ANGLO-INDIA

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ALLAHABAD
PRINTED AT THE PIONEER PRESS

1904

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ANGLO-INDIA

I

A COUNTRY of curiosity to some, of scorn to many, of deadly earnest to the few. Such is the Anglo-India of modern times. Gone is the fabulous pagoda-tree, with its famous wealth of blossom; vanished the gradations of a Hastings, a Clive, a Lawrence; faded the glamour that once enshrouded the mysterious land of the East. The search-light of the Twentieth Century has laid India bare to the furthermost points of her frontiers, and a career on her shores is too often looked upon now as a foregone conclusion, with salary attached, ending in Anglo-Indianism of a pronounced type than which no more contemptuous definition, especially to the many whose views are bounded by the English Channel, could possibly be arrived at.

It never has been made quite clear where the term Anglo-India begins, and where it ends, or rather where it never begins at all. Presumably

those Englishmen who can afford to serve India in a different way, racing home to England on leave every year or so, and racing out again with the latest music-hall songs ringing in their ears, may be considered exempt from such an opprobrious epithet. It is after all a mere matter of income. No one save a Viceroy would stop in India if he saw the way to wealth and distinction clear and paved for him at home. The soldiers and civilians who make their way out to the East are one and all seeking their fortunes ; adventurers, gambling with health for success and a pension. Yet their hearts are almost always in their work, nor do they shun the responsibilities and drawbacks of their position. India may be a fickle mistress, now giving with both hands, now smiting cruelly where the blow was least expected, but she is always served loyally and devotedly by those who approach her shrine. The prizes are great, the winners few, yet she subdues to herself the very conquerors whose footsteps have trampled in the blood upon her soil. For India absorbs, she does not succumb. In its fascination, its powers of endurance, her history is second to none. Not all the confusion of races and peoples that have beset her from generations immemorial, can disturb her primeval simplicity, her mighty indifference to the things that are not of her world. Wars, and the ravages of wars, famines, and the ravages of famines, have swept her from mountain

to sea, but they have left no more impression than the storm that passes in the night. Serene and calm the sun rises again undisturbed by the petty tumults of an hour ago; serene and calm the sun sinks down again to its rest, and the tranquil stars are left to gaze in admiration at a land, for so many centuries torn and mutilated by excessive strife, now sleeping with no signs of scars or wounds, happily, if not always contentedly, at peace.

And not the least wonderful amongst her many wonders are the conquerors of India. Nation upon nation they have fought and bled and governed, until in one last upheaval, the East has brought itself to accept the sway of the West, and the Englishman reigning supreme propitiates with the sacrifice of many honest lives, that goddess of absorption which is his doom.

For none can escape it. India is bound to leave her mark on those who dwell for any permanency upon her shores. Hence the term Anglo-Indian, so fiercely resented by those who most feel its truth, so scornfully applied by those who need never test its advantages. Yet there are tragedies as poignant, deeds as enduring, in the monotony of Anglo-Indian life, as are to be found in the West—only they are never chronicled. The flippant, the frivolous, the gorgeous side of Indian life is dwelt on again and again. The globe-trotter, supercilious with his return ticket safely in his pocket

wanders round the country, hospitably entertained alike by the hard-worked civilian and the generous-minded raja. But long before the hot weather has set its glaring mark on plain and sea, he has betaken himself Home again, notably impressed with the luxury of life in the East and loudly acclaiming its lucky residents, while devoutly thankful in his own heart to set foot on English shores once more. Or the famous author rushes out for three months, crams himself to surfeit with statistics and impressions and rushes Home again to produce his book. Or again the novelist claims attention with tales of frivolous fair ones and flirtatious A. D. C.'s, as though flirtation and frail beauty and the pitiful tale of the Divorce court were inscribed on the pages of Anglo-Indian history alone; or the Oriental and picturesque side of Indian life will be seized upon and painted in lurid colours such as never were supplied by Nature nor from the other side of the colour-monger's counter either. But the monotonous daily existence, that existence which marks time by its marriages, births, deaths, by promotions and appointments, by friendships all too fleeting, and partings all too soon; that existence which in its commonplaceness, its monotony, its destitution of all outside interests, forms the one great excuse for Anglo-Indianism in its acute form, that existence is altogether overlooked. Indian life is not one big tiger shoot, nor one long flirta-

tion. It does not begin up a tree rifle in hand, nor end at a Viceregal ball. On the contrary, it commences usually in a four-wheeler cab rolling through foggy London streets with a tearful mother and sisters waving a farewell behind and the huge hulk of a P. and O. steamer just starting on its outward voyage looming up in front. And it continues with dull grinding of engines slowly working, and with the screaming and snorting of impertinent busy tugs while the ship slips down the river into the sea, where the chopping waves of the Channel and the heavy swell of the Bay mark the beginning of sea-sickness and an Indian career at the same time.

Mark it with hope too, with health and vigour and high spirits and that boast of unachieved greatness which is the stepping stone to a high career until Bombay is reached,—Bombay with its noise and chatter, its large-minded public buildings, magnificently indifferent to the squalor and misery at their feet; its harsh blending of Eastern and Western life, eager for harmony and yet forever striking false chords. But with Bombay the worries of Indian life dawn on the horizon, the heart-ache of exile seizes the novice in its grip. He may forget it temporarily in the glamour of that first invitation which reaches him in the up-country station where he begins his work, but it will seize him again once the invitation is realised. For it is merely an official dinner to which

he is bidden, where iron-bound convention drives friendliness away. A dinner of many courses, all of which he is doomed to taste again, but most especially so the tinned salmon and the iced asparagus. A dinner of men chiefly, who talk sport, with a sprinkling of ladies, who talk India. A dinner-party that rolls home finally in carriages and dog-carts of every description, with the air of having satisfactorily performed a satisfactory duty. These sorts of duties, these sorts of dinners, go on forever in India. They are its social backbone as well as its bane. If only officialdom could be banished from its festive boards, and selection take the place of precedence, there might be some hope of real sociability at the risk of offended dignity. But the stamp of custom lies too heavy on the land. Newcomers imagine too much; they find too little, and with the hotheadedness of youth they condemn too eagerly. Later on they will learn the reason, and with the reason the excuse. But at first they are only aware of the disappointed reiteration that hammers dully at their brain—India—and the influence she wields over those who till her soil.

II.

INDIAN CANTONMENTS.

THE man who invented Indian cantonments must have been suffering from melancholia. He could not have been within six months' distance of the merest smile. There is a joylessness about an Indian cantonment which is very striking. London, with its rows upon rows of artisan houses, its factories and chimneys, its thousands of intersecting railway lines, its bridges and shipping and advertisements, and vast dim railway stations, is an awful place to approach. It sets the most careless pondering. It strikes home with its wealth and its misery, each struggling for supremacy in that sootladen atmosphere, as no other city in the world can strike. But an ordinary Indian Cantonment would not give cause for thought to a fly. As approached from the railway it is mostly invisible. One's watch and the guide-book alike inform one that it is time to be "there"—but meanwhile the train lumbers heavily along between dusty cactus hedges and flat uncultivated ground with occasionally an empty ravine or a group of desponding mud huts to vary the landscape. Presently, for no apparent reason, the engine lets forth an abandoned shriek, and the weary traveller shaking himself

free of dust gathers together his traps and gazes forlornly out of window. The train is slackening speed, there is no doubt about that; it was slow enough before, it is simply crawling now. But where is the *raison d'être* of its slowness? Where are the church spires, the houses, the bustle and life of a military cantonment as pictured to himself a hundred times over by the ardent new-comer?—Nowhere at all. As he strains his eyes to the distance, he sees arising, apparently out of nothing, a row of white erect buildings. He looks again, and there is another row parallel and exactly similar to the first. Then some trees and more erect buildings, and then a very white, very uncompromising church steeple. And while he still looks and endeavours to realise the utter melancholy of it, the train pulls up alongside a bare platform thronged with natives and overwhelmed with noise. That is all. Barracks and barracks and again barracks, and there, with a few houses clustered round and about, is the Indian Military Cantonment. Economical, doubtless; healthy, not always; comfortable, never.

A shaky carriage, that once had springs and now has merely bumps, conveys the traveller to the precise places to which he does not wish to go. No hired native coachman ever condescends to know the way anywhere. That would be inaugurating an era of peace for the Sahib which would be most detrimental to the spoiling of his temper, a process which every

Sahib should undergo within a year of landing. And so there being no particular reason why the new-comer should not see everything at one fell drive, the native Jehu gallops contentedly along the Mall in the wrong direction, plying his attenuated steeds with whip and choice language, whilst his apology for a carriage rattles and sways in unison behind.

There is always a Mall in an Indian Cantonment. This alone speaks worlds for the conservatism of the Englishman in India. A couple of centuries ago the Mall or bowling alley was a fashionable resort in all would-be smart English towns. Therefore the East Indian Company amongst other vagaries brought the Mall to India with them, and in India it has remained. A long straight road as a rule, with a club and a bandstand and public garden as its chief features. On either hand straggle houses of a sort, some large, some small, some hidden in trees, some bare to the world with only an irregular mud wall between them and publicity. White roads, straight and precise, lead off at intervals to right and left. Follow them, or induce the Jehu to follow them, and you will find yourself in barracks. Beyond the Mall before the hard metal of the engineered road gives place to the dust of a country track, more houses solidly built, often quite imposing, with lawns and flowers and brick-red walls. Here as a rule dwell the General and his staff, or the Civilian community, while far in the distance,

hazy in the morning sun, or heavy with smoke as night advances, lies the native city. No one save the Cantonment Magistrate, or the Deputy Collector, ever penetrates into that heterogeneous collection of buildings. There plague rages at will, or cholera smites with swift strokes, but life in barracks and around them goes on as before. The soldier has his drills, his parades, his lounge in the afternoon, or his bicycle ride. The officer his work, his polo and his pigsticking, occasionally a dance or a race-meeting, while with unwearied regularity the bugle sounds its call to duty, and the mid-day gun its warning to time. Such summer and winter, hot and cold, and nearly always dusty, is an Indian cantonment.

But once a year it rains. Then the last state of that cantonment is worse than the first, for most of the houses leak, and some of them fall in. An Indian landlord has a rooted objection to spending any money on the repair of his houses. On the other hand, he has a perfect mania for collecting his rent. There is in fact a great want of sympathy about an Indian landlord. He has no soul, or if he has one, it has migrated from some particularly wooden species of animal life, and has not yet had time to generate. He will observe the damp spreading on walls and ceilings with indifference, and mark the brown streaks of wet disfigure the drawing-room paint without a tear. He will let the beams of his roof fall in, giving his tenants a shock which will

last them a lifetime even if they are not killed outright, rather than pay for new ones before their time. And yet he is not so much to be blamed for parsimony as for an inability to see things in the right light. The laws of the cantonment are generally on his side. Why they should be is not easily understood, but so it is. The pitiful thing is that he does not rise superior to them. Instead, he almost appears to rejoice in and make the most of them. If the missionary would give a little attention to recalcitrant landlords he would be doing a world's amount of good, but possibly his house does not leak, and so he sees no cause for interference. Nevertheless, it is not a matter for idle jesting, this dripping of the ceilings in the rainy season. It is instead a matter for repentance of one's sins and tin baths. I have tumbled into a tin bath in the mess ante-room before now, and have dragged my bed from one end of the room to the other on many a hot stormy night in the vain endeavour to find a really dry place. These sound like trifles, and sordid ones too. There is nothing heroic about a tin tub, nor is it romantic to discover a shower bath in one's bed-room, but such details make up the sum total of Anglo-Indian Cantonment life. They explain much and excuse much.

