that self-government is not good for the man of the East, predicted failure to the experiment.

But it is well to avoid exaggeration and important to see things as they are. The Old Resident, while by no means inclined to minimize the blessings which Mysore owes to the late Maharaja and his Minister, lays stress on the fact that those blessings could not have been secured without the help of British advisers and officials. Even at the present moment, he tells me, though Mysore is nominally an independent State, it is in reality governed by the British Resident and the British gentlemen who fill all the higher posts.

'If the Maharaja does not play at ducks and drakes with the revenues of the State, for example,' he says, 'it is partly because he cannot do so. The revenue of the State amounts to 219 lakhs of rupees. Out of that the Maharaja gets only thirteen lakhs for his civil list; thirty-five lakhs go to the Government of India in payment for protection against aggression from outside; five lakhs are devoted to the Imperial Service Troops, and the rest is spent on the civil administration of the country.'

I ask him whether Mysore is not a constitutionally governed State with a Representative Assembly, a free Press, and a responsible Cabinet of one.

The Old Resident smiles at my simplicity, and explains that the Assembly is not elected, but appointed; that its members have no power to do anything but ask questions; that if a member ventures to display any morbid tendency to criticism, he can be summarily dismissed by the Deputy-Commissioner who appointed him; and that, in brief, the Mysorean Constitution is a great sham.

This is most disheartening, for I had come to Mysore prepared to find a genuine Parliament in embryo, and I find instead a kind of Turkish provincial council. I understood that the Legislative Assembly was intended to legislate, and I find that it is only expected to listen. I also understood that both the Maharaja and his Minister had fully realized the necessity of submitting to public

criticism and following public opinion. Instead, the Old Resident informs me that a few weeks ago the reporter of a local journal was evicted from the Assembly because his paper had dared to disagree with the Government.

One more illusion broken, O my platitudinarian friend!

A few miles from the capital lies the city of Bangalore, commanded by an old fort which, in the middle of the eighteenth century, was allotted by the Maharaja of Mysore to Haidar Ali as a reward for his bravery in repelling a Mahratta invasion. Haider Ali, however, as we have seen, aimed at higher things, and, with this fort as his base of treason, succeeded in ousting his master from the ivory armchair. During his reign and that of his son Tippu, while Seringapatam was the seat of power, this fort was the seat of pleasure, until 1791, when the British under Lord Cornwallis laid siege to its walls, and one bright moonlit night took it by storm.

Ever since that night Bangalore has been a British military station, famed for its mild temperature. It consists of the busy, noisy, dirty native town—70,000 souls packed in an area less than three square miles—and of the vast, thinly-populated cantonments with their ambitious public buildings—Greek temples surrounded by verandas—and other architectural masterpieces due to British sense of harmony. It also includes a strange imitation of an English village with a real English village church, spire and all, presiding over a real English parish of unmistakable English Tommies and their families.

And not many miles off stretch virgin forests inhabited by herds of wild elephants and tribes as primitive as those of Central Africa. They dwell apart, these shy, coffee-coloured, coarse-visaged dwarfs, each family in a hut rudely constructed of branches, a cluster of such huts forming a little community which lives free from culture and caste under the canopy of the immemorial trees and the mild rule of its patriarch. Thus they live with the

wild beasts, whose habits they know and on whose flesh—when herbs and honey fail—they feed, inspiring in their less unsophisticated neighbours that mysterious awe which belongs to the dimly understood. All that is strange is sinister.

The aloofness of the children of the forest and their indifference to the principle of caste, or any other, are interpreted as clear proofs of uncanniness; and these poor creatures are propitiated as masters of the Black Art and dreaded as intimate comrades of the Evil One. To this reputation these interesting reminders of the dark past of the human race probably owe their survival in a land boasting a British Resident, a representative Assembly, a Press, and a responsible Cabinet of one.

CHAPTER XXII

THE ELEPHANT-HUNT*

WE are seated behind a barrier, improvised by the hand of man, but interlaced with leafy boughs so as not to arouse the elephants' suspicions. Below us shimmers a wide reach of the tranquil Kubari, and beyond stretches the illimitable forest, gray in the Indian twilight. Far away the smoke of the burning jungle hangs over the low range of hills along the horizon. The elephants are hidden in the dense bamboo clumps, enjoying a brief rest from the harrying drivers who for weeks past have been slowly gathering in the herd by easy stages, through mile after mile of forest, towards this stockade. The only sound heard above our whispering is the rustling of the dry bamboo stems overhead.

All of a sudden the forest is filled with the clamour of men, the 'clop, clop' of rattles, and the wild explosions of old-fashioned guns. Beaters and shikaris are uproariously active, and the further side of the jungle is on fire. The elephants, a herd of forty of all ages and sizes, finding themselves between the enemy and the burning undergrowth, break out along the river, and plunge helter-skelter into the water. At the same moment the opposite bank bursts into points of flame, and the leader of the herd, panic-stricken, turns back to the only road left open—the road that leads to the stockade and captivity.

* For the following chapter I am indebted to the kindness of my friend Mr. H. Holman, one of the few Europeans, besides their Royal Highnesses' staff, who were privileged to witness this elephant-hunt in Mysore.—G. F. A.

The herd follows its leader, the heavy iron portcullis falls into place, and the first act of the drama is over.

We return to camp through the jungle, along a road lined with beaters, shikaris, and camp-servants haggling at the sweet-stalls by the wayside. The camp-fires are lighted, and to-night there will be rest; but with the dawn the turmoil begins again.

It is a pleasant four miles' walk in the cool gray haze of early morning. The trees of the forest loom on either side of the road, the giant bamboos sweep the sky with their brown tresses, and here and there a younger group, still green, fringes or droops over a still wayside pool. The beaters are gathered round the wood fires over which their food is cooked, but a contingent of four or five tame elephants, with their mahouts across their necks, are already preparing for the business of the day.

As we draw near the stockade, we see the iron portcullis lifted cautiously to permit the egress of a couple of tame elephants towing an unwilling captive, who struggles gallantly at the end of a stout rope. The gate appears too narrow, and there may be trouble. But the wily veteran who brings up the rear gives the prisoner a brisk heave with his blunted, brass-bound tusks, and all is well. More captives are dragged out of the stockade in a similar manner, and thus the herd is somewhat thinned, for their number exceeds the capacity of the inner stockade into which the prisoners are to be driven later.

Meanwhile, as the second act has not yet begun, we walk on to a spot in the jungle where another herd of about fifty stand unwittingly enclosed within a large fence, with a ditch on the inner side, twelve feet wide and ten deep, spanned at intervals by a rickety bridge of three or four bamboos, thrown loosely across to provide a path of escape, should, as frequently happens, a straggling beater be marked out for attack by one of the bolder spirits of the herd. On the outside of the fence are stationed watchers, each armed with a smouldering brand, ready to turn back any charge of the captives, who can be heard

wandering up and down through the jungle, scenting danger and seeking a way out of their mysterious prison. Backwards and forwards they move uneasily, their increasing agitation indicated by the crash of the dry wood trampled under foot. But though not more than twenty yards away, it is barely possible to distinguish the masses of gray-black life through the deep shade of the bamboo clumps and the tangled undergrowth. So we return to the stockade, where the final act of the drama is about to begin.

A dais has been erected near the funnel-shaped avenue which terminates in the entrance to the scene of the forthcoming performance — a small circular enclosure within the larger stockade—and the spectators, including the Prince and Princess of Wales, the Maharaja and his guests, take their seats on that dais, screened, clumsily enough, by newly-cut green boughs. In like fashion are disguised the rails converging to the entrance of the inner enclosure, and it argues little penetration on the part of the elephants if they are blinded to the real nature of the avenue which lies open before them; but, hush! the curtain is up.

The audience crouch warily behind the screen, watching in breathless silence the last efforts of the bewildered herd. Most of the beasts are huddled together in a struggling mass at the entrance to the funnel, fearing to go on, and yet not daring to face the crowd of beaters who, at a prudent distance, urge them forward, shouting and clattering their rattles. The elephants at the back bury their heads in the scrum, burrowing frantically. Every now and again the scrum screws round, and the beaters fall back, shrieking, and seeking shelter behind the tame elephants, who, drawn up on the fringe of the field, look on the game with an air of keen, yet perfectly calm, appreciation.

Suddenly a lady elephant breaks from the herd, and charges wildly across the open. A beater in a blue shirt is in her way, and she singles him out for her vengeance.

He dodges hither and thither, breaking at right angles from one bamboo bush to another, each time narrowly escaping his pursuer, until a charge of shot, fired at point-blank range straight into the elephant's face, brings her to a standstill. She draws back, trumpeting with rage, but her surprise lasts only an instant. Again and again she charges, trying to get at the blue shirt, but every time she is forced to retreat before the shouting mob and the burning undergrowth. The crowd of men and elephants regard her with profound admiration, while she lumbers furiously to and fro, looking for her enemy. Suddenly the blue shirt creeps out from its hiding-place, and our virago makes a new charge upon it, heedless of the shouts and shots of the shikaris. The blue shirt crawls into the thick of a bamboo clump, and finds a refuge among its thorns. The elephant cannot dare the spiky covert with her trunk, but she works her way in with her forefeet. Now she seems to have reached her victim, and throws herself on her knees, determined to crush him. The blue shirt's last hour is close at hand.

By this time the shikaris have come within range, and they open a merciless fusillade on her. She is driven off, and the victim is pulled out, seemingly crushed to death. But we learn later that, though sorely torn and bruised, he has received no serious injury. The stiff bamboo spikes proved too much for the tender skin of the elephant's trunk and face, and she had only succeeded in partly kneeling on him and crushing him further into the heart of the thicket.

Meanwhile, all the wild elephants, male and female, young, old, and middle-aged alike, have been driven into the inner stockade, and the spectators, climbing up to a gallery built round the circular walls, find themselves looking down from a height of some ten feet upon the herd, crowded together, all heads turned away from the entrance. The young ones are invisible between the legs of their parents, but nearly all the trumpeting and squealing comes from them, the grown-ups taking matters in a more digni-

fied fashion, though they have not yet, perhaps, abandoned all hope of escape. Every now and then one of the huge beasts walks deliberately up to the stockade, and, putting its head against one of the posts, gives a heave that makes the structure creak and tremble; but it is too well fixed and braced to yield to an isolated attack. Were the whole herd to push together, it might be unpleasant; but the elephant, despite his many intellectual gifts, does not understand the value of co-operation. He is a beast of genius, and it is the essence of genius to be independent. He suffers from a morbid horror of sinking his individuality in a common cause, and he has to pay the penalty of individual greatness by collective humiliation. Nevertheless, when a wicked-looking old mass of flesh and genius puts forth all its weight and strength against the post immediately beneath one's seat, one is apt to experience a curious kind of emotion.

But behold! there march into the ring five or six tame elephants, trained, like the soldiers of a conquered land which is divided against itself, to help in the subjugation of their brethren. They march solemnly in, each, in addition to his mahout, carrying on his back a man armed with a sharp-pointed spear and a coil of stout cable, one end of which is securely twisted round his girth. The newcomers are backed into the crowding herd, until three or four of the constituent members thereof are pushed out from the rest, and each is squeezed, tails to heads, between two of the tame ones. While thus prevented from turning round, some men on foot, who have crawled in under the stockade, pass the rope round one or both of the hind-legs of the captive, and anchor him to the stump of a tree left standing for the purpose.

The first to be fettered is a fine tusker, the acknowledged leader of the herd. He did not seem inclined to offer much resistance at first; but when he found himself fixed by the heels he fought long and hard, though only succeeding in twisting the rope tighter into his flesh.

To make room for the severer work, the mahouts now

begin to thin out the herd by tying up some of the youngsters. This is done by dropping a noosed rope over the head and neck, and then lashing the noose. When safely tied, the young captives are tugged away, screaming and trumpeting loudly. The struggle is watched with great interest by a big tame tusker, who follows up each baby elephant as it is captured, straightening out the tangle formed when the youngster makes a dash among the legs of the older ones. Now and again the old gentleman will halt over some obstreperous youngster guilty of more noise than is deemed decent, and, at a word from the mahout, he lifts the struggling baby on his tusks, throws it up four or five feet into the air, and lets it drop on the ground with a thud. This treatment generally shakes the spirit out of the astonished offender, though one or two of them do not give in until the performance has been repeated.

