

FOREST LIFE

IN

CEYLON.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.
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CHAPTER IV.

THE CAVE-TEMPLES OF DAMBOOL.*

“ ——How shall we beguile

The lazy time, if not with some delight.”

Midsummer's Night Dream, act v., sc. 1.

THE central mass of mountains and table-land that constitutes, as it were, the heart of Ceylon, is surrounded on all sides by a low district, comparatively level, and of very varying extent, that, for the most part, slopes down gently to the sea. On the north, where the island narrows to a point, this level district is of much greater extent than anywhere else, and was, in the olden times of Ceylonese prosperity, the seat of the capital and the residence of the vast majority of the inhabitants. If a pear be taken and cut longitudinally, from the stalk downwards, the core will aptly represent the hilly district in the centre, and the pulp that surrounds it will be no bad illustration of the level region skirting the sea.

When Ceylon was in its prime, a conquering island, issuing forth from its ocean home to spread its arms and its religion in India and the Eastern peninsula, it has been calculated that it contained five millions of inhabitants; now, in the days of its degeneracy and debasement, after Portuguese, Dutch, and British have partially or entirely conquered it in turn, and after centuries of previous civil strife, before Europeans made their appearance at all, it does not contain much more than a fifth of the number. Then the extensive level district, stretching away to the north, was densely populated, its tanks and artificial water-courses fertilizing the ground, and producing, under careful cultivation, abundant crops for the supply of the large masses of the people and for exportation—*now* that level district, with the richest possible soil, is deserted by the natives, part of it has never been explored by Europeans, and the whole is covered with thick, almost impenetrable, jungle; the tanks and water-courses that formerly enabled the inhabitants to irrigate their rice-fields, and surround their abodes with the blessings of plenty and wealth, are now the fruitful sources of miasma and contagion. The artificial mounds and embankments, often of the most gigantic character, are broken or scattered uselessly about, whilst the country is fruitlessly inundated, and thick, tan-

gled masses of aquatic vegetation have taken the places of the flourishing corn and happy abodes of times long gone by. It has been stated, indeed, by men capable of forming an estimate on the subject, that it would exceed the power of the British Government in the island, and be a task beyond its resources, to restore these old-world reservoirs to their former condition, so massive and gigantic were the works.

The cave-temples of Dambool are cut out of a vast mass of primitive rock that rises, rounded and solitary, from the level plain to the height of five or six hundred feet above it. The cave-temples themselves, the traditions connected with them, and the interesting view from the summit, all render the rock of Dambool an interesting object. I had read much of it, I had talked much to Marandhan of it, and was determined to see it. He spoke with raptures of the solemn awe inspired by the first entering into the extensive temples, hewn, as they were, out of the solid rock—an awe felt by the most thoughtless spectator, from the strange and unwonted spectacle they presented; but to him,—acquainted with the history of the caves, knowing how they were mixed up with that of the island from the century preceding the Christian era to the present,—doubly impressive and awe-striking.

Anuradhapoorā, too, the former capital of the island, lay in the same direction, fifty miles further on—a veritable buried city. It had been a place of importance long before Rome had first risen to extensive wealth and power. It had been the capital of the island, and celebrated throughout India and China and Chin-India, for its extent and magnificence, when Athens was in its glory and when the Persian monarchy had attained its greatest splendour! its remains attesting, at the present day, its former greatness, and amazing the traveller by their size and often by their preservation. True, the greater part of the city lies buried beneath the all-pervading jungle that attacks within the tropics so unrelentingly every remnant of antiquity, and renders the preservation of old buildings and ruins so difficult a matter, nay, almost an impossibility; but still there was enough to be seen, I was assured, to gratify the most inveterate novelty-hunter—enough to interest, to amaze, and to instruct.

An excursion into these regions was, however, rather a perilous matter. Jungle-fever was often caught from the *miasma* that pervaded the district, and numerous instances had occurred of Europeans having been attacked by it in the course of their exploring expeditions. Not that the danger would have deterred me personally, for I was

determined to visit both the cave-temples and the ancient capital, come what might; but I knew that Hofer and his wife were equally anxious to see these places, so famous for their peculiar character, and the interesting associations connected with them; and I hoped, therefore, that, by biding my time, I might travel thither in company with a party, which would add variety to the journey.

