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A VISION OF INDIA

Mr. JOHN MORLEY, In his Indian Budget Speech in the House of Commons, July 20, 1906, said :

' One of the books about India which I would respectfully recommend hon. members to read is by Mr. Sidney Low—a gentleman of proved competence in political subjects. Mr. Low is a man who knows what he is writing about.'

LORD CURZON, in a Speech at the New Vagabond Club, May 15, 1906, said:

• Mr. Sidney Low, the author of that interesting book, " A Vision of India," has succeeded in giving a striking picture of Indian life under many of its varied aspects, which I believe to be substantially accurate, and which is clearly the result of much acute observation and pene trating insight.'

SIR CHARLES CROSTHWAITE, K.CiS.I., late Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Pro vinces, and Member of the Indian Council, says:

' Full of information in a picturesque shape on the forms and problems of Indian lifo—altogether a remarkable book.'

SIR DONALD ROBERTSON, K.C.S.I,, formerly of the Indian Political Department and Resident in Mysore, says:

[1]**1** would especially exempt from the circle of unreliable critics the talented writer of " A Vision of India." I do not know Mr. Sidney Low; but for a clever and moderate account of India and its peculiarities, I have never read anything more interesting and entertaining.'

VISION OF INDIA

BY

SIDNEY LOW

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR AND OTHERS

THIRD IMPRESSION (SECOND EDITION)

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY*. ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
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PBEEACE

THE materials on which the following pages are founded were collected, for the most part, during the progress of the Prince and Princess of Wales through the Empire of India, which I was permitted to accompany as Special Correspondent of the *Standard,* in the autumn and winter of 1905 and the spring of the following year. Of this interesting journey much might be written from the personal, the political, and the purely pictorial side. It is not, however, with these matters that I am chiefly con cerned. I deviated rather frequently from the route of the royal travellers, since it was my object to give some general idea of the conditions of life and society prevailing in India, rather than to furnish a circumstantial record of the tour, or to describe in detail those places of historical, antiquarian, and aesthetic interest which were included in the official itinerary. It has been my aim to reproduce something of the impression which our vast and varied dominion of the East—almost a world in itself—leaves on the mind, in its splendour and its contradictions, its colour and its mystery, its wealth and poverty, its medley of classes, creeds, and peoples: to hint at a few of the absorbing problems suggested by the contemplation of this strange and fascinating amalgam. I hope that my survey, partial and incomplete as it may be, will not mislead those who know India only from hearsay and

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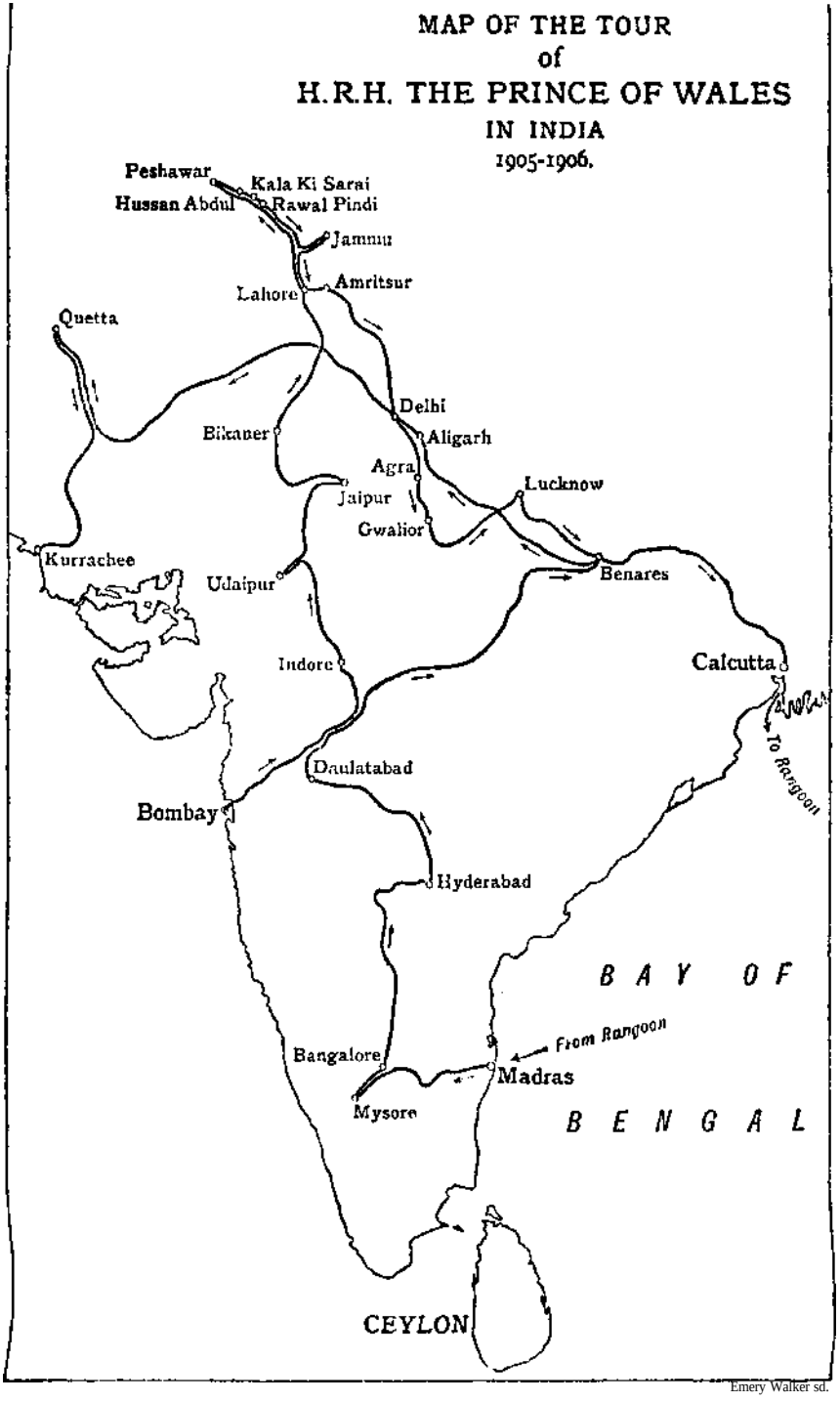

Emery Walker sd.

A VISION OF INDIA

CHAPTER I

AT THE SEAWARD GATE

THE tension of the restless Eastern night lay upon the great P. and O. liner as she glided through the last stretch of dark water that held her from India. On a ship in the western and northern waters, night, so far as may be, is given to seclusion and repose, as it is on shore. Except for the stokers, toiling among their abysmal fires below, and the watch keeping silent vigil overhead, all are asleep, or at least seeking to get as much sleep as winds and waves permit. But the passenger steamer, eastward bound, when once she has passed Suez and felt the languorous breath of the Red Sea, falls swiftly into the indefinite eastern way, the way of a world that is never wholly awake by day or quite asleep at night.

If you leave your cabin any time between the mid night and the dawn, you are conscious of a vague stirring of life about you. You have need to walk delicately lest you stumble over some prone and breathing form. On the spar deck and the promenade deck you may disturb the repose of many of the first-class passengers, who, finding their berths unendurable, even with the electric fans whirling, have ordered their beds to be laid out upon the boards. On the starboard side, fenced in by a zareeba

of deck-chairs, are a dozen ladies ; on the port side scores of men lie stretched upon their mattresses, with no more bed-clothing than a sheet drawn over them, if so much. The solvent of climate has acted quickly. Here is a stout responsible gentleman, no longer in his first youth. Three weeks ago you could have met him in an English hotel or a Swiss *pension,* and he would as soon have danced a hornpipe on the table of the *salle-a-manger* as passed a night in public. He wooed the goddess of slumber chastely, behind closed doors, in the midst of decorous bedroom furniture. Now he lies in the open, amid a score of casual strangers, with bare feet touched by the sea wind, and all his portly form in striped pyjamas revealed to the searching stars.

Below, in the aisles and galleries of the main deck, where the luggage has been stacked in readiness for the morning, and in all sorts of odd corners, are other sleepers. The ship carries a large complement of ladies and chil dren and consequently has many ayahs ; and the ayah, like the Indian servant generally, sleeps where she can, by preference muffling herself in her cotton rug near the door of her mistress's cabin, so that she may respond readily if the Memsahib should call, or if *sonny baba* should cry in the watches of the night. Sometimes she may be allowed to take her charge with her. As I pass the main hatch, which covers the baggage-room, I see a pretty picture. A Madrassi ayah lies there, swathed in garments of spotless white, from which emerge arms of chocolate and a brown foot and ankle adorned with heavy silver bangles. On the same mattress is an English child, with dewy cheeks, golden curls, and dimpled rosy limbs. The boy tosses restlessly in the dim heat-laden air, till the Tamil woman pats him with a deft magnetic touch, and croons softly some old-world nursery song of the south, and so lulls him to a fitful slumber again.

The great ship sways gently and slowly, like a cradle, on the swell of a drowsy sea that seems to breathe with long measured respirations. The water is dark, with no ripple of light to break its sleek and oily blackness. Black, too, without one touch of blue or grey, is the sky, a dome of solid velvet, through which the stars burn like points of golden fire, or gleam in showers and rains of silver in the broad cincture of the Milky Way. The shafts of starlight and moonlight cross one another in the spaces overhead, but they are lost in the dull water, and the ship glides through heavy banks of shadow. Suddenly an orange light flames out of the void beyond our bows and disappears, only to turn its glare upon us again a few seconds later. Even the unimaginative European tourist may feel some tightening of the heart as the big yellow eye winks solemnly at him across the heaving plain ; for this is the seaward light of Bombay, and behind it lies India, with all its mysteries and its millions.

But what are these white-robed shapes, moving silently, with shoeless feet, along the crowded decks ? The shadowy figures flit across the gangway to the fore castle, where the anchor gear lies in a huddle of windr lasses and cranes and chains. They pause just behind the Lascar sailor and the English quartermaster who share the look-out, and go through a series of compli cated genuflections and salaams. I forbear to disturb the devotions of the Faithful, and do not draw near enough to ascertain whether this is some special ceremony con nected with the sacred fires of home, or whether these are merely the customary orisons before the dawn of day. Do my eyes mislead me in the dimness, or is one of those shrouded forms that of the extremely alert young native gentleman, who had won the sweepstake on the ship's run in the morning, discussed Haeckel and Mr. Benjamin Kidd with me in the afternoon, and played an animated

game of bridge in the smoking-room all the evening? But it is time to go below and snatch a little sleep, and then bathe and dress, if we are to pay our own respects on the threshold of the Empire in the East.

There are finer roadsteads in the world than that of Bombay, but not many, I think, that are more picturesque and impressive. The sun is rising high in the heavens as the anchor-chains rattle through the hawse-pipes; and the harbour launches Government tugs and Com pany's tenders pant anxiously round the floating bridge that weekly joins India and 'Home/ The water-front of the city, with its long line of high white buildings, lies before us; a few cables away we see the funnels and fighting-tops of a cruiser, the flagship of the Admiral of the station; white*winged yachts skim over the twinkling waters; there are two other large passenger steamers swinging at their moorings. We are in what appears to be a land-locked space of sea, dotted with islands, and shut in by green hills, leaning to the water's edge, with higher mountain shapes swelling in the distance. It might be a Scottish loch, but for the white sunlight, which pours over everything and makes outlines sharply visible, as they seldom can be behind the watery veil of the denser northern atmosphere.

But the East greets you with a rush the moment you step ashore. All along the landing-stage you see a line of bare-legged men, in turbans and very clean white linen robes, who are servants of the incoming passengers, brought in, perhaps, only from the suburbs of Bombay, perhaps from the Punjab, Madras, or Assam, to await the arrival of their masters and mistresses. And on that same platform are many other types and figures characteristic of India as it is to-day under British rule. Here is the Anglo-Indian husband, from up the country, come down

to greet a returning wife. It may be many months since he has seen her last, months of toil amid the baked dust of the plains for him, and for her perhaps a quiet rectory nestling among leafy English lanes. She has to tell him of the boys, left at school ' At Home′; or she may try to induce the baby, rather cross in her ayah's arms, to make friends with the lean, brickdust-coloured person, of whom she was too young to ' take notice′ when she was carried away on the homeward voyage.

Tenderer meetings occur in a secluded corner of the landing-stage. Here are a couple of affianced maidens come out to marry the men of their choice. They have the English blush in their cheeks, the unmistakable bridal look in their eyes; the smartest of Bond Street dresses have been extracted from the many packages which form their travelling *trousseaux* to impress the stalwart young fellows whose bungalows they will presently irradiate. Before the hot morning has waned into the merciful coolness of evening, there will be a wedding service at the Cathedral and a wedding breakfast at the Taj Mahal Hotel; and in a few weeks the new gowns will have roused the envy of critical matrons among the hills, or evoked the despairing admiration of home-sick subalterns on the plains.

A clatter of many tongues prevails, and a torrent of hasty conversation, as the slow process of clearing and checking the passengers' baggage is got through. Brisk young Bombay business men are exchanging greetings with friends from the Yacht Club and the Byculla; officers of all arms are already deep in conversation as to stations and marching orders ; and Indian civilians, returned from leave, assume a certain pride in their port and dignity in their mien which you did not notice on shipboard. During the voyage the Collector Sahib was an inconspicuous unit in the crowd, who spent his time

for the most part in his deck-chair reading novels. But the mail-train is in waiting to bear him to his satrapy. To-morrow he will be the Huzur, the Presence, the Protector of the Poor, the representative of an omnipotent Government, ruler, patron, beneficent despot, and earthly Providence for a million of miscellaneous Asiatics. The air of authority comes back upon him as naturally as the pith helmet and the suit of silk with which he invests himself on the last morning of his journey.

You go outside into the white sunlight to find a cab. The Mussulman driver of the *tikka gharry* salaams to you with effusion as being a Sahib of inexperience, who will give a rupee where another would bestow eight annas. The short drive to the hotel takes you through what seems to be a fine modern town. You see handsome stone and brick buildings of great size, imposing frontages, clubs, hotels, public gardens, statues, fountains, well-stocked shop windows. But you have no eyes for such things. You are held and fascinated by the riot of colour and strange humanity with which you are assailed at once. Bombay is a generous and liberal hostess to the stranger within her gates. She feels the responsibility of showing him India, and she does not husband her treasures or reveal them grudgingly, but, on the contrary, throws them lavishly before him at the first onset. The great city is cosmopolitan and Pan-Asiatic. A fifth of the human race has its representatives within the island town where the white Power in the East found its first secure resting-place. Bombay is largely an epitome and abstract of the conglomerate of peoples and religions which we call by a single inadequate name.

The visitor will find out something of this later. But in the beginning he can only gaze in a sort of helpless amazement, stunned by the succession of living pictures which ring their chromatic chords upon his bewildered

retina. His first impression is that he is taking part in a gigantic masquerade, with everybody in fancy dress of indiscriminate extravagance. Here are splendour, wealth, poverty, but, above all, colour and strangeness. All the hues of the rainbow, and many more, are displayed against a background of white and brown, the white of cotton garments and the dusky tone of bare legs and arms and bodies. The reflection you feebly make as you survey the groups which move like ants over the broad roads is that in Bombay any person may wear anything or nothing. He may clothe himself in a costume which would seem grotesquely spectacular in a Drury Lane pantomime, or he may go with a wisp of rag round his loins. Here is a pudgy child, naked as nature made him, save for two anklets of rough silver; here a Parsi lady in a robe of sky-blue silk, and a filmy veil of muslin and silver tinsel drawn over her black hair and round the pale oval of her dark face.

A porter strides along the tram-lines bearing a load of wood. Plis thin legs, revealed in all their length, his bare arms and breast and shoulders, gleam in the sun as if carved out of some smooth polished brown wood. There is a shout of 'Ey-ah' behind him, and he jumps out of the way to avoid being run over by the carriage in which his Highness the Raja is seated with some of his suite. His Highness has come into Bombay, where he is rent ing a bungalow for a fortnight on Malabar Hill for 20,000 rupees, in order that he may welcome the Prince of Wales on his arrival, and he is in festal array. His coachman and his two grooms have gold turbans and gold sashes, his landau is a noble vehicle, and it is drawn by two high-stepping bays. He himself is attired in white silk trousers, spangled with gold stars, a pink jacket, and a magnificent green and gold turban with a high aigrette and a brooch of diamonds.

The landau moves with stately slowness; its big horses are fat and out of condition. It is easily passed, not only by the shabby gharry, in which is seated an English lady in a white flannel dress with a huge sun helmet, but also by the native bullock-cart, with its two little humped zebus trotting smartly along. The cart is gaily painted, and a whole Hindu family in striped cottons of various shades are stowed miscellaneously inside.

Wherever the eye travels it catches some patch or point of colour; and no combination seems to be excluded on the ground of extravagance or excess. In most places, even in Cairo, or Constantinople, or Tangier, some notice would be directed to a stout man, with a sort of Eoman toga of vivid purple, drawn over a yellow under-garment, and crossed by a sash or waistband of cerise, with a head-dress of red velvet and silver braid, especially if the arrangement ended inadequately with tight cotton draw[T]ers and canvas shoes in bad condition. In Bombay no one is surprised at this decorative scheme; nor at others, such as that of the man with bare feet, several inches of un sheltered skin above the waist-line, and a turban of a pale lemon silk, of a quality and shade so delicious that one would have liked to buy it on the spot.

There are Parsi gentlemen in grey bowlers provided with a parti-coloured roll instead of a rim, and Parsi clerks and shop assistants in black alpaca surtouts and high hats of shiny oilskin. A few Englishmen are visible in sola topis and flannels, and there are Arabs, Armenians, veiled Mussulman ladies, ragged dervishes all hair and tatters, a water-carrier with his goat-skin bag across his back, and coolie women in bright-coloured *saris.* The novelty of the scene, and the flood of living light poured over everything, transfigure the commonest incidents to your enraptured senses. A Hindu with the caste mark on his forehead, under the white folds of his ample headdress,

and two bullet-headed Goanese servants, are leaning from a low verandah to talk to a woman of the people on the pavement below. A crimson shawl drapes gracefully over her head and shoulders, leaving her shapely brown legs bare to the knee, and as she lifts an arm you see that it is clothed to the elbow in broad bands of silver. A carriage dashes through an open gateway, and two grooms leap down and run beside it, with long horse-tails fluttering from the staves they carry. In a hand-cart, heaped with garbage, a man is rooting and burrowing like a dog. All his raiment would not furnish the substance of a table-napkin ; but gold loops depend from his ears, and a collar of dull blue stones is round his neck. As you drive in to the welcome coolness of the shaded hotel courtyard, you feel that if your Vision of India were to be limited to a single morning spent in Bombay you would not have crossed the seas altogether in vain.

His first few days in the city, if the visitor has never set foot on the soil of India before, are likely to be a period of delighted amazement and most enjoyable con fusion. He wanders about, drinking in the fulness of the new experience, perplexed and absorbed by all he sees, trying to wind his way through the jumble of novel human types and unfamiliar customs and costumes borne before him. Bombay is different from any other town outside India; the tourist will presently discover that India itself has nowhere anything quite like it. The Island City is unique—a *diluvies gentium,* a well into which the races of Asia have poured themselves, or, perhaps one should say, a reservoir out of which they pass as fast as they flow in. It is full of the wealth of the East and the wealth of the West, and of the poverty and vice of both. It has its palaces fit for a prince, and its human kennels unfit for a dog. The hand of Vishnu the Preserver, and Siva the

Destroyer, ate felt in their might daily. A splendid indus trial and commercial activity makes Bombay rich and great, and a canker is working at its vitals. Every tenth person you meet is doomed to swift and painful death by a disease for which science has no remedy. It is the city of the Parsi millionaire. It is the city of the Plague.

When you have begun to disentangle your first im pressions, you can appreciate the force of the contrasts which Bombay presents. The East and the West, the Old and the New, are here in curious and piquant juxta position. A great deal of that part of Bombay which is called the Fort, and is the centre of the European business life, is very modern indeed. There are enormous ranges of huge public buildings, designed with a fine official disregard for all local associations, great blocks of flats, and flourishing shops, some of which might have been transported from Bond Street and others brought from the Edgware Boad; and a life, essentially English and only touching the East at the fringes, is in being here. But a few hundred yards away are the bazaars and the native streets, and you are in the heart of Asia. This is true, more or less, of many Indian towns; but it is specially felt to be the case in Bombay, because there the Europeans are not shepherded apart in cantonments, or in any separate quarter of their own, but are physically, at least, in pretty close contact with the natives. The lines touch at many points, but they do not merge.

' Society ' in Bombay, though the natives are knocking insistently at its portals, is still English in the English orthodox mode. It is more varied in its constituents, more permeated by the commercial element, and less dominated by the official factor, than in other Indian towns, except Calcutta. But its forms and customs are those to which we cling with fidelity wherever we settle. There are excellent clubs in Bombay, where the stranger, if properly

accredited—much meaning in that' if *—will be welcomed with a most agreeable hospitality; there is a relative abundance of ladies' society; tea parties, lawn-tennis parties, and dinner parties prevail; people dance, ride, play bridge, and go out with a good pack of hounds to hunt the jackal; they escape the heats of Bombay by ruralising in the hill stations of the Ghats, or they flit about the harbour in smart little yachts.

In the cool garden of the Yacht Club, from tea onward till dinner-time, the visitor may almost forget that he is in India. If it is on a Friday, the day when the P. and 0. liner discharges its complement, the grounds will be thronged, especially during the weeks of the autumn rush eastward. Except for the dark faces and white cotton garb of the servants, there is little that is distinctively Oriental. Ladies are parading the green lawns, or taking tea and cooling drinks at small tables set out on the terrace which overlooks the shimmering waters of the roadstead. Immediately opposite lies the slate-grey guardship, and a wall-sided yellow-funnelled transport. The band of the Blankshire Regiment is playing a selec tion from the last new musical comedy. The fragrance of cigarette-smoke is wafted into the air; there is the tinkle of feminine laughter and the buzz of many voices; the women are in light European summer dresses; the straw hat has replaced the sun-helmet for the men ; we might be on the Riviera, or at some fashionable country club in the United States, or perhaps even at Banelagh or Hurlingham.

When you have stayed long enough and drunk your tea, and the sudden Eastern night has fallen in its pall of blackness, you will be asked to dine in some luxurious bungalow or well-appointed flat. Here, it is true, the flavour is slightly more Oriental. The punkahs will be flapping above your head ; barefooted ' boys' will minister

to you. But though there may be some unfamiliar dishes and a local fish, the viands presented will be in the main those of home. You will find a *menu* card, written in the usual culinary French; mutton cutlets and par tridges and asparagus and ices and *olives farcies* will appear on the list; you will drink Mumm or Heidsieck, and talk to your neighbour about nothing in particular in a subdued undertone. It is a replica of those sparkling repasts with which we exhilarate ourselves during the London season. You will emerge into the starlight with the consciousness of an evening spent in a reputable and decorous dulness.

But get back into your gharry and tell the driver to take you by the Grant Boad past the Munbadevi Tank, along Abdul Kahman Street, by the Bendi Bazaar, and about the native quarter generally. You will not lack entertainment: especially if you strike Bombay, as I did, on the eve of a Royal visit, and at the new moon of the month Kartik, which is the Hindu Feast of Lanterns. The entertainment begins even before you leave Malabar Hill, that most desirable residential region, where the luxurious bungalows have their place. Many of these have been rented for a fortnight by native chiefs and potentates, who have come into Bombay to pay their respects to the Shahzada. They are in a demonstrative mood; they attest their loyalty to the eye and ear. That is why 'The Queen Victoria Royal Band' has been brought up to the lawn of Bellaggio, and why its Eurasian artists are fiddling drumming and fifeing furiously among the flower-beds; that is why The Pines is a blaze of light, and why its compound is dotted all over with red green and white balls of tinsel stuck on little poles. If a man is a raja, and a ruling chief, and a K.C.I.E., entitled to be met at the railway-station by a Government House aide-de-camp, and to a salute of several guns, there is no reason

in the world why his presence should not be made known to the general public in a perceptible fashion.

The night, indeed, like Prospero's isle, is 'full of noises'; the Indian night always is, even in the quieter suburbs of the towns, for there are the noises of beast and bird, as well as the sounds made by human hands and throats. The field crickets and grasshoppers are chirping with a loud metallic clank; the grey-backed crows, which you have noticed all day feeding on dead rats and other carrion, retire to their nests with raucous cawings; weird squeals and chatterings are heard from a thicket, and you know—that is, you know when your driver tells you—that they are emitted by the monkeys who are swinging in the boughs.

When you reach the native bazaar, your coachman must drive at a foot's-pace, with many stoppages. The narrow twisting streets are swarming with people, spread ing all over the roadway in close groups and solid columns. You will make better progress by leaving your carriage and walking; besides, this will give you an opportunity of observing the people in their various types and tribes. Your studies have not gone very far, but you make an attempt to classify and select. In India everybody bears the mark of his occupation, his religion, and his social status upon his person, so that his mere outward aspect should tell you who he is and what he does. It is as if you could wait for the nine-fifteen train at Ludgate Hill, and, as the crowd poured through the turnstiles, you could point a finger and say: ' Here is a Eoman Catholic, here a member of the Church of England, here a Welsh Non conformist ; this man was born in Lancashire and is a member of the Stock Exchange; that other is very likely to be an auctioneer, though it is also possible that he does something on commission in coals and wine.*

There is ample opportunity for such exercises in the Bombay bazaar. Even a novice can distinguish between the Mussulman head-gear and that of the Hindu, between the sturdy, upstanding Sikh and the Mahratta, with his rat-like profile, little, restless eyes, and receding forehead; between the Brahman, with his oval face and pale yellowish skin, and the outcast, despised Mahar, a little blackened wisp of a man, stunted and ape-like. In honour of the Festival, many of the people have been to the priests and paid their fee to have their caste-marks repainted, so that their foreheads glisten with weird symbols, balls and lines and ovals, and smears of red and yellow.

The expert can tell you something about almost everybody you pass in the throng. Here is a baniya, or retail trader, with carpet slippers and a large gamp umbrella in his hand. The baniya is often fat; for, though he lives generally in the native quarter and in the native fashion, he may be quite rich, and wealth means to a Hindu more butter and ghee and rice and sweet meats and other viands that produce adipose tissue. Here is a man in white jacket and trousers of a some what European cut, carrying a child sitting astride his right hip, and followed by a woman in a purple *sari,* A square of cotton cloth, which serves for tunic and bodice and as much skirt as she needs. It is the prosper ous upper servant of a well-to-do family, or perhaps the butler at a club, taking his youngest born and the more favoured of his two wives out to see the show. He shuffles along, in ungainly fashion, in his canvas shoes; his wife, in her graceful drapery, with silver earrings and anklets, is a more distinguished figure, and she walks like a princess, but she keeps respectfully a pace or two behind her lord, and does not speak to him ex cept when he turns to address her over his shoulder.

In Bombay and elsewhere in India the women of the lower classes have a dignity of carriage which is denied to their male owners. Some of them, of the coolie grade, are almost pygmies in stature, their features are blunt and shrivelled, and they are black from exposure to the sun ; but no wild doe on the mountain-side moves with more unfettered grace and freedom. The women walk better than the men, for they bear their burdens on their heads, while their partners and proprietors bend and slouch under the weight of heavy loads carried on the shoulders and back.

The bazaar is always crowded from early morning until late night; it is always full of people walking, sitting, lying on the ground, jostling against one another like ants. But perhaps the throng is a little more than normal on this Feast of Lamps, the *Diwali,* which is one of the great festivals of the Hindu year. The *Diwali* is held in honour of Lakhshmi, the Venus of the Indian Pantheon, the wife of Vishnu the Preserver. Lakhshmi, like her Hellenic antitype, arose out of the foam of the sea waves, and she is the Goddess of Beauty; but she is also the Goddess of Wealth and Prosperity, and is there fore held in special honour by shopkeepers and tradesmen.

On the Feast of Lamps the gains of the year are dedicated to the goddess, and every house is lighted for her. The larger Europeanised stores in the bazaar, the * cheap jacks,' where they sell all sorts of things, from bicycles to safety-pins, the motor garage where the wealthy native buys his up-to-date car, are hung with tiers of electric lights and glow-lamps; but each little square booth has its own small illumination. All the shops are open, and the owners are seen sitting beside the implements and objects of their trade. The goldsmith has rows of candles to set off his golden bowls, his cups and chains and jewellery work; the *shroff,* the sinal)

moneylender or usurer, piles up his account-books in a heap, with a kerosene lamp on top. A white Hindu temple is all festooned with ropes and wreaths of flowers ; a yellow Jain chapel sparkles with coloured lights, and looks rather like a Paris cafe, with its open rooms and balconies and lounging groups. Only the Mohammedan mosque stands grimly shut and dark and silent; for *Diwcdi* is a Hindu festival, and the children of the Faith have no part in it. There were times when the celebra tion was a fruitful source of faction-fighting and serious riot. But the vigilant Bombay constables, little sturdy men in blue, are scattered freely among the crowds, and in the very centre of the whole turmoil, where the chief Mohammedan street crosses the Hindu bazaar, there is a small square brick building, which is the police post. Here a couple of sepoys are talking to a khaki-clad sowar of the mounted force standing beside his horse, ready to ride to the barracks for assistance, if need be; and against the door-post leans a tall young Englishman, in white uniform and helmet, surveying the passing stream of humanity with good-humoured, but not inattentive, indif ference—a symbol of that impartial tolerance, combined with the vigorous assertion of public authority in the maintenance of order, which is the attitude of the British *raj* towards the creeds and sects of India.

loud and long, but frequent and almost continuous. Perhaps the Parsis and the Eurasians may have been the fuglemen; but the Hindus and Mohammedans took up the strain and said ' Heep hourr-a ! ' and clapped their hands as if they had been doing it all their lives.

It was something of a surprise to white residents, who had felt doubts as to the possible attitude of Bombay, for the great city is known to contain elements, not perhaps of disloyalty, but of disaffection. The local ruling chiefs are not men of the calibre and distinction of the Princes of Eajputana and Central India, nor have they accepted the Imperial system with so much cordiality. The most important of them, the Gaekwar of Baroda, whom a large section of the Guzerati population regard with a certain reverence, is somewhat out of favour with the Govern ment. The Mahrattas, a restless, shifty, suspicious race, have never been quite reconciled to the loss of the supre macy they once exercised over half India. Poona is a centre of intrigue, and even sedition, and the Poona Brahman is banefully busy in Bombay.

Some experienced persons were a little anxious. As the event showed, they could have dismissed their fears. There was every outward sign that the people of all tribes and classes were glad to welcome the son of their Sovereign, The loyalty of the Indian is largely a personal attachment to a family and dynasty. To him the Royal office means a great deal; he ascribes to it a kind of Divine authority, if not a Divine origin; whereas the Viceroy or the Governor, the ' Lord Sahib' though he be, is only a mortal like himself, perhaps the first of the King's servants, but a servant after all.

The show part of the ceremonial was, on the whole, w[r]ell done; the stage management, if one may use the term, was skilful. I heard only a single adverse criticism, and it is characteristic enough to be reproduced. An

able member of the non-official community, a man of thirty years' Indian residence, said that the natives were a little surprised to find the Prince driving through the town in the ordinary white Indian uniform and helmet, which every Englishman wears in the sunny hours of the day, which is borne by private soldiers and shop-assistants, and is sometimes used by Eurasian clerks.

I had the same testimony from natives. They expected to see the heir to the Empire blazing in scarlet and adorned with stars and orders. The full gala array of a field-marshal, with cocked hat and plumes, would have been appreciated. And my informants thought that it would have given additional lustre to the procession in native eyes if all the rajas and feudatory chiefs, in their silks and jewels, had driven behind the Royal carriage. As it was, the body-guard and the hussars were no more than the populace see every time the Governor performs some public function, rather less than they can witness when the Viceroy comes into the city in state. In India greatness is supposed to live and move amid pomp and pageantry. That austere simplicity, behind which the reality of power is often veiled in the West, is not understood or valued by Orientals.

The interest of the whole occasion was keenly felt by those who were allowed to participate in the various parades and festivals without being oppressed by the weight of official duty. A private individual, in this situation, with leisure to observe, could not fail to find himself sometimes obsessed by a curious and piquant sense of unreality. One seemed to be living in several different worlds at once, passing from Earl's Court to the Arabian Nights and back again, touching various other places and periods in transit. At the Byculla Club ball, for instance, you could easily forget that you were in

Asia. 'No native need apply' might be the inscription over the portals of the Byculla, as of every other important club in the East. Consequently the ball was altogether British and insular. The large, solid, square saloon, built in the late 'thirties of the last century, might have been the assembly-room of a fashionable watering-place or a provincial town in the Midlands. The company was in keeping with the place. There was the usual array of black coats and white shoulders, military officers in smart mess-jackets and spurs, naval men in blue and gold, the Chief Justice creditably legal, the Bishop blandly episcopal, broad blue ribbons across expansive shirt-fronts, and diamond tiaras gleaming above blonde or chestnut * transformations.' There was a state quadrille and many valses, and some strolling or sitting out in the grounds, and much supping off salmon and mayonnaise and champagne. There was hardly anything to remind you of India—nothing, indeed, but the native servants and the troopers of the body-guard, tall Sikhs and bearded Mohammedans, in gorgeous scarlet and blue, standing like statues by their lances in the corridors, and gazing in a kind of savage bewilderment at the scene before them.

Or take the day of the great reception at Government House, a day in which it seemed to me that I sampled several very varied phases of life. In the morning, a friend took me to call on a Mohammedan chief, who had come down to pay his respects to the Prince. His Highness, a man of immense stature, with a massive forcible face, like that of one of the granite Pharaohs in the Egyptian temples, spoke no English, and had never been outside India, seldom indeed outside his own tiny principality. But he was full of intelligence and a genuine kingly feeling—a sensible man, with some of the ideas of a born ruler, and certainly all the manner of one.

Through the interpreter he told me of his little State, of the difficulties he had had with famine and plague, of his farming and his shooting, and his somewhat primitive methods of administering justice and promoting educa tion. I left his Highness's presence to go and look at his Highness's future Suzerain laying the foundation-stone of a new public institution. There were speeches and addresses, and frock-coats and tall hats, and the handling of a trowel and plumb-rule, and the declaration that the block was well and truly laid. It was all familiar enough.

Familiar, too, was the long line of slowly moving carriages making their way towards the doors of Govern ment House for the evening *fete.* The road runs through the gardens and close above the shore, and one had time to admire the singular beauty of the Back Bay of Bombay. Past the lithe graceful stems and over the feathered heads of palm-trees, the eye travelled across a space of still water, glimmering in the cool moonshine, and beyond that to the crescent of silver light on the opposite strand of the bay. Where a cross-road joined the main avenue there was a patch of bare earth, and on it a man and a woman lay fast asleep, careless of the long train of carriages, of the lamps, the clatter, the hoarse cries of the marshalling police. But here we are at Government House, and in the midst of a vast and promiscuous throng of Europeans, Parsis, Hindus, ladies, turbaned chiefs, military uniforms. It takes long to pass through the crush, an hour or more of waiting to get started again homeward, while carriages, with pawing horses, are brought up, loaded, and sent away, amid a scene of confusion pleasantly reminiscent of Park Lane in the season.

It is the Arabian Nights again as we drive through the native city, with its variegated crowd, its medley of

shifting light and wavering shadow. And then we pass out on to the Maidan, or open public garden, where a Fancy Fair is being held in honour of the Prince's visit, and it is an aggravated Bank Holiday with the most fantastic local adjuncts. I step through an aggressive triumphal arch, inscribed with the motto 'Duo in Uno' and adorned with female transparencies emblematic of Britannia and India, and find myself back in a contorted Cockneydom. There is a switchback railway, roundabouts, four great wooden towers entwined with coloured glow-lamps ; there are booths and stalls where they sell cheap German glass, imitation meerschaum pipes, ferocious neckties, fiery perfumes, and other triumphs of Western skill and taste; there are shooting-galleries and fortune-telling booths; and there is a *cafe chantant,* with a high-class performance by the Sisters Somebody, warranted of London.

The Fair is deliriously popular with the natives, who come in shoals. They are of all ranks and classes—plutocrats who can pay their rupee a ride on the switch back without wincing, young Parsi clerks from the banks and railway offices, families from the country districts moving about rather bewildered amid all the splendour. Two elders of the village will be holding each other by the hand for better security, while their wives and a little company of children follow close on their footsteps. Tall Arabs and brawny Eajputs elbow Tommy Atkins from the standing camps on the Esplanade and negro sailors from the docks. The shooting-galleries, the try-your-weight machines, the sham-finery shops, are beset by customers. As I went out I nearly knocked over an old Mussulman with a beard stained red and a green turban—the signs of sainthood—gravely trailing by a string a couple of inflated air-bladders. Then I found my gharry again, and as I drove home I saw two men in white raiment bestriding

the same mule, and another man, with no raiment at all but a wisp of waistcloth, accurately and punctiliously washing a huge drab Guzerati buffalo in the open street. Who will deny that Bombay is rich in contrasts? But so is all India.

Indeed, to one who has never been in Eastern Asia before, almost any great Indian city is a weird revelation. The Prince of Wales during his sojourn in Bombay was shown the docks, and the harbour and new street, and the cathedral, and doubtless his attention was directed to the Victoria Terminus and the Clock Tower, the Town Hall and the Courts of Justice. But these are not the things most worth seeing; and I should venture to doubt whether any of them interested his Royal Highness nearly so much as his drives through the native quarters.

For the thing to see in Bombay is Bombay itself. It has no sight to show, no spectacle to offer, at all equal to that presented by its own streets, seething with miscel laneous humanity, especially if one can examine them at leisure and on foot, mingling with the populace and peering into the open houses. In the East people do not live in sealed compartments, and the front door, the shield of our own cherished domesticity, can hardly be said to exist. The climate and the local habits are opposed to it. Before the sun has risen, or after his setting, everybody seeks space and air and coolness out of doors; nor is there any jealous shrinking from observation, even in the daytime. People do all sorts of things in public which to our thinking should be transacted in privacy, such as dressing, shaving, washing, and sleeping, and, in spite of the caste rules and religious restrictions, even a good deal of eating.

Going into one of the large sheds in the quarter of Bombay where the hand-loom weavers carry on their work, I saw two men crouching in the dust by the outside

wall. They proved to be a barber and his client. The latter was naked to the waist; the barber, a respectable old gentleman in robe and turban, was sitting on the ground beside his victim, on whom he was operating in a very complete fashion, passing his razor not merely over the chin, but over the head, arms, and shoulders, and performing the whole toilet in full view of passers-by and of various other persons engaged in minor manufacturing or domestic avocations at intervals of a few yards along the wall of the shed. So it is everywhere. As you pass along the streets of the bazaar you can look right into half the houses. The shops are simply boxes, set on end, with the lids off. You can, if you please, stand and watch the baker rolling his flat loaves, the tailor stitching and cutting, the coppersmith hammering at his bowls and dishes, the jeweller drawing out gold and silver wire over his little brazier. The Indian townsman does not mind being looked at. He is accustomed to it. He passes his life in the midst of a crowd.

And that, to go back to the point from which I started, is what strikes the newcomer from the West most keenly. After a time, I suppose, he ceases to notice it, as we cease to notice anything which is before us constantly. (It is not every married man of twenty years' standing who could tell you off-hand the colour of his wife's eyes.) But upon the novice this sense of crowded humanity presses like an obsession, a nightmare, as he walks through the native streets in the noonday furnace, or at the cool of morning, or amid the restlessness of the closing night. The amazement which is his first feeling, the admiration for varied forms and bold colour that succeeds it, give way to a kind of horror as he sees all this brown, common, unregarded swarm poured out upon the ground like locusts, crawling in and out of every chink and cranny like ants, filling every vacant space. You cannot

cast your eye into any corner but you find a man there, if it is not a woman or a child.

If there is a spare decorative niche in the wall of a building, the odds are that you will find a man or boy huddled up there. In any little patch of vacant ground there are thick groups of squatters by day and sleepers by night. People roost for hours on the edges of the pave ment, or on any fragment of sill or low wall, sitting motionless upon their heels, with their hands stretched out over their knees, looking strangely like crows or vultures. The European will find the attitude so constrained and uncomfortable that he cannot endure it beyond a few minutes, if, indeed, he can get into it at all. The native, apparently, can maintain this posture all day. The Westerner, when he has work to do, likes to stand up to it. The native sits or lies, or crouches down, whether he be sewing or using the hammer and chisel, or cleaning a vessel, or dusting a room, or mending a garment. The scribe sits down on the floor to write a letter. The *mali,* or gardener, grovels over the flower-beds to grub up weeds or plant his roses. It seems as if they could not get too close to the warm and teeming bosom of the elemental Mother from whom they have sprung.

It is not the throng poured forth on some special occasion which moves one's wonder so much as the con course that perpetually besets the streets and houses. The formal crowd assembled to witness a spectacle is not greater than can be seen elsewhere. There were vast hordes of people on the route through which the Prince of Wales drove in his public progresses, but not by any means enough to excite the astonishment of a Londoner by their numbers, though every window and cranny and chink in the house-fronts showed a turbaned head or a brilliant robe, and men clung like apes to every projecting timber and carved balustrade, and perched with the

sparrows on eaves and sloping roofs. An Indian crowd, it is true, is larger than it looks. There is no attempt to leave air-space or elbow-room between its constituent units; the natives are accustomed to get close together, and have no prejudices against intimate personal contact, as anybody can see who has watched them packing themselves into a railway-carriage or a bullock-cart. Between the desire to secure good places and the rough pressure of the police, the throng is kneaded into a soft compact mass, knees, backs, and arms laced into one another, so that it occupies the minimum amount of space and standing-room.

Making due allowances for these circumstances, the Bombay hosts were not to be compared to those London turns out to witness a coronation or a Royal funeral or a Mafeking demonstration. But the Eastern crowd has no need to assemble. It is always mobilised and in marching order. Unending streams of people pass through the streets, by units, or in couples, or small groups, or sit immovable, hour after hour. Not till you get to Asia do you realise how cheap the human animal can be, and how easily man-power, of a certain limited kind, is to be had. In this part of India one does not notice many elderly people. They age too fast to grow old; for the women of the labouring class are worked out at thirty-five or forty, the men under fifty, and I suppose they die before they can become grey-headed.

But perhaps the most marvellous thing about these people to the Western eye is the way they sleep. It is an unending source of wonder and awe, this capacity of the Indian native for slumber under all sorts of conditions. Sleep comes to him without any of the allurements and amenities with which it is wooed by us. The poorest of European day labourers needs a bed and bed-furniture, if not a bedroom. The Indian manages

contentedly without all three. He will throw himself down, like a dog, on the bare earth, and sleep the night through without a movement. We say that he has no nerves, which may or may not be the explanation.

The poorer native, of the labouring or menial class, sleeps where he can, anywhere and everywhere. At Agra I went with a friend to look at the Taj Mahal by moonlight. We left our carriage waiting for us outside the great gate. When we emerged, we saw this vehicle and its horses standing under the trees; but the coach man we did not see. We called him loudly and more loudly, we searched the shadowy courtyard under the glimmering moonlight, we peered into the carriage and under it, with no result. At last it occurred to us to examine the driver's seat, a perch about two feet long and twelve inches wide ; and there, sure enough, close inspec tion revealed a minute bundle, which on being fiercely prodded and shaken uncoiled itself and sat up and became the missing charioteer.

Your own personal attendant, valet, or ' bearer '—a functionary of a certain standing—will sleep night after night with no better accommodation than the mat out side your bedroom door. He does not undress when he lies down ; he apparently does not wash when he gets up ; yet he is moderately tidy to look upon, he is quite as clean in his person as most English servants, and if his white garments are not spotless you are entitled to revile him. In one of the hotels in which I stayed, the floors of the passages were laid with porcelain tesselated tiles, hard as steel and shiny as glass ; but all over them were men extended at length, sometimes upon a thin cotton sheet, more often with nothing under or over them. Outside the building, on the verandahs, the steps, the courtyard, the bare earth of the stables and offices, were other slumbering forms. At every dark corner protruded

a brown leg and foot from under a white wrapper. If there is no other place for him, an Indian will sleep contentedly in the open street or the channel of the pavement. At the Festival of the *Diwali,* when all the bazaars were blazing with lamps and alive with people, I saw men lying fast asleep on the bulkheads of shops and in open doorways. The noises, the lights, the passing crowds that brushed their garments, left them undisturbed. They slept as animals sleep, with the same indifference to comfort, the same dead immobility.

It is this carelessness of the amenities of the bed chamber that somewhat qualifies one's view of the Indian slum-dwelling. Bombay, where plague is still endemic, and was taking its victims not long since at the rate of a thousand a week, has its congested quarter, where people are packed more closely than in almost any place outside China and a few other Indian cities. The municipality and the City Improvement Trust have made great efforts to clean the worst area. They have opened out the nests of courts and alleys by running fine broad streets through them, and erecting blocks of model *chawls,* or tenement dwellings, to provide accommodation, which *is* at least sanitary, for those who have been displaced.

Under the guidance of an English resident, who has studied Bombay long and closely, accompanied by a sanitary inspector and an able young Hindu medical man in the service of the Corporation, I was taken to see some of the dwellings in the condemned and congested district. I confess I was less impressed than perhaps my friends expected ; for I have seen slum areas and municipal clearances nearer home, and for pure filth, foulness, degradation, and outward misery I am afraid that London has more painful sights to show than those which were brought before me in Bombay.

The houses I saw had been visited by the plague again and again; on many a doorpost was the red circle, with date within, which is the sign that the pestilence had done its work and claimed its victim. On some of the lintels there were as many as five or six of these marks of doom. The houses were rabbit-warrens, with a family or two families to every room. And these rooms themselves were mere oblong cavities—low, dark, cavernous, sometimes all but windowless. There was no chimney; the fireplace consisted of a few bricks or stones piled up in a corner; the floors were of hardened cow-dung, which is the kind of flooring that breeds the plague infection, and gives a resting-place to the rats that carry it. There was usually no bed and no bedding, and often no more furniture than a couple of wooden chests and a cord on which clothes were suspended.

It sounds bad enough; and yet, as I have said, to those who have seen European slums it might have been worse. For, poor as it was, there was an absence of some of those pretences at civilisation which make urban poverty so much more horrible. You could go in and out of the rooms without being appalled by spectacles of degrading indecency. There were no broken leg-less chairs, cracked crockery, fragments of carpet and wall-paper begrimed with indescribable dirt. The cow-dung floors were usually clean, so were the wooden chests; and the brass pots and bowls shone like burnished gold. The very emptiness of the tenements, the scanty and elementary needs of the occupants, were in their favour. Sleeping largely out of doors, the people had no frowsy mattresses; tables they do not want, or chairs, for they sit on the floor, and eat from it; religion and custom prescribe cleanliness for the person and for cooking utensils; the scanty drapery of a warm climate is easily washed. Poor as they were, the people seemed to retain a certain dignity,

as if they still felt themselves members of a community, not mere outcasts from it. Poverty, I suppose, has be come so habitual with the masses of an Eastern popula tion that they can accept it as the normal state of things. It does not seem to bring with it the hopeless degrada tion which it produces in societies where the require ments of all men are less simple and the general standard of comfort higher.

CHAPTER III

BOMBAY: THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN

To the passing visitor, the casual globe-trotter, provided with good introductions—and without these it is hardly worth his while to come to India at all—the life of the European resident in Bombay must seem, at first view, distinctly agreeable. He has a noble town to live in, full of life and movement, with good clubs, yachting, golf, tennis, bridge to taste, some music, feminine society, much dancing. When he needs a change he can run up to some hill village among the Western Ghats, and feast his eyes upon the castellated sierras, the bold, upstanding peaks, and rugged rock-crowned kopjes of the mountain land. The climate is fair, and tempered by the sea-breeze, if a little too warm and sticky at a season which the judicious tourist usually avoids.

The said tourist will be much gratified by his first dinner-party, especially if it takes place at a bungalow on Malabar Hill. The main part of the city lies low among the flats and reclaimed marsh lands of its island site. But towards its south-western extremity the island throws out a horn into the sea, and here the ground rises to a height of three hundred feet. At the point of the spur is Government House; close to it is the famous Hindu temple of Walkeshwar, to which pilgrims resort from all parts of India. When the ladies of Government House drive out to play croquet at the Gymkhana Club, they pass groups of these worshippers streaming from the shrine,

with the caste-marks newly painted on their foreheads, and some of them with the staves and bowls and wallets which show that they have travelled from a far country. All along the ridge are the best and most desirable houses in Bombay, the houses where Europeans like to live, because of the air, and the gardens, and the views over the town, the Back Bay and the open waters of the Indian Ocean.

In the cool evening light the visitor drives up from the noisy streets and the swarming bazaars of Bombay. The breeze quickens as he reaches the upper levels, and he sees trim villas set back among palms and lotos-trees and the Indian acacia with its sumptuous blossoms. Presently he finds himself at his friend's house, and wonders why it should be called a bungalow, which to him suggests some sort of makeshift erection, flimsy and impermanent. But the Malabar Hill bungalow is quite likely to be a solid brick-and-stone building, with spacious and lofty apartments. The best bedroom is as large as an ordinary London drawing-room, the drawing-room the size of a small Dissenting chapel. The floor is of coloured tiles and porcelain, the walls painted in creamy yellow, and a great gold-fringed punkah sweeps overhead.

White-robed attendants glide about on noiseless feet, and serve an excellent dinner. Ice, still a rarity in the hottest London summer, is as common in India as in the United States, and the cold blocks chink musically in the glasses as the Mohammedan butler pours out champagne. There is not much furniture in the large rooms, but probably a fine Delhi or Cashmere rug or two, some old metal work, and a handsome bureau or table carved from the local blackwood. After dinner the company sit out on the longest of long chairs in the deepest of deep verandahs, and always there are the same soft-footed ministers at hand to tender the soothing cigarette, and

prepare the welcome peg of whisky and soda. The gratified guest sits and smokes, and drinks, and listens to the many voices of the Indian night, and gazes on the lights of the shipping, sprinkled like fireflies over the dark waters far below, and across to the opposite shores of the Back Bay outlined in points of silver. He may be excused for thinking that he has drifted into something like an earthly Paradise; and he marvels the more when he reflects that his entertainer is no millionaire or prince or great noble, but only a bank manager, or a transport agent, or perhaps an official who at home would be nothing more dignified than a somewhat superior clerk in the Treasury.

But when he has been a few days in Bombay he will discover that his satisfaction is by no means shared by his European friends. He will perceive that they are suffering under an irritating sense of grievance, all the more annoying since they do not see their way to a remedy. For one thing, they will speedily inform him that his earthly Paradise is pretty nearly Paradise Lost, so far as they are concerned. The time was when all Malabar Hill, with its adjacent ridges, was given up solely to European habitation. The native lay swelter ing in the narrow streets of the low-lying bazaar quarter, huddled up in the cramped, insalubrious, Eastern fashion ; the Englishman lived spaciously at his ease on the airy uplands.

But all this has changed. The native has made money, he has enlarged his ideas, and he has been tho roughly scared by the plague. When he discovered that people died like flies in the bazaars, while the Sahibs, behind their roomy compounds, enjoyed comparative immunity, he quietly went to work to turn these same Sahibs out. As he holds nearly all the land and most of the money, he found no great difficulty in the task. When

a lease determined or a house fell vacant on the ridges he stepped in. If he owned the site himself, he occupied it, and refused to entertain any offer from an European ; if it belonged to a compatriot, he tendered a price far beyond the resources of the civilians and the soldiers, or even those of the mercantile agents and business men.

The result is that to-day the English bungalows on Malabar Hill and Cumballa Hill may almost be counted on the fingers. Nearly all the finest houses are occupied by natives, who live there in great style, with their horses, their carriages, their motor-cars, and their married sons and daughters to the second and third generation. Small tradesmen and baniyas, who know no better, or who prefer to stick to the ancient ways, coolies and weavers, who cannot help themselves, may keep to the bazaar region ; the wealthy native does not mean to catch plague if he can help it, and he will have a house on the hills, while there are houses to be had. The Englishman complains bitterly that he has no room to live. At his moderate salary he cannot compete with his affluent brown competitor. For him the Parsi land speculator builds blocks of flats down near the sea-front, and he has to pay a relatively high rent for his three or four stuffy rooms, and be glad to get them, while his landlord looks down upon him from his eyrie three miles away. There has been something like a house famine in Bombay of late, and Europeans have been driven to camp out on the Maidan, or to live permanently and unsatisfactorily in rooms at the hotels.

If you listen to your resentful European informants, they will tell you that this is only typical of what is happening generally in Bombay. The white man, they say, is being 'crowded out,' and the native is establishing his ascendency. You hear the case put in various w&ys, according to the temper and temperament of those who

formulate it. ' All d——d nonsense, Sir!' says the colonel at the club, over his third peg of whisky and soda. ' These blank niggers are getting the upper hand. They think themselves as good as we are, and we encourage them with our rotten new-fangled notions. They want keeping in their places, or they will turn us out of ours, confound them!' The urbane officer's views are expressed in a less crude, but equally significant fashion, by more discriminating observers. One of the cleverest ladies in Bombay—an ' European,' according to the technical classification, but in fact an American—said to me: * There is a native conspiracy against you here—a con spiracy to get the best of everything and leave the worst to the English,'

Most residents, whether they believed in the existence of this complot or not, would probably take the same view as to the facts. They would tell you ruefully that the natives have already obtained the best of things in Bombay. They own, as we have seen, the finest houses; they are monopolising the choicest residential sites ; they drive the most expensive horses, ride in the showiest carriages, elect the majority of the municipality, run the best of the cotton-mills, and every day they are getting more of the profitable business of the town into their hands. Many of them are extremely rich, while most of the Europeans are rather poor. The English are, in a dignified fashion, the hewers of wood and drawers of water, doing all the hard work of govern ment, police, and sanitation, and toiling through the sweltering days to maintain the ordered security under which the Parsi and the Hindu merchant wax mighty and amass money.

Bombay, in spite of its splendid Europeanised public buildings, is still a native town, and the natives are fully conscious of the fact. The stranger who comes here

expecting to find a handful of his countrymen lording it over a subservient dusky population will assuredly be dis appointed. There is not much subserviency about the sturdy little natives of the Presidency. These descendants of the Mahratta raiders, of the Concanese villagers, and of the amphibious tribesmen of the coast, are not particularly good to look at. They are short and dark and insignifi cant, though the women, as I have said, are somewhat redeemed, in spite of their shrivelled features, their nose rings, and their betel-chewing, by the grace of their draperies and the excellence of their gait. But they are rather self-assertive folks, and their demeanour towards Europeans is not in the least servile or even respectful. If the white man gets among the seething crowd of the bazaars he will have to push his own way through, and he will find himself handled with no more ceremony than if he were in the Mile-end Boad on a Saturday night.

Old Anglo-Indians shake their heads gloomily over the change of manners, and look back fondly to the good times when the native left the pavement to the white people, and halted his beasts when they wanted to cross the road. He does that still in some of the up-country districts, but not in the Presidency towns. He knows too much about the Sahibs to regard them with any special awe. For the white man in Bombay is not always a ruler and an English gentleman. He may be a tailor's cutter at the Stores, or an assistant at one of the big outfitting shops, or a German commercial traveller, or an Italian hotel-manager, or the chauffeur who drives some wealthy Parsi's motor-car. It is a very miscellaneous oligarchy, and the native is not much impressed by it, and treats its members with impartial indifference, relying on the protection of the law. If the Briton with a remnant of the old ideas about Oriental subordination displays his resentment in a forcible fashion, there is at

hand a magistrate, probably a native himself, to right the aggrieved Asiatic's wrongs, with no prejudice in favour of the governing race. So our Aryan and Dravidian brethren are free to wear gilded raiment and pile up rupees, while the Anglo-Saxon plods on doggedly in the interest of his subjects, giving the best years of his life for them at a pittance, and going home to die when he can work for them no more.

We sometimes console ourselves by reflecting that we earn the native's respect and gratitude, if not his affection. But one cannot be quite sure even of that. Some light on this point came to me from a conversation I had with a highly intelligent Hindu merchant, not from the Bombay Presidency, but from the Southern Dekhan. If you can get a native to talk to you at all, he will often talk quite freely and frankly. This man spoke English fluently, and he made no fuss about telling me all his business and learning as much as he could of mine. He had been in many different trades, and had, appa rently, made money out of everything. He dealt in grain, he had general stores here and there, he financed various industrial concerns, and he owned a lot of house property. For the English, as a nation, he entertained a sentiment which, I think, was almost contemptuous. He liked us personally, but it seemed to me that when he contemplated our proceedings they filled him not so much with awe as with amazement.

Indeed, he said as much. He recognised our dis tinctive qualities, but he did not admire us for them so cordially as one could have wished. He summed up his views in a few concise sentences. 'You English,' he said, 'are a curious people. Now if it were ordered that I and the District Magistrate were set down together, without an anna, in a strange country, he would starve, but in three years I should be a

rich man again,' I agreed that this was possible, **but** suggested that matters might be different if it were a question of governing the hypothetical land of exile.

My Hindu gave way there at once. He admitted that in this competition he would be as badly outclassed as the Englishman in the other. He could not govern, he confessed; it was not his *mStier* or that of his people. The English could and did, and he was glad they devoted themselves to this function, since it saved considerable trouble to individuals like himself, who had other and, as he plainly thought, worthier scope for their intellectual activities. Military officers, judges, magistrates, deputy-commissioners, and civil servants generally, he regarded without hostility but without enthusiasm. How does a prosperous professional man or a manufacturer in an English town feel towards the local tax collector, the sanitary inspector, the police superintendent, the borough surveyor? He knows these are all useful functionaries doing necessary work, which he would not in the least care to be doing himself; but he neither admires nor envies them. Such seemed to me about the attitude of this highly intelligent native towards the finest bureau cracy in the world.

To see something of native society is easier in Bombay than in any other place -in India, and yet it is not in itself an easy thing even there. The city is full of educated, emancipated Asiatics, of various denominations, many of whom have gone a long way towards assimi lating Western customs and ideas. I do not refer merely to the Parsis; there are also in Bombay Hindus of high rank and good standing, and even Moham medans, who can associate familiarly with Europeans, who travel to England frequently, who take their ' cure' at Homburg and Vichy, who know London and Paris, who read English books, play English games, and some-

times—though this is an extreme step—wear English attire indoors.