When a sufficient number of babies have been roped and tied up to the side of the stockade, the bigger elephants receive undivided attention. Among these the heroine of the blue shirt again distinguishes herself by the obstinacy and ferocity of her resistance. But she is eventually captured and fastened to the biggest pair of tame elephants; yet, though they are assisted by the great tusker, who follows her up and gives her an occasional lift with his powerful tusks, she continues her heroic fight for liberty, at times pulling her captors backward, in spite of all the urging of the mahouts, and cleverly utilizing a solitary tree here and there for the purpose of entangling the ropes by which she is led. The odds are too many against the gallant lady; but, though the struggle lasted nearly the whole day, when we went away she was still unsubdued.

In the end all the elephants are secured, and led away to be fastened by all four legs outside the stockade. There only remains the fine tusker, who, first to succumb, has been fretting himself with vain strivings to break his fetters asunder. Though tied by the heels, he is not to be treated with contumely, his long trunk and keen tusks commanding respect, and the spearmen, now on foot, keep

at a discreet distance, holding in their hands the ropes, with which he is to be harnessed and led out of the stockade. Here the wily old gentleman who has so tactfully silenced the noisy youngsters and the lady elephant has another part to play. Standing head to head with the recalcitrant one, he begins to stroke the face of the latter with his trunk until he has drawn close enough to get his brass-bound tusks on either side of the other's trunk. This done, he holds him firmly until the strong cable has been fastened in double strands round his girth, and his forefeet have been noosed by the men. The latter, taking the loose ends with a double turn round the stout tree-stumps, pull on them till the captive's legs are drawn out full stretch. Then a jostle from another elephant sends the prisoner rolling over on one side, and he is dragged into slavery with the rest of his brethren. On our way back to camp, we see the captives tied up in the jungle along the road, casting looks full of reproach on those of their kind who have so basely betrayed them. Here they will remain until a little judicious starvation has taught them the futility of individual resistance to the force of combination. Then their education becomes only a matter of time, and they are, in due course, ready for the market, to share in the toils of wood-piling, or in the glories of tiger-hunting, or, alas! in the unspeakable splendour of a triumphal procession

CHAPTER XXIII

HYDERABAD

We are in the State of the Nizam, greatest of Indian feudatories, whose dominions spread nearly over the whole of the Deccan, or central plateau of Southern India, covering more than 80,000 square miles, rich in rivers and luscious vegetation. A large proportion of this vast territory is dense with jungle, such as the tract round Nekonda, 120 miles distant from the capital, where a shooting camp was prepared for the Prince of Wales.

The road from the railway-station to the camp, twelve miles off, cuts through a wilderness of trees, knotted and gnarled, some still clothed in thick foliage and festooned with riotous creepers, against whose dark greenness flashes the 'flame of the forest,' now ablaze with brilliant blossoms. But most of the trunks, even so early in the season, stand gaunt and gray, spreading their skeleton boughs abroad, stripped bare by the heat; and the earth beneath is carpeted with curling yellow leaves, while through the trellis of the twigs overhead glows the blue sky fiercely. It is a forest combining the cold appearance of wintry nudity with the sultry drowsiness of midsummer.

There is none of the humming of life which one fondly associates in imagination with a tropical jungle; but over all broods an uncanny silence, deepened by the sad cooing of the wild dove or by the rustle and crackle of the crisp leaves, as a gust of warm breeze sweeps lightly over the ground.

Yet the jungle is by no means devoid of life. Here is

a flock of monkeys, great and small, short-tailed and long-tailed, scampering up the trunks and leaping noiselessly from bough to bough, alarmed at the sight of their remote descendant. Now, emboldened by distance, they squat on the branches, blinking and grimacing down at you or up at the sun impartially. They form a most edifying caricature of the conceited animal which calls itself the paragon of creation.

Suddenly, a few yards in front of you, across your very path, gallops a strange quadruped of the size of a horse, with a glossy blue-gray coat, short tail, and short furred horns. It is the horse-deer called *nilgai*.

Besides, there are leopards, panthers, bears, and tigers in great abundance, and no one is allowed to travel this way after dark. A short time ago, the Chief of Police has informed me, one of his sowars, belated on the road, was snatched off his saddle by a tiger. But at mid-day all these fellow-creatures seem to prefer the shade of their lairs, and the knowledge of their proximity only lends a spice of interest to the scenery.

Here and there from amidst the trees rises a quaint, isolated hill of huge boulders, black and bleak, and poised upon one another like the ruins of a Cyclopean castle devastated by fire. Or, again, the hill swells into the form of a beast, its back bristling with wild wood delicately outlined against the azure of the sky. Here and there, again, the trees fall back, leaving a clear space bright with the green blades of waving paddy. Over this field towers a clump of stately palms, immensely tall and slender, and close by crouches a colony of low huts built entirely of dry palm-leaves.

Beyond the jungle rolls the open plain, bordered with blue mountains in the distance, but for the rest gently undulating, and, though in sore need of water this year, full of promise. The soil, when manured, yields a sequence of all kinds of crops without regard to season, for here it is always summer; and from year's end to year's end caravans of camels, elephants, bullock-carts, and horses

may be seen moving backward and forward over the land, laden with the fruits thereof.

It is a land blessed with every blessing that Allah can bestow, except one. In suggestive contrast to Rajputana, with its arid plains and hardy people, the Deccan is a nursery of other flowers than men. Here, as in Bengal, the trite reflection forces itself upon the spectator's lips—

> 'La terra molle e lieta e dilettosa
> Simil a sè gli abitator produce':

indolent, improvident, comprehensively incompetent.

Eight sleepy coolies barely contrived to carry my six light packages from the railway-carriage to a ragged vehicle drawn by two animals which a brother-sufferer faithfully described as hair trunks slightly animated. Like their drivers, the horses of the Deccan appear to possess just enough energy to irritate. Were it otherwise, would these ten millions of human beings bend the knee to a handful of exotic sahibs? And would their ruler be content to rule by other than the grace of Allah?

But here are my slightly animated hair trunks waiting to convey me to the capital. It is the one city in an area of 80,000 square miles; the rest are hamlets, many belonging to the great nobles, who possess over their villeins virtually all the powers of medieval barons, and, like the Turkish beys, derive from their enormous estates the means of idling in the capital. This is set in a ring of low rocks of granite, jagged and stern, here and there sloping smoothly down to the shores of blue ponds which smile placidly back to the placid blue heavens above. Across this valley flows the river Musa, dividing the suburb in which live the Europeans from the walled city.

I pause on the bridge and look into the stream below—its waters split into broad arrow-heads of white foam by the outstanding boulders; its bosom dotted with floating ducks; its banks busy with men, women, and children, bullocks, buffaloes, and elephants. The men and women are washing their clothes or their bodies, the children are

playing in the sun, the bullocks are drinking; but the buffaloes only wallow in the shallows, while the elephants plash heavily into the mud, and then climb on to dry land refreshed.

They are full of a curious kind of humour, these ponderous quadrupeds; but I will not insult the reader with the oft-told tales of elephantine vivacity. And yet I cannot resist the temptation of repeating one story which the Old Resident has just related to me, vouching for its authenticity. It may be called the Story of the Humane Elephant:

'A few weeks ago one of the Nizam's elephants, while crossing the jungle, happened to tread unawares upon a bird wandering outside her nest. Startled by the contact with the soft body, the elephant gave a ridiculous little squeal, such as elephants give when startled. Then, looking down, he perceived what he had done: the dead bird, and close by her young ones, gaping helplessly. Whereupon the elephant, smitten with remorse, addressed the orphans as follows: "Poor little things, left motherless through my own stupidity! I will be a mother unto you, and will tend you as your mother would have done." Having spoken thus, he sat down upon them.'

I was pleased to find so much sense and sensibility under so thick a skin, and to have at last met with a true story concerning an animal so often made the subject of improbable fiction.

Thus conversing, we crossed the bridge, passed through one of the thirteen gates which pierce the walls, and found ourselves in the main thoroughfare of an Oriental city but little affected as yet by Occidental fashion.

The street is flanked with small shops—silversmiths, coppersmiths; shops stuffed with gold-broidered slippers, and shops resplendent with melons, water-melons, limes, oranges, and bananas. The toddy-sellers sit cross-legged on low, carved armchairs, with the round pitchers of the frothy liquor in front of them; in the other establishments turbaned traders sit cross-legged on the floor amid their

wares, or lie on their backs, one leg upon the other, puffing at their hookas.

Up above, the purdah which screens the small windows is occasionally lifted by a jewelled hand, and a lady's eyes may be seen peering out upon the world. Down below, women of a rank which renders seclusion impossible and unnecessary bend under heavy sacks of corn or rice, and the water-carriers empty their skins upon the dust.

The road is crowded with a variety of male bipeds, local and otherwise: men of the Punjab, men of Rajputana, Mahrattas, Madrassis, Sikhs, Parsis, natives of Central Asia—Afghanistan, Turkestan, Persia, and Arabia—and negroes of African descent.

Most of the natives are Hindus, but all the strangers are followers of the Prophet of Mecca, attracted to this great stronghold of Islam by the prospect of employment in the Mahomedan Prince's service. For there is no part of India where the faith of the Prophet flourishes more rigorously than in Hyderabad. Here I see a great mosque with balconied minarets and arched cloisters, a copy of the very sanctuary at Mecca, built by Kutab Shah Mahomed Kuli, the founder of the city, 300 years ago. At every corner I see shrines enclosing the tombs of holy Sheikhs, whom the Hindus also, ever hospitable to new gods, adore, and at every turn I am confronted with the red fez and the star and crescent of Turkey. Over one shop I even discern the imperial cipher of the Osmanli, and the Old Resident explains that His Highness the Nizam loves to take for his model the Sultan of Stamboul, to whom alone he is second as a ruler of true believers. He cherishes about 300 wives, and refuses to allow his countenance to shine upon his subjects oftener than he can help. This surprises me, for I saw His Highness this morning, and what impressed me about his features, dress, and demeanour was their utter unlikeness to those of Abdul Hamid.

The Nizam is a gentleman of forty years of age, with a high-bred face adorned with a moustache and a pair of

whiskers which, when taken in conjunction with his black frock-coat and manner, make you forget his turban and think of an Austrian banker. And yet this European-looking Prince has 300 wives and some 80 children; and the revenues of a whole suburb—the Begum Bazaar—are devoted as pin-money to his wife-in-chief.

Moreover, His Highness does not permit the printing of newspapers in his State, the journals from which the inhabitants of Hyderabad learn what happens around them being published in Madras. Another point of similarity between the Nizam and his august prototype is the extreme suspiciousness shown to strangers by his police. At every station the newcomer is requested to enter in a book his name, nationality, occupation, and date of arrival and departure. But perhaps this inquisitiveness is due to the provisions of the Plague Regulations. As to the ruler's inaccessibility, the Old Resident has a very interesting story to tell.

'Two years ago,' he says, 'there was in one of our districts a great flood, followed by a great plague of locusts. The flood ruined many fields, the locusts did the rest, and the villagers were left starving. The Government remitted their taxes for the moment, and the wretched people managed to sow another crop under great difficulties, for now the land, delivered from the deluge, suffered from drought. They were on the point of reaping this scanty crop when the tax-gatherers came with arms and claimed, not only the tax on this crop, but also the taxes already remitted. The villagers implored for mercy, but there was no mercy for them. So they surrendered their crops, and some of them even sold their cattle in order to satisfy the collectors' greed. Then came the hot weather; the eggs which the locusts had deposited in the ground were hatched by the heat, and a second plague ensued, which devoured the tender rice-blades as they sprouted from the soil. Next came the tax-gatherers again, and the people, in despair, arose and walked fifty miles to the capital in order to lay their case before the Nizam himself.

'Here they came, some 3,000 men, and sat in the streets outside the palace, waiting for His Highness to come forth and hear their tale of distress. They waited for a whole week, but His Highness came not forth. Instead, on the eighth day, there drove out the Chief of Police in his carriage. Whereupon all the men, with one accord, fell flat on their faces before the carriage, and cried out: "Drive over us! drive over us!" The Chief of Police forbore to do so, but, alighting from his carriage, said: "What is it you want from me?" Then five or six headmen arose and spoke on behalf of their brethren, who remained prostrate. The Chief, having listened, promised to report their complaint to his master, and drove back into the palace to do so. The Nizam then sent out word to the crowd that he would inquire into the matter and do the needful. The peasants went away to their homes hoping. But His Highness never inquired into the matter, and the tax-gatherers continued to torture them.'

