In Aldershot Camp I found a new era inaugurated in the moral and spiritual life of the camp through the influence of Miss Robinson—the soldiers’ friend—and the "Home" raised by Mrs. Daniels and her daughter, and the energetic Wesleyan chaplain, the Reverend Richard Hardy, who with the assistance of Miss Robinson had started a Temperance Society in every Regiment in camp. A stimulus was given to spiritual work among the officers through the influence of the General Officer Commanding, General Sir James Hope Grant aided in all good works by Lady Hope Grant and the Principal Medical Officer, Surgeon John Fraser, C.B.

The Aldershot of 1872 was not the spiritually neglected wilderness I had known in 1862. There were influences at work in connection with the Homes opened there that had brightened the life of the soldier and made the air of Aldershot Camp fragrant spiritually.

On the transfer of the Reverend Hardy his successor, the Reverend Richard Watson Alien was equally determined to continue the good work. One evening while sitting with him in the Soldiers Home at the back of the Cavalry Barracks, he was bemoaning the indifference of the Methodist soldier to the privileges offered him by the Home. I remarked that the Home was out of the track of the soldier leaving the camp and that until a more accessible and commodious Home and Church were erected, no improvement in the attendance was possible. I suggested that he should call on Mr. Thomas White, the owner of the ground between the Mission Hall and the Victory Theatre, adding that I had reason to believe that Mr. Thomas White would receive him in a generous spirit.

His first remarks were "where is the money to come from? How much will you give." I told him that the Methodist community would find the money, if he made out a good case (and few ever had such a good case). I would promise him a month’s pay and £100 by bazaars and collected monies, a promise which I fulfilled.

Next morning he called on Mr. White and settled the preliminaries for the acquisition of the ground, pending the appointment of a local committee.

In consequence of injuries, when dealt with by the Mounted Military Police, Hospital Sergeant Thomas Maule of the 1st Royal Scots in the Town of Aldershot ending in his death, it fell to my lot to dispense the medicines for the Royal Scots. A few days later, owing to the illness of the Hospital Sergeant of the 19th Hussars, I was instructed to add their dispensing to my already extra work. I now had three surgeries and the mortuary under my charge for which no extra remuneration was allowed. The honour was to be regarded as sufficient reward.

At the end of the first fortnight both Commanding Officers applied to the Principal Medical Officer for my transfer as Hospital Sergeant. The Director-General Sir T. Galbraith Logan declined to accede to this request. In June 1873 I was detailed to take
William Morrision

charge of the arrangements for the Field Hospital required for the review in Windsor Park in honour of the Shah of Persia.

On leaving Aldershot Camp in the early morning, I found the ambulances full of horse blankets, drivers' blankets and kits, I determined to resist this filling up of the ambulances on the return journey. I declined to take them then. This aroused a hornet's nest, the acting Principal Medical Officer, Surgeon-Major Richard Gilborne, and Commissary General Downes came on the scene and ordered me to take the kits and blankets into the ambulances. I asked Dr. Gilborne where I should put any men who fell sick on the line of march home? Commissary General Downes saw my contention and said if I took them now, he would remedy the defect in his next month's War Office Circular. An order was subsequently issued to the effect that a light spring van should in future accompany a Field Hospital on manoeuvres or at Reviews.

On my return from Windsor I was asked by the coroner's medical officer to assist at a post-mortem on a body brought in from the canal. The body was of the civilian servant of Commissary General Robinson, C.B. I carried out the post-mortem while the doctor looked on taking the notes. There was no water in the stomach, and I thought the man had been stunned or unconscious before he got into the water. The doctor would not agree. He said it was a case of drowning. Subsequently, noticing a slight break in the skin of the forehead I reflected the scalp and found a piece of lead, which subsequently the Superintendent of Police also weighed it and found it corresponded to the weight of a saloon-gun bullet—fifteen grains. The doctor still held to his view it was a case of drowning. Shortly afterwards a man came round selling a gun, I told him that was the gun that shot General Robinson's groom—the man bolted. A Barrack Sergeant was subsequently tried and acquitted. I was not asked to give evidence, nor was the lead bullet ever brought into the case.

Chapter VII

On the 1st July 1873 I was promoted Sergeant and warned to hold myself in readiness to proceed to Ceylon in relief of a Lieutenant of Orderlies, and to be in charge of the Army Medical Stores there. I was the junior of the Army Hospital Corps Sergeants at that time, and the reason was that Ceylon was a notorious place for drunkenness. I was to take the place of a dispenser who had died the previous month from delirium tremens, I was to be on the same pay as in England and with inferior rations. As a known life-long abstainer it was hoped that I would break the spell of the previous intemperance there.

