail of the gorgeous scenery on either side of the canal. All along the route I saw huts of untouchables who cultivated numerous acres of paddy fields. On the first day of my arrival at

Kottayam I stayed in the Y.M.C.A. and subsequently with a Christian family.

The C I D. pest For the first time in my journey I had to face the C. I. Ds. They saw me under different guises—a newspaper reporter, an inquisitive citizen, and then a policeman. I was greatly vexed by these subterfuges and reported the matter to higher authorities. And thenceforward, I was rid of the pest.

Nambudri Brahmins Here it was that my first personal experience with the Nambudri Brahmins commenced. Most of them are landlords and highly conservative in habits. They go about in such simple dress that a stranger can never take them to be rich men. Their houses are dark and ill-ventilated. The ladies are invisible to a stranger. They go about with large umbrellas, made of palm leaves, serving as a protection from sun and rain as well as a screen from popular gaze.

I had an opportunity to visit a Nambudri family; and in their illom (house) all that I could manage was a glimpse of the women. They seemed to be quite pale in complexion, perhaps due to insufficient exposure of the body to the health-giving sun and air. The master of the house knew no English; but I had a long chat with him through one of my friends who acted as the interpreter. I pointed out to him the injustice and unwisdom of keeping their women backward, especially when the women in other parts of India had progressed by rapid strides. He only shook his head (more, so it seemed to me, in helplessness than in anger) and quietly informed me that he was bound by the stern laws of the community, violation of which would involve too unbearable a sacrifice. Another revolting custom of these

Brahmins was detailed to me. The eldest son alone has the right to marry in his caste and bring a wife into the family. The younger sons must consort with Nayar (non-Brahmin) women and live in a state of perpetual concubinage.

Kottayam is a centre of the Syrian Christians, supposed to have been converted by St. Thomas. They are very enlightened, and have made rapid progress in commerce and agriculture. Their dress is very simple indeed. Most of the women succeed in getting university degrees; and they are found in the different parts of India as doctors, teachers etc. Their marriage system has certain striking peculiarities. Much depends upon the dowry, strictly payable in advance. Among the middle classes, the dowry is generally as high as 3,000 Rs. The parents settle the marriage, and courtship is rare, if not unknown.

Some of the Syrian christians are Roman Catholics, subject to the sway of the Pope at Rome; some are Jacobites owing allegiance to the Petrarch of Antioch; some others belong to the church of England. The ancient church here contains a cross on a granite slab and some inscriptions on copper plates, supposed to throw much light on the history of the Syriam Christians.

After visiting the college and some of the high schools, I went through Changanacherry and Thiruvallur, centres of Syrian Christians, and reached Mavelicara.

I mention this place not because it is commercially or industrially important but because it recalls to me my pleasant stay with Rama Varma who is related to the royal family of Travancore.

He is the son of the famous South Indian artist, Raja Ravi Varma, and has inherited a good deal of the artistic talents of his father. It was a rare intellectual treat for me to inspect his studio filled with remarkable specimens from different parts of the world.



A MALABAR GIRL WITH HER COIFFURE

The peculiar way in which his wife dressed her hair attracted my notice, and he was kind enough to allow me to take a photograph of his daughter with her hair dressed after her mother.

I am reminded also of the statue of Buddha installed in front of a Hindu temple here. It is said to have been unearthed somewhere in the neighbourhood, and as there

**Spread of
Buddhism**

was no Buddhist at all in the place, I could not help concluding that Buddhism must have spread to the southernmost extremity of India.

I then went to Quilon, 30 miles away. It belonged originally to the Portugese and the Dutch owned it afterwards. It became part of the Travancore State in 1742. About two and a half miles away from the town is a small British Settlement called Thangcherry. The British, finding the administration of this place costly, proposed to hand it over to the Travancore State. But the people vehemently protested against this step and petitioned to Parliament and succeeded in their prayer.

Cashunut is the chief industry of the place; large quantities of it are roasted, packed in air-tight tins and exported to all parts of the world.

Twentyfive miles of cycling took me to Varkala, famous for its Shri Janardana Swami temple. Thousands of Hindu pilgrims, from every corner of India, visit this place throughout the year. The shrine is situated on a hillock overlooking the sea, and the surrounding scenery of mountain and sea lends abiding beauty to what is accepted to be very holy. I found it highly refreshing to drink off the water spouts, emanating from the side rocks. Through the tunnel here a canal has been dug, connecting together Quilon and Trivandrum.

From here I went to Trivandrum (32 miles). It is the seat of the Travancore Government, and the Maharajah lives there. There are several places of public interest—a magnificent garden containing the Napier Museum and Art Gallery with original paintings of Raja Ravi Varma, and the Managerie, the several colleges and schools, the Public Library, the observatory, the State Guest House etc.

The town is beautifully laid out, covering an area of nearly sixteen square miles and contains all the amenities which an enlightened government can supply.

The first and the most striking detail that I noted was the high literacy of the place. I thought that it would be almost impossible for me to come across an illiterate person; and women seemed to be no less advanced than men. I am yet to see a sight more glorious or more inspiring than that of a large number of girls and ladies trooping out of the schools and colleges here, at the end of the day's work. The education of women in other parts of India is so neglected that one almost despairs of a bright future for this country. But Trivandrum forms the silver lining of this dark cloud. Perhaps it is no exaggeration to say that 95% of the population are literate here. I found the ladies working in all the offices. The next detail that struck me was the presence of only one theatre in such a big city. The people are very conservative and economical. Life is very cheap and few luxuries are hankered after. Herein perhaps lies the reason for the paucity of modern amusement halls.

The people struck me as very clean. Men and women wear pearlwhite clothes of the shortest possible length. In about six yards of cotton cloth the women are able to conceal their shame without affecting their natural beauty; the men cover their private parts with long narrow strips of white cloth, a considerable length of which hangs down at their back below the waist, and they wear over them a white piece of cotton cloth, taken once round, one can see the under wear through the out-wear. Here then is a striking contrast to other parts of India where the more grown-up women at any rate wear nine yards sarees going round them any number of times, and the men use eight to ten yards of colth, either doubled

Pages
57 to 58
missing! [59]

he must tie his upper cloth round his waist, before he is fit to enter the holy precincts.

Once in six years a great festival known as Mura-japam lasting for 56 days and Laksha Deepam (a hundred thousand lamps) which marks its termination, takes place and is celebrated with great splendour at an expense of several lakhs met by the state. During this period, thousands of Brahmins, are fed and asked to repeat holy incantations as many times as they possibly can. Attached to the temple is an Ootooperah (free inn where Brahmins are fed); and about 4,000 people are fed daily. I had my meals here one day and I found several students in the assembly.



BOATS IN THE QUILON BACK WATERS

Water communication in Travancore being so generally available, and in some localities the only means, various classes of boats are in constant use. The men pull lustily, lightening their task with the famous Malayalee Boat

**Boats and
the Boat
song**

Song—a kind of responsive chant whose words are generally hieroglyphics to strangers. They are very athletic and fine-looking, and rowing ninety miles for twenty hours with a short half an hour rest to eat their rice is almost their routine.

Serpent
Worship

Serpent worship is very common here—a thing only to be expected in a land of forests. It is difficult to exhaust the many curious customs and manners of this ancient simple folk ridden with superstition and tradition. Since I cannot do justice to the subject in a hurried survey of an extensive tour, let me not attempt it at all.

The coins here gave me a deal of trouble. One chakram is more than half an anna, and $28\frac{1}{2}$ chakrams make a rupee. The smallest coin is $1/16$ of a chakram. Counterfeiting is rampant and I fell an easy victim to this fraud.

Stern
servants and
kindly
masters

The gentlemen here keep curious servants. I was always told that the 'master is very busy and will not see any one.' But when I forced myself in, the 'master' was very glad to see me and generous enough to give me a good donation.

The place abounds in churches, and Salvation Army buildings, and as I have pointed out already, the missionary influence here can be traced to the rigidity of Hindu castes.

There is an aerodome, and other marks of modern industrial advancement. I was not allowed to inspect the rubber factory which manufactures tyres and tubes. After visiting the Industrial School here, where fine ivory works feasted my eye I got up on my cycle and sped away towards Nagercoil (46 miles).

It is a christian centre and that is all worth saying about it. Twelve miles away is the Cape Comorin, the southernmost point of India, where three seas meet—the Indian Ocean, the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea. A noteworthy feature of this place is the peculiarity of its sand valued by goldsmiths for purifying gold; I saw in fact three varieties—blue, black and red. All kinds of shell are here exposed for sale.

There is a famous temple of Comori (the Virgin, an attribute of Durga), standing on rocks; and the long sandy promontory with groves of palms at the back is very picturesque indeed. *

Swami Vivekananda reached this spot from the Himalayas by foot, and there it was that he conceived the idea of crossing the seas to America and spreading the teachings of Hinduism in other lands than his own.

