



# NEWSLETTER

## GALLE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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Circle of wisdom; Tibetan Mandala; a visual tool for meditation  
(James W. and Marilyn Alsdorf Collection in the Art Institute of Chicago)

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## President's Message



It's an honor and a privilege to be selected as the president of the second oldest medical association in the country. The Galle Medical Association (GMA) was founded as the Galle Clinical Society in 1940. Year by year over the last 77 years it has risen to the current standard of a prestigious association catering various aspects of medical profession. I salute all the past presidents and the council members for their tremendous contribution towards betterment of the association.

I am happy to announce that GMA committee has been expanded incorporating members from the GP association, dental doctors' association and doctors representing subspecialties. With the support of the current executive committee, I promise to maintain the good standards and if possible add more color during my tenure in 2018.

GMA has a solid academic program throughout the year focusing both post graduate and non-postgraduate doctors. The Annual Academic Sessions of this year will be held from 10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> October 2018 with the hope of offering the maximum benefit to the membership.

The annual GMA long trip and short trip, Students verses Staff cricket matches and many other attractive social activities has been already scheduled for this year. To expand the knowledge of our members beyond the horizons of the medical field, a series of non-medical lectures by the veterans of various fields has been lined up. As I strongly believe that Indulging with some kind of art will mold a balanced person out of a doctor who is burnt out due to the heavy workload, certain items have been incorporated in to our year planner. We have already started one such activity "GMA Night Theatre" fortnightly at the GMA lecture theatre. To bring up the hidden talents of the doctors, we wish to provide them a platform by means of offering a place to display their art work in the library premises and in the newsletter.

GMA has already started offering a research grant during the tenure of Dr. Satish K. Goonesinghe. From this year, we expanded this facility further by providing a "Research Help Desk" to discuss the practical problems with the experts in the field.

In addition to the regular CPR programme conducted in collaboration with the Collage of Anaesthesiologists, we wish to expand this service to the community as a "Basic Life Support" course during this year. The GMA website - [www.gma.lk](http://www.gma.lk), has been already launched and all the academic and social events will be uploaded well ahead. We cordially invite you to communicate with us via the website and give us a feedback regarding the activities we hold.

I wish to thank the outgoing president Dr. Sarath Kularatna, council members and the administrative secretaries for their tireless efforts and to warmly welcome the new council members with whom I will tie my hands to do the best to the association and the membership during the year 2018.

Dr. Kesharie De Silva  
President – 2018

## The Annual General Meeting – Galle Medical Association

The 76<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Galle Medical Association was held on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2017 at 11.00 a.m. at the GMA Lecture Theatre, Teaching Hospital, Karapitiya. It is noteworthy that this is the first AGM held after the refurbishment of the GMA lecture theatre.

The meeting was chaired by the outgoing president Dr. Sarath Kularatna. The minutes of the 75<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting was read by Dr. Eisha Waidyarathne and the Secretary's Report for the year 2017 was read by Dr. Pushpika Jayawardana, Joint Secretaries of GMA 2017. The treasurer's report was presented by Dr. Aruna De Silva. The outgoing president Dr. Sarath Kularatna addressed the gathering and expressed his gratitude to the executive committee and all the members for making the activities of the year 2017 successful. Dr. Kesharie De Silva was inducted as the new president. While thanking the outgoing president for the service rendered for GMA, she highlighted the vision and mission for the forthcoming year. The following members were elected for the GMA committee 2018.

### **President**

Dr. Kesharie De Silva

### **President Elect**

Dr. Arosha Dissanayake

### **Immediate Past President**

Dr. Sarath Kularatna

### **Vice President**

Dr. Kalum Deshapriya

### **Joint Secretaries**

Dr. Nayana Liyanarachchi

Dr. Manjula Dissanayake

### **Treasurer**

Dr. Aruna De Silva

### **Postgraduate Coordinator**

Dr. Bhathiya Ranasinghe

### **Social Secretary**

Prof. Channa Yahathugoda

### **Co-Editors**

Dr. Satish K. Goonesinghe

Dr. Eisha Waidyarathne

### **Committee Members**

Dr. Pushpika Jayawardana

Dr. Harshini Dharmawardane

Dr. G.P. Punchihewa

Dr. Ganaka Senaratne

Prof. Mahinda Kommalage

Dr. Saliya Wijenayaka

Dr. Gayani Liyanage

Dr. Kapilani Withanaarachchi

Dr. Janaki Warushahennadi

Dr. Priyankari Amaradivakara

Dr. Nilmini Abeygunawardhana

Dr. Rohan Pullaperuma

Dr. Chanika Kulatunga

Dr. Amaranath Karunanayake

Dr. Iromi Mohotti

Dr. Janaka Welahetti

## **Benefits of mindfulness: Could it help to improve quality of service of health-care professionals in Sri Lanka?**

'Mindfulness' is a Buddhist concept. It is commonly interpreted as 'bare attention' or 'present centered awareness' which means non-judgmental, non-discursive attending to the 'here-and-now'. It is believed that understanding of mindfulness as bare attention has its roots in the Theravada meditation revival of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the currently common technique of mindfulness, the practitioner is trained to focus on whatever sensory object arises in the moment-to-moment flow of consciousness. This method was designed to make it accessible even for laypersons who did not have much familiarity with Buddhist philosophy or practice. The German born monk Nyanaponika Thera (1901-1994) who coined the term 'bare attention' called mindfulness "the clear and single-minded awareness of what actually happens to us and in us at the successive moments of perception."

