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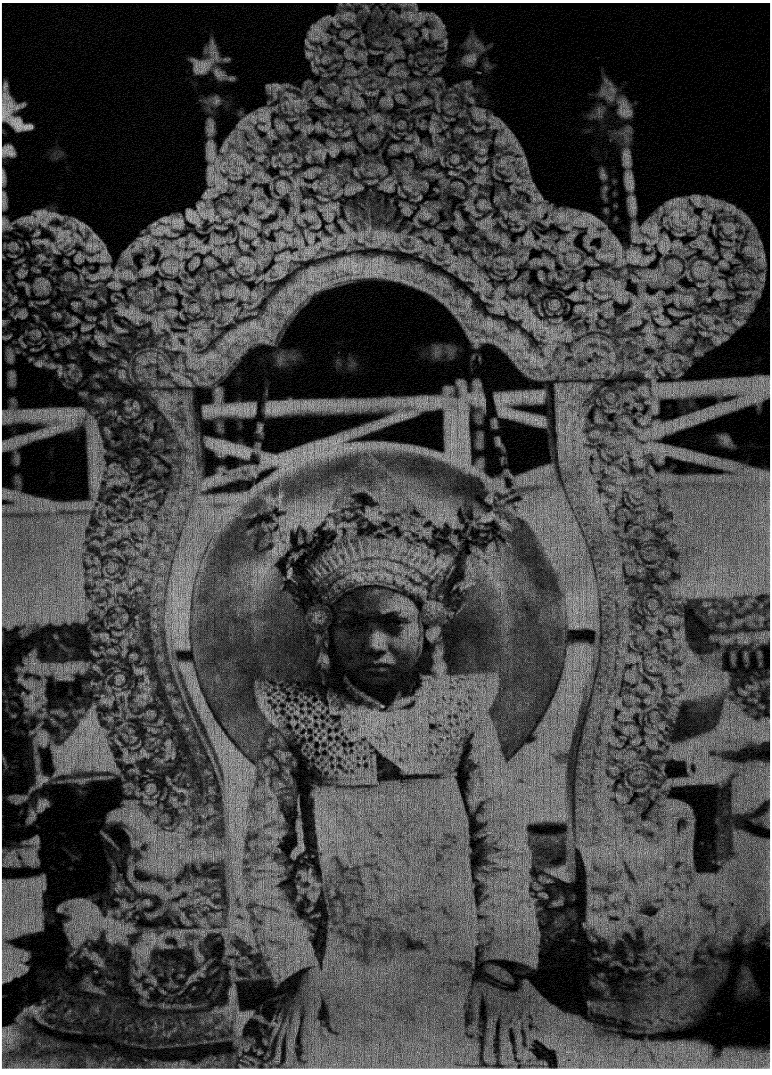
WORLD TRAVELS



DANCING GIRL—BALI

Frontispiece to Volume IV.

WORLD TRAVELS

A full descriptive narrative of personal travels in almost every land and sea, and among most of the peoples, both civilised and savage, of the entire world

BY

CHARLES W. DOMVILLE-FIFE

AUTHOR OF "AMONG WILD TRIBES OF THE AMAZONS," "SAVAGE LIFE IN THE BLACK SUDAN," "THROUGH CENTRAL AMERICA," "THE REAL SOUTH AMERICA," "THE UNITED STATES OF BRAZIL," "MODERN SOUTH AMERICA," ETC., ETC.

With nearly 800 Illustrations and 30 Maps

VOLUME IV

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VOL. IV

Journeys and Explorations from Central America to India and the East

INCLUDING

PANAMA AND THE CANAL
NICARAGUA
SALVADOR
GUATEMALA
WEST INDIES
VENEZUELA
CUBA
BAHAMAS ISLANDS
BERMUDA
INDIA
BURMA
IRRAWADDY RIVER
CEYLON
SUMATRA
JAVA

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WORLD TRAVELS

CHAPTER I

IN OLD AND NEW PANAMA

TWO round hummock-like islands rose up, distant and mist-enveloped, above the calm waters of the Bay of Panama. Later, when these islands turned from misty-grey to vivid green, a thin smudge appeared along the horizon which slowly extended to right and left. It was my first glimpse of the narrow isthmus connecting the two Americas. The islands are the natural guardians of the great interoceanic canal, which, by linking the waters of the Atlantic and Pacific, has, at least technically, converted South America into an island continent.

There is a very general misconception that Panama City marks the exact western entrance of the world's greatest canal. This, however, is not the case, for the way in from the Pacific is through Ancon Harbour with its giant breakwaters, linked islands and fortifications, situated some three miles distant from the Panamanian capital, and all the large bonded warehouses and wharves for the transhipment of merchandise on this side are at Balboa, in the zone ceded by Panama to the United States in return for the generous sum

of two millions sterling. This narrow strip of country, called the canal zone, extends inland from the waterway for a distance of five miles on each side, and runs right across the isthmus, some fifty miles, to the Atlantic entrance at Cristobal-Colon. This is one town physically but two politically, for whereas Colon, although within the five-mile limit, is recognised as Panamanian territory, Cristobal is the Atlantic depôt for the canal and belongs to the United States.

Another belief is that the Pacific gateway lies to the westward of the Atlantic entrance, whereas the exact reverse is the case. Owing to the curious configuration of Central America, this interoceanic waterway does not run from east to west, as might be supposed, but from north to south-east, placing the city of Panama some eight minutes of longitude to the eastward of Colon.

Landing at the Balboa docks, I drove along a fine avenue of cedar, banyan and palm trees to Ancon Hill, a slight elevation at the back of the city, from which fine views are obtained of the country, the canal and the bay. Crowning these heights are the wire-netting covered bungalows of the American officials and the fine hospital and grounds maintained by the Commission. The windows and doorways of these and all the administrative offices are covered with wire-netting to keep out the mosquitoes, carriers of the yellow fever and the malaria, which, before Colonel Gorgas and his staff cleaned up the whole zone from Colon to Panama, were the scourge of the canal workings.

It must not be imagined from this that the whole of the little state of Panama has been rendered healthy. On the contrary, the jungles stretching away on either

side of the canal zone are still in their wild, unhealthy, and fever-breeding condition. Even along the banks of the waterway malaria is by no means unknown, and this, as well as other tropical diseases, is only kept from assuming epidemic proportions by the untiring efforts of an exceptionally able medical and sanitary staff. The five principal methods employed while the canal was being built are still maintained. Every square foot of swampy ground is sprayed with kerosene; pure water for drinking purposes is carried across the isthmus by pipe lines running parallel to the canal; the houses of white residents, hospitals and offices are protected by netting; the sanitation of even the Panamanian cities of Colon and Panama is superintended by American experts, and the fine hospitals at either end of the canal are supplied with every known appliance for fighting disease. These precautions have converted Panama, so far as the canal zone is concerned, from a serious rival of old-time West Africa into a tourist resort!

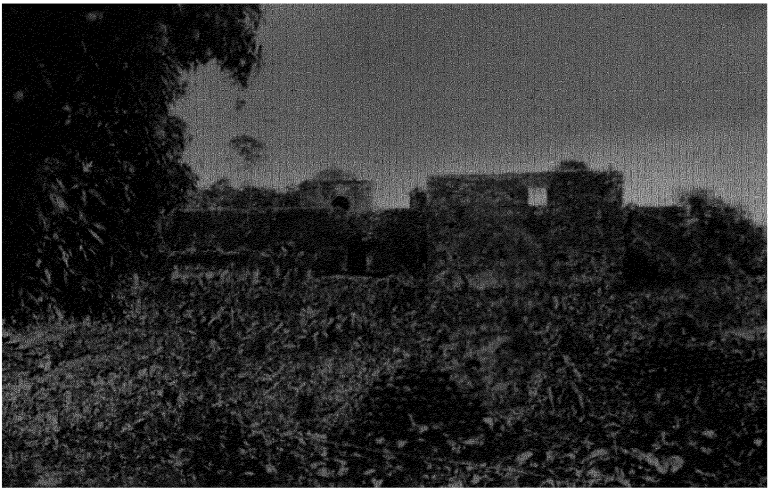
Descending from Balboa Heights, and passing between neatly trimmed mango and banana trees, I made my way towards the capital city of the state of Panama. There are no cool hours on this coast, even the high wind which blows at certain times of the year is like the breath of a furnace. During the steaming hot hours when the sun blazes down from almost directly overhead, there is but little movement among the drowsy loungers in plaza and patio. The Spanish-Negro-Indian people take life very easily, and remain stretched out on the numerous public seats, in hammocks on the verandas, and under the palms in the patios; in fact, anywhere and everywhere so long as there is shade. When midday has

come and gone, they all dress themselves and go out to enjoy the evening. It is the same with rich and poor; all are half-dressed until the sun touches the ocean's rim. With the return of vitality come a few crowded hours of flirtation, dancing, drinking, music, scandal, intrigue and amusement, before closing carefully the mosquito screens in preparation for the sticky-warm and often restless night.

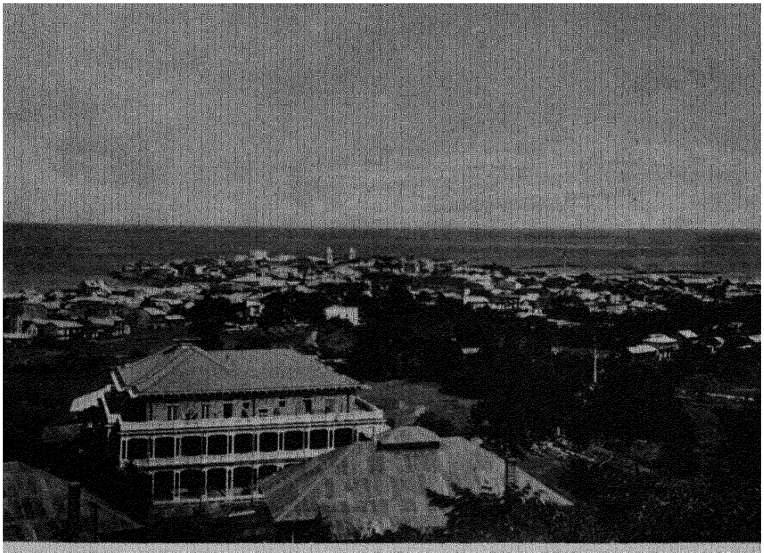
Panama City is, for a Central American town, well paved, lighted and clean. My first call was at the official residence of the President of the Republic. Passing between the somewhat slovenly-looking sentries on guard, I entered the small patio of the palace. Here a fountain was cooling the air with its cascade of water. A turtle was living a very cramped existence in the uppermost basin, while several beautiful egrets and bright-coloured ducks seemed to have their home in the courtyard. The interior of the palace was simply but sensibly furnished for a tropical country.

In the Church of San José there is a vast gilt altar which was transferred from the cathedral of old Panama after the sacking and burning of that city by Morgan, the Welsh buccaneer, in 1671. A story is told of how this beautiful ornament was saved from destruction by the monks coating it with whitewash. New Panama has a population of about 60,000, and was built some three years after the destruction of the old city on a site five miles westwards of the original town. It is the oldest European town on the American mainland.

The most noticeable feature of Panama is the great granite wall, built in 1673, which still encloses the city. The top of this forms an attractive



TOWER OF OLD PANAMA CITY



PANAMA CITY
View from Ancon Hill.

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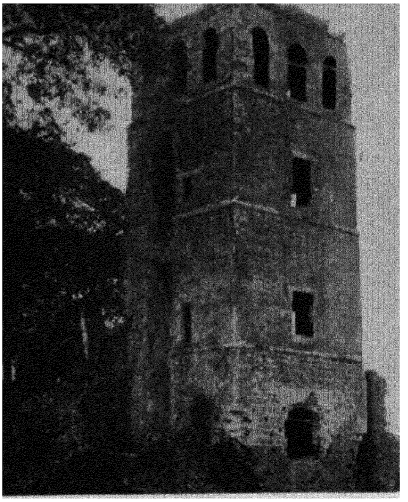
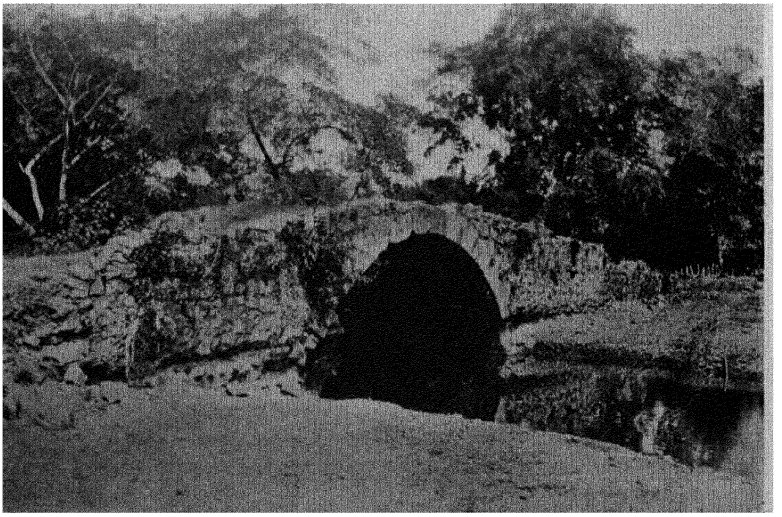


TOWER OF OLD PANAMA CITY



ANCIENT BRIDGE, PANAMA

promenade above the dazzling white-balconied houses and the narrow streets, which seem to hint of old romance and adventure. I have purposely refrained from saying anything of either the bathing beaches, the Chinese shops, with their silks and curios, and the night life in the cabarets, because I explored all these avenues of interest more thoroughly in the town of Colon, at the Atlantic entrance to the canal.

Although it is possible to drive along the five miles of coast road to old Panama, the ruins themselves must be explored on foot, as the tracks are narrow and the whole largely overgrown with jungle. There is very little left of this once famous city of the Spanish Indies. The old stone bridge, undamaged by Morgan and his adventurers because across it they effected their retreat laden with booty from the despoiled town, the guard-house, the great tower of the old cathedral, and a heap of ruins beneath a tangle of briar and vine, alone survive.

Silence reigns in the deserted streets of what was once the richest city on the shores of the Spanish Main. Here was the gold road along which the treasures wrested from the Incas of Peru were carried on mule-back to the ships bound for Spain. Drake once unsuccessfully attacked this treasure caravan at a spot near to where the ill-defined road now turns off into the jungle.

The Republic of Panama was originally one of the nine departments of the South American State of Colombia. In 1903 it revolted, however, and established a separate government. The area is about 31,900 square miles, and the population, including that of the canal zone, is just over 445,000. There are several tribes of almost uncivilised Indians in the

western jungles, especially those of the San Blas race along the Darien Gulf. The Bay of Panama is one of the finest places in the world for hunting the big game of the sea. Sharks, saw-fish, sail-fish, devil-fish, and other hard fighters inhabit these waters in numbers.

What old Panama must have been like when it was the *entrepôt* for the treasures sent up from Peru, and during the terrible three weeks of torture, death and fire to which it was subjected by Morgan, is now somewhat difficult to conjure, for there is little left to aid the imagination. History, however, gives a wonderful account of its riches, its monks, nuns, churches with altars of gold and silver, merchant-princes, slaves, tropical gardens, luxury, licentiousness, and fever. Its capture by the 1,200 adventurers under Morgan, who first reduced the fortifications of Porto Bello, on the Atlantic coast, then, by boat, canoe and jungle path crossed the pestilential isthmus, gave battle to and defeated the Spanish garrison, 2,900 strong, and, after unparalleled debauchery, burned the city, provides history with some of its most vivid pages. And these decaying walls, cobbled paths, and riot of palms was the scene of the triumph, the vice, the avarice, and the misery of it all.

CHAPTER II

THE "GREAT DITCH"

THE "Great Ditch," as the Americans of the zone call their wonderful achievement, can only be described in two ways: either it must be treated from the standpoint of the engineer or from that of the voyager on its surface. The time has passed for a technical account of the difficulties encountered in the making of this great waterway, which was more than a mere engineering accomplishment; it was an historic event, and so being has histories devoted to it. To record here the landslips, the methods of working, and the details of administration would likewise be out of place, for they, too, require blue-books faithfully to record them. Only a brief survey of what it looks like and feels like to be locked and lifted in a many-thousand-ton liner from Pacific to Atlantic is called for here.

For the first eight miles the vessel steams up a broad waterway beyond the sheltering arm of the Ancón breakwater, with the low-lying Pacific coast of the isthmus on either hand. Ahead lies a jagged mass of low hills, and one wonders how a way will be found of lifting the great ship over such a seemingly impassable barrier. Wharves and railway lines flank the trim banks, and large cranes and storehouses are everywhere around. The engines slow down and

the vessel glides into a lock, is raised some twenty feet, passes through a second lock which lifts it another twenty-seven feet, and great gates release it into Miraflores Lake, fifty-four feet above the surface of the Pacific. Across this artificial sheet of placid water, which is fed not only by the stream passing through the canal, but also by several small rivers dammed and turned into it, the ship steams for about a mile and a half; then the great Pedro Miguel Locks take a hand and lift vessel, cargo and passengers another thirty and a half feet into the famous Culebra Cut, which is nine miles long, and is flanked by hills with crumbling, back-sliding propensities which have turned hairs grey and cost millions of dollars.

This " great ditch " is the spectacular achievement of the canal, for a channel with an average depth of 120 feet and a width of about 300 feet had to be cut through nine miles of hills ! At the highest point of the divide, Gold Hill and Contractor's Hill, a cutting nearly 400 feet deep had to be made. Culebra was only completed by the removal of 200 million cubic yards of earth and rock. Since then there have been some twenty-six slides, several of which have blocked the workings with a mere 200,000 cubic yards of debris—cleared away in a week or so ! The Cut curves in a serpentine fashion and leads to Gatun Lake, another artificial sheet of water about 170 square miles in area, fed by the " dammed River Chagres." Lighthouses and lighted buoys guide the vessel along the twenty-four miles of channel formed by this flooded area. Then the three great locks of the Gatun system lower it down eighty-five feet, within a space of about three-quarters of a mile, to the Atlantic Ocean which is, however, not reached

until the canal, here formed by the Rio Mindi, has been traversed for a further five miles, and Colon Harbour passed. The Atlantic entrance is very low-lying, swampy, and surrounded by rank but luxuriant vegetation. At more than one point along the canal bank there is a broad pathway lined by royal palms.

There are, of course, many interesting engineering features, other than those briefly mentioned above, which should receive attention in any work purporting to describe the Panama Canal, such, for example, as the Gatun Dam and Spillway, creating the great lake and at the same time preventing its overflow. The average rainfall hereabouts is 132 inches a year, and the River Chagres, when in full flood during the rainy season, has been known to rise forty feet in as many hours. This great stream supplies the water for the twenty-four miles of lake, and any surplus goes over the 1,200-feet-broad concrete spillway into the open sea. Electric locomotives tow the vessels through the locks, and the same power operates the many ponderous gates, the lighting systems, and other works. The power station is at Gatun. There is also an ingenious arrangement of double gates at the upper end of each lock, as a safeguard against accidents, as well as a special emergency appliance which can quickly be brought into operation in the event of a dangerous break in the whole water-control system.

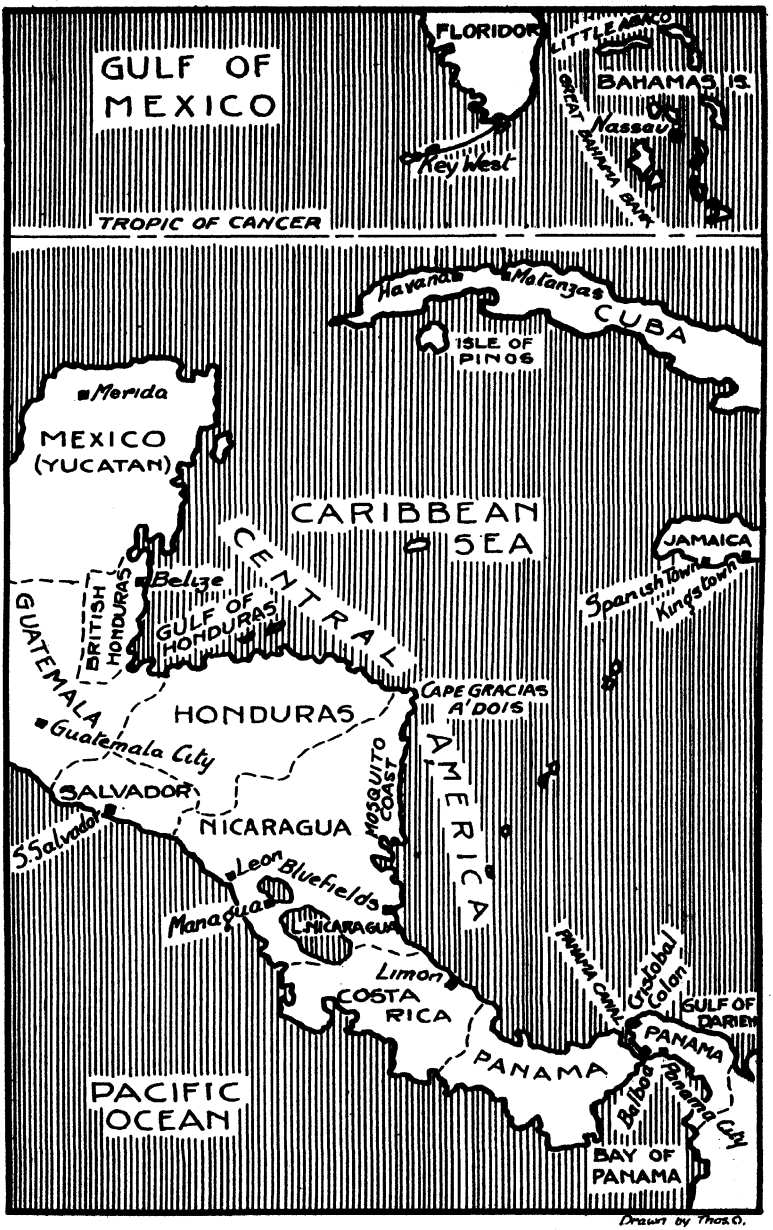
The passage of a ship through the canal from ocean to ocean can be accomplished in from seven to ten hours, but many passengers prefer to disembark and cross the isthmus by railway, which enables them to spend several hours either in Panama City or Colon

before re-embarking on the vessel which has come through the canal.

How wise it was of the people of Panama to grant to the United States of America the narrow strip of territory forming the canal zone is made equally as apparent at Cristobal-Colon, the twin-towns at the Atlantic end of the inter-oceanic highway. The first of these places is a beautifully laid-out little settlement resembling a tropical garden-city, and forms the American town, while Colon is Panamanian and enjoys the great advantage of being able to cater for all kinds of amusement. It also gains very largely from what may be termed the retail business created by the ships and passengers passing through the canal. Its principal customers are, however, the officials and labourers of the Commission, and, above all, the naval, military, and air garrison of the United States Forces.

Arriving in Cristobal-Colon—and few people who are not connected with the official or business life of the country know exactly where the frontier between the canal zone and Panama really begins or ends—I found these twin-towns crowded with happy soldiers and sailors from the ships and forts. Into this uniformed medley poured a stream of American and European tourists from two cruise ships doing the round of the Caribbean Sea. Add to your mental picture white buildings, arcaded side-walks, palms, a brilliant tropical sun beating down on Chinese and Indian shops, backing on to streets filled with drinking saloons and cabarets, and you will have a good idea of what Colon looks like during the cool season.

Then it is necessary to remember that Cristobal,



CENTRAL AMERICA

the American town, is almost entirely residential and absolutely *dry*—so far as intoxicating liquor is concerned. Moreover, that there are no cabarets or amusements—unless, of course, one includes the fine Washington Hotel and its open-air swimming-bath in this category. This curious combination of factors leaves the Panamanian city a free hand, *with free laws*, to cater for the American officials and fighting men, as well as for the tourists, so far as retail trade and amusements are concerned.

At night, Colon awakens from the disturbed siesta of the day. Its arc lights gleam from among the gently swaying fronds of the royal palms. Its lines of arcaded pavements are crowded with humanity of all types and shades of colour. Its motor cars are laden with revellers. In two of its streets leading from the waterfront, rows of coloured lights proclaim the whereabouts of its cabarets. Gramophones shriek popular airs as one passes the little swing-doors of its saloons ; and along Water Street, Indian and Chinese storekeepers stand in the doorways of their glittering silk, sequin and gilt-filled bazaars, inviting customers to " look round."

Yet there is but little crime in this town, for, although recognised as belonging to Panama, its proximity to things vitally American necessitates a fatherly eye from Uncle Sam. Happily, this eye is able to wink, however, and no one need feel either thirsty or lonely in Colon. But equally there are few offensive odours, caused by faulty sanitation, or awkward moments created by desperate coloured beggars or roving concubines. It is a bright little place with an atmosphere peculiarly its own. In the quite large shops of the Indian and Chinese merchants

all the silks, embroidered gowns, ivory carvings and curios from the lands of Nippon, Hindustan, Cathay and the whole Far East can be purchased—if time permits of the long bargaining necessary to reduce the original price asked by at least twenty-five per cent.

Now let us turn in beneath the archway of coloured lights, ascend the stairs, and spend an hour in the sticky heat and gaiety of Billgrey's Cabaret. Passing through a babel of voices, a crowd of people hunting for tables round the dancing-floor beneath the glow of yellow and red spotlights, numberless negro waiters, and the clinking of glasses, we find ourselves seated with a clear view of all that can happen on the floodlighted and shining floor. Wooden hammers are served out to all the tables. The negro syncopated orchestra beats out a tune, hundreds of little mallets rap in unison, and whirling figures gyrate on the polished floor. There is a few minutes' interval, during which time one can saunter on to the covered balcony overhanging the street. A yellow tropical moon is silhouetting in black outline a star-like palm. Lights are flickering from the mast-heads of warships in the great bay, and down in the street below, white-clothed men and thinly clad women are mingling with travellers ashore in European evening dress from the ships waiting to pass through the great canal.

Back once again in the saloon, the lights have been dimmed over the tables to accentuate the amber glare illuminating the dancing-floor, where Cuban girls in a minimum of clothing are imitating an Eastern dance. San Francisco supplies the next amusement—a chorus of cool young things for whom

every one is asked to "give a hand!" And so an evening merges into a night, but the cool trade wind is refreshing as one drives home through the whispering palms, with the glitter of night-time in Colon paling before the luminous yellow of the tropical dawn.

CHAPTER III

QUEER THINGS IN NICARAGUA AND SALVADOR

THE volcanic cordillera of Nicaragua must have been a wonderful sight when the Spanish conquerors first overran the country, for there were at least twenty cones vomiting fire and ashes within sight of each other. It is recorded that for many leagues on either hand there was no darkness, only a blood-red glow. Now, however, there are but two or three which occasionally show signs of activity. The craters of many hold placid pools of poisonous water.

Near to the old town of Managua, while an irrigation canal was being excavated to prevent the town from being flooded by streams of water from the precipitous mountain sides during the rainy season, a solid bed of lava was uncovered, and on its surface were the prints of many human feet, all pointing in the same direction. These imprints were made centuries ago, and there is no record to account for them, but they leave no doubt in the mind that they were caused by Indians running across the burning stream, with naked feet, towards the lake and safety, from the fire and ash of one or other of the neighbouring volcanoes.

Some fifty miles distant from Managua stands the

city of Leon, about the translation of which from the foot of the still active volcano Momotomso to its present safe position, a curious story is told. In the year 1549 the Bishop of old Leon was murdered in his palace by a son of the Governor of the province, who afterwards sacked the Bishopric, robbed the ecclesiastical treasury, raised the usual revolution under the usual banner of liberty, failed after a brief triumph, and died in the usual violent way. Sixty years later Leon was seriously damaged by an eruption of Momotomso. This was an occasion not to be missed, so the Bishop declared that the mountain had belched forth fire as a punishment from Heaven on the wicked city for the murder of the former prelate, and ordered the whole population to march out *en masse* on the following morning. He led them, riding on horseback, for twenty-five miles over broken ground, until near the Indian town of Subtiaba, where he commanded the new Leon to be erected.

This wise old priest had his way, and modern Leon has suffered no more from Momotomso's wrath, although in the centuries which have lapsed it has several times been in eruption, and even now, during the velvet Nicaraguan night, a faint glow, which turns the indigo sky to crimson and purple, tells of great fires still burning low down beneath this "safety-valve of Nicaragua."

While on the subject of Leon I must mention a wonderful procession which I witnessed during the *Semana Santa*, or Holy Week. The road taken led across country to the adjacent old Indian town of Subtiaba, and was covered with sawdust of many colours, cleverly formed into most elaborate patterns, like a huge bizarre and continuous carpet, adorned

with beautifully scented flowers. The overhead decorations comprised arches, with long lines of fluttering flags, paper streamers, and banks of frangipani and roses. The procession was led by choirs of trained voices and violinists, while military bands, stationed at various points, played selections between the columns of moving banners, effigies, religious pictures, school children, priests and nuns. Then, when the short twilight ended, flambeaux, fireworks and lanterns gave the old streets of Leon the appearance of China *en fête.*

Farther up the coast lies the smallest of Latin-American republics, the little Pacific Coast state of Salvador—the land of startling phenomena. Its area is only 7,225 square miles, but its population numbers about one and a quarter millions, and although smaller than the principality of Wales, it is surprisingly energetic. Volcanoes rise suddenly from level ground to a height of several thousand feet. The earth trembles so frequently that minor shocks pass unnoticed. The capital city, San Salvador, has been shaken almost to the ground on seven separate occasions, and some of the latent energy from the earth beneath seems to have been imparted to the population of the surface, for on each occasion the city has been rapidly rebuilt. Lakes rise and fall mysteriously, and rivers which have flowed peaceably for years suddenly become rushing torrents; but although in the other Central American states there is a "dead land" where the natural resources are neglected, and the population is sparse, in Salvador agricultural and industrial activity is manifest in all save the few arid patches of the country. The

Salvadorians are the sturdiest fighters on the isthmus, and their armies have seldom been beaten, yet, territorially, it is the smallest state. In commerce, too, far less is heard of *mañana* than in the surrounding republics, and its population is among the most energetic and courteous of their race. One of the principal products is Peruvian balsam, which has never been grown in Peru, but owes its name to the simple fact that for many years it was first shipped from this coast to the Peruvian port of Callao.

The story of the birth of the burning Salvadorian mountain of Izalco is remarkable. It appeared suddenly on the morning of February 23rd, 1770. The earth opened and streams of fiery lava and showers of hot ash were thrown out. The explosions were as regular as minute guns at sea, and in a few weeks Izalco had risen to a height of nearly 4,000 feet ! Still the violent explosions occurred, and for years this volcano continued to throw out volumes of flame, smoke and ashes which, at night, lit up with a lurid glow the curious plains of Sonsomate, and, showing far out over the broad Pacific, earned for it the title of " Lighthouse of Salvador."

Previous to the birth of this burning mountain, which has its counterpart in the Jorullo of Mexico, the plains were occupied by 400 geysers, which gave to the district the name of Sonsomate, or " Four Hundred Springs." When far out on the swelling bosom of the Pacific, the fire-glow from more than one volcanic cone along the coast of Salvador casts lurid gleams on the waters when the brief Equatorial twilight ends.

The capital, San Salvador, is a bright little town of one-storey buildings, which point unmistakeably

to the inherent caution of the people and to the precarious nature of house property in this energetic little city, whose inhabitants, the year round, work and play in the shadow of a dozen volcanic cones. Some few miles eastward of the capital lies Lake Llopango, which was the scene of one of the most remarkable volcanic disturbances recorded in history. Llopango stands on one of those small Central American plateaux which, by their elevation, become more temperate than tropical. It is 1,600 feet above sea-level, and has an area of twenty-five square miles. It is surrounded by lofty mountains sloping precipitously down to its rocky shores, the only level ground being two small defiles in which stand the villages of Apulo and Asino.

This was Nature's stage for a queer spectacle. The opening scene occurred in December 1879, when the surface of the lake rose suddenly about five feet, causing the Rio Jiboa, which flows out at the south-east corner, to transform itself from a slowly moving, shallow stream into a foaming rapid some forty feet deep. This sudden egress of water, estimated at thousands of millions of cubic feet, caused a corresponding drop in the level of the lake, which subsided about thirty feet in less than the same number of days. These phenomena were accompanied by violent convulsions of the earth and subterranean explosions, which shook the capital and the whole centre of the country. Simultaneously with the fall in the lake's surface, poisonous vapours were emitted from its centre ; a volcanic cone, surrounded by numerous islets, rose above the seething cauldron, then came the fire, the lava and the ashes, a conflagration that illuminated the mountains for

miles around, but darkened the sky far and wide over Salvador. When all was over, an island of solid lava, about 160 feet high, remained in the centre of the lake. The waters resumed their normal level, but the shocks had once again destroyed nearly all the buildings in the city of San Salvador, six miles distant.

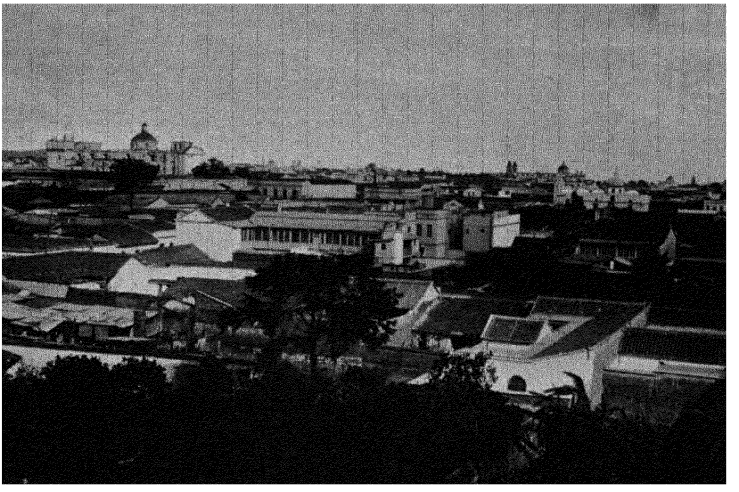
CHAPTER IV

THE WHIRL OF A REVOLT

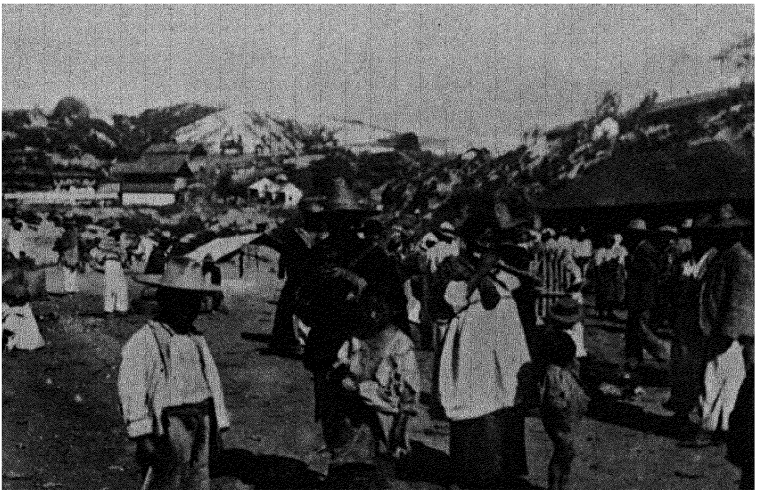
REVOLUTION is not an unknown phase in Latin-American affairs, and I have seen more than one of these young countries in the whirl of a rising. The basis has often been financial rather than politic, and the result more Gilbertian than tragic. There have been occasions, however, which proved the exceptions to this rule, and one of these was the downfall of the last Central American dictator.

Beneath the stone portals of the old Spanish fortress of San José, in the capital of the Republic of Guatemala, on a bright summer morning, the pitiful figure of Don Manuel Estrada Cabrera—who, like Diaz of Mexico and Castro of Venezuela, had ruled this Central American state for nearly twenty-three years with all the power of a dictator—passed, weary and broken, from the roar of a frenzied mob, the ominous flash of knives, and the wild cries of "*Muera Cabrera!*" into the silence of a fortress-prison. It was the final act of a long drama, which I had watched from behind the scenes. More like a stage version of some exciting romance than actual happenings in the sober twentieth century, these events came with the suddenness of a tropical storm and cast a lurid light on the capital of this little Central American state.

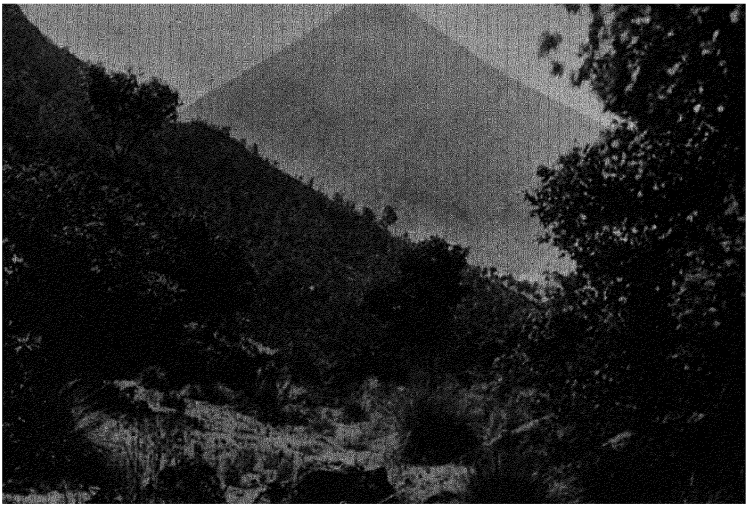
There was tragedy in this Cabrera family of



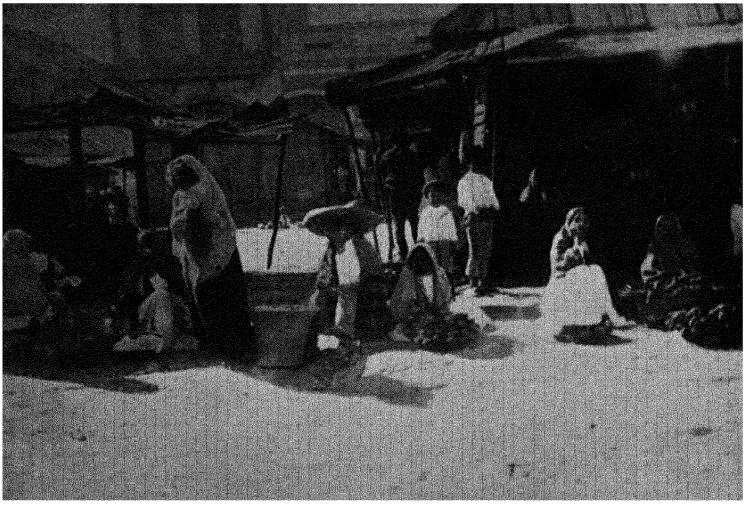
GENERAL VIEW OF GUATEMALA CITY



A VILLAGE SCENE IN GUATEMALA



SANTA MARIA VOLCANO—GUATEMALA



MARKET SCENE GUATEMALA CITY

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modern Spanish adventurers in the New World. Although Don Manuel is credited with a large number of children, it was the three sons of his first marriage who occupied the greater part of his domestic attention. These were Diego, the elder, who died of consumption when his father was at the zenith of his power; Joachim, the light-hearted Dulwich College boy, with a love of the boulevards of London, New York, Paris and Berlin, and who returned to the paternal palace in 1914, aided in the defence of that citadel, and was afterwards for some time a prisoner with his father in the old Castillo of San José; and Francisco, the youngest, who shot himself in the palace of Guatemala City shortly after his return from a European tour.

Nor were these tragic events confined to Cabrera's own family. When General Reyna Barrios, the former President, was assassinated he left two children, a boy and a girl. For reasons which are unknown, Cabrera became godfather to these two little orphans. The girl, Reina Barrios, was sent for education to a convent at Mill Hill, London, where the writer found her, quite happy with the nuns and other children, in 1908, but she, too, died in a Californian sanatorium. Of the son of this ill-fated President it is believed that for some unexplained reason he took a prominent part in the downfall of Cabrera.

The long-feared earthquake came to Guatemala City in 1917, and shattered what had hitherto been the finest and most modern town in the whole of Central America. For two years the people waited for an impoverished treasury to rebuild the city of which they had once been so proud, and the failure was a contributory cause for the breaking of the

storm. The city in its palmy days formed a striking contrast to the earth-shaken, shell-torn town in the throes of revolt, in which the mere mention of the ex-President's name was sufficient to cause dark eyes to flash, hands to move suspiciously towards pocket or belt, and hissing lips to encompass but three words, "*Muera el tirano!*"

The apathy and restlessness which followed Nature's catastrophe in 1917 turned to violence and passion when the *Cabreraist* guns again demolished much that had been rebuilt by infinite labour. Idle crowds filled the Plaza and the broad *Paseo Reforma*, fiery denunciations filled the columns of a newly freed Press, street-corner orators attacked everything and everybody with a truly Latin-American flow of meaningless phrases and vituperation, and most curious of all were the "political talks" of eminent prelates. The native and mestizo population seethed with excitement and passion: from every point came the cries of "*Libertad!*" "*Viva Herrera!*" "*El Buen Piñol!*" Only the market, which still offers the wares of a hundred years ago, with its swarthy sellers and buyers, its bright-hued *guipiles* (bodices), *enaguas* (skirts), and girdles embroidered with tribal symbols, its gorgeous fruit from the gardens passed on the way from the Pacific Coast, its small chickens, bags of turtles' eggs, and the waxy flowers of the *Spanish dagger* — which are not used for ornamentation but are eaten as a relish—remained outwardly calm, undisturbed by the tumult of the revolt.

The bombardment was over, and the Dictator, whose every word had meant life or death for twenty-three years, was a prisoner, although not yet confined

in the old fortress facing the new *Paseo Reforma.* Flags were flying in celebration of the new régime, which the Press was already beginning to denounce because of dissatisfied office seekers. Bands played martial music to rejoicing thousands, who had been promised impossible improvements in the conditions of life and labour, but ruin was all around. In the plaza the newcomer was shown the spots where spies of the old Dictator had been torn to pieces by the infuriated populace, and in the shop windows were photographs of ghastly armless and legless objects lying on the stones.

The city was still there, gleaming white, red and green in the intense Central American sunlight, but all was chaos. Tongues no longer held still by fear were making up for lost time. Hitherto servile pens and presses vied with each other in acclaiming or denouncing those who but a few days before had given them liberty—of this latter commodity there was such a superabundance that life became correspondingly unsafe. And this is how it all happened, according to one well-informed public official :

" When public opinion was crystallised by the work of the Press in helping people to realise more vividly what they could all see for themselves, a prominent member of the clergy, Bishop Piñol, began a series of talks on social and political topics, which further stirred up the people. Then began the campaign of the Unionist Party, so-called not so much because it raised the banner of the Central American Union as because it signified the union of all Guatemalans for the purpose of changing the system of government by purely pacific and legal methods, as had been suggested by the Bishop in his talks."

The above is a careful translation of the actual words of a prominent member of the new government, and is an admirable description of cause and effect from the Latin-American point of view. It discloses little, and reduces a revolution to the dimensions of a Sunday School treat. Here, as elsewhere in the modern world, the speeches of ardent reformers need careful analysis for the common sense they contain before their tone is allowed to convey an indefinable something to the minds of listeners which may afterwards warp sound judgment.

So far all the real information obtained was the *modus operandi* which, in this case, effected the overthrow of another Central American despot. It was the co-operation of a political party with the Press and clergy—the three platforms of publicity. Among the few remaining adherents of the old Dictator, difficult to unearth because of the overflowing prisons, the ghastly photographs of lynched *Cabreraists*, and the hatred of the old régime of oppression by the still frenzied mob, the lament concerned the soldiers, the final arbitrament of force. Don Manuel sent to Sololà for 5,000 men, but "*Carramba!* when these *pirros* arrived they went over to the Unionists. The Generals, the Army, the Clergy, all turned to bite the hand which had fed them."

Searching in more placid waters, the tangled skein was slowly unravelled. Cabrera's sun had been sinking for years. So great had been the hatred engendered by his iron rule that for five long years he had never dared to leave the grounds of La Palma, his palace on the outskirts of the capital, for fear of assassination. When serious political opponents arose they soon found themselves behind prison bars.

Secret police, in the guise of lawless desperadoes, attacked recalcitrant reformers in the public streets, until it became so dangerous that few would walk on the side-paths during the hours of darkness for fear of being mistaken for some marked politician or journalist. They preferred the moonlit roadway to the deep shadows and dark alcoves.

Not so long ago a plot against the life of the Dictator was discovered abroad, and in due course the warning came to Guatemala City that the assassins would land in the country from a certain steamer. On the arrival of that vessel off the coast, a small boat containing armed men went out to meet her. The wanted passengers were transferred to the boat which then put back towards the shore. It is asserted that the same number of persons landed as had left the harbour an hour or so earlier. Subsequently the informant received a letter thanking him for the warning, and adding: "The persons mentioned in your dispatch did not land." They have not yet landed, doubtless the sharks prevented it! Here, however, diplomatic complications arose, for the steamer from which the passengers had been forcibly taken when several miles off the coast was flying the flag of a great foreign nation.

The iron rule, so necessary in the early days of Cabrera's dictatorship, when the whole country was in chaos, became, in the twenty-three years of its existence, the very negation of all activity. Exactly how far the Clerical Party—strong in every Spanish-American state—was responsible does not appear certain, but judging from Bishop Piñol's fiery utterances, it certainly played no small part in the general upheaval. The newspapers, irritated by the severe

censorship, and under the pretext of pleasing the Cabrera Government, criticised, with that wonderful flow of invective of which the Latin-American journalist is capable, the monetary system (paper *v.* gold), and the despotic methods employed by the Provincial Governors towards the planters, which was another contributory cause of this revolt. Goaded by the spectacle of the capital still lying in partial ruins although the earthquake had occurred nearly two years before, the people eventually turned, like those of Rome when the flames of the great incendiary spread to the Tiber Quarter. The National Assembly voiced the popular demand for the resignation of the President.

Cabrera replied to this clamour by entrenching himself in the palace and grounds of La Palma, strategically situated so as to command the capital. According to an eye-witness, the night which brought the news of the National Assembly's decision was a busy one in the fortified camp amid the palms. Don Manuel, gentle only when pleased, gave way to terrible anger. He called to his aid the native regiments, which he had taken special care in organising and drilling. Mounted messengers were sent to the general commanding at Sololà, a small town high up in the sierra, overlooking the famous Lake of Atitlan, about a hundred miles from the capital, asking him to hasten his march on the city.

On the following day came word from the National Assembly that if the old Dictator would surrender, his life and property, as well as those of his family, would be guaranteed. Cabrera preferred, however, to rely upon the troops marching down from the mountains under a trusted general, and upon the French-trained

batteries of artillery standing ready among the trees of La Palma. But treachery was alive in this camp on the Guatemalan plateau. A member of the Assembly who had been Cabrera's most intimate friend from childhood, one who enjoyed his complete confidence, having been his private secretary and a Cabinet Minister, was to play the Judas.

In a moment of intense anger, Cabrera had struck this man, who now repaid the blow by carrying the information of the President's intention to bombard the capital at daybreak to the National Assembly. In this building, which faces the Plaza de Armas, consternation reigned supreme. For some time the uproar was so great that nothing effective could be done. Then the news of the forthcoming bombardment passed from lip to lip, out through the doorway of the Chamber into the crowded Plaza.

Over fifty per cent. of the city's population—estimated at about 120,000—are natives, and at least another thirty per cent. are mestizos, Chinese, or of other mixed races. Among these hot-blooded thousands were many fiery orators, for the art of declamation is an inheritance of both Spaniard and half-caste. Wild tumult ensued, and throughout the night the cry of "*Muera Cabrera!*" was heard on every hand. Arms of many kinds appeared in the hands of frenzied citizens of a dozen shades of colouring. The moonlight played on a sea of faces, knives and revolvers, raised amid roars of "*Viva la Union!*" "*Viva la Libertad!*" "*Muera el Dictador!*"

There were, however, cool heads in the Legislative Palace who recognised that the new régime must not begin in a welter of blood if the recognition and respect of the great powers of Europe and North America

were to be arraigned on their side. If Cabrera shelled the capital, then he must do so as a revolutionary and not as the accepted ruler of the state. With the idea of encompassing this, and acting under the Constitution, the Assembly unanimously removed him from office and appointed a Provisional Government.