From here I went to Tinnevelly (48 miles). On the way it rained cats and dogs, with water dripping all over my sides I reached the town.

It stands on a bank of the Tambraparni river. It is inhabited chiefly by the Tamils; but I was told that the Tinnevelly district was the most christianised in South India. St. Francis Xavier is supposed to have begun his preaching in India here. The temple here is worth visiting. It is dedicated to Lord Siva, and has a Teppa Kulam (Tank) in front of it. Its Gopurams and other details are characteristic of all South Indian temples of which the Madura Temple is the best representative, and as I shall describe it in detail later, I need not tarry here.

I now pedalled for 28 miles and reached Tuticorin, one of the busiest ports in India. Many European and Indian firms are here, and the port has its own chamber of commerce.

Even before the advent of the Christians, this ancient town of the Tinnevely district, was noted for its trade. The Portugese took possession of it in 1532, and held it till 1658 when the Dutch fleet entered the harbour and captured it.

I pitched my lodgings here in a choultry and found it not only free but also comfortable. It was from here that I went by sea to Colombo, 150 miles away.

Before I embarked for Ceylon I had to undergo medical examination at the Tuticorin **A Quarantine Camp** Quarantine camp and get a permit (to enter Ceylon) from the Health Officer there. The permit is usually granted on the fulfilment of two conditions : (1) the person must be healthy ; (2) he must get somebody to guarantee his reporting himself to the nearest health officer at Ceylon for twelve days after arrival there. I knew nobody in Ceylon to give me this accommodation ; the personal guarantee could have been replaced by a deposit of fifty rupees ; but it was beyond me to spare such a huge amount then. The third class and deck passengers are generally put in the Quarantine camp for six days during which time they have to pay for their own food. I did not like to stay ; it meant delay and unpleasantness. As luck would have it, Mr. Kodandarama Iyer, a pleader at Tuticorin and a perfect stranger to me, stood personal surety to me and got me the permit. On the 8th July 1936 I jumped into the S.S. Chakla and bade a temporary good-bye to my native land.

CEYLON

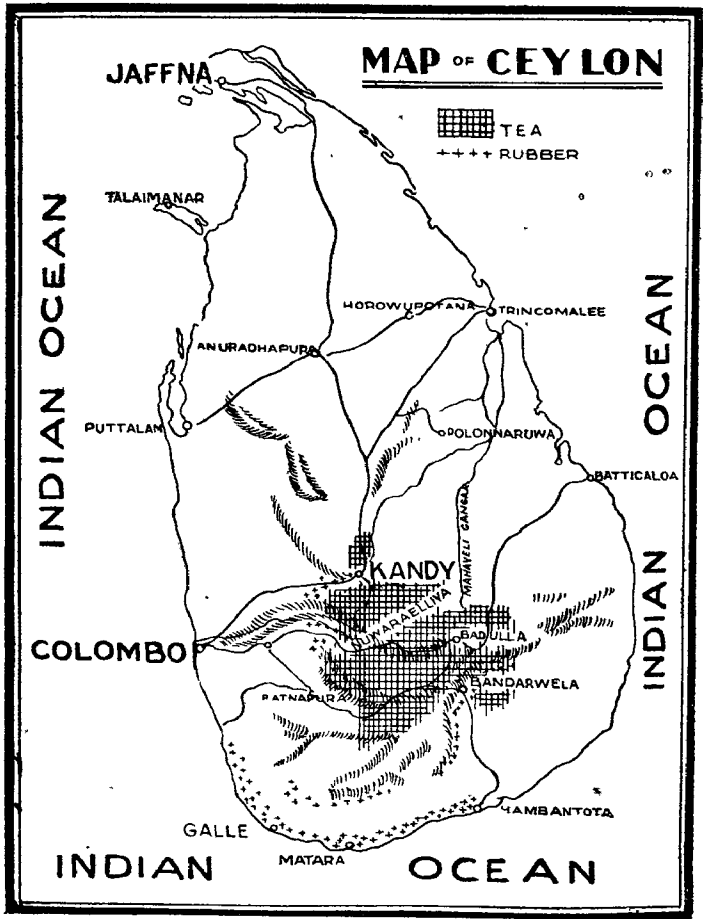
THE LAND OF THE SINGHALESE

On entering the port of Colombo, the first thing to greet me was a huge advertisement board, 200 ft. high, with the caption "Ceylon For Good Tea." I realised later on that this advertisement at any rate spoke the bare truth; for nowhere else is so much tea—and that too very good stuff—grown as in this island. What a busy place the port seemed to me! From all sides passenger steamers touch this spot. It rose in importance since the days of the Portugese occupation of Ceylon. It is now called the "Clapham junction" of the East. There is a jetty for first class passengers where police inspection takes place. My mind wandered back to the 16th century when this place was just a village. Now it has become a hub of the Eastern world with a population of three lakhs.

I had an introduction to Mr. S. M. Kalangoo Mohiddin who was kind enough to accomodate me.

At the fort I saw the ruins of ancient walls. The Government House (or the Queen's House) is situated here. I called upon the Governor, R.E. Stubbs esq., and made him sign my autograph album. Ceylon attracts a large number of visitors from all parts of the globe and its taxi wallahs have a good time of it. The leading newspapers in English are the Daily News, and the Times of Ceylon, 'Dinamina' is the only paper in Singhalese. There is also a Broadcasting Station which provides entertainment in three languages—English, Singhalese and Tamil. But most of the programme is generally in English.

The people are mostly Bhuddhists. But the advent of the Portugese has made many Singhalese take to Christian names without conversion to that faith. 7



MAP OF CEYLON—SHOWING THE ROUTE

The hotels are clean and the main food of the people consists of fish and rice. Practically all the preparations contain fish. The vegetables are cooked in more or less in the Indian style; but the rice is not cooked properly. Ninety percent of the Singhalese eat with knives and forks—a direct result of European contact.

The main Bazaar with its numerous shops is an interesting sight. The Chettiars with their rice business tickled me most. The Singhalese do not cut their hair; they wear a semi-circular comb on their head. The majority of them are dark complexioned.

Colombo is the headquarters of the Ceylon government. The local railways branch off from here. The city is divided into five parts—the Fort, the Pettah, the Havelock Town, the Cinnamon Gardens, and the Slave Island.

The Cinnamon gardens is named after the Dalchini plant which once throve there. Many big, well ventilated bungalows have now taken its place. Opposite to the Galle Face Hotel is a small beach resembling the Chowpati of Bombay. I found a number of people loitering here with that careless ease so out of place in a business centre.

I enjoyed my visit to the museum, full of curious old things. One room was filled with glass-ware and furniture of Portugese origin. Some cases exhibited Singhalese jewellery, ivory-ware, silver and gold articles, etc. The paintings narrated the ancient history of the island which was a separate kingdom from the days of King Vijaya Sinha right up to the time of King Wikrama Raja Sinha (1815). A striking exhibit was the skeleton of a whale more than 60 ft. long found at Ambalagoda forty years ago. The Zoo attached to the Museum grounds is very small; but the indigenous monkeys, deer and birds kept there compel attention.

The Victoria Gardens pleased me with its variety of trees and shrubs. The race-course was very popular. I could not help concluding that the Ceylonese were race-mad. They seemed to bet even at the cost of their food, and their needs were ever on the increase.



A SINGHALESE COMB MAKER

In Havelock Town is situated the famous Buddhist Temple of Ashokaramaya. The temple is recently built and the Singhalese of the neighbourhood are supposed to have spent much money on its construction and decoration. The frescoes and statues are the work of local Singhalese artists; the painted ceilings are extremely instructive. The first room in the temple contains an image of Buddha 18 ft. high, seated on a lotus flower, is huge indeed; but I found its features quite proportionate and life-like.

The second room is devoted to Buddha Ashoka. Ashoka was "Siddharta", prince of Benares, 2,400 years

ago. He left his wife and children, went into a jungle, took away his royal robes, cropped his hair, put on yellow clothes and attained "Buddhahood." His full history contains 550 stories.

In the third room Lord Buddha is seen preaching to five disciples; and on the top of the wall the gods worship the Lord with folded hands. The fourth room enacts the grand scene of Lord Buddha descending down to earth by the diamond ladder. The different gods are accompanying him, and kings and queens have assembled to greet him.

Outside these rooms there are equally interesting sights. Buddha preaches to his disciples in the jungle; his image is made of marble while those of his disciples are made of plaster. During the time of King Devanampiya Tissa (307-267 B.C.), Mahinda, the son of Emperor Ashoka carries Buddhism from Benares and introduces it into Ceylon. Buddha visits the earth for the third time; and his foot-print on the top of Adam's Peak (The highest peak in Ceylon) contains 108 marks. There is also a sketch of a holy dragon.

