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Vol. LXVI

January - December 1992

Nos. 1 - 4

Journal of the Dutch Burgher Union of Ceylon.

"Eendracht Maakt Macht"

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EDITOR'S NOTE

In this volume of the Journal we are privileged to publish the scholarly and interesting article "Jacob Haafner. Travels through the Island of Ceylon in 1783" by the two distinguished Dutch historians Paul van der Velde and Jaap de Moor.

This article is the outcome of research which will ultimately result in the republication in three volumes of the complete works of the Dutch orientalist, artist and writer, J. G. Haafner, in the series *Werken van de Linschoten Vereeniging*, a series which can be considered the Dutch counterpart of the "Works of the Hackluyt Society".

In this article the authors will start out with a short biographical sketch of the life of Haafner, which is based on a combination of biographical data contained in his works and data gathered from research in the VOC archives, in the Hague and in other archives. The authors will then tell you about his writings and proceed with an examination of Haafner as a writer of travel stories. They will continue with some remarks about the influence of both Enlightenment and Romanticism as they can be discerned in the writings of Haafner. They will conclude with a more detailed investigation of his writings about Ceylon and of what most people consider to be his masterpiece, his Travels on Foot Through the Island of Ceylon.

The DBU notes with regret the death, during the past year, of four distinguished members. Dr Drogo Austin, FRCS, was one of the most brilliant surgeons for several decades in this country. After he retired from Government Service he served for a few years in Liberia. On his return to Sri Lanka he became an active member of the DBU and served on the General Committee. We extend to his widow Nora our deepest sympathies.

Mr Richard Jansz was a serving member of the General Committee of the DBU when he unexpectedly died. Our deepest sympathies to his widow Loretta.

Mr Noel Ernst of Matara was a long standing member of the DBU and took a keen interest in its affairs. His sudden death is a sad loss to the DBU.

Miss Ella Brohier, another long standing member of the DBU and St Nikolaas' Home will be grievously missed by many of the DBU.

JACOB HAAFNER. TRAVELS THROUGH THE ISLAND OF CEYLON IN 1783 [1]

by

Paul Van Der Velde and Jaap De Moor

1. INTRODUCTION

This article is the outcome of research which will ultimately result in the republication in three volumes of the complete works of the Dutch orientalist, artist and writer, J. G. Haafner, in the series *Werken van de Linschoten Vereeniging*, a series which can be considered the Dutch counterpart of the "Works of the Hackluyt Society".² The first volume, containing a biographical introduction, will appear in March 1992. The other two volumes will be published over the next two years.

In this article we will start out with a short biographical sketch of the life of Haafner, which is based on a combination of biographical data contained in his works and data gathered from research in the VOC (the United Dutch East India Company) archives, in the Hague and in other archives.³ We will then tell you about his writings and proceed with an examination of Haafner as a writer of travel stories, referring to the classic study on travel writing in the eighteenth century by Percy C. Adams.⁴ We will continue with some remarks about the influence of both Enlightenment and Romanticism as they can be discerned in the writings of Haafner.⁵ We will conclude with a more detailed investigation of his writings about Ceylon and of what most people consider to be his masterpiece, his *Travels On Foot Through the Island of Ceylon*.

2. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jacob Gotfried Haafner was born in Halle (Germany) on the 13th of May 1755. Shortly after his birth his father settled in Embden as a physician. In 1763 the family moved to cosmopolitan Amsterdam. When Haafner senior's practice failed to attract enough patients, he decided to enlist as a ship's surgeon in the service of the Dutch East India Company. His decision to take his son with him had far-reaching consequences for the course of Jacob Haafner's life. Hardly had they reached Cape Town when Haafner Senior died.

At first Jacob was cared for by a friendly Dutch family but after two years, his foster parents decided that Jacob should start working.

Thus, in 1768, Haafner mustered as a cabin-boy on a ship bound for Batavia (Jakarta). In the capital of the Dutch Indies for several months he was tutor to the children of a high-ranking VOC official. Realising that he was not a born teacher he returned to Cape Town where he was employed by a slave-trader. Intensifying conflicts with his employer about the treatment of slaves made him decide to return to Amsterdam in 1770. He became a painter's apprentice but soon the atmosphere of the city began to oppress him, one of the reasons being his vexatious mother, who had tried in vain to gain possession of the money Haafner had earned as a VOC employee. Haafner, who according to himself was gripped by travel mania, decided to go East. "The love of travelling is an unfortunate, incurable desire, ending only with life, which it frequently shortens. I have been possessed with this desire from my childhood; it troubles me still now I am become older, and embitters many of my days. This insatiable curiosity to examine everything myself, and foolish passion for adventures, has exposed me to many dangers, and been the occasion of much adversity and vexation; it has often rendered me unhappy, or forced me from the happiness I enjoyed."⁶

After two years of wandering on the high seas he enlisted as an assistant bookkeeper at Negapatnam in 1773, the head office of the VOC on the Coromandel coast. In 1779 he became secretary-bookkeeper at a branch office in Sadraspatnam, a post which could have been the beginning of a promising VOC career. The outbreak of the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War in 1781 cut short that prospect. He was taken prisoner-of-war and was held for one year in Madras. After being released at the end of 1782 he arrived in Ceylon at the beginning of 1783 and made a journey through Ceylon from approximately June till September of that year. Then he went to Calcutta, where he arrived at the end of 1783. He became bookkeeper to the former Governor of Benares, J. Fowke. During his two-year stay he moved in the circles of the Asiatic Society, which had been founded in 1784 by Sir William Jones. He survived in the international business community of the Subcontinent with great ease. He was fluent in the modern European languages and Tamil and Hindi, while he also had a limited understanding of Sanskrit. He succeeded in amassing a small fortune, whereupon he returned to Amsterdam in 1787.

There he led the life of a gentleman scholar and he corresponded with English orientalists. He probably came into contact with the theoretician of the German early Romantic movement A. W. Schlegel, who resided in Amsterdam from 1791 to 1795. At the end of the nineties he started to write his travel stories, the first of which was published in 1806. His books met with success and were translated

into English, German, French and Danish. However, he did not live to see this because, on the third of September 1809, he died of a chronic heart disease.

3. HIS WRITINGS

From the year 1801 onwards Haafner started publishing about his experiences in Asia, in particular about India and Ceylon and from 1806 onwards his travel stories began to appear. These were not published chronologically and only two of them were published by Haafner himself. His son, Christian Mathias, published the other works of his father and, in 1826 - 1827, he published the complete travel stories of Haafner. In all, five books containing travel stories have been published. *Lotgevallen en vroegere zeereizen* (Amsterdam 1820) [Adventures and Early Sea-voyages] dealing with his first sea-journey and his stay in South Africa and Batavia (Jakarta). *Lotgevallen op eene reize van Madras over Tranquebar naar het eiland Ceylon* (Haarlem 1806) [Adventures on a Journey from Madras via Tranquebar to Ceylon], dealing with the period 1773-1783, his stay in Negapatnam, Madras, his escape from Madras to Ceylon; *Reize te voet door het eiland Ceilon* (Amsterdam 1810) [Travels On Foot Through the Island of Ceylon], being an account of his journey through Ceylon in 1783; *Reize in eenen Palanquin* (Amsterdam 1808, two volumes) [Travels in a Palanquin], being an account of his journey along the Coromandel coast in 1786 and his infatuation for the Indian dancer, Mamia; *Reize naar Bengalen en terugreize naar Europa* (Amsterdam 1822) [Journey to Bengal and Return-voyage to Europe], about his stay in Bengal from 1784 to 1786 and his return-voyage to Europe.

His travel stories attracted a lot of attention and positive reviews, and became popular in Holland witnessing several reprints in the twenties and the fifties of the nineteenth century. Abroad also his books were praised. The first German translation appeared in 1806, a French one in 1811 and an English and Danish one in 1821.

Two other books of Haafner's deserve equal mention. His essay *On the Usefulness of Missionaries and Missionary Societies* and his translation of part of the Ramayana. After his return from Asia Haafner was actively involved in the study of Indian languages and cultures. He worked on a translation of the Ramayana and at the same time on a book about Indian agriculture, which never appeared. The intellectual climate in Amsterdam did not encourage the study of the Indian languages and culture at that time. To escape from his isolation he contacted English proto-Orientalists, whose work had received a great deal of attention. The republic of letters in England was deeply involved in translating Indian classical texts and

writing about Indian culture. Such a conducive environment was completely lacking in The Netherlands.

Nevertheless, Haafner's knowledge of India and Indian literature received a degree of recognition in 1797, when a specimen of his translation of the Mahabharata and Ramayana was recited by the president of one of the Literary Societies of Amsterdam. The latter observed that the Dutch now had a better opportunity than the English to translate Indian texts directly from the Sanskrit. It would be just as well to view this remark about the English in the context of the era around the turn of the eighteenth century when anti-English sentiments were prevalent in the Batavian Republic.

