Lover of Lanka

Rev. W. S. Senior

● This month marks the centenary of the birth of REV WALTER STANLEY SENIOR, scholar, educationist and lover of Sri Lanka, who is still remembered by his pupils of an earlier generation and all who came into contact with him during the period he spent in this country.

He is specially remembered for the number of poems in which he poured out his love for the country of his adoption. Among them is the one titled THE CALL OF LANKA which is known to most Ceylonese readers of English. Publishing here is a photostat copy of the poem which he gave his pupil and admirer James T. Rutnam in 1937. This manuscript is now with the University of Sri Lanka.

Son of the Vicar of St. Thomas' Church in Nottingham, Walter Stanley Senior won a Goldsmith Prize for Classics at Oxford and later came to Sri Lanka at the request of Rev A. G. Fraser to work as a teacher at Trinity College, Kandy in 1905. In 1915 he was appointed Vicar of Christ Church, Galle Face. He also served as Registrar of the University College and as Lecturer in Western Classics before leaving in 1938.

Rev. Senior was a lover of music and literature. He did much of his literary work in an estate bungalow enjoying a magnificent view of the Haputale valley, and it was in keeping with that some of his ashes he interred at St. Andrew's Church in Haputale. The tombstone erected by his admirers bears the legend: "Walter Stanley Senior, Poet of Ceylon Seeker of Souls, Servant of God"