I was not deceived. The safest time for making such a trip fortunately coincided with the season of rest and repose, and, too often of idleness, on the coffee-estates, and a large party was ultimately formed to journey northwards, taking Kandy and Matelle * in our way, at both of which places we were to stop for some time, so as to advance leisurely, and prevent the pleasure becoming, as it too often does, a toil. Hofer and his wife, with her newly-arrived sister, Miss Mowbray, Fowler, Marandhan, and myself, were to constitute the party, and a better assorted one could not easily have been formed. Miss Mowbray had not been long in the island, but was eager for any expedition of the kind. She had more buoyancy of spirits, more girlishness in her nature than her more sedate sister, Mrs. Hofer, and was certainly not so handsome; but there was a charm about

* Pronounced Mättelley.

her hearty enjoyment of everything enjoyable that made her society eminently attractive. Fowler, who was somewhat of a book-worm, and a bachelor, like, myself, and an enthusiastic admirer of Mrs. Hofer, was evidently dazzled by Miss Mowbray's attractions, and was now a constant visitor at Lanka. She teased him, and coquetted with him, as young ladies will sometimes do, and he pouted at it, and made me his confidant. I gave him the best advice I could under the circumstances, although I felt that it was but the blind leading the blind. Courtships and marriages are matters so speedily arranged in the jungle that he seemed astonished that he could not win the fair lady by a *coup-de-main*, and was disgusted at the thoughts of a regular siege. Yet he had "never told his love," in words at least; as yet, his eyes alone had spoken, and he seemed to expect, foolish man, that the lady should have cried out for quarter at once, and surrendered at discretion! So little art do men learn in the jungle, so strangely does a solitary life affect them, when they are surrounded only by books and coffee!

Our intention was to remain a fortnight in Kandy, a friend of Hofer's living there, who had taken his family on a visit to Colombo, having generously placed his house at our disposal. Our next stage was Matelle, where a common friend,

well-known to, and esteemed by every member of our party, was anxious to receive us; and thence we purposed making a bold push through the vile jungle path, or "trace" as it is called—a trace at some future time intended to be a road—to Dambool.

At length the day of departure arrived. We all assembled at Mouat's house in Ruminacaddee, it being on the line of march. Mouat had promised to join us; but although his uncle was the Chief Justice, he was unable to leave his station just at the time, as the Supreme Court was to sit in Kandy shortly, and all the neighbouring magistrates and district judges were of course on the alert. Servants had been previously despatched to prepare our temporary abode in Kandy for our reception, and we promised ourselves an agreeable ride and pleasant stay in Kandy. Marandhan was by far the most picturesque object in our cavalcade, with his fine black moustaches and beard, which the hand of time had scarcely yet frosted at all;—his strange head-dress surmounting a pair of sparkling eyes, that spoke eloquently of intelligence and intellect;—he rode a faithful cob or country horse, a hard-working, muscular little fellow, that cared little for an elephant, and had long been used to all the accidents and incidents of jungle wayfaring. The

two ladies were well-mounted—Mrs. Hofer on a bay Arab that she had long been used to, and Miss Mowbray on the chestnut Hofer had lately purchased—a steady animal enough, although rather more showy than there was any necessity for in jungle travelling. Both were excellent horsewomen, and in their broad-brimmed straw hats and short riding habits, looked foreign and interesting; both evidently in high spirits, Mrs. Hofer's eye flashing brilliantly as I had not seen it flash for many months; the road, the journey, the exercise, and the scenery, all combining to throw a glow into her cheeks and an hilarity into her heart, that made her, according to Fowler, "perfectly bewitching."

Hofer himself admired her as much as any, and when she cantered along before, or pointed out the interesting objects in the landscapes around, no one could regard another with more love and admiration than he. As to Marandhan, his powers of conversation seemed for a time to fail him altogether, so much were his eyes rivetted by the fine female forms before him, and I was at length obliged to ask whether he had not been taking a lesson from Mrs. Mouat. Miss Mowbray was charming too; but, whatever might have been Fowler's opinion, there was no disputing the superiority of her sister. She sat her fine

horse well, managed him admirably, showed off her elegant figure as a graceful lady only can on horseback, and, by her quick-witted remarks and repartees, was the soul of the party. She rather avoided Fowler, poor fellow — rank coquetry thought I two or three times as she stopped for Hofer to come up, when he left Mrs. Hofer with Marandhan and me, and cantered forward to accompany her—rank coquetry, unquestionably!

There was neither stiffness nor formality about the party. For the most part Hofer rode with Miss Mowbray, as she seemed to prefer him, Fowler accompanying, and Marandhan escorted Mrs. Hofer, whilst I joined one party or the other as I listed, occasionally inquiring about objects of interest, or the scenes of remarkable incidents as we proceeded. Marandhan was a living “Murray” for us, and no young lady going down the Rhine, whether making contemptuous remarks about the appearance of Bonn from the river, or lost in admiration of the Drackenfels, ever consulted her Handbook with more assiduity than did we, as we proceeded, consult Marandhan. Not a strange rock, not an oddly-shaped hill, not an ugly tree escaped us. We pumped him almost dry, as we ascended one hill and descended another, for the road from Ruminacaddee to Kandy, if road it can be called, runs straight over everything.

