CEYLON AS A FOREIGN STATION.

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In the November issue of our Journal there is a paper by Major Freeman, R.A.M.C., on "Bermuda as a Garrison," the object of his communication being to give information which would prove useful as well as interesting to Officers proceeding on duty to the Colony of Bermuda. May I say that I look upon Major Freeman's purpose as a most useful one, and hope his example will be followed by other officers in our Corps giving descriptions of the foreign stations they may have served in. The practical information embodied in such accounts cannot fail in being of value and interest to those who may in the future be called upon to serve in the stations described.

As a contribution to the design initiated by Major Freeman, I propose in this communication to give a description of Ceylon, in the hope that it will be useful to those officers who in the future may have the good fortune to serve in that beautiful island, one which, in natural scenery, can vie with any part of the world.

GARRISON.

The normal garrison of Ceylon comprises one European Infantry Battalion, three Companies of Royal Garrison Artillery, half a (Fortress) Company of Royal Engineers, together with detachments of Royal Engineers, Army Service Corps, Royal Army Medical Corps, Army Pay Corps and Garrison Staff. In addition there are some Asiatic troops, composed of two companies of the Ceylon Mauritius Battalion, R.A. (average strength 135), and a Submarine Mining Company Royal Engineers (average strength 49).

The distribution of the troops is as follows:

Colombo.—G.O.C. and his staff, with all heads of departments. Headquarters of British Infantry Battalion and three Companies. One Company Royal Garrison Artillery. One Company Ceylon Mauritius Battalion, R.A.

Kandy.—Two Companies British Infantry Battalion. Two Companies Royal Garrison Artillery.
Trincomalee.—Submarine Company Royal Engineers. Half Company (Fortress) Royal Engineers. One Company Ceylon Mauritius Battalion, R.A.

Nevera Eliya (Sanatorium).—Forty convalescents.

STATION HOSPITALS.

There are station hospitals at Colombo, Kandy, Trincomalee, with a small non-dieted hospital at Nevera Eliya.

The distribution of Medical Officers is as follows:

Colombo.—Three Medical Officers, including the Senior Medical Officer.

Kandy.—One Medical Officer.

Trincomalee.—Two Medical Officers.

Nevera Eliya.—One Medical Officer.

COLOMBO.

Colombo, the capital of the island, is now an important centre of trade owing to the completion, in 1882, of an extensive breakwater which has converted an open roadstead into a fine harbour, one that provides safe anchorage for ships of any size, irrespective of weather conditions. This substitution of an extensive harbour for an open roadstead has concentrated the commerce of the island at Colombo, making that town one of the most thriving in the East. As all steamers bound for India, Australia, Burma, China and Japan call at Colombo, "trippers" are numerous. To accommodate such gentry and other travellers, some very fine hotels have sprung up. The Grand Oriental, Bristol, and Galle Face Hotels, especially the latter, are all palatial buildings, not indeed to be equalled, as hotels, in the East. Each and all are comfortable, and all things considered, to residents, moderate in their charges; conditions which induce many married officers to reside in them in preference to undertaking the responsibilities of private housekeeping; the more so, as quarters for married officers are limited in number, and suitable private bungalows are difficult to secure, and are of high rental.

The station hospital, a fine building of modern construction, occupies a commanding site facing the sea; attached to it is an excellent and commodious bungalow for the Medical Officer in charge. A smaller bungalow, fairly commodious, situated in Flag Staff Street, is reserved for the Junior Medical Officer.
The headquarter offices, giving office accommodation to the G.O.C. and all heads of departments, is a fine block situated in its own compound. This concentration of staff offices is very convenient and greatly lessens official work.

Climate.—The climate of Ceylon differs, of course, exceedingly at different elevations, but even in Colombo, the hottest of the military stations, the temperature, compared with that on the mainland of India, is equable and limited. The average yearly temperature in Colombo is 80° F., April being the hottest month, and December and January the coolest, but the variation of temperature throughout the year is small.

About May 20 the south-west monsoon sets in, with a deluge of rain, strong wind, much thunder and lightning, and continues to be the prevailing wind until October, when the north-east monsoon sets in. The average rainfall is 80 inches.