And so in half an hour, probably entirely against his will, the new-comer may have seen the whole of an Indian cantonment, with the

exception perhaps of that road leading to the city where stand the few shops European and native which are ever willing but rarely capable of supplying the precise want of the moment. But though he may possibly have seen the outside of it, he cannot have realised the entirety of it. A cantonment takes itself seriously. It is sufficient unto itself always, and it is odd to notice how quickly the ever shifting community amalgamates with its new surroundings. A regiment will come to a place, and instantly it is absorbed into it. All its interests become local; it might have lived for ever on that particular bit of Indian plain. It marches away, and is speedily forgotten in the glories of its successor. For there is no constancy about an Indian cantonment. It is conservative to obstinacy in its construction, but as unretentive to memories as the ground upon which it is built. The most heart-breaking tragedies may take place within its boundaries, but the comedy of Anglo-Indian verandah life goes on as gaily as before or ever the mourning is doffed, or the last note of lament sounded across the plain. Were it otherwise existence in India would be impossible, since the overwhelming publicity of the life does not lend itself to too much depth of feeling.

Therefore, no one should presume to talk of an Indian cantonment who has not been dripped on from the ceiling or who has not killed a cobra in his drawing-room, or been

forgotten by his friends in half-an-hour—and since cantonments are India and India means cantonments, it follows that India itself remains an unknown quantity to many who boast otherwise. Only the Civilian with brains and the Political Officer can afford to be indifferent to cantonments. They get the best of India in camp and in Native States. For them Government houses and stately Residencies open wide their portals. Calcutta is their rendezvous and Simla their haven of delight. The echo of distant history is as music to their ears, and the native becomes an object of interest rather than of wages. They skim the cream along with their twelve hours of work a day. Not so the ordinary mortal.

A lady once suggested to me that life in India was all frivolity and scandalous ease. That we danced from ball-room to altar, indulging in a few pretty little flirtations by the way, and invariably enjoying the uttermost possibility of luxury. I should like to put that lady down in an Indian cantonment of medium size and some distance removed from the centre of commerce. I should like her to find herself in an empty bangalow attended by an obsequious landlord who promises all things and achieves nothing. I should like her to choose a faint egg-shell blue for her drawing-room walls, and come next day to find them painted a hideous grey. I should like her to select her furniture at the only furniture-dealer in the place and

to wait six weeks for a sofa, which, when it arrives, is the wrong pattern. I should like her to participate in a hot weather and realise the rains, and then I should like to take her views on Indian life all over again.

It is true there are compensations. The sun shines gorgeously in the cold weather. The sky is blue as ever sky in Italy; flowers spring up in abundance, and the nights are fresh and starred with beauty. But the sunshine breeds dust, the blue sky means glare; the flowers wither all too soon, and the night air engenders chills. On the whole, and considering everything, I am fain to admit that an Indian cantonment has its drawbacks.

III.

INDIAN CLUBS.

India might fitly be described as a great country bounded by a small horizon. Not all the vastness of her mountain ranges, not all the broad expanse of her ocean frontier, can widen her possibilities or extend her views, nor can any of those whose lives are pledged out here escape the iron relentlessness of her embrace. But if they cannot escape their bonds, at least they accept them cheerfully, unconscious very often until too late of the inroads made into health and mind by the glare and toil of the day; anxious only to get the best out of life, whether hitting a goal at polo, or waltzing through the greater part of a hot weather night, or lounging on the lawn of the local Club. Not a very ingratiating amusement one would suppose this last to be, and yet Clubs with their Club-life are very essential to India. There is an attraction about them which neither time nor habit can ever abate. Unprepossessing as a rule to look at, they are generally represented by a great bare building, facing the Mall or the Gymkhana ground, with lawn and gardens attached. Usually they are mixed Clubs, the members being of both sexes, and this is the more popular style. But

occasionally those who should know better have refused to permit any female innovations, and the ladies find themselves removed to a small annexe in the grounds of the more superior building, where they make the best of their embittered lot by drinking tea in twos and threes, and upbraiding mankind in general and the Club Secretary in particular.

For no self-respecting man ever ventures within this Ladies' Annexe. Therein lies the sting of the whole matter. It is given over as a rule to the latest joined subalterns and rowdy games. The Lords of Creation are occasionally known to steal across and snatch a book from the archaic library, which is the invariable adjunct of a Ladies' Club Or sometimes they are waylaid and forced to listen to the band, and now and then tea-parties are indulged in, and interesting heroes fresh from polo, lounge on to the verandah and spice the tea with playful badinage. But these are delights to be but fearfully enjoyed with the eyes of all the tea-party-less ones fixed on the more fortunate fair. Such outbursts provoke gossip and unkind remarks. They have even been known to cause an estrangement between two bosom friends, hitherto unassailable in their clinging attachment. It is better On the whole, having regard to the perverse obstinacy with which Indian society of both sexes frequents the Station Club in the evening, to make one meeting-place of it. One lawn, one

reading-room, with billiard-room and bar carefully estranged from the rest. Such proximity promotes happiness and ensures peace. It is particularly conducive to the long life, or, perhaps it should be said, the longer life of the Club Secretary. The latter occupies an invidious position which few, very few, are likely to envy. If he pleases some, he is sure to offend others. If he does not effect changes and improvements, he is held up to general execration, yet whenever he spends money he is certain to spend it wrong. If he advertises a dance, half the ladies in the station refuse to go to it because they were not consulted beforehand; if he refrains from Terpsichorean entertainment, it is immediately obvious that he is utterly unfit for the responsible position he holds. A Club Secretary, to enjoy any happiness at all, should wrap himself up in Olympian clouds, and hold himself loftily aloof from the common herd. He should not have a genial temperament, nor indulge in a predilection for ladies' society. He should wear a frown and always appear in a hurry. This is impressive, and has the further advantage of preventing him from being waylaid too frequently. If he plays bridge he should do so with an abstracted air, as one whose time is too precious to be wasted even when he is winning. He should never see a joke, for this lays him open to the charge of frivolity, and he should be able to order suppers. Altogether a Club Secretary needs education.

Viewed with a disinterested eye when empty and deserted an Indian Club does not afford much scope for enchantment A dusty lawn green during the rains but never before or after, bordered possibly by rose bushes, whose glory of blossom is all the more to be commended because of the dust from which they arise; empty chairs and tables scattered about, and here and there a few nurses and children playing in a corner, and a group of native servants in another corner discussing the productive value of an anna—such is the aspect of the Club premises before the afternoon is on the wane. But presently the polo or the tennis or the "At Home" being over, by twos and threes the inhabitants of Cantonments reluctanly appear. Their air clearly indicates that they are the unwilling victims of an obsolete custom. The men in particular present a hang-dog appearance, only to be dissipated by a drink slowly indulged in at the bar, whilst the ladies disperse themselves round and about the various tables on the lawn. As the dusk deepens, however, the atmosphere becomes more sociable. The men leave the bar and join one or other of the scattered groups. Conversation hums busily. It is usually local in topic. Frequently it deals entirely with its neighbours. Indian society is not only eager to take its pleasures in public, but to discuss them too. Hence the overflow at the Club in the evening. It assists in the circulation of gossip, and

affords ample opportunity of noting the doings of others as well. The men or the women who do not frequent its pastoral grounds become deservelly unpopular. Even the Club Secretary looks askance at them. They may pay a monthly subscription, but they never order drinks. They are spoken of contemptuously, or worse still, not spoken of at all. It is possible that they will complete their Indian careers without once attracting unto themselves the breath of scandal. They most probably indulge in rose-gardens or stamp-collecting, harmless hobbies, which by keeping them at home merely brand them with ignominy. To be effaced in India is in fact to die the death instantly. If a man cannot attract attention unto himself by meting out justice in a new fashion, or by blowing up a frontier tribe to the satisfaction of everyone except the tribe themselves, or by dancing a novel hornpipe, such as was never danced before, then he must marry a wife and attract notice unto himself through her. Publicity is the watch-word of the strange kaleidoscopic scenes which are forever shifting across the stage of the Conquerors of India. The very dwelling places even are public, with doors and windows constantly flung wide, and gardens always abutting on the high road. Thus the whole secret of life in this alien country becomes clear at the Club of an evening. A life wherein the chief characters huddle together craving for sympathy in their exile. A usually

frivolous life, always flying from the cares that always must pursue it. Little wonder then that people collect on this lawn and drink iced drinks and flirt and gossip. India is not the country where a man can take his pipe and lean on a gate and muse in comfort. In the first place there are no gates, and if there were, they would probably be unhinged and unsafe. They would afford food for thought of a peculiarly dramatic kind. It is better not to think too much. The native, ploughing his way patiently after his cattle, never thinks at all. Whatever he does of brain work is in the direction of multiplication or subtraction. And after all, he and his forefathers have inhabited this land of gorgeous idleness for untold generations, and therefore in their humble way know best. No, it is better not to think. The shortcomings of the aforesaid native, the greater shortcomings of hardearned pay, the approaching hot weather from which there is no escape, often—too often, the children far away growing up beneath a stranger's care—these are the thoughts that Indian Club-life drives away, whether with its dinners and dances, its theatricals, or the teas on the lawn, while the band plays yonder on the bandstand, and the hot afternoon gives way to sudden night.

Nevertheless, in truth it may be said that many are not conscious of the reasons for which they seek the Club. The desire for distraction grows with life in the East. It is the slow

insidious poison which is to the mind a malaria is to the body. It saps away all vitality and leaves a spurious attempt at gaiety, which is all the more painful because it is so forced. Those who come to India to work have little time or energy left them to play; those who come to play are dull because they do not work. But dull or gay, limp or fresh, they all gather together in the twilight at the Club. There the reputations of an hour are made or marred for an hour only; there gaze into each other those mutual eyes which six months hence will seek some other depths; there wafted on the soft night air come those ribald sorties from the bar where do congregate all that soldiery corps whose proximity causes such an invariable fluttering of hearts; and there when the gay crowd has dispersed and the last carriage-wheels roll away, do the Club Secretary and the small body of unattached sit down to their reflective dinner, pausing to think perchance of "Her"—between courses. What enemy of matrimony, however determined but would not adopt it as a means of escape from those Club dinners, with their monotonous ever-recurring dishes? A halo of glory awaits that Secretary who shall invent a relay of new menus. But meanwhile the Indian Clubs pursue their course serene and undefied. We may cavil at them, shrug our shoulders, cast aspersions on their innocent amusements, but sure enough with the setting sun our footsteps will

take us thither, and we settle down to the whisky-and-soda, the cigar, the gossip, often to bridge and mild gambling; sometimes even—breathe it not above a whisper—to flirtation But that is only when the dusk is very dusk—and the stars are very kind.

V

ON INDIAN GARDENING.

THE word garden falls musically on most ears. To many it conjures up some favourite haunt of the past, some mossy dell where primroses and daffodils were wont to glorify the spring—some shady lawn rich with the fragrance of crimson petalled roses. Or it revives recollections of stately avenues and walks that lose themselves in lovers' bowers of green and prim yew trees, where the fountain plashes by the marble seat, and the peacock shrieks discordantly with outspread tail in the glamour of the midday sun. For a garden can be all things to all men. It may run wild around that country cottage yonder with the roses creaming and frothing over the porch, and the poppies shedding their leaves on the ragged paths, and the tall larkspurs pushing themselves up contemptuously between the daisies and the asters that are not yet come to bloom; or it may flourish, guarded and cared for in neat suburban fashion, round that red brick villa on the outskirts of the busy town; or it may burst into full glory of Nature's most glorious promise round the houses of the great, but wherever and whatever it may be, it is a garden still

Those back-premises of a London lodging-house, hallowed by the presence of a stunted lilac tree breaking into feeble bloom, or by a few timid daisies thrusting themselves forth with spring-time on the blackened grass-plot, resolve themselves at once into a garden in the estimation of their jealous owners. Even in the heart of the city, where row upon row of artisan dwellings jostle cruelly for space, and the air is laden with soot, and the shriek of the engine as it rushes by drowns only for an instant the clamour of traffic all around,—even in the heart of such surroundings there will flourish the thought of a garden. There a dingy sun-flower will struggle up towards a sun it never sees, or a primula will put forth bleached and frightened petals from a bottle, or a sickly primrose will just peep above the grimy earth. The very children playing at marbles in the gutter will cherish some weed that has struggled forth to life unexpectedly, and the boy who delights to torment a fly and bully his weaker brethren will lovingly crush to death some faded blossom that he has picked up on his errands and carried for safety in the palm of his sticky hand.