Whether any engineer ever planned it, I do not know—it is impossible to say what engineers in the East, who sometimes survey a district without visiting it, will do, but this I know, that nothing could be more simple than the construction of this attempt at a road. The principles on which it was formed were three in number. Draw a straight line from Ruminacaddee to Kandy. Well, so far so good; that is a great principle in itself to begin with. Now the nearer we can keep to that line the better, principle number two,—diverging from it only to get into the water-courses that sweep down the sides of the hills in the rainy season, which, in the dry weather, will, of course, form admirable roads, principle number three. That is the conclusion, the road is finished, and in due time the same may be said of many poor horses and oxen that have to travel over it.

Where a little level ground permitted—for even in the interior of Ceylon there are some parts level, although I am willing to confess they are quite exceptional—the entire party cantered on briskly, the ladies generally taking the lead, their large hats, their veils and habits fluttering in the most picturesque way in the breeze.

By nine o'clock, when the sun had already attained considerable height and power, we reached Kandy, where Hofer had, of course, as might have

been expected, offended all his friends, by occupying the empty house which had been offered to him. As in most other matters, he had consulted his own inclination first, and left others to be pleased or not as suited their fancy. In this instance, however, he was certainly right. We intended to stop a fortnight in the town, and wished to be as independent as possible during our stay—Marandhan promising to show us all the objects of interest in the neighbourhood. Had we been divided, or obliged to consult the convenience and habits of others, as well as those of our own party, much time would of course have been lost, and much entertainment missed. With the exception then of a few ceremonial visits, which were, for the most part, distantly received and as ceremoniously returned, our time was entirely our own—all invitations to dinner being systematically refused—even that of His High Mightiness the Government Agent of the Central Province himself, a circumstance so unprecedented in his life, that it was said, he began to suspect socialism was spreading and the very foundations of society beginning to be shaken; a coffee-planter refusing to dine with him! positively the present state of things, under such circumstances, must be alarming! Nevertheless it was true, and Mr. Bluster was obliged to make the most of it, but, so rank was

the offence, that as a matter of course the next time Mrs. Bluster and her amiable daughter met Mrs. Hofer and Miss Mowbray, the former stared very hard at them, as if to ask who *they* were or could possibly be, whilst, by some condescension of which Marandhan and I felt ourselves quite unworthy, we were honoured with a most cordial salute; "and so ends our acquaintance with our dear friends the Blusters," said Mrs. Hofer, as we rode on.

It may be readily conceived what an interest we felt in visiting the lions of Kandy with so admirable a guide as Marandhan. He showed us the ruins of the palace, and took us through the great temple containing the much celebrated tooth of Budha; the temple noteworthy on account of its noble flights of steps, lofty arches, and imposing colonnades. The tooth itself, placed on a silver altar, was covered by a number of conical cases, one fitting over the other, like a juggler's goblets—the outermost five feet high. To me, and indeed to all our party, except Marandhan, the tooth seemed emphatically a humbug. It had not the form of a canine tooth at all; more resembling indeed the top of a small elephant's tusk sawn off. But this we did not hint in Marandhan's hearing, of course. The massive and substantial appearance of the walls of the palace showed us that it was built with

the intention of being a permanent structure, not a temporary one as is too often the case in the East, and the carvings on various portions of it are passable.

The lake itself, which forms so interesting a feature of the valley in which Kandy is situated, is a proof of the gigantic character of the works which the old Kandians could undertake and complete. It is quite artificial, fed from the neighbouring hills, is of considerable extent, and, with the road round it, forms a delightful object to contemplate whilst one is walking, riding, or driving at the base, or on the sides, of the hills. This road round it has indeed been constituted the evening promenade of the European inhabitants of Kandy, and I doubt if any city in Europe has a more agreeable one. A house stands in the middle of the lake in a line with the palace, formerly, they say, part of the seraglio of the Kandian kings—such *was* its destiny; but how times are altered! John Bull knows nothing of seraglios; even Mr. Bluster himself would not venture to keep one openly, in all the plenitude of his power, but John Bull knows something of the smell of powder, and the lake-temple, once sacred to women and love, is now a powder magazine! “To what base —” but no, I’ll spare the reader the hacknied quotation.