In the streets they compromise by keeping to the national headgear, a badge of race and religion, which a man seldom discards except as an intimation that he has abandoned both. Thus you will see the Persian cap of the Parsis, or their more distinctive oil-cloth mitre, above a suit of tweeds; and at the Prince of Wales's levee a native chief or sardar would sometimes appear in ordinary evening dress topped by a gorgeous jewelled turban. One of the most Anglicised young Parsis I met, an athlete and a great cricketer, apologised for taking me round his factories and offices wearing the national cap. The members of his community would not consider it quite dignified for him to be seen in public without it. After all, as he pointed out, it is no more irrational than the affection of the English professional man for his silk topper, which for hardness, heaviness, ugliness, and general inconvenience could hardly be beaten by the most bizarre of Oriental headdresses. As for the ladies, even when emancipated from the *purdah* limita tions, they generally keep to some adaptation of the garb of their mothers. Herein they show their sense, for the flowing draperies and bright colours suit them, and the European dresses do not. A Parsi lady in a tailor-made gown and a hat derived from Bond Street looks no better than a common little Eurasian nursemaid; whereas in her robe of flowered silk, with the pale oval of her face set off by a floating muslin veil bordered with silver braid, she may become quite attractive.

Theoretically there is very little to prevent the European and the emancipated part of the native societies from associating together. In practice they do not mingle. The men see each other in the way of business, on municipal boards, and in the course of official functions,

and native gentlemen come to Government House to attend the great promiscuous public receptions. But the white and brown communities stand aloof socially. There are many Englishmen in Bombay who have lived in the city for years, and have never been in a native house or seen any native but a servant or a tradesman within their own doors, nor have they ever exchanged a sentence with an Indian lady. Indeed, I fancy that, even in Bombay, a man who was known habitually to seek native society would be looked at with some suspicion by his friends at the clubs.

Anglo-India does not care to be too familiar with the inhabitants of the country. It confines its interests mainly to itself, and the relations of its own constituent parts to one another, and to the people At Home. Espe cially is this the case in the great towns, which contain, it must be remembered, an unduly large part of the white population of the peninsula. The civilians in the rural districts, and some of the officers of the police and the forest service, make praiseworthy efforts to know some thing of native gentlemen out of working, and even sport ing, hours; for you may play polo with a man, or go pig-sticking with him, without really knowing him. It is a difficult task, but occasionally it is successful. In the Presidency towns, English society is large enough to be self-contained, and it is languid about cultivating the local element. Besides, it is mainly composed of busi ness men, who do not feel, as the more conscientious civilians do, that it is their duty to try to understand our Eastern fellow-subjects. The breaking down of social barriers is no affair of theirs.

I suppose that is the reason why a certain acerbity is perceptible in the sentiments of many influential Indians towards the English and English rule. When you first come in contact with the educated native, on the

threshold of the Empire, you cannot fail to be struck by the fact that he is a man with a veiled grievance. And this in spite of the fact that Bombay—even beyond the rest of India—is being run for his benefit, and that he is the dominating factor in its industry and its pro fessional life. He seems to have things very much his own way ; but he is in rather an irritable splenetic mood, and is inclined to patronise radical Congress orators, in triguing Mahratta Brahmans, insubordinate rajas, and divers others who are discontented with the existing scheme of things. While staying in Bombay I found myself one evening dining with a company of leading men among the Asiatic community of the Presidency city, I was the only European present; the other guests were Parsis and Hindus, with one Mohammedan. Need less to say they were all emancipated, occidentalised persons, otherwise they would not have been dining with me or with each other. One of them held high office under the Government; another had taken honours at Cambridge; a third was a wealthy merchant and finan cier, who generally has a house in London for the season, entertains lavishly, and is quite an important figure in metropolitan society.

Now, on the face of it, none of these men should have been suspected of any special prejudice against the ruling race, whose manners they copied, or of any particular affection for the congeries of peoples from whom they had, to a large extent, broken asunder. Yet, when they were properly warmed up by French cookery and judi cious contradiction, I found that they were one and all suffering under a sense of injustice and slight. They declared, some with distinct heat, others in more guarded terms, that the theoretical equality of all men in British India was a mere fiction. Though I told them that everything I had seen in Bombay conveyed a contrary

impression to my mind, they insisted that this was an error. The native, they said, throughout the country was treated as an inferior and as a member of a servile and subject race.

I asked for illustrations, and they rolled out a string of them. Many were concerned with the railways, where, of course, people of all races come into contact. At some stations, I was assured, the first-class waiting-room is reserved for Europeans and the second-class for natives. * One of the white foremen at my factory,' said a great Parsi mill-owner, ' can go into the superior apartment, while I, his employer, must slink into the other enclosure, in company with coolies and day-labourers.' An English and a Mohammedan Judge of the High Court were travel ling together; when they alighted at the station, both strolled into the same waiting-room. Presently an official of the company came up and ordered one of the eminent lawyers to leave on the plea that the place was not intended for natives.

In several of the stories the British subaltern, with his comprehensive contempt for all ' niggers,' played a shining part. There is one pleasing tale which is a 'chestnut' in India, so often has it been told, but may perhaps be new to some English readers. A young cavalry officer entering a first-class carriage, for a long night journey on an express train, found that he had for fellow-traveller a middle-aged stout Hindu, who was chewing betel-nut. The trooper requested that this ob jectionable practice should be discontinued. The Asiatic refused; whereupon the youngster compelled his com panion, under menaces, to enter the adjoining lavatory compartment, locked him in, and threatened him with dire personal injury if he made the smallest sound till he was released. The native, a man of peace, complied, and passed a night of quaking stillness in his darksome prison*

In the morning the train drew up at a station, and uniformed Government House functionaries and gold-turbaned attendants came to the carriage in search of the important chief they had been sent to receive; but, though his Highness's slippers and his Highness's umbrella were in evidence, his Highness himself was nowhere to be seen. Explanations were sought from the subaltern, and with some difficulty he grasped the situation. 'I expect,' he said cheerfully, 'the chap you want is the black Johnny I locked up in the bath-room last night *; so the doors were unclasped, and the limp potentate extracted.

Several other histories were narrated, tending to show that the young British officer is often wanting in tact and consideration in his dealings with natives; nor are his superiors, or even the high civilian officials, always impeccable. Kajas and other great personages, if seldom handled so disrespectfully as in the above-mentioned example, are sometimes treated with scant courtesy and in off-hand fashion, even on occasions of public ceremony. The grievance is social rather than legal or political, and it is in this form that it is felt by some of those, whether they be feudal landowners of progressive views or ambitious plutocrats, who admire English methods but are irritated by English exclusiveness. With all their cleverness, and all their wealth and worldly success, they cannot get the English to put them exactly on the same level as themselves socially. The Parsi millionaire may ask half London to his entertainments when he is living in Piccadilly or Queen's Gate; but he would be requested to withdraw at once if he ventured to put a foot inside the grounds of the Bombay Yacht Club or the Byculla, Ranjitsinhji himself, the hero of English cricketing schoolboys, could not be asked in to play a game of tennis at the Ladies' Gymkhana Club.

These seem all very small matters; I mention them because, apparently, they do not appear quite so in significant to some of the natives whom we have admitted to equality with ourselves in other respects. And what did not seem to me a small matter, by any means, was that all these Anglicised de-orientalised natives had a certain common national feeling as against the alien ruler. Differing as they do, among themselves, in origin, race, and language—two of the company, both Bombay-side men, could find no common medium of communication but English—they yet manifested a consciousness that, *vis-a-vis* the British, they were all 'Indians,' It was a sentiment the existence of which most Anglo-Indians would emphatically deny, but I have seen other evidence that it prevails, even in Europeanised Bombay, which is perhaps the last place where one would expect to find it.

In the business world of Bombay the Parsis hold a position out of all proportion to their numbers. Wherever in the world you find a small community, distinctive in race or religion, or both, that community will generally be successful, especially in finance and trade. "Witness the Jews, the Armenians, the Basques, the Marwaris, the Levantine Greeks, the Quakers. But of these organisms the Parsis are in some ways the most remarkable, for they are by far the smallest and certainly, for their numbers, the most flourishing of any.

They are a mere handful, though it is hard for the European, in his novitiate in India, to believe it. There are only some 45,000 of them, men, women, and children, in Bombay, and well under a hundred thousand in the whole world, including Piccadilly. The fact seems in credible : for at the first aspect Bombay gives the impres sion of a city of Parsis. They are visible, they and their work, everywhere. The wealth of the place is largely

in their hands, so is the manufacturing industry and the real property. Parsi names are painted on the gate posts of many of those desirable suburban residences from which European tenants have been banished. If the eye falls on a handsome public building, it is quite likely to be a Parsi hospital, or a Parsi con valescent home, or the college founded by one wealthy fire-worshipper, or the monument presented to the city by another. Parsis hold most of the shares in the largest of the cotton-mills, whose tall chimneys are blackening the sunlit air all over the northern quarter of the island; the big new hotel, whose impos ing sea-front greets the voyager with his first view of Bombay, belongs to a family of Parsi financiers whose names are known in the West as well as the East.

In the morning, streams of Parsis, in black alpaca coats and high shiny caps, are flowing down to their offices, to go ebbing back at eventide. There are apparently no Parsi coolies, or labourers ; but the clerks, the shop assistants, the native officials, the doctors, lawyers, brokers, engineers, accountants, are largely drawn from this com munity. They are very prominent in the Bombay Corporation, and generally ' boss' municipal affairs, so far as these can be bossed under the Indian system. And on every public festivity, a reception of the Viceroy or a Royal Prince, the Parsi ladies and gentlemen are much in evidence. There is no *purdah* for Parsi women, who drive and walk about as they please, and sometimes even ride bicycles; but they keep to their picturesque national dress, and particularly to the gauzy veil, because no woman, in this part of India, is considered quite respect able without some sort of covering for her head.

The Parsis, we are often reminded, are foreigners, like ourselves, in India. As it is some twelve centuries since they left their home, they may be said to have taken root.

They fled from Persia to escape Mohammedan persecution, and found a refuge under the Hindu kings of Guzerat, who tolerated them, within limits. They were allowed to practise their Zoroastrian worship of the elements, but they were expected to conform to Brahmanist feeling, and compelled to adopt the high black cap, supposed to be shaped like a cow's hoof, as a sign of subjection and con formity. But they brought their consecrated fire from Persia, and it burns to this day in little, whitewashed, empty temples, within sound of the tramway gongs of Bombay. Driven upon themselves, they became, as these proscribed and powerless minor sects often do, hard working craftsmen and industrious traders. For many generations they were the minor shopkeepers and artisans of Bombay, persevering but uninfluential.

Under the settled peace of British rule they have flourished wonderfully and waxed mighty. Free from Mahratta tyranny and Hindu suspicion, they have been able to give full scope to their mercantile and financial talents. They were no longer afraid to make money, and were able to keep it. Some of them left off being small tradesmen, and developed into merchants, manufacturers, mill-owners, millionaires. Having no chain of caste re strictions like the Hindus, and no swathing of burden some religious prejudices like the Mohammedans, they got into contact with the white mercantile community, and assimilated some—not all—of our manners and cus toms with avidity. They learnt the English language, read English books, and sometimes wrote them, founded schools for their children on English lines, and joined with Englishmen in works of charity and benevolence. Also they learnt English games. As everybody knows, they play cricket. They play it so well that for the last year or two matches between them and Britkh teams are discouraged: the native spectators having developed a

taste for 'barracking' the beaten eleven (which is gene rally the white one), and exulting riotously and offensively over the victory of the men of Asia.

Many of the Parsis also provided themselves with English names, or distant imitations of them. The Parsi nomenclature is curious. Every man has his first name, which is what we call a Christian name, and his family patronymic, and a third appellation of a descriptive character. It is rather like the mediaeval English system under which a person was William the son of Eobert the Smith, or something of the kind. The Parsis of the past generation varied their descriptive labels according to taste. Not being above their business, they took titles drawn from their avocations or otherwise con nected with their station in life. Thus, if a young Parsi were, say, a waiter who poured wine at a club, he would probably call himself Mr. Bottleman, which in the ver nacular would be Bottlywalla; and this, slightly disguised as Batlivala, is, in fact, now the name of a Bombay family honourably distinguished in professional life.

So we have bootwalla, coatwalla, and sackcloth-walla, which is now Saklatvala. Such a name as 'Mr. Keady-money' sounds as if it came out of a novel or a comic opera, but it belongs to highly important people, and is known all over Western India. After all, it is not very different from Mr. Butler or Mr. Baker or Mr. Cartwright. Sometimes the aspiring Parsi went farther afield, and simply appropriated English names, calling himself Mr. Spencer or Mr. Ripon. Just lately * Curzon & Co.' has been in favour. In due course it may be Minto Brothers. But it is suspected that some of these names are simply adopted for business purposes, according to a custom not unknown elsewhere, and are not used in the domestic circle.

Hindus, as well as Parsis, are rather loose about

names. There is a story that one Madras shopkeeper brought an action against another to restrain him from using his trade name, which was English and high-sounding. The Judge of the High Court, whom we may call Sir William Ramsbury, in giving judgment against the defendant, explained that he was quite at liberty to adopt any name but that pre-occupied by the plaintiff. ' May I use any other name I like ? ' said the defeated litigant. ' Certainly,' said Mr. Justice Ramsbury. The next morning his Honour received a card announcing that 'Eamsbury and Company' were prepared to supply him for cash on the most reasonable terms.

The Parsis are an interesting and rather attractive body of people. Their cleverness is undeniable, and it shows itself in other ways besides that of commerce. There are eminent surgeons in the community, able lawyers, good engineers, botanists, and physiologists. In business itself they have not only the quickness and alert adaptability of the Oriental trader, but also a boldness of conception and a courage in undertaking great and even hazardous enterprises which we are rather inclined to regard as Western traits. There is at the present moment a great scheme for developing the mineral resources of the Bombay Presidency and generating electricity by water-power, initiated by a Parsi group, which is quite Transatlantic in its comprehensive audacity.

They have a taste for open-air amusements. Their family life is, as a rule, excellent; one can go for afternoon tea to a Parsi lady's drawing-room and find good conversation and pleasant feminine companionship, though the few highly 'advanced' Parsi ladies who travel abroad must not be taken as quite average specimens of their sex in the community. The majority retain sufficient vestiges of Orientalism to believe that a certain seclusion and reserved domesticity are required of a woman, and that

she should still occupy herself mainly in her household and family affairs. Female emancipation among the Parsis has not gone quite so far as we are apt to imagine.

' At Home ' the Parsis get on very well. Those who come abroad have plenty of money to spend, and they are hospitable, courteous, kindly, and quite modern in their views and ways. But in his own real home the Parsi is not always quite so happy. He is to some extent adrift in an uncertain position between the Asiatic and the European, and he represents, in its acutest form, that social grievance to which reference has already been made. He is so English in his customs, he talks English so well, and he has got rid of so much of his superfluous Oriental baggage, that he has almost got into the habit of thinking himself a member of the ruling race. Yet he is painfully conscious that to nine Englishmen out of ten he is only a 'native,' lumped up unceremoniously with all the conglomerate of civilised, semi-civilised, and savage humanity denoted by that comprehensive term.

From these same natives themselves he receives only that qualified amount of deference which attaches rather to riches than to race. An English friend tells me that a Parsi gentleman was driving him in his phaeton through the streets of Bombay. His horses were as smart a pair as you could want to see in the Bow, he handled whip and reins neatly, he was a handsome man, well dressed and well set-up. The Englishman noticed that policemen, and other officials, saluted them with considerable precision, and he made some remark on the respectfulness of their bearing. ' Yes,' said his friend rather bitterly, ' but that is because you are sitting beside me, and they see you are one of the Sahibs. If I were alone, not one of these men would take the slightest notice of me. And they would make me pull up and

keep my horses standing if a white shop-assistant chose to dawdle across the street.' For my own part, I must confess that I did not observe any sign in Bombay of that exaggerated deference towards the members of the ruling race which this remark suggested.

The future of the Parsis is somewhat doubtful. Some people who know them tell me that there are signs of degeneration among them. The young Parsis, who go to the high schools, or to Oxford or Cambridge, and acquire a taste for culture, have lost the grip and go of their hard-headed pertinacious progenitors, who pushed themselves, by sheer force of character, from the trades man's counter and the small money-lender's office to become merchant princes and captains of industry. They are less strenuous, more frivolous, somewhat ashamed of the ' shop;' they are losing their identity; and they are relaxing their hold on the religion of their fathers, with its simple ethical code, without finding a substitute for it. They are becoming denationalised, and some of them themselves have told me that they fear it is their destiny to be absorbed into the general body of Europeans in India. Here I think they are mistaken. There is no sign that the English will assimilate them. They may cease to be Parsis ; but if they merge at all it will be in that still small and hesitating body of Asiatics who are trying in a tentative way to regard themselves as ' Indians.'

CHAPTER IV

AT THE MILLS

MANUFACTURES, like most other things in India, are very new and very old; and it is often easy to see the new and the old side by side. You can observe the juxtaposition, for instance, in Cawnpore, a town which seems to be rapidly ascending towards the second place among the manufacturing cities of India. The visitor to Cawnpore usually limits his attention to the Memorial Church and the Massacre Ghat, and that garden of intolerably tragic memories where the sculptured Angel of Peace droops her white wings above the pit into which 'a great company of Christian people, chiefly women and children,'[1] were cast, 'the dying with the dead,' after being hacked to pieces by the butchers of the Nana Sahib. But when he has seen these reminiscences of a sombre past, he might walk over to the cotton-mills, the woollen-mills, or the great leather-factories, where modern industrialism is humming with eager vitality. The Cawnpore woollen-mills are crowded with splendid machinery, so nearly automatic that the *chumar,* the low-caste coolie who attends it, has little more to do than to brush away the

[1] **The words are from the inscription round the screen wall above the Well at Cawnpore. The inscription, in its simplicity, is more in touch with the sentiment evoked by this sorrowful place than the feebly ornate screen and the mid-Victorian angel. One feels that if Baron Marochetti had been Michelangelo he could hardly have put an adequate intensity of expression into the face and form. A plain cross or column of marble to mark the spot where the Nana's victims lie, in the midst of the beautiful quiet garden, would surely have been better.**

dust and feed the thirsty faucets with oil. It is almost as if the man and the machine had changed places: the former has only to exert a limited amount of mechanical force ; the moving thing of metal seems endowed with intelligence and volition. There is a knitting-machine which needs only to be fed with a reel of worsted-thread to turn out a whole string of stockings, beginning a new one as soon as it has finished the last. With deft steel fingers it picks up the threads and works away swiftly and unerringly at the leg and ankle, never dropping or missing a stitch, and putting in the right number with faultless precision. Then it comes to the heel and stops a moment; it reflects that in a well-made stocking the heel should be of double thickness. So it takes up two threads instead of one, works away a little slower till the heel is done, stops again, goes back to the single ply, and so finishes the foot. And all this absolutely without a touch from the attendant, without the handling of a tap or a lever. Unless something goes wrong, he is merely required to snip off the stockings from the string as they are wou4id out in front of him. Here is the New World indeed. But the Old can also be seen in the squalid bazaars of Cawnpore, where men and women sit in their reeking little hutches, weaving, fulling, and dyeing the cloth with such primitive processes and implements as they used before there were English in India or steam-engines in England.

In Bombay one can pass from the great steam-power cotton-mills in the suburbs to the Street of the Weavers, which is in a crowded insalubrious por tion of the native city, and is inhabited chiefly by Mohammedans of a sturdy, rather truculent, type, who have been hand-loom weavers for generations. There is no caste system among the Mussulmans ; but in the East a man likes to follow the calling practised by his

father before him. These hand-loom weavers work in their own homes on their own account, or in small work shops, where a dozen or so of them will be collected. They sell the woven cloth through the owner or lessee of the place, who takes a small commission on the pro ceeds. The plant required is not costly. The hand-loom consists of a few sticks and strings, and the whole apparatus, I was assured, could be bought new for less than a couple of rupees—say half a crown. Pro vided with this trumpery machine and a few hanks of cotton or silk thread, the Indian weaver can get to work. He needs nothing more—nothing but his own bony claw-like fingers and his own capacity for patient monotonous endurance.

The weaver is a little man : his occupation is not favourable to long limbs and big muscles. He sits on the floor of dried cow-dung, with his legs huddled into a hole under him ; his flimsy framework hangs from the ceiling above, and he pulls the bobbin with its spool of thread backward and forward across his knees. He does this all day, never varying the slow even pace at which he goes, following his rough pattern without a mistake, seldom stopping to rest or talk. If you peer into his dark little cell in the early morning, you find him there, silent and intent, with his brown hands skimming across his brown knees; in the noontide heat he goes on; he is still at his toil when evening falls. From sunrise to sundown are the traditional hours of labour for the Indian weaver—from the beginning of the natural day to the time when the light is veiled. Now and again the weaver rises and goes out to get a drink of water. He eats little during his working hours; in the Eamazan, the month of fasting, being a Mohammedan, he does not eat at all, taking his food before the rising and after the setting of the sun; but he stops to say his prayers at noon and in the after-

noon, and, when night comes, he gets out his square of threadbare rug, turns his face vaguely to the West, where the Holy City lies, and gives thanks to Allah for the mercies of the day. He pays, perhaps, three rupees a month for his lodging, and, if he is lucky and times are good, may earn seven rupees, so that he has four over—say eighteenpence a week for food and clothing and the maintenance of his wife, or wives, and his children. So he lives and labours and starves and endures, as his fathers have done before him through the dim centuries.

When you have considered this image of his Maker sufficiently, go by train or carriage to the northern suburbs, where the tall chimneys of the mill are pouring black smoke into the sunlight, and fouling the low-lying marshy soil of the island with their refuse. There are good mills and bad mills in Bombay, as in Calcutta and Cawnpore and the other cities whose industry is fast giving India a place among the great cotton-manu facturing countries of the world. The first mill I visited belonged to one of the largest and most successful of the native joint-stock companies, and its shares stand at a premium of 1,500 per cent., or more. It was a fine and, apparently, a very well-managed concern. And here, again, it seemed strange, with the recollection of the hand-loom weaver in mind, to look into the vast sheds of glass and iron, full of modern machinery, with row after row of workmen and workwomen at the spindles. So far as cleanliness and good order were concerned, it was equal to most mills or factories I have seen, even in Germany, There was no reek or smell of tainted air, except, as you went through the lines, the somewhat acrid odour of perspiring humanity. Sweeper-women were prowling about everywhere, brushing away the dust and refuse and cotton-waste, and keeping the floors tidy. The sanitary accommodation, as things go in the East,

was good enough, and there were pipes and taps and large cement cisterns at which the workpeople could perform their frequent ablutions. The Indian, at his dirtiest, is a washing animal. He can no more live without sluicing himself all over with water (not necessarily clean water) than his own buffaloes.

This, as I say, was one of the better mills : in fact, it is, I believe, pretty nearly the best in the district. I saw others which impressed me less favourably, where the sheds were low and dark, the workpeople crowded together, and the arrangements for ventilation and sanitation capable of considerable improvement. However, there seems on the whole no great reason to criticise the general structural condition of the mills, which is kept up to a fair standard, especially where the buildings are modern. What the Indian workman complains of are the long hours of labour exacted. That is to say, he might complain. But he does not; he complains of nothing. Sufferance through long ages has been the badge of his kin. Some of the mill-hands belong to the Mahars, an outcast tribe, probably of aboriginal descent, who are still not far removed from savages. Outside one great mill I visited was a village of these people. Their houses were the merest shanties of earth and thatch, as poor as Kaffir kraals, or the cabins in which men—and voters—live on the coast of Connemara and Donegal.

But most of the mill-workers are immigrants from the Concan and other rural districts of the Western Presi dency. A good proportion were women, for the most part of a low type, short, stunted, and ill-favoured, though here and there one saw a Hindu woman of a higher caste, with *sari* and *chudder*, and silver ornaments. The women are sometimes the wives of the male operatives, sometimes they are not. [4] That man,[1] said the manager, pointing to

a burly Hindu, 'has two wives at work in the mill, and three children.' The family earnings must have rendered this owner of livestock quite prosperous. Other women were widows, and a Hindu widow has sometimes no resource but to form an illicit connection with a man, who may, perhaps, chivalrously send her to work in the mill wiiile he takes her wages. He may, it is true, invest part of the proceeds in a ring for her nose, and bangles for her legs and arms, not from generosity or gallantry, but because this is the local substitute for a bank-balance, and more convenient than digging a hole in the ground and putting the rupees there. And there were plenty of children, some of them well-grown girls and boys, others tiny scraps of skin and bone, who looked (I do not say that they were) even less than the mature age of nine, at which it is lawful in India for employment as a half-timer to begin.

There has been an agitation in Bombay for a re duction of the hours both for child labour and for adult labour in the cotton-mills. The echoes have reached Lancashire, and fall on willing ears; for Lancashire has been hard hit by Bombay and Delhi and Calcutta, and will be hit harder still. A country which has the cotton on its own fields, and in which grown men will work all day and a good part of the night for a few pence, must be a formidable competitor. Bombay, after rather a long spell of bad times, caused in part by the plague, has been advancing very rapidly of late, and even claims that she is now ' the second city of the Empire ' in point of population. The Bombay merchants have been shipping full cargoes, not only of cotton-yarn, but of cotton-cloth, to the Far East. The mills have been running at full pressure, and there are public-spirited persons in Bombay, with no *arriere-pensee* such as the citizens of Oldham and Manchester may possibly feel,

who are pressing for a more merciful treatment of the workmen by their employers.

The leading Bombay journal, the *Times of India*, has gone closely into the subject, and it has published some distressing revelations. It insists that the laws as to juvenile labour are systematically evaded. Under these laws, passed in consequence of an agitation in England, no child may be employed under the age of nine, and from nine to fourteen only for six hours a day, or for more than three hours and a-half without an interval. It is alleged that these provisions are disregarded. When the European inspector goes his rounds, low whistles are heard in the shops, and the children are driven helter-skelter down the steps, or concealed under sacks and behind doors, in order that they may not be seen and questioned. ' On entering a mill in the afternoon or after sunset a perfect chorus of whistles went up, and it was invariably followed by a stampede of half-naked children. The jobbers (native overseers) hardly attempted to disguise what they were doing. Eepeatedly I saw them driving the children before them with cuffs and blows. On several occasions we chased the children among the frames, caught one or two, and questioned them. More than once they gave evasive answers, but at other times told us the number of hours they had worked. The law was being systematically evaded, with the manifest connivance of the jobbers.'

It is also asserted that large numbers of the mill-children are below the statutory age. This is an illegality which it is hard for the inspectors to detect. An Indian child of nine looks very like an Indian child of eleven to the European eye; and the officials get small help from the parents, who will sometimes, it is said, compel their children to work a legal day's shift at one mill and then a shift at another. This is not so much from cruelty as

from ignorance and carelessness and the poverty that makes the labourer hungry after every pice.

Inspection, whether of factories or dwelling-houses, is in any case difficult to perform with searching adequacy. The native subordinate cannot invariably be trusted; the European officer, active and zealous as he may be, does not always penetrate the devices employed to baffle him. I was told a grimly illustrative story while I was going round the slum tenements in Bombay. In the first two years of plague there was the greatest possible difficulty in enforcing measures of disinfection in a plague-stricken dwelling. The authorities were supposed to be notified wherever a death occurred, in order that the other tenants should be isolated and clothes removed.

In India, if the cause of death is not ascertained at once, it will be too late to do anything, for in an hour or two the body will be at the burning ghat. A medical inspector, hearing that two deaths had occurred in a large tenement building, hurried to the place and went into the suspected room. He saw nothing more remarkable than four men sitting on the ground playing cards, two of them propped against the wall in the stiff immovable attitude these people often adopt. Otherwise the room was empty; no bed or hangings; no cavity in which a human body could be concealed. The inspector turned away; but as he walked out of the doorway his native sepoy whispered to him, 'Better go back to that room, Sahib.' He did so, and found the two card-players at the wall still sitting in the same immovable attitude; but one, whom the sepoy touched with his foot, rolled over on the floor in a limp bundle. The men were both dead: dead of the plague. A similar dramatic incident has been put on the stage, and has been condemned, I believe, as improbable. The critics who said that had, perhaps, not been in the East, and did not know how

easily life and death can be counterfeited and played with by Orientals.

To return to the mills. At fourteen the Indian child is a man under the Factory Acts, and can be legally em ployed for an unlimited number of hours. It is really rather appalling to read that, as the result of philanthropic agitation, some of the more enlightened mill-owners have held a meeting, and decided to limit the tale of work to twelve hours daily. Twelve hours ! Think of it, for a grown man or woman, not to say for a boy of fifteen, or a girl of sixteen, in a room sprayed with steam heat to keep the yarn moist, and in a climate which makes us break into a profuse perspiration all over after ten minutes' gentle walking ! But this twelve hours' shift, it seems, is a sweeping concession, a reform so extensive that even the reformers do not ask for more. It is as much as the good mills will give; in the bad mills they work by the old Eastern measure, from sunrise to sunset. Consider what that means in the Indian summer, when it is dawn at five and light till seven! Then the mill-hand may work his fourteen hours at a stretch; and, incredible as it may seem, even that is not the limit. There is a great outcry in Bombay against the ' electric-light mills,' which are putting in artificial illumination, so as to be able to keep the machinery going after dark. Thus there may be a fourteen or fifteen hours day all the year round, and not merely in the long-drawn days of the early summer.

How can even the Indian mill-hand stand it ? Partly, say the obstructives, because he has no nerves, and partly because he is accustomed to long spaces of toil. As to the nerves, I do not know. It is one of the convenient theories we adopt, without taking much trouble to test them. The Oriental seems nervous enough sometimes. But that he can labour for portentous periods, if he is allowed to go his own pace and not hustled, is apparent

to anj'one who walks through the bazaar and sees the tailor at his work early in the morning and late into the night. With all this, it is quite certain that fourteen hours spent standing before **a** machine in a factory is more **than** any flesh and blood, Eastern or Western, can endure without physical disaster. The Indian mill-hand is soon worked out. Men and women are aged pre maturely, even for this climate, where youth flies swiftly. Nor would the operative last as long as he does, if he did not take periodical holidays and occasional intervals of recuperation and something like repose.

He is by nature a peasant, an agriculturist, as are nine out of ten of the inhabitants of India. The life he knows, the life he loves, is that of the village community and the fields. The town and all its conditions are alien to him, unwelcome, demoralising. Poverty has brought him into the city to pick up a few rupees at the works; but his heart is in the mud hut away in the hills or on the plains, with the buffalo wallowing in the byre, the chickens pecking in the untidy yard, the small field of millet, the tiny patch of earth which his uncles and aunts and brothers and nephews, perhaps his wife and children, tend and cherish. When the burden of the whirring spindles and humming engines is too much for him, he takes a holiday of three or four months, and goes back as he says to 'my country,' There he grubs in the earth, and delves in the sun, and rests in the shade, and feeds the beasts, and gossips by the tank, and feels himself a man again, till the call for more rupees sends him back to the mill. When he has had enough of it, and can stand the strain no more, he returns to his 'country' for good. His hope is to have saved enough, during his exile, to live comfortably in his retirement. More often he has spent all he has earned, and is in debt to the small trader and the village money-lender to the end.

CHAPTER V

IN CAMP

TILL you come to India, you do not understand the possibilities of life under canvas. In most countries and climates the idea of luxury, or even ordinary comfort, in a camp, would seem absurd. It is supposed to be a hugger-mugger makeshift existence, at the best, in which you put up with all sorts of inconveniences, on the same principle as that which induces people to forego some of the elementary decencies and amenities of civilisation on shipboard or the railway. Baths, good cookery, meals served with refinement, soft beds, adequate shelter from sun and rain, facilities for reading and writing, and privacy—who would look for these in a place in which one is a mere temporary sojourner? It is unpleasant, but soon over. That is why, I suppose, we submit to be locked up in a cupboard to dress, undress, and sleep, in company with a perfect stranger, on a *wagon-lit* train or in a first-class passenger steamer. People go into tents either to satisfy a temporary need or a passing caprice, or under conditions which do not allow much room for choice. A soldier on active service must deem himself lucky if he gets any sort of covering from the weather. If his tent saves him from sleeping in a pool of rain water or shelters him from a snow-storm, it is about all he can ask, and more than he will usually obtain.

Some of the newspaper correspondents, unused to Indian ways, when they heard that they were to live in

camp during a considerable part of the Prince of Wales's tour, may have felt moments of apprehension. Those who had gone through more than one serious campaign recalled the hardships and privations of tent-life under the burning skies of the Sudan or the merciless blasts of Manchuria. Less hardened travellers thought of their 'camping out' in English meadows; or they may have had memories of Easter holiday volunteering, with half a dozen men packed in a small bell-tent, spending laborious mornings in emptying pails, washing up tea-things, and peeling potatoes. By young fellows, released from desk and office for a few days' outing, this was easily endured; responsible persons, with work to do, might find it less attractive. A place of abode, in which there would be no room to stow baggage, to write undisturbed, or to dress and undress in comfort, would have been disagreeable.

There was no cause for alarm. The first camp we came to was a revelation, even to those who had heard something of the Indian practice in these matters. Considering how large the party was that travelled with the Prince, I had not anticipated that each correspondent would have a tent to himself, and was wondering who would be my stable-companion. But when we drove into the canvas town one of the first objects that caught my eye was a small white sign-post, planted in the ground, with my own name painted in visible black letters upon it, and it was signified to me that the tent behind this notice-board constituted my exclusive domain. And a surprisingly desirable little estate I found it, and greatly did I enjoy the two and a-half days I spent therein. I parted from it with deep regret, mitigated, however, by the reflection that other and equally satisfying domiciles awaited me at various subsequent stages of our journey, which, indeed, proved to

be the case. Sometimes we were even more luxuriously lodged; sometimes slightly less so. But this first tent of mine was a fair average specimen, not only of those which I occupied at other times, but of those which form the domicile of many Englishmen during a sub stantial portion of the years they spend in Southern Asia.

My tent is, properly speaking, two tents—one inside the other. You need much more than a single thickness of canvas between yourself and the searching sun of the tropics. Therefore a good Indian tent is made with an outer and an inner skin, and an air-space of a foot or more between the two roofs. The inner tent is the one in which I sleep and work. It is about sixteen feet square, and about seven feet high at the sides, rising to perhaps twenty feet at the apex, where the shaft of stout bamboo goes through the covering. This tent is of the single-pole type, having one main central support, with plenty of thinner posts at the corners and sides to keep everything taut and rigid. Indeed, the whole concern has an air of solidity and permanence, which is all the more remarkable when one reflects that it may have been put up with a couple of hours' work yesterday, and that to-morrow it may be travelling away on a bullock-cart, a mere bundle of rods and sheets and cordage.

When I sit in this combined bedroom and parlour, my eye is not offended by the sight of crude rough canvas ; for walls and sloping ceiling are all clothed with hangings of some stout cotton material, of a gold-yellow hue, with a small geometrical pattern in brown. There is even a sort of dado or fringe, of a suitably harmonious design, where roof and walls join. There are doorways or oblong openings at the back, front, and sides, each covered by a *chick* or curtain of lath, which admits the

air and keeps out the sun, besides a flap of the same material as the walls, which can be let down at night.

My doorways, however, do not let me out of my little territory at 6nce. They give upon the corridor formed by extending the roof of the outer tent laterally and bringing its sides down to the ground, so that I have a passage about five feet wide all round. At one corner this corridor is enlarged to a canvas outhouse, screened off from the main building. Here is my bath-room, and it is large enough to hold a wash-stand, basins, towel-horse, and a great oblong zinc cistern, not a mere tub, in which I can sit down and bathe in comfort; or I can stand upright in it, and have water poured over me, ice-cold, from great earthen pitchers, which is the alluring, but rather perilous, custom of many Anglo-Indians when heated in the chase.

My saloon is well furnished. There is a cotton rug all over the floor, and a bed-mat. It is no case of sleeping on the earth and a waterproof sheet. There is a regular iron bedstead, with proper framework for mosquito-curtains, and there is a mattress, and sheets blankets and pillows, which things, as a rule, the Anglo-Indian traveller carries about with him everywhere; there is a writing-table, a dressing-table with mirror, and a folding chest of drawers; and there are two cane chairs, besides a large well-wadded armchair in which I can take my rest. My passages and bath-room are lighted with lanterns protected by wire guards, and by two good oil-lamps (made to stow away in tin boxes for travelling), which shed a bright light into every corner of my saloon. Nothing is wanting. There is an inkstand, with pens, blotting-book, and stationery on the table, a waste-paper basket on the floor. And the whole compact little estab lishment is placed on a square of turf, carefully kept green by diligent watering, with a small path or minia-

ture carriage-drive edged with red tiles leading up to the front door.

My tent is one of a hundred or so, set in two rows on each side of the broad main street of the camp, and along the cross-roads, which branch out from this avenue. Larger tents, of similar construction but with double poles and sometimes two rooms, accommodate important members of the Royal suite, or serve as offices for those who have business to transact. There is a post-office, with a red pillar-box in front, and a notice that the next collection will be at such and such an hour, into which receptacle you drop your letters with as much confidence as if you were in a London square. There is a telegraph-tent, with a staff of clerks and messengers ; and there are office-tents for the military secretary, the chief of the staff, the transport director, and others, and a press room, with tables, and writing materials, and newspapers.

In a little crescent, off the main thoroughfare, with a flower-garden in front, there is a whole range of spacious marquees, with silken hangings, which serve for recep tion-room, drawing-room, smoking-room—with a counter where you can get tea, and cooling drinks, and cigars at most times—and dining-room. Behind this last is a square yard, with high canvas walls, where are small pyramidal tents and other structures, and brick ovens, and a whole corps of cooks and waiters, who between them contrive to produce each morning, noon, and even ing, breakfasts, luncheons, and dinners which would do credit to the kitchen of a first-rate hotel in any European or American city. Tube wells and pumps provide an unlimited supply of cold water; great iron cauldrons, with brick furnaces, enable anybody to have hot baths three times a day, if he pleases, and in India many people do please to bathe at frequent intervals and at all sorts of odd hours ; and there is a tall electric-light standard in

front of the dining-marquee, and lamps on poles scattered about freely. Though there are carriages and cavalry escorts and mounted messengers and sowars moving along the camp roads all day, there is no cloud of dust; for the *bheesties,* with their huge leathern water-bags, slung over the patient backs of their bullocks, are always at work keeping the whole camp moist and fresh, and making it difficult to believe that its site was a space of arid sand or a burnt-up patch of scrub and friable plough-land not many days ago.

When Royalty travels things are at their best, and no doubt this is an encampment complete and luxurious even for India. But with a little less elegance and refinement in the upholstery and the reception-rooms, a little less perfection in the *menus* of the dinner-table, it is such a camp as the Viceroy often has, and the Commander-in-Chief, and at times even a Lieutenant-Governor or a Chief Commissioner. It is a different matter for that humbler, but most necessary, functionary, the lynch-pin and crank shaft of Indian administration, the District Officer. Yet, when he traverses his domain, he will carry with him a small cohort of servants, six or eight bullock-carts, or a score or so of camels, and three or more commodious tents, like that described above, with furniture that takes to pieces, in order that it may travel in sections. People [1] go into camp,' to use the technical phrase, so frequently in India, that they must make themselves reasonably comfortable over the process.

The Indian camp is a necessity because of the condi tions of Anglo-Indian existence and administration. It is not a mere passing expedient, but a part of the ordinary machinery of life. Almost everybody is in camp at some time or other, and a large number of highly im portant persons spend a considerable portion of each year in this situation. The Viceroy is in camp when he makes

his regular progresses and when he pays visits to native potentates or goes on a shooting-expedition. The Com mander-in-Chief is constantly in camp, visiting the various military stations, inspecting cantonments, supervising manoeuvres, and seeing battalions, brigades, or whole divisions out for exercise. Political Agents camp out all over the group of feudatory States which they superintend. Lieutenant-Governors and Chief Commissioners go into camp when they wish to traverse their territories and see how their subordinate satraps are getting on; so do the heads and high officials of the Public Works and the Irrigation departments; and the civilian District Officers spend from a third to nearly a half of their period of active service under canvas. Anybody, in fact, who travels much in India, and goes at all far afield, must be prepared to live in camp ; for outside the large cities and the regular tourist route, along which the cold-weather ex cursionist runs his precipitate career, there are no hotels, and very little accommodation of any sort for the tra veller save such as he brings with him. In the villages there is none at all. So the voyager whose way lies in the country districts, in the forest, the jungle, the desert, or the vast cultivated plains, and among the smaller towns —he journeys with some such equipage as that described, and contrives to make himself fairly comfortable as he goes along.

It is not a case of self-indulgence. The autumnal inquisitor, taking a casual glance at one of these camps, with all its appurtenances and appliances, may go beck and talk about Oriental luxury. But the Indian official is compelled to give himself some of the comforts of home in his tent, if he is to reside in it for weeks and months at a time, and do serious work there. The camp, unless perhaps he is shooting or paying a visit to friends, is not a place in which he amuses himself. It is the scene of

definite, regular, important, anxious, day-to-day business ; and you cannot get through business properly with habitually inconvenient surroundings, especially in a climate in which the native of Northern Europe can only retain his energy and efi&ciency by taking a good deal of care of himself, A person who, while in camp, still remains executive ruler, revenue authority, head tax-collector, and administrator of the criminal law, for several hundred thousand human beings, cannot afford to impair his efficiency by exposing himself to superfluous privations and avoidable discomforts.

Take the example of the District Magistrate, the Col lector, or the Deputy-Commissioner, as he is called in some provinces. Under the standing orders of his Government he is obliged to go on tour through his district for several months in each year. Normally he would be so engaged, on and off, from about the end of October till near the beginning of the hot weather in the early spring. The most vital part of his official duties is performed in this period, during which he visits the various villages and towns under his command, examines revenue questions in conference with the subordinate officials on the spot, hears complaints, receives petitions, casts an eye on education and public works, and as he moves from place to place acts as a minor judicial officer and court of first instance. Situated as he is, he must take his belongings and the tools of his trade with him.

For those many weeks his camp must be his office and his home. His bungalow at the district capital will be shut up, or left with a servant or two in charge. If he is a married man, with no children, his wife, unless she is in Europe or at the Hills, may come with him. So does his cook, his butler, his bearer or valet, his horses, with a *syce* or groom to each, his laundry-man, his *dirzee* or tailor and mender, his table-servants, his

sweepers to empty slops and do dirty work generally; and, if his wife accompanies him, she will bring her ayah, who acts (for the most part inadequately) as her personal attendant and maid. The magistrate's household is with him in the camp, since that is to be rendered an endurable residence for a busy man, struggling under a load of responsibility. His office, of course, must be with him too. He has his clerk, and copyist, and transcriber; he must take his documents, his records, and his letter-files, his stationery and his books of reference. He cannot, at a moment's notice, send for a paper to his headquarters, which may be thirty miles distant, through more or less roadless jungle. When he opens his bed of justice before the porch of his tent, or inaugurates a local commission of inquiry, he must have the requisite material to hand. So his office desk and his despatch-boxes travel about with him by bullock-cart and camels, or are sent on ahead during the night, in order to be ready for him as he moves from stage to stage.

This is what renders the Indian camp necessary. What makes it possible is the abundance of available man-power and beast-power. It is not till you come to the East that you realise how cheap the human animal can be, and how plentiful is the supply of the other slightly more expensive animals, the quadrupedal kinds, which are his companions in toil. A man, a bullock, a donkey—they are always to be had; the horse, the camel, even the elephant, can be obtained when wanted. Looking at a District Officer's paraphernalia, I noticed the cumbrous clumsiness of his receptacle for documents. I told him of a new invention, which would enable him to keep his papers in better order, without burdening himself with half the weight. He admitted its merits, but demurred to the initial cost, which was rather heavy. It would save labour in handling and transport, I urged. 'Yes,' he

replied, 'but that is not worth our while to consider. We like things to be cheap and roomy. We are not very particular about their lightness in travelling; for what is an extra coolie or two, or another half-hundredweight when you are loading a bullock-waggon?'

When the Deputy-Commissioner travels, the headman of the next village is told that so many men and so many animals will be needed for his use, and they are forthcoming. The owners and the workers are paid for their services, at a rate fixed by Government, and they get the money, or so much of it as is not intercepted by native subordinates. No doubt the stream which flows from the Sirkar and the Sahib becomes an exiguous trickle by the time it reaches the dusty palms of the peasant.

He may esteem himself rather lucky if anything comes his way. When a late Political Agent went on tour some years ago there moved with him, in the shape of subordinate officials, military escort, clerks, assistants, and followers, a train of fifteen hundred people all told. And where he went the country was swept nearly bare for six miles or so on each side of his track. The villagers would learn that the Sahib would require a hundred sheep, fifty goats, a drove of pigs, so many maunds of grain, bowls of milk, earthen chatties, bullock-carts, and so forth, and three days' labour from an army of coolies. Nine-tenths of these commodities he did not want and did not get. He was a particularly humane and considerate man, and he laid down careful regulations to protect the country-folk from being robbed and cheated. But robbed and cheated they were, all the same, as I happen to know from unimpeachable first-hand European evidence.

This was in native states, where things are done more loosely than in our territory; but even in provinces directly administered by our civilians I believe the same abuses, in a minor form, are often practised in spite

of the vigilance of the officials and elaborate Government regulations. What can the Huzur do? Between him and the people there lies a great, squeezable, elastic, but nearly impervious, cushion of inferior native officialdom, which keeps him from direct contact with the subject masses. If he gives an order, there is a native subordinate to see to its execution; if he makes a payment, the money usually passes through native hands. That is the Indian way.

The poor man submits. He has been taught for generations to endure, and he deems it part of the order of nature that those who serve the great and powerful of the earth should fleece him and domineer over him. If the process is carried out with some degree of moderation, he does not greatly complain of it. We try to teach him that he has rights, which the law will enforce, even against officers of state and their retainers; but he is slow to learn that lesson in the villages, though in the towns it is a different story.

The peasant inherits a tradition of servitude. Under his old masters he toiled hard and long, and often for no reward. By his newer masters he is paid, or should be paid, for his services; but the habit of patient endurance is in his blood, and for his pittance he will perform an astonishing amount of monotonous, prolonged, uninviting drudgery. In my first camp, and often enough afterwards, I saw men going over the ground on their knees and haunches, picking up the filth and ordure with their bare hands; everywhere in India you get human beings to do all kinds of repellent cleaning and emptying which in other countries have to be done by mechanical assistance or they would not be done at all. Take the case—not the worst case—of the *pwikah-wallah,* the poor wretch who crouches in a corner of the verandah or in the dust outside it and pulls at the cord which moves

the ventilating-fan. You pay him about seven shillings a month or less; and for hours at a stretch this ragged automaton goes on jerking at his string, through the fierce day, when you are working or dining, and the long hot night while you are trying to sleep. It is not hard work, and it is not skilled work—anything with an arm and some fingers could do it; but to most men of European nerves and temper the task would be a sheer impossibility, or would lead to madness and death. The *punkah-wallah* does not die prematurely, he does not become insane, he does not take to drink. He is miserably poor, but still not without self-respect, aware that he is born of the breed which waves fans to keep other people cool, and conscious that he is doing his duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call him. For the practical application of that usually neglected article of the Church Catechism you must go to India.

CHAPTEE VI

ON THE LINE

KAILWAY-TBAVELLING in India is a thing apart, even for those who take it in a first-class compartment. We are in a land of mighty distances. The Anglo-Indian, normally a migrant, a bird of passage, spends much of his time in long journeys by rail. And his journeyings are somewhat elaborate proceedings, not to be transacted in the casual fashion customary in the Outer World.

It is no case of packing a portmanteau, whistling at the door for a hansom, arriving at the station ten minutes before the train starts, giving a sixpence to a civil porter, and finding yourself under way with an open magazine on your knees. There are no hansoms; and if there were, a file of them would be needed to transport a very ordinary Sahib's effects. The amount of luggage which people take with them, even on comparatively short journeys, would amaze those austere travellers who believe that one trunk and a handbag should be enough to carry them anywhere. This may be sound reasoning in Europe, but it certainly does not apply in India. In that region every traveller, every white traveller, at least, must move rather like a snail, and sometimes at a snail's pace, with his house, or a good part of it, on his back. When he arrives at his destination he cannot rely upon finding effective substitutes, not merely for the luxuries, but for the common necessaries, which he may have left behind. Thus, like an army in campaigning order,

or a ship on the high seas, he must have sufficient in his own stores to be equal to all emergencies. Perhaps his point of arrival is a camp on the plains or among the hills, perhaps it is a bungalow in the cantonments or the civil lines adjacent to a native city. In any case, unless he goes into one of the Presidency towns, where life has been Europeanised, he cannot hope to make good any omissions, except by the generosity of friends, who have, as a rule, nothing to spare. Suppose, when he opens his despatch-box to write, he finds that he has forgotten such trifles as ink, or envelopes, or the filler for his stylographic pen, or suppose his 'boy' confesses to a dearth of, say, bootlaces or white neckties. There can be no sending off a messenger to the stationer or to the haberdasher in the town, no putting up, for once, with the resources of the village shop. There is no village shop. Even if the European station is nominally at a large town, that town is quite likely to be three or four miles distant, with nothing beyond a native bazaar. The bootlaces, and the stationery, soap, medicine, books, games—all the things that civilised man and woman require—must be brought with the baggage or done without.

This alone would render the Anglo-Indian's trans port train formidable. But, then, the conditions of his life compel him to load himself with a quantity of other articles, which do not usually form part of a travelling-kit elsewhere. Some things, it is true, in common use in most countries, he may leave behind. One of them is a purse. In India you carry your own mattress with you ; but if you forget to bring your money, you will not greatly miss it. Some small coin for occasional tips is useful; but even that will be supplied by your bearer out of the current petty cash, for which he renders you periodical and mysterious accounts. Otherwise currency is scarcely necessary in a land where everybody's income and every-

body's status are accurately known. Except for the tourists who frequent the towns and the hotels and are requested to pay cash, a card-case or, at the worst, a cheque-book is all that is required. If you are a person of the proper and recognised position, you get everything you want in India by the attractively simple process of handing in a *chit*, or scrap of paper signed with your name. Indeed, where natives are the intermediaries, the *chit* is in most cases compulsory. Employers and traders do not care to have small amounts of money paid directly into the hands of their Asiatic clerks and servants. In the club smoking-room, if you call for a penny cheroot and a halfpenny glass of soda-water, you render yourself responsible for the debt by giving a *chit* to the waiter. In due course, these promissory-notes come home to roost, but money seldom passes even then. A postal-order, or a draft on one of those admirable agents, who paternally supervise the finances of Anglo-Indians from the seaport capitals, will settle the matter. With a credit from Messrs. King, King & Co. of Bombay in your pocket-book you can buy most things vendible from Cashmere to Ceylon.

But if you need not burden yourself with much in the 'way of notes and bullion, there seems no limit to the rest of your impedimenta. First, you must have your bed ding. This is an absolute necessity without which nobody travels. In the East you understand the meaning of the Biblical command : 'Take up thy bed and walk.' People carry their beds with them wherever they go: even the native walks about with his, which is the less difficult since it often is no more than a square of cotton counterpane. As for the European, he brings his sleeping-equipage with him, whether he stays at an hotel, or spends the night in a railway-carriage, or visits a friend. The bundle, containing a *razai,* or wadded quilt, two pairs of blankets thick and thin, sheets, pillows, and perhaps an

eiderdown coverlet, the whole done up in a big canvas hold-all, is never omitted. The bedstead, a mere frame work of wood, with strings or tape-webbings across it, is to be found in most places, and, if not, it is one of the things that can be bought in the bazaars; but the bed-furniture cannot be reckoned on, even in hospitable private quarters. Many people will willingly provide you with a room or a tent to sleep in, but they will have no blankets and *razais* available, and will expect you to bring your own. Similarly you may sometimes borrow a horse, but may have to supply your own saddle and bridle. So the traveller takes these articles too. Then a folding table is a very handy thing to have in a railway-carriage, where you may want to write or eat, and it is useful again in camps and bungalows where there is not always quite enough furniture to 'go round.'

On the same principle a folding deck-chair is added to the list: one can never have too many of them on verandahs and places where they lounge. A tiffin-basket, with teapot, cups, plates, spoons, a couple of bottles of soda-water, a pot of marmalade, and a tin of biscuits, cannot be dispensed with on long journeys, where a restaurant-car is not always available, and the refresh ment-rooms are far apart. For the dark evenings a lamp is requisite, and it is often taken with the luggage: usually, what is called a camp-lantern, a fine metal-and-glass affair, with a copious kerosene reservoir, carried safely in a great tin case. Another tin case holds two or three topis, or pith-helmets, absolutely necessary, of course, and far too ample for any ordinary hat-box. Eiding-breeches, boots, leggings, spurs, whips, a gun or two, and a rifle, cannot be forgotten in a land where everybody rides and most people shoot. Add to all these, clothes in great abundance, evening dress and dresses for dinner and parties, light suits of flannel or khaki for

the heat of the day, warm garments and wraps for the chilly mornings and evenings, and it is not surprising that a small mountain of trucks and packages has to be conveyed to the station when * master' and the Mem-sahib set out for even a comparatively short journey.

But the business of transport rests lightly on their own shoulders. The servants manage it. Some hours before the train is due to leave, a bullock-cart, or camel-cart, or perhaps even an elephant-lorry, arrives at the bungalow, and takes the whole load to the station, in charge of the head [1] boy.' Bound it, on arrival, a disorderly crowd of ragged coolies collects, and amid squabbling and objurgations and disparaging remarks about their female relatives, the various parcels are distributed among them. The number of these bearers is large. My own not immoderate personal effects have furnished employment for eleven persons. But that is because each porter will only carry a single packet, whatever its size or weight. One man will stagger along with a gigantic dress-trunk on his head, another will sail away with nothing but a pocket camera. There is much competition for the smaller parcels, since every coolie receives the same number of annas or pice, whatever his burden. Long after all this excitement has subsided, the owner of the property drives down comfortably in a carriage or pony-cart, having sent the indispensable *chit* to the station-master, asking that official to allow his servants to stow his hand-baggage in the compartment reserved for him. Hand-baggage is an elastic term. The two extreme interpretations are to be met with in the United States and in India, On a train in the West you have about room enough in the parlour-car for a minute satchel, in which you can keep a razor and a toothbrush. In a first-class carriage on an Indian railway, the voyager expects to find space for at least a leather portmanteau, a suit-case, a dressing-bag, a hat-box,

a helmet-case, a lunch-basket, and a huge roll of bedding. The rest of his modest belongings will have been deposited in the brake-van.

When two or three are gathered together under these conditions, the place becomes a little congested. The sleeping-compartment may legally hold four; but there are seldom more than two, and often the traveller may get a whole compartment to himself. The seats are wide, and when pulled out for the night they make comfortable foundations for the passenger's blankets and sheets, laid out for him by his own servant, who is boxed away in another part of the train. This assiduous retainer visits his master at intervals during the day and night, brings him the *chota hazri* or early tea and toast, in the morning, draws his attention to the approach of stations where lunch and dinner are to be had, and supplies him with ice and soda-water at intervals. Tea and ice and soda-water are to be had at most places in India. Much of the rolling-stock of the Indian railways is venerable with age, and stands in considerable need of renovation and improvement; though, on the other hand, certain of the more enterprising managers of the State lines have recently placed on their rails first-class carriages of the most admirable quality. Some of the new carriages of the Great Indian Peninsula, the East Indian, and the Oudh and Rohilkhand railways would be hard to beat anywhere. And even the worst of the Indian first-class compartments have windows which will close and efficient lattice-shutters to keep out the sun ; and a lavatory, with taps that will work, and a cistern that is not allowed to run dry. In the cool season, or at night, a journey under these conditions is not unpleasant. But at other times, when the heat burns through the woodwork of the shutters, and the inside of the carriage is an oven, while the world beyond is a furnace, the traveller may

sometimes sigh for the rabbit-hutches of a damp little island where, at least, you can open the window without being choked by fiery dust, and put your head outside without the risk of sunstroke.

If travelling in the hot weather and in the daytime may have its inconveniences even for the Sahib amid the amenities of the first-class, what must it be for the native who travels third? The authorities of the Indian railway companies do not greatly disturb themselves about the comfort of their third-class passengers, being content to carry them in enormous numbers at marvellously low rates. For these voyagers, a kind of slightly superior cattle-truck, packed rather closer than careful drovers would permit, is usually considered sufficient. A third-class car on an Indian railway is not an attractive vehicle for white people. I tried it myself for short periods, and I found the experience more instructive than enjoyable. As a means of conveyance I am free to confess that I preferred the Eoyal special trains.

The native, however, has no such feeling, or, at any rate, he is not prevented by it from patronising the rail ways to the utmost extent of his resources. The people of India have taken most kindly to railway-travelling, which is to them not so much a disagreeable necessity as a delightful and exhilarating recreation. The fact should qualify the dogmatism of those who talk too confidently about the changelessness of the immovable East. We are told that the Oriental will endure no innovations, that he will not look at a new invention, that he insists on doing everything precisely in the same fashion as his fathers before him. Yet he seems willing enough to adopt novelties when they suit his purpose. A case in point is that of the sewing-machine. From the days of Shem the son of Noah, and Arphaxad the son of Shem, the East has undoubtedly sewn its garments and its fabrics

by hand. Forty years ago, many people would have confidently predicted that it would go on doing the same thing till the last Flood of all. The prophecy would have been fallacious. The East now sews by machinery. The name of Singer is known from the Mediterranean to the Pacific. In every bazaar in India one may see men—they are always men, not women—in turban or Mussulman cap, crouching over the needle-plate and working the pedals. No prejudice in favour of the traditional methods has interfered with the employment of this instrument, now that its utility is understood. Another example is the use of mineral oil as an illuminant. The cheap petroleum lamp is fast driving out the *butty* or *cldrag*, the earthenware saucer of animal fat or tallow, with its floating wick, which has furnished light to countless Eastern households for centuries. The cubical kerosene-tin is now a most familiar object in every village, and it is fast superseding the great brass bowl or the *chatty* of rough red pottery as a vessel for carrying water from the well.