We have evidence that Haafner translated Indian texts or contended that he translated Indian texts. His sudden death in 1809 prevented him from publishing these texts himself. In 1823 his son published a translation of part of the Ramayana. It contains 300 pages and in the introduction his son claims that his father had translated directly from the Sanskrit original. However we have to conclude that, although Haafner must have had a basic understanding of Sanskrit grammar and must have known many Sanskrit words, the claim by his son is ill-founded. Haafner's translation of the Ramayana offers a correct excerpt of the Ramayana which he must have based on oral sources and on Tamil and Hindi versions of the Ramayana. Haafner's 'translation' was the first to appear in Dutch.⁷ Notwithstanding, the founder of scientific Sanskrit studies in The Netherlands, Hendrik Kern, does not mention Haafner in his works. This is curious since abroad Haafner's work was mentioned in one breath with the works of Schlegel, Wilkins, Jones and others, for example in a German survey about Sanskrit literature by Friedrich Abeling, and in an English translation of the book by D. A. Talboys.⁸

Another of Haafner's books should now be discussed since it is essential for our knowledge of Haafner's ideas about colonialism and the influence of Enlightenment and Romanticism on his way of thinking. It is the already mentioned speculation about the significance of Christian missions: *Essay on the Usefulness of Missionaries and Missionary Societies*. Haafner sent his manuscript to the Teyler's Theological Society in Haarlem which had offered a prize for the best answer to the question: What is the usefulness of the Missionaries and Missionary societies? In his answer Haafner completely rejected the mission as such and condemned the behaviour of missionaries. The Directors of the Theological Society will probably have been galvanized while reading Haafner's manuscript. Nevertheless, they were willing to give the award to Haafner if he polished his text and quoted his sources. Maybe another reason why he was awarded

the prize was the fact that he was the sole entrant! Haafner had one good piece of advice for future attempts to missionarize: Try to Christianize the Europeans in the colonies and leave the local population alone.

In his anti-missionary attitude to a certain degree he foreshadowed Multatuli, whose Max Havelaar, in contrast to Haafner's essay, became world famous. However, while Multatuli considered it to be the task of the colonizers to educate the local population so that in due course they could become independent, Haafner argued for the complete withdrawal of all imperial powers from their colonies. It would take 150 years for Haafner's wish to come true.

4. HAAFNER AS A WRITER OF TRAVEL STORIES

While the significance of the work cited above is not debated, his travel stories can provide the food for controversy. In these he recounts about his adventures in Asia, his work in the service of the Dutch East India Company, his contacts with Indian and Singhalese civilisations and his life at the Dutch factories on the Indian and Ceylonese coasts. His description of his life in Asia departs in many cases from the rather stereotyped images depicted by other writers of travel stories. His sketches of the informal, relaxed life style, the manifold interactions between Europeans and local population, the many friendships resulting from it, the enervating parties, are enthralling and cheerful, a quality markedly absent from stories written by other writers of travel stories at that time. Apart from this clear cut distinction, Haafner had a lot in common with other writers of travel stories around the turn of the eighteenth century.

Readers of Percy Adam's *Travellers and Travel Liars* will be aware that any historian who is, for the most part, dependent on travel stories as source material is liable to find himself out of his depth. Adams distinguishes three categories of travel stories. The first category, the true travel story, is written by a traveller who has been to the places he describes. The second category is that of the imaginative travel story such as *Gulliver's Travels*. The third category Adams notes is the travel lie written by people who have never been to the places they so colourfully describe in their books; the so-called armchair travellers.⁹

The thirst for travel stories, real and fabricated, during the eighteenth century, which was marked by an outburst of intellectual activity and an urge for geographical discovery, was enormous. The travel stories satisfied both the scientific and exotic curiosity of this century, which is commonly referred to as the Century of Reason.

It could just as well have been called the Century of Plagiarism, and the travel-story was the literary genre most contaminated by it. Therefore the first task of anyone wanting to assess the originality of the travel stories of the writer he is researching, is to detect all the plagiarisms in the writings. This task is a daunting one, as it involves reading large numbers of other travel stories. Some clues as to what we are up against can be found in Haafner's aforementioned essay on the Usefulness of Missionaries and Missionary societies.

In response to criticisms made about the first draft of his essay by the directors of the Enlightened and Patriotic Teyler's Theological Society, Haafner buttressed his arguments with quotations from a wide range of writers, Voltaire, Rousseau, De Las Casas, Ziegenbalg, Charlevoix and Gage. It gives an idea of Haafner's wide reading but it puts us specially on our guard. The theme for his third book 'Travels in a Palanquin, which deals mainly with his 'alleged' love affair with an Indian dancer, Mamia, could have been borrowed from the then immensely popular *Paul et Virginie* by the French writer Jean Bernardin de St. Pierre or from the equally popular *Johanna* by the English writer J. Stedman.¹⁰ In Haafner's book cited above we find a description of Haafner visiting an old acquaintance who is bewailing the death of his daughter, who had died of a broken heart. This touching scene was taken from *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien* by the Dutch writer F. Valentijn, whose works teem with plagiarisms.¹¹ We can conclude that Haafner, just as practically all other travel story writers, did not hesitate to borrow themes and stories from a wide range of other travel books.

Although Haafner may have borrowed from other books, he was not an armchair traveller. The VOC-archives in The Hague generally confirm the statements in his books regarding his whereabouts at particular times. Letters from the *Fowke Collection* in the India Office Library prove that he did indeed reside in Calcutta from 1784 to 1786.¹² One of these letters has been quoted by H. Furber in his *John Company*.¹³ Further proof of his stay in Calcutta has been found in the *Oriental Collection* of the Utrecht University Library where, amongst other papers, there is a receipt stating that *James* (sic!) Haafner had paid the rent for his house to a certain Mr. Burke and letters to Haafner written in Bengali.¹⁴ More research remains to be done in the archives of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in Calcutta, the Madras State Archives in Madras and the VOC-Archives in Colombo.

The fact that once in a while Haafner mixes up dates can be attributed to the fact that twenty years had elapsed between his return to Europe and the first publication of one of his travel stories.

The publication in 1806 of his *Adventures On a Journey from Madras. Via Tranquebar to Ceylon*, at the height of the Continental System, reinforces Percy's contention that an old man who, had been back in Europe for some years, came forward at the appropriate time to present his evidence - in this case of the cruel conduct of the English in India.¹⁵ The book deals with the destruction of the Dutch factories on the Coromandel coast during the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War and with the havoc wrought by the war between the English and the Indian leader, Hyder Ali Khan, whom Haafner considered to be the dyed-in-the-wool leader of a war of liberation.

We can also trace the motive which Adams labels the Adario motive, i.e. the use of a philosophic Indian to criticise Western culture.¹⁶ In the *Adventures* quoted above, a *sannyasin* criticises Western hunting practices and the eating of meat. Haafner claimed to have become vegetarian under his influence and he describes with repugnance scenes in Amsterdam where the blood of butchered animals gushes down the gutters.¹⁷ This motive can also be found in the writings of Romantic authors who held up distant lands and distant times as a model for Western man. Similarities may thus be discovered in Enlightened and Romantic writing. The differences between Romantic thought and Enlightened thought, on the other hand, far outweigh these similarities.

5. THE INFLUENCE OF ENLIGHTENED THOUGHT AND ROMANTIC THOUGHT ON HAAFNER¹⁸

The French philosopher, A. Finkielkraut, in his *Defaite de la Pensée*, [Defeat of Thought] published in 1987, draws a line from Enlightened thought to Imperialism and another line from Romantic thought to Anti-imperialism, on the basis of his analysis of the fundamental tenets of these opposing world views.¹⁹

The main tenet of Enlightened thought is a universalistic one. According to Voltaire reason will in due course conquer all particularistic tendencies. This linear process will result in the growth of supra-national juridical, aesthetic and moral concepts based on humanitarian insights. This way of thinking had a profound influence on French revolutionary thought, which did away with tradition and based the individual's membership of a state on that individual's free will. This meant that man, no longer the prisoner of a certain regime, religion or country, had become a phenomenon of all seasons, unrestricted by traditions. Thus institutions could no longer derive

their authority from traditions but had to feed on ideals. This break from historical consciousness (and facts) gave birth to a timeless will and unprecedented ideals which, due to their absolute aspirations fostered an imperialistic tendency.

The main tenet of Romantic thought, on the other hand, was a particularistic one. According to the German philosopher Herder, man did not belong to a nation from free will but was chained to it by birth, language and religion. Thus man could only be understood in the context of his time. The institutions by which he was governed derived their authority from their longevity. These deterministic, particularistic claims excluded universalist aspirations. Therefore Romantic thought provided ammunition for the counter-revolutionaries of the beginning of the nineteenth century, who for a long time hampered imperialistic aspirations of continental European countries.²⁰

How are these elements of Enlightened and Romantic thought reflected in the works of Haafner? The Dutch Orientalist Vogel has already noted that there was a strong contradictory undertone in Haafner's way of thinking in his address on the study of Indian literature in The Netherlands, delivered in Amsterdam in 1898.²¹ After he had praised Haafner as being the first Dutchman to have shown a profound interest in Indian languages and Indian thinking, he went on to say that Haafner was a child of the Enlightenment which was, however, contradicted by the fact that Haafner stressed the right to independence of all 'nations'.²² Seen in the context of the foregoing exposé on Enlightened and Romantic thought we can conclude that, although Haafner shared the attitudes of Enlightenment, he did not share its universalist claims if this involved colonial rule. He agreed with Herder that every nation should be governed by its own rulers.²³ In the case of India this was reflected by Haafner's admiration for the Indian leader Hyder Ali Khan and in the case of Ceylon for the emperor of Kandy.