After staying in Colombo for nearly five weeks,

Kalutara I started off to see the other parts of Ceylon. Kalutara, 27 miles away, was the first large town to hit my fancy. I enjoyed the roads as they were all tarred, and the refreshing sea breeze made my coastal trip pleasanter still. The town stands at the mouth of the Kaluganga (Black river) spanned by a magnificent iron bridge. I saw quaint boats in the river, each consisting of two dug-outs joined by a platform on which was built a house with plaited fronds of the cocoanut palm.

My visit to the famous basket hall here proved highly instructive. All kinds of dainty little articles,

made in numberless shapes and sizes, are to be seen—betel and cigar cases, fans, hats, purses, baskets, odds and ends of a mandarin's fancy work etc. I was told that they were exported in large quantities to England duty-free. The manufacture of these articles is fairly simple; children are sent out into the jungle to cut off the thin fibres from the fronds of the palm (the Basket Tree); these are split into narrow slips and dyed with vegetable colours: they are then woven by the skilful fingers of girls.

I saw everywhere men breaking coconut fruits. There is a pronounced coir industry also. **Toddy-tapping** { Toddy and arrack distillation give employment to quite a good number of people and yield a large revenue to the state (£ 300,000 and upwards annually). I found most of the coconut trees quite barren—obviously due to their unnatural culture for toddy-tapping. Climbing this tall tree in the crude but dexterous way of the natives—a rope tied round the legs keeps them close while they are lifted, and hands kept one above the other work a kind of “pull-me-up”—is fairly risky; I was told that the game cost the lives of at least 300 tappers every year. Toddy is a favourite beverage among the natives; for one thing it is very cheap. It may well be called the coconut wine, and the arrack into which most of it is distilled is quite an equal of the European brandy.

My next halt was Ambalangoda, 27 miles away. **Ambalangoda** The place has huge cinnamon gardens, and the people have for their breakfast Hapus (a rice cake akin to the South Indian Dosai) with hot chutni. They have another preparation resembling the Samea (vermicelli) preparations of India—but I couldn't tackle it.

(I passed through some villages before reaching Galle (18 miles). They were all very small, and each one had an Urban District Council Chairman and a police station.

Galle is the chief town of the Southern Province and the seat of the provincial government. A thousand years before Colombo rose into mercantile importance, this place was known to the Eastern world as a great emporium. Even now its fort is venerable to look at. Right up to the seventeenth century, it was able to maintain its position as the chief port of Ceylon, and it fell only with the rise of Colombo. The Dutch Fort and the church contain curious relics of 17th and 18th centuries and are full of antiquarian interest. The Dutch buildings are too old to live and have wisely been converted into store-houses for corn. The Dutch style of building—numerous big halls, brick verandahs, large windows and peculiar doors—struck me as a happy combination of luxury and art. I was surprised to see so many Arabs here.

After the British occupation, the government departments have found a comfortable shelter in the old Dutch Fort. There is a nice race course, an inevitable feature of such a busy town with a population of 50,000. Twenty different kinds of ropes are manufactured out of coir and exported to all parts of the world.

The extraction of citronella oil is an interesting industry of the neighbourhood. In this southern part of Ceylon, chiefly between Matara and Tangalla, the citronella grass grows in abundance. More than 20,000 acres, which are otherwise useless, are thus brought under cultivation. The grass, which grows to a height of about 4 ft., is cut and boiled, and the oil is extracted. Perfumers and soap

Extraction of citronella oil

manufacturers are its chief purchasers, and it has a fine smoothing effect upon the skin.

Before leaving Galle, I feel like mentioning the hotel in which I stayed, Dhammika by name, it was the dirtyest of its kind that I had so far seen. I now went to Matara, 27 miles away. On the way, I saw some tea and rubber estates on the low country; but I was told that the hill products were superior in quality. I halted at Welligama, **Welligama** a small town, with a nice rest-house on the sea-shore. What wonderful bathing and swimming in the sea I had here! Nowhere else in Ceylon I could recapture this pleasure. On a small mountain near by I saw the statue of a leper King; but I did not care to know much about it, for even a traveler's curiosity sometimes recoils at the thought of such fell diseases.

The road was quite level, and I reached Matara without much exhaustion. It is to the **Matara** extreme south of Ceylon, lying at the mouth of the Nilganga (Blue river) which flows into the sea within four miles of Dondra Head, the southernmost point of the island. I saw rich vegetation on either side of the river—quite a characteristic feature of all Ceylon rivers.

From here I went to Tangalle (22 miles). I had to **Tangalle** cycle through ups and downs, and I found it a very difficult task. Large fields of citronella grass delighted my eyes. When I arrived at the place, I was very tired, and so got into the Gilton View Hotel without any hesitation. The proprietor, Mr. Atupattu, looked after me so well that I have to refer to him here. I went to Balapitua, a village nearby; and the first news I gathered was that several murders took place there every year. Can you guess where I was the

next morning?—at Hambantota, a good twenty miles from this graveyard! I was very eager to go from Tangalle to Ratnapura (the City of Gems); but as the road lay through dense forest, full of wild elephants, I found it wise to curb my inclination.

Fancy going to Hambantota at a time when it had had not a drop of rain for seven months and more! Sea bath is no good, unless it can be followed up by a fresh water rinsing, and for four days I had to forego bathing—quite a punishment for the Hindu whose tradition prescribes a course of three baths every day. I wished for the moment that I were an Englishman who has the unique reputation of being quite comfortable with a weekly bath. I found the people at once hospitable. I went to see the salt store in the evening, 2 miles away. Sea water is let into land; it gets mixed up with the earth; and evaporation releases the salt which is distributed in large quantities throughout Ceylon.

The next day I went to Tissamaharam (14 miles). "Tissa" means "friends of gods" in Singhalese. The Dagoba built by king Mahanagaraj, 2,000 years ago, after clearing a dense forest, is still in good condition.

What a dirty hole I got into! It was malarial and dirty beyond description. I could not touch food as it was covered all over with flies. I tried to satisfy myself with a cup of milk and plantains. I was in a bad mood and so I did not relish the idea of visiting Katargama (15 miles), a famous Hindu Temple which has to be reached through no regular roads but through the puzzling mazes of a dense forest full of bears, elephants and other wild animals. It is dedicated to the Hindu god Subramanya, one of the sons of Lord Siva. In the month of July every year, it attracts a large number of pilgrims.

I had now to cover 36 miles before reaching Wellawaya ; as the roads lay through dense forests I preferred to travel by bus. On the way the driver drew my attention to a group of elephants. He told me that none of them was a 'rogue' and would not trouble us. He would not stop talking—thank the Lord that he did not stop the bus ; and I was solemnly informed that the rogue elephant was quite a beast, it would hoist a man on its trunk and beat him thrice on the ground—I could not help exclaiming to myself " Is it necessary to beat more than once ?"—and he had seen many such deaths with his own eyes—here I thought how lucky my story teller must have been. After three or four miles of ride and talk, I had a pleasant diversion. I could see not a leaf on the trees and a thousand cranes presented themselves before us. I learnt that it was a Birds' Sanctuary, and there was plenty of water and fish for the little things to go on with. I wanted to spend sometime in the midst of the feathery Kingdom ; but the talkative driver would not tarry.

I halted at Wellawaya for the night and started off for Haputale early in the morning. It was a regular climbing for 26 miles ; I could see nothing but rubber plantations for the first eight or nine miles, and then the tea plantations burst upon my view. The latter grow from a height of 2,000 ft. right up to 6,000 ft., and as I have pointed out before, the tea on the heights is superior in quality to that on lowlands. In the middle of the journey, about 17 miles from Wellawaya, is the Diyaluma Falls, the biggest in Ceylon, 628 ft. high, and consists of one huge torrent. As it lies quite near the road, the water comes upon the road during the rainy season and blocks the traffic.

The scenery on the highlands is picturesque ; but the tea and rubber plantations make it somewhat monotonous.

The workers in these plantations, which are mostly European concerns, are all Tamilians, as no Singhalese will work under men of other castes—so independent and proud are they. Wherever a Singhalese accepts any job, he at once develops the feeling that he is a manager of the show, and begins to issue orders. Sometimes he does not listen even to his superiors—an attitude that makes him unwelcome as a worker and brings about his speedy dismissal.

