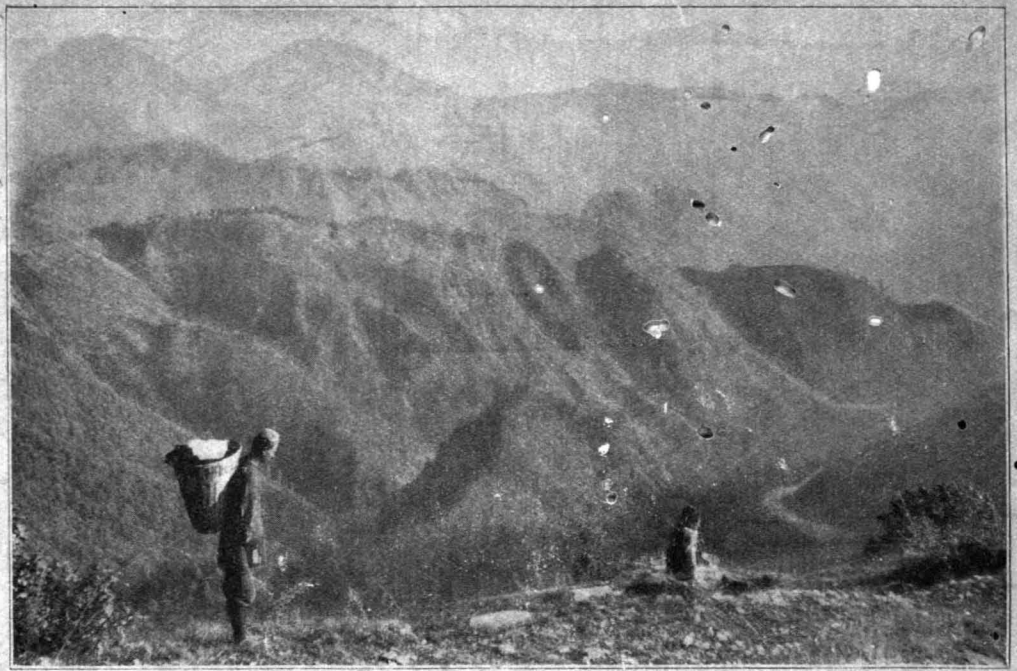

Photo by the Author

IN THE HIMALAYAS

"We ascended the steep mountain path, through forests of Himalayan oak and rhododendron, crossing range after range of foothills, and from time to time getting wondrous views of the valleys below or of the heights above."
(See p. 12)

INDIA
AND HER PEOPLES

BY

F. DEAVILLE WALKER

Editor of "The Foreign Field"
Author of "The Call of the Dark Continent"
"Talks on African Villages," etc.

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PREFACE

THIS book has been written, at the request of the United Council for Missionary Education, for a special purpose. For some years thousands of teachers and workers among young people have been using the publications of the United Council as material for missionary lessons —"Talks," "Yarns," "Heroines," "Story Lessons," and the text-books prepared specially for missionary Study Circles. All these books deal directly with missionary work and opportunity. The need has now arisen for a new series of books dealing, not with missions, but with the countries in which missionaries work and with the peoples to whom they seek to present the Gospel message. This little volume therefore is the first of a new series; others will follow dealing with China, Africa and other lands.

The book seeks to give such information as will create in the mind of the teacher a picture of India and her peoples. It aims at a vivid, picturesque presentation of some of the outstanding facts of Indian life, and there may be others besides teachers who will find it useful as an introductory study. The writer was asked to keep specially in mind those readers who are studying India for the first time; so *India and her Peoples* assumes no preliminary knowledge of the subject. The material is drawn very largely from the author's personal experiences and very extensive memoranda made during a 7000-mile tour through India in 1920-21. Every possible opportunity has been taken to test the accuracy

of the statements, and it is hoped that this small book will be found to convey, in broad outline, a true impression of that great country. The writer has striven to be scrupulously fair to the Indian people, and if he has in any way misinterpreted them it will be to him a matter of very sincere regret. He trusts, however, that what he has written will impart to others something of his own affection for India, a just appreciation of her true worth, and an earnest desire for her highest welfare. To visit India is to be fascinated by her, and to know the Indian people is to love them.

The author gratefully acknowledges his indebtedness to the many missionaries and other friends who, during his tour, extended to him most generous hospitality and gave him opportunities of acquiring information he would not otherwise have had. He also sincerely thanks the friends who have helped by reading the MS. and proofs of this book and enriching it with valuable suggestions.

F. D. W.

SIDCUP, KENT,
April 8th, 1922

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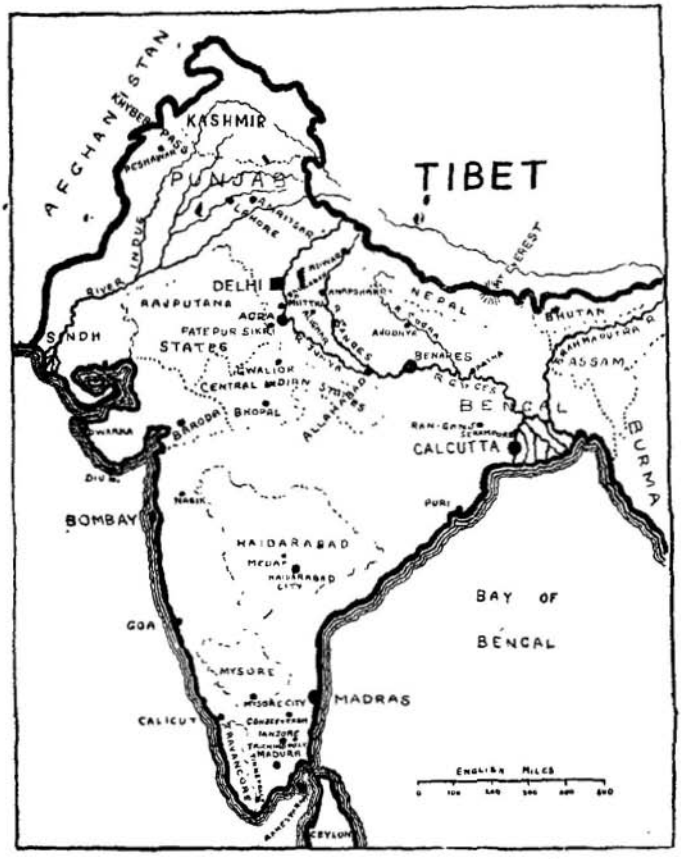

MAP OF INDIA

SHOWING THE PLACES MENTIONED IN THIS BOOK

(For physical features see Map on page 11)

NOTE

The following Editions of this text-book are published :—

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Those who read this book in Groups are strongly recommended to make use of the "Questions for Discussion" that have been prepared in connection with it. They may be obtained by writing to the Home Educational Secretary at any of the above addresses marked *.

INDIA AND HER PEOPLES

CHAPTER I

THE LAND OF THE HINDUS

THE Victoria Station in Bombay is one of the finest railway termini in the world—a great Italian-Gothic pile, richly decorated with open arcades and porches, and surmounted by handsome towers and pinnacles and domes; a building that for size and external grace may easily put to shame many of the royal palaces of Europe.

But the visitor newly arrived from home is less impressed with the station building than with the people who gather there. In the large third-class waiting hall some scores of Indians, in bewildering assortment of dress and undress, are sitting in groups or lying asleep on the floor. Some of them are pilgrims going to bathe in "Mother Ganges"; others are just ordinary coolies (labourers) wearing only a narrow loin cloth and turban, and there are several khaki-clad Indian soldiers returning home from Mesopotamia—stalwart black-bearded Sikhs, or smart little Ghurkas. Walk round among these representatives of India's 320 millions of people, and you will detect at least a dozen of the 150 different languages spoken within her borders.

