

# Journal of the Dutch Burgher Union of Ceylon.

"Eendracht maakt Macht"

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# Journal of the Dutch Burgher Union of Ceylon

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

It was encouraging to note the newspaper Reviews on our last issue of the Journal, and this has spurred us on to collect some very interesting articles on people and places, for the 60th volume. As in the past, it is our aim to maintain the high standards of English prose and poetry and every attempt will be made to attract the scholar, the historian, the literary minded and the lover of the fine arts, to contribute in no small way to this annual publication.

During the course of this year the Director of Census and Statistics made some very interesting comments on his "sampling" done on population in 1981; the most significant being that the literacy rate had risen to 86.5 per cent and the other important point made being that the Burghers were the most literate community (97.1 per cent). Education, knowledge and learning have always held the attention of the Dutch Burgher community in years gone by, and it is not out of place here to recall with pride the names of the late Mr. L. E. Blaze and the late Mr. Cyril Jansz. These two great educationists are still remembered for their valuable contribution with great reverence.

The literacy of a community or a nation can be traced back to the importance placed on education. The most important significance in the history of education in ancient Ceylon, was the introduction of Buddhism thus firmly establishing the Buddhist religion and culture. With Buddhist culture, traditions and methods a Buddhist system of education evolved and this could be regarded as the one indigenous to the country, when the Portuguese arrived in 1505. The education and training of rulers, leaders and commoners was the monopoly of the Buddhist clergy and it will be seen that this was the usual practice in other countries during the same period, where every aspect of education was handed to the next generation by the priests.

The arrival of the Portuguese in 1505 saw the introduction of Christianity and the Catholic priests became the "pioneers of Western education" in the Island. The reasons for the decline of the indigenous schools were the competition from the schools of the Western

## ERRATUM

The volume of the previous issue of the D.B.U. Journal was incorrectly given as Vol. LXIX. It should be Vol. LIX. The error is regretted.

rulers which were better organised and maintained, and a reduction in the number of Buddhists due to conversion to Christianity.

With the arrival of the Dutch and subsequent conquest of all Portuguese territory in 1656 the administration passed into the hands of the Dutch East India Company. Education was the responsibility of the State and in spite of the fact that the Dutch were primarily concerned with commerce they did not neglect the responsibilities to the people which is evidenced by the provision of several welfare services. There was a well organised system of education but, like the Portuguese, this was very closely linked to religion. Teaching in the parish school was carried out in the vernacular and the Dutch missionaries were of the opinion that the indigenous language should be used as a medium of instruction. Under Dutch rule school attendance was made compulsory and children were not allowed to leave school until they received a certificate from the Inspectors who visited the school annually. Though compulsory schooling ended at 15 there was also a period of compulsory continuation schooling for four years.

It was thus apparent that the Dutch system of education was well organised and is comparable to any advanced system of today. Even after the Dutch surrendered their territories to the British East India Company in 1796, the recommendations made in 1834 by the Colebrooke Commission for educational reforms, were very similar to those found during the Dutch era.

In keeping with the importance of education as stressed by the Dutch, the Dutch Burgher Union too has given every encouragement to the youth of the community to further their studies. The Schneider Trust offers scholarships to those students who wish to pursue their education at St. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia. The Dr. de Hoedt Scholarship is offered to those who wish to pursue a career in medicine. In years gone by financial assistance has been given to all promising students of the community, and we intend to carry on this good work, in spite of many difficulties.

"An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest" and when a person stops learning he stops growing mentally, spiritually and

emotionally. Learning is a life-long process and it helps keep one in the main stream of living. Formal learning and experiential learning help to maintain the happy balance that is required of any worthy profession and indeed experience has been categorised as "unteachable learning." It is this practical aspect of knowledge that enriches the work of man. It is widely recognised that "knowledge is a treasure, but practice is the key to it."

In general, the more a man learns "the richer harvest he reaps," but only if the knowledge is truly his own and not merely accepted from another man without the exercise of his own reasoning powers. It is also important that people should learn not merely for the sake of learning, but for the sake of knowing well enough to gain guidance in the active search for truth.

Let us therefore inculcate in our youth an inquiring mind, the desire for knowledge and learning, to develop intellectual honesty and integrity. Though our numbers may have dwindled let us inspire and encourage the younger generation to enter the honourable professions, where, as the pages of history reveal, the Dutch Burgher community were well represented and highly respected.



## HAIL, LANKA !

Let others belaud the ways of the West,  
Or homeland or township wherever it be,  
However mighty, however blest :  
Oh Lanka my Island you are all to me.

When I keel homeward from travels afar,  
And your mountains arise like wraiths from the sea,  
By rose of the dawn or beam of the star :  
Oh Island mine you are heaven to me.

And lo! from the peak and the table-land,  
That brave the vast dome so fair and so free,  
From the palm-fringed shore and the glittering sand,  
The Emerald Island calls to me.

And the strains of eld, on her night airs borne,  
Wing out of her solitudes eerily;  
The themes that are shrined in legend and stone  
Are the songs the old Island sings to me.

But Oh! for the trails that the wild men tread,  
The hills that are home to the hiving bee,  
For the tuneful beak and the horned head.  
Oh! Island, wild Island, you're home to me.

R. L. SPITTEL.

## GALLE : SOMETHING TO CROW ABOUT through a (reversed) telescope

By HERBERT KEUNEMAN

For 18 years I passed through Galle and did not know it was there. My *gama* was Matara where (when we weren't actually living in it) we spent every available holiday, homing in from as far afield as Kandy, Trincomalee and even Pt. Pedro; and the name Galle represented only one of the infinitely tiresome succession of railway stations on the interminable journeys. It was in fact more tiresome than most; for at Galle the south-bound train used suddenly, as it seemed, to lose its senses and pant off northwards again as though it had decided in a fit of pique not, after all, to deliver us where we longed to be. At this point my sister and I would dissolve into wails of infant frustration; until many repetitions of the odd manoeuvre followed by the thrill of passing through the only tunnel on the Coast Line proved to us that by some miracle of orientation we were actually on a new route and on the way home, in the end. Having learnt this, we learnt also to sit resignedly through the dull wait at the Galle platform gazing either at the bleak wall of the town gaol on the side or a turbid widish ditch backed by scabby buildings on the other until the train resumed its way with that equivocal *volte-face*, the tunnel reassured us, and the blue bays of Talpe opened to the view.

Then, for 4 years, I didn't see Galle even to pass through (I was in India, studying to take Holy Orders) until towards the end of my time away I heard that Galle was where my father had just been transferred. Nor was that the worst of it. Galle, it seemed, had me by the short hairs; for the work I was offered on completion of my course was at Richmond College as a sort of Chaplain on probation. I was not so reckless as to refuse; but I remembered only that railway platform view—an anti-palace and a prison on each hand—and I cannot say that I was elated when I bought my first deliberate ticket for the place. Yet, within an hour of landing there I was in thrall. It was Richmond began my captivation.

Never choose the railway approach to Galle. In point of fact none of the ground approaches to the city is noticeably impressive,

though near Dadalla on the road from Colombo there is a brief glimpse of great battlements, green trees at their foot and red roofs overtopping them as they rise grey and grim out of the watchet glints of the sea, that calls forth part of an ancient mystique. By sea the approach is excellent but unlikely to be realized. But the choice (if you can make it : there is a landing-strip at Koggala, a flying-boat base for Sunderlands in World War II, about 10 miles south; and a helicopter would put you down much closer in) is the approach by air. Galle is, and was, a region even more than it is a city or was a fortress or a port or a corral for bullock caravans—*gala*—whence perhaps its modern name; and its fantastically beautiful hinterland has to be ‘apprehended’ if you are to appreciate it whole. Richmond provided the beginning to my initiation.

Richmond lay just off the road to the house we lived in, and my father met my train in the car and drove me, first, to my interview with the Rev. Alec Sneath which had been fixed for that morning. I don’t really remember how the interview went or what Mr. Sneath thought of me, and frankly I wasn’t thinking much about what I thought of him (I grew to like and admire him only later) because I was thinking merely of the one thing : that here I should certainly be happy and would do my best to earn that happiness. The Mission Bungalow at Richmond was typical, in a modest way, of the mansions (but the real mansions were those of merchants from the early British times before Colombo supplanted Galle as the Island’s chief port) and though the houses were, many of them, grand enough it was their situations that made them magnificent. Richmond’s was inferior to few.

Fortunately, in my time many of these mansions survived undiminished and unsullied as, alas! modern pressures have caused them to be today : Eddystone, west of the city, on its sea-smitten bluff with its echoing cavern-like cellars; Mount Pleasant and lesser Mount Airy, to the north; Garstin Hill to the northeast, with its lovely park, its dreaming outlook towards the Elpitiya hills and its stone-cold bathroom hewn out of the living rock all green with moss and fern; Buona Vista, commanding the finest seascape in the Southern Province, on the nearer heights of Rumassala Kanda; Cloisenberg, to the east, on its own bluff between the Fort and Buona Vista, with its conservatory, and its roof-trusses with their P. & O. sunbursts still

proclaiming the provenance of its builder’s wealth, but its once lovely sea view over its ‘own’ bay has been changed for one over the new docks! Many of these still stand though their glory is departed; and if you can by tactful negotiation arrange to visit any of them, do so : with imagination you can still re-create the period when they flourished (and Galle flourished too) when up to 700 ‘passengers’ from ships at anchor sometimes thronged the narrow streets.

From Richmond we drove the 4 miles home. Home was once a small hotel, an immensely popular one for a tourist outing in Galle’s British heyday, called Armitage Hill. Bishop Heber’s name was still in the old Visitors’ Book. Poor man, what execration he has reaped for the use of a theological technical term in what was intended as a compliment to our Island! So overcome was he by its beauty that—I have seen in England a photo-facsimile of the manuscript, so know this to be true—at the expense of strict metre he struck out ‘Java’ to whose spicy breezes he had originally borne witness in his famous hymn and put in ‘Ceylon;’ yet it was only the word ‘vile’ (in a condition of un-salvation) that caught the Ceylonese eye! It may or may not, of course, be true that he was convinced of the local lack of salvation when a pedlar sold him a gemstone which turned out to be cut from the bottom of a soda-water bottle! Be this as it may, Galle is the only town I have been in where, as one gets to know one’s jeweller, one may be invited into his go-downs and dip one’s hands elbow-deep in gems, even if chiefly moonstones.

With Richmond to work in, and Armitage Hill to holiday in, I was soon deeply under Galle’s spell and involved in searching out the less touristic aspects of its antique history.

If Galle was not—as Tennent once held—the Tarshish of King Solomon’s ships—and probably it was not; for apes and peacocks and gunny bags! derived their Hebrew names (besides, in the case of the last, its English name ‘sack’) from the Tamil while it is interesting also that ‘corundum,’ to which class belong Ceylon’s finest precious stones, the ruby and the sapphire, is a Tamil word again—the harbour was almost certainly the Kaleh of the mariners of Haroun al Raschid’s time; and beyond question the Qali of the Moorish traveller Ibn Batuta. His period was two centuries before the Portuguese arrival

Yet, though the gem trade is still predominantly in Muslim, no longer to say Arab, hands hardly any Galle memorial of the Portuguese survives unless we count some memory of their language. I doubt if even this survives today in more than etymological form; but well into this century there were services for the Portuguese-speaking congregations in most churches; and my grand-mother used to speak it. (But I am forgetting how long ago that must have been: I remember her telling me how one morning, as the 'buggy,' in which she travelled from Labuduwa to the school in which she was then a pupil-teacher, came in sight of the harbour, she noticed that the water had vastly withdrawn and on the wet sand were exposed unspeakable secrets of the sea and back bones of long-drowned ships; and much later I realized that what she had seen was the terrible suck from the *tsunami* wave that twice circled the globe after Krakatoa had blown up in the earthquake of 1883). And of course, the Portuguese *bailas*, too, are even now better danced in Galle than in most other parts of Ceylon.

Important though the place was to them, the Portuguese fortifications of Galle were sketchy ones. The original piously named Santa Cruz, had been a mere blockhouse, and a small walled compound where the Harbour Police Station now stands and the Dutch later built their Zwart Bastion; the forbidding curtain which the visitor must now pass through to enter the present Fort is a Dutch munification built over the simple rampart the Portuguese hastily flung up, cutting from sea to sea the throat of the little peninsula which then became the total fortified area, only after their rivals' presence in Ceylon waters already posed an imminent threat. Along the earthwork lightly faced if at all with stone, were sited west to east three 'bulwarks' named San Antonio, Conceicao and Sant' Iago. The Dutch, when they had finally completed the splendid northern wall, renamed them Star, Moon and Sun respectively.

On the Sun Bastion, in my time, the Police Band used to dis-course pleasant Moonlight Music and the monthly recital was a delightful social occasion. Yet it was through a breach in the harbour-side face of the wall just by it that in 1640 Galle was finally stormed and taken (thus becoming the first permanent Dutch holding in Ceylon, 18 full years before the last Portuguese stronghold in the Island fell) and hereabouts took place the worst of the fighting and the bloodiest of the slaughter. Nevertheless an even pleasanter connexion

with the Sun Bastion than mine of music must be recorded. When the Dutch formally declared the northern wall complete (in 1667) three prominent ladies of the city were appointed to fire each a cannon from one of the new bastions to mark the event. That on the Sun Bastion was fired by a lively—surely she was lively—young widow, Juffrouw Hester de Solemme. The cannon were loaded with blank charges, of course; but the Juffrouw scored a bull's eye! Within a week her re-betrothal was announced; and that to no less than the Dutch Governor who had naturally been present to grace the ceremony.

Although not even the north wall, imposing as it is, is 'correctly laid out according to the Rules of Military Fortification'—Moon Bastion has one flank and Star both flanks too short, and neither has a properly constricted gorge, and Sun is but a half bastion so that it does not balance Star, and Moon is off-centre—yet the student of military engineering will find in Galle much to interest and instruct him. The cavalier on Moon Bastion is the only one in Ceylon: at any rate, the only one surviving. So is the *faussebraye*, literally a 'false dyke', a secondary wall thrown up in advance of the main one and generally overtopped by the latter (here running between Moon Bastion and the bastions on either flank) although the term is also, but preferably not, applied to a covered-way—a covert-or hidden-or protected-way; not a roofed-over passage—such as the gap between *faussebraye* and main wall at Galle affords. Here (in Galle) may be traced the 'wet' ditch, or moat, now filled in, that lay before the northern wall; a 'dry' ditch which happens to be an inside-ditch as well, within the western fortifications; and all along the wall of the coastal perimeter demi-bastions such as the Sun Bastion (a half, only, of the classic shape) and battlemented angles such as Point Utrecht near the mosque; and other salient features all called equally 'bastions' by the would be *au fait*.

It is a point to make that, well-known though Galle undoubtedly was as a port and *entrepot*—Tennent assures us that the Chinese, at all events used it regularly as early as the early 4th century, though they seem to have called it by the abstruse *alias* Lo-le—the region has no real history until the Portuguese arrive and the warlike times begin. Legends there are, and folk beliefs, but even these centre upon the rocky promontory of Rumassala Kanda rather than a demesne by any name. My favourite amongst these explains the

origin of the promontory itself and Talpekanda, the hill a mile east of it; because it typifies not only the facile dialectics of popular etymology but also the engaging fecklessness of our national reaction to mishap: not by unavailingly crying over milk spilt (or mountains let drop!) nor by enervating effort to reduce a probably irreducible disaster! but by a comfortable ventilation of the unassailable fact; for we are nationally realists, not self-deluding determinativists, whatever the advocates of modern *diyunuwinma* may say!

Anyway, here is the story. Somewhere in the Galle region sometime lived a King, and his queen was ailing. Summoning a famous giant who was his subject, he bade him search out and bring back a large selection of herbs required in the prescription advised for her. The giant after much unproductive search discovered in the Ruhunu wilderness two hills on which grew in quantity all the varied ingredients necessary, and loading a hill into each basket of a 'pingo' he set back homeward. Just outside Galle, however, his yoke overbalanced and his precious burdens fell to the ground. 'Onna vatuna!', he exclaimed, superfluously but characteristically. And the place has been called Unawatuna ever since. To this day (say the people) rare medicinal herbs difficult or impossible to gather elsewhere grow on the two relinquished hills to the great benefit of the folk of Galle, Rumaswala, in particular, is connected with several weird 'animal' legends as well. To Wellakovila, a *devala* on the beach on its Matara side, mad dogs, it is said, perform pilgrimage and make three votive circuits of the shrine before setting forth on their fierce career; beneath a great ledge of rock on the cliffside near the *devala* the sea has fretted a large cave inside which the Sea Serpent dwells, and—especially in rough weather—you may hear the monster coil and hiss and blow within; and along the main road below the foot of the headland, where the buses run, there runs also at desert midnight (if the road any longer enjoys such a condition) a huge boar with tushes of flame: demon Maha Sohona, of course!

But I think, despite all this picturesqueness, the Dutch period in Galle is my favourite; and I think that the thing about Dutch Galle that most impressed me when I learnt about it was that the ditch or canal or call it what you like that I used to observe with such bored disdain from my childhood prison in the 'Matara Express' was the outward and visible sign of a most unexpected inward though highly

utilitarian—almost alimentary—grace! Had I watched long enough I should have noticed that twice a day at high tide a small cagret swept up it from the sea to carry away on the ebb the feculence from the then slums of China Gardens. Exactly the same thing, meanwhile, was happening, had I known it, in a maze of under-ground gullies and sewers beneath the respectable streets of the Fort. In my time Galle had 'progressed' beyond this reckoned primitive stage of sanitation to one for which the original houses allowed no provision; so that the front rooms required temporary evacuation while the duteous 'coolie' passed through! But I imagine that, now hygiene has new (*sic*) techniques, the ancient conduits have come again into their own.

(A notable corollary to the tale of the ancient sewers: the Dutch—never anything if not pragmatically mercantilist—prosecuted a most profitable trade in musk from the glands of the little grey shrews: *hik-miyo* that swarmed in these subterraneous passages. How about *that* for a Non-traditional Export!)

I am not writing here a Guide to Galle for the tourist trade, so I shall not mention save in passing such obvious 'sights' as the Groote Kerk or the little church by the belfry in front of it (which may have been a Portuguese predecessor done over) and is now the Galle Club; except that I would like to draw the attention of the visitor to the former to the fact that muniments there—registers dating back to the Restoration in England; notated music for a choir, in 17th (?) century print; a noble Bible—and all preserved under far-from-preservative conditions—are well worth asking to examine. Oh and I will add that the heavy rails behind which the choristers now sit, because the old choir-loft has been unsafe for half a century, once—and that a hundred years before this present age of oecumenicism—enclosed an altar, an all-but-idolatrous object in less charitably-bent Calvinistic eyes, while the Anglican church nearby was abuilding, and the rail was the Anglican communion rail. Nor is it necessary to name still-Dutch-named streets. What I am trying to do by as it were displaying leaves from an old album is to re-create the feel of a vanishing past or a past already vanished.

The two decades of Dutch Galle's singularity as their enclave in the Island were far from reposeful; yet, even during those years of insecurity the *burg (h)er* did no less to improve his civic amenities



than the *soldat* to perfect his defences. The Dutch as you will see from any reading of their history, became the world's first nation of *bourgeoisie*; and in Galle there is plenty to attest to the (now pejoratively) 'gracious' living of those times. However, you must painstakingly search for it. The once continuous double line of high and shady *stoeps*: whence *istoppuwa* that bordered every street is far too frequently broken by hideous facades in the 'Bambalapitya' architectural style; nevertheless you may, not seldom, encounter behind these an unexpectedly preserved door—tall, wide and elaborately fanlighted; dignified—and with any luck the door may lead to nobly proportioned rooms not yet subdivided into the 14'×12' cubicles of our overpopulated day. The quiet sequestered *plaatse*, the interior courtyard round which the domestic life of the house revolved, is still likely to be there. And even, serendipically, you may still find unsold and untransplanted the odd specimen of heavily handsome *kyst* or *lessenaar* or *rust-bank*—chest or press, *escritoire*, settee or sofa—or at least a *knappje* (*cp. Kanappuwa*). A mere *astralie-lamp*—an 'astral' lamp from the word for a star: a globe lamp, for floating wicks so casting no shadow: the *golo(b)-lampuwa* of the local antique-dealer—is a nostalgic reward.

