THROUGH INDIA WITH THE PRINCE

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE ROYAL TOUR.

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CHAPTER I

BOMBAY

A TINY peninsula, almost an island, of bright-coloured quaintness, rising out of the Arabian waters, its hem fringed with rugged palm-clad islets, bold promontories, and busy docks, amid which the white wings of countless sailing vessels glide, flashing in the sunlight. Behind them bristle the masts of bigger craft, and columns of black smoke are belched forth from grimy funnels. This is Bombay, 'The Eye of India,' viewed from the sea—a picture of many brilliant colours and many promises, embedded in green foliage and framed by the distant blue range of the Western Ghats. And as the eye dwells upon this entrancing picture, the mind wanders back to the Queen of the Adriatic and her departed greatness. You are tempted to describe Bombay the Beautiful as the Venice of the East—a Venice robbed of her canals and her campanile and the songs of ever-enamoured gondoliers, but rich in a charm of a subtler and stranger sort.

Such is the first impression of the capital of the western Presidency of British India—a vast tract of territory once partitioned among many independent realms of unrest, now comprising twenty-four quiet British districts and a score of native States, whose rulers enjoy a safe, if limited, freedom under the British ægis. It stretches on the north to Baluchistan and the Punjab; on the east to the Maḥratta

State of Indore, the Central Provinces, and the dominions of the Nizam of Hyderabad; on the south to the Presidency of Madras and the State of Mysore—all of them lands which we will visit at our leisure, if the gods permit.

Meanwhile this city, in its history and present population, is a shorthand summary of the whole province, and, indeed, of a great deal more. At the time when it came to King Charles II., as part of the dowry of a Portuguese bride, Bom Bahia, or the Beautiful Bay, was an insignificantly picturesque cluster of islets, with a sparse population living on dried fish, cocoanuts, and golden sunsets. To-day, second to Calcutta in size, it surpasses all cities, not only of the Indian Empire, but of the world, in wealth and in variety of human types. Within its twenty-five square miles of brick and stone and painted wood are packed three-quarters of a million of Oriental souls—packed more densely than are the thousands which languish in the slums of London—house pressed against house, and each house in itself a colony of families.

There is no creed, no caste, no colour, no costume, on earth which does not contribute its note to this motley symphony. As you look out of your window you see the streets below swarming with all the shades of complexion that the skin of man is capable of: from the blackest coffee of the tropics, through the intermediate gradations of chocolate-brown, to the pale amber of Central Asia. For, though the soul of Hindustan may be uniformly dark, her children are of all colours. As you elbow your way through the busy, crowded bazaars, you collide with absent-minded Jains, still firmly attached to the Buddhist chimeras which formed the established religion throughout the Indian peninsula two thousand years ago—a small remnant of a host once mighty; with self-admiring Brahmans, the solemn exponents of an even more hoary orthodoxy; with despised and in many ways despicable Sudras; with the more cordially despised, and in a greater variety of ways despicable, pariahs—pessimistic-looking, sullen wretches, yet the only people who in this land of

self-inflicted bondage could call their souls their own, had they any; with followers of the Prophet of Mecca—hawk-eyed Arabs, soft Persians, dignified Turks, aquiline Afghans, vivacious Malays—in their green, gold-broidered turbans, red fezes, or brown coils wound round white headkerchiefs, in their black beards, and imperturbable self-respect; with haughty Mahrattas, in towering red and white head-dresses; with vulpine banias, or traders, in conical crimson turbans; with keen-nosed, cash-absorbed and absorbing Jews; with shrewd Armenians, undistinguished Christian converts, ebony-faced negroes, poor and cheerful; with Chinese, pig-tailed, prosperous, and mournful; with trousered and topee'd supercilious Europeans; and those unfortunate mistakes who in their name, as well as in their complexion, dress, and character, constitute a curious coalition between Europe and Asia—the hapless, casteless Eurasians, children of both continents and recognised by neither. I wonder what it means to be the disinherited of two worlds.

But, beyond question, the most notable unit in this congeries of nations is the colony of Parsis—some 50,000 sleek disciples of *Zoroaster* in upright mitres of glossy black cardboard and black frock-coats, who, expelled from Iran in the days of yore by the two-edged sword of Ali, drifted to these shores, whither they have carried, along with their headgear, their faith, their aloofness, and their aptitude for financial enterprise—all these qualities intensified by the loss of political independence. To this colony Bombay owes the largest measure of her prosperity.

The Parsis are the Jews of the East—conspicuous out of all proportion to their numbers, clever, mutually helpful, jealous of their tribal distinctions, abhorring proselytes, rigidly tenacious of essentials, yielding in matters of detail, supple, versatile, munificent, and patriotic in a parochial sense. They are strangers in the land of their fathers, and, after twelve centuries' sojourn, still aliens in that of their adoption. Everywhere and nowhere at home, everywhere and nowhere powerful, these worshippers of Ormuzd

and his rival live in profound social isolation, tempered by the commercial exploitation of their neighbours.

Thus they live in their elegant suburban villas on the sea-girt slopes of Malabar Hill, comfortably; and, when they die, they are neither burnt like the Hindus nor buried like the Mahomedans and Christians, but they are exposed on those grim Towers of Silence which stand—low, sullen blocks of gray stone—on the gray rocks overlooking the western ocean. Green trees grow in strange abundance out of these gray rocks, shrouding the slopes and surrounding the gloomy sepulchres. But these trees, like the rocks and the towers, suggest, not life, but the grave.

The sun had just sunk in the Arabian Sea as, having passed through the rows of elegant villas, I reached the mournful summit of the hill. The silence was deafening. Suddenly a flight of black carrion-crows arose out of the trees and hovered for a while over one of the towers, cawing hoarsely. Then it was all silence again, and on the top of a palm, silhouetted against the burning gold of the sky, I discerned a pair of vultures. They stood still, as though carved out of the dark rocks, waiting for their supper, or already torpid with excess of human meat.

As I drove downhill again between the elegant suburban villas, I could not help reflecting that their inmates would one of these days be laid out on yon sullen square blocks of gray stone—ladies and gentlemen—a nice, well-nourished feast for the fowls of heaven, thus emphasizing the amiable doctrine that even in death there can be no union or intercommunion between the Zoroastrian shades and those of ordinary mortals. What will become of this exclusive tribe when India is thoroughly roused to national consciousness the remote future will show. Meanwhile their spiritual arrogance prevents not the Parsis of India, any more than it prevents the Jews of Europe, from enjoying the favour of the powers that be by their ostentatious loyalty and the tolerance of their fellow-citizens by their elasticity.

Two things, however, I admire about the Parsis—their

women and their manners. The former, alone among Eastern ladies, have the moral courage to expose their faces to God's free air and light, and, though not thrillingly beautiful, those faces have no reason to be ashamed of themselves. They are very delicate, these ladies of Persian blood, and very graceful. Graceful and delicate also are their gossamer veils—light blue, pink, sea-green, lilac, or primrose—flowing in front and behind in soft rivulets of silky sheen and shade. The politeness of both men and women is remarkable even in this politest part of the earth. The desire to please is inborn in the Oriental. A high-caste Hindu servant addresses the outcast sweeper, whose mere contact defiles, as 'Jemindar,' and the cook as 'Sardar,' both titles of military rank.

These amenities form part of that general urbanity which the suspicious North European is apt to mistake for dishonesty or servility, and to enjoy cynically or to resent violently, according to his temperament and breeding, but to understand never. In a lesser degree it is the same with the races of Southern Europe—those sunny races with their exuberant cordiality and love for the superlative, of whom the Parsis often remind one. It seems as though these ancient nations, while losing some of the robust virtues of their civilized forefathers, have retained this inalienable heritage of civilization—courtesy, a treasure which we have not yet acquired, or which, if some of us have acquired it as an accomplishment, has not yet become an instinct.

Do we not labour under the barbarously conscientious delusion that a poetical exaggeration is a lie? Do we not very often, in our terrible anxiety to speak not more than the truth, succeed in speaking less? We call this self-restraint. It is a good name; it may even, for aught I know, represent a good thing. But it does not help to make us more lovable or loved. The difference is, of course, most unpleasantly forced upon one when he meets the Insolents abroad, and nowhere more than here in Bombay, where I have had the opportunity of seeing the

British tourist amazing and amusing the native mind, which he strives to impress, with his unutterable knickerbockers and his 'no d——d nonsense about me' air.

Such are the constituent members of this humming, bewildering bee-hive called Bombay. The only things they seem to have in common are earnestness in the pursuit of lucre and a strong conviction frankly entertained by each sect that all the others are unclean. 'Touch me not' is the motto inscribed in letters invisible and indelible on the pediment of this strange edifice of many tints and many orders. And yet, as a matter of fact, the peace is rarely broken. It is only on holy and festive occasions that the police have some difficulty in preserving good humour and order among the worshippers of a thousand incongruous and antagonistic gods, inebriated with religious fervour and other fountains of enthusiasm. On such occasions outbursts of violence come to mar the normally harmonious discord, and then, the gentle arts of persuasion proving inadequate, there is much shaking of turbans and wagging of tongues at the law, as personified by those creatures in flat yellow coifs, whose dark blue jackets and breeches, tucked up at the knees, bare brown legs, and sandalled feet, are visible everywhere, suggesting sailors ready to swab the earth clean of *petty sin*.

On closer acquaintance with the town your superficial recollections of the West grow even more vivid. The European residents and their indigenous imitators appear to have fallen in with the eclectic genius of the place, their Renaissance houses, their cafés, their spired churches, reminding one of Marseilles or Alexandria rather than of India, and even the Government has made a courageous effort to bring itself into some harmony with its environment by building its monster Secretariat in a kind of architecture, half Venetian, half Gothic, which successfully combines the characteristic puerilities of both orders. The University also rears its Gothic clock-tower to the sky of Asia unashamedly, and some of the hotels strive

to reconcile Gothic gables with Saracenic domes and arches. But the benevolent sun of the East shines tranquilly upon the congruous and the ridiculous alike, glorifying all, smiling politely upon all. He is as well bred as any other native of Bombay, and as unlike as possible the Anglo-Indian official of a rank sufficiently middling to encourage the belief that it is a substitute for breeding.

I am in the native bazaar. Both sides of the street are lined with shops, standing as close to one another as the books in a well-ordered library, and presenting as great a variety in dress and contents. Many-coloured stuffs are measured out here by fat merchants to fat customers. The dry fragrance of Eastern spices emanates from the boxes and bottles next door. Here are sweets weighed out, and there jewels of gold and silver sparkle through the dusk. And the place is alive with the bustle and the buzz of bargaining and the whirl of wheels. Fashionable landaus clatter past, carrying rich Parsi ladies and gentlemen, gold-turbaned mollahs, Zoroastrian high-priests, all white, or pink-turbaned princes. The tramway also rattles down the middle of the road, cutting —the gods and the drivers only know how—its way safely through the crowd.

But more picturesque than carriage or tramcar is the gilt Noah's ark kind of vehicle drawn by a pair of obese bullocks, their yard-long horns covered with gold-leaf, their humps wobbling majestically, their necks jingling with bells and amulets. Under the awning of the ark I see two solemn boys sitting stiff in brocade of gold, and two or three little girls equally stiff, yet gay.

From amidst the shops on right and left rise houses climbing on elaborately-carved pillars to the height of four or five handsome stories—dwellings of merchant princes worth many lakhs of rupees—fanned and shaded by the green richness of the peepul and the plantain, or beautified by the jejune elegance of the palm. And

behind this fringe of magnificence spreads the broad mantle of misery, noisy, noisome, nauseating.

Did not even Venice in the day of her glory have her Ghetto? But what is any slum of Europe beside these Eastern abodes of ancient filth and multiform wretchedness?

Impelled by a morbid craving to see the other side of things—the side of reality, which mere Princes are not privileged to see—I leave the main street and plunge into the narrow lanes, seething with a hookah-smoking, betel-chewing humanity, buying and selling or only bargaining, whining and worshipping in a medley of unfathomable squalor. The lower parts of the houses are open cupboards, in which petty tradesmen and artisans squat on their haunches, all but naked, puffing, sleeping, perspiring in malodorous idleness. On the grimy balconies overhead lounge women in all degrees of dusky undress, and to the rickety rails cling little boys and girls who have not yet exchanged their innocence for a loin-cloth. And between these rows of dwellings flows on the turbid, maddening stream of tumult which in the East passes for business.

Suddenly the clangour of a bell breaks upon the clamour of the people. I am before a temple. An attempt to penetrate into the holy interior is met by a chorus of devotees gesticulating with unambiguous unanimity that I am a being polluted and polluting. . . . I did not endeavour to undeceive them. Instead, I looked round from the gateway and beheld enough to cure me of any desire to behold more. On one side of the peepul-shaded quadrangle stand the sacred bulls, immeasurable monsters of no shape, whose sole aim in life appears to be its prolongation and its propagation. On the opposite side spreads a low-browed, many-arched cloister, a number of cells opening on to it. Each dim cell enshrines a glittering god or goddess, many-armed, many-legged, animal-headed, hideous. In the passage bronze monsters lie couchant, while the worshippers, ministers, and idlers of

the temple keep up an incessant concert of delirious discord.