Flowers and lawns and trees, and stately parks, these are our national pride, the objects that delight the eye of an exile more than any other when he first returns to the country he calls "home." And yet he has but to recross the seas and breathe the air of the East

to forget that such joys exist. Save at public buildings and Government houses where, one owner steps in, as another steps out, India is ignorant of permanent gardens. She changes her fashion in them as frequently as a lady changes her dress. Comes along a Cantonment Magistrate with a passion for tidy walls and roses, and walls will instantly rise up in place of ragged mud banks or cactus hedges, whilst roses will flourish hopefully, imported from the nearest horticultural market. Replace the Cantonment Magistrate with one whose only idea of salvation is drains, and the wall will peacefully crumble to ruin again, and the roses will grow wilder and wilder, albeit struggling pluckily year after year to put forth the blossom that all neglect to prune and trim. For in the matter of gardens there is no doubt that India is shamelessly coy. Coax her and pet her, and she will array herself in her prettiest garb and throw about flowers in a wanton confusion that would horrify the respectable British mind. Neglect her, and her coyness vanishes at once. Weeds choke her fairest flowers. Unfettered her creepers fling out tendrils far beyond their limits, and her lawns grow brown and scant for want of water. There is no stability about an Indian garden, and still less about the owners thereof. Here to-day and gone to-morrow, the Anglo-Indian has no time and less money for horticulture. When he is not struggling to get out of debt

he is saving for a passage Home. Nowhere is the incongruity of means so apparent as in the East. A clerk on two hundred pounds a year will have his garden and his flower-beds, but the owner of five times that income in India grumbles at the garden-help and declines to plant new shrubs or sow new lawns. Dust and want of water and perpetual, never ceasing economy are the enemies of Indian gardens. Yet roses would sweeten the air where champagne serves only to destroy the liver, and garden parties would be frequently all the more enjoyable if there were less of party and more of the atmosphere of garden about them.

For a garden elevates. It forms a haven from the floating passions and strangling desires of humanity. It might be likened to a buffer between the stress of existence and the individuality of the individual. He who rushes straight from his private abode to the world, who knows no softening influence of flower and shaded shrubberies; he who has never watched a seed burst the earth, nor removed a caterpillar from a favourite rose-tree, has rejected the noblest recreation that Nature offers us. He has flung from him rest to eye and brain and heart. For no malice can linger in the chastened cup of the arum lily, no bitterness find its abode amongst the ox-eyed daisies. Bacon, philosopher and man of the world though he was, valued his garden above all other possessions. The flowers bloomed for

his pleasure, the fountains plashed at his will. Amid all the difficulties and intrigues and passions of his life he ever turned to his garden for peace, and yet in India, where labour is cheap and its blossoms profuse, the dusty Mall, the local Club, the publicity of verandah life are preferred again and again and again to the cultivation and gracious blending of that ragged compound that helps to mark by its very untidiness the gulf yet yawning between "India" and "Home." May be it is the obstinacy of the Indian gardener that drives the would-be cultivator to despair and the Club when he would fain linger in his own pleasure grounds, since it cannot always be want of means or taste. An Indian mali is the caricature of all men Eastern. He nearly always has thin legs and scanty clothing. He speaks a vernacular all his own, and takes a fiendish joy in sowing marigolds amongst pink rose-beds. Marigolds are his fetish, and when dug up by an infuriated master from the front of the house, they will reappear at the back, not in the least abashed either by his treatment or their own effrontery. White pebbles are also dear to the mali's heart. If left to himself he will draw little patterns with them round innumerable little paths all over the garden. That is his idea of beauty and symmetry. He does not understand lawns save for purposes of tennis or croquet, but when obliged to submit to them he generally endeavours to surround them with

bougainvillea and borders them with nasturtiums. A mali has no idea of colour. The harsh violet of the bougainvillea is exquisite to him as the tender blue of the forget-me-not. He passively resists the endeavour to uproot it from the garden. It climbs and is luxuriant, therefore he cannot understand why it should so often be removed to another sphere. He does not realise that its flaunting brilliancy kills the paler shades of English flowers growing near. It harmonises with the sunshine and the glare, with the white walls of the houses, with the saris of the women fetching water from the well, and yet it is as merciless in its effect and as overbearing in its conclusions as Anglo-Indianism in its worst form. All this, however, the mali does not understand. It has abundant blossom and flourishes defiantly everywhere. More than that a mali does not covet in a flower.

He is most in his element, however, in a vegetable garden. There he will dig and delve from morning to night with the utmost patience and the most magnificent results. For a native gardener will produce beautiful vegetables at a very small cost, given time and space. There is indeed very little that he will not do. His failing is the want of a past and a future. He has no reminiscences and works for the moment only. To him one garden is as another garden, one master as another master. Bid him to work for a Maharaja or a Sahib, it is

all the same. The Maharaja will surely die, the Sahib will certainly go away—but there are other Maharajas and other Sahibs. Only does his heart truly rejoice when he is bidden to prepare a garden for some great camp or festival occasion. Then in company with many other malis does he work his diabolic will on waste pieces of dusty ground—on spare tracts of sand and rock. Then do minute borders and plots spring up all round and miniature fountains play and marigolds, brilliant and unstinted, burst into life. There is no cavilling here. Flowers and colour and white-pebbled borders are all that are demanded for the space of one short day or two. Through these paths and past these incongruous patches of newly-grown garden some great man will drive with dashing escort and booming of guns and clashing of bands and salutes, and then it will all be swept away again, and the ground will be desolate and dusty as before. *That* the mali understands. But the treasuring up of gardens from one generation to another, the pride in the growth of a tree, the recollections and the reminiscences in the walks and amongst the roses—these are beyond him. So he makes a profit on his cauliflowers, he asks for nothing more.

And somehow the mali's sentiments find their echo throughout the length and breadth of India. To make a profit of the life out

there, to hurry scurry through it, seeing distraction by the way, that is the view the Anglo-Indian takes of to-day—ever rushing forth to seek new business or pleasure in the dusty world beyond his gates, while his roses droop for want of pruning and the marigolds flaunt their heads.

V.

ON INDIAN HOSTESSES.

ANGLO-INDIA owes the peace that prevails throughout her vast dominions, the whole weight of her place and opinion in the world to the soldiers who guard her frontiers and to the civilians who toil day and night at her economical and political problems grudging neither health nor time nor brains. Alas! she owes the aimlessness of her society, the vapidity, the frivolity of it, to the women who throng her shores, to the wives and sisters of those heroes who, whether fighting wild border tribes in the open or a sickly climate in an office, are the cause and upbuilding of her prosperity and her position.

It is a sad fact that the female mind is incapable of balance. Detach a woman from her ordinary routine of life, and she is apt to become querulous or frivolous or flirtatious, as occasions demand, in short to lose her head. It is said of foreigners that they make bad colonists. That the Germans pine and die of homesickness, and that the French carry with them a miniature France wherever they go, with its boulevards, its *cafés*, its clean white streets and green-shuttered villas. Their endeavour is less to

associate themselves with the country to which they go than not to disassociate themselves from the country they have left behind. Not so the English. They adopt the customs of every new dominion in a free-and-easy style that savours more of master than of exile. They enjoy the best it has to give, while attempting, as honestly as they can, to alleviate the worst. But the very qualities that cause them to be the wonder and envy of their neighbour colonists, react fatally on themselves. The feverish and cheerful energy of the Englishman in India finds its outlet at the desk or on manœuvres, in polo and in racing, but to his womankind the life offers few interests except such as they make for themselves. The boundary line is still too sharply drawn between Native and English. Only the missionary or the lady-doctor can find a scope for energy in the mysterious alleys and by-ways of the city or in the tortuous lanes of the remoter villages. The society woman has nothing to do but order her household and seek amusement where she may. In England she would probably have endless occupations. When all else failed she would go out shopping. In India there is very little shopping and rarely, except for those in high places, much occupation. If a woman seeks for sport, she must be prepared to lose her complexion. If she desires to remain with her husband in the plains instead of migrating alone to the hills, she will probably lose her health. She is generally parted from her children.

What wonder if she drifts unconsciously into a petty life of small engagements that lead to nowhere; of violent friendships that induce to gossip; of flirtations that sometimes end in scandal?

Moreover, there is no camaraderie amongst women. Those who spend the greater part of their lives in India owing to their husbands' career, are too often alien to those who rush out for a few years only. The term "Anglo-Indian" divides them inexorably, and the hostesses who by reason of their independence of India and her drawbacks might do much to smooth and improve serve only to irritate and discontent. They flutter out and flutter back again, here to-day and gone to-morrow, the wives of soldiers generally, who look upon India, not as the mainstay of a great Empire, but as a social hunting-ground, to which they bring all the hopes and rivalries, all the pleasures and amusements of their days in England. They cannot accustom themselves to the discrepancies of the life, they grasp eagerly at the attractions, they fail not to grumble at the difficulties, and yet they are so much in the majority, for it is the mere wayfarers in the land that are very often of the greatest numbers and wield the greatest social influence, that their words carry weight and echo and re-echo (not always to the good of India) from the heart of the Himalayas to the sea-girt ports of Madras.

There is, for instance, the apologetic hostess, who apologises herself and those surrounding her into a constant state of depression. She is devoid of that sense of humour which Eastern life tends to develop, and infinitely prefers the orderliness of a suburban household at Home to the erratic tendencies of an Indian mansion. She is constantly dumbfounded by the doors that never bolt, the wardrobes that will not shut, the drawers that once locked are forever locked, yielding to nothing less persuasive than the native screw-driver. Such a hostess has probably no aptitude for arranging chairs and sofas. They muddle themselves into the room somehow, and then look awkwardly out of place. She has been accustomed, and no doubt tells you so, to a yellow brocaded drawing-room at Home, which, save on occasions of spring cleaning, has never been known to vary in its aspects. She may have a good cook, but she apologises nevertheless piteously for her bad dinners, and she always makes her own cakes because she is suspicious of the butter. She apologises for her clothes, and she continually apologises for not having brought out a maid with her. The omission weighs on her spirits particularly at tea parties, and in that hour of mutual confidences after dinner so abhorred of women. She apologises, too, invariably for the bedroom accommodation she offers her guests, which, though ample, is, she considers, bare to indecency, whilst a mosquito net fills her soul.

with horror. It is either too thick and keeps all the air out, or else it is too wide of mesh and lets all the mosquitoes in. For her there can be no happy medium as regards mosquito nets. She apologises, too, for the horse she drives and his peculiar habit of making for every gate he sees. She has a rooted conviction that such is the habit of all Indian horses, and that it must be borne with resignation. In time, indeed, she comes to look upon it as a practical joke on the animal's part, Indian horses doubtless having a keener sense of humour than the cob she was wont to feed with sugar in the paddock behind the red-brick villa at Home. She apologises for the duskiness of her butler's complexion (it is one of the inconveniences of this country that the servants are all black); and she has been known to apologise, with a blush, for the scantiness of her gardener's clothing. But she is chiefly apologetic at being found in India at all. The narrowness of England grips her close. She would fain be back with her calls, her "At Homes," her luncheon parties. She misses the mild gossip of a morning with cook in the clean white kitchen and the early strolls round the garden where the gooseberry bushes are bursting into promise and the fresh sweet lilac is scenting the morning air. She would willingly give half her husband's income for the cry of "M-i-ilk," which is such music to her ears, and ah! she would dearly like to harangue the grocer's boy once more for loitering on the road. For her

and such as her India has no attractions. Its grim lessons of endurance and friendship are lost in the vast apology which surrounds her life. The sights and sounds of Indian cities have no meaning for her. The history of centuries is overshadowed by the discomfort of one day. She can face the Himalayas without awe and stand on the terrace of the Taj without regret. She does not want the East and the East does not want her, and yet every mail-boat that steams into the harbour at Bombay brings her prototype with it. She will lean over the deck-rail and watch her first Indian sunrise melt with tender rays those pearl-grey mists that cling lovingly to yonder shores and cupolas and hills; she will watch that Queen of Eastern cities rise triumphant from her long night's rest, all gleaming and shining in that first fresh hour of dawn. She will watch the shadows on the waters flee away before the dancing sunlight that chases them in wanton glee with its merry rays—she will watch India as it were rising upon the horizon of her life—indefinite, strange, alluring—and it will only occur to her to feel worried, because she is the first lady to be up on deck, and, true to her instincts, she will enter Bombay harbour with an apology on her lips!

