the crops, and terrible distress to millions of people. Few lands have suffered so much from famine.[1]

For many centuries efforts have been made to conserve the water for use during the dry season. In old times kings threw up enormous banks of earth and constructed great "tanks" or reservoirs to store as much water as possible. During the last forty years the Government of India has undertaken vast works of this character, modern engineering skill making it possible to construct tanks on a much larger scale, with a system of canals to carry the water to different parts of the country. Up to 1920 no less than 28 million acres had been irrigated. In the Madras Presidency alone there are now nearly 30,000 Government irrigation tanks — mostly small — irrigating between 2½ and 3 million acres. In the Deccan several enormous dams are under construction, capable of holding over 20,000 million cubic feet of water. Owing to this irrigation work, famine has become almost impossible in some areas. But great as is the work accomplished, it is only the beginning of the gigantic task.

The Ruling Princes of India

We have already mentioned the Ruling Princes of India.[2] Who are these Princes? In what sense do they rule?

India consists of two different kinds of territories: (1) "British India"—that is, the Presidencies and Provinces under direct British rule, and (2) "The Native States" that belong to and are governed by Indian Princes, and are not under direct British rule at all. They form about one-third the area of all India, and

[1] See pp. 85-7. [2] See pp. 17 and 27.

their combined populations number about 72,000,000—nearly a quarter of the whole population of India.

These States differ considerably in size, and their Princes in importance, wealth, and ability. Some of the States consist of a few villages under a petty chief. Others may be compared to some of the smaller European kingdoms. The great State of Haidarabad—the dominions of His Most Exalted Highness the Nizam—is nearly the size of Italy (without her islands), and has a population of over ten millions. Kashmir is about the same size, but has only three million subjects. His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore rules over a country more than half the size of England, with a population of six millions. Baroda, Gwalior, Indore, Jaipur, Travancore, and others are states of considerable importance. Some of the Ruling Princes are Hindus; others are Mohammedans—as, for instance, the Nizam of Haidarabad and the Begum of Bhopal (the only woman ruler in India to-day)—and still others are Sikhs. Their importance is indicated by the salute of guns to which their Highnesses are entitled on state occasions. The Nizam of Haidarabad, the Maharaja of Mysore, the Gaekwar of Baroda, and the Maharaja of Gwalior are entitled to a salute of 21 guns each; seven other Princes are entitled to 19 guns, thirteen others to 17 guns, seventeen more to 15 guns, thirteen more to 13 guns, thirty more to 11 guns, and still thirty-one others to 9 guns. The minor rajas receive no salute at all.

These Native States have almost complete "home rule." Laws made for British India do not apply to them. Their peoples are not British subjects. But the Princes are all subject to the suzerainty of the King-Emperor through his Viceroy and Governor-General. While some of the Princes are naturally of a conservative

and narrow-minded type, many are enlightened men of great ability. They all rule through a *Diwan* (prime minister), and have high officials in charge of the different departments of state.

In the States of these Princes we see Indian people under Indian rule, and a visit to some of their capitals is of entrancing interest. They have ancient strongholds perched on towering rocks, magnificent palaces and beautiful parks with lakes and pavilions embowered in the tropical vegetation; and the oriental splendour of their state processions is a sight never to be forgotten. The wealth of many of the Princes is immense, and their jewels are world famous.

The more important Princes have their palaces lit with electricity and fitted with every convenience wealth can provide. They have numerous motor cars, and at least one of them has a light railway in his palace grounds. Go into the *dufter* (study or private office) of one of the more advanced Princes, and you will find a telephone, possibly a dictaphone, an up-to-date bureau, filing cabinets, and all the latest office equipment; and the room is decorated with autographed photographs of our British monarchs, several Viceroys and other distinguished personages, and perhaps some trophies of the Great War in which the Prince held a command. The apartment might be the study of an English Cabinet minister!

No Native State has made greater progress than Mysore. Its Maharaja has made his capital—Mysore City—one of the most beautiful towns in India, laying out gardens and parks and fine broad roads. The new palace is one of the largest and most imposing in the country—a magnificent building crowned with towers and domes and turrets, its interior resplendent with

cloistered courts and richly-decorated pillared halls. His Highness has built a fine university, a general hospital, and other important public buildings. He has created an elective Representative Assembly, that meets twice a year to discuss the affairs of state and advise His Highness's Government. Mysore is the only part of India that has had the courage to disendow the immoral temple girls [1]—a truly great achievement.

The writer has vivid recollections of a state torch-light procession he witnessed in Mysore City. The palace was wonderfully illuminated, every window and porch, every dome and turret being outlined with myriads of electric fairy lights. In the great square in the centre of the palace buildings, dense crowds of people sat upon the ground while the Mysore troops took up their places —the Maharaja's own infantry in picturesque garb, and his cavalry in white and gold uniforms with leopard skins over their saddles. About ten o'clock at night the sound of music heralded the approach of the procession, and in a little while it entered the square with more cavalry and camels, and elephants with painted heads and trunks and wondrous trappings. Attendants walked alongside carrying big fans and torches; Bengal fires threw their green or red light over the whole scene. Last of all came the body-guard, and the Maharaja. His Highness was seated in a splendid golden howdah upon his state elephant, decorated with huge anklets and other ornaments of gold, and a cloth of gold and crimson hanging almost to the ground. The great Prince wore garments of cloth of gold—material that can be purchased in the bazaars of Delhi for about £150 per yard —and his turban was encrusted with diamonds. Above him, concealed in the little dome of the howdah, were

[1] See p. 104.

electric lights, which threw their rays down upon him and made his jewels flash and sparkle with each movement of his princely head. As he rode slowly across the illuminated square, amid the cheers of his people, one seemed to be in fairyland. It was a scene of dazzling Eastern splendour worthy of the *Arabian Nights*. We were standing under the portico of the palace when the huge elephant halted within a few paces of us; and as the Maharaja alighted, he seemed like a fairy prince stepping out of the pages of a story book.

CHAPTER IV

A NORTH INDIAN CITY

In the Bazaar

FEW experiences can be more fascinating than a walk through the picturesque bazaars of a North Indian city —a *real* Indian city unspoiled by incongruous mixture with things of the West.

The narrow, winding streets are gay with the varied life and colour of the gorgeous East. And the shops !— those open-fronted shops, where the picturesque traders sit cross-legged among their wares and haggle over prices with would-be purchasers ! The Kashmiri wood-carver exhibits his skilfully-made fire screens and dainty little tables, and the brass-worker sells his lamps and water pots of all shapes and sizes. As you pass the shop where calicoes and cotton goods are sold, you hear the steady humming of a Singer sewing machine, before which the tailor sits on the dusty floor making print shirts for his customers. The vendor of fruit and vegetables sits contentedly smoking his hookah until the voice of a customer recalls him to business ; a carpet-merchant with bland smile beckons you to inspect his goods, and a perfume seller salaams as you pass. The idol-maker, the garland seller, the grain dealer, the silk merchant— all are there — now squatting drowsily among their wares, now bowing a polite salaam to a prospective customer, now rising up in the heat of an argument as to price. In many of the shops a little image of Ganesh,

the elephant-headed god of wisdom and good luck, stands on a shelf or in a niche in the wall—the presiding and much revered deity of the establishment: for will he not make his worshippers wise in trade and bring good luck with each bargain?

As you pass down the street a cloth merchant invites you into his place of business, and ascending the steps of the little front veranda you pass through a small room where a couple of clerks are sitting cross-legged on the floor casting up accounts—one of them, perchance, pounding out letters on a typewriter. In the main room of the house—a sort of large central hall—shelves of cloth and silk are arranged round the walls; if the establishment is a large one there may be a gallery halfway up to enable the assistants to reach the cloths stored on the high shelves. As you enter the room, you are salaamed to a seat on a carpet in the centre—it may be a European chair, or possibly an Indian "swing seat" hanging by four ropes from a stout teak beam in the ceiling. While the well-clad merchant entertains you with deliciously oriental compliments, almost flattering you into the belief that you are at least a lord, two or three assistants tumble over each other in their eagerness to pile at your feet all manner of fabrics. Turbans are displayed, rolls of cloth are unwound, and silk *saris* are held up for "my lord's" inspection. Nowadays there are a few "one price" shops, but usually you select your material and then spend some time haggling over the price—time is no object with the Oriental merchant. He assures you that this piece of cloth cost him fifty-five rupees, but he will sell it to you for fifty rupees—he only makes such an offer out of the deep respect he has for "my lord." You offer him *fifteen* rupees, and he smiles blandly as he explains, as con-

descendingly as he would to a foolish child, that every one else in the bazaar would demand at least double what he is asking of you; nevertheless, to mark the propitious day of his meeting with you, he will waive the point and sell to you for *forty* rupees. You parry this by protesting that the cloth is really not the slightest use to you, it being far too narrow, but for friendship's sake you are prepared to give him *eighteen* rupees. "My lord is indeed a man of business," he declares, "and my lord knows that this cloth would be cheap at thirty rupees"; but "just for luck," he is prepared to give it to "my lord" for *twenty* rupees *plus three rupees baksheesh* (gratuity). Time is pressing, and you eventually close the bargain at a total of *twenty-two* rupees—baksheesh included. The delighted head of affairs orders his clerk to make out a bill of sale for "my lord," and with many compliments and profuse salaams on both sides, the scene closes.