In the middle of this enclosure saunter several saints with long black hair, black beard, and a coat of gray ashes for their main attire. A long string of big wooden beads hangs from the neck, and a staff is brandished in one hand. They glare at the infidel in no friendly manner, these holy maniacs or humbugs. They are apparently men who, in embracing the ascetic life, have renounced all luxuries except religious rancour.

I walk away quite satisfied with this glimpse of another world. Perhaps an admittance into the inner depths might have spoiled the sense of mystery and robbed me of the fascinating pastime of surmise concerning the unseen.

I continue my erratic perambulation, and finally pause before a kind of hostelry, bearing the inscription 'Panjrapole.' I enter into the courtyard, to find that it is in reality an asylum for superannuated beasts and birds. Here are cages containing sacred apes, munching the plantains which the faithful provide in such abundance for them; there are venerable goats, feasting on clover; further down stands a large coop, in which elderly hens and feebly-canting cocks are revelling in heaps of grain, which they share amicably with the interloping sparrows. But by far the greater part of the yard is devoted to the ancient horses and bulls, and cows and buffaloes, and other attenuated quadrupeds, whose skins display the unseemly marks of a cruel taskmaster. I am informed, however, that many of these seemingly obsolete bundles of bones, after a few months' strenuous eating, recover sufficiently to perpetuate their respective species. Evidence of the truth of this information is supplied by yon sheds full of lowing young calves and buffaloes. Some of the inmates of the asylum are even resold into slavery; for the pious Hindu who will not slay a brute for all the gold on earth has no scruple about selling it for a little silver, even when it is fully entitled to the rest of the sanatorium, or, better still, of the grave.

I emerge from these precincts of a preposterous piety, and so back again into the din and the odours of more narrow lanes. The impression wrought upon me by all these scenes is that I am the victim of a bad dream. So I seek, and finally find, the realms of pure air and comparative sanity, the richer by a little wisdom purchased at the cost of a great disillusion. Was it worth it?

Let me try to extract at least some coherent moral out of my disillusion. The parts of an Oriental city which are brought under Occidental influence fast outgrow medieval conditions of life; the streets become straight, broad, and airy, and light penetrates into the alleys and courts which the overhanging upper stories once doomed to sempiternal gloom. But the quarters of the poor know none of these blessings. Year after year they grow more populous, and, as the space remains the same, more squalid. Squalor begets degradation, indecent and indescribable, and the fatal gift of fecundity, cultivated in many cases as a religious duty, fosters it.

To the curse of over-population is added the annual flood of the rains, which transforms the tortuous lanes into marshy lakes, fills the lower stories with malarious mud, and turns the whole quarter into an abode of prematurely aged men, of stunted, elderly children, and of repulsive wrecks of womanhood—a region where Poverty and Vice dance hand in hand, and where man is engaged in a perpetual struggle with Death. Nay, more often he does not even attempt to struggle, but succumbs with a prayer on his lips and in his heart despair, or the pathetic hope of a better world.

Year after year the plague comes, following what mathematicians call a harmonic curve, her path rising and sinking and rising again in normal accordance with the seasons. And day after day the victims are carted off to their dissolution in the earth, air, or the stomach of the vultures, after each sect's special hallucination.

A standing heading in every Indian newspaper is 'Plague

Statistics.' Here is a recent specimen: 'Plague mortality in India is again going up. Last week 4,080 deaths were reported, 2,732 being in the Bombay Presidency, 580 in the Central Provinces and Berar, 145 in Hyderabad, 131 in Mysore, 30 in the Punjab, 60 in the United Provinces, and 187 in the Madras Presidency.'

With the cold weather the scourge waxes more virulent and the victims more numerous. Whole villages and towns are evacuated by the terrified survivors, the schools are closed, the bazaars are deserted, and the hand of Death lies heavy upon all. Then every man has an infallible remedy which he recommends to his friends, until his own turn comes, and his remedy fails with him.

Some native doctors recommend a fire in one's bedroom during any epidemic. There may in this advice be embodied the lessons of long experience. Unfortunately, in proof of its efficacy, one of them tells the following story:

'Once upon a time there came a hermit to a certain village in Kashmir. At the time cholera was playing havoc in the village, and hundreds were daily carried off by the disease. The hermit took pity on the people in their terrible distress, and advised a religious sacrifice. Logs of wood were collected and cast into the sacrificial pit, and a huge fire was kept blazing for three days and three nights. And behold! within three days of the sacrifice the epidemic abated and gradually departed.'

The narrator had nothing but scorn for 'men read in Western sciences,' who, foolish ones, ascribed the effect to the purifying influence of the fire on the soil and air of the village, and not to the three days' sacrifice.

Others believe in the poison of the cobra, the sacred serpent of Hindustan. One of these dangerous physicians declares that he has found it prescribed in the *Ayurveda* writings of three thousand years ago, and that he has tried it repeatedly, but apparently not on his own person. None of his patients ever died—so he says. Cobra poison, according to this amusing quack, does not only cure plague, but also promotes piety. 'The success

which attended this humble discovery of mine was simply unbounded. People, panic-stricken and confounded before this, took heart and an optimistic view of God's providence.'

The British authorities are equally energetic, equally ingenious, and equally successful. Although the epidemic has now been in India for ten years, we are still quite in the dark as to its cause, its prevention, and its cure. The authorities, however, with a brave optimism as remarkable as their failure, are persevering in experiments which are by the more sanguine described, guardedly, as being 'on the right lines.' Among these essays in hygiene the most interesting, from a spectacular point of view, is the rat-hunt.

The theory is that the disease is communicated from one person to another by the bites of fleas which have deserted the rats that have died of plague. It is claimed that, when measures were adopted for the systematic destruction of rats, careful inquiries showed that new cases of plague occurred with almost mathematical precision in inverse ratio to the number of rats destroyed. It is further stated that, when a recrudescence occurred, the only district that suffered severely was one where the proprietor objected to the destruction of his household rats on religious grounds. The result of the discovery was a proclamation of a general and truceless crusade against this new enemy of mankind.

The operations began a twelvemonth ago. Stations for the reception of rats, dead or alive, were established in many parts of the country. At each of these stations were placed one keeper, one sweeper, and two cages—one for the corpses and the other for the captives. Rat-traps were supplied at municipal expense to the poor, and a price was offered of one pice (farthing) per head, dead or alive. At three o'clock in the afternoon all the cages were collected to a central station, where a tank was dug, and its water mixed with a solution of carbolic acid. There, in the presence of the special plague doctor, the prisoners

were thoroughly drowned, then taken out, and all the corpses were counted carefully and cremated solemnly.

The people, conscientious scruples notwithstanding, have taken kindly to the game. On a single day, which happened to be a holy festival, the pious Mahomedans of a village, being forbidden to work, collected as many as 411 rats, and earned as many farthings. Lest the mere proclamation of the tempting blood-money should fail to reach every heart, the people are usually called to arms once a week by the beat of the tom-tom—an official instrument of distress as popular in modern India as the town-crier's bell and the night-watchman's rattle were in old England.

Yet, after a whole year's ruthless anthropomyomachia, we are no safer than in time of peace, and all sensible people and Lieutenant-Governors have to fall back upon the trite recommendations of cleanliness, disinfection, segregation, fresh air, regular habits, and like wise platitudes. At the same time the persecution of the wretched rats is going furiously on, and, in any case, it can injure no one, except the rats; for there has not yet come into being any society for the prevention of cruelty to vermin, although it is true the Indian Humanitarian Committee has issued a manifesto denouncing the Pasteur Institute at Kasauli for the 'inhuman barbarities perpetrated on the lower animals,' with no other purpose than that of alleviating human misery.

Nor are European humanitarians the only opponents of scientific research. The native press from time to time, when tired of attacking Lord Curzon, has been seeking relaxation in attacks on inoculation. These attacks, as I read them, arise partly from genuine cussedness and partly from a scepticism which, seeing the results which science has so splendidly succeeded in not attaining, is neither incomprehensible nor unpardonable. Less intelligible to me is the faith of Lord Lamington, the Governor of this presidency, who the other day, in the course of a speech at the Bombay Government Plague Research

Laboratory, extolled the part which the Government is playing in the campaign against the disease, and appealed to all who had influence over the people to do their utmost to convert them to the worship of science. Lord Lamington has no philosophic doubts. The foundations of his belief are official statistics. But the Indians prefer the evidence of their own unenlightened eyes. And this evidence shows that, after ten years' scientific research, the disease is thriving.

But perhaps the deepest and most general source of distrust of scientific methods is what may be crudely described as superstition. The fact is that the people of this country, even the educated among them, still live in the theological age. The immortals still walk in the plains of Hindustan, fighting against each other and finding favour in the eyes of the daughters of man. Sky and heaven still are synonymous terms here, and the air is peopled with spirits. The miraculous is an everyday occurrence, and the only thing that is incredible is the natural. Whatever of good or evil befalls man does so through the direct agency of the gods. The mythological interpretation of things is the only interpretation intelligible to the Indian mind, and the only method for averting calamity is prayer, magic, and multifarious incantations and propitiations of the powers of evil.

How can we expect these people to look upon our laboratories as other than things presumptuous and ridiculous? Let us be thankful that they do not regard our scientific experiments as a wanton provocation of the evil ones.

After all, it is not so very long since we quitted the mythological cradle ourselves—or have we altogether quitted it yet? Do we not still pray to be delivered from disease? The Indian's fault is that, like our own medieval ancestors, he is consistent in his animistic theory of the universe, while we are no longer. Therein lies the sole difference. It is, I think, a question of time. Let us be patient with those who are to-day what we were yesterday.

But, at the worst, plague is only a modern upstart, and

has not yet been definitely deified by the priests of Hindustan. If she is feared as a goddess, the fear is reasonable and the godship vague. This is not, however, the case with her great rival. Small-pox is an ancient deity of assured position, worshipped in dread earnest and with terrible results. Not long ago thirty patients were found in the very temple from which I was so ignominiously expelled. They had been taken there for a cure by means of the customary rites of propitiation. The temples, therefore, despite the Health Department, are no mere places of devotion, but also active and popular centres for the dissemination of disease.

To make success doubly sure, the stricken congregation drives to the temple in the public conveyances, each of which is thus automatically converted into a vehicle of death. These public conveyances, like everything else in Bombay, are of two kinds and of two continents: smart, smoothly-rolling victorias with indiarubber tyres and the merry bullock-carts already described. Both are numbered as hackney carriages, and the facilities for infection offered by the one are equal to those offered by the other. These are some of the perils which the adventurous explorer of the bazaars of Bombay has a good chance of encountering. A drive through those gay bazaars may be confidently recommended to all those who suffer from *l'ennui de la vie*. It can cure them either of life or, at least, of the *ennui*. For though in Bombay you may be driven to death or to madness, you cannot be bored.

You cannot be bored even at the best of times, least of all at a moment when the city is wildly fermenting with the anticipation of a visit from the heir to all the thrones of Hindustan. The Government, the municipality, and the ultra-loyal Parsi aristocracy, have all conspired to render Bombay temporarily uninhabitable. Triumphal arches, florid with ungrammatical inscriptions and mixed metaphors, in which the sacred fire in the heart of the British Empire is bidden to burn and flourish for ever, stands, platforms, water-carts, and rollers propelled by

steam or pulled by a chorus of rhythmically groaning coolies, have for weeks been the disorder of the day, and the city of Bombay has for weeks been a city encased in aerial bamboo scaffoldings of many knots, with thousands of coffee-coloured, lithe coolies climbing up and down, trowel or paint-pot in hand, brush between the toes, and little girls and boys carrying the needful on their heads and filling the air with their monotonous chanting. The gaping drains and the heaps of rubbish, the turmoil and the dust and the din, have turned the Eye of India into a great eyesore. And to think that identical transformations and torments are simultaneously going on in every one of the dozens of cities which the Prince and Princess of Wales will honour with a casual glance! Why do people try to be clean only when they hope to be seen?

But this is not the time or the place for philosophical conundrums. Let me only mention, as part of the universal upheaval, that zoologists have been furnishing their museums with fresh specimens of beetles and lizards and bugs for the Prince's edification, while gifted journalists, I understand, have been laboriously laying up a fresh stock of old adjectives, called, I think, descriptive.