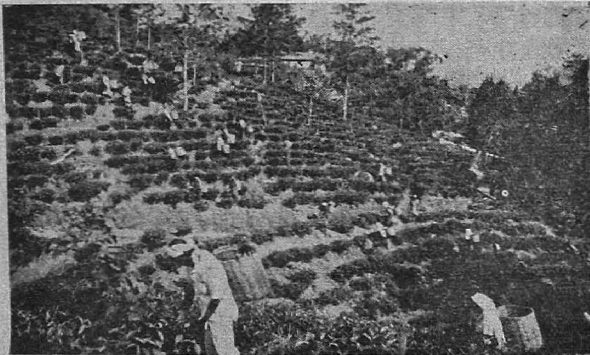
The Singhalese male workers are lazy when compared to their women. There are several instances of women supporting the idle men from the fruits of their hard work. Their religion teaches them "Ahimsa"; they would not kill a snake, a rat or a bug. The net result of it all is that they have lost a good deal of their manhood and have become mere cowards. It has killed the urge for occupation and made them utterly indifferent to work of any kind. They are now meat eaters—a curious compromise with the principle of Ahimsa. Dry fish is sold throughout Ceylon in large quantities, mainly by the Mohammedans.

At last I reached Haputale, a height of 4500 ft. The neighbourhood consists of deep valleys and high mountains, and the climate is very cold. Here and there could be seen the bungalows of European planters. They draw fat salaries and lead a go-lucky life. Each tea estate has a capital of about 75 lakhs of rupees, owns a factory and employs about 100 to 120 workers.

I visited the Hantane Tea Estate at Kandy and formed some useful first hand impressions.

Tea shrubs are generally planted on the slopes of hills, 2000 to 7500 ft. high above sea level. In an acre of land about 3630 shrubs are planted. All round the

year the leaves are got. On an average one coolie can look after the manuring, plucking and other operations over the area of one acre. The maximum crop is yielded during the months of March, April and May. From June to January, the yield is only 60% of the maximum. Each acre yields about 600 lbs. of tea and 2400 lbs. of green leaves. Hence the green leaves on withering contract to 55% of their original weight. Tea pruning is a biennial affair.



TEA PLUCKING AT HAPUTALE

At the factory the green leaves are spread on the *Hessian tats* (coarse pieces of cloth)—there are thousands of such sheet in each factory. They are thus allowed to wither for 20 to 24 hours. During the rainy season, the withering has to be done by artificial means. On withering the leaves lend themselves to rolling. Fans work busily above the hessian to quicken the process of withering. A hessian is about 125 sq. ft. and carries about 1 lb. of tea. In this factory I saw four machines for rolling withered tea leaves.

Each roll carries about 250 lbs. of withered leaves. Rolling takes about four hours, with intervals of 30 minutes rolling and 15 minutes breaking.

After this process commences fermentation done in a big chamber containing four plates. It takes about two hours. The leaves are fermented until they acquire a coppery hue. Then the leaves are dried for about 18 minutes, and as a result, they assume a black colour. Now they are removed to another department where they are graded with the help of a machine carrying four or five different kinds of wire nets. Broken orange pekoe (the big leaves), orange pekoe, broken pekoe, pekoe, fan-nings and dust, are the resulting varieties. The grades are packed in different boxes and sent to Colombo for shipment to foreign countries.

This estate is about four miles from Kandy, owned by Mr. Gordon Piper. It covers 699 acres and produces about 4,500,00 lbs. of made tea every year. The factory is indeed a model one and has the reputation of being classed among the best exhibits at the Wembley Exhibition, 1924.

I now went to Bandarwella on a slope of 7 miles. The place is noted for its fresh and dry air and excellent fruits. Near by is Diyatalawa (4 miles). It is at a height of 5,000 ft., and commonly known as "The Happy Valley" as it is surrounded on all sides by mountains. I was told that German prisoners were kept here formerly. A military camp is now stationed in this place. I started gliding down a slope of 18 miles and reached Badulla in two hours. Although the road was good, it was zigzag and so I had to be very careful. On one side lay the valley and on the other side the mountain. I had to be on the alert every now and then in order to avoid the many

motorcars that were coming from the front. The mountain sides were all covered with rice fields cultivated by the water drawn from the tops through graded slopes.

A few coco plantations were to be seen. I was told that the place was no good for coffee and the tea plantations were developed only after the advent of the Europeans.

The Badulla district lies in the Uva province and is full of dense forests in some of which live the Veddas (an aboriginal race), now fairly civilised. Very few travellers are seen in these parts, and there is the fear of thieves. The forest elephants are troublesome and murder stories about the locality are quite numerous. All things considered, I was wise in not touring this district.

The head of a district is called the Government Agent. The taluqs are presided over by an Urban District Council Chairman (corresponding to our Mamledar), who conducts a court. Police stations are seen everywhere. There is a government hospital in every district—far superior to the corresponding ones in India; and just as in Mysore, government rest houses are found in all places—even in villages. This makes travelling in Ceylon not only comfortable but also possible. I had to make a good use of them throughout my journey, although I never neglected any opportunity to avail myself of private hospitality. As soon as you enter any of these buildings, your bill commences. A day's mere stay costs Rs. 1—12—0 and extras have to be paid for each item of comfort or use. Meals could be had at very short notice.

From Badulla I started climbing at about 6 A.M., and in 4 hours I covered only ten miles, and there

were yet twenty six miles to cover to reach Nuwara Eliya, a famous health resort. I was very tired, although a cup of tea on a roadside shop refreshed me somewhat. The next 6 miles were a slope—a piece of unexpected luck for me. But once more I had to climb and the day was unbearably hot. But I was determined to finish the journey I had planned in the morning to reach the top and I kept on, bathed though I was in perspiration. Another 10 miles and I had to stop for sometime, as my legs were paining. I was now at a height of 45,00 ft. It was very cold and I had to take the sweater out of my bag. In three hours I made the remaining 10 miles.

I did not know where to go, and all the hotels advertised proved very costly. I placed my baggage in a police station, warmed myself with a cup of tea, and went about in search of a suitable accomodation. All the hotels were of the European style; I got into the smallest of them. Everything was supplied, cots, towels, blankets etc., and I could have been comfortable here even if I had not a yard of wollen with me.

This sanitorium of the East is at a height of 6,400 ft.—the only important hill station in the whole of Ceylon. The golf grounds, so I was told, were the very best in the Orient. It has been felicitously described as a tea cup, symmetrically surrounded as it is on all sides by huge mountains. Pidurutallagalla (8240 ft) is the highest peak. Six miles from here lies the Hakgala Garden or Ashoka Vanam where Ravana is said to have imprisoned Sita.

The Singhalese call it Sitavalaya. I saw nothing here that could possibly remind one of the mythological events so graphically described in Valmiki's Ramayana. But I saw literally forests of roses, filling the air with sweet fragrance. The

Botanical garden filled me with a unique sense of beauty and joy.

Tea grown at this height is reputed to be very tasty. In every direction I could see forests and plains, mountain ranges and verdant lands. Verily it is "The show place of the universe."

A striking tribute has been paid by Samuel Baker who after shooting in the lowlands for upwards of an year contracted jungle fever and had to go up in search of health: "A poor and miserable wretch I was upon my arrival at this elevated station. I was only a week at Nuwara Eliya. The rest-house was the perfection of everything that was dirty and uncomfortable. The toughest possible specimen of a beefsteak, black bread and potatoes were the choicest and the only viands obtainable for an invalid. There was literally nothing else; it was a land of starvation. But the climate! what can I say to describe the wonderful effects of such a pure and unpolluted air?... At the expiration of a week. I was as well and as strong as I ever had been."

As irony would have it, it was at this very place of magic health that I contracted acute dysentery, although medical help was locally available; the cold did not suit me in my sick condition, I preferred moving to Kandy (58 miles) the same day.

The next morning I was in the hospital. I had 103° temperature and felt very weak indeed. The North Indian can not get on with the food here, however accommodative he may be by temperament or education. My illness was solely due to the enormous quantity of chilis used in the food I had to eat here.

It took me eight days to get out of the hospital; and the worst was yet to come. I was too weak to use my

cycle and I had to see the whole town of Kandy in a rickshaw, a two wheeled carriage dragged by a man. A man dragging another man, and both being comfortable at the job is the most loathsome experience I have had in all my travels, and I could never forgive myself for having gone through this Inferno nor could I forget the cruelty of that fate which would not spare me from that ordeal. During this troublesome period Mr. Chowdhary was very helpful to me; he was indeed the silver lining of my dark clouds.

Next to Colombo, Kandy is the biggest and most important town in Ceylon, with a population of 75,000. It is on a height of 2,000 ft. and the climate is salubrious. It was the capital of a Singhalese King right up to 1815 when it was annexed by the British. The crown of the last Singhalese King, Vikrama Singh, was first removed by the British to England and subsequently sent back to the Colombo Museum in 1935, along with the King's belt, sceptre and sword, all of which articles I had the good fortune to see with my own eyes.

Many tourists have described the scenery here as the foremost in the British Empire. It is situated on the banks of a small artificial place, overhung on all sides by hills. I tasted here for the first time two fruits for which this place is world-famous—mangosteen and tom-tom.