At the booking-office a wealthy Parsi merchant is taking a first-class ticket; two or three of his servants look after the luggage, and his wife, a timid-eyed lady wrapped in a beautiful *sari* of pink silk bordered with

narrow black velvet richly embroidered, holds their little child by the hand. A baggy-trousered Afghan moneylender is pouring out a torrent of Hindustani over the head of an Anglo-Indian[1] guard; probably he is asking about a train for Peshawar on the North-West Frontier—a three days' journey if he goes by the "Punjab Mail" or much longer if he can only afford to travel by the slower "passenger" train. Two Bengali students, with big blue shawls thrown round their shoulders, stroll down the platform holding each other by the hand in a way that suggests young lovers. As they enter a second-class carriage, a burly Maratha corn dealer is arranging his belongings for the journey; one of his servants is piling up three or four small tin trunks, almost blocking the compartment, while another is spreading out his master's *bistar* (bedding) on one of the long couches. A pair of brown legs and bare feet hang down from the upper sleeping berth—a pundit (learned Brahmin), going to Benares, has captured that shelf-like retreat, and is re-arranging his turban and counting over his change. As the time of departure draws near, more passengers saunter up the platform and try to squeeze their way into the already full carriages. Most of them seem to be liberally supplied with trunks and bundles of bedding, which the noisy coolies try to push in through the carriage windows should the doorways be already blocked. A British officer in khaki uniform and two young civilians have taken possession of a "First," while an important-looking Indian gentleman in European clothes enters another: he is one of His Majesty's judges, and has a number of well-dressed

[1] The term "Anglo-Indian" is now used, instead of the old word "Eurasian," to denote a descendant from a European on the one side and an Asiatic on the other.

servants in attendance upon him. There is no mistaking yonder party with the blue-uniformed official: Cook's tourists are familiar the world over! And now the guard is waving the train off—he, like the engine-driver, is an Anglo-Indian, dressed in white drills and wearing a pith *topee* (sun helmet). This train is the "mail," timed to reach Calcutta (a distance of 1349 miles) in forty-eight hours. It is possible to take many equally long journeys in India, for the country is 1900 miles from west to east and as many from north to south. Its total area is more than thirty times that of England and Wales.

The Varied Scenery of India

Few countries possess so great a variety of scenery as India. It boasts the highest mountains in the world, and, by way of contrast, has dull uninteresting plains over which one may journey for days together with little in the way of scenery to break the monotony. The tiger-infested jungles of Bengal, with their tangled undergrowth, contrast sharply with the sandy deserts of Sindh and Rajputana. The parched uplands of the Deccan are often waterless at the very time the north-eastern monsoon is flooding the rice fields of the Madras Presidency. From the tropical loveliness of Travancore one may pass in a few hours to the bold rocky heights of the Western Ghats. These varied features seldom intermingle. They are distinct, separate—so much so, indeed, as to give the visitor the impression that he is passing through several countries rather than one country.

India is vast, but its physical features are, in the main, singularly simple, and they can be easily indicated by

a few bold splashes of chalk on an outline map. There are, roughly, four clearly-marked regions,[1] viz.—

(1) The great mountain chains of the Himalayas and adjacent ranges, that form an almost unbroken wall around the entire northern frontier.
(2) South of the mountains are vast plains stretching across the country from east to west, watered by the Ganges and Indus with their numerous tributaries.
(3) South again is the high triangular tableland of the Deccan, which forms the chief feature of the Indian peninsula.
(4) Below the tableland, on its eastern and western sides, are fertile coast plains that separate it from the sea.

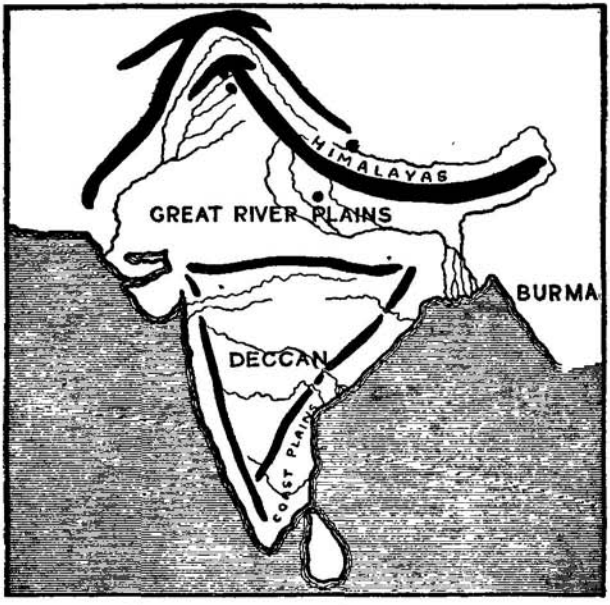
These great regions, so diverse in character, have each a charm of their own, and seen under the ever-changing conditions of the grey dawn, the midday glare, the golden light of evening, or the splendour of the moonlight, they all contribute to the unique fascination of this wonderful land. It may help the reader to grasp the main features of India if we take a brief glance at each of these four regions in turn.

(1) The Northern Mountains

The great ranges that shut off India from the rest of Asia form a mighty wall more than 2000 miles in length, rising sharply from the level plain of Hindustan. The principal chain—the snow-capped Himalayas, "the

[1] Burma, though politically a province of India and directly under the Viceroy and Government of India, is an entirely separate country, different in every way from India proper. It does not lie within the scope of this book.

Abode of Snow"—has an average height of about four miles, a double wall of rock and ice. From this gigantic rampart rise majestic peaks, the chief of which, Everest (29,000 feet), is the highest mountain in the world. Clad with a mantle of eternal snow, this great peak has defied the skill and endurance of explorers, and its sky-piercing



MAP OF INDIA, SHOWING THE FOUR DIVISIONS

summit, nearly six miles high, has never been scaled. So recently as 1921 a well-equipped expedition, after attempting to ascend from all four sides, was baffled by the blinding snow-storms to which those high altitudes are subject. Mortal man is powerless in the presence of the whirling masses of snow that guard the icy precipices around Mount Everest, and the party was obliged

to abandon the struggle.[1] Yet Everest is but one of a great number of snowy monarchs that rise high above the main range. Between those silent untrodden heights are huge glaciers, one of which is known to be more than sixty miles in length. From these glaciers are born great rivers which break through the inaccessible fastnesses and force their way down deep valleys to the plains.

The Himalayan scenery is unrivalled. It is a never-to-be-forgotten experience to be carried up from the plains in *dandies* on the shoulders of the hardy hill-men. The writer and his sister on one occasion, escorted by fourteen bare-footed mountaineers, ascended the steep mountain path, through forests of Himalayan oak and rhododendron—blazing with colour in the spring-time—crossing range after range of foothills, skirting precipices, and from time to time getting wondrous views of the valleys below or of the heights above. Our bearers, sure-footed as mountain goats, carried us up winding paths that seemed impossible, and deep ravines opened at our feet. Here and there a tiny village seemed to hang on to the mountain-side in the far distance, and we marked the dens of leopards by the forest path. On reaching higher altitudes, a turn of the path opened out a view that awed us to silence—a wondrous panorama of mountain ranges rising one above another in succeeding terraces, separated by deep, mysterious valleys. And, high above all, the majestic snows of the central range of the Himalayas stretched across the sky—a tossing sea of giant peaks, separated by glaciers and ice fields, interspersed with lofty walls of bare rock, so precipitous as to afford no lodgment for the snow. The profound silence was broken only by the cry of some large bird

[1] While these pages are passing through the press, another attempt is being made to reach the summit of Everest.

that soared slowly in the awe-inspiring abyss at our feet. It was the hour of sunset. The vast chasms below were dark and gloomy; only the rugged mountain-tops caught the golden light, while the snowy heights above flushed pink against the glowing sky. As the shadows deepened, and all around was bathed in mysterious twilight, the great peaks glowed crimson until they seemed to be on fire. Too soon the glory faded, and only the cold silvery snows remained visible in the gathering night. *A similar scene might have been witnessed from any point for a thousand miles!*

On the bleak mountain-sides, beneath the snowy ranges, are tiny villages—lonely and isolated from the great world. The sturdy mountaineer builds his simple dwelling of stone, and roofs it with beams stout enough to resist the snows of winter. In it, he and his family must find shelter from the piercing blasts for four dreary months. Between December and March they are absolutely cut off from the outer world, and pass the time in wood carving, in preparing the skins of animals they have trapped, or in embroidering their own garments. In the smoky dwelling, with their goat-skins wrapped around them, they sit on the floor around the little fire and gossip as they smoke their hookahs (pipes) and chew *pan*. By the dim light of clay lamps they make new clothes or repair the old ones, and sometimes the process is accompanied by the hum of a Singer sewing machine—a treasure carried up from the plain by some member of the family, who, in the bazaars of the town, has sold his carvings or skin rugs to advantage.