Two Dutch 'suburban' houses stand—what may remain of them—in Unawatuna. The name of one. Bath-field House, may be an Anglicization and not as suspect as it sounds: an imposing lychgate supported by scrolled walls about halfway along the base of Rumaswala Kanda identifies it. The other is even closer in to town. The creek called Waggal-modera crossed by the first sizeable bridge on the Matara road enters the sea at the near end of the Rumaswala headland, and from here a small canal emptying into it leads to an exceptionally large brick-lined swimming pool with a feeder-pond above (which I think is all that survives of what used to be the 'country' residence of the Commandeur of Galle). A massively-pillared gateway a little farther along the main road offers a less back-door access! Both sites have atmosphere if little else.

But the Dutch house above all to see is the Commandeur's town house. I have not seen Galle in years and I cannot tell how much of the original house now exists. The section of the city in which it stands has since my time been 'developed'—equivocal word—con-

siderably. But if the commercial firm of Ms. Walker's Sons who have the premises will permit you, whatever exists is likely to be still worth seeing. The great *plaatse* green with trimmed grass and bright with tended flower-beds surrounded by the high walls of the three-storeyed building; the enormous lofty rooms; the stately furniture which I remember from the time of a previous owner and of which I trust at least a piece or two remains where it should.... all carry you back to a period when pride was not confused with conceit.

There is just that kind of pride—a kind of *house-prouddness* but expanded beyond the *huissvrouw's* scope—that shows in the chancleer vaunting it from his perch on a rock which became the crest of the Dutch arms of the city—Galle may derive as well from *gala*: a rock as from *gala*: a corral, and *gallus* for *gala* is a nice heraldic cant—and at its period there was ample justification for it.

If you would see the full arms look for them over the old moss-grown and crumbling gate opening from the road that lies between the harbour and the eastern wall. That was the original gate—the larger gate that opens off the esplanade is British-built—and itself invites inspection. But think of the old gate as a memorial; not as a ruin.





## LETTERS FROM J. F. LORENZ SNR. TO C. A. LORENZ, 1842-1845

(Introduction and Notes by Percy Colin-Thome)

Johann Freiderich Lorenz<sup>1</sup> was born in Tempelburg, in Prussian Pomerania, on the 25th June, 1772. He was the only child of Captain John Andre Lorenz of the Schwartz Cuirassiers, a distinguished Company of Life Guards. Captain Lorenz was killed in military action when Johann Freiderich was only 5 years old. His mother died shortly after.

The Colonel of the Regiment, who was the Godfather of Johann Freiderich, sent him to School in Potsdam and later to a Military College in Berlin. Frederick the Great, the Scholar King of Prussia, on a visit to the Military College was so impressed by the verses composed by the young boy, in honour of his visit, that he presented him with a book of poems in red morocco.

When he was 18 Johann Freidrich left the military college and travelled across Germany to the Netherlands. When he reached the Netherlands he decided to come out East. He had an uncle in India who had done well. He embarked from Amsterdam in the winter of 1792 with a light purse, a bundle of his belongings and a stick over his shoulder. He was 20 years old at the time. He travelled round the Cape of Good Hope, earlier known as the Cape of Storms, and landed at Galle in 1793. This he later recalled was a critical period of his life as he passed through prolonged trials on land and at sea.

After he arrived in Ceylon he learnt Dutch and Portuguese. After the British took over the Maritime Regions from the Dutch he picked up English. Governor North (Later the Earl of Guildford), the 1st of a long line of British Governors in Ceylon, was impressed by Lorenz's ability and appointed him to the Fiscal's Office in Colombo. Later he was appointed Translator and Secretary to the Fiscal in Galle in June 1801, and Secretary to the Provincial Court in Matara in 1803. Thereafter, he was appointed Sitting Magistrate at Morawake Korale in the Matara District. Next, he was transferred to Gettamane, near Beliatte, and finally, he was transferred as

Sitting Magistrate to Matara at which point he retired on a pension in 1833. His work as Magistrate was highly esteemed by the Judges of the Supreme Court. The Courts of the sitting Magistrate were established in 1801 with the establishment of the Supreme Court of Judicature. These Courts had a limited criminal and civil jurisdiction and were abolished by the Charter of the 18th February, 1833, which came into force on the 1st October, 1833, following the reforms recommended by the Colebrooke-Cameron Commissions. The retirement of Lorenz no doubt coincided with these reforms.

Johann Freiderich was a man of more than ordinary intelligence and force of character. He was capable of great industry and perseverance and had wide interests and many skills. He submitted valuable reports to the Government on the agricultural conditions of the districts in which he served. He embarked on an abortive experiment in the cultivation of wheat in the Matara District.

He married three times. He first married Susanna Wilhelmina Roosemale Cocq of Galle on the 12th July, 1801. She died 22 months later after giving birth to two children who predeceased her.

Thereafter, he married Maria Elisabeth Andre, daughter of Captain J. F. Andre of Cochin, on the 29th March, 1805, at Galle. She died on the 22nd April 1809. They had two children. His third marriage was to Anna Petronella Smith on the 21st September, 1813, at Matara. They had nine children. The most versatile of them all turned out to be the youngest, Charles Ambrose Lorenz, born at Matara on the 8th July, 1829.

There are 21 letters from Johann Freiderich Lorenz to Charles Ambrose Lorenz in the Lorenz Cabinet of the Royal Asiatic Society Library in Colombo. The first letter is dated 20.10.1842 and the last is dated 08.01.1845. In 1842 Johann Freiderich Lorenz was 70 years old and Charles Ambrose Lorenz was 13. The father's pet name for his son was Charly.

These letters were treasured and carefully preserved by young Charles. He meticulously noted on the letters the date of receipt and the date of his reply. In later years he used to show his intimate friends the letters of his father, full of love and advice.

The letters reveal an interesting aspect of urban, middle class life in Matara in the 1840s. They also show that J. F. Lorenz had to

support his large family from a meagre pension, his only source of income. Their hardships at times bordered on poverty. At Colombo, Charles stayed with his sister Harriet and her husband John Driberg, Proctor and Notary Public, in a house at the junction of Dam Street and Old Moor Street, nearly opposite the Kachcheri.

J. F. Lorenz, an accomplished scholar, had grounded Charles in English, Latin and Euclid, besides teaching him, and his other children, the rudiments of poetry, painting, music, dancing and amateur theatricals. On the strength of these accomplishments he sent Charles to Colombo, where he joined the Academy, at San Sebastian, then in the zenith of its fame. Rev. Dr. Barcroft Boake, Principal of the Academy, soon observed the great promise which the intelligent little stranger from Matara gave and took the liveliest interest in his studies, directing and assisting his labours with the generous encouragement of a friend. In later years Charles Ambrose Lorenz referred to Rev. Boake as "our Master and Pastor."

Towards the end of his life J. F. Lorenz had the happiness of seeing his son launched in a brilliant career at the Academy. At this time his health began to fail rapidly and he hinted occasionally at the symptoms of his serious illness in his letters. He died on the 3rd May, 1845, at Galle, and, as he wished, was buried in the Dutch cemetery, in Galle, among his kindred. He did not live to see his beloved Charly share with Frederick Nell the Turnour Prize in 1846, then the most coveted prize at the Academy.

(Received on the 22nd October 1842, Colombo. All in Lorenz' own hand).

(No. 41 p. 4)

My dear Charly,

Matura 20th Oct. 1842

I was very much pleased with your last letter, you could not keep marvelling at your hardihood, in proposing a separation between us; as an individual of the family did before. I do not gainsay the reasons which you allege for the proposal, on the contrary, I say, you are perfectly right, but I have not been able, as yet to come to a final determination, the reasons of my indecision, your brother John,<sup>2</sup> will briefly relate to you; but you shall soon hear from me. In the meanwhile, let me know of what and what you stand at present in need of. I know your wardrobe is very scanty, but then you must ascribe it principally to yourself, in being so very indifferent, not to say slovenly

in taking care of your clothes, and your departure from here was so sudden that I could not remedy the evil. I believe you want a coat very sorely. A Moorish shop in the Fort has been opened where I could get cloth for a coat cheap, but how shall I do to get your measure, for the breadth of the cloth is different. Hats there are none here; let me know if you can get one cheap and for how much. Shirting was not to be had here for a good while. No more than four could I get, otherwise you should have had more. Let me know what you want else; in the mean while I enclose your a 1/2 note. Let your sister Harriet buy for you what is most necessarily wanted, till I can send more. I am glad to hear you are so well employed by your Brother; indeed I perceive some amelioration in your handwriting in your last two letters. Continue to study thus and make yourself more perfect in Arithmetic, which you know is a very pleasant study.

To the Gentlemen, my friends, who have kindly remembered me and sent me their compliments make my hearty remerciments. To your sisters and Mr. Driberg senior<sup>3</sup> likewise and kiss Alfred<sup>4</sup> for me.

Your Mother sends you her best compliments; she has bought you a very nice white Cock and Hen and is anxious you should come and see them. I have bought a nice gun, something like my former, and not heavier, for 20 Rixdrs. Your grandmother<sup>5</sup> is somewhat better. Nonje Gysbert is here since 2 days, and keeps your Mother in uncommon good humour. They both sleep with Fredy<sup>6</sup> in the long room. We eat every day Jamboe for our tree is full of fruit.

No more news.

Adieu my good Boy  
Says your loving Father,

**J. F. Lorenz.**

(Answered on the 27th October, 1842, and sent to Matura on the 31st October. in his own hand).

**C. A. Lorenz**

(No. 41 p. 5)

My dear Charly,

Belligam Tuesday 29th No. 1842

Your mother, myself and Fredy arrived here yesterday on our return from Galle to Matura. We intend to leave this tomorrow in the mail coach. We have stayed with Andreas and Fikky<sup>7</sup> a full month. Meeting just now with a Catechist Master of the Wesleyan Mission who goes to Colombo and who is in a hurry I can only indite

the following few lines, but will write to you more fully when I reach home. I perceive that in the inclosed *Circular* you are registered as Master C. Lourenz. For heaven's sake beg your good Brother John to have that abominable error rectified and your name properly inserted. Your name is Lorenz—not Lourenz. The latter is a Dutch but the former is a German name, and for the whole Island of Ceylon I would not be mistaken for a Dutchman. It were better to have a new printed paper in which your name is correctly inserted than a name altered and corrected one.<sup>8</sup>

Your sister Josy's<sup>9</sup> famous Ayah died on the 24th inst. Fikky and her children and husband are well. Your mother is not quite well, nor I neither. You have our best wishes.

Compliments to the whole family at Colombo,

Addressed thus

No more for the present,

To

Your loving Father,

My beloved son

**J. F. Lorenz**

Master C. A. L. Lorenz

(in Lorenz's hand)

Colombo.

(No. 41 p. 6)

Matura 1st December 1842

My very dear Charly,

Your first letter which I find has no date pleased me very much, because it informed me of the probable event of your being sent to Mr. Sproule's<sup>10</sup> school, in preference to the Academy, which I believe, you will remember, I had no great opinion of for perhaps ill-formed reasons, in which your aforesaid letter confirmed me, for you say "Mr. Sproule keeps a school and instructs 25 to 30 boys, who far surpass the Academicians in learning" etc. You cannot wonder then that your second letter dated the 24th Novr. surprised me very much—as you say that you attend the *Academy*.<sup>11</sup> You do not say what the schooling will cost, but say it is more than at Mr. Sproule's, it is not that which makes one regret the change, but something undefined in my mind and which of course must give way to the determination of your good Brother's choice, whose better information on the subject I very willingly submit to. Yet cannot I help to grumble at the unreasonable number of hours of teaching to which you are chained like a galley slave, with only one hour's intermission, and that from 1 to 2 a time which would broil you to a herring, were you to enjoy it in the open air or under heaven's blue canopy. Another serious consid-

ration struck me in a very unpleasant manner, and that was your being registered by the name of *Lourensz*, an inadvertance unpardonable. However all these unpleasant surmises and objections must give way in my own mind as well as in yours to the determination which your good Brother has come to, and so, here is an end to my grumbling which I hope he will pass over unresentingly as grumbling is an attribute inherent in old men.

Both your letters I received at Galle where I had so many things to engage my mind and attention to prevent my acknowledging their receipt, but being returned yesterday, I do so now. I went with your mother and Fredy to Galle on the 28th October and left it on the 29th Novr. We stayed with Fikky and Andreas who now live at Ludovici's<sup>12</sup> house. Our journey was undertaken for the recovery of your poor mother's health, but I am sorry to say pains and expense have been useless. In her mind she is much altered for the better, but her bodily health is the same. On Friday night we were at the Theatre. The actors had performed to the children a few days previous gratis. The two pieces were *Fortunes Frolic* and the *Rival Valets*, with interludes of songs and a finale of a Hornpipe danced by Barton.<sup>13</sup> The performance was capital, the dresses well chosen and the scenery in the painting of which you had a hand, excellent, particularly the drop scene. They had applied to me for a Prologue—it was spoken by Mr. Wootler, dressed in black. The only draw-back was that they kept too long intervals between the acts. The doors were open at 7, at 8 the curtain rose and at 1 o'clock after midnight the play ended. Your grandmother during our absence has repaired your clothes and torn 6 new shirts for you, which however we do not like to sew here as perhaps you would like to have the breast part Dandy fashion. I hear you dislike the four shirts I lately sent you. Have you forgotten that I wrote to you that no linen for shirting was to be had at the time? The 6 new ones are of better stuff of which I have also got 5 made. Your new pantaloons are at the Taylors. When everything is in order I will pack your things into a chest with your fiddle, accordion, Books and send it to Andreas who has promised me to send it to you by a cart that goes to Colombo. My absence at Galle has prevented me to have my Harriet's guitar repaired. Fredy will go to the Fort today and engage Kemp to do it. Let me know if you want any books, if so, send me a list. Is there anything else you require, mention it. Can you pick up any cat-gut strings? I want

to string our strumstrum for Lutchy<sup>14</sup> at Hambangtotte who wants it. Apropos Maria, Dolfy's daughter is to be married to one de Zilva a black fellow; perhaps she is already coupled to him. Everybody at Galle and here also deprecates it,

Friday 2nd December.

My dear Charly, My heart and mind is daily with you. Do not think that because I have so easily parted with you, that your welfare is indifferent to me, or that I do not love you. And I therefore hope and trust that by your good behaviour you will make yourself worthy of their kindness. I was very happy in reading the following passage in your last letter, and which I herewith copy to serve you as a remembrance of your earliest promises to me—to wit;

"You must not think that I going among so many hundreds of boys, will turn out to be a bad boy, but be assured I will never keep company with those boys who are reputed for bad conduct."

I hope and trust that you are incapable to act unworthily or ignoble, and that it pains you to afflict me, and that it will give you pleasure to make me happy. You can do this very easily in the present period of your life, which you commence in Colombo whatever little thoughtless childish pranks you have played here will then be for ever forgotten.

That you may not be too great a burden to your good Brother and sister, let me know what the monthly schooling will amount to, that I may from time to time remit it. If among the different articles of dress I send you there should be anything which you cannot any longer wear, give it to some poor boy.

That is all my good Boy that I have to say to you for the present. You have the most hearty good wishes from your grandmother and your mother and brother. Assure my good John and Harriet of my love and gratitude. Remember me to my good friend Mr. Driberg Senr. If there be anyone else who remembers me for early love and affection (of which however I have reasons to doubt) say that love and affection continues. Kiss Alfred for me and try to make as lively as yourself pranks and mischief excepted.

Your Grandmother lives with us and manages everything which I know not how to thank her, for your good mother is not in a state of doing anything. I shall be in the necessity of parting with my house over short and over long after the unsuccessful attempt of pledging it at Colombo. I shall then remove to Galle and be buried among my kindred.

Now a hearty farewell my boy,  
Thy loving and affectionate Father,  
**J. F. Lorenz.**

(No. 41 p.7)

17 th Jan, 43

My dear Charly,

Being very much indisposed, I must be brief. What the box contains you will see by a list inside. The organ being out of order on account of the bellows being damaged I request John and Harriet to send it to Mrs. Holmus or Ohlmus from whose Father I bought it and who once before repaired it, with request once more to put it to rights, and then when you can part with it to do so at any rate. Your mother sends something prepared by her mother for the mother of Alfred. I regret very much that you have been kept out of your clothes for such a length of time—but it could not be helped. No cart, no Dhoney,<sup>15</sup> no cooly was to be had for love or money. Since New Year's day it has rained here as hard nearly as in the time of Noah. Yesterday was the first sunshiny day and today was I so happy to engage these two fellows. Utchy and her 4 children are still here all unwell. She sends her best love to you all and so does your mother and her mother. God bless you my dear boy, I need not I believe recommend your love, affection and obedience to your Brother and Sisters. Tell Nancy<sup>16</sup> I commend her good sense.

Your loving Father,  
**J. F. Lorenz.**

P.S. I do not send Harriet's guitar because I have discovered that the Baas has very badly repaired it. Browne died 2 days ago at Galle. Send Fredy's guitar by those people. I write this by candle light because the bearers came so late.

Kiss Alfred for me and give Mr. Driberg Snr, a shake of the hand.  
Vale.

18th Jany. in the morning, Andreas advised me to send your box to Galle, that from thence he wld. despatch it to Colombo by a cart—but as I consider it uncertain, that he can command a cart at all times I think it the surest and safest way to send these two fellows on with it direct to Colombo, though it is much more expensive. One of the reasons is, because the organ might be damaged in a cart and other is because I learn from Nancy's last letter that you are very poorly off for want of clothes which I can well comprehend considering the scanty quantity you took with you. So you see it is not extravagance which makes me put myself to so much expense. I have paid those two men only in part as is usual but am unable to send to you the remainder of their hire because I have not yet got my Pension. Do you request your Brother and sister Driberg to advance the needful and the first opportunity I will remit the amount.

Your grandmother sends six bottles of Soya.

Farewell,

**J.F.L.**

2 o'clock at noon. A letter from Hambangtotte just received, mentions that Dolfy Andree<sup>17</sup> is seriously ill—from the symptoms described I make it out to be rheumatism. Utchy's Emma is attacked with fever and cold. Her boy has a return of fever with shivering. Ebert wrote that he is ordered to hold himself in readiness to proceed to Calcutta for a year.

(No. 41 p. 8)

Matura 28 Mar. 1843.

My dear Charly boy,

On the 24th inst. Fikky sent me a letter tied to a piece of best English cheese with which she wanted to regale me—but the letter was so tied and so carried by the bearer that the buttter made a perfect paste of it so that it could not be opened without tearing it into pieces. It was entirely illegible but on one of the torn bits I discerned that a letter from you must have been in its belly because I could distinguish the words Colombo 2 March in your handwriting, that was all. Yesterday my eyesight was blessed with another letter from you dated 15 inst. and one from my Harriet with a present of a

number of Ducks without legs. Three of which I devoured immediately for my breakfast, and luckily it was that they arrived, because Sobitte would allow me nothing else to eat with my rice and pepper broth. The other present was immediately lighted that Fredy might not get a sight of it for he is also under Hospital regimen but not so strictly as we three other poor sinners. Your letter, my good boy, gives me the greatest satisfaction; continue in your present praiseworthy career and make once more the name of Lorenz shine forth with some lustre, were it but as faint as the tail of the present Comet.<sup>18</sup> With regard to your present task of learning Latin I freely give up my opposition for the reason alleged by you and your good sister Nancy, which I cannot disapprove. The Geographical Atlas you shall have with the return of the Supreme Court and very welcome you are to it. I had another of which the maps were not coloured which I can no where find and which I want for the use of Fredy. Have you perhaps lent it to anyone? With regard to the Mathematical Instrument box Nancy will enlighten your mind. A little patience, my good boy, and you shall have one by hook or by crook. If there be anything else that you want and I can furnish you write me soon that I may forward it also. The Supreme Court opened here yesterday. So you have still 10 or 12 days before you. Let me know who the Drawing master is, and during which hours he gives his lessons and how often a week, and his charge, for in your last letter I cannot make it out clearly. Also how your hours are employed in your present class. Buy no books without telling me for I can perhaps furnish them from my stock.

The fiddle which through Lorenz hall

The soul of music shed.<sup>19</sup> Pray does it sleep on the wall because its strings are broke? Do not neglect it nor your flute. Fredy is very good Proficient in both though unassisted by any teacher. He went with Andreas and Richard to Tangalle and will send you a sketch which he made. Neither Cramer nor Loos have squinted in at Lodge Harmony. Well, well, nothing lost, except personal intelligence from the Uitvlugt<sup>20</sup> at Colombo. Pray what reception did you meet with from your Uncle and Godfather Mr. Kootchy or rather James Roosmale Cocq.<sup>21</sup> Give me a full account when you write next, but there is no hurry in it. You must have committed an

error in noting down the distance of the Comet from the earth when you say it is 18,000 miles or Master Twest must be out at the elbow with his calculation. The Comet of 1811 had a tail 33,000,000 of miles in length and was distant from the sun on the 12th Sept. when in its Perihelion 97,000,000 of miles and from the earth when nearest to her, which was on the 11th of Oct. 114,000,000 of miles. Oh Master Twest Master Twest. I owe a long letter to my Harriet and so shall have it with the Court people, not so long as the Comet's tail but somewhat shorter.<sup>22</sup> I can stand no longer. Your grandmother and mother who are much indisposed greet you, so do I and Fredy.

