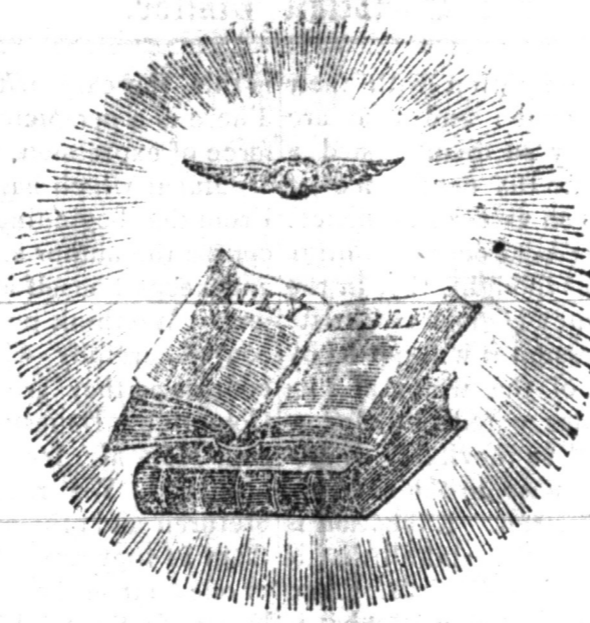


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THE OLD CLOCK ON THE STAIRS.

BY H. W. LONGFELLOW.

Eternity is a pendulum, the oscillating click of which says and re-says, without ceasing, two words only, as amidst the silence of the grave,—For ever—never! Never—for ever!"—*Jacques Bridaine.*

Somewhat back from the village street
Stands the old-fashioned country-seat.
Across its antique portico
Tall poplar trees their shadows throw;
And from its station in the hall
An ancient Time-piece says to all,
"For ever—never!
Never—for ever!"

Half-way up the stairs it stands
And points and beckons with its hands,
From its case of massive oak,
Like a monk, who under his cloak,
Crosses himself, and sighs, Alas!
With sorrowful voice, to all who pass:
"For ever—never!
Never—for ever!"

By day his voice is low and light;
But in the silent dead of night,
Distinct as a passing footstep's fall,
It echoes along the vacant hall,
Along the ceiling, along the floor,
And seems to say, at each chamber-door,
"For ever—never!
Never—for ever!"

Through days of sorrow and of mirth,
Through days of death and days of birth,
Through every swift vicissitude
Of changeful Time, unchanged it has stood;
And as if, like God, it all things saw,
It calmly repeats those words of awe,
"For ever—never!
Never—for ever!"

In that mansion used to be
Free-hearted Hospitality:
His great fires up the chimney roared;
The stranger feasted at his board:
But, like the skeleton at the feast,
The warning Time-piece never ceased,
"For ever—never!
Never—for ever!"

There groups of merry children play'd;
There youths and maidens, dreaming, stray—
O precious hours! O golden prime, [ed]
And affluence of Love and Time!
Even as a miser counts his gold,
Those hours the ancient Time-piece told,
"For ever—never!
Never—for ever!"

From that chamber, clothed in white,
The bride came forth for wedding dight;
There, in that silent room below,
The dead lay in his shroud of snow;
And the hush that follow'd the prayer,
Was heard the Old Clock on the stair,
"For ever—never!
Never—for ever!"

THE ISLAND OF CEYLON.

"What though the spicy breezes
Blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle;
Though every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile—
What though with lavish kindness
The gifts of God are strewn,
The heathen in his blindness
Bows down to wood and stone."

This beautiful island is situate in the Indian ocean, and separated from the S. W. coast of the promontory of Hindostan by straits about 90 miles in width. It is 270 in length and 120 in width at the extreme points, and in shape resembles a pear.