I went to Katugastota, 3 miles away, a picturesque and flourishing suburb of Kandy, situated on the Mahawelliganga.

There are many bathing ghats for the elephants which are made to do heavy work in the forests. The sight of these essentially frolicsome beasts, splashing the water here, there and everywhere just before dusk, is one that I could never forget.

**Elephant
bathing**

The Papal Seminary on Brown's Hill is well worth a visit. Christians—Catholics as well as Protestants—go thither from all parts of India to learn the fundamental tenets of their religion.

The very essence of Kandyan native life can be seen in the Perahera procession, the biggest of its type in the whole of Ceylon. In the first week of August 75 elephants are decorated, and are taken out in procession which is at least a mile long. The



PERAHERA PROCESSION AT KANDY

festival lasts for ten days, ending on full moon day. Kandyan chiefs, dancers, torch-bearers move on in a dense crowd, excited by the music of tom-tom, pipe and other oriental instruments. There are about 10 chiefs, and all of them take part in this procession. Their dress is very gaudy and costly, and in front of every one of them will move 100 to 200 people—obviously his more important followers. About two lakhs of people participate in this annual solemnity, and any one who is caught up in the

ground need not walk at all—he will be simply pushed forward the whole distance.

By now my reader must have begun to “wonder what is all this fuss about?” On a temple elephant the sacred tooth of Buddha is supposed to be carried about in a golden casket. But the actual relic does not leave the temple, although in days of yore it is said to have done so under the personal protection of the king.

It is time I say something about the temple itself.

**The Temple
of the Tooth**

The Dalada Maligawa or “The Temple of the Tooth” is not very imposing but is certainly very picturesque. “On a lotus flower of pure gold, hidden under seven concentric bell-shaped



“ THE TEMPLE OF THE TOOTH ”

metal shrines, increasing in richness as they diminish in size, and containing jewels of much beauty, now reposes the sacred relic.”

The “ sacred tooth ”, according to legendary lore, was brought to Ceylon during the reign of Shri Maghavan̄na (352—379 A. D.), and was kept concealed in the

folds of her hair by a princess of Kalīnga. It is said to have been taken from the funeral pyre of Gautama. It is two inches long and held in reverence by about a third of the world's population. Once a year the temple is thrown open to all people, but the tooth is never shown to any visitor. There is a small museum at Kandy where coins of the 8th and 9th centuries, old Kings' dresses, throne and other ancient relics are exhibited. The Audience Hall, adjoining the Temple of the Tooth, is one of the most imposing buildings in Kandy. The British are now using it as court premises.

Kandy is the headquarters of the Ceylon planters and has four colleges. But far more interesting than its modern details are its traditional and antiquarian touches, especially in the field of arts and crafts. The native artisans are even now born artists, and although they are no longer uninfluenced by the foreigner, they instinctively follow the traditional lines of their craft. Their methods are at once modest and simple—the roughly constructed blow-pipe, the earthenware chattie (pot) containing a small charcoal fire, the box of self-made tools etc. The silver and brass works are worth special mention.

The Kandyan arts and crafts are famous dancers, and owe this artistic skill to their essentially superstitious nature. I must not forget to mention here devil-dancers at the ceremony of paddy cultivation which is the chief occupation of primitive people and which is therefore the most solemn also. The success or failure of the crop is fundamentally associated with unseen influences of gods, demi-gods and devils. They must all be conciliated and appeased, and several charms and weird ceremonies are the inevitable results. The civilising influence of Buddhism has not touched even the fringe of these superstitions, and when a foreigner points out their absurdities to a Kandyan agriculturist, the

latter naively acknowledges his own folly, but coolly adds that his country is full of devils and evil spirits and that if he does not please them he will be destroyed by them.



KANDYAN DANCERS

I then cycled off to Ratnapura 56 miles away. It is the capital of the province called Sabaragamuwa. It has a very heavy rainfall, on an average, about 150 inches. Some of the finest views of Adam's Peak can be had from here. It is the headquarters of the gemming industry of Ceylon—sapphires, topazes, and cats eyes, being the most common. The old fort is by no means uninteresting.

23 miles of cycling took me to Negombo, famous for its fishery. On my way, on either side of the road, I could see nothing but coconut trees. Goods are transported from here to Colombo by an artificially constructed canal. Roman Catholics constitute the majority of the population. I got a fairly decent price for my photos of St. Francis Xavier and St. Philomena, and could not help concluding that the Christians here were particularly devout.

The road to Madampe (22 miles), was very good and I got there quite easily. Mr. Senanayaka, a poor man of the place, literally dragged me to his cottage, and as he was kind and hospitable, I readily agreed to stay there.

“The house was small but the heart was big.” At night I was treated with Singhalese music, and I liked my short stay here more than in the so-called ‘respectable’ places.

The next morning I went to Chilaw (11 miles). The canal system here struck me as excellent. Very few wells have good water, and tanks are built separately for men and women, near the wells for bathing purposes. A curious irrigation practice is current here; water is drained off from one field to the adjacent field, in succession, and I wondered whether any part of the manure or silt of one man’s field could be washed away thus to the neighbour’s; if that were so, “the last come” would be the best served.

I then went to Puttalam (32 miles), where salt is manufactured practically as a government monopoly. The salt pans interested me very much indeed. Water from a huge lagoon is taken out in small tanks and let into the pans by the automatic action of a windmill. The water remains stagnant in the pans for 3 weeks by which time it gets evaporated. The salt is then scraped out and thrown into heaps. The annual yield is about 300,000 cwt. A few private pans are owned by merchants holding a license from the Government. The salt is collected only from April to September.

I saw some schools here, and formed some useful impressions. Elementary education is compulsory throughout Ceylon, and schools have been opened in all towns and villages. For every $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles limit there is a boys’ school,

**Elementary
Education in
Ceylon**

and for every $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles limit, there is a girls' school. A boy must attend school up to his twelfth year, if there is a school within a limit of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles; and a girl has to study up to her tenth year and pass her vernacular final examination, if there is a school within a limit of $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles. The salary of teachers is far higher than that prevailing in India. The scale for a vernacular teacher is 35 Rs. —75 or 100 Rs., whereas the Indian teacher starts with 15 or 20 Rs., and slowly mounts up to a few rupees more.

It was with a heart tense with expectation that I turned towards Anuradhapura, 47 miles **Anuradhapura** away, a city famous throughout the world for its hoary and interesting ruins. Two thousand years ago it was at the height of its glory when it was the capital of a succession of Singhalese Kings. My way to this place lay through dense jungle and I was very much afraid of wild elephants which, for some mysterious reason, scrupulously avoided me. There was great scarcity of water and only six months ago an epidemic of plague raged fiercely in these parts. Consequently all the bazaars were closed, and the people scattered themselves all over the district. Compared to the amount of paddy cultivation done here, I thought that the tanks were far too many. All of them, very huge, were dried up. Some of them should be at least twelve square miles.

Anuradhapura was founded in 437 B. C. by King Pandukabhaya and called after the constellation Anuradha. It became the capital of Ceylon in the 4th century B. C. and reached its eminence about the beginning of the Christian era. Tamil invasions caused great suffering to the city which was finally abandoned as the King's residential place in the 9th. century. As I have observed before, the surrounding villages are even today suffering from famine and disease. Formerly they suffered much more until in 1872 Sir W. Gregory planned

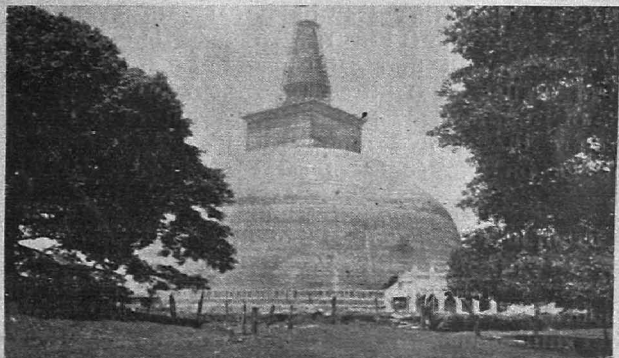
out the restoration of hundreds of village tanks and succeeded to a large extent in driving away the evils of bad water and inadequate water supply.

The city is supposed to have been originally 16 miles long and 10 miles broad. The Brazen Palace or the Priest Monastery contained 900 rooms and measured 150 ft. each way and was nine stories high, roofed with sheets of brass. The ruins now cover 232 sq. ft., and 1600 stone pillars are visible up to a height of 12 ft. It was erected by King Duttagamini about 400 A. D. —

The ancient architecture of Ceylon is typified by the **The Dagobas** Dagobas, huge hemispherical stupas. In Sanskrit "datu" means a relic and "gabbam" means a shrine; and obviously "Dagoba" has a Sanskritic origin. The Burmese "Pagoda" is only a corruption of the Ceylonese "Dagoba." Several such dagobas are found in this city and within their sacred vaults reside relics of either Lord Buddha or his disciples. Space permits me to sketch only a few of them.