At a distance of about five miles from Kandy we were shown by Marandhan, some rocks which appeared to me to be Druidical remains. I should not have ventured to express such an opinion then, but on inquiring into the matter since, I find these Druidical monuments are much more extensively scattered than I had supposed, not only over Europe, but in Asia also. A complete Druidical circle like Stonehenge exists at Darab, in Persia, described by Sir W. Ouseley, and it has amused me to find that Stonehenge itself has been set down by some savants as a Budhistic remain. The cromlech, which Marandhan showed us—for cromlech I believe it was—somewhat resembled that at Plas Newydd, in Anglesey.

How little, after all our Egyptian and Assyrian discoveries, do we really know of the early history of our race! Who shall tell us where this widespread Druidism, extending from Ceylon to Britain, took its rise? when it first propagated its doctrines, and how? whether its progress was from east to west, or from west to east? Whether, like Mohammedanism, its early preachers held the sword in one hand and their religion in the other, and told the unbeliever to take his choice, or, like Budhism, relied upon the force of reason, and the power of persuasion alone? How truly did Göthe write when he exclaimed—

“ To us, my friend, the times that are gone by
Are as a book, sealed with seven seals.
That which you call the spirit of ages past
Is but, in truth, the spirit of some few authors
In which those ages are beheld reflected,
With what distortion strange, Heaven only knows.”

It was not without a melancholy feeling that we gazed upon “ the tombs of the kings ” in Kandy, when Marandhan took us to them, and sorrowfully pointed them out. “ The tombs of the kings ! ” there is magic in the very phrase. What text more apt could the preacher desire for his homily, the sentimentalist for his rhapsody ? The tombs of the kings, broken, desecrated, and almost destroyed. Goths from England carrying away part, and Vandals in Ceylon seizing the rest—a carving here, and an inscription there picked out, until the pile stands shapeless and disfigured, a monument of what the noblest memorials of greatness, real or fictitious, may ultimately come to. And this race of kings, what is to be said of it?—not much I fear that was great, not much that was good, not much that was noble, yet still something of each—this, at all events, must be allowed, let them have as little praise as they may, the oldest dynasties of modern Europe were new and unvenerable compared with that strange Singha race. Wickrama, whom the British proclamation, in 1815, designated a monster of cruelty, was the last scion of a line that had con-

tinted to govern Ceylon for two thousand years ! The European monarch that can trace back his pedigree through the one half of that period, whether a Hapsburg or a Hanover, feels proud of the old genealogical tree—Wickrama thrown into a dungeon in India to pine out the rest of his life in misery—Wickrama reviled, insulted, struck, spat upon by the soldiers that took him prisoner, should rebuke the empty boasting resulting from a mere freak of fortune.

We had not nearly exhausted the picturesque rides and rambles in the neighbourhood of Kandy when we left it to continue our journey northward. We crossed the Mahavelliganga, not very far distant from the spot where the massacre of Major Davis's force, by the Singhalese, had taken place—a massacre which Marandhan denounced as quite unjustifiable and cruel, with as much warmth as we could have done.

Our way led through the village of Matelle, where we remained for a few days, to visit some coffee-estates in the neighbourhood, and in compliance with the pressing invitation of the magistrate of the district. No man could live with more patriarchal simplicity than our good friend Mr. Rivers, nor more pleasingly exhibit the noblest patriarchal virtues; his own natural, warm, and unsophisticated benevolence being

amiably contrasted with the more cultivated, but not on that account less genuine, goodness of his two daughters. One can have no conception, with his cut-and-dried notions of life in England, of such a family as that of Rivers',—living in the midst of a semi-civilized population, who were attached to them by the ties of affection and gratitude, sure of justice, and looking upon them more as gods upon earth than as men and women—regarding their very house, and all that belongs to them, as sacred;—looking upon it as the abode of every virtue, of power the most unlimited, combined with the most extensive goodness. Did the poor native meet with oppression at the hands of his Singhalese or European employer, he knew that he had but to state his case before “the good mahathma,” as he was emphatically called, in order to have it thoroughly and diligently investigated. Had his rice-fields been destroyed, and his only hope of sustenance for the year thus removed, “the good mahathma” was willing to help him for the present, and to direct him to, or to find him, work for the future. Did the father or the daughters walk or ride abroad, through the magnificent valley in which he reigned supreme, the natives crowded around to bless, and even, in their untaught heartfulness, to adore them—to point them out to their children as the righters of

the wronged, the stays of the distressed or the oppressed, the bountiful helpers of the helpless.