When the news of these happenings within the city reached the entrenched camp of the *Cabreraists* at La Palma, the order was given for the batteries to commence the bombardment. The sun had barely tinged the summits of the distant line of volcanoes with golden fire before the shriek of shells, the white puffs of shrapnel, and the lurid flash of high explosives struck terror into the hearts of the mixed population, unversed in the mysteries and chances of modern war. Bursting shells struck the adobe and stucco buildings, shattering what the earthquake of two years before had left to shelter the inhabitants from the hot sun and cool night winds. Clouds of dust arose from the market, the plaza, the fine *Avenida Reforma*, and other parts of the city. The batteries did their work well, for soon the cries of wounded men, women and children arose from the thickly populated poorer quarters, and over a hundred maimed and dead lay about the ill-paved streets and beneath the debris.

The generals commanding the national army, and even the troops, hastened from different parts of the republic to place themselves under the orders of the new government. Emissaries were sent out to intercept the native regiments marching down from the mountains of Sololâ, and a cordon was thrown round the *Cabreraist* camp. To save the capital from further destruction and bloodshed an armistice was

arranged, and the National Assembly again offered life and freedom to Cabrera if he would surrender. The old Dictator, still believing himself strong enough to crush all opposition and relying upon the Sololâ garrison supporting the self-styled "Liberal Party," demanded, as a preliminary to all negotiations, the annulment of the decree appointing the Provisional Government, and the adoption in its place of an act appointing the nominee he had compelled the Assembly to elect a year before as "First Designate" (Vice-President) to the place which he would vacate of supreme power in the republic.

This was refused, and a feeble fire was again directed upon the city; but the net around Cabrera and his few chosen troops entrenched at La Palma was drawn tighter. The Sololâ garrison arrived, but many of them went over to the new government. When several *Cabreraist* spies were discovered in the city, whether innocent or guilty of the charge, they were literally torn to pieces in the streets.

The sun of the old Dictator was sinking rapidly below the horizon, and in a few hours desertions among his trained native troops rendered him almost helpless within a mile or two of the city he had bombarded and in reach of the frenzied horde of Indians and half-breeds. It was at this crucial moment that the Provisional Government, acting in conjunction with the Foreign Diplomatic Corps, accepted the surrender of the ex-President, who for over twenty-two years had been omnipotent. One of the *Cabreraist* leaders succeeded in escaping in the uniform of a United States marine, and Cabrera himself was only saved from the enraged mob by walking between the British and United States

Ministers. The surrender took place in the presence of the principal members of the Provisional Government and the Foreign Diplomatic and Consular Corps. Both the ex-President and his son Joachim were promised their lives when removed from La Palma to a place of temporary confinement. Later they were taken to the solid old fortress of San José, because it was feared that the incensed populace of the capital might attempt to lynch them.

Broken by long years of superhuman exertions, Don Manuel Estrada Cabrera died some months later in the old stronghold of the colonial days which has seen so many tragedies.

CHAPTER V

SUN PICTURES IN THE CARIBBEAN

PALMS were astir in the cooling trades when I stepped ashore one warm January morning at Bridgetown, Barbados. Coming out of the northern winter I had watched the wind-tormented billows of the North Atlantic, grey-green and flecked with foam, become docile under the caress of a southern sun, and finally subside into the china-blue seas of the Caribbean, dappled with the silver sheen of flying fish. Each day the puckered, splashing waves had beckoned forward, until at last they dropped exhausted between the encircling arms of Carlisle Bay.

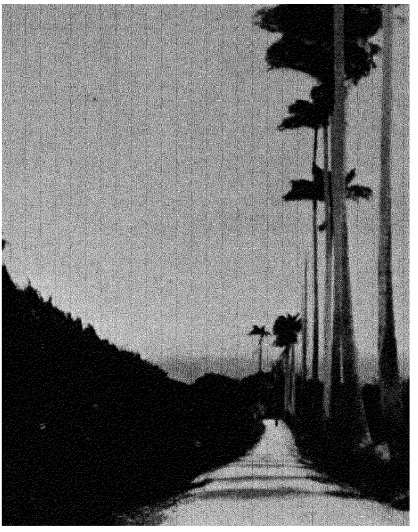
Jutting out into the coral shallows was the small pier of the Aquatic Club, and my explorations of the island began from this convenient place. It is the bright spot of Bridgetown, with a bathing beach, a dance pavilion, and a restaurant famous throughout the Caribbean Sea for its flying fish suppers served to moonlight dancers and bathers.

The whole of Bridgetown, the capital, is not in keeping, however, with this modern club. Quaint little Trafalgar Square, from which glimpses are obtained of a harbour filled with the white-sailed inter-island schooners, so typical of West Indian life, leads into "Main Street," which is reminiscent of bygone times. Wooden bungalow-like houses and

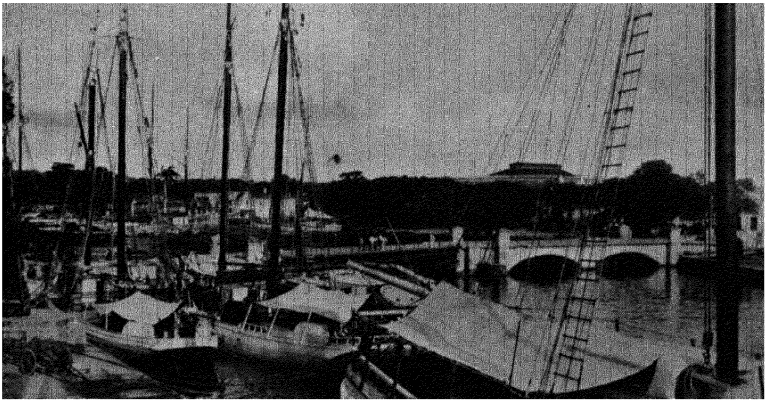
shops flank this thoroughfare with its trams, horse-cabs, motors and dust.

Barbados, with about 160,000 inhabitants, of whom only one-fifth are white, is, next to Java, the most thickly populated land in the world. It has over a thousand people to every square mile of its coral surface, but is, nevertheless, one of the most healthy of the West Indian islands, being swept by fresh sea breezes, and it is almost free of the malaria-breeding mosquito. Carlisle Bay affords one of the prettiest views in Barbados—which is, perhaps, the least picturesque of these islands. Circling round me, as I stand on the elevated terrace of the little pier, is the bay of clear blue water, with the vivid green of the foliage-covered shores broken only by the fringe of gleaming white beach and the red roofs of the houses. Following the curve of the bay I can see Hastings, the little seaside residential town with its baby promenade, its bathing beach and its hotel. Then there is Worthing and Oistin's Town.

The pride of the capital is its Saturday evening market, which certainly presents a curious and picturesque sight. The stalls, presided over by shining black negresses, are laden with a great variety of fruit, fish and flowers, which vie in colours with the brightly clad proprietors. The negroes, who form the bulk of the population, are good-tempered, and quarrels of a serious nature seldom occur. They live either in very small wooden houses or in quite nice-looking bungalows, according to their wages and habits. These little dwellings have windows but no glass, and every night, regardless of the temperature, they are closed by shutters to keep out ghosts. Even the bedrooms in the hotels are often without window-



COUNTRY ROAD—BARBADOS



THE HARBOUR, BRIDGETOWN—BARBADOS

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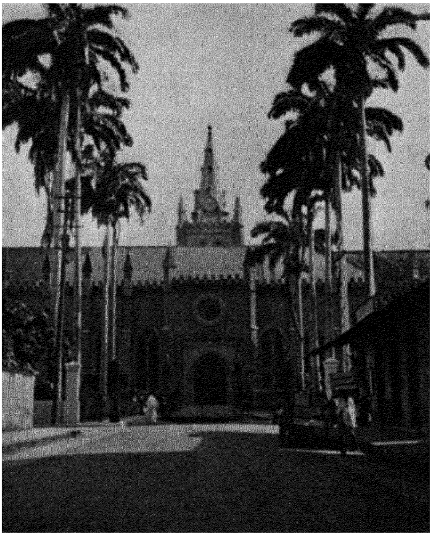


CATHEDRAL—PORT-OF-SPAIN

SCARBOROUGH—TOBAGO

panes, and I believe this largely accounts for the damage done by hurricanes in these islands. The wind comes through the shutters and lifts the roof from its supports.

Driving out into the country I was surprised to find the interior quite hilly in places, although the whole island is composed of coral. When newly cut, this substance is almost as white as plaster or a block of mortar, but when exposed to the weather it rapidly turns greyish-black. Apart from the green cabbage palms, some of the finest specimens of which can be seen in the grounds of the old Codrington College, which was burned down some years ago, there are the great patches of crimson and mauve bougainvillæa, the scarlet poinsettias, and the coconut palms.

Away towards the most northerly point of the island there is the Animal Flower Cave, containing numerous specimens of curious anemone, looking much like a miniature palm, which closes up on being touched. These supersensitive creations of Nature would, I believe, make a useful field for collective scientific study. On the Burmo-Chinese frontier, great patches of "sensitive-plant," which performed the same coy evolution on being caressed, were scattered about the floor of the jungle. In the Bermuda Government Aquarium the energetic curator introduced me to a fish, normally a luminous green, but which blushes an orange-red on meeting strangers; and similar phenomena—so rare in human life these sophisticated days—have been brought to my notice in various parts of the world.

While fishing in Carlisle Bay the water was so clear that I could see many fathoms below the keel

of the boat, to where, amid the branching coral, queer porcupine-fish, looking like inflated hedgehogs, giant skate and crayfish, as well as many others of curious shape and colour, were swimming or crawling about. On another occasion I was bathing in these waters, near the Aquatic Club, and was just landing in the shallows after a long swim when my foot rested on something very sharp. At first I thought it was the coral, but investigation showed that I had stood on a sea-egg, which resembles a large greenish-white thistle. Not only are these disagreeable things a curious form of marine life, but they are also very poisonous. However, much tramping about had thickened the soles of my feet, and I avoided what usually results in a most painful sore.

In another direction stands Lord's Castle. It is said to have been built by one Sam Lord, a wrecker, whose method must have since inspired many a despondent novelist in search of a suitable plot. On dark and tempestuous nights this man would fasten a lantern to the horns of an ox and then walk the animal up and down the beach inside the dangerous coral reef. The poor mariner, mistaking this for the anchor light of a ship, would come closer to the land, only to be dashed to pieces upon the coral reef at a spot where the tide washed ashore much of the cargo precipitated into the sea. Mr Sam Lord would collect the wreckage at leisure; and so well did this interesting but somewhat callous business pay, that shortly he made enough money upon which to retire and build himself this castle, finally dying like a good Christian upon his bed.

Everywhere in the West Indies I came across reminders of the glorious age of sea adventure, both

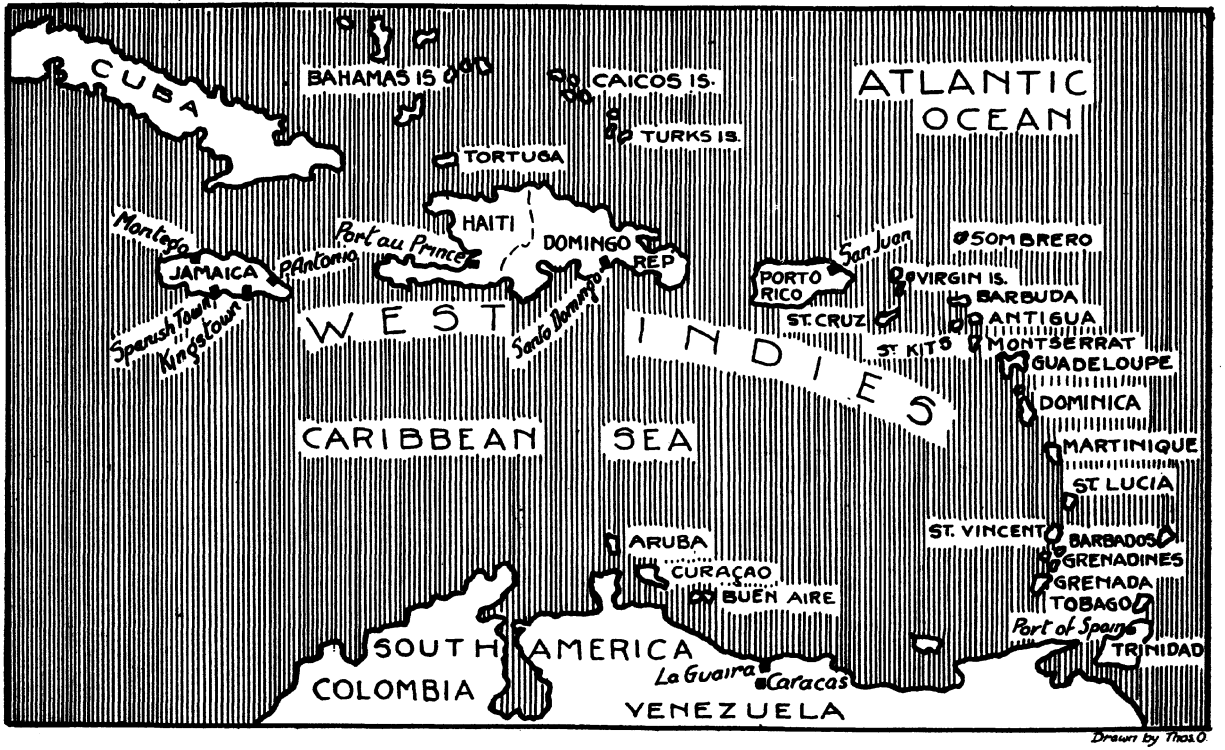
legitimate and illegitimate. At Hole Town a quantity of treasure is supposed to have been buried, but, so far as I could ascertain, nothing has yet been discovered. It is questionable whether the digging operations are ever conducted at a sufficient depth during these hunts for the hoards of the buccaneers. I have been aboard several modern treasure-ships and discussed the difficulties with the optimistic explorers. Invariably there has been a lack of knowledge as to where on a given island the search should commence, and also a complete mental void on the important subject of the corresponding rise in the surface of the earth over a long period of years. Archæologists understand these essentials and meet with a remarkable measure of success, but only in one case have I found the same appreciation of the difficulties placed by Nature in the way of treasure-hunters. This was during a night voyage down the Thames with Captain Gardiner, of the S.S. *Alfred Nobel*, when outward bound to search for Kruger's lost gold in the sunken *Dorothea* off the coast of Zululand. This expedition proved unsuccessful because of the immense overlay of sand which covered the wreck.

Trinidad is, with the exception of Jamaica, the largest island of the British West Indies, and is fifty-five miles long and forty miles broad. The capital is Port-of-Spain, and behind this interesting city rises a beautiful range of forest-covered mountains 1,900 feet in height. Apart from the tropical fertility which is everywhere in evidence there are the exquisite little humming birds, and, most interesting of all, the Pitch Lake. It was to this place that I drove first

on my way across the island from the quay at La Brea, where the sea is full of repulsive-looking jelly-fish and the air is alive with pelicans.

Here the pitch oozes out of the ground apparently as fast as it is hacked up in solid blocks, and carted away by a chain of buckets direct to the quay or to the big steam cauldrons in which it is melted for refining purposes. Although I found that I could stand on the surface of this lake of pitch where the top crust had not been removed, it did not take long before my feet began first to stick and then to sink slowly where the hard upper strata had been cut away in slabs. This lake is said to have subsided only ten inches in half a century, although for a considerable time over 200,000 tons of pitch have been removed each year by the exploiting company. In the cauldrons superheated steam is made to pass through the pitch, purifying it and melting it sufficiently to cause it to flow in a black stream into the barrels, ready for export. Over 110 acres in extent, this lake is seamed by fissures of water and is surrounded by beautiful tropical gardens, recreation grounds and bungalows.

While motoring across this island I also inspected the oil-fields, and could not help contrasting the clean appearance hereabouts with the awful black-brown, oil-smeared buildings of the Roumanian fields. There is, however, a great difference in the form in which the oil is obtained. The wells around Ploesti, in distant Transylvania, yield black sand, from which the petroleum is extracted by a refining process, whereas, in Trinidad, it comes up in springs of almost pure crude oil, and is often piped direct to tank steamers or refined but little before it begins its



WEST INDIES

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world travels. These West Indian fields certainly had a prosperous and busy appearance when I passed through them on my way to Port-of-Spain.

Bordering this fifty miles of good road there are sugar plantations and banana groves, with trees varying from twelve to twenty-two feet high, having leaves often two feet broad. It seems curious that these immense trees should be merely annuals. They never seed, but grow up each year from the roots. Then come coffee estates, cocoa plantations and, everywhere, big blue convolvulus, scarlet begonias, yellow flowering trees shielding the growing cocoa, and palms of many varieties.

Away across the sapphire sea I could distinguish the island of Tobago, considered by many people to be the real home of Robinson Crusoe, although from personal explorations I am convinced that Defoe's castaway was Alexander Selkirk, and that the isle of romance was Más a Tierra, in the Juan Fernandez group. Then came Port-of-Spain, one of the largest towns in the West Indies.

The capital of Trinidad possesses broad streets and some good stores. It has a population of about 62,000 and is a modern town in every way. In the centre there is the wide and green Queen's Park Savannah, and two of its principal buildings are Trinity Cathedral and the Royal College.

Although the population of Trinidad is mixed, the majority are of African descent, and there are among its 400,000 inhabitants about 130,000 immigrants from India. " The Spanish settlers left behind them in the names of places and families evidence of their former dominance, and during the French Revolution Trinidad became the home of many refugees from

the French West Indies. About the middle of last century there was considerable immigration from the Portuguese island of Madeira. Americans and Canadians, who have gone to the colony on business, have found it pleasant and profitable to settle there, and from Britain, particularly North Britain, many have gone out to Trinidad and Tobago to seek a livelihood and found a home there. Asia has sent, in addition to a large number of East Indians, considerable numbers of Chinese and Syrians. Of the Caribs who formed the population at the time of its discovery there only remains a tradition. Occasionally a canoe load of the natives of the Orinoco delta pays a visit to the south coast to do a little bartering in the neighbouring villages and in San Fernando."

The origin of the name "Trinidad" is curious. The island was discovered by Columbus on July 31st, 1498, at which time it was peopled by Caribs who called it Iëre, or the "Land of the Humming-Bird." In fulfilment of a vow, however, Columbus christened it *La Trinidad*, or "The Trinity." The fancied similarity between the shape of the neighbouring little island of Tobago and that of the pipe smoked by the natives is believed to have led to it being called "Tobago," the early pioneers in these seas confusing the name of the pipe with that of its contents—tobacco.

The two most picturesque places near Port-of-Spain are the Botanical Gardens, with Government House, and the coolie village of St James, which reminded me of similar scenes in Ceylon. In the little village of Tortuga, through which I passed on my way across the island, there is a Black Virgin,

symbolic of the fact that Christianity embraces all the human family. At San Fernando, the second largest town in the island, I learned that Angostura bitters is the only manufactured article exclusively produced in Trinidad which is known by its trade name throughout the world.

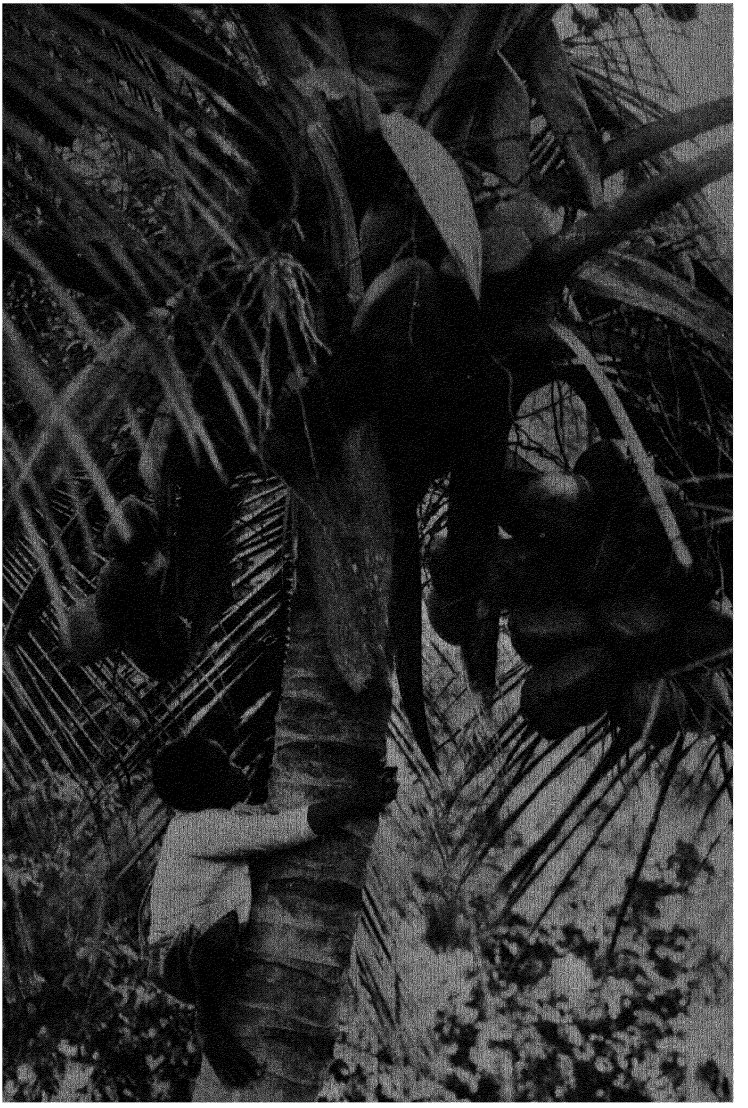
CHAPTER VI

LOFTY CARACAS AND QUAINT CURAÇAO

IT was a calm tropical night when the steamer in which I had taken passage entered the Dragon's Mouth, or narrow sea passage dividing the island of Trinidad from the South American mainland. The mountains tower up to a considerable height on both sides of this little strait, which, in the days of sailing ships, was considered very dangerous. When the moon rose, it tinged the placid waters and the lofty precipices with golden light. There was a suggestion in the scene that a Norwegian fjord had been transported to within ten degrees of the Equator.

Early the following morning I stepped ashore at La Guaira and surveyed the steep mountain slope supporting the little yellow, green, pink and blue houses, perched in the most inaccessible positions. One can do little more than *step ashore* in this Venezuelan port, unless the coast road is taken to the seaside resort of Macuto, which is more open to the cooling Caribbean breezes, and is provided with gardens, esplanade and sea baths.

In La Guaira there is but one thing to do, and that is to get out of it by means of the wonderful little railway, or motor road, which climbs over the La Silla Cordillera to Caracas, the Venezuelan capital.



COCO-NUTS

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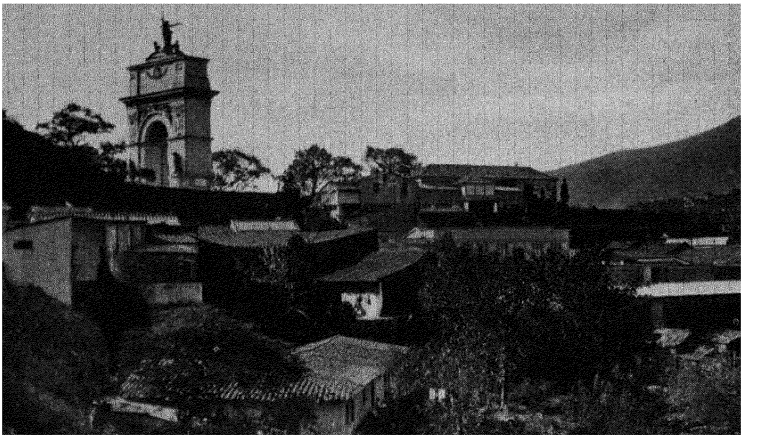

CARACAS
Capital of Venezuela.

ON THE ROAD TO CARACAS

I chose the former route and climbed in an open rail-car up twenty-three miles of zigzags surrounded by the bare, reddish-brown mountain slopes, which reflected the solar heat to such an extent that my pocket thermometer was soon registering ninety-four degrees Fahrenheit. From various points along the steep track, beautiful views were obtained over the deep sapphire of the Caribbean. When the summit of the cordillera had been reached the road descended about 1,000 feet into Caracas, where the air was delightfully cool and refreshing after the damp heat of the coast.

The capital of Venezuela enjoys a long succession of warm summer days and cool nights. Its elevation of 3,000 feet above sea-level is just sufficient to temper the tropical heat of the sun. How seldom it is that altitude, latitude, and other equally as important factors, such as proximity to a sea coast, can be found in combination with a capital city? Although the Plaza Bolivar forms the centre, with its fine statue of the Liberator, the most popular place is the Bull Ring, which seems to attract the entire population during a *fiesta*.

This was the city that for years defied the buccaneers, but eventually succumbed, through treachery, to Amyas Preston and his adventurers, who crossed the cordillera by a neglected Indian trail and captured the town by surprise. In 1812 it was almost entirely destroyed by an earthquake, which is said to have killed 15,000 people in a few minutes. In this way the old colonial city vanished, and there are now few buildings more than a century old.

Although modern and largely of stucco, there is something attractive about Caracas which charms in a quiet, inoffensive way. Somehow there came a

desire to linger in this city of Miranda and Bolivar. The streets are laid out in parallel lines and numbered, not named. The atmosphere of antiquity which they seem to possess is probably due to the open *patios*, iron-barred windows, and single-storey white buildings. A splendid view of this red-tiled city, plentifully intermingled with palms and water-courses, may be obtained from the summit of Calvario Hill, rising to a height of 200 feet. The slopes are laid out as a public garden, approached by broad carriage drives, and stone steps lead to the summit. The favourite evening promenade is, however, the *Paraiso*, a public garden of palms and flowers, in which a military band plays under the tropical moon on the banks of the Guaira River.

Caracas was the birthplace of Miranda and Bolivar, and relics of the latter are numerous. In the Plaza Bolivar stands the fine statue of the Liberator; near by is the Bolivar Museum, with weapons, letters, uniforms, a jewelled snuff-box presented to the national hero by George IV., a gold and diamond sword presented by the goldsmiths of Lima, Peru, the baptismal font, and a host of other relics of the central figure of South American history. A short distance from the Plaza is situated the Pantheon, wherein those of Venezuela who have deserved well of their country find a last resting-place. It is surrounded by the tombs of famous figures in the stormy history of the country, and in the midst of them all is the casket containing the ashes of what was once Simon Bolivar, who was born in this city in 1783, and lived to liberate from the yoke of Spain not only his own country but also Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru.

In the *Salon Eleptico*, of the Executive Palace, there are portraits of these famous Venezuelans in life, and among them is the Irishman O'Leary. The roof of this apartment is decorated with a painting of the Battle of Carabobo, and near by are pictures of other episodes in the War of Independence, and such famous events as the Congress of Angostura.

One is literally " here to-day and gone to-morrow " throughout the lands and islands of the Caribbean Sea. Distances are often short, and there is but little temptation to linger very long in any one spot. Ten hours after sailing from La Guaira I stood in the narrow but colourful and gay streets of Willemstad, capital of the Dutch island of Curaçao, which has a population of about 45,000.

The greater part of this island is arid waste, due very largely to its coral formation. Cactus seems to be the one plant which flourishes exceedingly. The original Curaçao *liqueur* is still made in the island from a peculiar variety of orange, but the peel of this fruit is largely exported to Holland and France, where an improved quality of the famous liquor is also made.

Willemstad is a miniature Amsterdam in a tropical setting, and is peopled largely by negroes. Its gabled houses, all colour-washed and spotlessly clean, have the appearance of models. But Curaçao is not so innocent as one might suppose from its simple appearance. It is a free port, and a lucrative business is carried on with Venezuela, where a high tariff prevails. Queer stories of smuggling enterprise are as numerous as the adventurous little sailing schooners one sees in the fine coral-encompassed Shottegat Lagoon. Here,

in the old days, pirates waited under cover to swoop down upon the treasure-ships of Spain.

I found walking in the busy little commercial streets somewhat difficult, as they are very narrow and have footpaths seldom more than two feet broad. The roads were blocked with hooting motor cars. Almost every shop possesses a gramophone, and uses it as a means of attracting attention. Owing to the effect of the sun's rays on the coral, the use of white for exterior decoration is prohibited, and the buildings are all colour-washed in pastel shades of yellow, fawn, pink, blue and green, with dark-red tiled roofs. This medley of colours gives to Willemstad and its residential suburbs of Pietermaai and Scharloo a most picturesque appearance.

There is an excellent little bathing beach, but as I had seen two large sharks, with their wicked-looking dorsal fins cleaving the water alongside the ship while approaching close to the island, I decided the assurances given that these monsters of iniquity never approach that part of the shore were insufficient. I frankly doubted the shark's ability to distinguish one place from another, and left Curaçao in an unwashed condition, because fresh water seemed impossible to obtain.

CHAPTER VII

JAMAICA—ISLE OF SEA ROMANCE

JAMAICA, the largest island of the British West Indies, impressed me as being also the most beautiful. It rises from the sea on all sides in a gradually ascending slope, which culminates in the central range known as the Blue Mountains. The valleys between these hills are filled with tropical vegetation and fruits. The climate has been universally proclaimed as "inimitable"—which is Froude's word for it.

Those who knew old Kingston and Port Royal before its destruction by a terrible earthquake in 1907 would certainly not recognise the city of to-day, which has been laid out on modern lines with broad streets and fine avenues. Modern Kingston, the capital of the island, is clean, well-drained, lighted by electricity, crossed by tramways and well supplied with fine hotels and shops.

In an island like Jamaica, where every square mile of ground can produce scenes which would defy reproduction at the hands of the most skilful artist, it is invidious to draw comparisons between one scene of beauty and another. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that Jamaica has a long history. It was discovered by Columbus in 1494 and remained a Spanish possession for the next 160 years, being

captured by the British in the days of Cromwell. The original inhabitants, the Arawak Indians, died out while the island was under Spanish dominion owing to the most appalling cruelty and oppression. The negroes one now sees on every white, sunlit road and in every vivid green plantation, are the descendants of those first brought from West Africa by the Spaniards to work on the sugar plantations—an industry also introduced by the world conquerors of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

In Kingston I spent many interesting hours in the market-places among the queer fruits, vegetables and fish, watching the good-tempered negresses and negroes negotiating with East Indians, Chinese and Syrians. The population of Kingston is about 68,000, of whom the majority are black. In these markets I saw dagger-work fans, native embroidered doyleys, fern albums, coolie bangles, and *Jipijapa*, or Panama hats. The streets of Kingston are laid out chess-board fashion, and the principal thoroughfares are King Street and Harbour Street, where the best shops are to be found. Experience has taught me the impossibility of exploring a town from a comfortable seat in a motor car; so much of interest is missed — one cannot be continually popping in and out of a vehicle in a busy thoroughfare. For this reason I invariably ramble slowly round on foot, stopping where fancy dictates. The Kingston sun can be very hot, however, even in the cool months of January and February, so, after an hour or two in the gay little streets and markets, I used to turn into the centrally situated Myrtle Bank Hotel, lounge beneath the shade of its verandas or tree-filled gardens, and finally bathe in the tepid waters of its open-air pool.

One day I drove to Spanish Town, the old capital of the island and the *St Jago de la Vega* of the Spaniards. Apart from the beautiful scenery along the road, and Tom Cringle's "Cotton Tree," with its immense buttressed roots, there is much of interest in the old town on the banks of the Rio Cobre. The square was laid out in 1560, and here there is one of those grotesque statues inspired by ancient Rome. Admiral Lord Rodney is depicted in Roman attire with a truncheon in his right hand, standing in a kind of Sibyl's Temple, against a background of palms and distant vivid blue mountains. The incongruity of Rodney in a *toga* struck me as forcibly as the statue of Napoleon and his brothers in similar attire which I had seen in the little square of Ajaccio.

Not far away is the "Eagle House," which was the residence of the Earl of Inchiquin when Governor of Jamaica in the early days of the British occupation, and it is still possible to trace the foundations of the old Spanish White Cross Church and convent in the street named after it. In the cathedral, which was formerly the Spanish Church of St Peter, there are many beautiful tablets and brasses dating back to 1660.

In a junk shop in Spanish Town I discovered one of the old Jamaica pennies of the early eighteenth century. It was made of white metal. There was also one of the smallest silver coins ever minted, the "quattic," or halfpenny. The buxom negress who kept the little shop—it was difficult to understand how it managed to support her—seeing that I was a likely customer, showed me also a Barbados penny of 1782. It was engraved on one side with a pineapple and on the other with the head of a negro slave and the words, "I serve."

On the way to the Blue Mountains I stopped to inspect a small sugar estate. The mill was still being worked in primitive fashion by two oxen walking round in a continuous circle. The juice of the canes, after being squeezed out, is boiled and evaporated. It is then allowed to remain until crystallisation begins, and the sugar is separated from the molasses, which is dispatched to factories for the manufacture of the famous Jamaica rum and treacle.

Passing through vast banana plantations, which are rendered beautiful by the immense green leaves and the meeting of these overhead, forming dim aisles between sturdy trunks, the car climbed steadily into the bluest of blue mountains. The road was bordered by maidenhair ferns, palms, and shadowy forests, in which brilliant little humming-birds darted across sunlit clearings like pin-points of coloured light. In these glades there were orchids, while the gardens of the hill bungalows were bright with scarlet hibiscus, golden begonias and blue "morning glory." Far below I could see glittering white Kingston, with its sapphire harbour almost encompassed by misty green shores.

During my rambles in Jamaica I visited Port Antonio, from which the Blue Mountain Peak could be seen towering 7,388 feet into what appeared, by contrast, a greenish-aquamarine sky. This beautiful little bay, with its large hotel, has become the fashionable bathing resort for American visitors to Jamaica. From its harbour enormous quantities of bananas are shipped to Europe and South America. At Moore Town, in the mountains near by, there is a settlement of Maroons, or the descendants of Spanish slaves who escaped into the hills centuries ago. In subsequent

ROYAL PALMS
The Glory of the West Indies.

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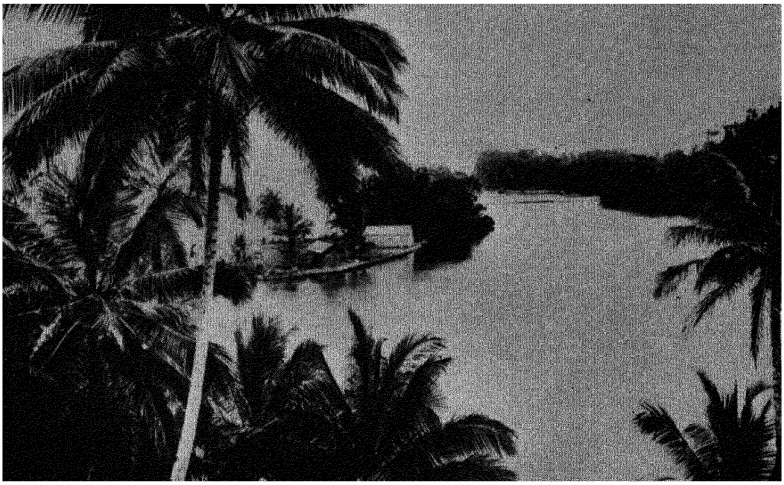

THE BLUE HOLE JAMAICA

KINGSTON—JAMAICA

years these people gave considerable trouble to the British authorities, but on being given tracts of land they settled down as the allies of their former enemies. An interesting, if somewhat lazy, pastime hereabouts is rafting on the Rio Grande.

It was to the "Great House" at Muirton that Tom Cringle was taken on his arrival in the island from Cuba, when suffering from yellow fever. The sea-coast town of Manchiönreal was the scene of much that is recorded in the famous "Log," which gives a unique picture of West Indian life in the early nineteenth century. Back once again in Kingston I crossed the harbour by government launch to old Port Royal, which was destroyed by an earthquake in 1692. Very little is now left of this pirates' nest, at one time "the wickedest spot on earth." There are, however, a few sordid streets and narrow lanes still surrounding Fort Charles. A marble tablet in the wall of the courtyard of this historic old pile bears the inscription: "In this place dwelt Horatio Nelson. Ye who tread his footprints remember his glory." Near by there is an elevated platform which is called "Nelson's Quarter Deck." It was from this look-out that he waited for the French fleet in 1799.

CHAPTER VIII

CUBAN DAYS AND WAYS

HAVANA, the capital of Cuba, is an agreeable mixture of the old and the new. Here is what Columbus wrote to Ferdinand and Isabel after his discovery of this large island on October 28th, 1492: "This land, O Most Serene Majesties, is so wonderfully beautiful that it surpasses all others in charm, even as the light of day surpasses that of night. I have often said to my subordinates that however much I might exert myself to give your Majesties a complete account of it, my tongue could not speak the whole truth, nor could my pen write it. . . ." Allowing for the extravagant language used in the Middle Ages and for the necessity of this early explorer to enthuse his royal masters, there can be no doubt that every one who sees Cuba becomes a convert to its charms. The whole island is beautiful and interesting, but Havana, its capital, is without equal in these southern seas of the Americas.

Landing near the San José wharves, I was soon in the midst of old Havana, with its architectural reminders of bygone times. This ancient part of the city contains not only the plazas and the *castillos* but also the narrow and tortuous streets typical of the more primitive of Spanish towns. It is in these dock-side thoroughfares, with their pungent odours of

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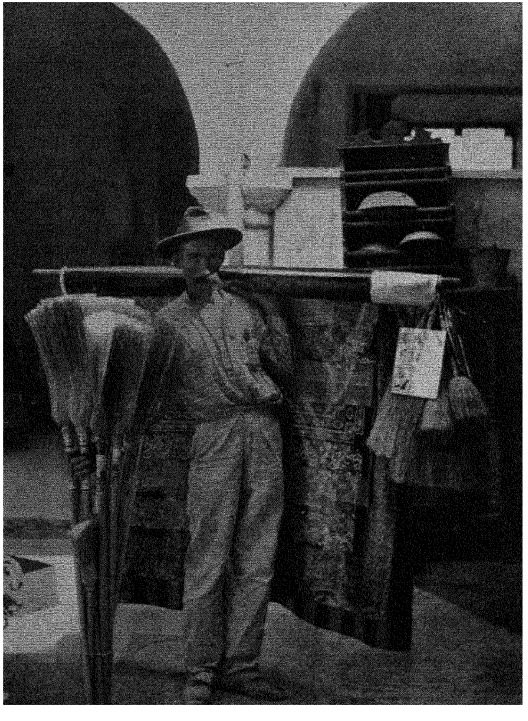
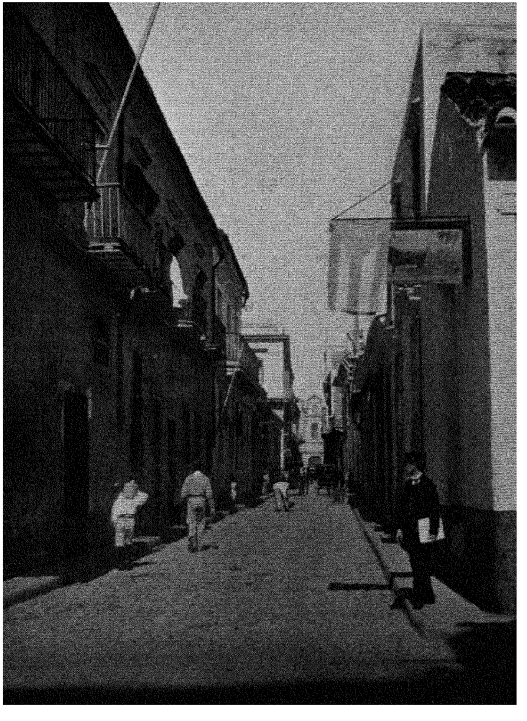


A CUBAN BROOM AND RUG SELLER



A NARROW STREET IN OLD HAVANA

PICKING TOBACCO IN CUBA

A FUNERAL HEARSE IN OLD HAVANA

tropical fruits, provisions and coffee, that one sees something of the maritime activity of this important seaport.

Havana has many interesting forts, built by the early inhabitants to defend the young city from the buccaneers. The oldest of these is La Fuerza, built in 1545. For many years it was the residence of the Captain-General of Cuba. Its mellow walls are enclosed by a good moat, and it possesses a beautiful old tower. Standing on a headland at the entrance to the harbour is the Morro Castle, a sixteenth-century fortification with a stormy history. It possesses, among other things, twelve old bronze cannon, called locally " The Twelve Apostles."

At the time of the English invasion, in 1762, the fleet, commanded by Admiral Sir George Pocock, began its attack on this fort and on the Cabaña battery. These succumbed to the bitter onslaught after a heroic resistance. The English banner was then planted above the Morro, and in the following month the defenders of the city surrendered. On the following day the Government was transferred to the Duke of Albemarle.

La Punta, also called " San Salvador de la Punta," is a tiny *castillo* at the harbour entrance, on the same side as the city, opposite the Morro. At the end of each fort one may still see the cannon embedded in the native rock of the coast to serve as moorings for the huge iron chain which, in ancient times, was strung across the harbour entrance every evening to prevent the passage of ships.

Around Havana there are many old forts, all much alike. So anxious were the early inhabitants to defend their homes and their growing wealth from

the almost continuous depredations of the pirates of the Caribbean Sea that they subscribed towards the cost of these defences—said to have amounted to over three million pesos—an amount equal to that provided by the Government. La Punta Castle, facing the fine Prado Avenue, is perhaps the most interesting of these old military relics of the colonial days.

The Cathedral of Havana is an excellent example of the architectural style adopted in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by the Catholic Missions sent by Spain to the Indies. The interior is, however, disappointing. Near the principal altar there is a niche in the wall where the remains of Columbus rested during the building of the mausoleum which was transferred to Spain, together with the body of the discoverer of America, when Cuba seceded from the motherland.

In old Havana the plazas, the out-of-the-way corners and streets still preserve the aspect which the city presented in bygone times. It is not difficult to imagine these narrow streets with their *quitrines* and *volantas* driven by liveried negro slaves. Within the walls of the Convent of Santa Clara I discovered many historical curiosities belonging to the old city, such as the first public fountain, a complete house of the early colonial period, called "La Casa del Marino," and an entire old-world street. In the Plaza de Armas there is the historic palace of the Captains-General, now the City Hall. The Cristobal Colon Cemetery contains the most extraordinary, and at the same time some of the most beautiful, monuments of their kind that I have ever seen.

From a passive city, essentially Spanish-Colonial

in character, reclining indolently on the shore of an historic sea, Havana has grown in the few years since its emancipation into a populous modern town of cosmopolitan character. It is now called the "Paris of the Caribbean," although I fail entirely to see any point of resemblance between it and the city on the banks of the Seine. Broad streets and avenues flanked by massive buildings, often little short of skyscrapers, form a striking contrast with the old greystone houses bowed with age, which alone remain to tell the tale of the past. The two great centres of the fashionable life of the city are the Malecôn, or seaside drive, and the Prado, or central avenue, with its massive marble promenade, its lines of trees and its broad drives. The golden-domed Capitol, a replica of the Legislature of the United States, is its show building, and the illuminated city at night is a sight not to be missed.

Of all the curious things to be seen in Havana there is nothing to beat the trap-door of the Foundling Asylum, where unwanted babies can be placed in a huge letter-box and left to the care of the nuns. Then there is the Tropical Garden, to which every taxi-driver in Havana is anxious to take newcomers, because, beautiful as this little garden is, the real attractions are the free glasses of light beer offered to all comers by the enterprising brewery who own it. The advertisement secured in this way is remarkable. Then there are the factories where a man is employed by the workpeople to read aloud from a newspaper or a novel while they are rolling and forming the famous cigars.

When I had grown tired of both old and new Havana, I sought and found the sophisticated sections

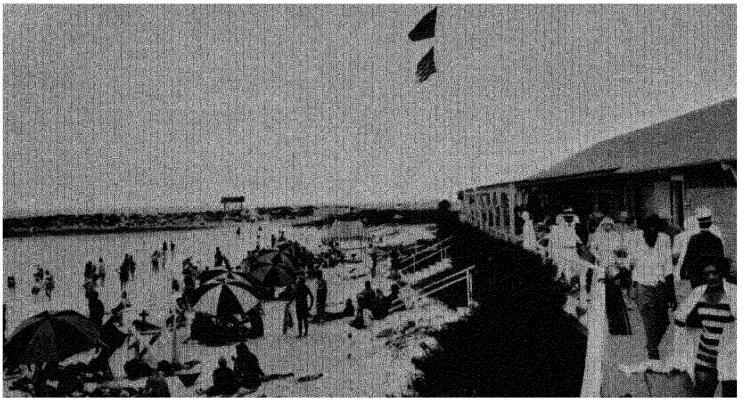
of this great playground of wealthy Americans—and one needs to be able to spell the word with a capital "W" during a long stay in this tropical Monte Carlo. In the roof-garden of the Sevilla-Biltmore Hotel I witnessed a remarkably good variety show between midnight and two in the morning, while late diners were obtaining their "evening meal." In the Cabaret Montmarte there was the usual *risqué* performance interspersed with dancing and refreshments, but after a drive of several miles, one glorious tropical night of bright stars, along a succession of avenues bordered by artistic houses, I reached the Casino. In its restaurant and among its gaming-tables the gowns and the atmosphere were strangely reminiscent of the old Riviera, although the faces round the ivory ball were, it seemed, a little less blasé, not quite so much those of the *habitué* as of the casual and *ingénue*.

After bathing at Mariänao, with its beautiful Lido-like beach, and dancing the hours away at Almendores, it came as a shock to wander into Chinatown, with its 35,000 Celestials, nearly all of whom are men. Here, one hot night, I witnessed a 3,000-years-old drama in the theatre of Chung War, with its pungent odours, its weird music, and its array of expressionless yellow faces, sitting silent, motionless, gazing at the curious, unintelligible pantomime taking place in the green half-light beloved of drama in old China—the New World certainly has its problems.

Down in San Isidro Street I mixed—or tried my best to do so—with the sailors of all nationalities who had come ashore from the ships in harbour to spend the hot night listening to the blaring music, drinking the sickliest and most intoxicating of drinks, and

CAPITOL AND NATIONAL THEATRE—HAVANA

Facing page 54.



PARADISE BEACH—NASSAU

SPONGE FISHING FLEET—NASSAU

dancing with the dusky Cuban and creole girls, the flash of whose eyes proclaimed them dangerous quarry. It was in a café hereabouts that I learned of the drama that had been taking place outside. Six hundred Mexican students and revolutionists were being rounded up by the police, and would be on their way back to their native land by sunrise ! This time it was successful, but a few months later shots chipped the stone and the stucco in the same little street, and over a wide section of Havana, before order could be restored in this cosmopolitan pleasure-city of the old Spanish Main.

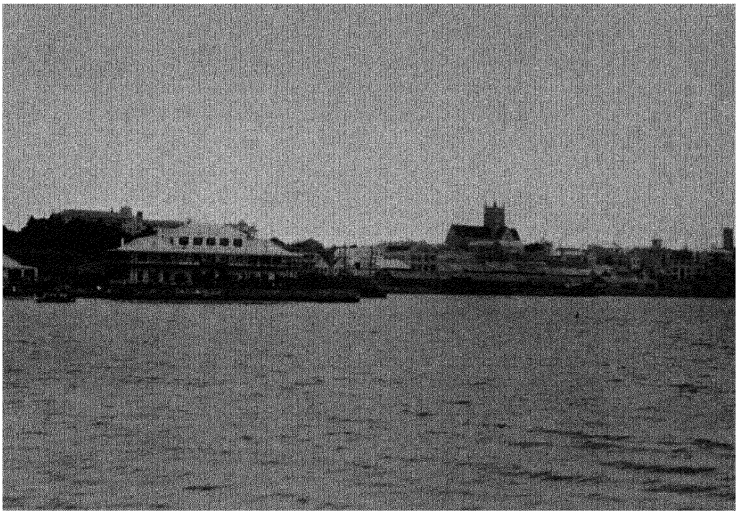
One of the exciting sports to be seen under ideal conditions in Havana is *jai-alai*—the Spanish ball game. Not only are special teams brought direct from Europe to compete against Cuban players, but in these contests of skill and agility betting plays a prominent part. There are two *frontones* of *jai-alai*, and both of them are crowded with spectators and backers during an international match. Race-courses, country clubs, and the most magnificent yacht club in the world add their quota to the gaiety of Havana. There were whispers afloat, however, that this sumptuous city was really living on borrowed capital ; but what does it matter, asks the light-hearted Cuban, so long as it can be borrowed ?