Stepping out into the sunlit street, you are confronted by a half-naked "holy man" whose ash-smeared body and filthy matted hair proclaim his separation from this vain world. He holds out a begging bowl and mutters the magic word "baksheesh."

The water-carrier jostles the driver of the panniered pony as people stand back to make way for a wedding procession with music and garlands. Or perhaps it is a funeral with mourners crying, "Ram is true! Ram is true!" as they carry the corpse towards the burning-ground by the river outside the town. Women—mostly of low caste—surround the bangle seller, and cast covetous glances at his glittering display of cheap bracelets made of coloured glass or tinsel. Small boys hang round the sweetmeat stall and sigh for the fly-covered dainties that lie in sticky masses on

the brass trays or big green leaves that serve for plates.

If the street be wide enough, you may encounter a ramshackle springless *ekka*—a sort of glorified ice-cream cart on high wheels, with a canopy overhead supported by four upright poles that sway with the jolting of the cart; two precarious-looking shafts in front are tied with an assortment of strings and sundry odd scraps of old rope to an ill-conditioned pony. There is no seat; the passengers sit on the floor of the *ekka*, cross-legged if they be Indians, or with legs hanging down if they chance to be of the stiff-jointed West. A ponderous bullock cart rumbles along over the cobble stones, the driver guiding the faithful beasts by poking his toes into their hind-quarters and urging them forward by twisting their tails. In the Punjab, or some Native States, a stately elephant or a string of soft-footed camels adds variety to the scene on the wider thoroughfares.

The City from the Minaret

Now leave the busy bazaar, and let us wander down the narrow, ill-paved and evil-smelling streets that seem to have worked their way, corkscrew fashion, into the dense mass of human habitations that constitutes the city; they twist and wind in and out among the tall buildings, sometimes apparently boring underneath the very houses. If the city is situated in the plains, the streets may be more or less level; but if it be built on a hill-side there are sure to be many ups and downs, and the pedestrian constantly finds himself stumbling up irregular steps, of varying height and breadth and width, as he wends his way between high uninteresting walls of brick or plaster, broken here and there by massive doors or high-placed lattice windows. In some places he

comes across a house built right across the narrow street, forming a sort of arch above his head as he saunters along.

Those steps in the wall through yonder arched doorway lead to the terraced court of a little Mohammedan mosque—raised up on the roofs of several shops. Ascending the steps, we encounter a dignified Moslem with flowing robes, spotless turban, and a beard dyed red in imitation of the Prophet's own beard. For a moment he is austere—cold. But a smile, a polite salaam—and possibly something more (a touch of nature not unknown in the West)—usually secured a courteous welcome. Removing our shoes, we enter the tiled court. It is spotlessly clean—in marked contrast with the street we have just left—and the whitewashed walls and arcades of the mosque are dazzling in the bright sunlight. Look up. High above us are domes and cupolas surmounted with glittering crescents—the symbol of Islam—and rising above everything else, two tall slender minarets stand out against the blue sky.[1] What a view there must be from the lofty balconies near the summit! Half-hesitatingly, we ask leave to ascend, and the solemn custodian nods permission—an Indian moves his head sideways by way of assent, instead of moving it backwards and forwards as we do. In stockinged feet, we squeeze up those narrow spiral stone steps—up, and up . . . and up . . . till we stand, hot and breathless, on the balcony from which five times a day the *muezzin*[2] gives the call to prayer.

The city lies spread out below—not like a map, for in all probability you cannot trace the course of a single street. The writer remembers looking down from such

[1] See photograph facing p. 33.

[2] The official who announces the hours of prayer.

a minaret upon the holy city of Benares; not a street was visible—nothing but a bewildering collection of houses curiously huddled together. The buildings, small and great, seemed to cling to each other, and grow out of each other, and stand on each other's shoulders, as though fear of some common foe had driven them to squeeze as close together as possible for mutual protection. Between these crowded buildings the narrow winding streets, often overhung by the upper stories, are invisible. Nothing is seen but a monotonous vista of housetops, relieved here and there by temples and mosques, by gilded domes and whitened cupolas; with an occasional minaret to break the intense blue sky that forms the background of the picture. As one looks down upon the houses below and wonders what life must be like in such places, a hundred questions arise in one's mind.

Some Indian cities are still encircled by ancient walls that have borne the brunt of many a siege, and from the minarets one may catch sight of venerable ramparts pierced with great gateways and defended by moats and mighty towers. Possibly one may get a peep of the open country beyond the walls and suburbs, where ancient domed tombs and piles of crumbling ruins tell of days when Arabs, Moguls, Tartars or Persians contended for possession of the city. Around yonder walls Rajput and Maratha, Sikh and Sepoy have struggled together in furious mortal combat.

As we gaze across the city, the sun sinks towards the yellow plain to the west, its slanting rays gilding tower and dome and minaret with the splendour of evening. The courtyards of countless houses are filled with purple shadows. A babel of voices rises up from the streets below.

The Bazaar by Night

• Descending from the minaret, and bestowing upon the custodian of the mosque a little more baksheesh, we once more enter the streets, and immediately notice a great change. The intense heat of the day is over and the streets are filled with cool shadows. The people turn out of their houses to do their shopping or to enjoy a pleasant stroll before the evening meal. In the bazaar, the shopkeepers are lighting their brass lamps—small open vessels of oil with little cotton wicks flickering from a projecting lip. Some of these lamps hang from above by brass chains; others stand on the stall on a beautiful brass pedestal. No shopkeeper is dozing now; hookahs are pushed aside, and the real business of the day begins. The street is literally crowded with people, who press around the grain shops and vegetable stalls to buy food for the evening meal, or haggle over the price of chillies for the curry. Through such a crowd, *ekkas* and *tongas* drive slowly. In vain the drivers scream out the Indian equivalent for "By your leave!" The street is narrow and crowded, and vehicles must needs proceed at walking pace. People hardly heed the *tonga-walla* (driver) as he cries, "Oh! you with the water-pot!—you with the sugar-cane!—get out of the way! Son of a pig (to a low caste man), stand back! . . . Now, my father (to an old man), make way!" Notice how careful he is in addressing any proud Moslem who gets in the way—Mohammedans have a habit of resenting rude remarks, and the worthy *tonga-walla* has no desire to be knocked off his seat. People dodge in front of the bullock carts only to find themselves under the disdainful nose of a lordly camel as it strides slowly through the crowd. As you move aside to avoid the camel's apparently unmanageable legs, you notice just beside

you—perhaps within a yard of your eyes—a face you can never forget, a human face scarred and disfigured, the most pitiful of God's creatures, a leper. There are 150,000 of them in India. No one seems to take much notice of the sufferer, and you pass on. Every man, woman and child seems to be talking at the top of their voice! There is nothing of the "Silent" East about this fascinating scene.

Peep in through that big arched gateway between the shops. It is a shabby little temple to Krishna or Siva —or perchance to Rama and Sita. The priest is lighting the lamps round the shrine; the tom-toms are announcing the hour of evening *puja* (worship), and already a few people are passing in to hang a garland round the idol or to sprinkle a little holy water before it. Next door, the jeweller is blowing up his little charcoal fire; then, squatting down before it, he leisurely proceeds to work some gold or silver into nose-rings or anklets for his clients. The sweetmeat seller is doing a roaring trade now. Tourists who have not been through the Indian bazaars at night have not seen the real India. It is then that East is East.

Visiting some City Homes

Come once more into the dark narrow lanes of the city—so dark after the brightly-lit bazaar. The crowds and noise are left behind, and we wend our way by the light of a hurricane lamp—carefully avoiding sundry holes in the road—to visit a few Indian homes. Can anything be more confusing than this maze of nameless streets after nightfall? In the darkness we almost run into a sacred bull going to the bazaar for a feed. A stranger would be hopelessly lost in such a labyrinth; but we are in the hands of a zenana missionary lady who

is quite at home in these tortuous by-ways. She knows them in the dark, too, for she is a medical worker, and has sometimes been called out at night to visit some sufferer. In her company we shall get into Indian homes that would otherwise be closed to us as Europeans and strangers.