The island was famed in Europe before the christian era. It appears to have been visited

by some Nestorian missionaries, in the 9th century. About the middle of the 13th century it was visited by Marco Polo, a Venetian, who travelled over a great part of Asia, and afterwards published an account of his travels. The information, however, which he communicated being of a general, rather than of a circumstantial nature, but little was known of Ceylon, beyond its actual existence as an island, until after the discovery of the passage by the Capé of Good Hope, and its being visited by the Portuguese in 1505, who found it divided into several petty sovereignties, which subsequently merged into one, under the title of the kingdom of Candy. The Portuguese held settlements on different parts of the coast for upwards of 150 years, when they were expelled by the Dutch, who possessed themselves of the entire circuit of the coast, for 10 to 20 miles from the sea, and the whole of the north part of the island; confining the dominion of the king of Candy entirely to the interior.—The Dutch possessions of the island all surrendered to the English in 1796, after sustaining a siege of three weeks; and in 1815 a British force marched into the interior, took the king of Candy prisoner, deposed him, and possessed his territory, thereby rendering the whole island a part of the British dominion. The general character of the surface of the island of Ceylon is mountainous and woody, with an ample extent of soil; and sufficiently intersected by streams of water, to afford the most abundant means of subsistence and comfort to a population more than tenfold its present extent. The most lofty range of mountains divides the island nearly into two parts, and terminates completely the effects of the monsoons, which set in periodically from opposite sides of them. The seasons are more regulated by the monsoons than the course of the sun; for the coolest season is during the summer solstice, while the western monsoon prevails. Spring commences in October, and the hottest season is from January to the beginning of April. The climate, on the coast, is more temperate than on the continent of Hindostan, but in the interior of the country the heat is many degrees greater, and the climate often extremely sultry and unhealthy.—The finest fruits grow in vast plenty; but there is a poisonous fruit called Adam's apple, which in shape resembles the quarter of an apple cut out, with the two insides a little convex, and a continued ridge along the outer edges; and is of a beautiful orange colour. Pepper, ginger, and cardamoms are produced in Ceylon, with five kinds of rice, which ripen one after another. One of the most remarkable trees in the island is the talipot, which grows straight and tall, and is as big as the mast of a ship; the leaves are so large as to cover 15 men; when dried, they are round and fold up like a fan. The natives wear a piece of the leaf on their head when they travel, to shade them from the sun; and they are so tough that they are not easily torn. Every soldier carries one, and it serves for his tent; other trees and shrubs some valuable for their timber, and others for their resin, gums, and flowers, are interspersed over every part of the island; but the most important of all its vegetable productions is the cinnamon tree, the bark of which is distributed over every part of the habitable globe.

Ceylon also abounds with topazes, garnets, rubies, and other gems; besides ores of copper, iron, &c., and veins of black crystal. Common deer, as well as Guinea deer, are numerous; but the horned cattle are both small and scarce, six of them weighing altogether only 714 lbs., and one of these only 70 lbs. Yet the island produces the largest and best elephants in the world, which occasionally form an extensive branch of traffic to different parts of Hindostan. The woods are infested by tigers; they abound also with snakes of a monstrous

size, among which is the boa constrictor, one of which has been known to destroy a tiger, and devour him at one meal. Spiders, centipedes, and scorpions, also grow to an enormous size. Among the curiosities of the insect tribe, the mantis, or creeping leaf, is met with, having every member of common insects, though in shape and appearance it greatly resembles a leaf: it is of a green colour. The sea coasts abound with fish. Alligators, and all the lizard tribe, are also numerous. The pearl fishery, in the gulf of Manara, is considered the richest source of that article in the world; and which, with cinnamon, to the amount of 300,000 to 400,000 lbs. weight annually, constitutes the basis of its commerce, in exchange for European productions. The population is estimated at about 1,500,000.

Such is a general description of this famed island. But its inhabitants, for ages, have been degraded idolaters. Since the occupation of the island by the British, various christian missionaries have taken up their abode there, and the English Baptists have long had their mission stations, with chapels, schools &c. The Ceylon mission is endeared to them by many affecting remembrances, and lately they have had to lament the loss of another of their estimable missionaries. It is earnestly hoped that more laborers will be raised up to occupy this important field. "For the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few." Lord of the harvest, send forth more!
—*Baptist Reporter.*

Discoveries in the Interior of South Africa.

The London Evangelical Magazine for March, has a letter from Rev. David Livingstone, addressed to the Rev. Arthur Tidman, Foreign Secretary of the London Missionary Society, communicating the geographical discoveries in the interior of South Africa, made by Mr. L. during the last year. The Magazine deems the letter most "interesting in its character, and important in its bearings."—The station of Mr. Livingstone is at Kolobeng. In July last, accompanied by two enterprising English travellers, Messrs. Murray and Oswell, he set out northward on an exploring tour.—He says that when a "Bermagueato chief became aware of our intentions to pass into the regions beyond him, with true native inhumanity, he sent men before us to drive away all Bushmen and Bakalihari from our route, in order that being deprived of their assistance in the search for water we might be compelled to return. This measure deprived me of the opportunity of holding the intercourse with these poor outcasts, I might otherwise have enjoyed. But through the good providence of God, after travelling about 300 miles from Kolobeng, we struck on a magnificent river on the 4th of July, and without further difficulty in so far as water was concerned, by winding along its banks nearly 300 miles more we reached the Batavana, on the lake Ngami, by the beginning of August."