Your loving Father J.F.L.

Received April 1 1843

C.A.L. Lorenz

To Mr. C. Lorenz,  
Academician,  
Colombo.

(in Lorenz's own handwriting)

(No. 41 p. 9)

Matura 1st May, 1843.

God's Blessing on your head, my dear Boy. Your letter of the 27th. ult. reached me yesterday. It made me quite happy, your Mother shed tears of joy when she heard your advance in your studies and your good and decent behaviour. The old lady who is since this morning busy in preparing something for Harriet, says she will make something exclusively for you. We intend to despatch a man on Wednesday. The little girl for Alfred is here. She intends to treat with Robert to carry her in the Mail coach to Galle and from thence to despatch her in a cart under the care of a relation of hers. That which you require you shall have by the man whom we send. How is it with a Mathematical Instrument box? Is there none to be had second hand? If not beg Nancy to buy you a new one. If her stock of pence, pence, pence is short, I will send more. I hope my letter congratulating little Alfred on his Birthday has arrived, though you do not mention it. Mind to have the entry of your name in the School Register correctly taken down without that d——d snake (S) before the Z. Lately I have perused a New work on Ceylon by my good friend Bennett<sup>23</sup> in England in it he makes honourable mention of my poor self in a long Article—but what does it signify when he

spelled my name Lorenz. Who would know whom he meant. Were it not that he had prefixed to my name my office which I held at the time, viz; Sitting Magistrate of the Morwa Corle. This will be handed or sent to you, by Perera Modliar's son in law.

More on Wednesday,

Your most affectionate Father,

J. F. Lorenz.

My dear Charly,

You always write "Yours affectionate son, in future leave out the s in the word. If you do not add the word, son or friend, or brother, yours is all right but not otherwise.

(Addressed to "My Beloved son Charly")

(No. 41 p. 10)

Matura, 3 May 1843

My very dear Charly,

By the bearer I send you 12 yards of cloth, which I think will do for Jackets and Waistcoats. The price of this cloth is 6 fanams per yard—do you request your sister Nancy to let me know, whether that is cheap or dear at Colombo. If it be dear, I will buy no more in future, but transmit money. I also send you pantaloons of Fredy's, which are too short for him, and which he assures me, will fit you, Stockings I can send you none, because they bring none. If Nancy can manage to buy some, tell her to take unbleached Europe ones. No Tutucorin ones on any account. What shall I say to you about shoes, I know I wrote to Andreas and Fikky 3 times, but they have vouchsafed me no answer. Andreas left this with the Supreme Court on the 3 of last month with solemn professions of procuring for us conveyance by the Carts of the Supreme Court people, but up to this moment I have heard of or from him, neither Bah nor Boo. Here at Matura I cannot ever get a pair of slippers made, but must wear shoes night as well as day.

About the Drawing School, I am sorry to say, I have a very indifferent account. Mr. and Mrs. Livera tell me the Master is very careless. Could I but visit Colombo for 5 days, I might form a judgement of my own, and contract with him, what he was to teach you. For to set you to work again on eyes and ears and noses, would be useless. I send you Pennocks Cathechism containing Algebra, and another little work done by the famous Ozanum, which I believe you will find very useful, though published 130 years ago. Also a Latin and Dutch book that will be a great help to you at home, in learning the Latin Declinations and Conjugations. With the Dutch of course you have nothing to do. My dear Charly, if you are out of shoes, go to Jansz's Shop in the Fort and buy a pair of Europe shoes—Your sister Harriet I am sure, will be good enough to advance you the money, if Nancy dear, my good Cashier has not so much in her Treasury, till I can expend it by a remittal from here. ———This moment I receive the inclosed from Friky, not a word about your shoes. From it Harriet will learn that it is not me or any one of us here at Matura that we have not been able to profit by the Carts of the Supreme Court people. I have still so many things to say but am unluckily prevented from continuing my letter, by a sudden fit of that distressing oppression in my heart, which from time to time seizes me, and I fear will one day ———no matter.

I must give up writing to my Nancy—whose most pleasing letters reached me day before yesterday. I implore God's holy Blessing on you my dear Boy, every morning and every evening in my devotions. We all greet you and your Brother and Sisters. Kiss Alfred for us—and make my most cordial compliments to my very good friend Mr. Drieberg Snr. and all good friends who remember me.

I can no more just now,  
Your loving Father,  
**J. F. Lorenz.**

To

My dear Charly,  
J. F. Lorenz.

My dear Nancy, my dear Harriet—

I cannot write to just now. I will make up for this defalcation as soon as I am free to breathe and will give you a double measure of what I could give now. J.F.L.

(No. 41 p. 11)  
Matura 1. June 1843

My very dear Charly,

It was my intention to write a long letter to you, and I believe I promised so much in Nancy's letter, but even before I had finished that half, I felt indisposition creeping on me, and I therefore broke it off rather abruptly. Having just risen from my sleepless bed and with Physic in my stomach, I set to work to redeem my promise at least in part, as the bearer said he would come for the box about noon.

I am highly pleased my dear boy with you assiduity at school of which the Prize which you obtained is a sure token; your sisters also give a tolerably good account of your behaviour at home which they tell me is improving. I have written, I believe about three times on the subject of the Mathematical instrument box, but you all have forgotten to let me know whether you have got one. If there be anything also that you require, let me know and I shall do my best to satisfy you in every reasonable wish or desire of your heart.

Give the enclosed one pound note to your good sister Nancy and pray, send me the bridge of Harriet's Cyther or Guitar, which I remember I put into your colour box, for without it we cannot repair or string it. Now do not forget to send it with the man who brings this when he returns, as also a cake of Indigo—I think you will find it in your box of cakes—but if that is not the case, buy a cake and send it me. How are you off for shoes?

Farewell, the man comes. I must break off  
Your loving Father  
**J. F. Lorenz.**

(No. 41 p. 12)  
21 June 1843.

My dear Charly,

I hope the accompanying will please you, it is as good or rather better than my case of instruments, but it was rusty when I got it. Clean it every Saturday with a bit of rag dipt in Sallad oil—and if



the steel drawing pens do not work well, have them corrected or repaired on a hone, by a friend or some one who understands it. There was no Sector in the box, I have added one that I had to spare.

God's blessing be with you my dear Boy. He preserve you in good health. The earnest prayers and wishes of your Mother and Grandmother for your Welfare accompany this and I subscribe myself.

Your loving and affectionate Father  
**J. F. Lorenz.**

P.S. I see I must give up the hope and expectation of getting any music from Messrs. Brohier. The Indigo and Guitar bridge came safe.

(Addressed "To my dear Son Charly with his father's best wishes")

(No. 41 p. 12 *real*)  
Matura, Thursday,  
July 6th, 1843.

My very dear and beloved Charly,

With and under the Blessing of the Almighty, you will day after tomorrow close your Fourteenth year. Fourteen years has His bountiful hand been stretched out over you; it has preserved you from sickness and from bodily defections. It has given you and still keeps for your affectionate Parents and kind and loving Sisters and brothers. He provides the means for your subsistence, preservation and instruction. Be it then your first duty to-morrow morning on rising from your bed to adore and thank him on your knees for all these undeserved mercies and Bounties and beg and pray him for the continuance of his blessings—and thank your Brother and Sister for the care, love, affection and protection with which they overwhelm you. Be obedient to them and do not grieve them through carelessness or disobedience. Continue your studies with the attention, diligence and assiduity with which you have commenced them, remembering and considering that, in all likelihood, that will be the only fund from which in future you are to draw your livelihood. I was not so fortunate as you in my youth—for my Parents died when I was a child and brothers and sisters I had none. The little learning I then picked up, has carried me through the world to this very day.

Let us hear from time to time how you are in mind and body.

These are the wishes and sentiments of your most affectionate Father and Mother, and in which your Grandmother would have surely joined, had she not early morning crossed the river on some business.

**J. F. Lorenz**  
**A. P. Lorenz**

P.S. To my dear Nancy and Harriet, assure my most hearty thanks for their kind and well meant good wishes on my last and in all probability, my very last Birthday. To my good John I remain under very great obligations for the handsome pair of spectacles which he was so good to send and which I now wear because they fit my eyes better than the others I have. I dare not affront him by asking what they cost, and so once more Thank ye.

P.P.S. I am in doubt whether you have received the mathematical instrument case which I sent you and whether you like it.

The girl which was destined for little Alfred ran away without rhyme or reason. Your Grandmother has found out that she is a worthless little monkey.

The short cooly who has travelled between us the last 2 or 3 times is very glad to place his own daughter with Harriet and will convey her thither as soon as the weather clears up which is rainy and boisterous up to this day.

**Vale J.F.L.**

(No. 41 p. 3)  
Matura 6th Sept. 1843.

My dear Charly,

Day before yesterday I received a letter from Andreas, in which he sent me one from you, which he says was delivered to him by one of his Clients who had returned from Colombo. Your letter is dated, Colombo, August ..... 1843 and covered one from my Nancy to Fredy, dated 19 Aug. So that I suppose yours was penned about the same time. The tardy receipt of your letter will therefore explain

the tardiness of my response. I must candidly confess, that I did not expect, nay nor even dream of such an application from you to me. The mention of it to your Mother and Grandmother, occasioned the greatest astonishment to them and the former was lamenting with tears, and sobs, your proposal and as for me, I could not conceive how such a sudden impulse could have seized you, to abandon all those to whom you are dear in this Country, of whom after a lapse of *five years* a number you never meet again, and to think of going to the distance of so many thousand miles, and to dwell among strangers of whom no one would ever think of tying a handkerchief around your fevered temples in case sickness or disease should attack you, and for what? but to learn a profession, which you can learn here among your friends and relations perhaps as well; a profession which alienates you from your own self, for a medical man is not his own master, but a slave to others, whom he must serve at day and at night, and for whom he must often give up not only the best company, conviviality, festivity, nay his very meals, in order to fly to the abode of misery, tears and complaints, cut and slash human flesh, saw off legs and arms, open and handle dead bodies, wounds, sores, and all that for perhaps a very precarious recompense—to which I well may add, remorse and bitter and poignant feelings at an unlucky operation, or distressing consciousness at an after thought, when a dead patient lies before you, and you become aware, that what you had administered to him was not that which might have saved him, but possibly quite the contrary. That profession in my opinion requires a morbid feeling and insensibility, which I am sure you are not possessed of. I could expatiate upon this subject throughout this whole sheet of paper, but I will abstain from it and go into a dissection of other considerations which occur to my mind on this subject. You are now about a year at Colombo and have only *entered* on the studies, which when completed, will constitute you a Gentleman, I mean not an outward one, and will you leave, run away and abandon these studies, before you have gone through the whole circle of those preliminary re-and at questions so absolutely necessary for your advancement in life? Is it not requisite, that as a Scholar of the Academy you should obtain a certificate from the Head of that establishment to entitle you to the favourable notice of the Government? Do you feel yourself already sufficiently proficient to demand or expect such a token? Can I, with that precarious amount of

emolument which Government allows me, and which I share with a harsh Creditor, afford you a sufficient quantum, to equip you as a Gentleman, in such a city as Calcutta for five long years? Who assures my life for only one year, nay for only five months? and when I am dead and gone from whom can you expect a supply? This is not a vague or captious evasion of complying with your wishes, for you must consider that I am bound to provide for Fredy's education and to think of poor Nancy's Nuptials (which I wish to God to celebrate soon) at least equal to those of her sisters. Add to this, that I very sensibly feel, that I am rapidly going down hill.——

I am happy to say, just now Fredy hands to me, your letter to him, dated the 27th ult. which Henry Bastiaansz handed to him as he was passing our house, driving the Mail coach—how he got it we know not. Had it arrived some what earlier it would have saved me from penning this long and unpleasant sermon, for from it I learn, that Mr. Boake has not consented to your proposal, and for very good reasons too, for which I most sincerely thank him, hoping that from this seasonable opposition to your wishes, you will reap the advantage, to control the tempest of youthful passion, which so often blasts the promising hopes of manhood. Should you at the end of your academic studies, become one of the six students, who will be favourably recommended to Government, I would advise you most seriously, to consider any other profession than the one you have so preposterously fixed upon, to settle you in life. This country offers the situations of Engineer, Surveyor, or a place in the Offices of the Chief Secretary, the Revenue Department or the law. I say let all these engage your consideration and scrutiny, and let us at a future opportunity resume the subject.

Thursday 7th Sep. Yesterday I went with Fredy to Mr. Blake's<sup>24</sup> who lives in what is called Mrs. Mouton's house—he has opened his school on the first of this month, with 25 of the oldest boys, in the hospital or the house where you painted the scenes for the Theatre. Fredy goes to day to school from 9 to 12 and from 1 to 3—at his Grandmother's he will take his tiffin or breakfast. Dr. Cuylenburg and family leave this tomorrow for Colombo. Your Grandmother pays them a visit today in order to tell Miss Morgan, all what she has to say to Harriet and Nancy. Yesterday she sent a message for the girl whom she wanted to send by this opportunity to Harriet, but the

answer was, that she is sick. The old lady wants to finish her out-houses, which stand nearly in the same state as when you left this, for her best workman Janis the son of Weregampitte Amah has been murdered. She wants to let her house this time, to the Supreme Court people, and *that* she would not be able to do if the kitchen were not built up—the old one having tumbled down.

Touching the new miraculous pills, I should like to make a trial of them, perhaps they may do me good, though I suspect that they will merely prove to be anodynes. We have a musical meeting at Mr. de Livera's<sup>25</sup> every Saturday evening at seven. His lady plays her new Piano, which they bought of Wenham for 35 £ and Fredy accompanies her on the flute, and fiddle, ; Your instruments I fear are hung on Tara's walls as if their soul had fled<sup>26</sup> and your drawing utensils are superscribed Forget me now. Mr. de Livera comes every afternoon to my house to take lessons in Dutch, which he already reads and translates pretty well. My dear Charly, I request you, to send me with some one or other of the Supreme Court Gentry, my Lucubrations, and also the Dutch ones which I sent for perusal to Mr. Driberg senior: do not forget this—and remember also the box of pills for which I will pay on receipt, when you will let me know the cost. If there is anything that you may want from here, which I may have or be able to procure, let me know, that when the Court returns, I may send it. On our return from Mr. Blake's we saw the Doctor handling, cutting and slashing the body of a Singalese killed 3 days before in the Candeboddepattu. The stench was intolerable. I thought of you—but to divert my thoughts from this disgusting spectacle, I pictured to myself My Charly, traversing the streets of Calcutta, rehearsing to himself from the Traveller, the following lines;

But me not destined such delights to share,  
My prime of life in wand'ring spent and care,  
Impel with steps unceasing to pursue  
Some fleeting good that mocks me with the view;  
That like the circle, bounding earth and skies,  
Allures from far, yet as I follow flies,  
Me, fortune leads to traverse realms *alone*  
And find no spot of all the world my own.

You, and all that we hold dear around you, have our best compliments and kind wishes. Let us hear from you at least once a month as circumstantially as possible. Your brother John seem, I know not how or why, to have cut my acquaintance. If I have given him cause to be indifferent to me assure him, it has been unintentional.

Your loving Father,  
**J. F. Lorenz.**

(No. 41 p. 14)

Matura 13th May 1844.

My dear Charly,

I regret to say that I cannot write to you half so long a letter as yours of the 1st inst: which pleased me very much, for I am not quite so well as I could wish, and I am stinted for time, the bearer of this going this evening.

My dear Boy, your first wish after you had left Matura, was to enter the Academy and study in it during 3 years. About a year after you changed your mind and wanted to go to Calcutta. Some time after another whim took you, to enter the Normal School and now you make a new proposal. Far from thwarting you in this, allow me to ask you, how long you think this new inclination will occupy your mind—and when you suppose you will make a new application to me?

If you have really made up your mind and intend to accept the very advantageous offer of your good Brother John, I with all my heart give my full consent to it and wish you joy and God's blessing into the bargain. That you gave up the idea of going to Calcutta, I confess, was on my representing to you the difficulties—but the business of the Normal School, I believe, if I mistake not, I did not advise you, to give up finally. Be that as it will, revolve well in your mind what you enter on, in binding yourself to the Study of the Law. It is the best study here in the Island that you could have chosen, and under *such* a Master. But consider my dear Boy, that when you have entered into and signed your indenture, you must stand to it, there is no retreat, unless by a breach of faith. I have written to your Brother on the subject in the most favourable terms and will write to you more fully in my next.

I could heartily wish and your Mother and Grandmother do most anxiously desire, that you would in the course of next month (provided you can get leave from your Br. John) pay us a visit. You can come in the Mail coach; money I will transmit by Mr. Livera, who will most likely proceed to Colombo by the 20th inst. or thereabout.

You mention the Portuguese Gentlemen in your letter—I became acquainted with them at Galle, through Andreas. They and the Governor's Lady paid us an evening visit, played the Piano, the flute. The last night when they were to depart with the Mail—The old Governor<sup>27</sup> knocked at our door at midnight and handed to Grandmother the inclosed note to give to me in the morning.

All of us greet you,  
God bless you  
My dear Charly  
Your loving Father  
**J. F. Lorenz.**

(Recd. 23rd May 1844

**C. A. L. Lorenz)**

(No. 41 p.15)

Matura 1 June 1844.

My dear Charly,

I felt happy on receiving your very pleasing and most welcome letters of the 26th and 29th ult. and hasten to remove from your mind the cause of my backwardness in transmitting, as I had promised.

On Saturday the 18th ult. Mr. de Livera spent the evening with me. This he has frequently done during my illness, and a great pleasure it was to me, in my irksome house. He said he expected Mr. Talbot<sup>28</sup> back on the 22nd, but that he doubted, whether Mr. T was to not stay over till the 24th as past. I was therefore in no hurry to make up my mind for him—but next morning early he received leave from Government to proceed to Colombo and letters from T also, off he was, as lightning. I had only time to wish him a pleasant Journey: Lie there the reason Andreas had warned me not to send money by the Post, as the P. Office at Galle is not safe and that is the fact. Van

Cuylenberg has experience. However as we are all anxious to see your face and you like wise to see ours, I venture on the present Scheme, which I hope will not miscarry. Your letter to Fredy and Harriet's to myself of the 12th ult. which you sent by Daniel O. Condol M.P. and A. L. Luke de Livera (?) with his Master on the 29th ult. Before you leave Colombo you and your Sister Harriet put your heads together and make up my account of the arrears due to her—as for schooling, Shoes, Apothecary bills, Doctor Perera: What I recd. from her in ready cash I have noted down. If you want any Pantaloons, Coaty (?) : or any such sort of stuff as mine are made of—request your Sister to buy for you, and bring it with you to have it made up here where most likely it can be made cheaper than at Colombo; and you shall take it back with you, whatever dear H. shall lay out—as no doubt you will come by the Mail coach, do not you break the journey by any stage at Caltura, for no other reason than that you may not be choused out of your fare, as I was.

If you can do it conveniently bring with you, your broken fiddle, I will have it repaired here, for I should not like that you should neglect or give it up, when you were in such a fair way of becoming proficient in it. Your brother plays his remarkably well. Do not incumber yourself with too many things, for which they might perhaps charge you additional fare at the Mail coach Office.

Take some refreshment at Bentotte if you require it—and take care that you do not get wet on the road. Let us know if convenient when you intend to leave Colombo, and I will borrow George P's<sup>29</sup> mule and saddle and meet you at Polwatte (a hem)

I have spoken above of coloured Pantaloons, Coaty or Jackets, because I think they will make a saving in washing—however we can talk of this when we meet.

I shall conclude with best compliments to all my good friends who may inquire after me, especially Mr. Driberg Snr.

I had a visit from Mr. John Poulier<sup>30</sup> who gave me an exhilarating account of you all.

I am particularly happy in that you have such a flaming certificate from the Head of the Academy.

We all commend you in God's holy keeping.

Your loving Father  
**J. F. Lorenz.**

My dear Charly,

Buy me a good *large hard* (very hard) hair brush, I use the brush I bought when you were here still.