Though its origins are in the Buddhist corners of Asia, mindfulness crossed borders and reached other parts of the world. Being inspired by this concept not so familiar to western ideologies, the North American and European researchers and practitioners widely studied it. The practice is currently so popular that there exist a massive body of literature, multiple centres and different courses extending up to post-graduate degrees in mindfulness. Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) and mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) are two commonly used techniques to treat variety of mental and physical conditions and to improve wellbeing. It is promoted as a cure for disorders including post-traumatic stress, alcoholism and drug dependence, attention-deficit disorder, recurrent depression, and also delinquent behaviours such as anti-social and criminal behavior. It is also seen as a way to combat the commonplace debilitating stresses of modern life.

Numerous benefits of mindfulness have been reported by the researchers predominantly in US and Europe. Some of these positive outcomes include, reduction of rumination, increase in positive affect and decrease in anxiety and negative affect, enhanced working memory, reduction of emotional reactivity, greater cognitive flexibility, improvements in moral reasoning and ethical decision making, enhanced focus and attention, increased information processing speed, decreased task effort and relationship satisfaction. In addition, some studies report health benefits such as increased immune functioning.

Given the wide range of positive outcomes of mindfulness in stress reduction and mental wellbeing, increasing number of employers are turning to adopt it for their employees. Organizations such as the US Marines, the NHS, Google and Transport for London have reported positive outcome of mindfulness training for their employees. These include increase in emotional intelligence and reduced stress-related absenteeism.

Number of studies has been carried out on health-care professionals and students undergoing their clinical training who practice mindfulness. MBSR training was the commonly used mindfulness technique in these studies. It has been found to enhance self-compassion among health-care professionals. Findings from studies of medical undergraduates who participated in an eight-week MBSR training report that the mindfulness group had significantly higher self-reported empathy than a control group. This training also helped them by decreasing total mood disturbance including stress, anxiety and fatigue. Nursing students reported better quality of life and a significant decrease in negative psychological symptoms following exposure to MBSR training.

An emerging body of research suggests that mindfulness can reduce physician burnout and improve physician wellbeing. A study from US, published in the *Annals of Family Medicine* has shown that physicians with mindfulness skills communicate well with patients and provide better quality care. In this study conducted by John Hopkins University, researchers used questionnaires to measure physicians' mindfulness, analyzed audio recordings of physician's interactions with their patient and also interviewed the patients to get their perspective on quality of their clinician's care. They found that mindful physicians had more patient-centered communication, that is, they spent more time building rapport with their patient and talking about the patient's experience, rather than focusing solely on the biomedical aspect of the patient's illness. They also had a more positive emotional tone, spent more time in visits with their patients, and had patients who rated the quality of their communication and care more highly.

These researchers wrote "In an era in which many physicians suffer professional burnout, mindful practice may be the way in which physicians not only heal themselves, but heal their patients as well."

In Sri Lanka health-care professionals are generally accused of lack of compassion for their patients; media reports and general public view often highlight dissatisfaction over the caring aspects of health services. Medical educators have responded to this criticism by introducing soft skills training into undergraduate curricula of medical schools and allied health science programmes. Outcomes of this measure are yet to be evaluated. Given the range of benefits of mindfulness reported from elsewhere, it's worth asking the question, 'could it help to make our health-care professionals patient-centered?'

'Sati' is not an unknown concept to Sri Lankans, especially to Buddhists. 'Sati' in traditional Theravada Buddhist practice and mindfulness as 'bare attention' are not identical. The fundamental difference is that mindfulness is used as a therapeutic practice aiming to alleviate emotional problems and achieving fulfilling life. Still there are many similarities between these two concepts. Therefore, if introduced, mindfulness practices will be readily accepted by both professionals and students of health-care sector.

#### **References**

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### **Cover Story**

A mandala is a complex abstract design that is usually circular in form. In fact, "mandala" is a Sanskrit word that means "circle." Mandalas generally have one identifiable center point, from which emanates an array of symbols, shapes and forms. Traditionally used as a visual tool to focus in meditation, mandalas can contain both geometric and organic forms. It has been a traditional practice of Tibetan monks to create this beautiful spiritual symbol using coloured sand.

Mandala contains recognizable images that carry meaning for the person who is creating it. In essence, mandalas represent the connection between our inner worlds and outer reality. Designing your own mandalas can be both inspirational and therapeutic.

## The Door in the Wall

H G Wells

One confidential evening, not three months ago, Lionel Wallace told me this story of the Door in the Wall. And at the time I thought that so far as he was concerned it was a true story.

He told it me with such direct simplicity of conviction that I could not do otherwise than believe in him. But in the morning, in my own flat, I woke to a different atmosphere; and as I lay in bed and recalled the things he had told me, stripped of the glamour of his earnest slow voice, denuded of the focused, shaded table light, the shadow atmosphere that wrapped about him and me, and the pleasant bright things, the dessert and glasses and napery of the dinner we had shared, making them for the time a bright little world quite cut off from everyday realities, I saw it all as frankly incredible. 'He was mystifying!' I said, and then: 'How well he did it!... It isn't quite the thing I should have expected of him, of all people, to do well.'

Afterwards as I sat up in bed and sipped my morning tea, I found myself trying to account for the flavour of reality that perplexed me in his impossible reminiscences, by supposing they did in some way suggest, present, convey- I hardly know which word to use- experiences it was otherwise impossible to tell.