On the 8th August 1873, at the Victoria Docks, London, I embarked on the Steamship "Vibilia" for passage to Ceylon (W.K.M. The Suez Canal was opened in November 1869). The first thing that struck me was that many of the ship's staff were dazed and I was informed by the third officer that it was always so on ships leaving the Thames for foreign ports. The Captain and the third officer were abstemious if not total abstainers, also the second engineer. We were reassured by the information that a pilot and a class of men known as "runners" would take the ship as far as Gravesend, where some of the passengers would embark. We waited thirty hours at Gravesend for the engine-room hands to recover from their carousals.

The first Sabbath on board was not regarded with any degree of solemnity either by passengers or crew. There was too much drinking and gambling, both sexes taking part. There was an intense fog when we were passing Pantelaria and the Captain and the
third officer were both on the bridge. There was much intemperance on board, the stewards pushing the sale of drinks regardless of the safety of passengers and ship. The Ship’s Doctor, to the resentment of the passengers, was a medical man who had given up medicine for coffee planting thirty years before and now wanted a cheap passage back to India. There were two other medical men on board and the passengers went to them.

On hearing I was going out to Ceylon to take charge of the medical stores there, the Chief Officer asked me to use the Surgery as my cabin, I declined as I was not a doctor. The “discarded” doctor asked me to help him to which I agreed. On reaching Port Said on the Sabbath morning I received a shock, those who had happily attended service the previous Sabbath, rushed off to the French theatres and many questionable places. The further I removed from Home the more conspicuous became the irreligion of my countrymen.

We steamed into the Canal on Monday morning. It was interesting here and there to examine the few traces we could find of the geology of the Canal and to admire the genius of the man who designed and made it. It afforded some amusement to watch the natives collecting the fish washed up on the sand by the ship’s propellers and left there as the waves receded. The most conspicuous object of the landscape going through the Canal was the Palace of Ismalia, the deserted residence of the Empress of the French, erected as a quiet retreat from the volatile life of the French Capital. How fickle and unenduring is popular applause!

A considerable amount of speculation was indulged in as to the particular spot where Moses crossed the Red Sea from the Egyptian side, but there seems to be no dubiety as to the spot where he landed on reaching the other side, it’s location being well marked with a grove of palms enclosing a spring of water called Moses’ Well. It is evident that Moses vetoed war correspondents in his camp, otherwise the history of the forty years marching and countermarching would have been richer in literary and geographical embellishments than it is. In the Red Sea we now experienced the miseries of tropical life with the thermometer at 90°F, in the cabin it even rose to 96°.

We wished we were on Ben Nevis amongst the ptarmigans and white hares. Punkahs were fitted up in the saloon to comfort those whose life on board was wholly devoted to card playing. What the heat was in the stokehold was too horrible to contemplate. Trade Unions were not so omnipotent as they are now, or artificial contrivances would have been supplied to make the stokehold habitable. We wended our way down the Red Sea to Perim, the Eastern Gate of the Red Sea known to sailors as “Hell’s Gate”. The Twelve Apostles stood sentry over the gate, but were apparently unconcerned about those who were passing out of or into this purgatorial hole. Our exegete was silent on the reason why these rocks were called the Twelve Apostles, yet he was ready to locate the betrayer (W.K.M. Strange that I, the writer’s son, should have to look up the dictionary for the definition of the word ‘exegete’—Exposition of the scriptures).

Leaving Perim we steamed to Aden. The monotony being relieved by the movements of the flying fish, the dolphins and sharks, while here and there a stranded wreck proclaiming unmistakenly the dangers of a seafaring life. We dropped anchor in Aden Bay on the twenty-first day after leaving London. It is interesting to watch the boys diving for coins around the ship.

Having landed we made our way to the barracks, water tanks and such places of interest as were available to the traveller. I was delighted to find that Aden came under
Bombay Command and not under the Colonial Office. On pricing samples of ostrich feathers, and expressing horror at the price demanded, I found the retailer ready to justify the price “Master no come often, master make good bargain, master must pay good price.”

After replenishing the larders and stokeholes, we weighed anchor and steamed across the Gulf of Aden to the shelter of Cape Guardafui (W.K.M. I note my father does not record what he told us verbally, that he played his bagpipes at Aden). The ship’s officers gave us much gratuitous information as to what we might expect on rounding the point to encounter the South West Monsoon. The steward had fitted the “fiddles” on the dining tables in anticipation of a change in the weather. On rounding the Point we met the full force of the gale. Many stokers came on deck and squatted round the windlass to enjoy their evening meal. Suddenly without the least warning, the ship heeled over while a large wave even reached the foot of the mast. Firemen, passengers, dishes were all washed down into the cook’s galley. We then realised the Chief Officer’s yarns were spliced with a modicum of truth.

It was interesting to watch the crest of a storm-tossed ocean (W.K.M. How strange! Ever since 1929, in our various homes, we have had one picture on the wall—a watercolour of a storm-tossed ocean—when my general practitioner in Edinburgh in 1956, an ex-naval surgeon and a keen R.N.V.R. man, asked if he could have it when we were both finished with it!).