**Freddy.**

2. June—My dear Charly—I enclose a note of £ 1 to serve you for Pocket Money, Have it changed for silver and copper. Remember the poor on the road. Sister H. will advance the Mail fare.

(No. 41 p. 15 rear)  
Matura Sunday morning  
28th July 1844.

My dear Charly,

Your letter of the 25th. blessed my eye sight yesterday and as it contains intelligence of consequence, I hasten to answer it. Your wishes to improve your studies are in the highest degree—pleasing to me, and as much as in me lies I am anxious to indulge and encourage you therein. Of Mr. Sproule's qualifications as a Latin Teacher I know nothing, according to his terms they must be of the first rate—but let him be ever so expert, he cannot instil you with a perfect understanding of Virgil and Sallust in less than 3 years and if Syntax, Prosody, Scanning and Ellis' exercises take precedence, which of course they must, a term of 4 years is barely sufficient. In my youth it took so much time in our Latin schools in Germany and then my dear, at the end of that time you will certainly be a very good Proficient in Latin, but of what use will it be to you (a Lawyer by that time). The fabulous history of Aeneas, his Pastorals (Bucolics) or Sallust's War of the Roman Slaves? They cannot add a jot to the better understanding of the Law of Ceylon pleadings. A polite scholar among the Gentry of this country you certainly will be, but a better Lawyer, I very much doubt. Take also into account,

the uncertainty of your studies being uninterrupted. Last and least let me bring to your notice, the really enormous charge of one £ per month. Might we not employ that sum to something more profitable to you? Will it be easy for your Mother to send monthly a £ note, after I am dead and gone? Let your brother and Instructor John give his opinion and advice in this Matter—That you are all well at home, and especially my little Princess Agnes<sup>31</sup> is most pleasing to us. That Alfred is a lively boy I like better to hear, than that he should be what the Dutch call, a *Slaapmuts*.<sup>32</sup> Your trip to Negombo by water and your giving it the preference to Matura pleases me much. I passed through it in 1803, two or three times, I dare say it is much improved since then. Tell my Harriet she must not think of coming to Matura during the X'Mas holy days without pulling John along with her. Kessen<sup>33</sup> whose demise you mention, was never known to me, as a country man of mine. Your Latin quotation on the back of your letter, I answer with one from the New Testament—Argentum et aurum non est mihi; quod autem habes; hoc tibi do, Surge (et itur ad Astra).<sup>34</sup>

Write always P.N.T.

Our most affectionate embraces to you all. Farewell my good Boy.

Your loving Father,  
**J. F. Lorenz.**

(No. 41 p. 16)  
Mat. 6 Aug. 44

My dear Charly,

A few days ago I had a visit from Mr. Blake. Happening to speak of you and of your desire to study Latin, he assured me that Mr. S—w—e was no Shining Scholar in that language. Mr. de Livera with whom I spoke upon the same subject was also of that opinion.

So do not be dejected in not having succeeded in your application to me. In a future letter I will converse with you and try to find out some other means to employ the 1 £ note per month more profitably. Be obedient and diligent.

Your loving Father,  
**J. F. Lorenz.**

(No. 41 p. 16).

Matura 20th. Augt. 1844

My dear Charly,

The warm and pressing desire which you express in your letters of the 10th and 16th inst. of learning Latin, and the support which your good Brother John lends you for that purpose, have mollified my stubbornness, as perhaps, you may call it, to give into your wishes. Yet cannot I pass over in silence, that *my opinion* with regard to the proficiency of Mr. Sp——le's in that science, after further inquiry remains the same, and that his regularity is also not much commended—but I will take *your opinion* in the most favourable sense; where you say,

"My Sp——le possesses so much ability, as will enable him to bring me forward, as much as is requisite, in the study of Latin."

I will also not conceal that one of my demurrers (NB. not *refusals*) against your learning that language, was the exorbitant, as you yourself call it, price of schooling, because I thought that for so much money you might learn something besides, per Ex: Mathematics, Music, Painting or some other science; but as necessity knows no Law—I give up my scruples. Another reason for demurrer was the barbarous dialect in which the English pronounce their Latin. The Italians, the Portuguese, the Spaniards who look upon Latin as the Mother of their languages, and the French I believe, consider it as the Step Mother, all these nations together with all others that inhabit Europe, pronounce it in one uniform dialect. The English only have anglicised it, and are therefore not understood by the others; however, as most likely you will have no dealings with other Nations, at least in Latin, I shall pass that over likewise.

This short exposition, I hope will fully convince you, that it was not parsimony, that made me differ in opinion on the foregoing point. With regard to the generous offer of your Brother and Patron, to share the expenses of your study under Mr. Sp——le, I request you, to express to him, in the warmest language of thanks my obligation to him, and my renunciation of that new token of his love and affection for you, at least for such a space of time, till fate or necessity disable me to afford to you my paternal assistance. And here I discover a

difficulty, which is, how to transmit money to Colombo without fear of losing it—a word of advice of your Brother would much oblige me. And so then, my good Boy, begin your study in God's Name, as soon as you please. I add no admonition of your attention and industry, being already fully convinced, that would be superfluous. You have not informed me, what the hours of your studies are and how often per week, and if they are convenient and do not interfere with your Brother's official business. Let me hear of this in your next letter.

And now a few lines of anxious maternal advice, which your Mother desires me to recommend to your most serious attention. She wishes you would take a bath once or twice a week—and an opening medicine once a month and to be very attentive to your bodily health. Young Henry Ernst<sup>35</sup> she says, has most shamefully plaid the truant, and has brought himself by abuse of paternal indulgence in liberty to the brink of the grave, by taking furtively Physic for some complaint or other—so that he now lies helpless on his bed, unable to move hand or foot, he must be fed and lifted up by other people's hands. Your Mother is also very anxious to know, how your foot ancle is. Do not fail to enlighten us on this subject truly and clearly in your next.

What you say about Mr. Langslow<sup>36</sup> and his expected departures is not unpleasant news to me, for let him be ever so clever a Lawyer from what I have heard of him, he seems to be a very mischievous creature. I wish you would send me a rough sketch of his Phiz—and also the drawing of those with whom you are surrounded, as you promised me. You have a good opportunity by the return of Mr. Morgan to Galle. I will return them by an opportunity with your Prize books and will add a Latin New Testament by Biza—which I am sure, will by its constant perusal give you great help in your study. If any fatality should happen to Mr. White—I will lay a wager of what you will Henrietta Cocq will in no time become Mrs. Brown or Black or any other colour. Perhaps a Mrs. B——l——y. It would be a sight worth seeing, should Dr. Misso return from Goa, in black Cassock, leathern girdle, a Tonsura on his Occiput, and on the top of it a four cornered Black Cap—in short transmogrified from a Doctor into a Padre. Let me know how the Suit between Bishop Antonio and Padre Damas will be decided.

I was much edified at Mr. Van Twest's advertisement in a late Paper, where he charged entrance to his lectures at so much and Exit at so much. So that when one leaves him either in disgust or for some other reason, one must pay him a premium—of course, if not paid, it is to be recovered by a law suit. He advertises to teach the making of *correct* Sundials at so much. I wonder how much he would charge for making *incorrect* ones. Who the deuce would wish to learn that, which a person may earn in the space of a single hour. A single Sundial maker would suffice for the whole Island. The Man is a fool in Folio.

And now my good Boy farewell—you have the best compliments and fervent wishes of and from us all.

Your loving and very affectionate Father  
J. F. Lorenz.

P.S. I could wish my good Son John could procure for me, by the help of his Domestic (in Dutch Domme-Stukken) two Europe Rat traps. Fredy thanks you for the snuffbox—*Alas* what will become of my Masulipatam.

(No. 41 p. 17)

Matura 25. Oct. 1844.

My dear Charly,

Your Sister Lucy at Hambantotte is so very anxious to know from time to time, how you are going on, and how Harriet and family do, that I think the easiest way to satisfy her wishes, to send your and her and good John's letters at intervals. Yesterday she returned the budget and now I set to work to answer the whole seriatim. In yours of the 8th Sept; you promised me copies of your drawings of prominent characters which came under your notice. I have a good deal of longing to see them, and hereby remind you of that promise, when time and leisure will allow it. The one of Mr. L—g—w which you enclosed to me, I sent to Mr. Livera was lost on its transit from my house. His departure from the Island of which you speak, I think will not be much regretted. In the same letter you mention the controversy between the Roman Catholic Bishop, Prester Damas and the schismatic Doctor Misso. The first of whom I consider superlatively blameable, and I confess I formed a very incorrect idea of

him. The last mentioned Shentle man was lately here. He paid me a visit in company of Ephraumsz Senior. He was very backward in his communication about the foregoing matter; I could not even elicit a syllable regarding his illustrious guests, the Portugese Governor and Lady. The next subject of which you treated the literary or debating Society pleased me very much, but what you said of Professor Clark was rather outree (as the French call it) or rather it was not well digested. The races and the Langslow fracas gave me also some amusement; The account you gave at the end of your epistle of Alfred and Agnes' improvement was after all the best part of it. Yours of the 15th Sept. gives me a detailed and circumstantial description of young L—g—w's<sup>37</sup> Don Quixotery—which verifies the old adage of the Dutch—De appel valt niet verre van de boom.<sup>38</sup> Alas! for poor Arnoldina Krickenbeck or rather Wilmot Old rosy checked Ludekens, I knew by sight. Peace be with his ashes. The dashing soldier Van der Spaar, I fear is an equal burthen to his father, as his brother the blind boy, whom Fredy and I lately saw reading with his fingers ends in the Bible. The excuse which you make of the long detention of your letter on account of the french beans is plausible enough, but what am I to understand of this sentence? *Green* gifts from a *greener* hand, which is the greener hand, Harriet's or yours? Yet that does not take away the obligation which I lie under of thanking John and Harriet and yourself for the congratulation on my 31st wedding day with your Mother, which I did not think would be in your remembrances. Though I declare I have no reason of doubting or complaining of your memory, when I find you repeating from a cursorily perusal of a piece of Poetry which Lucy sent me when you were here.

"Merry words, ye come bustling around, Many happy returns of the day."

You close by saying that young Gratian married a few minutes before, why then by this time his Honeymoon is well over. I now come to your last missive of the 18th inst. and feel much pleased that former acquaintances such as Mr. Bartholomeusz still remember me with kindness—Lavaters Physiognomical Fragments which he undertook to convey to me, have come safely to hand. It contains extracts out of his first volume, of which there are four, and the perusal of it refreshed my memory of this extraordinary work. Though I must



say, I look upon it, as much below the standard of my former conceptions. Lavater lived and died an Enthusiast and his celebrated work written 60 years ago, has now given place to Gall and Spurtz heines Phrenology as Dyke's Spelling Book to Murrays Grammar. Your Lecture on and about the Stars—I daresay you *read* very well, but I wish you were so far advanced, to say, I *wrote* it—and not I *copied* it. Well, well Charly, all in good time—Sic itur ad Astra. Thus men reach the skies. Sallust's conspiracy of Catiline, strange to say, I never met with, either in the original or in a translation—but from the little that you done in English, I perceive he must be a most excellent Author. It is very strange, that when I consented to your attending Mr. S——'s lectures, I prognosticated that it would not last long; for I believe I heard that he was not very regular in his habits. I do not exactly say that I am glad of it, but I aver that now you have a better penny worth—or in other words, that you have greater scientific lore and store for much less money, and the pennies which we save from the £'s may with good advantage be employed upon your outward man. I am glad to hear and doubt not what you say that the hours which are employed on your studies, do not infringe on your Brother, Patron and Masters official business. How you will be able to find or spare time to attend the newly announced Law Lectures, I know not, unless they are given in evening hours—The half guinea for them, we must burthen your good Brother with, it may be found in the surplus which we save from Mr. S——'s discontinuance of his lessons.

I am glad that my dear Harriet, out of the little money which I sent her, has been able to amend in some degree your Wardrobe. I cannot at present send more, for I have been at some unavoidable expense. Frikkie and family are to accompany Andreas at Sessions here—and George Poulter has announced, that when he comes here as a Juror, he will bring Emmy also here—and my Utchy has promised to accompany her husband to the Sessions at Tangalle—and then to come and take care of our household, till your Grandmother returned from Caltura, or rather till John and Harriet pay us their promised visit. And now my dear Boy, let me advise you, to be very careful, about your dress and clothing. I remember perfectly well, when you were here, that you was not so attentive to these matters, as I could have wished, and you were snatched from me, before I could

have corrected your deficiency and insinuated my own example. In January 1839 I bought 9 pair of unbleached Stocking, 5 of which I gave to Fredy, the other four I wear ever since and they will serve me another year, if I recruit their company with others—but then, the smallest hole, I had immediately mended. So much for this time I have been somewhat lengthy to give you a practical example, how to answer letters. I take my leave of you with mine and your Mother's best wishes, and request you will most kindly remember us to your Brother and Sister and kiss Alfred and Agnes for us.

God bless you, my good Boy,  
Fredy speaks for himself in the inclosed

Your dearly loving and affectionate Father  
**J. F. Lorenz.**

My hand is not now so steady as it used to be, but I feel I grow daily a little better.

Post Paid.

To :  
C. A. Lorenz }  
Dam Street } (address of Mr. Driberg.)  
Colombo.

(No. 41 p. 18)  
Matura 10 Dec. 1844.

My dear Charly,

Your letter dated on the cover 7th inst. with the inclosure to Lutchy I received only today. The reason why I did not answer yours of the 31 October is this. As I had not a syllable from John since the 25th August nor from Harriet since the 6th of October, I expected daily a line from either of them, and then to kill 2 or 3 birds with one shot—but in vain. So this is the reason why.

I am really happy to understand, and so are we all, that you will grace our Chirstmas table with your presence—but at the same time regret there is no likelihood of seeing John and Harriet at the same time, if that had been the case, I would have invited Mr. Driberg Senr. also. I learn from Mrs. de Livera that her 2 brothers will

pay her a visit for Christmas, enquire how they travel, I wish you could come in their company, in whatever vehicle it be provided it be not in a bullock cart. At all events if you come, in the mail coach, request my Harriet to pay the fare for you to Galle, for I do not know what the charge for you will be and you may carry back with you her outlay. If the de Sarams do not leave Colombo before or on the 20th you had better travel in a vehicle of their own—provided as I said before, it be not in a bullock-cart.

I am glad to learn that your Granny is making a trip to Colombo. I think it will contribute to her health, and that at the end of her pilgrimage she will return with renovated spirits—and that by your presence here the same effect will be produced on your Mother.

11. Dec. the first anniversary of Nancy's wedding day. My dear Boy, if your grandmother is now at Colombo tell her that I send her my best compliments, and that I inform her, that a certain Person, whose name I am forbid mention proposes to buy my house. My answer was that I could not tell him, before New Year, because I wanted to consult my mother-in-law about it, nor could I mention my price till then. Indeed I am not very anxious to sell it unless I could get its full value, and what that at present may be I cannot exactly tell. Could I get 2,000 Rix dollars at the rate of 7 per cent, I would not part with it, for I could then not only pay the interest with ease, but 50 Rixd : every month in discount of capital—but that I fear is a vain speculation, however I could wish that after a mature consideration of the subject your grandmother would send me at her leisure her opinion. Tell her, that by constantly thinking of that unpleasant state of subjection in which I stand to D—u—e I am melancholy by night, and that I have entirely lost my appetite so that I can hardly swallow one single meal a day.

Tell her, that notwithstanding, Lucy and Dolfy and the children are here, your mother is as melancholy as ever, she will listen to no advice, and will not bathe on any account, I hope your presence will rouse her.

Your brother requests you to buy for him in the Moorish shops 2 bundles of that sort of guitar strings called quint or requinto.

I had almost forgot to mention for the information of you all, the news of Matura, namely that Fetho Altendorff is betrothed to Miss Dumplin Jansz,<sup>39</sup> who have exchanged rings, and that young Smith has solicited Miss Joan Poulier and that it is expected that he will succeed—further that Holst has asked Miss De Kaan in marriage but has been refused, and in consequence beastly Pasquils are nightly affixed to the doors of people, defaming Mrs. Claefsen.

And now farewell till we meet

Your affectionate Father,

**J. F. Lorenz.**

(No. 41 p. 19)

Matura 8 Jan. 1845.

My dear Charly,

I have been prevented by indisposition from answering your pleasing letter of the 28th ult. for which and its inclosure I thank you kindly.

About this time of the year, since 1820 I am always ailing, and had Andreas and Ficky been at Galle, I could have paid them a short visit, in order to consult my excellent young Doctor Anthonisz.<sup>40</sup> Feeling myself a little better than usual this morning I indite these few, and but a few lines. I am very much pleased with your academical exercises, which have much good marks from your Professor and also with your drawings, which are much commended by all that have seen them here, at Matura. Continue my dear Boy, in your endeavours to be studious and emulous—I am not fully acquainted with the manner in which your entrance into the Academy this time has been effected. What are the hours, what your studies and what the terms, and above all what are the arrears of schooling which are due by me, In your very next letter, give the most explicit answer to these my queries, and especially to the last, for I am very anxious that you should not become a burden, over and above the bounty which your good Brother and Sister so plentifully bestow on you.

I am sorry to say, I can give no cheering account of your poor Mother, and to give a desponding one, in this my first letter at this season I do not like. Lucy is still here—but—no matter.

The holy days passed with us not so pleasant as we were led to expect several months before, but of what use is after-regret—so enough.

And now, my dear Charly, I constitute you, by these presents, my Consul to the family at Colombo—and so does your Mother and your sister Lucy (Fredy acts for himself).

Convey to your grandmother and your Brothers and Sisters our united good wishes, and kind regards on the entrance of a New Year, and say that we pray the Almighty that we may see them in health and wealth and in prosperity, next Year. Shake hands with the eldest and kiss for us the youngest of my beloved grand children. Your prize books and essays I cannot transmit by this opportunity though Mr. de Saram, whom I like very much, offered to take any parcel for you. They are too bulky for a traveller in the mail coach. Farewell, my Boy, and farewell to all around you. Tell my Ficky, not to stir from Colombo until she has seen all that is worth seeing or as the Portugese proverb has it—

“Alle yui Intchy Bariye”<sup>41</sup>

About this time last year I found the air and climate at Colombo very heavy, cold and oppressive, I hope it will be otherwise with Ficky and especially with Lucy.

Once more Adieu,  
Your affectionate Father  
**J. F. Lorenz.**

By my ill-formed and ill-favoured letters you'll perceive that I am not so well as usual,—<sup>42</sup>

## NOTES

1. *Source* : Lorenz Cabinet, Royal Asiatic Society Library (Colombo), Book 41. See also “Monograph on Charles Ambrose Lorenz” by Francis Beven, L.C., R.A.S., Book 37; “Charles Ambrose Lorenz” by Leopold Ludovici, Ceylon Quarterly Magazine, September 1871, and L.C., R.A.S. Book 1, p. 14; Life of Sir Richard F. Morgan by William Digby, C.I.E., Vol. 2, pp. 216-221; “Tombstones and Monuments in Ceylon” by J. P. Lewis, C.M.G., pp. 186-188; “The Life of Lorenz” by B. R. Blaze, pp. 19-21. For the Genealogy of the Lorenz family, compiled by F. H. de Vos, see J.D.B.U., (1910) Vol. III, pp. 46-50.
2. Johan (John) Drieberg, Proctor and Notary Public, born 17 May 1809, married Harriet (Harry) Agnes Lorenz (J.F.L.’s daughter by his third wife), on 13th July 1841, at Matara. He had an extensive practice and in due course became Senior Proctor in Colombo. Between 1837 and 1858 he lived in a house at the junction of Dam Street and Old Moor Street, nearly opposite the Kachcheri. (J.D.B.U., Vol. XXXIX p. 9). This house was close both to the Courts at Hulfisdorp and to the Academy at San Sebastian.
3. Gerard Johan William Drieberg, Proctor, Provincial Court, Colombo, born 20th April 1785, father of John Drieberg (J.D.B.U., Vol. XXXIX, p. 9—“Domestic Occurrences” L.C. Book 36 R.A.S.).
4. Alfred Lorenz Drieberg, born 22nd April 1842, eldest of the eleven children of John and Harriet Drieberg.
5. Helena Catharina Smith nee Ernst, born 1775, wife of Johan Gabriel Smith. Their daughter Anna Petronella Smith was the third wife of J.F.L. (J.D.B.U., Vol. III p. 48).
6. John Fredrick (Fredy) Lorenz, born 5th January 1827, brother of Charles Ambrose Lorenz who was born on 8th July 1829, at Matara.
7. Margareta Frederica (Fikky) Wilhelmina Lorenz, born 25th August 1814, (eldest daughter of J.F.L. and his third wife) married Andreas Everardus Andree on 6th March 1832 : J.D.B.U. Vol. III, p. 48.
8. Several years later J. H. Eaton, M.L.C., a close friend of C.A.L. since their schooldays at the Academy made a similar error in a letter to C.A.L. C.A.L. in reply corrected the error bidding Eaton to remember, “there are no asses in his family.” See “Reminiscences of C.A.L.” by J. H. Eaton, Kingswood Magazine, Vol. XIII, p. 96 (1910).
9. Probably Georgina Elizabeth Lorenz, born 16th January 1824, youngest daughter of J.F.L. and his third wife.
10. William Bernard Sproule came from Ireland as an army schoolmaster. For a time he ran a private school. Circa 1843 he joined the staff of the Colombo Academy : Blaze, B. R. “Life of Lorenz.” p. 41, 45. (A.N.C.L.).
11. Under the Principalship of Rev. (later Dr.) Barcroft Boake. The Colombo Academy was situated in San Sebastian. According to “A History of Royal College” 1835 has been traditionally accepted as the date of the foundation of the Colombo Academy with Rev. Joseph Marsh in charge. Later the Academy was named Royal College.
12. Petrus Jacobus Ludovici, Secretary of the District Court of Galle, married Johanna Wilhelmina Justina Lorenz (eldest daughter of J.F.L. and his second wife Maria Elisabeth Andre) at Matara on 24th November 1834.
13. Capt. William Barton of the Grenadier Guards who was wounded at Quatre Bras. He was first employed in the Commissioner of Roads Dept. and was absorbed into the Civil Service on 1st Oct. 1845, his first appointment being that of Police Magistrate, Matara. See Toussaint J.R., “Annals of the Ceylon Civil Service.” p. 120, 121 (publ. Col. Apothecaries).