Thuparama, the oldest in Ceylon, and the first dagoba to be built in this place, dates back to 307 B. C. It was built by King Tissa over the collar bone of Lord Buddha. It was then 450 ft. high; the ruins display a fraction of it. The Ruanwellia Dagoba, commenced by King Duttagamini in 137 B.C. It is 380 ft. at the base and was originally 270 ft. high. Having been much injured by the Tamil invasions, it is now only 180 ft. high. It is said to contain gold and jewels worth millions of rupees. The Abhayagiri (Mount of Safety) is the largest of the dagobas, 330 ft. high and 1150 ft. in circumference. It was built by King Wallagam Bahu in 87 B.C. The Jetawanarama, commenced by King Maha Sena in 275 A.D. and completed in the 4th century, is said to have had about the same dimensions as the previous. Lankaramaya (a small but stately one) and Marisweliya (with

its unusually fine sculpture) are also worth special mention. Sir Emerson Tennet has pointed out that the materials out of one of these large dagobas will suffice to build 8,000 houses, each with 20 ft. frontage, constituting a town like Ipswich or Coventry. Ruins of many other articles are also to be seen—statues of Buddha, bathing pools and elephant stables.



RUANWELLIA DAGOBA

The sacred Bo-Tree here, planted in 288 B. C. by Sanga Mitta, sister of Mahinda who was chiefly responsible for the spread of Buddhism in Ceylon, has lived for 2,200 years, and is expected by all Buddhists to live for a like period in the future. Though small in size, it is held in great veneration. It took me two full days to see all these. The deep shadows of the trees help to preserve the ancient atmosphere of the ruins.

Passing through jungle roads, I visited Mihintale (8 miles), the Mecca of the Buddhists of Ceylon. Mahinda, the son of Ashoka, is said

Mihintale

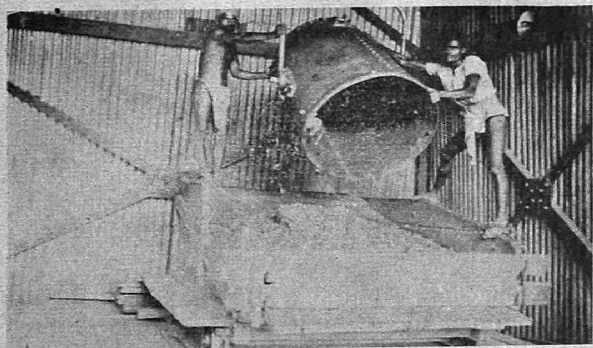
to have landed on this hill in 243 B. C., converted King Dewanampiya Tissa and his royal household, and first expounded the teachings of Buddha. A flight of 1800 steps, quite easy to climb, leads to the top. The Naga Pokuna (a hooded cobra carved out of a solid rock, encircling a pond) was one of the interesting sights on my climb down.

My next halt was Dambulla (91 miles). The rock temple (1118 ft. high, steep climb) contains many fine paintings and carvings of the reign of Wallagam Bahu (104-76 B.C.) One recumbent image of Buddha is 47 ft. long, hewn out of solid rock. There are in all five temples with 200 statues. The paintings on the roofs preserve Singhalese art at its best.

From here I went to Matale (29 miles), on an elevation of 1137 ft. It is a progressive town and most of the people are Roman Catholics. Tea, rubber, coconut, coco—all grow in wild exuberance. I felt it very odd indeed that the people here, who exported so large a quantity of coco seed to England, were quite ignorant of preparing the beverage. I visited the few chocolate factories here.

The plumbago mines at Dodagaslonda now attracted me. From the top of the hill, digging has gone on vertically down to a distance of 1,500 ft. There are no electric lifts, though electric power is used. I reached a depth of 100 ft. on the hanging drum which brings up the plumbago. The ore is found in thick layers between the rocks. By another shaft I dropped down a depth 370 ft. I had to get into a third shaft and finally I touched bottom with the help of a ladder. The steps were very narrow and it

is still a wonder to me how I did not lose my balance. The plumbago vein contains 20% plumbago and 80 per cent rock.



PLUMBAGO MINES IN CEYLON

Kurunegale I then went to Kurunegale (~~32~~ miles). A big hill, resembling an elephant in the sitting posture, goes by the name "The Elephant Rock."

Sigiriya Through jungle roads I reached Sigiriya (9 miles from Dambulla). The rock fortress here is really one of the wonders of the world. King Kasyapa, after having murdered his father, had to flee from the wrath of his brother Moggalana, and so he founded this shelter in 479 A. D. The remains of a moat still exist. The entrance to the fortress (called Lion's Mouth) is secured after a flight of steps through the joins of a great carved line. Inside are the galleries hewn out of solid rock; and the outside is flanked by polished cement walls, imbedded with grains and husks of paddy—a device that makes the

cement as hard as the rock itself. The precipitous sides rendered the fortress impregnable and huge lumps of rock (one of them still remains), to be hurled below, provided deadly engines of War. Many of the paintings on the walls have survived in traces the shocks of climate and war—perhaps due to their well-protected position.

Yet another feast to the eye was in store for me **Polonnaruwa** at Polonnaruwa (60 miles), perhaps the most interesting of the ruined cities in Ceylon. It was the capital of the old kings. But the ruins are said to date back only to the 12th century, and so the ravages of time have diminished their original glory far less than in other cases.

The palace of Parakrama Bahu, now all in ruins, proclaims a magnificent bygone age; about a mile from here is a life-size rock statue of Parakrama Bahu with his beard, a very imposing figure indeed! Jetawanarama, the largest Buddhist temple in Ceylon, is circular in construction and enshrines a gigantic statue of Buddha in a large hall; it contains numerous figures richly carved and moonstone steps of rare beauty. Deep in a jungle of two miles length is the spot known as Gal-Vihare where three rock statues stand in close proximity—a sitting Buddha, his disciple Ananda, and a reclining Buddha (46 ft. long). What simplicity, dignity and religious fervour do these life-like representations carry!

Near the Circular temple lies the Vata-da-ge, one of the finest temples in Ceylon and close to it is the Gal Pota (stone book, carved in the shape of an Ola book, the stone weighing 25 tons).

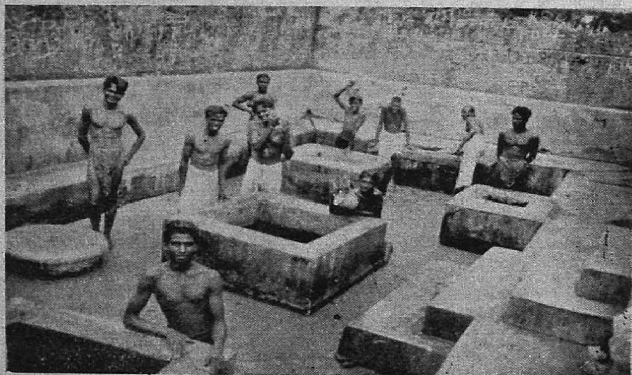
The rest house in the jungle is frequented by elephants in the night, and so I could not fancy it. The places around are all malarial (of course I always carry

with me a good stock of quinine), and there is great scarcity of water. What a lot of insects infest this spot!

I reached Trincomalee, the "Little Singapore." It has a wonderful natural harbour surrounded on three sides by mountains. It was formerly a Naval Station of great importance, and even today it is a valuable base for His Majesty's ships. The Government is spending a huge sum to make this place a strong link in the chain of Empire Defence in the East Indies. It is said that the whole of the British Navy could be stationed here, if necessary—so vast is the area of water inclosed by the natural ramparts. I was not allowed to see the new works, although I tried my level best to prove my bona fides to the manager in charge. There are two forts—Fort Ostenburg, (towering above the numerous small islands which guard the entrance to the bay), and Fort Frederick (built by the Portugese on the sea-shore in 1673) which now serves as residential quarters for the British officers. At the end of the fort on the shore is the Swamy Rock, a steep rock near which was a Hindu temple formerly. The Hindus have now transferred their worship to the rock itself. It is said that the Government offices will be shifted here very soon.

I visited the hot springs of Kannyai, 7 miles away. There are seven wells in all, each having its own temperature (100° F to 110° F). The water is quite free from salt. I found the water in all the wells not too hot to bathe. The legend about the name of the wells is quite interesting. Kannyai is the name of Ravana's mother. Fearing one of Ravana's adventures to harass the Devas (Gods), Vishnu appeared before him in the guise of an old man and told him that his mother was dead. Ravana made these hot springs burst forth in order to perform the funeral ablutions of his mother.