I can conceive of no situation more gratifying to the well-constituted mind than that of the man who was thus regarded by a whole district as its benefactor and preserver. Yet it is not to be supposed that his situation was altogether without trials. How could it be so in such a world as this? Where did ever the good do battle manfully against the oppressors and the evil-doers, without being exposed to injury and loss, to contumely from some, to obloquy from others, to censure and scorn from many? The habit of ruling with all but absolute sway in their estates, made our class, the coffee-planters, impatient of control, and I have heard men of true hearts and kind dispositions ask the question, "How are we to get on at all, deep in the jungle, surrounded by these half-savages, if we have not the right of flogging them when they deserve it?" and if the more moderate and honest could ask, and ask seriously, too, such a question, what would not the Siggenses be willing to do when they could and dared?

We rode about through Matelle, from one estate to another, in great joyfulness and high spirits, the Misses Rivers forming an agreeable addition to our party. It was an interesting sight to see our various-looking cavalcade, riding,

often in single file, up the hill's side, or crossing a rivulet, whilst joyful playfulness suggested, and light-hearted mirth gave expression to, repartees and sallies without number. The more our party became acquainted with Miss Mowbray the more did we value her capacity for enjoyment, and the total abandonment of all that was gloomy and dispiriting, with which she threw her whole energies into the gladness of the moment. As day after day of constant intimacy ripened our friendship, we all became mutually, I believe, better satisfied with each other's society, and more disposed to cultivate it; yet was not our residence at Matelle, sunny and bright as it was, cloudless for poor Fowler.

A Captain Reid, of one of the Queen's regiments, had come out in the same vessel with Miss Mowbray, and now joined our party for a few days. He was accommodated at the bungalow of a coffee-planter of his acquaintance a short distance from Mr. Rivers's residence, and spent usually the entire day with us. He was a dashing sprightly fellow, shallow, according to Fowler's idea, but eminently calculated, at all events, by his benevolent suavity and gentleness, accompanied by a considerable share of fun, to attract a young lady's attention. It was just before he joined us that I had persuaded Fowler to make

up his mind to propose to Miss Mowbray, of whom he gradually thought more highly. His esteem and friendship for her had now ripened into love; it was, therefore, not without some chagrin that he saw her begin to listen attentively to Captain Reid's observations, and take evident pleasure in his society; yet he fancied, too, for I was his confidant, that the Captain's attentions, if attentions they were at all, were more directed towards Miss Rivers than towards her, and after his departure he speedily conquered his ill-humour, persuading himself, with the vanity which a young man *will* sometimes feel, that she divined his intentions, and was willing to render her conquest and possession not quite so easy and uninterrupted an achievement as he might possibly have fancied it would be. I say he thought so then, and notwithstanding what subsequently took place during our trip, I think so, too. I do not indeed pretend to fathom the deep mystery of the heart of a playful young lady, or to understand completely the strange levity, on the most momentous of subjects, with which they will sometimes speak, yet I did flatter myself then that I could see as far into the causes of outward actions as most other people. To me it was simply amusing, however, to hear Fowler speak so rapturously of the charming appearance and manner

of the young lady in question, of the ineffable grace with which she sat and controlled her chestnut steed—of the beautiful sweep of the head with which she listened to what you had to say, and then raised her eyes to your face to reply ; of the happy observations she made, and of the cheerfulness which she diffused everywhere around her. That which to the individual interested is often the most momentous concern of life, to a spectator may be but ludicrous or even absurd.

Captain Reid's stay with us was, however, by no means a prolonged one, and, before we set out for Dambool, still keeping our horses' heads to the north, he had retaken the road to Colombo, and left us to resume our cavalcade journey in the same order as that in which we had originally started from Ruminacaddee.

There is something singularly imposing about the vast mass of rock called by the natives the Damboola-galla, in which the celebrated cave-temples have been excavated. From the surrounding plain it rises majestically in one large, rounded, naked mass—like a gigantic human skull, on the forehead of which the pious zeal of former ages has hollowed out these strange worship-houses. It certainly has a much greater resemblance to a huge skull than the so much vaunted likeness of the rock of Gibraltar to a lion. The

summit of it, on which formerly stood some religious erection, is five hundred and fifty feet above the plain beneath, and as the country around is singularly level, a beautiful and extensive view is obtained from it;—a few oddly-shaped rocks dotting the horizon on one side, a rounded hill on another, whilst the distant mountains of the Matelle district are seen dimly and hazily to the south, the intervening spaces filled with tanks and forests, low brushwood in one place and lofty trees in another, monuments of the luxuriant vegetation which pervades the entire district.