14. Lucilla (Lucy, Lutchy) Charlotta Henrietta Lorenz, born 22nd Aug. 1814, second daughter of J.F.L. and his third wife, married Adolphus Wilthelmus Andree on 24th July 1837 (brother of Andreas Everardus Andree) : J.D.B.U. Vol. III, p. 48.
15. A small boat. Derived from the Tamil word "thoni."
16. Nancy Catharina Louisa Lorenz, born 20th Sept. 1816, daughter of J.F.L. and his third wife. She married Rev. D. A. L. Bartholomeusz, a Methodist Minister and widower, at St. Paul's Church, Pettah, Colombo, on 11th December 1843 : J.D.B.U. Vol. XLVIII, Part 1, p. 23.
17. Adolphus (Dolfy) Andree, husband of Lucilla. See note 14. Their daughter Emmeline (Emma) Louisa was born on 29th March 1841 : J.D.B.U. Vol. XL, p. 48.
18. The length of the tail of the Brilliant (Sun-grazing) comet of 1843 was only about  $3 \times 10^8$  kilometres : Encyl. Britt., IV (1974) p. 974.
19. A parody of the poem by Thomas Moore :—  
"The harp that once through Tara's halls  
the soul of music shed,  
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls  
As if that soul were fled."
20. "Uitvlugt" is the past participle of the Dutch word "uitvliegen," meaning to fly out, leave the nest, take wing, leave home etc. (This translation is by Meintje Orsel, Royal Netherlands Embassy, Colombo).
21. Jacobus (James) Ambrosius Roosmale Cocq, younger brother of J.F.L.'s first wife : J.D.B.U. Vol. XIV, Part 1, p. 17.
22. The great comet of 1811 had a parabolic envelope, like jets in a fountain, suggestive of a force from the sun..... A few large, bright objects (comets) developing huge tails that can stretch over more than 90% (P/Halley in 1910). "i.e. the tail may be almost 100,000,000 miles long : Encyl. Britt., Vol. 4 (1974). Obviously, J.F.L. had a better knowledge of astronomy than Master Twest of the Academy.
23. This refers to the book by J. W. Bennett : "Ceylon and its Capabilities" (London). In this book Bennett mentions that J.F.L. was the first to try the cultivation of the potato in the Island at Beralapanatara. See also "Tombstones and Monuments in Ceylon" by J. P. Lewis p. 188.
24. J. R. Blake, an expert linguist, joined the staff of the Colombo Academy in 1838. In 1843 he opened a private school in Matara : Blaze, B.R., "The Life of Lorenz." p. 41 (A.N.C.L.).
25. Frederick de Livera was the first Ceylonese to be appointed District Judge Matara, in 1844; see Hulugalle, H.A.J. "British Governors of Ceylon," p. 71 (A.N.C.L.). But see "Domestic Occurrences"—John Drieberg's diary, L.C. No. 36, R.A.S.C.B., which noted that Frederick de Livera Esq., District Judge, married John Drieberg and Harriet Lorenz on 13th July 1814 and this ceremony took place in the Court. The date "1841" in John Drieberg's contemporaneous entry is clearly the more accurate.
26. See note 19.
27. Sir Colin Campbell, Governor 1841-1847, fought with Wellington in India Spain and Waterloo and was the Duke's A.D.C. He was 64 when he was appointed Governor of Ceylon : See Hulugalle, H.A.J., "British Governors of Ceylon," p. 67 (A.N.C.L.).

28. Hon. Gerald Chetwynd Talbot (1838-1855), son of the Earl of Talbot, retired G.A., Southern Province. Galle owes a good deal to Talbot who constructed many public buildings, roads and the water service in Galle. Talbot Town, Galle, was named in his honour : Toussaint, J.R.T. "Annals of Ceylon Civil Service" p. 99 (Col. Apothecaries).
29. George Poulier married Adelaide Amelia Lorenz circa 1838 (daughter of J.F.L. and his third wife) : J.D.B.U., Vol. III, pp. 47-49.
30. Gerrit Joan Poulier, former Sitting Magistrate, Belligam (Weligama), father of George Poulier (See note 29) : JDBU, Vol. XXIV, Part 1, p. 21.
31. Agnes Harriet, born 24th October 1843, eldest daughter of John Drieberg and Harriet Lorenz, sister of Alfred : JDBU, Vol. XXXIX, Part 1, p. 10.
32. Dutch word for a "night cap." It could also mean a drowsy or lazy person. (Translation by Meintje Orsel and S. A. W. Mottau).
33. Rev. Andrew Kessen, former Headmaster of the Lower School at the Academy. He was succeeded by Rev. J. Brooke Bailey : Blaze, B.R. "The Life of Lorenz," p. 41.
34. J. F. Lorenz has combined two quotations, one from the Acts of Apostles 3 : 6, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee," and the other from Vergil, Aeneid IX, "Macte nova virtute, puer, sic itur ad astra." "Good Luck to your ambition, lad, that is the way to the stars."
35. John Henry Ernst, a cousin and close companion of Fredy and Charly, was the eldest son of George Edward Ernst, a first cousin of J.F.L.'s third wife. The Ernsts lived at a house called "The Hermitage," across the river behind J.F.L.'s house "Lodge Harmony" : JDBU, Vol. XLVIII, Part 1, p. 27, 28; Blaze, *ibid*, p. 27.
36. Robert Langslow, an English Barrister and a quarrelsome eccentric, was appointed District Judge, Colombo South, on 27th January 1841. In 1842 friction rose between him and the local Government, which culminated in his suspension by Governor Sir Colin Campbell in November 1843 and eventually in his dismissal by the Home Government in 1844 on charges of "dilatatory justice, insubordination and contempt towards the Governor." He was married to Sarah Jane Henrietta Thackeray, an aunt of William Makepeace Thackeray : see Lewis J.P. "Tombstones and Monuments in Ceylon," p. 237; Digby "The Life of Sir Richard Morgan, Vol. 2, p. 131, 132.
37. Robert William Langslow, B.A., born 14th August 1819, was the son of Robert Langslow, District Judge, Colombo South — see note 36. While Asst. Secretary in his father's Court he brought an action in his father's court against Mr. Whiting, District Judge of Colombo North, for having assumed the office of Judge without authority, and having tried him for an assault on Mr. F. J. Saunders, C.C.S. at the Queen's Birthday ball of 1842. The case was transferred to the Kalutara Court, but in the meanwhile Langslow, senior, entered judgment by default against his brother Judge of the North Court. On application to the Supreme Court the case was dismissed : Lewis J.P. *ibid* p. 237 239.
38. Like father like son (translation by Meintje Orsel and S.A.W. Mottau).
39. Miss Jansz must have been very stout.
40. Dr. Peter Daniel Anthonisz, C.M.G., M.D., F.R.C.S., (Edin), M.R.C.S. (Eng.), M.R.C.P. (Lond.); Colonial Surgeon, Ceylon Medical Department; Burgher Member of the Legislative Council, 1886-1895; President of the Ceylon Branch of the British Medical Association 1887; born 25th June 1822,

died 12 June 1903. The clocktower in the Fort, Galle, was erected by public subscription during his lifetime. The marble tablet at the base of the clocktower bears the inscription :—

"This tower was erected by Public Subscription to the perpetual memory of Peter Daniel Anthonisz (born at Galle) in testimony of his skill and benevolence in relieving human suffering."

The costly clock was the sole gift of Mudaliyar Samson de Abrew Rajapakse of Kosgoda, a grateful and devoted patient : J.D.B.U. Vol. XV, No. 2, Oct. 1925, p. 45-50.

41. A hotchpotch of German and Portuguese. J.F.L., a German picked up a smattering of Portuguese after arriving in Matara. In common parlance it probably means until "She has had a bellyful."
42. This letter was probably the last written by J.F.L. to his beloved Charly. J.F.L. died at Galle on 3rd May 1845, and, as he wished, was buried in the Dutch Cemetery, Galle, among his kindred. In 1975 this cemetery was acquired for a post office and the gravestones, including the gravestone of J.F.L., were moved to the garden of the Dutch Reformed Church in the Fort, Galle, where they now lie. The following epitaph is on his gravestone:—

Sacred to the Memory  
of

**JOHANN FREDRICH WILHELM LORENZ,**

late Sitting Magistrate of Matara,

Born at Tempelburg in Prussian Pomerania

25 June 1772,

Died at Galle 3 May 1845.

Below the inscription is engraved the Lorenz crest—a dexter arm in armour embowed, couped at the shoulder, the hand grasping a battle axe, with the motto in a garter : "Labor omnia vincit."



## SOME REMINISCENCES OF J. L. K. VAN DORT THE ARTIST

(BY ONE WHO KNEW HIM WELL)

**J. B. Siebel**

A Public School was established in the forties in 2nd Cross Street,<sup>1</sup> in the Pettah, of Colombo, called St. Paul's Parochial School. Archdeacon Glenie and his son the Reverend S. O. Glenie, Incumbent of St. Paul's, Colombo, established it I believe, and Henry Chinner, a retired Regimental School-master was its Headmaster. I was one of the pupils and was there one day half an hour before time having a game of marbles with some classmates on the outer-verandah of the school, when to our utter astonishment, a little nondescript trap pulled up at the school-door—now one of the Furniture Depots of Don Carolis, the famous furniture dealer. It was a little trap (the fons et origo of our rickshaw) just sufficient to hold two little boys, drawn by a coolly man. We surrounded the (to us) extraordinary little vehicle and helped the two little boys, who were seated in it, to alight. "Where did you get that manhorse?" said one. "He has only two legs" said another. "He is our man *April*" said one of the two boys, "but he does not live upon gram." This remark was made by the younger of the two boys, Willie whilst his brother J.L.K.V.<sup>2</sup> smothered a grim smile and was evidently taking a mental photo of the scene around him. We soon became friends and took the two boys under our protection : and the man *April* was told to come back with the trap at half past 3 p.m. *sharp*.

The two boys made many friends, and we were all very sorry when we were told some months afterwards that they were shortly to leave the school as old *April* had gone lame by an accident, and they could not get another quiet *man-horse* to take his place.

In the following year, I found myself in the Lower School of the Colombo Academy, and to my delight and surprise I found J.L.K.V. and his brother Willie there. In course of time, I made some pro-

1. This corresponds to 1st Cross Street of the present time.

2. John Leonhard Kalenberg Van Dort, born 28th July, 1831. See Genealogy, D.B.U. Jnl. Vol. xxxviii, p. 26.

gress in school, and after a certain half yearly examination I was placed somewhere about the middle of the class with J.L.K.V. as the next boy. We soon became as "thick as thieves" and he would at times slyly shew me his slate covered with all sorts of funny pictures. His great delight was to draw pictures of horses and also of soldiers marching at double quick. On a certain Monday morning our classical teacher, Mr. Goertz, quite lost his temper and administered a severe lecture to a number of boys who had forgot to bring their themes or essays which they had to write on Saturdays. This lecture was accompanied with sundry fierce gesticulations. J.L.K.V. knocked off the scene on his slate—the work of a few minutes—and as soon as I had a sight of it, I laughed outright. Goertz, who had a sneaking regard for me as a steady well-behaved boy, shouted out: "I say S—What's all that?" what on earth are you laughing at? I walked up to him with the slate, whilst my poor friend (the caricaturist) was shaking in his shoes. Goertz, like "Herman, was a German," and liked fun of this sort immensely. He looked hard at the picture and burst out laughing—"Well boys," said he, "I am sorry I was hard on you, but I won't give V.D. another<sup>1</sup> chance to take me off!" V.D. was safe, and I was glad to have saved him in a way—for he really believed he should be dragged before the Principal and receive a sound thrashing for daring to make fun of his master!

In course of time, we were promoted to a higher class, and amongst other subjects, we were reading Paley's Natural Theology with Principal Boake. After a while we tackled a chapter on "*Compensation*," which had reference to the relative sizes of man and the various animals which afforded him sustenance—such as cows for instance, which were of a certain height and make, enabling mankind to milk them without any discomfort or inconvenience. If men were giants, they would not be able to attain their object. We all accepted this theory as a very plausible one; but the next morning we found a pencil sketch on one of the Academy walls, pointing out how the difficulty suggested by Paley might be met. There was the picture of a healthy fat cow with teeming udder, and of a huge giant lying flat on his stomach with his fingers clutching the udder from which he was lustily drawing its milk with huge compressed lips.

1. V. D. Standing for Van Dort.

There was also in the picture a group of open-mouthed boys looking on at the scene in great astonishment! Principal Boake's attention was drawn to this extraordinary sketch, and all he said was: "That fellow V. is a genius, and will some day set the lake on fire." He did not, however, accomplish this feat; but his talent as an original artist came to be recognised by all who knew him in a very short time thereafter.

During the Race Season, some of us made a party and walked down of an afternoon to Colpetty to see the fun. J.L.K.V. was always one of the number; and the next morning he had no end of life-like sketches to show us—the winners, jockeys and horses—the great motley crowd crossing the Slave Island Bridge—the gram, sugar cane and ginger-beer sellers—and some of the remarkable lady occupants of the carriages which had pulled up on either side of the fence or rope which enclosed the Race Course! On Saturday evenings, too, we were often at Galle Face to hear the Band play. Some of us were fond of music and were there to hear the "*concord of sweet sounds*," but J.L.K.V. was there for another purpose as well. The subject of his facile pencil was the Ceylon Rifle Band under the baton of that well-known Bandmaster Somers and the bandsmen were all Caffres and Malays! J.L.K.V. had a great admiration for the Caffres and he knew them by their names. He loved to paint them; their thick lips, their rolling eyes, and short curly hair had a great charm for him—and I possess one of his inimitable sketches of half a dozen of them—done with a crowquill and Indian Ink!

In the Fifties I was away in Kandy; and whenever J.L.K.V. wrote to me the charm of his letters consisted in the illustrations, referring to the incidents and stories narrated by him.

I have mislaid his letters—but I have one dated December 1855 in which he gave me a very interesting and highly humorous account of a picnic on the Kelani. He had a row on this magnificent river on a glorious sunshiny morning. "The heavens were very blue and the river very green." He was in a native boat—to which was attached a Colla, or outrigger. He sent me a picture of this marvellous boat, shewing how he and his school mates and friends were seated—the place he occupied, pencil and paper in hand as "our artist"—

J.L.K.V. had nobody to assist him in the pursuit of his favourite art; but he wrote to England and got out some useful books which he studied most assiduously. He then turned his attention to lithography, procured the necessary apparatus, and set to work most enthusiastically. It was about this time that *The Catholic Messenger* which, I believe, was edited by my old friend the very Rev. J. C. Fernando, now Vicar General of Kandy, came into prominence. Its X'mas supplements had some very valuable contributions and some of these were written and most happily illustrated by J. L. K. V. My earliest "funny" contribution was to this supplement about thirty years ago! I wrote a little article about two Pettah Fiddlers and a well-known Banjo-player by the name of Jan Mack Alias Chucha Jan and J.L.K.V. "glorified" my poor contribution with some excellent illustrations. My article was entitled—"The illustrious dead." For some years, the X'mas supplement of *The Messenger* afforded very pleasant reading and the illustrations were, of course, by the well-known artist, who, in addition to his pencil illustrations, contributed a brilliant and exhaustive article headed "Roast Pigeana" with illustrations—all about Father Anthony and his famous pig!

We were still in school together when our friend J.L.K.V.D. summoned a meeting and brought forward a project to establish a Club, which he proposed to call "The Brick Club." We all quite entered into the spirit of the thing and the Club was at once established, the originator himself being nominated Honorary Secretary and Treasurer. The Club met on Saturday afternoons and the Secretary took us all by surprise one day by producing an illustrated paper he had just started entitled "The Wonderful Adventures of the Honourable Members of the Brick Club." Pleasant little stories were told in a pleasant racy style—all pure invention, of course—whilst the pen and ink illustrations were simply marvellous in their way. In relating some of his own personal adventures he called himself "Peter Jefferson Brick" and we never failed to call him by that name so long as the Club was in existence—but it had not, like most Clubs of the kind, a long life!

After the Brick Club was closed, some of us met together and resolved to have theatricals in Small Pass. A house was engaged on the top of St. Sebastian Hill—a pretty stage got-up—our artist

painting all the scenes—which he did *con amore*;—scenes which were very much admired by all who saw them. He also took a great interest in the play and the players, and put most of the actors through their facings; and, with some persuasion, he took a part *himself* in one of our "screaming farces;" and as Jeremy Diddler brought down the house by his masterly acting. The house had to be given up after a while, and we—the *dramatis personae*, got dispersed in different directions. It was about this time (1855) that Captain Gosset, Surveyor-General, arrived in Ceylon and took a great interest in the welfare of the people of the country who wished to enter the Survey Department. In due course of time, he called at the Colombo Academy, had a long talk with Doctor Boake, the Principal, and registered the names of half a dozen of the Academy Boys who were willing to join the Department. Amongst those chosen or willing to join were J. L. K. V. D., Francis Foenander who has just retired from Government Service and who is so widely known; Emanuel Perera, William de Waas; Peter Dias, afterwards Maha Mudaliar, and a few others, who have since joined the majority. They all did well, and some of them shone conspicuously. But whilst J.L.K.V. was quietly working away as a draughtsman, he did not neglect his art; but was constantly engaged in preparing designs in connection with all sorts of functions and social events. He designed almost every transparency that was wanted for a silver wedding or for some social demonstration. Besides the extreme beauty of the designs, there was so much of quiet humour and meaning in the different pictures produced by him from time to time. His services—as he was the only artist of any note—were naturally in constant demand. The Illuminated farewell addresses presented to the Governors from time to time, on their quitting the Island were all done by him or from designs executed by him: and the full page illustrations in the work entitled "The Visit of the Duke of Edinburgh to Ceylon" were all his handiwork.

His love of caricature led him to contribute to the local comic papers. For instance, his pictures and sketches which appeared in *Muniandi* from time to time were much admired, and his splendid illustrations which formed a special feature of the Christmas Supplements to some of the local newspapers are not likely to be soon forgotten! For some of his best sketches and illustrations, we would refer our readers to the illustrated supplement to *The Examiner*.



(X'mas 1875).<sup>1</sup> Amongst these are the sketches relating to the visit of the Prince of Wales. His repute as an artist was not confined to the land of his birth, for he became many years ago a valued contributor to several English illustrated papers notably the *Graphic* which had his photograph and a graceful tribute to his memory as an artist, in a recent number.