In the introduction to his book on the Usefulness of Missionaries and Missionary societies Haafner declares that his main goal was to remove prejudice against and notions of barbarism in foreign cultures which had been disseminated by obtuse travellers and fanatical missionaries.²⁴ Furthermore he thought that Western influence on indigenous cultures was detrimental. It was embodied by depraved colonizers, who enslaved or decimated whole populations, and by missionaries who were completely uninformed about the people they wanted to convert. In this respect he greatly admired the Jesuits, who adapted religion to local circumstances and not the other way

around. In this Haafner once again showed himself to be in line with Herder's contentions that there was no universal religion but that every country had its own God who spoke that country's language. With the Jesuit example in mind he did not oppose all missionary activity, provided that the missionaries acquired a profound knowledge of the indigenous language and culture. Only then would they stand a chance of converting the local population to the Christian faith, although this missionary activity should not concentrate on civilised people such as the Hindus and Singhalese whose religions - here Haafner was quoting Voltaire - shared many of the basic tenets of Christianity.

Missionary activity should concentrate on less civilized people, for example the Hottentots in South Africa and the Vedda's in Ceylon, whom he considered to be the least civilized of all nations. On the other hand he feared that it would lead to their destruction and, in the vein of Rousseau, he admired these barbarians: 'The desires of barbarians are few', he said, 'and are easily satisfied. Therefore he is always happier than civilized men whose desires are innumerable.'²⁵ May be Haafner has also been influenced by Buddhist teachings wherein the source of human grief is defined as human desire. Haafner's saying that - from a humanitarian point of view I could become barbarian - can be better understood, in view of his being caught between Enlightenment and Romanticism as - from a humanitarian point of view (from the point of view of Enlightenment) - I could become barbarian (I could embrace Romanticism).

6. HAAFNER'S WRITINGS ABOUT CEYLON

Haafner's first serial publication, which consisted of four articles on Ceylon was never completed due to a combination of circumstances. It was published in the *Vaderlandsche Letterkundige Oefeningen*, a literary journal, in 1801 and 1802 under the title, *Iets over het eiland Ceilon* (Information About the Island of Ceylon). The serial publication fitted the mood prevailing in Holland at that moment when former VOC employees were trying to find reasons for the collapse of the once all-powerful Dutch East India Company, in connection with the Peace Treaty of Amiens (1802) which among other things stipulated that Ceylon would become a British colony.²⁶

In his serial publication Haafner blames the downfall of the Company on the neglect of defences, corruption and nepotism. The main theme of his serial publication is one of the biggest and longest colonial wars of the eighteenth century; the war waged by the Dutch against the Emperor of Kandy, which lasted from 1759 to 1766 and cost the Dutch about 10 million guilders. As far as we know it was

one of the first extensive descriptions of this war in any periodical. It is still of interest to historians of colonial wars and historians of Sri Lankan history. For example, Haafner contends that the death of Governor Van Eck was not caused by a stroke, which still seems to be the accepted explanation, but was caused by Van Eck himself. According to Haafner he committed suicide after it transpired that his campaign against the Emperor of Kandy in 1765 had proved to be a complete failure. A year later Ceylon-born Governor Van der Falck succeeded in negotiating a peace with the emperor.

Between the publication of this article and his book *Travels On Foot Through the Island of Ceylon* in 1810, eight years had elapsed, a period during which he published his book on the *Usefulness of Missionaries and Missionary societies*, and two travel stories, his *Travels in a Palanquin and Adventures on a Journey from Madras via Tranquebar to Ceylon*. Chronologically seen, his *Travels on Foot* is a continuation of the *Adventures*. The book was published a couple of months after Haafner's death. He had written and composed the book on the basis of his travel notes. We can conclude from the way the last part of the general description of Ceylon, which precedes his *Travels on Foot*, is written, that he knew his time was running out. In some instances he apologizes for not having been able to treat a certain subject in more detail. Probably the last lines he ever wrote are those at the end of the general description of Ceylon under the heading: *Farewell Ceylon and the End*. 'Fare thee well thou ingratiating objects which have enchanted my soul! Fare thee well!' Knowing that Haafner spent the last days of his life working on his book about Ceylon lends a dramatic and romantic flavour to a book full of perilous moments. Upon publication the book met with instant success and, in literary terms, it must be considered his masterpiece. The book was reprinted a couple of times in the nineteenth century and not long after its publication it was translated into German, French, Danish and English.

As we mentioned earlier, the first part of the Dutch version of the book consists of a general description of Ceylon of 60 pages. The description as such is representative of the scientific and investigative nature of Enlightened man. It consists for the most part of a description of the fauna, agonizing fights between animals seem to attract Haafner's particular attention, and a description of the flora. Haafner also devotes attention to the aboriginal population of the island, the Veddas, to whom he was attracted from a Rousseauian perspective. This general description has not been included in the translations of the book. However in the *Journal of the Dutch Burgher Union of Ceylon* in 1926, a small part of this text has been published under the title: 'A general description of Ceylon'.²⁷

The first English translation appeared in London in 1821. It was part of the fifth volume of the series *New Voyages and Travels*, which included five other travel stories. In a footnote on the first page the translator, Sir R. Philips, justifies the translation of Haafner's book by saying: "A modern Dutch account of Ceylon, now that island is become an English colony, cannot fail to be interesting to English readers, independently of the curious facts and singular adventures detailed by the writer. The value of the work is also enhanced by the consideration that the works published describe districts bordering on the sea coast only, or of general statistics."²⁸

Although *The Travels on Foot* does not contain as many anti-English remarks as do the *Adventures on a Journey from Madras via Tranquebar to Ceylon*, Haafner includes a few anti-English remarks, which have been left out of the English translation of 1821. These have been retained in the English translation which appeared more than 100 years later in Colombo. The translation appeared as supplements to the *Journal of the Dutch Burgher Union of Ceylon* in 1926 and 1927.²⁹

The first time attention has been paid to the works of Haafner in a Ceylonese Journal was in 1890, by the well known Ceylonese historian Donald Ferguson. In the *Ceylon Literary Register*, which was published weekly as a supplement to the *Ceylon Observer*, he summarized the contents of Haafner's book on Ceylon with respect to geographical and political points of interest.³⁰ Much attention was devoted to the Candy war of 1759-1766. Since Ferguson was not aware of the existence of the English translation he used the French translation by M. Jansen.³¹ Working on part of his series he suddenly discovered a reference to the English translation by Sir R. Philips.

More than 35 years later two prominent members of the Dutch Burgher Union of Ceylon, L. A. Prins and J. R. Toussaint, followed Ferguson's footsteps. As a kind of postscript, Toussaint translated the article by the Dutch Indologist, Vogel, about Haafner which had appeared in the *Indische Gids*, a periodical about the Dutch colonies in 1900.³² Amongst other things Vogel praises Haafner for the humanitarian attitudes expressed in his writings. One should ask oneself why Prins and Toussaint decided to translate the book by a man who rejected colonialism and who was known for his dislike of the English. The anti-English remarks, which were left out in the first English translation, surface again in their translation, which I would like to label the Colombo translation as opposed to the first or London translation. His antipathy will become clear when we compare the opening lines of both translations.

The London translation leaves out the first paragraph and commences as follows: "Having been prisoner-of-war for a considerable time in the city of Madras, I found it impossible to remain any longer a witness to the misery that prevailed in it, and being in great danger of also perishing in the general famine, I resolved to make my escape to the Danish settlement of Tranquebar, where I soon arrived in an open and leaky boat."³³

The Colombo translation commences as follows: "A frightfully destructive war waged between the English and the Nabob of Mysore, Hyder Ali Chan, laid waste for almost three years the unhappy Carnatic and South Coromandel. The whole land was a scene of death and horror, and thousands of unfortunate natives of these once-flourishing and populous districts lost their lives by the sword or by the still more deadly famine. Madras, the headquarters of the English, was in a pitiful and miserable condition. Continuously and for more than a year the city seemed as if it were covered by the bodies of dead and dying Indians. For a considerable time I was prisoner of war in this unfortunate city."³⁴

From this point onwards both translations are more in harmony with each other. It could certainly be debated why Prins and Toussaint translated Haafner's book on Ceylon at a time when the striving for independence in the coloured English colonies had just gained momentum after the successful bid for independence by the white English colonies. The Dutch Burghers tried to strengthen their Dutch identity. Dutch classes were organised but the hopes of the organising committee that the success of Toussaint and Prins would induce other members to take up the study of the (Dutch) language, proved to be wishful thinking.³⁵ Neither did the plans of Prins and Toussaint materialise to: ... take in hand the translation of another of Haafner's works.³⁶ However, another of their expectations concerning their translation did come true. 'If not valued now, it will certainly be valued some years hence as a distinct contribution to our stock of information on Ceylon history.'³⁷