Well, I don't resort to that explanation now. I have got over my intervening doubts. I believe now, as I believed at the moment of telling, that Wallace did to the very best of his ability strip the truth of his secret for me. But whether he himself saw, or only thought he saw, whether he himself was the possessor of an inestimable privilege or the victim of a fantastic dream, I cannot pretend to guess. Even the facts of his death, which ended my doubts for ever, throw no light on that.

That much the reader must judge for himself.

I forget now what chance comment or criticism of mine moved so reticent a man to confide in me. He was, I think, defending himself against an imputation of slackness and unreliability I had made in relation to a grate public movement, in which he had disappointed me. But he plunged suddenly, 'I have,' he said, 'a preoccupation-'

'I know,' he went on, after pause, 'I have been negligent. The fact is- it isn't a case of ghost or apparitions- but it's an odd thing to tell of, Redmond- I am haunted. I am haunted by something- that rather takes the light out of things, that fills me with longings...'

He paused, checked by that English shyness that so often overcomes us when we speak of moving or grave or beautiful things. 'You were at Saint Athelstan's all through,' he said, and for a moment that seemed to me quite irrelevant. 'Well'- and he paused. Then very haltingly at first, but afterwards more easily, he began to tell of the thing that was hidden in his life, the haunting memory of a beauty and happiness that filled his heart with insatiable longings, that made all the interests and spectacle of worldly life seem dull and tedious and vain to him.

Now that I have the clue to it, the thing seems written

visibly in his face. I have photograph in which that look of detachment has been caught and intensified. It reminds me of what a woman once said of him- a woman who had loved him greatly. 'Suddenly,' she said, 'the interest goes out of him. He forgets you, He doesn't care a rap for you- under his very nose...'

Yet the interest was not always out of him, and when he was holding his attention to a thing Wallace could contrive to be an extremely successful man. His career, indeed, is set with successes. He left me behind him long ago; he soared up over my head, and cut a figure in the world that I couldn't cut- anyhow. He was still a year short of forty, and they say now that he would have been in office and very probably in the new Cabinet if he had lived. At school he always beat at me without effort- as it were by nature. We were at school together at Saint Athelstan's College in West Kensington for almost all our school-time. He came into the school as my co-equal, but he left far above me, in a blaze of scholarship and brilliant performance. Yet I think I made a fair average running. And it was at school I heard first of the 'Door in the wall'- that I was to hear of a second time only a month before his death.

To him at least the Door in the Wall was a real door, leading through a real wall to immortal realities. Of that I am now quite assured.

And it came into his life quite early, when he was a little fellow between five and six. I remembered how, as he sat making his confession to me with a slow gravity, he reasoned and reckoned the date of it. 'There was,' he said, 'a crimson Virginia creeper in it- all one right uniform crimson, in a clear amber sunshine against a white wall. That came into the impression somehow, though I don't clearly remember how, and there were horse-chestnut leaves upon the clean pavement outside the green door. They were blotched yellow and green, you know, not brown nor dirty, so that they must have been new fallen. I take it that means October. I look out for horse-chestnut leaves every year and I ought to know.

'if I'm right in that, I was about five years and four months old.'

He was, he said, rather a precocious little boy- he learned to talk at an abnormally early age, and he was so sane and 'old-fashioned', as people say, that he was permitted an amount of initiative that most children scarcely attain by seven or eight, His mother died when he was two, and he was under the less vigilant and authoritative care of a nursery governess. His father was stern, pre-occupied lawyer, who gave him little attention and expected great things of him. For all his brightness he found life grey and dull, I think. And one day he wandered.

He could not recall the particular neglect that enabled him to get away, nor the course he took among the West Kensington roads. All that he faded among the incurable blurs of memory. But the white wall and the green door stood out quite distinctly.

As his memory of that childish experience ran, he did at the very first sight of that door experience a peculiar emotion, an attraction, a desire to get to the door and open it and



walk in and at the same time he had the clearest conviction that either it was unwise or it was wrong of him- he could not tell which- to yield to this attraction. He insisted upon it as a curious thing that he knew from the very beginning- unless memory has played him the queerest trick- that the door was unfastened, and that he could go in as he chose.

I seem to see the figure of that little boy, drawn and repelled. And it was very clear in his mind, too, though why it should be so was never explained, that his father would be very angry if he went in through that door.

Wallace described all these moments of hesitation to me with the utmost particularity. He went right past the door, and then, with his hands in his pocket and making an infantile attempt to whistle, strolled right along beyond the end of the wall. There he recalls a number of mean dirty shops, and particularly that of a plumber and decorator with a dusty disorder of earthenware pipes, sheet lead, ball taps, pattern books of wallpaper, and tins of enamel. He stood pretending to examine these things, and coveting, passionately desiring, the green door.

Then, he said, he had a gust of emotion. He made a run for it, lest hesitation should grip him again; he went plumb with outstretched hand through the green door and let it slam behind him. And so, in a trice, he came into the garden that has haunted all his life.

It was very difficult for Wallace to give me his full sense of that garden into which he came.

There was something in the very air of it that exhilarated, that gave one a sense of lightness and good happening and well-being; there was something in the sight of it that made all its colour clean and perfect and subtly luminous. In the instant of coming into it one was exquisitely glad- as only in rare moments, and when one is young and joyful one can be glad in this world. And was beautiful there...