From Trincomalle I started for Jaffna. The roads lay though jungles, but they were quite straight and level. It, however, took me three full days to reach my destination. Jaffna is the capital of the Northern Province. The people here are



KANNYAI HOT WELLS

practically Tamils who have migrated into Ceylon long time ago. The place is a Roman Catholic See and the missionaries practically control the education. Hence most of the Hindu boys and girls who attend the Christian colleges get converted; but the parents have in several instances retained their religion. The poverty of the people is yet another potent factor in the conversion of a large number of Hindus here into Christians. The bungalows are all fenced, greatly diminishing the beauty of the town. Several Dutch buildings of considerable length, with big verandahs, are to be seen here, although none of them has any compelling architectural beauty. There is a strong Dutch Fort, with a moat round it. To the West of Jaffna, it is all a lagoon

decked with small boats bringing fish from the small islands nearby. Besides the fishing industry, the chief occupation of the people is farming.

There are some interesting Hindu temples in the town as well as in its vicinity. Kerimalai is famous for its natural spring; the tank (50' by 50') is just near the sea, and yet water is not salty. Legend says that an Indian princess, afflicted with the face of a mongoose bathed here and was cured of the deformity. Hence the name of this tank (the Mongoose Place). She built a temple at Manidapuram, two miles away from the tank. Kankesanturai is another interesting place on the sea shore with a Tuberculosis sanitorium. I then went to Kayts (14 miles)—a fine natural harbour with a fort built by the Dutch in the 15th century. There is a move to develop Indo-Ceylon trade between Point Calamere (on the East coast of India) and Kayts, for unlike Talaimannar, a sandy waste without any attraction to the tourist. Kayts is a more populated place and free from Malaria. The sea here abounds in fishing and promises to afford ample facilities for big game fishing.

Point Pedro, (20 miles), the extreme north of Ceylon, is a very healthy place.

I then reached Vavunia (90 miles). On my way I passed the Elephant Pass, so named because herds of elephants were in the habit of coming from the mainland through the shallow water to the peninsula of Jaffna. There are some salt pans here, and the lagoon is crossed over by a bridge.

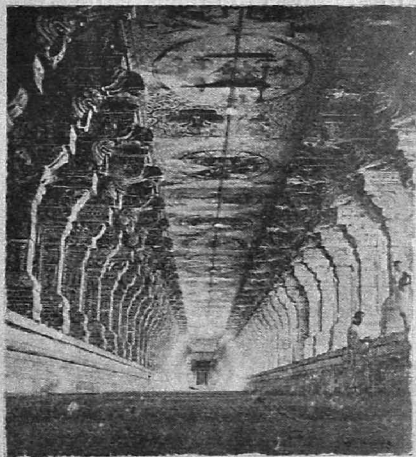
Sixty miles of cycling took me to Mannar. It is rather a dreary place with an old Dutch Fort containing some 16th century Portuguese tomb-stones. 17 miles off is Talaimannar which is the terminus of the Ceylon Government Railway. From this

latter place I got into the Goschen steamer and reached the Dhanushkodi pier (19 miles). I got down in the morning, took a sea bath at the ghat which is held sacred all over India and went to Rameshwaram by train; I could not use my cycle, as there were no roads at all. At Pamban I had to change the train. The Railway Embankment and the bridge across the Pamban channel are masterly effects of engineering skill, and they connect the trains from Ramnad and Mandapam with Pamban, on the island of Rameshwaram.

SOUTH INDIA

Rameshwaram is a place of pilgrimage for the Hindus. There are any number of choultries where free accommodation can be had. The guides are a regular nuisance, although they are somewhat serviceable to the curious traveller. The temple is more than two furlongs long; it is one of the biggest temples in South India, built by the Raja of Ramnad in the 12th century. The best and oldest portion is built of a dark, hard limestone, while the more recent is made of ordinary rock. Its majestic towers, vast colonnades and walls full of carved work and statuary make it a magnificent representative of Dravidian architecture in its highest perfection. The glory of this temple resides in its corridors, extending nearly to 4,000 ft. in length; the pillars contain elaborate designs which are richer than even the Parvati Porch at Chidambaram. Light is admitted to these corridors by the back-walls, and the whole temple is electrified. Hence the mysterious half-light of the Madura temple is missing here, and perhaps the temple is less impressive on that account. The central dome (Vimana) is golden, and there is a big bull (Nandi) about 15 ft. in height.

Rameshwaram is according to Hindu tradition, founded by Rama himself. Pilgrims go there with the idea of getting absolved from their Karmaic sins by holy baths in tanks, wells and sea, and by pujas calculated to propitiate various deities—specially the Navagrahas (the Signs of the Zodiac).



RAMESHWARAM TEMPLE—AN INTERIOR VIEW

I reached Mandapam (12 miles) through Pamban.

Mandapam

In the middle of the bridge, the rails are automatically lifted by cranes in order to make a passage for steamers.

At Mandapam there is a big immigration camp for the Indian labourers going to Ceylon to work on the plantations. The Ceylon Government has provided accomodation for 2000 people at a time ; there are about twenty six wards as well as some special wards. It is

also a famous sea-side resort and there are railway rest houses for both Indians and Europeans.

From there I went to Ramnad (20 miles from Rameshwaram), a big state in South India. **Ramnad** The town struck me as a big village. I was not lucky enough to meet the Raja, as he was not there. I then went to Madura (50 miles), "the Athens of South India".



THE MEENAKSHI TEMPLE—MADURA

Meenakshi Temple Madura is the second largest town in the Madras Presidency. It has numerous temples, all several hundreds of years old; but the chief one is the Meenakshi Temple, a lofty and

massive structure containing fine specimens of ancient Hindu architecture. The four big gopuras (towers) with dexterous carvings, the wall paintings in the interior, the artistically worked-out pillars—these require a whole book to describe. Festivities are a daily feature, reminding one of the conviviality of Benares.

The place was the capital of successive Hindu dynasties, and the Tirumalnaik's palace is a unique masonry work with pillars and walls of enormous height, strength and solidity.

The biggest spinning mills of the world are here; and the place is a big weaving centre; no stranger is admitted into the mills, and I could not, therefore, worm out any of the trade secrets.

I was put up with Mr. Gebilal who made my stay ever so pleasant. I met all the Gujarathi merchants who treated me very kindly.

40,000 Sowrashtras, speaking their own language (a mixture of Gujarathi, Marathi, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, etc.) reside here; none of their words are pronounced distinctly, and they use Tamil for writing. They are said to have migrated here in search of business from Kathiawar. They claim to be Brahmins, although the other Brahmin communities in South India are unwilling to give them that honour. Their main occupation is spinning, dyeing and weaving, both cotton and silk. They possess remarkable business acumen and are in no way inferior to the Parsees or the Gujarathis in this respect.

I then went round Chettinad inhabited by the Chettiars, one of the richest communities in South India. The main business of these people is money-lending in Ceylon, Burma and Malaya; they also own paddy fields, coconut, tea and rubber estates. The buildings are fine, modern and sometimes huge (a furlong in length); marble

is freely used for paving and decorating. The front portions, which are also the best, are reserved for ceremonial occasions, and the owners' families are confined to two or three rooms at the back. They make their surroundings gaudy and maintain their innate miserliness thoroughly unaffected. ↘

The women (Achis) command independent wealth, either through dowry or jewels, and I was told that often the men borrowed money from them. The younger generation is fond of English education, although the business instinct and the taste for multiplying money are never smothered or abandoned. Nowadays the Chettians have started financing many useful industries, and owing to their business tradition and acumen they rank as one of the foremost commercial communities in South India. They are quite clannish and no Chettiar is allowed to become destitute. There is a widespread rumour to the effect that when a Chettiar declares insolvency, he must have suppressed at least two lakhs of rupees. Whether it is true or not, it is certainly an unconscious tribute paid to this born merchant community. The layman can not even think of the possibility of a Chettiar failing in his business.

There are in all ninety six villages, and the more important towns are Devacotta, Karaikudi, Pallatur, Kanadukathan (where the Raja of Chettinad, Sir M.A. Annamalai Chettiar, a wealthy, shrewd and most successful of businessmen lives). He has founded the magnificent university named after him at Chidambaram, of which I shall speak later. In summer this part is very hot, and water becomes scarce. Tanks are, therefore, built everywhere to store this precious liquid. The roads in towns are well-paved and there are numerous other signs of wealth and prosperity. Oddly enough, some of the richest men here do not know English at all.

I then went to Pudukotta, a small native state of 5 lakhs population. The Raja is a minor and **Pudukotta** Mr. Tottenham, the English administrator, would not grant me an interview with him. The town is well laid out with a fine palace and an old fort. There is the Maharaja's College conducting classes up to the intermediate standard. During the Dasara festival, Brahmins are fed free or given doles of rice at the state's expense. But I have a grievance; I had to pay a toll of as. 6, twice on entering as well as on leaving—in return for my cycling on some of the worst roads I had ever seen.