'Torture!' said I; 'what do you mean?'

'One of the methods is to seize the peasant and make him stand out in the sun with an enormous stone on his back until he pays his taxes.'

I could only express the hope that this method was not very frequently resorted to, but the Old Resident shook his head, smiling darkly.

His dramatic tale invested the palace with new interest in my eyes, and as I gazed round at the great walls and the courtyards swarming with a mob of armed retainers, servants in gaudy robes, and richly-caparisoned horses, I saw in imagination these 3,000 figures prostrate in the street, waiting for eight days to pour their distress into their Prince's ears.

And yet time was, not long ago, when matters were infinitely worse, when every noble's hand was against every other, and Hyderabad, torn by rival ambitions, which the British Residents were apparently unable to reconcile, came to be described as a happy hunting-ground

for all adventurers from East and West. The Nizam counted for nothing, and his irresponsible courtiers for everything. Intrigue and incompetence ruled unchecked, and their triumphs were revealed by frequent scandals of corruption and crime, until some five years ago there came Colonel Barr, and under his sympathetic direction the Nizam was persuaded to resume some of the responsibilities of royalty. The British Resident and the Prince between them drew up a programme of reform, and the fruits of their industry are visible at this hour in the comparative order which has been evolved out of the old administrative chaos. To the picturesque vagaries of self-seeking and unscrupulous scribes have succeeded measures of prosaic utility. The finances of the State flourish, famine has grown rarer, communication has been facilitated, justice has ceased to be a mere figure of speech or a source of bakshish, the police protects at last to some extent the people whom it once only fleeced, and while I pen these lines my ears ring with the roar of an Industrial Exhibition!

Yet, even under the most prosaically efficient administration, Hyderabad has not yet entirely lost those romantic irregularities which make the East worthy of the cynic's attention. It still is, in many respects, what Turkey was 200 years ago. I can see that even as I stroll idly through the bazaar, with its buzzing flies and whining beggars, through the dust and the sun, jostled by all kinds of men, many of whom swagger past, their belts bristling with daggers, and carrying in one hand a curved sword as a Londoner carries his umbrella.

Thanks to these gentlemen, the narrow lanes and courts which open out of the main street are unfit for exploration by the unprotected, and that notwithstanding the legions of constables, who, unaccustomed to the luxury which the Prince of Wales's presence has forced upon them, slip their new, buckled shoes off their feet and squat by the roadside. Then they take their striped turbans off, and proceed to scratch their heads with one hand and

their toes with the other, enjoying the perfect inaction which the Oriental loves.

Here and there, as I move on, I see walls painted with many crude designs—angels poised on unhinged wings, gods and goddesses, and, most frequent of all, black-striped tigers of a species that, I am sure, never trod the jungle. Most of these works of art—it must be art, for it is not nature—are committed on a background of yellow, as brilliant as the yellow of the lemon and more brilliant than that of jaundice. It is the Nizam's colour.

Thus I traverse the city, and, emerging through a second gate, I find myself in another suburb of low mud dwellings, and beyond rise the gray rocks on which stands the white Falaknuma Palace, a great modern building, with Greek pillars and pediments, intended for the accommodation of distinguished visitors. It now accommodates the Prince and Princess of Wales.

His Highness the Nizam, in spite of the death of his favourite daughter, which occurred the other day, has accorded his guests a truly royal reception, and has assured them that their visit 'is one more link, and a very strong link, in the long chain of most cordial associations which binds me and my house to the British Empire.' Let me attempt to trace that chain link by link.

The ruler's full title, Nizam-ul-mulk—that is, 'Organizer of the Kingdom'—is derived from his ancestor Asaf Jah, a Turkoman courtier of Delhi, who was, in the early days of the eighteenth century, appointed by the Moghul Emperor Viceroy of the Deccan under the above title, and, availing himself of the opportunities which the times afforded, converted his viceroyalty into sovereignty, and founded a hereditary dynasty. On his death, in 1748, there ensued a fierce internecine war for the succession between his son and grandson. One of the pretenders, of course, found a supporter in the East India Company; the claim of the other was, equally of course, espoused by the French. The latter, however, disappeared from the field, and for a brief while the British client proved

On the Bridge at Hyderabad

victorious. But, soon after, he perished by the hands of his own followers, and the French client was left in full possession of a sceptre which he wielded by the grace, and under the guidance, of the French General Dupleix.

Not long afterwards, this prince also perished in an obscure affray with some of his own followers—disappointed Pathan chieftains—and the French raised to power a creature of their own—an event which gave rise to a second dispute for the succession, brought to a speedy end by the curiously opportune death of one of the two claimants.

British and French went on plotting and counter-plotting for supremacy over this distracted principality, until Clive's victories forced the French to devote their whole attention to the defence of their own possessions. The weak prince of the Deccan, thus left in the lurch, sought to prop up his tottering throne by a discreet submission to British dictation, but in the end he was dethroned and murdered by his own brother—a villain who, however, could at least make his villainy respected. Accordingly, in 1766, the British, in return for a grant of a maritime district, not only recognised the usurper as a lawful sovereign, but agreed to furnish him with a subsidiary force when required, and, when not required, to pay him instead an annual tribute of nine lakhs of rupees.

Not very long after the conclusion of this treaty the British readily offered to the Nizam their aid in his contemplated campaign against Haidar Ali of Mysore, whose star was then in the ascendant; but the Nizam suddenly changed his mind, and, in a lucid moment, made of his intended enemy an ally against his dangerous friends. In this struggle the two princes were worsted, and a new treaty was signed with the Nizam in 1768, on similar terms to those of the old. This alliance passed through many vicissitudes during the next generation, for in those last days of the eighteenth century Hyderabad played a leading part in the warfare waged by the Marquis of Wellesley against Tippu Sultan of Mysore and his French allies, and both

sides were anxious to secure the Nizam's friendship. The British finally succeeded, and the Nizam, on the whole, came out of the transaction the richer in lands and the poorer in power. Henceforth the British, instead of paying, exacted tribute in men or money—a reversal of terms foreshadowed by the treaty of 1800. For this success the East India Company was largely indebted to a hero appropriately named Achilles Kirkpatrick, British Resident at Hyderabad, who won the Nizam's affection and seasoned political intrigue with domestic romance, the times being propitious for the combination.

There lived in the court of Hyderabad a nobleman of Persian descent called Akil-ud-daula, or 'the Genius of Government,' who was paymaster of the Nizam's forces and had a beautiful granddaughter named Khair-un-nisa, or 'Excellent among Women.' This young lady heard of Achilles' manly beauty and manifold fascination, and, upon seeing him through the purdah during an entertainment at her grandfather's, determined to fall in love with him. Having done so, she proceeded to woo the hero in the natural, direct, and impetuous manner which differentiates the woman of the East from her artificial sisters of the West. She sent to Mr. Kirkpatrick her old nurse with a message that she loved him, and wished to become his wife. He declined. She persisted. He continued inflexible, until the poor Begum, despairing of vicarious diplomacy, had recourse to a personal trial of strength. She called on Mr. Kirkpatrick one evening, and Mr. Kirkpatrick saw and succumbed.

'It was at this interview,' says the gallant Achilles, 'that I had a full and close survey of her lovely person. It lasted during the greater part of the night, and was evidently contrived by the grandmother and mother, whose very existence hung on hers, to indulge her uncontrollable wishes.'

Thus Mr. Kirkpatrick was fated, by a single act of kindness, to save the lives of no fewer than three generations of passionate Hyderabad ladies.

After this interview there was, of course, only one road open to Achilles, and he bravely took it. Pending the ceremony, the impatient bride took up her abode in the Residency. The adventure made the unromantic Marquis furious, and nearly lost Achilles his position. But the marriage was celebrated none the less brilliantly in 1801, and announced to Lord Wellesley by His Highness the Nizam himself, who loved the fascinating Achilles as his own son. The Governor-General, seeing that one alliance depended on another, granted his graceless acceptance of the inevitable, and Achilles and his Begum lived happy ever after. Of this union was born Carlyle's famous 'Kitty'—'a strangely-complexioned young lady, with soft brown eyes, amiable, graceful, low-voiced, languidly harmonious, a half-Begum; in short, an interesting specimen of the semi-Oriental Englishwoman.'

This romance of the Princess Khair-un-nisa and Mr. Achilles Kirkpatrick, otherwise known as Hashmad Jung, or 'the Magnificent in Battle,' is still cherished by the people of Hyderabad as a memorial from an age when a middle-class British sahib did not consider a union with a noble lady of the land as derogatory to his own dignity or as a stigma on his posterity. Englishmen in those days did not preach imperialism, but practised it. They were no more conscious of their racial superiority than a healthy man is of his stomach. It was a barbarous age.

The history of the relations between the State of Hyderabad and the British Raj during the nineteenth century contains little that is romantic, though much that is regrettable. In 1853 the Nizam's dominions barely escaped annexation, thanks largely to the efforts of the able Minister, Salar Jung, who acted as Regent on behalf of the minor prince, and at the present hour one finds the Spokesman of Native Discontent observing: 'What the ultimate result of the indefinite extension of the policy of protection will be it is impossible to foretell, but it will soon be difficult to discriminate between annexation and

the process of friendly absorption which has displaced the older policy.'

These dismal forebodings do not prevent thoughtful Indians from appreciating, frankly and gratefully, the good that accrues to Native States from British intervention, when this is prompted by sincere and benevolent statesmanship. A single grain of kindness yields a whole crop of gratitude in India. When Sir David Barr retired from the Residency last February, he was sped by the whole-hearted gratitude and admiration of all sections of the Nizam's subjects.

This Resident seems to have realized in his own conduct the ideal of a perfect adviser. The result was a great success. When the great Minister, Salar Jung, after a rule of thirty years, died in 1882, his son succeeded to his father's position, though not to his talents. Proud, domineering, and tactless, Salar II. soon lost the confidence of his young master and made room for another nobleman, who remained in office for eight years, continuing the battle for the realities of power which his predecessor had lost. Friction and chaos ensued, as already described, and this state of things lasted until the arrival of Colonel Barr, whose skill improved the administration without alienating the confidence of the people.

But even this excellent Resident would probably have accomplished little were not his efforts seconded by many honest and capable officials from among the Nizam's noblemen. Thus, if the Native States owe much to the experience, zeal, and ability of British advisers, these gentlemen would labour in vain but for the corresponding qualities among the native rulers' subjects. In other words, the only condition of success—the condition on the observance of which depends the very permanence of the British Empire in India—is sincere co-operation between the Englishman and the native, and as the native becomes more and more educated he is entitled to a greater and yet greater share in the government of his

own country. The example of a Native State like Baroda brilliantly proves that the talent for self-government is not a monopoly of the West. The moral qualities and the material means necessary for the work are quite as plentiful in the East. All that is needed is a stimulus from outside to quicken the dormant body into action, and some disinterested teaching to guide its first steps.

CHAPTER XXIV

BENARES

EVERY great city in the world is known by some special feature, product, or property which differentiates it from other cities, and gives to it its peculiar tone and its individuality. Thus, London is famed abroad for its fogs and its Lord Mayor, Paris for its boulevards and its frocks, Naples for its Vesuvius and its macaroni, Athens for its Parthenon and its politicians, Constantinople for its Turkish delight and Armenian massacres. The characteristic industry of Benares is holiness.

From the earliest times of which record exists this hoary spot has been revered as the sanctuary of Hinduism. Then, in the year 2513 of the present Kali-Yuga, or, Christianly speaking, in 523 B.C., there arose a new prophet, who chose Benares for the starting-point of that missionary journey the fruits whereof abide to this day. This was Siddhartha Gautama, the fourth and last of the Buddhas, born under the constellation Visa on a Tuesday in May, in the year 2478 of the Kali-Yuga. The moon shone full at the time of his birth, as she also did on all the cardinal eras of his life: his renunciation of the world, his attainment of enlightenment, his entry into eternal rest. Wherefore all these epochs are jointly celebrated by good Buddhists in the great festival of the full moon in the month of Vaisakha, which corresponds with our month of May.