7. TRAVELS ON FOOT THROUGH THE ISLAND OF CEYLON

Haafner's *Travels on Foot* can be divided into two parts. The first part deals with his journey from Jaffna to Colombo and the second part deals mainly with his adventures in the jungles of Ceylon when he, in the company of another adventurer, tried in vain to locate a treasure. His fellow traveller died en route and Haafner barely escaped from the dangers of the jungle with his life. He was saved by natives who accompanied him to Jaffna. To give an impression

of what Haafner encountered in the forest the following quotations are illustrative; one about the horned spider and the other about strange sounds. "On getting up to pursue my journey, I perceived at my feet an hideous insect I had often heard mentioned, the horned spider. Though I had all my life had a particular aversion to those sort of insects, curiosity induced me to examine it more closely. Its brown rough body was more than six inches round, and its claws, which were about the thickness of a quill, held a lizard, the flesh of which it was greedily devouring. I could plainly see its fiery eyes rolling in its head; and taking a small twig, I held it under its nose, when it instantly darted at it like lightning: letting fall the twig, I set off as if a serpent had pursued me."³⁸ Nearing the end of his solitary wanderings through the forests Haafner thought he was becoming insane when he started to hear voices which he could not account for. "About midnight I was aroused from my pensive musings by a noise like the barking of dogs, accompanied from time to time by deep hollow tones that seemed to issue from the mountain on the opposite side of the canal. Before I could collect my terrified fancy sufficiently to judge what it might be, I heard the same sound behind me, but at some distance; there even seemed to be the voices of several persons, who burst into loud fits of laughter, which produced an indescribably awful contrast with the stillness of the night ... this noise continued several minutes, and sometimes seemed to approach rapidly, and then to retreat with equal swiftness ... the blood froze in my veins; I could withhold no longer ... I must see what it is, said I, were it Satan himself. I armed myself with a large stone and rushed, half desperate, out of the cavern. At the same moment there issued from behind a rock about ten paces from me, such a mixture of strange sounds, so sharp, so piercing, so horrible and uncommon, that I put my fingers in my ears, unable to withstand the hellish tumult, and retreated in such haste that my head struck against a projection of the rock; my face was instantly covered with blood, and I crept into the farthest corner of the cavern."³⁹

Upon his return to Jaffna his story about the strange noises was confirmed by others. Haafner concludes; "The Sinhalese imagine them to be the voices of ... evil spirits, but the vulgar Europeans call them cries of wood devils. The philosophical reader will, however, ascribe them to natural causes, at present untraced."⁴⁰ Here it is the 'Enlightened voice of Haafner which is addressing us.

At the beginning of his *Travels on Foot*, whilst living in Jaffna, the Romantic voice of Haafner prevails. "Here, then, I lived in tranquillity and peace, free from all care, grief and vexation. I can scarcely recollect a period in the whole course of my life, in which I was so completely happy, so truly content as then in Jaffnapatnam.

And no wonder; I possessed all that can render a man happy in this world. I had property enough to enable me to live in a liberal manner, and in worthy Templin, I had an honest friend. I had always considered independence as the greatest gift of heaven - no one had now the command over me, I had nobody to fear, and was completely my own lord and master. I loved a retired life, and in this also my wish was gratified. The house in which I lived had a grove of rustling palms and cacao-trees behind, and before a flower garden and shrubbery. I was besides blest with the society of Anna, whose heart I possessed without any mixture of self-interest, and thus my days passed away, like the current of a clear brook among borders of flowers."⁴¹

After a couple of months of this idyllic life style, Haafner was again gripped by his travel fever. When his friend the cooper had to go to Colombo, Haafner with two other Europeans joined him on his journey thither.⁴² Their retinue consisted of eleven Indians and two slaves. Before departing Haafner arranged an oppa, or safe conduct, which made travelling easy. "Two days before our departure a courier was sent out who advertises all the villages at which the traveller is to stop, or pass through. The heads of those villages, are expressly commanded, in such a safe-conduct, to hang round the ambalam, a large straw hut which acts as a resting place, with white linen. The head as well as the people must supply him with provisions as long as he thinks proper to remain in the village. The heads of the villages are, by the order of the Company, required to keep an accurate list of all the travellers who pass through their villages with such a safe-conduct, and to deliver annually an account of all the expenses thereat, to the governor; but the money is seldom or never repaid to them."⁴³

We gain an impression of how the travellers looked from Haafner's ironical description: "The four Europeans bore a considerable resemblance to a troop of freebooters going out upon an expedition. Templin, D'Allemand and myself had each a hanger at his side, a pair of pistols in his girdle, a cartridge-box before him, and a musket upon his shoulder; the deaf baker was armed with a long hussar sabre, which struck upon the ground at every step he took."⁴⁴

A little bit further on he gives a description of the deaf baker. The latter is representative of many of the Europeans who came to India and Asia. "As he spoke with the Strasburgh accent, a mixed dialect of bad Dutch and German, thickly interspersed with oaths,

and at the same time accompanied the relation of his adventures with ridiculous gestures, and a distorted countenance, it was impossible for us to forbear from now and then bursting out into loud laughter. He had married four wives in different cities in Europe, who, as far as he knew, when he went to India, were all living, and unknown to one another. They had caused him all the evils that ever base and wicked women can possibly bring upon a man. His domestic history, which he related at full length, was truly strange and humorous. He was forced to leave his first wife, for fear of his life; she was a devil in human shape. The second had sold him to a Prussian recruiting party, and he had the misfortune to lose his hearing at the battle of Rosbach. The third, who was a spendthrift tippler, soon reduced him from the comfortable situation he was in when he had the misfortune to marry her, to a state of beggary. The fourth whom he espoused at Hamburg, betrayed him into the hands of the Dutch Zielverkopers (who recruited for the Dutch East India Company) and was sent by them as a soldier to Negapatnam. He there married his fifth wife, a black paria girl of Roman Catholic religion ..."⁴⁵

When travelling Haafner had an unprejudiced eye for the beauty of nature. "The sun now rose in full majesty: the heaven was blue and clear, and the scarcely-opened dawn gave to all objects around me a youthful enchanting appearance; the finely wending shores of the gulf, bordered with high trees, the overhanging branches of which were reflected on the blue surface of the water; the gentle breath of the cool morning wind; the monotonous plashing of the light waves; the screaming of the seagulls, that skimmed in circles, the surface of the water; the melodious pipe of the red-legged snipes, calling to each other; the innumerable water-fowl, rising from the thick groves of reeds, produced in me the most delightful sensations, and, at that moment, all the dangers, all the difficulties, of our intended journey were forgotten."⁴⁶

In another description the travellers penetrate into the wood at night. "The whole forest was illuminated by flambeaus to a considerable distance, which formed a very grand spectacle. The sharp clang of the cymbals awoke all the feathered inhabitants of the woods, and being dazzled by the strong light, they flew around us in confused multitudes. Many apes also, disturbed in their rest on branches of the trees, expressed their dissatisfaction by throwing fruit and pieces of wood at us."⁴⁷

As is mentioned earlier, Haafner has given us descriptions of the merry convivial life in India. Upon their arrival in Vedative they were invited to join in a marriage party by the acting sergeant. D'Allemand ordered his slave to surprise them with his violin. "The sound of the instrument no sooner reached their ears, than they all seemed as if struck by an electric shock. They all stood up, and the young girls, encouraged by the example of their parents, eagerly called for a country dance, and taking us by the hand, notwithstanding our objections and protestations of being fatigued, they drew us into the circle. All, even the old corporal and his wife joined in the dance ... (after the dance they began singing Malabar love songs). As I excelled in that kind of singing I received the applause of the whole company. My companions, who did not understand a word of the songs, and still less could sing them, stared at me with admiration, and the respect of my koolies, who had listened at some distance, rose from that moment in a remarkable degree."⁴⁸

Not only did Haafner want to be appreciated by the native population he wanted to be considered one of them. "I could not forbear laughing to myself when the good old man took me for a Mestese. It is true I had altogether the manner and exterior appearance of one, and he was only in part deceived, for besides being without shoes or stockings, my face was quite sunburnt, and I spoke the Malabar language very fluently."⁴⁹

However the resemblance was only skin-deep. The old man must have seen Haafner writing Singhalese words in his booklet. "From the time of our departure from Poetlan, the first place where Cingalese only was spoken, I had begun to write down a great number of the words of that language, that I might make use of them in time of need. I found it to be a mixture of the Grindamee, Hindostanee, and Malabar or Tamil, languages."⁵⁰ And here Haafner inserts a comparative list of words in his book.

We would like to conclude this article with two of Haafner's descriptions of Colombo of about 200 years ago. "The succession of villages, country-houses, and gardens, with which the road was bordered on both sides; the liquor shops and casinos, that we met with almost every instant, full of European and Topaze soldiers indicated our near approach to the capital, Colombo."⁵¹ "The city is very pleasantly situated on the side of a fine broad river, full of fish and crocodiles. The streets are very wide, and of considerable length.