It is the same with the railway. At their first introduction, the ' fire-carriages' of the English were regarded by the natives with suspicion and alarm. There is good reason to believe that they contributed towards that general ferment of men's minds which preceded the Mutiny. It was some time before the natives could overcome their distrust of an invention which seemed clearly of diabolical origin. But this sentiment wore away as the value of the new mode of locomotion came to be understood, and now there are no more ardent and enthusiastic railway-travellers in the world than the lower classes among the people of India. They take a journey by train whenever they can spare the time and afford the money, evidently regarding the occasion as one of enjoyment and festivity. It is an amusement like riding a bicycle or driving in a motor, to which latter proceeding

the wealthier natives are also taking very kindly. So popular is the railway that many families will save up their spare cash for weeks and months in order to enjoy a trip. The whole clan, with its friends, retainers, and dependants, fathers, mothers, children, thirty or forty in a batch, will go on the journey, with apparently their entire worldly possessions tied up in enormous bundles.

You can hardly enter an Indian railway-station without coming upon one or more of these tribal excursion parties, with probably another horde of their friends to see them off, the whole crowd talking, shrieking, gesticulating, arguing with one another, or wrangling with coolies and officials, and buying eatables and cheap cigarettes from the hawkers who pervade the platform; so that the place usually looks as if a permanent Bank-holiday were in progress. They arrive hours before the time fixed for the departure, and when the train comes up they pack themselves like eels into the long third-class carriage, until the windows bristle with protruding heads and irresponsible arms. Then, perhaps, when all are stowed, it is discovered that one of the party is missing. More shrieks, more gestures, more vehement discussion, ending with half a dozen of the voyagers uncoiling from the heap and throwing themselves out upon the platform to wait for the absentee. They may have to tarry for the rest of the day, for Indian trains run at infrequent intervals; but that does not affect their spirits. Time is of no great value in Asia, and the native is good at waiting. It is his favourite recreation. He will sit for hours on his heels, with his hands drooping from his knees, motionless, doing nothing, even where there is nothing to see. Much more is he inclined to loiter at so agreeable a place as a railway-station, where there is always something to observe, if it is only a porter lighting a lamp, or a bullock being inducted to a cattle-truck.

The travelling native hardly seems to have grasped the significance of the time-table. He thinks that a train starts at some indefinite and uncertain moment, probably due to the caprices of the engine-driver, and he holds that it is well to be prepared for emergencies. So he arrives at the station at any hour of the day or night, and proceeds to encamp there until his train appears. If it is timed to leave in the morning, it is quite the thing for him to turn up vaguely the evening before. At many places there are regular rest-rooms or enclosures provided for him; otherwise he makes himself comfortable on the platform or in odd corners outside.

In the very early hours of the morning, before the sun has risen, an Indian railway-station, in the up-country districts, is rather a weird place. There are no lamps alight; but a few railway-officials drift about shedding a faint yellowish glow from their hand-lanterns. As you move cautiously in the gloom, among heaps of piled-up luggage and goods, you discern other heaps under dim white coverings, generally lying in pairs; one heap being the native's shapeless bundle, the other consisting of himself, equally shapeless beneath his blanket or cotton shroud. As the day draws on he wakes up and makes his way to the booking-office. In the remoter districts he has not always mastered the system of fixed fares. The journey strikes him in the light of a promising opening for a bargain. He demands his ' et-tickett,' and when the babu at the window tells him the price he promptly offers half. This, of course, is rejected, whereupon he goes away tranquilly, and returns in an hour or two with a slightly increased bid. It may take the best part of a day to convince him that there is no possibility for him to obtain a reduction in the official rate.

As for the regulations about overcrowding the carriages they are, so far as my observation goes, habitually dis-

regarded: which is not wholly the fault of the companies, but is partly due to the fact that the travelling native likes being in a throng, and does not really enjoy himself unless his compartment is filled far in excess of its proper capacity. If there is no seat for him, he squats contentedly on the floor or on his bundles, or balances himself precariously against doors and windows. The passengers seem oddly mixed, and represent very diverse sections of the Indian population. In one third-class carriage in Kajputana in which I made a brief pilgrimage, my fellow-travellers included a good-looking young Thakor, or small squireen, in very well-made linen riding-breeches of the celebrated 'Jodhpur' cut; two or three Marwari traders, in their peculiar peaked turbans; a fat Hindu merchant, arrayed in a sort of dressing-gown of flowered silk; a Surat man, in white trousers, light tweed overcoat, and round skull-cap, who talked some English, and was probably a servant to one of the first-class passengers; some unkempt farmers or drovers redolent of the cowsheds, with long sticks; and a couple of women, very dark and uninviting, with nose-rings and bright-coloured mantillas. Most of the company were on excellent terms with one another, and chatted familiarly, though the young Thakor talked little, and the women hardly at all.

I was rather surprised to find that a considerable amount of eating and drinking went on throughout the journey. At every station hawkers gathered round, bearing trays laden with chupatties, or thin wheaten cakes, other cakes of *bajra,* or millet, various kinds of sticky and smeary sweetmeats, and open brown-paper parcels, containing, I believe, a mixture of meal and sugar, which seemed to be in request. Several of the passengers were chewing or sucking something most of the time, such as the sweetmeats aforesaid, betel-nut, of which the red

stain was plainly visible on their teeth and lips, or bits of sugar-cane. This last is immensely popular in most parts of India, so that you may see the labourer going to his work with a long stick of it over his shoulder, like a fish ing-rod. But the great demand was for water, with which they supplied themselves from the great ewers or goatskins brought round at the stations. The water-bearers are employed by the railway companies, and no charge is made for the liquid. Most of the passengers had their own brass or copper pots; others made a cup of their two hollowed hands, from which they contrived to drink a pint or 60 of water without spilling a drop. At intervals somebody would proceed to perform his ablutions, sitting down on the ground in front of the train, pouring water over his face and neck, and operating on his mouth, with the aid of a fragment of split cane, and with much tooth-rubbing and expectoration. The native is always doing something to himself with water, and it seldom seems to make him any cleaner.

I tried in vain to reconcile what I had heard of the strictness of the Hindu caste rules with this promiscuous jumbiing-up of persons of varied status. I do not know what would have been the result if I had touched one of the eating or drinking vessels, but, having been warned on this point, I took care not to do so. Among themselves no great precautions seemed to be observed, though I noticed that one or two of the passengers neither ate nor drank in the carriage, but took their refreshment, during the stoppages, on the platform. The railways, however, have acted as a great solvent of caste restrictions in India, and I believe on the trains it is generally recognised that the strict letter of the rules need not be observed. There are carriages set apart for females, but it is quite common to see women travelling in the general compartmente. Even Mohammedan women, who are strictly *purdah,* have

ON THE LINE

THE CHATTY **AND** THE **KEROSENE-TIN.**

*[**See** page 80,*

yielded to the innovation. Hidden under the *burka*, or shapeless round upper garment, which effectually conceals all feminine charms, they will take long journeys in carriages filled with men.

It is another example of the adaptability of the native when his own comfort and convenience are involved. It would take more than the Brahman and the moulvie nowadays to deprive the Indian, *utriusque juris*, of the pleasures of railway-travelling.

CHAPTER VII

MEDIEVAL INDIA

NOT till you begin to travel about India do you gain some idea of its size. To most of us at home India is a country like another, one country among many. We talk of India as we might talk of Italy and Spain, of 'seeing India' as some of us try to 'see' Switzerland or Portugal. I suppose our geography-books are partly responsible for this misapprehension; and it is confirmed by the map of the world, drawn 'on Mercator's projection,' which delu sive invention, too familiar in the schoolroom, colours all our notions of the relative size of different portions of the earth's surface. On Mercator's projection, the territories near the Equator are unduly shrunken, and those towards the Pole unfairly drawn out. India looks somewhere about the size of Sweden and Norway, and appears a quite insignificant triangle compared with the frozen wastes of Siberia.

But when you have been but a little while in Asia your views undergo a change. You appreciate the mean ing of that shrewd remark of a great Oriental adminis trator who said that the first and most essential fact to be learnt about India is that there is no such country. There is no such country as India; the name includes many countries, which have some common characteristics, it is true, but also many and deep-seated divergences. For India is larger than all Europe without Eussia, and it has a greater population, and as many varieties of climate,

race, creed, and custom. We do not, as a rule, gene ralise about Europe; we should be cautious about saying that a ' European ' does this or that, or has such and such peculiarities. We know that the Norwegian is a European, and so also is the Sicilian: we hesitate before framing sweeping statements meant to apply equally to the bur gesses of Aberdeen and the peasants of Andalusia.

Yet, as Sir John Strachey observes, Scotland is more like Spain than Bengal is like the Punjab. The mountaineer of the Northern Frontier is as far, physically and morally, from the Mysore villager as the Londoner is from the Montenegrin, ' European civilisation has grown up under conditions which have produced a larger measure of uniformity than has been reached in the countries of the Indian continent, often separated from each other by greater distances, by greater obstacles to communication, and by greater differences of climate. It is probable that not less than fifty languages, which may rightly be called separate, are spoken in India. The diversities of religion and race are as wide in India as in Europe, and political catastrophes have been as frequent and as violent. There are no countries in civilised Europe in which the people differ so much as the man of Madras differs from the Sikh, and the languages of Southern India are as unintelligible in Lahore as they would be in London. A native of Calcutta or Bombay is as much a foreigner in Delhi or Peshawar as an Englishman is a foreigner in Paris or Home.'[1]

North and south, or east and west, you can travel in a straight line over a greater distance than that which separates Charing Cross from Constantinople without quitting the territories that owe allegiance to the Kaisar-i-Hind. You can begin at the foot of mountains

[1] **Sir John Strachey, *India: its Administration and Progress* (3rd ed.), p. 3.**

nearly twice the height of Mont Blanc, in a region where the cold of winter is more severe than that of Lapland, and finish your journey in the very heart of the tropics, looking out towards the Equator over a sea of changeless blue. To most of us the very name India is synonymous with intense heat and burning sunlight; but the autumn tourist, if he gets up to Peshawar or to the Afghan or Baluchistan border, will endure more discomfort from cutting winds and frosty mornings than any he is likely to suffer from excessive warmth. The popular idea is that the people of India live mainly on rice ; but there are tens of millions of them who never touch that cereal and seldom see it. All general statements about India must be accepted with due regard to these considerations. What is true of the natural and geographical conditions is equally true of the human product. We have to do with a sub-continent which includes a vast number of countries, tribes, states, religions, and peoples, at various stages of development and progress.

The Royal tour, if it did nothing else, should have brought home to Englishmen the exceeding greatness of the heritage which has been gained for them by valour, foresight, diplomacy, and good luck. The Prince of Wales spent some three weeks in visiting the feuda tory princes of Central India and Rajputana. The public at home learnt that he was passing a day or two with Holkar at Indore, three days with the Maharaja of Udaipur, two at Jaipur, five with Scindia at Gwalior, and so on. A few telegrams and casual references in the news papers, and one ruling chief is left, and another has his turn. But anybody who looks up his atlas and his gazetteers will discover that each of these 'petty' sovereigns, who individually count for so little in the great checker-board of Indian administration, would else where be reckoned a somewhat important personage. We

do not take very much notice of them in England : Simla is polite to them, but it has many other things to think of. Yet each of these princes rules a territory equal to that of a second-rate European kingdom, and he has his court, his army, his feudal aristocracy, and perhaps a million or two of subjects. Indore is quite a minor State, but it is larger than the Kingdom of Saxony. Jaipur covers more space than either Holland or Belgium, and it is more populous than Greece, Gwalior is about the size of Scotland, and it has nearly as many people. And if we go a little farther south, to the Dekhan, we find the Nizam ruling an area as extensive as that of Great Britain, with nearly twelve millions of inhabitants. All these principalities are held in suzerainty to the Imperial throne, and they exist on sufferance and by our goodwill and pleasure; and all together the whole of them do not include more than a fifth of the three hundred millions of human beings who are counted in among the inhabitants of ' India.'

But it is the diversity as much as the magnitude of the great Empire which impresses the imagination. It is a good object-lesson to pass swiftly, or as swiftly as the formidable distances permit, from Bombay to the land of the Rajputs. The change is quite as striking as that which would be felt in travelling through from the Adriatic to the Baltic. In the coast port the visitor from Europe, even if he comes in the autumn, is pretty certain to complain of the heat. He finds himself plunged into a moist and sticky warmth which makes him perspire as if he were in the hot room of a Turkish bath. But on the upland plains he is in a more vitalising atmosphere. The sun burns fiercely at midday, even in the cool season ; and in the summer, before the mon soon, it flames with scorching fury, parching the soil into brown waste or blinding white dust. Yet the air is

dry and bracing, there is a snap in it at its worst, and even when pitiless it is not enervating. For the luxuriant greenery of the lower Ghats we have exchanged the bare plains, the baked deserts, and the rugged kopjes, of the tableland. Instead of the busy merchants and traders of Bombay, the pushing Parsis, the alert baniyas, the foxy-faced intriguing Mahrattas, we find a race of hunters, cattle-drovers, shepherds, and horsemen, square-headed, square-shouldered, and upstanding, burly as Yorkshire-men, and independent as the farmers of the Lothians.

At Jaipur, some friends and I borrowed a couple of tongas from the transport train, which is the Maharaja's sensible contribution to the Imperial Service Corps, to drive to the ruins of the old royal city of Amber. When we got back we offered one of the drivers a gratuity ; but he declined to take it, pointing to a medal he wore and murmuring something about the Maharaja. He was a soldier, and a servant of his king, and he did not need a present for doing his work. The custodian of the old palace was equally dignified. He, too, explained that he was in the Maharaja's service, and did not wish to be 'tipped' for showing a little attention. But the tips would have assuredly been accepted in Bombay, or, for that matter, in most other parts of India and the world. Perhaps a Scottish Highlander, of the old strain, would have refused them too.

It is of the Highlanders that the Rajputs remind one in many ways, even including physique, though the Indian sun has tanned them brown, and darkened their eyes and hair. They are raw-boned, wiry, and muscular, with something of the Caledonian build. As I stood looking at a highly dignified Rajput chief, who was entertaining us in his palace, I thought that with his robes and turban exchanged for a bonnet and kilt, and his black ragged beard turned a sandy red, he might very well pass for

some patriarch from the moors and deer forests, a great territorial magnate, a keen sportsman, shrewd, kindly, domineering, and quick-tempered. The racial affinity may be nearer than we suspect. The learned Lieut-Colonel James Tod, who wrote *The Annals and Anti quities of Bajasthan,* as long ago as the time when William IV. was King, holds that the Eajputs are of Scythian origin, and modern scholars are inclined to accept this conclusion. Now the Celts and the Scythians are thought by some authorities to have had close family connections, in the early days when the fighting branches of the great 'Aryan' stock were roaming Europe and Asia to find a permanent home.

Whatever they may be, the Rajputs of Rajputana[1] are very different from the majority of the peoples who inhabit the plains of Hindustan and the Dekhan. They are a northern people with many of the northern charac teristics. At some remote period they came down from beyond the barrier mountains and settled in the Trans-Indus region and on the upper portion of the great Gangetic plain. In the early centuries of the Christian era they seemed likely to found a great empire. But they were a small people, in point of numbers, and they were always divided among themselves. Like the Celts once more, they have never shown a capacity for national or political unity. They were tribesmen and clansmen, devoted to their chiefs, but incapable of combination on a large scale. The Mohammedans, more numerous, and

[1] There are of course plenty o! Rajputs outside the Rajputana terri tories. The name is not that of a nation—there are no nations in India—**but** that of a caste. The Rajputs are the supposed descendants of the old warrior clan, the most influential and aristocratio of all except the Brahmans ; and like the latter they are found all over the Peninsula, the name having been freely adopted by many tribes and septs, who have gradually risen in the social scale, and in the process of their ascent have ascribed to themselves an origin for which there is no historical founda tion.

directed by leaders who were statesmen and organisers as well as soldiers, gradually pushed them away into the deserts and the arid sandy tracts which lie south and east of the great rivers. Here the Rajput chiefs founded their kingdoms, established their capitals, Jodhpur, Chittor, Amber, Boondi, Alwar, built their white-walled palaces, beautified them with enamel-work and mosaics and painted ceilings, took their pleasure in marble summer-houses by cool tanks and artificial lakes, hunted the wild boar, the tiger, and the sambhur, and ruled precariously over turbulent feudatories, each with his own following of more or less devoted subjects.

They were great builders and gardeners and founders of Hindu temples, these Eajput kings, and they were always fighting—sometimes with the Moghuls, sometimes with their rebel barons, often with one another. When the generals and proconsuls of John Company took to the work of pacifying India in earnest in the later eighteenth century, the Rajput princes were in a bad way. They had been so weakened by their contests with the Moslem and their internal dissensions that they were making little head against the Mahratta raiders, who were sweeping over the country like locusts. Thus it fell that to Eajputana the English came not as conquerors but deliverers. The princes accepted our supremacy without reluctance ; and, for the most part, they have shown themselves loyal and steady supporters of the Power which has secured them in their ancestral thrones and rendered it possible for them to maintain their independence and identity without perpetual conflict.

So all Eajputana remains to-day outside the direct control of the Indian Government, and it is in some respects the most characteristically Oriental and unchanged portion of the Empire, redolent of a not un-

welcome flavour of medievalism. It is ruled by its own chiefs, some of whom represent famous royal dynasties of venerable antiquity. With the old laws and customs we have interfered no more than is necessary; the Maharajas are still the heads of a feudal hierarchy; and they live in state, in the midst of a horde of retainers and privileged hangers-on, as an Oriental monarch likes to do. They have their cavalry, and their batteries of artillery, and stout regiments of infantry, armed with flint-locks or Enfield muzzle-loaders; they keep their elephants, and studs of horses and camels, and menageries of wild beasts, and their household guards with ancient swords and halberts and coats of mail. Each has a British Eesident to keep him in order; but the Rajput princes are as a rule honest and fairly capable rulers, and there is no desire to curtail their freedom of action, though a little pressure has sometimes to be put upon them to organise famine relief properly, and to encourage educa tion and see after the making of roads.

It is an old-world interesting land, full of primitive ways, the ways of a people of herdsmen, horsemen, and soldiers. Fighting is in the Rajput blood, though peace has long reigned, and it is seldom that a shot is now fired in anger. Now and again we may allow a Maharaja to levy execution upon a recalcitrant Sardar, or to coerce re bellious aboriginal Bhils with fire and sword. But the tradition remains; a Rajput still clings to his weapons and does not like to move without them. As you travel through the country you may seethe peasant, going to his fields in the morning with his curved scimitar hugged close under his cotton robe, or driving his bullocks with a long matchlock over his shoulder. They have something of the bearing of warriors, their gestures are free and animated, they are great talkers, as voluble and noisy in a crowd as anv folks I have seen; and they are good-

humoured and easy to deal with. The Kajput gentleman is frank and pleasant, a good sportsman, a manly and genial companion. He takes kindly to the English ways, is pretty nearly the best polo-player in India, and may be seen sometimes at Eanelagh and Hurlingham.

But will the Bajputs keep their stamina and virile virtues now that the fighting days are over ? The young Thakors, who might have been leading their men in the battle and the march, pass their lives in a rather supine inactivity, relieved by sport and by quarrels with their liege lord. Some who know them tell us that they are less tenacious, less energetic, less masculine altogether, than their fathers before them. We used to get many Rajputs in our Indian army, and have still good companies of them. But the supply is falling off: the younger men, it seems, have lost some of their taste for the military life, and the whole population has been hard hit by the famine and the plague. The future of the race, and that of their barren picturesque country, is one of the problems of India—one of the many unsolved enigmas which meet us at every turn.

CHAPTER VIH

SOME RAJPUT CAPITALS

THE CITY OF THE ENCHANTED LAKES

THE older un-Occidentalised Rajputana, which still clings to its feudalism and medievalism, finds its most favourable example in the State of Mewar; for the ruler of that territory, a dignified, upright, and conscientious prince, thoroughly loyal to the Empire, is, nevertheless, a steady champion of Hindu conservatism, who dislikes modern innovations, admits them grudgingly, and does his best to keep his country and his people to the older ways. The bluest blood of India runs in his veins : he can trace his lineage back authentically nearly two thousand years, and mythically he goes further still, for he is the head of the Sesodia dynasty, the descendants of the Sun God, who have never sullied the purity of their race by giving a daughter in marriage to the Mohammedans. For this reason, his Highness the Maharana, Sir Fateh Singh Bahadur, G.C.S.I., is regarded with reverence all over the Hindu world; and partly on this account, and partly because he is an excellent man, who governs wisely and honestly according to his lights, we interfere with him as little as possible, and allow him to retain in being many vestiges of the past, which more progres sive rajas have been induced to abandon. To the student of Eastern institutions, of sociology, of Asiatic history, and Indian politics, much fruitful material lies to hand in Mewar State. But that student must be

' more or less than man' if he can keep his mind on these matters during the first day of his sojourn in the distracting city of Udaipur. You cannot easily make statistical observations in Fairyland.

Conceive a rugged mountain country, of brown, bare, jagged peaks, and scarped, serrated hills; and in a broad valley or basin of this desolate land place a chain of still and silvery lakes, with palms and plantains, and blossoming wisteria, and cactus, and spiny jungle-grass, breaking the sandy hummocks in a belt of verdure at the edges of the pools. And plant, by the margin of the largest lake, and on the lowest ridges of the upland, a city of snowy palaces and gleaming towers and fretted minarets, and the great carved blunt pyramids of temples—a city which leans over^he flood in long stretches of crenellated rampart and jutting bastion, or opens from it in arabesqued gateways, which reveal narrow streets, gay with many-hued life, and backed by a sheet of turquoise sky. It is a city of wharves and bridges, like Venice, and tiers of marble steps, leading down to the lapping water, and balconies, with delicate domes and threadlike mullions and shafts of embroidered ivory hung from high white walls. Stud the surface of the lake with islands, and make these visions of marble porticoes and cupolas and trellis-work and terraces, with the plumes of the palm and the broad green pennants of the plantain waving above them ; and let castles and forts and shrines dot the mountain-sides, or rest like tiaras on the frowning headlands. Imagine all this, and you may get some faint idea of the earthly Paradise which the Children of the Sun created for them selves when the Moghuls sacked their ancient capital and drove them to find a home and resting-place behind the desert hills.

Udai Singh and his successors had a sense of the fit ness of things. Perhaps they were not great designers ;

I do not know that there is a really fine piece of architecture in Udaipur, and whenever you pry into the details of the buildings you are met with something petty and insignificant, with silly pepper-pot turrets, domes with poor lines and bad curves, and cemented verandahs that look mean at close quarters. Put all this confectionery under a dull sky and in a leaden northern atmosphere, and it might seem common and shabby. But in this fine air, picked out against the monotone of enamelled blue, it is in its place. The old palace is an immense building, of high, blank, and nearly windowless, wall, which dominates the lake from its lofty terrace; but behind this massive screen one catches a glimpse of pinnacles and roofs in creamy marble, so graceful and so light that you almost think they must wave and quiver with the breeze.

The palace is a town of itself, so vast that the Maharana's stables, with all their horses and grooms, can be stowed away among the foundations of the great containing wall. The newer portion of the palace, built in the last century, with its courts and fountains and reception-rooms, occupies a mere corner of the huge fabric, a corner happily which does not too roughly depart from the style of the remainder. Seen from the lake, the palace is always the centre of the picture as it should be, standing, impassive and serene, with the clustering town at its knees, the green gardens at its feet, and the castellated brown heights, like kneeling elephants with their howdahs, shutting off the enchanted valley from the world beyond.

It would be hard to say at what hour of the twenty-four Udaipur is at its best. Is it when the touch of dawn turns the hills to gold and flushes the white walls and cold marbles with the rose of life? Or is it thac magic moment just before sunset, when the heat-haze

rises like thin smoke over the ridges, and when all the foreground, lake and town and islands, swims in a bath of thin and luminous azure? One has seen it at night, and on that special night when the Maharana clothed it in golden light in honour of his Koyal guests. Illu minations are, as a rule, rather vulgar affairs; but I think all illuminations henceforth must seem cheap and tawdry to those who remember that November evening on the terraces at Udaipur. Here there were no electric arcs, with their cold and steel-like beam, no incandescent lamps, with hard unwinking stare, no coloured lanterns in garish green and red. Nothing was used but the common Eastern *butty,* the true 'Light of Asia,' a mere earthenware saucer, with a shred of cotton-wick and a tiny pool of oil. These humble nightlights were set by the thousand and the ten thousand, outlining every thing with a tender palpitating glow, as if streams and runlets of lambent flame were slowly trickling along every wall and pinnacle and projection, by the sides of buildings, and down the shafts of columns. The islands mirrored themselves in the lake in temples and palaces of softened fire; the forts flickered like giant fireflies on the distant hills. It was Fairyland—with the elfin lamps alight.

When you are recovered from your first ecstasy at the mere outward form and aspect of Udaipur, and you come to know it familiarly and to move about its streets and courts, you find it more delightful still. You are filled with a strange sense at once of novelty and reminiscence. You may go down to the lake-side, and there, on the broad steps of the palace itself, under the embossed and fretted arches of the gateway, you may see the women filling their water-pots at sunrise and evening: pots of gleaming brass and copper, that go dripping up the steps, or great red earthen *chatties,* balanced on dusky heads,

under veils of purple or crimson, and held in place by a single curved brown arm. You can look over the low wall into the square arena of sand, with the circular stone pedestal in the middle, where the King has his wild-beast fights on certain state occasions ; or you may stroll down to the bottom end of the lake, and see the King's wild boars fed, and the King's tigers and black bears ramping at their bars. Walk down the narrow dusty street, through the *Hathi Pal,* the Gate of the Elephants, past the great Temple of Jaggernath, and by the Sarai, or caravanserai, where camels and bullocks and squealing stallions are tethered all over the open courtyard.

Peer into the rows of dim little booths as you pass- Here is the armourer at his work, and the goldsmith, and the man who puts spots and borders of silver tinsel on the cotton *saris.* The money-changer sits at his door with his scales and measures and his little heaps of coin; if you give him a quarter of a rupee, which is fourpence, he will fill both your hands with irregular square-shaped bits of copper, that represent the small currency of the Maharana's realm. A huge Brahminy bull wanders by, none making him afraid, for he can nose into what stalls and baskets he pleases, and is a licensed plunderer and drone. And here is the man whom the King delights to honour, resplendent in silk and cloth of gold, with his runners before him to clear the way; here a young cavalier, riding down the street with his falcon perched upon his gloved wrist; here a Rajput noble, in helmet and crest, with a hauberk of chain-mail descending over his shoulders, followed by his knot of armed retainers with long spears and rusty scimitars. In the cool of the evening you may see many people walking upon the flat roofs of the houses, even as King David walked when his eye lighted upon the wife of Uriah the Hittite; you may, perchance, come upon Jezebel, with her head tired,

looking out from an upper window. After all, we are on familiar soil. We have come far from the world of the twentieth century. But we are close to countries which have been travelled ground to most of us at some period of our lives. We are in the land of the Bible and the land of the Bomances.

JODHPUR THE MEDÆVAL

Away in the western corner of the Bajputana region lies the kingdom of Marwar. It is one of our 'petty'\ subject states, only about the size of Ireland ; most of it dry sand, with great conical rock masses, eight hundred to a thousand feet high, rising out of the plain. On the eastern edge there is a huge brine marsh, where you may see tons and tons of glistening salt piled up in hillocks as you pass by on the railway; through the western slice runs the river Luni, which loses itself in the porous soil in summer, but in the autumn overflows the land in a fertilising inundation, and enables heavy crops of barley and wheat and millet to be reaped. But, unlike the Nile, the Luni is capricious and irregular in its action. It depends upon the rainfall, as indeed does Bajputana in general even more than the rest of India. With any thing over ten inches of rain, the country is green for a few weeks and prosperous for the year. But in the season of 1905 the fall had been less than two inches, the country was bare and brown, even beyond its wont, the people were scattering into other districts, and for those that remained famine-relief camps were being prepared.

Life is not easy in Marwar; which is perhaps a reason why its people are vigorous, alert, and energetic, beyond the average of Asiatics. The Marwaris are the best native bankers and retail dealers in India, and they are to

A CAMEL CORPS.

IX THE **BIBLE LANDS.**

be found in Calcutta and most other great cities all over the Peninsula, pushing their trade, and for the most part doing well at it. The bazaars of Jodhpur and Bikaner are full of tall houses, with carved fronts, which are the homes of Marwari merchants, who have made money in the distant haunts of commerce, and have come back to spend it among their own people.

The territory belongs to the Rahtors, the great fighting clan of the Rajputs, of whom the Maharaja of Jodhpur is the chief. They are of the ' Solar race,' and claim descent from Rama, like the Sessodia of Udaipur, their age-long rivals. Coming down from the north seven centuries ago, the horse-loving Rahtors settled on these breezy, sun-dried, dusty steppes, subdued the native inhabitants, and formed a powerful little state, too small to become an empire, but large enough to play the leading part in the turbulent history of Rajputana, which so singularly resembled that of Central Europe in the early middle ages. Unfortunately there was no Rajput Charlemagne, no Pope, no Holy Roman Empire, to give unity to the loose collection of principalities and feudal baronies. Marwar was always quarrelling with Mewar, and the Moghuls and the Mahrattas made prey of both, till the English came and brought peace to the land.

A few years ago Jodhpur was better known in England than most Indian native capitals. The late Maharaja Jeswant Singh had the good sense to appoint as his Prime Minister his brother, that popular and picturesque Rajput cavalier, Sir Pertab Singh, who is a distinguished and welcome visitor at Windsor and Buckingham Palace and at Ranelagh and Hurlingham. To see the Maharaja of Idar on a horse, to see him in white coat and cerulean turban as colonel of the dashing corps of Imperial Cadets, to see him in his shirt-sleeves on the polo-ground, is to set eyes on as fine a figure of a native gentleman and

soldier as all India can produce. Sir Pertab Singh brought Jodhpur forward in many ways. He induced Sir Swinton Jacob to give his services to the state as architect and engineer, and commissioned him to build a set of handsome law courts and public offices, designed with admirable taste after the old Indian fashion. He cultivated the English and he cultivated the horse.

Visitors of standing were always welcome in Jodh pur, where they were given pigs to stick, Arabs or thoroughbreds to ride, and champagne to drink. The Jodhpur racing-stables were famous all over India, and the Jodhpur colours frequently caught the judge's eye. The Jodhpur polo-team was trained to the highest point of perfection, with state aid in the shape of enormous subsidies for the purchase of ponies, so that it held the championship of India till it lost the Cup in the final round of the great Delhi Durbar contest.

In its enthusiasm for polo Jodhpur was not alone. During the last few years the game has become a passion in some of the native states, and sporting Maharajas were led by it into extravagances which called for the inter vention of the Government of India. The state treasuries were depleted in order that the local teams might be mounted on the best ponies that money could secure, such ponies as no British regimental club in India could afford to purchase. In one case at least, a very few years ago, skill on the polo-ground was the sure avenue to court favour; and an active sowar or non-commis sioned officer who made a brilliant run or hit a difficult goal, under the eye of his sovereign, might be rewarded with the command of a regiment or assigned the revenues of a village.

The polo at Jodhpur is as good as ever; but in other respects the sporting glory of the state is a little tarnished. Sir Pertab Singh has given up the Premiership, and con-

fines himself to English society and the government of his minute principality of Idar. The racing-stud and other luxuries were found too expensive for the state, which drifted into financial confusion, and is now passing through a course of retrenchment and reform under severe Government-of-India tutelage. The ambitions of the Rahtors are to some extent satisfied by the Jodhpur Lancers, which is one of the most satisfactory Imperial Service corps on the register. In this fine regiment the poor gentleman of Eajputana finds a career and an occu pation. It suits him as well as the Black Watch suitfed the Highland clansman after the break-up of 1745. Soldiering is his hereditary profession, and here he can devote himself to it with credit and to the common advantage. In the regiment he meets his comrades ; the officers are the nobles and feudal landowners of his own country. An Imperial Service corps provides its local colonel and staff; the only British officer is the Inspector, who is appointed from the headquarters of the Indian Army, and is responsible for seeing that the proper standard of efficiency is maintained.

The entire system, which was instituted by Lord Dufferin, is a splendid outlet for the energy and military instincts of the fighting races of India, and it gratifies the national pride of the people and the legitimate vanity of the Princes, who are allowed to have this small, modern, well-drilled, perfectly equipped force, as well as their own miscellaneous armies with obsolete rifles and travestied British uniforms. Perhaps the discipline of even the Jodhpur Lancers and the Bhopal Lancers is not quite what it would be if they were converted (as some military precisians would like to convert them) into regular regiments of the Native Indian Army, with a proper proportion of European officers. But it would be bad policy to purchase this advantage by dealing a

blow at local sentiment and national *esprit de corps.* We can be content for the present with having found an opening for the pride of race and warlike aptitude, which have been running to seed badly since we caused the *Pax Britannica* to prevail from the Himalayas to the Southern Cape,

Jodhpur is a little off the route of the autumn tourist, though he appears occasionally. If properly recommended he will be entertained in great comfort in the Maharaja's luxurious guest-house, where he will find himself provided with commodious rooms, and as good a *menu* at dinner and breakfast and tiffin as any reasonable man can desire. Also the State will decline to receive any remuneration from him for all this generous hospitality. Otherwise he must go to the Dak Bungalow, for a hotel in Jodhpur is not yet. Presently it will come. The English visitor, the American, the German, will find out the city, pervade it, and spoil it. Meanwhile it remains, in spite of Sir Pertab Singh, and the railway and the polo and racing-stables, unspoilt, picturesque, and entirely delightful. It is still a fragment of the feudal, medieval India, whose development we cut short. Feudalism speaks to us as we look up to the towering rock, frowning three hundred feet above the sandy plain, on which the Rao Jodha built his fortress, a vast and splendid castle-palace, with massive gateways, and a ring of guard-houses and embattled outworks, with a great bastioned wall which is thrown all round the city.

In the beauty and romance of its situation, Jodhpur falls behind Udaipur; but in Eastern colour and picturesqueness it does not yield to many cities in India. It is full of Hindu temples, with elaborate fronts and open courtyards. You may go as far as the entrance of these courts, but not farther, unless you will consent to take off your boots, which is a proceeding unsuited to the dignity

of the ruling race in India. When I went to the oldest and most venerated of these temples, though accompanied by a distinguished Anglo-Indian official and a most consequential *chuprassi,* we were not permitted to pass beyond the threshold ; indeed, when we placed our feet an inch or two farther, a bearded old gentleman, with a conspicuous red-and-white caste-mark smeared all over his forehead, angrily motioned us back. Otherwise the Brahmans were quite civil, and allowed us to look in and see about a dozen worshippers going through a sort of morning service, and raising a monotonous wailing chant before the canvas screen which hid the idol from view. They were chiefly women. The temple itself was built by a Maharani; and we were told that the priests depend largely on wealthy ladies, who are more regular and constant in their devotions than persons of the other sex. The same phenomenon has been observed elsewhere.

There are other imposing buildings in the place besides the temples. The wealthy Thakor, or feudal land owner, has his town house in Jodhpur, as the old French nobles had their hotels in Paris, and here he comes from time to time to attend the Court, and generally make a show. His mansion is as large as his means allow, and sometimes larger; for he likes to ruffle it with a suitable following of spearmen and sword-bearers. Some of the older houses now occupied by wealthy baniyas, or traders, have elaborate facades, with overhanging balconies, nobly carved in that fine old red sandstone which is the best material for Indian architecture, since it is sufficiently soft to take the most delicate tracery and chisel-work, while it is hard enough to weather the climate. In front of these loftier fabrics, or in the lower storeys, under pent-house roofs, the busy bazaar goes on from early morning till late night, a bazaar of

tiny cells packed close, like those of a beehive, in which the trader sits on the floor in the midst of his wares. If you want to buy anything, you stop in the street and traffic with him across the stone lintel; if he desires to offer you something, he reaches out a hand to his stock piled about him, or extracts it from a tin box or a rag bundle. He does not need to rise; all his commodities are within arm's length. When you begin the process of bargaining, without which, of course, nobody buys or sells anything, the passers-by gather in a small circle, and watch the process with interest. There is no particular use in attempting to maintain privacy, in a place where every man's business is done in public. Competition, one would suppose, must be limited in Jodhpur, and the market is an open one in every sense. Custom ordains that dealers of the same trade should put their shops side by side ; consequently, if jeweller number one is selling a silver bangle or a pair of gold-wire earrings, jeweller number two has only to crane an ear round the partition-wall to know all about the transaction.

Even affairs of state are managed with the same artless publicity. A mint, for example, would seem to be an institution in which closed doors are essential. But in Jodhpur the royal mint is up a small courtyard, opening from the main bazaar, and anybody who pleases can stroll in and watch the current coin of the realm in course of manufacture. Under a little, open, whitewashed roof there are two or three tiny furnaces, two or three small anvils, and two or three nearly naked workmen. Three iron pegs, six inches high, with flattened heads, lodking rather like exaggerated golf-tees, spring from the stone floor; one of them is the die for the gold pieces, one for the silver rupees, and one for the lesser coins. The workman takes a lump of bullion in his hands, heats it in the furnace, cuts off a round or moderately

round disc, carries it with his pincers to the die, and hammers on it until he has got a sufficient impression; then he casts it aside upon a little heap to get cool, and to be conveyed to the royal treasury. This free-and-easy mint, I am told, was a busy place two or three years ago. Unhappily, progress is laying its touch upon Jodhpur. The State has adopted the Indian Government's rupee, and imports most of its coinage. The mint is now chiefly occupied in manufacturing a few gold mohurs, and copper coins. It will also supply you with seven of the small two-anna pieces, made with shanks to wear as buttons, if you give the order for the same to the intelligent, but unclothed, official in charge, in exchange for a rupee. As the rupee is worth sixteen annas, the profit on the transaction to the Controller of the Mint, or to the Treasury, is about twopence, including the cost of labour. When the tourist has really annexed Jodhpur, no doubt the price will rise.

Animals, as well as men and women and impish brown children, swarm through the Jodhpur bazaars. High, gaunt, brown camels, sometimes in strings of half a dozen or so, thread their way through the narrow lanes. Well-mounted young Thakors, on sporting-looking country-breds, come cantering by. Goats and chickens walk in and out of the houses, great grey baboons chatter among the sparse trees of the suburbs, and dogs of all kinds prowl about in the roadways, unnoticed—for what Indian native would demean himself to pay any attention to a dog?—but unmolested. Bulls and heifers and horned cattle of every sort pervade the place, standing about on the pavements, browsing at the market-stalls, and generally making themselves at home. Nobody interferes with them beyond giving them a gentle push when they are too much in the way. The great beasts are so used to human society that they move about quite lightly and

intelligently, and cause far less obstruction than might be imagined. Twice a day all these wandering cattle, bullocks, buffaloes, skimpy calves, and sleek Brahminy bulls, assemble in an open space fitted with many deep stone troughs. These are supplied with grain through the posthumous munificence of a wealthy Marwar mer chant, who left money for this purpose, and in conse quence obtains, I believe, several million years of celestial bliss. The universal Hindu respect for the cow and its kin seem accompanied in Eajputana by a real liking. I made an observation on this point to the highly intelligent Bengali babu, from the Prime Minister's office, who, through the kindness of the State authorities, was de puted to be my amiable and courteous guide in Jodhpur. [1] It is true, sir,' he replied, ' in this region there is much predilection for the bovine species.' The predilection is supposed to be general throughout India, but in Rajputana it is less theoretical than in other districts.

JAIPUR AND BIKANER

The [f] rose-red city' of Jaipur has a great reputation for picturesqueness and artistic effect, which is somewhat beyond its deserts, and is due chiefly to the fact that it is on the regular tourist line, and is taken in his stride by the autumn visitor who ' does' India, between Bombay and Calcutta, in a few weeks. But when you compare Jaipur with the other capitals of Eajputana, with Udai-pur, by its enchanted lakes, with Jodhpur, with its grand fortress-palace, and its crowded, quaint bazaars, with Bikaner, islanded in its desert, Jaipur seems modern, pretentious, artificial, rather vulgar. One is inclined to agree with a great Indian Viceroy who declared the 'rose-red city' to be no more than a rose-red fraud.

It is clean, well planned, well governed, prosperous, pro gressive. But it has lost a good deal of that distinctive old-world flavour of Eastern mediaevalisin which renders the other towns so delightful.

In some respects Bikaner is the most interesting of all. Pour hundred and fifty years ago, when the Moghuls were pressing hard upon the rulers of Marwar, Bika Singh, the sixth son of the Rao Jodha, the founder of Jodhpur, moved into the heart of the wilderness and founded a new city there. All Eajputana is more or less desert, but Bikaner State is desert almost unadul terated—a waste of waterless sand, with green oases, on which are villages and cultivated fields. From the old palace of Bikaner, builded on a rock, as all these Rajput citadels were, you see, beyond the low houses and flat roofs of the town, the desert extending on all sides, like a sea. And, indeed, at some hours it is hard to persuade oneself that it is not the sea; for in the heat-haze the brown and yellow tones turn to purple and the effect is that of a level plain of dark water. If you mount a horse and ride in any direction, in ten minutes you are deep in the desert, with nothing about you but drifting sand and a few weakly stunted bushes.

Bikaner is a fragment of Arabia or Africa transported to India; and the town itself seems Syrian or Egyptian, with its thick walls of sandstone, its square flat-roofed houses, its prevailing tints of brown and orange, its plenitude of camels, which here attain a speed and strength and spirit beyond those of their fellows in other parts of India. To the Bikaner people, till the rail way came, the camel was as necessary as it is to the Bedaween and the Sudanese. It was their connecting-link with the outer world, their only means of transport ing goods and merchandise across the arid wilderness which shut them in on all sides. Under the conditions

of its existence Bikaner might be expected to show itself a poverty-stricken town, struggling desperately for a bare livelihood. But it is nothing of the sort. On the contrary, it impresses the stranger with its air of prosperity and well-being. There is an old palace on the Fort which shows that the Maharajas of Bikaner in the past contrived to get a good deal of money to spend. It is a vast rambling structure, a maze of small rooms and dark passages, like many of these Indian palaces, with the usual medley of incised marble and glittering rubbish. But it has a fine collection of old arms, and a library of exquisite illuminated Hindu and Arabic manuscripts and other things, to testify that for centuries past the Bikaner kingdom has enjoyed a prosperous civilisation.

Agriculture in this tract of bare and drifting sand must be a heart-breaking business ; and when the rains fail, as they did to a great extent in the year 1905, then the farms simply go out of cultivation and four-fifths of them are temporarily abandoned. Yet in this trying environment the races of Bajputana are seen at their best. The cleverest and wealthiest of the Marwari merchants issue from the desert-city, and often come back to it. The Kajput physique is perfected by the sun and wind. Many of the women are tall and straight, with clear skins and regular features; and the men of the Bikaner Contingent, who served as a camel-corps in China and Somaliland, are as fine a body of long-limbed clean-built troopers and sepoys as India can produce.

There is an excellent gaol, managed under English direction, where the convicts make carpets that are sold all over the world; there is a good club; and the clever energetic young Maharaja has lately built a splendid new palace, a really fine example of modern Indian architecture, furnished in excellent taste, and provided with electric fans and electric lights and all the latest improvements.

With all this the atmosphere of the place still remains antique and Oriental.

Jaipur is different. It is two hundred years old, but it is in some respects more modern than most towns in Europe. The Maharaja Jai Singh, who founded it in 1728, was a reformer, a utilitarian, and a man of science. He was a great astronomer, and established an Observa tory, which consists of a sandy courtyard with immense instruments built up of brick and stone, that look as if intended to be playthings for a race of giants.

Jai Singh would have proved an invaluable chairman for the Improvements Committee in a modern borough council. He had the root of the matter in him, since he knew that urban locomotion demands broad and straight streets. These conditions could not be effectively secured at the old capital of Amber, up among the hills, five miles away, which now lies, with its marble courts and embossed houses, empty, deserted, and exquisite. The palace at Amber was built in the great age of Eajput architecture. It is full of dignity and stateliness, and though its internal decorations are tinselly and meretri cious, it has beautiful ceilings, held up by noble columns, trellised balconies, with chiselled screens of stone-work, and a labyrinth of porticoes and flat roofs, which give lovely views of the valley and the hills. '0 Progress, what crimes are committed in thy name!' So one feels inclined to say on surveying the work of the early municipal reformer, who wrote the doom of Amber in order that he might create Jaipur.

But Jai Singh did not want his improved scientific capital to be complicated by valleys and rising ground. He perceived that for a city, laid out on a strictly regular geometrical pattern, a level site is the best. So he planted the new town on a dead, flat, dusty plain, without a hillock or a depression anywhere. Its ground-plan is like that of

a modern American city. The main avenues run straight as a line from end to end, a hundred and eleven feet wide, which is more than the width of any thoroughfare in London, except about three. Lesser, but still very wide, streets run parallel to these; others cross them at right-angles. There are circular spaces at various points, and in the middle of all is the palace, covering an enormous area of ground, with its stables, its menageries, and its great oblong sanded arena, in which the king's animals, his horses, elephants, bears, wild boars, rams, and ante lopes, exercise and occasionally fight.

It is rather curious to reflect that some fifty years before Jai Singh created his new capital, Sir Christopher Wren drew up a somewhat similar plan (it is now in the library of All Souls College, Oxford) for the rebuilding of London after the Great Fire. Wren could not get the Corporation to accept his design; but Jai Singh had no Lord Mayor and Common Council to consult, and as the King ordered, so it was done. He decreed that his city should be all of a deep pink, the colour of the red sand stone, and thus it is to this day. Unfortunately, there was not enough of the stone to go round, and most of the buildings are of painted stucco. Moreover, they are very low, and they look ridiculously mean and petty, ranged along the immense sandy roadways. In many cases, upper storeys, with battlemented parapets, have been superimposed, but these only make matters worse ; for they are obviously ' duffers,' mere shells of wall, with no roofs and no rooms behind them. In this way they add to the general air of theatrical unreality with which the city is invested. It seems a town of pasteboard, a hollow affair of lath and plaster, and canvas and paint, made to be looked at, but not to stand, like those imitation streets—[1] India in London,' or 'Venice in London'—which are sometimes exhibited for our entertainment. Indeed,

when I drove through the town for the first time, and saw it adorned with flags and coloured transparencies of the Prince and Princess of Wales, I could not escape the feeling that the whole city had been run up for the occasion by some enterprising caterer, and that it would be taken down and packed away for use elsewhere when done with.

The circus-like impression is intensified when you wander about the vast pink palace, with its menagerie of animals. You come upon elephant-stables and camel-stables; and there are all kinds of creatures, housed in what look like temporary sheds, apparently just prepar ing to ' go on.* Within the precincts of the building, in close proximity to the reception-rooms, with their new French furniture, their gilding, and chandeliers, and glistening modern glass-ware, there is a whole village of mud huts, with half-naked men and women, and wholly naked brown children tumbling about in the sunshine. This mingling of luxury and squalor is very characteristic of India. You find it everywhere. Rags and silk and jewels are always in juxtaposition. Tattered hangers-on loaf about the courtyards of great people, even on the most solemn occasions of State.

At Jaipur these villagers, I believe, are the sweepers and cleaners of the palace and the attendants on the Maharaja's livestock, which last is highly extensive and varied. I went to a sort of gymkhana or exhibition, held in the arena, early one morning, and saw a great many of them. There were haughty cream-coloured and piebald stallions with sumptuous velvet housings, bulls and buffaloes, pretty little chinkara deer, and spotted antelopes, huge grunting boars, young pigs playful as kittens, and rams with threatening voluted horns. All of them were tethered with ropes, and in the case of the larger beasts there were half a dozen men hanging on to each

rope. After being led round the ring, the animals were pitted against each other in pairs. There were quail-fights, and cock-fights, and deer-fights, and boar-fights, and little-pig-fights, and ram-fights. It was rather a poor show, not without an element of cruelty. Most of the animals had no stomach for the fray; and as for the fat and well-fed boars, they simply looked at one another and turned away, until hustled together by the attendants, when they lost their tempers, and cut and ripped in earnest, inflicting some nasty gashes. The only really spirited contests were between the rams, who charged each other with fury, clashed their armed foreheads together with a shock like a pistol-shot, and were pulled away half-stunned after each encounter. The Prince and Princess of Wales did not attend this exhibition, and the whole pro ceeding is regarded with little favour by the Government of India, though the privilege of keeping and training fighting-beasts for the arena is one which the independent princes are unwilling to surrender. In its present modified and mitigated form it seems hardly worth retaining, and even the tiger- and boar-fights and the rhinoceros-fights are said to be very tame performances.

This kind of survival seems particularly out of place in Jaipur, which in many ways is quite a modern city. It is well kept, it is lighted by gas, and it has hotels for the accommodation of the autumnal visitors. It has a famous School of Art, where they make excellent enamelled metal ware under exceedingly skilled direction; and it has the best museum, with one exception, in all India, a museum which, in the careful selection and the judicious arrangement of its contents, is a model of what such an institution ought to be. There are a hundred and sixty thousand people in Jaipur, and the place is full of life and business, the commercial centre and entrepot of all Kajputana and the adjacent parts of

India. The Maharaja has shown considerable interest, as befits a descendant of Jai Singh, in art, and science, and education; and it seems prosperous enough, even in a famine year. Being a resort of many traders and artisans from various districts, near and remote, it assembles a variegated multitude in its wide avenues. If the rose-pink walls are shoddy, the crowd is genuine, and delightful hours may be spent in watching its motley streams and mingling with its noisy eddies.

CHAPTEK IX

HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA

HE **may,** or may not, have some of the best blood in India in his veins. In the East birth and breeding go a long way, but they are not everything ; and in the curious chaos of Indian history strange things have happened. The long procession of Princes and Ruling Chiefs who passed before the Shahzada on his way through the Empire can only be described as a miscellaneous collection. They differed from each other as much in origin and descent as they did in appearance and religion. Some were of the pure northern strain, men who could trace back in unbroken sequence to the earliest conquerors, who have preserved their race to this day, uncontaminated by admixture with the inferior castes, the black children of the soil. The ancestors of others were Arab or Afghan or Tartar raiders centuries ago; and some were the descendants of cowherds and court favourites and soldiers of fortune, who were upstarts when the English came.

It was interesting to note the variety of types these feudatories exhibited, as one saw them at the receptions, whieh were held in each province and group of states, in order that they might make their salute to the Prince and present him with the *nazar,* or offering of gold coins, to be touched and remitted. Not infrequent was the kind of person whom many of us might be inclined to regard aa the typical Raja, the huge man, with thick lips, a vast

face, great insolent shoulders, like those of a Brahminy bull, a bloodshot saturnine eye, an elephantine regal gait; a king obviously, though not quite the sort of king whose subject one would care to be under genuine Oriental con ditions. But there were princes of a very different make: high-bred gentlemen, tall and lithe, with olive complexions and oval faces, and regular features of the Brahman or Bajput mould ; or lean, wiry, hook-nosed, eagle-eyed warriors from the Border; and dark, short men from the south. And in their characters and their situation was as much variety as in their faces and their figures.

A few years ago it would have been easier to classify them than it is to-day. Broadly speaking, they would have fallen under two main headings, at least in the estimation of the Indian Foreign Office and the Political depart ments. There was the virtuous Maharaja and there was the Maharaja who lacked virtue. The unvirtuous Maharaja still exists; but he is mainly a survival, and he has had his claws so severely pared and his wings so closely clipped that his more picturesque lapses from the straight path are no longer possible. We have made examples of so many of his kind that he has become exceedingly cautious; nor do his supervisors and the representatives of the paramount Power allow him so much latitude as the more indulgent 'politicals' of the past. The unvirtuous Maharaja was often inclined to treat his state as his own private property, and to spend its revenues for his personal gratification. He filled his great rambling palace with monstrosities from Europe, for which he was charged blood curdling prices. He spent lakhs of rupees on emeralds to adorn his own person and diamonds for his favourite wife or more favourite dancing-girl. He built new wings to his noble old residence, of monumental hideousness, and emptied the State treasury to pay for horrible glass lustre chandeliers, crystal thrones, and gilded Lord Mayor's

carriages; or he wasted his substance on a stud of elephants with silver howdahs, on fighting bears and tigers, and on whole menageries of animals, wild and tame.

These were the milder indulgences, and with them we did not, and do not, interfere when exercised in con junction with a reasonable amount of good government. But when his Highness took to twisting the tails of his Sardars, his knights and barons, in order to make them yield more than the feudal revenues, when he levied mediaeval benevolences and plundered his merchants and traders, when he courted rebellion by general maladmin istration, and tried to suppress it with his matchlock-men and his ancient batteries of smooth-bore muzzle-loaders : when he broke out in this fashion, it became necessary to bring his performances to an end.

Nor could we permit his private life to rise above a certain level of scandalousness. We were not too par ticular in these matters, and we preferred not to inquire curiously into the interior economy of the palace. But the Eastern despot, who lives in the true Eastern fashion, finds moderation difficult, and easily slides into practices which make it impossible for self-respecting individuals or governments to have any friendly relations with him. In due course, the career of the unvirtuous Maharaja is brought to a conclusion. After sufficient warning, the Government of India drops down a heavy hand upon him, and flattens him out, to rise, as a rule, no more. Sometimes the State is put into commission, under the political agent, and the Raja is given a period for repentance, with a promise of restoration if he shows signs of amending his ways. More often he is deposed and pensioned off, and his throne is conferred upon some reputable brother or cousin; or one of the royal infants is taken away to be educated up to the latest Anglo-Indian standard, while a Council of Begency is appointed to do

those things which seem good in the eyes of Simla and the local Agency, until such time as the young sovereign comes of age and can take up the reins of government, and proceed, it is hoped, to put into practice the lessons of his preceptors.

Like other dethroned monarchs, the deposed Maharaja does not always take his fall quietly, and may show a disposition to give trouble, sometimes by fomenting in ternal intrigue within his late dominions, more frequently by trying to reach the ear of the Viceroy and other influential persons in Asia and Europe, As a rule he is harmless, and relapses after a time to a struggle between his allowance and his pleasures. A curious little incident occurred while the Prince of Wales was the guest of one of the greater chiefs, a promising young ruler, with sporting and Anglicising tastes, who had been substituted within the past few years for a disreputable elderly pre decessor. There was a garden-party at the Eesidency, the Koyal visitors being present, together with the young Maharaja and most of the native and European notabili ties of the district. In the midst of the entertainment, while the band was playing and the guests were busy with tea and ices, the slightest possible signs of activity were visible in the local official group ; and the officers in command of the Eesidency guard and the troops brought up from the nearest British cantonment held a brief con sultation. Not till afterwards was it known, and then only to a minute number of persons, that the deposed chief had been in need of attention. The old ruffian had made various applications to be allowed to see the Prince of Wales, which had been ignored; and finally, on the afternoon of the garden-party, news was received that he had started off on his motor-car, from his castle a few miles distant, to pay his respects in person. This could not be permitted, so a small party of well-mounted sowars

was despatched to head off the vehicle and lead the dis crowned potentate safely home again.

The unvirtuous Maharaja, though he had a taste for Western luxuries and Western extravagances, was usually Oriental and Conservative in his political attitude. He had no sympathy with modern progress, and strenuously objected to reforms, which, as he perceived, must often cost money he preferred to spend on himself, his house hold, and his zenana. Schools, model prisons, hospitals, irrigation works, and famine relief would make a con siderable hole in his private Civil List. Therefore his Highness entrenched himself behind Hindu or Mussul man orthodoxy, and protested as vehemently as he dared against innovations. Sometimes, indeed, he may have been unselfish in his opposition, knowing that the re forming schemes would bring more Englishmen and English influences into his dominions, and so shake the belief of his subjects in the wisdom of their fathers and the ancient social and religious ways.

One of the best of the present ruling chiefs, a man of the highest character and deservedly respected by English and natives throughout India, takes this view. He is a champion of the old Hindu system, an upright and conscientious sovereign, who does the best for his subjects according to his own lights; but he sets his face against the wholesale adoption of European methods. He does not want his people to live in imitation English houses, and wear shoddy English clothes; he sees no great necessity for teaching them to read and write, holding that education will only turn them from hunters and herdsmen into clerks and babus. He keeps rigidly to the caste rules, and he will not eat with Europeans, or drink their whisky and champagne. Even the railway seems to him undesirable, and it needed a good deal of pressure before he would permit the line to approach his ancient

and picturesque capital. His territory is rich in mineral deposits; but he will not allow them to be worked by modern appliances, and he discourages the beneficent advances of the company-promoter and the share-monger. Nor will he patronise British sport. He shoots the tiger and spears the wild pig, and leaves polo and racing and cricket to others.

But the virtuous Maharaja, as a rule, is full of English ideas. He is enlightened and progressive. He adopts the Anglo-Indian method of administration, perhaps even institutes a Council, and imports a Bengali or two to act as Secretary or Legal member. He reforms his judicature on the English model, and allows the Penal Code to prevail. With European assistance he improves his gaols, and sometimes puts his instructors to shame by the excellence of his work.

There is not, in the whole of India, a prison more admirably equipped and arranged than that in the Maharaja of Bikaner's capital: there is, perhaps, no better one anywhere. Its cleanliness, sanitation, and good order are beyond reproach, and one can scarcely imagine a more cheerful, and apparently contented, body of criminals than its inmates. They have large open corridors to sleep in; and if they wear fetters on their legs, that is only in accordance with Indian sentiment, and is, moreover, more humane than locking up prisoners in small close cells during the hot weather. Steady industry is the rule in this model house of detention. There are tailors' shops, carpenters' shops, and brassworkers' shops; and in the great weaving and tapestry sheds, murderers, thieves, dacoits, and pickpockets are peacefully, and as it would seem quite happily, employed in making carpets of lovely design and irreproachable workmanship to the order of wealthy clients all over the world. The Bikaner gaol is not only efficient, but it is economical, for it is run at a

clear profit to the state. It is also quite popular with its tenants; so that when a prisoner shows signs of in subordination the Governor can usually reduce him to obedience by threatening to set him at liberty and turn him out. Again, at Jaipur there is a museum, which is equal to any in India, with the single exception of that at Lahore. The Maharaja of this State has shown him self a discriminating and liberal patron of art and science; and he, and the Nizam, the Maharaja of Gwalior, and others, have founded excellent colleges and are zealous promoters of the higher education among their subjects.