As the winter draws to its close, and the store of fuel and food is almost exhausted, the villagers come forth from their dwellings. Soon the snows melt under the warm rays of the spring sun, and the people prepare

the gardens they have cut one above another in narrow terraces along the steep hill-side. With the simplest of implements they till the soil and sow their seed. Then the men and boys, staff in hand, journey across mountains and valleys to the nearest hill-station to sell their handiwork, or to get employment as carriers or as servants with some of the Europeans who flock thither in April and May to escape from the burning heat of the plains. When "the season" is over, the hill-men spend their earnings on such things as they need or fancy, and then tramp back to their distant homes, travelling over the mountains in companies for mutual protection, for the solitary traveller, while he slept, might be attacked by some dangerous beast, or his throat might be cut by some mountain robbers. On reaching home, the crops are gathered, and preparations are made for the winter that will shortly close in. Thus the years come and go, with but little to mark their passage, save that the children grow bigger, and the brown faces of the parents begin to wrinkle and their black hair to grow white.

(2) The Great River Plains

It would be difficult to imagine a greater contrast than one experiences on passing from the mountains to the monotonous plains that stretch almost without a break from Eastern Bengal to the Afghan frontier. They lack anything that is worthy to be called scenery. The great rivers—the Ganges with its tributaries the Jumna and the Gogra, the Indus and the rivers of the Punjab—have no natural beauty, and from their low sandy banks stretch vast cultivated plains, green enough after the rains, but soon becoming brown and dusty under the fierce rays of the sun. The mud villages are unlovely, and almost the only relief is found in the splendid avenues

of trees—banyan and mango, neem and Indian oak, that line the great highways. Occasionally one sees a solitary date-palm, but even a palm tree does not make scenery. In Bengal, however, the country becomes more attractive; masses of pampas grass, and clumps of giant bamboos—often sixty or seventy feet high—and the beautiful green foliage of the plantain and the feathery coco-nut palm are a welcome relief. In April and May the heat is intense—sometimes reaching 115 degrees in the shade—and even in the so-called "cold weather" the very phrase seems a mockery to the perspiring tourist.

Yet these hot, dusty plains are the most densely populated part of India. The villages are almost uncountable. Numerous towns and a few large cities attract the visitor by their narrow streets and oriental bazaars. Delhi and Agra, Muttra and Jeypore, Ajmere and Alwar, Allahabad and Benares, with their ancient forts and marble palaces, their carved temples and splendid mosques, their shining domes and lofty minarets, more than compensate for the lack of natural beauty. Here and there a ridge of rock, rising precipitously from the plain, is crowned with the ruins of some oft-besieged stronghold. Where a sacred river flows past some famous city, its margin is lined with stone steps and terraces crowded with Hindu pilgrims who have come to bathe in the soul-cleansing waters. Ever and anon the skyline is broken by a graceful minaret that bears witness to the Moslem faith. Almost every acre is historic ground. And these populous plains, rather than the glorious Himalayas, are the real India.

As the train rushes across the country, one may see from the carriage windows the *ryot* (small cultivator) ploughing with his oxen—or possibly with camels—in the same primitive way that his fathers ploughed hundreds,

or even thousands, of years ago; and he is using a primitive wooden plough similar to the one they used. Or perchance, according to the time of year, he may be carrying his seed in a basket of dry palm-leaf, scattering it as he walks over the newly made furrows. Or perhaps it is harvest time, and the millet or barley is being cut with a primitive sickle and borne in big lumbering carts to the thrashing floors. In the burning heat of midday the people are usually seen resting under the welcome shade of trees or bushes.

These simple agriculturists toil in their fields from sunrise to sunset to earn a bare livelihood. They are accustomed to the intense heat but they are not proof against it, and they suffer a good deal from exhaustion, especially in times of drought and sickness; and many of them are nearly always underfed. There may not be the rush and hustle that we who live in cold climates are accustomed to, but they work steadily on at their appointed task until the night cometh when no man can work. After all, one cannot see the real life of the people from the windows of an express train. Those who have gone in and out among the villages and have paused to watch the men toiling at the irrigation wells, the women and children labouring ankle-deep in water in the rice fields, and boys and girls of quite tender age undertaking the responsibility of tending the cattle—in short, those who know anything of the daily struggle for existence, will never bring a sweeping accusation of laziness against the Indian *ryot*.

(3) The Deccan

South of the great plains rise ranges of mountains—the Vindhya and Central Indian Hills—that separate South India from the North. They also form the base

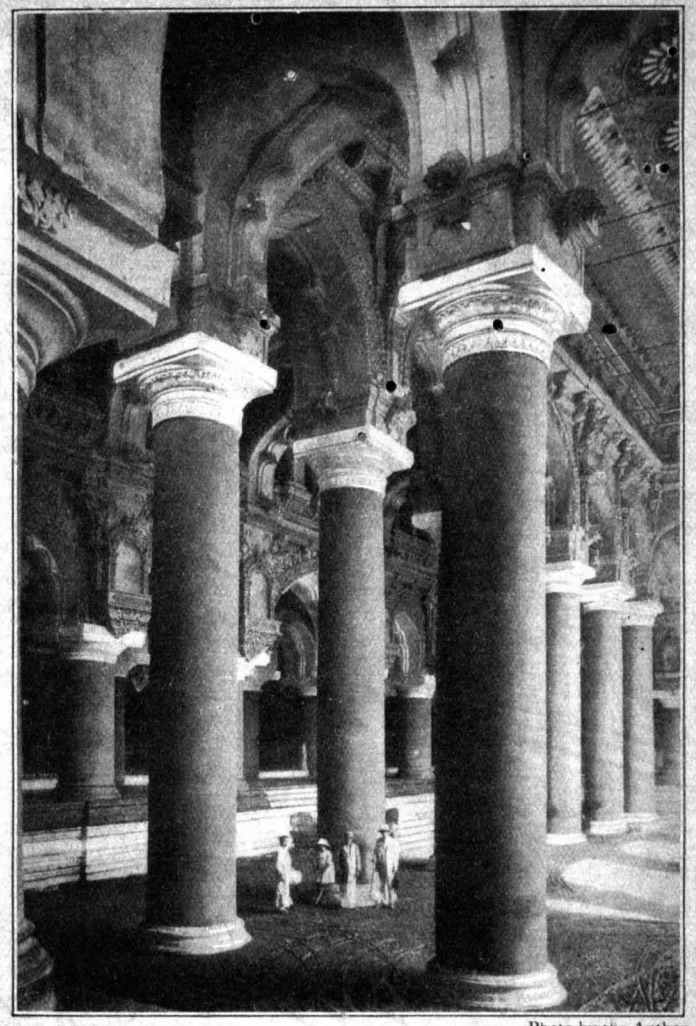


Photo by the Author

ONE OF INDIA'S MAGNIFICENT PALACES

The entrance portico to the old palace of the Naik kings, at Madura, South India. It was built by a Hindu Raja, Tirumala Naik (A.D. 1623-59).

of the huge inverted triangle of the Deccan, an elevated plateau which occupies the greater part of the Indian peninsula. This wide tableland averages from 2000 to 3000 feet above sea-level. Its apex points due south, and its sides are buttressed by the mountain ranges of the Eastern and Western Ghats. It includes two of the largest of the self-governing Indian States—the dominions of His Highness the Nizam of Haidarabad—and His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore.

Considerable areas of the Deccan are liable to frequent and prolonged drought; the rivers and tanks dry up, the earth becomes hard as iron, and gaunt famine stalks through the villages. But more ground has lately been brought under cultivation, and important irrigation works in some districts increase the fertility of the soil. There are wide stretches of jungle, sometimes thick forest with tangled undergrowth in which the tiger has his lair and the python lurks, but more often open jungle—great plains covered with cactus and aloes and prickly-pear, strewn with masses of rock and with big granite boulders, piled up fantastically as though by giant hands. In such places leopards abound, and he who would climb those rock-strewn hills must beware of bears; while in the denser jungles British officers and Indian princes organize tiger hunts on a large scale. The scenery, on the whole, is less monotonous than in the northern river plains, and one often comes across stretches of real beauty, where rocks and date-palms stand in picturesque combination against a background of bare hills crowned with some ancient castle.