Two days of boisterous weather considerably reduced the demand on the ship’s larder. All the passengers with the exception of myself, my wife and a gentle man who had been crossing annually for thirty years paid a three day’s tribute to Father Neptune. On the third morning after leaving the African coast the gale increased in intensity. About noon one of the davits securing the larboard lifeboat was broken by the roll of the ship striking the boat on the top of a wave, the axe was promptly applied and the boat drifted away, to announce on some shore the probability of “another foundering at sea.”

On the eighth day after leaving Aden, the first glimpse of Ceylon the land of the “spicy breezes” was announced, amid a chorus of general rejoicing and a solemnly expressed thanksgiving for the merciful Providence that gave promise of immunity from the horrors of the South West Monsoon for at least the next three years. As we steamed into Colombo, this important anchorage, we were amazed by the poverty struck appearance. A few guns of George I period pointed seaward from the Flagstaff Battery behind the Governor’s quarters, more for show than for service. No shelter was provided, so that there was nothing to protect passenger boats from the fury of the gales that swept the Indian Ocean. The landing pier was a wooden structure that, from its appearance and decayed condition would give the idea that it was built by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century. A custom house in keeping with the pier and a staff of custom house searchers, clerks and superintendents as antiquated in their views and action as if the printing press had never been invented. A closer acquaintance with the younger members of the staff materially altered the opinion I formed when fretting under a three hours waiting in the Custom House to have my boxes searched for dutiable articles. This treatment had roused my radical spirit to ask if a Colony, whose exports came into our Home Ports duty free, levied taxes on our goods and chattels. I was informed that The Scriptures we sent them supported the taxation of strangers. Today their Harbour, Custom House and Staff can challenge comparison with any portion of the civilized world.
The scenery as viewed from the boat-deck of the steamboat was exquisitely grand. The mountains of the interior stood out boldly against a cloudless sky. The perennial foliage that covered both hill and plain seemed to justify the poet’s conclusion that every prospect “Pleases, Pleases” and we were about to land on an Eastern Paradise. Castellated towers here and there peeped out amongst the coconut groves manifesting the luxurious grandeur of the successful and prosperous colonists. Having surveyed the scenery for some time, I then returned to my cabin and handed over the keys of the surgery to the “Chief” and made my arrangements to land. I then made my way to the Principal Medical Officer’s office and presented my letter of instructions and was told that it was quite impossible that he could allow a non-commissioned officer to take over charge of what had always been an officer’s appointment, however well qualified the non-commissioned officer might be.

I told him that I had had charge of medical stores three times the value of the medical stores here, when only a lance-sergeant on one shilling and ninepence a day. I referred him to the instruction he had received from the War Office and to those which I had brought with me, to which he drily remarked “I suppose they will soon send a subordinate to relieve me”. “You’re quite right, Sir, you will be the last Principal Medical Officer in Ceylon, your successor will be a Senior Medical Officer”. He candidly informed me that he had been much gratified by the letter he had from Surgeon-General John Fraser regarding my work, and my principles and hoped that I should break the spell, the evil spell that my predecessor in the non-commissioned ranks had given to the place. He informed me that five of them had been invalided or died from the effects of their intemperate habits. He detailed Surgeon Quill to place me in charge of medical stores, so relieving Lieutenant Moss and also to place me in charge of the Staff Dispensary. He referred the matter to the War Office who replied it was their original intention that Lieutenant Moss would return home tour expired and to be relieved by Morrison in charge of the medical stores.

On leaving the office I was stopped by the office messenger, an Indian Tamil, who asked me if I was going to employ servants, and if I should, to employ two servants I must be sure that one must be a Tamil and one a Singalese. Each would be happy to report the other’s delinquencies. Later experience confirmed this sage advice. There was much petty stealing by the appoos (the indoor servants). The excuse or the denial was always the same, and often the only English known “I Christian, Master”. An intimation that often saved the ‘master’ from asking for his testimonials! To the new arrival the absence of a kitchen range is much deplored. A brick oven heated within by wood is a poor substitute for a Benham’s range. The appetite had to be re-educated to appreciate the dainties prepared by the Tamil cook.

Chapter VIII

I was not long in the Ceylon Command, when I became painfully conscious of the little interest taken by the officers of the Army Medical Department in the subordinates of the Army Hospital Corps. Deputy Surgeon-General Godfrey Watt was a bachelor and lived with the General Officer Commanding. I interviewed him to ask for better financial conditions for my employment in a position normally held by an apothecary, for which he got £12.10.0 colonial pay. I was doing duty hitherto done by an officer and a sergeant. I certainly should have some remuneration for the charge of medical stores.
He then informed me that I had to take over further duties, and in his office, to replace his chief clerk who was a chronic alcoholic. He had his chief clerk in and warned him “Now I have an abstainer in the office, I will not tolerate your absenting yourself from the office nor your coming in in a state of intoxication.” For the three years and eight months I was there he became a changed man and never came to the office under the influence of drink. I had been used as the scourge with which to bring him to know himself.