Very different is the hostess who always knows best. She too has never been to India before and she frankly acknowledges that she never desires to come to India again, but fate compelling her to reside for a few years in such

an indifferent country, she sets about regenerating it so far as in her power lies. She rejoices in a multiplicity of servants, from whom she extracts a minimum of work. Nevertheless she is convinced that they are the greatest treasures the land can produce until the cook tries to cut the butler's throat with the meat-chopper, and the coachman, having drunk not wisely but too well, persuades her horses and carriage to steeplechase home by themselves whilst he soliloquises in a ditch near the Club on the tendency of this world to circulate backwards. Even then her happy faith in her own judgment is only temporarily damped. It is one of her proudest boasts that she never orders dinner. A glance at the menu of the day is sufficient for her. The dinners may degenerate, not so her complete self-assurance. She whitewashes her kitchen once a week to the demoralisation of her chef, and feeds her distracted household on quinine and eucalyptus oil alternately. She even looks forward to the hot weather. It will afford her time, she decides to write a guide on Indian housekeeping. In the preface she states that Englishwomen are too fond of running away to the hills or England, leaving their husbands to unwholesome solitude and heat. They could occupy their time better, she informs them, by remaining and endeavouring to forge stronger links between feminine East and feminine West to the greater advantage of woman's reputation, in this country. So

interested is she in the above subject that she even patronises the Deputy Commissioner's wife in the hopes of grinding useful information out of her, and it is only when May is upon them, scorching, glassy, parched, that she desists. By that time she has realised some of the inconveniences of the hot weather, and has had more sunshine than she considers decent. Nor do the papers make any mention of the monsoon. Everywhere the land cries aloud for water. The flowers droop and wither. In her afternoon rides she sees troops of famished cattle, their ribs knocking together, straying like forlorn ghosts by the roadside, nibbling a bit of scanty verdure here and there. She is tenderhearted and she loves cows. Moreover, the Deputy Commissioner's wife is absorbed in nursing a sickly husband through the hot weather until his one wretched month of leave is granted to him, and takes no interest in the Housekeeping Guide and its Preface. Rumours from Simla float gently down to her, wafted on a hot-weather blast of gossip. Surely regeneration is needed there if anywhere, so she buries the Guide-book in a tin-lined case, packs up her trunks, and flits away.

At Simla she will have ample opportunities of knowing best, and the cattle will have plenty to eat. On the whole, should she hesitate to go there?

VI.

ON INDIAN HOSTESSES.

She is a distinct type in herself, one that is generally to be met with at the larger military cantonments, complaining gently at her fate in being married to a soldier. She is rich, as her perfectly-cut gowns testify, and accustomed to enjoy the best of the best at Home. Consequently she is inclined to sweep all Anglo-India into an enclosure by itself, and to remain outside it, not without a few caustic remarks by the way. She wears a good deal of jewellery of an unobtrusive but exceedingly choice kind, the very latest thing in enamel, and delicate neck-chains and sparkling rings. She calls them her trinkets and tells you almost with tears in her eyes that her jewels were all sent to the bank before she came out to this deplorable country. She talks of ordering her cakes and sweets from London, though she never does so. She overpays her cook and ruins the market for less fortunately incomed ladies with reluctant equanimity. She wears lorgnettes and searches through them for an Indian Civilian with a curiosity tempered by anxiety. If she possesses wit, she exercises it by telling quaint little stories about these

people she meets out here, although she is careful to observe most of them from a distance. She returns all calls with a punctiliousness which would be almost pleasing if it were not chilly. When she has made herself thoroughly unpopular, she scatters invitations to a heavy dinner throughout the station. Should not that appease the illegitimate wrath of the Anglo-Indian? Indeed, has an Anglo-Indian any right to any spirit of any kind save that which carries him through his work and his hot weathers. She is second cousin to a duke, and this combined with the very best iced champagne should give sufficient *éclat* to her dinners to make them independent of the tedious duties of a hostess. Music, a frigid handshake and an English butler complete the success. Occasionally, however, she descends from the clouds of superiority to the commonplaceness of an Indian Club, and chats almost genially with one or two of the women who seem most able to impart information about the rest. These particular ladies are invariably plain. A pretty woman is her pet aversion. She has been known, it is true, in a fit of absent-mindedness to admire a baroness's wife; a countess may often be considered nice looking, and a duchess has every claim to beauty, but a pretty woman who is only pretty, and who lives more or less in India—impossible. The very turn of her head, the very swish of her frock, are tokens of frivolity. She is

dismissed with a stare of the lorgnettes and a smile of the thin lips. She may be good—Heaven knows! as she trips across the Club lawn in her white muslin frock and shady hat, let us give her full benefit of the doubt; that pretty fluffy hair may be all her own, likewise the rose flush on her cheeks—it may be, we say, thereby slandering her not too definitely, but at any rate she is empty-headed. She does not visit the hospitals twice a week and worry the Sergeant-Major's wife with incessant attention. For such actions are included with the jewels, the rich dinners and the distant duke. It is compatible with the dignity left at Home, the social position that plays at *beinwillance* and the *grande dame*, and which in India finds its vent in the women's quarters of the barrack square; in tea-parties for soldiers' children, and in improvements to the women's hospitals. Generous actions all of them, and generously intended, for somewhere between the starched self-assertion there is a latent kindness that struggles to find its way out. Unfortunately so often the wrong way—rippling over rocky ground and losing itself amidst clefts and precipices that give it back no thanks. While all the time there is the parched and burning meadow-land of Indian society that would have been the greener for a drop of it and might have responded to it here and there by the budding of some hidden flower. But it is not to be, and the ship that brought

her out will probably carry her Home again to add one more to the long list of India's defamers.

She does not wear smart clothes nor give smart dinners. She does not get into debt for the sake of the extra flicker it will give her in the eyes of a will-'o-the-wisp society. She goes out a good deal alone either bicycling or on a long-tailed pony as quiet and gentle as herself; mostly she has no trap, economy having ever been a necessity to her, and a trap wears out and needs repairs, and finally does not sell for a third of its original price. But although she lives an apparently monotonous life broken only by the frequent moves that India entails on its devotees, she does not look unhappy; rather she appears very tranquil, as though she knew and understood the best of life. And so surely does she. Her views of it may be a little narrow, but they are very clear. That deep devotion for her husband—that still deeper devotion for the two boys schooling over the sea—these are the mainsprings that regulate existence for her. So her husband keeps well and busy, so the mail brings her letters in two scrawling schoolboy hands, the whirl of Indian society may pass her by unheeded. The little ups and downs of her boys' school-life, the prizes they gain, these are the delights of her existence, not the fleeting friendships she may or may not make in a land where friendships never stand still. The very bills that each

quarter produces in connection with her heroes are treasured and reverently put aside for future reference. Many days hence when the boys are men and mayhap have drifted out into military or civil employ she will take those uninteresting little documents, neatly labelled in packets now stained with age, from the box where they have lain so long, and study them tearfully, almost (if such can be said of bills) regretfully. They were paid long since. No financial heartache was laid away in that box with them, only a mother's heartache for the things that grow to completion and are no more. Letters still come to her, but not so often and not so full of careless tomboy spirits. More full alas! of demands for money, and mention of debts that were unavoidable——— Ah well, those days are not yet, and meanwhile let us pray that time and India will deal gently with her. We may have been very bored when we dined with her not so long ago, and have driven away with relief that that duty is over, but in our hearts we must admire, and sometimes envy her. No world's canker could ever eat its way into her soul. For her and such as her, in the midst of all the clamour and the turmoil, there is peace.

There is another hostess who occasionally takes up the reins of entertaining for a short time in India. She might emphatically be styled the ignorant hostess. She does not know and does not want to know. She hopes

she has only come for a year, but she is not certain. She thinks that in the hot weather they will probably go away on leave, but she does not know where to. She has not brought out any of the odds and ends that make life pretty in India, because she did not know what to bring. Now that she is here she does not know what to send for. She asks questions of everybody, and invariably forgets their answers, so that she knows no better next time. She constantly studies the map of India without ever knowing at which end of it she lives. She has a vague idea that it takes a week's travelling, day and night, to get anywhere, and that when you are there it would have been better not to have gone. She is never happy unless she carries with her a white sun umbrella. A white umbrella is with her a symbol of the East. She does not know why; she only knows that it is so. On a sunless day or in the rains she feels forlorn—an outcast. What is the use of racing across oceans and continents if at the end of such a terrific journey one is not allowed to don a sun-hat and parade a sun umbrella? She is morbidly inquisitive as to sun stroke and heroically defiant as to plague, while her notions of Indian history are primitive in the extreme. India, she believes, was founded by Akbar, who built the Taj and the Chandni Chowk at Delhi. He was, she is given to understand, but does not know for certain,

finally defeated and killed by Clive in the Mutiny, after which the whole of the country became subject to our rule. As facts do not weigh heavily on her conscience, so does depression never weigh heavily on her spirits. She is always full of fun and life and cheeriness. She will equally well sit up for a tiger or a dance all night. She does not know, and is entirely indifferent, to the incomes of any of her friends. She has never studied the awful byways and highways of seniority; consequently she will sometimes sail out of the room in front of superior rank with a gay ignorance which is entrancing. Her dinner parties are always the most popular in the place, although she declares she does not know whom to ask, nor what to order, nor where she gets her wine. Some day not too far hence she will sail Home again, just as ignorant, just as bright, just as contented as when she sailed out. She will describe to all her friends a life she does not know, a society she has not met, a climate she has never experienced. She will always declare that India is the most fascinating country in the world, but when her husband is ordered abroad again on foreign service, she will persuade him to retire. And the foreign service stations will be the losers thereby.

VII.

ON INDIAN HOSTESSES.

It may appear an anomaly to praise la vraie Anglo-Indienne when but a short time back the insipidity of Indian society was attributed to its widely-varying hostesses, but there are exceptions to most rules, and the woman who lives her life in India is usually the exception to this. To her India means home, dashed with the bitterness of exile. Too often it means camp or a lonely outstation with uncongenial surroundings and companions. Consequently she becomes a hostess of the heart and not of the brain. Her charm lies in impulsiveness and an overflowing hospitality. She is prepared to give all, and she asks in return only a little friendliness and mutual esteem. If she is high in the ranks of Indian officialdom, she will get all that and more. If she and her husband are still climbing the ladder, she will get less or nothing. But she is philosophical. She soon learns that India is ruled by rank, and goes on her way cheerfully, conscious that with luck and health it will some day be her turn to rule and receive, to smile and be smiled on, for though the pendulum swings slowly it swings straight.