Night was fast setting in when we arrived at the large and almost empty building erected here for the use of travellers by government; our servants as usual, however, had been sent on long before us, and we found everything prepared for our reception, and the whole place looking quite comfortable. We were all tired, for our day's journey had been fatiguing, and our rest had been much disturbed at the native house at which we had passed the preceding night. Yet, tired as I was, I was anxious to see something of the far-famed cave-temples that evening. Marandhan and Hofer both regarded my desire as unreasonable, and refused to accompany me, whilst Fowler was by no means disposed to leave the ladies,—so I set off alone. A walk of about a mile,

a considerable portion of which consists of vigorous climbing, brought me to the entrance, and, as Marandhan had told me, my attendant found little difficulty in getting a priest to chaperon me, late as it was. A considerable number of the brotherhood reside all about the entrance of the caves, on the sides of the hill which here alone slope more gently than elsewhere. It was quite dark before we arrived at the entrance, and as the priest opened the sacred portal of one of the excavations, he held a flaming torch in his hand to exhibit the interior to my gaze. But it was only a very small portion of it that the red flames could illumine, and as the light flickered about, exhibiting now the head of some gigantic statue, and now the yellow dress and dark features of my guide, the scene struck me as one of an unearthly character. It was as if twenty centuries had been entombed here, and we, for the first time, were violating the sanctity of their catacomb; for twenty centuries have indeed rolled over the world since the hand of man first chiselled out these extraordinary monuments of mistaken piety! Behind us were the stars shining clearly in a sky of a dark-blue ground; on either side and in front was a darkness almost palpable in its intensity; whilst, as the torch flamed here and there, a thousand figures of the

Budhistic man-god seemed to start into existence, and to disappear again in the black night behind, like demons from the tombs. It was a picture, which, once witnessed, could never be forgotten, and in this scene I felt that I, with my rude jungle dress—not quite so rude, however, as it would have been, had I been travelling alone—and my European nineteenth century appliances, must have formed, to any observer, had there been such, not the least extraordinary feature of this striking picture. To me the figures were simply bits of stone or lime, the place in which we stood a simple hole in the rock, large indeed, but artificial; to the priest who stood by my side, these images were idols, this hole in the rock, a sacred temple. What I looked upon as unmeaning symbols or airy superstitions, were to him realities full of deep and holy significance.

A huge recumbent figure of Budha was before us, the vast head, six feet long from the chin to the forehead, was reclining on the outstretched hand beneath, and, as the red glare of the torch waved high and fitfully above, I could faintly discern the gigantic shoulders in proportion—“all,” said the priest, as I examined it by the strange glare—“all hewn out of the solid rock around.” I doubted the fact, for the face was painted, and, unthinkingly, not for an instant

intending to give offence by so doing, I struck the broad forehead before me a smart blow with the stick I had in my hand, to test the truth of his statement. What he said was perfectly correct, but no sooner had I thus violated the sanctity of his idol than he seized me by my arm, and shouted lustily for assistance. My situation was critical—numbers of priests were in the immediate vicinity, and the nearest magistrate was my friend Rivers, at Matelle, thirty-five miles distant. Fortunately, however, my left arm was disengaged, and, taking a few rupees from my pocket, I slipped them noiselessly into my companion's hand. The silver had a magical effect. Even here, in the middle of the jungle, in the very cave-temples of Budha—thirty-five miles away from the nearest magistrate—her majesty's head was all-powerful—the loud bellowing ceased—the storm was lulled, and, as a crowd of anxious monks came rushing into the cave, he informed them that a miracle had been wrought, that a huge bird of some unknown species had suddenly appeared from behind the great statue, and had, as suddenly, flown out at the door, disappearing as strangely as it had appeared, and knocking the torch from his hand in its passage. Some seemed to believe, and looked out anxiously with us after the extra-

ordinary bird, others turned their dark eyes upon us, rolling them from his countenance to mine, and from mine to his, as if they were by no means convinced of the truth of the story; whether they were or not, however, certain I am of this fact that the bird was never again seen, that I did not tell them the cause of the shouts which had thus drawn them together, and it is highly probable that my friend the shouter kept the secret to himself.

It was late when I returned to the rest-house, where our party, wearied out with their day's fatigue, had just retired to rest. The two ladies occupied a pleasant chamber that faced the road, and was more free from insects than those in the rear—it had been comfortably fitted up by the servants sent on before us, and was decidedly, as it ought to have been indeed, the best room in the house. Marandhan and Fowler occupied the other front chamber on the opposite side of the common dining hall, Hofer had taken the room behind Marandhan's in order that he might continue his conversation with him whilst preparing to retire, as a door communicated between the two; and so the chamber behind that occupied by the ladies, fell to my share. Thinking they might probably be already asleep, and aware, from what I had seen in the similar rooms at the other side

of the house, that the partition, although apparently substantial, was of the flimsiest possible character, I made no noise, and was the rather induced to act so by hearing none within. In a few minutes I was stretched on my mat-covered bed close to the wall, the musquito curtains carefully tucked all round, and every preparation made for a comfortable night's rest. "Well, I suppose your desire to converse, Ada, is infectious," said a voice that I recognized at once as that of Mrs. Hofer, and which, in the stillness of the house, I heard, through the deceitful partition, most distinctly, "for I too feel more disposed for conversation than for sleep, although I am so tired."