(4) The Southern Coast Plains

In South India, between the Deccan and the sea, lie plains that vary from a few miles in width (on the west)

to a hundred or two hundred miles on the south-east. A tremendous rainfall unites with the blazing sun to give tropical fertility to these plains.

On the western coast, the State of Travancore is one of the loveliest parts of India. Its "backwaters" and lagoons are fringed with luxuriant groves of coco-nut palms and broad-leafed plantains (bananas) which recall the beauties of Ceylon. In this lovely region there dwell an Indian people who are not true Indians—the Syrian Christians, who form not less than a quarter of the population of the State of Travancore. They are the descendants of Syrians who, in the early centuries of the Christian era, journeyed from Antioch in Syria and made this land their home. They have their own bishops and priests, their own liturgies and the Scriptures in their ancient Syriac tongue, and many very ancient church buildings—several of which may be a thousand years old. These Syrian Christians number nearly three quarters of a million. On this western coast of India also is the country of the Moplahs. They too are strangers, whose forefathers came from Arabia in the seventh century. A wild race they were when they came from their distant homeland, and a wild race they are to this day. This region is famous for its pepper and chillies, its ginger and cinnamon, and for its beautiful coco-nut groves—all of which are an important source of revenue to the land-owners and cultivators. Farther inland there are vast forests from which teak and sandalwood are obtained; and on the hills beyond are tea estates, providing employment for large numbers of coolies.

On the eastern side of the peninsula, practically all the land is under cultivation. The brilliant green rice-fields are often fringed with rows of stiff-looking palmyra-palms, and the whole country is strewn with villages.

There are innumerable wayside shrines, and one occasionally catches sight of the lofty towers of some vast temple; for this is essentially the land of great temples with high walls and many towers and spacious courts.

These fertile southern lowlands lie entirely within the tropics, and cold weather is unknown—the temperature is only varied by different degrees of heat.

. . . . .

We have now taken a bird's-eye view—may we say "an aeroplane view"?—of India. We have seen something of her mountains and her plains, her vastness and her variety. In these things the tourist and the lover of nature may revel. But to the closer observer the great charm of India is her people rather than her geographical features. To visit India is to be fascinated by her, and to know her people is to love them.

CHAPTER II

THE COMING OF GREAT PEOPLES

The Dim Past

IF India is a museum of scenery, it is even more "a museum of races," for through long ages successive waves of invasion have constantly brought new peoples into the land.

It is not difficult to picture what India must have been like in the dim past. Long before the dawn of history, the land was covered with great forests and vast stretches of jungle, and a few scattered tribes maintained a precarious existence. Among the hills the simple people would dwell in such caves as they could secure against the attacks of wild beasts. On the plains they would make primitive huts and fortify them as best they could against their inveterate foes, the leopard and the tiger.

Many of the primitive tribes were nomadic, moving from place to place in search of food and safety, and ascending to the higher ground when the torrential rains flooded the plains. At sundown they would light their watch-fires to keep wild beasts at bay, and their rest would be broken by the night noises of the jungle. The loud chorus of frogs or crickets, the dismal howl of jackals, and the chattering of monkeys, would form the background for the deeper voice of the dreaded tiger. Then, as the first glow of dawn stilled the noises of the night, the people would draw their scanty skin-

garments about them and prepare for the struggle of another day. With their flint-headed arrows they would hunt the fawn drinking unsuspectingly by the jungle pool, or they would set traps for larger game whose skins would provide comfort for the chilly nights of December and January. Moving to new places, they would carry the family fire with them. Life must have been one prolonged struggle for existence; and many of those primitive people would fall victims to the relentless feline foes who would spring upon them as they dozed by the dying embers of their watch-fires, or to the deadly snakes they would tread upon in long grass.

Then, long before the dawn of history, through the wild mountain passes of the North-West, there came a people of higher civilization—the Dravidians. We know practically nothing of the time or the manner of their coming, but in course of centuries they spread across the land, and the older inhabitants retired before them, taking refuge in the hill and jungle fastnesses, where their descendants still exist as primitive "jungle tribes" —the Bhils, Kols, Santals, Todas and others.

. . . . . .

Meanwhile, peoples of very different origin were pressing slowly into India from the far East—Mongolian tribes, people of yellowish skin and narrow eyes, of the same stock as the Chinese. Entering from what is now China, they kept to the valleys and foothills of the Himalayas, peopling what are now the mountain states of Nepal and Bhutan. Others turned southwards into Burma and became the Burmese. Still others, following the Brahmaputra river into Bengal, settled in the great delta and, intermarrying with the Dravidians, formed the Bengal race of to-day.

The Coming of the Aryans

Some fifteen centuries before Christ, came the greatest invasion of all. Singing hymns in praise of their bright gods, and driving before them their flocks and herds, the strong, vigorous Aryan peoples journeyed from their ancestral home in Central Asia and poured through the rugged mountain passes into the land destined to become their holy land.

As the new invaders emerged from the gloomy defiles into the well-watered Punjab ("the Land of Five Rivers"), they settled down after their long wanderings. They cultivated the land, and in time their temporary settlements grew into permanent villages. They regarded themselves as the "Noble Ones" (Aryans), and the darker-skinned Dravidians as vastly inferior. There was much fighting to be done, and many no doubt gave themselves to a military life. Slowly the conquerors pushed their way eastward, pressing the Dravidians across the Vindhya Hills into the great peninsula, which their descendants still occupy—the Tamil, Telugu, Kanarese and Malayalam peoples of to-day.

The Religion of the Early Aryans

The early Aryan settlers in the Punjab had no temples, no idols, no priests. Yet they were a singularly devout people, and every man built an altar, offered daily sacrifice, and sang hymns to the friendly gods. Their faith was largely nature-worship. They were impressed with the golden dawn, the powerful midday sun, the dark thunder cloud, the mysterious sacrificial fire; and these phenomena were, in the thoughts of the devout Aryans, clothed with the attributes of divinity. The Sun god, the Storm gods, the goddess of Dawn, the god of Fire came to be reverenced as powerful divinities; hymns

were composed to them, and they received regular worship. The people gazed in wonder towards the snow-capped Himalayas—what more fitting place could there be for the abode of the gods than those dazzling, stupendous heights? Their vivid fancy peopled the inaccessible fastnesses with divinities, and they bowed before them in awe and worship. And whence the great rivers that flowed from those eternal snows? Came they not from the very throne of the gods? Thus the rivers also began to be reverenced as divine.

As time passed, certain men specialized in religion, and these gradually developed into a recognized priesthood, which by a slow but inevitable process gathered to itself all the rights and powers of offering sacrifice. These men became known as Brahmins, and thus the Brahmin or priestly "caste" became paramount in religious authority and privilege.

The Sacred Hymns

The Brahmins were the natural guardians of the sacred hymns. Some of the more ancient hymns were no doubt brought from the far-off ancestral home; but from time to time new ones were composed. There was no writing in those days, and we owe it to the Brahmins that the hymns were preserved. In their schools the hymns were committed to memory, and in this way were transmitted from one generation to another. Not even the punctuation was lost. As early as 600 B.C. we find the theological schools carefully counting every verse, every word, and even every syllable of the hymns, in order to protect them from alteration. The 1028 hymns of the *Rig Veda* were declared to contain 10,622 verses, 153,826 words, and 432,000 syllables. Marvellous indeed were the memories

that for centuries preserved this ancient lore until it could be committed to writing!