He was the son of King Suddhodama and Queen Maya, who reigned over the realm of Kapilavastu, one hundred miles north-east of Benares, and about forty miles from the Himalayas.

Now, it has been well said that it is easier for an elephant to dance on the point of a needle than for a prince to acquire wisdom. But our prince was gifted with such a natural aptitude for knowledge that even in his cradle he seemed to understand all arts and sciences almost without study. As he grew into boyhood he had the best teachers, but they could teach him little that he did not know already. He was not an ordinary prince. The Brahman astrologers had foretold at his birth that, oppressed by the sufferings of mankind, he would one day abdicate his throne and, renouncing power, riches, children, wife, and all other carnal worries, become a prophet.

The king, his father, not wishing to lose his heir, carefully endeavoured to prevent his seeing aught that might suggest to him human misery and death. He built for him three magnificent palaces suitable to the three Indian seasons—the hot, the cold, and the febriculous—of nine, five, and three stories respectively. Around each palace bloomed gardens of the most beautiful and fragrant flowers, with fountains of spouting waters, trees full of singing birds, and peacocks strutting with outspread tails over the ground. Furthermore, the prince, in his sixteenth year, was married to a lovely princess, whom he won, after the ancient warrior fashion, by overcoming all his rivals in feats of skill and valour. With that princess he lived virtuously in his palaces, and many beautiful maidens, skilled in dancing and music, were in perpetual attendance to amuse him. It is, therefore, small wonder that the young prince was terribly bored.

It was the monotony of his own prosperity that made the young prince melancholy, for as yet he had had no opportunity of witnessing the misery of other men. No one was even allowed to speak of death and distress in his presence, so careful was the king to prevent the fulfilment of the astrologers' prediction. But the gods conspired to defeat the king's purpose.

The prince was in his twenty-ninth year when a *deva* appeared to him under four forms, repulsive yet impressive

—viz., as an old man broken down with age, as a sick man, as a decaying corpse, and as an emaciated hermit. The prince was so tender-hearted that, at sight of those unpleasant things, he determined to leave all his luxuries and to go alone into the jungle, in order that, by deep and undistracted meditation, he might discover the cause of human suffering and its cure.

It was love, unbounded and unreasonable, that prompted the prince to take this vow. Through numberless incarnations and æons beyond count, he had been cultivating that weakness, with the unfaltering resolve to become a Buddha, that is, 'Enlightened' or 'All-wise.' Such a person is born into the world at various periods, when mankind have become overwhelmed with misery through ignorance, and need the wisdom which it is the function of a Buddha to impart, and the guidance which it is his privilege to give.

With this curious object in view, our prince one night, when all were asleep, arose, cast a last look at his sleeping wife and infant son, called his attendant Channa, mounted his favourite white steed Kanthaka, and rode to the palace gate. The *devas* had thrown a heavy slumber upon the gate-keepers, so that they might not hear the noise of the horse's hoofs. They also caused the gate to open, and so the prince rode out into the darkness.

Thus alone, with his faithful attendant and his fixed idea, the prince journeyed through the night. When he reached the river Anoma, a long way from his father's kingdom, he alighted from his horse, cut off his beautiful hair with his sword, donned the yellow robe of an ascetic, and, handing his ornaments and horse to Channa, ordered him to take them back to his father, while he himself proceeded on foot into a neighbouring forest, where dwelt some wise hermits, and became their disciple.

These hermits taught that by severe penances and pitiless torture of the body man may acquire perfect wisdom. But the prince did not find this so. He mastered their systems and practised all their penances,

but he could not thus discover the cause of human sorrow or its cure. Therefore, he left these hermits, and, accompanied by five Brahmans, went away into the forest of Gaya, where he spent six years in deep meditation beneath the Bodhi tree, undergoing the severest discipline and self-mortification.

During six years Siddhartha sat under the Bodhi tree pondering with his whole mind the higher problems of life, and taking less and less food, until he ate scarcely more than one grain of rice or sesame a day. But even this discipline failed to teach him the wisdom which he sought. He grew thinner and thinner in body and fainter in spirit, until one day, as he slowly walked about meditating, he dropped to the ground like one dead. On reviving, he reflected that knowledge could not be attained by starvation. So he decided to eat.

Having formed this resolution, he arose, took his alms-bowl, bathed in the river, ate food, and, in the evening, went to the Bodhi tree and sat under it, determined not to rise again until it yielded unto him the fruit of knowledge. There he sat, facing east, and lo! in the course of the night he obtained the knowledge of his previous births, of the causes of reincarnation, and of the way to extinguish desire. Just as day was breaking this light dawned upon him, and his mind was opened like the full-blown lotus-flower. The Four Truths were his. He had become Buddha—the Enlightened, the All-wise.

He discovered that sorrow is the offspring of rebirth, rebirth the offspring of desire to live, and desire to live the offspring of ignorance. Therefore, to escape sorrow it is necessary to escape rebirth; to escape rebirth it is necessary to extinguish the desire for it; and to extinguish desire it is necessary to dispel ignorance. Thus man, purged of passion, attains that highest state of peace which is called Nirvana, and becomes part of the Divine. This end is within the reach of everyone, for everyone possesses latent within him the capacity for enlightenment. In order to attain it, however, man

must master the fundamental truth that existence means sorrow.

This gospel, so gray and chilly, filled Buddha with a strange fervour. He no longer saw his fellow-creatures as blind men at large, groping their way blindly to final darkness; but as children of light led towards an eternity remote but glorious.

Yet even Buddha, his exaltation over, recalled with misgiving the limitations of these heirs of eternal bliss. In the fifth week after his attainment of Buddhaship the Blessed One sat again at the foot of the Bodhi tree and thought:

'I have attained the truth which is profound, hard to perceive and to understand, which brings quietude of heart, which is exalted, which is unattainable by reasoning, abstruse, intelligible only to the wise. The people of the world are given to desire, are intent upon desire, delight in desire. My doctrine will not be intelligible to them. Let me, therefore, remain in peace, and not preach the doctrine.'

Then the four-faced Brahma, divining the thought which had arisen in the mind of the Blessed One, reflected:

'If the Blessed One remains in peace and does not preach the doctrine, the world is lost!'

So, with hands folded, he approached the Blessed One and said:

'May the Lord preach the doctrine, may the Blessed One preach the doctrine, may the Perfect One preach the doctrine. There are beings whose eyes are not yet darkened by any dust; if they do not hear the doctrine, they cannot attain salvation. Therefore, may the Stainless One open the door of Immortality to them!'

The Blessed One saw that it was his duty to proclaim the truth revealed unto him, and to trust to its own power for impressing itself upon the minds of men in proportion to each man's individual *karma*. But then the Blessed One thought:

'To whom shall I preach the doctrine first? Who will understand this doctrine easily?'

After a long deliberation he set forth to Benares. On the way he met a wandering ascetic called Upaka, who said to the Blessed One:

'Thy countenance, friend, is serene; thy complexion is pure and bright. In whose name, friend, hast thou retired from the world? Who is thy teacher? Whose doctrine dost thou profess?'

The Blessed One answered and said:

'I have overcome all foes. I am All-wise. I am free from all stains I have left behind me everything, and have obtained emancipation by the destruction of desire. Having gained knowledge unassisted, whom should I call my master? I have no teacher. No one is equal to me. In the world of men and of gods no being is like me. I am the Holy One in this world. I am the Teacher. I have gained calm by the extinction of all passion, and have obtained Nirvana. To found the Kingdom of Truth, I go to the city of Benares. I will beat the drum of the Immortal in the darkness of this world.'

Having spoken thus, the Buddha went on his way until he reached the river Ganges, which he had to cross. The ferryman asked him to pay the fare. But as Buddha had no money, he could not pay it. So he flew through the air, and reached the other side. Astonished thereat, the ferryman went to the king of the country, and related to him the miracle performed by Buddha, whereupon the king ordered that thenceforth ascetics should not be charged ferry fare.

Having thus crossed the river, the Blessed One repaired to a place near Benares called the Deer Park, where he met the five Brahmans who had been with him while he practised meditation and starvation under the Bodhi tree in Gaya. The five Brahmans were at first full of conceit. On seeing the Blessed One coming from afar, they communed among themselves, saying:

'Friends, there comes Buddha, who lives in abundance,

who has given up his austerities, and who has turned to an abundant life. Let us not salute him, nor rise from our seats when he approaches, nor take his bowl and his robe from his hands. But let us put there a seat; if he likes, let him sit down.'

But when the Blessed One drew near they could not keep their agreement. They bowed down to him in reverence with hands folded, and went forth to meet him. His calm, tranquil mien had subdued them.

The Blessed One addressed them, and said:

'Give ear, O Brahmans! To you I will preach the doctrine.'

Then the Blessed One explained to them the doctrine of the Noble Eightfold Path which leads to insight, which leads to wisdom, which leads to calm, to the full enlightenment, to Nirvana.

Thus it came to pass that the Kingdom of Righteousness was first founded in the Deer Park at Benares.

After the five Brahmans a rich treasurer named Yasa embraced the doctrine, and his friends followed. In the course of a few days fifty men became followers of Buddha. This number grew rapidly, many men and women and damsels accepting the new creed, induced thereto partly by its own sublimity and partly by the preacher's miraculous powers. Monarchs followed the example of mortals, and the doctrine spread far and wide over the peninsula of Hindustan, and thence to Nepal and Tibet in the north, to Ceylon in the south, through Burma and China to Japan in the east, until it conquered one-half of the human race.

For many centuries Benares continued the centre of Buddhism, and a great stupa, erected by the Emperor Asoka at Sarnath, about four miles from the city, still marks the spot where the Blessed One preached his first sermon. But a second revolution of the wheel, in the seventh century of our era, converted Benares once more into a capital of the older faith. Hinduism succeeded in eradicating Buddha's doctrine, and in turning Buddha's

ministers out of their monasteries. It is true that Brahmanism, though revived, could not obliterate the traces of the long Buddhist domination, and Buddha had to be retained in the Hindu hierarchy of gods as one of the incarnations of Vishnu, yet Buddhism itself was dead in the whole of Upper India.

At the present day the only monument of its glory is this great stupa at Sarnath—a solid circular pile, over 100 feet in height, its lower parts of smooth stone, ornamented with bands of beautifully-carved fruit and flowers and neat geometrical patterns, the upper part a rough mound of brick and earth fringed with grass. Its face is adorned at intervals with niches which once must have contained images of the Buddha, and some of the lower stones are at this moment covered with leaves of gold, attached by the Tashi Lama and his followers during their recent pilgrimage to this cradle of their once dominant creed.

The monument was once the centre of a populous city. It now stands in the middle of the silent fields, close to the ruins of a temple and a number of fragments of columns and statues, dug up from the ground, including a stone pillar erected by Asoka. And not far off I see a small cottage, in which dwells a solitary yellow monk, a belated apostle of Nirvana from Ceylon.

The same roof shelters a small school, in which a score of small boys are initiated into the mysteries of the Urdu, Hindi, and English alphabets by a local teacher. They sit on the floor round the room, each boy with a tablet of wood on his knees, a pot of chalk beside him, and a rude reed pen in one hand. He dips the reed into the pot, copies out the characters on the wooden tablet, and so acquires wisdom. Of course, the ultimate aim of the smiling yellow monk, as of other missionaries, is to wean these youths from idolatry. But, methinks, it will be some time ere Buddha's gray gospel is again heard in Benares.

This city, moved by Hinduism triumphant from this polluted site, now spreads along the northern bank of the

Ganges, the most sacred of rivers, whose sources are on the summit of the mythical mount Meru—the Hindu Olympus round which rise in successive tiers the various paradises and upon which shine the Nine Planets.

To this city I return from the grand desolation of Sarnath, and feel at once in the atmosphere of a living faith. Every inch of its soil is hallowed by some temple, shrine, or legend. Every other inhabitant is a saint, or at least a priest.