Our guide pauses before a low door heavily panelled and studded with iron nails. "I know the people who live here," she tells us. "I doctored their little girl when she was ill with pneumonia last cold weather, and they are very grateful. The women do not keep purdah (seclusion); so they won't mind my bringing you." Then, knocking loudly on the door, and raising her voice, she cries in Hindustani, "Koī hai? Koī hai?" (Is anyone there?) The call is repeated, and then someone comes to the door. "Is that you, Miss Sahib ji?" says a woman's voice from within. "Yes, Mother of Ram Gopal; it is I. And I have brought visitors from across the dark water to see you. May we enter?"

Heavy bolts are withdrawn, the door is thrown open, and the light of our lantern reveals a little Indian housewife dressed in a cinnamon-coloured skirt, with a veil of bright green muslin covering her head and thrown round her shoulders. Her large ornamental ear-rings are of silver, and there is a big ring of thin gold wire two inches in diameter through her nose. That vermilion spot on her forehead means that she is married. Perceiving that one of her visitors is a man, she modestly draws her green veil across the lower part of her face with one hand while she salaams with the other, and bids us enter. As she moves, we notice that her feet are bare and she has cheap lead rings on her toes—surmounted with tiny bells that tinkle as she walks. We follow her across a small court a few yards square. The people love a secluded courtyard, not overlooked by neighbours.

The rooms run along two sides, with a portico of rough brick-work pillars in front, supporting an upper story on one side.

Several men and women rise from the earth floor to greet us, and someone pulls a *charpoy* (an Indian string bed) from one of the dark rooms into the portico for us to sit upon. Two or three children stand in the shadow till shyness has worn off, and then come and sit beside us—a little seven-year-old girl nestling close up to our guide who is no stranger to her. By the light of a couple of clay lamps we sit chatting together. The family speak Hindi and our missionary friend acts as interpreter as we converse about England, about high prices, and about the Prince of Wales's visit to India. With evident delight they tell us the oft-repeated story of how the great King-Emperor, when he himself visited India, stopped his royal train on Sunday that he "might go to the Christian temple to do his *puja*"; and their eyes glisten with approval and pride at the knowledge that the great monarch is religious. They ask what places we have visited, and what we think of India; and they tell us of the preparations they are making for the Dewali festival—the Feast of Lights—to-morrow night. The men talk most; but the women are interested listeners and often interject remarks. They are evidently pleased to have this diversion.

While talking, we glance around and note the simple domestic arrangements. In one corner of the portico two young girls are preparing the evening meal; one mixes the ingredients of the curry, while the other tends the big earthenware pot of rice cooking on the small Indian fire-place. The house is almost destitute of anything we should call furniture—the two or three *charpoys* are the only articles that seem to rise to that

distinction. The earth floors are uncovered save for one or two rather dilapidated grass mats, and there is a general sense of untidiness and discomfort about the whole place. The brick walls are covered with rough plaster—in places it has crumbled away, and a portion shows the remains of what was once whitewash. Garments in regular use are hanging from poles suspended horizontally by ropes from the open rafters above—even in the city white ants are troublesome, and it is safest to hang things thus. Several strong wooden boxes contain the best clothes and such jewellery as the family possesses. Brass and clay vessels and the simple cooking utensils lie about; there are also sundry rough brushes, and general items of rubbish. One wall of the court is plastered with dozens of round flat cakes of cow-dung, put there to dry in the sun that it may make fuel.

In the dim light we can just discern several crude pictures of Hindu gods stuck (without frames) upon the walls of one of the rooms—gaudy-coloured prints of Rama and the beloved goddess Sita, the pure and devoted wife of Rama and the ideal of North India's womanhood, especially in the United Provinces. Sita is a vast improvement on Kali the horrible goddess of Bengal. By moving a foot to the right we can just catch sight of a tiny brass lamp burning before a little plaster idol, around which a little rice, a couple of plantains (bananas), and half a coco-nut are lying. The family is a pious one.

Our guide notices that the evening meal is now ready, so at a sign from her we rise and take leave, several of the family escorting us to the door and little Roshni clinging affectionately to "Miss Sahib ji's" hand. "Salaam!" and again "salaam!"

. . . . . .

Our next call is at a very different home. "Down this passage," says our guide, "lives an elderly Mohammedan whom we sometimes employ when we need extra help. He is rather dull, but he is faithful and we can trust him. He can cook, wait at table, go messages, look after the house in our absence, and do all sorts of odd jobs." As we approach the wide-open door of what looks more like a blacksmith's shed than a dwelling, our friend calls, "Koī hai? Abdul Kareem!" The surprised Abdul Kareem springs to his feet with apologetic salaams. He stands before us barefooted—a tall graceful figure with a beard turning grey. He wears tight white trousers, fitting close from ankles upwards; a white tunic-like coat hangs to below the knees, and a big white turban shows off to advantage his rather handsome face. Being off duty he has thrown off his *cummerbund* (belt), but a print duster thrown over one shoulder proclaims him to be servant to a sahib. "We were just passing, and I thought I'd like to show my friends where you live, Abdul Kareem. I don't want you just now. (Abdul Kareem again salaams.) May we look inside?"

Nodding his head sideways, Abdul Kareem stands aside, and we peep into his dwelling—just one windowless room, possibly fifteen feet by eight, with a door near each end. Everything is untidy, and very dirty—except Abdul Kareem's white garments. An old *charpoy*, the inevitable wooden box, the necessary cooking things, and two or three old faded photos from the mission house, and a good deal of litter—that is all. The cheerless room is full of smoke from the fire over which some goat's flesh is stewing in the pot. Abdul Kareem's wife—he is too poor to afford two—is sitting cross-legged upon the floor rolling out *chapatties*[1] to eat with the

[1] Used instead of bread. They are the size and shape of a pancake.

meat. Abdul Kareem and his wife live alone; their elder son is in far-away Bombay, the second boy is in the army, and their only daughter, a girl of fourteen, is married and living at a distance. There is no idol or shrine here, and no pictures of the gods; Abdul Kareem is a staunch Mohammedan, and has a deep contempt for "the idolaters" around him. He declares that he would "as lief be 'that animal' (he dare not defile himself by saying 'pig' outright) as a pagan!" We salaam and pass on.

. . . . . .

"I know a Hindu family in the next street," says our friend, "but I'm not sure if they will let me take you in. They are rather strict purdah people, and may not be able to hide the womenfolk away—they have no separate zenana. We'll try."

"Koī hai? Koī hai?"

The voice is recognized immediately, and several female voices answer, "Oh, Miss Sahib ji! Come in!"

"But, Mother of Govind, I have friends with me, and one is a Sahib!" There is a merry titter and a confused chattering within. Then a man's voice calls through the still barred door: "Please wait a minute, Miss Sahib ji; only one minute!"

In a few minutes the heavy bolt is withdrawn, and with a salaam the eldest son of the family receives us. We enter the courtyard. The women have completely covered their heads with their veils, but they remain sitting at the hand-mills grinding corn in the dim light of clay and brass lamps. This house, like so many in India, is run on the joint family system; the four sons have each brought home a wife and, with sundry bright-eyed children, all live together with the old parents.