CHAPTER IX

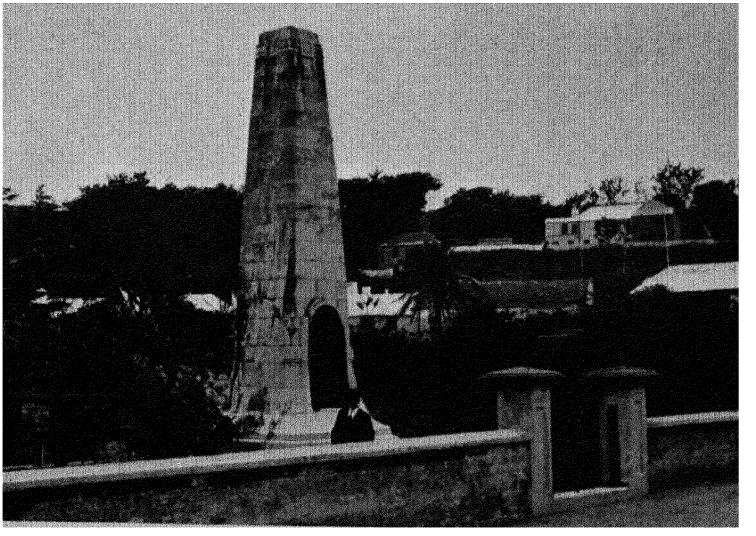
PIRATES, PALMS AND *BOOTLEGGERS*

PERHAPS it was the striking contrast as much as the south-sea-island-like atmosphere and surroundings which caused me to revel in the simple life and pleasures of Nassau, the quaint little capital and sponge-fishing centre of the Bahamas Islands. Curiously enough I had only just landed and was reclining on the terrace of the new hotel, when a paragraph in a Canadian newspaper—the *Montreal Star*—caught my attention. It focused the romance of these islands into a couple of paragraphs, and its view-point was the very spot upon which I was sitting.

" From an old fort to the most chic of the moderns tea-ing on the terrace of noted hostelries is a far cry. It encompasses . . . a broad sweep of history that can be reviewed as a pageant of sea-roving, empire-building and the development of a new civilisation in the West Indies. The paths that lead through lanes of rock and in stairs cut by stone chisels have echoed to the clash of arms and the rattle of musketry. Where the excited cry of the players on the tennis courts of a hotel may be heard, the swinging gibbet chains have rattled and the pirate necks have snapped. Around the spacious grounds of another hotel have skirmished Spaniard, American, Eleutherian and Briton, and the contest for new world power has been



HAMILTON—BERMUDA



ST GEORGE—BERMUDA

Facing page 56—4.

A COUNTRY ROAD, NASSAU—BAHAMAS ISLANDS

waged. Old ruins buried in bougainvillæa and hibiscus have felt the shock of cannon-ball, and on the tangled paths beyond Lake Killarney have trod dainty feet in eighteenth-century slippers keeping a tryst with some young middy of the fleet of Nelson's day."

Nassau, situated on the island of New Providence, is the centre of an archipelago comprising some 3,000 islets, which, for two and a half centuries, has been the seat of government of the ancient British colony of the Bahamas. Its sheltered harbour has been the scene of countless stirring adventures recalling the days of the buccaneers, the treasure-seekers, Spanish invaders, slavers, privateers, blockaders, and, more recently, the rum-runners, who, in turn, have played their part in its fascinating history.

On the site where these lines are being written, overlooking the entrance to the harbour, stood old Fort Nassau, where Blackbeard, the notorious pirate, watered his ships from the famous well, and the last of the pirates who had held full sway for so many years surrendered to Governor Woodes Rogers and received the royal pardon in 1718. Eight unrepentant ones were hanged there and then.

I shall not attempt to describe Nassau, for its charm, to be paradoxical, consists very largely of what it does not contain, rather than what it does. There are no fine buildings beyond its few large hotels, there are no huge stores, but many quaint little shops filled with polished turtle-shell, dried sea-fans of coral, pink pearls and sponges. There are no boulevards or noisy commercial thoroughfares, but just curious little Bay Street with its bungalows and shops. There are no terraces of stone buildings, no clanging tram-

ways, only a few streets of garden-encompassed little houses. I expected to find a crude seaside promenade, but discovered palm-fringed Paradise Beach away on Hog Island. Then I looked for the famous sea-gardens, feeling sure their beauty had been greatly exaggerated. Twenty minutes in a motor boat, with thick glass panels in the bottom, and I was able to gaze down at the most amazing of sea growths, delicate mauve fans of coral, sea-eggs of palest blue, angel-fish of vivid colouring, and forests of weed waving to a submarine breeze. Then a black, evil-looking creature, about six feet long, appeared, and all the fish of rainbow hues darted away. It was a small but lazy shark. These sea-gardens of New Providence came up to expectations as fully, and in their own way were as satisfying, as the first glimpse of an Eastern city at the magic hour of sunset.

Wandering into a shop on Bay Street I gazed at pink pearls from the " mud," which is the under-sea bank on which the sponges grow, at Havana cigars made in the island, at polished turtle-shells of glorious browns and greys beneath their shining surface, at little green and white hand-woven sisal bags and carved coconut shells ; then I was prepared for many birthdays at home.

One cannot be serious in *dolce far niente* Nassau, so I dived into " Dirty Dick's."

This island hostelry each year sees many famous men. A millionaire from the Middle West of America was sitting at the next table and an English peer was by my side, but " Rum Row " is not so far away, and I wondered. In fact it is difficult to prevent one's mind dwelling lovingly on the thought that outside the maze of islands only a hundred miles of calm sea

divides a land of plenty from a region of drought. When one has spent years hunting submarines in a hundred-foot-long torpedo boat amid the icy gales of sub-arctic seas, it did not seem a very difficult or arduous proposition.

However, I turned my attention to *sponges* of the more healthy variety, and learned quite a lot. Capital to a considerable amount is invested in these fisheries, an industry which employs a whole fleet of schooners and sloops and about 7,000 men. Skill and knowledge on the part of the crews are required, not only in the management of the vessels, but in hooking the sponges off the beds and cleaning them for the market. There is a certain measure of government control over this industry. The sponges are sold in parcels to the highest bidder at the Sponge Exchange at Nassau, the crew receiving a share of the proceeds. The Mud is the principal sponge-field. During the months of February, June and November the whole sponging fleet is to be found there. It is a body of water about 200 miles long and sixty-four miles broad, situate to the west of Andros Island. Sponge grows in the mud from which the field takes its name; this is a peculiar white marl. The sponge is dislodged from the sea-bed by means of hooks attached to staves, which are lowered in the water until they catch the root of the sponge. As its hold on the mud is very slight, it is easily extracted. The mud produces about four-fifths of the entire sponge crop. Other important sponge-fields are Abaco Bight, Acklins Bight and Exuma Cays. Many Greek merchants are engaged in the sponge trade, and are heavy buyers of sponge. The principal market is in Europe.

A talk with the officials of the energetic Develop-

ment Board turned my attention to the "outer" islands, as they are called, where conditions are indeed primitive. "You will be in contact with the life of the early settlers, little changed from the early days of the Carolinas and Virginia. Respect their simplicities and gain their confidence, and you may be rewarded with the sight of such cut glass, early cabinet work and bric-a-brac as came with 'Grand-grandpappy' from the old colonies. Hand-tooled ironwork can still be secured from craftsmen in quaint forges, where they are almost musically made beautiful. The old churches passing into decay still have the wooden locks on their cedar doors, and in the cemeteries you will see fences of hand-tooled scroll work that go back one hundred years and still stand up sturdily to the elements.

"Where to-day you see a village, in the past there was a thriving seaport, and the keels of the clipper freighters have come to rest by the quayside and in the roads. An occasional old inhabitant can tell you of confederate privateers and running fights at sea, of the *Beauregard* and *San Jacynth*, and even of the notice of the hanging of Blackbeard punched out on tinplate that was posted on the dock notice-board.

"You may stand where Columbus and the men of the *Santa Maria* stood to hear mass on San Salvador, hear the twang of the bow as a native archer shoots a great tarpon or barracuda, see herds of cattle and wild asses loose on a great prairie, or walk in paths made by the feet of slaves. Old plantation homes are in picturesque ruins, and the poinciana and hibiscus blossom colour them with romance."

Most of the islands have certain physical features in common. At first sight they appear as dark, low

surfaces rising out of an emerald sea ; seen nearer, the low coppice that is prevalent on many of them presents an olive tint in the brilliant sunshine that generally prevails, but assumes a vivid hue on close inspection. The sand of the Bahamas is famous for its purity and fineness, and everywhere throughout the colony there appear at intervals stretches of gleaming white beaches between the rugged cliffs of calcareous rock. There are no mountains and but few hills, but the wonderful combination produced by the brilliant colouring of the surrounding waters and the striking contrasts of the island shores supply an unrivalled substitute for mountain scenery on which the eye never tires of gazing. The islands are not well wooded, but there are on Abaco, Andros and Grand Bahama forests of pine trees, and the graceful coconut palms wave their feathery arms in fruitful groves all over the country.

These islands constitute a chain, beginning with Grand Bahama and the Biminis, both lying on the eastern edge of the Gulf Stream, some forty miles off the coast of Florida, and extending over about 760 miles in a south-easterly direction to Inagua, from which, on a clear day, the mountains at the eastern end of Cuba can be seen. The chief claim to historical renown lies in the fact that they were discovered by Columbus on his adventurous voyage to the New World, one of the islands, San Salvador, or Watling's, having been his first landfall on October 12th, 1492. Only twenty-five of these islands are as yet inhabited. White-sailed little schooners maintain communication between these lonely and isolated little lands of a southern sea.

CHAPTER X

IN THE CORAL ISLES OF THE BERMUDAS

VOYAGING north into the open Atlantic, where the waters are so clear that the top of each wave as it catches the light becomes a translucent green, I reached the coral islands of the Bermudas. There are two things in these little isles of a summer sea which, in these hectic days, struck me as peculiarly attractive. No motor cars are allowed, and, for all practical purposes, the towns of Hamilton and St George are entirely devoted to the pursuit of open-air pleasures both in winter and summer—if the seasons can be so described.

The climate is almost perfect, and is generally considered to be the most equable in the world. The temperature varies only from sixty-three degrees Fahrenheit in winter to seventy-eight degrees Fahrenheit in summer. The Gulf Stream, flowing between Bermuda and the mainland of the American continent, forms a barrier to the cold north winds of winter, while the mid-ocean location of these islands prevents excessive heat in summer, and, although when it rains it does so with complete abandon, there is no wet season. The atmosphere is so clear that every detail of the landscape seems to show with startling precision.

Fifteen of the 350 small islands and reefs which comprise this colony are inhabited. The largest is Great Bermuda, which is about fourteen miles long and a mile wide. They are all formed of limestone and coral, and stand up out of the sea like gleaming white and green jewels in a field of lapis lazuli. It is an interesting fact that Bermuda is the oldest self-governing colony in the British Empire, and that its Parliament ranks next to the one at Westminster in regard to age. Of the 30,000 inhabitants of the Bermudas about one-half are white, and can trace their ancestry to the earliest settlers.

It so happened that on the day of my arrival in the wide sound opposite Hamilton a north *boreal* blew so strongly that even these sheltered waters were lashed into fury, and the large tender wallowed in foam as it negotiated the narrow entrance to the harbour between the coral reefs. Landing on the little white quayside, I was met by negro *jarveys*, with light four-wheeled buggies—which are the only means of conveyance, although at least fifty per cent. of the local population use bicycles. I had not seen so many of these since Copenhagen days. The roads are excellent, and, as all the principal islands are joined by bridges, it is possible to make a complete tour of them by road almost without losing sight of the sapphire sea, which rolls in from the ocean with the crests of its waves a vivid emerald green. These combers break in snowy foam upon the white and pink coral. It is the ever-varying lights and shades of the sea and the coral lagoons of the Bermudas which add so much to the attractiveness of the sub-tropical vegetation and flowers.

Although the wind was blowing with almost

hurricane force, the sky was a clear greenish-blue and the wild sea sparkled in the sunlight. My first mishap occurred along the coast road during a drive to the Government Aquarium and the Crystal Caves. A fierce gust caught the buggy as it was crossing a spray-swept causeway of gleaming coral. The vehicle turned on its side and, while I sprawled in the road, the black driver disappeared entirely. Eventually he emerged from a shallow pond, and seemed far more concerned because of the loss of his hat than at the ducking he had received. The drive to the Crystal Caves was abandoned for that day.

Hamilton is a coral city. Its houses are either a greyish-white or else a decided pink in colour, and are built of coral blocks, often cut from the cliffside on which they rest. There are no rivers or springs of fresh water, and so the rainfall has to be carefully stored in tanks. Each house has its private cistern, and there are also big government reservoirs. This peculiarity has its effect on the architecture. Many of the houses have flat roofs, which are constructed with partly covered grooves, kept scrupulously clean for the collection of the precious fluid.

One of the things which impressed me most during a visit to these islands was the number of fine hotels. It is certainly not realised in either Europe or America the extent to which the Bermudas have developed their amenities in order to attract the world's pleasure-seekers. A rough calculation gives the number of rooms in the principal hotels at well over 3,000. This is, of course, in addition to the many beautiful villas, cottages, bungalows, and furnished apartments which can be rented during the different seasons. Certainly the Bermudian hotel need not apologise

for its existence. The principal establishments of this kind are the last word in artistic luxury, and compare quite favourably with the famous winter hostelries which crowd the shores of the Mediterranean.

With attractions of a less negative character Bermuda is also well to the fore. Horse-races on the Shelley Bay Track are held periodically during the winter season. There is the famous Mid-Ocean Club, with its eighteen-hole golf-course, as well as five others. Most of the large hotels maintain their own tennis courts, and international tournaments are frequent. Undoubtedly Bermuda's principal attractions are connected with the sea. The lure of its crystal waters and many beautiful little islands proves irresistible to yachtsmen. One may spend weeks exploring the harbours, bays and inlets, without exhausting the possibilities for new expeditions by motor or sailing boat. A classic contest of the sea, which takes place each year, is the New York to Bermuda Ocean Yacht Race.

With sparklingly clear waters, warmed by the Gulf Stream, it is but natural that the beaches of these islands should be extremely popular with bathers. They present an appearance difficult to describe without the use of superlatives. It required much self-restraint to prevent a childish exhibition of joy at the sight of miles of soft pink sand, consisting of coral ground into minute particles by the age-long action of the sea, which is intensely salt but entirely devoid of pollution, to watch parties of gaily dressed sun-bathers lying beneath vivid-hued umbrellas, to be able to choose either the calm water of a palm-fringed lagoon or the sparkling foam of an open beach in which to take one's morning bathe.

In more tropical islands there is always the danger of sharks, but Bermudian waters are entirely safe in spite of the queer fish one sees at the Government Aquarium. Here there is an amazing collection of angel-fish, which are said to be continuously quarrelling among themselves; groupers, who blush rosy-red when you gaze at them through the glass of the tank; parrot-fish, with mouths like their namesake of the air and of equally brilliant colouring; sea-horses, one of Nature's wonders; fish that actually grunt; others with both eyes on one side of the head; and, in fact, many forms of marine life from the shallow coral reefs of the Bermudian waters and also from the Sargasso Sea, that mysterious continent of weedy stagnation which floats in the Gulf Stream.

One of the most interesting excursions from Hamilton is out to the sea-gardens, which are viewed through glass-bottomed boats propelled slowly over the coral reefs. Many of these are covered with marine growth of gorgeous colouring. So clear is the water that only the ripples denote its presence as one gazes down at variegated anemones, star and finger coral, brain-stones, sea-fans of gorgeous purple, sea-eggs and puddings in a variety of shades, and other curious submarine flowers, many of them waving with the currents of the ocean like plants in a breeze. Darting in and out among them are fish of beautiful form and brilliant colouring. Several species catch the sun's rays on their scales and reflect them in rainbow fire.

The restful beauty and quiet of the Bermudas is undisturbed by factories, street cars, automobiles, motor cycles and itinerant vendors. The vegetables and fruits which these islands produce in large

quantities are smuggled away quietly from sheltered little bays. Bermuda at all seasons of the year is a veritable floral kingdom in which fields of stately Easter lilies, magnificent hedges of oleanders—lining the roadways for miles with their masses of pink, white and red blossom—the Chinese hibiscus and a profusion of roses and scarlet poinsettia lead in their respective seasons.

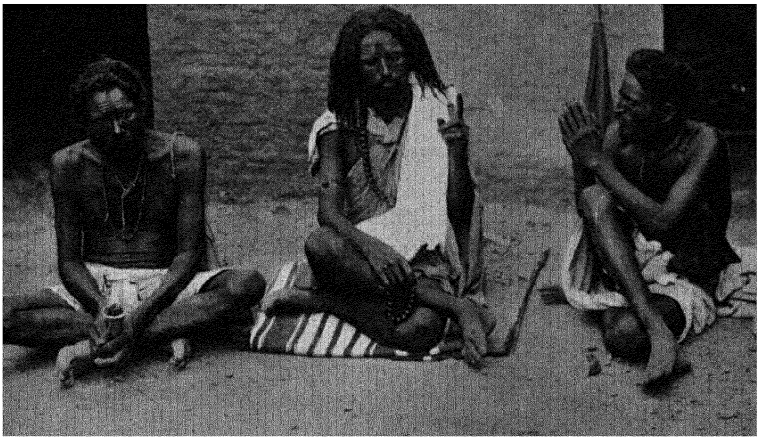
Then there are the Crystal Caves, where scintillating pendants, columns and draperies hang down from the arched roof which, when lighted by electricity, reflects a million pin-points of prismatic fire. The Bermudas are a gift of the ocean, and they still retain the purity and freshness of deep waters.

CHAPTER XI

THROUGH THE GATEWAY OF INDIA

MYSTERY—inviting speculation, but more often than not quite beyond hope of solution—has so often crossed my path that only a mild thrill of interest was occasioned by the stopping of the India-bound mail-boat in mid-ocean, so that her captain might investigate and report upon the whys and wherefores of a suddenly discovered dhow, deserted and heaving forlornly on the blue bosom of the swell, far out in the Arabian Sea.

To me it was just another mystery of the seven seas, without a known beginning or ending, but it lined the deck-rail of the stopped vessel with eager faces, and when the engines turned again it caused the smoke-room to be full of theories and stories, in which the old sea mystery of the *Marie Celeste* was once again discussed. The appearance of this derelict dhow, surrounded by the wicked-looking dorsal fins of many sharks, during the calm period of the north-east monsoon, with no signs of disorder or damage, was the only incident of this voyage across the glittering wastes of the North Indian Ocean. A few days later I stepped ashore beneath the great stone arch—the Gateway of India—and entered restless Bombay.



HOLY MAN AND DISCIPLES

STREET MUSICIANS—INDIA

Facing page 68—4.

STREET IN THE NATIVE CITY—BOMBAY

When writing about India most observers are tempted to quote figures in order to show its immense area and density of population, to use Miltonic phrases to portray its gorgeous colouring, and to seek in vain for words pithily to describe its multifarious races, creeds and castes. History and politics add to the complexities, with the inevitable result that it becomes impossible to read about, to understand, and to enjoy India; she must be laboriously studied. And what applies to India as a whole can be said of Bombay, which ranks, among British cities, second only to London in regard to population and area. It is typical of the racial, architectural and topographical chaos to which has been given the generic name of India.

Those who would enter more deeply the exacting and impersonal realms of modern history, politics and geographical detail can do so in the pages and pictures of another extensive survey—*The Encyclopædia of the British Empire.* Here I shall record the impressions made by the people and places during my journeys to and fro across the greatest of Asiatic Empires, in days of both sunshine and storm.

The collection of dingy bungalows which formed Bombay during the Portuguese dominion gave no indication of the brilliant future in store. This island, which for all practical purposes forms a part of the mainland, was transferred to the British Crown as a portion of the dowry of Princess Catherine of Portugal on her marriage with King Charles II., and was leased to the East India Company, in 1668, in exchange for an annual payment of £10. It then had a population of about 10,000. A striking con-

trast to the twenty-five square miles of bricks and stone, housing about one and a quarter million people, comprising the city of to-day.

Bewilderment. That is the only word I can think of which adequately describes one's first impressions of India. Within a stone's throw of the vast waterfront of Bombay, where great ships dot the gleaming sheet of the harbour which fades away into misty heat and the pearl-grey outlines of hills on the encircling promontories, I saw snake-charmers, child acrobats, half-naked and deformed beggars, bare-legged but yellow-and-blue uniformed police, and such a medley of Persians, Parsees, Afghans, Baluchees, Rajputs, fakirs, sepoys and white-coated *sahibs* that the broad roadway of the Apollo Bunder, with its motor cars and the great modern Taj Mahal Hotel, seemed the only things representative of the white man's world. Yet Bombay is a European city with all the amenities of a purely western metropolis. Its population, however, consists of about 840,000 Hindus, many of whom are rendered conspicuous either by the horizontal marks of the Sivaites or by the vertical *tilac* of the Vishnuvite sect. Then there are over 200,000 Mohammedans of different races, and a European civil population of just under 15,000.

Although representatives of most Asiatic races may be seen amid the Bombay crowd, there is one sect, the Parsees, which calls this city its own. Few of these disciples of Zoroaster are poor, for the tenets of their religion enjoin brotherly friendship and mutual assistance ; they may be termed the Jews of the East. In Bombay, the centre of this colony is on Malabar Hill, where many live luxuriously in fine villas ; but where they differ most from people of other religions

is not in their mode of life but in the disposition of their bodies after death. Unlike Hindus, they are not cremated, nor buried like Christians, but are carried up to the "Towers of Silence"—low ramparts of grey stone overlooking the Arabian Sea—and there laid on gratings as an offering to the birds of prey. Over this garden of death, vultures and other carrion birds are continually hovering, for beneath, lying cold and still on the gratings, are the latest dead—rich and poor, men, women and children of the Parsee faith.

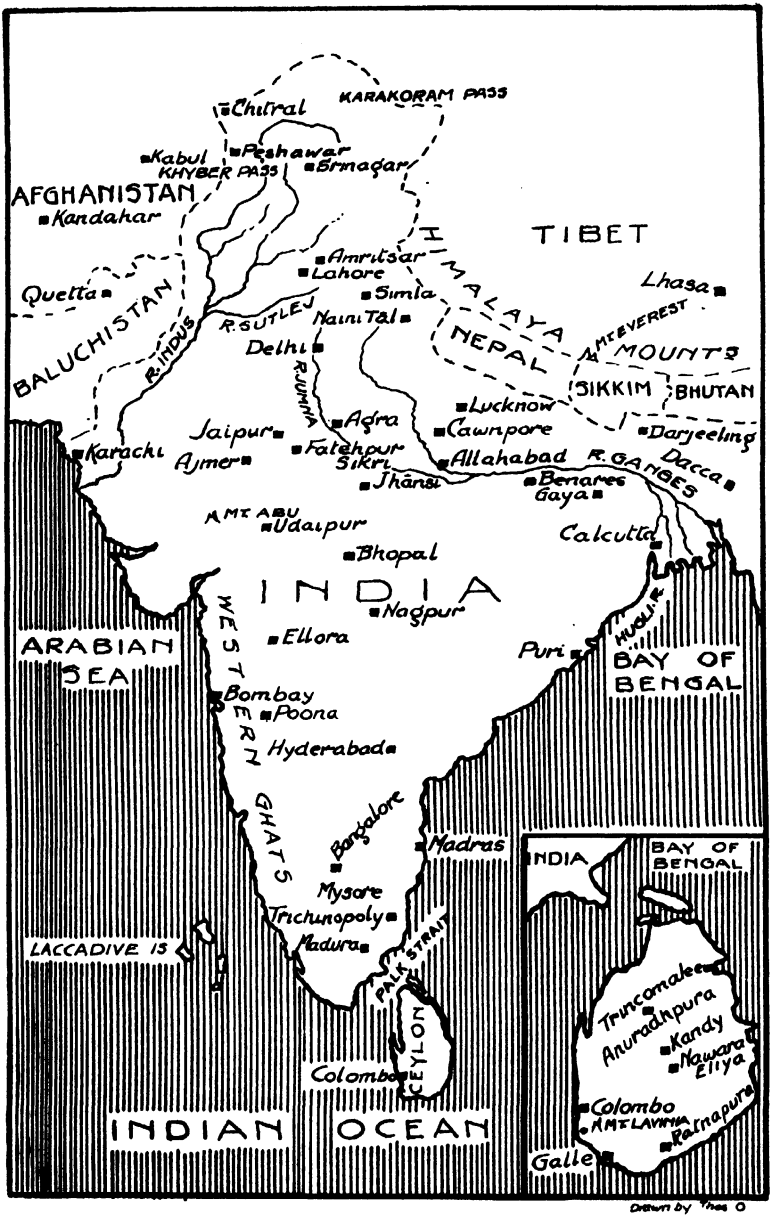
Although with the aid of a pass I was allowed to enter the gardens of the "Towers of Silence" and to inspect a model of the actual ramparts upon the summit of which the bodies are exposed to the vultures, no one who is not of the Parsee faith is permitted to witness this gruesome method of disposing of the dead. Great care is taken to insure hygienic conditions. The bones fall through the gratings into lime, and the gardens surrounding the towers would be extremely beautiful were it not for the immense number of repulsive-looking birds inhabiting the trees.

After visiting the grim towers I could not help looking curiously at the pale, amber-complexioned men of Persian descent with black mitres and coats, and the almost delicate-looking women with flowing veils of the prettiest shades, who compose this queer sect. The houses in which they live are often of artistic European design, standing in their own flower and tree-filled gardens, and entered from the roadway by broad carriage drives and ornamental iron gateways. The Parsees may be ostentatious in life and somewhat gruesome in death, but they are

certainly clever financiers and business men, and by no means inhospitable.

One of the principal commercial thoroughfares of Bombay is the Hornby Road, and it was while driving along this broad street, which is lined on both sides with modern shops, stores and offices, that I obtained my first view of an Indian riot. The traffic-filled road was blocked in a moment by thousands of shouting, white-robed figures, surging and running wildly in all directions. The mob was demonstrating and stone-throwing at one of the principal British stores. These were the stormy days of the boycott, when passions were easily roused. Within the brief space of five minutes this busy commercial artery was converted into a pandemonium. Youth and fanaticism were the predominant impressions conveyed by the wild-looking crowd.

A thin line of yellow and blue uniformed native foot police, reinforced by a number on horseback under a white-helmeted British officer, arrived on the scene, and the crowd surged back in disorder without attempting to do more than throw a few stones at the very slender yellow and blue line which had soon extended itself across Hornby Road and was advancing in the direction of that great open grassy space, the *maidan.* Having seen war on the grand scale, as well as red revolution in many countries, I could not help being impressed by the feeble resistance of the Indian mob and the good temper of the native police. Such riots as I witnessed in India could undoubtedly have been instantly suppressed by the determined action of one infantry company with machine-guns. The fault lies not with the police nor with the military when their services have



INDIA

Facing page 72—4.

been requisitioned, but in a weakness of administrative decision due to dangerous political interference with the routine work of maintaining order among 300 million Asiatics. The arrest of Ghandi took place within a few days of my arrival in India. Terrible riots and massacres were predicted by academically minded officials, but the timely parade of military force proved sufficient to hold the misled Hindu students and their dupes in check.

On another occasion the heat of the midday sun had scarcely left the shadeless *maidan* when, from the lawn of the Gymkhana Club, I witnessed a somewhat more fierce attack by a crowd of several thousands on the fine Bombay Municipal Building, one of the architectural sights of the modern city. Here, again, the thin blue and yellow line restored order within an hour without a single casualty. Up-country, however, the military were, at the same time, being called upon to reinforce the police in many centres simultaneously.

During my journeys across India I met a number of Canadian, American, Australian, German and French travellers, all more or less impartial observers. Every one of these expressed the opinion that India was not ready for democratic government, and that the presence of large forces of British troops, and of Government officials in all branches of the administration, appeared absolutely necessary, not only for the safety of European lives and property but more particularly for the welfare of the heterogeneous native races and creeds of India. It is not revolution or riot which is the real danger in this great empire, but feeble administration and the concomitant evil of assassination. Much harm has been done by the education of Indian youths in Western universities,

and their return to India discontented and with the erroneous idea that because of a certain measure of academic knowledge their economic and social future should be assured without undue effort.

This is a digression, however. To return to my wanderings in and around Bombay, I could not help being impressed by the great business and maritime activity. Whole quarters are devoted to textile mills and factories of all kinds. The average annual value of the oversea trade of this great Indian port amounts to about eighty-two millions sterling. In one way, however, Bombay is disappointing. There is really little beyond the ceaseless flood of Asiatic life, always colourful and bizarre, that is typical of India. I wandered along the broad Apollo Bunder when the sun was setting over the Arabian Sea, and saw only steamships at anchor in the gold-tinted waters and European buildings of many storeys with windows aflame. The building of the Secretariat, a Venetian-Gothic structure, the fine terminus of the Great Indian Peninsular Railway, which was erected at a cost of twenty-seven *lacs* of rupees, in the Italian-Gothic style, then the stately High Court, and the massive building of the Post and Telegraphs, all are purely European in both character and appearance.

Early one morning, however, I caught some remarkable glimpses of Indian life in the Crawford Market, and thus encouraged drove at evening into the maze of streets surrounding the Kelbadevi Road and Parel Road, which forms the centre of the Mohammedan quarter. In the Dhobi Talao I found many Parsees, and in this part of the great city of Bombay there are the seemingly endless lines of mosques, shrines and temples. It is a curious fact

that the more one sees of Eastern religions the firmer becomes the conviction that the Mohammedan faith is morally the cleanest of them all and the one most suited to Asiatic life and customs, but about this difficult and important subject I shall have more to say after my sojourn in China.

An hour's journey by launch across the harbour landed me one sweltering afternoon at the bottom of the quarter of a mile of steep path and stone steps leading up to the old Hindu cave-temples in Elephanta Isle. While toiling and perspiring up the 300 roughly hewn stone steps, I was continually reminded that India is a land of beggars. Even the smallest children called in the monotonous tones of the professional for *annas* or *pice*. Fortunately it takes relatively very little to make these brown-bodied, black-haired and bright-eyed children happy. When nearing the temples, however, snake-charmers and vendors of sticks, coloured beetles, and other grotesquely hideous objects became more numerous and persuasive.

At one spot sat an old white-bearded Hindu, calling continuously as he played with a repulsive-looking green reptile, "Snake kill mongoose; mongoose kill snake." Every now and again he opened a little wicker basket and allowed the mongoose held captive therein to escape. Then he lowered the head of the yard-long snake, which was coiled round his arms, just sufficient to allow its furry and almost rat-like enemy to seize it with its sharp teeth. Spectators immediately gathered round, and the cruel sport continued until five *rupees*—the value of the snake—had been collected. This essential of the performance completed, the unfortunate snake was dropped. Dust obscured much of the combat. Twisting coils, fangs,

fur and teeth became engaged in a life and death struggle. Natives looked on with their characteristic indifference to suffering. Some white tourists turned away after encouraging this cruel old hypocrite. Then, when the little audience had thinned down, the dust of combat quickly subsided and the half-dead snake was replaced in its basket to recover for the next performance.

The cave-temples of Elephanta consist of three huge excavations in the solid rock. A fourth has been discovered but has yet to be cleared of debris. Their beginning is unknown, although the native guide tells a story which would give them an age of about six or seven centuries. As a place of worship, they have long been discarded. The largest cavern is 133 feet by 130 feet, and is just over twenty feet high. The roof is supported by huge pillars with ornamental capitals. Facing the main entrance there is a gigantic three-headed bust, representing the Hindu triad—Siva, the destroyer; Vishnu, the preserver; and Brahma, the creator. In another cave there is a small sacrificial altar, a roughly hewn water-tank, and stone carvings so mutilated as to be almost unrecognisable. It was the welcome coolness of these cave-temples after the scorching heat on the slopes of the surrounding jungle-covered hills which appealed to me far more than the idolatrous carvings of bygone generations.

Before leaving Bombay I had an opportunity of exchanging views on a variety of burning questions with many officials, business men, and travellers of wide experience congregated in this cosmopolitan centre, which is really the commercial and maritime capital of India and one of the fever spots of the

country's politics. Among them was Sir Percival Phillips, who was watching events, during these troublous times, on behalf of one or more of the leading London journals. Boarding the Delhi express, I journeyed over the Western Ghats into Northern India.

CHAPTER XII

BY THE WATERS OF THE JUMNA

I AM in Agra, which, because of its association with the Moghul emperors, especially during that period when Mohammedan architecture in India reached its zenith, is one of the most romantic cities in all the wide plains of Hindustan. The night is clear and full of the diffused radiance of a crescent moon. After the long journey from Bombay the freshness of the cool season in the north of the peninsula has lured me forth to see the world's most famous building at the time of day when its beauty is said to be irresistible. One feels the strange lure of the Taj Mahal even while clinging to the back seat of a *tonga*, or native cart, the customary vehicle in which to undertake the romantic drive out from Agra to this monument of an emperor's devotion to the memory of his favourite wife.

The white road, the dark and shadowy peepul trees, vague figures muffled to their eyes in the cool night air, with here and there a watchman carrying a dim lantern, was all that I could see as the chariot raced me through the night. We stopped suddenly. Nothing would induce me to look up from the ground until Abdul, the guide, had directed my feet to the steps by the entrance gate. To see the Taj is one thing, but to see it *first* by moonlight from this point

is to enjoy a thrill which will recur whenever the words *Taj Mahal* are spoken.

Raising my eyes from the rough stone of the gateway there appeared a vision of gleaming silver in a frame of indigo, the combined masterpiece of man and Nature. Nowhere more than in India is the time of day so important to the full enjoyment of a scene either of beauty or interest. When Nature can be induced to provide the correct light and background, one sees not only the work of a bygone master but something which satisfies the human craving for both art and romance.

First I looked into the waters of the great pool stretching away from my feet. On its opalescent surface the Taj was mirrored darkly. Around this pool, which seemed to symbolise eternity, was a framework of white marble. Peace brooded over this garden of a tomb. Leading from the pool to the shadow-filled gateway of the Taj itself was an ornamental river between tall and ghostly cypress trees.

Then I gazed at the Royal Mausoleum, with its rounded marble dome half in the purple shadow and the remainder softly and seductively glimmering. There was perspective, model-like accuracy and colour as the eyes grew accustomed to the iridescent sparkle of the marble in the moonlight; the hitherto black trees and trim lawns showed faintly green; the four stately towers, the cupolas, the minarets, and the base, all exhibited the delicate tracery of their carvings, like pencilled lines on a silver base. It seemed then that the Taj Mahal was nothing but a dream—a vision conjured by some Eastern tale.

On the following day I returned to explore this amazing mausoleum of an emperor and an empress. The story is one of the most romantic connected with any building existing to-day, and I think that the tale is worth the telling. Many dynasties have ruled in India, but there is one in particular which has left its mark on the sands of time. In the spring of 1526 the Moghul conqueror, Babar, defeated the last of the Pathan kings on the battlefield of Panipat. It is recorded that the booty was great, and that both Delhi and Agra fell at once into the hands of the invader. When the victorious armies entered Agra they were presented with a peace offering of jewels, and among these was the famous diamond known as the *Koh-i-noor*, or Mountain of Light. After passing from one conqueror to another during succeeding centuries, this historic gem now forms part of the British Crown Jewels and can be seen in the Tower of London.

The Emperor Babar founded the Moghul Dynasty in India, but his son, Humayun, almost lost the newly acquired kingdom. Then came Akbar, the Great Moghul, who built the red sandstone Agra Fort, which appears to extend for miles along the banks of the Jumna. He was undoubtedly one of the most remarkable rulers of the sixteenth century, and no one can travel intelligently across the plains of India without acquiring some knowledge of the splendours of his court and reign. The next emperor was Jahangir, who owed both peace and prosperity to his wife, *Nur-Jahan*—Light of the World. He was followed by Shah Jehan, who reigned from 1628-58, and to whom India owes the Taj Mahal. With an empire well established and a full treasury, he spent prodigally in the erection of buildings—mostly

of marble—during that period when Mohammedan architecture in India attained its greatest magnificence.

At the death of Mumtaz Mahal, his beloved wife, Shah Jehan sought consolation in the erection of the most beautiful mausoleum in the world. "As my wife," said the emperor, "was the most beautiful and the most priceless among women, so shall her tomb be the most priceless and beautiful in the world." It is said that he ordered the eyes of its designer to be put out so that the unfortunate man could never construct its equal. Although Shah Jehan was laid to rest next to his "Chosen of the Palace," it was really his wish that he should be buried in a black marble *taj* which he intended to build on the opposite bank of the River Jumna. During the thirty years of his reign Shah Jehan impoverished the treasury to such an extent that his son Aurangzeb, fearing for his inheritance, made him a prisoner. He was confined in the Agra Fort, and it is said that he died in the Masammat Burj, often called the Jasmine Tower, looking towards the magnificent tomb of his beloved empress.

The Taj Mahal is supposed to have taken eighteen years to build and to have given continuous employment to 200,000 workmen. Although the cost is said to have been about three millions sterling, this mausoleum could not be built to-day for twenty times that figure. Passing through the beautiful garden of lotus pools, fountains, palms, banyans and feathery bamboos, in the fierce Indian sunlight, with the song of birds in my ears and the smell of roses and lemon flowers perfuming the air, I entered the central shrine of this marble poem of love and sorrow.

The gateway where I had stood on the previous

night to obtain my first glimpse of this beautiful tomb was no longer a black silhouette against a starry sky. It was a vast arch of red sandstone inlaid with white marble inscriptions from the Koran and surrounded by twenty-six white cupolas. Far ahead, beyond the avenue of Italian cypress trees, the tomb appeared ethereally white against the azure of the Indian sky. The walls are inlaid with precious stones, one of the characteristics of the style of the Moghuls after the death of Akbar, the great and virile warrior.

Entering the central shrine, where the subdued light penetrates only through a double set of marble lattice-work screens and reflects from jewelled ornamentation on the inner walls, I gazed upwards to the central dome, which is 243 feet in height. There are several chambers, and in the central one are the replicas of the tombs of Mumtaz Mahal and Shah Jehan. Curiously, the actual tombs of both emperor and empress are in an underground vault below. Even to this day the memory of the romantic couple still lives. I saw little bunches of fresh flowers lying on the costly marble—such is India.

By the muddy waters of the Jumna stands the vast red and white fort which was the real Agra of Akbar and his successors, especially of Shah Jehan, in the days of India's barbaric splendour. I shall not attempt a detailed description of this amazing walled royal city. Word pictures of stone structures seldom convey any idea of their architectural grandeur or beauty. The lofty walls are sixty-five feet high and more than a mile and a half in circumference. "They enclose," says the official booklet, "a maze of great courtyards, gateways, mosques, audience halls,

and the private apartments of the emperor. As you enter through an imposing gateway and up an inclined road you reach the Diwan-i-Am, the Hall of Public Audience, where officials and ambassadors were received and the emperor showed himself to his people and delivered justice. From here you pass to the Diwan-i-Khas, the Hall of Private Audience, where the emperor received his nobles. Near by is the small mosque used by the emperor. It is a little gem of white marble, and small beside the famous Pearl Mosque where the whole court worshipped. This mosque, with its great aisles 150 feet in length, formed by columns cut from blocks of marble, simply but exquisitely carved, entrances the eye.

" From about the time of Henry VII.'s accession to the throne of England till shortly after the death of Charles II., this palace-stronghold was the centre of an empire that stretched from Kabul to Dacca and from Ahmednagar to Kashmir, and though it stands to-day bereft of imperial pomp and glory, untenanted and unfurnished, yet the remarkable group of palaces, mosques, halls of state, baths, kiosques, balconies and terraces that are contained within its walls make it of unfailing interest. Magnificent, indeed, must have been the state which the Grand Moghul maintained. Deserted and still lie the vast courtyard and the solemn simple and dignified expanse of the great marble mosque, a revelation to those who only know ' white marble ' as the dank, lifeless substance seen in Western lands and have never realised the exquisite tints, from that of old lace or ivory to an almost golden glow, to which the Eastern sun ripens it. Empty are the cages of chiselled stone where lived the 5,000

wives of Akbar; unoccupied the balustrades and balconies from which the court gazed down upon the arena wherein wild animals were made to fight. But it needs little exercise of the imagination to conceive these halls and pavilions glowing with silken hangings and gorgeous tapestries, the courts and cloisters and vestibules glittering with resplendent retainers and all the clashing bravery of the court of an Eastern emperor who was undoubtedly the ablest and the most remarkable monarch of his age."

Life is cheap in India. It does not require long residence either on the vast plains of Hindustan or among the deodar and pines on the slopes of the Himalayas to realise this ages-old fact. The British *raj* may have increased its value by a hundred per cent. with the aid of peace, sanitation, hospitals, protection of the weak, famine relief and all the so-called amenities and advantages of civilisation, but the population has become so dense and the areas of new land for cultivation so restricted that life is not easy for the Indian masses. Beggars there are in hundreds wherever one wanders. Sitting one day on the terrace of the Cecil Hotel at Agra, I saw one of those little tragedies which will serve as an illustration of Indian life. Amid the lush green of the trees—for it was the cool season, and the gardens were continually being watered to prevent the vegetation from becoming scorched by the midday sun—a snake-charmer drew out of a dirty old sack two or three reptiles, from which, no doubt, the venom had been extracted. With the aid of a kind of flute he caused these snakes to sway rhythmically, like hideous flowers in a breeze. Then, when the performance had

ceased, he picked up the largest snake to put it in the bag. Suddenly the reptile seized his right arm in its strong jaws. A companion came to his rescue and tore the snake away, and the two beggars slunk away between the trees with their bag of reptiles, leaving a trail of blood on the sandy path. Their place, in full view of the hotel terrace, was immediately taken by two Pathans and their performing bears.

Like most Indian towns Agra has its cantonment, or European quarter, which is really a bungalow city of avenues and gardens. In this portion there is little to interest anyone except the resident, and more often than not I wandered off into the native town. Dust and teeming streets, with every one carrying on his trade, washing, cooking, gossiping, and working in full view of the passers-by; walking is impossible except, perhaps, after a heavy shower of rain, for the mud is preferable to the clouds of fine dust made by the cumbersome carts with their teams of patient, doe-eyed bullocks, and the shouting, moving hordes of people on the earth roads, between the lines of wooden or mud-brick huts and booths which form an Indian bazaar. In spite of dirt and squalor, however, one catches glimpses almost everywhere of interesting or picturesque scenes. It may be simply a polished brass jar being filled with water by a graceful, brown-skinned girl, the warm tints of whose arms and legs are accentuated in the bright sunlight by the vivid orange, purple or red of her *sari*.

There are no shops in the western sense of the word, only open booths without paint, fittings, counter, or anything else except, perhaps, a matting shade to protect the worker, sitting cross-legged, sewing yet another pair of bright red slippers to add to the rows

which form a blotch of colour against the drab background. He chats to passers-by while he works and seems indifferent to whether there are customers or not. He is lucky and he knows it, for the street is full of untouchable beggars in rags who are gazing about everywhere for refuse to eat. The crowd parts mysteriously. Even the cumbersome bullock-carts are drawn almost into the open shop-fronts. A naked and deformed creature, with wild-looking hair hanging down to his shoulders and a far-away stare in his eyes, totters forward, leaning on a tall stick. He is a holy man, and India affords him the right of way.

Water! Never have I seen such a prodigal use of this precious fluid in a country where drought is by no means unknown. Jars are filled to overflowing, and the precious fluid forms pools of mud in the inches of dust of the street; two men are performing their ablutions by the wayside, each is emptying a jar of water over the head of the other, and a little brown baby is sitting in the puddle between their legs.

The chaos of the streets is made worse by droves of sacred white cows who are allowed to wander without let or hindrance where they like, much in the manner of stray dogs at home. Mere children with gold rings through their ears and noses were pointed out to me as the wives of prominent merchants and tradesmen. Others are the concubines of the Hindu priests and are attached to the local temples.

Down by the river I found Agra at play, or rather that portion of the population the tenets of whose religion has at least taught them to make the intimate acquaintance of water daily. The river was low,

shallow and sluggish. Everywhere clothes were being pounded, children were playing, and towards sunset devout Hindus came down to the stream to perform their evening bathe in its holy waters. Climbing up on to the banks, I found holy men who looked as if they were sun-bathing, but in reality they were expounding religion and philosophy to little groups of followers. Some were healing the sick by suggestion. Farther away were the burning ghats, where the funeral pyres were still smouldering a dull red as the purple mist of evening began to creep slowly over the plains of India.

CHAPTER XIII

CITY OF THE GREAT MOGHUL

IMAGINE vast palaces, courts, turrets, chambers and gates—mostly of red sandstone—elevated above a broad and fertile plain on the only eminence within the whole range of vision. The burning sun of midday is streaming down on to the cracked earth and hot stonework. No sound breaks the stillness of this deserted city during the hours of daylight, but at night the weird cries of jackals echo through the silent courts and temples. With this picture in mind you will share my first impression of Fatehpur Sikri, the abandoned capital of the Great Moghul. I knew, however, as I toiled up the hill from the little railway station, some twenty-three miles from Agra, that once the immense Gate of Victory had been entered the centuries would slip away and I should be able to people again, with the gorgeous figures of the past, this marvellously preserved royal city where barbaric splendour reached its zenith about the time when Elizabethan merchant-adventurers were scouring the seas for treasure-ships and trade.

As with all the historic buildings of India, one must know something of their past in order to appreciate their massive beauty and be able to look down the corridor of time and see their pageantry. The story of Fatehpur Sikri is an epic of romance.

Akbar, who had caused the great and imposing fort of Agra to be built as his royal castle and the place in which to house in cages his 5,000 wives, had but one great sorrow. All his children died in infancy, and to have a son was the greatest ambition of his life. At the little native village of Sikri there lived a Mohammedan holy man, Sheik Salim Chisti, who was renowned far and wide for godliness and asceticism. The stories told of this saint's amazing powers reached the ears of the Great Moghul, who visited Salim Chisti and told him of his desire for a son.

Exactly what advice the holy man gave to the emperor is not very clear. It appears, however, that Akbar was advised to send his Hindu wife to stay for a time in the hermit's little house at Sikri, and that here, within a year, a son was born who afterwards became the Emperor Jahangir. So overjoyed was Akbar that he registered a vow to erect a city on the spot and to make it his capital. By the year A.D. 1569 thousands of stone-masons were at work constructing the battlemented walls, the huge palaces and stone-flagged courtyards, the mosques, the vast bathing tanks, and all the wonderful buildings which stand to-day almost untouched by the passage of centuries.

For the thirty-six remaining years of Akbar's life, the splendour of his court in the new city formed the subject of tales told in all the bazaars of the East. Nowhere can the atmosphere of Moghul times in India be so easily recaptured to-day as within the reddish-brown walls of Fatehpur Sikri. After the death of Akbar the city was abandoned because of the brackish water which had always caused a heavy death-roll among its inhabitants. Undoubtedly it is the extremely dry nature of the soil and climate which

has been largely responsible for the good state of preservation in which this city—it is not a ruin—has remained up to the present time.