"We shall not allow the antiquarian zeal of Marandhan, or Ernest's love of the picturesque, to wile us up early to-morrow morning," answered the younger lady.

Conscience told me I ought to cough, hem, haw, or in some other way intimate to the unconscious talkers, my proximity, but curiosity said no, and sophistry suggested that besides I really wanted to go to sleep and intended to do so. True, they undoubtedly thought that Hofer was in my place, as had been originally intended, but it was not my fault if he chose to occupy my room instead of his own, so I lay still, and heard

distinctly every word, for these thoughts flashed through my mind with the rapidity of lightning.

“I am astonished that you still prefer the younger Miss Rivers to the elder,” said Mrs. Hofer, “considering how like the elder is to yourself—a perfect æsthetic character—and considering the more intellectually trained reflection of the younger.”

“First impressions carry great weight with me,” said Miss Mowbray, “perhaps too much weight. Do you not remember how warmly the younger received us, and the much colder salute of the elder.”

“Yes, but you must remember also, that the gentlemen entered just as the elder advanced, and that doubtless disconcerted her a little,” argued Mrs. Hofer.

“Captain Reid paid much attention to the elder,” said Miss Mowbray.

“It appeared to me that he paid more attention to some one else,” was Mrs. Hofer’s reply.

“To me?” suggested Miss Mowbray.

“Yes, Ada, to you. There could be no mistaking it. His warmth to Miss Rivers was but a foil to hide a little his greater warmth of manner when addressing you.”

“He is a charming man,” said the younger lady.

“ And Mr. Fowler ? ”

“ An excellent acquaintance or companion,” observed Miss Mowbray, “ but too solemn for a husband.”

“ You cannot deny that he is handsome,” observed Mrs. Hofer.

“ His features are regular enough, and I have no objection to make either to his height or figure, but he wants the gaiety and sprightliness of Captain Reid altogether. His studies have made him too much of a bookworm to please so mercurial a young lady as I confess myself to be.”

“ I am sorry to hear it, Ada,” replied her sister ; “ I fear he loves you.”

“ Nay, my dear Emma, do not fear that, he would willingly sell me or any lady alive, I believe, except yourself, for her weight in old books, the mustier and more antiquated the better.”

“ Except me, Ada ? ”

“ Yes, love, except you. It is not me he loves, nor do I think he means to pretend to love me. I have watched his eye following you, and the brightening of his countenance at your approach—.”

“ Nay, Ada, no more of this,” exclaimed Mrs. Hofer, interrupting her ; and then, more seriously than she had yet spoken, she added, “ Ada, Mr.

Fowler is a man to make his home happy. Try and regard him with more favour. You are mistaken in your too quick-witted impressions, and have hitherto looked upon him with a prejudiced eye. There is not a man in England or Ceylon that I would more willingly welcome as a brother."

"I am not insensible of his excellences," said Miss Mowbray; "he can ride well, but so can all coffee-planters; he can talk well when he likes, and when *you* are by to hear; and he can quote Greek like a Bœotian. Lastly, he is a quiet, inoffensive man that hurts nobody and no one hurts him. I wonder why Ernest took such a fancy to him, they are so unlike in many respects."

"Better, far better, Ada," said Mrs. Hofer, "than all this. He has a good heart and a clear head. Believe me it is not the sprightliness and the untimed gaiety of a man that makes home happy."

"How seriously you talk, Emma."

"Marriage is a very serious matter, Ada."

"Well, from one who has drawn such a prize in the lottery as you, I am surprised to hear such grave remarks. Are you not happy, Emma?" said Miss Mowbray, and as she said so,

I could hear her throwing her arm round her sister and kissing her.

“Of course I am, Ada,” was the reply, after a pause; “you see that with two such beings to love me as Ernest and you, I am and must be happy. But take my advice, my love, and think better and more kindly of Mr. Fowler. Judge him impartially, and not with an eye dazzled by a red coat.”

“Dazzled by a red coat!” repeated Miss Mowbray, poutingly.

“Nay, I did not mean that, but merely not to let a pre-occupied mind weigh his sterling qualities against the meretricious advantages of superior dancing and greater gaiety. Tell me, Ada, do you love Captain Reid?”