Among the temples, most amazing is the one dedicated to the goddess Durga, Siva's dread spouse. The building itself is a small structure of red stone, with small massive gates of brass. From the ceiling of the portico hangs a bell, which the worshipper rings as he enters, in order to wake the goddess. Round the quadrangle runs a cloister, in which devout men sit cross-legged, muttering incomprehensible prayers. And over cloisters, columns, and cornices scamper hundreds of sacred apes, the younger sort playing practical jokes on one another, the elders engaged in the more serious occupation of tending their offspring, of scratching their rivals' faces, and of rushing for the roasted Indian corn which the pious throw to them. In the enclosure of the temple stands the block on which are immolated the sacrificial victims.

On landing in India you experience a feeling of relief to find yourself at last in the midst of frank idolatry, after so many centuries of the other thing. Your dormant memories of classical polytheism spring to life again, and you dream of Homeric hecatombs. Would that you never awoke from your dream!

It is the feast of Durga, and you join the myriads of worshippers who throng to her sanctuary, each leading by a string a little kid. The sight of the victim makes your heart feel a trifle heavy. You enter the enclosure of the temple, and you see the grim executioner standing close to the block, with a long curved knife in his hand, and his feet deep in a pool of dark, clotted gore. Your heart sinks. The sinking grows into physical sickness as kid

after kid is rapidly snatched up and brought to the block, bleating for mercy, and you see little head after little head fall into the basket, little body after little body convulsed in the spasms of death. It is the death-blow to your æsthetic craving for sacrificial scenes.

Here is no ritual cloak to hide the horror of slaughter; but the tragedy, stripped of all theatrical pomp, appears in all its nauseating nudity, and your soul revolts at the cold-blooded, butcher-like brutality of the spectacle.

Less revolting, though hardly less humiliating, is the homage paid to the bull of Durga's husband—a grotesque monster of stone painted red, sitting between a holy well and a shrine in which stands a small image of the All-Destroyer and his amiable wife. Crowds of devotees press round the bull of stone, men and women adorning its upturned nostrils with marigold blossoms, sprinkling its legs with holy water, laying votive garlands and grain at its feet, touching its sides with their foreheads, and then departing consoled. Up above the bull hangs a punkah, intended to keep the thing of stone cool during the hot weather, and at night it is covered with blankets.

Close by, amid a swarm of other shrines, stands the holiest of all holy fanes—the Bisheshwar, or Golden Temple. In it is enshrined a plain stone—very square and very sacred—being the symbol of the god Siva, monarch among the gods who reign over the city of Benares; for Bhaironath, the special guardian deity of the city, mighty as he is, is, after all, only Siva's minister of police. The whole net of narrow lanes round this temple is crawling with pilgrims, many of them come from afar in search of consolation.

They come from north, south, east, and west, male and female, young and old, sick and sound, fair and foul, all eager to worship at this great sanctuary of Hindustan, and to prepare themselves for that other pilgrimage from which no pilgrim has ever returned in the same form.

Here they come in long procession, each pilgrim with a bamboo stick across his shoulder, from which are

suspended his brass bowl, his gourd, and two baskets containing bottles in which he will carry home some of the water of the Ganges—if he ever returns home; for the walls of the bazaar are efflorescent with advertisements of specifics for plague and cholera and other things that tend to make return uncertain. Furthermore, the sight is not uncommon of a pilgrim, in various stages of weariness or illness, lying by the roadside, or of a holy mendicant, too weak to complete his round of depredation, sinking suddenly in the street exhausted. But what of that? Benares is a city to which men come ready to face eternity.

Besides these itinerant wretches, many elderly widows, bereft of hope in this world, betake themselves with their savings to the city which affords the surest passport into a better. Their migration is based on the hope of speedy dissolution. But the Old Resident sadly observes that their purses are too short, and Benares, on the whole, too healthy. Consequently death is apt to be unduly slow in coming, and meanwhile many of these tall, rickety houses teem with aged ladies, striving to hide the pain and the shame of hunger in the darkness of their unwholesome attics. Then, there are the starving students of theology and the families of the sick who come here for recovery, and find a happy release from life, leaving their wives and orphans to continue their earthly pilgrimage alone and helpless. The bread of faith is good; but even in Benares man cannot live on metaphors alone.

I thread my way through this maze of lanes, so dusky, so dirty, so crooked, and so crowded with pilgrims, pariah dogs, pundits, cows, fanatics, and peddlers, jostling one another. On either side totter the houses, high and overhanging, with small windows aloft and below small shops redolent of religion. Here are sold Sanskrit volumes of sacred lore; there dangle strings of rosaries. On one counter I see reels of the thread worn by the Brahmans across the breast; on another bundles of the sticks used for cleaning the teeth; on a third baskets of yellow

marigold. And amid these implements of sanctity sit the money-changers, who provide the coin which the priests love. On every side gape niches holding images of the gods, and at every corner stands a shrine—a tiny white-washed summer-house with a pillared portico—enclosing an idol which the faithful sprinkle as they pass with drops of holy water from their brass bowls, or adorn with wreaths and blossoms.

Here is an ascetic, seated behind a brazier of charcoal, shivering in a place where normal humanity perspires. But he is not normal. His arms are withered to the bone, his legs are rigid, his eyes are fixed in vacancy. He is a saint. Having long bidden farewell to the senses, he is now revelling in the passionless joys of an imaginary heaven. He is true to his celestial chimera. He is consistent with himself. He is happy.

A little further on I come face to face with another naked ascetic, lying on a bed bristling with three-pronged nails. He reclines on this horrible couch as comfortably as an Anglo-Indian reclines on his long cane-chair, and far more gracefully. Theoretically, he also holds that it is a good man's duty to make a hell of this life in order to inherit paradise in the next. But the nails, I perceive, are not so sharp as they appear at a distance. He is a holy humbug. But he also is happy, or, at all events, plump.

At every step I collide with a sacred beggar, a sacred bull, a haggard widow, a holy cow, a pilgrim, or a corpse, and suddenly I am brought to a standstill by a procession of the elephant-headed god Ganesh, carried in a litter, with a crowd of ash-sprinkled, absurd fakirs shouting behind and a band shrieking in front. The sacred shell wails dolorously, and the brass instruments bray 'For he is a jolly good fellow!'

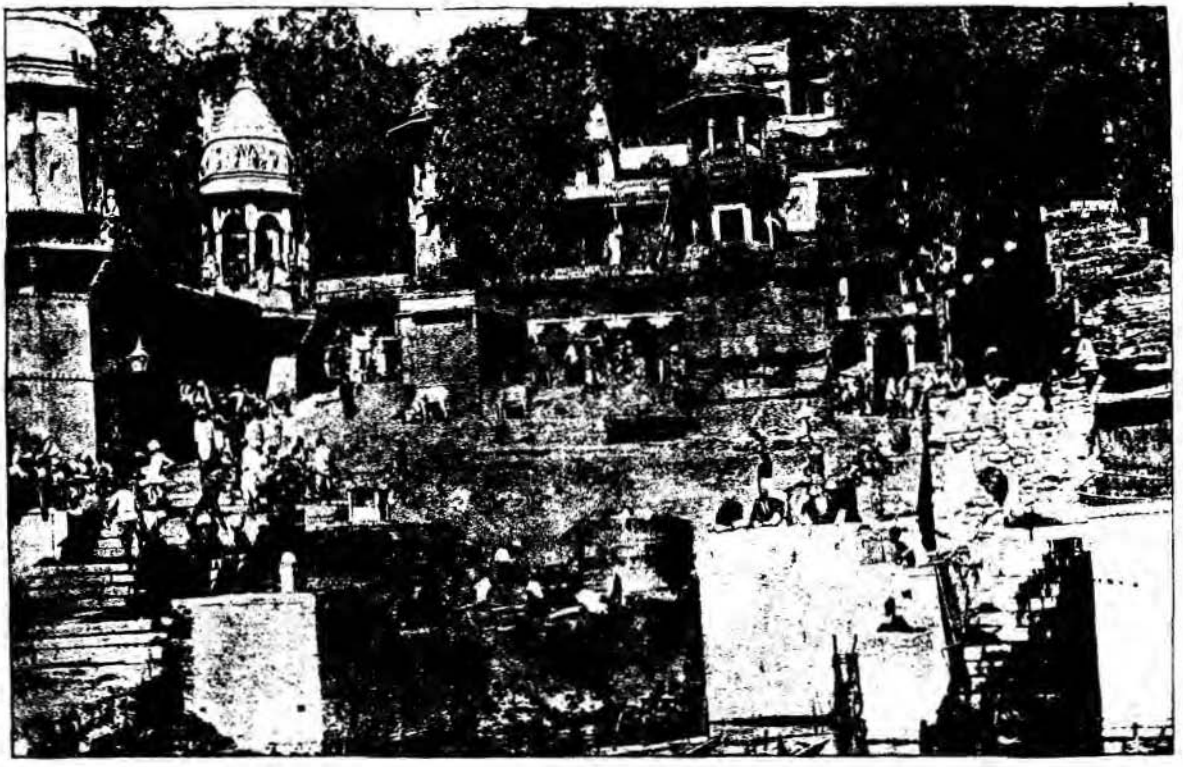
It is a picturesque chaos—a Drury Lane melodrama set in a labyrinth of Eastern gods. It is Benares. It possesses and fascinates you. But the possession gradually becomes an obsession, and your Western soul, satiated

with spiritual hallucinations and the clash of creeds, pants for the freedom of the open air. Fortunately the last act is close at hand.

In front of me I perceive a lumbering buffalo loaded with firewood. He staggers unsteadily down the tortuous lane, and I follow him through the mud which proclaims the vicinity of the river. Soon we both emerge into an open space on the bank of the Ganges. It is the burning ghat. The buffalo kneels down amid the Brahmans and the barbers, the peddlers, the pilgrims, and the cows. The wood is taken off his back, and built up into a small pyre. A human body lies close by, wrapt up in a white shroud, and tied to a framework of bamboo. The pyre completed, it is placed upon it, with the feet towards the river. A few pieces of wood are put on top of it, the mouth is touched with a burning torch, and then the whole is ignited. Gradually the flames blaze up, the man in attendance stokes the fire with a long stick, the body is slowly reduced to ashes and smoke, and the breeze bears to your nostrils a smell which ought to be, but is not, unpleasant.

The relatives of the deceased squat on an elevated platform over the pyre, the chief mourner conspicuous by his clean-shaven head, and they watch the process with scarce a sign of emotion. Now the fire is dying out for want of food. The man in charge throws the ashes into the river, and some poor wretches try to rescue from the stream as much of the charcoal as they can. No one objects, for the ashes are safe in the water, which has the power to wash off sin even after death. Here, again, as in the sacrifice, you are revolted by the absence of all attempt to cloak the horrors of death. The whole thing is done in a cold, bare, perfectly business-like fashion.

In this case cremation was complete; but I am assured that the bodies of children under six years of age are not burnt at all, but simply thrown into the Ganges, while the bodies of people whose relatives cannot afford sufficient firewood are thrown into the river scarcely singed; for the



BURNING THE DEAD, BENARES.

Ganges hallows whatsoever it swallows, and its crocodiles digest it. Frequently bodies are seen floating on the water, and now and again a crocodile shot and ripped open is found harbouring within its stomach bangles, earrings, or human limbs—the leg of a man, or the arm of a child. So much concerning the dead.

Near the ghat stand many stones, set up in memory of the widows who were once burnt alive with their husbands. The custom (*sati*), though rare, is by no means extinct. Not long ago thirteen men were charged with assisting at such a function in Behar. The facts, as set forth in the magistrates' commitment order, constitute a scene which would satisfy the most exacting patron of frenzied fiction.

A certain Brahman died in the village Sanchani on October 8, 1904, and his body was taken to the bank of the neighbouring stream in order to be cremated. Then the widow, having bathed in the river, and adorned herself as for her marriage, took her seat on the pyre, and called on her son to do his duty as a devout Hindu. The son lighted some wheat-stalks, and, having walked round the pyre three times, applied, according to custom, the fire to the mouth of the deceased. This failed to ignite the pyre, and he, with four other Brahmans, proceeded to perform the *humad*, a rite consisting of the burning of incense and the placing of lighted chips of wood, dipped in ghee, under the pyre until it is ignited.

By this time a vast crowd had assembled.

The widow turned towards the setting sun, and when the flames reached her, she moved and writhed about. Finally, she stood up and turned towards the setting sun; but immediately, overcome by the smoke and heat, she fell back into the flames, and was burnt to ashes with the corpse of her husband, amidst cries of

'Sath Ram,
Sita Ram,
Sati Mai,
Ki Jai,'

the beating of drums, the clangour of cymbals, and the blowing of the sacred shell.