We cannot withhold from our readers further extracts from a letter giving intelligence so original and important:

Previous to leaving this beautiful river on my return home, and commencing our route across the Desert, I feel anxious to furnish you with the impressions produced on my mind by it and its inhabitants, the Bakoba or Bayeiye. They are a totally distinct race from the Bechuanas. They call themselves Bayeiye, or men, while the term Bakoba, (the name has somewhat the meaning of "slaves,") is applied to them by the Bechuanas. Their complexion is darker than that of the Bechuanas; and, of 300 words I collected of their language, only 21 bear any resemblance to Sitchuana. They paddle along the rivers and lakes in canoes hollowed out of the trunks of single trees; take fish in nets made of a weed which abounds on

on the banks; and kill hippopotami with harpoons attached to ropes. We greatly admire the frank, manly bearing of these inland sailors. Many of them spoke Sitchuana fluently, and, while the wagon went along the bank, I greatly enjoyed following the windings of the river in one of their primitive craft, and visiting their little villages among the reed. The banks are beautiful beyond any we had ever seen, except perhaps some parts of the Clyde. They are covered, in general, with gigantic trees, some of them bearing fruit, and quite new. Two of the Boabob variety measured 70 to 76 feet in circumference. The higher we ascended the river, the broader it became, until we often saw more than 100 yards of clear deep water between the broad belt of reed which grows in shallower parts. The water was clear as chrysal, and as we approached the point of junction with other large rivers, reported to exist in the North, it was quite soft and cold. The fact that the Zonga is connected with large rivers coming from the North awakens emotions in my mind, which make the discovery of the lake dwindle out of sight. It opens the prospect of a highway, capable of being quickly traversed by boats, to a large section of well peopled territory. The hopes which that prospect inspires for the benighted inhabitants, might, if uttered, call forth the charge of enthusiasm.

One remarkable feature in this river is, its periodical rise and fall. It has risen nearly three feet in height since our arrival, and this is the dry season. That the rise is not caused by rains is evident from the water being so pure. Its purity and softness increased as we ascended towards its junction with the Tamunakle, from which, although connected with the Lake, it derives the present increased supply. The sharpness of the air caused an amazing keenness of appetite, at an elevation of little more than 2000 feet above the level of the sea, (water boiled at 207½ deg. Thermometer) and the reports of the Bayeiye, that the waters came from a mountainous region, suggested the conclusion that the increase of the water at the beginning and middle of the dry season must be derived from melting snow.

All the rivers reported, to the north of this, have Bayeiye upon them, and there are other tribes on their banks. To one of these, after visiting the Batavana, and taking a peep at the broad part of the lake, we directed our course. But the Batavana Chief managed to obstruct us, by keeping all the Bayeiye near the ford on the opposite bank of the Zonga, African Chiefs invariably dislike to see strangers passing them to tribes beyond. Sebitoane the Chief who in former years saved the life of Sechele, our Chief, lives about ten days north-east of the Batavana. The latter sent a present as a token of gratitude. This would have been a good introduction: the knowledge of the language, however, is the best we can have. I endeavored to construct a raft, at a part which was only fifty or sixty yards wide, but the wood, though sun-dried, was so heavy it sunk immediately; another kind would not bear my weight, although a considerable portion of my person was under water. I could have swam across, and fain would have done it; but, landing without clothes, and then demanding of the Bakoba the loan of a boat, would scarcely be the thing for a messenger of peace, even though no alligator met me in the passage.

The Bayeiye or Bakoba listened to the statements from the Divine Word with great attention, and, if I am not mistaken, seemed to understand the Message of Mercy delivered, better than any people to whom I have preached for the first time. They have invariably a great many charms in the villages; stated the name of God in their language, without the least hesitation, to be "Oreeja;" mentioned the name of the first man and woman, and some