The heat of Colombo is unmistakably muggy, especially so, in my experience, during the rainy season, i.e., June, July and August. During those months the climate of Colombo is not unlike the temperature of an immense hothouse tempered by soft sea breezes. In such a climate the skin acts on small provocation, and only the lightest clothing can be endured. For uniform white drill or khaki is worn; when mufti is donned tropical tweeds or flannel suits are the most suitable materials. All residents in Colombo should have a good supply of undergarments, for a change of underlinen has to be made twice or oftener in the day by all who take active exercise. In connection with this matter of under-garments I wish to say a special word in favour of the constant use of Jaeger's elastic abdominal belts, articles of underwear which I consider to be a great safeguard against liver and intestinal disturbance.

The excessive action of the skin in such a climate as that of Colombo predisposes to chill, the occurrence of which is followed by liver congestion and intestinal catarrh. To prevent this chill we must have some material, in close contact with the abdomen, which will readily and effectually absorb the perspiration which abundantly collects there. For that purpose I can confidently recommend the belts I have named; they should be changed once or twice a day, a fresh one being invariably put on when retiring for the night, and a light cummerbund as well. I make no apology for entering into
the foregoing details of under-garment wear, experience having taught me the value of the advice I offer.

This sketch of the climate of Colombo may read dispiriting, but although most people do not find the climate a pleasant one, it has the important advantage of being, in my experience, healthy, if ordinary care is exercised.

Amusements.—The amusements available at Colombo are numerous. Within a mile or little more of the Fort is one of the finest racecourses in the East; there throughout the year numerous race meetings and gymkhanas are held.

The principal racing fixture comes off in August; at that meeting valuable cups and stakes attract to Colombo the best horses in India of the Waler class.

Adjoining the racecourse is an excellent polo ground, on which play takes place twice or thrice a week. Nearer the Fort is Victoria Park, an extensive and attractive asset of Colombo. The Park contains an excellent cricket ground, picturesque gardens, where tennis and croquet flourish, delightful rides and drives, as well as a ladies' golf course. Those who like social functions such as dances, dinner parties, picnics, &c., can have their taste fully gratified, especially during the Colombo season, i.e., in the south-west monsoon months, June, July, August and September. At that period of the year there is a plethora of society gatherings. For men there is a first-rate club in a delightful position on the sea front; there hospitality is unbounded, and bridge and billiards are always going after 5 p.m.

Last, but not least, some three miles from Colombo there is an excellent golf course of eighteen holes, named "The Ridgeway Links," after Sir West Ridgeway, who was Governor of Ceylon when the links were opened. The links, some three miles in length, are sporting in character, and have excellent greens. They are largely patronised by enthusiastic golfers, a numerous body in Colombo.

KANDY.

We will now leave Colombo and travel up country by rail to Kandy and Newera Eliya, the latter being the delightful sanatorium of the island. Kandy is 72 miles from Colombo and 1,676 feet above sea-level; the temperature in the day-
time is some $3^\circ$ lower than that of the coast stations and less humid. Nevertheless, the heat is often oppressive, Kandy lying in a deep hollow, as in the bottom of a cup. The main difference in climate is experienced at night time, a blanket or two being always required, whereas in Colombo a sheet is ample night covering. The rail journey between Columbo and Kandy is strikingly beautiful; it must be seen to be fully appreciated, no description doing it justice. I will only say that the panorama of bewitching scenery as the train climbs up the steep gradients, winds round hills clothed with luxuriant tropical vegetation, and passes through wonderful valleys, is a revelation to the traveller.

The "hill capital of Ceylon" as Kandy is called, is most picturesque, in its way, indeed, quite unique. A beautiful little lake nestles at the foot of mountains covered with gorgeous vegetation, and by the borders of that lake lies Kandy, picturesquely built, and surrounded by lavish and irrepressible greenery. Kandy is a great centre of Buddhism, and contains the renowned "Temple of the Tooth," where a reputed tooth of Buddha is jealously preserved in an elegant shrine. The famous tooth is not "above suspicion," for it is well-known that the original relic was destroyed by the Portuguese, and the present substitute, to non-Buddhist eyes, appears to be nothing more than a piece of discoloured ivory, bearing indeed, no resemblance of any kind to a human tooth. Kandy has none of the bustle of commercial Colombo, but is a sociable and popular little station.