There are many taverns and coffee houses, kept in the Dutch manner, where people amuse themselves at billiards, bowls, chess, and other games. The environs of the city are delightful, being composed of avenues of high and umbrageous trees. There are many beautiful walks along the banks of the river, where multitudes amuse themselves, particularly on Sundays, and the suburbs are full of liquor shops and casinos which are almost always full of soldiers and the working classes of the people."⁵² Looking back on his stay in Colombo Haafner wrote: "As for the cooper and myself, we amused ourselves in the best possible way during our stay at Colombo. We were every day with some of our numerous acquaintances and friends in different parts of the environs of the city, where we amused ourselves at the billiards, bowls, and other games. In the evening we were commonly invited to a ball, a party, or a wedding. In this manner we spent a fortnight."⁵³

NOTES

1. This article is a revised and adapted version of a lecture held by Paul van der Velde at a meeting of the members of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka in Colombo on the 18th of March 1991 and a lecture held at the Peradeniya University in Kandy on the 26th of March 1991. He wishes to express his gratitude for the many useful suggestions given by the audience.
2. The republication will be edited by the present writers who are both employed at the Institute for the History of the European Expansion (IGEER) at the University of Leiden.
3. Lotgevallen op eene reize van Madras over Tranquebar naar het eiland Ceylon (Haarlem 1806); Reize in eenen palanquin (2 Vols. Amsterdam 1808); Lotgevallen en vroegere zeereizen van Jacob Haafner (Amsterdam 1820); Reize naar Bengalen en terugreize naar Europa (Amsterdam 1822); Proeve van Indische Dichtkunde volgens den Ramajon (Amsterdam 1823); Nieuwe Algemene Kunst-en Letterbode (Haarlem 1797); Algemene Vaderlandsche Letterkundige Oefeningen (Amsterdam 1801, 1802, 1807, 1809).
4. Percy C. Adams, *Travelers and Travel liars* (New York 1982).
5. J. Haafner, *Onderzoek naar het nut der Zendelingen en Zendeling Genootschappen* (Haarlem 1807). (Verhandelingen van het Teyler's Godegeleerd Genootschap XXII).
6. J. Haafner, *Travels on Foot through the Island of Ceylon* (London 1821). p. 4.
7. Jaap de Moor and Paul van der Velde, 'De heilige tale des lands'. Jacob Haafner als wegbereider van de studie van het Sanskrit in Nederland', in: H. t Hart-van den Muijzenberg (ed.), *125 jaar Sanskrit in Nederland*. To be published in September 1991.

8. F. Abelung, *Versuch einer Literatur der Sanskrit Sprache* (St. Petersburg 1830)
D. A. Talboys, *A historical Sketch of Sanskrit Literature* (Oxford 1832).
9. *Travelers and travel liars*, p. 1-18. A useful addition to Adam's work is the book of D. F. Passmann. *Full of improbable lies; Gulliver's Travels und die Reiseliteratur vor 1726* (Frankfurt am Main, Bern and New York 1987).
10. J. Haafner, *Reize in eenen palanquin*, (2 vols. Amsterdam 1808); J. B. H. de Saint Pierre, *Paul et Virginie* (London 1799); J. Stedman, *Reize naar Suriname en door de binnenste gedeelten van Guiana* (4 vols. Amsterdam 1800).
11. F. Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien, vervattende naukeurige en uitvoerige verhandelinge van Nederlands mogentheid in die gewesten* (5 vols. Dordrecht and Amsterdam 1724-1726). Vol. 4, p.47.
12. India Office Library, *The Fowke Letters*. MSS 61-233.
13. H. Furber, *John Company at work* (London 1951). p. 230.
14. University Library Utrecht, *Collectie oude handschriften*. MS 1480.
15. J. Haafner, *Lotgevallen op eene reize van Madras over Tranquebar naar het eiland Ceilon* (Amsterdam 1806). *Travelers and travel liars*, p. 17.
16. *Travelers and travel liars*, p. 199.
17. *Lotgevallen op eene reize van Madras*, p. 164-169.
18. See: Paul van der Velde: 'The orientalist, artist and writer J. Haafner (1755-1809); 'Caught between Enlightenment and Romanticism', in: *Dutch Crossing* 39 (December 1989). p. 88-95.
19. A. Finkelkraut, *La défaite de la Pensee* (Paris 1987). A. Finkelkraut, *De ondergang van het denken* (Amsterdam 1988).
20. *De ondergang van het denken*, p. 1-50.
21. J. Ph. Vogel, *De beoefening van de studie der oud-Indische Litteratuur in Nederland* (Amsterdam 1898).
22. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
23. J. G. Herder, *Auch eine Philosoph/e der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (*Sammtliche Werke* V, Berlin 1891).
24. *Onderzoek naar het nut der Zendelingen en Zendeling Genootschappen* (Haarlem 1807).
25. *Ibid.*, p. 112-113.
26. *Algemene Vaderlandsche Letterkundige Oefeningen* (Amsterdam 1801-1).
27. *Journal of the Dutch Burgher Union of Ceylon* (JDBUC) 16-2 (1926), p. 58-63.
28. *Travels on Foot*, p. 1.

29. JDBUC 15-4 (1926), p. 1-14. JDBUC 16-1 (1926), p. 15-37. JDBUC 16-2 (1926), p. 39-72. JDBUC 16-3 (1927), p. 73-119. JDBUC 16-4 (1927), p. 121-142. JDBUC 17-1 (1927), p. 143-167. JDBUC 17-2 (1927), p. 169-185.
30. *Ceylon Literary Register*, Vol. V (August 1890 to July 1891), Colombo 1891. p. 82-85, p. 91-93, p. 99-100, p. 107-109, p. 114-116.
31. J. Haafner, *Voyages dans la peninsule occidentale de l'Inde et dans l'île de Ceilan* (2 Vols. Paris 1811).
32. J. Ph. Vogel, 'Jacob Haafner. Schets uit de laatste jaren der Oost-Indische Compagnie', in: *De Indische Gids* 22 (1900) p. 384-407. This article has been translated by J. R. Toussaint under the title: 'Jacob Haafner. A sketch of his life', in: JDBUC 17-3 (1928), p. 93-105.
33. *Travels on Foot*, p. 1.
34. JDBUC 15-4 (1926), p. 1.
35. JDBUC 16-4 (1927), p. 130.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
37. JDBUC 17-2 (1927), p. 85.
38. *Travels on Foot*, p. 105.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 110-111.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
42. Because Haafner was a free Burgher at the time he arrived in Ceylon, no mention was made of his arrival by the authorities in Jaffnapatnam. That his friend Jan Gottlieb Tempelin (van Berlijn) was looking for a job as a cooper, can be learned from Tempelin's letter, dated September 30, 1783, to the Governor of Ceylon, Iman Willem Falck. In it he asks for a job as cooper in Negapatnam in India, should the peace between Holland and England be restored. (National Archives of Sri Lanka, Colombo Lot 1. The Dutch East India Company. Inventory number 1282-8.)
43. *Travels on Foot*, p. 10-11.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 15-16.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 37-38.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

DUTCH COLOMBO¹

John Capper

Once upon a time when good Queen Bess reviewed her trusty troops at the Fort at Tilbury and sent her gallant fleet to meet the great Armada, the countrymen of Pedro Lopez manned many guns on the Colombo ramparts, and the flag of Portugal floated jauntily over each gateway. Where now is the Fort stood then the Citadel, or inner fortress: the outer walls of cabook and lime, armed with small brass guns, extended along much of what is Norris' Road as far as Saint John's river, then a veritable stream running from a portion of the lake to the sea: this outer wall stretched along its bank and terminated at the sea beach. Kayman's Gate and its tower being then a guarded approach from the open country, where the wooded hills of Wolfendhal and Hultsdorf in the distance, were often infested by troops of the King of Cotta in wily ambuscade.

The Dutch changed much of this, and though they did their utmost to live at peace with the Native sovereigns, spared no pains or cost to render their strong-hold impregnable. Forts were constructed at Hangwella, Panebakere, Mutwall, &c. The outer walls of Colombo along the river banks of Saint John, were demolished: the swamp round the Fort was excavated and converted into the present lake, the earth removed from it going to form Slave Island and a portion of the ramparts. At the same time the late Fort of Colombo was rebuilt on a larger scale and on scientific principles, and it is supposed must have occupied a quarter of a century in construction. The strength that was gained by these means and the more pacific policy of the Dutch, gave an amount of security to their possessions which ultimately emboldened their principal officers and a few of the civilians, to build houses at some distance in the country, at Hultsdorf, Grand Pass and Mattacooly on the banks of the Kelani. At the happy period of which I write, Proctors had not been invented: trade was in the hands of the government, and comprised little else than cinnamon and pepper.

Colpetty existed but as a native suburb: Mutwall and Grand Pass were open country, dotted about by a few Dutch villas, whilst the Pettah consisted of a number of pretty streets pleasantly shaded by sooriya trees, the houses tenanted by families the heads of which occupied responsible posts under the government. No native trader had then desecrated by his half-nude presence, the many, well-kept rows of pleasant cheery dwellings.

In the days to which these pages refer, communication with Europe was carried on twice in each year, when the spring and autumn fleets left Holland for Ceylon, laden with the goods suited to tropical countries. Transported in the spirit to those bye-gone days, let us stand upon the Battenburg bastion and look out to sea with the Port Master and his chief pilot Jansz. The morning is bright, the air is cool and crisp, fresh from Adam's Peak, and the flag of the Dutch republic floats from the mast-head on the lofty outworks erected by the wave washed rocks where once stood a Chapel to the Blessed Virgin. The Chapel and the tower have long since disappeared, and the massive rock on which they were erected is now partially levelled on the verge of the old Galle Buck. Between those outworks and the fort walls the Port-Master dwelt, and they say a prettier house was not to be seen in all Dutch Colombo, nor a neater garden, or greener sward on which, on moonlight nights, Dutch maids and lads met to do honor to the host's hospitality, when was tapped for old citizens, many a store of ripe scheidam or may be well vatted arrack.