Of all the wonders of Fatehpur Sikri the most striking is undoubtedly the immense Buland Darwaza, or Gateway of Victory. It was erected in 1601 to commemorate achievements in Southern India. Besides being the highest gateway in Hindustan—176 feet above the ground—it is one of the most effective structures in marble and red sandstone. Standing beneath this immense arch I could not help feeling a thrill engendered by the thought that I was entering this city over the same stone pathway as that trod by the great conqueror. Curiously enough, this city is infested with birds, beasts and occasionally insects. A few years ago the child of a British official was killed by a panther in its deserted courts. Looking up at the curved roof of the Gate of Victory I could see attached to the old walls an immense hive of wild bees. Climbing to the top of this imposing entrance to the city one can look over the countryside for many miles in all directions and down upon the collection of mud-brick houses forming the little modern town, clinging tenaciously to this single hill which rises from the level plains. A bird's-eye view can also be obtained of the amazing collection of palaces, mosques and courtyards which formed the royal city of Akbar.

The only inhabitants, other than guides, seemed to be a few naked diving boys, who will jump from the old walls of the city into a huge well of brackish water, some thirty-two feet across, if sufficient inducement is offered them. A dive of eighty feet into this stagnant pool is carried out for the modest sum of

one rupee. It has always seemed to me that so much beauty and romance all over the world is spoiled by the beggars, who in one guise or another infest all such places however remote. The great mosque within the walls is one of the largest in India, although it will not bear comparison with the famous Jumma Masjid at Delhi. It measures 550 feet from east to west and 470 feet from north to south. It is surmounted by three domes, and there is a richly carved and ornamented shrine.

It so happened that my guide at Fatehpur Sikri was a Mohammedan whose knowledge of the deserted city and its history was very extensive. In fact, it was because of this latter accomplishment that I had engaged him. While crossing the quadrangle where the Great Mosque is situated, a Hindu peddler approached with his wares. Although my knowledge of Hindustani is limited to a few phrases, I caught the flash in the dark eyes of my guide and the words of bitter anger and reproach with which he drove away the beggar. In a moment religious hatred flared up in this unexpected spot. Mohammedan pilgrims to the adjoining tomb of the holy man, Salim Chisti—who afterwards became adviser to Akbar—flew eagerly to the aid of their co-religionist, while Hindus from the shadowy courtyards and courts answered the call of the peddler. It was an ugly moment, full of unpleasant possibilities. However, the seller of trinkets slunk away, and the swagger of my guide increased.

Hereabouts is the tomb of the saint to whom Akbar considered he owed the birth of his son. Even to-day it is a place of pilgrimage. Surrounding the cenotaph are carved marble screens, so delicate and

lace-like that it is difficult to believe they were cut from a solid block of marble. Passing through these screens the fierce golden light is split up into countless little sun-rays. I noticed hundreds of coloured threads tied through the interstices of these marble curtains, and was told that Mohammedan pilgrims placed them there until a wish made in the tomb had been fulfilled. A second pilgrimage then became necessary to remove the thread. Changeless India! Here is the survival of the belief which caused Akbar to visit Salim Chisti over three and a half centuries ago.

The cenotaph, situated in the centre of the marble floor of this mausoleum, was covered by a velvet cloth which, on being lifted, disclosed a replica of the tomb in the vault below. It was made of thousands of pieces of mother-of-pearl, and glittered like a gigantic jewel in the rays of sunlight coming through the marble screens.

Walking and climbing immeasurable stone stairways in this deserted city was heavy work in the fierce heat which seemed to be reflected from the vast flagged courtyards. Blowing through the lofty Hall of Private Audience there was, however, a faint but cooling breeze. It is a curious apartment of red sandstone. In the centre a carved pillar supports a lofty platform from which narrow stone galleries radiate. On this lofty dais, above the floor of the chamber, Akbar sat cross-legged listening to and arguing with the wise men of many religions, for he conceived of a faith which would combine all the best qualities of those religions practised in all quarters of his empire and by foreign countries beyond the Himalayas and the sea.

Perhaps it is the Pachisi Court which stimulates the imagination most, however. This open space between the palaces is laid out in black and white squares. In the middle is a raised platform. Beneath a canopy of silk, Akbar sat on this dais together with his opponent in the games of human chess for which this remarkable court was designed. Slave girls stood on the surrounding squares and moved from one to another at the command of the two players. Half the slaves acting as chess-men were provided by each player, and the winner became the owner of the queen among them.

The wives of Akbar were housed in small rooms, but the favourites were allowed to have palaces within the walls built to suit both their whims and their religions. Such tolerance seems extraordinary in a ruler of the old India. Miriam's house was called the Golden Palace, and its walls both inside and out were covered with gold-leaf. Being of the Hindu faith, the interior carvings are mostly concerned with the three principal gods of this belief. The garden contains a fish-tank and an open bath. In Jodhbai's Palace the carvings are particularly fine, and it is said that many of the inmates of Akbar's *zenana* were housed in this vast building of ornate architecture and battlemented walls.

The most curious and at the same time the more striking of the buildings in Fatehpur Sikri is the Panch Mahal, which, as its name implies, is a five-storeyed building clearly suggestive of a Buddhist temple. Having each storey smaller than the one below, it lends support to the theory that Akbar employed Chinese artisans to assist in the construction of his capital. Standing in the picturesque little kiosk which

forms the topmost pinnacle of this pagoda-like building, it was easy to picture in the imagination Akbar in silken robes among his slave girls. It would seem that this lofty palace of open design was built mainly to enable the ladies of the *zenana* to take the air without being observed from any of the surrounding buildings.

Notwithstanding the great heat, I wandered for several hours about this city of the dead, discovering the horse and camel stables, the Hall of Public Audience, a huge building surrounded by cloisters, and, above all, the House of Dreams, containing Akbar's private apartments. A special seat was pointed out to me as that occupied by the court astrologer. Knowing the importance attributed to the study of astrology by the Hindu of to-day, especially when about to commence something new or to undertake a long journey, it was easy to see why this official's apartment was so close to the private suite of the emperor. The sun was casting a pink glow over the vast plains when I emerged from the high Gate of Victory. The red sandstone of Fatehpur Sikri was no longer dark and lifeless, for the city was aflame with the fires of the dying day.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SEVEN CITIES OF IMPERIAL DELHI

CURIOUSLY enough the first person that I noticed on arriving in Delhi was an old Tibetan peddler, well-coated in both dirt and rags, wandering along in the gutter with a curious basket containing miniature prayer-wheels for sale to the passers-by. The sight of this man from a lofty land far beyond the Himalayas caused me to realise, more even than the distant glimpses of stately buildings of red sandstone and white marble above crowded bazaars, that I was in the capital of imperial India. "He who holds Delhi holds India" is a saying which has been handed down for generations, and the truth of this old statement is proved by the fact that there are seven distinct cities marking the tides of invasion, victory and defeat, within the twelve square miles carved out of the Punjab which forms, in general terms, the present capital of the Indian Empire.

These seven cities of old and new Delhi date only from the eleventh century, but there is ample proof to show that other towns existed in the dim prehistoric days. Of the two cities which remain at the present time, one is the spacious and imposing modern capital, commenced in 1911, and completed for the purposes of an official inauguration in 1931; the other is Shahjehanabad, as it should really be

called, the city built as a capital by the capricious emperor who lies buried in the *taj*. Access to this portion of Delhi, which includes the commercial and native cities as entities apart from the purely political capital recently built some three miles away, is gained through seven picturesque gates which pierce the surrounding and lofty red sandstone wall.

Although the principal sights as laid down in every guide-book are the fort, the palace, the Jumma Masjid, the historic spots of the Mutiny and the Jain Temple, I did not rush off hot-foot to any of these. Neither did I immediately charter a motor car to take me to the ruins of the five other cities lying beyond the walls of the living town of to-day. What I did do, however, was to make my way into the broad but dusty Chandni Chowk, an historic street which, in 1739, flowed with the blood of 80,000 people slaughtered by the invader, Nadir Shah.

In this famous centre of the bazaars I watched some of the passers-by. Here was a tall Sikh with flowing beard and haughty mien. There, in the road, was a wild Dravidian type, whom a student of the races of the peninsula alone could place with any accuracy. The teeming throng passed me by in a halo of sunlight and dust. Water sprinklers, bullock-carts, fine touring cars, *tongas* and vehicles of a hundred different types choked the road. Everywhere there was the colour, the art, and yet the drabness of the East. Narrow streets, full of the human throng, with the inevitable dust cloud and deep shadows obscuring even the near distance, led away from the broader thoroughfare both to the right and to the left. There is something in a teeming Eastern bazaar which causes the average European

to hesitate about plunging on foot into its attractive yet at the same time repulsive depths. There seems to be no space, no air, and when the novelty of its curious shops has worn off, one is inclined to avoid rather than to face the hustling and jostling crowd.

Resisting the temptation to get away from the hot, dust-choked atmosphere in these busy streets, I compromised, and turned into a famous jewellery and curio store in the Chandni Chowk. Passing through a series of rooms in which were displayed an amazing array of jewels, ivory carvings, silks and other Eastern works of art, I found myself in a quiet courtyard half-filled with trees. All around this little patio were whitewashed cubicles, in which I discovered the workmen who produced many of the *objets d'art* being sold in the shop. I watched the ivory-carver turning the wheel with his foot while he shaved the tusk of an elephant preparatory to chiselling this immense trophy. In another box-like workshop I found the wood-carver drilling with a wheel operated by a piece of string. He was doing the finest kind of work with this crude implement. Lapidaries were polishing gems with the tools used by their forefathers for unknown centuries. Time seemed of no concern to these artists of the old India. I asked what they were paid, or what they made, and was informed that a rupee a day was considered excellent remuneration for the finest workmanship.

Wandering again into the busy street my attention was attracted by the variety of the wares being offered in the long lines of shops : carpets and rugs from Persia, curios from Tibet and Afghanistan, silks from China and Japan, filigree silver carved locally, inlaid knives from Nepal, and I realised that overland

caravans are continuously coming and going across the snowy passes of the Himalayas to and from all parts of Asia, often taking months on the journey. Of the people who come in with these caravans there are those who stay behind when the cavalcade returns into the centre of the continent. It is these wanderers and their descendants who make the bazaars of Delhi and other cities of India a kind of ethnological museum of Asiatic races.

Huge and rosy-red in the warm light, the sandstone building of Delhi Fort stands, like its counterpart at Agra, on the banks of the muddy Jumna. Although the fort itself is of red sandstone, within its walls lies the palace, built to a large extent of white marble. The panels inside this building are inlaid with precious stones forming a mosaic pattern. The ceiling is decorated with gold leaf and paintings. Time was when some of these ceilings were entirely covered with the gold and silver filigree work for which the smiths of Delhi have been famous for centuries. In the year 1759 the city was sacked by the Mahrattas, and much of the interior decoration and movable fittings were carried away as loot.

The Diwan-i-Khas, or Audience Hall, once contained the famous Peacock Throne. It obtained this name because two peacocks wrought in solid gold stood behind the royal dais. The tails of these birds were shown expanded, and were inlaid with sapphires, rubies, emeralds, pearls, and other precious stones which represented the gorgeous colours of the actual plumage. The throne itself is said to have been of solid gold inlaid with diamonds, and the whole was surmounted by a canopy of cloth of gold supported by jewel-encrusted pillars. The fringe of

this awning was of pearls, and over the throne itself was a parrot cut from a single emerald. Its estimated value many years ago was seven million pounds sterling. Alas, the Peacock Throne is no more. It was taken to Persia from the palace at Delhi by Nadir Shah. Rumours of its existence in Teheran have been frequent, but it is generally believed that this amazing antique work of art has been dismantled and melted down.

Inside the fort area at Delhi, besides some picturesque gardens and ornamental waters, there is the Moti Masjid, or Pearl Mosque. Its three white and symmetrical domes, when seen from different angles of the palace, gardens and red fortress walls, afford entrancing views which are so typical of India that it is perhaps one of the most photographed objects in all Delhi. Having been built as a place of worship for the Moghul emperors it is, of course, extremely small, and the marble of the floor inside the tiny square is partly covered by a design of inlaid coloured stone representing prayer mats.

Across the large open space of the *maidan*, outside the walls of the fort, there is the Jumma Masjid, or Great Mosque, which is built of red sandstone. Not only is it one of the largest in the world, but it is also one of the most beautiful. The central dome is 200 feet high, and the flanking towers as well as much of the ornamental work is in alternate stripes of red sandstone and white marble. The effect in the vivid light of the Indian plains is most impressive when seen from the vast quadrangle. As with so many religious buildings in India, one of the entrances is through a square hole in the ground, although the Jumma Masjid has three fine gateways and an

imposing flight of stone steps. The mosque contains the usual so-called relics of the Prophet. There is, indeed, one hair from his beard !

Not far away from this great mosque, and raised on a walled platform, stands the Jain Temple, encompassed by stucco colonnades. The religions of India play such an important part in the lives of the people that it may not be out of place to give here some of the principal beliefs together with the approximate number of followers. Although the oldest religion in India is a form of Animism, from which has resulted much of the transition to popular Hinduism, the greatest number of adherents is claimed by this latter sect. Hindus number about 217 millions, whereas the Mohammedan faith can claim only 69,000,000 of followers. Numbers are, however, deceptive, especially where Indian statistics are concerned, for although most of the sects of Hindus accept the supremacy of Brahma, worship a number of gods, look upon the cow as a sacred animal, and regard a number of rivers and pools of water as holy, they are not a very closely knit religion. On the other hand, the followers of Islam comprise most of the virile and what are known as the fighting races of India. They are a compact religious body, although outnumbered by three to one. Buddhism has lost ground during recent centuries, and can now claim only about 11,600,000 followers, a large proportion of these being situated in Burma. Animism is practised by about 8,000,000 people, and the fine Sikh race has its own faith with 3,300,000 adherents. That queer sect, the Jains, who will hate no living thing, not even an insect, possesses the spiritual allegiance of 1,200,000 ; and there are

said to be nearly 5,000,000 Christians and over 100,000 Parsees in different parts of the Indian Empire.

At every turn of the road throughout the length and breadth of this vast land one obtains evidence of the extent to which these and other religious beliefs enter into the innermost life and thoughts of the people. Their daily actions are so largely controlled by the most fanatical forms of religious doctrine that it is almost impossible to live and work in India without acquiring a knowledge of the principal prejudices which seem in multifarious ways to govern the life around.

Then there is the Hindu caste system. The word *caste* is generally believed to come from the Portuguese "*casta*," meaning race, kind or quality. Originally all Hindus were divided into four castes, or sections of society, but the tendency during past centuries has been to divide these into thousands of sub-castes, one for every profession and trade. Between each there is an unbridgeable gulf. Social position is fixed by birth, it is unchangeable, and even marriage outside the caste is forbidden.

The highest of these social divisions are the Brahmans, or priests, who believe they were born from the head of Brahma. The second is the warrior caste, or *Kshatriyas*, who claim to have been formed from the arms of Brahma. That fighting Hindu race, the Rajputs, are mostly of this caste. Next come the farmers and artisans, called the *Vaisyas*, who are the direct descendants of the trunk and thigh of Brahma. These three castes call themselves "Twice born," and claim to be of Aryan descent. Beneath them, literally in every phase of life, come

the *Sudras*, or fourth caste, consisting mostly of slaves, menials, and people originally conquered by the Aryans. These are referred to as being only "once born," and from the feet of Brahma.

Still lower down the scale is the *untouchable*, one of the lowest sub-castes of the *Sudras*. People in this state are regarded more in the light of animals, they are too low to even touch unnecessarily, and it matters little how much wealth or knowledge one of these unfortunate beings, or even a *Sudra*, may acquire, he is socially and in every way beneath the notice of the high caste Brahman or *Kshatriya*. With the temporal and spiritual life of hundreds of millions of people divided in this intricate manner by religion, caste, language and even race, it will easily be seen that the word *India* is but a geographical expression pertaining to a section of Southern Asia inhabited by heterogeneous races and units inextricably intermingled.

Having explored the existing city of Delhi, I engaged a guide and a car to take me to the six other towns spread over the adjacent countryside. The direction was south from the walled city, and we soon came to the Purana Kila, or old fort, which was built during the fifteenth century by Sher Shah and his successors. It stands on the banks of the River Jumna, and is generally considered to have been erected on the site of *Indraprastha*, the first Delhi, which existed long before the dawn of history. The Purana Kila is now only a ruin, but the massive old walls and gateway afford some fine views. The areas of pasture-land now enclosed by the ramparts are used for grazing cattle, and their only inhabitants, other than these domestic beasts, are a large number

of porcupines. Boxes made from their quills are to be seen in the bazaars of the Chandni Chowk.

A little farther along the road one comes to the rather imposing tomb of the Emperor Humayun, which is built of red sandstone relieved with white marble. The dome rises 125 feet. To this place we gained access by a flight of stone steps leading on to the raised terrace in front of the mausoleum. Inside the central dome a wonderful bell-like echo was obtained by the guide calling in the wailing tones so typical of Indian songs. I shall not attempt to describe all the tombs and ruins of deserted cities which cling to the southern outskirts of the twin-capitals of to-day. There is, however, the famous Kutab Minar and the Iron Pillar, distant about seven miles from the walled city.

Sightseeing during the midday hours in India is not only extremely arduous, but it is also disappointing. The fierce light reduces everything to a uniform and monotonous glare. It was for this reason that I chose the early evening to set out on an excursion to the mysterious Kutab Minar, or Tower of Victory. This immense column of red sandstone, inlaid with stone of a lighter colour, stands in a prettily laid-out garden. When we arrived, the top of this fluted tower, some 238 feet high, was catching the orange light of the setting sun. I stood for some minutes entranced, for the sky above was of the palest green and seemed to match the plumage of the parrots that flew around the base, which was veiled in the gathering purple shadows.

"The actual origin of the Kutab Minar is a much-discussed subject. It appears, however, to date from the twelfth or thirteenth centuries. It tapers

from the base to the summit, and is divided into five sections by heavy corbelled balconies. The distance between each balcony diminishes in proportion to the diminishing diameter of the shaft, and the effect is to greatly add to the height by exaggerating the perspective." Anyone who wishes to climb to the top of the Kutab Minar can do so by ascending 400 stone steps.

There is an old Mohammedan mosque half surrounding the Kutab Minar which is of considerable interest from the architectural point of view. On one side there is a line of arches extending for over 400 feet. The faces of these are ornamented with stone lattice-work of intricate design, but the mystery lies in the columns, which show mutilated Jain figures. This peculiarity is believed to have been caused by the building of the mosque from fragments of still more ancient Jain temples.

It is in the courtyard of this extraordinary edifice that the famous Iron Pillar is to be seen. About sixteen inches in diameter and rising to a height of twenty-three feet, it is a solid pillar of wrought iron *absolutely devoid of rust.* Although excavations have been made to a depth of nearly forty feet, the bottom of this shaft below the ground remains unknown. Archæological authorities are of the opinion that this Iron Pillar dates from about A.D. 400.

It is extraordinary to find the capital of the British-Indian Empire within a mile or two of the remains of the older cities. All over India to-day the history of each succeeding epoch is written on top of the half-effaced record of that which went before. New Delhi, however, does not stand on top of a former city, but has been placed in a central position between them

all on a site where the engineers and architects could start with a free hand to construct a capital worthy of both Britain and India. I stood with my back to the ornamental iron gates of Government House, between the gorgeously uniformed sentries of the Viceregal bodyguard, and gazed down the immensely broad avenue, flanked by the imposing white buildings, which forms the centre of the new imperial city. Then I mounted to a high elevation and gazed critically at the long sweep of the Secretariat, the Viceregal Lodge, and the Legislative Rotunda, all of which are built in the Moghul style, and of red sandstone in contrast to the spotless white of the surrounding buildings and the green of the grass, trees and well laid-out gardens. The impression I gained was one of solidarity, space and majesty. New Delhi, which has been built entirely during the past thirty years, certainly compares favourably with the capital cities of the past. A whisper came to my ears, however, that it is not liked by many of the officials who are compelled to live there because of its isolation from the remainder of the Delhi cantonment and the vast distances which separate all the buildings and houses. New Delhi is certainly imposing, but it will take another century of building to make it anything but a cheerless administrative centre.

Overlooking Delhi from the north there is the Ridge, so famous in the days of the great Mutiny. Driving out to this historic area early one morning, I passed through the Kashmir Gate, where the shot-holes and the ramparts have been left untouched as lasting reminders of those terrible days. High up on the Ridge, and overlooking both the past and present

cities, there is the Mutiny Memorial, Hindu Rao's house, and the suburb of Sabzi-Mandi, where the siege batteries were placed during the storming of the city by the British and Sikh troops. Those stirring times in the old India seem very remote ; they have been dwarfed into historical perspective by the World War, yet I can still remember the tales of adventure told me by an old general of the Bengal Staff who had fought under Sir Hugh Rose in Central India.

CHAPTER XV

PILGRIMS AND GODS IN GLITTERING BENARES

I AM in Benares, the holy city of the Hindus, the teeming, dirty, bizarre, colourful and wholly fascinating centre of 200,000 people, by the waters of the Sacred Ganges. Some of the million pilgrims who come here every year from all parts of India are even now making the circuit of the *Panch Kosi*—a thirty-six miles' walk around this vatican of an Eastern faith—yet the morning sun is streaming through the tamarind and *nim* trees on to well-kept roads and trim bungalows. It is the European cantonment, and the great native city lies away to the south-east.

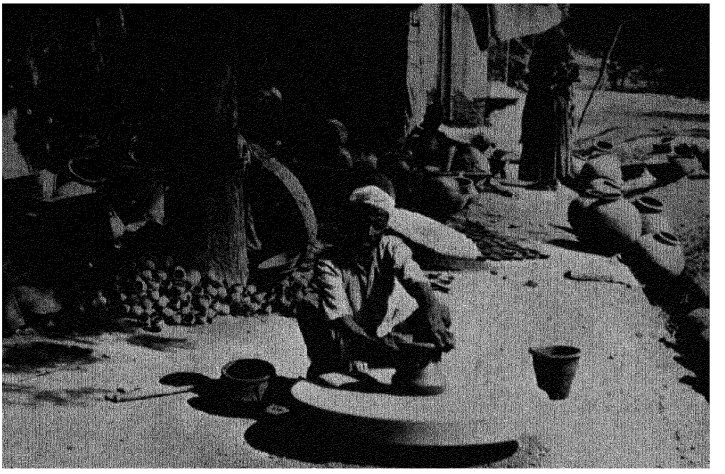
The plains of India teem with cities of historical, human and architectural interest, but of them all, Benares is undoubtedly the most sacred and at the same time, perhaps, the most interesting in this portion of the peninsula. It was here that Gautama Buddha, nearly 600 years before the advent of the Christian era, founded the Buddhist faith. In later years the older Hindu religion regained the ascendancy, and Benares is now the sacred city of the Brahmans. One monument of Buddha's holy sway still exists, a solid tower, over one hundred feet high, with carved base—the Great Stupa of Sarmath—erected on the spot where Gautama preached his

first sermon. Benares is, however, famous for other things than the founding of a powerful Eastern religion. It has amazing bazaars, temples and shrines; it is the home of a heterogeneous people where beats the heart of the real India.

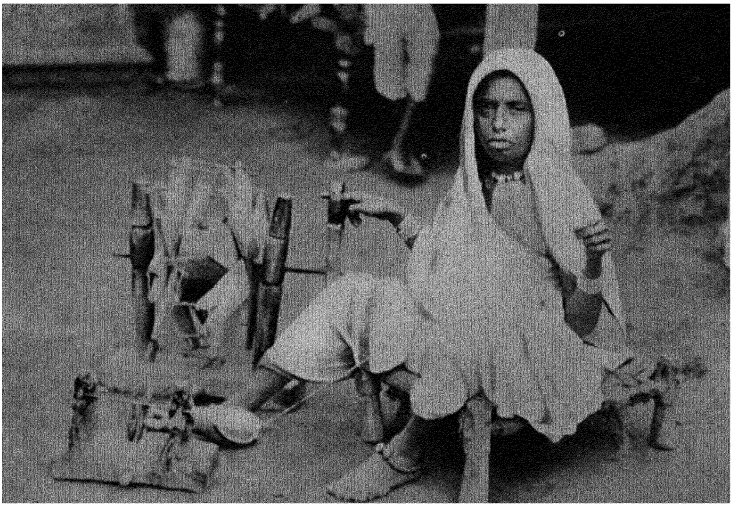
A long broken pole, with its ends supported by the shoulders of two men, and from the centre of which hung a curious triangular parcel wrapped carefully in crimson cloth—this was the first sight to attract my attention and arouse curiosity as I became engulfed in the maze of narrow and tortuous streets and clefts between tall oriental houses and dim cavern-like shops full of gleaming brass and coloured silks which forms the centre of Benares.

Passing me like the tide of a swiftly running stream was an endless procession of brightly clad figures, with here and there a grotesque, hideous-looking holy man, shaggy and naked. The carriers of the crimson parcel entered a house and were lost to view. It proved to be a common sight, however, just the conveyance of a high-caste lady who must not walk abroad. She sits on a small square of basket-work, from the four corners of which a covering of crimson cloth is drawn up to where this parcel-like seat is attached to the bamboo carrying-pole. In this way not even the hem of her dress can be seen by passers-by, and she must be carried everywhere by her two servants.

So many were the curious sights which passed amid the human stream that I almost forgot that it was towards the Golden Temple, dedicated to *Bisheswar*, the Poison God, that my footsteps were being directed. So narrow and crowded are many of the native streets of Benares that to drive through



SHOP OF INDIAN POTTERY



INDIAN WOMAN SPINNING

Facing page 108—4.

BATHING GHAT—BENARES

them in a wheeled vehicle is impossible. When one's eyes have become accustomed to the dim light in the shops, some strange things are to be seen. Hundreds of little brazen gods looked out from one dark vault; in another, curious sweets were attracting a group of children, while on the other side of the passage-way there were brilliant-hued prayer-bags, into which the right hand of the devout pilgrim is thrust while holding the sacred beads and praying. On many objects appeared the head of the sacred cow, and the Hindu triad were modelled in gold, silver and brass, so frequently that every other booth seemed full of them. Then there were the flower stalls—masses of gorgeous blooms, often with a sickly odour, destined to be purchased by the throngs of pilgrims so that garlands of their petals could be hung around the necks of the temple gods. Being a Christian I was not allowed to cross the threshold of the Golden Temple, the domes of which are covered with thin plates of solid gold, originally the gift of the Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Lahore. These glittering domes beneath the blue sky make a fine show.

Although not permitted to enter this temple, I obtained a view of the crowded interior by standing close to the entrance. A stream of pilgrims seemed to be continuously coming and going, all carrying garlands of flowers. At first I was puzzled as to the reason why those leaving should also be adorned with blooms. Enlightenment came from my Hindu guide. It appears that the garlands are carried into the temple, and when they have been placed around the *lingan* inside they are returned by the priest to be worn by the donor in honour of Siva. To my amaze-

ment, sacred white cows walked in and out of this temple, and the human stream made way for the passage of these animals, some of which were chewing the garlands of flowers. Many of the pilgrims, on leaving the Golden Temple, appeared to press their heads against the stone doorway, turning as they did so to look at something in the dimly lighted interior. Some were carrying brass trays on which were cups filled with rice, milk and water from the Ganges. I was told that it was their sacred duty to offer these delicacies to the gods.

Making my way out of the narrow street in which the temple is situated, I reached one of the most holy places in Benares, the *Gyan Kup*, or Well of Knowledge. Crossing a courtyard, wherein reclined in magnificent ease the inevitable sacred cow, I traversed a colonnade decorated with pillars, and there, in the centre, was the famous well. It appears that the sanctity of its waters is due to the fact that the symbol of Siva was at some remote period thrown into them. It is said to still remain at the bottom of the well, giving to the waters the power of absolving from guilt even the greatest criminal. The top of the well is covered, and flowers are thrown upon it by those who seek its aid. A Brahman ladles out the water and is rewarded with coins. Each buyer, on receiving the sacred liquid in the palm of his right hand, immediately places, with the finger of the left hand, three drops in his mouth and pours the remainder on the top of his head.

When I was told that there were 2,000 temples and holy places in Benares I became alarmed, as my guide seemed capable of insisting upon my visiting all of them. After much inquiry, however, I found

that there were only one or two others which offered the requisite amount of interest to make the journey through the hot crowded and dusty streets worth while. During these peregrinations, I noticed the amazing decorations on the walls of the private houses. They included white cows, red cows, blue elephants, curious dragons and other devices. Apparently they are painted on the wall to celebrate a wedding or a birth.

In the temple dedicated to Durga, the Terrible One, I saw monkeys of all sizes, who had their *habitat* in the surrounding trees, being fed in front of this holy place. They are considered to be the descendants of Hanuman, the Monkey God. In the hollow trunk of a giant tamarind there is a babies' nursery—a cosy nook set apart for the young monkeys. The outside of this temple is of a deep red colour, and it is ornamented with flashing points of gold. No private house is allowed to be decorated with this shade of crimson.

While passing through some of these streets I was reminded of the fact that to touch any of the food-stuffs or sweets in the shops would mean that they would be rendered unfit to be eaten by any pious Hindu. Even my shadow might be considered poisonous, so strict is the religious belief of the followers of these gods, especially in this holy city.

In a narrow thoroughfare close to the Golden Temple there is a curious emblem of Sanichar, the Regent of the planet Saturn—at least this was the story told me by my highly religious and encyclopædic-minded guide. Apparently this deity, which consists, so far as I could see, of a round silver disc garlanded with flowers, is worshipped only on Saturdays.

Hindus certainly have their work cut out to do the round of the gods in time to commence again.

At the Temple of Annapurna, which is over 200 years old, there are many delicately tinted sacred pictures, and the cows are even more numerous than ever. It was here that I saw a priest marking the pilgrims on the forehead with the quaint symbols, in red pigment, to be seen throughout India on the brow of many passers-by. At the Well of Fate superstitious people were looking eagerly down when the sun was at its zenith to see if their faces were reflected in this holy pool. Anyone who cannot see his own face at this hour of the day in these waters will assuredly die within six months, and in India may die by auto-suggestion alone.

Vivid and colourful are the streets of Benares, but they will not bear comparison with the truly amazing river-side life, where the religious fervour, not only of residents in the holy city but also of its million pilgrims, seems to be concentrated in a truly fanatical orgy. Whether it be a wedding, with the bride and bridegroom on their way to cast flowers into the Ganges, or a funeral procession chanting as the corpse is carried to the burning ghat from whence its ashes will be cast into the stream, it matters not, for all Benares visits the river, drinks its waters, bathes in and worships them ; even the sacred cows, when they die, are borne to the banks on stout bamboos and are thrown into the slowly moving flood.

Standing one day at the Dasashwamedh Ghat, I felt that the scene before me was a dream. It could not be real, there were not enough people in the world for so many to be congregated in one spot. Tens of thousands of men were throwing off their

outer covering and entering the water. Women were wading, and then suddenly dipping below the surface while enveloped in their bright *saris*; all seemed to be offering drops of the sacred water to the sun by holding them aloft in the palms of their hands — golden bangles and brass jars glittered everywhere. Other thousands were on the banks and steps changing into dry garments. Crowds equally large were gathered round the *yogis*, or "Sons of the Ganges," who were themselves shielded from the fierce sun-glare by huge bamboo umbrellas. These holy men were marking, or rather re-marking, the foreheads of the bathers with the sacred symbols denoting that they had been purified by the holy waters. Still higher up the steps of the ghat sat the Pandits, who were reading aloud the scriptures. Groups of gaily dressed pilgrims were gathered round these professors of the ancient Sanskrit writings. All were seated cross-legged, and had garlands of flowers round their bare necks, and a pile of offerings from the listeners heaped in front of them.

Hiring a shapeless Benares boat, I made my way through the bathing thousands from this and other ghats. Many of the native rulers of India have a palace by the Ganges. It is to these houses that the aged come to die. Then there are the many temples with conical domes, coloured red and gold. The ghats themselves are giant stairways of masonry leading from the top of the bank to the water's edge. From a boat on the river are obtained some of the strangest scenes in the world.

There is even a temple dedicated to *Sitala*, the Goddess of Small-pox, where those go to offer thanks who have recovered from this foul disease. Away

along the river bank is the palace of the Rajah of Benares, guarded by ivory elephants and fierce-looking plaster tigers. At another point a vast array of brass vessels, covered with wicker-work, are being filled with the holy waters. They are decorated with brilliant peacock feathers and bells, which jingle as they are slung on bamboo poles so that the waters may be carried to far-distant places.

The bodies of *yogis* and very young children are not burned after death, but are placed in stone coffins and thrown into the Ganges. When a baby dies, if the parents are unable to afford a stone coffin, the body is cast into the waters after a heavy piece of rock has been fastened to it. No surprise is occasioned when a corpse floats on the surface of this river, and it is in these waters that Benares bathes daily.

At sunset, as at sunrise and midday, from every temple and palace along the banks, wild and melancholy music echoes over the river—it is yet another religious rite. In the gathering gloom, which so soon follows the Indian sunset, a red glare comes from the two burning ghats, and lines of dark smoke float out over the waters. Passing close to these places the mourners can be seen clustered round the funeral pyres. In the darkness, which comes almost immediately, one or more floating lights appear on the surface of the river. They are grease-fed lamps, which have been launched on the holy waters as an offering by those who are too low in the social scale of castes for them to be allowed to take part in the daily worship of the Ganges.

CHAPTER XVI

THE HIMALAYAN FRONTIER

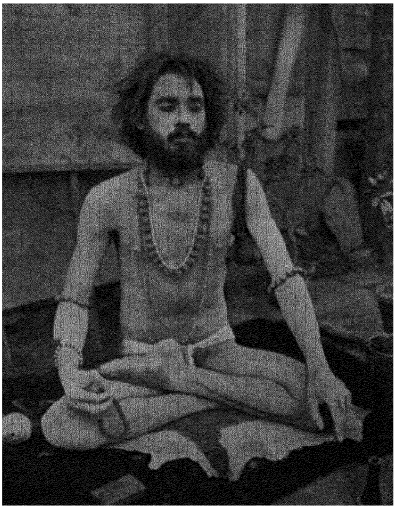
SHORT is the twilight in this land of the lotus. Soon after leaving the Sealdah Station, Calcutta, on the seventeen hours' journey to Darjeeling and the Himalayas, the darkness was complete. For over an hour I had watched from the railway carriage window the passing of the fertile plains of Eastern Bengal. Here one sees the *Ryot*, or smallholder, watering his field from a branch canal of the great irrigation system by the same creaking, pool-and-bucket method as that employed by the Egyptian *fellah*. These somewhat monotonous, swampy and thickly populated plains are covered with clumps of pale green bamboos, broad-leaved plantains and small mangoes, all interwoven by creepers, with their tops waving listlessly in the tepid breeze. Ever and anon villages of thatched huts, with an occasional low white-domed temple, catching the glittering fires of the dying day, had appeared from amid the green foliage. This portion of Bengal is the home of jute and rice, and the native cultivator wages constant warfare against the ever encroaching tropical vegetation.

Fire-flies now began to hover over the rice-fields and to glow amid the jungle, but a yellowing of the eastern sky foretold the rising of a full moon, soon, with its warm, soft light, to clothe in mystic beauty

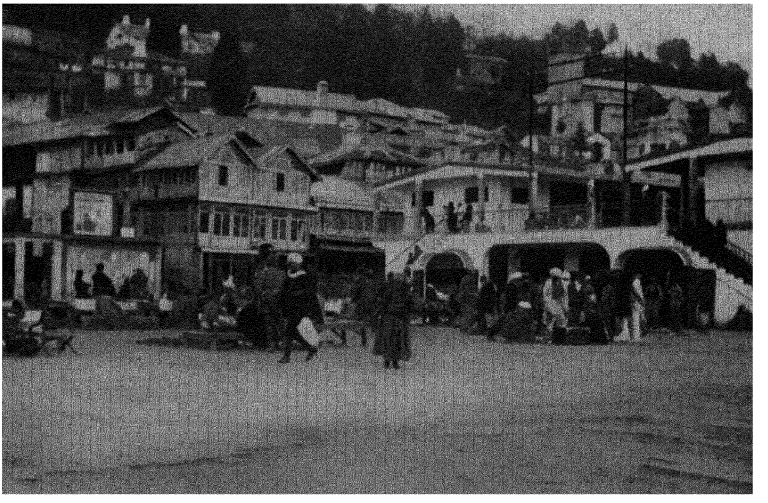
scenes which had dazzled and burned in the glare of the sun. On reaching the Ganges the train crossed this sacred river by the Hardinge Bridge, which cost over £2,500,000 to construct. During the night that great tea-growing region, known as the *Dooars*, was traversed, and the foot-hills of the Himalayas were reached at an early hour on the following morning.

At Siliguri I changed trains and, after an early breakfast, entered a carriage, or really open car, of the Himalayan railway, a panoramic line some fifty-one miles in length which rises to a height of 7,000 feet. When travelling in India, meals are often provided at dining-rooms on the platform while the train waits. For the first few miles we traversed a country of tea-gardens, but after leaving Sukna the line began to rise steeply. Soon the train plunged into a dense forest of giant bamboo, often sixty feet high, tangled grass and innumerable creepers. In many places so thick was this jungle that the branches met overhead, and from them hung trails and bunches of mauve and white orchids. We were passing through the *Terai*, a belt of wild and almost impenetrable forest, the home of tigers, buffaloes, rhinoceros, and other game. Owing to the clouds of the wet monsoon breaking against the great wall of the Himalayas and depositing their moisture on these lower slopes, the climate of the *Terai* is hot, damp and feverish.

The train climbed by every device known to engineering science. It twisted, hung on the edge of precipices, became lost in a tempestuous forest, crossed rushing torrents, dived through tunnels, and even reversed its direction because the gradient was



INDIAN FAKIR



MARKET-PLACE—DARJEELING

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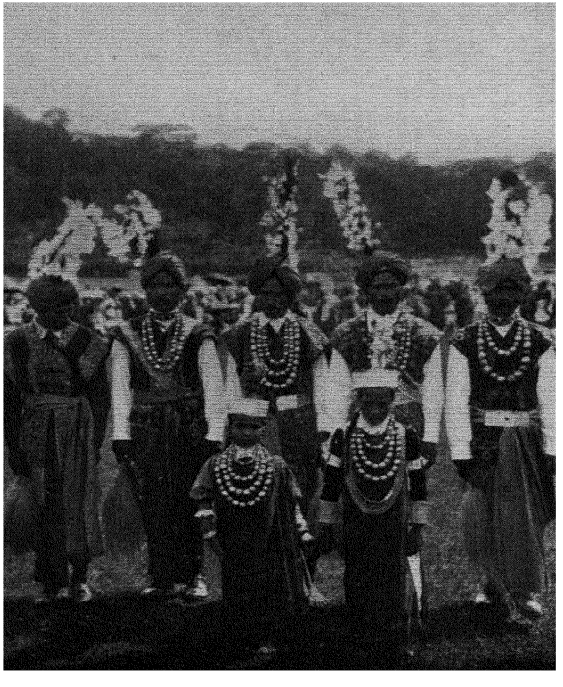
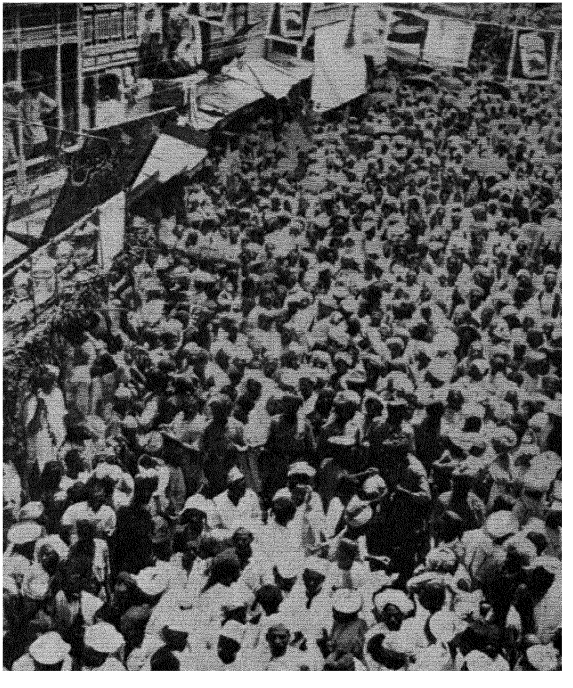


KHASIS OF ASSAM



INDIA'S TEEMING MILLIONS

too steep to permit of it rounding a loop. As the altitude increased the aspect of the country changed. The awful mass of reeking jungle gave place to more orderly forests of oak, mulberry, rubber and giant bamboo. At 4,000-feet elevation the hillsides were dappled with the pale pink of almond and peach blossom, which in turn gave place to picturesque tree ferns.

So far the view had been mainly towards the south. Several times I had gazed out of the carriage window to get a glimpse of the great snows high up in the heavens towards Tibet. For many miles the sunlit plains, crossed by silver rivers and blotched with jungles, could be seen far below. At Kurseong the scene changed, however. Away up in the clouds snow-fields and glaciers made their appearance, gleaming ethereally white against the cerulean blue of the Himalayan skies. When Ghoom was reached, the wondrous panorama of the most lofty mountain range in the world unfolded itself in earnest. All around was the land of the deodar and the fern. Dark mountain masses rose up skywards to the realms of the snowy Hispar.

Darjeeling is scenic and social. Its principal attraction is the view of the majestic range which seems to overshadow its steep little streets, neat bungalows, colourful markets, and its hotels. But Darjeeling is cool even during the hot season, and many weary, sun-dried and fever-ridden people from the plains and jungles come up to breathe the pine-scented air of this hill-station, to which even the Government of Bengal transfers itself when the plains below are either scorched by the sun or swamped by the rains of the wet season.

I felt the lure of the Himalayas from the moment when, glancing out of the bedroom window soon after sunrise, I saw twelve white pyramids, all over 20,000 feet high, towering into the lemon-yellow sky of the morning. I learned later that the nearest of these peaks was thirty-two miles away and the farthest seventy-three miles. Yet so clear was the atmosphere that they seemed quite close. Over two-thirds of the horizon is covered by this line of stupendous heights, which form the roof of Asia. Darjeeling itself is perched on a ridge above the Ranjit and Teesta Rivers at an elevation which varies from 6,000 to 7,000 feet. Its bungalows are scattered among the pines and the firs. All the roads are winding and steep. Its people are mostly Nepalese and Tibetans; devout Buddhists, whose daily cry is the ancient "*Om Mani Padme Hum*"—"Hail the jewel in the lotus!"

Darjeeling, which means "Place of the Thunderbolt," is on the *Ultima Thule* of British territory in India. It is surrounded by Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan. Away to the north, successive ridges, like gigantic folds in the earth's surface, rise up to the great white barrier which forms the true frontier between the vast plains of India and the many lands and peoples of Central Asia. It was towards these frozen highlands that I found myself gazing, almost continuously, with a curious longing.

Determined to put an end to this lure, I rose one morning at the early hour of 3 A.M. The light breeze came from the snows above and had a keen edge after the heat of the plains. It reminded me of the strenuous days I had spent in past years high up in the Bolivian Andes, but here, on the top of Asia,

the scenery was more colourful and impressive. A sturdy hillman, who claimed to have taken part as a bearer in the second Mount Everest Expedition, and a shaggy little pony were waiting in the shivering air when I emerged from the hotel. The night was peculiarly dark as we rode out over the bare hillside.

Somehow these mountain ponies seem never to stumble or shy. Soon we entered a forest of firs and giant ferns, but the going became easier although nothing was visible in the black void. We climbed steadily for over an hour before the first pale saffron streaks of dawn eased the offensive gloom. The parchment-faced and Mongolian-featured guide shook his head as he gazed at the vivid bands of dark purple cloud away to the east. We reached our objective, the summit of Tiger Hill, after a steady climb of about seven miles. From this point it is possible on a clear morning to see the magic light from the rising sun sweep suddenly across the highest Himalayas to a far-distant white cone—a hundred miles away—which is the mysterious, unconquerable Mount Everest.

"There is no opportunity for any but the mountaineer to approach nearer to Everest than the Phallut Pass, a fifty-miles' trek from Darjeeling and nineteen miles as the crow flies—a journey of eight days which involves elaborate preparation, and can be made only at certain times of the year owing to its altitude, 11,811 feet," says a little official pamphlet on Darjeeling. Although Everest exercises a natural fascination for the explorer and mountaineer, it is the panorama of the Kanchenjunga Range, with a line of steep rocky slopes culminating in jagged ice-capped peaks, which forms the true fascination of Darjeeling.

Already the crisp mountain air had imparted a feeling of energy. Returning from my first and last view of Mount Everest, which, during subsequent days, remained veiled in cloud, I commenced exploring the market and quaint little bazaar of the town. It soon became evident how close this little hill-station is to the forbidden land of Tibet. The steep zigzag roads, combined with the altitude, make walking tiring, and I found it advisable for the first day or so to engage one of the line of rickshaws with native runners who were looking eagerly for a fare.

From this moving easy chair I witnessed many curious scenes with a by no means unpleasant mixture of interest and indolence. Here are the Tibetans, with their quaint headgear and untidy dress, leading pack mules; the Bhutanese, looking the embodiment of Eastern brigands, with their bright sashes and murderous *khookeries* dangling from bead and silver-buckled girdles; the Chinese shopkeepers, smiling and patient; the lamas from the surrounding temples; the Merwaris from the plains; Anglo-Indian visitors, planters, Government Forest and Revenue officers, riding or driving; beggars turning their praying-wheels and chanting with religious fervour; and the Nepalese themselves. These people are small and of Mongolian appearance, they are typical mountaineers, and from them are recruited some of the best fighting troops in the Indian Army.

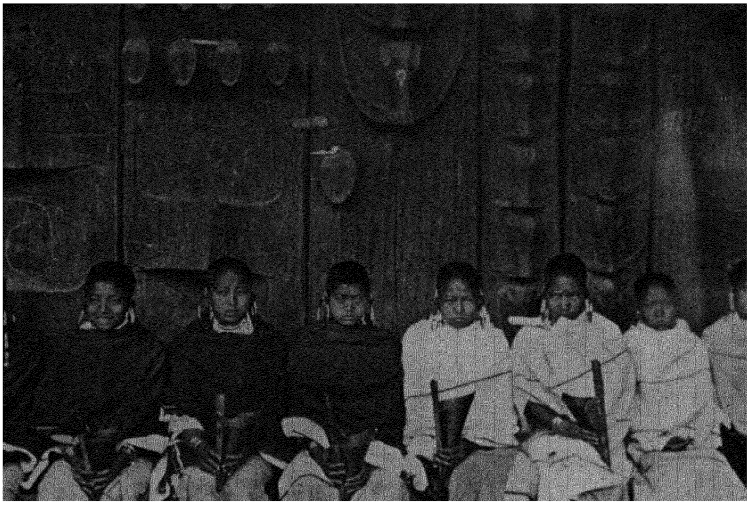
While wandering about the world, I have noticed that mountain races are generally physically superior to those whose natural habitat is on the low-lying plains. They are usually of a happier and more contented disposition, and, curiously enough, always seem willing to forego the pleasures of city life in

STREET COBBLERS—DELHI

STREET POTTERS—INDIA

Facing page 120—4.

GIRLS DANCING -NAGA HILLS, ASSAM



UNMARRIED GIRLS-NAGA HILLS, ASSAM

return for the sun and air of their mountain homes. Although appallingly ignorant, the hill people of Darjeeling reminded me of overgrown children, and the chubby little ones themselves, when one could see through the dirt, had the rosy glow which is seldom seen in exactly the same shade except on the faces of those who dwell either by the mountains or the sea.

In Darjeeling itself, and along the mountain roads of the surrounding highlands, I came across tall poles with printed Buddhist prayers on flags which were fluttering from them. Many of these had also a crude design representing the demons of the wind carrying the prayers to Heaven. Wherever these prayer-poles are seen, one is sure to come across a monastery or temple of the mystic creed of Buddhism. On the road to Lebong, a frontier military post, I entered a monastery, and was shown a drum made from a human skull together with a trumpet fashioned from a thigh bone. The devout Buddhist recites many of his thousands of weekly prayers by revolving a wheel, which, like a crude gramophone, produces a sound intended to be the usual "*Om Mani Padme Hum.*" In this monastery there was a wheel of this kind which measured about six feet in diameter, and it was certainly capable of saying, without much effort, quite a lot of prayers, intended to warn off evil spirits. I wondered what Gandhi would say to this mechanisation of even religion, which, however, dates back into the dim past.