Wallace mused before he went on telling me. 'You see,' he said, with the doubtful inflection of a man who pauses at incredible things, 'there were two great panthers there... Yes, spotted panthers. And I was not afraid. There was a long wide path with marble-edged flower borders on either side, and these two huge velvety beasts were playing there with a ball. One looked up and came towards me, a little curious as it seemed. It came right up to me, rubbed its soft round ear very gently against the small hand I held out, and purred, It was, I tell you, an enchanted garden. I know, And the size? Oh! It stretched far and wide, this way and that, I believe there were hills far away. Heaven knows where Kensington had suddenly got to. And somehow it was just like coming home.

'you know, in the very moment the door swung to behind me, I forgot the road with its fallen chestnut leaves, its cabs and tradesmen's carts, I forgot the sort of gravitational pull back to the discipline and obedience of home, I forgot all hesitations and fear, forgot discretion, forgot all the intimate realities of the life. I became in a moment a very glad and wonder-happy little boy in another world. It was a world with a different quality, a warmer, more penetrating, and mellower light, with a faint clear

gladness in its air, and wisps of sun-touched cloud in the blueness of its sky. And before me ran this long wide path, invitingly, with weedless beds on either side, rich with untended flowers, and these two great panthers. I put my little hands fearlessly on their soft fur, and caressed their round ears and the sensitive corners under their ears, and played with them, and it was as though they welcomed me home. There was keen sense of homecoming in my mind, and when presently a tall, fair girl appeared in the pathway and came to meet me, smiling, and said, "Well?" to me, and lifted me and kissed me and put me down and led me by the hand, there was no amazement, but only and impression of delightful rightness, of being reminded of happy things that had in some strange way been overlooked. There were broad red steps, I remember, that came into view between spikes of delphinium, and up these we went to a great avenue between very old and shady dark trees. All down this avenue, you know, between the red chapped stems, were marble seats of honour and statuary, and very tame and friendly white doves.

'Along this cool avenue my girl-friend led me, looking down I recall the pleasant lines, the finally-modeled chin of her sweet kind face- asking me questions in a soft, agreeable voice, and telling me things, pleasant things, I know, though what they were I was never able to recall... Presently a Capuchin monkey, very clean, with a fur of ruddy brown and kindly hazel eyes, came down a tree to us and ran beside me, looking up at me and grinning, and presently leaped to my shoulder. So we two went on our way in great happiness.'

He paused.

'Go on,' I said.

'I remember little things. We passed an old man musing among laurels, I remember, and a place gay with parakeets, and came through a broad shaded colonnade to a spacious cool palace, full of pleasant fountains, full of beautiful things, full of the quality and promise of heart's desire. And there were many things and many people, some that still seem to stand out clearly and some that are vaguer; but all these people were beautiful and kind. In some way- I don't know how- it was conveyed to me that they all were kind to me, glad to have me there, and filling me with gladness by their gestures, by the touch of their hands, by the welcome and love in their eyes. Yes-'

He mused for a while. 'Playmates I found there. That was much to me, because I was lonely little boy. They played delightful game in a grass-covered court where there was sun-dial set about with flowers. And as one played one loved...

'But- it's old-there's a gap in my memory, I don't remember the games we played. I never remembered. Afterwards, as a child, I spent long hours trying, even with tears, to recall the form of that happiness. I wanted to play it all over again- in my nursery- by myself. No! All I remember is the happiness and two dear playfellows who were most with me...Then presently came a sombre dark woman, with a grave, pale face and dreamy eyes, a sombre woman,

wearing a soft long robe of pale purple, who carried a book, and beckoned and took me aside with her into a gallery above a hall- though my playmates were loth to have me go, and caused their game and stood watching as I was carried away. 'Come back to us!' they cried. 'Come back to us soon!' I looked up at her face, but she heeded them not at all. Her face was very gentle and grave, she took me to a seat in the gallery, and I stood beside her, ready to look at her book as she opened it upon her knee. The pages fell open. She pointed, and I looked, marveling, for in the living pages of that book I saw myself; it was story about myself, and in it were all the things that had happened to me since ever I was born...

'It was wonderful to me, because the pages of that book were not pictures, you understand, but realities.'

Wallace paused gravely- looked at me doubtfully.

'Go on,' I said. "I understand."

'They were realities-yes, they must have been; people moved and things came and went in them; my dear mother, whom I had near forgotten; then my father, stern and upright, the servants, the nursery, all the familiar things of home. Then the front door and the busy streets, with traffic to and fro. I looked and marveled, and looked half doubtfully again into the woman's face and turned the page over, skipping this and that, to see more of this book and more, and so at last I came to myself hovering and hesitating outside the green door in the long white wall, and felt again the conflict and the fear.

' "And next?" I cried, and would have turned on, but the cool hand of the grave woman delayed me.

' "Next?" I insisted, and struggled gently with her hand, pulling up her fingers with all my childish strength, and as she yielded and the page came over she bent down upon me like a shadow and kissed my brow.

'But the page did not show the enchanted garden, nor the panthers, nor the girl who had led me by the hand, nor the play-fellows who had been so loth to let me go. It showed a long grey street in West Kensington, in that chill hour of afternoon before the lamps are lit; and I was there, a wretched little figure, weeping aloud, for all that I could do to restrain myself, and I was weeping because I could not return to my dear playfellows who had called after me, "Come back to us! Come back to us soon!" I was there. This was no page in a book, but harsh reality; that enchanted place and the restraining hand of the grave mother at whose knee I stood had gone-whither had they gone?'

He halted again, and remained for a time staring into the fire.

'Oh! The woefulness of that return!' he murmured.

'Well?' I said, after a minute or so.