I soon found that the prices charged for European provisions were such as to land me in bankruptcy if I indulged in any such luxuries on a salary of twenty-five shillings a week, when flour sold from sixpence to ninpence per pound and if sealed in 2lb tins at two shillings. Danish butter at three shillings and ninpence per 1lb tin. Tea at five shillings per pound. All articles of European origin at exorbitant rates. Much Hennessey’s Brandy was sold. I asked a gentleman of the Counter how Europeans paid their liabilities. He said there are four classes of customers:—

(a) Those who, like yourself, pay over the counter. (b) Those who pay every three months. (c) Those who pay after they have been put into court. (d) Those who never pay and you others have to bear our losses.

I decided I must become a vegetarian or find some way of using my leisure to provide more money.

The commissioned officers serving in the colony had a graduated scale of colonial allowance from twelve pounds sterling for a Lieutenant to twenty-seven pounds for a Lieutenant-Colonel, in addition to forage allowance whether they kept a horse or not. The men of the various Corps had free rations equivalent to four pence a day. The Army Hospital Corps were worse off than when in Aldershot Camp, where they had free rations. I asked the Principal Medical Officer to take up the matter either with the G.O.C. or the Home Authorities—he declined to act in the matter. I was not surprised that under such conditions my predecessors were driven to trying to augment their poor incomes.

I had not been many days in my post when a native arrived with a request for “one rupee worth of castor oil”. I told him to go to Maitland’s stores or I would hand him over to the police. He said “Master! For thirty years I buy medicines here, plenty medicines, one bottle this size . . . one rupee, another bigger bottle this size . . . two rupees, a big, big bottle three rupees”. This led me to examine the 240 bottles of castor oil I had taken over and found thirty-two large blue bottles empty, nicely sealed and waxed and placed at odd intervals amongst the full bottles. The culprit was dead and the Chief agreed to replace them, rather than report the loss to the War Office.

I was compelled to get some other employment for my leisure hours. No one would employ me as a dispenser unless I left the Service. Having dabbled in photography when in Aberdeen. I got a camera, a stock of chemicals and Jabez Hughes Manual of Photography, improvised a darkroom and began to practise on the men of the garrison. After a few month’s practise I found not only an enjoyable pastime but a profitable speculation. I was extremely fortunate in having Surgeon-Major L. A. White as my chief in the staff Dispensary and so long as my work was satisfactorily arranged I was allowed from 5 a.m. to 10 a.m. for outdoor photography and again from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the evening.
Through the kindly notices given to my work in the "Ceylon Observer" I was enabled considerably to add to my income and to live in comfort in Ceylon. My photography excursions were as interesting as they were profitable. Pyro and silver in the days when photography was a science materially helped the photographer to comply with such a request as I received from a native advocate "to make us as white as you can" for his family group. The amateur had, in those days, to depend on himself for a good many of his chemicals. I converted my chloride of silver to nitrate, a half sovereign was occasionally dissolved to make chloride of gold. I made my own developing tent and my photograph frames. I found tent making a profitable occupation. A local member of the photographic fraternity complained to a friend of his in the Audit Office, who put the unfortunate man's woes into verse:

This man's for ever obstructing my paths
with his schemes for new cameras and baths
But I trust to kind fortune by April or May
To have him and his chemicals out of my way.
For he with his photos of all that is grand
Is taking the trade, Sir, clean out of my hands.

My holiday excursions occasionally extended into the interior of the Island, where the coffee planter welcomed the photographer to the shelter of his home. While on one of these delightful holidays, accompanied by my wife, our total abstinence gave a shock to my friend's butler. When we had been there four days, he asked his Master how he made such a mistake as to say his guests came from Colombo "You tell me Colombo lady and shentleman come here. Dat no Colombo Shentleman or Lady", "How so?" enquires the Master. "I know Colombo ladies and shentlemens all drink brandy and soda, dat lady and shentleman drink water.

Such unfortunately is too common a practice among European residents in the tropics. The native cynic grasps the situation clearly, when those who call themselves "christians" indulge in questionable habits. Having had to question a native pensioner from the Ceylon Rifles, employed in the medical stores, as to whether drink or opium was the cause of his frequent blundering; with the air of offended dignity he replied "Sar, I now Christian: I Mohametan" insinuating that only christians indulged in the pernicious habit of imbibing alcoholic liquors.

A few days after this, soldiers and a sailor passing my office, the three being under the influence of alcohol, when the Mohametan quietly approached my desk and pronounced the question "Do these men come from the missionary's country?" To this I replied that unfortunately they did. "Missionary better stay at home, him get plenty work".