Hardships are hers, however. Not the petty hardships of the hostess who comes out for a year or two, and finds herself face to face with the more sordid aspects of Indian life, with the worry of bad servants, and excessive prices. But hardships of a deeper kind, clouding the sunny atmosphere and drawing lines where once were smiles and dimples. Separation from children or husband, hot weathers, ill-heath, a constant striving of means with an establishment in India and schools at home—these are the trifles that cut deep into woman's soul, either killing that soul altogether, or fostering in it unforeseen germs of tenderness and thought. For there is much to occupy la vraie Anglo-Indienne, if she will but allow herself to be led towards development of heart and mind, instead of sinking into irritation of spirit, trivialities and discontent. The schools and zenanas, the education of native women, their hospitals and physical development, all these things are as a sealed book to the hostess who flits out to India with a soldier husband and flits back again, proud if she has mastered sufficient of the vernacular to order her dinners without an interpreter, and pay her bills without being cheated. But to the wife of an Indian official they are easy of access, and lend a charm to a life that might occasionally be dreary and always is difficult.

To her, if she so chooses, the history of India is unfolded, the peculiarities and characteristics of its people become familiar. She learns by

heart the embroideries of Kashmir, the carpet-work of Amritsar, the inlaid Jeypore enamel, and the brasswork of Muttra, or the treasures of the Lucknow bazaar. She is enabled to appreciate and discuss a hundred traits of Indian life which are misunderstood by the trivial passer-by. She can comprehend the spirit of the Taj, because she has studied its memories, and her wonder at the marvels of Delhi is lost in her wonder at the story of its Kings. To her the Fort of Chittorgarh represents more than a mere mass of ruins on the brow of a precipitous hill, and the palaces at Oodeypore, glowing pink on the shores of the lake, are more than a marble dream flushed by the setting sun. She can, if she will, climb the Himalayas, and shoot tiger in the jungle. Altogether a fulness of life is yielded to her which would be impossible in narrow England, but it is a life of which the pleasure is won by pleasure and not by duty. Hence it is sometimes inclined to pall, and beneath all the charm and glamour of it she sometimes feels the sting, and writhes under the term "Anglo-India," which her knowledge of the incomprehensible East forces on her. Few women have the moral courage to live independently of their surroundings. Whereas the hostess who has no connection with India can afford to be rude and extend her finger-tips, the hostess who knows that she will be described as "Anglo-India" strives to be all sweetness to all men. Later, when she has reached some

high estate, she has learned her lesson so well, that she forgets to patronise, and is all sweetness still, for which assuredly the gods will not condemn her.

And so her charm is often as much due to her self-consciousness that she owes much and deserves little, as to the broadmindedness that India develops. And when she has drifted back to England, and commonplaceness, that charm will linger with her still. India, probably now the work ground of her children, is faithful to those who love and have not despised her. Her memories are as fascinating as the brilliant sunshine and blue skies of her cold weathers. They impart warmth and brightness to cold grey England—a cheeriness to the hostess who will never touch her shores again. Even the opprobrious epithet of "Anglo-Indian" is less resented now—is indeed almost cherished in the afterglow that India leaves behind it, for has it not taught her to look beyond the horizon where others do not look beyond the Channel waves? Has it not taught the infinite, where others only learn the finite; above all, has it not taught that to be a hostess is to be a friend?

VIII.

ON FLIRTATIONS.

FLIRTATIONS are at once the bane and the support of India. If there were no flirtations, an A. D. C. would lose half his importance and India nearly the whole of her reputation. Slyly laughing Cupids, hovering over her cantonments or sending their silver-headed shafts from Simla to Calcutta with unerring aim, throw a glamour over her dust and glare. Their mission is not so much to be as to seem; a reality that is tangible is rarely so enticing as a reality that is imaginary. Flirtation does not admit of dissection. It should hang on a smile or a gleam from beneath half-closed eye-lashes. Let it once be an established fact and it becomes sordid, often tragic. To be tragic there is no need to take a passage on board a P. and O. steamboat bound for India. London and Paris and all the great highways and narrow byways of Europe, the country villages, the provincial towns, the distant moors, the solemn Alps, can contribute their meed of tragedy to an ever-revolving world. But for the comedy that plays at tragedy, the illusion that is disillusion, the rapture bred of boredom, India stands alone. Her society is like a balloon without ballast, like a Christmas cake that is all

icing and almond paste. It lacks foundation and stability. Yet renovate it from end to end and where would be the occupation of her unemployed? Would they not clamour for a flirtation amid the dulness of their tea-cups or to discuss during the monotony of their evening drives? Some provision must be made for the idle and the restless, some spice dropped into the sterility of everyday life, and what pray would become of the novelist if there were no wicked heroes of cavalry regiments at moon-light picnics and matutinal rides, or of the satirist if no frail beauties rickshawed recklessly round Simla, indifferent to the safety of their own lives and those of their neighbours?.....As out of discord frequently arise harmonies, so out of constant meetings arise flirtations, and the harmonies, joining other harmonies, reverberate on forever into space, while the flirtations, joined to other flirtations, carry India's reputation a little lower down the stream of time.

On the whole an Indian flirtation is a very unselfish affair. It usually affords as much amusement to the onlooker as it does to the participants in the game. It is also infinitely more comfortable to smoke a cigar and criticise from behind the sheets of a newspaper, without any of the worry and disappointment, than to be caught in the mazes of a rendezvous or to be pursued by the inevitable pink-scented notes. Flirtation, therefore, should be encouraged firstly for the amusement of the public in general, and

secondly, because it is the only art that is really cultivated in the East. Painting and music and literature find but an insecure foothold on the heights of Jakko or in the busy marts of Calcutta and Bombay. Carpets and embroideries, gold, silver and brass work live and are likely to live in the bazars of the native—in the heart of the great flat-roofed cities where hangs a perpetual haze of dust and smoke. So long as the confiding globetrotter comes to Indian shores, so long as the English and American millionaires buy and order, so long will the trades thrive which are of any in the world the most artistic and the most picturesque. But to ordinary Indian society these *objects de vertu* count little. The cheaper sort of rugs adorn the floors of most mansions; the cheaper kind of curtains cover the doors. The more luxurious articles are passed by in silence, saved up for until the day of pension and off-reckonings is at hand, only as a rule to find the savings scattered to the four winds in the rush for "Home." But to flirt costs nothing. Nor is it even necessary or advisable to save up for it. There is no accumulated interest to gain by it and no particular advantage that time can give save the practice that is no necessary to art in every form. It is true age imparts a certain flavour to it, wherefore none need despair, but then neither has youth the monopoly of it, indeed rather the contrary in these days of perpetual springtime. Nor is it afflicted by any despotism

in the way of rules and laws. The most respectable grey-headed Member of Council may suddenly become a victim to Cupid's darts, and the victor of a hundred fights bow his head to the haphazard persecution of a pair of bright blue eyes. But in all this there will be no depth of feeling. Indian flirtations are usually as artificial as the society in which they generate. They are born in the cold weather to die in the hills, where the sigh of the pines and the glimpse of the distant snows only make memories pleasanter and add more to the long, long list, or they will not be born at all, but will develop out of spite or the desire on some fair beauty's part to outshine other beauties, wherefore the smile, the morning gallop (very often a bitter sacrifice to Cupid this), the drives by starlight, the extra valse at the ball. But it were useless to enumerate the reasons or counter-reasons for which flirtations exist in India. Frequently they arise out of nothing to do, and a feverish thirst for amusement. Nearly always they are as open as the day to an especially inquisitive public—for nowhere is there a society so entirely without deceit and yet so eaten up by a morbid curiosity as the society of Anglo-India. In dull, foggy, altogether antiquated old England, when an army officer considers he is entitled to an appointment higher than he at present holds, he sneaks into the War Office unseen, save perhaps by a grim policeman, who watches him

warily out of the corner of his eye as he goes in, and makes way for him contemptuously as he comes out again. A disagreeable policeman, that. None knows on what mission he is bent (though the policeman probably suspects much) save the chief whose office he visits. Or he lies in wait at his club for a word with "someone" whose influence at Pall Mall may secure him the desired post. But even so he can maintain absolute secrecy and his most intimate friends need not be aware of the goal he has in view. In India it is far otherwise. There the War Office is Simla, and men who want a billet crowd eagerly and perfectly openly to that fir-topped hill. Day after day the tongas pour forth aspirants to fame, and all the world knows what they have come for, very often more accurately than they do themselves. There is no guile and no deception. The tricks of the trade are all exposed, and each man knows the rival on his right hand or his left. As with work, so with play. In London a flirtation may flourish uncriticised amid all the noise and bustle and glare. In India it would not be a flirtation at all unless it were participated in by all society.

And yet there is a certain frivolity in the air which it were useless to deny. A certain indifference to appearances, an utter indifference to home-life, which sows the seeds of that recklessness so disastrous to many in their Indian careers. Is it caused by the contact of

dingy Londoners with the gorgeous atmosphere of the East? Or by the fragrance of the lotus blossom dying on the bosom of the lake? Or by the wealth, the magnificence, the terror of India's past?——Ask not the Civilian cantering wearily home from office with the thoughts of much work and much heat oppressing soul and body. Ask not the soldier struggling for a staff appointment and more pay. The answer lies not with them, but with the dusty Malls, the dreary houses, the monotony of all but the very big civil and military cantonments of India. It lies in the one-sidedness of the life that is lived in those cantonments—all work and sport for the men, all emptiness and gossip for the women. What wonder if Cupid, spying through the maze of idle amusement and unsought dissipation, let fly a shaft and flying reach his aim?

IX.

INDIAN HOTELS.

INDIAN hotels savour not so much of the Dark Ages, as some people would have us believe, as of the most modern of modern iniquities. No romance of medieval inns envelops them—no ghosts haunt their passages. History has not toned down their defects with her softening touch, nor memory wrapped their walls in clinging ivy. Neither sundials nor poetry are to be found anywhere in the scrappy ground that some of them call gardens. They are entirely the outcome of the Twentieth Centuryism that has crept into India's utter-most corners, and as incomes become daily more cramped so hotels become daily more necessary, and a country that by tradition and intention should not even have known the meaning of their name is almost entirely subservient to them.

Now-a-days, indeed, people live in them frequently for many months together in order to economise and to save time and trouble in the frequent moves, while others passing through cantonments, on business or pleasure, make use of them as a matter of course instead of appealing to the hospitality of friends. Thus it comes to pass that more and more victims

are flung out of their carriages with innumerable rolls of bedding on to innumerable verandahs opening on to innumerable rooms. The fiat has gone forth, and the lavish and kindly friendliness that distinguished Anglo-India in days gone by has sounded its own death-knell.