These Vedic hymns were expressions of genuine piety and devotion, and amid much that is commonplace and feeble, we find real gems of thought. Here is a verse from the *Atharva Veda* (iv. 16):—

The mighty Varuna, who rules above, looks down
Upon the world, His kingdom, as if close at hand.
When men imagine they do aught by stealth, He knows it.
No one can stand, or walk, or softly glide along,
Or hide in dark recess or lurk in secret cell,
But Varuna detects him, and his movement spies.
Two persons may devise some plot, together sitting,
And think themselves alone; but He, the King, is there—
A Third—and sees it all. His messengers descend
Countless from His abode, for ever traversing
This world, and scanning with a thousand eyes its inmates.
Whate'er exists within this earth, and all within the sky,
Yea, all that is beyond, King Varuna perceives.
The winking of men's eyes are numbered all by Him.
He wields this universe as gamesters handle dice.

This great God Varuna is said to be "merciful to him who has committed sin" (*Rig Veda* vii. 87), and we can imagine the worshippers standing around the altar, singing while the sacrifice was offered:—

Let me not yet, O Varuna, enter into the house of clay,
Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!
If I go trembling, like a cloud driven by the wind;
Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!
Through want of strength, thou strong bright god, have I gone wrong;
Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!
Whenever we men, O Varuna, commit an offence before the heavenly host,
Whenever we break Thy law through thoughtlessness;
Punish us not, O God, for that offence!
Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!

(*Rig Veda*, vii. 89.)

As the hymns were sung, offerings of *ghee* (clarified butter), curdled milk, rice, cakes, and the juice of the soma plant were laid upon the altar. The fire consumed the gifts and carried them to the gods. Thus the fire is described as :—

> A messenger, conveying to the sky
> Our hymns and offerings.

And the fire, too, came to be regarded as a mighty god. Animal sacrifices were also presented : sheep, goats, bulls, buffaloes, and—most powerful of all—horses.

The Rise of Buddhism

While the Brahmins were developing a very elaborate ritual, other men of religious temperament devoted themselves to an ascetic life, retiring to the jungles to torture themselves. An early record mentions forty methods of self-mortification. Still other men gave themselves to meditation, and retired to lonely places that they might solve the riddle of the universe—of man's existence and destiny, and the mystery of suffering. They developed complex systems of philosophy, and prepared the way for the philosophic schools of later ages.

From among these lonely thinkers in the jungles came one of the greatest religious teachers of the world—the Buddha. Born in the sixth century B.C., he was burdened with the problem of suffering, and after many years of self-torture and meditations he received what he believed to be the key to the riddle. As " the Enlightened One " (the Buddha) he gathered disciples around him, and his doctrines spread through India. The great Emperor Asoka (272-232 B.C.) made Buddhism the official religion of the State, and sent missionaries to carry it to Ceylon and other distant lands.

But Brahminism was only eclipsed, not crushed; after a struggle of several centuries it overcame its rival, and by A.D. 900 Buddhism had died out in the land of its birth. There are no Buddhists in India to-day.[1]

The Corruption of the Ancient Faith

In their efforts to regain their supremacy, the Brahmins succeeded in drawing into their fold the great Dravidian peoples. To make conversion easier, the Brahmins allowed them to bring their own tribal gods with them, and places were found for them in the Brahminical system. For instance: in Western India, Krishna, a long-dead chieftain, was worshipped by the non-Aryan people; so he was declared to be an incarnation of the old Brahmin god Vishnu. In the same way Kali, a dread goddess of Bengal, was proclaimed to be the wife of Siva. Thus the non-Aryan gods and peoples were united to the great Aryan faith and this conglomerate religion is called "Hinduism." But in widening its influence, the old Vedic religion lost its purity. Idols were introduced, and all manner of corruptions crept in.

As the centuries passed, temples were built or were carved out of the solid rock—no rock temples in the world can compare with those of India. Of the stone-built temples, the earlier ones were small, but kings rebuilt or enlarged them, and other kings added outer courts. Thus, in South India, what were at first comparatively small shrines were surrounded with courts, until they now cover very large areas—usually nearly square—with enormous walls and high towers.

[1] They are found in the valleys of Nepal and Bhutan, and there are some ten millions in Burma and two and three-quarter millions in South Ceylon; but there are none in India proper.

The Origin of Caste

In the far distant days, before the birth of Buddha, the Brahmins originated the social system we call "caste." We have already seen how the Brahmin and warrior classes came into existence. Gradually they became separate and exclusive "castes." Soon other castes appeared. All the Aryan people, of whatever caste, were declared to be "twice-born," entitled to wear the sacred thread,[1] and therefore of good caste. The Dravidian converts, though received into the Aryan fold, were not received on equal terms; they were inferiors, only "once-born," and therefore of low caste. At first, then, there were four main castes carefully graded, viz.:

ARYANS (twice-born)	1. Brahmins (priests). 2. Kshattriyas (warriors). 3. Vaisyas (agriculturists, industrial workers and merchants).
DRAVIDIANS (once-born)	4. Sudras (the low castes).

The non-Aryans who did not accept the Brahmin faith formed the "outcastes," of whom there are to-day some fifty-two millions. The great majority of them are in South India.[2]

More Invaders

While the Brahmin religion was spreading over the country and gradually developing, political changes were constantly taking place. Tribal chiefs increased in power and became local rajas (kings); from time to time one

[1] Put on with a priestly ceremony at adolescence and worn through life over the left shoulder and under the right arm.

[2] For more about castes and outcastes, see pp. 76-9 and 82-8.

of these would overthrow some of his neighbours and make himself a maharaja (great king). The continual turmoil thus created was increased by further invasions from without. Persians, Greeks and Scythians poured through the passes and founded kingdoms in North-West India; but the Aryan peoples maintained a continual struggle, and gradually assimilated them.

The Coming of the Mohammedans

The eleventh century opened a new era of invasion for North India. In A.D. 1001, Mahmud, chief of Ghazni in Afghanistan, burst through the Khyber Pass with irresistible force. A born fighter and a stern Moslem,[1] he had taken a vow to march into India every year to "conquer the unbeliever." With green banners waving, and cries of "Allah Akbar!" (God is Great!) echoing from the overhanging crags, the Moslem host swept down the famous pass, entered the Punjab, and overcame all resistance of the Indian monarchs. During the next thirty years, Mahmud invaded Northern India seventeen times. Furious and impetuous were those raids, but they were met with stubborn resistance. Chief after chief and city after city opposed the invader, only to be defeated at last and compelled to yield. Often, when some Hindu stronghold was taken, the Indian women burned themselves in their palaces, while their men flung themselves upon the spears of the foe. Enormous booty was carried back to Afghanistan, but Mahmud's proudest title was that of "the Idol Breaker," for, true Moslem that he was, his zeal for Allah led him to break down every idol in his path of conquest.

[1] Islam, or Mohammedanism, is the religion founded by the Arabian Prophet, Mohammed, in the seventh century A.D. His followers are called Mohammedans or Moslems.

After Mahmud's death, other Moslem chiefs led their fierce warriors through the gloomy defiles into the plains of Hindustan, and each century brought fresh waves of invasion from the same quarter. The ancient city of Delhi was captured, and on its ruins an Afghan Viceroy erected a great Tower of Victory—the majestic Kutab Minar. Through wars and earthquakes, this incomparable minaret has been spared to the present day. Its graceful fluted walls and delicate balconies, its exquisite decorations and inlaid Persian inscriptions, combine to make it by common consent the most beautiful tower on earth.

For more than five centuries the struggle between Moslem and Hindu raged fiercely. The land seethed with warfare and slaughter, plunder and rapine, until the proud necks of Brahmin and Rajput were compelled to bow beneath the yoke of their conquerors. Mohammedan chiefs and generals carved out for themselves kingdoms—small or great—ruled for a few years (or for a few months!) and were then overthrown by more formidable rivals. The land continued to be one vast cockpit, but the majority of Hindus utterly refused to accept the Moslem's religion, and they were heavily taxed in consequence.