I regretted that the taunt was too well deserved. Yet it is a sad truth that if those who leave our shores in the service of our country, whether as soldiers, sailors, civil servants, or commercial adventurers were first brought under the influence of christian truth, it would be easier for the missionary to vary out his praiseworthy and Christ honouring work. My interrogater had good grounds for his caustic rebuke that the "missionary would find plenty of work at home". He had no idea that in christian Britain seventy thousand home heathens were annually sacrificed with the connivance
of the christian church to gild the coronets periodically bestowed on the manufacturers of beer and whiskey.

On another occasion I had to remonstrate with him on his audacious request, repeated once in every four months, for permission to go home for three days to bury his mother. I demurred on the fourth occasion to repeat the concession and asked the reason for this periodical re-internment for his mother. As usual he was ready with the answer. "De first was my faader’s first woife, the second time was my faader’s fifth woife: de third was my faader’s fourth woife; and this my faader’s seventh woife". My wife, who was standing by my desk, turned towards him and asked how many wives he was the proud possessor of? Raising his hands above his head in respectful horror-stricken mood, he slowly responded "Oh! Maam! I von: him much plenty”.

I was much impressed with the standards required to select new arrivals for membership of the Club House on the Galle Face. Mercantile traders were not classified by education or intellect, the line of demarcation being drawn over the open brandy case, those who sold by the bottle were excluded, but those who sold by the case were admitted. The commercial morality of some of the European traders would not stand much critical examination. On one occasion a consignment of merchandise from a London House was sent to the order of an Englishman in the colony, and hypothecated to one of the local banks. On presentation of the invoice the consignee declined to take it over, urging inability to meet the bill and clear the Custom House. He was offered most reasonable terms; but persistently declined the goods. The consignment was put up for sale by public auction and was delivered at his store on the evening of the sale at one half of the invoiced price. Such were the men from whom the benighted heathen were supposed to learn the moral standard of the christian faith.

An incident that transpired at a social gathering in the Assembly Rooms on the Galle Face shortly after I landed, amused me very much. A few passée dames who “sipped the scandal potion pretty” scanned with the fiendish malignity the bloom of youth on the fair form that “tripped” into the room on her husband’s arm, a young local bride of prepossessing appearance, whose personal charms had probably advanced her above the station in which she was born, but not destined to stay there; conversation ceased in the corner for a time. The murmur of applause and admiration was too much for the leading spirit among them, who belched out in sulphurous volume “But her grandfather was a soldier”. Bystanders whose colonial experience went back to the fourth decade of the nineteenth century could afford to smile at the reference remembering that the faded critic could have traced a more questionable pedigree than that of a soldier’s without going as far back as her grandfather. When the grandfather of the one was custodian of the Government institute for the reclamation of the wanderers from the paths of moral rectitude, the father of her critic was given into his care decorated with bracelets of the best Sheffield steel. Verily, society soon forgets moral lapses when prosperity has smiled on the delinquent. Men are measured in social life (by all but the tailor) by the amount of surplus gold or credit notes they have at the bankers. Colonial life, within a few degrees of the equator, is apt to generate a listless feeling that requires careful watching to keep the digestive and locomotive organs in a healthy condition. With the thermometer at 94°F in the shade it is difficult to throw off this induced ennui.

A military medical officer, who by the injustice and laxity of discipline in his department, had carried on a large and renumerative private practice, sold it on retiring from
the army to a private medical practitioner for two thousand five hundred pounds. Within a few months his genial successor in his military office, had the majority of his patients, the good will of whom the civil practitioner had purchased at too high a figure.

A casual paragraph on the subject of the sale of his private practice by a military medical officer appeared in a local paper, in which the usual pungent note appeared bearing the letters "Ed. C. O." in which the insinuation was conveyed that if the general practitioner had dabbled less in local politics and social gossip than he did, he might have profitted by his investment. This led to an action in the District Court of Colombo and Judge Berwick had his opportunity to display his profound knowledge of Roman Law as administered in the days of Nero. The outrageous sentence was an enormous, heavy fine to compensate the man who had lost his practice, and ordered the offending editor to apologise to the unfortunate practitioner on his knees, on the doorsteps of the Court House, before such of the public as cared to witness the degradation of the most popular and certainly the most useful man in the Colony. The judge who had thus prostituted his high office sought to browbeat the lawyer who lodged an appeal against the judgement. The appeal was carried to the Supreme Court, and the Chief Justice, Sir Richard Morgan, a native-born Dutch Burger of Ceylon, upset the judgement and castigated the mediaeval judge for his lack of appreciation of the progressive instincts of the Age into which an unfortunate freak of nature had injected him nineteen centuries too late. In legal circles and in Ceylon the good Judge is but a speck on the pages of the past, while Alister Mackenzie Ferguson will live as long as our Colonial Empire lasts.