I turn for relief to the local newspapers, and my eye is met with paragraphs which aggravate my distress. In one I read: 'Every citizen, no matter where his house is, is requested to do something in the way of decorating his house or business premises in honour of the royal visit, in order that the whole city may have a gay and festive appearance.' O East, Far or Near, even thy gaiety is made by order! I throw the paper down and pick up another, in which I read: 'His Highness Sir Sultan Shah Aga Khan, G.C.I.E., has issued orders to his estate manager, Mr. Jaffer Cassum Moosa, to decorate and illuminate. . . .' I can read no more. A Mahomedan Prince and a Jewish estate manager—this, at all events, is instructive, if not amusing. Yes, Bombay is grimly determined to do her duty and be gay.

The population has received an appreciable addition in

the persons of the native chiefs of Western India come to greet the Prince. They may be seen at every turn, turbaned in multitudinous rainbows, some driving in state-coaches and four, followed by half a dozen prancing lancers; others, similarly arrayed and escorted, are driving their own dog-carts. A few of these exalted and superlatively bejewelled personages, obviously in platonic love with the novelty of simplicity, are rattling unostentatiously in their motor-cars. There are amongst them rajas and maharajas, nawabs, raos and ranas, thakor sahibs and sar desais, raj sahibs, pant sachivs, naik nimbalkas and sardars without number, each with a retinue proportionate to his degree. One of them evoked my profoundest admiration, not so much by the pink amplitude of his turban and the number of his followers as by the sight of the servant on the box, who sat bolt upright, carrying on his finger the prince's favourite falcon.

Many of these sons of the East, despite their most un-European turbans, majesty of mien, and general bulk, speak English fluently, and the other evening I had the curious pleasure of seeing one of the heaviest of these Highnesses vivaciously beating time to 'The Soldiers in the Park' and other masterpieces from the English stage which the band perpetrated on the veranda of my hotel. It was after dinner. The banquet had been hilarious. I retired to bed dimly wondering what demon it is that prompts us to strive so ardently to turn Asia into a colossal caricature of Europe.

This, then, is the state of things in Bombay and the other great cities of India. But what of the country at large?

It is related by the English press in India, and faithfully echoed by the English press in England, that when the present King made his tour through this peninsula the whole country was roused to a display of emotion until then considered utterly incompatible with Oriental placidity and sense of decorum. We read that the

Oriental reveres his Sovereign as a god, and that there are no limits to his power of self-mystification. I do not know how it was in those days, for in those days I was in the nursery. At this moment, and in India, I am unable to confirm these descriptions of native sentiment without serious qualification.

During the Hindu Durga festivals a few weeks ago I saw, among the grotesque statuettes of gods and goddesses exposed by the thousand for sale on the counters in the bazaars, many obese little busts which were unmistakable, though unconscious, parodies of the late *Malikah-ee-Muazzameh*—the Gracious Queen—already enthroned in the hospitable halls of the labyrinthic Hindu pantheon as a minor deity, or rather as the latest incarnation of some mighty and multiform goddess of old standing. These busts were improved copies of the artistic atrocities so common in England during the two Jubilees, the veil being replaced by a blatant Union Jack. I have also seen a corpulent Parsi lady in her brougham with her veil attached to her head in feeble imitation of Queen Victoria's portraits, and across her capacious bosom the border of her cloak doing duty for the ribbon of the Star of India. But in both cases these tributes of admiration met my eyes in the immediate neighbourhood of Government House. In the regions beyond the direct influence of the British rule such things are more impossible than miracles.

The same observations apply to the royal visit. The millions of this country, platitudes to the contrary notwithstanding, are simply unaware of the existence of the British Emperor or of his son. To them all earthly government is personified in the visible magistrate or native chief immediately over them. This is their god—a very poor dog of a god, but at all events tangible. But the mute millions, of course, do not count. As to the important and articulate few, whatever they were thirty years ago, at the present hour they are inclined rather to criticise their old gods than to create new ones.

For all that, I felt no desire to quarrel with my platitudinarian friend when, in tones of extraordinary, almost tearful, solemnity, he said: 'Their Royal Highnesses' presence will provide a fitting climax to the emotions that were aroused by the Delhi Durbar.'

'I know nothing about emotions,' I answered sweetly, 'but I fully agree with you as to the climax.'

We stood on the landing-pier, known by the characteristically hybrid name Apollo Bunder, watching the *Renown* as she steamed slowly into harbour. At that moment, as though in confirmation of my friend's words, the warships in the harbour began booming forth a royal salute.

A few hours later we once more stood on the pier watching the landing of the Prince and Princess of Wales. All my magnificent maharajas were here under the pavilion prepared for the reception, and they were even more magnificent than anything I had ever seen before. Words fail to adequately describe them, as we journalists say. Each one of them was a breathing, gleaming, perspiring monument of silk and gold and stones which, I suppose for their rarity, men call precious. I recognised among the number my immense friend who beat time to the 'Soldiers in the Park' the other evening. But, O ye shades of Darius and Xerxes, how transformed! His head was encircled in a tower of silk and pearls, round his herculean neck hung three rows of big green stones, the torso was encased in brocade of gold, and an apron of glittering stuff covered the rest of the body in many rigid creases.

Another maharaja stood close to me. He was a small man, attired in a great turban, from the crown of which rose a plume of red and blue and gold, quivering and twinkling in the sun and giving him the appearance of a brilliant bird of paradise. In front of this head-dress gleamed an enamelled miniature of Queen Victoria set in pearls. A tight sea-green tunic embraced his body and

a gold-broidered sash hung its golden fringe from the waist. From beneath this stretched two thin patent-leather top-boots armed with spurs of gold.

The reader must imagine a dozen similar princes, attired each after his traditional fashion and personal taste in splendour, and each recklessly eager to outshine all the others.

It must be to the appearance of her princes that the East owes her fame for wealth. They are as magnificent as their subjects are miserable. But what of that? Are not the many created for the few—whether frankly, as in the East, or essentially, as in the West?

When the Prince had finished shaking by the hand each wigged and gowned judge, frock-coated official and be-jewelled maharaja, he stood with the Princess and Lord and Lady Curzon and Lord Lamington on a dais facing the crowd. 'Oh, isn't she a howling beauty?' whispered an American lady, pointing with her fan to Lady Curzon. I was gazing at the Prince and Princess, admiring their wonderful faculty for looking interested, as the President of the Corporation of Bombay—of course, a black-mitred Parsi—addressed to them with rhetorical emphasis many words of welcome. Then the Prince retaliated at similar length, and I, being nobody, enjoyed such relief as is in a score of little yawns, covert yet cordial.

For a whole week there was nothing but the clattering of hoofs, the rattling of wheels, the thunder of salutes, the glitter of state-coaches, the sheen of maharajas, and the infliction of platitudinous oratory. In the days there were drives through the bazaars, under strings of flags and streamers and Chinese lanterns and greetings stretched densely across; visits and counter-visits; laying of foundation-stones and opening of new thoroughfares. In the evenings there were banquets and levées. At all these functions I had the privilege to be bored. But their poor Royal Highnesses endured it all with truly princely patience, and the visit to Bombay was, as my American lady friend would have said, 'a howling success.'

PRESENTATION OF MUNICIPAL ADDRESS, BOMBAY.

The one ceremony that did not bore me was one at which I was not present. But partly from the description given me by the Government, and partly from that supplied by a lady friend, I have gathered the knowledge which I proceed to bestow on the reader. It was a strictly purdah affair—that is, a function by ladies and for ladies. It took place in the Town Hall.

After the usual presentations, the Princess mounted the steps to the first landing. There a group of Parsi ladies performed the ceremony known as 'Vadhavilevani.' An egg and a cocoanut were passed seven times round the head of Her Royal Highness and then broken, the seven times symbolizing the seven circles of the world, and the breaking being an emblematic prayer that so may be broken any calamities that the evil spirits which move in those circles may be concocting for the person performed upon. Furthermore, the Parsi ladies explained that, as the breaking of the egg and the cocoanut is productive of wholesome nourishment, so may every broken evil turn to good for the Princess. Likewise a dish full of water was passed seven times round the head and then poured away, the significance of this being that no drought but rainy abundance may be the Princess's lot through life. A small handful of rice was also thrown over the head, indicating the wish that Her Royal Highness may not only have enough food, but in such plenty as to be able even to scatter it round her. Lastly, the lady, learned in mystic lore, who acted as the high-priestess in these rites, pressed her knuckles fast against her own temples, making them crack in token that even so may all misfortunes and evil influences be cracked off the Princess.

On the top of the stairs a group of Hindu ladies were waiting for their own turn. Their ceremony, called 'Arti,' consisted in a number of burning wicks, ranged in a tray round a quantity of red powder, wherewith it was their kind intention to anoint the Princess's brow. But Her Royal Highness evaded the intention with the same smiling tact which had already enabled her to escape

many a weighty garland of flowers without offence. This ceremony indicates that, as red is the brightest of the seven colours, even so may the brightest of lights shine upon the recipient for ever.

At the entrance to the hall the Mahomedan ladies acted, after their own fashion, the harmless rite called 'Ameen.' There was neither fire nor water here. The Princess, who had most successfully passed through those two trials of good temper, was simply garlanded and be-showered with gold and silver almonds and other nuts, reminiscent of the *nuces* which the Romans used to scatter over the bride and the Greeks over newly-bought slaves. But these ladies knew none of these things, luckily, and the explanation they gave was that the nuts were simply symbols of peace, because they yield oil. Even so, then, may the oil of peace smooth the course of the Princess's life. I fear they were the victims of their own metaphors; but this is irrelevant. They then handed the Princess a cocoanut, minutely emblematic of the following wishes: As its kernel gives food and contains water, as its leaves provide roofing, as its coir makes some articles of furniture, and as its shells make cups, so may the Princess never lack food, water, shelter, and furniture.

'We shall be very much surprised if, after all these rites, Her Royal Highness ever goes to the workhouse,' said my lady informant, with a smile.

I could only share her sentiment and return her smile.

'It is a thousand pities that those responsible for the arrangements of the tour have not seen their way to organize a lion-hunt.'

'A lion-hunt in Bombay!'

'Not in the town, of course,' said my literal friend, 'but somewhere in the interior of the Presidency.'

I thought the suggestion romantic, but upon inquiry I found that it was not so wild as I had thought.

To the north of Bombay lies the peninsula of Kathiawar, a political agency subordinate to the Government of

Bombay, having under its control, direct or indirect, no fewer than 187 distinct States, great and small, a few of which are quite independent, and of the others some tributary to the British Government, some to the Gaekwar of Baroda, and some to the Nawab of Junagarh. Furthermore, the peninsula contains the great Gir forest, and it is there that my friend's lions live. No census of them has ever been taken, but they appear to be a great sylvan colony, subsisting chiefly on Indian peasants.

On the borders of the forest stretches the land of Amreli, which belongs to the Gaekwar of Baroda, and it is said that the authorities of this privileged district wrote not long ago to the representatives of their neighbour, the Nawab of Junagarh, requesting them officially: 'Please stop your lions from carrying off our coolies.'

The *Times of India* in a recent issue gave many interesting particulars concerning the customs and manners of these lions. I extract the following morsel:

'But perhaps the most recent and notable instance of the daring of the lions occurred only last Wednesday night, shortly after the Governor had arrived at the camp at Sasan. A man was riding three miles from the camp after dark, when he was attacked by a lion. He incontinently fell off his pony, dropped his gun and sword, and bolted. The lion seized the pony and carried it off. To anyone acquainted with the ways of jungle folk, their demeanour in the jungle after dark is significant enough. They will not move without lights, and they beg those who happen to be with them to keep close to the flares, as otherwise they may be attacked. The villagers manifestly live in a dread of the lions which is certainly genuine enough, though it was not fully credited until now, as hardly any Europeans had visited the interior of the Gir for some time. There are, it need scarcely be added, innumerable cases of depredations among live-stock.'

I think I begin to understand India: elegant suburban villas and lions; Veneto-Gothic Secretariat offices and

virgin forests; a few tiny drops of modern civilization floating on an ocean of what I may, for politeness' sake, call primitive culture. My platitudinarian friend calls it picturesque culture. And again I am not inclined to quarrel with him, for a few days ago a telegram from Bhavnagar, in the immediate neighbourhood of the Gir forest, announced that an attendant in the service of the Prince of Jasdan had been arrested on a charge of having mixed poison in the food served at the Prince's table. It appears that while the Prince and four guests were dining they were suddenly taken ill. The food was immediately sent to the doctor for analysis, and he declared that it contained arsenic.

Virgin forest—lions—native prince—banquet—poison. Could the most romantic of young lady romancers invent a plot more replete with the things called picturesque? Verily, the commonplaces of Indian life are stranger than the wildest dreams of European fever. When I grow weary of sober reality I will pitch my tent in India.