'poor little wretch I was!-brought back to this grey world again! As I realized the fullness of what had happened to me, I gave way to quite ungovernable grief. And the shame and humiliation of that public weeping and my disgraceful home-coming remain with me still. I see again

the benevolent-looking old gentleman in gold spectacle who stopped and spoke to me-prodding me first with his umbrella. "poor little chap," said he; "and are you lost then?"- and me a London boy of five and more! And he must needs bring in a kindly young policeman and make a crowd of me, and so march me home. Sobbing, conspicuous, and frightened, I came back from the enchanted garden to the steps of my father's house.

'That is as well as I can remember my vision of that garden the garden that haunts me still. Of course, I can convey nothing of that indescribable quality of translucent unreality, that difference from the common things of experience that hung about it all; but that- that is what happened. If it was a dream. I am sure it was a day-time and altogether extraordinary dream...H'm!- naturally there followed a terrible questioning, by my aunt, my father, the nurse, the governess- everyone...

'I tried to tell them, and my father gave me my first thrashing for telling lies. When afterword I tried to tell my aunt, she punished me again for my wicked persistence. Then, as I said, everyone was forbidden to listen to me, to hear word about it. Even my fairy-tale books were taken away from me for a time- because I was too "imaginative". Eh! Yes, they did that! My father belonged to the old school... And my story was driven back upon myself. I whispered it to my pillow- my pillow that was often damp and salt to my whispering lips with childish tears. And I added always to my official and less fervent prayers this one heartfelt request: "Please God I may dream of the garden. O! take me back to my garden." Take me back to my garden! I dreamt often of the garden. I may have added to it, I may have changed it; I do not know... All this, you understand, is an attempt to reconstruct from fragmentary memories a very early experience. Between that and the other consecutive memories of my boyhood there is a gulf. A time came when it seemed impossible I should ever speak of that wonder glimpse again.'

I asked an obvious question.

'No,' he said, 'I don't remember that I ever attempted to find my way back to the garden in those early years. This seems odd to me now, but I think that very probably a closer watch was kept on my movements after this misadventure to prevent my going astray. No, it wasn't till you knew me that I tried for the garden again. And I believe there was a period- incredible as it seems now- when I forgot the garden altogether- when I was about eight or nine it may have been. Do you remember me as a kid at Saint Athelstan's?'

'Rather!'

'I didn't show any signs, did I, in those days of having a secret dream?'

## II

He looked up with a sudden smile.

'Did you ever play North-West Passage with me?... No, of course you didn't come my way!'

'It was the sort of game,' he went on, 'that every imaginative child plays all day. The idea was the discovery of a North-West Passage to school. The way to school



was plain enough; the game consisted of finding some way that wasn't plain, starting off ten minutes early in some almost hopeless direction, and working my way round through unaccustomed streets to my goal. And one day I got entangled among some rather low-class streets on the other side of Campden Hill, and I began to think that for once the game would be against me and that I should get to school late. I tried rather desperately a street that seemed a cul-de-sac, and found a passage at the end. I hurried through that with renewed hope. "I shall do it yet," I said, and passed a row of frowsy little shops that were inexplicably familiar to me, and behold! There was my long white wall and the green door that led to the enchanted garden!

'The thing whacked upon me suddenly. Then, after all, that garden, that wonderful garden, wasn't a dream!'

He paused.

'I suppose my second experience with the green door marks the world of difference there is between the busy life of a schoolboy and the infinite leisure of a child. Anyhow, this second time I didn't for a moment think of going in straight away. You see- For one thing, my mind was full of the idea of getting to school in time- set on not breaking my record for punctuality. I must surely have felt some little desire at least to try the door- yes. I must have felt that... But I seem to remember the attraction of the door mainly as another obstacle to my overmastering determination to get to school. I was immensely interested by this discovery I had made, of course- I went on it my mind full of it- nut I went on. It didn't check me. I ran past, tugging out my watch, found I had ten minutes still to spare, and then I was going downhill into familiar surroundings. I got to school, breathless, it is true, and wet with perspiration, but in time. I can remember hanging up my coat and hat... Went right by it and left it behind me. Odd, eh?'

He looked at me thoughtfully. 'Of course I didn't know then that it wouldn't always be there. Schoolboys have limited imaginations. I suppose I thought it was an awfully jolly thing to have it there, to know my way back to it; but there was the school tugging at me. I expect I was a good deal distraught and inattentive that morning, recalling what I could of the beautiful strange people I should presently see again. Oddly enough I had no doubt in my mind that they would be glad to see me... Yes, I must have thought of the garden that morning just as a jolly sort of place to which one might resort in the interludes of a strenuous scholastic career.

'I didn't go that day at all. The next day was a half-holiday, and that may have weighed with me. Perhaps, too, my state of inattention brought down impositions upon me, and docked the margin of time necessary for the detour. I don't know. What I do know is that in the meantime the enchanted garden was so much upon my mind that I could not keep it to myself.

'I told- what was his name?- a ferrety-looking youngster we used to call Squiff.'

'Young Hopkins,' said I.

'Hopkins it was. I did not like telling him. I had a feeling

that in some way it was against the rules to tell him, but I did. He was walking part of the way home with me; he was talkative, and if we had not talked about the enchanted garden we should have talked of something else, and it was intolerable to me to think about any other subject. So I blabbed.

'Well, I told my secret. The next day in the play interval I found myself surrounded by half a dozen bigger boys, half teasing, and wholly curious to hear more of the enchanted garden. There was that big Fawcett- you remember him?- and Carnaby and Morley Reynolds. You weren't there by any chance? No, I think I should have remembered if you were...