Riding out one day along the mountain road beyond Ghoom, some four or five miles from Darjeeling, I came across another curious monastery, where I was able to see a dance by the lamas, or holy men of Tibet. It appears that these dances are

intended to disperse not only spirits with evil intentions but also human enemies. Their presentation to a Buddhist congregation forms part of a play in which a wicked chief is shown persecuting the lamas and destroying the monasteries. Notwithstanding the extremely dirty surroundings I watched this barbaric mime, which takes place in the dim light of the monastery.

The actors wore the most appallingly hideous masks, and their costumes represented devils and skeletons. To the noise of two immense trumpets, about ten feet in length, and many drums and cymbals, they performed weird dances. Although I was not able to follow the whole of this dumb show, it appeared that the villain, or wicked chief, was represented by a mass of bright red substance which had been placed in the centre of the little shadowy courtyard by figures representing ghouls. During the course of the dance, lamas appear with head-dresses representing the tiger, the monkey, and more weird animals which do not exist in the world to-day.

The effect gave me the impression of passing through a horrible nightmare. Viciously these monsters attacked the bloody mass in the centre. The tiger tore at it with his teeth, a stag-headed priest stabbed it with his horns, and the monkeys clawed it and scattered the pieces in the air. When the courtyard had been rendered disgusting with the blood-coloured fragments, the lamas in their hideous masks and dresses worked themselves into a frenzy during what is apparently a dance of death. Nothing more barbaric could well be conceived, although it is regarded as a highly religious ceremony—a kind of pastoral play of the Buddhist faith.

Suddenly, swords are drawn by the dancers and the air is full of whirling, slashing blades. Old flintlock muskets are then produced, and the explosions of the powder add to the din. The blue smoke of incense from four bronze pots was all the while impregnating the atmosphere with its pungent odours. Prayer-wheels were being turned with unaccustomed energy. The effigy of the Lord Buddha looked down upon the chief lama, his representative on earth, muttering prayers in the centre of the dancers.

The Tibetans among the onlookers were sucking some local drink through hollow reeds. On reaching the open air of the mountain side, I felt like one awakening from a bad dream. In distant Peiping I was to learn much more of the mysterious lama cult, which, despite the often friendly nature of its disciples, has much that is degrading and vicious in its practices.

CHAPTER XVII

PICTURE CITIES OF RAJPUTANA

I AM back in the busy, pulsating west, surrounded on one side by massive stone offices, motor cars and well-dressed pedestrians, and on the other by open gardens. Yet it is still India, although the sun and sky alone remain as evidence of the fact. The time is the busy hour of eleven in the morning and I am driving down the Chowringhee, Calcutta, which, despite the removal of the seat of political power to Delhi, has succeeded in maintaining its supremacy as the commercial capital of British India. In the early hours of the day, during what is known in India as the hot season, a drive along the Chowringhee—a broad thoroughfare facing the *maidan*, and lined on one side with hotels, museums, shops, and municipal offices—is decidedly enjoyable and interesting. It affords an unrivalled opportunity of studying the peculiarities of Anglo-Indian life. In this portion of India there are three seasons: the hot period lasting from the middle of March to the beginning of the rains in June; the rainy season usually begins about the middle of June and continues until the end of September; the cold season extends from November to the beginning of March.

The Chowringhee is the Piccadilly or Broadway of the European quarters. Motors are manœuvring

amid the seemingly careless native pedestrians, and there is the bustle and noise of a busy Western metropolis. Walking is not fashionable in India, and the pedestrians in the Chowringhee, or other thoroughfares away from the small residential and business sections, are composed of a few Europeans and Eurasians, or half-castes, among a large number of coolies and native women.

Undoubtedly the finest building in the whole of Calcutta is the Queen Victoria Memorial Hall, a white marble building with an immense dome, which was inaugurated as recently as 1921. It is considered by some people that this building rivals the Taj Mahal at Agra in magnificence. It was, however, in Dalhousie Square that I found most of interest, so far as the European portion of Calcutta is concerned. Here is Government House, the fine General Post Office, and the site of the " Black Hole," wherein was enacted the tragedy of the night of June 20th, 1756. The position of this chamber of horrors is now marked by a tablet in an arch of the veranda of the Post Office.

From this portion of Calcutta I made my way into old Fort William, built in 1773, but much altered since the stormy days which closed the eighteenth century. It stands on the banks of the Hugli River and is surrounded by a dry ditch, which can, however, be filled with water by a sluice from the river. The defences are still maintained to a certain extent, but there is little of interest now to be seen. Certainly one of the most fascinating buildings in Calcutta is the Jain Temple, an amazing structure of domes, pinnacles, and façades, standing in a garden decorated by queer statues and ornamental waters. There are,

in Calcutta, a large number of ornate temples, mosques, shrines and palaces, but it was not until I commenced exploring the teeming streets and bazaars of the native city that the real India again surrounded me. Calcutta, however, does not afford the best illustrations of Indian life, although, in the neighbourhood of the Chandni Chowk, I saw many of the sights made familiar by the bazaars of Benares, Delhi, and other cities of the plains.

Crossing the Hugli River, with its burning ghats and its immense variety of shipping, I made my way to the southern outskirts of the city. Here, in the Botanical Gardens, I saw the largest banyan tree in the world. It is 900 feet in circumference, but its appearance is more that of a grove than a single tree. Its aerial shoots resemble hundreds of tree trunks in miniature. My stay in Calcutta was cut short by a desire to see something of the native states, where the principal characteristics of Indian life have remained almost unchanged by the centuries.

The rose-pink city of Jaipur is situated in the land of chivalry. Words such as these savour somewhat of the "Arabian Nights"; and yet, as I look around at the Palace of the Winds, at a huge elephant trailing an immense chain and bell, at the Chandra Mahal, or Palace of the Maharaja, at tiers of fanciful architecture in pyramidal form, and at rosy masonry with mauve shadows, I realise that Jaipur is, indeed, different from any other city in India. Remembering also that this land of Rajputana, although now divided into a number of native states, of which Jaipur is but a single example, is inhabited and still owned by that race of Indian soldiers and hunters, the Rajputs,

who ruled India before the Mohammedan conquest, and whose deeds are among the most stirring in the history of the Eastern world, there can be little doubt that this heart of Hindustan is a land of chivalry. Even the name *Rajput* means "Son of Sovereignty."

This city of Jaipur is the only town in India built with straight roads and rectangular blocks of buildings. The main streets are 111 feet wide. Jaipur, however, is modern when regarded from the Indian standpoint, for it was built by the soldier-statesman and astronomer, the Maharaja Jai Singh, in 1728. Kipling remarks that "many years afterwards the good people of America builded their towns after this pattern, but knowing nothing of Jai Singh, they took all the credit to themselves."

Space, light and colour are the impressions I obtained when first I walked down the main street of this amazing city of pink stone. In yet another way is this capital of a Rajput state different from all other cities in the world, astronomy was the incentive of its creator. When Jai Singh set out to construct his capital, with his own fantastic palace as its centre, he created something of a stir in the world of those days. Jai Singh's hobby was astronomy, and he spent years in the study of this science, becoming one of the great astronomers of the early eighteenth century.

Certainly one of the most interesting features of the palace of Jaipur is the Yantra, or Observatory. It is the largest one of the five which this astronomer-king constructed in India. Here is to be seen an immense sundial which is a marvel of accuracy, and shows clearly the depth of Jai Singh's knowledge. Nearly

all the instruments in this extraordinary place are constructed of stone. Jai Singh considered that brass would prove unreliable in the heat. There is one building, however, which surpasses all others for ingenuity: it is called the Sanrat Yantra. I entered this eerie chamber, which is both lofty and narrow. It is arranged so that the light shall penetrate only through minute apertures high up in the roof. At midday the sun shone through these tiny holes for exactly one minute, and I watched the rays fall on circular arcs which are graduated so that the sun's meridian, altitude, zenith, distance and declination can be calculated. There are, of course, many other extraordinary instruments in this observatory, but I must confess myself unable to describe their purpose intelligently.

Within the palace enclosure, besides this observatory, there are the administrative offices, the Law Courts, the Treasury and a private theatre. Like the Incas of Peru, the Rajputs believed themselves to be the descendants of the Sun, and for this reason the main gate of the palace faces the east. In the Chandra Mahal, or residence of the Maharaja, which is a fantastic building of seven storeys built on the skyscraper principle with each floor inset on the roof of the one below, there are some amazing apartments which conjure visions of true Oriental splendour. The Halls of Private and Public Audience are amazingly beautiful, the Winter Chamber is glazed with talc, and the Halls of Pleasure and Brilliancy do not belie their name. The carpets covering the floors of these gorgeous apartments were made in the Jaipur jail. On state occasions, when the palace is alive with silk and jewel-clad men and haunting

melodies of the long-ago are being played on centuries-old instruments, the world of to-day passes away as if by magic.

Here is what another traveller has said of this beautiful city : " Wander through these wide streets, those salmon-coloured houses, those ramparts painted with great flowers, palace yards with their frescoes of frenzied gods, those gardens, those squares where the Rajput horseman rides past on his stallion with the gaudy trappings, his curved ' tulwar ' at his side, his beard parted and trained close down on either cheek, an aigrette on his forehead. He loves hunting, beautiful swords and beautiful women. No iliad but pales beside the stories of love and death that go to make up the annals of Rajisthan."

The gardens of the palace are watered the year round by artificial rain showers from many fountains, and in a clump of palms I came upon a monument erected by the late Maharaja to a pet dog who carried the letters from the ladies in the *zenana* to their lord in the palace itself. The crocodile pool of Jaipur is considered to be one of the sights of Rajputana. These reptiles are fed daily, at Government expense, by an old man who plays with them fearlessly. The birds and beasts of this city appear to have a jolly time. Monkeys climb all over the houses and verandas, thousands of pigeons are fed every morning, and peacocks walk about in the streets conscious of their sanctity and immunity from harm.

In the Armoury there are many weapons which tell a stirring tale of the days when the Rajputs of Jaipur rode with bloody tulwar on many a stricken field. One gigantic sword, weighing over sixty pounds, was that wielded by Raja Man Singh, to

whom was entrusted the command of an army by Akbar, the Great Moghul. Among the more unique specimens is a marvellously flexible sword-belt, a scabbard, as sharp as the blade it contains, and a number of wonderfully wrought and decorated spears, knives and daggers. The whole collection is beautifully displayed, with gold sceptres and peacock feathers to lend a touch of colour to polished steel and filigree.

One of the ancient industries of Jaipur is embroidering in metal. Only those holding a Government licence are allowed to engage in this work. The thread used is either of pure gold or silver, no alloy is permitted. Some excellent examples of the beautiful work produced are the canopies of the carriages of state, and the gold and peacock sceptres which adorn the Armoury.

In the Albert Museum there is a most interesting assembly showing the arts and crafts of Jaipur. Jewels, enamel and brass blaze from every case, but the specimens that intrigued me most were the papier-mâché models showing the many picturesque and brilliant turbans worn in Rajputana. In addition to these hundred or more forms of head-dress there are the models of the inhabitants of the state who wear them. I was told that the features are reproduced with great accuracy, and the collection, therefore, has an ethnographical as well as an artistic interest.

In the Ran Newas, or Public Garden, which surrounds the Albert Museum, there is a small collection of wild animals. Many of these had been recently captured at the time of my visit, and were, consequently, extremely fierce. To tell you what I thought of that amazing building, the Hall of Winds,

which was built to enable the ladies of the *zenana* to view the life of the main street of the capital through gossamer-like trellis-work without themselves being seen, would mean the use of words which could not convey either a mental picture of the building—fairy palace would be a better title—or the curious thrill which I felt while gazing at its ornate and voluptuous beauty.

It is now used during the period of the Durbar as a residence for distinguished guests. Perhaps Sir Edwin Arnold's description will stimulate the imagination. He calls it a vision of daring and dainty loveliness, "nine storeys of rosy masonry and delicate overhanging balconies, and latticed windows, soaring with tier after tier of fanciful architecture in a pyramidal form, a very mountain of airy and audacious beauty, through the thousand pierced screens and gilded arches of which the Indian air blows cool over the flat roofs of the very highest houses. Aladdin's magician could have called into existence no more marvellous abode. . . ."

In nomenclature as well as in architecture such purely Indian cities as Jaipur are peculiarly romantic. Another building of alluring title and design is the Swarga Suli, or "Heaven-Darting Tower," which was built by order of an inquisitive ruler to enable him to watch and spy on his subjects unobserved. The Chattris, or Cenotaphs, of the Maharajas of Jaipur are extremely beautiful. With the delightful background of foliage, the marble monuments seem to have for their centre the one designed to commemorate the rule of Jai Singh. Beneath the dome of this shrine a lamp has been burning for nearly two centuries.

Before leaving Jaipur I passed through the Residency, another amazing building, and into the bazaars where some of the finest damascene work was on view in the curio and jewellery shops. Lapis lazuli, amber, jade and exquisite enamel ware, with designs copied from old Persian works of art, made me wonder from whence came the people to buy these choice things.

By motor and elephant I reached the deserted city of Ambèr. No longer is the elephant necessary, even for the last two miles of road as in the days of yore, but in order to approach this city and feel its mediæval thrill I resorted to this old-world mode of transport for the journey up the Kali Koh Gorge, between overhanging cliffs and jagged rocks. Ambèr was the predecessor of the city of Jaipur, and Pierre Loti has likened it to an eagle's nest. In many ways this deserted city is similar to Fatehpur Sikri, and the old castle forms its centre-piece.

It was up to the great bronze doors of this imposing royal palace, which reached the zenith of its magnificence during the middle of the seventeenth century, that I rolled in silent, soft-footed state, on the back of an immense elephant. This journey brought to mind visions of the splendour of past ages ; happily these scenes of pageantry have not yet departed from India. I shall not attempt to describe in detail either the amazing palace or the flanking forts of this peopleless city. It is a mass of courtyards, wherein occurred the elephant fights, the mortal combats, the pomp and the circumstance, and even the human sacrifice ordained by strange deities and kings. One story alone will illustrate the fierce jealousy of those bygone days.

When the owner of this castle, Jai Singh, built for himself a Hall of Audience equal in magnificence to those of Delhi and Agra, the Great Moghul grew indignant "at the thought of its beauty," and he dispatched retainers to destroy it. Jai Singh was, however, a man of ideas. He covered the beautiful sandstone walls and the grey-green polished columns of marble with a thick coating of stucco, making it both tawdry and cheap in appearance. When the agents of the Great Moghul arrived they looked at this Diwan-i-Am with disgust. It did not equal even the slaves' quarters in the fort of Delhi. They returned to the Emperor with the report that there was nothing worth destroying in the palace of Ambèr.

In the little temple of the Goddess Kali, wife of Siva, there is still to be seen a jewelled shrine of exceptional magnificence. It was here that the human sacrifices recorded in Indian history used to take place so frequently. Now, however, goats and buffaloes only are slaughtered to appease the appetite of this bloodthirsty goddess. There is a doorway which is often considered to be one of the finest in the world. It is the portal by which the dining-hall of the palace is reached. Mosaic work and sculpture have seldom been employed more effectively than in the ornamentation of this entrance. The hall itself is decorated with some amazing wall pictures of Hindu places of pilgrimage. In the "Abode of Delight" a rivulet of water from a fall once flowed with cooling effect, and the glimpses obtained through the trellis screens of beautiful gardens and arches causes one to realise what life must have been like in this playroom of mediæval Eastern kings when surrounded by their slaves and dancers. The houses

and baths of the *zenana* favourites, and the glittering Hall of Victory, still gay with mirrors, spangles and dadoes, showing coloured butterflies, birds and flowers, certainly refutes the idea that the beauty of life has increased with the passing of the centuries.

Feudal India in bygone times must have provided some vivid contrasts. These exquisite palaces were always surrounded by the crude mud-brick hovels of the people. Life was, however, more communal. There can be no doubt that these retainers, serfs and traders delighted in the pageantry of their rulers. They took part therein, and enjoyed its dazzling interest quite as much as they did the often cruel but always theatrical processions and festivals of their idolatrous religious cults. Here is an example : the rulers of Ambèr once decided that a popular form of entertainment for themselves as well as for their people would be the holding of moonlight Durbars. For these events special terraces were constructed on to which the heavenly light could stream to some purpose. Standing on one of these detached masses of masonry in the radiance of a full moon, I peopled again in imagination this old palace and city of Rajputana.

A few miles away stands the pilgrim-city of Galta. I reached this by a zigzag path which led to the Sun Gate, appropriately named because the *alpha* and *omega* of the town's existence is the Temple of the Sun God. Here, during the vernal equinox, these Rajput worshippers of the heavenly body responsible for the world's life, light and heat hold mediæval festival. This ceremony is said to be one of the most brilliant pageants to be seen in a state which still retains so much that is truly Eastern and bizarre.

Starting from the Temple of the Sun God an image of this deity is carried with fitting pomp and circumstance through the streets of the near-by capital.

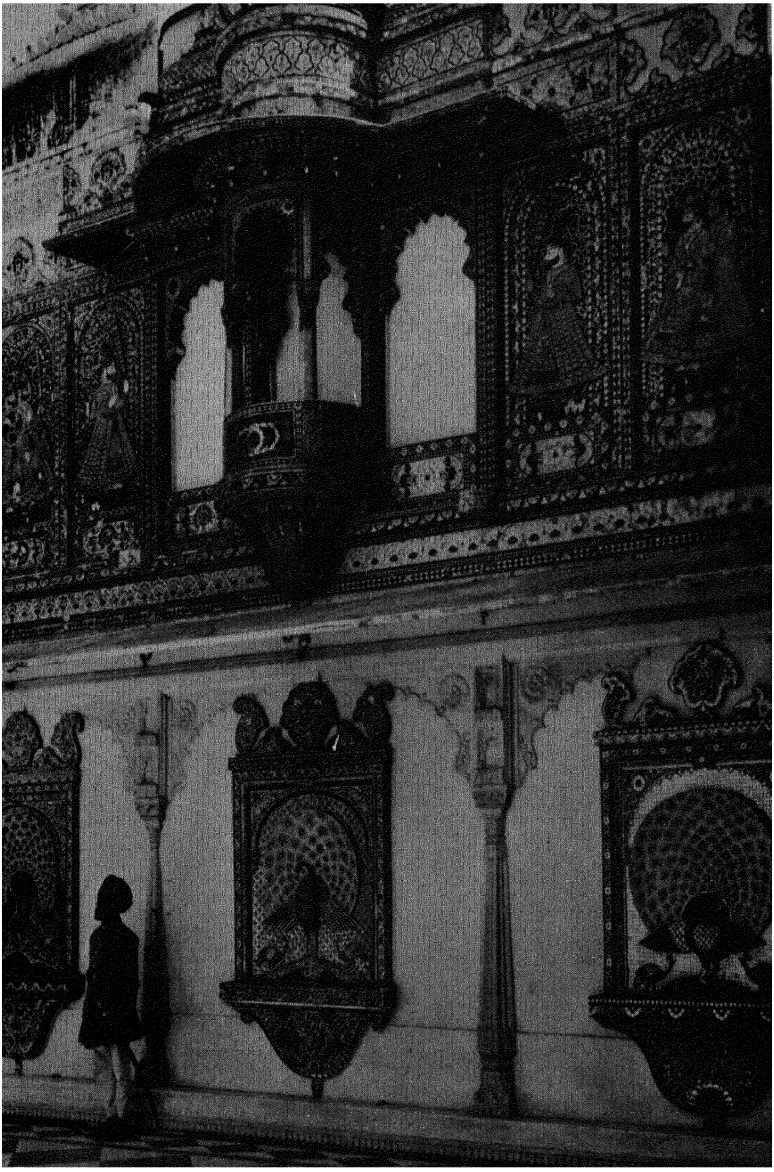
"The Lake City of India"—such is Udaipur, another capital of another Rajput state. Imagine a sheet of limpid water with two palace-islands glittering like jewels on its pearly surface and a more distant line of pinkish-white eastern buildings fading into mauve-blue hills, and you will have an impressionist picture of the great artificial lake, the city, and the water-palaces of Udaipur, which, for soft beauty, has no rival in India.

It is at sunrise that the great Pichola Lake achieves artistic fame. An early morning excursion is no hardship in India. One rises and dresses in the cool breath of dawn, then, with all around hazy and blurred in the half-light, the necessary exercise, rendered impossible during the heat and glare of midday, can be enjoyed with a zest which is not only physical but mental as well. This in large measure accounted for my presence on the lake while the sun was rising above a distant rim of blue-grey hills. A line of fire suddenly flashed along the sky-line of the city and the palaces across the water. The whole panorama of Udaipur was unfolded in a moment. The misty grey lake became blue and sparkling. At the distant bathing *ghat*, coloured *saris*, brown figures, and gleaming brass moved beneath the golden walls of the sunlit palace. Towards the forefront of this picture the limpid surface of the lake, now tinged with yellow light, was broken by the two island-palaces amid their little gardens of vivid green palms.

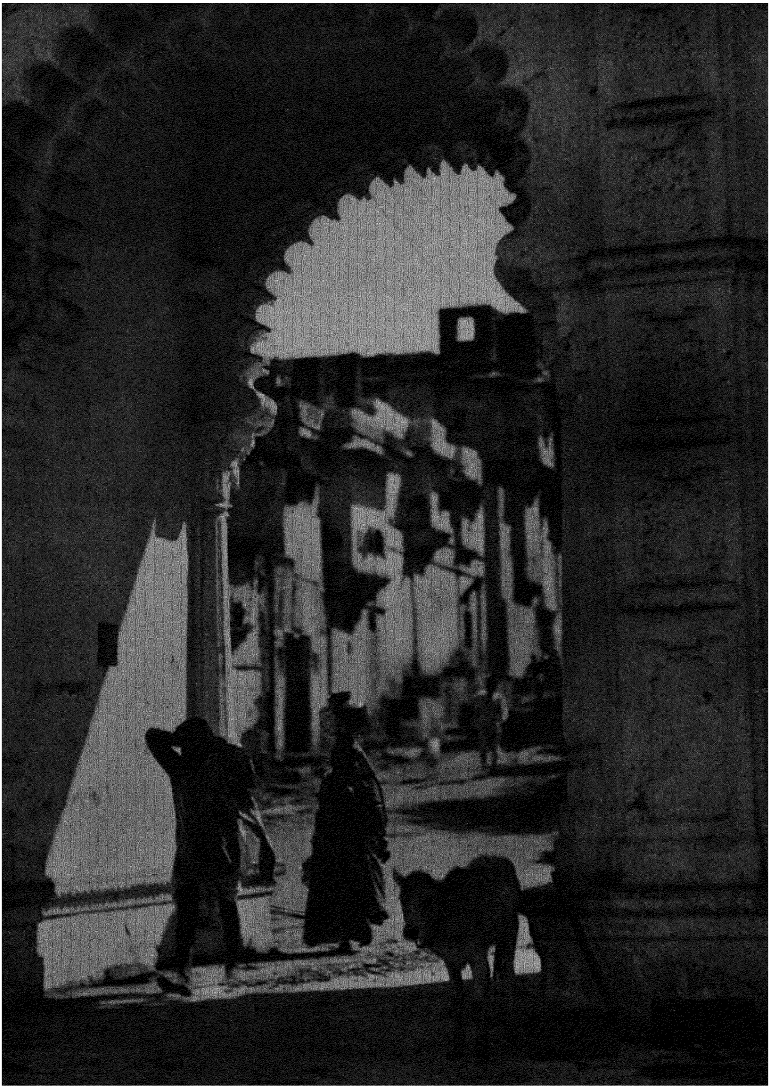
With the shortening of the shadows, the glare from the water increased and the time came to land and explore these places of beauty.

I wandered through the marble halls of the vast main palace, which has its western face turned towards the lake, then through the streets and bazaars, gay with colours and seemingly oblivious of the world beyond the water and the hills, and out to the lake-island where love and music seemed the only things which could possibly count in such surroundings. Somehow it would appear that man cannot live without excitement. It is in the most peaceful place that one will often find the cruellest sport. On a hill at the end of the Pichola Lake there is a small arena, where fights between tigers and wild pigs are staged to awaken this fairy-city from a contemplation of its beauty.*

* Far away from India, in south central France, the same incongruity occurs. In old-world Nîmes take place the most exciting bull-fights outside Spain and Peru.



DECORATIVE WALL, THE PALACE—UDAIPUR



A GATEWAY IN UDAIPUR

Facing page 136—4.

CHAPTER XVIII

IN THE GOLDEN TEMPLE OF AMRITSAR

NORTHWARDS from Udaipur across the Rajputana desert—a veritable land of death—and in the centre of the more fertile Punjab, there is Amritsar, the City of the Golden Temple and of the Pool of Immortality. India is a country of immense distances. No journey is referred to as a long one unless it exceeds a thousand miles. How many days and nights one spends in the spacious four-berth compartments of its really comfortable railway trains, while crossing and recrossing its plains and hills in a vain endeavour to explore its beauties and understand its peculiarities, is a calculation which few travellers care to make. Why count the cost of life's most precious medium of exchange? India is the East, where time means so little.

In this holy city of the Sikhs there is one great temple which transcends all others in the Punjab, both in regard to sanctity and beauty. Sikhism is said to be a phase of Hinduism which rejects idolatry and recognises one formless and timeless god, called *Hari*. The centre of this belief is the *Darbar Sahed*, or Golden Temple, with its Pool of Immortality, and it was to this place that I drove on my first day in Amritsar. The temple precincts are surrounded by *bungahs*, or houses in which the important chiefs

reside when they come to worship at this vatican of the faith. The pavements surrounding the pool are of marble brought from Jaipur. In the midst of this little artificial lake—some 470 feet square—and approached by a marble causeway, stands the Golden Temple. Whether seen in the vivid light of the sun or in the more gentle rays of the moon, it makes a deep impression on the mind. The lower walls are of snow-white marble decorated with arabesques in precious stones. Above this chaste dado all the walls, columns, cupolas and ornamented domes are of gilded copper, which blazes in the sunshine like a temple aflame. It is easier during the noon hour to gaze at the reflection in the pool than at the temple itself, but in the more subdued light of the afterglow there are few sights to compare with the Golden Temple of Amritsar.

It is an island-shrine, and along the causeway leading to it there are many sellers of jasmine, lotus, marigolds and other flowers which are considered suitable offerings to the Holy Granth. Here, as elsewhere in India, one meets with some strange incongruities. These commenced, for me, when landing by tender at Bombay. I was approached by a tall and grave-faced native to know if I would like my ears cleaned with two little steel instruments which he was dangling playfully in front of my face. Here, at the entrance to the Golden Temple, a chiropodist was attending to the toe-nails of a Sikh whose hair and beard had never been cut by either scissors or razor. The Sikhs are warriors, and one meets but few who do not impress with their dignified bearing. Just before entering the temple I saw an immensely tall man, wearing a conical hat decorated with steel,

bowing to a picture of *Nanak*, founder of the Sikh religion.

Passing through a gateway of marble, I was led to an upper room and shown the wonderful jewels which adorn the holy emblems during processions and festivals — gold canopies studded with diamonds, emeralds and rubies of no mean size, pearls in strings and fringes, and gold-handled wands. It is easy to become *blasé* to the precious metals and stones of India, because of their lavish employment in all royal and religious ceremonies.

In the water of the pool devout pilgrims were washing away their sins at the same time as the dust of travel, while other figures in spotless white robes were solemnly gazing into the waters and muttering the sacred name of *Hari*. There is, however, a kindliness in the Sikh which is more than skin-deep. It is part of his religious belief to couple this virtue with truthfulness. They are handsome men, with black beards divided in the centre and turned back in the form of two plaits into the whiskers. Neither the head nor the face may be shaved. The hair of the women is plaited at the back of the head and stands out in a form of knob; their ears are loaded with gigantic rings. Wherever one travels in the British East—from Singapore to Hong-Kong—the Sikh will be found as the guardian of peace and order.

The sound of chanting came from the inner shrine of the Golden Temple, but this ceased almost as soon as I crossed the threshold. Everywhere there were silent worshippers, and in the centre beneath a canopy there rested, on cushions, an immense Sikh Bible, wrapped in silk and covered with rose petals.

Near by were several little heaps of grain, the offerings of the devout. A white-turbaned priest was continually waving a kind of fan over the holy book to prevent flies settling on the silken cover. A circle of figures, with attentive dark faces, were sitting on the floor. The coloured designs on the ceiling were reflected by the light on to their white robes and turbans, giving the scene a truly Oriental picturesqueness.

With grave courtesy the priest, or really leader of the chanting, uncovered the holy book so that I could see the strange writing, and at the same time presented me with a cup of what appeared to be white sugar. It was, however, the sacred sweet. Then a rose from among the petals and blooms I had seen strewn on the silken wrapper was handed to me, and the reception ceremony was over.

Before ascending the gallery leading to the upper part of the temple, I observed that the worshippers, as they entered or left, first prostrated themselves on the floor, bowing so low that their heads touched it, then laying their palms also on the stone, they rose and placed their hands on their own foreheads. On the temple roof I wandered about between the shining gold cupolas, careful always to avoid the sacred circle drawn on the roof above the spot where the sacred writings reposed in the hall below. As I left the Golden Temple the chanting was resumed, and for long afterwards the *Hymn of Hari* resounded in my ears.

Amritsar is a city of towers, turrets and flat-roofed houses. The green of many gardens relieves the glare from the sunlit white stone. It was, however, in the marts and bazaars that I found the most of

interest. This city of Northern India is famous for its copper, brass and piece goods. While wandering through its streets, it became increasingly evident that the wares of Central Asia are brought to this city for distribution.

CHAPTER XIX

THE FRENZY OF THE JAGANNATH

BEING in Calcutta, preparing to leave India before the breaking of the monsoon, I chanced to hear of the Car Festival of Jagannath, and forthwith took train to Puri, on the surf-beaten shores of the Bay of Bengal. This town is the only place in all India where caste restrictions are removed, and the Brahman pilgrim can live with the "untouchable" without the dire consequences which would result elsewhere. Curiously enough, as I found to my cost, this same relaxation of restrictions does not apply to the Christian. Walking over the sands I approached the great temple, which is surrounded by double walls twenty feet high, and discovered that although I could approach the gate, no white man has ever entered the portals of Vishnu's most holy shrine—the abode of the "Lord of Creation." It mattered nothing that the dirtiest and most lowly Hindu pilgrim could pass through one or other of the gateways at any hour of the day or night.

The temples containing the images of Jagannath and his brother and sister were built about 800 years ago, and since then have attracted thousands of pilgrims every year. The town of Puri is full of large and small houses, mostly owned by Brahmans, in which the pilgrims are housed. One of the sights

FESTIVAL OF THE JAGANNATH—PURI

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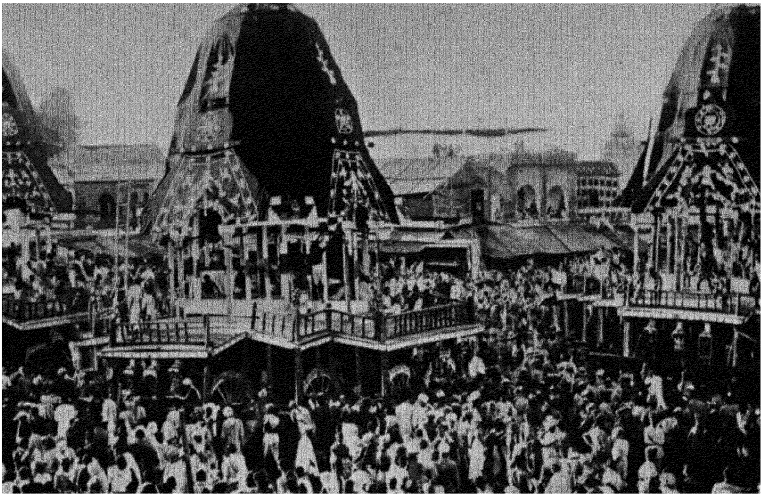
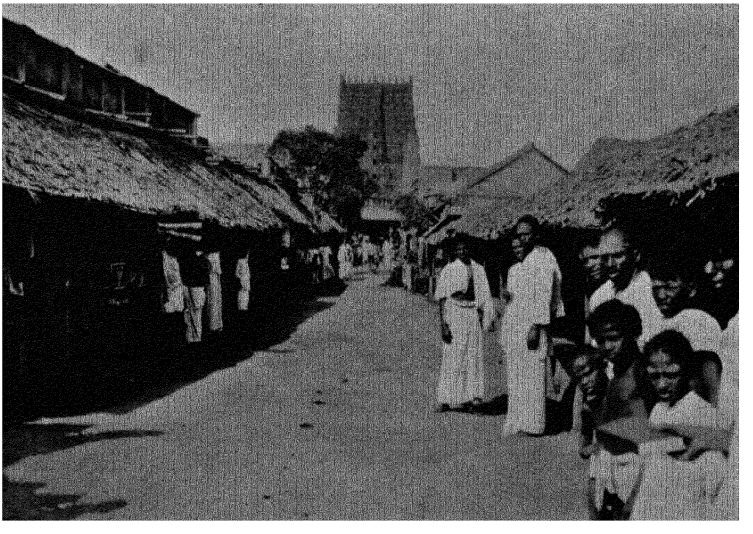


JAGANNATH CARS—PURI



MADURA (S. INDIA)

of the place is to watch these pilgrims in their multifarious costumes streaming from the houses in which they lodge to the native restaurants in the bazaars at which they take their meals. So far as I could learn, each pilgrim pays according to his means. The Jagannath temples are situated on a slight eminence at the end of the Bara Danda, a broad avenue over a mile in length.

Although I could not enter the sacred precincts, I learned that the images which form the centre-pieces of one of the most amazing religious processions in the world are kept in what is known as the White Pagoda. Near by stands the Hall of Offering, and I was told that the sums of money deposited here each year by the half million or so pilgrims who come from all parts of Hindu India amount to an enormous figure.

Just before the breaking of the monsoon, these sacred images are removed to what is called the "Sick Chamber," where they are carefully repainted in preparation for the forthcoming ceremony. In a house specially constructed for their reception, and situated on one side of the avenue leading to this temple, are kept the colossal Jagannath cars. The largest one has sixteen wheels of solid wood, held together by beams. The wheels are seven feet in diameter, and the car measures thirty-five feet square. The two other vehicles, intended for the transport of the brother and sister of this god, are somewhat smaller. While the images are being repainted an immense erection, resembling a conical temple some forty-five feet high, is built up upon the principal car. This erection is of wood and bamboo. Similar structures are placed on the two smaller cars.

Securing a privileged position on the Bara Danda,

I watched the thousands of pilgrims and others assemble for this amazing festival. In past years, before the police were present to regulate the vast crowds, accidents, and even suicides, engendered by the religious fanaticism evoked by the passage of the cars, often occurred. These happenings gave rise to the fable of the so-called "Juggernaut Car." It was said that pilgrims cast themselves beneath the ponderous wheels and were crushed to death. It is, however, doubtful if many people ever threw themselves deliberately under the awful wheels, but it is beyond dispute that a very large number died beneath these cars through the frenzy and pressure of the crowd.

The scene on the day of the procession is almost beyond the powers of description. The whole of this vast avenue, nearly 200 feet in width, was crowded to suffocation with men, women and children, old and young, wealthy and poor. The leper elbowed the blind and the lame clung to the strong. Tall Punjabis stood beside the shaven-headed and darker-complexioned Madrasis, and all were excited to such a pitch of religious fervour, long before the procession arrived, that it became a source of wonder as to how these gigantic cars would get through the moving, swaying and seemingly demented crowds. Looking over this strange sight, I realised what the idolatrous religions mean to the masses of India. Curiously incongruous were the thousands of umbrellas held by both men and women to protect their turbaned, skull-capped, or *sari*-covered heads from the fierce rays of the sun.

The course taken by the procession extends from the Lion Gate down the broad avenue to the Garden

of Pleasure, a distance of about a mile and a half. The images are brought out from the Jagannath Temple and placed ceremoniously on platforms high up on their respective cars. At this moment the scene passes the bounds of reason. Hundreds of police line the street and force back the crowds. Thousands of pilgrims throw themselves on to the ground and press their faces into the dust, then, rising up, they seize the ropes, over six inches in diameter, and pull the car with frenzied zeal along the broad and dust-filled roadway.

The decorations, especially of the Jagannath car, are truly extraordinary. Silver and gold tinsel, with festoons of flowers and queer images, are all piled up in a pyramid of gaudy colour on a platform raised some ten feet above the axles of the wheels. Almost every one among the thousands of spectators endeavours to get hold of the rope and pull. It matters not that their efforts are confined to a second or two by the pushing and scrambling multitude eager to perform an act so meritorious in the sight of the "Lord of Creation." When viewing this festival as it exists to-day, it is easy to understand the terrible spectacle of the past, when men, women and children fell beneath the ponderous wheels, giving rise to the stories of the Juggernaut Car.

CHAPTER XX

RANGOON

"SO this is Rangoon!" The exclamation was one of sheer surprise after I had been driven through the Europeanised streets leading inland from the Strand Road to Dalhousie Park. It was not the busy commercial thoroughfares of this great seaport, with its 350,000 heterogeneous peoples, situated some twenty-one miles up the Rangoon River, which caused amazement, but the discovery that the crossing of the Bay of Bengal from Calcutta—a mere 780 miles—had so completely changed my whole surroundings. The atmosphere was no longer that of India. Every passer-by, every building, even the odours of the bazaars, told of a new realm which was neither the Hindustan to which I had grown accustomed nor the next great land of Asia, the teeming, amazingly dirty, mysterious and inscrutable China.

I glanced from beneath the Great Pagoda at the passing show, and realised how very mixed is the population of this capital of Lower Burma. There were almost as many half-naked Madrasi labourers, seamen from the Andaman and Laccadive Islands, Parsee and Bengali merchants, Chinese shopkeepers, and yellow-robed priests of various Asiatic races acknowledging Buddha's holy sway as there were

Burmese, whose indolent, pleasure-loving ways give the necessary opening in this big city to the more enterprising races of both India and China.

Rangoon is largely European in architecture, with fine streets, squares, drives, commercial buildings, and quays—accommodating a surprising medley of ocean shipping and also of river steamers and quaint native craft. It is a most picturesque town, and is dominated by the lofty Shwè Dagon Pagoda which rears its gilded spire 368 feet skywards from amid green trees and the smaller spires of surrounding shrines. By day this historic pagoda glitters amazingly when the fierce sun of tropical Burma flashes its bright rays on the golden dome, and at night it is illuminated by circles of electric lights. I noticed while journeying through Burma to the Chinese frontier that several of these old pagodas, even in the remote interior, possess their own electric generating plant and are illuminated at night.

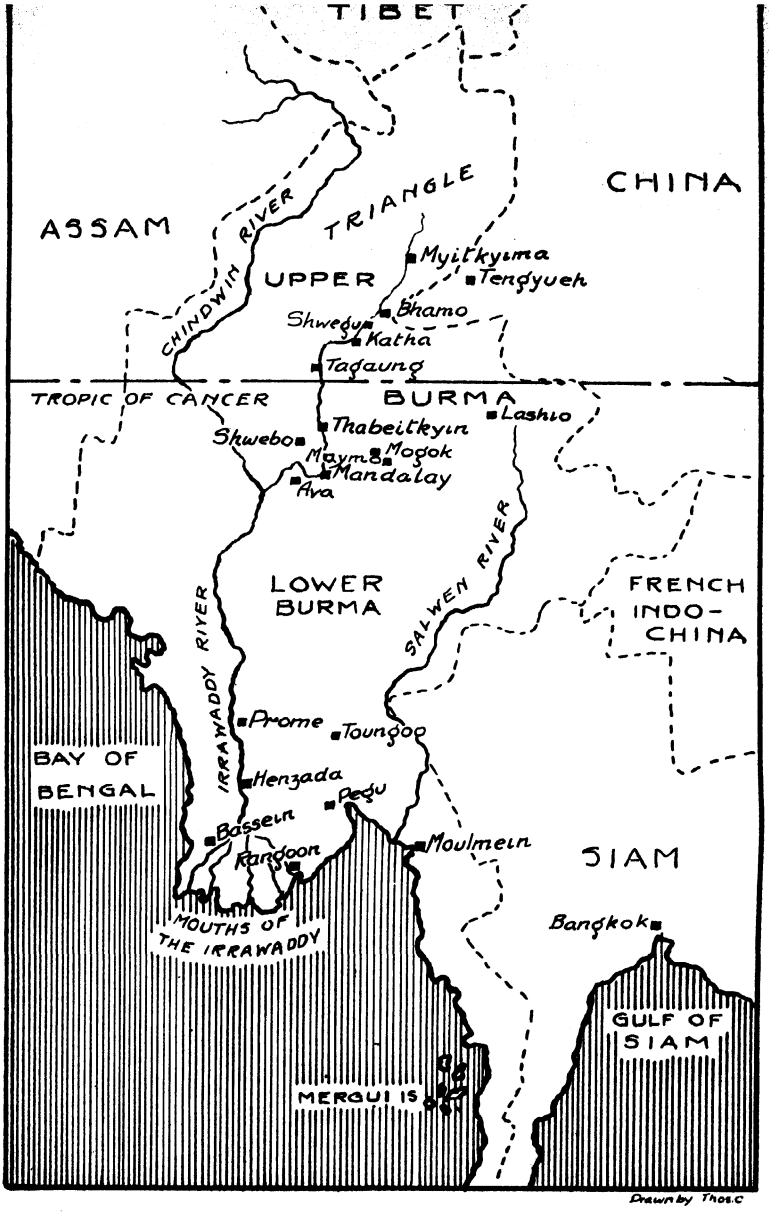
The Strand Road, facing the river, and the streets leading back from this, comprise the most important European commercial quarters, while the Cantonment Gardens, the Dalhousie Park and the Royal Lakes are favourite and pretty residential districts on the outskirts of the city. I commenced my rambles in Rangoon by a climb up the long flight of steps, bordered by stalls and shops displaying all the wares peculiar to Eastern bazaars, on to the temple platform of the Great Pagoda. In the shadow of the Shwè Dagon are the graves of the few British soldiers and sailors who were killed in the storming of this amazing edifice over half a century ago.

Although I have learned to respect the religious beliefs and often queer customs of many Eastern

peoples, it is both galling and repugnant to be requested to remove not only one's shoes but socks as well, and to walk barefooted on the floor of the vast Shwè Dagon Pagoda. Experience with Oriental races has taught me that such a request by the priests is not made to avoid injuring the religious scruples of the many worshippers at this shrine, nor is it in keeping with the usual and perfectly reasonable demand that shoes worn in the street should be covered by a loose slipper supplied to Europeans at the entrance to all Eastern mosques and temples. This demand that I should walk barefooted had in it the symptom of one of those dangerous and periodic moods of hostility to the Christian which ever and anon make their appearance in the fanatical East. However, I was allowed to compromise, and entered the temple and its satellite shrines in stockinged feet.

The interior of the Shwè Dagon was dim with the smoke of many lighted candles which surrounded an enormous and grotesque figure of Buddha. In this weird light saffron-robed priests moved amid the brightly dressed kneeling figures paying homage at the central shrine. Below the image of Buddha there were pious offerings, varying from a bowl of rice to a few custard apples. I noticed also a bunch of flowers which appeared to be tied with human hair. To the Shwè Dagon and its numerous shrines come yearly thousands of Buddhist pilgrims from all parts of Burma, Siam, the Malay States and Ceylon, for it is the oldest and most sacred pagoda—the " Mecca " of the pure Buddhist faith as practised in these countries.

This wonderful golden edifice, which towers high above Rangoon, stands on the temple platform.



BURMA

Facing page 148—4.

Walking out into the sunlight streaming down on to this raised plateau after the reeking interior of the temple itself seemed like emerging from the Pit of Tophet. Here were many smaller shrines rearing their spires towards the gleaming sky against a background of green trees. Groups of priests with their yellow toga-like robes thrown over their left shoulders and carrying palm-leaf umbrellas were moving from one group of pilgrims, or shrine, to another.

Then I came to an immense statue of Buddha surrounded by coco-nut palms, and a little farther on there was an amazing shrine of gilt and lacquer with jolly gods on each side holding tiny sceptres. Below them, on the ground in front of the shrine, there were four carved and gruesome figures. One depicted in melancholy detail the effect of old age, a second showed the emaciated body and features of a man stricken with sickness, the third portrayed death, with vultures and dogs devouring the corpse, while the fourth showed piety—a skeleton-like figure passing *old age*, *sickness* and *death* with a look of serene indifference on the face and leaning heavily on a long stick. Figures of Burmese ladies in attitudes suggesting laughter, dance and song ornamented the entrance of what appeared to be an inner temple. The whole platform, however, seemed both dirty and dilapidated. The Buddhist faith is a curious one, and I was to learn much more concerning it during my wanderings in China.

Rangoon is at heart both pagan and poetical, for the Burmese are lovers of the arts and gods. They are merry, yet, withal, very religious. The Buddhist priest is supposed, and very often does, beg his daily

bread from door to door. One sees these brownish-yellow complexioned, saffron-robed men carrying their rice bowl on the daily begging round from house to house. Into this receptacle the people place their offerings. How such a vast number of priests succeed in obtaining subsistence in this way out of the comparatively poverty-stricken multitudes of these Eastern cities it is difficult to conceive. The Burman is a happy, laughter-loving fellow dressed in a bright-coloured *sarong*, or skirt, and an equally gaudy short coat. He enjoys nothing so much as making love, smoking, chewing betel-nut and spitting the bright red juice on the ground, and watching a *Pwe*, or native song and dance.

The diminutive, pale-faced maiden of this land of sunshine, unlike her Mohammedan sisters, does not hide her face from the world, but walks abroad prettily dressed in a white jacket, her head adorned with flowers, a cheroot between her lips, and bright-coloured silk swathing her legs and sometimes the whole of her body. Not all Burmese men and women are dressed in this way, however. The boatmen of the Irrawaddy, which is navigable for about 900 miles from its mouth near Rangoon almost to the Chinese frontier, and on the Salwen, which crosses the country to Siam, make picturesque figures in their immense straw hats. The upper half of their brown bodies is usually bare, while the lower half is encased in striped or plain-coloured bell-bottomed trousers. Then there are those who wear little yellow, red or blue pill-box hats, and the wild tribesmen of the frontier, the Kachins, Karens and Shans, whom I was to meet on my journey through the Irrawaddy defiles to the Chinese Province of Yunnan.

After searching among the Buddhist pagodas, the Hindu temples, and the Chinese joss-houses, scattered among the medley of bazaars, low-roofed houses and matting-covered huts built on poles along the river-banks, I came to the conclusion that beyond the Chinese silk stores, with their amazing array of coloured fabrics and gold and silver embroideries, there was little to detain me longer in Rangoon. The timber yards on the banks of the river, down which the teak logs from the forests of Upper Burma are floated to the coast, did give an idea of the magnitude of this important industry. The average annual export of teak from Burma amounts to 350,000 tons. Elephants draw the huge logs to the sawmills, and it was an interesting sight to watch these intelligent animals at work lifting the logs with their trunks and placing them feather-like on the ground.

CHAPTER XXI

THE WAY TO MANDALAY

THE road to Mandalay is such an old theme for both poetry and prose that it would be superfluous to do more than mention here that for many years now it has been a metal track, 386 miles in length, over which run the comfortable trains of the Burma railway.