A sail, a sail! The signal is run up to the mast head, and quickly a gun is fired from the Commandant's quarters to awaken all those who may perchance be still asleep or dozing through the early morning. Yes, it is the spring fleet arrived, just in time for Christmas! And it is well, for stocks of all kinds are low, and even his Excellency has been compelled to use Kandyan tobacco and Caltura arrack in the place of the veritable articles from Holland. In less time than it would take to smoke a pipe of the true Virginian weed, the fort walls are crowded with soldiers, civilians and native followers, all anxious to see the three ships that are freighted with things as dear to the colonists almost as life. On they come lazily, their big sails flapping listlessly in the faint morning breeze, until the roads are reached, anchors are dropped, and ropes are coiled.

What a rush there is on shore to be sure; burly Dutch officials accustomed to doze away their lives under the sooriya trees before their offices, are on the move: troops are on the march; the Lascoryn guard are turned out with the proverbial band of tom-toms and reedy,

1. Reprinted from John Capper, *Old Ceylon: Sketches of Ceylon Life in the Olden Time*, London: W. B. Whittingham and Co., 1878, pp. 45-51.

shrieking pipes, and away they go past the Justice Hall which at that time stood facing the esplanade, just where the Council Chamber, Audit Office and other public buildings now look out across the sea-walls. The present fort Church of St. Peter's was then the Governor's house, with many reception rooms and a great audience hall. On they march round the esplanade extending partly over the site of the present Government house, and midway on which stood the fine old Dutch Church now levelled to the ground and gone, and on through the water-gate to the landing jetty where they draw up alongside the military guard assembled to do honor to the Commander of the squadron and the official new-comers.

A goodly crowd gathers about the landing place, and when the three boats from the squadron pull alongside the jetty, the guard presenting arms, and the Commander and his fellow captains with a supercargo and a few passengers of both sexes, step upon the soil of Ceylon, there is a great commotion and much interchange of salutations. Away the travellers are whirled in several unweildly conveyances of which there are no specimens in the present day, not even in the Museum. Do they drive to the Commandant's to report their arrival, to the Governor's to pay their respects? To neither of these, but to the Church on the esplanade, their first act on landing being to return thanks for a safe and happy arrival at their destination. The church in which this offering-up of thanks was made, is standing no longer. Demolished on the capture of the fort by the British, a portion alone remained standing until the year 1860, when, after having served as a powder magazine and then an ice house, it was finally razed to the ground, its site forming part of the esplanade. It stood at the south-west corner of the public green, close by where a wicket still opens on the old Galle Buck.

The thanksgiving service over, the Captains proceed to the Commandant's quarters to report their arrival, which is done over a few pipes of veritable Virginia produced in great triumph by the skippers: that ceremony of Dutch good fellowship being terminated, the party proceed to the Governor's palace, a rare old building of such capacity that a Dutch regiment could be drilled and put through its manoeuvres in the public reception room, now the body of St. Peter's: as for the audience hall and dining rooms, you could drive a carriage and four round it with the most perfect ease with plenty of room for the frisky leaders. Credentials are soon presented, and the new officials who have arrived by the fleet, are introduced and welcomed by Mynheer Van Somebody. This ceremonial over the party retire to the capacious verandah in the rear, looking out upon a terrace of rare breadth leading down to prettily laid out walks above a huge

tank of water, where in modern times there flourished a garden, which later still has degenerated into a collection of carriage sheds and horses' stables at the service of government officials, though some of the fine old trees remain living, monuments of the Dutch Governor's rule.

Under a massive tamarind tree were ranged many seats and small tables: and here in the cool evening His Highness the Governor, and his chief officers were wont to find solace in pipes and schiedam, after the heated labor of the day. To this favorite spot the new arrivals were conducted, the ladies from the fleet being consigned to the Governor's wife and her family. Need it be said how earnestly the news of old fatherland, of friends at home, of many long forgotten folk were listened to, and how doubly welcome to the half-starved-out officials were some stout flagons of the best Hollands and a portly packet of fragrant Virginia. How the flavor of those importations gave new zest to the guests' recitals of home events, and how vast clouds of smoke rose and disported themselves amidst the wide branches of the tamarind tree above, until supper was announced, when the guests followed the slow steps of mine host towards the great refectory hall where ponderous tables bore generous fare for all comers.

Not only the high officials grow merry on this red-letter day for all Colombo, but citizens of every degree, - the lower officials, the troops, the military and civil underlings have all reason for rejoicing now that the spring fleet has come, and brought letters from friends and good cheer for everybody. Beer Street, now known as Chatham Street, is alive with mirth and music: there is dancing and revelry within every other house: a corner building with huge gables, looking out upon the fort canal, where now a British wine merchant holds goodly stocks of costly liquors, a merry motely party chiefly of under civilians were entertained by the Captain of the Burghers. The evening meal being over, the tables were moved aside and to the sound of mirth-provoking music the whole party joined in the frantic movements of the Ceylon "Caffreina," a kind of tropical "Cancan," in vogue to the present time. It is a dance admitting of considerable latitude in regard to the movements of legs and arms; and it may be said of the head too, and one might almost marvel how it came to pass that a dance of such vigorous vitality could possibly find favor in any country, so near the equatorial line as Ceylon, especially in a Dutch colony; but it was a dance not pertaining so much to Hollanders as to old Portuguese colonists who cherished it and went for it on every permissible occasion. Nevertheless it is a dance admitting of much grace and pleasing effect when accomplished by moderately

slow and not wildly frantic music: the gently sweeping undulations of a proficient in the Caffreina are as pleasing and far more graceful than many modern drawingroom dances.

There are other and quieter little parties coming off in various parts of the Fort. Away beneath the Battenburg bastion for instance, the Port Master, Van Cuylenberg, is entertaining a goodly gathering of friends on the green before his pretty little Villa, where sooriya trees have been many years struggling for a crooked and at times doubtful existence against their dire enemy, the salt sea wind. But there they are, good-natured looking, humpbacked dwarfs, ready to extend a friendly branch to any young lad or maiden seeking for a seat on the soft sandy sward beneath. On the night on which this "Toddy Party" was held a good many lads and maidens were accommodated by their steady friends, the sooriyas, some of whose straggling branches descended so low as to form veritable bowers within which goodness only knows what may have occurred in matters of flirting. On an open space away from the sly sooriyas, were placed small, round, big-legged ponderous tables up to any weight of cakes and toddy jugs. Oh, those jolly jugs of brown ware, of real Haarlem make, but filled with swett toddy - cup of Lanka! How they leered out upon the assembled guests as though to coax the young maidens from their snug hiding-places. How proudly the portly cakes oozing with luscious ghee and saccharine substances, peered down from their lofty vantage ground upon the humble "hoppahs" that lay pell-mell on wide delft platters, looking as abashed at their flat insignificance as though hoping to be soon devoured and hid from sight.

But bless us, long before the good dame Van Cuylenberg and the widow Plaats, and the elderly spinsters, the Van Graafs, had half finished their critical essay on the dress and the deportment of the female new comers, such games, such romplings were a-foot in the moonlight, that must have driven a cynical old on-looker bachelor like Van Graafs, the "powder master," mad with envy. But even the nimble-footed Laura, the agile Lydia, must yield in time, from frolicsome weariness and as pretty dimple-faced Laura positively refused then and there, to dance the Caffreina, there was nothing for it but to take to creature comforts, and so it came to pass that a great and happy gathering was seen around those dumpy, ponderous tables whose loads of hoppahs and cakes, whose jugs of toddy-cup rapidly became small by degrees and beautifully less, until the wise ones of the party gave the signal for dispersing, and all made their happy way to pleasant homes not far away, to dream of the bright and gorgeous things the fleet had brought at that gay Christmas-tide.

COLOMBO RACES ON GALLE FACE IN THE FORTIES¹

J. L. K. Van Dort

The Havelock Race Course at Colombo (and the Railway), make people to forget the time when there was only one Race Course in the Island. Nor were race meetings then held every year. Those were the days when the cadjan thatched oval bungalow which stood on the site of the present Club and Assembly Rooms on Galle Face did duty for Grand Stand, weighing, and dressing rooms &c., when the Military were the principal, if not the only, promoters of the Races held, and when totalizators and all such were unknown. The old ramparts of the Fort were then not yet demolished - the Clock Tower and light not in existence. The Colombo Light was then displayed from the 4th story of the present Signalling Station behind Queen's House.

Except to those who arrived by the Slave Island or Colpetty routes, the only entrance to the Course for carriages was through an opening scarcely 12 feet wide, situated near the old guard-house which is still in evidence.

Foot passengers scrambled over the grassy mounds of the glacis (now levelled), while clouds of stingless mud-flies from the Mangrove bushes growing by the lake pestered the luckless foot passenger.