We are taken into an almost dark inner room, where

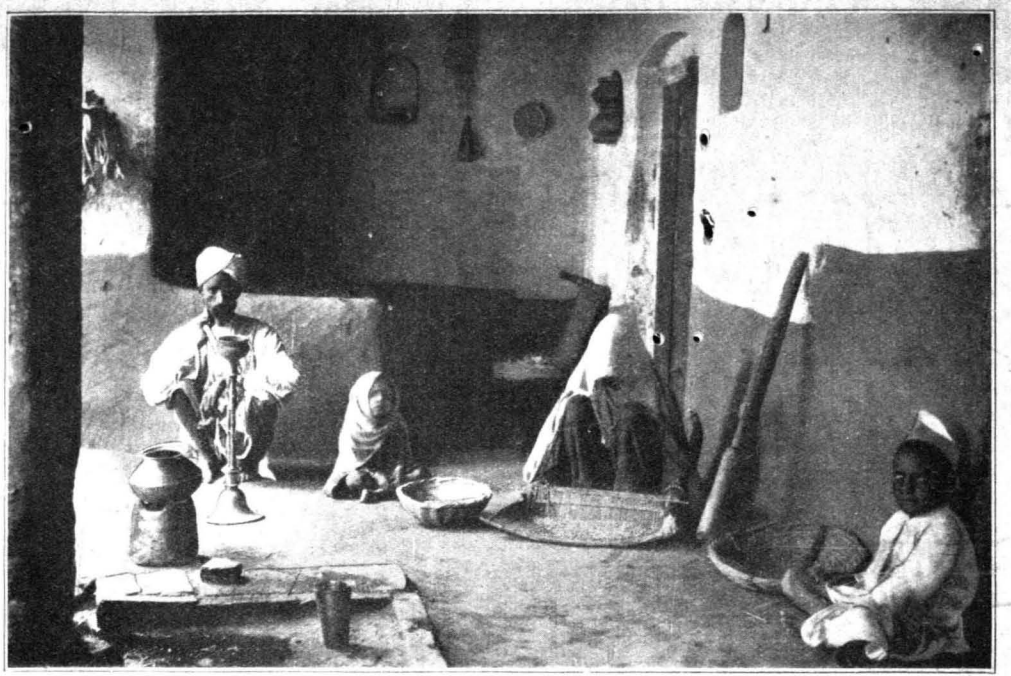

Photo by the Author

A LOW-CASTE HOME IN NORTH INDIA

This photograph shows practically the whole dwelling. There is a tiny yard through the arched opening to the left. The man in front of the half-wall (behind which the family sleep) is smoking his hookah. Before him a clay vessel of water is boiling on the curious little fireplace. The wife is sifting the grain. Although the family is a poor one, she is carefully veiled.

the old father lies sick on a *charpoy*. We sit on a wooden chest by his side while our friend suggests some simple remedy. "Take care that you don't touch that hookah on the floor," says our guide. "If you do, they will have to break it up, for they can never use it again. And," she continues in an undertone, "if you quietly look round, you will see eyes watching you through that barred window. The women are trying to have a look on the sly!" As we take our departure we notice that the women in the courtyard are trying to peep at us under the edges of their veils. Indian women are as human and as full of curiosity as their sisters of other lands. Human nature is much the same the world over!

"To-morrow we will call on a wealthy Mohammedan family in another part of the city," our guide remarks, as we wend our way through the now silent streets to the mission bungalow just outside the town.

. . . . . .

A Wealthy Mohammedan Home

Next morning we are up at daybreak, only to find our missionary hostess already at work. But the sun is high in the heavens and the chill of the November morning has given place to the heat of forenoon as we step into the little bullock cart that is to take us for several miles to pay the call. "I had hoped to get away earlier," says our hostess, "but the teacher of our girls' school in the town came to see me about a little scholar who has just been withdrawn from the school to be married—she is only eleven years old. And then a boy with a very bad foot was brought in—a cart had run over it in the bazaar, and instead of bringing him to me at once, or taking him to the Indian doctor at the little Government hospital three miles away, his people

tried doing it up themselves : now the foot is in a dreadful state and full of maggots. Then two men came to haggle over the price they ask for re-thatching our bungalow. So I've had a busy time. Isn't it hot ? "

The humped bullocks trot merrily along, urged forward by sundry exhortations—more or less forceful—from their driver, and we pass right through the town and out into the less crowded suburbs beyond. Here the houses are larger and better built, but are still very close together. Indeed some of them are without courtyards. Many of them are three and even four stories high, and have balconies of stone or carved woodwork overhanging the street. These balconies are supported by pillars or by stout beams that project from the walls. The carving on the front of such houses is frequently very elaborate, and in some instances the woodwork is brightly coloured. Many houses have big pictures of the gods painted on both sides of the doorway. Most old Indian towns have many really splendid specimens of domestic architecture.

Before one such house we alight, and as we ascend the half a dozen steps of the front portico—or veranda, as it is usually termed—an Indian gentleman comes forward to greet us. He is a grain merchant, and the lower story of the house is a grain store. We are shown along bare passages, and up a stone staircase, into a large apartment with several windows—or rather stucco arches *without* windows—opening on to the projecting balcony of fine old woodwork. Indian mats and Persian rugs lie about the floors. There are several cane-seated chairs—including one or two long low ones on which one may lie with legs stretched out—and three or four small carved wooden tables with big trays of lovely brasswork. There is the inevitable hookah, sundry cushions, a rather

elaborate clock, a western-looking iron and brass lamp-stand, several niches in the walls for lamps of more oriental character, and sundry knick-knacks evidently brought from Europe. On the walls are several photographs of places our host visited when he was in England, including one or two of King's College, Cambridge, where he graduated. On the bookshelves at one end of the room we notice Shakespeare, and Tennyson, and Tagore, two or three of Tolstoi's works, Spencer, Darwin, Huxley, John Stuart Mill, Green's *Short History of the English People*, several French novels, Arnold's *Light of Asia*, and Ameer Ali's *Spirit of Islam* and *Ethics of Islam*, besides various works on mathematics and science. Possibly there may even be a copy of the Bible—a class book left over from schooldays; our host regards it as a school book, an English classic, nothing more. Most important of all—standing alone in a place of honour on a side table—is a beautiful manuscript copy of the Mohammedan sacred book, the Koran, with camphor-wood covers inlaid with ivory and silver. It rests on a Koran-stand of carved sandalwood. Not far away stand the brass ewer and basin for the ceremonial washings for prayer—both inlaid with tiny pieces of coloured enamel-work, and kept wonderfully clean and bright.

Our host speaks English fluently, so while we men converse with him about the political situation, the probable effect of Mr Gandhi's non-co-operation movement, and the Turkish question, our missionary friend asks his permission to take the ladies of the party to see the ladies in the zenana on the top story of the house.

In this orthodox Mohammedan family the purdah system is rigidly observed; the ladies seldom go out of the house—when they do they are carefully veiled and conveyed in a "purdah carriage" over which a thick

covering is thrown as an additional safeguard against the prying eyes of men. To such women life is virtually imprisonment, and time often hangs very heavily upon their hands. Their apartments are almost destitute of furniture; their simple duties are soon attended to, and little save gossip remains to while away the time. Quite uneducated, their minds are often limited by the narrow confines of their own little world. They do, and undo, and re-do each other's hair; they delight in powders and perfumes and jewels; they adorn themselves with bangles and flowers; they spend much time cutting up betel nut for chewing with *pan* leaf—which is as dear to a Mohammedan as cigarettes to an inveterate smoker; they tend their children, caress them and spoil them and play with them, and then, in a fit of anger, slap them; they quarrel with the other women, and sometimes indulge their envy and jealousy to cruel excess. Making all due allowance for oriental custom and for the explanations of modern apologists, the fact remains that the lot of millions of Moslem women is unenviable. Such joys and advantages as they possess cannot compensate for the dull secluded life and inevitably stunted powers.

Many Mohammedan women are very devout, and though, unlike their husbands, they are unable to go to the mosque for the Friday prayers, they may be seen spreading their prayer mats and performing their worship in their own homes. Those who are able to read often spend considerable time reading the Koran.

In very many Mohammedan homes the confinement is less rigid, and the women move freely about the house with the male members of the family—they have full liberty within the home, but if a strange man comes they at once retire to their own quarters until the visitor has left. On certain occasions they are allowed to go—

carefully veiled of course—to weddings, or to visit some relative who may be ill or in sorrow. This semi-seclusion is very common in some parts of India.

It must not be supposed that no man is ever allowed to enter the zenana, as is sometimes erroneously stated. No *stranger* is admitted, but the men and boys of the family, male relatives, and in some cases even male servants, enter freely. Unlike the Hindus, the Mohammedan men and women may eat together, and there is a good deal of family life and real affection between husband, wife, and children.

Our host, being an enlightened man, has only one wife; some Mohammedans have two, and a few—very few—have three. Their religion allows them four, on condition that they can afford to keep them, but only princes and nobles avail themselves of this. Among thoughtful Moslems, however, there is a growing conviction that it is best to have only one wife. They practise the joint family system like the Hindus, and this means that the house has a good many inmates. It is the presence of so many women—wives of different brothers—in the zenana that leads to so much quarrelling. "When you have a lot of keys on one bunch, they will continually jingle," says the proverb. The zenana missionary is teaching several of the little girls of this household to read. As an educated man, our host realizes what it means to have an illiterate wife who may hold his affection but can never share his deeper life. He would like his son—now away at High School—to be married to a girl who can read; indeed if he can find a really educated girl for the lad, he will certainly do so.

The education of women is one of the most urgent problems. Of 32 millions of Moslem women and girls less than 140 thousand can read. Progress is being made

in this matter, but it is tragically slow and there is still much prejudice against educating women. Many educated Mohammedans are painfully conscious of the unsatisfactory conditions of womanhood, and one of them has declared :—

> At the present day a great deal of literary talent lies buried behind the purdah, but alas !
>
> 'Full many a flower is born to blush unseen
> And waste its sweetness on the desert air.'
>
> In saying this . . . I am in no sense defending the abuses which have sapped the foundations of our social system and ended in the undoing not of the women but of the men. . . . The rising generation of Mohammedans are becoming more and more conscious of the abuses which shut out men from the most charming portion of mankind, whose softening influence and gracious presence lend, as we find in Western lands, an added dignity and sweetness to life.