My friend married in the sixties, I think,<sup>2</sup> and lived for a short while in a little house in Hospital Street, Fort. I saw him in his little cottage more than once and he told me he was leading a very happy life in that quarter of the world. From his house he took me, one morning, in about five minutes, to the nearest rampart (the old fortifications had not then been pulled down) and pointed out the "*coigns of vantage*"—"the favourite spots or points from which he had such splendid views of the sea" of the surf-beaten shore; of Galle Face; of the beautiful Esplanade (the old race course) with its fringe of coconut tops; of Slave Island and its little bridge, and of the beautiful Beira Lake—of the blue skies and of the lights and shadows that fell upon the lake and its surroundings; and of Adam's Peak which was visible at times in the distance. He made me a present of one of his most exquisite drawings painted about this time. It was a picture of the Lake at dawn with Adam's Peak in the distance.

J.L.K.V. was fond of music and had a great fancy for the violin. But his musical talents found scope in a different direction. About this time, he came in contact with a singularly eccentric old gentleman, Liebert Phillips who was a great musician and could play with much facility on the Flute, Guitar, Zither and Bandarinha—particularly on the last-named instrument. J.L.K.V., in a short time, became a great favourite of the old gentleman's, who taught him to play on the Bandarinha—a sweet three-stringed instrument. Old Liebert was a well read man—knew Dutch, and it was pleasant to listen to his talk and to hear him play on the Bandarinha. The *staccato* passages were simply splendid, and the little instrument literally "spoke out" when he touched the strings. J.L.K.V. persevered and was in a very short time as good a player as his master, who left his Bandarinha as a legacy, to his favourite pupil, before he died.

1. This newspaper was established on the 7th January 1846.

2. Married Cornelia Henrietta Spittel, at the Dutch Reformed Church, Wolvendael, on the 30th January 1861.

After quitting the Fort, J.L.K.V. came back to Small Pass, and lived there, (next to his father's residence), for many years, until he flitted to Bambalapitiya, where he purchased a piece of land and built a model house—quite an artist's cottage with beautiful Ionic pillars—and thus became one of the earliest settlers to Bambalapitiya, where he lived up to his death. His best work was done whilst living in this cottage, which he called "DORDRECHT."<sup>1</sup>

It is, perhaps, not generally known that among other things, our artist took a great interest in pushing forward that excellent work by Mr. Leopold Ludovici—his *LAPIDARIUM ZEYLANICUM*, which contains a collection of monumental inscriptions of the Dutch Church and church-yards of Ceylon. J.L.K.V. supervised the lithographic portion of the work, as it was going through the press, and contributed a beautiful pen and ink sketch of the interior of Wolfendhal Church, Colombo, shewing the Governor's pew all lined with crimson velvet; the Elders' and Deacons' pews nearly opposite to it; the grand old pulpit with the Baptistry and Lectern, and also the western window of stained glass with the hatchment of Governor Wilhelm Iman Falck on one side of it. If one examines this picture carefully, the details will simply astonish him; for there is nothing that the artist has omitted. Last, though not least, you will notice a chair next to the Elders' pew, in which he inscribed his name as the artist, shewing his love and attachment to the grand old historic church in which he was baptised, confirmed and married, and in which he had served as an Elder for many years. In this connection I can scarcely omit to mention that, besides being an Elder of the Wolfendhal church for a series of years, he took a deep interest in the erection of the plain but pretty little church at Bambalapitiya.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to all this J.L.K.V. was a Free Mason of a high order. He was a Past Master<sup>3</sup> and belonged, I believe, to the Royal Chapter Lodge, and was at one time corresponding secretary and, in communication with all the lodges. On the XXVth anniversary of his marriage, a few years ago a large number of masons called at

1. Between Haig Road and 10th Lane.

2. In 1869, A. M. Ferguson brought out his "Souvenirs of Ceylon" which derived its chief interest from the caricatures of various classes of Ceylon people in different walks of life, by J. L. K. Van Dort.

3. He was a Master of the Sphinx Lodge, Irish Constitution in 1879.

"Dordrecht" headed by Colonel Gorman, who made a very feeling speech on the occasion and presented J.L.K.V. and Mrs. Van Dort with very costly gifts. On the same day but a short while afterwards, an address was presented to him by his numerous friends, and Mr. Charles L. Ferdinands, the spokesman, made a most effective speech in the course of which he referred to Mr. Van Dort's position as "unique"—he being the only Ceylon artist.

I have some of his earlier sketches with me. He visited Kandy in the sixties, and I have a very good coloured sketch of the Gampola bridge and its surroundings, a sketch of Dawson's monument at the top of Kadugannawa Pass, (erected under his father's supervision), and also of a Buddhist priest and his attendant. He told me that when he was making a sketch of the monument, Sir William Ogle Carr, C.J., who was a fellow-passenger with him in the Kandy mail coach, looked at his sketch and was pleased with it, and made some suggestions which he readily adopted.

I also possess a copy of the well-known picture (done in Indian ink) of the "Vacant Chair"—in the study of *Whist Bungalow*. The table is there—and the bookshelves and the Vacant Chair and on the top of an office-box a string of beads left probably by some dear little grand-daughter who was playing at his knee a day or two before Sir Richard<sup>1</sup> had passed away. The crest with the motto "Let the deed shew" is seen in the top corners of the sketch; and through the open window the two stone elephants are seen which had been sculptured and brought there from Muttu-rajawela. Nothing could be more complete or more telling than this picture.

To my mind, however, there is nothing finer amongst his sketches than the picture of the Stone Lion of *Nissanka Malla*, which will be found in the illustrated supplement of "*The Examiner*" of October, 1875. It will be remembered that this remarkable Stone Lion was removed from the wilds of Polonnaruwa and dragged all the way, on a dray, by elephants until it reached Matale. I saw it at the Kandy railway station, and large crowds went to see it too. The Mahawansa tells us that King Nissanka or Kirti Nissanka Malla reigned at

1. Sir Richard Morgan.

Polonnaruwa A.D. 1198, just 700 years ago, and administered Justice in his council-hall, sitting on this stone beast. This fact was most strangely corroborated by an inscription found on it to the following effect—"ON THIS LION KING NISSANKA MALLA SAT AND ADMINISTERED JUSTICE."

Well, when the Stone Lion reached Colombo and found a resting place in the Museum—(anybody can have a look at it now)—J.L.K.V. was one of the first to go and see it, and whilst he was admiring this grand relic of the past, a bright idea occurred to him. He made a sketch of it, and added a caricature of Sir William Gregory sitting on its back in regal Kandyan costume holding a pair of scales, and administering Justice as King Nissanka Malla did of old.

This picture was lithographed by J.L.K.V. with a beautiful ornamental border, and, as soon as it appeared in the pages of the newspaper referred to, it attracted the attention of Sir William Gregory, who was evidently much pleased with it; for he refers to it with much satisfaction in his autobiography recently edited and published by Lady Gregory.<sup>1</sup> This is what Sir William says of the Stone Lion and of the clever artist:—

"I much regret I cannot lay my hand on the letter of Mr. MacBride giving the account of the transport of a famous Lion from its original site in the council-hall of King Nissanka Malla at Polonnaruwa." This is the ruined city of greatest interest after Anuradhapura. It is of much later origin. The Lion in question is a fine object. There is an inscription on it to this effect.—

"On this Lion King Nissanka Malla sat and administered Justice."—A capital caricature was done of me by Mr. J. L. K. VanDort I was portrayed as King Nissanka Malla dressed in Royal Kandyan robes and seated on the Lion with the Title "*The modern Nissanka Malla!*"

Some time after the appearance of the caricature in question, I met the artist in Colombo and I asked him what all this was about.

1. Sir William Gregory K.G.M.G., an autobiography, edited by Lady Gregory (1894).

"O, yes," said he. Sir William Gregory sent for me and I thought I would be severely censured for attempting to caricature the Governor of Ceylon. Instead of that he received me most kindly at Queen's House, and, after putting me a few questions about my career as a local artist, Sir William with a merry twinkle in his eye, asked me, "Now tell me Mr. Van Dort, how did the idea of placing me on the top of the Lion as Nissanka Malla occur to you?" I candidly told the Governor that the idea dawned on me as I was admiring the Lion at the Museum—a building which owed its origin to His Excellency himself. It was simply the *association* of ideas, Sir William had a hearty laugh; and then he had another look at the sketch which he held in his hand and then at me! I feared he would, at least, warn me *not to do it again*: but he did not. As I was leaving him, he said he hoped to see and know more of me: but, of course, I never went near Queen's House again." Just like him—we all know what a modest retiring fellow he was!

As an artist of some repute, he should have been better known; but J.L.K.V. led *such* a quiet life in his little cottage, "Dordrecht" and thus seldom came before the public. His great delight was to take long and almost fatiguing walks in the early mornings and afternoons until his medical attendant prohibited him from doing so as he feared heart-disease. I met the artist one morning at Bambalapitiya, when I was staying temporarily in his neighbour-hood not many years ago. He stopped me and he said, "you have no idea what lovely walks there are in our neighbourhood. I have only to get into the Hindoo Temple opposite to my house, and reach the garden behind, and I find myself in paradise—such beautiful avenues—such large umbrageous trees—such shady inviting nooks—where the birds sing—and such soft breezes blow now and again as you get into the open."

When he was confined to the house during the latter years of his life, he spent the early mornings in reading—and, after breakfast in preparing "designs" or sketches for *The Graphic* and other illustrated English papers.

As an artist he was widely known throughout the Island and even beyond its limits; but very few knew that he was equally clever

with his pen, and could describe a scene which arrested his attention with as much ease and facility, with his pen, as with his pencil.<sup>1</sup> For some years past, he regularly contributed articles on various subjects to the Christmas supplement of *The Ceylon Examiner*, and probably none but his intimate friends suspected that *he* was the author of those excellent contributions. I think I can do no better than subjoin a few extracts to shew the peculiarities of his style and his powers of description and also the extreme clearness, and correctness of such description, no matter what the subject was that engaged his attention.

J.L.K.V. was equally happy in relating short stories. He wrote a very stirring article as an X'mas contribution to the *Examiner* not very long ago in regard to some haunted houses in and around Colombo. It would suffice if I give your readers an extract relating to Vuystwyk, the country-seat of the notorious Dutch Governor Vuyst. This is the extract:—

The proverbial schoolboy has given us the meaning of the familiar letters, R.I.P. as "*Return if Possible*" hence no doubt certain reckless spirits acting on this hint, are in the habit of paying frequent visits to this world in general and Colombo in particular during the glimpses of the moon. From various sources of information, the following legends have been collected by your reporter for the entertainment of your numerous readers during the present festive season. Beginning with the northern suburbs, Vuystwyk looms pre-eminently amongst Ghost-ridden quarters. Whether or not Vuyst was a cannibal, or that his Malay cook shared his cannibalistic propensities is no concern of ours; suffice it to say, that the legend hints as much, and states further that the Village byepath leading from the high road behind Vuystwyk was the spot whence many a villager returning homeward after dusk mysteriously disappeared, and that the bones of people of all sexes and ages were unearthed in its immediate vicinity after Vuyst's reign of terror. When your reporter visited Vuystwyk in 1847, a well and a large bathing tank constructed near it with steps leading down to it were pointed out as the haunted locality where groans and sighs innumerable issued all day and night; and,

1. An article by him on "Old Colombo,"—printed in Vol.xii, p. 78 of *The Journal*, affords a striking example of his ability as a writer.

verily, the loneliness of the place, combined with the sighing and rushing of the Christmas breezes then in full force, contributed not a little towards lending an air of truth to the rumour, while a grove of bamboo bushes growing around the tank emitted something like groans when their stems happened to grind against each other during fitful gusts of wind. It needed not the presence of a fat boy to make one's flesh creep while standing there alone. In 1894, the bamboo bushes had disappeared, the well and tank were in ruins and overgrown with weeds, but the mysterious sounds were there and no one was to be found courageous enough to venture near it after dark. At night the belated traveller would hurry on as he saw lights gleaming around the uncanny spot where all around was dark and no human habitation near, the bungalow being about 300 yards away near the junction of two carriage roads, and quite out of sight and hearing. The guide and caretaker rejected the idea of there being any Jack-o'-Lantern or Will-o'-the-Wisp in the case at all, and stoutly maintained that it was old Vuyst himself keeping nightly vigil there and doing penance in his burning "Iron Chair."

I cannot help adding one more Extract from a contribution which appeared in "The Examiner" newspaper of *Christmas* 1893. His article is headed "CHRISTMAS in COLOMBO, 1850, by a *Spook of the Period*." It is a very interesting article, and shews how close an Observer J.L.K.V. was of the customs passing events and incidents of the day. After describing the different ceremonies and customs in vogue in Colombo in the Old Times in celebrating The Great Festival, he proceeds to describe the various costumes as well as the head-gear and dresses worn by the children in those days, including the CONCERTINA CAPS not in vogue now. Then, with great ingenuity he traces the "LAST CAP" of its kind to an ancient almirah to be found in a Moorish-Lumber-Store amongst the "Iron-Shops" in the Pettah of Colombo! Having taken us to this antiquated store he proceeds, with a quaintness and humour peculiarly his own to describe the OTHER rare and extraordinary articles which formed the stock-in-trade of that enterprising Old Tamby who was always hoping that a purchaser might turn up some fine day and pay a fancy price for his wonderful commodities.

### Extract referred to

"Children go about in their smartest costumes of the period to receive presents from Uncles, Aunts and Grandparents as well as to pay their duty visits; and aged pensioners move about earlier than usual this morning to obtain their Christmas bounties at an early hour." Toy—and firework—stalls spring up in every available nook and corner, from the humble *kanape* covered with a clean napkin, and heaped with packets of Chinese crackers, bundles of bluelights, rockets and squibs and saucers of detonating balls and glass bubbles, to the well stocked boutique glittering with paper lanterns, swinging mandarins and toy-fishes besides mountains of crackers, and a great variety of fireworks, large and small. There are, at all hours, admiring groups of little ones assembled before the same, under escort of nurses, others, who are old enough, make purchases on their own account and a few who only *stand and wait* outside the circle until a sympathetic kind hearted person scatters a few crackers amidst them. Amongst the head dresses of the young folk the '*Concertina Cap*' is the most conspicuous. It has since disappeared from mortal ken, and seems to have been improved off the face of the earth. There is however: at the present day, an antiquated Moorish lumber—store amongst the "Iron boutiques" in the Pettah in which stands an ancient almirah. Through its broken and dusty panes covered with the mildew and damp of years of neglect, reposes in peace one of those curious caps, in the company of a few poke-bonnets, large and small, of limp and faced straw; and two dress-hats of real beaver fur, with fiercely cocked brims in the fashion of fifty years ago, both of a discoloured drab but one lighter in tint than the other. There are besides them a few rusty waist and shoe-buckles, a high comb or two, an ancient snuff box, and a bunch of watch seals; also an old betel box with brass betel crusher and other accessories; and in a huge chest a green bombazine Dress coat with brass buttons, pointed tails and a high velvet lined collar, likewise a couple of gorgeous though faded, waist-coats of silk and velvet, gold embroidered; a few shirts and huge collars and frilled fronts and cuffs and some high-waisted, pudding-sleeved ladies' dresses, one of which is embroidered with gold and silver spangles. The Old Tamby "the Proprietor still entertains a hope that a purchaser might turn up for them some fine day, as well as for a worn out Poffertjie—panfa—Wafell-Iron

and a bell-metal Broeder pannetje, which occupies another corner of this shop in company with the steering gear and front wheel of a trikel, the sliding doors of a palanquin and the remains of a "looy banque."<sup>1</sup>

Does not the foregoing remind us somewhat of the 'needy shop' of the poor Apothecary of Mantua to whom *Romeo* went for a dram of Poison in his despair.

"And in his needy shop a tortoise hung;  
An alligator stuffed and other skins  
Of illshaped fishers : and about his shelves  
A beggarly account of empty boxes  
Green earthenpots, bladders and musty seeds  
Remnants of pack-thread and old cakes of roses  
Were thinly scattered to make up a show."

I think I have now said all I can remember of my esteemed departed friend and it is time I should drop the curtain.

There is one small item however I cannot well omit, When I was at "Dordrecht" for his funeral I entered his studio and I was shewn the picture of a horse done in pencil framed and hung by himself. It bore his initials and the words "7th year." It was evidently one of his earliest productions which he had carefully preserved; and not far from this was his easel with a very striking water-colour picture. It was that of a race course and of a Jockey who had come to grief at a hurdle.—The words underneath were "His LAST HURDLE." This was certainly the last picture J.L.K.V. ever painted. There is, I think, a sad significance in the words as if he had a pre-sentiment of his approaching end.

His sudden death of heart disease took place on the afternoon of the 24th March last.<sup>2</sup> He left only a son and a daughter—both clever in their ways—different and identical though they are in many respects—and the son who has inherited much of his father's talent will we feel sure, do his best to fill his father's place.

1. A bench or wooden seat for affianced lovers in the old days.

2. 1898.

In the death of J.L.K.V. I need scarcely say; Ceylon has lost an Artist of no little merit, ability and originality; and his numerous friends are, I feel sure, not likely to forget him for a long time to come. They will always think of his goodness and gentleness as a friend and of his sterling ability as an Artist.

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*Note by Editor* :—This biographical sketch was written by J. B. Siebel and published in June 1898 in a monthly magazine of general interest called *The Ceylon Review*. It might be added that the subject of the sketch was the father of Miss Grace Van Dort and of her brother Ernest Francis Van Dort—himself an artist who exhibited largely at exhibitions held under the auspices of the Ceylon Society of Arts of which society his father was one of the earliest Presidents.

Ernest Van Dort married Rosaline Harriet Ondatje. The latter and her daughter Enid Muriel the wife of Col. Carl Evatt Arndt settled some years back with their family in Perth, West Australia.

J. B. Siebel, the school-boy friend of J. K. L. Van Dort took to the Law and eventually settled in practice as a Proctor in Kandy. He was later Crown Proctor and was a widely-known personality endowed with a sympathetic pen which enriched many a periodical published in his generation.

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## "COURT ODDITIES OF OLD"



The Sword.



The Judge.



The Marshal.



The Registrar.

## ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS FOR STUDIES OF THE DUTCH IN CEYLON

By Samuel A. W. Mottau

In the eighth annual report of the Archivist of the United States of America for the year 1941-1942 he says :

Nations like the people of whom they are composed, make their plans and decisions and base their actions, if they are wise, on their own experiences or on that of others. They know of this experience either through memory or through a written record which serves as an extension of memory. Since individual nations live longer as a rule than individual men, they must depend increasingly on the written record rather than on the memory of man for their knowledge of experience. It follows, therefore, that a nation has a greater fund of experience on which to draw and presumably can take more intelligent action if it records its experiences, and if it finds and makes use of that record whenever it is needed. It must have been with these thoughts in mind that Congress established the National Archives in 1934, and gave to it the task, though it was not stated in so many words of making the experience of the Government and the people of the United States as it is embodied in non-current records of the Federal Government and related materials available, to guide and assist the Government and the people in planning and conducting their activities.

The National Archives of Ceylon is the main repository of the primary sources of information for studies of the Dutch in Ceylon from the 17th to the early 19th century. It had its beginnings with the appointment of Sir Hugh Cleghorn, who was the first Chief Secretary to the Government in early British times, as the first *Keeper of the Records* of this Island in the year 1798, nearly a century and a half earlier than the National Archives of the United States of America.

A contribution of the Dutch to the history and culture of Ceylon is the unique complete record of transactions connected with the administration of their territories in this Island from 1640 A.D. to

the end of the 18th century, consisting of over 7000 manuscript volumes and files. This is a priceless legacy bequeathed by them to their successors and the peoples of Ceylon.

The subsidiary repositories for primary sources of the period are the archives of the Consistories of the three Dutch Reformed Churches—Colombo, Galle and Matara—which contain the records of the history and progress of the ecclesiastical and educational establishments.

The plans and maps in the repositories of the National Archives, the Colombo Museum, and the Surveyor-General's Office in Colombo afford a useful source for geographical and topographical studies of the country during this period.

Taken together, these collections form a complete series of the recorded transactions dating from 1640 A.D., Except for a few gaps caused by the ravages of time and wear, damage through improper storage and care by the custodians, by vermin and other insect pests, and occasionally through the special emergencies of war. They are a veritable gold-mine on the historical cultural, and economic development of this Island during the Dutch administration; and furnish original documentary evidence not available in the repositories either in Holland or in the East (Indonesia, etc.) for studies such as;

1. General colonial history, with special reference to the Dutch;
2. The political, social and economic conditions of this Island;
3. The history of the Sinhalese, Tamils, Moors, Malays and other communities in the Island, their laws, customs and institutions;
4. The progress and development of religion and education;
5. The system of land tenures and registration of property;
6. Naval and military adventure;
7. Geographical and ethnological studies;
8. Diplomatic relations with the various Sinhalese monarchs of the Kandyan Province, the native princes of India and other foreign powers.