The Empire of the Great Moguls

The sixteenth century brought from Afghanistan a new race of Mohammedans who were destined to found and consolidate a mighty empire. Babar the Mogul conquered the North Indian States, and his brilliant grandson, Akbar the Great (1556-1605), organized the new empire on the sound policy of "government for the good of the people." His long reign (contemporary with that of our Queen Elizabeth) was devoted to the

great task to which he set himself, and he succeeded as few rulers have ever done. Akbar's grandson, Shah Jehan, exceeded him in splendour but not in real power. To-day, in Agra and Delhi and Fatepur Sikri may be seen the magnificent sandstone fortresses, the marble palaces, graceful mosques and wondrous tombs of those mighty monarchs. Who has not heard of the glorious white marble Pearl Mosque at Agra, or the Fort Palace at Delhi with its gorgeous hall of Private Audience? Shah Jehan built this hall to be his imperial throne room —"a poem in marble"—the ceiling of which was of solid silver, and its wonderful pillars richly inlaid with precious stones in exquisite design. Over the arches, in Persian characters, are the words, "If there be a Paradise on earth, it is this, it is this, it is this!" Who does not desire to see the peerless Taj Mahal—the fairy-like tomb of Shah Jehan and his beloved empress—the fairest, purest, loveliest building the hand of man ever wrought? Travellers have exhausted their vocabularies in attempting to describe that wonderful tomb; no picture can convey an idea of its amazing beauty. It hardly seems to be made of solid masonry—a fairy-like, ethereal thing. Seen at sunset when the rich colours of the sky tinge its marbles with soft rose-pinks, or when its inlaid devices sparkle like jewels in the Eastern moonlight, the Taj appears too dream-like to be real; one almost fears to breathe lest it should vanish like some fairy vision. In the full splendour of the morning sun, one shades the eyes from the dazzling purity of that gem of art. Tradition declares that when the Taj was finished, Shah Jehan put out the architect's eyes lest he should create another building to compare with it.

But the glory of the Mogul empire passed away. Its rebellious Viceroys set up as independent monarchs, and

the great empire of Akbar broke up into a number of contending states. Once more foreign foes thundered through the mountain passes. In 1739 the Persian Shah swept down upon Delhi and for fifty-eight days the streets of that proud capital were given over to massacre and pillage. Other Moslem invasions followed, and confusion reigned. (What other land has suffered so much from invasion?) But as the centuries passed, the invaders, while remaining Moslems, became Indians. They married Indian wives; their sons in their turn married Indian girls, and thus each generation became more Indian than the one before.

The Indian Moslems To-day

To-day there are more Mohammedans in India than in any other land. Of India's total 320 millions of people nearly 70 millions are Moslems. They are found chiefly in the north and north-west. Delhi and Agra, Peshawar and Lucknow, strike the visitor as essentially Moslem cities. In the Deccan and South India the Mohammedans are comparatively few, the one outstanding exception being Haidarabad City whose ruling prince—the powerful Nizam—is a Mohammedan.

A proud people are the Indian Moslems, distinct in every way from their Hindu fellow-countrymen. Even a stranger may recognize them at a glance—by their dress, by their physique, and by their proud carriage. Amid the Hindu populations of the south there is no mistaking that dignified, full-bearded man who strolls through the village street obviously regarding "the idolaters" around him as vastly inferior to himself. Converse with him, and you will discover a certain pride of conquest. He cannot forget that his Mohammedan forefathers—whether Arabs, Turks, Afghans or Persians

—came into this land as conquerors and ruled as overlords. He points to the tiny mosque gleaming white on the summit of yonder ancient hill fort. His fathers captured that fort after a desperate conflict, and built that mosque above the topmost rampart as a symbol of their triumph! Note the pride in his voice as he mentions the Tower of Victory near Delhi, Akbar's Gate of Victory at Fatepur Sikri, and many another memorial that still witnesses to the conquests of his race. The Moslem you meet in the railway carriage asks if you have visited Delhi or Agra, and whether you have seen the Taj Mahal. "The Mohammedans built those places," he tells you, with a glow of pride. To him those marvels of architecture are living witnesses of the glorious past.

Again, these Moslems are intensely proud of their monotheistic faith. Their oft-repeated creed—

> I testify:
> There is no God but Allah,
> And Mohammed is the Apostle of Allah—

is a proud boast as well as a confession of faith. From a hundred Indian towns the lofty minarets rise into the intense blue sky as if to challenge mankind, and from the balconies of those minarets five times a day that haughty "Witness" rings forth—"I testify there is no God but Allah!" As you talk with the village Moslem you immediately find the same pride of faith. Notice the contemptuous way he refers to the village gods—the quiet, though conscious, pride as he points to the ruins of some great shrine his ancestors destroyed long ago. Do you see those great mythical figures cut in the stone among these ruined temples?—his fathers knocked their heads off because they were vile idols!

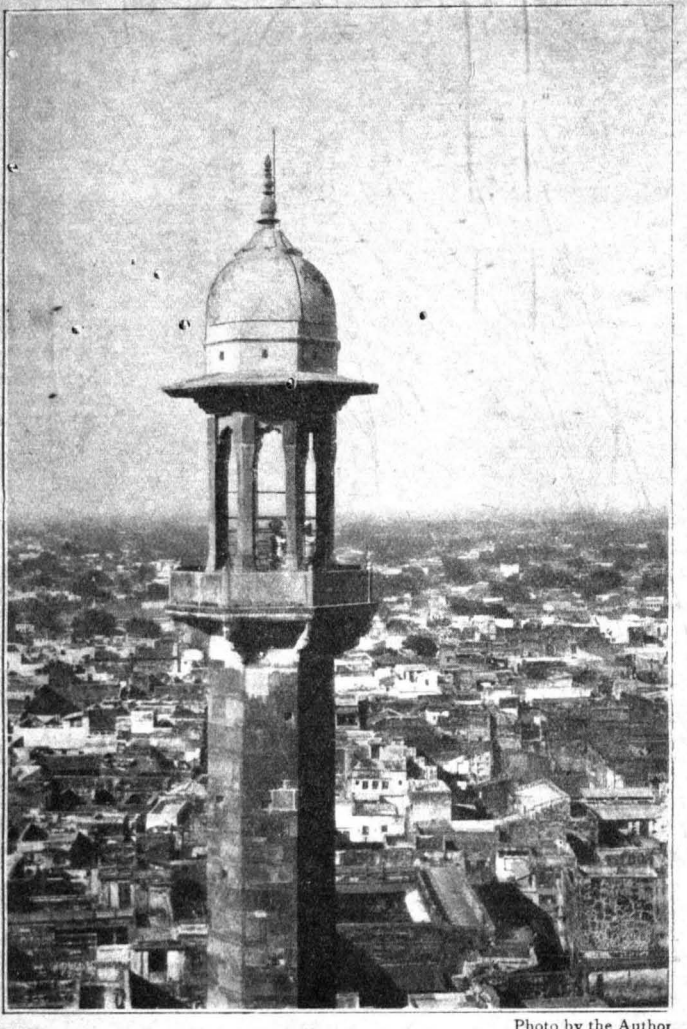


Photo by the Author

BENARES FROM A MINARET

This photograph was taken from one of the minarets of a mosque—the other appears in the picture. Most of the large mosques have two minarets.
(*See p. 56*)

Yet again, our Indian Moslem is proud of the great Mohammedan brotherhood. They have their divisions, no doubt; there are both Sunnis and Shiahs;[1] but there is an underlying sense of unity. They have one short, clear creed, one book, one Prophet. And there is the tremendously important fact that they speak one language—Hindustani, or more properly, Urdu. At any great gathering of Hindus the delegates speak many vernaculars, and English is the only language in which they can converse together. Not so with the Mohammedans; whether from the villages and cities of Upper India, or from the great plains of the south, they have a common medium of speech. Imagine the sense of unity that results from this link.

There is a strange impressiveness about Indian Mohammedanism. At evening, while the sky is flushed with gold, and the boys drive the goats through a cloud of yellow dust that somehow catches the gleams of sunset, and the smoke hangs low over the village, one hears a soft melodious call that seems to come from the sky. You pause and glance swiftly up at the minaret of the village mosque. On the lofty balcony stands the muezzin with hands uplifted while he chants the call to prayer:

Come to prayer!
God is great.
I testify there is no god but Allah.
I testify that Mohammed is the Apostle of Allah.
Come to prayer!

The music of that oft-repeated call seems to harmonize with the soft glow of evening. In a few moments, from the little mosque below, one hears the familiar sound

[1] Moslems have their sects, and their sect prejudice and bitterness, as well as followers of other religions.

of the prayers, and cannot but be struck by the impressiveness of it all.

