The island of Ceylon, called "Sri Lanka" by the natives and known to the ancient Greeks as "Tatrobe," looks back on a history of thousands of years. It has been ruled by Tamils, Sinhalese, Portuguese, Dutch, who captured Colombo in 1656, and since 1815 — by the British, and is once again under the shadow of war. Magnificent cities were built on it and fell into ruins. The northern part of the island was a flourishing center of agriculture under Sinhalese kings ruling in the 8th century, who built an amazing system of irrigation. Today nothing remains but impenetrable jungle and a few villages where millions of people once lived and prospered.

Palms, palms, palms! View from a hill near Colombo over the immeasurable palm forests of Ceylon.
Ancient Ceylon

After two thousand years this figure of Buddha still serenely braves the jungle.

The “Northern Tagoba” in the ruined city of Anuradhapura, completely overgrown by dense jungle.

A Buddhist pilgrim in the shallow water of the Prince’s Pool in ruined Polonnaruwa, praying for the fulfillment of his wishes.

The Lotus Pool of Polonnaruwa, built in the 8th century and rivaling the most sumptuous Roman baths.
The coat of arms of the "Vereenigde Oost Indische Compagnie" still looks down from the great gate of the 17th-century fortress of Galle in Ceylon. The Sinhalese word galla means "rock." The Dutch, however, got it mixed up with the Latin gallus and put a cock on top of their coat of arms.

A Hindu church in Baroque style. It shows the influence of Dutch-colonial buildings of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Dutch gravestones in one of the many Dutch churches in Ceylon. The wooden memorial tablet on the wall bears parts of a Dutch knight's armor.
Street scene in Colombo

Singhalese outrigger canoes similar to others throughout the tropics

Medieval and Modern Ceylon

Buddha’s tooth is kept in this temple, the Dalaba Maligawa at Kandy, one of the most sacred places of the Buddhist world
Sri Lanka, the island of lovely women

The beauty of Ceylon seems to be expressed in the serene face of this society lady. Our photographer assures us that she is not listening to a symphony but watching a tennis match.