This is one side of the Anglicising activity of these progressive princes. The tendency develops in other ways, interesting, but not always of such unques tionable utility. They have an inclination to gratify Western tastes more reputable than those of their pre decessors, but sometimes quite as costly. The ol3 rambling palaces, with their rookery of passages and inlaid cells behind marble screens, are deserted; and a fine new building, with large modern saloons and recep tion-rooms, is erected. His Highness will often be a keen sportsman himself, and a munificent patron of many kinds of sport. Those aspirations after excellence in polo, to which reference has been made, are apt to run into money, and the durbar may be required to pay the expenses of training a first-class team and buying ponies at prices far beyond the legitimate resources of the state treasury. The Chief may even keep a racing-stable, bring out stud-grooms and trainers from England, and secure the services of well-paid English jockeys to carry his colours at the fashionable Indian race-meetings.

The good Maharaja's English friends will be only too ready to encourage him in so meritorious an extravagance as that of promoting open-air recreations. 'You ought to have a pack of jackal-hounds, Maharaja Sahib,' says

one set of enthusiasts. 'You should turn that field into a lawn-tennis ground,' suggests another. Anxious to oblige, the Chief provides both the hunting and the tennis, much to the satisfaction of the subalterns and the young ladies of the station. Meanwhile, his own personal tastes must be gratified in other ways. So enlightened a student of western institutions can hardly get on without frequent visits to Bombay and Calcutta, and an occasional trip to the still more instructive cities of London and Paris. Perhaps, when he asks permission to quit his dominions, the Government of India ungraciously informs him that he has been expending far too much money on his various diversions, and reminds him that his subjects are suffering great privation from the failure of the rains. The virtuous Maharaja sighs, and proceeds to organise famine relief, not in the ancient rule-of-thumb fashion of his royal ancestors, but according to the English system.

He has his trials, for the new way is not always understood, and it may have to be worked by the old officials. It is said that during a recent famine the British Besident remonstrated with a native prince on the mismanagement of his relief works. ' These men, whom your Highness sent to distribute food, are simply robbing you.' ' Eshmitt Sahib,' said the Maharaja; ' is there a man in all my country, except yourself, who does *not* rob me ?' Indeed, there are many difficulties before the reforming Raja in this transitional age. The more credit to him that he overcomes them so well as he often does.

It is the opinion of the most brilliant Anglo-Indian statesman of our age that the real Indian aristocracies, the princely class, and the reigning families, were never so well content with British supremacy or so loyal to the Empire as they are to-day. Up to the post-Mutiny settlement, and long beyond it, there were always princes who could be, and were, centres of disaffection. The

insubordinate or disappointed chief easily drifts into that position, and the older Indian administrators were quite right in regarding an ill-disposed Maharaja of one of the greater states as a possible source of danger. They knew that these princes, powerless as they seemed at the moment, might under conceivable circumstances become extremely formidable.

One must, of course, distinguish. There are rajas and chiefs of all kinds in India, from the Nizam—whose subjects are more numerous than those of the Queen of Holland, the King of Belgium, the King of Denmark, and the King of Portugal taken together—to the petty Nawab with a few square miles of territory and a lakh or two of revenue. But the head of one of the older and more influential dynasties is undoubtedly a personage, even outside his own dominions. It was impossible to mingle with the crowd in the cities through which the Prince of Wales passed without feeling that some of these poten tates aroused an interest in the native breast deeper than that evoked by any British official, not excluding the highest of all. A Governor or Lieutenant-Governor, the virtual ruler of thirty or forty millions of people, is in reality a far more important individual, especially in his own province, than any of the local reigning chiefs.

Yet I think that the multitude, or some of them, looked on the Maharaja, as he went by in his gilded coach and four, followed by his caracoling escort, with a livelier and more sentimental curiosity than that which could be evoked even by the' Lord Sahib ' himself. To the Indian natives, our officers, civil and military, our judges, commissioners, generals, commanders-in-chief, provincial satraps, vice roys, are mortal men, like themselves ; highly placed and highly paid servants, dignified and potent, but evanescent: here to-day and gone to-morrow, moved about at the bid ding of unknown masters. It is otherwise with the man

who reigns by right of birth, albeit his realm may be only a patch of rock-ribbed desert, and his authority so restricted that he cannot sentence a convicted murderer to death in his own courts,[1] The sacredness of the 'Lord's anointed' is still a living force in the East, though the idea would be expressed differently. Loyalty has much of the old meaning which it has lost in Europe; it includes a sort of religious reverence for the person of the sovereign, and a tendency to regard unquestioning obedience to his commands as something higher than a legal duty. It may be taken as a general rule in native India that the people would follow their princes—anywhere.

And even to those outside the ranks of his own sub jects the ruling Maharaja frequently represents something of significance. He may be the head of a great religious community; or the premier prince of a race which is invested with a special sanctity by millions; or the inheritor of a stirring tradition of conquest and successful war. Even when their material power is trivial, they may wield a moral influence sufficient to render their content or discontent with the prevailing regime a matter worth very serious consideration.

In the old days they were usually discontented. It was very natural that they should be so. They had sub mitted to the paramount Power with reluctance, some times because they had been subdued by force of arms, sometimes because of irresistible pacific pressure, some times because it was the only way to save themselves from being wiped out by stronger neighbours. But they did not enjoy the situation, nor did they appreciate the blessings of Imperial rule. Equal laws and equal rights

[1] It ia only in a few of the larger native states that the ruling princes are entrusted with what is technically known as the power of life and death. In the great majority of these states no death penalty can be carried out except after reference to the local Agency or the Government of India.

had few attractions for men whose very existence was an assertion of the principle of inequality. An Eastern despot, who did what he liked in his own country, subject to the chances of rebellion, and made war when he pleased, would seldom care to exchange this exciting irresponsibility for an uneventful security and a dignified dependence. The Government of India put him in leading-strings, and deprived him of some of his most cherished indulgences. The true Oriental licence to plunder and misgovern was practically withdrawn. His territory was no longer his private property; he was expected to consider the feelings and interests of his subjects, with what no doubt seemed to him quite superfluous solicitude. This patriarchal mixture of oppression and generosity had to make way for something more nearly resembling the rule of law. The process annoyed the chief, and it did not always please the people, who sometimes preferred the old, irregular, free-and-easy arrangements. Besides, the Raja really disliked the English and their ways, many of which seemed to him offensive or absurd or irreligious, and he would have been heartily glad to see them cleared out of India altogether. So he was potentially disloyal, though wise enough not to quarrel openly with the Power that was master of his destinies.

The theory of the statesman to whom I have referred, and of many other distinguished Indian administrators, is that the attitude here suggested has been changed in recent years. We are told that the members of the great ruling and princely families are becoming reconciled to the British supremacy, and are now in many cases its cordial and whole-hearted supporters. They no longer endure it with sombre acquiescence. On the contrary, they understand the prevailing system, they appreciate the benefits it confers upon the country, and they would be the last persons to rejoice at its overthrow.

The younger generation has a tendency to be Anglophile. Some of the princes and greater territorial proprietors have been educated in England itself, and not merely under English teachers and tutors; many of them are on very friendly terms with English officers and officials, they are getting to like their ways, they join in their sports and games, they meet them in business, on the polo-field, on the parade-ground, and to some extent in society. They have abandoned a good deal of their exclusiveness and aloofness, and find it possible occasionally to be on terms of frank *camaraderie* with the better kind of Englishman. Then they know more of England and of the extra-Indian world generally. Some of them travel, and read European books, not excluding fiction from the fair land of France. They cultivate a taste for modern inventions, and have modern progressive ideas as to sanitation and education. All these things put them in a better frame of mind than their sulky and resentful fathers before them.

Add to all this that we are at length making some pro gress towards bringing them back to the only career which really suits a member of an Eastern aristocratic caste. We are giving them a revived interest in soldiering. We have always permitted the native States to keep up armies of sorts. But it was our policy that these armies should be ineffective for fighting purposes. The princes might have a limited number of men in buckram, or in red or khaki coats, or in mail armour, to play with ; but we could not afford to let these troops be made efficient enough to become dangerous. Consequently we have refused to allow the feudatories to have their regiments drilled by European officers. We do not permit them to possess batteries of breechloading artillery, and we forbid the purchase of good modern rifles.

The forces of the native States were paraded for the Prince of Wales's inspection as he passed through;

and some of them made a very brilliant appearance, for we exercise no veto upon the sartorial fancies of the Maharaja, and if his Highness chooses to clothe his horde of military retainers, armed with smooth-bore muskets and old Enfield carbines, in uniforms of canary yellow or blue and silver, with old French dragoon helmets, we do not offer any objection. His subjects like the show, and are pleased to see these obsolete warriors facing about and presenting arms, while Colonel Gopal Singh or Major Mohammed Khan gives the word of command in what is supposed to be the English language. But to a young prince of spirit the whole affair must doubtless seem silly and theatrical, and perhaps no more than a proof of humiliation and dependence. A man sprung from generations of warlike ancestors, who won their way and held it by the sword, must chafe at the restric tion which binds him down to an army of stage supers and provides no worthy profession for the cadets and col lateral branches of his royal house. That was one of the reasons why the Maharaja aforetime gave himself to unworthy courses. He 'chewed bhang and toyed with dancing girls,' as described by Macauiay. What else was he to do, when we had made his government an unreality, and his army a farce ?

But we are now opening to him a wider avenue of activity. We allow him to raise a contingent for the Imperial Service Corps, which he may make as efficient and soldier-like as he can. The LS.C. was instituted during Lord Dufferin's viceroyalty, and it has been much improved and enlarged during the past few years. It is intended to associate the feudatories with the defence of India, in a genuine sense, and to allow them to maintain small bodies of troops, armed, equipped, and trained, as nearly as possible like those in the direct employment of the Crown. Each unit of the Imperial Service Corps is

stationed in the native State to which it belongs. It Is part of the army of that State, and it is paid for out of its revenues; the officers are the Maharaja's own subjects, holding their commissions from him. All that the Indian Government requires is that there shall be a British inspecting officer, whose business it is to see that the force is kept well up to the standard of our own Native Army. It has modern weapons and receives the latest instruction in drill and tactics; and it may be called upon to take its place in line with British troops when the Empire goes to war.

The Maharaja who decides to establish an Imperial Service Corps is left a considerable latitude of choice as to the kind of contingent he will supply. The horse-loving Kajputs of Jodhpur contribute a dashing regiment of lancers. In Bikaner, the desert State, they have a first-rate Camel Corps, which did valuable service in Somaliland and China—in the latter case with the high-spirited young Maharaja himself in command. The Maharaja of Jaipur contents himself with a workmanlike and useful train of transport carts. At Gwalior, the Maharaja Scindia, that energetic Indian prototype of the German Kaiser, sitting erect on a magnificent charger, with waving sabre flashing in the sunlight, led his own Imperial horsemen, at a thundering gallop, past the Koyal standard. When the Prince of Wales was at Lahore, a review of all the Imperial Service contingents of the Punjab chiefs was held at Mian Mir. There were between three and four thousand troops on the ground of all arms, except artillery—since the Mutiny we do not put field-guns into native hands—and a better display of physique, good marching and riding, and accurate drill could scarcely be seen in any country. There was little to choose, so far as the eye could judge, between the Mohammedan and Sikh soldiers of Patiala and Kapurthala and the bast

regiments of our Native Army. And these contingents, it must be remembered, were in all cases officered by men of their own state and people. Colonels, captains, and subalterns were of the same districts and the same races as their men. Many of them were relatives of the Chief, his brothers, nephews, or cousins, or members of the landowning families who owed him feudal allegiance.

But this is not all that we do to gratify the military tastes of our Indian warrior castes. The young scions of the reigning houses can be educated at the Kajkumar colleges, where they receive a combination of that sort of training which an English lad can get at a public school and at Sandhurst and "Woolwich. When they leave these academies they can join the Imperial Cadet Corps, a very select body, formed entirely of princes of the Indian reigning houses, which was one of Lord Curzon's happy thoughts. This squadron of high-born youths was happily chosen as one of the Prince of Wales's guards of honour, and a very gay and gallant troop of young cavaliers they looked, fit to be the escort of any sovereign, with their pretty fawn uniforms, their turbans of tur quoise blue, and their saddle-cloths made of the skin of the snow-leopard. It is proposed that some of these young gentlemen shall obtain direct commissions in the Indian Army. One of them has already been appointed to the General Staff, where they think extremely well of him.

The mere existence of these corps is symptomatic of a certain change in the attitude of the rulers of India towards the native states. It is a kind of testimonial to the loyalty of the Chiefs: a certificate that they can be safely trusted with so formidable a weapon as a few first-rate modern regiments, on the assumption that it would never be used except in our service or at our direction. If we went to war with an European Power we take it for granted that all the Imperial Service contingents

would vie with each other in pressing to be sent to the front. There they would be valuable. On the other hand, we could not afford to leave thirty or forty thousand magazine rifles, in trained native hands, on the rear of our Army of the first line. If the Bajas were *not* loyal, if they were at any time to develop active disaffection, then one cannot deny that these well-drilled troops might be a source of potential danger. Meanwhile we have un doubtedly done something to give a legitimate outlet to the martial instincts of the ' fighting races ' and their leaders; and we assume that the Ruling Chiefs, at any season of stress, will perceive that their interests and those of the Imperial Government of India lie along the same line. Are we justified in this complacent hypothesis ? It is a rather delicate subject to discuss, and there is not much that can be said upon it with any profit. Ambitious men, who have behind them a tradition of successful struggle, may sometimes chafe a little under the regime, which has substituted safe tranquillity and dignified subordination for attractive adventure and undefined authority.

Looking at the matter from the outside, one might say that the ruling families have no reason to be discontented with the place assigned to them. If we have taken much from the feudatory ruler, we have also given him a good deal. We have rendered him secure. His throne is no longer precarious. He can ' sleep well,' like King Duncan, though not in his grave. Treason, domestic broil, foreign assault ' can touch him not and harm him not again,' provided he exhibits a moderate diligence and a mode rate good sense in the task of government. We might dethrone him ourselves, but we should allow neither rebel barons nor ambitious rivals to overturn him.

Moreover, he has good assurance that we have no aggressive intentions towards him. If he were deposed it

would only be for proved misconduct, and even in that case his throne would not be forfeit. The time has gone by when the Indian Government would use an occasion of the kind in order to round off its territory. The era of annexation in the Peninsula is closed, and we desire only to maintain the political *status quo.* If it becomes necessary to administer a native state, the Government regards itself only as a trustee, acting in the interests of the population, but with due regard also to that of the legitimate dynasty, whose right to be replaced, so soon as circumstances permit, is always acknowledged.

A striking object-lesson was afforded by the rendition of Mysore. This old Hindu kingdom was transferred by us to the representatives of its ancient sovereigns after we had conquered it from Tippoo Sultan and Hyder Ali and their French allies at the end of the eighteenth century. But the restored Princes of Arcot had learnt nothing and forgotten nothing, like the Bourbons, and they proceeded to misrule their recovered domains in a bad Oriental fashion. Thereupon—it was in the year 1831—we found it imperative to give them their *conge* and replace them by Anglo-Indian officials. For fifty years Mysore was in commission under an English administration.

It was practically an integral part of our own ter ritories, and we could hardly have been condemned if we had forgotten that it had ever been anything else. Few people in India could have imagined that it would be given back to the descendant of its former rulers. The restoration was an act of voluntary justice, carried out when the reforms had been completed, and when it seemed that a capable Maharaja, with competent native assistance, could be safely left at the head of affairs.

Mysore has used its restored self-government well. It found not only an upright and well-educated Raja, but a Prime Minister of exceptional capacity, and since 1881,

the year of the surrender, it has been a model state, as excellent a specimen of administrative efficiency as India has to show. The example of Mysore has been valuable in many ways; but it has been particularly so by con vincing the Indian princes that we mean to keep faith with them, that we have no desire to extinguish the qualified independence we have left them, and no wish to incorporate their dominions with our own.

The Indian Government acts wisely in maintaining, so far as it can, the separate existence of these principali ties. They discharge, or may discharge under favourable circumstances, some useful functions in the Indian body politic. Within their comparatively restricted area it is possible to try experiments, legislative, economical, and social, which could with difficulty be attempted at one stroke over the whole large area of British India. The little cock-boat of a state, steered by its own native pilot and crew, might make the trial trip into waters upon which, if the navigation prove fortunate, it can in due course be followed by the weightier argosies. Thus Mysore can venture to go further in the direction of a social and domestic reform than the Government of India has cared to do. It can raise the age of marriage for women a full two years above the level at which it stands in British India. If this salutary and necessary change were made in one British province it would have to be followed in all the others; some fifty million families would be asked to modify intimate customs and abandon their rooted prejudices. In Mysore there is only a fiftieth part of the population involved, which makes a difference ; and there is a native administration concerned in this interference with domestic practices, not a foreign bureau cracy, which makes a greater difference still.

The Mysore Government, again, has used part of the surplus funds in its treasury to establish a great power-

station at the Falls of the river Cauvery, from which electric energy is supplied to the adjacent Kolar Gold-fields and the town of Bangalore. The scheme has proved successful both from an engineering and a financial point of view, and the Mysore exchequer receives a steady revenue from it. But this bold and rather speculative enterprise could hardly have been initiated by a British province which has no money save what it raises by taxation, and which has to account to the Government of India and to Parliament for every penny it spends. The greater elasticity of native rule allows scope for various tentative essays, and it also supplies an element of variety amid the level uniformity of the Anglo-Indian system of administration.

In this and similar ways an enlightened prince, on the *gadi* of an Indian native state, can find great possibilities of usefulness if he cares to grasp them. A philosopher on a throne could hardly desire a more favourable situation for the exercise of his abilities and his benevolence. He has most of the advantages of despotism without its customary discomforts and dangers. The cares of diplo macy, the burdens of military defence, are taken off his hands by his Imperial guarantors. He can ignore the peril of invasion, and it is his own fault if he is vexed by intrigue. Within his borders we leave him a large measure of freedom. He can appoint his own ministers and officials; and if he has to pay some deference to the views of the Besident he is, on the other hand, untroubled by a parliament or an electorate. He has a docile, loyal, and rather primitive, people within his own little ring-fence, and he can find ready to hand ample opportunities for adding to their well-being. His own station is assured, and should be extremely agreeable. He occupies a fine position ; he has honours and dignities ; he is treated like a reigning sovereign, with salutes of artillery, cavalry

escorts, and other tributes of respect, when he enters British territory; and he need only manage his finances with some approach to economy and avoid the grosser forms of personal extravagance to have plenty of spending money, with few of the anxieties which usually attend the possession of wealth in an Eastern society.

For these benefits he should be grateful. Perhaps he is; but he has his grievances. They are apt to bulk large when he is not on good terms with the political officer appointed unto him by the Government. The 'political' is not always the most tactful of human beings. Those who are selected by the India Office to manage the greater states, which come under its direct authority, are usually able men. But the Provincial Governments nominate Agents and Eesidents to their own groups of minor states, and one does not invariably hear the best accounts of these gentlemen. The position does not attract the most capable and ambitious officials of the Civil Service, because there is no great prospect of promotion in it. An aspiring young civilian, who hopes for a Lieutenant-Governorship or a Chief Commissionership or a post on the Council, as the crown of his career, will not consent to spend his active life in an unimportant Residency. The Department has to fall back on a military man who has taken to civil employment, or it selects a possibly second-rate member of the bureaucracy. He may be fussy or pretentious, or pompous, or merely ignorant and idle. There are political officers to whom most of these epithets could be justifiably applied. When such an individual has to manage a subtle, intriguing, and irritable native princeling, at once proud, sensitive, and suspicious, the machinery is not likely to work with smoothness.

At the best it does not run easily. The more we educate and Europeanise the native gentlemen, the less

do they like being held in leading-strings. The Kaja feels that his brain is at least equal to that of a middle-aged, middle-class Colonel, and he is quite aware that this diplomatist is nobody in particular when he goes back to his own country. In the old days that fact was hidden from him. Mysterious beings were emitted from out of the darkness of an unknown land. They might be princes themselves, or great councillors of state whose seat was on the steps of the Imperial Throne, for what his Highness knew.

But the mystery has been stripped bare. The Maha raja goes 'Home,' he knows all about our politics, he reads our newspapers, he assimilates even the valuable and informing society paragraphs. Fussy colonels impress him no longer. He takes them at about the valuation of their own countrymen, which is not exalted; and if he is young, able, ambitious, progressive, he is inclined to ask why he should not be permitted to manage his own affairs and those of his people without perpetual and patronising supervision. 'You are making men of us,' said one young Europeanising prince to an English friend of mine, who had been admitted to his confidence. ' Isn't it about time to leave off treating us like children ?' The suggestion conveyed in these words may be called unreasonable, when we consider that some of these Buling Chiefs would now be throneless and landless outcasts but for our protection. Yet the sentiment exists, and it would be foolish to pretend that it does not. His Highness the Maharaja makes his account, like a sensible man, with things as they are, especially as they really work out remarkably well for him. But we need not suppose that he is entirely satisfied with them, or that he would fail to seize an opportunity for modifying them if it came conveniently in his way.

CHAPTER X

ON THE FRONTIER

THE peoples of India are, speaking generally, a docile and a peaceable folk. The great majority of them are easily taught to abstain from strife and bloodshed. They do not like killing man or other animals, even in self-defence or for food. Most of them are habitual vegetarians; many are forbidden by their religion to take life under any circumstances. Though Buddhism was driven out of the Peninsula by the Brahmans, it left its impress upon the dominant sect in a theoretical aversion from violence of all kinds. The 'mild Hindu' is not a mere figment of the imagination. The Hindu, when excited, can become wild rather than mild. But, taken in the mass, he is assuredly not a first-class fighting-man. He will endure oppression, or endeavour to counter it by subtlety and craft, rather than resent it openly. His tendency is to obey authority, even when wrongly exercised. In fact, he is a highly governable person.

If it were not so, our task would be difficult to the verge of impossibility. As it is, though we hold India by force, that force itself is, in point of numbers, almost contemptible. The Indian army is much the smallest in the world in comparison with the size of the country. In Germany there is one soldier, actual or potential, for about every twenty civilians, women and children included; in France there is one among twelve; even in the United Kingdom at least one person in forty or fifty has been

trained, more or less, to the use of arms. The population of India is close on three hundred millions, and the troops of the King-Emperor, Imperial Service Corps and all, total up to some two hundred and fifty thousand ; that is to say, one soldier for every twelve hundred persons.

Naturally, the military profession is not much in evidence in the greater part of the Peninsula. It is as if the army, let us say, of Belgium or Switzerland had to do duty for the whole of Western Europe, from Lapland to Sicily. There are large tracts of India where a soldier is never seen, and there must be millions of peasants who do not set eyes on a military uniform from one year's end to another. Yet the experts assure us that these unguarded tracts are perfectly safe, and that over the greater part of them rebellion is as unlikely as it would be in Bedford shire, and a serious disturbance beyond the power of the police to handle almost equally improbable. We keep a few troops in cantonments near the large cities, where there are European residents and a possibly turbulent mob; but even this is thought by many soldiers to be a superfluous sacrifice to the tragic memories of the Mutiny. The New School would like to take the regiments away from the enervating plains altogether, trusting to the railway to truck them down again when needed, and quartering the troops upon the frontier and the districts adjacent, where the great wars for the mastery of India will be waged in the future as they have been waged in the past.

It is to the far North-West that you must go to see the flower of the Anglo-Indian army, and the men who hold the sword of Britain in the East. You see it best of all near the point of the blade, the tongue of land thrust up into the mountains from which the invaders of India have so often dropped, Peshawar lies a little back from the extremity, a town of soldiers, and where

the soldier rules. Elsewhere the civilian bureaucrat is omnipotent; here he is subordinate to the warrior caste. The Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province is a military officer, and so are his principal assistants. For the whole district is like a fortress with the ramparts manned, or like a ship of war cleared for action. Even in peace time it is always on guard. There is a simmer of unrest in the very air, and you feel it as you come up from the busy tranquil toiling Hindustan down below.

Much study of maps and books at home may give you some idea of what the Borderland is like, in its geographical and political aspects; but its true character is not revealed till you reach that colossal mountain rampart which shuts off India from the mainland of Asia. The frontier is a broad irregular zone of broken earth, tossed into frowning hills, or gashed by deep and sinuous valleys, through which the watercourses cut their way towards the great plains and the sea. In the north the barrier spreads out to more than the breadth of France, and takes in Kashmir and Chitral and the Pamir country, till it loses itself in the towering masses of the Himalayas; to the south it flattens and widens again, till it covers the area of British Baluchistan, now solidly held by our soldiers and engineers as an outlying bastion to command and turn the whole line. Here we have made our strong place of arms at Quetta, a fortress which could defy modern artillery; and we have carried the railway almost to the border of Afghanistan, so that, if an invader should attempt to press through the Amir's territory, we could pour troops into Kandahar, and strike his advancing columns upon the flank.

In its central portion, where it faces the Punjab and Scinde, the frontier zone narrows down, and India and Afghanistan are joined by the Khyber, and further south

by the Gonial and Kuram Passes, which pierce the dividing ridge. All this vast tract of rough country has been peopled from time immemorial by clans of wild High landers, hardy, independent, quarrelsome, and militant as any mountaineers in the world. The tribes differ much among themselves; and while the Hazaras and Baluchis are fairly dependable and amenable to control, the Afridis are difficult to manage and the Mahsud Waziris, who could call out thirty thousand fighting men or more, are normally in a state of turbulence and internecine warfare.

These hillmen belong to the fighting races. They have been raiders and warriors from the beginning, pursuing each other with fierce blood-feuds and savage hereditary vendettas, and lifting cattle impartially from the Afghan valleys and the Indian plains, like Scott's freebooter, who

> stole the beeves that made his broth,
> From England and from Scotland both.

In 1893 a joint British and Afghan Commission marked out the 'Durand line,' which makes the frontier strip nominally Indian territory up to the Afghan boundary. In reality, it is still abandoned to the clans men, who carry on their feuds and contests, tribe against tribe, village against village, as their fathers did. We should be well content if they would confine themselves to these pastimes, so long as they left the communications uninterrupted and abstained from interfering w[r]ith our peaceable subjects.

But even this compromise cannot be maintained without constant friction. We have arrived at a good understanding with certain headmen and have made them and their levies re sponsible for keeping the peace of their own districts. Bus some of the chiefs are doubtful, and some of the tribes have no chiefs whose authority they

respect. Just now we are on fair terms with the Afridis, among whom we have raised an excellent and disciplined force for the policing of the Khyber. Other clans are perennially restless. In 1896 there was a great rising of many confederated tribes, acting temporarily in unison; and the Indian Army has seldom found a harder task than that of cornering these tough mountaineers among their glens and gorges, and beating them into a reluctant sub mission. Few people at home realised what the Tirah cam paign meant, or knew how near we came to being swept out of the frontier altogether. The peace of the border is still extremely precarious. No longer ago than 1902 we had twenty thousand men engaged in blockading the Mahsuds, with the object of exacting restitution for the outrages they had committed. We levied our fine and withdrew the troops. But the lesson was imperfectly learnt; and all the time I was in India the talk among soldiers was of another ' punitive expedition,' which may easily become a serious campaign before it is over.

In the fringe of country that adjoins this perturbed tract, where the rifle and the long jezail are seldom mute for any length of time, our officers sleep, so to speak, with their arms in their hands. Lawless deeds, even when there is no formal trouble with the tribesmen, may be expected at any moment. A few days before the Prince arrived at Peshawar, a frontier picket had been attacked, several sepoys had been killed and wounded, and some rifles were carried away ; and about three weeks after the Eoyal visitors left an armed band made a sudden raid on a village a few miles from Peshawar itself. The episode is thus instructively explained by one of the Indian newspapers: ' The raiders are said to have been Afridis, and their leader the notorious outlaw Gafar, who was already wanted by the police for many other misdeeds. In Banamani is the residence of a well-known Pathan

contractor, by name Wali Khan; and as the simple-minded Afridi connects contracts with wealth, it was supposed that a raid on his house would yield a good haul. So Gafar, taking advantage of a dark night, led the attack on Wali Khan's house in true military style. But it was a case of Greek meeting Greek. Wali Khan was more than prepared for the kindly attentions of Gafar and his gang. The report (from all accounts a true one) is that Gafar and three of his men fell to the valiant contractor's gun, and so the raid failed. It appears that six of the marauders have been captured.' Obviously a region in which contractors play their game in this warlike fashion breeds a different kind of trader from the pacific townsmen and home-loving cultivators of the more settled interior districts.

The moral change is as great as the physical, and that is marked enough. In this far northern region we come back to the northern winter. There is a savage bite in the frost-laden morning wind which sets you long ing for the open grates and blazing hearth-fires of home; and though the sun may burn strongly for an hour or two at midday, the mercury runs down thirty degrees at dusk, and in your tent or draughty bungalow you shiver under your rugs and blankets. The unwary voyager, coming out with only thin flannels, to match his conception of the Indian climate at all seasons, finds himself hurrying to the bazaar, and is thankful for the *poshtin,* the coat of sheepskin and embroidered yellow leather, which he can buy for a few rupees.

It is a country that straightens a man's back and strings up his muscles. There is no softness in the town, the people, the atmosphere of Peshawar. We have left the region of bright colours and smooth faces behind us, the gay cotton robes, the green, and orange, and crimson turbans of Eajputana, the shrewd Marwari merchants and

the sleek Hindu tradesmen. When the Prince of Wales held his first reception at Peshawar we had a scene till then unfamiliar to us in India. Here was no galaxy of corpulent notables, shining in silks and brocaded satins, and hung round with jewels. The Border chiefs, who offered their packet of gold coins, or put forward their sword-hilts for the Prince to touch, did not make a decorative group, if judged by their costumes. Most of them were plainly, some were even shabbily, dressed ; and they stumbled into the Royal presence, these wild men of the hills, with none of the self-confident ease of the down-country rajas. I noticed that not one of them paid the least attention to the Royal lady sitting beside the Prince; indeed, they seemed too nervous to salute her, though, perhaps, being Mohammedans, they might have deemed it contrary to etiquette to recognise her presence in any way. They looked as if they would have been far more in their element leading their tribesmen in a foray against a neighbouring clan, or lurking among the rocks to cut off a convoy. Both occupations are familiar to most of them. If they were not decorative, they were eminently interesting: tall and sinewy, with fierce keen eyes, they moved with the step of the mountaineer and the unconscious dignity of men sprung from generations of free and fighting ancestors.

Just now our frontier officials have a good under standing with these chiefs, who are helping to guard the roads through the mountains, and are doing their best to keep their people from interfering with traders and travellers. But their own feuds are carried on ener getically, and life is ruthlessly sacrificed. At the very moment when the Prince was at Peshawar two of the tribes were at war, though they had very courteously agreed on a week's truce so that his Royal Highness might not be incommoded in his journey through the

Khyber Pass. In our passage along that famous defile we could see the little shelter-trenches up the hillside which the belligerents had dug for the greater convenience of pursuing their warlike operations. In a country like this perpetual vigilance is required. When the Prince drove through the streets of Peshawar to the G-hor Kattri, where General Avitabile, in the days of Ranjit Singh, used to have his weekly hangings, the streets were guarded by the Black Watch, the Gordons, and the 37th Dogras.

The Highlanders and the Hindu troops stood in a close line, and behind them were rows of tall Pathans, gaunt and bony, with keen eyes and vulturine Semitic beaks. The soldiers had ball-cartridge in their pouches, and the people were kept sternly from coming too near the edge of the pavement. These precautionary measures were not directed against any organised disaffection, which nobody for a moment expected. But it was necessary to provide against the contingency of an isolated outbreak of infuriated fanaticism. An Afghan Mussulman may go Ghazi at any moment. When he does so, he becomes the most dangerous creature that walks the earth—not so much a lunatic as a demoniac, under the influence of an irresistible hypnotic suggestion which impels him first to kill an infidel and then to get killed himself, in order that he may go straight to Paradise. Even when the Border in a general way is quite tranquil, a single Ghazi may break out and destroy a valuable life or two before he can be shot or knocked on the head like a mad dog.

An officer of one of the local corps told me that he never took the short ride from Peshawar to Jamrud, which is regular British territory, and ordinarily undisturbed, without a loaded revolver on his person; for a Ghazi might pop out even there, and he did not wish to afford the public the undignified spectacle of an Englishman bolting before a screaming fanatic. Against the Ghazi

the white man unprovided with firearms has no chance. He can only run away.

So the Prince and Princess were well guarded all the time they were on the frontier. Even at the garden-party in the grounds of Government House precautions were unobtrusively observed. It was odd to notice that the attendants and Royal servants were armed, at what was otherwise a very English-seeming entertainment. The menace of the Frontier was forgotten as one paced the smooth lawns behind Government House, dotted with groups of ladies in charming summer dresses, with officers in uniform, and with frock-coated civilians, listening to the military bands and the pipers of the Highlanders. Peshawar is characteristically Asiatic, but its European quarters have a homelike air. The cantonments are among the most delightful in India, with their wide avenues lined with trees that keep their greenery in this northern climate, and their bungalows set in gardens where the English flowers bloom.

It is strange to pass from the pleasant umbrageous suburbs to the Mohammedan city, with its flat-roofed houses of sun-dried brick, looking down from loop-holed windows and jealously latticed casements upon the stream of mixed Asian humanity—Afghan, Afridi, Mongolian, Hindu—flowing through the narrow streets and the dark alleys in which a European is warned that it is wiser not to walk after dusk.

And whenever you cast your eyes upwards in Peshawar, the dragon-teeth of the hills are before you. From the gate of the Ghor Kattri, or the roof of the barracks, or the bastions of the fortress, the mountain-barrier fronts you, grey-green in the morning, golden brown in the day, glowing with rose and reddened umber at sunset; and Peshawar is an historic city, because it faces the breach in that wall of sandstone and shales by which the men

of the north have been marching upon the plains of India since history began. The Scythian, the Tartar, the Arab, the Moghul, the Persian have come that way. The Afghan, perhaps the Muscovite, would swoop through it to-morrow if the sentinels of Peshawar were withdrawn.

Yet there is little to see in the Khyber Pass itself, and no memorial of all the triumphant or dejected pilgrims who have traversed its stony sands. From Peshawar the rail way leads across some dozen miles of rough pasture and arable land, which is dead level plain to the very foot of the hills. Here stands the fort of Jamrud, looking like a great battleship anchored at the mouth of the dangerous strait. The road, which English engineers have made, goes winding up between barren hills, treeless and bare to the summits which Pollock crowned with his infantry and batteries, when he forced the Pass on his way to relieve Jellalabad in 1842. At intervals there is one of those fortified farms, with round towers, like the peels of the Scottish border, in which the women and the cattle can be placed at night.

Nothing tells more strongly of the insecurity of the country than these embattled dwellings. After the great tribal rising in 1897, when we were driven clean out of the Khyber by a sudden wave of Moslem fanaticism, many of the towers were demolished ; but we have per mitted new ones to be erected, nor, indeed, could we well forbid it, since we do not hold the Afridi country, but have only preserved a right of way through the Pass itself. We guard the road, and punish any breach of the peace fifty yards on either side of it. Beyond this narrow ribbon we do not assert our authority, and if the tribesmen shoot each other outside the limit we make it no business of ours. Along the Pass itself British forts, crenellated and machicolated, with loopholed walls and steel shutters for protection against musketry fire at close quarters,

alternate with the native strongholds. At Ali Masjid, in the middle of the valley, which was sacked by the tribesmen in 1897, there are now barracks and a permanent garrison. Here the mountains rise higher and the scenery gains in boldness; and thence onward, past gorge and jutting mass of rock and deep chasm, the skilful spirals of the road twist and turn, till it opens upon a fine basin, in the midst of which stands Landi Kotal, on the edge of Afghanistan, the last outpost of Britain on the road from Central Asia.

The "Wardens of the Marches—that is to say, the Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province and the Political Officer of the Khyber district—had resolved that no risks should be taken when the Prince drove through the Pass. In the ordinary way the Khyber is guarded twice a week ; sentries are posted and pickets are out on those two days, and then it is safe for the tourist to take his tonga through, and for the great caravan from Central Asia, with its train of laden Bactrian camels, its horses, and its pack-mules, to plough slowly over the sand to Peshawar Bazaar and Railway Station. On this Monday in December, the royal *cortege* went by under the watchful eyes of a small army of troops. There was a line of sentries all the way along a few yards above the roadside, and if the eye travelled upwards, on every conspicuous height or jutting fragment of rock, it picked out the khaki uniforms and glinting bayonets of other sentries. Minute figures, perched two thousand feet in the air, were presenting arms to the procession that must have looked like a train of toy carriages in the dusty thread of road below them. These were the men of the Khyber Rifles. The whole seventeen hundred of them were on duty that day ; and we knew, though we could not see them, that an equal number of the tribal levies formed an outer cordon on the farther heights beyond,

If the Prince was well defended, his defenders themselves were those who had been, many of them, fierce enemies of the rule and the civilisation he represents. There was an interesting scene at Ali Masjid, where the *maliks* or headmen of the Zakka Khel, the Kubri Khel^ the Sipah, and other wild clans, assembled to offer their *nazar* of sheep and honey to the Prince, and to assure him of their loyalty. 'Though I am blind,' said one fine old sightless patriarch, 'I can touch the hand of my king.' The Khyber Bifles themselves are Afridis, who have been taken into our pay and drilled and disciplined under our officers. It is the policy which made the Black Watch and the Gordons out of the caterans and cattle-raiders of the Scottish Highlands, and it seems to be succeeding almost as well. A handful of young English officers are turning the savages into first-rate British soldiers—orderly, obedient, and proud of their service. When you look at these admirable battalions of disci plined infantry, with their two squadrons of smart cavalry, you find it hard to believe that these are the own brothers and cousins of the long-haired picturesque barbarians who come out from their hamlets to stare at the Royal travellers.

And the men who have done this thing? We saw some of them at Landi Kotal, by the Afghan end of the Pass. It is a desolate place enough, this lonely sentry-box on the Empire's rim. All round it are the brown bare mountains, spotted with stunted trees and wispy bushes of camel-thorn; in front is Afghanistan and the unknown dangers beyond; behind, the long sandy path that goes snaking through the hills and is the only way back to India and home. In this forlorn abiding-place you will find the British subaltern, neat and cool and comfortable, a boy with clear cheeks and smooth hair, who handles his half-hundred wind baked ruflians much

as if they were the Second Eleven and he their captain. He has to be something of a linguist, an ethnologist, a cartographer, a diplomatist, this cheerful youngster; he may be shot down by a stray sniper from the hills any morning as he goes his rounds; he has no one to talk to but three or four of his own comrades, no society, no amusements, hardly any leisure; he is always drilling his men, or teaching them, or making up their accounts, or finding out what mischief is brewing among the villages. His life is as hard and as busy as that of the juniors in the ward-room of a man-of-war; he takes it with the same reserved vivacity ; he keeps his health, his manners, his sense of humour. There are those who say that the young British officer is always foolish and always idle. They should go and look at him in India, and, above all, on the Frontier.

CHAPTEE XI

SEPOY AND SOWAR

IT is a truism to say that we hold India by the sword; and, like other truisms, it is often forgotten and often mis understood. It does not mean, for example, that we rule India by mere armed strength against the will of the majority of its population, as the Sultan of Turkey rules Macedonia. Nor does it mean that any large proportion of our subjects are only deterred from rising against us by the certainty that we should shoot them down if they did so. Not in that sense do we govern India by force. We are the masters of India because we control the administration and have got the executive authority into our hands.

Of the inhabitants of the sub-continent, five-sixths have for centuries lived and died under alien domination. We are the substitutes for various sovereigns and dynas ties, all of whom were foreigners as much as we are to the mass of those who yielded them obedience. Two hundred and fifty millions of the peasantry of India have never known political freedom and have never known native government. We took no independence from them, for they had none. All that we have done has been to put ourselves in the place of other despots, whose title, like our own, rested in the last resort on military efficiency. If we hold India by the sword, the point and edge of the weapon are not turned against the ' Indian people' (which does not exist), but against potential rivals,

within and without, who would wrest it from us in order that they might grasp the hilt themselves.

Yet it is true enough that the mainstay and sheet-anchor of our position in India is the British-Indian Army. If there is any force, within the confines of the territory itself, or within accessible distance, which could overcome that army, our civil administration, our public works, our law, justice, and education, would melt away like the winter snows in spring. All that we have done, all that we may do, in India rests on the basis of that armed power. We make, as I have pointed out, no ostentatious display of it. How little we need to use it against the vast and obedient multitude of our subjects is shown by the almost ridiculous paucity of our garrison in the Plains. It may still be said to-day, as it was by Sir William Hunter a few years ago, that in Bengal [1] probably forty millions of people go through life without once seeing the gleam of a bayonet or the face of a soldier,' But those whose interest or whose business it might be to make prey of that forty millions, know where the bayonets gleam; they are aware that they will do well not to look on the faces of British soldiers except in the way of friendship.

Fortunately, we have enlisted the militant instincts of many of the natives in our own service. The sword which Britain wields in Asia is largely in Asiatic hands. It is not till you have seen something of our Eastern army at close quarters that you realise the excellence of the material at our command. Two-thirds of our army in India is native ; the rest is European. Of the latter, not much need be said. The effectiveness of our British, infantry battalions, of our regiments of Lancers and Hussars, and our batteries of Royal Artillery, depends on the administration of the War Office at home, and on the quality of suitable recruits it is able to attract to the

colours. The officers and men are not very different from their comrades at Aldershot and the Curragh.

Such variation as one can discern is all in favour of the Indian contingent. For the regiments have been picked and weeded over before they leave their depots ; they have ampler space and latitude for training and drill; they live under something much more nearly resembling service conditions, and they are hardened by abundant exercise in the open air. The Scottish and Irish lads, the Cockneys, and the young fellows from the villages, are tougher and stronger and more soldier-like than they appear in the old country. I saw the Queen's, the Dorsets, and the Cameronians march past in the great Beview at Rawul Pindi on December 8, after days of marching and sham-fighting in the sun and the awful Indian dust, and after bivouacking on the bare hillside at night, without tents or blankets. A smarter, cheerier, more workmanlike, lot of infantry soldiers it would be hard to find. And when the batteries of the Royal Artillery thundered by, every trace taut, every horse extended at a pounding gallop, one could not doubt that the guns dancing behind the racing teams would be un commonly well served when the word was Action Front. Excellent troops—if only there were enough of them to fill up the gaps when this admirable first line begins to feel the waste of war. As for the officers, they are much like their brothers and cousins at home : clean, pleasant, well-mannered, good-tempered youths, sport-loving, manly, a little 'casual' about their work, but showing signs of the sobering effect produced by the change in their environment. India is a serious country for the Englishman of every grade, and he cannot take his re sponsibilities too lightly.

You notice, however, a perceptible contrast between the officers of the Home, and those of the Indian, Army,

With these latter the amateurishness of the British subaltern has gone by the board. You feel at once that you are in the presence of men, who make soldiering their business and have no other interest in life which can in the smallest degree compete with it. Neither French officers, nor Germans, nor Japanese are more candidly professional. There is no affectation of regarding the regiment as a nuisance, no abhorrence of talking shop. On the contrary, the Indian subaltern will talk shop all day if you will let him. Polo, racing, hunting, pig-sticking may interest him; but these things are his amusements; he does not pretend to live for them, and would not be respected by his fellows if he did.

His thoughts and the most of his time are occupied with his duties, as is the case with his kinsmen who wear His Majesty's uniform on board His Majesty's ships of war. Indeed, he has many points of affinity with the naval officer, and I am struck by his resemblance to that admirable public servant. Like the sailor, he is kept in order by those two potent stimulants, poverty and work. The Indian officer is usually poor; he would not be in India if he were not. A large majority of the men of the Staff Corps (to use the term which is still current, though it was officially abolished in 1903), I am assured, live on their pay. One hears cases of captains, married and with children, supporting themselves on a salary and allowances which, all told, would not reach four hundred a year; of youngsters living on half that sum,—and this in a country where horses and many servants are necessary.

Further, the Indian lieutenant, like his friend in the ward-room, cannot play with his duties. He is responsible for some six-score of semi-savage Pathans, or dour hard bitten Sikhs, or wild Punjabi Mohammedans. He has no European sergeants to take the rough work off his hands. The oldest bearded native resaldar-major, a gentleman

and a landed proprietor in his own district and a soldier of twenty years' service in the regiment, may come to the boy for orders. He has to be drill-instructor, and riding-master, and musketry expert, and accountant; and all his men, and their horses, and their rifles, and, to some extent, their morals, are under his charge. And he toils, so far as the climate will allow him, from morning till night.

In the hot season there is not so much doing, and it is the wise policy of the authorities to permit him to take plenty of leave at this period, and to keep in touch with European ideas and military developments by getting a few weeks at home every third year or so. But in the cold weather he is always at it. Early-morning parades, drill, target-practice, stable-inspections, teaching recruits, checking accounts for stores and forage, and a vast amount of office-work (far too much of it, some good judges think), leave him little time for recreation. If he can get an hour or two at polo or hockey in the afternoon, and now and then a game at whist or bridge, he may consider himself lucky.

The staff are no less sedulous. One officer told me that it is his custom to begin work soon after six in the morning, and, except for his meals and a break of an hour or two before dinner, he is busy till ten o'clock at night. People who think that military men are mainly occupied in amusing themselves should see the officers of the Indian Native Army in camp or at headquarters. They cannot afford to be dissipated, and they have no time to be idle. But their work, if hard, is interesting. It trains the character and the brain, provided only that a man has an adequate supply of both to start with. If he is not so furnished he will do little good in the Indian Army, and it generally contrives to get rid of him. Industry, self-reliance, intelligence, a knowledge of human

nature, and a sense of humour, are requisite for success in that exacting school, and these qualities seem to be developed there.

An Indian regiment, with its eight or nine hundred bayonets, or its five or six hundred sabres, is under the charge of from nine to thirteen Europeans, including the colonel, the surgeon, and the adjutant. The rest are natives. They come from a comparatively limited section of the population. Bengal, with its eighty millions, hardly supplies a sepoy or a sowar, Madras very few, Bombay not many. The great majority are from the Punjab and the northern frontier districts and from Oudh. They are members of the fighting races, some of whom have once ruled India, while others would make a fair bid to do it again, if they had the chance. The Pathans of the hill border, the Sikhs, the Dogras, the Itajputs, the Gurkhas, and the Punjabi Mohammedans, descendants of Afghan or Tartar invaders, are the chief elements. The Punjabis and the Pathans believe in the Prophet; the Sikhs, Dogras, and Rajputs believe in Vishnu and Siva; the Gurkhas believe in nothing in particular except their own officers. In Central India some of the aboriginals have been drilled, and in Madras there are regiments in which 'Pariahs and Christians' and other miscellaneous folk are enlisted.

But the staple of the Indian Army consists of these aforesaid Sikhs, Pathans, Punjabis, and Gurkhas. In the old days there were mostly 'class regiments' formed entirely of men of the same race and religion. Since the Mutiny we have preferred a judicious mixture, making up many of the regiments with companies each drawn from the same sect or tribe, the idea being generally to keep a balance of Mohammedans and Hindus in the corps. The Gurkhas are all class regiments still, because we have the greatest confidence in the little yellow Mongolians,

who would not serve with either Hindus or Mohammedans, and have no sort of respect for either. The Gurkha deems himself one of the *sahib-log.* He will not wear the turban of the Asiatic peoples, though he has no objection to the helmet, or the round cap, or the South African slouch hat, or any other hideous headgear of civilised Western man.

Better troops than some of those belonging to these warlike races few armies in the world possess. The Gurkha looks in all respects precisely like the Japanese, and is as tenacious, as brave, and as invincibly cheerful. The Pathans are wiry hillmen, born fighters, and full of dash and mettle; and the Sikhs, in regard to physique and bearing, would give points to most European regi ments, including our own and the Prussian Guards.

Whether these soldiers would really hold their own with white troops no one can say, for the quality of the Indian Army has not been tried by that test. But one cannot see why they should fail under it. They drill as well as any Europeans, and they ride and shoot and march better than most. Opinions may differ as to the precise value of the tactical and strategical training they receive.

The verdict of some military experts present during the great manoeuvres near Rawul Pindi was not, I be lieve, quite favourable. They suggested that there was too much of the old Aldershot unreality about the whole transaction, that cavalry enacted impossible spectacular charges, that infantry were tranquilly deployed, under the fire of heavy artillery, before impregnable positions. As to the supreme administration, as everybody knows, it has formed the subject of embittered controversy of late, and there are those who say that the internal economy of the Indian War Office needs reform as much as that of the establishments in Pall Mall and Whitehall. But I am sure that the fifty-seven thousand men who marched past

the Prince of Wales at the great review constituted as fine a host as any nation need wish to have when doing battle for its life. The organisation may need improvement, but the material is not far short of the best.

Indeed, the Indian trooper or sepoy will compare, in some particulars, rather favourably with Tommy of the Line. He is drawn from, speaking relatively, a superior class of society ; he respects himself more, and is, I think, also held in more respect by his officers. You will not often find a subaltern of an English regiment eager to assert that his men are the finest fellows in the world. But I have scarcely met an officer of the Indian Army who does not hold that opinion; nor does he usually hesitate to give audible expression to it. The ingenuous youth, who is responsible for a double company of Gurkhas, is an enthusiastic eulogist of the men of Nepaul. The squadron-leader, who rides in front of a hundred hook nosed Afghans, assures you that there are no soldiers like his Pathans. I look back to a delightful hour on a sunny verandah spent with an officer of Madras Pioneers, who pointed out, at considerable length, the superiority of the sturdy cheerful Tamils, unduly depreciated by the military autocrats of the North, over turbulent Mussulmans and uncomfortable high-caste Hindus.

The Indian officer has some reason to be proud of his native comrade in arms. Pir Bukhsh or Ahmed Khan is, taking him all round, a reputable person not without honour in his own country. He does not come from the residuum of the towns, but is, on the contrary, usually sprung from a sturdy population of yeomanry and peasants. Enlistment is for him not a final resource to avert starva tion, but the entry to a dignified and recognised profession. It elevates rather than debases him in the social scale. When he goes back to his village with a pension, after carrying a lance or rifle for a dozen years, he will be

treated with a certain amount of deference by his neighbours, and will feel himself entitled to walk with a swagger for the remainder of his days. In the ranks his conduct is usually excellent. His discipline is good; he revels in his work, and is proud of it; he keeps his uniform and accoutrements spotless, and looks a soldier all over under his dashing *lunghi*; he is sober, temperate, and thrifty; he is often a married man, and when he takes his leave he spends it in visiting his family and the paternal farm. If he is in the cavalry, he is commonly a sort of gentleman, belonging to the class of small landed proprietors, with an hereditary predilection for the trade of arms.

Besides being one of the best of soldiers, he is also one of the cheapest. In the infantry, the private receives nine rupees—say, twelve shillings—a month, and out of that sum he feeds and clothes himself. His rifle he receives from the Government; he is given a sum of forty rupees on joining to provide himself with the rest of his equipment, and an allowance of nine rupees a year to keep it in order. The sowar has thirty-one rupees *per mensem,* and he provides for his own clothing and maintenance, as well as for the keep of his horse, half the wages of a syce or camp-follower, and the food of a mule or pony; there being one attendant and one such animal for every two troopers. When on active service he receives his rations, and at other times a small allowance to supplement the cost of forage if the price rises beyond a certain level. Otherwise, the Sirkar gets this excellent trooper, his horse, his clothing, his food, his half-mule, and his half-follower, at an inclusive charge of less than twenty-four guineas per annum, which does not seem excessive.

The cavalry regiments, except in Madras, are organised on what is called the Silladar system. Instead of bringing his own horse, the sowar pays two hundred rupees into a common regimental fund. Out of this fund the regiment

buys the charger for him and other necessary equip ment, repaying itself by deducting the amount from his monthly pay. If he loses his horse on active service, the Government supplies him with another; should the accident occur in peace time, an inquiry is held, and if it is proved to be due to any preventable cause the sowar obtains another animal from the regimental fund, but he has to pay for it by monthly stoppages. This naturally renders the troopers extremely careful of their mounts, and better horse-masters than the men of the Indian cavalry are not to be found. They ride light for their height, with no superfluous baggage, and they never miss a convenient opportunity of saving their horses by dis mounting, when an English Hussar would be sitting stolidly, all the twelve stone of him, in the saddle.

The Silladar organisation cares for the interests of the rank and file in various ways. Some regiments keep their own stud-farms and remount establishments, under the charge of a non-com. and a few pensioners of the corps. Nearly all buy grain and forage and clothing material in large quantities and retail it to the men at a reasonable rate. The whole arrangement is under the superintend ence of the European officers, which is one of the reasons why the regiment works together in a kind of family union. When the trooper takes his discharge from the colours, his horse, or what is left of it, goes back to the regiment, and he receives the balance of his two hundred rupees deposit.

Thus Pir Bukhsh may return to his village with a small capital, as well as his pension. He often buys a small plot of land, if he has not inherited one, and lives in moderate prosperity, provided he keeps out of the hands of the moneylenders. He brings his old cavalry sabre with him, and sometimes he takes it down and cleans it carefully, regaling his sons with stones of the

warlike exploits performed by him in the regiment under Captain Eshmitt or Captain Estewart, and of the singular and special notice which he, the said Pir Bukhsh, received from the Colonel, and even from the great 'Lat Sahib' himself, when he was detailed to do duty as orderly to that commander. Then in the fulness of time, perhaps, young Smith or young Stewart, now leader of his father's troop, despatches a native officer to the village, with an intimation that a few recruits would be welcome; and the veteran sells a bullock or two, scrapes together the neces sary entrance-money, and sends off the likeliest of his boys, with his blessing, to become a soldier of the Em peror, like himself.

There are rumours that it is proposed to abolish the Silladar system. But it seems incredible that any such mischievous project should be seriously entertained. Good judges are convinced that it would be the ruin of the native cavalry. The soldier likes to think that he is serving the Sirkar in the old feudal fashion, which we did not invent, but only inherited with some modifications from our predecessors in the government of India. He would deeply resent the idea of being converted, as he indignantly puts it, into a mere paid servant like any coolie or table-waiter.

Promotion in the Indian Army is from the ranks. The ambitious young native gentleman who aspires to a military career enlists as a private, perhaps bringing with him a welcome contribution of a dozen or twenty of his father's retainers and dependants. He is naturally marked out for promotion from the beginning; and if he is intelligent and attentive, and shows some aptitude for command, he soon rises. Presently he becomes a naik or duffadar, and in due course havildar, jemadar, and subadar, or resaldar-major. Even higher honours may await him. Dining with a general commanding one of the most

important military districts in India, I found his Moham medan aide-de-camp at the table, and treated by every body—the general himself, the ladies of his family, and his guests—on precisely the same footing as the English members of the staff. Though he was a young Border noble, of ancient descent and some fortune, he had gone through the ranks and carried a rifle, like any peasant recruit from the mountain hamlets on his estate.

But the Indian Army has been suffering of late from a recruiting difficulty of its own. In India we are drawing our contingent from a somewhat constricted circle. We depend more and more upon the ' fighting races,' and these form only a small fraction of the vast population of the Empire. And the proportion has been steadily diminishing of late years. The Mahrattas, once great warriors, now prefer intrigue and other civil pur suits ; the Bajputs, a fine people but no longer quite what they were, do not now enter our armies as freely as in former times; the high-caste Hindus, the Brahmans and ' Pandies,' who formed the staple of the old pre-Mutiny army, scarcely offer themselves at all. Thus we are rely ing mainly on the two hill-peoples beyond the frontier, the Pathans and the Gurkhas, whose numbers are limited, and on the Sikhs and Punjab Mohammedans. The Sikhs are brave and excellent soldiers ; but they are also keen lovers of money, and they are finding many profitable avenues open to them as policemen, railway servants, and watchmen.

There is another difficulty, of which one hears a good deal just now. The pay of the Indian soldier has not kept pace with the times and with the increased demands made upon him. In this respect he suffers in company with his own officers, and with most other persons in official employment. Living in India, for native and European alike, is no longer so cheap as it once was. TLe

cost of everything has increased, including that of food and clothes and lodgings. The native soldier is not now able to buy grain and condiments, sufficient to keep him in health, for twopence a day; he finds himself a badly paid man in comparison with a mill-hand or a domestic servant.

He has also another special grievance. Military training, in every modern army, is and must be more exacting than it used to be. Under the new regime, the regiments are constantly at work, on parades and field exercises, in practising night attacks, route marches, entrenching operations. This means more destruction of clothing and kit, more wear and tear of horses and shoe-leather, and more food for man and beast; for the Indian native, in his wisdom, adjusts his consumption of food to the amount of muscular energy he requires to produce. Thus the soldier is put to greater expense in many ways, and instead of saving a few annas at the end of the month, he may find himself with a deficit. I am assured that there is great dissatisfaction throughout the Indian Army on this account, and that the shortage in recruiting is largely ascribable to the same cause. Happily the remedy is easy. The Indian Government must contrive to add another rupee or two to the monthly wages of its native troops. And while it is so engaged, it might usefully make some improvement in the pay and allowances of the hardworking corps of European officers, who have made its military establishment, with all its defects, one of the finest working armies in the world.

CHAPTEE XII

THE CITIES OF THE MOGHULS

DELHI, NEW AND OLD

FROM the wild Northland, with its whisperings of the wars to come, the Prince of "Wales passed down into the Punjab, where almost every seamed and ravined plain, and every devious spreading river, carries a memory of triumphs and disasters in the past. The Indus, the Sutlej, the Jhelam, the Ravi, the Jumna—the very names speak of ' the drums and tramplings of a thousand con quests.' Afghans, Sikhs, Tartars, Bajputs, Mahrattas, and English, have poured their blood into the sandy lagoons of the great watercourses. The Prince might have mused (if the crowded days of a Royal progress yield time for musing) on the strange fate which makes him heir to the thrones of Akbar and Aurangzeb. It is as if, in some distant century, a Mikado of Japan were to visit his subjects among the palaces and churches of Rome, as perhaps (who knows ?) he may.