'A boy is a creature of odd feelings. I was, I really believe, in spite of my secret self-disgust, a little flattered to have the attention of these big fellows. I remembered particularly a moment of pleasure caused by the praise of Crawshaw- you remember Crawshaw major, the son of Crawshaw the composer?- who said it was the best lie he had ever heard. But at the same time there was a really painful undertow of shame at telling what I felt was indeed a sacred secret. That beast Fawcett made a joke about the girl in green-'

Wallace's voice sank with the keen memory of that shame. 'I pretended not to hear,' he said, 'Well, then Carnaby suddenly called me a young liar, and disputed with me when I said the thing was true. I said I knew where to find the green door, could lead them all there in ten minutes. Carnaby became outrageously virtuous, and said I'd have to- and bear out my words or suffer. Did you ever have Carnaby twist your arm? Then perhaps you'll understand how it went with me. I swore my story was true. There was nobody in the school then to save a chap from Carnaby, through Crawshaw put in a word or so. Carnaby had got his game. I grew excited and red-eared, and a little frightened. I behaved altogether like a silly little champ, and the outcome of it all was that instead of starting alone for my enchanted garden, I led the way presently-cheeks flushed, ears hot, eyes smarting, and my soul one burning misery and shame - for a party of six mocking, curious, and threatening schoolfellows.

'We never found the white wall and then green door...'

'You mean-'

'I mean I couldn't find it. I would have found it if I could.

'And afterwards when I could go alone I couldn't find it. I never found it. I seem now to have been always looking for it through my schoolboy days, but I never came upon it- never.'

'Did the fellows- make disagreeable?'

'Beastly... Carnaby held a council over me for wanton lying. I remember how I sneaked home and upstairs to hide the marks of my blubbing. But when I cried myself to sleep at last it wasn't for Carnaby, but for the garden, for the beautiful afternoon I had hoped for, for the sweet friendly woman and the waiting playfellows, and the game I had hoped to learn again, that beautiful forgotten game... I believed firmly that if I had not told-...I had bad times after that- crying at night and woolgathering by day.

For two terms I slacked and had bad reports. Do you remember? Of course you would! I was you- your beating me in mathematics that brought me back to the grind again.'

### III

For a time my friend started silently into the red heart of the fire. Then he said: 'I never saw it again until I was seventeen.

'It leaped upon me for the third time- as I was driving to Paddington on my way to Oxford and a scholarship. I had just one momentary glimpse. I was learning over the apron of my hansom smoking a cigarette, and no doubt thinking myself no end of a man of the world, and suddenly there was the door, the wall, the dear sense of unforgettable and still attainable things.

'We clattered by- I too taken by surprise to stop my cab until we were well past and round a corner. Then I had a queer moment, a double and divergent movement of my will: I tapped the little door in the roof of the cab and brought my arm down to pull out my watch. "Yes, sir!" said the cabman smartly. "Er-well-it's nothing," I cried. "My mistake! We haven't much time! Go on!" And he went on...

'I got my scholarship. And the night after I was told of that I sat over my fire in my little upper room, my study, in my father's house, with his praise- his rare praise- and his sound counsels ringing in my ears, and I smoked my favourite pipe- the formidable bulldog of adolescence- and thought of that door in the long white wall. "If I had stopped," I thought, "I should have missed my scholarship, I should have missed my Oxford- muddled all the fine career before me! I begin to see things better!" I fell to musing deeply, but I did not doubt then this career of mine was a thing that merited sacrifice.

'Those dear friends and that clear atmosphere seemed very sweet to me, very fine but remote. My grip was fixing now upon the world, I saw another door opening- the door of career.'

He started again into the fire. Its red light picked out a stubborn strength in his face for just one flickering moment, and then it vanished again.

'Well,' he said and sighed, 'I have served that career. I have done- much work, much hard work. But I have dreamt of the enchanted garden a thousand dreams, and seen its door, or at least glimpsed its door, four times since then. Yes- four times. For a while this world was so bright and interesting, seemed so full of meaning and opportunity, that the half-effaced charm of the garden was by comparison gentle and remote. Who wants to pat panthers on the way to dinner with pretty woman and distinguished men? I came down to London from Oxford, a man of blood promise that I have done something to redeem. Something- and yet there have been disappointments...

'Twice I have been in love- I will not dwell on that- but once, as I went to someone who, I knew, doubted whether I dared to come, I took a short cut at a venture through an unfrequented road near Earl's Court, and so happened on

a white wall and a familiar green door. "Odd!" said I to myself, "but I thought this place was on Campden Hill. It's the place I never could find somehow- like counting Stonehenge- the place of that queer daydream of mine." And I went by it intent upon my purpose. It had no appeal to me that afternoon.

'I had just a moment's impulse to try the door, three steps aside were needed at the most- through I was sure enough in my heart that it would open to me- and then I thought that doing so might delay me on the way to that appointment in which my honour was involved. Afterwards I was sorry for my punctuality- I might at least have peeped in and waved a hand to those panthers, but I knew enough by this time not to seek again belatedly that which is not found by seeking. Yes, that time made me very sorry...

'Years of hard work after that and never a sight of the door. It's only recently it has come back to me. With it there has come a sense as though some thin tarnish had spread itself over my world. I began to think of it as a sorrowful and bitter thing that I should never see that door again. Perhaps I was suffering in a little from overwork- perhaps it was what I've heard spoken of as the feeling of forty. I don't know. But certainly the keen brightness that make effort easy has gone out of things recently, and that just at a time- with all these new political developments- when I ought to be working. Odd, isn't it? But I do began to find life toilsome, its rewards, as I come near them, cheap. I began a little while ago to want to the garden quite badly. Yes- and I've seen it three times.'