CHAPTER II

INDORE

We left Bombay in the evening of November 14. Our visit to this little native State was due to the special favour of Famine—that long-armed, grim-visaged goddess who is responsible for so many things in this part of the world. But for her intervention, we should have gone to Ajmer instead. But poor Ajmer is in no holiday mood just now. It has just been officially declared a famishing district. Telegrams from other parts of the country also published during the last few days announce a rapid rise in the prices of food-grains throughout Upper India, especially in the Punjab and Rajputana. The numbers of persons in receipt of relief doles are growing daily. From the Punjab also to-day comes the news that Plague is carrying off her thousands, and the authorities are energetically poisoning rats.

But do not let us dwell on things mournful. We are supposed to be enjoying ourselves. And, in truth, once your heart was hermetically closed to the other side of things, 'twas sweet, as the poet says, to spurn the thirsty plains that lie and wait upon the skies, to leave the matutinal drains of dry municipalities, the clamour of the streets, the flies, the leaden hotel hours that scarce can crawl, and to climb up through the breezy night to the heights of Indore.

The first part of the journey took us across a thick jungle with patches of arable land cleared here and there, ill-tilled and only less unkempt than the jungle itself. At rare intervals blue smoke, curling up from amid the trees,

proclaimed the presence of human beings. Gradually these signs of life became more frequent. A corn-rick here, a rickety watchman's loft there, a shed lower down, or a mud hovel, its thatch covered with dung-cakes, came to give a meaning to the landscape. But as we proceeded the green forest made more and more room for the golden cornfield, while in the parched pastures broused herds of cattle, and the wilderness of brown stubble and yellow corn-stalk or black, newly-ploughed earth was now and again interrupted by rivers which, though mere pariah streams at this time of year, when swollen by the rains turn the adjacent fields into lakes, and, departing, leave behind them large malarious marshes. Down upon all this glared the noontide sun out of a sky white with the heat of an India November day, abruptly succeeding to the chills of the night.

We reached Indore at four o'clock, and the first sight that met my eye was a steam-mill on one side of the station, and on the other a great bull carrying a couple of water-skins athwart his hump. The station itself was gay with red carpets, many-coloured bunting, two score and fifteen chiefs of Central India, and a number of British officers, awaiting the Prince. Among the former sat conspicuous His Highness the Maharaja Holkar of Indore—a delicate youth of some nineteen years of age, in gorgeous robes of scarlet and gold—and Her Highness the Begum of Bhopal—a little bundle of lilac silk crowned with diamonds. In front two holes, veiled with gauze, intimated the position of Her Highness's eyes. Each of the other chiefs was apparelled in special grandeur, and one of them wore on his head a golden diadem obviously modelled after that of the Tsar.

The Prince and Princess, when they alighted, shook hands with the Maharaja and the principal chiefs, Her Royal Highness singling the invisible little Begum out for a conversation carried on under extraordinary difficulties.

In the evening every one of the few great public buildings, the many small houses, and most of the open shops

NATIVE CHIEFS AWAITING ROYAL TRAIN AT INDORE.

in the bazaar, were illuminated after a fashion at once beautiful and fantastic. But the most beautiful and fantastic sight of all was the river Kahn, with its winding banks outlined in tremulous oil lamps and rows of Chinese lanterns hung on the trees and bamboos. It zigzagged from the darkness and into the darkness—a serpent of duplicate streaks of many-tinted light, quivering against a duplicate background of sombre foliage. Beneath the ample awnings near the river sat the chiefs of Bundelkhand on quaint thrones of gold and silver, with one leg tucked up, after the manner of ganders at rest, their arms languid on lions or tigers of carved and gilt wood. There they sat in their gorgeous state robes, while around them stood their attendants, some bearing enormous fly-flaps of horse-hair or of peacock feathers, others holding aloft the banners of their masters. They were 'At Home' to a crowd of guests, mostly European officers, residents, visitors, and ladies, who swarmed over the lawns, while from the distance came the strains of Caledonian bagpipes and Indian drums, floating on the night air. Upon all shone the calm silver moon out of a sky serene and limpid as the waters of the Kahn. It was a scene of dreamy charm which I shall not soon forget.

But the native bazaars drew me away from the dreamy river banks. There was a piece of the pure East awaiting me. Amid the twinkling lights and shades of the balconies above glided the silhouettes of veiled women, while the streets below rumbled with state-coaches of an indescribable variety of epoch, colour, style, and splendour, creaked with innumerable springless vehicles drawn by miserable little ponies or bullocks, and hummed with the drowsy murmur of thousands of Oriental sightseers. And out of this chorus arose the loud chanting of the fakir, as, staff in one hand and rosary in the other, he wandered round, invoking the blessing of Allah upon the charitable men of Indore and all true believers.

Yet, now that the noises have been hushed and the moon shines silently upon the last flickering lanterns, it

is good to be in this camp—upon the tranquil banks of the Kahn, breathing the clear night air of some 1,800 feet above sea-level and speculating hazily upon the future of things.

While enjoying this brief spell of quiet, it may be interesting to recapitulate the little knowledge you have gleaned about the people who live in this large, struggling capital of this little Mahratta State in Malwa. For, I take it, the life of the country is not entirely made up of Chinese lanterns and state-coaches. To-morrow we shall have a grand Durbar and garden-parties and banquets and receptions, at which His Royal Highness will deliver the insignia of a G.C.I.E. to Her Highness the Begum of Bhopal, and of a K.C.I.E. to the Raja of Sailona, one of the principal Central Indian chiefs. These and many other functions, solemn or festive, will occur to-morrow and the day after. But to-night let us be prosaic and, if possible, instructive.

The whole State of Indore includes a population fully equal to two or three London suburbs—a million of brown-skinned, greatly-turbaned creatures, Mahrattas, Hindus, Mahomedans, and aborigines, fameless, faithless, and nameless, scattered over some 9,000 square miles. Over them rules a nominal autocrat, who dwells in this town, together with one-tenth of his subjects, governing them with powers of life and death, exercised discreetly, according to the advice of the inevitable British Political Agent. It is an arrangement satisfactory to both sides. The British Raj undertakes to defend the Maharaja against the aggressive ambition of his more powerful neighbours, and to mediate in case of quarrels with them; likewise, if he is a minor, to educate him in the way he should go. The Maharaja, on his part, pledges himself to abstain from direct communication, or even subtle diplomatic intrigue, with the other States; to limit his military force within the bounds dictated by mere love of peace; not to avail himself of the wisdom of European or American adventurers without permission;

and to help in the purchase and transport of supplies for the troops kept by the British Government for his protection. So long as he behaves properly, His Highness may call himself an independent sovereign, a Knight Grand Commander of the Star of India, and a Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire; he is allowed to enjoy a permanent thunder of nineteen guns when he visits the British possessions, and a salute of twenty-one guns in his own dominions—or even, if he is very good, the same number in British territory—and, in one word, to be as happy as human maharaja can be. For is not £120,000 out of the £700,000 of the annual revenue of the State devoted to the maintenance of his own palace?

This colossal edifice, with its towering gateway of many stories scowling upon the city, and that other summer palace which smiles placidly amid the beautiful trees of the Lal Bagh, are things eminently worth having. The latter estate also contains a market-place, a reading-room, a cotton-mill, a dispensary, a school and a menagerie of wild beasts which mingle their sweet voices agreeably with the rumble of English wheels and the recitations of English classics, and a moribund mint. What more is there in the power of Heaven to bestow, or in that of man to receive?

The mint, however, reminds me of unpleasant things. The Spokesman of Native Discontent, to whom I always listen with interest tempered by critical caution, a little time ago spoke as follows:

'There is nothing which the native Princes prize so much as the right of coinage; and well they may, for it is the emblem of sovereignty. From several Native States the right of coinage has been withdrawn, and they have been persuaded or pressed by negotiations which, carried on by the Resident or the Governor-General's Agent, are veiled commands to give up their own coinage and the right of coining money, and accept the British coinage. Alwar, Jhalwar, Bikaneer, Bhopal, and last, but not least, Indore, are among the States which have been persuaded

to forego this sovereign power and accept British coinage. The story of the conversion of Indore *Hali* coins into British coins is an interesting one, and is fairly illustrative of the growth of Imperialistic ideas which threaten slowly but steadily to encroach upon the treaty rights of Native Princes. The change in Indore was carried out in 1902, when the Maharaja had been deprived of his powers, and the government was conducted by a Council, nominally under the control of the Maharaja, but really dominated by the all-powerful personality of the British Resident representing the Paramount Power. Such a Council could not dare go against the mandate of the Resident or the wishes of the Governor-General's Agent. The conversion, which involved the withdrawal of this emblem of sovereign power, was thus the act of the Paramount Power rather than that of the State; and was it right or seemly on the part of the British Government to have deprived the State of this right at a time when it was acting as the trustee of the State, charged with the maintenance of its dignity and its interests?'

Alas, my indignant friend, what is the use of propounding your abstruse conundrums to me?

I inquired of the moderate and learned Advocate of India what he thought about it, and he answered as follows:

'The Indian States, including those in Burma, number 688, and have a population aggregating upwards of 70,000,000, very nearly one-third of that of British India. One hundred and seventy of the larger and more important of these States are under the immediate control of the Viceroy, who, through the Foreign Department, directs all matters concerning administrative questions and successions, and formulates the policy which guides the relations between them and the paramount Power. Of course, authorities differ as to the precise degree of subordination or dependency of the more powerful States, some of which contracted treaties of alliance and friendship with the old East India Company prior to the

transfer of India to the Crown, and Viceroys regulate the degree and extent of their interference with the personal and administrative affairs of the Princes according to their own judgment. The policy of the Indian Government towards its feudatories is largely based upon precedents, which, having been once accepted without demur, become inflexible laws to which no resistance can be conveniently or usefully offered. The complexities thus created are incomprehensible except to those initiated in the traditions of the Foreign Department and the Residents and Political Agents who have to expound and apply them at the native Courts to which they are accredited. And, as may be readily imagined, their interpretations of a somewhat nebulous procedure are not always happily conceived, as they are liable to be tinged by the personal idiosyncrasies of the exponents. When such instances occur—and, despite all the precautions of the Foreign Department, they do occasionally occur—friction and unfriendliness usurp the ideal relations contemplated and desired by the paramount Power between its representatives and the Princes.'

Thus spoke the learned Advocate.

Not content with these views, I approached a third oracle. It responded:

'The policy of the British Government in this respect is not quite the same as it was in the beginning of British rule more than a century ago. From 1757, when Clive, after the victory of Plassey, laid the foundations of the British Empire in India, up to the close of Lord Minto's administration in 1813, the pressure of Parliament and the prudence of the East India Company operated in the direction of a policy of non-intervention. During this period the Native States led an almost independent life. But the confusion, disorder, and general unsatisfactory condition of affairs in them proved greatly detrimental, not only to the internal administration of British India, but also to other Imperial interests of a serious nature. For instance, in the British districts touching the borders

of native administration, the police felt the difficulty of arresting criminals and preventing their escape into foreign jurisdictions; the revenue officers experienced similar difficulties in excluding untaxed opium or illicit spirits from British territory; and sanitary measures could not successfully be effected in time of epidemics. Common defence and other requirements of the daily growing Empire urged upon the Government the necessity of introducing railways and roads, telegraphs and post-offices, into the dominions of some of the Chiefs. In the interests of the Empire, therefore, the Native States had to be brought to a state of "subordinate isolation." Their international status was destroyed, and the Guardian Power assumed exclusive control over their foreign relations. The Chiefs were made to unite for the common cause, and an understanding on certain points necessary for the welfare of the Empire was arrived at. They were, however, left to arrange their internal affairs after their own way, in pursuance of a desire to preserve native rule. But the doctrine of non-intervention, it is a pity, was pushed to absurd limits, and the interests of the suffering millions were entirely ignored, until such scrupulous avoidance of interference sadly resulted, in some instances, in the adoption of annexation as a necessary corrective. For when a native sovereign could by no means be persuaded to look upon a proposed reform as anything but an insult to his dignity, there could be no remedy other than the entire suppression of his sovereignty.'

Thus far the pleaders of India and of the Indian Government. Now hearken again unto the ultra-discontented Native Spokesman:

'The Queen's Proclamation is the Magna Charta of our rights. It is even a greater Charter for the Princes of India. "We shall respect the rights, dignity, and honour of Native Princes as our own," are the solemn words of the Proclamation. We fear this gracious promise has not been redeemed. The Imperialistic views of Lord Curzon have dealt a serious blow at the dignity of the Native Princes.

In 1858, when the Proclamation was announced, they were the allies of the Sovereign, the honoured Feudatories of the Empire. To-day they are the vassals of the Viceroy.'