They are all the same, these rooms, of the same size, the same aspect, the same dinginess, and each contains one or two doors and windows, and the barest stock of necessary furniture. The traveller supplies the rest. There is a dining-room, of course, large and whitewashed; more respectable than comfortable probably, with two or three side-boards displaying cruet stands and bottles of Worcester sauce in defiance of prejudice. Very loyal are these dining-rooms—their walls covered with pictures of the Royal family framed in gilt, heedless of cost. Here do congregate in the cold weather all the globetrotters who happen to be passing through, and a few who are not globetrotters, whom duty has driven forth. A curious collection sometimes—Americans very often; languid English, only slightly interested in their surroundings, not a few. Foreigners scarcely any. The commercial traveller, however, figures frequently. Sometimes there is a honeymoon couple, nearly always a soldier or two. The soldiers and the honeymoon couples always know each other. They talk familiarly about Peshawar and Calcutta, Rangoon and Assam. They are

eager to know each other's plans and always delightfully inquisitive as to other places. For the Anglo-Indian in India as a rule is genuine. He has none of the morbidness of Western cultivation. He is not too weary to live. He is always pleased to tell you how many tigers he has shot or where his regiment is quartered, or whether he is on the direct road to a Lieutenant-Governorship of a Province. There is a freemasonry about Anglo-Indians which is very delightful Being all on equal terms with each other, they do not need to regard each other with suspicion. India for the time being belongs particularly to them. Every man carries, or thinks he carries, a field-marshal's baton in his knapsack, and it makes him wonderfully warm-hearted towards his fellow-creatures. Time may prove that he was only carrying stones, but so long as he is in India he will feel the disappointment but little. His niche is still carved for him—he still earns a place in the esteem of his own little circle. It is only when he creeps Home to play golf and die that he discovers the baton to be missing. It is borne in upon him then that the world is a big place and Bengal very far away. In the huge luxurious hotels of London or the Continent he finds he is only a number. The very porter he so munificently tips will not recognise him when he comes again. Hot water and electric light and French dinners are his in abundance, yet he yearns

secretly (he never dare acknowledge it) for the bare walls and the chicken curry of the East. Probably he grumbled at them badly in the days gone by. Doubtless smoking a cigar in the verandah after-dinner, with the calm stars gazing down at him, and the pariah dogs howling across the road, he imparted to an acquaintance he had never seen before his firm determination that when he marries he will bring his bride to no dingy second-class establishment like this. Paris and Venice figure before his enraptured gaze, and lo! when he comes to enjoy them, his heart aches for India again. For there he was master, and better still, all the other masters were his friends.

The Americans at the large dining table in the Royal dining-rooms are curious and talkative. They eat oranges for dessert and wonder why we do not build better hotels. The soldiers and the honeymoon couples avoid such discussion. They are too busy wondering why a mutual acquaintance did not receive a decoration in the last New Year honours. The commercial traveller quite humbly informs the Americans that there is a good hotel at some place to which they are not in the least likely to go. They are grateful for the information, and ask him if there is a famous Taj or a mosque there. He does not know. There is a British Cavalry Regiment, he believes, who he hopes will buy his goods. But the Americans have minds superior to British

cavalry. They want to see the Taj by moonlight before they go to Ceylon. They calculate that if India belonged to them, they would drive the trains a bit quicker and do the Taj and the rest of it in a week. As it is, they plaintively tell the commercial traveller that they have been hanging round at hotels for a month or more without seeming to get anywhere. The traveller swallows his last mouthful of chicken curry, and sighs. He knows that sort of travelling too.

That is the cold weather aspect of an hotel. There is the hot weather side of the case. Then the slight hilarity that attended the winter months is gone. The hotel is given over to the dreary flaps of punkahs and to the attentions of many, many flies. Where they come from, why they are never killed, where they disappear to, are unsolved riddles. They eat the jam and settle on the butter and swarm over the sugar. They always drop into the milk jugs and drown themselves in the tea. They are as ubiquitous in their attention as the wasps droning in the verandahs outside. The weary victims of their solicitude flick them vainly with their napkins every now and then at breakfast or dinner but always in silence and without expostulation of the sterner sort. Indeed a deadly silence reigns throughout an Indian hotel in the hot weather. Travellers have their meals at odd hours without any view to sociability. They glare at one another

from distant ends of the table, as who should say—"You are responsible for this appalling heat—" The only remark (and that is not strictly original) that it ever occurs to any one to make is either of or to the punkah-coolie, and is always to the effect that if he does not pull harder he will have his neck broken. The punkah-coolie who is nodding his head on a wooden box without, has heard the remark so often that it ceases to weigh on his spirits or to accelerate the motion of his hand. A punkah-coolie has a soul like the rest of us, and the one yearning of his soul is for sleep. It is a simple and a wholly reasonable desire when the state of the temperature is considered. There are people in the world who would benefit themselves and others immensely if they would follow his example and take a placid view of existence. But it is an anachronism of this hemisphere that a thing like a punkah-coolie is to be despised. Yet he, on his wooden box in the verandah, when the temperature has reached a hundred in the shade, is as great a philosopher in his own way as ever Diogenes was in his tub, which the Sahib within learns to his cost.

The subject of an Indian Hotel cannot be dismissed without reference to chicken curry. It is a curious fact, but whatever else may fail in the culinary line, a chicken curry is always to the fore. It may be all legs, mixed with other curious joints tha defy anatomy, but at

breakfast, lunch and dinner it invariably appears. Even in the homely rest-houses on unfrequented hill-roads, while the traveller fumes to and fro in the verandah impatient of delay and the tonga-ponies pant without, a chicken curry saves the situation. The chicken may have been alive and running a race when the tonga hove in view, but in ten minutes he is dished up and ready for table, along with chutney of doubtful age and plenty of sticky rice. And well that it is so, for the Englishman travelling is always in a hurry, and not always in good temper. Dusty, tired, hungry, after a thirty-mile drive in a cramped tonga—the empty dâk bungalow would have a dispiriting effect on him if it were not for that chicken curry. Everywhere there is the same solitude about these little roadside houses, the same whitewash, the same dining-room with the same square table, and the remains of the latest meal in evidence in crumbs upon the floor, and everywhere the cook appears with folded hands and deep reverences to explain that chicken curry and "eggs poach" can be produced immediately. And whether it is the bite of the air in the Himalayas, or the fatigue of the journey, or the hurried breakfast at the start, but that chicken curry, good or bad, dry of greasy, real chicken or unspeakable remains of chicken, is always eaten, and the tonga-horn hoots and the traveller pays, and the cook watches him swing away with a deep salaam and a covert smile on his

face. There will be another tonga through presently, bearing another Sahib, and another chicken will be summarily slaughtered. And the cook is waxing fat thereon.

But, of course, all hotels are not equally devoted to bare walls and chicken curry. Even the unspeakable dâk bungalow points the way to Simla and comfort. For at hill-stations hotels are ambitious and generally good. They cater for a more grateful public too: a public that does not rush away again after a night's rest and a meal or two. To them the wanderers in the East betake themselves. Girls of uncertain age who have come out to stay with friends or relations and find themselves unable to endure the privations of a hot weather for more than a fortnight or so; ladies whose husbands are away fighting or shooting; husbands whose wives are in England—they make a temporary home at these hotels, sometimes in the plains as well as in the hills, and encourage them to luxury and daintiness. A heterogeneous collection of people tossed together for a little while and then separating—none knows where. Sometimes a friendship is made that endures. As a rule, however, hotel friendships cannot count on being lasting.

And because they are improving, if only slowly, hotels are bursting one more link in the chain that formerly bound Anglo-Indian society together. Formerly hospitality was

the order of the day. Now arrivals come and vanish again from a station, and no one has heard of their existence. At Calcutta and Bombay the hotels are always full to overflowing. Such a change in the country was inevitable, and is doubtless more convenient, but with the convenience vanishes the camaraderie of other days never to return. Only in the very wilds of India, in the suburbs of her great provinces, are people still entreated to be guests. For the rest, trains draw up at sun-parched platforms and drop their burdens indifferently, rattling off again into dust and heat, while tired arrivals submit themselves to the attentions of clamorous luggage coolies, and await their welcome from the Hotel-keeper's respectful salaams.

X.

MILITARY AND CIVIL.

INDIA is a country of such violent contrasts that it is no matter for surprise to find her society composed almost entirely of two such utterly opposite elements as Military and Civilian. There is no bridging over these two elements either—no smoothing them down with Yeomanry and Militia, with clerks and lawyers and country gentlemen. In India one either trips up over the sword of a soldier or runs straight into the arms of the civilian. A few merchant princes there are, it is true, scattered in the great centres of commerce, and a few merchants who are not princes yet, but only hope to be so some day. Otherwise there is a solemn monotony about friends and foes alike. Down in the tea-planting countries there are of course tea-planters, but these again constitute a colony to themselves and are hardly countable amongst the Anglo-Indians of India, the soldiers who fight and the civilians who govern. They probably have the better part too, inasmuch as they make money and are their own masters—achievements beyond the wildest dreams of any Anglo-Indian now-a-days, yet time was when India spelt money, when Military and Civilian

alike journeyed Home with stuffed pockets and large ideas of the East. Those days are, however, as remote now as the days of Jack the Giant-killer with his ladders reaching to the skies. Many years have rolled by since officers in the Company's service wrote Home distressing appeals on being cut of their batta money! We can imagine their expressions and impressions when the news was conveyed to them by runner and messenger. How they fretted and fumed and expostulated, in vain! The Company was stern and Lord William Bentinck presiding as Governor-General was sterner. The batta money was reduced, and it has continued to be reduced unto this day. In such matters the Civilian has the better of the Military. He may grow gloomy and parchmented and taciturn. He may view the world with a jaundiced eye whilst sentencing half-a-dozen men to be hanged or accumulate rheumatic gout through the long dreariness of many hot weathers. He may, when he retires, find himself a mere atom amongst other atoms instead of the Sahib of Life and Death—the Protector of the Poor—the pivot upon which India's power turns. He may resent all this, and allow loudly that he resents it, but at least he draws an excellent pension, and for many years has drawn excellent pay, and is withal provided with a grumble at the end of it. The heart of the ordinary working-day man could hardly desire more. The soldier, on the other hand, chiefly depends

upon his gold lace to make life endurable. But then there are soldiers and soldiers in India, whereas there is only one civilian.

The civilian, as a rule, does not exist at all for many years. His haunts will be canal banks or the heart of a Native State or the centre of a clump of dreary houses in a place with a weird name, twenty miles from the railway. It is his fate, like a chrysalis, to burst suddenly from obscurity. He gets a rise in promotion and lo! he is a Collector or a Deputy Commissioner, or a something of importance somewhere, and instantly Anglo-India recognises him, and borrows his carriages, and eats his dinners, and enjoys his Christmas-camps, and in return probably invites him to moonlight picnics, to which, however, the civilian does not go. The first years of his service he spends in studying intricate questions, the rest of his time in India is absorbed in putting them to the proof. He has little liberty for anything except the duties of a host, which he discharges always liberally, if sometimes absent-mindedly. His thoughts are too often with the files of papers in the office he has just left. Occasionally he rouses himself from his abstraction and probably having a keen sense of humour tells a good story at which he laughs as heartily as any of his guests. But almost instantly he is back again in gloom and calculation. For not only is he a busy man but he is hampered, from the outset of his career, by the burden of three

hundred a year dead or alive. This increases his responsibility and in many cases turns him prematurely old. He dare not indulge in the rapture of pressing weakly yielding hands or of gazing ardently, but without serious intent, into bright eyes at any period of his service. Even in the days of obscurity and jungle life he is oppressed by the knowledge of this three hundred a year. He may never rise to any great position. He may plod slowly along unaided by that brillance of intellect which India requires of her chosen servants, until the day of retirement arrives, but he cannot shake off the responsibility of being an eligible man. His only escape from it, and it is a permanent one, is to marry young—which he frequently does.