'The garden?'

'No-the door! And I haven't gone in!'

He leaned over the table to me, with an enormous sorrow in his voice as he spoke. "Thrice I have had my chance- thrice! If ever that door offers itself to me again, I swore, I will go in, out of this dust and heat, out of this dry glitter of vanity, out of these toilsome futilities. I will go and never return. This time I will stay... I swore it, and when the time came- I didn't go.

'Three times in one year I have passed that door and failed to enter. Three times in the last year.

'The first time was on the night of the snatch division on the Tenants' Redemption Bill, on which the Government was saved by a majority of three. You remember? No one on our side- perhaps very few on the opposite side- expected the end that night. Then the debate collapsed like egg-shells. I and Hotchkiss were dining with his cousin at Brentford; we were both unpaired, and we were called up by telephone, and set off at once in his cousin's motor. We got in barely in time, and on the way we passed my wall and door- livid in the moonlight, blotched with hot yellow as the glare of our lamps lit it, but unmistakable. "My, God!" cried I. "What?" said Hotchkiss. "Nothing?" I answered and the moment passed.

"I've made a grate sacrifice," I told the whip as I got in. "they all have," he said, and hurried by.

'I do not see how I could have done otherwise then. And the next occasion was as I rushed to my father's beside to

bid that stern old man farewell. Then, too, the claims of life were imperative. But the third time was different; it happened a week ago. It fills me with hot remorse to recall it. I was with Gurker and Ralphs- it's no secret now, you know, that I've had my talk with Gurker. We had been dining at Frobisher's, and the talk had become intimate between us. The question of my place in the reconstructed Ministry lay always just over the boundary of the discussion. Yes- yes. That's all settled. It needn't be talked about yet, but there's no reason to keep a secret from you... Yes - thanks! Thanks! But let me tell you my story.

'Then, on that night things were very much in the air. My position was a very delicate one. I was keenly anxious to get some definite word from Gurker, but was hampered by Ralphs' presence. I was using the best power of my brain to keep that light and careless talk not too obviously directed to the point that concerned me. I had to. Ralphs' behavior since has more than justified my caution... Ralphs, I knew, would leave us beyond the Kensington High Street, and then I could surprise Gurker by a sudden frankness. One has sometimes to resort to these little devices... And then it was that in the margin of my field of vision I became aware once more of the white wall, the green door before us down the road.

'We passed it talking. I passed it. I can still see the shadow of Gurker's marked profile, his opera hat tilted forward over his prominent nose, the many folds of his neck wrap going before my shadow and Ralph's as we sauntered past.

'I passed within twenty inches of the door. "If I say good night to them, and go in," I asked myself, "what will happen?" And I was all a-tingle for that word with Gurker.

'I could not answer that question in the tangle of my other problems. "They will think me mad," I thought. "And suppose I vanish now?- Amazing disappearance of a prominent politician!" that weighed with me. A thousand inconceivable petty worldlinesses weighed with me in that crisis.'

Then he turned on me with a sorrowful smile, and, speaking slowly, 'Here I am!' he said.

'Here I am!' he repeated, 'and my chance has gone from me. Three times in one year the door has been offered me - that door that goes into peace, into delight, into a beauty beyond dreaming, a kindness no man on earth can know. And I have rejected it, Redmond, and it has gone-'

'How do you know?'

'I know. I know. I am left now to work it out, to stick to the tasks that held on me so strongly when my moments came. You say I have success- this vulgar, tawdry, irksome, envied thing. I have it'. He had a walnut in his big hand. 'If that was my success,' he said, and crushed it, and held it out for me to see.

'Let me tell you something, Redmond. This lost is destroying me. For two months, for ten weeks nearly now, I have done no work at all, except the most necessary and urgent duties. My soul is full of inappeasable regrets. At nights- when it is less likely I shall be recognized- I go out. I wander. Yes. I wonder what people would think of that if

they knew. A Cabinet Minister, the responsible head of that most vital of all departments, wandering alone- grieving- sometimes near audibly lamenting- for a door, for a garden!'

#### IV

I can see now his rather pallid face, and the unfamiliar sombre fire that had come into his eyes. I see him very vividly tonight. I sit recalling his words, his tones, and last evening's Westminster Gazette still lies on my sofa, containing the notice of his death. At lunch today the club was busy with his death. We talked of nothing else.

They found his body very early yesterday morning in a deep excavation near East Kensington Station. It is one of two shafts that have been made in connection with an extension of the railway southward. It is protected from the intrusion of the public by a hoarding upon the high road, in which a small doorway has been cut for the convenience of some of the workmen who live in that direction. The doorway was left unfastened through a misunderstanding between two gangers, and through it he made his way.

My mind is darkened with questions and riddles.

It would seem he walked all the way from the House that night- he has frequently walked home during the past Session- and so it is I figure his dark from coming along the late and empty streets, wrapped up, intent. And then did the pale electric lights near the station cheat the rough planking into a semblance of white? Did that fatal unfastened door awaken some memory?

Was there, after all, ever any green door in the wall at all?