There was a pause for a moment, after which Miss Mowbray answered with a sigh, “No, O no, I certainly do not love him, but I could do so, if he were to seek my love.”

“Well then, my dearest Ada, take my advice,” said Mrs. Hofer, fondly, “do not think of him, and look more favourably upon Mr. Fowler. The absence of the one and the presence of the other makes this quite possible. Acquaintance may thus ripen into friendship and friendship into love. It may be more romantic, as in Ernest’s

case and mine, when both fall in love as it is called, at first sight, but it is not more likely to be enduring."

"Your homily has made me sleepy," said Miss Mowbray.

"One kiss more, and good night then," was the reply, and silence again reigned supreme in the house—the external uproar from the jungle, which always increases as the hour advances towards midnight, being too much an accustomed sound to all of us to prevent our sleeping.

When we visited the cave temples the next day, Marandhan gave us a particular account of their history and object—how a king of Ceylon, Walagambahu by name, who reigned about one hundred years before the Christian era, had taken refuge at the rock, where he had been concealed from some invaders from Malabar, until forces were raised to expel them—how he had subsequently set about the excavation of the largest of three sacred cave-temples, as a pious act of gratitude for his preservation, and had employed the best artists of the island to cut huge figures of Budha out of the solid quartz—how other kings, at various periods, one in the twelfth, one in the fifteenth, and two in the eighteenth centuries, had hewn out or enlarged similar caves at

either side of the larger ones but much inferior to them in size and effect, until altogether five temples were the result,—monuments, in this the middle of the nineteenth century, of what the misguided religious zeal of former days was able to accomplish. In the largest of these temples, the second in order from the entrance, called the Maha Wihare, the effect was extremely imposing. It struck me as equally extensive with the largest cave in the Peak Cavern in Derbyshire, that called Pluto's Hall, I believe, but by no means so lofty. One cannot walk through it without feeling involuntary awe. Its great size; the strange echoing of the footsteps; the forty-six gloomy and shadowy-looking statues by which it is partly occupied, stretching away in two long lines; the gentle dropping of the water, regarded as sacred, in the distant corner; the noiseless tread of the yellow-robed priests, with the death-like stillness that pervades the place,—are all calculated to impress upon the visitor a kind of religious or superstitious awe, that one does not like to shake off, and of which it would probably be impossible altogether to divest oneself. In the five caves there are a hundred and twenty-three images of Gotama, varying from sixty feet to one in length.

Our quarters proved so comfortable at Dambool,

there was so much excellent shooting in the neighbourhood for us, and so much sketching for the ladies to do, that we remained there several days; Marandhan pointing out to us various scenes in the neighbourhood connected with the history of the island, and all of considerable interest to the antiquarian; one of these, the remains of an ancient road, struck me as very similar in construction to the great military *vias*, by which Rome interlaced Italy. About twelve miles from Dambool, he pointed out a flattened mound of earth with stone and rock at the top, at each side of the trace on which we travelled; that was the ancient road, through which the modern engineer has cut, in tracing out a direct way from Kandy to the north of the island. We stopped some time to examine it, Miss Mowbray ironically protesting that it was lovely. A bridge of massive granite, over what was once a rivulet, surprised me by its strength and solidity. It was composed of upright blocks of granite, about eight feet high above their foundation, supporting other similar blocks placed horizontally, each seven feet long, four broad, and one thick. We examined this primitive, but enduring structure with great interest, not even deterred by Miss Mowbray's recommendation to harness all our horses to one

of the blocks, and convey it at once to Colombo, for transmission to the British Museum, there to be stuck up for the amusement and instruction of the gazers of all future ages. We make bridges much better now, you will say. So we do, doubtless; but they do not last quite so long. This road ran from Polonaruwa to Kurnegalle, according to Marandhan, and was probably constructed ten or fifteen centuries ago.

CHAPTER VI.

ANURADHAPOORA, THE BURIED CITY.

“ — What seest thou else
 In the dark backward and abysm of time?
 If thou remember'st aught, ere thou cam'st here;
 How thou cam'st here, thou may'st.”

Tempest, act i., sc. 2.

ANURADHAPOORA, or the city of Anuradha, was founded by that chieftain five hundred and fifty years before the Christian era. The history of the city is, in fact, coeval with the earliest history of the island, for, previous to that date, little is known regarding the latter, and of that little, nothing with certainty or precision. It was not, however, for more than a century afterwards that it became the capital of Ceylon, one of the distinguished sovereigns of that day, who rejoiced in the euphonious appellation of Pandukabhayo, having removed thither the seat of Government 437 B. C. The accounts of the reforms which he introduced into its municipal government and ad-