**Newera Eliya.**

Leaving Kandy by train for Newera Eliya, we enter almost at once on the tea country. For miles and miles the hills are seen to be covered with the tea bush, and the scenery as the train climbs upwards, is hardly, if at all, inferior to that experienced between Colombo and Kandy. At Nanuoya the train is left, the remainder of the journey to the sanatorium being completed in a species of waggonette, or coach, as it is called. By this time the wise traveller will be wrapped in an ulster with a heavy rug over his knees, the temperature having fallen $20^\circ$ or more since he left hot and humid Colombo. Between Nanuoya and Newera Eliya only some four miles
R. H. Quill

intervenes, yet Newera Eliya is 2,000 feet higher than Nanuoya, a fact which will indicate the steepness of the ascent.

The extensive table-land named Newera Eliya is 6,210 feet above sea-level, and has been used as a health resort since, I believe, 1828. The climate is European, and at times (January and February) almost wintry, the temperature at night-time sometimes falling to 26° or 27° F., the ground covered with white frost, and pools of water being frozen over—a marvellous difference between the climatic conditions of Colombo, only eight hours distant by rail. In the daytime the temperature rapidly rises, but in the shade is never more than 70°, the average being 60°. The keen mountain air is wonderfully bracing, and being so easily and quickly reached is of the greatest advantage to those who have become run down by the high and humid temperature which is constant in Colombo.

On children the climate of Newera Eliya has a most beneficial effect. There they quickly regain the colour and energy lost at Colombo or Trincomalee. I would counsel parents to arrange, if possible, for the residence of their children at Newera Eliya all the year round. I adopted that plan for my two boys, aged 5 and 6 years, with the result that on their return home, after two years residence in the East, they had all the appearance of children reared in the highlands of Scotland. If continuous residence at Newera Eliya for children is not possible, then I would suggest for them a yearly change there; the visit commencing about September 15 and continuing until the end of January. During that period bungalows can be had for half the price asked for them between February and May, i.e., the season time. Of course, if residence can be extended to May so much the better for the child, the months of March, April and May at Colombo being always unpleasant and trying ones.

It is, in my judgment, difficult to praise Newera Eliya too highly. It is one of the most beautiful hill stations in the East, with shady walks, rich foliage, a picturesque lake and other landscape attractions most pleasing to the eye. The facilities for recreation are numerous: cricket, football, hockey, tennis, croquet, boating, trout fishing and golf are all in full swing between January and May. The golf links are allowed to be the finest in the East; I have had many pleasant rounds
Ceylon as a Foreign Station

on them and can testify that they are a source of great attraction to visitors from India, Singapore and Burma. In addition there is an excellent little racecourse where many pleasant meetings are held.

During the months of June, July and August (the south-west monsoon months) there is a good deal of rain and wind, so much so that during those months the sanatorium is largely deserted. Yet old residents at Newera Eliya have assured me that there is no portion of the year there so healthy as the monsoon months, unpleasantly wet though they be; an opinion which has been borne out in conversations I have had with the local medical practitioners. For the remainder of the year the climate is delightful.

The Military Convalescent Depot is opened by September 15 and remains available for the reception of convalescents until the end of May. During that period successive batches of men quartered in Colombo and Trincomalee who have been run down by the continuous muggy heat of those stations, or those who are convalescing from attacks of acute disease, are brought to Newera Eliya for a complete change of climate. The improvement which invariably follows is very great. The Medical Officer in charge of the Convalescent Depot is usually relieved after a three months’ tenure of his appointment, so as to allow another medical officer to have the benefit of the Newera Eliya climate.

The excellent and hospitable “Hill Club,” which has a number of comfortable bed-rooms attached to it, is usually made use of by all officers doing duty at the sanatorium.

Newera Eliya, which has many pleasant memories for me, is now widely known, and year by year is an object visit for crowds of tourists from all parts of the world. It is a satisfaction being able to state that before I left Ceylon in 1902, it was finally decided to establish a sanatorium at Newera Eliya on a permanent and liberal basis, for the use of the troops quartered in the Command.

TRINCOMALEE.

I must now say something of Trincomalee, which is situated on the north-east coast of the island. Trincomalee is a paradise for a sportsman of the shooting class, a variety and profusion of game being found in its immediate vicinity. A fair shot can
secure twenty or thirty couple of snipe in the day during the season, while a good shot can account for fifty or sixty couple as the result of his day's tramping in paddy fields or along the lagoons (tanks they are called in Ceylon), which afford admirable feeding ground for snipe and duck. One of the most famous of the Trincomalee snipe fields is to be found at Tamblegam, a place very familiar to Major G. E. Hale, R.A.M.C., one of the finest shots who ever served in Ceylon, and whose bags have, I believe, never been equalled. It was a red-letter day in the annals of the "Tamblegam snipe," when Major Hale was ordered from Trincomalee to South Africa on the outbreak of the Boer war.