Scarcely had this tempest in a teapot subsided, when the Colony was thrown into a state of excitement by the injudicious exercise of power on the part of the youthful prelate who came out to rule the destinies of the Episcopalian Church in Ceylon. Unaware of the amount of latent energy enclosed in his canonic(al) vestments, he injudiciously sought to gauge his strength with the Church Missionary Society in this interesting Crown Colony, he made no allowance for the popular influence that sustained those grand men in their war of the heathenism that reigned supreme around them. He thought that he had only to speak the word and those stalwart veterans of the Cross, who had been preaching the gospel under a tropical sky when he was a babe in the nursery, would at once bow to the East at his bidding, abandon their principles and practices, and thus cease their evangelic work among the heathen. He deprived eleven of those godly men of their licence to preach the gospel, feeling that a repetition of ecclesiastical history was possible, that while Mordecai flourished, Haman, the man of straw, could not enjoy his prosperity (W.K.M. R.S.V. Common Bible 1973, page 435. "But Mordecai did not bow down and do obeisance to Haman, whom the King had set above all princes. Mordecai was a Jew and when Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow down or do obeisance to him, Haman was filled with fury").

Churches might remain shut, the heathen might remain in the darkness, so long as the church missionaries refused while in prayer to turn towards the rising sun, or allow the bishop to select their lay agents. He felt that if he could get the superstitious native catechist into his hands he could tracterianize the Colony in a brief space of time.

An indignant Colony was up in arms against this unchristian action and strong protestations went from all sections of the Evangelic Churches in the Colony to the Home Authorities. After a prolonged war, peace was eventually proclaimed in a victory for
the Church Missionary Society. The Bishop's zeal had outrun his prudence, he had entrusted to his imprudent mento, the Ahithopel who ruled for some years in the Cathedral grounds. (*W.K.M. The Bible Text Cyclopaedia. Rev. J. Inglis 1860:*—

"Ahithophel, David's counsellor, joins Absalom 1 Chr. 27.33. Commits suicide on his counsel being rejected 2 Sam. 17.1-14.23)."

He, the good Bishop, had long ago mourned in sackcloth and ashes the injudicious exercise of his early acquired power, while in his zeal in the extension of Christian missions has condoned his first outburst of Tractarian fervour. He has since then won golden opinions from every section of the Christian Church for his untiring devotion to the souls entrusted to his care.

The Editor of the Ceylon Observer on seeing the young prelate's name in print prophesied that the last of the State paid Bishop of the Anglican Church had been appointed. His name when deprived of the letter "L" coincided with the stone that completed a building in that glorious country where the prophetic Editor first inhaled the fragrant aroma of peat and heather. The Editor had wrought assiduously to place the copestone on Church Establishments and lived to see the fulfilment of his prophecy in the dis-establishment of State Churches in Ceylon. At the time dis-establishment was not then within the range of practical concessions. The dis-establishment Church in Ceylon, as in Ireland, has prospered by the change.

On the disbandment of the Ceylon Rifles the Deputy Surgeon-General determined on returning home, but before doing so recommended that abandonment of Newera Ellya as a military sanatorium. The railway had not then penetrated sufficiently into the interior of the island to ensure a speedy transit into the hill stations, while the opening of the Suez Canal suggested to him the possibility of sending invalids in the incipient stage of disease to England at as cheap a rate as the administration of the hill station would cost. He had overlooked the fact that on recuperation in the hills they would again return to military duty in the garrison. Their restoration would be as effectually ensured at Newera Ellya as at home. For nearly twenty years this excellent Sanatorium was closed against the British soldier. Ceylon then became a Senior Medical Officer's charge.

On the return home of the Deputy Surgeon-General, the administration of the Army Medical Department developed on Surgeon-Major A. Peile Cahill, a warrior who never hesitated to assert his personality when circumstances forced this upon him. He invariably manifested that he had the courage of his convictions. As a perverse obstructionist he had few equals among his own nationality. He gloried in having a "Donnybrook" affray, and felt it a real pleasure to throw down his hat for some one to kick it. He had not long to wait.

The fire-eating autocrat Major-General John A. Street, C.B. assumed the Command in relief of General Renny, C.S.I. He had been in the Colony but a month or two when he ordered a Company of the 57th Regiment, The Middlesex Regiment, from Galle to Colombo and one from Mandy (possibly Kandy) to give him a larger command for spectacular exhibitions on the Galle Face. Without consultation with the Medical Department he ordered five additional beds to be put into each barrack room, already fully equipped to maximum occupation, so as to accommodate the contemplated addition to the Garrison. When the order was officially
promulgated the Senior Medical Officer presented himself at the Brigade Office to ascertain where the additional troops were to be accommodated, as he had not been consulted in the matter. He was told that extra beds were put into every room for the purpose. To this he replied that he could not allow overcrowding in the barrack rooms, nor sanction the use of canvas while ample accommodation could be provided elsewhere. General Street jumped from his chair in a towering rage and roared at the highest pitch he could command "I'm the General here". "Yes Sir" replied the imperturbable Pat. "Sure you're the General for discipline, and I'm the General for health". General Street saw that he could not gainsay the view taken by the Senior Medical Officer and countermanded the original order. The "General" for health was for the time victorious.