I do not know. I have told his story as he told it to me. There are times when I believe that Wallace was no more than the victim of the coincidence between a rare but not unprecedented type of hallucination and a careless trap, but that indeed is not my profoundest belief. You may think me superstitious, if you will, and foolish; but, indeed, I am more than half convinced that he had, in truth, an abnormal gift, and a sense, something- I know not what- that in the guise of a wall and door offered him an outlet, a secret and peculiar passage of escape into another and altogether more beautiful world. At any rate, you will say, it betrayed him in the end. But did it betray him? There you touch the inmost mystery of these dreamers, these men of vision and the imagination. We see our world fair and common, the hoarding and the pit. By our daylight standard he walked out of security into darkness, danger, and death.

But did he see like that?

*C. Coroneos (1969), Short Story Muster, The Macmillan Company of Australia Pty Ltd, South Melbourne, Victoria 3205*

**Herbert George Wells (1866-1946), a master story teller well known for his iconic science fictions started his career by writing textbooks on Biology. He used to publish vividly in Nature and In fact, he proposed a similar version to Wikipedia, almost half a century before anybody had even heard about the web. "The door in the wall" is considered as one of his finest short stories.**

## Upcoming Events

- ◆ GMA Bakthi Gee - 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2018
- ◆ Annual Long Trip - 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> June 2018 "Pasikudah"
- ◆ GMA Night Theater - Fortnightly on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m.

### GMA RESEARCH HELP DESK

#### GMA Research Help Desk will help you to

- ⇒ Find information for your research
- ⇒ Articulate your research question
- ⇒ Identify best sources of information
- ⇒ Formulate your search strategy
- ⇒ Get the documents related to ethical clearance
- ⇒ Any other matters arising....

*Experts will be available at the GMA office*

*Every Friday from 11.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.*

*Book an appointment from the GMA office*



### GMA Research Grant

Applications are called for

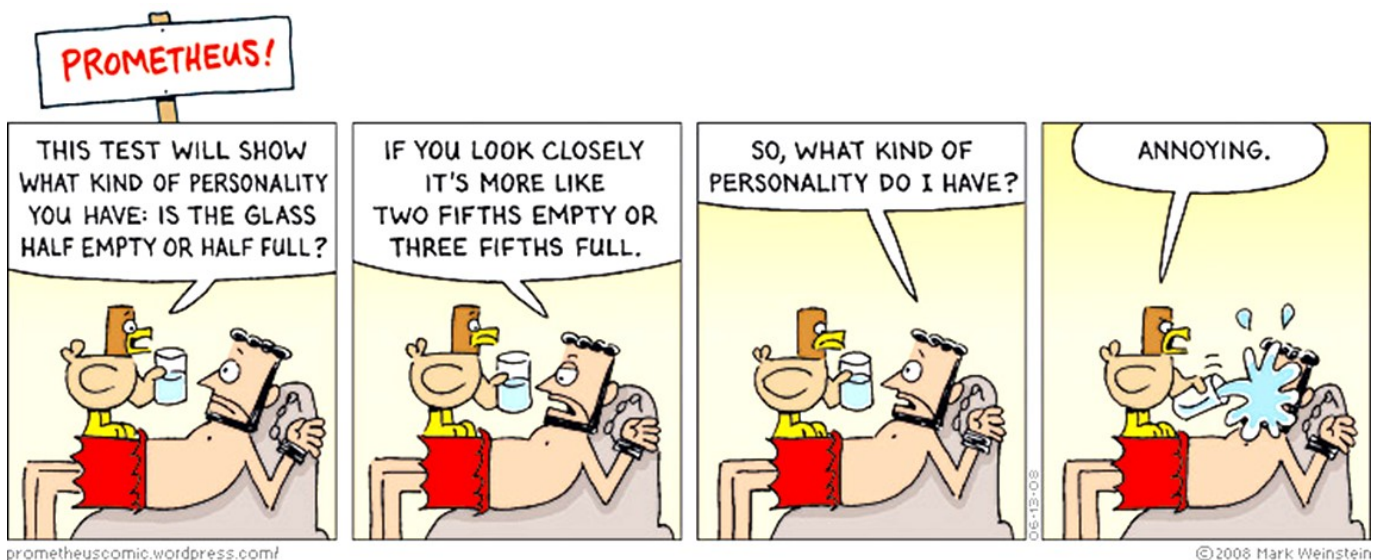
GMA Research Grant - 2018

Guidelines and Applications available at the GMA Website

[www.gma.lk](http://www.gma.lk)

Deadline for Submissions

**30<sup>th</sup> July 2018**



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## A Message from the Editors

We would like to invite the membership of GMA to contribute to the GMA newsletter. Please feel free to send **articles, letters, short stories, picture stories, poems, puzzles, jokes, cartoons etc.** We would also like to hear your views about the GMA newsletter. Please send them all to Editors GMA via e-mail [gmathk@gmail.com](mailto:gmathk@gmail.com)



## Photo Gallery

### Annual General Meeting - 2017/2018



### Six A Side Cricket Tournament



## GALLE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

### 77<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL ACADEMIC SESSIONS

10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> of October 2018

**CALL FOR SHORT PAPERS, POSTER PRESENTATIONS AND GMA ORATION**

#### Abstracts of Short Papers / Poster Presentations

The number of words should be limited **strictly** to 250. Upload your submission to GMA website. No hard copies needed.

#### Galle Medical Association Oration - 2018

Full text must be submitted in 4 hard copies. Three of the submissions should **Not** contain the name of the author and any indication to the identity of the author (including references). Upload the soft copy of your submission to GMA website.

**Submissions will be accepted up to 15<sup>th</sup> July 2018**

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