If the paddy fields and tanks are left for the surrounding dense jungle, bears, leopards, buffaloes and various species of deer can be found, as well as the lordly elephant, but at the present time an expensive special licence has to be secured before elephant shooting can be indulged in.

Trincomalee, being out of the course of trade, would be but little known were it not for its possession of the finest harbour in the East. In that harbour the largest battleships can find accommodation and security, no matter how boisterous may be the weather. The harbour is not only safe and extensive, it is also wonderfully picturesque. Looking down on it from the barracks, its appearance, owing to its being landlocked, is that of a beautiful lake, studded with islands, and not the great harbour it is. The first time I looked on Trincomalee Harbour it reminded me irresistibly of the Lower Killarney lake, and I could not have believed it was anything but a beautiful lake had I not seen lying at anchor, within a stone's throw of the shore, two big war-ships.

The barracks, officers' quarters, and mess are of modern construction, and have an ideal position looking on to the picturesque harbour.

Trincomalee is most difficult of access, owing to there being no rail connection between it and Matale, which is some 100 miles distant.

To reach Trincomalee from Colombo travellers have a choice of two routes: (a) By sea in a small coasting steamer, which discharges and takes in cargo at various intervening ports; a tiresome and uncomfortable voyage, which consumes four or five
days. (b) By train to Matale, via Kandy, and from there by coach and bullock waggon to Trincomalee. The road journey between Matale and Trincomalee is a most trying and fatiguing one. Thirty miles are completed in a nondescript species of coach, the remaining seventy miles have to be undertaken in a bullock cart (called a bullock coach!) drawn by two bullocks, which are changed every five or six miles. The continuous vociferations of the half nude native driver, addressed to his overworked team; the jolting of the coach along the jungly road for seventy long miles, and the esprit de corps from the perspiring Jehu is, I can aver, a most trying experience. I am a fairly tough specimen of manhood, yet whenever I made this road journey between Matale and Trincomalee I reached my destination a sad wreck.

Between, then, a choice of evils, I recommend the coasting steamer to the traveller proceeding from Colombo to Trincomalee, except during the south-west monsoon months; at that period of the year, unless the traveller is an accomplished sailor, I unhesitatingly recommend the journey by road.

My residence in Trincomalee having never extended beyond four or five days at a time, I am not in a position to say much, from personal experience, regarding its climate. The temperature is practically the same as that of Colombo, but the air is much less humid, which is difficult to understand, both being coast stations. As already mentioned, to anyone devoted to shooting, service in Trincomalee would be entirely suitable, but in the absence of such an interest I should think that life there would be uncommonly dull.

I have heard ladies say that they "loved Trinco," a declaration I have ever failed to understand—no shops, very limited society, equally limited amusements, indifferent food supplies; a trying climate, and the knowledge that to reach the nearest railway station you have to travel some 100 miles in a primitive conveyance on a jungly road, ought surely to be considered by the fair sex serious drawbacks to "loving Trinco."

To complete the foregoing sketch of Ceylon as a garrison, something must be said as to its healthiness or otherwise.

When describing Colombo, I said "although the climate of Colombo is not to most people a pleasant one, it has the great advantage of being healthy, provided ordinary precautions are
That is so; certainly most of the Colombo residents, especially children, quickly lose their colour, owing to the excessive skin action, but their bleached appearance is no indication of bad health. A similar observation is applicable to Trincomalee and Kandy. Among the troops there is little malarial fever, thanks to the rarity, in the military stations, of the malaria-bearing mosquito. The Culex variety is everywhere met with, but the Anopheles genus, most fortunately, is practically an absentee. Dysentery, when it occurs, is seldom severe, and is easily dealt with. Cholera, among Europeans, is very rare, and cases of enteric fever are quite infrequent.

A word as to finance. The pay for all ranks is slightly less than the Indian rate, but the expenses in Ceylon are less. Servants on the whole are good, and all speak English. I have had two tours of service in Ceylon, the first commencing in December, 1872, when I joined as a Staff Assistant Surgeon, and the junior of all the medical officers in the island; the second in January, 1899, when, by a curious reversion of circumstances, I joined as the senior medical officer of the Ceylon Command.

I have many pleasant recollections of Ceylon, and can never forget happy days spent there, nor the unvarying kindness and hospitality shown to me during both tours of service in that delightful island.