It is to be feared that the tenacity with which the orthodox cling to the letter of their sacred Koran is a hindrance to reform, for some of its teaching, as well as the personal example of the Prophet Mohammed himself, is unwholesome and unjust to women. Mohammed may have been an affectionate husband ; but one who practised polygamy, concubinage and child-marriage, and even fell into adultery, can hardly be expected to lead womanhood to its rightful position in the world.

. . . . . .

The above sketches will serve to give an impression of life in an Indian city. Of course, all cities are not alike. There are very considerable differences in the appearance of the streets, the prevailing style of houses, and many other things. Some cities have features of special interest—cotton mills, palaces, old citadels, Government buildings, or a High School (a mission High

School, or possibly one given to the city by a wealthy Indian gentleman who believes in education).

In South India the towns and cities are usually less crowded; the streets are wider and the houses larger—most of them are of only one story and have big courtyards. In most cases the Southern town centres round some vast temple—very different from the small temples of the North—and the Moslem influence is not nearly so strong, though there is sure to be a mosque, and the minaret is as conspicuous as the church steeple in an English town. Variety is one of the chief charms of India. The more cities you visit, the more you marvel at the difference they exhibit.

CHAPTER V

VILLAGE LIFE IN THE SOUTH

IMAGINE yourself approaching a South Indian village by a raised path between the flooded rice-fields—a sort of clay wall a couple of feet high, separating one field from another. The rains are over and all nature is green and gay. You hear singing and the merry laughter of men and boys as they begin the day's work. The clay walls retain the water in the little fields, and the peasant cultivator, more than ankle deep, is busily ploughing through it with his primitive wooden plough and two patient bullocks that splash the water and stir up the mud as they pace steadily along. Or, perchance, the ploughing is over and the *ryot* (small cultivator), still walking through the water, is sowing his rice seed.

In the soft light of early morning the village looks pleasant enough with its stately rows of tall palmyra-palms standing like sentinels against the azure sky. Blue aloes are growing from the golden sand near the river, and there are thick masses of cactus and prickly pear—the hiding-place of the deadly cobra and other poisonous snakes. Around the village are mango trees, or great banyans from whose spreading branches tendrils grow down till they reach the ground, work their way into the soil, and in time become new roots around the parent stem. A well-grown banyan tree is a grove in itself.

At the entrance to the village, beneath a banyan, is

an earth or brick platform two or three feet high, its sides striped white and red to show that it is sacred. Upon it stand the village gods—strange-looking deities of local fame—or the snake-gods cut in stone, or possibly some honourable member of recognized Hindu pantheon such as the monkey god, or the elephant-headed Ganesha. Little offerings of marigolds, a coco-nut or a few plantains, or a clay saucer of milk or *ghee* (clarified butter) lie before the idols, placed there by pious hands. Stuck in the ground, their points towards the sky, there may be several spears for the gods to use in self-defence if need should arise. The crude stone images are smeared with saffron or vermilion, or garlanded with flowers. This is the village sanctuary. Not far away there may be a couple—or perhaps a dozen—huge clay horses, ten or fifteen feet high, covered with whitewash and gaily painted over with patterns done in blue, red, and yellow. These fearsome creatures are for the god Iyenar—the guardian of villages—to ride upon when he goes round the village by night.

As we pass the village well, the women and girls are drawing water, or chatting together and laughing merrily while waiting their turn to fill their beautifully polished brass water-vessels. At our approach they draw their *saris* (long cloths) over their faces and turn away. As they walk down the shady street we cannot fail to notice their graceful easy carriage—due doubtless to their life-long habit of carrying those heavy water-vessels upon their heads.

The village looks rather uninteresting as we enter—just a cluster of mud-and-thatch dwellings, ugly in themselves, but often pleasing in their setting of palmyras. There is often an air of general untidiness about the place—a fallen hut, lying just as it collapsed during th

rains, or a heap of stones deposited several years before and just left; or there is a stagnant muddy pool where the oxen drink and the water-buffaloes lie down in the heat of midday. There is no attempt at paving or road-cleaning or drainage. How one would like to "tidy up" the whole place!

The Village Home

The houses are made of unburnt bricks, plastered over with brown mud—possibly whitewashed—and the big thatch roof overhangs in front so as to form a veranda under which the people sit to shelter from the fierce rays of the sun. Here and there a better-built house has a roof of red tiles—made perhaps at the Industrial Mission tile-works at Mangalore. Village houses are seldom more than one story high, and most of them have some sort of a courtyard in the centre; a veranda runs round the court and the rooms open out from it—tiny dark rooms with little or no furniture, and very stuffy. No part of the house is "purdah," for in most parts of South India the zenana system is practically unknown, and the women are free to go about and even to work in the fields with the men. The courtyard is the centre of family life; there the domestic work is done, the babies are washed, the grain crushed in the stone pounder, the food prepared, and the brass vessels vigorously polished with red earth till they shine in the sunlight.

At meal-times the men sit cross-legged on the floor on the shady side of the veranda, while the women pile their big leaves with rice and curry and fill the little brass drinking vessels with water. Afterwards, the women sit down and eat what is left. Then the leaves are thrown away. Tin or white enamel plates are now coming into use instead of the primitive leaves.

If the family is an agricultural one, the dwelling will be strewn with simple agricultural implements. If they are of the potter caste, there will be heaps of prepared clay in the courtyard, with dozens of newly-made vessels baking in the sunshine. In a shady corner, before the time-honoured wheel, sits the potter; his bare feet keep the wheel revolving while his skilled hand shapes four or five vessels from one piece of clay. Or perchance, the people are of the oil-presser caste; then in the courtyard —or maybe on a bit of land just outside the dwelling— there will be the oil-press, a hollowed log cut from the trunk of a large tree, with an arrangement for crushing the oil from the seeds, the whole being turned by two cream-coloured bullocks that pace steadily round and round.

Sometimes all the people in one street will be of the weaver caste. Their primitive looms are set up in the tree-shaded street before their dwellings, and they may all be seen—men and women—busily working at a piece of cloth the length of the street! The small children play around and dodge one another by ducking underneath the half-made fabric.

As we walk along, we see the carpenters working at their sawpit with a two-handled saw, the blacksmith with his forge, and the idol-maker painting images for the villagers to buy. In the little bazaar is the goldsmith, blowing his small charcoal fire to melt up some jewellery a customer desires to have altered, or to turn some silver rupees into anklets for the landowner's wife. The Singer sewing machine is humming merrily—probably there is not a village in India without at least one "Singer."

If the village is a large one, there is sure to be a temple —large or small, unimportant or famous through all the

countryside. The principal street leads right up to the main gateway, and the high walls surrounding the temple are covered with broad perpendicular stripes of red and white.

Caste

In the street that runs round the temple are the houses of the Brahmins—usually some of the best houses of the whole village, for are not the Brahmins the highest and most influential of the 2500 castes[1] of India? They are not all rich, but all are proud of birth and position and training. Even a visitor can recognize a Brahmin at a glance: the dignified bearing, the erect head, the finely chiselled features—these things alone mark him out as head and shoulders above his fellows, and immeasurably above the outcastes. Theoretically the Brahmins are all priests of one sort or another, but nowadays it would be impossible for them all to get a living in connection with religion, and thousands of them take up other employment—many are in Government service, others are "pleaders" (lawyers), teachers, or merchants. All Brahmins are scrupulously careful about the ritual of their religion. The touch of a person of lower caste would defile them. Their cooking utensils, the cooked food, and even the fireplace, must be jealously guarded from defilement of even the shadow of a person of lower caste.

Most, if not all, Brahmins are educated men, taught from early childhood not only to read and write the language of the part of India in which they live, but also the sacred Sanskrit—the ancient literary language

[1] The four main castes (see p. 27) are to-day subdivided into about 2500 castes. The lower subdivisions of the lowest caste group (the Sudras) are termed "low castes." The "Outcastes" are those who are outside the whole system of Hinduism.

of the Aryans now only understood by the educated, and no longer in ordinary use. Sanskrit is in India what Latin is to us in England. The great sacred books of the Hindus are in Sanskrit, and therefore as inaccessible to the bulk of the people as the Latin Bible was to the ordinary Englishman in the Middle Ages. During the last hundred years many thousands of Brahmins have been through Government or missionary colleges and are familiar with the English language and literature, and a few have completed their education at a university in England. The Brahmins, then, are the brain of the country and its natural leaders. Unhappily their usefulness is very largely discounted by their narrow caste prejudice and intolerance. As a class their attitude to the rest of the population is one of proud exclusiveness, and to the low castes and outcastes they are often tyrannical and unjust.