The case came to the sessions, and the jury returned a unanimous verdict of guilty against five of the accused, who were sentenced for culpable homicide and abetment of suicide. Similar cases of *sati* I have now and again seen chronicled, without comment, in the native journals, among current events.

Now, it may be worth while to understand a little what we condemn. The widow is never driven to death. In many cases the *sati* is an act of suicide dictated by the religious sense of the victim, and consecrated by immemorial tradition. In other cases it is forced upon her by the iron rule of public opinion, and by her own dread of widowhood. The fidelity to the departed husband's shade which once compelled all respectable women to burn themselves on his funeral pyre nowadays manifests itself usually in the practice which dooms young wives to perpetual widowhood, and all the domestic degradation and filthy misery which that estate involves, even when the bride, wedded in her cradle, is widowed in the nursery. The woman who has lost her husband is regarded as one cursed of Heaven and capable of communicating her curse to the rest of the family. What is more, she believes herself in deep earnest to be accursed and to deserve her loathsome lot. Under these conditions it is easy to understand her willingness to escape self-contempt through the one door left open to her. This is the seamy side of *sati*. But it has another side. There are many instances in which the sacrifice was an act, not of self-destruction only, but of self-devotion, noble and ennobling. From that point of view its condemnation by the law as a crime is ludicrous. At least, I have for this statement the authority of a highly-educated Indian gentleman, and Sister Lucretia pronounces the custom admirable. But, then, she is not a Hindu widow, any more than is the highly-educated Indian gentleman.

For my part, as I walked between those memorial

stones, I felt haunted by the rumble of funeral drums, the clangour of cymbols, the shrill blast of the sacred shell, and the weird chorus:

'Sath Ram,
Sita Ram,
Sati Mai,
Ki Jai,'

and I again saw the widow falling into the flames, with her eyes turned to the setting sun.

But enough of things funereal.

A witty Frenchman once said that, if you want to seize the spirit and the beauty of a place, you must know how to sit down. In Benares it is easy to do so. I descend the slippery bank, and, stepping into one of the numerous houseboats which throng the riverside, I sit down on a basket chair. The boat moves off, and we glide smoothly on the bosom of Mother Ganges.

Here the stream bends into a broad bay, along the steep northern bank of which roam the temples and palaces, shrines and preaching canopies, sacred cows and bulls of Benares, with flights of steep stairs of marble struggling up between the tall buildings. Down these stairs come the women of the city with their brass vessels. They fill them from the river, and, lifting them on their heads, they climb up the steps slowly, jingling their silver anklets. Now and then a sunbeam, darting between the buildings, lingers for a moment upon the brass vessel or silver anklet of the ascending figure. There is a bright glint through the gloom, and next moment vessel and anklet and draped figure are lost in the dark narrow lane aloft.

Down below, along the margin of the river, stretch the broad bathing-ghats—spots pathetic with the credulity of immemorial millions. Five among these ghats are pre-eminent for holiness. To bathe from one of them is to insure pardon for all sins past and to come and to earn eternal salvation. One is ascribed to the goddess Durga herself. It appears that, after a million years' duel with two ambitious demons, she threw her victorious sword on

this spot, and lo! the sword in falling cut out this channel, which the goddess, thereupon, blessed with the gift of cutting away the sins of her worshippers. Another flight of steps derives its name from Brahma's sacrifice of ten horses. On one side of it stands the shrine of Sita, the goddess of small-pox, and on the other a shrine of Siva. Beneath a third five rivers meet, all endowed with a variety of miraculous virtues. Just above a fourth there yawns a well, into which Parvati, Siva's spouse, once dropped her earring. Therefore, in this well, many seek a remedy for disease, and often find it. Not far off is a tank containing a wondrous stone, which grows daily by the size of one grain of millet—but the wonders of Benares are as inexhaustible as the waters of Mother Ganges, the faith of her worshippers, or the greed of her ministers.

These ghostly persons squat along the river-bank, under broad umbrellas of palm leaf, seeking whom they may fleece. Nor is there any lack of victims. All the bathing ghats are at this morning hour alive with pilgrims of all castes and complexions, and the right to initiate them into the mysteries of baptism is a cause for which many a sacerdotal nose has bled. Here they come—Mahrattas, Bengalees, Punjabis, Pathans, natives of Nepal—all eager to wash off their sins in the waves of the Ganges, each flock under the guidance of a pastor, who conducts it to the edge of the river with many a muttered prayer and minute instruction. Now the pilgrims plunge, men and women, and, standing in the water, wash their faces. Then they emerge, purified of the past and fortified for the future, their draperies clinging to their limbs, their hair dripping with mud, their faces shining with spiritual exaltation.

Wealthy citizens have their own private piers, which protrude far into the water, and upon which the bather completes his toilet, tells his beads, and recites his prayers at leisure. Upon similar piers also lie the sick, tended by their friends, and looking into Mother Ganges wistfully for health, or at least for a grave.

High above all soar the palaces of the pious princes whom we have visited in various parts of India—Indore, Udaipur, Jaipur, Gwalior—full of old men and women come to end their days here. One great mansion of stone lies prostrate on the river-bank—a magnificent memorial of a bygone flood. But at this hour Mother Ganges, oblivious of sterner moods and old tragedies, smiles serenely under the rays of the sun. And the crowd goes on creeping up and down the sacred steps, while many a column of blue smoke curls up from many a funeral pyre. It is a picture in which the grand and the pathetic mingle strangely with the preposterous and the gruesome, abolishing all your preconceived ideas of beauty and piety. Your mind is gripped by a mighty doubt as to its own sanity; but it is a doubt that causes no serious inconvenience, for the sun shines up above and the blue river flows calmly beneath, and both are things eminently sane.

Suddenly, from the midst of all this paganism shoots up the great mosque of Aurangzeb. It is, of course, built with the spoils of a Hindu temple, for in Benares, as elsewhere, the hand of Allah may be seen grasping what it created not, reaping where other gods have laboured, and building upon the ruins of the vanquished. It stands scornfully upon the crest of the steep cliff, its massive breastworks spreading down the bank, its slender minarets tapering up into the blue of the sky, a relic of a triumph that is past. For Mahomed has failed in Benares as surely as Buddha, and the faith of Brahma flourishes now as ever.

Only last October a new temple was consecrated at yonder ghat, and in it was installed Siva, the All-Destroyer, in strict accordance with the traditions of old, including rich gifts to the pundits and Brahmans and a permanent refuge for destitute pilgrims and religious students. For the maintenance of the establishment the pious founder has allotted two lakhs of rupees and many acres of land. Munificence to the gods and their ministers still is in India the most meritorious method by which man can aspire to

immortality, and the Maharaja was acclaimed by the citizens of Benares as an enlightened man.

Another event showing the vigour of Hinduism in a city where Mahomedan mosques and Christian missions mark the discomfiture of rivals old and new, is the recent visit of a certain holy man, Harribole Thakur by name, who came with a body of disciples, chanting, curing the sick, and altogether creating an immense sensation. Other parts of India may have succumbed to the violence of foreign conquerors and the fervour of new creeds. Benares still is what she was in the beginning: the impregnable citadel of Hinduism, the oracle of orthodoxy, and a short cut to heaven.

The sun has set across the Ganges; the stars have not yet risen. It is that grim and hollow truce between day and darkness which men out here persist, with unconscious cynicism, in calling twilight. It is the borderland between the world of deeds and the world of dreams.

The cows are coming home from their pastures, lowing sadly, their humps drooping as though under the weight of immemorial transmigrations. The crows also are seeking their nests for the night, and all the space in creation that is left vacant by the lowing of the cattle is filled by the hoarse cawing of the birds. How harsh it sounds, how sinister, how unholy! It makes one think of dead bodies unburied.

The flying-foxes—giant bats—are flapping their wings noiselessly in the air; and their dark, ghostly forms, as they sail across the pale heavens, add an uncanny feeling to the gathering shadows.

From yon screen of mango-trees come the voices of the servants chanting sleepily in the gloom. The song is mournful, but the singers are, no doubt, happy. It is a happiness subtler than the happiness of joy, this happiness which man finds in his misery, and more enduring than life. It is spirit-soothing, and it exhausts not that on which it feeds. It is restful and everlasting as death.

Has not solitude also its song, and is there no poetry in old cemeteries? And here I am in the greatest and oldest of all cemeteries—a land peopled with the tombs of the past, the very air heavy with the dust of things dead. The song of those servants is the latest echo, borne to me across the centuries, of a music that was old in Abraham's babyhood.

Hark! ding, dong; ding, dong; ding, dong. The bell of the mission church down in the plain penetrates the dolorous chant with its smart, aggressive, masterful clangour: dong, dong, dong . . . dong, dong, dong . . . dong, dong. . . .

How familiar it sounds, and yet how foreign by the banks of the Ganges; and how superfluous! Carrying creeds to Hindustan—is it not like carrying coals to Newcastle? Convert the Hindus! You might as hopefully attempt to convert the Pyramids. These ancient patriarchs who have lived so long, seen so much, suffered so much, and survived so much, are they to be instructed in the mysteries of the grave by men of yesterday? It is not creed, my friend, that India needs, but character.

But the message the good missionaries bring to India is not really that which they think. The means they use is the real end, and their most effective sermons are those which they never preach.

Far away to the south the railway-engine whistles shrilly. That is the message. It is the voice of the West calling unto the East: Sister, wake! . . .

Then all sounds human and of things human are hushed; a subtle smell mingles with the dusk, and deeper grows the gloom. Night has fallen, soft and swift, as it falls on the plains.

A fire-fly gleams intermittently across the shade of the trees, its cold, tremulous light illumining nothing but itself, and the cricket begins his song. It is a land where the cricket chirps all through the year, and his song is monotonous and mournful, like that of the other natives of the land. In the solitude of the night he is your companion

and your counsellor. But he only brings the refrain to a music of other than terrestrial birth. Your eye is subject to the power of the night as well as your ear. The stars sparkle up above in their myriads. Heaven and earth murmur the majesty and the mystery and, alas! also the monotony of things. The soporific spell of the East is upon you. It is a spell potent enough to make a philosopher of a shoeblack or of a schoolmaster—a philosopher or a fakir.

Yet, in the midst of your captivity you feel strangely free. The fetters of personality have fallen from off your soul, as by the touch of a magician's wand. You have attained peace. Is it the peace of everlasting life or of everlasting sleep? Are you in Calypso's fairy grotto or in Circe's pigsty? You cannot tell, you care not to inquire.

Detached from yourself, you are borne aloft on the wings of an unseen power. Higher and higher you soar, unresisting; but your eyes are turned to the earth. You see the smallness of terrestrial things You see your old self far below: how puny he looks; how paltry the things for which he battles! You smile at him sadly.

Higher you soar and yet higher. The earth has dwindled to a speck in the abyss below. You are confronted with the infinity of creation. You are absorbed in the universal—heaven and earth are no longer; you are no longer; nothing is but a great immensity—endless, shapeless, vaguely terrible. . . .

But you are a novice at celestial flights. You are too modern, too Western, too young for the empyrean. Your wings are tired, the secret power has lost its virtue, and down you come back to solid earth again.

It is all a matter of perspective, you reflect. Yes, but things that may seem small when viewed from the standpoint of the stellar universe are stupendous when seen from your own arm-chair. To me at this moment yon earthy fire-fly looms larger—*is* larger—than any member of that heavenly chorus of immeasurable magnitudes which whirl through eternal space over yon vast fair of light

and mystery. It may be, as the Enlightened One will have it, all illusion. *Quid tum?* I am part of that illusion, and must play my part therein.

But though roused—or is it reduced?—to sanity, you are no longer the same person. Through the silence of the stars a voice has spoken. The lesson the night has taught abides with you by day. You have brought back from the empyrean a torch which will illumine many dark nooks. Rhythm and order are now revealed in what was formerly chaos. You now understand the man of the East. You understand the fascination which the enigma of existence has for the Eastern mind—the eternal questions: How? Why? Whence? Whither? the desire to penetrate into the origin, the meaning and the purpose of things. All these cosmic riddles grow more important in your eyes than any sublunary problems, domestic, political, or social, ever were.

