Two happy years in Ceylon

C. F. (Constance Frederica) Gordon Cumming

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Transcriber's Note:

This version of the text cannot represent certain typographical effects. Italics are delimited with the '_' character as _italic_. Superscripted characters are prefixed with a carat '^'.

Footnotes have been moved to follow the paragraphs in which they are referenced.

Minor errors, attributable to the printer, have been corrected. Please see the transcriber's note at the end of this text for details regarding the handling of any textual issues encountered during its preparation.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

ON

TWO HAPPY YEARS IN CEYLON.

'SINCE EMERSON-TENNENT'S MONUMENTAL VOLUMES, NO DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY SO FULL, ACCURATE, WELL-ILLUSTRATED, OR ENTERTAINING HAS BEEN PUBLISHED.'

DAILY CHRONICLE.

'It will certainly become the classical work on Ceylon.'—BLACK AND WHITE.

'Miss Gordon Cumming's is by far the most valuable account of Ceylon that we have read for many years. She has travelled over most of the "Isle of Flowers," and knows every kind of life, animal and vegetable, that flourishes in that wonderful garden of vivid

greenery.... It is thoroughly interesting.'—ST. JAMES'S GAZETTE.

'It is always pleasant to meet with a new work by Miss Gordon Cumming. Her pages are no less valuable for the information they embody than they are conspicuous for their literary merit. To her keen powers of observation and description she brings the incomparable advantage of a cultured mind and a widely extended knowledge, and she is, in addition, a clever and painstaking artist. A fund of entertainment will be found in this volume. It is bright and pleasant reading, and is pervaded by a sense of thorough enjoyment which fully justifies the title of a clever and very welcome book.'—SPECTATOR.

'Such a name as the "Ceylonese Encylopædia" would befit it well. Nobody can read a chapter without feeling that he has been learning something he is glad to know, and that he would despair of finding in any other book. The minute peculiarities of the island life, in costume, monuments, house-building and furnishing, festivals, pilgrimages, have never been caught by a more far-seeing eye, or set forth in more apt words. On the whole, this tome will long be a standard work on Ceylon. These points, and many more, to be appreciated must be read as portrayed with feminine grace and masculine vigour by the wide-wandering authoress.'—NATION.

'These volumes contain all that any traveller can wish to know of its history, the life of the people, the temples, the worship, the animals, and the botany of that delightful island. Exhaustive and authoritative, full and faithful, are the adjectives necessary to describe the methods in which Miss Gordon Cumming has dealt with the interesting subject of her book. We have read no better book on Ceylon.'—ACADEMY.

‘Miss Gordon Cumming is at once an artist, a naturalist, a keen observer, and a writer of rare skill and grace; and wherever she has wandered she has carried the habits and faculties of a trained intelligence, full of knowledge and resource.... She visited Ceylon under the most favourable auspices, and nothing has escaped her attention.’—DAILY NEWS.

‘Quite one of the most vivid and accurate books of travel which we have recently encountered.... In no case, so far as we are aware, has so exact and pleasing a picture been drawn as that which is contained in these pages.’—STANDARD.

‘In every respect a charming book. Whosoever wishes to know all about that earthly paradise, Ceylon, should hasten to peruse the delightful volume written and illustrated by Miss Cumming.’—DAILY TELEGRAPH.

‘Miss Gordon Cumming has written nothing more delightful than this volume.... Many books have been written to celebrate the beauties of Ceylon; but, so far as our knowledge goes, no traveller has described them with the force and eloquence that we find in Miss Cumming’s volume.’—ANTI-JACOBIN.

‘A series of pleasant and vivid pictures of the beautiful island, and of the occupations and industries of the people, copiously interspersed with notices of their history, religion, folk-lore, and the like.’—ATHENÆUM.

‘Her book is one of the best on the subject, for giving both a good general idea of what Ceylon is like and a great amount of detailed information.’—SCOTSMAN.

‘She gives an admirable picture of life on the island, gained from her journeys throughout the length and breadth of it.’—GRAPHIC.

‘The narrative is as brilliant as any of Miss Cumming’s well-known volumes, and the illustrations from the author’s pencil are excellent.’— OBSERVER.

‘Miss Gordon Cumming is an indefatigable and a delightful maker of books of travel.... This work is as faithful and complete as the writer’s books always are. It is admirably done, and is extremely interesting.’— GLASGOW HERALD.

‘It is impossible to read the book without both pleasure and profit.’—MANCHESTER GUARDIAN.

‘The volume forms a valuable handbook to those who desire to follow Miss Gordon Cumming’s example, and spend a few months in so beautiful a climate.’—QUEEN.

