

MISSION FIELD.

ANURADHAPURA, THE BURIED CITY OF CEYLON.

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The American Mission in Ceylon is working among the Tamils in Jaffna, who are of the same race as are fourteen millions of people in southern India. But the southern and central portions of the island are peopled by Sinhalese, who have a different language and religion. In some of the jungles in the interior there are some tribes of wild people called Veddahs, who live by hunting and wear little or no clothing. They are supposed by many to be the aborigines. The Sinhalese came from somewhere near the Ganges in 613 B.C. Their name means the lion race, from *sinha*, lion. They are supposed to have intermarried more or less with the aborigines, whom, however, they called demons. Their capital was made in the city of Anuradhapura, in the north central part of the island.

In the second century B.C., Buddhism was either introduced or revived by a noted missionary from northern India. The Queen and her companions wished to be initiated into the mysteries of this religion, and for this purpose the sister of the missionary was sent for. When she came she brought a branch of the sacred Bo tree, under which Gautama sat on the day that he attained to Buddhahood. This was in the year 245 B.C. The story of this tree has been handed down by a continuous series of authentic chronicles. It has been carefully tended, and there is no doubt that this is the oldest historical tree in the world. Three terraces have been built around it, so that only the branches are now above ground. Other trees of the same kind are growing near, but its leaves are easily distinguishable, being more oval. It is the *figus religiosa*, a kind of banyan, but without root from the branches, and is held sacred by the Hindus also. Thousands of Buddhists come here to worship it in the months of June and July.

Not far from this tree are the dagobas. The oldest of these was built in 307 B.C., to enshrine the right collar bone of Buddha. It is sixty-three feet in height and bell-shaped. There are many of these dagobas in this city. One of the largest is called Ruwanweli, or Golden Dust. It was begun in 161 B.C., and was originally 270 feet high, and contained many costly offerings and relics. It was built to commemorate a victory over the Tamil invaders. For many centuries the city lay desolate, and these dagobas, originally white and glittering, became covered with shrubs and trees. Somewhat recently the Buddhists have attempted to repair and restore them. This one is now 159 feet high. The wall is not very strongly built, and a few weeks ago a portion of it was washed down by heavy rain. The bricks of which the dagoba is composed are largely decomposed by exposure. Around the base was a circle of brick elephants. There are four large statues of the king and others, once covered with gilt, and there was said to be an underground passage to the room in the centre. The holes in the wall are left by the masons for scaffolding.

The Abhayagiriya Dagoba, or mountain of safety, is the largest of them all, having been 405 feet in height and 357 feet in diameter. This was two-sixths of the height of the great pyramid in Egypt. The Chinese traveller, Fa Hien, who visited this city about 412 A.D., and gave a full account of all, says that this dagoba was 400 cubits high, and adorned with gold and silver and precious stones, and that there were 5,000 monks in its monastery. Certainly there are very extensive remains of monasteries and chapels around it. The present height is 251 feet. As it was fast falling into decay, the government undertook its repair, restoring the ancient form so far as possible. It is said to have been begun in 59 B.C. by the then reigning king, in gratitude for the recovery of his throne after a war with the Tamils. Some think that in those times Anuradhapura was the largest city in the world.

Its ruins cover many miles, and its magnificence must have been very great. Its prosperity depended entirely on a system of irrigation works, the most extensive ever known. The invaders destroyed these ultimately, and the country was ruined and speedily became jungle. Some of these artificial lakes have been restored, but it will take generations before the malarial fevers are conquered. The country is being gradually brought under cultivation, and the railway now being decided upon will hasten the process. There are other remarkable buried cities in Ceylon, but this is the most noticeable.

JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER.

The preacher rose in his pulpit to plead for God's work in the mission field. It was his favorite topic—foreign missionary effort; and his rare gifts of eloquence and pathos were seldom displayed to more advantage than when pleading with an audience to devote time, money, and talents to God's service among the heathen.

There was a rustle of expectation among the crowded congrega-

tion as the preacher rose. Two or three ladies drew out their pocket handkerchiefs in case their susceptible and easily moved feelings brought on a display of tears.

Close under the pulpit sat a lovely girl just budding into womanhood.

"Such a clever girl," said her friends.

"A graduate, too, I hear?" asked one.

"And no wonder," would volunteer another; "she has had every advantage of education and social position, and no money spared on her accomplishments."

"She will marry well," prognosticated many.

But her father always shook his head and smiled, saying: "I hope not; she is the very apple of my eye, and now that school duties are over I hope to keep her many happy years at home, to be my sweet companion and my greatest joy."

The preacher preached his sermon. It was a very remarkable one, famous for its pleading pathos, asking for volunteers for the mission field. He addressed himself to the audience, pleading with overpowering fervor. "I claim all for Jesus," he cried; "He deserves the best that you can give—the fairest flower, the richest gem, the sweetest song, the loveliest gift that man's heart ever conceived. I want your youth fresh and fragrant, your beauty of face and form, the best powers and talents of your redeemed body and soul."

And then he turned to the young among his hearers and pleaded for their personal sacrifice to Christ, drawing a vivid picture of the reward which awaited those who forsake all for Christ's sake, ending with a tender appeal that touched every heart and bowed every head with tears.

The sermon was over, the benediction pronounced, and the congregation dispersed.

The preacher walked slowly home through the darkening streets, to be greeted as he entered the threshold of his home by his beautiful young daughter. Her face was glowing with the zeal of an inspired purpose.

"My father!" she cried; "I have heard the Lord's call to-day, and I have answered it; I am ready to go forth. 'Here am I; send me!'"

The preacher looked at his child like one bereft of sense, then put his hands before his eyes as though some fearful sight had met him, and said in a voice that he could hardly command: "What did you say, my daughter?"

"I know that you would be overjoyed, dear father," cried the girl, mistaking his emotion. "You who so pleaded for Jesus (Christ to-day will be only too glad to give me to His service. I know that you love me dearly, and that is just why you will like me to obey His call, for you said that nothing was too good for Him. O father, dear, I love you much, but to-day I have learned to love Jesus better."

Then the father, with cold, cold hands and dry lips that would not frame an answer in words, put the fair young face away from him, and in silent agony of soul, like one in a terrible dream, made his way to his library. Locking the door, he threw himself on his knees and buried his face in his hands. "O God, I cannot, I cannot!" he wildly cried. "She is my child, my darling child, the joy and brightness of my lonely life—take anything but her! Thou hast flocks and herds; leave me my own ewe lamb."

Then he rose and paced the room. He had never thought of this! His cherished daughter laid upon the altar! A small volume of poems lay upon the table. Mechanically, hardly knowing what he was doing, he took it up and read:

"O fond, O fool, and blind,
To God I give with tears;
But when a man like grace would find,
My soul puts by her fears."

Was it God's voice, God's call to the grudging father? The preacher thought it so, and accepted the heavenly censure as from the lips of a father. Pulling himself together, he unlocked the door and went straight in search of his daughter, whom he found sitting alone, her bright face clouded, for she had been bewildered by his reception of her decision.

"My child," he said, folding her in his arms, "Christ deserves the best, and I freely yield you to Him."

From that moment he accepted her sacrifice in the spirit in which it was offered, and which he had himself inspired. His daughter became a missionary, and carried out to the letter, throughout her life, the advice that he had given so bravely to others from his pulpit that memorable day, little dreaming that it would reach the heart of his own child.

Is not this the story of Jephthah's daughter lived out in the nineteenth century? How many of us would like to feel that God might at any moment take us at our word? We sing such solemn words, we repeat such wonderful truths, we call upon others for