And when you find Herbert Spencer better known among educated Indians than Conan Doyle, and a work on the Immortality of the Soul more popular than any detective story, you are no longer surprised. Nor are you any longer astonished at the Indian fellow-traveller who on board the steamer studied 'The Religions of the World,' while your English friends were skimming the 'Molly Monologues' or the 'Joys of Jehovah.' You are no longer puzzled to find the native daily Press teeming with notices of nightmares like these: 'The Real and the Apparent Man,' 'The Ideal of Universal Religion,' 'Imitation of Buddha,' etc. You have mastered the fact, queer and undeniable, that the subtleties of metaphysics thrill the Eastern heart more deeply than the amours of armoured knight and lady fair ever thrilled the hearts of your medieval ancestors, or fiscal problems ever thrilled their degenerate son, and you know why it is so.

* * * * *

Such is the East as she appears to the Western eye—aged, disappointed, dispirited; dull, inert, resigned; knowing no moderation; giving to speculation the time she

ought to devote to action; underfed and over-philosophic; —fatalism and supine apathy interrupted at times by emotional extravagance; ascetic and tolerant mysticism suddenly, if rarely, superseded by wild fanaticism. Millions of passive believers spurred now and again to *frenzy by a Messiah, or a Mahdi, or a Mullah. But,* as a rule, enormous forces slumbering the sleep of Epimenides. Everywhere you are confronted with the wisdom of age and its dignity, with the infirmity of age and its decay.

Such is the East, still unchanged in her depths, but on the highroad to great changes. The old lady is no longer allowed to spin her metaphysical cobwebs in peace. For good or for evil—who can tell or need trouble to inquire? —she is now disturbed from her senile dreams by a fashionable and forward young wench who, herself unable to sleep, will suffer no one else to do so.

She is bursting with high activity, this young person, and will not rest until she has stirred the aged dame to the joys of this life, the miseries of this life, the sordid ambitions of this life—to what she calls a sense of human power and responsibility; to the superior beauty of inquiry over acquiescence. Will she succeed?

Let us look more closely at this self-appointed guardian of the universe. Having succeeded in shaking herself more or less free from the thraldom to the spiritual, she is strenously pursuing material aims through material means. Action, conquest, physical culture, plain-thinking and rapid living—these are her aspirations. She is young, she is confident, she is optimistic. What chance has the poor aged East against such a champion of emancipation?

The struggle is a struggle between two great powers: 'to do' pitted against 'to be.' What will the result be? The present observer does not feel competent, or, indeed, bound, to prophesy. And yet, unless Japan is a freak, prophecy is not so hard a matter. To Japan applies every word said in the foregoing pages regarding the East generally. I read that in Japan, as in India, man is taught that personal glory or gain is nothing; that the individual

must sacrifice himself to the community; that all that the living man does is done to earn the approbation of the dead. Caste, poverty, humility, self-denial—these, I understand, are the Japanese ideals. Now, these are ideals in which I firmly do not believe, as producers of what we call success. They may enable a man to climb to heaven, but nowhere else. And yet Japan has succeeded. Her success, I suppose, is due to a modification of those ideals. India is more logical and more uncompromising. But perhaps it is only a question of time. At all events, in India at this hour the wrestle between the two powers is far, very far, from being decided.

CHAPTER XXV

A DAY IN THE DOAB, AND SOME REFLECTIONS

A VAST alluvial plain, green, flat, and uninspiring. Embraced by the Ganges on one side, and the Jumna on the other, this broad expanse of verdure, even in this year of little water, smiles the fat, complacent smile of one who knows not the horrors of famine.

Here and there the eye, sad with excess of pleasure, is met by the dry, white glitter of patches of salt-crusted desolation, and it hails these interludes to the monotony of colour with the same perverse gratitude with which the ear, wearied of Beethovian and Wagnerian melodies, receives the arid banalities of the street organ.

In the midst of the district slumbers its obsolete city Koil—a city of drowsy tradesmen, shabby ekkas, tumble-down dwellings, and decrepit little donkeys—clustering under the scant shadow of a mosque, modern and dilapidated—for the Asiatic never repairs. This mosque is perched on a little hill, or big mound, which springs from the plain like the boss in the centre of an old shield. Round this modest height clusters not only the capital but also the history of the Doab.

The origin of the city is traced by popular tradition to a hero of the race of the Moon, and its appellation to another hero, Balaram, the slayer of demons, who thought fit to commemorate one of his performances by bestowing on the city the name of one of his victims, Kol. From this period of fiends and their victorious foes we pass by a heroic stride to the times of the Rajput chiefs who ruled over Koil and its lands until the end of the twelfth cen-

tury. Then they were forced to yield the sceptre to the Mahomedan invaders, who came, under Kutab-ud-din, seeking glory for their Prophet and acres for themselves. On the approach of the apostle, all those who were, in the words of the Mahomedan chronicler, 'wise and shrewd,' hastened to embrace the new creed, while all those who foolishly prized conviction above comfort were granted the crown of martyrdom which they deserved.

Next came the fiery Timur, and Koil shared the sorrows of the rest of India, until the reign of Akbar, when it became part of a solid and united Empire. The religious ardour of Islam at its zenith is still visible in the numerous shrines and worshippers of Allah which render the district the stronghold of a vigorous and self-conscious Mahomedanism. But, if the mosques and tombs of Koil proclaim the triumph of the Koran, its large population of sacred monkeys affords even more emphatic evidence of the vitality of the older faith. Indeed, two-thirds of the inhabitants are still Hindus, and the two communities prove at times of festivity that they are not utterly insensible to the charm of religious antagonism. An insult offered by a procession of Mahomedan revellers to a monkey or to a peepul-tree is sufficient to rouse the dormant antipathy to fury, and then there is much brandishing of sticks and bleeding of noses.

Aligarh, or Ali's Fort—a large fort surrounded by a deep moat outside the city—forms a standing memorial of the later history of the district. The power and piety of the Moghuls had to bow in time before the power and the rapacity of the Mahrattas; these conquerors made place for the Jats; the Jats, in their turn, were expelled by the Afghans; the Afghans succumbed to the reanimated greed of the Mahrattas; and these, under the French adventurer Perron, held Ali's Fort till 1803, when the British, under Lord Lake, after a battle that was no battle, encamped under its walls, to find them defended by a formidable coalition of French intelligence and Mahratta courage. But neither availed. After a vigorous assault

the fort was subdued, and with it the whole of this plain.

The peace was broken during the Mutiny, when Koil for a few weeks was converted into a scene of pillage and arson, until the precarious alliance between Hindu and Mahomedan came to its predestined end, the older feuds awoke to their customary fury, the house divided against itself fell with the facility natural to such houses, and the district relapsed into submission, henceforth to form an administrative section of the British Raj, the seat whereof is in the civil station of Aligarh—a suburban excrescence of the native city of Koil, but separated from it by centuries of culture and oceans of racial aloofness. The only proof of sympathy between the white station and the black town that I have been able to discover is due to the agency of a demon. It came about as follows:

There lived a few years ago in Koil a certain Hindu whose children were in the habit of dying prematurely. The afflicted father consulted a learned and pious Brahman, who attributed the calamity to the agency of an evil demon, and advised him, in order to baffle the demon's malignity, to give to his next born a strange name. Soon after the Hindu's wife gave birth to a boy. Mr. Smith was then magistrate of Aligarh. The Hindu reflected: 'What name can be more potent to ward off evil than the great Sahib's?' The upshot of this cogitation is a number of black urchins in Koil known by the name of Smith.

But it is rarely that the observer can discern even a demoniacal connection between a native city and the Anglo-Indian colony which rusticates in its immediate neighbourhood; as a rule, the relations of the two are characterized by mutual and total indifference, almost amounting to ignorance of each other's existence.

They are very small, these Anglo-Indian colonies, and very quaint—tiny bits of Europe dropped into the map of Asia, as if by a merry freak of the gods, and vaguely conscious of their incongruity. The picture of one may serve for all. A score of straggling huts that try to look

like houses; each hut surmounted by a roof of straw sloping unevenly on all sides, and resting on a low arched veranda. This is the Anglo-Indian bungalow: a pastoral palace in the middle of a garden shaded by the peepul, the banyan, or the neem, scented by the soporific fragrance of mango blossoms, and shielded by a hedge of aloe or cactus from the inroads of the sacred, lawless bulls. In this garden there is a plot in which each household grows its own cabbages, and a pond in which it breeds its own mosquitoes.

The colony spreads over an area out of all proportion to its population, for every one of its score of bungalows sprawls in thatched isolation, preaching silently, yet emphatically, the lesson that Asiatics and other common animals may love to herd together; the sahib, like the lion, prefers to be alone.

Frequently the colony consists of a few military men, who teach the sorrows of discipline to a detachment of turbaned troops; a few Civil Servants, who teach the joys of justice and taxation to the children of the soil; and a contingent of apostles of various denominations, determined to convert the children of the soil to a faith on which they themselves cannot agree.

A day spent in such a station is a nightmare for ever. The first sound that wakes you at dawn is the dull whoofing of the monkeys in the compound, and the last sound that lulls you to sleep at night is the yelling of the jackals outside. In the daytime the green parrots chatter on the thatch overhead, and the brown servants on the veranda; so that it is good to escape from their guttural garrulity into the open air. There the wasps buzz in the sunlight, the birds twitter sleepily in the shade of the trees, and the squirrels run up and down the trunks, trilling absurdly. The kites, crows, and vultures sail across the blue of the sky, tacking and veering with great amplitude of wing; and the butterflies flit aimlessly from shrub to shrub. Now and then is heard the crowing of a distant cock, and, as the sun declines, you are depressed

by the insistent wail of the wild dove and the melancholy monotone of the koel. In the daytime this bird utters a lugubrious cry, suggesting no sound ever heard in Christendom; its evening call is a sepulchral combination of the call of an Indian cuckoo and the hooting of a Christian owl.

It is the last note of day defeated, and, hark! from yonder comes the first voice of night, triumphant and discordant. It is the voice of a sweet-vendor, singing his unwholesome viands aloud, at intervals, as he goes down the road:

'Badam er nokul daná,
Tatká Chadjá, ellaché daná.'

The chant grows fainter and fainter in the distance. Now you can scarcely hear it. Now it is dead and gone, and the mind doubts whether it has actually heard it, or dreamt of it.

It is all profoundly strange to you, and to you profoundly grotesque: the people who dwell in the land, and the gods whom they worship; the beasts of the field, the fowls of heaven, the smells which fill the air—yea, the very trees and vegetables and flowers which grow from the soil; all things, save the stars that sparkle in the sky—and even these shine with a light that is new. All is alien to you, and you are a stranger in the land.

You repair to the sanctuary, round which centres the life of the European colony. There, at least, you think, you will find a world which you understand. It turns out to be a sanctuary of billiards, bridge, whisky and soda; and it is designated the Club. Here all the world assembles evening after evening, the ladies in one room, the gentlemen in another, and forthwith the more strenuous among them devote themselves to the card-table. The remnant seek spiritual consolation in the conscientious perusal of the old newspapers. Among these teachers the most highly revered are *Punch*, *Truth*, and the *Sporting Times*—for the Anglo-Indian, if not a great wit, is a great sportsman, and his wife speaks of tigers in terms of con-

siderable familiarity, almost of contempt. A savoury scandal now and then comes to stir the stagnant waters of the social pool, and to remind the man and woman of the mofussil that they belong to civilization. But, for the rest, life to the denizen of an Anglo-Indian station means what it meant to the ancient Bœotians.

Aligarh, however, is a station differing in several important respects from the typical. It is entirely civil, and almost entirely secular; some of its bungalows have exchanged the picturesque thatch for a tiled roof; the place of the febriculous tank is, in some cases, filled by a deep well, up and down whose incline toil the patient bullocks, straining at the huge bucket painfully; the gardens bloom with multitudinous beauty; the monkeys confine their operations to the native city; and, lastly, the station possesses a distinctive feature and a fountain of stimulating rivalry in the great Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College. It was this institution that caused the Prince and Princess of Wales to honour Aligarh with a fleeting, private visit on the eve of their departure from India, and me to accord it a place in these pages.