Naturally, many Brahmins are quite alive to modern movements. The writer remembers visiting one such in a large South Indian village. The house was built of stone, with a spacious front veranda with big pillars and stone couches—like huge sofas—for the inmates to recline upon in the open air. Ascending the half-dozen steps to the veranda, and entering the house by a short passage, we found ourselves in the guest room, a rather large apartment lit by a skylight. There were rugs, mats, and cushions on the floor, and several cane-seated armchairs. A recent copy of the London *Times* lay on the swing seat in the centre. But the most remarkable thing about the family was the presence of two ladies—the mother and sister of our host. Both were widows, and, by all rules of Hindu religion and custom, absolutely forbidden to re-marry. But there was a startling difference between them; they repre-

sented the old ideas and the new. The elder was a widow of the old order—her head shaven, no jewels, and the usual coarse white garment; the other—her daughter—although a widow, was clad in beautiful silk garments, wore gold jewellery on fingers and toes as well as in her ears and round her neck and arms, and her black glossy hair was decorated with gold ornaments and flowers. A greater contrast it would be difficult to imagine. "We educated men see that some of the old ideas are not right," our host remarked. Yet on a hundred other points that Brahmin gentleman would be inflexible, and would suffer any loss rather than "break caste."

In the village community quite a number of castes are represented, broadly referred to as "good caste," "middle caste," and "low caste"; beside the Brahmins there will be such castes as the landowners, the bankers, the farmers, the goldsmiths, the weavers, the blacksmiths, and many others. Among the "low castes" there will be the washermen, the basket makers, and the barbers. In a way these castes resemble our English social grades and trade unions. But there is a wide difference: caste cannot be changed as an Englishman can change his occupation; there is no choice about it, for it is hereditary, the child being of necessity of the same caste as its parents, taking up the same trade, occupation, or profession. The castes are separate and distinct; they are shut off from one another in water-tight compartments. People of one caste cannot eat or live with people of another, and (with one or two curious exceptions) they may not intermarry.

Caste rules are very complex and very rigid and—in Western eyes—often very unnecessary and foolish. By receiving water from a person of a lower caste, by eating food defiled by the shadow of a low caste person, by

smoking a hookah another has touched, by crossing the "black water" (the sea), or even by being touched by the garments of some outcaste in the bazaar—by these and a hundred other things a man's caste may be "broken," and a good deal of ceremony is required to restore it. Generally speaking, the caste system is much stronger in the villages than it is in the cities where all sorts of people are crowded together; and it is stronger in South India than in the north where the presence of many millions of Mohammedans has considerably affected social conditions. But there are many evidences that the more rigid caste rules are weakening. When railway trains were first introduced a high caste man would ask to have a compartment to himself; the railway companies were quite willing to oblige—providing the said passenger paid for all the unoccupied seats! Nowadays all castes travel together with little distinction beyond that of First, Second, Intermediate, or Third class carriages. Tram-cars and motor-buses are likewise bringing the members of the different castes to sit in one another's company and, on a long journey, to sleep and eat their food in one another's presence. Many a caste man may to-day be seen wearing leather boots—a grave departure from custom, for leather in any form is a defilement to a strict Hindu. The writer once travelled with a Brahmin gentleman who, without shame, confessed himself to be a *leather merchant* — an almost incredible instance of yielding to modern tendencies. "We who are educated," he explained, "have come to see that caste is something deeper than mere employment."

The Daily Round

Taking them as a whole, the villagers of India are an industrious folk. Under the fierce rays of the tropical

sun they toil from dawn to sunset—ploughing, sowing, transplanting, reaping, or tending their cattle. If the season is dry, they incessantly labour at the wells. Others do their appointed work as blacksmiths, carpenters, or weavers.

At sundown the day's work ends, and in the forty minutes of twilight the husbandman gathers his tools and drives his tired oxen homeward through a cloud of dust. The boys and girls call loudly as they bring in the flocks of goats, and the smoke of many fires hangs low over the village. As the workers come in from the fields, the village market, held every day at sunset, is in full swing. Most of the goods are laid out on the ground for inspection and sale, and for an hour or so there is as animated a scene as one could wish to see. In the dwellings, the women and girls are preparing the simple evening meal, and soon the toilers squat cross-legged on the floor to enjoy what to many is the one good meal of the day—the morning and midday meals being usually less substantial.

Simple as the food is, it is taken with keen relish by the toilers. The high caste Hindus are nearly all vegetarians—largely because of their belief in the transmigration of the soul, which, in one of its many existences, may dwell in a cow or goat, in a sheep or a fish. The staple food of the villagers varies according to the grains grown in the district. In some places it is rice, in others *ragi*, *dāl*, millet, barley, or some other grain. Pulse is used everywhere. Different curries supply variety to food that would otherwise become wearisome. They consist of such things as chopped vegetables, red-pepper, chillies, cardamoms, cumin, and coco-nut. The curry is always prepared fresh for every meal, and what is left over is thrown away. The people hold that the curry is

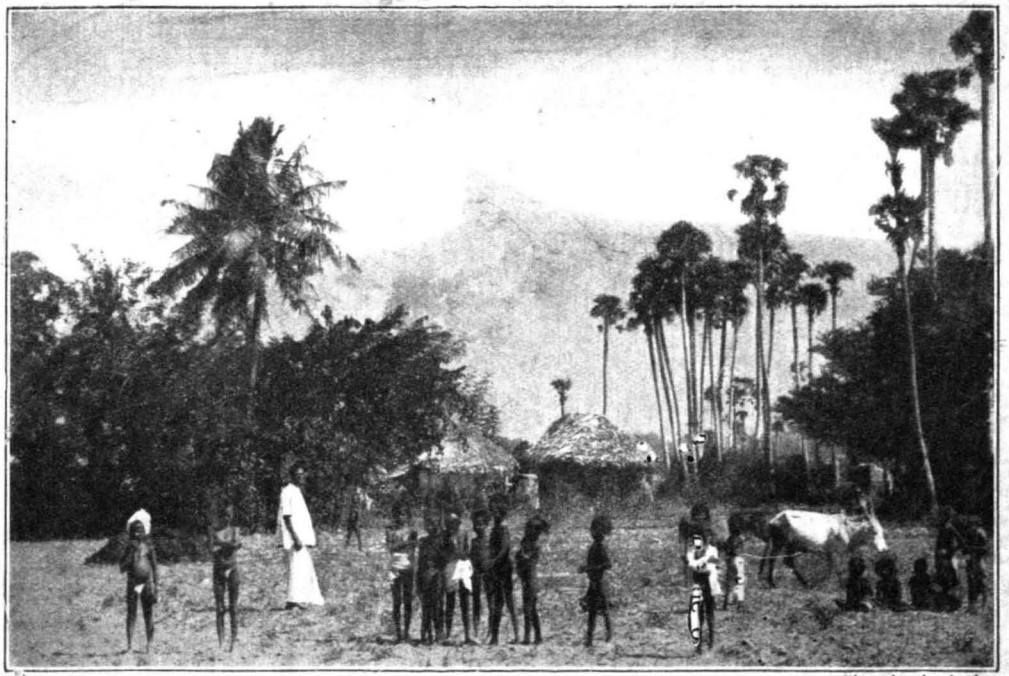

Photo by the Author

AN OUTCASTE VILLAGE, SOUTH INDIA

"A hundred yards or more from the main village is a little hamlet of fifty or sixty miserable mud-and-thatch sheds. . . . This is the home of the outcastes." (See p. 82) *The tall trees to the right are palmyra palms.*

not good unless the spices and other things are specially chopped or ground immediately before use. A girl who can cook a dozen or fifteen different curries has a higher value in the matrimonial market. In addition to the curry, the Indian loves chutney and all sorts of pickles, but those of high caste are forbidden to touch onions and garlic. There are many different caste rules about food.

After the evening meal, the villagers give themselves over to gossiping and smoking. By the light of a flickering clay lamp they sit cross-legged or recline on grass mats under the veranda of a neighbour's dwelling and discuss the latest news—the rains, the state of the crops, the unrest, or the actions of the Government. Possibly one of their number reads to them scraps from some more or less badly-printed vernacular newspaper. If the village be in the Mysore State, they probably have a copy of the *Vrittanta Patrike*, a weekly newspaper, printed in the Kanarese language and issued by the Wesleyan Mission Press in Mysore City. This paper gives the news of the week and deals with all social, moral, and religious questions from the Christian standpoint. It is read in villages in every part of Mysore State. Lolling on their mats in the warm night air, the villagers smoke their hookahs while someone reads its contents to them, and they talk things over and express their views.