Rome herself has scarcely a stronger appeal to offer to the imagination than some of these storied cities of north ern India. The view over the Campagna, with its halting legions of broken arches and riven columns, is little more impressive than that which lies before the watcher from the minarets of the Jamma Masjid at Delhi. The history of many aires is in that wide prospect. Close below is the splendid fort and palace, where the latter Mohammedan

Emperors ruled, the noble halls of Shah Jehan, first of crowned builders and married lovers, and the maze of rose-red courts above the river-bed, where the traditions of the race of Timur flared up again for a brief revel of murder and intrigue in the tragedy of 1857. To the south, amid the waste of grey fields, are the ruins of the older Delhis, mile after mile of remnants dropped, as it were, by Hindu and Mohammedan kings in their transi tory conquests of this much-conquered land. Out from Kome, along the Appian Way, you are among the tombs of men and women; but here you come upon a very cemetery of cities, a graveyard stocked with the monu ments of dynasties and nations.

It is a book of torn and fading records, that sheet of dusty earth beyond the Delhi Gate. Here and there is an entry that resists the touch of time. Nearly a thousand years ago a Hindu king laid an iron finger on the page, when he planted a famous pillar forged from a single bar of metal, with a vaunting inscription in Sanskrit. The founders of the first Mohammedan Delhi, three centuries later, did not think it worth while to alter the legend or deface its setting. The little Iron Pillar stands; but hard by, the Moslem Kutab Minar, the Tower of the Faith, soars two hundred and forty feet aloft, decked out for ever in a bannered pomp of red and orange and purple and creamy white. Vendome Columns and Nelson Memorials and Teutonic Victory *Denkmals,* even St. Mark's Winged Lion ramping on his pole, seem tame beside this cry of victory in coloured stone. Slender, graceful, defiant, the brilliant shaft rears itself skyward, with all the triumphant symbolism of that Moslem art, which had learnt to express by line and tint the passions and emotions it was forbidden to illustrate on the human face and form.

Between the Kutab Minar and the Delhi Gate lies the

Tomb of Humayun, the second great Emperor of the Tartar line. Oriental potentates are careful of their last abiding-places. It is perhaps one phase of that yearning for repose which haunts the Eastern temperament, at once unquiet and indolent, and makes it so easily at home with Death the Reconciler. 'For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept; then had I been at rest with kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves.'

The writer of the book of Job had doubtless looked upon the Pyramids. But the tombs of the Moghul kings of Hindustan, and those of their queens and ministers and favourites, are by no means desolate places. On the contrary, they are among the most beautiful objects that the hand of man has created. The 'kings and coun sellors of the earth,' who dwelt while alive at Delhi and Agra and Fatehpur Sikri, were epicures in graves. To erect a splendid monument for themselves and their wives was their hobby, their amusement, the occvipation of their leisure. From the battle and the march, the angry struggle with intrigue and rival ambition, the fever of sensual pleasure, they turned to contemplate the long silences to come. Life was hurried and broken, full of weariness and travail, menaced by murderous enmities. For the fallen king or the fallen favourite there was nothing to hope; all that he had, or could leave, would be at the mercy of his supplanter. But no Mohammedan would desecrate a tomb. There, even the dethroned monarch, the disgraced and condemned minister, could sleep in peace. So all the resources of Moghul power and taste were lavished upon the mausoleum. It is the crowning achievement of Mohammedanism in the domain of art, more beautiful and distinctive even than the splendid mosques and palaces with which the Tartar kings enriched Agra and Delhi.

Its site was laid in some delicious plot of garden-ground, where the dark spires of the cypress and the feathers of the neem tree are mirrored in the silvery gleam of shallow waters poured through marble cisterns, and where beds of flowering shrubs are set amid turf kept green even in the tropic summer. Bound it was thrown a high wall, crenellated like that of a fortress, with a great red sandstone arch, itself a wonder of proportion and design, standing on guard over the treasure within.

In the cool and silent space of verdure, behind the doors of ebony or bronze, the Sultan built his shrine. The cunning hands of Hindu workmen, whose fathers had wrought in stone through buried centuries, were his to command; the old Indian patterns of deeply carved balcony and incised bracket, and chased and fretted surface-wall, were before him. To the rich but sternly limited Brahmanic schemes the Moghuls added all the refinements of later Saracenic art, in hovering domes and sumptuous cusped arches and nobly aisled and vaulted halls and delicate cupolas, poised lightly in mid-air, like windflowers trembling on their stems. Skilful craftsmen were brought from Baghdad and Samarkand, from Persia and China and Arabia, even from Italy and France, to perform miracles in inlaying and mosaic and plaster-work and enamelling ; and Asia was ransacked for rare marbles and jade and turquoise and jasper and lapis lazuli.

About the shrine itself was no hint of funeral gloom : it was a casket, shining in ivory, like the Taj Mahal, or set with jewellery, like the tomb of Itmad-ud-Daulah at Agra, or solemnly rich, like that of Akbar at Sikandra. While he lived, the exquisite empty chamber was its owner's garden-house and place of serene enjoyment; when he died, it became a sanctuary, where he could lie quiet through the ages, behind the verses of the Koran traced in flawless blue down the lintels of the doorway.

But as we gaze upon the distant dome of Humayun's tomb, floating in the luminous haze of morning or the amber and emerald of the sunset sky, we remember that once, at least, the sanctuary was violated. It was from these vaults, after Delhi had fallen, in September 1857, that 'Hodson, of Hodson's Horse,' that dashing, daring, reckless adventurer, dragged out the last of the Moghuls, the puppet king who had been made the nominal head of the rebellion. The coffin of his ancestor could not shield the trembling old intriguer from the arm of England and an English prison. Nor could it save his sons from a darker doom. It was at Humayun's monument that the princes were in hiding when this same Hodson sought them out the following day. Tall and thin, with red hair, and flaming blue eyes all alight with the concentrated wrath that was burning in English hearts in that grim autumn, a hundred of his wild horsemen at his heels, the fierce guerilla chief burst into the crowd that beset the mausoleum. Before that Spirit of Vengeance Moslem fanaticism quailed. With ten men Hodson disarmed the clamorous mob in the garden of the tomb, and took a thousand swords and firearms from them. Then he brought the fugitives through the throng, and carried them on that famous and fatal drive to the Delhi Gate, where he shot them with his own hand, while a host of Mohammedans looked on, paralysed with fear and horror. A bloody deed: but let us remember that it was the year of the Cawnpore massacres before we pass hasty judgment upon it and its author.

The mention of this lurid episode reminds us that he who watches from the turrets of the great Delhi mosque is not left alone with the buried past and the long-forgotten dead. He can turn from the distant domes and straggling ruins to look down into the Chandni Chauk, the main street of the bazaar, swarming with eager life.

He can see the laden bullock-carts, the carriages, and the tongas, pushing their way through the broad crowded street; he can catch faintly the hum of voices that issues from the chattering multi-coloured throng. And if he casts his eyes northward, he is confronted with other scenes which appeal to the imagination no less forcibly than the ruined cities and lonely fanes of the southern view, scenes, indeed, on which few Englishmen can look for the first time without some quickening of the pulses.

Beyond the city on that side are leafy glades and avenues, with white bungalows and spreading suburban parks. Here, among these gardens, is the grave of John Nicholson; close by, in the compound of the building, which is now a club, is the spot where the breaching batteries were placed for the final bombardment of the rebel town on September 11 and 12 in the Mutiny year. Two hundred yards away is the old wall, still showing the rents and gaps torn by the English guns ; and not far off stands the famous Kashmir Gate, all shattered as it was left on the niyht when Lieutenant Home and his hand-ful of unnoticed heroes scrambled into the ditch with their port-fires and fuses. That small building, again, just inside the walls, near the yellow spire of St. John's Church, is on the site of the Arsenal, which Willoughby and a dozen other English lads blew up over their own heads after holding it all night against a surging mob of mutineers.

Somewhat farther round the wall used to stand the Lahore Gate ; and there, if you poke about a little among the dusty by-streets, you will come upon the narrow lane, high houses on one side, the high rampart on the other (and marksmen swarming upon both on that 14th of Sep tember, 1857), where Nicholson met his death. ' Showers of grape tore their ranks open; bullets flew down upon them like hail from above; stones and round-shot were

pitched among them; two officers fell mortally wounded ; five more were struck, and the shattered column, hurled back in confusion, stood cowering under the storm. Then Nicholson himself strode forward, and, raising his sword above his head, indignantly appealed to them to advance. In another moment he had fallen, shot through the chest.'

The actual spot you cannot make out from the minaret platform; but the Flagstaff Tower you can see, and all the length of the Bidge, where the avenging force of Britain, a mere skeleton of an army, hungry, fever-stricken, harassed by daily attacks, ' stormed at by shot and shell,' tormented by the heat, clung desperately all through that bitter summer of the Year Terrible. They were not five thousand, British and native, at the beginning, and never much more than eight thousand to the close, many of them sick; yet they pinioned, and finally they captured, a city of two hundred thousand people, with a garrison of at least fifty thousand angry fanatics, armed like our own men, and drilled by our own officers. A hopeless enterprise it seemed; doomed to failure.

It did not fail. The Ridge is green and grown with waving trees to-day, and the curt record on the Mutiny Memorial is idly read by a generation which has forgotten the very names of the men who brought England and India through the long agony of 1857. But their work abides. Look from your lofty station, past their famous tumulus, and you see the high roofs of factories where tall chimneys are spouting the smoke of lignite coal in a black stream across the sky-line. It is the ugly pennant of that peaceful industrial India, which toils and pushes under the strong rule for which the martyrs of '57 died. So in Agra, from the Jasmine Tower of the Palace, itself a box of gems, on one side of the river you look down to the ' white wonder ' of the Taj ; and on the other side to a

monstrous railway-bridge, strident, naked, unashamed, and then again to great chimneys trailing their mephitic mist above the lovely heads of minaret and mosque. Here in Delhi we have an epitome of the three phases of Indian development that concern us most: the India of the older civilisations, to which it owes all it has inherited of grace and beauty and devotion ; the India of the long struggle, in which we rescued it from a fast-devouring anarchy and gave it law and peace; and the India of the New Age, which is that of mechanical progress and modern industry. To reconcile the first with the last is the problem before the Nicholsons, the Lawrences, the Herbert Edwardeses of the future, and it is one as hard as those their fathers faced in the days of conquest and pacification.

THE DEAD CITY OF FATEHPUR SIKRI

India has many dead cities besides those which are scattered upon the country south from Delhi. There is the noble old capital of the rajputs at Chitor, towering over the circumjacent plain on its immense natural earth work, and Amber, near Jaipur, asleep among its green deserted hills, and the huge fortress of Golconda, and Vijayanagar, the once mighty centre of the Hindu kingdom of Southern India, with its forest of ruined temples, and various others. But none of these can vie in impressiveness with Akbar's capital of Fatehpur Sikri, some twenty miles from Agra. For the other places are all more or less ruinous and time-worn. But the palace of Fatehpur Sikri looks as it must almost have done when it came fresh from the builder's hand three centuries ago. There is no mould of decay upon its walls, no broken arches or ruined columns or crumbling ornaments. It lies too far in the wilderness for van-

dalism or barbaric spite to have wrecked it; and the clear dry air has dealt so lightly with the red sandstone of its fabrics that it stands to-day intact in its desolation—an island fragment of the vanished Moghul Empire. Dead and still it lies; bare and cold its audience-halls, its council-chambers, its galleries, its temples, its baths and playing-grounds, and the cages of chiselled stone where Akbar's women lived. It seems as if the Destroying Angel had breathed upon it in a night and swept all life out at a blast, leaving the cenotaph of empty courts to stand in petrified perfection through the ages.

It dates back to no very remote antiquity, and in this it resembles all that is best in the architecture of Northern India. What is old is, as a rule, interesting only to the antiquary. Elizabeth had been Queen of England six years when Akbar halted on his march at the lonely village of Sikri, where the Sheik Salem Chishti, a holy anchorite, prayed and fasted in his cave. The Emperor had no male heir, and he consulted the saint, who advised him to bring his Hindu—or as some say his Christian—wife to Sikri. This was done, and in due course a son, afterwards the Emperor Jehangir, was born in the saint's cell. 'My revered father,' says Jehangir in his Memoirs, 'regarding the village as fortunate to himself, made it his capital, and in the course of fourteen or fifteen years the hills and deserts, which abounded in beasts of prey, became converted into a magnificent city.' It was called Fatehpur, the Town of Victory, after Akbar's triumphs in Guzerat.

Magnificent indeed must have been the state which the great Emperor maintained. It needs small exercise of the imagination to conceive these halls and pavilions glowing with silken hangings and gorgeous tapestries, and the quadrangles and cloisters and vestibules glitter-

ing with resplendent retainers and all the clashing bravery of an Eastern Court, For Salem Chishti himself, when in due course he passed into the Paradise of Moslem saints, a shrine was prepared behind an exquisite screen of marble lace-work. Though the glory of Fatehpur has long departed, the saint is worshipped there still. Round the outside of the tomb numberless small wisps of string and silk are twined into the trellis-work by childless mothers who have prayed to the saint to help them in their need, even as he helped Akbar the Emperor. Not all the supplicants are Mohammedans and Hindus. They showed me a knot of ribbon, which had been left by an English lady, perhaps with some faint half-ironical hope that the faith of her Eastern sisters in the virtues of the saint might not be wholly vain.

The white tomb of Salem Chishti shines like some delicate casket of crystal near a corner of the great quad rangle which Akbar drew round it. One face of this square is formed by the Jamma Masjid, the Cathedral Mosque, dedicated by the Emperor to the saint. It is one of the noblest temples in the Moslem world, solemn, simple, and dignified, with the lightly poised yet massive domes of its three chapels and the rich severity of its arabesque internal aisles and colonnades. But the Mosque is almost dwarfed by the grand entrance-arch, the Buiand Darwaza, or Gate of Victory, which opens on another side of the court. From within the immense portal may look too large for its environment; but seen from outside, lifting itself aloft, a superb mass of ensan guined stone and marble, with the light playing on its galleries and arcades, and the shadows lurking in its deep recessed alcoves, it is overpowering in its magnificence, the fineet by far of the Moghul gateways, perhaps the most splendid entrance-tower of the earth. In the effec tiveness of its position no other can surely compare with it.

The bare dusky plain stretches to the horizon in front of the mighty arch, which must be visible for league upon league, as it stands against the sky-line, heaved into mid air by the mound and broad flight of steps on which it is raised aloft.

Through the wall of the great recess three doorways are pierced. Over one of them, carved in Arabic charac ters, these words may be read: ' Said Jesus, on whom be peace! The world is a bridge, pass over it, but build no house there,' The Emperor was not a Christian, though he had a Christian wife; but he was an eclectic in religions, a dabbler in many forms of faith, with a turn for rationalism, mysticism, and occultism, and no sympathy with the narrower forms of Mohammedan puritanism. Yet he was devout, and a believer in the things of the spirit. On another doorway of the Buland Darwaza it is written :

> He that standeth up in prayer and his heart is not in it, does not draw nigh to God, but reraaineth far from Him. Thy best possession is what thou givest in the name of God; thy best traffic is selling this world for the next.

Strange to read these words of humility and devotion, and to pass from the court of the Jamma Masjid into the Palace and the residency buildings. They bring before us, with a weird emphasis, the manner in which the Moghul rulers lived in the short summer of their power. Here is the Daftar Khana, or liecord Office, where Akbar worked with his secretaries, and the Mahal-i-Khas, or Private Apartments of the Emperor, with his sleeping chamber, on the roof. We can see the Diwan-i-Khas, or Hall of Private Audience, with a single column and colossal bracket capital that carried Akbar's throne; from it there branched off stone gangways or bridges to the corners of a gallery round the room, where (so it is said) the

four chief ministers of the kingdom sat. We can look at the Panch Mahal, a sort of grand-stand in stone, in which five storeys are raised one above another, on columns each carved to its own distinct elaborate design. From these stages the ladies of the zenana would taste the freshness of the evening air, and gaze down at the cere monies and revels in the courts below, and at the great *pachisi* or chess-board marked out on the pavements, where the game was played with slave-girls as the living pawns and pieces. One can walk down to the Elephant Gate, with its tower, bristling with stone teeth and tusks, from which the Emperor used to shoot antelopes and deer, driven up to him from the margin of the great artificial lake.

There are many smaller separate dwellings scattered about the enclosures : the Palace of the Hindu Minister ; ' Miriam's House,' where perhaps the Christian wife lived, with paintings on the walls supposed to be of Biblical subjects; and the so-called ' Turkish Sultana's House,' with a covered passage to the royal private apartments, a charming petite *maison* ornamented to the last square inch. We ponder over the skilful labour that all this work must have been for a multitude of diligent hands, and consider what it meant to transform this desert rock into a palace of art and a pleasure-house ; and with a shock we realise that all this was only to satisfy the caprice of an hour. Scarcely was the costly toy made than it was thrown aside, to lie abandoned on its dust-heap ever since.

Akbar held his court at Fatehpur Sikri for no more than seventeen years, when he removed it to Agra. Some accounts aver that the transfer was prompted by considera tion for the feelings of Saint Salem Chishti. The holy man complained that the concourse of human beings in the city and palaces disturbed his devotions, and that either he or the Emperor must go elsewhere. ' Then,'

said Akbar, Met it be your servant, I pray.' Recent inquirers have suggested[1] that the City of Victory was more probably deserted because the water-supply was in adequate. Whatever the cause, there it stands, the most splendid and striking testimony to that capricious and irresponsible Eastern despotism, which could use the lives, the labour, the destinies of men for its own purposes, and could at its will call rich and populous towns into being in the wilderness and drop them back again into solitude and silence. Nowhere does that come quite so clearly before us as in the beautiful dead city which Akbar built and left.

AGRA AND THE TAJ

But of the later Moslem art the crown and flower is the Taj Mahal at Agra; and of the Taj what is one to say? It is a thing whereof it is hard to write; for no writing can convey its peculiar and unique appeal to the emotions. There was an instructive anecdote related to me when I was at Agra. It was of a middle-class, middle-aged American, probably from Chicago, and quite possibly, when at home, in Pork. He was doing India rapidly, in a shiny black coat, and with no outward traces of senti ment. To all appearance the price of commodities in terested him more than the customs of the East, and as a subject of conversation at the club he preferred the tariff to Indian art. No man could have been less readily suspected of yielding to the emotions. Yet when they took him to the Taj for the first time, on a night of moon and stars, he gazed in blank silence for a space as he came through the entrance portal. Then he lifted up his voice and wept, disturbing the solemn stillness with

[1] See Mr. E. B. Havell's excellent *Ilandboolc to Agra and tJie Neighbour hood*, which contains an admirable and very well-written description of Fatehpur Sikri.

audible sobs and ejaculations. So at least the story was given to me by a respectable resident in Agra, who was himself present and witnessed the phenomenon. I had no reason to suppose that he imagined this remarkable incident, and, for my own part, I believed his tale. It is not so difficult to credit when you have yourself seen the Taj Mahal by moonlight.

There are some few things of this earth which cannot be vulgarised, and chief among these is the Taj. Familiarity does not touch the edge of its charm, or sully its virginal freshness. One has seen it travestied a thousand times, in feeble photograph, and libellous post-card, and clumsy 'process' print, and utterly inadequate water-colour or oils. They cut it out of cardboard, or make a miserable forlorn toy of it, in imitation marble, under a deplorable glass shade, so that it seems fit only for the lodging-house mantelpiece. It has been described to death, and the late Sir Edwin Arnold assailed it with blank verse. Tourists travel half round the globe to look at it and go home to gush. If any object could awaken disillusion and resentment by being known too well, that object should be the Agra shrine. But it comes victoriously through all. There is no spoiling it, any more than by the same familiarity it is possible to spoil the Moonlight Sonata, or *Borneo and Juliet* or the Sistine Madonna.

A healthy critical intellect, when all men combine to praise, is inclined to question. Some people fortify themselves for a visit to the Taj by suspecting that much of the admiration lavished on it is mere conventional exaggeration, based on no definite conviction, and there is a moment when the rationalist may think he did well to be sceptical. The first view of the Taj, it is commonly said, is 'disappointing.' That is because of the conditions under which it is so often taken. The alert visitor, anxious to lose no time, makes for the tomb as soon as possible

after his arrival in Agra. In the morning or early after noon he drives out from his hotel in a hired carriage, which sets him down inside the outer courtyard by the steps of the great entrance door. He has not noticed the beauty of the approaches, nor can he spare an eye for the quiet precincts, or the stone bells on their delicate stalks at the corners of the garden wall, or the mosques and *chatris* grouped about the central chapel; scarcely does he observe the noble gateway as he passes through it with a hasty unilluminative glance.

Then he stops, with probably a gasp of amazement. Is this the Wonder of the World, this smallish square building, with its four dumpy cupolas huddling under the dome, and its four cylindrical lighthouse towers, looking, in the remorseless clearness of the atmosphere, dispro portionately distant from each other and the main edifice ? The spectator, educated on soaring Gothic spires and massive towers, on huge walls, opulent with flying but tress and springing arch and intricate ornamentation, is apt to be taken aback by the restrained simplicity of the white fabric that perches on its platform in front of him. He is visited by the blasphemous thought that it is some what petty, that it is even (Heaven forgive him!) a little hard and cold. The flaring sunlight is flung full upon its gleaming surface, so that the shadows vanish, and the recesses are flattened, and the angles come out with unfaltering crudity. If he were to see it but once, and see it like that, he would go away vexed with the Taj Mahal, and smile derisively for ever after when he heard its praises sung.

Repentance comes speedily after that first full-faced unsatisfying glance. It is born when you have crossed the terrace, and passed out of the noonday glare into the silent richness and sweet subdued glow of the interior. Here the golden sunlight strays wandering in, filtered

through thread-like trellises of marble, till the whole chamber is full of a soft and luminous aether, free alike from the levity of day and the gloom of night. In this clear twilight dusk, all the lovely details of the decoration are 'more expressed than hid,' and it needs no peering into dark corners to reveal the flowers that grow in low relief on the mural tablets of the ante-chapels, and those that blossom in inlay of poppy red and turquoise blue and emerald green on the walls of the octagon shrine itself. Under the vault of the great dome (you see how large it is as you look upwards into its billowing depths) lies the tomb of Mumtaz Mahal, the fair and gentle lady for whom Shah Jehan, the Emperor, created this peerless monument, in the plenitude of his power and passion. When he died, old and broken, and a dethroned prisoner, they laid him beside her, with the same screen of laced and embroidered stone thrown round both to shelter their slumbers, and the same unfading flowers blooming by their graves.

But, beautiful as is the interior of the Taj, its fullest charm is caught from the outside. You realise this when you abandon the front view, and wander about the gardens, finding exquisite glimpses of snowy structures, so light and graceful that they seem to rest on air, of buoyant cupola and climbing campanile. The Taj owes much to its surroundings. Perhaps it would lose its effect in the Waterloo Bridge Eoad, or even in the Champs-Elysees. But where it stands, amidst its trees and flower-beds and waters, rising serene from among the lesser tombs and temples clustering at its knees, you cannot wish it otherwise. Go a little distance away, and you wonder that you ever deemed it trivial. You see that it is, in fact, spacious and lofty (the dome rises higher than the spire of many cathedrals), and that it has grandeur as well as beauty.

Fortunately you can now get sight of the masterpiece without approaching too near. The gardens have been restored to something more nearly resembling their ori ginal condition, and the results of many decades of neglect and carelessness have been cleared from the precincts. It is one item in that work of renewal and conservation, which India owes to some of its recent administrators, and more particularly to the late Viceroy. It is not the least of Lord Curzon's achievements that he caused the finest examples of Hindu and Mohammedan architecture to be treated with reverent and judicious Attention. He has induced the masters of India to respect the artistic heritage which has descended to them from the rulers they supplanted. If we cannot reproduce, we may at least preserve, the splendid works of the older conquerors, long regarded with barbarian indifference. It was a pre decessor of Lord Curzon's on the viceregal throne who began to sell the materials of the palaces at Agra, and would have sold the Taj itself if he could have got a good price for the marble. And even so late as thirty years ago, when King Edward visited India, they could find nothing better to do with the Taj than to illuminate its dome with limelight. Let us be thankful that they fore-bore to embellish it with advertising placards.

In these days of slightly better perception, the Prince and Princess of Wales were spared the illuminations. They went to view the Taj by moonlight, which every body should do who finds that the daytime aspect still leaves him with lingering doubts. For at night its seduction is irresistible. Criticism is mute, as you sit on the steps by the entrance gate, while the moon drifts above the trees, and the ring of silver light is stealing round the base of the dome and creeping gently upwards to the pinnacle!. Here are none of the harsh contrasts familiar in such circumstances elsewhere. To talk of

ebony and alabaster is to evoke ideas too rough for this intimate revelation of beauties withheld from the in discreet and prying day. The shadows on the Taj are not black, but something between umber and violet; and the marble itself, glimmering under the dusky velvet of the sky, has lost its frozen pallor and hints at the warmth and soft texture of life. You note the tender half-tones growing upon the smooth and rounded surfaces, as a young lover, sitting with his mistress by a moonlit window, might watch the faint shadows hovering over the warm whiteness of satin throat and ivory shoulder.

It is this sensuous suggestiveness of the Taj which some critics disparage. They say it is feminine, it lacks strength and stern dignity. But of course it is feminine. One might as well make that a reproach against the Venus of the Capitol and the Virgins of Murillo. If Shah Jehan had been a Greek or an Italian, the Lady of the Tomb would have stood in changeless marble or smiled from breathing canvas. But Moslem art was forbidden to imitate the human figure. It could only symbolise; and the Taj is a symbol, like all the finest creations of the later Mohammedan architecture. The Kutab Minar sym bolises warlike energy and passion; the Tomb of Akbar majesty and varied wisdom; the Hall of Audience at Delhi, the Diwan-i-Khas, with its famous inscription,

> If the earth holds a heaven of bliss,
> It is this, it is this, it is this;

symbolises the sumptuousness of ease and wealth and arbitrary power.

Yet the Taj Mahal is not merely a monument and a symbol, but also to some extent a representation. The meaning which its subtle and allusive art conveys is significantly revealed when you see it neither in full day nor by night, but at the moment after sunset, when most

of the light has faded from the sky, ahd only a **few** flying streamers of rose and opal are left under a canopy of azure, paling swiftly into greyness. The dim shape, with its flowing curves all shrouded in white> might be the figure of some veiled Eastern princess, walking with bowed head and rhythmical footstep in her gardens by the shining river. And the four watching minarets **are** the grave and kindly sentinels, keeping guard over the beauty and tenderness, the modesty and shrinking charm, which so often find shelter behind the *purdah* screen of Indian womanhood.

When you have time to spare from the Taj, you go to see the other Moghul monuments of Agra. The best of them were built by Shah Jehan, in whose time the archi tecture and decorative art of the Indian Mohammedans flowered into their fullest splendour, before they ran to seed in the tawdry extravagance of the palaces and monuments at Lucknow. Shah Jehan's days were chequered. He rebelled against his father Jehangir, and when he came to the throne he disposed of all disputes about the succes sion by murdering his brothers. He was self-indulgent and tyrannical, and in the end his son Aurangzeb headed a conspiracy, against him and deprived him of his crown.

He married Mumtaz Mahal when he was twenty-one and she was nineteen. He had one wife already; but his second marriage was a true love-match, and Mumtaz Mahal—which, being interpreted, means 'The Crown of the Palace[1]—was famous for charity and mercifulness, as well as for beauty and wit. Eighteen years after the marriage she died, having borne her husband no fewer than fourteen children. The Emperor was inconsolable, or, rather, he consoled himself by sending for the most skilful architects and craftsmen he could find, and with their help and a lavish outpouring of treasure he built the tomb by the Jumna.

A great artist was Shah Jehan as well as a great lover. The Palace Fort at Agra is full of gorgeous buildings, and the finest are those which owe their origin to him. He built the Pearl Mosque, a dream of delicacy and grace, by some thought lovelier than the Taj itself, and the Khas Mahal and Diwan-i-Khas at Agra, besides that Hall of Audience at Delhi, all of which are miracles of pro portion and design and ornamentation. When Aurangzeb had driven him from his throne, and taken his kingdom from him, Shah Jehan was kept in confinement in the exquisite pavilion called the Jasmine Tower, which stands in the Fort at Agra, hard by some of his own masterpieces, and in full view of the Taj. Seven years he lived there, the old broken king, faithfully attended by his good and gentle daughter Jehanara, who voluntarily shared his captivity. He was seventy-five when the end came, and his last day he spent in gazing down the river to the tomb where Mumtaz Mahal lay. When sunset fell and darkness hid the domes and turrets from his sight, he died, bidding Jehanara be of good cheer, and calling on the name of Allah the Merciful. His sins be forgiven him. He shed blood and he broke troth. But he made the world more beautiful, and he loved much.

CHAPTER XIII

THE BLOSSOMING OF THE WILDERNESS

IT might almost have been the terrace of an English country house, as we stood there on the verandah that pleasant Sunday morning. In front of the stone steps was a gravelled sweep of carriage-drive, bordered by a bed of standard roses and pink and yellow chrysanthemums. On the other side of the low hedge was a smooth rectangle of turfed lawn-tennis ground, with the court marked out and the nets standing. The eye ranged down an avenue of young tamarind-trees to the swinging gate of the com pound, and beyond that to a broad high road. Not far away one saw the red walls of other bungalows, and in the distance the clustering roofs of a town, the sheds and signal-posts of a railway-station, and a tall warehouse-chimney. Round us the flat country lay green with fodder and the ripening winter crops; and at intervals small brown hamlets spotted the plain, which stretched away in an unbroken level to the foot of a purple line of saw-backed hills. Cattle grazed in the meadows, husband men were at work among the fields and trickling water courses, laden carts moved slowly along the roads. It seemed a picture of ordered and tranquil prosperity.

But you are admonished to glance at a large patch of tawny yellow in the midst of the greenery not far away. You see that this inset is bare and lifeless sand, with nothing growing upon it but a few stunted bushes. Anl you have to learn that as this space now is, so, some five

years ago, was the whole wide champaign before you. It was all arid waste, without grass or trees or cultivation. There was no town, no road, no railway-station, no agri culture. There were no cattle but the small and half-starved beasts belonging to the scattered nomads who roamed over the desert track. Now the same area yields food for nearly a million people, and sends its surplus coastw,ards to load the corn-ships which help to give Londoners their daily bread.

The miracle has been wrought by water—water and brains, and well-directed energy to apply both. Four-fifths of the inhabitants of India cultivate the soil; but they serve a hard and fitful taskmistress. Under that burning sun, which crumbles dry earth to a powder or bakes it into fissured blocks, there can be no culture with out abundant moisture. To the Indian peasant, the rain fall which comes, or should come, towards the close of the south-west monspon or in the early spring, is all in all. If it is plentiful he may have a good crop and a prosperous year; if it drops below the average, he will be hardly pressed; if it fails altogether, his cattle will probably die, his home will be broken up, his wife and children and himself may become outcasts, and the whole family may perish miserably, unless there happens to be a Belief Camp accessible. No wonder the ryot, as he sits under a tree in the heat of a summer afternoon, watches the hard dome of polished azure above him with ravenous eye. To the farmer in another country a bad season brings trouble and loss ; here it is a matter of life and death for millions.

And, unhappily, the rains cannot be depended upon. Seas of water pour upon India from the clouds, or roll down into its plains from the melting snows of the Himalayas; but the flood is badly distributed and capri cious. Over large tracts the normal rainfall is only just sufficient to feed the crops and grass-lands; if there is a

surplus one year, there may be drought the next. There is an area of a million square miles—say twenty times the size of England—' of which,' says an official document, ' in the absence of irrigation, no portion can be deemed absolutely secure against the uncertainties of the seasons and the scourge of famine.' Other extensive districts there are in which the annual rainfall is so scanty that sufficient harvests cannot be gathered in without artificial irrigation.

The greatest and most permanent of all the benefits which British rule has conferred upon India is that of regulating, improving, and equalising the supply of water for agricultural purposes. It is sometimes said that if we were to quit the Peninsula to-morrow we should leave behind us nothing worthy to endure: only iron bridges, mostly hideous, and a few tasteless churches, museums, and town halls—no noble monuments such as those of some of the Hindu and Mohammedan kings. But our canals we should leave; and unless our successors were sheer barbarians they could not allow these splendid public works to decay, or permit the provinces we have made habitable by them to go back to desert again.

India, for many centuries, has been supplementing the atmospheric water-supply in its own primitive fashion. The rain-water was stored in tanks, or it was tracked to its subterranean reservoirs and drawn up to the surface. The ancient rulers of the land were great diggers of wells and builders of cisterns; in the South especially their handiwork is seen . in many thousands of ponds and artificial lakes, large and small, which are used to this day. Canal-making came much later. It was not till the Moghul sovereigns had given a large part of northern India a stable and settled government that they turned their attention to this subject. But most of their schemes were abandoned or remained in abeyance during the dis-«

orders which overtook their empire in the eighteenth century. It was left for the English to amplify and develop the enterprise. For the last fifty years the engineers of the Indian Government and the Public Works Department have been busily engaged upon it. The result is a system of irrigation, which though still uncompleted is unquestionably the most magnificent created by human effort in any modern country. The great rivers have been tapped in their upper ranges, and the surplus water that comes down in the rainy weather is drawn off into main feeder canals, which deliver their contents into branch canals; and these again fill a network of minor runlets, and finally discharge their fertilising streams into the conduits and ditches by which the farmers keep their crops green.

The canals are officially classed under two heads: they are regarded either as Protective or Productive. The former are supposed to supplement the water-supply of districts which in years of normal rainfall can be culti vated successfully. Thus they furnish a defence against famine and all the loss and misery that evil word suggests. The Protective canals are not kept up mainly for profit, though as a matter of fact they mostly yield a very fair return on the capital expended. The Productive works are, however, intended to increase the yield of the soil, and in some cases to render cultivation practicable where otherwise it could not be attempted, owing to the scantiness of the rainfall.

Millions of acres of good but drought-stricken land have been turned into arable and pasture by this means. The earth is willing enough to yield up its abundance; but the heavens deny the water of life, and it has had to be brought in by the hand of man. The Productive works pay very well. In the Punjab they yield 10½ per cent, interest on the capital outlay, and for the whole of India

the net revenue is over 7 per cent. The Government of India, after paying 4 per cent, interest on the capital cost, is nearly three-quarters of a million in pocket by its canals at the end of every year, besides having saved its subjects incalculable damage and suffering.

So satisfactory a result abundantly justifies the con -templation of a further expenditure on canal construction amounting to several million pounds during the next few years. Some of the projects are daring even for the new school of engineers, who fear nothing. There is talk of banking the snows of the Himalayas in a stupendous artificial lake in Kashmir, and spreading them by pipes and aqueducts half over Northern Hindustan. This may be visionary; but another proposal, almost equally striking, is considered quite feasible, and will probably be carried out. The Jhelam, one of the Punjab rivers, has rather more water than is needed, and the Chenab rather less; so the engineers are calmly devising a new conduit, by which they can connect the two watercourses, and regulate the flow of both by turning on a tap. Nature is rough and unruly and frequently terrible in Southern Asia; but she is being slowly got into harness.

The most audaciously conceived and brilliantly suc cessful of all the schemes are those monuments of engineering enterprise and administrative capacity, the [1] Canal Colonies,' as they are called, of these same Chenab and Jhelam river-basins. The colonies are vast tracts of land, which, owing to the want of water, were almost uninhabited, except by a few nomads and semi-civilised squatters and cattle-thieves. The engineers constructed the artificial watercourses that rendered it possible to bring the soil under cultivation. Then the Government constituted each district an administrative unit, and placed it under the charge of a Deputy Commissioner, who was

also appointed 'Colonisation Officer,' with special in structions to carry out a definite and systematic scheme of settlement.

The Sirkar had the wisdom or good fortune to secure the services of officials of quite exceptional capacity for this important task. The Chenab Colony, which is the older and the larger, has been for five years past under the firm and successful rule of Mr. Leslie Jones, who has done great things with it. The district which he controls is nearly equal in extent to Kent, Surrey, and Sussex taken together, and the population is now well over a million. It has two hundred miles of railway, admirable roads, several prosperous little towns, and one larger place, Lyallpur, which is rapidly growing to quite respectable proportions; and it yields a net revenue of more than 21 per cent, on its capital cost.

But I preferred to visit the Jhelam Colony, which, though slightly smaller, is newer, for its canal was only opened in the autumn of 1901; and it was here that I spent some singularly agreeable and instructive days. The Jhelam Colony has been watched over from its birth by Mr. W. M. Hailey, one of the ablest of the younger officials in the Civil Service of the Punjab—a man with just that force of character, clearness of insight, relentless industry, and restrained enthusiasm, which are required for such work as this. Little more than four years before my visit the colony was lifeless scrub and empty desert. To-day, like its neighbour on the Chenab, it is covered with fields of grain, with orchards, gardens, grazing-meadows, breeding-farms, and cattle-runs. It is studded with pro sperous villages, and it includes a population of probably three-quarters of a million, of whom several thousands live in Mr. Hailey's rising capital of Sargodha, a model little town, with well-planned straight streets, a granary, a municipal market, a busy bazaar, a cotton-store, a

factory, and an active group of traders and merchants who are on the high road to wealth.

These colonies are 'plantations' in the old sense of the term. They have to be sown not only with trees, but with men. The Colonisation Officer, as he settles down in his first camp or his newly built bungalow, in the centre of what is afterwards to be the civil station of the cantonment, has a blank sheet before him: a million acres of bare waste, to be converted into townships, farms, and villages. To a large extent he has a free hand; he is the mandatory of a despotic Government, intended to act the part of a beneficent autocrat himself. There are not many vested rights to be considered in this wilderness, and few troubles about ancient titles or prescriptive boundaries. The Commissioner can divide out his domain accurately into square plots, so many for each farm and each hamlet; he can trace his highways and local roads on the most suitable lines with regard to topography and water-supply; he can lay out his town with broad avenues and inter secting cross-streets, and secluded but airy courts, accord ing to the latest municipal ideas adapted to Oriental customs; he can put his finger on the map and decree, in consultation with the engineers, where men and women are to live, and under what conditions.

The settlers come to the places allotted to them, with their wives and children, their buffaloes and cows, their brass pots and simple tools, and presently, on the pre scribed site, there arises a brown village which is the counterpart, with certain sanitary improvements, of that which they have left behind—a village with its pond and well and mud-walled byres and farmsteads, its tiny mosque or temple. The Mohammedans are in one village, the Hindus in another, the Sikhs congregate in a third.

And, besides the cultivators, people of other classes have to be encouraged or attracted: policemen, postmen, and

Government messengers, traders, and baniyas to supply the markets and fill the bazaars, dealers to buy and sell the grain and cotton from the farms, artisans and labourers. It is not a backwoods colony of isolated pioneers, slowly working towards cohesion, but an organised com munity, with its complex social gradations properly ad justed. And here the structure stands to-day, in its outlines and relative proportions, pretty much as it may be found a century or two hence, save for some cataclysm of Nature or politics : a complete little province, a minia ture state, busy, thriving, and self-sustaining, and pro ducing such a superfluity of food that it is helping to convert Karachi into a formidable rival to Bombay and changing the balance on the corn-markets of the world.

A wonderful work, truly, to have been done in a few brief years sliced out of a young man's lifetime, a work assuredly not accomplished without heavy sacrifices and an invincible endurance and determination. Before the Jhelam Colony had been many months in being, the plague broke out and the people began to flee from their houses in panic. Mr. Hailey's chief native subordinate (he had no European assistant) fell ill and died; he him self, going in and out of the plague-stricken dwellings to superintend disinfecting operations, caught the epidemic and narrowly escaped with his life.

The men at the head of these irrigation colonies must know the natives thoroughly, and they should love them —wisely, but perhaps not too well. They must have that combination of deep sympathy and equable justice wherein lay the strength of the great Anglo-Indian admi nistrators in the past. If you ride with a Colonisation Officer on his daily rounds, you begin to understand something of the meaning of paternal government. He is judge, governor, supreme adviser, tax-collector, chief magistrate, agricultural expert, and general admonisher, of

his subjects. When he enters the village, he has an eye for everything. Why is that heap of refuse allowed to encumber the road outside Abdul Kerim's enclosure, con trary to regulations? Let it be cleared away. The offender objects to the suggestion, and makes no sign of compliance. '*Hookum hai*—it is an order,' says a voice, which is quite low and level; but Abdul knows the tone, and, with a sigh of resignation, he begins to remove the obstruction.

The head-man comes out with the village elders. They salaam before the Head of the District, but they have a grievance. They collect round his horse, and pour out a billowy torrent of excited speech, in which you distinguish the word «*Pani'* (water), reiterated with sobbing passion. They are complaining that the engi neers of the Public Works Department are stinting them of their lawful allowance of the fluid, or charging them unduly for that which they do receive. As the Colon isation Officer moves slowly along, they follow him ; the head-man, with agitated staff sawing the air, keeps by his off stirrup-leather; a tall, black-bearded, sunburnt peasant, with his red mantle thrown round his right shoulder, raises an antistrophe from the other side; com panions behind and in front act as a voluble chorus; the village children, grinning all over their brown faces, toddle gleefully in the wake of the procession.

The pale-faced, square-shouldered gentleman, sitting erect in his saddle, listens, asks a question now and again, does not say much. He lets them chatter: it may be that their complaint is legitimate and must be looked into; in any case he knows that half their sense of injury will disappear if they are allowed to talk their fill upon it. And so on to another village and another, and then back to camp or bungalow, to make notes of what has been heard and seen, to discuss it with the water officials,

perhaps to begin a wearisome correspondence over it with the Public Works Department or **the** Provincial Government.

But years hence these orators of **the** hamlet will recollect their speeches and repeat them, and explain how they stood up before the Huzur and patriotically spoke for the common weal; and sadly they will compare the Burra Sahib, the Protector of the Poor, who brought them to this good land, with the much inferior sahibs known to the younger generation. They will not have forgotten him, even after he has long left India and gone home for good, when such a scene as this will be no more than a dim memory, that may perchance steal faintly back to his brain, as he turns over the evening papers in the smoking-room on some sunny afternoon. At the club they may have only a vague remembrance that So-and-So was once 'something in India.' Therein they are, indeed, not wrong. A man of this stamp is unquestionably Something in India.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PILGRIM FAIR

WHAT is the most wonderful sight in India—the strangest thing to be seen in all this land, where so much is strange? For my part, I am inclined to doubt whether anything can be witnessed more impressive and picturesque, more pregnant, too, with meaning and significance, than the Kumbh Mela, or great Pilgrim Fair, which is held, once in every twelve years, where the waters of the Ganges and the Jumna meet, below the walls of Alla habad. Until you have looked upon one of these tre mendous gatherings of humanity many aspects of Indian life and character must be hidden from you.

At the Kumbh Mela, which occurs only at Allahabad and Hardwar, and in a minor form at two other places, you see Hinduism at its best and its worst; you begin to realise faintly the hold that this jumble of devotion, metaphysics, and rank idolatry has upon the masses of the people; you observe Brahmanism working hand in hand with a crude and savage fetish-worship; you have before you such multitudes of men and women as you may not meet twice in a lifetime; and you know that this gigantic assemblage, built up on a framework of pro fessional fanaticism, is kept in absolute control and perfect order by a handful of Europeans, which is, perhaps, the greatest miracle of all. How we govern the peoples of India, and how it is that we can govern them—that, too, you understand better if you are so fortunate as to get to

the duodecennial Festival at the meeting of the Sacred Kivers.

India is a land of pilgrimages and pilgrim fairs. All over the country there are spots where some one of the vagrant gods of the populous Hindu Pantheon has sojourned on earth for a space and left behind an odouf of special and undying sanctity. To these holy shrines the worshippers resort as eagerly as they did in that Merrie England of Chaucer's time, when men wandered forth ' ferae halwes for to seeke,' and they do it with the same mixture of devotional zeal and pleasurable zest.

For the pious Hindu the pilgrimage is a church festival and a bank holiday in attractive combination. To wash in the sacred Ganges, to sacrifice a kid on the blood stained shambles of Kali's temple, to bathe in the beating surf before the Jagannath altars at Puri, will bring redemption of sin and a few aeons of salvation. It will also provide an extremely agreeable outing. There is the great world to be seen, perhaps an unknown big city to be visited, temples, holy tombs, healing tanks, not to mention the marvels of the bazaar and the European shops, to be inspected, and many * side-shows' and amusements to be tasted in the enlivening company of a vast miscellaneous concourse.

For the Indian peasant and craftsman, and more par ticularly for their womankind, life is hard and monotonous. The pilgrimage is the treat of the year, perhaps of many years. In the old times the journey was made on foot, or in crazy native vehicles of one kind or another. In these days a large proportion of the pilgrims travel by railway, and opulent is the harvest that is reaped from them. Eight-and-twenty third-class trains, packed as one would imagine no cattle-trucks or sheep-pens could be packed, will be run into one of the great pilgrim centres in a single day. The platforms are jammed with squealing voyagers,

the waiting enclosures swelter and flutter like chicken-crates.

The travellers are not all of this kind. Now and then even a ruling prince with his horde of followers will set up an encampment on the ground, though this happens seldom in these days, for religious zeal is not fashionable with the modern generation of rajas. But many well-to-do traders and baniyas come, and some bring their families with them. The fair is the Hindu woman's holi day, even more than the men's —the one brilliant fortnight in years of drudgery and seclusion. At these festivals you see more women of a grade above that of the coolies and the sweepers in a few hours than in many weeks among the great cities ; and your estimate of Hindu feminine beauty rises by leaps and bounds.

A woman, in most countries, looks her best when she has got her nicest * things' on; and at the fair bright new robes and a lavish display of ornaments, bangles, anklets, nose-rings, and earrings, are the mode. Moreover, the women here, unlike most of those visible to the European connoisseur elsewhere, are not all darkened by exposure and stunted by toil and hard living. Pretty soft oval faces, bright eyes, teeth unreddened by betel-nut, and complexions of almost European fairness, are not un common. And the ladies are all smiling and cheerful, and are treated with comparative politeness, even by their own husbands, on these exceptional occasions.

Of all the festivals, those connected with bathing in the sacred rivers are the most popular, and of these rivers the Ganges is the holiest. That is why Allahabad, which in the Hindi language is called Prayag, the Place of Sacrifice, has been a goal of pilgrimage for many centuries. The celebration is older than Mohammedanism, older than Christianity, perhaps older than Brahmanism itself. Just below the Fort there is a triangular spit of sand, at the

point of which the Jumna rolls into the Ganges; and, according to popular belief, a line of ripples marks the junction of a third river, which bubbles up from under the ground, and is visible to the eyes of the Enlightened, though not to those of the ordinary sin-laden spectator.

This triangle, the Sangam, or meeting-place, is among the most exalted bathing-sites in all India, and great is the merit acquired by dipping in the waters at its apex. Consequently there is a much frequented Mela at Allahabad every winter. But when the planet Jupiter enters the sign of the *Kumbha,* which is Aquarius the water-carrier, then the sanctity of the place is increased tenfold, and more than tenfold are the numbers of the pilgrims, so that they are only exceeded by the tale of those who flock to Benares during a total eclipse of the sun. There were said to be two millions at the Mela during one of the great processional days on which I visited it; and to the casual spectator, surveying the immense encampment and the moving crowds, the estimate did not seem exaggerated. The camp, indeed, should not be called by that name. It is a town—a temporary town, it is true ; but while it lasts one of the great cities of the world, more populous than Peking or Vienna, with as many inhabitants as Liverpool Manchester and Glasgow rolled into one.

The Fair is largely a money-making concern. It is run by associations of ascetics, who have their headquarters in Allahabad and in some cases their branches all over India. They assume the fakir dress, or want of dress, and go about publicly in rags, with matted hair, their faces and bodies daubed with the river clay. Some of them wear no clothes at all, and are regarded on this account with peculiar reverence. But these akharas, or religious societies, are not too much absorbed in the things of the spirit to neglect earthly details, They own a good deal of property, and some of them are bankers and landholders,

as well as mendicant friars; they are legally enrolled as corporations, and can sue and be sued; and they have their own superiors, or mahants, who manage their common affairs, and are treated with considerable respect by the British authorities, for they are important persons, able to give a good deal of help or to cause much trouble during the processional periods.

The various sects and akharas are active rivals, and some care has to be taken that they do not come into collision during the Allahabad Mela. The most turbulent are the Bairagis, a large association worshipping Eama and Krishna, which has its adherents all over Northern India. The Bairagis are always a source of anxiety to the police officials during the Fair; for they are noisy and aggressive, and, unlike the other bodies, they are not under the regular control of their mahants. All the akharas are encamped upon the left bank of the Ganges, with the Bairagis separated by a broad road and a fence from the others.

From bank to bank two temporary bridges of boats are laid during the Mela. On the Allahabad side is the camp of the pilgrims. It is a town of many streets. The avenues and cross-roads are laid out by the Government, which also builds huts of plaited straw, and allows them to be occupied at a very low rent by the visitors. A few hundred thousand are lodged in this way. Others make tiny sheds for themselves of logs and brushwood, or put up little shelters of canvas, or are content with the bare ground, and it may be an umbrella.

They can please themselves as to this ; but certain limited sanitary rules are laid down and strictly en forced. The Kumbh Mela is an affair of the priests and the fakirs. They keep it going mainly for their own benefit; and in essentials it probably does not differ greatly from what it was three centuries or ten centuries

ago. The Government does not interfere with the religious ceremonies. Hinduism, even in its ridiculous and offensive manifestations, is given a free hand. But we do for its votaries what they would never do for themselves: we watch over their health, we keep the peace among them, we humbly go about to see that they are properly policed and scavenged and disinfected. We make the place about as safe as Piccadilly, and nearly as healthy.

A little cholera there will always be in this immense concourse of folks from the four corners of India, of whom many will bathe in the cold waters of the river in the morning, eat unwholesome food, lie in the sun all day, and expose themselves with no sufficient covering to the chills of night. There was a case or two during my visit, and I saw one brown figure with knees drawn up, eyes closed, and rigid jaw, lying in a state of collapse outside his shanty. But he was not jolted down to the river to die, as he would have been before we took the Fair in hand. There are proper segregation huts, with native doctors and attendants, and a body of trained inspectors to see that the cholera patients are promptly dealt with, and the sanitary regulations carried out.

To go his rounds with a police officer at the Fair, on the afternoon before one of the days fixed for the great processions of the akharas, is an interesting experience. Strange scenes and figures are met at every turn. There is a separate enclosure for the barbers, a whole village of them, for no less than 2,800 of these useful persons are needed to perform the offices of the toilet for the pilgrims. The main street of the camp is a seething bazaar, where traders and merchants of all kinds have set up shops. Brass pots and pans, clothing, provisions, toys, jewellery, native shoes and Austrian kid boots, books, perfumes, cheap haberdashery, sewing-machines, and numberless other things, are on sale. The booths of the sweetmeat-

sellers are surrounded by struggling crowds from morning to night; for every Hindu eats sweetstuff. There are numerous shows and performances. A native, supposed to be got up as an European, with a false moustache, a straw hat, and check trousers, is beating a drum at the entrance of a tent where a vernacular adaptation of *Faust* is to be given. Next to him is a mart for the sale of devotional literature. The customers can buy religious tracts, or if they prefer them, ancient chromos of King Edward VII. as Prince of Wales in the costume of the 'seventies—a remnant, perhaps, of the previous Royal tour.

Religion, trade, and amusement go hand in hand everywhere. The ground is dotted with tiny shrines and makeshift temples, which are an excuse for the faithful to make an offering. Dust-strewn fakirs sit under big umbrellas, wrapped in meditation, but with an ear for the clinking of coppers in the begging-bowl beside them. Some of them rest immovable, hour after hour, on wooden bedsteads studded with iron nails, the points upwards. Others exhibit hideous deformities : a leper, with both legs swollen into horrible grey trunks; a man with one arm withered to a loose tendril, which he wrags endearingly at the passers-by. In an open vault, at the bottom of a flight of steps, is a huge recumbent figure of Hanuman, the monkey-god. The idol is smeared all over with red paint, and in the dim light one can see the priest picking from its monstrous limbs the rupees and annas thrown upon them by the worshippers, who stand upon the steps with bowed heads and supplicating palms.

The Sikhs are much in evidence at the Fair. We go into one of their large open pavilions, where a sort of prayer-meeting is being held. An altar is placed at one end of the tent, and before it black-bearded men sit solemnly in rows, while a reader recites passages from the *Granth,* the sacred volume of the Khalsa, in a monotonous

sing-song. There is an instrumental accompaniment: one man beats a small tom-tom, another performs on a kind of concertina, and the brass bell-mouth of a gramophone yawns beside him.

The mahant, a splendid old Sikh, six feet two at least, with a chest like that of a bull elephant, courteously invites us to a place where we can have a good view of the proceedings. He thinks we might like to hear the gramophone. So the reader stops his chant, and the machine, a very bad one, grinds out what I presently discover to be an English lyric, painfully familiar. * Wow'n't you come home, Bill Bailey ?' asks the wheezy gramophone in a Cockney accent, while the old mahant leans on his stick and beams with pride, and the black-bearded worshippers look on with unrelaxed features. Perhaps they thought they were listening to a devotional melody.

My companion has various calls to make. One of them is upon the mahant of a group which on these occasions dispenses with clothes. With him he has to discuss some details of the morrow's procession; for these men, as I have said, are influential and can keep things in order. They made an unusual pair—the tall young Englishman, in his neat khaki uniform, with belt and shoulder-straps, and the little drab fakir, without a rag or stitch upon him. But the mahant was an intelligent man, with a shrewd eye and a courteous manner, and the interview went smoothly.

There were many other duties to fill the police officer's well-spent day—precautions to be enforced against fire, the order of the great processions to be arranged, the outlying police-posts to be visited, the daily charge-sheet to be examined. In one respect, his task is made easier than it could be in some other countries. Sectarian rivalries may give trouble, but there is scarcely any ordinary crime.

As we went back to the police headquarters, a constable was holding by a cord a miserable outcast lad, who had been caught pilfering small coins; but the charge-sheet was almost blank, and the wooden cages, intended as a lock-up for prisoners, were empty. In this vast assemblage, swept up from a continent, there was a complete absence of violence, of drunkenness, of disorder. Noise there was, indeed, in deafening quantity, for the people, as they passed through the lines of tents and swarmed about the shops and shows, were all chattering furiously, screaming, calling to one another, talking at the full stretch of the high-pitched strident native voice; but there was no rowdiness, no rough horseplay, no offensive revelry, no indecent larking. Women and young girls were there by the hundred thousand. I was told that amid the throng of the camp bazaar, and among the rows of dimly-lighted shanties, they were as secure from molestation or annoyance as they could have been in their own homes., Some comparisons, not wholly welcome, leaped unbidden to the mind.

The Allahabad Kumbh Mela is kept up for some weeks in January and February. To see it at its weirdest, it should be visited on one of the three great days when the associations of *sadhus* and *swamis* and other holy men go in procession to bathe at the meeting of the Sacred Eivers. Ascetics as these persons are by profession, contemptuous of the elementary comforts of life and even its conventional decencies, they understand the importance of spectacular display in impressing the multitude. Elephants, with gilded howdahs and rich housings, resplendent palanquins, and broad banners of silk and gold waving over long columns of marching worshippers, make these processions very showy affairs, so that they will quite bear comparison with some of the interesting

medleys of childishness and splendour which certain of the feudatory princes array on occasions of festivity or state. The martial pomp of gleaming weapons and prancing chargers is wanting ; but its absence is not felt. Without it there is enough of varied colour and vibrating life; and there are some singular, and even startling, features which give the parade a character most distinc tively its own.

The Fort of Allahabad, capacious as most of those built by the Moghul kings, a stronghold and a town in itself, stands high on its bluff of land above the sandy bank and spreading channel of the Ganges. There was a Sabbath hush about its vacant courts as we drove through them in the early morning of that Sunday, which was the Sankrant, the first of the three chief processional days of the festival. European society was still mostly in bed, and the soldiers, except the few on duty, were in their barrack-rooms.

We made for an angle of the ramparts which over looks the sacred spit of sand wedged between the com mingling rivers. A little clump of grey and a fleck of scarlet guided us to the place; for there was a knot of official spectators here, together with a sergeant and a couple of privates of a British battalion, languidly busy with the cartridge-slide of a Maxim gun. There were some two millions of people from all over India close at hand, of whom thousands were professional fanatics ; so that a reserve of coercive machinery was no doubt necessary. But of visible military preparation one saw nothing beyond this Maxim and another small field-piece trained upon the inclined way leading up to the main approach to the Fort from the water-side. There had been an idea of ordering a native regiment into camp, some where near the Mela site; but there came a scare of cholera, and it was decided not to expose our turbaned

warriors to the risk of infection. The civilians and the police were left to manage the crowd, and well they did it.

I went up to the parapet, and from the grey stillness behind me looked down upon a scene which took my breath away. The Sangam, the sacred triangle below us, was covered to its last inch by a swarming, shifting, variegated crowd. Even as I gazed, the sun, which had been struggling through the smoky river-mist, burst into the sudden splendour of the Eastern day, and under that radiant light the rustling throng seemed like a giant horde of gay tropical beetles, settling upon a flower-bed with scintillating scales and quivering pinions.

From the sort of private box or balcony-stall out of which we had our view of this vast stage, we could see that the crowd was all alive with movement and aflame with colour. The garish tints of the dyed cotton robes, orange, and purple, and sanguine crimson, and emerald green, coarse and crude individually, blended into an opulent harmony, from which now and again the sparkle of polished metal ornaments, or the flash of a glass bracelet, five inches deep on a rich brown arm, rose like the high notes of the violin above a rolling wave of orchestral music.

The crowd went down to the river's brink beyond it; for all the way along the spit the shallows were alive with bathers, standing immersed to the waist, ducking their heads under the surface, scooping up the dun fluid in the cupped hollows of their hands, or throwing it over their bodies, so that the water was foaming and spouting like the surf of the sea breaking on a ragged edge of beach when the tide is rising.

The throng was densest just under our bastion at the base angle of the three-cornered Sangam, where a bridge of boats led to the opposite bank of the Ganges, upon which the akharas lay encamped like a great army.