Vendors of refreshments poured in from early noon, and school boys found it none too early to find their way to the spot and regale themselves on parched peas and "Seenee-Sachara-Muttai." Servants on leave took a day out and gave themselves up unreservedly to picnicing on a mixed diet of sugar-cane "veraloo acaharoo," "cooroomba" and saurasee conjee - the latter a strange choice of food to be partaken of under a tropical sun, but which still remains popular in a thirsty crowd at the "Vale" and other Native Festivals, and holds its own against the rival charms of Bombay Syrup, and cool drinks of variegated colours.

An incessant stream of bullock carts, single and double, conveying family parties of the poorer natives from the suburbs come lumbering along and camp out on the borders of the lake. Overloaded "Family Bandies," with ancient horses being urged or coaxed along, block up the way, while hackeries at a break-neck pace come tearing along

¹ Reprinted from the *Times of Ceylon Christmas Number 1919*, pp. 60, 61, 65.

"neck or nothing" and scatter foot passengers and sweetmeat passengers far and wide.

Palanquin carriages with shutters down and curtains drawn, conveying Mahomedan ladies, and those of the Chetty community, take up an early position close to the roped off space; a rope doing temporary duty in place of railings. No charge being made for carriages however advantageously placed, first come first served, was the order of the day, and accounted for these early arrivals.

Later, an occasional buggy on high C Springs could be seen zigzagging amongst the crowd, or a conveyance built after the pattern of the first American waggon which was introduced to Ceylon by the late Mr. Wilson of the defunct firm of Wilson, Ritchie & Co. Mr. Wilson's horses were always ridden on the course by Captain Barton of the Guards (subsequently the P.M.G. of Ceylon).

Captain Price of the Commissariat rode his own horses, and his colours, white and sky blue were often quite as victorious as the red and white of Captain Barton. But the favorites were then not the horses, but the riders; and old Barton, with the collar of his old-fashioned jacket hiding the nape of his neck, cheeks, and ears, and his equally old-fashioned riding breeches reaching up to his armpits, was first favorite always, and cheered everywhere.

A marked feature of the Race Meets of early years was the silence with which the Native crowd looked on while the most exciting races came to a finish. The cheering was mostly confined to the European community in the vicinity of the "Race Bungalow." The racers of the period were chiefly Arabs, with a stray Australian or Indian horse among them. The minor events were made up by ponies from Achren and Burmah, some Indian Tattoos, and a few Ceylon-bred animals.

Of professional Jocks there were only the two Whites (sons of old White, the tarrier and trainer) and a comical looking Indian Jock very popular with the Natives. Officers of the Garrison supplied the gentlemen riders. The saddling bugle always sounded at 4 p.m. sharp.

The ropes were guarded by Gun Lascars and Ceylon Riflemen, in undress uniform. The course was cleared by men on white chargers, wearing pink and white "top-hats," and wielding dog whips with immense lashes, to terrorise now and again either a fat Nattucottaya Chetty, or an equally unwieldy Appu who would attempt to

cross the course five seconds before the start. And then, of course, there was the inevitable pariah dog who would run up and down the cleared course at the critical moment to the accompaniment of the unearthly shrieks and yells of enjoyment of the motley crowd.

On one occasion, a buffalo-cow broke loose from its grazing ground by the lake, and running wild, broke up the line at the starting post, just when the flag was about to fall, scattering the horses which bolted all over the field amidst great confusion.

In those days the weighing scales were after the rude pattern of those on tripods, still to be seen in some of the Pettah Stores.

The interval between each race was longer than it is now, and the time was profitably employed, not only at the temporarily improvised refreshment booths, but in open vehicles and on the roofs of carriages where gay groups discussed fizzing drinks infinitely superior to ginger-pop.

On Cup Day, the Governor's carriage would be seen approaching, with outriders in Lascreeen uniform, their smart *Repis* glittering with gold, and white horsehair plumes tipped with scarlet.

On the box of the Governor's carriage, beside the coachman, sat the attendant Lascreeen with a George IV helmet and plume, immense epaulets, coat with preposterously short tails, the high collar covering his ears; his hair knotted into the regulation "Konde" with a high tortoise-shell comb surmounting it, and a waist-band six inches in width encircling his body, up to his armpits almost. The band strikes up the National Anthem (to the slow and solemn measure of the times) and the horses fretting within the narrow limits of the cadjan paddock, are strutted out for parade.

The Band on duty was that of the Ceylon Rifles, in their smart uniforms of green and gold, their *Repis* surmounted with nodding black horsehair plumes.

Herr Somers was there as Maestro, and beside him were Sergeant Foulstone and Corporal O'Brien, both Madrassesees, while Potts with his tenor drum loomed heavily in the distance, and the African features of Beauchamp & Co. and Bachcho smiled on either side with their serpent and oboe; Malay boys acting as living band-stands.

CHRISTMAS IN CEYLON DURING THE OLD TIMES¹

D.

We all appreciate a good Christmas story, but it is difficult to please all tastes. Some prefer a ghost story to any other, and will read such articles with great delight. Others like to pursue something strange and marvellous, and they will swallow voraciously every word of the tale although it may not be founded on fact. I have just written a few words about Christmas in Ceylon, long after the Dutch surrendered the island to the British by capitulation, I believe, during the administration of Joan Gerard van Angelbeek, who was the last Dutch Governor of the island. Strange to say some of the usages and customs of the Dutch inhabitants of that period exist to the present day.

A traveller recently paid a visit to Holland; and he says that in almost every house he went he was offered for *lunch* what is still known here as *Pofferschies*, *Brooder*, *Painte-fretu*, *Sablinha*, *Paan-cook*, etc., and when he went in search of a comfortable lodging for a week or two, they would ask him whether he would prefer the *Forecamber* to the *Plachecamber*. Those terms are still used in Ceylon for the "front-room" or "back-room" of a house. The usual preparation for the observance of Christmas is also amusing and interesting. Long before the arrival of Christmas, the poultry-yard is stocked with all kinds of domestic birds reared for the table, such as fowls, chickens, turkeys, geese, ducks, pigs, for roasting. Things were exceedingly cheap then. For example a pullet could then be had for threepence and a *turkey cock* for a rupee. How different things are now. Christmas eve till 12 o'clock in the night is chiefly enjoyed by friendly visits and greetings. In fact that day was considered so great, and the people so hospitable, that if any one were to enter a house and make himself as free as possible the inmates would find no fault with the intruder, simply because they expect to meet with the same hospitality in return.

The respectable portion of the *Burghers* were all living in Main St., Pettah, some of whom I can remember still in the *Cassels*, the *Wambeeks*, the *Toussaints*, the *Huybertzes*, the *Van Dorts*, the *Schroters*, the *Gauders*, the *Van Houtens*, etc. A little farther on after passing the Colombo Kachcheri was another Dutch locality called *Small-Pass*. This place was chiefly occupied by the *Kriekenbeeks*,

the *Jongbloeds*, the *Cramers*, the *De Heers*, the *Fermers*, the *Pompeuses*, the *Meiers*, the *Ides*, the *Van Hoffes*, the *De Jongs*, the *Van Ecks*, etc.

On Christmas eve the whole town from one end to the other was beautifully illuminated with blue lights. Music, singing and crackers seemed to be the order of the day.

At the end of Main Street (opposite the Pettah burial ground) resided an old gentleman, black as jet. He called himself *Baron Van Kittan*, and he had an only son (a chip of the old block). This young man could read and write the Dutch language tolerably well. One day three young naughty Dutch *Burghers* took into their heads to tease the old man and his worthy son. They accordingly paid him a visit on Christmas eve late at night. The old man congratulated his son *Johannes* on the good company he kept, and brought a bottle of *Madeira* and a richly made cake (whisky then being unknown in Ceylon). Just at this moment the corkscrew was missing, and both father and son went in search of it. The three youngsters, *Jan*, *Piet* and *Claas* perpetrated a bad joke; they decamped with the cake and the bottle of wine and left them on the wall of the Pettah burial ground. Poor old *Sicket*, the grave-digger, came early in the morning to dig a grave for an old man who had departed this life the previous day. He soon discovered the good things on the wall, and took them home; but his good wife insisted on their instant removal, declaring that it was intended for some poor ghost, some devilish affair. The patrol coolie (for there were no police at that time) being informed of the fact restored them to the right owner. The father's advice to his son was, "Have nothing to do with those scamps in future".

Just then the mechanics (tailors, shoemakers, tinkers, etc.) were enjoying their *strom-strom* and flute on their way to a silver-wedding. The door of the house in which the happy couple resided was shut, but the sweet music roused the hosts; and the bystanders sang the following:-

"Amor te drums amor sonnu regalada
Amor to drums amor anjus rodiando."

The late facetious advocate *Lorenz* thus rendered into English these lines:-

"Hush my dear, lie still and slumber,
Holy angels guard thy bed."

1. Reprinted from *The Household Register*, 1892, pp. 92-93.

The report of a gun was then heard, and the musicians entered the house congratulating the happy pair. "*Folga muita*" said some; "*Bon entragu de Nata!*" said others. Afterwards they were treated to patties, ginger-beer, etc., and they went home satisfied and gratified.