There is no more remarkable sight in all India, perhaps on earth, than that to be witnessed every Friday in Shah Jehan's great mosque at Delhi—easily the finest mosque in existence. In the great open court, before the beautiful arches and arcades of the noble building, stand thousands of bare-footed worshippers in long straight lines, their faces turned towards Mecca. Two *Imans* (prayer leaders), on a high wooden platform, guide the worship by melodiously intoning the words "Allah Akbar" (God is Great), and with the precision of well-trained soldiers the worshippers go through the prescribed prayers—standing, bowing, bending, and kneeling. On the great day that closes the annual month of fasting, the court of this splendid mosque is crowded with 10,000 worshippers, and thousands more who cannot gain admission form up on the vast flights of steps outside and join in the prayers. It is the largest prayer meeting in the world.

The orthodox Mohammedan prays five times a day. No doubt there are truly pious men among them, and it is equally certain that there are many to whom the prayers have become a merely mechanical exercise. May we not say exactly the same of Christian peoples? It must be remembered that these Moslem prayers are said in Arabic, which to millions of Indian Mohammedans is an unknown language. Such frequent repetition naturally leads to formalism, and it must be confessed that Islam inevitably tends to become a religion of outward ceremony rather than of a changed heart and a pure life. When one knows something of the life of the Afghan horse-dealer of Lahore, the full-bearded Moslem money-lender one meets all over India and Ceylon, and not a

few other Moslems, one is reminded of the ancient words, "This people honoureth me with their lips but their heart is far from me."

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The story told in this chapter gives new meaning to the hackneyed phrase with which we began. India is indeed a "museum of races." One after another they have entered through her rocky portals; they have conquered, settled down, intermarried. Many peoples of many races have introduced many languages, many different customs, and several religions. India is a land of marvellous diversity, and every statement one can make concerning her is only partially true. What applies to one part of India is not necessarily true of another. So great is the amazing diversity of her peoples.

CHAPTER III

MODERN INDIA

How It Began

On the 20th of May, in the year of our Lord 1498, three tiny vessels dropped anchor off the town of Calicut on the south-western coast of India. Their sails bore the sign of a great red cross, and from their mast-heads fluttered the banners of Portugal. Over the stern of the largest ship there hung a gorgeous flag with the device and arms of Dom Vasco da Gama. With these three vessels of little more than 100 tons burden each, and with a total muster of 170 men, the intrepid admiral had performed the hazardous eight months' voyage from Lisbon. Harassed by heavy seas off the Cape of Good Hope, when his mutinous seamen demanded that he should turn back, da Gama had flung his charts and instruments of navigation overboard, and, declaring that he would put his trust in God, had set his helm and spread his sails to the south-western breezes till the palm-fringed coasts of India lay before him. We may date modern India from the day of da Gama's landing.

The new-comers were at first kindly received by the Hindu Raja of Calicut, but the Mohammedan Moors (Arabs) showed hostility. Fleet after fleet was sent out from Europe; till, after considerable fighting, the Portuguese got a firm foothold, and the reputed wealth of "the Indies" tempted adventurers of all classes. Goa and Diu were captured, and are held to the present

day. With Portugal came missionaries of the Roman Church, which now numbers nearly two millions of adherents, most of whom are in South India.

The Coming of the British

Then came the English. In 1599 Queen Elizabeth's ambassador, Sir John Mildenhall, stood before the throne of the Emperor Akbar the Great. He came to ask for privileges for the English East India Company, recently formed for the purpose of trade with the East. Imagination pictures the brilliant scene in the magnificent sandstone and marble halls of Agra as the be-ruffled representative of our Tudor Queen advanced, doffing his plumed cap as he bowed his way between lines of turbaned courtiers to the throne of the mighty Akbar.

As years passed, the East India Company began to acquire territorial possessions. A piece of land where Madras now stands was purchased from a local raja in 1639, Bombay was given to Charles II as part of the dowry of his Portuguese bride in 1661, and the site of Calcutta was purchased in 1700. After a long struggle with the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the French, the English Company overcame its European rivals and became master of the situation. Throughout the eighteenth century India was in a state of chaos; and in order to secure its position, the Company found it expedient to annex territory on a large scale by taking over the possessions of such princes as it was deemed necessary to depose.

At last, in 1798, Governor-General Wellesley determined to establish British supremacy throughout the length and breadth of India, believing that nothing else could ensure the peace of the country. His policy was

gradually carried to completion, until, after the great Mutiny in 1857, the East India Company was abolished, and the British Government assumed responsibility for India.

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Although not a few officials of the East India Company were high-souled Christian men who did much for the welfare of the people, it must be confessed that the dominating consideration of Company rule in India had been trade. The new era, inaugurated by Queen Victoria's famous proclamation of November 1st, 1858, brought a radical change in the whole policy of Government. That noble edict, sometimes called the "Magna Charta of the Indian people," laid down the broad principles of freedom and justice for all, and at the same time announced the great purpose of preparing the people of India to take their rightful place among the nations of the world.

In our last chapter we beheld India a theatre of continual warfare—of invasion from without and strife and anarchy within. All that has passed away. For more than sixty years no battle has been fought upon Indian soil, and only the raids of lawless mountain tribes have disturbed the frontiers. The Ruling Princes of India have been at peace with one another, for the mighty fiat of England has gone forth, "Let there be peace," and the iron hand of Government has compelled obedience. In some parts of India one often sees villages surrounded with ancient moats and half-ruined walls. These crumbling ramparts tell of the insecurity of the past. But the days of robber bands and invading armies have gone, and such defences are no longer needed. In some of the Native States one may still meet men

armed with old flint-lock pistols, three-thrusts,[1] or curved daggers—a relic of days when every man had to defend his own life and property. The murderous Thugs, who made a practice of strangling merchants with whom they travelled, have been exterminated; and so have the equally dreaded road-poisoners. Infanticide, widow burning, and human sacrifice have been suppressed. Life has become sacred; and personal property is as secure as the law can make it. All this is no small achievement.

Indian Highways

With peace and security there have come progress and the rapid development of the country. A hundred years ago India was almost a roadless country, because, owing to the general lawlessness, the few ancient roads had fallen into decay. Even to-day thousands of villages and small towns have no roads leading to them, and rough carts still bump along through trackless jungle and over uncultivated land. But India has now highways that for quality can compare with any roads on earth. From Calcutta to Peshawar, a distance of fifteen hundred miles, there stretches the Grand Trunk Road —a magnificent avenue of fine trees whose foliage gives welcome shade to travellers. One side of that broad thoroughfare is well laid and metalled for swift-moving *tongas* and *ekkas*; the other side is kept sandy for the convenience of lumbering bullock wagons and camel carts. And this is but one of India's splendid highways, the total length of which, in 1921, reached about 200,000 miles, nearly 60,000 miles being first-class metalled

[1] A small round hand-shield a few inches in diameter, with a strong iron spike projecting from the centre, and two other spikes projecting from either side of the shield. A useful weapon in a general mêlée!

roads. But fine as these highroads are, they are wholly insufficient for the needs of that vast country, and new ones are continually being made.

The quiet beauty of many Indian roads often reminds one of our stateliest avenues in England. Every tree harbours a score of squirrels, graceful little grey creatures, with broad stripes of yellow and black down the back; as one drives along, hundreds of them may be seen playing along the dusty road as far as the eye can reach. On such a road in North India there are people and vehicles of all descriptions: the grass-cutters trudge wearily with their heavy burdens; a "bunch" of camels, tied together, stride along in single file, sniffing scornfully as they pass; we overtake a long line of heavily laden bullock carts, or perchance a lordly elephant. Here and there we meet camel carts, whose iron bars instead of windows give them the appearance of menageries on wheels—these are the omnibuses of Northern India, and camels never look quite so haughty and disdainful as when pulling these four-wheeled monstrosities. No traveller need complain of monotony on Indian highways!

In the Railway Trains

The railways of India are even more important than the roads, because of the speed at which they carry passengers and goods over that land of distances. Slow as many Indian trains are, they are a vast improvement on bullock carts and camel carts going at a steady pace of two miles an hour! In 1919 India had 37,000 miles of railway line. During that year, these railways carried over 500 millions of passengers.