Three-quarters of a mile further up the river another temporary bridge had been placed. The processions were to cross this, pass along between the Port and the stream to the Waters-meet, and then, after their cere monial bath, re-form, march up the Sangam, and return to their camps by the lower of the bridges. Between the two, the level stretch was beset by more people than I ever saw on an English racecourse; but through the midst of them a broad track was kept clear, hedged by a weak open palisade of thin laths, and guarded by policemen dotted fifty yards apart. A child could have broken down the flimsy fencing with one hand, a brigade of infantry could not have kept the massed spectators back, if they had chosen to sway forward; but till the proces sions passed the course was left inviolate, save for the police and a few civil officials, who rode up and down on horseback to see that everything was in order.

A burst of wild Eastern music, the music of tom toms and pipes, vague, threatening, inarticulate, warns us that the parade has begun. Looking up the course from our grand-stand, we see it approaching, and presently it is under our feet. In front rides an Englishman in tweeds and gaiters, and another in uniform with a sword at his side. They are the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police, the representatives of that haughtily impartial Government, which 'views with equal eye ' this carnival of paganism and a Methodist school treat, and throws the same shield of vigilant guardianship over both.

The two officers have for escort a squad of mounted police, followed by a score of constables on foot, all in khaki, with cerise turbans. Then we get the first akhara, which is that of the Nirbanis, a respectable society, largely drawn from the Sikh districts. After the ' broken music' of the band, tom-tomining and whistling with

energy, we have the now familiar, but always imposing, spectacle of a dozen great elephants, rolling ponderously on, with the sand swirling at their massive knees like the bow-wave before a battleship. Housings of cloth of gold depend from their painted sides, and in their howdahs sit various notables of the akhara.

Then come *chobdars* and servants in handsome liveries, men carrying feather fans and gilt umbrellas and great curled silver trumpets. Follows a line of palanquins, through whose open doors, as they swing past, we catch glimpses, now of silk-clad forms, now of brass images, recumbent amid flowers and garlands. Behind them are the banner-bearers, holding the tall poles from which droop the great squares of embroidered silk. The banners are sometimes exquisite in colour, stiff with embossed designs in gold and silver thread; but the staves of silver end in rough wooden hafts wound round, for more con venience in carrying, with dirty strips of rag ; for we are in India.

After the banner-bearers, necks are craned along the palisade, and the crowd waits in hushed expectancy for the detachment of specially sanctified *Nagas* or unclothed ascetics. Slowly, under the remorseless daylight, there marched, two by two, a hundred and twenty men, naked as God made them, save that some had added mutilations and deformities to the Creator's handiwork, and others were smeared and streaked with the muddy clay of the river. One of the leading files of the column was a giant, a swollen hulk of grey flesh, and in his arms he carried a cramped and knotted dwarf, no bigger than an infant.

The strange company went by with a kind of measured gravity, even with a certain dignity, as if per forming a solemn rite, neither flaunting their nudity nor ashamed of it. These men had nothing in common with the half-insane fanatics who wandered about the camps

with gibbering tongues and obscene gestures. Some of the *sadhus* and *mahatmas* before us were celebrated pundits, learned in all the learning of the Vedas and the Shastras, famous teachers, who expounded the Sanskrit texts to thousands of disciples beneath the branches of a wild fig-tree, or under the shadow of a great rock.

The spectators, male and female, looked on without prurience, without flippancy, without shamefacedness; only a low reverential murmur broke from the dense ranks as the holy men paced on, with silent footfall, followed by their rearguard of chelas and attendants. After the akhara had passed, the crowd swarmed all over the cleared track; and you saw men throwing themselves down at full length to touch the ground marked by the sacred footprints, or kneeling to take up handfuls of the dust, and carry it to their lips and foreheads.

I descended from my perch, and came down with a companion to the level, in order to witness the approach of the Bairagi akhara. The Bairagis are the people who cause most anxiety to the authorities on these occasions. They are imperfectly controlled by their leaders, and not at all particular as to the character of their members. At this very Mela I saw a man arrested, in the disguise of a Bairagi fakir, by a keen-eyed Pathan detective from the Punjab, who 'wanted' him on a charge of murder somewhere in the North. These Bairagis are a quarrelsome lot, and given to fighting not only with other akharas, but also among themselves ; for they are divided into three sections, which have disputes over precedence and ceremonial, as, for instance, whether the processional banners ought to be carried at the trail or erect during the march to the Sangam. Moreover, they prefer to do the course at a sprint, instead of taking it, like the others, at a respectable walking pace.

Looking back along the track I see the mounted

police cantering their horses and the constables on foot, a strong body this time in five ranks, going at a hard double. Behind them the akhara of the Bairagis is coming on in a sort of war dance. The great banners are swaying overhead like ships' pennants in a stormy sea, the palanquins rock perilously upon the shoulders of the trotting bearers, and fakirs and chelas and a miscel laneous crowd of hangers-on are bounding and shrieking.

We wait until they have passed, and then go down to the bathing-place at the point of the spit. Here every pre caution has been taken against accident. A kind of river-bath, or pool of shallow water, has been staked off, with wooden shelters round it, for people to dress and undress, if anybody cares about that convenience—which most people do not. There are covered sheds, built over the water, for the benefit of female bathers who are *purdah.* Otherwise it is the mode for most visitors to go in ' as they are,' and assume dry garments on the bank or as they are stepping out. An Indian woman can change in public from a wet *chudder* to a dry one, with a lightning-like celerity that would baffle a music-hall conjurer, and with out exposing more than a glimpse of neck and shoulder.

Outside the bathing-pool there are some of the boats of the famous Benares water-police, smart and workman like crews, organised by the local District Superin tendent for river work at the Holy City. Within the space there are several flat-bottomed police punts. We get into one of these with a tall Sikh inspector, and push out among the bathers, who are ducking and diving like water-ouzels, and rubbing themselves with intent earnest ness, as if to get as much of the sacred fluid as possible through the very pores of their skin.

Anon ther§ is a stir among the crowd on the shore, discordant noises are heard, and with yells and thrum-mings the second akhara of the Bairagis comes barging

down. They rush into the depths, plunging and wallow ing in the water all round us, like a shoal of black porpoises, shouting and laughing and splashing one another. Fanatics they may be, but they are in the larkiest of moods, and as merry as holiday excursionists at Blackpool. Presently they begin to climb into our crazy little craft, until her sides sink perilously low, and it becomes necessary to assist the Sikh inspector in shoving them off and plumping them back into the water.

They take it all with excellent temper, and only respond by allowing a good many of their splashes to come in our direction, so that we have enough of the sacred Ganges upon us to wash some of our sins away before we set foot on the shore again. Many people will tell you that the Indian native is sad and immobile, with no sense of humour. He may seem so in the large towns, where he is out of his element and cumbered with much serving. But when you see him in the villages, or on the road or the railway, and most of all at the fairs, he seems joHy enough, with a ready laugh and an obvious desire to find material for a joke on the smallest provocation.

The noisy Bairagis were seen safely back to their camp at last, much to the relief of the police officers. Two of their sections were very cross and sulky with one another. On one of the subsequent processional days I learnt that these Bairagis managed to get up a serious riot, which could only be quelled by calling out the military; on another day a panic arose, owing to the terrific crush along the walls of the Fort, and many people were trampled under foot and several pushed into the river and drowned; but on the Sankrant no actual collision occurred, thanks to the ubiquitous vigilance of the District Superintendent and his assistants, and the day passed without disturbing incidents, except such as were caused by the elephants.

These stately animals, I regret to say, were ' supers.' They had been lent by wealthy zemindars and rajas for the occasion, and of course the mahouts, or drivers, went with them as part of their furniture. There were not enough elephants to go round, and while one procession was passing over the second bridge, the whole elephant corps was driven back to the first bridge to ' come on' with the next body. But the mahouts expected a fee for each trip; and at the very height of the proceedings these worldly men struck, and refused to move their bulky beasts unless they were paid then and there. Demoralised by this evil example, one of the elephants subsequently bolted into the Ganges, and declined to come out till the following morning.

It was evening before all the processions had passed, and the sunset was turning to a curtain of luminous orange the veil of dust that the stirring of myriads of feet had lifted. Then the darkness came down, and presently the moon rose and shed its silver flood upon thousands and tens of thousands making their way along the strand and through the maze of huts back to the places where they were to prepare their meals and lie down to sleep. But many stopped to lay their offerings by the tiny shrines, at the waterside, in the sandy gullies, among the alley-ways and spaces of the camps. In India the gods are many and the gods are strong; and none can tell what harm a chance neglected deity may do. So any fakir who set up his little lamp and mat before his image of brass or painted wood was sure of some prayers and some pice.

A religion of terror, they tell us, much more than one of love. And yet the people, as I saw them at this Pilgrim Fair, were gentle, obedient, temperate, contented. Is it their religion, with its incredible fantasies, its monstrous obligations, which has made them thus, or have they

become so in its despite? But the question drifts us into the deeper waters.

Allahabad is one of the nicest of Anglo-Indian stations. The globe-trotter and the tourist seldom trouble it; and the stranger can find himself made welcome to a hospitable circle, large enough to be cheerful, and not too large to be intimate. You will spend pleasant days at Allahabad if its kindly residents take to you. But of the Kumbh Mela you will hear comparatively little. Local society, except the officials specially concerned, is not deeply interested in it. It has its own affairs to attend to. An Allahabad man I met elsewhere, shortly after my visit, apologised for not calling upon me while I was at the town. 'You see,' he explained, 'there was a good deal going on just then. It was the week of the Hockey Tournament, and that always brings a lot of people down to us. I daresay you noticed there was rather a crowd about the place?'

'Yes,' I said, 'I did notice that.'

CHAPTEE XV

BENGAL AND BABUDOM

T H E voyager who comes down to Calcutta after a journey through the 'mofussil* may feel at first as if he had suddenly left India a long way behind. In the hot weather, it is true, the undeniable Indian sun, and the feverish breath of the stewed sodden land-breeze, may convince him of his error. But in midwinter the climate is only just warm enough to be comfortable, and the air is clean bright and wholesome. In this invigorating season the stranger looks about him, and he sees people in European clothes and with European faces walking—positively walking, not driving, or riding, or bicycling—even in the solid hours of the day, strolling across or beside a broad common, which is neither brick-red nor dusty yellow, but a good northern green. He passes a line of shops, genuine shops, as they know them in the West, with counters and plate-glass windows. He per ceives many imposing buildings, not Oriental in any sense, but stucco-classical, or pseudo-Gothic, or latter-day Renaissance,

A further touch of homeliness is imparted by the frequent monuments which meet the vagrant gaze. Most of the Indian cities we have mercifully forborne to decorate with the triumphs of modern British statuary. Our cantonments and civil stations are too impermanent and strictly utilitarian for such indulgences. But in Calcutta the statesman, in trousers of changeless if

wrinkled bronze stares gloomily from his pedestal, the hero curvets on a circus-horse of tormented marble. There is even a long stone cylinder, which resembles, if it does not consciously imitate, that painful column which rears itself unashamed over the steps at the bottom of Waterloo Place, S.W. The Duke of York was a suffi ciently bad soldier to deserve a bad monument; but Sir David Ochterlony was a general of some distinction, and he should have been better treated.

Still one would not wish the Ochterlony column away from the Calcutta Maidan, nor the other examples of our plastic art which adorn that noble stretch of verdure. Nor would one care to see them denationalised or made much other than they are. It is a just instinct which has dictated that the new Memorial Hall in honour of Queen Victoria, of which the Prince of Wales laid the foundation-stone during his visit, shall be ' clas sical ' in its design, with no suggestion of Orientalism at all. It is to be built all of stainless white marble, and no doubt it might be made very splendid with domes and minarets; but so conceived, it would not respond to the local tradition. Calcutta is an English city, the second of the Empire, and it does well to be conscious of the fact.

It is a city which owes its very existence to English adventure, and its greatness to English rule. We are not here inheriting past stories or treading in the steps of fallen dynasties. But for the English, all that there now is of Calcutta would to-day be no more than a few villages scattered among the swamps of the Hooghly, as it was when Mr. Job Charnock bought the site for the East India Company two hundred and seventy years ago.

Charnock lies buried, with a legible inscription over his grave, in the old church of St. John's, with his native wife—*not* beside him; for the story is that the lady was a, Hindu widow, whom he rescued by force just as she

was about to commit suttee, and though she lived with him to the end, and bore him children, she was never converted to Christianity, and died a 'pagan.' Charnock, however, was the first of the line of great merchants, statesmen, administrators, and soldiers, who never wavered from the determination that Calcutta should be the Imperial centre of British power and commerce in the East,

From Charnock to Curzon: it is a long and notable succession, through Warren Hastings, Cornwallis, Wellesley, Bentinck, Dalhousie, Canning, Lawrence, Lytton, Dufferin. The history of Calcutta is a record of great names and great events, on which Englishmen might: be excused for dwelling with much more self-satisfaction than they commonly exhibit. Thanks largely to the late Viceroy, the old memorials have been restored, and new ones erected. The streets are full of associations. In one corner of the Maidan are the mounds and earth works and bastions of Fort William, a name which ought to make our hearts beat higher when we think of Robert Clive, albeit it is not Clive's Fort William, but one of slightly later date, from which Lord Kitchener rules the Indian Army of to-day.

Walking from the stately stairs of Government House we come upon Wellesley Place, which recalls one famous proconsul, and Dalhousie Square, named after another. And when we have registered our letters at the post-office, we can shiver at the tablet on the corner wall, which tells us that a few yards distant was the Black Hole, that torture-chamber, twenty-two feet by fourteen, where 146 human beings spent the night of an Indian June; and we can walk across to the marble obelisk, renovated by Lord Curzon, which one of the twenty-three survivors erected to the memory of his fellow-sufferers.

Not far from these records of a dire tragedy is Hastings House, which has been restored and acquired by the Imperial Government; and, if you like, you can drive out past the common, and the shops and offices and Chowringhee, along the line where the electric trams run, past the bungalows set back among their trees and gardens, past Belvedere, where the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal lives, and where Hastings fought his famous duel with the author of 'Junius,' to the leafy village-suburb of Alipore, where the great Proconsul himself resided, with the woman whom he had made his own under such strangely romantic circumstances. One need not tell the story again. That episode, at least, is familiar to some people who know little else of Anglo-Indian history, for in these gossip-loving days a great man's affairs of the heart are apt to be remembered when his works are forgotten.

The mention of Hastings and his Austrian Baroness and the Black Hole recalls Macaulay, the first writer who brought India into popular English literature. We can go' back to Chowringhee, and pass through the hospitable portals of the Bengal Club—always open to any properly accredited visitor—and so be in the very house which Macaulay himself occupied when he was legal member of the Governor-General's Council. Here Macaulay spent the cold weather of four happy years, enjoying himself hugely, drafting the Penal Code, delighting in everything, in the society of the statesmen and civilians he met on the Council, in the big salary he drew (the rupee was a rupee in those days), which made him independent for the rest of his life, in Orme and Tod and the other historians, and, above all, in the life and colour of the wonderful land which he rendered into his own animated prose, for the first time making people at home realise that India was something else besides a country

whence a man returned, possibly with a larger income certainly with a larger liver.

It is as a home of English trade even more than a seat of English statesmanship that Calcutta impresses one. The factors and merchants of the East India Company may have been founding an Empire, to use the late Sir John Seeley's phrase, in a fit of absence of mind. Perhaps they had no consciousness of the political results of their enterprise, and shrank from the dominion which their generals and vicegerents compelled them reluctantly to acquire. But they did intend that Calcutta should be a world-centre of trade, the British mart and emporium for the Eastern Continent. Here they laid their foundations broad and deep, and the building has endured and waxed exceeding great.

There is an air of solidity and permanence about European Calcutta which is wanting to most of the English settlements in India. Soldiers and civilians, who are merely encamped on the soil for a term of years, and that broken by frequent flights homeward, need not be too particular as to their accommodation. Soon the bungalow and the garden will be left to others, and the transient tenant will never care to look on them again. Under such conditions, people naturally do not build and plant for posterity.

With the merchants, and particularly the merchants of the days before fast steamers,' it was otherwise. From the beginning they felt they were on the Hooghly to stay. The trader could not often be leaving his business to take holiday, when the voyage to Europe occupied months and there were no hill-stations. Calcutta was to be his home for perhaps the greater part of his life, and when he left or died, the firm would go on, and there would be others to take his place. It was worth while to set up an office or warehouse that would endure, and a house in which

a man might live in comfort, even through the hot weather.

So the old-time traders built fine mansions, spacious and durable, planned with no more concession to Eastern ideas than was necessary for shelter against the Eastern sun. You see these stately dwelling-houses behind the masts and funnels, as you steam up the river along Garden Reach. Society has deserted this quarter now; it has migrated to others nearer the centre of the city and the Maidan, and here the manufacturers, the men of business, and the high officials live, in handsome houses, behind white walls, over which the bougainvilleas droop their purple blossoms.

In most of the Indian cities the members of the governing race are poor, and what wealth there is seems to be chiefly in native hands. But Calcutta in this respect differs noticeably from its rival on the West coast. Bombay, as its residents will sometimes bitterly tell you, is almost ceasing to be a white man's town: the Asiatic is so pushing and so thriving. But the Bengal capital is still the seat of a highly affluent European community, which dominates commerce in spite of the Hindu baniya and the versatile Marwari dealer. The great jute-mills, the cotton-mills, the ironworks, the shipping lines, are in Western hands. It is a thriving manufacturing centre, where England holds her own, though the Germans are active too: a haunt of comfortable people, who can afford to dress their wives in garments for which the up-country ladies sigh in vain, to give resplendent dinner-parties, to keep half a dozen excellent clubs in high prosperity, and to make the Tollygunj racecourse on a Cup day look rather like Ascot or Goodwood.

It is a great native town, too, though it is not one of which white Calcutta affects to be proud. It has the squalor of the East, without its picturesque colour—a

nest of mean streets, unpaved, dirty, and shabby, lined with dingy shops and malodorous hovels. The poorest bazaars of most Indian cities have a redeeming touch of local character; but in Calcutta they are "Western or cos mopolitan. There are busy thoroughfares, which are as ugly as the working-class suburbs of an English seaport; there are rows of small houses, where the Chinese car penter plies his trade; and there are back alleys which have the shiftless untidy aspect of Southern Europe. Native Calcutta is like some of her own citizens: she has departed from the ways of the East only to produce a very poor travesty of the West.

Yet there is an Oriental Calcutta which is still primitive enough, and you need not go far to find it. You may see it any morning, close beside the great Howrah bridge, over which the clerks and shop-assistants and labourers are pouring in to their work in an endless stream, like that which rolls across London Bridge or Blackfriars. A stone's throw distant is the pile of steps leading down to the river, from which the people bathe in crowds; for the Hooghly is a branch of the Ganges and its waters are credited with the virtues of that sacred stream. They come from remote inland districts of Bengal, from Bihar and Orissa, from Sikkim and Assam.

It is a curious manifestation. The railway trundles its goods-trucks close at hand, waggons laden with bales from the mills creak along the road behind the bathers, the chains and mooring-ropes of tramp steamers and iron lighters are before them. In the dust by the roadside, where the groaning wheels of the big trollies almost touch it as they pass, a little altar to Ganesh has been set up. A Brahman crouches beside the hideous four-armed image, and a worshipper, naked to the waist, listens with joined hands and half-closed eyes while the holy man goes through his muttered incantations, careless of the railway

and the goods waggons and the passers-by in European garments, and the knot of native Christians formed into a little circle and lustily singing a Salvation Army hymn in Bengali.

Or you may go any Tuesday morning to the shrine of Kali, at Kalighat which is the original of Calcutta, where you may see Hinduism in one of its more rampant phases. Through a rookery of reeking narrow lanes, leading up from a muddy creek, you come upon the black little courtyard, with its group of temple buildings, in one of which is the idol of the Destroying Goddess. The place is swarming with people, some still dripping from their bath, some holding moist and bleating lambs and kids, which are to be offered up in sacrifice after being soused in the slimy canal. There is a sort of butcher's block in a corner, round which congregate half-draped priests, wild-looking and dirty. One of them presses a wretched animal's neck into a hollowed cavity of the wooden frame; another swings a long curved cleaver aloft, and with a single blow slices off the head, leaving a spout of blood to join the crimson pool on the slippery flagstones. Then the palpitating little body is carried into the inner temple to be offered to the idol, round which an eager crowd is pressing.

It is not a nice spectacle, and we quit it without re luctance. As we pass out of the squalid precincts our attention is directed to a square pool, set back in a sort of hollow behind the temple and the priests' houses. A single white-robed female figure is bowing and prostrating itself at the water's edge, a figure whose attitude, even through the shrouding veil, is instinct with a sort of de spairing pathos. For this is a childless woman, who is beseeching the goddess to lift from her the worst afflic tion but one that Indian womanhood can endure. Her prayers, at least, are genuine, whatever may be the case

with the savage revellers in the temple slaughter-house. But the gongs of the electric tramcars are clinking merrily at the end of the road; and as we step into one in order to get back to Chowringhee we reflect that there is a good deal of unvarnished Indian Orientalism even in Europeanised and babu-ridden Calcutta.

To the English resident the typical Bengal native is the babu, the man of the clerkly, semi-educated, class. It is certainly not that rather interesting person's own fault if he is not well known. He has pretty nearly the best brains in India and the readiest tongue. His memory is prodigious and his fertility in talk inexhaustible. He is something of an Irishman, something of an Italian, some thing of a Jew: if one can conceive an Irishman who would run away from a fight instead of running into it, an Italian without a sense of beauty, and a Jew who would not risk five pounds on the cbance of making live hundred. He is very clever, but his cleverness does not lead him far on the road to achievement; for when it comes to doing, rather than talking, he is easily passed by people of far inferior ability. The wealth of Bengal is not exploited by him; the profits of the local industry are not his to reap.

He has shown little of the capacity of the indigenous native in Bombay for asserting himself successfully in trade. The active Parsis, the shrewd Hindus of the Presidency and the Dekhan, are getting the business of the Western capital into their hands, buying up the shares in the old cotton-mills or starting new ones, elbowing the Europeans out of commercial and financial enterprise. The Bengalis have developed differently. The banks, the offices, the engineering-works, the cotton-mills, the jute-factories, are still English.

If the mercantile predominance of the ruling race is

threatened it is not by the Bengalis, but by immigrants from the other side of India, who carry on most of the trade and much of the finance. The babu orator pero rates about Bengal for the Bengalis; but he allows the Marwari to come from the deserts of Bajputana and pluck away the most lucrative commerce from under his very nose.

The reason, or part of it, was given to a friend of mine by a wealthy Marwari merchant, with whom he was discussing the Swadeshi movement. 'The Bengali,' he said, 'may talk about native industries as much as he pleases; but they will do no good to him. In all the larger kind of business he will not hold his own with us. And I will tell you why. The Bengalis have no power of initiative, and they have no mutual confidence. They will not take the risk of starting a new enterprise. They are afraid to strike out for themselves, and they do not trust one another. A Bengali would not care to hold shares in any joint-stock concern run by another Bengali, and if the stock fell a point he would be half-dead with anxiety until he had sold out, even at a loss. Now I,' added the man from the West,' should not have grown as rich as I am if I had not known how to trust my fellow-countrymen. If a Marwari, whom I have never seen before, comes to me and asks for goods on a three-months credit, I let him have them without a contract. I take his word for it that he will pay me when the time comes.' Suspicious and timid people are obviously unsuited for the great operations of modern commerce, which demand, above all other qualities, confidence and courage.

There are many other kinds of work in the capital city which the native of Lower Bengal does not perform. Policemen, postmen, messengers, tramcar-drivers, are up-country men, from Bihar or Chota Nagpur or the United Provinces; so, too, are many of the workers in the factories

and mills. The managers are mostly Europeans, as well as the foremen and inspectors. The owners would prefer the native article if they could get it of the right quality. For the imported overseer is expensive. The capable Scots mechanic, who might be earning thirty-five shillings a week in Dundee, will have to be provided with three or four hundred pounds a year, and perhaps a house, when he gets out to the banks of the Ganges. His native sub stitute is far cheaper, and if he is a Bengali, intelligent, well-taught, and capable of mastering detail, he may understand the work equally well. But the employers say that he cannot be depended upon, and that he is apt to lose his head and his nerve at moments of crisis. He makes a good subordinate, and does very well in quiet times and when things are going smoothly. But he is no daring pilot in extremity, and when the storm runs high he may forget to keep a steady hand on the helm.

That, at least, is the English view in Bengal, where it is not favourable to the children of the soil. In some other parts of India, in the Punjab, the North-west, and Rajputana, you may find plenty of Englishmen express ing real regard for the natives of their district. But you might be a long time in Bengal without hearing a good word spoken for the Bengali. The Englishman frankly does not like him, nor does he for his part entertain any profound affection for the English. The gap between the races here yawns very widely. Calcutta is full of natives who speak what they regard as the English language, wear the English dress slightly modified, and read English newspapers. But I doubt if there is much more community of feeling between them and the gentle men who frequent the Bengal Club and the United Services Club than there was between the cringing Orientals of the eighteenth century and the 'nabobs' and merchant princes, who lived sumptuously in the great

mansions by the river-side that are the warehouses of to-day.

And it must be admitted that the Bengali, be he peasant or pleader, is not the kind of person who naturally wins his way to the Anglo-Saxon heart. He is not picturesque, like the wild man of the North with his martial air and swashbuckling swagger, nor simple and manly like the sunburnt cultivator of the Central dis tricts. In outward appearance he is, in the lump, by no means attractive. He is rather short, and so dark that Anglo-Indians seem almost justified in describing him as a black man; he walks abroad with his round bullet head often bare of any covering at all—a mode which seems scarcely decent to an eye that has become habit uated to the graceful folds of the many-coloured turban. If poor, he arrays himself in a scant drapery of dingy white; if well-to-do, he shuffles along in a tweed coat, a cotton *dhoti,* and cheap leather shoes.

His diet of rice and oily butter and sweetmeats induces corpulency ; and the richer he is the more of this inflating food he eats, and the fatter he gets and flabbier. Of late years the young men have taken to various athletic sports and pastimes, and the figures of the newer generation tend to be a good deal less pronounced than those of their elders. But, except in the way of pastime, the civilised Bengali is not fond of muscular exertion; he prefers the sedentary labour of the bureau, or the security, and possible perquisites, of an official post. This is the object of his ambition, and in the hope of it he endures the stress of lectures and classes and examina tions. To place his son within reach of such a prospect the small landowner, the tradesman, even the farmer, sends him to school and college and encourages him to take a degree, or at least to try for one.

With his memory, and his power of assimilation in a

rapid superficial fashion, he accommodates himself easily to the examination system, and has a well-grounded belief that he could beat most English youths of his own years at the game. That is why there is a demand for throwing open the covenanted Civil Service to simultaneous com petition in India and England, in which case a fair pro portion of the posts would be sure to fall to 'Indian gentlemen' from the Ganges delta.

The babu makes an excellent minor official; indeed, all India ought to be grateful to him, for it would not be too much to say that the administration of the country could hardly be run without him, so largely is he employed in doing the clerical work and filling the subordinate offices. Properly supervised, he does useful service, being adaptable and intelligent, with more capacity than most other natives for learning to write and read English. As we all know, he learns it rather too well, having a taste for ornate sentences and mellifluous phrases, mingled with fragments of idiomatic colloquialism. Much easy wit has been expended over babu-English, which is, indeed, a peculiar dialect. At a certain railway-station a female milk-vendor caused some annoyance to the ticket-collector, who sat down and composed a letter to her employer in the following terms:

Horned Sir,—I beg you will remove your hand-maiden of milk, as she is not good fellow, and we cannot stand her cheeks.

Other samples can be obtained by the visitor in every Indian club and mess-room. But most people have their own collection of babuisms, even if they do not remember those which Mr. Anstey has so ingeniously invented. We need not make too much of them. If English boys had to read the Chinese classics at school, and to learn Chinese from masters who had never been nearer China than Dover beach, I daresay their literary style would cause

amusement in Peking. We teach our young Hindus a little English grammar under native instructors, and then feed them on Shakespeare and Addison, on Gibbon, Scott, Dickens, and Euskin. No wonder the result is a little mixed.

Education (of a sort) has been spread widely in India, and the Bengali takes to it as a young duck takes to water. Colleges are numerous, and very cheap, and the ladder from the back bazaar to the University is easy to climb. But though the ascent is gentle, there are a good many tumbles. Yet even the unsuccessful candidate has achieved something.

It is better (in Bengal) to have gone in for an exam ination and been plucked than never to have tried at all. The Failed B.A. has a recognised status, and proudly mentions his qualifications when applying for a post. The head of a great establishment tells me that every week he is solicited by gentlemen who offer this singular testimonial of mitigated efficiency. One even sees adver tisements : 'Wanted a Failed B.A., with some knowledge of typewriting'; the advertisers being no doubt shrewd as well as economical persons who believe that they may get good value for their money even out of the slightly inferior article which has not 'satisfied the examiners,'

As for the B.A. who has not failed, but arrived, he is, of course, eligible in various ways. His price in the marriage-market is increased. A Bengali father expects to pay cash for the bridegroom before he can get his daughter off, and the value of a B.A., I am credibly in formed, is assessed in some circles at two thousand rupees, while the M.A. may be worth as much as four thousand. For a man of this higher academic standing may be expected, not only to get a good situation himself, but to do something for his family, and perhaps even to put pickings in the way of a deserving father-in-law.

The college man, failed or otherwise, who does not get a post in the public service or in private employ ment often fares badly. Bengal is full of educated or semi-educated hangers-on, waiting for something to turn up. It is this material of which, in every country, agi tators are made, and in Bengal they are numerous and voluble. Some of them take to journalism and write anti-Administration articles in a swarm of vernacular newspapers.

Many more gravitate to the law, and become pleaders, or attorneys, or barristers; for India has a passion for litigation, and there is some sort of a living to be made by a whole host of practitioners, from the Small Cause Court lawyer, who touts for clients at two rupees a case, to the leader in the Calcutta High Court, who earns an income which would be deemed handsome in Lincoln's Inn. The law is the one profession in which the Bengalis more than hold their own with Europeans. The 'black Bar' in Calcutta is pushing out the white, which has a pretty hard struggle for existence ; for the native barrister is sometimes a man of real capacity, an able lawyer, a clever cross-examiner, and a first-rate forensic orator.

The calling suits the Bengali, with his subtlety, his ingenuity, and his readiness of speech. And when pro moted from the Bar to the Bench he often does very well there. The High Courts and Chief Courts of the various Provinces are seldom without native Judges, who obtain and deserve the respect of their European colleagues; and much of the minor judicial work throughout the country is performed by Hindus and Mohammedans. It is for the higher responsibilities of executive business that the Bengali, with some rare exceptions, is supposed to be unfitted. For that needs character and courage and firmness; and these are qualities in which he is commonly deficient, according to the received opinion not

only of most Europeans, but also of many natives outside his own Provinces.

When everybody says the same thing, that thing is usually untrue. But it is difficult to resist the consensus of testimony that the native of Lower Bengal is not, to put it gently, a person of conspicuous valour. He is credited with being able to yield to the menace of physical violence without any sense of humiliation. One hears stories like that (possibly apocryphal) anecdote of the Bengali, travelling in the train with his wife, who summoned a drunken sailor for kissing the lady. When asked why he made no attempt to prevent the outrage, he replied, 'Your Honour, I am a fearful man,'

I have seldom met an Anglo-Indian who doubted that the inhabitant of this region was a 'fearful man,' though I have encountered an educated Hindu from another part of the Peninsula who flatly denied it. He ascribed the theory to a famous passage in Macaulay's Essays, which, he said, had given the Bengalis a false character for cowardice with the English reading public.

It is highly probable that the habitual timidity of these people has been exaggerated. The Bengalis used to be great faction-fighters, and still are so in some of the rural districts, where they will turn out and pummel each other with bamboos and staves in a vigorous and bloodthirsty fashion. The rule is that the fight stops when a man is killed, and it is said that the party which is getting the worst of the engagement will sometimes slay one of their own side. This serves a twofold purpose. It brings the battle to an end, and it enables the vanquished combatants to lay a charge of murder against their opponents.

Riots, indeed, of one kind or another are not at all infrequent in Bengal. The Anglo-Indian view is that if a single unarmed individual falls among a body of Bengali rioters he will be in great danger; but that a dozen

policemen will subdue the largest and most turbulent mob. Some courage, at any rate, the young men of Bengal undoubtedly display. They have taken to cricket, and will stand up boldly, without pads or gloves, to the fastest bowling. They play football, too, in bare feet, and can make a good match with Thomas Atkins in his thickest ammunition boots.

But if the Bengalis are not all cowards, they are certainly unwarlike. There is no people in the world with less taste for martial glory. It is said that all the millions in Lower Bengal do not contribute one single sepoy or sowar to the ranks of the British-Indian army.

As we know him best and hear most about him, the Bengali is a babu. Yet all babudom would make but a small island in the sea of population that floods the valley of the Lower Ganges and the lands adjacent. The true vocation of the man of Bengal, away from artificial urban conditions, is that of the agriculturist. If you want to see him *au naturel,* you must leave the great cities and the railways, and wander among the villages which cluster all over the rich alluvial plain. Very different are they from the bare brown mud-walled hamlets of the North, The tiny cottages, with their conical roofs of thatch, look like beehives; and like bees the people swarm in and out, and over the rice-grounds, and among the lanes shadowed by palm-trees and bamboos. There is no solitude on this countryside, for it is such a breeding-ground of human animals as exists scarcely anywhere else on earth, outside China. Here, as he hoes and rakes his fields, with sedu lous though slovenly labour, or lies under the spreading banyan-tree during the heat of the day, or walks by his bullock-cart along the road, above all when he sits and gossips outside his shanty in the evening with his brood about him, the Bengal peasant seems fairly content, in spite of malaria, the fever, the moneylender, and the land-

lord. If he is poor enough in the world's goods, he is usually rich in sons and daughters and uncles and aunts and cousins and nephews; for he is essentially a family man, soft and kindly and philoprogenitive, and he esteems himself happiest when his quiver is fullest. Indeed, in the plenitude of his paternal bounty he does not limit his regard to his male offspring, but will sometimes even display a quite demonstrative affection for a favourite little daughter; and he will mortgage his financial future for years, in order that she may be suitably married, with all the honours of a ruinously expensive wedding-feast, at the mature age of seven.

CHAPTEE XVI

IN THE SOUTHLAND

WHEN you pass from the North of India to the South you realise once again the greatness and the diversity of the vast territory. The traveller who has been spending some weeks or months in Eajputana, the Punjab, the United Provinces, and Bengal, may begin to presume that he has got his orientation with some approach to correctness, and may even be rashly inclined to believe that he is coming to know something about India. But he will find that many of his bearings have to be taken afresh when he gets into the Southland. The aspect of the country is changed—its scenery, its peoples, its architecture, its flora and fauna, its languages.

The voyager discovers that the smattering of collo quial Hindustani he has laboriously acquired is of small use to him. That extraordinary dialect, which was made up in the camps of the Northern invaders, and is more or less understood by two hundred millions of people, is nearly unknown to the majority of the remaining hundred. The servant, brought from Bombay or Cal cutta, is almost as much at a loss as his master, when talking to a Telugu-speaking coolie or a Tamil tonga-driver, and he often has to fall back on English as a common medium of communication.

This, by the way, is one of the points that first attracts attention. In the North and West, English is the language of the sahibs and the Eurasians, and of them

almost alone. Even in Bombay and Calcutta, with their English shops and business houses, and a European population several thousands strong, you cannot make yourself understood without some slight acquaintance with the vernacular. But in Madras, if you address a porter, a policeman, an hotel waiter, or any casual native, in your own tongue, the chances are that he will answer you in fairly correct and grammatical English. In the Southern Presidency it is not at all unusual for ladies and gentlemen to talk to their servants habitually in English, and I have met residents of some years' standing who know next to nothing of the vernacular. I do not say that the mem-sahib of the other Provinces is always an accomplished linguist; but she has to pick up a little colloquial Hindustani or Bengali or Guzerati, since otherwise she would hardly be able to convey her wishes to her domestics at all.

The contrast throws light on a whole chapter of history. It reminds us that we have been in Madras longer than anywhere else. When you stand by the earthworks of Fort St. George, and look out upon the line of surf breaking upon the shore, you are at the seat of our Empire in the East. In a large part of the North we are but newcomers. It is only the other day, so to speak, that we annexed Oude ; I met old men, and at least one old lady, in Lucknow, who were living there when the Mohammedan kings still misruled in that noble city. In the Punjab we have not been settled much longer; in the Frontier Province we are hardly settled yet.

But in Madras the English have been at home for not far short of three hundred years. The agents of the East India Company planted themselves upon that coast, by the old Portuguese settlement of San Thome, while Charles the First was still King of England; and there they remained, trading, working, fighting hard at times with

the'Moors' and the French, but constantly increasing the extent of their territories and the number of their subjects.

Madras, like Calcutta, is a city mainly of English creation; and though it has been outpaced by its later rivals, it had its three hundred thousand inhabitants when both Bombay and Calcutta were small and struggling towns. Thus the traders and the officials have had more time to teach the people English; and, perhaps, because these latter are of more malleable fibre than the men of the North, and because they have no such massive literature as that of the Sanscrit to fortify them, they have yielded more easily to the speech of the conqueror ; and they use it with a readiness for which the tourist would bless them, if he came.

But he does not come. Madras lies beyond his radius, together with all the Southern States, including plea sant Mysore and picturesque Hyderabad. Anglo-Indians themselves, unless business or officialdom places them there, know little of Madras, and are accustomed to speak of it with a certain contemptuous patronage. It is the benighted Presidency, left outside the main sweep of Indian life, rather backward and deficient in enterprise, with an inferior administrative record and a degenerate people. The ' best men ' of the Civil Service always go to the Punjab, the second best to the United Provinces and Bengal; Madras puts up with the leavings. So one is told in the superior North, and warned further that there is nothing to see and nothing to do in this hot and com fortless abode of the unworthier black races, persons of low stature, who cannot even fight. The visitor is pre pared to expect little that will furnish him with interest and entertainment in the South country, and looks for ward to enduring it with resignation and leaving it without regret.

And he is agreeably disappointed. It is one of the many illusions and disillusions of his Indian experiences. When he was in the Punjab he saw reasons for doubting whether the administration of that important and self-conscious province is so supremely able and successful as it professes to be; or whether the Punjab official himself, excellent as he often is, has not been a little over-praised. Conversely, when he comes to Madras and its daughter states and dependencies, he will seek in vain for evidence of inefficiency or stagnation. He will find, on the contrary, all the signs of a Government which understands its business, and studies the interests of its subjects, and watches over them with a vigilant care.

If he enters the Presidency by train from the North he will reach a certain frontier station, at which he and his fellow-passengers, including the screaming horde from the third-class vans, are turned out for plague-inspection purposes. A doctor, with his native assistants, proceeds to take the *dossier* of the whole complement, ascertains where everybody comes from, makes a medical examination in cases of doubt, and finally issues an elaborate certificate, testifying that the incomer is to remain under observation and report himself during the first ten days after his arrival. It is a little annoying, and the aggrieved European grumbles freely; but—Madras has kept itself almost clear of plague, while Bombay, with a very similar climate, has been decimated by the disease.

Madras has a flourishing educational system, and can boast more persons per thousand who can read and write than any other province in India, except Burma, which, of course, is not India at all in any but the administrative sense. Its roads seem excellent, and its railways not below the ordinary Indian standard. Its Public Works Department may fairly challenge comparison with that of the very best of its rivals. I have said something

already of the Punjab irrigation schemes and colonies. Magnificent as these are, they do not surpass, in boldness of conception and brilliancy of execution, the great dams of the South, by which the fitful rivers, rushing wildly at one season from their mountain reservoirs, and trickling weakly along their parched channels at another, have been tamed and rendered subservient to the uses of man.

Moreover, it is in Mysore, which is a geographical and political adjunct to Madras, that the most serious and successful effort has been made to develop the mineral resources and the natural agencies of India. Some of the richest mines in the world are being worked on the Kolar goldfields; and the Sivasamudram power-station, where the falls of the Cauvery are used to develop electrical energy, is laid out on a scale which is not to be met with again until we get across the Atlantic. A visit to the Sivasamudram works and then to the Mysore mines does not leave on the mind the impression that Southern India is effete.

Nor is it, as the supercilious Northerner will sometimes aver, a repellent, a disagreeable, or a forbidding land. Quite the contrary. It is a commonplace to observe that the South is the India of the picture-books; but one cannot help repeating the saying, for its truth is self-evident. Here at last you can find that for which you have been searching, with expectant and baffled gaze, for many weeks. The brown deserts of Eajputana, the stony hills of the Borderland, the rock walls and snow-capped pyramids of the Himalayas, the bare rifted plains of the Upper Ganges valley, the rice-fields of Lower Bengal, the forts and tombs and palaces of the old royal cities—all these are interesting enough. But they are not the India of tradition, the India of our youth; and in the midst of them we are sometimes

impelled to ask when India—the real India—is going to begin.

It begins when the night mail from Calcutta has carried you clear of Orissa, and you wake in the morning to find yourself among 'the palms and temples of the South,' amid villages set deep in broad-leaved tropical plants, cactus and aloe. Here are the Indians that we have all known; not the gaunt, bearded peasants of the upper regions, nor the bullet-headed stout Bengali, but the brown half-naked folks, with large gentle eyes, and with vestments of red and blue, such as the Apostles wear in the old coloured nursery Bibles.

These Canarese and Telugus and Tamils command no great amount of respect either from Europeans or from the natives of the other Provinces. They are not among the fighting races ; they furnish a very small contingent to the armies of the King-Emperor, and the head quarters staff thinks so poorly of them that it has almost abolished Madras as a recruiting-ground. Yet all the virtues of the world are not military, and these South erners seem to me a rather attractive people. They have the reputation of being ill-looking, except the high-caste Brahmans, among whom, indeed, you will find faces not easily beaten for perfection of feature and intellectual distinction. I have seen a Brahman lawyer of Madras who could have sat for the model of Giotto's 'Dante,' and another who might have passed for Phoebus Apollo in cream-coloured marble.

It needs no ethnological expertness to select the 'Aryan' strain of this aristocracy of birth from the Dravidian masses. These same Dravidians are dark and low of stature and sometimes negroid in type; but they seem healthy and sturdy, their chocolate skins are sleek and clear. They are a lively, good-tempered folk ; very poor, I am told ; extremely lazy, I make no doubt; but kindly,

humorous, and placable, except when they are roused into frenzy by fanaticism. They have the Southern *insou ciance,* and some touch of Southern artistry, in their selec tion of bright colours that go unerringly with their dusky tones of skin, and in the classic grace with which they loop their scanty drapery over one shoulder leaving the other bare as the Greek often did. For picturesqueness I saw no festal crowds in India to beat those which assembled to greet the Prince of Wales on his entry into Madras and Mysore. Some of the groups of women, in glowing robes of orange or magenta or deep blue, made splendid clumps of colour, as they lined the roofs or were framed in the recesses of verandahs and arcaded windows.

Madras itself seemed to me one of the most desirable of the larger Indian towns. I did not notice anything which struck me as resembling the attitude or demeanour often ascribed to this fine city. We have been told to see in the capital of the South only

A withered beldame now,
Dreaming of ancient fame.

But Madras looks more like a matronly beauty than a faded old hag. She may be dreaming of ancient fame, but she has many present amenities to comfort her. It is a city of 'magnificent distances'—far ampler even than those of Washington. The five hundred thousand inhabitants are spread out over an area almost compar able to that occupied by the five millions of Londoners. And, like London, the capital of the South is not so much a town as an agglomeration of villages. They are linked together by wide open tree-shaded roads, flanked by gardens and meadows.

In Madras you find that the compounds are the largest in India, so that quite insignificant official personages or private individuals have their three or four acres of

ground, and many have small estates, like miniature parks, with lawns and groves and kitchen gardens and pasture-land. They are well housed, for they are able to live in handsome roomy bungalows, such as people built in the spacious old Anglo-Indian days, before they began to be cramped by rising prices and a falling rupee. Space is treated with a kind of lavish disdain in Madras, where, in the middle of the municipal area, you come upon a great grassy maidan, a sort of Hampstead Heath or Putney Common, upon public offices surrounded by leafy glades and flower-beds, upon watercourses and river-channels, and native hamlets and plantations of palm-trees.

Social life, too, seems to glide along with a certain Southern ease and freedom, untroubled either by over-important officialdom or by great wealth, as in the other two capitals. There are no jute or cotton magnates or Parsi millionaires in Madras, and no Viceregal Court, too dignified to be quite accessible. Everybody knows every body else—within the limits of the knowable and the clubable, of course; there is much meeting and tea-drinking at the Adyar Club, where you can sit on the pleasant lawns by the riverside, and watch the fours swinging along, and the pairs and skiffs putting off from the adjacent Boat Club, and almost fancy yourself by the reaches of the upper Thames on some warm summer afternoon.

But Madras is not too much lapped in ease to be indolent and careless; nor does it at all confirm the im pression, which you may have brought with you, that it is drifting behind the world. The fine harbour, a purely artificial creation, in which ships like the *'Renown* and the *Terrible* can moor alongside the wharves, is a proof that the city, even though she may now be a little out of the main stream of commerce, does not despair of her future; nor has she lost the energy which made a great port and

world-famous trade centre of this strip of wind-swept surf-beaten sand.

As you drive along the Marina, and watch the famous catamarans—the boats whose name you have known, and whose picture you have seen, all your life—skimming their way across the fidgeting waves, you wonder anew at the vigour and the genius which turned this strand into the seat of an Empire. And you look again at the mounds of Fort St. George, and also you marvel why Madras thinks so little of her one immortal name. In common with the rest of India, she seems to have forgotten Robert Clive. She has a statue of Neill, the man of Cawnpore and Lucknow, one of the gallant soldiers of the Mutiny. But of a far greater than Neill and the other Mutiny heroes she has, I think, no memorial at all. I am not sure that there is a single monument to Clive in the whole of India. We have yet to do justice to the man to whom, more than any other human being, we owe our Empire of the East.

CHAPTER XVII

GOLD AND WATER-POWER

MYSOBE is one of the best governed of Indian native States, and the most important in Southern India, except that of the Nizam. For nearly half a century it was under British management; and when we handed it back to the reigning dynasty, twenty-five years ago, we did so with a first-rate Anglicised administration, which the late Maharaja, assisted by a native Prime Minister of exceptional ability, maintained intact. They even introduced further improvements, creating a Eepresentative Assembly, which, it is true, is not allowed to do anything in particular, but, on the other hand, is permitted to talk as freely, and almost as long, as it pleases.

There are many interesting things to see and do in this pleasant little country. Good shooting is to be had, and the Prince of Wales was taken to the great keddahs, where the wild elephants are caught and corralled, with the assistance of traitorous tame giants of their own species. Those whom history tempts more than sport can drive out from the bright Iiesidenz-Stadt, where the Maharaja is building what will be the finest and most artistically important modern palace in India, to the famous but now ruined city of Seringapatam, where the last rounds in the fierce struggle for the Carnatic were played off between the British, the French, and the Mohammedans.

When I took the trip to Tippoo Sahib's old capital it was in a motor-car on a clear warm morning, some hours before the Royal party were expected to make the same journey. Many people were passing along the nine miles of road, lined with green mangoes and spreading banyans and other trees of the forest, as roads so often are in India. The villagers had been ordered to keep the track moist for the august visitors, and they stood in groups to see our unfamiliar machine go by—men with their white togas flung over one shoulder, and women, statuesque and graceful in their crimson and orange robes, with the great brass *lotas* balanced on their heads. Sometimes we came upon roadside hamlets, with the goats and buffalo-calves straying in and out of the byres, amid brown laughing children; or upon the shepherd, with his long staff and long mantle, walking solemnly at the head of his flock.

At Seringapatam there is much to see if one is in the sight-seeing mood. They show you the beautiful mausoleum with the tombs of Tippoo Sultan and Hyder Ali, those sturdy Moslem tyrants, with whom we had pretty nearly the toughest of all our fights for India; and the tomb of General Baillie, who died a prisoner in Tippoo's hands. One may also see the dungeon arches where Major Baird, a hot-tempered Scots officer, was kept in captivity for three years and a-half, chained to a native warder. 'I'm sorry for the chiel that's tied to oor Davie,' said Baird's mother when she was made acquainted with this arrangement.

But Mysore has interests which are in no way con nected either with archaeology, with history, or with sport. The Kolar gold-mines lie in this State, and their names, Champion Keef, Mysore, Ooregum, and the rest, are known to thousands of people in places where they buy and sell shares, who perhaps would find some

difficulty in explaining precisely where they are. The Kolar district is now one of the leading goldfields of the world, and it is able to throw two million pounds' worth into the common stock of the precious metal every year. And, in order that the mines may be worked with economy and efficiency, the State Government has established a scheme for transmitting to them, over ninety miles of intervening country, the electric energy developed in its power-station at the Falls of the Cauvery Eiver.

There is nothing in India, or in all Asia, more remarkable in its own way than this skilful and successful effort to utilise and transmute some of the wasted force of Nature; and it says much for the Mysore Administration, under its late Diwan, the clever Brahman statesman, Sir Seshadri Iyar, that it had the courage and foresight to carry out and finance this project. The Sivasamudram power-station, planned by a clever Anglo-Canadian engineer, Major de Lotbiniere, E.E., but fitted up by an American company, and run by American managers, is worth coming a long way to see, by those who are interested in the future, as well as in the present and the past, of India.

But not many people, save those whom business takes there, ever do think of seeing Sivasamudram. For one thing, it is not easy to reach. It is thirty miles from the nearest railway-station, and it was not thought necessary to bridge the distance even by a tramway or construction-line for the transport of heavy machinery. Men and animals are too cheap in India for such assistance to be required. The dynamos, the turbines, all the weighty forgings and huge pipes and tubes, were brought in on bullock-carts, at a rate per ton with which mechanical transport could not compete.

There is no passenger traffic in the remote and solitary river-bottom where the works lie. The officials have a

tonga service to and from Maddur station, on the line between Mysore and Bangalore ; but it was temporarily suspended at the time of my visit, because all the vehicles were needed at Mysore and the Royal shooting-camp. The only possible mode of conveyance was the native country cart, which is called a jutka; and so in jutkas a companion and myself determined to traverse the thirty miles from Maddur to Sivasamudram. Experienced residents at Mysore obliged us beforehand with lurid descriptions of the horrors of this method of transport, which they assured us was fit only for the *dtira ilia* of the native. In the result we did not fare so badly, though I should not recommend the trip to anyone solicitous as to his personal comfort.

You become acquainted with various strange machines in your passage through the Empire of India. There is the two-horsed tonga, with the pole running right under the body of the carriage, and the single-horsed ekka, with a similar arrangement of shafts, both of which are apt to tip you out backwards if not properly balanced ; there is the Burmese chaise, which has been described as a decayed match-box dragged by an enlarged rat; and there is the bullock-cart, drawn by two trotting zebus with painted and brass-tipped horns, which is so pretty to look at that you almost forgive its absence of springs. For rancid discomfort the jutka is in the first flight. It is like a costermonger's barrow turned the other way about, with a pony between the handles, and it is provided with a sort of beehive or dome-shaped cover of plaited straw. It is about two feet wide, and the floor slopes steeply from front to back. A whole family of natives, men, women and children, can contrive, in some acrobatic fashion of their own, to huddle up inside it; but a single moderate-sized European, with a moderate-sized suit-case, finds himself badly cramped for space.

I crawled under the tilt, and discovered that when I tried to sit up my hat was in contact with the low roof; and when I attempted to lie down my legs protruded in decently beyond the tail-board. Moreover, the concern was redolent of that mingled odour of garlic, cocoa-nut oil, and warm humanity, which the native leaves behind him, and every time I moved clouds of dust arose from the sacking which covered the boards. The pony was a minute country-bred framework of gaunt skin and jagged bone, and I formed the worst anticipations when I re flected that I had thirty miles to travel by this agency, under a searching afternoon sun which pierced the straw covering as if it were tissue-paper.

However, the ragged Mohammedan driver was willing, and the pony belied his appearance. We went along at a smart ambling trot that carried us over the ground at an unexpected speed ; and when, after a dozen miles, we stopped to change horses, our wiry little animal, as soon as he was released, took a long roll in the dust, and then, espying a tethered stallion about twice his own size, went up to him with a snort and began a spirited fight. The jutka covered the thirty miles, with two relays of ponies, in little more than three hours. It delivered us at the inspection-bungalow of the power-station in time to sit down to dinner with the State Engineer and the manager of the scheme, Americans both, and as hospit able and as keenly interested in their work as American men of business and experts usually are wherever you meet them.

The next morning I went all over the installation with my genial hosts, and marvelled much at what I saw. It seemed strange to hear the familiar, kindly American locutions; stranger still to witness this superb example of American mechanical skill, here amid these lonely hills in the heart of Asia. It is a beautiful corner

of country which the engineers have annexed, albeit, one heard with regret, much troubled by malaria—a country of bold headlands and scooped hollows and flashing waters. Near Sivasamudram, which is just at the point where Mysore State and the Madras Presidency touch, the Cauvery makes its spring of four hundred feet from the Dekhan upland to the lower level of the coast region. Down the mountain stairs the swift river hastens, gushing through clefts and gorges in foaming cataracts, or pouring in fleecy torrents over the sheer black surface of the cliffs. One lovely cascade hangs like a floating bridal veil of silvered gauze upon the brow and shoulder of the mountain, and loses itself in a rock-bound basin of still green water at the foot.

A couple of miles above the Falls, the Cauvery broadens out into a shallow boulder-strewn bay before gathering itself for its downward plunge. Here is a long stone bridge of native workmanship, perched on a hundred little rough pillars, rude and primitive to the eye, but which yet can stand unharmed the fiercest violence of the river when it roars and races in the madness of its flood orgy. Hard by the engineers have thrown their dam across the channel, and placed weirs and gates, through which the water is led by four long aqueducts or canals to the penstocks that feed the turbines four hundred feet below. Round about the pond or forebay, at the head of the great steel pipes, are clustered the offices of the power-station, the bungalows where the managers and officials live, their little club and recreation-ground, and the neat brick huts of the workpeople and coolies. Here also are the fitting-shops, where skilled mechanics do the repairs necessary for keeping the machinery in order; and the drum and winding-engine of the tramway which runs down the perpendicular face of the cliff alongside the penstocks.

We take our seats in the trolley, and in a couple of minutes are in the generating-shed at the Jower level of the river. In the long brick building we find the row of turbines, the wheels set with little cups round their tyres, which are receiving the impact of the solid core of fluid as it pounds out of the penstocks. Our expert guides explain to us the score of elaborate devices employed to regulate the flow, so that each wheel spins its allotted three hundred revolutions per minute, no more and no less, and they show us the chains and bridles which render the angry river nixies obedient, if not willing, slaves to man.

Opposite the turbines is ranged the line of dynamos; and you can stand between these two files of imprisoned iron monsters, and know that the miracle is being wrought in your presence, The Spirits of the Waters are transmuted into the Spirits of the Ether, and the inert stored forces the river has gathered from the rain-clouds are turned into the fiery energy, which is carried through a few thin strands of wire to the engine-houses and stamping-mills of the Kolar goldfields nearly a hundred miles away.

Eleven thousand horses, with all the thunder of their trampling hoofs and the strain of their quivering limbs, could not equal the power which those few purring boxes of steel and copper evolve; and the engineers hope to work up to a full capacity of twenty thousand horse-power before long. Even in the East you feel that the new magic is more potent than the old, the machine mightier after all than the crude force of flesh and blood and tissue, though they be spent with uncalculating prodigality.

For my part, while the men of science were explaining to me, in that lucid curt language of theirs, which puts our literary efflorescence to shame, the triumphs of reasoned ingenuity which the General Electric Company

of Schenectady, N.Y., had brought to bear in order to economise labour and develop efficiency—while I listened to them, I was thinking what all this may mean for India in the future. A shrine of Siva, the embodiment of the elemental force which brings life and death, was near this place; it may have stood on this very spot. East and West are in contact again: the West purposefully bending Nature to the service of man ; the East trembling before Nature as a cruel capricious Colossus avid of lust and blood. Siva has gone, and Schenectady has come. But the conflict is only beginning. Are the old gods vanquished yet? Which will prevail in the end, Siva or Schenectady ?

Labour-saving, at any rate, is a new idea in Asia, and it is carried far at the Cauvery station. The whole apparatus is as near as possible automatic. When I heard that by this scheme the power derived from the river-fall is turned into electric energy, generated at a force of thirty-two thousand volts, transformed to a voltage of two thousand, and so transmitted to the goldfields of Kolar and to the street lamps of Bangalore, I looked to see a great army of workmen, a whole corps of officials. But nothing of the sort is in evidence. Mr. Haskell, the manager, is the only high officer permanently in residence at the Cauvery station, assisted by occasional visits from Mr. Gibbs, the chief executive engineer. The entire skilled staff consists of no more than a score of Eurasian operatives and fitters, and there are less than a hundred all told of native labourers, coolies, cleaners, and sweepers.

George Eliot, in *The Impressions of Theophrastus Siichy* imagined a cycle in which machinery should be endowed with intelligence and volition. We seem almost to have reached that stage, when we enter this great generating-shed, and see the cohort of turbines and

dynamos, whirling obediently and uninterruptedly, with a single oiler to wait on them ; or when we ascend to the switch-room above, with its tiers of levers and dials and pointers, and one skilled operative sitting at a table with pencil and note-book, occupied in taking records, con cerned mainly to see that nothing goes wrong with the process by which the downward rush of the river is turned into magnetic energy. The tubes and wheels and wires do the work ; the human assistant need only put a finger upon the pulse of the organism, to ascertain that it is beating normally.

The Cauvery station, with its ninety-three miles of wire to Kolar and its fifty-seven to the electric lights of Bangalore, is one of the largest producers and transmitters of power in the world. At Niagara, and at three or four other places in the United States, its capacity is exceeded; but it is ahead of anything that exists, and is in actual operation at this moment of writing, either in Europe or in Asia. No more striking example is to be found of the scientific utilisation of the natural fall of great masses of water for the development of electrical energy.