On the following day General Street issued an order that officers and men in the Command should at once conform to the Queen's Regulations in the matter of beards, and forthwith scissors and razors were reluctantly set to work. Many of us felt keenly the unwarranted piece of martinetism, simply to compel the Senior-Medical Officer to part with his much prized ornament. He for whom the malicious edict was primarily intended was the only one who disregarded it. He was summoned to the Brigade Office to explain his reasons for not complying with the order to shave. To this he replied that he wore his beard on medical grounds, on medical authority that extended to India and the Colonies, and that he was about to leave for England in a few days, he regretted that he could not part with what so effectually protected his throat. The martinet was for once non plussed. It must be admitted that the patent right of ready retort is not the exclusive right of the Briton, nor even of an Irishman, but it is not expected among the possessions of the slow-moving residents of the East. I met it however in an Arab commission agent. I had occasion to order a ring with five rubies, stipulating that it was not to cost more than fifty, or less than thirty. On production of the ring I asked him what he had paid for it. To this he quietly replied "Master no business what "Sampsi" pay, Master business what "Sampsi" sell". "No "Sampsi" I remarked "I must know what you paid for it". "Master must know what "Sampsi" pay? "Sampsi" tell lie, God punish Master make "Sampsi" tell lie." I came to the conclusion that metaphysics came as natural to the Arab as to the Scotsman and told him that rather than run the risk of becoming the recipient of the threatened punishment, I would forego the pleasure of acquiring his trade secrets. The ring cost me three pounds.

Having occasion to visit the Borella Cemetery in company with three English friends on a public holiday, I summoned the native "jehu" who invariably drove me out for photographic excursions and directed him to drive me to Borella. Mounting the "dicky" he began to discuss in his mind to which of the three institutions in Borella he would drive and began a mental soliloquy concluding that I must be bound for the Lunatic Asylum and accordingly drove us to the front door. On asking his reason for this unwarranted adventure he replied "Master only say Borella; Master no camera, not go to cemetery, shentlemen no handcuffs, master no go to jail; Master must take shentlemen mad peoples’ house".

I have been repeatedly asked what I thought of the work of the various mission agencies at work in Ceylon, Being in direct touch with the work I had ample opportunities of investigating the results of the efforts put forth to evangelize the heathen. Supposing that no spiritual results followed, which I emphatically deny, the moral improvement in the daily life of the native community amply compensates for the
outlay involved. The influence of the Christian workers in the various Protestant Educational Institutions have sent thousands of young men and women back to their heathen homes saturated with Biblical knowledge and in many cases with genuine spiritual experience, which they manifest by a consistent life as teachers in vernacular schools. In a few institutions technical training forms part of the school curriculum, which has equipped many a young man for the battle of life, and strengthened him to maintain the faith and practice unculculated in his school.

St. Thomas's College attached to the Episcopal Cathedral in Colombo, has done excellent work in the oversight and training of native youths and many of the lads taught there have graduated at the Calcutta University conferring lustre on their school and teachers, and rising to eminence in the Professional and Civil Service of their Colony. The Wesleyan Methodists have established Higher Grade Schools at various centres with equally gratifying results giving an impetus to higher culture which would never result from a purely secular system of education.

The growing numerical strength of the various Christian churches working for the spiritual and social elevation of the heathen manifests the appreciation and influence of the teaching imparted. The social advancement of the women of Ceylon through gospel teaching cannot be gauged by statistical returns, nor can any financial estimate set forth the value of the work accomplished. Eternity alone can provide the moral and spiritual results of the work accomplished by Miss Kate Scott of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Colombo during the last fifty years of the nineteenth century. The women of Ceylon are now free to think for themselves and to act for themselves, and have ceased to be mere chattels in the hands of the man who could pay the highest price for their bodies.

The success of our Foreign Missionary efforts among the heathen in the last one hundred years is manifest, even greater results would accrue if the men selected for the mission field were wholly consecrated to Christian life. My experience has been, that very questionable exponents of Christian life and doctrine have been sent into the mission field, men who have neutralized the work of some of the devoted pioneers with whom it has been my privilege to be associated with in Christian work in the Colonies. Another sad cause of failure is found in the selfishness of members of the Christian Church who export liquors to paralyse Christian effort at foreign stations. Until the Church of Christ can look this matter in the face, and cease to countenance the sale of poisonous drugs, whether as opium or alcohol, they had better cease to send out missionaries.