An Indian railway station has a fascination second only to that of the bazaars. The lower class travellers,

innocent of railway-guides and time-tables, go to the nearest station and simply wait until a train comes—it may be eight or ten hours, or possibly next day. They sit about, gossiping, quarrelling, eating, or smoking. Many perform their ablutions under the station tap, or they squat on the ground while the barber shaves them. Sometimes scores of them may be seen, wrapped up in their cloths, lying asleep on the platforms or in the roads around. Whole families of pilgrims, going to some holy city or sacred festival, sit quietly conversing or chewing *pan*,[1] until their teeth and gums are red. Time is no object, and the patience of India seems inexhaustible.

Before starting on a journey through India that involved some 6000 miles of railway travelling, kind friends advised me to provide myself with plenty of books to read during the tedious hours in trains. I did so—but did not read a single volume, for there were much greater attractions. The train is possibly the tourist's best opportunity of conversing freely with Indians of all classes. Forsaking the first-class carriages, usually occupied chiefly by Europeans, I travelled in the second and often in the third-class, usually choosing a compartment full of Indians. The people I met in the second-class could nearly all speak English; but in the third one seldom met anyone who knew more than a word or two. I look back with greatest pleasure to those long conversations with my Indian fellow-travellers.

Immediately on entering the compartment one found a welcome. The European who shows himself friendly will usually find friendliness among the Indian people of all classes. A polite salaam and a smile of greeting meet with a ready response. The people are thirsting for friendship; they desire to be understood,

[1] See p. 68.

and enter into conversation immediately. First come questions as to the whence and whither of your journey, your business—and possibly your salary. After that, the conversation flows freely enough; and the wise traveller will take the rôle of questioner and let the people talk and express their views.

One's fellow-passengers represent varied castes and creeds, races, and political opinions; they are dressed in all varieties of costume, and sometimes speak several Indian languages. Every one seems to have two or three little black tin trunks. Many carry a tin arrangement holding their food—a series of round boxes fitting one above another with a handle over the lot, each one containing a different curry or supply of rice or *chapatties*. Some passengers also have with them a big long-necked water-vessel of red earthenware, fitted into a wooden frame a couple of feet high. In those railway carriages I have on rare occasions seen a Hindu fellow-traveller perform his *puja* (worship), or a Moslem spread a little mat and say his evening prayers.

The third-class carriages are even more interesting, though decidedly less comfortable; one's companions are not all bipeds—or even quadrupeds! Everything is vastly below our "Thirds" in England, and every compartment is crowded—sometimes literally packed—with Indians of the poorer classes. The hard narrow seats are only half-backed, and one can see, or walk, from one end of the carriage to the other. Iron pillars, rising from the benches, support shelf-like sleeping places up above. Often amid such surroundings the people gathered round me, and by smiles and gestures tried to converse. Frequently they would point through the window to something of interest and try to explain it to me—a wayside shrine or temple, a big ant-hill,

or a crocodile basking on a mud-bank of the river we were crossing. One could not help noticing the people's politeness and friendliness to one another, and above all their family affection. I have seen coolies get up and give their seats to women. In the early hours of morning, during one long all-night journey, a poor tired woman with her husband got into the compartment; immediately two very poor men gave up their places that the woman might have room to sit with her feet up. At another stopping-place that same night, I saw a man jump down from the upper sleeping-berth so that a woman who had just entered the compartment might lie down full length and sleep. That carriage was crowded to excess, and even the floor was covered with sleeping people; the men who gave up their seats had to stand for hours—and there was scarcely room for their feet. During those railway journeys one often got at very close quarters with the people and learned to respect Indians more because of the experiences one shared with them.

Jungle Motor-buses

One hardly expects to hear of motor-buses in Indian jungles! Yet to-day there are some hundreds of them engaged in carrying passengers between country stations and towns fifty, seventy, or even a hundred miles away. There are probably millions of people in India who often see a motor-bus but have never seen a railway train. In some cases the motor-bus runs once a week, in others there is a more frequent service. Most of these vehicles are owned by Indian proprietors; they are in charge of Indian drivers, and in appearance are not very unlike those plying in the rural districts of England. In some places the jungle roads have been improved, and small bridges have been built to carry the motors over narrow

streams, though often they go splashing through shallow rivers of considerable width.

A ride on such a motor route is full of interest. Looking ahead, one sees men and boys and even women leaving their work in the fields and running as fast as their legs can carry them towards the road, to have a better view of the snorting monster as it rushes past. The sound of the hooter almost unnerves the driver of a bullock cart half a mile in front; jumping from his seat, he pulls the frightened bulls this way and that, until in his terror he succeeds in pulling the cart at right angles across the road—effectually blocking the way—and sometimes the whole thing upsets and rolls down the low embankment.

A driver in Bengal told the writer how on one occasion a large tiger stood defiantly in the road. The fearless beast took no notice whatever of the hooter, and when the heavy motor-bus rushed towards him at full speed, he sprang upon the bonnet, smashed the wind-screen to atoms with one stroke of his great paw, and then, losing hold, fell backwards and was crushed to death under the wheels. The terrified driver pulled up to collect his nerves!

The Indian Postal System

In the year 1854 India had only 700 post offices; to-day there are about 20,000—which, after all, only means one for every 93 square miles of country. There are 100,000 postal officials, and the main mail routes exceed 160,000 miles. The bulk of the mails are conveyed by trains, steamboats, motor vans, and mail carts, or by galloping *tongas* that change horses like the old post-chaise of England. But mails are carried for many thousands of miles by less prosaic

methods—camels carry them over the deserts of Rajputana, and frail canoes along the streams and backwaters of Travancore. During night rides through the jungles, the writer has heard the tinkle of bells and seen the flare of a torch; soon a half-naked man has run steadily past, with mail bag slung over his brown shoulders. He is one of the many jungle postmen: in one hand he holds a short stick with little bells tied to it—his symbol of office—and with the other hand he waves the torch to frighten away wild animals. But more than once the torch has failed, and a man-eating tiger has carried off the unfortunate postman. These runners are still employed on more than half of the mail routes of India.

India possesses the highest post office in the world; it is at Pharijong in the Himalayas, 14,300 feet above sea-level. In the year 1919-20 the Indian Post Office handled no less than 1367 millions of postal articles excluding money orders. It also pays the pensions of ex-soldiers, insures Government employees, collects custom duty, receives salt revenue, sells quinine, and has a pay-on-delivery system for goods sent by shopkeepers through the post to their customers at a distance. The Telegraph Department, too, is a huge undertaking. At the end of 1919-20 it had 90,000 miles of line and cable.

Rainfall and Irrigation Works

No other land has so tremendous a rainfall. In June the south-west monsoon, blowing across the Indian Ocean, drives the rain clouds over Western and Northern India till they reach the great wall of the Himalayas and discharge all their moisture in such a way that the foothills and valleys get the heaviest rainfall in the

world. At Cherra Punji, in Assam, the annual rainfall averages about 50 feet. As much as 30 feet have been reported there in a single month. In London the annual rainfall is about 25 inches! About mid-October the north-eastern monsoon, blowing across the Bay of Bengal, causes a tremendous rainfall in the Madras Presidency.

Only those who have been through a monsoon can realize what it means to have the sluices of heaven opened and the rain falling in a perfect deluge, while houses collapse and the whole land is flooded for hundreds of square miles. The writer has vivid recollections of being weather bound for three days at Madura station. We were unable to proceed on our journey as the railway embankment had collapsed through the floods. The next night a terrific thunderstorm broke over the city, and it seemed as though the station itself would be washed away. At daybreak we stood on the upper story veranda of the station and looked out over that strange scene. We saw coolies wading shoulder deep through the water in the station yard, carrying goods on their heads. Then we learned that the line to the north of the town (over which we had passed the previous day) had been washed away for nearly two miles! A few days later the newspaper contained the following very casual comment on that downpour :—

> There was a great fear that if the rain continued, part of the town of Madura would be altogether washed away. Behind the railway station the compound had at least five feet of water. By morning, however, the rain ceased.

Yet the bulk of this amazing rainfall is carried off to the sea by the numerous rivers and wasted, and the failure of a single monsoon causes drought, the ruin of