And at Sivasamudram the new agent, *Vhouille blanche,* as M. Hanotaux has called it, is free from the repellent surroundings that are usually found where great work is being done through the action of coal and steam. "With water-power and electricity it is not necessary to deface a whole country-side, to hide the daylight under palls of smoke, to poison grass and trees and rivers, or to pile up hideous mounds of refuse and burnt-out cinders. Though the engineers have diminished the volume of the flow in the dry season, the cascades still drift in gleaming folds down the rocks, the wild flowers bloom among the clefts, and the low brick buildings, the pools and reservoirs and canals made for the power-scheme, have done little to spoil the beauty of this fair, though unfortunately fever-

haunted, valley of the Cauvery. Nature is enslaved; but here, at any rate, she is not degraded or deformed.

The day after leaving Sivasamudram we picked up the power-cables of the Cauvery station at their other end, and made our way to the Kolar goldfields, where the energy developed from the river-falls is used to work stamp-mills and mining machinery. Here, too, one felt the atmosphere of the Newer World. The mining settle ment straggles along the line of the great reefs for a length of some nine miles, in a high breezy plain, with bare scarped hills, like South African kopjes, jutting out from it in the distance. The winding-gear and head-works of the mines raise themselves at frequent intervals, surrounded by stone-built battery-rooms and crushing-sheds, cyanide-tanks, motor-houses, and mounds of tail ings; with officers' bungalows enclosed in flower-gardens, brick tenements for the European workers, and row after row of small straw tin-roofed huts for the native miners.

It is, as I have said, one of the noticeable goldfields of the world, representing, as it does, a capital of £2,192,000, a market valuation, when I was there, of about nine millions sterling, a total gold production well over twenty-three millions, and a contribution, by way of royalty, to the revenues of the Mysore State of not less than eleven hundred thousand pounds. Thirty thousand persons are employed above ground and below, and five and a-half lakhs of rupees are paid out in wages every month. There are more European residents here than in almost any place in India, outside the military cantonments and the Presidency cities; but of course the great majority of the miners and labourers are natives. The lowest unskilled coolie receives eightpence for a day's work of eight hours, and a cottage, which he occupies at a rent of eightpence

to one and fourpence a month. These would be deemed favourable terms anywhere in the Peninsula, so that native labour is plentiful, and there is much competition for employment on the fields.

The European foremen and skilled artisans and the officials are also very well paid: a man who would be satisfied with something under thirty shillings a week at home may be making his two hundred pounds a year or more, with free quarters, lights, and medical attendance, and very little occasion to spend largely on his necessities and comforts. He comes as a single man, without 'encumbrances'; if he has a wife or family, they stay behind him, and he is allowed by the companies five months' leave of absence every three years and a free return passage, in order that he may go home and visit his belongings. A careful person, under these conditions, can have a very nice nest-egg laid by at the end of a few years ; and some of the Cornish miners, who are thrifty and saving to penuriousness, do not take long to amass money enough to return to the old Western county as capitalists in a moderate way.

What strikes one most about this mining settlement is its air of quiet, well-conducted prosperity. There is little outward evidence of the rowdiness and raffishness and the adventurous instability, which are characteristic of such concourses of humanity elsewhere. The great firm, which manages nearly all the mines, and is the virtual employer of almost the entire population, encourages neither booms nor rushes; the outside promoter and prospector receive so scanty a welcome that in the whole colony there is not a single hotel where they can stay, and, unless they come properly introduced, they will be hard put to it to find a night's lodging. On the other hand, any person who brings suitable credentials may be sure of hearty and hospitable entertainment in

one or other of the commodious bungalows of the chief officials.

The climate of Kolar is almost the best in India, outside the hill-stations—bright, airy, and equable, and seldom hot enough to make the punkah necessary. These conditions, and perhaps most of all the absence of any floating population, since almost everybody on the fields is engaged under contract and has some definite Btatus, render the level of health high and that of crime low. I noticed no saloons, or bars, or gambling-rooms, or drinking-shops; but there is a first-rate hos pital, there are good schools for the Eurasian children, there are churches and chapels, social institutes, cricket and tennis grounds, racquet-courts, and an excellent club. The Goldfields Rifles count among the smartest volun teer forces in India. For general comfort and well-being, and for the absence of disorder and violence of any kind, I am assured by those who know California and South Africa and Australia and British Columbia, that the Kolar settlement has no superior, and probably no equal.

We were shown the shafts and surface-workings of the great mines, the Champion Reef and the Mysore, whose names they know so well in Throgmorton Street and the Place de la Bourse. We peered down the new shafts, two thousand five hundred feet deep in one case, four thousand, when completed, in another, which are to tap the veins at their lower levels, and prolong the life of mines that are already among the steadiest and most constant producers within the investor's ken.

We went into the reduction-sheds, and watched the ever-fascinating process by which the shapeless, useless-looking, chunks of grey stone are made to yield the precious metal at their hearts. We see the load of rough quartz trucked from the mouth of the shaft and lifted up

to a high revolving table, on which natives, treading bare footed among the flinty cores, sift out the gold-bearing lumps from the heap, and pitch them into a shoot, where great iron teeth bite them into manageable morsels.

We pass into the battery-rooms, where the ponderous stamps, dancing up and down like giant piano-keys, grind the fragments of ore into powder under their manganese-steel heads ; and we behold this powder, watered into a viscous fluid, flowing over the copper plates past the cunning barrier of mercury, which takes up the gold held in solution. We witness the process of roasting and retorting the amalgam, till all the mercury is driven off as vapour, and only the precious yellow stuff is left in the crucible. Then we inspect the cyanide-tanks, with their pools of deadly liquid, and the tub holding a hundred weight of an innocent-looking white precipitate, one feathery ball of which would suffice to poison a regiment. Finally we enter the trim little office, where the manager opens the three-inch-armour-plate door of the strong-room and reveals the gold bricks glistening in a tempting row, ready to be packed and sealed and labelled and sent down under an armed escort to the railway.

It is all very modern, business-like, un-Indian. The sturdy Cornish miners, the keen-eyed Welsh and Scotch foremen and fitters, make us forget the coolies and sweeper-women raking away at the sand-heaps and tail ings. The cheery fresh-faced mine-managers and engi neers, loud in speech, jovial, careless, informal in dress and demeanour—they seem to have little in common with the precise civilians and the sporting young exquisites of the parade-ground. We hear the deep Lancastrian bass, the rolling burr of Northumbria, the level monotone of the American West.

We pass from the mine-works, in company with these good-humoured and well-informed men of business,

to their club, and from the club to the hospital, a model of all that is up-to-date and scientific, where the alert young doctors exhibit the latest triumphs of curative electric apparatus and X-ray improvements. We look from the spotless wards out upon the neat garden, with its English flowers, and beyond that to a tall brick chimney, a row of sheds, and the straddling iron legs' of a windlass hoist: and we forget that we are in India.

But what are those strange piercing cries, unearthly, blood-curdling, that fly through the open windows? What is this Maenad figure which meets our gaze as we emerge hastily upon the terrace? A woman, with long black hair floating loose in the wind, comes staggering past the low iron fence of the compound. Her red robe streams behind her, leaving breasts and shoulders bare; her arms are wildly extended, and in one uplifted hand she brandishes a kind of trident; the head is thrown back, the dark eyes blaze with frenzied light, the features are hideously distorted; demoniac shrieks tear her as she runs. So might some priestess of Cybele have looked when the fury of the goddess was upon her.

And that, indeed, is the case of this coolie woman. 'Drunk?' says one of the European spectators. The hospital surgeon shakes his head. He points to a small three-sided enclosure of rough stones in a patch of waste land hard by. Within is a big boulder forming a kind of altar, and upon it a rude wooden image. It is a temple of Durga Kali, the Hecate of the Hindu Pantheon. The altar-stone was just a lump of the quartzite rock scattered over the brae. But there was something a little unusual in its shape and size, and so the people took to wor shipping the spirit that dwelt within it. Then somebody walled it in, and they put the misformed red-daubed idol upon it, and now, adds our informant, it is a temple,«and we must not touch it,'

The woman has been worshipping at the shrine of the Goddess of Terror until the mania has entered her brain. She is possessed of the devil, as our forefathers would have said; the gadfly is stinging at her heart, the *cestrus* of Durga, the Slayer, the Blood-drinker, she who is the wife of the Destroyer, drives her onward. Her husband and a group of neighbours follow, at a respectful distance, half-alarmed, half-admiring. She approaches the steps of the hospital, and it is time to intervene, lest she break in and disturb the patients. The doctors and a policeman-modern science and the instruments of the law—bar her progress, and exhort her friends to get her away; but these latter are obviously reluctant to meddle with the manifestation of the deity. The trident is taken from the woman, and with difficulty she is turned back and headed off to safer ground. An hour afterwards, when we pass by the low wall of the crude temple, we see her crouching upon the altar-steps, her snaky locks falling over her bowed head, a knot of the villagers still standing near in awed silence to watch her shivering shoulders and listen to her con\ulsive sobs. Close by the laden trucks are rolling to the mills, and the wire-ropes are rattling over the drums of the winding-engines. Here, as in Sivasamudram, we are faced by the perpetual contrast, the inevitable ques tion. Which will survive in the end—the old gods of Asia or the new spirit of the West ? Is it to be Siva or Schenectady, Kali or the General Electric Construction and Maintenance Company, Limited? Perhaps it will be neither—perhaps both.

CHAPTEE XVIII

HINDUISM AND THE CASTES

'CHRIST is our salvation; Caste is our curse,' The sentence was painted in black letters on the whitewashed wall of the little mission building. It represents the honest opinion of many earnest teachers who are trying to turn the people of India to the Christian faith. Some Hindu reformers take the same view. Whenever there is what may be called a Protestant movement in Hinduism, an attempt to bring back the old Vedantic system, and to purge away the priestly excrescences, there is a certain revolt against caste. The new theistic Hindu sects, such as the Brahmo Somaj and the Arya Somaj, preach the equality of all men in the spiritual world. The Sikhs, who started as Hindu Puritans, with Brahmanism as their Scarlet Woman, are not supposed to recognise caste distinctions.

But the insurrections have usually died away; the Nonconformists themselves end by a return to orthodoxy and a reconciliation with the caste arrangement. The Sikhs have in reality, though not ostensibly, fallen into castes; so, to a large extent, have the Mohammedans; so have even many of the native Christians in the South of India, where alone they count as a substantial element in the population. Simon Sebastian, clerk and writer, is a good Catholic; he attends Mass, he listens to prayers read in the Latin tongue, he confesses his sins to Father Dominic or Father Ambrosius. But he will not marry

his daughter to a man who works in leather, nor, if he can help it, eat with him. For twenty centuries or more the people of India have lived under the rule of caste; the vast majority of them live under it to-day, and will so live for longer than we can see.

It is an affair of immense complications, intricate and confused. The origin is probably ethnological. Such appears to be the conclusion of the closest modern ob servers, including Mr. H. H. Eisley, whose essay, in the introductory volume of the Indian Census Report for 1901, contains more information on the whole subject than is to be found elsewhere in a convenient form. The highest castes of all, the Brahmans, who are the priests, and the Rajputs, who were the knights, are descended from the Northern conquerors, the 'Aryans,' who came down from beyond the mountains. The secondary classes are a mixed race, made up from these fairer taller people of the North, and the Dravidians, or Mongoloids, who still constitute the mass of the population in Bengal, the Central Provinces, and the South.

Climate and environment worked physical changes in the course of centuries, and no doubt there has been much mixing of the blood, even in the aristocratic septs. Still, many of the high-caste Hindus bear obviously the stamp of race. The Brahman, with his light-brown skin, his lithe delicate build, and his well-cut features, is clearly marked off from the swarthy peasants of the Lower Ganges, the stubby semi-negroid Telugus and Tamils of Madras. The contrast is most noticeable in the South, where the priestly order has always kept itself apart and retains many of its ancient privileges. Some of the high-caste Southern women, the celebrated 'cream-coloured' Iyengas, are warmly praised by exigent connoisseurs in female beauty; and I have seldom seen faces of more intellectual distinction than those of the leading native

barristers and pleaders of Madras, who are nearly all Brahmans.

The Hindus are not the only people among whom elaborate devices have been attempted for preserving intact the supposed purity of certain superior stocks. Most conquering aristocracies have tried it, and most have failed. But in India the classification is guarded by the strictest observance of the principle of heredity, and it is not confined to a comparatively small number of selected families. It has been extended till it includes most of the population, so that every Hindu, above the lowest stratum of all, is a member of some caste. Society in India is made up in air-tight compartments, every group being rigidly marked off from the rest, and it is extremely difficult for a person to pass from one to another, or even to establish very intimate relations with thost, outside his own circle.

The common tie may be that of race, of social status, or of occupation. To get a loose analogy, we might suppose that everybody who could claim descent from one of the old Norman families in England formed one caste; that members of the 'learned professions,' who had never soiled themselves with commerce, were com bined in a second; and that others consisted exclusively of bankers or moneylenders, or of pork-butchers, costermongers, bricklayers, and so on *ad infinitum.*

Add that a man born in the costermonger class would remain, or ought to remain, a member of that connection to the end of his days, and that he would usually bring up his sons to the same business; that a greengrocer ought not to eat food in company with a poulterer, that a baker might not give his daughter in marriage to a cheese monger, and that neither could have any matrimonial relations with a bootmaker; and, further, that none of these persons should place himself in personal contact

with a clergyman or a solicitor—imagine all this, and you begin to acquire some faint notion of the involved tangle in which the entire Hindu community has managed to get itself en wound.

At the back of it all lies the religious sanction ; and in India religion, with what seems a malign ingenuity, has occupied itself in heaping complications round the two essential functions of eating and marrying. The Hindu cannot take his food without elaborate precautions against pollution; and the higher his caste the more burden some are these rules. Even the coolie woman in the street, carrying home her bowl of cooked porridge, will take care to keep well clear of any passing sahib; for if the Viceroy or the Lieutenant-Governor should happen to touch the brass vessel with so much as the flap of his overcoat the contents would have to be thrown away.

As for the higher sort of Brahman, nothing is easier than to sully his purity. There are some inferior castes in the South, who are not supposed to approach even within speaking distance of the elect. A regular table has been drawn up of what may be called the degrees of pollution; so that, while some of these low persons can pollute a man of a superior caste only by actually touching him, it is held that blacksmiths, masons, carpenters, and leather-workers can pollute at a distance of twenty-four feet, toddy-drawers at thirty-six feet, and cultivators at forty-eight feet, while the pariahs, who eat beef, have a pollution-range of no less than twenty-one yards twelve inches.

The more sacred a Hindu is the more he is worried by his code of table etiquette. The very high-caste Brahman ought to strip of all his clothes, and, if possible, sit on a floor of cow-dung when he consumes his food. He should not eat anything which has been touched by an inferior, or a non-Hindu, nor drink water out of any

vessel similarly defiled. As the scale descends the re strictions relax, until we get down to the lowest kind of menial or labourer, who can attend to dogs, if required, and do many other things forbidden to his superiors, and allow his womankind to dispense with the dignity and the restraint of the *purdah.* Finally we reach the outcast, who, having no social position to lose, eats any kind of meat whenever he can get it, and will even drink out of an earthenw[r]are cup which has touched other lips.

Luckily for the modern Hindu these burdensome prohibitions and injunctions are subject to certain con venient legal fictions. Sweetmeats, it appears, are not food, and may be taken by anybody anywhere. Not long ago the Brahman pundits at Benares decided that soda-water is not water, within the meaning of the Act so to speak, and that ice does not count. The priests made a virtue of necessity. They found that iced soda-water was too popular in an Indian summer to be kept on the Index. The most orthodox Rajput gentleman, when exhausted by a hard game of polo, will not hesitate to drink the sparkling fluid, even though it is possible that some un believing hand may have touched the bottle from which it bubbles or the frozen block with which it is cooled.

The complexity of the Hindu socio-religious system looms even more formidably when we enter the domain of marriage. A Brahmanist Table of Prohibited Degrees would be an appalling document. It would include almost everybody, except some of the prospective bride groom's own cousins several times removed. What the caste system means in the matrimonial sphere is strikingly illustrated by a vivid apologue with which Mr. Kisley lightens the pages of the Census Report.

He imagines the great tribe of the Smiths, throughout Great Britain, bound together in a community, and re cognising as their cardinal doctrine that a Smith must

always marry another Smith, and could by no possibility marry a Brown, a Jones, or a Bobinson. This seems? fairly simple : there would be quite enough Miss Smiths to go round. But, then, note that the Smith horde would be broken up into smaller clans, each fiercely endogamous. Brewing Smiths, Mr, Bisley asks us to observe, must not mate with baking Smiths ; shooting Smiths and hunting Smiths, temperance Smiths and licensed-victualler Smiths, Free Trade Smiths and Tariff Beform Smiths, must seek partners for life in their own particular section of the Smithian multitude. The Unionist Smith would not lead a Home Bule damsel to the altar, nor should Smith the tailor wed the daughter of a Smith who sold boots.

An additional complication would be introduced by the fact that certain very lofty Smiths might marry the daughters of the groups next below them, but were strictly forbidden to unite their own girls to the male scions of these slightly inferior families. It is as if the Brompton Smiths might give a daughter to the Smiths of Shropshire, but could by no means be permitted to pass on a son to that respectable county connection.

Under such conditions the difficulties of the Hindu parent with a marriageable daughter on his hands must often be great: especially when the whole family will be disgraced if the young lady is not wedded when she reaches the age of thirteen or fourteen at the outside. Custom rigorously enjoins that she must marry some body; yet the circle in which she can find a suitable husband is strictly circumscribed. Likely bridegrooms are scarce, and among the classes with social pretensions it may be impossible to get them at all without a con siderable outlay in cash.

The unfortunate father is often compelled to put down a lump 6um to obtain a youth of the correct caste as a bridegroom for his daughter, or he runs the risk of seeing

her remain single until she is long past the age at which a Hindu woman is supposed to become a wife. The tariflf is fixed according to the social standing and personal qualifications of the bridegroom. Besides paying a large dowry, the bride's father is expected to hold a marriage-feast on such a lavish scale that the expenses may cripple him for years. Small wonder that the birth of a daughter is not a cause of rejoicing in Hindu households, and that the poor little thing receives a frosty welcome in this hard world.

In the old days the provident parent, foreseeing these social and financial difficulties, frequently got rid of them, together with his baby daughter, at the outset. Female infanticide was regularly practised, not amongst the de graded races, but among some of the most respected and reputable peoples in India, such as the Jats, the Rajputs, the Sikhs. We call it murder, and do our best to stop it; but the disproportion of female to male children, revealed in the Census returns, shows that the practice has not yet been completely stamped out. The isolated crime is hard to detect; but when the ratio of girls to boys falls particularly low in any village, the Government makes things unpleasant for everybody by quartering extra police on the place, and causing all the inhabitants to contribute towards the cost; which naturally annoys a thrifty population.

Still, public opinion is hardly as yet on the side of the law. An old jemadar in one of our native regiments discussing the subject with his company commander, said that he could not understand why the Sirkar interfered with what he evidently regarded as a beneficial custom. If it were a question of boys he could understand it; for boys are useful, and may in time grow into sepoys and sowars. But why all this fuss about girls, who are of no value, and only a source of expense?

Under the spell of ' the monster custom ' the Hindus can be amazingly callous and brutal, especially where women and female children are concerned. In the older days, when infant murders were numerous, if it were in convenient or dangerous to dispose of the wretched little corpse by cremation, it might be buried in the compound, with a jibing verse over the grave, such as this :

Your life, my dear, we must destroy,
Since you're a girl and not a boy.

And the mothers ? Did not the mothers object ? My friend, the company officer, asked the question. * If it was the first one,' replied the native corporal calmly, ' they used to give a lot of trouble. But after a time they got used to it.'

Worse than the infanticides—much worse—are the child-marriages, with all their evils, of which the greatest is girl-widowhood. Hard and sorrowful, as everybody knows, is often the lot of the Hindu widow. We have abolished suttee,[1] but one sometimes wonders whether that is really a reform, since multitudes of women have exchanged the swift and passing agony of the funeral pyre for years of oppression, neglect, and misery. Many thousands of widows have to choose between a life of degradation and shame if they leave their husband's relatives, and barbarous ill-usage if they remain with them. According to the Census of 1901, there were close on twenty million Hindu widows, of whom 821,470 were under fifteen years of age. And though perfunctory reso lutions are sometimes passed at the National Congress in favour of raising the age of marriage—-to twelve!—no serious attempt is made to wean the people from the practice of child-wedlock, and there is more of it in Bengal than in any of the other provinces.

[1] Or tried to do so. But cases of public self-immolation by widows still occasionally occur in the villages and are sometimes brought before the courts.

All the Congress orators combined have not done so much as a single unobtrusive Political Officer, Colonel Walter, a former Agent for Rajputana, who in 1888 induced the leading Rajput families to agree to a revised code of marriage rules. Under this scheme, fourteen was laid down as the minimum age of marriage for girls, the expenses of betrothal *fetes* and wedding-feasts were regulated according to a fixed and moderate scale, and second marriages, during the lifetime of the first wife, were prohibited. The code has been called the greatest social reform which has been made effective in India for about two thousand years. When we consider what this single English gentleman accomplished by moral suasion alone, we may be tempted to ask whether our Government does not sometimes deal too tenderly with caste abuses; and whether that which Colonel Walter did for Rajputana the law might not contrive to accomplish for the whole of British and native India.

As to the tyranny of caste rules in other matters, many curious examples were given me, drawn from the opposite extremes of native society. One relates to a young Indian nobleman, wealthy, educated, and almost European in his ways. He talks and reads English perfectly, wears English clothes, plays English games, has many English friends, and would seem to have left most of his Oriental habits and predilections behind him. But this gentleman is the hereditary head of a caste of thieves; and it is expected of him that once a year at least, if not oftener, he should steal something. So now and again his [English] secretary leaves a few rupees carelessly lying on his desk, and the raja pockets them, thereby discharging himself of the obligation laid upon him at his birth. The story may be *ben trovato* rather than true ; but the fact that it is repeated and believed illustrates the tendency of Indian opinion, which still feels that if a man is born a thief he

must go on robbing to the end of his course on earth. The gods have written it on his forehead, as the common saying runs : there is no help for it. Our laws are doing something to modify this theory, by making the position of the criminal tribes as precarious and uncomfortable as possible. In the meanwhile, there are still a good many of them, scattered up and down the country, or even living quite quietly in their own villages, from which they emerge to prey upon the rest of the community. The police know all about them ; but a person bred to larceny and pilfering from the cradle is not easily caught in the act.

Hereditary occupations are not limited to one sex, as the following authentic history demonstrates. A lady, who had a Mission School for native Christians, was visited by the mother of one of her pupils, a bright and promising girl. The woman asked that music and certain other accomplishments might be imparted to her daugh ter, as these would prove useful in her future career. Asked what this was to be, she explained that the maiden was destined to pursue that branch of industry which has been euphemistically described as ' the oldest profession in the world.' The Mission teacher was naturally horrified. ' How can you let your child give herself to such wicked ness?' she said. 'You are a Christian.' The native woman was not shaken. No doubt she was a Ki-listian ; but she belonged to that ancient calling, like her mother before her, and so her daughter ought to follow it also. The girl had indeed been married in infancy to a peepul-tree with this express object. It was her caste ; she had no other place in life.

But the crudities and cruelties of the caste system need not blind us to its other aspects. There is no doubt that it is the main cause of the fundamental stability and contentment by which Indian society has been braced for centuries against the shocks of politics and the cataclysms

of Nature. It provides every man with his place, his career, his occupation, his circle of friends. It makes him, at the outset, a member of a corporate body ; it protects him through life from the canker of social jealousy and unfulfilled aspirations; it ensures him companionship and a sense of community with others in like case with himself. The caste organisation is to the Hindu his club, his trade union, his benefit society, his philanthropic society. There are no workhouses in India, and none are—as yet—needed. The obligation to provide for kinsfolk and friends in distress is universally acknowledged ; nor can it be questioned that this is due to that recognition of the strength of family ties, and of the bonds created by association and common pursuits, which is fostered by the caste principle. An India without caste, as things stand at present, it is not quite easy to imagine.

BENARES

Those who seek to get a little closer to the religion that lies behind the Hindu social system must go to Benares, which is in some ways the most notable of the cities of India : not because of her wealth, her magnificence, or her beauty, for the Presidency capitals are richer, by far, and greater, nor has she any such noble monuments of art or such memorials of the past as those which lend undying interest to Agra and Delhi. But Benares is the metropolis of Hinduism, the Kome of the strange amalgam of creeds and customs that rules the lives of so many dusky millions, the mysterious Queen of the Brahmanic world; and, like a queen, Benares sits by the Ganges, albeit a queen with purple robes somewhat patched and tattered and a throne of ivory and clay.

The stream of the sacred river sweeps past in a wide crescent of pale yellow water, and Kashi, ' the Splendid,'

as the Hindus call the city, looks down upon the flood in a huddle of palaces and towers, of walls and window-spaces, of cones and cupolas and fretted temple pyramids, with the tall minarets of a mosque lifting themselves sternly towards the impassive sky, as though calling upon Allah, the One and Indivisible, in indignant protest against the idolatrous tangle below.

Beauty and squalor, pretentiousness and insignificance, meet you as you are rowed past the broken line of wharves and ghats. Now a noble fa$ade, now a tumbled heap of ruin or a patch of bare sandbank and gravel-pit; now the deep red *gopuram* of a Hindu temple, or a white Jain steeple, with vanes and bells of gold; now the mighty piers and massive stone blocks of an unfinished palace, which has slipped on its foundations of river-mud, and lies threateningly on the brink. From the irregular masses of buildings, terraced on the high bank, great flights of steps lead to the water's edge; broad steps, which for many hours of the day and most days of the year are all alive with pilgrims, bathing and washing, with worshippers throwing their chaplets of marigold upon Mother Gunga's bosom, with priests and ascetics sitting in prayer under great straw sunshades ; steps which the red-robed women climb at evening, with their pots of gleaming brass and dripping earthen bowls; steps down which they bring the dead for burning, and the dying that they may pass away with their feet wet from the lapping of the River of Life.

Apart from its sumptuous water-front, there is little dignity and charm in Benares. The temples, even the Golden Temple itself, are mean things, with no claim to architectural merit. The old town is a nest of narrow lanes, where the pilgrims, on their way to the shrines and the bathing ghats, can look into the tiny booths from which is heard the clink of the brassworker's hammer and

chisel, as he works at his images of Mahadeo and Parvati and Ganesh.

The Mohammedans trampled heavily on Kashi, and most of its older shrines disappeared. If you want to see the true memorials of Hindu art, in its stronger day&, you must go elsewhere, to Madura or Tanjore or Conjevaram, or to the temple caves of Ellora, enriched with sculptured figures almost Hellenic in their austere simplicity. Benares, like Eome, has passed under the hoof of the spoiler.

But Aurangzeb, the iconoclast, broke the idols of the sacred city in vain. When the Prince of Wales rode through the flower-festooned streets of Benares at the head of a great elephant procession, a company of ascetics, ragged and unkempt, greeted him at one point. A little farther on there was a kind of lofty throne, under the canopy of which were seated two boys, dressed in the richest silks and jewels, with half a dozen gorgeous attendants to hold gilded fans and maces behind them : small boys, who might have been princes themselves, by the haughty *insouciance* of their demeanour. These were the hereditary mahants, the heads, by right of descent, of the great religious corporations. They typified that insolent ecclesiasticism of which Benares is the centre, even as the fakirs represented the crowd of ignorant fanatics who wander into its courts, as irresponsible as its sacred bulls and cows, and not much more intelligent.

Benares is the embodiment of Hinduism, and, like Hinduism, it leaves on the mind the impression of a con fused jumble, a mass of contradictions. What is the Hindu religion? Men who have spent more years upon it than I have spent days confess themselves unable to answer the question. To the superficial observer it seems to be the strangest mixture: magic tempered by meta physics, according to one epigrammatic description. The

outsider, however, sees more of the magic, the crude idolatry, than of the philosophy. Perhaps he does it an injustice on that account. The spiritual impress which Brahmanism has laid upon the Indian people is hidden from him. But what he does see is the welter of superstition in which it leaves the masses, the tyranny of priestcraft it lays upon them, the solid barrier with which it walls round private life, the crude, cumbrous, repellent maze of rules and observances, on which it places the stamp of despotic custom and immutable law.

It is full of contradictions, not, perhaps, in this differing from other religions. It enjoins tenderness, self-sacrifice, mercy, so that some of its votaries will not take the life of a stinging insect; and it can exhibit the most relentless cruelty, especially where its own formalism is involved. 'Thou shalt not kill,' is the maxim; therefore a pious Hindu will allow an ox with a broken leg to starve to death in lingering agony by the wayside. When you hear of the barbarities practised upon women in child-birth, of the savage rites with which the dying are surrounded, the child-marriages, the persecution of widows, you sometimes feel inclined to wish that the missionaries and the Imperial Government could combine to sweep the whole business into the sea.

Yet the Hindus are a kindly people, with more highly developed family affections than ourselves. If they do cruel things it is with the intention to be humane. Their humanity looks beyond this transient world to that which includes and comprehends all others, and it points vaguely to the supreme abstraction, of which the horrible gods and distorted idols are grotesque or terrifying symbols.

Of death, of the dead, and of the dying you see much at Benares, for every Hindu would like to perish by the Ganges if he could. The Burning Ghat on the water front is always busy, and the tourist, as he is rowed

along, can see the pile of logs crackling briskly with a stiff brown corpse laid upon it. There is no sanctity and no privacy about this place of cremation. The poor relic of humanity lies unregarded by the strand before the flames do their work upon it. Pariah dogs, the sacred dogs of Benares,prowl about with expectant eyes; know ing that the body may sometimes be thrown half-consumed into the river.

That used often to be done to save the expense of fuel, though it happens less frequently now that the Govern ment provides wood enough for every pyre free of charge. The Burners of the Dead, an unclean caste, who alone may tend the funeral fire, are sitting on a neighbouring bulk, engaged in cheerful conversation ; others are raking with long rods among the blazing heaps, poking down an exposed skull or a charred protruding foot; close by women are dipping clothes in the Ganges, or filling their water-pots, without a glance at the pile and its burden. Life is cheap in India, and death too common.

At certain places, and in Benares especially, when Hindus are at the point of death, their kinsmen drag them from their sick-rooms, that they may breathe their last beside a holy river. A heartless custom, it seems, which must be the cause of much suffering to racked and shattered frames, and is at times scarcely distinguishable from murder; for in the old days, if the victim, when brought to the water, still obstinately refused to render up his soul, they would occasionally help him on his way by filling his mouth with mud.

Yet even this rite is not always repulsive. In Benares, drifting down the stream, one late and luminous afternoon, Rome weeks before the approach of the Prince had caused the banks to be beset with decorated house-boats, I passed close to the Manikarnika Ghat, the most sanctified of all the stairways that lead to the Ganges. At the foot of the

steps, a group of three or four men were bending over a recumbent form, swathed in white. As we came opposite the ghat we saw that the figure was that of a woman, lying stretched upon a couch or mattress of cotton, with the feet just touched by the sacred water.

She had been brought here to die, so that her spirit might pass into the other world, saved and purified by the river of redemption. The dying light fell full upon the dying face; and it showed us the eyes already half-closed and a smile of transfiguring peace playing about the pale and quivering lips. There was no suggestion of harshness in this scene; it was one of painful beauty. Happiness was written on the wan features under the loose white coif, the happiness of an intense and passionate calm, like that of the doomed Cenci girl on Leonardo's canvas; and in the attitudes of the watching attendants there seemed to me a grave and anxious reverence.

But when I looked up the bank I saw another party carrying a litter on which a sick old man was lying. They were running fast, and audible groans broke from the wretched shrivelled creature, as they jolted his crazy catafalque over the rough path, anxious to get it down to the brink before the end came. So Hinduism shows its twofold aspect; and who shall say how far the deep spiritual tranquillity it yields its votaries is balanced by the wrongs, the follies, and the barbarisms, which hive under its shelter ?

There is no religion in which the difference between the elect and the common herd is so marked. From a Welsh revivalist to an Oxford professor of theology the acclivity is steep. But the gulf between the highly cultivated Hindu, who is a philosophical Pantheist, and the villager, smearing himself with the blood of butchered goats before the altar of Durga, is wider. In practice, one might say that Hinduism consists largely of priest-

craft and a genial, primitive, rollicking, unclean idolatry. To ' feed and fee ' the Brahmans is the main duty of the layman: that done, he is free to worship stocks and stones, or ghosts and demons, or any fee-faw-fo-fum images that seize his fancy; and his morals may take care of themselves, provided he sticks to certain caste practices and abstains from the killing of cows.

Loose as the system is, it holds two hundred and forty millions in a clasp which has never relaxed through the centuries, and is just about as firmly fastened to-day as ever. It is natural to assume that Hinduism is a waning force, weakened by its impact upon modern science and progress. But that is extremely doubtful. Some of those who know most about India believe that the change is in the opposite direction. They tell us that of late years there has been a striking revival of Brahmanism, that it is going forward instead of backward, that it is clutching closer into its subtle embrace whole classes and tribes who before hung loose from its influence.

At the first glance one would say that the railway, the telegraph, the printing-press, the secondary school, must make short work of the idol-worship, the hideous altars, the battening temple hordes, the offerings, and the sacrifices. But this does not seem to be the case. It may be that Hinduism is even assisted in its onward march by these new agencies. The railways make the pilgrimages to the sacred rivers and the famous shrines easier and more popular. These festivals are public holidays as much as religious celebrations; but the priests and the sadhus profit by them. They have learnt how to use the printing-press, and with their vernacular tracts and cheap liturgies they are bringing into the regular Hindu communion many aboriginals and Animists and outcasts and others, who were formerly mere pagans. Now that all India is drawn closer together by better communi-

cations and the printed word, so that its various provinces are growing conscious of a certain identity, the one thing they have in common, which is the Brahmanical system, emerges more clearly. It is becoming better organised, and is gaining some of the attributes of a church as well as a vague creed.

But education—surely this must tell? No doubt it does; but the educated Hindu sometimes reconciles the Higher Thought with the Lower Act in a startling fashion. It is not merely that cultivated native gentlemen, university graduates, trained lawyers, fluent writers, will doff their European ideas with their European garments inside their own doors, and submit themselves to the most irrational code of caste formularies. They do more. Persons who can quote Herbert Spencer and Weissmann at an English dinner-table may 'go Fanti' at any moment. You may have a native friend, let us say a Sessions Judge—I am not giving an imaginary case—who seems in the ordinary way all that is enlightened and refined. He understands our fashions, is acquainted with our literature, behaves in his office, or when you ask him to your house, much like any well-bred Englishman. But the festival of Kali comes, and you must not be surprised to find him, daubed with red paint, half-naked, with dishevelled hair, howling and shrieking in the midst of a frenzied crowd of idol-worshippers.

Some people, whose opinions deserve respect, hold that Hinduism is destined eventually to succumb before the advance of Christianity. The Light of the Gospel, waxing perhaps somewhat dimmer in the West, may be relumed in the East.

> Oh, never star
> Was lost here but it rose afar!
> Look East, where whole new thousands are.
> In Vishnu-land what Avatar?

Not, I think, this avatar. Christianity, it is true, is making some progress, and the actual increase in the number of native converts between the last two Censuses is remarkable. It rose from 1,246,000 in 1872 to 2,664,000 in 1901, which is at the rate of more than 113 per cent, for the thirty years. In Madras, during the decade 1891-1901, the increase of the whole population was 7'2 per cent., while that of the Christians was 18*1 per cent. In the Southern Presidency one person in thirty-eight is a Christian, and in some of the contiguous native states the proportion is even higher, so that it amounts to almost a quarter of the entire population in Cochin and Travancore. It is in the South that Chris tianity is strongest; for here a colony of the so-called Syrian Christians has been in existence possibly since Apostolic times,[1] and the Portuguese and the Society of Jesus have been making Koman Catholics of the Tamils and Telugus for centuries. Of late the Anglicans, and various other Protestant missionaries, have been busy, and have gained a considerable number of converts, chiefly in Madras, but also to a lesser degree in Bengal, the Punjab, and other provinces. But, taking India as a whole, there is only one Christian for every ninety-nine persons belonging to some other religious community.

And the increase, such as it is, does not show itself among the educated classes, nor among those with much pretension to social status. The high-caste Hindu does not become a convert. I once asked an excellent missionary, who had been for over thirty years in a native State and spoke with some satisfaction of the results of his work, how many Brahmans he had brought into his fold. He answered, * One'; and I afterwards ascertained that this solitary proselyte was a man who

[1] **The Syrian Church in India was said to have been founded by St. Thomas. Its adherents still number about half a million persons.**

had got into difficulties with his own communion because of a marriage which violated caste rules. The Christian converts come from another class of society.

In the Indian Army List the constitution of the regi ments is given according to the race and caste of the soldiers: two companies of Sikhs and two companies of Punjabi Mohammedans, and so on. Against the names of a few of the battalions, which bear the old title of Carnatic Infantry, one finds this curious entry : '4 com panies Sikhs; 2 companies Mohammedans ; 2 companies *Pariahs and Christians'* For official purposes it seems that Christians can be conveniently classed with the pariahs or outcasts. There is a certain brusqueness in the description, but it corresponds roughly with the facts. The converts to Christianity, especially the recent con verts, are drawn (so the Madras Census officer tells us)

almost.entirely from the classes of Hindus which are lowest in the social scale. These people have little to lose by forsaking the creed of their forefathers. As long as they remain Hindus they are daily and hourly made to feel that they are of commoner clay than their neighbours. Any attempts which they may make to educate themselves or their children are actively discouraged by the classes above them : caste restric tions prevent them from quitting the toilsome, uncertain, and undignified means of subsistence, to which custom has con demned them, and taking to a handicraft or a trade : they are snubbed and repressed on all public occasions: are refused admission even to the temples of their gods : and can hope for no more helpful partner of their joys and sorrows than the unkempt and unhandy maiden of the parach^ri with her very primitive notions of comfort and cleanliness.

Whatever one may think of missionary effort in a general way, it can hardly be doubted that it is an excellent thing for many of these poor outcasts to be received into a body which releases them from the iron

shackles fettered on them at birth and helps them to escape from their semi-servile condition. The converted sweeper or pariah has made a distinct advance in the social scale. He has acquired a position of his own, he is a member of an association which includes many of his ' betters,' he is allowed to cultivate his self-respect, and he can, if he pleases, acquire the rudiments of an education, not to mention other advantages; for the missionaries are charitable, and have some funds at their disposal. It is significant, though not surprising, that there is often a perceptible growth of Christian converts in districts where poverty has been accentuated by recent drought and famine.

But while Christianity is thus doing something for the lowest grade of Hindus, there does not seem much evidence that it is touching the higher classes. Chris tian ethics exercise a certain impalpable influence on Hindu thought; for Hinduism has a capacity for assimi lating other faiths and systems. If the Brahmans found Christianity really formidable, I imagine they would absorb it, just as they absorbed Buddhism. They are content to ignore it, so long as it does not get far beyond the village helots and the residuum of the towns. As for the educated Hindu, when he has tasted of the springs of Western enlightenment and emancipated himself from the tenets of his fathers, he commonly becomes au agnostic or a rationalist, usually retaining just enough orthodoxy, in matters of ceremonial, to avoid shocking public opinion. Christianity offers him few temptations. He can get all the latitude he needs without leaving his own community.

CHAPTER XIX

ISLAM AND ITS CHILDREN

THE banners of the morning were streaming in folds of flying crimson across a sky of pearl as the luxurious special train of the Great Indian Peninsula Eailway slowed up outside the cantonment station. I threw down the window-shutter and looked out upon a sheet of water, a floor of smooth and polished turquoise, edged with a blood-red border where the flaming light had caught and stained the shallows. It was the great tank, or artificial lake, which lies just outside the Nizam's capital of Hyderabad.

The city was all astir, for the Nizam had brought out his troops and his household retainers to do honour to the Shahzada, and the townspeople and many visitors from the countryside were in the streets. So one of the most picturesque of Indian towns was seen at its best. Nowhere, except perhaps in Peshawar and in Bombay, had one seen more diverse types assembled. Hyderabad is the premier Mohammedan State of India, and Islam was very variously represented.

Fresh from Mysore with its plump, cheerful, swarthy little men and women, we were here once more face to face with some old friends from the North—hawk-nosed Pathans, tall Punjabi Mohammedans, Eohillas, Afridis, and Afghans. The Hyderabad sovereigns have long drawn their mercenaries from all Mussulman India and beyond it. Here we saw companies of the Nizam's

famous * Arab' irregulars, their heads enwrapped in loose hooded turbans of saffron yellow, which is the Hyderabad court colour. Arabs these men are called ; but many of them had the thick lips, the woolly hair, and the ebony skin of Africa.

There were the Nizam's regular troops, too, in baggy red breeches, with crooked sword-bayonets, oddly reminiscent of the French infantry of the Second Empire days. Alongside these relics of the past, with their obsolete Enfield rifles, were other Hyderabad battalions armed with Martinis ; and finally his Highness's Imperial Service Cavalry, with magazine carbines and all the best modern equipment, a corps able to hold its own with the picked regiment of British Indian Lancers which had come down from Secunderabad to act as the Prince's escort.

There is much that is reminiscent of Turkey in this the largest Moslem capital outside the dominions of the Padishah. Gone are the days when scarcely a man walked in Hyderabad without arms in his hand or about his person. Yet you still see the peasant coming in from the wilder rural districts of the Dekhan with his brass-barrelled hollow-butted gun over his shoulder, and the yeoman or small squireen with a broad curved yataghan in a scabbard of faded velvet belted to his side, and a whole magazine of knives, daggers, and flint-lock pistols in his leather girdle. Here, also, are many men and boys in the red fez or tarbush, which is an uncommon headgear in the rest of India; and sometimes you observe that it completes the costume of a portly gentleman in a black frock coat, who might put Pasha or Bey to his name in Cairo or Constantinople.

In the intervals of waiting, the soldiers sit on the heels of their deplorable shoes and smoke bad cigarettes, and slouch about, as they do in Monastir and Salonika.

Suddenly they spring to attention, and present arms; and the civilians, frock-coated officials and all, prostrate themselves, with an ultra-Oriental salaam, heads knocking the ground, as when in Stamboul the Sultan drives forth to the Selamlik. A yellow-painted landau dashes by, and in it is seated a gentleman with side-whiskers and sharply cut, rather Semitic features—a little gentleman, inconspicuously dressed, who looks about him with the eye of a king. You do not need to be told that this is his Highness the Nizam, sole and autocratic sovereign, by the grace of God and the Government of India, of a territory as large as Great Britain, and ruler of more people than are contained in the Dominion of Canada and the Commonwealth of Australia taken together.

It is a long walk through Hyderabad, for the city is larger even than its population of 450,000 would lead you to imagine. Past white-walled bungalows and public buildings, set back in roomy gardens, under high mediaeval-looking arches, through furlong after furlong of the painted hutches of the bazaar, you come at length to the far end of the town, where the Faluknama Palace is perched on high.

About the story of this royal residence there is a distinct flavour of the nearer, and the older, East. It was built, out of his modest savings, by one of the ministers of the last Nizam—not, of course, the great Sir Salar Jung, who was everything that was honourable and distinguished, but another somewhat less precise. The Nizam's favourite sultana cast the eyes of desire upon this delectable abode, and pointed out to her lord that it was far too good for a subject, and at any rate much better than the old palace down below in the town. So the minister was informed that he would have to sell the pleasure-house to his master, and, sorely against his will, he complied, receiving, as some say, its full equivalent in

rupees, and, as others aver, considerably less. However this may have been, the Light of the Zenana soon tired of the toy. After a few months it was abandoned, and it has never been regularly occupied since. Except when the Nizam entertains guests of state, it lies upon the hillside empty and silent, with its saloons filled with French furniture and gilding and glass-lustre chandeliers—a monument of reckless expenditure and uncalculating caprice.

From the terrace of this same palace there is a prospect which is hard to beat. At the foot of the hill, the great city with its suburbs spreads out over many miles of country, a dim blur of groves and gardens, with the lanes of small dwelling-houses hidden by the leafage, and only here and there the outlines of a palace, or the bulbous domes and white shafts of a mosque, showing among the date-palms and mango-trees. Beyond the suburbs and the sparkling azure lakes lies the grey-brown Dekhan tableland, crossed by jutting ridges and ragged masses of isolated rock.

On one of these eminences you are able to make out the remnants of walls and towers and ramparts, which are the colossal ruins of the fortress-palace of Golconda, that famous stronghold of the earlier Mussulman dynasty, eventually extinguished by the Moghul Emperors. India has many hill-fortresses; for in its centuries of warfare no potentate, whether he was emperor, king, or feudal noble, could deem himself safe unless he could shelter his wives, his treasures, and his faithful followers behind some impregnable fastness, builded upon a rock. There is one such, a marvel of inaccessible situation and defensive ingenuity, at Daulatabad, near the cave-temples of Ellora, in the far corner of the Nizam's state.

But Golconda is the most impressive of all; perhaps the most impressive castle ruin in the world. Its size is

prodigious; Kenilworth or Warwick would go into a corner of the vast space of boulder-strewn hill enclosed within its crenellated walls. Whole blocks of dwelling-houses and nests of courts and alleys were scattered here and there among the ramparts and bastions and fortified terraces ; the great stone-stepped path that leads through them to the palace-rooms at the summit of the hill is like the main street of a town. The fortress seems built to hold, not merely a garrison, but a people; as indeed it did in the long siege of 1687, when for eight months Abdul Hasan, the last of the Kutab Shahi kings, held out against the hosts of Aurangzeb. The defence is a fine romantic story of heroism, treachery, and valorous ad venture. But in the end the Moghuls prevailed; and it is the descendant of the Moghul's lieutenant, the Nizam-ul-Mulk, the Viceroy of the Dekhan, who rules over Hyderabad to-day as the Premier Prince of India under the Imperial Crown of Britain.

' If the Nizam goes, all is lost,' So wrote the Gover nor of Bombay to the Resident at Hyderabad in the crisis of the Mutiny. But the Nizam did not go. He stood faithfully by us, remembering that we had saved his house when all Mohammedanism was being swept out of India by the Mahratta flood. The fidelity of the Dekhan princes has been rewarded by leaving them in a position of quasi-independence such as no other chief in India enjoys.

But this has made them rather formidable too; and we have paid them the compliment of keeping pretty nearly the largest concentrated force in India in their dominions. At Secunderabad, which is an outlying suburb of Hyderabad, the Prince of Wales was able to review some nine thousand troops, including four British regi ments and three batteries of Royal Artillery. We do not, however, interfere more than we can help with the Nizam's internal policy, and we leave him to carry on his

domestic administration chiefly by the aid of his own subjects. There are very few Englishmen in his Highness's employment, and only an exiguous squad of officials has been 'lent' him by the Government of India,

That the principality, under such circumstances, should be as well managed as our own provinces, or even as some of the other native states, is not to be expected. For thirty years the Nizam's predecessors were guided by the counsels of Sir Salar Jung, the greatest of native Indian statesmen in modern times, who introduced and cirried out salutary reforms in every department. There hus been some falling-off since his death, and Hyderabad in recent years has not been exactly a model state, nor is it so at present. But it is improving. The present Nizam has his faults. He is said to be somewhat indo lent and dilatory, and a little too Oriental in his ways. Yet he is understood to be a capable man, with much natural ability and considerable force of character. He takes a great interest in educational matters, and is a munificent supporter of Mohammedan teaching insti tutions, not merely in his own dominions, but in other parts of India. He appears to be honestly desirous to do his best for his twelve millions of subjects, of whom the most part are peasants painfully striving to squeeze a subsistence out of a hard and urifruitful soil.

The Nizam is a personage in India outside his own territory. For Mohammedanism, if it has lost its old political predominance, is still a great force in India. It is the faith of one person out of every five in the country. The King-Emperor rules more than half the Mohamme dan population of the world, the Sultan of Turkey coming a very long way behind him. There is one province—that of the North-West Frontier—which is almost entirely Mohammelan, the Hindus being an unimportant minority, Mohammedans are numerous in the Punjab, and they are

to be **found** scattered everywhere down to the extreme South, especially in the towns.

In Eastern Bengal there are some twenty-seven or twenty-eight million followers of the Prophet, and in this region they are increasing more rapidly than the Hindus ; for the Mussulman, with his varied diet, has a better physique than the pulse and grain feeding Brahmanists, and, moreover, he does not believe in child-wedlock, nor does he think it wrong for widows to re-marry. The high and growing proportion of tli3 Mohammedan population in Bengal is one of the hard nuts for the Bengalis to crack. It is also an elementary fact which is not, I think, so generally apprehended in England as it should be.

By race these Bengal Mohammedans are akin to the Hindus, and that, indeed, is true of the great majority of their co-religionists outside the frontier districts. Most of them are descended from Hindus who were converted during the long period of Moslem rule. They exist as a standing argument against that modern doctrine which ascribes everything to race, and nothing to environment, education, social conditions, and custom.

It is commonly held that the religion and social system of Islam tend to develop the character of the Indian Mohammedan somewhat at the expense of his intellect. He is simpler, braver, more masculine than the Hindu, more devout, in a rough, practical, straightforward fashion, but less subtle, less ingenious, less acute, and less capable of assimilating the methods of modern education. He makes a first-rate soldier, he is useful as a policeman, an inspector, or a watchman, and he does fairly well in any position where courage, fidelity, and a certain self-respect are requisite; at times he exhibits a distinct aptitude for trade, and as a shopkeeper he is frequently successful. He is a convenient man to have as butler or personal

attendant, for in the first place he is in moderation honest, and, secondly, he is not under the tyranny of caste rules, and can serve food to a Christian without a qualm.

But the Hindu beats him at the office and the desk and in the class-room. This is one of the reasons why there ought not to be direct appointments to the higher Civil Service by competitive examination in India. It is tolerably certain that in this contest the babu and the Brahman would drive the Mohammedan out of the field, and that would be unfortunate. Most Indian Mussulmans cherish in their hearts some memory of the days when their fathers were the masters of India, and they believe, rightly or wrongly, that if ever the English power were shaken they would regain their old predominance. In the meanwhile they will endure being the subjects of a Christian race, whose character they respect, and whose religion they can understand. But to the feebler tribes of idol-worshippers, as they consider them, they protest indignantly that it would be an outrage to ask them to yield obedience.

Englishmen, for their part, find it easy to get on with the children of Islam. They have no difficulty in liking men who have good manners without servility, and who possess some of the open-air qualities and tastes we ascribe to ourselves. The Hindu, with his glib tongue, his pliant brain and back, his fantastic social rites, and his incomprehensible religion, puzzles and annoys us. The Mohammedan gentleman is just the man we should like to see taking a prominent part in our provincial administration. The difficulty is to get him there : for he is apt to be too conservative and obscurantist, too haughtily contemptuous of modern progress and modern learning, and too much under the influence of an obsolete system of education. Mohammedans of the better class are still rather disposed to regard Western knowledge as at once

impious and vulgar, tending to disbelief in the Koran and to the neglect of the classical literatures of Persian and Arabic.

There is, however, a progressive movement in Indian Mohammedanism. The chief promoter of this reform was the late Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, a man who did more to broaden the minds and liberalise the views of his co-religionists than any Indian Mohammedan since the Emperor Akbar. Sir Syed, who was a member of an old family which had held high office under the Moghuls, devoted his life, his conspicuous ability, and the whole of a considerable fortune, to the encouragement of education on European lines among those of his countrymen who professed the faith of Islam. He was to the end a devout Mussulman, and he believed that Moslem schools and colleges should be strictly denominational; that is to say, that instruction in the doctrines of their creed, by their own qualified teachers, should be provided for the students. But in all secular subjects he saw no reason why the youthful Mohammedan should not have the advantages of the best modern training. His efforts—long impeded by his co-religionists, and even viewed askance by many Englishmen—culminated in the establishment of a first-rate school and college for the education of Moham medans at Aligarh in the United Provinces. This is in some respects the finest educational institution in India. I do not know that a much better one is to be found in England.

It is worth while to go to Aligarh, if only to have your convictions disturbed, and your belief in the ineradi cable differences between East and West a little shaken. The time I spent at Aligarh (I took care not to visit it when the Royal party went there, wishing to see the college under its normal everyday aspect) I found extremely instructive and a trifle bewildering. The town

is an interesting old place, with a fine fort and a picturesque mosque, and a Hindu tank with tame monkeys swarming about it; and the bazaar seemed to me the cleanest and best kept of any I had seen in India. The Civil Station outside the city is clean and neat, too, with nice wide roads, and bungalows set back in suburban-looking gardens and avenues of fine trees. Everything is trim and orderly and quiet; there is an academic, almost an ecclesiastical, feeling in the air ; a bishop in his gaiters would scarcely seem out of place here.

Sir Syed Ahmed's foundation is so closely modelled on Western lines that you find it hard to believe, as you go round the buildings and courts with the Principal, that you are not back in the old country, with a cathedral spire or a castle keep somewhere in the background. The establishment is carried on under English direction. The Principal, Mr. W. A. Archbold, who has succeeded those famous Indian educationists, Mr. Theodore Morison and Mr. Theodore Beck, is a distinguished Cambridge graduate. English university men, too, are the professors and the headmaster of the school, with native graduates of Indian universities to assist them.

The small dormitories, in which the students live, are built round large quadrangles like those of an Oxford or Cambridge college. There are lecture-rooms, with forms and desks, and a great dining-hall, and cricket-grounds, and football-fields, and tennis-courts. In one corner of the great court there is the mosque, which might be the college chapel, where the students are expected to attend prayers daily; and I suppose they are taken to task by their tutors if they fail to put in the statutory number of attendances.

We go into one of the students' rooms. In deference to the Indian climate it has 'chicks' before the doors and windows, and whitewash, or distemper, instead

of paper on the walls; and the furniture is scanty, as it always is in India. But the apartment bears a quite colourable resemblance to a study at an English public school, or even an undergraduate's abode, say at Selwyn or Keble. There is the student's bed on one side, his table on the other. His shelf of books hangs against the wall, and upon it you may note Stubbs's *Constitutional History,* Mill's *Political Economy,* perhaps a Cambridge Euclid and Algebra, as well as a Persian and Arabic Grammar. In one corner there is a stand of hockey-sticks ; in another a cricket-bat and some Indian clubs, with a pair of boxing-gloves; on one wall pictures of the King and the Sultan of Turkey, a highly coloured chromo of Windsor Castle, and a photograph of the members of the First Eleven in their caps and flannels.

Athletics are much cultivated at Aligarh. They have excellent football and hockey teams, and their cricket is pretty nearly the best in India, which is saying a good deal. Cricket, during the last few years, has caught on throughout the Peninsula, and is played by the natives all over the country with the utmost zest and considerable skill. In fact, it is now almost a native game, the Anglo-Indian being more inclined to devote himself to polo and hockey. This is partly because the latter games are less dilatory and provide more exercise with a smaller expen diture of time. But I believe the waning interest in cricket among the white community is also due to a consciousness that the natives are playing it so well that matches with them are not altogether satisfactory to the ruling race. There are certainly not many regimental or other cricket-clubs in India which could engage the Aligarh boys with any confidence.

I got into conversation with a member of the cricket eleven, and in two minutes I forgot that he was an Indian. He talked of the game, of the matches they had won and

lost, of the prospective arrangements for the next season, of football and the Australians, of pig-sticking and shooting, of which he had done a little in the holidays with 'his people,' and something also of his books and studies and approaching examinations. He had the manner, the tone, the expression, of a gentlemanly, well-set, healthy English lad; he might have been a sunburnt prefect at Winchester, the captain of the boat-club at Brasenose or Trinity Hall. The Principal talked to the lads just in the frank, kindly way adopted by those headmasters at home who happen to be men of the world rather than pedagogues and pedants. 'I treat them precisely as if they were English boys,' he said, * and often I find it an effort to remember they are anything else.' He told me that they seemed to him very like our own youngsters: intellectually not much better or worse, perhaps with rather stronger memories and slightly less capacity for close reasoning; more docile and obedient and easily managed; not, as a rule, more devoted to study or less addicted to play.

The discipline and general arrangement of the college and the school are kept on the English lines so far as is compatible with a due regard for the social traditions of the pupils and their parents. Some of these young gentlemen, it must be remembered, are married; most will return to homes where, of course, the customs of the country still prevail. It would not do to send them back unable to eat with their own male relatives. So they consume native food, served in the native fashion in the dining-halls. A few of the Anglicising fathers send their boys to what is known as the 'English House,' where knives and forks and table-napkins and roast beef and boiled potatoes are provided, and here the resemblance to a boarding-house at one of our public schools is very close indeed. The six or seven hundred

young followers of the Prophet at Aligarh[1] are drawn from a good many divisions of the Islamic world. In a group of bright youngsters with whom I foregathered there was a light-coloured Persian, a blue-eyed Afghan, a Burman from Rangoon, an ebon-cheeked boy from Hyderabad, whose father was an officer of the Nizam's • Arabs,' and even a lad from Capetown, the son, I suppose, of one of the Malay traders settled in South Africa. The Aligarh College is doing a work comparable *mutatis mutandis* to that of the Rhodes scholarships. It gets to gether the picked scions of Mohammedanism, and gives them a common culture and common associations. Inci dentally it is helping to bring the Indian Mussulman gentry out of their seclusion, and qualifying them for the professions and pursuits of active modern life.

But the youth who goes to Aligarh may have a sister. She, too, sometimes gets educated in these days. She learns French and music, and reads English novels. Then in due course she is married, and is shut up for life iu the mitigated captivity of the zenana. The *purdah* is a much more rigorous screen for the woman of Islam than for her Hindu sister, and it is thrown round many, even among the poorer classes, who, if they were of the rival faith, would be allowed to escape from its seclusion.