The records have been generally most carefully arranged and methodically preserved and marshalled by their contemporary cus-

todians in the various series under which they are now listed and catalogued. Time will not permit reference in detail to the several subsidiary sources for studies in particular subjects such as are listed in Miss M. W. Jurriaanse's *Catalogue of the Archives of the Dutch Central Government of Coastal Ceylon 1640-1796*, and in my own *Catalogue of the Dutch records of the Galle, Matara, Jaffna and the Wanny districts*. Both are available at the National Archives in Colombo, the latter in typescript. I shall endeavour to comment briefly on the main sources for general study and research which are available in the following series of the records in the National Archives and in other repositories in Ceylon.

*First* : The minutes or proceedings in the Dutch *Politieke Raden*, or Councils of Policy of the General administration in Colombo and the two *Commandements* of Jaffna and Galle and other towns and outposts such as Mannar, Tuticorin, Trincomalee, Batticaloa and the Malabar Coast. They form the backbone of the original sources for studies of all aspects of Dutch administration in Ceylon; and consist of over 1,000 manuscript volumes and files along with the annexes or additional papers and documents tabled (submitted) at the Session of the various Councils and the contemporary indexes to the same which are available, in the National Archives.

Written in the Dutch language in varying styles of script of the period this source has been almost untapped for purposes of historical research and study, except by former Archivists of the Government and by a few keen and enterprising scholars from abroad and by a few from Ceylon who in recent years have acquired a knowledge of the language for their contributions towards the history of Ceylon. Besides the voluminous contemporary works of Dutch men such as the Revs. Philippus Baldaeus, Francois Valentyn and Pieter van Dam, modern contributions by Drs. Karl Gunawardena and S. Arasaratnam (both of Ceylon), Dr. F. W. Stapel (of Holland) and the Rev. Fr. R. Boudens (of Belgium) are results of such recent endeavours.

These minutes are maintained and filed under the various branches of activity set up by the Central Government from time to time as occasion demanded :

- A. The General or Ordinary Council minutes (from 1640-1796 A.D.);



- B. The Secret Council minutes (1665-1796) which contain separately the Confidential and Secret discussions and decisions of the Council;
- C. The minutes of the *Binnenlandsche Department* or Department of the Interior (1786-1794) which dealt specifically with matters connected with internal administration of the country and the native or Ceylonese establishments;
- D. The minutes of the *Militaire* or Military Department (1790-1794) which dealt specifically with all military affairs and operations in the country and against foreign powers and the military and naval establishments of the Dutch East India Company;
- E. The minutes of the Secret Committee (1762-1766) which dealt specifically with the confidential and secret discussions and decisions of the Council connected with the war against Kandy and the treaty of 1766 A.D.

These minutes record the individual opinions of the members on the various topics and problems that came up for discussion and action in matters of internal and external policy, trade and commerce, local administration, local usages and customs, diplomatic relations, education, religious and charitable establishments, agriculture and irrigation, etc.

Unfortunately only a very small section of these series has been translated into English. The one substantial effort is the English rendering of the minutes of the Secret Committee on the Kandyan war and the treaty of 1766, English translations along with the Dutch text of the full series of these interesting minutes are now available. The first part for the year 1762 has been translated by J. H. O. Paulusz, former Government Archivist—and published by the Government in 1954. English translations (with the Dutch text) of the subsequent years to 1766 made by Edmund Reimers, former Government Archivist are available in typescript at the National Archives. Summaries of the same which I prepared are being published serially in the *Journal of the Dutch Burgher Union of Ceylon*.

Apart from the contemporary series of indexes to these minute which are available in the Dutch language, there is also a manuscript

general index in English of the more important subjects and topics prepared by another former Government Archivist, R. G. Anthonisz. This covers the period 1656-1796 and though not fully comprehensive nor systematic by modern standards—nor uniform in alphabetical arrangement, serves as a most useful aid for study and research.

*Second* : There is the series of memoirs and circuit diaries left by various Dutch Governors and other Chief Officials of Ceylon for their successors. This series is by far the most useful source for purposes of general study.

According to the orders issued by the Government at Batavia, every Governor or *Commandeur*, in fact any high official of the Company, was expressly required to leave a memoir for the guidance of his successor in office, outlining the principal points regarding administration of his particular office. The memoir left by the Governor, as a rule, furnished a description of the country, its resources, its peoples, their customs, industries etc.; with special hints of a personal nature for the incoming man. In many cases the personality of the author was fully reflected in the memoir and consequently it would contain much authentic and factual matter. The subjects dealt with were treated more or less in this order :

- A. The general revenue derived from commodities over which the Dutch had either monopoly or partial monopoly; and the various taxes levied on gardens and field, as cinnamon, arecanut, paddy, salt, chank and pearl fisheries; the trade in cotton goods, tobacco, elephants, timber etc.

Among the taxes, several items dealt with furnish an interesting source for study of the social conditions at that period; for example, taxes for licences issued for travelling in a palanquin, the use of the *sombreel* or sunshade, wearing of gold medals, exemption from *uliyam* or cooly service—or other obligatory services by the several castes or grades of local inhabitants, and even for formalities to be observed at funerals, weddings, etc.

- B. Administrative supervision of the fortifications and defences, including much useful information of topographical and local interest;

### C. The Civil, Naval and Ministry establishments.

Under this heading some of the memoirs contain a frank and free expression of opinion on the merits and demerits of the Company's officials. A good example of this appears in Governor Jan Schreuder's *Memoir* written in the year 1762, during the disquieting period of the Kandyan war, where he makes the following interesting remarks on the efficiency of officials of that period.

As to what now relates to the efficiency of the servants of the Company at this place, there is not much to enthuse thereover seeing that the efficient and zealous officers are only a few in number, and the rest are in such a case as Mr. Imhoff testifies : for he who loves the truth cannot deny that I have to rouse and keep awake the majority of them from a sleep of indolence and indifference which had totally crept over them, by continual urging, earnest admonition, threats and even the imposition of fines (which were however usually remitted) in order to make them diligent and attentive to their duties, the which had such results that I have reformed many of them. I must also confess to my regret that the expectations that I had formed of some of them have been abused, and that I have seen illustrated the truth of the proverb that "They are not all cooks who carry long knives," and that those upon whom one thought he could rely most committed the gravest errors in a moment of emergency.

D. Description of the various establishments of the Dutch and the administration of their schools;

E. Ceremonies and events connected with the reception of the Ambassadors from the Kandyan Court : and the relations (political and economic) between the Dutch and the Kandyan Kingdom;

F. Description of the various communities and castes and their grades and peculiar obligatory services;

G. The memoir usually closed with matters concerning coinage, mint and exchange of the country during various periods; and topics of secondary importance.

The later memoirs furnish useful information on the system of land registration and service tenure in vogue at the time, and the merits and demerits of the headman system.

Apart from acting appointees during periods of interregnum, thirty Governors were in office during the period of the Dutch Government in Ceylon. Seven of these died in office in the Island :

Gerrit de Heere, died in November 1702

Isaac Augustyn Rumpf, in June 1723

Johannes Hertenberg, in October 1725

Diederik van Domburg in June 1726

Geraard Joan Vreeland, in February 1752

Lubbert Jan, Baron van Eck, in May 1765

Iman Willem Falck, in February 1785

One man, Petrus Vuyst, was apprehended and removed from office in 1726 after a short but tyrannical rule of three years. He was tried and executed in Batavia for treason, rebellion and murder.

Another man, Stephanus Versluys, was recalled in disgrace in 1729.

Eight other governors do not appear to have complied with the order of the Supreme Authority in Batavia in this respect and left no memoirs. These are :

Jan Thysz Payaart, in office 1640-1646

Jacob van Kittensteyn, 1650-1653

Adrian van der Meyden, 1656-1662

Jacob Hustaart, 1663-1664

Adrian Roothaas, 1664-1665

Willem Maurits Bruynink, 1740-1742

Daniel Overbeek, 1742-1743

Joan Gerard van Angelbeek, 1794-1796, when Colombo surrendered to the British.

Fortunately for students of history, thirteen men left most interesting memoirs. All have been translated, except that of Laurens Pijl (4 below). Two translations are in manuscript only, and their authors are not known (10 and 13 below). The other ten are translations made by former Archivists—Miss Sophia Pieters, later Mrs. R. G. Anthonisz and Edmund Reimers. These ten works were published by the Ceylon Government. Chronologically these thirteen memoirs are :

1. Jan Maetsuyker to Jacob van Kittensteyn, in 1650; tr. by E. Reimers (Colombo, 1927)
2. Rijklof van Goens Sr. to Jacob Hustaart, in 1663; and later to Rijklof van Goens, Jr., in 1675; tr. by E. Reimers. (Colombo, 1932)
3. Rijklof van Goens, Jr. to Laurens Pijl, in 1679, tr. by Miss S. Pieters (Colombo 1910)
4. Laurens Pijl to Thomas van Rhee, in 1692 (Manuscript copy of text in the Colombo Museum Library)
5. Thomas van Rhee to Gerrit de Heere. in 1697 : tr. by Mrs. S. Anthonisz (Colombo 1915)
6. Cornelis Joan Simons to Hendrick Becker, in 1707; tr. by Mrs. S. Anthonisz (Colombo 1914)
7. Hendrick Becker to Isaac Augustyn Rumpf in 1716; tr. by Mrs. Anthonisz (Colombo 1914)
8. Jacob Christiaan Pielat to Diederik van Domburf in 1734; tr. by Miss S. Pieters (Colombo 1905)
9. Gustaaf Willem Baron van Imhoff to Willem Maurits Bruynink in 1740; tr. by Miss S. Pieters (Colombo 1911)
10. Julius Valentyn Stein van Gollennesse to Geraard Joan Vreeland in 1751. (Photostar copy of Dutch text and a manuscript translation into English—author not known both at National Archives)
11. Joan Gideon Loten to Jan Schreuder in 1757, tr. by E. Reimers. (Colombo 1935)
12. Jan Schreuder to Lubbert Jan, Baron van Eck in 1762; tr. by E. Reimers. (Colombo 1946)
13. Willem Jacob van de Graff to Joan Gerard van Angelbeek in 1794. (Typescript of translation into English—author not known at the National Archives).

Mention must be made here of a valuable set of Instructions left by one of the earliest and ablest Dutch Governors, Rycklof van Goens, Sr., who later held the office of Governor-General at Batavia. These Instructions contain a full and complete record of the orders issued

from time to time during the early period of the Dutch Administration, (1656-1665) for the principal officials of the Company, and they form the basis on which this country was governed throughout the period of Dutch rule. An English translation by Mrs. Sophia Anthonisz, Dutch Translator to the Government of Ceylon and to become wife of the Government Archivist at the time, was published by the Government in 1908.

Governors and other officials made regional and general circuits. The circuit diaries and reports on various districts are of special use for geographical studies of the country and its resources; for customs and usages prevailing at the time, and occasionally for ethnological and philological studies. For example, one diary describes a commodity as *Singhaleesche ooren* which literally rendered into English means *Sinhalese ears*. A subsequent diary revealed that the term referred to *goraka*, an acid fruit used in curries. The shape of the article and the absence of a proper Dutch equivalent, plus the fact that it was a product of the interior villages, presumably prompted the scribe to term it as *Sinhalese ears*. There are several instances of this kind.

*Third.*—There is a series of correspondence and the annual general reports and returns of trade and commerce called *Compendia*, plus their annexes (supplementary matter) which were sent to Holland and to Batavia. More than 1,500 manuscript files of such correspondence ranging from 1721 to 1756 are available. Of these, the most important are the annual general reports of the Dutch Governors which contain a summary of the transactions and events of the previous fiscal year systematically arranged under the various aspects of administration. Unlike the corresponding series of the British records, no contemporary general indexes of this series are extant as aids to research. The order of arrangement is quite uniform, and reference to any particular topic of interest is not too difficult with sufficient experience in their use.

*Fourth :* The series of Head and Land *Tombos*. This monumental work of registration has been referred to as the *Doomsday Book* of Ceylon. It was a survival of the Portuguese *tombo* or register of holdings, and their *forals* or register of quit rents, both of which in turn

had been modelled on the *Lekam-mitti* or *feudal registers* of Sinhalese times. Governor Jan Schreuder, referring to them in his *Memoir*, says :

A fully completed tombo is important not only in respect of the least detail which concerns the country, but also of the good inhabitants thereof; and indeed in all civilised countries, nothing is so proper and natural than that the particulars regarding one's own territory and subjects should be recorded in writing in such a manner that it would not be possible for a child to be born, or a graybeard, however old he may be, to die, without some mention being made thereof.

There are three sets of such tombos compiled in respect of the Colombo and Galle districts, revised from time to time between 1742 and 1784, consisting of more than 400 manuscript volumes. Some originated, and dating from about 1683, are also available. These are not arranged in any substantial form, and are fragmentary. There is also a set of 38 volumes of such tombos respecting the several villages and islands of the Jaffna *Commandement*, dating from 1772-1779, which throw much light on the land tenures and customs of that district.

The tombos were to serve a dual purpose. They were to be a statistical record of population and properties in the districts and villages. They were also an economic survey of revenues and other resources of the Company based on land taxes and feudal services of its subjects. Today they serve a still further purpose : they provide authentic certification of title to ownership, and certificates are admissible as legal evidence in the absence of proper notarial deeds in cases of land disputes. More informally, they are also very much in use now in genealogical studies of the various Sinhalese and Tamil residents of the country.

*Fifth.*—I now refer briefly to other subsidiary series of primary sources in the more important branches of research.

*A. Education and Religion.*—The Dutch school tombos or parish registers and the proceedings of the *Scholarchale Vergaderingen*, or School Boards, in the National Archives date from

the latter part of the 17th century, and are the earliest records of village population in territories administered by the Dutch.

These records and the minutes of the three school boards in Colombo, Jaffna and Galle districts in the National Archives, are supplemented by the minutes of the three Church Consistories, the reports of the annual visits of the *Scholarchen* or *School Inspectors*, and the registers of baptisms, marriages, and burials which are available in the archives of the respective Churches. Alphabetical indexes of entries in the registers of the Dutch Reformed Churches in the Colombo District for the period 1709-1952 A.D. are available in the Archives of the Dutch Reformed Church at Wolvendaal in Colombo. All of these furnish a useful primary source for study of both educational policy and genealogy during a period covering more than 125 years of Dutch and early British rule in Ceylon.

Following are three useful guides for background to the two systems of registration, the head and land tombo and the school tombo or parish registers :

Mottau, S.A.W. "Documents relating to the tombo registration of the Dutch and the instructions issued in this connection." *Ceylon Historical Journal*. III (pt. 2), 1953.

Mottau, S.A.W. *A Summary of the contents of the Dutch Head and Land Tombos*, MSS. II volumes, compiled 1956.

Reimers, Edmund. *The Dutch Parish Registers (School Tombos) of Ceylon*. Printed as a draft bulletin of the Historical Manuscripts Commission of Ceylon in 1949; not published.

An account of the Dutch educational establishment in Ceylon by the Rev. J. D. Palm, apparently based on sources at Wolvendaal Church which he served was published in the *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* in 1846, and reproduced in the *Journal of the Dutch Burgher Union of Ceylon* in Vol. 28. of 1939. A general survey of progress and development of education in Ceylon during the Portuguese, Dutch and British periods appeared in articles included in *Centenary Volume of Education in Ceylon*, published by Government, 1969.

- B. *Geographical and Topographical studies*.—The series of maps and plans in the National Archives, the Colombo Museum and the Surveyor-General's Office in Colombo, with their relevant lists and indexes, are the main sources for these studies.

The comprehensive work is Dr. R. L. Brohier's *Land, Maps and Surveys* (Colombo, 1952). Subsidiary material is also among the manuscript files in the National Archives where are reports of the various Dutch officials on matters of defence, agriculture, irrigation, survey and land settlement.

- C. *Diplomatic relations of the Dutch with the Kandyan Court, Indian princes and other foreign powers*.—About 100 manuscript files dealing with *external affairs* of the Dutch and their diplomatic relations with both eastern and western powers; treaties concluded; naval and military expeditions against the Portuguese, French, British; and their wars with Kandy are available.

These files are apart from the reports of the Dutch Governor's memoirs and their annual reports to Holland and Batavia, both of which were mentioned earlier. The series contains reports of the various Dutch embassies to Kandy and to Siam (Thailand), and the original letters of King Rajasinha II to the various Dutch officials, written in Portuguese. Translations of these by Donald Ferguson appeared in the *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 55, 1904. Texts of the various treaties concluded by the Dutch in the East are published in *Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico-Indicum*, by J. E. Heeres and Dr. F. W. Stapel available, as are other books cited in this paper, at the National Archives. Its full title reads :

CORPUS DIPLOMATICUM NEERLANDO-INDICUM :  
*Verzameling van politieke contracten enverdere verdragen door de Nederlanders in het Oosten gesloten, van privilege—brieven aan hen verleend, enz. Uit heg. en toegelicht door Mr. J. E. Heeres. I (1596-1650). II (1650-1675). Verzameld en toegelicht door Dr. F. W. Stapel : III (1676-1691). IV (1691-1725). V (1726-1752). Reprinted from Bijdragen tot de Taal, Land—en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch—Indie. (s—Gravenhage; 1907-1938).*

- D. *Legislation and Judicial procedure*.—Justice was administered in Ceylon to the Dutch and to other Europeans according to the laws in force in Holland and the Statutes of Batavia originally compiled by J. Maetsuyker, President of the Court of Justice at Batavia in 1641, and later revised. The Native Asian inhabitants were governed according to the custom of the country, if clear and reasonable, otherwise according to the law of the Dutch.

The 1766 revision of Dutch law was called the New Statutes of Batavia. Five MSS volumes of these Statutes are extant at the National Archives.

To these two codes must be added the enactments of the Governor and Council which were binding *prima facie* on the European, the Eurasian and the Asian inhabitants alike. The Tamils in the northern provinces had a special code, the *Thesavalamai*, which law and custom had been collected by Claasz Isaacs, Dessave of Jaffna, on order of Governor Joan Simonsz. There were corresponding codes for other communities like the Muslims and the Mukuwars. These codes and their amplifications introduced by Government at various times were circulated to the chief officials in the various districts in the form of permanent, positive, and circular orders. They, with the relevant *Placaaten* or *proclamations* issued from time to time, are contained in 63 MSS volumes. The *Placaats* (English form of the plural, and sometimes spelled *plakaats*) in Dutch and the vernaculars, at first manuscripts and later printed, are useful for Sinhalese and Tamil calligraphic studies, and language comparisons. This applies also to the series of MSS volumes of *ola* (palm leaf) translations, dated 1700 to 1796, filed among the National Archives' Dutch records.

Dutch Judicial administration in Ceylon has been dealt with in a recent contribution by Dr. T. Nadaraja to the *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, n.s., Vol. 12 for 1970.

In conclusion it may be appropriate to mention that nearly all the collections of primary sources of the 17th and 18th centuries are written in the Dutch language. Comparatively, very little use has

been made of them by scholars of period studies in Ceylon owing to the lack of adequate knowledge of the language in which they are written. Unless steps are taken to encourage students of history in a study of the Dutch language, these valuable primary sources will continue to remain unexploited and forgotten, wasting their utility and sweetness in the "desert air" of our inadequately conditioned repositories in Ceylon.

#### **General Reference Sources in the National Archives**

Anthonsiz, R. G., Report on the Dutch records in the Government Archives at Colombo (Colombo, Government Press, 1907).

Gives a general all-round idea of scope and range of various series of records related to the Dutch Government in Ceylon.

Jurriaanse, Miss M. W., Catalogue of the Archives of the Dutch Central Government of Coastal Ceylon, 1640-1796. (Colombo, Government Press, 1943).

Mottau, S. A. W., A Catalogue of the Dutch records of the Galle, Matara, Jaffna and Wannai Districts. (Typescript).

Mottau, S. A. W., A Summary of the despatches and correspondence between the Government of Ceylon and the Directors of the British East India Company and the Secretary of State for the Colonies and other officials of the Colonial Office in London, from 1796 to 1835 A.D., with an alphabetical index. (Typescript, 2 vols.).

These summaries contain detailed information on the administrative and judicial history of the Dutch Government as reviewed by their successors in Ceylon during the early years of the 19th century.