The most moderate Advocate concludes his exposition with commendable inconclusiveness, as follows:

'Lord Dalhousie's sweeping annexations, which Sir Mortimer Durand, no mean authority, considered as largely responsible for the Mutiny, had been followed by reassurances given to the Princes by Lord Canning and a period of comparative quiescence under his immediate successors. To Lord Northbrook must be ascribed the resuscitation of the policy of intervention in the affairs of Native States, which, twenty years previously, had frequently resulted in annexation on the ground of misgovernment. The doctrine of protection, which he inaugurated, has been expanded and amplified by his successors to a degree which makes it absolutely impossible for any publicist to give an intelligible description of the complex relations which now form the basis of the policy maintained by the Government of India towards its Feudatories. The latter are so circumscribed and bound in fetters of red-tape, assiduously spun by successive Viceroys and Political Agents, that the term "Independent," except in a modified degree within the boundaries of their State, has no longer any application to their Governments. Whether the reiterated assurances, official and other, of the profound belief in their loyalty and devotion to Imperial interests is accepted by the Princes as a sufficient solatium for the loss of their independence is a problem we are unable to solve.'

With my characteristic modesty I refrain from comment, beyond the Aristophanic warning, *πρὶν ἂν ἀμφοῖν μῦθον ἀκούσῃς, οὐκ ἂν δικάσαις*, which, though couched in Greek, is perfectly harmless, and for all practical purposes useless.

That there are two versions of the story the above utterances amply prove. Yet Lord Curzon's oratory, if un-

checked by independent and patient investigation, leaves upon the mind echoes of a harmony such as the wise Odysseus found so charming to hear and so fatal to follow. Says the late Viceroy, in one of his latest public displays in this country:

'The position which is occupied by the British Crown towards the feudatory Princes of India is one of the greatest responsibilities that is anywhere enjoyed by a sovereign authority. Sometimes it may impose upon that authority unwelcome or distasteful obligations; but far more often it is the source of a relationship which is honourable and advantageous to both, and which associates them in the bonds of a political union without any parallel for its intimacy or confidence in the world. As one who has represented the sovereign Power for an unusual length of time in India, I can speak with some right to be heard when I say that anything that enhances the security or adds to the dignity of the Indian Princes is above all things welcome to the British Government.'

It may be so; in fact, I am disposed to think that, on the whole, it is so. The fact remains that the majority of articulate Indians do not believe that it is so. Perhaps their distrust is due to our own inimitable faculty of throwing our good intentions on the heads of people in a manner which leads the unfortunate recipients of our favours to mistake them for brick-bats.

Briefly, every one of the 688 native princes rules, or reigns, *quam diu se bene gesserit*—the *bene* being one of those beautifully elastic terms that can be stretched or contracted at pleasure. Quite recently one of the least of these Princes reached the breaking-point of his *bene*, and the result was painful. How painful it was is shown from the following proclamation issued by the Madras Government, and printed in the newspapers under the ominous title:

'SUSPENSION OF A RULING CHIEF.

'Whereas the Nawab Syed Fateh Ali Khan Bahadur, C.S.I., Jagirdar of Banganapalle, has, by persistent extra-

vagance, involved himself deeply in debt and impoverished the administration of the Jagir, and has persistently disregarded the advice, remonstrances, and warnings of the Governor of Fort St. George in Council, and has persistently obstructed the proposals for reform in the administration urged on him by the Governor of Fort St. George in Council, tne Governor of Fort St. George in Council, considering that the misgovernment of the Nawab Syed Fateh Ali Khan should be stayed, and further injury to the Jagir prevented, accordingly, with the concurrence and sanction of the Government of India, and under the terms of the "Sanad" of 1849, and in virtue of the responsibility of the British Government towards the people of the Jagir, hereby declares that the said Nawab Fateh Ali Khan Bahadur is removed temporarily from the direct administration of Banganapalle Jagir, which is assumed by the Governor of Fort St. George in Council. This decision will have effect from the 1st February, 1905. During the period for which powers of direct administration are withdrawn, the said Nawab Fateh Ali Khan Bahadur will be granted from the revenues of the Jagir such allowance for his personal maintenance and expenditure as the Government in Council may from time to time determine.'

Be the substance what it may, however, in point of semblance, at all events, Indore is a sovereign State, and its young ruler, *quam diu se bene gerat*, has no reason to envy any of the Central India chiefs who have assembled here to greet the Prince and Princess of Wales. All these gaily-plumed and pearl-adorned potentates cannot but feel that their host, thus honoured by the heir to the Imperial throne, despite his tender years, is a greater man than themselves. For does he not even take precedence of the mature Maharaja of Alwar in all Imperial functions?

Of all these functions, the most memorable and impressive was, undoubtedly, the Durbar. A large pavilion of glittering cloth was prepared on the yellow plain which surrounds the Residency, within a few minutes' walk of

our camp. At one end of the pavilion was a silver-cloth carpeted and canopied dais, upon which stood two thrones —a velvet and silver one in front, and a smaller armchair of velvet and gold a little back. Half a dozen attendants, in robes of scarlet and gold and turbans of white and gold, stood behind: one armed with a scarlet and gold parasol, another with an immense scarlet and gold fan, two with colossal fly-flaps of horse-hair, and two with some curious instruments of imaginary coolness which looked like Hercules' club. On either side of the dais sat the ladies-in-waiting and the officers of the household, including the interpreter, while the path leading from the dais to the entrance was flanked by the fifty odd chiefs of Central India, first among them the little Begum of Bhopal, muffled in silks as on the previous day. Behind these serried ranks of plumes and pearls and precious stones and brocade of gold were ranged the ordinary guests.

A little before eleven the Princess slipped on to the dais informally from behind, and took her seat thereon. Ten minutes later the thunder of many hoofs, followed by a salute and the National Anthem, announced the approach of the Prince. He entered, and as, preceded by two long lines of aides-de-camp, he advanced to the dais, the whole assembly rose to their feet. On His Royal Highness's taking his seat, the Durbar commenced.

First was presented the Begum, who, having bowed twice, returned to her seat. She was followed in order of precedence by eighteen maharajas, rajas, and nawabs, each accompanied by the Political Officer attached to his Court, a brilliant, if barbaric, procession: some turbaned, others crowned, young and old, bearded and beardless, lean and stout, green, blue, red, white, purple, they all came, one after another, bowed, the Prince returned the bow and laid his hand between theirs, and they retreated backwards. Then the Prince read an address to the interpreter, who translated it into Hindustani to the assembly. Thereupon the same chiefs, in the same order, approached the throne; two attendants came forward with two silver salvers, and

the Prince handed to each chief a piece of *pan* wrapped up in silver paper, and sprinkled a few drops of ottar of roses into his handkerchief. An officer offered the same fragrant attentions to each of the inferior rajas, and this brought the ceremony to an end. The Prince led the way out, and the company emerged from the comparative coolness of the pavilion into the glaring sun of the yellow plain.

'A most important function,' said my platitudinarian friend.

'Yes,' I answered, 'and a very gorgeous spectacle.'

Platitudinarianism is infectious.

The person next in dignity to the Prince of Indore and superior to him in power is the British Agent, whose pillared mansion of stone and park stand within the Residency Limits, as drawn, sealed, and secured by treaty. Like the prince's domain, this area also includes a number of interesting incongruities, such as a bazaar, opium stores, and, most interesting of all, a hospital famed far and wide for its success in providing 500 new noses a year to a corresponding number of Indian wives, who have had the misfortune to quarrel with their lords.

It is a curious conjugal custom, this of nose-cutting. When an Indian gentleman has, or has not, reason to believe that his partner is endeavouring to imitate his own sentimental versatility, he does not seek to send her away as we do, or to send her decently to the bottom of the sea, as the Turkish Pashas are supposed to do. He is content to divorce her from her nose. This process, sanctioned by immemorial tradition and connived at by the law, or at most punished as a little misdemeanour, has many merits to recommend it. It enables the husband to relieve his feelings and to regain his self-respect without fuss or expense. The lady, on the other hand, thanks to the English surgeons, has no difficulty in making good her loss. She repairs straight to the hospital, carrying her old nose carefully wrapped up in a piece of paper or a handkerchief, if she has been lucky enough to find it; if it

is irretrievably lost, she comes without any nose at all. In either case, it is only a matter of a few days. Repairs over, the wife returns home none the worse, if little the wiser, for her experience, and peace is restored with the nose—until next time.

Next to the noseless wife, in point of popularity and pathos, among the patients of the hospital, ranks the wife who is sonless. An Indian nose, after all, is only an ornament—sometimes hardly that; a son is a necessity, without which an Indian woman's life is worse than death. A Hindu regards himself as dishonoured in this world and most surely damned in the next if he leaves no posterity to pay off his own and his ancestor's sins.

No less pathetic is the sight of the mother who—such is the power even of a little faith—commits her only child to the surgeon's care. And when the surgeon has failed, and the beloved one is dead, the aged mother, having decently bewailed her lot with the refrain 'Niputa! niputa!' (Sonless! sonless!) consoles herself and the self-reproaching doctor, who has assisted Nature, with the reflection: 'It was written on his forehead'—written, not in the metaphorical *kital* of the superficial Nearer Eastern Angel, but by the incisive pen of Brahma in the sutures of the skull. Fate in India has mastered the rudiments of anatomy.

My informant concludes with a rhetorical little sketch of another scene from these schools of scientific death:

'A Hindu pilgrim carries his brother, worn out by the fatigue and exposure of a thousand miles tramp from the Punjab, into the hospital, and nurses him there day and night with a woman's care and tenderness. Every day he prostrates himself at the doctor's feet, touching his boots with the caste marks on his forehead, begging him to do all that he can to save the sick man's life. The doctor does it, and then offers his condolences to the surviving brother. "What can we say?" is the reply. "Karma ki dawa kuchh nahin hai" (There is no medicine for Fate). And he shoulders his burden to resume his pilgrimage alone.'

'The fatalism of the East!' says my platitudinarian friend, glibly.

The belief in Fate, my glib friend, is neither Oriental nor Occidental; it is as universal as human impotence. True, the Orientals use the term more often than we, or at least that is the prevailing notion. But that must be only because, having a greater aptitude for meditation and limitless leisure for cultivating it, they realize their own insignificance more keenly than we. We do not talk of *kismet*, it is true; but when we have done our best, or even when we have not done it, and failed, we call it hard luck. When a country parson in time of drought prays for rain—for, paradoxical as it may seem both to our meteorologists and to Allah, our parsons still do pray for rain, though, I believe, they have given up praying in time of an eclipse—and rain refuses to come, both he and his parishioners call it the will of God. Sometimes we go even further in our fatalism, and blame the heavens for disagreeable experiences solely and clearly due to our own palpable imbecility. Did we not call our South African defeats by the soothing name of disasters? But my platitudinarian friend prattles confidently on, as if he were under the impression that the frank recognition of our limitations and the consciousness of an inexorable power outside ourselves were a fruit of the East, like the infamous and indigestible plantain.

It is all a matter of faith. Faith! sole failure's bath, balm of hurt minds, helpless man's last resort, the West calls thee Fatalism, and spurns thee as a stupid soporific, and the West, on the whole, is right. But what fills thy deserted house in the West? Emptiness, cheered by the flitting phantoms of fallacies once credible enough, now merely grotesque.

But even Eastern faith's healing power has its bounds. Frequently resignation fails, and then one touch of despair makes the whole world kin on the surface as it is in its depths.

It has been said that suicide is one of the peculiarities which distinguish man from the lower animals, the other

being laughter. And, certes, no mule, so far as I am aware, has ever been known to indulge in either. Judged by the first standard, the inhabitants of Hindustan must be reckoned among the most highly-developed members of the human race. For, though they laugh less often than we, they kill themselves far more easily. According to the report of the Sanitary Commissioner of one part of the country only, the United Provinces, no fewer than 676 suicides occurred during the twelvemonth ending December 31, 1904, among males, and 2,050 among females. In the towns of 10,000 inhabitants and over, statistics show a draw between the sexes, each of them being represented by the curiously precise number of 78 deaths. This equality cannot be a mere coincidence, for in the previous year also there were 78 male and 75 female suicides. It looks as though there were some method in suicide, as in other forms of madness. It follows that the vast preponderance of feminine self-destruction occurs in the villages. This is an extremely curious phenomenon, and a satisfactory explanation of it would be of profound interest to the student of Indian life. But the report, of course, does not even raise the question, much less throw any light upon its answer.

The preponderance of female suicides, however, is said to be due to the ill-treatment of widows and young wives. The slightest provocation is enough to persuade a Hindu woman to kill herself in order to spite her husband or her mother-in-law. The latter is, indeed, a rich source of family sorrows and funerals. Mothers-in-law all over the world appear to have been created for the sole purpose of making their sons' wives unhappy. But in Hindu society this mission is fulfilled with particular zeal and ingenuity. We often hear of mothers-in-law branding their daughters-in-law with a red-hot iron, an attention for which they are supposed to suffer under the Indian Penal Code. What wonder if young women seek relief in transmigration? After all, death is only one of the minor tragedies of life.