I then went to Trichy (31 miles), the second most **Trichinopoly** important town in the Madras Presidency. It has a famous rock fort temple, about 260 ft. above the main street, dedicated to Ganapathi. From the top can be had a good view of the entire town. The streets are crooked and ill-kept. Temples, Churches and mosques vie with one other in number as well as in strength. The fort of the Nawab of Arcot has been dismantled, and there is a ruined palace. About four miles away on a large plain lie two masses of granite (the sugar Loaf Rock and the Fakir's Rock), collectively known as the Golden Rock. It was the scene of a fight between the French and the English (led by Clive and Lawrence). When the British first occupied this part of the country, they are said to have found gold there. Near the rock, the South Indian Railway, whose headquarters is Trichy, has built their workshop and colony.—

Three miles from Trichy, lies the island of Srirangam formed by the Cauvery. The temple of Rangantha, built in the 7th century, is one of the holiest temples in South India. The idol represents Vishnu sleeping on a five headed Naga. The temple is unique in conception and design, has seven prakaras (compounds signifying the mystic number⁷ seven) and is asupreme example of

Dravidian architecture. There is also an equally ancient temple, Jambugheshwaram, dedicated to Siva.

Tanjore (33 miles), was my next halt. Thousand years ago it was ruled by Chola Kings, and **Tanjore** Shivaji's brother founded a kingdom here. Ten Mahratta Kings ruled successively. The last king, Raja Sarbhoji, by a treaty in 1799, ceded his territory to the British, retaining only the capital and a small tract of the country around. Sarbhoji's son, Shivaji, died without legitimate male issue, and even this portion, therefore, lapsed to the British in 1855. The palace is in a very dilapidated condition. Its library contains many valuable records inscribed on palm leaves (about 18,000) as well as printed books, in Sanskrit, Tamil and other languages, Indian and European. There is a rumour to the effect that a German has secretly removed the more valuable records to his country. There is a wonderful Siva temple here with a gigantic Nandi (bull) in black granite, a monolith 12 ft. high and 16 ft. long.

The central tower (200 ft. high), including the great monolithic dome-shaped top and stupa, is said to cast its shadow always within its base. Copious Tamil inscriptions are carved on stones, and the pillars and pilasters represent the finest style of the latest Dravidian architecture. A subterranean tunnel is said to connect the temple and the palace.

Tanjore District is called the Granary of South India. Many arts and crafts—silk, carpets, jewellery copperware, models in pith, etc.,—flourish here.

Kumbakonam Kumbakonam (36 miles), is a dirty place, full of mosquitoes, and a large number of people suffer from elephantiasis. The streets are used as urinals and lavatories, and banks of rivers and tanks are scattered all over with human refuse—bye-the-bye this feature is common to most of the South Indian towns. Water sources are used for washing, bathing and drinking.

The municipalities have introduced the tap system, but public hygiene is still at its lowest level. The place is famous for brass and copperware. There are quite a lot of Sowrashttras here, engaged in weaving and selling cotton clothes. .

Negapatam (36 miles), is fairly a good sea port touched by steamers from Rangoon and Singapore. Tuticorin has robbed this place of most of its trade in recent times.

Chidambaram (42 miles), was a capital of the Chola kingdom and it is now full of rice mills. The temples here are the oldest in South India, the principal one is dedicated to Nataraja (God of dancing); the idol has four arms, the right is planted on the ground and the left is lifted sideways. Very close to this sanctuary, in the same building, is an idol of Vishnu. It is comical to see the devotees standing in between these two idols and dividing their attention, as the priests are busy performing pujas. There is generally a good deal of rivalry between the Vaishnavites and Saivites in South India; and the compromise in this temple is only a virtue of legal necessity.

In the neighbourhood has sprung up, quite recently, the Annamalai University founded by the Raja of Chettinad. The hostel attached to it provides accomodation for girls also. There are about sixty lecturers and the Rt. Hon. V.S. Srinivasa Sastry is now the vice-Chancellor. The strength was about 450, when I visited the institution. But I was told that it had an assured and bright future. It is called a residential university, chiefly due to its hostel and the university town that has sprung around it. But the actual working of the institution did not strike me as different from that of the teaching universities of India, for it suffers from the characteristic defects of the latter type.

Karaikal (12 miles), is a French sea port and steamers from Japan and Singapore unload their cargo here

practically duty free. The roads are remarkably straight. The High School is attached to the Paris university. Most of the people are Christians and Muslims.

Pondicherry (36 miles), the capital of the French possessions in India, is the best port on the East Coast. Big steamers from France, Singapore and Japan halt here. Japanese silk is very cheap, as it is imported duty free and I was told that in spite of the vigilant British customs smuggling of goods from Pondy was rampant. The buildings (in the old French style) are curious. They do not have a good external appearance, but are very comfortable to live. I could not see the Governor, as he was not in station, but I met the Mayor, Mr. David, who struck me as a kind hearted gentleman, though somewhat punctilious in behaviour. The beach and the pier (about 1,200 ft. long) are quite enjoyable; cheap and good wines provide a strong temptation to the British Indians who live nearby. The principal languages are French and Tamil.

The Ashram of Sri Arabindo Ghosh has given Pondicherry a world-wide reputation. There is nothing impressive in the building or the surroundings; the interest is centred in the object the saint has vowed to achieve—to bring Paradise to Earth and to elevate mankind by spiritualising the body by the grace of the Mother. Hitherto saints were interested in achieving Moksha (salvation) for themselves. Here is a personality who, for the first time in the history of the world, not merely wants, like Jesus Christ, to redeem man from sin and suffering and take him back to his original abode, heaven, but to convert this dog-kennel of a world into an ante-chamber to heaven. In this role of the fullest conceivable redeemer he is really unique; but he is invisible and inaccessible to human beings except on four appointed days in the year. On these days the public are admitted only by tickets which must be applied for several days in advance. A

large number of people from all parts of the world aspire to see him and it is said that Arabindo himself examines all the letters and grants permission only to the deserving. The French soil seems to be quite congenial to this spiritual enterprise of a condemned political murderer from British India, and daily lessons in yoga are given by the more advanced Sataks (disciples) who are said to draw, secretly all their inspiration from the saint himself.

The Ashram has bought several buildings in the place, and possesses substantial funds raised from munificent donations of members and sympathisers. It has published a series of instructive books in English, which are extremely, easy, scientific, modern and stimulating.

I, then, reached Madras (100 miles) and went from there to Conjeevaram (45 miles), a place full of Pallava and Dravidian temples whose architectural beauty has been sung in several books written by European and Indian scholars. The Kailasnath temple (a Pallava structure) and Shri Devaraja Swami temple (a Dravidian model) are remarkable architectural monuments, alike for the extent and for the beauty of their sculptures.

From there I went to Mahabalipuram or the Seven Pagodas, famous for its ruins of Pallava carvings. There are numerous monolithic temples known as Rathas—five of them being dedicated to the Pandava brothers. There is also a Ratha called after Draupadi. The representations on isolated rocks—the penance of Arjuna, the combat between Durga (wife of Siva) and the buffalo-headed demon, etc.—are striking beyond description.

On my way back to Madras I halted at Tirukalikundram, the Sacred Hill of the Kites. At the top of a hillock is a rock-cut temple on whose pillars are many Dutch signatures. Hundreds of pilgrims flock almost every day at noon to see two sacred kites well fed with sugared rice and ghee on the hill-top from the hands of

a priest. As the legend goes, the birds have a morning bath at Rameswaram, have their mid-day meal here, and reach Benares before dusk; and this is their daily routine, which implies that they travel every night from Benares to Rameswaram. The pilgrims swallow this Cock and Bull story and hunger for the remains of the rice on which the kites are fed.

The Tamils, mostly inhabiting plain level tracts of land, are noted for their docility and poor physical growth. I am aware of noteworthy exceptions; but they only serve to prove the rule. Rice is their staple food, and even the middle and upper classes do not seem to have realised the importance of a mixed diet and plenty of vegetables. The food of the Brahmin is most deficient in respect of nutrition. Dhal, ghee and curds are liberally used in some homes; but the low physique of the people can be explained only in the light of an ill-chosen traditional diet. Education in South India is advanced. But the craze on the part of the Brahmins—and the non-Brahmins have also developed the same craze recently—for government service seems to have killed all initiative and enterprise. But there are distinct signs of awakening in several parts and among several communities, and industrial and commercial activities are slowly supplying the deficiencies of a top-heavy clerical education. Orthodoxy is quite rampant in the village parts, and the numerous temples help to prop up ancient beliefs for a comparatively longer time than in other parts of India. Although the women do not move about freely, they are not subject to any purdah system. The other peculiarities of the people, social and religious, are shared by the Hindus in other parts of India also, and so let me not bother about them.