At the village inn, or perchance on the earth platform beneath the council tree, a more serious discussion is in progress. The village *panchayat* (council of five) is in session. These five good men and true are elected by the people to form a permanent court to decide all claims and disputes and to deal with offenders. To-night there is business to be dealt with, so the village head-man has called the *panchayat*, to assemble at eight o'clock. Sitting in the dim light of lanterns, they order the village watch-

man to bring the disputants before them. The washerman and the goldsmith come forward and lay their case before the court. The washerman, after prostrating himself on the ground, narrates how his wife took four silver rupees to be made into anklets, and he now claims that the anklets supplied are not silver at all but base metal. The goldsmith denies the charge, and enters a counter claim that the washerman has not returned all the clothes sent to him for washing. Witnesses are called and heard. The discussion is a long one, high words are used—in high tones too—and then the council orders all present to retire while they discuss their verdict. After due deliberation, they call the disputants before them again, deliver their judgment with stern words of rebuke, and, if necessary, inflict a fine or some punishment on the guilty party. For two thousand years such courts have dealt with the minor disputes of the village folk.

At length the village street is silent; the lights are extinguished, and all sleep save the watchmen who are paid by the whole community to keep guard. But even the watchmen have been known to sleep! Then the stealthy *dacoit* (robber) finds his opportunity to dig quietly through the mud walls of some house and reach the chest in which the silk cloths and family jewels are stored.

Such are the main features of village life, and we must never forget that India is a land of villages. They are strewn over the whole country, and number more than three-quarters of a million. Nine out of every ten of India's people live in villages.

The Outcastes

A hundred yards or more from nearly every main village is a little hamlet of fifty or sixty miserable mud-

and-thatch sheds of the simplest character. As you approach, a half-starved dog comes yelping towards you; then a man covered with a coarse blanket of goat's hair comes forward. The huts around are dilapidated and dirty—little more than rough crooked poles supporting a makeshift thatch roof, with mud walls built up afterwards. The dim interior is divided by a half-wall, the inner portion being the sleeping place. The whole hut is seldom more than ten or twelve feet square. All is squalor and wretchedness. During the rains the roof leaks and the floor soon becomes a puddle.

This poor hamlet is the home of the "outcastes"—people who are below all the castes and outside the pale of orthodox Hinduism. The outcastes are often called the "untouchables"; their very presence is pollution; they are despised and shunned by all. Their ancestors were slaves, bought and sold with the land. With the advent of British rule slavery has passed, but the servitude and degradation remain. The outcastes do all the scavenger work of the village and all the most menial work in the fields. They live on the coarsest food, they are not allowed to use the village well, they dress in the poorest rags, and are utterly illiterate and superstitious. They know nothing of the meanest comforts, and are destitute of all but the barest necessities of life. The children run about naked, playing as children will—even though they be despised outcastes—or chasing the dirty black pig that is uprooting the gourd that sprawls over a clump of cactus and up over the roof of the hut. Some outcastes possess an ugly domestic animal known as a water-buffalo, and others have a few goats or chickens. A few of the more prosperous may own a couple of acres of land. But even these are extremely poor. A recent

and most thorough investigation shows the family budget for one year for a family of three adults and five children, owning one acre of wet land and one acre of dry. The total income from all sources is proved to work out at less than £13 per annum. And the family of eight people have to live on this pittance!

The grinding poverty of the outcastes makes them a ready prey to the moneylender; and often the landowner for whom they labour strengthens his hold upon them by lending them money at a rate of interest that makes it impossible for them ever to free themselves. Thousands are in debt for years over a matter of a few rupees, being barely able to pay the interest and utterly unable to reduce the loan. In some parts, especially in the Native States, it is not an unknown thing for a man to bind his wife, his children, and himself for long years of servitude as security for a very small loan.

The outcaste's life is one of toil, privation, and fear. The hamlet is deserted during the daytime, for all the people are in the fields, working ankle-deep in mud and water as they transplant the young rice shoot by shoot. In the evening they go home for a scanty evening meal, and then wrap themselves in their tattered blankets for the night. This is the ordinary daily round of India's fifty millions of outcastes.

There are terrors all around them. They pass their lives in fear of evil spirits, whom they try to propitiate at little devil-shrines. More real dangers are not wanting. The girls go out in the dusk to gather firewood, and in mistake for a stick, pick up a deadly snake. Or perchance, during the wet season, when the ground around the village is flooded, a cobra gets into the hut at midnight, and some sleepy inmate rolls over upon the venomous reptile. Within an hour all is over. There

are leopards in the jungle around, and though they seldom attack men and women unless startled, they carry off children or goats whenever they have the opportunity. There are bears on that bold rock-strewn hill half a mile away, and it is no uncommon thing for a man or woman to be mauled by one. Perchance a man-eating tiger is keeping the whole neighbourhood in a state of alarm, and the outcaste knows that his door—mere wickerwork daubed over with mud—is but slender protection against such a beast. Incredible as it may seem to those who do not know India, the Government returns show that every year about 21,000 people are killed by snakes and over 2000 by wild animals.[1] Medical missionaries frequently deal with unfortunate people who have been attacked but have managed to escape with a severe mauling. Of course all village people, of whatever caste, are liable to these dangers, but it is the outcastes who suffer most, because their dwellings are less secure and their mode of life more exposed.

What Famine Means

Terrible indeed is the fate of the outcastes when the rains fail and gaunt famine stalks through the land. The writer can never forget scenes he witnessed in the Nizam's Dominions in December 1920. There had been no rain for nearly three years. Imagine the state of the country! Scores of rivers were dry. Many of the great storage tanks were dry, and others were reduced to a pool of green stagnant water in the centre. The whole

[1] The total returns are startling. Here is the record for one year :—

Killed by tigers .	.	786	persons and	28,093	cattle.
,, ,, leopards	.	399	,, ,,	42,812	,,
,, ,, wolves	.	244	,, ,,	9,984	,,
,, ,, bears .	.	728	,, ,,	7,317	,,
,, ,, snakes	.	21,880	,, ,,	10,976	,,

land was brown and as hard as iron. It was pitiful to travel over what should have been green rice-fields, with that fierce Indian sun beating down relentlessly—though by courtesy it was called the "cool" season. I climbed to the summit of the ancient rock fortress above the little jungle town of Medak and looked down upon the waterless plain below. It was a vision of parched lands and dried-up rivers and tanks. Yet that plain is sprinkled over with villages; there are about 600 of them within a 25-mile radius of where I stood.

While visiting these famine-stricken villages, one wondered how the unfortunate people existed. In the big wells the water was something like seventy feet below the surface. Dozens of wells were drying up, and new ones were being dug—great holes with sloping sides like huge shell-holes or the craters of small volcanoes. The earth was so dry that it would crumble and fall in if the sides were too steep. We saw the people patiently labouring at their heavy task, carrying out the sandy earth in palm-leaf baskets—working all through the moonlight nights to avoid the heat of the day.

As always, it was the poor outcastes who were suffering most. The well-to-do people had their reserves, and the ordinary village folk, though feeling the pinch severely, were able to buy just enough food to sustain a more or less precarious existence. But the multitudes of outcastes were reduced to a really terrible condition—living on a miserable half-handful of grass seeds, and forced to eat whatever roots they could find, and to stew the bark of trees. Yet the village markets were held each evening as usual; there were grains and vegetables on sale there—for those who could afford to buy at famine prices. But the outcastes could not buy. Hungry people have gathered around me and attempted to kiss

my feet, or have held out their hands in sad appeal. Their scanty garments exposed their poor emaciated bodies and one could count their ribs. Some of them rubbed their hollow stomachs as if to prove to me that they were hungry. More than once little children have climbed upon my knees and stroked my hands; they have looked pleadingly into my face and held out their little thin hands imploringly for food. Indian children are such playful little things, and it went to one's very heart to see them suffering.

In British territories, Government does a great deal to relieve the distress, and in the area just referred to, the Nizam's Government was doing its own relief work. But many of those outcastes would fare badly indeed were it not for the noble work of missionaries, many of whom have been a veritable "refuge from the tempest . . . the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" to many thousands of helpless people. With the aid of money sent from England, it was possible to purchase cheap rice in Burma and thus feed multitudes who had no other helper. Each famine has left thousands of helpless children on the hands of missionaries.