But it is not always the mother-in-law's fault. Here is a typical example, such as you see in the Indian newspapers every day under the heading 'Inquests.' The deceased, a Hindu widow, with her daughter, had lived in the house of her mother, who, it appears, had chastised her granddaughter. This annoyed the deceased, who first refused to take her meals, and on the following day was found unconscious and foaming at the mouth. The police-surgeon pronounced that death was due to arsenic-poisoning, and the jury returned a verdict of suicide, *not* 'while temporarily insane.' Eastern juries do not deem it necessary to exculpate the dead by insulting the intelligence of the living.

But self-murder, though most popular among women, is by no means their exclusive monopoly. The Hindus of either sex are a shockingly delicate and fragile sort of creatures. Where we think they feel, and where we feel they brood. They require an exceptionally gentle handling, which they do not always get at the hands of the irritable sahib. You often hear of servants dying after a blow which they probably deserved, but which was only just severe enough to make an English servant give notice or, at most, swear. The only apparent cause of death is vindictiveness acting on a rotten liver. The law takes a very stern view of such cases, and I suppose the law knows best. But in many cases the poor sahib has my full sympathy, as the victim of a peculiarly subtle form of malice.

Again, you hear of a Hindu lad committing suicide because he failed to pass an examination, or for some other equally grave calamity. The other day such a lad, aged about seventeen years, in the Twenty-four Parganas, was sent by his father to the Cotton School. The authorities did not see their way to admit him, as he had not brought his last school transfer certificate. They, however, permitted him to stay on the premises. On Monday afternoon he was found dead, hanging from an iron beam. In another case a young man named Khagendro

Nath Nag, aged about twenty-six years, having had a quarrel with his mother and brother over a petty domestic affair, poisoned himself.

This world is too hard for such brittle creatures, and perhaps they do well to betake themselves to another. They are creation's errors, and their maker owes them a reparation which, I fear, he is not likely to pay.

One more illustration of this incredible sensitiveness of the Indian soul. The other day a native magistrate sentenced a man to a fine of 200 rupees (£13 7s.), or to three months hard labour, for calling the plaintiff *sharir*, a nursery word which means 'naughty.'

CHAPTER III

A WEEK-END IN UDAIPUR

THE dawn was just gilding the skyline over the eastern hills as a sudden slowing down of the train awoke us. We were in Rajputana. Any doubt that might linger on the sleep-numbed brain was dispelled by a glance out of the window at the yellow, burnt-up plains and the rugged hills, shaggy with dwarf vegetation and wrinkled with the memories of ephemeral streams, and especially by yon group of humped camels kneeling by the roadside.

We reached the capital of this chief among Rajput States in the chilly dawn, and alighted at the station to find it in the possession of flags floating gaily in the breeze and of gloomy red-turbaned coolies, hugging themselves and shivering beneath their rags resignedly. The open space outside was packed with vehicles—smart open carriages from the Palace, brakes drawn by great artillery horses, tongas drawn by small, well-fed, optimistic-looking ponies, and innumerable mat-roofed bullock-carts, waiting to convey the guests, their belongings, and their servants to the various places prepared for their reception. It was now half-past seven. The station gradually filled with the persons invited to witness their Royal Highnesses' arrival—to wit, the Maharana, attended by a dozen of the principal officers and sardars of the Merwar State, all gay in their festive colours; the Agent to the Governor-General and his staff; the Resident in Merwar and his staff, all in full dress; European officers and ladies; and the precincts beyond were thronged by a silent yet eager-looking mob of Rajput men and women.

At 8.30 the royal train steamed in, and the Prince and Princess alighted to the thunder of a salute of thirty-one guns, fired by the Maharana's artillery from the Eklingarh fort. The Maharana and the Resident were immediately presented by the Agent; and then the sardars, who were ranged along the right-hand side of the porch in order of precedence, were presented by the Resident; while on the left-hand side of the porch stood the European ladies and gentlemen, and further down the platform were drawn up the Maharana's troops, with their band. Presentations completed, the Maharana escorted the Prince through the station to the first state-carriage, while the Princess, escorted by the Agent, followed immediately after and stepped into the second state-carriage, and, the rest of the procession being formed, all moved slowly off, a serpent of many-tinted splendour glittering in the early sunlight.

I followed in one of the carriages, with a coachman in flowing white robes and turban and sash which seemed to have stolen their colour from the morning sky. Thus we drove along a dusty cactus-hedged road, winding across the valley and up the horse-shoe of rocky hills which embraces the city of Udaipur.

We first passed a colony of cenotaphs, marble-pillared and minutely sculptured, some of them crumbling, all marking the place where the Maharanas of Udaipur and their consorts have been converted to ashes since the end of the sixteenth century. Conspicuous among these monuments of glories and beauties long gone by stood the empty tomb of Singram Singh, the prince whose corpse was followed to the flames by twenty-one of his favourite wives, none daring to forego this last proof of affection, or rather to endure the consequences of a dereliction of their supreme duty to a lord powerful even in death.

The next object of interest was a leper woman, crouching by the roadside with her veil drawn up to her nose. You could just see that one half of her face was eaten away. She whined, with her hands outstretched, for the means of prolonging her misery.

'*It is a mad world, my masters,*' I quoted softly to myself.

'What did you say?' asked my companion.

'It is rather cold,' I answered; and he rejoined:

'I was just thinking the same thing.'

The sun had meanwhile risen well over the mountain ring, and the valley smiled her greetings sleepily through the white mist. At intervals cottage thatches, square or circular, peeped through the green foliage of the trees, and on many a wooded slope and bare brown summit gleamed the white pinnacles of temples and shrines and the mossy ruins of obsolete forts. The cornices of the temples and tombs nearest to our path were crimson with Rajput turbans and veils watching the royal procession, and the road itself gradually became animated with the noise of men and beasts. In front of us trotted a cavalcade of uncouth camels, each bearing on its hump a stalwart, curly-bearded Rajput, with old-fashioned rifle across his knees and curved scimitar at his side. Behind us galloped the ponies of the tongas which carried our luggage, jingling their bells merrily. To the right and left lean horsemen on sleek horses curvetted and pranced and reared, reckless with excess of health.

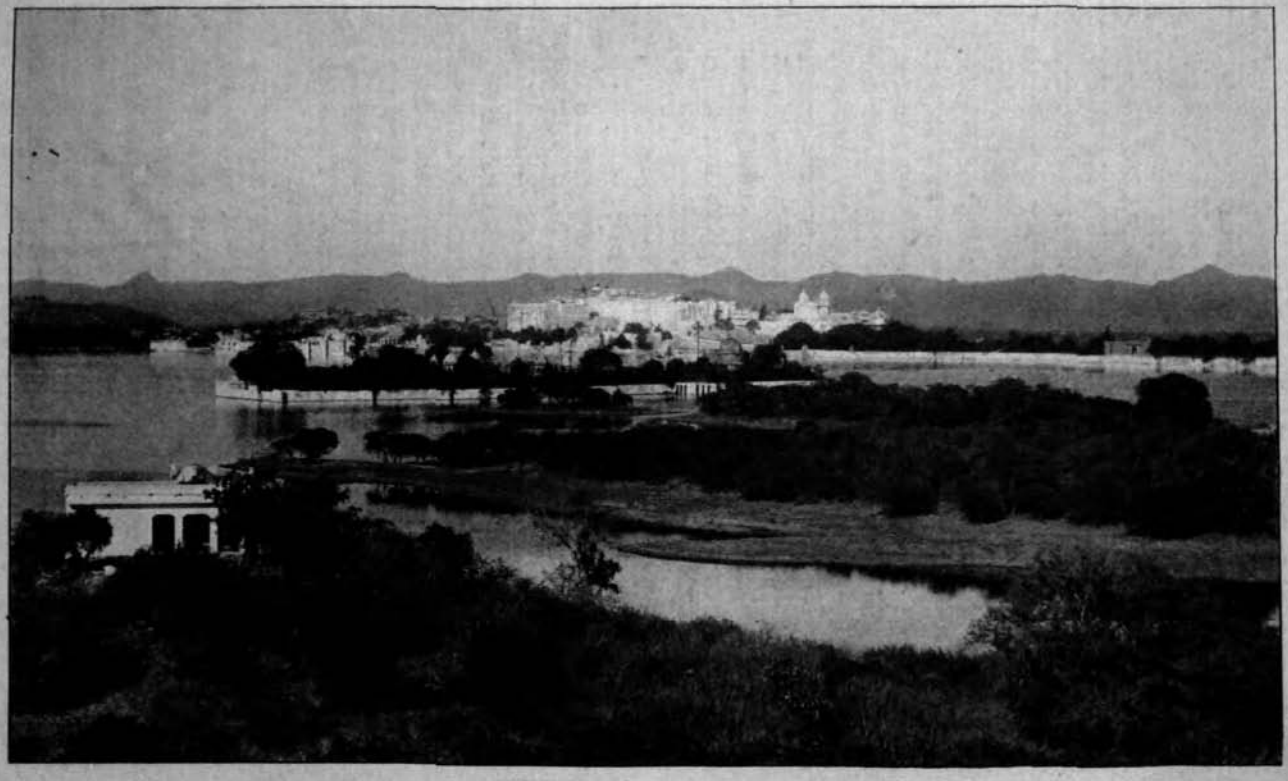
Thus we zigzagged up the hillside, past trees adorned with coloured rags—the offerings of pious Hindu peasants to the spirits of vegetation—or overshadowing an altar upon which grinned the amorphous idol, red with an inexpensive substitute for the blood of sacrifice. The gods of Hindustan must be easily deceived. And close to these tokens of deep-rooted, indigenous faith rose the little spire of a Scotch mission church, in charge of a charming old gentleman.

Thus we drove on, along the dry moat that runs round the low, stout walls of the city, pierced with loopholes and festooned with pointed battlements, even as were the ramparts of Troy in the old illustrated 'Iliad' which thrilled my foolish boyhood. No doubt these stout walls did stout service in the days when warfare to the chieftains of Raj-

putana meant what it meant to the heroes of Homeric Greece. Those days, though gone, are not yet forgotten. Behold a sardar in his gala robe of sky-blue satin, half-moon sword, and small round shield, swaggering medievally to the railway-station!

We have left the walled city behind and caught a glimpse of the Residency, a delightful little mansion, all white, with broad, pillared verandas below and Saracenic cupolas above, the whiteness of the walls being agreeably set off by the rich green foliage of bougainvillia creepers ablaze with purple blossoms. Now we skirt an enclosed cemetery, sad with the struggling ruins of Mahomedan sepulchres; and here is the solitary grave of a departed saint crowned with big stones which, in the rays of the sun, glitter like silver, and probably are tinsel. Now and again, in the midst of the sombre jagged hills, shimmers a blue lake, along the margin of which men wash clothes, beating them on the gray rocks and spreading them out to dry; and yonder is a troop of wild, keen-tusked pigs, rushing down the hillside to slake their thirst.

Upon the crest of one of those hills gleams the marble palace of the Maharana, its lofty towers, domes, arched terraces, and granite gateways reflected in the clear mirror of the lake below on one hand, and on the other dominating the walled city which spreads from its foot—a mass of gray weather-stained houses, white cupolas, and green trees. The palace is a motley structure grown slowly round the peak of the hill on which, it is said, the founder of the dynasty rested after taking Udaipur. This spot forms the sacred centre of the princely home. To this kernel each successive Maharana has deemed it his duty to add, and the result is the grandiose congeries of epochs overhanging the placid lake, at this moment aflame with the glow of our host's father. For this marvellous Maharana, so stern, so bearded, and so brilliantly turbaned, firmly believes that, in common with all Rajputs, he is the direct descendant of the sun; wherefore the banners and heart-shaped fans of Udaipur State, her servants' badges,



THE PALACE AND LAKE, UDAIPUR.

and her new-fangled coat of arms, all bear in their middle the round radiating face of the Rajput race's progenitor.

According to another version the chief's special origin is traced no further back than the god whose adventures in the pursuit of his wife's ravisher are narrated with so engaging a contempt for probability in the 'Ramayana,' the endless 'Odyssey' of Hindustan. Yes, Rama, an incarnation of Vishnu, the All-preserver, if not the Sun himself, is the divine fountain of our host's family; or, if not Vishnu, at all events the well-known Julius Cæsar of Rome—so abundant are the resources of genealogy when its records are left to the imagination of courtly minstrels. Many of these tuneful inventors of celestial ancestors for the great ones of the earth are to be met with in Rajputana, living in the palaces of the princes, and repaying their masters' hospitality with epic mendacity. Our host some time ago even founded a school for the encouragement of so pleasing a form of historical research.