Leaving Rangoon in the cool of the early evening, after a fiery day, during which the temperature had climbed to well over a hundred degrees Fahrenheit in the shade, I sat with the breeze of passage coming through the open carriage window, watching the endless succession of rice-fields, the pinnacles of innumerable shrines, and the pointed thatched roofs of huts raised above the flood-line on poles. Two things occurred to me as the miles rolled by. One was the atmosphere of romance with which a successful popular song can invest a country regardless of either its beauty or its interest. Lower Burma has the usual picturesqueness of a tropical land with a heavy rainfall. Palms and vegetation of all kinds are prolific. The sunset skies are often full of colour, and the slender spires of thousands of tiny pagodas rise up from a flat sea of tangled foliage broken by mile after mile of *padi* fields. These half-inundated little plots supply the wants, not only of the mere

fourteen millions of natives living on the 230,839 square miles of fertile soil comprising Upper and Lower Burma, but also the needs, especially during times of famine, of a considerable portion of the 320 millions of people inhabiting the great peninsula on the other side of the Bay of Bengal. About one-third of all the peoples of the world use rice as a staple food. First cultivated in India, it was introduced into China about 2900 B.C. Rice supplies not only food but such things as rope, paper, spirits, matting, hats, coats and even slippers for the people of the East.

This is all that can be said for the country lying along the road to Mandalay. There is, however, another route from the sea-coast to the old capital of Burma. The Irrawaddy winds a sinuous course through the rice-fields, past ancient cities of pagodas and palaces, and through the great petroleum wells which have been developed during recent years. It must have been of this road that the writer of the famous ballad was thinking, for here the dawn still comes up like thunder from distant China away to the east, and the same old flotilla lies along the river bank at Mandalay.

The other point which occurred to me as the fire-flies glowed against the darkening foliage was the immense number of tiny pagodas, and the reason why so much labour had been expended on these little evidences of piety. Many of the shrines one sees in Burma are really monuments of mud-brick covered with stucco; they are solid, with no interior or purpose other than possibly the perpetuation of a text from the sacred writings of Buddha. The reason one sees so many hundreds falling to pieces while others are being built alongside is the curious belief

that the rewards of sanctity will come only to those who have built *new* pagodas. The repair of the old ones, for which merit has already been accorded, does not enter into the scheme of things.

The night was dark and hot in spite of the two electric fans buzzing away in the roof of the compartment, partly to cool the atmosphere, and also to keep away the myriads of mosquitoes which hover over the stagnant water of the rice-fields and in the swampy jungle aisles during the hours of darkness. At one station I heard much talking, but the shutters of all the carriage windows being closed and fastened, as is customary on Burmese as well as Indian trains to prevent the arms of thieves coming through the otherwise open spaces—for the glass windows must necessarily be kept lowered owing to the heat—I paid no heed, and the train rolled on through the night. Luckily for my night's sleep, I did not know then that an express coming in the opposite direction had been deliberately derailed, farther down the road over which we had passed, by a band of dacoits, so that they could attack the defenceless people and rob without hindrance. I learned later that there were two native coaches on the front of the wrecked train, and it was therefore among the Burmese themselves that the principal casualties occurred.

Mandalay is an important native town with 150,000 inhabitants, and it is also the headquarters of the British Administration in Upper Burma. The city derives its name from its situation at the base of Mandalay Hill, a spur of the eastern range, which looms large and blue in the background. This hill is now covered with shrines dominated by a gold and white pagoda, which is wonderfully illuminated at

night, and can be reached by a long flight of stone steps.

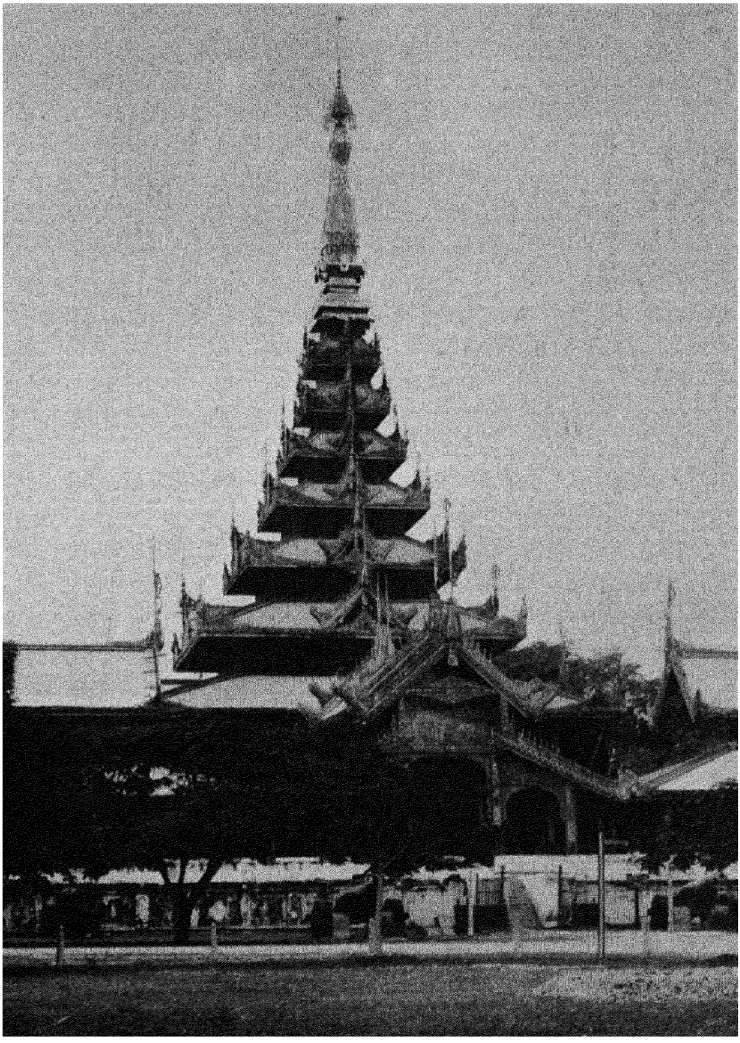
Arriving in this picturesque but not very salubrious town, I drove along a road literally inches deep in dust to the bungalow, on the banks of the Irrawaddy, which was to be my home while I explored the city chosen by King Min, father of the infamous Theebaw, as the chief town of the Burmese kingdom in succession to the older capitals of Ava and Amarapura. All this, however, occurred before the British occupation, which was made effective between the years 1824 and 1885. It was not long before I discovered that a river bank, with a placid backwater surrounded by the exuberant growth of the tropics, is far from an ideal situation for a white man's home. I tried to have a bath, but the mosquitoes were too bloodthirsty. Dinner, the only meal for which one has a real appetite in the damp heat of this enervating land, was accomplished with the aid of an incense coil burning under the table to drive the mosquitoes from their favourite place—human ankles exposed in dark shadows. Then came the hours of slow strangulation beneath a mosquito net during the breathless night.

However, Mandalay proved worth it. On the following day I began my investigations by a drive to the erstwhile royal city, now known as Fort Dufferin, which is separated by an open space from the mass of native houses and bazaars forming Mandalay proper. It is a gigantic compound, just over a mile square and surrounded by walls twenty-four feet thick and twenty-six feet high. Along these battlements there are turreted watch-towers, and below the walls a broad moat giving the place something

of the appearance of a mediæval castle. Its history dates from 1857, when King Mindon selected it for his capital and began the erection of this royal city.

Passing through the ponderous gateway I entered the enclosed area, much of which is now occupied by a fine park. Originally, however, the royal town was built inside this fort, but since the British occupation only European residences, administrative offices and military posts have been erected in this vast enclosure. Standing in the centre is the wonderful palace of the last two kings of Burma. The chief building, which contains the Throne Room and Reception Halls, decorated with red-lacquer pillars and mosaic-like mirrors, is surrounded by many small structures. The tapering spires of this palace give it a light and fanciful aspect, somewhat Siamese in character. Although portions of the interior are dilapidated, the Lion Throne Room and the Durbar Hall still retain much of their bizarre and ornate beauty. If you have seen the flashing hub or centre of a merry-go-round at a circus then you will have some idea of what the principal apartments of this old Burmese royal palace look like in the garish light of day. Their walls, pillars and doors are covered by little octagonal pieces of looking-glass; and, where not so covered, red lacquer and gold leaf complete the bizarre appearance.

Although, in one of its rooms, this palace has an interesting museum, where the extraordinary dresses of Burmese courtiers of a past age can be seen in all their gold and white extravagance, it is a little difficult to picture exactly what the scene must have been like when the cruel Theebaw ruled at Mandalay. It was this last king of Burma who erected the tall



MANDALAY OLD PALACE

Facing page 156—4.

CITY OF 450 PAGODAS

FORT DUFFERIN—MANDALAY

circular tower, eighty feet high, now to be seen near the palace. It is called the Nan Myin, and was built to enable the Burmese court to conveniently view the illuminations in the city during religious and other celebrations.

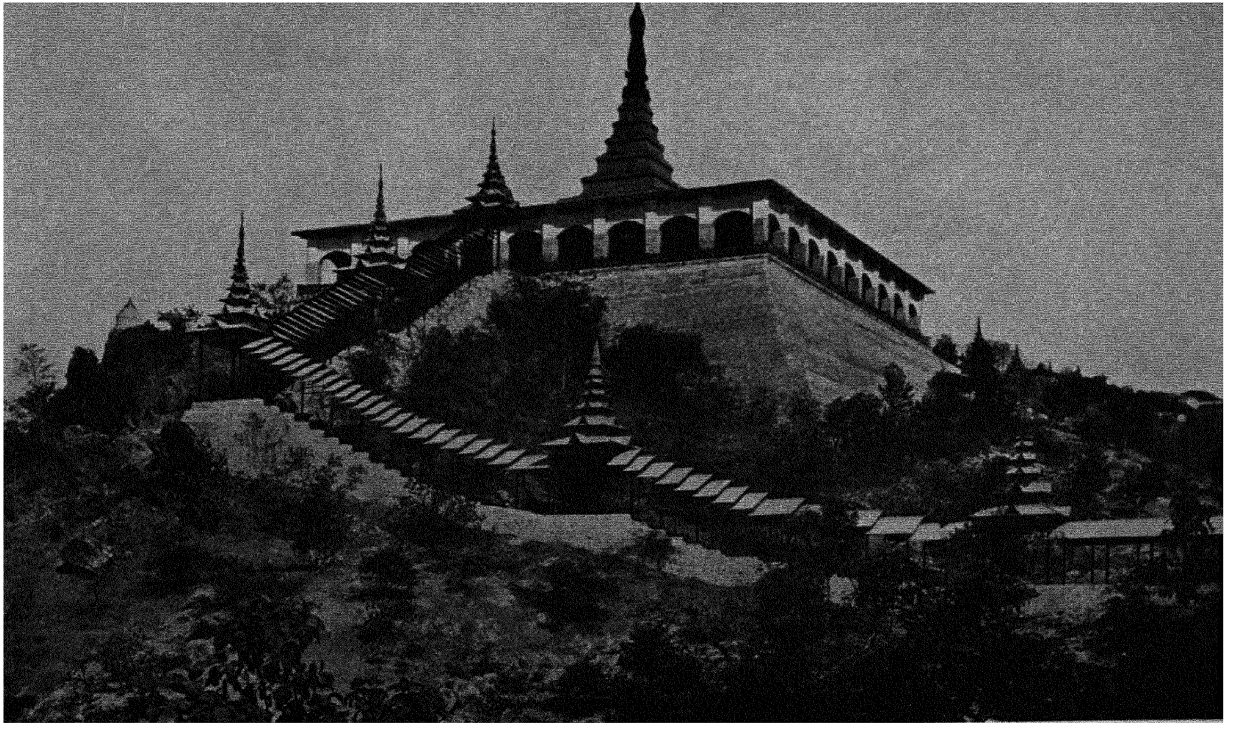
Any attempt to describe Burmese buildings in detail is doomed to failure, for no words can convey a proper idea of these many-spired, turreted, balconied, frescoed, lacquered and carved buildings of delicate design, which generally have the appearance of enlarged fretwork models. Such is the Royal Palace, the Queen's Monastery, and the Arakan Pagoda, with its lake of sacred turtles. These amphibians are, by the way, things to be spoken of with awe and reverence in more than one Buddhist country.

In the Arakan Pagoda, which is the principal one in Mandalay, there is a brass image, about ten feet high, which is said to weigh forty tons and to be an exact likeness of Buddha. It is called *Mahamuni*, and was cast in A.D. 150. The Burmese brought this statue to Mandalay in 1784, after their conquest of the Arakan country, and, although little seems to be known concerning its origin or meaning, it is regarded with great veneration by the priests. In the courtyard of the Arakan Pagoda there are several bronze figures of men and lions, and also one of a three-headed elephant. All these objects have been, for centuries before they came to rest in Mandalay, among the spoils of many wars. An authority on this subject expressed the opinion that they originally came from Siam.

About one and a half miles beyond Mandalay is situated the famous "City of Four Hundred and

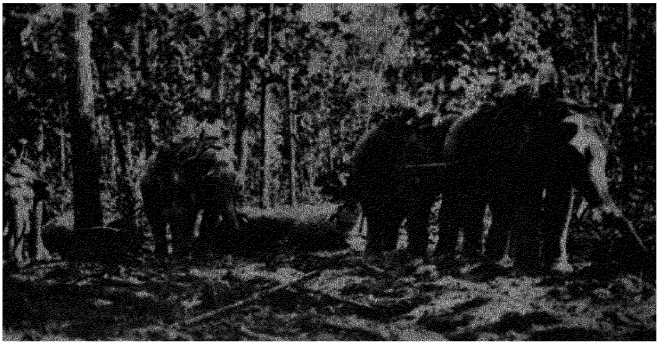
Fifty Pagodas." It was to this amazing collection of shrines that I went one day when the heat and dust of the bazaars proved intolerable. From a slight eminence my eyes ranged over a forest of glittering white spires surrounding a fane of gold. It seemed too unreal to be true. I tried to count them, but gave up the task as impossible owing to the eye becoming confused by the seemingly endless rows of miniature pagodas all much alike. Each is the work of some pious Burman and contains a Buddhist inscription. There is nothing in Burma to compare with the massive and artistic monuments of India, but fanciful picturesqueness is produced by the slender gold and white spires and the amazingly ornate balconies of the larger temples usually seen against the vivid green of the tropical foliage.

The Zegyo Bazaar of this city is noted for its silks. The raw material comes by caravan from China and is woven in Mandalay. Wandering without set purpose through these marts, I saw and heard some curious things. Questioning one big Chinese merchant as to why the roads and the drainage systems seemed to be in such a deplorable condition, his reply once again confirmed the danger of " new wine in old bottles." It appears that having handed over municipal government to the natives, effectual control by the British authorities is impossible. The taxes collected had been stolen by the Burmese officials responsible for their safe custody. This, after all, is only what occurs in China and other countries rendered backward and uncomfortable to live in by Oriental maladministration. The smile which came over the wrinkled yellow face of the old merchant seemed to say, " Poor fools, what else



TEMPLE ON MANDALAY HILL

Facing page 158–4.



ELEPHANTS DRAGGING TEAK LOGS

BURMESE DOCTOR AT WORK

BURMESE ORCHESTRA IN A PAGODA

could be expected amidst the poverty of the teeming uneducated East."

Here, also, I received my first lesson in the art of lacquer work. Some of the finer specimens of trays and coffee-sets take several years to make. Each coat of lacquer requires as long as nine months to dry and harden before the next layer is applied. In China the art of lacquering on silk is confined to a few families, and some of the best work takes fifteen years to complete. In another half-dark little shop I watched rubies from the Burmese mines at Mogok and sapphires from Siam being polished by the crude methods of past ages. The finished products were, however, perfect specimens of the lapidary's art.

The Provincial Government of Upper Burma moves its headquarters from Mandalay, during the hot summer months, to Maymyo, in the near-by hills. Cool breezes temper the tropical heat in these highlands. Portions of the railway, which crosses this range on its way towards the Chinese frontier, were extremely difficult to construct. The zigzags up to Maymyo, which is a town of European bungalows situated on a lofty plateau, and the bridge which spans the Gokteik Gorge, many miles farther along the line, afford some wonderful views over mountain and dense tropical forest.

One of the most hospitable places in Mandalay is the Upper Burma Club, which has its headquarters inside Fort Dufferin. Here one gains some idea of the peculiar life of the white resident in an Eastern land away from the cosmopolitan ports. It is the custom to visit this place in the early evening, to drink, to dance, and to gossip, before returning to one's bungalow for dinner. There were officers of the

Burma Rifles in their green and white mess kit, officials of the imperial police and of the civil administration; but the conversation—notwithstanding that punitive expeditions were operating in Lower Burma against bands of dacoits, or outlaws, who had retreated into the jungle after killing a European official, and in Upper Burma against the slave-owning Kachins—was of local events, approaching home leave, families moving up to Maymyo, and newcomers into the little social circle of Mandalay. And so I found it not only in British posts but in those of other countries throughout the East, such as Fort Mackinley in the Philippines, and the guarded Legation City in Peiping.

It seems that familiarity with the unrest which is seldom far from the surface of life in these lands breeds a contempt in white people, who are daily exposed to its alarms and rumours. It often creates an awkward lull in the conversation to even mention events of greater importance than the local gymkhana, golf, tennis or base-ball match. There seems to be an unwritten law that more serious subjects should be discussed by two, or three men at most, and then only when they are left alone with their whiskies and brandies.

CHAPTER XXII

A BAZAAR BOAT ON THE IRRAWADDY

WHEN the time came for me to leave Mandalay, a choice had to be made between one of the large and comfortable express steamers of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company or what is called a bazaar boat. These latter are cargo vessels, to which is attached a double-decked barge fitted with many stalls for the sale of all kinds of merchandise to the people along the river bank. At each little stopping-place, Burmese, Shans, Chinese, Kachins, Karens and other queer people crowd on board to make purchases. The spectacle afforded is an interesting one, and there are ample opportunities for studying the life of these people away from the towns. Unfortunately time was a consideration, and I compromised, travelling part of the way on an express steamer but making a short voyage on a bazaar boat.

Shortly after leaving Mandalay we passed, on the right bank of the Irrawaddy, the curious unfinished Mingoon Pagoda. It was the intention of a Burmese king to make this the largest Buddhist temple in the world. The court prophets, foreseeing a decline in both the royal and popular esteem for the local temples if this new pagoda was completed, predicted that King Bodawpya would die directly it was finished.

For this reason it was abandoned in 1797. As it now stands, this pagoda covers an area of 450 square feet and is 163 feet in height, about one-third of the intended elevation. I noticed many large cracks in this quaint but by no means picturesque structure. These were caused by a severe earthquake in 1839.

Some indication of how these colossal buildings came into existence in more than one country of the amazing East is afforded by the record of Mingoon, which was built by slave labour and, owing to the fact that 5,000 men were employed for seventeen years, a large area of the country was more than once threatened with famine because the entire adult population was employed in the building of this great pagoda.

Landing for a short time at Mingoon, I was able to see also the famous bell. The same mad Burmese king aspired to construct not only the largest pagoda in the Buddhist world but also the biggest bell and other sacred objects. The Mingoon bell is the largest undamaged and hung specimen of its kind. The great bell which I saw in Moscow, although somewhat larger, is not perfect, and rests on the ground. The one on the banks of the Irrawaddy weighs eighty tons, is twelve feet in height, and has a lip diameter of just over sixteen feet. It is said that this enormous bell was cast on an island opposite to its present position, and was floated across the Irrawaddy on an immense bamboo raft.

For some miles the scenery along both banks of the river was decidedly uninteresting. Then came a large village with a group of gaily dressed people by the water's edge and an imposing monastery, looking almost like a castle, on the opposite bank. Some

near-by hills are those from which the famous crystal-alabaster is cut for making the images of Buddha sold in the bazaars of Mandalay. Soon after this place had been left behind, the river narrowed down and the banks were covered with dense jungle. At the next village I noticed bamboo rafts laden with the immense pots, called *sin-o*, which are in use throughout Burma. Many of these are rendered watertight, and are used as floats for rafts carrying other merchandise on this great river. The captain of the steamer expressed the opinion that it was with the aid of these that the great bell of Mingoon was floated across the Irrawaddy. At Kyaukayaung a great naval battle was fought between the war canoes of the Burmese and those of the Peguans in 1754. It is said that the former had 10,000 combatants in many hundreds of canoes, and that the drums and war-cries were heard far into the jungle. The Peguans were routed, and the Burmese thus captured Lower Burma.

The express steamers of the Irrawaddy Flotilla are fitted with powerful searchlights, and it was an interesting sight to watch the beam of light from one of these playing on to the river and jungle. Every now and again a pagoda or native village would come within its rays. Soon after leaving the scene of the Burmese naval victory over the Peguans, we entered the third defile of the Irrawaddy. This stretch of water is full of whirlpools and is forty-six miles in length. The Irrawaddy rises and falls some forty feet at this point between the wet and dry seasons.

Hereabouts is the Island of the Golden Pagoda. It is called *Thi-ha-daw*, and the shrine is the only one in Burma built entirely of stone, all the others being

of brick and stucco. No one knows definitely either when or by whom it was constructed, but the golden image from which it obtained its name has been removed for safe keeping to a pagoda in Mandalay. At the present time its most interesting features are the tame fish which feed from the pilgrims' hands.

Villages along the banks of this river are too numerous to be easily identified, even with the aid of a good map, and there is little of interest to make such an effort worth while. Near to Thabeitkyin, however, are the famous ruby mines of Mogok, and the surrounding country is full of game, including elephant and rhinoceros. There is a motor road, about sixty miles in length, which leads up to the hills, where, in the bed of an ancient lake, the famous Burmese rubies are discovered. Curiously, precious stones of almost every conceivable shade are found at Mogok, but so far neither emeralds nor diamonds have made their appearance.

At a village some miles farther upstream I changed from the express steamer to the bazaar boat, and watched the crowds of natives pouring across the gangway to make their purchases at the little stalls erected under cover of the deck. It was amusing to see the joy with which pots, pans, bead necklaces, and even umbrellas were carried in triumph to the shore, to be handled and admired by less fortunate people who could not afford them. While watching this animated scene, I saw a large water-snake dart out from the river bank and try in vain to crawl up the side of the steamer. In the village of Kyanhnyat is still to be seen the gallows on which a local chief and several villagers were hung in 1887 for the murder

of a Captain Vaughan. This unfortunate officer, who was stationed at this point with a number of troops to prevent dacoity, made an incautious remark about the beauty of a Burmese girl who was bathing near by. He did not know that she was the wife of the chief to whom he was talking. That night he was hacked to pieces with the short sword, or *dah*, still carried by the dwellers in the jungles.

From this place, when steaming northwards, the tropics are left behind, and a cool breeze sweeps down from the high mountains along the frontier of China and Tibet. Two white images of Buddha, quite close to the water's edge, are the principal features of interest on the way to Katha. It is thought that these mark the spot where Buddhism was first introduced into Northern Burma by a number of Sakya immigrants from Oudh, in Central India, during the year 240 B.C.

So superstitious are the natives of this portion of the country that little information can be extracted from them. They live in fear of spirits, called *Nats*, who have forbidden them to talk of the past to any but their own people. It is said, however, that a city, built 2,700 years ago, lies buried with all its treasures some forty feet below the present village and ruins of Tagaung. I certainly noticed signs of volcanic action in some curious hills a few miles distant from this supposedly historic site, which, according to Harvey, is the Tugma of Ptolemy.

After calling at several collections of mud-brick and thatch native houses, so that the villagers might purchase their weekly needs from our floating bazaar, Inywa was reached, and here one sees vast stretches of jungle in which elephants and tigers are numerous.

It is interesting to note that snake-bite accounts for no less than a thousand deaths a year in these jungles, and that mosquitoes kill many more by carrying the germ of malaria from one victim to another. The only interesting things along this stretch of river were the immense rafts of teak logs. The jungles around are full of these valuable trees, but only an expert can distinguish them amid the tangled growth, except during the brief periods in the month of September when they burst forth into flower.

The green teak wood will not float, and the trees are therefore dried before being hauled down to the water by elephants and buffaloes. One raft on to which I clambered contained no less than 170 logs, each of which weighed, when dry, about one and a quarter tons. A little matting bungalow had been erected in the centre of this raft, and in it a family would live while the raft was being floated down many hundreds of miles of river to the sawmills at Rangoon. It sometimes happens that a raft of ordinary green wood is floated downstream with the aid of some 20,000 bamboos.

A curious feature of the Irrawaddy is the water hyacinth, or Beda Weed. On several occasions I noticed a long line of these mauve-coloured flowers, which are very similar to the ordinary hyacinth, floating with the tide towards the low-lying delta from their natural habitat in Upper Burma. This water-flower finds a new and congenial home in the many creeks at the mouth of the Irrawaddy, and so thick does it become in these warm waters that navigation is not only impeded but at times and places is even brought to a standstill.

At Katha, which is 224 miles from Mandalay and

about 700 from Rangoon, there occurred on the evening of our arrival a sunset of extraordinary brilliance, which threw into striking contrast the olive-green jungle and the white and red stucco houses. Katha is famous for both fogs and fevers. The former are, however, largely confined to the rainy season, when the comparatively warm water falling from the clouds comes within the influence of the ice-cold river, which is fed by the melting snows in the mountains farther north. Yet another cause of the heavy wet mists which hang over the river and jungles of this part of Upper Burma is the morning rain of the wet season which is followed, more often than not, by a hot sunshine in the afternoon. The fever is largely the result of the jungle being allowed to crowd close upon the houses. It is a curious fact that wherever one finds bamboo growing luxuriantly, there also will mosquitoes be living in vast numbers. I learned in Burma that at the junction between the fronds and the trunk of the bamboo a little cup of vegetable substance is formed, which holds the rain-water, and allows the mosquito to breed happily and comfortably all over these beautiful trees.

At the next two villages on the way north I obtained glimpses of Kachin women and men. They are small of stature and of typically Mongolian type. Later on, in Bhamo, I was able to learn much about these hill people of the frontier from an officer of the Indian Intelligence Service, whose duty it was to make long journeys alone into the heart of their country for the purpose of keeping a fatherly eye on the savage tribes of the frontier. At Shwegu there is a pottery which makes many curious and quaintly

ornamented *chatties*, or water jars, as well as small tea services and vases.

The climate by now had become almost temperate, for we had climbed both in altitude and latitude since leaving Rangoon. Almost every native house in this little place seemed to have wild roses growing profusely in its garden. Shortly after leaving Shwegu we passed Royal Island which is almost entirely covered by pagodas, and each year, in the month of March, people from far and wide assemble here for a great religious festival which lasts for nearly a week. I was told that as many as 30,000 people congregate on this one small island during the period of the *Kyundaw* pilgrimage. The natives who live on Royal Island the year round are said to be the descendants of those who built the pagodas at some remote period in the dim and unknown past.

We now entered the second defile, and by a stroke of good luck passed through in the early morning when the chances were excellent for seeing some of the wild life of the rocky, jungle-covered banks. Nor were we disappointed. No sooner had our steamer entered the narrows than elephants were observed descending what is known as the "slide" to drink and bathe. This clearing was really made to protect a telegraph line which crosses the defile at this point. In the centre of the gorge the steamer rounded a corner, and the scenery became particularly grand. A cliff over 800 feet high projects into the deep bottle-green water, and there is a little pagoda at its base. Somehow the view reminded me of the entrance to the Troll Fjord in distant Norway. So numerous are the tigers in the jungle around, that a native village opposite to this cliff has been abandoned

because of the number of wild animals using the neighbouring sandbank as a convenient spot from which to obtain a drink from the river.

At various points the Irrawaddy is joined by other small streams and creeks. In one of these I was able to witness some fishing operations by the local natives. In the deep water hereabouts there are many large fish, which measure from four to six feet in length and weigh up to 500 pounds. They are provided with several rows of teeth, and are said to bite the feet of swimmers whom they drown by dragging them below the surface. Here, also, I saw the flying fish of the Irrawaddy. They jump out of the water and give the impression that they are skimming the surface on their tail. The Burmans along the upper reaches of this river do not employ the drift net, seen in the delta region. They make a kind of fish trap of light bamboo. This is sunk in the water and attached to a float. When a fish has been enticed to enter this device and to swallow the bait and hook suspended inside, he is not held by a line to the shore but can swim away with the very light basket in which he finds himself encased. This affair is attached by a thin line to a float. The fisherman sits on the bank watching a number of these floats bobbing idly up and down on the surface of the water. When one moves away downstream he knows that a big fish has not only been caught on the hook but is also trapped in the basket. Leisurely he paddles his canoe along until it comes abreast of the fast-moving float. He then hauls the basket on board the canoe and waits for the fish to expire inside, because it is against the local religious belief to kill with his own hands.

CHAPTER XXIII

ALONG THE CARAVAN ROAD TO CHINA

BHAMO, which we reached in the amazing orange glow of an Upper Burma sunset, is situated on the left bank of the Irrawaddy, near to its junction with the Taiping River. It is 1,028 miles by water from Rangoon. The latitude of this place is 24° 15 N. It has a heavy annual rainfall, and although only 360 feet above sea-level the climate is a temperate one. It is known to have been a centre of trade with China since the seventeenth century.

The buildings of Bhamo are neither interesting nor picturesque, but the place has a fascination out of all proportion to either its size or importance. It is really a native town and a British post on the *Ultima Thule* of the Burmo-Chinese frontier. Landing at the *ghat*, or sloping river bank, close to China Street, I began my explorations in what proved to be one of the most interesting thoroughfares in all Burma. The open booths were crowded with Chinese and picturesquely dressed Kachin women. Living in a cool climate, their dress is of dark blue homespun cloth with white and red borders ; their necks are adorned with immense bangles and curious charms, which, through fear of the evil eye, they hold tightly

in their hands when being either stared at or photographed.

China Street exhibits all the crude native wares of this portion of Asia, including the gigantic straw hats, over three feet in diameter, worn by the coolies of the flowery land, which is only twenty-nine miles distant as the crow flies but is fifty-two miles along the China road of the caravans. The booths opening on to this street are crude affairs, mostly of wood, bamboo and matting. Not only are they used as shops, but also as suitable places for an afternoon siesta by a large proportion of the Chinese and Burmese inhabitants. The Kachins are country people who come in to buy and sell. They are seen to best advantage in the open market of Bhamo. Gaily dressed, with much of brass and silver in the form of ornaments, they come in to the town laden with baskets of fruit and vegetables.

Turning into a house just off China Street I made the acquaintance of the principal jade merchant, whose supplies of this precious stone are brought by mule caravan from across the frontier. In this quaint dwelling, typical of the old China, I was shown large pieces of this beautiful green stone which is kept under water. It was explained to me that one of the tests to which jade is subjected by the Chinese buyers is to remove a block from the water and hold it against the face. I tried the experiment with a small piece of a beautiful apple-green colour, and found that it was much colder to the touch than the water from which it had been taken. Although dilapidated and somewhat dirty, the interior of this Chinese merchant's house attracted by the charm of its circular latticed windows, its quaint tilework, its single pots of flowers

and its roof of pipe-like tiles. During later travels, however, I was to see many such houses in the great cities of Canton and Peiping.

My friend the Intelligence Officer showed me the place where the caravans arrive from and depart for China. This traffic is nearly all carried on by mule transport, although a few bullocks are employed. The loads are made fast on both sides of a wooden pack-saddle, and they weigh about eighty pounds each. The method is to cover them neatly with coarse grass-matting, and in this way cotton, candles, oil, nails and other such products of Burma and the West are sent across the wild hills into Yunnan. The returning caravans bring mostly raw silk, jade, ornamental tiles and walnuts, some of which come from the Chinese province of Szechuan, a seven-weeks' journey from Bhamo.

Although there is a European post office, administrative building, hospital, club, and a number of bungalows, mostly situated near the police lines to the north of the town, I preferred to remain in the native quarters near the river bank. At the extreme end of China Street there is an old joss-house, which the priest-caretaker informed me was built 155 years ago with funds supplied by the Emperor Kya Chan of Peiping. I entered this building through the circular doorway and was immediately confronted with the raking roofs, the gables, the ornamental pillars, the coloured tiles and the circular windows of a typical temple of Central China. Inside there are some hideous carvings of devils and a well into which many bodies were thrown during the troublous times before the British occupation. This joss-house, with its surrounding trees, forms the most picturesque spot in Bhamo.

Feeling that the moment was propitious for an interesting journey by caravan across the Chinese frontier as far as the town of Tengyueh, I asked of Messrs Kohn & Co. whether they could fit out such an expedition at short notice, but was told that some days were required to obtain the mules, the drivers, and the guides. It so happened that I mentioned this to a local official, who strongly advised me to confine such activities to a ride along the China road as far as the frontier, but not to go beyond it. Further inquiry elicited the fact that a marauding party of Chinese, who had broken away from the revolutionary forces then operating on the other side of the dividing hills, had made a raid into Kachin territory and were said to have crucified a native girl. Retaliation of a severe kind was but natural, and several hundreds of these sturdy little fighting men had crossed into China, where they had destroyed an entire village and put its inhabitants to the sword. At the time when this story was told to me, I scarcely believed that part of the gruesome tale which described the crucifixion of the Kachin girl, but later episodes in China itself left me no room to doubt the possibility of such an atrocity being committed by Chinese bandit-soldiery.

A day or two later I was riding along the caravan road towards a jagged line of steep, misty blue hills. A cloud of dust close ahead proclaimed the approach of a line of laden mules, and I halted to watch them pass. It was a long caravan, and the muleteers were covered in dust. Some had their large straw hats slung across their backs and wore only a small white turban. A number of big wolf-like dogs accompanied the laden mules, but the men appeared to be

quite unarmed, and in this respect differed from the caravan guards and drivers I saw later coming across Mongolia from the Gobi Desert. Perhaps it was the frontier police who prevented these men from entering Burma armed in any way.

Wandering off the road at one point I came to a pretty little Shan village, where the houses were both clean and tidy. They were raised above the ground on poles, and prayer-flags hung from a cord attached to a tree. Several women were sitting in the shade beneath one of the houses weaving cloth on a large wooden frame. It is often very difficult when passing through a country to distinguish at a glance the different races inhabiting it. This was especially the case in Upper Burma, where the Shans, the Kachins, the Karens, and, to a lesser degree, the Chinese from adjoining provinces across the border mingle and intermarry to such an extent that a great similarity often exists in their appearance. The most characteristic people hereabouts are, however, the Kachins. I learned later that some of the inhabitants of this little village are descendants of prisoners brought in from Assam nearly a century and a half ago.

Every few miles along this road there are *dâk* bungalows for the accommodation of travellers. On the Burmese side of the frontier these are provided with a certain amount of furniture, but it is essential if one is proceeding far along this caravan route to take a bed, a chair, a table, and, above all, a mosquito net, as the valleys among the hills are extremely malarious. The made road at the time of my visit ran only as far as the seventeenth milestone, after which a mule track led uphill through thick jungle. On each side of this track the ground is

covered with the sensitive plant which closes up on being touched, and the jungle is full of brilliantly coloured butterflies. There does not appear to be many wild animals anywhere near the caravan trail.

After crossing the Nantipet River, the road became very rough and winding. Several times I had to stop in a clearing to allow a line of mules, laden with side-baskets, to pass. The frontier at Kulikha is marked by a bridge over a stream, and here there is a hut occupied by the Chinese. Some five miles beyond the frontier the jungle is left behind, and the country opens out into broad rice-fields. On my way back to Bhamo I watched the military police high up in the hills above the pass signalling to each other by Morse lamp. To the northward of the caravan road and on the opposite bank of the Irrawaddy lies the wild country known as the Triangle, into which several expeditions have been sent during quite recent times by the British Administration in Burma to persuade the Kachins to come within the pale of civilisation. In this dangerous work the Burma Rifles have played a conspicuous part, and slave-releasing by the Kachin chiefs, under pressure from the Administration, was actually in progress in this vast area of jungle when I left Bhamo.

CHAPTER XXIV

IN PICTURESQUE CEYLON

I CAN remember few more enchanting scenes than those presented by the island of Ceylon in the filmy blue of a tropical morning: the sun was rising from behind the Indian Ocean, and the waves around the ship were faintly streaked with golden light. Slowly the mist cleared, and Adam's Peak appeared above the vaporous clouds. When the distance lessened, the coast assumed both colour and form. First came a vivid green line between sea and sky, then waving palms, and, finally, forest-covered hills behind the low-lying shore. Next there was the landing at Colombo, amid the shouting and splashing of black Tamil boatmen, and the plunge into York Street and Queen's Street, to be met by an interesting stream of Asiatic humanity which would require an ethnologist correctly to sort out.

Taking a rickshaw, the vehicle mostly used for sightseeing within the area of what is known as the Fort of Colombo, I commenced a tour of this city, which has been aptly termed the "Clapham Junction of the East." Here the seaways divide. Vessels bound from Europe to Australia make this the last port of call in the East. Liners going to and from the Malay States, China and Japan come to rest for a brief space in the fine artificial harbour, while

those making for the Hugli River and Calcutta, or for Rangoon in picturesque and fertile Burma, also call at this rendezvous of the Indian Ocean.

What impressed me most, as I travelled easily and without noise in the pneumatic-tyred rickshaw over the red-earth road, were the Cingalese themselves. Slender and brown-skinned, with their hair coiled in a knot fastened with a comb, and wearing a kind of white skirt, it was difficult at first to distinguish the men from the women. Although the business section of Colombo has been almost entirely Europeanised, and possesses broad clean streets flanked by departmental stores, hotels and fine jewellers' shops, a few minutes' drive beyond the Fort area, in the district known as the *pettah*, Colombo shows another sight. Here the unchanging East holds full sway in the teeming bazaars and streets.

Pavements, roadways and vehicles were crowded with brown humanity. Cumbersome matting-roofed country carts, laden with tropical fruits and drawn by sleek oxen, passed by in an almost endless line. The houses and shops are mostly one-storey buildings with fluted red-tile roofs, their fronts exhibiting an amazing collection of the produce and wares of both East and West. Each street is given over to a special trade. In Sea Street I found the *chetties*, or rice and grain merchants, on Main Street were the general stores, and Cross Street seemed to have a monopoly of piece goods. Then came the brass, hardware and furniture bazaars, a labyrinth of small shops originally built as living quarters by the old Dutch burghers.

Perhaps it is the people themselves who form the most interesting sight in any Eastern city. Glancing at the crowded tramcars, the dilapidated motor buses

coming in from the countryside, at the figures in the passing rickshaws and walking along the overflowing pavements, I was amazed at the number and variety of the Asiatic family who seem to earn a good living in this capital of England's premier Crown Colony. Besides the Cingalese themselves, there were numberless Eurasian clerks, Tamils with caste marks on their foreheads, and women of this race, whose home is in Southern India, dressed in gay-coloured *saris*. The most picturesque passers-by amid this stream of brown peoples were the tall and often handsome Afghans, dressed in voluminous muslin trousers, embroidered jackets, gold and brilliantly coloured turbans and ornamental shoes. I learned later that most of these fine hillmen are money-lenders or cloth peddlers, who make a living very easily.

Although the buildings in the Pettah are by no means attractive, there is a curious Hindu temple with a much-carved and ornamented low front of pale bluish-green, and a fine Mohammedan mosque. Remains of bygone colonial empires are here also. The old belfry is a relic of the Portuguese occupation, and the Dutch Wolvendahl Church and Cemetery also speak eloquently of past centuries. Away beyond the Pettah and almost surrounded by a lagoon there is Slave Island, which obtained its name from the fact that during the Dutch occupation the slave-quarters were situated hereabouts. This part of Colombo is now inhabited very largely by Malays and Afghans. It is said that the former community originated in the old Malay Regiment, which was housed on Slave Island when the British took possession of Ceylon.

The Fort is merely the name of the central business and maritime quarter of Colombo. The old landward

defences, erected by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century and later improved and strengthened by the Dutch, were demolished about sixty years ago. In this section of the city stands the principal hotels, shops and business houses. It has generally seemed to me a waste of time to spend more than a few odd hours among purely Western streets and buildings, but in Colombo I found much of interest in the jewellers' shops.

The island of Ceylon is 275 miles long and 140 miles in breadth. On the low-lying coast lands rice is cultivated over a very wide area, coco-nut palms cover 900,000 acres, tea gardens are spread over 450,000 acres in the hill country, and rubber occupies 475,000 acres of old jungle land. Ceylon is also famous for its precious stones, which are found in great variety in the district of Ratnapura, or "City of Gems." The Cingalese goldsmiths, who seem to possess considerable artistic ability in making articles of the finest filigree, showed me some beautiful jewels, especially sapphire, topaz, aquamarine, zircon, amethyst, moonstone, tourmaline and pearls. These latter gems came originally from the fisheries in Palk Strait, off the north-west coast of the island. One merchant has formed a museum of antique and modern jewellery, much of which is not for sale. I learned that the world's largest sapphire, which, after being cut and polished, weighed 466 carats, was discovered at Ratnapura in 1907, and was purchased by the late Mr Pierpont Morgan.

Many years ago cinnamon was the chief export of Ceylon, and the place where this aromatic shrub was originally grown is now the principal residential area of Colombo. It is appropriately called Cinnamon

Gardens. Here I spent many happy and restful days. Fine bungalows standing in flower and tree filled gardens, more than one hospitable club, a race-course where this fascinating sport is made pleasant even in the tropics by electric fans overhead in the grand stand, and, above all, the beautiful Victoria Park with the Colombo Museum certainly help to make life worth living when the skies are blue and the sun appears daily to illuminate the masses of coloured blooms.

In the Colombo Museum there are many specimens of great archæological interest, obtained from the buried cities of this historic island. One room is entirely devoted to the display of old Portuguese and Dutch furniture and glass. In another place I noticed some fine examples of Cingalese jewellery, carved ivories, silver boxes, tortoise-shell, manuscripts and bronzes. The grounds contain a small zoo, with a collection of the fauna of the island.

In the cool of the evening the seaside promenade, called the Galle Face, is perhaps the most attractive place for a walk or drive ; and when I had grown tired of the city and its tropical life, it was towards Mount Lavinia's palm-fringed beach and cooling surf, rolling in from a sapphire sea before a fresh trade wind, that the wheels of my car were invariably directed. The environs of Colombo are perfectly Arcadian. A broad road leads through dense clumps of pale green bamboos, tall coco-nut palms and banana plantations, with splashes of colour from the flamboyant and *suriya* trees, past native villages and shimmering lakes to the little rocky beach below the Mount Lavinia Hotel. Here one can bathe in safety in the tepid waters of the

Indian Ocean. The shallows are protected by a complete circle of coral reefs, which, however, allow the surf to roll over on to the shore. Lavinia is certainly one of the world's beauty-spots, and although I have been there many times during my journeys across the world, it never fails to provide me with a thrill of pleasure to bathe in its surf, and then to sit on the terrace beneath the waving green palm fronds while the sun sinks in a blaze of tropical glory and the catamarans come in from the rapidly darkening ocean with their catches of queer fish.

CHAPTER XXV

KANDY AND THE *PERAHERA*

TO witness a moonlight Buddhist Festival I motored out from Colombo to the Kelani Temple, a famous shrine which was rebuilt in 1301. There was a full moon, and it was the time of year for the processions of pilgrims to this holy place. On arriving close to the temple the scene was beautiful in the extreme. Lines of men in spotless white and women in coloured clothes and white muslin jackets were wending their way towards the shrine, bearing gifts of fruit and flowers. The green of the palms, the vivid hues of the flowers, and the bright shades of the dresses combined with the yellow robes of the priests to form a most picturesque sight in the silver sheen of the moon's rays, which cast deep shadows among the trees where lanterns glowed in the jungle aisles.

The whole island of Ceylon has been made available to motorists by the construction of really good roads, with rest houses at strategic points when the three or four small towns have been exchanged for the jungle or hills. Although one can go almost anywhere in Ceylon by railway, I succumbed to the lure of the open road. This was due in large measure to the exquisite tropical scenery and colourful native life, which seems to beautify and animate almost

every highway in the island—and it will always be a controversial point as to whether Ceylon or Java is the most lovely island in the world.

Leaving Colombo in the gentle sunlight of a tropical morning, during that period — between six-thirty and eight-thirty — which the Cingalese picturesquely call " the breath of dawn," I crawled out through the awakening *pettah*, blocked by country carts and people coming into the Colombo markets, and joined the trunk road for the seventy miles' run through the beautiful hill country of Ceylon to Kandy, the old capital of the Cingalese kings. For some distance native villages were passed in quick succession, and the surrounding country seemed almost entirely devoted to the cultivation of rice.

On a previous visit to Ceylon I had experienced along this road one of the torrential storms of the rainy season. The sky had turned, in the space of less than half an hour, from a cerulean blue to the hue of burnished copper with purple clouds. Then came the rain, not the drizzle of more temperate lands, but a fog of falling water which brought to an instant standstill every motor car, cart and pedestrian : it even penetrated the roofs of the big hotels in Colombo and caused the low-lying lands and roads among the rice-fields to be inches, and in places feet deep in water before the sky had cleared for a night of bright stars.

While crossing the jungle-covered lowlands, I noticed the flood-marks by the roadside which had been made by the waters of the rainy season. About twenty-five miles from Colombo, after passing through jungle scenery of a kind to restore the most

disillusioned traveller's belief in the beauty of the tropics and the Orient, I met an amazing procession of elephants, saffron-robed priests, and gaily decorated country people, evidently on their way to some ceremony in a jungle temple. Looking up the long road, the patches of bright colour, the blare of trumpets, and the peculiar throb of native drums made a stirring and picturesque scene.

After a run of about thirty-five miles I turned into a rest house for tiffin, and rocked myself into a reminiscent mood, not unaccompanied by a healthy thirst, in a chair on the flower-bordered veranda. These rest houses in Ceylon are particularly comfortable, and are worked by a reliable native family, although owned and supervised by the Government. At Kegalla, about fifty miles from Colombo, the road led through a typically native town of bungalow houses, with thatched or tiled roofs, rough wooden verandas, and everywhere the bright patches of colour caused by the *saris* and *sarongs* against the graceful brown shoulders and legs of Cingalese women and men.

After negotiating the Utuwanka Pass the scenery at once began to change. The road climbed steadily from the low-lying rice-fields into hills covered by tropical vegetation. It is interesting to recall the name by which Ceylon has been known through the centuries to both the peoples of the West and East. The ancient Greeks called it the " Land of the hyacinth and the ruby " ; to the Chinese it is still known as the " Flowery Isle " ; and in the great peninsula lying to the north it is referred to in both legend and song as " The pearldrop on the brow of India." Each of these alluring titles seems to have

a foundation of truth as one leisurely and watchfully crosses this favoured isle.

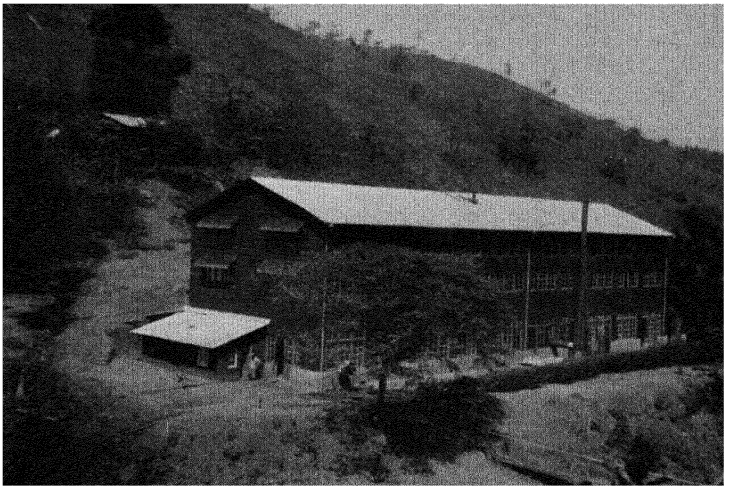
Colombo is only fourteen feet above sea-level, whereas Kandy stands at an elevation of 1,654 feet. This difference in altitude is overcome during a three miles' climb up a zigzag road which rises from the foot of the Pass of Kadugannawa. As the car climbed steadily, dense forests stretched downwards into deep ravines, and waterfalls came from above and crashed in feathery foam into misty hollows. Passing through a tunnelled rock on a hairpin corner of the pass, Peradeniya, with its Botanical Gardens, was reached, and a long avenue of trees, interspersed with quaint little native houses, led into the centre of the old hill-town of Kandy.