## **"DUTCH HOUSE" — A PERIOD MUSEUM**

By

**Deloraine Brohier**

Too often we of this generation forget that others have also had dreams and seen visions. In the event of the occasion we celebrate today and since errors, factual continue, let us take time and care to set the record straight, for those who will come after. It was a long dream our forebears had to create a "Dutch House." So, lest we forget we hereby trace its history.....

Delving into old records, now yellow and brittle with age, it came as a surprise to find that the project goes back possibly to as early as the 1873's, "back, as far for instance, to the time of Charles Ambrose Lorenz," who died in 1871. A keen student not only of Dutch law, but of the language, literature and the social habits of the people, the setting up of a Museum reflecting the Dutch Period, was one of the concerns he gave time and effort to.

Since then the idea has from time to time been taken up over the years. Old records show that despite the stature of the personalities behind it, their enthusiasm, efforts or perseverance, regrettably all attempts to bring to maturity the establishment of a Dutch House, Period Museum, Folk Museum of the Dutch Period — call it what they willed, seemed to have failed.

We turn to the beginning of the present century when Mr. C. Brooke Elliot, like Lorenz, a lawyer by profession, suggested the acquisition of a typically Dutch homestead, dating from the rule of the East India Company and furnished in the style characteristic of the period. He felt such a Museum should present the physical remains of the normal home life of the Hollanders in Ceylon. But even his advocacy proved, in this case at any rate, to find no response and the proposal died of inanition.

Lost in a collection of papers left by the late Dr. R. L. Brohier, there was found a "Souvenir of Dutch House" dated 1912:

"Colombo : Printed at the Boy's Industrial Home Press, Wellawatta." The cover depicts a pencil drawing by Ernest F. Van Dort, "Colonial Dutch House."

The publication, a modest few pages, sets out to initially explain : "The object of the 'Dutch House' is to present some idea of such a dwelling in the Pettah of Colombo, or in Jaffna or Galle in the middle of the eighteenth century."

The brochure refers to a "model" which was to have been built and was to have served as an illustration "to convey to the minds of the present generation" (i.e. in 1912) that of a complete home-stand depicting a typical Dutch House. Thus this early concept was to have a type-building set up for the purpose.

About the year 1932 the project again came to life—from quite an independent source. "Busy Bee" wrote a striking series of articles in the "Ceylon Observer" on some of the old Dutch houses in Colombo, by which she endeavoured to rouse interest in the preservation of one of these ancient buildings — as a "show place for posterity."

The cycle of reincarnation seems to continue and after an abeyance of nearly seven years the "venerable idea" was reborn. At a meeting of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, which was held towards the end of 1938, Mr. E. Reimers, who was Government Archivist at the time, delivered a lecture on "Colonial Dutch furniture." A lively discussion ensued with the learned gathering of the day, and the establishing of a Dutch House was indicative of the importance given to the subject. One record explains that it highlighted a need, in view of the gradual disappearance of such unique relics as old furniture, china and pictures of the Dutch period of occupation in the Island that, before it was too late, some steps should be taken to get together a representative collection of Dutch furnishings, "in a typically Dutch house, which would serve as a permanent feature of the attractions which Ceylon could offer, both to tourists and to students of Dutch History."

Taking up the matter as raised by these opinions, Mr. Jan Paulusz, who followed Mr. Reimers as Government Archivist, and himself an esteemed member of the Dutch Burgher Union, contributed an

article to the "Daily News" where he concisely summarised the history of the movement : "Like the Grand Lama of Tibet" he says "the idea of a Dutch House for Ceylon has migrated through a series of births but on each occasion it predeceased any real attempt to bring it to maturity.....Now the cycle of reincarnation has completed yet another circuit and the venerable idea has once again been reborn."

The Editor of the D. B. U. Bulletin, in the issue of January 1939, expressed the opinion that the Union was the proper organisation to move in the matter, and that "the present time was opportune for action." All those interested in the movement were invited to attend an informal meeting to discuss whether the project was feasible or not. Men and women came with interest and, for the record amongst them were persons like Mr. L. E. Blaze, Dr. A. Nell, Mr. J. R. Tous-saint, who was for many years Editor of both the D. B. U. Bulletin and Journal, Mrs. Toussaint, Mr. R. L. Brohier, Miss Grace Van Dort, Mr. J. G. O. Paulusz and many others. Miss Jurriaanse, one of the Island's earliest Consultant/Experts from Holland to assist the Department of Government Archives, was present by special invitation.

Opinion as to the scheme had assumed clearer shape by now, and it was generally agreed that the venue of the institution should be within the limits of Colombo. The acquisition of a building in Borella (which today, the garages and offices of Collettes Ltd. have replaced), had historical association and claim to antiquity. Its name was "Dutch House" and tradition holds that it was at one time the hunting lodge of a former Dutch Governor.

Meanwhile, as even so today, the voice of criticism reared its grisly head. "Anyone, it was said, could talk about a 'Dutch House,' indeed ever since the days of Lorenz everybody seems to have been talking about it, but unless the money was forthcoming, the whole discussion was reduced to mere futility." The question of cost particularly arose in that the building in Borella entailed the purchase of private property.

The possibility of securing an existing public building and preferably in the Fort or the Pettah was then considered and no better specimen of the old Dutch-type house was found than the building

along Prince Street in the Pettah, which was even at the time being used as the Post Office. The entrance to the building bore a legend with the date, 1780.

Two representatives from amongst the Committee of the Dutch Burgher Union, were nominated—Miss Jurriaanse and Mr. R. L. Brohier, to inspect this building and report. They agreed that although in many respects it was typically Dutch the improvements which had been effected in more recent times and certain other features, rendered the building unsuitable for the purpose contemplated. It is interesting for the record to note how these two representatives, wandering around in search of any other building which displayed characteristics of the Dutch period, came upon one in Chatham Street in the Fort, “perhaps, the only building left unaltered at that time, and typically Dutch.” Unfortunately though even then it had been converted into a mosque.

Two other suggestions were then put forward : one was that the Union might carry out the idea expressed by earlier promoters of the movement, of building a replica of a Dutch House, should the proposal to move the headquarters of the Dutch Burgher Union which was also being considered at the time, matured; and secondly, that representations be made to the authorities to build a replica, and to provide it with suitable furnishings, in connection with the scheme to provide a Folk Park and extend the National Colombo Museum grounds.

The latter proposal was favoured by the majority of the members of the D.B.U. who recognised that the Scheme was a matter which touched or should touch, the island at large, and that an endeavour should be made to capture the interest of all communities.

These various opinions of that informal group were submitted to the General Committee of the Dutch Burgher Union, who, record has it, on their authority, duly communicated to the Council of the Royal Asiatic Society :—

“This meeting resolves that the council of the Royal Asiatic Society be requested to follow up Miss Jurriaanse’s proposal for a Dutch House in Ceylon with Dutch furnishings as an exhibit, by representing to the proper authorities the necessity for doing so.”

Launched under these favourable auspices, the movement now became an object of interest among the members of the Royal Asiatic Society, where a meeting of the Council on 6 March, 1939, resolved, that the question be fully gone into by a Joint sub-committee of the Society and the Dutch Burgher Union.

The joint sub-committee held their first meeting on 21 April, 1939, and was of opinion :

- (1) That the preservation of a characteristic building of Dutch origin as a permanent memorial of their domestic architecture and surroundings was very desirable;
- (2) that preferably it should be situated in Colombo;
- (3) that before any recommendation be made, the joint sub-committee should inspect the available house; and
- (4) that the Secretary should write to the local papers calling for information regarding such houses.

In the contest of the fourth resolution yet another building came within the scope of inquiry of the sub-committee. This was the District Judge’s bungalow at Negombo, a very fine type of old Dutch residence, which, it was stated, “was shortly to be demolished by the Public Works Department.” This building had the date 1685 in large figures on its front entrance, and it was thought that if the other “Dutch House” could not be secured for the purpose in view, Negombo would not be too far away. A circumstance which counter-balanced the disadvantage of distance from Colombo was that the building was Crown property, and admittedly a very unique structure in the Dutch style, too valuable, historically, to be destroyed. The issue was however later ruled out, when the decision to demolish appears to have been reviewed in favour of its preservation.

A report, which in due course was completed by the joint sub-committee, early in 1940, epitomizes the results of the careful attention given to the matter at several meetings. The report can be read in all its detail as printed in the Journal of the Dutch Burgher Union, Vol. XXXI, No. I. Of interest for historical record, the report is signed by Dr. P. E. Pieris, Dr. R. L. Spittel, Hon’ble A. E. Keuneman,



Dr. S. Paranavitana, Dr. E. Q. Arndt, Mr. E. Reimers and Mr. Aubrey Weinman, the Secretary RAS. CB. (Mr. R. L. Brohier also a member of the joint sub-committee, was absent from the Island at the time).

During this period however, the clouds of World War II hung heavy over the Island as even over the world. A concise article which records all the stages of development of "Dutch House" is attributed to Mr. R. L. Brohier, for many years Editor of the Dutch Burgher Union's Bulletin and Journal, and can be found in the Union Journal Vol. XXX, No. 4, of April 1941. Writing at the time, he notes that, "seventy two years have passed since the idea of a Dutch House for Ceylon was mooted by Lorenz," concluding that the spark which was rekindled had to be left again to smoulder in the blast of war. "Our ambitions must lie dormant, till such time of ordered security of civilised society. When that time comes, as come it must, let us remember the claims for that small niche — A Dutch House for Ceylon."

The old "Dutch House" in Prince Street, Pettah, as recommended for conversion into a Museum, had to await many, many years more, till, fruition came finally in our generation and time. Regrettably, none of those earlier men and women, but for whose perseverance and concern the concept would never have been conceived, were to see the institute in its reality and brought to maturity. Their names we have deliberately noted and recorded for later generations such as ours to take inspiration and example from.

Most of his colleagues of that earlier committee long since passed away, when writing in 1941 Mr. Brohier could look back to the years, "when still many of us were not young, but not yet old," and in 1957, he was thus still active to raise the concept once again. He, as Chairman of the Special Committee of Antiquities in its Report issued as Sessional Paper VII, of 1959, recommended the establishment of period Museums for the Kandyan, Dutch, and early British periods. In 1959 this Committee Report was able to record that Dutch furniture, costumes, arms and weapons, porcelain, plate and crockery, books, maps and pictures were, "still procurable." It should be remembered as of importance that a total of 156 headstones, property of the Dutch Reformed Church, were being retained on a small site adjoining the Pettah Police Station.

The building in Pettah, Prince Street, so named by the Dutch as a compliment to the son of King Rajasinghe of Kandy, as selected, has a history of its own. For purposes of this chronicle of record we should note these if not elaborate on them. Suffice to say, it was earliest the residence of the Count, August Carl Van Ranzow; and when the Pettah gave way from that of fine houses and luxuriant gardens to the stores and boutiques of merchants, the house then served as a Dutch Orphanage, again later as a private residence, was put to use in turn as a Hospital, the headquarters of the Ceylon Volunteers, (now represented by the Ceylon Defence Force), a Police Training School and lastly as a Post Office. In its last form, we of this generation saw the old Dutch House.

The clouds of war having blown over, changes, political were ushered in to the Island; colonialism was phased out to give way to an independent democracy. The building continued as a Post Office, and the authorities refused to give way to the suggestion that they vacate in lieu of a more historic identity. Then one stormy night, in the mid 1970's (January 1974 to be accurate), it was by an "act of God," that officialdom and bureaucratic stubbornness came to an end. The west wall collapsed in a gale. A gutter which served as a reservoir for the water cascading off the Electricity Board Transformer, constructed against it, broke, causing the cabook support to crumble, bringing down with it, loose wires and electric fittings which were of danger to all and any who were occupants. Only then did the Post Office authorities hurriedly move out (and for the record now occupy a building in a nearby street).

A use had now to be found for this magnificent building before other more cruel, irrevocable or destructive designs of demolition overtook it. The indefatigable member worker towards the project, who had outdistanced his colleagues of that joint sub-committee of 35 years before, Mr. R. L. Brohier was out of the Island at the time, and a younger generation to his, who was as dedicated to the institution of a Dutch Period Museum, took on the responsibility. The late Mr. H. E. Tennekoon, former Governor of the Central Bank, and Mr. Mallory Wijesinghe, Hony. Consul for the Netherlands Government in Sri Lanka, turned to the Chairman of the Tourist Board, as appropriate to provide a co-ordinating role.

Thus, on the 8 October, 1974, a Special Committee had its first sitting in the Board Room of the Ceylon Tourist Board with representatives of the above, the Archaeological Department and Mr. R. L. Brohier (then returned). Here was formulated a methodology to transform the historic building in Prince Street, Pettah, into the Dutch Museum for which it was so long destined.

The first necessary action was to declare the building an archaeological reserve, under the Archaeological Ordinance, No. 9 of 1940, so as to safeguard the site from encroachment, vandalism and demolition. Lack of funds by the Archaeological Department to restore and later for maintenance, came as an initial setback. But a way was found in leasing the building out, to the Tourist Board for the sole purpose of restoring and repairing it. It was also agreed that thereafter, the building could be handed over to the Department of National Museums.

At this inaugural meeting the need for incorporating others, not only well-wishers but officials representing related departments was realised. The Department of Archives, the Department of National Museums, were brought in and a non-Governmental organisation which expressed great interest in the project was the Netherlands Alumni Association of Lanka. Under the auspices of this Association, funds for the project came from Holland. Dr. Evert Jongens, Director Education of the Netherlands Universities Foundation for International Co-operation (NUFFIC) was able to raise substantial funds for the work that ensued. With the able direction of Mr. Ashley de Vos, as honorary Architect, the repair and restoration continued and the building in the state we see it today, took form. The contractor awarded the task had previous experience in restoration work, having been associated with the Archaeological Department in similar projects of restoration sites. A simple plaque set into the wall at the entrance, 26 January, 1977 commemorates the commencement of this work.

On 15 January, 1981 to the fanfare of drumming and waving of banners, the Mayor of the City of Colombo, Mr. Sirisena Cooray was conducted through the nearby streets of the Pettah, to declare open the Museum, in what our present age has termed "soft opening."

Little by little, and bit by bit, artefacts relevant to the period of the Museum depicts, were collected and put together. By its initial interest and association, the Netherlands Alumni Association continued to give its support to the Museum authorities by purchasing several rare and beautiful objects of furniture, fittings, books and maps. In recognition of this collaboration and co-operation the Dutch Period Museum Restoration Committee in a gesture of appreciation allocated one room for the NAAL, to be its permanent office, board room, library and research centre.

Yes, it has been a long story and of many vicissitudes. The enthusiasms and perseverance of several personalities not only of our day and age but of yesterday and years combined. Let us therefore have the humility to acknowledge that it was their dream too, the vision of other men and women before, that we celebrate today. This is only our legacy, the legacy of the past generation to the present, that we in turn will hand down to posterity and to the future.



## Some Additions and Corrections to the de Kretser Genealogy

By **Mervyn Granville de Kretser**

Revised by Mr. D. V. Altendorff in 1957 and published in Vol. XVII No. 4 of the Journal REF. *Section XIII*.

Leslie Mervyn de Kretser—Dutch Burgher Union Roll of Honour.

1914–1918 (Locomotive Driver, Railway).

Son of Arthur Colvin de Kretser and Adeline Maude Kelaart. Born—2nd December 1895. Died 16th May 1959.

Married—Lola Myrtle de Witt on 21st April 1919 at St. Paul's Church, Milagiriya, Bambalapitiya.

### *Their Children—*

1. Mervyn Granville de Kretser. Born 16th May 1920.
2. Arthur Colvin. Born 16th August 1921. Died 22nd September.
3. Gloria Myrtle. Born 27th June 1924. Died 15th April 1971. Married Claude Monty Jansz 1944.
4. Daphne Marjorie. Born 9th February 1927. Died 27th September.
5. Eric Shelton. Born 14th February 1929. Died 22nd October.

Mervyn Granville de Kretser. Born 16th May 1920. Range Forest Officer.

Married at Galle Registry on 4th June 1944, Nandana Chitra Jayasinghe, daughter of Patrick Jayasinghe.

Their only child Desmond de Kretser. Born 19th January 1945. Married—17th June 1977 Anne Delrene Lorenz-Daniel (Born 2nd September 1952), at St. Lawrence Church, Wellawatte, daughter of Fred Lorenz-Daniel and Clotilda Hyacinth Jacolyn.

Their child Anne Olivia de Kretser. Born 26th September 1979.

## REF. Section VIII

16, Sidney Harris (Kuala Lumpur) on 6.2.10. Married Evelyn Fernando.

Their Children (a) Vernon married Olive Foster.  
(b) Ida Norma married Dr. George Oorloff.

## REF. Section XXVI

Cyril Walter (Junior), M/s. Lewis Brown. Born 23/11/1927. M. Phyllis Zena Dorn Kretser 3/11/1953 at The Registrar's Office, Ratmalana.

Their children Geraldine Edith born 13/12/54.

Cyril Hector born 9/7/56.

Phyllis Veronica born 16/4/57.

## REF. Section X

Gilbert Walston (Gilly) de Kretser born 1870. Manager of the White Horse Hotel, Fort, Colombo.

Was the eldest son of Henry Loftus de Kretser and Rosaline de Run. He married on 30/11/1896 Winifred Passe.

Their children Marjorie Maud married (1) Edgar Frederick Hunter,  
(2) Mervyn Cassells.

Gilberta married Abeyesekere.

Gilbert (Captain) died unmarried aged 21.

## REF. Section XI

1. Hugh Austin de Kretser Chartered Bank. Born 17/9/1872, died 20/9/43, married Elsie Beatrice Passe.

Their children 1. Herbert born 1898 died blind and unmarried.

2. Hugh Austin (Jnr.) born 31/5/1900 died 1/3/70, married Gertrude Gerlach in 1945 at St. Anthony's Cathedral, Kandy, whose son Boniface Christopher de Kretser. Book keeper.  
Salu Sala was born 6/6/48.

3. Pearl married Herbert de Zilwa.
4. Shelton Vernon born 21/1/1910, married Mavis Pereira at St. James' Church, Mutwal 26/12/40.

The Children of Shelton Vernon and Mavis Pereira are :

Godfrey Terence born 27/6/43. married 20/12/64, Ruth Evangeline Reimers at St. Mathias' Church, Maharagama.

Claudette Rochine born 25/9/44, married in 1970 Farook Miskin.

Evangeline born 21/8/45 married Winston Outschoorn at St. Mary's Church, Bambalapitiya.

The children of Godfrey Terrence, Shipping Executive, Blue Diamonds Ltd., and Ruth Evangeline are :

Michelle Ionali born 13/7/66.

Terrence Christopher Joseph born 8/7/68.

Tamara Ionali born 27/7/74.

Clinton Godfrey born 30/6/76.

#### REF. Section X (6)

6. Hector Eugene born 14/3/85, Ceylon Wharfage Co., Floating Superintendent, married on 17/3/12 Jessie Edith de Lile.

Their Children were : Esme Hazel born 12/6/13, married Horace Victor de Run; Hector Vernon, Ceylon Army born 12/12/1914, married Nobel Elaine Ludowyke.

Phyllis Zena married (1) Lenox Dumbar Vanheer.

(2) Cyril Walter de Kretser.

Carlton Loftus born 10/2/18, married Irma Ludowyke.

Edith Iris Rosemary born 10/1/21, married Shelton Maurice Andries.

Irma died unmarried.

The children of Hector Vernon de Kretser, Ceylon Army and Nobel Ludowyke are:

(1) Hector Eugen born 7/8/45.

(2) Rachel born 2/1/46.

(3) Geraldine born 2/2/48, married Annesley Young at St Lawrence Church, Wellawatte.

(4) Randy born 1949 in Australia.

(5) Rosemary born 19/5/50, married Jerome Kreltsheim.

The children of Carlton Loftus Ceylon Army and Irma Ludowyke are:

(1) Claudette Irma born 27/4/46 married Melvin Pieris 27/4/1970 at St Mary's Church, Dehiwala.

(2) Carlton Loftus Anthony born 3/9/47, married Dawn Erin Holsinger at St Mary's Church, Dehiwala.

(3) Cedric Bryan born 25/5/50.

(4) Roger Rolaston born 28/9/52, married Erika Bischiff of West Germany.

(5) Bernadette Dawn born 24/10/59, married Udaya Iliaperuma on 6/2/82 at St Mary's Church, Dehiwala.

The children of Carlton Loftus Anthony and Dawn Erin Holsinger are :

(1) Minella Liza born 26/9/77.

(2) Shane Anthony Carlton born 10/12/78.

## NOTE ON THE CONTRIBUTORS

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