There are bold innovators in the Moslem community who go so far as to suggest that married women, in these days, might be treated like rational human beings, and allowed rather more liberty than is given to habitual criminals in the West. And there are even one or two Mohammedan families of high rank and unquestioned orthodoxy who permit their ladies to go about unveiled and to talk to male persons, European and others. But

[1] There are even a few Hindus, who come under a sort of conscience clause and are allowed to obtain the educational advantages of the seminar,' without being subjected to the religious discipline and teaching.

in this respect Mussulman emancipation moves but slowly, and it does not seem that any substantial progress is being made in modifying the domestic arrangements which form the real barrier against genuine intimacy between ourselves and the people of India. It is difficult to get to intimate relations with a married man, when you will never be permitted to see his wife, and may not even allude to her in the course of conversation.

Speaking at the Imperial Institute,[1] Mr. Theodore Morison, who was for sixteen years the distinguished Principal of the Aligarh College, ascribed the conser vatism of the Indian Mussulmans, in matters of social reform, not so much to religious fanaticism as to[4] a quasi-patriotic feeling of which they themselves were only dimly aware, and to which they would have found it difficult to give articulate expression,' In the conflicts of ages the Cross and the Crescent have become the symbols not merely of two different religions (though the kindred origin of both has often been recognised by cultivated Mohammedans), but of two distinct and rival social systems. 'The followers of both religions, being habituated to look upon each other as natural enemies, had em phasised those social customs in which they differed from each other, and had come to regard with peculiar fondness those habits and manners which might be reckoned dis tinctively Islamic or Christian. Practices which were neither good nor bad in themselves became lovable and praiseworthy when they were recognised characteristics of the followers of the true faith, and bigots would be in clined to view with an indulgent eye even the bad practices of their own people, if they were in sharp contrast to the manners of the infidels.'

[1] **In a very** interesting lecture delivered before the National Indian Association, November 16,1005, of which a report is given iu the Allahabad *Pioneer,* December 8, 1905.

The mischief of this was so strongly felt by Sir Syed Ahmed that, while emphasising his strict adhesion to all the tenets of the Islamic faith, he made public renunciation of many of the Mohammedan customs, for which he could see no sufficient cause, and ostentatiously paraded his liking for some English manners and habits. 'His impenitent admiration for English ways while he was in this country led the Doctors of the Law in Delhi to set him formally under a ban, as a Kafir outside the pale of Moslem society, and for a long time his relatives and friends dare not receive him into their homes. His experience was shared by all who ventured to adopt European customs. "When Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk first went to dinner with an Englishman, the news was telegraphed to his native city and spread consternation through the place. On his return home none of his friends came to meet him on the platform, and he was followed to his own doors by an angry crowd of Mussulmans. The indignation ran so high that when his son died shortly afterwards not a Mohammedan of the city would accompany the bier to the grave,'

It was amazing, added Mr. Morison, to observe how much heat could still be generated by such apparently trivial questions as the length of the trousers a true believer should wear, the cut of his moustache, or the shaving of his beard. 'With a sort of inarticulate patriotism, the old-fashioned party were struggling to preserve the existence of their particular civilisation.' Mr. Morison thought that 'the struggle had terminated in favour of the Anglicising party. Islamic civilisation had gone; the old mode of Mohammedan life had been broken up, and the most vigorous spirits in the community were inspired by European ideals.' One would not differ from so high an authority without hesitation; but I am afraid Mr. Morison's view is a little too

sanguine. The struggle between the New School and the Old School of Indian Mohammedanism has not yet terminated decisively in favour of the former, nor is it rendered less acute by the fact that it does seem to turn partly upon theological differences.[1] Social reform is hampered by the fact that the dead-weight of an intole rant priesthood is against it, and the Moslem is even more under the influence of the moulvie than the Hiudu is subject to that of the guru.

Withal, as I have said, there is conspicuous progress, and this not merely among the superior classes, who are getting their sons educated in the learning of the West so that they may become magistrates, lawyers, civil servants, engineers, and doctors. The movement is ex tending downwards, and the Mohammedan of the peasant and labouring orders is finding his way into the industrial army. Discussing the subject with some of the leading employers of Cawnpore, I was much struck by their

[1] Some interesting comments upon Mr. Morison's lecture were made by Mr. Yusuf Ali, an accomplished Mohammedan oflicial of the Indian Civil Service : ' Change of customs was a contributory cause of the bitterness with which Sir Syed Ahmed was assailed, but the main reason was on account of his theological views. It was because Sir Syed adopted opinions which were in the eyes of many Mohammedans absolutely heretical if not anti-Moslem that their great hatred of him arose. When he was last in Lucknow he said to a moulvie connected with the most pronounced of anti-Aligarh organisations, " Why is it you and your party so strongly object to English education?" He replied, "We don't object to English education, or to your wearing European clothes. What we do object to is that you learn natural theology; that you try to interpret the Koran in ways that wo cannot follow ; that you throw aside the authority of the commentators, and take your stand upon the text as interpreted by your own intelligence." That expression explained the line of cleavage between the Aligarh School and the Old School. This cleavage had existed in the history of other religions of the world, and certainly in Christianity. He believed that the first great movement which gave rise to the Keformation arose from the claim of a small minority of devout men to exercise the right of private judgment, instead of accepting without question the authority, on questions of doctrine and practice, of the Fathers. The reform party in Islam took a like position; and when this view generally prevailed Western civilisation and culture would be accepted by Mohammedans, to the working out of those human laws of culture and development which they in early times did so much to cultivate.'

testimony to the increase in the number of the Mussul man workers. 'When I first came here, fifteen years ago,' said the manager of one large establishment, ' there was not more than one Mohammedan in our factories to five Hindus; now the proportion is at least fifty per cent,' I asked if the Children of Islam gave satisfaction. I was told that they did ; that they were getting the better jobs assigned to them, and earning higher wages. It seemed to be admitted that for the posts in which some intel lectual qualifications were required it was still necessary to resort to the Hindus; though that, perhaps, was mainly because it was so much easier to find men with educa tional advantages in that community.

But (although there was some difference of opinion on this point) my informants were inclined to think that, among the rank and file of the workmen, the Moham medans showed a higher efficiency. They have more grit, more energy, more endurance, and more physical vigour; they need less constant supervision; and they are easier to deal with because they are free from the burden some caste rules. They are, however, somewhat less industrious, and not so careful in attention to detail, whether as artisans or as cultivators. When I was going through a section of rural country, in which Jat and Mohammedan villages were sandwiched in together, I soon found it easy to distinguish one from the other by the mere appearance of the lands; for the Moslem farms were usually worse tilled and more slovenly than those of the Hindus. Besides, the Jat cultivator can get his womankind to help him in the fields as well as the factory, while his rival has no such assistance. In this respect, as in others, the ' peculiar institution' of the Moslems handicaps them in the competition of modern industrialism.

CHAPTER XX

THE DISTRICT OFFICER

LET US suppose, by a long stretch of fancy, that we are living in the year 2106, and that the Japanese, taking advantage of the dissensions and divisions among the Western nations, have become the masters of the greater part of Europe, including the British Isles. Let us conceive ourselves in Wales at this hypothetical period. The Principality is inhabited by two and a-half millions of people, speaking Welsh and English, as they do to-day. There are schools for both races just as there are at present, there are newspapers in the two languages, there are landowners of Norman blood drawing their rents from Celtic tenant farmers; there are Methodist ministers, Church of England parsons, and an Anglican bishop still enjoying the modest revenues of St, Asaph; there are tax-collectors and revenue officers, not distinguishable from those who are even now discharging their honourable functions; Welsh and English judges will be deciding cases in the local courts, barristers and attorneys, mostly Welsh, will be arguing before them ; Welsh miners will be hewing coal in the Khondda Valley; enterprising financiers from London will be making money out of the ores of Swansea and the cargoes of Cardiff.

There might be a Japanese regiment at Chester, and a cruiser flying the chrysanthemum flag acting as guardship off the Severn. But beyond a few traders there are no Japanese residents at all, save and except a Mr. Hay ash i

or a Mr. Inaga, who is the principal administrative officer of the province, with a couple of young Japanese assistants, a Japanese police-commandant, and a Japanese chief judge. Imagine, further, Mr. Hayashi or Mr. Inaga ruling from an extremely modest country-house somewhere in the mountain valleys, and assume that he has no Parliament or local Assembly to control him, but receives his orders direct from the Mikado's Cabinet at Tokio, or from a Japanese 'Government of Europe,' with its seat at Berlin or Vienna. Imagine all this, and you get something like the miraculous condition of things which prevails in British India at this moment of writing.

And if anyone says that this is a mere fancy picture, I can direct him to a district in Southern India which is not much smaller than Wales; where the inhabitants are of two races as different from ourselves as either Englishmen or Welshmen are from Japanese, with their temples, their priests, their religious systems, their schools, their vernacular newspapers, with all which things we practically do not interfere at all; where there is no British military force within a much greater distance than that which separates Chester from St. David's Head; where all the police, the revenue collectors, the minor civil officials, and the subordinate judges are natives of India; and where there are not more than half a dozen Europeans, all told, to assist the English gentleman, who has a *chuprassi* or two and a few policemen about him as the only external signs of that authority under which the entire district rests. He is thirty-six years of age; he draws about the salary of a county-court judge at home; he lives in a bungalow, which looks shabby compared with that of the adjacent wealthy native landowner; and he takes his instructions from a centre of government which he can only reach after a day and a night of uninterrupted rapid travel.

Those who think that India is a country in which a [1] horde ' of foreign officials batten upon the natives should look at the actual figures. They will find that the horde is one of amazing smallness. It is hard to believe when out of India—it is harder to believe when there—that the Indian Civil Service comprises little more than a thousand persons. ' Including military officers in civil employ, and others,' says Sir John Strachey, ' about 1,200 Englishmen are employed in the civil government of 232 millions of people, and in the partial control of 62 millions more.' On the average there are only four members of the ruling race for every million of its subjects.

Bureaucratic administration has surely never been exercised with a stricter economy in the higher grades of service. We might have filled India with a swarm of officials of our own blood, conferring upon them every place of any importance in all the departments. But we use our Englishman in India with parsimonious thrift. We engage him only for a few superior posts, leaving him to conduct the actual management of the country, its revenue system, its defence, its finances, its police, its justice, by means of an army of natives. India is a government of Indians under British direction. To understand what that means in practice you need to go out into a rural district, where you may see the provincial ruler at work, with perhaps two European assistants, perhaps one, and a whole corps of native subordinates.

The unit of Indian administration is the District; and the important individual is its chief, the District Magis trate, the Collector as he is called in some provinces, the Deputy-Commissioner in others. He is the regimental officer of the Indian service; and on him, much more than on Lieutenant-Governors and Members of Council, and even Viceroys, the efficiency of the whole vast machine

depends. He tramps through the mud and does the hard work, lives in camp most of the winter, fries and bakes in the summer, and simmers and stews during the rains. The Councils and the Secretariats escape to Simla or Ootacamund, or some other pleasant hill-station, to carry on their intellectual labours through the hot season; but the Head of the District works away on the plains, except when he is fortunate enough to be absent on leave.

Within his own area of jurisdiction, which may be as large as Kent or Yorkshire, or larger still, the Collector is a monarch, rather of the personal than the constitutional type. He is himself responsible for the behaviour of his million or so of subjects; he has to see that the laws are carried out, that the police do their duty, that the revenue is punctually gathered in; to supervise his string of native deputy-collectors, assistant-commissioners, tehsildars, naibs, patwaris, and the rest, down to the village headmen. Prisons, schools, roads, railways, canals, dispensaries, famine, plague, epidemics, the state of the farms, the progress of trade and commerce, the social condition of the people—in all these he is constantly and practically interested. He is to some extent judge as well as governor; he should be a lawyer as well as an administrator and accountant; and he ought to know something of land surveying, of irrigation, of agriculture and stock-breeding, of sanitary science and engineering. And on all these subjects and many others he must be prepared, at short notice, to write reports and memoranda with fluency and knowledge.

To his people the District Officer is the Government in corporeal form. For the villager, Parliament, the Cabinet, the Secretary of State, have no existence; the King-Emperor is a dim mysterious Shape in another planet; the Great Lord Sahib and the Governor are far-

away inaccessible potencies; even the Commissioner is too remote. But the Head of the District they know; they see him in the flesh when he goes his rounds in the camping season, or when they attend at his *cutcherry* to proffer a petition.

The aspiring small landowner, who thinks that his family importance entitles him to be placed on the provincial durbar list, the official who believes that he has been unjustly denied his promotion, the tradesman who hopes for a Government contract, the village headman who has a complaint to make against the Public Works Department for an insufficient supply of irrigation water—all these and many others appeal in writing or by word of mouth to the Huzur, the Presence, who is to them the personal representative of the beneficently despotic Sirkar. He sits outside his tent, or on his verandah, or in his dusty little office, and hears, judges, condemns, admonishes, awards praise or punishment, makes notes, reproves the petitioners, or promises to have their cases further considered. It is government as they understand it in the East: the Cadi under the Palm-tree, with modern improvements.

And the Cadi for the most part is no more than a very average, fairly well-educated, intelligent, conscientious Briton. He is not, of course, as a rule either a genius or a hero. Some people write of him as if he were necessarily both. The visitor to India, with his literary and historical recollections thick upon him, may confess to a faint feeling of disappointment when he comes in due course to make the acquaintance of the rulers of the land *in situ*. I suppose the race of the Lawrences, the Herbert Edwardeses, the Nicholsons, the Taylors, the Sleemans, is not extinct. But the ordinary civilian, as you meet him, though an excellent fellow, does not perhaps strike you as the silent, strong man, masterful but kindly, self-

devoted yet unbending, for whom you have been vaguely and rather foolishly looking.

Such men there are, such you will even find in the course of a hasty peregrination. But the majority are quite ordinary persons, much like their fathers, their brothers, and their cousins, in rectories, college common-rooms, and public offices at home. For myself, I confess that the young civilian fell a little below my expecta tions, just as the young officer of the native army, and even the young police-superintendent, rose rather above them.

One has been taught to believe the soldier ' stupid,' the policeman perfunctory ; but I do not think that in brains and character they rank far behind the competition-wallah. A man may pass a moderately stiff examination, and write I.C.S. after his name, without changing his nature. The civilian has the ordinary faults, the ordinary virtues. His outlook is often limited; he is sometimes pedantic, conceited, and too complacently official. But he belongs to a service which brings out some of his best qualities and mitigates his worst—a service which has a tradition of hard work, self-reliance, and absolute, irrefragable, untainted integrity.

And the training of the District is like that of his Majesty's ships: it makes or breaks the individual sub jected to it. If the young civilian is gifted with some elements of strength and resourcefulness, if he has his share of tact and judgment and knowledge of human nature, he is developed and improved by the splendid re sponsibilities of the magistracy, till he is fit for even greater things. But if not, he is quietly removed from the executive deck, and sent to office work in the Secre tariat, or turned into a Sessions Judge, or provided with some other employment, in which industrious steadiness may compensate for some lack of decision and temper

and the capacity to deal with men and cope with unforeseen emergencies.

But are the Indian administrators of our time better or worse than their predecessors? How do they compare with the men of the pre-Mutiny and pre-competition days and with those who inherited the traditions of that period? These are questions to which diverse answers will be given, and on them it is not easy to come to a definite conclusion.

Some of the older generation of officials are altogether unfavourable to the men of the new order. In Anglo-Indian society and in the Indian clubs there are dolorous headshakings over the social shortcomings of the younger civilians. Many of them, it is whispered, are not 'gentlemen,' but only clever lads who have worked their way up, with scholarships and exhibitions, from the board-schools and grammar-schools to the Universities and the high places on the Civil Service Commissioners' list. 'Why, sir, the son of my father's gamekeeper is Collector of my old district,' says the indignant veteran; and you are bidden to observe that the natives have the keenest eye for social distinctions: *they* know one kind of sahib from another, and they dislike rulers of plebeian origin.

But in these democratic days the gamekeeper's son has 'come to stay'; and if, besides having the ability and energy to pass high in the examination, he also happens to have rowed in his college boat or to have got his Blue—if he is a good sportsman and a good fellow, manly, capable, and well-mannered—it is possible that even the astute Oriental may not detect these disabilities of birth, or may condone them if he does. So far it does not seem that the new system has filled the I.C.S. with 'bounders' or weaklings or with persons too unpolished to hold their own in the cultured society of an Indian cantonment.

It is also alleged that the latter-day civilians know

less of native life and the condition of the country than their forerunners; one is often told that they are not nearly so well acquainted with the vernacular. But the suggestion is probably quite unwarranted. The older civilian had a rough knowledge of the colloquial speech of his province, picked up from his servants and his native subordinates; but he had seldom studied the language accurately and grammatically as the young officials and officers are now compelled to do.

On the other hand, I daresay it is true that the man of the past was better acquainted with his district and its people. Facilities of communication, here as every where else, have worked their effects. The official of the days when John Company Bahadur ruled, and long after, was more closely rooted to the soil of Asia than his suc cessor. The voyage to Europe was long and costly ; the civilian did not look forward to taking it more than once or twice during his whole term of service, India was his home; and he knew that if he did not leave his bones there he would at any rate not often get away from the country, until he left it for ever after thirty or forty years of almost continuous residence in the East.

Here there has been a great change. In these times, when the voyage is an affair of a fortnight, people are constantly taking it. Anglo-India is always on the move, flitting backwards and forwards. Many of the ladies get home every season; plenty of the men can contrive a holiday in England—or in France, Italy, or Switzerland —once in about three years. Europe is no longer a remote region, from which only faint echoes reach the exile. Modern Indian society is closely in touch with the West; it has read the new books, seen the new plays, kept itself well in the current of politics, sport, and amusement.

The change is in many ways beneficial. The Anglo-

Indian is, physically and morally, the healthier for it. It saves his liver, and keeps him from sinking down into the crude provincialism which Thackeray drew with savage veracity in the person of Jos Sedley. The original of the Collector of Boggleywallah exists no longer; nor the official who made himself so much at home in India that he provided himself with feminine companionship of indi genous growth. In the compounds of many of the old-time bungalows you will see a little whitewashed *annexe* or garden-house, wherein the Sahib was wont to relax, after his daily labours, in true Oriental fashion. No such indecorous arrangement would be tolerated in a modern cantonment or civil station. But the newer system is not without some disadvantages of its own. The Anglo-Indian is thinking 'Europe' all the time; and even the civilian is a lodger, a mere transient visitor, in his district, who will not stay in it long enough to know it with the ancient intimacy. Something has had to be paid for the swift steamers, the rapid mails, the telegrams, the railways to the hills, the frequent holidays, which have robbed the life of the Englishman in India of some of its former terrors.

CHAPTER XXI

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF EXILE

WHEN Tompkyns Sahib is At Home, he is apt to assume the airs of a martyr. He may succeed in persuading others, and he honestly tries to persuade himself, that he does not like India. He will speak of it as the Land of Eegrets, and justify himself by referring to the poets :

> What far-reaching Nemesis steered him,
> From his home by the cool of the sea ?
> When he left the fair country that reared him,
> When he left her, his mother, for thee ;
> That restless, disconsolate worker,
> Who strains now in vain at thy nets ;
> O sultry and sombre Noverca,
> 0 Land of Eegrets !

He asks for sympathy on the ground that he is a forlorn exile, living afar from his native land, in a deplorable climate, among an alien, semi-barbarous people. He will contrast the amenities of life in England with the conditions of an existence, in which work has to be done with babu clerks and with the temperature in the nineties for oight months out of the twelve. The intellectual poverty of a society without theatres or even a music-hall furnishes him with matter for indignant comment. All the time he is in India he makes a serious effort to imagine that he is counting the hours till his next trip to Europe; and he would rather like to believe that the one really

agreeable moment of his joyless sojourn in the East is that in which he sets foot on the tender while the P. and 0. liner is getting up steam for the homeward voyage in Bombay harbour. And when the time comes for him to leave the foggy skies and mud-draggled pavements of his native land, Tompkyns is heartily sorry for himself, and disappointed if he does not obtain a reasonable amount of condolence, particularly from the feminine members of his circle.

Yet, if he will allow himself to think so, he has some compensations. Tompkyns is only a *chota sahib,* a minor mercantile personage, neither the Collector of a District nor the Colonel of a Kegiment. If he were at home he would be in a bank or an export house in the City, as his younger brother actually is. He would probably live in a middle-class suburb and go down to his work every morn ing by the omnibus or the District Railway, instead of driving to his office in a neat dog-cart, behind a smart country-bred pony, with a syce in a green turban balancing himself on the step.

Young Tompkyns, as a matter of fact, resides in Putney, where he occupies a bedroom and a sitting-room, with a somewhat overworked lodging-house maidservant to minister to his wants. This lady leaves a can of lukewarm water at his door in the morning, and Young Tompkyns pours it himself into the tin pan in which he performs his ablutions. She dumps an egg or a rasher of bacon in front of him before he catches the 8.45 train up; and if he is not dining out she is able to furnish him with a steak and some potatoes in the evening. Young Tompkyns is not without his relaxations. A few people ask him to dances; he goes to the theatre sometimes with a friend ; he practises the violin in his rooms and joins a quartette party; on Sunday he plays his round or two of golf. He is at work five days and a-half out of seven, and has few

extra holidays, beyond his annual three weeks, when he goes to the seaside, or perhaps takes an economical trip to the Continent.

A perfectly wholesome and not unsatisfactory existence, but it cannot be called brilliant. When Tompkyns Sahib is more than usually inclined to 'grouse,' it may strike him that this would have been his situation, if he had remained in London instead of getting an appointment in the country he asperses. As it is, he enjoys at least certain material advantages which otherwise might have been denied him. He lives not in modest lodgings or a cramped little London house, but in a roomy bungalow. He shares this abode, it is true, with two other young men; but each tenant of the chummery has his own spacious apartment, and there is a sitting-room, twenty feet square and twenty feet high, with a punkah depending from the ceiling; also there is a dining-room in which a dinner can be, and sometimes is, given to a dozen guests. The windows of Young Tompkyns abut upon a minute back yard and the cisterns of the next street. But the dwelling of Tompkyns Sahib is in a compound, which is, in fact, a small estate, such as Young Tompkyns is not likely to occupy, down Putney way, until some time after he has become married and moneyed and middle-aged.

When Tompkyns Sahib steps through the lattice of his sleeping-room, in the early morning, stumbling over the punkah-man asleep by the sill, he comes out upon a half-acre of lawn, set with flower-beds. In the height of the hot season it is baked into grey dust; but for a large part of the year the *bheesties* keep the turf green by constant outpourings from leather goat-skins and great earthen jars, and the gardeners, impelled by much tuition and objurgation, contrive to make the place gay with asters and chrysanthemums and sunflowers and bougainvilleas and other blossoms, English and Indian. You sit with

Tompkyns, under the shade of his deep verandah, fringed with the tassels of the wisteria and the hibiscus, and from your reposeful arm-chair you look out upon his palms and cactus-plants and the arcades of a mighty banyan or the spreading arms of a great mango-tree, all covered by the orange and purple trumpets of the climbing bigonia; and you are disposed to sympathise with the Sahib less cordially than when you listened to his lamentations At Home.

Nobody takes any particular notice of Young Tomp kyns, who is but an inconspicuous unit in a crowd of persons no more distinguished or important than himself. Nor is there any real distinction attaching to Tompkyns Sahib. Still he is an aristocrat—one of, per haps, a hundred and fifty members of the ruling race in a community of a hundred and fifty thousand. He moves and has his being, conscious that the vast majority of the people about him are, and know themselves to be, socially his inferiors.

Young Tompkyns would be greatly surprised if he were respectfully saluted by policemen and officials and the general public when he walked or drove in the streets; but Tompkyns Sahib is not at all astonished at these tributes, and is even a little indignant at the [4] infernal cheek' of the native who withholds them, a native, perhaps, as well educated as himself, not less in telligent, and probably ten times as rich.

Then again his domestic arrangements, if in some respects wanting in comfort, imply a certain assumption and style which Young Tompkyns would deem quite unsuitable for his station in life. Across the lawn of his compound, beyond the path and the hedge of prickly pear, you catch sight of certain whitewashed low buildings, which are the abodes of the servants and the stables of the horses. Of the limited establishment of Young

Tompkyns something has been said. His brother, though a bachelor also, requires nevertheless the services of a considerable number of attendants. Some sixteen or eighteen adult males constitute the regular domestic staff of the chummery, not to mention auxiliaries like the washerman and the barber.

Each gentleman has his own * boy,' or personal valet, and there is a butler, a cook, and his assistant, table-servants, water-carriers, a sweeper, and others. Tomp kyns Sahib begs you to observe that all these menials do no more work than a quarter of their number in England. But if he were in England he would not have even this quota, and would doubtless find himself dependent, like Young Tompkyns, on a single unwilling female. He would certainly take off his own boots, and put the studs into his own shirt, and do various things for himself which now involve no more exertion than a brief command in the vernacular to somebody lurking within earshot outside a partition or behind a curtain.

Tompkyns Sahib keeps his own horse, with its own special groom. He rides every morning, before driving to his office in his pony-cart, and occasionally he can get out to hunt the jackal. He is also proposing to buy another pony to serve him in the game of polo. Young Tompkyns, when he rides anything, rides a bicycle; he cannot afford to keep a horse, and he would as soon think of playing polo as of entering for the Grand National. But all Tompkyns Sahib's friends have horses, as they all have several servants, and his ' living wage' is calculated in accordance with this circumstance.

His office is organised with due regard to the exigencies of a climate in which an European cannot maintain his full health and vigour without many and frequent holidays. Every three or four years Tompkyns Sahib is allowed to leave the work to his colleagues, and to

take a six months' or an eight months' vacation. Young Tompkyns, who has never had six months' holiday in his life, is inclined to envy his brother these prolonged periods of repose, and sometimes he wonders whether even a spell of Indian hot seasons would be too heavy a price to pay for them.

It is a cheerful society to which Tompkyns Sahib belongs, a society of which a large proportion of the members are young. The old people have gone home, and if they are wise and fortunate they went before age had begun to lay a heavy finger upon them. India is not a good place to grow old in; even late middle-age feels that it would be better elsewhere. To enjoy it, you should be as Tompkyns Sahib is—full of the animal spirits of youth and its delight in physical exertion. You should be blithe and lively and easily amused, and whatever underlying earnestness you may possess it should be compatible with a certain tolerance of frivolity, a capacity for enjoyment not exclusively intellectual, and that lightness of heart which is proof against disturbing shocks and depressing incidents.

A good reserve of recuperative buoyancy is needed, such as men possess who pass their lives on ship board, and in other situations where a shadow of sudden danger and possible tragedy lurks always in the back ground. The day's work must be done, and even the day's play got through, though your partner of the night before is down with fever in the morning, and the man you jested with at breakfast is dead of cholera before dinner. It is a life of hasty friendships, hastily broken by death, by absence, by separation—a life in which nothing seems very permanent, in which new faces drift into youi; sphere and drift out, in which the rosebud must be gathered before it fades upon the bough, and the passing hour snatched swiftly because it passes so soon. The melan-

cholic, reflective temperament is not suited to the English man in India. He seems sometimes afraid to think too much, lest he should unfit himself for the duties cast upon him and the relaxations which render them tolerable.

Toinpkyns Sahib is in no peril of being sicklied o'er by the pale cast of thought. He is otherwise occupied. He can put in seven hours of busy labour in his office in the hot season, when the place is like a furnace, though all the shutters are closed and the fans humming, and even the Eurasian clerks are in a state of collapse as they pant and perspire over their typewriters. He is not too tired for a rattling game of polo, or a few hard sets of tennis, under the mitigated, but still scorching, blaze of the afternoon sun. Then a change and a bath, and a saunter and cool drinks at the club, or perhaps an hour of bridge before dinner.

And after that meal there may be a dance, into which Tompkyns throws himself with zeal; and though he dances every valse, except those which he sits out, and though he does full justice to the supper and the cham pagne-cup somewhere after midnight, he is able to be up and taking his morning canter at daylight. To the man who has health and energy and the vigour to work and flirt and dance and ride and shoot and play indoor and out door games, all with equal zest and enjoyment, India has a good deal to give in return for all she takes away. So Tompkyns really feels; and when he is at home he misses the spacious freedom, the easy society, and the open-air recreations of his banishment, and he is not sorry, when all is said, to find himself on board the liner heading down the Mediterranean for the Red Sea and the 'Land of Regrets' once more.

But the sensation tends to grow weaker with each suc cessive holiday; and as the years pass by, and Tompkyns Sahib floats towards autumn, his plaints become less

voluble, but more sincere. He can no longer take it out of himself, night and day, with the old impunity. The games and sports, and even the dances, have lost much of their attraction ; he goes on with them steadily, but it is with an effort; the gossip of the station, the chatter of the club, bore him, and the burden of his work weighs heavier. He begins to develop nerves and a temper, scolds his subordinates, and bullies his attendants, and is sick of the sight of anything 'native.' The wet lanes of England, the pale sunlight, the whistling rains, are calling him. He would give his tropical garden, his bungalow, bis verandahs, his horses and carriages and many servants, for a brick box in a suburban street.

When an Anglo-Indian is in this condition, it is time he left his place to some younger man, who will come out with a gay heart and stout limbs, and fling himself into the life of India, and find it all delightful, as his prede cessor did once. Tompkyns Sahib goes home, and settles down again among his kindred, and the East sees him no more. He has few good words to say of India; and yet he cannot forget it. He wonders why people are somehow so different from what they were when he left them a quarter of a century ago, and why England has grown so much duller, and, above all, why he seems so much older than his stay-at-home brother, who is now in the full flush of a vigorous middle-age, full of work and interests, with no thought of retirement for years to come. So it may be that Young Tompkyns has not had so much the worst of it after all.

Whether the amenities of Indian life compensate for its limitations is a point on which the returned exile is often more uncertain than when he was in his place of banishment. It is not easy for the external observer to strike the balance; for India is a land of bewildering

contrasts. Eastern opulence and Eastern poverty make an antithesis that constantly seizes the imagination. The pride of life is before you, and also its meanness and degradation. One of the first objects that caught my attention when I began to look about me in Bombay was a man (he was a retainer or attendant of one of the native chiefs who had come into the city to receive the Prince of Wales) in very conspicuous vesture. His head was crowned by a large and showy turban, folded with bands of gold, and he wore a robe of rose-tinted satin, with pendant earrings of pearl, and a necklace of amethysts and emeralds. But when I looked below these splendours I found them supported by legs in frayed cotton pyjamas and feet shuffling upon old carpet slippers.

When I came to know more, it seemed to me that this figure was typical of India, in its strange mixture of pomp and squalor, of gorgeousness and grime, of luxury and discomfort, of gold and ashes, of ideal beauty and naked realistic wretchedness. You meet the conjunction every where ; a hundred examples leap to the memory even of the casual wanderer who may have been but a few weeks or months in Asia.

At Lahore, for instance, I was passing through the broad tree-planted courtyard of the Jamma Masjid, the mosque of Aurangzeb. It is a splendid and spacious example of the later Mohammedan architecture, degenerate but still beautiful. The fluted lotus-shaped domes float like water-lilies upon the swelling curves of the smooth red-sandstone arches. But in the sacred court, which the unbeliever may not enter without putting felt sandals over his shoes, there is a square marble cistern; and at this tank I saw a common porter or coolie washing his face and feet and hands, taking the holy water into his mouth and throwing it back into the fountain stained all red with the juices of the betel-nut he had been chewing.

There is a finer Moslem church at Lahore, the mosque of Wazir Khan, hard by the Delhi Gate. It is built of brick, inlaid with a mosaic of blue and yellow tiles, blue and yellow as pure and lucent as the colours on a plate of early Italian faience. The deep-set doorway is shimmering with azure light, like a sea-cave, and above are traced *in* blue, on a white ground, some sentences in that bold and flowing Persian script which is a decoration in itself: * Eemove your heart from the gardens of the world.' So Islam holds high its blazon on this noble banner. But in the *chauk* or small square, on which the gateway opens, tin pots are being made, street traders are selling common wares for farthings, animals are tethered against the foundation-walls of the temple, and rags and ordure are on its very steps.

At one of the palaces where the Prince and Princess of Wales were entertained to a sumptuous banquet by a great ruling chief, the guests were received in a *shamiana,* or pavilion, erected before the open entrance-hall. The walls of the tent and the pillars of the portico were draped in gold brocade, and wide levels of this same fabric were stretched over the steps and pavements of the courtyard. On this flooring were ranged those who were to receive the Boyal guests, his Highness himself with half the value of the State Treasury on his person, jewelled and silk-clad feudatories, English ladies in evening dress, laced and uniformed officials and officers. The Maharaja's *chobdars,* big men in blazing liveries, held the golden fire-screen fans and the silver maces.

As we waited amid all this splendour, I cast my eye casually along the carpet, behind the tier of gorgeous ' supers,' and in one corner I noticed an untidy little pile of dingy cotton and a pair of deplorable shoes. They were the relics left behind him by some coolie or hanimal, some inferior palace menial, who had been taking his *siesta*

If important messages have to be sent, you step out upon the verandah, where the *chuprassis*, the red-scarved official commissionaires of your host's establishment, are in waiting. They salaam humbly at your call, take the order, and are off—well, not exactly like the wind, but with reasonable diligence. Again, when you want a bath, you are not compelled to cross a passage, or even to turn on a hot-water tap. You utter your instructions, there is a pattering of bare feet, and a swishing of water from buckets and goatskin bags, and presently the curtain before one of the four doors of the apartment is drawn back, and there is the big tin tub all ready to step into, with a waiting satellite to proffer soap and towels and sponges. All this sounds—to some extent, indeed, it is—rather luxurious.

On the other hand, your commodious chamber has many of the characteristics which seem to us proper to a prison or hospital ward, and some which would not be tolerated in either. The ceiling is bare beam and rafter. There is no paper, or silk, or tapestry on the walls, because dust, and heat, and damp, and insects render anything but distemper impossible. The floor is of cement, for the same reason. The furniture is heavy and hard and forbidding, useful, but not elegant or attractive : a bed with a mere framework of iron rods to support the mosquito-curtains, brown wooden armchairs with cane bottoms, clean wooden tables, oblong or circular.

Your host may lack neither means nor taste; but who would spend much money on upholstery, when encamped, so to speak, for perhaps three or five years, or at the most for ten ? And this in a climate where the mandibles of insects, the teeth of rodents, and the hands of native servants are always to be dreaded? The amenities of your spacious quarters do not include those of privacy and seclusion. There are, as I have said, four doors; but

during the heat of the day, and in the summer during the night also, these are all left open, and are defended only by curtains and screens of lath. Life is very public in India. Most of the bungalows have no internal passages. All rooms open into one another, or upon the verandah; and if you want to know whether anybody is at home, the simplest way is to lift up the curtain and look in.

Lastly, Anglo-Indian luxury is always compatible with the denial of some things without which we in the West have learnt to believe that existence would stand still. You cannot say that the drains are good or that they are bad in an Indian house, for as a rule there are no drains. The sanitary arrangement is precisely that which prevailed in England in the fifteenth century and in Scotland in the eighteenth. It is endurable, as noticed in a former chapter, because of the abundance of the cheap human animal, and the willingness of certain Orientals to discharge servile functions which few men can be induced to perform for hire in the West. But that is characteristic of the 'gorgeous East,' with its external glitter and its inward limitations. Its realities come a little closer to us, when we reflect that a man who perhaps rides abroad with a cavalry escort, before a salaaming multitude, lives at home under conditions which no English town-council would permit if they were inflicted on a day labourer in a common lodging-house.

CHAPTER XXII

THE MEMSAHIB

INGENIOUS writers of fiction have given an engaging pic ture of her, as of one who combines imperfect manners with highly uncertain morals. That the wives and mothers of British India are always fast and sometimes loose is a libel too blatant to gain acceptance even from popular novelists. But many persons would be quite prepared to find the Englishwoman in India loud, irresponsible, and flirtatious. Also they believe that her life is one of unfettered enjoyment, passed in an atmo sphere of Oriental indolence, untroubled by sordid cares, with half her time spent in a glorified grass-widowhood on the hill-tops, amid a congregation of male admirers.

The picture is absurdly mendacious. But no doubt it is true that matronhood in India often carries with it a certain element of exuberance, a touch of lightness and gaiety, which are commonly wanting to the state matri monial of middle-class England. There is a spaciousness and freedom about the life which makes it seem attractive enough, especially to those who do not look very far below the surface of things. In the early years of her exile, the memsahib, particularly if she is high-spirited and good-looking, can contrive to enjoy herself very well.

Young girls and young wives, if fortunate in their location and surroundings, find much to commend in India. From the grey dulness of the parsonage, the fossilised family circle, the country village, or the suburban square,

the youthful bride is transported to a larger atmosphere and a more vivid light. The life is less intellectual, and in reality it is harder; but at first sight it seems broader, sunnier, more luxurious, with wider scope for amusement and easier social intercourse. People dine more and dance more and play more than persons of a similar social status can usually do at home; they see more of their friends and acquaintances, the few white folks with whom they are islanded amid the ocean of brown humanity; there is more unrestrained communion between the sexes ; a spice of Southern levity mitigates the formalism of English manners.

My friend Tompkyns Sahib, of whom mention has already been made, has a sister, whom he brought out to spend a cold season with him. Miss Tompkyns's blue eyes and cool pink cheeks were naturally appreciated in a station where girls at the moment were scarce. So nobody was surprised when that smart young officer, Captain Jones, of the 150th Chitralis, induced her to share his bungalow and his fortune.

The latter was moderate, the former far from sump tuous. Nevertheless, Mrs. Jones, at Cutchapore, feels herself a good deal more important than Miss Tompkyns was at Streatham, or was ever likely to have become if she had accepted the attentions of a possible suitor in that respectable locality. She drives about the station in a dashing high dog-cart, with a tall syce in a gold-laced turban holding a sunshade over her pretty head. At Streatham, Miss Tompkyns made her journeys for the most part by omnibus or in the London County Council's inexpensive tramcars.

The Jones compound is rather an untidy enclosure, with a good deal of dusty turf and sun-baked flower-bed ; but there is room in it for some score or so of servants, for the stables in which the captain keeps his charger and

a couple of polo ponies and his wife's trapper and riding-horse, and for the deep well, with its rough windlass and sloping embankment, up which two yoke of patient bullocks draw water all day long for the necessities of the household.

There is always something going on at Cutchapore, which is a largish cantonment with a British battalion and a couple of native regiments in the lines. Mrs. Jones goes out to dinners and gives them; she can reckon on a dance about once a week in the cold season ; in the late afternoons everybody drives down to the club, where there is Badminton for the ladies and bridge and racquets for the men ; hockey, tennis, polo, and croquet are cultivated with assiduity, and there is a good deal for Mrs. Jones to be doing or seeing.

She has no lack of masculine society. An informal tea-party is held several days in the week on the wide and shaded verandah in front of her drawing-room. Nice 'boys' from the military camps, and dapper young civilians, are on terms of easy intimacy with her, are in and out of her house rather frequently, are perhaps not discouraged from smoking cigarettes and drinking whisky and soda in her drawing-room, are permitted to ride and drive and walk and sing songs with her, and generally to constitute themselves into a court of her devoted but discreet admirers and attendants.

Mrs. Jones enjoys it all, in this heyday of her spring time, though she is conscious that the Indian climate does not improve the cream-and-rose complexion she brought with her from England. She adapts herself to the traditions of the station, treats all natives with becoming *hauteur,* develops social ambitions, and is even disposed to look down on the *box wallahs,* the mere mercantile persons, whom her brother sometimes introduces to her notice. It is very different from Streatham; and

Mrs. Jones, when she pays a brief visit to her relatives at home, finds their social circle tame and their recreations limited, and thinks England an uncomfortable country, with a very inadequate supply of domestic servants.

But, as the years go by, she discovers that the attractions of India are not purchased without a price. There is the annual recurring misery of the hot weather, when life is unendurable out of doors, and almost intoler able within, for eighteen hours out of the twenty-four. When the thermometer is in the nineties, and sometimes over the htmdred, for weeks at a time, existence is a burden and a penance. The men feel it less; they have their work to do, and in the offices and law-courts, or on the parade-ground and the polo-field, they can partly forget the heat.

But a woman, after her early morning ride, can only lounge about in her darkened rooms, anaemic, inanimate, and lonely, trying to read or paint or do something quiet to kill the hours until the sun has fallen and it is possible to venture out again. Her health, her looks, her temper, all suffer under the long torture of the Indian summer. She may try to escape it by flitting to the hill-stations or taking a trip home; but Indian wives are not essentially, and on the average, different from wives in most other countries, and they do not enjoy taking perfunctory holidays, while their husbands are toiling on, exposed to all the perils of climate and illness.

Then there are the children. India is no country for them. It is not till Mrs. Jones's boy and girl have come that she sometimes begins to envy her married sister at home. She vows she will keep the children with her as long as possible; but at the best she finds she cannot have them for more than a short time. The white-faced precocious Anglo-Indian child must be sent home, if it is to get the sturdy English limbs, and the English colour,

and, above all, the English mind and morals and behaviour. The petting and spoiling and cringing of the native ayahs and servants are not wholesome, after the first infantile years; and when the child begins to 'take notice,' it notices more things than a judicious parent cares to have brought to its attention.

One lady told me that the road near her bungalow happened to be much frequented by parties of Hindus taking their dead down to the Burning Ghat. Close by the house was a patch of grass, kept well watered by the cantonment authorities, which was a favourite spot for the bearers to put down their stiff white burden for a few minutes' rest and gossip. My friend was horrified to find that her little daughter was constantly taken to this attractive rendezvous by her ayah in the course of the morning walk. Again, what is a careful mother to say when an intelligent child comes back from the servants' compound with the information that Ruttun or Muttroo has provided himself with a second wife, having un fortunately failed to obtain a male heir by the assistance of his first consort ?

So at five years of age, or thereabouts, the child goes home to be left to the care of strangers or the more or less satisfying kindness of relations. It is not so bad now, in these days of rapid communication, as it used to be. The Anglo-Indian mother may, if she is lucky, see her children every second or third year; but then that probably means months of separation from her husband. The boy grows up to manhood, seeing his father only as a holiday visitor; the girl may be a woman and a wife herself before she has the chance of real intimacy with her mother.

There are good schools at the hill-stations, and some Anglo-Indians are getting their sons and daughters edu cated there. But the experiment is not wholly successful.

It is the moral, as much as the physical, climate of Asia which is unhealthy for the English child. The 'country-bred,' they tell us, even if of the best stock, deteriorates. As a rule, I suppose, the Anglo-English children will continue to be sent home, leaving aching hearts behind them.

That is one side of the tragedy that lurks beneath the buoyant surface of the memsahib's existence. And there are others, or at least the possibility of others; for in India one never knows what may happen. Death, disease, and danger are no respecters of sex. The Anglo-Indian woman requires to keep her wits about her and to be possessed of that quality which is known as presence of mind. Let me give two or three examples communi cated to me, quite casually and in the course of conversa tion, by Anglo-Indian ladies themselves.

1. The narrator is the wife of a magistrate, who is in charge of a remote district, inhabited by a primitive agricultural population. Their bungalow is fifty miles from the nearest station, the nearest English lady, the nearest European doctor. The magistrate and his wife are the only white people in the place, except a sub ordinate official of the Public Works Department; the assistants in the office are all natives. In the very height of the hot season plague breaks out in the village. The visitation is new to these parts, and the inhabitants are in a state of panic terror.

Through the fierce summer days, the sulphurous summer nights, the magistrate has to do the work of ten men: he has to keep the frightened peasants from abandoning their houses and fleeing helplessly to the fields; he has to devise measures of sanitation and dis infection, and see that they are carried out; he has to get the dead buried and the sick nursed, to worry the distant Provincial Government for medicines and help, to attend

to his normal office duties, and keep the machinery of administration going all the time.

Before the crisis is over he is himself struck down. One evening he comes home, after spending a terrible afternoon among the plague-stricken huts, with his eyes burning and his hands shaking. That night he has high fever, and next morning he is on his bed unable to move. The memsahib must do everything. A tangle of responsibilities is upon her. She is compelled to nurse her husband, and to do about half his work at the same time, to conduct his correspondence with the Government, to take his directions to the native subordinates, themselves paralysed with alarm and anxiety, to give orders in his name to the frightened villagers, to see that the social organisation does not lapse into chaos before he can rise from his couch of sickness.

Upon the hands of this young woman are thousands of helpless people; they look to her—since "there is no one else—for help, counsel, guidance, moral support, medical advice. For the moment she is the representative of the Sirkar, the principle of authority; if she fails them the tie that binds the community will snap, the work of years will be undone.

She does not fail. She nurses the invalid till it is possible for him to be moved; she admonishes the collapsed native assistants to do their duty, consults with the head of the police, exhorts the villagers in the name of the sick chief, becomes, like him, doctor, nurse, inspector of sanitation, commissariat officer, general controller of affairs. All this the memsahib does—she who six years ago was a school-girl, who before she came to India had seen nothing of life more serious than a little 'parish work' with the curate.

2. An English lady is sitting in her verandah one afternoon. Her husband is away on a tour of inspection,

and will not return for a day or two. Suddenly there is a great commotion in the compound ; a crowd of, servants and hangers-on rush up. A man has been bitten in the foot by a snake, supposed to be a cobra; in a few minutes he will be dead unless the memsahib will help. There is no European within call; there is a native doctor, but he lives in a village eight miles distant.

The lady puts down her novel and goes to look at the. sufferer. He is lying in a heap on his string bed, beside himself with terror, pointing to his foot, and clamouring to have the bitten place cut out. The man may or may not die from snake-bite ; but he will assuredly die from fear if the operation is not performed. Will not any of the servants undertake it? With one accord they excuse themselves. The Mohammedan butler says that if it be the will of God the man must die, otherwise he will re cover; and he intimates that in either case he personally sees no occasion to intervene. The bearer, a Hindu, has religious scruples ; the other bystanders are all too flurried and nervous to do anything but talk loudly and make confused suggestions.

What is to be done? The lady knows nothing about surgery, and has never operated on anything bigger than a pet canary in her life; her friends at home give her credit for being a rather unhandy, self-indulgent, incapable kind of person. But she is a soldier's daughter; she comes of the race on which emergency acts like a tonic. She sends to the house for one of her husband's razors, tells a groom to hold the man's legs, and then and there hacks the bitten piece out of the quivering brown foot. It is a horrible bungling bit of work ; there are no anaesthetics or ai^tiseptics, and the operator's white hands and white dress are all dabbled with the spouting blood.

[1] I was not at all certain,' she told me, [i] that I should not kill the man by cutting an artery, or giving him

lockjaw or something. But I felt quite sure he would have died if I had not done it.[9] As a matter of fact, in spite of the unskilful surgery, and the amateur bandaging with which they contrived to stop the bleeding, the man recovered^ and lived (I hope) to be grateful. * I wonder how you could do it,' said I. ' Oh, I don't know. It *had* to be done,' replied the memsahib. ' Have another cup of tea, won't you 9 *

3. A civilian, with his wife and girl-baby twenty months old, in a disturbed district near the Frontier. The Mahsuds are disaffected, and roving bands are on the prowl ail over the country. The husband's duties compel Him to spend the whole day in a survey camp twenty miles distant. Before he rides out he puts a loaded revolver into his wife's hand: ' If the Pathans come, shoot the child first and then shoot yourself.' When next you are inclined to talk lightly of Anglo-Indian womanhood, think of this little scene: the young mother standing there in the dim morning light with the pistol clenched in her hand, while the husband, after that grim farewell address, calmly mounts his horse and rides forth to do his spell of daily toil for a forgetful Government and an unappreciative people.

4. Another young wife goes out after breakfast to make her inspection of the servants' quarters, the small hamlet of huts and shanties behind the bungalow. She finds that plague has attacked the establishment in the night; one man is dead already, tw[r]o are dying. The same lady told me that coming home in a friend's carriage late one night after a dance she found her own coach man lying dead of cholera on the steps of her residence. A disagreeable experience; especially when one has two young children inside the house.

When you listen to stories such as these—and there are many Anglo-Indian women who could supply copious

additions to your collection—you are inclined to revise your estimate of the memsahib. If you see her some times, when her life * fleets pleasantly as in the golden world,' you may remember that sooner or later some crisis may arise, some grave moment of stress and strain, which will test her mettle. They come suddenly, these strokes of Fate, more suddenly in India than else where. Behind the easy, indulgent, sociable existence, the spectral shapes loom—the spectres of death, of deadly sickness, of absence, loneliness, separation. No wonder if, in the midst of her mirth, the memsahib casts an anxious glance at them; no wonder that her laugh is sometimes a little hollow, that her merriment is a trifle forced, that there is a suggestion of strain and nervousness in her gaiety. If she enjoys herself more obtrusively than her staid sisters at home, if she laughs more loudly, talks more freely, and cultivates male friendships with a more candid comradeship, we need not assume that she is merely frivolous and empty. When, it may be after years of ease and security, the day of her trial comes she does **not** often prove unequal to it.

CHAPTEE XXIII

IN THE VILLAGES

[1] You will see many things and people in India,' said the Member of Council, ' but do not forget the Man who Matters,'

"Meaning thereby?' I inquired.

" Meaning the cultivator of the soil. India, recollect, consists mainly of *him.'*

That is a fact which nobody who wishes to grasp the conditions of Indian life should for a moment ignore. It is also one of the reasons why, to the ordinary tourist, the customary autumn trip is so unsatisfying; for it gives him little real insight or information in return for long and dusty railway journeys, for poor food, and for hotels, with a few exceptions, contemptibly inadequate, lie goes in at one of the two great sea-gates and emerges at the other: having in the interim spent more or less time at Delhi, Agra, Benares, and perhaps at Madura, Conjevaram, Ellora, and Ahmedabad, with a run up to Simla or Darjiling for a look at the snow-ranges. He will have seen some interesting towns, some wonderful tombs and temples and ancient monuments, and some picturesque scenery. But of the Indian people he will know little more than when he set out from home. For the Indian people do not live in the cities. Their habitat is in the country, to which five-sixths of them belong; the overpowering majority of them are villagers.

And with the villager it is not easy to come into

touch without the benevolent assistance of those who conduct the local administration. Without such aid the voyager can hardly ever set eyes on a rural hamlet, except from a distance; he will not know how to approach it. There are no railway-stations at the villages; their only access, as a rule, is by field-paths or jungle-tracks, or at the best by *cutcha* roads, narrow lanes, deep in sand or mire, along which a horse may travel, but not a carriage with wheels and springs.

If you would seek out one of these communities, you must get the Collector to send his tehsildar or other qualified native assistant to pilot you to the clump of thatched or mud-walled dwellings; you must let trim summon the headman and bring out the principal inhabi tants and set them to elucidate for your benefit the work ing of the primitive but yet rather complicated little social organism. Better still it is to have a good friend who, being himself Deputy Commissioner or Settlement Officer, will endure the burden of taking an irresponsible inquisi tive spectator into his camp when he goes his rounds. Then you see the Man who Matters—governing man and governed—at first hand, and you begin to realise the difference between the semi-Europeanised sophisticated India of the towns and the India of two hundred and fifty million peasants.

To go into camp with a Settlement Officer is, indeed, among the most delightful and instructive experiences that a visitor to India can enjoy; and a few days so spent, under kindly and competent guidance, will teach him more of the life of the villages, which is the life of the peoplg, than many weeks passed in other and less informal w[r]ays. For with this village life the civilian engaged in settlement work, more even than his colleagues, the District Magistrate and the Police Superintendent, is in intimate and habitual contact.

By the ancient law and custom of all the states and provinces of India, the ruling power is entitled to a certain proportion of every acre of land in the country, unless it has transferred or limited its rights. The procedure by which that proportion is determined is called a Settlement of the Land Revenue. Such a settlement may be permanent, in which case the demand of the State is fixed once and for ever. This was the course adopted in the famous Permanent Settlement of 1793, which is operative over the whole of Bengal and parts of the United Provinces and Madras. By this much-criticised measure, the persons responsible to the State for the collection of the land-revenue were given all the rights of English landlords, and they have been able to absorb the entire rack-rental of the richest agricultural areas of the Peninsula, paying in return a land-tax calculated on the values of a hundred years ago. The unearned increment goes to the rent-receiver. The State gains nothing, and the actual cultivator very little, though something has been done by recent legislation to secure his position and moderate the exactions of the landlord under the Permanent Settlement.

In the rest of India the mistakes of the eighteenth-century legislators, hidebound in the traditions of English real-property law, have been avoided. The settlements are temporary; and the Government tax is fixed for a period of twenty or thirty years only, after an elaborate examination of local customs, resources, and conditions, conducted by selected officials of the Indian Civil Service, who are carefully trained for the work. A kind of Domesday Book is compiled for each district, in which the particulars for every village are entered in detail, and the tax is increased or diminished on each holding after due consideration of the facts upon the record.

This assessment is of vital importance to every person connected with the land, be he landowner, tenant, or

labourer; for rents, wages, profits, and to a large extent prices, will rise or fall in relation to it. Much, therefore, depends upon the Settlement Officer. He must have a deep knowledge of the country, tact, judgment, industry, patience; above all, sympathy and a sense of justice, so that he can enter into the feelings of the agriculturists and consult their interests without sacrificing those of the Sirkar.

At the headquarters of his district the Settlement Officer has his central bureau, with a staff of native secretaries, clerks, registrars, and draughtsmen, who are engaged in compiling and revising the record, and in dealing with the accounts, reports, and surveys sent in from the various *tehsils.* Much time is spent by the S. 0. in supervising all this minute book-keeping, and fixing his assessment, or hearing appeals from the pre liminary decisions of his subordinates. But during a considerable portion of the cold weather, and sometimes in the hot weather also, he is occupied with a close personal investigation of the local conditions.

In the course of this examination he goes over the district himself, consults the tehsildars, the minor revenue officials, the patwaris, or village accountants, the head men, the landowners, and other principal inhabitants, looks into the facts on the spot, hears complaints, re ceives representations, considers the crops, the rainfall, the soil, the animals, the wells, the irrigation facili ties, the character, standing, and temperament of the population.

The inquisition is not resented by the people for two reasons. In the first place, they are used to it; secondly, they know that the more carefully the Huzur inquires, the more readily they place accurate and comprehensive information in his way, the greater is the probability that the assessment will be moderate and equitable.

It is hard, anxious, responsible work for the civilian in charge, yet not without its amenities, and performed in a stimulating atmosphere of spaciousness and freedom. The Settlement Officer's guest, who is spared his host's responsibilities and anxieties, will hardly fail to enjoy his trip, especially if he is able to select for the scene of his pilgrimage some bracing unspoilt corner of the Northern plains with a good spring climate and a manly attractive peasantry. He will see Indian camp life at its best: not, it is true, with the luxury and parade with which Governors and Commanders-in-Chief are almost compelled to surround themselves on tour, but with quite as much solid comfort.

Neither in the various Royal camps, nor in those provided by hospitable Maharajas at the capitals of the principal native states, did I find myself in possession of more commodious and agreeable quarters than those allotted to me when I travelled with a Settlement Officer through a portion of his district. An extra tent—one of those admirable double-pole pavilions, with outside porch and passages, which I have already described[1]—was taken along for me; otherwise the camp was in its ordinary service guise. Yet it required a whole convoy of bullock-carts and a long train of camels to move it from place to place; and when pitched on the dusty maidan, a mile or so from a small native town, it looked like a canvas suburb itself. There was my host's living-tent and office-tent, with an extra deep verandah in front, before which a local police sentry kept guard, with two or three *chuprassis* and orderlies usually sitting in the corners.

My own tent was ranged alongside, and here also would have been that of the Commissioner's civilian colleague or deputy if he had taken one. At a little distance was the tent of the principal native assistant, a

[1] See *supra*, Chap. V. p. 03.

somewhat important personage, with responsible executive and quasi-judicial duties to perform; adjacent to this were the lodgings of thetehsildar and those of the munshi or official translator and secretary, the clerks, surveyors, and accountants. In the rear were shanties for the servants, a kitchen-tent and a storeroom-tent, and a long stable-tent, with racks and mangers and everything com plete for the accommodation of four or five horses and ponies.

Several of these apartments were in duplicate; for we were moving about from day to day, and while we were using one set of tents the other was travelling on ahead so as to be ready for us at our next halting-place. I saw now why the writing-table, which stood in my friend's *daftar* when he was at his bungalow, had strong steel hooks depending from its sides. In camp it occupied the middle of his office-tent, and his papers and books of reference were in its nest of drawers. When the day's work was done his servants and tent-pitchers would take away the heavy teak bureau in sections; while we were at dinner they were slinging it across the back of a camel; all through the night, when we were sleeping peacefully, it was being carried along the roads or by field-paths; and when, in the forenoon of the next day, we reached the new camp, there was the office-table in position, with its inkstand and calendar and stationery, precisely as one had last seen it the previous afternoon twelve or fourteen miles away.

Early hours are kept in the camp. If you would ride out with the Settlement Officer on his daily round, you must be up betimes. It is dark and chilly as you scramble into your clothes and go forth to take *chota hazri*, the early-morning tea and toast, in your host's tent. The syces bring up the horses and ponies, and presently you find yourself beside the 'Burra Sahib,' as he makes his

way across the country, at the head of a miscellaneous troop of mounted men, with an infantry detachment tailing in the rear.

The *corttge* is quite a large one; for it includes the chief native assistants and ofl&cials, and all sorts of minor local notabilities, resident landowners, zemindars, and various persons more or less interested in the matter in hand. Some are here byway of compliment to the repre sentative of the Sirkar; others merely because they like to see what is going on. Anybody who pleases can join in the procession, and even take part in the business, which is conducted with the frank publicity customary in a country where everybody is cognisant of everybody else's affairs. A man in an old khaki uniform, with a cavalry seat on his weedy country-bred pony, rides up and salutes. He is a retired resaldar of one of our lancer regiments, who has come back to settle in his native village: a prosperous man, having his pension and special allowances for his two medals and the Order of Merit. He attaches himself to the Settlement Officer for the rest of the morning, acts as a sort of voluntary guide and *aide-de camp,* is ready with much local learning as occasion offers.

A sporting young Mohammedan gentleman, in a checked coat and riding-breeches, with his falconer running beside him, makes his salaam. He has brought his hawk, thinking that the great man might like to see a flight, if a partridge or a hare can be flushed on the way. There is almost a holiday feeling as the little troop rides along in the exhilarating morning air, now winding in single file on the edge of a plantation, now snapping the dry sticks of last year's cotton crop under the hoofs of the ponies, now cantering across an open stretch of jungly common, with a herd of black buck or chinkara galloping away in the distance.