Even the industries of this island are of the more picturesque kind, such as tea and rubber growing, while coco-nuts have been aptly termed the *Consols of Ceylon.* At one point on the road, when the hills had been entered, I stopped to visit a tea-garden and factory. The little olive-green bushes were laid out in regular rows over the adjacent slopes. In the factory itself the green leaves were being dried on immense trays before being roasted and sorted into grades. Even in these gardens—they are not called *plantations* in Ceylon—the bright garments of the women pickers, carrying huge baskets on their backs, formed delightful patches of colour in the vivid sunlight.

Here, in Kandy, one is scarcely conscious of being in a town of some thousands of inhabitants, because of the riot of tropical foliage and the encircling verdure-clad hills. It gave me the impression of being in a large and scattered village in a remote and

hilly jungle. Kandy is built round the lake. Tall palms overshadow its bungalow residences; leafy trees shade its roads; flowers fill its gardens and hang enticingly over its walls: everything is of the vivid green which comes with an ample rainfall. Only the few commercial streets seem to be free of the all-conquering vegetation, and in these stand the big hotels, the shops, and the offices. Motor cars are everywhere. They belong, more often than not, to the tea-planters and Government officials who come in from the estates and administrative posts in the mountains to shop and to enjoy the life of this hill-capital for a day or two. Yet Kandy is not a European city. Its streets are full of quaint and colourful dresses, prominent among which are the yellow robes of the priests, and one feels that here is the true heart of this great Buddhist people.

In so many towns of the world there is an element of doubt as to which of the local sights is the most interesting to the new-comer. Not so in Kandy, however. The Dalada Maligawa, or Sacred Temple of the Tooth, attracts within its moated precincts all who come to the hill-capital of Ceylon. Standing one day on the bridge leading across the moat, I gazed upwards at the older parts of this building, which dates from the thirteenth century. Its lichen-covered walls and fortress-like contours give it more the appearance of an old castle than of a temple of an Eastern faith. In the moat below, the heads and backs of sacred turtles alone disturb the muddy surface. The interior is somewhat disappointing. The precious relic which is held in reverence by nearly twenty million Asiatic people, and is contained in a gold and jewelled casket, appears from its size



TEA FACTORY—KANDY

STREET IN CEYLON

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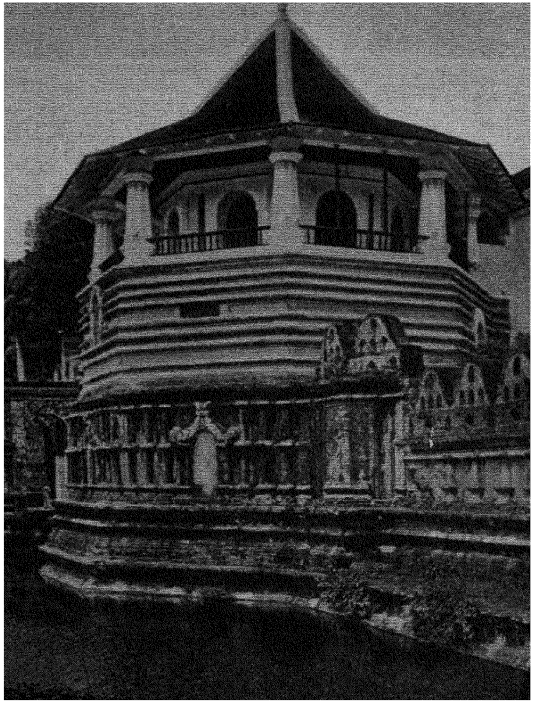
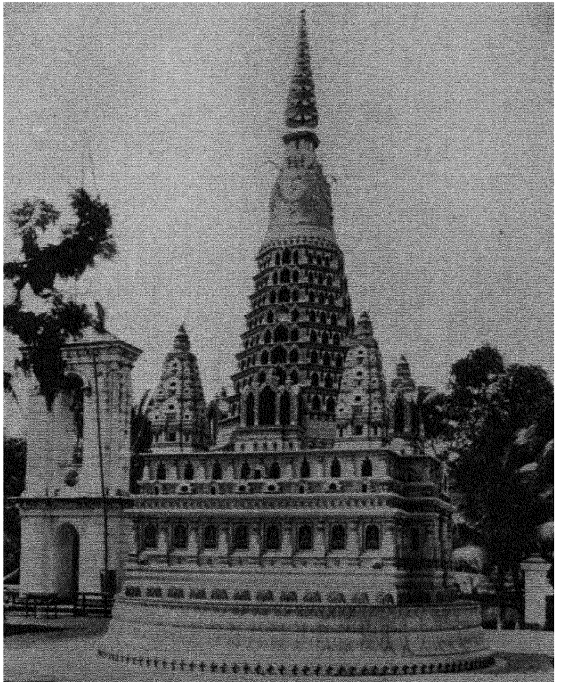


LIBRARY OF THE TEMPLE OF THE TOOTH—KANDY



PAGODA AT BUDDHIST TEMPLE—COLOMBO

and shape to be scarcely in keeping with the story that it is a tooth from the skull of Gautama Buddha, saved from the flames of his funeral pyre.

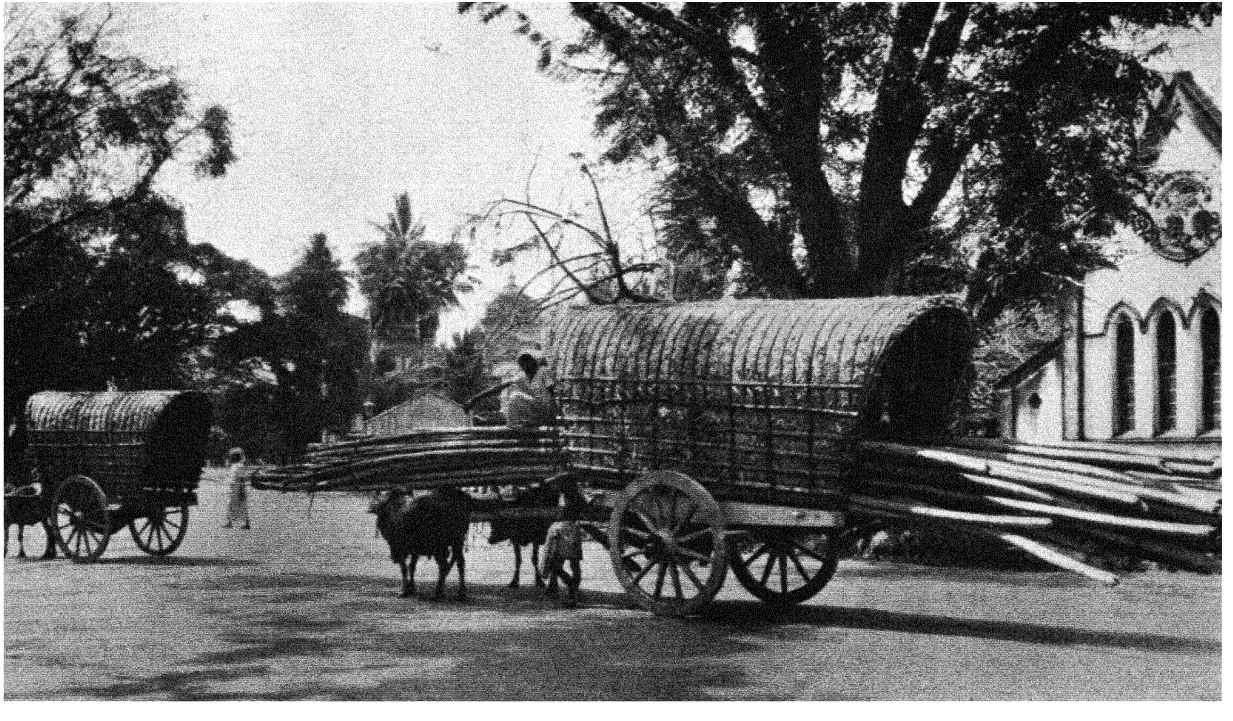
It was in the Oriental Library, an addition to the temple made by the last king of Kandy, that I found most of interest. Here there are many valuable books and ancient manuscripts written with an iron *stilus* on talipot leaves. The kindly old priest, whose wrinkled and veined yellow face seemed to blend with the robe he wore, explained to me how the palm-leaf pages of these long and narrow books are made and the manner of writing on them. Dried palm-leaves are carefully stuck together in long strips to form a piece about eighteen inches in length and from two to three inches in depth. Holes are then punched in the narrow pages, and they are bound together much in the same way as the modern loose-leaf ledger. The sacred books are laid on the table and opened lengthways, the writing running across the eighteen inches of breadth. In order to mark on the dried and parchment-coloured leaves, a steel point is first used to scratch the words. When a page has been completed in this manner, indian ink is wiped across the whole surface. Where the palm-leaf has been scratched, the ink adheres in the cuts made, but can be cleaned off the non-porous surface which has not been touched by the sharp stilus. In the library of the Temple of the Tooth I saw many very ancient manuscripts which had been written in this way, and even to-day the holy books of the Buddhist faith are transcribed with great labour on to the leaves of the talipot palm by this old-world process.

The palace, where the last kings of Kandy dwelt

amidst a wealth of feathery bamboo and wonderful flowering trees in gardens overlooking the lake, is another building which is worth seeing, more for its surroundings than for its interest or architectural beauty. It has an underground passage leading to the temple. One of the most imposing structures hereabouts is, however, the Audience Hall, which has fine carved pillars of satin-wood and ebony. It is one of the best examples of old Kandyan architecture, but is now used to house the Supreme Court.

Curiously enough, many of the kings of Kandy had Tamil wives. These remained true to the Hindu faith, and were permitted to erect temples to their own gods. A number of these buildings still remain in the outlying suburbs of Kandy. They are richly decorated, and the images ornamenting the interiors are studded with jewels. One of the oldest of these temples is that of Asgiriya, in which can be seen a huge stone figure in a reclining attitude.

Barbaric splendour still characterises the great Buddhist celebration, known as the *Perahera*, which takes place in Kandy every year during the month of August. This festival lasts for ten days, and reaches its climax on the night of the full moon. Once, when homeward bound from the Far East, I was fortunate enough to be able, by altering my route, to witness the final scene. In the misty light, against which the tall and ghostly palms were silhouetted in black outline, the Kandy road became a pathway of silver, dappled with the sheen of many-coloured silks thrown into sharp relief by a sea of expectant and reverent brown faces. First came the Kandyan chiefs in full regalia with fifty richly caparisoned elephants. Whips were being cracked like a succession of pistol shots



BULLOCK CART—COLOMBO

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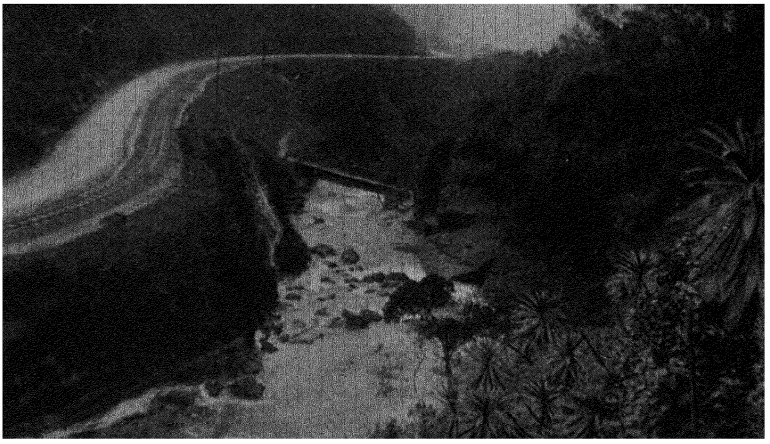


ON THE ROAD TO KANDY

PERAHERA FESTIVAL KANDY

before the black and sombre beasts. Then came the drums, the dancers and the jugglers. Every now and again the procession halted to enable a special dance to be performed before one or other of the chiefs, all of whom wore elaborate costumes and jewels and stood in barbaric splendour beneath golden umbrellas. A line of swaying bodies richly encased in gold and silver, with head-dresses which are quite beyond the power of words to describe, moved in unison to the beating of the drums in a kind of wild ecstatic devil-dance, which seemed to represent the fighting of man against evil spirits.

I have witnessed many native ceremonies, gorgeous, tawdry, and even sordid, in different parts of the world, but I find it difficult to compare the *Perahera* as I saw it with any of these for truly barbaric splendour. The procession moves on. The long rows of dancers advance towards each other and recede. They chant in honour of the relic of Buddha, which lies in its golden casket, and move with the procession to the rhythmic beat of the *Udekki* drums, which somehow awaken the primeval instincts of man. The moon passes momentarily behind a heavy cloud, and it is then that the flares of coco-nut oil and the huge braziers of flaming copra throw a weird light on the glittering, colourful spectacle of moving figures and monstrous beasts doing honour to the gods of their forefathers.

In order to enjoy the tropical beauty of the country surrounding Kandy, I motored along the forest road, known locally as Lady Blake's Drive. With tree-filled ravines on one side and verdure-clad slopes on the other, this jungle highway enables one in the

space of an hour or two to penetrate into the leafy fastness which is the real Ceylon. Buried in jungle growth, with one's nostrils scenting the jungle odours, it is a drive to remember, because with it comes a realisation of the true exuberance of the tropics, the richness of its colouring and the heavy smell of the hot, damp earth. At the bathing-place of the temple elephants, which lies along this route, one can watch these docile beasts enjoying, with their *mahouts*, a dip in the cooling river. The spiked sticks with which they are driven seem to be more a source of amusement than of fear, and it is clear to any observer that the elephant has a keen sense of humour. Watching them roll and play in the water, it occurred to me how universal and natural it seems for the animal as well as the human species to delight in even the muddiest pool. At Peradeniya, a few miles from Kandy, there are the famous Botanic Gardens. Apart from the trees, spices and outdoor blooms, there is a wonderful orchid house, where the rarest specimens can be seen amid suitable surroundings of royal palms and Equatorial foliage.

CHAPTER XXVI

BURIED CITIES OF THE JUNGLE

IN the year 400 B.C. the city of Anuradhpura was at the height of its glory as the capital of the island kingdom of Ceylon. These halcyon days lasted for nearly fourteen centuries, and then came oblivion. Slowly the jungle engulfed the remains, which, during recent times, have, however, been brought back to light and life. It is now the finest of the many buried cities of Ceylon. Founded by King Pandukabbaya, about whose reign little is definitely known, amazing stories are told of the magnificence of this place. Here is what a Government pamphlet says concerning these interesting ruins : " At the height of its grandeur the city was sixteen miles long and sixteen miles broad. The Brazen Palace, as it originally stood, is said to have contained 1,000 rooms, and to have stood nine storeys high. As the ruins exist to-day they cover 323 square feet, and there are visible 1,600 monolithic pillars. The glory has vanished, though imagination may reconstruct the magnificence of this great building. In its neighbourhood are the ruins of palaces, monasteries, great dagobas, viharas and beautiful baths. At Thuparama, founded by King Tissa in 307 B.C., is to be found a cistern cut out of the solid rock ; at Anuradhpura is an object of pilgrimage and veneration for all Buddhists—the

Bo tree, now 2,250 years old. There is a tradition amongst Buddhists of the present day that this tree will live for another 2,250 years."

On the way back to Kandy I made a detour in order to see two other famous sights of the interior of Ceylon. Both of these lie in jungle country between the Ceylon Residents' Shooting Preserve and the Game Sanctuary. The first was the buried city of Polonnaruwa, where the ruins are far more complete although of later date than those of Anuradhpura. Cleared of jungle growth, these walls and columns of a bygone city present an interesting yet forlorn spectacle. In the great temple stands a huge figure of Buddha. Halls and towers are adorned with carved figures, and the peculiar moonstone steps are of considerable interest and beauty. Relatively little is known regarding the history of these buried cities, which cover a wide area in the northern part of the island. They are certainly amazing and provocative, conjuring visions of a past as glorious and bizarre as the deserted capitals of India, from whence, undoubtedly, came the art and culture which produced them.

During these long journeys by road I obtained many glimpses of Cingalese life. Soon after leaving Polonnaruwa I came upon a wedding-house beautifully decorated with flowers. Everywhere there were the *cadjan* huts, with the children playing in the forest clearing while the mother was cooking the rice over a wood fire in the open. At another spot I noticed a bride and bridegroom dressed in flowered and bright-coloured silks being admired by the entire village. Letter-writers, composing love epistles, petitions to local Government officials, or simple informative

messages, seemed to do a thriving business. More than once my car was slowed down to prevent disorganising a procession making its way to a neighbouring temple with flowers, banners and the beating of drums. Long lines of docile-looking bullocks, drawing country carts with heavy and crazy wheels, seemed to be everywhere along the country roads. In the more remote parts, where I often stopped to picnic in the jungle, rope-like creepers hung down from the immense trees, and groups of monkeys chattered and played in the leafy roof. At night, curiously enough, weird hoots and cries often came from the black pit of tropical growth.

Association with the owners and managers of tea estates in the country above 5,000 feet elevation corrected the erroneous idea that more than half the island was planted with this shrub. I learned that up to the year 1870 very little tea was grown in Ceylon, coffee being at this time the principal crop. Then came a blight which practically exterminated these bushes, and tea came into its own. The total yield is now about 240 million pounds a year.

Of all the sights of central Ceylon I consider the Rock of Sigiriya to be the most interesting. Rising hundreds of feet above the surrounding plain, the summit of this natural cliff is crowned by a fortress, parts of which are still intact. It was once a royal city, and from the remains a magnificent view is obtained far and wide over the jungle. The name Sigiriya means "Lion's Mouth," and came from the fact that the fortress town was entered through the open jaws of a carved lion's head. Some 600 feet below there is a vast tank, or ancient water reservoir. These tanks are comparatively common, especially in

the northern portion of the island. The rock was fortified many centuries ago, and not only did it serve as a refuge for the Kandyans, but also as the stronghold of an outlaw king. The frescoed walls and paintings of the somewhat sparse ruins existing to-day are of considerable beauty. Examining closely the mortar, I could see embedded in the rock-like substance grains of rice which must have been used in its composition. Unfortunately there appears to be no authentic history of Sigiriya, but if there is any truth in legend then such a story would not lack either incident or interest.

About the hill resort of Nuwara Eliya, which stands at an elevation of just over 6,000 feet, and enjoys cool, and at times frosty air, little can be said which does not savour of the guide-book. It is a bungalow township with many hotels and boarding-houses, to which all the jaded residents in the damp heat of the plains seem to fly during the months of March, April and May. Here log-fires burn brightly in open grates. Golf, tennis and race meetings fill in the days very pleasantly, while dancing in the evening no longer becomes a matter of changing collars more frequently than one changes partners. With clubs, shooting and riding, the lot of the retired Ceylon civil servant and planter, of whom there are many living permanently in this hill station, is certainly not a hard one. Isolation appears to me the only drawback, because Nuwara Eliya is surrounded by some of the most beautiful scenery in Ceylon.

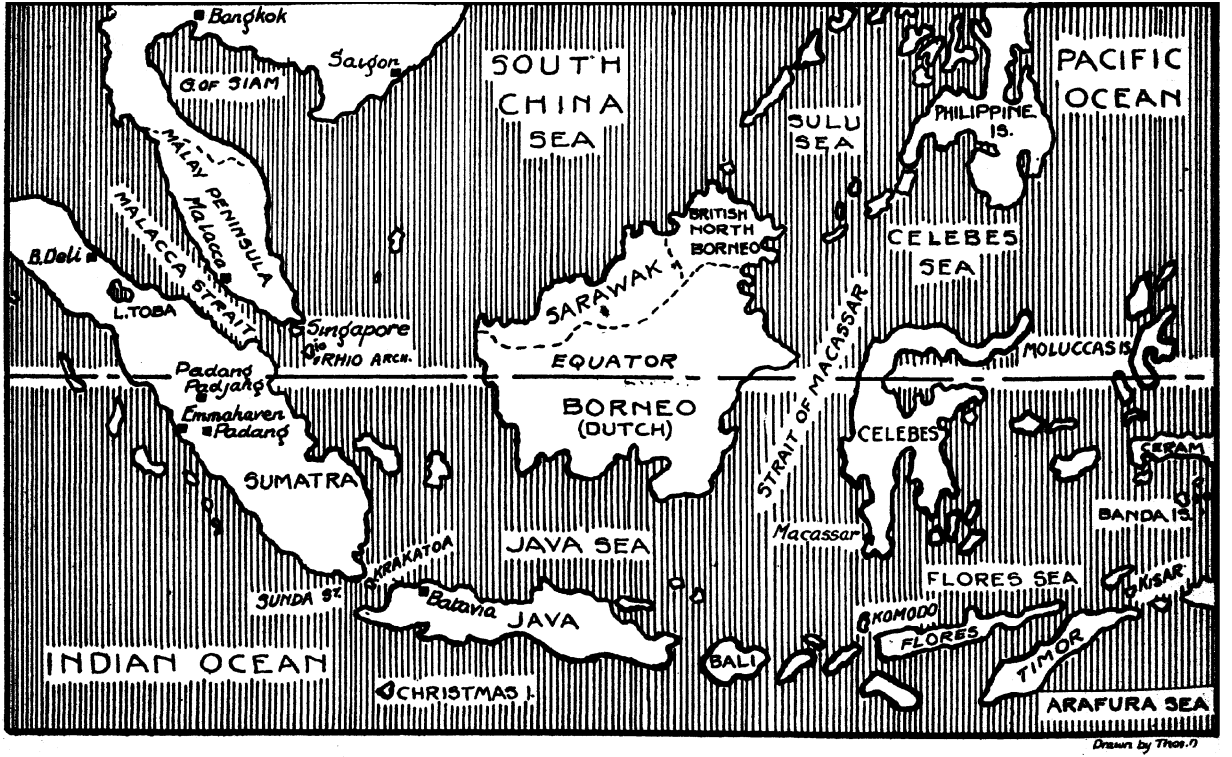
Trincomalee is a place which has every right to a grievance. In days gone by it was one of the principal British naval stations, but during recent years it has been deserted by all its old friends of both the sea and

land forces. Yet it possesses a wonderful harbour of deep blue water, is sheltered by gleaming white coral reefs, and is bordered by green hill-sides and yellow sands. I can testify to the excellence of both the bathing and the fishing. The latter sport is best conducted from the catamarans of the local Moor fisherfolk. There is a note of melancholy in the deserted barracks on the hill-side; in Admiralty House, standing forlornly facing the empty harbour and backed by a tropical garden in which the bright scarlet of the flamboyant trees contrasts with the sombre hues of the banyans. Even the historic old rest house, which about half a century ago was a famous rendezvous for officers on the East India station, is now almost deserted. Like some of the West Indian islands, Trincomalee is a place of old-world sea memories, of the days when wooden walls and square sails gave place to ironclads and engines.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE STRANGE LAND OF SUMATRA

IT is a strange world in which I have landed after crossing the Equator aboard an eastward-bound liner that has threaded its way past the vivid green islands, blue waters and mangrove-fringed shores of the west coast of Sumatra. Here in the Netherlands Indies all is different—natives, houses, flowers, trees, birds and customs. So queer are some of these that it is often necessary to rub one's eyes in order to make sure that it is not a dream. Even such uninteresting things as areas, distances and populations will come as a surprise to most people, as they certainly did to me when I landed at Emmahaven and interviewed some of the officials there. If all the Dutch islands in this great archipelago of the South Seas are included, the total area will equal that of half Europe, excluding Russia, and living on these 733,681 square miles of tropical land there are just under fifty-three millions of people, only 200,000 of whom have any claim to European descent. To get down to more manageable figures, however, the little island of Sumatra, on the steaming shores of which I am standing, is only 167,480 square miles in area, or fourteen times as large as Holland itself, and by way of population it has a mere six and a half million natives, who are among the queerest people on earth.



THE EAST INDIES

Facing page 196—4

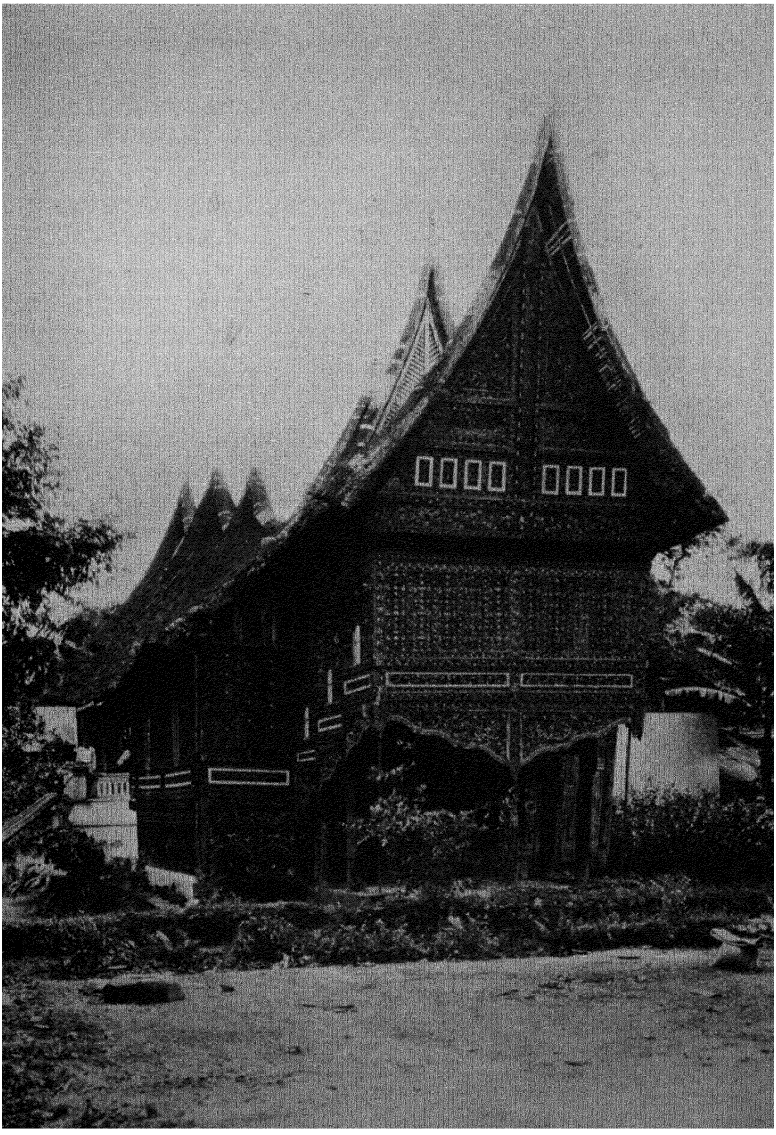
The inhabitants of this little port of Emmahaven seem to spend their entire day dressed in pyjamas. The brighter the colours and the more bizarre the pattern, the better the light-bronze complexioned people, among whom there is a goodly sprinkling of Chinese, seem to like their attire. After all it is not so extraordinary as it seems at first glance that these people should choose to wear just a pair of coloured cotton trousers and a jacket of the brightest hue. I had scarcely left the quay and walked down a road, which seemed to have been hacked out of the most vivid and exuberant jungle, before I also wished that I had come ashore in pyjamas.

The atmosphere was that of a Turkish bath. Everywhere there was water; pools gleamed in the misty sunlight along the roadsides, under the houses —for they are all built on stilts—and in every garden or patch of jungle. So riotous is the vegetation that it seemed to cover the houses in a sea of green. The road leading to the town cannot be much over a quarter of a mile in length, but a thin silk suit was sticking to my limbs like a plaster before I had accomplished even half of this distance. It rains about every other day in Emmahaven, and there appears to be great difficulty in disposing of the accumulated water and of subduing the vegetation which the hot sun and the moist earth conjure up everywhere in a few hours.

Perhaps it is an injustice to say that Emmahaven is just a tropical swamp, for much has been done to render it a useful port. I could not help noticing, however, that very few white people think it worth their while to live in this jungle paradise beneath Monkey Hill. They very wisely seem to prefer the

old native town of Padang, situated about four and a half miles inland. The Chinese, however, appear to thrive in this port. If names and faces are anything to judge by, they own all the dark and open-fronted shops, and run the ramshackle buses which collect and deposit the pyjama-clad Sumatrans in their town and country houses of bamboo and palm-leaf. A curious long-tailed monkey, which inhabits the forest-clad hills jutting seawards near the town, is captured in large numbers and brought down from the comparatively dry tree-tops to act as watch-dog in the reeking gardens of this port. The risk of these monkeys being drowned, or lost amid the profusion of green leaves if they were left on the ground, seems to be the reason why they are allowed to live in little kennels on the top of six-foot-high poles stuck in the earth along the roadside. The houses behind have broad verandas, on which yellow-skinned babies crawl about in imminent peril of falling off into the little rivulets of water which act as miniature moats in front of each of these castles charming.

Yet there is something fascinating in poking around this little town on the edge of the Indian Ocean. The trees meet overhead, and in the green half-light great blotches of coloured bloom seem to suggest a gaiety which the humid atmosphere makes it difficult for the white man to feel. Little native policemen, with broad-bladed and murderous-looking short swords, keep order in this malarious town of yellow and bronze people. Even in the Amazon region of Brazil one seldom sees such thick and colourful jungle. There was nowhere to go, and although the night set in with a cool and drying trade wind, I decided to leave on the following day by



A MENANGKABAU HOUSE—SUMATRA

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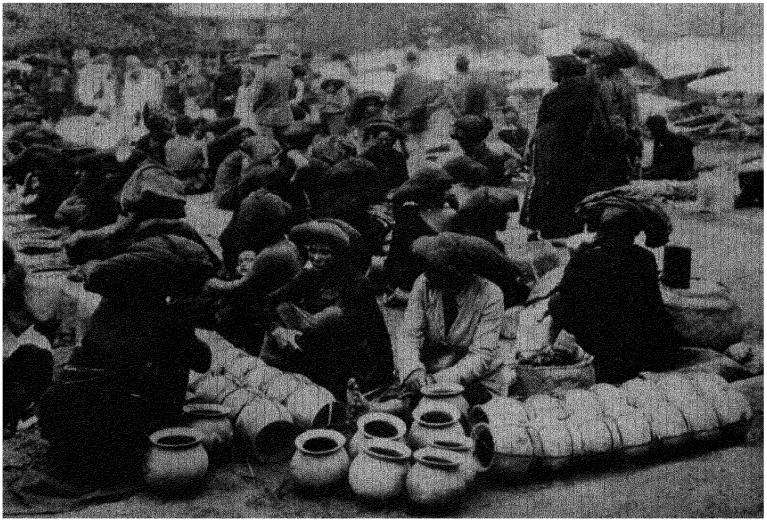
A BATAK DEALER IN WEAPONS



MARKET SCENE—NORTHERN SUMATRA

railway for the highland town of Padang Padjang, or Fort de Kock, as it is called by the Dutch. This portion of Sumatra is inhabited by the Menangkabau people, who live in the most extraordinary houses existing to-day and under a social system which belongs to the prehistoric past.

Dense and seemingly impenetrable forest, with the trees sweeping the carriage windows and often forming a leafy arch over the line, is the dominant impression left on the mind by the journey into the Padang highlands. The green curtain parted for a brief space while the train passed the populous town of Padang, the capital of West Sumatra, but it closed again almost immediately when the palm-thatch native huts and white buildings of the European residents in this exotic city had flashed by, leaving behind a blurred memory of vivid colours, brown-faced peoples, native waggons with roofs resembling those of thatched cottages and wild-looking gardens exuding the sickly smell of tropical flowers. Then came Anei Kloof, a chasm between towering mountains clothed to their lofty summits in verdant green. The breeze through the carriage windows, when not impregnated with soot from the engine, carried with it the smell of damp earth and the more rank odours of the Equatorial forest.

For wild and rugged scenery the Padang highlands are almost unique in the tropics. They are really formed by a vast tableland of volcanic rock, heavily fissured by the torrents of the wet season and covered with the thickest vegetation. Here and there I noticed high cliffs showing different coloured strata, proving the existence of mineral deposits of many kinds.

Slowly the train climbed to an altitude of 2,500 feet above sea-level, and wound its way on to the edge of a steep ravine. Here was Padang Padjang, clinging like an eagle's nest to crumbling rocks of a whitish-yellow colour. It is not the town itself which is of interest, although the climate is delightfully cool and dry after the moist heat of the coast, but the people who inhabit the surrounding country. The principal races of Sumatra are the Lampongs, the Redjangs, the Lebongs, the Gayos, the Achinese, the Bataks and, above all in point of interest, the Malays of Menangkabau. These people, whose home is in the Padang highlands, are a race of artists, especially where ingenious and picturesque architecture is concerned.

CHAPTER XXVIII

AMONG THE QUEER MENANGKABAU

THERE are no houses in the world quite like the fantastic dwellings of the Menangkabau. I shall never forget my first view of the peculiar roof-horns and outflung balcony porches of these amazing habitations. The walls are fashioned either of finely woven bamboo or of elaborately carved and painted woodwork. The intricate design and the wonderful contrasts of blue, grey and brown render it almost impossible to describe these buildings, and I must rely on a photograph to do justice to what are undoubtedly the most amazing human dwellings of any race.

These pantomime houses are not the only queer things in the neighbourhood of Fort de Kock. The Menangkabau women are the most picturesquely dressed in all Sumatra. As they move about either in the villages of these highlands, or in the *passars* (bazaars) of the town, they create a constantly changing pageant of vivid colours. On festive occasions their dresses are of extraordinary brilliance, and they wear many bangles and necklaces. Their heads are adorned with immense and peculiar-shaped turbans, which give them the appearance of Indian princes in full regalia. It occurred to me that one of these " models " should be introduced to the sorely harassed

designers of Bond Street, Fifth Avenue and the Rue de la Paix. In all of these countries of rapidly changing fashion it would certainly create a momentary sensation.

On occasions of less importance, however, these Menangkabau women wear the *slandang*, a bright-hued piece of cotton or silk, about twenty inches wide and three yards long, which is passed around the body under the arms and crossed at the back. Possessing almost perfect figures, attained by carrying baskets on their heads from early childhood, this tight winding and draping produces perfect harmony of line. The colours also are very effective against the flowers, foliage, and extraordinary house decorations.

It might be thought that too much space is being devoted to an account of the women of this race. Let me describe a passing scene which will give some idea of the importance of the female sex in these highlands of Sumatra. I am standing in the *passar*, or market, of Fort de Kock, and hundreds of natives of different tribes, all gaily dressed and many with bundles of merchandise on their heads, form a kaleidoscopic picture amid the stalls and paths. Fruits, flowers, and various kinds of merchandise are heaped on the ground and in the open booths. It is a picture of native life which is full of colour and animation. Here is one woman with a fine carriage bearing on her head an immense basket containing clusters of mangosteens, each about three inches in diameter and of a purple colour. She is selling these and other fruits, such as the *doekoe*, about one inch in diameter, which resembles a yellow olive, and the brown *sawoe*, a kind of sweet pear. Following her

about the market is a man dressed in a bright red *sarong*, or skirt, and a yellow *kan kapala*, or turban head-dress, both of which adornments contrast to advantage against his yellow-bronze skin. He looks happy and full of vigour, although by no means tall or muscular. This couple are evidently husband and wife, but whereas she is carrying heavy loads and doing all the business of selling the fruit, doubtless brought in from some distant garden in the early hours of the morning, he has come to collect money and is carrying a gilded wire cage, covered with a tasselled awning, in which is his favourite fighting cock, about to be pitted against that belonging to another husband following discreetly in the rear.

The Menangkabau people living in these highlands observe the strange custom of the matriarchate. The women do all the work and the husbands have practically no family cares. This does not mean that the Menangkabau women are able to lay down the law to their husbands. The men are still the rulers, but they obtain what authority they possess from their relationship to certain members of the opposite sex. In this system of society a husband belongs to his mother, and is often employed in looking after his sister's children. On the death of a father, his place is taken by the son of his sister. In all cases, children belong to the family of the mother, while their father is considered to be part of the family group of his mother and sisters.

The way in which this complicated code of relationship works out is both curious and interesting. Even when a daughter marries, she never leaves the house of her mother. Her husband visits her daily, but he still lives either in the house of his mother or

in that of his eldest sister, if, of course, he does not leave home to earn a living in distant parts. Every Menangkabau woman desires to have a daughter who will support her as long as she lives, and will never leave home although she may marry. When over ten years of age, boys are no longer allowed to live in the houses of their womenfolk, but are segregated in communal dwellings. Here they are taught to read the Koran, to dance, and to fence with knives and swords. When on the threshold of manhood they leave the communal houses to marry, but the home tie is never severed. Whether as a boy or as a man, they return to their own womenfolk to live or to be nursed in the case of illness. There is a proverb in these highlands that "a bird may fly far, but will always come back to the tree of its birth."

These curious people have a family economic system which might be called communistic were it not for the fact that it bears no relationship to the political doctrine which passes by that name. They never know the joy of private ownership. All they possess belongs to the family and not to the individual. This, however, does not cover money or goods acquired by individual labour, although these also become part of the family wealth on the death of the one who amassed them. Property in the form of the beautiful horn-roofed houses and the rice-fields or plantations are the indivisible property of the family, and pass down from one generation to another. They are entailed estates. They cannot under any circumstances be taken away from their original owners. In this way poverty is almost unknown to the Menangkabau ; but, on the other hand, no man

can accumulate a large private fortune, each family is either rich or relatively poor. The economic state naturally depends upon the thrift or otherwise of an entire family. Under this system mercenary marriages are unknown. The flaws in this code will be apparent to anyone who takes the trouble to work out such things as the inheritance of wealth, the differences in the temperament between one member of a family and another, and the fact that debts soon become uncollectable. Although the Menangkabau is often an artist of no mean ability, he is by no means a likeable person. The men do little work, and prefer to loaf about the villages, relying on their womenfolk to till the fields, sell the produce and keep house.

Shortly before I arrived in the Padang highlands, there had been a serious rising of these people against all Europeans. This outbreak had its origin in the Russian centre for the training of Eastern agitators in distant Samarkand. A study of the psychology of the Menangkabau people in this university of Communism led to the training of native agitators, especially procured for this purpose. These were eventually returned to Sumatra, where they succeeded in convincing these ignorant natives that a Bolshevik force had defeated the Dutch colonial army. They incited the ill-tempered and somewhat savage Menangkabau, as well as other Sumatran peoples, to attack Europeans in the town of Padang. There was an extended uprising, and many hundreds of natives were killed and wounded. The agitators sought refuge in the jungles and hills, but they were resolutely hunted down and shot by the colonial troops of the Netherlands. One cannot travel far on the fringes

of Asiatic Russia without discovering the extent to which Communistic activities have been responsible for the commitment of the most fearful atrocities. What I saw and heard in China make the worst stories of the French Revolution pale into insignificance.

CHAPTER XXIX

MYSTERY OF THE BATAK PEOPLE

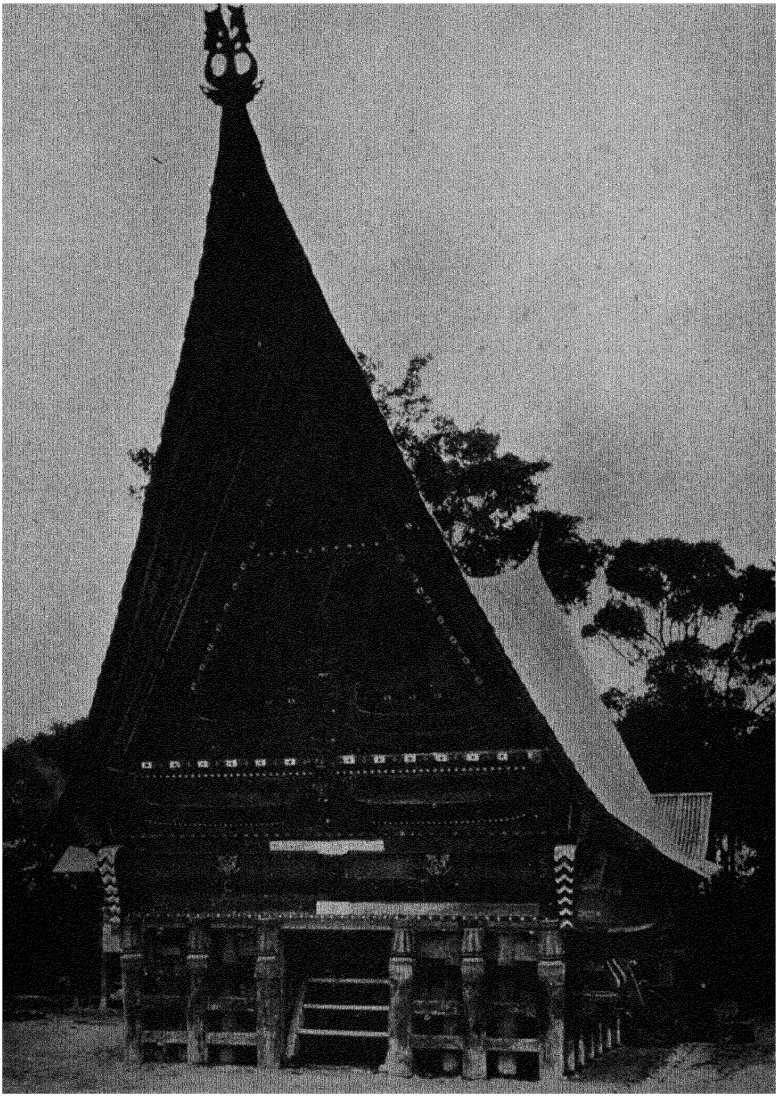
AWAY in the north of Sumatra, beyond Lake Toba, lies the mountain home of the Bataks, who live in houses almost as elaborate as those of the Menangkabaus. Up to quite recent years these people were cannibals, and they are still very primitive although at present quite peaceable. The country they inhabit is very wild and beautiful. The waters of Toba, which is the largest lake in this vast and jungle-covered island, were considered sacred by the natives, and many of those who attempted to explore this region were murdered and eaten. Lake Toba has an area of twenty-five square miles, and is said to be 1,500 feet deep in places. Rocky cliffs and vast forests surround it on all sides. It is best reached from Balawan-Deli, a port on the east coast of Sumatra. Near to the north end of this lake there is a little mountain station called Brastagi. This makes an excellent centre from which to become acquainted with the only race, besides the Menangkabaus, characteristic of this large East Indian island.

In the dense jungles hereabouts the giant trees are often strangled by the undergrowth and the creepers. Camphor, rubber, pepper, cinnamon and other sylvan products abound. The elephant is largely confined to the north-western coast, but in these central forests

the rhinoceros, tiger, panther, tapir and the orang outang exist in large numbers, although seldom seen from the fine motor road running inland from Deli. At Medan, the capital of Sumatra's east coast, which is only thirty minutes by car from the neighbouring port, there are modern European houses, streets, hotels, and the residence of the district governor, besides the palace of the Sultan of Deli.

Shortly after leaving Medan the road runs past tobacco-fields, then through the little settlement of Arnhemia, where one sees the first of the Batak villages. Steep ascents, sharp bends, jungle, an occasional tea estate, a climb, and Brastagi is reached. Here there is civilisation, and it is possible to explore the fantastic villages of the natives while living for most of the time in a comfortable hotel. These East Indian islands are remarkable for their systems of railways, motor roads and often isolated but modern hotels, which enable the country to be seen without the discomfort I have experienced when away from the beaten track in so many parts of the world.

The Bataks live in villages surrounded by mud walls, often reinforced as a means of defence by hedges of thorny bamboo. Although they no longer wage war against each other, insufficient time has yet elapsed since the days of their savagery for many of the old customs to have passed into the limbo of forgotten things. Apart from the houses in which they live, which are unique in style and resemble gigantic thatched barns supported by finely carved and painted woodwork, their most characteristic feature is the dress of both men and women. In contrast to the shining attire of the Menangkabaus, these Batak people are usually to be seen in plain



A BATAK HOUSE—SUMATRA

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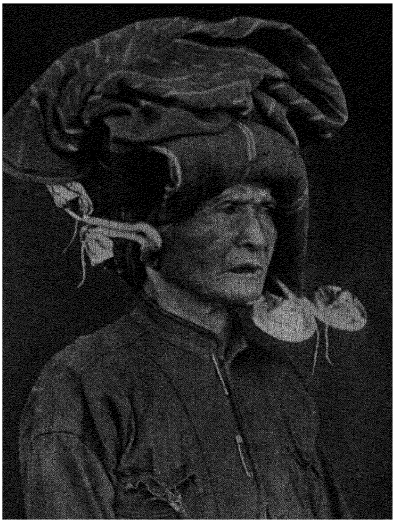


A BATAK WOMAN

A BATAK VILLAGE

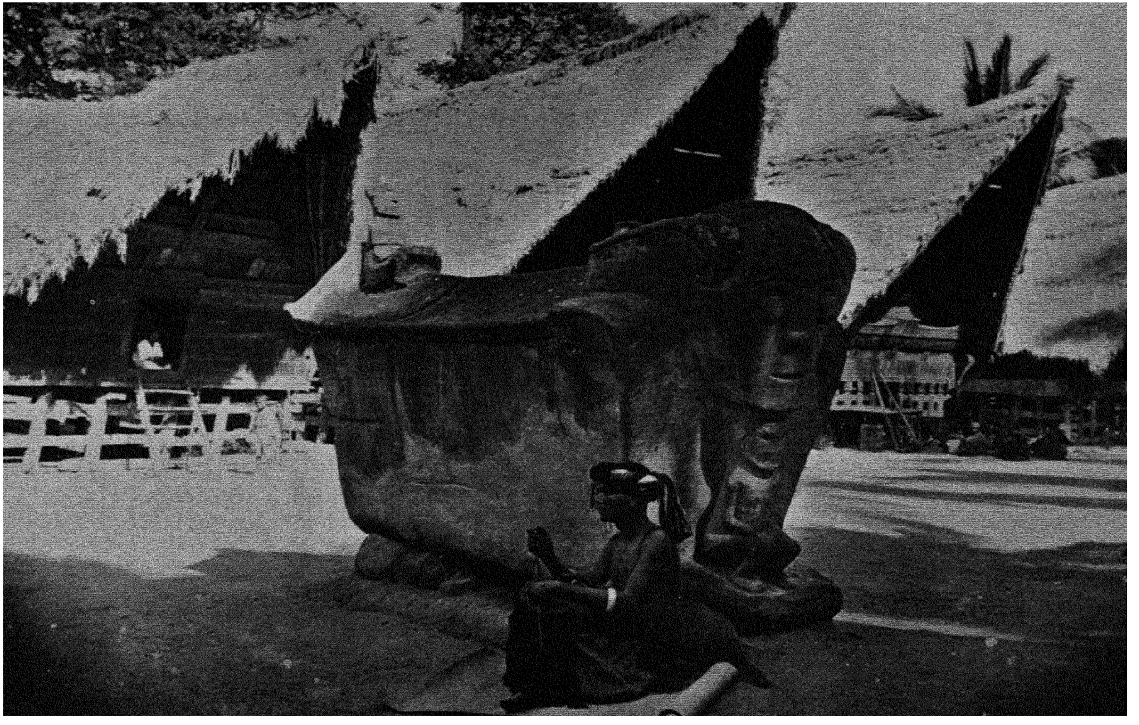
dark-blue *sarongs*. The women seldom wear any clothing above the waist, but their heads are invariably adorned with what looks like a small bundle of old clothes which, however, is really a turban. Neither men nor women appear to wear anything on their feet, but they are an ugly although interesting race.

Undoubtedly there is a racial connection between these people, the Malays and the Polynesians. Away in still distant New Zealand I also came across characteristics in the now civilised Maori which set me thinking furiously that all these people of the South Seas must at one time have had a common ancestry, or at least a meeting ground undivided by thousands of miles of sea. In this connection a story I heard on the north-west coast of British Columbia is also of interest.