He is not unique in his appreciation of the value of rhapsody. All the Hindu chiefs of Rajputana, I hear, are liberal patrons of this branch of literature, and the proud owners of pedigrees whose length is only limited by the credulity of the listener. Yet they all look upon a hospitable Maharana with the reverence due to his solar extraction and sacerdotal character; for he is not only the prince, but also the high-priest of his Rajput subjects, and is worshipped by them as a god. I was therefore not surprised to see His Highness's head, in a portrait in the palace the other night, adorned with an aureole like that of any other medieval saint.

Such are the antecedents of the prince who rules, with a firm hand, over this desirable principality. And his character reflects the antiquity of his lineage. No more conservative soul breathes in this most conservative of lands. His Highness abhors railways, and the telegraph is a mighty nuisance to him. Yet, after a good deal of pressure brought to bear for a considerable number of years, he consented to allow both the one and the other to

approach his rock-crowned capital. But only to approach. The Maharana would almost renounce his genealogical tree rather than the venerable quiet of his kingdom. Even as it is, when the affairs of State have taxed the princely nerves too severely, His Highness loves to seek repose in a retreat which I was fortunate enough to explore.

A gate leads into a shady park, and a wicket leads from the park into a high-walled garden, within which cloistered court opens into cloistered court, each court cool with the spray of waters playing into basins of marble, and drowsy with the perfume of roses and the tender cooing of amorous doves. Small iron doors in odd corners and narrow stone stairs lead up into corridors and alcoves lighted only by the coloured glasses of diminutive windows, through which the sunbeams slant upon the tessellated floors. The dados round the walls unfold deeds of prowess in the field. Here is a scene of gallant Rajputs, armed with spears and arrows, stalking the deer, assisted by Bhil shikaris; there are lion-hunts, tiger-hunts, panther-hunts, and huge elephants crushing through the jungle. And in the midst of this 'Arabian Nights' world you are brought to a stand-still by the sight of two London coster girls, in their black straw hats, economical skirts, and superabundant boots, leering at you from the panels of the iron door which leads into one of these soft bowers of Eastern sleep! It must be the doing of the railway.

The same agency must be accounted responsible for the glass chandeliers and glass tables and unwieldy glass-framed chairs which disfigure the new palace with what the East innocently regards as the fashionable luxury of the West. Otherwise our visit to that palace was ravishingly free from Western horrors.

It was night, and the moon had considerately refrained from interfering with the illuminations. We drove down to the edge of the great lake and embarked on the boats. The shores around and the hill-tops up above were aglow with millions of little earthenware lamps, whose cotton wicks and cocoanut oil traced every palace, every

temple, and every bathing-ghat in lines of tremulous fire; and the dark waters beneath were one continuous fence of quivering gold. Similarly outlined to their minutest detail were all the kiosks upon the islets scattered over the face of the lake, the ramparts of the town, and the arches of the stone bridge which girdles the narrow waist of the lake; while amid the trembling lights and smoke moved thousands of turbaned and veiled shades, humming confusedly.

After half an hour's wondering we landed on the steps of the new palace, where the Maharana, attended by his courtiers, waited to receive his royal guests. A right royal banquet was followed by fireworks on the opposite shore, which we viewed from the roof of the palace, sneezing. And when, surfeited with manifold marvels, we set out on our way home, His Highness decorated each parting guest's neck with a garland of gold thread and tufts of silk, and presented to each a packet of *betel* wrapt up in green-leaf. The bedward drive through the labyrinth of the town, spontaneously crowded, supplied a fitting background to the stately hospitality at the palace.

The majority of the people over whom this stern, pious, courteous, and hard-working descendant of the sun rules are Hindus by religion and the upper-class Rajputs by race—hardy warriors and lovers of horses, who fear the plough far more than the sword. Below this proud martial class are the tillers of the soil, the fishers of the lake, and the hunters of the jungle, many of them dark men with straight black hair, high cheek-bones, and fat lips—an ungainly, not over-scrupulous, highly unintelligent, but abstemious and industrious tribe of aborigines, whom the Rajputs despise as Bhils and the Banias dread as robbers. Out of this rough material was, in 1841, shaped a corps which remained loyal through the Mutiny. It is related that, when a body of rebel cavalry tried to induce their Bhil comrades to join them, the latter readily complied, and, having accompanied

their allies part of the way, murdered them all in the night—a truly aboriginal form of loyalty. Yes, the Bhils make useful instruments for the destruction of life, whether brute or human, in sombre earnest or in sport.

The Maharana counts fifty-one chiefs among his feudal vassals, and surely no vassals ever were more to be envied. Since the necessity for military service has disappeared, these nobles enjoy their fiefs as family estates, paying only an accession fee to the prince, and not always even that, and spending their revenues on the maintenance of regal pomp, each in his little kingdom, but all assembling to grace their lord paramount's Court on great occasions like the present. I have seen some of these gentlemen in the garb of peace, and they impressed me vividly by their feminine magnificence—silk turbans, immense ear-rings, beginning on the top of the ear and passing through the lobe, each ring of gold set with pearls; strings of jaspers and amethysts round the neck, golden chains across the breast, and about the ankles heavy fetters of gold. Yet these same men rejoice in the perils of the field, as the panthers of Udaipur have good reason to know, for the Hindu gladly destroys in fun the life which he will not take for food. But the wild pigs are protected from slaughter by the order of the Maharana, who preserves them for his own spear. Herds of these long-tusked brutes bristle over the country, even under the window of the Rest House where these lines are penned, and yesterday we were conveyed across the lake to the Khas Oodi to see a vast number of them fed in state. They appeared to enjoy their dinner, and expressed their satisfaction by grunting misanthropically.

We arrived in Udaipur on Saturday, November 18, and depart to-day, Monday, having crowded into three short days the impressions of three long years. It was a week-end spent in the Homeric Age—or was it in the Court of Harun-al-Rashid? I applied to my platitudinarian friend for a succinct description, and he spoke as follows:

THE PRINCE AND THE MAHARANA DRIVING TO A SHOOTING CAMP, UDAIPUR.

'A most interesting visit—awfully picturesque country, don't you know, and the Maharana the most charming prince I have ever met. Pity the Prince did not get his panther.'*

* His Royal Highness had gone out to shoot a panther, and shot four pigs, one small deer, and three hyenas

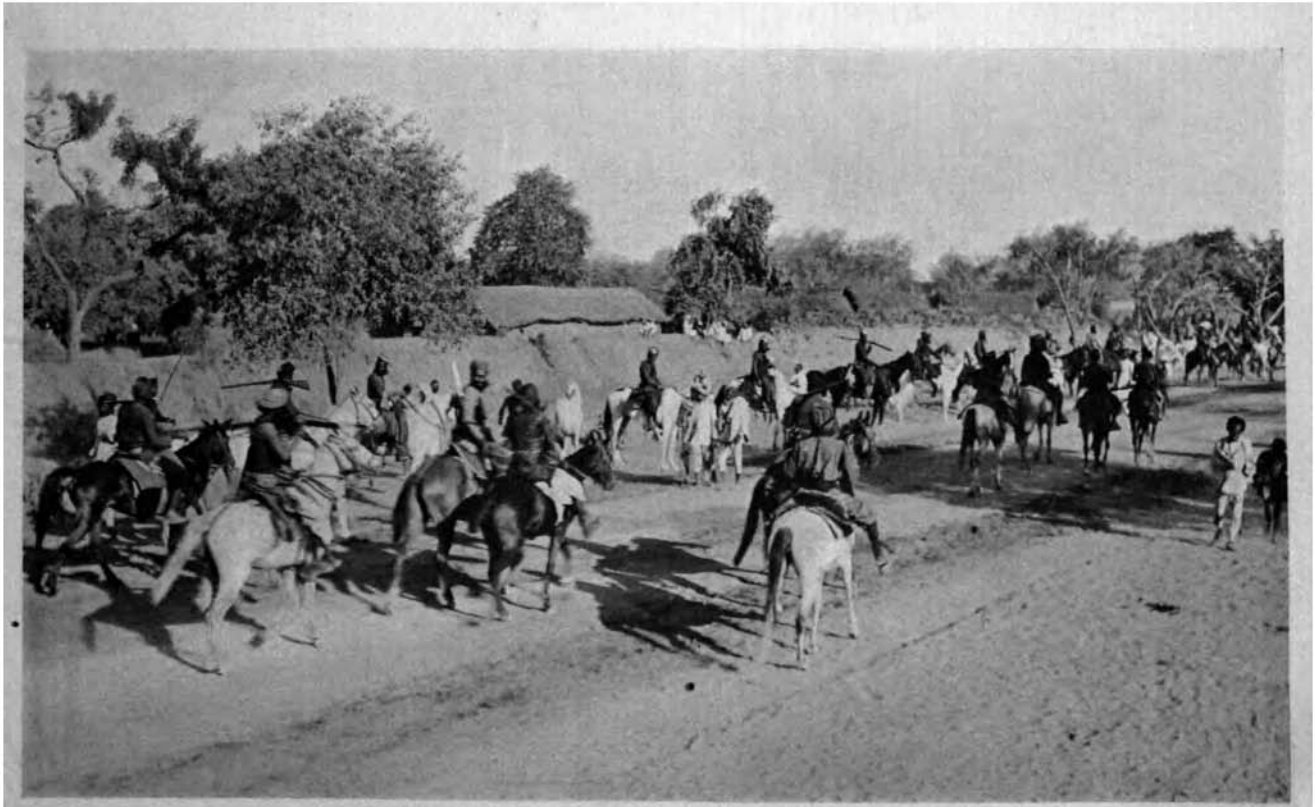
CHAPTER IV

JAIPUR

ANOTHER Native State of Rajputana, twice as large as the last one, and three times as dry. Towards the south and east the soil is kinder, and the crops more varied and picturesque—yellow-bearded Indian corn, white cotton-pods and sesame blossoms smiling in the sunlight, sugar-cane bristling forest-high, not to mention the tobacco-plant, than which, as everyone knows, no more cheering herb grows under the canopy of heaven.

But these things are rather the exception. The country as a whole appears to be a vast sandy plain, its flatness accentuated by the hill-ridges which cross it in the distance, and its thirst feebly relieved by the river Banas and its meagre tributaries—most meagre just now. The soil suggests penury and compulsory temperance, and the peasants are in harmony with the soil, their dull looks and drab clothes bespeaking a land rich only in courage and camels.

And so, by that abrupt transition from rural torpor to urban bustle so common in the East, we reach the station, broad awake to coming events, and we alight in front of three sardars, gorgeous in gold and crimson turbans and swords of state. They are three out of the twelve who alone are privileged to accompany the Maharaja on this solemn platform. Soon the Maharaja himself arrived in a state-coach and four—an elderly, dignified gentleman, in a black gold-broidered cloak and gray beard, reminding one strangely of an Armenian



SARDARS AND RETAINERS MEETING THE PRINCE AT JAIPUR.

bishop. He rides under a canopy of gold cloth culminating in a crown of gold.

The royal train is signalled, the guns roar a royal salute, the royal standard is hoisted, the guard of honour presents arms, the band strikes up the National Anthem, and the Prince and Princess of Wales descend from their carriage. The Maharaja, introduced by the Resident, bows profoundly to both, lays his sword at their feet, picks it up again, shakes hands, and the twelve noblemen are presented. The procession then moves off in a string of state-carriages, flanked with a few elephants and escorted by native troops; and among them leap demoniacally hundreds of Nagas—semi-naked semi-savages in crimson or green close-fitting jackets and short breeches, wielding a small round shield on the left arm, brandishing a long, straight sword with the right hand, while the peacock feathers on their heads bob up and down in wild unison with the shrieking of the long, twisted horn. The Old Resident, however, tells me that the Nagas are not so savage as their dancing, their sole inherent peculiarity being religious dissent. Orthodox Pandits also are in attendance close to the triumphal arch, ready with their Sanskrit benedictions and censers of sacred fragrance, while the women's songs of welcome are drowned in the din of wheels, hoofs, harness, and other musical instruments.

Thus we move on between dust-clothed cactus hedges, Rajput turbans, and mud windowless huts and a few low buildings which are not quite shops. 'Why is not the road watered?' I asked of the Old Resident, and he replied: 'We cannot afford it; every drop of water is precious this year.'