The soldier, on the other hand, unless he be the rich scion of a cavalry regiment, carries no responsibilities with him whatsoever. Gaily with lance and sword he traverses the land. It matters not whether he is English Hussar or gallant Horse Artillery man, or Indian Lancer, superb beyond all thoughts of comparison, or whether he belongs to that impregnable wall of Infantry which is India's great defence. Ever changing, ever moving, he comes and goes, scintillating with lace and glory; for the army in India is ever on the march, and the civilian steadfast to one province watches hundreds of regiments pass by. Sometimes they are off to a Frontier skirmish, business-like, khaki-clothed, eager: sometimes they are merely

changing stations, sometimes they are bound for Home. But always they are cheery, sociable, glad to give and willing to take, good comrades and better friends, a thirst for fame and indifferent to death in the search for it. Very, very young many of them, mere boys, just starting in life. Hardly the place for them it would appear, this Anglo-India. Traps there are many, temptations not a few. When all else fails disease mows them down heedlessly, careless of parents' thoughts and prayers far away. And yet it is a glorious life for the subaltern, if he will go the right way with sport and work and not think too much of play. For under all circumstances, however young and shy and retiring he may be, he has a status all his own. He is a subaltern, and belongs to this or that corps and has a position in life to uphold. If he is a Cavalry Officer and rich, so much indeed the better for him. It may be said without exaggeration of a cavalry regiment that it travels round the country with little halos dancing over its many heads. In the fiercely white bungalows along the Mall their arrival is greeted by a fluttering of hearts, such as even a Highland Regiment cannot produce. In the darker precincts of the stale and smoky bazar the welcome extended is more mercenary, but not less enthusiastic. They are universally smiled on and salaamed at. Only that their thoughts are generally Englandwards, and their hearts out pigsticking, their heads would be completely

turned. As it is, it is difficult to make an impression even on a Cavalry Officer when in little bits. And as with the Cavalry, so in minor degrees with the rest of the Army. A red coat is an attraction that none can resist and that holds its own even against the three hundred a year of the civilian.

Such is the incongruity of Indian society. The greater half careless, dashing, transient, very often woefully ignorant of India, all spurs and fame. The lesser half overworked, absorbed, gravely conscious of the importance of the other half, pathetically hospitable when not ruined by claims at Home,—yet neither as a rule leavening the other. The military *malgré-lui* grows altogether too military. A fussiness for exercise and sport pervades his whole being. He captures every moment of leave that is his, and when he cannot spend it in London, dashes off to Ladakh. The civilian, on the other hand, accumulates leave thoughtfully. There is so little due to him that when he takes it, he enjoys it fearfully, wondering whether he has taken it at exactly the right time. Early responsibility makes him self-contained, perhaps a trifle reserved. He rarely talks of his work, and when a few remarks are dragged out of him they are cautious and well chosen. He has to make his way through such a sea of untruth and deception that perhaps it is little wonder if he shrinks from confiding even in his military brother. The soldier, on the other hand, has

nothing to confide. The secrets of his trade are open secrets; his reverses and successes in every man's mouth. Whenever he dons his uniform, he dons his medals too for all the world to read. But a civilian may cherish a C.I.E. for many years unknown to his acquaintances. And across this bridge of reserve and over this stream of easy confidence, the soldier and the civilian rarely meet, unless it be to accept the salute of some mighty Raja, or to listen together for the guns of a distant foe.

XI.

THE HILLS.

At first sight India appears a vast plain rolling interminably into a dusty horizon. There seems no end anywhere. The eye wearies of sandy tracts and stunted shrubs and sunburnt foliage. An occasional mound rising out of nowhere crowned with some historic fort, an occasional lake hidden away in the recesses of bare rock and waving pampas grass, a sluggish river winding innumerable arms round fields and towns and villages—these are the only reliefs to a picture which in its glaring monotony dazzles the sight and oppresses the heart. But travel on. Turn towards those great natural defences of India, those boundaries which no fortresses can equal, no armies overcome.....Far in the distance across the hazy plain there appears a faint blue streak where a few moments before seemed only dull horizon, yellow in the noon-day sun. Nearer and the blue outlines grow bolder and the shadows take more form, and nearer still and they tower up gigantic to the sky. These are the Himalayas, the eternal mountains which the Anglo-Indian knows familiarly as the Hills, and which in their beauty, their impenetrable depths, their unscalable heights form such a magnificent barrier to the India they embrace and shelter.

In spite of their glories the Anglo-Indian takes them complacently. He does not go into raptures over them. Switzerland, which by comparison seems a little play-garden with miniature lakes and toy glaciers, extracts a far greater meed of praise than do the Himalayas with all their vastness. The Anglo-Indian is accustomed to look upon them as something very ordinary indeed. If he cannot get leave to England, then he will refresh himself for a month or two in the Hills, away from the dreaded hot weather. That is all. He comes to regard them, not as the loftiest mountains in the world, but as refreshing sanatoriums, where he may breathe what fresh air the native bazar and the clustering houses of his fellowmen leave to him, and where he may regain health and vigour after the toil of the plains. For this purpose he searches out the place that will suit him best. The best club, the best hotels, the society that he will most enjoy,—these are the things he looks for in the Hills. He does not seek scenery, and when the scenery is spread before his gaze, he probably feels bored. Mountains have no meaning for him as a rule save from the point of view of sport. He has become too impregnated with India and Indian plains; he is too eager to snatch at the fleeting pleasures of the moment—too willing to pass by the feast Nature lays at his feet. On the hill sides beneath the pines and amongst the rhododendrons nestle villas, innumerable and slate-

roofed houses and sunny cottages; where once the monkeys chattered and the sun played bo-peep between the trees, now runs a Mall bordered by shops; up yonder complacent in its snug position is the Club; beyond the Club, white and conspicuous, the Church. Such are the Hills the Anglo-Indian knows. The solitude yonder where the glaciers run down to meet forests and where the stream brawls and tumbles through fern and moss and fallen trees, and where the grasses wave over wild strawberries and rare flowers and unseen rocks—such solitude is mostly unknown to him. The sportsman hurrying to the bare haunts of the stag is surprised occasionally into admiration by some glade, some lofty peak, some view that a turn of the road suddenly yields to his gaze; or the idle pleasure seeker wandering to Kashmir finds himself arrested on his march by the beauties unfolded everywhere around him; but such surprises are incidental and not sought after. They occur naturally, and like a spoilt child who knows he will have jam as well as cake for his tea, the Anglo-Indian settles himself down to pleasure on the business of the moment intent, regardless of surroundings which in any other country in the world would call for speechless admiration, and would be endlessly idealised by brush and pencil—in song and prose.

It is only fair to admit, however, that the Himalayas can be disappointing too,—and that

they sometimes appear for miles and miles a mere barren stretch of hills with only a few stunted pine trees to relieve the dulness—for all the world like a wash of yellow ochre with splashes of neutral tint invading it here and there. Put against this a pitiless blue sky and a fierce and deadly sun without the thought or hope of shade anywhere, and the scorching picture will be complete. The very intenseness of it makes the traveller yearn for the violet tones of Dartmoor, the soft greys of the rock, the dull greens of the moss, the ripple of the water through the cairns, and the faint blue sky dappled and fleeced with clouds. Or take the time of the monsoon in the Hills, when the storms crash overhead, and the wind plays havoc with the trees, and the rain pours down incessantly until it can pour no more and only damp clouds float aimlessly about obscuring heaven and earth alike from view in the soft envelopement of their embrace. Nothing can be more dispiriting than such perpetual moisture from such never-ending banks of sullen cloud. But let them drift apart—suddenly a shaft of light catches the hill and glade from the dying sun and a glory of crimson radiance floods pine and rock and fern, and the clouds themselves turn to pink and gold, and the sky glows amber in the joy of such new life and all the world seems radiant with mad hope and unthought of wonders in the passionate beauty of that brief moment. Or walk along those

bleak hill-sides, so disappointing in their bareness, the never-ending yellows and greys blinking in the sun; climb that little crest and dip down the other side—and how, as with a magician's wand, the scene is changed! Here are valleys green and fertile, spreading for thousands of feet precipitously below; far in the distance gleams a patch of scarlet where the Indian corn is ripening on some cottage roof; nearer the red millet and the maize bend serenely to the breeze. Underneath the feet soft paths are slippery with fir needles: overhead lofty pines just give a glimpse of sunshine and blue sky fulfilling the tender promise of greater things to come. For presently the pines grow fewer and the path more steep. Past precipices and mountain torrents and savage rocks it bends its tortuous way until it passes into the very heart of those mysterious mountains, where the great snow peaks striking jagged against the sky dwell for ever with a solemn solitude, broken only by the angry roar of the avalanche or by the crackling of some glacier as it slips into the valley below.

And these unsurpassable beauties, these forests carpeted with Nature's most bountiful produce, these meadows gay with the blue and red and purple and yellow of flowers rare and wild, these paths loitering by streams or climbing precipices whose dreadful depths enhance their weird fascinations—all these glories are the inheritance of the Anglo-Indian in his adopted

country. They are his to enjoy and to accept without let or hindrance. No foreign conqueror bars his way across the passes to Ladakh, no painted barriers proclaim another country's right in far Kashmir. He may require a pass here, a permit there, to visit the territories of some Raja or Native Chief, but everywhere he is met by the courtesy of friends, and not the challenges of foes, so that he may rove at will and unmolested in the prefect surroundings of the most stupendous mountains in the world. And yet in the hurry and bustle of his life, in the business and turmoil of it, he is able to avail himself but little of the advantages that are his. The Himalayas afford no inspiration to the overworked civilian and none whatever to his wife. The sportsman seeks their least accessible valleys and climbs their forbidding heights merely in search of prey: the fisherman endures the hardships of their blazing rocks and scorching river beds for the sake of the sport he loves: the holiday makers rush to their cooling glades to continue the whirl of amusement they were enjoying in the plains below—but few seek them out for their majesty alone. Time was when the poetic lakes and romantic woods of Kashmir offered complete seclusion and relief from Anglo-Indian life, but now the way thereto has been opened up—the tonga winds its horn with relentless zeal hour after hour along the dusty tonga-road—the fashion, the beauty the sports-

men of India rush to Srinagar and Gulmarg. On the grass grown sides of the hill, once a wilderness of flowers, polo and racing are indulged in as hotly as they are on the barren plains below. There hotels and huts and houses have sprung up: there bands play and society calls and flirts and dances. On every available camping ground throughout the Valley white tents gleam, where before the plane tree offered its grateful shade to a solitary passer-by. Only at places as remote as Sonamarg (meadow of flowers), radiant yet with its starry blossoms and its background of massive rock and ice-bound drifts, can solitude still be courted and peace enjoyed. Gorgeous house boats, pioneered by forty and fifty boatmen, make their stately way up and down the sleepy wide river. They are carved and upholstered with all the picturesqueness of the East combined with the luxury of the too-luxurious West, for Anglo-India has found its way to Lalla Rookh's abode of bliss and has conveyed thither all the vanities and vexations of spirit which mar the life in the Cantonments far away.