In this Batak village by the waters of Toba I came across a sarcophagus of stone, fashioned in the shape of a man so curiously sphinx-like that I sought the opinion of others whose knowledge of Sumatra is far greater than my own. "The Bataks have scarcely emerged from animism, yet the tombs and monuments that are to be met with occasionally in their villages exhibit a style of art curiously reminiscent of the temples of Chichen Itza, in Yucatan, or those of the Incas of Peru, or, at times, of the art of early Egypt, or of the Minoan civilisations." With the latter part of this assertion I entirely agree. In the case of this particular tomb, the massive stone head was so much like those common in the relics of ancient Egypt that, were it placed among them, identification would only be possible by an expert. Beneath the face of this sphinx and between the curiously shaped

stone paws sits a tiny guardian of the tomb, and another grotesque little figure squats on the top of the coffin lid. This seems to suggest that the ancient sculptor believed in the Egyptian theory of the "*Kha*," or "Astral Double." Even the head-dress of the main figure is entirely Egyptian in character. A Government publication draws attention to the fact that "there are, indeed, strange and mysterious problems for the archæologist hidden in the jungles of Northern Sumatra, and the scientist will doubtless remember that it was in Java (close at hand) that the remains of earliest man, the so-called *Pithecanthropus erectus*, were found. Who knows what even more important discoveries remain to be unearthed?"

During my stay in the Batak *kampongs*, I discovered that these people believe the human body to contain what can only be described as soul matter. This is called *tondi*, and they seek to preserve and increase this nebulous something at the expense of other living beings. They consider that by eating human flesh they obtain the *tondi* of their victim. Although cannibalism is now rigorously suppressed, who can say whether it is not still practised secretly in the fastness of the jungle-covered mountains. Anyway, those Bataks whom I met carefully preserved such oddments of the human body as finger nails, a cutting of another man's hair, and garments worn by others which had been soaked with perspiration. The pagan Batak—and some have been converted to Christianity, while others have embraced the Mohammedan faith—still wears his hair long and in a tousled mass, because he considers that the *tondi*, which gives him strength, is contained in the hair of the head. It is curious that this belief exists in



TOMB IN NATIVE VILLAGE—SAMOSIR

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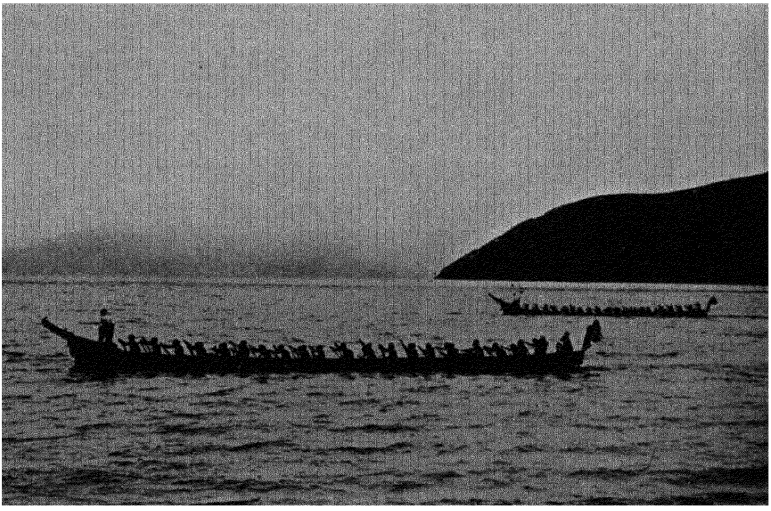
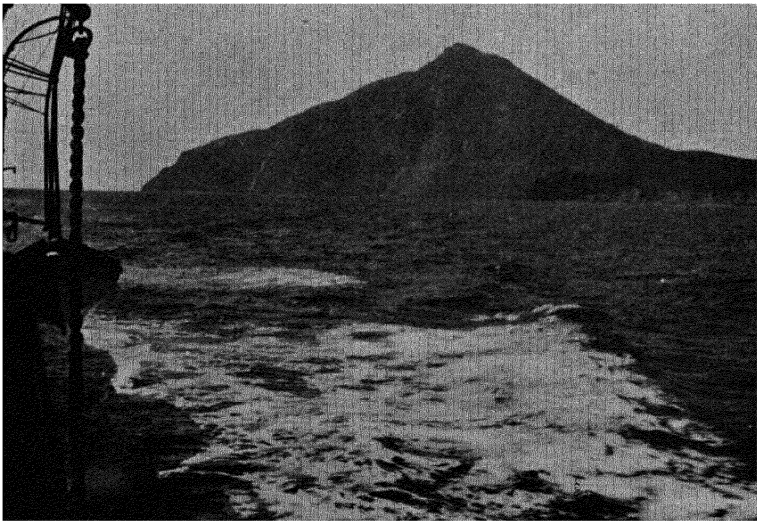


LAKE TOBA—BATAK PRAHU



SUNDA STRAITS—KRAKATAO VOLCANO

so many different creeds. Did not Samson obtain strength from his hair ?

Interwoven with these beliefs, which seem to have been common all over the world in bygone centuries, there is the superstitious idea that the spirits of the dead are jealous of the living, and for this reason must be both placated and worshipped. The Bataks are most careful not to allow their shadow to prevent the full light of day from falling on a grave. Here it would seem, however, that latitude plays a part, for the sun is almost directly overhead, and a man's shadow is long only towards the beginning and end of the day.

Unlike the Menangkabaus, these people of North-Eastern Sumatra are good-natured and intelligent. Those who have been educated are to be found in many of these islands acting as teachers, clerks and in other capacities of minor authority. At the time of my visit to Northern Sumatra a punitive expedition was operating in the jungle against some still recalcitrant tribes, but I could not discover whether these were of Batak origin or not.

From a little place called Prapat, which juts out on a peninsula into the clear waters of Lake Toba, I was able, with the aid of a motor boat, to explore this amazingly beautiful inland sea as well as the forest-covered island of Samosir. Toba is situated about 3,000 feet above sea-level, and is surrounded by mountains often over 6,000 feet high. Several of these are active volcanoes, and wisps of smoke can be seen coming from their craters. Occasionally I came across a mountain rising steeply out of the waters of this lake, which was first reached by a Dutch explorer in 1853. Curiously the round-topped

mountains encompassing Lake Toba are entirely bare of trees. This peculiarity forms such a striking contrast to the heavily wooded Padang highlands and the Equatorial forests of the west coast, that it would seem to point to volcanic action within quite recent times. In fact, Lake Toba is probably a flooded crater. This portion of Sumatra, which is certainly a most beautiful and diversified land, is also within the earthquake belt. While passing round the opposite or southern end of this island on the way to Java, the famous volcano of Krakatoa, which rises from the middle of the Sunda Straits, came within view.

It was a beautiful moonlight night, with the dark mountains of the northern end of the island of Java silhouetted against the luminous blue of the tropical sky. The water around the ship gleamed like frosted silver, and I had lingered on deck until the early hours of the morning enjoying the warm, scented breeze which was coming from the jungles on shore. Slowly the great black cone of Krakatoa appeared to rise from the moonlit sea. A cloud of diminutive size hung like a nightcap from its crest, and was the only one of its kind visible amid the great stars. This huge outlet for the smouldering fires far below the surface of both earth and sea formed an impressive spectacle in the peace of the Equatorial night. Originally this volcano-island was five miles long by three broad, then came one of the most severe earthquakes and volcanic eruptions recorded in history. In 1883 this island was shaken and blown to pieces. Those whose memory will carry them back to this and the following year may remember the blood-red sunsets which occurred all over the world during the

succeeding months. Scientists attributed these to clouds of volcanic dust drifting round the world. When the earth and fire subsided Krakatoa had changed its shape; two miles had disappeared from its length and one mile from its breadth.

By daylight the following morning this mountain had disappeared from view, and with it also the forest-clad southernmost point of Sumatra. Within a few hours we were lying far up-stream in the magnificent harbour of Tandjong-Priok, the maritime capital of one of the most beautiful islands in the world.

CHAPTER XXX

THE COLOURFUL LIFE OF JAVA

HERE in the *Pasar Baroe*, or native shopping centre of old Batavia, the half-Dutch, half-Javanese capital of the Netherlands Indies, I am surrounded by yellow-skinned Chinese curio-sellers, prosperous-looking Japanese silk merchants, half-naked Malay boatmen, and smiling chocolate-coloured Javanese. Such a medley of Eastern races and shades beneath the bright sun of tropical Java, that the overcast skies and monotonous uniformity of Western cities seem things as far away and remote as the ice mountains of the moon. Unlike many other towns of this archipelago, which links the continents of Asia and Australia, Batavia is not entirely Eastern, nor has it the atmosphere of the South Seas; there is sufficient that is typically Dutch in its buildings, its canals and its life to make it a quaint and picturesque mixture of all three. It is unique.

This great bazaar, the centre of native life in the Javanese capital, has been reached from the port of Tandjong-Priok after a car drive of over seven miles through vivid green country and along the banks of a muddy canal. Hundreds of washerwomen could be seen pounding the dirt out of innumerable garments, while brown-bodied children were swimming and playing in the warm but ooze-like water around.

Closer in towards the town this same canal was filled with bamboo rafts, *prahus* and Chinese *sampans*—a veritable floating city. Then came the broad Noordwijk Avenue, dominated at one end by the fine Hôtel des Indes, and so into the maze of native shops and stalls of the *Pasar Baroe.*

This capital of Java is composed of three towns. One is the port, with its modern harbour, in which there is little to interest the sightseer; the other is old Batavia, a medley of new hotels, fine commercial buildings, canals, tramways, motor cars, country carts and native markets; while the third is Weltevreden, the beautiful foliage-embowered European residential quarter surrounding the *Koningsplein,* or park. It is in the centre, or native town, that I am wandering without set purpose in an endeavour to capture something of its elusive atmosphere.

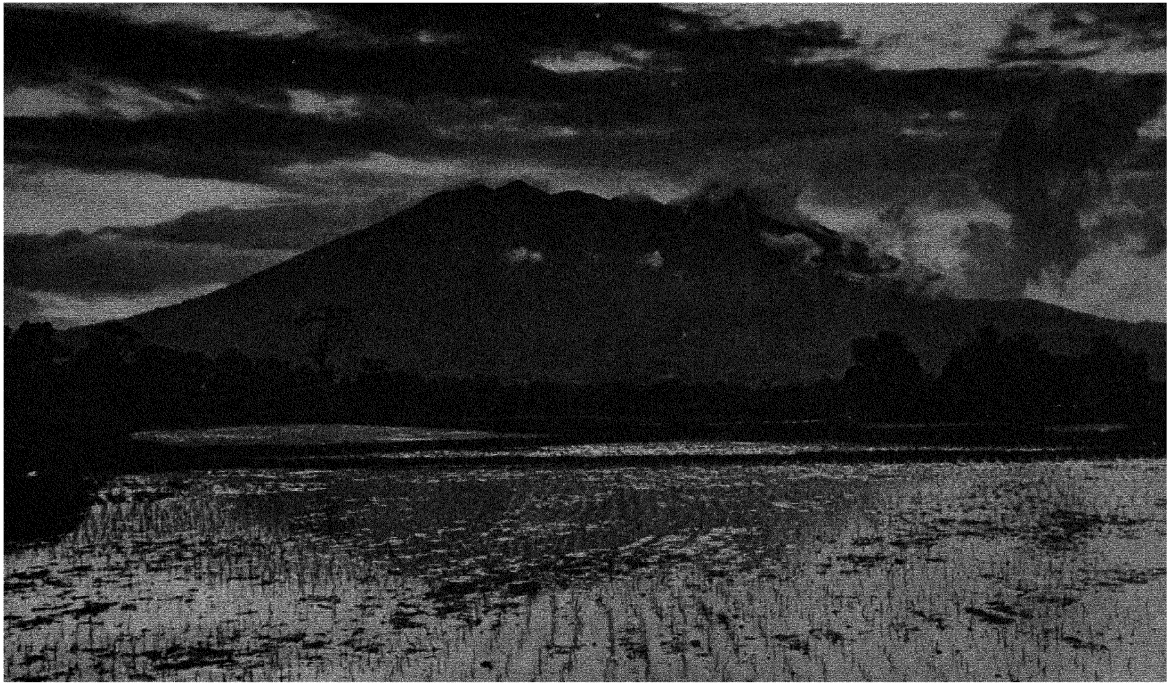
In this tropical city the vivid sun rays, coming from nearly overhead, seem to enhance the value of every coloured thing around. It is the Chinese bazaar, and the pavements are full of white and blue-clad shuffling figures. The shops exhibit silks and cottons dyed and printed in shades which would startle by their brilliance in lands where the light of day is more subdued. The roadway is choked with coolies of more than one race, all carrying curious loads suspended from poles balanced across their shoulder-blades and with their arms curled round from back to front. There are straw hats as large as umbrellas. Here are a few close-ups of these men who play such a prominent part in the native life of old Batavia.

A wrinkled, yellow face beneath a pointed hat of straw, a bare back slightly bent with the load hanging

by two wires from each end of a wooden yoke; it is the dinner vendor. A customer approaches, and squats cross-legged on a doorstep. In a moment the old Chinese trader stoops down a foot or two to allow the lighted stove hanging from one wire to rest on the ground simultaneously with the compact little kitchen suspended from the other end of the yoke. Within a minute or so he has supplied a plate, chopsticks, a peculiar mess, in which steaming hot beans seem to be the predominant factor, together with a minute cup of tea. There is a short conversation, the plate is collected, and the Eastern equivalent of the snack bar moves on to obtain fresh custom.

In Java one becomes accustomed to seeing every detail of human life take place in the open street. The indoors, from the native standpoint, is usually a room or hut occupied by many human beings almost exclusively for sleeping or working. The morning bath, for the Javanese and the Malays are scrupulously clean, is taken in the nearest canal, and these artificial waterways cross the city in all directions. The evening cooler in the muddy waters is usually undertaken at the same time as the day's washing. The barber often obliges his customers while they sit on chairs in the street beneath arches and doorways. Every patch of shade is eagerly sought for some act of domestic economy in this teeming city of one of the most thickly populated islands in the world. Java, with an area of 48,504 square miles, has no less than thirty-six million people living within its narrow confines.

Only a street or two away from the Chinese quarter there is the fruit and vegetable market. In this place I found it difficult to concentrate attention upon the



VIEW OF MOUNT SANAK—JAVA
Rice Fields in Foreground.

Facing page 216—4.

A WAJANG DOLL

MONSTROUS DANCING DOLLS

queer produce heaped around because of the ardent sellers of still more curious toys. Grotesque figures on sticks were thrust eagerly forward for me to purchase. They were *Wajang* dolls, with extraordinary heads and incongruous bodies, possessing a history which leads back into the dim legendary past. The *Wajang-Wong*, or puppet-show, is a feature of Javanese life. A story is told by a bazaar *raconteur*, who manipulates one or two of these curious dolls to caricature the actions of the people he is describing. At times and places there is also a *gamelon* orchestra to accompany this mimicry, but on this subject more anon.

When these unique dolls had ceased to fascinate, there was the seller of sweets, surrounded by many eager little mouths. I particularly noticed an Arab boy, more daring than his companions, thrust his hands into one of the immense circular tins, each divided into sections like the spokes of a wheel, and steal what looked like a sticky ball of toffee on a long piece of split cane. Somehow sweet-sellers the world over appear to be good-tempered, and this quite young man proved no exception to this rule.

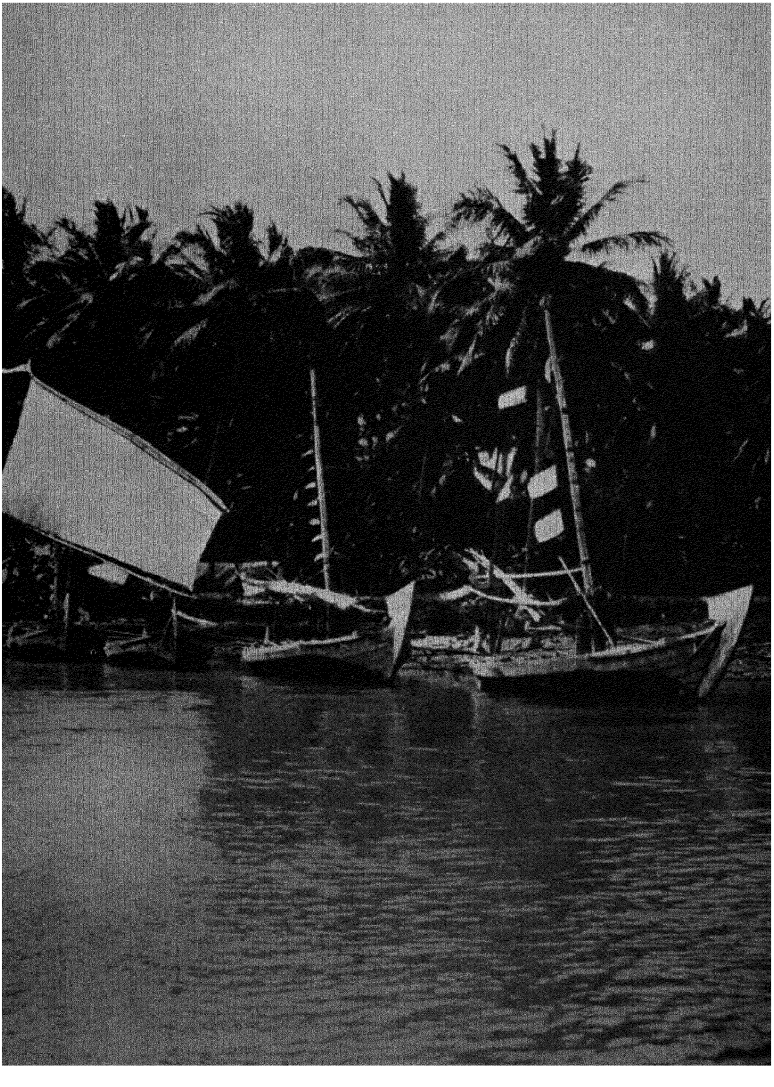
Moving about from stall to stall the number and variety of Javanese fruits became apparent. Here were red and green *ramboetans*, the pulp-like shell of which splits easily and enables the opaque white kernel to be eaten. To describe the taste of this and other queer fruit is almost impossible. The *doekoe* is about one inch in diameter, and resembles a large yellow olive. This I had seen in the market of Padang Padjang. Then there were piles of the melon-like papaya, called pawpaw in some tropical countries, and baskets full of greenish-yellow

mangoes, brown-coloured *sawoes*, large and heavy jack-fruit and deceptive durian. This latter is, perhaps, the most objectionable of all tropical fruit. It is said to be of a particularly delicate flavour, and is about eight inches long and weighs up to four or five pounds.

On one occasion, during my first visit to the tropics, I cut open a durian in the hotel bedroom just before retiring at night. I shall never forget the efforts made afterwards with the electric fan and a strong cigar to get rid of the terrible smell that this fruit emitted directly the pulp was cut. Sleep was out of the question until, eventually, I summoned a "boy" to take the objectionable thing away. The aroma is far worse than that of a Limburger cheese or the nauseating smells of Canton. I was told later that the durian should be eaten with the nose buried in a handkerchief tied tightly round the head. Notwithstanding this excellent piece of advice, I am still ignorant of the delicate flavour which it is said to possess.

One of the oldest things in Batavia is the Molenvliet, a canal which originally carried the produce from the sugar mills outside the city down to the sea. It is bordered on both sides by tree-shaded avenues, which are themselves flanked by brightly painted native bungalows. Although the sugar mills ceased to exist many years ago, this "mill-stream" still forms one of the main thoroughfares connecting old Batavia with the new city of Weltevreden.

This canal-road offers unusual opportunities for studying native life. The banks are thronged with all the colours and types one sees in this exotic city. On the brazen surface of the chocolate-coloured



NATIVE FISHING CRAFT—BANTAM, JAVA

Facing page 218—4.

CROWDED NATIVE LIFE—BATAVIA

CANAL LIFE IN JAVA

flood are the bamboo *tangerang* rafts, which bring to the city building material of all kinds; in fact, the rafts themselves are the material from which the native builds or repairs his house. "He buys a raft, takes it to his building site and, pulling it to pieces, uses the bamboo for pillars, posts, cross-ties and, when split, for laths, and when woven for the so-called *bilik*, or bamboo walls and ceilings. There is also a method of using split bamboo for roofing, so it is actually possible to build a complete house of bamboo only, although in Batavia the roofs are mostly of tiles or *stap* (dried palm leaves). On these rafts the children play, as naked as they were born, and from them they dive and swim. Along the banks the women wash clothes, some of them for the European inhabitants of the place and some for themselves and their families. The bright colours of the clothing blend with the shades of the trees and water, and with the amazing reds and browns of the soil, to create an unforgettable picture."

On the outskirts of Batavia there is a section of the old wall, and above it an aged and whitewashed skull, which is transfixed by the point of a spear. I came across this curious relic of the past after leaving the coco-nut groves and small canals to enter the old Jacatra road. The tablet on the wall beneath the skull explains in both Dutch and Javanese that it was left as a reminder and a warning: "In detested memory of the traitor, Peter Elberfeld; building on this spot is forbidden now and henceforth." It appears that this Peter Elberfeld was an influential half-caste who, in 1722, conspired with the Javanese against the Government. He plotted to massacre all the Europeans in Batavia and to restore native

rule, with himself as a Javanese king. A native girl, who was friendly with one of the Europeans, betrayed the plot, and all the ringleaders, with the exception of one, were beheaded. On the day of the execution, the body of this arch-conspirator, Peter Elberfeld, was torn to pieces by four horses, and his skull was fixed on this old wall.

Close to this gruesome relic there is the old Portuguese church, built in 1693. Old Batavia antedates Weltevreden by over two centuries. "It stands on a site near the sea where, in 1603, following the advice of Jan Huygen van Linschoten, a trading post was opened by the Dutch and a stone building erected at the mouth of the Tyiliwong River." According to an official record, giving the history of this Dutch settlement, "the Portuguese were in Bantam in 1522, but missed their opportunity of establishing themselves permanently. At that time the pepper and spices from the Moluccas were brought by the Bukinese to a post at the Tyiliwong mouth, to be transhipped and carried to the Portuguese trading post in Malacca. The Portuguese carried them to Lisbon, where the Dutch merchants bought them for distribution over Europe. When Phillip II. of Spain conquered Portugal, he shut the port of Lisbon against the Dutch, with whom he was at war, and the merchants determined to fetch the spices from the East themselves. Accordingly, a trading fleet of four vessels, under Houtman, was equipped, and in 1596 the Dutch were trading in Bantam. In 1603 a post was established at what was then known as Djakatra. In 1610 Pieter Both was appointed Governor-General of all Dutch posts east of the Cape of Good Hope, and in 1612 he was in Djakatra, a native town of growing

importance. In 1619 a factor in the Dutch East India Company, Jan Pieterszoon Coen, like Clive in British India, was driven by force of circumstances to take on military duties, and he built the fortifications and thus established the outlines of the new city which was called 'Batavia.' The city was built in the typical Dutch style, intersected by narrow streets and numerous canals, over which there are picturesque bridges."

Passing through one of the gates of the old castle, which has long since disappeared, I came to the Sacred Cannon, lying half-buried in the ground of a small garden just off the roadway. Although its history is unknown, it is undoubtedly of European origin. The breach end is fashioned to represent a clenched fist, and bears an inscription in Latin: "'From myself was I reborn." This old cannon is believed by the natives to possess the power of conferring fertility on the female sex. Standing by the side of it I watched many dark-eyed Javanese girls bring floral offerings to this curious god. There is a native belief that it will one day be united with its mate, another old gun in Java, and that when this happens Dutch rule in the Indies will come to an end. I could not help thinking of a similar story told to me in British India, and wondering whether there was any connection between these superstitious beliefs.

One evening, towards sunset, I wandered through the native town to the *prahu* harbour and watched these high-prowed little vessels, with their curious sails and flags, put out to sea for the night's fishing. The sun was sinking behind the green stars of the coco-nut palms on the canal banks, and it tinged

with copper light the hundreds of quaint-shaped sails and hulls dotted over the lagoon, forming a picture typical of these islands of the Java Sea. In the near-by aquarium I saw fish of such brilliant colours and queer shapes, that were they to be described here, no one who had not seen them would believe that such amazing creatures existed in the ocean depths.

Having no desire to add to the many tons of curios obtained during my journeys across the world, I did not linger in the gay palm-filled gardens of the Hôtel des Indes, where itinerant vendors of everything Javanese are to be found in such numbers that it represents a miniature bazaar. After driving one day through the beautiful modern town of Weltevreden, with its parks, gardens, swimming-pool, race-course and even English club, I looked in at the museum, which possesses a wonderful collection of Buddhist and Hindu statuary from the temples still existing in the interior of Java. There is also an amazing assortment of gold and silver work from the island of Bali, and weapons collected from various parts of the East Indies.

It was not these things, however, which attracted my attention most, for here I came across a representative collection of samples of the *batik* work for which the Javanese are famous. My natural curiosity never seems to be quite satisfied with a view of the finished product, and for this reason I took an early opportunity to seek out a native factory, or really studio, where the process of printing *batik* was being carried on. The method is a long and laborious one. It consists of first drawing on cotton cloth, with the aid of melted wax and vegetable dyes, highly intricate native designs, which somehow succeed in producing

BATIK FACTORY—BATAVIA

SACRED CANNON—BATAVIA

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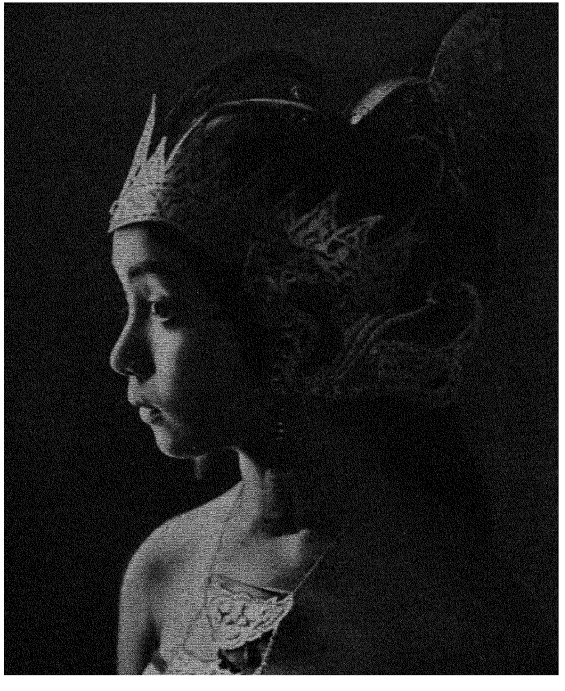
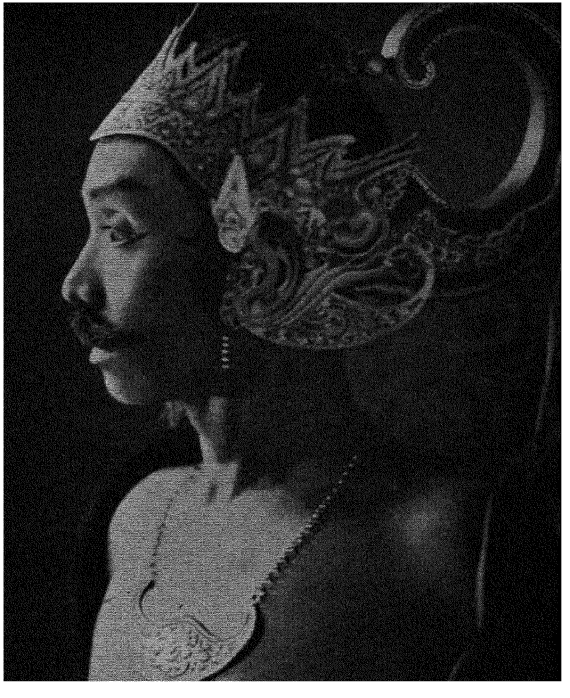


JAVANESE ACTRESS



JAVANESE ACTOR

the most artistic and unusual effects. That part of the cloth which is to remain unaffected by the dye is covered with a hot brown wax, applied through a tapering funnel. The cloth is then brushed with the first colour, which stains the uncoated cotton. There may be a dozen or more different printings, according to the colours used. Each time the cloth is cleaned of wax by steaming, and other portions are then treated with both the wax and the dyes. The *sarong*, which is worn by both men and women as a skirt, the *slandang*, used by native women as their principal garment, and each *kam kapala*, or turban head-dress, may, if of fine workmanship, take many months to complete. Needless to say, few natives nowadays can afford to dress in this expensive hand-decorated cloth.

CHAPTER XXXI

BATAVIA AND BUITENZORG

ALTHOUGH before my arrival in Java there had been serious floods, which had submerged many of the low-lying streets in old Batavia, I saw no evidence of this disaster. Being close to the Equator, the temperature in this island varies only two degrees in the whole year. Notwithstanding this equability of climate, there are, however, two distinct seasons—the dry monsoon, which lasts from May to November, when the earth cracks with the heat and absence of moisture, and the wet monsoon, from November to May, when there is a tendency for green mould to form on everything left for many hours exposed to the damp air. Rain comes during this latter season in sudden torrential downpours, but it is surprising how soon the hot sun dries up the red earth and exuberant tropical growth. Old Batavia was such an unhealthy city in the days before drainage and sanitation, that it became necessary for the European population to move away from the swampy coast, and early in the nineteenth century Weltevreden was founded with the still existing Harmony Club as its centre. Now, however, old Batavia is so well drained, and everything is kept so scrupulously clean, that one is never offended by the stench of rotting things so common in many purely native towns.

NATIVES CARRYING GOODS ON A COUNTRY ROAD—JAVA

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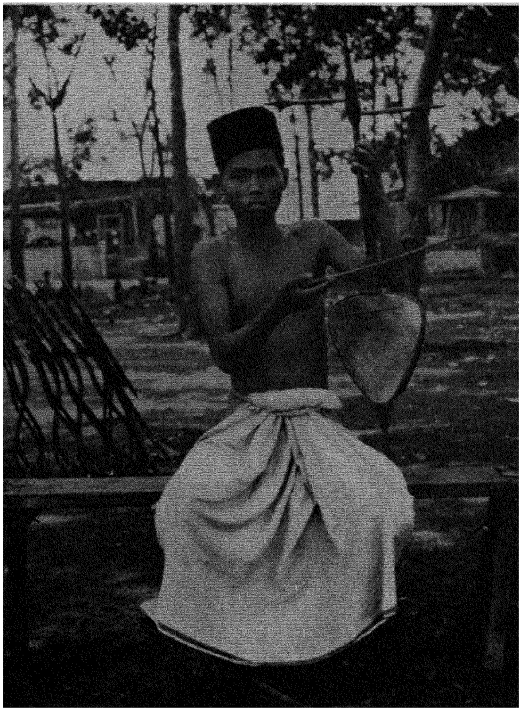
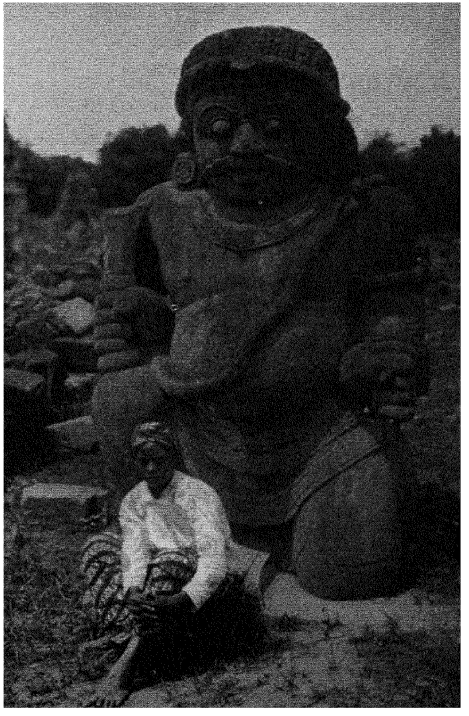


JAVANESE MUSICIAN



STONE IDOL—CENTRAL JAVA

Among the many queer sights of Java is the *Wajang*. At the time of the Mohammedan conquest, the priests forbade the representation of the human form in art. This caused the invention of what has become known as the *Wajang*. It is a figure so grotesquely distorted that not even its shadow has a really human resemblance. The *Wajang-wong* is a puppet-show, which is conducted by a story-teller, who recites legendary history and folk-lore while he manipulates one or two of the queer punch-like dolls held in his hands. These shows are sometimes conducted behind a silk curtain, and all that the public sees is a kind of shadow-picture, to the accompaniment of an extraordinary orchestra called the *gamelon*. Then there is the *Wajang-orang*, which, in Java itself, is more or less reserved for exhibition at the courts of the one or two remaining Javanese sultans. It is the performance of a play from the Hindu epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, by men and boys, trained as mime actors and dressed in the elaborate *Wajang* costumes. It is very difficult for Europeans to understand the story or even the true meaning of these old Oriental plays. Every action is a conventional one, and although performed in silence, it is timed to coincide with the words spoken by a reader of the Sanskrit story, who sits in front of the players. The *gamelon* provides the incidental music, and maintains a kind of rhythmic movement. Performances of the *Wajang-orang*, accompanied by the true pomp and circumstance, can now seldom be witnessed except by invitation of the Sultan of Djokja, a native stato ef the interior. About feudal Java, however, more will be said hereafter, although it was not until I reached the unspoiled little island

of Bali that I was able to see many of these native plays and dances.

Java is not only thickly populated, having over 900 people to every square mile, but as a natural corollary it is also very closely cultivated. Driving one day to Buitenzorg, about forty miles inland, I passed through some typical scenery. Soon after leaving town the road cut across rice-fields, with their terraced irrigation systems, an occasional rubber plantation, having coffee as a secondary crop, fields of pea-nuts and katella, from which tapioca is produced, and through rows of stately kapok trees, from the silky fibres of which the stuffing for pillows and cushions is made. Palms of many varieties rise up from the moist reddish-brown earth to where, far above the deep green of the lesser growth, they catch the golden light of the tropical sun. During midday the road receives but little shade from the riot of vegetation on either side, and the strong light enhances the vivid colours of the native dresses. The highway to Buitenzorg is crowded with pedestrians all day long, and almost every passer-by seems to be carrying, with the aid of a wooden yoke, some product of field or garden. Native villages, with picturesque thatched dwellings, often little more than roofs and verandas, are passed at frequent intervals. Then comes a line of low purple mountains, and the road ascends gradually until it reaches Buitenzorg, passing the deer-park in front of the palace of the Governor-General, who resides in this town, which is raised some 800 feet above sea-level, although most of his official duties are performed in the capital.

As a town, Buitenzorg is quite important, for not only has it a population of about 55,000, of whom

4,000 are Europeans, but it also possesses some famous botanical gardens laid out in a unique manner. Walking down the famous Kanari Avenue in these grounds, my attention was directed to the fact that each giant tree was bedecked with one or other kind of climbing plant. In this way the true prodigality of plant life in the tropics was demonstrated in a way which I had never seen before. Although this method is decidedly spectacular, it has one serious disadvantage, which I realised only after colliding with two natives walking beneath their sunshades. In order to see the extraordinary parasitic growth high up in the leafy roof, one has to keep a sharp watch overhead. At the moment of impact with these somewhat diminutive Javanese visitors, I was admiring a mass of beautiful orchids high up among the branches of the trees.

The palace of the Governor-General is situated in these grounds, and overlooks a beautiful lake surrounded by feathery bamboos. While wandering through these gardens, I came upon some graves of Dutch pioneers, who played a prominent part in the making of modern Java, and close to a delightful little pool, on which was floating an unusual type of lotus blossom, there was a monument erected to Lady Raffles, wife of the founder of Singapore and Governor-General of Java when this island belonged to the British. Although I looked everywhere, I could not find an example of that precious rarity, the *Rafflesia Arnoldi*. This flower is remarkable for the size of its petals. When in full bloom, these often measure a yard in diameter. Dark red in colour, they are dotted with yellow spots, giving the impression that this huge flower is a freak of Nature.

In the Zoological Museum, besides seeing almost every type of bird and animal to be found in the Netherlands Indies, including many curious monkeys, flying cats, fierce-looking tigers, birds of paradise, and the peculiar Komodo dragon which, on being irritated, vomits lustily, there is the skeleton of a gigantic whale. Although I have seen some very large types of these creatures, both in life and death, in the icy waters of Spitzbergen, as well as in the wastes of the South Seas, it seems that few, if any of them, can have equalled in either length or weight this specimen which was discovered stranded on the southern shores of Java during a terrific storm. A special house has been constructed to protect the skeleton, which is over eighty feet in length, and is said to have weighed, when captured, about three and a half tons.

Although the native market is full of colour and choice fruits, it presents few features of outstanding interest. There is, however, a particularly good Government pawnshop, where examples of native handicraft can often be purchased quite cheaply. I have noticed that wherever Government pawnshops exist, one sees less of intrinsic value and more that is useful and artistic—perhaps articles of gold and silver are taken to other establishments for sale.

It was not in the Botanical Gardens, beautiful as they undoubtedly are, that I fully realised the tropical luxuriance which surrounds this Javanese hill town. I was sitting on the back veranda of the Hôtel Belle Vue, with the sun sinking in a welter of red fire behind the purple line of hills, when Java unfolded a masterpiece of tropical colouring. Far below, a broad river had bored its way through a tossing sea

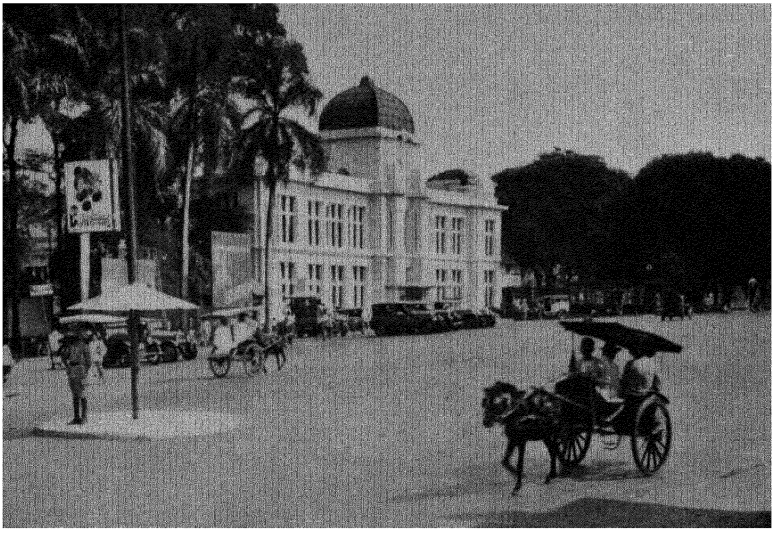
of green coco-nut palms waving their fronds above a misty haze of undergrowth. A red road skirted one side of this turgid stream which was, however, reflecting the flames of the dying Equatorial day. Figures looking like bronze statues were bathing or lazing on the banks, and over all there brooded that peculiar hush which seems to herald the onset of the tropical night.

CHAPTER XXXII

JAVANESE STATES AND HINDU TEMPLES

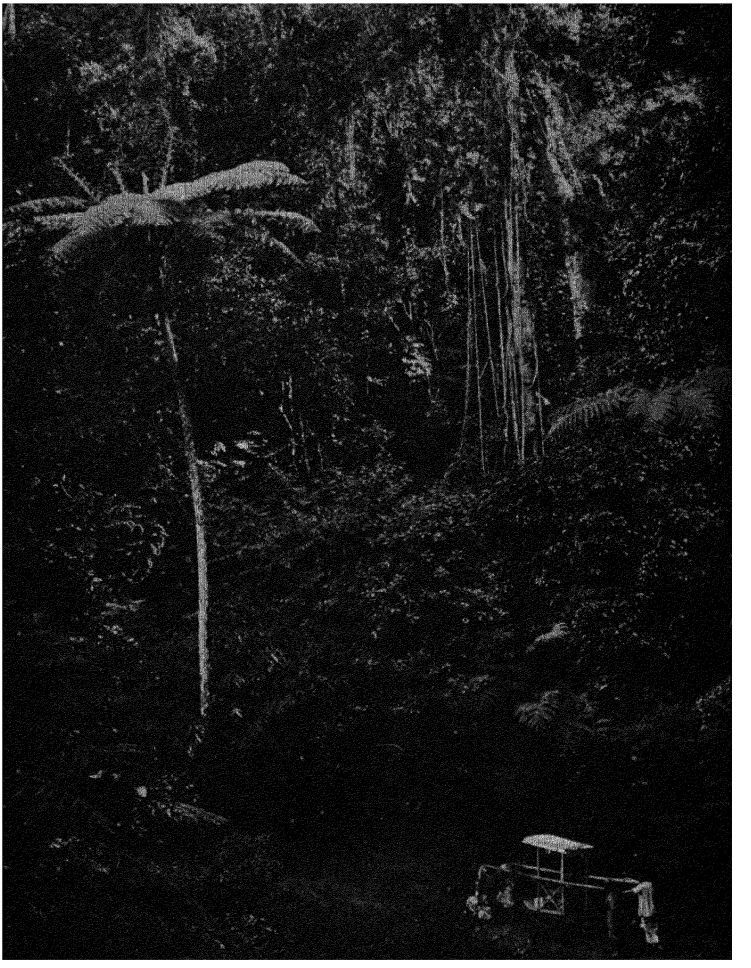
IN Djokja the real native Java remains almost untouched by modern civilisation. Unlike the remainder of the island, this central area is ruled by a native sultan, suitably guided by a Dutch resident. There are two of these principalities hereabouts, the other being called Solo, or, more correctly, Sourakarta. They were originally independent states ruled by native princes, but although they still retain a certain measure of independence, the authority of the sultans is more nominal than real.

The town of Djokja is an important one, having a population of over 100,000 ; and it was here that I arrived one tropical afternoon after a long railway journey across the central highlands from Batavia. The Bungalow Hotel faces the main street, called Residency Road, and, when settled therein, I proceeded to explore this capital of a Javanese feudal state. Strolling through the town, I came first to the Pasar, where the sellers and buyers are quite as colourful and interesting as the merchandise being exhibited. Having already seen *Batik* artists and brassworkers, I did not remain long in this fascinating centre of native life, but made my way to the *kraton*, or sultan's palace, which is really an enclosure in the heart of the town.



POSTAL SAVINGS BANK—WELTEVREDEN

VIEW FROM THE SUMMIT OF BOROBUDUR



IN THE DEPTHS OF THE JAVANESE FOREST
The Road to Papandajan.

Facing page 230—4.

Surrounding this collection of native buildings there are some remarkable waringin trees, which have been clipped and trained into the form of immense *payongs*, or state umbrellas, which here, as in West Africa, are a symbol of royalty. Inside the white-washed walls there are, besides the palace itself, many buildings, in which reside the court officials of this Javanese potentate. The entrance to the main palace, where feudalism has remained unchanged throughout the centuries, is somewhat ornate, but inside the building the atmosphere is entirely native. Unfortunately, I was unable to witness one of the *Wajang-orang* performances, for which this sultan's court is famous.

Among other places of interest in Djokja are the remains of a water castle, built in the eighteenth century by a Portuguese architect for a former sultan. Its splendour has, however, vanished. Earthquakes have reduced the buildings to shapeless ruins, and the jungle has largely overgrown even these poor relics of a glorious past. The house of Prince Wrekso Adiningrat repays somewhat for the disappointment created by the water castle. The walls, doors and furniture are beautifully inlaid with native woods.

It was from this purely native town that I journeyed across country to Borobudur, the finest of Java's ancient Hindu monuments. To attempt to describe in detail here this immense *stupa* would be to court failure ; sufficient to say that, contrary to appearances, it is not built on a hill but around it, the hill forming the centre of the temple and galleries. When the Mohammedans conquered Java, the priests of Borobudur covered the old temple with earth and planted trees therein, so that it might be preserved

from destruction at the hands of the invaders. One has only to gaze at these immense Buddhist remains to realise what the work of covering it with earth must have entailed in the way of labour under a scorching sun. The rapid growth of tropical vegetation soon completely hid the great *stupa*.

About 600 years later, in 1814, it was rediscovered and unearthed by order of Sir Stamford Raffles, during the British occupation of Java. Later, the work of clearing and renovating was completed by the Dutch. It is, to-day, one of the sights of the world, and is said to have been built at a time when the Buddhist faith was predominant over a large area in Hindustan. Some authorities contend that it was erected over part of the cremated remains of Buddha. Some idea of its size may be gained from the following particulars, taken from an official publication of the Java Government.

"The hill forming the core of the *stupa* is enclosed by a series of sculptured galleries, four in number, on top of which rise three terraces, the uppermost having a bell-shaped *stupa* in the centre. From the first gallery upwards the walls are covered with bas-reliefs, illustrating various episodes in the life of Buddha, gargoyles occupy the angles, and delicate decorations, such as flowers, birds and animals, break the monotony of the gutters and run along the cornices. The top of the monument is surmounted by a central dagoba, which formerly contained an unfinished statue of Buddha. Each side of the building measures no less than 531 feet at the base, and the carvings, set end to end, would measure more than two miles. The material used is volcanic stone, the greyish tint of which enhances the imposing effect of this enormous

BROMO VOLCANO—JAVA

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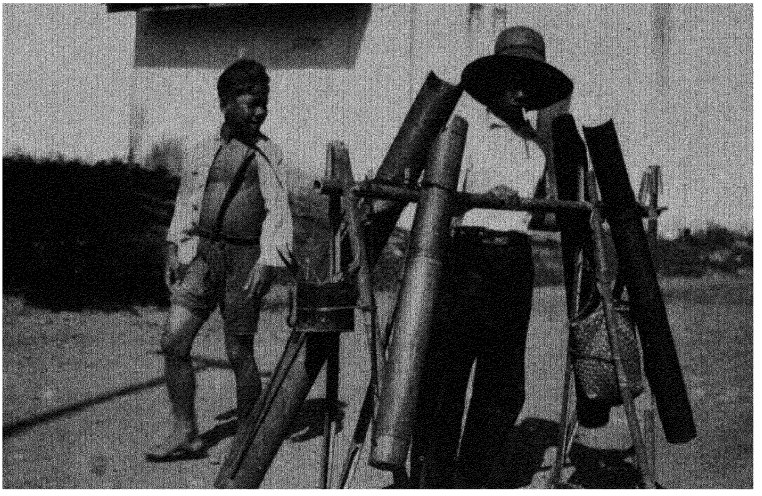

A TRAVELLING SPEAK-EASY

MASKED DANCERS

structure which stands facing Mount Merapi in a plain covered by slender coco-nut palms, the horizon being bordered by a range of beautiful hills."

It was in the soft yellow light of a full moon, with every projection of stone on its eastern side tinged with gold, that I left this colossal reminder of an early Eastern faith to the amazing stillness of the Javanese night. As I drove away, I could scarcely bring myself to believe that no less than six of its great terraces still remain below the surface of the earth.

During a brief visit to the town of Solo, the capital of the second little sultanate in Java, I saw native life as it was centuries ago. In one of the streets there was a company of strolling actors performing in hideous masks, vendors were everywhere trying to sell the beaten brass and decorated leather work, for which native industries the town is famous, and once I caught a glimpse of a member of the *Susuhunan's*, or local sultan's court. My guide recognised him because of the stiff sugar-loaf cap, elaborately decorated *kris*, or short sword, and the umbrella which a bearer was holding over his head as he passed through the throngs of people towards the large *kraton*, or palace.

From this place I journeyed on to one of the best known mountain resorts in Java. Tosari stands at an altitude of about 6,000 feet above sea-level and resembles an eagle's nest on some lofty crag. Although the air is cool, even during midday, it was not because of its climatic advantages that I had made the long journey into these southern highlands. My object was to inspect, at close quarters, the famous sand-sea and the Bromo volcano.

Starting early one morning on horseback, many villages—perched on seemingly inaccessible points of rock in the mountains around—were passed before the sun began to make travel, by this means, somewhat uncomfortable in the deep ravines. A forest of casaurina trees hides the view until the track is left. Then, after a short descent, I stood on the brink of a great mountain precipice looking down at a vast oval plain of sand, 1,000 feet below, out of the middle of which rose one of the most perfect volcanic cones in existence. I did not descend the steep incline on to the five miles' square plain of sand from which the crater of Bromo is easily reached, but was told that when one stands on the lip of the crater and gazes down some 500 feet into the heart of the volcano, furious jets of steam can be seen coming from crevices in the sides, " as from the escape-pipe of a monster steam engine."

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