‘The work is as delightful as any of the author’s previous works—and that is saying a good deal.’—NORTH BRITISH DAILY MAIL.

‘It would be difficult to name a more delightful work of travel than this. The subject is sunny.’—LIVERPOOL MERCURY.

‘The present work has all that grace of style and extent of observation which characterise every page that comes from Miss Gordon Cumming’s pen.’—NEWCASTLE CHRONICLE.

‘The book is admirably written, and its value is greatly enhanced by numerous excellent illustrations.’—FIELD.

‘We welcome Miss Gordon Cumming’s valuable contribution to the literature of Greater Britain.... An interesting account, charmingly

written.’—COLONIES AND INDIA.

‘The handsome volume is a complete cyclopædia of the island in its every aspect; and her word-pictures are to the full as correct in execution as her paintings.... It is at once instinct with beauty of description and crammed full of information.’—EUROPEAN MAIL.

‘A very pleasant record of travel, adventure, and experience.’—TIMES.

‘Some of the sunshine of the sunny land about which she writes seems to linger on the pages of Miss Gordon Cumming’s goodly volume. There is a pervading sense of joy and brightness which irresistibly communicates itself to the reader.’—BIRMINGHAM MERCURY.

‘A charming book. Miss Gordon Cumming seems to have put forth all her powers to give an adequate description of one of the most beautiful places on the face of the earth.... Reading the book is like entering a tropical forest in all its splendour.’—ABERDEEN JOURNAL.

‘The book is full of interesting narrative.’—MANCHESTER GUARDIAN.

‘It may be doubted whether the present book is not even more interesting than its predecessors: it is certainly not less interesting; and the rare faculty possessed by the writer of thoroughly enjoying what she sees, and of admirably describing what she enjoys, has seldom, if ever, been exhibited to greater advantage than in the goodly volume before us.’—JOHN BULL.

‘We have no more fascinating writer than the lady who made so

many friends by her former books. Miss Gordon Cumming has made herself mistress of the art of descriptive writing. She is an acute observer of men and things.'—LEEDS MERCURY.

'Altogether, this is one of Miss Gordon Cumming's best works, and may safely be recommended to lovers of travel-literature.'—GLOBE.

'A book to be read without delay.... Miss Gordon Cumming continues to keep the reader charmed at every step.'—METHODIST RECORDER.

'To all who contemplate the journey to Ceylon, we should recommend a previous study of this work. It will teach them what to see, and how to see it, much better than any ordinary guidebook.'—CHURCH TIMES.

'It is not every life that can put on record two consecutive years of unalloyed happiness like those which appear to have fallen to the lot of the author of this pleasant volume.... Miss Gordon Cumming has much that is exceedingly interesting to say, and her statements have unusual weight from the fact that for a considerable portion of the two years she was residing with the Bishop of Colombo, and was afterwards the guest of important Government officials.'—GUARDIAN.

'Miss Gordon Cumming's book is full of the cheerful buoyancy of a pleasure excursion without drawbacks or danger.... It is a book which ought to make the reader believe himself transported to for a brilliant hour or two the lovely woods and sunny verdure of Ceylon.'

BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

TWO HAPPY YEARS IN CEYLON

CEYLON

‘And we came to the Isle of Flowers;
Their breath met us out on the seas,
For the Spring and the Middle Summer
Sat each on the lap of the breeze;

And the red passion-flower to the cliffs,
And the dark-blue clematis, clung;
And, starred with myriad blossoms,
The long convolvulus hung.’

TWO HAPPY YEARS IN CEYLON

BY

C. F. GORDON CUMMING

AUTHOR OF

‘AT HOME IN FIJI’ ‘A LADY’S CRUISE IN A FRENCH MAN-OF-WAR’
‘IN THE HEBRIDES’ ‘IN THE HIMALAYAS AND ON THE INDIAN PLAINS’
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PREFACE

What can be the reason that writers on Ceylon seem impelled to describe their book as a term of years?—

‘Fifty Years in Ceylon.’ An Autobiography by Major Thomas Skinner.

‘Eleven Years in Ceylon.’ By Major Forbes, 78th Highlanders.

‘Eight Years in Ceylon.’ By Sir Samuel Baker.

‘Seven Years in Ceylon.’ By Mary and Margaret Leitch,—

and finally, ‘Two Happy Years in Ceylon,’ by C. F. Gordon Cumming, who had so named her notes of pleasant days in the fair Isle, before realising that any of her predecessors had thus described their longer terms of residence therein?

I can only ascribe it to the fact, so evident in each of these works, that

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