And as in Kashmir so at Simla, so at all the other sanatoriums which the Himalayas supply to the Lords of their passes and the conquerors of their hills. Nowhere possibly in the world are the passions of human nature laid so open for dissection as they are in these remote hill-stations on the slopes of these eternal abodes of snow. It is as though humanity desired to

revenge itself on the dignity and grandeur of its surroundings, too impossible to imitate, too infinite to admire. In the very small communities the round of gossip is incessant, probably inevitable. Resources there are none, save such as are afforded by the Amusement Committees. The men are mostly deprived of sport, the women are overladen with calls and dressing and admiration. Flattery and rivalry push their way boldly among the ever-changing throng. The feverish necessity for entertainment lays its heavy burden on young and old alike. The Gods of Society and Mammon are pursued as eagerly at Simla and her sister-stations as ever they are in the great cities of the greater world. And because they are pursued within smaller limits so they are more deteriorating in their effects. The thrilling battlefield of politics, the building up and the crashing down again of great fortunes, the overwhelming push and struggle for existence itself—these larger aims of humanity are necessarily unknown where everyone is supplied with an income and a pension and has a position assured in a society revolving endlessly round civil and military officialdom. But human nature needs the demands made upon it by higher endeavour and by other surroundings and occupation than the routine of business followed by the routine of pleasure. The groove into which Anglo-India is forced by circumstances in the plains becomes narrower still in the

hills. There, where every advantage of climate is combined with every imaginable beauty of Nature; with few housekeeping cares, with many luxuries, with a constant flow of amusements which few, save in the richest society at Home, can attempt to enjoy incessantly; there, where even the rainy season has its compensations, and the miraculous beauty of a troubled sunset after a storm is a joy to be treasured in the memory always; and where all being more or less equal, none has cause to complain—there discontent breeds and jealousy and scandal dominate. The smallness of society, eddying round in such a tiny backwater, makes for stagnation. The very fact that so many are on a holiday is an additional cause for weariness, and, if Anglo-India does not do justice to its great birthright in the plains, still less does it do so in the hills. Yet none of the inspirations of Nature are wanting and none of its charm. Surely in those far-off haunts of deodar and pine the joy of living should be for the sake of life alone. But human nature wills it otherwise, and under the shadow of mighty Kinchinjanga, in fair Kumaon, and on the Simlayan slopes, the efforts to be first in the race, whether for admiration or distinction or emoluments, continue with unabated zeal. Each niche as it empties is filled up again; each friendship passes to find a new friendship readymade; in each season wanes to find another season treading close upon its heels.

While indifferent to the little frivolities, the petty passions of an hour, silent, inscrutable and awful, the rugged snowpeaks of the Himalayas, towering aloft, proclaim themselves the guardians of India before all the world.

XII.

ON SIGHTS AND SOUNDS.

It is difficult to alienate India theoretically from Anglo-India, yet practically they are very wide apart, and the only real bond of union between the clustering houses of the white man and the habitations of the black, are the sights and sounds common to all in everyday life. Indeed, but for the trivialities of Eastern existence that press themselves for ever upon the attention of the West, the laws of caste, the prejudices of religion, the likes and dislikes of ruler and ruled would probably divide for ever two nations whom destiny has bound so closely together.

To anyone who grows to love India its sights and sounds will be a source of constant joy and not only the festival sights of holiday time. The pen of many a ready writer has already described the gorgeous overflow of colour and splendour which characterises Indian feasts. We know by heart the routine of an installation, with its attendant ceremonies: we have seen Delhi aflame with patriotism and glittering lights, and have watched the Taj glow like a pearl in a setting of diamond lamps. When India chooses to rejoice we know that she does

so right regally, amid a clamour of guns and a trampling of horses and elephants and a seething sea of white and saffron and crimson. It is not with such pageantry that we have to deal in the ordinary course of events. Very often the clang and clash of great doings reach us but faintly from the distant city or the still remoter Native State. We read of them in the columns of newspapers or enjoy them in the letters of friends. But the picturesqueness of everyday India is with us always. Even that little urchin, naked save for a rag round his waist and a tinsel cap on his head, who salaams us merrily as we ride past, is worthy of observation. He has almost the makings of a London street boy in him with plenty of humour and plenty of character. A little early suppressed perhaps, for Indian children learn to work young and quickly take their share with their elders, still the buoyancy and the mirth of youth are expressed in the upright little figure standing black and shiny knee-deep in dust. Life holds no restrictions for him and no conventions. He may play in the mud and bathe in the pond and throw dust at his playmates quite indiscriminately and unrebuked. The world, so far as he can see it from his village surroundings, is all his. He knows every inch of the fields round about, every stone of the well where the women congregate in the evenings, their babies on their hips—every shadow in the twisting lanes that run past the

mud huts to the Temple by the tree with its red-streaked idol glaring grim and ghastly within. Half the year these lanes are morasses of mud : half the year they are piled high in dust, but always he races through them indifferent to either, since he has no clothes to spoil and no shoes to wear out. His mother, grinding corn at her door or sitting huddled in crimson wrapper on the roof of her hut, shrieking discordantly to her neighbour, cares for nothing so long as he remains fat and does not lose his tinsel cap. That cap connects him distantly with the children of the town—the little grave demure children of merchants, who hang about the doors of their fathers' shops with blackened eyes, surveying customers disapprovingly and always conscious of their own dignity.

They do not run wild in the streets, but go to school decorously as little boys should do, an embroidered silk coat slipped on over a very dirty little shirt, and the smartest of inevitable tinsel caps on their heads. They are different again to the children of the Parsis, bright eyed little fellows, whose holiday attire will be wide white satin trousers and satin coats with gold fringe. Even on ordinary days the clothing is very smart of these little Parsis as they go for their evening walk with Papa and Mamma and a tribe of little sisters. Indeed no sight in India can quite equal the garments of Parsis,

as seen in Bombay or any of the southern Presidencies of India, with all their varied harmonies of colouring. Where do they get their instinctive taste for the pale blues, the lavenders, the rose pinks, the tender greens in which they love to deck themselves? A group of graceful Parsi women at the corner of a street is like a variegated bunch of flowers in tints as lovely as ever radiated from a sunset across Bombay harbour.

But if colour run wild is really sought after, then plunge into the middle of a native fair. Down the narrow streets with booths on either side there surges a clamorous crowd of every kind of Indian nationality. There a stalwart Pathan with long locks and dark blue pagri and tunic forces his way along, disdainful of the weaker brethren on either side of him; or a prosperous merchant, with violet satin coat, pushes his little son before him, gaudily adorned in flowered chintz edged with green. On every side are turbans of mauve, turbans of pink, turbans of bright grass green. Women in full petticoats of red and blue, with little embroidered jackets and artistic saris, add their shrill voices to the ceaseless chatter all around. Their clothes may be of the commonest and cheapest material possible, but the toning and shading, the stamping and dying and embroidering of them is brilliant and varied in the extreme. On their raised platforms the owners of the booths sit cross-legged and meditative, smoking a

hookah occasionally, taking no seeming interest in anything, yet with a very wide-awake gift for bargaining when their turn comes.

Before them are spread out sweets or toys or cheap ornaments or piles of cotton stuffs, or even carpets of the commoner kind. Sometimes highly coloured prints adorn the walls of their booths, and looking-glasses in shoddy gilt frames call for exclamations of admiration from the seething crowd. Everywhere good temper and a perfect orderliness prevails. On the wider thoroughfares bullock carts with cloth-covered hoods labour heavily along, the bullocks jingling bells as they go, their horns tipped with red, their thick necks hung round with wreaths of flowers. From behind the curtains peep bright eyes; probably dancing girls, these, going to the scene of festivity covered with bangles of glass and silver and gold, their full skirts of muslin ornamented with tinsel, their eyes besmeared with black paint, their teeth red with the chewing of betel-nut. Behind them, caracoling solemnly along, comes some very great personage indeed, in snowy white clothes and turban, mounted on a grey Arab whose showiness is further enhanced by spots of yellow in daubs all over his body. A little crowd of retainers follow this gentleman—probably a large landowner from the neighbouring districts—who shout and gesticulate and push, rather more rudely than the occasion demands, but

the good-natured crowd submit willingly, too intent on the wonders around them to notice much else. So intent are they indeed that a dog cart advancing at a rapid pace driven by a stout Parsi in a high shining hat would end the lives of not a few of them if his groom did not run in front clearing the road with voice and whip as he runs. Only does the crowd waver and stand aside when a fakir or holy man strides along. Naked save for the saffron cloth about his waist, with long matted locks smeared with ashes, a staff in his hand, a fixed glare in his fierce eyes, he seems to see nothing to know nothing of the tumult about him. Ash strewn, painted, fanatical, he passes through the crowd and disappears. But wherever he goes a little way is made for him and a wave of turbans bend in his direction. From the unknown he comes, to the unknown he is going, and the simple Indian peasant bows down in acknowledgment.

It is good to turn from the noise and bustle and dust and to wander along the banks of the canal towards that village yonder, peaceful in the growing dusk. A flight of wild duck whirr overhead on their way to settle for the night. Outside the village some half dozen worthy Mahomedans have spread their rugs and are paying their evening's devotions in the direction of Mecca and the setting sun. With unswerving enthusiasm they prostrate themselves

again and again, each man wholly absorbed in his own prayers and quite indifferent to those of his brethren. While they pray a trumpet harsh and discordant breaks the still air. It is followed by the clang of a bell harsh too and monotonous. This is the call to prayer from the Hindu Temple hidden in that clump of trees by the pond, where the flying-foxes take refuge for the night, suspended heads downwards, from the thick branches. By slow degrees the village settles down to sleep. Dots of fire break out here and there. The pariah dogs howl dismally, adding their voices to the lamentation of the jackals from across the plain. Overhead, calm and stately, the stars look down with satisfaction. They have seen those same villages, and that same land, and those same distant hills torn and racked and fused with blood—and lo! it is peace at last

In the bazars and the cities all will be life until a much later hour of the night. There the hideous uproar of the tom-tom disturbs the serenity of India's gorgeous moonlight. Women's voices, harsh and singularly out of tune to the unpractised ear, accompany the drums with a monotonous wail, which yet signifies joyous emotion and is not the prelude to a funeral as might be supposed. From all the houses, whether of mud or stone or wood, whether three-storied with carved

balconies, or one-storied with no windows and but one door, the same stifling fumes of smoke and burnt fat arise. They are common to the length and breadth of India; rising they mingle with the dust and hang about over the city in a dead haze which smartens the eyes and obscures the view. Strange figures, smuggled in blankets, lie about in doorways and on the roofs of houses. Sometimes they are on the ground, more often they repose on coarse beds of string—always they are in the way of any wheeled traffic that may be about. But as a rule carts and carriages are few and far between in the mysteries of the night. At every village and in every available space in a town carts are huddled together, their owners sleeping underneath them until the break of day. Only strings of camels may sometimes be met with on the country roads—in the dark, dim awful figures, looming black and dreadful in front of scared horses and anxious passers-by. With stately measured tread, and noses in air, they pass on, leaving a heavy cloud of dust behind them. Of foot-passengers there are few and far between, but when a native is compelled to walk at night he either sings at the top of his voice or talks loudly and continuously to the companions in single file behind him. Such precautions ward off evil spirits and other horrors of the moment. Always he watches eagerly for the glimmering of light in the East.

Then, in that first hour of exquisite forgetfulness the world is given up to the waking cries of Nature. The sparrows twitter round the sleeping bungalows, the brain-fever bird utters his reiterant call, the pigeons coo softly to one another from the branches of the trees, a delicious freshness harbingers the coming day. Later, the pigeons will coo more loudly, keeping accompaniment to the creaking of the wheel as the slow bullocks force water from the well. Gradually the cool of the morning gives place to the heat and glare of the day. In the towns and the villages alike work is suspended —the labourer sleeps as usual on the ground and is as always in the way.

Only the mail-carrier running with his bags from village to village pursues his road, with heavy notched stick, round which little bells jingle as he runs. The bells will keep snakes from his path, and make a rhythm for his feet on the weariness of his march. Everywhere in the wilds he is to be met with—in the heat of the plains, at the dead of night, in the heart of the Himalayas, on the top of the cruelest snow-passes. Does he realise that he is as much a connecting link of Empire as are the sights and sounds of India to the Anglo-India with which she is allied? Ask him, and he will stare stupidly, though brave enough to face death when it is demanded of him as he makes his way through snow and ice. For his thoughts are not so much with the burden of letters to

be carried, his allotted span, as with the dinner he will cook for himself at the other end. And so human to the last, faithful servitor of the civilisation that is pushing itself into every corner of the world, he runs steadily onward, his bells clamouring faint and more faintly still, until they die away.....

Pioneer Press, No, 684.—13-6-04.