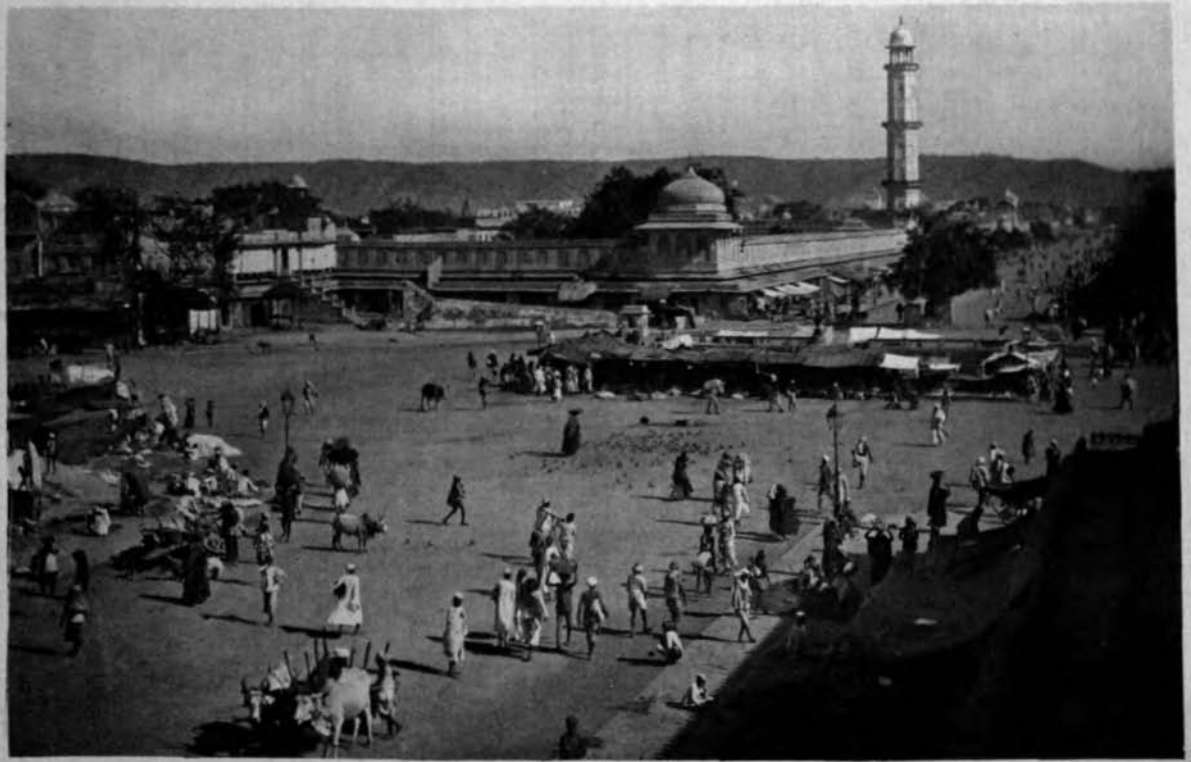
I leave the procession at the splendid Residency mansion and proceed to the city of Jaipur—a busy, money-dealing town, set in a brown desert, which is supposed to be the bed of a dried-up lake, and surrounded by rocky, mangy-looking, wickedly-scarped hills, upon the peak of one of which stands the Tiger fort, and upon that of another

a white-domed temple. From the foot of these hills spreads the capital, with its 150,000 inhabitants—a colossal pink-and-white bazaar, encircled by thick walls, loopholed and crenellated, and pierced with seven gates, as was Thebes of old.

Having traversed the extra-mural market-place, with its crowds of sombre peasants and gaily-turbaned citizens, buying and selling the products of the fields, and its legions of persistent cripples, I pass under a fortified gateway into the main street. It is a broad, sun-flooded, dust-clouded thoroughfare of corn-shops and steep stone stairs of temples thronged with brightly-veiled women and other worshippers of the gods. Here and there low-browed arches open into mysterious courts, and over the shops run rows of latticed windows, peeping down upon a stream of dyspeptic little donkeys, buffaloes, small sedan-chair-like tongas, drawn by huge bullocks, whose horns are painted red or green, pariah dogs snapping at the flies, disdainful camels, plentifully-caparisoned elephants, simple-minded goats, and incurious human bipeds.

Here is a pious Hindu washing the brass pots and pans which form the foundation of his spiritual life; there a woman seated in the sand turns patiently a hand-mill; a little lower down another woman is winnowing grain in a scoop-shaped fan; a third collects the dung of various beasts from the road, puts it into a basket, and carries it off on her head, strutting like a queen crowned with diamonds. Whence do these peasant women of the East derive their regal carriage? There, again, round a deep well—the only spring that appears to contain any water—stands a cluster of lissom lasses, filling their rotund, neckless and handleless red pitchers, and exchanging the news of the day. And amidst this busy mass roams the Indian bull, even more impressive and oppressive than the Indian policeman.

The latter may tyrannize over his inferiors; he is a slave to everyone else. But the Brahmani bull is the lord of



MAIN STREET OF JAIPUR.

all. He roams over the smiling meadows or through the squinting streets of village and town at pleasure, neither toiling nor moiling, but despoiling those who do. He is universally revered and feared, and experiences no difficulty in making his aims clear and his claims good. When the grass of the pastures and the tender stalks of the cornfields begin to grow, he sets out on a tour through the bazaar, blundering and plundering round the narrow lanes, pausing before every counter that tempts his jaded palate, and levying tribute from reverent and willing hands.

Some of these quadruped despots of the land are milk white, and their large solemn eyes appear in very truth to bless the gods who have created men to labour for them and cows to minister to them. Is there any greater bliss conceivable to mortal bull than an illimitable choice of food and wives? But there be also many that are neither gentle nor serene. They are black beasts, black in colour and in disposition, with immense double chins which stretch in unseemly frills from the lower lip to the belly, swaying to and fro their flaccid bashaw-like insolence. Insolent also is the rigid hump, which curves backwards after the fashion of a fossilized Liberty cap. Careless, godless, and lawless, these four-legged Brahmans form excellent emblems of priestly indolence, battening on the sweat and the superstition of their social slaves—the wretched tillers of the soil. Were I a Brahman, I would choose two of these bulls, rampant, for my coat of arms, and for motto the Pindaric ὀρθὴ κνωδάλων ὕβρις.

And so I reach another great fortified gate, pass under its heavy arch, and find myself in the front courtyard of the palace. I wind my way through a multitude of retainers clad in crimson and gold and bearing silver maces, warriors armed with quaint rifles of deep antiquarian interest, and I reach a third archway of marble fretwork and many delicately-latticed balconies. But the gate—a huge thing of polished brass, also pierced in delicate designs—flashes forbiddingly in the sun. I am told that it will only be opened for the Prince, who is to come

shortly to hold a Durbar. I was not prepared for a Durbar; nevertheless, as life is short and the hotel a long way off, I graciously consent to adorn the reception with my flannelled presence.

An enormously fat Bengali gentleman, in a black shirt which came down to his knees, and a low black cap, with a black band fluttering behind after a deprecating fashion, advanced and smilingly conducted me into the Divan Khana, or Council Hall—a great square pavilion with a marble colonnade running round three sides of it; on the fourth a row of balconies, and in the middle, close under the great glass chandelier which glittered from the vaulted roof, a canopied dais, all silver and gold, ready for the royal guest. In the centre of the pediment shone the Rajput sun, and around it scintillated compact rows of nobles of many degrees in their silks and golden turbans, plumes and tassels, pearled ears and necklaces, some of them in voluminous calico petticoats. Behind them upon the carpet sat, cross-legged, numerous retainers, splendidly apparelled and barefooted, glad to be allowed to dispense with the dignified discomfort of European chairs. One of them mutters inaudibly, with eyes closed fast to the vanity of this world, telling his beads. He must be a Mahomedan, and it is the hour of prayer. Another is twiddling his toes, unaffectedly.

Then the gray-bearded Maharaja, attended by the British Resident, came in to the strains of the Jaipur anthem, followed by two high-backed thrones of red velvet and gold. These were placed on the dais, the fan and fly-flap bearers took their positions behind them, and the Maharaja sat down on one of the thrones. The Princess, with her ladies-in-waiting and other members of her suite, then appeared modestly on one of the balconies aloft; for no mere woman is publicly recognised in zenana-ridden Rajputana. The Old Resident tells me that when the Duke of Connaught visited Jaipur years ago he was sorely offended at the lack of official consideration shown to his Duchess. It is even said that he spoke words of wrath to

the Maharaja. But the latter bowed profoundly and remained unconvinced and unreformed, unless the laying his sword at the feet of the Princess on the railway-platform was a sign of repentance.

Not many minutes after, an attendant arrived and whispered into the Maharaja's ear that his royal visitor was approaching. Thereupon the Maharaja quitted his throne, walked across the dais, and down into the lower court, where his interesting troops mounted guard with their curious rifles. Almost immediately after, the Prince, in a simple carriage and pair, drove between the brass gates and alighted in front of the pavilion. The Maharaja did obeisance, laying his sword at the feet of his guest, and then conducted him to the dais, where the two sat side by side conversing, embarrassingly, through the Resident.

The members of the Divan and other nobles were then presented, and, after a few minutes' silent, almost somnolent, solemnity, the inevitable garlands and the other offerings of hospitality were brought in. The Maharaja garlanded his guest's neck, an officer did likewise to the suite, whose white uniforms contrasted so refreshingly with the peacock splendour of their native neighbours, and up above in the balcony similar honours were paid to the ladies.

This was the second Durbar I assisted at, through no fault of mine, and I hope it will be the last I shall feel under the necessity of inflicting on the reader.

When the great ones had departed, I availed myself of the smiling Bengali's courtesy and inspected the wonderful palace gardens, which flourish, as best they may, under the fort-crowned rock. The tanks and water-channels were full of drought, and the trees drooped under the dust. The peacocks strolled about dejectedly with their tails contracted, and the very eyes of the granite puppy—a defunct favourite of the Maharaja's—appeared to look upon the world hopelessly from under the marble canopy on the top of a mound which would have been green if it were not in Rajputana.

Having thus perspired through the planted parts and traversed a shady cloister, we emerged into the glaring greenness of the stagnant pond in which are kept His Highness's pet crocodiles. The keeper brought out a handful of ancient meat, and, hooking it on to a rope, threw it into the portion of the pond which was not utterly arid, and proceeded to emit a series of sounds which the crocodiles apparently consider enticing, for they presently came to the surface, four or five of them, and swam straight to the mud's edge. They must have had their dinner already—possibly one of His Highness's female subjects, whose washing, I hear, is sometimes concluded in the monsters' stomachs. At all events, the keeper had to utter a great many raucous notes ere the slimy brutes were induced to climb on to the dry bed, and, with mouths gleaming white, to snap at the proffered delicacies.

With a parting look of disgust at the hideous pets and a bakshish to their keeper, I walked out of the gardens and back into the city, pondering all the things I had seen and the meaning thereof. Further food for rumination was supplied by a closer view of the town. Here I see a museum, there a library. I cross the Botanic Gardens; there rises the School of Arts, and my cicerone, when asked how he came to speak English so well, answered that 'His Highness provided free education in an English college.' Yes, His Highness, though he speaks only a few words of the West himself, and though he sincerely scorns the Western estimate of woman, is a progressive Maharaja. And his city boasts railway-stations and schools, a meteorological observatory, a menagerie, a hospital, a gaol, and a heliograph kept by the wily opium merchants for a speedy record of the fluctuating prices of the pernicious and fascinating drug.

The regularity and width of the streets also proclaim the modern craving for method and expediency at the expense of naturalness. Do I not see outside yonder shop a turbaned tailor whirling a Singer's sewing-machine? and

IRREGULAR TROOPS MEETING THE PRINCE AT JAIPUR.

is not the front of the house over the shop adorned with Hindu dancing-girls, and close by with two highly idealized portraits of English gentlemen in smoking-jackets and silk hats? Above all, is not the whole city painted pink and white? It is true, the uniformity of the painting suggests a thing done by order, and its freshness a thing done for the nonce. It is also true that the inquisitive eye easily detects behind the painted façades walls dim with the dirt and grime of ages. But what of that? Does not civilization mean the keeping up of appearances?

But the pinched faces of the peasants, the multitude of limping cripples, the sight of the squalid lanes, what tale do they tell? Happy and thrice happy is the impetuous earth-runner who, note-book in one hand and camera in the other, rushes and crushes through the universe seeking what he may admire. He loves to describe the brilliance and the bulk of state elephants. He speaks fluently of the glamour of the East, and, I charitably hope, he sees it, where I only see its ghastliness. In his pages squalor is magically translated into splendour. Happy mortal! In his pages also the dreams of a fevered fancy are raised to the dignity of historic facts, and facts are twisted into illustrations of a state of things which has never existed save in the visions of delirious sentimentality.

Thus, before coming to Jaipur, I had read greedily of bazaars sparkling with marble sculptures, diamond jewellery, and silk draperies. Where are they? Here also, I was told, one sees and handles real gold mohurs—a pleasant change after the everlasting silver rupee and paper notes of British India. I confess to a tender love for gold, and those heavy pieces of the warm yellow metal, with their sprigs on the obverse, make my heart glad; but I cannot find them in the bazaars of Jaipur. Perhaps they have all been gathered in the purses of her nobles.

The city was built in 1728 within these walls so high and so thick, and was populated with the inhabitants of Amber, now a city of deserted palaces and silent streets. It was built on an imposing scale; but its houses, its