It is hypocrisy of the vilest sort to appear in the world as pillars in the House of God, so long as we export liquid damnation for the sake of gain, regardless of its soul-destroying influences on those who are made slaves to its use. Verily, Spurgeon was right when he said that these men, the manufacturers and exporters of alcohol, were not pillars, but caterpillars in the House of God. Heathen China persists in the refusal of our opium thrust upon her by Christian statesmen under the guns of the Fleet (W.K.M. C. H. Spurgeon 1834-1892. Popular preacher, Metropolitan Tabernacle, London).

Infidel France is determined to root out of her Dominions the vile poison which is undermining her national life, while a British House of Commons is unable to reach the House of Lords with a measure that shall liberate the slaves who are in chains to our social customs.
While resident in Ceylon the old Dutch ramparts that enclosed the commercial portion of Colombo were demolished and new barracks erected on the site. Five two-storied blocks were erected in echelon facing the Galle Face promenade and capable of accommodating a Battery of Garrison Artillery and four or five companies of Infantry, while the exterior presented a very attractive appearance, the interior reflected scant credit on the superintending officials. The flat concrete roofs seemed ill adapted for tropical climates. As soon as the concrete dried and scarred by the sun came under the torrential showers of the South West Monsoon, the barrack rooms became uninhabitable. Having occasion to visit a Colour Sergeant of the 57th Regiment one morning after the breaking of the South West Monsoon, I found himself and his wife crouching in a corner of the bed, the only dry spot in the room, under a large umbrella to protect themselves from the continuous downpour of rain coming through the twelve month's old roof. Passing over to another of the new buildings, a one storied block of staff quarters, I found the Army schoolmasters up to their ankles in water on the floor baling out the continuous downpour through the new roof.

A letter and leaderette in the "Ceylon Observer" of that evening set the Commanding Officer, Royal Engineers to remedy the defects due to the incapacity of his subordinates. He resented the suggestion contained in the letter to the press, that the married quarters should be converted into a Home for Imbeciles, the Royal Engineers staff and officials to be the first inmates. In December 1875 the Royal Squadron escorting His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales on his Eastern tour anchored in the Colombo Roadstead. The presence of His Royal Highness created a tremendous outburst of popular enthusiasm among the European and native population each vying with the other in loyal demonstrations. I was requested by the Engineer in charge of the Breakwater works to photograph the laying of the foundation stone of the breakwater by His Royal Highness, as also the decorations and arches spanning the streets. I was called on by the Governor, Sir William Henry Gregory to furnish him with seventeen of the views he had selected from my album, to be included among others in an album to be presented to His Royal Highness as a memento of his visit to Ceylon.

I had arranged that during the presence of the Royal Squadron in the Roadstead, I should have all the Christian men and members of the Wesleyan Church and abstainers, also any Good Templars to tea each evening at 5 o'clock. Accordingly, the Master at Arms on each ship arranged that the watches came in turn and for fourteen days we had the privilege of entertaining twenty to thirty each evening.

As district Deputy of the Independent Order of Good Templars, I instituted a Lodge of the Order on H.M.S. Newcastle to carry on temperance work on board, and to extend the principles of the Order and Christian fellowship.

Soon after my arrival in the Colony I instituted a Lodge of the Order and initiated both soldiers and civilians to extend our work and principles. In no portion of the British Colonial Dominions was there at the time so much need for Temperance reformation than in Ceylon. Europeans, civilians and soldiers alike, required some restraining influence to slacken the pace on which they were bent on their destruction, to their social and moral degradation. Some of the finest intellects I met in the Colony have been lured to their destruction through the conviviality of their surroundings. The loose morality that characterized certain sections of the European community was painfully
in evidence to any who took the trouble to look into the matter. The Sergeants Mess of both Regiments that occupied the Barracks during my tour of service were veritable hells. So much so was this in evidence, that the Officer Commanding the 2nd Brigade Royal Artillery had the square where the Sergeants Mess was located put out of bounds for his men. My Quarters being close to the Mess, I had every opportunity of knowing what was going on.

To those who cavil at Colonial Office administration of Crown Colonies, a trip to Ceylon would explode a few of their antiquated theories and bile-generated expletives. Prosperity and contentment flourish there, notwithstanding the lofty assumption of the half-baked cakes thrown into office by the propulsive power of the Civil Service crammers.

Now and again a judicious selection from among tested administrators in the House of Commons would be preferable to the transfer of a promoted subordinate from another Colony. Such promotion should be confined to vacancies in the Colonies as these occur. A Governor appointed from the House of Commons has no office traditions to hamper administration. He steps into power with no preconceived prejudices, and takes up the administrative thread where his predecessor dropped it.

(to be continued)

Publications by Officers—1973

The following is a list of publications by Officers, or late of, the R.A.M.C. which have appeared during 1973, other than in the Journal of the R.A.M.C.


COWAN, G. O.  Jean-Paul Marat, M.D. Revolutionary extraordinary. History of Medicine (summer) 5, 10-12.