The Ravages of Disease

Under such conditions, is it to be wondered at that plague and cholera and smallpox run riot among the villagers? The vitality of the people is so reduced that they cannot resist these and other diseases. In 1918, influenza swept through India carrying off over six millions of people. Can we wonder that the deities most worshipped by the villagers, and especially by the outcastes, are the fierce goddesses of cholera and smallpox? At times of special outbreaks of disease, these horrible divinities are worshipped by whole villages of

people, and hundreds of buffaloes, goats, sheep, and chickens are slaughtered, till the ground is drenched with blood and the hungry goddess is supposed to be propitiated. Such scenes have been frequent in recent years.

. . . . . .

It is among the villagers, and especially among the outcastes, that Christian missionaries have had their greatest successes. Mass movements are continually taking place on a large scale; scores of thousands of people have already received baptism, and they and their children are now being trained in the Christian life. Only those who have seen such work in Haidarabad, Tinnevelly, and among the Chamars of the north can realize what is being done to uplift the lowly and depressed classes of India.

CHAPTER VI

HINDUISM IN DAILY LIFE

The Daily Worship

To the Hindu, be he villager or citizen, religion is everything: it is an inseparable part of his daily life, woven into the very fabric of his being.

The Brahmin, especially, is probably the most religious man in the world. His first duty in the morning is worship of the gods. As the earliest tinge of dawn steals into his dwelling, he rises from floor or *charpoy*. He will not permit food or water to pass his lips until he has worshipped his gods, and soon he may be seen preparing for his devotions. First he cleans his teeth with a small twig—he may not worship until he has done this. If there is a river or tank near, he will bathe: failing that he will perform ceremonial ablutions as best he can with water from a brass *lota* (bowl), or waterpot of red clay. Before the purification, he repeats a prayer to the sacred rivers :—

> Oh Ganges! Oh Jumna!
> Oh Godaveri! Oh Sarasvati!
> Oh Narmade! Oh Indus! Oh Kaveri!
> Be ye present in this water.

Then, standing in the water and turning towards the rising sun, he thrice takes up a handful of water and pours it out as a solemn libation to the sun god, saying each time the most sacred of all Hindu prayers :—

OM,[1] earth, sky and heaven!
OM, that excellent vivifier!
Let us meditate upon the Divine Light.
May He enlighten our understanding.

Then in the little courtyard or a room of his house, he squats before one of his sacred books or his family deity. With white lime (if he be a worshipper of Vishnu), or sacred ash of sandalwood mixed with water into a thick paste (if he be a follower of Siva), he traces the sacred marks of the god upon his brown forehead. There are many such marks, denoting various sects, but the most common are :—

I VISHNU II VISHNU (another sect) III SIVA

Having put on the sacred mark correctly, he rings his little brass bell to call the attention of the god. He pours oil or a few drops of holy water over the idol, or sprinkles sandalwood water over the sacred book; and then, still sitting cross-legged, facing the East, with hands together, he bows with his face to the ground. He mutters his creed :—

Glory to Brahm whose form is inscrutable,
Whose essence is divine wisdom,
Who is manifest as Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva.
OM!

Again ringing his bell and bowing, he proceeds to

[1] The mystic letters OM represent the names of the three great gods —Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva.

count the beads of his rosary, muttering to every bead the name of the god he is meditating upon. Some *mantrams* (mystic sentences and invocations) are repeated. Another ring of the bell, and *puja* is over. India has many sects, and the details of the worship vary considerably, but the general features of high caste worship are not widely different from the above.

The Brahmin is not content with morning worship alone. At midday, when the sun is highest, he again worships; and at night, ere he wraps himself in his long shawl and lies down to sleep, his last care is to perform his proper *puja*.

Religion in Daily Life

The average Hindu does not, like many so-called Christians, lay aside his religion when his morning *puja* is over. It is a necessary part of his life and occupation, and he goes about his business with strict religious observance. If he be a shopkeeper, he has a little plaster figure in a niche in the wall, and it receives due attention in the hope that the god will aid him in his business. The goldsmiths, the weavers, the potters, all have their gods to whom they look for assistance and prosperity: tiny clay or brass lamps burn before them, and offerings of coco-nut, betel-nut, flowers or rice are presented daily. In hundreds of Hindu homes there is an image of Ganesha in a niche over the entrance or inside the courtyard facing the door.

Similarly, religion dominates all the domestic arrangements—the food, the cooking, the eating. No animal food, and especially beef, must be eaten—religion forbids it. Rice and curry are eaten with the fingers—religion commands it. The Brahmin's drinking vessel must not *touch* the lips—that would mean defilement. No shadow

of a person of low caste must fall on the food or especially on the water, or even upon the cooking vessels—that would render the food or water unclean and it must be thrown away. Indeed, even the *glance* of a low caste person is a defilement.

Every pious Hindu firmly believes that, before his birth, the "pen of Brahma" wrote upon his forehead what he should be and what he should do, his character, his occupation, and his destiny It is the gods who decreed whether he should be a farmer or a blacksmith. If he suffers the loss of a son, if plague or cholera devastates his little family, if the failure of the rains ruins his crops, if floods cause his house of sun-dried mud to collapse, if his wife is bitten by a deadly snake, or a dearly-loved child "falls into the pit of Christianity," he will steel his heart to the sorrow or loss by the reflection that "the fate that is written in a man's forehead, even that must be." He is convinced that the gods are angry with him because of some sin in a former life, and he will set himself to appease their wrath by sacrifice of a goat, by a vow to dedicate a little girl to the gods, or by a pilgrimage to some famous shrine. Seldom does he doubt that the gods are all around him, and the fear of them is ever upon him.

All important family events are accompanied by a religious ceremony. Before a betrothal takes place, the Brahmin priest must cast the horoscopes and pronounce the stars of the boy and girl harmonious. The long wedding ceremony is full of worship and religious observances; it is the priest who unites the hands of bride and bridegroom and declares them man and wife. There are further ceremonies when children are born, and at all other important events, until, after death, the priests perform the final rites before the eldest son places rice

in the mouth, applies the fire, and the body is burned on the funeral pyre.

Worship at the Village Temple

But a Hindu is not content only to worship at home. Down the street is the temple, and thither he often goes. It is usually a comparatively small and not very imposing building. Over the entrance gate of the South Indian village temple there is a small *gopuram*, or tower, rising like an oblong pyramid and covered with strange carvings. The worshipper, with a small offering in his hand, passes through the gateway, crosses the little court, and enters the pillared portico before the inner shrine. He now sees the idol in a dark chamber immediately before him and just visible through a door-like aperture. The idol is often a very mean-looking image of wood, stone, or clay. If it be hung with garlands or smeared with paint, the effect is still more tawdry. As the worshipper advances, the *pujari* (priest) receives his gift and presents it to the god, while the worshipper bows or prostrates himself on the ground. The ringing of a bell, and the pouring of a little oil or holy water over the idol, and the repetition of a *mantram*, completes the *puja*.

Most temples are so constructed that the worshippers can walk round and round the shrine. They usually go round three times, with head bowed and hands together. If it be a temple to the great god Siva, there is, before the idol, a stone or bronze figure of a recumbent bull—a symbol of the strength of the god—and the worshipper will sprinkle it with water and walk several times round it. The whole *puja* may be performed in a few minutes, or, if the worshipper be more devout, or has some pressing need for the god's help, it may be prolonged indefinitely.

The Brahmins perform their devotions with much greater care than the common people.

There is no particular day for worship corresponding to the Christian Sunday or Jewish Sabbath, or even to the Moslem Friday. Neither is there any specified hour for going to the temple. Indeed, there is nothing at all resembling a "service" as we understand the term. There are no seats, no congregation, no singing, no sermon or discourse—in fact, ordinarily there is no *collective* worship at all. It is all *individual* worship: the worshipper goes into the temple any day and at any hour he pleases, performs his *puja* without reference to that of any other man, and then goes away. Truly, either morning or evening is the more correct time for going to the temple, but even then there is nothing resembling a Christian service. The writer has often stood by the door of some shrine about the time of sunset, and, peering in through the wide-open doors, has seen the priests lighting the lamps before the idol, and the worshippers going in with their offerings. Non-Hindus are hardly ever allowed to enter these small temples.

There is in all this temple-worship nothing really resembling Christian prayer. If a man desires prosperity for his crops or healing for his child he does not kneel before the idol and say, "Oh God, give me a good harvest," or "Oh God, restore my child to health." He simply goes to the temple of a god reputed to be able to deal with one or other of these matters, and believing that the god will fulfil his desire, he makes an offering, rings a bell, mutters the god's name as he touches his beads, perhaps repeats a *mantram*, walks a few times round the shrine, and then goes home. That may be worship, but it is not prayer in the Christian sense of the term.