The college was founded in 1875 with the object of rousing the Mahomedans of India from their proud lethargy, and enabling them to compete with their Hindu rivals in the race for prosperity generally, and Government patronage especially. The State schools, while affording to all sects alike the means of advancement in this life, make no provision for the next. The Mahomedans wanted an institution capable of insuring success in both worlds. The result was this establishment, begun as a small school of fifty boys, and now numbering eight hundred students of all ages, who live, five or six together, round spacious courts, reading in big books, riding on horses, praying five times a day in a beautiful private mosque, and playing tennis, hockey, cricket, and football, with their white shirts flowing outside their baggy trousers, and the tassels of their fezes dangling gracefully behind.

Thus equipped with accomplishments both sacred and profane, the bearded graduates sally forth into the world eager for the fray and carrying the gospel of intellectual and muscular emancipation to their bigoted brethren in the four quarters of the globe; for among these curiously-attired youths I have found not only natives of all parts of India, but also sons of Persia, Arabia, and Africa, both Sunnis and Shiahs, sent by their parents to the one institution in the East which affords a successful blend of ancient piety and modern culture such as the true believer needs.

Despite this wide appreciation, however, and an official encouragement which the Hindus describe by the nasty name of favouritism, the college is still engaged in a constant struggle with the forces of popular obscurantism, whose hostility is chiefly manifested in a passive resistance to all appeals for financial support. Nevertheless, the Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College of Aligarh has vindicated its utility by its growth.

To me the real significance of this institution lies in the fact that it is a fruit of indigenous effort. It is the practical expression of a conviction, formed by certain Mahomedan gentlemen of the district thirty years ago, that an obstinate adherence to the traditions and the methods of the past was incompatible with success in the present. These men realized that their community could not recover the position which it once held, unless it adopted a system of education consonant with modern thought. Its rapid growth proves that, despite opposition, inevitable and intelligible, the idea which gave birth to the college is gaining ground even among the least progressive section of the Indian people.

Nor is this an isolated instance. India, as a whole, is at this moment going through a kind of agitation similar to that which Europe went through five hundred years ago, or—an even closer parallel—to that of Israel in the middle of the eighteenth century. She is in the throes of her Renaissance. The old warfare between Humanism

and Obscurantism is revived here under a new form, and it is not hard to recognise in the India of to-day all the characteristic products of a period of transition, from the extreme worshipper of all that is Western to the extreme zealot for all that is Eastern. The fascination of the new impels some to iconoclasm; the charm of the familiar inspires more with conservatism. The shallow renegade and the fanatical reactionary are both here at this hour. But between these two extremists, each intoxicated with his peculiar enthusiasm, there is growing a class of sober thinkers who, recognising what the West has to teach them, frankly welcome the lesson; but, also, recognising what the West cannot teach, smile indulgently. This is the class which, I think, will prevail in the end. But that end still is very distant. Occidental culture has as yet touched only the fringe of the Indian world. The women of India have hardly as yet felt the breath of the new spirit, while the peasants still are in the condition in which they were as far back as our knowledge of the history of man goes. And it is perhaps essential to remember that the women form more than one-half of the section which has come, however feebly, under Occidental influence, and that this section itself, compared with the whole, is like one tree in a jungle. Yes, the end still is very distant.

Meanwhile, India's temperament is clearly illustrated by her temples. A Hindu temple may be considered as an embodiment in stone of the genius of the country. There are no alpine peaks here, but the highest summit is a level tableland; no deep valleys, but boundless plains. India knows no lively conflict between sombre, snow-clad mountain and smiling meadow. Everything is dull, placid, and passive, conducing to meditation and to idleness. The dominant note is breadth and rest rather than loftiness or action. I cannot imagine a native of this country producing a drama.

The spire of the West exists here only as an exotic and inartistic monument to the foreigner's æsthetic callous-

ness. But even the tapering minaret of Turkey, which already in Egypt has lost much of its aërial lightness and jejune grace, here has dwindled altogether in height and multiplied in number. The houses are distinguished by the flat roof and not by the pointed gable. Their arches and cloisters, which succeed one another in an endless arithmetical progression, show no originality of conception either in their plan or in their ornaments, but only an infinite patience in execution. Incredible multiplicity of detail and absence of individuality are the characteristics of a land rich in artisans, but singularly poor in artists.

These are to some extent characteristics common to the whole of the East. Already in the ancient Egyptian sculptures you see the limbs clinging to the body, stiff and lifeless, and the figures repeating themselves in indefinite series, all alike in expression and attitude, none daring to distinguish itself from its fellows.

Also note the absence of all effort at organic combination. In the sculptures of India there are no groups, but only aggregates of units. Look at these units again. The image of a Hindu god is a masterpiece of slavish industry, arm added to arm, eye to eye, and head to head, until an attempt to express the omnipotence and omniscience of the deity results in a revolting monstrosity.

The West has achieved her highest triumphs by simplification. The East still carries on the more primitive process of amplification. Look at embroidery and carving, pattern within pattern, painstaking, minute and barbaric. Listen to the popular songs, one note repeated again and again without variation or relief. Watch the so-called dramatic performances of the Indian dancing-girls. They consist of one initial *motif*, reiterated again and again, until the chief guest, bored, gives the signal for departure. There is no reason why the entertainment should last longer any more than why it should have lasted so long. Then open any Eastern book: the Hebrew Bible, the Koran, the 'Arabian Nights,' the 'Laws of Manu'—in all

you will find sentence following sentence, detail added on to detail, without any more variety of connection than an 'and' or a 'but,' the whole—if whole can be called what has no beginning or end—inorganic, loose, susceptible of infinite extension, like the arches of a cloister, the beads of a fakir's rosary, or a string of camels in a caravan. And the style is a faithful image of the substance, as is shown in the oceanic speculations of Hindu philosophy.

The dome of the Hindu temple is an object-lesson in itself. Each horizontal layer projects a little further in than the one below it, until the two opposite piers of the arch come so close together that they may be joined by a single stone, thus forming a cone, circular or pyramidal. This is the Hindu arch, a symbol of the deductive turn of the Hindu mind, of its conservatism and its lack of resource. Any child playing with toy bricks would hit on this device. The marvel is that the Hindu mind has never outgrown its childish discovery. It has devoted all its energy and ingenuity to the elaboration and embellishment of this primitive arch instead of developing it. It is one more proof of arrested growth.

A writer, commenting on this subject, has well said: 'The parts of the Hindu arch are in stable equilibrium; each stone supports its proper share of the weight, and consequently a well-built Hindu temple may last practically for ever, unless disturbed by the action of external forces.' These words might be applied to the whole of Hindu life. It is a pyramid in which the individual stones count for nothing, and serve only to support each other: witness the constitution of Indian society. Its unit is not the individual, or even the family, but the village. The principle on which it rests is the sacrifice of man to the community. The manner in which this principle manifests itself is a tyrannous control of each member of the community by the whole. It is a primitive constitution, characteristic of all human society in its infancy, but in India elaborated and amplified as scrupulously as everything else. The village, with its hundred sleepless

and highly inquisitive eyes, watches every one of its inhabitants day and night, and everyone feels that he or she is expected to eat and drink, to dress and undress, to bathe, pray, get married, and die according to the rules sanctioned by authority, hallowed by antiquity, and obeyed by the whole world implicitly. A breach of any one of these rules is visited with a social ostracism more terrible than death. In an Indian village he is the most virtuous who is most like everyone else.

From this broad, flat, eternal basis rise, tier after tier, the social castes, culminating in the absolute monarch who derives his authority from heaven. The principal, perhaps the sole, merit of this system, as of the temple, is its stability. 'It may last practically for ever, unless disturbed by the action of external forces.'

Turn wherever you may, you are confronted with proofs of feminine passivity and fecundity, and of the absence of all virile masterfulness or independence. The very trees in this part of the world are apt to grow on the communal system. Each of them consists of a multitude of stems, the whole spreading abroad instead of aspiring upward. If I were asked to name a symbol of Hindu life, I should choose, not the palm, but the banyan-tree.

Industry applied to the infinitely small, subtlety wasted on the infinitely insignificant, earnestness revealing itself in infantile *naïveté*—these are the virtues of the Eastern soul, and the result is infinitely absurd.

The East has no genius. For, in truth, genius is a form of divine egotism; and the Asiatic has no more conception of the Ego than a man has in a dream.

All this resolves itself into conservatism on one hand and into uniformity on the other; conscientious obedience to authority, blind adherence to tradition. Your very servants show this tendency; slow to learn the slightest innovation, they are even slower to unlearn an old habit. They were born to move in a procession, each doing a limited task, and doing it thoroughly, so long

as he is allowed to do it in the manner in which his forefathers did it before the Flood.

The material is here, and the industry to work upon it; also the sincerity, such as one can have who has never learnt what it is to be himself; yet the work of art is not produced. You can bring yourself to admire Indian architecture, sculpture, or painting by a mental wrench; but if you are candid, if you are true to your ideals of beauty, you will feel bound to say: 'Verily, India has no Art.' To say what my platitudinarian friend is fond of saying, that there are different conceptions of beauty, is tantamount to saying that there are different conceptions of health or of truth, which is manifest nonsense. Emerson realized these defects of the Eastern mind, as shrewdly as he realized so much else, when he said: 'All our great debt to the Oriental world is of this kind, not utensils and statues of the precious metal, but bullion and gold-dust.'

Before the Oriental can become an artist he must become an individual man, and, in order to become an individual man, he must become a dissenter; he must learn to say 'No.' As it is, he is only capable of assent. Hence an unlimited faculty for self-suppression and self-abasement, and an utter absence of the desire for self-expression or the ability for self-reverence.

All this is mightily puzzling and irritating at first. In face of this life you experience a curious kind of dislocation—you feel as if you suddenly found yourself in another man's clothes. The world around you and its inhabitants are strange; the perspective is new; the standards of judgment of beauty, of music, of morals, the customs and costumes and colours, the men, beasts, birds, and plants, the scales on which things natural and things human are built, are all novel. You move in a world unfamiliar, unreal, and fantastic, like a fancy-dress ball or a dyspeptic dream.

But by degrees you come to understand this world and to tolerate it, for admire it you cannot. It is a carnival of the grotesque—viewed from without; but when these

things, which offend the Western eye, are viewed in relation to their environment, they are found to possess, not, indeed, the harmony of a Greek temple, but the harmony of all that is natural and consistent with itself. All these features are as natural to India as is the elephant. It is the presence of the white man that makes them look grotesque, by contrast. He is a stain on the landscape, a defiance of Nature's laws, a sort of an indignity to the Creator.

You acquire this comprehension and tolerance in the best possible way—by considering the effect of environment and climate upon yourself, and then multiplying it by several thousand generations. You find that, after a few hot seasons in India, you have lost much of the springiness and spontaneity which, perhaps, once animated you. You are never wrought to any high pitch of enthusiasm. Your likings and your dislikings grow less vehement; your mind loses in intensity what it may have gained in extension; your temperament is attuned to the limitlessness of the landscape, and the leisured languor of the life around you. Time and space lose their meaning, and your spirit is rocked to a rest which you are inclined to call soul-soothing or soul-searing, according to the mood of the moment. You discover in yourself a faculty for slow, minute elaboration, which you had never suspected. On the other hand, gone is that divine frenzy—that fever of the brain which made you forget meals by day and sleep by night: it is gone from you for ever. No more travails of the soul, no more new births, but a patient upbringing of such offspring as the mortals may have already inflicted upon you.

Yet this state of things also has its charm, though it may be only the charm of sleep. Why try to wake the man of the East? Why disturb the equilibrium of the social arch which he loves? His existence, viewed from within, is so perfect, so well rounded off, so full of poetic unity—so much nearer to that terrible Power which acts by law, taking no account of individuals, and, therefore,

philosophically, so much superior to ours. If it lacks the beauty of progress, it possesses the fascination of permanence. And yet, is not permanence too dearly purchased, if the price to be paid for it is self-abasement?

This Hindu conservatism, the Old Resident informs me, has been immensely strengthened by the triumphs of the Japanese, and dreams are now dreamed in Hindustan of a new civilization, wholly Eastern and untainted by the coarse materialism of the West, to which India will supply the thought, China the ethics, and Japan the artistic expression. The hope, if vain, is perfectly legitimate. They who possess nothing in the present have the best right to claim a portion of the future.

THE END

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