GALLE-PORTUGUESE CAROL

THE GALLE PORTUGUESE CAROL

Percy Colin-Thomé

A small community of the descendants of Portuguese and Sinhala marriages used to inhabit the Dutch Fort in Galle. From time immemorial they used to sing in Portuguese what was known as the Galle Portuguese Carol. In my childhood, in the 1920s, we used to look forward to this event which was sung in the night of Christmas eve until the dawning of Christmas Day. The musical instruments accompanying the carol were two or three violins, wind instruments, cymbals and a big bass drum. The verse used to be sung in a slow, measured tone and the chorus, in contrast, used to burst forth into a lively rhythm. A feature of this performance was the carrying around of a large illuminated lantern square in shape. On the four sides of the lantern were scenes of the nativity of Jesus Christ. The lantern was fixed on top of a thick pole and whenever the lively chorus was sung the lantern was made to swivel round briskly in keeping with the rhythm of the chorus.

The choristers all powdered and decked in blue and red were led by a chorus master and they visited many of the houses in the Fort where the carol was sung. A large crowd of mostly young people followed the choristers around throughout the night. In my childhood Lyn Ludowyk and Bussy Austin were the chief sponsors of the carol.

At the time the Great War (1939-1945) broke out the enthusiasm for performing the carol had dwindled. Mr Arthur Anderson A.R.C.M who belonged to the Royal Air Force at Koggafa, transcribed the music of the carol and it came into the hands of Rev. Alan Vandergert who incorporated it into the carol service of the Dutch Reformed Church, Galle, usually held on the 23rd December.

In this way the carol survived a few more years until the church closed down for lack of a congregation caused by the great Burgher diaspora from Galle and other towns to Australia.

Thereafter, I got a copy of the music from my sister, who at one time was the organist of the Dutch Reformed Church at Galle and gave it to Dr Earle de Fonseka, Conductor of the Colombo Symphony Orchestra. The Orchestra occasionally plays this beautiful carol at public performances.

The words in Portuguese are taken from a carol service sheet of the church in Galle.

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1. Lea-vai nos per De-as este Gran-de dia, Ja nas-ce Sen-hor, por vir-gin mari-
 2. Pro-ph-e-tas E-sai-as Assim pro-ph-e-tan-do, Ja nas-ce Sen-hor, por nos dec-la-ran-
 1. a, Ja na-See Sen-hor, Ja nas-ce Sen-hor, Ja nas-ce Sen-hor, por
 2. do, Ja na-See Sen-hor, Ja nas-ce Sen-hor, Ja nas-ce Sen-hor, por
 1. Vir-gin mari-a Al-le-lu-ia, por nos-se Sen-hor, Je-sus tem na-
 2. dec-la-ran-do. Je-sus tem nas-ci-do Je-sus tem nas-ci-do, Je-
 -su-do Gran-de Re-demp-tor. Je-sus tem nas-ci-do Je-sus tem nas-ci-do, Je-
 sus tem na-Sci-do, Gran-de Re-demp-tor.

CANTIGA

Galle Portuguese Carol

1. Louvai nos per Deos
 Este grande dia,
 Ja nasce Senhor
 Per Virgem Maria,
 Ja nasce Senhor,
 Ja nasce Senhor,
 Ja nasce Senhor,
 Per Virgem Maria.

Chorus

Alleluia per nosse Senhor
 Jesus tem nascide
 Grande Redemptor
 Jesus tem nascido,
 Jesus tem nascido,
 Jesus tem nascido,
 Grande Redemptor.

2. Propheta Esaias
 Assim prophetando
 Ja nasce Senhor
 Per nos declarando
 Ja nasce Senhor,
 Ja nasce Senhor,
 Ja nasce Senhor,
 Per nos declarando Chorus
3. Hum Anjo chagava
 Per elles fallando:
 Eu ja trize hum novas,
 Per tem alegrado,
 Eu ja trize hum novas,
 Eu ja trize hum novas,
 Eu ja trize hum novas,
 Per tem alegrado Chorus

4. Ja parece hum estrella
 Banda de Oriente,
 Sinal de Nascia
 De Jesus 'nocente;
 Sinal de Nascia,
 Sinal de Nascia,
 Sinal de Nascia,
 De Jesus 'nocente Chorus
5. Ja nasce Senhor
 Ne aquel compal,
 Deos dah hum benca
 Per este Natal,
 Deos da hum benca,
 Deos da hum benca,
 Deos da hum benca,
 Per este Natal Chorus

**GENEALOGY OF THE SPELDEWINDE FAMILY OF CEYLON
JOURNAL OF THE DUTCH BURGER UNION
VOL. XXXIII - JANUARY 1944
CONTINUATION FROM SECTION XXV PAGE 80**

- 1) Harold Victor James Christopher Speldewinde born 18th October 1927 married in the Dutch Reformed Church, Regent Street, 12th September 1953, Marina Ithali Ohlmus, born 24th November 1934, daughter of Hubert Vernon Mack Ohlmus and Pearl Iris Mellonius (D.B.U. Journal vol.)

He had by her:-

1. Michelle Suzette born 14th August 1960, married Ashley Mathew De Silva on 26th September 1987 at All Saints Church, Borella.
2. Timothy Allan Brent born 7th October 1961, married in Ladies College Chapel, Colombo 3, on 25th November 1987, Esha Darini Abeyasinghe, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. T. G. Abeyasinghe.

He had by her:-

1. Timothy Andrew Brian born 19th April 1990.
- 2) Ian Mauritsz Speldewinde born 13th June 1929, married in St. Paul's Church, Milagiriya, 16th October 1963, Patricia Anne Meier, born 15th March 1945, daughter of Deryck Harry Breckman Meier and Audrey Amarencia Koch (D.B.U. Journal vol. X).

He had by her:-

1. Jacqueline Gale born 4th July 1964.
 2. Pamela Anne born 18th August 1965.
- 3) Lorna Rita Adeline born 17th July 1932, married in the Dutch Reformed Church, Wolvendaal, 20th December 1952, Ernest Vivian Spencer Vanderzeil, born 28th October 1924, son of William Willig Vanderzeil and Lilian May De Bruin.
- 4) George Noel Allan Speldewinde born 29th December 1934 married in St. James' Church, Mutwal, 18th June 1958, Rosemary Anne Van Dort (Shirley), born 10th November 1940, daughter of Bertram Alexander Van Dort and Stephanie Auwardt.

He had by her:-

1. Deanne Therese born 3rd October 1958, died 1962.
 2. Tanya Corinne born 14th November 1960, married in St. Leonard's Church, Glen Waverley, Australia, 7th May 1983, Malcolm Campbell.
- 5) Kathleen Ruth Moira born 9th October 1937, married in Christ Church Cathedral, Mutwal, 10th January 1959, George Lorensz Bartholomeusz, born 1st August 1929, son of George Bartolomeusz and Dulcie Eaton.
- 6) Fredrick Karl Speldewinde born 15th April 1940, married in St. George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe, Australia, 15th March 1969, Daralyn Jane Olver, born 30th August 1942, died 10th January 1984, daughter of William Keith Olver and Myrna Irene Carlyle.

He had by her:-

1. Jane Bethany born 30th November 1971.
- 7) Reginald Donald Speldewinde born 21st February 1942, married in Christ Church, Galle Face, 27th February 1965, Trisette Yolanda Lena Henricus, born 30th September 1940, daughter of Kenneth Lucas Henricus and Lena Millicent Cooper.

He had by her:-

1. Tamara Suzette born 4th March 1969.
2. Christopher Allan born 12th May 1973.

**ADDITIONS TO THE MULLER FAMILY
CONTINUED FROM D B U JOURNAL VOLUME NO. 50**

Vernon Allanson Maurice Muller, Consul of Liberia, at Colombo, Born - 24th April 1938.

Son of Cyril Placidus Muller & Ruth Gladys Joachim
Married in St. Mary's Church, Bambalapitiya, on 21st April 1971
Anthea Cecile Jonklass, born 22nd February 1930, Daughter of Cecil Frederick Dunbar Jonklass & Christobel May Ludovici Anthonisz.

He had by her:-

Antonio Christopher Mark Muller born 4.12.1974.

Winston Alfred Benjamin Muller born 24th April 1938.
Son of Cyril Placidus Muller & Ruth Gladys Joachim

Married in St. Mary's Church, Bambalapitiya on 14th October 1970.
Sheila Bridget Carmel Felsinger born 11.4.1940. Daughter of
Luke Peter Felsinger & Jenny Zilva

He had by her:-

Allaston Christopher Keith Muller born 18.12.1971.

ADDITIONS TO THE OHLMUS FAMILY

CONTINUED FROM D B U JOURNAL VOLUME XXVIII (NO.4),
APRIL 1939, PAGE 178

Ethelbert Haddon Ohlmus, born 20th November 1937, married in
St Mary's Church, Bambalapitiya 31st December 1976, Pamela
Rosemary Virginia Diaz, born 24th November 1952, daughter of
Orville John Diaz and Palma Marie Diaz. He had by her:-

1. Richard Andrew Ohlmus, born 17th February 1980.
2. Ryan Michael Ohlmus, born 16th September 1981.

DUTCH BURGHER UNION OF CEYLON

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